

lost! His laurels will be insufficient to cover the brand which from to-day on will glow upon his brow!" Her husband looked at her in amazement.

"Is this your welcome, after seven long years of absence, Louise?" said he, sadly.

She laid her hand hastily upon his arm, saying, "Hush, hush!" Once more she gazed at the princess, who was talking and laughing gayly with her husband and Count Kalkreuth. "How her cheeks glow, and what tender glances she throws him!" murmured Louise. "Ah! the prince has fallen a victim to his ingenuousness! Verily, he is again praising the merits of his friend. He tells her how Kalkreuth saved his life—how he received the blow meant for his own head. Poor prince! You will pay dearly for the wound Kalkreuth received for you. I said, and I repeat it—he is lost!"

Her husband looked at her as if he feared she had gone mad during his absence. "Of whom do you speak, Louise?" whispered he. "What do you mean? Will you not speak one word of welcome to me to convince me that you know me—that I have not become a stranger to you?"

The princess now arose from her seat, and leaning on her husband's arm she passed through the room, talking merrily with Count Kalkreuth at her side.

"They have gone to the conservatory," said Louise, grasping her husband's arm. "We will also go and find some quiet, deserted place where we can talk undisturbed."

CHAPTER III.

MOTHER AND DAUGHTER.

LOUISE DU TROUFFLE drew her husband onward, and they both followed silently the great crowd which was now entering the splendidly illuminated conservatories. The view offered to the eye was superb. You seemed to be suddenly transplanted as if by magic from the stiff, ceremonious court-saloons into the fresh, fragrant, blooming world of nature. You breathed with rapture the odor of those rare and lovely flowers which were arranged in picturesque order between the evergreen myrtles and oranges. The windows, and indeed the ceiling were entirely covered with vines, and seemed to give color to the illusion that you were really walking in an open alley. Colored Chinese balloons attached to fine chains, fell from the ceiling, and seemed to float like gay butterflies between the trees and flowers. They threw their soft, faint, many-colored lights

through these enchanting halls, on each side of which little grottoes had been formed by twining together myrtles, palms, and fragrant bushes. Each one of these held a little grass-plot, or green divan, and these were so arranged that the branches of the palms were bent down over the seats, and concealed those who rested there behind a leafy screen.

To one of these grottoes Louise now led her husband. "We will rest here awhile," said she. "This grotto has one advantage—it lies at the corner of the wall and has but one open side, and leafy bushes are thickly grouped about it. We have no listeners to fear, and may chat together frankly and harmlessly. And now, first of all, welcome, my husband—welcome to your home!"

"God be thanked, Louise—God be thanked that you have at last known how to speak one earnest word, and welcome me to your side! Believe me, when I say that through all these weary years, each day I have rejoiced at the thought of this moment. It has been my refreshment and my consolation. I truly believe that the thought of you and my ardent desire to see you was a talisman which kept death afar off. It seemed to me impossible to die without seeing you once more. I had a firm conviction that I would live through the war and return to you. Thus I defied the balls of the enemy, and have returned to repose on your heart, my beloved wife—after the storms and hardships of battle to fold you fondly in my arms and never again to leave you." He threw his arms around her waist, and pressed his lips with a tender kiss upon her mouth.

Louise suffered this display of tenderness for one moment, then slipped lightly under his arms and retreated a few steps.

"Do you know," said she, with a low laugh, "that was a true, respectable husband's kiss; without energy and without fire; not too cold, not too warm—the tepid, lukewarm tenderness of a husband who really loves his wife, and might be infatuated about her, if she had not the misfortune to be his wife?"

"Ah! you are still the old Louise," said the major merrily; "still the gay, coquettish, unsteady butterfly, who, with its bright, variegated wings, knows how to escape, even when fairly caught in the toils. I love you just as you are, Louise; I rejoice to find you just what I left you. You will make me young again, child; by your side I will learn again to laugh and be happy. We have lost the power to do either amidst the fatigues and hardships of our rude campaigns."

"Yes, yes," said Louise; "we dismissed you, handsome, well-formed cavaliers, and you return to us clumsy, growling bears; good-humored but savage pets, rather too willing to learn again to

dance and sing. The only question is, will the women consent to become bear-leaders, and teach the uncultivated pets their steps?"

"Well, they will be obliged to do this," said the major, laughing. "It is their duty."

"Dear friend, if you begin already to remind us of our duty, I fear your cause is wholly lost. Come, let us sit here awhile upon this grass-plot and talk together."

"Yes, you will be seated, but I do not see exactly why we should talk together. I would much rather close your laughing, rosy lips with kisses." He drew her to his side, and was about to carry out this purpose, but Louise waved him off.

"If you do not sit perfectly quiet by my side," said she, "I will unfold the gay wings, of which you have just spoken, and fly far away!"

"Well, then, I will sit quietly; but may I not be permitted to ask my shy prudish mistress why I must do so?"

"Why? Well, because I wish to give my savage pet his first lecture after his return. The lecture begins thus: When a man remains absent from his wife seven years, he has no right to return as a calm, confident, self-assured husband, with his portion of home-baked tenderness; he should come timidly, as a tender, attentive, enamoured cavalier, who woos his mistress and draws near to her humbly, tremblingly, and submissively—not looking upon her as his wife, but as the fair lady whose love he may hope to win."

"But why, Louise, should we take refuge in such dissimulation, when we are assured of your love?"

"You are assured of nothing! How can you be so artless as to believe that these seven years have passed by and left no trace, and that we feel exactly to-day as we did before this fearful war? When you have opened the door and given liberty to the bird whose wings you have cut, and whose wild heart you have tamed in a cage: when the captive flies out into the fresh, free air of God, floats merrily along in the midst of rejoicing, laughing Nature—will he, after years have passed, will he, if you shall please to wish once more to imprison him, return willingly to his cage? I believe you would have to entice him a long time—to whisper soft, loving, flattering words, and place in the cage the rarest dainties before you could induce him to yield up his golden freedom, and to receive you once more as his lord and master. But if you seek to arrest him with railing and threats—with wise and grave essays on duty and constancy—he will swing himself on the lofty branch of a tree, so high that you cannot follow, and whistle at you!"

"You are right, I believe," said Du Trouille, thoughtfully. "I see to-day a new talent in you, Louise; you have become a philosopher."

"Yes, and I thirst to bring my wisdom to bear against a man," said Louise, laughingly. "I hope you will profit by it! Perhaps it may promote your happiness, and enable you to recapture your bird. You will not at least make shipwreck on the breakers against which the good prince dashed his head to-day; he was wounded and bleeding, and will carry the mark upon his brow as long as he lives."

"What has he done which justifies so melancholy a prognostication?"

"What has he done? He returned to his wife, not as a lover but as a husband; he did not kiss her hand tremblingly and humbly and timidly—seek to read in her glance if she were inclined to favor him; he advanced with the assurance of a conquering hero, and before the whole world he gave her a loud, ringing kiss, which resounded like the trump of victory. The good prince thought that because the outside war was at an end and you had made peace with your enemies, all other strifes and difficulties had ceased, and you had all entered upon an epoch of everlasting happiness; that, by the sides of your fond and faithful wives, you had nothing to do but smoke the calumet of peace. But he made a great and dangerous mistake, and he will suffer for it. I tell you, friend, the war which you have just closed was less difficult, less alarming than the strife which will now be carried on in your families. The wicked foe has abandoned the battle-field to you, but he is crouched down upon your hearths and awaits you at the sides of your wives and daughters."

"Truly, Louise, your words, make me shudder! and my heart, which was beating so joyfully, seems now to stand still."

Louise paid no attention to his words, but went on:

"You say the war is at an end. I believe it has just begun. It will be carried on fiercely in every house, in every family; many hearts will break, many wounds be given, and many tears be shed before we shall have household peace. All those fond ties which united men and women, parents and children, have been shaken, or torn apart; all contracts are destroyed or undermined. In order to endure, to live through these fearful seven years, every one gave himself up to frivolity—the terrible consequence is, that the whole world has become light-minded and frivolous. We do not look upon life with the same eyes as formerly. To enjoy the present moment—to snatch that chance of happiness from the fleeting hour, which the next hour is chasing and may utterly destroy—seems the only aim. Love is an amusement, constancy a phantom, in which no one believes—which is only spoken of in nursery fairy tales. The women have learned, by experience, that their husbands and

lovers did not die of longing to see them; that they themselves, after the tears of separation, which perhaps flowed freely a long time, were once quenched, could live on alone; that independence had its bright side and was both agreeable and comfortable. The history of the widow of Ephesus is repeated every day, my friend. The women wept and were melancholy a long time after the separation from their husbands, but at last they could not close their ears to the sweet, soft words of consolation which were whispered to them; at last they realized that incessant weeping and mourning had its wearisome and monotonous side, that the dreary time flew more swiftly if they sought to amuse themselves and be happy. They allowed themselves to be comforted, in the absence of their husbands, by their lovers, and they felt no reproach of conscience; for they were convinced that their truant husbands were doing the same thing in their long separation—were making love to ‘the lips that were near.’”

“Did you think and act thus, Louise?” said Major du Trouffle, in a sad and anxious tone, looking his wife firmly in the eye.

Louisa laughed with calm and unconcern.

“My friend,” said she, “would I have told all this to you, if I had committed the faults I charge upon others? I have been inactive but observant; that has been my amusement, my only distraction, and my observations have filled me with amazement and abhorrence. I have drawn from these sources profound and philosophic lessons. I have studied mankind, and with full conviction I can assure you the war is not at an end, and, instead of the palm of peace, the apple of discord will flourish. Men no longer believe in constancy or honesty, every man suspects his neighbor and holds him guilty, even as he knows himself to be guilty. Every woman watches the conduct of other women with malicious curiosity; she seems to herself less guilty when she finds that others are no better than herself; and when, unhappily, she does not find that her friend is false or faithless, she will try to make her appear so; if the truth will not serve her purpose, she will, by slander and scandal, draw a veil over her own sins. Never was there as much treachery and crime as now. Calumny stands before every door, and will whisper such evil and fearful things in the ears of every returned soldier, that he will become wild with rage, and distrust his wife, no matter how innocent she may be.”

“I shall not be guilty of this fault,” said Major du Trouffle. “If I find slander lying in wait at my door, I will kick it from me and enter my home calmly and smilingly, without having listened to her whispers, or, if I have heard them involuntarily, without believing them.”

“Then there will be at least one house in Berlin where peace will reign,” said Louise, sweetly, “and that house will be ours. I welcome you in the name of our *lares*, who have been long joyfully awaiting you. I have also an agreeable surprise for you.”

“What surprise, Louise?”

“You often told me that my daughter Camilla disturbed your happiness, that she stood like a dark cloud over my past, which had not belonged to you.”

“It is true! I could not force my heart to love her; her presence reminded me always that you had been loved by another, had belonged to another, and had been made thoroughly wretched.”

“Well then, friend, this cloud has been lifted up, and this is the surprise which awaited your return home. Camilla has been married more than a year.”

“Married!” cried the major, joyfully; “who is the happy man that has undertaken to tame this wilful child, and warm her cold heart?”

“Ask rather, who is the unhappy man who was enamoured with this lovely face, and has taken a demon for an angel?” sighed Louise. “He is a young, distinguished, and wealthy Englishman, Lord Elliot, an *attaché* of the English embassy, who fulfilled the duties of minister during the absence of the ambassador, Lord Mitchel, who was generally at the headquarters of the king.”

“And Camilla, did she love him?”

Louise shrugged her shoulders.

“When he made his proposals, she declared herself ready to marry him; but, I believe, his presence was less agreeable and interesting to her than the splendid gifts he daily brought her.”

“But, Louise, it was her free choice to marry him? You did not persuade her? you did not, I hope, in order to humor my weakness, induce her by entreaties and representations to marry against her will?”

“My friend,” said Louise, with the proud air of an injured mother, “however fondly I may have loved you, I would not have sacrificed for you the happiness of an only child. Camilla asked my consent to her marriage after she had obtained her father’s permission, and I gave it. The marriage took place three days after the engagement, and the young pair made a bridal-trip to England, from which they returned a few months since.”

“And where are they now?”

“They live in Berlin in an enchanting villa, which Lord Elliot has converted into a palace for his young wife. You will see them this evening, for they are both here, and—”

Louise ceased to speak; a well-known voice interrupted the

silence, and drew nearer and nearer. "Ah," whispered she, lightly, "the proverb is fulfilled, 'Speak of the wolf, and he appears.' That is Lord Elliot and Camilla speaking with such animation. Let us listen awhile."

The youthful pair had now drawn near, and stood just before the grotto.

"I find it cruel, very cruel, to deny me every innocent pleasure," said Camilla, with a harsh, displeased voice. "I must live like a nun who has taken an eternal vow; I am weary of it."

"Oh, my Camilla, you slander yourself when you say this; you are not well, and you must be prudent. I know you better than you know yourself, my Camilla. Your heart, which is clear and transparent as crystal, lies ever unveiled before me, and I listen with devout love to its every pulse. I am sure that you do not wish to dance to-day, my love."

"I wish to dance, and I will dance, because it gives me pleasure." "Because you are like a sweet child and like the angels," said Lord Elliot, eagerly; "your heart is gay and innocent. You are like a fluttering Cupid, sleeping in flower-cups and dreaming of stars and golden sunshine; you know nothing of earthly and prosaic thoughts. I must bind your wings, my beauteous butterfly, and hold you down in the dust of this poor, pitiful world. Wait, only wait till you are well; when your health is restored, you shall be richly repaid for all your present self-denial. Every day I will procure you new pleasures, prepare you new *fêtes*; you shall dance upon carpets of roses like an elfin queen."

"You promise me that?" said Camilla; "you promise me that you will not prevent my dancing as much and as gayly as I like?" "I promise you all this, Camilla, if you will only not dance now."

"Well," sighed she, "I agree to this; but I fear that my cousin, Count Kindar, will be seriously displeased if I suddenly refuse him the dance I promised him."

"He will excuse you, sweetheart, when I beg him to do so," said Lord Elliot, with a soft smile. "I will seek him at once, and make your excuses. Be kind enough to wait for me here, I will return immediately." He kissed her fondly upon the brow, and hastened off.

Camilla looked after him and sighed deeply; then, drawing back the long leaves of the palm, she entered the grotto; she stepped hastily back when she saw that the green divan was occupied, and tried to withdraw, but her mother held her and greeted her kindly.

Camilla laughed aloud. "Ah, mother, it appears as if I am to be ever in your way; although I no longer dwell in your house, I

still disturb your pleasures. But I am discreet; let your friend withdraw; I will not see him; I will not know his name, and when my most virtuous husband returns, he will find only two modest gentlewomen. Go, sir; I will turn away, that I may not see you."

"I rather entreat you, my dear Camilla, to turn your lovely face toward me, and to greet me kindly," said Major du Trouffle, stepping from behind the shadow of the palm, and giving his hand to Camilla.

She gazed at him questioningly, and when at last she recognized him, she burst out into a merry peal of laughter. "Truly," said she, "my mother had a rendezvous with her husband, and I have disturbed an enchanting marriage chirping. You have also listened to my married chirp, and know all my secrets. Well, what do you say, dear stepfather, to my mother having brought me so soon under the *coif*, and made her wild, foolish little Camilla the wife of a lord?"

"I wish you happiness with my whole soul, dear Camilla, and rejoice to hear from your mother that you have made so excellent a choice, and are the wife of so amiable and intellectual a man."

"So, does mamma say that Lord Elliot is all that? She may be right, I don't understand these things. I know only that I find his lordship unspeakably wearisome, that I do not understand a word of his intellectual essays, though my lord declares that I know every thing, that I understand every thing, and have a most profound intellect. Ah, dear stepfather, it is a terrible misfortune to be so adored and worshipped as I am; I am supposed to be an angel, who by some rare accident has fallen upon the earth."

"Truly a misfortune, for which all other women would envy you," said the major, laughing.

"Then they would make a great mistake," sighed Camilla. "I for my part am weary of this homage; I have no desire to be, I will not consent to be an angel; I wish only to be a beautiful, rich young woman and to enjoy my life. Do what I will, my husband looks at every act of folly from an ideal stand-point, and finds thus new material for worship; he will force me at last to some wild, insane act in order to convince him that I am no angel, but a weak child of earth."

"You were almost in the act of committing such a folly this evening," said her mother, sternly.

"Ah, you mean that I wished to dance. But only think, mamma, with whom I wished to dance, with my cousin, whom all the world calls 'the handsome Kindar,' and who dances so gloriously, that it is a delight to see him, and bliss to float about with him. He only returned this evening, and he came at once to me and greeted me so

lovingly, so tenderly; you know, mamma, we have always loved each other fondly. When I told him I was married, he turned pale and looked at me so sorrowfully, and tears were in his eyes. Oh, mamma, why was I obliged to wed Lord Elliot, who is so grave, so wise, so learned, so virtuous, and with whom it is ever wearisome? Why did you not let me wait till Kindar returned, who is so handsome, so gay, so ignorant, before whom I should never have been forced to blush, no matter how foolish I had been, and with whom I should never have been weary?"

"But how did you know that the handsome Kindar wished to marry you?" said Louise, laughing.

"Oh, yes, mamma, I knew it well; he has often told me so, even when I was a little girl and he was a cadet. This dreadful war is the cause of all my misery; it led to his promotion, then he must join his regiment; then, alas! I must marry another before his return."

"Yes, but a noble, intellectual, and honorable cavalier, who does honor to your choice," said Du Trouffle.

"Lord Elliot has red hair, squints with both eyes, and is so long and meagre that he looks more like an exclamation-point than a man. When he appears before me in his yellow-gray riding costume, I am always reminded of the great *windspeil* you gave me once, stepfather, who had such long, high legs, I used to creep under them; and when he lies like a *windspeil* at my feet, and squints at me, his eyes seem tied up in knots, and I never know if he is really looking at me, or is about to fall into a swoon. Now, stepfather, do you not find that Lord Elliot does honor to my taste?"

"Certainly, and all the more because your choice proves that you appreciate the true dignity and beauty of a man, and his outward appearance seems to you comparatively insignificant."

"Alas, alas! now you begin also to attribute noble and exalted motives to me," said Camilla pathetically. "No, no, stepfather, I am not so sublime as you think, and I should not have married Lord Elliot if mamma and myself had not both indulged the ardent wish to be released from each other. Mamma is too young and too beautiful to be willing to have a grown-up daughter who is not ugly by her side, and I was too old to be locked up any longer in the nursery, so I stepped literally from the nursery to the altar, and became the wife of Lord Elliot; so mamma and myself were freed from the presence of each other, and I thought that a time of joy and liberty would bloom for me. But, alas, I have only changed my cage; formerly I was confined in a nursery, now my prison is a temple, because my husband says I am too elevated, too angelic to come in contact with the pitiful world. Ah, I long so for the world;

I am so thirsty for its pleasures, I would so gladly take full draughts of joy from its golden cup! My husband comes and offers me a crystal shell, filled with heavenly dew and ether dust, which is, I suppose, angels' food, but he does not remark that I am hungering and thirsting to death. Like King Midas, before whose thirsty lips every thing turned to gold, and who was starving in the midst of all his glory, I beseech you, stepfather, undertake the rôle of the barber, bore a hole and cry out in it that I have ass's ears—ears as long as those of King Midas. Perhaps the rushes would grow again and make known to my lord the simple fact, which up to this time he refuses to believe, that I am indeed no angel, and he would cease to worship me, and allow me to be gay and happy upon the earth like every other woman. But come, come, stepfather, I hear the earnest voice of my husband in conversation with my merry, handsome cousin. Let us go to meet them, and grant me the pleasure of introducing Lord Elliot to you—not here, but in the brilliantly-lighted saloon. Afterward I will ask you, on your word of honor, if you still find I have made a happy choice, and if my *windspeil* of a husband is of more value than my handsome cousin?"

She took the arm of the major with a gay smile, and tried to draw him forward.

"But your mother," said Du Trouffle, "you forget your mother?"

"Listen now, mamma, how cruel he is, always reminding you that you are my mother; that is as much as to say to you, in other words, that you will soon be a grandmother. Mamma, I could die of laughter to think of you as a grandmother. I assure you, mamma, that in the midst of all my sorrows and disappointments this thought is the only thing which diverts and delights me. Only think, I shall soon make you a worthy grandmother. Say now, grandmother, will you come with us?"

"No, I will remain here, your gayety has made me sad—I do not feel fit for society. I will await my husband here, and we will return to Berlin."

"Adieu, then, mamma," said Camilla, rapidly drawing the major onward.

Louise du Trouffle remained alone in the grotto; she leaned her head against the palm-tree, and looked sorrowfully after the retreating form of her daughter. It seemed to her that a shudder passed through her soul; that a cold, dead hand was laid upon her heart, as if a phantom pressed against her, and a voice whispered: "This is thy work. Oh, mother worthy of execration, you alone have caused the destruction of your daughter; through you that soul is lost, which God intrusted to you, and which was endowed with the germ of great and noble qualities. It was your duty to nourish and

build them up. God will one day call you to account, and ask this precious soul of you, which you have poisoned by your evil example, which is lost—lost through you alone.”

Louise shuddered fearfully, then rousing herself she tried to shake off these fearful thoughts, and free herself from the stern voices which mastered her. They had so often spoken, so often awaked her in the middle of the night, driven sleep from her couch, and tortured her conscience with bitter reproaches!

Louise knew well this gray phantom which was ever behind her or at her side; ever staring at her with dark and deadly earnestness, even in the midst of her mirth and joyousness; the harsh voice was often so loud that Louise was bewildered by it, and could not hear the ring of joy and rapture which surrounded her. She knew that this pale spectre was conscience; press it down as she would, the busy devil was ever mounting, mounting. But she would not listen, she rushed madly on after new distractions, new pleasures, she quenched the warning voice under shouts of mirth and levity; she threw herself in the arms of folly and worldly pleasures, and then for long months she escaped this threatening phantom, which, with raised finger, stood behind her, which seemed to chase her, and from which she ever fled to new sins and new guilt. Sometimes she had a feeling as if Death held her in his arms, and turned her round in a wild and rapid dance, not regarding her prayers, or her panting, gasping breath; she would, oh how gladly, have rested; gladly have laid down in some dark and quiet corner, away from this wild gayety. But she could not escape from those mysterious arms which held her captive in their iron clasp, which rushed onward with her in the death-dance of sin. She must go onward, ever onward, in this career of vice; she must ever again seek intoxication in the opium of sin, to save herself from the barren, colorless nothingness which awaited her; from that worst of all evils, the weariness with which the old coquette paints the terrible future, in which even she can no longer please; in which old age with a cruel hand sweeps away the flowers from the hair and the crimson from the cheek, and points out to the mocking world the wrinkles on the brow and the ashes in the hair.

“It is cold here,” said Louise, shuddering, and springing up quickly from the grass-plot—“it is cold here, and lonely; I will return to the saloon. Perhaps—”

Hasty steps drew near, and a voice whispered her name. Madame du Trouffle drew back, and a glowing blush suffused her cheek, and as she advanced from the grotto she was again the gay, imperious coquette—the beautiful woman, with the cloudless brow and the sparkling eyes, which seemed never to have been over-

shadowed by tears. The conscience-stricken, self-accusing mother was again the worldly-wise coquette.

Her name was called the second time, and her heart trembled, she knew not if with joy or horror.

“For God’s sake, why have you dared to seek me here? Do you not know that my husband may return at any moment?”

“Your husband is entertaining Prince Henry while the princess dances the first waltz with Count Kalkreuth. All the world is dancing, playing, and chatting, and, while looking at the prince and princess, have for one moment forgotten the beautiful Louise du Trouffle. I alone could not do this, and as I learned from Lady Elliot that you were here, I dared to follow you, and seek in one glance a compensation for what I have endured this day. Ah, tell me, worshipped lady, must I be forever banished from your presence.”

The words of the young man would have seemed insincere and artificial to every unprejudiced ear, but they filled the heart of the vain Louise du Trouffle with joy; they convinced her that she was yet beautiful enough to excite admiration.

“All will be well, Emil,” said she; “I have convinced my husband that I am wise as Cato and virtuous as Lucretia. He believes in me, and will cast all slander from his door. Remain here, and let me return alone to the saloon. *Au revoir, mon ami.*”

She threw him a kiss from the tips of her rosy fingers, and hastened away.

CHAPTER IV.

THE KING IN SANS-SOUCI.

THE ceremonies and festivities of the reception were ended. The king could at length indulge himself in that quiet and repose which he had so long vainly desired. At length, he who had lived so many years to perform the duties of a king, who had in reality lived for his country, might after so many cares and sorrows seek repose. The warrior and hero might once more become the philosopher; might once more enjoy with his friends the pleasure of science and art.

The king entered the carriage which was to bear him to Sans-Souci with a beaming countenance—his deeply-loved Sans-Souci, which had seemed a golden dream to him during the dreary years of the war—a bright goal before him, of which it consoled and strengthened him even to think. Now he would again behold it; now he would again enter those beautiful rooms, and the past would once more become a reality.