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The Somerset Herald

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MISCELLANEOUS.

AMONG THE RUINS.

stranger, and the exercise of his singular power.

"Allow me to ask," inquired Barbeaux, turning away from the piercing gaze of the cold grey eyes, "do you mean good or evil towards me?"

"Neither one or the other," was the response; "I shall guard your destiny, that is all. Now let me tell you. The Corbys have passed from plebeian to nobility. If you will be influenced by me, if you will act in the manner I bid let me pull the strings, I will serve you."

Impressed by the words of the stranger, and cherishing the wish to win Henriette, Frederick yielded.

"Come, enter with me," continued the doctor, as the servant opened the door.

"Allow me to present to you," said the physician, addressing Madame Corby, "my young friend, Frederick Barbeaux, the hope of making your acquaintance induced him to come to this evening."

The introduction between Madame Corby and Barbeaux was satisfactory. When the visit was concluded, she turned to her daughter, and expressed herself as pleased.

"This young stranger is an agreeable man," she said, addressing Henriette. "Do you not think so?"

"Yes," he impressed me as being agreeable," responded Henriette; "and yet I do not like him."

"As usual, you are absurd, and will at once retire to your room," was the angry retort.

"Henriette obeyed, and remained in her apartment until evening.

It was twilight when a young man entered the enclosure contiguous to the garden. No one had observed him. Beneath his arm he carried a book, which seemed to contain the history of a nation.

It was nine o'clock when Camille Berne, for such was his name, heard the gate open, and saw a figure glide into the enclosure almost exhausted; he hastened to meet the one who approached.

"How late you are," murmured the young man.

"I came as soon as I could," responded the trembling voice of Henriette.

"You have been weeping," resumed Camille.

"No," she said, in a tone of annoyance. "You are not well, and should have remained in your own room."

"I came," replied the young girl, to fulfill a duty."

"What duty?" inquired Madame Corby sternly. "Ah, I see," she added, looking at her husband, "you are conspiring against me."

"Monsieur de Corby made no reply."

"Only have conspired," said Henriette.

"What did she tell you, Monsieur?" continued Madame de Corby, authoritatively.

"That she was not certain that she loved Monsieur Barbeaux," responded de Corby, timidly.

"No, father," interrupted Henriette, "I did not love Monsieur Barbeaux; and that I do not wish to marry him."

"And what was your reply, Monsieur?"

"That I would not see her made unhappy."

"Why did you not answer more fittingly? Why did you not say to this rebellious girl, a daughter's first duty is to her mother? Such is my reply, and it is my will that Henriette marry Monsieur Frederick Barbeaux, I will be no opposition."

"With these words Madame de Corby left the room abruptly.

"My child, what can I do?" inquired de Corby, nervously.

"Nothing," responded Henriette; "but I have lost all hope."

On returning to her apartment, Henriette wrote to Camille Berne. The letter contained these words: "Forget me, Camille, I will soon be the wife of another. The love we dreamed of so fondly exists often in an illusion that a breath may disperse. My family never would have consented to our union, and poverty would cool the ardor of our sentiments. You lose little in losing me, and you have learned a useful lesson in being able now to understand the inconsistency of human nature. Farewell."

Woman's heroism gave Henriette the courage to write her father, but when the letter was sent, all strength forsook the unhappy girl.

In the Church of Villonison, on the following Thursday, the marriage of Frederick Barbeaux and Henriette de Corby was solemnized. The responses made by the bride were scarcely articulate, and when all was over a young man, a stranger, faint, and was carried from the holy edifice insensible. It was Camille Berne.

The evening of the same day Frederick Barbeaux received a letter containing these words: "You are a coward. Knowing that she does not love you, you have married Henriette de Corby. If you have more—if you would have me explain, meet me at the door of the old church, near the cemetery."

Without delay Barbeaux left the house and hastened to the spot indicated, and soon stood in the presence of Berne.

"Who are you?" inquired Barbeaux.

"Your enemy," responded Camille.

"The lover of Henriette de Corby."

As Berne uttered these words the rustic light of the moon shined brightly in the long grass, and turning, she saw Henriette.

"Would you kill me," inquired the young girl, faintly, gazing appealingly at Camille.

"Fortunately," Madame, replied Berne, "there is one too many loving you. God shall decide which of us shall remain. Come," he added, addressing Barbeaux.

Without another word the men departed, leaving Henriette alone with her despair.

"I have pistols, but we require seconds," said Barbeaux, on reaching the spot where the duel was to take place.

"Your second is here," said a voice, instantly recognized by Frederick as that of the physician.

It was quickly agreed between the two adversaries that they should fire at thirty paces. The ground was measured, the shots fired, and Camille Berne fell upon the sod. A ball had entered his breast.

"The wound is mortal," said the physician, after having made a careful examination.

As the words were uttered a wild cry was heard, and Henriette, who had followed, rushed forward, and kneeling beside the wounded man, she raised him in her arms and laid his head upon her breast.

"This is no place for you, Madame," exclaimed Barbeaux, "I command you to leave that man and follow me."

"And I refuse, Camille, dear Camille, speak to me; tell me that you forgive me."

The eyes of the dying man were riveted upon her face, the lips moved, but no words escaped them. Suddenly the limbs quivered convulsively, and Berne breathed a faint sigh.

"He will not speak to me," murmured Henriette.

"He cannot," responded the physician, "he is dead."

AMONG THE RUINS.

White lengthening shadows over the sand that fell.

And a man from a white wall in the distance.

What a heart to listen maddly glad!

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