

WORTHINESS.
Whatever lacks Purpose is evil; a pool without pebbles breeds slime;
Not any one step hath Chance fashioned on the infinite stairway of Time;

THE LOVE CHAMBER.
I Shall Be Faithful to Him as Though I Were His Widow.
This is the way they told the story to me:

At the time I am telling you about there was a pretty girl at Biarritz named Pascaline—a Basque about 18 years of age, tall and slight—with that peculiar grace characteristic of those little mountain women.

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more in love than ever—excited by the very disdain of the beautiful girl, so fresh and young. He took courage and approached her once more.

“Pascaline, I do not now propose to you merely because I can offer you a fine social position. But you are certainly killing yourself with work; and if anything should happen to you, your father would simply die of hunger. Maxime is dead, Pascaline. You ought, I think, to marry me, and save your father.”

She never answered a word, but while she cried silently she allowed the old man to take her hand. So Moise went to Father Pascal, and told him all. The old man shook his head and responded slowly: “Good! * * * good!—No hay pajaros en los nidos de otoño!” (there are no birds in the nests of autumn.)

But they did not kneel before the old man and the old man did not kneel them. Three days before the wedding day, just at the moment of the autumn equinox, the pretty Basque was walking along the light-house path, near the grotto, when a voice behind her cried: “Pascaline, O Pascaline!”

“Trembling like a leaf she murmured: Maxime!—thee, Maxime!” and like a wounded bird she fell into her lover's arms. It was indeed he, still handsome, though thin and pale. He pressed her to his breast very, very tightly.

“It is not true, tell me!—it is not true thou wilt marry Moise Dunez?” “It is true. If I do not marry him my father will die for want of food. Why didst thou not come back?”

“Because the Spaniards captured me and kept me in prison. But I am now free and I can work.” “But what will become of father, should they capture thee again?”

“Speak not of such things, dearest; let us not discuss them. I love thee, and he drew her gently toward the grotto, and she resisted not; and in the soft light of the great cave they talked to each other in low, very low tones, each pressed to the other's heart, in infinite ecstasy of reciprocal love. But at last, tearing herself from his arms, she said: “‘Tis late, late! Let me go now. I hear midnight striking.”

“Nay, 'tis not midnight; 'tis only a flight of sea gulls whirring by.” A long time afterward she said: “O, how the sea roars; what if we should be swallowed up!”

“Nay? 'tis not the sea roaring, 'tis only the great chanting of our love.” A long time afterward she said once more: “O, Maxime, dost not hear how the wind raves?”

“Nay, 'tis not the raving of winds—'tis Our Lady of Guadalupe passing by. The last hours of our life are the first of our night of love. Thou shalt never marry the other now! Lo! love; this is our nuptial chamber; and the wave shall be our vast green winding sheet!”

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