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AMERICAN SENTINEL.

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Select Poetry.

CONFIDENCES.

Low to the stars she whispers a name—
Low to the listening stars;
Red as Arcturus her blushes flame,
Pale Virgo smiles on her maidenly shame—
Guard well the secret, O stars!

Soft to the flowers she murmurs a word—
Soft to the moon tranced flowers.
The nodding lilies are lightly stirred,
But the rosy dreams on of her poet bird—
Oh, guard well the secret, dear flowers!

Faint to the night wind she breathes a sigh—
Faint to the wandering wind
That mutely kisses her for reply,
Stealing the unshed tear from her eye—
Ah, breathe not the secret, sweet wind!

A whispered name—a word—and a sigh—
Floating away through space,
With a wind gathered tear from a pure maid's eye,
Seeking—seeking—below and on high—
Shall they ever find resting place?

Select Story.

THE JUSTICE OF THE GODS.

From ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

CHAPTER I.

"I wish you weren't going away, Ada," said Captain Walton. "Why on earth should you go to Irkham for Christmas, instead of spending it in London?"

He was engaged to Ada Bennett, and was a masterful lover, passionate—indeed almost too passionate for the shy-eyed, timid girl at his side—but masterful and accustomed to have his own way with men and women. Yet, in spite of his strength of will, little Ada might have had the firmness to withstand his wishes and decline his love if it had not been backed up by the aunt who so often assured her she had "been more than a mother to her"—yes, far more!—and by her sister Helen.

Helen Bennett—no one ever thought of calling her Nellie—was what is generally termed a "nice, sensible sort of girl"; the sort of girl who does not let romance or caprice or thick-skinnedness of any sort interfere with her advancement in life. When the Bennetts' father died and left them as nearly penniless as twenty pounds a year each could make them, no foolish pride, no dreams of independence, made Helen refuse the home which her aunt, Mrs. Penrhyn, offered them. Helen and Mrs. Penrhyn came to terms at once, without even expressing the terms in so many words. The girls were to make themselves agreeable—that is, dust the drawing room, arrange flowers, entertain dull visitors, make up for any deficiencies of ill-trained servants, and look always smiling, grateful, and well dressed on twenty pounds a year.

"And some day, if all goes well," added Mrs. Penrhyn, "I'll see you in good homes of your own, I hope."

This was meant as an announcement that the girls were to accept the first eligible men who sought them. Helen saw this, and did her duty nobly. Irkham—black, smoky Irkham, where the jangle of machinery was heard continually, and the air was thick with smoke and cotton flue—might not be her ideal of a city; nor was John Baggallay—rich in factories and vested funds, but not overburdened with either aspirates or aspirations—her ideal of a husband. But she accepted both, and was as happy as a woman of her nature needs to be.

Ada, though far the milder of the two, proved the most rebellious. Perhaps it was the fault of Laurie Penrhyn—her cousin Laurie, who fell in love with her without consulting the wishes of either his mother or his cousin Helen. He seemed to think that consulting Ada's was enough. Herein he erred, for though last Christmas, just a year ago, when he was home from Glasgow on a brief holiday, he had asked Ada if she loved him, and she had whispered "yes"; that did not secure her for his wife. When he had gone Helen treated Ada to much common sense, to which Mrs. Penrhyn added a little uncommon coldness, and finally Helen herself wrote the letter which released him from "a hasty and ill-considered engagement, the impulse of youth and thoughtlessness," as she put it, being herself five years younger than Laurie Penrhyn, though certainly more given than he to taking thought for the morrow and the days succeeding.

"You little goose!" she said to her sister. "Laurie has only two hundred a year, and if you get engaged to him auntie will turn you out of doors. She means her handsome son to catch an heiress. And there's Captain Walton evidently attracted by you. I wish I had such a chance."

For Helen had accepted her Baggallay by this time, and, though prepared to swallow him, could not refrain from a wry face or two.

"Laurie is getting along very well," protested Ada.

"Perhaps he is; but Captain Walton has got on, which is much more to the point. What on earth do you want, Ada? He is a gentleman; he has that look which a man who has once been in the army never loses; and if it is true, as people say, that he made his money in India by dabbling in opium—why he's made his money, and that's the chief point. I don't see what fault you can find with him."

"He's too old."

"Old! Forty-five or so; that isn't old. You're a romantic little donkey Ada; but if you refuse George Walton I'll never forgive you."

Ada did not risk angering her sister. Captain Walton proposed in July, and was duly accepted, which made Laurie Penrhyn exclaim, when in the beginning of December he was offered a good post in an American ship-building yard, that a fellow never got anything he wanted until it was too late to profit him.

Captain Walton did not think so. He seemed to think that Ada Bennett's love, or at least her promise to be his wife, would profit him very much, though he was impatient, and thought it hard that he must wait till spring before he was allowed to claim his bride.

"I shall be a new man when I have you with me, darling," he said with that fervor of passion which frightened more than it pleased her. "You are everything to me—strength, purity, happiness. I believe in Heaven when I look in your eyes, even if I never do at any other time."

Poor Ada might be forgiven for thinking such wooing slightly blasphemous, and very much too fervent to be comfortable.

At present Captain Walton felt deeply aggrieved that his betrothed was determined, in that mild obstinate way of hers, to spend Christmas at Irkham with her sister Helen, now Mrs. Baggallay.

"It would seem strange not to go to Helen the first Christmas after her marriage," she said, "and, besides, Laurie is coming home, so I'm better away."

"What has that to do with it?" cried the irritable lover.

Ada looked nervous, and equivocated:

"He is going abroad almost immediately, and he and his mother won't want any third person with them during his last few days at home."

"H'm! Well, I wish you weren't going to Irkham, that's all. It's a beastly hole."

"Do you know it at all, George?" asked the girl, bringing out her lover's name with an effort as she always did.

Captain Walton looked as if he did not like the question.

"I was there once, fifteen years ago, and I had enough of it then."

"Fifteen years ago! Ah, that was just when you came home from India, wasn't it? Well it may have improved since then. And Helen says her house is charming—an old house with a large garden, once in the country, which the town has come up and surrounded. It's not the sort of house the Irkhamites like, she tells me. They prefer brand new plaster and stucco, and can't understand her being so fond of Gore House."

"Gore House. It's an ugly name."

"Yes, isn't it? I must ask Helen if any one was ever killed there. Or I'll let you ask her; for you're coming up for Christmas Day, aren't you? Really, you needn't grumble so at my going."

"I wouldn't if you weren't going a fortnight before me. However, I must submit for the present. But after the first week in March, your days of liberty are numbered, my pet."

"Then I must make the most of those left me," she said, with a nervous little smile. "So I'll go off to Irkham and be free of your chains till the day before Christmas Eve."

"Well, see that you write to me often and tell me everything. Nothing that you do, nothing that you see or feel, is too trivial to interest me. Remember that, Ada; remember that you are all the world to me, that a new life will begin for me when you are my wife."

Ada sighed, thinking, not gladly, of the new life that would begin for her, but she was thankful to be released by her imperious lover at the price of a kiss or two, and still more thankful next day to leave smoky London for smokier Irkham.

Her first letter to her lover was bright and cheerful enough, full of the details, he said he cared for—description of Helen's house in general, of the little sitting room set apart for herself in particular, its chairs, its books, the china plates hung on the walls, the dainty inkstand, even the Shakspeare calendar on the writing table at which she penned the letter. There were enough of trivialities he had asked for, and not much besides—not enough affection to justify the passionate way in which he kissed the cool, crisp, lifeless paper, nor the fervor with which he exclaimed under his breath: "Unworthy as I am, I'll

[redacted]

with a bitter look that it was the day on which he ought to send a certain quarterly remittance, which, though meanness was not one of his faults, was never dispatched without a curse.

Ada's next letter was less cheerful. "You will think me awfully stupid," she said in it, "but I have got quite depressed since I came here. Perhaps it is the climate, which certainly is horrid; nothing but rain—smoky, dirty, towny rain. But I have quite a horrid impression about this house; I think it was the trees at the foot of the lawn that gave it to me first. There are three of them growing all together—quite large trees for a town garden, but there is a horrid red fungus growing on them that made me feel quite faint the first time I saw it. I think it was there I got the dreadful feeling I am telling you of—I can't define it a bit yet, but I am always conscious of it—and it followed me up the garden, into the drawing room—which has long windows opening on a veranda I think I told you—and even up to my little boudoir, where I am writing about it to you. For I can't get rid of it: that's the silly thing. At night I wake up in a sort of horror; not that I have seen anything, or dreamed anything. But I feel as if I were going to hear of something horrid, and though it is so idiotic and unreasonable, I can't get over the impression. I haven't told Helen and John about it. I suppose it must be the climate."

"Of course, it's the climate," said Walton, as he read the letter. "The damp, mild, enervating, soul-and-body-destroying Irkham climate that's making her morbid. I remember it well enough, and how it seemed to—Ugh! it's not worth thinking of. But I won't let Ada go there again. Happily she won't want to, thanks to this notion."

He wrote a jesting protest to her, saying that her ghost story came like the other Christmas annuals, too long before Christmas, and after all hadn't even a ghost in it. "Never mind, little girl," he added, "I'll be with you soon, and be something so real to think of that the cobweb 'feelings' and 'impressions' you speak of will vanish from your brain. But don't say anything to your sister or her husband that will put them out of love with their house when they have just got comfortably settled in it, after spending so much on making it pretty. Besides—though theosophy is in fashion now, and all the clever young fellows, who would have been rank materialists ten years ago are seeing visions and dreaming dreams, and generally overstepping the bounds that separate matter and spirit—I don't want you, my darling, to be anything but a most human, lovable little wife."

Ada obediently tried to repress her fancies and to enjoy life as it was lived in Irkham; but she could not succeed. She grew more depressed,

[redacted]

was a murder committed here once—let me speak of the thing as if it had really happened. A child, just fancy George, a poor innocent little child, was taken out of the room that is now my boudoir and carried down stairs into the drawing room and killed, and then buried under the trees on the lawn. Is it not horrible? At least, it would be horrible if it had ever happened, and wasn't only a dream of my imagination. I am ashamed to tell you such nonsense, and yet I must speak of it to somebody, for the consciousness of it weighs me down, as if I were somehow connected with the guilty secret."

"Good heavens! is she going mad?" Walton asked himself when he read these sentences. "I know she is absurdly sensitive to the vaguest impressions, and the society of that unimaginative, worldly sister of hers will be driving her more and more in upon herself. And Irkham in December is enough in itself to make anybody think of murder and suicide. I must go to her as soon as I can, and I'll bring her away with me the day after Christmas, and if I can help it she'll never enter the place again. Helen can come to London if she wants to see her."

He was seriously alarmed, thinking of the possible effect on Ada's health and mind of this strange morbid fancy of hers. For he loved her with a passion she could hardly have understood, and felt as if the one ray of light that brightened his path would be quenched if anything prevented her becoming his wife. So he got a time-table, and, having studied it, took the first train to Irkham, determined to see Ada at once, and cure her of her gloomy notions by his presence and the power of his love.

CHAPTER II.

There was trouble in the Baggallay household. The parlor maid, with that lack of consideration for her mistress' convenience which Helen looked upon as characteristic of the servant class, sprained her ankle a few days before Christmas. Another equally competent domestic was not to be got at a moment's notice, and Mrs. Baggallay had issued invitations for a dinner party on Christmas Eve, when she proposed to introduce her sister's betrothed to her especial friends. Helen was in despair; she felt that fate was using her unkindly, and in her depression was glad to listen to a suggestion of the girl's, who in her turn did not wish to lose a comfortable situation. She had a widowed sister, a Mrs. Wallwork—evidently, from the way she spoke of her, the member of her family who had "got on"—who might, if she was asked courteously enough, condescend to take her place till she was able to fill it again.

"You know, ma'am, my sister isn't quite like one of us. She's a good bit older than me, and has always held her head high," explained the girl. "She was always well thought on in her places, and one of her families left her an annuity, so, of course, she has a right to think something of herself. But I've no doubt she'll come for a day or two to oblige me if only you don't mind putting it to her as a bit of a favor."

Helen did not mind putting it as a condescension on the part of Mrs. Wallwork, if only she would come, and she had already learned that in the north country the working classes look upon themselves as the salt of the earth, and demand a recognition of the fact from their masters and mistresses. She sent a beseeching note to Mrs. Wallwork, setting forth her desperate plight, and that lady was gracious enough to come and interview her, and to consent to grace Gore House with her presence on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

"If you're having company and extra work, of course you'll need a parlor maid," she said; "but in your ordinary run, you can get along if the 'ousemaid will only put herself to it."

With this concession, Helen was forced to be content; but in order that Mrs Wallwork might be as far as possible fit for her duties when she came to undertake them, she took her over the house, and explained to her what would be expected of her.

Gore House was on the outside a very ordinary building, a square house with a portion over the door supported on stucco pillars—such a residence as may be seen by the score in any town. Formerly it had been surrounded by others like itself; but as the tide of Irkham fashion went elsewhere they had been pulled down, and endless rows of small houses occupied by the poorer of the clerk and the richer of the artisan classes, had taken their place. Those who knew the district said that the changes of the last ten years had made it almost unrecognizable, and most of Helen Baggallay's friends predicted that she would soon leave her old-fashioned house, in spite of its spacious room and large garden, and go to some smaller, smarter villa where she would be surrounded by "people like herself." Helen did not think so. She knew that there was a good deal of social sensitiveness in Irkham, caused by the fact that so many of the millionaires had cousins who were still in their original station of factory hands, with whom, therefore, they did not care to risk coming in contact; and such anxieties could not befall her. Besides, she liked her roomy house, which was so much larger than it seemed from the street, stretching out on the garden side in a long wing which contained a billiard room, dining room, and drawing room, all opening on a veranda that went round two sides of the house, and gave easy access to the sloping lawn.

She was still new enough to her position to feel a thrill of pride as she led her future partner paid through the rooms. Finally, she opened the door of the drawing-room where the sound of the piano, languidly touched, proved that Ada was trying to get rid of the time that now hung heavy on her hands.

"I shall expect you to—" she began, when the woman by her side uttered a sharp exclamation, ran forward a few steps into the room, and then fell fainting on the floor.

Helen and Ada rushed to her help, but it was some time before she revived. Even when she was restored to consciousness she hardly seemed to recognise them, but looked wildly round the room. "It's the same room," she muttered. "Everything's changed, the paper, and the furniture, and everything; but I can't mistake the room. I didn't recognize the house, and it hasn't the same name, but there's no doubt about the room."

"Well, what about the room?" queried Helen, with a touch of sharpness. She did not like mysteries.

"I saw a dead child in it," the woman moaned. "The child I had nursed since it was a month old, and I was fond of it—oh! if it had been my own, I couldn't have loved it more!—lying in this room on a sofa, dead! That was the last time I was here, and I never thought to enter the place again."

"It's very sad, of course," said Mrs. Baggallay, feeling very much annoyed at the scene; "but the child wasn't your own, after all, and I suppose all this occurred some time ago—"

"Fifteen years," interrupted Mrs. Wallwork; "but you don't understand it, ma'am. The child—the poor little baby was killed—murdered by its own father!"

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Helen; but Ada, who had been listening intently, caught hold of the woman's wrist with a convulsive clasp. "Then that was the child that was killed!" she cried, breathlessly.

"Yes, the child, but how do you know, Miss?" asked Mrs. Wallwork, and, "what do you know about it, Ada?" demanded Helen.

"Nothing. At least I have been told nothing; but I have felt ever since I entered this house that a crime had been committed in it, and latterly I have felt sure that a child was murdered here—taken from my little sitting room up stairs, carried down here and killed, and then buried under those trees in the lawn. I never mentioned it to you, because it seemed such a fantastic idea, but I'm sure of it all the same."

"What nonsense!" protested her sister; and turning to Mrs. Wallwork, added; "We must get you out of this room that affects you so much; and perhaps you had better say nothing about this—ah!—fancy or recollection of yours. One doesn't like such stories about a house, and you know if you didn't recognize the house you may be mistaken in the room."

"No mistake at all, ma'am, but you're right about not speaking of the matter. I've never opened my lips about it this fifteen years, and I don't want ever to mention it again. But if you have any doubts about what I say, take me to the room the young lady spoke of, and I'll see if it's the one I'm thinking of."

"It's quite useless!" cried Helen. But Ada said:

"Yes, let us go;" and there was a strained, fierce look on her face that made her sister think it wiser to consent to the suggestion.

She alone knew how self-willed Ada could be, and how obstinate in clinging to her fancies.

They went up stairs, Mrs. Wallwork leaning on Ada's arm, and Helen following them. For once the younger sister seemed the more decided of the two.

"Yes, this is the room," said the still, trembling woman. "It was the night nursery, and I slept here with the baby. One night, about midnight, I awoke, and the child wasn't in my arms, and—well, I've told you the rest."

"But I want to know everything," demanded Ada. "Who was this man—this father, who murdered his own child?"

"Ah! but I can't tell you. They called themselves Mr. and Mrs. Everett; but I don't think that was their right name. I took them to be a young married couple. They had been in Irkham for some months before the baby was born. I came to them when it was a month old, and was here six months; I suppose they were in Irkham for about a year. From some things they said, I guessed they had been in India; but they didn't get any foreign letters—at least, I thought not; all that came to the house had a London postmark. But once I found an envelope with an Indian stamp, and if it was addressed to my master, it wasn't in the name I knew him by."

"What name was it?"

"I don't remember now, it's so long ago, and I paid no heed at the time. It was only afterward that I began to put things together."

"Did they know many people in Irkham?" asked Helen.

"Not a soul. I remember my mistress once saying to Mr. Everett that they were more solitary there than in the midst of a desert, and he answered that there was no place like big cities for concealment."

"And why—why did he do this dreadful thing?"

"Ah, Miss, it's a sad world!" said the woman. "There's things the like of you don't understand. And perhaps Mr. Everett didn't kill his child. I didn't see him do it; only when I woke up and found the baby gone, I rushed out to the landing and saw a light down stairs. I followed that. It came from the drawing-room door, and there was the poor child lying dead. I cried out, and then my master rushed in by the open window from the garden, and—silenced me."

"How?"

"He gagged me and carried me up stairs to the nursery. Then he tied me down to my bed with the sheets, and left me for a time. He came back at last and said:

"'Unless you want a grave dug for yourself, too, you had better dress yourself quietly and come with me.'

"I was afraid of what he might do, so I obeyed him. When I was ready and went out of the room, I found my mistress waiting on the landing, dressed to go out. She was trembling, and I think she was crying a little, but very quietly, only I could hear her sobbing occasionally. The three of us went down stairs. I tried to walk as heavily as I could, thinking I might rouse the other two servants; but they slept at the end of a long passage in the back of the house, and I was still gagged and could not cry. When we got out of doors, Mr. Everett said to his wife:

"'You know your way, do you not, and have money enough for the present? Go straight away, and I'll follow you as soon as I have settled this creature.'

"My mistress went off by herself, and I thought my end had come; but he only kept me walking through the town till morning—oh, but I was tired—and then took me to the railway station and put me in the train for Berstone, the place I came from. He put some money into my hand and said I would get more if I held my tongue, and that was the last I ever saw of him, and I've never breathed a word about it till this day."

"But why did he do it? Why did he do it?" cried Ada.

"That's what I can't tell you for certain," said Mrs. Wallwork. "I have my notions. Well, I'll tell you, and you can make what you like out of it. One morning not long before I had taken the baby to her room. She had just had a cup of tea and a letter brought to her, and she was reading it when I went in. Before I got near her she jumped up with a cry and ran into her husband's dressing room, and I heard her say:

"'O George this is terrible! Alfred's coming home. He is so old, so old; why can't he die and leave me free?'

"Mr. Everett pulled to the door with a bang, and I heard nothing more; but I've wondered since—well, I may be wrong. There's no use talking about it."

"And did you do nothing to bring this man to justice?" asked Mrs. Baggallay.

"N—no. You know what it is when poor folks try to set the law agin rich ones; and, besides, I didn't know anything about where Mr. and Mrs. Everett had gone to. I came up to Irkham after a day or two, and went to the house; but it was empty, except that bailiffs were taking away the furniture. I didn't want to get into trouble so I said nothing."

"Oh, it's horrible that such a crime should go unpunished!" exclaimed Ada, rising from her seat and walking toward the window. She felt maddened with the story that she had just heard. She longed to avenge that murdered child, whose spirit, it now seemed to her excited imagination, had been trying to win her ear ever since she came to the house. She longed to search for this unnatural father, and bring him to justice, but how should she begin? She had been standing with her hand resting on the writing table, and a sudden, impatient movement she made in reflecting on their powerlessness, caused the calendar that lay on it to fall. Stooping mechanically to pick it up, her eye fell on the motto given for that twenty-second of December: "The gods are just, and of our pleasant vices make instruments to scourge us."

"Is that enough?" she asked herself. "Does the vengeance of God really pursue and punish every wrong-doer? Can we leave it to Him?"

She did not answer her own questions, but she no longer felt bound to help on the punishment of the crime.

CHAPTER III.

Captain Walton found when he arrived at Irkham, that Gore House was not easy to discover. The address, as he had received it from Ada, must have been incomplete, though the omniscience of the postman had insured the safe conveyance of his letter. He could tell the cabman to whose care he intrusted himself what district of the town it was in, but for the rest he had to trust to that cabman's knowledge, which was found wanting, and the chapter of accidents. Happily this brought to their aid one of the said omniscient postmen, to whom the cabman appealed for guidance.

"Gore House! why, it's at the end of Gore street," he was contemptuously informed. "Turn off Cambridge street at the end of Rushton lane, and then take the first turn to the left."

The names struck with a painful familiarity on the ear of the traveler, but he mentally echoed his driver's exclamation:

"There! There's no Gore House off Rushton lane that I knows of."

"They called it that after Gore street was built," exclaimed the postman. "It's the house that used to be called Wrexham Lodge."

"I know where you are now!" exclaimed the cabman driving on; but Walton covered his face with his hands.

"Wrexham Lodge!" he said to himself. "And Ada's in it—in that house of all places in the world!"

He forced himself to seem calm when he reached the house and got out. His arrival was unexpected, for he had come to Irkham a day sooner than he had intended, and the housemaid who opened the door for him did not know exactly what to do with him. So she left him in the hall while she went up to Ada's boudoir to consult her mistress.

"Show him into the drawing room, of course," said Mrs. Baggallay. "Ada, you'd better go and receive Captain Walton yourself."

"If you like," said Ada, "but I can't bear to go into the drawing room just yet: the idea of it is too dreadful. May I bring him up here? I don't feel any horror of this room, and, if you don't mind, we might sit here this evening."

"Just as you like, though it's rather small. Run off, and meantime I'll take Mrs. Wallwork down the back staircase."

Ada went off, but Helen detained Mrs. Wallwork for a final word:

"Seeing that this is such an old story, and that we can do nothing in the matter, perhaps it would be better to make no allusion to anything you—ah—fancied occurred in this house. There's no proof, you know, and—you understand."

"Oh yes, ma'am," answered the woman, eagerly. "I don't want to speak of it, only I was so took aback at seeing that room that the whole story came out. But it's no business of mine, and—well—there's five pounds come to me every quarter since that time. I don't know who sends it, but it comes. So I'll keep quiet."

"I understand," said Helen, with a sense of relief; and she led her along the corridor toward the door that separated the servants' room and staircase from the other part of the house.

As they went along, Ada and her lover were coming up stairs. Mrs. Wallwork turned to look at the pair—was there ever a woman born who did not like to look at happy lovers!—but as she did so she again uttered an exclamation, and seemed about to faint. Helen caught her, and Ada and Captain Walton hurried to help her, but as the latter approached she pushed him away.

"Don't let him come near me!" she cried. "It's Mr. Everett, and he'll kill me for telling you the truth.

"You are mad, woman," cried Helen, though at the moment she spoke she remembered with a sinking heart that Walton's entire name was George Everett Walton.

As for him, he came close to the woman to relieve Helen of her weight, apparently without recognizing her, but at her words he started back.

"It is you, woman, you!" he exclaimed. "First the house, and then to find you in it, spying on me as you did before. What does it mean?"

"Yes, what does it mean, Captain Walton?" echoed Helen, but in a different tone. "If you are the man this woman thinks you are, you are a murderer and a villain. Is it true?"

"No; it's a lie—a lie!" he cried excitedly. "She mistakes me for some one else; she's mad—she's—"

Ada stopped him.

"Tell lies to all the world, George," she said in a cold stern tone he had never heard before, "but speak the truth to me. I was to be your wife, I have a right to know. Did you live in this house fifteen years ago under the name of George Everett? Were you guilty of the sin, the crime this woman accuses you of?"

"Ada," he answered, "all men are guilty of things they are ashamed of. Search any man's past—"

She held up her hand with a gesture that silenced him.

"It is enough," she said. "Go, before I am calm enough to decide whether or not I ought to seek your punishment."

He bent his head and turned to go, but to the girl who a few minutes before had been his betrothed he said a last word.

"Ada, I am punished; I have lost you."

Then he left the house, while the three women stood silent, mute with horror that yet was mingled with awe.

The next day the Irkham newspapers contained an account of a suicide that had taken place the preceding evening. George Walton had gone to a hotel, taken a room, and there poisoned himself with a solution of morphia, which, it seemed, he always had about him. After this fashion he had prepared himself for the discovery that had come upon him at last.

Ada was very ill for a long time after that gloomy Christmas at Irkham. Helen thought at first that the horror of it would kill her, and found her only hope in the thought that her sister had never loved George Walton. That thought carried comfort to another anxious heart, to whom Ada's life was the most precious in the world. And in the end she did recover and find consolation, for the following Autumn John Baggallay and Helen had to go to Liverpool to say good-bye to some friends of theirs who were going to America—Mr. and Mrs. Laurence Penrhyn.

INTELLIGENT HORSES.

A writer in the St. Louis *Globe-Democrat* says: It is a great mistake to imagine that all the best trained and most intelligent horses are to be seen in circuses. I have handled horses all my life, and never saw anything very wonderful in an animal being taught tricks in a ring which is always the same size. There are hundreds of horses in St. Louis which know more and understand signs better than any circus horse I ever saw; and what is more, they will obey anywhere and under any conditions, which a so-called educated horse probably would not. The fire brigade horses, of course, are illustrations of this, and many express wagon horses are only a degree less intelligent. I make a round of calls every day. At some places there is nothing for us three days out of four, and when there is no card in the window the horse keeps going. But if he sees the card he stops of his own accord and backs up, no matter how heavy the traffic is. And at other places where there is no card he will stop and wait while I go in to inquire. If I don't come out at once he concludes there is something and backs up. If that isn't evidence of reason and thought, I would like to know what is.

It may be consoling to light-haired and red-headed people to read that out of 165 patients at the Kirkbride asylum only one has red hair; and only four have light hair and complexion. We venture the guess, however, that red-headed chap makes matters as lively as all the 164 put together. It used to be supposed that a pale complexion specially marked tendency to mental excitement and brain disorder. The statistics, however, show this to be an error. What is true of the men is also true of the women; they are with one exception in fifty, dark-haired and dark-hued. It is sometimes the case that the hair turns with insanity. Probably the error arose from this fact. The reason why dark people are more inclined to mental disorder has not been explained.

The present estimated population of the United States is 64,000,000. The rate of increase, exclusive of immigration, is estimated at 1.8 per cent. per annum—about 100,000 a month. By immigration the increase of population averages over 43,000 a month, or over half a million yearly. The aggregate annual growth from both causes will not fall much short of a million and three-quarters. The estimated foreign population is not far below 14,000,000.

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