

## INFIRMITY.

What is the truth to believe,  
What is the right to be done?  
Caught in the webs I weave,  
I halt from sun to sun.

The bright wind flows along,  
Calm nature's streaming law,  
And its stroke is soft and strong  
As a leopard's velvet paw.

Free of the doubting mind,  
Full of the olden power,  
Are the tree, and the bee, and the wind,  
And the sun and the brave May-flower.

Man was the last to appear,  
A glow at the close of day;  
Slow clambering now in fear,  
He gropes his slackened way.

All the up-thrust is gone,  
Fores that came from of old,  
Up through the fish and the swan,  
And the sea-king's mighty mold.

The youth of the world is fled,  
There are omens in the sky,  
Spheres that are chilled and dead,  
And the close of an age is nigh.

The time is too short to grieve,  
Or to choose, for the end is one;  
And what is the truth to believe,  
And what is the right to be done?

## A MYSTERIOUS LOVE EPISODE.

"You mean, then, Trevor, that you have the serious intention of marrying this Miss Craigie?"

"I don't think, Cousin Barbara, that I ever mentioned the word marriage; before I speak of such a thing I must first discover if sweet Madge Craigie loves me."

"Sweet Madge Craigie, indeed! Fancy calling her sweet! Commend me to a man for being taken in by a pair of bright eyes and a silly giggle! No man ever knew yet who was his truest friend—Miss Craigie isn't yours."

"My dear cousin, you are prejudiced. Madge has lived a great deal abroad, and acquired manners which I will acknowledge do not exactly resemble those you are accustomed to see every day; but she is none the less true and loyal and womanly on that account, while she is certainly ten times more fascinating than most of the people one meets."

"Humph!" growled Cousin Barbara. Well, those who live the longest will see the most."

Then there was a silence, Trevor Lane, who was an artist, went on with his painting, and the middle-aged spinster he called Cousin Barbara sewed her white seam with much diligence as she sat in the sunlight on an old settle by the window.

Cross-gained though Barbara was, there was one being she loved with a deep, fervent devotion, and that being was Trevor Lane. And so she ought, for he had been the kindest of friends to her. Left at the age of fifty, without a sixpence, Trevor Lane, who was only her second cousin, had invited her to come and live with him and manage his house for him. This for the last five years she had done right conscientiously, both as regards housekeeping and the giving of such good advice as she considered a young man required.

Trevor Lane accepted both services with apparent gratitude, bearing the infliction of constant advice with so much resignation, even cheerfulness, that he proved himself to be a thoroughly good tempered fellow.

The fact was he was truly sorry for his cousin Barbara, who had, he considered, been soured by bad treatment in the past; and, though it was no fault of his, yet he was resolved, if possible, to make her life fair and happy in the future. Hence every cross he answered with a caress, every recommendation that he should alter his ways with a promise that he would be circumspet.

And so five years had dawdled on, and the summer at Heathfield, about ten miles from London, where Trevor Lane's studio and pretty home were situated, came and went with but few incidents to disturb the current of the cousin's ways—till Madge Craigie came. This was the evil day for which Cousin Barbara had never ceased to look—the day on which Trevor Lane would elect to devote to another some portion of the love she wished to appropriate wholly to herself.

"Trevor was not yet thirty, how could she expect it to be otherwise?" she would ask herself, repeatedly. Then she would shake her head and mutter: "If I could only like her; but this Madge, this flighty, silly Madge—to marry my Trevor! Ah, me!" Cousin Barbara failed utterly to recognize that whoever the girl was on whom Trevor bestowed his affection, she would consider her objectionable and displeasing.

For a long while there was no sound heard in the studio save the flies buzzing on the window panes and the old clock ticking on the mantel-shelf. Trevor himself at last broke the silence.

"Madge is coming here this evening, Cousin Barbara—you will be civil to her for my sake will you not?"

Miss Barbara looked up suddenly and saw the light of love in Trevor's flashing eyes, the glow of a deep passion on his handsome face, and the sight of it seemed to chill her heart to be.

She answered coldly: "Miss Craigie wants no warm words from me; since you can utter them so glibly it is enough; but for the last time I say—beware."

Trevor Lane went on working deliberately at his picture; and Miss Barbara huddling up the white work on which

she was engaged into a bundle, escaped with it into her own apartment.

When this scene took place the afternoon was already pretty far advanced, and the month being May, it was not very late when the sun finally departed behind the western hills. Trevor could no longer see to paint, but he lingered on in the studio, gazing dreamily at his picture till it was nearly dark.

At last he shook himself back into reality, and raising some portieres which divided the studio from the dwelling-room in which he and Barbara usually sat, he went in, struck a match and lighted a lamp which stood on his own particular writing table.

"I wonder if she will come—I almost hope she will not. Till this prejudice of cousin Bab's is overruled I must try and keep her from the house. I would not for worlds that she should know that Bab has taken fancies into her head about her."

And, half murmuring his thoughts aloud, he proceeded to answer two or three business letters which had arrived during the day. One of them necessitated reference to some old papers, and, taking a key from his pocket, he unlocked the side drawer of his table and began to look for the documents he required.

So absorbed was he in his search, or the subject that caused it, that for the time Madge Craigie and the trouble with Cousin Barbara was forgotten.

It was not till a light hand was laid on his shoulder and a rippling laugh fell on his ear that he looked up from the open drawer into the sweet face of the lady who had bewitched him.

"Is this what you call meeting me by the garden gate and bringing me in to tea with Cousin Bab? Look you, sir, I have a mind to be very angry."

"Not with me to-night, sweet lady. I have had much to trouble and vex me—a letter here which gives me endless worry. Beside, Cousin Bab has gone to bed—she is not well."

"Gone to bed! Oh, then, I ought not to have come, I suppose."

"Since you are here, however, you will not go. Let us chat together for a little; later on I will see you home."

And he rolled an easy chair to where she stood and invited her to sink down into its softness, for Trevor Lane was a sybarite in his home. Madge Craigie obeyed him, and, tossing her straw hat from her head to the ground, lay back among soft cushions—her golden, wavy hair and white skin forming a striking contrast to their crimson hue.

For a moment or two he sat and gazed at her in mute admiration, till her merry laugh recalled him to himself.

"One would think that I am a picture—a lovely picture—," she said, instead of—

"So you are a picture—a lovely picture—the embodiment of my perfect ideal. Say, Madge, beautiful Madge, will you be my own, my wife, my very true, devoted, loving wife?"

She looked into his eyes, still laughing.

"Dear me, what an amount of truth and devotion and tenderness you seem to require. And pray may I ask how much you intend to give in return?"

"My thoughts by day, my dreams by night—everything I have shall be yours if only you will consent. My dearest Madge, do not keep me in suspense, but tell me—"

"Stop your rhapsodies, foolish man! Believe me, I am not worth them. I'll acknowledge, however, that I am rather fond of you, perhaps on account of the spontaneity there is about you. Hope it will last, though—there, don't gush again. I believe you'll try and be true to me, and—with more seriousness of manner—"I will never be false to you."

He tried to take her in his arms but she repulsed him gently, bidding him be rational and discuss their future prospects calmly, and so, for awhile, they did, no illusion being made to Cousin Barbara, or the part she was likely to play in their lives.

On a sudden Madge's eye fell on the open drawer.

"Wilfrid Lane!" she exclaimed pointing to some papers on which that name was written. "Wilfrid Lane? is he a relation of yours? How odd I should never have thought of that before."

"Why? Do you know him?"

"I know Wilfrid Lane! As well as I thought he were my own brother."

"How strange! He is my half-brother."

"Yes, he is much older than you are. When did you see him last?"

"I have not seen him for seven years."

"Ah! of course; he is always abroad. But you go abroad sometimes; why not to see your brother?"

"There have been family differences, Madge."

"Oh! It will be awkward when we are married if I may never see Wilfrid. I wonder what he will say when he hears that I am going to marry you."

A sort of a shiver passed over Trevor Lane.

"My brother Wilfrid is scarcely the sort of man with whom I should care for my wife to be on intimate terms," he said.

"Oh, yes, I know he is a vaurien, but that can't hurt me, and he is very amusing. Quite a treat to see his dear old handwriting in your drawer."

"He ruined Cousin Barbara—that's why she is here," persisted Trevor.

"Very likely. He ruined my father and my father ruined him; that's why I am poor. Yet I owe him no grudge. Trevor; why should you?" and once more she looked into his eyes with that strange mesmeric power she had, which set every nerve in his body vibrating.

And from talk of Wilfrid Lane they drifted back once more to themselves and their own affairs, murmuring to-

gether softly in the light of the pale moon, which had risen and cast a magic spell over the scene; broken at last, however, by a little scream from Madge. "What is it? I heard something moving. Is it a bogey or Cousin Bab?" "Cousin Bab!" And Trevor, indignant lest Bab should have been listening, went through the portieres into the painting room, the moon, as it were, followed him.

"No one to be seen—on into the garden he passed. Barbara was in her room; he could see the reflection of her form on the drawn blind. Instead of returning to the spot where he had left Madge he walked down the garden and called her to come to him. "The night was so beautiful, the moon so bright," he said, "it was better there than indoors."

From the garden they strolled into an adjoining wood, along a pathway leading to the village where Miss Craigie dwelt. The vicar was her uncle, and she was on a visit there for a while. Nor did they come back to Trevor's cottage that evening; on the contrary he went into the vicarage and stayed talking to the vicar till past 10 o'clock.

How he should tell Barbara that he was absolutely engaged to Madge Craigie puzzled him not a little during his walk home, and probably would have engrossed him even more had not his thoughts been diverted from it by almost a feeling of annoyance that his Madge should be on friendly terms with the half-brother whose very name was never mentioned in Heathfield Cottage.

When he reached home all was silent as the grave; the glass door leading from the sitting-room to the garden was ajar, as Miss Craigie had left it when she joined him, the lamp was still burning on the writing table, everything was as she had left it. No—the draw was still wide open, but the papers had been touched. He noticed it at a glance; those which had attracted Madge Craigie's attention, with Wilfrid Lane's name on them, were gone.

Pearly drops burst forth on Trevor's brow as he perceived it, and staggering into the seat which Madge had but recently quitted, he remained there for a time immovable. What did she know of Wilfrid Lane was the question he asked himself over and over again. Were the details of this man's shameful past known to her—had she ought to do with them? Could it be possible that she had made the excuse of sending him away in search of bogies, while she possessed herself of letters and documents inculcating Wilfrid Lane? No—the thought was madness.

Yet the papers were gone, and that they did inculcate Wilfrid Lane very heavily there was little doubt, since more than one of them was a forgery of his half-brother's name, and it was by the holding of them that Trevor succeeded in keeping the vaurien out of England, and his own hearth and home in peace.

Cousin Barbara's warnings against Miss Craigie rose like spectres into his mind, and would not be chased away, let him struggle as resolutely as he would. Madge and none other had been in that room, and the papers were gone—the case was conclusive. And he had promised to marry this woman! What should he do! Go to her as soon as possible, accuse her straightforwardly of the theft, demand the return of the stolen papers, and then spurn her image for ever from his heart.

That was the decision he arrived at while he sat gazing at the open drawer, and the clock struck four before he attempted to go to bed.

To bed, but not to sleep; and when he met Cousin Barbara at breakfast he looked pale and haggard, and was very silent, while Bab grumbled away in her usual style over the thousand and one petty annoyances which she managed to find at every turn.

At last Trevor rose and took up his hat.

"Going out, Trevor, instead of to work?" He leaned over her and kissed her. "Ay, only for a little while, dear cousin. I shall soon be back, and we will have some long hours together in the painting room."

"Yes—silent hours, while you are dreaming of that Miss Craigie's false, bewitching face. You'll rue it, Trevor—you'll rue it, as I'm a living woman."

"He was gone, but her words followed him all through the woods; seemed to be echoing through the leaves."

In the vicarage garden stood Madge, fresh and pure and lovely looking, in the daintiest of blue muslins. She kissed her hand to him when from some distance she perceived him, and he scarcely returned the salutation as coldly as he intended, for at the sight of her more than half of his suspicions seemed to disappear.

Her love a sham, her kisses but to betray? Could woman be so false?

"Oh, Trevor," she cried out when he was within hearing, "such glorious news I have for you. Your brother Wilfrid has not so utterly ruined my father as was at first imagined! Some of the property is saved, and I shall have a dot, and not come to your home an utter beggar."

"I do not want money," answered Trevor, scarcely graciously. "I have enough for both."

"Why, Trevor, what has happened. How gloomy and stern you look."

"Something has happened which has upset me exceedingly. Those letters—Wilfrid's letter, that you saw in my drawer last night—are gone," and he looked at her fixedly while he spoke.

"Gone—what do you mean?"

"Some one has taken them away; do you know who it is?"

"Trevor, you frighten me—don't glance at me like that—but tell me—whose interest would it be to take them? What are they about?"

"I am afraid you know too well what they are about."

"If Why, it is only last night I discovered that Wilfrid Lane was your brother."

"Ah! You are a good actress, Miss Craigie."

"Trevor—great heaven, Trevor—you do not believe that I—oh, this is too absurd!"

"You know nothing of the disappearance of those letters?"

"Nothing, upon my word; as I stand here a living woman, I swear it."

He shook his head; her very determined assurance made him doubt her more, and he turned away.

"Alas, Miss Craigie, that I should live to say it, but till those letters are found I can enter into no further engagement. Robbing me of them could be the act of no common thief, attracted by an open door; other valuables which were in the room have not disappeared."

"As you will," she answered, bowing her head proudly. "If you can believe this of me, it is indeed better that we should part."

And so, as Trevor had promised, in less than an hour he returned to Barbara in the studio; but during all that day, and for many days to come, both the conversation and the painting went on haltingly.

Miss Craigie he did not see again, and report said she lay ill at the vicarage; but this report did not reach Trevor or Lane, since he never went out of the house now; and so no one but his cousin Barbara heard it, and she, in her gruff, rough way, said: "It was wiser to let sleeping dogs lie, and make no allusion to Miss Craigie, with whom it was evident that Trevor had quarreled," though he had never vouchsafed to tell Barbara about the letters. He did not care to allude to them, for one reason, and he thought their loss might worry Barbara for another.

Heavily the weeks passed by, and the autumn tints were mellowing the trees in the little wood. Madge Craigie had left Heathfield, and already the episode of her love passages with Trevor Lane were forgotten. Forgotten by all but him; he could never forget the vision of beauty that had crossed his path and changed so speedily into a hideous spectre.

No, he would never marry now. So he had told Barbara more than once of late, and a smile had for a moment lighted up her wrinkled, soured face at his words.

Toward the end of October a change came to the everyday routine of Heathfield Cottage. Barbara fell ill. Seized with a paralytic stroke, she lay speechless and powerless. The grand doctor Trevor sent for from London said she might rally, but it was doubtful; at all events she would never be the same again.

The solicitude and devotion Trevor showed her was rather that of a son than a cousin, forsaking even his beloved painting to remain by her bedside and minister to her every want. But content was not one of her acquisitions, and she kept up her character for fretfulness to the extent of trying Trevor's patience not a little. There was evidently something she wished to say, and that her loss of speech prevented, and Trevor's repeated recommendation that she should remain quiet till she was better, only served to annoy her.

He was sitting with her at the wane of the day, the room only lighted by a feeble gleam of departing twilight, and an occasional flicker from a wood fire Cousin Barbara made a strange, unearthly sound, and pointed with the forefinger of her left hand to an old bureau which stood in the corner. Trevor took little notice at first, but she was so persistent that at last he rose and unfastened the bureau. Its carved doors shut in rows of small drawers, one after another. He opened several of them, but found nothing, and was beginning to think that he was merely the victim of a sick woman's caprice, when on a sudden he uttered a cry. There, in one of them, was the bundle of documents marked Wilfrid Lane.

He turned and glared on the woman who lay in the bed looking at him almost piteously. It was the first time Barbara had ever seen anger against herself expressed in Trevor's eyes, and she covered beneath it, closing her own, and pulling the bedclothes over her face.

He did not attempt to speak to her, but taking up the letters walked out of the room, called the little maid of the establishment, and bade her go to her mistress. Then, the letters still in his hand, he put on his hat and went out.

Poor, wretched Barbara; her punishment, when they told her she was gone, was almost more than she could bear. He had never forgiven Madge Craigie when he believed her to be the thief, how then could Barbara hope to be forgiven.

All that night he did not return, and during the next day there was no sign from him; the servants and neighbors did the best they could for Barbara, who was so quiet and enduring and patient that they all believed the end must be very near, since no one had ever seen her so subdued before.

Twenty-four hours had passed since Trevor Lane went away with the letters when a London hansom drove up to the garden gate, and he, himself got out, accompanied by Madge Craigie.

She looked very ill and wan, and was by no means the handsome Madge she had been five months ago; still there was a bright expression in her eyes which looked like rapturing happiness. Trevor led her straight up stairs to

Barbara, whose agitation on beholding her was painful to witness, but Madge knelt down beside the bed, and taking the old woman's hand, she kissed it gently.

"You loved him so well you grudged him to me, did you not, poor cousin? Well, he has promised for my sake to forgive you, and together we will try and nurse you back to health, and you will on your part try to love me just a little."

Barbara nodded her head in assent, and the doctor coming in at that moment ordered no more talking, so the lovers, restored to bliss in each other's society, went down stairs into the studio, and the old lady, with a load taken off her mind, was left by means of one of the doctor's draughts to have a few hours of quiet sleep. Nor did cousin Barbara die. She fought vigorously with death for a day or two, and for a while she succeeded. She would never be able to speak quickly or sharply again, but she managed to make herself understood, and in expressing her deep contrition for the past she kept her word when she said she would always be gracious and pleasant to her new cousin in the future.

So Trevor and Madge were married. Of course Barbara had to give up the housekeeping to the young wife; but she still kept her place in the studio window, though the white work was no longer on her lap, and instead of it the powerless right hand lay on her knee as though seeking strength in the sunshine.—From the Argosy.

## The Diet of a Monkey.

Herald of Health.

Dr. Allison, a London physician, has been making experiments on a monkey. He says: "Some time ago I bought a rhesus monkey, intending to study his habits. He is about eighteen inches high, and tame. I feed him with the same food I take myself. He likes fruits best of all; raw grains and cooked vegetables and potatoes next. He prefers his potatoes without salt and his rice without sugar. Peas and beans he will not eat unless very hungry. He always eats with his hands, the same as the Turks, and as he does not wash them beforehand, he swallows much dirt. When I give him hot food he has to wait until it cools before he can eat it, or before he dare thrust his hands into it. I tried this plan a few times with my porridge and stews, and had to wait before I dare finger them. I thought that if mankind were forced, like my monkey, to eat with their fingers, that we should not damage our teeth and stomachs with hot foods, nor should we indulge in soups. Soups are very good for exhausted people, but not good for persons in health, as they are not so easily digested as more solid articles; in fact, the superfluous fluid they contain must be absorbed before digestion goes on. Every food I offered him was first of all smelt of, and then if the smell was agreeable, he ate it; if otherwise, he threw it down. If mankind would always be guided by the sense of smell we should eat less rotten cheese, high game, etc., than we do, and consume more delicious fruits, whose aroma naturally attracts us. He is also a nose breather, and I never saw him breathe once through his mouth—another good example which mankind might follow with benefit, as we naturally are nose breathers."

## A Fishy Shark Story.

A Florida pilot tells big stories of the sharks which abound in the sea between Pensacola and Fort Pickens and the unfortunate sailors and soldiers they have eaten up. "I'd just as soon try to swim a lake of red hot pitch as to swim over from Pensacola to Fort Pickens." The sharks would be sure to get him. I've seen 'em moving around on the bottom like a drove of hogs. They generally swim slowly when not chased, but they can work up a tremendous race when they are chased, and I've seen one jump twenty feet in the air." He further remarked: "Some time ago a Spanish gunboat dropped in there and the officers amused themselves with shark fishing. They had quite a circus. They would take a small dynamite cartridge, bind a piece of pork to it and fix it to a float and wire and send it 200 feet astern. Pretty soon a shark would take it and they would fire, and the fish would fly into a thousand pieces. If one was wounded the others went for him and ate him up."—Boston Journal.

## The Dome of St. Peter's.

An important piece of work has just been brought to a successful conclusion in Rome, in the complete renewal of the leaden envelope of the dome of St. Peter's church in Rome. It has occupied twelve years, and has cost over 200,000 lire, about \$40,000. The original covering was applied to the dome in an imperfect fashion, which made continuous repairs a necessity, and at last it was determined to strip off the whole envelope and substitute a new one on a better system. New lead was imported from Spain and mixed with the old lead in the proportion of one part of old to two parts of new. The total weight of the new cover is given at 354,305 kilograms, and if it were spread out flat it would occupy an area of about an acre and a half. In stripping off the old plates three of them were found to be of gilded copper.—Brooklyn Eagle.