

Poetry.

AUTUMN DRIVING.

The Autumn winds blow wild and bleak, And scatter forth the golden leaves...

Literature.

Wronged and Righted.

[This is a serial of unusual merit and is by the same author as "Retribution" and "A Life Forsaken"...

CHAPTER V.

"I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU."

"It is false! It is false as your own heart and the facts that dared to utter so vile a charge!"

Adison Cheetham preserved an ominous silence, as if that point was not worth arguing. This very circumstance increased the interest of the listeners.

"What possible proof can you have of what you assert?" she questioned, at length.

"I have been to the Dove-cote," he answered briefly.

"You! Where is it?"

"About ten miles from here, in a little lane that leads to the right from Uppingham road; and Miss Radcliffe, let me assure you it is a dainty little nest for the blue-eyed dove who inhabits it."

"It seemed to Pearl as if the sun was laughing suddenly at her, and she was groping in darkness from which she would never emerge."

"He had been so precise in describing the location of the Dove-cote, that she knew there was a lane leading from the Uppingham road about ten miles distant; she knew, too, that there was a tiny cottage there, nestled among the trees; she had passed by it more than once, and she had seen it, and wondered whose home it was in that cozy nest."

these things, as you must have done, in order to bring them to me." Pearl's tones were very quiet, but intensely sarcastic.

"You need not swear to me at all," she interrupted, "I am not so foolish as to think that people are blind, but for heaven's sake, leave induced checks lying loosely about."

"I know you must have been prying into Richard Byrnholm's secret affairs, in order to have possessed of the money which you brought me to-day. But I am not to be deceived by you."

"No; it is identical with that in the memorandum book," she said, comparing the two.

"Good! I swear to you these checks have been tampered with. Now are you convinced—now will you believe that I wish to save you from a cheat and a villain—right and true, suppose you will recognize his hand writing on the back?"

"Yes; that was without doubt written by himself," she said.

"You identify it, then—you have no doubt of it?"

"No; it is identical with that in the memorandum book," she said, comparing the two.

"Good! I swear to you these checks have been tampered with. Now are you convinced—now will you believe that I wish to save you from a cheat and a villain—right and true, suppose you will recognize his hand writing on the back?"

"Yes; that was without doubt written by himself," she said.

Especially he had not anticipated any such straightforward proceeding as this on her part, and was not prepared for it.

"Then a look and vehemence of manner that braved the eyes, but her face bore a terrible fear was nearly driving her frantic."

"I swear to you," he began.

"You need not swear to me at all," she interrupted, "I am not so foolish as to think that people are blind, but for heaven's sake, leave induced checks lying loosely about."

"I know you must have been prying into Richard Byrnholm's secret affairs, in order to have possessed of the money which you brought me to-day. But I am not to be deceived by you."

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begone!" and she pointed authoritatively to the door.

Adison Cheetham shivered as these blighting words fell upon his ear; and then a wave of deepest crimson dye shone over his face, and the great veins stood out in ridges upon his forehead.

"As I like mine to be not a thing to despise," he said, through tightly set teeth.

"But Pearl Radcliffe did not deem his words even worthy of a reply. She stood in the same attitude, her delicate hand still pointing toward the door, her eyes fixed in a cold, contemptuous stare upon his.

"Why did you come to me with these facts? Was your motive for laying all this black catalogue of crime before me, she cried wildly, as she sank helplessly into a chair, and threw off her hand as if it had been a viper."

"You sent for me, did you not?" he asked, with a malicious grin.

"She stamped her foot angrily; hurt to desperation, she said, "I sent for you, because your vile hints and insinuations haunted me continually giving me no peace, and driving me wild with suspense. What are your wishes, intended motives in all this?"

"I have wishes, I have intentions, I have motives," he began slowly, while she looked on with a cold, scornful expression.

"What a wretch!—to plan all this simply because he won a paltry prize upon a school; somebody must win."

"I am not quite ready to do this interview," he said, quickly. "Evidently you consider what I have told you as of no consequence, or too wild to be believed."

that he must be shut away from all life and beauty, behind prison bolts and bars, and drag out a miserable existence, branded with a felon's doom.

But she could not so easily be driven away from her purpose. She lifted her icy hands and pressed them hard against her throbbing temples, while her wild eyes were fixed in terror on Adison Cheetham's stern face.

"You have dared to mock me with protestations of love," she said, in hollow tones.

"It is not mockery, I love you better than my own life," he replied, passionately, his heart leaping exultingly as he saw those signs of relenting in her.

"I will never do it—the sin, the mockery would be too dreadful!" Pearl cried, shuddering.

"He grew deathly pale at her words, and caught his breath hard.

"That is your decision, then—you will not love me?" he asked, in a hoarse voice.

"I have no right to be guilty of such mockery. I cannot ruin both our young lives—I had rather die!" she cried, wildly.

"If you should die, you alone would escape the misery of which you speak; Richard Byrnholm would still go to prison, he would never see you."

"Heaven help me!" he prayed, poor, distracted Pearl; then, like a hunted deer, she turned upon him, with more savagery than he had deemed her capable of.

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