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Twilight.

It is the sweet and tender grace

of sorrow in a lovely face.

When the bright eyes are brimmed with

tears.

That years through all the vanished

years.

For, though long years have passed

away.

I still recall that parting day

When here, with beating hearts we

stood

In this dim twilight of the wood.

The winding pathway is the same;

The oak, on which I carved her name.

Still exists its shadow over me.

And still—Ah! what is this I see?

The pale face lifted to my own.

The sad, sad lips that made sweet moan.

Unconscious of the future years.

When other eyes would fill with tears.

—

A Bit of Lace.

“It’s a perfectly exquisite piece of

lace, papa.”

“I dare say, Flor.”

“But I want you to look at it.”

“I shouldn’t know any more about

it if I did.”

“Well, then, I want you to buy it.”

“Buy it! What for?”

“Why, for me.”

“Pay five hundred dollars for a

handkerchief for you?”

“Yes, indeed. All the girls have

them, although certainly this is a

little, the best little piece that

there is. I don’t know why Lucy

should have a handsome handker-

chief just because she is married.

Anybody else would say it was

ought to be married. And I have

the handkerchief for my married

women have everything—love, and

lace, and diamonds. Now, papa,

just take out your pocket-book.”

“Do you suppose I carry \$500 bills

in my pocket-book?”

“It makes no odds. Your check-

book, then. I have set my heart on

it, it’s such a beauty. If you only

look at it—look at that wreath of

flowers, all so delicately shaded;

here the close work in the light, you

see, there the open work in the

shade, so faintly, so quiet, and so

the colors; and all done in this

one thread. See, papa, there’s a

draw-pearl, that round hole in the

mesh.”

“Nonsense, Flor; I can’t see any-

thing of the kind there.”

“That’s because your eye isn’t edu-

cated. I studied other people’s faces till I

could almost work them. That’s a

good man! I knew you would. You

always do. One, two, three. And

Give.

Perhaps he would have been

a nobler person if he had been

quite so strenuous in this matter of

obligation; but then, as Mrs. Bar-

netta said, he would not have been

Lucian Malvin, and Lucian Malvin

was a very good fellow, after all, and

there are few of us but have our

faults.

It was among these people that he

happened to meet Rosa Mercier. She

had come from a distant place, and

was visiting his pleasant acquaint-

ance, and certainly the house was

pleasanter still after her sunny

little presence dawned on it. It

seemed as if, for instance, there

never had been any flowers in the

house before, although it had al-

ways been overflowing; it seemed as

if there had been no music there, no

light, or color, or cheer; and now

the place was too dear to her, and

rightful for a young man who did not

want to marry to frequent. She was

such a lovely little thing; not exactly

beautiful, that is she would not have

been beautiful in a picture, but in

life, and in Lucian Malvin’s

vision’s eye, she was exactly what he

needed, with her soft color, her clear

dark gaze, and her bright hair that

broke into a cloud of sunny rings

about her sweet face; such a gentle

gait, such a tender grace of manner,

too, in the intervals of her languid

smiles, her voice was such a won-

derful voice, her ways were such

some ways. Lucian Malvin felt that

he must forever her presence un-

less he wanted to make life a burden

to himself; and he ceased going to

Mrs. Barnetta, where she was stay-

ing, almost as suddenly as the day

forsook the horizon in that dreary

season when twilights are not.

But if he could shut himself out

from the Barnetta, he could not

shut Miss Rosa out from general so-

ciety; and so when he would, he

met her almost right in his way,

gayly, singing so sweetly, dancing light-

ly, till he declared to himself that,

if this was going to last, he must in-

stead cease going out at all. But

this was a little too much; he did

not know how to give up so easily

himself the mere sight of her. Yet

things were growing very peculiar

when he could not take a book but

he saw that blushing, gold-embroid-

ered face slide between the pages, and

he could not make out a word with-

out the danger of slipping her name

into the blank, which he heard the

delicious voice murmuring in his

face that his heart reflected in a

molting glow. And then there was

no thought of pride, or of negation,

or forgetting; the music was swing-

ing them at its will; they circled in

each other’s arms to his delicious and

delicious movement,—eternity would

hardly have any bliss for lovers be-

hold the bliss of this moment. Yet

only a moment was it; a few min-

utes, a brief sweet space of half-

conscious time; and then a faint

recognition crept through its spell

and warned Lucian of the poison in

this honey. He was in the act of

surprise, and he felt that he was

face and that of this dear girl; to

take her away from her father’s

wealth and her luxurious ease, and

condemn her to the earthen care of

poverty. All his nature rebelled;

he chose not to be swayed by this

surprise, and he felt that he was

would have no passion, neither mas-

ter nor love, so master his soul as

to become the element in which it

swam, an exclusion of thought and

fear, of sight and sound, and with

other emotion; and, with his im-

pression, he felt that he was

break the enchantment; the real

world crept back upon his senses, he

heard the tune, beyond this cloud

that wrapped them, breaking again

into its distinctive measure, and, ex-

ercising his will, he controlled their

steps, and paused at last beside Mrs.

Barnetta, and, with a low bow, and

without a word, gave Rosa back into

that lady’s care, and passed into the

crowd and out of the place, and

home to his lonely rooms.

It was daybreak before he sought

rest, walking the floor till then,

hardly knowing what he did or what

he thought, but intent upon con-

quering himself. He would give

the world for Rosa Mercier’s love,

but he would not give his pride. To

him that pride meant self-respect;

to marry her, the child of opinion,

he must surrender that self-respect,

and give up the only thing that he

prized, or to reduce her to a state of

weariness in which her love might

soon wear out. He did not doubt

that love was without a syllable of

speech, he felt sure of it. While it

lasted, he felt his will and deeply,

if he could not give up his self-respect,

he only hoped and cursed his fate that

he could not take a book but he

saw that blushing, gold-embroid-

ered face slide between the pages, and

he could not make out a word with-

out the danger of slipping her name

into the blank, which he heard the

and far above the earth, so remote

and cold—they typified all the dear

and happy things of life forever re-

moved from him. His heart was

chilled and his face was white when

he stood at last in Mrs. Barnetta’s

drawing-room, and she floated for-

ward to meet him. He had not asked

for Miss Mercier.

“It is a delicate errand, Mrs. Bar-

netta,” said he, with a dreary attempt

at smiling. “But the truth is that

my maid, in her officious kindness,

has done such damage to a bit

of Miss Mercier’s property that

I must go and see to it. I have come

to beg you out of your friendship

for me, to transact the affair, if such

an article can be replaced here. I

believe these little trifles are rather

costly, and if you will procure one

—and he laid the check he had drawn

for the article—“I have come to

you, to transact the affair, if such

an article can