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AN APOLOGY.

When preachers their sermons arrange,
To cover our moral delinquencies,
They feel, I am sure, that themselves,
Are not free from some slight imperfections.
So I don't set myself up as a guide.
For any poor mortal to follow,
I know full well to my cost,
That my faith is somewhat shallow;
And pointed the course I should follow,
To a holier man, to a holier view,
Have appeared as a mocker, hollow.
Therefore I say, (ye'll believe me I hope),
That though I seemed ready to preach,
The words that I used may well be excused,
The faults of the writer they reach.

CARMA WILLARD.

We were not sisters, as some supposed, only cousins. Our fathers were brothers, Americans of the truest type. But our mothers were as foreign in looks and deportment as they were in nationalities.

Carma's mother was a dark Spanish lady, and from her Carma inherited that erratic, vindictive temperament that characterizes all Spaniards. She was beautiful, this Carma Willard. Her eyes were of the darkest hue and sparkled like some antique jewel beneath the long silken lashes that swept her cheeks. Her purplish black hair lay in heavy masses and was caught away from the classic temples, whose pencillings were partly hidden by the rich pomegranate complexion.

I loved her very dearly, with a fascination mingled with a constant fear. I don't know why I feared this beautiful girl. She was so entrancing, so impulsive, but withal there seemed to lurk an evil fire in her eyes, and I always felt that she made her advent in this world just to make trouble. Her father idolized his only child and never saw a fault in her. One could not blame him much; she had such an adroit way of hiding her faults and kissed and caressed the frowns away that sometimes gathered on Uncle Horace Willard's brow. We grew from childhood to womanhood together. Carma always exercised an imperious control over me, and I yielded to her whims as readily as if I had been her womanhood. But as I merged into womanhood I felt that her influence over me was not to last always. Sometimes I must have actions and possessions that must be exclusively my own, but how to break the fetters of her predomance I could not conjecture. Any abrupt change on my part would offend and perhaps make her my enemy. This I dreaded, for I feared that revengeful temper I had seen exhibited to royal who chanced to thwart her royal sway in the household.

There was to be a grand dinner party in our neighborhood, in honor of a Yale student who had graduated with great honors. His parents lavished all their hopes and pride on this their only son. He was indeed worthy the distinction.

I had met him a couple of years before, in a New England village, where my Aunt Margaret Glenn resided. This village was nestled in among the mountains to the West, while off to the South and East lay the river, smiling and blue between the hills. I used to spend a few months every year in this secluded place. It seemed to be so quiet and unpretending compared to New York. You need not look on your Atlas to find this miniature village, this Kenston, situated in the heart of a New England State. You never will find it. The description I am giving is all you ever will know of it. As I have already told you, I spent many happy days there—days in which Lester Belmont and I read life together—days in which through quiet drives and silent rowson the river and walks through the tangled old county roads we learned to understand and fully appreciate each other, and learned what each was to the other. A sweet new existence seemed born of his companionship, and life took on a strange mysterious significance and unveiled its sanctities as our hearts drew closer together. There had been no explanation or declaration from him, but each was perfectly conscious of the other's feelings. Perhaps this only increased the sweet, subtle, deliciousness of our association and lent a charm indescribable to the evenings he passed at Glencliff.

embodied all that was gracious and fragrant and noble in Lester Belmont and he left me for his last course at Yale with a sapphire, a pledge of our betrothal, upon my finger. We sat one evening before he left on the banks of the river, whose green shrubbery mirrored its depths. Not a ripple stirred the surface, only the restless undercurrent sent the low, sad murmur of waves back to our feet as if they were never at rest. Lester was reading the "Duchess May" and as the stately cadence

floated on through this wonderful poem, I listened with a new appreciation and reverence of the power and magnitude of genius. I sat, very still, absorbed in the mysteries and power of the self-allegation that sent this fair, brave woman smiling and exultant to an awful death.

Suddenly the face of Carma Willard in all its marvelous beauty rose before me, and I was comparing the symmetry of face and form to that of my companion. I had turned away from him and sat, pulling at the spires of grass that grew at our feet. I never had told him much about Carma. I was so happy I did not want to mar my joys with thoughts of her.

Lester had turned his gaze full upon me and had stopped reading several minutes before I was aware of it.

"Oh! why did you stop reading?" I asked.

"Because I had no audience," he replied. "The river and the banks could not hear me."

"Oh, Lester Belmont!" I cried. "Did not mean to—"

"No," he said, stopping short the words. "I know, but Grace Willard—tell me just the thought that was troubling you."

He had closed the book and laid it on the grass beside him. He gathered up his hands in his own impetuous fashion and looked me steadily in the face.

"How do you know my thoughts were troubled?"

"Because no woman's face could wear the look of perplexed pain that yours does and feel happy. Don't you know it amounted almost to a look of anguish?"

He dropped his hands and sat, toying with his watch chain.

"Grace Willard!" the words leaped out in a quick torrent and I lifted my face to meet the gaze of two calm eyes bent upon me. "Have I made a mistake? Do I really give the love that every woman should give the man she shall call, in the sight of God, her husband? I am not a conventional man. The love I offer you is as pure and unchangeable as God's own truth, and I ask just such in return. None other will do. Choose now, Grace, forever and forever."

"This is not the choice of this moment I am making," I replied. "I choose when I accepted you, Lester, and to live without you would be to live without life."

"Tell me then why you have been so quiet and listless these few days past, and why your face wears that clouded look?"

Then I told him about Carma, how fascinating and radiant she was, and how plain I felt in comparison to her. How much better her queenly, graceful bearing matched his own superb figure. I was small and plain in all external appearances and quite sensitive about it, too.

"Is that all that troubles you, my little girl?"

"That is all," I said, "that is enough. When you meet her, you will be quite overwhelmed by her elegance and sensuous beauty."

"Why, you jealous little child, I've half a notion to be angry with you," said he, taking my chin in the hollow of his hand. Then a quiet fell between us. Suddenly he turned to me. "Do you not know, my darling, that you are so pure, so set apart from all other women that I have ever met, that I institute a comparison as soon as I am presented to one, and invariably Grace Willard rises before me first and fairest."

"I don't like you to flatter me in that fashion," I replied.

"It is not flattery, but truth, candid truth, and your words this day I shall carry back with me. You do not realize what they are to me. To live without me would be to live without life. That is a correct translation of my own sentiments. If you should fail me, the favor of life would indeed be gone. By your side I can never be heaven. By your side I can hold a firm grasp upon the principles of Christ's doctrines, and each day feel that I am a day's march nearer home."

He said this more to himself than for me, for he was looking off to the far away solemn clouds that had piled like grim sentinels along the mountain tops.

Lester Belmont went back to Yale and I to my home in New York at Uncle Horace Willard's. His letters, filled with favorable accounts of his collegiate achievements, were a source of deepest pleasure to me, and the warm assurance of his memory of me filled my heart to overflowing.

What was it? Did I merit the love of such a man?—talented, noble, generous and true to the heart's core?

A year had slipped quickly by and the week preceding the party at Judge Belmont's was a week of flutter and expectation to Carma and I. She talked incessantly of the Judge's son, wondering what he was like and if she would be presented to him? Of course she would, for she was the center of attraction at every gathering in which she participated. She was beautiful and her voice was such as one seldom hears in a lifetime. She could hold an audience till each head turned in silent homage to her wonderful gift of song.

"Where did you get that beautiful

sapphire, Grace? You never wore it till since you came from Glencliff."

The little lady said this one morning a few days before the dinner party at Belmont Manor.

"First finger of the left hand looks rather suspicious, little Grace, but I don't care so long as you keep your thoughts from that young Belmont, the Judge's son. What's his name? I hope it is not a common name, but something novel. Did you ever hear it, Grace?"

"Yes; it is Lester."

"Oh! how elegant. Lester and Carma! Won't they sound elegant together?" and the willful girl clapped her fair dimpled hands in childish fashion.

"What shall you wear to the ball, Carma?" I said.

"I have not decided yet, but I think lemon silk and Honiton lace—no flowers—only diamonds. What shall you wear?"

"Oh! as for my toilet, it will be but a simple affair at best. You know I have not a very elaborate wardrobe."

"Yes, poor child," she answered. "I would not be compelled to economize in dress as you do for anything, I'd go in a convent or turn Sister of Charity, or do something I don't know what."

I laughed at the flippant style she talked on in, but was really busy conjuring my brain to fit up a suitable dress for the occasion. I knew I should meet a great many distinguished guests at the Belmont Manor and I also knew there would be some to criticize even me. I usually did not possess much vanity, but somehow I must confess for this once I was especially anxious. I had but one black silk, which had been given me by Uncle Horace Willard when I presented him a case of wax Japonicas I made for his sixtieth birthday. I concluded to wear the black silk. I told Carma this, and she said the Judge's son would take me for her mother. She meant to call me mama at dinner and I ought by all means to wear a cap to add to my matronly appearance.

The auspicious day arrived; the sunshine lay scattered over the fields and along the garden path and crept up and nestled in the hearts of the roses as they opened their pink bosoms on that fair September morning.

I was thinking of Lester and wondering what Carma would say when she became aware of our acquaintance and engagement. I sat twisting my sapphire around my finger when the bell rang and a servant entered, bearing on a silver salver a bouquet of richest flowers, accompanied by a note from Lester. "I can only by the greatest effort force myself to remain at home," he wrote me, "and forego seeing your dear face till evening. Wear those flowers at your throat and in your hair, darling; if you still love Lester."

I laid the delicate note down and took up the exquisite flowers. I had not noticed Carma's entrance. She took up the missive before I could speak and had read it at a glance.

She looked first at the flowers, then the note, and sent such a depth of scorn and hatred at me I quailed beneath her gaze.

"So this is the signet ring on your hand?" she said.

"Yes," I answered. "Lester Belmont and I are engaged, and we love each other dearly."

She looked at me and said: "You shall never marry him. You, poor and plain as a brown wren, marrying the aristocratic Judge Belmont's son and heir and queening it over that elegant mansion. No, you never shall. I swear to this. You may look as horrified at such language as you please, but I'll keep this vow. In less than one month I'll bring Lester Belmont to my feet and make him acknowledge his folly and laugh at his idocy for ever supposing he cared for you."

"You have never met him, Carma. You don't know that you could love him."

"What do I care for love! Give me money, position. I care for no more."

"Poor Carma! I said this with my heart, not with my lips. With all your splendor and your gold will never heal the heart wounds or draw the thorns that press to the very nerves of the soul of the woman who marries for money when she wakes up in after years to find that she has made a fatal mistake, but methinks a heart less vulnerable than Carma Willard's alone can suffer from such an error."

Radiant indeed looked Carma Willard when she stepped in her father's handsome carriage and leaned back on the magnificent cushions, in her cream colored dress, with its sweeping train, over which lay the fleecy folds of rare old lace, heirlooms for centuries, perhaps! The round arms flashed in diamonds and the purple black hair, wound up and bound by a coronet, was studded with diamonds.

"Papa, I've a notion to order Mark to drive off and leave Grace," I heard her say to Uncle Horace when he handed her to the carriage.

"No, daughter, don't."

"I am coming," I said, and walked down the yard to be seated by my cousin. Very plain was my toilet beside the elegance of Carma's. My black silk, with some old Spanish lace at throat and wrist, and Lester's flowers caught up on my bosom by a brooch set with pearls, and a string of pearls that my mother had worn

on her wedding night. My brown hair, completed my toilet.

We were met by the host and hostess at Belmont Manor, and warm was our reception. My mother's father had been a member of Parliament with the old Judge, and he remembered my father's hand beat with glad when his young and fair wife sailed away far beyond the sea, after having been a wife of but a few years. I was but only daughter, and he carried the girl of little Martha (his mother) and brought the sunshine with me whenever I came up to Belmont Manor just like she used to do.

There were groups and knots of people here and there talking in a desultory fashion; all glad to meet the son and heir of Judge Belmont.

We were still talking together, the Judge said Belmont and their son, when a burst of music came from one of the parlors. The voice was Carma Willard's. I knew it in an instant. Oh! that voice. It rose and fell like some far off echo, some soul-stirring strain that had floated out of Paradise. She was singing one of Beethoven's sad songs, and the keys of the instrument yielded up a gracious response to the touch of her magnetic fingers. Lester bowed and said: "I leave you, Grace, to the care of my mother," and walked down in the direction of the music. The grand Bradbury piano stood in the centre of the room, and behind it stood Lester Belmont, leaning on a massive chair, complacently surveying Carma Willard's face and drinking in the music. She played on and on, first some sad old strain that woke up memories long since buried in the hearts of her listeners, then some dashing instrumental piece that required the most efficient skill to execute. Finally she played the old song, "Lorena," and every word touched some responsive chord in the bosoms of her audience. All else seemed forgotten then but Carma Willard and her song.

"Who is she? Who is that beautiful woman?" went from lip to lip. Carma Willard rose like a star in that brilliant throng. Uncle Horace seemed never so proud of Carma as then. He led her to Judge Belmont's guests and introduced her with the most fatherly fondness, and in my inmost soul I wished she were a better woman.

Lester Belmont came back to the alcove in which he left his mother and I, but she had gone to the dining saloon and I sat alone on one of the crimson cushions twisting the heavy tassels through my fingers.

"Who was that beautiful woman at the piano, Grace?"

"Do you think her so beautiful?"

"Yes, with a sort of foreign beauty. She looks like an Italian. She is a woman I would not trust. The index of her character is stamped in her fair face; but you have not told me her name."

"Her name is Carma Willard, my Uncle Horace Willard's daughter," I said.

"I beg your pardon for expressing so amply my opinion of your cousin. Had I known it was she, I would not have been so elaborate in my expressions."

He sat still looking at me with a look I could not fathom. There was a shade of pain in the dark eyes and a determined look on his face that half made me uncomfortable.

"Grace!" He gathered up my hands in an impetuous fashion and held them in one of his. "Do you remember a conversation we once had up in the village of Kenston?"

"Yes, I did remember, remembered well. What of it?"

"I told you, you were more to me than all else beside; that in my heart broved an eternal love, unquenchable by time or absence; yes, by death or the grave. I repeat here to-night what I then told you. I love you as never man loved a woman before, and whatever may come, Grace, my darling, will you always trust me?"

"Always, even to the end of my life," and the words found echo in my heart as the angels recorded them in the Great Book of God's own reckoning. It was my heart that made the answer more than my lips.

"Even to the end of my life." He said this over slowly, as if sounding the depth of each word. "Grace Willard, if I had no other joy, no other boon from God's hand, you are enough, enough to fill my heart with praise and thanksgiving all the days of my life." He held my fingers with a sort of greedy clasp, as if he could not bear to lose them. "Do you not know that away at school your sweet pure face has risen before me and blurred the pages of my books; that at night, when restless of my religious duties, Grace Willard's voice would be heard far down in my heart saying, 'Remember your Creator.' You have been my beacon, my one star that has led me on to higher, nobler purposes and actions. Oh! my darling, you do not know what you are to me."

Just then the rustle of garments caused us to look up and Carma Willard stood close to us. She held out her fan for me to disengage the tassel, that had caught in her bracelet. I presented her to Lester, and made an apology for my absence and left them.

"You and Grace seem to be warm friends," I heard her say, for I had stepped on the terrace just to be alone

with my great happiness and have a silent communion with nature in its grand stillness.

"We are friends," he said; "I met her several years ago up in Vermont. I rarely met her here, for it seems she is away when I make my visits home. My father thinks her the personification of love itself. He grows rather tender when her name is spoken in his presence, and I sometimes fancy I should find a girl in the old gentleman if he could call back a score or two of years that have passed over his venerable head. Father is one of the like of whom we seldom meet in a lifetime. I defy any Philologist to read more accurately a face than he, and when his opinion is once formed, 'tis never de-throned. He loves Grace as well as if she was his daughter now."

"I did not quite understand you," Carma said, "my attention was divided just then between you and those gentlemen over to our left. They are discussing the political campaign. Most of them seemed to favor young Montague's election to the Senate. That will be very gratifying to my cousin Grace. She is very ambitious and thinks he would be a star of the first magnitude in a political court."

"He is not the gentleman she would elect, of her own decision, to represent her people and their best interests. She has a full share of philanthropic and patriotic love, if I am not greatly mistaken, and this young man loves emoluments and fame better than he loves his country," he replied.

"Mr. Montague has a very commanding appearance and fine oratorical gifts, and I think Grace admires him especially for these attributes. She admits he has taken a place in her heart second to none, and I feel sure—but then I'll not divulge Grace's secrets."

"They left the alcove and sauntered through the portico into the yard. The moon looked down in serene brightness, and the numberless hosts of stars hung out banners of light over the still earth. I was contemplating the wonderful beauties of God's creation, remembering the mighty Hand that fashioned and the Infinite mind that conceived them—how from Chaos and darkness, He said, let there be light and there was light, and I rejoiced and was glad."

"They turned right and left to enjoy the beautiful flowers in whose faces the dew was nesting. How well they looked together, Lester and Carma! He stood with his arm resting on a marble statue looking down on her, while she stood picking to pieces the flowers she held in her hands, scattering the leaves over the damp grass. In personal appearance, how splendidly they matched! but not in deportment, not in temperament. Two, so unlike could never be happy together. The antagonistic elements would assert their way, and Carma Willard's motto would be, 'victory or death.' I had seen her face livid with passion for the smallest provocation, and as in maidenhood so must it be in widowhood."

"I feel so tired, Mr. Belmont," Carma said, drawing her hand through his arm he led her to a sofa and seated himself near her.

"Why, what are you doing, staring out at the moon," said a voice behind me. I recognized the voice of Judge Belmont.

"You must not stay alone, my little girl. I came to take you to dinner, and drawing my hand through his arm, he led the way to the dining room with all the pride of a Father. There were many happy faces there. The chandeliers threw out hundreds of lights, which were caught and flung back by the sparkling of jewels, and the elaborate toilets and richly laid table, with its Sevres China and Bohemian glass, its rare old plate, with all the delicacies that art and nature could produce, were beautiful enough to tempt the most artistic and were as delicate as ambrosia. The broad plateau of flowers scattered perfume and beauty over the scene, and all seemed glad in the joy of the feast. I glanced at Carma. Her brilliancy outshined all former occasions. She was smiling back at Lester and talking in an animated tone. She could not conceal her triumph. It flashed out at every glance, every word.

Again some one asked her to sing. It was drawing near the time for us to go home. The French clock was pointing to two, so she pointed to the clock and said, "let that be my apology, 'tis late now." But some of the guests insisted that they must again hear her sing, and Lester Belmont led her to the instrument, and stung by her. Soon his fine tenor mingled in some old plaintive German ballad, and never before did two voices roll so smoothly, so harmoniously together as did the two. "Sing just one more," said a voice at their side, as she made an effort to leave the instrument, and this time an Italian piece was rendered that carried one back to Italy's sunny land, so distinctly were the words heard and so perfectly was the piece sung.

Somehow, I could not tell why, I felt as if there was a "something" gone out of my life. I am something truth ful when I say, I did not feel one pang of jealousy—no, not one. We drove home in silence, and after I had prepared to retire, the door of my room opened softly, and Carma came in.

"You seemed sulky this evening," she said. "I declare you behaved more like a naughty child than a full grown-up woman, Grace, and Mr. Belmont said he was disgusted. He had no idea you had such a jealous, suspicious disposition, and he emphatically said he would never link his destiny with a woman that exhibited such fearful mistrust of him."

"I do not care to discuss Mr. Belmont," I answered. "I am tired and would rather retire." She swept out of the room, and started to her chamber, but hesitated, then went to the library. I had been in bed several hours, but not to sleep. Did Lester Belmont say all this to her? perhaps he did. I was not myself at the moment. I was so engrossed with my happiness till I forgot to be civil, or to do anything but think. We breakfasted alone that morning, Uncle Horace and I. Carma's maid came to inform us that her mistress's head ached too much to appear at breakfast. We ate in comparative silence.

"Come to the library, Grace, as soon as you have finished," said Uncle Horace, slipping his napkin through the silver ring, and taking up the Chronicle.

"Yes, Uncle Horace," I answered. What did he want of me I wondered as I stopped to arrange the flowers in the vases on the dining-room mantel.

"Come in, dear." 'Twas Uncle Horace who said this, in answer to my low rap on the library door, and drawing a chair, he seated me near him.

"Can my little girl bear some good and startling news this morning, without getting excited?"

"I can. I am not easily excited, you know."

"Do you remember some property in California that your father, Clinton Willard, purchased, and how much disappointed he was in its value after having made the purchase?"

"Yes, Uncle Horace."

"That property has now proven to possess the veins of ore that he then thought only in prospectivity to his property, and to-day, my little niece is a richer woman than her uncle is a man."

I could not realize the truth of this statement. I had never cared for wealth. I had, since my father's death, been dependent partly upon my uncle. I wrote articles for several leading magazines and received some remuneration for these. I was not extravagant in my tastes, therefore did not require very much. My uncle was too kind, too fatherly, to admit my feeling any dependence, though there were times when I felt my faculties lying supine and rusting in Arcadian luxury in the elegant home in which I dwelt. "You shall have half the interest of my money, Uncle Horace," I said, stroking his long grey whiskers.

"No dear, I have enough for Carma and I, all our lives. I want you to manage your own money, your own way." He laid a caressing hand on my head. "I do so love your unostentatious, innocent way. It rests me to be near you—I am a worldly-weary man; his cares and their concomitants corrode my life until sometimes I feel, that all are false and impure—whited sepulchres—until I reach my little home and find that loving little hands have ministered to my comfort, and these acts are prompted by a good, pure heart—I find my dressing-gown and slippers and fresh out flowers to always greet me, and I say in my heart, God bless the one that thought of me thus. You are not like Carma; she is too cold to love her father in your sweet, childish way, and now, darling, don't get pique-proud or let any of your sweet simplicity be eclipsed by money and its appendages. You would not be my little sunbeam you know."

I clasped my arms tight about his neck—dear uncle Horace—and my fingers fluttered in and out his iron-grey hair.

A couple of weeks had passed in which time I neither saw nor heard from Lester. He had told me I probably would not see him for several days, as there were guests by the dozen to be entertained and several excursions, some of them desired to make, both aquatic and mountainous, and that through courtesy he must remain at home, but that I should remember, I was the sunlight in which his heart dwelt and that the drives and rambles we would enjoy together would compensate us for the days of separation we endured.

"A letter for Miss Grace," and Annette, Carma's maid, handed it to me. "Where did you get it," I asked?

"John, Mr. Belmont's page, handed it to me down at the door, and said I should deliver it to you." She stood scanning my face with a mysterious, searching look. "Go out, Annette," for she evidently intended to remain while I read the letter. She went very reluctantly and left the door ajar after her. With eager, trembling fingers I opened that letter. I laid it in my lap, fearing to read it. At last, my eyes fell on it, and there in his own words he told me our engagement was irrevocably severed, that having met my cousin—to meet her was to love her—and that the appearance of Irvin Montague in his father's house, with our engagement ring on his hand, was proof positive of my perjury—what more was required?—and that there would be a

specy consummation of his and Carma's marriage. When this letter reached me, he would be in the South trying to forget everything that would serve to suggest any remembrance of me, existing in the one thought that Carma Willard, Imperial Carma Willard, would be his wife, and that he congratulated us upon the power of my charms, but it did not accord with his idea of propriety or commend itself to good taste to give away a ring that was once a pledge to another man.

"What could he have meant by saying that Irvin Montague wore my sapphire ring? It was true I had left it off, because my fingers received a scratch and were swollen. I arose and looked in my jewel case for my beautiful engagement ring, and it was gone. I stood mute and motionless. Where could I find it? But, what did it matter now? The past was all I could turn to. I felt, just then, that nothing in life could ever come to me as sweet and rose-colored as the past had been. I lived over in memory every hour, every moment spent with him. Lester Belmont—the very name was the embodiment of beauty and dignity. So well I remembered the first long drive I took with him. It was a smiling September afternoon. I felt yet the delicious, sweet sense of enjoyment and pleasure. How well I remember the dress with which the fields were clothed. The soft mellow sunshine and the cool current of air running through the heat of that afternoon. Ah, well, it would only be the memory through the coming years of "what might have been." The tears were falling down my cheeks—I was appointed for my healing—I would not stay here any longer. I would go to Vermont and teach a school, to occupy my time. Perhaps, I might learn in time to forget him, and the voice at my heart be stilled by new scenes and new duties, and that submissiveness, the great panacea might take possession of me. But, of one thing, I was sure, I never again would allow another to occupy a place in my heart more than a friend.

"Kinston," called out the conductor of an eastbound train and we drew up at the station, the engine puffing and throwing cinders in profusion about us. I was handed in a close family carriage by my uncle, Malcolm Glen. We waited a few minutes after our first greeting, the relative honors paying the sword with their impatient hoofs.

"There he comes now," said my uncle, as a tall well proportioned man, of perhaps thirty, came in view.

"Whom?" I asked.

"Oh, yes, you have never met Paul Chapman. Just then he came up to the carriage, stepped in and seated himself beside Uncle Malcolm, opposite me. We talked on many subjects, dwelling on none. A few atmospheric comments, then the mountain scenery, the landscape, all received homage from the admiration they excited. I lifted my eyes to the stranger twice, he was looking intently at me but said nothing only in response to some questions my uncle had asked him. Paul Chapman was a distant relative of Uncle Malcolm and a minister. He had been spending a month at the Cliffs, before I came. The Cliffs was the homestead of the Glen family. It was an old man gabled farmhouse hidden away back amongst the stately elms that surrounded it. In the summer days, the scent of newmown hay, the blossoms and honeysuckles, made it a bower of sweetness to me and Kinston was my favorite retreat. Just back to the west of the town lay the Cliffs. I had gone one morning to the orchard and had taken a book with me intending to have a good time alone. I was reading Tennyson's "Elsine" and was intently absorbed in the wonderful story of the self immolation of that poor girl-woman, when a voice at my side aroused me.

"Do you allow any intruders under the shelter of your tent, Miss Willard?"

"Certainly," I said, "come under." He came and occupied half of the seat I had made by setting a plank across the roof of the tree.

"What were you reading so intently? I don't believe you were aware of my presence till my voice told you you were not alone."

I held the book to him for answer and his eyes fell on the song that Elaine dedicated to her unrequited love for Sir Lancelot:

"Sweet is true love tho' given in vain, in vain;
And sweet is death who puts an end to pain;
I know not which is sweeter, so, not I!"

"I faint would follow love, if that could be;
I needs must follow death, who calls for me;
Call and I follow, I follow! let me die."

"Do all men and women love as did this girl, this Elaine?" he asked.

"I mean all true men and women?"

"There is a difference, I think, in the organization of men and women, and men cannot understand, cannot comprehend the mortification a woman must needs feel when she finds her love unrequited."

"Do you speak from personal experience, Miss Willard?" His eyes were searching my face from under their long, dark lashes.

"Yes," I said, "with me it was once and forever."

[CONTINUED ON FOURTH PAGE.]