

ROSAWOND'S BOWER.

Love was everything to Margaret Mercer—love and home. She was such a very woman in the heart of the matter, I doubt if she had any ambition. "I wish to be great, to be known of all the world, to be very wise or learned, never entered her simple mind; but one thing she hoped and labored for with all her might—to be mistress of her husband's heart, and living queen regnant in his home. Such a home as she made of it, so—so bright in every nook and corner—so bright as she was with her fair, smooth face, smooth as a pearl, together with her eyes, as they gazed together before the pleasant fire on the first evening after the governess's coming. "And it is hard for any woman to earn her bread among strangers; let us be very good to her."

"She is so lonely, my dear," said Margaret, looking up into her husband's eyes, as they gazed together before the pleasant fire on the first evening after the governess's coming. "And it is hard for any woman to earn her bread among strangers; let us be very good to her."

"You could not help being good to any one, Margaret," said Matthew, "and I will try; but I must not quite make love to her—oh, Maggie?"

Then the wife had turned and kissed him. "I should be jealous, and put poison in a bowl of coffee, and offer her the serpent as one of my sharpest razors," she said, laughing.

That was in December. One day in June Margaret walked a little thoughtfully among the roses in the garden, and wondered whether it might not be that she was a little jealous.

"So wrong of me," she said to herself. "Matthew is only kind to Elsie." A tear trembled on her eyelash, and at last she sat down upon a bench and fairly sobbed aloud, telling herself all the while how much she loved him.

now after five years of labor—ten years in which no word had ever come to her of the man she had loved so fondly and who had so wofully broken the vow he uttered, to cherish and protect her while life should last—Margaret began the first picture which went beyond mere professional skill in which action and expression, rich draperies and knowledge of the costumes of the past were needed; a picture of Queen Eleanor in Rosawond's bower. It was an illustration of an old ballad which told the tale; and Rosawond was wondrous fair, and the Queen mightily stern and cruel; if the poet were to be believed; but, as she painted, that which slept within her soul found utterance.

Rosawond, beautiful indeed, had a face as false as it was fair; and Queen Eleanor's eyes held in their depths a look of such reproach that one might see she was an injured wife; and the bowl was at Rosawond's lips; and upon the wall above her bowed a portrait of the portrait of the King. Margaret did not mean it; but as she painted hard and fast through the long summer days, the faces that grew upon the canvas were portraits.

Rosawond was Elsie Grey; Eleanor had her own features; and the portrait of the King upon the wall was that of Matthew Mercer. Margaret's children watched her as she painted; the boy of 16 and the girl of 14, and the younger boy who had never seen his father.

"The elder boy said nothing for a while. At last he muttered, 'She's pretty enough, that girl, but I don't like her like I do.' I know some one. Who was it? The King is like what I'll be when I get a beard."

Then Margaret knew what she had done. She had her children out to walk, and looked the door. Then she stood before her easel, struggling with herself.

"The woman within her said, 'Dash your soul at it; paint it out, for you have written down your life history.' The artist said, 'Let it stand. What though it wrings my heart to look at it? It is the best thing I ever painted.' The woman looked upon the false face of Rosawond and the beautiful portrait of the King, and cast herself down and wept. The artist arose, and saw the gloss upon the golden hair, and the ruddy light upon the white neck, and purple velvet, soft as though one could lift it in its folds; saw the flesh-like flesh—the shadow, like the real light and shadow—saw power and feeling in the picture, and smiled through her teeth.

For the first time she understood that love was not all of life. For the first time she stood proud and ambitious, and hopeful of fame and desirous of it; and this before the record of her life, and with the beautiful faces of her false husband and his love, created by her own pencil, looking down upon her.

"You have not asked me to forgive you, Matthew," she said softly. "Pardon me, when you have painted my crime down in posterity to look upon!" he said. "Is it likely? Besides, you are rich now"—and he looked at her costly dress; "and I next door to a beggar."

"I was feeling pretty good, said Squilla, and had been whitewashed the convention. I had on body, boots and breeches, and I felt like a board yard he cat with his back hair curled the wrong side up.

"I know that she had seen the paper, but I said, 'No, love,' as mildly as if elections and all such snares were beneath my notice.

"Not got the election, Mr. Squilla?" "No, Mrs. Squilla, not that the court is aware of at this present writing, certainly not."

"Then what do you expect to get for all the whisky you've been pouring down your throats?" "What follows throats?" "Your friends who have been ramping in and out of my house, Mr. Squilla, and borrowing your children's money, and running you into all kinds of disagreeable places to hunt up votes, and sneaking you off into the country to barbecues and other infamous resorts, paying for buggies and making ridiculous remarks, while you know you had the right to work up a speech. A nice thing you have done for yourself, and me, and the poor children, and then, after all, not get anything for your pains; I'm ashamed of you, Squilla, if I could afford to blush for you, I would."

"About this time," said Squilla, "I put out the light, tumbled into bed, and prepared to sleep, but Mrs. Squilla kept at it with forty Squilla power. After a time exhausted nature gave way, and she was silent. Then I felt a singular jiggling at the bed, and I turned round and said: 'Mrs. Squilla, what is that? What in the world you doing that for?' 'I want to laugh, laugh, but don't shake as if you had the buck-ague.'"

"Oh, what a politician you are, Squilla," said she. "Two weeks' campaign, and then to be beaten by a tadpole." "To keep peace in the family," said Squilla. "I had to promise a dress, or something else, and as for the tadpole, I don't know what can explain to a woman."

After the Election. When I got home last night (said Squilla) the old lady was waiting for me. There always is when she sits propped up in bed reading, and I knew I looked at her costly dress; "and I next door to a beggar."

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A Nice Man to Ride With. The London correspondent of the Graphic tells this story: One of the most popular notions in England is that our system of railway traveling surpasses years in comfort, from the fact that with our small carriages it is easy to get a compartment to one's self, or at worst, a carriage with only one or two occupants. That there are drawbacks, however, even this summat of earthly felicity, the adventures of a worthy director, who recently traveled from one Midland station to another, may show.

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