Night and Morning.

BOOK V.

VI.
Continued.

Ring on, ye bells—most pleasant is your chime!"—WILSON: *Isle of Palms.*
O fairy child! What can I wish for thee?" *Ibid.*

VAUDEMONT remained six days in London without going to H——, and each of those days he paid a visit to Lord Lilburne. On the seventh day, the invalid being much better, though still unable to leave his room, Camilla returned to Berkeley Square. On the same day, Vaudemont went once more to see Simon and poor Fanny.

As he approached the door, he heard from the window, partially opened, for the day was clear and fine, Fanny's sweet voice. She was chanting one of the simple songs she had promised to learn by heart; and Vaudemont, though but a poor judge of the art, was struck and affected by the music of the voice and earnest depth of the feeling. He paused opposite the window and called her by name. Fanny looked forth joyously, and ran, as usual, to open the door to him.

"Oh! you have been so long away; but I already know many of the songs; they say so much that I always wanted to say!"

Vaudemont smiled, but languidly.

"How strange it is," said Fanny, musingly, "that there should be so much in a piece of paper! for, after all," pointing to the open page of her book, "this is but a piece of paper,—only there is life in it!"

"Ay," said Vaudemont, gloomily, and far from seizing the subtle delicacy of Fanny's thought—*her* mind dwelling upon Poetry and *his* upon Law,—"ay, and do you know that upon a mere scrap of paper, if I could but find it, may depend my whole fortune, my whole happiness, allthat I care for in life?"

"Upon a scrap of paper? Oh! how I wish I could find it! Ah! you look as if you thought I should never be wise enough for that!"

Vaudemont, not listening to her, uttered a deep sigh. Fanny approached him timidly.

"Do not sigh, brother,—I can't bear to hear you sigh. You are changed. Have *you*, too, not been happy?"

"Happy, Fanny! yes, lately very happy—too happy!"

"Happy, have you? and *I*——" the girl stopped short—her tone had been that of sadness and reproach, and she stopped—why she knew not, but she felt her heart sink within her. Fanny suffered him to pass her, and he went straight to his own room. Her eyes followed him wistfully: it was not his habit to leave her thus abruptly. The family meal of the day was over: and it was an hour before Vaudemont descended to the parlour. Fanny had put aside the songs, she had no heart to recommence those gentle studies that had been so sweet,—they had drawn no pleasure, no praise from him. She was seated idly and listlessly beside the silent old man, who every day grew more and more silent still. She turned her head as Vaudemont entered, and her pretty lip pouted at that look of neglected child. But he did not heed it, and the pout vanished, and tears rushed to her eyes.

Vaudemont was changed. His countenance was thoughtful and overcast; his manner abstracted. He addressed a few words to Simon, and then seating himself by the window, leant his cheek on his hand, and was soon lost in reverie. Fanny, finding that he did not speak, and after stealing many a long and earnest glance at his motionless attitude and gloomy brow, rose gently, and gliding to him with her light step, said in a trembling voice,—

"Are you in pain, brother?"

"No, pretty one!"

"Then why don't you speak to Fanny? Will you not walk with her? Perhaps my grandfather will come to."

"Not this evening. I will go out, but it will be alone."

"Where? Has not Fanny been good? I have not been out since you left us. And the grave—brother!—I sent Sarah with the flowers—but—"

Vaudemont rose abruptly. The mention of the grave brought back his thoughts from the dreaming channel into which they had flowed. Fanny, whose very childishness had once so soothed him, now disturbed; he felt the want of that complete solitude which makes the atmosphere of growing passion; he muttered some scarcely audible excuse, and quitted the house. Fanny saw him no more that evening. He did not return till midnight. But Fanny did not sleep till she heard his step on the stair and his chamber door close; and when she did sleep, her dreams were disturbed and painful. The next morning when they met at breakfast (for Vaudemont did not return to London), her eyes were red and heavy and her cheek pale. And, still buried in meditation, Vaudemont's eye, usually so kind and watchful, did not detect those signs of a grief that Fanny could not have explained. After breakfast, however, he asked her to walk out; and her face brightened as she hastened to put on her bonnet, and take her little basket full of fresh flowers which she had already sent Sarah forth to purchase.

"Fanny," said Vaudemont, as leaving the house, he saw the basket on her arm, "to-day you may place some of those flowers on *another* tombstone! Poor child, what natural goodness there is in that heart!—what pity that——"

He paused. Fanny looked delightedly in his face.

"You were praising me—*you!*—And what is a pity, brother?"

While she spoke, the sound of the joy-bells was heard near at hand.

"Hark!" said Vaudemont, forgetting her question—and almost gaily—"hark! I accept the omen. It is a marriage peal!"

He quickened his steps, and they reached the churchyard.

There was a crowd already assembled, and Vaudemont and Fanny paused; and, leaning over the little gate, looked on.

"Why are these people here, and why does the bell ring so merrily?"

"There is to be a wedding, Fanny."

"I have heard of a wedding very often," said Fanny, with a pretty look of puzzlement and doubt, "but I don't know exactly what it means. Will you tell me?—and the bells, too?"

"Yes, Fanny, those bells toll but three times for man! The first time, when he comes into the world; the last time when he leaves it; the time between, when he takes to his side a partner in all the sorrows—in all the joys that yet remain to him; and who, even when the last bell announces his death to this earth, may yet, for ever and ever, be his partner in that world to come—that Heaven, where they who are as innocent as you Fanny, may hope to live and to love each other in a land in which there are no graves!"

"And *this* bell?"

"Tolls for that partnership—for the wedding."

"I think I understand you,—and they who are to be wed are happy?"

"Happy, Fanny, if they love, and their love continue. Oh! conceive the happiness to know some one person dearer to you than your own self—some one breast into which you can pour every thought, every grief, every joy! One person, who, if all the rest of the world were to calumniate or forsake you, would never wrong you by a harsh thought or an unjust word—who would cling to you in sickness, in poverty, in care—who would sacrifice all things to you, and for whom you would sacrifice all—from whom, except by death, night or day, you may be never divided—whose smile is ever at your hearth—who has no tears while you are well and happy, and your love the same. Fanny, such is marriage, if they who marry have hearts and souls to feel that there is no bond on earth so tender and so sublime. There is an opposite picture—I will not draw *that*—And as it is, Fanny, you cannot understand me!"

He turned away—and Fanny's tears were falling like rain upon the grass below—he did not see them! He entered the churchyard; for the bell now ceased. The ceremony was to begin. He followed the bridal party into the church, and Fanny, lowering her veil, crept after him, awed and trembling.

They stood unobserved in a little distance, and heard the service.

The betrothed were of the middle class of life, young, both comely; and their behaviour was such as suited the reverence and sanctity of the rite. Vaudemont stood looking on intently, with his arms folded on his breast. Fanny leant behind him and apart from all, against one of the pews. And still in her hand, while the priest was solemnising marriage, she held the flowers intended for the grave. Even to *that* MORNING—hushed, calm, earnest, with her mysterious and unconjectured heart—her shape brought a thought of NIGHT!

When the ceremony was over—when the bride fell on her mother's breast and wept; and then, when turning thence, her eyes met the bridegroom's and the tears were all smiled away—when, in that one interchange of looks, spoke all that lady love can speak to love, and with timid frankness she placed her hand in his to whom she had just vowed her life,—a thrill went through the hearts of those present. Vaudemont sighed heavily. His heard his sigh echoed; but by one that had in its sound no breath of pain; he turned; Fanny had raised her veil; her eyes met his, moistened, but bright, soft, and her cheeks were rosy-red. Vaudemont recoiled before that gaze, and turned from the church. The persons interested retired to the vestry to sign their names in the registry; the crowd dispersed, and Vaudemont and Fanny stood alone in the burial-ground.

"Look, Fanny," said the former, pointing to a tomb that stood far from his mother's (for those ashes were too hallowed for such a neighbourhood); "look yonder; it is a new tomb, Fanny, let us approach it. Can you read what is there inscribed?"

The inscription was simply this:—

To W—G——
MAN BEST THE JUDGE—
GOD THE CIRCUMSTANCE.
JUDGE NOT, THAT YE BE NOT JUDGED.

"Fanny, this tomb fulfils your pious wish; it is to the memory of him whom you called your father. Whatever was his life here—whatever sentence it hath received, Heaven, at least, will not condemn *your* piety, if you honour one who was good to you, and place flowers, however, even over that grave."

"It is his—my father's—and you have thought of this for me!" said Fanny, taking his hand; and sobbing. "And I have been thinking that you were not so kind to me as you were!"

"Have I not been so kind to you? nay, forgive me, I am not happy."

"Not?—you said yesterday you had been *too* happy."

"To remember happiness is not to be happy, Fanny."

"That's true—and——"

Fanny stopped; and, as she bent over the tomb, musing, Vaudemont, willing to leave her undisturbed, and feeling bitterly how little his conscience could vindicate though it might find palliation for, the dark man who slept not there—retired a few paces.

At this time the new-married pair, with their witnesses, the clergyman, &c., came from the vestry and crossed the path. Fanny, as she turned from the tomb, saw them, and stood still, looking earnestly at the bride.

"What a lovely face!" said the mother. "Is it—yes it is—the poor idiot girl."

"Ah!" said the bridegroom tenderly, "and she, Mary, beautiful as she is, *she* can never make another as happy as you have made me."

Vaudemont heard, and his heart felt sad. "Poor Fanny!—And yet, but for that affection—*I* might have loved her ere I met the fatal face of the daughter of my foe!" And with a deep compassion, and inexpressible and holy fondness, he moved to Fanny.

"Come, my child; now let us go home."

"Stay," said Fanny—"you forgot." And she went to strew the flowers, still left, over Catherine's grave.

"Will my mother," thought Vaudemont, "forgive me if I have other thoughts than hate and vengeance for that house which builds its grandeur over her slandered name?" He groaned; and that grave had lost its melancholy charm.

To be continued.

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THOS. REYNOLDS,
Managing Director, Ottawa.

Feb. 13, 1876. 627

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Ottawa	1:25 p.m.	7:30 p.m.
Renfrew	2:25 p.m.	8:30 p.m.
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Brockville, Dec. 3, 1875. 441

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9:00 a.m.	12:30 p.m.	Rideau Canal, Kingston, Toronto, Hamilton, Port Dalhousie, St. Catharines, Niagara Falls, Clifton, Chippawa, Fort Erie, Port Colborne, Welland Canal, Dunnville, Caledonia, Brantford, Paris, Galt, Guelph, Berlin, Waterloo, Stratford, Sarnia, Windsor, Amherstburg, Chatham, Wallaceburg, Dresden, Thamesville, Wardsville, Glencoe, Strathroy, Komoka, Ailsa Craig, Parkhill, Ilderton, Arva, London, Port Stanley, Belmont, Dorchester, Aylmer, St. Thomas, Tilsonburg, Simcoe, Port Dover, Hagersville, Dunnville, Cayuga, Caledonia, Brantford, Paris, Galt, Guelph, Berlin, Waterloo, Stratford, Sarnia, Windsor, Amherstburg, Chatham, Wallaceburg, Dresden, Thamesville, Wardsville, Glencoe, Strathroy, Komoka, Ailsa Craig, Parkhill, Ilderton, Arva, London, Port Stanley, Belmont, Dorchester, Aylmer, St. Thomas, Tilsonburg, Simcoe, Port Dover, Hagers