

Ulrika still waited—almost holding her breath in expectation of some divine manifestation. The brief stillness grew unbearable—Hush! What was that? Jingle—jangle—jingle—jangle! Bells! Sledge-bells tinkling musically and merrily—and approaching swiftly, nearer—nearer! Now the sharp trotting of hoofs on the hard snow—then a sudden slackening of speed—the little metallic chimes rang slower and yet more slowly, till with a decisive and melodious clash they stopped!

Ulrika's heart beat thickly—her face flushed—she advanced to Thelma's bedside, hoping, fearing—she knew not what. There was a tread of firm, yet hurried, footsteps without—a murmur of subdued voices—a half-suppressed exclamation of surprise and relief from Valdemar—and then the door of the room was hastily thrown open, and a man's tall figure, draped in what seemed to be a garment of frozen snow-flakes, stood on the threshold. The noise startled Thelma—she opened her beautiful, tired, blue eyes. Ah! what a divine rapture—what a dazzling wonder and joy flashed into them, giving them back their old luster of sunlight sparkling on azure sea! She sprang up in her bed and stretched out her arms.

"Philip!" she cried, sobbingly. "Philip! oh, my darling! Try—try to love me again!—just a little!—before I die!"

As she spoke she was clasped to his breast—folded to his heart in that strong, jealous, passionate embrace with which we who love would fain shield our nearest and dearest from even the shadow of evil—his lips closed on hers—and in the sacred stillness that followed, Ulrika slipped from the room, leaving husband and wife alone together.

CHAPTER IV.

I have led her home, my love, my only friend;
There is none like her, none!
And never yet so warmly ran my blood
And sweetly on and on,
Calming itself to the long-wished-for end,
Full to the banks, close on the promised good.

TENNYSON.

BRITTA was in the kitchen dragging off her snow-wet cloak and fur mufflers, and crying heartily all the while. The stalwart Svensen stood looking at her in perplexity, now and then uttering a word of vague sympathy and consolation, to which she paid not the slightest heed. The poor girl was tired out, and half numb with the piercing cold—the excitement, which had kept her up for days and days, had yielded to the nervous exhaustion which was its natural result—and she kept on weeping without exactly knowing why she wept. Throughout the long and fatiguing journey she had maintained unflinching energy and perseverance

—undaunted by storm, sleet, and darkness, she had driven steadily over long miles of trackless snow—her instinct had guided her by the shortest and quickest routes—she seemed to know every station and village on the way—she always managed to obtain relays of reindeer just when they were needed—in short, Errington would hardly have been able to reach the Alten Fjord without her.

He had never realized to its full extent her strong, indomitable, devoted character, till he saw her hour after hour seated beside him in the *pulkha*, her hands tightly gripping the reins of the horned animals, whose ways she understood and perfectly controlled—her bright, bird-like eyes fixed with watchful eagerness on the bewildering white landscape that opened out incessantly before her. Her common sense was never at fault—she forgot nothing—and with gentle but respectful firmness she would insist on Sir Philip's taking proper intervals of rest and refreshment at the different farms they passed on their road, though he, eager to press on, chafed and fretted at every little delay. They were welcomed all along their route with true Norse hospitality, though the good country-folk who entertained them could not refrain from astonishment at the idea of their having undertaken such a journey at such a season, and appeared to doubt the possibility of their reaching their destination at all. And now that they had reached it in safety, Britta's strength gave way. Valdemar Svensen had hastily blurted out the news of the *bonde's* death even while she and Sir Philip were alighting from their sledge—and in the same breath had told them of Thelma's dangerous illness. What wonder, then, that Britta sobbed hysterically, and refused to be comforted—what wonder that she turned upon Ulrika as that personage approached, in a burst of unreasoning anger.

"Oh, dear, oh, dear!" she cried, "to think that the Froken should be so ill—almost dying! and have nobody but *you* to attend to her!"

This, with a vindictive toss of the brown curls. Ulrika winced at her words—she was hurt, but she answered, gently:

"I have done my best," she said with a sort of grave pathos. "I have been with her night and day; had she been a daughter of my own blood, I know not how I could have served her with more tenderness. And, surely, it has been a sore and anxious time with me also—for I, too, have learned to love her!"

Her set mouth quivered—and Britta, seeing her emotion, was ashamed of her first hasty speech. She made an act of contrition at once by putting her arms round Ulrika's neck and kissing her—a proceeding which so much astonished that devout servant of Luther that her dull eyes filled with tears.

"Forgive me!" said the impetuous little maiden. "I was very rude and very unkind! But if you love the Froken, you will understand how I feel—how I wish I could have helped to take care

of her. And oh! the *bonde!*"—here she gave way to a fresh burst of tears—"the dear, good, kind, brave *bonde!* That he should be dead!—oh! it is too cruel—too dreadful—I can hardly believe it!"

Ulrika patted her consolingly on the shoulder, but said nothing—and Valdemar sighed. Britta sought for her handkerchief, and dried her eyes—but, after a minute, began to cry again as recklessly as ever.

"And now"—she gasped—"if the Froken—dies—I will die too. I will—you see if I don't! I *w-won't* live—without her!"

And such a big sob broke from her heaving bosom that it threatened to burst her trimly laced little bodice.

"She will not die," said Ulrika, decisively. "I have had my fears—but the crisis is passed. Do not fret, Britta—there is no longer any danger. Her husband's love will lift the trouble from her heart, and strength will return more speedily than it left her."

And turning a little aside on the pretense of throwing more wood on the fire, she muttered, inaudibly: "Oh, Lord, verily Thou hast done well to grant my just demand! Even for this will I remain Thy servant forever!" After this parenthesis, she resumed the conversation—Valdemar Svensen sitting silently apart—and related all that had happened since Thelma's arrival at the Alten Fjord. She also gave an account of Lovisa Elsländ's death—though Britta was not much affected by the loss of her grandmother.

"Where is the *bonde* buried, Valdemar?" she asked, in a low tone.

He looked at her with a strange, mysterious smile.

"Buried? Do you suppose his body could mix itself with common earth? No!—he sailed away, Britta—away—yonder!"

And he pointed to the window of the fjord now invisible in the deep darkness.

Britta stared at him with roundly-opened, frightened eyes—her face paled.

"Sailed away? You must be dreaming! Sailed away! How could he—if he was dead?"

Valdemar grew suddenly excited. "I tell you he sailed away!" he repeated in a loud, hoarse whisper. "Where is his ship, the 'Valkyrie?' Try if you can find it anywhere—on sea or land! It has gone, and he has gone with it—like a king and warrior—to glory, joy, and victory! Glory—joy—victory!—those were his last words!"

Britta retreated, and caught Ulrika by the arm. "Is he mad?" she asked, fearfully.

Valdemar heard her, and rose from his chair, a pained smile on his face.

"I am not mad, Britta," he said, gently. "Do not be afraid! If grief for my master could have turned my brain, I had been mad

ere this—but I have all my wits about me, and I have told you the truth." He paused—then added, in a more ordinary tone, "You will need fresh logs of pine—I will go and bring them in."

And he went out. Britta gazed after him in speechless wonder.

"What does he mean?" she asked.

"What he says," returned Ulrika, composedly. "You, like others, must have known that Olaf Guldmar's creed was a strange one—his burial has been strange—that is all!"

And she skillfully turned the conversation, and began to talk of Thelma, her sorrows and sufferings. Britta was most impatient to see her beloved "Froken," and quite grudged Sir Philip the long time he remained alone with his wife.

"He *might* call me, if only for a moment," Britta thought, plaintively. "I do so want to look at her dear face again!—But men are all alike—as long as they've got what *they* want, they never think of anybody else. Dear me! I wonder how long I shall have to wait!" So she fumed and fretted, and sat by the kitchen-fire, drinking hot tea and talking to Ulrika—all the while straining her ears for the least sound or movement from the adjoining room. But none came—there was the most perfect silence. At last she could endure it no longer, and, regardless of Ulrika's remonstrances, she stole on tiptoe to the closed door that barred her from the sight of her heart's idol, and turning the handle softly, opened it and locked in. Sir Philip saw her, and made a little warning sign, though he smiled.

He was sitting by the bedside, and in his arms, nestled against his shoulder, Thelma rested. She was fast asleep. The lines of pain had disappeared from her sweet face—a smile was on her lips—her breath came and went with peaceful regularity—and the delicate hue of a pale rose flushed her cheeks. Britta stood gazing on this fair sight till her affectionate little heart overflowed, and the ready tears dropped like diamonds from her curly lashes.

"Oh, my dear—my dear!" she whispered in a sort of rapture—when there was a gentle movement—and two star-like eyes opened like blue flowers outspreading to the sun.

"Is that you, Britta?" asked a tender, wondering voice—and with a smothered cry of ecstasy, Britta sprung to seize the outstretched hand of her beloved Froken, and cover it with kisses. And while Thelma laughed with pleasure to see her, and stroked her hair, Sir Philip described their long drive through the snow, and so warmly praised Britta's patience, endurance, and constant cheerfulness, that his voice trembled with its own earnestness, while Britta grew rosily red in her deep shyness and embarrassment, vehemently protesting that she had done nothing—nothing at all to deserve so much commendation. Then, after much glad converse, Ulrika was called, and Sir Philip, seizing her hand, shook it with such force and fervor that she was quite overcome.

"I don't know how to thank you!" he said, his eyes sparkling with gratitude. "It's impossible to repay such goodness as yours! My wife tells me how tender and patient and devoted you have been—that even when she knew nothing else, she was aware of your kindness. God bless you for it! You have saved her life——"

"Ah, yes, indeed!" interrupted Thelma, gently. "And life has grown so glad for me again! I do owe you so much."

"You owe me nothing," said Ulrika in those harsh, monotonous tones which she had of late learned to modulate. "Nothing. The debt is all on my side." She stopped abruptly—a dull red color flushed her face—her eyes dwelt on Thelma with a musing tenderness.

Sir Philip looked at her in some surprise.

"Yes," she went on. "The debt is all on my side. Hear me out, Sir Philip—and you, too—you 'rose of the northern forest,' as Sigurd used to call you! You have not forgotten Sigurd!"

"Forgotten him?" said Thelma, softly. "Never!—I loved him too well."

Ulrika's head dropped. "He was my son!" she said.

There was a silence of complete astonishment. Ulrika paused—then, as no one uttered a word, she looked up boldly, and spoke with a sort of desperate determination.

"You see you have nothing to thank me for," she went on, addressing herself to Sir Philip, while Thelma, leaning back on her pillows, and holding Britta's hand, regarded her with a new and amazed interest. "Perhaps, if you had known what sort of a woman I am, you might not have liked me to come near—*her*." And she motioned toward Thelma. "When I was young—long ago—I loved—" she laughed bitterly. "It seems a strange thing to say, does it not? Let it pass—the story of my love, my sin, and shame, need not be told here! But Sigurd was my child—born in an evil hour—and I—I strove to kill him at his birth."

Thelma uttered a faint cry of horror. Ulrika turned an imploring gaze upon her.

"Don't hate me!" she said, her voice trembling. "Don't, for God's sake, hate me! You don't know what I have suffered! I was mad, I think, at the time—I flung the child in the fjord to drown;—your father, Olaf Guldmar, rescued him. I never knew that till long after—for years the crime I had committed weighed upon my soul—I prayed and strove with the Lord for pardon, but always, always felt that for me there was no forgiveness. Lovisa Elslund used to call me 'murderess'; she was right—I *was* one, or so I thought—till—till that day I met you, Froken Thelma, on the hills with Sigurd, and the lad fought with me." She shuddered, and her eyes looked wild. "I recognized him—no matter how!—he bore my mark upon him—he was my son—*mine!*—the deformed crazy creature who yet had wit enough to love you—you, whom then I hated—but now—"

She stopped and advanced a little closer to Thelma's bedside.

"Now, there is nothing I would not do for you, my dear!" she said very gently. "But you will not need me any more. You understand what you have done for me—you and your father? You have saved me by saving Sigurd—saved *me* from being weighted down to hell with the crime of murder! And you made the boy happy while he lived. All the rest of my days spent in your service could not pay back the worth of that good deed. And most heartily do I thank the Lord that He has mercifully permitted me to tend and comfort you in the hour of trouble—and, moreover, that He has given me strength to speak and confess my sin and unworthiness before you ere I depart. For now the trouble is past, I must remove my shadow from your joy. God bless you!—and—and try to think as kindly as you can of me for—for Sigurd's sake!"

Stooping, she kissed Thelma's hand—and, before any one had time to speak a word, she left the room abruptly.

When, in a few minutes, Britta went to look after her, she was gone. She had departed to her own house in Bosekop, where she obstinately remained. Nothing would induce her to present herself again before Sir Philip or Thelma, and it was not till many days after they had left the Alten Fjord that she was once more seen about the village. And then she was a changed being. No longer harsh or forbidding in manner, she became humble and gentle—she ministered to the sick, and consoled the afflicted—but she was especially famous for her love of children. All the little ones of the place knew her, and were attracted by her—and the time came when Ulrika, white-haired, and of peaceful countenance, could be seen knitting at her door in the long summer afternoons surrounded by a whole army of laughing, chattering, dimpled youngsters, who would play at hide-and-seek behind her chair, and clamber up to kiss her wrinkled cheeks, putting their chubby arms round her neck with that guileless confidence children show only to those whom they feel can appreciate such flattering attentions. Some of her acquaintance were wont to say that she was no longer the "godly" Ulrika—but however this might be, it is certain she had drifted a little nearer to the Author of all godliness, which, after all, is the most we dare to strive for in all our differing creeds.

It was not long before Thelma began to recover. The day after her husband arrived and Ulrika departed, she rose from her bed with Britta's assistance, and sat by the blazing fire, wrapped in her white gown and looking very fragile, though very lovely. Philip had been talking to her for some time, and now he sat at her feet, holding her hand in his, and watching her face, on which there was an expression of the most plaintive and serious penitence.

"I have been very wicked!" she said, with such a quaint horror

of herself that her husband laughed. "Now I look back upon it all, I think I have behaved so very badly! because I ought never to have doubted you, my boy—no—not for all the Lady Winsleighs in the world. And poor Mr. Neville! he must be so unhappy! But it was that letter—that letter in your own writing, Philip!"

"Of course," he answered, soothingly. "No wonder you thought me a dreadful fellow. But you won't do so again, will you, Thelma? You will believe that you are the crown and center of my life—the joy of all the world to me?"

"Yes, I will," she said, softly and proudly. "Though it is always the same, I never do think myself worthy. But I must try to grow conceited, and to assure myself that I am very valuable, so that then I shall understand everything better, and be wiser."

Philip laughed. "Talking of letters," he said suddenly, "here's one I wrote to you from Hull—it only got here to-day. Where it has been delayed is a mystery. You needn't read it—you know everything in it already. Then there's a letter on the shelf up there addressed in your writing—it seems never to have been opened."

He reached it down, and gave it to her. As she took it, her face grew very sad.

"It is the one I wrote to my father before I left London," she said. And her eyes filled with tears. "It came too late!"

"Thelma," said Sir Philip then, very gently and gravely, "would you like—can you bear—to read your father's last words to you? He wrote to you on his death-bed, and gave the letter to Valdemar—"

"Oh, let me see it!" she murmured, half-sobbingly. "Father—dear father! I knew he would not leave me without a word!"

Sir Philip reverently opened the folded paper which Svensen had committed to his care that morning, and together they read the *bonde's* farewell. It ran as follows:

"THELMA, MY BELOVED.—The summons I have waited for has come at last, and the doors of Valhalla are set open to receive my soul. Wonder not that I depart with joy! Old as I am, I long for youth—the everlasting youth of which the strength and savor fail not. I have lived long enough to know the sameness of this world—though there is much therein to please the heart and eye of a man—but with that roving restlessness that was born within me, I desire to sail new seas and gaze on new lands, where a perpetual light shines that knows no fading. Grieve not for me—thou wilt remember that, unlike a Christian, I see in death the chiefest glory of life—and thou must not regret that I am eager to drain this cup of world-oblivion offered by the gods. I leave thee—not sorrowfully—for thou art in shelter and safety—the strong protection of thy husband's love defends thee and the safeguard of thine own innocence. My blessing upon him and thee! Serve him, Thelma mine, with full devotion and obedience—even as I have taught thee—thus drawing from thy woman-life its best measure of sweetness—keep the bright shield of thy truth untarnished—and live so that at the hour of thine own death-ecstasy thou mayest de-

part as easily as a song-bird soaring to the sun! I pass hence in happiness—if thou dost shed a tear thou wrongest my memory—there is naught to weep for. Valdemar will give me the crimson shroud and ocean grave of my ancestors—but question him not concerning this fiery pomp of my last voyage—he is but a serf, and his soul is shaken to its very depths by sorrow. Let him be—he will have his reward hereafter. And now farewell, child of my heart—darling of mine age—clear mirror in which my later life has brightened to content! All partings are brief—we shall meet again—thou and I and Philip—and all who have loved or who love each other—the journey heavenward may be made by different roads, but the end—the glory—the immortality is the same! Peace be upon thee and on thy children and on thy children's children!

"Thy father,

"OLAF GULDMAR."

In spite of the brave old pagan's declaration that tears would wrong his memory, they dropped bright and fast from his daughter's eyes as she kissed again and again the words his dying hand had penciled—while Errington knew not which feeling gained the greater mastery over him—grief for a good man's loss, or admiration for the strong, heroic spirit in which that good man had welcomed Death with rejoicing. He could not help comparing the *bonde's* departure from this life with that of Sir Francis Lennox, the man of false fashion—who had let slip his withered soul with an oath into the land of Nowhere. Presently Thelma grew calmer, and began to speak in hushed, soft tones:

"Poor Valdemar!" she said, meditatively. "His heart must ache very much, Philip!"

Philip looked up inquiringly.

"You see, my father speaks of the 'crimson shroud,'" she went on. "That means that he was buried like many of the ancient Norwegian sea-kings—he was taken from his bed while dying and placed on board his own ship to breathe his last; then the ship was set on fire and sent out to sea. I always knew he wished it so. Valdemar must have done it all—for I—I saw the last glimpse of the flames on the fjord the night I came home! Oh, Philip!" and her beautiful eyes rested tenderly upon him, "it was all so dreadful—so desolate! I wanted—I prayed to die also! The world was so empty—it seemed as if there was nothing left!"

Philip, still sitting at her feet, encircled her with both arms, and drew her down to him.

"My Thelma!" he whispered, "there *is* nothing left—nothing at all worth living for—save Love!"

"Ah! but that," she answered, softly, "is everything!"

* * * * *

Is it so, indeed? Is Love alone worth living for—worth dying for? Is it the only satisfying good we can grasp at among the shifting shadows of our brief existence? In its various phases and different workings, is it, after all, the brightest radiance known in the struggling darkness of our lives?

Sigurd had thought so—he had died to prove it. Philip thought

so—when once more at home in England with his recovered “treasure of the golden midnight” he saw her, like a rose refreshed by rain, raise her bright head in renewed strength and beauty, with the old joyous luster dancing in her eyes, and the smile of a perfect happiness like summer sunshine on her fair face. Lord Winsleigh thought so—he was spending the winter in Rome with his wife and son—and there among the shadows of the Cæsars, his long, social martyrdom ended, and he regained what he had once believed lost forever—his wife’s affection. Clara, gentle, wistful, with the softening shadow of a great sorrow and a great repentance in her once too brilliant eyes, was a very different Clara to the dashing “beauty” who had figured so conspicuously in London society. She clung to her husband with an almost timid eagerness as though she dreaded losing him—and when he was not with her, she seemed to rely entirely on her son, whom she watched with a fond, almost melancholy pride, and who responded to her tenderness, though proffered so late, with the full-hearted frankness of his impulsive, ardent nature. She wrote to Thelma, asking her pardon, and in return received such a sweet, forgiving, generous letter as caused her to weep for an hour or more. But she felt she could never again meet the clear regard of those beautiful, earnest, truthful eyes—never again could she stand in Thelma’s presence, or call her friend—that was all over. Still Love remained—a Love chastened and sad, with drooping wings and a somewhat doubting smile—yet it was Love—

“Love, that keeps all the choir of lives in chime—
Love, that is blood within the veins of time.”

And Love, no matter how absurd and maltreated, is a very patient god, and even while suffering from undeserved wounds, still works on, doing magical things. So that poor Edward Neville, the forsaken husband of Violet Vere, when he heard that that popular actress had died suddenly in America from a fit of delirium tremens brought on by excessive drinking, was able, by some gentle method known only to Love and himself, to forget all her frailties—to obliterate from his memory the fact that he ever saw her on the boards of the Brilliant Theater—and to think of her henceforth only as the wife he had once adored, and who, he decided in vague, dreamy fashion, must have died young. Love also laid a firm hand on the vivacious Pierre Duprez—he who had long scoffed at the *jeu d’amour* placed it at last in grave earnest—and one bright season he introduced his bride into Parisian society—a charming little woman, with very sparkling eyes and white teeth, who spoke French perfectly, though not with the “haccent” recommended by Briggs. It was difficult to recognize Britta in the *petite élégante* who laughed and danced and chatted her way through some of the best salons in Paris, captivating everybody as she went—

but there she was, all the same, holding her own as usual. Her husband was extremely proud of her—he was fond of pointing her out to people as something excessively precious and unique—and saying—“See her! That is my wife! From Norway! Yes—from the very utmost north of Norway! I love my country—certainly!—but I will tell you this much—if I had been obliged to choose a wife among French women—*ma foi!* I should never have married!”

And what of George Lorimer?—the idle, somewhat careless man of “modern” type, in whose heart, notwithstanding the supposed deterioration of the age, all the best and bravest codes of old-world chivalry were written? Had Love no fair thing to offer *him*? Was he destined to live out his life in the silent heroism of faithful, unuttered, unrequited, unselfish devotion? Were the heavens, as Sigurd had said, always to be empty? Apparently not—for when he was verging toward middle age, a young lady besieged him with her affections, and boldly offered to be his wife any day he chose to name. She was a small person, not quite five years old, with great blue eyes and a glittering tangle of golden curls. She made her proposal one summer on the lawn at Errington Manor, in the presence of Beau Lovelace, on whose knee sat her little brother Olaf, a fine boy a year younger than herself. She had placed her dimpled arms round Lorimer’s neck—and when she so confidently suggested marriage to her “Zordie,” as she called him, she was rubbing her rosy, velvety cheek against his mustache with much sweet consideration and tenderness. Lovelace, hearing her, laughed aloud, whereat the little lady was extremely offended.

“I don’t care!” she said, with pretty defiance. “I do love oo, Zordie, and I will marry oo!”

George held her fondly to his breast, as though she were some precious fragile flower of which not a petal must be injured.

“All right!” he answered gayly, though his voice trembled somewhat, “I accept! You shall be my little wife, Thelma. Consider it settled!”

Apparently she did so consider it, for from that day, whenever she was asked her name, she announced herself proudly as “Zordie’s little wife, Thelma”—to the great amusement of her father, Sir Philip, and that other Thelma, on whom the glory of motherhood had fallen like a new charm, investing both face and form with superior beauty and an almost divine serenity. But “Zordie’s wife” took her *sobriquet* very seriously—so much so, indeed, that by and by “Zordie” began to take it rather seriously himself—and to wonder whether, after all, marriages, unequal in point of age, might not occasionally turn out well. He condemned himself severely for the romanticism of thinking such thoughts, even while he indulged in them, and called himself “an old fool,”

though he was in the actual prime of manhood, and an exceedingly handsome fellow withal.

But when the younger Thelma came back at the age of sixteen from her convent school at Arles—the same school where her mother had been before her—she looked so like her mother—so very like, that his heart began to ache with the old, wistful, passionate longing he fancied he had stilled forever. He struggled against this feeling for awhile, till at last it became too strong for him—and then, though he told himself it was absurd—that a man past forty had no right to expect to win a girl's first love, he grew so reckless that he determined to risk his fate with her. One day, therefore, he spoke out, scarcely knowing what he said, and only conscious that his pulses were beating with abnormal rapidity. She listened to his tremulous, rather hesitating proposal with exceeding gravity, and appeared more surprised than displeased. Raising her glorious blue eyes—eyes in which her mother's noble, fearless look was faithfully reflected, she said, simply, just in her mother's own quaint way :

“I don't know why you talk about this at all. I thought it was all settled long ago!”

“Settled!” faltered Lorimer, astonished—he was generally self-possessed, but this fair young lady's perfect equanimity far surpassed his at that moment—“settled!” My darling! my child—I am so much older than you are——”

“I don't like *boys!*” she declared, with stately disdain. “I was your wife when I was little—and I thought it was to be the same thing now I am big! I told mother so, and she was quite pleased. But, of course, if you don't want me——”

She was not allowed to finish her sentence, for Lorimer, with a sudden rush of joy that almost overpowered him, caught her in his arms and pressed the first lover's kiss on her pure, innocently smiling lips.

“Want you!” he murmured, passionately, with a strange, sweet mingling of the past and present in his words. “I have always wanted—Thelma!”

