A Twilight Fantasy.

A woman stood at a garden gate
(Sing hey for the distant spreading sail)
Sing hey for the dog that hurried by
With a kettle tied to his tail.

My good man skurried adown the road
(Sing hey for the joyous drinking bout!)
And after the ochre cur he sped
With many a gruesome shout.

"Now, why this haste, good neighbor?" she cried;
"Why after the dog of the umber tint?"
But, waking the echoes with a yell, he sped
Through the twilight's gleam and glint.

A smug-faced lad looked over the fence
(Sing hey where the birdlings sing and chirp!)
"Why laughest, good mother?" "I laugh," said she,
"To see you eeru purp."

A smile then smiled the smug-faced lad
(Sing lack-a-day for the sunset red!)
"Then laugh no more, good gossip, because
The kettle is your'n," he said.

[The poetry after Browning; the man after the dog; the woman after the boy.]

THE CHOICE OF THREE:

A NOVEL.

Eva looked faintly from one to the other; her head sank, and great black rings painted themselves beneath her eyes. The lily was broken at last.

"You are very cruel," she said, slowly; "but I suppose it must be as you wish. Pray God I may die first, that is all!" and she put her hands to her head and stumbled from the room, leaving the two conspirators facing each other.

"Come, we got over that capitally," said Mr. Plowden, rubbing his hands. "There is nothing like taking the high hand with a woman. Ladies must sometimes be taught that a gentleman has rights as well as themselves."

Florence turned on him with bitter scorn.

"Gentlemen! Mr. Plowden, why is the word so often on your lips? Surely after the part you have just played, you do not presume to rank yourself among gentlemen? Listen! it suits my purposes that you should marry Eva; and you shall marry her; but I will not stoop to play the hypocrite with a man like you. You talk of yourself as a gentleman, and do not scruple to force an innocent girl into a wicked marriage, and to crush her spirit with your cunning cruelty. A gentleman, forsooth!—a satyr, a devil in disguise!"

"I am only asserting my rights," he said, furiously; "and whatever I have done, you have done more."

"Do not try your violence on me, Mr. Plowden; it will not do. I am not made of the same stuff as your victim. Lower your voice, or leave the house and do not enter it again."

Mr. Plowden's heavy underjaw fell a little: he was terribly afraid of Florence.

"Now," she said, "listen! I do not choose that you should labor under any mistake. I hold your hand in this business, though to have to do with you in any way is in itself a defilement," and she wiped her delicate fingers on a pocket-handkerchief as she said the word, "because I have an end of my own to gain. Not a vulgar end like yours, but a revenge, which shall be almost divine or diabolical, call it which you will, in its completeness. Perhaps it is a madness, perhaps it is an inspiration, perhaps it is a fate. Whatever it is, it animates me, body and soul, and I will gratify it, though to do so I have to use a tool like you. I wished to explain this to you. I wished, too, to make it clear to you that I consider you contemptible. I have done both, and I have now the pleasure to wish you good-morning."

Mr. Plowden left the house white with fury, and cursing in a manner remarkable in a clergyman.

"If she wasn't so handsome, hang me if I would not throw the whole thing up!" he said.

Needless to say, he did nothing of the sort; he only kept out of Florence's way.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE VIRGIN MARTYR.

Dorothy, in her note to Ernest that he received by the mail previous to the one that brought the letters which at a single blow laid the hope and promise of his life in the dust, had, it may be remembered, stated her intention of going to see Eva in order to plead Ernest's cause; but what with one thing and another, her visit was considerably delayed. Twice she was on the point of going, and twice something occurred to prevent her. The fact of the matter was the errand was distasteful, and she was in no hurry to execute it. She loved Ernest herself, and however deep that love might be trampled down, however fast it might be chained in the dungeons of her secret thoughts, it was still there, a living thing, an immortal thing. She could tread it down and chain it; she could not kill it. Its shade would rise and walk in the upper chambers of her heart, and wring its hands and cry to her, telling what it suffered in those subterranean places, whispering how bitterly it envied the bright and happy life which moved in the free air, and had usurped the love it claimed. It was hard to have to ignore those pleadings, to disregard those cries for pity, and to say that there was no hope, that it must always be chained, till time ate away the chain. It was harder still to have to be one of the actual ministers to the suffering. Still, she meant to go. Her duty to Ernest was not to be forsaken because it was a painful duty.

On two or three occasions she met Eva, but got no opportunity of speaking to her. Either her sister Florence was with her, or she was obliged to return immediately. The fact was that, after the scene described in the last chapter, Eva was subjected to the closest espionage. At home Florence watched her as a cat watches a mouse; abroad Mr. Plowden seemed to be constantly hovering on her flank, or, if he was not there, then she became aware of the presence of the ancient and contemplative mariner who traded in Dutch cheeses. Mr. Plowden feared lest she should run away, and so cheat him of his prize; Florence, lest she should confide in Dorothy, or possibly Mr. Cardus, and supported by them find the courage to assert herself and defraud her of her revenge. So they watched her every movement.

At last Dorothy made up her mind to wait no longer for opportunities, but to go and see Eva at her own home. She knew nothing of the Plowden imbroglio; but it did strike her as curious that no one had said anything about Ernest. He had written—it was scarcely likely the letter had miscarried. How was it that Eva had not said anything on the subject? Little did Dorothy guess that, even as these thoughts were passing through her mind, a great vessel was steaming out of Southampton docks, bearing those epistles final of renunciation which Ernest, very little to his satisfaction, received in due course.

Full of these reflections, Dorothy found herself one lovely spring afternoon knocking at the door of the Cottage. Eva was at home, and she was at once ushered into her presence. She was sitting on a low chair—the same on which Ernest always pictured her with that confounded Skye terrier she was so fond of kissing—an open book upon her knee, and looking out at the little garden and the sea beyond. She looked pale and thin, Dorothy thought.

On her visitor's entrance Eva rose and kissed her.

"I am so glad to see you," she said; "I was feeling lonely."

"Lonely!" answered Dorothy, in her straightforward way, "why, I have been trying to find you alone for the last fortnight, and have never succeeded."

Eva colored. "One may be lonely with ever so many people round one."

Then for a minute or so they talked about the weather; so persistently did they discuss it, indeed, that the womanly instinct of each told her that the other was fencing.

After all, it was Eva who broke the ice first.

"Have you heard from Ernest lately?" she said, nervously.

"Yes; I got a note by last mail."

"Oh," said Eva, clasping her hands involuntarily, "what did he say?"

"Nothing much. But I got a letter by the mail before that, in which he said a good deal. Among other things, he said he had written to you. Did you get the letter?"

Eva colored to her eyes. "Yes," she whispered.

Dorothy rose, and seated herself on a footstool by Eva's feet, and wondered at the trouble in her eyes. How could she be troubled when she had heard from Ernest—"like that?"

"What did you answer him, dear?"

Eva covered her face with her hands.

"Do not talk about it," she said; "it is too dreadful to me!"

"What can you mean? He tells me you are engaged to him."

"Yes—that is, no. I was half engaged. Now I am engaged to Mr. Plowden."

Dorothy gave a gasp of horrified astonishment.

"Engaged to the man when you were engaged to Ernest? You must be joking."

"O Dorothy, I am not joking; I wish to Heaven I were. I am engaged to him. I am to marry him in less than a month. Oh, pity me, I am wretched."

"You mean to tell me," said Dorothy, rising, "that you are engaged to Mr. Plowden when you love Ernest?"

"Yes, oh yes, I cannot help—"

At that moment the door opened, and Florence entered, attended by Mr. Plowden.

Her keen eyes saw at once that something was wrong, and her intelligence told her what it was. After her bold fashion, she determined to take the bull by the horns. Unless something were done, with Dorothy at her back, Eva might prove obdurate after all.

Advancing, she shook Dorothy cordially by the hand.

"I see from your face," she said, "that you have just heard the good news. Mr. Plowden is so shy that he would not consent to announce it before; but here he is to receive your congratulations."

Mr. Plowden took the cue, and advanced effusively on Dorothy with outstretched hand. "Yes, Miss Jones, I am sure you will congratulate me; and I ought to be congratulated; I am the luckiest—"

Here he broke off. It really was very awkward. His hand remained limply hanging in the air before Dorothy, but not the slightest sign did that dignified little lady show of taking it. On the contrary, she drew herself up to her full height—which was not very tall—and fixing her steady blue eyes on the clergyman's shifty orbs, deliberately placed her right hand behind her back.

"I do not shake hands with people who play such tricks," she said quietly.

Mr. Plowden's hand fell to his side and he stepped back. He did not expect such courage in anything so small. Florence, however, sailed in to the rescue.

"Really, Dorothy, we do not quite understand."

"Oh, yes, I think you do, Florence, or if you do not, then I will explain. Eva here was engaged to marry Ernest Kershaw. Eva here has just with her own lips told me that she still loves Ernest, but that she is obliged to marry—that man," and she pointed with her little forefinger at Plowden, who recoiled another step. "Is not that true, Eva?"

Eva bowed her head, by way of answer. She still sat in the low chair, with her hands over her face.

"Really, Dorothy, I fail to see what right you have to interfere in this matter," said Florence.

"I have the right of common justice, Florence—the right a friend has to protect the absent. Oh, are you not ashamed of such a wicked plot to wrong an absent man? Is there no way (addressing Mr. Plowden) in which I can appeal to your feelings to induce you to free this wretched girl you have entrapped?"

"I only ask my own," said Mr. Plowden, sulkily.

"For shame! for shame! and you a minister of God's word! And you too, Florence! Oh, now I can read your heart, and see the bad thoughts looking from your eyes!"

Florence for a moment was abashed and turned her face aside.

"And you, Eva, how can you become a party to such a shameful thing? You, a good girl, to sell yourself away from dear Ernest to such a man as that;" and again she pointed contemptuously to Mr. Plowden.

"Oh, don't, Dorothy, don't; it is my duty. You don't understand."

"Oh, yes, Eva, I do understand. I understand that it is your duty to drown yourself before you do such a thing. I am a woman as well as you, and, though I am not beautiful, I have a heart and conscience, and I understand only too well."

"You will be lost if you drown yourself—I mean it is very wicked," said Mr. Plowden to Eva, suddenly assuming his clerical character as most likely to be effective. The suggestion alarmed him. He had bargained for a live Eva.

"Yes, Mr. Plowden," went on Dorothy, "you are right; it would be wicked, but not so wicked as to marry you. God gave us women our lives, but he put a spirit in our hearts which tells us that we should rather throw them away than suffer ourselves to be degraded. O Eva, tell me that you will not do this shameful thing; no, do not whisper to her, Florence."

"Dorothy, Dorothy," said Eva, rising and wringing her hands, "it is all useless. Do not break my heart with your cruel words. I must marry him. I have fallen into the power of people who do not know what mercy is."

"Thank you," said Florence.

Mr. Plowden scowled darkly.

"Then I have done;" and Dorothy walked toward the door. Before she reached it she paused and turned: "One word, and I will trouble you no more. What do you all expect will come of this wicked marriage?"

There was no answer. Then Dorothy went.

But her efforts did not stop there. She made her way straight to Mr. Cardus' office.

"O Reginald!" she said, "I have such dreadful news for you. There, let me cry a little first and I will tell you."

And she did, telling him the whole story from beginning to end. It was entirely new to him, and he listened with some astonishment, and with a feeling of something like indignation against Ernest. He had intended that young gentleman to fall in love with Dorothy, and, behold, he had fallen in love with Eva. Alas for the perversity of youth!

"Well," he said, when she had done, "and what do you wish me to do? It seems that you have to do with a heartless, scheming woman, a clerical cad, and a beautiful fool. One might deal with the schemer and the fool, but no power on earth can soften the cad. At least that is my experience. Besides, I think the whole thing is much better left alone. I should be very sorry to see Ernest married to a woman so worthless as this Eva must be. She is handsome, it is true, and that is about all she is, as far as I can see. Don't distress yourself, my dear; he will get over it, and after he has had his fling out there, and lived down that duel business, he will come home, and, if he is wise, I know where he will look for consolation."

Dorothy tossed her head and colored.

"It is not a question of consolation," she said, "it is a question of Ernest's happiness in life."

"Don't alarm yourself, Dorothy; people's happiness is not so easily affected. He will forget all about her in a year."

"I think that men always talk of each other like that, Reginald," said Dorothy, resting her head upon her hands and looking straight at the old gentleman. "Each of you likes to think that he has a monopoly of feeling, and that the rest of his kind are as shallow as a milk-pan. And yet it was only last night that you were talking to me about my mother. You told me, you remember, that life had been a worthless thing to you since she was torn from you, which no success had been able to render pleasant. You said more, you said you hoped that the end was not far off, that you had suffered enough and waited enough, and that, though you had not seen her face for five-and-twenty years, you loved her as wildly as you did the day when she first promised to become your wife."

Mr. Cardus had risen, and was looking through the glass door at the blooming orchids. Dorothy got up, and following him, laid her hand upon his shoulder.

"Reginald," she said, "think. Ernest is about to be robbed of his wife under circumstances curiously like those by which you were robbed of yours. Unless it is prevented, what you have suffered all your life that he will suffer also. Remember you are of the same blood, and, allowing for the difference between your ages, of very much the same temperament, too. Think how different life would have been to you if any one had staved off your disaster, and then I am sure you will do all you can to stave off his."

"Life would have been non-existent for you," he answered, "for you would never have been born."

"Ah, well," she said with a little sigh, "I am sure I should have got on very well without. I could have spared myself."

Mr. Cardus was a keen man, and could see as far into the human heart as most.

"Girl," he said, contracting his white eyebrows and suddenly turning round upon her, "you love Ernest yourself. I have often suspected it, now I am sure you do."

Dorothy flinched.

"Yes," she answered, "I do love him; what then?"

"And yet you are advocating my interference to secure his marriage with another woman, a worthless creature who does not know her own mind. You cannot really care about him."

"Care about him!" and she turned her sweet blue eyes upward. "I love him with all my heart and soul and strength. I have always loved him; I shall always love him. I love him so well that I can do my duty to him, Reginald. It is my duty to strain every nerve to prevent this marriage. I had rather that my heart should ache than Ernest's. I implore of you to help me!"

"Dorothy, it has always been my dearest wish that you should marry Ernest. I told him so just before that unhappy duel. I love you both. All the fibres of my heart that are left alive have wound themselves around you. Jeremy I could never care for. Indeed, I fear that I used sometimes to treat the boy harshly. He reminds me so of his father; and do you know, my dear, I sometimes think that on that point I am not quite sane? But, because you have asked me to do it and because you have quoted your dear mother, may peace be with her! I will do what I can. This girl Eva is of age, and I will write and offer her a home. She need fear no persecution here."

"You are kind and good, Reginald, and I thank you."

"The letter shall go by to-night's post. But run away now, I see my friend De Talor coming to speak to me," and the white eyebrows drew themselves together in a way that it would have been unpleasant for the great De Talor to behold. "That business is drawing toward its end."

"O Reginald," answered Dorothy, shaking her forefinger at him in her old, childish way, "haven't you given up those ideas yet? They are very wrong."

"Never mind, Dorothy. I shall give them up soon, when I have squared accounts with De Talor. A year or two more—a stern chase is a long chase, you know—and the thing will be done, and then I shall become a good Christian again."

The letter was written. It offered Eva a home and protection.

In due course an answer signed by Eva herself came back. It thanked him for his kindness, and regretted that circumstances and "her sense of duty" prevented her from accepting the offer.

Then Dorothy felt that she had done all that in her lay, and gave the matter up.

It was about this time that Florence drew another picture. It represented Eva as Andromeda gazing hopelessly into the dim light of a ghastly dawn out across a glassy sea; and far away in the oily depths there was a ripple, and beneath the ripple a form travelling toward the chained maiden. The form had a human head and cold, gray eyes, and its features were those of Mr. Plowden.

And so, day by day, Destiny thrown in space, shot her flaming shutters from darkness into darkness, and the time passed on, as the time must pass, till the inevitable end of all things is attained.

Eva existed and suffered, and that was all she did. She scarcely ate or drank, or slept. But still she lived; she was not brave enough to die, and the chains were riveted too fast around her tender wrists to let her flee away. Poor nineteenth century Andromeda! No Perseus shall come to save you.

The sun rose and set in his appointed course, the flowers bloomed and died, children were born and the allotted portion of mankind passed onward to its rest; but no Perseus came flying out of the golden east.

Once more the sun rose. The dragon heaved his head above the quiet waters, and she was lost. By her own act, of her own folly and weakness, she was undone. Behold her! the wedding is over. The echoes of the loud mockery of the bells have scarcely died upon the noon-day air, and in her chamber, the chamber of her free and happy maidenhood, the virgin martyr stands alone.

It is done. There lie the sickly-scented flowers, there, too, the bride's white robe. It is done. Oh, that life were done too, that she might once press her lips to his and die.

The door opens, and Florence stands before her, pale, triumphant, awe-inspiring.

"I must congratulate you, my dear Eva. You really went through the ceremony very well, only you looked like a statue."

"Florence, why do you come to mock me?"

"Mock you, Eva, mock you! I come to wish you joy as Mr. Plowden's wife. I hope that you will be happy."

"Happy! I shall never be happy. I detest him!"

"You detest him, and you marry him; there must be some mistake."

"There is no mistake—O Ernest, my darling!"

Florence smiled.

"If Ernest is your darling, why did you not marry Ernest?"

"How could I marry him when you forced me into this?"

"Forced you! A free woman of full age can not be forced. You married Mr. Plowden of your own will. You might have married Ernest Kershaw if you chose. He is in many ways a more desirable match than Mr. Plowden, but you did not choose."

"Florence, what do you mean? You always said it was impossible. Oh, this is all some cruel plot of yours?"

"Impossible! there is nothing impossible to those who have courage. Yes," and she turned upon her sister fiercely, "it was a plot, and you shall know it, you poor, weak fool! I loved Ernest Kershaw, and you robbed me of him, although you promised to leave him alone, and so I have revenged myself upon you. I despise you, I tell you; you are quite contemptible, and yet he could prefer you to me. Well, he has got his reward. You have deserted him when he was absent and in trouble, and you have outraged his love and your own. You have fallen very low indeed, Eva, and you will fall lower yet. I know you well. You will sink, till at last, you even lose the sense of your own humiliation. Don't you wonder what Ernest must think of you now? There is Mr. Plowden calling you—come, it is time for you to be going."

Eva listened aghast, and then sank up against the wall, sobbing despairingly.

CHAPTER XXXI.

HANS' CITY OF REST.

Mr. Alston, Ernest and Jeremy had very good sport among the elephants, killing in all nineteen bulls. It was during that expedition that an incident occurred which in its effect endeared Ernest to Mr. Alston more than ever.

The boy Roger, who always went wherever Mr. Alston went, was the object of his father's most tender solicitude. He believed in the boy as he believed in little else in the world—for at heart Mr. Alston was a sad cynic—and to a certain extent the boy justified his belief. He was quick, intelligent and plucky, much such a boy as you may pick up by the dozen out of any English public school, except that his knowledge of men and manners was more developed, as is usual among young colonists. At the age of 12 Master Roger Alston knew many things denied to most children of his age. On the subject of education Mr. Alston had queer ideas. "The best education for a boy," he would say, "is to mix with grown-up gentlemen. If you send him to school, he learns little except mischief; if you let him live with gentlemen he learns at any rate to be a gentleman."

But whatever Master Roger knew, he did not know much about elephants, and on this point he was destined to gain some experience.

One day—it was just after they had got into the elephant country—they were all engaged in following the fresh spoor of an apparently solitary bull. But, though an elephant is a big beast, it is hard work catching him up, because he never seems to get tired, and this was exactly what our party of hunters found. They followed that energetic elephant for hours, but they could not catch him, though the spoorers told them that he certainly was not more than a mile or so ahead. At last the sun began to get low, and their legs had already got tired, so they gave it up for that day, determining to camp where they were. This being so, after a rest, Ernest and the boy Roger started out of camp to see if they could not shoot a buck or some birds for supper. Roger had a repeating Winchester carbine, Ernest a double-barrelled shotgun. Hardly had they left the camp when Aasvogel, Jeremy's Hottentot, came running in, and reported that he had seen the elephant, an enormous bull with a white spot upon his trunk, feeding in a clump of mimosa, not a quarter of a mile away. Up jumped Mr. Alston and Jeremy, as fresh as though they had not walked a mile, and seizing their double-eight elephant rifles, started off with Aasvogel.

Meanwhile Ernest and Roger had been strolling toward this identical clump of mimosa. As they neared it, the former saw some Guinea-fowl run into the shelter of the trees.

"Capital!" he said; "Guinea-fowl are first-class eating. Now, Roger, just you go into the bush and drive the flock over me. I'll stand here and make believe they are pheasants."

The lad did as he was bid. But in order to get well behind the covey of Guinea-fowl, which are dreadful things to run, he made a little circuit through the thickest part of the clump. As he did so his quick eye was arrested by a most unusual performance on the part of one of the flat-crowned mimosa-trees. Suddenly, and without the slightest apparent reason, it rose into the air, and then, behold, where its crown appeared a moment before, appeared its roots.

(To be continued.)

Women's Work and Ways.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning wrote "Marathon" when she was 11 years of age. Copies of it are exceedingly rare.

Adelina Patti has a weakness for collecting autographs, and the signature of nearly every notable person in the world is to be found in her albums.

Miss Carey Thomas, the dean of the new female college at Bryn Mawr, took her degree at the University of Zurich. This degree is conferred only once in ten years.

A new employment for women is suggested by Mr. A. J. Harvey, who does not see why they should not tune their own pianos, and find suitable and remunerative work in tuning the pianos of others.

During the last eight years the Empress Augusta has presented the gold cross and insignia, bearing the imperial autograph, upon 1,156 women servants who have completed the required forty years of unbroken service in one family.

Boston has a gymnasium exclusively for the use of women. It has six bowling alleys, a tennis court, a gymnasium hall, a running track of twenty laps to the mile, hot and cold water baths, etc. It was projected by Miss Mary Allen, who has for years been a devotee of physical culture. It is well patronized.

Mrs. Haddock, of Iowa, in her paper on "Women as Landlords," read at the Women's Congress in Louisville, estimates that 1,000 women own and manage farms in her own State, while in Oregon women farmers are so numerous that they excite no comment. The number of women land owners is increasing all over the Union.

The Home for Overworked Horses, established in London through the efforts of Miss Linde, reaches farther than its name implies, inasmuch as it benefits man as well as beast. The object is to provide quarters where poor cabbies and tradesmen may obtain rest and treatment for their animals at a moderate cost, or free of all charge, as the circumstances indicate. Horses of well-to-do people will also be treated and cared for. It has been found expedient in the present state of the finances of the establishment to drop the scheme of lending horses to the poorer of those who make use of its benefits.

Miniature Stoves to Carry in Pockets.

Within the last fortnight, and especially during the recent cold snap, some of our peddlers have been making quite a fortune with a little device called a pocket warmer, which is simplicity itself and may be of value to the energetic people who walk across the bridge every morning and think they know all about Dr. Kane's sensation when he thought he had found the North Pole. It is nothing more nor less than a small tin box an inch in diameter and six inches long, holding a fuse of some slow burning material, which gives out considerable heat, but no smoke or gas; it burns for more than an hour and placed in a muff or in a pocket will give a tremendous amount of heat, while it can also be used as a foot warmer for carriages and sleighs. The apparatus costs but a trifle and each fuse costs one cent.—*Brooklyn Eagle.*

Dr. Chalmers Baffled.

When Dr. Chalmers became minister of Kilmany, in the north of Fife, he used to get his supplies from Anstruther. On one occasion—so the story runs—he sent a written order for a sack of corn to a Mr. Thomson there. The corn never came, and Chalmers was much annoyed. Next time he was in Anstruther he called on Mr. Thomson for an explanation. It was soon given. The merchant had been unable to decipher the minister's hieroglyphics and had put the note in his desk until Mr. Chalmers should call. "Not make out my writing!" exclaimed Chalmers indignantly—"Show it to me." He read a few words, but then he stuck, completely baffled. He was, however, equal to the occasion. With a pawky smile he returned the letter to the merchant, saying, "But the letter is addressed to you, Mr. Thomson; it is your business to read it, not mine."

Mrs. Howell, of Paulding, Ga., was passing her husband, a few days ago, just as he tried to light a match by striking it on the wall. The head of the match flew off and lodged in her ear. In one minute she became blind, began to vomit, and was prostrated for an hour and a half.

Grecian children were taught to reverence and emulate the virtues of their ancestors. Our educational forces are so wielded as to teach our children to admire most that which is foreign and fabulous and dead.—*Garfield.*