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## TOWANDA:

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(From Blackwood's Magazine.)

## EVA MEREDITH: THE VILLAGE DOCTOR'S STORY.

BY MADAME D'ARBOVILLE.

"What is this?" exclaimed several persons assembled in the dining-room of the chateau of Borey.

The Countess of Moncar had just inherited, from a distant and slightly regretted relation, an ancient chateau which she had never seen, although it was at barely fifteen leagues from her habitual summer residence. One of the most elegant, and almost one of the prettiest women in Paris, Madame de Moncar was but moderately attached to the country. Quitting the capital at the end of June, to return thither early in October, she usually took with her some of the companions of her winter gaieties, and a few young men, selected amongst her most assiduous partners. Madame de Moncar was married to a man much older than herself, who did not always protect her by his presence. Without abusing the great liberty she enjoyed, she was gracefully coquettish, elegantly frivolous, pleased with trifles—with a compliment, an amiable word, an hour's triumph—loving a ball for the pleasure of adorning herself, fond of admiration, and not sorry to inspire love. When some grave old aunt ventured a sage remonstrance—"Mon Dieu!" she replied; "do let me laugh and take life easily. It is far less dangerous than to listen to the beating of one's heart. For my part, I do not know if I even have a heart!" She spoke the truth, and really was uncertain upon that point. Desirous to remain so, she thought it prudent to leave herself no time for reflection.

One fine morning in September, the countess and her guests set out for the unknown chateau, intending to pass the day there. A cross road, reputed practicable, was to reduce the journey to twelve leagues. The cross road proved execrable: the travellers lost their way in the forest; a carriage broke down; in short it was not till mid-day that the party, much fatigued, and but moderately gratified by the picturesque beauties of the scenery, reached the chateau of Borey, whose aspect was scarcely such as to console them for the annoyances of the journey. It was a large sombre building with dingy walls. In its front garden, then out of cultivation, descended from terrace to terrace, for the chateau, built upon the slope of a wooded hill, had no level ground in its vicinity. On all sides it was hemmed in by mountains, the trees upon which sprang up amidst rocks, and had a dark and gloomy foliage that saddened the eyesight. Man's neglect added to the natural disorders of the scene. Madame de Moncar stood motionless and disconcerted upon the threshold of her newly-acquired mansion.

"This is very unlike a party of pleasure," said she; "I could weep at sight of this dismal abode. Nevertheless there are noble trees, lofty rocks, a moaning cataract; doubtless, there is a certain beauty in all that; but is it too grave an order for my humour?" added she with a smile. "Let us go in and view the interior."

The hungry guests, eager to see if the cook, who had been sent forward upon the previous day, as an advance guard, had safely arrived, willingly assented. Having obtained this agreeable certainty that an abundant breakfast would soon be upon the table, they rambled through the chateau. The old fashioned furniture with tattered coverings, the arm-chairs with three legs, the tottering tables, the discordant sounds of a piano, which for a good score of years had not felt a finger, afforded abundant food for jest and merriment. Gaiety returned. Instead of gubbling at the inconveniences of the uncomfortable mansion, it was agreed to laugh at everything. Moreover, for these young and idle persons, the expedition was a sort of event, an almost perilous campaign, whose originality appealed to the imagination. A fagot was lighted beneath the wide chimney of the drawing-room; but clouds of smoke were the result, and the company took refuge in the pleasure grounds. The aspect of the gardens was strange enough; the stone-benches were covered with moss, the walls of the terraces, crumbling in many places, left space between their ill-joined stones for the growth of numerous wild plants, which sprung out erect and lofty, or trailed with flexible grace towards the earth. The walks were overgrown and obliterated by grass; the parterres, reserved for garden flowers, were invaded by wild ones, which grow wherever the heavens afford a drop of water and a ray of sun; the insipid bearbears enveloped and stifled in its envious embrace the beautiful rose of Provence; the blackberry mingled its acrid fruits with the red clusters of the current-bush; ferns, wild mint with its faint perfume, thistles with their thorny crowns, grew beside a few forgotten lilies. When the company entered the enclosure, numbers of the smaller animals, alarmed at the unaccustomed intrusion, darted into the long grass, and the startled birds flew clapping from branch to branch. Silence, for many years the undisturbed tenant of this peaceful spot, fled at the sound of human voices and of joyous laughter. The solitude was appreciated by none—none grew pensive under its influence; it was recklessly broken and profaned. The conversation ran upon the gay evenings of the past season, and was interspersed with amiable allusions, expressive looks, covert compliments, with all the thousand nothings, in short, resorted to by persons desirous to please each other, but who have not yet acquired the right to be serious.

The steward, after long search for a breakfast-table among the dilapidated walls of the chateau, at last made up his mind to shout from the steps that the meal was ready—the half-smile with which he accompanied the announcement, proving that, like

his betters, he resigned himself for one day to a deviation from his habits of etiquette and propriety. Soon a merry party surrounded the board. The gloom of the chateau, its desert site and unhealthy aspect, were all forgotten; the conversation was general and well sustained; the health of the lady of the castle—the fairy whose presence converted the crazy old edifice into an enchanted palace, was drunk by all present. Suddenly all eyes were turned to the windows of the dining-room. "What is that?" exclaimed several of the guests.

A small carriage of green wicker-work, with great wheels as high as the windows, had stopped at the door. It was drawn by a gray horse, short and puny, whose eyes seemed in danger from the shafts, which, from their point of junction with the carriage, sloped obliquely upwards. The hood of the little cabriolet was brought forward, concealing its contents, with the exception of two arms covered with the sleeves of a blue blouse, and of a whip which fluttered about the ears of the gray horse. "Mon Dieu!" exclaimed Madame de Moncar. "I forgot to tell you I was obliged to invite the village doctor to our breakfast. The old man was formerly of some service to my uncle's family, and I have seen him once or twice. Be not alarmed at the addition to our party: he is very taciturn. After a few civil words, we may forget his presence; besides, I do not suppose he will remain very long."

At this moment the dining-room door opened, and Dr. Barnaby entered. He was a little old man, feeble, and insignificant-looking, of calm and gentle countenance. His gray hairs were collected into a cue, according to a by-gone fashion; a dash of powder whitened his temples, and extended to his forehead brow. He wore a black coat, and steel buckles to his breeches. Over one arm hung a riding-coat of purple-colored taffety. In the opposite hand he carried his hat and a thick cane. His whole appearance proved that he had taken unusual pains with his toilet; but his black stockings and coat were stained with mud, as if the poor old man had fallen into a ditch. He paused at the door, astonished at the presence of so many persons. For an instant, a tinge of embarrassment appeared upon his face; but recovering himself, he silently saluted the company. The strange manner of his entrance gave the guests a violent inclination to laugh, which they repressed more or less successfully. Madame de Moncar alone, in her character of mistress of the house, and incapable of failing in politeness, perfectly preserved her gravity.

"Dear me, doctor, have you had an overturn?" was her first enquiry.

Before replying, Dr. Barnaby glanced at all these young people in the midst of whom he found himself, and, simple and artless though his physiognomy was, he could not but guess the cause of their hilarity. He replied quietly:

"I have not been overturned. A poor carter fell under the wheels of his vehicle: I was passing and I helped him up." And the doctor took possession of a chair left vacant for him at the table. Unfolding his napkin, he passed a corner through the buttonhole of his coat, and spread out the rest over his waistcoat, and knees. At these preparations, smiles hovered upon the lips of many of the guests, and a whisper or two broke the silence; but this time the doctor did not raise his eyes. Perhaps he observed nothing.

"Is there so much sickness in the village?" inquired Madame de Moncar, whilst they were helping the new comer.

"Yes, madam, a good deal."

"Is this an unhealthy neighborhood?"

"No, madam."

"But the sickness. What causes it?"

"The heat of the sun in harvest time, and the cold and wet of winter."

One of the guests, affected great gravity, joined in the conversation.

"So that in this healthy district, sir, people are ill all the year round?"

The doctor raised his little grey eyes to the speaker's face, looked at him, hesitated, and seemed either to check or to seek a reply. Madame de Moncar kindly came to his relief.

"I know," she said, "that you are here the guardian genius of all who suffer."

"Oh, you are too good," replied the old man, appearing much engrossed with the slice of poultry upon his plate. Then the gay party left Dr. Barnaby to himself, and the conversation flowed in its previous channel. If any notice was taken of the peaceful old man, it was in the form of some slight sarcasm, which, mingled with other discourse, would pass, it was thought, unperceived by its object. Not that these young men and women were generally otherwise than polite and kind-hearted; but upon that day the journey, the breakfast, the movement and slight excitement that had attended all the events of the morning, had brought out a sort of heedless gaiety and communicative mockery, which rendered them pitiless to the victim whom chance had thrown in their way. The doctor continued quietly to eat without looking up or uttering a word, or seeming to hear one; they voted him deaf and dumb, and he was no restraint upon the conversation.

When the guests rose from the table, Dr. Barnaby took a step or two backward, and allowed each man to select the lady he wished to take into the drawing-room. One of Madame de Moncar's friends remaining without a cavalier, the village doctor timidly advanced, and offered her his hand—not his arm. His fingers scarcely touched hers as he proceeded, his body slightly bent in sign of respect, with measured steps towards the drawing-room. Fresh smiles greeted his entrance, but not a cloud appeared upon the placid countenance of the old man, who was now voted blind, as well as deaf and dumb. Quitting his companion, Dr. Barnaby selected the smallest, humblest-looking chair in the room, placed it in a corner, at some distance from everybody else, put his stick between

his knees, crossed his hands upon the knob, and rested his chin upon his hands. In this meditative attitude he remained silent, and from time to time his eyes closed, as if a gentle slumber, which he neither invoked nor repelled, were stealing over him.

"Madame de Moncar!" cried one of the guests, "I presume it is not your intention to inhabit this ruin in a desert?"

"Certainly I have no such project. But here are lofty trees and wild woods. M. de Moncar may very likely be tempted to pass a few weeks in the shooting season."

"In that case you must pull down and rebuild; clear, alter, and improve?"

"Let us make a plan!" cried the young countess. "Let us mark out the future garden of my domains."

It was decreed that this party of pleasure should be unsuccessful. At that moment a heavy cloud burst, and a close fine rain began to fall. Impossible to leave the house.

"How very vexatious!" cried Madame de Moncar. "What shall we do with ourselves?"

The horses require several hours' rest. It will evidently be a wet afternoon. For a week to come, the grass, which overgrows everything, will not be dry enough to walk upon: all the strings of the piano are broken; there is not a book within ten leagues. This room is wretchedly dismal. What can we do with ourselves?"

The party, lately so joyous, was gradually losing its gaiety. The little laugh and arch whisper were succeeded by dull silence. The guests sauntered to the windows and examined the sky, but the sky remained dark and cloud-laden. Their hopes of a walk were completely blighted. They established themselves as comfortably as they could upon the old chairs and settees, and tried to revive the conversation; but there are thoughts which, like flowers, require a little sun, and which will not flourish under a bleak sky. All these young heads appeared to droop, oppressed by the storm, like the poplars in the garden, which bowed their tops at the will of the wind. A tedious hour dragged by.

The lady of the castle, a little disheartened by the failure of her party of pleasure, leaned languidly upon a window-sill, and gazed vaguely at the prospect without.

"There," said she—"yonder, upon the hill, is a white cottage that must come down: it hides the view."

"The white cottage?" cried the doctor. For upwards of an hour Dr. Barnaby had been mute and motionless upon his chair. Mirth and weariness, sun and rain, had succeeded each other without eliciting a syllable from his lips. His presence was forgotten by every body; every eye turned quickly upon him when he uttered these three words—"The white cottage!"

"What interest do you take in it, doctor?" asked the countess.

"Mon Dieu, Madame! Pray forget that I spoke. The cottage will come down, undoubtedly, since such has been your good pleasure."

"But why should you regret the old shed?"

"I don't regret it; it was inhabited by persons I loved—and—"

"And they think of returning to it, doctor?"

"They are long since dead, madam; they died when I was young!" And the old man gazed mournfully at the white cottage, which rose amongst the trees upon the hill-side, like a dairy in a green field. There was a brief silence.

"Madam," said one of the guests in a low voice to Madame de Moncar, "there is mystery here. Observe the melancholy of our Esculapius. Some pathetic drama has been enacted in yonder house: a tale of love, perhaps. Ask the doctor to tell it to us."

"Yes, yes!" was murmured on all sides, "a tale, a story! And should it prove of little interest, at any rate the narrator will divert us."

"Not so, gentlemen," replied Madame de Moncar, in the same suppressed voice. "If I ask Dr. Barnaby to tell us the history of the white cottage, it is on the express condition that no one laughs."

All having promised to be serious and well-behaved, Madame de Moncar approached the old man.

"Doc?" said she, seating herself beside him, "that house, I plainly see, is connected with some reminiscence of former days, stored preciously in your memory. Will you tell it to me? I should be grieved to cause you a regret which it is my power to spare you; the house shall remain, if you tell me why you loved it."

Dr. Barnaby seemed surprised, and remained silent. The countess drew still nearer to him.

"How dreary everything looks. You are the senior of us all; tell us a tale. Make us forget rain, and fog, and cold."

Dr. Barnaby looked at the countess with great astonishment.

"There is no tale," he said. "What occurred in the cottage is very simple, and has no interest but for me, who loved the young people; strangers would not call it a tale. And I am unaccustomed to speak before many listeners. Besides, what should tell you is sad, and you came to amuse yourselves." And again the doctor rested his chin upon his stick.

"Dear doctor," resumed the countess, "the white cottage shall stand, if you say you love it."

The old man appeared somewhat moved; he crossed and uncrossed his legs; took out his snuff-box, returned it to his pocket without opening it; then looked at the countess—"You will not pull it down?" he said, indicating with his thin and tremulous hand the habitation visible at the horizon.

"I promise you I will not."

"Well, so be it; I will do that much for them; I will save the house in which they were happy."

"Ladies," continued the old man, "I am but a poor speaker; but I believe that even the least eloquent succeeded in making themselves understood when they tell what they have seen. This story, I warn you beforehand, is not gay. To dance and to sing, people send for a musician; they call in the

physician when they suffer, and are near to death."

A circle was formed round Dr. Barnaby, who, his hands still crossed upon his cane, quietly commenced the following narrative, to an audience prepared beforehand to smile at his discourse.

"It was a long time ago, when I was young—for I, too, have been young! Youth is a fortune that belongs to all the world—to the poor as well as to the rich—but which abides with none. I had just passed my examination; I had taken my physician's degree, and I returned to my village to exercise my wonderful talents, well convinced that, thanks to me, men would now cease to die."

My village is not far from here. From the little window of my room, I beheld yonder white house upon the opposite side to that you now discern. You certainly would not find my village handsome. In my eyes, it was superb; I was born there, and I loved it. We all see with our own eyes the things we love. God suffers us to be sometimes a little blind; for he well knows that in this lower world a clear sight is not always profitable. To me, then, this neighborhood appeared smiling and pleasant, and I lived happily. The white cottage alone, each morning when I opened my shutters, impressed me disagreeably; it was always closed, still and sad like a forsaken thing. Never had I seen its windows open and shut, or its door ajar; never had I known its hospitable garden-gate give passage to human being. Your uncle, madam, who had no occasion for a cottage so near his chateau, sought to let it; but the rent was rather higher than anybody here was rich enough to give. It remained empty, therefore, whilst in the hamlet every window exhibited two or three children's faces peering through the branches of gillflower at the first noise in the street. But one morning, on getting up, I was quite astonished to see a long ladder resting against the cottage wall; a painter was painting the window shutters green, whilst a maid-servant polished the panes, and a gardener hoed the flower-beds.

"All the better," said I to myself: "a good roof like that, which covers no one, is so much lost."

From day to day the house improved in appearance. Pots of flowers veiled the nudity of the walls; the parterres were planted, the walks weeded and gravelled, and muslin curtains, white as snow, shone in the sun rays. One day a post-chaise rattled through the village, and drove up to the little house. Who were the strangers? None knew, and all desired to learn. For a long time nothing transpired without of what passed within the dwelling. The rose-trees bloomed, and the fresh lawn grew verdant; still nothing was known from the commentaries upon the mystery. They were adventurers concealing themselves—they were a young man and his mistress—in short, everything was guessed except the truth. The truth is so simple, that one does not always think of it; once the mind is in movement, it seeks to the right and to the left, and often forgets to look straight before it. The mystery gave me little concern. No matter who is there, thought I; they are human; therefore they will not be long without suffering, and then they will send for me. I waited patiently.

At last one morning a messenger came from Mr. William Meredith, to request me to call upon him. I put on my best coat; and, endeavoring to assume a gravity suitable to my profession, I traversed the village, not without some little pride at my importance. That day many envied me. The villagers stood at their doors to see me pass. "He is going to the white cottage!" they said; whilst I, avoiding all appearance of haste and vulgar curiosity, walked deliberately, holding to my peasant neighbors.

"Good-day, my friend," I said; "I will see you by-and-by; this morning I am busy." And thus I reached the hill-side.

On entering the setting-room of the mysterious house, the scene I beheld rejoiced my eye-sight. Everything was so simple and elegant. Flowers, the chief ornament of the apartment, were so tastefully arranged, that gold would not better have embellished the modest interior. White muslin was at the windows, white calico on the chairs—that was all; but there were roses and jessamine, and flowers of all kinds, as in a garden. The light was softened by the curtains, the atmosphere was fragrant; and a young girl or woman, fair and fresh as all that surrounded her, reclined upon a sofa, and welcomed me with a smile. A handsome young man seated near her upon an ottoman, rose when the servant announced Dr. Barnaby.

"Sir," said he, with a strong foreign accent, "I have heard so much of your skill that I expected to see an old man."

"I am deeply indebted to you, sir," I replied. "I am deeply impressed with the importance and responsibility of my calling, you may confide in me."

"Tia well, I recommend my wife to your bet-care. Her present state demands advice and precaution. She was born in a distant land: for my sake she has quitted family and friends. I can bring but my affections to her aid, for I am without experience. I reckon upon you, sir. If possible, preserve her from all suffering."

As he spoke, the young man fixed upon his wife a look so full of love, that the large blue eyes of the beautiful foreigner glistened with gratitude, and she dropped the tiny cap she was embroidering, and her two hands clasped the hand of her husband. I looked at them, and I thought to have found their lot enviable, but somehow or other, the contrary was the case. I felt sad; I could not tell why. I had often seen persons weep, of whom I said—they are happy! I saw William Meredith and his wife smile; and I could not help thinking they had much sorrow. I seated myself near my charming patient. Never have I seen anything so lovely as that sweet face, shaded by long ringlets of fair hair.

"What is your age, madam?"

"Seventeen."

"Is the climate of your native land very different from ours?"

"I was born in America, at New Orleans. Oh! the sun is far brighter than here."

Doubtless she feared she had quered a regret, for she added—

"But every country is beautiful when one is in one's husband's house, with him and awaiting his child."

Her gaze sought that of William Meredith; then, in a tongue I did not understand, she spoke a few words so soft that they sounded like words of love.

After a short visit I took my leave, promising to return. I did return, and, at the end of two months, I was almost the friend of this young couple. Mr. and Mrs. Meredith were not selfish in their happiness; they found time to think of others. They saw that to the poor village doctor, whose sole society was that of peasants, those days were festivals upon which he passed an hour to hear the language of cities. They encouraged me to frequent them—talked to me of their travels, and soon with the prompt confidence characterizing youth, they told me their story. It was the girl-wife that spoke—

"Doctor," she said, "yonder beyond the seas, I have father, sisters, family, friends, whom I long loved, until the day that I loved William. But then I shut my heart to those who repulsed my lover. William's father forbade him to wed me, because he was too noble for the daughter of an American planter. My father forbade me to love William, because he was too proud to give his daughter to a man whose family refused her a welcome. They tried to separate us; but we loved each other. Long did we weep and supplicate, and implore the pity of those to whom we owed obedience; they remained inflexible, and we loved! Doctor, did you ever love? I would you had, that you might be indulgent to us. We were secretly married, and fled to France. Oh how beautiful the ocean appeared in those early days of our affection! The sea was hospitable to the fugitives. Wanderers upon the waves, we passed happy days under the shadow of our vessel sails, anticipating pardon from our friends and dreaming of a bright future. Alas! we were too sanguine. They pursued us; and, upon pretext of some irregularity in the form of our clandestine marriage, William's family cruelly thought to separate us. We found concealment in the midst of these mountains and forests. Under a name which is not ours we live unknown. My father has not forgiven—he has cursed me! That is the reason Doctor why I cannot always smile, even with my dear William by my side."

How these two loved each other! Never have I seen a being more completely wrapped up in another than was Eva Meredith and her husband! Whatever her occupation, she always so placed herself, that on raising her eyes she had William before her. She never read but in the book he was reading. Her head against his shoulder, her eyes following the line upon which William's eyes were fixed: she wished the same thoughts to strike them at the same moment; and, when I crossed the garden to reach the door, I smiled at ways to see upon the gravel the trace of Eva's little foot close to the mark of William's boot. What a difference between the deserted old house you see yonder and the pretty dwelling of my young friends! What sweet flowers covered the walls! What bright nosegays decked the tables! How many charming books were there, full of tales of love that resembled their love! How gay the birds that sang around them! How good it was to live there, and to be loved a little by those who love each other so much! But those are right who say that happy days are not long upon this earth, and that, in respect to happiness, God gives but a little at a time.

One morning Eva Meredith appeared to suffer. I questioned her with all the interest I felt for her. She answered me abruptly.

"Do not feel my pulse, doctor," she said: "it is my heart that beats too quick. Think me childish if you will, but I am sad this morning. William is going away. He is going to the town beyond the mountain, to receive money."

"And when will he return?" inquired I, gently.

She smiled; almost blushed, and then, with a look that seemed to say, Do not laugh at me, she replied, "This evening!"

Notwithstanding her imploring glance, I could not repress a smile. Just then a servant brought Mr. Meredith's horse to the door. Eva rose from her seat, went out into the garden, approached the horse, and, whilst stroking his mane, bowed her head upon the animal's neck, perhaps to conceal the tear that fell from her eyes. William came out, threw himself lightly into the saddle, and gently raised his wife's head.

"Silly girl!" said he, with love in his eyes and voice. And he kissed her brow.

"William we have never yet been so many hours apart!"

Mr. Meredith stooped his head towards that of Eva, and, imprinting a second kiss upon her beautiful golden hair, and then he touched his horse's flank with the spur, and set off at a full gallop. I am convinced that he, too, was a little moved. Nothing is so contagious as the weakness of those who love; tears summon tears, and it is not very laudable to cause that keeps our eyes dry by the side of a weeping friend. I turned my steps homeward, and, once more in my cottage, I set myself to meditate on the happiness of loving. I ask myself if an Eva would cheer my poor dwelling. I did not think of examining whether I were worthy to be loved. When we behold two beings thus devoted to each other, we easily discern that it is not for good and various reasons that they love because it is necessary; they love on account of their own hearts, not of those of others. Well, I thought how I might seek and find a heart that had need to love, just as, in my morning walks, I might have thought to meet, by the road-side, some flower of sweet perfume. Thus did I muse, although it is perhaps a wrong feeling which makes us, at sight of others' bliss, deplore the happiness we do not ourselves possess. Is not a little envy there? and if joy could be stolen like gold, should we not then be near a larceny?

The day passed, and I had just completed my frugal supper, when I received a message from Mrs. Meredith, begging me to visit her. In five minutes I was at the door of the white cottage. I found Eva, still alone, seated on a sofa, without work or book, pale and trembling. "Come doctor, come," said she, in her soft voice; "I can remain alone no longer; see how late it is!—he should have been home two hours ago, and has not yet returned!"

I was surprised at Mr. Meredith's prolonged absence; but to comfort his wife, I replied quietly, "How can we tell the time necessary to transact his business? They may have made him wait; the notary was perhaps absent. There were papers to draw up and sign."

"Ah, doctor, I was sure you would find words of consolation! I needed to hear some one tell me that it is foolish to tremble thus! Gracious heaven, how long the day has been! Doctor, are there really persons who live alone! Do they not die immediately, as if robbed of half the atmosphere essential to life? But there is eight o'clock! Eight o'clock was indeed striking. I could not imagine why William was not back. At all hazard I said to Mrs. Meredith, 'Madam, the sun is hardly set; it is still daylight, and the evening is beautiful; come and visit your flowers. If we walk down the road, we shall doubtless meet your husband.'"

"She took my arm, and we walked towards the gate of the little garden. I endeavored to turn her attention to surrounding objects. At first she remained inflexible, and we loved! Doctor, did you ever love? I would you had, that you might be indulgent to us. We were secretly married, and fled to France. Oh how beautiful the ocean appeared in those early days of our affection! The sea was hospitable to the fugitives. Wanderers upon the waves, we passed happy days under the shadow of our vessel sails, anticipating pardon from our friends and dreaming of a bright future. Alas! we were too sanguine. They pursued us; and, upon pretext of some irregularity in the form of our clandestine marriage, William's family cruelly thought to separate us. We found concealment in the midst of these mountains and forests. Under a name which is not ours we live unknown. My father has not forgiven—he has cursed me! That is the reason Doctor why I cannot always smile, even with my dear William by my side."

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Mr. Meredith stooped his head towards that of Eva, and, imprinting a second kiss upon her beautiful golden hair, and then he touched his horse's flank with the spur, and set off at a full gallop. I am convinced that he, too, was a little moved. Nothing is so contagious as the weakness of those who love; tears summon tears, and it is not very laudable to cause that keeps our eyes dry by the side of a weeping friend. I turned my steps homeward, and, once more in my cottage, I set myself to meditate on the happiness of loving. I ask myself if an Eva would cheer my poor dwelling. I did not think of examining whether I were worthy to be loved. When we behold two beings thus devoted to each other, we easily discern that it is not for good and various reasons that they love because it is necessary; they love on account of their own hearts, not of those of others. Well, I thought how I might seek and find a heart that had need to love, just as, in my morning walks, I might have thought to meet, by the road-side, some flower of sweet perfume. Thus did I muse, although it is perhaps a wrong feeling which makes us, at sight of others' bliss, deplore the happiness we do not ourselves possess. Is not a little envy there? and if joy could be stolen like gold, should we not then be near a larceny?

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