What Did Miss Darrington See?

By Emma B. Cobb

It was not so very long ago, for it was only about a year before the outbreak of the great rebellion, that Colonel Sibthorpe, living at Catalpa Grove,—County Kentucky, wrote to Mr. Allen, a merchant in Boston, with whom he had large dealings, to procure for him a governess. The correspondent was requested to look out for a young person capable of "finishing" the education of the colonel's two motherless daughters, aged respectively eighteen and sixteen, and of preparing his younger son for admission to a Southern college.

Mr. Allen was at first not a little embarrassed by a commission so entirely out of the ordinary course of business; but as he had a strong desire to oblige his Kentucky friend and customer, he at once set about making inquiries for a suitable person to "fill the order." Whether his search was attended with much or little difficulty I am unable to say; I only know that it resulted in the engagement, at a liberal salary, of Miss Elizabeth Darrington, from whom I have derived the chief incidents of the story I am about to relate, and who has reluctantly consented to my making them public.

Perhaps you have seen Miss Darrington? If so, I dare be sworn that you remember her more vividly than many a handsomer woman. At the time I speak of she was about twenty-four, a small figure, slight now, but promising fullness as time should go on; a face neither beautiful nor plain in feature, but showing intellect and *esprit,* and a manner unmistakably that of a gentlewoman. (It is a word little used now, but it expresses what I mean far more accurately than the flippant term "lady.") Sprung from one of the oldest and best families in Massachusetts—one which had produced governors and legislators in the early colonial time, and in nearly every generation since some man of shining mark—she had not only inherited a fair share of the family talent, but she had breathed an atmosphere of intellect and culture from her infancy. She had also been early forced by circumstances into a position of self-reliance, and had learned to think and act independently. The result was a character not so easily summed up as that of a woman of the model sort, made up after the ideal of newspaper homilists, and the reverend gentlemen who lecture on the "Woman Questions." Such as these would have found something of a paganism in the very virtues of Miss Darrington, without, perhaps, perceiving that there was a touch of nobility even in her faults. Proud, certainly—every thing about her, from the curve of her well-cut lip to the high-arched instep of a rather small foot, attested to that fact. Cold? I am not so sure. Her best friends said so; and at least the glance of her eye was cool and steady. Yet she had a keen physical organization, and enjoyed life with a zest unknown to duller and narrower natures. In short, she was one of those women, peculiarly the product of our later civilization, in whom the brain is uppermost, feeling in abeyance, and gifted with a power of self-rule which, if they do suffer, enables them to hide it as skillfully as a Mohican. She liked men, but they seldom got further withher than the point of good-comradeship. Very young men, by-the-way, were inclined to fight a little shy of her; but she liked shrewd elderly ones, and these were always her admirers. Her manner, too, was not the modest violet manner of the model woman; there was just a touch of conscious power in it—a fine, well-bred self-assertion, which stood her in good stead in her peculiar position at Catalpa Grove, and enabled her to keep the young ladies of the house very much in order. In those days Northern governesses of the meek sort used often to fare a little dismally among those high-spirited and not over-cultivated Southern girls. But one glance

into the level gray eyes of Miss Darrington would have convinced a duller than the Sibthorpes that this was a woman on whom it would be dangerous to play off any airs of superiority. They had a wholesome fear of her at the end of the first hour, but they cordially liked her by the end of the first week, and their respect and liking never diminished while she remained with them. The truth is, real New England "blue blood" is the very bluest in America, and the pride it engenders is more than a match for the haughtiest "F. F. V."—a fact which our Southern friends did not know so well before the war as they do now, for the reason that in their isolated plantation life they were seldom brought in contact with the real thing. They had their estimate of the Northern spirit from second and third rate specimens. The Sibthorpes were fine girls, however, and when they found out the stuff the governess had in her they were ready enough to make Catalpa Grove a pleasant abode for her, and soon its gayeties were incomplete without her.

The grove was in a populous county, and within easy visiting distance of the city of L—. There was always open house, and a very delightful house at that. The colonel was a good specimen of the Kentucky gentleman, frank, hearty, hospitable, and well-bred, until you touched his prejudices. He greatly admired Miss Darrington, and, indeed, showed some disposition to give his feelings practical expression, but was skillfully checked by the lady before he had committed himself. It did not in the least suit her book to be made love to by her host. She had undertaken a profitable year's task, and she wanted the salary. She did not choose either to resign the chance of earning it or to be made uncomfortable by the presence in the house of a rejected suitor.

You think I am describing a hard and selfish woman. What do you think she was down there governessing for, that finely trained, thorough-bred creature, among those free-and-easy, not over-intellectual Kentuckians? She was the eldest of four children. Her father was dead, and her mother a delicate, fine lady, as lovely and as helpless as a baby or a flower. Elizabeth was the support of the family. She kept the children at school, and wrote every week to her mother a long letter, full of fun and nonsense and merry rattle, to make that dear woman believe she had not a care in the world. But, trust me, she had plenty.

Miss Darrington had been about six months at the grove when, one morning in March, the household was thrown into a little cheerful commotion by a letter from Tom Sibthorpe, the colonel's eldest son, announcing his return home. He wrote to say that he should bring with him a friend, a young Cuban, with whom he had been traveling, and whom—for I am compelled to give him a fictitious name—I shall call Raphael Aldama. The expected advent of this stranger caused not a little excitement to the young ladies of the grove. He was of Spanish birth, but his family had lived for years in Havana, and he had formerly been at school with Tom Sibthorpe in New Orleans. The girls had never seen him; but they told Miss Darrington the most remarkable stories about him, of his wonderful personal beauty, his astonishing strength, his terrible temper and reckless daring, his duels and scrapes. He was very rich, very haughty, very magnificent. They were wild to see him, but rather inclined to be afraid of him. He was said to be as irresistible with women as he was dangerous with men. Miss Darrington did not find their picture of the expected guest particularly attractive. She laughed to herself, mentally decided that the romantic Cuban was probably a very ordinary young savage, and thought no more about him.

The travelers reached Catalpa Grove on the day expected. It was in the afternoon that they arrived; and his imperial highness, Signor Raphael, was pleased to retire immediately to bed, where he spent the night and the whole of the next day. All day long the two Sibthorpe girls were in a little fever of excitement, and were not above showing it. Alice could not practice her music lesson, and Rosalie had more trouble than usual with French verbs. They laid out their prettiest toilets for the evening, and teased Tom Sibthorpe with all sorts of questions about his friend.

Miss Darrington listened, a little *ennuyée,* checked a satirical smile, and yawned behind her fan. When they had fluttered away she arrayed herself in the plain white dress which was her ordinary evening wear, with no ornament, except some scarlet blossoms of the Japan quince in her dark braids, and went down to play galops and waltzes for the others to dance.

The evening was well-nigh spent, her fingers were getting tired, and she was playing half mechanically, her thoughts carried far away, when Alice Sibthorpe came toward her, leaning on the arm of a gentleman, and begged to present the Signor Aldama, who desired the pleasure of her acquaintance. She looked up, indifferently, and met the glance of an eye before whose fiery and intolerable splendor her for an instant fell—for an instant only. She was quite too practiced a woman of the world to lose her self-possession, though for a moment compelled to acknowledge the force of a magnetism more powerful than her own. A voice peculiarly soft and melodious addressed her, and the sweet, measured tones in which she replied betrayed no disturbance. Alice took her place at the piano, and she moved to a sofa, the stranger placing himself at her side; and she found herself studying curiously the face before her.

It was a very handsome face. She acknowledged that instantly. A white forehead, smooth as a boy's, over which the black hair clustered in heavy rings; an arched nose, the wide delicate nostril of which had a quiver of pride in it, like what one sees in fiery young horses; lips full yet firm, a strange sweetness in their smile, yet a fierceness in their passionate curve which suggested possibilities of cruelty. The eye was large and looked like black velvet, with the flash of a diamond in its centre. With all this a figure strong yet slender, a springing, cat-like tread, and a manner full of lazy grace, yet marred by something of haughty indifference.

Miss Darrington looked now steadily into the eyes whose bold, strong glance had at first beaten down her own, and recognized the nature of the soul that looked out from them. "It is a case for Van Amburgh," she said to herself, "or Girard, the lion-tamer. What jungle can have reared a wild animal like this?" But the low musical voice in which he addressed her did not accord with his harsh impression, and his manner at the moment was almost reverent in its gentle respect.

From that evening an intimacy singularly close and confidential existed between these two. I say existed, for it was a thing which had no growth; it seemed to spring up, "full-statured, in an hour." But whether it were of the nature of love or friendship the lookers-on were puzzled to decide. But, at least, he seemed never willingly absent from her company, and she had an evident pleasure in having him near her. Yet she certainly made no effort to attract him. So much was admitted, even by the two Sibthorpe girls, who, having, perhaps, anticipated an admirer in their brother's friend, may have felt a twinge of resentment at seeing him immediately carried off by the governess. But they were not ill-natured, and they had no lack of admirers; so they soon accepted the situation, wondering a little, too, for it was not vanity in them to think that, in point of beauty as well as youth, they had the advantage. But Raphael had known plenty of beautiful women—had enjoyed to the full the incense of their admiration—while a woman with brains was a new revelation to him. The spell of intellect and culture he found irresistible. This was the more strange as he was the last man whom a superficial judgment would have supposed likely to be attracted by such qualities. He had very little culture himself, little education, indeed, in the ordinary sense of the word. But he had seen a great deal of *life* in his five-and-twenty years—a life of vivid impressions and keen emotions. He had always been his own master, knowing from boyhood no law but his own will. The result was a character fixed in its mould, yet giving the impression of immaturity. Though really older than Miss Darrington, he seemed to her like a grown-up child. His nature showed a tinge of barbarism, a certain antique simplicity, which

seemed to belong to a past age. She could not fail to see that intellectually she was vastly his superior; and it is good evidence of the natural nobility of the man's nature that he, too, recognized that fact without resenting it. He had worshiped passionately at many a lovely shrine, but never quite free from the haughty feeling that his homage honored her on whom it lighted. Now, for the first time in his life, his boldness had become timidity, his audacity respect. The story of "Undine" may repeat itself in more forms than one. The soul in this half-savage breast sprang into conscious life with the first pure, unselfish love which had ever dwelt there. Unselfish, for he knew from the very first that it was hopeless. She was honest with him all through. She let him see that truly as she liked him, frankly as she admired him, she had only friendship to give him. Not that she told him so in words—a woman is a blunderer to whom such words are necessary—but he did not fail to perceive the truth.

Yet it must be confessed that she found in his companionship a wonderful charm, the secret of which she could never fully analyze. It might lie partly in his remarkable beauty—always a spell to any woman—or the intense personal magnetism by which he affected all who came near him. It might be the very contrast between her own complex but balanced nature and this romantic and ardent, though untutored soul. Then, too, he adored her, and what woman ever lived who did not love to be worshiped? His honest affection must have been inexpressibly soothing to her often-wearied spirit. I think she might even have loved him but for the recollection of—but that is *her* secret, and has nothing to do with my story.

So, though on the frankest terms of intimacy, they never talked of love. Without surrounding *herself* with any apparent defenses, she compelled *him* to a complete reserve in that direction. A coquette might have refused to listen to him; she assumed that he had nothing to say, and so persistently ignored the possibility of any thing else that he could not escape the position she assigned him.

Of course it was not to be expected that this sudden and close intimacy could escape comment in the little circle at the Grove. But after the first dash of surprise they treated the matter with indifference, good naturedly, willing that the parties should please themselves. Only Tom Sibthorpe, gifted with a somewhat more acute observation than the rest, watched the pair with a puzzled interest.

"By Jove!" he said to his sister Alice, "I did not think the woman had lived who could so tame the tiger in Raphael Aldama. Can you tell I me the secret of her power? It is not coquetry; she never throws out a lure; yet the very soul of the man is on its knees before her. It can not be beauty; she is not so pretty as you, or Rose; though in the real *air de grande dame* she beats you both out of the field—that little thing, not over five feet high! I don't know but it is in her pride, after all. For the first time in his life Raphael has found some one prouder than he is. Do you believe she will marry him?"

"I should think so, certainly," replied Alice, rather surprised at the doubt. "Possibly you are right. Women should know women. But I am not sure that she is one to say, 'all for love, and a world well lost.' "

"How can you be so censorious, Tom?" cried Alice, indignantly. "Miss Darrington is no more cold-hearted than you are. Besides, if it is a question of worldly advantage, she has every thing to gain from such a marriage."

"You think so, my dear, but she knows better. To her the losses might outweigh the gains."

"What would she lose?"

"The whole world in which she has hitherto lived and moved and had her being. Don't you see how opposite they are in character, in education, in ideas of life? She has been reared in the

stimulating mental atmosphere of the North, and is, to say truth, a very fine specimen of its culture; has grown up in sympathy with the living forces of thought which move the modern world. He is like the child of some past civilization, who does not even known himself out of harmony with this thinking nineteenth century. There can be no spiritual kinship between the two. If she were to marry him she would lose the freedom she prizes beyond every thing, and gain, not a *mate,* but merely an *adorer.* And such an adorer! A woman might as well trust herself to a typhoon."

"Don't you think his love for her would last?"

"How can I tell? He has loved a hundred times before; though, to speak the truth, I never saw him in such earnest as now. But if he did not weary, she would. His passion is too *exigeante;* it would bore her in a little while."

"You seem to think she does not care for him."

"Nay; that is where I am wholly at sea. She is not one to wear her heart on her sleeve for such daws as we to peck at. But, after all, what does it matter? These things are always unequal. *Il y a toujours l'un qui baise, et l'autre qui tend le joue."*

"You are a horrid old cynic, Tom."

"Yes, dear; and a stupid one at that; so let us talk of something else." So the warm spring days flew swiftly by, and the old house rang with the gayety of that careless Southern life; and these two floated on with the stream, enjoying the present, but knowing well that their pleasure could not last. At least she knew this. She understood that there could be no permanent tie between them. They had drifted together from opposite poles; they would soon drift apart again, and that would be the end. But it was not easy to keep him to this view.

"Why talk of the future at all?" he said, impatiently. "Let me at least dream that I have you forever. These hours are so sweet—I sip them slowly, like drops of some precious wine. I even fancy sometimes that the days go lingeringly, as if the very moments felt the joy they hold, and were loth to depart from us. We are but children playing in the sun; let us play that we are lovers—and love, you know, is eternal."

"Oh, but that is too idle."

"Yes; I will have it so," he said, evidently feeling that he was securing an advantage. "You insist that this companionship of ours is not any part of our real lives. It is a little dream we are dreaming together—a brief drama which we enact. In such a fictitious world it is no matter what *rôles* we take for our own. I choose the part of your lover. You can listen to my vows, for it is only play, you know."

She laughed, but made no reply. She was unwilling, by objecting, to seem to attach any importance to this new freak. He never relinquished the ground her silence conceded; yet he seemed always to feel that this advantage was a stolen one, and was careful not to press it too far.

Though after that he would often hold toward her the language of a lover, he was strangely gentle for one so naturally fierce and wild, and he played with this whim in a half sad, half tender way, which sometimes moved her more than she chose to show.

Raphael was passionately fond of music, and sang well in a wild, lawless way of his own, though in that, as in every thing else, quite guiltless of scientific method. He often chose to be present when Miss Darrington was giving her morning lesson to the young ladies; and, as what he chose to do it was rather difficult to prevent, both teacher and pupils soon learned to go on without paying any attention to him.

One memorable morning in May the two girls had finished their lesson and left the room. Raphael, who had been lying on a sofa by the window, with a newspaper over his face, as if asleep, flung it away as they closed the door.

"Now that those chatterers are gone, sing to me, Isabel," he said. It was one of his caprices to substitute for her stately English name of Elizabeth, whose consonants plagued his southern tongue, the softer Spanish form which is its equivalent.

"What will you have?" she asked, reseating herself. "Are you in a sober mood, or will something gay and sparkling suit you better?"

"Any thing you like will please me."

"That is a very flattering frame of mind in which to find one's audience. As a reward you shall hear this choice little bit from Tennyson's 'Maud,' which has just been set to music."

"Very well; I have not an idea who Tennyson is, and never heard of his 'Maud;' but if you like it I shall. I only want to hear your voice."

"What pretty things you say this morning! But I assure you that my grum tones do no justice to it. You should hear Alice."

"Alice screams like a macaw."

"That is not quite complimentary to my best pupil. But now, barbarian, be silent, and listen."

The song was the one, so familiar now, beginning, "There has fallen a splendid tear." She sang it in a way of her own, rolling out the words at the top, or rather bottom, of her voice, trying to imitate the deep, passionate tones of Maud's lover, as he stands, half stifled with impatience, listening in the hush of the summer night for the footfall that he loves:

"There has fallen a splendid tear
   From the passion-flower at the gate.
She is coming, my dove, my dear;
   She is coming, my life, my fate.
The red rose cries, 'She is near, she is near;
   And the white rose weeps, 'She is late;'
The larkspur listens, 'I hear, I hear;'
   And the lily whispers, 'I wait.'

"She is coming, my own, my sweet;
   Were it ever so airy a tread,
My heart would hear her and beat,
   Were it earth in an earthy bed;
My dust would hear her and beat,
   Had I lain for a century dead;
Would start and tremble under her feet,
   And blossom in purple and red."

During the singing of the first stanza Raphael kept his position on the sofa, but the second had not proceeded far when, with a smothered exclamation, he started upright, and sat leaning eagerly forward, listening with a flushed and working face. At the close he sprang to his feet, and came toward her, his eyes burning like coals of fire.

"*Jesu Maria!* Why do you sing like that to me?"

The passion in his tones made her tremble, but she answered as calmly as possible: “I had no special reason. I thought the song a pretty piece of hyperbole, which would please you.”

“It is not hyperbole; it is truth,” he said, softly, a sudden paleness replacing the flush on his face. He stood close behind her, and leaned over to look at the sheet from which she had been singing. His fingers rested for a moment with a light touch upon her hair—a touch inexpressibly soft and caressing—as he repeated:

“ ‘My dust would hear her and beat,
Had I lain for a century dead;
Would start and tremble under her feet,
And blossom in purple and red.’

Why, yes,” he went on, dreamily, “surely the earth does not furnish a grave so deep that the sound of her little foot above it would not send a thrill through his heart.”

“Raphael, I think you rave.”

“Indeed no,” he said, smiling softly. “Can not you see that if I were really your lover, as we only play I am, neither death nor the grave could divide me from you? In life, distance might divide us. Your own coldness, the cruel *convenances* of the world in which you live, might build themselves like a wall between us; but were this soul unchained by death I should be free to seek you, and the universe of God is not wide enough to divide me from her I love. Not highest heaven nor deepest hell could keep me from my darling.”

“You would not appear to her in the fashion of the spectre bride-groom, in the ballad of ‘Leonora’ we read the other day? Few ladies would like that.”

She spoke lightly, for the scene was becoming too painful, and she felt that she must end it at any cost. But her effort failed. He only smiled—a grave, patient smile, strangely unlike himself, she thought— as he answered:

“No, surely. Do you think I would frighten her, or harm one hair of her little head? Not to terrify, but to bless, would I seek her. And she would know my soul at last, and read all its love for her—a love she was too blind to believe in here.”

Tears sprang to her steadfast eyes. “Dear Raphael,” she said, “I will not wrong you by jesting any more. I do know your generous regard for me, and I am grateful for it. But if I were to listen to you it would be the bane of both. We are not suited to each other. We belong to two different worlds. The air of yours would scorch and blast me, as mine would chill and destroy you.”

“You do not care for me, then?”

“Indeed I do care. I was cold and lonely here, away from all I love; you came, and I was warmed with the sun of the tropics. It is you who give the charm to these sweet spring days which are passing so swiftly. But when they are gone that will be the end. You will leave us, and though you will think of me kindly for a while, the world of excitement and adventure will quickly renew its charm for you, and you will thank me then that I have left you unfettered.”

“And you?” he asked, in a tone of some bitterness. “You will forget me, doubtless?”

“I shall never forget you,” she answered, sadly. “I shall remember you always as the kindest, the most generous of friends. My life is one of labor and care; and this brief holiday we have spent together has the charm which only rare pleasures have. To you it is like the rest of your life, and so its memory will fade the sooner.”

“So you doubt alike my truth and constancy?”

"Doubt your truth? Ah, no! But for constancy—what is it? We are none of us constant—God be thanked, who gives us the power to change. How could we live if we had not that—if every sorrow held its keenness forever?"

"Do I cause you sorrow, Isabel?"

"Only when I see you unhappy. Did you not say that we were children playing in the sun? Then what have we to do with care? Let us play the play out merrily, for the end of it is near."

She staid for no reply, but smiling on him kindly, though with swimming eyes, she rose and left the room.

A week later Raphael went. Imperative business compelled Tom Sibthorpe's departure, and his friend had no pretext for lingering longer. In the interval he bore himself toward Miss Darrington with a fair degree of the coolness she had been teaching him, but whether from pride or acquired indifference she could not tell. The day before his I departure he ordered his horse immediately after breakfast, and rode to L—. She noticed, as he passed the window, that he had exchanged the white linen suit which, in common with other gentlemen at that season, he wore constantly, for a complete black dress.

He was gone nearly all day, only making his appearance after dinner was over, and the whole family assembled in the drawing-room. He had resumed his usual garb, and seemed in very gay spirits. Several guests were present, and he made himself brilliantly agreeable to them, flirted with Rose Sibthorpe, and paid any number of compliments to Alice on her singing. Miss Darrington played superbly, but he did not approach her. When she had finished, however, and walked away from the others into the shelter of a window, he soon followed.

"Have you heard," he said, "that I go tomorrow?"

"So Tom has been telling me."

"You speak very quietly. Do you understand that we part finally— that we shall never meet again?"

"Yes, I know."

The words were almost inaudible, for pain choked her voice. He went on:

"Well, then, since it is so—since we shall never be any thing to each other any more, will you not give me something which shall at times remind me of you? Otherwise I might forget you, you know."

"What shall it be?" she asked, faintly. The smile on his lips was almost more than she could bear.

"Any thing which you have worn, so it will seem a part of you."

"Wear this, then," drawing from her finger a little plain gold ring.

There was a flash like triumph in his eyes as he received it, and touched it to his lips before placing it upon his own finger.

"Now," he said, still speaking in the same slow tone, as if he were controlling it by an effort—"now, will you look at what I have here?"

He took a small parcel from the breast of his coat and placed it in her hand. She removed the wrapper, and there appeared a common jewel-case of purple morocco, which, on being opened, revealed, reposing on its velvet bed, a trinket of singular and beautiful workmanship. It was a large drop, or globe, of exquisitely cut crystal, inclosed in a fine net-work of gold.

"Do you like it?" he asked, as she did not speak.

"Who would not? It looks like a soap-bubble tangled in a golden nest, or a great dewdrop bound round with threads of Titania's hair. Surely you did not find such a rare and curious thing at L—?"

"No; I carried it there to-day. For what purpose I am not sure that dare to tell you. It is an heirloom in our family, and has come down to me through many generations. There is a tradition among us that it is a talisman, and brings good fortune to her who wears it. Will *you* wear it in memory of the last Aldama?"

Miss Darrington hesitated. "Ought you to part with a thing of such peculiar value?"

He answered with a strange smile: "I do not part with it. I only make of it a link between myself and you. While you wear it you can not wholly forget me. If you wish to do so, reject it."

She answered by fastening it to her watch-chain. Again that triumphant flash broke from his eyes. Some one approached the window. Their *tête-à-tête* must come to an end. He leaned toward her and whispered hastily: "Some day, when you look at it, you will learn how high my presumption has soared. But the link between us is riveted now. You can never undo it." The next moment he had moved away, and was laughing gayly with a group of ladies.

That night, in her own room, as Miss Darrington was laying aside her watch, she once more examined curiously the crystal drop. As she turned it over and over her fingers must have touched a small spring concealed in the gold net-work, for the globe parted in the middle, and the sides falling open, revealed a small but perfect photograph likeness of Raphael himself. This, then, was the errand which had taken him to L— that day; this was the piece of presumption which he had hesitated to confess to her. He had probably believed that she would not discover it till after he was gone. Should she tell him that she had done so, and reject a gift to which he evidently attached a half-superstitious importance? On consideration she decided against this course. It would bring about an exciting and perhaps stormy scene, and could do no good. They were not likely ever to meet again, so no embarrassment could ensue from her acceptance of his gift, and she need never wear it unless she chose.

The two travelers were to leave early next morning, as they had a ride of some miles to reach the nearest railway station. The heat was excessive, and Miss Darrington, who had not been well for some days, found herself languid and suffering; but she went down as usual. Alice Sibthorpe was in the room with her when Raphael came to say good-by. He spoke his farewells lightly and gayly to both ladies, and left the room. Alice followed to say another parting word to her brother, and to watch with the rest the bustle of departure. Miss Darrington remained alone, and yielding to the languor of indisposition and the oppressive heat she sank down upon a lounge. A sadness deeper than she was prepared to feel, and which she chose to attribute mainly to physical depression, sent the slow tears stealing through her closed eyelashes.

So sunk was she in the listlessness of her sorrowful mood that she did not heed the opening of the door, or perceive that she was not alone until, looking up, she saw Raphael again beside her. His face was pale, his lips trembled, his eyes flashed darkly through the tears that filled them. He bent over her; she extended her hand. He caught and pressed it in his own so fiercely as almost to draw from her a cry of pain. He seemed making an effort to speak, but his voice died away in his throat.

There was a sound of footsteps approaching the door. He heard it and started. Then suddenly dropping on his knees beside her couch, and bending down to her feet, he kissed them passionately, again and again, and rising, darted from the room. She heard him spring down the staircase, and the next moment the clatter of his horse's hoofs dashing away, and the voice of Tom Sibthorpe swearing at him to stop.

Miss Darrington was both shocked and pained by an incident which revealed a feeling on the part of her friend so much deeper than she had thought possible. But she consoled herself with the reflection that with him all emotions, though keen, were transient. Some other woman, she

believed, would soon ensnare his fickle fancy, and efface from his mind all memories of pain. "I shall regret him longer than he will me," she said, and turned to work as the best cure for sorrowful thoughts.

The autumn of the year 1868 found Miss Darrington living in Boston. A busy woman now, for life with her had been steadily gathering new interests and occupations. Some youthful dreams, indeed, had faded out of sight, some triumphs anticipated once had been wholly missed; yet in the career she had marked out for herself a fair measure of success had rewarded her efforts, and won her the recognition so dear to us all. Without being a famous woman, she had secured a position which enabled her to make her social world what she would. She was happy and cheerful, for with her no sense was dulled, no power of enjoyment diminished; only the uneasy restlessness of youth had passed, and given place to the secure repose of one who has found her place and learned to fill it.

With a life thus pleasantly full, it was not surprising that the episode of her Kentucky sojourn gradually faded from her thoughts. As for her Cuban friend, it was seldom now that the idea of him returned to her. Beautiful as he had been to her, the passing *tendresse* she had felt for him had taken no hold upon her life. The had never woven his image with a single dream of the future; and the feeling with which she remembered him, though grateful and even tender, had no longing in it. The little globe of crystal still hung at her watch-chain, recalling, when it met her eye, a pleasant memory of those spring days they had spent together; but for that reminder she might perhaps not have thought of him at all. She had never seen him, and all that she knew of him could be briefly told. On the outbreak of the war he had entered the Confederate army, held the rank of colonel, and fought with reckless bravery. But becoming offended at some real or fancied slight put upon him by his commanding officer, he resigned his commission; and the next thing known of him he was enlisted on the Union side. Probably he was actuated each time more by a love of adventure than by any special sympathy with the cause either of Union or rebellion. Severely wounded in the third year of the war, he again withdrew from the service, and returned to Cuba. At Havana he had a quarrel—it was only about a dog—with an Englishman in the street; and the result was a duel, in which the Englishman was killed. To avoid the consequences of this affair he went to Mexico; and in that ever-seething caldron of revolution and tumult he was finally lost to view.

One evening late in September—it was the twenty-ninth, as she had reason afterward to note—Miss Darrington sat alone in the little room which served her as a study. It was a narrow but lofty apartment, its single high-arched window looked westward over the green trees of a square, with a glimpse of the Charles Riving shining beyond. A library table, a single tall book-case, a lounge, a bust or two, some flowers in the window—these were nearly all the objects noticeable in the room.

Miss Darrington, who had been unusually busy all day, laid down her pen, and, leaning wearily back in her arm-chair, turned her eyes on the glowing evening sky. It had been a day of unusual beauty, very warm for the season; and the sun was setting in a sky soft, brilliant, and clear. A flood of yellow light streamed on the quiet river and brightened the distant view. The spires and leafy domes of Cambridge swam in a golden haze. The softened radiance filled the little room, and, falling about the lady herself, seemed to wrap her in an atmosphere of reverie. She was dreamily conscious of the beauty of the parting day; but she was not thinking of that, or, indeed, of any thing definite. She was, in fact, physically and mentally tired; and it was perhaps owing to this that a kind of depression stole over her—not really a sense of pain or sorrow, only a heavy languor of spirit, a feeling more tinged with the hue of sadness than was habitual with her. A

long time elapsed. The sunlight slowly withdrew; the splendor of the sky passed into the paleness of evening, and a few of the larger stars began to show themselves; but still she remained motionless, and half unconscious of place or time.

"Isabel!"

The name was uttered almost at her elbow in a low, clear voice, whose accents were unmistakable, even if she had not on the instant remembered who alone in all the world had ever called her by that name. She turned eagerly to welcome the unexpected guest. "Raphael!" she exclaimed, in accents of undisguised pleasure.

He was standing just within the room. The door, a heavy one, was closed; and she wondered in a flash of thought how it could have opened to admit him unheard by her. She half rose to meet him; but a strange thrill shot through her, and an irresistible force bound her to her seat. She looked at him fixedly. There was still enough of brightness in the fading twilight for her to recognize unmistakably his form and features. But his face was very pale, and there was a look upon it unlike any thing she had ever seen there. So sad, yet so still—so full of some strange calm—it filled her with awe. She noticed that he wore a dress half military in its character, with some tarnished gold embroidery upon the breast, and a large cloak, thrown back and falling from his shoulders as he stood, his hat in his hand, in an attitude of careless grace she well remembered. He was so near she could almost have touched him with her hand. But yet he never spoke; only his lips parted with a tender smile, and his eyes dwelt on her with a glance so intense, so full of fathomless love and sorrow, it was more than her heart could bear.

She tried to speak; but though her lips shaped his name, her voice died away in a husky whisper. Suddenly over the pale sad face broke a look of rapturous joy—a smile like the sunshine of heaven; and in that instant the figure vanished—was gone utterly in a breath; and the lady *felt* that she was alone.

Miss Darrington is not a nervous woman, but it was some minutes before she could summon sufficient calmness to act, or even to think. Then she rang her bell, and a servant came to the door. "Come in," she said, in answer to his respectful tap. But when he attempted to obey her the door was found locked on the inside. She remembered that she had herself turned the key some hours before to secure herself from interruption. Moreover, the man, on being questioned, declared with evident truth that no visitor had passed in or out of the house since noon. It was by a strong effort of will that she now drove back the superstitious feelings that assaulted her, and forced a smile at her own absurdity. Of course the thing was an illusion, a trick of the imagination played on by nerves overworn with work. It was odd, though, that imagination should have raised up so vividly the image of one who certainly had not recently been in her thoughts. Then, too, her memory could hardly have supplied some details of this vision; they were familiar. Where could she have got the picture of her friend in that garb? The wide gray cloak, the gold-laced military dress—these were very unlike the negligent white linen suit in which she remembered him. Only on one occasion had she seen him dressed otherwise, and that was the day when he rode to L—, to sit for the photograph which still hung at her side. On that day he had put on a black evening dress. Then the voice which had uttered her name—a name which only he had ever applied to her. How could imagination have raised that sound in her ear with such suddenness as to give her a shock of surprise?

It was odd, certainly; but she did not choose to indulge herself in morbid fancies upon the subject. Convinced that a low physical condition was really responsible for the illusion of which she had been the victim, she resolutely put the whole thing out of her mind, and set herself to get back the healthy tone to which nature entitled her, She left off writing, rode and walked

frequently, and went much into society. But she was not able to dissipate the impression made upon her mind by what she had seen. Whenever she thought of it it was with a renewal of the same strange thrill which she had contended with at the time. She could not help recalling certain words which Raphael had I once spoken to her, how he had vowed to seek her through the universe I when death should have left him free to do so. Could such things be? And had death really freed that fiery and generous spirit? If so, where and when had he passed away? In a country so full of political and social turmoil as Mexico it was easy to imagine all possible contingencies, especially with a man of his temper. She found herself frequently turning to the columns of "Mexican correspondence" in the newspapers, for the chance of lighting upon his name; yet she knew well how easy it would be, in the chaos of that country, for a single stranger to vanish out of life and leave no trace. And then she told herself again that this was all nonsense and nerves; that her old friend was probably alive and well somewhere, and that he had forgotten her as completely as if she had never crossed his path. So, by degrees, the intensity of her first impression wore off, and her mind was regaining its accustomed poise, when a new incident occurred.

Tom Sibthorpe, at the close of the war, had settled himself to the practice of law in New York. He and Miss Darrington often met, and a warm friendship had grown up between them, kept alive by a frequent correspondence, not sentimental, but much like that which two clever men are apt to enjoy. One day early in December the lady received a letter from her friend, in which, after discussing in a lively manner one or two items of personal gossip, a new book, and the last *bon-mot,* the writer said:

"Have you heard that it is all over with our poor friend Aldama? He was one of the few victims of the almost bloodless revolution with which sleepy old Spain has just been astonishing the world. I was not unprepared to hear of him as involved in that affair, for I knew that the dream of a free and regenerated Spain had taken strong hold upon him. You remember that, notwithstanding his long residence in Cuba, he was always intensely a Spaniard in feeling. Seven or eight months ago he went to London, and fell in with Prim and his conclave of schemers. Of course they made much of him, for he was just the man for their purposes. His reckless courage, his familiarity with every species of dangerous adventure, his indifference to the ordinary objects of ambition, which took him out of the list of rivals, and the immense wealth at his command, would make him invaluable to them. He entered heart and soul into their schemes; but he seems to have been haunted by a presentiment that his life would be the cost. Some time in the summer he wrote me a long letter, in which, though it had occasional flashes of his old self, it was plain to see that he was oppressed by some strong foreboding. His life, he said, had never been of any use to himself or any one. He had wasted it all in the pursuit of a pleasure he had never found, chasing a phantom of happiness which had forever fled before him. It might partly redeem the worthlessness of such a life if he could strike one blow for Spain and liberty. If his country was to be free, some of her sons must bleed for her, and he could at least die as well as a better man. Then suddenly changing both his tone and topic, he referred to our school—days together, recalling certain wild frolics we two had shared, in a gay and witty way that made me laugh then, but which now I can only think upon with tears. That was the last I heard from him until a few days ago, when a letter from my sister Alice, who, as you know, is married to Mr. Manners, an Englishman living in Madrid, gave me the whole sad story.

"It was in the month of August that Raphael, choosing, as usual, the post of greatest danger, went from Paris to Madrid, to communicate with the heads of the conspiracy there. The southern provinces were already alive with insurrection, but none of his friends in the city thought of

connecting him with the movement. Only George Manners, a young relative of my brother-in-law, became, to some extent, his confidant, and was deeply infected with his enthusiasm. The thing must have been well managed, for the extent and power of the uprising would seem to have been quite unrecognized. But events, as you know, moved very fast. The absence of the Queen from her capital furnished the insurgents with just the opportunity they required, and immediately the revolt became a revolution. Raphael, who must have held in his hands some important threads of the affair, remained in the city until the resignations of the Queen's ministry; but on the 20th of September he left Madrid to put himself in communication with Serrano, who was marching to give battle to the royalist forces. George Manners went with him, telling Alice that there was going to be a row, and he wanted to see it. A fortnight later George came back alone. The account he gives is not very clear as to details, but the main facts are plain enough.

"They succeeded in joining Serrano's forces a day or two before the engagement, which occurred on the 28th of September, not very far from Cordova; my recollection of the place, as named in the newspaper reports, is a little at fault. Raphael had a command, and in the action became separated from his friend. When the fight was over, the Queen's troops defeated and scattered, Manners tried in vain to find him. The young man had himself been taken prisoner, and only released when his captors found him a hinderance to flight, so his knowledge of the incidents of the fight was a good deal confused. After a two days' search, however, he learned that a wounded officer had been carried by some of his men into the hut of a peasant, the locality of which was pointed out to him, and had since died there. He hastened to the place, and in the still, cold form that lay there alone on a rude bench, covered with a rough cavalry cloak, he recognized his friend and ours."

Miss Darrington paused in her reading, and her breath came short and quick. The 28th of September! And he had lived for some hours after—how long she would never know. But she recalled with a shock that made every nerve quiver that it was on the evening of the 29th of September that she had seemed to see him in her own room!

It was some time before she could command herself sufficiently to go on with the letter.

"Poor Raphael," the writer continued; "there were splendid possibilities in him, if a bad education had not spoiled their promise. I hardly knew until he was gone how dear he had been to me. We were almost like brothers; and yet I know that he never fully revealed himself to me, and never would. After that visit to Catalpa Grove he was more than ever reserved. He was greatly changed, too; his boyish high spirits had vanished, and he seemed colder, graver, older by many years. I could not fail to see that his nature had been stirred to its profoundest deeps by some experience—whether of joy or pain I never knew. The key to his secret was not in my hands. Dear friend, I believe that if any one possessed such a key it was yourself. You knew him but a little while, but you read him far better than I. No need to tell *you* how rich in high impulses, in noble aspirations, was that generous, ungoverned soul. But the world was out of joint for him always. Only once did any hope to set it right seem offered him, and he missed that. If he had not— But forgive me. I am speculating upon contingencies which, perhaps, were never possible."

Miss Darrington read no farther. The letter dropped from her hands, and her face was buried in them, while hot tears forced themselves through her fingers—tears of remorseful tenderness, as she thought how little she had prized, how little deserved, that strong, true, generous love which had held her to the last in such tender remembrance; which had made its way across the ocean,

across the wider, deeper gulf that divides us from the unseen world, to give to *her* the greeting of lips that were sealed, the last loving look of eyes that were forever closed to all on earth beside!

She believed that. If you doubt it—if you think it can not be—will you tell me *what it was* that Miss Darrington saw?