

HOUSE AND HOME.

Where is the house, the house we love?
By field or river, square or street,
The house our hearts go dreaming of,
That lonely waits our hurrying feet;
The house to which we come, we come,
To make that happy house our home

Oh dear dream house! for you I store
A medley of such curious things,

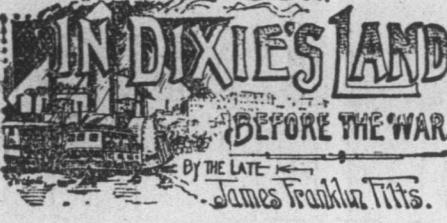
As a wise thrush goes counting o'er,
The glad morn of songs and wings,
When a small nest makes all her heaven,
And a true mate that sings at even.

Up those dim stairs my heart will steal,
And quietly through the listening rooms,
And in the prayerful love will kneel,
And in the soft-sighed twilight glooms,
Will set a certain straight, or fair,
And dust and order and make fair.

Oh, tarrying time, hasten, until
You light our hearth fires, dear and warm,
Set pictures on these walls so still,
And draw our curtains 'gainst the storm,
And shut us in together, time,
In a new world, a happier clime!

Whether our house be new or old
We care not; we will drink to you
From last year's nest its memories cold,
And all gold that once was gray.
Oh, dear dream house, for which we pray,
Our feet come slowly up your way!

—Katherine Tynan.



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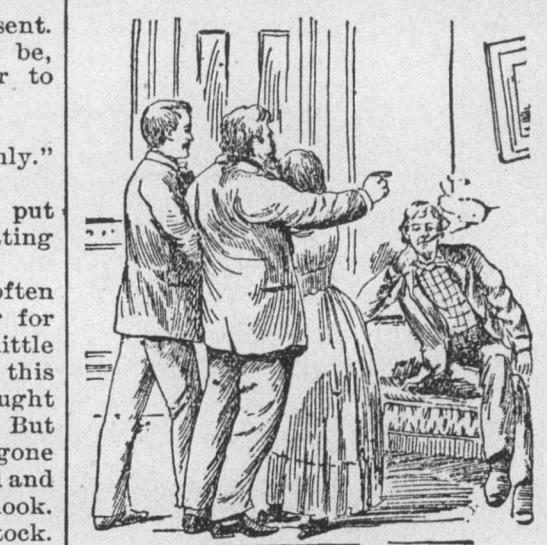
CHAPTER XIII.—CONTINUED.

Coralie had heard the sound of voices and our entrance into the parlor. She came in with a lamp. The stranger was revealed. I had last seen him when he was putashore by the captain of the Cotton Queen.

He sat down on a sofa and stretched himself out. Nobody else was seated. His impudent eye ranged round over the luxurious furniture of the apartment and coolly examined each one of us. Then, to my astonishment and disgust, he took a cigar from his case and scratching a match on the finely-grained panel of the wall he lit it and began to smoke.

Le Fevre started forward.
"Say the word, Mr. Bostock, and I'll pitch the insolent blackguard out of here, neck and heels."

The planter seemed unconscious of what had last happened. He raised his eyes and looked around him.



"THIS SCOUNDREL MUST BE SATISFIED AND SILENCED."

"Is he gone?" he eagerly asked.

"Yes, father. What was it?"

"Sh, child, don't ask me anything. He is gone; he won't come back. Did he say anything about you, Corry?"

"He wanted to kiss me—the odious beast!"—and good Mr. Le Fevre struck him."

"I'm sorry for that; Conrad is revengeful. But he said nothing about you?"

"No, father." The planter seemed greatly relieved at the answer.

"I'll go to bed, now, child. I am very weary with all this."

When Coralie had withdrawn with him, Le Fevre sat and stared blankly at me.

"What's all this?" he blurted out.

I felt the shadows descending over this house: I knew now that they

were to do—what will become of us?"

"Do not despair. We may never hear of that man again."

"Ah, you do not know the condition that poor papa is in! It is pitiful to see him. He begs me not to leave him; he calls on Conrad not to betray him."

"He is delirious."

"No, no; it is in his sleep. Since last night, it has seemed to me as if I could never be light-hearted or happy again. It seems as though some dreadful calamity was threatening us."

"You want rest and sleep yourself. You must not be so sad."

"Am I sad? Well, think of it. Here is papa, sick with fright from that man; he will die suddenly, some time, the doctor says—and then there is nobody to protect me or care for me. Mr. Le Fevre, perhaps—but he is so rough, though his heart is good. I am troubled."

All this was merely the natural outpouring of the heart, by one whose life had always been sunny, who had not known what grief was. It was my opportunity; I could not neglect it. My heart beat fast as I took the plunge.

"There is one to protect you, Coralie; there is one who would die for you, but who hopes to live long for you. Have you not thought of me in this trouble?"

She looked down; her long black lashes lay on her fair face.

"I did think of you," she said. "But I did not know how you felt toward me."

"Not know!" I echoed. "Could I have told you plainer than by my looks, my actions my very silence? Shall I tell you now that I love you dearly, and will stand between you and all peril?"

She looked into my eyes; her head was on my shoulder; my arms were about her.

"O Dorr, is it true?" she whispered. "I have dreamed it, but never dared to think it. Is it really true?"

We sat and talked until the twilight. I do not know how long; I only know that the world was lost to both of us in that time. Why should I repeat here what we said, the vows we exchanged, the air castles we built? With lovers and first love the way has always been the same since the days of Eden before the serpent.

Coralie at length started up.

"Let me go," she said. "I have been too long away from papa. If he has walked he has missed me."

She looked to the door, and gave a start. My arm was still about her; my hand held hers. The figure of a man stood in the doorway. The blinds were open, the windows were up; the brilliant twilight illuminated the room. It was the bent and bowed figure of Pierce Bostock, leaning on his canes. He saw us; he saw our attitude. I had become used to his moods, to his stern and forbidding facial expressions; yet I must confess that nothing had I seen in him to equal the blank visage, the consternation, with which he saw Coralie in my arms.

Coralie—always Coralie. She had taken possession of me; I could think of nothing else. I have ventured upon no description of her face and form; I will not. She was all that Mr. Dorian had said of her, and more.

But who was it that thus thought of her and hoped for her? A poor adventurer, with a few paltry dollars in his pocket; a dependent at this moment upon her father's hospitality.

Aye, indeed!—was that my position? Be it so. The other side of the question quickly appeared. There was danger threatening—danger to Coralie. The very air was full of it, since the ill-omened visit of the previous night.

"If he say anything about you, Corry?" was her father's anxious question.

What might he have said?—what could he say?—what was it that he had threatened to tell all through La Fourche?—the threat of which had forced Mr. Bostock to the humiliating confession that this scoundrel was his son.

"Give it to him."

The overseer took it and threw it upon the lounge. The man who lay there glanced at it and thrust it into his pocket.

"Go," said the planter.

"Pretty soon; don't hurry me. You must remember that we haven't met in many years. All your own fault; you would have it so. Now you have compelled me to come here to get money, you've got to acknowledge me."

"No—no!"

"You will! You're likely to die before I do; and where shall I come for money then? You know I was only a boy when we moved from here; I might find it hard to get myself recognized around here. It would be easier near Vicksburg; but I want the witnesses right here, in your own family. Tell these people who I am."

"You are one of the devils who has helped to make my life miserable,"

was the despairing cry of the planter.

"Will you tell them?"

"No."

"Very well. All La Fourche shall know the whole truth to-morrow. Mark me—the whole truth, I say!"

He turned to depart. Again he was recalled.

"Do you promise to keep that secret?"

"Do you promise never to return here?"

"I will keep the secret. I will not return here in your lifetime—provided you keep my account good at Le Bouteiller's. Now tell them!"

"Hold me up, Dorr—Le Fevre, stand back; this scoundrel must be satisfied and silenced. He wants me to tell you that he is my son, Conrad Bostock. That is true, I acknowledge it."

His head fell on his breast; his breath came hard and labored. His daughter placed her arm about his neck, and put her vinaigrette to his nostrils.

The gambler got up and looked with malignant triumph at the group.

"That's all, I believe," he drawled.

"Coralie, I'm quite happy to have so fine a girl for a sister. You won't see your dear brother again for some time; that is, if your dutiful father behaves himself. Come and kiss me, my chick-en!"

It was almost sunset when she came down from her father's chamber, wearied from loss of sleep, languidly beautiful in her white wrapper, with her black hair unbound and fastened back with a net. She came and sat by me on the sofa.

"He is asleep now," she said, anticipating my question. "I hope it will last long enough to rest his poor distract ed mind and his weak body. It all comes from the shock of that bad man's visit last night. He will not talk with me about it—but in his sleep he cries out his name, and prays him not to speak of me—and O, Mon Dieu, it is horrible! Can it be that this hideous man is my brother?"

"I fear it is so. Mr. Dorian told me so. He said that he came to the plantation near Vicksburg when you were an infant, with your father; that he was always called a son; and that it was supposed, when he went away during your childhood, that on account of his evil course your father had hired him."

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brooded at Pierce Bostock's heart largely concerned his daughter. The man who sought her must seek her under this cloud. He must take his risk. Was I prepared? Yes! A thousand times yes. I would face anything, dare anything, for her. I exulted, with a fierce exultation, to know that there must be some sacrifice on my part. I wanted something to dare; something to suffer for her sake.

The parting words of Le Fevre on the previous night returned to me.

"Hold me up, Dorr—Le Fevre, stand back; this scoundrel must be satisfied and silenced. He wants me to tell you that he is my son, Conrad Bostock. That is true, I acknowledge it."

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