

LIBERTY'S MARTYRS.

BY EVA KATHARINE CLAPP.

[Lured by the rays of the great electric light upon the statue of "Liberty," on Bedloe's Island, hundreds of sea birds nightly dash themselves against the wire net-work around the heavy glass lantern and are found dead at the feet of the Goddess when morning dawns.—*Newspaper paragraph.*]

Alone, on the desolate shore she stands,
Serenely, as the years drift by,
While drawn,
As by dawn,
To her outstretched hands
Her wild, winged worshippers fly.

The forms born to burrow, or climb, or creep,
Are safe on the earth, where they cling,
But they who dare,
Are of space and air,
And starward must soar and sing.

They are thrilled and filled with a fervor caught
From the infinite wind-swept main,
In their steadfast flight,
Toward the blinding light,
And their welcome is—death and pain.

Oh! wings, wings, wings,
Striving through dark and rain,
Merely to drop to death at the end,
Has your struggle been all in vain?

Nay, call them not wasted, those visions bright,
That inspired each tiny breast
With such keen desire,
Through that weary flight,
Toward the luring star of rest.

No fate so tragic doth Wisdom teach
Upon Nature's glowing page,
By symbol or speech,
For brave souls that reach
Toward light, through each bitter age.

And true as the course of the rolling year
Is the song that they sweet stars sing,
That right growth strong,
O'er the black shade, Wrong,
As summer o'er tops the spring.

Then beat, beat, beat, brave hearts, through
Oppression's night,
While Liberty stands by the bleak sea-sands,
Upholding her beacon light.

FEMININE STRATEGY.

CHAPTER I.

He had been telling her all he had to tell, and now she stood there quite still, neither by word nor glance vouchsafing the answer for which he pleaded.

"I must know the best or the worst, Christine," he whispered. "Speak to me, darling."

She started violently, and a vivid color rushed to her cheeks. Her broad forehead hid that, but it could not shut out the sigh which died away in a low, half sob.

"I am sorry if I give you pain," she said, softly, so softly that the words came almost in a murmur, "but I can not be your wife."

"I understand," with a short, hard laugh; "you will not. Pray, be frank."

At this she silently removed her glove and held out her hand. A soft, white hand it was, and one little finger was encircled by a heavy band of gold.

"Married?" "Not yet," and Miss Illerton's voice grew firmer now. "I am engaged to Arthur Gower."

Her companion was a tall, dark man, with a sunburnt face and a heavy mustache and honest brown eyes, evidently not the man to be easily overcome by any passing emotion, yet now he fairly staggered beneath the blow her words had dealt; so when he spoke again it was with a calm desperation.

"Forgive me," said he; "I have had so many hopes that—"

"Why did you not write to me?" she interrupted, turning upon him sharply.

"I wanted to tell you. I was a fool, that is all."

"Let us have done with folly," commenced Christine, almost wearily. Then, with a sudden, passionate outburst—"Ah! why need you have done this? Could you not see? could you not understand?"

Now he caught her outstretched hands, and, holding her in his arms, pressed her close upon his breast. For one little moment the poor lips quivered beneath a rain of kisses, for one little moment only; then, adroitly freeing herself, she said but this:

"Go now, Ralph," "Christine!"

"Go," she repeated; "it is too late; understand me—too late! I shall marry Arthur Gower, and I would not do otherwise now, even if I could."

And so, quitting the deep shadow of the willows, never looking back, Miss Illerton walked down the garden-path, her dainty white gown fluttering in the morning breeze, her whiter face hard and fixed and strangely stern.

Some one met her as she crossed the hall.

"Where is Mr. Gresham, Christine?" "Gone."

"Are you ill, dear?" "No; I will be down presently, Clara," passing on quickly.

This abruptness would have offended almost any other woman, but Clara Volney, being unlike almost any other woman, simply turned away, a pained pitifulness easily read in the troubled glance of her blue eyes.

She stood leaning against the doorway, just a little tinge of color in her cheeks, her slender little fingers mechanically threading an unruly yellow curl, when Miss Illerton sharply called to her from the gallery above.

"Clara!" "Yes, dear."

"I want you."

Obedient Clara was presently in her cousin's chamber, listening to a half confession born of self-rebuke and a wild yearning for some word of tender consolation.

"We have no secrets from each other, have we, Clara?" commenced Miss Illerton. "No, none."

"From the time—so long ago!—when my poor father died—from the moment when he put your hand in mine, and bade us love each other, not as cousins, only, but as sisters dear, have I ever, by word or deed, put that last counsel to shame, Clara?"

"Never, Christine."

"Think again."

"Never," reiterated the girl.

"It is false!" cried Miss Illerton, her cheeks ablaze now; "I have wronged you by a foolish silence; I have insulted the dead by willful disobedience; in nothing have I acted like a sister; a sister would have gone to you and said: 'Clara, I have promised to be Arthur Gower's wife; this ring I wear is the token of love; I am happy, share my content.' That is what a sister would have done—what I should have done; is it not?"

"Arthur Gower?"

The flush had quite faded from Clara's cheeks, but her eyes were bright with some keen emotion of surprise or joy, or maybe pain.

"Yes," went on Christine, never heeding this, "and just now, in the garden, who should come but Ralph Gresham, and—he loves me, Clara."

"Well?"

"But it is too late," said Miss Illerton, almost in undertone.

"What did you tell him?" asked her cousin, eagerly.

"What I have told you—that it was too late, and that I would not, even if I could."

She spoke very slowly, marking each word with a lingering emphasis; then, as the last fell from her lips she started up with a merry laugh. "Just think of it, Clara—Arthur

Cower! Did I tell you what he said? Listen. It was the drollest wooing! He took my hand and slipped that ring upon my finger; I knew then what was coming, and so kept very still. 'Christine,' said he, 'it is our parents' wish, you remember, that you should be my wife—will you consent?' And I consented, of course. So, there, now, that troublesome affair is arranged, and I am to marry him, and—For heaven's sake, Clara, open that window! one stifles here!"

She came and stood by her cousin, and in silence the two looked out upon the stretch of land where the flat brown tracts were all cut by low fences, and then beyond that the dark belt of woods, now softened and shadowed by the purple haze of the fast falling night.

Presently, turning to Miss Illerton, Clara asked, in a half-whisper: "Are you happy, Christine?"

"Who? I? What a droll question! Why, I am now the happiest woman in the world."

The next gray daybreak stole in through that same window upon a woman who had passed the livelong night crouched in that grand chair, her head resting upon the broad sill.

A pale-faced creature, who looked up listlessly when the swallows commenced twittering in the far-reaching eaves, and then with a sigh and a shudder turned from this ever new glory of the coming day.

"O, Lord!" she cried, and said no more. You are not to judge. Surely this was a cry for thanksgiving, for, by her own confession, she was the happiest woman in the world.

CHAPTER II.

A summer's day slowly dying—a tender gloom stealing down the long aisles of forest trees and the low murmur of softly plashing ripples; a mass of jagged black rocks, with the last rays of sunlight glinting upon their bald tops, and gnarled branches overreaching low, fern-tufted banks, to dip in the peaceful water.

Imagine this, and you have the picture of the little lake at "The Crag." Then imagine a tiny, prettily painted canoe, with a young woman at either end, and a gentleman fairly dividing his attention between his companions and the skillful management of the slender oars.

Now you have Miss Illerton, her cousin and Arthur Gower.

They had been floating lazily on, with barely a word now and then to break a stillness almost painful, until they neared the dangerous Black Rocks; then the little wherry became entangled in the stealthy current and veered with a treacherous lurch—a lurch sharp enough to fling one of the women backward, and dangerous enough to startle Arthur into a singularly awkward betrayal of emotion.

The little form had barely swayed when the gentleman, with a hoarse cry, sprang forward.

"Clara! My God, Clara!"

That was all he said; yet, when he remembered himself, he was holding Clara Volney in his arms.

"Is she hurt?"

The voice was Miss Illerton's, and now Arthur Gower remembered, too, that the woman whom he should marry was beside him.

"Are you hurt, Christine?" he asked, flushing hotly as his arm fell from Clara.

"Not at all, thank you."

"Nor am I," protested her cousin, laughing nervously. "Only frightened. It was so sudden, you see."

"Yes, it was sudden, certainly," acquiesced Miss Illerton; "sudden and pleasant."

This extraordinary assertion remained uncontradicted, for not another word was spoken until the boat was being made fast to the low, quaintly contrived landing of roughly hewn logs; then, as Miss Illerton stepped upon this rustic platform, Arthur Gower touched her hand, retainingly.

"What is the matter, Christine?" he ventured.

"Why, what should be the matter?" And now, affecting to notice for the first time his awkward hesitation, she continued, smilingly, "My dear boy, just put that out of its proper place, will you? Then follow us up to the house as quickly as possible. Those people will be there."

"Those people" were city friends who enjoyed amazingly frequent visits to The Crag, and to welcome them now hastened the hospitable mistress of the old manor house, leaving Mr. Gower in a most painful state of anxious doubt and self-convicted treachery.

Christine Illerton was not a woman of half measures. That night she entered her cousin's chamber, and without ado put this straightforward question:

"How long has this been going on?" "Going on?"

"Tell me, I wish the truth; I wish you to be frank."

"Why, what do you mean?" asked Clara, yet never looking up.

"You understand me. How long has this been going on between you and—and—the man whom I find so married?"

At this Clara lifted her head and looked at her cousin with innocent, fearless eyes.

"You do not mean to accuse us of anything like a flirtation, I hope," she said, proudly.

"Oh, no," was Miss Illerton's cool response; "I acquit you of that. There has been no flirtation; but there has been a great deal of intensely earnest love-making. That knowledge was forced upon me this afternoon, remember."

"Ah, Christine!"

And here this young woman displayed woeful ignorance of the first principles of feminine strategy; for, instead of adroitly maneuvering, carefully marshaling her replies, and skillfully defending all weak points of her false position from the unsparring vigilance of that keen-eyed sharpshooter, Miss Christine Illerton, the silly creature only hid her face in her hands, and, 'twixt piteous sobs, proclaimed her ignominious overthrow.

"Ah, cousin—ah, Christine!"

"Instead of calling my name in that utterly incomprehensible manner, you would do better to answer my question," suggested Miss Illerton. "How long has Arthur Gower loved you?"

"I never knew that he loved me," protested the offender.

"Yet he told it very plainly this afternoon, and I was present, if you recollect."

"Christine, dear Christine!" Clara was standing now, not weeping, but speaking with low, impressive eagerness. "As I live, never before has he said as much as that; never before has he uttered one word that you might not have heard—never, Christine, cousin!"

"Do you tell me this upon your honor?" "Upon my honor."

"But you love him, of course. There, you need not turn away. Keep your secret, child. Only remember this, that you are willfully walking to a moral destruction, for I shall certainly marry the man you love. Good-night, dear."

"What does it matter to me? Why should I care if she breaks her heart for him? Do I care? Not I," protested Miss Illerton, as she sauntered slowly to her own room, an hour later, after an awkward leave-taking with Mr. Gower. "They make their own misery. That which is not worth asking is not worth having, surely. She's a fool, but he is a coward; so, after all, I save her from a wretched fate."

CHAPTER III.

Life, like nature, has its unnatural calms—treacherous calms preceding ruthless devastations—calms whose seasons of dead stillness, when both life and nature seem to have paused, half-affrighted at the wreck and ruin cumbering their paths.

Such a time had come to Christine Illerton.

Throughout that livelong night had she been with her past, and that grim gossip had told her many bitter truths, had shown her the graves deeper buried in her heart, had uncovered the faces of the dead there lying, and of these, one there was—ah, heaven! how near, how real!

"But it may never be now," she murmured, "never! Dead? Ay, in very truth is he dead to me! For when I killed his trust I killed his love, and so—ah, good Lord, be merciful!"

The old cry, you see. Truly, her need was sore.

There was no one in the breakfast-room when Christine entered but Kaynor, the housekeeper.

A cheery little octagon was that breakfast-room, especially so when a soft air gently lifted the light curtains of its many windows, and a pleasant light shimmered among the glass and silver of its snow-covered, well-ordered table.

"Where is Miss Volney?"

"She is not very well, Miss Christine," was Kaynor's answer—"not well, and she won't be down. I have seen her, and it's only a bad headache; so there's no need to worry, dear."

Miss Illerton did not worry. She ate her rolls and sipped her coffee enjoyingly. Then, with her own hands, she prepared a tempting little meal, daintily arranged.

"Let this be taken to my cousin, please."

"My dear, she will not touch bit or sup. There is really no use," objected Kaynor.

"Take it, please, and tell her that I wish her to eat," said Miss Illerton.

Presently she was in Clara's chamber. That young person was yet in bed, and had been weeping. Indeed, judging from her appearance the whole night had been spent in that pleasant diversion. Still, she contrived in some awkward manner to screen her eyes, but her voice betrayed her; that tremble so characteristically.

To neither of these women did Miss Illerton vouchsafe any notice. In the most matter-of-fact manner possible she busied herself about the room, then approached the sufferer.

"Are you better, Clara?"

"Much better, thank you, Christine."

"Very well. Now listen to me. Why did you not take the breakfast I sent you?"

"I couldn't."

"Understand, see, Clara, you must obey me. Here are my instructions—commands, if you will. You are to remain quite up, and try to sleep. Don't attempt to come down to luncheon. Yours shall be brought to you."

"I wish you would not, Christine. Really, I—"

"Nonsense!" sharply retorted her cousin. "Do you intend to starve? None but heroines of high tragedy do such things, and you are always announcing their suicidal intentions in doubtful blank verse. You have not done that yet. Will you begin?"

"I am so wretched!" moaned the girl—"so utterly and unspokeably wretched!"

"Very good," continued the other, with stoical indifference; "but you are to remain here until I send for you. That will not be before the afternoon. I have much to do this morning, and can not spare a moment. Don't be silly, Clara; don't blind your eyes and blotch your face with tears. There, you are crying again. Good heavens, woman! what a great grief has come into your life? Need you nurse it after such a fashion?"

But the startling vehemence of this appeal produced an effect altogether contrary to the one intended. Clara only gave way to a perfect passion of sobs, whereat Miss Illerton impatiently shrugged her shoulders, and without another word walked from the room.

CHAPTER IV.

"You did me a great injustice," said she, wearily. "You should have acknowledged this sooner. Had you done so—"

"Well!" came the eager question to Miss Illerton, who finished her sentence with icy composure.

"Had you done so you would have spared me much annoyance, that is all."

"Does Clara know that?" commenced Mr. Gower, then he turned abruptly to Christine.

"That you and I came to an understanding yesterday? No, she does not."

A moment of silence, then spoke Mr. Gower again:

"You must not despise me, now, Christine."

"I did—yes, I despised what appeared to me an unmanly weakness and pitiful falsehood. I did not consider the mistaken sense of honor which caused you to hesitate before inflicting an imaginary pain."

"If you had ever loved me, Christine—"

"But I never loved you," she interrupted, with great earnestness. "This marriage was arranged between our parents. We lent ourselves to the sinful plottings of others; therein lay our fault. Why, we have been victims of obstinate stupidity!"

"Christine, suppose that all had been different; suppose that—"

"Do you then have loved me. Is that what you wish to say?"

"Well, yes, that I had not loved Clara—would you then really have sacrificed yourself to me?"

Miss Illerton did not answer immediately. She sat for a moment quite still, her head resting upon her hand.

"I can not tell," she said at last, half dreamily. "Heaven help me. I can not tell! I have been doing right. Then, with sudden energy, "Never mind what might have been! Think only of what is! Wait here, I will be back presently." And she hurried from the room.

She was back presently—with Clara Volney. The young lady was very pale, but preserved a remarkable composure. Miss Illerton's keen eyes, however, detected the sudden flush, and her firm fingers felt the tremor of the little hand they clasped.

But here was one who would not waste so much as one poor word on all this anguish. Leading her companion forward, she paused before her visitor; then she spoke:

"Mr. Arthur Gower, I give you my cousin as a wife."

"Christine!"

"Do not interrupt me. Mr. Gower has been making a confession, and so have I, and we understand each other now. You must believe me."

It was Mr. Gower who interrupted her here. He had taken her hand and kissed it reverently.

"What can I say, Christine?"

"My dear boy, say nothing—to me. There is Clara."

She turned away laughingly. At the door she stopped suddenly, then retraced her steps.

"Do you see nothing?" she asked. "Do neither of you mind anything?"

"I do!" cried Clara. "Where is it?"

"Are you sure that you understand me?"

"Ah, yes, I am sure! Oh, Arthur, where is it?"

But Arthur said never a word, only stood silently gazing at Christine.

"He does not know," averred the latter, with mock gravity, "but I will tell you. I threw it in the river this morning when I was riding."

Here Miss Illerton held up her hand, and lo! the ring, the token of betrothal, was no longer in its place!

Thus had she decided the matter of her marriage with Arthur Gower.

There had been a busy time at The Crag, such a busy time as inevitably precedes a marriage, and now came the lull which as inevitably follows those periods of hazardous excitement.

The pretty pageant was over, and Arthur was gone, and his wife was gone, and only a lonely woman remained at the old place, a very lonely woman, one who had let her hopes go by, had put her suffering aside,

and now, patiently bearing the burden of the day, waited for that night for which, in the cruel pangs of her anguish, she longingly yearned.

So time wore drearily on, until one day Miss Illerton sat in the library trying to fix her mind on the book which lay open in her lap, when suddenly, she knew not how it came about, a strangely rapturous expectancy seemed to have overcome her, when directly she heard the drawing-room door close and a visitor enter. A charm took possession of her, and she immediately arose and crossed the room, and as she parted the portiere her breath came in deep, gasping sobs, and she stood quite motionless, her eyes resting on Ralph Gresham.

"Christine!"

The wondrous eyes brightened now.

"I heard of this, Christine. I have been away, you know—far away. I have come for you, Christine."

"And I have waited for you, oh, my beloved!"

His strong arm was about her now, her head was pillowed upon his faithful breast, and if tears wet her cheek be sure they were very happy tears. The past, with its sorrows and shadows, was gone; and now a love so great had come to her that through its radiance she read the promise of a blessed peace, and joy unutterable. If you do not believe that the fates were kind to Christine ask Ralph Gresham's wife.

Too Slow.

The first electric telegraph was put in operation between Baltimore and Washington, in 1845, Congress having appropriated eight thousand dollars to keep it running for one year, as an experiment. Of the many amusing incidents of those early days, one of the best is the following, which used to be related by Professor Morse himself:

A pretty little girl tripped into the Washington office, and after a great deal of hesitation and coloring, asked how long it would take to send to Baltimore.

Mr. Morse looked at the pretty questioner with much interest as he answered:

"One second."

"Oh, how delightful!" exclaimed the girl, her eyes glistening with rapture.

"One second only! Here, send this even quicker if you can," and Mr. Morse found in his hand a neatly folded, gilt-edged note, the very perfume and shape of which told a volume of love.

"I cannot send this note," said Mr. Morse; "it is impossible."

"Oh, do, do!" implored the distracted girl. "I have had a quarrel with William, and I shall die if he doesn't know in a second that I forgive him—I know I shall."

As Mr. Morse still objected to sending the note, the girl asked:

"Will you send me on?"

"Perhaps it would take your breath away to travel forty miles an hour," said a clerk, trying not to smile.

"Oh, no, it won't—no, it won't, if it carries me to William."

"You could go by train to-morrow."

"But the cars are so slow."

Mr. Morse now comprehended the girl's mistake, and attempted to explain the process of carrying words along the wires.

The girl listened for a few moments, then rolled her burning note into a ball and thrust it into her pocket.

"It's too slow, too slow, and my heart will break before William knows I forgive him; and you are a cruel man, Mr. Morse, that you won't let me travel by the telegraph to see William."

"I am very sorry."

The girl left the office in tears.

Helen Densmore.

New York has many interesting women, and not the least among them is Dr. Helen Densmore. Helen Densmore used to be Helen Barnard, and under that name there are many newspaper men who remember her as a tall, handsome woman, with a shapely head and a profusion of yellow hair, who sat for years the only woman in the reporters' gallery of the House of Representatives, and taking notes and writing letters as if a man—and a clever man—were knocking off the sentences. Helen Barnard was a figure in the political and journalistic circles of Washington. Lamar, Garfield, Butler and Jere Black held many an animated discussion with her. When a mission was organized to look into the treatment of emigrants in the steerage crossing the Atlantic Butler went to President Grant and had Mrs. Barnard appointed on it at the same salary received by the men. The gentlemen on that commission had a fine time at the Vienna Exposition, but saw few emigrants. Helen Barnard put on an old dress and sailed from Liverpool to New York in the steerage of the Inman Line. Unless she found the privations and abuse of that passage considerably less than I did when I investigated the charges made in twelve or fifteen years, it is easy to believe that a deal of earnestness went into her report, which was pronounced one of the ablest state papers, on file at Washington. From journalism Helen Barnard went into medicine, and the same graceful woman, with firm-set chin and decisive mouth, is the physician best known as a successor to Banting in the cure of obesity. Dr. Densmore eats only one meal and is a personally strict vegetarian.—*Mail and Express.*