



CHAPTER XI.

February had come, bringing some spring-like days; the feathered lovers were already serenading their ladies; primroses and crocuses were springing to meet the first smile of their god. And June was decidedly growing less wan and white, her step was more elastic. Grief was still her master passion; but, already, Time was doing for her what he does for the young, and indeed for the old, too, only more slowly. And Tom had bravely aided Time.

"Should you be very angry if I were to say something to you?" he asked June one day.

"No," answers June, placidly, with a tolerably good intuition of his meaning.

"I have been afraid to say a word yet," he utters, still much perturbed in his mind. "But—but—oh, my darling, will you some day come and live here for good and all?—do you care enough for me to marry me?"

June does not answer in words, but she gives a little pressure to the hand which holds hers.

After that, what could any man do under the circumstances, especially a man madly in love, but snatch his darling to his breast and cover her face with kisses? June trembles violently; this time it is not from horror or disgust, but because the sudden remembrance of Dallas' kiss smites her, and with it the awful necessity of confessing her shame to Tom. In a moment she tears herself from his arms, and, starting up, rushes over to the fireplace. He dares not pursue her; already he is accusing himself of indecency to her grief; the moment of delight is being punished by remorse—too frequent sequence!

At last, making a tremendous effort over herself, June goes back to the sofa and sits down at a little distance from him.

"I have something to tell you," she says, in a trembling voice. "No, do not come near me, do not touch me, until you have heard it; perhaps, afterward, you will not want to."

A feeling of stupefaction comes over Tom. What can she mean?

Then June turns her face from him and begins to cry piteously.

"Oh," she sobs, "how can I—how can I tell you?"

"What do you mean?" cries Tom, at his wits' end, unable to believe a breath against her, but unutterably pained and mystified by her words and her agitation.

"Do you remember," she says at last, "when—when your cousin was here in the summer?"

Dal! What is this? Tom feels literally turning to stone. He cannot speak.

"You went away for a day or two, and—and I saw a good deal of him, and I fancied"—oh, poor, poor June, the agony of this confession!—"that I was in love with him and he with me, and"—suddenly checking herself, and speaking in a strained, unnatural voice—"he kissed me."

Tom is dumb; if any one had plunged the knife up to the hilt in his heart, he does not think the agony could be deadlier. June, this model of purity, on whose spotlessness he would have staked his soul, kissed by Dallas!

She has buried her face in the sofa cushions and is waiting with a beating heart for Tom's answer. There is a huge, long silence, and then a voice, distorted out of all likeness to Tom's, says:

"And—you—let him!"

Silence, utter silence.

It is enough. She does not deny it. And, after giving her a full minute in which to reply he gets up and walks away, and June hears the door close upon him.

She has lost him, lost the truest, bravest, kindest heart that ever beat. She is quite sure now that she loves him, that she would joyfully have been his wife, that she has lost the chance of immense happiness, and that a blank, lonely life spreads itself out before her.

She trembles at the bare thought of meeting him again. How will she look him in the face after this?

Mrs. Ellesmere is not surprised at dinner to remark that June's eyes are red from crying—that is not an infrequent event—but she is surprised, very much surprised at the change in Tom's manner toward his beloved one. The extreme tenderness which has characterized it ever since June became an inmate of the Hall is gone, and is replaced by a careful and studied politeness. Tom's mother hopes and believes that June has been refusing to give him any definite hope or to discuss the subject of marriage. The change in Tom's manner has in one way a beneficial effect on June; it makes her angry. She feels that he is unjust, and she resents injustice more than anything else in the world. She has told him this shameful secret of her own free will. He is welcome to give her up if he chooses, but he has no right to treat her in a way to arouse the suspicions of others. June's conscience being guilty, she fancies that the impression his behavior may give is that it is he, not she, who has broken the tie between them. But poor Tom has no idea of giving her

up; he is suffering mortal agony and trying with all his might to conceal it.

June takes a book after dinner. She will not bestow one look upon Tom. He tries to read the paper, but glances covertly at her from behind it and wonders if this awful thing she has told him can be true—wonders why she should be angry, which she evidently is, and, most of all, longs to take her in his arms and say he forgives her, and to hear from her that she really and truly consents to be his.

Mrs. Ellesmere, waking from her dose, goes off to her boudoir to write some letters. Tom sits for about ten minutes thinking how he shall approach his lady love, when she saves him the trouble by turning round, laying her book down and saying coldly:

"I have made up my mind to leave this house to-morrow. Under the circumstances it will be much the best thing I can do. I feel that I have already trespassed too long upon the hospitality of Mr. and Mrs. Ellesmere."

Miss June, who has such a love of justice, can be a trifle unjust herself under the influence of anger. June in a temper is quite a new spectacle to Tom; he is positively daunted by the manner of this slim young girl. He springs from his chair in a moment, crying:

"What do you mean, my darling?"

"I am not your darling," returns June, waving him off as she sees, with her quick woman's instinct, that she is going to get the best of it. "I shall never be anything to you now. As for your pretending to care for me, it was a farce."

A farce! For a moment Tom is speechless. Then he cries:

"Don't talk like that! Don't be angry with me, darling. It was such an awful blow."

June's eyes blaze; the blood mounts to her cheeks.

"Why need I ever have told you?" she exclaims. "I have humbled myself in the dust," and here she begins to cry, half from pride, half from shame, "just because I thought it was right and honorable, and you treat me like this."

Tom feels himself the most utter brute on earth, as men do the first time they make the woman they love madly, cry.

He essays to take her hand, but she snatches it from him; she turns her back upon him; she refuses to accept the expression of his penitence.

"Aunt Mary will be glad to have me," sobs Miss June; "she will not find me a trouble; she will not want to get rid of me."

This shaft, as we can well understand, is intended for Mrs. Ellesmere, but Tom feels it and the truth of it most keenly.

He cannot find words with which to answer it, therefore he tries once more to put his arm round June. To avoid him she jumps up and runs to the fireplace.

"You need not come and see me there," she adds. But this is too much for Tom. He approaches her with resolution, he takes both her hands in one of his and puts his other arm about her; she may resist if she pleases, but it is of no avail against his strength.

June does not hurt herself by struggling; she has a more potent weapon than Tom's strength in that sharp little sword which Providence has given her not only to defend herself with, but to wound her adversary.

"Of course I am no match for you if you use violence," she says, coldly.

But even this taunt does not cause Tom to relax his hold.

"I have never loved any woman but you," he says, in a voice that is not quite steady. "My one idea of happiness is to have you for my wife; my one idea of utter misery and wretchedness is to lose you. But, and here his emotion is almost too much for him, "I would rather lose you ten times over than that you should find you had made a mistake—that after you married me you should feel you might have cared for some one more. You only saw Dal a few times and yet—"

"Don't speak of him!" cried June, vehemently. "I hate the very sound of his name!"

"But if you saw him again—"

"Never! never! I despise him. Oh, Tom," and the girl looks up in his face with eloquent eyes, "you need not fear him or any one else now. When I—when I thought I fancied him, it was because I did not care for you. I did not know you then, dear, dear Tom, nor how kind and good you were. I may tell you frankly I never believed I could love you then; but now I do—I do with all my heart."

"Are you quite sure you love me?" he cries, passionately.

"Quite sure," she answers, softly.

After that there is no more talk of doubt; indeed, there is very little talk at all. But yet neither of them has ever been so happy before.

CHAPTER XII.

The wedding day was fixed for the middle of the last week in August, and Mrs. Bryan wrote to her sister-in-law, Mrs. Ellesmere, and suggested the propriety of inviting June to go to her in London for the purpose of selecting her trousseau.

Mrs. Ellesmere was extremely annoyed by the suggestion, but, after mature deliberation, she came to the conclusion that it was useless to fight against fate, and that the only thing to be done now was to make friends with June in order that the Hall might still be open to her when she chose to go there after the marriage. So, very much against the grain, she indicated a charming letter to her future daughter-in-law, begging her to come to her, and promising that she should not be drawn into any sort of gaiety that would be repugnant to her feelings.

Tom, not being in the secret of Mrs. Bryan's letter, was delighted with this proof of kindness from his mother, and wrote her a very grateful epistle, over which she made a wry face. Still, it was as well to have earned his gratitude, as it lay in his power to do a great deal for her if he were so minded.

June was ten days in London, and found them pass very agreeably, though she lived a quiet life enough. But the fact of seeing so many people, of being in the throng and bustle of a town, was sufficiently exciting after the country. Mrs. Ellesmere went out nearly every night, and Tom and June were life-tête-a-tête to their mutual satisfaction. June would not hear of going to the play or even to the opera. She consented, however, to drive in the park, and to sit in the Row with Tom in the morning, and was extremely amused and interested in watching the gay crowd. One day Dallas, who was ignorant of her arrival in town, dropped in to luncheon. It was an embarrassing moment for every one, except, apparently for Dallas, who greeted June with the greatest cordiality and had evidently forgotten that there had ever been a love passage between them. June recovered herself in a moment, and behaved as though she were equally oblivious; indeed, she was now so devoted to Tom that she felt absolutely nothing for his quondam rival. It was Tom who felt the least at ease.

"Tell me, my darling," he said that night, with extreme anxiety, "has—has seeing Dal made any difference in your feeling to me?"

June put her hand into his, and looked frankly into his eyes.

"Not the very, very least," she answered. "I rather wonder now what I saw in him before. Tom," in a questioning voice, "could you love two people at once?" then with a lovely, rippling smile, "I could not."

Tom's answer need not be chronicled. In due course the day arrived to which the young squire had looked forward as the one that must infallibly be the happiest of his life—only that general flutter, turmoil, nervousness, agitation, speechifying, are not generally very conducive to bliss. Still, everything "went off beautifully," as the phrase is.

Miss June, as we know, was a trifle self-willed, and, in spite of what anyone might say, she declined to be married in white with a bridal wreath and veil. As a matter of fact, she wished to go to the altar in black; but she was not allowed to offer this insult to the god Hymen, and therefore compromised the matter by wearing a charming toilet of silver gray. And sweetly young and modest and pretty she looked, with a faint carnation in her cheeks, and eyes bright with tears that she was resolute not to shed. For was she not happy? and would she do dishonor to her love by being a weeping, mournful-looking bride?

The wedding was a very quiet one, but a great festival was given to the tenants. The rector and Mrs. Ellesmere did the honors of that, while the bridegroom and bride were bowling away in their carriage-and-four on the first stage of their journey to Dover. For June had never been abroad, and was to see all those lovely parts of Switzerland and the Rhine, which we, who have often seen them, turn up our noses at, but which to the novices are so entrancingly lovely and charming.

And if ever two young people "did" the Continent pleasantly, Mr. and Mrs. Ellesmere did. Tom was the most liberal creature in the world, and endowed with a fair amount of wealth, and he was sensible enough to know that the value of money is the pleasure it can bring you. The services were secured of an admirable courier (who prevented their having the smallest trouble and made semi-paternal love to June's maid). Tom's pockets were full of gold and silver and bank notes, which he flung about with the generosity and recklessness of the traditional "miller" (less well known on the Continent now than formerly); the best of everything was scarcely good enough for his his darling; his good temper was imperturbable, and his adoration at its topmost pinnacle.

One question constantly perplexed her. How was it possible that Tom, the apple of her eye, the object of her intense devotion—in whose absence she felt it would be impossible to know happiness—could once have inspired disgust and weariness in her? Sometimes she was compelled to say, twining her arms round his neck, "How is it possible that I did not always love you as I do now?" and he would answer, pressing her to his faithful heart: "It seems more wonderful to me, darling, that you should care for me now than that you should not have cared for me before."

(To be continued.)

A River that is Not.

One of the most remarkable freaks of nature occurs in New Mexico. It is a river that is not a river. No one has ever seen it. The bed of it lies in a valley between the Rio Grande and Pecos Rivers. It is well defined, and many travelers have followed its windings to learn, if possible, what becomes of the great volume of water which should be there. It is not a dead or dried-up stream. It is simply lost. Numerous big tributaries flow into it from the neighboring mountains. Immediately, however, they reach the bed of the main stream they disappear from sight. Thus, for some reason or another, a river which should be three hundred miles in length has no existence which could be proved.

PATROLMAN MONROE'S LONG BEAT.



—Chicago Tribune.

VENEZUELAN CORRUPTION.

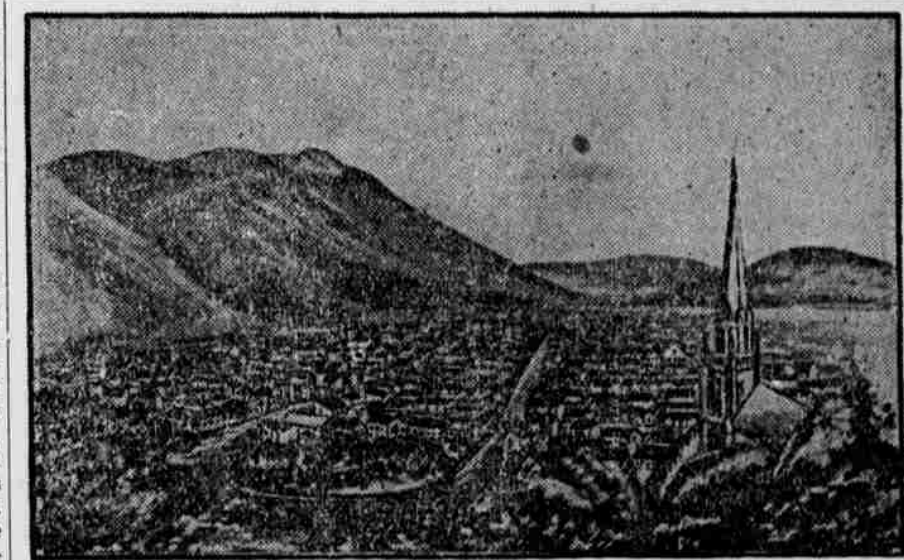
An American's Criticism of Affairs in South American Republic.

Notwithstanding President Cleveland's action on behalf of Venezuela, which saved that country the loss of part of its territory and which would have rendered the people of any nation our warmest friends, says an American long resident in the South American republic, the government and people of the United States are really more hated by the Venezuelans than those of any other nation—not excepting Germany and England up to the time of their present attack on Venezuela. Through their illiteracy and dense ignorance the Venezuelans have imbibed the idea that the United States government intends to absorb all Central and South American countries.

ness men or their managers and "borrow" \$5, \$10 or \$50. These "loans" are always made, and at once charged to business losses, as they are never paid.

Nothing at all is done by the general government of Venezuela in the interests of its people. Everything attempted by Castro is with a view to his own perpetuation in office and his own enrichment. That also has been the policy of his predecessors, for he is no worse than the others. After each one is overthrown it is found that he has anticipated such result and has laid up a fortune in Paris, not in view of the proverbial "rainy day," but to sport upon in Europe.

There is no attempt to enforce any health regulations in Venezuela, and smallpox and yellow fever are always with them. In fact, it is not unusual to



CARACAS, THE CAPITAL OF VENEZUELA.

Their hatred of citizens of the United States was noticed and remarked upon by all our people residing in Venezuela, and was shown by them in various ways. Foreigners of other nationalities, among them English and Germans, considered the treatment of Americans by the Venezuelans a great joke, and improved the occasion to make sarcastic remarks about the "love" of the Venezuelans for us.

The Venezuelan government officials are as characterless and corrupt as those of any on earth.

While Venezuela is a so-called "republic," President Castro has not permitted an election since he succeeded Guzman through a revolution to the Presidency. Castro arbitrarily regulates the tariff, and an import that has a duty of 5 per cent on it to-day may by his order have 25 per cent on it to-morrow. One of his acts since he became President was to order, under the penalty of imprisonment for its violation, all olive trees cut down, in order that he might derive more revenue from imported olives.

Most of the foreign companies and business men ascertain after they have invested their capital in Venezuela that they are subjected to systematic blackmail. If they do not contribute as called upon by the government officials they soon find their business hampered, if not entirely ruined, by said officials, who are responsible to no one but Castro, and it is understood that he "stands in" with them in their demands upon the foreign business people. As he alone, as already stated, regulates the tariff, it is plain how the business of any or all foreigners may be affected.

It is a quite common thing for the Secretary of war, the Secretary of the Interior and the private secretary of the President to call on foreign busi-

walking the streets in the towns and cities of Venezuela.

There is one disease I should have excepted, however, and that is leprosy. Near Caracas they have a reservation, a few miles out of the city, for lepers. As insufficient provision is made for clothing and feeding these unfortunates, it is not unusual for the lepers—some of them minus ears, noses, fingers and toes—to parade through Caracas and demand food to keep from starving to death.

Convinced Him.

Mr. Pinchpenny stepped aboard the car at 4th Street, and paid his fare, but the conductor, who was very busy, forgot that he had received the nickel, and at 7th Street held out his hand.

"Fare," he said.

"I paid you half a mile back," protested Mr. Pinchpenny.

"I think not," rejoined the conductor.

"I say I did."

"I say you didn't."

Mr. Pinchpenny hesitated a moment, and then said, with the air of an injured citizen:

"Don't you recollect a man that got on about five minutes ago and held on to his nickel as if he didn't want to give it up, and you almost had to pry it out of his hand?"

"Yes."

"Well, that was me."

"I remember you now," said the conductor, passing on with a grin.

A Timely Combination.

Let not this good old world be grave, Since sorrow has forsook it;

The oyster's here and soon we'll have The coal with which to cook it.

The price paid to quiet conscience keeps mighty few people poor.