

thoroughly lulled to sleep awoke with renewed strength and tormented him.

And speaking upon an impulse which he did not even seek to analyze or comprehend, he said: "Call Dolly, please. Let me see her."

Mr. Lisle remonstrated.

"To see her? Upon her wedding morning? She will not come to you;" then, urged by his own unwilling fears;

"But I will go and call her."

Next minute Frank heard him rapping at her door and calling, softly at first, then wildly, on her name:

"Dolly! Dolly! My child! Oh, in the name of Heaven, answer!"

And in that moment the lover whom she had cheated and abandoned and betrayed, comprehended, as if by intuition, his own wrongs.

He sprang to her father's side.

"She will not answer you. It is too late for that. Stand aside and let me know the worst at once—"

The other clung to his raised arm.

"What are you going to do?"

"Break down the door!" he shouted, raging. "Stand aside, I say."

"Is it locked?" cried Mr. Lisle.

No. It was not locked. It opened with a touch, and they rushed madly in—to find it empty.

Her wedding-dress lay on the bed where she had lain so oft, and should lie no more; the bridal veil that had floated so softly around her graceful form as she came to his arms only one day before; he caught it up with a cry of rage and anguish, and trampled it on the ground under his feet.

Mr. Lisle rushed madly from the room.

"Rose! Where is Rose?" he cried. "Rose, Rose!"

But Rose had gone and left no trace. Her bed had not been slept in, her room was not disturbed, her bonnet and cloak were missing from their place and she was gone.

He came to his daughter's room and sank down into a chair, white and trembling.

"The faithful friend and servant of twenty years in league with my own child against me!" he groaned, and covered his face with his two hands and wept aloud and bitterly.

A touch upon his shoulder roused him.

Frank stood before him with clinched hands and eyes of fire, and a stern white face that looked like death.

"Who is the man?" he cried, abruptly. "Who is the man?"

Mr. Lisle rose, trembling.

"The man?" he groaned.

"Yes. The man who has lured my little darling to her ruin and broken my heart! Oh, I know the story! You told me down-stairs just now. My poor little love had given another man her heart, and was being forced into a marriage with me. To save her from a villain, you will say. Oh, God! why couldn't you have told me the truth? I might have saved her if I had known in time, while now I can only avenge her. And I will avenge her! He shall do her justice and restore her honor, or pay for its destruction with his life! Tell me, sir, who is the man?"

"His name is Cyril Vernon. Where are you going, Frank?"

"Where?"

He was at the door with two great strides, but turned and paused to answer:

"I am going wherever he has gone! I am going to seek my little ruined darling through the world, and save her! I am going to see whether

He paused, and suddenly put up his hands to his head; a film came over his burning eyes, and his pale lips twitched strangely. He uttered a groan of pain.

"Oh, God! What's this?"

And then he reeled heavily, threw out his arms, and fell senseless at Mr. Lisle's feet.

CHAPTER XVII.

A DAUGHTER OF EVE.

Six months had passed by since the events transpired which have been already recorded.

The Saucy Kate had gone to sea again, this time without her owner; Mr. Lisle's cottage was deserted little, gossipy, excitable Greendale had grown tired of wondering and speculating upon the probable fate of the fair girl who had fled from an honest love and marriage on her wedding-eve leaving behind her a ruined home and a stained, dishonored name.

The voice of popular indignation and execration had been loud against her.

As there were none who understood the truth, so there were few to pity and excuse. Not one to raise a voice in her defense, for Frank lay sick and helpless.

It was around him and her deserted and well-nigh heart-broken father that village curiosity and interest centered most.

But there seemed little to learn. The long and unfortunate delay consequent upon Frank's sickness—which was so serious as to necessitate the services of both doctor and nurse for weeks—had placed an insuperable barrier in the way from the first. It was owing to this delay, doubtless, that the detectives employed too late, failed utterly to trace a certain party, answering exactly to the description of

the fugitives, any further than the Grand Central Depot, New York.

Here they had stopped, whether finally or to wait for another train could not be learned, and here all clew to their subsequent movement was lost.

But as soon as Frank could travel the cottage was closed up, and Mr. Lisle and he left Greendale.

Village curiosity took considerable trouble to ascertain their hopes and plans, but beyond an avowed intention to seek for the lost girl and a general understanding that their destination was New York, nothing could be learned of their designs.

When they finally took their departure it was without farewell to any one, and after that Greendale people heard of them no more.

And meantime as I have said, six months had slipped away, and my story—leaving for a little while Dolly and her belongings—proceeds to introduce to the reader a personage who, in the course of this narrative, has been frequently heard of but never as yet seen.

This person is no other than May Ellis, the heiress and beauty and belle, the unconscious rival of poor Dolly in her husband's love, the joint inheritrix with Cyril of the Huntsford fortune. She was worth looking at at all times, but never more so than on this particular evening. It was the occasion of the season's greatest ball, and she stood in full costume critically inspecting herself before the great mirror in the long drawing-room of her own house. No more beautiful or splendid vision would grace the Academy that night.

"He shall be proud of me, at least, if he does not love me!" she muttered. "Why shall he not love me? I believe that I love him too well."

She swept her trailing robe of roseate silk and costly lace to and fro, before the glass. She raised her perfect arms and arched her graceful neck, and turned a haughty head this way and that to catch the brilliant glitter of her diamonds.

"They are not brighter than my eyes," she sighed impatiently, "and they might as well be dull as lead for all power they have to attract him! I never cared for the winning of mortal man before as I care for this one—and why?"

She flung herself into a low, luxurious seat before the fire, shrugging her snowy shoulders as she drew her opera cloak around them, and glanced at the ormolu clock on the mantel.

"He keeps me waiting as usual of course. Why do I care so much to win him?"

A little while she paused, seeming lost in thought, then spoke again, in a low, soft murmur, only half aloud.

"I loved him once. He was my girlish ideal of all that was good and noble. It amused him then to win my heart and know that it was his wholly. I have never quite forgotten those olden days."

There was a suspicious moisture dimming her brilliant eyes, and her lip trembled.

"I don't believe," with an impetuous stamp of her little foot, "that I have ever been in love with him so much as now. It is well that he is as indifferent to all others as he is to me—a touch of jealousy would finish me."

Then she laughed.

"I have been called a coquette always—I am a coquette to the core. True daughter of Eve am I. Should I covet these grapes so dearly, I wonder, if I did not suspect them to be sour."

"If he had accepted me readily, joyfully, when the conditions of the will was made known, how different my feelings would have been. I should have been happy—for I liked him well enough to marry him—quite happy and content; but he did not accept me, joyfully or otherwise."

"I know not, to this hour, whether the Huntsford thousands, for which I care nothing, are to fall to my lot, or Cyril to become my husband. If he should refuse me after all? No fear of that, I fancy; he is too poor without me. And must I content myself to be accepted as a burden simply for the sake of this wealth? Oh, how that thought galls my pride! How I hate him for the humiliation he makes me suffer! What revenge it would be to lead him on to the very last, and then reject him even at the altar."

She arose as she spoke and turned toward the door, her quick ear had detected a footfall on the stair; next moment Cyril entered.

Entered unannounced and hurriedly, for he knew he had kept her waiting.

"Forgive me," he began, but paused, startled at the beautiful vision that stood before him.

She had not miscalculated the effect of her beauty, set off by costly jewels and superb dress. She looked indeed, a woman of whom the proudest of mankind might have been proud, even though he had not loved her.

Her gray eyes gleamed like stars, her cheeks were flushed, a vivid crimson burned in the perfect lips, while the creamy whiteness of her neck and arms was enhanced by the midnight hair, coiled regally about a haughty head and crowned with splendid diamonds. A smile flashed over her face as Cyril entered, and she held out a welcoming hand.

He advanced and took it eagerly, looking for a second into her lovely face.

"How beautiful you are, ma belle, how beauti-

ful!" he cried almost involuntarily, and pressed a kiss upon the little yielding hand. Then came the thought: "And she might have been my own, this superb creature, the possession of whom all men would envy me."

Then there arose before the eyes of his inner soul a tender, pleading face, pale now, though he had seen the day when it bloomed like a fresh June rose, and he seemed to hear a little, sobbing sigh. He dropped the velvet hand and turned away.

"I have been a fool!" he thought; then, half aloud: "It is too late!"

She caught the last two words, although their sense escaped her.

"Not too late!" she said, pleasantly. "though you have kept me waiting a long time, and I had grown impatient. Why do you do so?" smiling up into his eyes, all unconscious of the train of regretful thought into which her words fitted so strangely.

He gave a quick involuntary sigh.

"God knows!" he said, answering his own thoughts rather than her words. "Why do men commit all sorts of follies? I have my share to answer for, and suffer for, I suppose! Would I could cancel one of them!"

No sooner had he said it than he regretted the words—ashamed of the guilty wish that had prompted them, afraid of the meaning they might have for her. He tried to turn the subject quickly.

"Let us go if you are ready, May. Fred is in the carriage below; he came with me, and as he is an impatient soul, let us not keep him waiting."

As he spoke he picked up the opera cloak, that had fallen upon the floor, and proceeded to fold it about her shoulders. In that simple act a singular incident occurred—one of those curious trifles that has been said, "make up the sum of human happiness or misery."

The cloak was fastened by an elaborate clasp of silver and wrought steel; as Cyril flung the garment around his fair companion's neck, the sharp points of the clasp caught in a handkerchief that slightly protruded from his pocket and drew it forth, dropping it immediately on the floor.

He was completely unaware of his loss, but May's quick eyes detected it.

On a sudden impulse—under pretense of arranging her trailing laces, she stooped and picked it up.

With no motive in the world! Acting as entirely upon impulse and without reason as might some tiny child. She was a whimsical creature, and a whim had possessed her to pick up the handkerchief and hold it. Next moment it is quite possible she would have restored it again, but that, as she pressed it in her hand, a piece of paper rustled.

What she thought—why she so acted, I do not know, and doubt if she herself could have told—but in an instant she had slipped the handkerchief, rustling piece of paper and all into her bosom.

There it lay through the long, bright hours of he brilliant ball; warm and quiet, and still like at seed in the earth, and destined some day to bring forth important fruit. Cyril had never missed it, May had quite forgotten it. Hastings had never known of it at all; there it lay!

CHAPTER XVIII

DID SHE LOVE HIM.

The ball was at its height. Praise and admiration of May's beauty and grace were warm on every tongue, even Fred Hastings, cold and cynical as he was acknowledged, as she swept by on Cyril's arm, that she was well worth winning.

"A formidable rival for our little country girl," he muttered. "Especially now that the bloom of the rose has faded, and the subtle charm of novelty has past, Cyril begins to realize his own folly—see how his eyes devour his partner's face! No use, Cyril, no use at all. I'll block your game in that quarter too—I am to be next heir to Huntsford."

"Does she love him I wonder?" he went on musing as he watched the dancers from his quiet unnoticed corner, like a cat watches birds at play. "It is hard to read la belle May; she does not wear her simple heart upon her sleeve, like pretty cousin Dolly. Oh, what a sad little face that was that looked out from the window at Cyril and me to-night.

His face darkened a little.

"She is a gentle, patient, devoted little thing; I could find it in my heart to wish that some one else had to be the victim on the altar of my prosperity. What a blind, selfish brute that cousin of mine is! He is breaking her heart, day by day, and doesn't see it! Poor Dolly! If I possessed such a troublesome affair as a conscience, I suppose she would somewhat ruffle it!"

His eyes were fixed upon May's smiling face.

"This one is made of sterner metal. It is not love for Cyril so much as the thirst for conquest that possesses her. She intends to marry him, and longs to subdue him first. But I intend she shall do neither. His indifference hitherto has piqued her vainly, his admiration to-night flattens her. She fancies herself in love with him, I think, and he the vacillating fool! does he forget his ties? I'll interrupt them. That haughty belle would scarcely brook a rival. A spice of jealousy will work well by and by!"

He crossed the room in leisurely style and presented himself before May.

"I claim the next dance, I think," said he smiling.

Cyril immediately yielded his place, and moved away with a gay smile and flattering word. He seemed in the highest spirits.

"Cher Cyril," said Frank lightly, "I heard a fair lady asking for you a few minutes since. Miss Dolly—but what am I saying? Not Dolly but Polly Gray. She bade me send you to her."

Then, as his cousin left them, with all the gaiety of his face and manner suddenly clouded, and a look of anxious care and vexation replacing his bright smiles, Fred turned to his fair companion, and shrugged his shoulders amusedly.

"What is it to be a squire of dames!" he said laughingly. "Cyril seemed positively to go under a cloud at that young lady's name! A lovely girl too; he should rather be proud of her summons, I think, but probably that day has gone by. 'Oh, Heaven! Were man but constant he were perfect!' The bard of Avon must have had my cousin's prototype in his thoughts when he wrote that line!"

May's face had clouded now.

"Is he so fickle?" she asked, uneasily.

Fred laughed outright.

"My dear May! Would you have me tell tales out of school? Marriage will tame him. What does the proverb say? A reformed rake makes the best husband."

That is a stupid proverb, I think—an insult to common sense. I should not like to test it."

"Not? Well, well, you will not be called upon to do so with Cyril. Because a man admires a lovely face he is not to be called a rake you know. Besides as you two can't help yourselves why think of the faults of your bargain?"

It was said with the pleasantest easiest nonchalance in the world, but it cut May's pride sorely. Her eyes flashed and her cheeks grew red.

"Can't help ourselves!" You use very singular expressions, Mr. Hastings. Why cannot we help ourselves, pray?"

Fred answered with the utmost gentleness:

"The fact that the Huntsford fortune—"

She interrupted him impetuously.

"The fortune is nothing to me. I am wealthy enough already. I despise the person—man or woman—who would marry for money's sake!"

Fred immediately uttered an exclamation of surprise, and looked into her flashing eyes as if completely startled.

To Be Continued.

MONON TIME TABLE.

SOUTH BOUND			

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