

A KNOT OF PANSIES.

From New York Weekly.

"Marian!"—thus the note rang—"Darling! Five years ago you made me leave you. You, who had promised to be faithful to me, even unto death, whom I loved with a passionate, absorbing devotion, believed the first breath of slander against me and gave me up. When I tried to speak in my own defense you haughtily refused to listen, and I gave you back your troth, and for five years I have been a wanderer; but I cannot forget. I have come back to you again, unchanged in my love for you. May I not now utter the defense you then refused to hear? If I may, wear this knot of pansies on your breast to-night, for the sake of 'Auld Lang Syne,' and Maurice Everton."

The precious little message was pressed to her lips, with a shy guilty look in the tender eyes; and then the knot of pansies was laid against the white throat, giving, with its rich tints, the beautiful tints of color to her dress, and Marian opened her door, and ran lightly down the corridor, after Bella, feeling like the blithesome girl who had frolicked there with the children five years ago.

She did not wait to question her self as to the reasonableness of her happiness; she only felt that at last the burden was to be lifted from her heart. She had suffered, and her pride refused longer to sustain her against the pleading of his loving words. She would hear his defense and then—

Could it be possible that she had wronged him during all these years?

When she entered the drawing room, with Lady Willoughby, it was empty.

With a sigh of relief she made her way at once to her favorite recess, where, almost hidden by the rich crimson folds of drapery, she could remain in quiet, and try to calm herself a little before dinner.

Little Mrs. Hare soon came rustling in, looking lovely and fastidious, as was her wont; then Tom Granger and half a dozen others, and at last, Colonel Everton.

Marian's heart beat fast as she saw him glance rapidly round the room; the eager light in his eyes giving place to a shadow of disappointment, for she had drawn the curtains closely, not feeling prepared for a meeting in her thus state of nervous excitement.

She saw him seek Bella's side, and they were soon in deep and earnest conversation. Then dinner was announced, and as soon as she saw Colonel Everton offer his arm to Lady Willoughby, she came from her hiding place and discreetly joined the merry group.

He gave a start as he heard her speak to Mrs. Hare, and turned hastily toward her. A glow of intense happiness flooded his whole being, and his eyes shone with a luster as they fixed themselves on the knot of pansies resting in their rich, gorged, violet shades on that snowy breast.

Marian's eyes met his for one single moment, and the burning love she saw in them sent a thrill through her whole frame. She dared not look into them again. It seemed to Colonel Everton that the dinner that day would never come to an end. When, finally, Lady Willoughby and her train of attendant beauties swept by him through the open door, he caught Marian's hand as she would have hurried after them, and whispered: "Meet me in the conservatory in five minutes."

Leaving his companions, unobtruded, Maurice hastened to keep his tryst with Marian, and found her waiting under a feathery acazia, whose pale golden blossoms lay on her dark hair, like flecks of sunshine.

He stood there at last, alone with his darling, and it was with a mighty effort that he refrained from clasping her to his heart. He simply took her hand in his, and pressing it warmly, said, in a low, agitated voice:

"I see you wear my token. I am then at liberty to clear myself from the vile slanders that were poured into your ears five years ago. For five years my friends have been working for me, secretly, to this end, while I was necessarily absent from England, and now, at last, I can give you proof that I am innocent."

word and deed I have been true to my darling—that never was my heart swayed from its allegiance to you, my proud, beautiful Marian!"

With an irresistible impulse she laid her hand on his arm and looked up at him, with eyes full of tears.

"Oh, Maurice, can you ever forgive me? I see so plainly now how wrong and sinful I was not to hear your defense. It was your due, and I can only wonder at my own blindness and folly. Don't tell me anything. I know you are true and faithful, and I seek no proof—I will hear none."

He took her in his arms—his strong, loving arms—and her head rested on his faithful breast; and after her long yearning and misery, she was happy at last. His low-breathed words of love and tenderness were in her ear, and if an archangel had braided him then with falsehood she would have scorned the tale.

But Maurice would not be content until he had made her listen to all. And then she was covered with shame and confusion at having all well herself to be so grossly deceived, and at having related so easily, the stories against one whom she had every reason to believe the soul of honor.

He told her, briefly, this: that a few months before they separated, he had made an enemy, unwittingly, of one who was her cousin friend. This girl, who was poor but of good blood, was very amiable, and she had engaged herself, with his knowledge to a dear friend of his own. In the mean time, a richer, and therefore more attractive suitor declared himself, and Maurice's friend was most cruelly jilted. The young man had suffered terribly, and Maurice had expressed his opinion of the matter in unmeasured terms. His words had been carried to the young lady, and she had declared that she would be revenged on that proud, haughty Maurice by any means.

They sat under the shade of the acacia till they heard merry voices sounded in the adjoining room, and Tom Granger calling loudly for Miss Willoughby. Then, regretfully, they parted, Marian to go to her young friends, and he to seek Sir Arthur in the library.

The result of this conversation was not publicly announced, but during the days that followed suspicion was aroused, and many were the surmises of the young people as to what was going on. And when he thus five there was a wedding at Hazelhurst, and Lady Charles stood by their side, but not the last, the gossiping.

And Mrs. Hare declared that, in her experience, she had known no handsomer pair than Colonel Everton and Mrs. Willoughby.

Down in Kent there is a fine old mansion-house, and here, happy as the doves are long, Maurice and Marian live and love each other, but they never forget the long years of misery they endured, and age of Marian's greatest treasures is the knot of Pansies that brought her "heart's ease."

Advertisement for Standard Scales for Pies, featuring an image of a scale and text: 'IF YOU WISH A GOOD REVOLVER PURCHASE SMITH & WESSON'S'.

Advertisement for 'The Road to Wealth' by Dr. Henley's English Dandelion Tonic, featuring an image of a man and text: 'Cannot be successfully traveled without good health'.

Advertisement for 'The Cry of Mill' by G. A. Tupper, featuring an image of a man and text: 'OH, MY BACK! STOP IT NOW. SOON IT WILL BE TOO LATE.'

Advertisement for 'The Granger Book' by G. A. Tupper, featuring an image of a book and text: 'In the Heart of the Sierras'.

Advertisement for '20 BOOKS GIVEN AWAY' by The Granger Book, featuring a list of book titles and authors.

Advertisement for 'The San Francisco Weekly Call' and 'The Morning Call', featuring text about newspaper subscriptions.

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Advertisement for 'Syrup of Figs' by California Fig Syrup Co., featuring an image of a woman and text: 'Combines the juice of the Blue Figs of California'.

Advertisement for 'Royal Baking Powder' by The Golden Censer, featuring an image of a powder tin and text: 'The Best and the Cheapest Family Paper'.

Advertisement for 'Ask for it! The Self-Threading Eye' by The Golden Censer, featuring an image of an eye and text: 'The Self-Threading Eye'.

Advertisement for 'Lattis' by W. B. Tom Hunter, featuring an image of a horse and text: 'Report on Lattis, Containing, True and False, Scientific, Technical, and Practical'.

Advertisement for 'Home and Farm' by Louisville, Ky., featuring text about a journal for farmers.

Advertisement for 'Printers' Ink' by G. O. P. Rowell & Co., featuring text about advertising services.

Advertisement for 'Best Seeds' by D. M. Ferry & Co., featuring an image of a seed packet and text: 'The Best Seeds'.

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Advertisement for 'Printers' Ink' by G. O. P. Rowell & Co., featuring text about advertising services.

Advertisement for 'Payette Nursery' of Payette Idaho, featuring text about hardy trees and specialties.

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Advertisement for 'P. F. Stenger' featuring an image of a horse and text: 'Horses branded on either right or left side'.

Advertisement for 'Almeda A. Stenger' featuring an image of a horse and text: 'Cattle branded on left side, circle'.

Advertisement for 'Riley & Hardin' featuring an image of a horse and text: 'Horses branded on both sides'.

Advertisement for 'W. B. Tom Hunter' featuring an image of a horse and text: 'Horses are bred with "Lattis" with thick'.

Advertisement for 'Printers' Ink' by G. O. P. Rowell & Co., featuring text about advertising services.

Large vertical advertisement for 'Harper's' featuring various illustrations and text: 'Harper's ILLUSTRATED'.