THE CHIMES OF ST. MARY'S It was Christmas Eve. The bells of St. Mary's in the mountain village of Cloister pealed out the fact in joyful numbers. The hills caught up the clang and sent it back and forth in a thousand reverberations. Everything about the village betokened preparations for the morrow's festivities. The street on which the stores were located. was crowded, and foot passengers loaded with bundles jostled each other in good-natured confusion. Moving among these was one who was evidently a stranger, as many untrained to better manners turned and stared after him with rude cariosity. He did not seem aware that he was attracting attention, but manifesting that ready familiarity with the new surroundings which becomes second nature to one

wended his way as directly toward St.

of the walk and accosted him. "Can you direct me to the residence of Martin Fairburn?" he asked. The man reined the horses to a full

within, as the driver was slowly exer-

cising the horses in front of the build-

"Surely, sir, this is his team. He's within himself this minute," pointing

to the church as he spoke. The stranger smiled. "I thought I should probably find

him here. Is he training a choir of boys, or dressing a tree for the village children?

'Sure, sir, you're acquainted with his pleasant ways !" said the man; then boys this afternoon. There are visitors at the 'crags.' One of the young ladies sings like an angel. She's within, too. She's going to sing on the morrow.'

At that moment a Gloria, spng in woman's voice of rare richness and purity, rang out into the night, and without further question the gentleman stepped inside the half-open door. There was only one light burning; that was in the organ loft, hence he stood entirely unobserved and covered by the shadows. There were three persons in the choir, Martin Fairburn and two ladies. The soloist was in deep mourning, she had placed her bonnet on the railing and the long crape veil hung down over it. She was remarkably fair and there was an expression of rapt devotion on her face as she sang.

The stranger standing in the shadow, started. It was neither a new face nor a new expression to him. He changed color and stepped further back into the gloom. The Gloria continued. The stranger could not be said to be listening; he was looking intently at the organist who also was a lady. Once or twice he shifted his position in vain endeavor to get a glimpse of her face. Suddenly she turned and glanced toward the darkness where he stood. She was noticeably handsome. She gazed into the gloom of the shadowed corner persistently. The color sprang into his face, just a little smile curved his moustache. He knew that intent expression well, and the fine sensitive perception that could discover an un een presence. How came these two women to be at Martin Fairburn's in this quiet village in the Highlands He had known them at Nice. He had been desperately in love with one of them, when the other came between them with her heavenly voice and appealing manner. He had not intendhave beguiled a stoic. He had been more in love than he had thought, and the fine scorn of the words with which | girlish way. this one had left him, "diamonds are feel even yet the flash of the brilliant eyes that accompanied the words, they showed capabilities of such a flash now

as they peered into the gloom. It seemed as if she certainly saw him,

His first impulse was to return to the hotel and take the morning train, but the driver knew that he had en'ered the church, and Fairburn was expect ing him on the morrow; clearly he must fac , the situation. He was debating in his mind whether to do so guests boldly by going up into the organ loft and meeting them by the full blaze of a gas-jet, or to wait quietly and let the encounter have the softening bonefit of starlight. When the music ceased, for a moment there was silence, then gay vices first in the distance, then sound. ing clearer and nearer, until they were in the lobby, and then upon the door step face to face.

He was miserably embarrassed; they quite self-possessed, evidently having known of his expected arrival. Martin Fairburn was enthusiastically glad to see him. The widow gave him both her hands in greeting. He remembered afterward that he had also held Imogene's hand just one moment, and that it had been cold and irresponsive.

In looking back upon that ride to the it were. Do you understand? 'Crags,' it seemed like some dreadful nightmare. He remembered Martin Fairburn's natural joliity as hilarious and exaggerated. The widow's musical inughter as full of discord; the only lady, with them. I suppose she was thing about it was Imogene's with them at Nice?

he never knew how he deported Hirself. He was conscious that they situand at the hotel for his luggage. Executed as if the sleigh glided over

: "64 of hill country before they reachc : the Ornga.' When at last they the bad he had met Fairbarn's mother, leaving the room, had stepped out upon 1 45 been shown to his room, he the broad piazza. Through the wint This with a little bang of re- dow Russell could see her standing Li 13d was conscious of a boyish wish there in the starlight. He glanced at till 13 pover had to open it again. Fairburn who made one or two move-It is the smort immediately, for ments as if to follow her, but, as though Francisco L. If fored him to to con- on second thought, remained where he Cras Macortal g setings,

I've gone on just about as I used to. clear, and the chiming leapt from hill Mother bought this place about a year to hill and was multiplied until it seemago, and she and I have settled down ed as if it might come from a hundred just as well as ever, so I've hunted up seem either surprised or embarrassed all the boys for miles around. I've that he had joined her. Perhaps she trained them to sing like cherubs, and we've had ball matches and skating matches, and what not,' and he laughed gaily at what he knew to be his hobby.

Russell joined him. 'Aren't you ever going to marry and have boys of your own? he asked.

Fairburn shrugged his shoulders. 'I say, Russell, how lucky it is that you happen to know the two ladies. Mother met them at Saratoga last seaand lost her heart with them that is how they come to be here. The widow is wonderfully appealing. but Miss Adrian is surprising! She always makes me think of a shaft of who has seen much of the world, he light. I believe I'm more than half in leve with her, but she bewilders me so Mary's as if he had been in the habit that I'm not able to calmly analyze the of worshipping there every Sabbath of sensation, and determine whether it is his more than thirty years. By the genuine or not. How did she impress | she said. time he had reached the church the you, old boy?' His tone was intended bells had stopped ringing, and the to be fall of raillery at himself, but tones of an organ came out through the there was an element of earnestness in half-closed door. A large double-seated sleigh seemed waiting for some one

Russell winced at the question, but before he was able to reply Fairburn ing. The stranger stepped to the edge

'She's entrancing; but I think she would make a horribly uncomfortable wife. Somehow or other she gets pos session of a fellow's self-possess on. tell you the boys are safer. They never put a man in a flutter,' and he laughed gaily. 'But your toilet is all right; you look immaculate; let's go down;' he

Goethe has said that "Man is little and Fate is pitiless."

Russell felt pursued, pushed to the wall. He had not even a moment in which to collect himself, to get out of his nightmare. He followed Fairburn very stiff and unnatural.

sitting in the seclusion of a richly drap- days!' ed bow-window. Imogene was standing directly under the full blaze of a chandelier. She had unlirked the clasp of her bracelet, and was trying to readjust it. If her po ition had been studied, it could not have been more striking in effect. The gentlemen entered the room arm in arm.

"Diln't I tell you she was dazzling? whispered Fairburn, and he shaded his eyes with his hand as he looked at her, He seemed to do so involuntarily. Russell had natural elegance of manner; so despite his embarrassment, he went to her side and offered to take the bracelet, saying he was something of a tinker. She gave it to him immediately and stood watching him. His hands without glancing at her that she was

smiling. It made him desperate. trembles. Had you not better let me | Fairburn stays right here an l keeps his

He thought there was pity in her new friends. We never meet an old voice. He hated it from her, although one save by chance, as we met you he was conscious of pitying himself to to-night. Yet Imogene never seems bottom of his heart. Nothing bored!' would have induced him to give up; he even recovered himse f sufficiently summits of the hills to the upturned when he at last succeeded, to hold it | face of the handsome woman still inout open for her arm, although the tently regarding them. She did not touch of her round white wrist as he clasped it, was the undoing of him her sister-in-law was saying.

By this time the widow had come from her secluded retreat, leaving Mrs. Fairburn alone. The quiet corner that she had just abandoned looked like a haven of relief to Mr. Russell. He quietly sought it and devoted himself to his hostess. The widow looked a trifle piqued. Imogene smiled. Fairburn was insisting upon more music. ed to flirt, but this young widow could Mrs. Adrian allowed him to coax her a little, then went with him to the piane. She sang carols and jubilees in a light

Imogene sat directly under the chanrare, crystals are cheap and valueless," delier by a light stand, and rested ber stung him yet, over a space of memory | cheek in the palm of one of her white that covered three years. He could hands. She wore diamonds in her ears and on her hands, and they flashed and sparkled in the brilliant light. Fur burn stood by the piano, evidently not thinking of the music, but watching her with his hand shading his eyes again in although he knew that it was impossi- that involuntary way. Presently she ble, but he was nervous, and so stepped glanced toward him, met his eyes and

Russell, sitting partially concealed by the rich drapery, saw the smile. He had been talking over Martin's boyhood and his own quite cheerfully; now he suddenly became quiet.

Mrs. Fairburn was watching her 'Lovely girls, are they not? for Mrs. Adrian is nothing but a girl in years. It is so fortunate that you knew them.

Were you well acquainted! 'They were at Nice one winter when I was there,' was the evasive reply. They were very much sought after at Saratoga. There was one thing a trifle singular --- and Mrs. Fairburn

Russell did not ask her to continue. he was too well bred, but he waited attentively as if he expected her to, of

Mrs. Fairburn lowered her voice. 'I perhaps should not say so, but it always seemed to me as if Imogene gave her lovers to Mrs. Adrian, handed them over to be charmed by her, as

Russell bowed assent. He was indulging in miserable retrospection. 'They are spending this winter in

New York. They have an aunt, an old He again boxed in the affirmative.

It was getting late. Mrs. Farburn suppressed a yawn. The bells of St. Mary's were again ringing the Christ-

'It must be midnight,' she said. Imogene had heard the chimes, and

G freine Bantil, it same little After a few moments Russell arose of the state of th Charles the pleasant to take. Contain their own drapery swept Russell's boots. She Purgative. Is a safe, sure, and effectual proces you've sees everything; and piasm. The night was wonderfully had a two-year-old baby in her arms destroyer of worms in Children or Adults. Newcastle Sept. 29 85.

like old folks. I like the little fellows different belfries. Imogene did not had expected him to do so. Three years ago that very night he had stool with her at Nice, and looked at the stars and listened to the chimes. He had held her hands in his then. The recollection was so vivid that he could feel their thrilling touch that moment.

Had she entirely forgotten? Had she handed over so many lovers to her sister-in-law since then that the episode which had marred his life was effaced from her memory? Sue was gazing at the stars and the white towering mountains. She looked thoroughly happy and absorbed with her present surroundings. Suddenly she glanced at her watch; it was five minutes past twelve. She turned to him with a kindly expression in her luminous eyes. 'I wish you a 'Merry Christmas!'

He bowed in silent thanks. He was piqued. Sae should not so ignore the past. 'Miss Adrian,' he said, "it ives a man a regular sensation when he has closed a chapter under which he supposed 'finis' was written, to turn a leaf

derful confusion of sweet sounds. 'I love those chimes of St. Mary's!" she said, quite irrelevantly.

Yet he felt sure she had heard him Then Fairburn came out with his arm linked in Mrs. Adrian's. Th widow was silent and pensive for a with misty, half revealed lights in her gray eyes, that carried a wonderful fascination-lights that drew devotion as a magnet draws steel.

'It is just three years since we were all so happy at Nice! Do you remem ber, Mr. Russell? Imogene and I have Mrs. Fairburn and the widow were not forgotten. Those were haleyon

> We've seen so many people since then,' said Imogene, absently. Russell had been looking into M.s. Adrian's eyes. They were the kind of eyes that one naturally looked into. Now he turned toward Imogene; she was gazing at the mountains and at the stars quite as before they came out. 'Had he been to Nice since?' in the widow's low, musical voice.

'He had not!' the answer was short, almost sharp.

Imogene smiled; he was unconscious of it, for he, too, was gazing out towards the tops of the Highlands as if there must be something worth seeing there, or she would not look so intently. 'You have been wandering all over trem bled, he fought hercely to steady | the globe since then, Mr. Fairburn tells them, and bit his lip under his mous- us. We have been quite every place, tache until it pained him. He knew too, Imogene and I. At least it seems to me as if we had. I think it grows to be very wearisome," pathetically. 'You are nervous! My hand never | Then, after a moment's silence, "Mr friends. We do nothing but flit; always

> Russell glanced now from the white seem to be paying any attention to what past, and respectfully solicits a continuation

'I could not be spared to go roaming about. Why, what would these boys do? Besides what is to be gained? Can you tell. Russell?' said Fairburn; his arm was still linked in that of the widow's-he looked unhappy.

'She has got through with him and handed him over, poor Martin!' he thought, with a sort of fierce judignation at her; at the past, at life gen-

'Why, how reckless; you will all catch cold! Dear Mrs. Adrian, and you so delicate! Come right in!' said Mrs. Fairburn in a tone of concern from the doorway. They went at once. 'Well, at any rate St. Mary's has stopped chiming,' said Imogene. That seemed to be all that she had lingered for; all that she cared about. Nobody heard her but Russell. He felt very

Christmas morning broke bright and beautiful over the Highlands. The villagers and the people at the 'Crags' In the morning there were services in which the choir boys did credit to their leader, and in which also Mrs. Adrian entranced the congregation with her beautiful oice. The regular organist being present, Imogene sat in one of the pews with Mrs. Fairburn and Russell. She seemed to enjoy every mo ment, and joined in the services heart and soul. Russell watched her in sullen discontent. How could a woman who had spent years in handing over lovers for Mrs. Adrian to charm, weiship in that earnest manner. He began to have a silent distrust of every

'If she should ever meet a lover with whom this handing over process should prove impossible, that would be the result? he asked himself. He did it so pointedly that he had an uncomfortable suspicion that he had put the question aloud. But the congregation were reading a response at the time.

and no one heard him even if he did so. In the afternoon there was a festival for the children, and Martin Fairburn, for the time being, lost the unhappy expression which was fast settling on his face and devoted himself to his ittle friends with whom he was a grand pero. Russell watched him enviously.

Once having a moment's opportunity, 'Take my advice, Mart, and never look at any woman.' Fairburn clapped him garly on the shoulder. 'Helio, old fellow, has travel made you cynical? Or have you had an experience! Then with an effort still to be gay, though his voice hald an element of trouble. 'Look at these happy

intle fellows, -some woman, you know

is mother to each; suddenly he lower-'Russell, there are some women who ere not meant for that sort of lifeyou know what I mean, to be mothers and old-fash oned wives. They're not to blame. It is a matter of birth and position. They're wonde fully captivating and all that, out they would make uncomfortable wives, you know.'

and was feeding it on sugar plums. Both gentlemen looked as if they had been talking about her and had been detected in the act. She did not even see them, -she was absorbed in the child. Sie had never looked more beautiful. Furburn twitched nervously at his monstache. He was like a man who had been beaten in an argument, who had been forced to abandon a position. Imogene looked both wo-

manly and motherly. Some half-dozen of his young friends claimed him then. Women are riddles; I cannot hope to read them,' he said to Russell, with a vain effort for gaiety, as he went off with the boys. Russell stood a silent looker-on, taking no part in the mirth. Just a little way off the widow was holding spell-bound the pale-faced white-handed young minister, who had struggled all throu h the morning service to keep his mind and eyes from wandering to her face. Imogene had given the baby back

to the flattered young mother and was assisting Fairburn in starting games. Russel' suddenly realized with sullen discontent that he had been nothing but a "looker-on in Vienna' since that experience at Nice. This woman who had been the cause of his isolation took part in every pleasant thing that cossed her path, -in fact, took the principal part, for even now the boys were last forsaking Fairburn for her. Suddenly he took his hat and went out unnotice !. He walked the deserted streets until gas-lighting time. He knew the testivities were to close then. When he returned, apparently no one and unexpectedly find 'to be contin- | knew that he had been away. As a result of the quiet meditation in that The chimes leapt and rung in a won- | walk, the next day he told Fairburn that he had decided that it would never do for him to stay there selfishly enjoying himself for a whole week, when

for the New Year, he shook hands all round and left. He had a defeated feeling as he did so, and the feeling inmoment, then she looked at Rossell creased when he was seated in the cars and had time to think it over. [Conclusion next week.]

ne had not been near his relations in the city, who would never forgive him,

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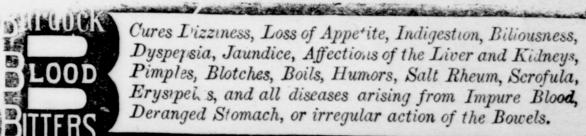
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