"THE VIGNETTE."

A trio of schoolgirls huddled together,
Beguiling an hour of dull, stormy weather;
A tinted note withdrawn from its cover,
A chorus of voices: "O fie! a lover!"

A gem-studded locket, in which was set
The exquisite face of a dark-eyed brunette;
'Tis hidden away with a sigh of regret—
Ah! the past that's recalled by that little vignette!

A fierce battle raging; men fight hand to hand
Who both were brought up in the very same land,
See! the standard's cut down 'mid the cannon's hoarse roar,
And he who once held it will never speak more.

A cold lifeless form on a hospital bed—
'Tis only the body, the spirit has fled—
Hung round his neck, with his life blood still wet,
A slender gold chain and a little vignette.

MISS MAHONEY'S LACE.

They were having a good time at the farm, as pleasant a party of gay girl graduates as could well be put together, when Miss Mahoney arrived upon the scene of action, and her appearance was certainly like a wet blanket on all pleasure.

The farm was on a mountain-side, high up in the air; all below it a great amphitheater of lesser hills mellowed in distance and vapor till they looked like the waves of a purple sea, with now and then mighty rainbows spanning them; and all above it the lofty tops of hills, whose woods here feathered oft upon the morning sky, and whose crags there jutted sharply on the stars at night. The air was full of the song of birds, the rustle of leaves, the hum of bees and the rushing of water-falls, and it seemed to the happy young things that they were somewhere above the world—in an ideal region from which no voice could summon them. But, for all that, a sharp voice called when Miss Mohoney was heard at the door, and the cruel common world burst in behind her.

She came in the noon stage, and she brought such tons of luggage! That had to come on another. What did she mean to do with it at the farm, where linen lawn was full dress? And she had a collie dog, and a huge cage with a magpie in it, and the magpie chattered like the confusion of tongues. Miss Mahoney stopped at the door, opened the cage and let the magpie go. "He comes back at call," she said to Mrs. Pierson, our landlady, who hardly looked with kindness on the bird of evil. "He likes to have his liberty and make his nest, and so I let him have it all the summer—city life is so confining. And Laddie keeps an eye on him." But we all embraced Laddie at once, as he put up his pretty nose and tender brown eyes to our faces, and the collie became the best friend of all the young girls that day, particularly those of the prettier ones, for he had quite a taste in beauty; he seemed to know that there was not a gallant about the place, and he might be escort to the whole party if he would, and he presently attached himself so pertinaciously to Adele Montrose that Jane Hunt said that she should have to show him Philip's picture next, and tell Laddie that Philip was coming in a month.

Miss Mahoney came down to tea in regal array. No such garments had ever been seen at the farm as her purple-striped velvet gauzes, with their satin understuff. As for her string of pearls, perhaps they were only Roman, but if they were real, they were worth more than the farm; and then the lace shawl which she knotted up round her throat as they sat on the piazza, looking at the sunset more underneath than above them, "as if it had been Shetland wool," said Jane; "when it was priceless Brussels net."

"But she has oceans of lace," said Miss Meyer. I opened her door by mistake as she was unpacking, and there it was some in boxes and trays, and some over chairs. What with laces and jewels, the room looked like the milky way."

"She'll think we are a set of barbarians," said Adele, with her quick blush, "with hardly so much as a tucker."

"And we shall think her a vulgar parvenue, bringing such things to such a place," said Jane.

"She's not a mouveau riche, at any rate," answered Miss Meyer. "For she isn't rich at all. Mrs. Pierson knows about her. She inherited all her fine things from some relation or other, and has only enough money to live on; and when she wants to do something extravagant, like coming to the mountains, she sells a pearl or bit of lace."

Miss Mahoney, of course, became an object of study to the girls, and was always accompanied in her progress by some awe and more ridicule—the former as the possessor of finery that somehow went to their hearts every time they saw it or heard of it, the latter as a woman past forty, tall and angular and ugly and ignorant, aping the appearance and manners of young girls.

"I wonder how she came by Laddie?" said Adele, one day.

"She gave a jewel for him," said Miss Meyer, laughing, "so as to have something to protect her other jewels. I'm sure it's no wonder how she came by Jack. That magpie will drive us all out of the house yet."

"See him now," said Jane Hunt, "on the limb of that hollow oak. Doesn't he look like a limb himself?"

"There is certainly something demoniac about Jack," said Adele. "He came tapping at my window last night, and when I saw those eyes of his they made me shiver so—"

"He was after those cakes in your closet."

"Do you suppose he was?" she asked, as she was going off with Laddie.

They didn't any of them suppose so, for all the animals about the place seemed to have fondness for Adele, cows and horses, cats and doves; even the wood birds have a way of flying low round the charming head as she called them. Some said it was her beauty, for she was the loveliest little brown-haired blue-eyed, white-browed, damask-cheeked piece of flesh and blood one could imagine; and the rest fancied it was some nearness to nature in her, or some secret attraction like that of the Indian snake-charmers.

"That is the same way she tamed Jane's brother Phil," said Lucia. "Every one knows that Phil was the haughtiest and most high-strung mam in existence, and rather despised women. And now he just adores the ground she walks on.

"As for me," said Miss Meyer, "I should be afraid that that sort of love was a glamour, and would break up some day."

"There's no danger of Phil's love for Adele breaking up," said Jane. "And how she does worship him! She never mentions his name, but she writes to him every day—and she even saves the scraps of his writing on newspaper envelopes she does indeed, girls!"

"Dear me! I wouldn't want to care so much for any one," said Miss Meyer.

"I don't know any one that's more likely to," cried Lucia. "When you do fall in love, Maria Meyer——"

"Don't you concern yourself, young lady, about me," said Miss Meyer, sharply, walking off to give Laddie a biscuit, which was at once stolen by Jack, Laddie being engrossed in a fine game of romp with Adele. "They say she used to care for Phil herself," whispered Lucia to her neighbor; and then they fell to comparing their tatting and crocheting and getting out patterns, and Miss Mahoney joined them. Miss Mahoney's morning toilets were as extraordinarily severe as her afternoon ones were extraordinarily superb. "Oh, Miss Mahoney!" cried one of the girls one morning, "if we had your laces we shouldn't have to do tatting."

"We hear you have such lovely lace," said Maria Meyer, with that grand air of hers on.

"I have some very pretty pieces," said Miss Mahoney. "Our family is an old Irish family, and I am the last of it, and so in one direction and another I have fallen heir to a good deal."

"And I suppose you know all about lace?" said Lucia.

"I know all about my lace. Some of it is quite nice. As pretty pieces," repeated Miss Mahoney, "of their size as one could see in America."

"What if you had a grand opening at some time, and let us see them all?" asked Lucia.

"Why with the greatest pleasure, any time—now, if you say so." And of course the girls all said so, and sprung to their feet at once.

"Oh, is she going to show us her laces?" cried Adele, dancing up with Laddie barking and jumping round Jack, who had perched on her shoulder. "How lovely of you, Miss Mahoney!" and she followed with the rest.

"This," said Miss Mahoney, when she had opened her boxes, "is Venice point."

"It doesn't look any different from tatting," said Maria Meyer.

"Only," said Miss Mahoney, "as different as mist is from water. This is a bit of Spanish lace made in a convent. Here is a scrap of cardinal's lace; nobody but the cardinals at Rome have it. I don't know how my grandmother came into possession of this scrap—there used to be an archbishop in our family somewhere, but that's not a cardinal. These are all old French laces—Mrs. Palissey never saw their equal. But they are a great deal of care. I often think that piece of Valenciennes costs me as much trouble as a child. These are Irish laces—they are like hoar-frosts and blowing snow-drifts, somebody once told me. They don't make them now. See this piece of English point—old Devonshire point—"

"Oh, how lovely!" cried Adele, while the others were exclaiming over this and that. "Talk of snow-rifts!" and she took the Devonshire point in her hands; it was two or three yards of finger-deep edging in a couple of pieces caught together by a thread, of the most exquisitely delicate beauty both of texture and design—idealized foam wreaths or the fancies of some frosted pane spread on a spider's web. "How perfectly lovely!" exclaimed Adele again, and she wound it round her blushing face before the glass. "What a finish for a bridal toilette?" and then she held it up in her hands in the sunlight, and the magpie on her shoulder, cocking his head on one side and the other, looked more demoniac than ever through the film of an end of it that lay over his shining black feathers. "You are exactly like one of those girls holding little bannerols that come dancing out of the facades of temples in those Pompeiian decorations of Phil's!" cried Jane. "What a pity that you're not going to marry a rich man, Del, who could afford you Devonshire point and diamonds," she added, the least atom maliciously, "instead of a poor young architect!"

"If Adele wound a duster round her she would still look decorated," said Lucia.

"Most folks would," said Adele, taking off the lace soberly, and laying it down. "But I must confess that I think lace is the most perfect thing made by hands; it always seems to me the nearest approach of man to works of nature, and I would about as lief make lace as paint pictures."

Miss Meyer began wrapping herself in a black lace mantle so precisely designed that the very dewdrops seemed to glisten on the poppy petals there; and presently all the other girls were masquerading in the precious things, while Miss Mahoney sat by complacently enjoying her magnificence.

"Now, my dears," said Miss Mahoney, as one by one they resigned their borrowed plumes. "You see I have nice things if I don't wear them." And satisfied with the exhibition, during the next week she put on nothing costlier than a nine-penny print.

"Well," said Adele, "it's just a pleasure to have them to look at."

Poor little Adele was the penniless orphan of penniless parents, and she taught drawing in a large school in Boston, where Philip had happened to see her and love her at first sight. Phil was coming before long now, for his month's vacation, and she was only living by counting the hours. A little restless till then, the light talk of the girls seemed to her to be meaningless chatter, in which she had small interest; and she used to wander off by herself, sketching on her little pocket boards, or lying in the fern or in the shadows of the cliffs, with an unread book in her hand, by the hour together. Occupied with her own fancies, and with a drawing of the outlines of old World's End, it was not strange that she did not particularly notice the demeanor of the girls, or if she did observe them with their heads together, that she should have thought it no more than the customary mischief and merrymaking.

She was standing alone one morning, just as the sun was drying the grass and moss on the top of Breezy Bluff, behind her the great purple mountain, below her the dewy verdure of the hillsides; hawks were soaring and sweeping over her head in the marvelous blue of the stainless sky, and under her feet the tops of the woods were bowing and bending. It was not like daily life, she was saying to herself. "This wonderful hill country! It is just as if one died, and were really approaching heaven." And in her white gown, with her bright brown hair floating out about her face in then wind that fanned so pure a color there, and with her luminous eyes borrowing the very color of the skies, she looked almost as if she were. As she stood there, rapt in reverie and happiness—the world was so beautiful and Phil was coming any day now, and she had hardly any other thought—she did not notice Miss Mahony, under a big umbrella toiling up to meet her, till that individual was close up to her.

"I have followed you here, Miss Montrose," said she, suddenly, in her most rasping tones, "to save you any mortification before the other boarders, and to ask what you have done with my Devonshire point."

"With what?"

"With my Devonshire point."

"What have I done with your Devonshire point? Why, Miss Mahoney, what do you mean?" she exclaimed, descending from her day-dreams.

"I mean what I say. My Devonshire point has disappeared. I have searched everywhere for it, so have two or three others—every box, every bag, every basket, every drawer. I have shaken every garment, have left no nook or corner neglected, and it is not to be found. You were the last person seen with it, the only one who appreciated it. What have you done with it?"

"You must—you must be dreaming, Miss Mahoney," said Adele. "What in the world should I do with your lace?"

"Finish a bridal toilette with it, perhaps," said Miss Mahoney.

"Do you mean—is it possible you can mean—"

"Miss Montrose, I mean that somebody has taken my lace, and that to be plain, suspicion points to you, and that I am giving you a chance to restore it to me before I call in an officer. For doubtless, since you could do such a thing, you know the value of that lace."

"Am I talking to a crazy woman?" cried Adele.

"No," said Miss Mahoney, "but I am talking to a thief."

For a moment Adele was dumb. Then the full meaning of the accusation smote her, and her anger flashed up like a flame. "How did it happen," she broke forth, "that so dreadful—so contemptible a woman ever came under the same roof with me? Leave me—leave me this instant! I refuse ever to even speak to you again."

"You will speak to the officers of the law, then," said Miss Mahoney, using her umbrella like a tipstaff. "The people at the house have but guessed that I suspected you. Now I shall speak at once to Mrs. Pierson and the other boarders, and tell them my certainty. I never even dreamed that in coming to a country farm-house I was coming into a den of thieves." And she was as good as her word.

Adele herself hurried down the mountain, slipping, scrambling, rolling. But, fast as she went in her indignation, Miss Mahoney's long legs had gone faster; and as she drew near the house, she saw that the usual gay morning parties on the piazzas were absent, and she presently understood, by the sound of the loud forgetful tones that came through the open window, that the loss of the Devonshire lace was under discussion.

"Mr. Philip Hunt will learn," Miss Meyer was saying, "that before one marries a beauty it is best to see whether or not she is a kleptomaniac."

"Kleptofiddlesticks!" cried Miss Mahoney. "A thief's a thief. Rich or poor. She has my lace or she hasn't. If she has, she's a thief, and four strong walls will hold her before nightfall, and save the lace of her people."

It seemed to Adele that she was certainly going mad herself. She walked in among them and stood looking about her, white as ashes, and with blazing eyes. Is there any one here capable of believing such a frightful thing as this woman's words?" she exclaimed.

"Miss Montrose!" cried Mrs. Pierson—"Miss Montrose, don't you be a mite troubled. There's nobody believes her. We'd trust her all of us with untold gold."

"I don't know," said Maria Meyer then, slowly and very white herself. "But I feel it my duty to say that passing Miss Montrose's door the other morning, I saw what looked very much like a long strip of lace fluttering at her window."

"Maria Meyer!" I would far sooner believe you told a falsehood—"

"Thank you," said Miss Myer, with a scarlet face. "But your belief will not end the matter." And just then every one's glance followed in the direction of her own, and they saw the tall figure of a dark young man in the doorway. "What is all this?" cried a cheery voice. And at that Adele turned too. "Oh, Philip! Philip!" she shrieked, holding out her arms. "Save me save me save me from this dreadful woman!" In another moment the dark young man's arms were about Adele, and he was possessing himself of the state of the case. "And so, because Miss Montrose admired your lace you dare to make such an accusation!" he exclaimed turning on Miss Mahoney and his face almost gray with wrath, "I make no unsupported accusation," said Miss Mahoney. "Miss Meyer has seen the lace in Miss Montrose's room—"

"Oh, you don't believe it, Philip!" cried Adele, in an agonized tone. "Believe it! Not if all the—"

Just at that time so furious a barking rose without from Laddie, that Mrs. Pierson, who at any other time would not have minded it, now with all her nerves fluttering, ran to see what was the matter and in another moment her cry rang out so wild and loud that, by natural instinct, half the people in the room had followed her—to see Laddie, who had treed the cat in the branches of the old dead oak under Adele's window, himself powerless in the grasp of Jack, who had descended from his frequent perch in those branches, and planting himself firmly on Laddie's shoulders, had proceeded to tear out his hair by beakfuls. At the approach of Laddie's reinforcements, though, in the shape of Mrs. Pierson, Jack extricated his claws, screaming and fluttering back; and following his flight with their eyes, they all saw what Mrs. Pierson had seen—the end of something delicately white and fibrous peeping from the moss and lichens in the crotch of the hollow tree.

Philip, who had not followed, but had remained, but hushing Adele's sobs, heard the voices that called him; and in less time than it takes to tell, he was in the crotch of that tree. "Whose magpie is this?" he cried, as well as he could be heard for Jack's scolding, sitting astride the branch, and begining to pull out a long string, firmly quilted and felted in the hollow with hair and matted moss. "Here is his nest, which he has hidden away; and here" (he knew very well what it was)—"is this string of any consequence?"

"It is the lace!" it is the lace!" cried Lucia.

"The lace!" echoed Jane. "And that is Adele's room just over the hollow. He got out with it from Miss Mahoney's room, and the wind fluttered this end into Adele's window while he was stowing it away; and that is what Maria Meyer saw, if she saw anything."

"Oh, my lace! my lace! It is ruined! it is almost ruined!" cried Miss Mahoney; and then she remembered Adele. "I am sorry Miss Montrose!" she said—"so sorry! Indeed I am! How can you overlook it?"

"I never can," sobbed Adele, trembling still in every fiber.

"You may just pack your trunks, Miss Mahoney, for the afternoon stage," said Mrs. Pierson. "I can't have—"

"And here's a comb," interrupted Philip, still bringing out one thing after another, "yours, by its air and bringing up, Mrs. Pierson. And a thimble, and a bow of ribbon, and a curl of yellow hair, and a stuffed humming-bird, and—what is this, Adele?" and he held up a gold chain and onyx locket.

"Oh, it is mine!" exclaimed Adele. "It is the one you gave me on my birthday. I couldn't imagine what had become of it."

"And you didn't make any outcry."

"Oh, I thought—I thought—I mean, I thought she never came honestly by so many things, and I was sure she had taken it to add to the others, and it didn't seem worth while to make any fuss. So after that I just locked my drawers."

"She?" cried Miss Mahoney, now recovering her lost breath. "She? Me?—a Mahoney? Is it I, you little—"

Oh, yes!" replied Adele, "And I am so ashamed? And you never can forgive me."

"I never can," said Miss Mahoney. But directly afterward she broke into a hearty laugh. "My dear Miss Adele," she. "I can, and I do; and you must, and you shall. As for that bad Jack, he deserves to have his neck wrung wrung; and I'd do it—indeed, then, I would—if I didn't need him to keep Laddie in subjection. Now I beg your pardon heartily and everybody's, and know you're going to grant it. The poor Devonshire point! that will take me weeks to restore, and I suppose it would have uncomfortable associations, too. But I've lots of old Irish lace just as delicate as that, and it will look just as well as the finish to the bridal toilette. And you musn't feel hard. You see, we're quits; you thought as much of me. I'm a well-meaning old thing; and perhaps Mrs Pierwill let me stay after all."—*Harper's Bazar.*

LOVE AND JEALOUSY.

Grace Thornley had been married a year when the civil war begun, and lived in a pleasant cottage with her husband, who was a fine-looking, tawny-whiskered young fellow of twenty-five, as fond as a man could be of his wife, and as well-liked by everybody as he was whole-souled and loveable.

Grace was nineteen, a pretty, blue-eyed yellow-haired little creature, whose only fault was a growing tendency to be inordinately jealous of her husband, if he so much as glanced at a lady who, to the charms of youth, added the captivating spell of beauty.

She loved Will Thornley dearly, but at the same time, Will's smiles must all be for her and nobody else, and he must think her just perfection in everything, whether she was so or not, and never, no, never must he by any possible chance hint that any woman living was ever half so lovely, good or wise as her own exacting, impulsive little self.

Will, being a young husband, and very much in love with his wife, was quite willing to admit, and for a time to sincerely believe that Grace really was an angel, and they were as happy as two turtle doves, or a pair of newly-mated swans, until Rose Woodward came to pay them a visit.

Before Grace's marriage, Rose had been her most intimate friend, and she naturally looked forward to her coming with no little pleasure, quite forgetful that her old schoolmate had been thought very attractive when they were girls together at Madame Delacourt's seminary.

A very great oversight on the part of Grace; for Miss Woodward had large, laughing eyes, glossy dark hair and wine-red lips, which Will, of course, could not help seeing, and, having seen, could not help admiring.

It is unreasonable for one to insist that a man must be both blind and dumb simply because he is married.

And then, too, Rose was so tall and elegant, while Grace was such a little childish, baby-faced thing.

It was not Will who made this discontented comparison. It was Grace herself. She was sure Will thought her silly and insignificant, for she had heard him say he thought Miss Woodward a remarkably handsome woman.

To be sure, she had asked him the question point blank one day, when they were walking in the garden, and he could not have answered otherwise and spoken truthfully.

And Rose was so clever and sensible, besides being handsome. Grace felt keenly her own inferiority, and wished from the bottom of her foolish young heart that she was not such a blue-eyed, amberhaired little stupid. It was a very undignified thing to do, but, almost before she knew it, Grace found herself watching mistrustfully both friend and husband, and suspecting deceit where there was none. She was half ashamed of herself wholly unhappy for so doing, but jealousy is ever a self-mortifying and misery-breeding tyrant, which, once having gotten a foothold in one's thoughts, hangs on like grim death, and is apt to make a ruin of the tenderest and truest love.

It was not long before Rose guessed what was passing in Mrs Thornley's mind, and shaped her conduct accordingly. It was a trifle embarrassing, certainly, but she was a woman of admirable tact, and managed to adopt a safe middle course, privately vowing, however, to make her visit as short as possible, and take good care not to repeat it until such time as Mrs Will Thornley had learned to temper her wifely affection with some small share of common sense.

But the prudent middle course had its drawback, for Will fancied his wife's guest treated him with marked coldness, and as was very natural, wanted to know the meaning of it.

He did not understand it at all, and chancing to meet Rose alone one morning in the drawing-room, he said:

"I fear I have in someway offended you, Miss Woodward; you are so bent upon keeping me at a distance."

"Not at all," she smiled. "Pray don't think me so ungracious. It would ill become me to treat the husband of my friend and hostess with indifference; and if my manner so impressed you, it was unintentionally done on my part, I assure you."

"A man married is not a man banished forevermore from the good graces of all womankind, is he?" laughed Will. "If so, I take it as being very hard lines fallen in the hardest sort of places."

"And would treasonably wish yourself a bachelor again," rejoined Rose.

"Yes and no," he replied, still laughing, with something of a serious look in his dark gray eyes.

Neither saw Grace standing pale and still in the doorway. She had only heard Rose say, in her lowest and most musical tones, "wish yourself a bachelor again!" and his evasive reply, "yes and no!" but it was enough.

Grace was quite satisfied now that she was an unloved wife. Will should be free. Rose was better suited to him. It were folly for her to suppose that he ever really loved her. Men were so fickle and false-hearted! She had seen how it would be from the first, and all that was left to her to do was to die as soon as she could, and find rest and forgetfulness in the grave.

Having come to this wise conclusion, Grace went up to her room, locked herself in, and cried comfortably for a whole hour.

Will came whistling upstairs, and was surprised to find the door locked. Still more was he surprised when Grace, in a smothered voice, denied him admittance, saying she had a headache and did not wish to be disturbed.

Puzzled, and somewhat angry withal, as he had reason to be, Will went away to his office, feeling as if the angel was fast disappearing, and his wife, after all, was but a pretty, perverse, provoking child, whom time and experience alone could ever teach to be a woman.

An hour after her husband's departure, Grace, in a plain gray traveling dress, and with a thick veil tied closely over her tear-stained face, stealthily left the house; and before Rose, who, from her window, saw her hurrying along the road to the railway station, could clearly divine her purpose she was gone.

This was a nice predicament for one to be placed in, truly! Miss Woodward's indignation for the moment, got the better of her pity; and she could have shaken Grace well for her senseless and wilful absurdity.

There was but one thing for her to do, and that was to pack her trunks with all possible dispatch and leave on the next train, which she did to the infinite amazement of Biddy, who did not know what in the world to make of her sudden departure, not dreaming that her mistress had also taken flight, and was already many miles from home.

When Will came home to dinner at six o'clock, and learned the true state of things, he grew as pale as death, and staggered to a chair as quickly as if a shot had struck him in the heart.

Grace had left a note on the bureau in her room, in which she stated, in a kind of hysterical Enoch Arden-like manner, that she was going home to her mother, and he might be assured that neither he nor Rose would ever be troubled by seeing or even hearing from her again. It was her earnest wish to die, and over her early grave, perhaps, some gentle thought of her might stir his cold, forgetful heart into a passing throb of tenderness.

With the note crumpled convulsively in his hand, Will Thornley seized his hat and rushed from the house. It mattered not where he went, or what he did now, and ere the next day's sun had set, he made one of the many thousands of soldiers marching bravely to the front, to fall, maybe in the battle, with face turned unflinchingly toward the foe, or die miserably in some prison, like a caged beast, his heart broken, and death a welcome release from pain, and grief, and hopeless wretchedness.

The setting sun was rapidly sinking to his crimson-curtained couch in the west, when Grace walked up the grassy path to the little white gate, where she and Will had often stood in the old, happy days of their courting, and watched the fading light steal duskily and slowly among the softly-whispering leaves of the maples.

"A letter for you, Mrs. Thornley," said Mr. Parkhurst, a near neighbor. "I happened to be passing this way, and thought you might like to have it."

"Oh, yes, thank you!" she replied, in a trembling voice. "You are very kind."

Mr. Parkhurst gave her the letter, and went on.

Grace recogaized the handwriting in a moment, and with a glad "Oh, it's from Will, and he has forgiven me!" she tore open the envelope and hastily ran her eyes over its contents. The smile faded; the glad look left her eyes, and with a low piteous cry, she fell on her knees—aye to the very earth, and sobbed out the bitter, remorseful anguish of her stricken soul:

"Gone—Will gone! Oh, no, no! It cannot be! And yet this cruel, cruel letter—only four little lines!"

"You have chosen your way and I have chosen mine. All I desire in this world is a speedy and brave death, and I go to meet it as joyously as ever a bridegroom went to meet his bride."

That was all. No name, no date, but she knew only too well its meaning. She pressed it to her lips, her heart. She covered it with tears, all the while uttering the poor, pititul cry:

"Oh, Will, Will, forgive me! You must forgive me—you must come back to me or let me go to you!"

But alas her repentance came too late! Will was hundreds of miles away, and between him and Grace's peaceful home cannon were thundering their dread alarm, and war's heroic victims were falling by the tens of thousands.

They found her lying unconscious and apparently lifeless under the maples, with her still white face all wet with the night dews, and the little cold hands clasping close to her heart Will's short, last letter.

* * * * * *

Private Thornley soon won for himself the reputation of being the most desperately daring man in the army. If anything particularly dangerous was to be attempted, Thornley was always sure to offer his services.

He never seemed to sleep, and was forever putting himself in the most dangerous places; but do what he would, and tempt fate as he might, nothing harmed him.

Three years of bloodshed, turmoil, anxiety and alternate hope and fear passed away—years that had been to Grace one long agony of sorrowful regrets and slow wearisome waiting; for she did wait, and Heaven only knows how patiently and prayerfully—waited for some sign from Will—waited to know that he still cared for her, or at least remembered that she had once been his wife.

She knew that Colonel Thornley was somewhere in Tennessee, but for the rest, she knew no more than the merest stranger who read his name and an account of his brilliant deeds in the daily papers.

The fabled Lethe is a stream never found this side of the grave, search long and far as one may, and those three stirring years, active as was his life and hazardous his march to fame, had by no means brought forgetfulness to Will Thornley's troubled heart.

Grace was so young and impulsive! He should have been more patient! more forebearing, more forgiving. He felt remorseful and self-condemned; but how make the matter up now?

Some thoughts as these were passing gloomily through his mind, one evening, as he sat alone in his tent, pondering over the subject. What a sad, sad ruin the madness of an hour had made of his life!

True he had no small share of fame, and it was not altogether egotism, perhaps, to say it was fairly earned; but happiness he had lost, and wife and home, though the old love still remained, and to-night, somehow, seemed very near.

"A lady to see you, colonel," said the tall Irish orderly, entering the tent, and saluting.

"I can't see anybody to-night, sergeant. Some begging refugee, I suppose. Refer her to Major Clinton," testily replied the colonel.

"But she's not a refugee, or anything of that sort, and says she must see you. She's kinder weakly looking, and as pale as a ghost, wid the travelin' and trouble she's had: and begging your pardon, colonel, I'd rather go to the guard-house for a week than take your message to her," stoutly urged the honest orderly.

An impatient frown darkened the colonel's brow, for he had grown stern and irritable during the past three years, and was no more the Will Thornley he had formerly been than the merry-hearted school-boy is like a grim, iron-handed old field-marshal.

"Show the lady in, then, and be quick about it," he said shortly.

The orderly promptly obeyed, and soon reappeared, conducting a lady, who trembled visibly, and seemed half afraid to enter, though she had but a moment before begged the orderly to procure the interview for her.

The sergeant instantly retired; and with a sharp interrogative, "Well, madam?" Colonel Thornley turned to know the pleasure of his strange visitor.

The light from the single tallow candle, burning on the table, was so dim as to barely admit of readily distinguishing the feature of one in the corner where the small, shrinking figure stood, as white and nerveless as a statute.

"Well, madam," and this time Colonel Thornley's tones were not quite so sharp. "What is your business with me?"

The woman took a step forward, and in a second down at his feet fell that slight, shivering form—a sob, an imploring out-reaching of two thin, trembling little hands, and then from the pale lips came the wild, agonized cry:

"Oh, Will, Will! pity me—forgive me, and let me die here at your feet! It is all, all I ask!"

"Grace! my wife, my darling! my poor sad and lonely child, is it indeed you?" He caught her to his heart, and covered her cold, death white face with kisses. "Forgive you, Grace? Alas, it is I who should crave your forgiveness! Look up my own dear one. Do not tremble so. You are safe with me, and the past shall be both forgotten and forgiven. It was a hasty act—hasty on your part and on mine; but we are wiser now, and shall know better in the future how to guard against anger and jealousy—the two besetting sins of poor, weak human nature."

"Mine was the greater fault," she sobbed, "and the love that is without jealousy, let them say what they will, is the only true, believing, lasting love. I know it now; but, oh, Will, the learning of the lesson was bitter, bitter, indeed! And I must see you—and must tell you —"

"Not that you have suffered, for I can see that plainly enough—much too plainly. And Miss Woodward is—"

Married!" Grace turned away her face that he might not see the sudden blush that crimsoned it like a rose. "I—I went to see her. I did, really, and she forgave me. Said I was a little goose, and—and—advised me to go and see you whether you liked it or not. So I came, and now I am here; you don't mind, do you? And we will begin all over again, and be as happy as we were at first."

"Yes: as happy as we were at first, and as I ever hope to be hereafter."

"And you don't care to be a bachelor again, even if I am silly?"

"Yes, and no," he said, smiling.

She laid her head contentedly on his breast, and smiled too, though a little sadly, for she had learned through bitter experience, that

"Into each life some rain must fall,
Some days must be dark and dreary."