seemed to struggle back into it before even the dull eyes participated in the glow. Dr. Duchesne, with a sudden gesture, waved aside his companions, but not before Josephine had bent her head eagerly forward.

"He is coming to," she said.

At the sound of that deep, clear voice—the first to break the hush of the room—the dull eyes leaped up and the head turned in its direction. The lips moved and uttered a single rapid sentence. The girl recoiled.

"You're all right now," said the doctor, cheerfully, intent only upon the form before him.

The lips moved again, but this time feebly and vacantly; the eyes were staring vaguely around.

"What's matter? What's all about?" said the man, thickly.

"You've had a fall. Think a moment. Where do you live?"

Again the lips moved, but this time only to emit a confused incoherent murmur. Dr. Duchesne looked grave, but recovered himself quickly.

"That will do. Leave him alone now," he said brusquely to the others.

But Josephine lingered.

"He spoke well enough just now," she said eagerly. "Did you hear what he said?"

"Not exactly," said the doctor abstractedly, gazing at the man.

"He said 'You'll have to kill me first,'" said Josephine slowly.

"Humph!" said the doctor abstractedly, passing his hand backward and forward before the man's eyes to note any change in the staring pupils.

"Yes," continued Josephine gravely. "I suppose," she added cautiously, "he was thinking of the operation—of what you had just done to him."

"What I had done to him? Oh, yes!"

CHAPTER II.

Before noon the next day it was known throughout Burnt Ridge Valley that Dr Duchesne had performed a difficult operation upon an unknown man who had been picked up unconscious from a fall and carried to Burnt Ridge Ranch. But, although the unfortunate man's life was saved by the operation, he had only momentarily recovered consciousness—relapsing into a semi-idiotic state, which effectively stopped the discovery of any clew to his friends or his identity. As it was evidently an accident which in that rude community—and even in some more civilized ones—conveyed a vague impression of some contributory incapacity on the part of the victim or some Providential interference of a retributive character, Burnt Ridge gave itself little trouble about. it It is unnecessary to say that Mr. and Mrs. Forsyth gave themselves and Josephine much more. They had a theory and a grievance, Satisfied from the first that the alleged victim was a drunken tramp, who submitted to have a hole bored in his head in order to

THE YOUNG GIRL CONFRONTED HIM WITH STEADY EYES.

foist himself upon the ranche, they were loud in their protests, even hinting at a conspiracy between Josephine and the stranger to supplant her brother in the property, as he had already in the spare bedroom. "Didn't all that yer happen the very night she pretended to go for Stephen—eh?. Tell me that! And didn't she have it all arranged with the buggy to bring him here, as that sneaking doctor himself let out—eh? Looks mighty curious, don't it?" she muttered darkly to the old man. But although that gentleman, even from his own selfish view, would scarcely have submitted to a surgical operation and later idiocy as the price of insuring comfortable dependency, he had no doubt others were base enough to do it; and lent a willing ear to his wife's suspicions.

Josephine's personal knowledge of the stranger went a little further. Dr. Duchesne had confessed to her his professional disappointment at the incomplete results of the operation. He had saved the man's life, but as yet not his reason. There was still hope, however, for the diagnosis revealed nothing that might prejudice a favorable progress. It was a most interesting case. He would watch it carefully, and as soon as the patient could be removed would take him to the county hospital, where, under his own eyes, the poor fellow would have the benefit of the latest science and the highest specialists. Physically he was doing remarkably well; indeed, he must have been a fine young chap, free from blood taint or vicious complication, whose flesh had healed like an infant's. It should be recorded that it was at this juncture that Mrs. Forsyth first learned that a silver plate let into the artful stranger's skull was an adjunct of the healing process! Convinced that this infamous extravagance was part and parcel of the conspiracy, that it was only the beginning of other assimilations of the Forsythis' metallic substance, that it was probably polished and burnished with a fulsome inscription to the doctor's skill, and would pass into the possession and adornment of a perfect stranger, her rage knew no bounds. He or his friends ought to be made to pay for it or work it out! In vain it was declared that a few dollars were all that was found in the man's pocket, and that no memoranda gave any indication of his name, friends or history beyond the suggestion that he came from a distance. This was clearly a part of the conspiracy! Even Josephine's practical good sense was obliged to take note of this singular absence of all record regarding him, and the apparent obliteration of everything that might be responsible for his ultimate fate.

* * *

Homeless, friendless, helpless and even nameless, the unfortunate man of 25 was thus left to the tender mercies of the mistress of Burnt Ridge Ranch as if he had been a new-born foundling laid at her door. But this mere claim of weakness was not all; it was supplemented by a singular personal appeal to Josephine's nature. From the time that he turned his head toward her voice on that fateful night his eyes had always followed her around the room with a wandering, yearning, canine half-intelligence. Without being able to convince herself that he understood her better than his regular attendant furnished by the doctor, she could not fail to see that he obeyed her implicitly, and that when any difficulty arose between him and his nurse she was always appealed to. Her pride in this proof of her practical sovereignty was flattered; and when Dr. Duchesne finally admitted that although the patient was now physically able to be removed to the hospital, yet he would lose in the change the very strong factor that Josephine had become in his mental recovery, the young girl as frankly suggested that he should stay as long as there was any hope of restoring his reason. Dr. Duchesne was delighted. With all his enthusiasm for science, he had a professional distrust of some of its disciples, and perhaps was not sorry to keep this most interesting case in his own hands. To him her suggestion was only a womanly kindness, tempered with womanly curiosity. But the astonishment and stupefaction of her parents at this evident corroboration of suspicions they had as yet only half-believed, was tinged with superstitious dread. Had she fallen in love with this helpless stranger? or, more awful to contemplate, was he really no stranger, but a surreptitious lover thus strategically brought under her roof? For once they refrained from open criticism. The very magnitude of their suspicion left them dumb.

It was thus that the virgin Chatelaine of Burnt Ridge Ranch, was left to gaze untrammeled upon her pale and handsome guest, whose silken bearded lips and sad, childlike eyes might have suggested a more Exalted Sufferer in their absence of any suggestion of a grosser material manhood. But even this imaginative appeal did not enter into her feelings. She felt for her good-looking, helpless patient a profound and honest pity. I do not know whether she had ever heard that "pity was akin to love." She would probably have resented that utterly untenable and atrocious commonplace. There was no suggestion, real or illusive, of any previous masterful quality in the man which might have made his present dependent condition picturesque by contrast. He had come to her handicapped by an unromantic accident and a practical want of energy and intellect. He would have to touch her interest anew if, indeed, he would ever succeed in dispelling the old impression. His beauty, in a community of picturesquely handsome men, had little weight with her, except to accent the contrast with fuller manhood.

Her life had given her no allusions in regard to the other sex. She had found them, however, more congenial and safer companions than women, and more accessible to her own sense of justice and honor. In return they had respected and admired rather than loved her, in spite of her womanly graces. If she had at times contemplated eventual marriage, it was only as a possible practical partnership in her business; but as she lived in a country where men thought it a dishonoring proof of incompetency to rise by their wives superior fortune, she had been free from that kind of persecution, even from men who might have worshiped her in hopeless and silent honor.

For this reason there was nothing in the situation that suggested a single compromising speculation in the minds of the neighbors, or disturbed her own tranquility. There seemed to be nothing in the future except a possible relief to her curiosity. Some day the unfortunate man's reason would be restored, and he would tell his simple history. Perhaps he might explain what was in his mind when he turned to her the first evening with that singular sentence which had often recurred strangely to her she knew not why. It did not strike her until later that it was because it had been the solitary indication of an energy and capacity that seemed unlike him. Nevertheless, after that explanation, she would have been quite willing to have shaken hands with him and parted.

And yet—for there was an unexpressed remainder in her thought—she was never entirely free or uninfluenced in his presence. The flickering vacancy of his sad eyes sometimes became fixed with a resolute immobility under the gentle questioning with which she had sought to draw out his faculties, that both piqued and exasperated her. He could say "yes" or "no," as she thought, intelligently, but he could not utter a coherent sentence nor write a word, except like a child in imitation of his copy. She taught him to repeat after her the names of the inanimate objects in the room, then the names of the doctor, his attendant, the servant and finally her own under her Christian prenomen, with frontier familiarity; but when she pointed to himself he waited for her to name him! In vain she tried him with all the masculine names she knew; his was not one of them, or he would not or could not speak it. For at times she rejected the professional dictum of the doctor that the faculty of memory was wholly paralyzed or held in abeyance, even to the half-automatic recollection of his letters, yet she inconsistently began to teach him the alphabet, with the same method, and—in her sublime unconsciousness of his manhood—with the same discipline as if he were a very child. When he had recovered sufficiently to leave his room, she would lead him to the porch before her window and make him contented and happy by allowing him to watch her at work at her desk, occasionally answering his wondering eyes with a word or stirring his faculties with a question. I grieve to say that her parents had taken advantage of this publicity and his supposed helpless condition to show their disgust of his assumption to the extreme of making faces at him—an act which he resented with such a furious glare that they retreated hurriedly to their own verandah. A fresh though somewhat inconsistent grievance was added to their previous indictment of him: "If we ain't found dead in our bed with our throats cut by that woman's crazy husband" [they had settled by this time that there had been a clandestine marriage] "we'll be lucky," groaned Mrs. Forsyth.

Meantime the mountain summer waxed to its fullness of fire and fruition. There were days when the crowded forest seemed choked and impeded with its own foliage, and pungent and stifling with its own rank maturity; when the long hillside ranks of wild oats, thickset and impassable, filled the air with the heated dust of germination. In this quickening irritation of life it would be strange if the unfortunate man's torpid intellect was not helped in its awakening, and he was allowed to ramble at will over the ranche; but with the instinct of a domestic animal he always returned to the house, and sat in the porch, where Josephine usually found him awaiting her when she herself returned from a visit to the mill. Coming thence one day she espied him on the mountain-side leaning against a projecting ledge in an attitude so rapt and immovable that she felt compelled to approach him. He appeared to be dumbly absorbed in the prospect, which might have intoxicated a saner mind.

Half veiled by the heat that rose quiveringly from the fiery canon below, the domain of Burnt Ridge stretched away before him, until, lifted in successive terraces hearsed and plumed with pines, it was at last lost in the ghostly snow peaks. But the practical Josephine seized the opportunity to try once more to awaken the slumbering memory of her pupil. Following his gaze with signs and questions, she sought to draw from him some indication of familiar recollection of certain points of the map thus unrolled behind him. But in vain. She even pointed out the fateful shadow of the overhanging ledge on the road where she had picked him up—there was no response in his abstracted eyes. She bit her lips: she was becoming irritated again. Then it occurred to her that, instead of appealing to his hopeless memory, she had better trust to some unreflective automatic instinct independent of it, and she put the question a little forward: "When you leave us where will you go from here?" He stirred slightly and turned toward her. She repeated her query slowly and patiently with signs and gestures recognized between them. A faint glow of intelligence struggled into his eyes; he lifted his arm slowly and pointed.

"Ah! those white peaks—the Sierras?" she asked eagerly. No reply. "Beyond them?"

"Yes."

"The States?" No reply. "Further still?'

He remained so patiently quiet and still pointing that she leaned forward and, following with her eyes the direction of his hand, saw that he was pointing to the sky.

Then a great quiet fell upon them. The whole mountain side seemed to her to be hushed as if to allow her to grasp and realize the pathos of the ruined life at her side, which it had known so long, but which she had never felt till now. The tears came to her eyes; in her swift revulsion of feeling she caught the thin uplifted hand between her own. It seemed to her that he was about to raise them to his lips, but she withdrew them hastily and moved away. She had a strange fear that if he had kissed them it might seem as if a pet dog had touched them—or—it might not. The next day she felt a consciousness of this in his presence, and a wish that he was well cured and away. She determined to consult Dr. Duchesne on the subject when he next called.

But the doctor, secure in the welfare of his patient, had not visited him lately, and she found herself presently absorbed in the business of the ranche, which at this season was particularly trying. There had also been a quarrel between Dick Shipley, her mill foreman, and Miguel, her ablest and most trusted vaquero, and in her strict sense of impartial justice she was obliged to side on the merits of the case with Shipley against her oldest retainer. This troubled her, as she knew that with the Mexican nature, fidelity and loyalty were not unmixed with quick and unreasoning jealousy. For this reason she was somewhat watchful of the two men when work was over and there was a chance of their being thrown together. Once or twice she had remained up late to meet Miguel returning from the Posada at San Ramon, filled with aguardiente and a recollection of his wrongs, and to see him safely bestowed before she herself retired. It was on one of those occasions, however, that she learned that Dick Shipley, hearing that Miguel had disparaged him freely at the Posada, had broken the disciplina of the ranch and absented himself the same night that Miguel "had leave," with a view of facing his antagonist on his own ground. To prevent this the fearless girl at once secretly set out alone to overtake and bring back the delinquent.

For two or three hours the house was thus left to the sole occupancy of Mr. and Mrs. Forsyth and the invalid—a fact only dimly suspected by the latter, who had become vaguely conscious of Josephine's anxiety, and had noticed the absence of light and movement in her room. It was, therefore, that, having risen again and mechanically taken his seat in the porch to wait her return, he was startled by hearing her voice in the shadow of the lower porch, accompanied by a hurried tapping against the door of the old couple. The half-reasoning man arose and would have moved toward it, but suddenly he stopped rigidly, with white and parted lips and vacantly distended eyeballs.

Meantime the voice and muffled tapping had brought the tremulous fingers of old Forsyth to the door-latch. He opened the door partly; a slight figure that had been lurking in the shadow of the porch pushed rapidly through the opening. There was a faint outcry quickly hushed, and the door closed again. The rays of a single candle showed the two old people hysterically clasping in their arms the figure that had entered, a slight but vicious-looking young fellow of five-and-twenty.

"There, —— it!" he said impatiently, in the voice whose rich depth was like Josephine's, but whose querulous accents were those of the two old people before him, "let me go, and quit that. I didn't come here to be strangled! I want some money—money, you hear! Devilish quick, too, for I've got to be off again before daylight. So look sharp, will you?"

"But, Stevy dear, when you didn't come that time three months ago, but wrote from Los Angeles, you said you'd made a strike at last, and"—

"What are you talking about?" he interrupted violently. "That was just my lyin' to keep you from worryin' me. Three months ago—three months ago! Why, you must have been crazy to have swallowed it; I hadn't a cent."

"Nor have we," said the old woman shrilly. "That hellish sister of yours still keeps us like beggars. Our only hope was you, our own boy. And now you only come to—to go again."

"But she has money; she's doing well, and she shall give it to me," he went on angrily. "She can't bully me with her business airs and morality. Who else has got a right to share, if it is not her own brother?"

Alas for the fatuousness of human viciousness! Had the unhappy couple related the simple facts they knew about the new guest at Burnt Ridge Ranche, and the manner of his introduction, they might have spared a catastrophe, and this chronicle would have ended here.

But the old woman broke into a vindictive cry: "Who else, Steve—who else? Why, the slut has brought a man here—a sneaking, deceitful, underhanded, crazy lover!"

"Oh, has she?" said the young man fiercely, yet secretly pleased at this promising evidence of his sister's human weakness. "Where is she? I'll go to her. She's in her room, I suppose," and before they could restrain him he had thrown off their impeding embraces and darted across the hall. The two old people looked at each other. Even this powerful ally, whose strength, however, they were by no means sure of, might succumb before the determined Josephine! Prudence demanded a middle course. "Ain't they brother and sister?" said the old man, with an air of virtuous toleration. "Let 'em fight it out."

The young man impatiently entered the room he remembered to have been his sister's. By the light of the moon that streamed upon the window he could see she was not there. He passed hurriedly to the door of her bedroom; it was open; the room was empty, the bed unturned. She was not in the house—she had gone to the mill. Ah! What was that they had said?—an infamous thought passed through the scoundrel's mind. Then, in what he half believed was an access of virtuous fury, he began by the dim light to rummage in the drawers of the desk for such loose coin or valuables as, in the perfect security of the ranch, were often left unguarded. Suddenly he heard a heavy footstep on the threshold, and turned.

An awful vision—a recollection, so unexpected, so ghostlike in that weird light that he thought he was losing his senses—stood before him. It moved forward with staring eyeballs and white and open lips from which a horrible, inarticulate sound issued that was the speech of no living man! With a single, desperate, almost superhuman effort, Stephen Forsyth bounded aside, leaped from the window and ran like a madman from the house. Then the apparition

HE APPEARED TO BE DUMBLY ABSORBED IN THE PROSPECT.

trembled, collapsed, and sank in an undistinguishable heap to the ground.

When Josephine Forsyth returned an hour later with her mill foreman she was startled to find her helpless patient in a fit on the floor of her room. With the assistance of her now converted and penitent employe, she had the unfortunate man conveyed to his room—but not until she had thoughtfully rearranged the disorder of her desk and closed the open drawers without attracting Dick Shipley's attention. In the morning hearing that the patient was still in the semi-conscious exhaustion of his late attack, but without seeing him, she sent for Dr. Duchesne. The doctor arrived while she was absent at the mill, where, after a careful examination of his patient, he sought her with some little excitement.

"Well?" she said with eager gravity.

"Well, it looks as if your wish would be gratified. Your friend has had an epileptic fit, but the physical shock has started his mental machinery again. He has recovered his faculties; his memory is returning; he thinks and speaks coherently; he is as sane as you and I."

"And"—said Josephine, questioning the doctor's knitted eyebrows.

"I am not yet sure whether it was the result of some shock he doesn't remember, or an irritation of the brain, that would indicate that the operation had not been successful and there was still some physical pressure or obstruction there; in which case he would be subject to these attacks all his life."

"And you think his reason came before the fit or after?" said the girl thoughtfully.

"I couldn't say. Had anything happened?"

"I was away, and found him on the floor on my return," she answered half uneasily. After a pause she asked, "Then he has told you his name and all about himself?"

"Yes, it's nothing at all! He was a stranger just arrived from the States, going to the mines—the old story; had no near relations, of course; wasn't missed or asked after; remembers walking along the ridge and falling over; name, John Baxter, of Maine." He paused, and relaxing into a slight smile, added: "I haven't spoiled your romance, have I?"

"No," she said, with an answering smile. Then as the doctor walked briskly away she slightly knitted her pretty brows, hung her head, patted the ground with her little foot beyond the hem of her gown, and said to herself: "The man was lying to him."

CHAPTER III.

On her return to the house Josephine apparently contented herself with receiving the bulletin of the stranger's condition from the servant, for she did not enter his room. She had obtained no theory of last night's incident from her parents, who, beyond a querulous agitation that was quickened by the news of his return to reason, refrained from even that insidious comment which she half feared would follow. When another day passed without her seeing him, she nevertheless was conscious of a little embarrassment when his attendant brought her the request that she would give him a moment's speech in the porch, whither he had been removed.

She found him physically weaker; indeed, so much so that she was fain, even in her embarrassment, to assist him back to the beach from which he had ceremoniously risen. But she was so struck with the change in his face and manner, a change so virile and masterful, in spite of its gentle sadness of manner, that she recoiled with a slight timidity as if he had been a stranger, although she was also conscious that he seemed to be more at his ease than she was. He began in a low, exhausted voice, but before he had finished his first sentence, she felt herself in the presence of a superior.

"My thanks come very late, Miss Forsyth," he said, with a faint smile, "but no one knows better than yourself the reason why, or can appreciate better their real value as a sign that the burden you have so generously taken on yourself is about to be lifted. I know all, Miss Forsyth. Since yesterday I have learned how much I owe you, even my life, I believe, though I am afraid I must tell you in the same breath how little that is worth to anyone. You have kindly helped and interested yourself in a poor stranger, who turns out to be a nobody, without friends, without romance and without even mystery. You found me lying in the road

THERE WAS A MOMENT OF SUSPENSE.

down yonder, after an accident that might have happened to any other careless tramp, and which scarcely gave me a claim to a bed in the county hospital, much less under this kindly roof. It was not my fault, as you know, that all this did not come out sooner; but while it doesn't lessen your generosity, it doesn't lessen my debt, and although I cannot hope to ever repay you I can at least keep the score from running up. Pardon my speaking so bluntly, but my excuse for speaking at all was to say 'Good-by' and 'God bless you.' Dr. Duchesne has promised to give me a lift on my way in his buggy when he comes."

There was a slight touch of bitterness in his voice in spite of its sadness, which struck the young girl as a weak and even ungentlemanly note in his otherwise self-abnegating and undemonstrative attitude. If he was a common tramp he wouldn't talk in that way; and if he wasn't, why did he lie? Her practical good sense here asserted itself.

"But you are far from strong yet; in fact, the doctor says you might have a relapse at any moment, and you have—that is, you seem to have no money," she said gravely.

"That's true," he said quickly. "I remember I was quite played out when I entered the settlement, and I think I had parted from even some little trifles I carried with me. I am afraid I was a poor find to those who picked me up, and you ought to have taken warning. But the doctor has offered to lend me enough to take me to San Francisco, if only to give a fair trial to the machine he has set once more agoing."

"Then you have friends in San Francisco?" said the young girl, quickly. "Those who know you? Why not write to them first, and tell them you are here?"

"I don't think your postmaster here would be preoccupied with letters for John Baxter if I did," he said, quietly. "But here is the doctor coming. Goodby."

He stood looking at her in a peculiar, yet half resigned way, and held out his hand. For a moment she hesitated. Had he been less dominant and strong she would have refused to let him go—have offered him some slight employment at the ranch; for oddly enough, in spite of the suspicion that he was concealing something, she felt that she would have trusted him, and he would have been a help to her. But he was not only determined, but she was all the time conscious that he was a totally different man from the one she had taken care of, and merely ordinary prudence demanded that she should know something more of him first. She gave him her hand constrainedly; he pressed it warmly.

Dr. Duchesne drove up, helped him into the buggy, smiled a good-natured but half perfunctory assurance that he would, look after "her patient," and drove away.

The whole thing was over, but so unexpectedly, so suddenly, so unromantically, so unsatisfactorily, that, although her common sense told her it was perfectly natural, proper, businesslike and reasonable, and, above all, final and complete, she did not know whether to laugh or be angry. Yet this was her parting from the man who had but a few days ago moved her to tears with a single honest gesture. Well, this would teach her what to expect. Well, what had she expected? Nothing.

Yet for the rest of the day she was unreasonably irritable, and, if the conjointure be not paradoxical, severely practical and inhumanly just. Falling foul of some presumption of Miguel's, based upon his prescriptive rights through long service on the estate, with the recollection of her severity toward his antagonist in her mind, she rated that trusted retainer with such pitiless equity and unfeminine logic that his hot Latin blood chilled in his veins, and he stood livid on the road. Then, informing Dick Shipley with equally relentless calm that she might feel it necessary to change all her foremen unless they could agree in harmony, she sought the dignified seclusion of her castle. But her respected parents, whose triumphant relief at the stranger's departure had emboldened them to await her return in their porch with the bended bows of invective and lifted javelins of aggression, recoiled before the resistless helm of this cold-browed Minerva, who galloped contemptuously past them.

Nevertheless, she sat late that night at her desk. The cold moon looked down upon her window and lit up the empty porch where her silent guest had mutely watched her. For a moment she regretted that he had recovered his reason, excusing herself on the practical ground that he would never have known his dependence, and he would have been better cared for by her. She felt restless and uneasy. This slight divergence from the practical groove in which her life had been set had disturbed her in many other things, and given her the first views of the narrowness of it.

Suddenly she heard a step in the porch. The lateness of the hour, perhaps some other reason, seemed to startle her, and she half rose. The next moment the figure of Miguel appeared at the doorway, and with a quick, hurried look around him and at the open window he approached her. He was evidently under great excitement, his hollow shaven cheek looked like a waxen effigy in the mission church; his yellow, tobacco-stained eye glittered like phosphorescent amber, his lank gray hair was damp and perspiring. The young girl cast a hurried glance at the open window and at the gun which stood in the corner, and then confronted him with clear and steady eyes, but a paler cheek.

Ah, he began in Spanish, which he himself had taught her as a child, it was a strange thing, his coming there to-night; but then, mother of God! it was a strange, a terrible thing that she had done to him—old Miguel, her uncle's servant; he that had known her as a muchacha; he that had lived all his life at the ranche—ay, and whose fathers before him had lived there all their lives and driven the cattle over the very spot where she now stood, before the thieving Americans came here! But he would be calm; yes, the senora should find him calm, even as she was when she told him to go. He would not speak. No, he—Miguel—would contain himself; yes, he had mastered himself, but could he restrain others? Ah, yes, others—that was it. Could he keep Manuel and Pepe and Dominguez from talking to the millman—that leaking sieve, that gabbling brute of a Shipley, for whose sake she had cast off her old servant that very day.

She looked at him with cold astonishment, but without fear. Was he drunk with aguardiente, or had his jealousy turned his brain? He continued gasping, but still pressing his hat against his breast.

Ah, he saw it all! Yes, it was to-day, the day he left. Yes, she had thought it safe to cast Miguel off now—now that he was gone!

Without in the least understanding him, the color had leaped to her cheek, and the consciousness of it made her furious.

"How dare you?" she said passionately. "What has that stranger to do with my affairs or your insolence?"

He stopped and gazed at her with a certain admiring loyalty. "Ah, so," he said, with a deep breath, "the senora is the niece of her uncle. She does well not to fear him—a dog"—with a slight shrug—"who is more than repaid by the senora's condescension. He dare not speak!"

"Who dare not speak? Are you mad?" She stopped with a sudden terrible instinct of apprehension. "Miguel," she said in her deepest voice, "answer me, I command you! Do you know anything of this man?"

It was Miguel's turn to recoil from his mistress. "Ah! my God, is it possible the senora has not suspected?"

"Suspect!" said Josephine haughtily, albeit her proud heart was beating quickly. "I suspect nothing. I command you to tell me what you know."

Miguel turned with a rapid gesture and closed the door. Then, drawing her away from the window, he said in a hurried whisper:

"I know that that man has not the name of Baxter! I know that he has the name of Randolph, a young gambler, who have won a large sum at Sacramento, and, fearing to be robbed by those he won of, have walk to himself through the road in disguise of a miner. I know that your brother Estaban have decoyed him here, and have fallen on him."

"Stop!" said the young girl, her eyes, which had been fixed with the agony of conviction, suddenly flashing with the energy of despair. "And you call yourself the servant of my uncle, and dare say this of his nephew?"

"Yes, senora," broke out the old man passionately. "It is because I am the servant of your uncle that I, and I alone, dare say it to you! It is because I perjure my soul, and have perjured my soul to deny it elsewhere, that I now dare to say it! It is because I, your servant, knew it from one of my countrymen who was of the gang—because I, Miguel, knew that your brother was not far away that night, and because I, whom you would dismiss, have picked up this pocketbook of Randolph's and your brother's ring which he have dropped and I have found beneath the body of the man you sent me to fetch."

He drew a packet from his bosom and tossed it on the desk before her.

"And why have you not told me this before?" said Josephine, passionately.

Miguel shrugged his shoulders.

"What good? Possibly this dog Randolph would die. Possibly he would live—as a lunatic. Possibly would happen what has happened! The senora is beautiful. The American has eyes. If the Dona Josephine's beauty shall finish what the silly Don Esteban's arm have began—what matter?"

"Stop!" cried Josephine, pressing her hands across her shuddering eyes. Then, uncovering her white and set face, she said rapidly: "Saddle my horse and your own at once. Then take your choice! Come with me and repeat all that you have said to that man, or leave this ranch forever. For it I live I shall go to him to-night and tell the whole story."

The old man cast a single glance at his mistress, shrugged his shoulders, and without a word left the room. But in ten minutes they were on their way to the county town.

Day was breaking over the distant Burnt Ridge—a faint, ghostly level, like a funeral pall, in the dim horizon—as they drew up before the gaunt, white-painted pile of the hospital building. Josephine uttered a cry. Dr. Duchesne's buggy was before the door. On its very threshold they met the doctor, dark and irritated.

"Then you heard the news?" he said, quickly.

Josephine turned her white face to the doctor's. "What news?" she asked, in a voice that seemed strangely deep and resonant.

"The poor fellow had another attack last night and died of exhaustion about an hour ago. I was too late to save him."

"Did he say anything? Was he conscious?" asked the girl, hoarsely.

"No; incoherent! Now I think of it, he harped on the same string that he did the night of the operation. What was it he said? you remember."

"'You'll have to kill me first,'" repeated Josephine in a choking voice.

"Yes; something about his dying before he'd tell. Well, he came back to it before he went off—they often do. You seem a little hoarse with your morning ride. You should take care of that voice of yours. By the way, it's a good deal like your brother's.

* * * * * *

The Chatelaine of Burnt Ridge never married

A RICH MAN'S PLACE.

Commercial Value of a Fine, Large Mansion to a Community.

DEMAND FOR HANDSOME HOUSES.

An Elaborate Design for a Wealthy Family's Dwelling.

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR MAN AND BEAST

[WRITTEN FOR THE DISPATCH.]

The very prevalent belief that it is folly to build a big house is not well founded. True enough, it is difficult to sell a "large place" of poor design, especially if it is lacking in modern conveniences and is in bad order, and has, perhaps, a noisy new factory as a near neighbor, but the fault must not be ascribed to size. As a matter of fact, fine, large mansions are comparatively scarce in this new country, and there is an actual demand for them.

In a general way, it may be said that a large house and barn that cost to build, let us say, $20,000, set in the midst of handsome grounds, the whole cost, including the new furniture that is needed for a new house, not to exceed $30,000, create "a place" that is worth $50,000. Where the grounds are exceptionally large and fine, the valuation may even be placed higher. So much for the commercial view; we are a commercial people, and it is proper

Perspective View of Mansion.

to apply commercial tests to every enterprise.

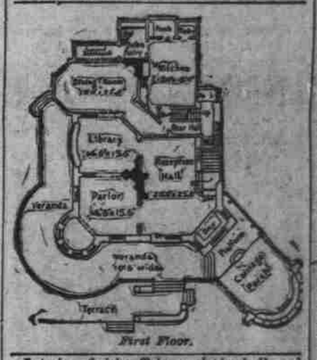
Beside providing a delightful and luxurious home for his family and an attractive place for the entertainment of his friends, the builder of a large house confers substantial benefits upon the community in which he lives. The building of the house gives employment to mechanics and increases trade for dealers; its beauty and conspicuous size make it one of the "sights" of the neighborhood; newspapers describe it; every owner of real estate and every merchant will realize that his values have increased, and every laborer will consider that he is more certain of continuous employment.

Here is a description of the design for a handsome mansion, with stable:

Size of structure: Width (front), including carriage porch and veranda, 77 feet; depth (side) over all, 80 feet.

Height of stories: Cellar, 7 feet 6 inches; first story, 10 feet; second story, 9 feet 6 inches, third story, 8 feet.

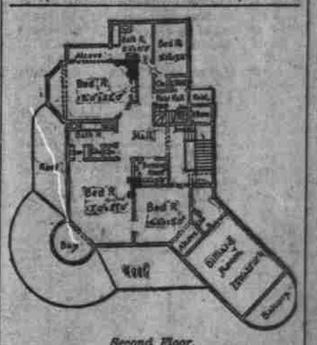
Exterior walls: Foundations, stone; first story, stone and frame; second story, shingles; roof, slate.



First Floor.

Interior finish: Trim, oak in hall and dining room; cherry in parlor and library. Ceilings paneled in hall, dining room and billiard room. A dado of lincrusta walton three feet wide in dining room, front hall, billiard room and up the main stairs. Oak seats in hall. Hardwood floors in first and second stories.

Exterior colors: First story main part the natural color of the stone used; clapboards (first story) of the rear frame part painted greenish drab; shingles on side walls of second and third stories dipped in yellowish red stain; all trim, including water table, corner boards, casings, cornices, bands, veranda posts and rails, painted dark red; front door (oak) finished with hard oil, showing



Second Floor.

natural color; all other outside doors and blinds painted dark green; sashes white; veranda floor stained walnut; verandas ceiling painted dark red; rainwater pipes dark red; brickwork oiled.

Accommodations: The principal rooms and their sizes, closets, etc., are shown by the floor plans given herewith. Besides these there are four bedrooms and three balconies in the third story, and there is a cellar under the whole house. Laundry under kitchen. Lavatory and water closet in the rear hall of first story; water closet in basement; two complete bath rooms with water closets on second floor; bath room and water closet on third floor for servants. Sliding doors throughout the first floor. Large windows on main staircase glazed with stained glass. Large wrought iron tank, holding 1,000 gallons, in the attic.

Cost: For all localities where the prices of materials and labor are about the same as those of New York City, $16,500. Cost may be reduced $2,000 or $3,000 by specifying less elaborate interior finish.

A description of the stable design is as follows: Size of structure, including shed,

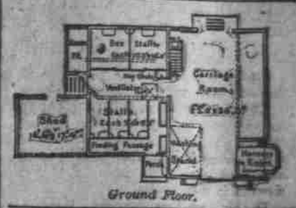
Perspective View of Stable.

64 feet 8 inches; depth, including roof over front entrance, 41 feet 2 inches. Height of stories—First story, 10 feet; man's room in second story, 8 feet.

Exterior walls: Foundations, stone; first story, clapboards; gables, shingles; roof, slate.

Interior finish: First floor ceiled with Georgia pine. All woodwork finished with hard oil. Stall and stable floors spruce laid with an incline to stall drains. All flooring treated with a hot tar preservative.

Exterior colors: Clapboards, Pompeilian red; trim, dark green; outside doors, dark green with light olive green panels; sashes, Pompeilian red; porch floor, dark red; porch ceiling, light olive green; rainwater pipes, dark green; brick work,



Ground Floor.

Pompeilian red; shingles on gables, Pompeilian red, dipped before laying.

Accommodations: In addition to the accommodations shown by the ground plan printed herewith there is a loft 30x45 feet open to the roof, except over the harness room where a stable man's room is plastered and finished. The stable portion may be extended to provide for more stalls in case they are required, at a cost of about $50 per foot for such extension.

Cost: built as described, in the vicinity of New York City, $2,800.

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Human Nature.

Chairman of Committee of the National Science Association—Fellow members, in calling upon Prof. Knowmore, I want to caution you as to the non-display of levity in any form, as he is an extremely dignified man, and such a breach would shock him intensely. Let us enter the gate.

The professor (indulging in unfortunate recreation)—Come on, now, Bulger; I'll make a rather out of you if it takes all year. —*Judge.*

Romance, but No Cash.

Detroit Free Press.

A recent storm in the West Indies brought to light the hull of an old vessel which sunk upward of 100 years ago, but to the chagrin of those who first discovered it the only treasure aboard was a barrel of poor rum, which the captain probably drew upon whenever he wanted to get in humor to kill a sailor or two.

Constipation,

IF not remedied in season, is liable to become habitual and chronic. Drastic purgatives, by weakening the bowels, confirm, rather than cure, the evil. Ayer's Pills, being mild, effective, and strengthening in their action, are generally recommended by the faculty as the best of aperients.

"Having been subject, for years, to constipation, without being able to find much relief, I at last tried Ayer's Pills. I deem it both a duty and a pleasure to testify that I have derived great benefit from their use. For over two years past I have taken one of these pills every night before retiring. I would not willingly be without them."—G. W. Bowman, 25 East Main st., Carlisle, Pa.

"I have been taking Ayer's Pills and using them in my family since 1857, and cheerfully recommend them to all in need of a safe but effectual cathartic." —John M. Boggs, Louisville, Ky.

"For eight years I was afflicted with constipation, which at last became so bad that the doctors could do no more for me. Then I began to take Ayer's Pills, and soon the bowels recovered their natural and regular action, so that now I am in excellent health."—S. L. Loughbridge, Bryan, Texas.

"Having used Ayer's Pills, with good results, I fully indorse them for the purposes for which they are recommended." —T. Conners, M. D., Centre Bridge, Pa.

Ayer's Pills,

PREPARED BY

Dr. J. C. Ayer & Co., Lowell, Mass.

Sold by all Druggists and Dealers in Medicine.

Bermuda Bottled.

"You must go to Bermuda. If you do not I will not be responsible for the consequences." "But, doctor, I can afford neither the time nor the money." "Well, if that is impossible, try

SCOTT'S EMULSION

OF PURE NORWEGIAN COD LIVER OIL.

I sometimes call it Bermuda Bottled, and many cases of

CONSUMPTION,

Bronchitis, Cough or Severe Cold

I have CURED with it; and the advantage is that the most sensitive stomach can take it. Another thing which commends it is the eliminating properties of the hypophosphites which it contains. You will see it for yourselves at your Druggist's, but see that it is the original SCOTT'S EMULSION.