

WHERE IGNORANCE IS BLISS.

The Other Side of an Idol.

"That's the carriage, Henry; the one that just drove down the street. Every Sunday night, just at dusk, it waits on the corner diagonally opposite our house, for a woman who comes from some place in the block. A man gets out of the carriage, helps her in, and they are driven away. I've found out who the people are," and the invalid in her low chair by the window raised her pale face to her husband's habitually listless one. With careless good-humor he turned toward her.

"Well," smilingly, "how came you to know?"

"Felice found out all about."

"She leads a life of interrogation and exclamation points, that pert little maid of yours," said he. "There's no use of closing a door on a skeleton, if she is near. Like love, she laughs at locksmiths."

"Yes, I know she is curious, and I often reprove her for it, but this time the story is so interesting and pathetic that I listened."

"That I'm going to keep until the last, and see if you can guess. First, I'll tell you all that Felice told me."

"She watched and found out from which house the woman came. Then she invited the attentions of the butler of the family, whose overtures she had hitherto repulsed. He is a man who has long been in their service and until he met Felice, had guarded their secret well. She frankly acknowledged that he was *tres difficile*, but that, to her, was no drawback. It only heightened her enjoyment of the situation. By degrees, she learned this sad story of the daughter of the family.

"The young woman has been engaged to a man of whom her father and brother disapprove, for, although she was very charming, they felt that the wealth of the family had something to do with his attentions. He was forbidden the house. She then made arrangements to elope with him. He was to meet her at this very corner, at this very hour, with a carriage. They were then to drive to a minister's house to be married. She felt that all would be forgiven her when her father and brother realized her great love for this man, and his great love for her.

"She came to this appointed place, and waited. Half the night she stood in the shadow of a neighbor's house,

and strained her ears for the sound of carriage wheels. Then, cold, weary, she crept back to the home she had deserted. She dragged herself up to the steep marble steps leading to the front door, and rang the bell. She gave no thought to the surprise and consternation her appearance there at that time of the night would occasion. The butler opened the door, and she attributed his state of apathy, if she thought at all, to the fact of his being a well trained servant, rather than a lack of interest. She was about to mount the stairs leading to her apartments, when her brother came out of the library. He, too, showed no curiosity at seeing her there in the gray dawn in her out-door clothes. The sight of his pale, drawn face finally aroused her numbed senses. Like a child, she held out her hands to him, while a mantle of fear fell over her. He drew her towards him, with the tenderness he always showed her, led her into the library, and closed the door. There he told her, as gently as he could, the terrible news.

"Their father, seeing that he could no longer ward off bankruptcy, had, that afternoon, taken his own life.

"The poor girl fainted, and for many weeks after that, the brother thought that he was going to lose the only being he had left on earth to love. The body finally survived, but the tired brain slept. Once a week it awakened. Every Sunday evening, just at dusk, she stole from the house, came to this corner and waited for her faithless lover. At first her brother opposed her leaving the house, but that caused her to become violent. Their physician recommended meeting her with a carriage, just as the arrangement was made three years ago.

"She leaves her home at the same time every Sunday night, followed stealthily by the faithful butler, who sees that she reaches the corner in safety. Her brother is there with a carriage. He alights, as the lover should have done that terrible night, helps her in, and they are driven away. That seems to satisfy her until the next week, when the same proceeding takes place again."

"What became of the man."

"The butler told Felice that he married a woman of great wealth, who is an invalid. His wife adores him, but he finds it necessary to be out of town often on business. The butler admitted that he was considered fascinating by women.

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GARDENS OF THE CHINESE IMPERIAL PALACE.

The city of Peking proper has little to attract the attention of lovers of the grand and beautiful, but within the walls that enclose that part of the Chinese capital known as the "Forbidden City" there is magnificence and grandeur. The imperial palace and beautiful gardens which surround it furnish a marked contrast to the rest of the city. The illustration shows a corner of the imperial palace gardens.