

Victorian Anthology

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- Frequency of appearance on syllabi listed in the Open Syllabus Project
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PUBLIC DOMAIN CORE COLLECTION TEAM

Acknowledgements

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Extract from Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

By Robert Louis Stevenson (1886)

Some two months before the murder of Sir Danvers, I had been out for one of my adventures, had returned at a late hour, and woke the next day in bed with somewhat odd sensations. It was in vain I looked about me; in vain I saw the decent furniture and tall proportions of my room in the square; in vain that I recognised the pattern of the bed-curtains and the design of the mahogany frame; something still kept insisting that I was not where I was, that I had not wakened where I seemed to be, but in the little room in Soho where I was accustomed to sleep in the body of Edward Hyde. I smiled to myself, and, in my psychological way began lazily to inquire into the elements of this illusion, occasionally, even as I did so, dropping back into a comfortable morning doze. I was still so engaged when, in one of my more wakeful moments, my eyes fell upon my hand. Now the hand of Henry Jekyll (as you have often remarked) was professional in shape and size: it was large, firm, white, and comely. But the hand which I now saw, clearly enough, in the yellow light of a mid-London morning, lying half shut on the bed-clothes, was lean, corded, knuckly, of a dusky pallor and thickly shaded with a swart growth of hair. It was the hand of Edward Hyde.

I must have stared upon it for near half a minute, sunk as I was in the mere stupidity of wonder, before terror woke up in my breast as sudden and startling as the crash of cymbals; and bounding from my bed, I rushed to the mirror. At the sight that met my eyes, my

blood was changed into something exquisitely thin and icy. Yes, I had gone to bed Henry Jekyll, I had awakened Edward Hyde. How was this to be explained? I asked myself, and then, with another bound of terror—how was it to be remedied? It was well on in the morning; the servants were up; all my drugs were in the cabinet—a long journey down two pairs of stairs, through the back passage, across the open court and through the anatomical theatre, from where I was then standing horror-struck. It might indeed be possible to cover my face; but of what use was that, when I was unable to conceal the alteration in my stature? And then with an overpowering sweetness of relief, it came back upon my mind that the servants were already used to the coming and going of my second self. I had soon dressed, as well as I was able, in clothes of my own size: had soon passed through the house, where Bradshaw stared and drew back at seeing Mr. Hyde at such an hour and in such a strange array; and ten minutes later, Dr. Jekyll had returned to his own shape and was sitting down, with a darkened brow, to make a feint of breakfasting.

Extract from the Stage Version of Jekyll and Hyde

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

Jekyll: Poor humankind. Bound by laws as rigid as the sheepskin covers of the book that holds them. And I, who have toiled for freedom doomed to eternal wretchedness, the possessor of a secret I dare not even whisper. Heaven help me, Heaven help me. (Stands at fire)

Agnes: Harry

Jekyll: (At table, not hearing her, aside) In the power of the monster, I myself created. In its power. What if it should present itself here—before them—what if...

Agnes (aside): What does he say? Harry.

Jekyll: Agnes. (shrinking from her) Is that you?

Agnes: Yes, there is something wrong. I have seen it in your face for days. What is it Harry? You must let me share in this. How else am I to help you?

Jekyll: You cannot help me. There is no help for me on earth.

Agnes: Harry.

Jekyll: We are at the cross-roads—we must part before it is too late. I must go on alone.

Agnes: Part?

Jekyll: Yes.

Agnes: Are you out of your senses? Do you know me? I have promised to be your wife—I love you. Look, this is I—Agnes Carew.

Jekyll: It is you who do not know me. I am unfit to live upon the good earth with you. You do not know me, I tell you.

Agnes: Are you not Henry Jekyll?

Jekyll: The philanthropist, the man of science, the distinguished person—before the world, yes. How if it were all a lie? If I were like

one possessed of a Wend—wearing at times, another shape, vile, monstrous, hideous beyond belief?

Agnes: Oh, be silent. (Hiding face in hands)

Jekyll: Yes, a Wend without conscience, and without remorse—inventing crimes and longing only to commit them.

Agnes: This is horrible. Who accuses you. You are ill and tired—you are not yourself.

Jekyll: That is true. I am but half myself—the other half is—

Agnes: Mine. You have no right to accuse it falsely.

Jekyll: You will not believe—if I dared tell you—

Agnes: You shall tell me nothing.

Jekyll: You are right. It is best to part so.

Agnes: Part? How little you know me. If you have sins to conquer, I have mine. Who is there without sin in all the world? We are born into it to help one another. And when you need me most, am I to give you up—to leave you.

Jekyll: You can say these things. You ask me nothing.

Agnes: No, you have won my love—you must accept it.

Jekyll: But if you knew—

Agnes: (Drawing nearer, tenderly) How much I might confess to you. You would not listen.

Jekyll: Darling, I—no I cannot tell her that, never that.

Agnes: Who ever lived that was not tempted by the Wend. To be tempted is not to yield. We will resist.

Jekyll: (Embracing her) You are an angel.

Agnes: (In his arms) Harry, do you remember, where I met you first?

Jekyll: In the ward of the hospital—yes.

Agnes: Where you watched by my poor old nurse who was dying. You were there night and day, with all that human skill could do, with more than human patience and devotion. I tried to thank you for your kind looks—your gentle words. I could not speak.

Jekyll: But your eyes said it all. And then I loved you. It was a strange courtship.

Agnes: That is the man I know. There is no other. Drive away these morbid fancies—for my sake—for my sake.

Jekyll: (Kissing her. Rises) For your sake, yes. You shall teach me to control myself. It will take courage.

Agnes: To me you are without fear—without reproach.

Jekyll: To you at my best always. See. The stars are coming out. Which among them all is ours?

Agnes: The brightest. (Exeunt through window into garden)

[later in the same scene]

Agnes: I do believe that papa has fallen asleep. (Sees Hyde and draws back with low cry) Ah.

Sir Danvers: (Waking) How cold it is. Ha. (Seeing Hyde and rising) What's this? (Draws back with a shudder)

Agnes: (shrinking back) Papa, papa.

Sir Danvers: (Pushing her off) Leave the room Agnes.

Agnes: Papa, papa.

Sir Danvers: (After a pause, more gently) Do as I bid you child. (Exit Agnes silently) Now sir what business brings you to my house?

Hyde: Agnes. Why did you send her away?

Sir Danvers: My daughter's name. Why? What's that to you?

Hyde: Call her back I say. I saw her face through the window, I like it.

Sir Danvers: Scoundrel, leave my house.

Hyde: (Laughs defiantly) Eh. That's good.

Sir Danvers: Monster, who and what are you? Go or—

Hyde: Go? I? Why I will make the house mine; the girl mine if I choose.

Sir Danvers: Infernal villain, I'll—(Steps towards him)

Hyde: Hands off, or it will be your death, I warn you.

Sir Danvers: By Heaven, I'll—(Grapples with him)

(Hyde throttles him)

"The Beetle" Extract 1

RICHARD MARSH

By Richard Marsh (1897)

Well, if the house was empty, in such a plight as mine I might be said to have a moral, if not a legal, right, to its bare shelter. Who, with a heart in his bosom, would deny it me? Hardly the most punctilious landlord. Raising myself by means of the sill I slipped my legs into the room.

The moment I did so I became conscious that, at any rate, the room was not entirely unfurnished. The floor was carpeted. I have had my feet on some good carpets in my time; I know what carpets are; but never did I stand upon a softer one than that. It reminded me, somehow, even then, of the turf in Richmond Park,—it caressed my instep, and sprang beneath my tread. To my poor, travel-worn feet, it was luxury after the puddly, uneven road. Should I, now I had ascertained that—the room was, at least, partially furnished, beat a retreat? Or should I push my researches further? It would have been rapture to have thrown off my clothes, and to have sunk down, on the carpet, then and there, to sleep. But,—I was so hungry; so famine-goaded; what would I not have given to have lighted on something good to eat!

I moved a step or two forward, gingerly, reaching out with my hands, lest I struck, unawares, against some unseen thing. When I had taken three or four such steps, without encountering an obstacle, or, indeed, anything at all, I began, all at once, to wish I had not seen the house; that I had passed it by; that I had not come through the window; that I were safely out of it again. I became, on a sudden, aware, that something was with me in the room. There was nothing, ostensible, to lead me to such a conviction; it may be that my faculties were unnaturally keen; but, all at once, I knew

that there was something there. What was more, I had a horrible persuasion that, though unseeing, I was seen; that my every movement was being watched.

What it was that was with me I could not tell; I could not even guess. It was as though something in my mental organisation had been stricken by a sudden paralysis. It may seem childish to use such language; but I was overwrought, played out; physically speaking, at my last counter; and, in an instant, without the slightest warning, I was conscious of a very curious sensation, the like of which I had never felt before, and the like of which I pray that I never may feel again,—a sensation of panic fear. I remained rooted to the spot on which I stood, not daring to move, fearing to draw my breath. I felt that the presence with me in the room was something strange, something evil.

I do not know how long I stood there, spell-bound, but certainly for some considerable space of time. By degrees, as nothing moved, nothing was seen, nothing was heard, and nothing happened, I made an effort to better play the man. I knew that, at the moment, I played the cur. And endeavoured to ask myself of what it was I was afraid. I was shivering at my own imaginings. What could be in the room, to have suffered me to open the window and to enter unopposed? Whatever it was, was surely to the full as great a coward as I was, or why permit, unchecked, my burglarious entry. Since I had been allowed to enter, the probability was that I should be at liberty to retreat,—and I was sensible of a much keener desire to retreat than I had ever had to enter.

I had to put the greatest amount of pressure upon myself before I could summon up sufficient courage to enable me to even turn my head upon my shoulders,—and the moment I did so I turned it back again. What constrained me, to save my soul I could not have said,—but I was constrained. My heart was palpitating in my bosom; I could hear it beat. I was trembling so that I could scarcely stand. I was overwhelmed by a fresh flood of terror. I stared in front of me with eyes in which, had it been light, would have been seen the

frenzy of unreasoning fear. My ears were strained so that I listened with an acuteness of tension which was painful.

Something moved. Slightly, with so slight a sound, that it would scarcely have been audible to other ears save mine. But I heard. I was looking in the direction from which the movement came, and, as I looked, I saw in front of me two specks of light. They had not been there a moment before, that I would swear. They were there now. They were eyes,—I told myself they were eyes. I had heard how cats' eyes gleam in the dark, though I had never seen them, and I said to myself that these were cats' eyes; that the thing in front of me was nothing but a cat. But I knew I lied. I knew that these were eyes, and I knew they were not cats' eyes, but what eyes they were I did not know,—nor dared to think.

They moved,—towards me. The creature to which the eyes belonged was coming closer. So intense was my desire to fly that I would much rather have died than stood there still; yet I could not control a limb; my limbs were as if they were not mine. The eyes came on,—noiselessly. At first they were between two and three feet from the ground; but, on a sudden, there was a squelching sound, as if some yielding body had been squashed upon the floor. The eyes vanished,—to reappear, a moment afterwards, at what I judged to be a distance of some six inches from the floor. And they again came on.

So it seemed that the creature, whatever it was to which the eyes belonged, was, after all, but small. Why I did not obey the frantic longing which I had to flee from it, I cannot tell; I only know, I could not. I take it that the stress and privations which I had lately undergone, and which I was, even then, still undergoing, had much to do with my conduct at that moment, and with the part I played in all that followed. Ordinarily I believe that I have as high a spirit as the average man, and as solid a resolution; but when one has been dragged through the Valley of Humiliation, and plunged, again and again, into the Waters of Bitterness and Privation, a man can be constrained to a course of action of which, in his happier

moments, he would have deemed himself incapable. I know this of my own knowledge.

Slowly the eyes came on, with a strange slowness, and as they came they moved from side to side as if their owner walked unevenly. Nothing could have exceeded the horror with which I awaited their approach,—except my incapacity to escape them. Not for an instant did my glance pass from them,—I could not have shut my eyes for all the gold the world contains!—so that as they came closer I had to look right down to what seemed to be almost the level of my feet. And, at last, they reached my feet. They never paused. On a sudden I felt something on my boot, and, with a sense of shrinking, horror, nausea, rendering me momentarily more helpless, I realised that the creature was beginning to ascend my legs, to climb my body. Even then what it was I could not tell,—it mounted me, apparently, with as much ease as if I had been horizontal instead of perpendicular. It was as though it were some gigantic spider,—a spider of the nightmares; a monstrous conception of some dreadful vision. It pressed lightly against my clothing with what might, for all the world, have been spider's legs. There was an amazing host of them,—I felt the pressure of each separate one. They embraced me softly, stickily, as if the creature glued and unglued them, each time it moved.

Higher and higher! It had gained my loins. It was moving towards the pit of my stomach. The helplessness with which I suffered its invasion was not the least part of my agony,—it was that helplessness which we know in dreadful dreams. I understood, quite well, that if I did but give myself a hearty shake, the creature would fall off; but I had not a muscle at my command.

As the creature mounted its eyes began to play the part of two small lamps; they positively emitted rays of light. By their rays I began to perceive faint outlines of its body. It seemed larger than I had supposed. Either the body itself was slightly phosphorescent, or it was of a peculiar yellow hue. It gleamed in the darkness. What it was there was still nothing to positively show, but the impression grew upon me that it was some member of the spider family, some

monstrous member, of the like of which I had never heard or read. It was heavy, so heavy indeed, that I wondered how, with so slight a pressure, it managed to retain its hold,—that it did so by the aid of some adhesive substance at the end of its legs I was sure,—I could feel it stick. Its weight increased as it ascended,—and it smelt! I had been for some time aware that it emitted an unpleasant, foetid odour; as it neared my face it became so intense as to be unbearable.

It was at my chest. I became more and more conscious of an uncomfortable wobbling motion, as if each time it breathed its body heaved. Its forelegs touched the bare skin about the base of my neck; they stuck to it,—shall I ever forget the feeling? I have it often in my dreams. While it hung on with those in front it seemed to draw its other legs up after it. It crawled up my neck, with hideous slowness, a quarter of an inch at a time, its weight compelling me to brace the muscles of my back. It reached my chin, it touched my lips,—and I stood still and bore it all, while it enveloped my face with its huge, slimy, evil-smelling body, and embraced me with its myriad legs. The horror of it made me mad. I shook myself like one stricken by the shaking ague. I shook the creature off. It squashed upon the floor. Shrieking like some lost spirit, turning, I dashed towards the window. As I went, my foot, catching in some obstacle, I fell headlong to the floor.

Picking myself up as quickly as I could I resumed my flight,—rain or no rain, oh to get out of that room! I already had my hand upon the sill, in another instant I should have been over it,—then, despite my hunger, my fatigues, let anyone have stopped me if they could!—when someone behind me struck a light.

"The Beetle" Extract 2

RICHARD MARSH

By Richard Marsh (1897)

I found myself confronting an individual who might almost have sat for one of the bogies I had just alluded to. His costume was reminiscent of the 'Algerians' whom one finds all over France, and who are the most persistent, insolent and amusing of pedlars. I remember one who used to haunt the repetitions at the Alcazar at Tours,—but there! This individual was like the originals, yet unlike,—he was less gaudy, and a good deal dingier, than his Gallic prototypes are apt to be. Then he wore a burnoose,—the yellow, grimy-looking article of the Arab of the Soudan, not the spick and span Arab of the boulevard. Chief difference of all, his face was clean shaven,—and whoever saw an Algerian of Paris whose chiefest glory was not his well-trimmed moustache and beard?

I expected that he would address me in the lingo which these gentlemen call French,—but he didn't.

'You are Mr Atherton?'

'And you are Mr-Who?—how did you come here? Where's my servant?'

The fellow held up his hand. As he did so, as if in accordance with a pre-arranged signal, Edwards came into the room looking excessively startled. I turned to him.

'Is this the person who wished to see me?'

'Yes, sir.'

'Didn't I tell you to say that I didn't wish to see him?'

'Yes, sir.'

'Then why didn't you do as I told you?'

'I did, sir.'

'Then how comes he here?'

'Really, sir;'-Edwards put his hand up to his head as if he was half asleep-'I don't quite know.'

'What do you mean by you don't know? Why didn't you stop him?'

'I think, sir, that I must have had a touch of sudden faintness, because I tried to put out my hand to stop him, and-I couldn't.'

'You're an idiot.-Go!' And he went. I turned to the stranger. 'Pray, sir, are you a magician?'

He replied to my question with another.

'You, Mr Atherton,-are you also a magician?'

He was staring at my mask with an evident lack of comprehension.

'I wear this because, in this place, death lurks in so many subtle forms, that, without it, I dare not breathe,' He inclined his head-though I doubt if he understood. 'Be so good as to tell me, briefly, what it is you wish with me.'

He slipped his hand into the folds of his burnoose, and, taking out a slip of paper, laid it on the shelf by which we were standing. I glanced at it, expecting to find on it a petition, or a testimonial, or a true statement of his sad case; instead it contained two words only,-'Marjorie Lindon.' The unlooked-for sight of that well-loved name brought the blood into my cheeks.

'You come from Miss Lindon?' He narrowed his shoulders, brought his finger-tips together, inclined his head, in a fashion which was peculiarly Oriental, but not particularly explanatory,-so I repeated my question.

'Do you wish me to understand that you do come from Miss Lindon?'

Again he slipped his hand into his burnoose, again he produced a slip of paper, again he laid it on the shelf, again I glanced at it, again nothing was written on it but a name,-'Paul Lessingham.'

'Well?-I see,-Paul Lessingham.-What then?'

'She is good,-he is bad,-is it not so?'

He touched first one scrap of paper, then the other. I stared.

'Pray how do you happen to know?'

'He shall never have her,-eh?'

'What on earth do you mean?'

'Ah!—what do I mean!'

'Precisely, what do you mean? And also, and at the same time, who the devil are you?'

'It is as a friend I come to you.'

'Then in that case you may go; I happen to be over-stocked in that line just now.'

'Not with the kind of friend I am!'

'The saints forefend!'

'You love her,—you love Miss Lindon! Can you bear to think of him in her arms?'

I took off my mask,—feeling that the occasion required it. As I did so he brushed aside the hanging folds of the hood of his burnoose, so that I saw more of his face. I was immediately conscious that in his eyes there was, in an especial degree, what, for want of a better term, one may call the mesmeric quality. That his was one of those morbid organisations which are oftener found, thank goodness, in the east than in the west, and which are apt to exercise an uncanny influence over the weak and the foolish folk with whom they come in contact,—the kind of creature for whom it is always just as well to keep a seasoned rope close handy. I was, also, conscious that he was taking advantage of the removal of my mask to try his strength on me,—than which he could not have found a tougher job. The sensitive something which is found in the hypnotic subject happens, in me, to be wholly absent.

'I see you are a mesmerist.'

He started.

'I am nothing,—a shadow!'

'And I'm a scientist. I should like, with your permission—or without it!—to try an experiment or two on you.'

He moved further back. There came a gleam into his eyes which suggested that he possessed his hideous power to an unusual degree,—that, in the estimation of his own people, he was qualified to take his standing as a regular devil-doctor.

'We will try experiments together, you and I,—on Paul Lessingham.'

'Why on him?'

'You do not know?'

'I do not.'

'Why do you lie to me?'

'I don't lie to you,—I haven't the faintest notion what is the nature of your interest in Mr Lessingham.'

'My interest?—that is another thing; it is your interest of which we are speaking.'

'Pardon me,—it is yours.'

'Listen! you love her,—and he! But at a word from you he shall not have her,—never! It is I who say it,—I!'

'And, once more, sir, who are you?'

'I am of the children of Isis!'

'Is that so?—It occurs to me that you have made a slight mistake,—this is London, not a dog-hole in the desert.'

'Do I not know?—what does it matter?—you shall see! There will come a time when you will want me,—you will find that you cannot bear to think of him in her arms,—her whom you love! You will call to me, and I shall come, and of Paul Lessingham there shall be an end.'

(jump to later chapter)

Chapter XVIII

The Apotheosis of the Beetle

The laboratory door was closed. The stranger was standing a foot or two away from it. I was further within the room, and was subjecting him to as keen a scrutiny as circumstances permitted. Beyond doubt he was conscious of my observation, yet he bore himself with an air of indifference, which was suggestive of perfect unconcern. The fellow was oriental to the finger-tips,—that much was certain; yet in spite of a pretty wide personal knowledge of oriental people

I could not make up my mind as to the exact part of the east from which he came. He was hardly an Arab, he was not a fellah,—he was not, unless I erred, a Mohammedan at all. There was something about him which was distinctly not Mussulmanic. So far as looks were concerned, he was not a flattering example of his race, whatever his race might be. The portentous size of his beak-like nose would have been, in itself, sufficient to damn him in any court of beauty. His lips were thick and shapeless,—and this, joined to another peculiarity in his appearance, seemed to suggest that, in his veins there ran more than a streak of negro blood. The peculiarity alluded to was his semblance of great age. As one eyed him one was reminded of the legends told of people who have been supposed to have retained something of their pristine vigour after having lived for centuries. As, however, one continued to gaze, one began to wonder if he really was so old as he seemed,—if, indeed, he was exceptionally old at all. Negroes, and especially negresses, are apt to age with extreme rapidity. Among coloured folk one sometimes encounters women whose faces seem to have been lined by the passage of centuries, yet whose actual tale of years would entitle them to regard themselves, here in England, as in the prime of life. The senility of the fellow's countenance, besides, was contradicted by the juvenescence of his eyes. No really old man could have had eyes like that. They were curiously shaped, reminding me of the elongated, faceted eyes of some queer creature, with whose appearance I was familiar, although I could not, at the instant, recall its name. They glowed not only with the force and fire, but, also, with the frenzy of youth. More uncanny-looking eyes I had never encountered,—their possessor could not be, in any sense of the word, a clubable person. Owing, probably, to some peculiar formation of the optic-nerve one felt, as one met his gaze, that he was looking right through you. More obvious danger signals never yet were placed in a creature's head. The individual who, having once caught sight of him, still sought to cultivate their owner's acquaintance, had only himself to

thank if the very worst results of frequenting evil company promptly ensued.

It happens that I am myself endowed with an unusual tenacity of vision. I could, for instance, easily outstare any man I ever met. Yet, as I continued to stare at this man, I was conscious that it was only by an effort of will that I was able to resist a baleful something which seemed to be passing from his eyes to mine. It might have been imagination, but, in that sense, I am not an imaginative man; and, if it was, it was imagination of an unpleasantly vivid kind. I could understand how, in the case of a nervous, or a sensitive temperament, the fellow might exercise, by means of the peculiar quality of his glance alone, an influence of a most disastrous sort, which given an appropriate subject in the manifestation of its power might approach almost to the supernatural. If ever man was endowed with the traditional evil eye, in which Italians, among modern nations, are such profound believers, it was he.

When we had stared at each other for, I daresay, quite five minutes, I began to think I had had about enough of it. So, by way of breaking the ice, I put to him a question.

‘May I ask how you found your way into my back yard?’

He did not reply in words, but, raising his hands he lowered them, palms downward, with a gesture which was peculiarly oriental.

‘Indeed?—Is that so?—Your meaning may be lucidity itself to you, but, for my benefit, perhaps you would not mind translating it into words. Once more I ask, how did you find your way into my back yard?’

Again nothing but the gesture.

‘Possibly you are not sufficiently acquainted with English manners and customs to be aware that you have placed yourself within reach of the pains and penalties of the law. Were I to call in the police you would find yourself in an awkward situation,—and, unless you are presently more explanatory, called in they will be.’

By way of answer he indulged in a distortion of the countenance which might have been meant for a smile,—and which seemed to

suggest that he regarded the police with a contempt which was too great for words.

'Why do you laugh—do you think that being threatened with the police is a joke? You are not likely to find it so.—Have you suddenly been bereft of the use of your tongue?'

He proved that he had not by using it.

'I have still the use of my tongue.'

'That, at least, is something. Perhaps, since the subject of how you got into my back yard seems to be a delicate one, you will tell me why you got there.'

'You know why I have come.'

'Pardon me if I appear to flatly contradict you, but that is precisely what I do not know.'

'You do know.'

'Do I?—Then, in that case, I presume that you are here for the reason which appears upon the surface,—to commit a felony.'

'You call me thief?'

'What else are you?'

'I am no thief.—You know why I have come.'

He raised his head a little. A look came into his eyes which I felt that I ought to understand, yet to the meaning of which I seemed, for the instant, to have mislaid the key. I shrugged my shoulders.

'I have come because you wanted me.'

'Because I wanted you!—On my word!—That's sublime!'

'All night you have wanted me,—do I not know? When she talked to you of him, and the blood boiled in your veins; when he spoke, and all the people listened, and you hated him, because he had honour in her eyes.'

I was startled. Either he meant what it appeared incredible that he could mean, or—there was confusion somewhere.

'Take my advice, my friend, and don't try to come the bunco-steerer over me,—I'm a bit in that line myself, you know.'

This time the score was mine,—he was puzzled.

'I know not what you talk of.'

'In that case, we're equal, -I know not what you talk of either.'

His manner, for him, was childlike and bland.

'What is it you do not know? This morning did I not say, -if you want me, then I come?'

'I fancy I have some faint recollection of your being so good as to say something of the kind, but -where's the application?'

'Do you not feel for him the same as I?'

'Who's the him?'

'Paul Lessingham.'

It was spoken quietly, but with a degree of -to put it gently -spitefulness which showed that at least the will to do the Apostle harm would not be lacking.

'And, pray, what is the common feeling which we have for him?'

'Hate.'

Plainly, with this gentleman, hate meant hate, -in the solid oriental sense. I should hardly have been surprised if the mere utterance of the words had seared his lips.

'I am by no means prepared to admit that I have this feeling which you attribute to me, but, even granting that I have, what then?'

'Those who hate are kin.'

'That, also, I should be slow to admit; but -to go a step farther -what has all this to do with your presence on my premises at this hour of the night?'

'You love her.' This time I did not ask him to supply the name, -being unwilling that it should be soiled by the traffic of his lips. 'She loves him, -that is not well. If you choose, she shall love you, -that will be well.'

'Indeed. -And pray how is this consummation which is so devoutly to be desired to be brought about?'

'Put your hand into mine. Say that you wish it. It shall be done.'

Moving a step forward, he stretched out his hand towards me. I hesitated. There was that in the fellow's manner which, for the moment, had for me an unwholesome fascination. Memories flashed through my mind of stupid stories which have been told of compacts made with the devil. I almost felt as if I was standing in

the actual presence of one of the powers of evil. I thought of my love for Marjorie,—which had revealed itself after all these years; of the delight of holding her in my arms, of feeling the pressure of her lips to mine. As my gaze met his, the lower side of what the conquest of this fair lady would mean, burned in my brain; fierce imaginings blazed before my eyes. To win her,—only to win her!

What nonsense he was talking! What empty brag it was! Suppose, just for the sake of the joke, I did put my hand in his, and did wish, right out, what it was plain he knew. If I wished, what harm would it do! It would be the purest jest. Out of his own mouth he would be confounded, for it was certain that nothing would come of it. Why should I not do it then?

I would act on his suggestion,—I would carry the thing right through. Already I was advancing towards him, when—I stopped. I don't know why. On the instant, my thoughts went off at a tangent.

What sort of a blackguard did I call myself that I should take a woman's name in vain for the sake of playing fool's tricks with such scum of the earth as the hideous vagabond in front of me,—and that the name of the woman whom I loved? Rage took hold of me.

'You hound!' I cried.

In my sudden passage from one mood to another, I was filled with the desire to shake the life half out of him. But so soon as I moved a step in his direction, intending war instead of peace, he altered the position of his hand, holding it out towards me as if forbidding my approach. Directly he did so, quite involuntarily, I pulled up dead,—as if my progress had been stayed by bars of iron and walls of steel.

For the moment, I was astonished to the verge of stupefaction. The sensation was peculiar. I was as incapable of advancing another inch in his direction as if I had lost the use of my limbs,—I was even incapable of attempting to attempt to advance. At first I could only stare and gape. Presently I began to have an inkling of what had happened.

The scoundrel had almost succeeded in hypnotising me.

That was a nice thing to happen to a man of my sort at my time

of life. A shiver went down my back,—what might have occurred if I had not pulled up in time! What pranks might a creature of that character not have been disposed to play. It was the old story of the peril of playing with edged tools; I had made the dangerous mistake of underrating the enemy's strength. Evidently, in his own line, the fellow was altogether something out of the usual way.

I believe that even as it was he thought he had me. As I turned away, and leaned against the table at my back, I fancy that he shivered,—as if this proof of my being still my own master was unexpected. I was silent,—it took some seconds to enable me to recover from the shock of the discovery of the peril in which I had been standing. Then I resolved that I would endeavour to do something which should make me equal to this gentleman of many talents.

'Take my advice, my friend, and don't attempt to play that hankey pankey off on to me again.'

'I don't know what you talk of.'

'Don't lie to me,—or I'll burn you into ashes.'

Behind me was an electrical machine, giving an eighteen inch spark. It was set in motion by a lever fitted into the table, which I could easily reach from where I sat. As I spoke the visitor was treated to a little exhibition of electricity. The change in his bearing was amusing. He shook with terror. He salaamed down to the ground.

'My lord!—my lord!—have mercy, oh my lord!'

'Then you be careful, that's all. You may suppose yourself to be something of a magician, but it happens, unfortunately for you, that I can do a bit in that line myself,—perhaps I'm a trifle better at the game than you are. Especially as you have ventured into my stronghold, which contains magic enough to make a show of a hundred thousand such as you.'

Taking down a bottle from a shelf, I sprinkled a drop or two of its contents on the floor. Immediately flames arose, accompanied by a blinding vapour. It was a sufficiently simple illustration of one of the qualities of phosphorous-bromide, but its effect upon my

visitor was as startling as it was unexpected. If I could believe the evidence of my own eyesight, in the very act of giving utterance to a scream of terror he disappeared, how, or why, or whither, there was nothing to show,—in his place, where he had been standing, there seemed to be a dim object of some sort in a state of frenzied agitation on the floor. The phosphorescent vapour was confusing; the lights appeared to be suddenly burning low; before I had sense enough to go and see if there was anything there, and, if so, what, the flames had vanished, the man himself had reappeared, and, prostrated on his knees, was salaaming in a condition of abject terror.

‘My lord! my lord!’ he whined. ‘I entreat you, my lord, to use me as your slave!’

‘I’ll use you as my slave!’ Whether he or I was the more agitated it would have been difficult to say,—but, at least, it would not have done to betray my feelings as he did his.

‘Stand up!’

He stood up. I eyed him as he did with an interest which, so far as I was concerned, was of a distinctly new and original sort. Whether or not I had been the victim of an ocular delusion I could not be sure. It was incredible to suppose that he could have disappeared as he had seemed to disappear,—it was also incredible that I could have imagined his disappearance. If the thing had been a trick, I had not the faintest notion how it had been worked; and, if it was not a trick, then what was it? Was it something new in scientific marvels? Could he give me as much instruction in the qualities of unknown forces as I could him?

In the meanwhile he stood in an attitude of complete submission, with downcast eyes, and hands crossed upon his breast. I started to cross-examine him.

‘I am going to ask you some questions. So long as you answer them promptly, truthfully, you will be safe. Otherwise you had best beware.’

‘Ask, oh my lord.’

‘What is the nature of your objection to Mr Lessingham?’

'Revenge.'

'What has he done to you that you should wish to be revenged on him?'

'It is the feud of the innocent blood.'

'What do you mean by that?'

'On his hands is the blood of my kin. It cries aloud for vengeance.'

'Who has he killed?'

'That, my lord, is for me,—and for him.'

'I see.—Am I to understand that you do not choose to answer me, and that I am again to use my—magic?'

I saw that he quivered.

'My lord, he has spilled the blood of her who has lain upon his breast.'

I hesitated. What he meant appeared clear enough. Perhaps it would be as well not to press for further details. The words pointed to what it might be courteous to call an Eastern Romance,—though it was hard to conceive of the Apostle figuring as the hero of such a theme. It was the old tale retold, that to the life of every man there is a background,—that it is precisely in the unlikeliest cases that the background's darkest. What would that penny-plain-and-twopence-coloured bogey, the Nonconformist Conscience, make of such a story if it were blazoned through the land. Would Paul not come down with a run?

"Spilling blood" is a figure of speech; pretty, perhaps, but vague. If you mean that Mr Lessingham has been killing someone, your surest and most effectual revenge would be gained by an appeal to the law.'

'What has the Englishman's law to do with me?'

'If you can prove that he has been guilty of murder it would have a great deal to do with you. I assure you that at any rate, in that sense, the Englishman's law is no respecter of persons. Show him to be guilty, and it would hang Paul Lessingham as indifferently, and as cheerfully, as it would hang Bill Brown.'

'Is that so?'

'It is so, as, if you choose, you will be easily able to prove to your own entire satisfaction.'

He had raised his head, and was looking at something which he seemed to see in front of him with a maleficent glare in his sensitive eyes which it was not nice to see.

'He would be shamed?'

'Indeed he would be shamed.'

'Before all men?'

'Before all men,—and, I take it, before all women too.'

'And he would hang?'

'If shown to have been guilty of wilful murder,—yes.'

His hideous face was lighted up by a sort of diabolical exultation which made it, if that were possible, more hideous still. I had apparently given him a wrinkle which pleased him most consummately.

'Perhaps I will do that in the end,—in the end!' He opened his eyes to their widest limits, then shut them tight,—as if to gloat on the picture which his fancy painted. Then reopened them. 'In the meantime I will have vengeance in my own fashion. He knows already that the avenger is upon him,—he has good reason to know it. And through the days and the nights the knowledge shall be with him still, and it shall be to him as the bitterness of death,—aye, of many deaths. For he will know that escape there is none, and that for him there shall be no more sun in the sky, and that the terror shall be with him by night and by day, at his rising up and at his lying down, wherever his eyes shall turn it shall be there,—yet, behold, the sap and the juice of my vengeance is in this, in that though he shall be very sure that the days that are, are as the days of his death, yet shall he know that THE DEATH, THE GREAT DEATH, is coming—coming—and shall be on him—when I will!'

The fellow spoke like an inspired maniac. If he meant half what he said,—and if he did not then his looks and his tones belied him!—then a promising future bade fair to be in store for Mr Lessingham,—and, also, circumstances being as they were, for Marjorie. It was this latter reflection which gave me pause. Either

this imprecatory fanatic would have to be disposed of, by Lessingham himself, or by someone acting on his behalf, and, so far as their power of doing mischief went, his big words proved empty windbags, or Marjorie would have to be warned that there was at least one passage in her suitor's life, into which, ere it was too late, it was advisable that inquiry should be made. To allow Marjorie to irrevocably link her fate with the Apostle's, without being first of all made aware that he was, to all intents and purposes, a haunted man—that was not to be thought of.

'You employ large phrases.'

My words cooled the other's heated blood. Once more his eyes were cast down, his hands crossed upon his breast

'I crave my lord's pardon. My wound is ever new.'

'By the way, what was the secret history, this morning, of that little incident of the cockroach?'

He glanced up quickly.

'Cockroach?—I know not what you say.'

'Well,—was it beetle, then?'

'Beetle!'

He seemed, all at once, to have lost his voice,—the word was gasped.

'After you went we found, upon a sheet of paper, a capitally executed drawing of a beetle, which, I fancy, you must have left behind you,—Scaraboeus sacer, wasn't it?'

'I know not what you talk of.'

'Its discovery seemed to have quite a singular effect on Mr Lessingham. Now, why was that?'

'I know nothing.'

'Oh yes you do,—and, before you go, I mean to know something too.'

The man was trembling, looking this way and that, showing signs of marked discomfiture. That there was something about that ancient scarab, which figures so largely in the still unravelled tangles of the Egyptian mythologies, and the effect which the mere sight of its cartouch—for the drawing had resembled something of

the kind—had had on such a seasoned vessel as Paul Lessingham, which might be well worth my finding out, I felt convinced,—the man’s demeanour, on my recurring to the matter, told its own plain tale. I made up my mind, if possible, to probe the business to the bottom, then and there.

‘Listen to me, my friend. I am a plain man, and I use plain speech,—it’s a kind of hobby I have. You will give me the information I require, and that at once, or I will pit my magic against yours,—in which case I think it extremely probable that you will come off worst from the encounter.’

I reached out for the lever, and the exhibition of electricity recommenced. Immediately his tremors were redoubled.

‘My lord, I know not of what you talk.’

‘None of your lies for me.—Tell me why, at the sight of the thing on that sheet of paper, Paul Lessingham went green and yellow.’

‘Ask him, my lord.’

‘Probably, later on, that is what I shall do. In the meantime, I am asking you. Answer,—or look out for squalls.’

The electrical exhibition was going on. He was glaring at it as if he wished that it would stop. As if ashamed of his cowardice, plainly, on a sudden, he made a desperate effort to get the better of his fears,—and succeeded better than I had expected or desired. He drew himself up with what, in him, amounted to an air of dignity.

‘I am a child of Isis!’

It struck me that he made this remark, not so much to impress me, as with a view of elevating his own low spirits,

‘Are you?—Then, in that case, I regret that I am unable to congratulate the lady on her offspring.’

When I said that, a ring came into his voice which I had not heard before.

‘Silence!—You know not of what you speak!—I warn you, as I warned Paul Lessingham, be careful not to go too far. Be not like him,—heed my warning.’

‘What is it I am being warned against,—the beetle?’

‘Yes,—the beetle!’

Were I upon oath, and this statement being made, in the presence of witnesses, say, in a solicitor's office, I standing in fear of pains and penalties, I think that, at this point, I should leave the paper blank. No man likes to own himself a fool, or that he ever was a fool,—and ever since I have been wondering whether, on that occasion, that 'child of Isis' did, or did not, play the fool with me. His performance was realistic enough at the time, heaven knows. But, as it gets farther and farther away, I ask myself, more and more confidently, as time effluxes, whether, after all, it was not clever juggling,—superhumanly clever juggling, if you will; that, and nothing more. If it was something more, then, with a vengeance! there is more in heaven and earth than is dreamed of in our philosophy. The mere possibility opens vistas which the sane mind fears to contemplate.

Since, then, I am not on oath, and, should I fall short of verbal accuracy, I do not need to fear the engines of the law, what seemed to happen was this.

He was standing within about ten feet of where I leaned against the edge of the table. The light was full on, so that it was difficult to suppose that I could make a mistake as to what took place in front of me. As he replied to my mocking allusion to the beetle by echoing my own words, he vanished,—or, rather, I saw him taking a different shape before my eyes. His loose draperies all fell off him, and, as they were in the very act of falling, there issued, or there seemed to issue out of them, a monstrous creature of the beetle type,—the man himself was gone. On the point of size I wish to make myself clear. My impression, when I saw it first, was that it was as large as the man had been, and that it was, in some way, standing up on end, the legs towards me. But, the moment it came in view, it began to dwindle, and that so rapidly that, in a couple of seconds at most, a little heap of drapery was lying on the floor, on which was a truly astonishing example of the coleoptera. It appeared to be a beetle. It was, perhaps, six or seven inches high, and about a foot in length. Its scales were of a vivid golden green. I could distinctly see where the wings were sheathed along the back, and, as they seemed to be

slightly agitated, I looked, every moment, to see them opened, and the thing take wing.

I was so astonished,—as who would not have been?—that for an appreciable space of time I was practically in a state of stupefaction. I could do nothing but stare. I was acquainted with the legendary transmigrations of Isis, and with the story of the beetle which issues from the woman's womb through all eternity, and with the other pretty tales, but this, of which I was an actual spectator, was something new, even in legends. If the man, with whom I had just been speaking, was gone, where had he gone to? If this glittering creature was there, in his stead, whence had it come?

I do protest this much, that, after the first shock of surprise had passed, I retained my presence of mind. I felt as an investigator might feel, who has stumbled, haphazard, on some astounding, some epoch-making, discovery. I was conscious that I should have to make the best use of my mental faculties if I was to take full advantage of so astonishing an accident. I kept my glance riveted on the creature, with the idea of photographing it on my brain. I believe that if it were possible to take a retinal print—which it someday will be—you would have a perfect picture of what it was I saw. Beyond doubt it was a lamellicorn, one of the copridae. With the one exception of its monstrous size, there were the characteristics in plain view;—the convex body, the large head, the projecting clypeus. More, its smooth head and throat seemed to suggest that it was a female. Equally beyond a doubt, apart from its size, there were unusual features present too. The eyes were not only unwontedly conspicuous, they gleamed as if they were lighted by internal flames,—in some indescribable fashion they reminded me of my vanished visitor. The colouring was superb, and the creature appeared to have the chameleon-like faculty of lightening and darkening the shades at will. Its not least curious feature was its restlessness. It was in a state of continual agitation; and, as if it resented my inspection, the more I looked at it the more its agitation grew. As I have said, I expected every moment to see it take wing and circle through the air.

All the while I was casting about in my mind as to what means I could use to effect its capture. I did think of killing it, and, on the whole, I rather wish that I had at any rate attempted slaughter,—there were dozens of things, lying ready to my hand, any one of which would have severely tried its constitution;—but, on the spur of the moment, the only method of taking it alive which occurred to me, was to pop over it a big tin canister which had contained soda-lime. This canister was on the floor to my left. I moved towards it, as nonchalantly as I could, keeping an eye on that shining wonder all the time. Directly I moved, its agitation perceptibly increased,—it was, so to speak, all one whirr of tremblement; it scintillated, as if its coloured scales had been so many prisms; it began to unsheath its wings, as if it had finally decided that it would make use of them. Picking up the tin, disembarassing it of its lid, I sprang towards my intended victim. Its wings opened wide; obviously it was about to rise; but it was too late. Before it had cleared the ground, the tin was over it.

It remained over it, however, for an instant only. I had stumbled, in my haste, and, in my effort to save myself from falling face foremost on to the floor, I was compelled to remove my hands from the tin. Before I was able to replace them, the tin was sent flying, and, while I was still partially recumbent, within eighteen inches of me, that beetle swelled and swelled, until it had assumed its former portentous dimensions, when, as it seemed, it was enveloped by a human shape, and in less time than no time, there stood in front of me, naked from top to toe, my truly versatile oriental friend. One startling fact nudity revealed,—that I had been egregiously mistaken on the question of sex. My visitor was not a man, but a woman, and, judging from the brief glimpse which I had of her body, by no means old or ill-shaped either.

If that transformation was not a bewildering one, then two and two make five. The most level-headed scientist would temporarily have lost his mental equipoise on witnessing such a quick change as that within a span or two of his own nose I was not only witless, I was breathless too,—I could only gape. And, while I gaped, the

woman, stooping down, picking up her draperies, began to huddle them on her anyhow,-and, also, to skeddadle towards the door which led into the yard. When I observed this last manoeuvre, to some extent I did rise to the requirements of the situation. Leaping up, I rushed to stay her flight.

‘Stop!’ I shouted.

But she was too quick for me. Ere I could reach her, she had opened the door, and was through it,-and, what was more, she had slammed it in my face. In my excitement, I did some fumbling with the handle. When, in my turn, I was in the yard, she was out of sight. I did fancy I saw a dim form disappearing over the wall at the further side, and I made for it as fast as I knew how. I clambered on to the wall, looking this way and that, but there was nothing and no one to be seen. I listened for the sound of retreating footsteps, but all was still. Apparently I had the entire neighbourhood to my own sweet self. My visitor had vanished. Time devoted to pursuit I felt would be time ill-spent.

Extract from "The Blood of the Vampire"

FLORENCE MARRYAT

By Florence Marryat (1897)

As she spoke, however, the chair opposite was sharply pulled into place, and a young lady seated herself on it, and looked boldly (though not brazenly) up and down the tables, and at her neighbours on each side of her. She was a remarkable looking girl — more remarkable, perhaps, than beautiful, for her beauty did not strike one at first sight. Her figure was tall but slight and lissom. It looked almost boneless as she swayed from side to side of her chair. Her skin was colourless but clear. Her eyes were long-shaped, dark, and narrow, with heavy lids and thick black lashes which lay upon her cheeks. Her brows were arched and delicately pencilled, and her nose was straight and small. Not so her mouth however, which was large, with lips of deep blood colour, small white teeth. To crown all, her head was covered with mass of soft, dull, blue-black hair, which was twisted in careless masses about the nape of her neck, and looked as if it was unaccustomed to comb or hairpin. She was dressed very simply in a white cambric frock, but there was not a woman present, who had not discovered in five minutes, that the lace with which it was profusely trimmed was Valenciennes, and that was clasped at her throat with brilliants. The newcomer did not seem in the least abashed by the numbers of eyes which were upon her, but the scrutiny very calmly, smiling in a sort of furtive way at everybody, until the entre'es were handed round, when she riveted all her attention upon the contents of her plate. Miss Leyton thought she had never seen any young person devour her food with

so much avidity and enjoyment. She could not help watching her...It was not so much that she ate rapidly and with evident appetite, but that she kept her eyes fixed upon her food, as if she feared some one might deprive her of it.....

“I wonder who that girl remarked Mrs. Pullen as soon as they were out of hearing. “I don’t know whether I like her or not, but there is something rather distinguished-looking about her!”

“Do you think?” said Miss Leyton, “I thought she only distinguished herself by eating like a cormorant! I never saw anyone in society her food in such a manner! She made me positively sick!”
(later)

Elinor Leyton’s was an exceptionally cold face, and it matched her disposition. She had attractive features; –a delicate nose, carved as if in ivory – brown eyes, a fair rose-tinted complexion, and a small mouth with thin, firmly closed lips. Her hair was bronze-coloured, and it was always dressed to perfection. She had a good figure with small hands and feet – and she was robed in excellent taste. She was pre-eminently a woman for a man to be proud of as the mistress of his and the head of his table. She might be trusted never to say or do an unladylike thing – before all, she was cognizant of the obligations which devolved upon her as the daughter of Lord Walthamstowe and a member of the British aristocracy. But in disposition she was undoubtedly cold.

(one of many similes for Harriet)

Harriet Brandt meanwhile, sitting almost opposite to the stranger, was regarding him from under the thick lashes of her slumberous eyes, like a lynx watching its prey. She had never seen so good-looking and aristocratic man before.

(Harriet and children)

“Harriet is very fond of children,” she said, “but she has never seen any – there were no children at the Convent under ten years of age, so she does not know how to make enough of them when she meets them. She wants to kiss everyone. Sometimes, I tell her, I think she would like to eat them. But she only means to be kind!”

(Harriet kissing)

Ralph felt the slight form beside him lean upon his shoulder till their faces almost touched. He threw his arm about her waist. Her hot breath fanned his cheek.

“Kiss me!” she murmured in a dreamy voice. Captain Pullen was not slow to accept the invitation confidently extended. What Englishman would be? He turned his face to Harriet Brandt’s, and her full red lips met his own, in a long-drawn kiss, that seemed to sap his vitality. As he raised his head again, he felt faint and sick, but quickly recovering himself, he gave her a second kiss more passionate, if possible, than the first. Then the following whispered conversation ensued between them. “Do you he commenced, with his head close to hers, “that you are the very jolliest girl that I have ever met!”

"Goblin Market"

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI

By Christina Rossetti (1862)

Morning and evening
Maids heard the goblins cry:
"Come buy our orchard fruits,
Come buy, come buy:
Apples and quinces,
Lemons and oranges,
Plump unpeck'd cherries,
Melons and raspberries,
Bloom-down-cheek'd peaches,
Swart-headed mulberries,
Wild free-born cranberries,
Crab-apples, dewberries,
Pine-apples, blackberries,
Apricots, strawberries;—
All ripe together
In summer weather;—
Morns that pass by,
Fair eves that fly;
Come buy, come buy:
Our grapes fresh from the vine,
Pomegranates full and fine,
Dates and sharp bullaces,
Rare pears and greengages,
Damsons and bilberries,
Taste them and try:
Currants and gooseberries,
Bright-fire-like barberries,

Figs to fill your mouth,
Citrons from the South,
Sweet to tongue and sound to eye;

Come buy, come buy.”

Evening by evening
Among the brookside rushes,
Laura bow'd her head to hear,
Lizzie veil'd her blushes:
Crouching close together
In the cooling weather,
With clasping arms and cautioning lips,
With tingling cheeks and finger tips.
“Lie close,” Laura said,
Pricking up her golden head:
“We must not look at goblin men,
We must not buy their fruits:
Who knows upon what soil they fed
Their hungry thirsty roots?”
“Come buy,” call the goblins

Hobbling down the glen.

“Oh,” cried Lizzie, “Laura, Laura,
You should not peep at goblin men.”
Lizzie cover'd up her eyes,
Cover'd close lest they should look;
Laura rear'd her glossy head,
And whisper'd like the restless brook:
“Look, Lizzie, look, Lizzie,
Down the glen tramp little men.
One hauls a basket,
One bears a plate,
One lugs a golden dish
Of many pounds weight.
How fair the vine must grow
Whose grapes are so luscious;

How warm the wind must blow
Through those fruit bushes.”
“No,” said Lizzie, “No, no, no;
Their offers should not charm us,
Their evil gifts would harm us.”
She thrust a dimpled finger
In each ear, shut eyes and ran:
Curious Laura chose to linger
Wondering at each merchant man.
One had a cat’s face,
One whisk’d a tail,
One tramp’d at a rat’s pace,
One crawl’d like a snail,
One like a wombat prowld obtuse and furry,
One like a ratel tumbled hurry skurry.
She heard a voice like voice of doves
Cooing all together:
They sounded kind and full of loves

In the pleasant weather.

 Laura stretch’d her gleaming neck
Like a rush-imbedded swan,
Like a lily from the beck,
Like a moonlit poplar branch,
Like a vessel at the launch

When its last restraint is gone.

 Backwards up the mossy glen
Turn’d and troop’d the goblin men,
With their shrill repeated cry,
“Come buy, come buy.”
When they reach’d where Laura was
They stood stock still upon the moss,
Leering at each other,
Brother with queer brother;
Signalling each other,

Brother with sly brother.
One set his basket down,
One rear'd his plate;
One began to weave a crown
Of tendrils, leaves, and rough nuts brown
(Men sell not such in any town);
One heav'd the golden weight
Of dish and fruit to offer her:
"Come buy, come buy," was still their cry.
Laura stared but did not stir,
Long'd but had no money:
The whisk-tail'd merchant bade her taste
In tones as smooth as honey,
The cat-faced purr'd,
The rat-faced spoke a word
Of welcome, and the snail-paced even was heard;
One parrot-voiced and jolly
Cried "Pretty Goblin" still for "Pretty Polly;"—

One whistled like a bird.
But sweet-tooth Laura spoke in haste:
"Good folk, I have no coin;
To take were to purloin:
I have no copper in my purse,
I have no silver either,
And all my gold is on the furze
That shakes in windy weather
Above the rusty heather."
"You have much gold upon your head,"
They answer'd all together:
"Buy from us with a golden curl."
She clipp'd a precious golden lock,
She dropp'd a tear more rare than pearl,
Then suck'd their fruit globes fair or red:
Sweeter than honey from the rock,

Stronger than man-rejoicing wine,
Clearer than water flow'd that juice;
She never tasted such before,
How should it cloy with length of use?
She suck'd and suck'd and suck'd the more
Fruits which that unknown orchard bore;
She suck'd until her lips were sore;
Then flung the emptied rinds away
But gather'd up one kernel stone,
And knew not was it night or day

As she turn'd home alone.

Lizzie met her at the gate
Full of wise upbraidings:
“Dear, you should not stay so late,
Twilight is not good for maidens;
Should not loiter in the glen
In the haunts of goblin men.
Do you not remember Jeanie,
How she met them in the moonlight,
Took their gifts both choice and many,
Ate their fruits and wore their flowers
Pluck'd from bowers
Where summer ripens at all hours?
But ever in the noonlight
She pined and pined away;
Sought them by night and day,
Found them no more, but dwindled and grew grey;
Then fell with the first snow,
While to this day no grass will grow
Where she lies low:
I planted daisies there a year ago
That never blow.
You should not loiter so.”
“Nay, hush,” said Laura:

“Nay, hush, my sister:
I ate and ate my fill,
Yet my mouth waters still;
To-morrow night I will
Buy more;” and kiss’d her:
“Have done with sorrow;
I’ll bring you plums to-morrow
Fresh on their mother twigs,
Cherries worth getting;
You cannot think what figs
My teeth have met in,
What melons icy-cold
Piled on a dish of gold
Too huge for me to hold,
What peaches with a velvet nap,
Pellucid grapes without one seed:
Odorous indeed must be the mead
Whereon they grow, and pure the wave they drink
With lilies at the brink,

And sugar-sweet their sap.”

Golden head by golden head,
Like two pigeons in one nest
Folded in each other’s wings,
They lay down in their curtain’d bed:
Like two blossoms on one stem,
Like two flakes of new-fall’n snow,
Like two wands of ivory
Tipp’d with gold for awful kings.
Moon and stars gaz’d in at them,
Wind sang to them lullaby,
Lumbering owls forbore to fly,
Not a bat flapp’d to and fro
Round their rest:
Cheek to cheek and breast to breast

Lock'd together in one nest.

Early in the morning
When the first cock crow'd his warning,
Neat like bees, as sweet and busy,
Laura rose with Lizzie:
Fetch'd in honey, milk'd the cows,
Air'd and set to rights the house,
Kneaded cakes of whitest wheat,
Cakes for dainty mouths to eat,
Next churn'd butter, whipp'd up cream,
Fed their poultry, sat and sew'd;
Talk'd as modest maidens should:
Lizzie with an open heart,
Laura in an absent dream,
One content, one sick in part;
One warbling for the mere bright day's delight,

One longing for the night.

At length slow evening came:
They went with pitchers to the reedy brook;
Lizzie most placid in her look,
Laura most like a leaping flame.
They drew the gurgling water from its deep;
Lizzie pluck'd purple and rich golden flags,
Then turning homeward said: "The sunset flushes
Those furthest loftiest crags;
Come, Laura, not another maiden lags.
No wilful squirrel wags,
The beasts and birds are fast asleep."
But Laura loiter'd still among the rushes

And said the bank was steep.

And said the hour was early still
The dew not fall'n, the wind not chill;
Listening ever, but not catching
The customary cry,

“Come buy, come buy,”
With its iterated jingle
Of sugar-baited words:
Not for all her watching
Once discerning even one goblin
Racing, whisking, tumbling, hobbling;
Let alone the herds
That used to tramp along the glen,
In groups or single,

Of brisk fruit-merchant men.

Till Lizzie urged, “O Laura, come;
I hear the fruit-call but I dare not look:
You should not loiter longer at this brook:
Come with me home.
The stars rise, the moon bends her arc,
Each glowworm winks her spark,
Let us get home before the night grows dark:
For clouds may gather
Though this is summer weather,
Put out the lights and drench us through;

Then if we lost our way what should we do?”

Laura turn'd cold as stone
To find her sister heard that cry alone,
That goblin cry,
“Come buy our fruits, come buy.”
Must she then buy no more such dainty fruit?
Must she no more such succous pasture find,
Gone deaf and blind?
Her tree of life droop'd from the root:
She said not one word in her heart's sore ache;
But peering thro' the dimness, nought discerning,
Trudg'd home, her pitcher dripping all the way;
So crept to bed, and lay
Silent till Lizzie slept;

Then sat up in a passionate yearning,
And gnash'd her teeth for baulk'd desire, and wept

As if her heart would break.

Day after day, night after night,
Laura kept watch in vain
In sullen silence of exceeding pain.
She never caught again the goblin cry:
"Come buy, come buy;"—
She never spied the goblin men
Hawking their fruits along the glen:
But when the noon wax'd bright
Her hair grew thin and grey;
She dwindled, as the fair full moon doth turn
To swift decay and burn

Her fire away.

One day remembering her kernel-stone
She set it by a wall that faced the south;
Dew'd it with tears, hoped for a root,
Watch'd for a waxing shoot,
But there came none;
It never saw the sun,
It never felt the trickling moisture run:
While with sunk eyes and faded mouth
She dream'd of melons, as a traveller sees
False waves in desert drouth
With shade of leaf-crown'd trees,

And burns the thirstier in the sandful breeze.

She no more swept the house,
Tended the fowls or cows,
Fetch'd honey, kneaded cakes of wheat,
Brought water from the brook:
But sat down listless in the chimney-nook

And would not eat.

Tender Lizzie could not bear
To watch her sister's cankerous care
Yet not to share.

She night and morning
Caught the goblins' cry:
"Come buy our orchard fruits,
Come buy, come buy;"—
Beside the brook, along the glen,
She heard the tramp of goblin men,
The yoke and stir
Poor Laura could not hear;
Long'd to buy fruit to comfort her,
But fear'd to pay too dear.
She thought of Jeanie in her grave,
Who should have been a bride;
But who for joys brides hope to have
Fell sick and died
In her gay prime,
In earliest winter time
With the first glazing rime,

With the first snow-fall of crisp winter time.

Till Laura dwindling
Seem'd knocking at Death's door:
Then Lizzie weigh'd no more
Better and worse;
But put a silver penny in her purse,
Kiss'd Laura, cross'd the heath with clumps of furze
At twilight, halted by the brook:
And for the first time in her life

Began to listen and look.

Laugh'd every goblin
When they spied her peeping:
Came towards her hobbling,

Flying, running, leaping,
Puffing and blowing,
Chuckling, clapping, crowing,
Clucking and gobbling,
Mopping and mowing,
Full of airs and graces,
Pulling wry faces,
Demure grimaces,
Cat-like and rat-like,
Ratel- and wombat-like,
Snail-paced in a hurry,
Parrot-voiced and whistler,
Helter skelter, hurry skurry,
Chattering like magpies,
Fluttering like pigeons,
Gliding like fishes,—
Hugg'd her and kiss'd her:
Squeez'd and caress'd her:
Stretch'd up their dishes,
Panniers, and plates:
“Look at our apples
Russet and dun,
Bob at our cherries,
Bite at our peaches,
Citrons and dates,
Grapes for the asking,
Pears red with basking
Out in the sun,
Plums on their twigs;
Pluck them and suck them,

Pomegranates, figs.”
“Good folk,” said Lizzie,
Mindful of Jeanie:
“Give me much and many: —

Held out her apron,
Toss'd them her penny.
"Nay, take a seat with us,
Honour and eat with us,"
They answer'd grinning:
"Our feast is but beginning.
Night yet is early,
Warm and dew-pearly,
Wakeful and starry:
Such fruits as these
No man can carry:
Half their bloom would fly,
Half their dew would dry,
Half their flavour would pass by.
Sit down and feast with us,
Be welcome guest with us,
Cheer you and rest with us."—
"Thank you," said Lizzie: "But one waits
At home alone for me:
So without further parleying,
If you will not sell me any
Of your fruits though much and many,
Give me back my silver penny
I toss'd you for a fee."—
They began to scratch their pates,
No longer wagging, purring,
But visibly demurring,
Grunting and snarling.
One call'd her proud,
Cross-grain'd, uncivil;
Their tones wax'd loud,
Their looks were evil.
Lashing their tails
They trod and hustled her,
Elbow'd and jostled her,

Claw'd with their nails,
Barking, mewing, hissing, mocking,
Tore her gown and soil'd her stocking,
Twitch'd her hair out by the roots,
Stamp'd upon her tender feet,
Held her hands and squeez'd their fruits

Against her mouth to make her eat.

White and golden Lizzie stood,
Like a lily in a flood,—
Like a rock of blue-vein'd stone
Lash'd by tides obstreperously,—
Like a beacon left alone
In a hoary roaring sea,
Sending up a golden fire,—
Like a fruit-crown'd orange-tree
White with blossoms honey-sweet
Sore beset by wasp and bee,—
Like a royal virgin town
Topp'd with gilded dome and spire
Close beleaguer'd by a fleet

Mad to tug her standard down.

One may lead a horse to water,
Twenty cannot make him drink.
Though the goblins cuff'd and caught her,
Coax'd and fought her,
Bullied and besought her,
Scratch'd her, pinch'd her black as ink,
Kick'd and knock'd her,
Maul'd and mock'd her,
Lizzie utter'd not a word;
Would not open lip from lip
Lest they should cram a mouthful in:
But laugh'd in heart to feel the drip
Of juice that syrapp'd all her face,

And lodg'd in dimples of her chin,
And streak'd her neck which quaked like curd.
At last the evil people,
Worn out by her resistance,
Flung back her penny, kick'd their fruit
Along whichever road they took,
Not leaving root or stone or shoot;
Some writh'd into the ground,
Some div'd into the brook
With ring and ripple,
Some scudded on the gale without a sound,

Some vanish'd in the distance.

 In a smart, ache, tingle,
Lizzie went her way;
Knew not was it night or day;
Sprang up the bank, tore thro' the furze,
Threaded copse and dingle,
And heard her penny jingle
Bouncing in her purse,—
Its bounce was music to her ear.
She ran and ran
As if she fear'd some goblin man
Dogg'd her with gibe or curse
Or something worse:
But not one goblin scurried after,
Nor was she prick'd by fear;
The kind heart made her windy-paced
That urged her home quite out of breath with haste

And inward laughter.

 She cried, "Laura," up the garden,
"Did you miss me?
Come and kiss me.
Never mind my bruises,
Hug me, kiss me, suck my juices

Squeez'd from goblin fruits for you,
Goblin pulp and goblin dew.
Eat me, drink me, love me;
Laura, make much of me;
For your sake I have braved the glen

And had to do with goblin merchant men.”

Laura started from her chair,
Flung her arms up in the air,
Clutch'd her hair:
“Lizzie, Lizzie, have you tasted
For my sake the fruit forbidden?
Must your light like mine be hidden,
Your young life like mine be wasted,
Undone in mine undoing,
And ruin'd in my ruin,
Thirsty, canker'd, goblin-ridden?”—
She clung about her sister,
Kiss'd and kiss'd and kiss'd her:
Tears once again
Refresh'd her shrunken eyes,
Dropping like rain
After long sultry drouth;
Shaking with aguish fear, and pain,

She kiss'd and kiss'd her with a hungry mouth.

Her lips began to scorch,
That juice was wormwood to her tongue,
She loath'd the feast:
Writhing as one possess'd she leap'd and sung,
Rent all her robe, and wrung
Her hands in lamentable haste,
And beat her breast.
Her locks stream'd like the torch
Borne by a racer at full speed,
Or like the mane of horses in their flight,

Or like an eagle when she stems the light
Straight toward the sun,
Or like a caged thing freed,

Or like a flying flag when armies run.

Swift fire spread through her veins, knock'd at her heart,
Met the fire smouldering there
And overbore its lesser flame;
She gorged on bitterness without a name:
Ah! fool, to choose such part
Of soul-consuming care!
Sense fail'd in the mortal strife:
Like the watch-tower of a town
Which an earthquake shatters down,
Like a lightning-stricken mast,
Like a wind-uprooted tree
Spun about,
Like a foam-topp'd waterspout
Cast down headlong in the sea,
She fell at last;
Pleasure past and anguish past,

Is it death or is it life?

Life out of death.
That night long Lizzie watch'd by her,
Counted her pulse's flagging stir,
Felt for her breath,
Held water to her lips, and cool'd her face
With tears and fanning leaves:
But when the first birds chirp'd about their eaves,
And early reapers plodded to the place
Of golden sheaves,
And dew-wet grass
Bow'd in the morning winds so brisk to pass,
And new buds with new day
Open'd of cup-like lilies on the stream,

Laura awoke as from a dream,
Laugh'd in the innocent old way,
Hugg'd Lizzie but not twice or thrice;
Her gleaming locks show'd not one thread of grey,
Her breath was sweet as May

And light danced in her eyes.

Days, weeks, months, years
Afterwards, when both were wives
With children of their own;
Their mother-hearts beset with fears,
Their lives bound up in tender lives;
Laura would call the little ones
And tell them of her early prime,
Those pleasant days long gone
Of not-returning time:
Would talk about the haunted glen,
The wicked, quaint fruit-merchant men,
Their fruits like honey to the throat
But poison in the blood;
(Men sell not such in any town):
Would tell them how her sister stood
In deadly peril to do her good,
And win the fiery antidote:
Then joining hands to little hands
Would bid them cling together,
"For there is no friend like a sister
In calm or stormy weather;
To cheer one on the tedious way,
To fetch one if one goes astray,
To lift one if one totters down,
To strengthen whilst one stands."

Extract from "Carmilla"

SHERIDAN LE FANU

By Sheridan LeFanu (1872)

Prologue

Upon a paper attached to the Narrative which follows, Doctor Hesselius has written a rather elaborate note, which he accompanies with a reference to his Essay on the strange subject which the MS. illuminates.

This mysterious subject he treats, in that Essay, with his usual learning and acumen, and with remarkable directness and condensation. It will form but one volume of the series of that extraordinary man's collected papers.

As I publish the case, in this volume, simply to interest the "laity," I shall forestall the intelligent lady, who relates it, in nothing; and after due consideration, I have determined, therefore, to abstain from presenting any précis of the learned Doctor's reasoning, or extract from his statement on a subject which he describes as "involving, not improbably, some of the profoundest arcana of our dual existence, and its intermediates."

I was anxious on discovering this paper, to reopen the correspondence commenced by Doctor Hesselius, so many years before, with a person so

clever and careful as his informant seems to have been. Much to my regret, however, I found that she had died in the interval.

She, probably, could have added little to the Narrative _which she communicates in the following pages, with, so far as I can pronounce, such conscientious particularity_.

I. An Early Fright

In Styria, we, though by no means magnificent people, inhabit a castle, or schloss. A small income, in that part of the world, goes a great way. Eight or nine hundred a year does wonders. Scantly enough ours would have answered among wealthy people at home. My father is English, and I bear an English name, although I never saw England. But here, in this lonely and primitive place, where everything is so marvelously cheap, I really don't see how ever so much more money would at all materially add to our comforts, or even luxuries.

My father was in the Austrian service, and retired upon a pension and his patrimony, and purchased this feudal residence, and the small estate on which it stands, a bargain.

Nothing can be more picturesque or solitary. It stands on a slight eminence in a forest. The road, very old and narrow, passes in front of its drawbridge, never raised in my time, and its moat, stocked with perch, and sailed over by many swans, and floating on its surface white fleets of water lilies.

Over all this the schloss shows its many-windowed front; its towers, and its Gothic chapel.

The forest opens in an irregular and very picturesque glade before its gate, and at the right a steep Gothic bridge carries the road over a stream that winds in deep shadow through the wood. I have said that this is a very lonely place. Judge whether I say truth. Looking from the hall door towards the road, the forest in which our castle stands extends fifteen miles to the right, and twelve to the left. The nearest inhabited village is about seven of your English miles to the left. The nearest inhabited schloss of any historic associations, is that of old General Spielsdorf, nearly twenty miles away to the right.

I have said "the nearest inhabited village," because there is, only three miles westward, that is to say in the direction of General

Spielsdorf's schloss, a ruined village, with its quaint little church, now roofless, in the aisle of which are the moldering tombs of the proud family of Karnstein, now extinct, who once owned the equally desolate chateau which, in the thick of the forest, overlooks the silent ruins of the town.

Respecting the cause of the desertion of this striking and melancholy spot, there is a legend which I shall relate to you another time.

I must tell you now, how very small is the party who constitute the

inhabitants of our castle. I don't include servants, or those dependents who occupy rooms in the buildings attached to the schloss. Listen, and wonder! My father, who is the kindest man on earth, but growing old; and I, at the date of my story, only nineteen. Eight years have passed since then.

I and my father constituted the family at the schloss. My mother, a Styrian lady, died in my infancy, but I had a good-natured governess, who had been with me from, I might almost say, my infancy. I could not remember the time when her fat, benignant face was not a familiar picture in my memory.

This was Madame Perrodon, a native of Berne, whose care and good nature now in part supplied to me the loss of my mother, whom I do not even remember, so early I lost her. She made a third at our little dinner party. There was a fourth, Mademoiselle De Lafontaine, a lady such as you term, I believe, a "finishing governess." She spoke French and German, Madame Perrodon French and broken English, to which my father and I added English, which, partly to prevent its becoming a lost language among us, and partly from patriotic motives, we spoke every day. The consequence was a Babel, at which strangers used to laugh, and which I shall make no attempt to reproduce in this narrative. And there were two or three young lady friends besides, pretty nearly of my own age, who were occasional visitors, for longer or shorter terms; and these visits I sometimes returned.

These were our regular social resources; but of course there were

chance visits from “neighbors” of only five or six leagues distance. My life was, notwithstanding, rather a solitary one, I can assure you.

My gouvernantes had just so much control over me as you might conjecture such sage persons would have in the case of a rather spoiled girl, whose only parent allowed her pretty nearly her own way in everything.

The first occurrence in my existence, which produced a terrible impression upon my mind, which, in fact, never has been effaced, was one of the very earliest incidents of my life which I can recollect. Some people will think it so trifling that it should not be recorded here. You will see, however, by-and-by, why I mention it. The nursery, as it was called, though I had it all to myself, was a large room in the upper story of the castle, with a steep oak roof. I can't have been more than six years old, when one night I awoke, and looking round the room from my bed, failed to see the nursery maid. Neither was my nurse there; and I thought myself alone. I was not frightened, for I was one of those happy children who are studiously kept in ignorance of ghost stories, of fairy tales, and of all such lore as makes us cover up our heads when the door cracks suddenly, or the flicker of an expiring candle makes the shadow of a bedpost dance upon the wall, nearer to our faces. I was vexed and insulted at finding myself, as I conceived, neglected, and I began to whimper, preparatory to a hearty bout of roaring; when to my surprise, I saw a solemn, but very pretty face looking at me from the side of the bed. It was that of a young lady who was kneeling, with her hands under the coverlet. I looked at her with a kind of pleased wonder, and ceased whimpering. She caressed me with her hands, and lay down beside me on the bed, and drew me towards her, smiling; I felt immediately delightfully soothed, and fell asleep again. I was wakened by a sensation as if two needles ran into my breast very deep at the

same moment, and I cried loudly. The lady started back, with her eyes fixed on me, and then slipped down upon the floor, and, as I thought, hid herself under the bed.

I was now for the first time frightened, and I yelled with all my

might and main. Nurse, nursery maid, housekeeper, all came running in, and hearing my story, they made light of it, soothing me all they could meanwhile. But, child as I was, I could perceive that their faces were pale with an unwonted look of anxiety, and I saw them look under the bed, and about the room, and peep under tables and pluck open cupboards; and the housekeeper whispered to the nurse: "Lay your hand along that hollow in the bed; someone _did_ lie there, so sure as you did not; the place is still warm."

I remember the nursery maid petting me, and all three examining my chest, where I told them I felt the puncture, and pronouncing that there was no sign visible that any such thing had happened to me.

The housekeeper and the two other servants who were in charge of the nursery, remained sitting up all night; and from that time a servant always sat up in the nursery until I was about fourteen.

I was very nervous for a long time after this. A doctor was called in, he was pallid and elderly. How well I remember his long saturnine face, slightly pitted with smallpox, and his chestnut wig. For a good while, every second day, he came and gave me medicine, which of course I hated.

The morning after I saw this apparition I was in a state of terror, and could not bear to be left alone, daylight though it was, for a moment.

I remember my father coming up and standing at the bedside, and talking cheerfully, and asking the nurse a number of questions, and laughing very heartily at one of the answers; and patting me on the shoulder, and kissing me, and telling me not to be frightened, that it was nothing but a dream and could not hurt me.

But I was not comforted, for I knew the visit of the strange woman was _not_ a dream; and I was _awfully_ frightened.

I was a little consoled by the nursery maid's assuring me that it was she who had come and looked at me, and lain down beside me in the bed, and that I must have been half-dreaming not to have known her face. But this, though supported by the nurse, did not quite satisfy me.

I remembered, in the course of that day, a venerable old man, in a black cassock, coming into the room with the nurse and housekeeper, and talking a little to them, and very kindly to me; his face was very sweet and gentle, and he told me they were going to pray, and joined my hands together, and desired me to say, softly, while they were praying, "Lord hear all good prayers for us, for Jesus' sake." I think these were the very words, for I often repeated them to myself, and my nurse used for years to make me say them in my prayers.

I remembered so well the thoughtful sweet face of that white-haired old man, in his black cassock, as he stood in that rude, lofty, brown room, with the clumsy furniture of a fashion three hundred years old about him, and the scanty light entering its shadowy atmosphere through the

small lattice. He kneeled, and the three women with him, and he prayed aloud with an earnest quavering voice for, what appeared to me, a long time. I forget all my life preceding that event, and for some time after it is all obscure also, but the scenes I have just described stand out vivid as the isolated pictures of the phantasmagoria surrounded by darkness.

II. A Guest

I am now going to tell you something so strange that it will require all your faith in my veracity to believe my story. It is not only true, nevertheless, but truth of which I have been an eyewitness.

It was a sweet summer evening, and my father asked me, as he sometimes did, to take a little ramble with him along that beautiful forest vista which I have mentioned as lying in front of the schloss.

"General Spielsdorf cannot come to us so soon as I had hoped," said my father, as we pursued our walk.

He was to have paid us a visit of some weeks, and we had expected

his arrival next day. He was to have brought with him a young lady, his niece and ward, Mademoiselle Rheinfeldt, whom I had never seen, but whom I had heard described as a very charming girl, and in whose society I had promised myself many happy days. I was more disappointed than a young lady living in a town, or a bustling neighborhood can possibly imagine. This visit, and the new acquaintance it promised, had furnished my day dream for many weeks.

“And how soon does he come?” I asked.

“Not till autumn. Not for two months, I dare say,” he answered. “And I am very glad now, dear, that you never knew Mademoiselle Rheinfeldt.”

“And why?” I asked, both mortified and curious.

“Because the poor young lady is dead,” he replied. “I quite forgot I had not told you, but you were not in the room when I received the General’s letter this evening.”

I was very much shocked. General Spielsdorf had mentioned in his first letter, six or seven weeks before, that she was not so well as he would wish her, but there was nothing to suggest the remotest suspicion of danger.

“Here is the General’s letter,” he said, handing it to me. “I am afraid he is in great affliction; the letter appears to me to have been written very nearly in distraction.”

We sat down on a rude bench, under a group of magnificent lime trees. The sun was setting with all its melancholy splendor behind the sylvan horizon, and the stream that flows beside our home, and passes under the steep old bridge I have mentioned, wound through many a group of noble

trees, almost at our feet, reflecting in its current the fading crimson of the sky. General Spielsdorf’s letter was so extraordinary, so vehement, and in some places so self-contradictory, that I read it twice over—the second time aloud to my father—and was still unable to account for it, except by supposing that grief had unsettled his mind.

It said “I have lost my darling daughter, for as such I loved her.

During the last days of dear Bertha's illness I was not able to write to you.

"Before then I had no idea of her danger. I have lost her, and now learn _all_, too late. She died in the peace of innocence, and in the glorious hope of a blessed futurity. The fiend who betrayed our infatuated hospitality has done it all. I thought I was receiving into my house innocence, gaiety, a charming companion for my lost Bertha. Heavens! what a fool have I been!

"I thank God my child died without a suspicion of the cause of her sufferings. She is gone without so much as conjecturing the nature of her illness, and the accursed passion of the agent of all this misery. I devote my remaining days to tracking and extinguishing a monster. I am told I may hope to accomplish my righteous and merciful purpose. At present there is scarcely a gleam of light to guide me. I curse my conceited incredulity, my despicable affectation of superiority, my blindness, my obstinacy—all-too late. I cannot write or talk collectedly now. I am distracted. So soon as I shall have a little recovered, I mean to devote myself for a time to enquiry, which may possibly lead me as far as Vienna. Some time in the autumn, two months hence, or earlier if I live, I will see you—that is, if you permit me; I will then tell you all that I scarce dare put upon paper now. Farewell. Pray for me, dear friend."

In these terms ended this strange letter. Though I had never seen Bertha Rheinfeldt my eyes filled with tears at the sudden intelligence; I was startled, as well as profoundly disappointed.

The sun had now set, and it was twilight by the time I had returned the General's letter to my father.

It was a soft clear evening, and we loitered, speculating upon the possible meanings of the violent and incoherent sentences which I had just been reading. We had nearly a mile to walk before reaching the road that passes the schloss in front, and by that time the moon was shining brilliantly. At the drawbridge we met Madame Perrodon and Mademoiselle De Lafontaine, who had come out, without their bonnets, to enjoy the exquisite moonlight.

We heard their voices gabbling in animated dialogue as we

approached. We joined them at the drawbridge, and turned about to admire with them the beautiful scene.

The glade through which we had just walked lay before us. At our left the narrow road wound away under clumps of lordly trees, and was lost to sight amid the thickening forest. At the right the same road crosses the steep and picturesque bridge, near which stands a ruined tower which once guarded that pass; and beyond the bridge an abrupt eminence rises, covered with trees, and showing in the shadows some grey ivy-clustered rocks.

Over the sward and low grounds a thin film of mist was stealing like smoke, marking the distances with a transparent veil; and here and there we could see the river faintly flashing in the moonlight.

No softer, sweeter scene could be imagined. The news I had just heard made it melancholy; but nothing could disturb its character of profound serenity, and the enchanted glory and vagueness of the prospect.

My father, who enjoyed the picturesque, and I, stood looking in silence over the expanse beneath us. The two good governesses, standing a little way behind us, discoursed upon the scene, and were eloquent upon the moon.

Madame Perrodon was fat, middle-aged, and romantic, and talked and sighed poetically. Mademoiselle De Lafontaine—in right of her father who was a German, assumed to be psychological, metaphysical, and something of a mystic—now declared that when the moon shone with a light so intense it was well known that it indicated a special spiritual activity. The effect of the full moon in such a state of brilliancy was manifold. It acted on dreams, it acted on lunacy, it acted on nervous people, it had marvelous physical influences connected with life. Mademoiselle related that her cousin, who was mate of a merchant ship, having taken a nap on deck on such a night, lying on his back, with his face full in the light on the moon, had wakened, after a dream of an old woman clawing him by the cheek, with his features horribly drawn to one side; and his countenance had never quite recovered its equilibrium.

“The moon, this night,” she said, “is full of idyllic and magnetic

influence—and see, when you look behind you at the front of the schloss how all its windows flash and twinkle with that silvery splendor, as if unseen hands had lighted up the rooms to receive fairy guests.”

There are indolent styles of the spirits in which, indisposed to talk ourselves, the talk of others is pleasant to our listless ears; and I gazed on, pleased with the tinkle of the ladies’ conversation.

“I have got into one of my moping moods tonight,” said my father, after a silence, and quoting Shakespeare, whom, by way of keeping up our English, he used to read aloud, he said:

“In truth I know not why I am so sad.

It wearies me: you say it wearies you;

But how I got it—came by it.’

“I forget the rest. But I feel as if some great misfortune were hanging over us. I suppose the poor General’s afflicted letter has had something to do with it.”

At this moment the unwonted sound of carriage wheels and many hoofs upon the road, arrested our attention.

They seemed to be approaching from the high ground overlooking the bridge, and very soon the equipage emerged from that point. Two horsemen first crossed the bridge, then came a carriage drawn by four horses, and two men rode behind.

It seemed to be the traveling carriage of a person of rank; and we were all immediately absorbed in watching that very unusual spectacle. It became, in a few moments, greatly more interesting, for just as the carriage had passed the summit of the steep bridge, one of the leaders, taking fright, communicated his panic to the rest, and after a plunge or two, the whole team broke into a wild gallop together, and dashing between the horsemen who rode in front, came thundering along the road towards us with the speed of a hurricane.

The excitement of the scene was made more painful by the clear, long-drawn screams of a female voice from the carriage window.

We all advanced in curiosity and horror; me rather in silence, the rest with various ejaculations of terror.

Our suspense did not last long. Just before you reach the castle drawbridge, on the route they were coming, there stands by the roadside a magnificent lime tree, on the other stands an ancient stone cross, at sight of which the horses, now going at a pace that was perfectly frightful, swerved so as to bring the wheel over the projecting roots of the tree.

I knew what was coming. I covered my eyes, unable to see it out, and turned my head away; at the same moment I heard a cry from my lady friends, who had gone on a little.

Curiosity opened my eyes, and I saw a scene of utter confusion. Two of the horses were on the ground, the carriage lay upon its side with two wheels in the air; the men were busy removing the traces, and a lady with a commanding air and figure had got out, and stood with clasped hands, raising the handkerchief that was in them every now and then to her eyes.

Through the carriage door was now lifted a young lady, who appeared to be lifeless. My dear old father was already beside the elder lady, with his hat in his hand, evidently tendering his aid and the resources of his schloss. The lady did not appear to hear him, or to have eyes for anything but the slender girl who was being placed against the slope of the bank.

I approached; the young lady was apparently stunned, but she was certainly not dead. My father, who piqued himself on being something of a physician, had just had his fingers on her wrist and assured the lady, who declared herself her mother, that her pulse, though faint and irregular, was undoubtedly still distinguishable. The lady clasped her hands and looked upward, as if in a momentary transport of gratitude; but immediately she broke out again in that theatrical way which is, I believe, natural to some people.

She was what is called a fine looking woman for her time of life, and must have been handsome; she was tall, but not thin, and dressed in black velvet, and looked rather pale, but with a proud and commanding countenance, though now agitated strangely.

“Who was ever being so born to calamity?” I heard her say, with

clasped hands, as I came up. "Here am I, on a journey of life and death, in

prosecuting which to lose an hour is possibly to lose all. My child will not have recovered sufficiently to resume her route for who can say how long. I must leave her: I cannot, dare not, delay. How far on, sir, can you tell, is the nearest village? I must leave her there; and shall not see my darling, or even hear of her till my return, three months hence."

I plucked my father by the coat, and whispered earnestly in his ear: "Oh! papa, pray ask her to let her stay with us—it would be so delightful. Do, pray."

"If Madame will entrust her child to the care of my daughter, and of her good *gouvernante*, Madame Perrodon, and permit her to remain as our guest, under my charge, until her return, it will confer a distinction and an obligation upon us, and we shall treat her with all the care and devotion which so sacred a trust deserves."

"I cannot do that, sir, it would be to task your kindness and chivalry too cruelly," said the lady, distractedly.

"It would, on the contrary, be to confer on us a very great kindness at the moment when we most need it. My daughter has just been disappointed by a cruel misfortune, in a visit from which she had long anticipated a great deal of happiness. If you confide this young lady to our care it

will be her best consolation. The nearest village on your route is distant, and affords no such inn as you could think of placing your daughter at; you cannot allow her to continue her journey for any considerable distance without danger. If, as you say, you cannot suspend your journey, you must part with her tonight, and nowhere could you do so with more honest assurances of care and tenderness than here."

There was something in this lady's air and appearance so distinguished and even imposing, and in her manner so engaging, as to impress one, quite apart from the dignity of her equipage, with a conviction that she was a person of consequence.

By this time the carriage was replaced in its upright position, and the horses, quite tractable, in the traces again.

The lady threw on her daughter a glance which I fancied was not quite so affectionate as one might have anticipated from the beginning of the scene; then she beckoned slightly to my father, and withdrew two or three steps with him out of hearing; and talked to him with a fixed and stern countenance, not at all like that with which she had hitherto spoken.

I was filled with wonder that my father did not seem to perceive the change, and also unspeakably curious to learn what it could be that she was speaking, almost in his ear, with so much earnestness and rapidity.

Two or three minutes at most I think she remained thus employed, then she turned, and a few steps brought her to where her daughter lay, supported by Madame Perrodon. She kneeled beside her for a moment and whispered, as Madame supposed, a little benediction in her ear; then hastily kissing her she stepped into her carriage, the door was closed, the footmen in stately liveries jumped up behind, the outriders spurred on, the postilions cracked their whips, the horses plunged and broke suddenly into a furious canter that threatened soon again to become a

gallop, and the carriage whirled away, followed at the same rapid pace by the two horsemen in the rear.

III. We Compare Notes

We followed the *_cortege_* with our eyes until it was swiftly lost to sight in the misty wood; and the very sound of the hoofs and the wheels died away in the silent night air.

Nothing remained to assure us that the adventure had not been an illusion of a moment but the young lady, who just at that moment opened her eyes. I could not see, for her face was turned from me,

but she raised her head, evidently looking about her, and I heard a very sweet voice ask complainingly, "Where is mamma?"

Our good Madame Perrodon answered tenderly, and added some comfortable assurances.

I then heard her ask:

"Where am I? What is this place?" and after that she said, "I don't see the carriage; and Matska, where is she?"

Madame answered all her questions in so far as she understood them; and gradually the young lady remembered how the misadventure came about, and was glad to hear that no one in, or in attendance on, the carriage was hurt; and on learning that her mamma had left her here, till her return in about three months, she wept.

I was going to add my consolations to those of Madame Perrodon when Mademoiselle De Lafontaine placed her hand upon my arm, saying:

"Don't approach, one at a time is as much as she can at present converse with; a very little excitement would possibly overpower her now."

As soon as she is comfortably in bed, I thought, I will run up to her room and see her.

My father in the meantime had sent a servant on horseback for the physician, who lived about two leagues away; and a bedroom was being prepared for the young lady's reception.

The stranger now rose, and leaning on Madame's arm, walked slowly over the drawbridge and into the castle gate.

In the hall, servants waited to receive her, and she was conducted forthwith to her room. The room we usually sat in as our drawing room is long, having four windows, that looked over the moat and drawbridge, upon the forest scene I have just described.

It is furnished in old carved oak, with large carved cabinets, and the chairs are cushioned with crimson Utrecht velvet. The walls are covered with tapestry, and surrounded with great gold frames, the figures being

as large as life, in ancient and very curious costume, and the

subjects represented are hunting, hawking, and generally festive. It is not too stately to be extremely comfortable; and here we had our tea, for with his usual patriotic leanings he insisted that the national beverage should make its appearance regularly with our coffee and chocolate.

We sat here this night, and with candles lighted, were talking over the adventure of the evening.

Madame Perrodon and Mademoiselle De Lafontaine were both of our party. The young stranger had hardly lain down in her bed when she sank into a deep sleep; and those ladies had left her in the care of a servant.

“How do you like our guest?” I asked, as soon as Madame entered. “Tell me all about her?”

“I like her extremely,” answered Madame, “she is, I almost think, the prettiest creature I ever saw; about your age, and so gentle and nice.”

“She is absolutely beautiful,” threw in Mademoiselle, who had peeped for a moment into the stranger’s room.

“And such a sweet voice!” added Madame Perrodon.

“Did you remark a woman in the carriage, after it was set up again, who did not get out,” inquired Mademoiselle, “but only looked from the window?”

“No, we had not seen her.”

Then she described a hideous black woman, with a sort of colored turban on her head, and who was gazing all the time from the carriage window, nodding and grinning derisively towards the ladies, with gleaming eyes and large white eyeballs, and her teeth set as if in fury.

“Did you remark what an ill-looking pack of men the servants were?” asked Madame.

“Yes,” said my father, who had just come in, “ugly, hang-dog looking fellows as ever I beheld in my life. I hope they mayn’t rob the poor lady in the forest. They are clever rogues, however; they got everything to rights in a minute.”

"I dare say they are worn out with too long traveling," said Madame.

"Besides looking wicked, their faces were so strangely lean, and dark, and sullen. I am very curious, I own; but I dare say the young lady will tell you all about it tomorrow, if she is sufficiently recovered."

"I don't think she will," said my father, with a mysterious smile, and a little nod of his head, as if he knew more about it than he cared to tell us.

This made us all the more inquisitive as to what had passed between him and the lady in the black velvet, in the brief but earnest interview that had immediately preceded her departure.

We were scarcely alone, when I entreated him to tell me. He did not need much pressing.

"There is no particular reason why I should not tell you. She expressed a reluctance to trouble us with the care of her daughter, saying she was in delicate health, and nervous, but not subject to any kind of seizure—she volunteered that—nor to any illusion; being, in fact, perfectly sane."

"How very odd to say all that!" I interpolated. "It was so unnecessary."

"At all events it was said," he laughed, "and as you wish to know all that passed, which was indeed very little, I tell you. She then said, 'I am making a long journey of vital importance—she emphasized the word—rapid and secret; I shall return for my child in three months; in the meantime, she will be silent as to who we are, whence we come, and whither we are traveling.' That is all she said. She spoke very pure French. When she said the word 'secret,' she paused for a few seconds, looking sternly, her eyes fixed on mine. I fancy she makes a great point of that. You saw how quickly she was gone. I hope I have not done a very foolish thing, in taking charge of the young lady."

For my part, I was delighted. I was longing to see and talk to her; and only waiting till the doctor should give me leave. You, who live

in towns, can have no idea how great an event the introduction of a new friend is, in such a solitude as surrounded us.

The doctor did not arrive till nearly one o'clock; but I could no more have gone to my bed and slept, than I could have overtaken, on foot, the carriage in which the princess in black velvet had driven away.

When the physician came down to the drawing room, it was to report very favorably upon his patient. She was now sitting up, her pulse quite regular, apparently perfectly well. She had sustained no injury, and the little shock to her nerves had passed away quite harmlessly. There could be no harm certainly in my seeing her, if we both wished it; and, with this permission I sent, forthwith, to know whether she would allow me to visit her for a few minutes in her room.

The servant returned immediately to say that she desired nothing more. You may be sure I was not long in availing myself of this permission.

Our visitor lay in one of the handsomest rooms in the schloss. It was, perhaps, a little stately. There was a somber piece of tapestry opposite the foot of the bed, representing Cleopatra with the asps to her bosom; and other solemn classic scenes were displayed, a little faded, upon the other walls. But there was gold carving, and rich and varied color enough in the other decorations of the room, to more than redeem the gloom of the old tapestry.

There were candles at the bedside. She was sitting up; her slender pretty figure enveloped in the soft silk dressing gown, embroidered with flowers, and lined with thick quilted silk, which her mother had thrown over her feet as she lay upon the ground.

What was it that, as I reached the bedside and had just begun my little

greeting, struck me dumb in a moment, and made me recoil a step or two from before her? I will tell you.

I saw the very face which had visited me in my childhood at night, which remained so fixed in my memory, and on which I had for so

many years so often ruminated with horror, when no one suspected of what I was thinking.

It was pretty, even beautiful; and when I first beheld it, wore the same melancholy expression.

But this almost instantly lighted into a strange fixed smile of recognition.

There was a silence of fully a minute, and then at length she spoke; I could not.

“How wonderful!” she exclaimed. “Twelve years ago, I saw your face in a dream, and it has haunted me ever since.”

“Wonderful indeed!” I repeated, overcoming with an effort the horror that had for a time suspended my utterances. “Twelve years ago, in vision or reality, I certainly saw you. I could not forget your face. It has remained before my eyes ever since.”

Her smile had softened. Whatever I had fancied strange in it, was gone, and it and her dimpling cheeks were now delightfully pretty and intelligent.

I felt reassured, and continued more in the vein which hospitality indicated, to bid her welcome, and to tell her how much pleasure her accidental arrival had given us all, and especially what a happiness it was to me.

I took her hand as I spoke. I was a little shy, as lonely people are, but the situation made me eloquent, and even bold. She pressed my hand, she laid hers upon it, and her eyes glowed, as, looking hastily into mine, she smiled again, and blushed.

She answered my welcome very prettily. I sat down beside her, still wondering; and she said:

“I must tell you my vision about you; it is so very strange that you and I should have had, each of the other so vivid a dream, that each should have seen, I you and you me, looking as we do now, when of course we both were mere children. I was a child, about six years old, and I awoke from a confused and troubled dream, and found myself in a room, unlike my nursery, wainscoted clumsily in some dark wood, and with cupboards and bedsteads, and chairs, and benches placed about it. The beds were, I thought, all empty,

and the room itself without anyone but myself in it; and I, after looking about me for some time, and admiring especially an iron candlestick with two branches, which I should certainly know again, crept under one of the beds to reach the window; but as I got from under the bed, I heard someone crying; and looking up, while I was still upon my knees, I saw you—most assuredly you—as I see you now; a beautiful young lady, with golden hair and large blue eyes, and lips—your lips—you as you are here.

“Your looks won me; I climbed on the bed and put my arms about you, and I think we both fell asleep. I was aroused by a scream; you were sitting up screaming. I was frightened, and slipped down upon the ground, and, it seemed to me, lost consciousness for a moment; and when I came to myself, I was again in my nursery at home. Your face I have never forgotten since. I could not be misled by mere resemblance. _You are_ the lady whom I saw then.”

It was now my turn to relate my corresponding vision, which I did, to the undisguised wonder of my new acquaintance.

“I don’t know which should be most afraid of the other,” she said, again smiling—“If you were less pretty I think I should be very much afraid of you, but being as you are, and you and I both so young, I feel only that I have made your acquaintance twelve years ago, and have already a right to your intimacy; at all events it does seem as if we were destined, from our earliest childhood, to be friends. I wonder whether you feel as strangely drawn towards me as I do to you; I have never had a friend—shall I find one now?” She sighed, and her fine dark eyes gazed passionately on me.

Now the truth is, I felt rather unaccountably towards the beautiful stranger. I did feel, as she said, “drawn towards her,” but there was also something of repulsion. In this ambiguous feeling, however, the sense of attraction immensely prevailed. She interested and won me; she was so beautiful and so indescribably engaging.

I perceived now something of languor and exhaustion stealing over her, and hastened to bid her good night.

“The doctor thinks,” I added, “that you ought to have a maid to sit

up with you tonight; one of ours is waiting, and you will find her a very useful and quiet creature.”

“How kind of you, but I could not sleep, I never could with an attendant in the room. I shan’t require any assistance—and, shall I confess my weakness, I am haunted with a terror of robbers. Our house was robbed once, and two servants murdered, so I always lock my door. It has become a habit—and you look so kind I know you will forgive me. I see there is a key in the lock.”

She held me close in her pretty arms for a moment and whispered in my ear, “Good night, darling, it is very hard to part with you, but good night; tomorrow, but not early, I shall see you again.”

She sank back on the pillow with a sigh, and her fine eyes followed me with a fond and melancholy gaze, and she murmured again “Good night, dear friend.”

Young people like, and even love, on impulse. I was flattered by the evident, though as yet undeserved, fondness she showed me. I liked the confidence with which she at once received me. She was determined that we should be very near friends.

Next day came and we met again. I was delighted with my companion; that is to say, in many respects.

Her looks lost nothing in daylight—she was certainly the most beautiful creature I had ever seen, and the unpleasant remembrance of the face presented in my early dream, had lost the effect of the first unexpected recognition.

She confessed that she had experienced a similar shock on seeing me, and precisely the same faint antipathy that had mingled with my admiration of her. We now laughed together over our momentary horrors.

IV. Her Habits—A Saunter

I told you that I was charmed with her in most particulars. There were some that did not please me so well.

She was above the middle height of women. I shall begin by describing her.

She was slender, and wonderfully graceful. Except that her movements were languid—very languid—indeed, there was nothing in her appearance to indicate an invalid. Her complexion was rich and brilliant; her features were small and beautifully formed; her eyes large, dark, and lustrous; her hair was quite wonderful, I never saw hair so magnificently thick and long when it was down about her shoulders; I have often placed my hands under it, and laughed with wonder at its weight. It was exquisitely fine and soft, and in color a rich very dark brown, with something of gold. I loved to let it down, tumbling with its own weight, as, in her room, she lay back in her chair talking in her sweet low voice, I used to fold and braid it, and spread it out and play with it. Heavens! If I had but known all!

I said there were particulars which did not please me. I have told you that her confidence won me the first night I saw her; but I found that she exercised with respect to herself, her mother, her history, everything in fact connected with her life, plans, and people, an ever wakeful reserve. I dare say I was unreasonable, perhaps I was wrong; I dare say I ought to have respected the solemn injunction laid upon my father by the stately lady in black velvet. But curiosity is a restless and unscrupulous passion, and no one girl can endure, with patience, that hers should be baffled by another. What harm could it do anyone to tell me what I so ardently desired to know? Had she no trust in my good sense or honor? Why would she not believe me when I assured her, so solemnly, that I would not divulge one syllable of what she told me to any mortal breathing.

There was a coldness, it seemed to me, beyond her years, in her smiling melancholy persistent refusal to afford me the least ray of light.

I cannot say we quarreled upon this point, for she would not quarrel upon any. It was, of course, very unfair of me to press her, very ill-bred, but I really could not help it; and I might just as well have let it alone.

What she did tell me amounted, in my unconscionable estimation—to nothing.

It was all summed up in three very vague disclosures:

First—Her name was Carmilla.

Second—Her family was very ancient and noble.

Third—Her home lay in the direction of the west.

She would not tell me the name of her family, nor their armorial bearings, nor the name of their estate, nor even that of the country they lived in.

You are not to suppose that I worried her incessantly on these subjects. I watched opportunity, and rather insinuated than urged my inquiries. Once or twice, indeed, I did attack her more directly. But no matter what my tactics, utter failure was invariably the result. Reproaches and caresses were all lost upon her. But I must add this, that her evasion was conducted with so pretty a melancholy and deprecation, with so many, and even passionate declarations of her liking for me, and trust in my honor, and with so many promises that I should at last know all, that I could not find it in my heart long to be offended with her.

She used to place her pretty arms about my neck, draw me to her, and laying her cheek to mine, murmur with her lips near my ear, “Dearest, your little heart is wounded; think me not cruel because I obey the irresistible law of my strength and weakness; if your dear heart is wounded, my wild heart bleeds with yours. In the rapture of my enormous humiliation I live in your warm life, and you shall die—die, sweetly die—into mine. I cannot help it; as I draw near to you, you, in your turn, will draw near to others, and learn the rapture of that cruelty, which yet is love; so, for a while, seek to know no more of me and mine, but trust me with all your loving spirit.”

And when she had spoken such a rhapsody, she would press me

more closely in her trembling embrace, and her lips in soft kisses gently glow upon my cheek.

Her agitations and her language were unintelligible to me.

From these foolish embraces, which were not of very frequent occurrence, I must allow, I used to wish to extricate myself; but my energies seemed to fail me. Her murmured words sounded like a lullaby in my ear, and soothed my resistance into a trance, from which I only seemed to recover myself when she withdrew her arms.

In these mysterious moods I did not like her. I experienced a strange tumultuous excitement that was pleasurable, ever and anon, mingled with a vague sense of fear and disgust. I had no distinct thoughts about her while such scenes lasted, but I was conscious of a love growing into adoration, and also of abhorrence. This I know is paradox, but I can make no other attempt to explain the feeling.

I now write, after an interval of more than ten years, with a trembling hand, with a confused and horrible recollection of certain occurrences and situations, in the ordeal through which I was unconsciously passing; though with a vivid and very sharp remembrance of the main current of my story.

But, I suspect, in all lives there are certain emotional scenes, those in which our passions have been most wildly and terribly roused, that are of all others the most vaguely and dimly remembered.

Sometimes after an hour of apathy, my strange and beautiful companion would take my hand and hold it with a fond pressure, renewed again and again; blushing softly, gazing in my face with languid and burning eyes, and breathing so fast that her dress rose and fell with the tumultuous respiration. It was like the ardor of a lover; it embarrassed me; it was hateful and yet over-powering; and with gloating eyes she drew me to her, and her hot lips traveled along my cheek in kisses; and she would whisper, almost in sobs, "You are mine, you _shall_ be mine, you and I are one for ever." Then she had thrown herself back in her chair, with her small hands over her eyes, leaving me trembling.

“Are we related,” I used to ask; “what can you mean by all this? I remind you perhaps of someone whom you love; but you must not, I hate it; I don’t know you—I don’t know myself when you look so and talk so.”

She used to sigh at my vehemence, then turn away and drop my hand.

Respecting these very extraordinary manifestations I strove in vain to form any satisfactory theory—I could not refer them to affectation or trick. It was unmistakably the momentary breaking out of suppressed instinct and emotion. Was she, notwithstanding her mother’s volunteered denial, subject to brief visitations of insanity; or was there here a disguise and a romance? I had read in old storybooks of such things. What if a boyish lover had found his way into the house, and sought to prosecute his suit in masquerade, with the assistance of a clever old adventuress. But there were many things against this hypothesis, highly interesting as it was to my vanity.

I could boast of no little attentions such as masculine gallantry delights to offer. Between these passionate moments there were long intervals of commonplace, of gaiety, of brooding melancholy, during which, except that I detected her eyes so full of melancholy fire, following me, at times I might have been as nothing to her. Except in these brief periods of mysterious excitement her ways were girlish; and there was always a languor about her, quite incompatible with a masculine system in a state of health.

In some respects her habits were odd. Perhaps not so singular in the opinion of a town lady like you, as they appeared to us rustic people. She used to come down very late, generally not till one o’clock, she would then take a cup of chocolate, but eat nothing; we then went out for a walk, which was a mere saunter, and she seemed, almost immediately, exhausted, and either returned to the schloss or sat on one of the benches that were placed, here and there, among the trees. This was a bodily languor in which her mind did not sympathize. She was always an animated talker, and very intelligent.

She sometimes alluded for a moment to her own home, or mentioned an adventure or situation, or an early recollection, which indicated a people of strange manners, and described customs of which we knew nothing. I gathered from these chance hints that her native country was much more remote than I had at first fancied.

As we sat thus one afternoon under the trees a funeral passed us by. It was that of a pretty young girl, whom I had often seen, the daughter of one of the rangers of the forest. The poor man was walking behind the coffin of his darling; she was his only child, and he looked quite heartbroken.

Peasants walking two-and-two came behind, they were singing a funeral hymn.

I rose to mark my respect as they passed, and joined in the hymn they were very sweetly singing.

My companion shook me a little roughly, and I turned surprised. She said brusquely, "Don't you perceive how discordant that is?"

"I think it very sweet, on the contrary," I answered, vexed at the interruption, and very uncomfortable, lest the people who composed the little procession should observe and resent what was passing.

I resumed, therefore, instantly, and was again interrupted. "You pierce my ears," said Carmilla, almost angrily, and stopping her ears with her tiny fingers. "Besides, how can you tell that your religion and mine are the same; your forms wound me, and I hate funerals. What a fuss! Why you must die—_everyone_ must die; and all are happier when they do. Come home."

"My father has gone on with the clergyman to the churchyard. I thought you knew she was to be buried today."

"She? I don't trouble my head about peasants. I don't know who she is," answered Carmilla, with a flash from her fine eyes.

"She is the poor girl who fancied she saw a ghost a fortnight ago, and has been dying ever since, till yesterday, when she expired."

"Tell me nothing about ghosts. I shan't sleep tonight if you do."

"I hope there is no plague or fever coming; all this looks very like it," I continued. "The swineherd's young wife died only a week ago,

and she thought something seized her by the throat as she lay in her bed, and nearly strangled her. Papa says such horrible fancies do accompany some forms of fever. She was quite well the day before. She sank afterwards, and died before a week.”

“Well, _her_ funeral is over, I hope, and _her_ hymn sung; and our ears shan’t be tortured with that discord and jargon. It has made me nervous. Sit down here, beside me; sit close; hold my hand; press it hard-hard-harder.”

We had moved a little back, and had come to another seat.

She sat down. Her face underwent a change that alarmed and even terrified me for a moment. It darkened, and became horribly livid; her teeth and hands were clenched, and she frowned and compressed her lips, while she stared down upon the ground at her feet, and trembled all over with a continued shudder as irrepressible as ague. All her energies seemed strained to suppress a fit, with which she was then breathlessly tugging; and at length a low convulsive cry of suffering broke from her, and gradually the hysteria subsided. “There! That comes of strangling people with hymns!” she said at last. “Hold me, hold me still. It is passing away.”

And so gradually it did; and perhaps to dissipate the somber impression which the spectacle had left upon me, she became unusually animated and chatty; and so we got home.

This was the first time I had seen her exhibit any definable symptoms of that delicacy of health which her mother had spoken of. It was the first time, also, I had seen her exhibit anything like temper.

Both passed away like a summer cloud; and never but once afterwards did I witness on her part a momentary sign of anger. I will tell you how it happened.

She and I were looking out of one of the long drawing room windows, when there entered the courtyard, over the drawbridge, a figure of a wanderer whom I knew very well. He used to visit the schloss generally twice a year.

It was the figure of a hunchback, with the sharp lean features that generally accompany deformity. He wore a pointed black beard, and

he was smiling from ear to ear, showing his white fangs. He was dressed in buff, black, and scarlet, and crossed with more straps and belts than I could count, from which hung all manner of things. Behind, he carried a magic lantern, and two boxes, which I well knew, in one of which was a salamander, and in the other a mandrake. These monsters used to make my father laugh. They were compounded of parts of monkeys, parrots, squirrels, fish, and hedgehogs, dried and stitched together with great neatness and startling effect. He had a fiddle, a box of conjuring apparatus, a pair of foils and masks attached to his belt, several other mysterious cases dangling about him, and a black staff with copper ferrules in his hand. His companion was a rough spare dog, that followed at his heels, but stopped short, suspiciously at the drawbridge, and in a little while began to howl dismally.

In the meantime, the mountebank, standing in the midst of the courtyard, raised his grotesque hat, and made us a very ceremonious bow, paying his compliments very volubly in execrable French, and German not much better.

Then, disengaging his fiddle, he began to scrape a lively air to which he sang with a merry discord, dancing with ludicrous airs and activity, that made me laugh, in spite of the dog's howling.

Then he advanced to the window with many smiles and salutations, and his hat in his left hand, his fiddle under his arm, and with a fluency that never took breath, he gabbled a long advertisement of all his accomplishments, and the resources of the various arts which he placed

at our service, and the curiosities and entertainments which it was in his power, at our bidding, to display.

"Will your ladyships be pleased to buy an amulet against the oupire, which is going like the wolf, I hear, through these woods," he said dropping his hat on the pavement. "They are dying of it right and left and here is a charm that never fails; only pinned to the pillow, and you may laugh in his face."

These charms consisted of oblong slips of vellum, with cabalistic ciphers and diagrams upon them.

Carmilla instantly purchased one, and so did I.

He was looking up, and we were smiling down upon him, amused; at least, I can answer for myself. His piercing black eye, as he looked up in our faces, seemed to detect something that fixed for a moment his curiosity. In an instant he unrolled a leather case, full of all manner of odd little steel instruments.

"See here, my lady," he said, displaying it, and addressing me, "I profess, among other things less useful, the art of dentistry. Plague take the dog!" he interpolated. "Silence, beast! He howls so that your ladyships can scarcely hear a word. Your noble friend, the young lady at your right, has the sharpest tooth,—long, thin, pointed, like an awl, like a needle; ha, ha! With my sharp and long sight, as I look up, I have seen it distinctly; now if it happens to hurt the young lady, and I think it must, here am I, here are my file, my punch, my nippers; I will make it round and blunt, if her ladyship pleases; no longer the tooth of a fish, but of a beautiful young lady as she is. Hey? Is the young lady displeased? Have I been too bold? Have I offended her?"

The young lady, indeed, looked very angry as she drew back from the window.

"How dares that mountebank insult us so? Where is your father? I shall demand redress from him. My father would have had the wretch tied up to the pump, and flogged with a cart whip, and burnt to the bones with the cattle brand!"

She retired from the window a step or two, and sat down, and had hardly lost sight of the offender, when her wrath subsided as suddenly as it had risen, and she gradually recovered her usual tone, and seemed to forget the little hunchback and his follies.

My father was out of spirits that evening. On coming in he told us that there had been another case very similar to the two fatal ones which had lately occurred. The sister of a young peasant on his estate, only a mile away, was very ill, had been, as she described it, attacked very nearly in the same way, and was now slowly but steadily sinking.

"All this," said my father, "is strictly referable to natural causes. These poor people infect one another with their superstitions, and

so repeat in imagination the images of terror that have infested their neighbors.”

“But that very circumstance frightens one horribly,” said Carmilla.

“How so?” inquired my father.

“I am so afraid of fancying I see such things; I think it would be as bad as reality.”

“We are in God’s hands: nothing can happen without his permission, and all will end well for those who love him. He is our faithful creator; He has made us all, and will take care of us.”

“Creator! _Nature!_” said the young lady in answer to my gentle father. “And this disease that invades the country is natural. Nature. All things proceed from Nature—don’t they? All things in the heaven, in the earth, and under the earth, act and live as Nature ordains? I think so.”

“The doctor said he would come here today,” said my father, after a silence. “I want to know what he thinks about it, and what he thinks we had better do.”

“Doctors never did me any good,” said Carmilla.

“Then you have been ill?” I asked.

“More ill than ever you were,” she answered.

“Long ago?”

“Yes, a long time. I suffered from this very illness; but I forget all but my pain and weakness, and they were not so bad as are suffered in other diseases.”

“You were very young then?”

“I dare say, let us talk no more of it. You would not wound a friend?”

She looked languidly in my eyes, and passed her arm round my waist lovingly, and led me out of the room. My father was busy over some papers near the window.

“Why does your papa like to frighten us?” said the pretty girl with a sigh and a little shudder.

“He doesn’t, dear Carmilla, it is the very furthest thing from his mind.”

“Are you afraid, dearest?”

"I should be very much if I fancied there was any real danger of my being attacked as those poor people were."

"You are afraid to die?"

"Yes, every one is."

"But to die as lovers may—to die together, so that they may live together.

"Girls are caterpillars while they live in the world, to be finally butterflies when the summer comes; but in the meantime there are grubs and larvae, don't you see—each with their peculiar propensities, necessities and structure. So says Monsieur Buffon, in his big book, in the next room."

Later in the day the doctor came, and was closeted with papa for some time.

He was a skilful man, of sixty and upwards, he wore powder, and shaved his pale face as smooth as a pumpkin. He and papa emerged from the room together, and I heard papa laugh, and say as they came out:

"Well, I do wonder at a wise man like you. What do you say to hippogriffs and dragons?"

The doctor was smiling, and made answer, shaking his head—

"Nevertheless life and death are mysterious states, and we know little of the resources of either."

And so they walked on, and I heard no more. I did not then know what the doctor had been broaching, but I think I guess it now.

V. A Wonderful Likeness

This evening there arrived from Gratz the grave, dark-faced son of the picture cleaner, with a horse and cart laden with two large packing cases, having many pictures in each. It was a journey of ten leagues, and whenever a messenger arrived at the schloss from our

little capital of Gratz, we used to crowd about him in the hall, to hear the news.

This arrival created in our secluded quarters quite a sensation. The cases remained in the hall, and the messenger was taken charge of by the servants till he had eaten his supper. Then with assistants, and armed with hammer, ripping chisel, and turnscrew, he met us in the hall, where we had assembled to witness the unpacking of the cases.

Carmilla sat looking listlessly on, while one after the other the old pictures, nearly all portraits, which had undergone the process of renovation, were brought to light. My mother was of an old Hungarian family, and most of these pictures, which were about to be restored to their places, had come to us through her.

My father had a list in his hand, from which he read, as the artist rummaged out the corresponding numbers. I don't know that the pictures were very good, but they were, undoubtedly, very old, and some of them very curious also. They had, for the most part, the merit of being now seen by me, I may say, for the first time; for the smoke and dust of time had all but obliterated them.

"There is a picture that I have not seen yet," said my father. "In one corner, at the top of it, is the name, as well as I could read, 'Marcia Karnstein,' and the date '1698'; and I am curious to see how it has turned out."

I remembered it; it was a small picture, about a foot and a half high, and nearly square, without a frame; but it was so blackened by age that I could not make it out.

The artist now produced it, with evident pride. It was quite beautiful; it was startling; it seemed to live. It was the effigy of Carmilla!

"Carmilla, dear, here is an absolute miracle. Here you are, living, smiling, ready to speak, in this picture. Isn't it beautiful, Papa? And see, even the little mole on her throat."

My father laughed, and said "Certainly it is a wonderful likeness," but he looked away, and to my surprise seemed but little struck by it, and went on talking to the picture cleaner, who was also something

of an artist, and discoursed with intelligence about the portraits or other works, which his art had just brought into light and color, while I was more and more lost in wonder the more I looked at the picture.

“Will you let me hang this picture in my room, papa?” I asked.

“Certainly, dear,” said he, smiling, “I’m very glad you think it so like. It must be prettier even than I thought it, if it is.”

The young lady did not acknowledge this pretty speech, did not seem to hear it. She was leaning back in her seat, her fine eyes under their long lashes gazing on me in contemplation, and she smiled in a kind of rapture.

“And now you can read quite plainly the name that is written in the corner. It is not Marcia; it looks as if it was done in gold. The name is Mircalla, Countess Karnstein, and this is a little coronet over and underneath A.D. 1698. I am descended from the Karnsteins; that is, mamma was.”

“Ah!” said the lady, languidly, “so am I, I think, a very long descent, very ancient. Are there any Karnsteins living now?”

“None who bear the name, I believe. The family were ruined, I believe, in some civil wars, long ago, but the ruins of the castle are only about three miles away.”

“How interesting!” she said, languidly. “But see what beautiful moonlight!” She glanced through the hall door, which stood a little open. “Suppose you take a little ramble round the court, and look down at the road and river.”

“It is so like the night you came to us,” I said.

She sighed; smiling.

She rose, and each with her arm about the other’s waist, we walked out upon the pavement.

In silence, slowly we walked down to the drawbridge, where the beautiful landscape opened before us.

“And so you were thinking of the night I came here?” she almost whispered.

“Are you glad I came?”

“Delighted, dear Carmilla,” I answered.

“And you asked for the picture you think like me, to hang in your room,” she murmured with a sigh, as she drew her arm closer about my waist, and let her pretty head sink upon my shoulder. “How romantic you are, Carmilla,” I said. “Whenever you tell me your story, it will be made up chiefly of some one great romance.”

She kissed me silently.

“I am sure, Carmilla, you have been in love; that there is, at this moment, an affair of the heart going on.”

“I have been in love with no one, and never shall,” she whispered, “unless it should be with you.”

How beautiful she looked in the moonlight!

Shy and strange was the look with which she quickly hid her face in my neck and hair, with tumultuous sighs, that seemed almost to sob, and pressed in mine a hand that trembled.

Her soft cheek was glowing against mine. “Darling, darling,” she murmured, “I live in you; and you would die for me, I love you so.”

I started from her.

She was gazing on me with eyes from which all fire, all meaning had flown, and a face colorless and apathetic.

“Is there a chill in the air, dear?” she said drowsily. “I almost shiver; have I been dreaming? Let us come in. Come; come; come in.”

“You look ill, Carmilla; a little faint. You certainly must take some wine,” I said.

“Yes. I will. I’m better now. I shall be quite well in a few minutes. Yes, do give me a little wine,” answered Carmilla, as we approached the door.

“Let us look again for a moment; it is the last time, perhaps, I shall see the moonlight with you.”

“How do you feel now, dear Carmilla? Are you really better?” I asked.

I was beginning to take alarm, lest she should have been stricken with the strange epidemic that they said had invaded the country about us.

“Papa would be grieved beyond measure,” I added, “if he thought you were

ever so little ill, without immediately letting us know. We have a very skilful doctor near us, the physician who was with papa today.”

“I’m sure he is. I know how kind you all are; but, dear child, I am quite well again. There is nothing ever wrong with me, but a little weakness.

“People say I am languid; I am incapable of exertion; I can scarcely walk as far as a child of three years old: and every now and then the little strength I have falters, and I become as you have just seen me. But after all I am very easily set up again; in a moment I am perfectly myself. See how I have recovered.”

So, indeed, she had; and she and I talked a great deal, and very animated she was; and the remainder of that evening passed without any recurrence of what I called her infatuations. I mean her crazy talk and looks, which embarrassed, and even frightened me.

But there occurred that night an event which gave my thoughts quite a new turn, and seemed to startle even Carmilla’s languid nature into momentary energy.

VI. A Very Strange Agony

When we got into the drawing room, and had sat down to our coffee and chocolate, although Carmilla did not take any, she seemed quite herself again, and Madame, and Mademoiselle De Lafontaine, joined us, and made a little card party, in the course of which papa came in for what he called his “dish of tea.”

When the game was over he sat down beside Carmilla on the sofa, and asked her, a little anxiously, whether she had heard from her mother since her arrival.

She answered “No.”

He then asked whether she knew where a letter would reach her at present.

“I cannot tell,” she answered ambiguously, “but I have been thinking of leaving you; you have been already too hospitable and too kind to me. I have given you an infinity of trouble, and I should wish to take a carriage tomorrow, and post in pursuit of her; I know where I shall ultimately find her, although I dare not yet tell you.”

“But you must not dream of any such thing,” exclaimed my father, to my great relief. “We can’t afford to lose you so, and I won’t consent to your leaving us, except under the care of your mother, who was so good as to consent to your remaining with us till she should herself return. I should be quite happy if I knew that you heard from her: but this evening the accounts of the progress of the mysterious disease that has invaded our neighborhood, grow even more alarming; and my beautiful guest, I do feel the responsibility, unaided by advice from your mother,

very much. But I shall do my best; and one thing is certain, that you must not think of leaving us without her distinct direction to that effect. We should suffer too much in parting from you to consent to it easily.”

“Thank you, sir, a thousand times for your hospitality,” she answered, smiling bashfully. “You have all been too kind to me; I have seldom been so happy in all my life before, as in your beautiful chateau, under your care, and in the society of your dear daughter.”

So he gallantly, in his old-fashioned way, kissed her hand, smiling and pleased at her little speech.

I accompanied Carmilla as usual to her room, and sat and chatted with her while she was preparing for bed.

“Do you think,” I said at length, “that you will ever confide fully in me?”

She turned round smiling, but made no answer, only continued to smile on me.

“You won’t answer that?” I said. “You can’t answer pleasantly; I ought not to have asked you.”

“You were quite right to ask me that, or anything. You do not

know how dear you are to me, or you could not think any confidence too great to look for. But I am under vows, no nun half so awfully, and I dare not tell my story yet, even to you. The time is very near when you shall know everything. You will think me cruel, very selfish, but love is always selfish; the more ardent the more selfish. How jealous I am you cannot know. You must come with me, loving me, to death; or else hate me and still come with me, and _hating_ me through death and after. There is no such word as indifference in my apathetic nature.”

“Now, Carmilla, you are going to talk your wild nonsense again,” I said hastily.

“Not I, silly little fool as I am, and full of whims and fancies; for your sake I’ll talk like a sage. Were you ever at a ball?”

“No; how you do run on. What is it like? How charming it must be.”
“I almost forget, it is years ago.”

I laughed.

“You are not so old. Your first ball can hardly be forgotten yet.”

“I remember everything about it—with an effort. I see it all, as divers see what is going on above them, through a medium, dense, rippling, but transparent. There occurred that night what has confused the picture, and made its colours faint. I was all but assassinated in my bed, wounded here,” she touched her breast, “and never was the same since.”

“Were you near dying?”

“Yes, very—a cruel love—strange love, that would have taken my life. Love will have its sacrifices. No sacrifice without blood. Let us go to sleep now; I feel so lazy. How can I get up just now and lock my door?”

She was lying with her tiny hands buried in her rich wavy hair, under her cheek, her little head upon the pillow, and her glittering eyes followed me wherever I moved, with a kind of shy smile that I could not decipher.

I bid her good night, and crept from the room with an uncomfortable sensation.

I often wondered whether our pretty guest ever said her prayers.

I certainly had never seen her upon her knees. In the morning she never came down until long after our family prayers were over, and at night she never left the drawing room to attend our brief evening prayers in the hall.

If it had not been that it had casually come out in one of our careless talks that she had been baptised, I should have doubted her being a Christian. Religion was a subject on which I had never heard her speak a word. If I had known the world better, this particular neglect or antipathy would not have so much surprised me.

The precautions of nervous people are infectious, and persons of a like temperament are pretty sure, after a time, to imitate them. I had adopted Carmilla's habit of locking her bedroom door, having taken into my head all her whimsical alarms about midnight invaders and prowling assassins. I had also adopted her precaution of making a brief search through her room, to satisfy herself that no lurking assassin or robber was "ensconced."

These wise measures taken, I got into my bed and fell asleep. A light was burning in my room. This was an old habit, of very early date, and which nothing could have tempted me to dispense with.

Thus fortified I might take my rest in peace. But dreams come through stone walls, light up dark rooms, or darken light ones, and their persons make their exits and their entrances as they please, and laugh at locksmiths.

I had a dream that night that was the beginning of a very strange agony. I cannot call it a nightmare, for I was quite conscious of being asleep.

But I was equally conscious of being in my room, and lying in bed, precisely as I actually was. I saw, or fancied I saw, the room and its furniture just as I had seen it last, except that it was very dark, and I saw something moving round the foot of the bed, which at first I could not accurately distinguish. But I soon saw that it was a sooty-black animal that resembled a monstrous cat. It appeared to me about four or five feet long for it measured fully the length of the hearthrug as it passed over it; and it continued to-ing and fro-ing with the lithe, sinister restlessness of a beast in a cage. I could

not cry out, although as you may suppose, I was terrified. Its pace was growing faster, and the room rapidly darker and darker, and at length so dark that I could no longer see anything of it but its eyes. I felt it spring lightly on the bed. The two broad eyes approached my face, and suddenly I felt a stinging pain as if two large needles darted, an inch or two apart, deep into my breast. I waked with a scream. The room was lighted by the candle that burnt there all through the night, and I saw a female figure standing at the foot of the bed, a little at the right side. It was in a dark loose dress, and its hair was down and covered its shoulders. A block of stone could not have been more still. There was not the slightest stir of respiration. As I stared at it, the figure appeared to have changed its place, and was now nearer the door; then, close to it, the door opened, and it passed out.

I was now relieved, and able to breathe and move. My first thought was that Carmilla had been playing me a trick, and that I had forgotten to secure my door. I hastened to it, and found it locked as usual on the inside. I was afraid to open it—I was horrified. I sprang into my bed and covered my head up in the bedclothes, and lay there more dead than alive till morning.

VII. Descending

It would be vain my attempting to tell you the horror with which, even now, I recall the occurrence of that night. It was no such transitory terror as a dream leaves behind it. It seemed to deepen by time, and communicated itself to the room and the very furniture that had encompassed the apparition.

I could not bear next day to be alone for a moment. I should have told papa, but for two opposite reasons. At one time I thought he would laugh at my story, and I could not bear its being treated as a jest; and at another I thought he might fancy that I had been

attacked by the mysterious complaint which had invaded our neighborhood. I had myself no misgiving of the kind, and as he had been rather an invalid for some time, I was afraid of alarming him.

I was comfortable enough with my good-natured companions, Madame Perrodon, and the vivacious Mademoiselle Lafontaine. They both perceived that I was out of spirits and nervous, and at length I told them what lay so heavy at my heart.

Mademoiselle laughed, but I fancied that Madame Perrodon looked anxious.

“By-the-by,” said Mademoiselle, laughing, “the long lime tree walk, behind Carmilla’s bedroom window, is haunted!”

“Nonsense!” exclaimed Madame, who probably thought the theme rather inopportune, “and who tells that story, my dear?”

“Martin says that he came up twice, when the old yard gate was being repaired, before sunrise, and twice saw the same female figure walking down the lime tree avenue.”

“So he well might, as long as there are cows to milk in the river fields,” said Madame.

“I daresay; but Martin chooses to be frightened, and never did I see fool more frightened.”

“You must not say a word about it to Carmilla, because she can see down that walk from her room window,” I interposed, “and she is, if possible, a greater coward than I.”

Carmilla came down rather later than usual that day.

“I was so frightened last night,” she said, so soon as were together, “and I am sure I should have seen something dreadful if it had not been for that charm I bought from the poor little hunchback whom I called such hard names. I had a dream of something black coming round my bed, and I awoke in a perfect horror, and I really thought, for some seconds, I saw a dark figure near the chimney-piece, but I felt under my pillow for my charm, and the moment my fingers touched it, the figure disappeared, and I felt quite certain, only that I had it by me, that something frightful would have made its appearance, and, perhaps, throttled me, as it did those poor people we heard of.

“Well, listen to me,” I began, and recounted my adventure, at the recital of which she appeared horrified.

“And had you the charm near you?” she asked, earnestly.

“No, I had dropped it into a china vase in the drawing room, but I shall certainly take it with me tonight, as you have so much faith in it.”

At this distance of time I cannot tell you, or even understand, how I overcame my horror so effectually as to lie alone in my room that night. I remember distinctly that I pinned the charm to my pillow. I fell asleep almost immediately, and slept even more soundly than usual all night.

Next night I passed as well. My sleep was delightfully deep and dreamless.

But I wakened with a sense of lassitude and melancholy, which, however, did not exceed a degree that was almost luxurious.

“Well, I told you so,” said Carmilla, when I described my quiet sleep, “I had such delightful sleep myself last night; I pinned the charm to the breast of my nightdress. It was too far away the night before. I am quite sure it was all fancy, except the dreams. I used to think that evil spirits made dreams, but our doctor told me it is no such thing. Only a fever passing by, or some other malady, as they often do, he said, knocks at the door, and not being able to get in, passes on, with that alarm.”

“And what do you think the charm is?” said I.

“It has been fumigated or immersed in some drug, and is an antidote against the malaria,” she answered.

“Then it acts only on the body?”

“Certainly; you don’t suppose that evil spirits are frightened by bits of ribbon, or the perfumes of a druggist’s shop? No, these complaints, wandering in the air, begin by trying the nerves, and so infect the brain, but before they can seize upon you, the antidote repels them. That I am sure is what the charm has done for us. It is nothing magical, it is simply natural.”

I should have been happier if I could have quite agreed with

Carmilla, but I did my best, and the impression was a little losing its force.

For some nights I slept profoundly; but still every morning I felt the same lassitude, and a languor weighed upon me all day. I felt myself a changed girl. A strange melancholy was stealing over me, a melancholy that I would not have interrupted. Dim thoughts of death began to open, and an idea that I was slowly sinking took gentle, and, somehow, not unwelcome, possession of me. If it was sad, the tone of mind which this induced was also sweet.

Whatever it might be, my soul acquiesced in it.

I would not admit that I was ill, I would not consent to tell my papa, or to have the doctor sent for.

Carmilla became more devoted to me than ever, and her strange paroxysms of languid adoration more frequent. She used to gloat on me with increasing ardor the more my strength and spirits waned. This always shocked me like a momentary glare of insanity.

Without knowing it, I was now in a pretty advanced stage of the strangest illness under which mortal ever suffered. There was an unaccountable fascination in its earlier symptoms that more than reconciled me to the incapacitating effect of that stage of the malady. This fascination increased for a time, until it reached a certain point, when gradually a sense of the horrible mingled itself with it, deepening, as you shall hear, until it discolored and perverted the whole state of my life.

The first change I experienced was rather agreeable. It was very near the turning point from which began the descent of Avernus.

Certain vague and strange sensations visited me in my sleep. The prevailing one was of that pleasant, peculiar cold thrill which we feel in bathing, when we move against the current of a river. This was soon accompanied by dreams that seemed interminable, and were so vague that I could never recollect their scenery and persons, or any one connected portion of their action. But they left an awful impression, and a sense of exhaustion, as if I had passed through a long period of great mental exertion and danger.

After all these dreams there remained on waking a remembrance

of having been in a place very nearly dark, and of having spoken to people whom I could not see; and especially of one clear voice, of a female's, very deep, that spoke as if at a distance, slowly, and producing always the same sensation of indescribable solemnity and fear. Sometimes there came a sensation as if a hand was drawn softly along my cheek and neck. Sometimes it was as if warm lips kissed me, and longer and longer and more lovingly as they reached my throat, but there the caress fixed

itself. My heart beat faster, my breathing rose and fell rapidly and full drawn; a sobbing, that rose into a sense of strangulation, supervened, and turned into a dreadful convulsion, in which my senses left me and I became unconscious.

It was now three weeks since the commencement of this unaccountable state.

My sufferings had, during the last week, told upon my appearance. I had grown pale, my eyes were dilated and darkened underneath, and the languor which I had long felt began to display itself in my countenance.

My father asked me often whether I was ill; but, with an obstinacy which now seems to me unaccountable, I persisted in assuring him that I was quite well.

In a sense this was true. I had no pain, I could complain of no bodily derangement. My complaint seemed to be one of the imagination, or the nerves, and, horrible as my sufferings were, I kept them, with a morbid reserve, very nearly to myself.

It could not be that terrible complaint which the peasants called the oupire, for I had now been suffering for three weeks, and they were seldom ill for much more than three days, when death put an end to their miseries.

Carmilla complained of dreams and feverish sensations, but by no means of so alarming a kind as mine. I say that mine were extremely alarming. Had I been capable of comprehending my condition, I would have invoked aid and advice on my knees. The narcotic of an unsuspected influence was acting upon me, and my perceptions were benumbed.

I am going to tell you now of a dream that led immediately to an odd discovery.

One night, instead of the voice I was accustomed to hear in the dark, I heard one, sweet and tender, and at the same time terrible, which said, "Your mother warns you to beware of the assassin." At the same time a light unexpectedly sprang up, and I saw Carmilla, standing, near the foot of my bed, in her white nightdress, bathed, from her chin to her feet, in one great stain of blood.

I wakened with a shriek, possessed with the one idea that Carmilla was being murdered. I remember springing from my bed, and my next recollection is that of standing on the lobby, crying for help.

Madame and Mademoiselle came scurrying out of their rooms in alarm; a lamp burned always on the lobby, and seeing me, they soon learned the cause of my terror.

I insisted on our knocking at Carmilla's door. Our knocking was unanswered.

It soon became a pounding and an uproar. We shrieked her name, but all was vain.

We all grew frightened, for the door was locked. We hurried back, in

panic, to my room. There we rang the bell long and furiously. If my father's room had been at that side of the house, we would have called him up at once to our aid. But, alas! he was quite out of hearing, and to reach him involved an excursion for which we none of us had courage.

Servants, however, soon came running up the stairs; I had got on my dressing gown and slippers meanwhile, and my companions were already similarly furnished. Recognizing the voices of the servants on the lobby, we sallied out together; and having renewed, as fruitlessly, our summons at Carmilla's door, I ordered the men to force the lock. They did so, and we stood, holding our lights aloft, in the doorway, and so stared into the room.

We called her by name; but there was still no reply. We looked round the room. Everything was undisturbed. It was exactly in the

state in which I had left it on bidding her good night. But Carmilla was gone.

VIII. Search

At sight of the room, perfectly undisturbed except for our violent entrance, we began to cool a little, and soon recovered our senses sufficiently to dismiss the men. It had struck Mademoiselle that possibly Carmilla had been wakened by the uproar at her door, and in her first panic had jumped from her bed, and hid herself in a press, or behind a curtain, from which she could not, of course, emerge until the majordomo and his myrmidons had withdrawn. We now recommenced our search, and began to call her name again.

It was all to no purpose. Our perplexity and agitation increased. We examined the windows, but they were secured. I implored of Carmilla, if she had concealed herself, to play this cruel trick no longer—to come out and to end our anxieties. It was all useless. I was by this time convinced that she was not in the room, nor in the dressing room, the door of which was still locked on this side. She could not have passed it. I was utterly puzzled. Had Carmilla discovered one of those secret passages which the old housekeeper said were known to exist in the schloss, although the tradition of their exact situation had been lost? A little time would, no doubt, explain all—utterly perplexed as, for the present, we were.

It was past four o'clock, and I preferred passing the remaining hours of darkness in Madame's room. Daylight brought no solution of the difficulty.

The whole household, with my father at its head, was in a state of agitation next morning. Every part of the chateau was searched. The grounds were explored. No trace of the missing lady could be discovered. The stream was about to be dragged; my father was in distraction; what a tale to have to tell the poor girl's mother on her

return. I, too, was almost beside myself, though my grief was quite of a different kind.

The morning was passed in alarm and excitement. It was now one o'clock, and still no tidings. I ran up to Carmilla's room, and found her

standing at her dressing table. I was astounded. I could not believe my eyes. She beckoned me to her with her pretty finger, in silence. Her face expressed extreme fear.

I ran to her in an ecstasy of joy; I kissed and embraced her again and again. I ran to the bell and rang it vehemently, to bring others to the spot who might at once relieve my father's anxiety.

"Dear Carmilla, what has become of you all this time? We have been in agonies of anxiety about you," I exclaimed. "Where have you been? How did you come back?"

"Last night has been a night of wonders," she said.

"For mercy's sake, explain all you can."

"It was past two last night," she said, "when I went to sleep as usual in my bed, with my doors locked, that of the dressing room, and that opening upon the gallery. My sleep was uninterrupted, and, so far as I know, dreamless; but I woke just now on the sofa in the dressing room there, and I found the door between the rooms open, and the other door forced. How could all this have happened without my being wakened? It must have been accompanied with a great deal of noise, and I am particularly easily wakened; and how could I have been carried out of my bed without my sleep having been interrupted, I whom the slightest stir startles?"

By this time, Madame, Mademoiselle, my father, and a number of the servants were in the room. Carmilla was, of course, overwhelmed with inquiries, congratulations, and welcomes. She had but one story to tell, and seemed the least able of all the party to suggest any way of accounting for what had happened.

My father took a turn up and down the room, thinking. I saw Carmilla's eye follow him for a moment with a sly, dark glance.

When my father had sent the servants away, Mademoiselle having gone in search of a little bottle of valerian and salvolatile, and there

being no one now in the room with Carmilla, except my father, Madame, and myself, he came to her thoughtfully, took her hand very kindly, led her to the sofa, and sat down beside her.

“Will you forgive me, my dear, if I risk a conjecture, and ask a question?”

“Who can have a better right?” she said. “Ask what you please, and I will tell you everything. But my story is simply one of bewilderment and darkness. I know absolutely nothing. Put any question you please, but you know, of course, the limitations mamma has placed me under.”

“Perfectly, my dear child. I need not approach the topics on which she desires our silence. Now, the marvel of last night consists in your having been removed from your bed and your room, without being wakened, and this removal having occurred apparently while the windows were still secured, and the two doors locked upon the inside. I will tell you my theory and ask you a question.”

Carmilla was leaning on her hand dejectedly; Madame and I were listening breathlessly.

“Now, my question is this. Have you ever been suspected of walking in your sleep?”

“Never, since I was very young indeed.”

“But you did walk in your sleep when you were young?”

“Yes; I know I did. I have been told so often by my old nurse.” My father smiled and nodded.

“Well, what has happened is this. You got up in your sleep, unlocked the door, not leaving the key, as usual, in the lock, but taking it out and locking it on the outside; you again took the key out, and carried it away with you to some one of the five-and-twenty rooms on this floor, or perhaps upstairs or downstairs. There are so many rooms and closets, so much heavy furniture, and such accumulations of lumber, that it would require a week to search this old house thoroughly. Do you see, now, what I mean?”

“I do, but not all,” she answered.

“And how, papa, do you account for her finding herself on the sofa in the dressing room, which we had searched so carefully?”

“She came there after you had searched it, still in her sleep, and at last awoke spontaneously, and was as much surprised to find herself where she was as any one else. I wish all mysteries were as easily and innocently explained as yours, Carmilla,” he said, laughing. “And so we may congratulate ourselves on the certainty that the most natural explanation of the occurrence is one that involves no drugging, no tampering with locks, no burglars, or poisoners, or witches—nothing that need alarm Carmilla, or anyone else, for our safety.”

Carmilla was looking charmingly. Nothing could be more beautiful than her tints. Her beauty was, I think, enhanced by that graceful languor that was peculiar to her. I think my father was silently contrasting her looks with mine, for he said:

“I wish my poor Laura was looking more like herself”; and he sighed. So our alarms were happily ended, and Carmilla restored to her friends.

IX. The Doctor

As Carmilla would not hear of an attendant sleeping in her room, my father arranged that a servant should sleep outside her door, so that she would not attempt to make another such excursion without being arrested at her own door.

That night passed quietly; and next morning early, the doctor, whom my father had sent for without telling me a word about it, arrived to see me.

Madame accompanied me to the library; and there the grave little doctor, with white hair and spectacles, whom I mentioned before, was waiting to receive me.

I told him my story, and as I proceeded he grew graver and graver.

We were standing, he and I, in the recess of one of the windows, facing one another. When my statement was over, he leaned with

his shoulders against the wall, and with his eyes fixed on me earnestly, with an interest in which was a dash of horror.

After a minute's reflection, he asked Madame if he could see my father. He was sent for accordingly, and as he entered, smiling, he said:

"I dare say, doctor, you are going to tell me that I am an old fool for having brought you here; I hope I am."

But his smile faded into shadow as the doctor, with a very grave face, beckoned him to him.

He and the doctor talked for some time in the same recess where I had just conferred with the physician. It seemed an earnest and argumentative conversation. The room is very large, and I and Madame stood together, burning with curiosity, at the farther end. Not a word could we hear, however, for they spoke in a very low tone, and the deep recess of the window quite concealed the doctor from view, and very nearly my father, whose foot, arm, and shoulder only could we see; and the voices were, I suppose, all the less audible for the sort of closet which the thick wall and window formed.

After a time my father's face looked into the room; it was pale, thoughtful, and, I fancied, agitated.

"Laura, dear, come here for a moment. Madame, we shan't trouble you, the doctor says, at present."

Accordingly I approached, for the first time a little alarmed; for, although I felt very weak, I did not feel ill; and strength, one always fancies, is a thing that may be picked up when we please.

My father held out his hand to me, as I drew near, but he was looking at the doctor, and he said:

"It certainly is very odd; I don't understand it quite. Laura, come here, dear; now attend to Doctor Spielsberg, and recollect yourself."

"You mentioned a sensation like that of two needles piercing the skin, somewhere about your neck, on the night when you experienced your first horrible dream. Is there still any soreness?"

"None at all," I answered.

“Can you indicate with your finger about the point at which you think this occurred?”

“Very little below my throat—here,” I answered.

I wore a morning dress, which covered the place I pointed to.

“Now you can satisfy yourself,” said the doctor. “You won’t mind your papa’s lowering your dress a very little. It is necessary, to detect a symptom of the complaint under which you have been suffering.”

I acquiesced. It was only an inch or two below the edge of my collar. “God bless me!—so it is,” exclaimed my father, growing pale.

“You see it now with your own eyes,” said the doctor, with a gloomy triumph.

“What is it?” I exclaimed, beginning to be frightened.

“Nothing, my dear young lady, but a small blue spot, about the size of the tip of your little finger; and now,” he continued, turning to papa, “the question is what is best to be done?”

“Is there any danger?” I urged, in great trepidation.

“I trust not, my dear,” answered the doctor. “I don’t see why you should not recover. I don’t see why you should not begin immediately to get better. That is the point at which the sense of strangulation begins?”

“Yes,” I answered.

“And—recollect as well as you can—the same point was a kind of center of that thrill which you described just now, like the current of a cold stream running against you?”

“It may have been; I think it was.”

“Ay, you see?” he added, turning to my father. “Shall I say a word to Madame?”

“Certainly,” said my father.

He called Madame to him, and said:

“I find my young friend here far from well. It won’t be of any great consequence, I hope; but it will be necessary that some steps be taken, which I will explain by-and-by; but in the meantime, Madame, you will be so good as not to let Miss Laura be alone for

one moment. That is the only direction I need give for the present. It is indispensable.”

“We may rely upon your kindness, Madame, I know,” added my father. Madame satisfied him eagerly.

“And you, dear Laura, I know you will observe the doctor’s direction.”

“I shall have to ask your opinion upon another patient, whose symptoms slightly resemble those of my daughter, that have just been detailed to you—very much milder in degree, but I believe quite of the same sort. She is a young lady—our guest; but as you say you will be passing this way again this evening, you can’t do better than take your supper here, and you can then see her. She does not come down till the afternoon.”

“I thank you,” said the doctor. “I shall be with you, then, at about seven this evening.”

And then they repeated their directions to me and to Madame, and with this parting charge my father left us, and walked out with the doctor; and I saw them pacing together up and down between the road and the moat, on the grassy platform in front of the castle, evidently absorbed in earnest conversation.

The doctor did not return. I saw him mount his horse there, take his leave, and ride away eastward through the forest.

Nearly at the same time I saw the man arrive from Dranfield with the letters, and dismount and hand the bag to my father.

In the meantime, Madame and I were both busy, lost in conjecture as to the reasons of the singular and earnest direction which the doctor and my father had concurred in imposing. Madame, as she afterwards told me, was afraid the doctor apprehended a sudden seizure, and that, without prompt assistance, I might either lose my life in a fit, or at least be seriously hurt.

The interpretation did not strike me; and I fancied, perhaps luckily for my nerves, that the arrangement was prescribed simply to secure a companion, who would prevent my taking too much exercise, or eating unripe fruit, or doing any of the fifty foolish things to which young people are supposed to be prone.

About half an hour after my father came in—he had a letter in his hand—and said:

“This letter had been delayed; it is from General Spielsdorf. He might have been here yesterday, he may not come till tomorrow or he may be here today.”

He put the open letter into my hand; but he did not look pleased, as he used when a guest, especially one so much loved as the General, was coming.

On the contrary, he looked as if he wished him at the bottom of the Red Sea. There was plainly something on his mind which he did not choose to divulge.

“Papa, darling, will you tell me this?” said I, suddenly laying my hand on his arm, and looking, I am sure, imploringly in his face.

“Perhaps,” he answered, smoothing my hair caressingly over my eyes. “Does the doctor think me very ill?”

“No, dear; he thinks, if right steps are taken, you will be quite well again, at least, on the high road to a complete recovery, in a day or two,” he answered, a little dryly. “I wish our good friend, the General, had chosen any other time; that is, I wish you had been perfectly well to receive him.”

“But do tell me, papa,” I insisted, “what does he think is the matter with me?”

“Nothing; you must not plague me with questions,” he answered, with more irritation than I ever remember him to have displayed before; and seeing that I looked wounded, I suppose, he kissed me, and added, “You shall know all about it in a day or two; that is, all that I know. In the meantime you are not to trouble your head about it.”

He turned and left the room, but came back before I had done wondering and puzzling over the oddity of all this; it was merely to say that he was going to Karnstein, and had ordered the carriage to be ready at twelve, and that I and Madame should accompany him; he was going to see the priest who lived near those picturesque grounds, upon business, and as Carmilla had never seen them, she could follow, when she came down, with Mademoiselle, who would

bring materials for what you call a picnic, which might be laid for us in the ruined castle.

At twelve o'clock, accordingly, I was ready, and not long after, my father, Madame and I set out upon our projected drive.

Passing the drawbridge we turn to the right, and follow the road over the steep Gothic bridge, westward, to reach the deserted village and ruined castle of Karnstein.

No sylvan drive can be fancied prettier. The ground breaks into gentle hills and hollows, all clothed with beautiful wood, totally destitute of the comparative formality which artificial planting and early culture and pruning impart.

The irregularities of the ground often lead the road out of its course, and cause it to wind beautifully round the sides of broken hollows and the steeper sides of the hills, among varieties of ground almost inexhaustible.

Turning one of these points, we suddenly encountered our old friend, the General, riding towards us, attended by a mounted servant. His portmanteaus were following in a hired wagon, such as we term a cart.

The General dismounted as we pulled up, and, after the usual greetings, was easily persuaded to accept the vacant seat in the carriage and send his horse on with his servant to the schloss.

X. Bereaved

It was about ten months since we had last seen him: but that time had sufficed to make an alteration of years in his appearance. He had grown

thinner; something of gloom and anxiety had taken the place of that cordial serenity which used to characterize his features. His dark blue eyes, always penetrating, now gleamed with a sterner light from under his shaggy grey eyebrows. It was not such a change as

grief alone usually induces, and angrier passions seemed to have had their share in bringing it about.

We had not long resumed our drive, when the General began to talk, with his usual soldierly directness, of the bereavement, as he termed it, which he had sustained in the death of his beloved niece and ward; and he then broke out in a tone of intense bitterness and fury, inveighing against the “hellish arts” to which she had fallen a victim, and expressing, with more exasperation than piety, his wonder that Heaven should tolerate so monstrous an indulgence of the lusts and malignity of hell.

My father, who saw at once that something very extraordinary had befallen, asked him, if not too painful to him, to detail the circumstances which he thought justified the strong terms in which he expressed himself.

“I should tell you all with pleasure,” said the General, “but you would not believe me.”

“Why should I not?” he asked.

“Because,” he answered testily, “you believe in nothing but what consists with your own prejudices and illusions. I remember when I was like you, but I have learned better.”

“Try me,” said my father; “I am not such a dogmatist as you suppose. Besides which, I very well know that you generally require proof for what you believe, and am, therefore, very strongly predisposed to respect your conclusions.”

“You are right in supposing that I have not been led lightly into a belief in the marvelous—for what I have experienced is marvelous—and I have been forced by extraordinary evidence to credit that which ran counter, diametrically, to all my theories. I have been made the dupe of a preternatural conspiracy.”

Notwithstanding his professions of confidence in the General's penetration, I saw my father, at this point, glance at the General, with, as I thought, a marked suspicion of his sanity.

The General did not see it, luckily. He was looking gloomily and curiously into the glades and vistas of the woods that were opening before us.

"You are going to the Ruins of Karnstein?" he said. "Yes, it is a lucky coincidence; do you know I was going to ask you to bring me there to inspect them. I have a special object in exploring. There is a ruined chapel, ain't there, with a great many tombs of that extinct family?"

"So there are—highly interesting," said my father. "I hope you are thinking of claiming the title and estates?"

My father said this gaily, but the General did not recollect the laugh, or even the smile, which courtesy exacts for a friend's joke; on the contrary, he looked grave and even fierce, ruminating on a matter that stirred his anger and horror.

"Something very different," he said, gruffly. "I mean to unearth some of those fine people. I hope, by God's blessing, to accomplish a pious sacrilege here, which will relieve our earth of certain monsters, and enable honest people to sleep in their beds without being assailed by murderers. I have strange things to tell you, my dear friend, such as I myself would have scouted as incredible a few months since."

My father looked at him again, but this time not with a glance of suspicion—with an eye, rather, of keen intelligence and alarm.

"The house of Karnstein," he said, "has been long extinct: a hundred years at least. My dear wife was maternally descended from the Karnsteins. But the name and title have long ceased to exist. The castle is a ruin; the very village is deserted; it is fifty years since the smoke of a chimney was seen there; not a roof left."

"Quite true. I have heard a great deal about that since I last saw you; a great deal that will astonish you. But I had better relate everything in the order in which it occurred," said the General. "You saw my dear ward—my child, I may call her. No creature could have been more beautiful, and only three months ago none more blooming."

"Yes, poor thing! when I saw her last she certainly was quite lovely," said my father. "I was grieved and shocked more than I can tell you, my dear friend; I knew what a blow it was to you."

He took the General's hand, and they exchanged a kind pressure.

Tears gathered in the old soldier's eyes. He did not seek to conceal them. He said:

"We have been very old friends; I knew you would feel for me, childless as I am. She had become an object of very near interest to me, and repaid my care by an affection that cheered my home and made my life happy. That is all gone. The years that remain to me on earth may not be very long; but by God's mercy I hope to accomplish a service to mankind before I die, and to subserve the vengeance of Heaven upon the fiends who have murdered my poor child in the spring of her hopes and beauty!"

"You said, just now, that you intended relating everything as it occurred," said my father. "Pray do; I assure you that it is not mere curiosity that prompts me."

By this time we had reached the point at which the Drunstall road, by which the General had come, diverges from the road which we were traveling to Karnstein.

"How far is it to the ruins?" inquired the General, looking anxiously forward.

"About half a league," answered my father. "Pray let us hear the story you were so good as to promise."

XI. The Story

"With all my heart," said the General, with an effort; and after a short pause in which to arrange his subject, he commenced one of the strangest narratives I ever heard.

"My dear child was looking forward with great pleasure to the visit you had been so good as to arrange for her to your charming daughter." Here he made me a gallant but melancholy bow. "In the meantime we had an invitation to my old friend the Count Carlsfeld, whose schloss is about six leagues to the other side of Karnstein. It

was to attend the series of fetes which, you remember, were given by him in honor of his illustrious visitor, the Grand Duke Charles.”

“Yes; and very splendid, I believe, they were,” said my father.

“Princely! But then his hospitalities are quite regal. He has Aladdin’s lamp. The night from which my sorrow dates was devoted to a magnificent masquerade. The grounds were thrown open, the trees hung with colored lamps. There was such a display of fireworks as Paris itself had never witnessed. And such music—music, you know, is my weakness—such ravishing music! The finest instrumental band, perhaps, in the world, and the finest singers who could be collected from all the great operas in Europe. As you wandered through these fantastically illuminated grounds, the moon-lighted chateau throwing a rosy light from its long rows of windows, you would suddenly hear these ravishing voices stealing from the silence of some grove, or rising from boats upon the lake. I felt myself, as I looked and listened, carried back into the romance and poetry of my early youth.

“When the fireworks were ended, and the ball beginning, we returned to the noble suite of rooms that were thrown open to the dancers. A masked ball, you know, is a beautiful sight; but so brilliant a spectacle of the kind I never saw before.

“It was a very aristocratic assembly. I was myself almost the only ‘nobody’ present.

“My dear child was looking quite beautiful. She wore no mask. Her excitement and delight added an unspeakable charm to her features, always lovely. I remarked a young lady, dressed magnificently, but wearing a mask, who appeared to me to be observing my ward with extraordinary interest. I had seen her, earlier in the evening, in the great hall, and again, for a few minutes, walking near us, on the terrace under the castle windows, similarly employed. A lady, also masked, richly and gravely dressed, and with a stately air, like a person of rank, accompanied her as a chaperon.

“Had the young lady not worn a mask, I could, of course, have been much more certain upon the question whether she was really watching my poor darling.

“I am now well assured that she was.

“We were now in one of the salons. My poor dear child had been dancing, and was resting a little in one of the chairs near the door; I was standing near. The two ladies I have mentioned had approached and the younger took the chair next my ward; while her companion stood beside me, and for a little time addressed herself, in a low tone, to her charge.

“Availing herself of the privilege of her mask, she turned to me, and in the tone of an old friend, and calling me by my name, opened a conversation with me, which piqued my curiosity a good deal. She referred to many scenes where she had met me—at Court, and at distinguished houses. She alluded to little incidents which I had long ceased to think of, but which, I found, had only lain in abeyance in my memory, for they instantly started into life at her touch.

“I became more and more curious to ascertain who she was, every moment. She parried my attempts to discover very adroitly and pleasantly. The knowledge she showed of many passages in my life seemed to me all but unaccountable; and she appeared to take a not unnatural pleasure in foiling my curiosity, and in seeing me flounder in my eager perplexity, from one conjecture to another.

“In the meantime the young lady, whom her mother called by the odd name of Millarca, when she once or twice addressed her, had, with the same ease and grace, got into conversation with my ward.

“She introduced herself by saying that her mother was a very old acquaintance of mine. She spoke of the agreeable audacity which a mask rendered practicable; she talked like a friend; she admired her dress, and insinuated very prettily her admiration of her beauty. She amused her with laughing criticisms upon the people who crowded the ballroom, and laughed at my poor child’s fun. She was very witty and lively when she pleased, and after a time they had grown very good friends, and the young stranger lowered her mask, displaying a remarkably beautiful face. I had never seen it before, neither had my dear child. But though it was new to us, the features were so engaging, as well as lovely, that it was impossible not to feel the attraction powerfully. My poor girl did so. I never saw anyone more

taken with another at first sight, unless, indeed, it was the stranger herself, who seemed quite to have lost her heart to her.

"In the meantime, availing myself of the license of a masquerade, I put not a few questions to the elder lady.

"You have puzzled me utterly," I said, laughing. "Is that not enough? Won't you, now, consent to stand on equal terms, and do me the kindness to remove your mask?"

"Can any request be more unreasonable?" she replied. "Ask a lady to yield an advantage! Beside, how do you know you should recognize me? Years make changes."

"As you see," I said, with a bow, and, I suppose, a rather melancholy little laugh.

"As philosophers tell us," she said; "and how do you know that a sight of my face would help you?"

"I should take chance for that," I answered. "It is vain trying to make yourself out an old woman; your figure betrays you."

"Years, nevertheless, have passed since I saw you, rather since you saw me, for that is what I am considering. Millarca, there, is my daughter; I cannot then be young, even in the opinion of people whom time has taught to be indulgent, and I may not like to be compared with what you remember me. You have no mask to remove. You can offer me nothing in exchange."

"My petition is to your pity, to remove it."

"And mine to yours, to let it stay where it is," she replied.

"Well, then, at least you will tell me whether you are French or German; you speak both languages so perfectly."

"I don't think I shall tell you that, General; you intend a surprise, and are meditating the particular point of attack."

"At all events, you won't deny this," I said, "that being honored by your permission to converse, I ought to know how to address you. Shall I say Madame la Comtesse?"

"She laughed, and she would, no doubt, have met me with another evasion—if, indeed, I can treat any occurrence in an interview every

circumstance of which was prearranged, as I now believe, with the profoundest cunning, as liable to be modified by accident.

“As to that,’ she began; but she was interrupted, almost as she opened her lips, by a gentleman, dressed in black, who looked particularly elegant and distinguished, with this drawback, that his face was the most deadly pale I ever saw, except in death. He was in no masquerade—in the plain evening dress of a gentleman; and he said, without a smile, but with a courtly and unusually low bow:—

“Will Madame la Comtesse permit me to say a very few words which may interest her?”

“The lady turned quickly to him, and touched her lip in token of silence; she then said to me, ‘Keep my place for me, General; I shall return when I have said a few words.’

“And with this injunction, playfully given, she walked a little aside with the gentleman in black, and talked for some minutes, apparently very earnestly. They then walked away slowly together in the crowd, and I lost them for some minutes.

“I spent the interval in cudgeling my brains for a conjecture as to the identity of the lady who seemed to remember me so kindly, and I was thinking of turning about and joining in the conversation between my pretty ward and the Countess’s daughter, and trying whether, by the time she returned, I might not have a surprise in store for her, by having her name, title, chateau, and estates at my fingers’ ends. But at this moment she returned, accompanied by the pale man in black, who said:

“I shall return and inform Madame la Comtesse when her carriage is at the door.’

“He withdrew with a bow.”

XII. A Petition

“Then we are to lose Madame la Comtesse, but I hope only for a few hours,” I said, with a low bow.

“It may be that only, or it may be a few weeks. It was very unlucky his speaking to me just now as he did. Do you now know me?”

“I assured her I did not.

“You shall know me,” she said, “but not at present. We are older and better friends than, perhaps, you suspect. I cannot yet declare myself. I shall in three weeks pass your beautiful schloss, about which I have been making enquiries. I shall then look in upon you for an hour or two, and renew a friendship which I never think of without a thousand pleasant recollections. This moment a piece of news has reached me like a thunderbolt. I must set out now, and travel by a devious route, nearly a hundred miles, with all the dispatch I can possibly make. My perplexities multiply. I am only deterred by the compulsory reserve I practice as to my name from making a very singular request of you. My poor child has not quite recovered her strength. Her horse fell with her, at a hunt which she had ridden out to witness, her nerves have not yet recovered the shock, and our physician says that she must on no account exert herself for some time to come. We came here, in consequence, by very easy stages—hardly six leagues a day. I must now travel day and night, on a mission of life and death—a mission the critical and momentous nature of which I shall be able to explain to you when we meet, as I hope we shall, in a few weeks, without the necessity of any concealment.”

“She went on to make her petition, and it was in the tone of a person from whom such a request amounted to conferring, rather than seeking a favor.

“This was only in manner, and, as it seemed, quite unconsciously. Than the terms in which it was expressed, nothing could be more deprecatory. It was simply that I would consent to take charge of her daughter during her absence.

“This was, all things considered, a strange, not to say, an audacious request. She in some sort disarmed me, by stating and admitting everything that could be urged against it, and throwing herself entirely upon my chivalry. At the same moment, by a fatality that seems to have predetermined all that happened, my poor child came to my side, and, in an undertone, besought me to invite her new friend, Millarca, to pay us a visit. She had just been sounding her, and thought, if her mamma would allow her, she would like it extremely.

“At another time I should have told her to wait a little, until, at least, we knew who they were. But I had not a moment to think in. The two ladies assailed me together, and I must confess the refined and beautiful face of the young lady, about which there was something extremely engaging, as well as the elegance and fire of high birth, determined me; and, quite overpowered, I submitted, and undertook, too easily, the care of the young lady, whom her mother called Millarca.

“The Countess beckoned to her daughter, who listened with grave attention while she told her, in general terms, how suddenly and peremptorily she had been summoned, and also of the arrangement she had made for her under my care, adding that I was one of her earliest and most valued friends.

“I made, of course, such speeches as the case seemed to call for, and found myself, on reflection, in a position which I did not half like.

“The gentleman in black returned, and very ceremoniously conducted the lady from the room.

“The demeanor of this gentleman was such as to impress me with the conviction that the Countess was a lady of very much more importance than her modest title alone might have led me to assume.

“Her last charge to me was that no attempt was to be made to learn more about her than I might have already guessed, until her return. Our distinguished host, whose guest she was, knew her reasons.

“‘But here,’ she said, ‘neither I nor my daughter could safely remain for more than a day. I removed my mask imprudently for a moment, about an hour ago, and, too late, I fancied you saw me. So I resolved to seek an opportunity of talking a little to you. Had I found that you had seen me, I would have thrown myself on your high sense of honor to keep my secret some weeks. As it is, I am satisfied that you did not see me; but if you now suspect, or, on reflection, should suspect, who I am, I commit myself, in like manner, entirely to your honor. My daughter will observe the same secrecy, and I well know that you will, from time to time, remind her, lest she should thoughtlessly disclose it.’

“She whispered a few words to her daughter, kissed her hurriedly twice, and went away, accompanied by the pale gentleman in black, and disappeared in the crowd.

“‘In the next room,’ said Millarca, ‘there is a window that looks upon the hall door. I should like to see the last of mamma, and to kiss my hand to her.’

“We assented, of course, and accompanied her to the window. We looked out, and saw a handsome old-fashioned carriage, with a troop of couriers and footmen. We saw the slim figure of the pale gentleman in black, as he held a thick velvet cloak, and placed it about her shoulders and threw the hood over her head. She nodded to him, and just touched his hand with hers. He bowed low repeatedly as the door closed, and the carriage began to move.

“‘She is gone,’ said Millarca, with a sigh.

“‘She is gone,’ I repeated to myself, for the first time—in the hurried moments that had elapsed since my consent—reflecting upon the folly of my act.

“‘She did not look up,’ said the young lady, plaintively.

“‘The Countess had taken off her mask, perhaps, and did not care to show her face,’ I said; ‘and she could not know that you were in the window.’

“She sighed, and looked in my face. She was so beautiful that I relented. I was sorry I had for a moment repented of my hospitality,

and I determined to make her amends for the unavowed churlishness of my reception.

“The young lady, replacing her mask, joined my ward in persuading me to return to the grounds, where the concert was soon to be renewed. We did so, and walked up and down the terrace that lies under the castle windows.

“Millarca became very intimate with us, and amused us with lively descriptions and stories of most of the great people whom we saw upon the terrace. I liked her more and more every minute. Her gossip without being ill-natured, was extremely diverting to me, who had been so long out of the great world. I thought what life she would give to our sometimes lonely evenings at home.

“This ball was not over until the morning sun had almost reached the horizon. It pleased the Grand Duke to dance till then, so loyal people could not go away, or think of bed.

“We had just got through a crowded saloon, when my ward asked me what had become of Millarca. I thought she had been by her side, and she fancied she was by mine. The fact was, we had lost her.

“All my efforts to find her were vain. I feared that she had mistaken, in the confusion of a momentary separation from us, other people for her new friends, and had, possibly, pursued and lost them in the extensive grounds which were thrown open to us.

“Now, in its full force, I recognized a new folly in my having undertaken the charge of a young lady without so much as knowing her name; and fettered as I was by promises, of the reasons for imposing which I knew nothing, I could not even point my inquiries by saying that the missing young lady was the daughter of the Countess who had taken her departure a few hours before.

“Morning broke. It was clear daylight before I gave up my search. It was not till near two o'clock next day that we heard anything of my missing charge.

“At about that time a servant knocked at my niece's door, to say that he had been earnestly requested by a young lady, who appeared to be in great distress, to make out where she could find the General

Baron Spielsdorf and the young lady his daughter, in whose charge she had been left by her mother.

“There could be no doubt, notwithstanding the slight inaccuracy, that our young friend had turned up; and so she had. Would to heaven we had lost her!

“She told my poor child a story to account for her having failed to recover us for so long. Very late, she said, she had got to the housekeeper’s bedroom in despair of finding us, and had then fallen into a deep sleep which, long as it was, had hardly sufficed to recruit her strength after the fatigues of the ball.

“That day Millarca came home with us. I was only too happy, after all, to have secured so charming a companion for my dear girl.”

XIII. The Woodman

“There soon, however, appeared some drawbacks. In the first place, Millarca complained of extreme languor—the weakness that remained after her late illness—and she never emerged from her room till the afternoon was pretty far advanced. In the next place, it was accidentally discovered, although she always locked her door on the inside, and never disturbed the key from its place till she admitted the maid to assist at her toilet, that she was undoubtedly sometimes absent from her room in the very early morning, and at various times later in the day, before she wished it to be understood that she was stirring. She was repeatedly seen from the windows of the schloss, in the first faint grey of the morning, walking through the trees, in an easterly direction, and looking like a person in a trance. This convinced me that she walked in her sleep. But this hypothesis did not solve the puzzle. How did she pass out from her room, leaving the door locked on the inside? How did she escape from the house without unbarring door or window?

“In the midst of my perplexities, an anxiety of a far more urgent kind presented itself.

“My dear child began to lose her looks and health, and that in a manner so mysterious, and even horrible, that I became thoroughly frightened.

“She was at first visited by appalling dreams; then, as she fancied, by a specter, sometimes resembling Millarca, sometimes in the shape of a beast, indistinctly seen, walking round the foot of her bed, from side to side.

“Lastly came sensations. One, not unpleasant, but very peculiar, she said, resembled the flow of an icy stream against her breast. At a later time, she felt something like a pair of large needles pierce her, a little below the throat, with a very sharp pain. A few nights after, followed a gradual and convulsive sense of strangulation; then came unconsciousness.”

I could hear distinctly every word the kind old General was saying, because by this time we were driving upon the short grass that spreads on either side of the road as you approach the roofless village which had not shown the smoke of a chimney for more than half a century.

You may guess how strangely I felt as I heard my own symptoms so exactly described in those which had been experienced by the poor girl who, but for the catastrophe which followed, would have been at that moment a visitor at my father's chateau. You may suppose, also, how I felt as I heard him detail habits and mysterious peculiarities which were, in fact, those of our beautiful guest, Carmilla!

A vista opened in the forest; we were on a sudden under the chimneys and gables of the ruined village, and the towers and battlements of the dismantled castle, round which gigantic trees are grouped, overhung us from a slight eminence.

In a frightened dream I got down from the carriage, and in silence, for we had each abundant matter for thinking; we soon mounted the ascent, and were among the spacious chambers, winding stairs, and dark corridors of the castle.

“And this was once the palatial residence of the Karnsteins!” said the old General at length, as from a great window he looked out across the village, and saw the wide, undulating expanse of forest. “It was a bad family, and here its bloodstained annals were written,” he continued.

“It is hard that they should, after death, continue to plague the human race with their atrocious lusts. That is the chapel of the Karnsteins, down there.”

He pointed down to the grey walls of the Gothic building partly visible through the foliage, a little way down the steep. “And I hear the axe of a woodman,” he added, “busy among the trees that surround it; he possibly may give us the information of which I am in search, and point out the grave of Mircalla, Countess of Karnstein. These rustics preserve the local traditions of great families, whose stories die out among the rich and titled so soon as the families themselves become extinct.”

“We have a portrait, at home, of Mircalla, the Countess Karnstein; should you like to see it?” asked my father.

“Time enough, dear friend,” replied the General. “I believe that I have seen the original; and one motive which has led me to you earlier than I at first intended, was to explore the chapel which we are now approaching.”

“What! see the Countess Mircalla,” exclaimed my father; “why, she has been dead more than a century!”

“Not so dead as you fancy, I am told,” answered the General.

“I confess, General, you puzzle me utterly,” replied my father, looking at him, I fancied, for a moment with a return of the suspicion I detected before. But although there was anger and detestation, at times, in the old General’s manner, there was nothing flighty.

“There remains to me,” he said, as we passed under the heavy arch of the Gothic church—for its dimensions would have justified its being so styled—“but one object which can interest me during the few years that remain to me on earth, and that is to wreak on her the vengeance which, I thank God, may still be accomplished by a mortal arm.”

“What vengeance can you mean?” asked my father, in increasing amazement.

“I mean, to decapitate the monster,” he answered, with a fierce flush, and a stamp that echoed mournfully through the hollow ruin, and his clenched hand was at the same moment raised, as if it grasped the handle of an axe, while he shook it ferociously in the air.

“What?” exclaimed my father, more than ever bewildered. “To strike her head off!”

“Cut her head off!”

“Aye, with a hatchet, with a spade, or with anything that can cleave through her murderous throat. You shall hear,” he answered, trembling with rage. And hurrying forward he said:

“That beam will answer for a seat; your dear child is fatigued; let her be seated, and I will, in a few sentences, close my dreadful story.”

The squared block of wood, which lay on the grass-grown pavement of the chapel, formed a bench on which I was very glad to seat myself, and in the meantime the General called to the woodman, who had been removing some boughs which leaned upon the old walls; and, axe in hand, the hardy old fellow stood before us.

He could not tell us anything of these monuments; but there was an old man, he said, a ranger of this forest, at present sojourning in the house of the priest, about two miles away, who could point out every monument of the old Karnstein family; and, for a trifle, he undertook to bring him back with him, if we would lend him one of our horses, in little more than half an hour.

“Have you been long employed about this forest?” asked my father of the old man.

“I have been a woodman here,” he answered in his patois, “under the forester, all my days; so has my father before me, and so on, as many generations as I can count up. I could show you the very house in the village here, in which my ancestors lived.”

“How came the village to be deserted?” asked the General.

“It was troubled by revenants, sir; several were tracked to their graves, there detected by the usual tests, and extinguished in the

usual way, by decapitation, by the stake, and by burning; but not until many of the villagers were killed.

“But after all these proceedings according to law,” he continued—“so many graves opened, and so many vampires deprived of their horrible animation—the village was not relieved. But a Moravian nobleman, who happened to be traveling this way, heard how matters were, and being skilled—as many people are in his country—in such affairs, he offered to deliver the village from its tormentor. He did so thus: There being a bright moon that night, he ascended, shortly after sunset, the towers of the chapel here, from whence he could distinctly see the churchyard

beneath him; you can see it from that window. From this point he watched until he saw the vampire come out of his grave, and place near it the linen clothes in which he had been folded, and then glide away towards the village to plague its inhabitants.

“The stranger, having seen all this, came down from the steeple, took the linen wrappings of the vampire, and carried them up to the top of the tower, which he again mounted. When the vampire returned from his prowlings and missed his clothes, he cried furiously to the Moravian, whom he saw at the summit of the tower, and who, in reply, beckoned him to ascend and take them. Whereupon the vampire, accepting his invitation, began to climb the steeple, and so soon as he had reached the battlements, the Moravian, with a stroke of his sword, clove his skull in twain, hurling him down to the churchyard, whither, descending by the winding stairs, the stranger followed and cut his head off, and next day delivered it and the body to the villagers, who duly impaled and burnt them.

“This Moravian nobleman had authority from the then head of the family to remove the tomb of Mircalla, Countess Karnstein, which he did effectually, so that in a little while its site was quite forgotten.”

“Can you point out where it stood?” asked the General, eagerly. The forester shook his head, and smiled.

“Not a soul living could tell you that now,” he said; “besides, they say her body was removed; but no one is sure of that either.”

Having thus spoken, as time pressed, he dropped his axe and departed, leaving us to hear the remainder of the General’s strange story.

XIV. The Meeting

“My beloved child,” he resumed, “was now growing rapidly worse. The physician who attended her had failed to produce the slightest impression on her disease, for such I then supposed it to be. He saw my alarm, and suggested a consultation. I called in an abler physician, from Gratz.

“Several days elapsed before he arrived. He was a good and pious, as well as a learned man. Having seen my poor ward together, they withdrew to my library to confer and discuss. I, from the adjoining room, where I awaited their summons, heard these two gentlemen’s voices raised in something sharper than a strictly philosophical discussion. I knocked at the door and entered. I found the old physician from Gratz maintaining his theory. His rival was combating it with undisguised ridicule, accompanied with bursts of laughter. This unseemly manifestation subsided and the altercation ended on my entrance.

“‘Sir,’ said my first physician, ‘my learned brother seems to think that you want a conjuror, and not a doctor.’

“‘Pardon me,’ said the old physician from Gratz, looking displeased, ‘I shall state my own view of the case in my own way another time. I grieve, Monsieur le General, that by my skill and science I can be of no use. Before I go I shall do myself the honor to suggest something to you.’

“He seemed thoughtful, and sat down at a table and began to write.

“Profoundly disappointed, I made my bow, and as I turned to

go, the other doctor pointed over his shoulder to his companion who was writing, and then, with a shrug, significantly touched his forehead.

“This consultation, then, left me precisely where I was. I walked out into the grounds, all but distracted. The doctor from Gratz, in ten or fifteen minutes, overtook me. He apologized for having followed me, but said that he could not conscientiously take his leave without a few words more. He told me that he could not be mistaken; no natural disease exhibited the same symptoms; and that death was already very near. There remained, however, a day, or possibly two, of life. If the fatal seizure were at once arrested, with great care and skill her strength might possibly return. But all hung now upon the confines of the irrevocable. One more assault might extinguish the last spark of vitality which is, every moment, ready to die.

“And what is the nature of the seizure you speak of?” I entreated.

“I have stated all fully in this note, which I place in your hands upon the distinct condition that you send for the nearest clergyman, and open my letter in his presence, and on no account read it till he is with you; you would despise it else, and it is a matter of life and death. Should the priest fail you, then, indeed, you may read it.’

“He asked me, before taking his leave finally, whether I would wish to see a man curiously learned upon the very subject, which, after I had read his letter, would probably interest me above all others, and he urged me earnestly to invite him to visit him there; and so took his leave.

“The ecclesiastic was absent, and I read the letter by myself. At another time, or in another case, it might have excited my ridicule. But into what quackeries will not people rush for a last chance, where all accustomed means have failed, and the life of a beloved object is at stake?

“Nothing, you will say, could be more absurd than the learned man’s letter.

“It was monstrous enough to have consigned him to a madhouse.

He said that the patient was suffering from the visits of a vampire! The punctures which she described as having occurred near the throat, were, he insisted, the insertion of those two long, thin, and sharp teeth which, it is well known, are peculiar to vampires; and there could be no doubt, he added, as to the well-defined presence of the small livid mark which all concurred in describing as that induced by the demon's lips, and every symptom described by the sufferer was in exact conformity with those recorded in every case of a similar visitation.

"Being myself wholly skeptical as to the existence of any such portent as the vampire, the supernatural theory of the good doctor furnished, in my opinion, but another instance of learning and intelligence oddly associated with some one hallucination. I was so miserable, however, that, rather than try nothing, I acted upon the instructions of the letter.

"I concealed myself in the dark dressing room, that opened upon the poor patient's room, in which a candle was burning, and watched there till she was fast asleep. I stood at the door, peeping through the small crevice, my sword laid on the table beside me, as my directions prescribed, until, a little after one, I saw a large black object, very ill-defined, crawl, as it seemed to me, over the foot of the bed, and swiftly spread itself up to the poor girl's throat, where it swelled, in a moment, into a great, palpitating mass.

"For a few moments I had stood petrified. I now sprang forward, with my sword in my hand. The black creature suddenly contracted towards the foot of the bed, glided over it, and, standing on the floor about a yard below the foot of the bed, with a glare of skulking ferocity and horror fixed on me, I saw Millarca. Speculating I know not what, I struck at her instantly with my sword; but I saw her standing near the door, unscathed. Horrified, I pursued, and struck again. She was gone; and my sword flew to shivers against the door.

"I can't describe to you all that passed on that horrible night. The whole house was up and stirring. The specter Millarca was gone. But her victim was sinking fast, and before the morning dawned, she died."

The old General was agitated. We did not speak to him. My father walked to some little distance, and began reading the inscriptions on the tombstones; and thus occupied, he strolled into the door of a side chapel to prosecute his researches. The General leaned against the wall, dried his eyes, and sighed heavily. I was relieved on hearing the voices of Carmilla and Madame, who were at that moment approaching. The voices died away.

In this solitude, having just listened to so strange a story, connected, as it was, with the great and titled dead, whose monuments were moldering among the dust and ivy round us, and every incident of which bore so awfully upon my own mysterious case—in this haunted spot, darkened by the towering foliage that rose on every side, dense and high above its noiseless walls—a horror began to steal over me, and my heart sank as I thought that my friends were, after all, not about to enter and disturb this triste and ominous scene.

The old General's eyes were fixed on the ground, as he leaned with his hand upon the basement of a shattered monument.

Under a narrow, arched doorway, surmounted by one of those demoniacal grotesques in which the cynical and ghastly fancy of old Gothic carving delights, I saw very gladly the beautiful face and figure of Carmilla enter the shadowy chapel.

I was just about to rise and speak, and nodded smiling, in answer to her peculiarly engaging smile; when with a cry, the old man by my side caught up the woodman's hatchet, and started forward. On seeing him a

brutalized change came over her features. It was an instantaneous and horrible transformation, as she made a crouching step backwards. Before I could utter a scream, he struck at her with all his force, but she dived under his blow, and unscathed, caught him in her tiny grasp by the wrist. He struggled for a moment to release his arm, but his hand opened, the axe fell to the ground, and the girl was gone.

He staggered against the wall. His grey hair stood upon his head,

and a moisture shone over his face, as if he were at the point of death.

The frightful scene had passed in a moment. The first thing I recollect after, is Madame standing before me, and impatiently repeating again and again, the question, "Where is Mademoiselle Carmilla?"

I answered at length, "I don't know—I can't tell—she went there," and I pointed to the door through which Madame had just entered; "only a minute or two since."

"But I have been standing there, in the passage, ever since Mademoiselle Carmilla entered; and she did not return."

She then began to call "Carmilla," through every door and passage and from the windows, but no answer came.

"She called herself Carmilla?" asked the General, still agitated. "Carmilla, yes," I answered.

"Aye," he said; "that is Millarca. That is the same person who long ago was called Mircalla, Countess Karnstein. Depart from this accursed ground, my poor child, as quickly as you can. Drive to the clergyman's house, and stay there till we come. Begone! May you never behold Carmilla more; you will not find her here."

XV. Ordeal and Execution

As he spoke one of the strangest looking men I ever beheld entered the chapel at the door through which Carmilla had made her entrance and her exit. He was tall, narrow-chested, stooping, with high shoulders, and dressed in black. His face was brown and dried in with deep furrows; he wore an oddly-shaped hat with a broad leaf. His hair, long and grizzled, hung on his shoulders. He wore a pair of gold spectacles, and walked slowly, with an odd shambling gait, with his face sometimes turned up to the sky, and sometimes bowed down towards the ground, seemed to wear a perpetual smile;

his long thin arms were swinging, and his lank hands, in old black gloves ever so much too wide for them, waving and gesticulating in utter abstraction.

“The very man!” exclaimed the General, advancing with manifest delight. “My dear Baron, how happy I am to see you, I had no hope of meeting you so soon.” He signed to my father, who had by this time returned, and leading the fantastic old gentleman, whom he called the Baron to meet him. He introduced him formally, and they at once entered into earnest

conversation. The stranger took a roll of paper from his pocket, and spread it on the worn surface of a tomb that stood by. He had a pencil case in his fingers, with which he traced imaginary lines from point to point on the paper, which from their often glancing from it, together, at certain points of the building, I concluded to be a plan of the chapel. He accompanied, what I may term, his lecture, with occasional readings from a dirty little book, whose yellow leaves were closely written over.

They sauntered together down the side aisle, opposite to the spot where I was standing, conversing as they went; then they began measuring distances by paces, and finally they all stood together, facing a piece of the sidewall, which they began to examine with great minuteness; pulling off the ivy that clung over it, and rapping the plaster with the ends of their sticks, scraping here, and knocking there. At length they ascertained the existence of a broad marble tablet, with letters carved in relief upon it.

With the assistance of the woodman, who soon returned, a monumental inscription, and carved escutcheon, were disclosed. They proved to be those of the long lost monument of Mircalla, Countess Karnstein.

The old General, though not I fear given to the praying mood, raised his hands and eyes to heaven, in mute thanksgiving for some moments.

“Tomorrow,” I heard him say; “the commissioner will be here, and the Inquisition will be held according to law.”

Then turning to the old man with the gold spectacles, whom I have described, he shook him warmly by both hands and said:

“Baron, how can I thank you? How can we all thank you? You will have delivered this region from a plague that has scourged its inhabitants for more than a century. The horrible enemy, thank God, is at last tracked.”

My father led the stranger aside, and the General followed. I know that he had led them out of hearing, that he might relate my case, and I saw them glance often quickly at me, as the discussion proceeded.

My father came to me, kissed me again and again, and leading me from the chapel, said:

“It is time to return, but before we go home, we must add to our party the good priest, who lives but a little way from this; and persuade him to accompany us to the schloss.”

In this quest we were successful: and I was glad, being unspeakably fatigued when we reached home. But my satisfaction was changed to dismay, on discovering that there were no tidings of Carmilla. Of the scene that had occurred in the ruined chapel, no explanation was offered to me, and it was clear that it was a secret which my father for the present determined to keep from me.

The sinister absence of Carmilla made the remembrance of the scene more horrible to me. The arrangements for the night were singular. Two servants, and Madame were to sit up in my room that night; and the

ecclesiastic with my father kept watch in the adjoining dressing room.

The priest had performed certain solemn rites that night, the purport of which I did not understand any more than I comprehended the reason of this extraordinary precaution taken for my safety during sleep.

I saw all clearly a few days later.

The disappearance of Carmilla was followed by the discontinuance of my nightly sufferings.

You have heard, no doubt, of the appalling superstition that

prevails in Upper and Lower Styria, in Moravia, Silesia, in Turkish Serbia, in Poland, even in Russia; the superstition, so we must call it, of the Vampire.

If human testimony, taken with every care and solemnity, judicially, before commissions innumerable, each consisting of many members, all chosen for integrity and intelligence, and constituting reports more voluminous perhaps than exist upon any one other class of cases, is

worth anything, it is difficult to deny, or even to doubt the existence of such a phenomenon as the Vampire.

For my part I have heard no theory by which to explain what I myself have witnessed and experienced, other than that supplied by the ancient and well-attested belief of the country.

The next day the formal proceedings took place in the Chapel of Karnstein.

The grave of the Countess Mircalla was opened; and the General and my father recognized each his perfidious and beautiful guest, in the face now disclosed to view. The features, though a hundred and fifty years had passed since her funeral, were tinted with the warmth of life. Her eyes were open; no cadaverous smell exhaled from the coffin. The two medical men, one officially present, the other on the part of the promoter of the inquiry, attested the marvelous fact that there was a faint but appreciable respiration, and a corresponding action of the heart. The limbs were perfectly flexible, the flesh elastic; and the leaden coffin floated with blood, in which to a depth of seven inches, the body lay immersed.

Here then, were all the admitted signs and proofs of vampirism. The body, therefore, in accordance with the ancient practice, was raised, and a sharp stake driven through the heart of the vampire, who uttered a piercing shriek at the moment, in all respects such as might escape from a living person in the last agony. Then the head was struck off, and a torrent of blood flowed from the severed neck. The body and head was next placed on a pile of wood, and reduced to ashes, which were thrown upon the river and borne

away, and that territory has never since been plagued by the visits of a vampire.

My father has a copy of the report of the Imperial Commission, with the signatures of all who were present at these proceedings, attached in verification of the statement. It is from this official paper that I have summarized my account of this last shocking scene.

XVI. Conclusion

I write all this you suppose with composure. But far from it; I cannot think of it without agitation. Nothing but your earnest desire so repeatedly expressed, could have induced me to sit down to a task that has unstrung my nerves for months to come, and reinduced a shadow of the unspeakable horror which years after my deliverance continued to make my days and nights dreadful, and solitude insupportably terrific.

Let me add a word or two about that quaint Baron Vordenburg, to whose curious lore we were indebted for the discovery of the Countess Mircalla's grave.

He had taken up his abode in Gratz, where, living upon a mere pittance, which was all that remained to him of the once princely estates of his family, in Upper Styria, he devoted himself to the minute and laborious investigation of the marvelously authenticated tradition of Vampirism. He had at his fingers' ends all the great and little works upon the subject.

"*Magia Posthuma*," "*Phlegon de Mirabilibus*," "*Augustinus de cura pro Mortuis*," "*Philosophicae et Christianae Cogitationes de Vampiris*," by John Christofer Herenberg; and a thousand others, among which I remember only a few of those which he lent to my father. He had a voluminous digest of all the judicial cases, from which he had extracted a system of principles that appear to govern—some always, and others occasionally only—the condition

of the vampire. I may mention, in passing, that the deadly pallor attributed to that sort of revenants, is a mere melodramatic fiction. They present, in the grave, and when they show themselves in human society, the appearance of healthy life. When disclosed to light in their coffins, they exhibit all the symptoms that are enumerated as those which proved the vampire-life of the long-dead Countess Karnstein.

How they escape from their graves and return to them for certain hours every day, without displacing the clay or leaving any trace of disturbance in the state of the coffin or the cerements, has always been admitted to be utterly inexplicable. The amphibious existence of the vampire is sustained by daily renewed slumber in the grave. Its horrible lust for living blood supplies the vigor of its waking existence. The vampire is prone to be fascinated with an engrossing vehemence, resembling the passion of love, by particular persons. In pursuit of these it will exercise inexhaustible patience and stratagem, for access to a particular object may be obstructed in a hundred ways. It will never desist until it has satiated its passion, and drained the very life of its coveted victim. But it will, in these cases, husband and protract its murderous enjoyment with the refinement of an epicure, and heighten it by the gradual approaches of an artful courtship. In these cases it seems to yearn for something like sympathy and consent. In ordinary ones it goes direct to its object, overpowers with violence, and strangles and exhausts often at a single feast.

The vampire is, apparently, subject, in certain situations, to special

conditions. In the particular instance of which I have given you a relation, Mircalla seemed to be limited to a name which, if not her real one, should at least reproduce, without the omission or addition of a single letter, those, as we say, anagrammatically, which compose it.

Carmilla did this; so did Millarca.

My father related to the Baron Vordenburg, who remained with us for two or three weeks after the expulsion of Carmilla, the story

about the Moravian nobleman and the vampire at Karnstein churchyard, and then he asked the Baron how he had discovered the exact position of the long-concealed tomb of the Countess Mircalla? The Baron's grotesque features puckered up into a mysterious smile; he looked down, still smiling on his worn spectacle case and fumbled with it. Then looking up, he said:

"I have many journals, and other papers, written by that remarkable man; the most curious among them is one treating of the visit of which you speak, to Karnstein. The tradition, of course, discolours and distorts a little. He might have been termed a Moravian nobleman, for he had changed his abode to that territory, and was, beside, a noble. But he was, in truth, a native of Upper Styria. It is enough to say that in very early youth he had been a passionate and favored lover of the beautiful Mircalla, Countess Karnstein. Her early death plunged him into inconsolable grief. It is the nature of vampires to increase and multiply, but according to an ascertained and ghostly law.

"Assume, at starting, a territory perfectly free from that pest. How does it begin, and how does it multiply itself? I will tell you. A person, more or less wicked, puts an end to himself. A suicide, under certain circumstances, becomes a vampire. That specter visits living people in their slumbers; they die, and almost invariably, in the grave, develop into vampires. This happened in the case of the beautiful Mircalla, who was haunted by one of those demons. My ancestor, Vordenburg, whose title I still bear, soon discovered this, and in the course of the studies to which he devoted himself, learned a great deal more.

"Among other things, he concluded that suspicion of vampirism would probably fall, sooner or later, upon the dead Countess, who in life had been his idol. He conceived a horror, be she what she might, of her remains being profaned by the outrage of a posthumous execution. He has left a curious paper to prove that the vampire, on its expulsion from its amphibious existence, is projected into a far more horrible life; and he resolved to save his once beloved Mircalla from this.

“He adopted the stratagem of a journey here, a pretended removal of her remains, and a real obliteration of her monument. When age had stolen upon him, and from the vale of years, he looked back on the scenes he was leaving, he considered, in a different spirit, what he had done, and a horror took possession of him. He made the tracings and notes which have guided me to the very spot, and drew up a confession of the deception that he had practiced. If he had intended any further action in this matter, death prevented him; and the hand of a remote descendant has, too late for many, directed the pursuit to the lair of the beast.”

We talked a little more, and among other things he said was this:

“One sign of the vampire is the power of the hand. The slender hand of Mircalla closed like a vice of steel on the General’s wrist when he raised the hatchet to strike. But its power is not confined to its grasp; it leaves a numbness in the limb it seizes, which is slowly, if ever, recovered from.”

The following Spring my father took me a tour through Italy. We remained away for more than a year. It was long before the terror of recent events subsided; and to this hour the image of Carmilla returns to memory with ambiguous alternations—sometimes the playful, languid, beautiful girl; sometimes the writhing fiend I saw in the ruined church; and often from a reverie I have started, fancying I heard the light step of Carmilla at the drawing room door.

Animals' Rights: Considered in Relation to Social Progress 1892

HENRY SALT

By Henry Salt

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Prefatory Note

The object of the following essay is to set the principle of animals' rights on a consistent and intelligible footing, to show that this principle underlies the various efforts of humanitarian reformers, and to make a clearance of the comfortable fallacies which the apologists of the present system have industriously accumulated. While not hesitating to speak strongly when occasion demanded, I have tried to avoid the tone of irrelevant recrimination so common in these controversies, and thus to give more unmistakable emphasis to the vital points at issue. We have to decide, not whether the practice of fox-hunting, for example, is more, or less, cruel than vivisection, but whether *all* practices which inflict unnecessary pain on sentient beings are not incompatible with the higher instincts of humanity.

I am aware that many of my contentions will appear very ridiculous to those who view the subject from a contrary standpoint, and regard the lower animals as created solely for the pleasure

and advantage of man; on the other hand, I have myself derived an unfailing fund of amusement from a rather extensive study of our adversaries' reasoning. It is a conflict of opinion, wherein in time *alone* can adjudicate: but already there are not a few signs that the laugh will rest ultimately with the humanitarians.

My thanks are due to several friends who have helped me in the preparation of this book; I may mention Mr. Ernest Bell, Mr. Kenneth Romanes, and Mr. W. E. A. Axon. My many obligations to previous writers are acknowledged in the foot-notes and appendices.

H. S. S.

September, 1892.

Chapter I

The Principle of Animals' Rights

have the lower animals "rights?" Undoubtedly—if men have. That is the point I wish to make evident in this opening chapter. But have men rights? Let it be stated at the outset that I have no intention of discussing the abstract theory of natural rights, which, at the present time, is looked upon with suspicion and disfavour by many social reformers, since it has not unfrequently been made to cover the most extravagant and contradictory assertions. But though its phraseology is confessedly vague and perilous, there is nevertheless a solid truth underlying it—a truth which has always been clearly apprehended by the moral faculty, however difficult it may be to establish it on an unassailable logical basis. If men have not "rights"—well, they have an unmistakable intimation of something very similar; a sense of justice which marks the boundary-line where acquiescence ceases and resistance begins; a demand for freedom to live their own life, subject to the necessity of respecting the equal freedom of other people.

Such is the doctrine of rights as formulated by Herbert Spencer. "Every man," he says, "is free to do that which he wills, provided he infringes not the equal liberty of any other man." And again, "Whoever admits that each man must have a certain restricted freedom, asserts that it is *right* he should have this restricted freedom.... And hence the several particular freedoms deducible may fitly be called, as they commonly are called, his *rights*."¹

The fitness of this nomenclature is disputed, but the existence of some real principle of the kind can hardly be called in question; so that the controversy concerning "rights" is little else than an academic battle over words, which leads to no practical conclusion. I shall assume, therefore, that men are possessed of "rights" in the sense of Herbert Spencer's definition; and if any of my readers object to this qualified use of the term, I can only say that I shall be perfectly willing to change the word as soon as a more appropriate one is forthcoming. The immediate question that claims our attention is this —if men have rights, have animals their rights also?

From the earliest times there have been thinkers who, directly or indirectly, answered this question with an affirmative. The Buddhist and Pythagorean canons, dominated perhaps by the creed of reincarnation, included the maxim "not to kill or injure any innocent animal." The humanitarian philosophers of the Roman empire, among whom Seneca and Plutarch and Porphyry were the most conspicuous, took still higher ground in preaching humanity on the broadest principle of universal benevolence. "Since justice is due to rational beings," wrote Porphyry, "how is it possible to evade the admission that we are bound also to act justly towards the races below us?"

It is a lamentable fact that during the churchdom of the middle ages, from the fourth century to the sixteenth, from the time of Porphyry to the time of Montaigne, little or no attention was paid to the question of the rights and wrongs of the lower races. Then,

1. "Justice," pp. 46, 62.

with the Reformation and the revival of learning, came a revival also of humanitarian feeling, as may be seen in many passages of Erasmus and More, Shakespeare and Bacon; but it was not until the eighteenth century, the age of enlightenment and “sensibility,” of which Voltaire and Rousseau were the spokesmen, that the rights of animals obtained more deliberate recognition. From the great Revolution of 1789 dates the period when the world-wide spirit of humanitarianism, which had hitherto been felt by but one man in a million—the thesis of the philosopher or the vision of the poet—began to disclose itself, gradually and dimly at first, as an essential feature of democracy.

A great and far-reaching effect was produced in England at this time by the publication of such revolutionary works as Paine’s “Rights of Man,” and Mary Wollstonecraft’s “Vindication of the Rights of Women;” and looking back now, after the lapse of a hundred years, we can see that a still wider extension of the theory of rights was thenceforth inevitable. In fact, such a claim was anticipated—if only in bitter jest—by a contemporary writer, who furnishes us with a notable instance of how the mockery of one generation may become the reality of the next. There was published anonymously in 1792 a little volume entitled “A Vindication of the Rights of Brutes,”² a *reductio ad absurdum* of Mary Wollstonecraft’s essay, written, as the author informs us, “to evince by demonstrative arguments the perfect equality of what is called the irrational species to the human.” The further opinion is expressed that “after those wonderful productions of Mr. Paine and Mrs. Wollstonecraft, such a theory as the present seems to be necessary.” It *was* necessary; and a very short term of years sufficed to bring it into effect; indeed, the theory had already been put forward by several English pioneers of nineteenth-century humanitarianism.

To Jeremy Bentham, in particular, belongs the high honour of first asserting the rights of animals with authority and persistence. “The

2. Attributed to Thomas Taylor, the Platonist.

legislator," he wrote, "ought to interdict everything which may serve to lead to cruelty. The barbarous spectacles of gladiators no doubt contributed to give the Romans that ferocity which they displayed in their civil wars. A people accustomed to despise human life in their games could not be expected to respect it amid the fury of their passions. It is proper for the same reason to forbid every kind of cruelty towards animals, whether by way of amusement, or to gratify gluttony. Cock-fights, bull-baiting, hunting hares and foxes, fishing, and other amusements of the same kind, necessarily suppose either the absence of reflection or a fund of inhumanity, since they produce the most acute sufferings to sensible beings, and the most painful and lingering death of which we can form any idea. Why should the law refuse its protection to any sensitive being? The time will come when humanity will extend its mantle over everything which breathes. We have begun by attending to the condition of slaves; we shall finish by softening that of all the animals which assist our labours or supply our wants."³

So, too, wrote one of Bentham's contemporaries: "The grand source of the unmerited and superfluous misery of beasts exists in a defect in the constitution of all communities. No human government, I believe, has ever recognized the *jus animalium*, which ought surely to form a part of the jurisprudence of every system founded on the principles of justice and humanity."⁴ A large number of later moralists have followed on the same lines, with the result that the rights of animals have already, to a certain limited extent, been established both in private usage and by legal enactment.

It is interesting to note the exact commencement of this new principle in law. When Lord Erskine, speaking in the House of Lords in 1811, advocated the cause of justice to the lower animals, he was

3. "Principles of Penal Law," chap. xvi.

4. John Lawrence, "Philosophical Treatise on the Moral Duties of Man towards the Brute Creation," 1796.

greeted with loud cries of insult and derision. But eleven years later the efforts of the despised humanitarians, and especially of Richard Martin, of Galway, were rewarded by their first success. The passing of the Ill-treatment of Cattle Bill, commonly known as "Martin's Act," in June, 1822, is a memorable date in the history of humane legislation, less on account of the positive protection afforded by it, for it applied only to cattle and "beasts of burden," than for the invaluable precedent which it created. From 1822 onward, the principle of that *jus animalium* for which Bentham had pleaded, was recognized, however partially and tentatively at first, by English law, and the animals included in the Act ceased to be the mere property of their owners; moreover the Act has been several times supplemented and extended during the past half century.⁵ It is scarcely possible, in the face of this legislation, to maintain that "rights" are a privilege with which none but human beings can be invested; for if *some* animals are already included within the pale of protection, why should not more and more be so included in the future?

For the present, however, what is most urgently needed is some comprehensive and intelligible principle, which shall indicate, in a more consistent manner, the true lines of man's moral relation towards the lower animals. And here, it must be admitted, our position is still far- from satisfactory; for though certain very important concessions have been made, as we have seen, to the demand for the *jus animalium*, they have been made for the most part in a grudging, unwilling spirit, and rather in the interests of *property* than of *principle*; while even the leading advocates of animals' rights seem to have shrunk from basing their claim on the only argument which can ultimately be held to be a really sufficient

5. Viz.: in 1833, 1835, 1849, 1854, 1876, 1884. We shall have occasion, in subsequent chapters, to refer to some of these enactments.

one—the assertion that animals, as well as men, though, of course, to a far less extent than men, are possessed of a distinctive individuality, and, therefore, are in justice entitled to live their lives with a due measure of that “restricted freedom” to which Herbert Spencer alludes. It is of little use to claim “rights” for animals in a vague general way, if with the same breath we explicitly show our determination to subordinate those rights to anything and everything that can be construed into a human “want;” nor will it ever be possible to obtain full justice for the lower races so long as we continue to regard them as beings of a wholly different order, and to ignore the significance of their numberless points of kinship with mankind.

For example, it has been said by a well-known writer on the subject of humanity to animals⁶ that “the life of a brute, having no moral purpose, can best be understood ethically as representing the sum of its *pleasures* ; and the obligation, therefore, of producing the pleasures of sentient creatures must be reduced, in their case, to the abstinence from unnecessary destruction of life.” Now, with respect to this statement, I must say that the notion of the life of an animal having “no moral purpose,” belongs to a class of ideas which cannot possibly be accepted by the advanced humanitarian thought of the present day — it is a purely arbitrary assumption, at variance with our best instincts, at variance with our best science, and absolutely fatal (if the subject be clearly thought out) to any full realization of animals’ rights. If we are ever going to do justice to the lower races, we must get rid of the antiquated notion of a “great gulf” fixed between them and mankind, and must recognize the common bond of humanity that unites all living beings in one universal brotherhood.

As far as any excuses can be alleged, in explanation of the insensibility or inhumanity of the western nations in their treatment

6. "Fraser," November, 1863 ; "The Rights of Man and the Claims of Brutes."

of animals, these excuses may be mostly traced back to one or the other of two theoretical contentions, wholly different in origin, yet alike in this — that both postulate an absolute difference of nature between men and the lower kinds.

The first is the so-called “religious” notion, which awards immortality to man, but to man alone, thereby furnishing (especially in Catholic countries) a quibbling justification for acts of cruelty to animals, on the plea that they “have no souls.” “It should seem,” says a modern writer,⁷ “as if the primitive Christians, by laying so much stress upon a future life, in contradistinction to *this* life, and placing the lower creatures out of the pale of hope, placed them at the same time out of the pale of sympathy, and thus laid the foundation for this utter disregard of animals in the light of our fellow-creatures.” I am aware that a quite contrary argument has, in a few isolated instances, been founded on the belief that animals have “no souls.” Humphry Primatt, for example, says that “cruelty to a brute is an injury irreparable,” because there is no future life to be a compensation for present afflictions ; and there is an amusing story, told by Lecky in his “History of European Morals,” of a certain humanely-minded Cardinal, who used to allow vermin to bite him without hindrance, on the ground that “we shall have heaven to reward us for our sufferings, but these poor creatures have nothing but the enjoyment of this present life.” But this is a rare view of the question which need not, I think, be taken into very serious account; for, on the whole, the denial of immortality to animals (unless, of course, it be also denied to men) tends strongly to lessen their chance of being justly and considerately treated. Among the many humane movements of the present age, none is more significant than the growing inclination, noticeable both in scientific circles and in religious, to believe that mankind and the lower animals

7. Mrs. Jameson, "Book of Thoughts, Memories, and Fancies."

have the same destiny before them, whether that destiny be for immortality or for annihilation.⁸

The second and not less fruitful source of modern inhumanity is to be found in the "Cartesian" doctrine—the theory of Descartes and his followers—that the lower animals are devoid of consciousness and feeling; a theory which carried the "religious" notion a step further, and deprived the animals not only of their claim to a life hereafter, but of anything that could, without mockery, be called a life in the present, since mere "animated machines," as they were thus affirmed to be, could in no real sense be said to *live* at all! Well might Voltaire turn his humane ridicule against this most monstrous contention, and suggest, with scathing irony, that God "had given the animals the organs of feeling, to the end that they might *not* feel!" "The theory of animal automatism," says one of the leading scientists of the present day,⁹ "which is usually attributed to Descartes, can never be accepted by common sense." Yet it is to be feared that it has done much, in its time, to harden "scientific" sense against the just complaints of the victims of human arrogance and oppression.

8. See the article on "Animal Immortality," "The Nineteenth Century," Jan., 1891, by Norman Pearson. The upshot of his argument is, that "if we accept the immortality of the human soul, and also accept its evolutionary origin, we cannot deny the survival, in some form or other, of animal minds."

9. G. J. Romanes, "Animal Intelligence." Prof. Huxley's remarks, in "Science and Culture," give a partial support to Descartes' theory, but do not bear on the moral question of rights. For, though he concludes that animals are probably "sensitive automata," he classes men in the same category.

Let me here quote a most impressive passage from Schopenhauer. " The unpardonable forgetfulness in which the lower animals have hitherto been left by the moralists of Europe is well known. It is pretended that the beasts have no rights. They persuade themselves that our conduct in regard to them has nothing to do with morals, or (to speak the language of their morality) that we have no duties towards animals : a doctrine revolting, gross, and barbarous, peculiar to the west, and having its root in Judaism. In philosophy, however, it is made to rest upon a hypothesis, admitted, in despite of evidence itself, of an absolute difference between man and beast. It is Descartes who has proclaimed it in the clearest and most decisive manner; and in fact it was a necessary consequence of his errors. The Cartesian - Leibnitzian - Wolfian philosophy, with the assistance of entirely abstract notions, had built up the 'rational psychology,' and constructed an immortal *anima rationalis*: but, visibly, the world of beasts, with its very natural claims, stood up against this exclusive monopoly—this *brevet* of immortality decreed to man alone—and silently Nature did what she always does in such cases—she protested. Our philosophers, feeling their scientific conscience quite disturbed, were forced to attempt to consolidate their ' rational psychology ' by the aid of empiricism. They therefore set themselves to work to hollow out between man and beast an enormous abyss, of an immeasurable width; by this they wish to prove to us, in contempt of evidence, an impassable difference."¹⁰

The fallacious idea that the lives of animals have " no moral purpose " is at root connected with these religious and philosophical pretensions which Schopenhauer so powerfully condemns. To live one's own life—to realize one's true self—is the highest moral purpose of man and animal alike; and that animals

10. Schopenhauer's "Foundation of Morality." I quote the passage as translated in Mr. Howard Williams's "Ethics of Diet."

possess their due measure of this sense of individuality is scarcely open to doubt. "We have seen," says Darwin, "that the senses and intuitions, the various emotions and faculties, such as love, memory, attention, curiosity, imitation, reason, etc., of which man boasts, may be found in an incipient, or even sometimes in a well-developed condition, in the lower animals."¹¹ Not less emphatic is the testimony of the Rev. J. G. Wood, who, speaking from a great experience, gives it as his opinion that "the manner in which we ignore individuality in the lower animals is simply astounding." He claims for them a future life, because he is "quite sure that most of the cruelties which are perpetrated on the animals are due to the habit of considering them as mere machines without susceptibilities, without reason, and without the capacity of a future."¹²

This, then, is the position of those who assert that animals, like men, are necessarily possessed of certain limited rights, which cannot be withheld from them as they are now withheld without tyranny and injustice. They have individuality, character, reason; and to have those qualities is to have the right to exercise them, in so far as surrounding circumstances permit.

"Freedom of choice and act," says Otiida, "is the first condition of animal as of human happiness. How many animals in a million have even relative freedom in any moment of their lives? No choice is ever permitted to them; and all their most natural instincts are denied or made subject to authority."¹³ Yet no human being is justified in regarding any animal whatsoever as a meaningless automaton, to be worked, or tortured, or eaten, as the case may be, for the mere object of satisfying the wants or whims of mankind. Together with the destinies and duties that are laid on them and

11. "Descent of Man," chap. iii.

12. "Man and Beast, here and hereafter," 1874.

13. "Fortnightly Review," April, 1892.

fulfilled by them, animals have also the right to be treated with gentleness and consideration, and the man who does not so treat them, however great his learning or influence may be, is, in that respect, an ignorant and foolish man, devoid of the highest and noblest culture of which the human mind is capable.

Something must here be said on the important subject of nomenclature. It is to be feared that the ill-treatment of animals is largely due—or at any rate the difficulty of amending that treatment is largely increased—by the common use of such terms as "brute-beast," "live-stock," etc., which implicitly deny to the lower races that intelligent individuality which is most undoubtedly possessed by them. It was long ago remarked by Bentham, in his "Introduction to Principles of Morals and Legislation," that, whereas human beings are styled *persons*, "other animals, on account of their interests having been neglected by the insensibility of the ancient jurists, stand degraded into the class of *things* ;" and Schopenhauer also has commented on the mischievous absurdity of the idiom which applies the neuter pronoun "it" to such highly organized primates as the dog and the ape.

A word of protest is needed also against such an expression as "dumb animals," which, though often cited as "an immense exhortation to pity,"¹⁴ has in reality a tendency to influence ordinary people in quite the contrary direction, inasmuch as it fosters the idea of an impassable barrier between mankind and their dependents. It is convenient to us men to be deaf to the entreaties of the victims of our injustice ; and, by a sort of grim irony, we therefore assume that it is *they* who are afflicted by some organic incapacity—they are "dumb animals," forsooth ! although a moment's consideration must prove that they have innumerable ways, often quite human in variety and suggestiveness, of uttering their thoughts and emotions.¹⁵ Even the term "animals," as applied

14. In Sir A. Helps's "Animals and their Masters."

15. Let those who think that men are likely to treat animals

to the lower races, is incorrect, and not wholly unobjectionable, since it ignores the fact that *man* is an animal no less than they. My only excuse for using it in this volume is that there is absolutely no other brief term available.

So anomalous is the attitude of man towards the lower animals, that it is no marvel if many humane thinkers have wellnigh despaired over this question. "The whole subject of the brute creation," wrote Dr. Arnold, "is to me one of such painful mystery, that I dare not approach it;" and this (to put the most charitable interpretation on their silence) appears to be the position of the majority of moralists and teachers at the present time. Yet there is urgent need of some key to the solution of the problem; and in no other way can this key be found than by the full inclusion of the lower races within the pale of human sympathy. All the promptings of our best and surest instincts point us in this direction. "It is

with more humanity on account of their dumbness ponder the case of the fish, as exemplified in the following whimsically suggestive passage of Leigh Hunt's "Imaginary Conversations of Pope and Swift." "The Dean once asked a scrub who was fishing, if he had ever caught a fish called the Scream. The man protested that he had never heard of such a fish. 'What!' says the Dean, 'you an angler, and never heard of the fish that gives a shriek when coming out of the water? 'Tis the only fish that has a voice, and a sad, dismal sound it is.' The man asked who could be so barbarous as to angle for a creature that shrieked. 'That,' said the Dean, 'is another matter; but what do you think of fellows that I have seen, whose only reason for hooking and tearing all the fish they can get at, is that they do not scream?'"

abundantly evident," says Lecky,¹⁶ "both from history and from present experience, that the instinctive shock, or natural feelings of disgust, caused by the sight of the sufferings of men, is not generically different from that which is caused by the sight of the suffering of animals."

If this be so—and the admission is a momentous one —can it be seriously contended that the same humanitarian tendency which has already emancipated the slave, will not ultimately benefit the lower races also ? Here, again, the historian of " European Morals" has a significant remark: "At one time," he says, "the benevolent affections embrace merely the family, soon the circle expanding includes first a class, then a nation, then a coalition of nations, then all humanity; and finally its influence is felt in the dealings of man with the animal world. In each of these cases a standard is formed, different from that of the preceding stage, but in each case the same tendency is recognized as virtue."¹⁷

But, it may be argued, vague sympathy with the lower animals is one thing, and a definite recognition of their " rights " is another ; what reason is there to suppose that we shall advance from the former phase to the latter? Just this; that every great liberating movement has proceeded exactly on these lines. Oppression and cruelty are invariably founded on a lack of imaginative sympathy ; the tyrant or tormentor can have no true sense of kinship with the victim of his injustice. When once the sense of affinity is awakened, the knell of tyranny is sounded, and the ultimate concession of "rights" is simply a matter of time. The present condition of the more highly organized domestic animals is in many ways very analogous to that of the negro slaves of a hundred years ago : look back, and you will find in their case precisely the same exclusion from the common pale of humanity; the same hypocritical fallacies, to justify that exclusion ; and, as a consequence, the same deliberate

16. "History of European Morals."

17. "History of European Morals," i. 101.

stubborn denial of their social "rights." Look back—for it is well to do so—and then look forward, and the moral can hardly be mistaken.

We find so great a thinker and writer as Aristotle seriously pondering whether a slave may be considered as in any sense a *man*. In emphasizing the point that friendship is founded on propinquity, he expresses himself as follows : " Neither can men have friendships with horses, cattle, or slaves, considered merely as such ; for a slave is merely a living instrument, and an instrument a living slave. Yet, considered as *a man*, a slave may be an object of friendship, for certain rights seem to belong to all those capable of participating in law and engagement. A slave, then, considered as a man, may be treated justly or unjustly."¹⁸ "Slaves," says Bentham, " have been treated by the law exactly upon the same footing as in England, for example, the inferior races of animals are still. The day *may* come when the rest of the animal creation may acquire those rights which could never have been withholden from them but by the hand of tyranny."¹⁹

Let us unreservedly admit the immense difficulties that stand in the way of this animal enfranchisement. Our relation towards the animals is complicated and embittered by innumerable habits handed down through centuries of mistrust and brutality ; we cannot, in all cases, suddenly relax these habits, or do full justice even where we see that justice will have to be done. A perfect ethic of humaneness is therefore impracticable, if not unthinkable ; and we can attempt to do no more than to indicate in a general way the main principle of animals' rights, noting at the same time the most flagrant particular violations of those rights, and the lines on which the only valid reform can hereafter be effected. But, on the other hand, it may be remembered, for the comfort and encouragement of humanitarian workers, that these obstacles are, after all, only such as are inevitable in each branch of social improvement; for at every

18. "Ethics," book viii.

19. "Principles of Morals and Legislation."

stage of every great reformation it has been repeatedly argued, by indifferent or hostile observers, that further progress is impossible ; indeed, when the opponents of a great cause begin to demonstrate its "impossibility," experience teaches us that that cause is already on the high road to fulfilment.

As for the demand so frequently made on reformers, that they should first explain the details of their scheme —how this and that point will be arranged, and by what process all kinds of difficulties, real or imagined, will be circumvented—the only rational reply is that it is absurd to expect to see the end of a question, when we are now but at its beginning. The persons who offer this futile sort of criticism are usually those who under no circumstances would be open to conviction; they purposely ask for an explanation which, by the very nature of the case, is impossible because it necessarily belongs to a later period of time. It would be equally sensible to request a traveller to enumerate beforehand all the particular things he will see by the way, on pain of being denounced as an unpractical visionary, although he may have a quite sufficient general knowledge of his course and destination.

Our main principle is now clear. If "rights" exist at all—and both feeling and usage indubitably prove that they do exist—they cannot be consistently awarded to men and denied to animals, since the same sense of justice and compassion apply in both cases. "Pain is pain," says an honest old writer,²⁰ "whether it be inflicted on man or on beast; and the creature that suffers it, whether man or beast, being sensible of the misery of it while it lasts, suffers *evil*; and the sufferance of evil, unmeritedly, unprovokedly, where no offence has been given, and no good can possibly be answered by it, but merely to exhibit power or gratify malice, is Cruelty and Injustice in him that occasions it."

I commend this outspoken utterance to the attention of those

20. Humphry Primatt, D.D., author of "The Duty of Mercy to Brute Animals" (1776).

ingenious moralists who quibble about the “discipline ” of suffering, and deprecate immediate attempts to redress what, it is alleged, may be a necessary instrument for the attainment of human welfare. It is, perhaps, a mere coincidence, but it has been observed that those who are most forward to disallow the rights of others, and to argue that suffering and subjection are the natural lot of all living things, are usually themselves exempt from the operation of this beneficent law, and that the beauty of self-sacrifice is most loudly be lauded by those who profit most largely at the expense of their fellow-creatures.

But “nature is one with rapine,” say some, and this Utopian theory of “rights,” if too widely extended, must come in conflict with that iron rule of internecine competition, by which the universe is regulated. But is the universe so regulated ? We note that this very objection, which was confidently relied on a few years back by many opponents of the emancipation of the working-classes, is not heard of in that connection now ! Our learned economists and men of science, who set themselves to play the defenders of the social *status quo*, have seen their own weapons of “natural selection,” “survival of the fittest,” and what not, snatched from their hands and turned against them, and are therefore beginning to explain to us, in a scientific manner, what we untutored humanitarians had previously felt to be true, viz., that competition is not by any means the sole governing law among the human race. We are not greatly dismayed, then, to find the same old bugbear trotted out as an argument against animals’ rights— indeed, we see already unmistakable signs of a similar complete reversal of the scientific judgment.²¹

21. See Prince Kropotkine's articles on "Mutual Aid among Animals," "Nineteenth Century," 1890, where the conclusion is arrived at that "sociability is as much a law of nature as mutual struggle." A similar view is expressed

The charge of "sentimentalism" is frequently brought against those who plead for animals' rights. Now "sentimentalism," if any meaning at all can be attached to the word, must signify an inequality, an ill balance of sentiment, an inconsistency which leads men into attacking one abuse, while they ignore or condone another where a reform is equally desirable. That this weakness is often observable among "philanthropists" on the one hand, and "friends of animals" on the other, and most of all among those acute "men of the world," whose regard is only for themselves, I am not concerned to deny; what I wish to point out is, that the only real safeguard against sentimentality is to take up a consistent position towards the rights of men and of the lower animals alike, and to cultivate a broad sense of universal justice (not "mercy") for all living things. Herein, and herein alone, is to be sought the true sanity of temperament.

It is an entire mistake to suppose that the rights of animals are in any way antagonistic to the rights of men. Let us not be betrayed for a moment into the specious fallacy that we must study human rights first, and leave the animal question to solve itself hereafter; for it is only by a wide and disinterested study of *both* subjects that a solution of either is possible." For he who loves all animated nature," says Porphyry, "will not hate any one tribe of innocent

in the "Study of Animal Life," 1892, by J. Arthur Thomson. "What we must protest against," he says, in an interesting chapter on "The Struggle of Life," "is that one-sided interpretation according to which individualistic competition is nature's sole method of progress... The precise nature of the means employed and ends attained must be carefully considered when we seek from the records of animal evolution support or justification for human conduct."

beings, and by how much greater his love for the whole, by so much the more will he cultivate justice towards a part of them, and that part to which he is most allied." To omit all worthier reasons, it is too late in the day to suggest the indefinite postponement of a consideration of animals' rights, for from a moral point of view, and even from a legislative point of view, we are daily confronted with this momentous problem, and the so-called "practical" people who affect to ignore it are simply shutting their eyes to facts which they find it disagreeable to confront.

Once more then, animals have rights, and these rights consist in the "restricted freedom" to live a natural life—a life, that is, which permits of the individual development—subject to the limitations imposed by the permanent needs and interests of the community. There is nothing quixotic or visionary in this assertion; it is perfectly compatible with a readiness to look the sternest laws of existence fully and honestly in the face. If we must kill, whether it be man or animal, let us kill and have done with it; if we must inflict pain, let us do what is inevitable, without hypocrisy, or evasion, or cant. But (here is the cardinal point) let us first be assured that it is necessary; let us not wantonly trade on the needless miseries of other beings, and then attempt to lull our consciences by a series of shuffling excuses which cannot endure a moment's candid investigation. As Leigh Hunt well says :

"That there is pain and evil, is no rule
That I should make it greater, like a fool."

Thus far of the general principle of animals' rights. We will now proceed to apply this principle to a number of particular cases, from which we may learn something both as to the extent of its present violation, and the possibility of its better observance in the future.

Rudyard Kipling Poetry

RUDYARD KIPLING

“Fuzzy-Wuzzy”

(Soudan Expeditionary Force)

We've fought with many men acrost the seas,
An' some of 'em was brave an' some was not:
The Paythan an' the Zulu an' Burmese;
But the Fuzzy was the finest o' the lot.
We never got a ha'porth's change of 'im:
'E squatted in the scrub an' 'ocked our 'orses,
'E cut our sentries up at Suakim,
An' 'e played the cat an' banjo with our forces.
So 'ere's to you, Fuzzy-Wuzzy, at your 'ome in the Soudan;
You're a pore benighted 'eathen but a first-class fightin' man;
We gives you your certificate, an' if you want it signed
We'll come an' 'ave a romp with you whenever you're inclined.

We took our chanst among the Khyber 'ills,
The Boers knocked us silly at a mile,
The Burman give us Irriwaddy chills,
An' a Zulu impi dished us up in style:
But all we ever got from such as they
Was pop to what the Fuzzy made us swaller;
We 'eld our bloomin' own, the papers say,
But man for man the Fuzzy knocked us 'oller.
Then 'ere's to you, Fuzzy-Wuzzy, an' the missis and the kid;
Our orders was to break you, an' of course we went an' did.
We sloshed you with Martinis, an' it wasn't 'ardly fair;
But for all the odds agin' you, Fuzzy-Wuz, you broke the square.

'E 'asn't got no papers of 'is own,
'E 'asn't got no medals nor rewards,

So we must certify the skill 'e's shown
In usin' of 'is long two-'anded swords:
When 'e's 'oppin' in an' out among the bush
With 'is coffin-'eaded shield an' shovel-spear,
An 'appy day with Fuzzy on the rush
Will last an 'ealthy Tommy for a year.
So 'ere's to you, Fuzzy-Wuzzy, an' your friends which are no more,
If we 'adn't lost some messmates we would 'elp you to deplore.
But give an' take's the gospel, an' we'll call the bargain fair,
For if you 'ave lost more than us, you crumpled up the square!
 'E rushes at the smoke when we let drive,
An', before we know, 'e's 'ackin' at our 'ead;
'E's all 'ot sand an' ginger when alive,
An' 'e's generally shammin' when 'e's dead.
'E's a daisy, 'e's a ducky, 'e's a lamb!
'E's a injia-rubber idiot on the spree,
'E's the on'y thing that doesn't give a damn
For a Regiment o' British Infantee!
So 'ere's to you, Fuzzy-Wuzzy, at your 'ome in the Soudan;
You're a pore benighted 'eathen but a first-class fightin' man;
An' 'ere's to you, Fuzzy-Wuzzy, with your 'ayrick 'ead of 'air –
You big black boundin' beggar – for you broke a British square!

Gunga Din

You may talk o' gin and beer
When you're quartered safe out 'ere,
An' you're sent to penny-fights an' Aldershot it;
But when it comes to slaughter
You will do your work on water,
An' you'll lick the bloomin' boots of 'im that's got it.
Now in Injia's sunny clime,

Where I used to spend my time
 A-servin' of 'Er Majesty the Queen,
 Of all them blackfaced crew
 The finest man I knew
 Was our regimental bhisti, Gunga Din.
 He was "Din! Din! Din!
 You limpin' lump o' brick-dust, Gunga Din!
 Hi! Slippy hitherao!
 Water, get it! Panee lao! [Bring water swiftly.]
 You squidgy-nosed old idol, Gunga Din."
 The uniform 'e wore
 Was nothin' much before,
 An' rather less than 'arf o' that be'ind,
 For a piece o' twisty rag
 An' a goatskin water-bag
 Was all the field-equipment 'e could find.
 When the sweatin' troop-train lay
 In a sidin' through the day,
 Where the 'eat would make your bloomin' eyebrows crawl,
 We shouted "Harry By!" [Mr. Atkins's equivalent for "O brother:"]
 Till our throats were bricky-dry,
 Then we wopped 'im 'cause 'e couldn't serve us all.
 It was "Din! Din! Din!
 You 'eathen, where the mischief 'ave you been?
 You put some juldee in it [Be quick.]
 Or I'll marrow you this minute [Hit you.]
 If you don't fill up my helmet, Gunga Din!"
 'E would dot an' carry one
 Till the longest day was done;
 An' 'e didn't seem to know the use o' fear.
 If we charged or broke or cut,
 You could bet your bloomin' nut,
 'E'd be waitin' fifty paces right flank rear.
 With 'is mussick on 'is back, [Water-skin.]
 'E would skip with our attack,

An' watch us till the bugles made "Retire",
 An' for all 'is dirty 'ide
 'E was white, clear white, inside
 When 'e went to tend the wounded under fire!
 It was "Din! Din! Din!"
 With the bullets kickin' dust-spots on the green.
 When the cartridges ran out,
 You could hear the front-ranks shout,
 "Hi! ammunition-mules an' Gunga Din!"
 I shan't forgit the night
 When I dropped be'ind the fight
 With a bullet where my belt-plate should 'a' been.
 I was chokin' mad with thirst,
 An' the man that spied me first
 Was our good old grinnin', gruntin' Gunga Din.
 'E lifted up my 'ead,
 An' he plugged me where I bled,
 An' 'e guv me 'arf-a-pint o' water-green:
 It was crawlin' and it stunk,
 But of all the drinks I've drunk,
 I'm gratefullest to one from Gunga Din.
 It was "Din! Din! Din!"
 'Ere's a beggar with a bullet through 'is spleen;
 'E's chawin' up the ground,
 An' 'e's kickin' all around:
 For Gawd's sake git the water, Gunga Din!"
 'E carried me away
 To where a dooli lay,
 An' a bullet come an' drilled the beggar clean.
 'E put me safe inside,
 An' just before 'e died,
 "I 'ope you liked your drink", sez Gunga Din.
 So I'll meet 'im later on
 At the place where 'e is gone —
 Where it's always double drill and no canteen.

'E'll be squattin' on the coals
Givin' drink to poor damned souls,
An' I'll get a swig in hell from Gunga Din!
Yes, Din! Din! Din!
You Lazarushian-leather Gunga Din!
Though I've belted you and flayed you,
By the livin' Gawd that made you,
You're a better man than I am, Gunga Din!

The White Man's Burden

1899

The United States and the Philippine Islands

Take up the White man's burden —
Send forth the best ye breed —
Go bind your sons to exile
To serve your captives' need;
To wait in heavy harness
On fluttered folk and wild —
Your new-caught, sullen peoples,
Half devil and half child.

Take up the White Man's burden —
In patience to abide,
To veil the threat of terror
And check the show of pride;
By open speech and simple,
An hundred times mad plain.
To seek another's profit,
And work another's gain.

Take up the White Man's burden —
The savage wars of peace —

Fill full the mouth of Famine
And bid the sickness cease;
And when your goal is nearest
The end for others sought,
Watch Sloth and heathen Folly
Bring all your hope to nought.

Take up the White Man's burden —
No tawdry rule of kings,
But toil of serf and sweeper —
The tale of common things.
The ports ye shall not enter,
The roads ye shall not tread,
Go make them with your living,
And mark them with your dead!

Take up the White man's burden —
And reap his old reward:
The blame of those ye better,
The hate of those ye guard —
The cry of hosts ye humour
(Ah, slowly!) toward the light: —
“Why brought ye us from bondage,
“Our loved Egyptian night?”

Take up the White Man's burden —
Ye dare not stoop to less —
Nor call too loud on freedom
To cloak your weariness;
By all ye cry or whisper,
By all ye leave or do,
The silent, sullen peoples
Shall weigh your Gods and you.

Take up the White Man's burden —
Have done with childish days —
The lightly proffered laurel,
The easy, ungrudged praise.
Comes now, to search your manhood

Through all the thankless years,
Cold-edged with dear-bought wisdom,
The judgment of your peers!

"Lady Lilith"

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI

By Dante Gabriel Rossetti

(For a Picture)



Lady Lilith
by Dante
Gabriel
Rossetti,
Public
Domain,
Metropolitan
Museum of
Art

Of Adam's first wife, Lilith, it is told
(The witch he loved before the gift of Eve,)
That, ere the snake's, her sweet tongue could deceive,
And her enchanted hair was the first gold.
And still she sits, young while the earth is old,
And, subtly of herself contemplative

Draws men to watch the bright net she can weave,
Till heart and body and life are in its hold.

The rose and poppy are her flowers, for where
Is he not found, O Lilith, whom shed scent
And soft-shed kisses and soft sleep shall snare ?
Lo ! as that youth's eyes burned at thine, so went
Thy spell through him, and left his straight neck bent,
And round his heart one strangling golden hair.

Extract from "Dracula"

BRAM STOKER

By Bram Stoker

I was not alone. The room was the same, unchanged in any way since I came into it; I could see along the floor, in the brilliant moonlight, my own footsteps marked where I had disturbed the long accumulation of dust. In the moonlight opposite me were three young women, ladies by their dress and manner. I thought at the time that I must be dreaming when I saw them, for, though the moonlight was behind them, they threw no shadow on the floor. They came close to me, and looked at me for some time, and then whispered together. Two were dark, and had high aquiline noses, like the Count, and great dark, piercing eyes that seemed to be almost red when contrasted with the pale yellow moon. The other was

fair, as fair as can be, with great wavy masses of golden hair and eyes like pale sapphires. I seemed somehow to know her face, and to know it in connection with some dreamy fear, but I could not recollect at the moment how or where. All three had brilliant white teeth that shone like pearls against the ruby of their voluptuous lips. There was something about them that made me uneasy, some longing and at the same time some deadly fear. I felt in my heart a wicked, burning desire that they would kiss me with those red lips. It is not good to note this down, lest some day it should meet Mina's eyes and cause her pain; but it is the truth. They whispered together, and then they all three laughed—such a silvery, musical laugh, but as hard as though the sound never could have come through the softness of human lips. It was like the intolerable, tingling sweetness of water-glasses when played on by

a cunning hand. The fair girl shook her head coquettishly, and the other two urged her on. One said:-

“Go on! You are first, and we shall follow; yours is the right to begin.” The other added:-

“He is young and strong; there are kisses for us all.” I lay quiet, looking out under my eyelashes in an agony of delightful anticipation. The fair girl advanced and bent over me till I could feel the movement of her breath upon me. Sweet it was in one sense, honey-sweet, and sent the same tingling through the nerves as her voice, but with a bitter underlying the sweet, a bitter offensiveness, as one smells in blood.

I was afraid to raise my eyelids, but looked out and saw perfectly under the lashes. The girl went on her knees, and bent over me, simply gloating. There was a deliberate voluptuousness which was both thrilling and repulsive, and as she arched her neck she actually licked her lips like an animal, till I could see in the moonlight the moisture shining on the scarlet lips and on the red tongue as it lapped the white sharp teeth. Lower and lower went her head as the lips went below the range of my mouth and chin and seemed about to fasten on my throat. Then she paused, and I could hear the churning sound of her tongue as it licked her teeth and lips, and could feel the hot breath on my neck. Then the skin of my throat began to tingle as one's flesh does when the hand that is to tickle it approaches nearer-nearer. I could feel the soft, shivering touch of the lips on the super-sensitive skin of my throat, and the hard dents of two sharp teeth, just touching and pausing there.

I closed my eyes in a languorous ecstasy and waited-waited with beating heart.

But at that instant, another sensation swept through me as quick as lightning. I was conscious of the presence of the Count, and of his being as if lapped in a storm of fury. As my eyes opened involuntarily I saw his strong hand grasp the slender neck of the fair woman and with giant's power draw it back, the blue eyes transformed with fury, the white teeth champing with rage, and the fair cheeks blazing red with passion. But the Count! Never did I

imagine such wrath and fury, even to the demons of the pit. His eyes were positively blazing. The red light in them was lurid, as if the flames of hell-fire blazed behind them. His face was deathly pale, and the lines of it were hard like drawn wires; the thick eyebrows that met over the nose now seemed like a heaving bar of white-hot metal. With a fierce sweep of his arm, he hurled the woman from him, and then motioned to the others, as though he were beating them back; it was the same imperious gesture that I had seen used to the wolves. In a voice which, though low and almost in a whisper seemed to cut through the air and then ring round the room he said:-

“How dare you touch him, any of you? How dare you cast eyes on him when I had forbidden it? Back, I tell you all! This man belongs to me! Beware how you meddle with him, or you’ll have to deal with me.” The fair girl, with a laugh of ribald coquetry, turned to answer him:-

“You yourself never loved; you never love!” On this the other women joined, and such a mirthless, hard, soulless laughter rang through the room that it almost made me faint to hear; it seemed like the pleasure of fiends. Then the Count turned, after looking at my face attentively, and said in a soft whisper:-

“Yes, I too can love; you yourselves can tell it from the past. Is it not so? Well, now I promise you that when I am done with him you shall kiss him at your will. Now go! go! I must awaken him, for there is work to be done.”

“Are we to have nothing to-night?” said one of them, with a low laugh, as she pointed to the bag which he had thrown upon the floor, and which moved as though there were some living thing within it. For answer he nodded his head. One of the women jumped forward and opened it. If my ears did not deceive me there was a gasp and a low wail, as of a half-smothered child. The women closed round, whilst I was aghast with horror; but as I looked they disappeared, and with them the dreadful bag. There was no door near them, and they could not have passed me without my noticing. They simply seemed to fade into the rays of the moonlight and pass

out through the window, for I could see outside the dim, shadowy forms for a moment before they entirely faded away.

Then the horror overcame me, and I sank down unconscious.

Glossary

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