



BY
GUTHOR OF "AN ISRAELI" ETC.

CHAPTER XVII—CONTINUED.

The Wanderer was admitted without question. He found Unorna in her accustomed place. She had thrown aside her furs, and was sitting in an attitude of deep thought. Her dress was black, and in the soft light of the shaded lamp she was like a dark marble statue, set in the midst of thick shrubbery in a garden. Her elbow rested on her knee, her chin upon her beautiful, heavy hand; only in her hair there was bright color.

"I come from Israel Kafka," said the Wanderer, standing still before her.

"What of him?" she asked, in a voice without expression. "Is he well?"

"He bids me say to you that he has promised before heaven to take your life, and that there is no escape from a man who is ready to lay down his own."

"And you have brought me this message—this warning—to save me?" she said.

"As I tried to save him from you an hour ago. But there is little time. The man is desperate, whether mad or sane I cannot tell. Make haste. Determine where to go for safety, and I will take you there."

"I fancy it will not be safe to hesitate long," he said. "He is in earnest."

"I do not fear Israel Kafka, and I fear death less," answered Unorna, deliberately.

"Why, does he mean to kill me?"

"I think that in his place most very human men would feel as he does, though religion or prudence, or fear, or all three together, might prevent them from doing what they would wish to do."

"You, too? And which of the three would prevent you from murdering me?"

"None, perhaps—though pity might."

"I want no pity, least of all from you. What I have done, I have done for you, and for you only."

"You do not seem surprised," said Unorna. "You know that I love you."

"I know it."

"I must repeat that, in my opinion, you have not much time to spare," he said. "If you are not in a place of safety in half an hour, I cannot answer for the consequences."

"No time? There is all eternity. What is eternity or time or life to me? I will wait for him here. Why did you tell him what I did, if you wished me to live?"

"Why—since there are to be questions—why did you exercise your cruelty upon an innocent man who loves you?"

"Why? There are reasons enough!" Unorna's voice trembled slightly. "You do not know what happened. How should you? You were asleep. You may as well know, since I may be beyond telling you in an hour from now. You may as well know how I love you, and what depths I have gone down to win your love."

"I would rather not receive your confidence," the Wanderer answered haughtily. "I came here to save your life and not to hear your confessions."

"And when you have heard you will no longer wish to save. If you choose to leave me here, I will wait for Israel Kafka alone. He may kill me if he pleases. I do not care. But, if you stay you shall hear what I have to say."

"I loved you from the moment when I first saw you," said Unorna, trying to speak calmly. "But you loved another woman. Do you remember her? Her name was Beatrice, and she was very dark, as I am fair. You had lost her and you had sought her for years. You entered my house, thinking that she had gone in before you. Do you remember that morning. It was a month ago to-day. You told me the story."

"You have dreamed it," said the Wanderer in cold surprise. "I never loved any woman yet."

"How perfect it all was at first!" she exclaimed. "How smooth it seemed! How easy. You slept before me, out there by the river that very afternoon. And in your sleep I bade you forget. And you forgot wholly, your love, the woman, her very name, even as Israel Kafka forgot today what he had suffered in the person of the martyr. You told him the story, and he believes you, because he knows me, and knows what I can do. You can believe me or not, as you will. I did it."

"You are dreaming," the Wanderer repeated, wondering whether she was out of her mind.

"I did it. I said to myself that if I could destroy your old love, root it out from your heart and from your memory and make you as one who had never loved at all, then you would love me as you had loved her, with your whole soul. I said that I was beautiful—it is true, is it not? And young I am, and I love as no woman ever loved. And I said that it was enough and that soon you would love me, too. A month has passed away since then. You are of ice—of stone



BY
GUTHOR OF "AN ISRAELI" ETC.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"I do not know of what you are this morning you hurt me. I thought it was the last hurt, and that I should die then—instead of to-night. Do you remember? You thought I was ill, and you went away. When you were gone I fought with myself. My dreams—yes, I had dreamed of all that can make earth heaven, and you had waked me. You said that you would be a brother to me—you talked of friendship. The sting of it! It is no wonder that I grew faint with pain. Had you struck me in the face I would have kissed your hand. But your friend-ship! Rather be dead than, loving, be held a friend! And I had dreamed of being dear to you for my own sake, of being dearest and first and alone beloved, since that other was gone and I had burned her memory. That pride I had still until that moment. I fancied that it was in my power, if I would stoop so low, to make you sleep again as you had slept before, and to make you, at my bidding, feel as I felt. I fought with myself. I would not go down to that death. And then I said that even that were better than your friendship, even a false semblance of love inspired by my will, preserved by my suggestion. And so I fell. You came back to me, and I led you to that lonely place and made you sleep, and then I told you what was in my heart, and poured out the fire of my soul into your ears. A look came into your face—I shall not forget it. My folly was upon me, and I thought it was for me. I know the truth now. Sleeping, the old memory revived in you of her whom, waking you will never remember again. But the look was there, and I bid you awake. My soul rose in my eyes. I hung upon your lips. The loving word I longed for seemed already to tremble in the air. Then came the truth. You awoke, and your face was stone, calm, smiling, indifferent, unloving. And all this Israel Kafka had seen, hiding like a thief almost beside us. He saw it all, he heard it all, my words of love, my agony of waiting, my utter humiliation, my burning shame. Was I cruel to him? He had made me suffer, and he suffered in his turn. All this you did not know. You know it now. There is nothing to tell. Will you wait here until he comes? Will you look on, and be glad to see me die? Will you remember in the years to come with satisfaction that you saw the witch killed for her many misdeeds, and for the chief of them all—for loving you?"

The Wanderer had listened to her words, but the words they told was beyond the power of his belief.

"You shall not die if I can help it," he said simply.

"And if you save me, do you think I will leave you?" she asked with sudden agitation, turning and half rising from her seat. "Think what you will be doing, if you save me! Think well! You say that Israel Kafka is desperate. I am worse than mad, with my love!"

She sank back again and hid her face for a moment.

"You shall not die, if I can save you," he said again.

She sprang to her feet very suddenly and stood before him.

"You pity me?" she cried. "What lie is that which says that there is a kinship between pity and love? Think well—beware—be warned. I have told you much, but you do not know me yet. If you save me, you save me but to love you more than I already do. Look at me! For me there is neither God, nor hell, nor pride, nor shame! There is nothing that I will not do—nothing that I shall be ashamed or afraid of doing. If you save me, you save me that I may follow you as long as I live. I will never leave you. You shall never escape my presence, your whole life shall be full of me—you do not love me, and I can threaten with nothing more intolerable than myself. Your eyes will weary of the sight of me, and your ears of the sound of my voice. Do you think I have no hope? A moment ago I had none. But I see it now. Whether you will or not, I shall be yours. You make a prisoner of me—I shall be in your keeping, then, and shall know it, feel it, and love my prison for your sake, even if you will not let me see you. If you would escape from me you must kill me, as Israel Kafka means to kill me now—and then, I shall die by your hand and my life will have been yours and given in you. How can you think that I have no hope? I have hope—and certainty—for I shall be near you always to the end—always, always, always! I will cling to you as I do now—and say I love you. I love you—yes, and you will cast me off, but I will not go—I will clasp your feet, and say again, I love you, and you way spurn me—man, god, wanderer, devil—whatever you are—be loved always! Tread upon me, trample upon me, crush me—you cannot save yourself, you cannot kill my love!"

She had tried to take his hand, and he had withdrawn his; she had fallen upon her knees as he tried to free himself—had fallen almost to her

length upon the marble floor, clinging to his very feet, so that he could make no step without doing her some hurt.

"I heard some one come in below," he said, hurriedly. "It must be. Decide quickly what to do. Either stay or fly—you have not ten seconds for your choice."

She turned her imploring eyes to his.

"Let me stay here and end it all—"

"That you shall not!" he exclaimed, dragging her toward the end of the hall opposite to the usual entrance, and where he knew that there must be a door behind the screen of plants. His hold tightened upon her yielding waist. Her head fell back and her full lips parted in an ecstasy of delight as she felt herself hurried along in his arms, scarcely touching the floor with her feet.

"Ah—now—now! Let it come now!" she sighed.

"It must be now—or never," he said almost roughly. "If you will leave this house with me now, very well. But leave this room you shall. If I am to meet that man and stop him, I will meet him alone."

"Leave you alone? Ah! no—not that—"

They had reached the exit now. At the same instant both heard some one enter at the other end and rapid footsteps on the marble pavement.

"Which is it to be?" asked the Wanderer, pale and calm. He had pushed her through before him and seemed ready to go back alone.

With violent strength she drew him to her, closed the door and slipped the strong steel bolt across below the lock. There was a dim light in the passage.

"Together, then," she said. "I shall at least be with you—a little longer."

"Is there another way out of the house?" asked the Wanderer, anxiously.

"More than one. Come with me."

As they disappeared in the corridor they heard behind them the noise of the door lock as some one tried to force it open. Then a heavy sound as though a man's shoulder struck against the solid panel. Unorna led the way through a narrow, winding passage, illuminated here and there by small lamps with shades of soft colors, blown in Bohemian glass.

Pushing aside a small curtain they came out into a small room. The Wanderer uttered an involuntary exclamation of surprise as he recognized the vestibule and saw before him the door of the great conservatory, open as Israel Kafka had left it. That the latter was still trying to pursue them through the opposite exit was clear enough, for the blows he was striking on the panel echoed loudly out, into the hall. Swiftly and silently Unorna closed the entrance and locked it securely.

"He is safe for a little while," she said. "Keyork will find him there when he comes, an hour hence and Keyork, will, perhaps, bring him to his senses."

She had gained control of herself, to all appearances, and she spoke with perfect calm and self-possession. The Wanderer looked at her in surprise and with some suspicion. Her hair was all falling about her shoulders, but saving this sign, there was no trace of the recent storm nor the least indication of passion. If she had been acting a part throughout, before an audience, she would have been less indifferent when the curtain fell. The Wanderer, having little cause to trust her, found it hard to believe that she had not been counterfeiting. It seemed impossible that she should be the same woman, who but a moment earlier had been dragging herself at his feet, in wild tears and wilder protestation of her love.

"If you are sufficiently rested," he said, with a touch of sarcasm which he could not restrain, "I would suggest that we do not wait any longer here."

She turned and faced him, and he saw now how very white she was.

"So you think that even now I have been deceiving you? That is what you think. I see it in your face."

Before he could prevent her, she had opened the door wide again, and was advancing calmly into the conservatory.

"Israel Kafka!" she cried in loud, clear tones. "I am here—I am waiting—come!"

The Wanderer ran forward. He caught sight in the distance of a pair of fiery eyes and of something long and thin and sharp-gleaming under the soft lamps. He knew then that all was deadly earnest. Swift as thought he caught Unorna and bore her from the hall, locking the door again and setting his broad shoulders against it, as he put her down. The daring act she had done appealed to him, in spite of himself.

"I beg your pardon," he said, almost deferentially. "I misjudged you."

"It is that," she answered. "Either I will be with you or I will die, by his hand, by yours, by my own—it will matter little when it is done. You need not lean against the door. It is very strong. Your furs are hanging there, and here are mine. Let us be going."

"Where will you go?" asked the Wanderer.

"With you," she answered, laying her hand upon his arm and looking into his face as though waiting to see what direction he would choose.

"Unless you send me back to him," she added, glancing quickly at the house and making as though she would withdraw her hand once more.

"If it is to be that, I will go alone."

There seemed to be no way out of the terrible dilemma, and the Wanderer stood still in deep thought.

"If you are in your right mind," he said at last, beginning to walk toward the corner, "you will see that what you wish to do is utterly against reason. I will not allow you to run the risk of meeting Israel Kafka to-night, but I cannot take you with me. No—I will hold you, if you try to escape me, and I will bring you to a place of safety, by force, if need be."

"And you will leave me there, and I shall never see you again."

The Wanderer was perplexed. He saw, however, if he would yield the point and give his word to return to her she might be induced to follow his advice.

"If I promise to come back to you, will you do what I ask?" he inquired.

"Will you promise truly?"

"I have never broken a promise yet."

"Did you promise that other woman that you would never love again, I wonder? If so, you are faithful indeed. But you have forgotten that. Will you come back to me if I let you take me where I will be safe to-night?"

"I will come back whenever you send for me."

"If you fail, my blood is on your head."

"Yes—on my head be it."

"Very well. I will go to that house where I first stayed when I came here. Take me there quickly—no—not quickly either—let it be very long; I shall not see you until to-morrow."

A carriage was passing at a foot pace. The Wanderer stopped it, and helped Unorna to get in. The place was very near, and neither spoke, though he could feel her hand upon his arm. He made no attempt to shake her off. At the gate they both got out and he rang a bell that echoed through vaulted passages far away in the interior.

"To-morrow," said Unorna, touching his hand.

He could see even in the dark the look of love she turned upon him.

"Good night," he said, and the next moment she had disappeared within.

CHAPTER XVIII.

HAVING MADE

the necessary explanations to account for her sudden appearance, Unorna found herself installed in two rooms of modest dimensions, and very simply, though comfortably, furnished. It was a common thing for ladies to seek retreat and quiet in the convent during two or three weeks of the year, and there was plenty of available space at the disposal of those who wished to do so. Such visits were, indeed, most commonly made during the lenten season, and on the day when Unorna sought refuge among the nuns it chanced that there was but one other stranger within the walls. She was glad to find this case. Her peculiar position would have made it hard for her to be with equanimity the quiet observation of a number of women, most of whom would probably have been to some extent acquainted with the story of her life, and some of whom would certainly have wished out of curiosity to enter into nearer acquaintance with her while within the convent, while not intending to prolong their intercourse with her any further. It could not be expected, indeed, that in a city like Prague such a woman as Unorna could escape notice, and the fact that little or nothing was known of her true history had left a very wide field for the imaginations of those who chose to invent one for her. The common story, and the one which on the whole was nearest to the truth, told that she was the daughter of a noble of eastern Bohemia, who had died soon after her birth, the last of his family, having converted his ancestral possessions into money for Unorna's benefit, in order to destroy all trace of her relationship to him. The secret must, of course, have been confided to some one, but it had been kept faithfully, and Unorna herself was no wiser than those who amused themselves with fruitless speculations regarding her origin. If from the first, from the moment when, as a young girl, she left the convent to enter into possession of her fortune, she had chosen to assert some right to a footing in the most exclusive aristocracy of the world, it is not impossible that the protection of the Abbess might have helped her to obtain it. The secret of her birth would, however, have rendered a marriage with a man of that class all but impossible, and would have entirely excluded her from the only other position considered dignified for a well born woman of fortune, and wholly without living relations or connections—that of a lady canoness on the crown foundation. Moreover, her wild bringing up, and the singular natural gifts she possessed and which she could not resist the impulse to exercise had in a few months placed her in a position from which no escape was possible so long as she lived in Prague, and against those few—chiefly men—who for her beauty's sake, or out of curiosity, would gladly have made her acquaintance she raised an impassable barrier of pride and reserve. Nor was her reputation altogether an evil one. She lived in strange fashion, it is true, but the very fact of her extreme seclusion had kept her name free from stain. If people spoke of her as the Witch, it was more from habit and half in jest, than in earnest. In strong contradiction to the cruelty which she could exercise ruthlessly



when roused to anger, was her well-known kindness to the poor, and her charities to institutions founded for their benefit were in reality considerable and were said to be boundless. These explanations seem necessary in order to account for the readiness with which she turned to the convent when she was in danger, and for the facilities which were then at once offered her for a stay long or short; as she would please to make it. Some of the more suspicious nuns looked grave when they heard she was under their roof, others, who had not yet seen her, were filled with curiosity, others, again, had been attached to her during the time she had formerly spent among them, and there were not lacking those who, disapproving of her presence, held their peace, in the anticipation that the rich and eccentric lady would, on departing, present a gift of value to their order.

Unorna was familiar with convent life, and was aware that the benediction was over and that the hour for the evening meal was approaching. A fire had been lighted in her sitting room, but the air was still very cold, and she sat wrapped in her furs, as when she had arrived, leaning back in a corner of the sofa, her head inclined forward, and one white hand resting on the green baize cloth which covered the table.

She was very tired, and the absolute stillness was refreshing and restoring after the long drawn-out emotions of the stormy day. Never in her short and passionate life, had so many events been crowded into the space of a few hours. Since the morning she had felt almost everything that her wild, high-strung nature was capable of feeling—love, triumph, failure, humiliation—anger, hate, despair and danger of sudden death. She was amazed when, looking back, she remembered that at noon on that day her life and all its interests had been stationary at the point familiar to her during a whole month, the point that still lay within the boundaries of hope's kingdom, the point at which the man she loved had wounded her by speaking of brotherly affection and sisterly regard. She could almost believe, when she thought of it all, that some one had done to her as she had done to others, that she had been cast into a state of sleep and been forced against her will to live through the storms of years in the lethargy of an hour. And yet, despite all, her memory was distinct, her faculties were awake, her intellect had lost none of its clearness, even in the last and worst hour of it all. She could recall each look on the Wanderer's face, each tone of his cold speech, each intonation of her own passionate outpourings. Her strong memory had retained all, and there was not the slightest break in the continuity of her recollections, but there was little comfort to be derived from the certainty that she had not been dreaming, and that everything had taken place precisely as she remembered it. She would have given all she possessed, which was much, to return to the hour of noon on that same day.

In so far as a very unruly nature can understand itself, Unorna understood the springs of the actions she regretted and confessed that in all likelihood she would do again as she had done at each successive stage. Indeed, since the last great outbreak of her heart she realized more than ever the great proportions which her love had of late assumed and she saw that she was indeed ready, as she had said, to dare everything and risk everything for the sake of obtaining the very least show of passion in return.

For awhile, indeed, the pride of a woman at once young, beautiful and accustomed to authority, had kept her firm in the determination to be loved for herself, as she believed she deserved to be loved; and just so long as that remained, she had held her head high, confidently expecting that the mask of indifference would soon be shivered, that the eyes she adored would soften with warm light, that the hand she worshipped would tremble suddenly, as though waking to life within her own. But that pride was gone, and from its disappearance there had been but one step to the most utter degradation of soul to which a woman can descend, and from that again but one step more to a resolution almost stupid in its hardened obstinacy. But as though to show how completely she was dominated by the man whom she could not win, even her last determination had yielded under the slightest pressure from his will. She had left her house beside him with the mad resolve never again to be parted from him, cost what it might, reputation, fortune, life itself. And yet 10 minutes had not elapsed before she found herself alone, trusting to a mere word of his for the hope of ever seeing him again.

She comforted herself with the thought that the Wanderer would come to her once, at least, when she was pleased to send for him. Unorna's confidence was not misplaced. The man whose promise she had received had told the truth when he had said that he had never broken any promise whatsoever.

In this, at least, there was therefore comfort. On the morrow she would see him again. She might still fix her eyes on his, and in an unguarded moment cast him into deep sleep. She remembered that look on his face in the old cemetery. She had guessed rightly; it had been for the faint memory of Beatrice. But she would bring it back again, and it should be for her, for he should never wake again. Had she not done as much with the ancient scholar who for long years had lain in her house in that mysterious state, who obeyed when she commanded him to rise, and walk, to sit, to

when roused to anger, was her well-known kindness to the poor, and her charities to institutions founded for their benefit were in reality considerable and were said to be boundless. These explanations seem necessary in order to account for the readiness with which she turned to the convent when she was in danger, and for the facilities which were then at once offered her for a stay long or short; as she would please to make it. Some of the more suspicious nuns looked grave when they heard she was under their roof, others, who had not yet seen her, were filled with curiosity, others, again, had been attached to her during the time she had formerly spent among them, and there were not lacking those who, disapproving of her presence, held their peace, in the anticipation that the rich and eccentric lady would, on departing, present a gift of value to their order.

Unorna was familiar with convent life, and was aware that the benediction was over and that the hour for the evening meal was approaching. A fire had been lighted in her sitting room, but the air was still very cold, and she sat wrapped in her furs, as when she had arrived, leaning back in a corner of the sofa, her head inclined forward, and one white hand resting on the green baize cloth which covered the table.

She was very tired, and the absolute stillness was refreshing and restoring after the long drawn-out emotions of the stormy day. Never in her short and passionate life, had so many events been crowded into the space of a few hours. Since the morning she had felt almost everything that her wild, high-strung nature was capable of feeling—love, triumph, failure, humiliation—anger, hate, despair and danger of sudden death. She was amazed when, looking back, she remembered that at noon on that day her life and all its interests had been stationary at the point familiar to her during a whole month, the point that still lay within the boundaries of hope's kingdom, the point at which the man she loved had wounded her by speaking of brotherly affection and sisterly regard. She could almost believe, when she thought of it all, that some one had done to her as she had done to others, that she had been cast into a state of sleep and been forced against her will to live through the storms of years in the lethargy of an hour. And yet, despite all, her memory was distinct, her faculties were awake, her intellect had lost none of its clearness, even in the last and worst hour of it all. She could recall each look on the Wanderer's face, each tone of his cold speech, each intonation of her own passionate outpourings. Her strong memory had retained all, and there was not the slightest break in the continuity of her recollections, but there was little comfort to be derived from the certainty that she had not been dreaming, and that everything had taken place precisely as she remembered it. She would have given all she possessed, which was much, to return to the hour of noon on that same day.

In so far as a very unruly nature can understand itself, Unorna understood the springs of the actions she regretted and confessed that in all likelihood she would do again as she had done at each successive stage. Indeed, since the last great outbreak of her heart she realized more than ever the great proportions which her love had of late assumed and she saw that she was indeed ready, as she had said, to dare everything and risk everything for the sake of obtaining the very least show of passion in return.

For awhile, indeed, the pride of a woman at once young, beautiful and accustomed to authority, had kept her firm in the determination to be loved for herself, as she believed she deserved to be loved; and just so long as that remained, she had held her head high, confidently expecting that the mask of indifference would soon be shivered, that the eyes she adored would soften with warm light, that the hand she worshipped would tremble suddenly, as though waking to life within her own. But that pride was gone, and from its disappearance there had been but one step to the most utter degradation of soul to which a woman can descend, and from that again but one step more to a resolution almost stupid in its hardened obstinacy. But as though to show how completely she was dominated by the man whom she could not win, even her last determination had yielded under the slightest pressure from his will. She had left her house beside him with the mad resolve never again to be parted from him, cost what it might, reputation, fortune, life itself. And yet 10 minutes had not elapsed before she found herself alone, trusting to a mere word of his for the hope of ever seeing him again.

She comforted herself with the thought that the Wanderer would come to her once, at least, when she was pleased to send for him. Unorna's confidence was not misplaced. The man whose promise she had received had told the truth when he had said that he had never broken any promise whatsoever.

In this, at least, there was therefore comfort. On the morrow she would see him again. She might still fix her eyes on his, and in an unguarded moment cast him into deep sleep. She remembered that look on his face in the old cemetery. She had guessed rightly; it had been for the faint memory of Beatrice. But she would bring it back again, and it should be for her, for he should never wake again. Had she not done as much with the ancient scholar who for long years had lain in her house in that mysterious state, who obeyed when she commanded him to rise, and walk, to sit, to

when roused to anger, was her well-known kindness to the poor, and her charities to institutions founded for their benefit were in reality considerable and were said to be boundless. These explanations seem necessary in order to account for the readiness with which she turned to the convent when she was in danger, and for the facilities which were then at once offered her for a stay long or short; as she would please to make it. Some of the more suspicious nuns looked grave when they heard she was under their roof, others, who had not yet seen her, were filled with curiosity, others, again, had been attached to her during the time she had formerly spent among them, and there were not lacking those who, disapproving of her presence, held their peace, in the anticipation that the rich and eccentric lady would, on departing, present a gift of value to their order.

Unorna was familiar with convent life, and was aware that the benediction was over and that the hour for the evening meal was approaching. A fire had been lighted in her sitting room, but the air was still very cold, and she sat wrapped in her furs, as when she had arrived, leaning back in a corner of the sofa, her head inclined forward, and one white hand resting on the green baize cloth which covered the table.

She was very tired, and the absolute stillness was refreshing and restoring after the long drawn-out emotions of the stormy day. Never in her short and passionate life, had so many events been crowded into the space of a few hours. Since the morning she had felt almost everything that her wild, high-strung nature was capable of feeling—love, triumph, failure, humiliation—anger, hate, despair and danger of sudden death. She was amazed when, looking back, she remembered that at noon on that day her life and all its interests had been stationary at the point familiar to her during a whole month, the point that still lay within the boundaries of hope's kingdom, the point at which the man she loved had wounded her by speaking of brotherly affection and sisterly regard. She could almost believe, when she thought of it all, that some one had done to her as she had done to others, that she had been cast into a state of sleep and been forced against her will to live through the storms of years in the lethargy of an hour. And yet, despite all, her memory was distinct, her faculties were awake, her intellect had lost none of its clearness, even in the last and worst hour of it all. She could recall each look on the Wanderer's face, each tone of his cold speech, each intonation of her own passionate outpourings. Her strong memory had retained all, and there was not the slightest break in the continuity of her recollections, but there was little comfort to be derived from the certainty that she had not been dreaming, and that everything had taken place precisely as she remembered it. She would have given all she possessed, which was much, to return to the hour of noon on that same day.

In so far as a very unruly nature can understand itself, Unorna understood the springs of the actions she regretted and confessed that in all likelihood she would do again as she had done at each successive stage. Indeed, since the last great outbreak of her heart she realized more than ever the great proportions which her love had of late assumed and she saw that she was indeed ready, as she had said, to dare everything and risk everything for the sake of obtaining the very least show of passion in return.

For awhile, indeed, the pride of a woman at once young, beautiful and accustomed to authority, had kept her firm in the determination to be loved for herself, as she believed she deserved to be loved; and just so long as that remained, she had held her head high, confidently expecting that the mask of indifference would soon be shivered, that the eyes she adored would soften with warm light, that the hand she worshipped would tremble suddenly, as though waking to life within her own. But that pride was gone, and from its disappearance there had been but one step to the most utter degradation of soul to which a woman can descend, and from that again but one step more to a resolution almost stupid in its hardened obstinacy. But as though to show how completely she was dominated by the man whom she could not win, even her last determination had yielded under the slightest pressure from his will. She had left her house beside him with the mad resolve never again to be parted from him, cost what it might, reputation, fortune, life itself. And yet 10 minutes had not elapsed before she found herself alone, trusting to a mere word of his for the hope of ever seeing him again.

She comforted herself with the thought that the Wanderer would come to her once, at least, when she was pleased to send for him. Unorna's confidence was not misplaced. The man whose promise she had received had told the truth when he had said that he had never broken any promise whatsoever.

In this, at least, there was therefore comfort. On the morrow she would see him again. She might still fix her eyes on his, and in an unguarded moment cast him into deep sleep. She remembered that look on his face in the old cemetery. She had guessed rightly; it had been for the faint memory of Beatrice. But she would bring it back again, and it should be for her, for he should never wake again. Had she not done as much with the ancient scholar who for long years had lain in her house in that mysterious state, who obeyed when she commanded him to rise, and walk, to sit, to

when roused to anger, was her well-known kindness to the poor, and her charities to institutions founded for their benefit were in reality considerable and were said to be boundless. These explanations seem necessary in order to account for the readiness with which she turned to the convent when she was in danger, and for the facilities which were then at once offered her for a stay long or short; as she would please to make it. Some of the more suspicious nuns looked grave when they heard she was under their roof, others, who had not yet seen her, were filled with curiosity, others, again, had been attached to her during the time she had formerly spent among them, and there were not lacking those who, disapproving of her presence, held their peace, in the anticipation that the rich and eccentric lady would, on departing, present a gift of value to their order.

Unorna was familiar with convent life, and was aware that the benediction was over and that the hour for the evening meal was approaching. A fire had been lighted in her sitting room, but the air was still very cold, and she sat wrapped in her furs, as when she had arrived, leaning back in a corner of the sofa, her head inclined forward, and one white hand resting on the green baize cloth which covered the table.