

A REVERIE.

BY EDWARD G. ALLANSON.

I am drifting away in a beautiful bark,
Far out on a boundless sea,
And the sweep of the waves o'er the sounding deep
Has a mystical charm for me.

But the heart that is sheltered with purple
and gold
Is cold in its splendor and pride,
And the waves in their revelry mock as they pass.

And bitterness sweeps with the tide.

There are beautiful isles and bowers of love,
And glist'ning fountains of tears,
And pitiful wrecks of sorrow and shame
That pass with the fleeting years.

There are treacherous depths where the
waters whirl.

Where hate and sorrow stay,
Where the shattered wrecks on the breakers
of fate
Are silently drifting away.

They are drifting away to rest with the
years

Where the sunlight has faded and gone,
To wake in the morn at the judgment bar
In the light of eternity's dawn.

Oh, voices of love, that falter and break,
And speak of the past ever more,
Your echoes lead on 'neath the day-star of
hope

Till they break on eternity's shore.

ANITA, IOWA.

Dr. Elfenstein's Mission

A Remarkable Romance.

BY EMILY THORNTON.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE EVENING TASK.

As an elegant clock, with old cathedral chimes, struck the hour of ten, Ethel, with a pale face, and trembling hand, lighted a candle, possessed herself of the strange-looking knife, then opening the wardrobe, and drawing back the bolt, stepped into the passage and from thence through the small door in the opposite wall.

As this opened, she looked round for the entrance to the ruined rooms in which she was to find the basket of food.

She found herself as soon as the small passage was left, in a long, straight, dark gallery or corridor, that led directly to what Sir Reginald assured her was the Haunted Tower. At the end where she stood, however, on the left-hand side, was a door, fastened with an old-fashioned iron hook. This led to ruin, and with a beating heart she opened it.

Close by the door she found a small covered basket that she knew must contain what she sought.

Grasping it quickly she again fastened the door, as Sir Reginald had instructed her to do, and passed down the corridor.

There she found the entrance to the tower, and resolving to take some bright, sunshiny day to visit this spot, she turned, as she had been directed, to count out the number of panels on the left-hand wall, and immediately discovered the faint crack that she knew must be what she sought. Inserting the point of the knife, she turned three times, when the panels parted and there lay the shelves.

Opening then the basket, she found food in small pieces, consisting of broken biscuits, bits of chicken, potatoes, and quite a quantity of meat cut in mouthfuls. This she placed on the shelves upon the wooden plate upon which it was heaped. Then gently shaking the shelves, they slowly whirled around, and when the same side returned to her the plate stood upon it empty, ready to be placed again in the basket.

Arrangements for different colored lights were also on every hand.

After carefully examining all the machinery, until she perfectly understood its workings and the whole wicked plan to give supernatural appearance to the tower, Ethel passed upward until she could gaze without hindrance upon the tall windows of this lofty place.

Then exclamations of delight escaped her, for there she could catch an unobstructed view of the grand panorama that stretched for miles and miles away on every side.

But she did not linger, fearing she would be seen by some of the villagers, and her presence reported to Sir Reginald.

This visit she knew would be displeasing to him, if he wished it to be a place that should fill every heart with fear, in order to keep visitors from it by day as well as by night.

After, then, one more glance around on the glorious scene that lay before her, she descended, glad that she had been there, had seen the true inwardness of the place, for now it certainly could never have a feeling of terror with which to inspire her heart.

Let any person ever speak to her of the fearful sights seen in that lonely Haunted Tower, she could turn away unawed, knowing the whole thing to be a deception, a heartless imposition, a wicked fraud.

CHAPTER XIV.

DAILY PROGRESS.

Day after day passed, during which Ethel became quite accustomed to her routine of work, and quietly persevered in her duties.

Nothing difficult to accomplish was required at her hands; nothing by spending a couple of hours each morning in her own room, writing letters, of which an abstract was taken from Sir Reginald's own lips; then an hour or two, just as he felt inclined, reading the daily papers for his amusement.

Very often would he find a chance to whisper the question:

"Do you perform your evening tasks regularly and well? Does all go on as safely as I could wish?"

Then when the answer came, "All goes well," he would seem so satisfied and relieved that she felt almost happy in giving the information.

About a month after her arrival at Glendinning Hall, she had been reading one afternoon a work in which he was particularly interested, when she was interrupted by the entrance of Dr. Elfenstein.

As the baronet motioned to her to remain where she was during the interview, the regular nurse being absent, and as the Doctor might need some things from her hand, she became interested in the conversation which ensued.

Now, Dr. Elfenstein was rather a small talker, and this natural reserve tended to make his professional interests at the Hall brief, and usually confined closely to his medical work.

One thing, however, she decided to do,

she should take some morning hour to explore the ruins, and that Haunted Tower, so that she might become accustomed to all the dangers and peculiarities of the place before other offices were required at her hands.

With this resolution still in her mind, she restored the candle and knife to the secret drawer, and then sought the luxurious bed that awaited awaiting her, and there fell at once into a pleasant sleep, from which she never aroused until the bright rays of another morning sun stole into her room.

Springing up, she dressed as soon as possible, and opening her door found, by questioning a maid, that the family did not rise until late, as their breakfast hour was from ten to eleven.

"But you may believe me, sir, when I assure you such things are really to be seen there. Now, in order to satisfy my mind and perhaps enable me to explain the mystery to the frightened inhabitants, I crave your kind permission to visit the premises. Have I that permission?"

"It is impossible for me to grant it. When these things were first whispered about twenty-five years ago, we, as a family, were exceedingly annoyed by constant visitors to the spot, and the thing became so much of a nuisance that it was closed forever from all inspection. No, you must not ask this, Doctor, as I cannot consent to the place being entered after being so long sealed. As it is, take my word for it, all be satisfied. It is merely a vagary of the brain, an optical delusion, something better to be forgotten."

The door opened directly into a small rickety hall that led into several large rooms, all dusty, moldy, and more or less dilapidated. Broken windows, torn wall papers, bare rafters, seen through immense places where ceilings had fallen, were every where visible. Some rooms were filled with broken furniture, pieces of old china, and fragments of time-worn, cast-of clothing.

Dr. Elfenstein said no more, but inwardly resolved to pay a surreptitious visit there, if not a permitted one, as this mystery he determined should be unraveled.

As he rose to leave, he happened to glance toward the young girl opposite to him, and saw her head bent low over the book she held, while a sad and pained expression had floated over her speaking face.

All, even the floors, were in an advanced state of decay.

Ethel looked at these dilapidated objects and found herself wondering why Sir Reginald had not had the whole pulled down and removed? Its destruction certainly would heighten the value of property, while its presence only spoke of neglect and untidiness.

One thing she observed in her ramble there was an easy mode of egress and ingress to this part into the hall, and marks of recent footsteps on the floor told that this formed the entrance place to the person who prepared and bought the food she was nightly to place on the iron shelves.

Another thing struck her; in all the premises there was not the slightest appearance of the concealed room, in which she knew the treasure was secret.

Only a bare, blank wall appeared upon the side where she knew it must be.

Retracing her steps after all had been examined, she unfastened the door, and then sought the Haunted Tower.

The door leading to this was closed, but not bolted, so she opened it, and, casting quite a large square place, she began ascending a long flight of stairs.

The steps were steep, and not at all easy, and she became very tired before she reached the top, but not before she paused to rest upon a broad, flat landing: paused, too, with horror, at an unexpected sight that there presented itself.

It was the stuffed image of a man, fixed upon wires, that worked upon the same principle as the jumping-jacks often bought to amuse children.

This flattery, he saw at once, was utterly distasteful, therefore persevered in its use.

"O my dear Miss Nevergail, the fates certainly have befriended me, this time! To think that I should have met thus your beautiful self, just as you start on a ramble, is too fortunate for belief! Which direction shall go, for I at once constitute myself your devoted attendant?"

"Mr. Glendinning, you will excuse me, if I decline your services. I came out for a quiet walk by myself, and therefore shall not certainly trespass upon your time."

"Pardon me, my angel, my time is of no consequence at all. I must insist upon accompanying you, as I could never allow so lovely a lady to stroll around without a protector."

"Sir," said Ethel, now really losing patience, "there is no danger certainly to be met with in your uncle's grounds. But since you are otherwise, I shall instantly return."

So saying, the young girl wheeled about, and began rapidly to retrace her steps.

"You will do no such thing," was the insolent reply, as Robert sprang to her side, seized her hand, and drawing it firmly under his arm, held it tight, and thus drew her back to the walk. "When I propose walking with a charming girl, I usually do it."

"Whether your presence prove agreeable or no?"

"Whether my presence prove agreeable or no."

"Sir, release my hand. I have no desire to go further. I shall merely add that your presence is disagreeable, and your words of flattery almost insulting."

"Notwithstanding that, my dearest girl!"

"I am neither your 'dearest girl' nor your 'angel,' and you have no right to address me in that style. I am your uncle's secretary and amanuensis, and am here merely to carry out his wishes, and work, not to be attended by you in any way whatever," returned the indignant Ethel, once more disengaging her hand, and retreating toward the tall windows of this lofty place.

But she did not linger, fearing she would be seen by some of the villagers, and her presence reported to Sir Reginald.

This visit she knew would be displeasing to him, if he wished it to be a place that should fill every heart with fear, in order to keep visitors from it by day as well as by night.

After, then, one more glance around on the glorious scene that lay before her, she descended, glad that she had been there, had seen the true inwardness of the place, for now it certainly could never have a feeling of terror with which to inspire her heart.

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but this morning he seemed to linger and converse quite freely upon many of the topics of the day. Finally he commenced giving an account of the severe storm that had swept over the country the night before the baronet's accident and ended by relating his own adventures and what he had seen in the tower.

"Sir Reginald, I thought I would tell you this and ask if you can explain the meaning of the spectacle then manifested?"

"I cannot," was the reply Ethel watched for with anxiety. "I am told by people far and near of strange appearances in that tower, but I have never seen anything of the kind there myself, therefore put no faith in the story."

"But you may believe me, sir, when I assure you such things are really to be seen there. Now, in order to satisfy my mind and perhaps enable me to explain the mystery to the frightened inhabitants, I crave your kind permission to visit the premises. Have I that permission?"

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"It was now half after eight. With a little of the trembling nervousness of the night before the brave girl opened the intervening doors and stepped into the corridor.

All was folded in the same solemn stillness that made the place oppressive on the previous night.

She resolved to explore the ruined parts before she sought the tower, therefore unhooked the door and stepped out. As she did so she noticed that the covered basket was still there.

The door opened directly into a small rickety hall that led into several large rooms, all dusty, moldy, and more or less dilapidated. Broken windows, torn wall papers, bare rafters, seen through immense places where ceilings had fallen, were every where visible. Some rooms were filled with broken furniture, pieces of old china, and fragments of time-worn, cast-of clothing.

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