At the Turn of the Road.

The glory has passed from the golden rod's plume,
The purple-hued asters still linger in bloom;
The birch is bright yellow, the sumachs are red,
The maples like torches flame overhead.

But what of the joy of the summer is past,
And Winter's wild breath is blowing his blast?
For me all November is sweeter than May,
For my Love is its sunshine—she meets me to-day!

Will she come? Will the ring dove return to her nest?
Will the needle swing back from the east or the west?
At the stroke of the hour she will be at her gate;
A friend may prove laggard—love never comes late.

Do I see her afar in the distance? Not yet.
Too early! Too early! She could not forget!
When I cross the old bridge where the brook overflowed
She will be full in sight at the turn of the road.

I pass the low wall where the ivy entwines;
I tread the brown pathway that leads through the pines;
I hasten by the bowlder that lies in the field,
Where her promise at parting was lovingly sealed.

Will she come by the hillside or round through the wood?
Will she wear her brown dress or her mantle or hood?
The minute draws near—but her watch may go wrong;
My heart will be asking, What keeps her so long?

Why doubt for a moment? More shame if I do!
Why question? Why tremble? Are angels untrue?
She would come to the lover who calls her his own,
Though she trod in the track of a whirling cyclone!

—I crossed the old bridge ere the minute had passed,
I looked; lo! my Love stood before me at last,
Her eyes, how they sparkled, her cheeks how they glowed,
As we met face to face at the turn of the road!

—Oliver Wendell Holmes in Atlantic.

A STRANGE MARRIAGE.

John Collins was out of work. In common with many others, for reasons not necessary to enter upon, he had been idle for some time. He was almost out of money—50 cents is not much. But he was not out of hope. He was so determined to put his shoulder to the wheel that he could not believe that there would not soon be a wheel to shoulder.

Now, on this Saturday afternoon, with everything at a standstill, he knew that there would be no use in standing before closed doors or of loitering in empty yards; so he made up his mind to have a holiday, and all that sweet, sunny afternoon to pretend to himself that he had nothing to worry about.

There was music in the park; there were seats to sit upon.

A man could eat 5 cents' worth of soda crackers as well there as elsewhere. In fact, they made quite a neat lunch.

On Sunday he would buy a paper, and get every item in the columns headed, "Help Wanted—Males" by heart, but this afternoon his programme was the park.

Accordingly, he went home, climbed to the top floor of a tenement-house, where he had hired a half-bedroom of a washerwoman, who did not need all the rooms at her end of the flat, and dressed himself in his Sunday suit.

The suit was not a fine one at best, and it was by no means new, but John was a handsome man, and there is a good deal in that.

He blacked his boots, turned his cuffs, thanked fortune he still had a clean collar, and sat off parkward—he was just in time for the music.

The sky was blue, the grass was green, the park was just as much his as it was anybody's, and after the crowd had dispersed and the musicians descended from their pavilion, he bethought him to walk about awhile, and took his way toward the reservoir.

There was not a soul there, and he began to saunter about the brink, eating his crackers, when his attention was attracted to the singular conduct of a young girl, who was creeping along toward toward the reservoir, looking over her shoulder, as though she expected to be followed.

Now and then she lifted to her eyes a handkerchief that she had crushed up in one hand, and it was evident that she was crying.

"What can she be doing?" John asked himself. In a minute more it flashed upon him that she intended to drown herself.

He was about to spring forward to seize her, when he reflected that until he was sure that she was actually a would-be suicide it would hardly do to lay hands upon her, and so, concealing himself as best he could, he waited.

And now he observed the girl more closely. She was young, she was small, and her features were pretty. She had that peculiar attenuated look that comes to most women with worry and poverty, but her clothes were not ragged, and she had a very respectable air. She wore one kid glove, he noticed. At first she stood behind a stone parapet that guarded the edge of the reservoir, crying and looking over.

Then she folded her hands, and put her face upon them, and John fancied that she prayed. After this, by dint of scrambling, she perched upon the stones and sat there. John drew nearer.

At last she arose to her feet, and John was there below her, though she did not dream of it.

"Good-by, you dear, pretty world," he heard her say. "I wonder where I am going to," and she made preparations to jump into the water.

Instead of accomplishing this, she was lifted landward by two big hands, and as she touched ground she began to sob.

"Oh, why couldn't you let me?" she said. "And now you'll put me in prison, I suppose, for being too unhappy to live."

"I'm not a policeman," said John.

"Oh, thank goodness!" said the girl. "You'll let me go, then?"

"Not yet," said John. "You see, although I'm not a policeman, I'm a man, and that makes it my duty to take care of women folk when they need it. You seem to."

"You mean to be very kind," said the girl; "but you are not. I suppose you have no idea what it is to be all alone in a big city, without money and without work?"

"Oh," said John, "but I have. I haven't had any work for three weeks, and that is my cash in hand."

And he exhibited his half-dollar.

"Oh," she said, with an air of greater confidence. "Well, yes, you do know something about it, only you are not a woman."

"No," said John. "Of course that makes it worse for you. But tell me what drove you to that cowardly act."

"It was a very brave act," said the girl.

"Not a bit of it," said John. "It's brave to live and fight as long as you can—that's my idea."

"I can't; I've nothing to fight with," said the girl. "Oh, if you knew——"

"Tell me," said John.

"My father died," said the girl. "My stepmother hated me. She married again, and her second turned me out of the house. Pa had left her all his money; I had nothing. I came to New York and got sewing to do. One day the woman that employed me asked me if I'd make her a wall-pocket for her papers. The kind I mean is made out of old steels from extenders. You knit worsted over them, you know."

John did not know, but he looked as wise as possible.

"I was to make it as a favor, not for pay," the girl went on," "and at home, evenings. I liked doing it; but the steels were too long. I had to break most of them, and it gave me a felon on my thumb. I can't use it yet to sew with, and I can't do anything but sew. That woman knew how I got it, but she never offered to help me at all. She dismissed me and took another girl in my place. Then I couldn't pay my board and they turned me out. I went to a hospital. The doctor said that my finger wasn't bad enough to allow them to admit me; he said it would be all right in a month. Well, I have not even anywhere to sleep tonight. I shall have to starve or beg—I will not beg. Now you see that you had better go away and let me finish what I began."

"That can't be done," said John.

Every one who knew John called him queer. If acting differently from other people under given circumstances is being queer he certainly was.

As he looked down upon this little pale, pretty, and assuredly innocent girl, and knew that if he went away and left her she would assuredly jump into the water, his heart softened toward her as women's do to crying babies. What dear little thing she was, he thought. What a shame that fate should have used her so. It seemed his duty to take care of her.

"Oh, hang it, I'll get a job on Monday," he said; "and everybody tells me that it is as easy for two to live as one. I'll do it."

Then he turned to the girl and said:

"Circumstances alter cases. It's a queer kind of courtship, but I like you. I guess you could like me if you tried. Will you marry me? I'll get work on Monday, I'm sure. I've got half a dollar. Come to the minister with me, and be married, and I'll take care of you after this."

What the girl said was:

"Oh, my! Why, I never heard of such a thing. What would people say?"

"People will not know—it's our own business. I think you'll make a good wife," returned John. "You need taking care of the worst way. Think about it."

He left her alone and walked up and down. She looked at him—and John was handsome. He looked at her, and thought again that she was the sweetest little thing he had ever seen. He smiled, too. He went back and sat down beside her.

"Guess we'll go the minister?" he said.

"Well, you don't know the least thing about me," she said; "and I can't see how you can like me enough."

"I don't either," he admitted. "But I do like you better than I ever liked any other girl."

"I feel that way to you," she said.

And then they walked to the house of an old minister, who was willing to take his fee in thanks, and give them his blessing into the bargain.

And John and Annie were husband and wife.

On Monday John Collins went forth to search for work, rather more anxiously than before, and I am sorry to say he found none.

He remained away all day and returned home in very low spirits.

Annie had prepared supper. She had cooked two red herrings at Mrs. Romey's fire, and set the candle-stand with a cloth, on which she had placed two wooden pie-plates and two tin-cups. The bread was sliced nicely, and a "drawing of tea" had been made in a pitcher.

The room was tidy, the window shown, and Annie looked happy.

John began to be cheerful again.

"To be sure I have not had luck today, but it will come to-morrow," he said, as he sat down to supper.

Annie looked very pretty on the other side of the tiny table.

"If only a man could be sure of a good living," John thought, he would be much happier married than single."

After tea Annie cleared away the thinks, and John went out on the staircase with his pipe while she did so. He believed that women disliked smoke, but knew that Annie would never admit the fact.

As he sat there, wondering where he should go to look for work next day, a gentleman came stumbling up the dark stairs.

"I am looking for a Mr. John Collins," he said.

"That's my name," said John.

"You are a married man, sir?" asked the gentleman.

"Yes, sir," said John. "I've been married about two days, if that will do."

"Ah—you are the right man; and it's your wife I want," said the gentleman.

John's heart sunk

"What do you want her for?" he asked, thinking only of misfortune.

"To ask a few questions," said the gentleman.

"We have very small quarters," said John; "but come in."

He pushed open the door of the tiny room, but before he could speak, Annie ran forward with outstretched hands.

"Mr. Cummins!" she cried.

"Yes, Mr. Cummings, Annie,' said the gentleman. "I've been looking for you for six months. I really began to believe you dead, when I met an old friend of mine, a clergyman, and happening to speak of my fruitless mission, he told me that he had married a young lady of your name on Saturday night. Farewell is not a common name, though Annie is, and as the Rev. Mr. Darrow had learned your husband's place of residence, I came here to see if the bride were by any chance my lost heiress. I find that she is."

"An heiress!" cried Annie.

"Yes, my dear," said Mr. Cummings. "Your stepmother represented you as having been sent to boarding-school, and it was only on taking the property in charge six months ago, that we discovered how you had been used. You should have come at once to your father's lawyers. The rights of your stepmother in the property ended with her life. And though she gave a good deal of cash to her second husband, you are still very rich, and have only to take possession of your property in regular form."

"It is like a dream," said Annie. "I am glad papa did not forget me; that was the worst thought I had to bear."

"And I shouldn't wonder if this fortune were acceptable just now," said Mr. Cummings, as he took his leave.

But John stood silent after he had gone, and his face was very grave. At last he said:

"Well, Annie, are you sorry that you married me now? I had no idea I was a fortune-hunter."

"Joan," cried Annie, "I should be lying dead if it were not for you. Or, if I had been saved and sent to prison, perhaps Mr. Cummings never would have found me. It all came about because you were so generous to poor little me, whom most men would have suspected of being a very wicked girl; and all my life I shall spend in trying to repay you. Sorry? Oh, no, John. Already, though I have been your wife such a little while, I care a great deal more for you than I could for any fortune. And we shall be so happy on the old place, with plenty to live upon."

They were.—*Family Story Paper.*

Cameos Coming Back.

To every old fashion that is revived is added some modern and beautifying touch that enhances in value ancient art. Years ago wealthy women wore barbarically heavy earrings, bracelets, and necklaces of cameos set in jewels or plain gold bands. They prized them far more than diamonds, and carefully preserved them in queer old satin-lined boxes for the granddaughters of '93, who turn up their pretty little noses at the heavy ornaments. Some of the cameos were rarely beautiful, but the greater quantity were bad indeed. Just very lately somebody finds a new use for the old gewgaws, as they have long been regarded, and cameos will be much worn from this time out.

Collect all those ugly, dangling eardrops and wrist-bands once worn by a proud grandparent, and if they are big and handsome have them set in a broad, flexible gold band, large enough to clasp the arm high above the elbow, like the bracelets worn by those high-nosed, dignified Roman women. Four or five large-sized ones can be set in a bracelet, and if the gold band is not preferred order cameos, each in its original setting, to be linked together and furnished with a clasp. Women who affect statuesque draperies can make admirable use of the largest cameos set as pins to hold silken folds knotted on the shoulders and hips.

Jewelers have not forgotten how to use tools at carving the clear white stone, and to-day can be bought in the city of New York most wonderful examples of this art. For instance, on a thick, deeply toned sapphire, set in a rim of diamonds, is carved a warrior's helmeted head, and though the face and head covering are white the hair curling from under the helmet's rim and about the chin is pale gold colored, and every detail in the finish of the hair shows to perfection under a microscope.—*Illustrated American.*

Servian Roads in Winter.

The streets of the Servian town of Nisch, in the last week of the year 1876, were mere quagmires. In attempting to cross them there was always a doubt whether the liquid mud would be over one's ankles, as high as one's waist, or up to the neck. The highways and byways were rivers, estuaries, and pools of mud. The houses were built of the same material, and in fact most things were muddy in that Turkish frontier town.

To watch a company of troops crossing a road was an amusing sight to one seated comfortably at a first-floor window. The men would break off from the narrow sidewalk of cobbles into Indian file, and extend at least three paces as they took running leaps through the mire. Fortunate were those who succeeded in arriving on the other side with the pasty soil only up to their knees. The cause of all this muddiness was a rapid thaw following after many weeks of hard frost, a thaw for its rapidity and thoroughness peculiar to this part of the Balkan peninsula. In a few hours it would freeze just as quickly, converting the streets into glacier-like surfaces again, necessitating the immediate calking of our horses' shoes, and the covering of our boots with raw-hide, perhaps a discarding of them altogether for the moccasin of the Bulgarian peasants. The shining crust of mud reflected the deep cobalt-blue of the bright sky, the morning I rode from my lodgment to the hospital barracks, a few miles out of the town, and, for a wonder, I arrived almost spotless, although my horse's shoulders were dripping little mud-pies on the threshold of the barracks as the Turkish sentry saluted us.—*Frederic Villers, in St. Nicholas.*

The Castle of Heidelberg.

The work of restoring the historic castle at Heidelberg has begun and will continue for two years at least. It is not intended to restore the picturesque ruins, but to renew the foundations and restore certain portions of the castle in strict conformity to its appearance in the time of the electors palatine.

"THE DUCHESS."

CHAPTER XIX.—Continued.

part, "that it was only a moment's folly—a passing temptation."

"Were you the temptation," with a short laugh. Then all at once a touch of passion breaks up her icy composure. "See! Once for all," she says, coming a step nearer, "don't imagine that you can impose upon me. Act your part to the others, blind them if you will, but don't hope to take me in. From the very first moment my eyes lit on you I have seen through you. Your pretended avoidance of Denis, your carefully assumed coldness toward him, your clever little role of petulant dislike; has been clear to me, and beneath it—what do you think," insolently, "I could not read your eyes? And what eyes you have," with a gust of bitter hatred; "they tell what you dare not put into words; they woo silently the man you know to be in honor bound to another; they say such shameless things as you are afraid to utter. Do you think," vehemently, "that, watching you daily, hourly, as I have done, I have not read your secret in them? Yes, power away from me as you will, you shall hear what I have learned—that you—love him."

Norah puts out her hand as if to ward off a blow. "Hah! Does that make you a risk? Does that hurt you? I," vindictively, "am glad of it. Now go! And—remember!"

The insolence of this dismissal rouses in the Duchess a feeling of intolerable indignation.

"I shall remember you—forever," she says, breathlessly—child shy, perhaps, yet with a withering contempt that cuts deep into the haughty woman before her, "as the most ill-bred person I have ever met."

* * * * *

Heartsick and wearied by this addition to the secret grief she always carries, and crushed by a sense of bitter humiliation, it is because of no feigned headache that the Duchess declares her inability to accompany the others to the military theatricals at Lonbree, that take places this evening.

"What has Katherine been doing to you?" asks shrewd Miss Blake, looking down upon a very pale little Norah, who is sitting languidly in a huge arm-chair in the library, where they have all assembled, whilst waiting for the carriages. She is dressed in a very pretty white gown, made high to the neck, but with no sleeves, and her face is as white as her frock.

"Katherine? Why should you think that?" growing crimson. "I am not well; my head aches, but—"

"Never mind. I'll let you off the rest. Fibbing isn't much in your line," says Miss Blake, with a sapient nod. "I can wait and get it all out of you to-morrow."

She moves away with a little provoking glance over her shoulder at Norah, as she sees Madam Delaney a proaching with a rather anxious expression on her face.

"I hope you won't feel lonely, darling," she says tenderly, bending over Norah.

"Oh, no. I am too tired," with a smile, "to feel anything."

"The carriage is waiting, aunt," says Miss Cazalet in measured tones, sweeping up to them in an exquisite gown of black and gold.

"Very well, my dear," placidly. "Now, Norah," turning again with a fond glance to her other niece, "you will promise me, won't you, dearest, to go to bed at once?"

"An easy promise to give. I wish I was in it this moment."

"To confess a terrible truth to you," she says, "I wish with all my heart that I too was in mine."

She kisses the girl affectionately, and soon afterward they have all gone out of the room; there is the last sound of their footsteps in the hall; a faint far-off laugh—that was Nancy—and now even the roll of the carriages up the avenue has ceased upon the air.

What a curious scene of loneliness has fallen upon the house, almost it seems as though the very servants had left it. There is certainly nothing to sit up for, and yet in spite of that promise given so readily to Madam, Norah cannot bring herself to go to bed. The spirit of restlessness has taken possession of her, and rising from her chair she wanders in an aimless fashion about the library, touching a book here, trifling with a set of rare prints there, now stirring the already glowing fire, now staring idly at the large wall-filled bookcases, but always and in every case without intrest.

One of the servants brings her presently a cup of tea, which she accepts gladly, yet after all forgets to drink, and after that no one comes to disturb her solitude, which is perhaps the worse thing that could have happened to her. Left thus, entirely alone with her thoughts, they turn to, and dwell with a most unhappy persistency upon the events of to-day and the past night, painting them in their blackest colors, until finally, worn out with grief and misery, she sinks upon a low lounge and bursts into bitter weeping

And then, wearied by her emotion, but just drooping heavily upon the soft cushions of the lounge, and rests there gratefully, with a happy sense of relief; and after while that sense of relief turns to kindly sleep, which, growing on her, she draws up, half unconsciously, her feet to this welcome restful couch, and with a few faint sighs falls into a profound slumber.

CHAPTER XX.

"Now all is hush'd as nature was retired,
And to her usual motionless repose."

The night is dark and moist and windy. Now, thunderous sounds come up from the shores below, and are swept inland by the heavy force of the wind.

Now again the moon bears forth from behind the leaden clouds that almost outweight the sky, giving a brilliant if evanescent glory to the shivering earth beneath. For the most part, however, it has hidden behind this pall of dense watery cloud that lies across the heavens, and only a general darkness draws everything into one universal not.

Sometimes a star or two peeps forth through a chink in the black wall, breaking the inky dullness; but a more sure and certain irritation comes from the lighthouse, the lamp of which shines out every moment with a fervid power—to disappear, certainly, but then as certainly to appear again.

To the solitary horseman riding along the road that stretches like a gray ribbon on the right the coming of this lighthouse star brings a sense of comfort—foretelling as it does the nearness of his home. The road is a narrow one, hedged on either side by thick warm masses of yellow furze, still aglow with its golden bloom, though the season is so far advanced. Delaney, breathing the fragrant perfume of its flower, thinks with a feeling of rather fatigued satisfaction that he is now close upon his journey's end.

It is long past midnight, and cold, with a deadly chill, has grown the air. Now and again the moon bursts its bonds and lights up the surging, glittering waves away over there, that dance and heave and roar in the moonlight, while on this side it shows up the gray misty vapors that rise from the bay.

He had fully intended not to return when setting forth upon his journey, but time had destroyed that resolution. To stay away from her he found would be impossible to him. He could not. He must return—to see her, to plead with her afresh for the pardon she had so cruelly denied. He thought, he honestly believed, that if she had forgiven him he could have stayed away, but she had refused him absolution, and always that pale, small, sorrowful, unforgiving face was before him.

He could not rest. It was madness, no doubt, but she drew him to her with a force he could not resist.

There was no train to be had at that late hour when he felt that overpowering desire to see her again grow upon him, with a strength not to be conquered; so he had borrowed a horse from his host, on an excuse of instant business and had set out upon his long ride to Ventry with a feverish impatience that rendered him impervious to cold or rain or fatigue.

Now, at last, as the miles grow fewer, he confesses to himself that he is in a degree tired; two nights without sleep will tell on most men, be they ever so happy, but with a gnawing pain forever at the heart the loss of those precious hours of forgetfulness is sometimes worse than death itself.

Everything seems to rouse to him with a startling vividness as he rides on his silent way, everything connected with his ill-advised engagement to Katherine Cazalet. His first meeting with her years ago, when she had come, a tall, slender, wonderfully self-possessed orphan, to share her aunt's home till she should be of age. He remembers now with a rather idle wonder, how lovely he then had thought her; he, a very young man at that time, a mere stripling, only one or two years her senior. Then there was the cousinly relation between them, that ever seemed to draw them closer together, and the natural pleasure he had felt when it dawned upon him that she was warm and tender in her manner to him alone whilst cold to all the rest of the world. And after that there was the insensible drifting into that closer tie—the knowledge, vaguely but certainly conveyed to him show, or by whom he hardly knew then that a marriage between the cousins was a matter widely discussed and looked forward to by the world at large. To draw back now would bring down on Katherine the sneers of their many friends, to subject her to much unpleasantness, nay, to leave himself open to a charge that touched his honor.

There was but one thing to be done, and he had done it with a sufficiently good grace. It seemed to be the most natural thing in the world, Katherine so evidently had expected it—and so had his mother. There was no chance for withdrawal, and besides it had really seemed a very usual finish to a long friendship; so the betrothal was speedily made public, with a rapidity indeed that had astonished him at the time, and affairs had arranged themselves, and everything had settled down into the usual commonplaceness of an orthodox betrothal. And then—came Norah!

How loud the wind roars; what a sullen cry arises from the sea! Delaney, who is more worn out in body, and specially in soul, than he at all believes, rests a little in his saddle, and then pulls himself together again, with a fierce, vain wish that it might all end now, here, this moment! Life! What a worry, a turmoil it is! So much labor of spirit, so little rest; little! None, it seems to him.

What a flash was that, so blue, so vivid; yet no thunder. There is strong promise of rain for the morrow, to come out of those lowering clouds. Delaney hardly heeds the tempestuous signs of coming storm, riding ever onward, in a half dazed fashion, and conscious only of a passionate longing to see Norah once again.

The moon again! How clear, how wildly brilliant it makes all things seem! To his disordered fancy it lights the dark and gloomy earth with a radiance almost supernatural and somehow too at this time he cannot help thinking that something is running by his side. But what?

He looks down my lustarily, and—it is absurd of course—he almost laughs aloud at this fantastic trick his eyes are playing him—but is it a little child that is clinging to his stirrup leather? A little dead child! with white uplified face, and wide unseeing eyes!

The moon goes out again, leaving the world once more to its darkness, but still Delaney has seen that little form, and feels certain it is there, running with him, always with the tiny stiff fingers entangled in the stirrup leather, and always with the little dead face uplifted.

And now at last he reaches the gates of Ventry, and passes through them down the long avenue, the dead child entering, too, and clinging to him.

All at once a horrible certainty smites upon him, a certainty that it, the sad corpse face, is like Norah. Norah! What madness! He can reason still, yet a strong shudder shakes him as the thought declares itself. It follows him all the way round to the stables, where he dismounts, and, with that will fancy still strong upon him, actually in the darkness brushes down that side of the saddle where the small stiff hand had seemed to be—to find, of course, nothing.

He breathes rather more freely after that, and presses his hand to his forehead, which is throbbing to an agonizing degree. The whole thing was ridiculous, he tells himself as he hands the reins to a sleepy groom, and yet it was a powerful bit of imagination, like a presentiment—a presentiment of death. But death to whom? A hideous fear thrills him. Yes, the face—he is sure now—resembles Norah's.

Entering the house by a small side door, heavily clamped with iron, of which he has the key, he goes softly up the staircase that leads to the hall above. If anything should have happened to Norah! Perhaps even now, as he stands here useless, some accident may be taking place. Oh, to be certain that she is safe at Clontrive with the others! He has opened the door of the library and is standing just inside it, his mind full of one thought only, one longing, to see Norah again, alive, safe. His eyes wander carelessly round the room and then all at once he starts convulsively. What is that lying over there?

Almost it seems to him it must be Norah's lifeless body, the realization of his fears and his presentiments—so still, so deathlike in her repose. But a second later what a wild rush of relief is it that overwhelms him! She is only sleeping, and with that blessed certainty all his fatigue vanishes, with that curious dullness of the brain that had been troubling him, and his senses grow bright again and a great wave of joy breaks over him.

Bending over her, he watches the soft breath coming from between her parted lips. Unevenly it comes, with every now and then a little sobbing sound that tells of tears but lately shed, the traces of which are even now lying sadly upon the long silken lashes that sweep her cheek

How fragile, how white she looks! Almost as one might sicken for death. Her right hand drooping a little with the soft pink palm uppermost, and half unclosed in the languor of slumber, touches him with a sense of helplessness. Stooping, he presses his lips to it, very softly, lest he shall awaken her. A great longing to kiss her—her cheeks, her lips—possesses him but she looks so tranquil, so childlike, so innocuous, that such a deed would be impossible. So calm she lies, she might almost be dead, and therefore sacred.

Even as he gazes on her, roused perhaps by that gentle caress upon her hand, she wakes, the white lids unclose, and the large dark eyes look up at him, filled with a soft wonderment.

CHAPTER XXI.

"He looked at her as a lover may,
She looked at him as one half awakes,
The past was sleep, and her lover gray."

Not coldly, not scornfully, now do Norah's eyes meet Delaney's, but with a tender welcome in them. Softly she turns to him, with a little loving gesture, and with her lips parted by a happy smile. She has forgotten everything in this supreme moment, save those old sweet days when first they met, and, still half wrapped in the tender dream that had carried her back to them, she whispers fondly, sleepily, as a child, "Denis."

It is all so unexpected, so terrible, because of the hopelessness that must follow it, that he stands beside her as one stricken dumb. All his being had rushed to her as the sound of that loved voice calling on him fell upon his ear, and it is by a superhuman effort alone that he now stands beside her, irresponsive, motionless; oh! the sweetness of those parted lips! The lovelight in the deep gray eyes! Once again it is old Norah who is with him—his darling—his Duchess.

And then there is an end of it. He drops her hand and turns away, and, leaning his arms upon the chimney piece, lets his face fall forward upon them.

"You here!" says the Duchess, now in a tone that trembles. She has sprung to her feet, and is wide awake staring at his back with astonishment that is half fear shining in her eyes. "I thought you were in Bandon?"

"I could not stay there. I could not rest."

"But at this hour," glancing at the clock, which points to two. "There was no train?"

"Stay one moment," exclaims he, turning his haggard face toward her. "You know what brought me back. You know why I could not rest. Your ordinary coldness was bad enough to bear, but to feel that I had angered you, wounded you past forgiveness—that you had actually denied me pardon—was intolerable. I have come back to ask you again, entreat you to put your hand in mine and try to forget what I have done."

"Let it be as you wish then," says she, with a sad cold little glance, and with a touch of weariness in her tone. "I shall try to forget. But—" turning suddenly up to his large mournful eyes, "if only I might go home"

A pause.

"You are unhappy here?" asks he at last.

"I am. I confess it. I," with a desperate attempt at an everyday manner, "miss dad, I think. I want him, oh, so badly!" with a sharp burst of grief.

"Well, you shall go, Norah. We have no right to keep you. But you know your father is coming here the day after to-morrow, and after a little while you can return with him."

"That will all take too long," cries she, feverishly. "I don't want him to come; I want to go home to him—to be alone with him."

"But," questioningly, "must it be at once?"

"As soon as possible. At once, yes; I mean—to-morrow," in a nervous, uncertain way, trifling absently with an ornament on the table near her.

"Not to-morrow, I'm afraid," coldly. "You must try," with a rush of reproachful anger, "to curb your mad haste to be rid of us for a day or two. I can telegraph to your father in the morning to expect you, but there are one or two things I must see to before I can take you back to Ballyhinch."

"You take me! You! Oh, no; you must not; you shall not," vehemently. "I can go back alone."

"Certainly you cannot," decidedly. "I brought you here, and I am responsible for your safe return. I shall most undoubtedly accompany you."

"I tell you you shall not," in sore distress. The cruel meaning in Katherine Cazalet's face returns to her, like a stab at this moment. "Do not insist on this, Denis. Understand me when I say," going nearer to him and speaking in a low voice, but with intense excitement, "that rather than have you as my escort home I would even prefer to remain here."

"Even! I thank you for both my mother and myself," says he with a bitter laugh. "We may, indeed, congratulate ourselves on the success of our efforts to make your stay a happy one."

"Do not say such things to me," says she, her eyes filling with tears. "You know well how I love your mother."

She is standing close to him, looking upward with a grieved expression on her charming face. Her pretty, naked, rounded arms, hang loosely before her, the fingers

"I DON'T CARE—I WILL SPEAK."

in a lace; her eyes, still large and heavy, and drowsy with sleep, are full of unshed tears, and the hair upon her brow is a little ruffled, as if from slumber. Her white gown clings to her lithesome form. Never has she looked so lovely.

"I hardly know what to say," says Delaney. "Sometimes I am mad, I think, I know that—." Suddenly he falls on his knees before her and buries his face in her gown. "My darling! My beloved!" he breathes passionately.

"Oh, remember! Oh, shame!" cries she in a low, thrilling tone.

"I do remember; all—everything! Do you think I could forget?" He has caught her hands now, and is kissing them feverishly. "I know what you would remind me of—my engagement, the hour, the fact that we are alone. But," recklessly, "I don't care. I will speak." Then, seeing how pale she grows, and how she draws back from him, "My love, my sweetheart, forgive me. All I would say is that I will break this engagement with Katherine, and—," confusedly, "perhaps, then—"

"Why will you break it? What will you gain by so doing?

[TO BE CONTINUED.]