

A WOMAN'S LOVE, OR FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH.

IT WAS growing very dark in the little church of St. Stephen, and the paintings on the walls could be but dimly outlined by the pastor, as he sat in the organ loft, turned half on the stool, his left hand on his knee, the fingers of his right idly thrumming the keys, and a look in his gray eyes that was not born of devotion or content.

He sat thus a long, long time; then turned with a sigh, and struck the prelude measures to "He giveth His beloved Sleep." Softly the music swelled out into the night, stirring the silence for a moment; then it ceased, and the pastor arose, and locked the organ, lingered a little in the lonesome gallery, then went down the stairs and out at the door in the direction of his home.

The figure from the chancel followed, "keeping at a distance. It stood looking at the lights in the parsonage windows, after the pastor had gone in and shut the door, and the face the moonlight toyed with was whiter than the moon's. It was the face of a girl, and it was softly and delicately molded.

The girl waited a few minutes; then, pressing both hands over her heart, as if to still its beating, she went up the steps and stood leaning against the door, waiting there again to gather strength and courage. She pulled the bell presently, and a young girl about her own age opened the door.

"Can I see Mr. Percy?" she asked. "I think so," was the reply. "He has come home with a bad headache; but he rarely refuses to see any one." Emma Percy, the pastor's sister, had been leading the way to the parlor while she talked, and motioning her brother's guest to a sofa, she passed out of the room, closing the door behind her.

"Do try and go down," she pleaded, patting the pastor's feverish cheeks, and looking coaxingly as she knelt on the floor beside him. "She is such a timid child, and she looks so tired and white. I'm sure she needs you sorely; and I'll shake up your pillows while you're gone and sprinkle them with cologne and—"

"There, I'll go. Kiss me, sister. I feel somehow to-night as I used when things went wrong at school and I could scarcely wait for four o'clock to come, that I might get in mother's arms and cry it out."

"Has anything gone wrong to-day?" Emma asked, anxiously. "No, nothing at all; it's all inside, little sister—all inside. But it rankles only the more for that."

"Poor darling," Emma said. Then she kissed the hot cheeks, and forehead, and watched him go down the stairs, and in at the parlor door.

"I do wish he would quit playing of nights over in the lonesome old church," she muttered, going back to the sofa and shaking up the pillows. "It's enough to give any one the horrors. Ugh! I should fancy the ghosts of the martyrs stalking toward me through the dark; and then—" She broke off there, and stood motionless for a minute, looking at the roses in the carpet, but seeing them not.

Meanwhile, the girl down stairs had been standing just where she was when the pastor entered the room—one arm on the mantel, her black dress falling in unstudied grace around a figure, perfect in its outline as that of a statue, and her eyes fixed on the face of the minister, who was leaning against the door, as though powerless to advance or retreat.

"Will you not come nearer?" the girl asked, when the silence between them was growing painful. "I will not harm you."

The voice seemed to break the fetters binding the pastor's body and brain. He went quickly across the room, a low cry on his lips, a new light in his eye, and with outstretched arms that would have folded the girl to his heart. But she drew back, putting out her hand, as if to keep him away, though the hunger of

her life was all over her fair young face. "Not that!" she said, huskily. "I did not mean that! I only wanted to see you closer—to hear your voice. It has been so long, you know."

"Yes, Effie, I know," the man answered. "God knows, I know! Do you think I have forgotten anything?" "How should I know, Royal? You have had much to engross you—your studies, your friends, your work. For me there has been but memory, and the scorn of the world to keep my shame alive."

"Don't, Effie! for God's sake do not talk that way, if you could know what I have suffered!"

"I do not want you to suffer, Royal," reaching out her hand as if to touch his hair, but drawing it back quickly. "And I don't reproach you; I never did. We stood together once in the shadow of the same moral wrong, praying for forgiveness, resolving to find the pure, white way, and with God's help to walk therein; and the world gave you its velvet palm, its smiles, and its support at every step you took, in every redeeming success you plotted and achieved, because you were a man—reserving for me a woman's averted face, and its hard hand upon my head, and heart, to grind me into the dust! and where all that while was the God you worship? I tell you, Royal, He was not—is not—blind, nor deaf, nor pitiless!"

She was quivering with emotion from head to foot; and the face of the minister was white and drawn, as faces over open graves. She sunk into a chair at last, and he knelt on the carpet and bent his head on her knee. "Effie," he said, breaking at last the bitter silence between them, and looking straight and honest in the girl's pale face, "you have suffered long enough. Be my wife. Let me make whatever of restitution I can. Give me a husband's right to protect and defend you."

"Three years ago you said those same sweet words to me. Do you remember my answer?" "Yes, 'God made you strong to suffer,' you said, 'even to the death; but never to dishonor the man you loved.'"

"And I say so now, Royal." The girl's voice was low and broken. "Do you think I came for that? Do you think I'd let you soil your purple with my dust? Do you know me so little, oh! my lost, lost love?" She covered her face with both her hands, moaning piteously for a moment; then she arose suddenly, pushing the minister from her, and walked a dozen times back and forth over the soft carpet, her hands pressed hard on her heart, and her eyes betraying the bitterness of conflict 'twixt love and duty.

The minister had gone to the mantel, and stood there, with his head in his hands, sobbing like a child. She stopped beside him at last, and put a hand on his shoulder. "Royal," she said, "Dear Royal!" But when he would have taken her in his arms, she drew back, saying: "Don't Royal! don't make my duty harder to bear than it already is. Tell me of your life a little till I grow calmer, and can tell you of mine."

"I know nothing of my life except its love for you!" the man answered, losing his self control. "I know only that you are my darling, wronged, forsaken; but here, at last, in my house, as you have always been in my heart, where, God help me, you shall always stay. Thenceforth, for its scorn of you, let the world answer to me!"

"You are wrong, Royal," the girl answered, quietly, "you are wrong." "Have you ceased to love me, Effie?" Such a smile as broke over the girl's white face. It meant so much more than a man could interpret. It was as if a voice from heaven had said: "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." But the voice was not heard, and the girl's lips were silent. Her sorrowful, struggling soul stood on a height of devotion his own might never hope to climb to; but deeds, not words, should prove it.

"Let us be seated," she said, at last. "I am not strong, and I want to talk with you; but, wait a minute," she added, taking a vial from her pocket. "I've not taken my medicine for a long time;" she lifted the vial to her lips, emptied it, threw it out of the window, and then, going over to the sofa, put both hands in the minister's, smiling and saying: "I've changed my mind, Royal. I think it would make me stronger for the journey I have to go, if my head could lie in the old place awhile."

"It has wanted you always, darling—and you never shall leave it—never, at least, to go out into the world unsheltered by my name!" From his breast where he had drawn her head, she smiled up happily into his face. Divinest content looked from her luminous eyes, but she did not speak. "I was thinking of you so much to-night, Effie, over at the church, where I go to play the old airs you loved once. I know you love them still, and

somehow, you always seem nearest to me when I am alone at the organ with the dark. To-night I could have sworn your breath was in the shadows, and that I heard you sobbing as you did the day we parted. I suppose it was because you were so near me, darling."

"Yes," she answered, "It was because I was so near you." "You have not seemed very far away from me at any time," the pastor continued, caressing the tangled brown hair, looking fondly into the girl's clear eyes. "A thousand times I would have given up whatever had to be given up and gone for you, but that you had forbidden it, refusing to let me see or even to hear from you again."

"It was for your own sake, Royal." "I know it was the grand selfishness of woman, shielding the selfishness of man! Oh! Effie, my darling, what have you not borne for my sake!"

"It was not for your sake only, Royal but it was also partly for the sake of the good you might do without me; for now you have position and influence, and are honored and loved, and all is as it should be with you. I am so glad of this. Remember always, dear, that I said I was glad because all with you was as it should be."

"Dear child!" said the pastor, tenderly. "And don't ever blame me for coming back to you to-night."

"Blame you! I bless you!" "Yes"—her voice was growing so soft and so saintly; she had turned a little on his breast, and one white arm had stolen around his neck; "and if I should die before you do—"

"Darling!" interrupted the pastor, lifting her head suddenly, and staring into her face, that was quiet and smiling, but very, very white "don't talk so!"

"Why, we must all die, Royal," she said nestling back on the old place; "And if it should be I go first—it might happen so, you know—I'd like to be buried close up to the church, so I could hear you play of nights!"

"Effie," moaned the minister. "Why, did I hurt you, dear Royal? your face makes me remember mine, as I have often seen it in the glass at auntie's. Auntie is dead, you know. No, she was always good to me, and when she went away, there was nobody left, so I came to you."

"And here you shall stay, please God—" but here she interrupted him again.

"I might have lived so long, and so well, I might have been a light in the land and a comfort to lonely hearts, as you are, if the world—or the women who govern it—had given me the chance to wash away the stain of that early sin, by repentance and goodly deeds. But they were so hard upon me! women are so cruel to women, Royal!" the words had dropped faintly from her lips; her hands had fallen helplessly, and her face had not a vestige of color, nor any sign of life, when her voice grew silent.

He laid her down quickly, and went to the door and called: "Emma! Emma!" then he went back, and was chafing the cold hands, and kissing the cold brow, when Emma entered the room. "Royal—oh, Royal! what has happened!" she said quickly, going to the sofa, and standing with locked hands, and frightened eyes, looking from one to the other.

But the minister did not answer. He had killed his darling, he was thinking, and what would the world henceforth be to him?

Effie opened her eyes and looking about absently, moved her shoulders, and settled back, saying:

"Preach, Royal, preach as long as you live, and tell women—the world to be kinder and more forbearing, to such as I!"

Then she was dead. Close up to the eastern wall of St. Stephen's is a head stone upon which is simply engraved, "Effie," and underneath, "He giveth his beloved sleep." And wherever there are hearts to be comforted and lives to be lifted into the light and the gone astray to be led back to the ways of honor and peace, there you will find Royal Percy, and his sister, Emma.

Equal to the Emergency. A STORY is going the rounds (says the Bombay Gazette) which is too good to be lost. A young sub-lieutenant left his regiment a short time ago on sick leave, and put up at the best hotel not a hundred miles from Poonah, where he was immediately smitten by the attractions of a lovely maiden who was staying there. He proposed, was accepted, and the happy day was fixed. The colonel, however disapproved of sub-lieutenants getting married, and particularly of the sub in question. As he happened to be a friend of the young man's father, he thought to prevent the union of the fond couple by sending a peremptory telegram couched in the following words: "Join at once."

The son of Mars was in despair. He presented himself before his intended

with the fatal missive in his hand and anything but a look of pleasure in his countenance; but the lady was equal to the occasion. With a blush of maiden simplicity and virgin innocence she cast her eyes on the ground and remarked:

"Dear me! I'm glad your colonel approves of the match; but what a hurry he is in! I don't think I can get ready so soon, but I'll do my best, because, of course, love, the command of your colonel must be obeyed."

The young warrior was puzzled. "Don't you see, my darling," he said, "that this telegram puts a stopper on our plans? You don't seem to understand the telegram. He says peremptorily, 'Join at once.'"

The lady's blushes redoubled, but with a look of arch simplicity she raised her eyes to her fiance and replied:

"It is you, my darling, who don't seem to understand it. Your colonel says plainly, 'Join at once,' by which he of course means get married immediately. What else can he possibly mean?"

A look of intelligence replaced the air of bewilderment in the young hero's classic features, and bestowing a regular fusillade of chaste salutes on her rosy lips, he accepted the explanation, and was enabled to answer the colonel's telegram in forty-eight hours afterward in these words:

"Your orders are obeyed. We were joined at once."

MRS. WITHER'S EXPERIMENT.

MINNESOTA happens to be excessively cold in winter; so cold, in fact, that the inhabitants are frequently unable to remember their own names. In spite of her youth, beauty and general excellence, Mrs. Withers was peculiarly susceptible to the influence of cold weather and suffered agonies from cold feet from the first of November to the middle of April. The Baptist meeting-house was a particularly cold place, and it often happened that after the end of the Sunday morning service Mr. Withers was compelled to carry his wife to the stove and thaw her out before attempting to take her home.

During the recent cold snap in East Bridgewater, Mrs. Withers suffered so severely that she came to the determination to try every remedy for cold feet which any one might suggest to her.—On Saturday evening, December 10, Mr. Withers being absent on a visit to Chicago, his younger brother, a bad young man, holding the position of Teller in the local bank, and noted for his fondness for sinful games of every description, called upon Mrs. Withers, and when that admirable woman bewailed the coldness of the Baptist meeting-house, told her that he had an infallible recipe for keeping the feet warm in the very coldest weather. He advised his innocent sister-in-law to pour half a pint of Cayenne pepper, mixed with two table-spoonsful of ground mustard, into each of her stockings, just before going to meeting, and assured her if she would try this cheap and simple prescription her feet would remain comfortably warm, even if she were to put them under the table with those of Hon. Charles Francis Adams. Mrs. Withers thanked the young man with a guileless gratitude that would have touched the heart of a brass monkey, and instantly sent the servant to buy six pounds of Cayenne pepper.

On the following morning, just before the church bell rang she used the combined pepper and mustard in accordance with her brother-in-law's instructions, and walked to the meetinghouse without any inconvenience from the cold. The service began, and though at first Mrs. Withers felt delightfully warm, she showed signs of uneasiness long before the minister gave out his text. Just when that eloquent preacher was well under way, he was stricken dumb with horror at the unaccountable conduct of Mrs. Withers, who suddenly began to dance in the wildest manner and to shriek "Take them off!" in the most heartrending tones. It was too late in the season for snakes, and hence the congregation jumped to the conclusion that Mrs. Withers had gone mad. The deacons promptly hastened to her relief but the more they tried to calm her the more violently she danced. Finally she broke loose from them, and tearing off her shoes and stockings fled barefooted to the nearest house. While the congregation watched her flight down the aisle and wondered whether she could break a hole in the frozen river large enough for drowning purposes, a sudden and unanimous desire to sneeze fell upon them, and for the next ten minutes the uproar was deafening. At the end of that time the minister dismissed his audience by an elaborate pantomime and went home firmly convinced that the days of demonaical possession and witchcraft had returned.

Girls who are not handsome hate those who are, while those who are handsome hate one another. Which class has the best time of it?

VEGETINE

HER OWN WORDS.

Baltimore, Md., Feb. 13, 1877.

Mr. H. R. Stevens. Dear Sir.—Since several years since I have got a sore and very painful foot, I had some physicians, but they couldn't cure me. Now I have heard of your Vegetine from a lady who was sick for a long time, and became all well from your Vegetine, and I went and bought me one bottle of your Vegetine; and after I had used one bottle the pains left me, and it began to heal, and then I bought one other bottle, and so I took it yet. I thank God for this remedy and youself; and wishing every sufferer may pay attention to it.—It is a blessing for health.

Mrs. C. KRABK, 638 West Baltimore St.

VEGETINE.

SAFE AND SURE.

Mr. H. R. Stevens. In 1872 your Vegetine was recommended to me and I decided to try it. At the time I was suffering from general debility and nervous prostration, superinduced by overwork and irregular habits. Its wonderful strengthening and curative properties seemed to affect my most morbid system from the first dose; and under its persistent use I rapidly recovered, gaining more than usual health and good feeling. Since then I have not hesitated to give your Vegetine to my most afflicted in-doorment, as being a safe, sure, and powerful agent in promoting health and restoring the wasted system to new life and energy. Vegetine is the only medicine I use; and as long as I live I never expect to find a better. Yours truly,

W. H. BLARK, 120 Monterey St., Allegheny, Pa.

VEGETINE.

THE BEST SPRING MEDICINE.

Mr. H. R. Stevens. Dear Sir.—This is to certify that I have used your "Blood Preparation" in my family for several years, and think that for scrofula or Cankerous Humors or Rheumatic affections it cannot be excelled; and as a blood purifier and spring medicine it is the best thing that I have ever used, and I have used almost everything. I can cheerfully recommend it to any one in need of such a medicine. Yours respectfully,

Mrs. A. A. DINSMORE, 19 Russell St.

VEGETINE.

WHAT IS NEEDED.

Boston, Feb. 13, 1871.

Mr. H. R. Stevens. Dear Sir.—About one year ago I found myself in a feeble condition from general debility. Vegetine was strongly recommended to me by a friend who had been much benefited by its use. I procured the article, and, after using several bottles, was restored to health and discontinued its use. I feel quite confident that there is no medicine superior to it for those complaints for which it especially prepared, and would cheerfully recommend it to those who feel that they need something to restore them to perfect health. Respectfully,

U. S. PITTELL, Firm of S. M. Pittell & Co., No. 10 State St., Boston.

VEGETINE.

ALL HAVE OBTAINED RELIEF.

South Berwick, Me., Jan. 17, 1872.

Mr. H. R. Stevens. Dear Sir.—I have had dyspepsia in its worst form for the last ten years, and have taken hundreds of dollars worth of medicines without obtaining any relief. In Sept. last I commenced taking Vegetine. My food digests well, and I have gained fifteen pounds of flesh. There are several others in this place taking Vegetine, and all have obtained relief. Yours truly,

THOMAS E. MOORE, Overseer of Card Room, Portsmouth Co.'s Mills.

VEGETINE.

Prepare

H. R. STEVENS, Boston, Mass.

Vegetine is Sold by all Druggists. February, 5, 1878.

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REMOVAL.

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from Front to High Street, near the Penn'a. Freight Depot, where he will have on hand, and will sell at

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F. R.—Blankets, Robes, and Shoe Findings made a specialty. JOS. M. HAWLEY.

Duncannon, Jan. 19, 1878.—11

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