

Suddenly some one called for a song, which was repeated by several other voices crying, "Annie, give us a song." "Come on, Annie." But with a silent shake of her head she refused.

She was a pretty young woman of about twenty-five, with dark hair, dark serious eyes, regular features and a lovely complexion. Her hands were shapely and neat, her dress quiet and her actions as well as her general appearance plainly showed that she once had been surrounded by gentler and better influences. But there was something peculiar about her; she seemed to have withdrawn herself from the party, her eyes appeared continually moist and her bosom heaved rapidly as though some conflict were going on within. Was she thinking of the past? Was it sweeter, purer, better than the present? Probably.

"Pierre, can't you get Annie to sing?" was addressed to her companion, and he bending over the table, began pleading with her.

"I fear that I cannot; I feel so sad. They would not like my song."

"Sing us something sad, please do."

Slowly she rose and walked to the piano. As her fingers touched the keys, her heart failed her and she began crying. Silence gradually fell over the company—they were not wholly lacking in feeling—their hearts were not yet burnt to ashes. Wiping the tears away she again began to play and, catching her note, she sang—sang as she had never sung before—a sad, sweet song of home. When she ceased the tears were again trickling down her soft cheeks, but her bosom heaved slowly, more regularly—her soul had found expression; her heart had emptied itself of its fullness.

The room was quiet. That mournful note of a sad, despairing, reminiscent soul had found in each breast a chord which would vibrate in unison with it, and God only knows all the thoughts that passed through the minds of those hardened men and women. But to one mind there arose the vision of a happy little home, with a dear father and mother, which he had left long, long ago. He could stand it no longer; stepping up to her side, he said: "Come, Annie, let us go."

Quietly she arose and they left the room together. Slowly the party separated, and all that was left were the half-emptied glasses standing on the tables.

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