THE FACE OF ROSENFELD.

BY CHARLES HOWARD MONTAGUE.

AUTHOR OF "TWO STROKES OF THE BELL," "THE ROMANCE OF THE LILLIES," "THE POINT OF A NEEDLE," ETC.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE KNOCKING.

The afternoon was drawing to a close. Miss Maxey had conveniently absented herself. The artist was alone in the rear chamber with his pupil. Annette was seated before an easel near the window while Maxey was looking over her shoulder, apparently at the sketch. She was not working. Her hands lay listlessly in her lap, and her eyes were fixed on the gray sky above the river.

"Are you studying the effect?" the artist queried, with a smile.

"No, Mr. Maxey, I was listening."

"Listening? For what?"

"For the wind. Have you never noticed how queerly it knocks at the window frames sometimes? This is one of the days. When I am working here alone, I often notice it, and however much I hear it it never fails to startle me."

"What, the rattle?"

"The rap. There is not so much suddenness in the rattle. That is not it, for when that happens you think of the wind. It is as if the wind did it, but it is not so today. It is not as if the wind did it at all. There is silence, and then comes a sudden dull blow. At first I thought somebody must be throwing something against the pane, but I found after a time that it was only a movement of the window frame. Isn't it curious?"

"Very. You notice these little things, Annette. Do you know, I have worked in this room alone for months, and for my part I never noticed whether the windows rattled or were still. There! Was not that it?"

"I did not hear it then. I was listening to you, Mr. Maxey. Listen again, and it will come. I wish I were not foolish enough to be afraid of it. Hark!"

In the silence that ensued they could hear each other breathing. Perhaps it was nervousness, but Maxey felt strangely excited. A low knocking—not the knocking they were waiting for—came to their ears through the closed door.

"How very odd!" exclaimed Maxey. "That was not the touch of a ghostly zephyr, but the substantial rap of somebody tangible who wants to get in."

"It must be a timid person who would knock so low."

"Probably it is. Some beggar doubtless. Impecuniousness is occasionally timid. Don't disturb yourself, Annette."

Maxey stepped into the vestibule and opened the outer door. He regarded the man who had summoned him there with a look of speechless surprise. It was Mr. Dye. There were the woebegone beaver, the shiny, threadbare coat, the faded blue eyes, the long hair falling over the ears, the smooth face with its expression of hapless melancholy and all that went to make up the peculiar group of mental impressions which Maxey had learned since the first meeting, now weeks ago, to associate with the name Leander Dye.

"You!" was Maxey's only utterance.

"I, sir!" said the somber voice. "Pardon me if I venture to intrude my unseemly presence upon you thus abruptly without having prepared you previously by timely warning."

"Come in," said Maxey.

Mr. Dye hesitated.

"Pardon me if I am constrained to ask an impertinent question. Are you alone?"

"I am not alone in the house. No."

"But I desire to see only you, no one else. I have no wish to meet the young lady who once bore my name. It would be painful for us both."

"You shall see me alone," said Maxey. "Come in."

The artist ushered Mr. Dye into the parlor and closed the door. Was it that the gloomy presence of the melancholy man communicated a depressing influence? Maxey certainly felt an unreasonable dread—a sort of sinking at the heart—as the door closed and he stood there alone with his visitor.

Mr. Dye stood with his hat in his hand and avoided Maxey's eyes. He never lifted his glance from the floor. The artist noticed that he was more sallow and pallid than when he had seen him first; that there was a shakiness in his whole frame, a palsied tremble in his hands. He began at once, and his voice was like one speaking out of a tomb:

"Sir, your ears are exceedingly good"——

"Indeed!"

"Or you would not have heard my knock. I knocked very softly, as I have knocked at your door so many times and you did not hear. I hoped, and hoped in vain, that you would again let me go away unheeded as before."

"I don't comprehend you, sir. Have you been here before?"

"Sir, I have been here many times before, knocking at your door so softly that you might have mistaken the sound for the wind or the rattle of a rat behind the woodwork."

Maxey recoiled.

"Are you insane?"

"No, no!" said Mr. Dye quickly. "It is not insanity. It is not even whimsical. It is, on the contrary, strictly logical. Sir, you have heard it said that a man cannot serve two masters. I have sometimes tried. That was my trouble. One forced me to come and tell you something that I knew would be unwelcome to you. What shall I call that one? Conscience—remorse? The other caused me to desire that you should not receive me, but allow me to go away unheeded. Shall I call that other sympathy and regard for yourself or for somebody in whom you are interested? Never mind; it is not to the point now. Your ears were better than I thought they were, and you did hear me. I am here. Sir, why did you not take my advice and have me arrested? I am a heartless, miserable wretch!"

Theatrical air or not, this last sentence came out with a sincerity and a force that startled the artist. The trembling in the limbs increased; the somber man made an effort to loosen his cravat as if he were choking. Maxey hastily pushed a chair toward him.

"Sit down, sir. You are ill."

"Sir, I am not ill. I deny it. I decline all courtesies. Do not offer me any. If you do, you will regret it when I am done. I am to be spurned and spit upon. That is my only use in society, and I may mention parenthetically that society found that out some time ago. Don't forget that, sir. I will not detain you. I will not needlessly keep you standing here. I have come to tell you what I neglected to tell you before about this child whom I brought up."

"Well!" ejaculated Maxey nervously.

Mr. Dye cast an apprehensive glance at the artist.

"Say you do not want to hear me, sir, even now, and I will go away, and you nor she shall ever see me again. Do you say it?"

Mr. Dye's tone was portentous and beseeching. For an instant Maxey hesitated, but for an instant only.

"No, Mr. Dye, I do not say it. Go on, sir. Tell me the truth."

"Sir, you have pronounced your verdict. For better or for worse I shall speak now and ease my conscience of a bad matter. I told you I did not know this child's parentage. I told you a falsehood. I know both her parents. One was a scapegrace son of a proud family; the other was a servant in his father's house. Now you know the whole. I am done."

The blood rushed to Maxey's head.

"The proofs! Where are the proofs?"

Mr. Dye again glanced at him apprehensively and backed a step or two nearer the door.

"Sir, there are no proofs."

"None?"

"Not a scrap. It all rests upon the word of a worthless vagabond whom nobody would believe, who is in fact such a villain and a liar that he can hardly believe himself. If you wish to believe that he has lied, there is everything to encourage you in that belief, nothing to discourage you."

"And why have you come here to tell me this?"

"Did I not explain? I was forced to."

"By whom?"

"Sir, not by whom—by what. By my conscience."

Maxey raised his arm with a gesture of impatience. The somber man shrank back as if he expected a blow. He cried out apprehensively:

"Don't believe me! Don't believe me!"

"Do you acknowledge it to be a lie?"

"No, no. Not that, only—don't believe me."

"Mr. Dye," said Maxey suddenly, "will you swear a solemn oath, here in my presence, that you have told me the truth?"

"Sir, I will not. No oaths. Not tonight. No oaths. I have said it, and I will do no more. No, not if the sword falls, I will say no more. That is all I came to say. I have said it. I will go away again."

"Go, then!" cried Maxey hotly. "Go, while you can with safety get out of my reach, and if ever you show your face in this house again, unless you either come to confess that you have lied or hold the proofs of what you have said in your hand, you will regret it to the last day of your miserable life. Hold on a bit! Not quite so fast, my good man. I have not done yet. If you ever breathe a word of what you have told me today to any living soul, and I hear it"——

Maxey did not finish his sentence, but he was all the more impressive, for he looked unutterable things.

"Pardon me, sir, the caution is not needed. It has cost me much to say it to you. I shall never repeat it. But I must, I must warn you that I am not the only person who knows this to be the truth. If I had been, I never should have come. Sir, I thought it was better that you should know the whole before—before you took any rash step or steps, than hear of it afterward, when it would be so much more painful to both her and yourself. You understand me now?"

Mr. Dye suddenly turned, opened the door which led into the vestibule and glided out. Maxey sprang after him, exclaiming:

"Stop, sir, stop! I do not—I do not understand you!"

Maxey reached the vestibule only a second or two behind his strange visitor and would undoubtedly have dragged him back over the outer threshold, but at the very moment when he put out his hand to seize him he heard the rustle of a woman's dress. He changed his intention in the twinkling of an eye. In another instant Mr. Dye was free, the outer door was closed, and Maxey, pale and breathing heavily, stood upon the inside with his back against it, facing the astonished Annette, who was coming, quite unconscious of any intrusion, into the vestibule.

"Is anything the matter, Mr. Maxey?"

"Nothing—nothing at all. It was a mere— You startled me; that was all."

"Who has been here?"

"You do not know, then? You heard nothing of what he said?"

"Why, how strange you look! How could I?"

"I don't look strange," said Maxey. "It's the bad light I'm in. It was nobody you care to know. Let us go back to work again. There was something I was going to say when I was interrupted."

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Mr. Dye was staggering down the steps, clinging to the railing with one hand, looking the personification of despair. He muttered as he walked and crushed with his left hand a paper in the pocket of his threadbare coat—a paper on which a delicate feminine hand had traced these words:

"Prove her a waif then. If they marry, I shall hold you personally responsible!"

"Doubtless the poor girl's last hope," thought the melancholy man, "and I have stamped the life out of it."

At that very instant, however, Julian Maxey, the artist, was making of those words a hollow mockery. He had come back into the room with her and had closed the door. That rapid pulse that Dr. Lamar had warned him was so like-

"Who has been here?"

ly to get the better of his discretion was at its height. He began to tell her impulsively, passionately, before he fully realized it.

She turned so white and speechless that his heart almost ceased beating. The thought that he had at last uttered the irrevocable, fatal words came to him too late to prevent, the utterance of his hope and his longing, but not too late to make the flow of his eloquence tremble and die on his lips. He became as mute as she and almost as pale. For a moment they stood close together by the window, in the fading light from the western sky, looking into each other's eyes with a mutual terror.

"I—I have frightened you," stammered Maxey.

An undeniable fact, but it was all the artist could think to say at that moment.

Still he could not stand inactive. He sought to take the dainty hand which timidly shrank from the contact. He grew more persistent when he encountered opposition and concentrated all his energies on the capturing of the trembling member. In another moment it was his. Then, with a sudden boldness which astonished even himself, he drew her close, close to him.

He felt her startled heart beating, as if it would break, next to his. The unseen hand rapped upon the window, but it had no longer any interest or any terror for them.

"Oh, Mr. Maxey, let me go!"

"No; we must understand each other first. Tell me that I am a fool or a coward, and I will."

She made him no reply. She struggled a little with her baby strength and gave it up. She was very quiet.

But still the frightened heart beat wildly close to his. She had not spoken.

Softly the artist bent down to look into her averted face. There was neither anger nor tears there—only the paleness and the terror.

The two hearts were throbbing now in unison. It was getting dark.

"Annette," he whispered, "call me a coward!"

She answered him at last in a voice that was so low and hushed that it hardly sounded natural:

"I have no right to tell a lie, and I have no right to mix my life with yours. You are young, ambitious, rich, with a future. I have not—not even a name."

"No; I am not rich, Annette. You are mistaken, and, depend upon it, your name will be known some day, and it will be as good as mine. But what is that to me? What if you really had no name? I love you for yourself, Annette, for what you are. Annette, would you place your happiness against so flimsy a matter as that if I were nameless and you loved me?"

"Suppose—suppose some day the truth about me should be known and it should be—degrading?"

"Annette!"

"Ah, you have not thought of that! I have. Oh, I have thought of it often—when I awoke at night or when I even dared to dream of such great happiness as this"——

Her voice died away to quite a whisper. But those low spoken words did not escape Maxey's willing ear. They thrilled through his whole being as nothing had ever done before.

"Ah, then you have dreamed of this happiness, Annette? You will not deny it?"

She hung her head and became scarlet. She said not a word. Her very silence was eloquent. But the delighted artist would not leave her modesty this refuge. He felt a wild, delicious joy in the knowledge that the radiant little creature who hung upon his arm was his, body and soul, and the knowledge, the certainty, was not enough. He thirsted to hear her say it. He persisted:

"Tell me, Annette, you love me! Is it not so?"

The head sank lower still, and she did not reply, but the dark hair moved slightly. A scarcely perceptible little nod in the affirmative was all that she seemed willing to vouchsafe him.

All at once she aroused herself and sought once more to break the tender bonds that held her. She fought so hard, she seemed so very much in earnest, that Maxey, terror stricken for the result, permitted her to go. When she was free, she seemed about to leave him, but at the very threshold of the room she checked herself with sudden impulse and faced him. It was dusk, yet Maxey could see the dainty features. They told him plainly enough under what a storm of emotion she was suffering. It seemed as if she had intended to speak, but feared to trust her voice. There she stood like a timid fawn, panting and trembling.

Maxey, hardly knowing what he did, stretched out his arms in an imploring gesture.

She uttered a cry, ran toward him, threw herself into his embrace and broke down completely.

"Oh," she sobbed, "how I wish I were strong as I ought to be, as I thought I was! I had made up my mind to tell you 'No.' But I cannot. Oh, I cannot do it! I should be brave, and I am a coward. For your sake I should be willing to break both our hearts, if need be, rather than you make a misalliance with me."

"Not nameless, no," cried Maxey, with unanswerable logic, "for I will give you mine. If you had a name, what else could you do but throw it away?"

He bent over. His lips met hers. It was their first kiss. She threw her arms about him with a sudden vehemence that in some degree revealed to the astonished artist how truly his sister had spoken when she told him that he did not know the depth of that emotional nature which he yearned to possess.

She cried out hysterically:

"Oh, tell me over and over again, till I cannot fail to believe you, that when the truth about me is known, whatever it be, you will never, never regret this step you are taking!"

"Never!" answered Maxey, who had reached a state of exaltation beyond anything he had ever experienced. "I swear it!"

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It astonished Maxey to find that nobody was surprised.

There was little ceremony, no display. It was a very quiet marriage in the artist's rooms. Dr. Lamar gave away the bride.

Miss Maxey was excited and cried a great deal, and the physician was very thoughtful.

In the world there were busy tongues at work.

One woman, when she heard of this marriage, dashed a costly clock upon the floor and made a wreck of it.

A poor wretch, quivering between a jug of rum and a morning paper, saw the notice on the printed page and uttered a howl of delight. After that outburst he became for a long time still and pale and looked upon the dull brown surface of the jug with a gaze that was fearful and apprehensive. Then he began to matter to himself:

"Bah! What can it matter? What difference does it make? She has no memory. She never will have a memory of one dark hour of her life. I am safe, still safe for another day of existence—and this."

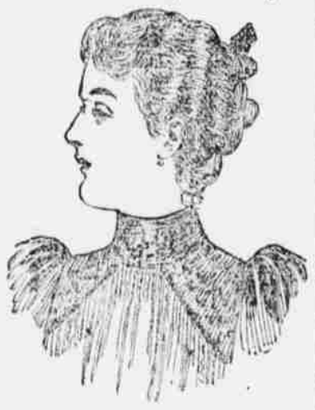
He stroked the surface of the jug and shivered at his own thoughts. Happy for him that his window did not look out upon the broad river, and that there was no uncanny, ghostly wind to come tapping at his sash in the dead of night!

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

FOR FOOT AND HEAD.

Judic Chollet's Seasonable Suggestions For Their Adornment This Summer.

Tan and yellow shoes are out of favor with Frenchwomen, chocolate shades being preferred. In America colored outdoor shoes are worn mainly for coolness, however, and brown cannot be really much less warm than black. White canvas shoes with white goat or black patent leather trimmings are extremely attractive for out of town use, and if they did



NEW COIFFURE.

not so quickly become soiled would be worn more than they are. The Juliet shoe for the street is merely a revival of the old fashioned congress gaiter with elastic in the sides that went out of style for women years ago, although it remained in use for men. It was predicted that side lace boots would also reappear, but none have been seen as yet. Button boots are first favorites, but the Blucher cut laced style is likewise much worn, especially in tan shades. Low, flat heels are decidedly the fashion, but the toe ranges impartially from pointed to common sense shapes. Patent leather retains its popularity, although, as it is not elastic, the foot takes a wider shoe in this material than in kid.

A woman with a large foot cannot do better than confine herself to plain fine French kid boots, as they fit perfectly and comfortably, and having a dull finish are inconspicuous. For evening wear she should select black suede or satin shoes without rosettes or buckles.

Now for the other extremity. The flat plastered locks of 1830 fashion have not come in, nor are they likely to do so. We are too well accustomed to the softening effect of wavy, fluffy arrangements of the hair to look with favor on the revival of so trying a style. The hair is often parted and arranged in curls at the sides of the face, but not with the painful smoothness and regularity that characterized the days of our grandmothers. A sketch is given of a simple coiffure in which the hair is waved all over the head, then parted in the middle and drawn loosely to the back, where it is coiled in a figure 8, which is secured by an ornamental pin.

JUDIC CHOLLET.

How Mushrooms May Be Secured.

Mushroom spawn may be secured from the seedsmen, and the mushrooms can be grown in sheds, stables and shaded spots where the soil has been made very rich. They may be prepared for the table in an endless variety of ways, and are a most delicious but little appreciated article of food.—Indianapolis Journal.

ESCHEAT.

To my estate no heirs succeed;
When I have done with it, no man
Shall find it suited to his need,
Adapted to his plan.

The walls were built for me, and when
I close the door and turn the key
No one shall enter there again,
Or rule in place of me.

This house is all I own; though poor
It shelters me, and many a storm
Has passed it, leaving all secure,
The inner hearthstone warm.

But after me no eager kin
Shall hold my former house in pride;
No enemy shall enter in
As tenant to abide.

The friendly earth is good and sweet,
And kindly to its heart will draw
Estates like mine when they escheat
By nature's changeless law.

—Meredith Nicholson in New York Sun.