

Literature.

A WOMAN'S HEART.

"Forgive me if I wound you, but what I have just told you must be final."

"Then this is indeed final," said Warren Blair, whose voice, so full of pain, belied strangely his cold, calm face.

Margaret Falkner bowed her head. But before he had reached the door she sprang towards him impulsively and laid both her hands on his.

"Oh! forgive," she cried, tears springing into her eyes. "I never thought in all my life to give such pain to anyone. Tell me that you forgive me if ever by word or deed I seemed to have done anything to make you care for me as you do care for me, and as I don't deserve, even if I were free to love you."

He bit his strong lip hard, and his strong hand trembled under her little gentle ones.

"See, I am unworthy; know I am unworthy; feel, I am unworthy," she went on rapidly and passionately. "Think that I flirted with you; that I tried to make you love me; that I would have married you just for your money—think anything you will of me that is hateful and vile, but don't don't suffer for me as you are suffering now."

He uttered an exclamation of despair, as he shook his hand free from hers.

She stood motionless where he had left her, with her eyes fastened upon the door that had closed behind him.

Then she walked slowly to the farthest corner of the room, and sitting there, she thought and thought so long that the twilight came and went, and it was almost dusk. She was frightened, horrified at herself. Who is it had said a woman is never so near to loving a man as just after she has refused him?

"I love Alec," she kept repeating to herself over and over again, as if to force it into her heart, which seemed to shut against it. "I have always loved him, always. I love him now. I shall always love him—Oh! Why does Warren Blair stand before me like a ghost, with that calm, still look in his eyes? Am I a woman or a weather-cock, that I should be twisted and turned in this way? Warren Blair is rich, rich, rich, and I am poor, very poor, and Alec is poor, too, we shall both be horribly poor."

Oh! why does Warren Blair stand there, always, always, with that white sad face! Surely I am not going mad. It's ridiculous, she cried fiercely, pressing her hands to her temples and over her eyes, as if to shut out the vision. "It's ridiculous. Why am I thinking about him so much? He'll soon forget me. If I had said yes to him he would have thought—I would have thought I was marrying him for his money, and yet if he were poor and had come to me, I wonder if my answer would have been different?"

And she shut her eyes and conjured up visions. These thoughts had evidently carried her very far away, for as the door opened softly, she gave a little start at hearing her own name spoken, and looking up she saw Deane standing before her.

"Is that you, Alec?" she asked irrelevantly, nervously, and half guiltily.

"How dark it is!" and she rang for lights.

She had never called him by his first name before, and she had not noticed that she did so now; but it made his heart beat faster, and when they were sitting beside the mended fire a little later, and had discussed a few trivialities, he bent nearer to her and said:

"I had not hoped to find you alone, but I am glad because I want to tell you something which, try as I must, I cannot keep from telling you, though every day, and all day long, I keep the thought uppermost in my mind that I am too bold. I am a poor man, I have no prospect of fortune, except that my brains can make, but they shall make one; and only now, it looks so hopeless, and it will look hopeless always if I have not your love to help me; but I shouldn't ask for it yet I know—Forgive me, forgive me, Margaret, and understand—"

"I do understand; but why, why have you come to-day?"

"Why have I come to-day?" he echoed. "Why have I come to-day? Because I couldn't keep away any longer, that was why—Don't you see, Margaret?"

There was a look of terrible fear in his face.

"I loved you yesterday," she said, slowly, looking away from him, "and I think I shall love you to-morrow—"

"Ah!" he said, bending and kissing her hands passionately. "But," she continued, drawing them slowly away. "I don't seem to be able to love you to-day in quite the same way. I have just killed somebody for your sake—don't be afraid, I shan't go to the gallows for it; those are the sort of murders that have nothing to do with the law—but while blood is red upon my hands I feel a sort of guiltiness—I cannot be so frank with you as I might be—do you understand?"

"Yes, I think so," he said slowly; "some poor beggar has not been as lucky as I hope to be—"

"That's it; now go, Alec—No, I will not give you a blood-stained hand, but come back to-morrow, and perhaps you shall have them both."

"Margaret, my darling!"

But she pointed to the door, and he

obeyed.

The morrow came, as morrows will, and with it Alec Deane. Margaret met him with her outstretched hands.

"Margaret!" he said, bending over them tenderly; and they talked as lovers will, and forgot all but their own happiness.

"And when, love, when?" he whispered for the third time—

"Oh, you impatient boy!" she answered, laughing. "Isn't twelve months soon enough?"

"Don't be cruel, darling!"

"Well then, six, will that do?"

He had to be satisfied, and so it was settled.

One May morning, when Margaret was busy writing pretty little acknowledgements to the senders of some presents, Alec Deane came in upon her in a state of suppressed excitement.

"I have some good news for you, Margaret, such good news!"

"Really?" smiling round at him, and going on with her writing.

"But it's like a fairy-tale, Margaret, and I hardly know where to begin. Well," he blurted out, "a nice old relative, whom I never knew existed until now, has died, and in doing so, left me his fortune, which amounts to half a million."

"Alec!"

"I knew, of course, in a dim sort of way, that I had relatives out there; but that there was any money, or I should be the lucky heir, or anything of that sort, never entered my head. Upon my word I can't realize it yet, can you?"

"N—o—"

"We shall be rich now, Margaret, just think of it, dear! And I am so glad for your sake, my beautiful darling. There is only one very awkward and disappointing thing about it to me, which is that they want me to go out there and see about some legal matters for which my presence is absolutely necessary. If they insist I suppose I shall have to go; but I shall not be any longer than necessary."

"You must go, if it is to your interests to do so, Alec; and, after all, a few months out of our whole lives will not make so very much difference, will it?"

"I was going to ask you, Meg, if you didn't think we might hurry it up, you know, so that you could come with me!"

"No; dear, no; we'll wait," and she kissed him softly on the forehead.

So the wedding was postponed, and the reason why was talked about with much interest for a day or two.

One evening about a month later, Margaret and her mother sat in the stalls of the Savoy Theatre to see Duse's inimitable performance of "Magda."

"Margaret," said Mrs. Falkner, when the curtain had descended for the first entr'acte, "there is a man two rows in front of us who puzzles me. He has seen us too, I know, when he thought we were not looking. I believe he is Warren Blair; you remember him?"

"Yes, mother," said Margaret quietly, but turning a shade paler as she spoke.

"He has altered very much surely, or my sight is getting bad?"

"Yes, mother, he looks much older but—he is coming to speak to us."

As there was a vacant stall next Margaret, Blair took it.

"Have you been out of England? Mr. Blair?" Mrs. Falkner asked. "We have not seen you for so long."

"Yes, I was called suddenly away a little over six months ago. My affairs in Wall St. went wrong, and the result is," with an indifferent smile, "that I am practically a poor man. The fortune of war!" he went on, with a laugh, but Margaret's little hand had for a second involuntarily found his.

At the end of the play when he had put them into their brougham, Mrs. Falkner said, "Now that your affairs do not keep you away, I hope you will not forget us?"

"Almost any day about half-past five," Margaret added softly, and it seemed to him pleadingly. And her voice sounded in his ears until he saw her again.

It was not long. The next day he came and she was alone.

She met him shyly, she didn't seem to be able to help it, try as she would to be different.

"Margaret," he cried impulsively, "Margaret, is it possible that after all these months you've changed towards me, you—Margaret. I worship you!" and he was beside her where she sat, and she was in his arms.

Then she thought, then she remembered, and suddenly freeing herself she rose with a terrible feeling of remorse.

"Oh! don't you know?"

"Know!"

"Yes, I'm engaged to Alec Deane—the wedding was to have been over by now—it's only been postponed—and we are to be married when he comes back from Australia."

She spoke rapidly as if it were a lesson learnt which she feared to forget before she reached the end.

His face was ashen pale.

"Woman," he said between his teeth, "then why, why have you let me come to you again?"

He moved towards the door.

"God only knows why," she answered from where she stood, very still, with her hands clasped tightly over her heart. "God only knows, but He does know, for He has put this great love for you into my heart. No, don't

come to me, I never really understood it until I met you last night, when you said you were a poor man. I was afraid it was your money, and not you; but, now that Alec is rich, and you are poor, I understand better. And although I have promised to marry him, he has not one atom of my heart. It is all wrong—I could never marry him now; but I will ask him to release me when he comes back, and although it will hurt him very much, still not so much as if I married him. I owe this to you, to him—and to myself. Then I will be your wife."

No! no! here are my hands—kiss them. Our hearts are together, our souls are together. We can wait."

Pithy Paragraphs.

By cultivating the mind we open the door to the soul.

Be as tolerant as the sunlight. There are a billion and a half of people in the world. Among this vast multitude, don't imagine God made you the only receptacle of knowledge. There are others.

The only way to feel happiness yourself is to give happiness to somebody else; and the more of it you give, the happier you will be.

Be generous. Give out sunshine. Forget your own petty personality. Don't let your imaginary troubles disturb other people. They imagine they have troubles of their own.

When I see a man who thinks he has religion, and yet is crabbed and miserly and unlovable and generally disagreeable, I conclude that he hasn't got the disease very bad.

A religion that will not make a man manlier, juster, more cheerful and more generous is not worth much.

If the average man had all he wanted he would be king of the world and everybody else would have to bow down on their eyeballs every time they came into the royal presence.

Twentieth Century's Dawn.

"The first people to live in the twentieth century will be the Friendly Islanders, for the date line, as it may be called, lies in the Pacific Ocean just to the east of their group," writes John Ritchie, Jr., in the January Ladies' Home Journal, of "Where the Next Century will really Begin." "At that time, although it will be already Tuesday to them, all the rest of the world will be enjoying some phase of Monday, the last day of the nineteenth century (December 31, 1900.) At Melbourne the people will be going to bed, for it will be nearly ten o'clock; at Manila it will be two hours earlier in the evening; at Calcutta the English residents will be sitting at their Monday afternoon dinner, for it will be about six o'clock; and in London, "Big Ben," in the tower of the House of Commons, will be striking the hour of noon. In Boston, New York and Washington half the people will be eating breakfast on Monday morning, while Chicago will be barely conscious of the hour of noon. At the same moment San Francisco will be in the deepest sleep of what is popularly called Sunday night, though really the early dark hours of Monday morning, and the Pacific will be wrapped in the darkness of the same morning hours, which becomes earlier to the west, until at Midway or Brooks Island it will be but a few minutes past midnight of Sunday night."

The Possibilities of the Catalpa.

The possibilities of the catalpa are attracting attention in connection with the interest now taken in timber culture. The hardy catalpa is easy to propagate, easy to transplant, grows rapidly and suffers but little from the onslaught of insects and diseases. It is therefore well adapted for timber plantations in localities where it does not winter kill. A good guide in the matter of climate is said to be the peach. Where this tree will grow it is safe to plant the catalpa. The wood is soft, weighs 26 pounds per cubic foot, is brown in color and makes good fence posts, being very durable. It is reported not a long lived tree, and the trunk in old age is liable to be decayed at the centre. The catalpa grows best in a rich, moist bottom land.

The Healthful Onion.

If one will eat a bit of cheese, a pinch of ground coffee, or a crust of sweet bread, directly after eating onions, they may not be afraid that their breath will be offensive.

Onions have medicinal as well as epicurean qualities. A cold in its first stages may often be broken up by a bowlful of hot onion bisque. Boil a pint bowlful of onions in water, changing the water three times. This robs them of much of their odor, and renders them safe for the most delicate stomach. When the onions are tender the water should be nearly all absorbed; add three cups of hot milk, thicken slightly with a teaspoonful of corn starch wet with cold milk, boil three minutes, season with cayenne and pepper and pass through a sieve, pressing all the pulp of the onion through. Serve while very hot.

For a brown soup, fry the onions with a pinch of sugar, dredge with a tablespoonful of flour, cover with a half pint of water and cook till tender; add a quart of hot broth and press through a coarse sieve.

Dr. Petty's Pills never fail to give relief, and they cure if given an honest trial.

Successful and delightful any girl may be, even though she cannot stay all day in the home. If it be her duty to be away, teaching in kindergarten or primary school, writing in an office or selling goods in a shop, she loses not a bit of her true worth in the household through her brave independence and her endeavor to relieve her parents of her support.—April Ladies' Home Journal.

Either morning or night is a good time for a cold water bathe or even a tepid one, but a hot water bath should be taken just before retiring, inasmuch as it is relaxing. Never bathe just before or after a hearty meal. Bathe after, instead of before, exercising, and bathe regularly every day.—April Ladies' Home Journal.

Per feet health is that condition of the body when digestion is so perfect that the physiological balance between the destruction and construction that goes on ceaselessly in cell life is daily kept normal.—E. B. Warman.

There can be no poorer soil for a child-plant to grow in, or to attempt to grow in, than the soil of pretense. To learn to conceal is a sorrowful lesson indeed for a child. To learn to conceal honest poverty, as though ashamed of it, is the most sorrowful of the sorrowful lessons in this line, for it is to so little purpose, and is unnecessary afterward.—January Ladies' Home Journal.

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