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Treading the Winepress; or, A Mountain of Misfortune

Clarissa Minnie Thompson Allen

Gabrielle Brown
Illinois State University

Eric Willey
Illinois State University

Jean MacDonald
Illinois State University

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Treading the Winepress

Clarissa Minnie Thompson Allen



Treading
the
Winepress



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Treading the Winepress

or, A Mountain of Misfortune

Clarissa Minnie Thompson Allen

Edited by Gabrielle Brown, Eric Willey, and Jean MacDonald

UNDISCOVERED
A M E R I C A S





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LEGACIES

Undiscovered Americas

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EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

“Some things you forget. Other things you never do.”

Toni Morrison, Beloved

There is something beautiful about discovery, about learning the journey we were once familiar with involved a detour that could possibly explain what we did not understand. While it is common to emphasize those who are the first, we must not forget those who came after, because they provide us the opportunity to learn more, which is a privilege we cannot take lightly.

When I was approached with the opportunity to work on an archival editing project involving an apparently unknown African American female author, I was excited but also nervously anticipating how large of a role I would take on in bringing this project to fruition. Taking Clarissa Minnie Thompson Allen's serial publication *Treading the Winepress; or, A Mountain of Misfortune*, which circulated as a serial in late-nineteenth-century black newspapers, and turning it into a novel provided the rare opportunity to expand my individual knowledge in another aspect of publishing while doing the important work of creating an open access book

available to educators and students in classrooms all over the world. This unique novel appears to drift away from the common spiritual and slave narratives of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and instead envelops readers in a story of intrigue with the majority of characters being African American themselves. While portraying the racial, economic, and classist disparities facing African Americans of that time, Allen's writing grabs her readers' attention through love, mystery, and murder happening in the fictional city of Capitolia, based on Columbia, South Carolina.

Few mentions of Allen exist on the Internet; her Wikipedia page consists of fourteen total sentences, with this novel the only published work mentioned by name and her other contributions to the literary arts unspecified. She was an educator as well as an author of poetry and novelettes for Texas-based publications. While *Treading the Winepress* is considered her most notable work, the serial publication has only been available in microfilm from historic newspapers, the *Christian Recorder* of Philadelphia and the *Boston Advocate*. Over time, I became increasingly passionate about the project. Allen appears to be one of the earliest African American female novelists published in the United States—the first divided between Harriet Wilson's *Our Nig* (1859) and Hannah Crafts's *The Bondwoman's Narrative* (believed to have been written between 1853 and 1860). *Treading the Winepress* takes readers on a journey through the lives of African American elites, with love affairs and murder mysteries abounding.

The first step to sharing Allen's novel with the world was to get all of the available chapters into a single document. The first three chapters were available via Accessible Archives, an online database of archived historical information, most of which were formerly only available in microfilm. The earliest record of publication comes from the *Christian Recorder's* August 6, 1885 issue; the chapters were printed in each week's issue until ending at chapter three with

“to be continued” on August 20, 1885, with no future installments published in this newspaper. The novel stopped serial publication in the *Christian Recorder* because the tragedies and intrigues of the narrative would not match the conservative, religious values of the newspaper. Her novel then began serial publication in the *Boston Advocate*, the first chapter printed in the September 26, 1885 issue, and would continue through to completion December 25, 1886. As I reviewed the copies of the microfilm from the *Boston Advocate*, I discovered that eighteen chapters, along with what I later assumed to be three partial chapters, were missing from the films provided for transcription. All of the film copies were low in contrast, so each individual microfilm was darkened using Adobe Photoshop, making the words more legible.

Since I had begun the transcription process with text from the *Christian Recorder*, I decided to compare the content of the two newspapers, discovering that many of the phrases in the *Boston Advocate* were modified in some way. For consistency, I changed any text that did not match directly with the *Boston Advocate* issues, noting with red font the areas that could not be verified due to missing portions of the newspaper, and used the *Boston Advocate* as the sole source for the transcriptions. As mentioned, many of the microfilms were not in perfect, pristine condition, often having entire sections either unreadable or cut off when copies were made. For these areas, I opted to use brackets to denote a word, phrase, or paragraph that was not legible. For consistency within the interior, it was decided that having consistent representation of illegible areas provided a more efficient way for future modifications of those sections. Many issues had a single chapter broken into multiple parts or sections, but I chose not to show this in the transcription because I believed this to have been a decision made by the newspaper editors for spacing, rather than the request of Allen herself.

There were other inconsistencies throughout various chapters, like the spelling of the last name De Verne, which is shown both as one word, “DeVerne” and two words, “De Verne.” I opted to keep De Verne as two words because this format appeared first in the publication. The bracketed phrases denote areas that were difficult to discern, but there were small words and phrases that could be determined by the language or scene surrounding them. Although there are many missing chapters and phrases, it was decided that enough of the manuscript was available to give a clear picture of the plot of the story. Unfortunately, the microfilm with the final installment was not available to us when creating this printed edition, but it was agreed that leaving it to the readers to draw their own conclusions about the fates of the characters, based on the clues Allen provides throughout the text, would still provide an enjoyable reading experience.

It is my hope that, in the coming years, new discoveries of heretofore unknown archival materials are made and this edition is expanded, the missing chapters discovered and similarly transcribed, adding more stops to the journey that Allen takes us on in the pages of *Treading the Winepress*. My hope is that teachers and students will seek to know more about the unsung novelist Clarissa Minnie Thompson Allen, as well as other female authors of color, taking note of how they contributed to the rich culture of American and world literature.

–Gabrielle Brown
December 2019
Illinois State University

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—CHAPTER 1—

GERTIE

Every life hath its chapter of sorrow. No matter how rich the gilding or fair the pages of the volume, Trouble will stamp it with his sable signet. Perhaps 'tis best, for

*Sorrows humanize our race,
Tears are the showers that fertilize this world.*

There is much to enjoy in this world, but there is also much to suffer. In some lives the suffering outweighs the joy; in some the burden seems greater than the human heart can bear. The Mountain of Misfortune rears its head, gloomy and forbidding, in the path of all who make the journey from the cradle to the grave. To some it is not so steep: others must climb higher and higher, over thorns and pebbles, over snares and pitfalls; but if the pilgrim toils up its rugged brow with Faith for his armor, Hope for his staff, and Love for his guiding star, he will find the summit no barren spot, but the very entrance to the Celestial City. Man is made to mourn—for his own good; as Miss Proctor so sweetly expresses it:

*Let thy gold be tried in the furnace,
Thy red gold, precious and bright;
Do not fear the hungry fire
With its avers of burning light.
And the gold shall return more precious
Free from every spot and stain,
For gold must be tried by fire,
As the heart must be tried by pain.*

One of the prettiest towns in Dixie is the capital of a State which has played so insignificant a part in our national history. Capitolia, as I shall call this town, possesses little artificial beauty. Though the public edifices, hotels, business houses, and some of the private residences are of brick or stone, wood is the favorite material used in building. Many of these wooden dwellings, however, are beautiful as to design and finish, and almost everyone, no matter how small or clustered, has a flower garden attached. Roses and violets, jonquils and hyacinths, pansies and jessamines, lilacs and geraniums, and hosts of other plants bloom here luxuriantly. She is called the "City of Flowers," and no town, tropical or extra-tropical, has a better right to the title. But 'tis not her flowers alone that make Capitolia lovely. A double, often triple, row of trees, of which the elm, the sugarberry, and the oak are the most conspicuous, line the broad, regular streets, and, when spring decks them in their robes of living green, the town looks like a piece of fairyland. As one said of her some time previous to the date of our story, "It is hard to conceive a city more beautifully situated, or more gorgeously embellished with splendid shaded walks and drives, with flowers, shrubbery and plantations. Birds of splendid plumage sang and sported in the garden under the delicious influence of its sunny skies. A spell of ease and voluptuous luxury seemed to pervade the place. Flowers, pictures, statuary, select libraries, all that the arts and sciences could contribute, adorned its halls and private residence... It is no

wonder that Eve was discontented in Paradise when a people, with so much to gratify the most epicurean tastes, rebelled.”

Capitolia never looked lovelier than on a Sunday in spring. The Sabbath here is indeed a day of rest. No places of business or amusement are open to lure the people to sin. It is a refreshing thing to one, wearied with the toils and cares of the week, to meet group after group with peace in their faces, and, we trust, hope in their hearts, dressed in their best attire, wending their way to the sanctuary. Churchgoing is universal; everybody seems to act on the suggestion afforded by these words of one of the former governors of the State: “Young man, all respectable young men attend church,” and perhaps this custom may account for the fact that, in proportion to its size, there is less crime committed in Capitolia than in any other town of the United States.

One of the largest congregations in the place is the Church which owes its existence to Richard Allen. It is by no means a handsome structure. The architecture is poor and the workmanship indifferent. Ill-natured people say (of course the remark is entirely too extravagant to notice) that enough money has been spent on it to build a cathedral. Certainly, the exterior is a reflection on the aesthetic taste of the denomination. Piecing an ugly church will not remedy its defects; when will some people realize this fact? While we can go to heaven from a barn as well as from a brick edifice, I should prefer to take my flight from the edifice. As Heaven is so glorious, I think that we should try to make God’s temple on earth as beautiful as we can. A handsome church has no little effect on the tone of a congregation. While the rule does not always hold true, perhaps a splendid church is apt to make a refined congregation—at least while they are within its walls. I think it helps them to recognize that fire (the Methodist characteristic) may be elsewhere than in the feet; happiness elsewhere than in the hands; love elsewhere than on the lips; and that there can be holiness in the

heart, salvation in the soul, and Christian perfection in every part without all those motions and noises, which convert what should be a reverent assembly of worshippers into a collection of Jumpers.* But I digress. As the bell announced the hour of one, the congregation began to pour out of Bethel. A fine looking congregation it was; Capitolia has always been noted for her fine looking colored population, and on this day they were out in their glory. Were it not for the difference in color (and this difference does not exist in a large number of cases), one's eyes—we say nothing of ears, for oh, what a buzz always follows the benediction in Bethel—could not distinguish these from Anglo-Saxon worshippers, for colored folks have a love for fine feathers, and will gratify this love, lest the rainy day be as near at hand as it may.

One of the last to descend the steps was the young girl whose name heads this chapter. It would have been a difficult matter to tell Gertrude Tremaine's age from her face; on some people the years make no mark, while others have a preternaturally old appearance. Such was the case with Gertie. The gossips averred that she would never see twenty again, but the old family Bible on the parlor table declared her age to be seventeen. She was not what is termed a pretty girl; her best friends would not have called her that. Some even said that she was homely. Yet it would be hard to tell in what the homeliness lay. Her features were good. Her forehead was of the Grecian type; her eyes were brown, and, as a noted author says, bright brown eyes are an attraction in both man and woman. Her nose, though somewhat of the pug order, did not look amiss; her lips were full and pouting, while her hair was really beautiful—fine, silken, curly,

*Whose glossy black to shame would bring
The plumage of the raven's wing.*

Some said that her face was too full; others found fault with her complexion—a dark brown. But her figure atoned for all the defects

of her face. Tall and well developed, with a decided inclination to embonpoint, though not enough to mar its rich outlines, it was more than shapely—it was magnificent. She was robed in pure white, nothing but the boot encasing her rather large but proportionate foot contained a vestige of color. On her head was a white chip, ornamented with white satin bows and ostrich plumes; her dress was a white mull, stylishly trimmed with Torchon lace and insertion; at her throat was a mother-of-pearl broach and a dainty lily; white satin ribbon, tied in the front in a tasteful bow, encircled her waist; white kid gloves covered her hands; a fan of swansdown and a white silk parasol, edged with Spanish lace, gave the finishing touch to her quiet but effective costume.

Many were the criticisms passed on her as she ran the gauntlet of feminine eyes—for what woman but can detect a flaw in another woman's armor?—but to the young man who stood on the outskirts, leisurely surveying the crowd, she looked the embodiment of taste and purity.

She had not taken many steps before he joined her.

“Is Miss Gertie so anxious to avoid an old friend that she needs must run a race?” he asked.

She turned toward him with a glad, happy smile that made her look almost beautiful. Her teeth were even and white as pearls, and when she parted her lips she was really lovely.

“Ah, I had no idea that you were so near,” she said, offering him her hand, which, man-like, he retained as long as possible. “I did not see you in church.”

“I should think not. It would have taken those eyes by Sam Weller to see me, large as I am. I heard them singing the doxology just as I entered the vestibule, and so I had to stand, like the heathen, in the outer court.”

* A sect which arose in Wales in 1760. They make violent noises during the tune of worship and jump until they are exhausted.

“How sad! What made you so late!”

“Oh, I had no idea that I was behind time. Judging Bethel in the light of the past, I thought that any time between noon and the dinner hour would be soon enough. You people do have an outrageously long service.”

“No reflections on my Church, if you please,” said Gertie, with that sweet smile which transfigured her plain face. “‘With all her faults I love her still,’ and it is really mortifying to me to hear anything said against her, however much she may deserve it.”

“You are a devoted little thing, that’s a fact. I believe you would stick to a fellow through thick and thin, wouldn’t you?”

“Devotion is characteristic of my sex, Mr. De Verne.”

“I can’t answer for the sex in general, but I think I can for you in particular. I believe you to be one of the truest, purest, loftiest women the world affords, Miss Gertie. The masterpiece of creation is a pure woman. She is the link that connects fallen man on earth with the holy angels in heaven. God created nothing nobler, and, if woman were true to her mission, how would she help to regenerate this sinful world! As Prof. Dart said in his lecture Thursday night, ‘Oh, woman, thou who hast power to lift man upward, higher than Milton’s Heaven! thou hast power to sink him downward, lower than Dante’s Hell!’ I believe you to be one of those women who would use your power over man for his good, and this is what drew me towards you from the first. Goodness is your chief attraction, Gertie, and what higher attraction can any woman possess?”

“Are you not afraid to lavish so much praise on a weak, erring mortal? It seems to me that nothing is more bitter than to discover that the being we thought almost perfection is made of the very commonest clay. Don’t overrate me so. I am like other women—certainly no better, and I hope no worse.”

“I would stake my life on your truth, Miss Gertie. I came across these words this morning, and, do you know, they reminded me

of you? ‘I have loved him with a deathless devotion that neither his unworthiness, nor time, nor eternity can conquer; and today I tell you he is dear to me—dear to me as some precious corpse, over which a gravestone has gathered moss for many weary, dreary years.’ That is a sentiment worthy of you, Gertie.”

“In my vocabulary—in that of every woman, I suppose—love and loyalty are synonyms. A true woman cannot be otherwise than faithful to him to whom she pledged undying affection.”

“You don’t know your own sex. You judge them all by yourself—a very good test, it is true, but, in your inexperienced hands, not an infallible one. In the mirror of purity, vice dare not show itself, and seeing it not, we doubt its existence.”

“We had better resolve ourselves into a Mutual Admiration Society, had we not? By the way, I see a lady approaching whom Madame Rumor declares you to admire more than anything ‘in heaven above, or the earth beneath, or the waters under the earth.’ Look, Mr. De Verne, allow me the distinguished pleasure of pointing out to your enraptured eyes the loveliest vision that ever greeted masculine orbs, viz, Miss Isabel St. Clair, the belle of Charlestorla and the reputed mistress of Willie De Verne’s affections. She is attended by Mr. Tracy, who, in the absence of his bosom friend, is guarding most sacredly his dearest treasure. See! They have just crossed there by Col. Rutledge’s.”

Ah, Gertie, the words seemed to be spoken lightly enough, and the smile which accompanied them seemed arch enough, but anyone more observant than Will De Verne (who, though certainly possessing his full share of conceit characteristic of his sex, did not dream that he had stirred the depths of your pure heart as they can be stirred but once in lifetime) would have learned your secret then and there. Love cannot hide itself except from those eyes that are strangely blinded, and you, poor child, have not yet learned the art of dissembling your real feelings.

A PRESENTIMENT

It was indeed a lovely vision that greeted Will's eyes. Say what they will to the contrary, men are slaves to beauty, and Will De Verne was peculiarly sensitive to a pair of bright eyes, a beautiful mouth, and a fine complexion. But then, what man is not? Charity covereth a multitude of sins, and so doth beauty. With a vast majority of the male sex, beauty will atone for all the crimes in the calendar. 'Tis her beauty, not her merit, that makes so many apologists for unfortunate Mary of Scotland. Beatrice would have gone to her death "unwept, unhonored and unsung," her great crime unpalliated, her name covered with opprobrium, had she not been

*A daughter of the gods, divinely tall
And most divinely fair.*

Thus hath it always been and thus will it always be as long as men are men.

Yet, if flesh and blood were all, one might be excused if he counted the world well lost for such a woman as Isabel St. Clair. I can best describe her in the words of another: "One of the most exquisite girls I have met in this South-land, where nature has done her choicest work in both vegetable and physical kingdoms, is Isabel St. Clair. Words, however well chosen, can scarcely give an adequate conception of her. The slender oval of the face, the truly rich olive of the cheek, the long, sweeping dark lashes of the superb eyes, glowing at once with passion and tenderness, the low forehead, with its rippling mass of silky hair, the slender neck, the lithe form, the spring step and the dainty foot make her like a poet's dream of darkly brilliant loveliness." She wore a creamy dress of some soft substance, a marvel of lace, ribbon and workmanship, which set off her rare beauty to its best advantage. Verily, a girl that understood the art of arraying herself to perfection.

Her cavalier was as handsome a man as she was a woman, and it did not take a very extensive acquaintance to find out that he was conceited accordingly. Some men think themselves "killing," and Lorraine Tracy was one of these. Yet, if such vanity is ever excusable, none ever had more excuse than he. His friends (at least, his lady friends) called him Adonis, and he was just the kind of a man to enjoy this title. His beauty was not of the strong, commanding type like Will De Verne's; he was only a little above the medium height and very slightly built. Yet there was strength in that slender well-knit frame, his cost. His features were regular, and his skin fair and delicate as a woman's; indeed, his face would have been called effeminate were it not for the heavy mustache shading his upper lip and the large, brilliant black eyes in which a physiognomist could read an indomitable will as well as the most violent passions. Those eyes, brilliant as they were, said "Beware!" to them who could sound their depths, as many a poor girl had learned when it was too late for the knowledge to avail her anything.

Will De Verne was of quite a different type. It seemed hardly possible that his tall, masculine figure and strong intellectual face were the result of only nineteen years' development, but some people mature rapidly, and Will was one of them. His rich, golden-brown complexion was lightened by the thick mustache he was so fond of twirling and the curls of raven-black hair clustering around his classical forehead. His was a handsome face—far more attractive to a physiognomist than Lorraine's dainty beauty—and its chief attraction lay in the large, dark brown eyes. I have a fondness for brown eyes; though lacking the brilliancy of black, the witchery of blue, and the variableness of gray, they have an earnestness, a depth, a tenderness peculiarly their own, which wins one in spite of himself. Heavy arched eyebrows added to their effect, and they were shaded by long silken lashes that would have graced a woman's. But there was nothing effeminate about him; from the crown of his finely poised head to the sole of his shapely foot, "this is a man" was stamped in unmistakable characters.

Most people thought Lorraine Tracy handsomer than Will—at least, most women did; but the two girls whom they escorted this bright May day had a different opinion. It was impossible not to see and understand the blush that dyed Isabel's soft cheek or read the tale told by the lovely, half-averted eyes as the two couples met. Will, in his impulsive way, speedily made Isabel's dainty hand a prisoner in his own, with no apparent intention of releasing it, and his eyes grew luminous with admiration. Gertie looked on with a dull pain gnawing at her very heartstrings. Ah, me! None know the pangs of unrequited love save those who have felt their poignancy!

Lorraine's hand sought his hat after a delay that augured little for his breeding. With him, admiration belonged to the women who possessed beauty and respect to those who possessed money. Gertie belonged to neither of these classes, and he did not see the need of

his troubling himself with any of those little courtesies which a real gentleman shows a woman if only in compliment to her sex.

Gertie, who was very sensitive, felt the hot blood rush to her face in mortification; nor was this mortification lessened by Isabel's seeming unconscious of her presence. She stood there, a little apart from the others, and it was with difficulty that she could restrain the angry tears.

Perhaps Isabel really had forgotten her; Will certainly had, for, during the first few moments, he forgot everything but the lovely girl whom Dame Rumor said he was enamored of. But it was not long ere he remembered his duties as an escort. He had not seen Tracy's tardy salutation, but he felt instinctively that Gertie was being ignored by his friends.

To think with Will was to act. The next instant he was by her side.

"Allow me to present to you Miss St. Clair, a friend of my aunt's, Miss Gertie," he said. "Excuse me, I thought you were already acquainted with each other."

"I met the young lady at the Normal School a week or two ago," said Isabel carelessly, with the least shade of condescension in her even tones. "I don't suppose she has forgotten me."

Gertie bowed coldly. She had a hasty temper, this heroine of ours, though she was learning to keep it under excellent control, but on the present occasion she could scarcely command it.

"Not exactly, and yet sufficiently for me to be grateful to Mr. De Verne for the honor of this introduction," she replied.

Will opened his eyes. It was impossible for his well-trained ear not to detect the stress laid on the word "honor."

Isabel saw her opportunity and was all sweetness at once. She understood human nature well, innocent and childish as she looked. She held out her hand, which Gertie, in her indignation and pride, took very coldly—so coldly that Will was surprised, for he had not suspected this trait in her character.

“I hope that Miss Tremaine will prove that she really considers it an ‘honor’ and a pleasure as well, by calling to see me ‘early and often’ during my stay in Capitolia,” she said cordially.

Gertie bowed again. Woman-like, she saw clearly through the subterfuge at once—that the invitation was given more for its effect on De Verne than from any desire of her company.

“Thanks!” she said frigidly.

Isabel raised her beautiful eyes to Will. “I consider this friend of yours a little deficient in manners,” they seemed to say.

Will bit his lip. He entertained the deepest regard for Gertie, and he was anxious that she should stand well with this lovely guest of his aunt’s. More disappointed than he cared to own even to himself, he changed the topic by presenting “my chum, Tracy.”

Worse than ever. Gertie may have been cold before—this time it was coldness intensified to the utmost degree. Lorraine’s bow was marked by a carelessness which bordered on insolence. Gertie bowed as haughtily as if she were an empress.

“You are not well, Miss Tremaine?” said Will a few minutes later as they turned into the street which led to Gertie’s home. He was inclined to be angry with her, but the sight of the tears in her soft hazel eyes had disarmed him. His voice was very low and gentle as he asked this question. Gentleness in a strong, willful man is really fascinating, and this gentleness of Will’s was, perhaps, the secret of his popularity with the other sex.

She looked up, and the cloud left her face immediately.

“Not well? Why, what put that notice into your head—my actions just now?”

“Well, yes; they did have something to do with it,” he assented.

“You thought me unreasonably cold, did you not?”

“I confess I did.”

“How truthful you are! I have observed that whenever truth and politeness clash, you invariably range yourself on the side of truth.

Most men make truth a secondary consideration in their dealings with women.”

Will did not notice this reflection on his sex or compliment to himself.

“What was the matter with you just now?” he said. “Miss St. Clair seemed to be so anxious to make your acquaintance, and you met her advances so coldly. I thought before this that you were friendliness itself, Gertie. You really surprised me.”

“Did I sin beyond forgiveness, Mr. De Verne?”

“Call me Will, please. I hate so much ceremony between friends. What made you treat her so contemptuously, Gertie?”

“Contemptuously? Really, I had no intention of treating any one, and least of all the lady to whom you are engaged, with contempt.”

“Let that part about the engagement rest, if you please. I am asking for your own sake, Gertie, not for Isabel St. Clair’s. She has backbone enough to fight her own battles, I hope. You disappointed me very much, Gertie.”

“Oh, I am so sorry—so very sorry! I would not have caused you a moment’s unpleasantness for anything in the world.” And she looked at him with such a tender, earnest light in her eyes that his anger melted as mist before the noonday sun. “I have met Miss St. Clair before this,” she continued, “but, as she is such a dear friend of yours I will not say a word against her.”

“She is no dearer friend than you are, Gertie, and you must excuse me if I insist on your telling me the real reason. And, even were she dearer, so much the more reason that I should have my eyes opened to her true character.”

“Ah, my friend, you are too innocent to read the character of anyone less guileless than a babe.”

Will laughed heartily at this. He had beautiful teeth—I think that regular white teeth are indispensable to good looks—and looked handsomer than ever.

“Innocent!” he said, as soon as he could find voice. “What a discovery! But I am not as innocent as you, Gertie.”

“In some things you are more innocent.”

“Lorraine would tell you that innocence and manhood are incompatible, Gertie.”

“I prefer not to hear any of Mr. Tracy’s cynicism,” said Gertie, loftily. “You will never be able to fathom a woman’s character as long as you live. Yours is one of those natures which must have an idol, and you invest that idol with all the attributes of the angels. I think you are the author of the parody:

*Better to trust and be deceived,
Then ne’er to trust at all.*

and such a nature as yours is so easily deceived, dear friend. There is that man we met just now; I see that he has your perfect confidence and yet I distrust him. A woman’s intuitions never deceive her. I am afraid that this implicit confidence will cost you dear...Will.”

He smiled at her hesitation in calling his name. It was the first time she had ventured, despite his request, and it was with some embarrassment that she addressed him thus. A girl like Gertie can never throw off all ceremony with a man without a great struggle, however close may be the tie that binds them.

“Whom do you mean, Gertie—not Tracy?”

“I do, indeed. I do not like that man, Will.”

“Why, Gertie, and he my most intimate friend!”

“That should be a passport to my favor, shouldn’t it? But I am afraid that you have been particularly unfortunate in your choice. I do not like him.”

“I do not like you, Dr. Fell, the reason why I cannot tell—but this I know, and know full well, I do not like you, Dr. Fell,” quoted Will.

“You are disposed to laugh at my fears, I see.”

“Women’s fears are too closely allied to their feelings to give one much concern.”

“I repeat, Will, a woman’s intuitions never deceive her. I shall be glad, indeed, for your sake, if mine are groundless, and only the result of the antipathy I do not attempt to conceal. I have a presentiment of coming evil when I look at him. I fear that he will be the cause of untold woe to you, Will. I cannot account for it—I only feel it. Pray God I may be mistaken.”

“Thank you for your warning, all the same. It shows a friendly regard for me that is really flattering. If any great trouble ever comes upon me—if ever I should find the applause of the world turned to hisses, its smiles into sneers, its praises into jeers, I should seek you out, Gertie, confident of the fact that I should find in you a friend whom neither time nor circumstances can change—who would believe me and trust in me, though all others turn their backs on me in scorn.”

Words of prophecy! How often do we forecast the future and know it not!

Ah, if we knew, if we only knew what the future holds in store for us! Thank God, it is veiled from our eyes.

Gertie’s reply was characteristic of her: “No matter how low you should sink, Will, you could not sink beyond my affection.”

AT MADAME DE VERNE'S

In the suburbs of Capitolia, quite a number of the representatives of the old regime had established themselves, and this quarter had gradually become the most aristocratic of the capital city. One of the handsomest of the residences was one that had been built by General P—, but which, to the unspeakable mortification of the real estate agent and the neighbors, who did not suspect the truth until it was too late, had fallen into the hands of the colored postmaster of the town, Rene De Verne. It was a splendid mansion and must have cost a mint of money, though those supposed to be acquainted with the facts declared that De Verne had bought it for a mere song. The grounds were extensive, considering the location, and were attended with the utmost care. Flowers of almost every species, native and exotic, bloomed therein; fountains, in which sported goldfish, threw their crystal waters in the air; the fragrant magnolia, the stately cedar, the modest arbor vitae, the delicate mimosa reared their heads against the sky; the banana

shrub and the brown shrub freighted the air with their delicious perfume; and roses of that exquisite variety known as “Cloth of Gold” adorned the broad piazzas. An earthen jar containing a blooming geranium was arranged on each side of every one of the front steps. Plants of the same kind, white, blue, crimson, purple, and gold, covered the two flower stands. A pair of hanging baskets, filled with ferns and mosses and delicate vines, add to the bowery look of the place. Everything visible betokened taste, refinement, and wealth, nor was this impression diminished by the appearance of the occupants.

In the rocking chair sits one whom we decided at a glance to be the mistress of this lovely dwelling. A tall, slender, aristocratic woman is Madeline De Verne, with small, finely chiseled features, and skin that is wondrously soft and delicate—too soft for her age, her friends aver (for our most intimate friends are oftentimes our severest censors, their love for us probably giving them a miraculous insight into our secret hearts); and some of them do not hesitate to say, “Now, don’t mention it, for, with all her faults, she is a dear friend of mine, and I wouldn’t speak ill of her for the world, but she really does use ‘Bloom of Youth.’ Isn’t it ridiculous, and she forty-five, if a day?” Madame is dressed richly and—this cannot be said of every one who sets up for a fashion plate—becomingly. A stylish costume of black silk, garnished with ribbon and passementerie, enwraps her graceful form; diamonds glisten in her ears and at her throat; and one of her shapely fingers is encircled by a ring whose setting of diamonds and rubies is worth a small fortune. On her bosom is a single japonica, nestling in a bower of geranium leaves, and an ornament of similar composition reposes amid the massive coils of her auburn hair.

On the steps is seated Madame’s eldest daughter, Adele. Adele is at this time twenty-one, but being petite, looks several years younger. Some regard her as the prettiest girl in Capitolia; she is

certainly lovely. Her features are like her mother's, and, like her mother, she understands the art of arranging herself to the best advantage. The white dress of India muslin, through which her fair arms and shoulders show like Parian marble; the profusion of blue ribbon, almost the exact shade of her violet eyes; the bunches of hyacinths in her belt, at her throat, and in her golden hair, all unite to set off her delicate, patrician style of beauty.

Madame's youngest daughter Corinne is seated in the hammock at the other end of the piazza with a copy of Byron in her hands. She is a girl of fourteen, quite tall for her age, and already gives promise of that magnificent beauty which, a few years later, dazzles all beholders.

Near Adele is a tall, splendidly built man named Mr. Livingstone, the reader at St. Michael's, who had lately come to Capitolia and was considered quite a catch in matrimonial quarters. Judging by his attentions to the elder Miss De Verne, he is already transfixed by Cupid's arrow.

Opposite Adele is a lady we have met, Miss St. Clair, as well as the other gentleman of this group, viz, Lorraine Tracy. We shall leave these alone for awhile and attend to the conversation that is going on between Madame and her nephew, who is none other than our old friend, Will De Verne.

Notwithstanding Miss St. Clair's fascinations this afternoon, Will had withdrawn into the corner occupied by his aunt, and, taking the morning's paper out of his pocket, seemed for a while to be absorbed in its contents. Madame's voice aroused him from this.

"I have been hearing about the Ciceronian Sociable for the last week or two, Will," she said. "I really believe it gets farther off every day."

Will, who had by this time devoured all the items of interest the paper contained, laid it aside and prepared for the battle he knew was at hand. Though quite fond of each other, apparently, he and his

aunt almost invariably looked at things from a different standpoint, and, as neither was disposed to yield, their conversations were usually contests of wits. Madame was as obstinate as she could well be, and Will would not have been a man if he was one wit behind her in this respect.

A smile crossed his handsome face as he turned toward her.

“That simply proves that you are fallible like your sex, Aunt Madeline. If I mistake not, I have been trying to convince you of that fact ever since I had the honor of forming your acquaintance.”

“Oh, I know that infallibility is characteristic of your sex only. To be a woman is to be full of whims and errors and temper.”

“Bravo! You rise twenty percent in my estimation. I did not know that you could be so candid.”

“Oh, candor, like infallibility, is an exclusive possession of your sex, of course. But to the subject on hand. Do you know that I do not like your sociables, Will? When I hear those girls talking of the fine times they enjoyed there, I feel a cold chill stealing over me. I don’t see how any girl of refinement can enjoy herself in such a promiscuous crowd as you students manage to get together. It is like colored folks, though, to mingle with Tom, Dick, and Harry.”

“What a poor opinion you have of your brethren after the flesh, Aunt Madeline! One would never think from your words that you form part and parcel of that much-abused race.”

“Thank heaven, very few drops of that blood courses through my veins,” and Madame gazed with much complacency on her dainty white hands and finely-molded arms.

The playful look left Will’s eyes.

“And yet, Aunt Madeline,” he said earnestly, “as long as those few drops remain, it would be well for you to recognize a fact that too many of our people are in danger of forgetting, viz, that just one scintilla of negro blood, be the possessor thereof as white as the driven snow, is sufficient to fix your status forever, as far as public

opinion is concerned. If some of our leaders could be made to see this, instead of isolating themselves from the race so sorely in need of their assistance, perhaps they would come down from their eyrie and try to lift up the masses. We cannot hew out for ourselves a separate destiny. It may benefit us for the time being, but it will avail our children nothing. We must all rise together or fall together. There is no middle ground.”

“Well, Will, you may be content to rise in such association, but I am not. You know that I have little sympathy with the race—I cannot call it my race for, thank heaven, the African in me is indeed small—I know them too well for that. They cannot bear to see one rise above another, be his merits what they may. They will put a stumbling block in his way instead of helping him to rise. They will throw their caps in the air for the lowest wretch with a white face, while they will slander most villainously a real gentleman or real lady of their own race. You cannot tell me anything about Ham’s descendants.”

“Don’t you think you are too severe, Aunt? Granting that all this is true, is it not one of the fruits of that slavery from which they have so recently been emancipated? Men are prone to pessimism when considering our race. I am not discouraged at the outlook. Twenty years from now we will astound many of the croakers.”

“You will have to cease this commingling of the good, bad, and indifferent, then. Just look at that club of yours, for instance, which has been formed among those professing to be intelligent. Young men of the lowest social strata are in it, and some of them hold the most prominent offices.”

“You should have been born on European soil, Aunt Madeline. Your sentiments are entirely too aristocratic to flourish under the American eagle. We could not tolerate for a moment, in an institution like ours, such exclusive ideas. Here we have and can have no aristocracy but the aristocracy of Genius. The aristocracy of blood must take a back seat, for blue blood does not always bestow

brains; the aristocracy of money must follow suit, for, though money is a mighty factor in human progress, fortune is too notoriously fickle for us to measure a man's youth by the size of his pocketbook; and that peculiar aristocracy of which you and your friends are such ardent advocates, viz, the aristocracy of color, should never be allowed to rear its serpent head among our people. The day it does our race is doomed. We are fighting the selfsame monster without; we cannot permit it to triumph within and live. Our social structure must have a different foundation. Moral character must be the cornerstone, mental culture one of the main columns. A man must be respected for his worth, not for the color of his skin or the strength of his bank account."

"Just listen to those young people," said Madame, sullenly.

The party on the steps were laughing merrily, and the central figure seemed to be Isabel. She was telling some amusing story, interspersed with those graceful little gestures for which she was so noted, and her auditors seemed to enjoy it mightily. She presented a charming picture as she sat there, as lovely as a houri, as fascinating as a siren, and Will gazed at her with unmingled admiration. She happened to look in his direction for a moment and their eyes met. Hers fell almost immediately and her cheeks grew crimson.

Madame noted this little scene and her cold blue eyes glistened. Though a guest in her house, Isabel St. Clair was personally distastefully to her, more especially since some of the most eligible of Adele's admirers had begun to worship at this new shrine. Mothers, even the best of them, have little liking for their daughter's rivals.

"Are you going to marry that girl, Will?"

Will, who was aware that her daughter's friend had fallen into disfavor with his aunt, and knew the reason of it as well, replied, with what Madame called "that provoking smile of his".

“That depends. She may not have me, you know. If she will, why should I not avail myself of such a glorious privilege? I am sure she will preside over my house most grandly—when I am able to get a house worthy of so beautiful and aristocratic a lady. Would you not be glad to welcome her as your darling nephew’s wife?”

“I would as soon welcome the devil.”

“Why, Aunt Madeline! Let me see your tongue. I did not think it capable of uttering such naughty words. The idea of mentioning the belle of Charleston in the same breath with his majesty of the fiery pit!”

“Heaven pity the man foolish enough to marry Belle St. Clair! She is an artful minx, the embodiment of selfishness and vanity with not an ounce of solid sense in her head or of generosity in her whole body. She’ll lead you a life, I can tell you!”

“What a reflection on your guest!”

“No guest of mine; Adele, whom she has, in some unaccountable way, bewitched, must claim that questionable honor.”

“I don’t blame Adele—most of my sex are in the same predicament. As beautiful as a houri, as stylish as a fashion plate, with a snug little fortune in her own right—”

“Can either her beauty or her money atone for her contemptible disposition? Mark my words, Will, if you marry that girl you will pray heaven to take you out of the world before the honeymoon is over.”

“She is no favorite of yours, I see.”

“Indeed she is not! I know her too well. Her beauty, as you call it—though she is not half as handsome as my Adele—cannot blind me to her faults, as it does your sex. What fools men are about a pretty face! No matter how shallow the brain, how mean the disposition, how light the reputation, a pretty face overbalances all. Call Mark Antony a fool for losing the world for Cleopatra? Men, nowadays, lose not only the world, but their own souls for a brilliant eye and a pouting lip.”

“Now, Aunt, leave that homily for a homely woman. A handsome woman should never give utterance to such sentiments. It savors too much of sounding abroad the power of one’s own charms.”

“I hate to see an aspiring young man throw himself away on an unworthy woman,” said Madame, somewhat mollified.

Will rose to his feet and the laughter left his eyes. What a handsome young man he was, and how tall and well developed to be nineteen! What a rich complexion and what beautiful eyes. He looked as handsome as Apollo as he stood there with that earnest, half-indignant expression on his fine face.

“Aunt Madeline,” he said, “it is useless for me to pretend ignorance of your meaning. I met Miss St. Clair here, in your house, as your guest. For a whole month she has been here, the apparently honored friend of yourself, the intimate companion of your daughters. That ought to be sufficient recommendation of her character. I say nothing about your very singular action of speaking slightly of one who is partaking of your hospitality. That is a matter your own conscience must decide. But I do say that I have always found her a modest, unassuming young lady, as pleasant in deposition as she is lovely in person. Now, why your strictures, Aunt Madeline? If I should make her my wife it will certainly be disagreeable, to say the least of it, to have the knowledge that you have helped to spread injurious reports; if we do not marry, you might certainly afford to leave her alone. If she is good enough for your daughters’ bosom friend, she ought to be good enough for your nephew’s wife. As to her suitability, that is another question.”

“Will, do you intend to throw aside all the counsels of those who have attended you from your cradle for the sake of the bold, vain, presuming girl?”

“Hush, Aunt! She may hear you. How strange it is that we should be discussing your guest in her very presence. Please let the adjectives rest, Aunt Madeline. I can discover your meaning

without their aid. This discussion is folly, anyway. I don't know that I shall wed that young lady or anyone else. I certainly shall not for many a day; I have my fortune to carve out before I can ask any woman to share my lot. It is selfishness—it is worse, it is sin—for a poor, struggling man to take a girl from her mother's house, where she has every comfort, to share toil and misfortune with him. In the profession I have chosen there is too much of this to rise above for me to be in haste to marry."

"Your profession, have you fixed on one at last?"

"At last, Auntie mine."

"What is it? Do you intend to electrify the bar with your eloquence, or point out to sinners the straight and narrow way?"

"My tongue stands in the way of my ever succeeding in either of these vocations. Guess again."

"Will you turn your talents to trade? No? Or will you put them at interest in the professor's chair? What then? Answer me, boy. In what way does my brilliant nephew intend to write his name upon the scroll of fame?"

"In none of those you have mentioned. Try once more."

"Perhaps you intend to mount the stage? They say that you have considerable dramatic talent."

"No, I shall not dazzle the world either as a Booth or an Irving. Mine shall be a humbler but far more useful sphere. A man's value should be judged by his usefulness, you know."

"Surely, Will, you do not intend to carry out that whim you had four years ago? You are mad to think of such a thing."

"And madder still to put it in execution, of course. But there is some method in my madness. I shall take a thorough course at Howard, spend a year or two in Paris, and then return to Capitolia and hang out my shingle."

"You will starve."

"I guess not, my appetite is too good."

“Who ever heard of a colored doctor succeeding?”

“Then it is high time someone did hear of such a miracle. No, Aunt Madeline, I have thought of this long and carefully. I know that it is a new departure in the South and that I shall have many obstacles to surmount; but difficulties only try one’s strength, Aunt Madeline, and if the man be made of the right stuff he emerges from the trial stronger and nobler. There must be pioneers in every profession. Some must go ahead and blaze the way for others, and those who follow can take warning by the mistakes of their predecessors. We have been too long the hewers of wood and drawers of water for our pale-faced brethren. Africa has achieved her emancipation at last. So long has she lain in the dust of oppression that it will take years, many years, to wipe that dust from our garments, but in that work we must each do our part. Every young man should feel that there hangs upon him much of the destiny of the race. Each should seek the vocation for which he is best fitted. I am bent on elevating my race. I shall direct all the energies God has given me to that purpose. I can be no idler—I can shirk nothing when the people are looking for a Moses to lead them out of Egyptian darkness. The young men and the young women of this generation, to whom God has given talents, must put their shoulders to the wheel and roll forward Africa’s heavy car from the depths of darkness and degradation to the Elysian fields of light and liberty. Oh, Aunt Madeline, it seems to me that I should be willing to spend fifty, sixty, nay, a hundred years in working for the elevation of my poor, oppressed, downtrodden people!”

“You are enthusiastic, Will. I know colored people too well for your enthusiasm to infect me. You may work for them until you are gray and get only backbitings and revilings and heart-burnings as your reward.”

“Our race is proverbially grateful, Aunt Madeline.”

“To white folks, yes; to their own color they are as ungrateful as fiends. A kick from a white man they regard as more of a boon than years of hard work and patient endeavor to lift them to a higher plane by one who happens to be identified with them. Look how it is in business. Do they give their patronage to the colored merchant, no matter if his goods be every whit as good and as cheap as his fair-skinned neighbor’s? Colored folks love a white face.”

“Woman-like, you overdraw the picture. Things are not quite as bad as you would have me believe. Backbiting is not peculiar to our race. As to revilings, God’s chosen people reviled and even put to death his only begotten Son. The Ruler of the universe suffered from mankind, and are we not willing to suffer in order that we may assist in elevating our race?”

“You are like your mother before you. Gentle and yielding she usually was, but if she once got an idea in her head that such and such a thing was right, all the arguments and entreaties in the world could not turn her from her purpose.”

“My mother was a noble woman, Aunt Madeline. Would to God that she had been spared, for now, more than ever, I need her loving counsels. All that is good in me—Heaven knows it is not much—I owe to her; all that is evil——”

“You get from your father. He was really one of the wickedest men that ever walked the earth. If the law of visiting the sins of the fathers on the children be carried out in this case, I tremble for your future, Will.”

“What a fine comforter you would have made Job! Zophar the Naamathite would have had to look to his laurels if you had chanced to live in his day and generation.”

“Your father whipped one of his slaves—she was a poor, sick, miserable creature—until the blood gushed from every pore and I heard her utter a most fearful malediction against him and his children before she died. It makes my blood curdle to think of it.”

“You give me the shudders. Please do not mention his name to me again, Aunt Madeline; you know that it is a most disagreeable topic. Whew! I feel cold chills running over me. Let me seek more congenial company. I leave you to your book.”

“To my nap would be more exact. I am one of those who think that

*There's nothing half so sweet in life
As a good, quiet nap.”*

The following chapters, four through eleven, were not present in the archival records to which we had access.

GYPSY'S HOMECOMING

“Perhaps she has changed her mind about coming—or possibly stopped over at one of the stations,” said Dan.

“She has friends on this route; but I hardly think she would have stopped over without letting us know,” said his sister.

“Pshaw? You’d better not pin your faith to that article,” said Dan sententiously. “Gypsy, like all her sex, is as changeable as the wind.”

“What a wise little fellow you are getting all at once,” returned Gertie, casting him a glance of mock admiration. “Solomon will have to look to his laurels if you keep on at this rate. But yonder’s the conductor—perhaps he can give us some information.”

The conductor was a gentleman, as he proved by his urbanity. He touched his hat respectfully (a courtesy as rarely shown toward a colored lady by a man of Caucasian lineage—at least, south of Mason and Dixon’s line—as angel’s visits) and asked to know her pleasure.

“Yes, he had seen such a young lady as she described—a very handsome lady, too, by the way. She and her husband were

the observed of all observers, both on account of their remarkable bounty and devotion to each other.”

“She had no husband—was only a schoolgirl.” He had mistaken the person, then, for this one was undoubtedly a bride! She must excuse him—[illegible] had answered to the description so angrily that he [illegible]

“Yes, he was sure—it had struck him because of its being the same as that of Poe’s lovely maiden.”

“This was the lady, then?”

“Yes, they had left the cars at the place the train broke down, five miles below, in a carriage which had been sent from the depot to meet Senator X— and a company of friends. The Senator and his party had stopped over at W—, and there was quite a spirited fight made for the unoccupied carriage. The coachman was a knowing fellow and insisted on a price so high that all the contestants gave up in despair, except the young man previously mentioned. He took out his purse and paid the fellow on the spot an exorbitant price to drive him and the young lady to town. That was about an hour or two ago, he thought—he had been too busy to keep a record of the time. No trouble at all—it was a pleasure to oblige a lady—could he do nothing further for her?—Good morning.”

“Oh, Dan,” groaned Gertie, with a sickening sensation at her heart, “what can it mean? Do you think she has run away from the convent and got married? Oh, God, suppose she has! What will Papa and Mamma do; and they had built such hopes on her!”

Dan could make no satisfactory reply, and with feet which their apprehensions endued with the swiftness of eagles’ wings, the two hurried back through the rain and darkness preparing themselves to have their worst fears realized.

THE OLD, OLD STORY OF MAN'S DUPLICITY AND WOMAN'S TRUST

A covered carriage dashing noisily down the road—something unusual in that out-of-the-way neighborhood—and coming to a halt suddenly in front of their house, caused six little curly heads to appear in the windows of the Tremaine domicile. Only one of the six, however, could recognize, at first, the tall, slender girl, whose magnificent beauty was set off to its best advantage by the stylish traveling suit she wore, as she alighted from the vehicle, and that one was the youngest of them all, little Valeria. What would the child have thought had her eyes been able to pierce the curtain and witness what had transpired within but a short time before?

As has been remarked, the rain was falling in torrents, and, in the gathering gloom, the streets looked very dismal—making the carriage, by contrast, seem the more comfortable. 'Twas a delightful journey to one of the occupants, at least, despite her fatigue—young—not yet sixteen—romantic, impressible, was it strange that her warm, enthusiastic, girlish heart—too young, alas! to even

dream of love and lovers—should have gone out to the man who sat by her side as handsome as Adonis, as chivalrous (in her eyes) as a Bayard, and as courtly as a Chesterfield.

“Oh, Lenore, my life, my love,” he whispered passionately as he pressed most tenderly the dainty, ungloved hand which lay a willing captive within his own, “will you be this constant until the blissful moment when I shall come to claim you as the star of my life, my mistress, my queen?”

They were passing up the now-deserted Main Street as he spoke and the reflection of the lamps cast a soft light over all surrounding objects. Under the young man’s ardent gaze, the girl’s delicate golden-brown skin grew roseate, and her eyes fell in confusion. He felt her hand tremble and almost fancied that he could hear the beating of her heart. But ’twas only for a moment. She raised again those brilliant orbs to his and met his gaze unflinching, the whole love of her soul beaming in their liquid depths. She looked so beautiful, so pure, so perfectly devoted at that instant that, for the time being, he felt like casting his sinful ways far behind him and becoming, for her sake, a better man. Her words, infallible index of her pure heart, fell like most delicious music on his ear.

“Lorraine, I love you next to my God. When this heart shall cease to love you, then may it also cease to beat.”

Oh, the depth, the abandon, the unselfishness of Woman’s Love! How many men, think you, impartial reader, are worthy of the affection lavished on them?

Softer, even more persuasive than before, was the young man’s voice. “And will you trust me, darling, even though we must, for a time, keep our secret from the rest of the world—from even father, mother, and sister?”

“To love is to trust, Lorraine—‘perfect love casteth out fear.’ I could not love if I did not trust implicitly. In true love there is no room for jealousy or doubting or distrust.”

“Lenore, my love, you are exquisitely beautiful—you will soon have hosts of suitors, some, perhaps, more eligible in the eyes of your family than I. While I am away striving to gain a cage worthy of my Bird of Paradise, someone may come in to woo thee—O love, sweet love, dear love, let it not be to win thee!”

He essayed to pass his arm around her as he spoke, but she gently removed it, and said earnestly, and with much dignity:

“Lorraine, I have promised not to doubt you—be generous enough to trust me. I am not sixteen yet—I will wait for you five, ten, fifteen, twenty years, if need be—for my love is eternal and knows no change!”

They were nearing her home by this time, and the young man exclaimed, “O Lenore, must I leave you? It is almost like death to leave you, even though I know it cannot be for long.”

“We shall be reunited, Lorraine, in the near future, God willing. My love will follow you—my prayers will rise each matin-time and vesper-time for you, my life, my lord, my king!”

“Lenore, Will De Verne loves you, and—”

“Lorraine, if the czar of all the Russians should offer me his love, I should reject him, for I am the betrothed bride of the handsomest, truest, bravest man—after the Holy Father—in the whole earth! How could I look on Will De Verne or any other man after knowing you, Lorraine?”

“He has loved you long, Lenore—”

“He has never told me so, and even were he to fall on his knees and swear deathless devotion, my heart could never acknowledge him as lord. It knows and will ever know but one monarch, Lorraine, and is it necessary to repeat his name?”

“Then, you are mine, Lenore—mine in the sight of God and the holy angels—and I charge you, by our plighted troth, to be true to me, in spite of men and friends, priests or laity. Trust me; disbelieve even the evidence of your own senses sooner than lose your faith in me.”

“I believe in you as I believe in the Holy Virgin, Lorraine. Go to the fray, my knight, panoplied with a pure woman’s confidence and love!” And, without another word, she opened the door and prepared to descend, and he hastened, perforce, to assist her.

O kindly Heaven, why is it that so many noble women yield up to the very best part of their natures to men who are unworthy to touch even the hem of their garment? Oh God, this is a hard world, in spite of all the beauty with which Thou hast decked it, in spite of all the pleasures which Thou hast made it steward of, and woman suffers much and grievously in it! Poor confiding Lenore! Why didst thou not know that all his vows were false—false as hell—and [illegible] this is but a part of [illegible] wound Will De Verne in his tenderest place—for he has discovered what Will is afraid to own even to himself, viz, that thou hast impressed him as no other woman has ever impressed him before? Why did not thy patron saint warn thee that most men make promises but to break them, and reveal to thee, before it was too late, the fact that thy idol was clay! Clay! Clay! And clay, alas! of the meanest kind?

A wise man was he who penned the words,

“There’s nothing true but heaven!”

WHY GYPSY LEFT SCHOOL

“**W**hat did you come home for, Gypsy?” was the question which met the young girl on every side after the first greetings were interchanged.

She seemed in no hurry to answer. It was only after her father, who had roused himself on hearing of her arrival, had repeated it that she vouchsafed a rejoinder.

“Come *home* for?” she returned, with bitter emphasis on the word “home.” “Don’t you think that both Walter and I should have come back long ago—indeed, that we never should have left here?” with a glance at her surroundings.

“We could have borne this a few months longer, my child,” said Mr. Tremaine, interrupting the glance. “The hardest part of the struggle—to submit gracefully to the inevitable—is about over, and it was one of my fondest hopes to present another daughter to the world as a thoroughly educated woman. I can leave you all no silver or gold, or property of any kind, Gypsy, but I had hoped

to give you possession which none can defraud you of and which, properly used, will bring both money and influence—namely, a good practical education.”

“Yes, Papa,” assented Gypsy, as she bathed, with some fragrant liquid, his aching brow, “but it was too much on you, on Mamma, and on Gertie to keep me in school at this juncture. Perhaps after a year or two, I may see the way clear to return—if not, Gracie and Leroy will probably win enough laurels to re[illegible] some lustre even of such an unintelligent [illegible].”

“But, you should have consulted your parents, Gypsy, before taking such a decisive step.”

“Yes, Papa, I know that. I am not as headstrong as you think me—certainly not headstrong enough to take my fate in my own hands without consulting you—but events followed one another so quickly that I had no time to do anything but *act*. It is a long story, but I will give you only a few details tonight, for you cannot bear much talk, and, besides, I am feeling very tired from my long journey. One of the sisters appointed to assist in the school last fall seems to have taken quite a dislike to me. I cannot say that I gave her no cause—for I am no saint and neither is Sister Agatha—but I am pretty sure that I gave her no reason to hate me so bitterly as she did. Love begets love, they say; I am pretty sure that hate begets hate. I had some little influence with the girls, and soon I found a way to get even with her. The worse she treated me, the harder did her daily task become. You see I am not trying to gloss over my part in the affair, Papa, for, as you have always told me, I am by no means a paragon. Well, Sister Agatha was certainly a gifted teacher, standing head and shoulders above the others in scholarly attainments, and, consequently, she had much influence with the Mother Superior. I think that I could have borne her severity, for I had a comfortable feeling that I generally managed to give her as good as she could send; but when she stooped to injustice, my

indignation knew no bounds. You know that I am no dunce, Papa—none of your children are dunces, that's an established fact—and I have always stood well in all my classes, generally standing at the head. Suddenly I was set to do all kinds of work—work that the servants had done theretofore—and on demanding to know the reason, was told that it was because I was in debt to the convent. I was mad enough to throw up my hands then and there, for I knew that I was not the only scholar who was in arrears for board and tuition, but when I considered what you all were depriving yourselves of to keep me in school (though the Holy Mother is my witness, I did not dream of this), I resolved to bear it a little while longer. I soon found all my time so taken up by menial work that I had but a few moments to devote to my lessons, and naturally I fell behind. I knew that this was what Sister Agatha intended, and I hated her more than ever. I was publicly reprimanded three times and not allowed the privilege of saying one word in my own defense. The war between us was now waged more furiously than ever, and, though I managed to put her to flight on more than one occasion, my life became intolerable. Finally, at her instigation, I was put back a whole year in my classes. My indignation got the better of me, and I publicly taxed Sister Agatha with being at the bottom of it all. Words ensued. I did not bite my tongue in speaking of her shameful conduct, you may be sure. The ruling powers sailed in, and I was ordered to apologize to the sister. I refused. The priest was sent in, and, for my obstinacy, I was threatened with excommunication. The scholars were forbidden to speak to me, and I was kept apart as if I were something contaminating. Of course, I was not one of the kind to stand such treatment, and soon I wrote to a lady—Mrs. Howard, the mother of one of the former day-scholars—who had formed quite an attachment to me. The next day I wrote to you, and while the nuns were at vespers, I slipped out the gate, assisted by a servant girl who had helped me mail my letters without being suspected,

and entered Mr. Howard's carriage. She confided everything to her priest—an embryo Father St. Bernard—and he, after lecturing me on my bad temper, disobedience, etc., wended his way to the convent, saw the Mother Superior, managed to appease her, paid my bills, and got my trunk. Thus ends this unlucky chapter in my life, Papa—with the message sent me by the Mother as a moral: ‘Tell that wretched girl that such conduct as hers cannot fail to meet the disapprobation of Heaven, and that some day vengeance will overtake her, little as she thinks of it now!’ The only notice I took of her spleen was to laugh contemptuously and bring on myself the father's reprimand—which I was sorry to do, for he is really a good man”

A sudden pain seized Mr. Tremaine at this moment, and thus the conversation ended for the time being. As Gypsy crossed the hall to lay aside her cloak and hat, Dan, who had been impatiently biding his time inquired in a stage whisper, “Gypsy, is it true that you are married?”

She turned crimson, looking, as a consequence, even more beautiful than usual—if such a thing were possible.

“Married, Dan?” she asked, as soon as she could overcome her confusion. “What in the world put such an idea into your busy little head?”

“The conductor said that you were with your husband, and he called you Lenore,” began Dan, sheepishly.

“Who, the conductor?” interrupted his sister, more annoyed than she cared to own.

“No, the young man who was with you,” persisted Dan.

“Don't believe every cock and bull story you hear,” said his sister, suavely, “conductors are like other mortals and draw on their imagination sometimes. What a level-headed fellow you must be to believe him when he told you that your fifteen-year-old sister was married, and that, too, without her parents' knowledge!”

Dan withdrew, crestfallen; but, in spite of the indifference with which Gypsy had treated the matter, Gertie referred to it again. It was long past midnight, but neither of the girls could sleep—the one being restless from fatigue and excitement, the other lying awake from interest.

“What brought Lorraine Tracy home, Gypsy?” she asked.

This point-blank question almost staggered the girl. For a couple of moments she hesitated; then, as if struck by a sudden impulse, replied, with an attempt at indifference, “Oh, he was coming home, anyway, to rest for a week or two—and kindly decided to take his holiday a little earlier, so as to be company for me on what would otherwise have been a very wearisome trip.”

“Where did you meet him?” was the next question.

“Oh, in Baltimore, whither he had run up on a visit. Mrs. Howard is his cousin.”

“Ah?”

“It will certainly be a consolation to Mr. De Verne’s ‘dear five hundred friends’ when he assumes the *toga virilis*—figuratively speaking. From my knowledge of him, I would trust him to take care of himself anywhere on these mundane shores, but you—well you don’t think him able to defend himself against little Belle’s arts? Don’t you know what she courted him more than he courted her? Perhaps, had he remained in Capitolia, she would have won him in spite of himself, but this separation from her has wrought a wonderful change in his feelings towards her, if they were ever as deep as you blind bats who set up for prophets pretend. Don’t tell anyone, Gertie, but Belle will marry Claude Livingstone in less time than two months.”

And so she did. To the great astonishment of the Capitolians, Mr. Livingstone requested and obtained a month’s vacation—for what purpose the dainty gilt-edged cards which soon arrived in the post office attested. “Claude Livingstone to Isabel Veronica St.

Clair”—quite a brilliant match for both, all agreed; but to few who knew what was behind the scenes, it was only another of those false marriages entered upon without true love or sincere respect by one of the contracting parties—and sure to prove, as all such marriages prove, unhappy. Of all bonds, the most hateful must be those which bind a woman until death to a man she not only does not love, but despises! Claude Livingstone, in spite of some absurdities of thought and action, was a good man, as men go; but he married the last woman in the world capable of doing justice to his really excellent qualities of head and heart. Well, his wife is a beauty, an heiress, and a blue blood—recommendations which he has always prized most highly—and he ought to be satisfied; while Isabel—well, she is mistress of an establishment, and can prove to the world that she was neither in love with nor jilted by Will De Verne?

A FATHER'S COURSE IS RUN

*Softly fades the twilight ray,
Of the holy Sabbath day;
Gently as life's setting sun,
When the Christian's course is run.*

Ay, the course of another one of Adam's race was run. The sun on that lovely day in early spring was sinking slowly to rest beyond the western hills, never to rise, alas, on one of Earth's denizens again.

Yet the morning had dawned brightly enough, and the loving group which had been watching so anxiously beside the sick bed for the past week were more hopeful than they had been since his attack. The lines of pain which had marked the brow were now almost eradicated the eyes had lost their agonized expression, and, save for a terrible feeling of weakness, which was supposed to be due to his long confinement, the invalid appeared to be better than he had been for months.

'Twas the second Sunday after Gypsy's arrival home. A lovely day—one of those rare, perfect days, when Heaven tries the earth if it be in tune, peculiar to the glorious springtime; and, as their father seemed so much better, all the younger children had gone out to the afternoon service. 'Twas beautiful to see each child advance to the bedside, kiss the thin face, and give utterance to some little expression of pleasure to see the father so. Much-better Gypsy, who was to sing an anthem at the church, was particularly affectionate as she came, last of all, to bid him goodbye.

“You'll soon be able to escort your second daughter to church, at this rate,” she said, laughingly, as she bent over him to imprint a kiss on his pale lips. “You have escorted Minerva, *alias* Gertie, and Gracie, the coming Juno, make haste and get well so that you can play the cavalier to the most bewitching of the three, Venus, whom modesty prevents me from naming Lenore. I believe my forte is doctoring, after all. Don't you see what a panacea my very presence has proven?”

Her father said nothing, but gazed at her long and with a trifle of sadness in his face. Gloriously beautiful she looked in her tight-fitting costume of black cashmere, profusely trimmed with passementerie, the beads glistening like jet crystals in the sunlight, and her large, black eyes glowing like stars. He drew her to him fondly and placed both his hands on her head.

“You are a wondrously lovely girl, Lenore,” he said, “and I trust that your life will be as lovely as your person. My dear child, a beautiful face, never an unalloyed blessing, is doubly dangerous to its possessor when joined to an impulsive headstrong disposition like yours. Dear, you inherited your face from your mother, and your disposition from me. Oh God, visit not my sins on the head of my innocent child, I pray Thee! Bless her, O God, and grant that she may be true to her God, her country, and her race. Goodbye, my dear, beloved child, and may God bless you!”

“Goodbye Papa,” said Gypsy tearfully, “we shall soon meet again.”
Was it chance or fate that, just at this moment, the voice of the girl next door rang out plaintively:

*We shall meet beyond the river
By and by, by and by;
And the darkness shall be over
By and by, by and by;
With the toilsome journey done,
And the glorious battle won,
We shall shine forth as the sun
By and by, by and by.*

About two hours after this, as the sunlight was beginning to grow fainter, Gertie began to read, at her father’s request, one of those sublime chapters from the Epistles, breathing forth such sweet assurance of God’s goodness and mercy, and such blessed promises concerning the glories He has in reserve for all who bear the cross for his dear sake, not faltering, even though their feet

All torn and bleeding mark the way.

The sufferer’s face brightened with joy.

“Sing for me, Jessie,” he said presently to his wife, who sat beside his bed, gently stroking his pallid brow.

“What shall it be, George?” she asked, tenderly.

“Sing ‘My Ain Countrie?’” was the reply, and, unassuming of the great change so near at hand, she began to sing, in her soft voice, that most tender and touching of Scotch songs. She had reached the lines,

*So I’m watching, aye, an’ singing o’ my home
as I wait,
For the sounding o’ His footfa’ on this side of the
gowden gate.*

A loud, piercing shriek from Gertie caused her very to stand still.
“My God! My God, Mamma!” she shrieked, “Papa is dying!”

Ay, Gertie, not dying but dead—gone in gladness to his “ain countrie!”

Draw the curtain o’er the scene; the anguish of the bereaved ones is too pitiable to witness. Oh, bereaved widow! Fatherless daughter! Words of consolation would now fall vainly on the ear! Your grief is too poignant! Weep and mourn for your loss! Sometime, after the violence of your agony has abated, you will look in faith to Him who can heal the broken heart, and submit in patience to him “who doth not willingly afflict the children of men!”

O God, were it not for thy goodness, how could we survive the loss of our loved ones?

The following chapter, sixteen, was not present in the archival records to which we had access.

WILL DE VERNE'S RETURN

“**B**ut, if Claude is right, after all,”—(this *sotto voce*, for she knew her husband’s sensitiveness of having his slightest word questioned)—“I wonder what Gabriella will do?”

“Do like a sensible girl and forget all about it,” said Gypsy, decidedly. “I have no respect for a girl who ‘wears her heart on her sleeve for daws to peck at.’ I would have pride enough to let him see that I had too much womanhood to fret after a man who had gone back on his plighted word to me to marry another. Only an unworthy man would be guilty of such conduct, anyway. Belle, I could not love an unworthy man, even though he had the power of Alexander, the wealth of Croesus, the learning of Socrates, and the beauty of Alcinous.”

Oh, Lenore! Lenore! Art thou sure thou hast not already given thy heart to one who is unworthy to touch even the hem of thy garment?

“Oh, Gypsy,” said Belle, suddenly changing the subject, “was Will ever engaged to your sister?”

Gypsy, the guileless, looked as innocent as a babe, as she replied, "Dear me, Belle, how am I to know? You know I was at the convent when he was making such havoc in the feminine hearts of Capitolia. I used to hear the girls tease you about him before your marriage."

Belle turned scarlet. "Will De Verne and I were engaged to each other, Gypsy, when he left for Howard, but I went back on him for Claude. Mind you, this is confidential; I have never before admitted it to a single soul."

Gypsy, who had her own opinion on the subject, discretely held her tongue, and so the conversation ceased for the time being. Mrs. Livingstone left the room soon after, and Gypsy resumed the letter she had hastily stowed away on that lady's entrance.

Had you looked over her shoulder, with her permission, of course, one or two sentences in those closely written pages of manuscript would have set you thinking. They were these:

"Yes, Lorraine, I will keep your secret as long as you wish, though I am almost sick of 'hope deferred,' dear love. For your sake, I will even encourage the attentions of that odious Charlie Herbert, or any other suitor, if you think best; though sometimes, dear love, I think it scarcely honorable to lead on a young man whom one has no idea of marrying. Before you return from your vacation, Will De Verne will probably be here with his French bride, they say; but I am inclined to think that 'the bride' is only a fabrication of these colored folks around here, who are glad of a chance to mortify Gabriella De Verne. I wonder if he will be as fond of me now as he was in that never-to-be-forgotten winter when you and I fell in love? Well, I like him very much and will be glad indeed to meet him again; still, I would far rather meet my king, my Lorraine, whom I love and will always love better than any being in heaven above or the earth beneath, except the Holy Mother and her Blessed Son. Oh, my own dear

*love, may heaven speed the day when these concealments
shall be done away with and I shall stand before the
world as your true, beloved, devoted*

—LENORE.”

She finished her letter, folded it, placed it in its cover, and directed it; then, kissing the name which her fingers had traced so lovingly on the dainty French envelope, she placed it in her writing desk and locked it carefully. It may not be amiss to reveal the fact that Gypsy never trusted the letters directed to this correspondent to pass through any hands but her own before committing them to the mails.

Hardly had she done this when she heard footsteps approaching and, a moment later, the door was opened, and one of the servants said, “Walk right in, Doctor, I will tell the ladies you are here.”

Gypsy looked up just in time to catch the surprised, admiring glance of—Will De Verne.

OUR HERO CALLS AT THE RECTORY

They made a charming picture, as they stood there, both of them preeminent in physical beauty. Nature had never been in a more prodigal mood than when she formed these. The years had used Will De Verne very kindly; he had matured into as magnificent a specimen of humanity as ever gladdened a sculptor's vision. But it is useless to attempt a description of his personal appearance; as his friends used to assert, he united in his person the polish of a Chesterfield, the chivalry of a Bayard, and the tenderness of a Woman with the beauty of Apollo.

"Surely this is not the little Lenore I left behind?" were his first words, uttered in those thrilling tones which were characteristics of him.

"'Tis the self-same maiden, 'whom the angels called Lenore,'" she replied smilingly, as she placed her little palms within his own. "I fancied such a demure damsel as myself had long since passed out of the recollection of the brilliant, courted Dr. William Lincoln De Verne."

“Oh, Lenore, how could such a maiden as you pass out of any man’s recollections?” exclaimed the young man as he lifted her dainty hands to his lips. “Dear young lady, your sweet face has ever been present before me. I remember no day since I met you that bright May afternoon over five years ago that you were not my first thought at night. One of my chief pleasures in returning to my native land was the consciousness that every breeze was wafting me nearer and nearer you. Do not turn away your face like that, Lenore; have I merited your indignation by revealing to you so unexpected the secret I have guarded religiously for five long years?”

What he might have said next can only be conjectured, for the rustle of silk was heard just as he concluded these last words, and the next moment, almost before Gypsy had time to extricate her hand, a lilac-robed figure was nestling in his arms, as if that were its right place, and a soft voice was exclaiming, “Oh, Willie! Dear, dear Willie! Thank God you have come at last! Welcome, welcome home again!”

She raised her head, which had been buried on his shoulder, and held up her lips as she spoke. I do not deny that Dr. De Verne should have hesitated before greeting so fondly his friend’s wife: but do my readers know of a man who ever refused to kiss a pretty woman when he had a chance? Truth compels us to acknowledge that Will was not one of these elevated mortals, for he imprinted more than one kiss—or two either—on the rosy, upturned lips.

I really believe he felt more embarrassed after it was over than the lady herself did, for she made no attempt to hide the love-light which sparkled in her magnificent eyes, nor did her delicate cheek assume a perceptible color; while Will did flush a little, and he did not at first dare to meet the inquiring, slightly scornful glance of the lovely girl who had been a surprised witness of the affair. But he had little time for reflections, whether agreeable or otherwise. Mrs.

Livingstone had too much to question him about for her to suffer him to remain long in silence.

“Is it true that you have been bewitched by a Frenchwoman, Willie?” she asked, seating herself on the sofa very near him.

He laughed in his old contagious way, but made no reply.

Mrs. Livingstone did not relish being kept in suspense, so she continued, “Where is your bride? You might have grace to tell us something about her, I am sure.”

“My bride?” still laughing. “I am sure, Mrs. Livingstone, you can answer that question as well as I can myself.”

Mrs. Livingstone put her own construction on his words, for she blushed and quickly cast down her eyes. Was he regretting his loss of her, she wondered? She had intended to bring him to her feet—someday—and make him confess his idiotic folly in leaving her unpledged to him when he went to Washington, to fall in with the overtures of Claude Livingstone, but she had thought that the task would be more difficult than this. “It is very easy for a pretty woman to win back an old lover,” she thought.

Had she observed, she would have seen that his eyes sought the face of her friend as she spoke, and, perhaps, her exultation might not have been so great.

The following chapters, nineteen through twenty-two, were not present in the archival records to which we had access.

ANOTHER WANDERER RETURNS

Fifteen months later, Dr. De Verne, contrary to the expectation of “those who ought to know,” who declared, at the onset, that “he was committing professional suicide to remain in Capitolia—colored folks would not patronize their own color,” etc., had built up a fine practice.

“Colored people can appreciate merit as well as white people,” replied Dr. De Verne (who, we must admit, liked to hear himself talk) to his prophetic friends. “Tis a sad fact that there are a considerable number who, through envy or admiration for a white face, or advice from those they have confidence in—for our people are too simpleminded to suspect deceit under a smooth exterior—can never be made to see that a colored man is the peer of a white man; but, happily, these are not in the majority. One’s health is one’s most precious possession, and naturally he hesitates about entrusting it to a stranger—especially if that stranger be young—for we instinctively associate medical skill with gray beards; but once convince the world around you that you are a worthy disciple

of Aesculapius, their patronage is assured. It's all nonsense about our people's preferring a white physician. I admit that a goodly number—and some whom we would expect to encourage race talent—do prefer a white man for everything which requires intellect and skill—believing, doubtless, that the color of the skin extends to the brain; but the vast majority of our people are self-respecting (where they are not ground down by Caucasian hellhounds) and would far rather trust their health in the hands of a skillful, upright man whose veins contain the same blood as their own, than to a white man, who affects to scorn everything about them but their pocketbook. I say affects, advisedly, for it takes a superior to scorn, and I have yet to see the man (be he as white as the driven snow, instead of possessing the coarse, reddish-white skin so many of the lighter race do possess) whom I consider my own or my people's superior, as far as flesh and blood are concerned; and as to our not being their equals educationally or financially—and God knows they have as many dunces and paupers among them as we have among us, and infinitely more thieves and cutthroats—they ought to be ashamed to refer to it, for have they not robbed us of our birthright for nearly two centuries and a half? But God will judge them for it, for He is just! The day of reckoning will surely come to them, as it came to the Egyptians of old—mark my words! But to return to the topic on hand: the colored people, as a race, are no fonder of being treated in a patronizing, I'll-help-thee-but-am-better-than-thou fashion than any other people. Of course, if one of their own race goes among them, and, while getting his living off them, treats them with hauteur, they resent it, and I would think less of them if they didn't. The trouble with our race today is that too many of those in high places try to hold themselves aloof from their brethren. I have in mind a gentleman of this kind, who, with his wife, seeks all of his associates and most of his employees from among the dominant race.

“Some of you defend this and say it is policy, and that the world respects us more for having representatives who are admitted to white circles, etc. Granted; but whom does posterity admire more—Arminius, who refused every inducement the Romans could offer to make him renounce his people, or his brother Flavius, who became a ‘Roman of the Romans?’ Our people are surely held in no greater contempt by the whites of America than were the Anglo-Saxons by their Norman conquerors yet does not the world admire the Saxons for their sturdiness? Again; how did Moses act—and surely he had more to gain by denying and more to lose by acknowledging his brethren than these exclusive Anglo-Africans have in this day? Pshaw! I have no patience with such people! God knows that they cannot plead there are no congenial associates to be found among their own race. I have mingled in the most brilliant society in the world—viz, French society—and I have no hesitancy in declaring that our society has as much refinement, as much talent and as much beauty, if not as much wealth and prestige, as any white society in America! We do not want what they call ‘social recognition,’ at least, I don’t! In France a negro is the peer, socially and legally, of any in the realm possessing equal talent, reputation and wealth—and I should have remained there, had I not loved my people too well to use whatever energies God has given me for the advancement of another race. Show your people that you are skillful and make common cause with them, and I have no fear that you go long without appreciation.”

It was the Sunday morning about this time that Mr. Tracy, now a votary of Coke and Blackstone (with more talent than clients, judging from his success) dropped into Dr. De Verne’s private office.

“Not going to church this morning?” he asked, in the nonchalant fashion characteristic of him, as he fell lazily upon the settee.

“No, we poor devils of doctors are deprived of such a luxury two-thirds of the time,” said the doctor, opening his cigar case

for, like so many of his sex, he was very near being that most inexplicable of things—a tobacco worm!

“You ought to be glad of it, man,” returned his friend, as he lighted the choice Havana “it shows that the Fates are propitious. As for us poor devils of lawyers—colored lawyers, I mean—I am sure every single one of us would promise the old adversary to remain from church forever, provided he give us as many clients as you have patients.”

“Capitolia is a poor field for colored lawyers, as I always told you,” said Lawyer Lorraine Tracy. “In the first place, the juries are almost wholly white, and, in the second place, the class of people around here who are fond of litigation are, as a general thing, the very class who care least for the race.

“I don’t blame the poor devils. If I knew of any way to get rid of this one drop of negro blood which, for some cause or other, insists on remaining in my veins, I would not hesitate an instant; I’d flay myself alive, almost, to reach this consummation devoutly to be wished for.”

“If you are so disgusted with your race, why, in the name of common-sense don’t you go off somewhere and pass for white? I’m sure you’re fair enough.”

“Humph!” shrugging his shoulders, “Allow me to express my sentiments on the great American problem in the language of another. Excuse me if I don’t quote *verbatim et literatim*:

*First come rich man,
Then come black man,
Then come dog,
And then poor buckra.*

If I had a fortune now—or even enough to live on decently—I’d leave these diggings before sunset and dazzle the world as Lorraine Tracy no more.”

“I can’t see why you don’t go West, where your connections are not known, and as one of the race you love so well, work your way up in your profession.”

“Well, dear Doctor, I don’t see either, except, in the first place, I haven’t sufficient energy, and in the second place, I can’t tear myself from Capitolia—for the simple reason that I’m in love.”

“That’s an old song of yours, Lorraine.”

“Will, you know that I have admired Corinne ever since she was a girl in short dresses.”

“Indeed! You’ve admired so many, you can’t expect me to remember them all.”

Mr. Tracy did not notice the interruption.

“Now, since she has developed into such a magnificent woman, are you surprised at my infatuation? Ah, Will,

*She is Venus when she smiles,
But she’s Juno when she walks,
And Minerva when she talks.*

But she’s so cold—so very cold. I flatter myself that I shall not sue for her hand in vain. Madame has set her heart on my being her son-in-law. She tried hard to win me for Adele, and, failing in that, and knowing, also, that I am too aesthetic to fancy Gabriella, she has set her heart upon my marrying her youngest. And, do you know, I sometimes wonder if Corinne has a heart. I don’t want to marry a statue, even though that statue be christened Corinne De Verne.”

“Don’t give yourself any uneasiness on that score, Tracy; the statue christened Corinne De Verne could never abide you, as you know, and judging from her actions, her feelings have not undergone much change.”

“Belle St. Clair could never abide Claude Livingstone, either, but she was glad enough when he gave her the chance to say ‘Yes,’ all the same.”

“Corinne De Verne is a very different woman from Mrs. Livingstone. You are not her ideal, or Gabriella’s, either, that I know. As for Adele, you know she cared more for Rivers’ little finger than

for your whole body. In spite of your supreme confidence, I think that your chances for entering Madame's family are very slim—unless she turns widow and marries you herself.”

Will was mad, especially as he could not deny that his aunt had really given Lorraine grounds to say exactly what he did.

Lorraine laughed.

“Dear Doctor, I have no wish to play the part of Petruchio in the *Taming of the Shrew*—and only Petruchio could tame Madame De Verne. I meant no disrespect to the lady, for she is one of the most commanding woman in the range of my acquaintance. But I have no fear of failure, Will; I can get any girl I want.”

“I think it would be a fine idea for you and some of your irresistible friends to do some proposing, I think. So many men think that every girl who smiles with them is in love with them. Unless Corinne undergoes a radical change, your opinion of yourself will change when you do her the honor to offer your hand in marriage.”

“I know that, like her sister Adele, she has singular taste, but the only male she ever seemed to fancy was that Tremaine fellow before he went to Paris. Thank the Fates there is no fear of any rivalry in that quarter, for like the blind fool I always took him and the rest of his family for, he has thrown away all his chances to be a canting, psalm-singing priest.”

“Lorraine, you are disgusting. If you had half as much real manhood as Walter Tremaine, you'd be a power in Capitolia today.”

Lorraine's face turned red as blood. He bit his lip fiercely, and there was a dangerous glitter in his eye. But the paroxysm passed over, and he replied with a shrug, “You say some cutting things to me, De Verne, but I'm too lazy to keep account, ain't I? But I should excuse you for everything you say when the Tremaines are the topic, I suppose; your infatuation for that family is an old story. Apropos, do you know that the young priest has arrived?”

“Who? Not Walter.”

“Fact. I went to the depot to see Herbert off, and who do you think stepped on the platform but young Père Tremaine? I knew him at once by his resemblance to his sister. He’s certainly a splendid-looking fellow. Père St. Bernard informed me that he is going to enter at once on the duties of the mission—to which, by the way, they are going to relegate all us colored believers. Good thing the young fellow is a priest; otherwise half the girls in town would be breaking their necks about him. I expect a wonderful accession to our ranks as it is. But I will intrude on your privacy no longer, De Verne. Goodbye, I’m off.”

“Off where? To church?”

“No, sir. I think I’ll drop in at De Verne’s a moment, before I go home to dinner.”

“Nobody’s home except Uncle Rene, who is too feeble this morning to receive visitors. All the rest are at church.”

“My dear De Verne, don’t you know that I know that Miss Corinne has not been inside of a church for more than fifteen months? Strange. People’s attractions for each other! There’s young Tremaine so religious that he renounced everything for his faith, while the girl he worshipped is one of the most confirmed skeptics in the world! But, skeptic as she is, I am dying for a peep at her this morning.”

Half an hour after this interview, Mr. Tracy was ushered into the De Verne library by the Irish maid, who still served the family. Corinne, dressed in the sombre color she affected of late, was sitting at the window with a book—one of Voltaire’s—in her hand. She looked up with considerable vexation on her face, at his entrance. Indeed, her countenance was disfigured by a frown, which, truth compels us to say, she made no attempt to conceal.

“Mamma and Gabriella have gone to church,” she said, without replying to his courteous “Good morning.”

“I did not come to see Mamma and Gabriella,” he said, matching her tone perfectly. “You ought to know by now whom I do come to see, Miss Corinne,” he continued, reproachfully.

“I neither know nor care,” she said crossly.

“You are an accomplished girl, Miss De Verne, but manners are left out of the list of your accomplishments,” said Mr. Tracy.

“I have some scruples about casting pearls before swine,” said Miss De Verne

“Thanks for your frankness, Miss Corinne,” said Lorraine, with perfect *sangfroid*. “By-the-by, did you hear of Father Walter Tremaine’s arrival this morning?”

The blood in the girl’s face grew hot and cold but she made no rejoinder.

“Yes, I saw him myself,” continued Tracy, keeping his eyes fixed on her and trying to read her very soul, for she was too proud to avert her face or seek in any way to avoid his scrutiny. “What a pity ’tis that he’s a priest! I can see the despair now written on the countenances of some of my lady friends when they make the discovery that so exceedingly handsome a fellow is neither for love nor marriage! Pity, pity, pity! But I presume the mission—which he assumes charge of immediately—will be crowded, all the same, with all the Protestant girls in Capitolia! Half of the young men of this town became devout Catholics because of Miss Lenore—I venture the assertion that half of the young ladies of this town will enter the fold because of the shepherd in charge.”

It was with almost a sneer that Corinne replied, “It is hardly fair to judge the whole world by yourself, Mr. Tracy. There may be some mortals in the world whose actions may be governed by a little higher motive than yours are. But you must excuse me. If you wish to remain until the ladies come, you are at your liberty to do so. I shall vacate the library in your favor.”

Lorraine watched her as she retired with a peculiar gleam in his eyes.

“I’ll win you, Corinne De Verne, if I live,” he muttered, “and when I get you, she-devil, I’ll pay you for the old and the new.”

SUNDERED HEARTS

One afternoon about a month after this, Corinne put on her hat and, leaving word that they need not keep supper waiting for her, sauntered down to Gertie's.

More than five weeks had passed since she had been there, and, as for several years her visits had been very frequent whenever she was in Capitolia, Gertie had sent a note that morning to find out the cause of her continued absence. Corinne's answer had been that she would reply in person—and she now left home to keep her promise.

The house was deserted, apparently, though the front windows were partly open. She was about to ring the doorbell when Olive, now quite a promising girl, emerged from the neighboring premises with the information that her sister had been called out on some very urgent business, and left word that Miss Corinne must wait until she came back. She ushered the visitor into the parlor and told her to "make herself at home," then, glad to be released, ran back to

join her companions, and her laughing voice was soon heard above all the rest in the play.

The parlor was on the east side of the house and consequently cool and pleasant. The piano stood invitingly open, and she saw that some of her favorite music had been put in a conspicuous place, but she did not play just then. A picture on the wall had attracted her attention. She had never seen it before. It must have been placed there since her last visit. It was a life-size image of Walter Tremaine, [illegible] painting of his friends in Paris, an artist of considerable merit. She had not seen him in four years, but she recognized the likeness at once. 'Twas a superb-looking man, certainly, who had been the original of that painting, and the girl felt the blood within her turn first hot and then cold as ice itself as she gazed on it and traced each lineament of the fine face. Tears—the first she had shed for many a day—filled her eyes, and, seized by an uncontrollable impulse, she pressed her lips passionately on the inanimate semblance and exclaimed, “Oh, Walter, it was a grand act, a noble act, perhaps, but was it honorable in you to win my love and then renounce it as you did?”

She gazed at it for some time longer, in silence; after a while she took her seat at the piano and began to sing as if her whole heart were in the words, the plaintive song,

*Ah, I have sighed to rest me,
Deep in the quiet grave.*

She was not aware of a listener, but in the small room fitted up as a library at the end of the hallway sat a young man who started abruptly when he heard that voice; Corinne had a magnificent voice, but it was now soft and subdued, and, oh, so melancholy! Walter Tremaine sat motionless and almost held his breath while he drank in every syllable. 'Twas touching to hear her sing, “*Ah che la morte*”—she used the Italian version—and I know that it was with one of the saddest of hearts that he arose, after a while, and walked toward the parlor.

Before he reached it he heard a sound which pierced his heart as a knife blade. 'Twas a sound as of low suppressed sobs, and when he looked in, he saw the woman, for whom he would have given his lifeblood to shield from pain, leaning forward on the piano, with her head bowed on her hands and tears rolling down her cheeks. Ah, Walter, I would not like to feel as thou felt at that moment! In spite of the bitter lot which lay so near before thee, I doubt it, even in those dark, cruelly dark moments, thou felt'st as sorrowful as thou feel'st now!

Should he go in or not? He asked himself. His heart said, Go! Delicacy forbade him to appear as a witness of the grief which he suspected was on his account. While he stood debating the matter in his mind, Corinne, with that unerring instinct which tells us of the presence of some living being, looked up and saw him. She rose at once, without a word. For a few moments they gazed at each other in silence, neither knowing how to speak or what to say. Both thought of the last time they had been together—of the fond vows they had made, of the bright future they had planned, of the blissful existence they had pictured out—and the contrast between Then and Now was too great. Corinne recovered first, and, in spite of the teardrops on her face, was as calm and self-possessed as an empress. He had deceived her—he had blighted her life by his fanatic devotion to an idea, and she was not the kind of woman to forget such a wrong.

“This is Mr. Tremaine—or Father Tremaine I suppose I must call you now,” she said with a forced smile. “Perhaps you have forgotten me, for I was a mere child when you left. I am Corinne De Verne.”

She did not offer him her hand, and, though he colored as he noticed the omission, he merely bowed and said nothing.

“I have changed considerable, they tell me,” she continued, “so I should not be surprised at your not recognizing me. I must beg

your pardon for appearing in the role of an interloper. Your sister, Miss Gertie, left word that I should wait until her return. I had no idea that anyone was within."

Walter found his voice at last.

"I am the interloper, I think. I came in about half an hour since, and, finding no one within, took possession of the library and there remained until the music attracted me. I beg your pardon for disturbing you."

"You did not disturb me in the least. But I have already overstayed my time. Will you please tell your sister that I will call another day, as I can now wait for her no longer?"

She took up her gloves and parasol and prepared to go. In doing so she dropped her reticule. Walter hastened to pick it up, and she did likewise. Their hands met in the operation.

"I beg pardon, sir," said she.

"Corinne," said the priest, taking her beautiful white hand within his own and gazing at it longingly and tenderly. "You have been cold to me as cold as this dainty little hand I hold such an unwilling prisoner—but, I have no right, I suppose, to a warmer greeting. My child, can you not find it in your heart to forgive me for the unintentional wrong I have done you?"

"Wrong? Father Tremaine has done me no wrong, and there is therefore nothing to forgive. May I trouble him to allow me to pass?"

Instead of obeying, Father Tremaine released her hand and stood with his back against the door, so as to prevent her egress.

"Corinne, child," he said, "I have been here more than five weeks and during all that time have not, until now, caught even a glimpse of your peerless face, though I have called at the House three times and asked for you every time. I am blest with the privilege I have so long prayed for this afternoon; and, pardon me, I shall endeavor to use it."

He spoke in those authoritative tones which women like, when they come from a man they admire.

“If you have any business with me, of course I can wait to hear it,” said Corinne, calmly, and she sat down on the divan, and, spying a fan nearby, took it and began to use it airily. Perhaps her object was to disconcert him by this affectation of carelessness; if so she did not succeed, for, though he felt his position most embarrassing, he began in as calm a voice as her own, “It is more than four years since we met, Corinne.”

“It is,” answered that young lady, quietly, “I think our last meeting was shortly after your father’s funeral.”

“Many things have taken place since we met, Corinne.”

“Yes, I was a child then—now I am a woman;” she paused a moment, then resumed pitilessly, “and you were—or imagined yourself—a man, now you are a priest.”

Walter colored and bit his lip till the blood almost came. She affected to find something interesting in the figures traced on the fan. “You received my letter?” he asked, at length.

“Yes, I did not answer it, for I did not think an answer necessary.”

“You understand the motives which prompted me to write it?”

“I think so. I am naturally somewhat obtuse, I know, but your language was so plain that the wayfaring man, though a fool, could not err as to its significance.”

“Corinne, dear, excuse me for what I am about to say, but I must satisfy myself in this particular. Are you happy?”

“Pardon me, Father—your remarks are becoming entirely too personal to be pleasant. Don’t I look happy enough?”

Considering the fact that he had but just found her bathed in tears, it is not strange that he felt some little doubt on this point.

“Looks are deceptive, Corinne,” he said.

“Why should I not be happy?” she asked, defiantly. “Have I not everything to make me happy; youth, health, beauty (you say), friends, a good home?—what else can I need?”

*Man wants but little here below,
Nor wants that little long.”*

Poor Walter! Thou art as simple as a child. Transparent thyself, thou never hadst a doubt about another's sincerity! Yet he was not quite convinced.

"I pray for you early and late, dear child, and I thank Heaven that my prayers have been answered."

"Father Tremaine does me much honor."

He looked at her for a moment in silence. What was it that had come over this girl, who was once all frankness and affection to him? Was this cold, self-contained young woman the same Corinne he had parted with four years ago? Suddenly a thought struck him.

"I have read your book, Corinne."

For the first time she looked interested. She gave him a quick, searching glance, and her dark eyes, no longer seeking to hide her thoughts, grew brilliant. Life seemed to have been infused into the statue.

"Have you?" she asked, "I did not know that the fathers read novels."

"Corinne, may I make a request of you?"

"Certainly, sir."

"Will you please call me Walter, just for once?"

"I should like to oblige you, but I dare not use such familiarity with a dignitary of the Holy Church."

"I have read your book," he continued after a short pause, as if to digest [illegible] studied every [illegible] to find out [illegible] [illegible]—my character all imaginary; surely you would not confound the imaginary with the real?"

"You were always ambitious, Corrine," said Walter, not noticing her remark.

"Well, yes; truth demands that I plead guilty to that indictment. Is ambition an unpardonable sin in a woman? Oh! I forgot, the masculine wiseacres of the nineteenth century have discovered that learning unsexes a woman."

The priest smiled. This last remark was so characteristic of Corinne, who could always see the weakness of those with whom she came in contact, and was never noted for her leniency of judgement, either.

“You really think so?” he interrogated.

“I not only think so, I know so,” she replied, glad of the opportunity to change the current of the conversation, for she felt it almost torture to maintain that frigid demeanor longer.

“Tell me all about it,” said he, more from a desire to hear her talk than anything else, for he knew her sentiments on that subject long ago.

“Oh, well,” she replied, apparently falling into his vein—for she smiled, too, “if you want another proof of your sex’s intolerable stupidity, I am willing to oblige you. The majority of the young men of your race dislike, or *affect* to dislike, a woman with brains—believing, I presume, that God never intended *brains* and *heart* to be united in the same woman. I have heard one of this type, ‘They do very well for *companions* but not for *wives*.’ Apropos, ought not a *wife* to be a *companion*—or should she be a mere plaything, unable to enter into her lord and master’s high life—to understand his secret thoughts—to be able to sit by like some patient, loving dog until her master finds a crumb which she can digest? Pshaw! I could not marry a man who holds such sentiments, for I could not respect him. ‘Like seeks like,’—‘water seeks its level’—and it is as natural for a brainy man (provided he possesses that rarest of articles, common sense) to seek a brainy woman as for eagles to mate with eagles. I have seen some human eagles, though, mate with thrushes; while, on the other hand, I have seen that those men who have been deprived of the advantages of an education appreciate an intellectual woman for more than A. B.s, LL.D.s, etc. The trouble is, I think, that the intellectual women of our race excel (as a general thing) or, at least, equal in ability, the intellectual men

among us; and men do not like to feel themselves a dwarf besides those they have been taught to regard as ‘weaker vessels’—inferior in all save beauty and disposition. Andrew Johnson’s appreciation of an educated woman made him President of the United States. But whether men appreciate educated women or not, women are appreciating education more and more. My ideal of woman is very high. I am not one of those born to dress and flirt and do nothing else—my ambition has always been to be a true woman—a ‘brave, whole-souled, true woman’ such as Tennyson and Holland sing of. Don’t you admire Holland’s description of his ideal woman?

‘She was my peer;

*No weakling girl, who would surrender will
And life and reason, with her loving heart,
To her possessor; no soft, clinging thing
Who would find breath alone within the arms
Of a strong master, and obediently
Wait on his will as in slavish carefulness;
No fawning, cringing spaniel to attend
His royal pleasure, and account herself
Rewarded by his pats and pretty words,
But a sound woman, who with insight keen,
Had wrought a scheme of life, and measured
well
Her womanhood; had spread before her feet
A fine philosophy to guide her steps.
Had won a faith to which her life was brought
In strict adjustment—brain and heart meanwhile
Working in conscious harmony and rhythm
With the great scheme of God’s great universe
On toward her being’s end.*

The heroine of my story is a girl of this type, Father.”

“Yes: I admire no woman in the whole range of fiction more than I do Alene Wallace.”

“Thank you. I have entered the literary arena, not so much from ambition, but in order to use my feeble talents in the elevation of my race. Many others have more talent than I, but, I suppose, less self-reliance. I have made my people a study, and have seen some things which I think are stumbling blocks in the way of our advancement. To these I desire to call attention, as well as to show the more frivolous of our girls what a grand thing a true noble *woman* is, and to set before our young men the example of high-souled manhood. Well, as *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* did more to open the world’s eyes to the enormity of slavery [illegible] sermons that had [illegible] years, I thought [illegible], impress these upon my readers. Filled with this idea, I wrote the novel, which I know moralizes too much ever to become popular.”

She talked on glibly, as if Walter’s presence was nothing out of the ordinary, and he saw, or thought he saw, with a feeling of infinite relief that the scene he had just witnessed was not caused by any act of his. This may not have been humane, for the best of us do not like to find ourselves superseded in the affections of another, even if that other one whose love we can never return; but, as my readers have probably discovered, Walter Tremaine was a remarkably high-minded and self-sacrificing young man. Seeing Corinne’s self-possession, he breathed freer.

“They say that Alene, the heroine of your novel, is—”

He hesitated. Corinne laughed.

“Is myself. I know that; I’ve heard it all around. I think such an impression is due to the fact that it is not often we have a colored heroine, and, as I happen to be colored, my friends, who cannot understand my motives, make my novel an autobiography, of course.”

“I am glad you chose a colored heroine, Corinne.”

“Thank you. I chose a colored heroine, for I have no reason to be a depicter or historian of the white race. Our race has as

many heroes and heroines as the Caucasian, and it becomes us to honor them. Well, do you know that, except from a few, I am yet to receive one word of sympathy or encouragement from a member of my race? Again, as to this matter concerning the identity of Alene: I chose for my heroine—I can tell you this—Adele, who, as you know, is fair. I did not want my readers to lay Alene’s refinement to her Caucasian blood, so I changed her color. The type of physical beauty most frequent among our race, is that of the ‘brownie’—red-brown skin; good, yet not perfect features; soft, black hair and hazel or black eyes. You know this yourself. After I had described Alene in my manuscripts, I was so afraid that one might take her for Gertie, that I placed a mark—don’t laugh—on her cheek—a mole. Now, will you believe it that in my anxiety to guard against Gertie’s identification, I forgot the mole which is so conspicuous on my own chin? I don’t know how to account for my stupidity—but you know yourself, Walter, that the wisest of us are sometimes fools. My hero bears some resemblance to Will, for I do admire Will and his profession so much—but not enough for anyone to put his hand on him and say, ‘Thou are the man,’ but it is all over the town that I am so deeply enamored of Dr. De Verne that I have written a book about him. Some of the scenes depicted are said to bear some resemblance to my own experiences, and Alene is said to act like myself; is it not natural that an author should impress much of his own personality on his characters, especially in his first effort? One of my friends tells me that it loses much of its merit (it has but little, at best, I know) by my not writing under a *nom de plume*. Did Mrs. Browning, or Mrs. Hemans, or Mrs. Norton, among the poetesses; did Hannah Moore, or Maria Edgeworth, or Frederika Bremer, among foreign writers; did Harriet Beecher Stowe, or Augusta Evans— withhold their names? I have said some bold things in my book, and I am too much of a woman to throw a ball behind cover. But yonder comes

Gertie at last. You will excuse me, Father, as I am late and have a few words to say to her in private.”

Walter noticed his sister’s worried look when she came in.

“What is the matter, dear?” he asked.

“Walter,” she said, looking up at him with her eyes full of tears, “how different our lives would have been if Papa had lived!”

“What makes you say that dear?” he said, placing his arms around her and—that was a favorite caress with him—stroking her beautiful hair. He was devoted to this sister and could never get over a certain amount of reverence with which he had always regarded her—for the whole family had always looked up to this eldest child.

“Walter,” she said, resting her head on his shoulder. “I am going to send Dan to Boston next week.”

“What is the matter, dear—has he been giving you trouble?”

“He has been playing truant for the last two weeks, his teacher tells me. I went downtown this afternoon in response to a note she wrote me concerning him.”

“Have you seen him since?”

“No, but I have heard enough to convince me that he has come under the influence of certain bad spirits, and the only way to break him is to send him off at once.”

“What a careless brother I have been, Gertie! There I’ve let you worry with these children and made no effort to assist you. I might have known that a headstrong boy like Dan needed somebody [**illegible**] allowing him to stay around here now, even if you could make him listen to you. He has gone too far. I shall board him with the Riverses, while he attends the high school.”

“It will be too much of an expense on you, dear, to keep both him and Gracie in school.”

“You have helped me so much that I can afford it. Oh, if Mamma had not married! I feared that it would be unhappy, and

you see what it is! Well, as long as I have Olive and Eddie with me, I should be content, but I shall never be satisfied until she gives me Lee and Leery—and comes back herself, too. It is wicked in me, I know, but I would thank Heaven if Mamma was a widow tomorrow!”

“Dear, trust in Heaven and wait with patience. The clouds will disappear and the sun will shine after all of this darkness and gloom.”

“Perhaps so. Oh, Walter, if Papa had lived you would never have been a priest!”

She uttered the last word as if it was abhorrent to her.

“Gertie!” exclaimed her brother, as if her words had stung him.

“Forgive me, Walter, for wounding you. I ought to keep silent, I know, but I can hold my peace no longer. You know that Papa intended to take you to New Orleans and send you to Oberlin, and in that pure atmosphere you would have seen the error of the religion in which you were brought up. Do not interrupt me. Father St. Bernard never would have sent you to Paris—you never would have been thrown in the balance. Then Gypsy would never have gone to the rectory; she would have lived at home and, perhaps, married Dr. De Verne.”

“Tell me, Gertie; about that she will not confide in me, though I have sought her confidence. Why she persists in refusing to marry such a man as Dr. De Verne is more than I can understand, for he possesses every quality that a woman should admire.”

“I think—and I have reason for my belief—and so does Corinne, that Mrs. Livingstone’s influence has something to do with it. She has made her boast that she was his first love, and, as he couldn’t marry her, he shall not marry any other woman. No woman who had an ounce of self-respect would make such a remark.”

“Well, dear, do not bother yourself about this anymore. I shall relieve you, as much as my duties will allow me, of the cares which you have shouldered for five long years. I should have done this long ago, for I am the oldest son and should endeavor to fill my

father's place. I shall try to win Gypsy's confidence, Gertie, and perhaps bring her to her right mind again. Trust in Heaven, dear, and all will soon be right, never fear."

Gertie watched him as he walked down the gravel walk. "Dear Walter," she murmured, "what a noble life has been spoiled by your mistaken devotion to an idea! Corinne loves you yet—you might have married her and been happy—as you are not, poor boy! And will not, I fear, be again in this life! Oh, God, have mercy on my poor brother! I wonder if he will be as successful with Gypsy as he thinks? I doubt it. For her sake, I wish her to marry Will. I have given him up, as thou canst bear me witness, O merciful God, and will not faint though I see him the husband of another! May that other be Gypsy! But I doubt it—some malign influence may be at work—and I have a presentiment that some terrible fate is impending over someone dear to me! God avert the storm from our devoted heads!"

Yes, Gertie, the storm is about to burst—and very, very, soon! God help you all! "He doeth all things well," and I am not here to question His providences, but simply to chronicle the history of a life.

WATCH OVER MY LOVE FOR ME

*On with the dance! Let joy be unconfin'd
And eyes spake love that answer'd back again.*

It was a gay scene. Not only was the house ablaze with light, but the lovely grounds were also illuminated, and beautiful women and gallant men moved about to the strains of one of Strauss's most bewitching waltzes.

Mrs. Howard, the aunt of Charlie Herbert—whose attentions to Gypsy had given Dr. De Verne so much uneasiness—had used all that money and taste could command to make this ball the grandest of the season. She had succeeded, too, if one might judge from the sparkling eyes, spirited conversation, and merry peals of laughter which rang out so frequently on the air.

But where was she who had been the queen regnant of all the gaities which had taken place in Captolia for the last four years—made such by her extraordinary beauty and fascinating manners?

Many of the young ladies who had heretofore shown with dim lustre, completely eclipsed by that "one bright particular star," Lenore, now found themselves suddenly brought into belleship, and it was hardly strange that many of them fervently wished that their brilliant rival might eschew balls and parties forever.

But it was only natural that her absence should elicit inquiry from those who were most benefited by it. A group of these had collected in one corner of the ballroom and were soon discussing the cause of Gypsy's disappearance.

"Jimmy Howard says he saw her strolling through the grounds with Dr. De Verne more than an hour ago," said sprightly Maude Granger, who Dame Rumor declared to be hopelessly infatuated with Charlie Herbert. "Why don't she marry him and be done with it? She is compromising herself very much by her intimacy with him."

"I don't believe Will De Verne wants her," put in a piquant Stella Grey, whom the doctor had lately paid considerable attention to, "He hasn't the remotest idea of making her his wife. Men of his type like fast women well enough for companions but never dream of choosing one of them for his wife."

"They say that he is in love with the other sister and only goes with Gypsy for a blind," said Ada Belle Clare.

"In love with whom?" almost screamed Stella. "Humph! Dr. De Verne will never marry Gertie Tremaine, you may depend on that."

"From whence do you derive your information, Miss Grey?" said Corinne De Verne, who had come up to speak to Miss Clare and caught the last remark.

Stella looked at her defiantly. She disliked Corinne and was glad of the opportunity afforded her of stinging that young lady.

"When Will De Verne marries he will carry his race *up*, Miss De Verne," replied Stella, whose dainty roseate skin, violet eyes, and golden hair often made people take her for white—a fact of which she loved to boast.

“I know that most colored men seek wives as near white as they can get them, but I am happier also to know that Will De Verne is above such a weakness,” returned Corinne scornfully. “I don’t think he will ‘carry his race up’ in the way you refer to, Miss Grey. Ada Belle, I want you to take a stroll with Prof. Lecouer and me. He asked me to get you, and I want you to go.”

“There goes the most hateful girl in Capitolia,” said Stella, angrily, as the two moved off; “I believe she is in love with Will herself, and that accounts for the coldness between her and Lenore.”

“Her pride will have a fall someday, as sure as her name is Corinne,” said Maud, “and I, for one, will think it serves her right. I don’t care a fig for Gypsy, but I would far rather see her happy and prosperous than that arrogant, unbearable De Verne girl.”

“I think it’s ‘six in one hand and half a dozen in the other,’” said Stella. “Corinne is selfish and dictatorial, and Gypsy is conceited and fast. The way she goes on with Will De Verne and even your Charlie, Maud, is enough to make respectable society close its doors on her forever.”

“It is only her supposed beauty—men are such fools about good looks!—and Mrs. Livingstone’s influence that bolsters her up, as it is,” said Maud. “Mark my words—neither Will nor Charlie will marry her, and neither of them mean any good by the attention they pay her. If this thing continues six months more, it will find her no more tolerated by decent people than Rollicking Rhody.”

Poor Lenore! She did not hear these words of the new Cassandra, but she looked sad enough without. As the girls had said, she had strolled away with Dr. De Verne, but it was at his urgent request, to have an interview with her which she had sought to put off for a considerable while, and which he was determined should be put off no longer. They were under an arbor in the least frequented garden, and Will was leaning against the trellised work while the girl sat, with downcast eyes, on the rustic bench beside him.

“And so, Lenore, you tell me to give up all hope?” said the young man with a shade of deep melancholy in his tone.

“Dr. De Verne, I am so sorry—so very sorry; I respect you highly, but I do not love you.”

“What is there about me that you cannot love, Lenore? Tell me and I will get rid of it if I have to pluck out my right eye in doing so. I would serve for you fourteen years, as Jacob served for his Rachel—nay, more, and bless heaven for the privilege!”

“My dear friend, this is so painful—so very painful. You have no idea how you torture me.”

“Torture you?” fiercely. “If it is torture to you, great God, what do you think it is to me? Here I have loved you for six long years—I have had eyes for no woman but you—I have thought of you by day—I have dreamed of you by night—I have toiled with the bright hope before me that someday I should be able to surround you with luxury—I have striven to win a name in my profession, and my chief incentive was the thought that whatever honor I might win would cause your cheek to [] with pride—and now, after having accepted my attentions and led me to think that you were not indifferent to me, you sit down here and calmly tell me that I torture you to speak of my love. Great God, what are you women made of anyway?”

He spoke passionately, and his eyes blazed with anger. Lenore grew pale, and her very hands trembled, and Will thought he saw, after the first ebullition of his rage, a teardrop on her cheek. Too proud to let him see it, she averted her face, but the sight had already partly disarmed his resentment.

“Come, Lenore,” he said, taking her hand so firmly in his own that she winced with pain; “What is there that prevents you from loving me just a little? Am I so cruel, or so wicked, or so ugly that I may never hope to win the flower that I would give worlds to wear?”

“Doctor, you are all that any girl could desire, but—”

“Why, then, in God’s name, don’t you desire me, Lenore? I am not given to boasting, but I do say that few girls in this town would say me nay, if I had lavished on them the affection I have lavished on you.”

“Then why don’t you ask some of them, Doctor?”

“Great God, child, have you a heart?” And he clutched her hand so fiercely that she cried out in pain.

“There is nothing about me to call forth such passion,” she faltered, caressing her aching fingers.

“You made me believe that you are the most lovable woman on God’s green earth.”

“Stella Gray and Gabriella De Verne tell people differently.”

“What have you to do with Stella Gray and Gabriella De Verne? I don’t want them, and I have never asked either to be my wife, but I do want you. Oh, Lenore, my dear love, my ideal woman, I have loved you so long, so faithfully and so fervently! I have hoped for so long that my love was returned—I had dared to think that I was not indifferent to you, and—Lenore, if you did not love me, why did you lead me on?”

“I know I did wrong, Doctor,” she faltered, “but I liked you so much, and—”

“Don’t talk about *liking* me, Lenore—the word nauseates me. Tell me, please, who it is you *love*—Charlie Herbert or Lorraine Tracy?”

The girl rose to her feet with a wild cry and confronted him like a stag at bay. “What do you mean, Dr. De Verne?” she asked, “What right have you to mention either of those gentlemen in this connection—and especially Mr. Tracy?”

“I am no fool, Lenore. They say that love is blind—and I have been blind enough to refuse to see what was so patent to everyone, viz, that it is either that disgusting dude of a Herbert or the greatest roué in Capitolia, Lorraine Tracy, that has won the heart that I would almost imperil my soul to win.”

His words seemed to infuse new spirit into the girl. Drawing herself up to her full height, she said, with dignity, "You have made as great a mistake about my character, Dr. De Verne, as you have about my love, if you think the way to rise in my estimation is to malign gentlemen whose shoe latchet you are unable to loose. You have spoken, now listen to me. My heart is bestowed elsewhere, on a man whom I believe to be the peer, the superior, of any—and I am proud of it. I love him, and I cannot and I will not love another. Who he is, both you and this gossiping town will know before many more days are over. Good evening, Dr. De Verne," and, without turning to look at him, she walked from the arbor.

Will made no attempt to stop her. He loved her, he had thought, as he had loved and could love no other woman, but he was proud—very, very proud—and her words wounded him in his most sensitive part. How long he stood there he never knew, but it must have been hours, for the garden was deserted, the supper table was cleared, and most of the pleasure seekers had departed before he remembered where he was. He was recalled to himself by feeling a strong hand laid on his shoulder.

"What, man, mourning? 'Tis not good for your health to stand out here and let the night damps fall on your unprotected head. I have looked up and down for you, and half the girls have had the blues because of your inexplicable absence. Someone said you had gone home, but I thought I would not give up all hope until I had peered into every aperture."

"What do you want with me, anyhow," said Will, sullenly.

"Why, what is the matter with my sweet-tempered doctor? Will, what in the world has come over you? Are you going mad?"

"I am going—to the devil."

"In Heaven's name, Will, what is the matter with you? Oh, I heard that you and Miss Tremaine were together for a considerable time in the earlier part of the night; has she been treating you unkindly?"

“Let Miss Tremaine’s name rest. What do you want with me?”

“Humph! Man, you are in a bad temper, for sure.”

“You did not come [here] to see about my temper, I hope?”

“No, indeed, I did not. If a man chooses to make himself a bear, I allow him that privilege, as far as I am concerned. I came to see if you are going away on the six-forty train as you said.”

“Yes, I am going. Did I not promise you more than two weeks since?”

“Have you made preparations to go?”

“Yes.”

“Can you not defer it?”

“No; I cannot and will not.”

“Not if I tell you that it is impossible for me to accompany you?”

“I will not defer it, even then.”

“Well, I am sorry, but I will not be able to leave town before next week sometime. Business will not permit me.”

“I am glad that you have enough clients to keep you busy. I am going in the morning without fail. I must get out of this accursed town before I lose my mind. The very air is stifling to me.”

“How long a stay of it will you make?”

“Two or three weeks—perhaps longer. For goodness sake don’t tell any of these people where I am, or I shall be worried with letters, and I don’t want to see or hear of a letter. Dr. Floyd will attend to my patients for me while I am away.”

“I wish you a pleasant trip, Will. I may run up next week, if I can possibly find the time. Are you sure of going on the six-forty?”

“As sure as I can be of anything. Lorraine, are you going to marry Lenore Tremaine?”

Lorraine started as if he had been shot. As great a master as he was of his countenance, he paled visibly, but Will, in his eagerness for a reply, did not notice this.

“Am I going to marry Lenore Tremaine?” he asked, as soon as he could find voice to speak. “Why do you ask me such a question, Will? I think I have more right to ask *you* that question.”

“Are you telling me the truth, Lorraine?”

“Have I any reason to tell you a falsehood, Will?”

“Then who is it she loves—that Herbert fellow?”

“Don’t know—he is her shadow when you will allow him to be. Madame Rumor says that you were her suitor.”

“Madame Rumor, as usual, makes a mistake, Lorraine, I am going away for a while, but watch over the girl, I entreat you, and if Herbert or any other man does not mean to do the fair and honorable thing by her, let me know at once. Poor thing, she has no father, and her brother is too intent on the well-being of the Church to pay any attention to the well-being of his family. Will you promise me this, Lorraine?”

And Lorraine promised.

CHAPTER 26

DR. DE VERNE'S MYSTERIOUS
TRAVELING COMPANION

The next day dawned cloudy and cheerless. A cold, disagreeable rain had commenced to fall just before daybreak, and, as is frequently the case in this southern clime, the weather had suddenly changed, and those who, on the preceding eve had felt their thin summer robes an encumbrance, were glad enough to don some of their last winter's clothing.

The gong had sounded for the third time, and the echoes of the cry "All aboard!" had died away, when a slender lady, dressed in deep black and heavily veiled, glided forward and was assisted up the steps of the moving train by a gentleman who happened to be standing on the platform. As it was, her foot slipped, and she would have fallen had not his strong arm supported her.

"Excuse me, madam," he exclaimed as he opened the door for her, "a moment more and you would have been left."

The lady made no rejoinder and Dr. De Verne, who since his return to America had done an act of courtesy to more than

one white lady without receiving a single word of thanks, thought that this was only another of the same type—who would be saved from death by a “nigger,” but would die before thanking him for it—smiled a little bitterly. He was in a bitter mood this morning, anyway, and disposed to look at the world pessimistically.

The city, with its trees, towers, and spires, had faded from view, and Will had gazed at them all long and wistfully, with folded arms and thought brow. He breathed a sigh as the last object sacred to his birthplace disappeared, and then turned on his heel to enter the car. His handsome face looked sad and careworn, as if there was some deep trouble preying upon his mind, and his steps were slow and measured—very different from his brisk alert movements characteristic of him in days of yore.

He had bought a first-class ticket and his “traps” were arranged on one of the rear seats of the palace car, but being, as we have said, an inveterate smoker, he passed on into the advance coach, where there were already several lovers of the weed enveloped in a cloud of smoke. He then threw himself into an unoccupied seat, took out a cigar, and was soon puffing away as if for dear life. But it was not for long. The cigar, though one of the choicest brands, seemed to disgust him, for, with a muttered “Pah! This is beastly!” he pulled it out of his mouth and threw it out the window.

The scenery without was commonplace, but even if it had been otherwise, Dr. De Verne was too much absorbed in his own thoughts to pay much attention to it. He sat there, oblivious of everybody and everything, until he felt someone touch his arm, and heard the word “Tickets!” resounding in his ear.

He handed the conductor his ticket and watched him listlessly as he made the circuit of the car. All at once his interest was aroused. A few seats in front of him, on the opposite side, he saw the identical black-robed figure which he had assisted into the train at depot. She was the only lady occupant, and that fact made her quite conspicuous.

There is a certain air of respectability that black, no matter how cheap, imparts to its wearer, and Will found himself wondering what she was doing among such an ill-assorted set of men—and those men smoking and chewing. Urged by an uncontrollable impulse he watched her and heard the conductor say, as he looked at the piece of paper she gave him, “You are not used to traveling, I see, madam. The car in the rear is the one your ticket entitles you to; this one is reserved for second class travelers and smokers.”

The lady hesitated a moment, and Will caught the words—or thought he did, for she spoke very low—“change” and “danger.” Something in her voice, subdued as it was, seemed strangely familiar, and he eyed her attentively until, as the cars stopped a few moments later at a small station, she rose, and, assisted by the brakeman, passed into the rear car.

“Who is she?” he asked himself, as more and more the idea impressed itself on him that the voice, the figure, and the movements belonged to someone he knew. “What does she travel all muffled up like that for, I wonder? What do women wear veils for, anyway? It only makes them more conspicuous.”

But wondering did not throw much light on the subject, and after a few invectives against women in general and this woman in particular—for he felt decidedly savage this morning—he walked back into the car, with the one idea uppermost in his mind to fix, if possible, the identity of this mysterious personage. To his surprise he discovered on reaching his seat that she had taken possession of it and moved his bundles to one side. Was it only a trick of the imagination or did she really give a slight start as she saw him approaching? His desire to know who she was became greater than ever, but he was too much of a gentleman to gratify his curiosity by any undue familiarity.

“Pardon, madam,” he said, “with your permission, I’ll relieve your seat of these traps.”

She drew herself together as if in anger, and, quickly averting her face, gazed steadily out of the window. Throughout the next two hours she retained this position, and Will, who sat a few seats in front of her, felt it unworthy of the respect her sex demanded to stare at her, no matter how innocent the motive which actuated him. He thus had no further opportunity of studying her until the train had stopped and the clarion voice of the conductor had rung out "East Lynne! Change cars for Blackville and Courtland R. R.!"

The lady arose, as did also several other passengers of the crowded car, and he noticed that, of them all, she alone made her exit through the back door. In the surging mass of human beings, he lost sight of her for a few moments, but saw her again just as she reached the platform of the other car. Her foot—a dainty little thing—was visible an instant, and as he caught a glimpse of it, the vague idea which had possessed him all the morning took form.

"By all that breathes," he exclaimed, "if I did not know that she was safe in Capitolia, I should swear that that is Gypsy Tremaine! But no, it is impossible—she is at the home where she reigns undisputed queen, to win and then to spurn more hearts as she has done mine! Oh, Gypsy, you have scorned a love that never would have failed you—a love that was pure enough to deem an unholy thought of you profanation—that was deep enough to last through time and through eternity—that was strong enough to bear pain and misfortune, yea, death itself to shield you from harm—to bring you one moment's felicity! You have scorned it, and for what? For

*A thing that would
Be a woman, if it could;
But as it can't, does all it can
To show the world it's not a man—*

for such, indeed is Charlie Herbert—a very dude of dudes! How can a woman like Gypsy love such a thing as that? I wonder if the suspicion I have had lately about Lorraine is true? The Fates forbid!

I would rather see her the wife of Herbert, dude as he is, any day, than the betrothed of such a roué as Tracy! Can she be in love with him? Surely not. Well, such is life! Women are strange creatures, anyway. They pass by a good, manly fellow, who would make their happiness the chief object of his life, for some gay Lothario, who, loving himself supremely, will make their existence a burden! I wonder if my own sex is much better? Gypsy will never be the true, noble woman that Gertie is, and yet, knowing this, I have lavished on her, for the past five years, all the affection I am capable of— attracted at the onset by her beautiful face and artistic dress! Well, well! I will tear this passion from my heart before I return—or blow my idiotic brains out—and over me they can place the epitaph, ‘Here lies a fool, who preferring a *doll* to a *woman*, was counted by fortune too stupid to cumber the earth longer with his presence.’”

WHERE IS MY SISTER?

It was about six o'clock the same afternoon that Olive came into the sitting room, where Gertie was busily engaged in altering one of her own dresses for that young lady, with the news that Mr. Tracy was at the front door and wanted to know if Miss Lenore was within, as he had come to take her out driving, according to promise.

Mr. Tracy had never visited Gertie, and she had not really known of his paying any particular attention to Gypsy since that young lady's entrance into society, though once she suspected that an understanding existed between them. She had always, as our readers are aware, had an unconquerable repugnance to him, and the reputation he had made in the social circles of Capitolia was not calculated to make her regard him with any greater degree of favor. She was one of those old-fashioned people who believe that an impure man has no more right to be admitted into virtuous society than an impure woman, and she almost shuddered at the thought of any intimacy between such a notorious debauchee as Lorraine

Tracy and her beautiful self-willed sister. Oh Gertie, had you but known all! But soon, too soon, will the clouds burst, and thou shalt not only know but *feel* the worst!

She felt incensed at his coming there and answered less amiably than was her wont, "Gypsy does not stay here—doesn't he know that? Go back and tell him that probably he will find her at Mrs. Livingstone's as that has been her home for the last five years."

Olive returned to deliver the message, and Gertie resumed her work. But, urged by an uncontrollable impulse, she suddenly threw it aside and followed her sister to the door.

Lorraine, dressed with the most exquisite taste, as usual, with a dainty little bouquet in his buttonhole and smelling strongly of ottar of roses, stood on the veranda, handsome, high-bred and haughty, parleying with Olive, who, as we have said, was beginning to bid fair to rival even Gypsy in loveliness. Gertie boiled as she saw his brilliant black eyes fixed on the girl with an admiration he made no attempt to conceal. In her rage she did not even return his salutation, but said abruptly, "My sister has not been here today. Did she tell you that you would find her here?"

Lorraine, who disliked this stately woman quite as much as she disliked him, looked at her with mingled defiance and triumph.

"No; she simply made the engagement with me. I went to the rectory and she was not there. Mrs. Livingstone told me that probably I would find her here, and that is the only reason I have trespassed on your premises."

Gertie's lip curled disdainfully as she marked the emphasis with which he marked these last words, but she would not condescend to take any other notice of them.

"Mrs. Livingstone made a mistake; she has not been here since yesterday morning. Perhaps she stopped to see a friend and prolonged her visit longer than she had intended."

“Possibly, but I fully expected to find her here, as she did not return home after the ball last night, and Mrs. Livingstone informs me that she has neither seen nor heard from her today.”

There are some tidinges which affect us so that we lose, for a time, all control of the organs of speech. Gertie, whose thoughts were remarkably active, could not, at first, utter a word. A vague fear that some terrible crisis in her life was at hand caused the blood to forsake her cheeks and her heart almost to stop its beating.

“Did Mrs. Livingstone tell you that?” she asked as soon as she could find voice.

The young man played with his riding whip with affected nonchalance, while he covertly observed her with his sharp eyes.

“I have tried to quote her verbatim,” he replied carelessly.

His words, his tone, and his manner enraged Gertie, who, like all of us, had quite a temper when aroused, and the blood rushed back to her cheeks, causing them to burn like fire.

“Mrs. Livingstone has surely made some effort to discover my sister’s whereabouts,” she said with ill-suppressed anger. “Surely she has not allowed her to be absent herself so strangely without taking the trouble to make some little inquiry.”

“Mrs. Livingstone probably thought, as was quite natural, that the young lady had decided to spend the night at her sister’s— young ladies are so notional, you know.”

“She had no reason to think anything of the kind. My sister has never, during the whole five years she has lived at the rectory, spent a single night under any other roof in Captolia, not even under this one—and surely it must have looked rather strange to Mrs. Livingstone that she should, last night of all others, come here from Mrs. Howards, when the rectory is at least a mile nearer.”

“I know nothing about that, miss. I have come to keep my engagement with Miss Lenore, and if she is not to be found, I regret

it exceedingly, but I do not see what other steps there are for me to take in the matter—except to wish you a pleasant afternoon.”

He touched his hat carelessly and turned to descend the steps, but Gertie’s voice recalled him.

“There is no love lost between us, sir, I know, but I implore you to forget the past for a little while and help me to find my sister. I am alarmed about her, and, and—”

“I will render you whatever service is in my power,” put in Lorraine, seeing that she hesitated, as if in want of words.

“Thank you. First, will you please tell me if my sister was at the ball last night?”

“She was, most assuredly. I saw her myself.”

“Whom did she leave with?”

“That I can hardly say. I saw her last night about eleven in company with Dr. De Verne, but I do not think she left with him.”

“Whom did she go there with?”

“She went in the carriage with Mrs. Livingstone and Dr. De Verne. It was rather a strange procedure on her part, I must admit, to leave them so abruptly, but Mrs. Livingstone thought that she and Will had had some words, and, rather than come in contact with him again—you know Miss Lenore’s impulsive disposition, Miss Tremaine—she had sought other company and persuaded them to bring her around here.”

“Mr. Tracy, I can stand no ceremony this afternoon. I want you to drive me over to Mrs. Livingston’s, and, if I can gain no tidings of my sister there, I will go at once to my brother’s and get his assistance. Olive, bring me my hat, please, immediately. Thank you. If I am not back before sundown, lock up the house and go over to Mrs. Lane’s. I am ready, sir.”

Lorraine drove a pair of blooded horses, and, as he prided himself (and not without cause) on being an accomplished hand at the reins, it was not long before the couple drew up at the rectory.

Few words were said on the way, except that Lorraine, at Gertie's request, stopped his turnout at least half a dozen times to give her the opportunity to question some of Gypsy's acquaintances whom they passed as to her whereabouts. Lorraine sprang from his seat and assisted Gertie out with much grace. She ran up the steps and rang the doorbell violently before Lorraine had entered the gate. A servant girl soon appeared, and, to Gertie's inquiry if Miss Tremaine was within, replied, "No; she has not been to the rectory today."

"Tell Mrs. Livingstone I wish to see her."

"Miss Belle is lying down and gave strict orders not to be disturbed by any person whatsoever."

"But I *must* see her. It is a matter of vital importance to me. Go in and tell her that Gertie Tremaine is at the door to see her."

The girl opened her eyes a trifle wider, and, after a hard stare, muttered, "Humph! Some folks is mighty airish!" and went off to do as she was bidden. She soon reappeared with an invitation, delivered most ungraciously, to walk in, and that Miss Belle would be down just as soon as she made her toilet.

"Tell her I can't wait. Ask her to please defer dressing for a few moments. I must see her, and that at once."

Mrs. Livingstone came in soon after with that languid grace she had affected of late, a little put out about something. She received Gertie with a coldness which, considering the fact that Gertie's sister had been for half a decade her inseparable companion, was quite marked. To Gertie's questions the gist of her reply was that she had told Mr. Tracy all that she knew about the affair, and that Gypsy had proven herself so willful lately that she "had given up the idea of keeping up with her incomings and outgoings."

"You promised Mother to watch over her as if she was a younger sister of yours," said Gertie, indignantly. "If anything has happened to my sister, your conscience cannot but convict you of having proved recreant to your trust."

Mrs. Livingstone arose and drew herself up haughtily.

“I am not used to being spoken to in this way in my own parlors, Miss Tremaine. Pardon me if I vacate the room in your favor.”

Gertie also arose and moved toward the door.

“There is no need of your doing that, Mrs. Livingstone. My foot should never have crossed your threshold had it not been for poor Gypsy’s sake. Mrs. Livingstone, I entreat you to tell me, where is my sister?”

“I cannot answer that question. The last time I saw her she was talking with Dr. De Verne. He may be able to throw some light on the subject, were he here, but he left on the six-forty train this morning.”

“Dr. De Verne gone? What made him leave so suddenly?”

“The Lord only knows. By the way, a thought strikes me: if Gypsy is not in the city, suppose she has run away with Will? She was always romantic, you know, and I believe that that is just what she has done.”

“Run away with Dr. De Verne? Great God!”

She almost flew out of the house and found Lorraine waiting for her at the gate. His eyes asked the question that trembled on his lips. Gertie shook her head woefully.

“No, she has not been here today. Oh God, where is my sister?”

Lorraine said nothing but helped her into his vehicle, silently. To his dying day he remembered the look of anguish and the agonized tones of the girl as she asked this question. For Gertie never for a moment doubted that her sister had taken some decisive step which would seal her fate, for weal or woe, in this life. Not a thought crossed her mind that her sister had been murdered or spirited away; she had no doubt that whatever the girl had done had been of her own free will—superinduced by evil counselors—of which she had always regarded Mrs. Tremaine as the chief.

“Where shall we drive now?”

“To my brother’s. Possibly he may be able to throw some light on the subject. Oh, God of Heaven, where, oh where is my sister?”

Poor Gertie! For many days shalt thou ask that question and receive no answer until God, in His own good time, shall see fit to send an answer.

DE VERNE OR HERBERT— WHICH?

“**N**o, Gypsy has not been here for more than a week,” said Ada Belle Clare. “What, is she not at the rectory?”

“Miss Gypsy seldom visits here,” said Maud Granger. “Why don’t you go to Madame De Verne’s? She has been a frequent visitor there since Dr. De Verne’s return to the city.”

“Miss Tremaine never visits here,” said Stella Grey. “She passes here every day or two on her way to Mrs. Howards, though. Perhaps she may be there—though, since Charlie Herbert’s departure for Baltimore, I have not seen her near so often.”

Gertie turned from Miss Grey’s door, weary and dispirited, and with a terrible dread in her heart she hardly dared express, even to herself. Tracy, who, it must be acknowledged, manifested an unusual degree of interest and helped her in her search in many ways, curled his lip as he resumed the reins, and said, “They say that women have something more ethereal in their natures than men. Some do, I admit. But when a woman gets the devil in her, she becomes more

fiendish than the vilest man. What man, occupying the position those girls occupy, would have replied to the inquiry of a despairing brother with a taunt? God help a woman when she does become mean, for only the fiery pit can produce her equal in diabolism."

Gertie made no reply, but groaned, in anguish of spirit, "It is of no use to take our inquiries farther. Take me round to my brother's, and let me lay the matter before him and get his assistance! I should have done so before, but I hated to disturb him needlessly, for he has enough to trouble him without this, God knows. O God, suppose foul play has been used! Gypsy, my dear, idolized sister, if I could see you but once more—only once more! Kind Heaven, come to my succor!"

Lorraine looked at her with a peculiar expression on his face. In the moonlight he could see the tears coursing down her cheeks, and his conscience was deeply seared indeed if such grief did not affect him. Oh, why didst thou not heed thy good angel then and there and make such a reparation as still lay in thy power! Sad, sad, sad, that such a fair exterior should veil such a black heart!

"What a fool I have been!" he exclaimed, suddenly, "Why, she may be at your brother's. Mrs. Livingstone and she may have had a misunderstanding, and she, being too proud to remain longer under the same roof, may have gone to her brother for advice and sympathy. Mrs. Livingstone's infatuation for Dr. De Verne is an old story, and, Will's devotion to your sister being so apparent, she may have made it exceedingly disagreeable for Miss Lenore—you know to what lengths a jealous woman will go."

Gertie shook her head, mournfully. "No, I have no idea that she is there. Had such been the case she would have flown to me, not to Walter. I have had a presentiment of evil all along—and now the storm, so long threatened, has burst on my head. Poor Gypsy! My beautiful, idolized darling! God keep you safe till we meet again. Oh God! If someone has attempted her life?"

“No danger of that,” said Tracy, “She had no enemies, and only a most bitter enemy could be guilty of such a dastardly deed.”

“Yes, she had enemies. Some of those she thought her most devoted friends were her most vindictive enemies. Look at those two girls, Maud Granger and Stella Grey—she had told me time and again of their professed attachment to her and how they each would confide in the other, and now they are the very first to attempt to sheathe a dagger in her heart.”

“That is only woman-like, Miss Tremaine. I have always thought that Judas should have been a woman.”

“Oh, can’t the horses be made to go faster?” moaned the girl. “This suspense is killing me.”

“I will try,” said Lorraine, and he plied the whip so vigorously that soon he drew rein before the door of Walter’s lodgings. He sprang from the vehicle impetuously, and his loud rap presently brought the boy-of-all-work to the door, rubbing his sleepy eyes.

“No, the father had been sent for about an hour ago to administer the sacrament to a dying man way off in the country. Didn’t know when he would be back—might not come back till morning for all he knew. Was a lady there? No, indeed—no ladies ever visited the father at his home—if they had business with him they sought him at the chapel.”

“Don’t you know his sister when you see her, you fool?” demanded Tracy imperiously. “Don’t stand there jabbering, but tell me if she has been here today, and none of your nonsense about it, either.”

“You mean that beau-oo-tiful lady that sings like a nightingale on Sundays in the chapel? I have not laid eyes on her since last Sunday afternoon, sir.”

“Oh, God, what shall I do?” asked Gertie, with such a ring of despair in her voice that only a monster could have failed to pity her. “Tell my brother to come ’round to my house as soon as he comes back, as I must see him on business of importance.”

“The lady is his sister, Miss Gertrude,” said Lorraine, as he drove off. “Mind you, don’t forget to deliver her message as soon as her brother gets back. Whither now, Miss Tremaine?”

“Take me to where I should have gone from the first—to the police office. I would have gone there before, but through fear that such a step would seriously compromise my poor sister, if she was still here at one of her friends’ home. Please drive faster, please; this delay is agonizing.”

“It is too late tonight, Miss Gertie, really. The office has been closed long ago.”

“Then take me to the chief’s house. A search must be instituted at once. We have delayed too much already.”

“Miss Tremaine, I sympathize with you in this terrible trial, but allow me to suggest that you defer your visit till morning. It is now very near midnight, and the police will take no satisfactory steps till morning. Allow me to drive you home, and I myself will go ’round by the chief’s house—it lies on my way to the stable—and leave word. Depend upon it, the matter will be attended to just as well as if you looked after it yourself.”

“But I cannot sleep—I cannot even remain at home quietly until I hear some tidings of Gypsy.”

“But you must allow me to insist, try to be calm until morning, when you may be assured that all that can be done will be done. Perhaps you may find some news awaiting you when you reach home.”

Thus admonished, Gertie allowed herself to be persuaded and soon found herself on the street leading to her home. The house was dark, and Lorraine, almost forcing her to remain on the piazza and endeavor to compose herself, soon aroused Olive, who was, childlike, slumbering peacefully next door, opened the front door, and made a light.

While he was thus engaged, Gertie was eagerly questioning Olive.

“Yes, sister, a lad brought you this soon after you left, said that a lady at the depot gave him a dollar and told him to give it to you, without fail, just at sunset. Sister, the writing is Gypsy’s, I think.”

Gertie had not waited to hear the end of this, but had snatched the note out of Olive’s hand and flown into the parlor, where Lorraine had but the moment before succeeded in making a light.

She broke the seals, excitedly, and read as follows:—

Dear Gertie:

When you receive this, I shall be far away from Capitolia. I can explain nothing now. All I can do is to ask you to trust me, as you have always done, no matter how suspicious things appeared. I shall do nothing unworthy of my father’s daughter, Gertie. Tell Mamma and Walter so, and tell them also that in a very few weeks they will see me again—under a new name and under different conditions, perhaps—but the same old impulsive, headstrong, but devoted

—GYPSY.

She dashed the note on the carpet, looked ’round wildly for a second or two, then motioning to Lorraine to pick it up, she leaned forward on the table and groaned aloud. Lorraine read it through from beginning to end, reread it, examined it as if he was weighing every syllable, and said, finally, “What do you make of this, Miss Tremaine?”

Gertie raised her eyes, which now gleamed like stars, and gave him a glance he never forgot. Yet she spoke very calmly.

“She has eloped, Mr. Tracy. Gypsy, Gypsy, poor, dear, misguided girl, while you had a mother and a brother and a sister who would have shed their lifeblood to shield you from harm, could you not have confided in them and made the wretch, whoever he is, marry you from your home?”

Lorraine started as if he had been shot.

“By all the saints,” he exclaimed, bringing down his hand on the table with such force as to knock off several pieces of bric-a-brac it supported, “I see—I see! I can see the whole thing from beginning to end. I understand now why he was so determined to make that trip and so willing that I should stay behind. Oh, Will, I should never have thought it of you!”

Gertie looked at him and said quietly, “And so you think it was Will De Verne who has persuaded my poor sister to elope?”

“I will not say so, Miss Tremaine, in [illegible]”

“[illegible] have it still. [illegible] to be regretted [illegible] she has taken, I believe that she was persuaded to it by a stronger mind than hers—for Gypsy is just the kind of woman who will yield up everything—save honor, for she comes of a pure, virtuous stock—to the man she loves. Someone has won her love, and then, knowing her susceptible, passionate, impulsive disposition, has induced her to run away with him. What his object is, God only knows, for had he intended to do the fair and honorable thing by her, he would have married her here, from among her friends and relatives, and not advised her to do an act which she will regret to the end of her days. Only a villain would have urged her to such a step—only a deep-dyed, black-hearted villain. A real gentleman would die before permitting the woman he intended making his wife to do anything that would compromise her fair fame in the eyes of the world.”

“You make a heavy charge against my friend, Miss Tremaine. Though things point that way, I should be indeed shocked should he turn out to be the guilty party.”

“I have made no charge against your friend, Mr. Tracy, if by your *friend* you mean Dr. De Verne.”

“Pardon me, I thought your words referred to him. Knowing of his attentions to her for such a long time and putting together the fact of her disappearance and his sudden trip, both occurring about

the same time, and then reading this note, is it strange to you that even I, for a moment, should believe that my old friend had allowed his love to run away with his reason, and eloped with the girl he professed to love and who appeared to return his affection?"

"Will De Verne is not the man guilty of this sin, Mr. Tracy. An angel from Heaven could not convince me that he is. The only thing that would convince me would be his own words—and even then I should know that it was not the Will De Verne I knew but a crazed thing wearing his image."

"I trust that you may be right, Miss Tremaine. For her sake, I could wish that her companion would turn out to be De Verne."

"Will De Verne wanted my sister, Mr. Tracy—the whole town knows that—but had she accepted him, he would have been only too proud to have made her his in the face of the whole world. No, whoever the villain is, it is not Will De Verne."

"You have indeed an exalted opinion of him, Miss Tremaine. I could wish, for your sake, that the town could be brought over to your opinion, though you must pardon me if I sincerely hope, for Miss Lenore's sake, that the finale may prove you to be the one laboring under a mistaken idea."

"I am weary and cannot discuss this further tonight. Tomorrow morning I shall see my brother and quietly set to work to solve this mystery. May I request you to keep silent about this affair a few days, sir, and also ask Mrs. Livingstone to do the same? I thank you from the bottom of my heart for your kindness this evening. Pardon me—I am worn out and must bid you good night."

The next morning, very early, as Gertie was preparing to go down to seek her brother, one of Mrs. Livingstone's servants appeared with a note from that lady, saying, "I have searched in every nook and corner and have been able to find only this one page, which I came across in Gypsy's escritoire—which she must have overlooked in her haste, for every other scrap of writing has

been destroyed. I trust that it may furnish a clue to your sister's whereabouts, Miss Tremaine. If either Claude or I can be of any assistance to you, let me know, for, as you know, however dear our poor girl may be to you, no one living can love her any more deeply than I."

It was only one page, and ran thus:

Dear Gypsy:

I have loved you so long and so fervently! For your sake I have tried to be a better man. I know that I am not as influential as Dr. De Verne, nor as fascinating in the eyes of your sex; but dear, neither am I as arrogant nor as conceited. I will make you a good husband, my angel—far better than Will De Verne, with his French airs and egotism could ever make. You say your family do not fancy me; are you going to marry to please your family, or please yourself? I know your peace-loving disposition—I know how you hate to disagree with them concerning this most important step of your life; [illegible] it, [illegible]y, [illegible] ([illegible] should infinitely prefer), suppose you come out to me here and be married from my mother's house? You know she loves you and would be proud to welcome you as a daughter—and then we can spend our honeymoon among the springs, or at Harper's Ferry—which you know you have so long been anxious to visit? After we are man and wife, your family will see that opposition is both foolish and useless, and—

Here the paper gave out, and what followed on the next page could only be conjectured.

Of course, it was impossible to keep the flight of one so prominent in the social world as Gypsy a secret. Before many days, in spite of her brother and sister's efforts, the whole affair leaked out and as a consequence her name suffered greatly.

Some people love scandal and are prone to believe evil of one rather than good; and though some of the romantic declared that she had eloped with Dr. De Verne, and others with the same fiber held, with equal tenacity, the opinion that she had gone to Baltimore to wed Herbert, while the majority of those who had once professed themselves to be her steadfast friends whispered dark things about her inexplicable behavior.

Tracy, who claimed to have business in Washington, offered to run up to Baltimore to clear up the mystery, but Gertie, whose old distrust of him had returned, declined with thanks, and told him that her brother had resolved to leave Capitolia, after he could get no reply to his telegrams, and attend to the matter himself.

Walter did go to Baltimore on this errand, but not a word could he hear of Gypsy. Herbert and his friends avowed so solemnly that he had not left the city since his arrival and that Gypsy had not been seen there, that he was constrained to believe them. He returned to the city, fully convinced, in spite of his skepticism, that De Verne was his sister's companion. Gertie, with that faith characteristic of devoted womanhood, still held to her belief, and so matters stood, until the return of Dr. De Verne a few days later—with no Gypsy.

THE SELF-COMMISSIONED DETECTIVE

“**D**r. De Verne, where is my child?”

The sick woman, who, but a few minutes before had been unable to turn without assistance, now rose bolt upright in the bed, and fixed on the young man her deep, piercing eyes. At the foot stood Walter, gazing mournfully at the mother thus prostrated by the loss of her darling, while she who quickly set down the basin from which she had been bathing that fevered brow and hastened to prop up the sufferer with pillows, was Gertie—no longer the robust, imperial-looking woman of yore, but now fallen away to a mere shadow of her former self.

“Madame, God is my sacred judge that I am as innocent of her disappearance as an unborn babe. I know no more than what I have already told Water. I know it looks strange that I should have left on that morning, but I call Heaven to witness that I had not the remotest idea of her departure.”

“It does indeed look very strange, Doctor, and, as her mother, standing on the very verge of eternity, it may be, I demand a full explanation.”

“You shall have it, Madame. I know that I am resting under a cloud in this distressing affair—which, Madame, believe me, affects me as deeply as it can anyone, except her mother perhaps—and I know that you have a right to demand a full explanation. Walter has accepted it, and I trust that you will also.”

“**[illegible]** agonizing.”

“My trip had been planned more than a month, as the doctor [can] assure you, for I had made arrangements with him to look after my patients in the event of my taking a holiday; and Lorraine Tracy can testify to the same effect, for he had promised to be my companion, but owing, he told me to pressure of business, he changed his mind at the very last moment.”

“That proves nothing—except that your plans were deeply laid, that is all.”

“Madame, do you think that I could have been guilty of this vile sin of enticing a pure, innocent girl from her home—and especially the girl whom I have almost worshipped for long years? Why, only the preceding night, at Mrs. Howard’s ball, I had done her the highest honor a man can do a woman—I had asked her to be my wife. She refused and left me in scorn. Madame, I know that I have not lived as pure a life as I should, but even in my worst hours, have I ever given you or anyone cause to believe that I would betray the trust of an innocent girl?”

“You have paid attention to so many girls—”

“I have paid to no girl the attention I have paid to Gypsy. And, Madame, have you ever heard of my trifling with any girl’s affections? I could not be so despicable. Any man or any woman who will sport with another’s most sacred feeling to gratify his or her vanity or love of conquest is too vile to live.”

“The fact of your attention to my girl only criminales you the more, Dr. De Verne.”

“Madame, I see that you are determined to believe me guilty until I prove myself innocent. I should not blame you, perhaps, for your provocation is great, and to a superficial observer the evidence against me is strong, I must admit. Yet you have nothing to base your suspicions of me on but my attentions to her—and I call the whole town to witness that my attentions were always honorable, and I never sought to conceal them—and the accident of my leaving here, on a trip I had long contemplated and for which Tracy can assure you I had engaged him as a companion, on the same train. Herbert paid her quite as much attention—in fact, he paid her more, for she always accepted his escort in preference to mine—and wrote her a letter which certainly looks suspicious, and yet you declare him innocent and me guilty. My past life has been, at least, as good as his—but I cannot discuss this, Madame. I am deeply wounded, but I have no right to blame you. But Walter has encouraged me by his declaration that he does not believe that I could be such a villain, and he knows me better than you do, Madame. I have been one whole month among people who are as much interested in their neighbors’ business as any people in this world and you can ask them if anybody answering to your daughter’s description was my companion. I was alone, and stayed in one of the most central and most frequented houses of the whole place, as any of them can tell you. Madame, I see you believe me guilty. I swear to you now that I will give up my practice, and use every exertion to find your daughter—and if the search takes me two, three, eight, or ten years, I shall not give it up, as long as health and means shall last. I swear here to find Gypsy, if possible, and have you learn from her own lips that I am guiltless of even a thought that would harm a single hair on her head!”

“Live up to this oath, Dr. De Verne, and if you bring my darling back to me, and she herself declares you innocent, I will—”

Tears filled her eyes, her strength gave way, and she fell back exhausted. Will, in his capacity as physician, would have assisted her, but, weak as she was, she would not have him touch her.

“Bring me back my daughter first,” she moaned.

“God helping me, I will, Madame,” said Will with almost a groan, and without another word or glance, he noiselessly left the chamber. Strong man as he was, he was completely unnerved.

Valeria, now a good-sized girl, ran toward him in the hallway and held up her lips for a kiss—for she had not forgotten the handsome doctor who had done his best to spoil her during her occasional visits to Capitolia. Her innocent caress revived his spirits, and he took her up in his arms and pressed her to his heart. The child saw that his eyes glistened with tears.

“Poor doctor,” she said “Sister says you are one of the best men in the whole state”

“When did she say this, Leery?”

“She told Mamma on this morning. Mamma is very sick, doctor, isn’t she?”

“I am afraid she is, dear. You must be a good girl, and take good care of mamma, Lerry.”

The door of the sickroom opened just then, and a tall, slender figure glided down the hall. Will turned and said mournfully, “I am going away, Miss Tremaine, just as soon as I can get my business arranged. I shall never return to Capitolia until I gain some tidings of your sister. I cannot blame you for believing me guilty—”

A soft hand was laid on his shoulder, and a softer voice whispered, “I do not believe you guilty, Will.”

He put the child down hastily, and seized Gertie’s hand with both of his own.

“You do not believe me guilty? Oh, Gertie, tell me I heard you aright?”

“I know you too well, Will, to believe you guilty of anything unworthy. Poor Mamma! She does not know you, and in her piteous grief for poor Gypsy is ready to believe the worst of everybody and everything. Oh, Will, I know you will throw away some of the golden opportunities of your life if you give up your practice now—”

“My fair name is dearer to me than my practice, Gertie.”

“I cannot ask you to stay, for my heart is set on finding my sister. If she does not return soon, Mamma will die heartbroken. Oh, Will, may God help you in your search! I shall pray for you, as I have prayed for her, night and day!”

“Oh, Gertie, what a loving, trusting woman you are!”

“Do you remember what you said to me one Sunday long ago, just before you went to Washington? ‘If any great trouble ever comes upon me—if I should find the applause of the world turned to hisses, its smiles to sneers, its praises to jeers, I should seek you out, Gertie, confident that I should find in you a friend who neither time nor circumstances can change—who would believe in me and trust in me, though all others should turn their backs in scorn.’ Have you lost your confidence in me, Will?”

“Oh, Gertie, if God only spare me to find Gypsy—”

“He will—I firmly believe. But Mamma, Will, is she in any immediate danger?”

“I trust not. With proper care and attention she will soon be able to leave the sickroom, I hope, but she will never be the woman she once was until Gypsy returns.”

“Oh, God, help him to find my poor, misguided sister!”

“Goodbye, Gertie. I shall not give up the search until I do!”

He clasped her hand, looked at her for a moment—and thus they parted.

TIDINGS OF THE LOST ONE

It is one bleak night in early September, about six months later, that we invite the reader to the house, in which our last scene was laid. What a change since we were there! On one side of the fireplace sits our heroine, gazing dreamily at the bright coals as they burn in the grate; and in the other sits a tall graceful girl—almost the image of that lost, brilliant sister; while at the table is a handsome, well-grown lad, with the soft down showing itself on his upper lip—the former daredevil Dan—sketching. There is only one more of this once large family—or two if Gypsy is still in the land of the living, which they have not yet been able to discover. The others are not here—

*They have reached a fairer region
Far away.*

The sorely-tried mother, never very strong, had crossed the River more than five months before this. The physician had called her disease by some high-sounding name, peculiar to their profession,

but those who knew her best declared that she had died of a broken heart. She had never really recovered from Mr. Tremaine's death; her second marriage—which certainly was not an affair of the heart with her—had turned out most unhappily; and, as the crowning woe, Gypsy, her idol, had disappeared so mysteriously, and no effort could discover her whereabouts: all these had their effect on the delicate frame, and the angel of death stepped in to put an end to her suffering [illegible] God [illegible] the most [illegible] of all visitations when the most devoted of all thy creatures—a good mother—is taken away from her loved ones! What can fill the void?

*The sounds that fall on mortal ear,
As dew-drops pure and even,
That soothe the breast, or start the tear,
Are MOTHER, HOME, and HEAVEN.*

Gertie thought her heart had reached its utmost tension when she heard the clods fall on that coffin: but she was fated soon to experience that the heart has an infinite capacity for suffering. Scarcely had the poor mother been laid away, to await the sound of the last trump, when that terrible disease, diphtheria, broke out in Capitolia. Though it attacked almost every age and condition, it raged with the utmost virulence among children, and soon, alas! The poor mourners were called on to part with their four brightest jewels—Eddie, Olive, Valerian, and Valeria. Was it any wonder that Gertie looked sad as she sat there in her sable dress, her mind reverting to the scenes through which she had lately passed? Poor girl! God has seen fit to afflict thee grievously, and thou art almost ready to faint under the rod, and, alas! The end is not yet! May God sustain thee in thy dire extremity!

“Come Gertie, come Gracie,” said Dan, with his accustomed vivacity, “see how you like it! I have put on the finishing touch, and it’s a regular beauty. Don’t you think it worthy of a place in the Royal Academy?”

Gracie flew to his side, but Gertie only turned slightly in her chair. Her eyes had lost their piquancy—alas, forever!—and there was that in their depths which made every beholder say, “That girl has suffered in her lifetime.”

Her face had lost its fullness, her form its graceful roundness, but, to some, there was an indescribable something about her which made her more attractive to a certain order of people than she was in her palmiest days. Perhaps it was the *sympathy* which her appearance always excited now in refined minds.

Dan’s sketch was of a romantic spot on the opposite bank of the river on which the town was situated—and the ancient ivy-clad mansion looking venerable in its decay, the majestic oaks with their burdens of moss, and mistletoe, the weeping willows, the water dashing over the huge rocks and bounding on seaward, were depicted to the life. Genius had guided the hand that drew that, and Dan gave every promise of fulfilling the prediction made concerning him by his art teacher in Boston to Dr. Rivers, his guardian: “Give that boy five years with a real artist and he will rank with the masters of the age.”

“Don’t you think it good, Gertie?” asked Dan, holding it before her, a little wounded because she had not gone into raptures over it, as had the impressible Gracie.

“Yes, dear, it is,” and she took it in her hands and praised it to his heart’s content.

“I am going to make the name Tremaine glorious,” said Dan theatrically. “Everybody has his mission—that is mine. Walter is too good to do such a worldly thing as to try to write his name on the temple of Fame, and Gertie is too diffident, while little Gracie here is only cut out for one of those tender little things that amuse one’s lighter hours.”

All three noticed the omission of their former idol and looked at each other involuntarily—then as quickly dropped their eyes.

But Dan, with a man's hatred of anything like a scene, began noisily to arrange his materials, with the remark, "Well, if I am going to dazzle the world as a Rubens or a Correggio, I must leave you all and burn the midnight oil alone in my chamber—for female society is enervating. Goodnight, ladies!"

"I believe I will follow him, Gertie," said Gracie, after a few minutes' silence, "I sat up late last night and am as sleepy as a cat. Goodnight, my dear sister."

Gertie, thus left alone, sat for some time in her chair, with her head bowed on the table, her mind still engrossed in a painful reverie. Presently she arose and took her seat at what had always been her solace in distress—the organ. Her fingers ran over the keys without any special attempt at musical effect, but soon the strains rang out plaintively. Her soul seemed to be in her fingers as she improvised piece after piece, and under the influence of the melody, she grew stronger and more resigned to her Father's will. He seemed to whisper in her [illegible]

*Fear not, I am with thee, O be not dismayed
For I am thy God and will still give thee aid;
I'll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand
Upheld by My righteous, omnipotent hand.*

[illegible] convince [illegible] the [illegible] of time, nor did she hear the rap on the door, repeated twice. It was only when she heard her name called that she turned her head and saw Dr. De Verne, whom she had not seen for six months, standing in the door.

"I bring you tidings of your sister, Gertie," he said, advancing toward her, as soon as he saw she had recognized him. "I am on her track and will be able to put my hand on her in a few more days, thank God."

PERI AT THE GATE OF PARADISE

Gertie could never tell all that transpired during this interview. She says the blood seemed to forsake every vein in her body, and she stood as cold and unfeeling as marble until Will exclaimed, “Gertie, success is about to crown my efforts. In a few more days, God helping me, I will be able to bring your lost one back again.”

At these blessed words she became revived, and, leaning her head against the mantelpiece, she burst into tears and thanked God. Will stood on the other side and told her all that he thought best for her to know then—that her sister was not in good health, but that care and love and affection would soon restore her, and that she had done nothing to disgrace her family. “There is still a mystery connected with her disappearance, Gertie,” he said, “but she will explain that herself. I have my own opinion on the subject and am assured of its correctness, but prefer to let the poor child give you the full explanation herself.”

“Oh, Will, if Mamma had only lived to see this day!”

A shadow crossed the young man's brow as he answered, "Yes, Gertie, and she would have believed at last that I was guiltless of that vile crime of betraying her poor innocent daughter's trust!"

"She knows now that you are innocent, Will, she is an angel in Heaven and can rejoice with us in her blissful abode that our dear darling Gypsy will soon be ours again!"

A silence overcame them, but was broken by Dr. De Verne saying, "Gertie, when I have restored your sister to you, may I ask you to bestow that on me I am not worthy of, but which I shall prize above life itself?"

"So you still love her, Will? What a strong, what a mighty, what an undying affection must be yours!"

"Oh, Gertie," he said, moving nearer, so that he stood over her in all the strength of his grand, manly beauty, "I have been so blind—so very blind. I was a fool in those days. I mistook for love a feeling that was unworthy of the name. 'Twas the physical beauty that affected my senses—I discovered afterwards that what I had thought the strongest, highest love was only a far less noble sentiment. I never knew what pure, holy love was until I enthroned you in my heart, Gertie."

The blood left her cheeks, and she trembled like an aspen leaf as his meaning slowly dawned upon her. But she spoke not a word—her feelings too deep for utterance. He made a motion as if he would have folded her to his heart, then as suddenly controlling himself, he continued, "I cannot say that you are the first woman I ever asked to be my wife, Gertie, but you are the first woman who has ever made me feel unworthy of myself and anxious to rise to a purer, nobler and better life. I have tried to be a better man ever since I knew you. If I am anything today it is due to you. As I said on a certain occasion many years ago when with you, I forget that I am a *man*; I only remember that someday I shall be an *angel*. I offer you, dear, the true, pure, devoted love of a heart you have helped to

make a faint reflection of its Maker's. I know that I am not worthy of you—no man is, Gertie—but I will try to be as worthy of you as a man can be of a good woman. Gertie, I await your answer.”

The beautiful, tender hazel eyes looked up—and—need I say what the answer was?

“Oh, God, my punishment is greater than I can bear! O Mother in Heaven—oh my own dear, patient, angelic mother, now a saint in Paradise—plead for me, plead for me! O Blessed Virgin, intercede with thy Blessed Son for a poor, lost, undone sinner! O Blessed Lord, have mercy! Have mercy!”

She approached the steps, as if to ascend them, then, suddenly seeing the reflection of the light upon surrounding objects from a side window which had not been closed, tottered in that direction. What she saw as she looked in that window seemed to increase her agony. A bitter smile crossed her face.

“You were easily consoled, Dr. De Verne,” she said, “but then no man's love lasts nowadays. It is only we poor women who love with all our heart and soul and mind and strength and yield up that love only with our lives! And yet I should not talk thus of Will, for I scorned his love—and scorned it for *him*, who would have walked smilingly over my bleeding corpse, if by so doing he could have accomplished his ends. Oh, how I loved *him*, and how unworthy is he of even a dog's love! And yet, in spite of all his deceit—in spite of all his vileness—I love him still! O woman! Woman! Woman! Thou art indeed a mysterious creature! If thou once really lovest, neither the unworthiness nor the cruelty of thy idol could persuade thee to tear him from the heart in which thou hast enthroned him!”

She bit her lips fiercely and gazed again upon the scene transpiring within.

“How grand they look together! She seems created for him, and he for her. They used to call me beautiful—did I ever, in my

palmiest days, look as truly lovely as she looks as she stands there with her head pillowed on his breast and her eyes, now downcast, now venturing a glance at him, full of modest and affection? No wonder that he gazes on her as if she were an angel from Heaven! Nothing brings out the beauty in a good woman's face as love for the man she believes the noblest under the sun! Noble! Ha! Ha! Ha! Man surrendered his nobility with his rib, and whatever of nobility now exists in this world is the especial property of the daughters of Eve. Yet Will is a fine fellow, after all, and I know he will make her happy, if any man can! O God! What happiness I threw away—and all for what? O pitying Heaven, I stand here, this cold, bleak night afraid to enter what was once my home, like a Peri banished from Paradise—and I am dying! Dying! Dying!”

The winds seemed to take up the wail, “Dying! Dying! Dying!” just as the poor, despairing wanderer fell to the earth, unable no longer to contend with [life,] both Will and Gertie looked around in alarm.

“Great God! That was a woman's voice!” he exclaimed. “Did I not hear a fall?”

“It was her voice, Will. For God's sake, be quick! Even now she may be dying out there, stiff, stark, dead!”

A few moments later, and Dr. De Verne and Gertie stood over the apparently lifeless body of her whom they both had loved so devotedly—beautiful, high-spirited, misguided, unfortunate Lenore Tremaine.

A MEMORABLE NIGHT

They bore her into the house, lovingly and tenderly—at least, Will did, for Gertie was totally unnerved and could do nothing but weep hysterically and call on Heaven to restore her idolized sister to them again—placed her on the very bed in which her mother had died, and tried to bring back the breath of life into her motionless form. The noise had aroused not only Dan and Gracie but the old housekeeper, who was a woman of ripe experience in the sickroom. Dan and Gracie stood around weeping, and Gertie's grief seemed even more uncontrollable. Dr. De Verne would have had her taken from the room but she shook her head so determinedly and looked so pitiful that he was constrained to forego his purpose. He had expected more self-control, but when he reflected on what she been called upon to endure and the love which she had bestowed on the poor, dying girl, he could only pity her and wonder why Providence had placed such a bitter cup to her lips. Ah, Will, the bitterest had not come, even yet!

Their exertions were at length rewarded, and, when the doctor, for whom Will had dispatched Dan arrived, the girl had just opened her eyes and called for Gertie. The meeting was affecting enough to call tears to the eyes of those the most unused to weeping; and Will, strong man that he was, had to turn away when he saw Gypsy twine her once shapely arms around her sister's neck and moan, "Oh, Gertie, forgive me, [illegible]ly mother and disgraced and dishonored you all by my waywardness! Yes, Gertie, I have dishonored you; but God knows I did it unwittingly. I trusted him, and he deceived me! Come here, dear Dan—sweet little Gracie—your poor sister, once idolized, has brought reproach upon you all. O, Mother of God, is there any forgiveness for a wretch as vile as I?"

Gertie and Dan and Gracie all attempted to console her by loving words and kisses, but the physician, into whose hands Will had resigned the case and who had attended her from infancy, feared the effect of all this excitement on his patient and said firmly, yet kindly, "Gypsy, my child, you are as dear to these children as you have ever been. Don't excite yourself—we are all going to do the best we can to bring back the roses into our sweet little girl's cheeks—and when we get her on her feet again, we will pet her to her heart's content—as she used to do when she was the sauciest, most spoiled little imp in the whole of Capitolia!"

"Oh, Doctor, Doctor," moaned the girl, "I don't want to live. I want to die, die."

"Want to die? And what do you want to die for, pray?"

"I have nothing to live for."

"Nothing to live for? And, pray, young miss, don't you count us all something? We'll think it enough if you will only get well and look as beautiful as you used to. It will do my old eyes good, when I am perplexed and disheartened with the troubles of life, to rest on such a brilliant, beautiful piece of flesh as you."

His words called forth no smile on the pale face. "Don't speak of my beauty, Doctor. Beauty was the cause of my undoing—and it caused me to be the death of my mother."

"Your mother, dear, died of consumption. She blessed you with her dying breath, and, like us all, loved you the more for your misfortunes."

"Misfortunes! Thank God you call them so, Doctor, for He knows that I have not done wrong intentionally."

"We know our girl too well to believe anything else, my dear. But you must not talk longer—try to go to sleep; you need not shake your head like that—you are not going to die now—"

"You are wise and skillful and experienced, Doctor, but you make a mistake this time. I know that my days are numbered, and—"

"Oh, Gypsy, dear, dear sister, don't say that!" moaned Gertie. Gypsy cast on her a look eloquent with affection.

"I don't want to grieve you, dear," said she, stroking the soft hair with one of her thin hands, "but I know that very soon I must leave you all. I shall tell Papa and Mamma how good you all have been to me and how you have forgiven me for my sin. I want to see Walter, dear, before I die. I want to see him both as my brother and as my confessor."

Will stepped forward at this. She noticed him for the first time, and a smile—so different from those old brilliant smiles which seemed to irradiate her countenance like the sun itself—flitted over her face.

"Poor Will," she said, extending her hand, "We little thought when we parted in Mrs. Howard's garden that we should meet under such a circumstance as this, did we? You did not recognize me on the train, did you? Had you done so—no, I guess I would have gone, after all, for I was very wayward in those days. Six months have made a wonderful change in me, haven't they?"

Will kissed her hand tenderly. She smiled again.

“Gabriella used to say that you used to affect foreign airs, Will, but I used to insist that it was bred in the bone. You were always the soul of chivalry, Will, and nothing can gladden my dying moment than to know that I am going to leave my darling sister in such hands as yours. Come here, Gertie—take her hand, Will, praise your God that you have won the love of such a woman as Gertie Tremaine. May Heaven smile upon you two, and may you go down the hill of life hand in hand—your love for and worthiness of each other only increasing as the years go on—and may you rest together at the foot after the happy journey is accomplished! With my dying breath I bless you both and pray the Blessed Virgin’s care and protection over you! Oh, Will, I thank God that you are noble enough not to let my sin deter you from marrying Gertie. I have sinned, Will—I have sinned, Gertie—but God knows I did it unknowingly! I thought myself his wife, Gertie—but found out that I had been deceived most vilely, and that [illegible] false—[illegible] as hell!”

“Oh, dear Gypsy, tell me who the villain is, and I would make him do you justice, or like another Charlotte Corday, imbrue my hands in blood to rid the world of a monster!” said Gertie.

“Gertie, dear, don’t think strange of me—indeed you should not, for you have learned to love yourself and should know something of the death and *abandon* of a true woman’s love. Gertie, dear, in spite of his treachery, I love him today as deeply as ever—on the same principle that a mother’s heart yearns for her prodigal son—and I pray Heaven to forgive him for his sin and lead him to the light.”

“His name, Gypsy?” whispered Gertie. “Was it Charlie Herbert? If not, who in God’s name was it!”

“I shall never tell his name, Gertie, except under the seal of the confessional. Dear, forgive me for this obstinacy.”

“I am going for Walter, dear sister,” said Will, with a determined look in his eyes.

“Thank you, Will,” she said, “for I have much to tell him and my time is short.”

Then drawing him nearer, she whispered, “Will, I read in your eyes that you have discovered my secret. In God’s name, let it be buried with me. Oh, Will, in spite of his baseness, I love him too well to let his name be disgraced through any act of mine!”

“Go to sleep, Gypsy,” said Will, a little sternly, “you shall stand before the world a pure virtuous woman or I’ll—never mind; from what I’ve resolved on, I can’t be deterred. I am going for your brother.”

“Oh, Will, what do you intend to do?”

“Nothing but an act of justice. Be quiet, now, and go to sleep—you have talked more than is good for you already.”

The doctor, who had been in the other room directing the housekeeper how to prepare a certain remedy for his patient, now entered, and insisted on perfect silence. Will seized his hat and started off, but, as if urged by an uncontrollable impulse, turned back and kissed Gypsy, while he whispered, “Don’t worry, little sister; everything will yet come out all right, and you will see many bright and happy days. Allow me to manage my knowledge as I judge best, and all will be well.” He motioned for the doctor to follow him into the hall, and a few words were exchanged between them in a low tone of voice.

“There is no immediate danger, so far as I can see,” said the older physician, “if we keep her quiet. Her system is in a deplorable condition, I know, but with proper care and medicines, I think she will pull through all right. I shall remain with her until I see a change. All she needs is a little incitement—something to raise her spirits—for she seems bent on dying. It’s a sad, sad, case, De Verne, and there has been a foul wrong done somewhere. She was too innocent-minded, too virtuously brought up to go astray voluntarily. There are so many villains in this world that—De Verne, I thank God that I have no daughters, and if I had them, I would pray God to

make them as ugly as harridans, for I'm constrained more and more every day to think that beauty is a curse to a woman! Come back as soon as possible—I shall not go until you return.”

“Ask Gertie to come out here a moment,” said Will as the doctor placed his hand on the doorknob.

Gertie made her appearance directly, her face still bearing marks of grief.

“Oh, Will,” she said, “will she recover?”

“With God's help, she will,” was the reply as he drew her loved form to him. “Gertie, there has been a foul wrong done her, but the villain shall do her justice, or one or the other of us will sprinkle the earth with our heart's blood! Don't fret, dear—I have no fear of such a consummation as this, and soon, very soon, Gypsy will stand before the world in her rightful position—bearing a name not good enough for her, but one that the world around us almost worships. Goodbye, my love—mine for earth, and mine for Heaven!”

He pressed her to his heart, tenderly, imprinted a loving kiss on her brow, and then, without another word, rushed out into the street. The bell tolled the hour of midnight as his foot touched the sidewalk. Whither should he go—to Walter's lodgings or to the chapel, where the priest occasionally passed whole nights in the confessional? The lodgings were nearer, though they lay in a dismal part of the town, and the road to there, from where he was, was by no means cheerful or often traversed, but he decided to go there first. His loud rapping speedily brought a lad to the door, who told him that the father had not been home since dinner, and that he would probably find him at the chapel.

“I'll go there at once, and if he should come here before I see him tell him that Dr. De Verne says come down to his sister's, on Oakland Avenue, the instant he gets in, as it is a matter of life and death,” said Will as he dashed off at a breakneck pace.

The lad stood at the door a minute or two after that, gazing after the retreating form, but it was soon lost to view in the darkness. "He's in a mighty big hurry," he muttered as he locked the door. "Something must have happened down there. Wonder if its anything connected with Miss Lenore? Anyhow, I'll tell the father as soon as he comes; though I don't thank that harum-scarum doctor for waking me up at all hours o'night."

VISITATION OF PROVIDENCE— THE BITTER CUP

It was about twenty minutes past three o'clock that morning when the priest reached his sister's—at least, this was the time sworn to by Dr. Floyd, who stated that he had just consulted his watch when Walter hastily entered the room. He was exceedingly pale, and both the doctor and the housekeeper testified afterwards that his eyes had a terrified look in them, and that he appeared greatly agitated—but, at the time, they laid it to consternation at finding his idolized sister in such a plight.

A great change had taken place in the sick girl's condition. The strength which she had exhibited in talking so much, despite the doctor's prohibition, seemed to have failed her, for she lay back pale and quiet, with her eyes half closed, only opening them at intervals to inquire feeble, "Has Walter come yet?" and when the answer came, "No, not yet, dear, but he will be here soon now," a little sigh escaped her, but she made no other sign of disappointment. Some time passed in this way, and the physician, who was still at

his post, thought, as he watched her, that their apprehensions were groundless, and that, with a few days' attention, she would be out of danger, and then only rest and quiet would be necessary to bring her back to her former self. But one thing troubled him—she would not sleep. He had given her as much morphine as he dared to give her in her weak condition, but it seemed to have no effect on her. Still, her breathing seemed more regular, and her pulse, which had beat so wildly, was much nearer its normal state than it was at first. He was very hopeful and only remained because of his attachment to the girl whom he had attended from infancy—not because he really thought there was any absolute necessity.

Gertie sat beside the bed, pressing tenderly the hand which Gypsy persisted in retaining; Dan sat near, quiet but alert; while Gracie's eyes wandered first to her beloved sister's face, and then to the doctor's, as if to read the secret of that sister's condition. As the moments glided on, the old housekeeper began to grow weary and, having well gotten over her fright, sleep was past reasserting his dominion over her senses, but even she was aroused by the slamming of the gate and the hasty step on the walk. An instant later, the door flew open, and Walter, looking almost completely unnerved, was at his sister's bedside, exclaiming, "O Gypsy, Gypsy, speak to me! Speak to me!"

She opened her eyes, with a glad light in them. Not a word did she utter but with a strength that seemed too great for that slight frame, she drew him toward her and kissed him tenderly.

"O Gypsy! Gypsy!" said he, "My darling sister! Thank God that I see you again! O kindly Heaven, raise her up, I pray thee!"

A sweet smile illumed her lovely face. "Walter, dear, I want my spiritual father's blessing," she murmured. He raised himself, extended his hands over her, and breathed on her head the words of absolution and benediction. When he had concluded, she made a peculiar gesture; involuntarily, every one of her kindred

ran toward her. She raised herself up, drew each one towards her, and kissed them, and then, with a whisper, "God bless you all!" fell back on the pillow. So suddenly had all this taken place that none of them had time to suspect its purport; but the doctor sprang forward, placed his hand on her heart for moment, and then exclaimed sadly, "It's all over, children; your sister has taken her flight to Paradise."

She slept the sleep of death—the sleep we must all sleep, be we high or low, gifted or ignorant, comely or ill-favored. This earth is not man's abiding-place. Soon—all too soon to some, alas!—the message will come, and we must leave these scenes which we love, in which we have found so much delight, for which so many of us are staking our very souls, for another sphere. O God, help us, when we are bowed down with adversity or elated with prosperity or carried away with pleasure, to remember this!

*A few more years shall roll
A few more seasons come
And we shall be with those that rest,
Asleep within the tomb.*

Few, ah! All too few, they may be to some of us! None may escape;

*The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave
Await alike the inevitable hour;
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.*

She looked beautiful as she lay there—arrayed in spotless, virgin white, with lilies of the valley on her pulseless breast. All marks of pain and suffering had left her brow; she looked like an angel, not like the bride of death. Ah, Gypsy! Heaven will be lenient toward thee, for thou wast grievously sinned against! Faults had'st thou, as have us all; but the sin with which the world hast charged thee, thou wast not guilty of! Justice will be done thy memory yet, though it may not be speedily. But,

*Tho' the mills of the gods grind slowly, yet they grind
exceedingly fine.*

They laid her to rest in the family burying ground just as the sun was setting, beside the mother who had loved her so devotedly—there to sleep until the hour when they “shall come forth; those that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and those that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation.” A vast concourse of mourners followed the remains to their last resting place, for she had been a great favorite with all classes, and few but what could mention some instance of her kindness of heart and affability. Many were the tears shed, and many were the sympathizing glances which followed the stricken family as they turned from that flower-covered grave, where lay buried one whom they had thought the brightest, sweetest, and most beautiful of their whole flock. “Our Heavenly Father’s hand lies heavy on them,” said Father St. Bernard as he left the churchyard, and many hearts endorsed his utterance. This was on Sunday afternoon; what have been the consternation of these sympathetic souls when, on Monday morning, the news flew over the town like wildfire, “Dr. De Verne has been found dead in the old field near Taylor’s Spring, and Walter Tremaine has been arrested as the murderer!”

THE BITTEREST STROKE OF ALL

Twas all over. The blow had fallen. Death had again visited their flock, and the sister they had loved so devotedly was now sleeping beneath the sod—from which sleep, the trump of God alone could waken her.

There was little sleep in the Tremaine household that night, in spite of the weariness which the previous night and day must have occasioned them. It was late before any member of the bereaved family closed their eyes; and then, on the eldest sister's part, at least, it was only to fall into a troubled sleep. She had prayed for resignation, but the blow was too sudden, too recent, for her to bear it uncomplainingly. She did not doubt God's wisdom—she did not doubt that he had sent the stroke in love and mercy—but she could not but murmur, "Oh God! Father, mother, two sisters, and two brothers taken—could'st thou not have spared *her*, the idol of the household?"

The next morning she arose early; she could not sleep; she felt that without work of some kind to employ her mind, her aching head

would burst. She dressed herself slowly in her sable clothes—for the blow had bereft her of all vigor—and then, going into the parlor where so lately had been whispered in her ear the vows which make fond woman fancy this earth of ours a Paradise, she fell on her knees and poured forth her whole soul to God.

’Twas some time before she arose, but when she did, a calm seemed to have fallen upon her. Her heart was still sore, but the Blessed Christ had poured in the oil of consolation, and she felt that she could say at last, “Thy will, O God, be done. Thou knowest best, Thou hast taken Gypsy to Thyself. She is infinitely happier with Thee in Heaven than she could ever have been with us on earth. I thank Thee, that before any more sorrow came upon her, Thou decreed’st to take her to the land where ‘there shall be no more sorrow or curse.’ But O Father in Heaven, what punishment shall be meted out to the wretch who brought her to her grave, so young, so brilliant, so beautiful? Oh my God! What fate can be too terrible for such a villain? A man who will betray an innocent girl’s trust is too vile to curse the earth with his presence—the demons in Hell are his only fit associates. O Gypsy! Gypsy! Thou art but another case of one who loved not wisely, but too well. Great God! What was the mystery of her disappearance?”

“Will says that she had done nothing to cause us to blush for her, but he told me nothing, nothing; and she died with the secret locked within her breast.

“Oh this mystery is dreadful! I feel sometimes that I cannot bear it longer. Help me, Father, to fathom it, and speedily bring down condign punishment on the head of the wretch who caused it. I used to blame David, for his bitter invectives against his enemies, but I am now praying against mine as earnestly as he prayed against his. To think that she is lying in her grave through the villainy of some execrable wretch—the very thought almost maddens me! Will said he knew—and by the way, where is Will? I did not see him

at her funeral—O Gypsy, my sweet sister, art thou really dead? I would have died for thee, my beloved sister!

“No, he was not there—at least I did not see him—but then I was in too much agony to see any one. He may have been there, but why, then, did he not come to comfort me?

“He knows all about her recent history—why did he not come forward and try to console us by giving us the proof of her purity of heart and life? Yet no—I must not blame him—perhaps he thought that it would not be best to intrude on our grief until it had in some measure spent itself—for he would never forsake me in my hour of extremity. But he did not return with Walter—perhaps, though, he thought we would rather be alone to hear her story—but alas! She died without telling it, and we may never know about her wrongs until the morning of the resurrection. I have not seen him since—I wonder what can be the matter with him? Will, I have never doubted that you were the soul of honor, and I do not doubt you yet. I am wounded by your absence, but I know that something must have been the cause of it.”

She stopped. It seemed to her that she could hear the words spoken, in Will's clear, musical tones, with all the fervor which he was wont to throw into his sentences: “Would anything but death have kept me from your side, Gertie?”

She started; a cry died away in her throat. She looked around in horror, for the words seemed to have been spoken by someone at her side; she covered her eyes to shut out the vision which came before her at that moment. She could never account for it, but she declared to her dying day that she *felt* a presence in the room; and for an instant a bright, handsome face, pale and still in death, flitted before her.

She stood there almost paralyzed. The blood seemed to forsake every vein. Her breath came in thick gasps. Her brain seemed dazed, and she could think nothing connectedly. An awful fear had

chained her senses. How long she remained in this state, she never knew. The first thing that recalled her to herself was a knock on the front door, repeated twice and thrice, immediately afterward, as if the call was urgent.

Her mind returned and with trembling steps, for she could not so soon recover from that awful scene through which she had just passed, she went out into the hallway and opened the door. She looked out with an undefinable feeling of alarm, and a terrible presentiment took possession of her, for Corinne De Verne, looking the picture of misery, stood on the piazza. Neither could at first enunciate a syllable. Gertie drew the girl into the parlor and at last managed to gasp, "My God, Corinne, what has happened? Tell me, oh, tell me, where is Will?"

"In Heaven, I trust," was the reply. The girl threw herself on the [illegible] great sobs almost choking her.

Not a sound escaped Gertie; despite her recent vision, she could scarcely comprehend, at first, what Corinne had said. Not Will De Verne, who such a short time before had stood in almost that identical spot in the vigor and beauty of young manhood—it could not be! He could not be lying cold and stark and stiff in the embrace of death! And yet the words so lately breathed in her ear—the pale, still face—the blood froze in her veins—and she had to catch on to the mantelpiece to keep herself from falling.

But how, O God of Heaven, did she feel when Corinne spoke the next words!

"Yes, Gertie, he was found yesterday afternoon in one corner of Dillard's field, with his heart pierced by a pistol ball, and Walter has been arrested as the murderer."

STUNNED

Did she faint when those awful words fell on her ear? No, indeed. There are some blows which fall upon us too dire for fainting or weeping; the heart can make no motion, no sign, but only lie there, mangled, crushed, bleeding. Gertie had thought, when she turned away from Gypsy's grave, that there could be no more awful visitation in store for her; but now, before the wreaths had had time to wither on that grave, Destiny had again placed its iron heel upon her and destroyed at one fell blow all her hopes, all her future. Father taken, mother taken, sisters and brothers taken—she could have borne all this, terrible as the blows were, even her deep grief at Gypsy's sad fate time would have healed—but this final catastrophe—this crowning bitterness—this acme of woe—never, never, never would she—never, never, never could she recover from! Possibly, in years to come, she might have gotten over even her lover's awful death, though I doubt it, for a woman like her, who loves but once in a lifetime, the tendrils of whose heart, like those

of the ivy, are imbedded in the thing upon which it has grown, could never have recovered from such a loss—but under circumstances such as these, when a brother she had idolized was charged with murder, her heart could regain its elasticity never, ah, nevermore!

In Corinne, a metamorphosis had suddenly taken place. The calm, unemotional exterior which had characterized her for years had disappeared; the danger of the man she had loved with such devotion had sent the blood bounding through her veins at fever pace. Will she had loved as fondly, as devotedly as any high-minded girl must love a cousin whose every quality called forth her admiration, and that love had grown even stronger from the fact that she had found in him more congeniality of spirit than with all of those more closely related by blood, except Adele; but, near as had been the tie that bound them, even his premature death would not have affected her so much under other circumstances. But the fact that Walter Tremaine, the man whom her heart had enthroned as its king—the man whom she had loved as only such women as she can love—whom she had played with in childhood—admired in girlhood—loved in maidenhood and worshipped in womanhood, her love only growing the stronger because of the secrecy both pride and prudence had compelled her to use concerning it—the fact that he was charged with such a crime—that his dear life was in danger—this was too much. On Gertie the blow fell with such force as at first to deprive her of all sense, all feeling; the fountain of her tears seemed all dried up—on Corinne the blow had fallen with dire force, it was true, but in such a way as to unseal her eyelids, besides making her fertile in expedients, willing to do anything so save her idol.

’Twas she who spoke first. Gertie the bereaved betrothed, the stricken sister, could say nothing—her tongue was as heavy as lead, and had her life depended on it, she could not have enunciated a syllable.

“It is a vile, foul conspiracy,” said Corinne, “but the truth will shine out yet, clear as the sunlight, and he will be vindicated. Oh, Gertie, I implore you, try to fix upon the exact time when he came here that night, for upon it may hang his life or death!”

“Life or death!” repeated Gertie after her, in such a strange, unearthly tone that Corinne, agitated as she was, looked at her in amazement. Could it be possible that the awful tidings had unhinged her brain?

“Yes, yes—life or death!” she rejoined, quickly. “I have already been around to his house, and Tom Shores swears that Will left there exactly at half past twelve, for he heard the watchman cry out the hour as he re-locked the street-door—Walter came in exactly at two, he says, looking pale and worried, and he gave him the message, whereupon your poor, unfortunate brother left immediately. ’Tis no more than half an hour’s walk from his lodgings here—three quarters of an hour, at the longest, if he hastened as such intelligence would naturally make him hasten. I have been working already, Gertie, to have this sifted from top to bottom, and it may be possible to prove that Walter spent the time from half past twelve till two in the confessional, as he has often done. If we can only show that he reached here at half past two or a quarter of three, at least, we may be able to win our case by proving an alibi.”

Gertie looked at her in a dazed way, as if trying to comprehend her meaning. Corinne began to be alarmed for the condition of her mind, and asked, a little less impetuously, “Do you recollect the time, Gertie, when Walter reached her that night?”

Her meaning seemed to dawn slowly on Gertie, who put her hand to her head and began thinking. Corinne, in spite of her anxiety, said nothing, for she saw that Gertie’s mind was in a precarious state and that but the slightest shock might dethrone her reason. At last, after a time that seemed an eternity to Corinne, Gertie said, “Ah, yes, I remember. Gypsy died exactly at half past

three o'clock, for the clock struck the hour just as she fell back speechless. Walter came in a few moments before her death."

"Thank God! Thank God!" exclaimed Corinne, the tears coursing down her cheeks in torrents. "Gertie, are you sure of what you say?"

"Oh, Corinne, Corinne," was the agonized rejoinder. "I am sure of nothing! Nothing! All around me is dark—dark—dark! I doubt even God's goodness—I doubt even if there be a God! It is all dark—dark—dark! Walter, Walter, they say that you murdered Will—my Will—my dear, noble, idolized Will! Oh, Will! Dear Will! And so you are gone—cut off in the pride of your manhood—and they denounce Walter, who would not harm a fly, as your murderer. Oh, Corinne! Corinne! My cup is indeed bitter! My anguish is indeed greater than I can bear!"

"Oh, Gertie, try to be sure of the time! So much may depend on that!"

"I am sure of that. The clock had run down that afternoon, and I had Dan set it when the bell struck seven. Dr. Floyd and Mrs. Rosamond can also testify to the time my poor sister breathed her last, for they were both here."

"Thank God! We have this much in our favor anyway! Oh, if it were only not for the pistols!"

"The pistols! What pistols?"

"His—Walter's pistols, with his name engraved on them—those he brought from Paris with him, a present from one of his friends over there when he was on the eve of making that tour, with other students, of an unfrequented region. His name was engraved on them, you know—and oh, Gertie, they were found beside Will's lifeless body! What is the matter?"

"Only a sudden faintness," said Gertie, catching at the mantelpiece for support, for everything in the room seemed to spin around. It was not strange, for was not the blow enough to craze

her? “Walter would not harm a fly, Corinne, much less Dr. De Verne, for whom he always entertained the warmest affection! What could possibly have been his object in committing such a crime?”

“They say that it was something connected with that poor, dead girl who is, I trust, an angel in heaven,” said Corinne.

“Will was guiltless of doing Gypsy any wrong, Corinne, and none believed this more than Walter. Walter would not have harmed a fly, Corinne.”

“Don’t I know that?” exclaimed Corinne, with fierceness. “Don’t I know that he is the truest, and noblest, and purest, and best man ever created? He is innocent, and if God is just, as you all say, his innocence will shine out as bright as the noonday! I stake my belief in your God by the way in which he comes to my Walter’s succor!”

The words, which once would have shocked Gertie, had now a different effect, for the blow she had just received had almost destroyed her faith. Can you wonder at it, dear reader? She was but mortal, and “the flesh is weak.”

“Oh, Corinne, all around me is so dark! So dark!” she moaned piteously. “I cannot see a single ray of light.”

“If Papa were only alive,” said Corinne.

“Corinne, are you sure that Will is dead?” asked Gertie, suddenly.

“Oh Gertie, if you could have seen the ghastly wounds in his breast, as I have seen them, you would not ask me!”

“I must go and see Walter,” said Gertie, moving to the door. “My duty to the living accomplished, I will perform my duty to the dead. Oh, Corinne! Corinne! Am I on earth, or am I in hell?”

“God alone knows,” answered Corinne. “Hell can inflict on us no worse torture than this.”

A spasm of pain contracted Gertie’s brow, but she said nothing, and, without another word, the two sorely stricken women walked quickly down the street.

Whither—ah, whither? Ah, me!—one was going to a brother's dungeon—to a lover's bier, and the other was having an experience no less terrible!

“What, what have I done?” moaned Gertie, inwardly, “that I am thus TREADING THE WINEPRESS?”

A VISIT TO THE PRISON, AND ITS RESULTS

It was the afternoon of the next day. The sun was shining brightly without, for it was not much past five o'clock; but within the cheerless prison house, the rays were few and scant, making it look almost as dark as night.

Into one of the cells on the upper floor a young lady dressed in deep mourning and heavily veiled had just been admitted by the kindhearted jailer. Though his color was ebony, yet he showed a delicacy which might have done honor to the proudest of Japheth's lineage, for he knew that his presence would be a bar to their unconstrained conversation. After extracting a promise from the lady (whom he had known from childhood) not to lend herself in any manner to any attempt to further the prisoner's escape, he pulled the door to, and for the next half hour his heavy tread was heard as he paced up and down the gloomy corridor.

The lady, when she entered the cell, said nothing, but threw aside her veil, revealing a face of remarkable shapeliness, but

pale and drawn, bearing traces of many and recent tears. Her eyes, unaccustomed to the dimness, could at first perceive nothing. The prisoner, who had recognized his visitor as soon as she appeared at the door, advanced toward her, exclaiming, "Oh, Corinne, is it thus we meet again! How little I dreamed, when I parted from you on that memorable day in my sister's parlor, that the next time we should be together alone would be beneath the walls of this prison, where I am incarcerated on the charge of being the murderer of one of my dearest friends."

Corinne, emboldened in the face of this awful trouble, all false modesty gone, threw her arms around his neck and kissed him tenderly; then falling upon the lounge, which the kindness of the sheriff had allowed in the cell, she drew his head on her lap and began to caress his silken curls, not perceiving in the shadows that they had lost their glossy blackness and were plentifully sprinkled with grey.

Neither spoke for a few moments. At last her voice returned.

"Oh, Walter," she cried, "would to God I could suffer for thee! Would to God I could die for thee! My heart is broken—broken—broken!"

She leaned her head forward, and he could feel the tears raining on his face.

For a few moments he let her grief have its way; then, with the unselfishness which had always characterized him, he arose from his reclining posture and essayed to be the comforter.

"You do not believe me guilty, Corinne?" he said after he had somewhat calmed her.

"I would not believe you guilty if Will himself rose from the grave and charged you with his murder!"

"Thank God, Corinne, that those whom I love dearest—you, Gertie, Dan, and Gracie—believe me innocent. As long as you all trust in me, I can afford to wait God's time for clearing my reputation.

But oh, Corinne, how I hate it, that I must bring disgrace upon those whom I would have spilled my heart's best blood to shield from the slightest injury!"

"Disgrace, Walter? Oh, my dear love, believe me when I say that I would rather walk by your side though you were loaded with fetters, than sit on a throne with the autocrat of all Russia! Oh, Walter, had you only been true to the vows you made me, and not suffered those designing Jesuits in Paris to use you as their tool!"

"I took upon myself other and holier vows, Corinne. I felt—there were no Jesuits in the matter, dear—that I was called upon to do so by God himself—but if I wronged you—if I caused you pain (as I fear I did)—I have been punished for it, most grievously!—for my heart—even when it should have owned no love but that of my Creator—has always worshipped you, and only the more zealously since I knew that you were unattainable. Oh, Corinne, I was not the perfect man I imagined myself—I was not holy enough for a priest, and had I only known in time—but I must not speak of this! The past cannot be undone, and even if it be, I do not know whether I should have acted differently. Marriage was not for me—at least so I believed, and the Holy Father told me I had interpreted the vision aright."

"Don't speak to me of those Jesuit vipers, Walter; they are the cause of your misery and my own, and—but I will not speak of them, either. Oh Walter, if what you say be true—if there is a life beyond this—"

"Ah dear, I heard before now that you were becoming tainted by the infidelity of the age, but I could not believe that the pure, confiding, heavenly minded girl I worshipped could ever turn her back on the faith of her childhood and seek strange gods! Oh Corinne! Corinne! There is nothing for me to hope for in this world—nothing! Nothing! Nothing! Will you deprive me of the precious hope I have cherished in my very darkest hours—that

when this life, with all its mistakes, vexations, disappointments and agony, shall be ended, we will meet upon a happier shore, there to know as we are known—where one moment’s felicity will more than compensate for all that we have suffered here.”

“Walter, I cannot believe that God is just, or he would not allow you to suffer for a crime you are guiltless of even in thought—you, who would not harm a fly!”

“Am I of more worth in the sight of the King of the Universe than his own son, whom he permitted to die the most ignominious death—he the perfect, pure, and sinless one?”

“Oh, Walter, it is so dark—so dark!—I cannot see my way—I cannot understand!”

“We may not understand until we reach our Father’s house and look at our lives here through the lenses of Heaven. Oh, Corinne, for my sake will you not pray to God to manifest himself to you and take away all this unbelief and make you a humble devoted Christian?”

“Yes, Walter, I will—I will! I would do anything for you—even if it were offering up life itself.”

“Poor dear—my sweet devoted—sister! No nearer tie can ever bind us, Corinne—but—”

“We will not speak of that, Walter, I have no hope but in you—no desire to live, except by doing I might make you the happier. May God come to your aid in this hour of affliction!”

Walter might have essayed a reply, but just at this moment a gentle tap was heard, followed directly after by the appearance of the sheriff, accompanied by a lady, who was attired in heavy mourning like Corinne, whom no second glance was needed to recognize as Madame De Verne.

She strode into the cell, brushing the jailer aside as she did so, and, seizing Corinne by the shoulder, shook her roughly. Her eyes blazed, and it was plain to see that she had worked herself up into a perfect fury.

“Is this where I find you—you shameless vixen?” she demanded, angrily, “Is it not enough that you have opposed and thwarted me all your days, that you must now bring this new disgrace on us all, by thus boldly visiting your cousin’s murderer?”

“Peace, peace, Madame,” said the jailer, before either Corinne or Walter could reply—for the eyes of the patient gentle priest had in them a light which reminded one of the days when he had been ambitious, high spirited Walter Tremaine. As soon as Madame had grasped Corinne, he had risen to his feet and with the girl’s hand in his, confronted her mother.

“Father,” said the jailer, addressing him, “I am sorry I allowed you to be disturbed in this way, but I had no idea of this, or I should have guarded against it. Miss Corrine, it would be well to bid the *pere* goodbye, as the time has come for me to lock up. Madame, please come out into the corridor.”

Madame De Verne, who saw she had gone too far, obeyed without a word.

“Goodbye, Walter,” said Corinne, embracing him, “money can clear you, you will be cleared! Keep a brave heart, dear; I know you are innocent, and Heaven will protect its own. Goodbye; I will come again, and you will suffer for nothing that money can buy while here!”

Corinne and her mother walked some distance before either spoke. “Corinne,” said her mother at length, “what made you do this?”

“Mamma, I could not allow him to languish in that hellhole without giving him one kind word! Oh Mamma, unsay those cruel words you uttered in there—surely, surely you do not believe him guilty of poor Will’s death!”

“I will not say what I believe, Corinne; but I know what I would do—I would visit, personally, every one of your father’s old friends, and get them to use their influence to clear him, if you, my daughter, would gratify me in what you know has been the darling wish of

my heart—a wish that is only the stronger within me when I think of your escapade of this afternoon, which I discovered only by the merest chance, and which, I am afraid, my best efforts will fail to keep a secret from this gossiping town.”

“Mamma if you will do what you say to save Walter, I will gladly offer up anything—even my life itself—in payment! So he is saved, I care not what happens to me!”

“Corinne, you are quite old enough to become a wife and mother—and your escapade of this afternoon only makes me the more anxious to marry you off before you further compromise yourself.”

“Marrying and giving in marriage? Ha! Ha! For me to think of marriage when Walter’s life is imperilled!”

“You said just now that you would do anything to save him; I do not promise to intercede for him unless you obey me.”

Her mother had considerable influence in some quarters, and Corinne knew it.

“You may have all my money to employ legal counsel, Mamma—I insist that it shall go that way—and I will walk to a marriage or a funeral with whoever you like—providing the man be willing to take me, after knowing the state of my mind, which I shall certainly explain to him.”

“I am satisfied. Within a month, then—the very earliest time we can fix with decency, after Will’s death—I shall see what I have long desired—you the wife of Lorraine Tracy.”

“Lorraine Tracy? Well, never mind—I’d marry the archfiend himself, if by so doing I could aid Walter Tremaine in the least! Oh Mamma, few women love like me, and few have been more unfortunate in their love!”

“I trust you will be happy in your marriage, my daughter.”

“There is no happiness for me in this world, Mamma. I will never love Lorraine—I can never love him—but if he will take me, knowing all this, I will try to make him a faithful wife. I will tell him

all; and if he will wed me in spite of it, I will make you happy by becoming his wife—for I know I have not been as good a daughter as I should have been. Oh, Mamma, if you will help me clear Walter, I will love you as few mothers are loved—for I will love you not only as the author of my life, but as the savior of his life who is dearer to me than all else besides.”

A FEW LEAVES FROM CORINNE DE VERNE'S JOURNAL

Monday, Oct. 13.—

O day of horrors! Can I ever forget thee? Will—brave, brilliant, handsome Will is dead—dead—dead—murdered—and they say that Walter is the murderer! O God, how can I write the words? 'Tis a lie—a base, base lie! My Walter, he who gave up even the woman he loved with all the strength of his noble nature—he who renounced all that he held most dear because of his sincere yet mistaken devotion to his church—no! No! No! A thousand times not! I could believe it of an angel of light sooner than of him! His pistols were found beside poor Will's corpse, but I feel—I know that he did not put them there! O Will, I loved you dearly, but I loved Walter more! You are now, I trust, a saint in Paradise; but poor Walter, my idol, my king, who is as pure as mortal man can ever be, is a prisoner in a loathsome dungeon, charged with a crime of which the penalty is the most ignominious death! O God, my hand trembles, my heart quakes; I cannot write. Great scalding tears pour

down my cheek and blot this page. O Father, have mercy! Mercy! Save, oh, save my Walter!

Friday, Oct. 17.—

Three days have passed—three days so horrible, so full of agony that I doubt if I could pass through three more such days and survive! And yet the capacity of the human heart for suffering is astounding! When I was a child, I thought that I could not exist a single day without seeing Walter. I remember even now how I used to long for nine o'clock to come so that I might be with him again in the schoolroom, and how on Saturdays and holidays, no matter what the weather, I used to insist on Ned's driving me to the P.O. when he went to bring Papa home to dinner. Papa thought I came to see him, but I knew that Walter would come there just that hour every afternoon for mail, and I timed my trips by his. Oh, how I have always loved Walter! When I grew older and the time came for him to go to school, I thought that the parting with him would break my heart; but no—I lived through it all and grew stronger to bear more troubles. I grieved when he was in New Orleans—I thought that that was too far away; but did I not have to bear separation when the wide ocean rolled between us? How I wept over it? How I counted the days—nay, the hours, until he should return again! I tried to become worthy of him. Knowing his intense admiration for intellectual women, I grappled with studies that are generally thought too obtruse for my sex. I delved, or tried to delve, deep down into philosophy, I tried to mount to the skies with Herschel, or dive into the bowels of the earth with Agassiz; I tried to reason with Kant, to interpret Locke; I wrestled with the sciences, I reveled in the classics. My temper was naturally imperious; I strove to conquer that and become more womanly. He said once that he believed religion to be the crowning glory of my sex, and that he regarded a woman without religion as an ingrate;

I began to pray and tried hard—Heaven knows I did—to “find the pearl of greatest price.” I might have developed into a true, noble woman—one of the type that Tennyson and Holland sing of and that *he* has always admired. But that letter from Paris—that letter which I wear next to my heart and which I want buried with me—Great God! That froze within me all my generous impulses—that turned me from a woman into an infidel? The earnest inquirer after truth became the disciple of Coltaire—the girl who had been trained not even to touch the Bible irreverently now began to quote Tom Paine’s and Bob Ingersoll’s profanity. He returned. I met him that memorable day out to Gertie’s and I determined never more to see him, though I should die for one glance from those beautiful eyes of his! He went out little, except on errands of mercy which do not call him to this luxurious neighborhood—I went out still less, except to operas and balls, where I was as likely to meet one of the old patriarchs as him. Just think of it—though living in the same town with him, and a small town at that, it was nine months before I got a glimpse of him, and then I saw him for a few moments as he was crossing Rutledge Avenue. I had sworn that I would do nothing to attract his attention, but I had miscalculated my strength. Never nun gazed on the picture of the Madonna with more rapture than I gazed on that beloved face. Had I been nearer, I should have spoken to him—I could not have restrained myself! But he soon passed from my sight, and alarmed at my own weakness I determined to go out less frequently and thus lessen even more my chances for meeting him. But, O God! Did I think that the next time we met would be in the prison cell, where he languishes to await his trial for the murder of poor Will? I cannot write more—I feel that my heart is breaking. This weight of woe almost crushes me.

Thursday, Nov. 5.—

Mamma found out about my visit to Walter, by some means or other, and came and brought me home. I came with her without demur, for I knew I was of age, with a few friends on whom I could rely, and with money at my command to use to liberate Walter. She spoke to me quite calmly and pledged herself to do all in her power to help him, and I know that is considerable, for, even taking no account of the influence with Papa's old friends, which she certainly has, she is our governor's old playmate, having been born on his father's plantations and passing the first thirteen years of her life there. But the price was my hand in marriage to Lorraine Tracy. How her heart is set on that! I cannot understand it. She opposed Prof. Lacour's suit, and he is a man a woman (with a *heart* to give) would be proud to acknowledge as her lover. Oh, how I hate Tracy! And since Gypsy's sad fate, the suspicion I once had has gathered strength. Yet, after a moment's reflection, I decided to agree to her terms. But I have no idea of doing such a thing. I would do everything to save Walter. I was depressed, nay, desperate then; fresh from his cell, half-crazed over his situation, I gave the promise which I never, never can keep, unless my fulfilment of it will alone be Walter's salvation! But that night I changed my mind. I have money, I have friends, and, as Mamma's daughter, can influence a few of hers, I am confident. Oh, if the trial were only over, and Walter free once more! When he is free from this charge, I shall persuade him to get released from his vows (they certainly cannot refuse after what he has gone through), and then we will marry and, in sunny Italy, or vine-clad France, or some other distant land, try to forget the horrible scenes through which we have passed—for I know that he loves me still, and loves me devotedly! But Mamma distrusted me. I see that now. I acquiesced too readily to satisfy her. Yet she appeared perfectly content.

Thursday, Nov. 5.—

I came up in my room immediately after reaching home, and sat here in the darkness for more than two hours, forming plans to liberate him. After a while, Mamma came in with a waiter on which was some bread and fruit and a cup of tea. She tried to persuade me to eat, but I told her I could not, on account of my terrible headache. She said she would send for the doctor in the morning, if I felt no better by then. I told her there was no need of that—that my malady was beyond the physician's skill—that only heaven could relieve me. I wanted to tell her then that I could not marry Lorraine, and that I was sure that Walter could be saved without my making such a sacrifice. But she insisted on my being quiet and urged me to drink the tea, which, to please her, I did. She left immediately afterward, and presently I experienced a peculiar sensation. A feeling of drowsiness began to steal over me. I threw myself on the bed and soon fell into a profound slumber, I suppose. But the awakening! The first thing I remember is the doctor leaning over me, feeling my pulse, and giving directions about my medicine. I tried to speak, but could not. My head seemed pierced by a thousand needles, my tongue was tied, and I could not make a single movement. I seemed to be in a kind of trance, perfectly conscious of what was going on about me, yet unable to do a solitary thing. I heard the [illegible] Belle Livingston [illegible] voice purr, "Poor thing! I knew that the shock of poor Will's death would be too much for her, for she worshipped him, poor girl!" and I heard Mamma say that "Corinne loved Will only as one cousin might love another! She is engaged to Lorraine Tracy and will marry him as soon as she is strong enough!" while Gabriella whispered something that I could not catch. But I could not make my state known. They gave me medicine later on, but I lay there perfectly still. I fell into a kind of stupor after that, I suppose. The next thing I remember was the doctor's saying that I must be kept perfectly quiet. By the way, this is not Dr. Floyd, who

has attended our family ever since I was born, but a new doctor with some newfangled ideas, by the name of Reckham. I cannot understand why Mamma would call in such a quack. I'll ask her when she comes in. Ada Belle Clare and Maud Granger were in the room at the time, I know, for I caught both of their voices. I remember nothing more until this morning, except that I have had a feeling of terrible pain, as if oceans of molten lead had been poured upon me. Mamma has been in here and told me that I have had brain-fever—that I have been lying at death's door for nearly three weeks with it. I feel weak—oh, weak! My head reels—my brain seems giddy—even my hand trembles. I try to walk across the room, but cannot—and yet I must try to gather strength, for November is here, and Walter's trial will soon take place, and I have done nothing—nothing—nothing!

Nov. 7.—

I tried to sit up yesterday, but was so weak, I could not. I dressed myself and determined to conquer my feelings, but I could not. I implored Mamma to do all she could for Walter, and she made me a solemn promise to leave no stone unturned to clear him. "Yet," as she tells me, "it looks very, very bad for Walter. His pistols were found beside poor Will's body, and his actions," so she says, "since the murder have been very peculiar. He does not deny knowing something about it, but will not tell what that something is—he says that his honor forbids it." How scornfully Mamma uttered these words! "The usual plea put up when anything like that happens, viz, that he had a perfect right to kill one whom he believed to be the betrayer of his sister cannot be made, for Walter has declared to more than one person that he believes Will innocent of Lenore's ruin. Will was intensely popular, and the feeling here is strong against Walter. The Catholics are exerting themselves to clear him, but I am afraid they are not strong enough to allay the

popular feeling against him." Such were Mamma's words! How they are graven on my memory! O God have mercy!

Nov. 8.—

I have just been thinking about retribution. I remember well the story of Will's father beating one of his slaves to death, and the horrible curse she breathed out against him and his! His other children died violent deaths, I have heard, and now Will, of another race and one of the noblest men that ever lived, is cut down by the assassin's bullet! Verily, "the sins of the father shall be visited on the children!" Poor Will! Walter my idol, how can anyone believe you, who would not hurt a fly, guilty of the murder of one for whom you always cherished the tenderest feelings?

Nov. 16.—

I have been exceedingly ill since I wrote last. I believe my brain is softening. I am too ill to sit up. I can hardly scrawl this. Oh, my head! My head! How it reels! Am I losing my mind? Tomorrow is the day fixed for Walter's trial. Oh that I could attend! I would, in spite of Mamma, in spite of all of Capitolia, if I were able! O God, make me strong enough tomorrow!

Later.—

Gertie has been here. She looks ten years older and is almost crazed by her afflictions. The way she speaks is piteous. She tries to hide her grief, but it is impossible. She had just seen been to see Walter. She says he seems cheerful and sends me word to try not to be discouraged—that he is innocent, and God will protect His own! "And tell her, Gertie, that even should the verdict be against me, I know that she will still believe me innocent, for God knows I have tried to live blameless in the sight of Heaven, and the only great sin I have in my conscience is the wrong I did her! Tell her that I have never ceased to love her, and that someday she will understand why I

acted as I did—if not on earth, then in Heaven! Give her my blessing, and tell her I [illegible] and happier days!” Oh, Walter! Walter! Would to God that I could suffer for thee—that I could die for thee!

Nov. 17.—

The case came up today. Little done; no jury yet selected. I am too sick to sit up, even in bed.

Nov. 19.—

They tell me that the state is making out a strong case against Walter. It is all circumstantial evidence—which kind of evidence has often damned an innocent man! Mamma and Gabriella will not tell me anything—Susan told me this after I had begged her. She says that everybody is impressed with his brave bearing! I dare not write more—I dare not think!

Nov. 22.—

It is all over—he is pronounced guilty by the jury. O God, was ever as unjust a sentence pronounced since Pilate decreed Christ’s crucifixion?

I cannot write. My head is reeling—I am almost mad! O God, where is thy justice—let alone thy mercy? My faith is all gone—I believe in no such God as this! Oh, if I were only well! I would move heaven and earth to clear him. But I am as helpless as a babe, and Mamma, in spite of her promise to me, believes him guilty, and she has not done much in his favor! But she tells me that a new trial has been asked for, and that should things come to the worst, she is confident that the governor will commute his sentence! No, he shall not hang—before he should die so ignominiously, I would take a dagger myself and stab him to the heart, and then, like the Hindoo widow, sacrifice myself on his funeral pyre! Oh, it is all so dark—so dark! I am going mad—I feel it! I know it!

THE VERDICT

The spacious courtroom was crowded to suffocation. Every available space was occupied, and the judge had given orders during the progress of the trial to clear the room of those who, unable to secure seats, congregated in the aisles in such numbers as to render the atmosphere intolerable. Yet, in spite of this, the room was literally jammed, both races and sexes being well represented in the motley throng. In front, not far from what had so often proved to be the box of doom, sat the survivors of the prisoner's family.

Gertie, with her pale, woebegone face, in which the great sad eyes were not the most prominent feature, and her sable garb, affecting one's sympathy in spite of himself. Dan looking pale as death, yet perfectly self-possessed, who kept his eyes fixed on the lawyers, as he drank in every word which fell from their lips, now and then making a note of them—though frequently his eyes would steal to the box, where sat his brother, calm but pale.

Gracie sat next to Gertie, and her eyes never wandered from her brother's face. A few intimate friends were near them, but Corinne De Verne—she whose heart was almost breaking because of the prisoner's danger—was, as we know, not among them.

Corinne was prostrated with brain fever, so reports said. At one time, indeed, the news flew over the town that she was dying. Many shook their heads at this.

“I told you she was in love with her cousin,” they would say. “His death affected her so terrible that the doctors say she will never get over it. And to think that Walter Tremaine, with whose sisters she was so intimate, should have murdered him! Isn't it awful—awful—awful!”

We will not follow the trial. Suffice it to say that no more notable case had ever absorbed the attention of that vast audience. As one of the lawyers remarked, “Had one among us gone forth, like Diogenes not in search of an honest man, as did that ancient Arcadian philosopher, but in search of the most popular man within the borders of our imperial State, he would have found none more deserving of the title than he who is now lying cold and still in the embrace of Death—sent there by the hellish bullet of the midnight assassin. It was not hard to find out the cause of his popularity. A young man was he, a scion of a race that have long been ostracised and branded as unworthy, to fill any other position than that of hewers of wood and drawers of water to pale-faced brethren; and yet so great was his ambition, so mighty the force of his intellect, so indomitable his energy, that amid opposition, amid discouragement, against the well-meant but short-sighted advice of friends, he sought and obtained an education. Not content with completing his course at one of the finest Schools of Medicine our country affords, he betook himself to the Old World, and in Paris gained the well-earned diploma which admitted at once into the rank of our most advanced physicians—a place in which his acknowledged

skill and remarkable success kept him. A colored physician! An anomaly in even this latter half of our enlightened nineteenth century, I might say—yet I know, as many of you who now listen to me, that he had patients not only among his own race, but among ours. A young man he was, cultured and refined of eminently handsome physique, genial disposition, fascinating manners, and—shall I say it?—with some of the best blood of Carolina flowing in his veins—was it strange that he was popular among even those, who, while they doubted the abilities of the race with which he was identified, were broad enough to recognize and admire talent wherever they found it? But I will not dilate on his many noble traits—his intense popularity—his gifts of mind and person. As one of the gentlemen of the defense has already observed of me, I came not here to pronounce a eulogium over Will De Verne, but to assist in bringing his assassin to condign punishment. Gentlemen of the jury, that this is a case which appears to your deepest sympathies, I am aware. I know that the man before this tribunal, charged with the foulest of crimes, wears a face as innocent as the Ceres's, as handsome as Caesar Borgia's. I know also that much I have said about him who now sleeps in an untimely grave the sleep that knows no waking, I could also say of Walter Tremaine. If a colored physician was a novelty on this hemisphere when Will De Verne returned home from Paris, a colored priest was even more so. I know that the prisoner comes of a gifted family, and I know, as do you all, that he gave up worldly ambitions beat under the cassock, as under the soldier's uniform the Roman Church knows how to take care of its own, and the *eclat* which awaited a colored youth who devoted himself to her interests was enough to compensate him, in some measures, for whatever he sacrificed for her.”

The prisoner, at these words, turned his large brilliant eyes upon the solicitor with such a peculiar light blazing from their depths that he hesitated, too much confused (lawyer though he was)

to continue. Walter looked so kingly, despite his surroundings at that moment, that many who had as yet been unable to form any opinion as to his guilt or innocence were strongly prepossessed in his favor.

The leading lawyer on the other side here interposed an objection. "I rise to a point of order, your Honor; my client is before this court to be tried not for entering, under false pretences, the priesthood of the grand old church, of which I would be proud to be able to avow myself a communicant, but for a crime of which the penalty is death—a crime of which the purity of his whole life and the nobility of his character should place him above suspicion, however strong the circumstantial evidence (for you have no other) against him. Please, your Honor, I rise to appeal to you to require him to confine himself to the case in hand."

The judge, whose ruling had all along inclined in favor of the state, declared that a full knowledge of the prisoner was necessary to the elucidation of the case, etc.

Later on, the solicitor said, "The gentleman on the other side has insinuated that you will allow *feeling* to actuate us in this matter. I have more confidence in your integrity, gentlemen of the jury. I know you to be men of too broad a character to allow your just condemnation of the riotous acts of the Catholics at the Orangemen's celebration the other day to influence you against a member of their fold. I deny this imputation on your honesty, gentlemen."

The counsel here interrupted him, and a strong debate ensued, which the judge could only bring to a close by threatening to send them up for contempt of court.

During his argument, the solicitor referred thus to Gypsy's death: "That poor girl, in all the pride of her youth and marvelous beauty, was cut down, and now sleeps beneath the sod. There is a mystery connected with her latter days, but it is not the purpose of this Court to unravel it. Will De Verne was a *gentleman*, in every

sense of the word—and I have it from all his associates that he addressed the young lady openly and honorably. The very night of her disappearance he had proposed to her and was rejected. The reason of her objections none but she and her Creator knew. She disappeared from Capitolia—but Will De Verne had nothing to do with her disappearance. Her sister believed him innocent and approved the resolution which we know he made to go in search of her. Her brother, the prisoner at the bar, as shown by the evidence, professed to believe him perfectly innocent of his sister's flight, so where can you rest your plea that he, Walter Tremaine, shot down the man who had brought disgrace upon his family? The prisoner himself admits that he had not the slightest doubt of Dr. De Verne's innocence in this particular, so where can you rest this plea? He will not admit, neither will he deny, that he knows something of the murder, yet pleads not guilty. His pistols were found beside the body. The gentlemen on the other side claims that this, in itself, is a strong point in favor of his client's innocence, as no murderer would, after having deliberately committed the hellish deed, have the thoughtlessness to leave behind him such damning evidence of his guilt. But we can impute this to the compunction for having done such an atrocious deed, which made him haste to fly away from the black spot where he had stricken down his best friend, or the fear of being discovered, which caused him to flee immediately. The body was dragged from the highway toward the spring and there partially concealed by some underbrush, as we know; is it not likely that in doing so he lay down the hellish weapons and in his haste forgot to possess himself of them again?"

And thus he continued for more than two hours. The jury listened to his words with marked attention. The counsel for the defense made a splendid effort, and, at one time, seemed to carry everything before them. Someone remarked afterwards, "Col. Bray proved to you that Tremaine was innocent, but the solicitor turned

right round, called on the pistols, made you declare him guilty.” Col. Bray did make an eloquent, almost irresistible plea. It was noticed that the elder Miss Tremaine’s brow looked less careworn, and that Dan’s eyes began to shoot forth a triumphant gleam, while Gracie looked first at her brother with a reassuring smile, and then at the grave, heavy-bearded men who held that idolized brother’s life in their hands. But in spite of all—in spite of the counsel’s eloquence, the prisoner’s appearance, his past unblemished reputation and his kindred’s misery—the jury returned after an hour’s deliberation, with faces which, while they revealed nothing, gave little hope to the most interested—the prisoner himself. The foreman stepped forward; a breathless silence prevailed. He began to read; Gracie gave a piercing shriek and fell back in convulsions. Dan turned white as a sheet, and those near him declared afterward that every fibre of his body trembled like an aspen leaf and that he looked as if Death had set his seal on him then and there; while Gertie sat perfectly still and, save for a glance of mighty love and pity which she cast on her brother, gave no other evidence that she heard what the foreman said. Poor thing! Her troubles had dried up the fountain of her tears, and she could only bear her misery mutely. Walter turned a trifle paler, and for a moment a peculiar expression came into his eyes. Some said, too, that he bit his lower lip nervously, but except for this, he heard, unmoved, the verdict, “Guilty of murder in the first degree,” and the judge’s sentence. When asked what he had to say, why sentence of death should not be pronounced on him, he replied, “Nothing except that I am innocent.”

THY WILL BE DONE!

*Peace, troubled soul, whose plaintive moan,
Hath taught the rocks the notes of woe;
Cease thy complaint, suppress thy groan,
And let thy tears forget to flow:
Behold, the precious balm is found,
To lull thy pain, to heal thy wound.*

Adele Rivers had never sung as she sung that night, just fifteen months after Walter Tremaine’s trial and conviction. It was in her husband’s church—for he was now the pastor in charge of the work at Capitolia—at a prayer meeting, which he had inaugurated during his administration to take place every Friday night.

Adele had proved a helpmate indeed to her husband. Only eternity can tell the good she, and that noble man whose name she bore, accomplished during their lives. Born though she was in affluence, reared in the lap of luxury, she had left all behind when she gave her hand to Eugene Rivers “for better or for worse.”

and during all his ministry he had found her not the *fashionable lady*, who reveled in worldly excitement, pleasures, etc., but the *faithful minister's wife*, who with that true missionary spirit, which all such should possess, went about with her husband to the poorest hovels, among the lowliest, with words of cheer and consolation and oftentimes more substantial comforts—for her father had not left her penniless. Two lovely children—a boy and girl—were hers, and, as she told her friends, a busier, happier woman than she, it would be hard to find.

“I think I have just as much happiness as it is accorded for mortals to have in this life,” she would say, with that sweet smile which had perhaps done as much to lift up the despairing in her husband's parish, as the gifts of food and clothing she had dispensed with bountiful yet careful hand. The years had added something of roundness to her slender form, but only to render it more shapely; and though her face had lost its piquancy of *girlhood*, it was even more attractive than when we saw her last, for it had gained the lofty beauty of pure happy *womanhood*.

No wonder was it, that she sang so affectingly. Her whole heart was in that song, and she cast many a furtive glance at the tall, thin, black-robed figure beside her, for she had prayed for that mourner all day long. She had, had to deal with despairing, hopeless souls more than once during her experience but none seemed so wretched, so utterly hopeless as this woman, whom she loved as dearly as if she had been her own sister.

“Oh Gertie,” she had said that day, “why not give it all up and trust in God? I know it is hard now—I know the cup seems as bitter as wormwood—but why not leave it to Him who doeth all things well, and who will, in His own good time, bring joy out of sorrow and glory out of gloom?”

“Thank you, Adele,” was the rejoinder—a rejoinder which cut Adele to the heart, for it was already sore over her friend's

misfortunes and utter wretchedness—"thank you much; but you need lose no time on me. I know you mean well, but it pains me to hear you speak as you do, far more than you have any idea of. I have no faith—I have no trust, and I do not want any."

"Oh Gertie, my dear, dear Gertie, what are you saying?"

"Simply what I have been feeling for the last fifteen months; Adele, I don't want you to think that I am resigned, for I am not."

"Dear, I know it is hard," said Adele as she stole her arm in tender pity around her friend's waist, "but it is not quite as bad as it might have been, Gertie."

"Not quite as bad as it might have been?" said Gertie, freeing herself, and turning on her fiercely. "No, he might have been stretched on the gallows for a crime of which he is as innocent as an unborn babe; but these kind lawmakers with matchless compassion decide to give him a longer lease of life and commute his sentence to ninety-nine years in the State Penitentiary! I would rather see him dead and out of it all than immersed in that living hell."

"Eugene says that there is hope of pardon someday, dear?"

"Pardon for what? For being innocent of the crime of which twelve honest, upright, all-wise men declared him guilty? Pardon when, when he has lost all spirit, all hope—when life is a burden and death a relief? Don't talk to me Adele—I have no hope of any good—and I have as much faith in the devil as in anything else."

Adele said nothing, but imprinted a tender kiss on her forehead and left her; but that afternoon she offered to accompany Gertie on her weekly visit to her brother, and Gertie consented. They found Walter in the quarter allotted for the sick convicts—for he was not well—and, having won the favor of the officers in charge thereof, he was much better situated than the majority of the prisoners—having access to books, etc., and not being compelled to mingle with the others. His hair was grey and his brow careworn; but he

was still the patient, cheerful, trusting Walter of the olden times; and Adele had the satisfaction of seeing a portion of the moroseness which had been on her friend for so long, disappearing. Walter's last words, as she bade him goodbye,

*Let us be patient; these severe afflictions,
Not from the ground arise,
But oftentimes celestial benedictions
Assume this dark disguise*

had impressed her, and, when Adele prepared to leave home to go over to the prayer-meeting, she expressed a desire to accompany her—the first time she had entered a church of any kind since the day of Gypsy's funeral.

During a pause in the exercises, Adele, who had an unusually sweet voice and who often took part in the musical part of her husband's services, began to sing the piece we have written at the beginning of this chapter.

The words had some effect on the poor, misery-laden heart, though save for a tear which Adele thought she detected in the great sad eyes, she gave no sign. As the last strains died away, Gertie raised her hand and rested her cheek upon it; but save for that, she remained as motionless, and apparently as listless, as a statue.

There was silence for a brief space after this, for Elder Rivers, unlike the majority of ministers of his denomination, believed in the efficacy of a few moments of quietude in which the soul, having been roused to a sense of God's love and mercy, might ponder it in ecstasy.

And so there was silence in that chapel for the space of five minutes, during which a blessed calm pervaded the meeting. It had an effect on Gertie; her head drooped forward, and hardly aware of what she was doing herself, she fell on her knees. The pastor saw her, and silently gave the signal to bow in prayer. Noiselessly the assemblage obeyed him and in silence awaited his next move.

Suddenly a clear silvery voice, exquisitely sweet, exquisitely plaintive, rang out the words of that grand old hymn in music improvised for the occasion:—

*Jesus lover of my soul,
Let me to thy bosom fly,
While the nearer waters roll,
While the tempest still is high;
Hide me, O my Saviour, hide,
Till the storm of life is past,
Safe into the haven guide,
O receive my soul at last.
Other refuge have I none,
Hangs my helpless soul on thee;
Leave, ah leave me not alone,
Still support and comfort me.
All my trust on thee is stayed,
All my help from thee I bring;
Cover my defenseless head,
With the shadow of thy wing.*

With that magnetic sympathy which exists where two hearts beat in perfect unison, Adele had interpreted her husband's desire and sung that sublime old hymn in notes that those present declared afterwards had made them think that they were in Heaven and listening to the seraph's strains. And like a seraph's strain they were to poor Gertie. Tears, the first that had fallen since Gypsy's death, rained down her cheeks; prayers, which she had not made since Walter's conviction, poured forth from her heart, and she arose from her knees that night a sad and suffering, but trusting, woman—willing to wait God's own time to remove the chastening rod.

—CHAPTER 40—

SEQUEL

(**F***rom the Capitolia Tribune of March 13, 18—.*)

A ROMANCE IN REAL LIFE—A MOST PATHETIC STORY—TRAGIC DENOUEMENT

Our quiet town was roused from center to circumference yesterday by the news of a terrible tragedy which had just taken place, and in which two of our most aristocratic colored families are concerned. The full particulars of the affair, as it was given to our reporter by a responsible gentleman intimately connected with the actors in the sad drama, are as follows, and are but another proof of the fact that “truth is stranger than fiction,” and that

*Though the mills of the gods grind slowly,
Yet they grind exceedingly small.*

We need not look to the novelist for the hero, heroine, and double-dyed villain—they are around us—right at our door.

About eighteen or twenty years ago, the postmaster of Capitolia

was, as many of our readers remember, a colored man, Rene De Verne by name. He was a man of education, having been sent North by his Caucasian father before the war, and finished a full collegiate course at Oberlin, Ohio. During the Republican *regime*, he was appointed postmaster and filled that honorable position with much credit.

His wife, the daughter of a somewhat notorious demi-free woman, was educated and beautiful, and their four children, especially the eldest and youngest daughters—Adele and Corinne—were regarded as two of the handsomest girls, whether white or colored. Knowing the magnificent specimens of humanity as represented by this race in Carolina, this need not create any surprise. Mr. De Verne, whose father at his death left him an estate valued at fifty thousand dollars, surrounded his family with every luxury, and they were the leaders of our most aristocratic colored society—which, as most of our readers are aware, is very exclusive in this place. Adele was married about twenty years ago to Dr. Eugene Rivers, an eminent divine of the A.M.E. Church, who was one of the witnesses of the tragedy yesterday.

About the second daughter, Gabriella, there is a little romance. The son, Julian, was a scapegrace (as is so often the case where the father is a man of money, thus making his son a gentleman of leisure) and, after a wild career of dissipation, committed some flagrant act and succeeded in fleeing the country. He went to Paris, it is said, and while there, managed to worm himself into the friendship of one of the most ancient and influential Castilian families. Gabriella, though neither so beautiful nor amiable as her two sisters, seems always to have been her brother's favorite. So when her parents died—the mother died soon after her son's escapade, while the father died four or five years previously—he sent for her to join him, which she did. We cannot vouch for the truth of what follows, but both Col. Rutledge and Ex-Governor De Verne, other than whom there are no more honorable gentlemen in the world, assure us that

both of them met her in Madrid at one of the Court Receptions, and that she was called the Countess De—. The nobleman, who had become so intimate with her brother, seems to have fallen in love with and married her.

Both of the gentlemen mentioned above say that she was one of the leaders of the Court Society, her husband being a dignitary, high in favor with the king. They had both known her from infancy, hence they recognized her immediately.

She made an attempt to conceal her identity, and admitted that her husband knew, but begged them not to betray her origin, as it might affect her husband's interests. This they promised of course, and manfully have they kept the secret. Strange it is, that a girl born a slave in this country should marry into one of the haughtiest *noblesse* in the world, and wear a title which so many of our highbred American girls are striving so hard to obtain.

The youngest daughter, Corinne, was universally conceded to be the prettiest of the three. It is no reflection on the ladies of our own race, we trust (for Carolina's daughters are the fairest the sun shines on, and this we will maintain), to say that, during his visit to Capitolia about twenty years ago, the famous artist, Eldridge, declared that three of the loveliest girls he had ever seen, either in Europe or America, were Miss Alene Rutledge, now the wife of U. S. Senator Preston, Corinne De Verne, and Lenore Tremaine—both the latter being colored, though with a very large percentage of Anglo-Saxon blood in their veins. Miss Rutledge he called Juno, Miss De Verne, Minerva, and Miss Tremaine, Venus. Strange, that these last two should be so mixed up in that affair, and that Madame Preston should also be slightly drawn into it!

All the old citizens of Capitolia remember Will De Verne, the brilliant young doctor who was so foully murdered some nineteen or twenty years ago. It is said that he was an enthusiastic admirer of Lenore, or, as she was called, Gypsy Tremaine, who, with that

perversity so characteristic of woman, did not return his affection. One night after a ball, in which she had been the "one bright, particular star," this young lady mysteriously disappeared and was not heard of, notwithstanding the ceaseless efforts of her family, for months afterwards. As Dr. De Verne had been so attentive to her, and as by a singular coincidence, he left the town at the very same time. It was at first believed that she had eloped with him, but on his return, about two weeks later, he professed to be as much astounded by her flight as everyone else was. But public sentiment deemed him guilty, and indignant at this unjust verdict as well as burning with intense desire to learn the fate of the woman he had so fondly loved, he swore to her sister Gertie to go about the world in quest of her until he found her. About three months after this, a letter was received from the unfortunate girl, telling her family that she had been cruelly deceived; but declaring that Dr. De Verne was perfectly innocent of doing her any injury; but she would not mention the name of the villain who had blasted her life, or even give the slightest clue which might lead to his identification. Dr. De Verne, who had relinquished a lucrative practice in order to fathom the mystery, came back to Capitolia about three months after this with the news that he was on her track. While conversing with her sister relative to this, a thing occurred which rendered all further efforts on his part unnecessary. It was this—the poor girl, a shadow of her former self, came tottering into the house, where she had spent so many happy hours—to die. Dr. De Verne, after she had been placed in bed and administered to by hands which were even more tender towards her because of her misfortunes, left to call her brother, a priest of the Catholic Church, to her bedside. He went to the priest's lodgings, but Father Tremaine was not at home; and after leaving word with the boy to tell his master to come down to his sister's without a moment's delay, he turned from the door and was never more seen alive. The next day about noon, Dr.

De Verne's body was found in Dillard's Field, near Taylor's Spring, with a bullet in his heart, and beside him were found the pistols of the priest, Walter Tremaine. Circumstantial evidence pointed strongly against him as the perpetrator of the diabolical deed; and, as Dr. De Verne was exceedingly popular and the sentiments at that time was particularly bitter against the Catholics, he was tried, and, despite the eloquent appeals of Col. Bray, convicted, and the life sentence passed upon him. All of our older citizens recalled how that verdict was received, for young Tremaine was but a boy in years, remarkably handsome and highly educated—having, like Dr. De Verne, finished his course in Paris—and, as developments have since shown, possessed of a most exalted soul. There he has remained ever since, though, being in feeble health, he has been allowed more liberty and received better treatment than usually falls to the lot of the convict. Why he has never been pardoned is a mystery to us, for no less than seven petitions have been drawn up to that effect, but none have met with success. Perhaps it was the outcry raised by the abuse of the pardoning power which caused this, for some of our late Governors have been weaklings, afraid to show a will of their own.

And now comes the sequel, out of which grew the tragedy of yesterday. Corrine De Verne married, soon after Tremaine's trial, Lorraine Tracy, a young colored lawyer of this city, who had been a bosom friend of Will De Verne's. It has since been discovered that she did so to please her people, who promised her to use every effort to obtain Tremaine's pardon—which we regret to say, they never did, but, on the contrary, used all their influence—which is considerable—in other directions. Corinne's stipulation seems very singular when we remember that she was the favorite cousin of the murdered man, but, viewed in the light of recent developments, this proceeding is easy to understand. She and Walter Tremaine had been betrothed lovers, and we have seen the letter which he

wrote her when he decided to enter the priesthood. Mortal man never penned a more devoted, self-abnegating epistle than this. From this letter it is plain that he literally worships the girl, and, in giving her up for what he considers a higher love, he was tearing his very heartstrings asunder. But, as we have already said, she married Tracy, and, living a very quiet, retired life, she has not been a prominent feature in Capitolia since that time. Two children, whom we all remember, Cordelia and Shirley, were the fruits of this union.

About twelve months ago there appeared in this city a man of plausible speech and handsome person, who was immediately received with open arms by the colored *elite*. Everyone remembers the man who called himself Ernest Ray, and whom more than one suspected of being some white adventurer, palming himself off as colored, to accomplish some base purpose. The attention which he paid Cordelia Tracy, a most beautiful girl of eighteen, was the talk of the town. For a while, almost every afternoon found them either driving around town or promenading the avenue. Tracy's business called him much out of town, especially at this time, and Mrs. Tracy's health was so feeble that she had little to do with the affairs of her household, so the intimacy had proceeded to such lengths as to become a general topic of discussion before the family seemed to become aware of it.

Tracy, as soon as he knew of it, did everything in his power to break it up, but without success. He seems to have had an innate distrust of the man and forbade him to his house. But opposition is a spur to love and the two would often meet clandestinely. Time passed on. Tracy fondly believed that he had broken up the affair, but he counted without his host, as many of his friends could have told him, had they only been brave enough.

There was a grand ball given at Mrs. Howard's, a relative of Mr. Tracy's, about nine months ago. It was a grand affair, and the preparations for it was the talk of the town. Cordelia was present

and, as usual, was the belle of the evening. Ray was not there, Mrs. Howard not inviting him to please her kinsman. Now comes another event which proves that evil deeds, like chickens, come home to roost. It was at a ball given by Mrs. Howard about nineteen years ago that poor Gypsy Tremaine disappeared; it was at a ball given by Mrs. Howard that Cordelia Tracy disappeared. Ray disappeared at the same time, and it was soon learned, from the letter left behind by Cordelia, that the two had gone off in company. Her father's rage was fearful, and he grew twenty years older, while her mother, whose mind had been unhinged for some time, was almost entirely thrown off her mental balance and bade fair to become a harmless but confirmed maniac.

Tracy, contrary to all expectations, made no effort to discover his daughter's whereabouts. His was one of those vindictive natures which never forgive; and though he appeared to love his daughter with an idolatrous affection, he let her disappear unsought for. But Shirley, a handsome, brilliant, high-spirited boy in his seventeenth year, was of very different material, and left home, like his cousin Will De Verne had done many years before, in search of his loved one. Seven months passed, and, except among their intimate friends, little further was mentioned about the Tracys in this town where so many events of interest are daily transpiring.

Yesterday morning, while Madame Preston was driving in from the Cedars, just five miles from here, she had to pass the settlement which straggles on about a mile to the north of Capitolia, called Scuffletown, where so many disreputable characters of both races live. As she neared a hovel some distance apart from the others, she heard sounds proceeding from within, which arrested her attention. Having only a boy with her, she did not stop, but drove on with the intention of informing the police officers of her suspicions as soon as she reached the town. But, just as she cleared Scuffletown, she met Miss Gertie Tremaine, whose name, as all our readers know,

has for years been a synonym for mercy and goodness. No Sister of Mercy has been more devoted to her calling—none has attended more sickbeds, administered to more dying, or helped to lay out more dead than Gertie Tremaine. We all know her—we all have met her, attired in her neat tasteful black dress and hat, going on her errands of love and mercy in all kinds of weather—a striking-looking woman, with soft brown hair plentifully sprinkled with gray, looking the lady, every inch of her. Madame Preston met her, and after a few inquiries about Scuffletown, etc., asked her who lived in the hovel which had attracted her attention. Miss Tremaine did not know, but said that she would inquire of the neighbors, and, if possible, visit the place and see if she could do any good. Thus they parted, and Madame Preston drove on to town. She happened to come upon Dr. Rivers, who stopped his buggy and inquired of her whether she had met Miss Tremaine, as he was anxious for her to go with him to visit one of his parishioners that morning. Mme. Preston, after having satisfied him, drove to the Police Office, and luckily finding the Chief in, laid the affair before him. He promised to attend to it at once, which he did. He hastened to the scene immediately and reports that when he arrived, he drew up at the gate at the same moment as Dr. Rivers, who had come thither in quest of Miss Tremaine. Both of them entered the house together, where a most horrible scene confronted them. Cordelia Tracy, with the blood flowing from a most ghastly wound in her head, was in Miss Tremaine's arms, while Shirley lay on the floor weltering in his blood. As brought out later, it appears that Shirley had traced his sister to this place, whither after wandering about for several months she had been brought by the villain who had lured her from her home.

Ray had soon tired of his victim, whom he had promised faithfully to marry, and, determined to rid himself of her, he concocted a plot against the tender, refined girl who had been reared

in the lap of luxury and who had sacrificed everything for his sake. This was to create within her a love for strong drink. For some time he worked his plot with variable success; for the girl seemed never to have loved rum sufficiently for this demon's purpose. He began to *force* her to drink the vile stuff in great quantities, and the noises Mme. Preston heard yesterday as she passed were due to this, as the victim tried in vain to keep the fiend from pouring the liquor down her throat. Yesterday, when Shirley Tracy came in upon them a few moments after Madame Preston passed, Ray was holding a flask to the mouth of the poor girl, and with horrible curses commanded her to drink. Shirley, maddened by his sister's wrongs, fired his pistol, but unfortunately only struck Ray in the shoulder, inflicting a painful but not necessarily dangerous wound. Ray dashed down the flask, turned on his unexpected assailant, and the two grappled. There could be but one result. The boy, though his fury lent him strength, was no match for the strong man, wounded though he was, and soon he lay on the floor mangled and bleeding. Cordelia flew to the aid of her brother, and weak as she was, tried to prevent the escape of the archvillain by clinging to his knees. With a terrible curse, he bade her release him, but she only held on the tighter, and he dealt her two awful blows on her head and upturned face with the butt of his pistol. But this move of hers had accomplished her purpose, for at this very moment, Miss Tremaine rushed in, just in time to receive the wounded girl in her arms.

"Where did you come from; are you woman or devil?" asked Ray, who at first took the intruder for an apparition.

"You archdevil!" exclaimed Miss Tremaine, pointing a finger at him in denunciation, "God will punish you for this crowning act of wickedness before the setting of this day's sun!"

"Perhaps he will make you the executioner!" said Ray, as with a bloodcurdling curse, he started to escape from the house. But he was too late. Just as he reached the door, Capt. Bly and Dr. Rivers

appeared at the gate. Ray turned to fly, Bly ordered him to stop. Instead of obeying, he turned on the Capt. with a dagger which he wore in his belt. Capt. Bly took aim and fired, and the villain fell, mortally wounded. He lived long enough to confess, however, that he was of white parentage, a gambler by profession, and had served out a term in the Virginia State Prison, and that he had courted Cordelia Tracy because her beauty had made an impression on him, and also because he had hoped to gain her portion of the property, but that her father's unrelenting attitude had caused him to see the futility of this and so, grown tired of the girl, he had taken this means to get rid of her.

“But she is a wedded wife, though, providing your laws will count as legal the marriage between a white man and a negress,” he said as he laughed sardonically, and a few moments later his blood-stained soul was ushered into the presence of his Maker. The Tracys were brought to the town in Dr. River's carriage and conveyed home, where both expired soon after in the arms of their mother, whom this awful visitation seemed to have turned to stone.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Clarissa Minnie Thompson Allen (October 1, 1859 – November 23, 1941) was an American educator and author. Allen was born in Columbia, South Carolina, one of nine children of Eliza Henrietta Montgomery, a socialite, and Samuel Benjamin Thompson, a delegate in the South Carolina Constitutional Convention. She attended Howard Junior High School and a normal school in South Carolina. She worked at three different schools, including Allen University, where she taught subjects like algebra, Latin, physical geology, and history. She moved to Jefferson, Texas, around 1886, where she taught at a public school. She also lived in Ft. Worth, Texas, where she worked in the public school system.

Allen is best known for writing realistic fiction about aristocratic African American families in the Southern United States. Her most notable work was *Treading the Winepress; or, A Mountain of Misfortune*. She also wrote essays and a novelette, and her poetry was published in African American newspapers.

