

# THE ADVERTISER.

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OFFICIAL PAPER OF THE COUNTY.

## THE TWO VOICES.

### FIRST VOICE.

Life is so full of trouble,  
So fraught with grief and pain,  
With striving and with yearning  
For things we never attain;  
So filled with vain endeavor,  
So laden with its loss,  
That the strongest heart must shudder  
At thinking of its cross.

Oh, if we could but slumber  
The weary hours away,  
Forgetting all the trials  
That gather round the day!  
If we could drop our crosses  
Beside the path we tread,  
And so our ways in gladness,  
With not a tear to shed!

### SECOND VOICE.

Oh, life is not for slumber!  
Lie strong to dare and do;  
Be steadfast in endeavor,  
To God and man be true!  
Think not so much of trouble,  
And not so much of loss,  
As of the crown rewarding  
The bearers of a cross.

Help those who journey with you  
By earnest words and deeds;  
Bear one another's burdens;  
Of thought sow precious seeds.  
So shall the way seem shorter,  
Less hedged about with pain,  
And life have more of sunshine,  
And less of chily rain.

—Eben E. Reford.

## STEP-MOTHER AND STEP-SON.

A Story of Love, Jealousy, Hatred, Revenge and Heroic Self-Sacrifice.

By the Author of "Dora Thorne," "A Bride of Love," "At War With Herself," "A Golden Dawn," "Which Loved Him Best?" "A Rose in Thorns," &c., &c.

### CHAPTER X.—CONTINUED.

One of the most attentive and devoted of Ross' friends during his weary convalescence was Prince Cenci, whose interest in the tragedy never abated. He told Ross of Lady Viola's promise; and he looked very anxious.

"You must make haste to get well, Mr. Ross," he said, "and we will try our skill together. I will aid you."

Three days after that, Ross Cumnor, who had obtained permission from the authorities, went to visit Leam. At first he could only hold her in his arms and kiss with passionate rapture the pale, beautiful face. For a few minutes they could say nothing but how well and how dearly they loved each other; and then Ross said:

"Now, dearest, what is the mystery? Why have you taken the crime upon yourself? For I swear that you are not guilty of it! I believe in your innocence as I believe in Heaven."

She looked into his face with her clear, steadfast eyes. They seemed to read every thought of his heart.

"You ask me that, Ross? Oh, my love, do you not understand?"

"No," he replied, slowly; "indeed, I do not. I am sure only of one thing, and that is that you did not do it."

Still she clung to him with quivering lips and trembling hands.

"Oh, my love," she cried, "think for me! I—I am frightened now, and I know no fear before!"

"Frightened, Leam? You need not fear. If I had been well and strong, instead of stricken with fever and crippled with broken limbs, you should never have been sent here. As it is, I will move heaven and earth to free you. Oh, Leam, my love, my darling, why did you say that you had committed such a crime?"

She raised her head from his breast, and looked at him.

"You will be angry, and I shall be frightened," she said. "I—I did not stop to think. I heard all they said; and, though I did not think that you were guilty, it seemed to me that you must die. I did not stop to consider, Ross, my darling. Do you not understand?"

For a few seconds the two stood in perfect silence, looking into each other's eyes.

"I begin to see," said Ross, slowly. "Perhaps, in the impulse of the moment, hearing the overwhelming evidence there was against me, you thought me guilty?"

"I cannot remember my own thoughts clearly. I only knew that you were in danger. I remember that, when Lady Cumnor pressed home to you one thing after another, and I saw the faces of the people around you growing dark, and heard how they muttered and murmured against you, I said to myself: 'If he did it, it was in one of those hot passions of his when he does not count the cost of what he says and does.' I remember that."

"If!" he repeated, reproachfully. "Did you say 'If, Leam? Did you even for one moment think or believe that I had hurt that poor little child?"

"I cannot tell. My only clear thought was that you were in danger. You know, Ross, into what terrible passions you fly sometimes. In one of those you might, by an angry word or gesture, have frightened the child, and so caused him to fall into the water. That idea did once flash across me."

"But, if he had fallen in, I should have rescued him. Should I stand by and see a child drowned, do you think?"

"Oh, my love, forgive me! I did not reflect. I only knew that you were in danger. I heard—forgive me if I pain you, Ross—a man close behind me in the crowd say, 'He did it; as sure as fate he did it.' He drowned the little one, and he will be hanged for it. Then I did not stop to think another moment; I did not care. I thought only

of saving you; my own life seemed less than nothing to me. My love, I cared only for you. I stood before you and said that I was guilty; it was done in the agony of the moment."

"But, Leam, you said so clearly that before Heaven you were guilty of the child's death. How could you say that if it was not true?"

She looked at him steadfastly.

"It was true," she said—"true in this way. A short time after you had taken the child upon the lake Sir Austen came to me, and we talked about little Hugh. I told him that I thought you had him with you on the mere, and he seemed very pleased. 'The little fellow likes the water,' he said. 'He asked me yesterday to take him out, and I did so. But, Leam,' he added, 'I am always rather nervous about him. Go down yourself, and take him from Ross when they land.' I promised I would, but I did not; and so, by breaking my promise, I was indeed guilty of the child's death. If I had told Sir Austen that I could not go, he would have gone himself; and then little Hugh would have been living."

"But," said Ross, "I sent the boy to you, Leam! When I drew the boat up on the bank, I saw you at a distance, standing near the elm-trees. Do you remember being there?"

"Yes, I remember it well," she replied. "I stood there for some minutes—I was listening to the music; but the child never came to me. I never saw him; and I had forgotten all about Sir Austen's injunction. Look at it which way you will—either that he fell in, or that some cruel hand pushed him in—I am guilty; it all happened through my carelessness."

"Then you never saw him, Leam? He did not come to you?"

"No, I never saw him, Ross. If I had seen him, he would have been living now."

"Dearest Leam, you have given your life for nothing! The child could not have fallen in immediately after leaving me. If he had, he would have fallen in the middle of the lake where the water-lilies grow, and he had a water-lily in his hand. Some one must have rowed him out to them." And again they looked at each other in mute amazement.

If neither of them had done it, who was guilty? The child had most certainly been taken upon the water; the fact of his having been found in the middle of the lake proved it.

"It seems to me," said Ross, "that the little fellow was lost when I supposed that he was with you. He must, instead of going to you, have wandered back to the lake."

"I wish I had obeyed Sir Austen and gone to look for him," remarked Leam. "We are both guilty, Ross."

"But not of taking his life, thank Heaven—not of taking his life, Leam!"

"No," she said, solemnly, "not of taking his life."

"And now," continued Ross, "we have to find out who was with the little fellow. The child was taken back to the mere by some one. Who was it? No one would have any interest in killing the boy. It is a mystery. Do you remember that just at that time, Leam, there was nobody near the mere? The band was playing in another part of the grounds, and every one had gone to hear it."

"I remember," said Leam; "I am not likely to forget that day."

"But Leam," continued Ross, "how am I to forgive you? Do you know the deadly peril that you placed yourself in? Do you know that, if that clever counsel of yours had not so successfully pleaded insanity, you, my beautiful darling, would have lost your life, or at least would have been treated as one of the worst of criminals?"

"Better that ten thousand times than that harm should come to you," she replied. "Ross, after all the excitement was over, and I had time to reflect, I saw that I had probably sacrificed my life in vain; but I did not repent for one moment."

"My darling, the devotion of a life will never repay you—never!" he cried; and for a few moments they forgot all their troubles in the happiness of their love. "Now, Leam, my darling," said Ross, "I must go. The sooner I leave you the sooner I shall be able to set you free from this horrible place. I loathe every moment of my life which finds you here. I shall free you—I cannot tell how; but I will. I will move heaven and earth; and, if I can get no justice, I—I will burn the place down and run away with you; I will, my darling! Ah, thank Heaven, I hear you laugh once more! Dearest Leam, how I love you! I will rouse all England if needful; but I will set you free!"

"My dear, impetuous Ross!" she said, smiling through her tears. "Ah, now I feel what imprisonment is—now that I see you going away."

"I shall soon return, Leam; and, when I do, my innocent darling, it will be to open the doors for you."

They parted with kisses and tears; and Ross, on his way back to the mere, thought of the conversation they had had when she had told him self-sacrifice was her favorite virtue.

"I ought to have known," he thought, bitterly, "that she sacrificed herself for me. Oh, Leam, I will set you free, and love you and make up to you for this!"

When he reached home, it seemed to him that there was unusual excitement in the household. He asked for his father, and the butler told him that Sir Austen and Lady Cumnor had gone to John Cobham's cottage, and that they wished him to follow at once. Prince Cenci was waiting to accompany him.

"What is it?" he asked of the Prince, who looked excited.

"I do not quite know, Ross; but I think it is something about the child."

"The child?" echoed Ross. "Let us make haste then. Of course you mean little Hugh?"

"Yes, little Hugh. I do not know what it is. Do not excite yourself, Ross; it may be a mistake. You shall not stir until you have had some wine."

"Give it to me quickly, then!" cried Ross. "Oh, Leam, my beautiful love, you shall be set at liberty!"

In half an hour they had reached the boatman's cottage and found Sir Austen there with his wife. When Lady Cumnor saw Ross' white, agitated face, she went up to him.

"You must calm yourself, Ross," she said; "I believe there is good news for you."

"For you," she said, "not for us; and even in his agitation he noticed this."

"I am afraid I cannot bear very much," he remarked. "The sight of my darling in that wretched place, and the knowledge that she is as innocent as an angel, have unnerved me."

It dawned upon him suddenly that a woman was weeping bitterly somewhere near.

"What is the matter?" he asked; and then Mrs. Cobham, the boatman's wife, came forward.

"Our Jimmy's dying, Mr. Ross," the good woman answered, sobbing bitterly; "and he has told that to the minister which has broken his father's heart and mine! Oh, Mr. Ross, I don't know how to tell you! Go up-stairs and see him yourself."

"No," interrupted Lady Cumnor; "let me tell you myself, Ross. Sir Austen and Cobham are with the dying boy. Let me tell you, my dear, for I am a guilty, wicked, jealous woman. Oh, Ross, Leam is innocent—she never touched my child!"

"I know it—I have always known it!" cried impetuous Ross. "I could as soon believe that a saint would commit murder as that my beautiful Leam would."

He looked as he felt, terribly agitated, when Lady Cumnor, forgetting her pride, knelt down by his side, and with tears streaming down her face, said:

"Can you ever forgive me, Ross? By my violence and passion, by my bitter jealousy and dislike, I have almost caused your death and Leam's. Will you ever forgive me?"

He raised her and kissed her. "I forgive you," he said, simply. "I freely forgive you, for you have suffered much. What is it about the boy?"

### CHAPTER XI.

Lady Cumnor, who had so rarely expressed Ross, clasped her arms more closely round his neck as she answered him. Her hat had fallen off, and her golden hair, which had broken loose, fell over her shoulders. She had done wrong; and now, with all her heart, she meant to do right.

"It is such a sad, blundering story, Ross," she said; "and it seems to me that we were worse than foolish not to think of the possibility of such an occurrence. Let me tell you the story as the boy tells it himself. On that fatal, hateful day, Ross, this boy, the boatman's son, was at work in the grounds. I think he says that Sir Austen ordered him to keep the grass clear of paper and litter of every kind. He was working near the mere when he saw you land and draw the boat up after you. He says that you spoke a few words to little Hugh, and that you went one way and Hugh the other; that you were soon out of sight, and that he, having often longed for a row on the water, thought he might venture to indulge himself. He looked around, there was no one in sight but the child. He went down to the boat; and, when he was getting in, little Hugh ran back up to him. 'Let me go with you,' he said; 'I want some of those—pointing to the water-lilies. Jimmy, foreseeing no harm, and proud, I suppose, of being able to gratify little Hugh, put him into the boat and rowed him toward the water-lilies. He says—oh, Ross, listen!—that my little one laughed with delight, and that when they came to those fatal lilies the child leaned over the boat's side and, with a cry of joy, caught one of the blossoms in his hand; but, while trying to secure it, he fell into the mere and sank at once. The boy seems to have been paralyzed with fear. He made some attempt to save him, but, finding it impossible, he hurried back to land. He says there was no creature near. He drew the boat up on the bank, and then, instead of running to tell us what had happened, hastened to hide himself. He was dripping wet—for he jumped into the water to save the child—and, fearing to go home with his wet clothes, lest any questions should be asked, and knowing that in the excitement he would not be missed, he slept in the woods all night, and so took this chill which will end in his death."

She stopped abruptly and held out to Ross a faded knot of blue ribbon that had been torn in two.

"See, Ross—here is proof of what he says. The boy tells me that as little Hugh fell he clutched at the shoulder-knot my darling wore, and it gave way in his hands. He has kept it ever since."

"And Leam," cried Ross, "has sacrificed her freedom for this!"

"She will be free now," said Lady Cumnor.

"Free? Yes—with a blight on her life that nothing can remove; she will be free, but the odium will cling to her to the last!"

"No," cried Lady Cumnor, "you are mistaken! There will be no taint, no blame, no shame. Everybody will know how Leam loved you, because of what she did to save you. So far from being contemned, she will be more loved and honored than ever."

"I should like to see the boy," said

Ross, "and hear the story from his own lips."

He went up into the room where the boy lay dying. There Ross found Cobham, the boatman, and the lawyer who had written down the statement, and the clergyman who had listened to it. Sir Austen was comforting the dying boy with kindly words.

"To think," said the old boatman, while the tears dropped down his face, "that my lad should have done such a thing as that and kept it to himself!"

"I was frightened," gasped the boy. "I thought they would hang me for it. I dared not tell."

"My poor Leam!" sighed Sir Austen.

The boy turned his haggard, dying face to him.

"I never had the lady out of my mind, sir," he said. "I heard mother read how the young lady said she was guilty; but I knew that I had done it, and no one else. Ask her to forgive me, sir. I was so afraid of being hung!"

Half an hour afterward the boy died, his last moments soothed by the clergyman at his side.

Some days elapsed before Leam was liberated, and then she became the heroine of the day. Her story was in every newspaper and on almost every lip. It was another nine days' wonder, and then it died away; but in the hearts of the people who lived near her home, and in the hearts of those who loved her, the memory of her great sacrifice never died.

The first to welcome her, when she crossed the threshold of the mere, was Lady Cumnor; and Leam, whose heart was all aglow with happiness and love, forgave her her past hostility. She kissed the proud, fair face bent before her in such utter humiliation.

"I wish," she whispered, gently—"oh, how I wish, Lady Cumnor, that I could give you back your little son!"

It was Lady Cumnor who fixed the wedding-day; she was so humble, so loving, so patient, so anxious to make Leam and Ross happy, that they could not resist her.

"It was on Christmas Eve," she said, "that I came here; and I brought with me misfortune and sorrow. Let me atone for it by bringing to this Christmas Eve gladness and love."

It was a strange day for a wedding, as every one agreed; yet it had a charm of its own. No wedding-day could have seen two fairer brides; for Prince Cenci had won beautiful Lady Viola, and they were married on the same day.

That same Christmas Eve, while the wedding-guests were all busily occupied, Lady Cumnor called Ross and Leam into Sir Austen's study. She looked right queenly in her wedding-attire. She took the hand of her husband's son and held it in her own.

"Ross," she said, gently, "I did you a cruel injustice once; now let me atone for it. My little son in Heaven has taught me many lessons that I should never have learned from earthly wisdom. Let me atone for my injustice now. Heaven may bless me with other children; but your inheritance, Ross, shall be yours. I have asked Sir Austen to leave Larchton Mere to you and your heirs forever; and he has decided to do so. Kiss me, and let us bury the past." And he did so.

Another matter that touched and pleased Ross was this. On going into the gallery where his mother's picture hung, he found it wreathed with ivy and Christmas berries. He brought his wife Leam to look at it, and Lady Cumnor followed them. The carol-singers were singing just then, and the Christmas bells were chiming merrily.

Leam turned and clasped her arms round the stately figure, always for the future to be loved and never again feared. They formed a pretty group when Ross lovingly put his arm round his wife's shoulders, smiling the while into his step-mother's face.

"What a change," he said, "from the Christmas Eve when you came! How perplexed and anxious I was then, and how happy I am now!"

"My heart has been touched by the vision of a little child," said Lady Cumnor. "Heaven knows best. Perhaps, if my boy had lived, I should always have been proud, jealous and envious. I believe his bright, pure little spirit overshadows me. Ah me, ah me, the snow on the ground is not whiter than that little body was, not purer than the little soul that winged its way to Heaven! I could fancy this," she said, going to the window, and drawing aside the hangings, "the Christmas night of many hundreds of years ago."

Ross bent down and kissed his wife's sweet face. Lady Cumnor turned to him suddenly.

"Ross," she said, "do you think my child died that I might live a higher life?"

"I cannot tell," he replied; and, with her eyes fixed upon the stars, she murmured softly:

"Great gifts can be given by little hands. Since of all gifts Love is still the best."

### THE END.

—A Mexican at Las Vegas, New Mexico, tied his wife firmly to a board, leaned her thus helpless against a fence, took a position fifty feet away, and used her as a target for rifle practice. He did not hit her, his object being to frighten her by imbedding the bullets in the board close to her head and body. She fainted under the frightful ordeal.

—Mrs. Agassiz, found, one morning, in one of her slips, a cold little slimy snake, one of six sent the day before to her scientific spouse, and carefully set aside by him for safety under the bed. She screamed, "There is a snake in my slipper!" The servant leaped from his couch, crying, "A snake! Good Heaven, where are the other five?"

## PERSONAL AND LITERARY.

—"Mark Twain's" American sketches have been translated into French.

—The books bequeathed by Carlyle to the Harvard library number 325 volumes.

—E. A. Freeman, the historian, will lecture in Boston during his coming visit to this country.

—Ernest Longfellow, son of the poet, will paint a portrait of his father for Memorial Hall at Bowdoin College.

—One of the pleasantest things in railway travel nowadays, says the *Christian Union*, is to be greeted by the news agents on the cars with the cry: "Revised New Testament, only twenty cents!" The book has sold rapidly, and probably never before has there been so much Bible reading as there is now.

—Chinese authors complain that their works are not only printed in Japan, but that cheap editions of them are imported into China and sold to their detriment. Chinese authors have perpetual copyright in their productions, and any infringer of an author's rights is punished by receiving a hundred blows and being transported for three years.

—Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes says, in answer to a letter, that a free public library "is as necessary to a town as a nest is to a pair of birds. Scholars are sure to be hatched in it sooner or later, and in all such institutions you will see a good many old birds love to nestle and find themselves very warm and comfortable, whether they breed and sing or not."

—One of Sir Edwin Landseer's pictures recently brought at a London sale the sum of \$14,750. The auctioneer related that while Sir Edwin was engaged upon it Mr. Millais happened to call upon him, and the elder painter said to the younger: "If I don't live to finish this picture you will do it for me." Sir Edwin did die, leaving the work unfinished, and Mr. Millais completed it.

—Gilbert and Sullivan seem to have concluded that their new comic opera "Patience," which is as great a success in London as "Pinafore," would not make a hit on the American stage, as they have abandoned their dramatic right here by publishing the music, with accompanying words. The theme is the æsthetic craze in England, and it probably would not be thought funny by the mass of Americans.

## HUMOROUS.

—Protested notes—Those emanating from your neighbor's violin.—*Yonkers Gazette.*

—Who says it's unhealthy to sleep in feathers? Look at the spring chicken and see how tough he is.—*Boston Courier.*

—It has been definitely settled at last that the reason why the pig's tail curls is because it's styed when it is young.—*Boston Times.*

—It's a poor rule that don't work both ways, as the foreman of the printing-office said when he turned the column over for the death of the editor.—*Somerville Journal.*

—The game of lawn-tennis is chiefly notable because it affords young ladies an opportunity to wear base-ball shoes and know what is comfortable to the feet.—*New Haven Register.*

—A French engineer, after a series of experiments with a loaf of bread baked by a Vassar College girl, now announces that the project of tunneling Mont Blanc is entirely practicable.—*Philadelphia News.*

—A creature with no aim in life but that of bringing unhappiness to his fellow creatures publishes the fact that enough Connecticut tobacco was raised last year to make 900,000 cigars.—*Boston Transcript.*

—Says a society paper: "The nearer the bangs come to the eyebrow the more fashionable is the wearer." A hint to quarrelsome husbands. Hit her square on the eye if you want her to appear stylish.—*Philadelphia Chronicle.*

—"Everything I touch drops," said Mrs. Jarley, as her fork fell on the floor. Mr. Jarley replied, "I wish you would touch the price of beef," as he reached for a piece of steak that cost twenty-five cents a pound.—*Syracuse Sunday Times.*

—A boy in Pennsylvania was recently choked to death on a prune stone. We always supposed a boy couldn't swallow an anchor, that is, not very easily, but we thought he could get away with anything that didn't have a cross-piece to it.—*Burlington Hawkeye.*

—The girl who makes the acquaintance of every young man she sees, without waiting to know who or what he is, is held in the same esteem by men as the yellow dog that will lick every hand that pats its head.—*Turner's Falls Reporter.*

—The *New York Times*, in a cool, Philistine fashion, remarks: "Some forms of charity are fashionable," and goes on to show that a woman who wishes to be considered as belonging to the cream of society must be good to the poor.

—There are women to-day in San Francisco (says the *Chronicle* of that city) subsisting on scanty crusts in blind alleys, who could step into the empty mansions of our new millionaires and arrange the appointments of room after room of the entire house, with an artistic sense and individuality of taste which would put to the blush the first upholsterer of the city. The day is not far distant when this will become a distinct calling for women. The originality of conception and design manifested by women wherever their artistic powers are allowed a chance for development will lead to many new paths for industrious womanhood."