

AT TWILIGHT.

The robins sing in the gloaming
While among the trees they are roaming.
Why should not I?
The flowers send forth their sweetness
Clothed in their soft robes of meekness.
Then I do.

The nightingale sings to the twilight:
"Soon, oh, soon 'twill be starlight."
"Yes," echo I.
The buttercups nod to the grasses,
The clouds float by in white masses,
In the gray sky.

The green leaves flutter and tremble,
Their tiny buds never dissemble.
Living on high.

The mother bird nestles still lower
While twilight hushes the mantle o'er,
Zephyrs pass by.

The infant is hushed now in slumber,
The stars appear in great numbers.
Angels are high.

The sun has bowed down to the far west,
All creatures have gone to their night rest.

Why should not I?

—May Howes, in Boston Budget.



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CHAPTER V.—CONTINUED.

This resolution probably was not taken on the loftiest of moral grounds; but Allan North was not in a position just then to view the case from any elevated moral or ethical standpoint. If he had blamed his brother more severely he might possibly have been less inclined to shield him; but for some reason he had a distinct feeling that Ollin was more to be pitied than blamed. All his righteous indignation was visited upon the beautiful woman whom he believed to have been the cause of his brother's temptation and stumbling.

"And now," he reflected, having definitely determined upon his course, "can I so perfectly assume the character of my brother that not even his intimate friends and daily associates shall suspect the deception? My success thus far has been very encouraging; the only thing that staggers me is my utter ignorance of his private affairs here in X—, his social, political and professional connections. Then there is the uncertainty about how long Noll will remain away. If he should return before I have succeeded in gaining any evidence from Mrs. Maynard, my labor will be wasted. But, by Jove!—No, no, that is a wild supposition! Noll would never do anything so cowardly as to run away when he discovered that he was suspected. And yet, his leaving so suddenly as he did after receiving that message from Hopkins and Shepherd has a rather significant look. I must bear that in mind. Well, I shall have to trust largely to fortune, and make the most of the time that I have for developing and accomplishing my purpose. In the meantime, of course, I must not forget my mission for Hunter and Ketchum. I will write them a line now to report progress—or lack of it—and then give myself up to a careful consideration of this other, still more important matter."

The letter to Hunter and Ketchum was hastily written and sealed; then, as he laid his pen aside, North's eye fell upon the envelope that Mrs. Maynard had given him.

"Ah," he thought, taking it in his hand, "this is the letter that Noll had urged her to find, as he fancied it might be of value as evidence. It must have some more or less direct bearing, then, upon this will case. I think I can soon judge of its value."

He drew from the envelope a sheet of thin blue paper. When he had unfolded it, the old-fashioned chirography of Mrs. Dunkirk met his eye.

The ink was pale, and the writing tremulous and illegible. North was obliged to brighten the gas and study the document carefully before he succeeded in deciphering it as follows:

"DEAR NINA: Yours of the 15th is at hand. I am sorry to hear of your difficulties, but am in no position to advise you. Mr. Maynard used his own discretion in the matter, and his right to do so no one can dispute. That you are disappointed is of course natural; but why you should feel so despondent in regard to your future I cannot understand. You were always overjoyed of me. I have learned from my own experience that it brings to its possessor responsibilities, and a weariness and vexation of spirit, and it is a fruitful source of envy and strife. Beyond a modest competence, such as you will possess, it is not desirable, especially for a woman who has only mercenary lawyers to look out for her interests. Nevertheless, if wealth would bestow upon you any happiness, I should like to gratify you in that respect. While I live I must retain the control of my fortune. After I am gone, what matter to me who has it? I am anxious only to wrong no one in what I do. A few years ago I believed that I had a nice living—my only surviving relative, Hamilton's daughter—who ought to be my heir. The most diligent search has failed, however, to discover her, and I have at last most reluctantly given up this belief. There is one other claim that I have a right to, and that is my own. This claim is based upon the present recognition. Charitable feel inclined to present to recognize. I have given freely to public and private charities during my lifetime, and have received but meager thanks. During the five years that you were with me before our marriage, you were like a daughter to me. This I have always remembered kindly."

"My health is slowly improving with the return of warmer weather. The bleak springtime is an enemy to my constitution. I find Jenner a faithful attendant in my declining years. My regards to Mr. Maynard and family."

"Yours affectionately,
"JANE DUNKIRK."

CHAPTER VI

Mer.—How is the man esteemed here in the city? Ang.—Of very reverent reputation, sir: Of credit infinite, highly beloved.

Second to none that lives here in the city.

—Comedy of Errors.

Having folded this letter, replaced it in the envelope and put it carefully in his note book, North had just composed himself for the serious meditation that his circumstances required, when he heard a quick knock at his door.

He started to his feet nervously.

"Who is that, I wonder?" he asked himself blankly. "Some friend of Noll's, I presume. Well, there is no help for it; I must meet this ordeal sooner or later."

Crossing the room he unfastened the door and threw it wide open.

Instantly, without pause or cere-

mony, a gentleman rushed into the room.

North gave him one keen, comprehensive glance. He was short, slight and nervous, with sharp gray eyes, fierce black mustache, sassy nose and determined chin, a wide-awake, business-like manner and a frank, pleasant smile.

All this North noted in his first glance; and the burden of his unuttered thought was: "Who is he? Who is he?"

"Well, well! I say now, North;" were the first words of the visitor, spoken in a sharp, slightly-nasal voice, as he placed his hand impulsively on North's arm, "what on earth do you mean? You're a mighty cool fellow, seems to me!"

"I am, my dear friend," interposed North, with suave self-possession, "not too fast, if you please. Sit down—let me give you this lounging chair—and we will talk matters over. I trust that I shall be able to give a satisfactory account of myself, as to motives, and that you will be lenient toward my delinquencies as to actions."

"When did you get back?" inquired the gentleman, as, disposing himself comfortably in the offered chair, he elevated his feet to a convenient altitude and looked sharply at North.

"Why, let me see! I reached X— about noon, I think. Yes, I recollect, now; it was twelve o'clock."

North indolently twirled his drooping mustache as he spoke, and his whole manner was the perfection of nonchalance. No one observing him would have suspected that he was waiting

himself to be a violent partisan of the North faction.

"What chance has he?"

"A fellow with no brains at all, and no influence to speak of. Simply a third-rate criminal lawyer, for whom no one has an atom of respect. Why, you're a thousand times as popular, and, what's more, you have shown your superior ability as a lawyer. Wymer's chances may be represented by a cipher. No one wants a blockhead for city attorney. Too many of them in office already."

"Waiving all personal interest in the matter," remarked North, airily, "and speaking precisely as I might if I were not myself a candidate"—it certainly required no severe exercise of the imaginative faculty for him to take this dispassionate view of the matter—"I must say that I do not consider young Wymer a very hopeful specimen of political timber; and since he has been put into this contest, I am glad that it is with the indorsement of no more influential a party than the one he represents."

"Only chance for him," was the dry rejoinder. "Get a set of unprincipled demagogues to nominate him and a big enough set of ignoramus (and the world is full of 'em!) to vote for him and he's elected, but not otherwise. You'll catch a wiesel asleep when you see me letting my party come out second-best in any of our municipal elections! Not if I have to work day and night. Neither Clipper nor I will keep our coats on, I assure you, when there's so much work to be done."

North made some appreciative response to these words, while mentally commenting:

"Just as I surmised—he and Clipper are electioneering in Noll's interests, and now they have the whole affair in their hands, just as Noll left it when he went away. In the meantime I shall exist in quietness and peace, unruffled by any political excitements that may prevail, representing, in fact, the model politician who is in the hands of his friends, and who calmly awaits the verdict of the people; who will, pro bono publico, accept the honors of office when they are thrust upon him, but in the meantime is neither actively exerting himself to secure his own election, nor apparently 'talking on' about it. Very good. I see more clearly now the position, politically speaking, that I am to occupy. But—the very thought appalls me!—what if Noll should write to them to inquire how matters are progressing? That would place me in a most embarrassing position! However, this is borrowing trouble. Letter-writing never used to be my brother Noll's besetting sin, and it is to be hoped that his absorbing business complications, together with his sublime faith in these electioneering friends of his will prevent him from committing so absurd a blunder as that."

While he was struggling with these reflections North had been half-listening to his companion's conversation, and had absently responded to many hasty but cordial greetings from persons whom they met.

He did not recognize among the latter anyone that he had seen before until, on turning a corner abruptly, they came face to face with the gentleman with the eye-glasses, who made too disagreeable an impression on North's mind to be easily forgotten.

North gave a very cool response to this gentleman's growl of salutation and was intending to pass on immediately; but his companion halted with the brusque greeting:

"Hello, Wec! Any news afloat?"

"Concerning what?" inquired that gentleman in slightly non-committal tones, with a defiant "you-don't-get-anything-out-of-me" air, as he paused grudgingly and only half turned toward his interlocutor.

"Oh, things in general—politics, for instance. What are they doing up at that Wymer meeting?"

"How should I know? Haven't been there. You'd better go yourself, Warner, if you're so pushed to find out!"

And with this gracious response, accompanied by a surly little laugh, he was turning on his heel to pursue his way, when he abruptly checked him-

self and facing around squarely for the first time he continued, addressing North:

"By the way, North, old Archer was around this afternoon, and not finding you there, he tackled me. Very anxious to see you."

"Old Archer? What did he want of me, Wec?" inquired North at random, airing his newly-acquired information, i.e., the gentleman's name—or, more properly, nickname.

"Want of you? Quite a mystery!" retorted Wec with a sarcastic laugh. "He swore up and down that he wouldn't be put off any longer, and said that if you don't move in the matter yourself he'll soon find some way to fetch you. I believe I am quoting the gentleman literally."

"Swore up and down, did he? Well,

he will find that he will gain very little by that," said North, assuming an expression of stoical defiance which would probably have caused Mr. Archer to renew his profanity, could he have seen it.

Like the aesthetic dragoons, North was not at all sure that he was doing this correctly, but it was the safest venture that his ingenuity could suggest.

"No, I had not heard of it at all," rejoined North; adding mentally, with a slight shrug of his shoulders: "I have had quite enough of 'Wymer meetings,' myself! I don't ask for a repetition of the experience."

"He's a regular fool, now, Wymer is," pursued the other, thereby proving

himself to be a violent partisan of the

North faction.

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You'll catch a wiesel asleep when

you see me letting my party come out

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