

weight of repentance, in that he had not striven to make sure of his prize when he had been at Granpere before the marriage was settled. Had she loved him as she ought to have loved him, had she loved him as he loved her, there should have been no question possible to her of marriage with another man. But still he repented, in that he had lost that which he desired, and might perhaps have then obtained it for himself.

But the strong feeling of his breast, the strongest next to his love, was a desire to be revenged. He cared little now for his father, little for that personal dignity which he had intended to return by his silence, little for pecuniary advantages and prudential motives, in comparison with his strong desire to punish Marie for her perfidy. He

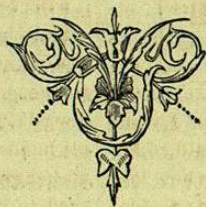
would go over to Granpere, and fall among them like a thunder-bolt. Like a thunder-bolt at any rate he would fall upon the head of Marie Bromar. The very words of her love-promises were still firm in his memory, and he would see if she also could be made to remember them.

"I shall go over to Granpere the day after to-morrow," he said to Madame Faragon, as he caught her just before she retired for the night.

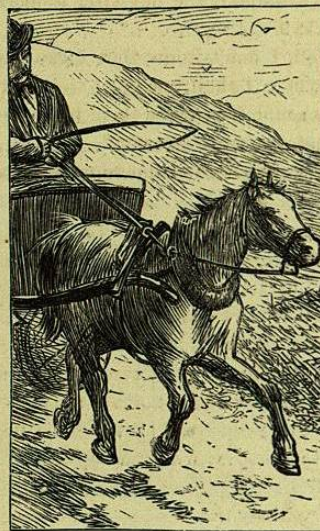
"To Granpere, the day after to-morrow? And why?"

"Well, I don't know that I can say exactly why. I shall not be at the marriage, but I should like to see them first. I shall go the day after to-morrow."

And he went to Granpere on the day he fixed.



CHAPTER XI.



"PROBABLY one night only, but I won't make any promise," George had said to Madame Faragon when she asked him how long he intended to stay at Granpere. As he took one of the horses belonging to the inn and drove himself, it seemed to be certain that he would not stay long. He started all alone, early in the morning, and reached Granpere about twelve o'clock. His mind was full of painful thoughts as he went, and as the little animal ran quickly down the mountain road into the valley in which Granpere lies, he almost wished that his feet were not so fleet. What was he to say when he got to Granpere, and to whom was he to say it?

When he reached the angular court along two sides of which the house was built he did not at once enter the front-door. None of the family were then about the place, and he could, therefore, go into the stable and ask a question or two of the man who came

to meet him. His father, the man told him, had gone up early to the wood-cutting, and would not probably return till the afternoon. Madame Voss was, no doubt, inside, as was also Marie Bromar. Then the man commenced an elaborate account of the betrothals. There never had been at Granpere any marriage that had been half so important as would be this marriage; no lover coming thither had ever been blessed with so beautiful and discreet a maiden, and no maiden of Granpere had ever before had at her feet a lover at the same time so good-looking, so wealthy, so sagacious, and so good-tempered. The man declared that Adrian was the luckiest fellow in the world in finding such a wife, but his enthusiasm rose to the highest pitch when he spoke of Marie's luck in finding such a husband. There was no end to the good with which she would be endowed; "linen," said the man, holding up his hands in admiration, "that will last out all her grandchildren at least!" George listened to it all, and smiled, and said a word or two—was it worth his while to come all the way to Granpere to throw his thunder-bolt at a girl who had been captivated by promises of a chestful of house linen!

George told the man that he would go up to the wood-cutting after his father; but before he was out of the court he changed his mind and slowly entered the house. Why should he go to his father? What had he to say to his father about the marriage that could not be better said down at the house? After all, he had but little ground of complaint against his father. It was Marie who had been untrue to him, and it was on Marie's head that his wrath must fall. No doubt his father would be angry with him when he should have thrown his thunder-bolt. It could not, as he thought, be

hurled effectually without his father's knowledge; but he need not tell his father the errand on which he had come. So he changed his mind, and went into the inn.

He entered the house almost dreading to see her whom he was seeking. In what way should he first express his wrath? How should he show her the wreck which by her inconstancy she had made of his happiness? His first words must, if possible, be spoken to her alone; and yet alone he would hardly hope to find her. And he feared her. Though he was so resolved to speak his mind, yet he feared her. Though he intended to fill her with remorse, yet he dreaded the effect of her words upon himself. He knew how strong she could be, and how steadfast. Though his passion told him every hour, was telling him all day long, that she was as false as hell, yet there was something in him of judgment, something rather of instinct, which told him also that she was not bad, that she was a firm-hearted, high-spirited, great-minded girl, who would have reasons to give for the thing that she was doing.

He went through into the kitchen before he met any one, and there he found Madame Voss with the cook and Peter. Immediate explanations had, of course, to be made as to his unexpected arrival—questions asked, and suggestions offered—"Came he in peace, or came he in war?" Had he come because he had heard of the betrothals? He admitted that it was so. "And you are glad of it?" asked Madame Voss. "You will congratulate her with all your heart?"

"I will congratulate her, certainly," said George. Then the cook and Peter began with a copious flow of domestic eloquence to declare how great a marriage this was for the Lion d'Or; how pleasing to the master, how creditable to the village, how satisfactory to the friends, how joyous to the bridegroom, how triumphant to the bride! "No doubt she will have plenty to eat and drink, and fine clothes to wear, and an excellent house over her head," said George, in his bitterness.

"And she will be married to one of the most respectable young men in all Switzerland," said Madame Voss, in a tone of much anger. It was already quite clear to Ma-

dame Voss, to the cook, and to Peter that George had not come over from Colmar simply to express his joyous satisfaction at his cousin's good fortune.

He soon walked through into the little sitting-room, and his step-mother followed him. "George," she said, "you will displease your father very much if you say any thing unkind about Marie."

"I know very well," said he, "that my father cares more for Marie than he does for me."

"That is not so, George."

"I do not blame him for it. She lives in the house with him, while I live elsewhere. It was natural that she should be more to him than I am, after he had sent me away. But he has no right to suppose that I can have the same feeling that he has about this marriage. I can not think it the finest thing in the world for all of us that Marie Bromar should succeed in getting a rich young man for her husband, who, as far as I can see, never had two ideas in his head."

"He is a most industrious young man, who thoroughly understands his business. I have heard people say that there is no one comes to Granpere who can buy better than he can."

"Very likely not."

"And, at any rate, it is no disgrace to be well off."

"It is a disgrace to think more about that than any thing else. But never mind. It is no use talking about it; words won't mend it."

"Why, then, have you come here now?"

"Because I want to see my father." Then he remembered how false was this excuse, and remembered also how soon its falseness would appear. "Besides, though I do not like this match, I wish to see Marie once again before her marriage. I shall never see her after it. That is the reason why I have come. I suppose you can give me a bed?"

"Oh yes, there are beds enough." After that there was some pause, and Madame Voss hardly knew how to treat her step-son. At last she asked him whether he would have dinner, and an order was given to Peter to prepare something for the young master in the small room. And George asked after the children, and in this way the dreaded

subject was for some minutes laid on one side.

In the mean time information of George's arrival had been taken up stairs to Marie. She had often wondered what sign he would make when he should hear of her engagement. Would he send her a word of affection, or such customary present as would be usual between two persons so nearly connected? Would he come to her marriage? And what would be his own feelings? She too remembered well, with absolute accuracy, those warm, delicious, heavenly words of love which had passed between them. She could feel now the pressure of his hand and the warmth of his kiss, when she swore to him that she would be his for ever and ever. After that he had left her, and for a year had sent no token. Then he had come again, and had simply asked her whether she were engaged to another man; had asked with a cruel indication that he at least intended that the old childish words should be forgotten. Now he was in the house again, and she would have to hear his congratulations!

She thought for some quarter of an hour what she had better do, and then she determined to go down to him at once. The sooner the first meeting was over the better. Were she to remain away from him till they should be brought together at the supper-table, there would almost be a necessity for her to explain her conduct. She would go down to him and treat him exactly as she might have done had there never been any special love between them. She would do so as perfectly as her strength might enable her; and if she failed in aught, it would be better to fail before her aunt than in the presence of her uncle. When she had resolved, she waited yet another minute or two, and then she went down stairs.

As she entered her aunt's room George Voss was sitting before the stove, while Madame Voss was in her accustomed chair, and Peter was preparing the table for his young master's dinner. George arose from his seat at once, and then came a look of pain across his face. Marie saw it at once, and almost loved him the more because he suffered. "I

am so glad to see you, George," she said. "I am so glad that you have come."

She had offered him her hand, and, of course, he had taken it. "Yes," he said, "I thought it best just to run over. We shall be very busy at the hotel before long."

"Does that mean to say that you are not to be here for my marriage?" This she said with her sweetest smile, making all the effort in her power to give a gracious tone to her voice. It was better, she knew, to plunge at the subject at once.

"No," said he. "I shall not be here then."

"Ah—your father will miss you so much! But if it can not be, it is very good of you to come now. There would have been something sad in going away from the old house without seeing you once more. And though Colmar and Basle are very near, it will not be the same as in the dear old home—will it, George?" There was a touch about her voice as she called him by his name that nearly killed him. At that moment his hatred was strongest against Adrian. Why had such an upstart as that, a puny, miserable creature, come between him and the only thing he had ever seen in the guise of a woman that could touch his heart? He turned round with his back to the table and his face to the stove, and said nothing. But he was able, when he no longer saw her, when her voice was not sounding in his ear, to swear that the thunder-bolt should be hurled all the same. His journey to Granpere should not be made for nothing. "I must go now," she said, presently. "I shall see you at supper, shall I not, George, when uncle will be with us? Uncle Michel will be so delighted to find you. And you will tell us of the new doings at the hotel. Good-by for the present, George." Then she was gone before he had spoken another word.

He ate his dinner, and smoked a cigar about the yard, and then said that he would go out and meet his father. He did go out, but did not take the road by which he knew that his father was to be found. He strolled off to the ravine, and came back only when it was dark. The meeting between him and his father was kindly; but there was no special word spoken, and thus they all sat down to supper.



CHAPTER XII.



It became necessary as George Voss sat at supper with his father and Madame Voss that he should fix the time of his return to Colmar, and he did so for the early morning of the next day but one. He had told Madame Faragon that he expected to stay at Granpere but one night. He felt, however, after his arrival that it might be difficult for him to get away on the following day, and therefore he told them that he would sleep two nights at the Lion d'Or, and then start early so as to reach the Colmar inn by mid-day. "I suppose you find the old lady rather fidgety, George," said Michel Voss, in high good humor. George found it easier to talk about Madame Faragon and the hotel at Colmar than he did of things at Granpere, and therefore became communicative as to his own affairs. Michel too preferred the subject of the new doings at the house on the other side of the Vosges. His wife had given him a slight hint, doing her best, like

a good wife and discreet manager, to prevent ill humor and hard words. "He feels a little sore, you know. I was always sure there was something. But it was wise of him to come and see her, and it will go off in this way." Michel swore that George had no right to be sore, and that if his son did not take pride in such a family arrangement as this, he should no longer be son of his. But he allowed himself to be counseled by his wife, and soon talked himself into a pleasant mood, discussing Madame Faragon, and the horses belonging to the Hôtel de la Poste, and Colmar affairs in general. There was a certain important ground for satisfaction between them. Every body agreed that George Voss had shown himself to be a steady man of business in the affairs of the inn at Colmar.

Marie Bromar in the mean while went on with her usual occupation round the room, but now and again came and stood at her uncle's elbow, joining in the conversation, and asking a question or two about Madame Faragon. There was, perhaps, something of the guile of the serpent joined to her dove-like softness. She asked questions and listened to answers, not that in her present state of mind she could bring herself to take a deep interest in the affairs of Madame Faragon's hotel, but because it suited her that there should be some subject of easy conversation between her and George. It was absolutely necessary now that George should be nothing more to her than a cousin and an acquaintance; but it was well that he should be that and not an enemy. It would be well, too, that he should know, that he should think that he knew, that she was disturbed by no remembrance of those words which had once passed between them. At last she trusted herself to a remark which perhaps

she would not have made had the serpent's guile been more perfect of its kind. "Surely you must get a wife, George, as soon as the house is your own."

"Of course he will get a wife," said the father.

"I hope he will get a good one," said Madame Voss, after a short pause—which, however, had been long enough to make her feel it necessary to say something.

George said never a word, but lifted his glass and finished his wine. Marie at once perceived that the subject was one on which she must not venture to touch again. Indeed, she saw further than that, and became aware that it would be inexpedient for her to fall into any special or minute conversation with her cousin during his short stay at Granpere.

"You'll go up to the woods with me tomorrow, eh, George?" said the father. The son, of course, assented. It was hardly possible that he should not assent. The whole day, moreover, would not be wanted for that purpose of throwing his thunder-bolt; and if he could get it thrown it would be well that he should be as far away from Marie as possible for the remainder of his visit. "We'll start early, Marie, and have a bit of breakfast before we go. Will six be too early for you, George, with your town ways?" George said that six would not be too early, and as he made the engagement for the morning he resolved that he would if possible throw his thunder-bolt that night. "Marie will get us a cup of coffee and a sausage. Marie is always up by that time." Marie smiled and promised that they should not be compelled to start upon their walk with empty stomachs from any fault of hers. If a hot breakfast at six o'clock in the morning could put her cousin into a good humor, it certainly should not be wanting.

In two hours after supper George was with his father. Michel was so full of happiness and so confidential that the son found it very difficult to keep solemn about his own sorrow. Had it not been that with a half obedience to his wife's hints Michel said little about Adrian, there must have been an explosion. He endeavored to conform himself to George's prospects, as to which he expressed himself thoroughly pleased. "You

see," said he, "I am so strong of my years that, if you wished for my shoes, there is no knowing how long you might be kept waiting."

"It couldn't have been too long," said George.

"Ah, well, I don't believe you would have been impatient to put the old fellow under the sod. But I should have been impatient, I should have been unhappy. You might have had the woods, to be sure; but it's hardly enough of a business alone. Besides, a young man is always more his own master away from his father. I can understand that. The only thing is, George—take a drive over and see us sometimes." This was all very well, but it was not quite so well when he began to speak of Marie. "It's a terrible loss, her going, you know, George; I shall feel it sadly."

"I can understand that," said George.

"But, of course, I had my duty to do to the girl. I had to see that she should be well settled, and she will be well settled. There's a comfort in that—isn't there, George?"

But George could not bring himself to reply to this with good-humored zeal, and there came for a moment a cloud between the father and son. But Michel was wise and swallowed his wrath, and in a minute or two returned to Colmar and Madame Faragon.

At about half past nine George escaped from his father and returned to the house. They had been sitting in the balcony which runs round the billiard-room on the side of the court opposite to the front-door. He returned to the house, and caught Marie in one of the passages up stairs, as she was completing her work for the day. He caught her close to the door of his own room, and asked her to come in that he might speak a word to her. English readers will perhaps remember that among the Vosges Mountains there is less of a sense of privacy attached to bedrooms than is the case with us here in England. Marie knew immediately then that her cousin had not come to Granpere for nothing—had not come with the innocent intention of simply pleasing his father—had not come to say an ordinary word of farewell to her before her marriage. There was to be something of a scene, though she

could not tell of what nature the scene might be. She knew, however, that her own conduct had been right; and therefore, though she would have avoided the scene, had it been possible, she would not fear it. She went into his room; and when he closed the door she smiled, and did not as yet tremble.

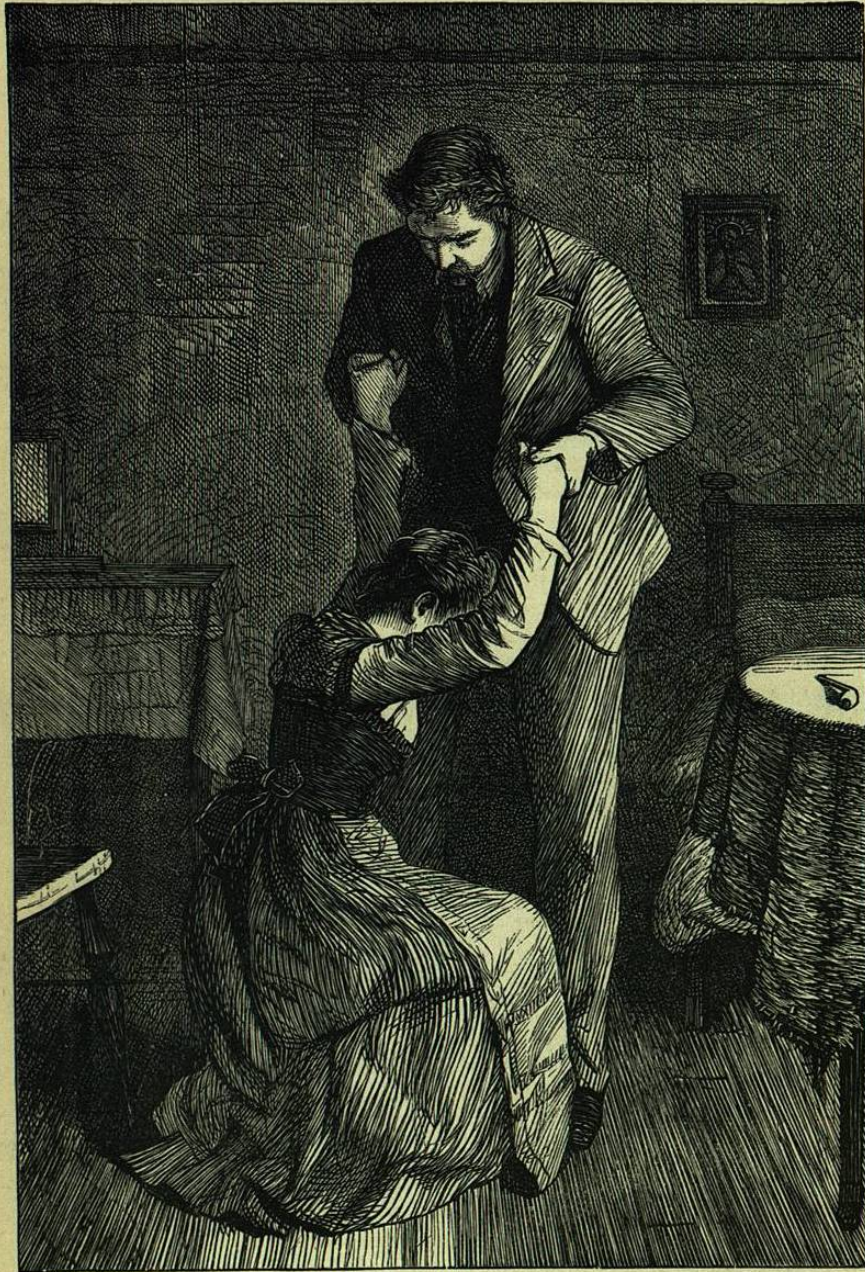
"Marie," he said, "I have come here on purpose to say a word or two to you." There was no smile on her face as he spoke now. The intention to be savage was written there as plainly as any purpose was ever written on a man's countenance. And Marie read the writing without missing a letter. She was to be rebuked, and sternly rebuked—rebuked by the man who had taken her heart and then left her—rebuked by the man who had crushed her hope, and made it absolutely necessary for her to give up all the sweet poetry of her life, to forget her dreams, to abandon every wished-for prettiness of existence, and confine herself to duties and to things material! He who had so sinned against her was about to rid himself of the burden of his sin by endeavoring to cast it upon her. So much she understood; but yet she did not understand all that was to come. She would hear the rebuke as quietly as she might. In the interest of others she would do so. But she would not fear him—and she would say a quiet word in defense of her own sex if there should be need. Such was the purport of her mind as she stood opposite to him in his room.

"I hope they will be kind words," she said. "As we are to part so soon, there should be none unkind spoken."

"I do not know much about kindness," he replied. Then he paused, and tried to think how best the thunder-bolt might be hurled. "There is hardly room for kindness where there was once so much more than kindness; where there was so much more—or the pretense of it." Then he waited again, as though he expected that she should speak. But she would not speak at all. If he had aught to say, let him say it. "Perhaps, Marie, you have in truth forgotten all the promises you once made me?" Though this was a direct question, she would not answer it. Her words to him should be as

few as possible, and the time for such words had not come as yet. "It suits you, no doubt, to forget them now, but I can not forget them. You have been false to me, and have broken my heart. You have been false to me, when my only joy on earth was in believing in your truth." Your vow was for ever and ever, and within one short year you are betrothed to another man! And why?—because they tell you that he is rich and has got a house full of furniture! You may prove to be a blessing to his house. Who can say? On mine you and your memory will be a curse—lasting all my lifetime." And so the thunder-bolt had been hurled.

And it fell as a thunder-bolt. What she had expected had not been at all like to this. She had known that he would rebuke her; but, feeling strong in her own innocence and her own purity; knowing, or thinking that she knew, that the fault had all been his; not believing—having got rid of all belief—that he still loved her, she had fancied that his rebuke would be unjust, cruel, but bearable. Nay, she had thought that she could almost triumph over him with a short word of reply. She had expected from him reproach, but not love. There was reproach indeed, but it came with an expression of passion of which she had not known him to be capable. He stood before her telling her that she had broken his heart, and, as he told her so, his words were half choked by sobs. He reminded her of her promises, declaring that his own to her had ever remained in full force. And he told her that she, she to whom he had looked for all his joy, had become a curse to him and a blight upon his life. There were thoughts and feelings too beyond all these that crowded themselves upon her heart and upon her mind at the moment. It had been possible for her to accept the hand of Adrian Urmand because she had become assured that George Voss no longer regarded her as his promised bride. She would have stood firm against her uncle and her aunt, she would have stood against all the world, had it not seemed to her that the evidence of her cousin's indifference was complete. Had not that evidence been complete at all points it would have been impossible to her to think of becoming the wife of another man. Now the evidence on



"OH, GEORGE, IF YOU COULD KNOW ALL!"

that matter which had seemed to her to be so sufficient was all blown to the winds.

It is true that had all her feelings been guided by reason only, she might have been as strong as ever. In truth she had not sinned against him. In truth she had not sinned at all. She had not done that which she herself had desired. She had not been anxious for wealth, or ease, or position; but had, after painful thought, endeavored to shape her conduct by the wishes of others, and by her ideas of duty, as duty had been taught to her. Oh, how willingly would she have remained as servant to her uncle, and have allowed M. Urmand to carry the rich gift of his linen chest to the feet of some other damsel, had she believed herself to be free to choose! Had there been no passion in her heart she would now have known herself to be strong in duty, and would have been able to have answered and to have borne the rebuke of her old lover. But passion was there, hot within her, aiding every word as he spoke it, giving strength to his complaints, telling her of all that she had lost, telling her of all she had taken from him. She forgot to remember now that he had been silent for a year. She forgot now to think of the tone in which he had asked about her marriage when no such marriage was in her mind. But she remembered well the promise she had made, and the words of it. "Your vow was for ever and ever." When she heard those words repeated from his lips her heart too was broken. All idea of holding herself before him as one injured but ready to forgive was gone from her. If by falling at his feet and owning herself to be vile and mainsworn she might get his pardon, she was ready now to lie there on the ground before him. "Oh, George!" she said; "oh, George!"

"What is the use of that now?" he replied, turning away from her. He had thrown his thunder-bolt and he had nothing more to say. He had seen that he had not thrown it quite in vain, and he would have been contented to be away and back at Colmar. What more was there to be said?

She came to him very gently, very humbly, and just touched his arm with her hand. "Do you mean, George, that you have continued to care for me—always?"

"Care for you? I know not what you call caring. Did I not swear to you that I would love you for ever and ever, and that you should be my own? Did I not leave this house and go away—till I could earn for you one that should be fit for you—because I loved you? Why should I have broken my word? I do not believe that you thought that it was broken."

"By my God that knows me, I did." As she said this she burst into tears and fell on her knees at his feet.

"Marie," he said, "Marie—there is no use in this. Stand up."

"Not till you tell me that you will forgive me. By the name of the good Jesus who knows all our hearts, I thought that you had forgotten me. Oh, George, if you could know all! If you could know how I have loved you; how I have sorrowed from day to day because I was forgotten! How I have struggled to bear it, telling myself that you were away, with all the world to interest you, and not like me, a poor girl in a village, with nothing to think of but my lover! How I have striven to do my duty by my uncle, and have obeyed him, because—because—because there was nothing left. If you could know it all! If you could know it all!" Then she clasped her arms round his legs, and hid her face upon his feet.

"And whom do you love now?" he asked. She continued to sob, but did not answer him a word. Then he stooped down and raised her to her feet, and she stood beside him, very near to him, with her face averted.

"And whom do you love now?" he asked again. "Is it me, or is it Adrian Urmand?" But she could not answer him, though she had said enough in her passionate sorrow to make any answer to such a question unnecessary, as far as knowledge on the subject might be required. It might suit his views that she should confess the truth in so many words, but for other purpose her answer had been full enough. "This is very sad," he said—"sad indeed; but I thought that you would have been firmer."

"Do not chide me again, George."

"No; it is to no purpose."

"You said that I was—a curse to you?"

"Oh, Marie, I had hoped—I had so hoped that you would have been my blessing!"

"Say that I am not a curse to you, George." But he would make no answer to this appeal, no immediate answer; but stood silent and stern while she stood still touching his arm, waiting in patience for some word, at any rate, of forgiveness. He was using all the powers of his mind to see if there might even yet be any way to escape this great shipwreck. She had not answered his question. She had not told him in so many words that her heart was still his though she had promised her hand to the Basle merchant. But he could not doubt that it was so. As he stood there silent, with that dark look upon his brow which he had inherited from his father, and that angry fire in his eye, his heart was in truth once more becoming soft and tender toward her. He was beginning to understand how it had been with her. He had told her, just now, that he did not believe her, when she assured him that she had thought that she was forgotten. Now he did believe her. And there arose in his breast a feeling that it was due to her that he should explain this change in his mind. "I suppose you did think it," he said, suddenly.

"Think what, George?"

"That I was a vain, empty, false-tongued fellow, whose word was worth no reliance."

"I thought no evil of you, George—except that you were changed to me. When you came you said nothing to me. Do you not remember?"

"I came because I was told that you were to be married to this man. I asked you the question, and you would not deny it. Then I said to myself that I would wait and see." When he had spoken she had nothing further to say to him. The charges which he made against her were all true. They seemed at least to be true to her then, in her present mood—in that mood in which all that she now desired was his forgiveness. The wish to defend herself, and to stand before him as one justified, had gone from her. She felt that having still possessed his love, having still been the owner of the one thing that she valued, she had ruined herself by her own doubts; and she could not forgive herself the fatal blunder. "It is of no use to think of it any more," he said at last. "You have to become this man's wife

now, and I suppose you must go through with it."

"I suppose I must," she said, "unless—"
"Unless what?"

"Nothing, George. Of course I will marry him. He has my word. And I have promised my uncle also. But, George, you will say that you forgive me?"

"Yes—I will forgive you." But still there was the same black cloud upon his face, the same look of pain, the same glance of anger in his eye.

"Oh, George, I am so unhappy! There can be no comfort for me now, unless you will say that you will be contented."

"I can not say that, Marie."

"You will have your house, and your business, and so many things to interest you. And in time—after a little time—"

"No, Marie, after no time at all. You told me at supper to-night that I had better get a wife for myself. But I will get no wife. I could not bring myself to marry another girl. I could not take a woman home as my wife if I did not love her. If she were not the person of all persons most dear to me, I should loathe her."

He was speaking daggers to her, and he must have known how sharp were his words. He was speaking daggers to her, and she must have felt that he knew how he was wounding her. But yet she did not resent his usage, even by a motion of her lip. Could she have brought herself to do so, her agony would have been less sharp. "I suppose," she said at last, "that a woman is weaker than a man. But you say that you will forgive me?"

"I have forgiven you."

Then very gently she put out her hand to him, and he took it and held it for a minute. She looked up at him as though for a moment she had thought that there might be something else, that there might be some other token of true forgiveness, and then she withdrew her hand. "I had better go now," she said. "Good-night, George."

"Good-night, Marie." And then she was gone.

As soon as he was alone he sat himself down on the bedside and began to think of it. Every thing was changed to him since he had called her into the room, determining

that he would crush her with his thunderbolt. Let things go as they may with a man in an affair of love, let him be as far as possible from the attainment of his wishes, there will always be consolation to him if he knows that he is loved. To be preferred to all others, even though that preference may lead to no fruition, is in itself a thing enjoyable. He had believed that Marie had forgotten him—that she had been captivated either by the effeminate prettiness of his rival, or by his wealth and standing in the world. He believed all this no more. He knew now how it was with her and with him, and, let his countenance say what it might to the contrary, he could bring himself to forgive her in his heart. She had not forgotten him! She had not ceased to love him! There was merit in that which went far with him in excuse of her perfidy.

But what should he do now? She was not as yet married to Adrian Urmand. Might there not still be hope—hope for her sake as well as for his own? He perfectly understood that in his country—nay, for aught he knew to the contrary, in all countries—a formal betrothal was half a marriage. It was half the ceremony in the eyes of all those

concerned; but yet, in regard to that indissoluble bond which would indeed have divided Marie from him beyond the reach of any hope to the contrary, such betrothal was of no effect whatever. This man whom she did not love was not yet Marie's husband—need never become so if Marie could only be sufficiently firm in resisting the influence of all her friends. No priest could marry her without her own consent. He, George, he himself would have to face the enmity of all those with whom he was connected. He was sure that his father, having been a party to the betrothal, would never consent to a breach of his promise to Urmand. Madame Voss, Madame Faragon, the priest, and their Protestant pastor would all be against them. They would be, as it were, outcasts from their own family. But George Voss, sitting there on his bedside, thought that he could go through it all, if only he could induce Marie Bromar to bear the brunt of the world's displeasure with him. As he got into bed he determined that he would begin upon the matter to his father during the morning's walk. His father would be full of wrath—but the wrath would have to be endured sooner or later.

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