

THE SILVER POPULAR.

A poplar stood on a sunny slope
 And it was all a-tremble:
 The east wind blew
 The branches through—
 A shimmering sheen
 Of glimmering green
 The tree.

A poplar stood on a sunny slope
 And it was all a-quiver:
 The west wind blew
 The branches through—
 A hazy light
 Of mazy white
 The tree.

A poplar stood on a sunny slope
 And it was all a-flutter:
 The east wind blew,
 The west wind blew—
 A lustrous beam
 Of silver gleam
 The tree.

—AMY C. BRUNER.

A STRANGE EMANCIPATION.

I.

Dark tapestries, with pale, grotesque figures covered the walls. The floor was carpeted with black. The furniture was sombre and massive and ancient. Crimson curtains drawn tightly over the windows admitted a dull red glow faintly illumining the apartment.

Wrapped in a blood-colored robe which twined about a form serpentine in grace, she paused, motionless but for the light tapping of her foot on the velvet carpet. Presently she turned quickly. A red light gleamed in her gloomy eyes; her lips curled so that the sharp teeth flashed. She smiled and her smile was cold and cruel. On the face of a man or of another woman it would have been a grin.

"You will not marry me, then? You refuse me—me! And for a doll—a dead thing!" She laughed, a low musical laugh but gruesome as a hyena's howl. "It is well; you shall have your will," she hissed. "You shall wed the dead!"

The young man, half discernible in the shadow, shrugged his shoulders contemptuously, bowed stiffly and went out. She laughed again, her low hyena laugh. Then she threw herself upon a couch. For a long time she lay silent, a moody sadness in her gloomy eyes.

II.

A young man awaited the coming of his bride to the altar. While he waited he thought only of her. Before his eyes floated a fairy phantom—the image of a maid with clear blue eyes that sparkled and smiled and glanced tenderly down upon him, and a fair bright face, shining gayly through the mist of her golden hair. It was a very dear phantom to him, one that he beheld often. And soon she was coming—to be his, his own forever. The young man turned wistfully toward the door. And just then it was thrown open and the bridal party entered and marched slowly to the altar.

The slender form of the bride was shrouded in floating robes of white. Even her face was lost beneath the silken veil through which her golden hair yet gleamed.

The minister came. All was ready for the ceremony. Eagerly the young man took the little white hand where a great jewel flashed—the little hand that was to be his. But he shuddered and paled when he touched it and glanced anxiously at the veiled figure by his side. A few noticed, and wondered.

The ceremony was finished. He turned and drew aside the silken veil for the bridegroom's kiss, yet, even as he leaned forward for that first pledge of his wedded life, he caught himself and drew back. His white face became whiter and his features stern-set. A startled cry was smothered on his lips.