



CHAPTER II—Continued.

One hour went by. The supper bell rang, but Beatrice never left her task. She was writing now. A singular feature of chirography, hers, it seems, for she wrote with a coarse pen, in a bold, masculine hand, and then with a fine one in delicate Italian characters.

She manipulated the two letters, so dissimilar in appearance, folded them in an envelope, carefully added the superscriptions, and then stamping the envelopes, put on her cloak and hat and stole from her room.

Down the dark hall, through the front portals, out into the road, and towards her she sped. At the village post-office she paused to drop the letters in the box there, and a faint gleam of a lamp near by showed the address plainly—“Mr. Raymond Marshall.”

“Done!” she murmured, breathlessly, as she hurried homewards. “Circumstances, accident, all are in my favor. I could not have endured the confidences that broke my heart, much longer. Edna will never write, her father’s letter tells me why. She will never see her old friends again. Raymond Marshall will forget her in time—I will be his friend, his confidante, and then—”

The dark eyes glistened, the fair face was sentient with vivid emotion. Then! Ah! balm for the hungry heart, love for the starved soul, peace for the self-torture, for word and feature betrayed the secret of a woman who could suffer, conceal, and plot as well, to consummate the hopes dictated by hatred, jealousy, and love!

### CHAPTER III.

#### TWO LETTERS

“Two letters, Mr. Marshall.”

Raymond Marshall took the tendered missives from the hands of the antiquated postmaster of Hopedale, thrust one, an ordinary business missive, into his pocket carelessly, but the other—his eye brightened and his pulses came quicker.

“From Edna,” he murmured, recognizing the handwriting on the envelope.

“Something about the reception to-night. I hope that tiresome Mr. Brinsley is not to be her escort. It is too precious, too sacred to read here.”

He closed the door and went to his room with a heavy heart. The memory of the girl he loved was always with him, the possession of a shy, dainty girlie from her enhanced sweetness.

“Rather bulky,” he commented, as he carefully cut open the envelope, as if every scrap of paper her hands had touched was precious. “Mr. Marshall—why! what is this? Oh, Edna! a joke, a cruel hoax, surely.”

The words died in a gasp. With staring eyes Marshall surveyed the letter before him. Then staggering to a seat, he sat glaring at it with colorless face and chilled heart.

A formal dismissal, a cold, precise disavowal of all the past, the cruel words seemed icy fingers reaching for his heart, to blight all the faith and love of his nature with a single touch.

“She has left me,” he thought, shivering, in a shuddering shudder, Italian style shown in the chirography. There could be no doubt of that, but the language!—oh! what did it mean?

Briefly it addressed him as might one a stranger. Circumstances, the latter said, had an hour changed her destiny. All was over between them. It was better so, since fate ordained it.

Remember her as a friend, their brief “flirtation” as a wayward caprice for passing the summer months away!

“False! Deceitful! I will never believe it,” panted the petrified Marshall. “Why! yesterday—the ring I gave her, the pledges we made—oh! this is some farce, some hidden dream! What is this?”

Mechanically turning the wretched missive over and over in his nerveless hands, Raymond Marshall observed for the first time that it was composed of two sheets of paper.

And striving to separate them, he ascertained that these patches of musings hold the lower page to the other. In a few minutes he discerned that it could not have been the intention of the sender to inclose the second sheet.

That was accidental. It had stuck to the top sheet and had been folded in with it by a hasty, careless hand.

It bore writing—not Edna’s writing. A dagger seemed driven to Ray Marshall’s heart as he tore it free, and the bold, masculine chirography danced before his vision.

If he had been startled before, every pulse stirred with fierce fire now. The letter had evidently been received by Edna the day previous, and was signed with the name of the only rival in her affection to whom he had ever given a thought. Miss Chandler’s signature. Edna’s announced escort of that evening, Barton Brinsley.

The letter of an accepted lover to the woman he loved, it betrayed decided on courage from Edna. It even bore a slight ridicule of Marshall’s pretensions. Edna had endured this! Edna had played him false, and while her shy lips were responding to his ardent expressions of devotion her hypocritical heart was thinking of Barton Brinsley.

The complication was maddening. With eyes dashed with despair, the tortured artist looked up. He clenched the tell-tale sheets in his hand as if they were the false heart of the girl who had jilted him, and that of the man who had stolen away her love.

“I will kill him!” he choked out, his sobs checked.

And then, realizing the folly of such a sentiment, the right of any man to honorably strive for a woman’s preference, with the bitterness of death comprehending that the woman was the deceiver, remembering his mother’s taunt once made that he had better marry some one besides “a nameless, homeless, nobody,” he calmed down, put on his hat, and walked from the house like one in a dream, his lips firmly set, but sick at heart.

He went straight to the seminary.

There was that in his heart so many, so straightforward, so inclined to doubt the falsity of the woman he had so blindly trusted, despite the terrible evidence in his hands, that, though the meeting killed him, he was determined to have the matter settled now and finally.

He would demand to see Edna—he would show her the letters. His philanthropic friends had more than once told him that all womankind were changing butterflies of sentiment. If she had indeed only played with his heart he would leave her presence and the place forever; without a word accept the bitter lesson as a warning against trusting

all humanity, and in silence and darkness wait for the end of a life blighted, profitless, undurable.

A servant admitted him, and took his card to the lady principal. Miss Chandler looked serious as she entered the room, but greeted him with the geniality she always bestowed on Edna’s friends. She started at the sight of his wretched face, however.

“Miss Chandler,” he spoke, in his misery and agitation neglecting to take her proffered hand, “I wish to see Edna—Miss Deane.”

“Edna!” ejaculated the lady principal, wonderingly. “Why! did you not know?”

“Know what?” he demanded, sharply, his heart taking a new alarm.

“Gone!” he repeated, blankly. “Gone? When were, with whom?”

“She left us last evening. Poor, dear Edna! her happy school life is over, and—why, Mr. Marshall?”

He had arisen to his feet at her first start of words. He felt his senses reeling now and swayed where he stood. The sight of such vivid emotion in a strong man alarmed the gentle lady.

“Go on!” he choked out, waving his hand agitatedly. “It is nothing. The shock, the suddenness.”

“Surely she wrote you that she was going?”

“No. That is—You say she went last evening?”

“Yes.”

“Alone? Why did she leave so abruptly?”

His heart hung on the reply. Miss Chandler’s face fell.

“Mr. Marshall,” she said, in a low, subdued tone, “you must not ask me. I have pledged myself to make no explanations. In fact, I know very little. She left in safe hands, of that I am assured, and she will never return to Hopedale. It has depressed us all; but surely she will soon write to you and explain.”

“Miss Chandler, I must know where Edna Deane has gone. You must tell me more!”

His voice was husky, but it bore a ring of sharp, lacerating anguish.

“I cannot. I never break a promise once made, Mr. Marshall,” spoke the lady, with dignity. “You may see Miss Mercer, if you choose. She was Edna’s most intimate friend. She may have the right to tell you, but I cannot. Edna may have left a message with her.”

“Allow me to speak with her, please.”

How strained and unnatural were his tones! He liked a mat marching to his doom down the broad hall and to the door of the office of the seminary.

“Miss Mercer is in there alone, I think,” spoke Miss Chandler. “Yes. Beatrix, Mr. Marshall.”

And the principal opened the door and closed it upon Raymond Marshall and the woman he so disliked and distrusted.

#### CHAPTER IV.

#### THE TRUTH REVEALED

There was no reply. Only the subdued sobs broke the waiting silence.

“You know where Edna is?” persisted Marshall.

“Yes, I know!” cried Beatrice, lifting her face, flashing with jealousy and emotion; “but do you think I will tell you—send you to bag at the feet of a woman unworthy of you? Leave me! If you are suffering, I am tortured. Oh! cruel! cruel! cruel!”

Her frantic hands swept the open portfolio across the desk as she shrank from him, hiding her head in her hands, profane, undurable.

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#### THE TRUTH REVEALED

#### THE WHEEL AND ITS RIDERS

The use of the bicycle is one of the striking features of the travel of the day. The bicycle is now one of the most common means of transport about cities and towns. It all parts of the country where there are fair roads it has largely displaced the horse and it is continually extending its field of usefulness.

It is comparatively but a few years since the bicycle was only a toy thought to be as little deserving of men as the small gravity wagons on which boys ride down the sidewalks.

The first bicycle, or the velocipede, as it was commonly called, had little to recommend it. It was hardly faster or less laborious than walking and the machine was laid aside on an early day.

The big-wheel bicycle was a long advance. It changed a toy into a useful machine. It enabled the rider to travel rapidly with small labor. It had the disadvantage that a small obstruction or a rough road meant a fall to the rider. Then again, standing, riding, the half-repressed fright that his hostess betrayed.

“Miss Mercer,” he spoke, hoarsely, “I have come to ask of you the information that Miss Chandler refuses. Why did Edna Deane leave the seminary? Where has she gone?”

“I cannot tell you.”

His eyes flashed excitedly. He clenched his hands in an excess of suffering and suspense.

“You must!” he gasped, frantically.

“Do you understand what I am enduring? Doubt—anguish—heart-breaking!”

From beneath her veiled eyelids the girl studied his working face. Craftiness was there, but well masked. A sinister triumph in her heart gave her strength to simulate.

“Pity you,” she said, softly. “I would be glad to tell you all, but it is useless to ask.”

“Goosie.”

“Whew!” that was what the farmer said to his wife when Mr. Brinsley drove up from the station one Saturday night to spend Sunday with his wife and little boy.

“Guess we’ll have to look out for the chickens with that thar animal about.”

“Never mind. You jest keep still.”

“Like a charm—my part of it, I mean. Nine sharks altogether stood in with the show, but every time one came ashore I got a note from every editor in the place, proposing to write the thing up, with a snap camera cut of the shark, at the regular rates.”

“Pretty mean, that.”

“Mean—those fellows could give Shylock cards and spades. The only part that referred to it at all was one we gave sixty-four free passes to. The day we left town it remarked that our show was enough to kill a blind dogger—let alone sharks.”

And the colossal aggregator sighed deeply and drifted out.—San Francisco Examiner.

#### FRUGALISM.

Vegetarians are elated by the fact that within the last twenty-five years the fruit-producing resources of the United States have increased just ten times as fast as the meat-producing resources.

Apples, oranges and grapes are getting cheaper from year to year, while meat is getting dearer, thus, as it were, bribing a short-sighted generation to relinquish their flesh-pots and try the panacea of Dr. Bronson Alcott. That much desired consummation could, no doubt, be greatly promoted by dropping the name of vegetarianism with its water cresses and root house suggestiveness. Out of ten flesh eaters nine could be persuaded to test the merits of baked apples for one who would under any circumstances consent to try the specific of King Nebuchadnezzar. And seriously speaking, there is not a vestige of proof that adults of our species were ever intended to feed on “vegetables,” in the green grocer’s sense of the word. If we admit the axiom that our natural diet should consist chiefly of substances that can be eaten without repugnance in the condition we receive them from the hands of nature, cabbage and spinach are every whit as objectionable as pork sausages. Man, according to all the evidence of his dentition and the structure of his digestive apparatus, is not an herbivorous, but a frugivorous, animal, and our dietary reformers should adopt the name of Frugalists.—Felix L. Oswald.

#### CARE OF THE VOICE.

No class of human habitation is so well fitted for voice culture as the fat.

No time is so good for practice as your neighbors’ afternoons at home.

No really fine effects are produced upon the world at large until the voice has been used from six to ten hours continually. It is then that people are moved—that is, are glad to move.

Only affected singers ever allow a cold to stand between themselves and a chance to show off.

Great care should be exercised in the selection of a piano for accompaniment. It should be pitched exactly three notes below the voice.

Anything beyond that must inevitably result in serious impairment of the musical taste.

Do not ask the opinion of unbiased critics relative to your singing.

Consult such as owe you money or those whose social position depends upon your pleasure.

Every time you hear of a charitable entertainment volunteer to sing. It places those in charge in a delicate position which they cannot fail to enjoy.

Never sing after going to bed. It is apt to make trouble.

Do not expect an offer to go on the stage inside of two months after you begin to train your voice. Disappointment injures the vocal chords.—Detroit Tribune.

#### LITTLE BOYS AND GIRLS.

#### THIS IS THEIR DEPARTMENT OF THE PAPER.

Quaint Sayings and Doings of Little Ones Gathered and Printed Here for Other Little Folks to Read.

The Happy Kite.