

The Williston Graphic

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NEIGHBORS.

I. In a garret, and she—well-a-day!—
Looking through curtains of lace,
Dreaming the beautiful moments away,
While I sing a song of her face,
But never a glance from her beautiful eyes;
She knows not my songs, and she hears
not my sighs.

Here is her picture. And is it not fair?
See—the red lips, and the fall
Of her sunshiny tresses: the gold of her
hair
And the bright eyes that dream over
all!
This is her picture—too glad for a saint;
The picture that Love led the Unknown to
paint!

I have passed the flowered window that
looks o'er the lawn,
And carried the light of that fact
(The light that was bright as the rosiest
dawn.)
Up to this desolate place.
And here I have fashioned it. (What is
her name?)
And where shall I gather the gold for a
frame?

I have fashioned it here, where my heart-
hopes have died—
Tolling unloved and alone.
(The carriage is here. She is going to
ride,
And she speaks in a silvery tone
To the footman: "Away! from this
desolate place;
But she leaves me—thank Heaven—the
light of her face!")
—F. L. Stanton, in Atlanta Constitution.

Madre Maria's Magic

By G. C. Terry.

ON the very corner of Calle de los
Pescaditos Blancos (street of the
Little White Fish), just where it juts
into the little Plaza de San Pablo, is
the shop of Dona Antonia. It is a
clean, tidy little place, and in it you
can buy the best cigarettes to be
found in all Mexico, and you can be
served at all hours of the day with
thick Spanish chocolate, hot and
pasty—for Dona Antonia is Spanish,
and therefore knows how to make
delicious chocolate—also, you can buy
there pins, needles, lottery tickets,
native Mexican sugar in tall brown
cones, macaroni fresh from Italy,
sardines, olives, Spanish wine and
many other things, for, while the
shop is a small one, it contains what
the proprietor proudly calls "an as-
sort of the most complete and fin-
ished."

Dona Antonia herself waits on her
varied customers. All of the common
folk in that part of the city patronize
her, and so she is kept very busy, with
hardly time enough to attend to her
yellow-headed parrot, or to keep the
"mariposa" light burning under the
picture of the Virgin which hangs on
the wall.

Things were different when Carlos
the torero was there—good-looking,
swaggering Carlos, in his gaudy
bullfighter's shirt and tight trousers,
with his pig-tailed head surmounted
by the flat torero hat—but Carlos has
most cruelly been banished. Not that
he ever did any work in the shop, but
the gods of bullfighters forbid! But he
at least was always willing to lounge
in the door or against the counter,
thereby scaring away robbers, and
even on some occasions so far un-
bent his dignity as to serve the chocolate
to customers of his own fraternity,
while Dona Antonia beamed from
afar. For she worshipped Carlos with
the adoration that only a fat and
homely woman of 40 can feel for a
young and handsome man.

Ever since bullfighting had gone
out in Mexico, three years before, she
had waited on Carlos, hand and foot,
giving him cheerfully and lovingly
from her savings, and working doubly
hard in order that he might appear
gorgeous on feast days and Sundays.
His clothes were of the best that
money could buy; his pointed Mexi-
can shoes were of the finest yellow
leather; his vivid scarlet neckties
were always of satin or softest silk;
none of the bullfighters who lolled on
San Antonio street or in front of the
Cantina del Tio Pepe smoked such
long, fine, black cigars as did Carlos,
and none of them could boast the sil-
ver and copper coins which always
jingled in the pockets of his braided
torero jacket. In short, Carlos was
in the greatest of luck, the very high-
est of clover, and did not realize his
blessings until it was too late. For
all this magnificence and luxury was
taken away from him, through his
own fault, and that of Panchita.

Not that Carlos cared for pretty, co-
quettish Panchita; not a bit of it!
Carlos loved no one but his own lazy,
good-looking self, and nothing but
his own ease and comfort. For Dona
Antonia, who furnished him with the
good things of life which he so much
cared for and appreciated, he had a
kindly, fraternal regard; being, more-
over, aware of the furious temper
which lurked beneath Dona Antonia's
good-natured exterior, he had always
been careful to avoid entanglements
with younger and handsomer women,
or, at least, to keep such affairs from
her sharp and very suspicious ears.

In the case of Panchita, however,
it was a difficult matter, for she was
either too careless or too much in
love to dissemble. She could not or
would not refrain from casting co-
quettish glances at the bullfighter,
even when Dona Antonia was by, and
finally even took to purchasing her
thread and needles and other supplies
from Dona Antonia's shop, refusing
there to be served by anyone but Car-
los himself.

Naturally this state of affairs could
not last for long, and things came to
a crisis one day when Dona Antonia
overheard Panchita addressing some
coquettish remarks to the torero, and,
moreover, caught him in the very act
of kissing her pretty though needle-
worn hands. After which there was
a scene, and very nearly battle, mur-
der and sudden death. Dona Antonia,
being a very powerful woman, and,
moreover, greatly infuriated, scrupled
not to fall upon the luckless couple,
tooth and nail. Carlos managed to
escape with his life and a blackened
eye, while Panchita, at the end of the
day, was minus one tooth and which
seemed at first sight to be fully half

of her pretty black hair. The noise
of the fight naturally attracted atten-
tion, and the combatants were finally
separated, much the worse for wear,
but nevertheless still breathing forth
defiance and snarlings. Carlos had
most unaccountably disappeared after
the first two rounds and could not
now be found; pitying neighbors
escorted homeward the battered and
wailing Panchita, while the equally
wailing Dona Antonia barred her shop
door in the very face of gaping cus-
tomers and locked the kitchen door
upon herself. No, not even that grace-
less Carlos should enter, if, as was al-
ways his custom, he came home peni-
tent and entreating at supper time.
For once Carlos should be severely
handled and taught sense and decent
behavior.

That was at eight o'clock. At nine
Carlos had not yet returned; at ten
there was still no sign of him, and
Dona Antonia was beginning to grow
very uneasy. Something must have
happened, for no matter what was
wrong, he always came for his meals.
At 11 he was still missing; so, at 12,
the poor woman put on her tapalo and
went forth in search of him.

At the Cantina del Tio Pepe she
found him, weeping bitterly in the
midst of sympathetic comrades, who
reproached the lady for her cruel
treatment of poor Carlos. Truly, she
had not seen what everyone else well
knew—that Carlos loved no one but
her. "All the world" knew that the
shameless Panchita pursued her
coquettish ways, and her desire that
she should ill-treat poor, faithful Car-
los, who had been driven to drink and
threatened suicide through her hard-
ness of heart!

Two comrades carried homeward the
incapacitated Carlos, with Dona An-
tonia weeping remorsefully behind
them, and sundry other toreros wink-
ing and chucking in turn behind her
back. For, while in luck, Carlos was
as generous a torero as ever lived, and
it would not do, for their own sakes,
to have Dona Antonia cut off his sup-
plies. And so, as the cortege wended
its way toward the little shop of Dona
Antonia, one shameless bullfighter
after another poured into her ear
tales of poor Carlos' persecution at the
hands of Panchita. Well knew the
Virgin, they declared solemnly, that
Carlos cared for no woman but his
own adored Antonia. Had he not
sworn it to them many a time and
oath? And was it his fault if infatuated
girls would make unwanted love to
him?

Before the noisy departure of the
toreros, Dona Antonia's plans for ven-
geance had been completed. When she
went to sleep that night she said sev-
eral padre nuestros before the image
of the Virgin and promised to burn
long and costly candles before her pic-
ture every day of the year if certain
prayers were granted. And then, wise-
ly believing that God (and also the Vir-
gin) helps those who help themselves,
the wily shop-keeper made her plans
for an early visit next morning to old
Madre Maria, the witch, who would
tell her, for a consideration, what she
should do with that graceless Panchita.

Madre Maria lived in a small, dark,
smelly tenement far out. Here Dona
Antonia found her at dawn, and into
the sympathetic ear of the shriveled
old woman she unfolded her tale of
woe, while Madre Maria smoked away
steadily at her cigar stub, nodding her
white head at intervals as she listened.
Good! Then what the nina wanted
was a cosa—a small charm, that is to
say—for the shameless Panchita? Or
something not dangerous, the nina un-
derstood; merely a little thing that
would, after taking it, cause her to
lose any love for Don Carlos? Aie, but
it would be easy! And only a matter
of five days at that; if the nina would
listen, paying to her pobre madre first
the small number of eight reales, she
would tell her what to do.

Half an hour later, with a wee bot-
tle of black fluid in her pocket, and a
thin, black chicken muffed up in her
rebozo, Dona Antonia turned toward
the Street of the Little White Fish.
Joy and hope once more shone in
her eyes and beamed from her fat,
red face, even though the advice and
charm of Madre Maria had cost \$1.80.

Most assuredly it was old Madre
"day." Hardly was the broad back
of Dona Antonia turned than another
client appeared upon the scene, and
bespeaking advice and a mild charm
that would destroy the love of a rival
woman. In the same manner did
Madre Maria advise the second applic-
ant—no less a person than Panchita
—selling her, in turn, some white fluid
and an attenuated white chicken, the
mate of the black one sold to Dona
Antonia. "Of a truth did the chicken
come somewhat high," the old witch
had stated to each applicant, "but fig-
ure to yourself, nina mia, that it is
a charmed one, wherein great power
lies, and it has moreover eaten for
weeks only charmed food given it by
the hand of your Madre Maria!" As a
fact, both chickens had been stolen
by a malicious Maria in the dark of
last night's moon—but no matter!

So Panchita, her mind at ease, and
also believing that all of her sorrows
were now soon to be ended, hurried
joyfully home, with bottle and chicken
hidden safely in the depths of her bu-
rebozo. Meanwhile, at intervals dur-
ing that entire day, chuckles of heart-
y and most unwonted mirth issued from
the dark room of Madre Maria, who,
while not ordinarily a merry person-
age, seemed mightily amused over
something.

Never in his life had the astonished
Carlos been more kindly and gener-
ously treated than during the next few
days. Dona Antonia seemed to think
that nothing was good enough for him,
and, filling his pockets with coins, fair-
ly pushed him into the streets, with
injunctions that he enjoy himself with
his companions. Had the torero been
a suspicious man he might have
thought Dona Antonia was engaged in
secret pursuits of which she wished
him to know nothing. Not being sus-
picious, however, he hastened to obey
her commands and have a joyous time.

As a matter of fact, there was nothing
evil in the actions of Dona Antonia,
one left alone, save that one might
have accused her of foolishly pamper-
ing and overfeeding a debilitated black
chicken, which she had housed in the
charcoal-box and fed thrice daily on
black zapotes and tortillas made from
black zapotes. But no one—Carlos least
of all—ever thought of this, who, like
endured for a brief span only, and

therefore no one unjustly condemned
her.
Now, in the great tenement house
just across the street, this same
chicken-pampering process was secretly
being gone through with by pretty
Panchita, save that her fowl was fed
solely on white zapotes and light-
colored tortillas. As in the case of Dona
Antonia's chicken, which flourished
and day by day waxed fatter and fatter,
her white chicken also thrived and grew
plump until, by the end of the fourth
day, you would not have recognized
either of these "charmed chickens."

On the evening of the fourth day,
Dona Antonia arrayed herself in her
best purple skirt and black lace man-
tilla, with the announcement to the
dumfounded Carlos that she was going
to the house of Panchita for the pur-
pose of asking her and her mother to
eat the midday meal with them the
next day, since it would be a festa and
Panchita accordingly at leisure.

For many months it had been the
custom of good-hearted Dona Antonia
to invite Panchita and her blind old
mother to her own savory feast-day
dinners. In view of last week's quar-
rel, however, Panchita's mother was
even now tearfully lamenting that
their dinner would have to be of tor-
tillas and beans. So that, driven to it
by her mother's tears and her own
urgent desire to break bread with Dona
Antonia's Panchita, was about to start
on a mission of peace, when that per-
son herself appeared, with jovial ex-
pressions of sorrow that any misun-
derstanding had arisen between the
two families, and her desire that her
two good friends should join her next
day for the usual festa meal. Of a ver-
ity they must come. Carlos had prom-
ised to go with some companions to the
Naucaalpam bull-fight, wherefore she
would be all alone and sad if they did
not come to eat with her.

Peace was restored in full, and soon
Dona Antonia bustled home to prepare
for the next day's festa. Poor Carlos
was hustled inconspicuously out of the
house, while Dona Antonia, doors and
windows carefully shut and locked, pro-
ceeded to kill and boil the black chick-
en, first carefully burying its feathers
and bones. All that night the mortal
remains of that charmed chicken sim-
mered away in a tiny olla. The result-
ant broth was carefully collected next
morning by Dona Antonia, and, with
the black fluid from the little bottle of
Madre Maria, was mixed into a very
savory soup, flavored with sherry, and
garnished with aguacates—of which
there was only one plateful. Not that
any of the trio had to do without soup,
however—far from it. Soup of the very
best, also made of chicken, with sherry
and tiny bits of garlic flavoring it, was
to be served to herself and Panchita's
blind mother.

The dinner was a great success, de-
spite the fact that only three women
were present, and that the hostess was
called away from the table at least four
times to speak to customers out of the
shop. The first of these calls gave Pan-
chita her opportunity, for Panchita
also had killed a chicken the previous
night, and in a small bottle, carried in
her pocket, was the boiled-down result
thereof. The door between the dining-
room and the shop had been carefully
closed by Dona Antonia, so that her
guests might not be molested by noises
from without—never was there a bet-
ter chance. In two seconds Panchita
had uncorked her bottle and emptied
its contents hastily into Dona An-
tonia's soup. Then, concealing the bot-
tle, she was unconcernedly swallowing
her soup when Dona Antonia returned
to the table. Neither of the two women
for a moment suspected that they were
partaking of charmed soup, made in
identically the same manner, from the
charmed chickens of Madre Maria, and
warranted to kill the love of any man,
woman or child on the terrestrial globe.

Now, few of us place overmuch ere-
dence in signs, tokens, and, least of all,
charms. For which reason I am loath
to tell you of the final result of the
charms so ingeniously and unsuspect-
ingly exchanged between these two
jealous women; still, if you are incred-
ulous, it is not my fault.
That very same night, reaching home
late and in a somewhat intoxicated con-
dition, poor Carlos tasted the first
fruits of the charm. For, in spite of
all blandishments and words that
should have melted the heart of even a
stone image, Dona Antonia fell upon
the luckless torero and, with abuse of
the strongest, literally smote him hip
and thigh, after which she cast him
forth into the outer darkness of the
Street of the Little White Fish, cruelly
bolting the door in his face and an-
nouncing that she had now washed her
hands of him and his shiftless com-
rades, Dona Antonia.

This from the woman who had
adored him during three long years;
this from the very woman who had
that very morning given him all her
available money and entreated him to
come home early. Poor Carlos! For,
even though he returned several times
to tearfully beg for mercy, there was
shown him only freezing contempt and
coldness, with at last the announce-
ment that his next call would be
watched by the gendarme at the cor-
ner, for which reason he had best keep
away for good and all from the shop of
Dona Antonia.

Being as it were off with the old love,
the hapless torero bethought himself
of a new. Was there not pretty Pan-
chita, for whom he had always enter-
tained a fondness? Doubtless even yet
she was fretting her heart out for him
and his neglect. He would go to her
and console her.

How Panchita received him deponet
sayeth not; of how she sped him on his
departure admiring neighbors in the
tenement still speak, though of the or-
der of his going Carlos remembers lit-
tle more than a vision of multitudinous
bright stars, and a "bump, bump" that
seemingly lasted for centuries, mean-
while his surprised and helpless body
hit the steep stairs at the rate of sixty
times a minute, with Panchita and the
neighbors cheering from above.

The "charm" was complete. Never
more was the torero, Carlos Garcia,
seen in the Street of the Little White
Fish, and never were better friends than
Dona Antonia and the girl Panchita,
who, strange to say, have never realized
just how the thing really occurred, and
have, in fact, forgotten all about Mad-
re Maria and the black and white
chickens.—San Francisco Argonaut.

Not a Horseless Joke.
Horseless wagons are increasing in
number, says the Chicago Tribune, in
beleguered Mafeking every day.



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CHAPTER IX.

"It she recognized me at all, she sure-
ly saw that I was coming, and left to
avoid me," Stanton said to himself as
he looked in vain along the gallery.
"And really, now, I don't blame her
for not running to meet the fellow for
whom she found a wife, I hope I shall
be able to show her some slight im-
provement if ever we do chance to
meet."

With that he dropped the subject and
went on with his itinerary; but the in-
cident had roused in him an intense
longing for home, which grew strong-
er and stronger the more he tried to
shake it off. He faithfully obeyed his
mute director, following its commands
through North Africa and Europe, till
months later he was strolling through
the Place de la Concorde with a promi-
nent Parisian, congratulating himself
that only Spain and Italy remained be-
fore him.

The obelisk attracted his attention,
and he paused as a hieroglyphic car-
ried him away to his friend in Bagdad.
Suddenly her face shut out the obelisk.
Her voice drowned all other
sounds. Her eyes flashed in his
thoughts.

With the quickness of reflex action
he turned, as a pair of fiery cobs dashed
past him towards the Bois de Boulogne.
She was driving them. Beside her sat
a white-haired man, and even in the
first shock Stanton realized that he had
seen his face before. Behind them sat
the footman.

Her eyes met his in one flash of recog-
nition, but before he could move she
was gone. He stood silently watching
while the carriage disappeared between
the marble groups, only vaguely he
realized that the Frenchman was say-
ing:

"So you know her. Happy man! But
you cannot win her, nor can anyone
else. They say she has the wealth to
purchase a prince, but she is always
beside her father. She has beauty to
capture anything, but she will look at
nothing. There are noblemen without
number who would give their titles for
such a glance as you received. Happy
man! How I envy you!"

Stanton winced as he thought how
had questioned that woman, in his of-
fice, less than a year before.
"How she must have laughed at me,
even if she did pity me and provide me
with a wife!" He thought, as they
walked away. The idea grew and de-
veloped, till he said to himself: "I'm
under no obligations not to see this
woman. She came to me without an
apology, when she had business, I
went to her. I'll tell her I am deter-
mined to be a different man and make
myself worthy of a real wife. She
helped me to win Esther Thordmike's
assistance. She may be willing to help
me to win her love."

He finally recalled the father's face
as that of Thaddeus Braddon, of Brad-
don & Burridge. One of the last vic-
tories he had won at the bar was an
almost hopeless case against Brad-
don & Burridge. Stanton had noticed only
the junior partner in the court room,
but Brad-
don was there, and chuckled
in a most unaccountable way as John
Olmstead's nephew twisted his wit-
nesses about till they said precisely
what they did not mean and the case
went against him in spite of glaring
facts to the contrary.

Stanton easily learned the location
of their lodgings. He found the place
the next afternoon, and learned from
a servant that Mr. Braddon and his
daughter had left Paris quite suddenly
and unexpectedly that morning, even
forgetting to tell him where they were
going or when they would return.

"The tips of his teeth showed under
his mustache as Stanton walked slowly
away, saying to himself:
"She did know me, and there's no
doubt she intends to avoid me. Well,
I'll not keep her away from Paris, right
in the height of the season. I'll leave
myself in the morning. But we shall
meet sometime, my beauty, on this side
of the ocean or the other; and when we
do I have a word to say to you. I'm
ashamed of the man you knew me, but
I'm not ashamed to look you in the face
and tell you so. You are my only pos-
sible means of reaching Esther Thord-
mike, and you must help me. You must.
That's all there is to it."

Stanton took pains to have definite
statements appear in the two journals
which all Americans read, that he had
left Paris for Spain and Italy, whence
he should sail for America late in No-
vember, without returning to the cap-
ital.

"If we meet again it will be your own
fault now, and you will have to listen
to me. See?" he observed; but the
weeks slipped away without such an
incident, and he found himself in Na-
ples upon the eve of sailing home.

How he had longed for that time to
come!
Now it suddenly appeared to him that
he had no home.

The stately, old-fashioned mansion
that he loved would be well aired and
warmed to receive him on the 6th of
December, for he had already sent the
order to Sam and his wife. But was
that all there was of home?

The good old couple would welcome
him back—back to sleep and bath and
breakfast. But even that would in-
crease their cares, and necessitate more
servants in the house to annoy them.
It could not prove any real pleasure to
them.
"What is there, after all, in this going
home that I've been longing for?" he
asked himself, and the loneliness in his
mind answered: "Nothing."
He was sitting at one of the little
tables, smoking, in that wondrously
picturesque garden stretching between
the broad and beautiful Chiaja and the
incomparable Bay of Naples.
San Martino looked down from the
hill behind; Capri lay a bright dot on
the blue water, and flashed, as the sun
went down, like a diamond set in a
mirror of ruby and sapphire. The black
murderer of Pompeii and Herculaneum
drew a royal Tyrian mantle about his
feet, and shrank away in the
dawning gloom till only his grim,
black shadow stood in the gloaming
against the sky, under the eternal pil-

lar of smoke, and down the long garden
10,000 lamps flashed out, enhancing its
marvelous beauty.
Even the waiters seemed happy as
they dispensed the delicious creams
and fragrant coffee to those sitting at
the tables. From the grand pavilion
one of the finest of Italian orchestras
rendered such music as might almost
have thrilled the frozen souls of the
marble gods and goddesses.

In the extravagance of dreams Robert
Stanton dreamed, not of the home that
would be, but of the home that might
be. He dreamed of Esther Thordmike
there, his wife—his real wife.

Suddenly the banker's daughter
surprised the place, and the home
changed to his office. He heard her
voice. He saw her eyes.
"She is here," he muttered, and, turn-
ing as though some one had spoken, he
looked, as he knew that he should look,
directly into her eyes. And yet it
caught his breath, and for a moment
he could not move.

Her father was beside her, at one of
the little tables. He was listening to
the music.

She seemed unconscious, almost as
though asleep and dreaming, dream-
ing some delightful dream from which
it would be cruelty to rouse her.
For a moment Stanton's very life
seemed to stand still—as a boat at the
vortex of the Norwegian gulf stops for
an instant, shudders, draws back a
handbreadth, then plunges and is en-
gulfed. And the whirling pool was
those flashing eyes.

It would have been easy to make the
plunge. It required a superhuman
struggle to drag himself back from the
spell.

"This is not asking her to help me
win my wife," he muttered. Grinding



Her father was beside her.

his teeth, he deliberately lifted his hat.
Then she woke with a start. For a
moment she looked at him irresolutely.
Her head inclined just perceptibly, and
she looked away.

That alone would not have caused
Stanton to hesitate, but his heart was
throbbing. His muscles were quiver-
ing. He did not dare to trust them.
"Not here. It is too public," he said.
"But to-night—to-night, before I sleep,
I must see her."

It was impossible to sit there, yet he
would not have her think that she drove
him too easily. Slowly he settled his
bill, and very slowly made the usual
preparations for departure; but when,
at the last moment, he glanced towards
her again, the face was still turned
away from him. She was talking with
her father.

With a troubled sigh he walked slowly
away. It was not encouraging.

A hand was laid upon his shoulder,
and a voice said:

"Beg pardon, sir; my name's Brad-
don & Burridge, of Brad-
don & Burridge, bankers, New York.
You know the firm. You won a
case against us a year ago, but you
twisted our witnesses about till every
one of 'em was ready to swear that he
had never spoken the truth in all his
life. Never mind. It was business, and
it was worth all it cost to see you do
it; only I want you on the other side
next time."

"Your name's Stanton—Robert Stan-
ton. You're my old friend John
Olmstead's nephew. Your mother
was an Olmstead—Mary Olmstead.
I used to know her. Used to
think she was an angel. Think so still,
even if she did refuse to marry me. It
almost killed me at the time, and it's
almost killed me ever since. You look
just like your mother, and if you don't
mind I'd like to shake hands with you."

"Good gracious, man, it takes me
back again to— Confound it, I'm pret-
ty old for tears. I say, my daughter's
here with me. She's my sister's child.
I took her when her father and mother
died. Oh, I never married. No, indeed.
Seems you and she have met before.
She caught sight of you here and sent
me after you to ask if you wouldn't
come round and dine with us to-night.
Dinner's in one hour. Private lodgings.
All alone. No form. Here's the card.
And, I say, you'll excuse me now, won't
you? I must be getting back to her,
or she'll say I'm growing old and take
too long at doing errands. One hour.
Don't forget. Glad to have met you,
sir. Hope to see more of you." And he
was gone.

Stanton watched as he disappeared in
the crowd, and with a half-sigh, half-
smile, remarked:
"If she thinks he is growing old she's
mistaken."

CHAPTER X.

If the meeting had been the work-
ing out of his own plans, Stanton would
have carried his message on his tongue.
As it was, he held it more in deference,
waiting for an opportunity that was
slow to come.

"Your trip has changed you till I
believe your friends at home will hard-
ly know that it is really you," Miss
Braddon said, in response to a passing
compliment. "You wouldn't have said
that a year ago. You'd just have looked
me over solemnly, and remarked: 'Hm.
You must have been out of doors. You
have freckles on your nose.'"

"I certainly had a vast collection of
disagreeable traits," Stanton replied,
seeing his first opportunity. "I've dis-
covered some of them and been making
a struggle to dislodge them. I'm glad
if you see a change, for you knew me
at my worst, and I'm heartily ashamed
of it. Any change at all must be for
the better."

"Oh, Mr. Stanton, what an idea!" she
exclaimed. "Of course I knew you at
my worst, but, truly, that worst was
so much better than the best I ever

knew of hosts of people who think
themselves very good, that I have al-
ways considered you a remarkably
model man. Papa says it's all because
you're an Olmstead and couldn't be
anything else. And don't you think
we're all of us a little ashamed every
time we look back? I am. If I weren't
I shouldn't think I was making any
progress."

"You're comforting to say the least,"
Stanton replied, and was going on to
press the opportunity, when Miss Brad-
don interrupted:

"We saw by the paper that you were
soon to leave for home. What a lion
they will make of you!"
"Of me?"
"Why?"
"Because you deserve it, of course."
"Deserve what?"
"To be lionized."
"For what?"

"Now, Mr. Stanton, if I didn't know
you I should think all sorts of things;
but instead I'll begin and tell you all
about what you know just as well as the
rest of us, only you don't see it in the
same light. Didn't you make a great
hero of yourself when your steamer was
captured by pirates in the Gulf of Siam?"

"Indeed I did not, Miss Braddon,"
Stanton exclaimed, and his cheeks
flushed. "I swung a rusty sword in the
face of a few Chinese cowards, and they
ran without a scratch. That was hero-
ism indeed."

"Of course I don't know all the par-
ticulars, but I'm sure the king of Siam
thought so, or he wouldn't have de-
corated you with an order. The New
York papers thought so, or they'd not
have printed so much about it. The
British government thought so, or it
would not have remembered it till you
returned London, two months ago, and
presented you with a medal. But how
was it about your being almost killed
by a tiger, in India, while saving the
life of a little native girl? There was a
story printed about that, too."

"I was hardly hurt at all," Stanton re-
plied, thoroughly confused. "I simply
wanted the tiger's skin as a memento,
and I have it."

With a merry laugh Miss Braddon
replied: "How fortunate for the little
girl that that was just the tiger whose
skin you wanted, and that you wanted
it at that very moment when it was
about to kill her! But what papa
thought most of was your address be-
fore the Historical society of London,
when you gave them an old Babylonish
brick. He said he couldn't see how a
lawyer could possibly know so much
about antiquity."

Vainly Stanton endeavored to take
another step toward the end he had
in view. Before the evening was past
Miss Braddon had invited him to drive with
them to Vesuvius the next day, and to
sit in their box at the opera the next
evening.

The second day was a failure, like the
first, so far as the message was con-
cerned; while with every atom of man-
hood in him Stanton struggled to hold
himself back from what he knew would
be a fatal plunge into that bewildering
pool.

Why should she fascinate him till his
heart and brain reeled? No woman had
so much as attracted him before, and
now, of all times, when it must not be!
"It is because she knows that I am
married and thinks herself safe?" he
asked himself. "I hope she is safe. If
not, surely I am not worthy of Esther
Thordmike's love. I don't know. Some-
times when she looks at me that way,
as though she were ready to put her
arms round my neck, I feel as if I could
throw away everything to run to her.
It would be throwing away everything,
and I will not do it."