LADY OLIVIA'S OPALS.

A Lady's-Maid's Reminiscence.

I can't say I ever took to my Lady Olivia, though I lived so long with her, and, after her own fashion, she behaved well to me. She was one of your flashing, dark-eyed beauties, haughty as an express, expecting all around to worship and obey her, and caring no more for human love—aye, not so much as the great mastiff at her father's gate did, and yet winning it almost without an effort, if one were to judge by the crowd of suitors that sprang up wherever she went.

She had been married when only eighteen to a gentleman of lower birth than herself, but of immense wealth, and on his death, which happened only four months after their union, she returned to her father's house and declared her intention of remaining a widow to the end of her life. She said that to the world; but I, who waited on her day and night—I, who saw her in all her moods—knew better.

For two years, however, she kept to her intention, and though, what with her beauty and wealth, she had suitors of all ages and all ranks, she reached the age of twenty without encouraging any. But all that came to an end, as I knew it would. She fell in love at last—yes, veritably in love.

Hubert Berris was a dark, stern, haughty-souled man, every inch a nobleman, but, to my mind, much more fit to inspire dread than love. His family was ancient, more ancient, I believe, than Lady Olivia's, and it was even more distinguished, having been particularly fruitful in statesmen and admirals. They were also rich. So, altogether, the world said Lord Hubert Berris and Lady Olivia St. Marlow would be well matched.

Somehow my lady seemed to change from that time, not so much in her outward conduct, for in society she was still the same proud, cold, queen-like creature; but in her private life, in the hours when she sat in that magnificent dressing-room, with my eyes alone watching her, she seemed, as it were, to throw off her old self and let the new peep out.

She was in love, intensely in love, and somehow it seemed to flash up in her great, dark eyes with a power that made one almost frightened, for it gave one a glimpse of the true fierceness of her nature. She was terribly restless, too, and although she moved like an animated statue before the world, she paced up and down her suite of apartments occasionally like one demented.

What had come over her I knew not, but at length some words of her own gave me a suspicion.

We were sorting jewellery, and, under her direction, I was packing up that which was to be taken with her on her tour, and setting aside the rest for alteration at the jeweller's, when we happened to come across a large opal brooch of singular workmanship. I observed my lady set it aside immediately, and then, as a ring of the same antique workmanship appeared, she gave a little start and let it drop.

"Why, Morton!" she began, and then she paused, and seemed almost to hold back her words, whilst her great, dark eyes fastened on me with a look which seemed to try and pierce my very soul.

I was not afraid of her, though, and so I looked her back in her white face, and answered:—

"Well, my lady?"

For a minute or two she was silent, but, in spite of her pride and hauteur, I knew she was burning to tell me something—aye, and it would out, too, if I waited her time patiently. I went on sorting the jewels, therefore.

"Morton," at length said her ladyship, "did you know that ring was in this casket?"

"Yes, my lady. I found it on the floor near your ladyship's dressing table yesterday, and put it in myself."

"On the floor?" she echoed, and then she took it up and gave another, a little start. "One of the opals is gone," she cried.

"Yes, my lady. I noticed that when I picked it up, but it was nowhere about the floor, for I looked carefully."

"Of course. I know you would, but——" Again, however, she paused, and then she got up and began pacing up and down in one of her wild, fierce moods, and I let her alone, for I knew it was scarcely safe to speak to her then.

Suddenly, however, she came up to me of her own accord, and putting her two hands heavily on my shoulders, said in a low hissing tone: "Morton, tell me, how did that ring come there?"

"On my life, my lady," I answered, "I don't know."

"You would swear he did not give it you to give me?"

Her eyes were awful to look upon as she said that, and for once I did feel frightened of her.

"He, my lady? I don't know who you mean."

"Why, Gaston St. Marlow, my dead husband. That ring was on his finger. It was my last gift to him. He died with it on. He was buried with it. Don't you remember noticing it on his finger in the coffin?"

"Law! my lady," I shivered; but as she spoke I took up the ring and looked at it, and then it suddenly did strike me that I had seen that opal on the dead man's hand.

How came it there, then? Had the coffin been robbed? or——— Ah! an awful idea suddenly darted through my mind, and, raising my eyes, I understood the fierce trouble of those burning orbs of Lady Olivia.

"Morton," she exclaimed, shuddering, "I should go mad if this marriage were broken off. I love Hubert Berris better than my own soul!"

And then she turned back to her wild pacing up and down the room.

Days passed after that, and though I saw nothing to throw more light on my dark suspicion of Lady Olivia's trouble, it rather gained ground in my mind than otherwise. She was haunted by some fear—some fear that might bring about a rupture with Lord Hurbert Berris, and I felt that it had connection with her dead husband. I kept my own counsel, but I also kept my own watch.

I recollect I was awaiting my lady's return from a ball just three days before the wedding day, when, suddenly, I heard the door open quietly behind me, and, looking round, I saw my lady looking white as a ghost glide quietly in.

I had heard no carriage drive up, and no bell, though the dressing-room was in the front of the house. To my surprise, too, instead of being in her pink satin and diamonds, as I had last seen her, my lady was dressed in a morning walking dress, particularly unpretending-looking. She came up to me quietly.

"Morton," she said, in a low, stern tone, "I think you are tolerably true when you once give a promise. Listen to me. If you will come with me and swear not to reveal what I am about to tell you, and to do, I will give you a hundred pounds down, and as much again when I am married. Hark you, girl, are you bold?"

"It takes a good deal, my lady, to frighten me."

"Yes, but could you look on a dead man's face without fainting? Could you dare to visit the dead?"

She hissed out these words, grasping my arm and gazing fiercely into my face, and then, as I turned shudderingly away, she seemed to quiet down.

"Morton," she said, almost humbly, for her, "I am in great trouble. I am pursued by a terrible fear, and I am either being driven mad by a fancy or a fiend. Listen: To-night, for the third time since my engagement to Lord Hubert, I have seen the face of my dead husband, not in fancy, but in living, breathing, ghastly earnest."

"Impossible! my lady," I exclaimed, horrified. "I saw Mr. St. Marlow's coffin carried to the vault with my own eyes."

She put up her hands and covered her eyes.

"This doubt is horrible, and if Hubert had a suspicion of it, all would be over. I believe I am going mad, but I have come to a determination, for, come what will, I will not be the dupe of any one. Morton, I am bound on a terrible errand. Will you come with me?"

There was no need for her to say more plainly what she meant, for I knew well enough what that large, rusty key belonged to, and for what purpose was that hammer and chisel and dark lantern. It was all horribly comprehensible. Throwing a shawl over my head, I took up the strange tools and opened the window. I helped Lady Olivia to mount the low sill and get to the soft garden bed beneath, and then descended myself.

We reached the dim, shadowy church—the entrance to the vault—and Lady Olivia pushed the key into the lock with almost fierce energy, and then with an effort she forced the great door back, and we two women stood there, white and ghastly, amid the mouldering dead!

The horror of that moment I shall never forget.

"Look," said my mistress's voice suddenly, breaking the dead stillness. "Morton, you know the coffin. Which? Tell me quickly."

"That one, my lady, the one to your right," I muttered, and then, in spite of my awe of her, I could not for the life of me assist her, as, using all her force, she slowly and with difficulty drew the coffin out and then let it fall heavily on one end on the stones.

"Dead men don't feel," she muttered, with a ghastly smile.

I covered my eyes, for somehow to see her face as she bent over that silver plate and read the inscription was worse than even the ghastly sight of those piles of coffins, and when next I looked up it was because a terrible cry roused me. Lady Olivia was standing like as if petrified with horror, and at her feet was the open coffin—empty!

How I got that coffin back into its place I know not. How I got my lady back safely into her room I know not. That night seemed always like some horrible dream, and I only remember bits and flashes of it. I did manage to get her to bed somehow, and then I gave her a draught to send her to sleep, for it was agony to me to watch her convulsive shiverings and hear her groans. I knew, too, that for my own sake it was as well to keep the night's work quiet.

The next day, however, to my relief, Lady Olivia woke herself again, though I, who saw her before she was dressed, knew how she must have suffered to make her careworn and old-looking in twelve hours.

My lady was still lounging by the fire in her dressing-room when a message was brought to her that Lord Hubert was below, and very much desired to be admitted to her presence for a few minutes, as it was a matter of importance. Lady Olivia turned a shade paler, but, pressing her lips firmly together, she gave the order to allow him to come up at once. And I, of course retired to an adjoining room.

I solemnly declare I had no intention of listening till I happened to go into a closet to hang up some dresses, and then I noticed that every word of what was being said in the dressing-room was distinctly audible. I could also see into the room. And then the temptation was too irresistible.

"I come to ask you rather an odd question, Olivia," said my lord. "Do you happen to possess an opal ring?"

"Yes. That is, I believe I have some opals among my jewels," answered my lady, quietly. "But how can that interest you, Hubert?"

"It does, though, strangely. Will you show me the ring?"

There was a silence, as if Lady Olivia hesitated. Then, however, she rose, and I heard her go to the casket of jewels, and I crept to the door and knelt down to where I knew was a certain small crevice. And then I saw Lord Hubert take the ring and examine it, with a frown.

"There is a stone missing."

"Yes. It has been gone for some time."

And then my lord put his fingers in his watch pocket, and taking out a small stone he held it out towards my lady with a look on his face I shall never forget.

"There is the lost opal," he said. "Lady Olivia St. Marlow, need I tell you who gave me that, who warned me against your fatal hand, and that your sin is known."

For an instant those dark, evil, beautiful eyes flashed up defiantly, but even she could not face Hubert Berris. The next instant she was crouching on the floor before him, with her face buried in her hands.

"Get up, woman," cried her former lover, sternly. "I do not pretend to judge you, and I will not be less merciful than Gaston St. Marlow, who, rather than claim you for a wife, or expose you to the world, lives the obscure and humble life he does. Only, I will prevent your doing more harm. Gaston St. Marlow, enter."

And then, to my horror, the door opened, and the man whom I had seen lying dead in his coffin four years ago walked in. No wonder Lady Olivia uttered that one long, shivering groan, which made even the two men almost shriek. Gaston St. Marlow walked sternly forward, and then, as Lady Olivia sprang up, he stretched out his left hand, and I saw that one of the fingers was missing.

"Your crime was cleverly planned, Olivia, your hypocrisy was perfect, and had it not been for my friend's love and fidelity, my beautiful and affectionate wife would have consigned me to my living tomb effectually."

"What mean you? What means this horrible scene?" muttered my lady, making a terrible effort to throw off her fear.

"I am about to explain. Listen. That ring—the opal ring, containing the poison, and which your fond hand placed on mine—acted well. The little prick which, as you playfully squeezed my hand, it made acted marvellously, and in twenty-four hours you wept, a widow, tears over my coffin.

"I should have been buried, but my old friend, Eric Stones, hearing of my decease, came to take a last glance at me in the vault and fulfil a boyish promise.

"My terror had always been that I might be buried alive, and I had extorted a promise from him that, if he survived me, he would come and open my veins, so that, if by any change the life current flowed again, I should bleed to death in my tomb.

"It was the dead of night when Eric crept to my coffin and fulfilled his vow, and, to his horror, the corpse rose up a few minutes after and called his name.

"He was skilled and strong, and he immediately bore me to his own house, and, suspecting poison, administered such antidotes as saved me; and then, in searching, he found the ring. Suspecting you, Olivia, he kept me hidden, and, closing the coffin again, allowed you to bury your husband, as you thought, and weep your false tears for him."

"Gaston!" cried the horrified woman, but St. Marlow interrupted her.

"Speak not. Let me not hear that deadly voice again. Mercy you shall have, but make no attempt to marry, for, as certainly as you try, the opal ring shall appear again a witness against you."

I saw my lady fall on the floor, and the two men left the room.

* * *

Whether my lady suspected I knew that terrible secret I knew not, but she gave me money enough to settle and marry, and I left her service immediately.

As for her ladyship, the last thing I heard of her was that she was the reigning belle of the Russian Court for some time, but that she was always strangely melancholy, and had at length committed suicide, it was supposed, though how was a mystery, as she was found lying on her sofa, beautifully dressed, and without any wound. An opal brooch, however, was found in her bodice.

Sky-Rocket Photographs.

An exceedingly ingenious invention consisting of a camera combined with a parachute, especially designed for obtaining photographs of fortifications and of the camps of the enemy, although pictures may also be made for surveying purposes, marks an important step in the science of modern warfare. The parachute is snugly folded in a thin case at the end of a rocket, which is fired to the required height, and bursts open by means of a time-fuse. The explosion sets free the parachute, which is protected from injury by a casing of asbestos. The parachute has a number of thin umbrella ribs, and these are forced outward, and kept in that position by a strong spiral spring. From the parachute a camera is suspended; and a string held by the operator is attached by a universal joint to the bottom of the device, for the purpose of pulling the parachute back. The camera is fitted with an instantaneous shutter, operated by clockwork, so as to give several exposures at intervals. At the back of the box is an arrangement by which the plates can be manipulated by mechanical agency. A swinging motion can be given the camera by the operator, and this will enable him to obtain successive pictures over a wide area. The whole arrangement is exceedingly clever; and there is no doubt that sky-rocket photographs will play an important part in the military maneuvers of the future.

Forgot all About it..

Dr. Duncan the great Scottish theologian and Oriental scholar, having to preach in a church near Aberdeen, set off one Sunday morning to walk to the place. Slowly moving along, he quickly got into the seventh heaven of mental exaltation, and time, space and matter fell from him like garments. Reaching the church, and seeing the people enter, it occurred to him to be a very proper thing to engage in public worship. Going up to the elder at the plate, he enquired who was to preach, and only "came to himself" when he was told that the preacher was to be "Mr. Duncan, from Aberdeen." One is at first inclined to doubt the authenticity of such anecdotes, but the present writer is ready to believe anything of the kind since an absent-minded friend of his returned home, after performing part of his journey by rail, to ask where he was going to.

To The Girls.

Girls, as many of you will have to make your way in life alone—and all of you ought to be able to help others fight its battles—do not wait until you are flung off by disaster, and your mother and your father are dead, and all the resources of your family have been scattered, but now, while in a good home, and environed by prosperity, learn how to do some kind of work that the world must have as long as the world stands. Turn your attention from the embroidery of fine slippers, of which there is a surplus, and make a useful article. Expend the time in which you adorn a cigar-case in learning how to make a good, honest loaf of bread. Turn your attention from the making of flimsy nothings to the manufacture of important somethings.

CHANGES IN TRADES.

The Great Changes Which Have Been Wrought in Many Trades in the Last Few Years.

The multiplication and improvement of mechanical appliances, the constantly enlarging use of steam and electric power and the steadily decreasing cost of production, all combined have wrought great changes in many trades. The shoemaker of other days could make a shoe, and every part of one. He could cut the leather, shape the upper and the last, trim the heel, sew, peg, stitch, and finish the various parts, and round it all off ready for wear without leaving his shop. But in these days of labor-saving devices and machinery the boss shoemaker has practically gone out of existence, or is going. Except a few custom-serving shoemakers, fewer in number each year, there is now nothing between the factory hand and the cobbler. The very name "shoemaker," once the designation of the Crispins, is now used chiefly to describe inferior workmen in any craft requiring special skill, knowledge, or dexterity. Nor is the shoemaker the only artisan to encounter this misfortune. The goldsmiths or goldbeaters are among the oldest of crafts. In England the goldbeaters guild was one of the greatest and most influential in all London town. The goldbeaters fought the fishmongers and the drapers or tailors for precedence, and bloody conflicts between the three were not uncommon. In London they still preserve something of their ancient organization. Their shops were known by the big yellow arm and hammer at the door. The jewellers do the work of which the goldbeaters formerly had a monopoly, and the electrotypers, too, have taken some of it. Silver has largely superseded gold for decorative and ornamental uses, and thin gold leaf prepared by a machine process supplies many of the requirements of those artists and artisans formerly requiring the labor of goldbeaters. Years ago the craft of the nailmaker was a separate and distinct one. Blacksmiths, quick at handling and shaping hot iron made nails by hand, and this was an established industry. Nowadays nails are a machine product, manufactured by the hundred gross, and the nailmaker, with his small shop, his hammer, his anvil, and his bellows, has been left behind in the march of progress. Another trade, or business, which has sustained almost a complete transformation, and has been nearly blotted out within a few years, is the business of stairbuilding. This was a separate branch of the carpenter's trade, and men trained to build stairs did nothing else. They had usually small workshops, their business being with carpenters and builders, and not with landlords and agents, as a rule; and therefore they did not find it necessary to advertise themselves. Wooden stairs are now put together by machinery, and are bought by builders ready made from factories. This has shut out most of the stair builders, though a few of them are still to be found. Iron staircases, too, have largely superseded in modern-built houses those of wood. All of these changes, while injurious to the material interests of individuals, have, in the main, greatly served the public by cheapening wonderfully the purchase price of such articles of manufacture to consumers, and thereby widening immeasurably the number of persons able to procure such commodities. Among unprogressive persons the extinction or decadence of some trades is deplored, but abler men, with their faces set toward the future, see nothing but general good to the community in the changes we have mentioned.

THE AUSTRALIAN GOLD FEVER.

It is Giving a Great Boom to Business in Western Australia.

The gold boom in West Australia is developing with wonderful rapidity. Already in Western Australia, we are told, there are springing up townships, where desolation once reigned; railways are being laid as fast as the workmen can put them down; a wild and hitherto unpeopled region is pulsating with civilization and a new life.

The recent discovery of an auriferous reef of untold value has given an impetus to the industry both in England and in the locality of the mines. Speaking of the discovery, Sir Malcolm Fraser, agent-general for Western Australia, reports officially as follows:

"It would seem to eclipse anything ever discovered in the world's history. 'Aladdin and his Lamp' does not record greater riches than those officially vouched for. A hole 5 feet 4 inches wide and 3 feet deep has yielded £10,000 first, and then enough gold is left to scale out two hundredweight. This reef outcrops a distance of half a mile, and it is believed to be a deep one. If it is anything like this, the wealth which is resting there must be something which will startle the world."

It is added, in comment by the London Financial News, that "if present indications are to be trusted it is a reasonable inference that the reef which runs north and south of Coolgardie will turn out to be one of altogether exceptional wealth, while at the Murchison field, although it has been hardly scratched over, the mines that have been opened are averaging from their crushings from three ounces to four ounces to the ton. During the six months ended June 30, 1894, the gold production of Western Australia amounted to 82,764 ounces, and it is estimated by eminent authorities that the total for 1894 will be 200,000 ounces, or nearly double the output in 1893. The gold is there—of that there can be no question."

Life's Problems Solved.

Tired Tim—"Wot's that you say? Lookin' fer work?"

Wayfaring William—"Yep. I an't no tramp. I work on farms. But I never stays in one sityation more'n a week."

"Why not?"

"Well, by that time the folks generally stops treatin' me as company, and wants me to work."

He—"She has very handsome teeth." She—"Why shouldn't she, when her brother is a dentist?"

FALL FUN.

Brown—"What tobacco are you smoking most of now?" Bunker—"Other fellows."

"Will you marry me?" "I am already engaged to four men." "But you can only marry one, you know. Let me be the one."

"So you are not going to send your son to college?" Uncle Oatbin—"'Tain't no use; don't care nothin' fur games an' never did."

Nell—"What makes you think your new suitor is entirely too honest?" Belle—"Because he wouldn't even steal a kiss."

Ethel—"What did you do when your fiance said he was going to have his mustache shaved off?" Maude—"Oh, I set my face against it."

He—"You are the only girl I ever loved" —She—"Oh, never mind that. The main question is am I the only girl you ever will love."

Wife—"And did Mr. Gay really say I was positively dove-like?" Husband—"Something of that sort. He said you were pigeon-toed, I believe."

Mrs. Hiland—"I don't like to see girls throw kisses. It is so immodest." Mr. Hiland—"Yes; and then they are usually such poor marksmen."

"How did you come to break with Miss Sweetlips? You always said she was as good as gold." "Yes; but I got acquainted with a girl who had the gold."

"Your wife takes great interest in the woman question." "She does, sir; she is so much taken up with the rights of woman that she forgets men haveany."

Mrs. Bingo—"Can't I have a bicycle, dear?" Bingo—"Pshaw, you'd never learn." Mrs. Bingo—"Well, I've had enough practice working the sewing machine."

Judge—"You say your boy was kept in the house nights and read books. What books?" Father of the youthful accused—"The Boy Bandits of Bombay' series."

Edith—"What makes you think that Charley is in love with you?" Maude—"Why, ma talked to him over half an hour last evening, and he really seemed to enjoy it."

Everett Wrest—"Lady, if you would like to have some wood sawed—" Mrs. Potts—"We burn gas." "Then perhaps you will let me turn on the gas for me breakfast."

He—"Do you know how to make good bread?" She—"Oh, yes; but I don't mean to; when I marry I mean to get a husband who will be rich enough to buy me cake."

Ethel—"What made people think they were husband and wife?" Frank—"Why, whenever he related a good story she always interrupted him by saying he'd left out something."

Wife—"The doctor says I will gain ten or fifteen pounds if I go away for a month. Can't I go, dear?" Husband—"Not much! Why, not one of your gowns would fit you then."

Teacher—"Now, Johnnie, we've been hearing of the changing seasons; how can we tell when fall is here?" Johnnie—"'Cause everybody's clothes smell of camphor balls."

"Say, I don't believe that story about Mrs. Danson's hair turning gray in a night, do you?" Susie—"Mercy, yes! That's nothing; my mamma turned hers yellow in half a day."

A noise in Europe—
They asked what was it,
'Twas little Japan
In the China closet.

"Do you think Sickles will recover soon? asked the invalid's friend. "H'm'm," replied the physician thoughtfully. "My answer depends on whether you mean physically or financially."

"Ah," said the casual caller, seeing the poet at work in the adjoining room, "the fire of genius is burning, eh?" "No," said the poet's practical wife, "I guess it is his cigarette that smells so."

Stoaks—"There goes Chanter Oakes. He's got one of the finest voices I ever heard. Ever hear him sing? He's got a fine voice." Oakes (sadly)—"Yes; nice voice. I heard it about an hour ago—he borrowed ten."

She—"Why did you make me a promise you never intended to keep? You would not treat a man that way." He—"Of course not. If you had been a man there would have been some show of reasoning with you."

"I don't believe Jack loves me as well as he ought to." Bertha—"Has he been neglecting you, dear?" "Oh, dear, no. He refuses to break our engagement when he know I could marry Mr. De Million if he would."

"Of course it's none of my business, dear," said Mildred to Amy, "but if I were you I wouldn't marry Mr. Spatters." "Why not?" "With all your money, you ought to be able to get a really handsome man."

"Here's somethin' great—simply great!" exclaimed the street fakir, as he blocked the path of a portly citizen. "I don't doubt it," was the reply. "But I belong to the class of people, sir, who object to having greatness thrust upon them."

WHENEVER I see Hood's Sarsaparilla now I want to bow and say

'Thank You'

Mrs. Paisley.

I was badly affected with **Eczema** and **Scrofula Sores**, covering almost the whole of one side of my face, nearly to the top of my head. Running sores discharged from both ears. My eyes were very bad, the **eyelids so sore** it was painful opening or closing them. For nearly a year I was deaf. I went to the hospital and had an operation performed for the removal of a cataract from one eye. One day my sister brought me

Hood's Sarsaparilla

which I took, and gradually began to feel better and stronger, and slowly the sores on my eyes and in my ears healed. I can now hear and see as well as ever." MRS. AMANDA PAISLEY, 176 Lander Street, Newburgh, N. Y.

HOOD'S PILLS cure all Liver Ills, Jaundice, Sick headache, biliousness, sour stomach, nausea.