[For the Globe.]

MORNING.

BY MRS. W. W. THOMAS.

The royal morning bursts upon a world
In dreams enwrapt, with voice of melody,
Bringing new hopes to men, no dreams, but
Grand realities to fold the spirit, now
Humanity hath birth anew, and
Earnest hand and heart sheaves of toil will
bind.

The tides of life o'er flow the silent town,
And busy multitudes the pavement tread,
While labor's hand majestic spurs the wheel
Of Art, and o'er machinery's din lifts up
Exultant notes of power. The marts of trade
Grow cheerful, and the village bells anon
Cast out upon the quivering air the long
Sad dirge of loss, and funeral call of joy,
The merry whistle of the mower blends
With the gladness of the meadow lark, when
From the dewy ground uplifting golden
Pinions, he pours his soul of melody abroad!

How beautiful the radiant morn!
Whose tuneful woodlands echo praise to God,
Whose minstrelsy on sea and shore is love!
Pray we for unstained souls, in unity
To rise, with pure unsullied song to keep
The ray ephemeral!

Man's empire is the
Narrow valley, and if its hollow
Pagentry leaves no mildew on the soul,
Not in Omnipotence be throned its hope,
Beyond the heavenly orbs a Glory-dome
In fadeless morning light arrayed, shall yield
Victorious lives exceeding great reward!

"Prospect Home" Middlebury Vt.

On the Trap.

I was only a clown, a painted, grinning clown, attached, on a small salary, to a theatre in the capital of one of the little duchies into which Germany was divided before the genius and ambition of Bismarck had effected its consolidation into the empire. My *role* was popular because everybody likes to laugh, and likes one who puts them in a laughing mood. My make-up was considered a marvel of perfection. My songs always took, and my gestures and grimaces never failed to elicit the most rapturous applause. It used to be said that my face must be made of India-rubber, it could be twisted and distorted into such strange expressions. But I hated the life, and my success made it more and more distasteful.

One night I went home completely worn out in body and mind. My little sister Ada, fifteen years old, and light and graceful as a sylph, who was engaged as a dancer at the same theatre, also seemed dispirited and worn. The play had been running forty nights, and the whole company was heartily sick of it. But it was not this alone which exerted a depressing influence on my spirits that evening. For many weeks I had been losing my heart to Fraulein Dora, the principal dancer of the theatre, who was no less lovely in mind and heart than in her person. She was the most beautiful woman I had ever seen; tall, well-formed, graceful, with a step like a fairy queen; large, thoughtful eyes and a sweet winning smile. What first drew me to her was her kindness to my sister, whom she took every opportunity to befriend and assist in her profession. This was the more surprising, because Ada promised to become a dangerous rival; and, in the theatrical profession, jealousy is the rule, and generosity the exception. So I learned to like Dora, and then to love her. But so did everybody else. All the gentry of the place fell in love with her, and raved about her beauty and her dancing, in a way that nearly drove me wild with jealousy. I was in love in the old-fashioned way we read of in novels—I am not ashamed to confess it—eager to kiss the ground on which she trod, and would not believe that any one else could love and worship her with the same devotion. I must not omit to say that Dora, in the midst of all this adulation, displayed the most discreet and modest behavior. She was always attended, to and from the theatre, by her mother, and always returned the rich presents showered upon her.

Among all who paid the court to Dora, I feared only one, the young, rich, handsome, and accomplished Count Ernest von Walters, who pressed his suit with unremitting ardor. What chance had the poor clown against this man? Yet I fancied if he were only out of the way I need not despair of winning her. Did she not love my sister, and had she not often spoken kindly to me, and praised my acting and singing? But this day I had learned the worst—that her kindness to me sprang only from a gentle and friendly feeling for the brother of the girl she had learned to love like a sister, and that she had promised to become the wife of Count von Walters. What wonder that I went to my lodgings with despair in my heart!

My little sister exerted herself to make things cheerful in our quiet sitting-room. She suspected nothing of the real cause of my downheartedness, for she, my confidant in everything else, had never been intrusted with the secret of my love for Dora; and, in the hope of drawing me out of my moody silence prattled on about a number of unimportant matters. She was interrupted by a knock at the door, followed by the entrance of our landlady. The good soul apologized for coming in at so late an hour, but the postman had brought a letter for me just after we had left for the theatre, and as it bore a foreign postmark, she thought it might be important I should get it that evening. I thanked her mechanically, but a glance at the postmark caused me to tear the letter open with eager and trembling fingers; for I had often heard my father speak of an only brother who had settled in England in early youth, and from whom vague reports came, from time to time, of a successful mercantile career. The letter was postmarked London, and the heavy black border lines told the story before the seal was broken. My uncle was dead. He had never married, and on his death-bed, remembering his only brother, he had left all his wealth to him or his children. For a moment I felt stunned and faint; and Ada, throwing her arms about my neck, begged me to tell her what bad news was in my letter to make me look so strange and pale. I took her on my knee, and told her we were rich, and would have no more need to act in the theatre. We would leave this miserable little town and go to Berlin.

To my surprise, Ada again put her arms about my neck, and whispered softly, "Need we leave the theatre immediately, dear brother?"

"No, child," said I, wondering what she could mean; "but tell me why you should want to stay another day, when you can leave at once and be free from this slavery?"

"Because, dear brother," she answered, hesitating and blushing, "Fraulein Dora told me I was a great deal prettier than she was, and a better dancer; and that I should have the first place in the new dances they are to put on the stage next week. Oh, I would like to have such a triumph once! It would be such a pleasant way to say good-by to the stage."

I could deny her nothing, my little sister; and though for me it was like going into the torture-room of the Inquisition to enter the theatre and see Count Ernest on such familiar terms with Dora, I consented for the present to conceal my good fortune from our friends, and go on just the same as if nothing had happened.

The eventful evening came at length. The play was interpersed with ballet-dancing, and was to end with a grand transformation scene in which Ada and Dora were to rise as sea nymphs, in a shell-like car, from the waters of a mimic lake. It so happened that, just before the last scene, I went into the room underneath the stage, where the machinery for raising the car was placed, impelled by a strange foreboding of impending misfortune, to assure myself that everything was in order; and that no precaution against accident had been neglected. There I found the master machinist, a dark and gloomy visaged man, standing by the car, muttering to himself in an undertone. "Better she should die than marry the count. He has bewitched her, as he does all women. A little slit would—"

"What are you muttering to yourself?" I asked him, suddenly; "and what do you mean by these mysterious words?"

He faced me, as if struck by an unexpected blow.

"I was only examining the machinery to see that everything was right," he answered sullenly, and turned away.

I carefully examined the cords by which the car was raised. Everything appeared to be secure and in good order; and I went back to my place, trying to laugh myself out of my apprehensions. But though it was easy to argue that all was right, and that my fears arose merely from some explicable disorder of the brain, I could not feel secure. I was positive that some frightful misadventure would occur before the play was over; and every nerve was strained in the effort to maintain a calm exterior.

The play progressed. The curtain rose upon the magnificent transformation scene; and the plaudits of the audience grew tumultuous as the splendors unrolled before by them. At length the car began to rise slowly and majestically, to low, sweet strains of music. I watched, with scarcely beating heart and bated breath, the first appearance of the beautiful vision—for like a vision it looked, rising and still rising, the car resplendent with all the tinsel which shone like gold, and silver, and diamonds. A sound as of many tinkling fountains mingled with the strains of delicious music; fairy-land seemed opening upon the sight with arching bowers and far-reaching vistas, and myriads of elfin forms disporting on the ground and in the air. For a moment I was fascinated, when Ada and Dora, in all their beauty, rose above the lake, their stately car seemingly lifted by invisible hands. I forgot my apprehensions, and once more breathed freely.

Suddenly there was a dreadful crash, and a wild cry filled the house. The car had fallen. For an instant, I felt rooted to the spot where I was standing, and then recovering my senses, rushed forward to learn the the worst. As I made my way through the narrow passage under the stage, I heard some one say in a pitying tone: "Poor thing, she will never dance again?" Which was it? Ada? Dora? I fought my way through the crowd of actors and attendants, and saw my little Ada lying senseless in Dora's arms. Throwing myself on my knees, I took her cold hands in both of mine. "My dear friend," said Dora, who was weeping silently, "she is not dead, though dreadfully hurt. The surgeon will be here directly. Compose yourself. She is reviving!"

My little darling opened her eyes, with a deep sigh, and looked about her with a bewildering gaze.

"Hush, little one," said Dora, softly, as she saw Ada was about to speak. "Lie still and be patient till the surgeon comes."

The gentle sufferer closed her eyes, and her little hands pressed mine with a tender grasp. The surgeon was soon on the spot. He assured me that Ada had sustained no fatal injury, but it was doubtful whether she would be able to walk again. With a piteous cry she fell back in Dora's arms, and fainted dead away.

I had noticed no one but Ada and Dora, but at this moment I was conscious that the count was kneeling beside me, and had clasped Dora's hand. "Better she than you, my love!" he murmured.

Dora gave him a quick look of reproof. "This is no time for love making," she answered, withdrawing her hand. "Have you no feeling for the poor girl lying here, whose life must be one of misery and sorrow?"

"What is this ballet girl to us?" answered the count, stung to the quick, and for a moment thrown off his guard. "Of course, I am sorry for her," he added the next moment, "but—"

At this moment Ada opened her eyes again, and a faint blush struggled with the paleness in her cheeks, as her gaze fell upon the count. A beautiful smile played on her trembling lips, and she reached her hand toward him. "Oh, my love," she said in a low whisper—a whisper which sent the blood mantling into Dora's face and then left it paler than snow—you are near and I—"

Something in the count's face stopped her words.

"The girl is wandering," he said, coldly. She does not know what she is saying."

"She had fainted again. "Go, count," said Dora, hastily. "Your presence is not wanted here." Her manner was decided and even imperious, and the count did not venture to disobey; but as he left he cast upon Ada a look which caught the other's eye, and from the expression that came into her face I knew—knew even then, that he would never more hold a place in her heart.

We carried Ada home, and through the long illness which followed, Dora was her constant nurse and companion. To this dear friend she confided with many tears the secret of her heart. The count had won her love, and had promised to ask my consent to their union. Unsuspecting and confiding, she knew nothing of his attentions to Dora, and it was by his wish that she had never mentioned his name to me. I heard afterward, that he and Dora met but once after the accident, and that he endeavored to defend his perfidy on the plea that he was only amusing himself with Ada and had never seriously thought of making her his wife. "So much the worse for you, count," said the true-hearted woman. "I shall never be your wife, and never want to see your face again."

We are married now, Dora and I. From loving Ada she learned in time to love me, and the sweet and gentle invalid, who never again will walk until she steps upon the heavenly shore, is happy in our love. No murmur ever escapes her lips. Her sweet face is never clouded. Since Dora learned her sad story, the count's name has never passed my sister's lips, nor has she ever in any way alluded to him. But Dora found her one day weeping silently over a picture which she put away without its being seen.

I have not told how the accident happened. The master machinist, himself in love with Dora, had cut several strands of the cords by which the car was secured. He openly avowed his crime, and only regretted that Dora had not been killed. "She rejected me with scorn," he said on his trial. "I was resolved she should never give her hand to another." He was manifestly a maniac. I can never forgive myself for not watching him more closely after that encounter under the stage.

—From the *Aldine* for September.

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