

COULD WE KNOW!

Could we but glance the future o'er,
His hidden depths unveil,
Look on the blessings safe a store,
Whose mercies never fail.

MIRIAM.

The Romance of Heatherleigh Hall.

By MANDA L. CROCKER.

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CHAPTER XXIV.—CONTINUED.

Well, this is hard! All my little dreams
of fanciful and sweet romance are pushed
back behind the sable curtain, and a different
tableau brought forth. And it may be
that Miriam will never know of the mes-

Maggie finds time to bring me up a cup
of tea, and sits down on the edge of the bed
for a little gossip in undertone. Dear child,
she is overjoyed to see me and to get rid of
the responsibility of the house. Under
the circumstances I don't blame her. She
looks worried and thin. And as I sip
my tea she tells me that Miriam "took
with a pain in her head," and that the doc-

When Maggie heard aught or not, I
am convinced that my suspicions are
correct in the main. The physician is to
call at three o'clock; it is now thirty minutes
past two, so I am obliged to wait a half
hour before I can talk with him myself
concerning Miriam. He is such a voluble
old man that I conclude to go down-stairs to
meet him, as he will perhaps give me a
noisy greeting, and it might disturb her—
all the one I have to care for in particular.

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I follow the nurse into the sick-room with
an affirmative nod. There on the pillows,
in the semi-twilight of the room, lies the
fair, proud face I remembered so well. The
dark, haunting eyes are wide open now,
with a dull, listless expression in them,
and the taper fingers stray over the pil-
lows and clutch anxiously at the lace frills.
Her breath comes stifflly, and a hectic
flush on either cheek tells the tale.

I go close to the couch, and, bending over
her, whisper her name. She starts, looks
up at me for a moment, while the fevered
lips part in a smile as she murmurs: "Yes,
yes, yes!" but she doesn't know me.

I grow sick and faint and turn away with
the hot tears on my face. I go to the win-
dow and look out. The beautiful day is
clouding over and the autumn wind is tear-
ing across the lot beyond the forsaken gar-
den like a thing of spite, the dead leaves
flying on before. The garden, too, is desolate;
the lilies are dead; every thing which
seemed full of joyous welcome at first
now has faded out into sable folds. I gaze
down the road and see the doctor's carriage
coming, and then I go down-stairs after once
more turning to the bed and brushing back
the brown tress from the hot brow of one
who knows me not at this my sad home-

The physician says that "within the next
twenty-four hours the tide will turn in Mir-
iam's favor or ebb with the tide of time, and
she will pass over." I recall her words of a
year ago: "If I only could pass over and
be at rest!" Somehow the very memory chills
my heart's blood. Her prayer be an-
swered! If she only could live to read the
message of soul-sunshine I have brought
her she might not want to be "at rest" now.

Perhaps if she lives there will be un-
folded a bright, glorious chapter in the
cloudy history of this child of bitterness.
Perhaps where the thorns are now the roses
will bloom, for "Love can never forget his
own," I repeat; but I am only thinking of
the hot tears on my face.

Allan Percival in this connection, and do
not consider that Miriam might repeat it
with the outlines of two graves rising to
the beck of memory, to the utter exclusion
of all late gifts of affection.

The "twenty-four hours" are about ended.
Miriam is sleeping now, tranquil and pale;
the fever has burned itself out and she re-
mains. The physician says: "She will
wake after a little, sane, conscious of every
thing, but very weak." It is not doubt him
in the least. She lies motionless and color-
less as the dead, and I believe him.

Last night I watched with her alone. Mrs.
Courtney, being nearly exhausted, went to
lie down and take her much-needed rest,
leaving me, as I desired, alone with Miriam.

I believe she loves Allan Percival. Once
in the night she tossed up her thin hands
and murmured: "Oh! it is you!" with such
a glad light coming into her dull eyes that
I for the moment forgot she was ill, and
said, bending down and kissing her: "Yes,
it is me." Then she said, slowly: "It has
been so long since I have seen you, Allan!"

"I was bending over her still, but when Mrs.
Courtney came into the room, and I, catch-
ing at an idea, followed it up with all the
alertness of a Pinkerton detective. I have
been but little else than a detective ever
since my wary feet touched the threshold
of Heatherleigh Hall some weeks ago, so I
"put out my feelers" for a little enlighten-
ment, if possible, and I say with seeming
unconcern: "I suppose Miriam has been
very restless ever since her illness," and
the answer comes: "Oh! yes; you can't
imagine!"

"Talking a great deal, too, I suppose;
asking for me often, I dare say!" I want
to know if any one else ever heard her say
"Alban," but do not ask directly, for the
reason that I desire to keep her and his
secret well; keep it as my own.

"Oh! yes," Mrs. Courtney replies, with a
sigh and a pitying look toward the uncon-
scious sufferer; "yes, she called for you
quite often; and sometimes she imagined
you were here, you know."

"And several times she seemed as if she
were talking to a gentleman, and would call
him 'Allan' in such an affectionate way that
I supposed she saw, in her delirium, her
dead husband. Then I had no hopes of her
at all, for they say that if a very sick per-
son thinks they are conversing with those
that are dead, why, it is a sign that they
will soon follow them."

I let Mrs. Courtney have her way about it,
being the dead husband, and also about the
"signs," for I have another evidence to
prove my suspicion, and care nothing for
her beliefs. I sit there, however, listening
to her whispering of the details of Miriam's
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listen to every word, although my thoughts
were running away like maddened steeds
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and is pitying in her kindly heart the sad,
sad separation made by death; while I
know that it is the exact likeness of Allan
Percival, and I can not help but bewail the
fate that keeps them apart, knowing what
I do now.

This locket, then, is the key to the story in
cipher I have been trying to read. There
is really more between Miriam and her
half-cousin, after all, than I had dared
to hope. I gaze into the bright countenance
of the picture in my hand, and my heart
throbs faster as I think: Ah! Allan, I
have come to an understanding now with
you. I know now why that wistful, happy
expression lighted up your fine eyes when
I saw you last. You had reason to hope.

"Mrs. Courtney," I said, softly, shutting
up the case, "we need not say anything to
Miriam about this, as she is rather peculiar,
and she would not like her husband's mem-
ory. Perhaps she might think we had no right
to open this locket."

"Oh! I won't mention it," she answered.
"I thought maybe," the little one's was there,
too."

CHAPTER XXV.

It is mid-December. The sun gleams out
fitfully between great, dark snow-clouds,
and dances coquettishly over the carpet
after having dashed through the frosty pane.

Outside the air is piercing cold, and the
deep white drifts lie all over the dreary
earth. The jingle of bells betoken by their
merry music that somebody is brave
enough to be out and enjoy the weather;
yet it may be that they are out *volens
volens*, and have the music of the bells to keep
up their courage and render the monotony
of their daily snow more bearable.

Inside the plants bloom in the alcove
give us a glimpse of summer, and the bird
in his cage above them is warbling his
matchless matin as merrily as if all earth
were but a garden of Eden.

Escorted in the depths of my favorite
easy chair Miriam is cuddled up, rather
than sitting, just where the fitful sunshine
strays over her dark tresses, which in the
sunlight are a rich brown, and in the
shadows a black color. She is very pale,
and her haunting eyes are darker
and more haunted than ever.

She has asked me long since if I "man-
aged to get her portrait," and I have told
her that when she was able to sit up I
would show it to her.

"Control yourself my dear," I said a half-
hour ago, when I started upstairs for the
much-coveted picture, "and pray do not get
excited in the least, as Doctor Cushman
says the last excitement may bring on a re-
lapse. She promised me to be calm and I
brought the portrait down, just as Peggy
wrapped it up, and laid it in her lap."

A deathly whiteness crept into her thin
face, but with steady fingers she unties
the string and undoes the picture.

"It has been a long time since I have been
face to face with myself," she says, dream-
ily, passing her white fingers caressingly
over the portrait. "When I looked on this
picture last I had no idea of the dismal
future, had no conception of how much
hearts can endure and still live. It is all
this side, this side, the lesson I have been
learning." Then she paused, and leaning
her head back among the cushions, shut
her eyes. Presently the tearful sips slipped
from beneath the closed lids. "Miriam!"
I said, half alarmed, "let me hang up the
portrait; you are losing your self-control;
no wonder you are so weak. I ought to have
known better than to have been so rash and
risky."

"At this she opened her eyes and looked
at me through her tears. "No!" she ejacu-
lated, with quite an emphasis for one so
weak, "you have done right. I need some-
thing to help me out of this rut of desolate
heartache, even though it come through the
outlet of tears. They will do me no harm;
they will ease the pain here," and she
placed her hand over her heart.

I had told her previously of the Hall and
of Peggy's mourning her for dead; and of
how the two old servants would be over-
joyed to see her dear face again, so there
was no need to reiterate my belief that it
was her duty to go back and see them, even
if she did not choose to stay. No, there was
no need ever to press the subject again, for

her firm and flat refusal was more pro-
nounced perhaps this time than before I
went to England, so I knew enough not to
touch on that. I only said: "Yes, I know;
but you ought to cheer up for the sake of
your friends."

"Friends," she repeated, with a ghost of
a smile lingering around her perfect mouth.
"I have such an array! Patty and you."
Then she paused, and a far-away look came
into her eyes and a faint color tinged her
cheek. She was thinking of Allan, I be-
lieved, but I kept judiciously quiet. We
should get around to that by and by, if I
did not fail, by easy, pleasant stages.

After a moment she looked up with such
a wistful expression in the dark eyes,
but she did not say "Allan." No, she said:
"Of course I have Peggy and Ancil, who are
good and true in their way; but they are
only Peggy and Ancil, after all; not com-
panions."

"Miriam," I said, rather authoritatively
for me, "you are not speaking of whom you
are thinking of, nor have you even men-
tioned the one's name whom you desire
very much to see. Why not be candid with
me, and tell me, does all in my power to
render you happy?"

A wild, frightened look flashed over her
features, and I was afraid I had said too
much. "Never mind," I added, apologeti-
cally, "I only had a fancy."

She shot a questioning glance at me, and
a faint flush again overspread her counte-
nance. Then in swift transition she was
again in tears. "I had a friend," she be-
gan, as if confessing a fault, "one whom I
had a great deal of, but I have lost all
trace of him, and I do not know now where
he is." The tears dropped down unheeded
now, and she was crying like a child. "I
should write to him, but I have lost the ad-
dress I did have," she added, after the first
paroxysm of grief had subsided.

"Would you like a letter from him, Mir-
iam?" I asked, with a great joy tugging at
my heart-strings. I felt like Tomson's
hero, so "Close on to the promised good,"
only the "good" belonged to some one else.

"Oh! yes," she answered, a hopeful light

beaming through the tears and blaming
her own face.

"Well, Miriam," I replied, "wait until you
are calm again, and I will give you one
which he sent by me."

"Oh! Father in Heaven! Can it be true?"
she exclaimed, joyfully. It was the very
first time I ever saw happiness so completely
outlined on her usually sad face. I had
seen a look similar one long ago when we
were wandering among the hills and resting
beneath the shade of a tree while we
gazed seaward; but this was really happy
anticipation.

"I presume you have reference to Allan
Percival?" she questioned, a rosy flush
sweeping up from cheek to brow.

"Yes," I answered, smiling. "I met him
in England, and he seemed very much
pleased to hear that you were at my home
in Rhode Island, and he gave me a letter,
saying: 'Give it to her with your own
hands.' I know you will be very happy
with him, Miriam, he is so noble and good."

I said this last at a venture, but not
amiss, for her sweet face was almost trans-
figured with the joy that shone from the
windows of her happy soul. "Now, when
you are calmer," I added, "I will give you
the letter."

The flush has gone from her face, and she
is sitting over there in the fitful sunshine
as in a summer's morning, outwardly at
least. "I am calm," she says, presently,
looking away out over the frosty landscape,
but there is a happy tremor in her voice,
and I know the love-light is in her eyes.

I take the portrait from her lap and go off
up-stairs. I hear her sigh as I shut the
stairway-door behind me, and my heart
throbs for the denouement.

Down in the bottom of my trunk, where I
placed it weeks ago, I find the letter which
I was to deliver with my own hands.

"Allan," I say, happily, "you are just
before dawn, as you know," and I go
down-stairs light of foot and light of
heart. Why shouldn't I, when I was the
medium of so much life happiness, and I
had so longed to bring it about, too? It
seems to me that as I pass down the shad-
owy staircase that the face of my dear,
dead friend, Lady Percival, smiles out of
the semi-darkness, and I fancy I hear a
sweet, soft voice, long since hushed in
death, saying: "Blessed be the day that
brought me to this world, for I have seen
the face of my dear daughter; for proving to
be such a tireless watch and ward over her
best interests."

Miriam looks up as I enter the room with
a bright smile, and I can not help uttering
the words which come involuntarily to my
lips: "Why is this Miriam; always so
sad, so sad?" She doesn't reply, only
reaches an eager hand for the letter, which
I moment later lay on her white palms.

I turn away as the taper fingers break the
seal. Somehow it comes to me that the
inclosed is sacredly hers; that I, even I,
have no right to intrude on its perusal. I
take up my crocheting and, stirring up the
coals anew in the grate, seat myself at the
opposite window on my fancy work intent.

The wind sweeps down from the hills and
whirls the snow into miniature mountains
and valleys out there in the front lawn,
where the summer sunbeams stood as if
brought up with sorrowful vengeance among
the lilies. Would she ever have such a sad
countenance again as on that day? I did
not know. Would she ever almost hiss
sneeringly through her pearly teeth that she
hated her home—her Heatherleigh home?

Most likely, if I should be foolish enough
to broach the subject again. But I will not;
I have more sense now.

A rustle of paper and a sigh, and I look
up to see Miriam's face in the letter
written on Allan Percival's knee in Health-
leigh Park. I can not tell whether she is
happy now or not, but I watch her furtively
and pretend that I do not care to be enlight-
ened in the matter.

The better way to find out some secrets
is to dissemble and play perfect indifference
to the import, and, according to the natural
perversity of things, they will unfold them-
selves before your uninterested vision.

Some persons are like oysters; undertake
to be familiar with their affairs and they
shut up, shell-like, and you are left a vic-
tim to your own over-inquisitiveness.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

CONCERNING TRIFLES.

"They Make Perfection, and Perfection Is
No Trifle," is sometimes quite
as suggestive as the most weighty facts. A
colored soap-bubble, blown from a clay pipe,
gave to Dr. Young the idea that led to his
discovery of the law of the interference of
light. Another "snapper-up of unsawdred
trifles" was the philosopher who said in the
fall of an apple the law which bids a tear
"trickle from its source," and "guides the
planets in their course."

"Because I have neglected nothing," an-
swered Pousin, when asked why he stood
so high among Italian painters. The rule
which guided him was the simple one that
so many persons know and so few heed—
"whatever is worth doing at all is worth
doing well."

Those who "despise the day of small
things" are themselves overlooked in the
day when attentive workers are rewarded.

"But these are trifles," said a visitor to
whom Michael Arago had explained that
since his previous visit he had retouched
the statue, polishing that part, softening
this feature, and bringing out that muscle.

"It may be so," replied the sculptor, "but
trifles make perfection, and perfection is no
trifle."

Samuel Smiles tells us, in his "Self-
Helps," that a lobster's shell suggested to
James Watt the form of the iron pipe by
which he carried water along the unequal
bed of the river Clyde. Brunel noticed how
a ship-worm perforated the wood, and from
the observation learned how to excavate
the Thames tunnel.

Thousands of men had seen steam issuing
from the spout of a tea-kettle without
seeing that nature was trying to attract at-
tention to the fact that drops of water ex-
panded by heat would give man a power
equal to millions of horses. She waited for
an observer until circumstances put the
Marquis of Worcester in the tower, where
he had nothing better to do than to watch
a vessel containing hot water. She blew off
the cover before his eyes, and he, attracted
by the trifle mused upon it, till the idea of
steam power was revealed.

Then nature waited for some one to de-
velop the idea and apply it to practical pur-
poses. Savary, Newcomen and others tried
their "prentice hand," but one day a mas-
ter workman, whose trade of making mathe-
matical instruments had trained him to ob-
serve trifles, was called upon to repair a
model of Newcomen's engine. James Watt
came, saw and conquered—for he developed
the modern steam-engine.

Smiles begins his chapter on the
"close observation of little things" with this
quotation from the Latin: "Opportunity has
hair in front, behind she is bald; if you
seize her by the forelock you may hold her,
but if suffered to escape, not Jupiter Him-
self can catch her again."—Youth's Em-
pansion.

CHERRY SUGAR.—Take bird cherries, wash
them up well, taking care to break most of
the stones, add a pint of sugar to each pint
of pulp, place in a kettle and boil two min-
utes; pour into small jars and seal up.

NEW YORK LETTER.

An American's Notes at the Paris Exposition.

The English Estimate of American Char-
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Dudes and Their Fool Actions.

[Special Correspondence.]