The Phantom of the Opera

BY GASTON LEROUX

CHAPTER X.—(Cont'd.)

Raoul returned the next day. But those two days of absence had broken the charm of their delightful make-believe. They looked at each other, in the dressing-room, with their sad eyes, without exchanging a word. Raoul had to restrain himself not to cry out:

"I am jealous! I am jealous! I am jealous!"

But she heard him all the same. Then she said:

"Come for a walk, dear. The air will do you good."

Raoul thought that she would propose a stroll in the country, far from that building which he detested as a prison whose jailer he could feel walking within the walls . . . the jailer Erik . . . But she took him to the stage and made him sit on the wooden curb of a well, in the doubtful peace and coolness of a first scene set for the evening's performance.

On another day, she wandered with him, hand in hand, along the deserted paths of a garden whose creepers had been cut out by a decorator's skillful hands. It was as though the real sky, the real flowers, the real earth were forbidden her for all time and she condemned to breathe no other air than that of the theatre. An occasional fireman passed, watching over their melancholy idyl from afar. And she would drag him up above the clouds, in the magnificent disorder of the grid, where she loved to make him giddy by running in front of him along the frail bridges, among the thousands of ropes fastened to the pulleys, the windlasses, the rollers, in the midst of a regular forest of yards and masts.

The precious days sped in this way; and Raoul and Christine, by affecting excessive interest in outside matters, strove awkwardly to hide from each other the one thought of their hearts. One fact was certain, that Christine, who until then had shown herself the stronger of the two, became suddenly inexpressibly nervous. When on their expeditions, she would start running without reason or else suddenly stop; and her hand, turning ice-cold in a moment, would hold the young man back. Sometimes her eyes seemed to pursue imaginary shadows. She cried, "This way," and "This way," and "This way," laughing a breathless laugh that often ended in tears. Then Raoul tried to speak, to question her, in spite of his promises. But, even before he had worded his question, she answered feverishly:

"Nothing . . . I swear it is nothing."

Once, when they were passing before an open trap-door on the stage, Raoul stopped over the dark cavity.

"You have shown me over the upper part of your empire, Christine, but there are strange stories told of the lower part. Shall we go down?"

She caught him in her arms, as though she feared to see him disappear down the black hole, and, in a trembling voice, whispered:

"Never! . . . I will not have you go there! . . . Besides, it's not mine . . . everything that is underground belongs to him!"

Raoul looked her in the eyes and said roughly:

"So he lives down there, does he?"

"I never said so. . . . Who told you a thing like that? Come away! I sometimes wonder if you are quite sane, Raoul. . . . You always take things in such an impossible way . . . Come along!"

And she literally dragged him away, for he was obstinate and wanted to remain by the trap-door; that hole attracted him.

Suddenly, the trap-door was closed and so quickly that they did not even see the hand that worked it; and they remained quite dazed.

"Perhaps he was there," Raoul said, at last.

"No, no! He has shut himself up, he is working."

"Oh, really! He's working, is he?"

"Yes, he can't open and shut the trap-doors and work at the same time." She shivered.

"What is he working at?"

"Oh, something terrible! . . . But it's all the better for us . . . When he's working at that, he sees nothing; he does not eat, drink, or breathe for days and nights at a time . . . he becomes a living dead man and has no time to amuse himself with the trap-doors."

She shivered again. She was still holding him in her arms. Then she sighed and said, in her turn:

"Suppose it were he!"

"Are you afraid of him?"

"No, no, of course not," she said.

And Christine's eyes stared wildly at everything around her.

"I will remove you from his power, Christine, I swear it. And you shall not think of him any more."

"Is it possible?"

She allowed herself this doubt, which was an encouragement, while dragging the young man up to the topmost floor of the theatre, far, very far from the trap-doors.

"Higher!" was all she said. "Higher still!"

And she dragged him up toward the summit.

And, despite the care which she took to look behind her at every moment, she failed to see a shadow which followed her like her own shadow, which stopped when she stopped, which started again when she did and which made no more noise than a well-conducted shadow should. As for Raoul, he saw nothing either; for, when he had Christine in front of him, nothing interested him that happened behind.

CHAPTER XI.

APOLLO'S LYRE.

In this way, they reached the roof. Christine tripped over it as lightly as a shadow. Their eyes swept the empty space between the three domes and the triangular pediment. She breathed freely over Paris, the whole valley of which was seen at work below. She called Raoul to come quite close to her and they walked side by side along the zinc streets, in the leaden avenues; they looked at their twin shapes in the huge tanks, full of stagnant water, where, in the hot weather, the little boys of the ballet, a score or so, learn to swim and dive.

The shadow had followed behind them, clinging to their steps; and the two children little suspected its presence when they at last sat down, trustingly, under the mighty protection of Apollo, who, with a great bronze gesture, lifted his huge lyre to the heart of a crimson sky.

It was a gorgeous spring evening. Clouds, which had just received their gossamer robe of gold and purple from the setting sun, drifted slowly by; and Christine said:

"Soon we shall go farther and faster than the clouds, to the end of the world, and then you will leave me, Raoul. But, if, when the moment comes for you to take me away, I refuse to go with you—well, you must carry me off by force!"

"Are you afraid that you will change your mind, Christine?"

"I don't know," she said, shaking her head in an odd fashion. "He is a demon!" And she shivered and nestled in his arms with a moan. "I am afraid now of going back to live with him . . . in the ground!"

"What compels you to go back, Christine?"

"If I do not go back to him, terrible misfortunes may happen! . . But I can't do it, I can't do it! . . . I know one ought to be sorry for people who live underground. . . But he is too horrible! And yet the time is at hand; I have only a day left; and, if I do not go, he will come and fetch me with his voice. And he will drag me with him, underground, and go on his knees before me, with his death's head. And he will tell me that he loves me! And he will cry! Oh, those tears, Raoul, those tears in the two black eye-sockets of the death's head! I can not see those tears flow again!"

"No, no, you shall never again hear him tell you that he loves you! You shall not see his tears! Let us fly, Christine, let us fly at once!"

And he tried to drag her away, then and there. But she stopped him.

"No, no," she said, shaking her head sadly. "Not now! . . . It would be too cruel! . . . let him hear me sing to-morrow evening . . . and then we will go away. You must come and fetch me in my dressing-room at midnight exactly. He will then be waiting for me in the dining-room by the lake . . . we shall be free and you shall take me away. . . . You must promise me that, Raoul, even if I refuse; for I feel that, if I go back this time, I shall perhaps never return."

"It is too terrible," she confessed, "to be always trembling like this! . . . And yet we run no danger here; we are at home, in the sky, in the open air, in the light. The sun is flaming; and night-birds can not bear to look at the sun. I have never seen him by daylight . . . it must be awful! . . . Oh, the first time I saw him! . . . I thought that he was going to die."

"Why?" asked Raoul, really frightened at the aspect which this strange confidence was taking.

"Because I had seen him!"

This time, Raoul and Christine turned round at the same time:

"There is some one in pain," said Raoul. "Perhaps some one has been hurt. Did you hear?"

"I can't say," Christine confessed. "Even when he is not there, my ears are full of his sighs. Still, if you heard . . ."

They stood up and looked around them. They were quite alone on the immense lead roof. They sat down again and Raoul said:

"Tell me how you saw him first."

"I had heard him for three months without seeing him. The first time I heard it, I thought, as you did, that that adorable voice was singing in another room. I went out and looked everywhere; but, as you know, Raoul, my dressing-room is very much by itself; and I could not find the voice outside my room, whereas it went on steadily inside. And it not only sang, but it spoke to me and answered my questions, like a real man's voice, with this difference, that it was as beautiful as the voice of an angel. I had never got the Angel of Music whom my poor father had promised to send me as soon as he was dead. I really think that Mamma Valerius was a little bit to blame. I told her about it; and she at once said, 'It must be the Angel; at any rate, you can do no harm by asking him.' I did so; and the man's voice replied that, yes, it was the Angel's voice, the voice which I was expecting and which my father had promised me. From that time onward, the voice and I became great friends. It asked leave to give me lessons every day. I agreed and never failed to keep the appointment when it gave me in my dressing-room. You have no idea, though you have heard the voice, of what those lessons were like."

"No, I have no idea," said Raoul. "What was your accompaniment?"

"We were accompanied by a music which I do not know; it was behind the wall and wonderfully accurate. The voice seemed to understand mine exactly, to know precisely where my father had left off teaching me. In a few weeks' time I hardly knew myself when I sang. I was even frightened. I seemed to dread a sort of witchcraft behind it; but Mamma Valerius reassured me. She said that she knew I was much too simple a girl to give the devil a hold on me. . . . . My progress, by the voice's own order, was kept a secret between the voice, Mamma Valerius and myself. It was a curious thing, but, outside the dressing-room, I sang with my ordinary, every-day voice, and nobody noticed anything. I did all that the voice asked. It said, 'Wait and see: we shall astonish Paris!' And I waited and lived on in a sort of ecstatic dream. It was then that I saw you for the first time one evening, in the house. I was so glad that I never thought of concealing my delight when I reached my dressing-room. Unfortunately, the voice was there before me and soon noticed, by my hair, that something had happened. It asked what was the matter and I saw no reason for keeping our story secret or concealing the place which you filled in my heart. Then the voice was silent. I called to it, but it did not reply. I begged and entreated, but in vain. I was terrified lest it had gone for good. I wish to Heaven it had, dear! . . . That night I went home in a desperate condition. I told Mamma Valerius, who said, 'Why, of course, the voice is jealous!' And that, dear, first revealed to me that I loved you."

Christine stopped and laid her head on Raoul's shoulder. They sat like that for a moment in silence, and they did not see, did not perceive the movement, at a few steps from them, of the creeping shadow of two great black wings, a shadow that came along the roof so near, so near them that it could have stifled them by closing over them.

(To be continued.)

New Year's Day in Japan.

Japan is of threefold interest to us. In art she stands high. She was our ally in the great war, and she is the only non-Christian nation that holds a position of influence among the nations of to-day. One of Japan's changes to bring herself in line with the West, was the adopting of January 1st as her New Year's Day, but on it she keeps up all her own quaint customs, some of which are very beautiful, and one at least is very good—the idea that all debts must be settled before the New Year. So on New Year's Eve there are great fairs at which practically everything of metal or woven fabric is offered for sale. All are second-hand and all brought there by people in debt who at this last minute will sacrifice one after another of their household treasures until they have raised enough to clear the account against them so that they enter the New Year happily.

Then comes New Year's Day! An arch more or less elaborate according to the means of the owner, is placed at every door; it is usually of bamboo and grass rope, and the idea of the arch is to prevent evil spirits from entering. Then above it will be a scarlet lobster, in an evergreen wreath, an emblem of good luck; with the flag of Japan—red sun on white ground. Sometimes there is the ship of the New Year—a decoration which we might use for our tables on New Year's Day; it is a tiny ship of twisted yellow straw laden with all that we hope for to make a happy New Year. There are wee bales of grain; tiny representations of vegetables and fruits, etc.; and other pretty and dainty articles, or ornaments, as may suit the ideas of the one loading the ship. In the streets and even perched on the roofs, parents and children alike play games. Ball and kite-flying are among the most popular. Then Japan makes calls and gives presents on New Year's Day, and, of course, there is the usual feasting that belongs to all holidays in all countries.

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For Short.

The laird of a small estate in Scotland went to a hiring fair to engage a manservant. After some bickering he engaed a likely man, and afterwards asked him his name.

"Alexander Scott Brown Graham," replied the man.

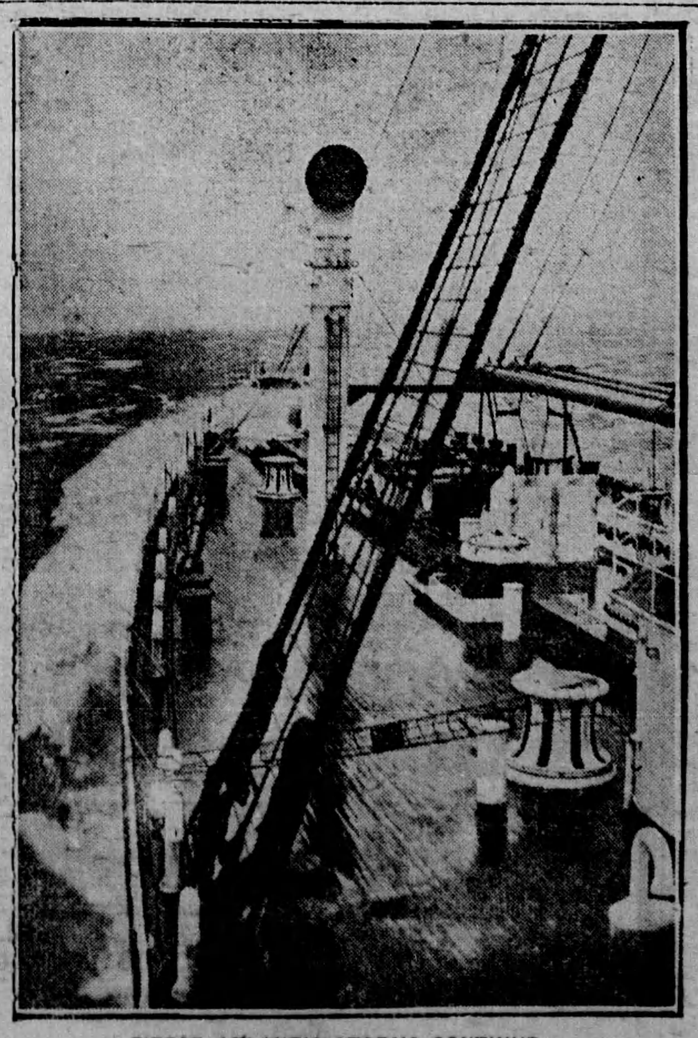
"Tut tut!" said the laird, "that's far too long a name for me to remember, be?" queried Sandy.

"And, noo, what micht your name be?" querier Sandy.

"Nicholas Duff Gordon," replied the laird, pompously.

"Ach!" said Sandy, "that's far too long a name for me tae mind, so I'll just ca' ye 'Auld Nick'"!

Rattlesnake flesh is edible and much resembles frog legs.



FIERCE ATLANTIC STORMS CONTINUE

For the past month there has been little let up in the heavy gales running, and many liners have been delayed on their schedule. The above photo shows the Aquitania fighting her way along with the waves breaking over her bow.

Where Hills Arise.

Take a hill before a rain,
Dust upon the yellow plain,
And the sombre waiting firs:
Take a hill when rain has passed
And the serried pine are massed
Spear points where a breathing stirs.

There is something in a hill
Ever eager, always still.

In the deep heart of the hills
Are a hundred hidden courses,
And their plunging waterfalls
Are like silver running horses,
While on windy days above,
Though the valleys have no sound,
Where the gentian holds the light,
Movement seems to till the ground.

I was born where many waters are,
I have sesen them at their source, and later,
Watched them when the floods were high,
Crossed them when the geese flew by;
Many a sea I've known, but never
Water like a hill-born river.

—Struthers Burt, in "When I Grew Up to Middle Age."

Whistler and His Mother.

Few modern pictures are more familiar to the general public than Whistler's portrait of his mother. The subject of that famous portrait, Anna M. Whistler, was a gentle, affectionate and deeply religious old lady, conventional in her habits and outlook upon life, and not at all the kind of parent one would have expected to belong to a brilliant, eccentric, sharp-tongued and belligerent genius. But the relations between mother and son, as depicted in some of Mrs. Whistler's letters recently published in the Atlantic Monthly, were of the happiest. The fine old American, though she had some natural doubts of the solid value of her son's artistic London friends, gifted and charming though they were, endeavored to prove herself adaptable and understanding, and acted successfully as hostess for her beloved "Jemie" when he entertained them.

She tried hard to understand and appreciate his art and took a true mother's pride and delight in his success. Of the famous portrait itself she wrote:

"Just now a neighbor and friend interrupted my writing. She has just told me what some of Jemie's friends said of the portrait of my unworthy self. An artist said to her, 'It has a holy expression. Oh, how much sentiment Whistler has put into his mother's likeness!' Your sister will tell you how wonderfully the three cases of portraits were preserved from fire on the railroad train, though many packages of valuable luggage were entirely consumed. The flames had reached the case in which my portrait was; the lid was burnt, a side of the frame was scorched, yet the painting uninjured."

Suppose the picture had been burned. Could or would Whistler have replaced it? It was a narrow escape indeed for one of the really great art works of our time.

"It is more encouraging to my hopes of Jemie," continues his mother in her leter, "that at this time, when the World is offered him, he should confided in me voluntarily his desire to unite with me in the highest of all attainments. His is natural religion; he thinks of God as the diffusive source of all he enjoys, in the glories of the firmament, the loveliness of flowers, the noble studies of the human form. The Creator of all!"

Winter Warmth.

Twinkling flames danced beneath the mantelpiece. Bronze andirons carry the figures of dormant lions, symbols of soft subservience to the flames, asleep like gentle cats under the spell of the fire. Lichen-covered logs, colored a sage green, with young moss and earthy smells clinging to their round and knotted surface, crackle merrily in the wide fireplace, etched with polished tiles. Grandmother sits contentedly in a Windsor chair and reads.

This is a modern home! Transplanted beauty of the ages abounds within the four walls of the living room whose hardwood floors radiate from the Chinese design on the taupe Wilton rug. The fireplace is only evidence of old-fashioned enjoyment of winter in northern lands. The blaze is bringing anew a blush to grandmother's cheeks. As the living flame leaps from the log a glowing atmosphere is left, which forms the essence of the foyer to the French; the hearth, without its cricket, to the English.

The fireplace is the link with winter days of yore. Memories and dim pictures are in the fireplace frame—pictures that live and breathe and vanish with the ever-changing music of the crackling logs.

All pervading is the warmth, the winter warm which bears no kin to the vagabond days of summer. Outside, the lawn is snow strewn, lit by the glow from the window where fringe of shade leaves a bar of flickering light and shadow above the sill.

Odors of the forest fill the living room. Phantasies of spring leap from quickening logs, as the rich aroma arises from red and purple flames that make only one step to the vanishing point in the somber shadows of the chimney and go out over the roof top into the night as a veil of smoke.

Eleven cubic feet of water, when frozen, makes twelve cubic feet of ice.

WHAT "OTHER PEOPLE" SAY

A young woman tells me that she considers she has a right to live her own life in her own way and do exactly as she pleases. So she has snapped her fingers in the face of Mrs. Grundy. Now she finds that her reputation is being torn to tatters and thinks that she is being treated unfairly.

"How hard, and cruel, and unjust people are!" she says, and then asks: "Don't you think that gossip is the unpardonable sin?"

Not at all. Gossip is one of the most powerful influences in the world for good. It is the invisible, omnipresent policeman that enforces law and order. It is the scourge that keeps the trembling wretch in order and makes the weak-kneed and the wobbly walk the straight and narrow path.

Cowards All!

We can stifle the voice of conscience, but we cannot silence the voice of our neighbors. We can believe that we have a right to make our own code of conduct, but we cannot force other people to take our point of view, or to make any exception on our behalf to the standards that society has set up for good behaviour.

And it is this fear of what "they'll say" that makes us keep up at least an outward show of decency. For no matter how vain and egotistic we are; no matter how self-complacent and self-satisfied we are; no matter how independent we think we are, we are all cowards who grovel in the dust before public opinion.

It is the lifted eyeebrow. It is the cold, measured, appraising look that weighs us in the balance and finds us wanting. It is the turn of a shoulder away from us and the little hush that falls on a group as we approach that tells us that we have been the subject of unfavorable discussion.

It is the knowledge that she will be gossiped about if she indulges in any flirtations that keeps many a bored young married woman with romantic yearnings from indulging in little affairs with good-looking bachelors. She knows that there might really be no harm in her having lunch with Mr. A. or going to the theatre with Mr. C., but she could never explain it to the woman who lives next door.

Protect Your Good Name.

Many an indiscreet girl is easy-going and good-natured, and warm-hearted and affectionate, and she ses no harm in letting boys she likes kiss her, but it makes her flesh creep to think of the Amalgamated Scandal-Mongers' Union getting out their hammers and going for her if she does.

If we could only do as we pleased without comments from our fellow-creatures there would be many more philandering husbands and wives than there are, many more neglected children, and ill-kept houses. It is the knowledge that, if they give way to their natural impulses, they will be talked about that gives many the strength to resist the temptation to be as bad as they would like to be.

Those who are down on gossip and feel that the world should cover up their shortcomings with a blanket of silence are unreasonable. Why should other people be more careful of your reputation than you are yourself. If you do not care enough for your good name to protect it, why demand that service from the general public?

Foolish and vain expectation! For the gossipers keep on their good work, and the only way you can escape being talked about is to be so exemplary that you are a dull subject for conversation.—Dorothy Dix.

Pyramids.

Wouldst build a gorgeous pyramid,
As Egypt did of old,
And point it upwardd to the sky,
Your name 'gainst time to hold?

Nay, do not build your monument
Of stones or jewels rare,
But build it up of loving deeds
Posterity may share.

Stone pyramids are futile things,
At best the stones may stay—
But men will soon forget the name
Of him who passed that way.

But he who builds that others may
Be helped by what he wrought,
Builds marvelously, a monument,
Of ever living thought.

—George Elliston.

A Tense Moment.

At a performance of an amateur dramatic club an amusing incident occurred through the nervousness of one of the performers.

The local band was a leading feature of the production, and praise for the music was heard all over the hall.

In the third act a youth who was playing the part of a page had to rush on the stage whilst the band was playing and cry:

"Stop the music! The king is dead!"

The critical moment arrived, and the excited and highly strung page made his entrance.

"Stop the music!" he cried, dramatically. "It has killed the king!"

Chasm Yawns in Field.

During a recent night a subsidence which caused a hole 30 feet deep occurred in a field sown with wheat at Newlands Farm, Luton, England.

Selling Ganges Water.

The water of the Ganges river is a considerable article of commerce in the remote parts of India.