

quite late before we adjourned to our respective chambers. I leaned a moment out of the window to inhale the cool air after extinguishing my candle, and noticed a tall figure stalking across the yard without giving it any thought, more than presuming it to be one of the field hands on some errand at the house.

I had fallen into a heavy slumber, and been asleep some, an hour or two at the least, when suddenly I sprang from my bed as if a cannon had exploded at my pillow. A shriek—the most thrilling, unearthly, blood-freezing scream that ever chilled the ear of human listener—rang out on the quiet stillness of that midnight hour, simultaneously with the report of firearms. With staring eyes and chattering teeth, Ned and I sprang to our feet and grasped each other's hands—not in fear or tremor, but with the awful presentiment of some heart-rending calamity. By this time we heard a wailing noise, another report, and renewed screams of a woman's voice. I groped my way to the candle, found a match, and struck a light. Then hurrying on our clothes, Ned and I hastened out in the direction of the screams. It led us on to the bedroom of Romez.

Heavens, what a sight met our gaze! There, stretched out upon the floor in a pool of blood, with protruding eyes and face drawn away by the fearful death-struggle, lay the hospitable host who had bid good-night to us with such merry voice and beaming face. His wife was leaning over him in wild-eyed horror, calling his name and frantically wringing her hands. Just beyond her, knelt Carlota in her pure white robes, supporting in her arms the head of a young man but a few years older than herself. The stranger's thick black locks were gory with the blood gushing from a terrible wound on the head, and his closed lids and pallid lips, and laboring breath, showed life was failing fast. Ned flew to her side and raised the stalwart form in his own arms to relieve her delicate shoulder, while I caught off a cloth from the table and commenced tearing it into bandages. As I bent over them to staunch the blood, Carlota looked up into my face with wild shivering glance, and her pale lips quivered pitifully as she asked:

"What have we done that this horror has come upon us? Do you know what it means?"

I saw the poor girl was scarcely sane after the shock and terror, and replied, soothingly:

"I know nothing about it yet, but we will find out after we have taken care of him."

"Then he is not dead yet? he will live?" she cried, more wildly still. "Mother, mother, do you hear? Juan is not dead; we have one left us yet. But my father! O my father!" And with a sob that shook her slender form like a reed in a gale, she bent above the rigid form.

A large mantle was lying on the bed. I wrapped it around Carlota without, I am confident, her being at all aware of it and then hurried out to find the servants who slept in a remote L of the house. The report of the pistol had aroused them, and I met them hurrying through the passage-way. I could give no intelligible answers to their excited inquiries as to what had happened. I only knew what I had seen—the cause of the terrible tragedy was still a mystery.

When I returned to the chamber I found the mother more collected. She had wiped away the blood from her husband's face and laid a cloth over it, and was mechanically assisting Ned in his efforts to revive the young man. A servant was despatched immediately to a neighbor who was supposed to possess considerable surgical skill. I removed the body of the unfortunate Romez to another room, and drew Carlota away from her trance-like watch above it. I led her into the sitting-room we had left so joyfully, and stroking softly her cold, clammy fingers, said:

"Now, dear Carlota, tell your friend what is the cause of all this."

She lifted those sorrowful gazelle-like eyes to my face, and then, with a sudden movement, dropped her head on my shoulders and burst into tears. I was thankful to see her weep, for I knew it would save her brain from paralysis and her heart from breaking; so I only stroked gently the beautiful head, wishing it was still to be on my shoulder and not Ned's where her future tears should be shed.

"Who is the stranger?" said I at length.

She wiped away the torrent of tears from her drenched face, and essayed twice to make her dry feverish lips reply to the question. Then I caught the words:

"It is my brother, sir. Heaven have mercy on him. He has killed his own father."

Little by little, amid heart-rending sobs and tears, I gathered the story. Juan Romez, the only son and brother, was a wild, reckless fellow, of roving disposition and dissipated habits, but as poor Carlota pleaded, always of a kind heart and generous hand. As he advanced towards manhood he grew impatient and rebellious under his father's control, and fell under the wicked influence of a bold villain, who exerted the worst possible power over him. His son's conduct had at last exasperated Romez to such a degree, that he had exiled him from

home, and forbidden any of the family to mention his name or associate with him in the slightest way. This accounted for our being ignorant of his existence. But Carlota had eluded her father's vigilance and watched over her brother, supplying him with all the pocket money her indulgent parents granted her, and faithfully keeping all the appointments of which her brother notified her through one of the field hands devotedly attached to him.

Anxiety for Juan, was the first inducement for her visit to San Francisco. He had been a long time away without any news of his whereabouts reaching her, and she had proposed the journey to her father in the hope of meeting him somewhere in that city. Just before they were ready to set out, however, he had appeared again with the same carpet-bag about which I had questioned her, requesting her to keep its contents securely for him till he should call for them. She looked up in my face wistfully as she told this saying meekly:

"I don't understand about that bag. I know there was some sad mystery connected with it. I have always been afraid of what Juan might do. I never examined the package in it, but put it away as Juan directed. The bag was just what I needed, and I took it innocently, when we left for San Francisco, but the moment you inquired for it, I knew there was some wrong deed, and I recalled the look on Juan's face when he bade me keep it secret, and I was frightened lest I had done something to criminate my own brother. And I was so afraid I should bring him into trouble that I burned the bag. Don't blame me too much. If you knew how good and kind Juan was before he was led away, you wouldn't wonder I cling to him still."

Poor child! how I longed to kiss the sweet pleading lips, and dry the wet exploring eyes. Well, after our circle had broken up that merry evening, so quickly followed by the night of horror, Juan, who had been lingering about for several days to find his sister, came to the window and called her name softly. Carlota heard him, and taking the fatal package in her hand, was stealing cautiously down the stairs, after giving him notice that she was coming. But Romez had heard the creaking of the upraised window, and looking out from his own room, recognized his son in the bright starlight of the cloudless night.

Indignant at this clandestine meeting and disobedience of his orders, he called Carlota away and commanded his son to enter the house and account for his presence there. Juan obeyed and listened in sullen silence to his father's angry reproaches. Becoming more and more exasperated, Romez accused him of disgracing the family name by deeds of shame and crime, and pointing to the glittering barrel of a revolver protruding from his coat pocket, inquired if he had turned highwayman or bandit yet. This aroused Juan's fiery spirit, and drawing out the pistol, he raised it threateningly, replying that he had grown bold and able enough to prevent insult from any one.

With a contemptuous sneer, Romez raised his arm to strike down the weapon, when Juan, shrinking back, somehow his fingers caught the lock, the pistol went off, and with that fearful cry his father fell dead at his feet.

The shrieks of his mother and sister aroused him from his trance of astonishment and dismay, and as the reality of the dreadful deed rushed upon him, with a remorseful entreaty for pardon he turned the pistol to his own forehead and fired again. This was the sad explanation of the scene.

The unfortunate son did not speak or seem in any way conscious throughout the night, but just before sunset on the day succeeding the woful tragedy, he opened his eyes and whispered with his ghastly lips to the trembling woman by his side:

"Mother—Carlota, I am going. I've been a wicked son and an ungrateful brother. Forgive me if you can, for I have loved you through it all, and began to feel a remorseful consciousness of my own guilt. Send for a witness and write down what I am going to tell you. It is the only such affair I have ever been in, and it has haunted me like a ghost. The package in the carpet-bag is gold, Carlota. Thank heaven, I dared not touch the accursed stuff before. It is all there. We robbed a passenger on board one of the San Francisco steamers. Manuel tracked two of them from the mines and inveigled me to help him, and this one was my share of the booty. We sent a poor negro on board after it. I got the negro out of the city by sending him with a message to Carlota. It was the only crime I ever joined Manuel in. The sweet saints forgive me. And you will forgive me too, wont you, mother? You know I never meant to hurt father. Say you forgive me, for I am dying."

The words had been disjointedly and painfully said, and panting and exhausted, he sank back into a drowsy slumber the moment his mother's lips had spoken the comforting words of pardon. I had heard it all. The next time he opened his eyes, I was ready with pen and paper to take his deposition, while Ned Wilkins, the tears actually pouring down his cheeks, stood by

and listened to the recital that removed all cloud and stain from his character, and Carlota, white and cold as a marble statue, leaned above the sick man's pillow.

But he did not die. He lived to prove his penitence sincere and heartfelt, to be the comfort and support of the widowed mother, whose staff in life had been so violently but innocently removed through his means.

We remained at the rancho a week after the funeral of our lamented host, and by that time were well assured of Juan's ultimate recovery. On the morning fixed for our departure, I said to Ned, whose joy at his providentially restored reputation was only calmed into quiet by the melancholy events that had transpired:

"Poor Carlota needs now all the comfort and consolation you can give. I suppose, of course, Ned, you have made known your sentiments and given her the assurance of having still a protector for her gentleness."

"I have been waiting this long time the opportunity," he answered earnestly. "Dear girl! I scarcely dared speak of it after this terrible shock. "But there she is in the garden. I will go this very moment." And away he dashed from my sight.

I rose from my chair, closed my lips grimly, and folding my arms across my palpitating heart, walked to and fro with a sickly, dreary wish that I had never been born, never left the dear New England hills, never seen California or Carlota, or, most of all, Ned Wilkins. I walked thus to and fro, what seemed an interminable time, almost fearing I should go mad with the whirling tumult of my brain.

At length I heard his returning step at the door. I caught up the note book on my dressing case. I would have an excuse for not beholding his radiant face, his smiling, lover lips, fresh from the first pure kiss of betrothal. He came in slowly, and sat down without a single word.

"Too happy for speech, lost in blissful dreams!" thought I, still without raising my eyes. A deep-drawn sigh startled me. I looked up instantly.

"Why, Ned Wilkins, what has happened?"

"Nothing, nothing," groaned he clenching his hand madly in his curly brown hair, "only she is an angel, and I am a fool! She does not love me—she has rejected me."

"But, Ned," stammered I, "I don't understand it. I thought—"

"Yes, so did I. And I believe it was you first made me so presumptuous. But we were both wrong. She don't love me, and worse yet, she acknowledges that she loves another. She would not tell me who, but—"

I did not wait for the completion of his sentence. Three minutes more and I stood beside Carlota who was weeping bitterly, in the garden.

"Carlota," whispered I, softly, "you have refused Ned. Will you have no pity on me?"

The wet, shadowy, lustrous eyes glanced up shyly into my face. A drift of rose leaves whirled across the pallid cheek and—O reader, have you seen a drowning wretch, just as the last despairing snatch at safety failed him, suddenly lifted up in security upon the stout deck of a friendly wrecking craft? Have you ever beheld a starving beggar, after the angry refusal of a miserly proprietor clutch the white loaf slipped in his hand by the gentle-hearted wife? Have you watched feverishly for morning, and in moaning anguish believed only deeper darkness upon you, when suddenly the black banner which veiled Aurora's face was cast aside and the rosy flushes of dawn kindled about you?

Then do you know something of the ecstatic joy which filled my heart just when, with the bitterest renunciation, I had put away forever, as I believed, sweet love's holy joys and ministering blessings, for—Carlota loved me!

Yes, but when I returned to the house, what would I not have given to have escaped poor Ned's reproachful eyes? His good name was restored, his law-case at rest, since I had forwarded to Alden, by Sam, Juan's confession and the undiminished gold, but what would the whole world avail for the loss of Carlota? So I reasoned, though Carlota laughed lightly, promising the wound would soon heal with one of his volatile, elastic temperaments. And sure enough, only a year after our marriage he came to our house in San Francisco with a wee blue-eyed, fair-haired New England importation on his arm to introduce to Carlotta as—Mrs. Wilkins.

Had Her Revenge.

A young lady named Taylor, meeting a former acquaintance named Mason, at a party, where the latter was assuming any quantity of importance for her wealth, and who did not deign to notice her, revenged herself by stepping into the group surrounding the haughty belle and thus addressing her with the most winning smile: "I have been thinking my dear Miss Mason, that we ought to exchange names." "Why, indeed?" Because my name is Taylor, and my father was a mason; and yours was a tailor and his name was Mason." There was a scene then; but there was no help for it.

SCIENTIFIC READING.

Facts Concerning Phosphorus.

It is now just two hundred years since phosphorus was first obtained by Brand, of Hamburg. So wonderful was the discovery then considered, that Kraft, an eminent philosopher of the day, gave Brand three hundred dollars for the secret of its preparation. Kraft then traveled, and visited nearly all the courts of Europe, exhibiting phosphorus to kings and nobles. In appearance, phosphorus resembles bees' wax; but it is more transparent, approaching to the color of amber. Its name, which is derived from the Greek, signifies "light-bearer," and is indicative of its most distinguishing quality, being self-luminous. Phosphorus, when exposed to the air, shines like a star, giving out a beautiful lambent greenish light. Phosphorus dissolves in warm sweet oil. If this phosphorized oil be rubbed over the face in the dark, the features assume a ghastly appearance, and the experimentalist looks like a veritable living Will-o'-the-Wisp. The origin of phosphorus is the most singular fact concerning it. Every other substance with which we are acquainted, can be traced to either earth or air; but phosphorus seems to be of animal origin. Of all animals, man contains the most; and of the various parts of the body, the brain yields, by analysis, more phosphorus than any other. This fact is of no little moment. Every thought has, perhaps, a phosphoric source. It is certain that the most intellectual beings contain the most phosphorus. It generally happens that when a singular discovery is made, many years elapse before any application of it is made to the welfare and happiness of man. This remark applies to phosphorus.

Art Among the Ancients.

THE edges of the statues of the obelisks of Egypt, and of the ancient walls of Rome are sharp as if but hewn yesterday, and the stones still remain so closely fitted that their seams, laid with mortar, cannot be penetrated with the edge of a penknife. Their surfaces are exceedingly hard, so that when the French artists engraved two lines upon the obelisk brought from Egypt, they destroyed, in the tedious task, many of the best tools which can be manufactured. And yet these ancient monuments are traced all over with inscriptions placed upon them in olden time. This, with other facts of a striking character, prove that they were far more skillful in metals than we are.—Quite recently it is recorded that when an American vessel was on the shores of Africa, a son of that benighted region, made from an iron hoop a knife superior to any on board the vessel, and another made a sword of Damascus excellence from a piece of iron.

Fiction is very old; Scott had his counterpart two thousand years ago. A story is told of a warrior who had no time to wait for the proper forging of his weapon, but seized it red hot, and found to his surprise that the cool air had tempered his iron into an excellent steel weapon. The tempering of steel, therefore, which was new to us a century since was old two thousand years ago.

Ventilation is deemed a very modern art. But this is not the fact, for apertures, unquestionably made for the purpose of ventilation are found in the pyramid tombs of Egypt. Yet thousands of years ago the barbarous pagans went so far as to ventilate their tombs, while we yet scarcely know how to ventilate our houses.

What Cloves Are.

Cloves are the unopened flower of a small evergreen trees that resemble in appearance the laurel or the bay. It is a native of the Molucca or Spice Islands, but has been carried to all the warmer parts of the world, and is now cultivated in the tropical region of America.—The flowers are small in size, and grow in large numbers in clusters to the very ends of the branches. The cloves we use are the flowers gathered before they are opened and whilst they are still green.—After being gathered, they are smoked by a wood fire, and then dried in the sun.—Each clove consists of two parts, a round head, which is the four petals or leaves of the flower rolled up enclosing a number of small stalks, or filaments; the other part of the clove is terminated with four points, and is, in fact, the flower cup and the unripe seed vessel. All these parts may be distinctly seen if a few cloves are soaked for a short time in hot water, when the leaves of the flower soften, and readily unroll. Both the taste and smell of cloves depend on the quantity of oil they contain. Sometimes the oil is separated from the cloves before they are sold, and the odor and taste is much weakened by such unfair proceeding.

—The curious fact that a needle or other steel wire inserted in a living body will immediately become oxidized, while if the body be dead no oxidation will take place, was recently brought to light by Dr. Laborde, of Paris.

—A smile may be bright while the heart is sad. The rainbow is beautiful in the air while beneath is the moaning of the sea.

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