

LINES TO A SKELETON.

Behold this ruin! 'Twas a skull,
Once of other as spirit tull.
This narrow cell was life's retreat,
This space was thought's mysterious seat.
What beauteous visions fill'd this spot!
What dreams of pleasure long forgot!
Nor hope, nor love, nor joy, nor fear
Has left the trace of record here.
Beneath this moldering canopy,
Once shone the bright an busy eye;
But start not at the dismal void—
Social love that eye employed;
If with no lawless fire it gleamed,
But through the dews of kindness beamed
That eye shall forever bright
When stars and sun are sunk in night.
Within this hollow cavern hung
The ready, swift and tameful tongue;
If falsehood's honey it disdained,
And when it could not praise was chained;
Al bold in virtue's cause it spoke,
Yet gentle concord never broke,
This silent tongue shall speak for thee
When time unveils eternity.
Say, did those fingers delve the mind?
Or with its envious rubis' shine?
To how the rock or wear the gem
Can little now avail to them.
But if the page of truth they sought,
Or comfort to the mourner bro'nt,
These hands a richer meal shall claim
Than all that waits on wealth or fame.
Avails it whether bare or she'd,
These feet the paths of duty trod?
If from the bowers of eas they fled,
To seek affliction's humble shed?
If grandeur's guilty bribe they spurned,
And home to vir's retur'd, returned,
These feet with angels' feet shall vie
And tread the palace of the sky.

A LOVE TEST.

"It is a real calamity," said Mme. de Leprenne, the mother, "to have this mad dog run at large. No one dares go out." "Last evening again," added her daughter, "the bit two children coming from school. The despair of their parents is indescribable."

"How frightful! Is there no means of making the bite harmless, doctor?" asked Mme. de Leprenne, addressing a young man of 30 years.

"There is first the cauterization with a hot iron," replied the doctor.

"That is horrible," exclaimed Mme. de Leprenne; "there ought to be another way."

"When the region permits it," continued the doctor, "one can apply a ligature above the bite, wash the wound, and burn it with a caustic liquid. Whatever the process, it should be quick, before it is too late. All inoculated liquid penetrates with great rapidity in the blood. Several experiments have been made on this subject."

"Tell us some," interrupted Mme. de Leprenne.

"For a wound in the hand," continued the doctor, "one applies a solution containing a substance easily recognized; soon after bleeding the opposite hand, one finds the inoculated substance in the blood, if having already pervaded the system."

"Then," said Gaston de Maurebois, cousin of Mme. de Leprenne, "when one is bitten there is no hope except at the Pasteur Institute."

"There is a preventive," replied the doctor, "whose immediate employment gives excellent results, but it is relinquished now."

"Doubtless it necessitates some serious inconvenience, does it not?" asks Karl Marientz, one of the guests of the chateau.

"Very serious," replied the doctor.

"Tell us about it, nevertheless," said Karl.

"It is suction," replied the doctor. "One must concentrate oneself and suck the wound at once. This operation presents great danger. The operator is almost certain of being inoculated with the virus, the lips being the chosen spot. The delicacy of the mucus which covers them facilitates absorption. This way, relying upon devotion, is little employed."

"You do not believe in devotion, doctor?" asked Mme. de Leprenne.

"I did not say that, mademoiselle. I believe it is prudent not to count on it too much."

"I am of your opinion," added Mme. de Leprenne.

"What?" cried her daughter, "you doubt it? You! The personification of devotion!"

"Yes, my child, to doubt is one of the bitter fruits of experience."

The conversation took place one scorching summer day in the park of the Chateau de Leprenne, situated a short distance from Paris in Brie. Mme. de Leprenne lived here with her daughter, Yveline. Since her widowhood she had renounced the world to devote herself exclusively to the education of her only child. She was still very beautiful and young, and her daughter was her exact copy. Yveline was 18 years old. Having been brought up in the country, she spent her life outdoors. Her face was fresh and rosy; her eyes bright and penetrating. She charmed every one by her natural grace.

She had just reached the marriageable age and the guests of the chateau were more or less suitors for her hand.

Gaston de Maurebois, Yveline's cousin, was an orphan, and since the death of his parents had lived an idle existence in Paris. He was 33 years of age, bold, dashing. In his spare moments he operated at the bourse and was associated with a broker at whose house most of his money was deposited.

At 33 he was entirely blind, all pleasure ceased to interest him, his health was broken down. Gambling and pure-blooded horses had diminished his fortune. He felt the pain of remorse and decided to marry. He remembered he had a cousin somewhere, who ought to combine all desirable conditions. One day he arrived without warning at the Chateau de Leprenne. At the sight of Yveline he was at once her suitor.

Karl Marientz, one of the guests, was the son of a celebrated writer, friend of the family of de Leprenne. He was 28. His face was very expressive, his hair was black and long. He had, written an opera in one act, which had had great success. From an early age he was a constant visitor at the chateau, spending several months there during his vacation. He was very intimate with the young girl and loved her passionately.

The doctor was a countryman. His father, an old friend of the house, had always been the physician of the family, his son succeeding him. The young doctor was slight, alert, and active; his face grave and tender. As a physician he was serious, charitable and possessed the entire confidence of Mme. de Leprenne. He loved Yveline, and profited by the least indisposition of her mother to renew frequently his visits.

The lovers were together on this day. Madame Leprenne, knowing she was

surrounded by friends, allowed Yveline all liberty—and the natural frankness of a young girl had been developed. She was bright and playful. The maneuvers of the three suitors amused her very much; she was fond of all of them, and it would have been difficult for her to choose had it been necessary.

The guests had separated, after awhile, leaving Yveline alone. Karl returned first.

"This is the way you abandon me," said Yveline.

Karl excused himself and offered his arm for a promenade in the park.

"I am very happy to meet you," said the young man.

"I, too, Karl," replied Yveline. "I wish to congratulate you on the success of your opera. What tender emotions you have experienced! I do not believe there is in the most noble life more feeling than that experienced by artists. I envy your happiness."

"My happiness! Is one ever satisfied?"

"What is wanting?"

"I am alone; I want a friend, a companion who will share my joys, who will sustain me in my declining hours—a woman whom I will adore, and for whom I will work with love in order that she may become proud of me."

"You are right, Karl; but you will find her."

"I have found her, Yveline," said the young man, stopping to look the young girl in the face.

She blushed and lowered her head to avoid his gaze.

"The young woman is yourself," replied Karl. "Pardon my audacity on account of our old friendship. I love you, Yveline, and have for a long time."

"Karl, cease this conversation."

"Why? I love you devotedly."

"Please be quiet."

"Perhaps there are others, as I, seeking to please you, but no one would love you more. You are my constant thought, the aim of my existence. I love you more than all the world, more than my art, more than life."

"Without you, it would be insupportable, Yveline. I would give it to you willingly."

"What spirit!" cried Yveline. "Until I ask such a sacrifice, leave me, I do not wish to see you again until you are more reasonable."

"I will obey," said Karl, retiring.

"More than life! That is a great deal," said Mme. de Leprenne to herself. "What does he mean? When one says it one thinks it true; but 'actions speak louder than words.'"

She remained very pensive. Karl was not the only guest of the chateau who sought her hand; the doctor and her cousin, though they had not spoken, were dancing attendance. The cousin, who formerly paid her no attention, today was her shadow. Karl had assured her that he loved her more than life, which seemed very much exaggerated, and she wondered if the other suitors would love her as much. She resolved to find out at the first opportunity. She was thus reflecting when the doctor appeared.

"Have you seen my mother, doctor?"

"Yes, mademoiselle."

"Is the palpitation of the heart better?"

"It has almost recovered."

"Thanks to your good care. I am so grateful to you. She has left everything for me, and is all I have."

"Care shall not be wanting to her for your sake. I have great respect and admiration for your mother, but I am devoted to you, and since chance has enabled me to find you alone—"

"Is it chance?" asked Yveline.

"I acknowledge that I planned it a little."

"For what aim?"

"That is difficult to say. Have you not thought you were old enough to marry?"

"No, doctor; no, never; have you?" replied Yveline, smiling mischievously.

"I dream of it often, mademoiselle, and have formed a certain project."

"What you wish to tell me?"

"You have guessed it, mademoiselle; the project depends only on you to be realized."

"Then I know the young lady, doctor?"

"Oh, perfectly. You understand me. My most cheerful dream is to unite the two families. Pardon me for speaking to you before addressing your mother, but I wished to assure myself of your approbation."

"I warn you I am a little romantic and wish to be loved very much."

"It is thus you merit being loved, and the way I love you."

"I wish to be loved even to abnegation. Proofs are necessary. If I wish it would you leave your mother, country, acquaintances?"

"I would leave all."

"You would find me foolish, but would you sacrifice your life for me?"

"I would give it with pleasure," said the doctor, gravely.

"Oh! if it were necessary not to satisfy a caprice."

"I love you more than life."

"Another one," thought Yveline. "Will she?" said she. "Adieu! Take good care of my mother."

"As a son, mademoiselle," replied the doctor, who returned to Mme. de Leprenne.

Gaston de Maurebois appeared from one of the walks in the park.

"I am happy chance has permitted me to see you," said he to his cousin.

"I also, cousin."

"I want to converse with you for an instant."

"Give me your arm and we will promenade."

"With pleasure."

"Do you know, cousin, it is very nice to you to leave Paris and its pleasures to go to a little girl relative?"

"Who has become very charming."

"I did not know you were a flatterer?"

"I am tired of Paris."

"You have not always said that."

"I changed my opinion when I saw you. At your side I am never tired."

"How gallant!"

"You mock me! I am serious. I find my life has been useless, in comparing the existence I have led with what I lead here and I prefer the latter."

"For how long?"

"For always! Do you know I intend to marry?"

"You are right; but your conversation is too grave for me. I must go."

"She tried to withdraw her arm."

"Do not go, I beg you. Listen to me, I wish to marry, to spend my life with a companion whom I adore, having but one aim, to render her happy. I only know one woman whom I wish to marry; it is her."

"I must escape," said the young girl, disengaging her arm.

"Yveline, I love you," continued Gaston. "I will do anything you wish; I will leave Paris, if you desire it."

"Not so fast, not so fast. I do not wish to marry yet. This great love has come very suddenly."

"It is none the less violent."

"Will it be durable?"

"I swear it."

"I am very exacting and am not contented with words."

"Do you wish that?"

"Would you sacrifice one of your horses or your dogs?"

"All."

"All, even your life?"

"Anything to please you."

"Words, words!"

She fled in the direction of the park, forbidding Gaston following her.

When she was sure of being alone, she seated herself on a bench.

"They all love me more than life," murmured she. "I do not believe it. It may be true in theory, but false in practice."

"I, too, Karl," replied Yveline. "I wish to congratulate you on the success of your opera. What tender emotions you have experienced! I do not believe there is in the most noble life more feeling than that experienced by artists. I envy your happiness."

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