BY THE AUTHOR OF "WEARITHORNE, -"Is it the wind that moaneth bleak? There is not wind enough in the air

She had been leaning in her window, in the moonlight, watching the shimmer on the lake, the shifting of the chequered shadows on the white walks, and on the grassy slopes that met the with piteous beseeching in them, and as it passed into silence, unmindful of water. All at once a longing came to Christie hurried from the room, and her, to stand under the calm heavens, was back again with hat and shawl by in the quiet beauty of the night; and | the time her father had taken a look like the poet's Christabel, she stole into his portable medicine-chest, and softly by the room where her father was ready to go. slept; by the old dog in the hall below;

thought prayer came to her. If she three reached the bank. under the old oak, yet, as she sat there about him, but it was no time to ask if he saw you—if he heard you—all his on the garden bench, in her grey dress, questions, and in almost utter silence peace would be gone. And he has been with the gray moss shadows veiling her, | they were rowed across. and the small fair-haired head leant had been there, when some near sound brought them back upon a sudden.

grassy bank.

water. When Christabel turned her head, she saw a woman's figure in the stern, stooping and laying the paddle softly then into the doorless hall.

As in a dream, the girl looked on. she came swiftly up the low slope of | vants were all off, at the quarter." the bank, and round the oak tree—face

Just a moment, the two stood looking into each other's eyes in the moon-

Then the elder woman sank down with a shuddering, gasping breath, on the bench from which Christie had risen. She was still gazing at the girl, with dread in her wild eyes, when the girl put a gentle hand on her shoulder.

"Something has frightened you—"
she said. "Something has happened.

there that you were going; and can I help you?"
The beautiful woman leaned back there, so pale-leaned back, with her dark head against the tree, in a posture

more and more faint and helpless. Christie half turned, as if moving away

little rest-a little quiet--' Christie was as unsuspicious and as good and evil.

She laid her hand gently over the slim, sive charge into an easy chair. cold fingers on her arm. "Come home with me. There is no need to tell me anything. After you

have slept and rested, then indeed, if | day. you choose to tell us, and if we can

Christie was sorry she had put even that question, when she felt the cold gently to her feet and made her lean upon her strong young shoulder; and so they passed on, through the flowery shadows to the house.

per of the strangeness of it all.

It is then that Dr. March, a breath of this, comes to his description. Old Dash growled in an inhospitable

and taken up her candle, which, on going cut, she had left on the hall-table; should she ask the stranger to be seated in the parlor while she roused Maum Chloe, and bade her make ready a guest-chamber? But then, Maum Chloe was so slow, and the guest so

room with me," ventured the girl; 'and pulsively, under her breath,if we could go up stairs very softly-has sorrowful thoughts--"

many years, that Christie could only look back dimly through them at a shadowy figure gliding away through their haze, to the far spirit-land. Christie could not speak of the lost mother to a stranger, but when she glanced at her, she saw the beautiful dark eyes full of pain; as they lowered themselves hastily from

The look drew the girl's heart to her; she put her arm softly about her, and lightly as they passed the father's door. | with us.' dresses must have made itself heard. For there was a step within, and the door opened.

shudder that almost convulsed the slender figure leaning against her. The woman shrank back an instant, with that pallid terror staring from her face; then seemed to collect herself, and

think?

hands together with an agonized, im. Surely then there was no cause why ploring gesture. "You will go home she should be miserable. She could with me, Dr. March? I came myself to bring you, because I was half mad with dread-I thought I could be quicker-the servants might not find

said Christie, in her soft aside. "You will come-at once?"

He took up his hat, and then paused, as he came forward to the door. will tell me something of its nature, that the woman's conduct was strange Mrs. Macpherson, I could be better and purposeless, her words confused, prepared to render assistance."

said steadily,mistake for quinine. A heavy dose. I

slowly,—
"Your husband?"

amidst the trees, as if stealing away She wandered to the lake-side, under- would anyone wish, to harm one of from sight? And why was she glancing neath the trees, until she found herself God's strong angels out of heaven?" now at Christie in that furtive, half by the old oak where she had first met So the two pass in together, as the frightened, half defiant way, as if she Agnes Macpherson. dreaded what the girl might say?

then closed them again. For was it ing note in the far music had brought any wonder if the poor creature were her troubled thoughts of the singer; half mad with the grief and horror of vague wonderings if she herself were the deed she had done unawares? In the girl's remorse for that instant

"Would you come?"

undid the door and passed out in the | the room, Christie had taken thought | for the crossing of the lake, and had Did you bid me follow you here to say This Christabel too, like the maiden | sent her maid for boat and oarsman, so | this to me?" of the poem, had a lover with whose | that both were in waiting when the did not exactly kneel at her orisons | Dr. March cast an inquiring look

Up the steep, broken bank; across not only her eyes she lifted to the skies. in the worm-fence, and under the old | marry?

its six-feet stilts, had a spectral, skeleton look about it too; its great, rough hewn logs mortared with mud, its broad mud chimneys leant against the outside like queer conical buttresses; its doorless thought for any other, Agnes?" only the quiet dip of a paddle in the cross-halls making of each room a separate abode under a common roof. Its mistress led the way in silence up the flight of steps to the gallery, and

A lamp swung from the roof-beam, mine is dead!" in bronze chains, burning secure from It seemed to her a vision, that lithe, draughts in its colored-glass lantern, willowy figure, in the black clinging dress, the white face half shadowed by Macpherson's hand as she paused with sight of her step-daughter through the the long veil put back from it. She it upon the lock of a chamber-door. clustered boughs.

The same brand was flung on her brow

The shadow an

With that she turned the lock.

and carried the candle to the bed. The feeble rays, flickering in the gust let in by the open door, seem for but not to the dark figure standing in an instant to give movement to the up- the shadow near her. over the pillow only for a moment, then Nor, if you could know all, would you comes and takes the widow by the hand. ever call me that again?" "There is no earthly help can come o him-God's hand has taken him from our reach," he says, gently.

A moment's pause, and then,-"My Christie will take you away. I

the stranger put out a languid hand, and stopped her.

She never turns her eyes once on that and stands as when she entered, her hand The "Do not leave me—I—I have no never trembling, that holds the candle, the man let fall her two hands where the stands of the man let fall her two hands where the man sentence, sure of condemnation.

trustful as Eve before she ate of the the room, and never seems to heed, thing that I have ever thought of you. fruit of the tree of the knowledge of when the girl opens one or two doors, There is no more to be said. I need Here was one in need of help, of she finds another chamber, and half never be unhappy; having gained what helter of a night's rest and quiet. gropes her way until she puts her pas- you have planned and plotted for." shelter, of a night's rest and quiet. gropes her way until she puts her pas-Not a tear yet; not a word, save

Other neighbors have gathered by help you.—It is our neighbor, Nigel this time; two or three men to confer and act with Dr. March; and half a And then a stifled, gasping state of the away, save the cann half a help you.—It is our neighbor, Nigel this time; two or three men to confer and act with Dr. March; and half a score of curious women, compassionate women, wives who watch the poor fingers tremble in hers. She drew her young creature's bearing of her troubles, and who presently begin to whis-

It is then that Dr. March, catching

"Christie, we must have that poor gently, and he lay quiet again, but with lady away from here, or all this will his nose on his forepaws, blinking up kill her."

> Christie watches, there is-not a stir, me; for myself I do not care. Butbut a mere change of expression, a tense line about the mouth, a closer locking of the hands folded together on the arm of the chair; and Christie other man! Knowing, as you say, he
>
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The old, vague feeling of distrust

tone? She has stirred, she has couched She broke off there. She was think- her head upon her breast, looking at ing of her dead mother; of her father's the girl with a strange gleam in her

Christabel shudders-shrinks as if in pain; but it is as if she is under a spell, trembling hand and takes hold of the

young creature sinking under the pressure of such calamity as this!"

The girl cannot answer; and he says again, sternly, after an instant's pause, "The boat will be ready in an hour. How can I be sure his very life-so the two went up stairs, stepping | See that she is ready, too, to come

And so it was; the beautiful, miser- her at last.

For that she was miserable, no one could doubt. Christie least of all; not even when, a year and-a-half later, on | found out the mistakea fortnight engagement, she became a

knew it then. To others, this marriag seemed as fair a fate as could befall the young widow, to whom, when Nigel Macpherson's estate was settled, it was went forward a pace or two, resolute- found that nothing remained save the "Dr. March—it is Dr. March, I homestead, which the law present which she her, secure from debts, but which she homestead, which the law presented to refused to keep, since still the creditors evil from you. You cannot undermust lose. So she was going out penniless and friendless into the world, "I cannot tell." She wrung her when Dr. March made her his wife. hardly be so for the loss of a man who, all the countryside knew, was by no

go mourning for, all her young days. But Christie knew the bridal smiles were forced; though, when she gently tried to warn her father before it was too late, and he turned on her with a sharp demand for her reasons, she had no words in which to put her vague suspicions. What if she were to say that night she came here first; and that She was whiter than death, as she her eyes would sometimes seek her stealthily even now, with a frightened,

these reasons to deny a man his right them back into her trembling heart, There was a dead pause for just a and try to put a brave face on the voice-that reaches the gentle heart of breathing space. Then Dr. March said wedding-day. It was some comfort the girl. that her own was close at hand. It was just a week before the girl's her, and then she checks herself. She bent her head; it seemed she had own wedding-day; and the honeymoon had given place to another strug- father's honor, my father's life? And Involuntarily Christie shrank back a little from her, and looked at her as she stood in the doorway.

gling palely through the clouds, one evening, when Christie stole shyly out of the library where her father and her pale hand in the moonlight. A vague distrust crept over the girl. lover were beginning to touch upon "If I had known him as I know him If this woman had been coming for business. The girl did not go to the now," she says, "I would never have Flower Pots, Sponges, the doctor, why had she pushed off the dining-room, whence her step-mother's married him. Now that I do know him boat she came in? Why had she slun | voice floated out to her from the piano. | -Christabel, would anyone dare,

Perhaps some vague thought of her and it ushers in the morning of Christa-Christie opened her lips to speak, had led her there; perhaps some wail- bel's wedding-day.

leaving all well with her father.

of bewildered suspicion, she was saying the land of dreams; bright waking "If I, too, could be of any use or these, she sat on there, her head leant back against the old oak's trunk, her "Would you come?" happy heart unmindful of the moments as they went, unmindful of the music anything about her; until with a start, she heard a voice close to her say,-

In that moment of her absence from my husband will be waiting for me."

There was an instant's pause, and then her voice again: "I bade you follow me here because

so good to me, so good to me!" "Am I here to listen to an eulogy of back against the rugged trunk, it was the lonely road; through the rude gate the old man you have jilted me to

The house with one story perched on | "Will it do you or me any good, this errand of yours? This one thing it shall not do, so help me Heaven-it shall not spoil his life.' "His -his !-- and you have no "Is it not too late for any other?

asked the quivering voice. "Yours and mine were spoiled so long ago. Yours—surely it may yet blossom out

The shadow and the trailing moss she stepped out of the boat, and turned it round, bow outward, giving it with all her strength a push which left it at rouse itself to drift the light empty I had but one thought—to get across to still face, and does not know what she thing away across the lake. And then | your side of the lake. And the ser- ought to do. To sit still and listen is hard enough, but to go out and confront

> And if harm is plotting for her father, she forget that moment and that scene. | ought she not to know, so that she

What do you mean? What can you mean? I know you were entrapped into this marriage, thinking me

"You are wrong there. You do marriage. The first I was entrapped TRUCK-WAGGONS,

stands as when she entered, her hand There was an instant's silence. Then the man let fall her two hands which entence, sure of condemnation.

She suffers Christie to lead her from said, slow and cold. "Wrong in everyinto library and dining-room, before not wish you happy, such as you can

> after that rustling movement in the A silence long enough for all sound to die away, save the calm lapping of

> And then a stifled, gasping sob: "Happy-O, Heaven! Happy!" She came pushing through the brush, straight for the bench under the oak. And there stood face to face with

It is then that Dr. March, catching a breath of this, comes to his daughter slowly on her knees, and put her hands in a sudden heat, and draws her from together, not as one who pleads, but

halo on her golden head, might have But the kneeling woman makes no confession. "You have heard all," is what she

says in a low voice grown suddenly

"Because I loved that other man.

Because I would not stain his name by You know how guilty. I have seen

ately together. "My father, and he loves you." The woman's head droops lower yet.

"He loves me, and the truth would kill him." Then she puts out a and she has no answer, when her father | hem of Christabel's garment. "Yes, yes; I do ask you to spare me. Have

her with dread and terror in her eyes. "How can I spare you? How can I leave my father to your tender mercies? The wretched woman looses her hold of the girl's dress, lifting her eyes to

"You believe that? Perhaps, then, you have not known, after all? Ithe morphine was so like quinine. The mistake was not strange. But-when I

She has lifted herself heavily to her feet. She stands leaning against the great oak-tree whose branches over-head let down the flickering moon beams and by str assorted sto patronage. on her haggard face.

"When I found out the mistakeah, girl, you do not know what cruelty is; what terror, what hate-you in your safe home with your father, strong as the angels of heaven, to ward off stand what demon within me drove me forth from that man's bedside. Only to flee -- to flee as far as the ends of the earth-and with fear, mad with joy; for was I not free from him now at last? She puts her hand to her throat as if the laboured words were choking her'

Then, after that pause, faintly: 'I have often thought that even when I fled it would have been too late to save him. Your father told me once he must have been quite dead before I came here for aid, as he believes. But, what of that?" she says, with a long, shivering sigh. "I had the heart of Cain in my breast, which drove me forth that night, when first you met me

After a moment: have spared my father?" "Ah, he seemed so strong, so safe

and I so longed for shelter. You cannot understand. Only the misery in the low, broken She makes one movement towards

Zaw.

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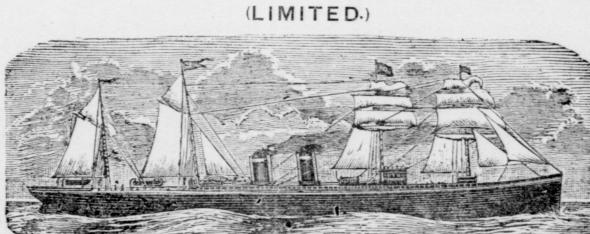
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To move away the ringlet curl From the lovely lady's cheek."

Just a light plash in the water; just the gliding of a boat's keel on the There had been no sound of rowing;

down in the bottom of the skiff.

to face with Christabel.

This road leads to our house-was it

to call some one to her assistance; but strength to tell you all to-night. A

undertone as they went by him in the the room. hall. Christie stopped and patted him suspiciously at the stranger. Christie hesitated when she had shut the door

pale and weary; and besides, so much stir in the house so late at night could not but make itself heard, and the lady somehow feels she in her turn is watch- would come back to claim you? looked so sorrowful and wan in the ed. "If you would not mind sharing my

quiet grief through these years past-so | eyes.

But there lay a level bar of light along the threshhold, and move softly able woman found her home at Fawnas they would, the rustle of their wood. "Papa-Christie said no more, for the strong

"Yes. Can I be of any service to

"It is Mrs. Nigel Macpherson, papa," "It is illness, I suppose, but if you

"I gave him a dose of morphine by yet defiant gleam in them? Were

weighed out twenty grains, as he bade to love? Christabel could only thrust

Never, so long as Christie lived, could

only that, "Dead-dead-And so it is, all night-half the next

The girl looks over her shoulder seemed a saint. through the open door-way. Mrs. Macpherson is lying in the easy chair, as she has lain almost without moving, since Christie put her into it last evening. But just now, while steady. "I do not ask you to spare

comes over her again, and she says im- taking it upon me, guilty as I was. "Not home, papa! Do not take her it in your eyes, that you have known papa is the lightest of sleepers of late— and it is sad to lie awake at night, one Could she have heard that smothered it from the first."

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> says, in slow wrath,-"This from you, Christabel! I could mercy, have mercy! Make me not a not have believed it. And this poor | murderer a second time!

second Mrs. March. But Christie was the only one who

means such a husband as a woman need

old clock on the stair strikes twelve,

But it was not far to wander into

"You can speak now, if you have anything to say to me. There is nothing to interrupt you here. But be brief; "Agnes, are you not needlessly cruel?

So far away her thoughts had strayed, gray-headed oaks standing up misty that she did not know how long she and spectral in the moonlight. "What is it you are here for?" she asked, in a low tone, cold as ice. asked, in a low tone, cold as ice.

> again-such things have been-but "Agnes!—my poor darling——"
> There is a slight stir in the shrubbery;

the mercy of such a breeze as might I must have been mad to leave him so. in the place, looks full into the white.

Mrs. Macpherson had struck a light | shall not go away and leave him to bear it alone ?" turned features. But Dr. March leans "Not yours, Douglas; not yours

will see that what remains to do, is not seem to know this is my second into believing you were dead; this sec-It is hardly a question, that one word ond, I planned and plotted for, for that shudders through the ashen lips. eighteen months, knowing you lived She never turns her eyes once on that and might come back to claim me after

He was gone; for a dead silence fell

And truly, the girl there, all in her cloudy white, and with the moonlight

"But my father. Could you not

"How can I trust you with my

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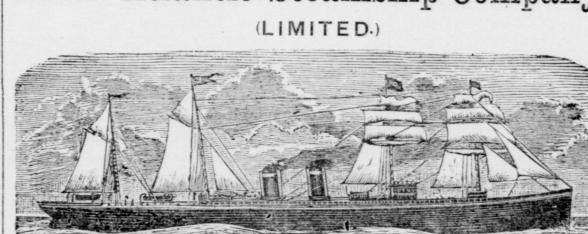
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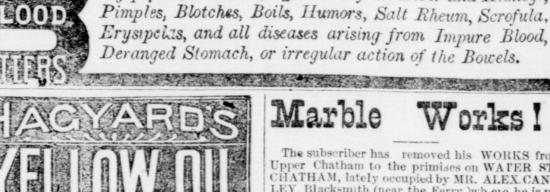
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