

in the glass now and then. He rather startled me when he threw down that knife, though. I suppose it is some old Norwegian custom?"

"I suppose so," Errington answered, and then was silent, for at that moment the door opened, and the old farmer returned, followed by a girl bearing a tray glittering with flasks of Italian wine, and long graceful glasses shaped like round goblets, set on particularly slender stems. The sight of the girl disappointed the eager visitors, for though she was undeniably pretty, she was not Thelma. She was short and plump, with rebellious nut-brown locks, that rippled about her face and from under her close white cap with persistent untidiness. Her cheeks were as round and red as love-apples, and she had dancing blue eyes that appeared forever engaged in good-natured efforts to outsparkle each other. She wore a spotless apron, lavishly trimmed with coquettish little starched frills—her hands were, unfortunately, rather large and coarse—but her smile, as she set down the tray and courtesied respectfully to the young men, was charming, disclosing, as it did, tiny teeth as even and white as a double row of small pearls.

"That is well, Britta," said Guldmar, speaking in English and assisting her to place the glasses. "Now, quick!—run after thy mistress to the shore—her boat cannot yet have left the creek—bid her return and come to me—tell her there are friends here who will be glad of her presence."

Britta hurried away at once, but Errington's heart sunk. Thelma had gone—gone, most probably for one of those erratic journeys across the fjord to the cave where he had first seen her. She would not come back, he felt certain; not even at her father's request would that beautiful, proud maiden, consent to alter her plans. What an unlucky destiny was his! Absorbed in disappointed reflections, he scarcely heard the enthusiastic praises Lorimer was diplomatically bestowing on the *bonde's* wine. He hardly felt its mellow flavor on his own palate, though it was in truth delicious, and fit for the table of a monarch. Guldmar noticed the young baronet's abstraction and addressed him with genial kindness.

"Are you thinking, Sir Philip, of my rough speeches to you yonder? No offense was meant, no offense—" the fellow paused, and laughed over his wine-glass. "Yet I may as well be honest about it. Offense *was* meant; but when I found that none was taken, my humor changed."

A slight, half-weary smile played on Errington's lips. "I assure you, sir," he said, "I agreed with you then, and agree with you now, in every word you uttered. You took my measure very correctly, and allow me to add that no one can be more conscious of my own insignificance than I am myself. The days we live in

are insignificant; the chronicle of our paltry doings will be skipped by future readers of the country's history. Among a society of particularly useless men, I feel myself to be one of the most useless. If you could show me any way to make my life valuable——"

He paused abruptly, and his heartbeat with inexplicable rapidity. A light step and the rustle of a dress was heard coming through the porch; another perfumed shower of rose-leaves fell softly on the garden path; the door of the room opened, and a tall, fair white-robed figure shone forth from the dark background of the outer passage—a figure that hesitated on the threshold, and then advanced noiselessly and with a reluctant shyness. The old *bonde* turned round in his chair with a smile.

"Ah, here she is!" he said, fondly. "Where hast thou been, my Thelma?"

CHAPTER VI.

And Sigurd the Bishop said,
"The old gods are not dead,
For the great Thor still reigns,
And among the Jarls and Thanes
The old witchcraft is spread."

LONGFELLOW'S *Saga of King Olaf*.

THE girl stood silent, and a faint blush crimsoned her cheeks. The young men had risen at her entrance, and in one fleeting glance she recognized Errington, though she gave no sign to that effect.

"See, my darling," continued her father, "here are English visitors to Norway. This is Sir Philip Errington, who travels through our wild waters in the great steam yacht now at anchor in the fjord; and this is his friend, Mr.—Mr.—Lorimer—have I caught your name rightly, my lad?" he continued, turning to George Lorimer with a kindly smile.

"You have, sir," answered that gentleman, promptly, and then he was mute, feeling curiously abashed in the presence of this royal-looking young lady, who, encircled by her father's arm, raised her deep, dazzling blue eyes, and serenely bent her stately head to him as his name was mentioned.

The old farmer went on: "Welcome, then, Thelma mine!—friends are scarce in these days, and we must not be ungrateful for good company. What! what! I know honest lads when I see them! Smile on them, my Thelma!—and then we will warm their hearts with another cup of wine."

As he spoke the maiden advanced with a graceful, even noble

air, and extending both her hands to each of the visitors in turn, she said:

"I am your servant, friends; in entering this house you do possess it. Peace and heart's greeting!"

The words were a literal translation of a salutation perfectly common in many parts of Norway—a mere ordinary expression of politeness; but, uttered in the tender, penetrating tones of the most musical voice they had ever heard, and accompanied by the warm, frank, double hand-clasp of those soft, small, daintily shaped hands, the effect on the minds of the generally self-possessed, fashionably bred young men of the world was to confuse and bewilder them to the last degree. What could they answer to this poetical, quaint formula of welcome? The usual platitudes, such as "Delighted, I'm sure;" or "Most happy—aw, charmed to meet you!" No; these remarks, deemed intelligent by the lady rulers of London drawing-rooms, would, they felt, never do here. As well put a gentleman in modern evening-dress *en face* with a half-nude, scornfully beautiful statue of Apollo, as trot out threadbare, insincere commonplaces in the hearing of this clear-eyed child of nature, whose pure, perfect face seemed to silently repel the very passing shadow of a falsehood.

Philip's brain whirled round and about in search of some suitable reply, but could find none; and Lorimer felt himself blushing like a school-boy, as he stammered out something incoherent and eminently foolish, though he had sense enough left to appreciate the pressure of those lovely hands as long as it lasted.

Thelma, however, appeared not to notice their deep embarrassment—she had not yet done with them. Taking the largest goblet on the table, she filled it to the brim with wine, and touched it with her lips—then with a smile, in which a thousand radiating sunbeams seemed to quiver and sparkle, she lifted it toward Errington. The grace of her attitude and action wakened him out of his state of dreamy bewilderment—in his soul he devoutly blessed these ancient family customs, and arose to the occasion like a man. Claspng with a tender reverence the hands that upheld the goblet, he bent his handsome head and drank a deep draught, while his dark curls almost touched her fair ones—and then an insane jealousy possessed him for a moment, as he watched her go through the same ceremony with Lorimer.

She next carried the now more than half-emptied cup to the *bonde*, and said, as she held it, laughing softly:

"Drink it all, father!—if you leave a drop, you know these gentlemen will quarrel with us, or you with them."

"That is true!" said Olaf Guldmar, with great gravity; "but it will not be my fault, child, nor the fault of wasted wine."

And he drained the glass to its dregs and set it upside down on the table with a deep sigh of satisfaction and refreshment. The

ceremony concluded, it was evident the ice of reserve was considered broken, for Thelma seated herself like a young queen, and motioned her visitors to do the same with a gesture of gracious condescension.

"How did you find your way here?" she asked, with sweet yet direct abruptness, giving Sir Philip a quick glance, in which there was a sparkle of mirth, though her long lashes veiled it almost instantly.

Her entire lack of stiffness and reserve set the young men at their ease, and they fell into conversation freely, though Errington allowed Lorimer to tell the story of their trespass in his own fashion without interference. He instinctively felt that the young lady who listened with so demure a smile to that plausible narrative, knew well enough the real motive that had brought them thither, though she apparently had her own reasons for keeping silence on the point, as whatever she may have thought, she said nothing.

Lorimer skillfully avoided betraying the fact that they had watched her through the window, and had listened to her singing. And Thelma heard all the explanations patiently till Bosekop was mentioned, and then her fair face grew cold and stern.

"From whom did you hear of us there?" she inquired. "We do not mix with the people—why should they speak of us?"

"The truth is," interposed Errington, resting his eyes with a sense of deep delight on the beautiful rounded figure and lovely features that were turned toward him, "I heard of you first through my pilot—one Valdemar Svensen."

"Ha, ha!" cried old Guldmar, with some excitement, "there is a fellow who cannot hold his tongue! What have I said to thee, child? A bachelor is no better than a gossiping old woman. He that is always alone must talk, if it be only to woods and waves. It is the married men who know best how excellent it is to keep silence!"

They all laughed, though Thelma's eyes had a way of looking pensive even when she smiled.

"You would not blame poor Svensen because he is alone, father?" she said. "Is he not to be pitied? Surely it is a cruel fate to have none to love in all the wide world. Nothing can be more cruel!"

Guldmar surveyed her humorously. "Hear her!" he said. "She talks as if she knew all about such things; and if ever a child was ignorant of sorrow, surely it is my Thelma! Every flower and bird in the place loves her. Yes; I have thought sometimes the very sea loves her. It must; she is so much upon it. And as for her old father"—he laughed a little, though a suspicious moisture softened his keen eyes—"why, he doesn't love her at all. Ask her! She knows it."

Thelma rose quickly and kissed him. How deliciously those sweet lips pouted, thought Errington, and what an unreasonable and extraordinary grudge he seemed to bear toward the venerable *bonde* for accepting that kiss with so little apparent emotion!

"Hush, father!" she said. "These friends can see too plainly how much you spoil me. Tell me"—and she turned with a sudden pretty imperiousness to Lorimer, who started at her voice as a race-horse starts at its rider's touch—"what person in Bosekop spoke of us?"

Lorimer was rather at a loss, inasmuch as no one in the small town had actually spoken of them, and Mr. Dyceworthy's remarks concerning those who were "ejected with good reason from respectable society," might not, after all, have applied to the Guldmar family. Indeed, it now seemed an absurd and improbable supposition. Therefore he replied cautiously:

"The Reverend Mr. Dyceworthy, I think, has some knowledge of you. Is he not a friend of yours?"

These simple words had a most unexpected effect. Olaf Guldmar sprang up from his seat flaming with wrath. It was in vain that his daughter laid a restraining hand upon his arm. The name of the Lutheran divine had sufficed to put him in a towering passion, and he turned furiously upon the astonished Errington.

"Had I known you came from the devil, sir, you should have returned to him speedily, with hot words to hasten your departure! I would have split that glass to atoms before I would have drained it after you! The friends of a false heart are no friends for me—the followers of a pretended sanctity find no welcome under my roof! Why not have told me at once that you came as spies, hounded on by the liar Dyceworthy? Why not have confessed it openly,—and not have played the thief's trick on an old fool, who, for once, misled by your manly and upright bearing, consented to lay aside the rightful suspicions he at first entertained of your purpose? Shame on you, young men! shame!"

The words coursed impetuously from his lips; his face burned with indignation. He had broken away from his daughter's hold, while she, pale and very still, stood leaning one hand upon the table. His white hair was tossed back from his brow; his eyes flashed; his attitude, though vengeful and threatening, was at the same time so bold and commanding that Lorimer caught himself lazily admiring the contour of his figure and wondering how he would look in marble as an infuriated Viking.

One excellent thing in the dispositions of both Errington and Lorimer was that they never lost temper. Either they were too lazy or too well-bred. Undoubtedly they both considered it "bad form." This indifference stood them in good stead now. They showed no sign whatever of offense, though the old farmer's outbreak of wrath was so sudden and unlooked for that they remained

for a moment silent out of sheer surprise. Then, rising with unruffled serenity, they took up their caps preparatory to departure. Errington's gentle, refined voice broke the silence.

"You are in error, Mr. Guldmar," he said, in chilly but perfectly polite tones. "I regret you should be so hasty in your judgment of us. If you accepted us as 'men' when you first met us, I cannot imagine why you should now take us for spies. The two terms are by no means synonymous. I know nothing of Mr. Dyceworthy beyond that he called upon me, and that I, as in duty bound, returned his call. I am ignorant of his character and disposition. I may add that I have no desire to be enlightened respecting them. I do not often take a dislike to anybody, but it so happens that I have done so in the case of Mr. Dyceworthy. I know Lorimer doesn't care for him, and I don't think my other two friends are particularly attached to him. I have nothing more to say, except that I fear we have overstayed our welcome. Permit us now to wish you good-evening. And you"—he hesitated, and turned with a low bow to Thelma who had listened to his words with a gradually dawning brightness on her face—"you will, I trust, exonerate us from any intentional offense toward your father or yourself? Our visit has proved unlucky, but—"

Thelma interrupted him by laying her fair little hand on his arm with a wistful, detaining gesture, which, though seemingly familiar, was yet perfectly sweet and natural. The light touch thrilled his blood, and sent it coursing through his veins at more than customary speed.

"Ah, then, you also will be foolish!" she said, with a naive, protecting air of superior dignity. "Do you not see my father is sorry? Have we all kissed the cup for nothing, or was the wine wasted? Not a drop was spilled; how then, if we are friends, should we part in coldness? Father, it is you to be ashamed—not these gentlemen, who are strangers to the Alten Fjord, and know nothing of Mr. Dyceworthy or any other person dwelling here. And when their vessel sails away again over the wide seas to their own shores, how will you have them think of you? As one whose heart was all kindness, and who helped to make their days pass pleasantly? or as one who, in unreasonable anger, forgot the duties of sworn hospitality?"

The *bonde* listened to her full, sweet, reproachful voice as a tough old lion might listen to the voice of its tamer, uncertain whether to yield or spring. He wiped his heated brow and stared around him shamefacedly. Finally, as though swallowing his pride with a gulp, he drew a long breath, took a couple of determined strides forward, and held out his hands, one to Errington, and the other to Lorimer, by whom they were warmly grasped.

"There, my lads," he said, rapidly. "I'm sorry I spoke! For-

give and forget! That is the worst of me—my blood is up in a minute, and old though I am, I'm not old enough yet to be patient. And when I hear the name of that sneak Dyceworthy—by the gates of Valhalla, I feel as if my own house would not hold me! No, no; don't go yet! Nearly ten? Well, no matter, the night is like the day here, you see—it doesn't matter when one goes to bed. Come and sit in the porch awhile; I shall get cool out there. Ah, Thelma, child! I see thee laughing at thy old father's temper! Never mind, never mind; is it not for thy sake, after all?"

And, holding Errington by the arm, he led the way into the fine old porch, Lorimer following with rather a flushed face, for he, as he passed out of the room, had managed to pick up and secrete the neglected little bunch of daisies, before noticed as having fallen on the floor. He put them quickly in his breast pocket with a curious sense of satisfaction, though he had no intention of keeping them, and leaned idly against the clambering roses, watching Thelma, as she drew a low stool to her father's feet and sat there. A balmy wind blew in from the fjord, and rustled mysteriously among the pines; the sky was flecked here and there with fleecy clouds, and a number of birds were singing in full chorus. Old Guldmar heaved a sigh of relief, as though his recent outburst of passion had done him good.

"I will tell you, Sir Philip," he said, ruffling his daughter's curls as he spoke—"I will tell you why I detest the villain Dyceworthy. It is but fair you should know it. Now, Thelma!—why that push to my knee? You fear I may offend our friends again? Nay, I will take good care. And so, first of all, I ask you, what is your religion? Though I know you cannot be Lutherans."

Errington was somewhat taken aback by the question. He smiled.

"My dear sir," he replied at last; "to be frank with you, I really do not think I have any religion. If I had, I suppose I should call myself a Christian, though, judging from the behavior of Christians in general, I cannot be one of them after all—for I belong to no sect, I go to no church, and I have never read a tract in my life. I have a profound reverence and admiration for the character and doctrine of Christ, and I believe if I had had the privilege of knowing and conversing with Him, I should not have deserted Him in extremity as His timorous disciples did. I believe in an all-wise Creator; so you see I am not an atheist. My mother was an Austrian and a Catholic, and I have a notion that, as a small child, I was brought up in that creed; but I'm afraid I don't know much about it now."

The *bonde* nodded gravely. "Thelma, here," he said, "is a Catholic, as her mother was—" He stopped abruptly, and a deep shadow of pain darkened his features. Thelma looked up—her large, blue eyes filled with sudden tears, and she pressed her

father's hand between her own, as though in sympathy with some undeclared grief; then she looked at Errington with a sort of wistful appeal. Philip's heart leaped as he met that soft, beseeching glance, which seemed to entreat his patience with the old man for her sake—he felt himself drawn into a bond of union with her thoughts, and in his innermost soul he swore as knightly a vow of chivalry and reverence for the fair maiden who thus took him into her silent confidence, as though he were some gallant Crusader of old time, pledged to defend his lady's honor unto death. Olaf Guldmar, after a long and apparently sorrowful pause, resumed his conversation.

"Yes," he said, "Thelma is a Catholic, though here she has scarcely any opportunity for performing the duties of her religion. It is a pretty and a graceful creed—well fitted for women. As for me, I am made of sterner stuff, and the maxims of that gentle creature, Christ, find no echo in my soul. But you, young sir," he added, turning suddenly on Lorimer, who was engaged in meditatively smoothing out on his palm one of the fallen rose-petals—"you have not spoken. What faith do you profess? It is no curiosity that prompts me to ask—I only seek not to offend."

Lorimer laughed languidly. "Upon my life, Mr. Guldmar, you really ask too much of me. I haven't any faith at all; not a shred! It's been all knocked out of me. I tried to hold on to a last remaining bit of Christian rope in the universal shipwreck, but that was torn out of my hands by a scientific professor who ought to know what he is about, and—and—now I drift along anyhow!"

Guldmar smiled dubiously; but Thelma looked at the speaker with astonished, regretful eyes.

"I am sorry," she said, simply. "You must be often unhappy."

Lorimer was not disconcerted, though her evident pity caused an unwonted flush on his face.

"Oh, no," he said, in answer to her, "I am not a miserable sort of fellow by any means. For instance, I'm not afraid of death—lots of very religious people are horribly afraid of it, though they all the time declare it's the only path to heaven. They're not consistent at all. You see I believe in nothing—I came from nothing—I am nothing—I shall be nothing. That being plain, I am all right."

Guldmar laughed. "You are an odd lad," he said, good-humoredly. "You are in the morning of life; there are always mists in the morning as there are in the evening. In the light of your full manhood you will see these things differently. Your creed of Nothing provides no moral law—no hold on the conscience, no restraint on the passions—don't you see that?"

Lorimer smiled with a very winning and boyish candor. "You are exceedingly good, sir, to credit me with a conscience! I don't

think I have one—I'm sure I have no passions. I have always been too lazy to encourage them, and as for moral law—I adhere to morality with the greatest strictness, because if a fellow is immoral he ceases to be a gentleman. Now, as there are very few gentlemen nowadays, I fancy I'd like to be one as long as I can."

Errington here interposed. "You mustn't take him seriously, Mr. Guldmar," he said; "he's never serious himself. I'll give you his character in a few words. He belongs to no religious party, it's true—but he's a first-rate fellow—the best fellow I know!"

Lorimer glanced at him quietly with a gratified expression on his face. But he said nothing, for Thelma was regarding him with a most bewitching smile.

"Ah!" she said, shaking a reproachful finger at him, "you do love all nonsense, that I can see! You would make every person laugh, if you could—is it not so?"

"Well, yes," admitted George, "I think I would! But it's a herculean task sometimes. If you had ever been to London, Miss Guldmar, you would understand how difficult it is to make people even smile—and when they do, the smile is not a very natural one."

"Why?" she exclaimed. "Are they all so miserable?"

"They pretend to be, if they're not," said Lorimer; "it is the fashion there to find fault with everything and everybody."

"That is so," said Guldmar, thoughtfully. "I visited London once and thought I was in hell. Nothing but rows of hard, hideously built houses, long streets, and dirty alleys, and the people had weary faces all, as though Nature had refused to bless them. A pitiful city—doubly pitiful to the eyes of a man like myself, whose life has been passed among fjords and mountains such as these. Well, now, as neither of you are Lutherans—in fact, as neither of you seem to know what you are," and he laughed—"I can be frank, and speak out as to my own belief. I am proud to say I have never deserted the faith of my fathers—the faith that makes a man's soul strong and fearless, and defiant of evil—the faith that is supposed to be crushed out among us, but that is still alive and rooted in the hearts of many who can trace back their lineage to the ancient Vikings as I can—yes!—rooted firm and fast—and however much some of the more timorous feign to conceal it in the tacit acceptance of another creed, there are those who can never shake it off, and who never desire to forsake it. I am one of these few. Shame must fall on the man who willfully deserts the faith of his warrior-ancestry! Sacred to me forever be the names of Odin and Thor!"

He raised his hands aloft with a proud gesture, and his eyes flashed. Errington was interested, but not surprised; the old

bonde's declaration of his creed seemed eminently fitted to his character. Lorimer's face brightened—here was a novelty—a man who, in all the conflicting storms of modern opinion, sturdily clung to the traditions of his forefathers.

"By Jove!" he exclaimed, eagerly, "I think the worship of Odin would suit me perfectly! It's a rousing, fighting sort of religion—I'm positive it would make a man of me. Will you initiate me into the mysteries, Mr. Guldmar? There's a fellow in London who writes poetry on Indian subjects, and who, it is said, thinks Buddhism might satisfy his pious yearnings—but I think Odin would be a personage to command more respect than Buddha—at any rate, I should like to try him. Will you give me a chance?"

Olaf Guldmar smiled gravely, and rising from his seat, pointed to the western sky.

"See yonder threads of filmy white," he said, "that stretch across the wide expanse of blue! They are the lingering, fading marks of light clouds—and even while we watch them they shall pass and be no more. Such is the emblem of your life, young man—you that would, for an idle jest or pastime, presume to search into the mysteries of Odin. For you they are not—your spirit is not of the stern mold that waits for death as gladly as the bridegroom waits for the bride! The Christian heaven is an abode for girls and babes—Valhalla is the place for men! I tell you, my creed is as divine in its origin as any that ever existed on the earth! The Rainbow Bridge is a fairer pathway from death to life than the doleful Cross—and better far the dark summoning eyes of a beauteous Valkyrie than the grinning skull and cross-bones, the Christian emblem of mortality. Thelma thinks—and her mother before her thought also—that different as my way of belief is to the accepted new creeds of to-day, it will be all right with me in the next world—that I shall have as good a place in heaven as any Christian. It may be so—I care not! But see you—the keynote of all civilization of to-day is discontent, while I—thanks to the gods of my fathers—am happy, and desire nothing that I have not."

He paused and seemed absorbed. The young men watched his fine inspired features with lively interest. Thelma's head was turned away from them so that her face was hidden. By and by he resumed, in quieter tones:

"Now, my lads, you know what we are—both of us accursed in the opinion of the Lutheran community. My child belongs to the so-called idolatrous Church of Rome. I am one of the very last of the 'heathen barbarians'—and the old fellow smiled sarcastically—"though, truth to tell, for a barbarian, I am not such a fool as some folks would have you think. If the snuffling Dyceworthy and I competed at a spelling examination, I'm pretty sure 'tis

I would have the prize! But, as I said—you know us—and if our ways are likely to offend you, then let us part good friends before the swords are fairly drawn.”

“No sword will be drawn on my side, I assure you, sir,” said Errington, advancing and laying one hand on the *bonde's* shoulder. “I hope you will believe me when I say I shall esteem it an honor and a privilege to know more of you.”

“And though you won't accept me as a servant of Odin,” added Lorimer, “you really cannot prevent me from trying to make myself agreeable to you. I warn you, Mr. Guldmar, I shall visit you pretty frequently! Such men as you are not often met with.”

Olaf Guldmar looked surprised. “You really mean it?” he said. “Nothing that I have told you affects you? You still seek our friendship?”

They both earnestly assured him that they did, and as they spoke Thelma rose from her low seat and faced them with a bright smile.

“Do you know,” she said, “that you are the first people who, on visiting us once, have ever cared to come again? Ah, you look surprised, but it is so, is it not, father?”

Guldmar nodded a grave assent.

“Yes,” she continued, demurely, counting on her little white fingers, “we are three things—first, we are accursed; secondly we have the evil eye; thirdly, we are not respectable!”

And she broke into a peal of laughter, ringing and sweet as a chime of bells. The young men joined her in it; and, still with an amused expression on her lovely face, leaning her head back against a cluster of pale roses, she went on:

“My father dislikes Mr. Dyceworthy so much, because he wants to—to—oh, what is it they do to savages, father? Yes, I know—to convert us—to make us Lutherans. And when he finds it all no use, he is angry; and, though he is so religious, if he hears any one telling some untruth about us in Bosekop, he will add another thing equally untrue, and so it grows, and grows, and—why! what is the matter with you?” she exclaimed in surprise as Errington scowled and clinched his fist in a peculiarly threatening manner.

“I should like to knock him down!” he said, briefly, under his breath.

Old Guldmar laughed and looked at the young baronet approvingly.

“Who knows, who knows!” he said, cheerfully. “You may do it some day! It will be a good deed! I will do it myself if he troubles me much more. And now let us make some arrangement with you. When will you come and see us again?”

“You must visit me first,” said Sir Philip, quickly. “If you and your daughter will honor me with your company to-morrow,

I shall be proud and pleased. Consider the yacht at your service.”

Thelma, resting among the roses, looked across at him with serious, questioning eyes—eyes that seemed to be asking his intentions towards both her and her father.

Guldmar accepted the invitation at once, and, the hour for their visit next day being fixed and agreed upon, the young men began to take their leave. As Errington clasped Thelma's hand in farewell, he made a bold venture. He touched a rose that hung just above her head almost dropping on her hair.

“May I have it?” he asked, in a low tone.

Their eyes met. The girl flushed deeply, and then grew pale. She broke off the flower and gave it to him—then turned to Lorimer to say good-bye. They left her then, standing under the porch, shading her brow with one hand from the glittering sunlight as she watched them descending the winding path to the shore, accompanied by her father, who hospitably insisted on seeing them into their boat. They looked back once or twice, always to see the slender, tall white figure standing there like an angel resting in a bower of roses, with the sunshine flashing on a golden crown of hair. At the last turn in the pathway Philip raised his hat and waved it, but whether she condescended to wave her hand in answer he could not see.

Left alone, she sighed, and went slowly into the house to resume her spinning. Hearing the whirr of the wheel, the servant Britta entered.

“You are not going in the boat, Froken?” she asked, in a tone of mingled deference and affection.

Thelma looked up, smiled faintly, and shook her head in the negative.

“It is late, Britta, and I am tired.”

And the deep-blue eyes had an intense dreamy light within them as they wandered from the wheel to the wide-open window, and rested on the majestic darkness of the overshadowing, solemn pines.

CHAPTER VII.

In mezzo del mio core e' ò una spina;
Non e' ò barbier che la possa levare—
Solo il mio amore colla sua manina.

Rime Popolari.

ERRINGTON and Lorimer pulled away across the fjord in a silence that lasted for many minutes. Old Guldmar stood on the edge of his little pier to watch them out of sight. So, till their boat turned the sharp corner of the projecting rock that hid the landing-place from view, they saw his picturesque figure and gleaming