



SYNOPSIS.

CHAPTER I.—Richard Derrington, returning from a winter in the woods to his uncle's farm home, is overtaken by his mother, accompanied by his eccentric wife, coming to pay a visit at the farm.

CHAPTER II.—Aunt Jerusha's questions about Emily Fulton, supposed to be Richard's sweetheart, bring out the fact that she is to marry a merchant, Edwards.

CHAPTER III.—Derrington's disappointment stimulates his ambition and under the advice of Seth Kinney, a hermit of the woods, he resolves to fit himself for college. Kinney promises to teach him Greek.

CHAPTER IV.—Derrington tells his mother of his resolve, and in his grandfather's old laboratory begins the study of Greek.

CHAPTER V.—Seth Kinney hears Richard's Greek recitation in the woods while he and Tom Bishop ply the cross-cut saw.

CHAPTER VI.—Derrington learns that he can look indifferently upon the loss of Emily. He visits Aunt Jerusha, who volunteers to help him through college, making him a gift of \$100.

CHAPTER VII.—The Greek learned in the woods carries Richard triumphantly through entrance examinations, wins approval from the professor and ensures his popularity among his fellows.

CHAPTER VIII.—Four years in college obliterate the memory of Emily. Derrington begins his journalistic work in Chicago.

CHAPTER IX.—Derrington meets Helen Gordon in her studio, where he goes to fill an assignment.

CHAPTER X.—Derrington's promotion to art critic on his paper makes him more secure financially. He makes rapid progress in comradeship with Helen. The discovery of an old love episode in her life reveals to him that he loves her.

CHAPTER XI.

He sought her the next day in the studio and found her occupied with a pupil. He had forgotten it was her day for pupils. She would be busy until four o'clock.

"I will come around and walk home with you—if I may."

"Very well," she assented.

They stood in the doorway, just out of sight of the pupil. He was watching her face anxiously. He fancied that she looked pale and worn, as if she had not slept.

"You are tired?" he questioned in a low tone.

She admitted that she was—"a little."

"Perhaps I would better not come for you to-night."

"No. Come. It will rest me to have some one to talk to."

"But if I come, I shall speak," he insisted.

She did not raise her eyes to his as he had hoped. She hesitated for a moment, and then only said, as she turned towards the studio, "I will wait for you."

He left the building, a tumult of joy and doubt in his heart. She had given him permission to speak, but she seemed to have refused his demand before it was made. He dared not hope. He hoped in spite of fear.

As the day wore on the fear subsided and the joy of love took possession of him. That, at least, she could not take away, no matter what she might refuse.

He found her alone, at work in the gray afternoon light.

"I am improving the last minutes," she said, looking up as he entered and speaking lightly, as if eager to put their meeting on a commonplace footing.

He did not answer, but seated himself on the long couch opposite her. He watched her as she sketched in the outline of a still-life study. She was sitting as usual, with the light falling full upon her. Yes, he had been right. Her face was pale.

"What is it?" he asked abruptly, at last, in a low tone.

"I am afraid of it," she answered quietly.

"Why?"

"Because things will never be the same again."

"I hope not," he responded quickly.

"I want them to be. I don't want them to change," she replied as quickly.

"Then they shall not. I won't say anything more."

A silence fell on the studio. The shadows in the corners grew darker and lengthened softly toward the center of the room. The light suited the room, Derrington thought, as he sat waiting for her to speak. The harmonious tones and subdued colors seemed to gather and center in the quiet figure under the skylight. It was always so. She would always gather the light and life in everything and transmute it to something softened and human.

She was trying the colors on the edge of her block, making ready to wash in the sketch. She spoke slowly, without looking up. "But you know that I love you?"

Derrington started suddenly. "No, I didn't know—you hadn't told me—"

"Their eyes met, and they broke into a laugh.

"You will marry me?" he said bluntly.

"No."

"Why not?"

She had become absorbed in the edge of her sketch and was drawing futile, ineffective lines.

"Why not?" he repeated.

"It's so selfish"—after a pause.

"Selfish?"—blankly.

"Yes, two people fall in love and they forget everything else and marry. They seem to think that love justifies everything."

"It does."

"But there are other claims."

"He was looking at her intently.

"Grace must be sent to school and the boys are hardly able to take care of themselves; and there is mother. They all depend on me. Don't you see that it would be selfish?" She was leaning forward and looking at him, impersonally, with the old air of comradeship.

"But I would help."

"I know. But you have no right to marry yet. There would be children, and the children of Bohemia are not always so happy as their parents. It is not fair that two people should be happy at the expense of so much. Probably marriage was meant to be right; but it is all wrong as things are now."

Spoken with quiet conviction, rapidly. Whatever she decided must be right. But one phrase stirred his pulses.

"That two people should be happy," he repeated. "You think—"

"I think that most marriages are mistakes," she replied, taking up her brush again and sketching rapidly.

"People are madly in love. They marry. And then apparently the love dies. I should die myself," she said quickly. "I could not bear that."

"He had risen and was standing, one hand raised and resting on the easel, looking down at her.

She lifted her face to his, smiling at him a little wistfully. "I had not hoped that you would understand. I thought there would be an explanation—and parting."

"Not that—never!"

"But there are no promises," she said quickly. "No," holding up her hand as he would have interrupted.

CHAPTER XII.

But if there were no promises, there was much happiness in the months that followed. After the talk in the studio their life assumed a new phase—something as far removed from the unrest of courtship on the one hand, as from the commonplaceness of married life on the other.

Derrington had accepted her decision as final. There was to be no marriage—not even a promise of marriage at some distant day. His love for her must begin and end in itself. One less capable of love, or one who had longed less for love, might have fretted at the anomalous position in which he found himself—neither aspirant nor accepted lover. But to Derrington it seemed that never since man was created had a love so unique been upon the earth.

He was at the studio daily, sometimes several times a day. He fell into the habit of going there to write up the articles for which he had been gathering material—an art lecture below stairs or a first view above. Often he read these articles to her as she sat at work. Her criticisms were frank and unsparring. Sometimes for days together, a stranger, overhearing them as they talked or jested, would not have guessed that they were more than good comrades. Only, now and then, a word, half-breathed, as he sat watching her move about the studio, would speak volumes and bridge over hours of commonplace. Then again there would be days when they would talk of their love as of any accepted fact of common interest.

Perhaps nowhere but in the art world could such a friendship have existed without danger of misunderstanding. At the boarding house they had instinctively remained mere table acquaintances. But among the artists they came and went with Platonic freedom. No one criticised. No one watched with malicious eyes. Here, as wherever artists meet, life was too busy for petty spying. Or is it, after all, not indifference or preoccupation, but the inherent purity of an apparently careless life, that makes artists slow to think evil of each other? In any case, these two were safe among them from fear of misunderstanding; and Derrington was in the studio whenever his work, or leisure, gave him opportunity.

"I always knew you must be somewhere," he said one day. He had finished writing and sat leaning back, his hands clasped behind his head. It had been half an hour since he finished work and no word had broken the silence till he spoke.

"I never dared believe I should find you, though," he continued.

She was turning her head to one side and leaning back, with half-closed eyes, to get a view of the last wash. "Yes, you were a good while finding it out." She gave critical touches here and there with the extended brush.

He started suddenly forward to an upright position. "What do you mean? Did you know—or care?"

"That is another strange thing," she said, smiling a little to him, "the woman always knows first. But she must wait patiently until the man's lumbering intelligence finds it out."

"But I never dreamed," he persisted, coming back to the concrete case. "You seemed so indifferent—"

"Of course. It wouldn't have been modest not to. And, besides, I did not want you to find out. I didn't suppose any man could be generous enough to understand how a woman might feel."

"It isn't that we don't understand. Any one can see how unfair marriage is to a woman—that it compels her to give up everything and offers her nothing. We see it plainly enough. But what can we do? We love you, and most of us see no way out of it but marriage."

"Now it is you who are hard," she returned. "The fault cannot all lie on one side. Marriage, in itself, is no harder for a woman to-day, I suppose, than it has always been. The difference is that so many other ways of happiness are open to her; and when she finds her marriage a failure, she does not try to make the best of it, without protest, as the only thing open to her. She is more restive under her own mistake than when fate left her no choice. So everything gets into a nice tangle and they don't live happy forever afterwards," she finished laughingly.

Gradually he came to understand that her determination not to marry him was influenced by something stronger than a mere personal shrinking from a false marriage. She would not marry, because she would not take a selfish happiness at the expense of her mother and those that depended on her; but more than that, and deeper, she would not by a rash promise add one more to the marriages that end in vain regret or divorce.

Gradually, too, he came to understand more fully what she had meant by saying that if they were made for each other they would find it out without promises, and if not, it were a thousand times better they should drift apart. And as he came to understand, an element of reverence mingled with his love for her, deepening and intensifying it.

He himself would not have questioned. He would gladly have married. To him it would not have been a test, but a consummation. But that they were not to marry did not trouble him. Why should he ask more of a love that was proving the fulfillment of all the longing of his boyhood and youth? It was transforming him—mind, body and soul. His frame, which had been tall, spare, and loosely built, began to fill and settle into strength; his step became firm and quick; his head took a firmer poise above the square shoulders; even his

"But If We Were Bound by Marriage"—She Broke Off, Looking Straight Before Her.

her, "I am older than you, you know. You may outgrow me. You must not be bound even by a promise. If we are made for each other, we shall find it out, as time goes on, without them; and if we are not, we shall only drift farther apart and there will be no pain for what never really existed. But if we were bound by marriage—" She broke off, looking straight before her.

"You have loved before." He was looking down at her. "You would not reason so clearly—"

"I thought once—that I loved." Her eyes were on her work.

"The question sprang to his lips. "And he is dead?"

"Thank God—yes."

"He stared at her blankly.

"I should not have found out in time. We should have been miserable. I thought I loved him. I mourned a long time. But lately—I have known—" Her head bent lower over her work.

His face deepened. He started towards her. "Ah, you have learned—"

"I have learned that I dare not trust myself," she said. She began to gather up her materials and put them away.

Presently she stood beside him. She had put on the long gray cloak. "I am going now," she said.

He looked about for his hat and found it still in his hand. He held it out with a whimsical gesture. "I have been eminently proper," he said.

With a laugh of the old comradeship she held out her hand and he covered it with his own.

"It is a compact?" he said.

"That there are no promises," she



Often He Read These Articles to Her as She Sat at Work.

eyes shared in the metamorphosis—they lost their dreamy, pleading look and became alert, laughing, and full of happiness and a strange power that seemed no longer to ask, but to command help and sympathy from all who met their glance.

Something of this change Derrington himself recognized. He knew that he was alive, glowing in every fiber; but he was less analytic in his happiness than in his misery; he did not see that his overflowing vitality communicated itself to everyone with whom he came in contact. It was only when some one spoke of the change that he knew that it was being marked. He exulted in his heart that no one guessed the cause.

He was settled down and working with a vigor of which he had not dreamed himself capable. Everything bent before him. He felt within himself power to conquer the world should it stand in his way. Sometimes he clenched his hands and stretched his arms to their fullest to give outlet to the play impulse that could not exhaust itself in work.

In his inner life, too, a change, less perceptible, but no less real, was taking place. Sight and hearing were opened to new beauty. Music had become to him a medium of soul speech; and the sordid city streets, with their overhanging clouds of smoke, started to picturesque life and beauty.

A long archway with a slant of sunshine at the farther end—an Italian woman stealing into the shadow, a huge bundle on her back and colored kerchief about her head—would stir his pulses like an old painting. The unsightly process of building, with its debris of mortar, bricks, and lath, gained artistic value as his eyes took in the grouping of the men at work around the mortar-beds—the soft, gray-white of the mortar, the dull red, blue or orange of the shirts upon the supple or stolid figures of the men, with the play of muscle beneath. Sometimes it was a single figure, that might have stepped from a Rembrandt canvas, appearing for a minute and disappearing in the shifting crowd. Always, everywhere, there was beauty—until Derrington, seeing it all, longed at times to relieve his overcharged senses by a loud cry—so wonderful, so overpowering, had the beauty of the world become.

Undoubtedly much of this quickened insight was due to the thought of Helen, who was never for a moment absent from his mind. Whatever work was engaging his hand or brain deep below it all was a consciousness of her existence, like a second ego, only a thousand times dearer and more inspiring than his own personality. It seemed to give him a sixth sense by which he perceived the beautiful—until Helen gave up in despair the attempt to transfer to canvas all that he brought to her notice.

It became a common sight for her sketching stool to be set up in some sheltered corner of the busiest part of the city. Derrington, who had dreaded the experiment, saw, with a thrill, that the quiet power of her personality that so rested and soothed him was felt here. The crowd either passed her by or stopped for a moment to look with respectful curiosity as the work grew under her hand. Sometimes a mason filled her water-can or a carpenter paused for a moment in his work to adjust her umbrella. It was the Chicago spirit—laissez faire, and help when you can. Except for the dust and rattle of the street she was unmolested as in her quiet studio.

CHAPTER XIII.

The fall and early winter had been mild. In January it came on to snow and to blow; and with the snowing and blowing the thermometer dropped many degrees. Old inhabitants told each other it was real "Chicago weather"; and new inhabitants shivered in their sealskins, or, lacking these, put on extra flannels.

It was during the cold weather that Derrington's work took him one afternoon to Lakeview to look over the work of the Amateur Art Club. As he left the house after finishing his task a dull roar fell on his ear. He started and listened eagerly—yes, it was the "ake. In a moment more his coat-collar was pulled up about his ears, his hat settled more firmly over his eyes, and he was on his way to the shore. The lake had a peculiar fascination for him. He could never resist it, especially when it was roaring and thundering like this.

A few minutes' walk brought him in sight of the mounting, threatening, white-capped breakers. His heart leaped with exultation. The power of the storm was on him. He longed to

run, to leap, to wrestle with it and scream himself hoarse against its tumult. It was like the ocean—that long stretch of lonely shore as yet unprotected by the breakwater.

Gradually, as he looked, he became conscious of something homelike and protected in the midst of the uproar. A thread of smoke rose from the chimney of a small, rude house, far down the shore, almost within reach of the threatening waves that ran up the sandy beach. All about the house boats lay stacked, evidently in winter quarters; and here and there remnants of fishing-tackle showed the occupation of fair weather. The house was sheathed in rough red boards and patched with artistic regularity. It was a sketch made to hand—a touch of nature within arm's reach of Chicago.

Helen was filled with enthusiasm and scoffed at his suggestion of waiting for warmer weather. "Half its charm is in the contrast," she protested. "Don't you see?—winter quarters in the midst of all that tumult. I shall go up this afternoon."

Derrington consented unwillingly. He was obliged to go to Hyde Park for the day, and it was not till four o'clock that he was free to seek her on the North Shore.

She was seated near the point from which he had first seen the house, an old piece of sail-cloth, fastened between two stakes, sheltering her from the wind.

She looked up when he approached as casually as if he had stood there all the afternoon. "I haven't caught that wind and it isn't cold enough—too much blue, isn't there?" she asked, holding her head back and surveying her work critically.

"Really, aren't you blue with too much cold?" he responded meekly.

"Don't be foolish. I am all right."

He had taken off his overcoat and was fastening it around her shoulders.

CHAPTER XIV.

She Seemed to Him Already Dead—Removed from Carcases.

"Oh, you mustn't do that. You'll take cold. Well, then, if you will—only you must go into the house and get warm. You'll find them highly entertaining, besides being good," she added. "They made me some hot coffee and the man rigged up this sail-cloth to keep off the wind. And there's a pair of candlesticks in there I would give my eyes for. But they're not for sale. So you're not to raise my bid."

"I couldn't raise it—if it were only a glance of your eyes—let alone the eyes themselves."

"I hope you didn't come all the way up here in the cold just to be funny," she responded severely. But she did not vouchsafe him the glance. She was absorbed in washing out the unsatisfactory sky for a second trial.

Derrington did not go into the house. He walked rapidly up and down the beach, watching the angry sky and the isolated little house. He fancied that, as the early twilight settled down, it stood out more distinctly and vividly—emphasizing its individuality—the work of man against the power of darkness.

At last he came and looked over her shoulder.

"Rather better, isn't it?" she asked complacently without looking up.

"You have caught the very demon of the storm in those clouds."

It was true. She had done what the water-colorist seldom achieves—succeeded in washing out her first attempt and replacing it with the desired effect. The thorough wetting of the paper or a touch of genius had aided the second attempt, and the result was a wash—clean and fresh in color—and in the clouds what Derrington had called the demon of the storm.

"Come," he said decisively as she sat putting in the last few touches lingeringly. "Come. You must stop. It is too dark. You will be frozen."

She began to collect her sketching materials.

"Leave those for me. Go on to the house and get warm. I'll bring your traps."

She started obediently towards the house, breathing on her cold fingers to warm them. But—so fierce was the wind—she made slow progress, and before she reached the house she was at her side. He opened the door that ushered them into the low room.

The round-faced Dutchwoman who greeted them looked with kindly eyes on the young lady. She bustled about the room and placed an armchair near the fire. "You stayed out longer this time," she said in a deep guttural voice. She gave a quick look of interest from Helen to Derrington.

Helen sank into the chair with a grateful smile. "Yes, I stayed out to-night." She had slipped noiselessly from the armchair to the floor.

With a quick exclamation Derrington dropped to his knees beside her.

only the heat," said the Dutchwoman practically. "Give her this." She had prepared a draught of brandy.

Derrington poured it between the white lips, around which a blue line was slowly settling.

They watched for the effect—Derrington eagerly, the woman with close attention. There was no sign of returning life. Derrington looked up in despair and the woman hurried away into an inner room for some other remedy.

He leaned over the motionless figure, listening. Slowly he gathered it in his arms. Tenderly, passionately, he drew her to him and pressed his lips on the white mouth with its shadow. She seemed to him already dead—removed from carcases. Slowly the lids fluttered, a breath trembled through the lips, and she lifted her eyes to his, faintly.

The good Dutchwoman appeared, bearing a large bottle of ammonia. She figured in Derrington's eyes as a ministering angel and the bottle as a heaven-sent chalice. But it brought tears to Helen's eyes and she pushed it away with the assurance, half-laughing, half-tearful, that she should be all right in a minute.

Derrington lifted her to an improvised couch and she lay, with eyes like stars, looking about the little room. He held one of the hands in his and chafed it gently now and then, under the pretence that it was still cold. Her brown hair had escaped from its fastening and was pushed carelessly back. Against the dark covering of the couch it formed a halo about her face. Derrington had always fancied that the Madonna might have been at home in such a room as this. It was a Holbein face.

The old woman had lighted the candles on the low table and was spreading the table for supper. She entertained her guests by leaving them free. The two candles gave out a dull glow and completed the effect of an old Dutch interior.

Helen and Derrington exchanged glances of appreciation.

"Think of finding it within five miles of Washington street! I am going to sketch it some day. She has promised to sit for me and it will be nice and warm." She shivered a little.

Derrington suddenly held fast in both his hands the one he had been idly stroking. "You must never do such a foolhardy thing again."

"Not even for a success? But I am glad I did it. It is a success." Her eyes rested lovingly on the sketch on the floor by the wall.

She was still looking at it when he left the house to telephone for a carriage. But when he returned, half an hour later, she was seated at the table laughing and talking with her hostess. She declared she had never felt better in her life, and she started out bravely to walk to the carriage, which could not drive down to the beach, but was waiting on the road above. Before they had gone half the distance she found that she was very tired. With a sigh of relief she sank back in the corner of the carriage as the door was slammed after them.

Derrington reached her promptly and drew her to him, placing her head against his shoulder and holding her close to protect her from the jar of the carriage.

"Rest here," he said quietly, as she made a half protest. "I should care for my mother or a sister. Why not you—dear one?"

She did not protest again, but yielded to the protecting arms like a child. He watched her face as they whirled into the light of the street-lamps and out again into the shadow. It was still pale, but full of content. They flew through the park and down the long avenue beyond. Never were two miles traversed so quickly. Not a word was spoken. It was as if the time were too precious for speech. Once she raised her face with a contented sigh and breathed his name softly, more as if to herself than to him.

As for Derrington, he dared not realize his happiness. Underneath its pulsing was a half superstition. Fate would not allow a man to be so happy. But she had been given back to him from the dead. She rested close to him. That could not be taken from him. He held her closer—defying an unseen fate.

(To be Continued)

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For sale—the best steam outfit in Cheyenne county, consisting of one new Cate separator, one steam (32 h. p.) engine and eleven fourteen-inch plows. Address OREN GRISWOLD, D-7-10 A-7-10 Dalton, Neb.

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