

WARBLE FOR LILAC TIME.

Warble me now, for joy of Lilac-time. Sort me, O tongue and lips, for Nature's sake, and sweet life's sake—and death's the same as life's.

ELECTIVE AFFINITIES.

A Novel.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN OF GOETHE.

PART I.

(CHAPTER VII. (continued).)

In the meanwhile, as the gentlemen were thus slackening in their energy, the activity of the ladies increased all the more.

With our friends, the feelings which were mutually arising had the most agreeable effects. Their dispositions opened out, and a general good will arose out of the several individual affections.

Such a temper elevates the spirit, while it enlarges the heart, and everything which, under the influence of it, people do and undertake, has a tendency towards the illimitable.

One day their walk led them down from the gate at the right wing of the castle, in the direction of the hotel, and thence over the bridge towards the ponds, along the sides of which they proceeded as far as it was generally thought possible to follow the water.

Already a plan was being suggested for making the distance shorter, and adding a fresh beauty to the landscape, by throwing a bridge across the stream, below the mill, where it ran into the lake.

would offer her, or if she supported herself on his shoulder, then he was left in no doubt that it was a very exquisite human creature who touched him.

What the meaning of this could be, she did not immediately learn. When they had gone down, and were seated opposite each other at a table under the trees, and when the miller's wife had gone for milk, and the miller, who had come out to them, was sent to meet Charlotte and the Captain, Edward, with a little embarrassment, began to speak.

"I have a request to make, dear Otilie; you will forgive me for asking it, if you do not grant it. You make no secret (I am sure you need not make any) that you wear a miniature under your dress against your breast.

Otilie said nothing, and while he was speaking, she kept her eyes fixed straight before her; then, without hesitation and without haste, with a look turned more towards heaven than on Edward, she unclasped the chain, drew out the picture, and pressed it against her forehead, and then reached it over to her friend, with the words:

"Do you keep it for me till we come home; I cannot give you a better proof how deeply I thank you for your affectionate care."

He did not venture to press the picture to his lips; but he caught her hand and raised it to his eyes. They were, perhaps, of the most beautiful hands which had ever been clasped together.

Under the miller's guidance, Charlotte and the Captain came down by an easier path, and now joined them. There was the meeting, and a happy talk, and then they took some refreshments. They would not return by the same way as they came; and Edward struck into a rocky path on the other side of the stream, from which the ponds were again to be seen.

They came upon it rather unexpectedly, and were of course delighted. They had made the circuit of a little world; they were standing on the spot where the new build was to be erected, and were looking again at the windows of their own home.

They went down to the summer house, and sat all four in it for the first time together; nothing was more natural than that with one voice it should be proposed to have the way they had been that day, and which, as it was, had taken them much time and trouble, properly laid out and graveled, so that people might loiter along it at their leisure.

Already a plan was being suggested for making the distance shorter, and adding a fresh beauty to the landscape, by throwing a bridge across the stream, below the mill, where it ran into the lake.

Even Charlotte, with all her prudence, had little to urge against this. There had been, indeed, a previous intention of selling the farm. The Captain was ready

immediately with a plan for breaking up the ground into small portions among the peasantry of the forest. Edward, however, had a simpler and shorter way of managing it. His present steward had already proposed to take it off his hands—he was to pay for it by instalments—and so, gradually, as the money came in, they would get their work forwarded from point to point.

So reasonable and prudent a scheme was sure of universal approbation, and already, in prospect, they began to see their new walk winding along its way, and to imagine the many beautiful views and charming spots which they hoped to discover in it neighborhood.

To bring it all before themselves with greater fullness of detail, in the evening they produced the new chart. With the help of this they went over again the way that they had come, and found various places where the walk might take rather a different direction with advantage. Their other scheme was now once more talked through, and connected with the fresh designs. The site for the new house in the park, opposite the castle, was a second time examined into and approved, and fixed upon for the termination of the intended circuit.

Otilie had said nothing all this time. At length Edward pushed the chart, which had hitherto been lying before Charlotte, across to her, begging her to give her opinion; she still hesitated for a moment. Edward in his gentlest way again pressed her to let them know what she thought—nothing had as yet been settled—it was all as yet an embryo.

"I would have the house built here," she said, as she pointed with her finger to the highest point of the slope on the hill. "It is true you cannot see the castle from thence, for it is hidden by the wood; but for that very reason you find yourself in another quite new world; you lose village and houses and all at the same time. The view of the ponds and the mill, and the hills and mountains in the distance, is singularly beautiful—I have often observed it when I have been there."

"She is right," Edward cried; "how could we have overlooked it. This is what you mean Otilie, is it not?"

He took a lead pencil, and drew a great black rectangular figure on the summit of the hill.

It went through the Captain's soul to see his carefully and clearly drawn chart disfigured in such a way. He collected himself, however, after a slight expression of his disapproval, and went into the idea.

"Otilie is right," he said; "we are ready enough to walk any distance to drink tea or eat fish, because they would not tasted as well at home—we require change of scene and change of objects. Your ancestors showed their judgment in the spot which they chose for the castle; for it is sheltered from the wind with the conveniences of life close at hand. A place, on the contrary, which is more for pleasure parties than for a regular residence, may be very well yonder there, and in the fair time of year the most agreeable hours may be spent there."

The more they talked it over, the more conclusive was their judgment in favor of Otilie; and Edward could not conceal his triumph that the thought had been hers. He was as proud as if he had hit upon it himself.

CHAPTER VIII.

Early the following morning the Captain examined the spot; he first threw off a sketch of what should be done, and afterwards, when the thing had been more completely decided upon, he made a complete design, with accurate calculations and measurements. It cost him a good deal of labor, and the business connected with the sale of the farm had to be gone into, so that both the gentlemen now found a fresh impulse to activity.

The Captain made Edward observe that it would be proper, instead that it would be a kind of duty, to celebrate Charlotte's birthday with laying the foundation-stone. Not much was wanted to overcome Edward's disinclination for such festivities—for he quickly recollected that a little later Otilie's birthday would follow, and that he could have a magnificent celebration for that.

Charlotte, to whom all this work and what it would involve was a subject for much serious and almost anxious thought, busied herself in carefully going through the time and outlay which it was calculated would be expended on it. During the day they rarely saw each other, so that the evening meeting was looked forward to with all the more anxiety.

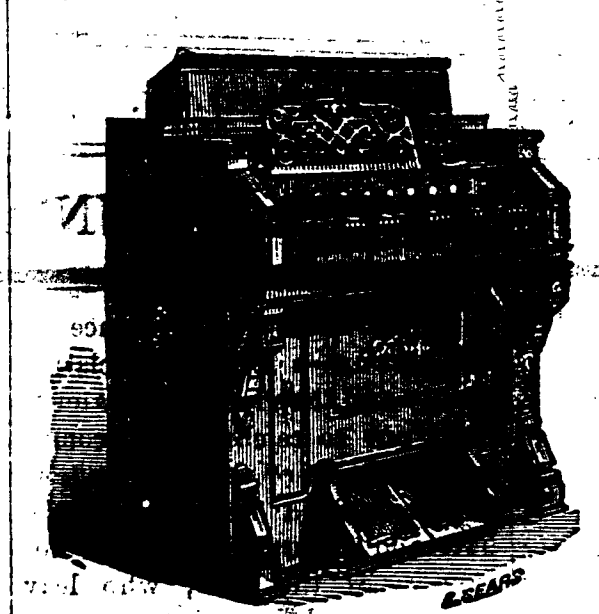
Otilie meantime was complete mistress of the household—and how could it be otherwise, with her quick methodical ways of working? Indeed, her whole mode of thought was suited better to home life than the world, and to a more free existence. Edward soon observed that she only walked about with them out of a desire to please; that she stayed out late with them in the evening it was because she thought it a sort of social duty, and that she would often find a pretext in some household matter for going in again—consequently he soon managed so to arrange the walks which they took together, that they should be at home before sunset; and he began again, what he had long let off, to read aloud poetry—particularly such as had for its subject the expression of a pure but passionate love.

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