THE LITTLE HEROINE.

The flames in cyclones rolled on high
And swept along a tidal wave.
With blinding smoke dark grew the sky
And everywhere was heard the cry,
"Oh, God, is there no power to save."

Deep horror seized the multitude
And on they rushed, they knew not where:
The flames advancing thro' the wood
And curling like a serpent-brood
Hissed death thro' all the heated air.

The strongest fell—ah, human power
However great, at times how vain;
As frosts lay low the fragile flower
So did those fires in one short hour
Leave awful ruin in their train

The strongest fell—but there was one,
A little girl of twelve sweet years,
Who with her baby brother won
A place of safety, while the sun
All vainly struggled with its fears

Saved! saved! ah, yes; but who can tell
Just how that little girl was saved!
Who guided her footsteps so well?
Who gently raised her when she fell?
Who shielded from the flames that raved.

Aye, more, who gave in direst woe
To her the superhuman power
To carry darling Baby Joe,
The little brother she loved so,
And from death's sickle save that flower!

Ah, love, you say, love, mighty love
Sweet love that fires cannot kill;
'Twas love that moved the powers above
To once again in terror prove
That nought can thwart their sovereign will

And yet we read in God's good book,
(What sweetness in that golden cup!)
Even when by parents fond forsook,
And when in vain for help we look,
'Tis then the Lord will take us up

Oh Freda Johnson, darling child,
Oh, Freda and sweet Baby Joe!
Down through the fiery tempest wild
God saw your sinless hearts and smiled
And saved you for he loved you so.

—G. W. Crofts, in the Chicago Inter Ocean

Lady Latimer's Escape.

BY CHARLOTTE M. BRAEME.

CHAPTER VIII—CONTINUED.

In spite of myself my lips quivered as I uttered his name, but my mother did not notice it. I did not distress her by crying out the truth—that I had been willing to barter the happiness of my whole life for one month's bliss; it would have broken her heart. I told her no untruth, I did not even deceive her, for I had never dreamed of any return for my great love. I never misunderstood his kindness or his gay, chivalrous fashion. It would soon be over now; no need to break my mother's heart as well as my own.

The beautiful month was drawing to an end, but before any of us had begun to realize what the parting would be like, Lord Latimer introduced a new feature. One day, just before dinner, Captain Fleming had gone into the library to speak to him. Colonel North followed. Business of some kind took Lady Latimer and myself there; we had a lively conversation; the old lord seemed pleased and cheered.

"I consider," he said, "that this shooting party has been a great success. Lionel, you must come back at Christmas—come for some weeks, and help Lady Latimer with her charades and plays. Come with him, Colonel North.

I saw the colonel look first at Lady Latimer. Her beautiful eyes smiled upon him.

"I shall be only too delighted," he replied; and that was how it happened that parting lost its pain.

Little matter if they left when September was over if they returned for Christmas. When the end came, and the day dawned on which they left Lorton's Cray, it was with smiles, not tears we saw them ride away. A few weeks, only a few, and they returned for even a longer stay.

It was a strange calm after they had gone. We were not unhappy or dull; a new order of things set in. We were always thinking of and preparing for Christmas and the New Year.

"We will have such a Christmas as has never been celebrated in England before," said Lady Latimer to me. "We will have the old banqueting-hall made into a theater; we will have charades, masquerades and theatricals; we will dance and sing. When it is frosty, we will skate. When the snow falls and the wind wails, we will tell ghost tales. Oh, Audrey, how happy we shall be!"

And she whose beautiful face had once expressed all the weariness that life could hold, caught me in her arms and waltzed around the room with me.

It was both pitiful and touching. She thought of nothing, talked of nothing but Christmas; everything referred to Christmas; there was no looking beyond it. If a beautiful costume was sent from London or Paris, it was reserved for Christmas.

"I think the end of the world will come at Christmas, Lady Latimer," I said. "We are making such preparations for it."

She laughed gaily. She was always laughing now, and a sweet, glad content rested on her fair face.

"I never knew before," she cried, "what a happy time Christmas was, Audrey;" and then her face flushed crimson. "We used to hang up what we called 'a kissing bunch' at home."

"So did we," I answered, and my face grew even redder than hers.

"I—I suppose," she said, after a time, "that we could not do such a thing here at Lorton's Cray. It seems to me, Audrey, the grander a house is, the more miserable it is. Think of the merriment at your house at Christmas. But we shall be happy. What do you think of a kissing bunch?"

"If we have one at all," I answered, discreetly, "it must be called a mistletoe bough?"

"Well, what do you think of a mistletoe bough?" she asked.

I thought it delightful, and told her so.

Then she drew nearer to me. She took my arms, and laid them round her neck.

"Audrey," she whispered, "if we have a mistletoe bough, will any one kiss us, do you think—you and me?"

"Lord Latimer may," I answered, dryly.

"Any one else?" she asked. But I would not smile. "I know some people so lovable," she said, "that to stand under the mistletoe for two minutes with them would atone for years of unhappiness."

"I am sorry that I do not know any one of that description," I answered. I was always careful—always discreet.

But, for all that, when the orders were given for the Christmas evergreens, there was a large one for mistletoe.

CHAPTER IX.

Every day Christmas came nearer and nearer—every day the face of beautiful Lady Latimer grew fairer and younger, more bright and more radiant—every day she woke up with fresh plans and fresh designs—every day she found some new beauty, some new happiness in the coming Christmas-tide. And all this because she had learned to love Colonel North without knowing it. At last Christmas came; and brought them both with it.

The snow and the biting frost had come, the ice was inches thick on the deep meres and pools round Lorton's Cray, and Lorton's Cray itself was a scene of merriment and festivity. A large Christmas party was gathering under its roof.

Lady Latimer was one of the most charming of hostesses. Lord Latimer took very little part in it; he dined, as usual, with his guests, and then retired. He never came to the drawing-room, but once or twice had made his way to the billiard-room.

I may have been prejudiced, but to me he seemed more morose and more stern than ever. It may be that it angered him to see youth and merriment all round him, yet not be able to share in it.

There was nothing to mar the happiness. If Lord Latimer heard the sounds of music, dancing and song, he made no comments, and the old walls rocked again with Christmas fun and merriment. Our boys shared it. Lady Latimer never left them out, when it was practicable to have them there.

They were at most of the skating-parties, and caused unlimited fun. I noticed one thing, and admired their good sense; they had entirely ceased to advise me over marrying, and were content to take things as they were.

The dear boys! I can see them now on the ice, with great red worsted comforters, and hands perfectly blue with cold, yet happy as kings. They saw nothing of the shadow that hung over Lorton's Cray, but I did, and I was powerless to prevent it.

I can not tell exactly how I saw it deepen, but the time came when I could think of nothing else. I placed my own love story aside to devote myself to her. I can not tell either when I first grew alarmed, and began to watch other people, to see if they were watching her. But no, the world went on its way rejoicing, and no one saw that a soul was in danger but myself—unconsciously so; that I shall always maintain—nevertheless, in peril so great that the very angels in heaven looked on in pity.

The first time that I was alarmed was one lovely frosty morning when the sun shone on the snow, and the hoar-frost had silvered the trees and hedges, and the icicles hung like huge diamonds. A walk through Lorton woods had been proposed, and when we were all ready to start, Colonel North was absent. I shall never forget Lady Latimer's face — all the brightness died from it, all the animation vanished. It was plain enough to be seen that the walk had lost all its interest for her.

"It is bitterly cold," she said to me, with a shudder. "I am not at all sure whether we are wise in going."

Quite suddenly he came upon us; he had been to the stable to give some direction about his horses. No need to speak. I turned aside with a groan. If all heaven had been suddenly opened to her, she could not have looked more delighted; her very soul seemed to shine in her eyes as they rested on him.

"I thought we had lost you," she said.

He took her arm in his, and with laughing gallantry, said:

"You may lose your memory, Lady Latimer, but you will never lose me." And though he laughed, I knew the words were true.

They went off together, forgetting all the world. Ah me! And I, who loved her better than I loved my life, stood by, powerless to help her. But the truth was apparent; she had learned to love Colonel North—unconsciously I know—and he loved her. I was as young as herself, but it seemed to me that the entire responsibility of her rested on my shoulders.

What should I do? I could not go to the old lord and say, "Rouse yourself; the beautiful young child whom you have made your wife is in deadly peril. She married you without love and she has learned unconsciously what love is since then. Save her, for she is in mortal peril." Heaven only knows what would happen; he was not that kind of man. Some men would have been noble, tolerant, generous—would have helped her out of the danger; not Lord Latimer; there was very little nobility of soul about him. If I had gone to her and said: "My dear, you are in deadly danger; you are married to a man older than your father, whom you do not love, and you have found one whom you do love," I might, by suddenly opening her eyes, do far more harm than good, and she might do something desperate in her despair. The only thing that seemed left for me to do was to watch over her with devoted care and love.

More than once it occurred to me to speak to the colonel, but it was a delicate and dangerous thing to do. I am quite sure that at first he had no thought of harm. Her beauty attracted him, and her genuine delight in his society urged him on, until the spell of passion lay upon both—and the passion of love is a terrible one. The shadow grew deeper and darker to my eyes, although no one else saw it. They were seldom apart now. When breakfast was over he was her companion in all walks and drives; they spent the afternoon together, either at the piano or with books; when twilight fell and it was too dark to read, too light for lamps, they would be found in the conservatory talking, always talking with the same earnest look on each beautiful face. Many a time I have gone in search of her and found her standing in the dim light by his side, her face all shining, and I have come away praying "Dear heaven help her, or she is lost!" At night she was queen of the revels, and he was king; they danced together, they sung together, and when those two exquisite voices went floating through the room in one grand unison, I knew how their souls went together also. A Christmas revel, a New Year's festivity, but for them a something which I began to fear would have no ending. The worst symptom, to my mind, was that she never spoke of him to me. If his name was mentioned in his absence, the color would rise and seem to burn her face. I tried my best; but what was an inexperienced girl of 18 against two people passionately in love?

There were times when I longed to tell Captain Fleming of the deadly peril so close at hand, and beg him to induce his friend to go away; but my courage failed me when I would have made the effort—I could not utter the words.

One night—It was the winter gloaming, if there be such a time; the lamps were not lighted, and the rooms were all brilliant with the red glow of the firelight and odorous with flowers, so warm, so luxurious; the visitors were dispersed over the house, some in the billiard room and some in the music room. I went to her boudoir in search of Lady Latimer. I had always been accustomed to enter the room without rapping at the door. I did so now.

I turned the handle gently and went in. They were standing together before the fire, the lamps were not lighted, and the ruddy glow of the fire filled the room. Their faces were turned to the fire; they neither saw nor heard me; his hand rested lightly on her shoulder and they were talking earnestly. I went back as quietly as I came, but with a sword in my heart, for her sake. I waited one minute, then announced my arrival by calling, "Lady Latimer, are you here?"

"I am here, dear Audrey, come in," was the answer.

But when I went in they stood together no longer; he was at the window, and she sat at the table. My heart sunk when I saw the happiness on her face.

The charade-parties were a great success; so were the plays. It seemed wonderful to me that no one else remarked how Lady Latimer and Colonel North always took the part of lovers; stranger still, that no one saw how naturally they assumed it, how, in playing a love scene, it was so natural for him to throw his arm around the beautiful figure that seemed to sway at his least touch, how he kissed with passion the white hand that he clasped.

Could I alone, out of the whole world see, or was everyone else blind?

So the shadow deepened and darkened. I was unutterably miserable; I began to live in constant fear. It seemed to me there was a volcano beneath my feet.

No shadow of fear lay on Lady Latimer's face. I shall never know now whether she realized the danger and ignored it, or whether she was ignorant of it until the end came suddenly.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

Shamed the Duchess.

An English woman of rank—a duchesss—was very apt to forget to pay her bills. A milliner, whose large bill had been repeatedly ignored by the duchess, at last determined to send her little girl, a pretty child of ten years, to beg for the money which was so much needed. "Be sure to say 'your grace' to the duchess," said the anxious mother, and the child gravely promised to remember. When, after long waiting, she was ushered into the duchess' presence, the little girl dropped a low courtesy, and then, folding her hands and closing her eyes, she said, softly: "For what I am about to receive may the Lord make me truly thankful." As she opened her eyes and turned her wistful gaze on the duchess, that light-hearted person flushed very red, and, without delay made out a check for the amount due to the milliner.—Argonaut.

He Was Tired.

Mr. Kickers, at 7 p. m.—Maria can't you go down stairs and bring up the fire-shovel? I'm too tired and worn out even to talk.

Mr. Kickers, one hour later at the ward political club, dancing on a chair—Hurrah! Wow! Three cheers for Willyum Swipers! Who-o-op-wow! hi-yi-yi—wow!—Chicago Record.

Can This Be True?

Mrs. Hayseed—These city boarders is awful big fools.

Mr. Hayseed—What has they bin doin' now?

Mrs. Hayseed—That New York lady wants fresh milk for the baby from one cow, and lots of fresh eggs all from one hen.—Texas Siftings.

Where He Missed It.

Drowning Editor—Help! I can't swim a lick!

Man on Shore—Neither can I!

Drowning Editor—Oh, if you had only read my paper you would have learned how.—Atlanta Constitution.

AN ACTOR'S DAILY MAIL.

Advice Freely Given, Assistance Asked and Free Tickets Demanded.

Most persons who are in any way in the public eye are constantly in receipt of curious communications, some amusing and some otherwise. There are numerous persons who will write to anybody on the slightest provocation, and the fact that they are unknown to the persons whom they address is apparently of little moment, says the New York World. Since W. H. Crane has returned to the city he has been in receipt of a large number of letters every day, and two-thirds of them come from persons who are unknown to him. The other morning the comedian sat in his room in the Fifth Avenue theater opening his mail. He came to one letter that made him angry. "Just read that," he exclaimed, and he handed over the following:

"Your play is an insult to any man who has got a daughter. Why should a father ever be compelled to give up his child? Why should he be prevented from making her happy, even after she is married? Is she not still his? Your play is far fetched, despite the Bible or anything else." The writer's name is withheld.

"Imagine a man being as silly as that," went on the comedian. "'His Wife's Father' is intended to show such old fools the error of their ways, and he resents it. It is the old thing about the truth being bitter.

"Ah! read this!" he exclaimed a moment later. This letter was from a woman, and was as follows:

"I saw your play last night, and I must say you deserve credit for showing that there is something worse than a meddlesome mother-in-law in the world, and that something is an old fool of a man. My son-in-law is going to propose that you form an association for putting down objectionable parents."

"That association is going to have a pretty big job on its hands. Read this," he said:

"If you will remember, on Tuesday night the close of the third act was marred by some indiscriminate applause by a man in the orchestra. I was that man, and I offer an explanation. When the young husband started in to go for the old fool for meddling in his domestic affairs he struck a soft spot in me, for I have a father-in-law. To see the old man catch it so elated me, and I could not help applauding, though I little knew it would cause such a laugh. I have been thinking of giving the old man rats, but I guess it will be better for me take him to see the play. Excuse me for bothering you."

Another letter was from a man who found fault with the fact that a certain character appeared in one of the scenes and still another told of a piece of stage business that would create a big laugh. There were a lot of applications for positions from aspiring young men and women, a few requests for help and a lot of requests for tickets. All of the letters, except those of the deadheads, were answered.

CAGING WILD BEASTS.

How the Animals Are Handled at Jamrach's in London.

A writer in Little Folks, who paid a visit to Jamrach's wild beast establishment, in London, has this to say: Now there are at the moment I am writing two beautiful Bengal tiger cubs in one of the cages. The cubs are old enough to be dangerous, so if I tell you the way I saw them put into the cage they now inhabit, you will know a little of how wild animals are transferred from one place of confinement to another. The boxes that tigers and lions come in are not very big—just big enough to allow the inmates to lie comfortably. This, besides saving freight, prevents the animal from using his full strength, and perhaps, in case of fright or frenzy, from bursting the box. Well, the box with the tiger cubs was placed in front of, and partly in, the open cage. A sliding door in the box was then lifted, and the cubs darted forward at the meat that was lying in the far corner of the cage to tempt them. Meanwhile the box was quickly withdrawn and the barred gate of the cage as quickly shut. It is easy, however, to transfer an animal from a confined box to a large cage. He is going then from captivity to comparative liberty. It is not so easy—indeed it is extremely difficult—to get him to go through the reverse process to walk from a large cage into a box. If there be time, he can always be made to do it quietly enough.

Give him no food in the large cage, but put it in the box. He may even hold out for days; hunger, however, will prove in the end stronger than his fears, and he will, with a growl, make a dash for the joints, when the trap will be closed against him. It isn't always possible to wait for hunger to make him submit. Perhaps the animal is wanted tomorrow, and the dealer has got the order only today and must catch a train with him at 4 o'clock in the afternoon. What is to be done now? Here man's superior intelligence shows itself. It is fear that prevents the animal from entering the box, and this fear must be overcome by a greater fear. This is an easy matter to the animal dealer with his knowledge of animals. He simply sets light to a little bundle of dry straw in the cage—this is enough—the animal's fear of fire makes him fly at any outlet of escape.

Dreamed of the Coming Disaster.

Second Engineer Wilson De Hart, of the fated steamer Longfellow, lives with his wife and children at 126 West Eighth street, and was among the saved, says Louisville Courier-Journal. His wife dreamed Wednesday night that the boat was lost with all on board and it preyed so on her mind all day Thursday that she tried to persuade her husband not to make the trip. After bidding him good-by on the boat she told the chief engineer, Dan Halley, of her dream, and with tears in her eyes, begged that he endeavor to influence her husband to remain at home, as she knew the boat would be lost. On learning of the accident she ran almost all the way to Promley in her endeavor to keep pace with the floating wreck, and was almost wild with grief before the news of her husband's rescue reached her, and she then refused to be convinced until he was brought to her.

Story of the Princess of Wales.

The following pretty story is told of the Princess of Wales, to illustrate her knowledge of housewifely duties: The princess visited an old protege of hers, living in one of the cottages at Sandringham. The good dame was knitting a stocking, and the princess took it out of her hand, saying: "You can't do the heel as fast as I can." And she sat and chatted with the old lady, knitting the nattiest heel possible. It is needless to say that sacred stocking is treasured in a drawer with the needles just as the princess left them. The story is all right enough in its way, but the pessimist would be inclined to believe that it was an excellent display of advertising enterprise on the part of the good dame, and that already that royal stocking has been sold to at least a score of relic hunters.

Warden Evans' Double.

A purse of gold has been presented to a warden upon his retirement, after forty years' service, from Birmingham jail. He thoroughly deserves it if, as it is stated, he was the original of the Warden Evans in "Never Too Late to Mend." It is now the fashion to ignore Reade's wonderful romance. The scenes in the jail are somewhat too terrible, none the less so that they were taken from real life and were the cause of quite a tumult in the theater at which, under the title of "Gold," the story was dramatized.—Philadelphia Press.

A woman's brain declines in weight after the age of thirty.

This Means Business.

On the principal lines of the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul railway passenger trains are electric lighted, steam heated and protected by block signals. With these modern appliances, railway traveling at high speeds has reached a degree of safety heretofore unknown and not attainable on roads where they are not in use. Electric lights and steam heat make it possible to dispense with the oil lamp and the car stove. Block signals have reduced the chances for collisions to the minimum by maintaining an absolute interval of space between trains.

Kissing a woman's lips is a gross insult in Finland.

Stamps for marking goods were in use in Rome before the Christian era.

Bears Robbing the Farmers.

Three bears belonging to a band of Italian rovers are at large in the northern part of this county, and great excitement prevails among the farmers, as last night considerable damage was done by the bears entering barnyards and feasting on pigs, poultry, etc. The bears, it seems, got unruly, and the Italians could do nothing with them, the result being their escape. They are said to be in the Lowry woods.—Sandusky (O.) Dispatch.

Leo XIII. is the two hundred and fifty-eighth pope.