

### THE MYSTERIOUS PORTRAIT.

In a small but handsomely furnished sitting-room in a London hotel a young lady was sitting in an easy chair, before a blazing fire, one dreary November afternoon. Her hat and cloak lay upon the table beside her, and from the eager, impatient glance she turned toward the door at every sound of a footstep on the staircase outside, it was evident that she expected a visitor.

At last the door opened and a tall, aristocratic-looking young man entered the room.

"Harry, what a long time you have been!" she exclaimed, springing up from her seat. "What news have you brought? What does your father say about our marriage?" hesitating with the shyness of a bride at the last word.

"Read for yourself, Helen," replied her husband, handing her an open letter, and standing opposite her, leaning against the marble mantelpiece, watching intently the expression of her fair face as she read.

"In marrying as you have done, you have acted in direct opposition to my wishes. From this day you are no longer my son, and I wash my hands of you forever!" "Harry, why did you not tell me of this before?" exclaimed Helen, as she read the hard, cruel words, looking up through the tears into her husband's face.

"My darling, what was there to tell? How could I know that my father would act in this hard-hearted manner? I knew that he wished me to marry the daughter of a nobleman living near Marston Hall, and so unite the two estates; but I had no idea he would cast me off for disobeying his wish. And even if I had known it," he added, fondly clasping his young bride to his heart, and kissing away the tears from her eyes, "I should not have acted differently. My Helen is worth fifty estates, and as long as she loves me I shall never regret the loss of Marston Hall and its fair acres. But, my love," he continued more seriously, "there is an end to your promised shopping expedition into Bond street. You will have to do without diamonds, now that your husband is a penniless outcast. Instead of the heir to £15,000 a year."

"Hush, Harry! Please don't talk like that," she said, hurt at his bitter tone. "You know that it was not of diamonds and dress I was thinking. But what are you going to do, Harry?" she continued, laying her hand upon his arm, and looking up sadly into his pale, set face. "You cannot work for a living?"

"And why not work for a living?" he exclaimed, in a determined voice. "Because I happen to be the son of a baronet, brought up and educated without any ideas or knowledge of business? But I will work for my living, and show my little wife that I am not quite unworthy of the trust and confidence she reposed in me when she placed this little hand in mine," he added, stooping to kiss the small white hand that rested confidently upon his arm.

It was while pursuing his favorite study of oil paintings among the famous galleries of Rome that Harry Marston wooed and won Helen Tracy, governess in an English family residing in Italy, and the orphan daughter of an officer in the army. Before he had known her a month, Harry, who had been in love—or fancied himself in love—with at least half a dozen different young ladies in as many months, felt that he had at last met his fate.

Delighted at the idea of being loved for himself alone, he had not told her of his real position, and it was not till the marriage ceremony was over that Helen discovered that she had married the eldest son of a baronet, and the heir to an estate producing £15,000 a year.

It was not without some inward misgivings that Harry wrote to his father telling him of his marriage, which were more than realized by the result, as we have seen by the letter from Sir Philip Marston, which awaited him at his club on his return to England with his bride.

But, full of confidence in his ability to maintain himself and wife by his own exertions, and thinking that surely his father would relent and be reconciled to him after a time, Harry troubled himself very little about his lost inheritance; and though their new home—consisting of three small, poorly furnished rooms in a back street—was very different from the grand old mansion to which he had hoped to take his bride, he set to work cheerfully at his favorite art, and tried hard to earn a living by painting pictures and portraits. But he soon found that it was not so easy as he thought.

It was all very well when he was heir to Marston Hall, and studied painting merely from love of art; but picture-dealers, who in those days had been all flattery and obsequiousness to the young heir, now that he finally wanted to sell his pictures, and sketches, shook their heads, and politely but firmly declined to purchase.

At last, one dreary afternoon, when Harry was sitting in the little room he called his studio, trying to devise some new scheme to replenish his slender purse, the servant opened the door and ushered a white-haired old gentleman into the room.

Placing his chair by the fire for his visitor, Harry inquired his business.

"You are a portrait-painter, I believe, sir?" said the old gentleman, looking at him through his gold spectacles.

"That is my profession, sir," replied Harry, delighted at the thought of having found a commission at last.

"Well, sir, I want you to paint the portrait of my daughter."

"With pleasure, sir," said Harry eagerly. "When can the lady give me the first sitting?"

"Alas, sir, she is dead—dead to me these twenty years, and I killed her—broke her heart with my harshness and cruelty!" exclaimed the old man, in an excited trembling voice.

A strange chill, came over Harry as the idea that his mysterious visitor must be

an escaped lunatic crossed his mind; but mastering, with an effort, his emotion, the stranger continued.

"Pardon me, young sir. This is of no interest to you. My daughter is dead, and I want you to paint her portrait from my description, as I perfectly well remember her twenty years ago."

"I will do my best, sir, but it will be no easy task, and you must be prepared for many disappointments," said Harry, when, having given a long description of the form and features of his long-lost daughter, the old man rose to depart, and for weeks he worked incessantly upon the mysterious portrait of the dead girl, making sketch after sketch, each of which was rejected by the remorse-stricken father, until the work began to exercise a strange kind of fascination over him, and he sketched face after face, as if under the influence of a spell.

At last, one evening, wearied with a day of fruitless exertion, he was sitting over the fire watching his wife, who sat opposite, busy with some needlework, when an idea suddenly flashed upon him.

"Tall, fair, with golden hair and dark blue eyes? Why Helen, it is the very picture of yourself!" he exclaimed, starting from his seat, taking his wife's fair face between his two hands, and gazing intently into her eyes.

Without losing a moment he sat down and commenced to sketch Helen's face; and when his strange patron called the next day, Harry was so busily engaged putting the finishing touches to his portrait that he did not hear him enter the room, and worked for some moments unconscious of his presence, until, with the cry of "Helen, my daughter!" the old man hurried him aside, and stood entranced before the portrait.

As for honesty, as a neighbor remarked, "If he found five shillings in the streets, he'd wear out ten shillings worth of strength and shoe-leather to find the owner."

One cold, dark night, Paul was returning from his work, with a loaf of bread under one arm and a violin under the other, and nearly fell over a small object crouched on the step.

"Bless us! what's this?" cried striving to regain his equilibrium. "Only me, sir!" and the small object stood up, and became a very pale, thin and ragged child.

"Are you hurt, little girl?" "No, sir." "What are you doing here in the cold?" "Nothing." "Why don't you go home?" "I ain't got any." "Dear me! Where's your mother?" "In heaven!"

At this Paul was dumfounded, and seeing that dark tears were stealing down the child's wan face, he thrust the violin under the arm which had held the bread, and, putting the other around the tiny figure, he said, "Oh, I've got a home, a real jolly place! Come up and see."

And this is the way old Paul came to have a neat little housekeeper, and to be buying calico gowns and shoes out of his poor salary.

People wondered at the sight of this bent old man, hitherto alone and uncared for, now walking daily to his work with his hand upon the shoulder of the odd yet pretty-faced girl, looking at her with honest pride brightening his eyes, and laughing as loud as she whenever the joke came in. But old Paul looked unconcerned, evaded the questions of the curious, and learned to love nothing in this world better than the little waif, Camilla.

There were many, many days when rheumatism drew Paul up by the fire in the old back attic, and drew the very last penny out of the dilapidated purse; but brave little Camilla, never forgetting how near death she had been on that bitter night of their meeting, always found a word to ward off hunger, and courage to keep them both bright until help came.

The winter of 186—come in like a lion, a many a poor wretch well remembers, and with the blast came Paul's enemy. He turned, one night, a sad face from his warm corner in Bertman's shop among the violins, and hobbled up the cold street, feeling the approach of the old rheumatic pains, and wondering what would become of his poor little Camilla.

His excitement carried him up to the last flight of stairs, and, hearing Camilla's voice, he paused to rest and to listen. She was singing in that sweet and expressive manner that made her voice seem to him the sweetest and purest he had ever heard. At the end of another stanza he took breath, and another voice said:

"Child, you astonish me. Either I am a poor judge of music, or else your voice is the finest I ever heard. You are right in preferring its cultivation to anything else."

An electric thrill shot through old Paul's frame, and quickened his blood to a rapidity that quite carried away his rheumatic pains, and in a twinkling he was up stairs and in his little attic.

He was terrified at the sound of a voice; but the sight of a handsome and polished gentleman, with diamonds in his snowy linen, a heavy ring upon his dainty white hand, unquestionable breadth upon his back, in close conversation with Camilla, whose wondrous beauty had of late startled even his dull perception, was more than Paul could bear.

He was a very small man—had been in his youth—and now that Time's withering fingers had touched him, he was shriveled and dried, like withered fruit, but in his virtuous indignation he puffed out to its fullest extent, and in a falsetto voice piped, "Camilla, how dare you invite anyone to come here?"

"Oh, Uncle Paul!" This is Mr. Clavering the gentleman whose—whose—"Whose mother she saved from death. Your niece, sir, a few days since was passing through our crowded thoroughfare, when my mother's carriage drew up to the pavement. The horses were restive, and bidding the driver attend to them, she began to descend unassisted. Her foot was on the step, when the animals sprang forward and flung her violently from her foothold. But for the sudden act of your niece, who received my mother in her strong, young arms, the fall might have proved a fatal one. I came to day at my mother's earnest request, to express heartfelt gratitude, and to offer—"

### CAMILLA.

Paul Smith was a poor old man. He had a back room in the top of a noisy lodging-house, where he slept nights and munched his meals of bread and cheese (or bologna sausage, when he could afford it), and from whence he crept, as harmless and unnoticed as a fly, down to the corner of the dingy street, to the little music shop of Carl Bermann, a music settler somewhere in Soho.

There he tinkered all day on broken violins and other instruments, save on Saturday afternoons, when he went to the house of a small tradesman, to teach the piano to three or four very stupid girls. Sundays, he curled up in his den and amused himself—nobody knew how—until Monday morning.

There are a few certainties; he never went to church but he picked ragged children from the pavement when they fell near him, and gave them half pennies when he had any; shared his dinner often with a mangy, dirty cur, who acted as a sort of escape valve for the ill-temper of half the men and women in the street; and he roused Pat Ryan from his midnight snooze in the gutter, and literally carried him home to Norah and the children.

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"You needn't offer Camilla penny, sir. She'll never suffer while I've a pair of hands to work for her," said Paul.

"You mistake me. I do not wish to insult you, but would raise this child from poverty and would educate her, that she might be of use to you and to herself, and become a refined woman. Don't let your self love stand in your light, and shut it out from her. She sings like a prima donna, and wishest to study music."

The large lustrous eyes of the child turned imploringly to the strange guardian.

"Lor, Camilla, I can't stand in your way. I know you're every bit a born lady, if your poor mother did die in a hotel among wretches who turned her child into the cold as soon as the breath had left her body; but, deary me, I can't part with you."

"And you shall not. Let me serve little Camilla, and she shall never leave you, but shall prove a blessing to you in your old age."

Paul could say nothing and the strange visitor departed, with no further injury to his darling than an eloquent glance from an expressive pair of eyes.

Then from the gloomy lodgings to a snug set of chambers a few streets off, went Paul and Camilla, and the poor wretch began to look like quite another being in his clean work clothes and Sunday suit, earned from the increased number of pupils provided through the willing assistance of their philanthropical friend Clavering.

Day after day, Camilla went with her books to the teacher so strangely provided and after a little time, there came days when passers-by paused to listen to the warblings of the rich young voice.

When she had been there six months, she entered one morning to find Mrs. Clavering in the music master's room.

"What do you propose to do with your famous pupil?" asked her soft voice.

"Madame, Camilla is capable of doing anything in a musical way. She will be a songstress of whom this country will be proud. Ah, here she is!"

"You have improved wonderfully, my child," said the lady, holding out her gloved hand. I came to bring you Richard's farewell. He leaves London to-night, and will remain abroad many years. Here is a gift as a token of remembrance."

She did not understand that Mrs. Clavering had placed a pretty necklace of coral in her hand, and then gathered up her shawl and departed, but, when her teacher spoke, she cried as if in mortal pain, and without a word, flew down the street towards home. As she turned the corner she rushed pell-mell into the arms of a gentleman, who, on seeing her pale and tearful said, "Why, little Camilla! What is the matter?"

"Oh, Mr. Clavering, you are going away!"

Richard Clavering's fine face grew sad and expressive, as the tearful eyes looked into his own, and for the first time, he comprehended that he was a young man, and that his protegee was stealing from childhood into beautiful girlhood, and was an undeniable beauty.

"Camilla, I am going away, but will you wait for my return?"

"Wait for you? I am not going to run away."

"You do not comprehend me. Well, it is better so. Perhaps two years later you may understand me. Good-bye, Camilla. Kiss me good-bye."

It was a very quiet street, and so Camilla lifted her head and kissed him. In all probability the child would have kissed him in the main thoroughfare as readily as there, and I only mention the fact of the street being a quiet one, to silence the startled propriety of those who are shocked at the publicity of it.

Well, they are parted. He to go over the sea, she to remain at home and improve the opportunities he had placed before her.

The great heart of the music-loving public was agitated with mingled emotions of joy, pride, astonishment, and awe. A new songstress had been criticised, picked over piecemeal, ground down to the finest point, dissected, examined through the most perfect microscope, and pronounced perfect! And now the manager of a first class fashion-patronized theater had engaged her for an almost fabulous sum, as the world was to hear her voice.

hope, of doubt, of pain. Nearer, still nearer it sounded, and hope half-drowned the doubts, and yet a plaintive sorrow seemed to remain. It came near, and the sorrow was a half-expected, trembling glimpse of something better; and then suddenly the strange voice broke forth in a triumphal strain; the listeners held their breath as the wondrous notes rang out upon the air and then died away.

For a moment a deadly silence reigned but it was for a moment only; then the building vibrated with a crash of enthusiasm that came from the music-crazed audience. Men rose in their seats and hundreds flung the floral tributes at her feet.

In one of the boxes, above the one where the music master and manager sat, an old, odd-looking man waved his handkerchief and cheered with great tears falling down his wrinkled cheeks; and Camilla looked up to that one box, and gave him the only smile that crossed her lips during the night.

But at last the curtain fell, and Camilla, weary and worn, went off to the dressing-room. Some one stood in the shadow of the side scene, and when she asked permission to pass, caught her by the hands and drew her out into the light.

"Camilla, little Camilla, is it you? Have I been listening to my little girl all this glorious evening? Speak to me! I am bewildered and blind."

"Mr. Clavering! When did you come? Oh, I am so glad, so happy," she exclaimed.

"Are you glad? Are you happy? Oh, is this my welcome? Have you waited for me, my love, my darling?"

She put her hands over her eyes murmuring: "You do not mean your words. I am dreaming! I am mad!"

"You are here wide awake, Camilla, and I am asking you to love me and to be my wife."

She drew him away for a brief moment and laid her head within his arms. Then she passed into her dressing room, and she shut out her hand, saying: "Oh, Richard, take me away. I am sick of all this."

"And you will only sing—"

"In your nest. Come, we must not forget Uncle Paul. He is waiting in the box for me." Uncle Paul, cried Camilla. "Why, you, naughty boy, you are fast asleep. Come, it is time to go home. Ah!"

She started back, with a cry, for the hand she touched was icy cold, and fell back, stiff and helpless.

"Camilla, darling, come away. I will attend to him."

"Oh, Richard."

"Hush, love. He is beyond us now. Those strains of music have carried him to heaven, from whence they came."

The poor old man was dead. With the consummation of his heart's wish, his quiet, unpretending, unoffending life had passed out into the new existence.

There were loud growls in the music-loving world, but nothing ever came of them; for Richard Clavering removed their singing bird so defiantly that few knew the cause of her flight; and now she sings only to him

### True to His Aunt.

Gambetta, the French journalist and politician, paid filial duty to "the aunt" with whom he has always lived. He now and then made a show of resistance to her will, which was expressed with despotic authority, but gave in the moment he saw that resistance hurt her. Not long previous to the election, two years ago, of the chamber of deputies, the relations of a west of France heiress proposed to him a match with her which would have given him immediate disposal of 7,000,000 francs, and opened to him the succession to a larger fortune. The young lady was pretty and accomplished, and well pleased to be set on a pedestal as Gambetta's wife. She had, however, one condition to make which the suitor took as a sign of a bad disposition and vulgar mind. "The aunt" was not to be produced in the projected establishment. Her style was not quite the thing for a gilded drawing room. Could not the old lady be sent to her family at Nice? Gambetta explained the relation in which she stood to him, and the indecency of deserting her. The heiress pursed up her red lips and shrugged her shoulders. "Adieu," said the tribune; "we were not made to understand each other."

### The Wealth on Fifth Avenue.

The New York Times is of the opinion that no street in the world represents in the short space of two miles and a half anything like the enormous aggregate of wealth represented by Fifth Avenue residents between Washington Square and Central Park. It gives a few names: Dr. Rhineland, \$3,000,000; M. O. Roberts, \$5,000,000; Moses Taylor \$5,000,000; August Belmont; \$8,000,000; Robert L. and A. Stuart, \$5,000,000; Mrs. Paron Stevens, \$2,000,000; Amos R. Eno, \$5,000,000; John Jacob and William B. Astor, \$60,000,000; Mrs. A. T. Stewart \$50,000,000; Pierre Lorillard, \$3,000,000; James Kernochan, \$2,000,000; William H. Vanderbilt, \$75,000,000; Mrs. Calvert Jones, \$2,000,000; James Gordon Bennett, \$4,000,000; Frederick Stevens, \$10,000,000; Lewis Lorillard, \$1,000,000. Total, \$248,000,000. Here we have 18 families living near each other who derive fixed yearly incomes from a capital of between \$240,000,000 and \$250,000,000.

A gentleman observing a servant-girl, who was left handed, placing the knives and forks on the dinner-table in the same awkward position, remarked to her that she was laying them left-handed.

"Oh, indeed!" said she, "so I have. Be pleased, sir, to help me turn the table round!"