

The Diamond Lens

A Fascinating Story of Mystery and Love.

V.
ANIMULA.

The three months succeeding Simon's catastrophe I devoted night and day to my diamond lens. I had constructed a vast galvanic battery, composed of nearly two thousand pairs of plates,—a higher power I dared not use, lest the diamond should be calcined. By means of this enormous engine I was enabled to send a powerful current of electricity continually through my great diamond, which it seemed to me gained in lustre every day. At the expiration of a month I commenced the grinding and polishing of the lens, a work of intense toil and exquisite delicacy. The great density of the stone, and the care required to be taken with the curvatures of the surface of the lens, rendered the labor the severest and most harassing that I had yet undergone.

At last the eventful moment came; the lens was completed. I stood trembling on the threshold of new worlds. I had the realization of Alexander's famous wish before me. The lens lay on the table, ready to be placed upon its platform. My hand fairly shook as I enveloped a drop of water with a thin coating of oil of turpentine, preparatory to its examination,—a process necessary in order to prevent the rapid evaporation of the water. I now placed the drop on a thin slip of glass under the lens, and throwing upon it, by the combined aid of a prism and a mirror, a powerful stream of light, I approached my eye to the minute hole drilled through the axis of the lens. For an instant I saw nothing save what seemed to be an illuminated chaos, a vast luminous abyss. A pure white light, cloudless and serene, and seemingly limitless as space itself, was my first impression. Gently, and with the greatest care, I depressed the lens a few hairs' breadths. The wondrous illumination still continued, but as the lens approached the object, a scene of indescribable beauty was unfolded to my view.

I seemed to gaze upon a vast space, the limits of which extended far beyond my vision. An atmosphere of magical luminousness permeated the entire fold of view. I was amazed to see no trace of animalcules life. Not a living thing, apparently, inhabited that dazzling expanse. I comprehended instantly, that, by the wondrous power of my lens, I had penetrated beyond the grosser particles of aqueous matter, beyond the to the original gaseous globe, into whose luminous interior I was gazing, as into an almost boundless dome filled with a supernatural radiance.

It was, however, no brilliant void into which I looked. On every side I beheld beautiful inorganic forms, of unknown texture, and colored with the most enchanting hues. These forms presented the appearance of what might be called, for want of a more specific definition, foliated clouds of the highest rarity; that is, they undulated and broke into vegetable formations, and were tinged with splendors compared with which the gilding of our autumn woodlands is as dross compared with gold. Far away into the illimitable distance stretched long avenues of these gaseous forests, dimly transparent, and painted with prismatic hues of unimaginable brilliancy. The pendant branches waved along the fluid glades until every vista seemed to break through half-lucid ranks of many-colored drooping silken pennons. What seemed to be either fruits or flowers, pied with a thousand hues, lustrous and ever varying, bubbled from the crowns of this fairy foliage. No hills, no lakes, no rivers, no forms of animate or inanimate were to be seen, save those vast auroral copes that floated serenely in the luminous stillness, with leaves and fruits and flowers gleaming with unknown fires, unrealizable by mere imagination.

How strange, I thought, that this sphere should be thus condemned to solitude! I had hoped, at least, to discover some new form of animal life,—perhaps of a lower class than any with which we are at present acquainted,—but still, some living organism. I find my newly discovered world, if I may so speak, a beautiful chromatic desert.

While I was speculating on the singular arrangements of the internal economy of Nature, with which she so frequently splinters into atoms our most compact theories, I thought I beheld a form moving slowly through the glades of one of the prismatic forests. I looked more attentively and found that I was not mistaken. Words cannot depict the anxiety with which I awaited the nearer approach of this mysterious object. Was it merely some inanimate substance, held in suspense in the attenuated atmosphere of the globe? or was it an animal endowed with vitality and motion? It approached, flitting behind the gauzy, colored veils of cloud foliage, for seconds dimly revealed, then vanishing. At last the violet pennons that trailed nearest to me vibrated; they were gently pushed aside, and the Form floated out into the broad light. It was a female human shape. When

I say "human," I mean it possessed the outlines of humanity,—but there the analogy ends. Its adorable beauty lifted it illimitable heights beyond the loveliest daughter of Adam.

I cannot, I dare not, attempt to inventory the charms of this divine revelation of perfect beauty. Those eyes of mystic violet, dewy and serene, evaded my words. Her long lustrous hair following her glorious head in a golden wake, like the track sown in heaven by a falling star, seems to quench my most burning phrases with its splendors. If all the bees of Hybla nestled upon my lips, they would still sing but hoarsely the wondrous harmonies of outline that enclosed her form.

She swept out from between the rainbow-curtains of the cloud-trees into the broad sea of light that lay beyond. Her motions were those of some graceful Naiad, cleaving, by a mere effort of her will, the clear, untroubled waters that fill the chambers of the sea. She floated forth with the serene grace of a frail bubble ascending through the still atmosphere of a June day. The perfect roundness of her limbs formed suave and enchanting curves. It was like listening to the most spiritual symphony of Beethoven the divine, to watch the harmonious flow of lines. This, indeed, was a pleasure cheaply purchased at any price. What cared I, if I had waded to the portal of this wonder through another's blood? I would have given my own to enjoy one such moment of intoxication and delight.

Breathless with gazing on this lovely wonder, and forgetful for an instant of everything save her presence, I withdrew my eye from the microscope eagerly,—alas! As my gaze fell on the thin slide that lay beneath my instrument, the bright light from mirror and from prism sparkled on a colorless drop of water! There, in that tiny bead of dew, this beautiful thing was forever imprisoned. The planet Neptune was not more distant from me than she. I hastened once more to apply my eye to the microscope.

Animula (let me call her by that dear name which I subsequently bestowed on her) had changed her position. She had again approached the wondrous forest, and was gazing earnestly upwards. Presently one of the trees—as I must call them—unfolded a long ciliary process, with which it seized one of the gleaming fruits that glittered on its summit, and sweeping slowly down, held it within reach of Animula. The sylph took it in her delicate hand, and began to eat. My attention was so entirely absorbed by her, that I could not apply myself to the task of determining whether this singular plant was or was not instinct with volition.

I watched her, as she made her repeat, with the most profound attention. The suppleness of her motions sent a thrill of delight through my frame; my heart beat madly as she turned her beautiful eyes in the direction of the spot in which I stood. What would I not have given to have had the power to precipitate myself into that luminous ocean, and float with her through those groves of purple and gold! While I was thus breathlessly following her every movement, she suddenly started, seemed to listen for a moment, and then cleaving the brilliant ether in which she was floating, like a flash of light, pierced through the opaline forest, and disappeared.

Instantly a series of the most singular sensations attacked me. It seemed as if I had suddenly gone blind. The luminous sphere was still before me, but my daylight had vanished. What caused this sudden disappearance? Had she a lover, or a husband? Yes, that was the solution! Some signal from a happy fellow-being had vibrated through the avenues of the forest, and she had obeyed the summons.

The agony of my sensations as I arrived at this conclusion, startled me. I tried to reject the conviction that my reason forced upon me. I battled against the fatal conclusion,—but in vain. It was so. I had no escape from it. I loved an animalcule!

It is true that, thanks to the marvelous power of my microscope, she appeared of human proportions. Instead of presenting the revolting aspect of the coarser creatures, that live and struggle and die, in the more easily resolvable proportions of the water-drop, she was fair and delicate and of surpassing beauty. But of what account was all that? Every time that my eye was withdrawn from the instrument, it fell on a miserable drop of water, within which, I must be content to know, dwelt all that could make my life lovely.

Could she but see me once! Could I for one moment pierce the mystical walls that so inexorably rose to separate us, and whisper all that filled my soul, I might consent to be satisfied for the rest of my life with the knowledge of her remote sympathy. It would be some thing to have established even the faintest personal link to bind us together,—to know that at times, when roaming through those enchanted glades, she might think of the wonderful stranger, who had broken the monotony of her life with his presence, and left a gentle memory in her heart!

But it could not be. No invention, of which human intellect was capable, could break down the barriers that Nature had erected. I might feast my soul

upon her wondrous beauty, yet she must always remain ignorant of the adoring eyes that day and night gazed upon her, and, even when closed, beheld her in dreams. With a bitter cry of anguish I fled from the room, and flinging myself like a child.

VI. THE SPILLING OF THE CUP.

I arose the next morning almost at daybreak, and rushed to my microscope. I trembled as I sought the luminous world in miniature that contained my all. Animula was there. I had left the gas-lamp, surrounded by its moderators, burning, when I went to bed the night before. I found the sylph bathing, as it were, with an expression of pleasure animating her features, in the brilliant light which surrounded her. She tossed her lustrous golden hair over her shoulders with innocent coquetry. She lay at full length in the transparent medium, in which she supported herself with ease, and gambolled with the enchanting grace that the Nymph Salmacis might have exhibited when she sought to conquer the modest Hermaphroditus. I tried an experiment to satisfy myself if her powers of reflection were developed. I lessened the lamplight considerably. By the dim light that remained I could see an expression of pain flit across her face. She looked upward suddenly, and her brows contracted. I flooded the stage of the microscope again with a full stream of light, and her whole expression changed. She sprang forward like some substance deprived of all weight. Her eyes sparkled, and her lips moved. Ah! if science had only the means of conducting and reduplicating sounds, as it does the rays of light, what carols of happiness would then have entranced my ears! What jubilant hymns to Adonais would have thrilled the illumined air!

I now comprehend how it was that the Count de Gabalis peopled his mystic world with sylphs,—beautiful beings whose breath of life was lambent fire, and who sported forever in regions of purest ether and purest light. The Rosicrucian had anticipated the wonder that I had practically realized.

How long this worship of my strange divinity went on thus I scarcely know. I lost all note of time. All day from early dawn, and far into the night, I was to be found peering through the wonderful lens. I saw no one, went nowhere, and scarce allowed myself sufficient time for my meals. My whole life was absorbed in contemplation as rapt as that of any of the Roman saints. Every hour that I gazed upon the divine form strengthened my passion,—a passion that was always overshadowed by the maddening conviction, that, although I could gaze on her at will, she never, never could behold me!

At length I grew so pale and emaciated from want of rest, and continual brooding over my insane love and its cruel conditions, that I determined to make some effort to wean myself from it. "Come," I said, "this is at best but a fantasy. Your imagination has bestowed on Animula charms which in reality she does not possess. Seclusion from female society has produced this morbid condition of mind. Compare her with the beautiful women of your own world, and this false enchantment will vanish."

I looked over the newspapers for chance. There I beheld the advertisement of a celebrated *dansuse* who appeared nightly at Niblo's. The Signorina Caradolee had the reputation of being the most beautiful as well as the most graceful woman in the world. I instantly dressed and went to the theatre.

The curtain drew up. The usual semicircle of fairies in white muslin were standing on the right toe around the enamelled flower-bank, of green canvas, on which the belated prince was sleeping. Suddenly a flute is heard. The fairies start. The trees open, the fairies all stand on the left toe, and the queen enters. It was the Signorina. She bowed forward amid thunders of applause, and lighting on one foot, remained poised in air. Heavens! was this the great enchantress that had drawn monarchs to her chariot-wheels? Those heavy muscular limbs, those thick ankles, those cavernous eyes, that stertorped smile, those crudely painted cheeks! Where were the vermeil blooms, the liquid expressive eyes, the harmonious limbs of Animula?

The Signorina danced. What gross, discordant movements! The play of her limbs was all false and artificial. Her bounds were painful athletic efforts; her poses were angular and distressed the eye. I could bear it no longer; with an exclamation of disgust that drew every eye upon me, I rose from my seat in the very middle of the Signorina's *pas-de-fascination*, and abruptly quitted the house.

I hastened home to feast my eyes once more on the lovely form of my sylph. I felt that henceforth to combat this passion would be impossible. I applied my eye to the lens. Animula was there,—but what could have happened? Some terrible change seemed to have taken place during my absence. Some secret grief seemed to cloud the lovely features of her I gazed upon. Her face had grown thin and haggard; her limbs trailed heavily; the wondrous lustre of her golden hair had faded. She was

ill!—ill, and I could not assist her! I believe at that moment I would have gladly forfeited all claims to my humanity, if I could only have been enlarged to the size of an animalcule, and permitted to console her from whom Fate had forever divided me.

I racked my brain for the solution of this mystery. What was it that afflicted the sylph? She seemed to suffer intense pain. Her features contracted, and she even writhed, as if with some internal agony. The wondrous forests appeared also to have lost half their beauty. Their hues were dim, and in some places faded away altogether. I watched Animula for hours with a breaking heart, and she seemed absolutely to wither away under my very eye. Suddenly I remembered that I had not looked at the water-drop for several days. In fact, I hated to see it; for it reminded me of the natural barrier between Animula and myself. I hurriedly looked down on the stage of the microscope. The slide was still there,—but, great heavens! the water-drop had vanished! The awful truth burst upon me; it had evaporated, until it had become so minute as to be invisible to the naked eye; I had been gazing on its last atom, the one that contained Animula,—and she was dying!

I rushed again to the front of the lens, and looked through. Alas! the last agony had seized her. The rainbow-hued forests had all melted away, and Animula lay struggling feebly in what seemed to be a spot of dim light. Ah! the sight was horrible: the limbs once so round and lovely shrivelling up into nothing; the eyes—those eyes that shone like heaven—being quenched into black dust; the lustrous golden hair now lank and discolored. The last throes came. I beheld that final struggle of the blackening form—and I fainted.

When I awoke out of a trance of many hours, I found myself lying amid the wreck of my instrument, myself as shattered in mind and body as it was. I crawled feebly to my bed, from which I did not rise for months.

They say now that I am mad; but they are mistaken. I am poor, for I have neither the heart nor the will to work; all my money is spent, and I live on charity. Young men's associations that love a joke invite me to lecture on Optics before them, for which they pay me, and laugh at me while I lecture. "Linley, the mad microscopist," is the name I go by. I suppose that I talk incoherently while I lecture. Who could talk sense when his brain is naunted by such ghastly memories, while ever and anon among the shapes of death I behold the radiant form of my lost Animula!

For The Dear Girls.

Suggestions to Make Them Pretty and Keep Them Neat.

I know it has been a fad for the last few years for the girls to be quite regardless of their complexions during the summer, but the girl who is wise will take my advice and carry a parasol, and for the greatest comfort, and to prevent all strain and glare to her eyes, let her have a dark green lining to it. This lining will not affect in any way the outside covering or the appearance of her parasol.

For every-day wear the plain sailor hat, untrimmed, is still unsurpassed, and it is unquestionably the hat above all others to wear with the shirt-waist suit. When a few hats must be made to fill many needs, black, white and ecru are the safest colors to choose, or a combination of any two of these colors. A wreath of various flowers in blended colors makes another attractive and suitable trimming for a hat which must be worn with many gowns.

A light wrap for the summer is essential to the girl either in the country, at the seashore or in the mountains. One that will stand sun and fog and yet retain a presentable appearance should be selected. Either a wide circular cape or one of the three-quarter length half-fitting coats of a light-weight broadcloth would probably be the best selection to make. Such wraps do not require a lining nor hardly any trimming beyond stitching or plaits.

The belt of black velvet ribbon worn with a fancy buckle is the most universally becoming and useful belt to wear with all kinds of gowns. High girdles of flowered ribbon will be worn with odd blouses and white gowns, and may certainly be classed among the most helpful accessories of one's summer costumes. These girdles are boned in the front, side and back, where they fasten and are finished with small stiff bows. Silver braid in a wide width, fastening with a cut-steel buckle, looks remarkably well with either a black or a white gown.

Harold—My ancestors were all honest, but they were not stylish.
"That's all right; my ancestors were all stylish, but so far as I can learn, they wouldn't pay their debts."—Detroit Free Press

An Oklahoma Story.

When the Territory of Oklahoma was opened to settlement in April, 1889, Henry McNeill, of Kansas, was one of the thousands who joined in the race for a claim. More fortunate than some, he secured a choice bit of land, and joyfully set to work to build his dug-out.

That necessary labor done, the question arose where he should conceal his provisions and other belongings while he took the unavoidable trip to the land office to get his "papers."

Neighbors, in the usual sense, he had none, the nearest settler being almost a mile away. The region was infested with straggling desperadoes—claim-jumpers, gamblers, horse-thieves—and to leave his property exposed would be to invite any rascal to take it.

McNeill dug a sort of cave behind his sod house, making the pit deep enough so that some time in the future he could connect it with his cellar. In this hole he placed his few household goods. Then he boarded over the top, covered the boards with sod and brush, and started away feeling sure that all would be safe.

McNeill was but one of the many settlers with claims to file, and it was three days before he received his papers. Then, happy in their possession, he hurried back to his new house—only to find that it was occupied by two rough-looking men who eyed him in a way that promised anything but a friendly reception.

Now McNeill was a Scotchman, and cautious, and he began by asking mildly if they knew where there was any vacant land in the neighborhood. They did not. But they volunteered the information that, finding this place deserted, and being told that the man who made the improvements had got discouraged and abandoned the claim, they had taken it up.

Were they claim-jumpers or honest men who had been misled? McNeill resolved to give them the benefit of the doubt.

"Gentlemen," he said, "I built this house and made these improvements. This is my claim. I have not abandoned it, and never thought of doing so."

The two men stared at him for a moment in silence. Then one of them laughed contemptuously.

"That won't go down, young feller!" he cried. "I don't believe you ever saw this claim 'fore today. And if you did, 'twas abandoned clear enough—no grub or tools in sight, to show that whoever'd been here meant ever to come back. Anyway, folks around about tell me the feller that was here was a 'sooner,' come into the country before the gov'ment give the word, and if he hadn't got out the military would 'a' run him out."

"But," McNeill protested, "I can prove that I am the rightful owner. See, here is my receipt from the land office, and it describes this claim: 'The S. W. ¼ Sec. 17.'"

Here one of the intruders reached for the paper in McNeill's hand, as if to examine it; but no sooner had he secured possession than he threw it toward the other end of the room. In the next instant he leveled a revolver at the young man's head.

"Now you travel, sonny," the rascal roared, "and don't you ever set foot on this claim again, unless you want the sun to shine clean through ye!"

McNeill traveled; there was nothing else for him to do. But there was a gleam in his eyes which suggested that the matter would not end there.

Naturally he went for help first to the men who had taken up adjoining claims. They sympathized with him, yet would not interfere. Their advice was that McNeill should begin legal proceedings to expel the intruders. But the young man objected that that would take time, and he wanted to be at work on his claim, since the season for planting was rapidly passing.

Finally, ending the wearisome and fruitless argument, McNeill resolved to try to regain possession single-handed.

He borrowed a spade and a shotgun from the nearest neighbor, and after darkness had fallen crept cautiously up the "draw" or ravine that crossed his claim. Undetected, he made his way to the pile of brush that marked the entrance to his underground storeroom, and cautiously removing some of the sods and boards, dropped down into the hole.

But he did not dare to begin at once to dig. Not until he thought the rascals must be asleep did he start to burrow between his hiding place and the room through the three or four feet of earth beyond.

Very slowly he worked, feeling with his hands for any stone that might fall and betray him, and laying each carefully down. Hours he toiled, it seemed, most cramped for space and sometimes straitened for breath, before he felt sure he was almost through the wall.

Then he took out his knife. Piece by piece, bit by bit, he shaved away the earth. Suddenly his blade penetrated the thin partition. He had come out as he had planned, directly under the bed. He could hear the deep breathing of his enemies as they slept.

It was no part of McNeill's design

to assault the "jumpers," although he believed they would not hesitate to kill him. He hoped to dispossess them by strategy. He must wait patiently for an opening.

Hardly daring to stretch a muscle now that he was so near, afraid to doze, lest he might dream and cry out, McNeill placed himself as restfully as he could and prayed for the long night to wear away.

At last he heard sounds that told him the claim-jumpers were astir. One prepared breakfast, the other guarded the door. McNeill in his hiding-place listened intently.

"Wonder if we'r goin' to be bothered today with the youngster as claimed this yer place?" one of them growled. "We'd ought to be a-movin' that ar team we picked up as soon's we can. If the feller that used to own it should come along jest now, lookin' for his hosses, he'd be mighty apt to find 'em."

"That's so," responded the other. "I guess you'd better take the hosses and slope for the Panhandle today, hadn't ye? If the little tenderfoot does come back, I can manage him. Sorry I didn't fix him yesterday, when I had such a good chance."

Well, McNeill reflected, if it must be "kill or be killed," he knew which would suit him the better.

"Hadn't ye ought to be goin' up the draw to water them ar hosses before anybody does get around?" one of the ruffians said, presently.

"Reckon we had. I'm ready."

"Better take the Winchester?"

"Oh, I guess not. It's kind of on-handly, and we ain't likely to be bothered by anybody so early in the mornin'." Buckle on your six-shooter; that'll be enough.

As the sound of their footsteps died away, McNeill jumped for his spade. With the desperate energy of an honest man who fights for his own, he drove at the thin crust of earth overhead. Down it fell; up he clambered into the dugout.

He ran for the Winchester. Then on second thought he laid it aside and took up his shotgun, the surer weapon at close range. Swinging the door almost shut, but leaving a crack through which to watch the approach, he waited expectantly.

Twenty minutes later the claim-jumpers came back. They had started an argument while they had been gone. That was the only thing then in their minds. Wrangling violently about the price they should ask for the stolen horses, they approached the dugout.

Then suddenly, in their very faces, the door flew open, they looked down the barrels of a shotgun, and heard a stern voice say:

"Throw up your hands—quick!"

Only an instant of hesitation—a glance at the face of the speaker—and four brown hands went high in the air.

"Now, about face! March! Side by side—six feet apart here. Gang as I tell ye, an' dinna stop nor look back, gin ye wad keep whole heids!"

Thus commanded McNeill, in his excitement dropping into the speech most familiar to his boyhood. And it was in the same tongue that the young man responded when, after they had covered half a mile, the rascals complained of the fatigue of holding up their hands so long, and begged piteously to be allowed to let them down to rest.

"Ye can clasp them atop your heids an' ye'll do wel enough," McNeill said, grimly. "Long will they rest, I'm thinkin', or e'er again ye lay them on anither man's gear!"

The young man was a true prophet. When he and his next neighbor had disarmed and tied the desperadoes and taken them to Guthrie, it proved that they were "wanted" not only for the theft of the horses they had hidden in the ravine, but for various crimes committed in Kansas. In the Kansas Penitentiary they remain to this day.

Thus well rid of the claim-jumpers, McNeill took part of the reward the State of Kansas paid for their capture, and—bought the spade and shotgun. The rich farmer would be deeply offended if anyone should call him a sentimental man; but he never allows the tool and weapon to be mishandled, and I have a notion that if his handsome house caught fire he would save the spade and the shotgun first.

Senator Grab—A man called on me this morning and offered me \$1000 for my vote on a certain measure, but I refused it.

Political Jurist—Bravo! You ought to have the approval of your conscience. Senator Grab—I have; we finally agreed on \$2000.—Boston Post.



VIA WIRELESS.
"Yes, sir," declares the native, "the wireless telegraph system runs right over where we are standing."
Here a whiff of old rye comes to our nostrils, and we remark:
"Ah! and doubtless that is a message from some politician going to headquarters."
"Nope," corrects the matter-of-fact native. "That's the new distillery just over the hill."