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Noticed.

GRAY AND BLUE.

"The only difference in your war." I heard a Briton say. "Is that one side dressed in blue. The other clad in gray." I went into a Federal camp. I heard the soldiers cry. "Hark! here come the newspapers." And saw them rush to buy. I went along the Valley road. And met upon my way, Tom of Lee's struggling industry. All clad in Rebel gray. One held a proclamation out. And, as I stopped my step, said: "Tell us what this paper says. For none of our own read." And I replied: "If you could find. And find out what is true. Instead of wearing Davis gray. You'd bear the Lincoln blue." Gray is the color of the dust. In which the serpent crawls; And blue the hue of Heaven, which looks Down on earth's prison walls.

Disabilities.

FAST AND FIRM.

A ROMANCE OF MARSEILLES.

I was at the Marseilles railway station: why I was there, or where I was going, I don't exactly remember, so much having happened since, and I, just at the time having no special reason to go to one place more than to another. The express train from Paris had just come in.

She was standing a little aside, just out of the crowd and bustle, looking on, scanning every face as it passed and, as I fancied, with more interest than others. Her face was very pale, and her eyes were anxious, but she looked calm and self-possessed, her manner had no bashfulness, no hardness.

Was she waiting for her fellow passenger to rejoin her?

People hurried to and fro, each one intent on his or her business. No one approached this little lady.

By-and-by I saw her speak to an elderly woman, who, for a few moments, stood near her, a matured specimen, apparently, of the genus "unprotected." Of her I think she asked some questions. From her she received, I fancied, a hurried, a not over-courteous answer. I saw a flush rise to her face as she turned away.

By this time the platform was almost clear. Such passengers as were by-and-by going on, had departed to refresh themselves; others had gone to their resting places; the railway officials began to regard this solitary figure curiously.

Raising my hat, speaking to her in French with as formal a courtesy as I could command, I ventured to ask if she was waiting for anybody; wanting any information if I could be in any way of any service to her. A shade as of perplexity or disappointment crossed her face, when I thus addressed her.

She answered in better French than mine, while her eyes seemed to read mine with something more than curiosity—with interest.

"I was to have been met here. I see nobody who is looking for anybody. I am disappointed. I must wait here, some one will perhaps, come yet. Thank you very much for your kindness, but I must wait."

Again lifting my hat, I left her; but only to take the platform and think about her. Wait! what had she to wait for? Any one meaning to meet her would have been there when the train came in. Alone there, and, most likely, strange to the place, what could she do? Meanwhile there she stood, waiting, comely, patiently.

As the minutes passed by, I thought she looked paler and paler; at last, as I approached her nearer than in my other turns, she came a few steps towards me. "Will you be so kind," she began in English, then, correcting herself she spoke in French.

I smiled. "I am English as you are." "Oh! I am so glad!" she said quite childishly. Then she added, "I can offer no excuse for troubling you, but will you tell me what to do? I came direct from London. I am going to my brother, who is ill in Rome. Some one was to have met me at Marseilles, and I know nothing about the route beyond this. My brother is very ill. I must travel quickly, or—here she paused, or rather her voice faltered here.

"Where you go to by land?" "Yes, my brother forbade me to travel by water. Sea-travelling had killed him, and he won't let me try it."

"But," I said, quite angrily, "it is an impossible journey for you to undertake alone by this route. What were your friends thinking of?" "I was to have been met upon that, you know. I was quite dependant upon her, but she has no business here at all. If you want to go by land, and quickly, you ought to have gone by Chambery, across Mount Oenis, by Susa, Turin, Milan—"

She turned so pale that I paused. She looked about for some resting-place; I gave her my arm, led her to the waiting-room, got her a glass of water and a cup of coffee, begging her to drink the latter.

She obeyed me, and, as soon as she could speak, it was, "You will tell me what to do now? My brother is very ill, perhaps dying. Will it be best to go to the place you spoke of, or, as I am here, to push on by this route? Which way is the quicker?"

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Noticed.

what to do now? My brother is very ill, perhaps dying. Will it be best to go to the place you spoke of, or, as I am here, to push on by this route? Which way is the quicker? "Where is your luggage? The train starts for Nice in five minutes. I am not sure what better you can do than push on by this route now you are here." She rose directly. "I had no luggage but what is in that bag," pointing to one I had taken from her when I gave her my arm.

"What a charming travelling-companion she would make!" I thought to myself. She added, as we hastened towards the platform, "I left London at an hour's notice in consequence of a telegram." As I hurried her along, she asked, "Are you going any further by this route?"

"Yes." "Would you kindly, while you are travelling the next stage, write me down directions?" "Certainly."

The ladies' carriage into which I looked was full; so I handed her into another, and got in myself, and as that small hand rested in mine, a curiously strong conviction entered my mind, and rested there.

I seated myself opposite to her, and having said, "We shall have plenty of time to talk it over before we get to Nice," I feigned to be fully occupied with route-books and maps in order to leave her quite time to recover herself.

All the while that I seemed thus occupied, I was thinking intently. I was not very young or "green." I had heard of bewitched and bewitching widows and of childish-looking little adventuresses lying in wait, at such places as the Marseilles railway station, for men's hearts to ensnare them and men's purses to make use of them, and I considered myself a man not likely to be imposed upon.

Many a calm, investigating glance of mine rested on my opposite neighbor's face, her dress, her ensemble. She did not speak to me; she turned her face to the window. I thought her earnestly interested in the fascinating, romantic scenes past which we were flying—the rocky heights, castle looking rocks and rocky looking castles, the blue bays and gray olive-hoary plains, which she was seeing now probably for the first time.

By-and-by, a gentle, stealthy movement of hers, a little hand slipped into her pocket, and then her handkerchief lifted to her face, assured me she was crying.

I am always afraid of a woman who is crying. A man is a brute who can speak a harsh word to a weeping woman, and a kind one often changes a mild trickling of the salt water to a deluge, so I left her alone.

She kept her hand, and her handkerchief in it, over her face, and her face turned toward the window as much as possible. I began to hope she would fall asleep. I believe I did fall asleep for a few moments. By-and-by I was roused by the falling of a book from my hand; when I opened my eyes I found my opposite neighbor's fixed upon me, with a look of waiting for the opportunity of addressing me. She had left off crying then; that she had cried a good deal her face told; her lids were reddened in tiny spots; she was looking very wan and ill.

"She had her purse open in her hand. "Shall I have enough money?" she asked me, holding it towards me, when I gave signs of being fully awake.

I took the poor little poorly-furnished purse in my hand. "Oh, yes, if you don't get cheated, and as I am going to Rome by this route, I will see to that, if you will allow me."

"You are going to Rome?" Such a light in the eyes, and such a pretty transient flush over the delicate face. "You are going all the way that I have to go?" "Yes." It was the state of her purse that had finally decided me.

She put the purse returned to her back in her bag. After that, and when I pretended to be looking in another direction, I saw her small hands folded together, and was confident that her lips formed the words "Thank God!" Somehow I was more touched than I could have told reason for by this.

"Have you slept at all on the road?" I asked presently.

"No; I have been too anxious." "Try and sleep now, or you will be utterly worn out. I am going to do my best to take care of you. Try and fancy I am the friend your brother sent for you. I will try and take as good care of you as if I was." It was not a case for half-measures, you see; I leant forward, not to be overheard, and spoke earnestly.

"You are very good," she said, and her eyes filled.

I put my hat-box for her feet, and threw my wrapper over her; then I immersed myself in my books again. Two old ladies and one old gentleman were nodding in the other compartment of the carriage. For a long time I did not stir hand or foot or look at my neighbor, hoping that, her mind more at ease, she might catch the infection of their drowsiness. She did; when I did venture to look at her she was asleep. Her hat lay on her knee; her head was leant back in the angle of the cushions. The

light of the carriage-lamp—it had grown dusk now—slanted down from the bright hair, throw a shadow of long lashes on the pale cheek, fell on the pretty round white throat; but it did not look careful sleep; the mouth retained lines of anxiety and depression. I did not look at her long; I was afraid of disturbing her, and besides it seemed to me that it would be a piece of unchivalrous audacity and profanity to take that advantage of the unconsciousness of one so strangely thrown upon my protection. Her hat slipped off her knee and fell to the floor of the carriage: I picked it up reverently and laid it on my own, which was on the seat beside me. I fell to considering it: it was a modest little hat, pretty, but not in a coquette's style; simple, tasteful, and free from any of the grotesque and unsuitable excrescences (I can't call them ornaments) I have wondered at on other women's head gear. Her whole dress had struck me, as I first noticed her at the station, as having a special appropriateness, a neat completeness, an absence of all superfluity, and yet no absence of feminine gracefulness.

"Who is she? What is she?" I pondered, and as I pondered my eyes, for the first time, fell upon a card fastened to the handle of her bag, which I had put on the seat beside me, to give her more room, when I begged her to try and sleep.

The name—not a common one—was not unfamiliar to me, and yet the familiarity of it carried me back into the past. "Harkness?" I kept repeating. I questioned and perplexed myself to no purpose, but, by-and-by, when I had given up, or imagined that I had, thinking about the matter, it all came to me.

Harkness was the name of an old drawing-master of mine. Harkness was the name of a young school fellow of mine. Harkness was a name that for two or three years I had seen in the Royal Academy's Catalogue as the painter of pictures which had struck my fancy—mostly scenes in the country round Rome, cattle and peasants of the Campagna.

For the sake of the name as much as for pictures themselves, I had purchased some two or three, I forget which, of these works (I bought up many more of them afterwards, for her sake) at the time, wondering if, for young artist Harkness, was my young school-fellow Harkness.

I now determined that the two should certainly be one, and that one the brother of my little companion, who must as certainly be the "sister Ruth" of whom he had often talked, a baby girl then and the object of his almost adolatorous affection.

"It is nothing I am very idle, unoccupied fellow, at anybody's service—especially at the service of your brother's sister." "If only he is alive to thank you! You think I cannot go to-night?" "I know you cannot." I did not know it, but I knew she ought not.

The mistress of one of the Nice hotels was well and favorably known to me. I committed Miss Harkness to her care, explaining in few words the object of her journey.

Then I ordered—and I remember I took great pains with its selection—a little dinner for one, of soup, game, cutlets, sweets, choice fruit and coffee, to be served as soon as possible to No. 99; and after I had done that, I went about my own business. I secured the coupe of the diligence and one place in the banquette as far as Genoa. I sent a telegram to Marseilles to request that my luggage, which I had left unowned there, should be taken charge of till further notice. I dined at a hotel close to the diligence office, drank coffee, smoked, lounging on the esplanade and looking towards the windows of the house where I had left Miss Harkness, and wondered drearily what would come of this very strange adventure of mine.

"Suppose a wife should come of it? Pshaw! most unlikely! What probability was there that a sweet girl like this should be disengaged." To what sort of a fellow, however, if he lets her run such risks as these? Suppose she had fallen into bad hands as completely as she had fallen into mine—which shall be harmless for her, God knows!

She would not have fallen into bad hands. There is judgment, discernment, wisdom beyond her years in that sweet little face, with its serene brow and clear eyes, its firm, rather sad mouth.

I was sorry she had seen my name, otherwise I could have laid the flatteringunction to my soul that it was my face which had inspired her with confidence. But what on earth could she have done had I not been there? What if the name of heaven would have become of her? Well! heaven guards its own. Heaven knows what would become of her.

When I tired of my moonlight rambling by the shores of that wonderful Bay of Nice, and went to my hotel, I found it was too late to be worth while going to bed that night, so I watched till morning.

I was at her hotel pretty early, anxious to settle her account, before she should be troubled about it. I ordered breakfast to be taken to her in her room, and sent a pencilled message to her, telling her I had arranged everything.

I shan't easily forget the earnestly grateful look she gave me when we met. As I tucked her up snugly in the coupe— "Had she been comfortable?" I asked. "O, yes, I had thought of everything. I had been most kind," she answered, her eyes full of tears. And then—"where was I going?" with a half alarm in her tone and her face, as she found I did not take my place beside her.

"To the banquette, up above; I am your courier, mademoiselle: one sees better there, but this fitter for a lady." It was an early February morning: the sun and sky as bright as only a Riviera sun and sky could be; the Mediterranean blue, as only the Mediterranean could be.

That wonderful Cornice Road! I had often travelled it before; but that only made me better able to admire it then. Now high on the hills, where you seemed to have glimpses of a whole Switzerland of snow-mountains; where you had below you bay after bay glittering azure of violet; town, village, and tower, and distant expanse of sea; where you looked upon little castellated cities sitting on their natural fortifications, secure, impregnable;—then down to the shore, through the queerest and quaintest of small ports, past new-built and building fleets, between boughs loaded with lemons, through orchards of lemons, past the palm groves of Bordighera—what an enchanted world it seemed! Medieval and romantic, northern strength, southern grace; but it is not of these things I care to talk now.

We did not stop more than a few hours at Genoa. How long we were upon our route altogether I cannot distinctly remember. We had bad weather at one time, cold and rain, snow, wind, and hail; that was, I think, in crossing the Apennines between Sestris and Spezia. She never complained, though she got so benumbed with cold that she would have fallen, but that I caught her in my arms, one evening as I was helping her to alight—she never complained.

Caught her in my arms! yes; and before I knew it had given her a sort of compassionate hug, exclaiming, "You poor, tired, patient child!" I couldn't help it. Rail from Spezia to Leghorn; past the marble quarters of Carrara, past Pisa, rail and diligence to Civita Vecchia, rail to Rome. Our journey was not long since, you see.

When we reached Rome, in full brightness of sunny morning, she did look travel-worn, fagged, and jaded. The night before, in a crowded diligence—I had not been able to secure a coupe for her—she had slept great part of the night, her head upon my shoulder—a sleep of such profound exhaustion as had half alarmed me. I had ventured to put my arm around her, to draw her to me, in order to support her better—what a slight, fragile feeling form it was! As I held thus, and she slept this dead sleep, my eyes never closed, and my mind was very busy.

What would be the end of this journey? Should her brother be already dead? Friendless, moneyless, homeless, alone! When we stopped once she half roused; she looked up in my face as I bent down to her.

"My arm afraid I weary you," she said. "I cannot help it; I'm so tired!" she was half stupefied with fatigue almost before she had finished speaking her head drooped on my shoulder again.

I pressed her closer for answer—that was all. "Your wife, poor young thing, seems quite worn out," said a kindly, half-quizzish-looking lady sitting opposite. I had noticed how pleasantly and compassionately she glanced at Ruth. A few days ago I should not have thought of a woman; but now—well, I was jealous and selfish. I wanted her all to myself, wanted her to be cared for with my cares—all mine, only mine.

I answered simply, "She is worn out; she has travelled from London almost without stopping; she has a brother dying in Rome."

"Poor, poor young thing! But she is happier than many; she will meet sorrow with one by her who loves her with more than the love of a brother."

My conscience was roused; none of our other fellow-travellers could hear us. I briefly told her Ruth's story, and finished by asking, "Are you going to stay in Rome?"

"Yes, friend, and shall be glad to be of service to the young lady."

"You may perhaps be of the greatest service." I gave her my card and she gave me hers, pencilling on it her address in Rome.

"This is your brother's address?" I asked Ruth, as we approached Rome, reading a card she gave me.

"Yes; you are surprised. Why? This is such a miserable quarter."

"Oh! he is very poor, and always saving, to be able soon to give me a home," she said. "He says I never shall be happy as a governess, nor he to know me one."

"Ruth," I said, taking her hand as we drove through the streets. "Let me call you so. I am not a stranger now; I am a brother to you, wishing to be to you more than any brother; but I am not going to speak of that now. Are you prepared for a great shock? Can your physical system bear it? I know that brave mind will mean if your brother should be very, very ill, dying—dead. She shuddered. "You have said the word; I could not. I have been thinking day after day that he is dead; that is why—"

"Why no one here met you?" "Yes." "I fear, poor child, you may be right. You will try to bear up bravely; and—you will tell me a brother to you till—"

Now our cab stopped. "This street is enough to have killed him," she said. "Surely it is not here?" We had stopped in one of the narrow streets, as a matter of course foul-smelling filth of which there is plenty in Rome.

"It is here," I said, as the cabman opened the door. I gave the word, "Wait," and lifted her out. Up the dark, chill, dirty stairs, up and up. At last we reached a door on which the poor fellow's card was nailed. She seemed to gather courage now. She led the way, through a small dark ante-room, in which I paused.

I heard a smothered exclamation from her; for a cry so shrill as to be almost a scream—"Ruth!" I walked to the head of the stair-case and waited there, perhaps half an hour; then she came to me; came close up to me and laid her head upon my arm—the expression of the piteous eyes lifted to mine told me there was no hope.

Which a caressing word I drew her to me she leant her forehead against my arm a moment, then— "Harold wants to see you; Harold wants to thank you," she said in scarcely audible voice. I followed her into the room. The full light of a small square window from which one could see the Tiber, the Castle of St. Angelo, and the line of Mons Janiculum, was streaming on a low couch where my poor young schoolfellow lay.

I passed, however. He asked to be lifted up: the recumbent position was painful to him; he lay with his head on Ruth's shoulder, bright hair mingling with brighter hair.

The doctor came and went, and the woman who had nursed him: they both forbade that the last hour was near.

It was an afternoon not to be forgotten. He said he did not suffer much: now and again he talked; and when he talked wisdom not of this world was in his words.

Ruth did not shed a tear: she seemed absorbed in him beyond consciousness of self or sorrow: she moistened his lips or wiped his brow continually, and her eyes seemed to cling to his.

The sunset entering the room touched those two. She was watching him intently: his eyes closed, half-opened, seemed to look at her dreamingly, like the eyes of one who dozes off to sleep. The light faded; the dusk gathered: we did not stir, believing that he slept.

By-and-by through the gloom, the near hush and the distant noise of the great city, Ruth's voice, low and awe-struck, reached me, asking for light. I had fallen into profound thought—life, love, death and immortality, failure, success, the world's vanity,—I do not know what I did not think of as I sat motionless in that dusky room.

I procured a lamp: I set it down on the table, where the light fell on those faces. I found that Ruth had sunk lower and lower as the head on her shoulder grew heavier. A glance told me the truth: he was dead.

She saw it: she knew it. She sank down lower yet, till his bright head was on the pillow, hers beside it. She moaned softly, lying thus cheek to cheek I heard a few words: "Brother, take me, take me with you; I have none but you." Then she lay quite still, half on the couch, half on the floor, face to face with the dead.

What did I do? I stood and looked at them. As I stood and looked at them, I went through one of those experiences that it is no use to try and record; that are written in the life of life, upon the heart of heart, forever.

By-and-by I found that she was lying in a dead faint. I disentangled them and laid her on the floor on as good a couch as I could make of my wrapper and of the cushions of an old chair.

I had told her the truth when I told her I was a sort of doctor. That had been the profession I had not loved well enough to follow, after a large fortune left me had made the pursuit of a profession needless. I could treat her as well as another. I did what I could for her, and saw her revive. My entreaties prevailed on her, after a time, to leave the room for a few hours, going with the woman of the rooms below; but before the night had half passed, she was back again.

"Do not be angry with me. I want to sit and look at him. I won't cry. Soon shall I see him for ever." She took her station by him: she begged me to go away somewhere to get some rest. I pretended to yield, but found myself too anxious to go beyond the ante-room: she was not in a state to be left alone.

The dawn brought the horrible and harrowing business—of putting away, out of sight, out of reach, the mortality that has been so dear, that we have clutched so close, and never could keep too near—to my mind.

I talked to her as little as I could and as gently. Gently! if words could have floated on the air like ether down, or touched her with gossamer-light touches, they would still have seemed to me too rough to be cast at her then. Still I was forced to try and ascertain her wishes.

"You know what is best, you will do what is most right," she answered me gently; but don't ask me to leave the house while he is in it. Think of the long years that I have not seen him, think of the long years that—There she paused, burst into violent weeping—she had not cried before—Oh, I feel as if my heart was breaking!" she said, pressing her hand over it.

I clasped her to me; I comforted her as well as I could, reminding her, as well as I knew how, of how well things must be with her beloved brother. I spoke too, of the place where we would lay him to rest, of the country quiet among the roses, the violets, the cypresses.

She lay quiet in my arms, and by-and-by lifted up her face to listen. "To see that sweet, sad face resting against my breast, to look down upon it, and meet the trustful eyes, filled me with over-mastering emotions."

"If you can love me," I said, then, "you need never feel alone or unprotected, never more while I live. This is no unfit place or time to tell you this, for he knew I loved you, and was glad in knowing it; but, I do not ask or expect or desire any answer, nor know."

are!" she said. "What could I have done but for you?" I arranged everything for the best as far as I knew; I tempted her from the room to go with me to the Protestant graveyard beyond the walls, to choose where he should lie. "She seldom spoke; she said afterwards it was all like a dream from which she expected at any moment to awake.

The next day we buried him. When all was done we lingered near the place. A spring-breathed soft wind was blowing; spring-voiced sweet birds were singing; the cypresses were awaiting to nod; the mild spring sun was shining; the place was very soothing and peaceful—towered over by the great monumental pyramidal tomb of some forgotten great one, with the wonderful city of the dead, of memories, and surviving art lying in sight.

That was a day to be remembered. I promised her that the grave should be cared for better than any other in the place; that flowers should always blossom on it, and its head-stone never be moss encrusted.

When we went away I took her to the care of that motherly, kind, quakerish lady of the diligence, whom I had prepared to receive her.

I did not see her again for some days, she was too exhausted, when the reaction from long over-tension set in, to leave her bed.

I called every day, and always found some gentle worded, grateful message ready for me; but day after day I did not see her.

At last a bright day came, when I did. She was more altered, more broken down looking than I had anticipated; the meeting me agitated her very greatly; her black dress, too, increased the delicacy of her look. Mrs. Morrison stood by her, smoothing her hair and petting her with loving deeds and words till she was calmer then, good woman, she left us together.

"I had no idea what lay before me. Our interview was a long one. More than once I left her side, and paced the room in despair, stood at one or other of the windows that looked down over the city, and pondered how I could convince her of my love, that is to say, of the selfish and interested nature of it.

She met my definite offer of my hand and heart (as the novelists phrase it) with the most meekly, humbly firm refusal. Her gratitude was so full and so lowly her agitation so great that I could not be angry with her, but I was gratefully irritated, and turned my irritation against myself; cursed myself that I could find no words strong enough to convince her. She had set me on a pinnacle, and she would keep me there, and I wanted to be no higher than the level of her love.

It was just like me, she told me. Just like what she had always heard of me. She would always love me with the most devoted love, but she would never love me in her prayers, but in my wife—"

It was long before I could get a reason why; but at last I tortured it from her. She believed that I was sacrificing myself, that I loved her because she was friendless and alone; but she was not fit for me, she told me; she had not the accomplishments, the education, the talent, the beauty, the anything that my wife should have. As for her future I need not be anxious, she assured me. Mrs. Morrison had told her that here, in Rome, she could procure her a suitable situation.

At last, when I had exhausted every argument, or thought I had, and despaired, at all events of present success, I grew hurt and angry; I turned from her to a window, and stood looking out. A veil of blackness gathered between me and all I looked on. I was ill with anger, disappointment, and thwarted will.

I don't know how long I had stood so (but I believe it was a long time) when the softest of small hands entered mine, which hung down beside me. I started and looked round. She was looking up into my face so wistfully, her own face strained with pain and earnestness.

"You look so pained, so distressed," she said. "I must seem to you so thoroughly heartless and ungrateful. I cannot bear it."

Before I knew what she was going to do she was kneeling beside me; before I could prevent her, her soft fingers were raising my hand to her softer lips; I lifted her up; holding her by the shoulders I looked in her face almost fiercely. "Can you tell me that you do not love me?"

"No, I cannot; I do love you; I love you very dearly." Her tears began to fall, and she, tottering towards me, shed them on my breast.

I held her there, fast and firm, and never since has she disclaimed the right to be there.

EASTERN IN RUSSIA.—All Russia breathes out into an Oriental exuberance of kisses. What aristocratic mind undertakes to compute the salutary expenditure? Every member of a family salutes every other member with a kiss. All acquaintances, however slight, greet with a kiss and a *Christos voskres*. Long-robed men, besides a deputation of the officers of the rest, and even with the sentinels at the palace gates. So amid smiles and handshakings, and exclamations of "Christ has arisen!" pass on the days of the Easter festival. Ample amusements made for the long absence of the Great East, by unbounded abundance in the coveted animal food, to say nothing of the copious libations of brandy—evidences of which are visible enough in groups of amateur street-singers who incessantly are seen playing the bagpipes in the early morning hours. Such is St. Petersburg, and most Russian.