

IRENE'S VOW

By CHARLOTTE M. BRAEME.

CHAPTER XIII.—(Continued.)

It was a beautiful day in June, and the grand old city of Rome lay resting in the sun, its gorgeous palaces and castles, its glorious ruins all shining in the rays of the fairest sun that ever shines. The old palace stood outside the walls of Rome, at some little distance from the city where the Tiber runs wide and clear; it is almost hidden by magnificent trees.

All that day, as he traveled toward Rome, the duke had been thinking of Beatrice; he had a confused idea that Beatrice was waiting for him, and yet he repeated to himself, again and again, that Beatrice had been dead many years.

It happened that when the carriage stopped, and the duke said he could walk through the garden and reach the house by the grand entrance, the first thing he saw in the beautiful walk that led to the flex trees was the sweeping train of a long, black dress; he saw the figure of a woman, tall, slender and graceful as any of the world-famed statues, a face so magnificently beautiful that no man who saw it could ever forget it, yet a face with a story in it.

A figure, the curves and lines of which were all harmony. He stood quite silent for a few moments. Was this what his dream meant? Was this Beatrice? Quite involuntarily he uttered the name.

"Beatrice," he cried, and the tall, stately figure turned to him at once. Ah, so it was not Beatrice. With all her beauty the young duchess had not been one-half so fair. This was a golden-haired woman with a face like a flower.

"I beg your pardon," he said; "I—I called you Beatrice."

She came toward him, and he said to himself that grace itself was centered in every movement.

"It is I who should beg pardon," she said in a low, clear voice; "I am intruding here."

"Who are you?" he asked, with perfect courtesy, yet with the manner of one who expects an answer.

She had heard nothing of the duke's coming, but it was very evident to her that he was someone who had a right to ask the question.

"I am Irene Darcy, the daughter of Santon Darcy, the artist," she replied.

And then the duke held out his hand. "I must introduce myself," he said. "I am the Duke of Bayard."

Irene bowed. All the dukes in the world would not have lessened her self-possession. He admired her well-bred calm.

"Your father knows I am expected," he said. "Has he not told you?"

She smiled, and the smile made her so beautiful that the duke gazed at her in silent wonder.

"To tell you the truth," she said, "my father and myself seldom speak of anything but art. Sometimes we sit together for hours and do not speak. My father is not an ordinary human being, and he never remembers to tell me anything, no matter how interesting it may be."

"I quite understand," said the duke, gently; and Irene continued:

"Since we have lived in this beautiful old palace, he has been more silent, more given to dreams than ever."

"I remember now," said the duke, suddenly; "your father wrote to ask my permission for his daughter to accompany him. And are you that daughter?"

"Yes, I am my father's only child," said Irene.

The duke walked by her side down the winding path.

"I hope," he said gallantly, "that you have enjoyed your visit here, and that everyone in the place has been most attentive to you."

"I have been happy and well cared for," she replied.

If Lord Waldo, the duke's nephew, had been there to see the lingering glance of admiration that the duke gave to the beautiful woman he duke had called out, "Dancer."

Irene was a little puzzled; she had never been vain, and in all her recent distress the fact that she was exceedingly beautiful had escaped her thoughts. She wondered at the duke's kindness and his evident determination to see more of her, but she did not, as many would have done, think that it was owing to her own charms.

That same afternoon the duke found his way to the artist's quarters, and overwhelmed him with kindness. He would insist that the artist and his daughter should dine with him. Long after that dinner party was over, long after the sun had set and the moon had risen over the broad river, Irene sat watching the blue night skies.

"My vengeance," she said; "oh, heaven, my vengeance, and now it seems near at hand."

CHAPTER XIV.

The moon shone as it shines only in an Italian sky, and the pale, pure stars, all bright and calm, studded the heavens.

The duke had asked Irene and her father to go with him to see the Coliseum by moonlight. They had enjoyed the weird, beautiful scene of their hearts' content. Santon Darcy was carried out of himself; he looked from the stony sky to the moonlit earth—the grand ruin that has no equal, and bowed his head, as he said:

"Verily, the great God is the great artist: we are but shadows."

One or two mute pictures haunted him, and he felt that he must immortalize them while they lived in his mind; and the moment the carriage stopped in the courtyard where the olives grew, he, with a half-murmured apology, hastened to his studio.

"Shall I come with you, papa?" asked Irene.

But he answered hastily:

"No, I want to be alone."

The fire of genius and imagination had been lighted in his soul, and he felt that he must be alone.

Then the Duke of Bayard turned to her.

"I wonder if I dare ask a favor from you, Miss Darcy?" he said.

"There can be nothing your grace would ask that I would not do," she replied.

"It is a small favor, but it will lead to a greater one," he said, courteously. "The moon is so bright and the stars so clear.

Will you come into the gardens, and let us see how the water looks under the light of the moon?"

"I will go with pleasure, if you wish," she said.

It was a grand old fountain; many a handsome Roman prince had stood there in the moonlight, and many a lovely face had been reflected in the shining waters.

It is like this better than the Coliseum, I believe," said Irene. "I can breathe here; there I was lost in wonder; what a night this is!"

The duke was smiling to himself. Her face, as the light fell on it, was marvelous to behold—it was like a beautiful white cameo; the duke took courage from its expression—so thoughtful, so gentle, the passion and tragedy seemed to die from it.

"Miss Darcy," he began, "I told you the smaller favor you granted me would give me courage to ask for a greater; may I do so now?"

"Ask what you will," said Irene.

The stately old nobleman had a fashion, quite his own, of making every attention he paid to her seem like a favor that she had granted him. She was startled from her calm when he said, in a tone of deep emotion:

"I can ask, and you can grant no greater favor, Miss Darcy. I—I loved you the first moment I saw you, and I want you to be my wife."

Even in the moonlight he saw how pale her face grew, and how her lips trembled.

"Your wife?" she repeated—"your wife?"

"Yes, pardon me if I have spoken abruptly; my most dear and honored wife. Will you listen to me one minute, Miss Darcy, before you decide? I know there is a great disparity between us. I am older than your father. I have not the hot-headed love of youth to offer you. I have the deepest and most reverential affection, that will make you as happy, perhaps, as the most passionate love. For heaven's sake," he cried, earnestly, "do not say that you are going to refuse me."

"I—I could not bear it; I did not think that I cared so much for you—think before you refuse me."

"I am very sorry," she began.

But he interrupted her.

"Think of the power you would have—the good you might do."

He had touched the right spring at last. The good she might do, the power she would have—ah, that was what she wanted—power. All at once a whole vista seemed to open out to her; she had wondered so much how, in their divided lives she would ever be able to influence the fate of Sir Hulbert Eastmere. Quite suddenly a whole vista of ideas were opened out to her—it she were Duchess of Bayard, holding a position second to none, queen of the world of fashion, it would be comparatively easy—she would be his superior then.

The duke wondered why all at once a strange, luminous smile seemed to creep from her eyes to her lips, why her white hands clinked themselves, as though they held something between them. Oh, that she could tear from her heart the memory of that dark, handsome face she had loved with such passionate love. She turned to the duke, the expression of her face quite changed.

"Will you try to think favorably?" he asked.

"Yes, I think I may promise that," she answered.

He kissed the white hand that lay on the marble stone of the fountain.

"You make me very happy," he said, simply.

After that it was impossible to talk of more commonplace matters. Irene shuddered as if she were cold, and the duke, with his usual politeness, immediately offered her eyes to see to her father's room.

She opened the door and went in without bidding.

"Papa, I know you want to be alone," she said, "and I know that you will feel annoyed with me. I shall disturb you, and perhaps spoil your inspiration. I cannot help it—I must tell you. Something so wonderful has happened to me. Papa, the duke—the Duke of Bayard has asked me to marry him," she said; and then, indeed, the artist did spring to his feet, and gave one cry of unutterable surprise.

"The duke has asked you to marry him, Irene? I can hardly believe it."

"It is perfectly true, papa," she said.

"What answer have you given him, Irene?"

"None at all, papa. I have told him that I will think it over; and so I will. Oh, father," she cried, with passionate tears; "is it really true that I am no wife?"

"My dear child," he said, sadly, "you know that there is no use in going over that most miserable story again—you know it."

"What answer shall I make him?" she asked; "shall I say 'Yes' or 'No'?"

"You must say just what your heart dictates, Irene," he replied.

"My heart," cried the girl, scornfully; "what a mockery of words—my heart. It is broken. Oh, heaven," she continued, with a cry; "I would give all—wealth, fortune, title, honors, all—my heart's core even, for one true word from the man I loved."

"There is one thing certain, Irene," said the artist; "if you marry the duke you must tell him your story first."

CHAPTER XV.

The following morning Irene sent a note to the duke by one of the attendants, saying that before she gave a decided answer to his question she would like an hour's conversation with him.

The duke sent a most rapturous reply, saying that he thanked her a thousand times. She found him impatiently pacing up and down the velvet greenward, where fountains played and the tame doves came to drink the pure water. He went to meet her, his face beaming with delight.

How she managed to tell him her sad story she could not afterward say, but tell him she did without bidding anything except the name of the man who had deceived her. He listened to her with shocked attention and then followed st-

lence, every moment of which seemed like an hour to Irene.

He was the first to speak, and she hardly knew whether his words were a burden or a relief, a pain or a pleasure.

"My dearest Irene," he said, "I have listened to your story; need I say that I believe every word, and that I most heartily believe I express the opinion that everyone in this world would give when I say that you are as innocent as when you were a child at your father's knee?"

In surprise at the words, which she had not quite expected, she raised his hand to her lips and kissed it. That kiss sealed her fate and his; for after it the duke could no more have given her up than he could have down.

"I love, revere and respect you as much as I did before I heard your story; for I do not see how blame could be attached to you. Unwittingly, and through no fault of your own, you have lost your year in life; now let me help you to retract your steps, let me love shield you, let me name shelter you, let me give you a position unassailable. As for myself, the confidence you have reposed in me will never be misplaced or abused; your secret will die with me, and it will never cross my lips. Now, Irene, will you be my wife?"

She laid her hand in his as she answered:

"From my heart I thank you for your love, your trust, your goodness; from my heart, I say, 'Yes, I will be your wife.'"

He was silent for a few minutes, and then he said:

"Before we close this subject forever, Irene, will you tell me the name of the man who practiced this fraud upon you?"

Her face paled.

"I could not do that," she said. "I have made my vow concerning him, and I shall keep it; I could not tell you his name."

A hot flush rose to the fine old face, and the duke's strong, white fingers were clinched, as he answered:

"I should like to know his name, because I should like to find the man; and, having found him, I would crush his face with my heel. Now, you know, Irene, why I would like to hear his name."

"Vengeance is mine. I have sworn to pay it, and I will," she replied. "No one can do it for me, and no one shall."

The week that the Duke of Bayard spent at the palace was one long act of devotion to Irene. The grand old city was ransacked to find presents for her—the most exquisite cameos, the finest pearls. The duke ordered velvet from Genoa, lace from Milan, silk from Lyons, furs from Russia. One huge rocket, after another arrived, until Santon Darcy was amused, and told his daughter that it was easy to see that she was the affianced of a millionaire. The duke urged that the marriage should take place at the British embassy at Paris; he could not endure that it should be in Rome, where he had married Beatrice, or in England, where Lord Waldo's disconcerted face would make him wretched.

The wedding took place with all the pomp and splendor imaginable. The only request that Irene made was that it should not be put in the papers, and for this request she had her own motives, and the principal one was that Sir Hulbert Eastmere should not hear of her marriage. He would know that the Duke of Bayard was married; the marriage of such a mighty person must be known to all the world; but no one need know whom he had married. The fact that he was married in Paris would naturally lead to the conclusion that he had married a French lady. So, all that the English papers had to say about the marriage was this—that the Duke of Bayard and his beautiful young duchess were spending their honeymoon in Paris, and that the marriage ceremony had been solemnized at the British embassy with the greatest privacy.

Lord Waldo's anger was great, although he was courteous enough not to show it. The duke wrote him, telling him of the event a few days before it happened; but the anger of Lord Hurst himself was as nothing compared with the indignation of his wife. Lady Waldo Hurst was a heartless, brilliant woman of fashion, who had married Lord Hurst entirely for the reason that she should ultimately become Duchess of Bayard. She had never made any secret of it, and now her indignation was great. But, acting upon the advice of her husband, she decided to conceal her indignation and disappointment from the duke.

"Take my advice, Ada," said Lord Waldo; "instead of making the young duchess your enemy, refusing to meet her, or any nonsense of that kind, make her your friend, and then, should there be any possibility of learning anything about her, you will probably find it useful; and Lady Hurst saw at once how sensible that advice was."

CHAPTER XVI.

The chief of the great ancestral homes of England, Saxons, stands unrivaled for its magnificence and picturesque beauty. This September it presented a picture not often seen. The climatic was all in flower; the gardens were a mass of gorgeous blossom. In compliance with the wish of the beautiful young duchess, there was no rejoicing over the coming home. She had wished it to be so, and the duke had written to his agent, Mr. Stretton, saying that he wished the time of his return kept secret, and that the festivities given in honor of his marriage would take place soon after his return.

When Irene reached the luxurious suite of rooms prepared for her, she sank on one of the couches quite overcome. In this magnificent room, her maid awaited her, and she was at length at home. It would be long to tell how, slowly and by degrees, she became accustomed to the splendor of her surroundings; grand as they were, they seemed only fitted for her. Santon Darcy had not come home with his daughter. He preferred returning to Rome, to finish the work on which he was engaged.

After a few days the whole country rang with the fame of the young duchess; her wit, her glorious beauty, her wondrous grace, the silvery sweetness of her voice, the music of her laugh—all these made her the subject of conversation. Everyone hastened to call upon her, and everyone came away charmed, delighted with her.

The favorite room of the young duchess was her boudoir; a gem of a room, where art had exhausted itself; a room that had been built with an especial eye to light and sunshine. There, one bright September morning, she sat all alone. On her knees rested a book. She was not reading; the book had fallen from her hands, and she was playing idly with the jeweled rings on her fingers.

The door opens and the duke enters the room. He stood in silence for one minute while he admired the beautiful picture; then he went to his wife, and bending over her, with all the grace of an accomplished courier, he kissed her white jeweled hands.

(To be continued.)

THE MEMORY OF HER BOY.

How the Empress Eugenie Was Affected by an American Poem.

An American woman, a noted reader and elocutionist, relates a touching incident in which she had a part during her stay in England. The present queen, then Princess of Wales, gave a luncheon on board the royal yacht. The elocutionist received an invitation, and accepted. Among the royal personages present was the sad-eyed, beautiful Eugenie, the dethroned Empress of the French, who still grieved for her son, killed by the Zulus of South Africa.

"After lunch, and during the idle hour before tea was served," says the elocutionist, "the princess asked me if I would recite something. I had often recited for her royal highness before, but on this occasion she wished me to do so especially for the Empress Eugenie.

"I asked the princess if she had any choice as to what I should recite. She said no, but suggested one of the many characteristic little American poems she had heard me recite before. So I decided to give 'Kentucky Belle.'"

"Most Americans know the poem, with its pathetic story of a thoroughbred horse which a woman gave to one of Morgan's riders, a sixteen-year-old boy whom she had nursed from death to life, to carry him back to his home.

"The empress was close to me. I saw the tears gradually gather in her great, sad eyes, and fall silently down her pale cheeks. I had touched, and touched deeply, a chord. Her memory took her back to Africa, where her dead boy lay pierced to the heart by the spears of the savages.

"When the poem ended the empress rose, and coming up to me, folded me to her heart, and with a voice trembling with emotion, said: 'God bless you, my child! You have made me feel as I have never felt since my poor boy was killed—God bless you! I shall never forget this day!' Then she kissed me, and drawing me to a seat by her and holding my hand in hers, she talked to me for a long time."

A Moorish City.

The sun never touches the ground in Fez, except in a few isolated spaces, owing to the narrow streets, the height of houses, and the habit of stretching trellises covered with vines across from side to side. The consequence is that its naturally dark-skinned citizens, being rarely exposed to the full light of day, have complexions resembling partially decomposed potato sprouts in a dark cellar. The so-called streets run in straight lines the entire length of the town, and are all paved with round stones the size of coconuts, worn smooth by the tread of generations of slipped feet. As these lanes are never swept, and every householder throws his sloop and refuse out of doors, one must pick his way with exceeding care.

The Wed el Jubal ("River of Pearls") divides the city into two parts, the new and the old. The "River of Pearls" is fordable in every part, the resort of every four-footed and two-legged beast in the place; it receives all the drainage of the city, and is the general source of the drinking-water supply.—Detroit Free Press.

A Lost Idol.

The papers say that a New York lawyer is suing a steamship company for \$2,500 damages for the loss of an Egyptian idol which he shipped to New York from Palermo. Times have changed since the hymn-writer sang of "the dearest idol I have known, where'er that idol be," and pleaded to be relieved of it. Here's a man who wants his idol back—a pretty dear one at that. Better for him to be content with his damages. The average collector's attitude toward a good old Egyptian god must be almost too worshipful to be encouraged in a Christian country. The hymn-writer's sentiment was safer.—Harper's Weekly.

A Beautiful Paradox.

"Actress Lillian Russell had a birthday party the other day."

"How old is she?"

"That's not polite. They say a woman is only as old as she looks."

"Well?"

"Well, if Lillian Russell were twice as old as she looks she wouldn't be half as old as good many women who are a great deal younger."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Ungrateful.

"Your constituents would arrange to give you a serenade."

"Well," said the member of Congress who has grown irritable, "I suppose it's the consistent and proper thing to do. My constituents always seemed to derive a good deal of satisfaction from keeping me awake nights."—Washington Star.

Handsomest Prince.

Prince Waldemar, youngest brother of the English queen, is said to be the handsomest of all the royal princes in Europe.

Japan's Foreign Trade.

Japan's foreign trade has in thirty years increased from less than \$1 to nearly \$7 per capita per annum.

Negroes in the Cities.

Baltimore has now fewer than 80,000 colored inhabitants and Louisville fewer than 40,000. St. Louis has 35,000.

Courtship is a Game.

In which a girl plays her heart against a man's diamond.

It's a waste of time to repeat hair-raising stories to bald-headed men.



Treating Rot in Peaches.

The brown rot of peaches is generally familiar to growers of this fruit, but many are careless in ridding their orchards of the pest, probably because they do not appreciate the damage the fungous growth does. The illustration fairly shows how the mummified peaches look when attacked with this disease. Not only is the fruit attacked by this disease, but the twigs are also affected, and the growth is much more formidable during a damp growing season than a dry one.

It seems unnecessary to say that much of the trouble from this difficulty could be avoided; that is, the disease might be checked, if these mummified specimens were picked from the trees before the buds appear in the spring.

As with most fungous diseases of fruit trees, this brown rot may be largely overcome by spraying. It would occupy too much space to go into the de-

tails of this disease here and tell how to combat it, hence the reader, if a peach-grower, wherever located, is advised to send a request to the director of the Georgia Experiment Station, located at Experiment Station Postoffice, Ga. If not a resident of Georgia, send a 2-cent stamp for the bulletin and ask for Bulletin No. 50.

Repeated Trials of Crops.

Every farmer who has tried the plan knows that he frequently fails to get a satisfactory crop of some grain or vegetable, and does not always succeed in getting a stand of the crops sown for stock. This is often the case with crimson clover, and sometimes with the cow pea and with alfalfa.

Several recent communications from correspondents who have adopted the suggestion offered in this column regarding alfalfa state that they tried the plan, but did not get a satisfactory stand, and hence would give it up. This is wrong, as the writer can testify, for on several occasions he has failed to get a satisfactory stand without any apparent cause for the failure except in one instance, when the seed was poor.

On the other hand, other sowings have brought good stands, and additional trials on the same land where previous failures had been made resulted in success. If tests on small plots show that certain crops can be grown on the farm, one ought not to be discouraged at a single failure, especially with such a crop as alfalfa, which promises so much to the American farmer.

Milking in Australia.

In Australia they have a novel way of milking in some of the large dairies, which precludes the access of dirt and filth to the milk pail while milking. It is a milking glove or tube. The valve is over the teat and is connected with a long narrow tube which leads to a covered pail. The orifices in the lid of the pail are just large enough to admit the tubes into the pail and are not attached to them. The plan seems to be the most feasible of any of the devices for the purpose of excluding foreign substances from the milk pail. It is very important that all deleterious substances be kept from the milk pail in any way that can be employed consistent with economy.

Price of Binder Twine.

Binder twine is higher this year than for the past twelve years, with the exception of 1898. Wholesale prices are about one-third higher at the present time than a year ago, and there has not been a time for years past when twine was as scarce in the Chicago market. If the harvest should be light or if the growth of straw is not heavy, there will probably be no material advance over present prices and the supply of twine will be ample. If, however, we should have seasonable rains throughout the country, resulting in a rank growth of straw, there is likely to be a twine famine, for the simple reason that there is not twine enough in the country to bind a heavy harvest.—Farm, Field and Fireside.

To Destroy Potato Bugs.

Hand-picking of potato bugs is a slow process, and if the spot is a large one many of the plants will be in-

jured by the beetles before the work is finished. On the appearance of the pests go over the plot and spray with paris green, which destroys them quicker than by any other method. Delay in so doing, even for a day, may result in the vines being so seriously injured as to render it impossible for them to recover their vitality, the yield of the crop being consequently reduced to a certain extent.

Utilize Waste Places.

Fence corners and waste places may be utilized for the purpose of planting shade trees for windbreaks, or even fruit trees. Where these places have grown up with large weeds or brush a simple plan for ridding them up is to feed animals their fodder during the winter in these vicinities. In sloughs where ordinary crops will not thrive willows may be planted, as these will furnish a large amount of wood after a few years. When land was worth \$5 and \$10 an acre a little waste around fence corners was of small significance, but now that land has risen to \$50 and \$100 per acre one cannot afford to give up the use of four or five acres of land on every quarter section. One writer in Iowa Homestead, estimates the amount of waste land due to fences in a State like Iowa to be 222,000 acres. This, it is claimed, might be made to produce profitable crops.

Bloating Cows.

There is always more or less complaint regarding the bloating of cows during the first weeks after they have been turned out to pasture. Doubtless a part of the trouble is due to the animal, long deprived of green food, overloading her stomach and at the same time drinking copiously of water.

Often, however, the trouble is either due to improper feeding or else the animal has an attack of indigestion. In either case the remedy is in an entire change of diet, avoiding any food that is not of the best quality and confining the grain ration to such as are of easy digestion.

The quality of the water drunk by the animal should be looked into carefully and particularly if the water is from a stream in the pasture. If there is the slightest doubt about the quality of the water, the source of supply should be changed.

Grain and Dairy Farming.

An important difference between dairy farming and grain farming is the amount of the farm that is sold with the product that is of the fertility of the farm. The man who sells a ton of wheat sells in it about \$7 worth of fertilizing elements, and if he does not buy something to replace them his farm is so much poorer. The dairyman who sells a ton of butter has sold but 50 cents' worth of fertilizing material, and if he is a good dairyman, he has probably added much more than that, or twenty times that in the value of the farm in the bran, oil meal, cotton seed, or other food that he purchased while feeding his cows for making that ton of butter. It is in this way that the dairyman's farm is continually growing more productive, and if he does not make much from his dairy, he should from the crops that he can grow on his much enriched soil.—American Cultivator.

Dairy Notes.

See that each cow eats her food clean.

Cows fed on rich food make rich manure.

Better five cows on full feed than ten on scant rations.

Try an increase in rations before condemning a cow.

Skill in feeding will make a vast difference in the profits.

If butter is overworked it will show an oily or greasy look.

Do not let the cream get thick sour, churn when slightly acid.

A good separator does wonderfully close skimming if intelligently handled.

One essential to success in dairying is a cow fitted for a special purpose.

Fall and winter calves will make fully as good dairy cows as spring calves.

Rich food will make rich milk and rich milk will make the most cream and butter.