

"THE VIGNETTE."

A trio of schoolgirls huddled together, beguiling an hour of dull, stormy weather; a tinted note withdrawn from its cover, a chorus of voices: "O let a lover!"

A gem-studded locket in which was set The exquisite face of a dark-eyed brunette; 'Tis hidden away with a sigh of regret— Ah! the past that's recalled by that little vignette!

A fierce battle raging; men fight hand to hand Who both were brought up in the very same land, See! the standard's cut down 'mid the cannon's hoarse roar, And he who once held it will never speak more.

A cold lifeless form on a hospital bed— 'Tis only the body, the spirit has fled— Hung round his neck, with his life blood still wet, A slender gold chain and a little vignette.

MISS MAHONEY'S LACE.

They were having a good time at the farm, as pleasant a party of gay girl graduates as could well be put together, when Miss Mahoney arrived upon the scene of action, and her appearance was certainly like a wet blanket on all pleasure.

The farm was on a mountain-side, high up in the air; all below it a great amphitheater of lesser hills mellowed in distance and vapor till they looked like the waves of a purple sea, with now and then mighty rainbows spanning them; and all about it the lofty tops of hills, whose woods here feathered off upon the morning sky, and whose crags there jutted sharply on the stars at night. The air was full of the song of birds, the rustle of leaves, the hum of bees and the rushing of water-falls, and it seemed to the happy young things that they were somewhere above the world—in an ideal region from which no voice could summon them. But, for all that, a sharp voice called when Miss Mahoney was heard at the door, and the earnest common world burst in behind her.

She came in the noon stage, and she brought such tons of luggage! That had to come on another. What did she mean to do with it at the farm, where linen lawn was full dress? And she had a colic dog, and a huge cage with a magpie in it, and the magpie chattered like the confusion of tongues. Miss Mahoney stopped at the door, opened the cage and let the magpie go. "He comes back at call," she said to Mrs. Pierson, our landlady, who hardly looked with kindness on the bird of evil. "He likes to have his liberty and make his nest, and so I let him have it all the summer—city life is so confining. And Laddie keeps an eye on him." But we all embraced Laddie at once, as he put up his pretty nose and tender brown eyes to our faces, and the collic became the best friend of all the young girls that day, particularly those of the prettier ones, for he had quite a taste in beauty; he seemed to know that there was not a gallant about the place, and he might be escort to the whole party if he would, and he presently attached himself so pertinaciously to Adele Montrose that Jane Hunt said that she should have to show him "Philip's picture next, and tell Laddie that Philip was coming in a month."

Miss Mahoney came down to tea in regal array. No such garments had ever been seen at the farm as her purple-striped velvet gowns, with their satin understuff. As for her string of pearls, perhaps they were only Roman, but if they were real, they were worth more than the farm; and then the lace shawl which she knotted up round her throat as they sat on the piazza, looking at the sunset more underneath than above them, "as if it had been Rhetland wool," said Jane; "when it was priceless Brussels net."

"But she has oceans of lace," said Miss Meyer. I opened her door by mistake as she was unpacking, and there it was some in boxes and trays, and some over chairs. What with laces and jewels, the room looked like the milky way. "She'll think we are a set of barbarians," said Adele, with her quick blush, "wish hardly so much as a tucker." "And we shall think her a vulgar parvenue, bringing such things to such a place," said Jane.

"She's not a mouveau riche, at any rate," answered Miss Meyer. "For she isn't rich at all. Mrs. Pierson knows about her. She inherited all her fine things from some relation or other, and has only enough money to live on; and when she wants to do something extravagant, like coming to the mountains, she sells a pearl or bit of lace."

Miss Mahoney, of course, became an object of study to the girls, and was always accompanied in her progress by some awe and were ridicule—the former as the possessor of finery that somehow went to their hearts every time they saw it or heard of it, the latter as a woman past forty, tall and angular and ugly and ignorant, aping the appearance and manners of young girls.

"I wonder how she came by Laddie?" said Adele, one day.

"She gave a jewel for him," said Miss Meyer, laughing, "so as to have something to protect her other jewels. I'm sure it's no wonder how she came by Jack. That magpie will drive us all out of the house yet."

"See him now," said Jane Hunt, "on the limb of that hollow oak. Doesn't he look like a limb himself?" "There is certainly something dæmonic about Jack," said Adele. "He came tapping at my window last night, and when I saw those eyes of his they made me shiver so—"

"He was after those cakes in your closet."

"Do you suppose he was?" she asked, as she was going off with Laddie.

They didn't any of them suppose so, for all the animals about the place seemed to have fondness for Adele, cows and horses, cats and doves; even the wood birds had a way of flying low round the charming head as she called them. Some said it was her beauty, for she was the loveliest little brown-haired blue-eyed, white-browed, damask-cheeked piece of flesh and blood one could imagine; and the rest fancied it was some nearness to nature in her, or some secret attraction like that of the Indian snake-charmers.

"That is the same way she tamed Jane's brother Phil," said Lucia. "Every one knows that Phil was the haughtiest and most high-strung man in existence, and rather despised women. And now he just adores the ground she walks on." "As for me," said Miss Meyer, "I should be afraid that that sort of love was a glamour, and would break up some day." "There's no danger of Phil's love for Adele breaking up," said Jane. "And how she does worship him! She never mentions his name, but she writes to him every day—and she even saves the scraps of his writing on newspaper envelopes—she does indeed, girls!"

"Dear me! I wouldn't want to care so much for any one," said Miss Meyer. "I don't know any one that's more likely to," cried Lucia. "When you do fall in love, Maria Meyer—"

"Don't you concern yourself, young lady, about me," said Miss Meyer, sharply, walking off to give Laddie a biscuit, which was at once stolen by Jack, Laddie being engrossed in a fine game of romp with Adele.

"They say she used to care for Phil herself," whispered Lucia to her neighbor; and then they fell to comparing their tattling and crocheting and getting out patterns, and Miss Mahoney joined them. Miss Mahoney's morning toilets were as extraordinarily severe as her afternoon ones were extraordinarily superb. "Oh, Miss Mahoney!" cried one of the girls one morning, "if we had your laces we shouldn't have to do to tating."

"We hear you have such lovely lace," said Maria Meyer, with that grand air of hers.

"I have some very pretty pieces," said Miss Mahoney. "Our family is an old Irish family, and I am the last of it, and so in one direction and another I have fallen heir to a good deal."

"And I suppose you know all about lace?" said Lucia.

"I know all about my lace. Some of it is quite nice. As pretty pieces," repeated Miss Mahoney, "of their size as one could see in America."

"What if you had a grand opening at some time, and let us see them all?" asked Lucia.

"Why with the greatest pleasure, any time—now, if you say so." And of course the girls all said so, and sprung to their feet at once.

"Oh, is she going to show us her laces?" cried Adele, dancing up with Laddie barking and jumping round Jack, who had perched on her shoulder. "How lovely of you, Miss Mahoney!" and she followed with the rest.

"This," said Miss Mahoney, when she had opened her boxes, "is Venice piece."

"It doesn't look any different from tating," said Maria Meyer.

"Only," said Miss Mahoney, "as different as mist is from water. This is a bit of Spanish lace made in a convent. Here is a scrap of cardinal's lace; nobody but the cardinals at Rome have it. I don't know how my grandmother came into possession of this scrap—there used to be an archbishop in our family somewhere, but that's not a cardinal. These are all old French laces—Mrs. Palissey never saw their equal. But they are a great deal of care. I often think that piece of Valenciennes costs me as much trouble as a child. These are Irish laces—they are like hoar-frosts and blowing snow-drifts, somebody once told me. They don't make them now. See this piece of English point—old Devonshire point—"

"Oh, how lovely!" cried Adele, while the others were exclaiming over this and that. "Talk of snow-drifts, and she took the Devonshire point in her hands; it was two or three yards of finger-deep edging in a couple of pieces caught together by a thread, of the most exquisitely delicate beauty both of texture and design—idealized foam wreaths or the fancies of some frosted pane spread on a spider's web. 'How perfectly lovely!' exclaimed Adele again, and she wound it round her blushing face before the glass.

"What a finish for a bridal toilette!" and then she held it up in her hands in the sunlight, and the magpie on her shoulder, cocking his head on one side and the other, looked more demotic than ever through the film of an end of it that lay over his shining black feathers. "You are exactly like one of those girls holding little banners that come dancing out of the facades of temples in those Pompeian decorations of Phil's!" cried Jane.

"What a pity that you're not going to marry a rich man, Del, who could afford you Devonshire point and diamonds," she added, the least aut maliciously, "instead of a poor young architect!"

"If Adele would a duster round her she would still look decorated," said Lucia.

"Most folks would," said Adele, taking off the lace soberly, and laying it down. "But I must confess that I think lace is the most perfect thing made by hands; it always seems to me the nearest approach of man to works of nature, and I would about as lief make lace as paint pictures."

Miss Meyer began wrapping herself in a black lace mantle so precisely designed that the very dewdrops seemed to glisten on the poppy petals there; and presently all the other girls were masquerading in the precious things, while Miss Mahoney sat by complacently enjoying her magnificence.

"Now, my dears," said Miss Mahoney, as one by one they resigned their borrowed plumes. "You see I have nice things if I don't wear them." And satisfied with the exhibition, during the next week she put on nothing costlier than a nine-penny print.

"Well," said Adele, "it's just a pleasure to have them to look at."

Poor little Adele was the penniless orphan of penniless parents, and she taught drawing in a large school in Boston, where Philip had happened to see her and love her at first sight. Phil was coming before long now, for his month's vacation, and she was only living by counting the hours. A little restless till then, the light talk of the girls seemed to her to be meaningless chatter, in which she had small interest; and she used to wander off by herself, sketching on her little pocket boards, or lying in the fern or in the shadows of the cliffs, with an unread book in her hand, by the hour together. Occupied with her own fancies, and with a drawing of the outlines of old World's End, it was not strange that she did not particularly notice the demeanor of the girls, or if she did observe them by their heads together, that she should have thought it no more than the customary mischief and merrymaking.

She was standing alone one morning, just as the sun was drying the grass and moss on the top of Breezy Bluff, behind her the great purple mountain, below her the dewy verdure of the hillsides; hawks were soaring and sweeping over her head in the marvelous blue of the stainless sky, and under her feet the tops of the woods were bowing and bending. It was not like daily life, she was saying to herself. "This wonderful hill country! It is just as if one died, and were really approaching heaven." And in her white gown, with her bright brown hair floating out about her face in then wind that fanned so pure a color there, and with her luminous eyes borrowing the very color of the skies, she looked almost as if she were. As she stood there, rapt in reverie and happiness—the world was so beautiful and Phil was coming any day now, and she had hardly any other thought—she did not notice Miss Mahoney, under a big umbrella toiling up to meet her, till that individual was close up to her.

"I have followed you here, Miss Montrose," said she, suddenly, in her most rasping tones, "to save you any mortification before the other boarders, and

to ask what you have done with my Devonshire point."

"With what?"

"With my Devonshire point."

"What have I done with your Devonshire point? Why, Miss Mahoney, what do you mean?" she exclaimed, descending from her day-dreams.

"I mean what I say. My Devonshire point has disappeared. I have searched everywhere for it, so have two or three others—every box, every bag, every basket, every drawer. I have shaken every garment, have left no nook or corner neglected, and it is not to be found. You were the last person seen with it, the only one who appreciated it. What have you done with it?"

"You must—you must be dreaming, Miss Mahoney," said Adele. "What in the world should I do with your lace?"

"Finish a bridal toilette with it, perhaps," said Miss Mahoney.

"Do you mean—is it possible you can mean—?"

"Miss Montrose, I mean that somebody has taken my lace, and that to be plain, suspicion points to you, and that I am giving you a chance to restore it to me before I call in an officer. For doubtless, since you could do such a thing, you know the value of that lace."

"Am I talking to a crazy woman?" cried Adele.

"No," said Miss Mahoney, "but I am talking to a thief."

For a moment Adele was dumb. Then the full meaning of the accusation smote her, and her anger flashed up like a flame. "How did it happen," she broke forth, "that so dreadful—so contemptible a woman ever came under the same roof with me? Leave me—leave me this instant! I refuse ever to even speak to you again."

"You will speak to the officers of the law, then," said Miss Mahoney, using her umbrella like a tipstaff. "The people at the house have but guessed that I suspected you. Now I shall speak at once to Mrs. Pierson and the other boarders, and tell them my certainty. I never even dreamed that in coming to a country farm-house I was coming into a den of thieves." And she was as good as her word.

Adele herself hurried down the mountain, slipping, scrambling, rolling. But, fast as she went in her indignation, Miss Mahoney's long legs had gone faster; and as she drew near the house, she saw that the usual gay morning parties on the piazzas were absent, and she presently understood, by the sound of the loud rattling tones that came through the open window, that the loss of the Devonshire lace was under discussion.

"Mr. Philip Hunt will learn," Miss Meyer was saying, "that before one marries a beauty it is best to see whether or not she is a kleptomaniac."

"Kleptofidesticks!" cried Miss Mahoney. "A thief's a thief. Rich or poor. She has my lace or she hasn't. If she has, she's a thief, and four strong walls will hold her before nightfall, and save the lace of her people."

It seemed to Adele that she was certainly going mad herself. She walked in among them and stood looking about her, white as ashes, and with blazing eyes. Is there any one here capable of believing such a frightful thing as this woman's words?" she exclaimed.

"Miss Montrose!" cried Mrs. Pierson—"Miss Montrose, don't you be a mite troubled. There's nobody believes her. We'd trust her all of us with untold gold."

"I don't know," said Maria Meyer then, slowly and very white herself. "But I feel it my duty to say that passing Miss Montrose's door the other morning, I saw what looked very much like a long strip of lace fluttering at her window."

"Maria Meyer!" I would far sooner believe you told a falsehood—"

"Thank you," said Miss Meyer, with a scarlet face. "But your belief will not end the matter." And just then every one's glance followed in the direction of her own; and they saw the tall figure of a dark young man in the doorway. "What is all this?" cried a cheery voice. And at that Adele turned, "Oh, Philip! Philip!" she shrieked, holding out her arms. "Save me save me save me from this dreadful woman!" In another moment the dark young man's arms were about Adele, and he was possessing himself of the state of the case. "And so, because Miss Montrose admired your lace you dare to make such an accusation!" he exclaimed turning on Miss Mahoney and his face almost gray with wrath. "I make no unsupported accusation," said Miss Mahoney. "Miss Meyer has seen the lace in Miss Montrose's room—"

"Oh, you don't believe it, Philip!" cried Adele, in an agonized tone. "Believe it! Not it all—"

Just at that time so furious a barking rose without from Laddie, that Mrs. Pierson, who at any other time would have minded it, now with all her nerves fluttering, ran to see what was the matter and in another moment her cry rang out so wild and loud that, by natural instinct, half the people in the room had followed her—to see Laddie, who had treed the cat in the branches of the old dead oak under Adele's window, himself powerless in the grasp of Jack, who had descended from his frequent perch in those branches, and planting himself firmly on Laddie's shoulders, had proceeded to tear out his hair by handfuls. At the approach of Laddie's reinforcements, though, in the shape of Mrs. Pierson, Jack extricated his claws, screaming and fluttering back; and following his flight with their eyes, they all saw what Mrs. Pierson had seen—the end of something delicately white and fibrous peeping from the moss and lichens in the crotch of the hollow tree.

Philip, who had not followed, but had remained, but hushing Adele's sobs, heard the voices that called him; and in less time than it takes to tell, he was in the crotch of that tree. "Whose magpie is this?" he cried, as well as he could be heard for Jack's scolding, sitting astride the branch, and beginning to pull out a long string, firmly quilted and felted in the hollow with hair and matted moss. "Here is his nest, which he has hidden away; and here" (he knew very well what it was)—"is this string of any consequence?"

"It is the lace!" it is the lace!" cried Lucia.

"The lace!" echoed Jane. "And that is Adele's room just over the hollow. He got out with it from Miss Mahoney's room, and the wind fluttered this end in to Adele's window while he was stowing it away; and that is what Maria Meyer saw, if she saw anything."

"Oh, my lace! my lace! It is ruined! it is almost ruined!" cried Miss Mahoney; and then she remembered Adele. "I am sorry Miss Montrose!" she said—"so sorry! Indeed I am! How can you overlook it?"

"I never can," sobbed Adele, trembling still in every fiber.

"You may just pack your trunks, Miss Mahoney, for the afternoon stage," said

Mrs. Pierson. "I can't have—"

"And here's a comb," interrupted Philip, still bringing out one thing after another, "yours, by its air and bringing up, Mrs. Pierson. And a thimble, and a bow of ribbon, and a curl of yellow hair, and a stuffed humming-bird, and—what is this, Adele?" and he held up a gold chain and onyx locket.

"Oh, it is mine!" exclaimed Adele. "It is the one you gave me on my birthday. I couldn't imagine what had become of it."

"And you didn't make any outcry."

"Oh, I thought—I thought—I mean, I thought she never came honestly by so many things, and I was sure she had taken it to add to the others, and it didn't seem worth while to make any fuss. So after that I just locked my drawers."

"She!" cried Miss Mahoney, now recovering her lost breath. "She! Me!—a Mahoney! Is it I, you little—"

"Oh, yes!" replied Adele. "And I am so ashamed! And you never can forgive me."

"I never can," said Miss Mahoney. "But directly afterward she broke into a hearty laugh. 'My dear Miss Adele,' she said. 'I can, and I do; and you must, and you shall. As for that bad Jack, he deserves to have his neck wrung wrong; and I'd do it—indeed, then, I would—if I didn't need him to keep Laddie in subjection. Now I beg your pardon heartily and everybody's, and know you're going to grant it. The poor Devonshire point! that will take me weeks to restore, and I suppose it would have uncomfortable associations too. But I've lots of old Irish lace just as delicate as that, and it will look just as well as the finish to the bridal toilette. And you mustn't feel hard. You see, we're quits; you thought as much of me. I'm a well-meaning old thing; and perhaps Mrs. Pierson will let me stay after all.'"—Harper's Bazar.

THE WATER-MILL.

Listen to the water-mill all the livelong day, How the creaking of the wheel wears the hours away; Langrily the water glides useless on and never coming back again to the water-mill; And a proverb haunts my mind as the spell is cast.

Take the lesson to yourself, loving heart and true, Golden years are passing by—youth is passing; Try to make the most of life, lose no honest day; All that you can call your own lies in this—today.

Power, intellect and strength man not, can not last, The mill will never grind with the water that has passed.

Oh! the wasted hours of life that have flitted by; Oh! the good we might have done—lost with a single word, Thoughts conceived but never penned—perishing unheard.

Take the lesson to your heart, take, Oh! hold it fast, The mill will never grind with the water that has passed.

—The Late Gen. McCullum.

MUSK AND PENNYROYAL.

Miss Margaret Willis slapped her maid in the face one morning as the girl was dressing her hair. "How often must I tell you not to draw the hair so tightly back from my forehead?" she exclaimed. "It must be quite loose, though firmly held. You quite make me look like a fright!"

It was a soft hand, yet it could give a stinging blow, as Agnes had learned during the last few weeks, for such blows were new in her experience with Miss Willis, who till lately had been the sweetest of mistresses. She said nothing, however, but made haste to loosen the brown hair over that snowy forehead till Margaret's sharp "Cosi!" told her that the right point had been reached.

Miss Willis was already dressed, for she had adopted the custom of the Empress Eugenie, of having her hair arranged last. When it was finished she rose, letting slip the large cambric mantle that covered her, and went to take a careful survey of herself in a long mirror that stood between the two windows. The result could not have been otherwise than pleasing. She wore a long unic of lace and muslin in stripes over a lavender silk, and rose-colored bows on the half-open sleeves and under her lovely chin.

"Non censate," she owned; and, drawing toward her a vase of large pink-and-white fuchsias, she fastened a bunch of them round her head like a coronet, and, taking the pearl rings from her ears, hung fuchsias in their places.

"I am going for a walk below the belvedere," she said then to her maid. "Say nothing about it to any one, and keep people away if you can. If any of those dreadful tourists come here to see the grounds, tell the gardener to come to the terrace and whistle."

Miss Willis went down the grand stairs. Not a soul was in sight. At this hour—it had just struck eleven from the clock in the grand fountain—all the ladies and gentlemen in the villa except, perhaps, the master of it, the Marquis of San Giorgio, were in their rooms, and would leave them only at the sound of the breakfast bell, which rang precisely at noon. If the marquis was out, he would be at the potteries in the very farthest corner of the villa. He almost invariably devoted the hour or two before breakfast to his correspondence.

Following a little path that wound among the shrubs and trees, Margaret descended to the level, where, from the windows above, she might have shown like a large flower in the midst of the rich green. She did not wish to be seen from the windows, however, but to escape all observation for a time, and to study for an hour her position, with the airs of heaven blowing about her. So she went nearer the belvedere, and when she saw its dark balustrade stand out against the blue sky began to walk slowly to and fro in its shadow.

Here was her position. She was a young, beautiful and accomplished New England girl, rich for her native city, but not rich for one of the grand cities either of the new or the old world. A wealthy and ambitious aunt, who had spent the greater part of her life in Europe, had brought her here, intending to find a great match for her. Margaret had gladly come abroad, but had not committed herself to the matrimonial scheme—had, indeed, been very cool about the candidate who immediately presented himself. The marquis was agreeable, elegant, rich, and of very high lineage, and he was not very old. She had no serious objection to make, but she had not yet been able to consent, though daily urged by her aunt and by the lover himself. And she could say neither yes nor no. She was too indifferent to accept, and the proposition was to brilliant to refuse. She had seen enough of society in London, Paris

and Rome to be weary of taking a subordinate place. With a coronet in the beautiful golden-brown hair she could become a social power. Her bright, disdainful eyes had searched out all the wheels and cranks of the social machine, and with time and familiarity disdain was rapidly losing itself in ambition. It was a game, and a brilliant and exciting one it seemed to her. She was beginning to find that her beauty was a weapon to use, not merely a pretty flower. It might procure her other advantages besides a coronet.

But just as her imagination was about taking fire and she thought: "I will carry in a half-open rose and give it to him before them all, and give him a smile with it which he shall understand," some other second thought set aside her half-formed decision.

Walking thus preoccupied, almost tormented, she became conscious presently of some sensible touch that reached her heart, yet so delicately that she was not aware by what sense it entered. It persisted softly, withdrawing for an instant to make its presence more clearly felt on returning, and at every return the emotion it caused became perceptible.

Her attention at length arrested by this soft opportunity, Margaret Willis paused and looked around to see what it was that had set her heart murmuring inarticulately like a mother over the cradle of her sleeping child. It was no sight or sound, though the birds were singing their noon lullabies.

It was a perfume, strong, penetrating and familiar—how more familiar than anything else there even while unrecognized! She stood and breathed it a moment, then bent and looked searchingly in the grass. It was gay with flowers of every hue, and set thickly among them, and looking over their heads, were stalks of pennyroyal, the dear old New England herb, studded all along the branching stems with tiny blue blossoms.

Picture after picture started up. The large, old-fashioned mansion house, with its pleasant verandas, its fields and gardens and woods, appeared, all its twittering swallows circling round; the boiling spring bubbling up under a birch-tree in the field; the well, with its curb, pole and bucket, mossy and dank, in the midst of the chip-strewn backyard; shining tin milk cans drying on a sunny bench outside the back door; lace curtains waving in the drawing room windows, and transparent muslin curtains fluttering and puffing out from the chambers above. A blue smoke curled up from the chimney of the kitchen, where the floor was so white, and the bird's-eye maple ironing table turned back on hinges and left a great chair for all but ironing days. The town, but a mile distant, looked over an intervening hill, and the primeval forest hung dark as a thunder-cloud close at the other hand. It was the best of the city with the best of the country.

She had gone into the woods with her brother Jamie. She had coaxed him to take her, and Jamie never refused her anything. How good he was to her that day, lifting her over the wet places, giving her all the little yellow violets he found, holding her up to look into a bird's nest while the mother bird chirped distressfully from a near tree, and telling her such wonderful things of birds and trees and flowers that he had learned from books.

Picture followed picture—of some bright, others mournful, many of them interwoven with the simple herb which she held clasped to her breast with unconscious hands.

There was John. With a dreamy smile on her lips and her unseeing eyes fixed, her fancy saw him grow up through all her remembrances of him: first, Jamie's dearest friend and playfellow; later, friend, too and forever her friend. An earnest, good boy, and an earnest good man—as firm as a rock in principles and character, and with something that might remind one of the rock in his form and face, in the square broad shoulders, the wide forehead, and the firm mouth that was never ready to smile and never had too much to say. He was seventy, too. From the time when, in her seventh year, he lifted her, all wet and trembling, out of the brook into which she had fallen, and carried her home in his arms, to their interview, when she had laughingly turned aside the declaration of love that for the hundredth time he had attempted to make, and left him with that hurt yet patient look which she had so often caused his face to assume, in all that time not a hasty or unkind word had he spoken to her, and never once had he neglected a wish of hers or seemed to resent, even in his own heart, her careless coquetry. This love had begun on the day when, half drowned and wholly terrified, she had clung round his neck and sobbed out her gratitude to him:

"Oh, John! how I do love you for coming up just now! The water was choking me. I wish you would always stay close to me just as long as I live." And John had responded, with his cheek blushing warm against her chilly wet one: "I'll never fail you when you want me, Pansy." And he never had failed her. A bell rang. Was it the bell of the school-house hidden behind the trees, or of one of those many churches in town beyond the hill? It rang so loudly and sounded so near that it broke through her reverie. Her mind came back to her eyes, and looked about, receiving a shock that almost blinded her. For all the landscape seemed in a whirl, and her visions reeled and fell like a city over an earthquake. The slim birch trees thickened to dense chestnuts; the branches of the pines ran up the trunks as an umbrella runs up in opening, and set themselves in a tuft high in the air; the wooden house with its long verandas changed to a palace with sculptured stone balconies and crowned with the airy arches of a grand loggia; and where a moment before the savage woods had climbed the hillside a white foam of water came falling down in foamy plunges, sprinkling the leaning flowers and the masks and the cupids as it fell.

She saw the splendor of it all, and remembered a century old temptation so clearly that it seemed to be newly witnessed in her ear: All this will I give thee if, falling down, thou wilt worship me.

One bright, sweeping glance over the whole; then gathering up her long skirts, she went swiftly toward the house. The first breakfast bell had ceased ringing, and the other would ring in fifteen minutes. Reaching the house, she was told that a gentleman was waiting in the salon for her.

"What an hour for a visit!" she thought, discontentedly, as she went trailing thro' the empty rooms to the last, where a tall broad-shouldered man stood at a window looking out.

At sight of him the blood rushed to her forehead, "I am bewitched to-day—I am certainly bewitched," she thought, and walked slowly toward him, not so aroused from her former dream as to

have laid aside or thrown away the bunch of pennyroyal she had clasped to her bosom.

He turned at the light rustle of her garments. His face was pale but his manner quite calm.

"How do you do, Margaret?" he said, as if he had seen her the week before. "I hope I am not intruding."

"How it happened she knew not, but at sight of him all the old malice and mischief woke in her heart. The intense blue eyes which were drinking in her face, the slight tremor in the deep voice—just what she had never been made to her again the laughing tyrant. Yet she laughed with joy, and was triumphant at seeing him so handsome. Her educated eyes found him finer looking than he had looked to her ignorant ken.

"You do intrude awfully, John," she said, giving him her hand; "there are two persons in the house who will be enraged at your coming."

"One is your aunt," he said, coldly. "And the other is—who?"

"Never mind, come and get some breakfast. The bell is ringing and I am hungry. Oh, you needn't hesitate about the invitation; we all ask whom we please. I have had one or two persons to breakfast. They will already have laid a place for you."

She was turning away, half waiting for him, when he took her hand:

"If you are going to marry him I will not sit at his table. Tell me the truth; don't play with me, Margaret."

She had never heard his voice so passionate; it was almost commanding.

"What is your advice about the matter?" she asked, innocently, turning once more toward him and dropping her eyes.

"I would advise you to marry him if you want to," he replied, almost angrily.

She looked into his face with her sweetest smile.

"And if I do not want to, John? If I hate to and won't?"

"In that case we had better not keep breakfast waiting," he replied, very quietly.

They went out in the tent-hung breakfast room, where the company were assembled, and Miss Willis was edified to see how very cordial her aunt's greeting of the new-comer was after the first involuntary scowl of recognition. In for the maquis, he was so truly and gracefully courteous that Margaret added a few explanatory words to her introduction.

"Mr. Norton was a schoolfellow of my brother's," she said. "I have known him all my life."

She compared the two while they talked. The Marquis was tall, slender and pale, and his beautiful face had that look of mildness which is the result of pride and culture rather than of a mild disposition. One might have said of this man that his face was calm and unruined, but because his passions were not strong, but because of their strength, which carried all before it. It is obstructed passion that graves the face. Whatever the Marquis of San Giorgio had wished to do, that he had done, and whatever he had wished to possess had never been long denied him. The two gentlemen talked a little on political subjects.