

round, in whose face all that is grand and noble lies sleeping, the living representation of Nirvana; and of the second, those odd little ornaments known as *netsuke*, comical carvings for the most part, grotesque figures of men and monkeys, saints and sinners, gods and devils. Appealing bits of ivory, bone, or wood they are, in which the dumb animals are as speaking likenesses as their human fellows.

The other arts show the same motif in their decorations. Pottery and lacquer alike witness the respective positions assigned to the serious and the comic in Far Eastern feeling.

The Far Oriental makes fun of man and makes love to Nature; and it al-

most seems as if Nature heard his silent prayer, and smiled upon him in acceptance; as if the love-light lent her face the added beauty that it lends the maid's. For nowhere in this world, probably, is she lovelier than in Japan: a climate of long, happy means and short extremes, months of spring and months of autumn, with but a few weeks of winter or of summer in between; a land of flowers, where the lotus and the cherry, the plum and the wistaria, grow wantonly side by side; a land where the bamboo embosoms the maple, where the pine at last has found its palm-tree, and the tropic and the temperate zones forget their separate identity in one long self-obliterating kiss.

Percival Lowell.

PAUL PATOFF.

XX.

[Continued.]

PERA, at this time, was indulging itself in its last gayeties before the beginning of the summer season, when every one who is able to leave the town goes up the Bosphorus, or to the islands. The weather was growing warm, but still the dancing continued with undiminished vigor. Among other festivities there was to be a masked ball, a species of amusement which is very rare in Constantinople; but somebody had suggested the idea, one of the great embassies had taken it up, and at last the day was fixed and the invitations were issued. It was to be a great affair, and everybody went secretly about the business of composing costumes and disguises. There was much whispering and plotting and agreeing together in schemes of mystification. The evening came, everybody went, and the ball was a great success.

Hermione had entirely hidden her costume with a black domino, which is certainly the surest disguise which any one can wear. Its wide folds reached to the ground, and completely hid her figure, while even her hands were rendered unrecognizable by loose black gloves. Paul had been told what she was to wear; but he probably knew her by some sign, agreed upon beforehand, from all the other black dominos; for a number of other ladies had chosen the same over-garment to hide the brilliant costumes until the time came for unmasking. He came up to her immediately, and offered his arm, proposing to walk through the rooms before dancing; but Hermione would not hear of it, saying that if she were seen with him at first she would be found out at once.

"Do not be unreasonable," said she, as she saw the disappointed look on his face. "I want to mystify ever so many people first. Then I will dance with you as much as you like."

"Very well," said Paul, rather coldly. "When you want me, come to me."

Hermione nodded, and moved away, mixing with the crowd under the hundreds of lights in the great ball-room. Paul sighed, and stood by the door, caring little for what went on. He was not a man who really took pleasure in society, though he had cultivated his social faculties to the utmost, as being necessary to his career. The fact that all the ladies were masked dispensed him for the time from the duty of making the round of the room and speaking to all his acquaintances, and he was glad of it. But Hermione was bent upon enjoying her first masked ball, and all the freedom of moving about alone. She spoke to many men whom she knew, using a high, squeaking voice which in no way recalled her natural tones. In the course of half an hour she found Alexander Patoff talking earnestly with a lady in a white domino, whom she recognized, to her surprise, as her aunt Chrysophrasia. Alexander evidently had no idea of her identity, for he was speaking in low and passionate tones, while Miss Dabstreak, who seemed to enter into the spirit of the mystification with amazing readiness, replied in the conventional squeak. She had concealed her hands in the loose sleeves of her domino, and as she was of about the same height as Hermione, it was absolutely impossible to prove that she was not Hermione herself.

"Hermione," exclaimed Alexander, just as the real Hermione came up to him, "I cannot bear to hear you talk in that voice! What is the use of keeping up this ridiculous disguise? Do you not see that I am in earnest?"

"Perfectly," squeaked Chrysophrasia. "So am I. But somebody might hear my natural voice, you know."

Hermione started, and drew back a little. It was a strange position, for Alexander was evidently under the impression that he was making love to herself,

and her aunt was amused by drawing him on. She hesitated, not knowing what she ought to do. It was clear that, unless she made herself known to him, he might remain under the impression that she had accepted his love-making. She waited to see what would happen. But Chrysophrasia had probably detected her, for presently the white domino moved quickly away towards the crowd. Alexander sprang forward, and would have followed, but Hermione crossed his path, and laid her hand on his sleeve.

"Will you give me your arm, Alexander?" she said, quietly, in her natural way.

He stopped short, stared at her, and then broke into a short, half-angry laugh. But he gave her his arm, and walked by her side, with an expression of bewilderment and annoyance on his beautiful face. Hermione was too wise to say that she had overheard the conversation, and Alexander was ashamed to own that he had made a mistake, and taken some one else for her. But by making herself known Hermione had effectually annulled whatever false impression Chrysophrasia had made upon him.

"Do you know who that lady in white domino is, with whom I was talking a moment ago? Did you see her?" he asked, rather nervously.

"It is our beloved aunt Chrysophrasia," said Hermione, calmly.

"Good heavens! Aunt Chrysophrasia!" exclaimed Alexander, in some horror.

"Why 'good heavens'?" inquired Hermione. "Have you been doing anything foolish? I am sure you have been making love to her. Tell me all about it."

"There is nothing to tell. But what a wonderful disguise! How many dances will you give me? May I have the cotillon?"

"You may have a quadrille," answered Hermione.

"A quadrille, two waltzes, and the

cotillon. That will do very well. As nobody knows you in that domino, we can dance as often as we please, and you will only be seen with me in the cotillon. What is your costume? I am sure it is something wonderful."

"How you run on!" exclaimed the young girl. "You do not give one the time to refuse one thing before you take another!"

"That is the best way, and you know it," answered Alexander, laughing. "A man should never give a woman time to refuse. It is the greatest mistake that can be imagined."

"Did aunt Chrysophrasia refuse to dance with you?" inquired Hermione.

Alexander bit his lip, and a faint color rose in his transparent skin.

"Aunt Chrysophrasia is a hard-hearted old person," he replied, evasively; but he almost shuddered at the thought that under the white domino there had lurked the green eyes and the faded, sour face of his æsthetic relative.

"To think that even she should have resisted you!" exclaimed Hermione, wickedly.

"Better she than you," said Alexander, lowering his tone as they passed near a group of persons who chattered loudly in feigned voices. "Better she than you, dear cousin," he repeated, gently. "To be refused anything by you" —

"They do things very well here," interrupted Hermione, pretending not to hear. "They have such magnificent rooms, and the floor is so good."

"Hermione, why do you" —

"Because," said Hermione quickly, before he could finish his sentence, "because you say too much, cousin Alexander. I interrupt you because you go too far, and because the only possible way of checking you is to cut you short."

"And why must you check me? Am I rude or rough with you? Do I say anything that you should not hear?

You know that I love you; why may I not tell you so? I know. You will say that Paul has spoken before me. But do you love Paul? Hermione, can you own to yourself that you love him, — not as a brother, but as the man you would choose to marry? He does not love you as I love you."

"Hush!" exclaimed the young girl. "You must not. I will go away and leave you."

"I will follow you."

"Why will you torment me so?" Perhaps her tone of voice did not express all the annoyance she meant to show, for Alexander did not desist. He only changed his manner, growing suddenly as soft and yielding as a girl.

"I did not mean to annoy you," he said. "You know that I never mean to. You must forgive me, you must be kind to me, Hermione. You have the stronger position, and you should be merciful. How can I help saying something of what I feel?"

"You should not feel it, to begin with," answered his cousin.

"Will you teach me how I may not love you?" His voice dropped almost to a whisper, as he bent down to her and asked the question. But Hermione was silent for a moment, not having any very satisfactory plan to propose. Half reluctant, she sat down by him upon a sofa in the corner of an almost empty room. There were tall plants in the windows, and the light was softened by rose-colored shades.

"It must be a hard lesson to learn," said Alexander, speaking again. "But if you will teach me, I will try and learn it; for I will do anything you ask me. You say I must not love you, but I love you already. When I am with you I am carried away, like a boat spinning down the Neva in the springtime. Can the river stop itself, in order that what lives in it may not move any more? Can it say to the skiff, 'Go no further,' when the skiff is already far

from the shore, at the mercy of the water?"

"The boatman must pull hard at his oars," laughed Hermione. "Have you never seen a caique pull through the Devil's Stream on the Bosphorus, at Bala Hissar? It is hard work, but it generally succeeds."

"A man may fight against the devil, but he cannot struggle against what he worships. Or, if he can, you must teach me how to do it, and give me some weapon to fight with."

"You must rely on yourself for that. You must say, 'I will not,' and it will be very easy. Besides," she added, with another laugh, in which there was a rather nervous ring, — "besides, you know all this is only a comedy, or a pastime. You are not in earnest."

"I wish I were not," answered Alexander, softly. "You tell me to rely upon myself. I rely on you. I love you, and that makes you stronger than me."

Hermione believed him, and perhaps she was right. She felt, and he made her feel, that she dominated him, and could turn him whither she would. Her pride was flattered, and though she promised herself that she would make him give up his love for her by the mere exertion of a superior common sense, she was conscious that the task was not wholly distasteful. She enjoyed the sensation of being the stronger, of realizing that Alexander was wholly at her feet and subject to her commands. That he should have gradually grown so intimate as to speak so freely to her is not altogether surprising. They were own cousins, and called each other by their Christian names. They met daily, and were often together for many consecutive hours, and Madame Patoff did her best to promote this state of things. Hermione had become accustomed to his devotion, for he had advanced by imperceptible stages. When he first said that he

loved her, she took it as she might have taken such an expression from her brother, — as the exuberant expression of an affection purely platonic, not to say brotherly. When he had repeated it more earnestly, she had laughed at him, and he had laughed with her in a way which disarmed all her suspicions. But each time that he said it he laughed less, until she realized that he was not jesting. Then she reproached herself a little for having let the intimacy grow, and determined to persuade him by gentle means that he had made a mistake. She felt that she was responsible for his conduct, because she had not been wise enough to stop him at the outset, and she therefore felt also that it would be unjust to make a violent scene, and that it was altogether out of the question to speak to Paul about the matter. To tell the truth, she was not sorry that it was out of the question, and this was the most dangerous element in her intimacy with Alexander. When a young woman who has not a profound experience of the world undertakes to convince a man by sheer argument that he ought not to love her, the result is likely to be unsatisfactory, and she stands less chance of persuading than of being persuaded. A man who persuades a woman that she is able to influence him, and that he is wholly at her mercy, has already succeeded in making himself interesting to her; and she will not readily abandon the exercise of her power, since she is provided with the too plausible excuse that she is doing him good, and consequently is herself doing right.

"I wish you would really listen to me, and take my advice," said Hermione, after a pause. "There is so much that is good in you, — so much that is far better than this foolish love-making."

Alexander Patoff smiled softly, and his brown eyes gazed dreamily at hers, that just showed through the openings in the black domino.

"If there is anything good in me, you have put it there," he answered. "Do not take it away; do not give me the physic of good advice."

"I think you need it more than usual to-night," said his cousin. "You are more than usually foolish, you know."

"You are more than usually wise. But if you tell me to do anything to-night, I will do it."

"Then go away and dance with some one else," laughed Hermione. To her surprise, Alexander rose quietly, and with one gentle glance turned away. Then she repented.

"Alexander!" she exclaimed, almost involuntarily.

"Yes," he answered, coming back, and seating himself again by her side.

"I did not tell you to come back," she said, amused at his docility.

"No — but I came," he replied. "You called me. I thought you had forgotten something. Shall I go away again?"

"No. You may stay, if you will be good," said she, leaning back and looking away from him.

"I promise. Besides, you admitted a moment ago that I was very good. Perhaps I am too good, and that is the reason why you sent me away."

"I did not say you were good. I said there was some good in you. You always take everything for granted."

"I will take all you grant," said he.

"I grant nothing. It is you who fancy that I do. You have altogether too much imagination."

"I never need it with you, even if I have it," answered Alexander. "You are infinitely beyond anything I ever imagined, in my wildest dreams."

"So are you," laughed Hermione. "Only — it is in a different way."

"Why do you think I like you so much?" asked her cousin, suddenly changing his tone.

"Because you ought not to," she answered, without hesitation.

"Then you think that as soon as any one tells me that I should not like a thing, I make up my mind to like it and to have it? No, that is not the reason I love you."

"It was 'liking,' not 'loving,' a moment ago," observed Hermione. "Please always say 'liking.' It is a much better word."

"Perhaps. It leaves more to the imagination, of which you say I have so much. The reason I like you so much, Hermione, is because you are so honest. You always say just what you mean."

"Yes. The difficulty lies in making you understand what I mean."

"As the Frenchman said when a man misunderstood him. You furnish me with an argument; you are not bound to furnish me with an understanding. No, I am afraid that would be asking the impossible. It is easier for a woman to talk than for a man to know what she thinks."

"I thought you said I was honest. Please explain," returned Hermione.

"Honesty does not always carry conviction. I mean that you are evidently most wonderfully honest, from your own point of view. If I could make my opinion yours, everything would be settled very soon."

"In what way?"

"Why should I tell you? I have told you so often, and you will not believe me. If I say it, you will send me away again. I do not say it, — another proof of my goodness to-night."

"I am deeply sensible," answered Hermione, with a laugh. "Come, I will give you one dance, and then you must go."

So they left their seat, and went into the ball-room just as the musicians began to play *Nur für Natur*; and the enchanting strains of the waltz carried them away in the swaying movement, and did them no manner of good. Just such conversations had taken place before, and would take place again so long

as Hermione maintained the possibility of converting Alexander to the platonic view of cousinly affection. But each time some chance expression, some softer tone of voice, some warmer gleam of light in the Russian's brown eyes, betrayed that he was gaining ground rather than losing anything of the advantage he had already obtained.

Half an hour later Hermione laid her hand on Paul's arm, and looked up rather timidly into his eyes through the holes in her domino. His expression was very cold and hard, but it changed as he recognized her.

"At last," he said happily, as he led her away.

"At last," she echoed, with a little sigh. "Do you want to dance?" she asked. "It is so hot; let us go and sit down somewhere."

Almost by accident they came to the place where Hermione had sat with Alexander. There was no one there, and they installed themselves upon the same sofa.

"I thought you were never coming," said Paul. "After all, what does it matter whether people see us together or not? I never can understand what amusement there is, after the first five minutes, in rushing about in a domino and trying to mystify people."

"No," answered Hermione, "it is not very amusing. I would much rather sit quietly and talk with some one I know and who knows me."

"I want to tell you something to-night, dear," said Paul, after a short silence. "Do you mind if I tell you now?"

"No bad news?" asked Hermione, rather nervously.

"No. It is simply this: I have made up my mind that I must speak to your father to-morrow. Do not be startled, darling. This position cannot last. I am not acting an honorable part, and he expects me to ask him the question. I know you have objected to my going

to him for a long time, but I feel that the thing must be done. There can be no good objection to our marriage, — Mr. Carvel made Griggs understand that. Tell me, is there any real reason why I should not speak?"

Hermione turned her head away. Under the long sleeves of her domino her small hands were tightly clasped together.

"Is there any reason, dear?" repeated Paul, very gently. But as her silence continued his lips set themselves firmly, and his face grew slowly pale.

"Will you please speak, darling?" he said, in changed tones. "I am very nervous," he added, with a short, harsh laugh.

"Oh — Paul! Don't!" cried Hermione. Her voice seemed to choke her as she spoke. Then she took courage, and continued more calmly: "Please, please wait a little longer, — it is such a risk!"

Paul laughed again, almost roughly.

"A risk! What risk? Your father has done all but give his formal consent. What possible danger can there be?"

"No. Not from him, — it is not that!"

"Well, what is it? Hermione, what in the name of Heaven is the matter? Speak, darling! Tell me what it is. I cannot bear this much longer." Indeed, the man's suppressed passion was on the very point of breaking out, and the blue light quivered in his eyes, while his face grew unnaturally pale.

"Oh, Paul — I cannot tell you — you frighten me so," murmured Hermione, in broken tones. "Oh, Paul! Forgive me — forgive me!"

At that moment Gregorios Balsamides passed before their corner, a lady in a red hood and a red mask leaning on his arm.

"Hush!" exclaimed Paul, under his breath, as the couple came near them. But Gregorios only nodded familiarly to Paul, stared a moment at his pale

face, glanced at the black domino, and went on with his partner. "I do not want to frighten you, dearest," continued Paul, when no one could hear them. "And what have I to forgive? Do not be afraid, and tell me what all this means."

"I must," answered Hermione, her strength returning suddenly. "I must, or I should despise myself. You must not go to my father, Paul — because I — I am not sure of myself."

She trembled visibly under her domino, as she spoke the last words almost in a whisper, hesitating and yet forcing herself to tell the truth. Paul glanced uneasily at the black drapery which veiled all her head and figure, and with one hand he grasped the carved end of the sofa, so that it cracked under the pressure. For some seconds there was an awful silence, broken only by low sounds which told that Hermione was crying.

"You mean — that you do not love me," said Paul at last, very slowly, steadying his voice on every syllable.

The young girl shook her head, and tried to speak. But the words would not come. Meanwhile the strong man's anger was slowly rising, very slowly but very surely, so that Hermione felt it coming, as a belated traveler on the sands sees the tide creeping nearer to the black cliff.

"Hermione," he said, very sternly, "if you mean that you are no longer willing to marry me, say so plainly. I will forgive you if I can, because I love you. But please do not trifle with me. I can bear the worst, but I cannot bear waiting."

"Do not talk like that, Paul!" cried his cousin, in an agonized voice, but recovering her power of speech before the pent-up anger he seemed to be controlling. "Let us wait, Paul; let us wait and be sure. I cannot marry you unless I am sure that I love you as I ought to love you. I do love you, but

I feel that I could love you so much more — as — as I should like to love my — the man I marry. Have patience, — please have patience for a little while."

Paul's white lips opened and shut mechanically as he answered her.

"I am very patient. I have been patient for long. But it cannot last forever. I believed you loved me and had promised to marry me. If you have made a mistake, it is much to be regretted. But I must really beg you to make up your mind as soon as possible."

"Oh, pray do not talk like that. You are so cold. I am so very unhappy!"

"What would you have me say?" asked Paul, his voice growing clearer and harder with every word. "Will you answer me one question? Will you tell me whether you have learned to care so much for another man that your liking for him makes you doubt?"

"I am afraid" — She stopped, then suddenly exclaimed, "How can you ask me such a question?"

"What are you afraid of?" inquired Paul, in the same hard tone. "You always tell the truth. You will tell it now. Has any other man come between you and me?"

It was of no use for her to hesitate. She could command Alexander and give him any answer she chose, but Paul's strong nature completely dominated her. She bent her head in assent, and the "Yes" she spoke was almost inaudible.

"And you ask time to choose between us?" asked Paul, icily. "Yes, I understand. You shall have the time, — as long as you please to remain in Constantinople. I am much obliged to you for being so frank. May I give you my arm to go into the next room?"

"How unkind you are!" said Hermione, making an effort to rise. But her strength failed her, and she fell back into her seat. "Excuse me," she faltered. "Please wait one moment, — I am not well."

Paul looked at her, and hesitated.

But her weakness touched him, and he spoke more gently as he turned to her.

"May I get you a glass of water, or anything?"

"Thanks, nothing. It will be over in a moment, — only a little dizziness."

For a few seconds they remained seated in silence. Then Hermione turned her head, and looked at her cousin's white face. Her small gloved hand stole out from under her domino, and rested on his arm. He took no notice of the action; he did not even look at her.

"Paul," she said, very gently, "you will thank me some day for having waited."

A contemptuous answer rose to his lips, but he was ashamed of it before it was spoken, and merely raised his eyebrows, as he answered in perfectly monotonous tones.

"I believe you have done what you think best."

"Indeed I have," replied Hermione, rising to her feet.

He offered her his arm, and they went out together. But when supper-time came, and with it the hour for unmasking, Hermione was not to be seen; and Alexander, who had counted upon her half-given assent to dance the cotillon with him, leaned disconsolately against a door, wondering whether it could be worth while to sacrifice himself by engaging any one in her place.

But Paul did not go home. He was too angry to be alone, and above all too deeply wounded. Besides, his position required that he should stay at least until supper was over, and it was almost a relief to move about among the gorgeous costumes of all kinds which now issued from the black, white, and red dominos, as a moth from the chrysalis. He spoke to many people, saying the same thing to each, with the same mechanical smile, as men do when they are obliged day after day to accomplish a certain social task. But the effort was

agreeable, and took off the first keen edge of his wrath.

He had no need to ask the name of the man who had come between him and the woman he loved. For weeks he had watched his brother and Hermione, asking himself if their intimacy meant anything, and then driving away the tormenting question, as though it contained something of disloyalty to her. Now he remembered that for weeks this thing she had spoken must have been in her mind, since she had always entreated him to wait a little longer before speaking with her father. It had appeared such an easy matter to her to wait; it was such a hard matter for him, — harder than death it seemed now. For it was all over. He believed that she had spoken her last word that night, and that in speaking of waiting still longer she had only intended to make it less troublesome to break it off. She had admitted that another man had come between them. Was anything further needed? It followed, of course, that she loved this other man — Alexander — better than himself. For the present he could see only one side of the question, and he repeated to himself that all was over, saying it again and again in his heart, as he went the rounds of the room, asking each acquaintance he met concerning his or her plans for the summer, commenting on the weather, and praising the successful arrangement of the masked ball.

But Paul was ignorant of two things, in his present frame of mind. He did not know that Hermione had been perfectly sincere in what she had said, and he did not calculate upon his own nature. It was a simple matter, in the impulse of the first moment, to say that all was at an end, that he gave her up, even as she had rejected him, with a sort of savage pleasure in the coldness of the words he spoke. He could not imagine, after this interview, that he could ever think of her again as his possible

wife, and if the idea had presented itself he would have cast it behind him as a piece of unpardonable weakness. All his former cynical determination to trust only in what he could do himself, for the satisfaction of his ambition, returned with renewed strength; and as he shook hands with the people he met, he felt that he would never again ask man or woman for anything which he could not take by force. He did not know that in at least one respect his nature had changed, and that the love he had lavished on Hermione was a deep-rooted passion, which had grown and strengthened and spread in his hard character, as the sculptor adapts the heavy iron framework in the body and limbs of a great clay statue. In the first sudden revulsion of his feeling, he thought he could pluck away his love and leave it behind him like an old garment, and the general contempt with which he regarded his surroundings after he left Hermione reminded him almost reassuringly of his old self. If his old self still lived, he could live his old life as before, without Hermione, and, above all, without love. There was a bitter comfort in the thought that once more he was to look at all things, at success in everything, at his career, his aims, both great and small, surrounded by obstacles which could be overcome only by main force, as prizes to be wrested from his fellows by his own unaided exertions.

He had forgotten that Hermione had been the chiefest aim of his existence for several months, and at the same time he did not realize that he loved her in such a way as to make it almost impossible for him to live without her. It was not in accordance with his character to relinquish without a struggle, and a very desperate struggle, that for which he had labored so long, and an outsider would have prophesied that whosoever would take from Paul Patoff the woman he loved would find that he had attempted a dangerous thing. Mere senseless

anger does not often last long, and before an hour had passed Paul began to feel those suspicious little thrusts of pain in the breast and midriff which warn us that we miss some one we love. For a long time he tried to persuade himself that he was deceived, because he did not believe himself capable of such weakness. But the feeling was unmistakable.

The dancing was at its height, for all those who did not mean to stay until the end of the cotillon had gone home, so that the more distant rooms were already deserted. Almost unconsciously Paul strayed to the spot where he had sat with Hermione. He looked towards the sofa where they had been seated, and he saw a strange sight.

Alexander Patoff was there, half sitting, half lying, on the small sofa, unaware of his brother's presence. His face was turned away, and he was passionately kissing the cushions, — the very spot against which Hermione's head had rested. Paul stared stupidly at him for a moment, as though not comprehending the action, which indeed was wild and incomprehensible enough; then he seemed to understand, and strode forward in bitter anger. His brother, he thought, had seen them there together, had been told what had passed, and had chosen this passionate way of expressing his joy and his gratitude to Hermione. Alexander heard his brother's footsteps, and, starting, looked wildly round; then recognizing Paul, he sprang to his feet, and a faint color mounted to his pale cheeks.

"Fool!" cried Paul, bitterly, as he came forward. But Alexander had already recovered himself, and faced him coolly enough.

"What is the matter? What do you mean?" he asked, contemptuously.

"You know very well what I mean," retorted his brother, fiercely. "You know very well why you are making a fool of yourself, — kissing a heap of cushions, like a silly schoolboy in love."

"My dear fellow, you are certainly quite mad. I waltzed too long just now, and was dizzy. I was trying to get over it, that was all. My nerves are not so sound in dancing as they were before I was caught in that trap. Really, you have the most extraordinary ideas."

Paul was confused by the smooth lie. He did not believe his brother, but he could not find a ready answer.

"You do not know who sat there a little while ago?" he asked, sternly.

"Not the remotest idea," replied Alexander. "Was it that adorable red mask, who would not leave Balsamides even for a moment? Bah! You must think me very foolish. Come along and have some supper before we go home. I have no partner, and have had nothing to eat and very little to drink."

Paul was obliged to be content with the answer, but he understood his brother well enough to know that if there had been nothing to conceal Alexander would have been furious at the way in which he was addressed. His conviction remained unchanged that his brother had known what passed, and was so overcome with joy that he had kissed the sofa whereon Hermione had sat. The two men left the room together, but Paul presently slipped away, and went home.

Strange to say, what he had seen did not have the effect of renewing his resentment against Hermione so much as of exciting his anger against his brother. He now felt for the first time that though he might give her up to another, he could not give her up to Alexander. The feeling was perhaps only an excuse suggested by the real love for her which filled him, but it was strongly mixed with pride, and with the old hostility which, during so many years, had divided the two brothers.

To give her up, and to his own brother, — the thing was impossible, not to be thought of for a moment. As he walked quickly home over the rough

stones of the Grande Rue, he realized all that it meant, and stopped short, staring at the dusky houses. He was not a man of dramatic instincts. He did not strike his forehead, nor stamp his foot, nor formulate in words the resolution he made out there in the dark street. He merely thrust his hands deeper into the pockets of his overcoat, and walked on; but he knew from that moment that he would fight for Hermione, and that his mood of an hour ago had been but the passing effect of a sudden anger. He regretted his hard speech and bitter looks, and he wished that he had merely assented to her proposal to wait, and had said no more about it until the next day. Hermione might talk of not marrying him, but he would marry her in spite of all objections, and especially in spite of Alexander.

Had she spoken thoughtlessly? In the light of his stronger emotion it seemed so to him, and it was long before he realized that she had suffered almost as much in making this sacrifice to her honesty as he had suffered himself. But she had indeed been in earnest, and had done courageously a very hard thing. She was conscious that she had made a great mistake, and she wanted to avert the consequences of it, if there were to be any consequences, before it was too late. She had allowed Alexander to become too fond of her, as their interview that evening had shown; and though she knew that she did not love him, she knew also that she felt a growing sympathy for him, which was in some measure a wrong to Paul. This sympathy had increased until it began to frighten her, and she asked herself where it would end, while she yet felt that she had no right to inflict pain on Alexander by suddenly forcing him to change his tone. Her mind was very much confused, and as she could not imagine that a real and undivided love admitted of any confusion, she had simply asked Paul to wait,

in perfect good faith, meaning that she needed time to decide and to settle the matter in her own conscience. He had pressed her with questions, and had finally extorted the confession that another man had come between them. She had not meant to say that, but she was too honest to deny the charge. Paul had instantly taken it for granted that she already loved this other man better than himself, and had treated her as though everything were over between them.

The poor girl was in great trouble, when she went home that night. Although nothing had been openly discussed, she knew that her engagement to Paul was tacitly acknowledged. She asked herself how he would treat her when they met; whether they should meet at all, indeed, for she feared that he would refuse to come to the house altogether. She wondered what questions her father would put to her, and how Madame Patoff would take the matter. More than all, she hesitated in deciding whether she had done well in speaking as she had spoken, seeing what the first results had been.

She shut herself in her room, and just as she was, in the beautiful Eastern dress which she was to have shown at the ball when the masking was over, she sat down upon a chair in the corner, and leaned her tired head against the wall. But for the disastrous ending of the evening, she would doubtless have sat before her glass, and looked with innocent satisfaction at her own beautiful face. But the dark corner suited her better, in her present mood. Her cheek rested against the wall, and very soon the silent tears welled over and trickled down, staining the green wall paper of the hotel bedroom, as they slowly reached the floor and soaked into the dusty carpet. She was very miserable and very tired, poor child, and perhaps she would have fallen asleep at last, just as she sat, had she not been roused by sounds

which reached her from the next room, and which finally attracted her attention. Madame Patoff slept there, or should have been sleeping at that hour, for she was evidently awake. She seemed to be walking up and down, up and down eternally, between the window and the door. As she walked, she spoke aloud from time to time. At first she always spoke just as she was moving away from the door, and consequently, when her back was turned towards the place where Hermione sat on the other side of the wall, her words were lost, and only incoherent sounds reached the young girl's ears. Presently, however, she stopped just behind the door, and her voice came clear and distinct through the thin wooden panel:—

"I wish he were dead. I wish he were dead. Oh, I wish I could kill him myself!" Then the voice ceased, and the sound of the footsteps began again, pacing up and down.

Hermione started, and sat upright in her chair, while the tears dried slowly on her cheeks. The habit of considering her aunt to be insane was not wholly lost, and it was natural that she should listen to such unwonted sounds. For some time she could hear the voice at intervals, but the words were indistinct and confused. Her aunt was probably very ill, or under the influence of some hallucination which kept her awake. Hermione crept stealthily near the door, and listened intently. Madame Patoff continued to walk regularly up and down. At last she heard clear words again:—

"I wish I could kill him; then Alexis could marry her. Alexis ought to marry her, but he never will. Cannot Paul die!"

Hermione shrank from the door in horror. She was frightened and shaken, and after the events of the evening her aunt's soliloquies produced a much greater effect upon her than would have been possible six hours earlier. Her first im-

pulse was not to listen more, and she hastily began to undress, making a noise with the chairs, and walking as heavily as she could. Then she listened a moment, and all was still in the next room. Her aunt had probably heard her, and had feared lest she herself should be overheard. Hermione crept into bed, and closed her eyes. At the end of a few minutes the steps began again, and after some time the indistinct sounds of Madame Patoff's voice reached the young girl's ears. She seemed to speak in lower tones than before, however, for the words she spoke could not be distinguished. But Hermione strained her attention to the utmost, while telling herself that it was better she should not hear. The nervous anxiety to know whether Madame Patoff were still repeating the same phrases made her heart beat fast, and she lay there in the dark, her eyes wide open, her little hands tightening on the sheet, praying that the sounds might cease altogether, or that she might understand their import. Her pulse beat audibly for a few seconds, then seemed to stop altogether in sudden fear, while her forehead grew damp with terror. She thought that any supernatural visitation would have been less fearful than this reality, and she strove to collect her senses and to compose herself to rest.

At last she could bear it no longer. She got up, and groped her way to the door of her aunt's room, not meaning to enter, but unable to withstand the desire to hear the words of which the incoherent murmur alone came to her in her bed. She reached the door, but in feeling for it her outstretched hand tapped sharply upon the panel. Instantly the footsteps ceased. She knew that Madame Patoff had heard her, and that the best thing she could do was to ask admittance.

"May I come in, aunt Annie?" she inquired, in trembling tones.

"Come in," was the answer; but the

voice was almost as uncertain as her own.

She opened the door. By the light of the single candle — an English reading-light with a reflecting hood — she saw her aunt's figure standing out in strong relief against the dark background of shadow. Madame Patoff's thick gray hair was streaming down her back and over her shoulders, and she held a hairbrush in her hand, as though the fit of walking had come upon her while she was at her toilet. Her white dressing-gown hung in straight folds to the ground, and her dark eyes stared curiously at the young girl. Hermione was more startled than before, for there was something unearthly about the apparition.

"Are you ill, aunt Annie?" she asked timidly, but she was awed by the glare in the old lady's eyes. She glanced round the room. The bed was in the shadow, and the bed-clothes were rolled together, so that they took the shape of a human figure. Hermione shuddered, and for a moment thought her aunt must be dead, and that she was looking at her ghost. The girl's nerves were already so overstrained that the horrible idea terrified her; the more, as several seconds elapsed before Madame Patoff answered the question.

"No, I am not ill," she said slowly. "What made you ask?"

"I heard you walking up and down," explained Hermione. "It is very late; you generally go to sleep so early" —

"I? I never sleep," answered the old lady, in a tone of profound conviction, keeping her eyes fixed upon her niece's face.

"I cannot sleep, either, to-night," said Hermione, uneasily. She sat down upon a chair, and shivered slightly. Madame Patoff remained standing, the hairbrush still in her hand.

"Why should you not sleep? Why should you? What difference does it make? One is just as well without it,

and one can think all night,—one can think of things one would like to do.”

“Yes,” answered the young girl, growing more and more nervous. “You must have been thinking aloud, aunt Annie. I thought I heard your voice.”

Madame Patoff moved suddenly, and bent forward, bringing her face close to her niece’s, so that the latter was startled, and drew back in her chair.

“Did you hear what I said?” asked the old lady, almost fiercely, in low tones.

Sometimes a very slight thing is enough to turn the balance of our beliefs, especially when all our feelings are wrought to the highest pitch of excitement. In a moment the conviction seized Hermione that her aunt was mad,—not mad as she had once pretended to be, but really and dangerously insane.

“I did not understand what you said,” answered the young girl, too frightened to own the truth, as she saw the angry eyes glaring into her face. It seemed impossible that this should be the quiet, sweet-tempered woman whom she was accustomed to talk with every day. She certainly did the wisest thing, for her aunt’s face instantly relaxed, and she drew herself up again and turned away.

“Go to bed, child,” she said, presently. “I dare say I frightened you. I sometimes frighten myself. Go to bed and sleep. I will not make any more noise to-night.”

There was something in the quick change, from apparent anger to apparent gentleness, which confirmed the idea that Madame Patoff’s brain was seriously disturbed. Hermione rose, and quietly left the room. She locked her door, and went to bed, hoping that she might sleep and find some rest; for she was worn out with excitement, and shaken by a sort of nervous fear.

Sleep came at last, troubled by dreams and restless, but it was sleep, nevertheless. Several times she started up awake, thinking that she again heard

her aunt’s low voice and the regular fall of her footsteps in the next room. But all was still, and her weary head sank back on the pillow in the dark, her eyelids closed again in sheer weariness, and once more her dreams wove fantastic scenes of happiness, ending always in despair, with the suddenness of revulsion which makes the visions of the night ten times more agonizing while they last than the worst of our real troubles.

But the morning brought a calmer reflection, and when Hermione was awake she began to think of what had passed. The horror inspired by her aunt’s words and looks faded before the greater anxiety of the girl’s position with regard to Paul. She tried to go over the interview in her mind. Her conscience told her that she had done right, but her heart said that she had done wrong, and its beating hurt her. Then came the difficult task of reconciling those two opposing voices, which are never so contradictory as when the heart and the conscience fall out, and argue their cause before the bewildered court of justice we call our intelligence. First she remembered all the many reasons she had found for speaking plainly to Paul on the previous night. She had said to herself that she did not feel sure of her love, allowing tacitly that she expected to feel sure of it before long. But until the matter was settled she could not let him hurry the marriage nor take any decisive step. If he had only been willing to wait another month, he might have been spared all the suffering she had seen in his face; she herself could have escaped it, too. But he had insisted, and she had tried to do right in telling him that she was not ready. Then he had been angry and hurt, and had coldly told her that she might wait forever, or something very like it, and she had felt that the deed was done. It was dreadful; yet how could she tell him that she was ready? Half an hour earlier, on that very spot, she had suf-

ferred Alexander to speak as he had spoken, only laughing kindly at his expressions of love; not rebuking him and leaving him, as she should have done, and would have done, had she loved Paul with her whole heart.

And yet this morning, as she lay awake and thought it all over, something within her spoke very differently, like an incoherent cry, telling her that she loved him in spite of all. She tried to listen to what it said, and then the answer came quickly enough, and told her that she had been unkind, that she had given needless pain, that she had broken a man's life for an over-conscientious scruple which had no real foundation. But then her conscience returned to the charge, refuting the slighting accusation, so that the confusion was renewed, and became worse than before. For the sake of discovering something in support of her action, she began to think about Alexander; and finding that she remembered very accurately what they had said to each other, her thoughts dwelt upon him. It was pleasant to think of his beautiful face, his soft voice, and his marvelous dancing. It was a fascination from which she could not easily escape, even when he was absent; and there was a charm in the memory of him, in thinking of how she would turn him from being a lover to being a friend, which drew her mind away from the main question that occupied it, and gave her a momentary sensation of peace.

Suddenly the two men came vividly before her in profile, side by side. The bold, manly features and cold glance of the strong man contrasted very strangely with the exquisitely chiseled lines of his brother's face, with the soft brown eyes veiled under long lashes, and the indescribable delicacy of the feminine mouth. Paul wore the stern expression of a man superior to events and very careless of them. Alexander smiled, as though he loved his life, and would let

no moment of it pass without enjoying it to the full.

It was but the vision of an instant, as she closed her eyes, and opened them again to the faint light which came in through the blinds. But Hermione felt that she must choose between the two men, and it was perhaps the first time she had quite realized the fact. Hitherto Alexander had appeared to her only as a man who disturbed her previous determinations. If she had hesitated to marry Paul while the disturbance lasted, it was not because she had ever thought of taking his brother instead. Now it seemed clear that she must accept either the one or the other, for the comparison of the two had asserted itself in her mind. In that moment she felt that she was worse than she had ever been before; for the fact that she compared the two men as possible husbands showed her that she set no value on the promises she had made to Paul.

To choose, — but how to choose? Had she a right to choose at all? If she refused to marry Paul, was she not bound to refuse any one else, — morally bound in honor? The questions came fast, and would not be answered. Just then her aunt moved in the next room, and the thought of her possible insanity returned instantly to Hermione's mind. She determined that it was best to speak to her father about it. He was the person who ought to know immediately, and he should decide whether anything should be done. She made up her mind to go to him at once, and she rang for her maid.

But before she was dressed she had half decided to act differently, to wait at least a day or two, and see whether Madame Patoff would talk to herself again during the night. To tell her father would certainly be to give an alarm, and would perhaps involve the necessity of putting her aunt once more under the care of a nurse. John Carvel

could not know, as Hermione knew, that the old lady's resentment against Paul was caused by her niece's preference for him, and it would not be easy for the young girl to explain this. But Hermione wished that she might speak to Paul himself, and warn him of what his mother had said. She sighed as she thought how impossible that would be. Nevertheless, in the morning light and in the presence of her maid, while her gold-brown hair was being smoothed and twisted, and the noises from the street told her that all the world was awake, the horror of the night disappeared, and Hermione almost doubted whether her aunt had really spoken those words at all. If she had, it had been but the angry outbreak of a moment, and should not be taken too seriously.

XXI.

It was probably curiosity that induced Professor Cutter to pay a visit to Constantinople in the spring. He is a scientist, and curiosity is the basis of all science, past, present, and future. His mind was not at rest in regard to Madame Patoff, and he found it very hard to persuade himself that she should suddenly have become perfectly sane, after having made him believe during eighteen months that she was quite mad. After her recovery he had had long interviews with Mrs. North, and had done his best to extract all the information she was able to give about the case. He had studied the matter very carefully, and had almost arrived at a satisfactory conclusion; but he felt that in order to remove all doubt he must see her again. He was deeply interested, and such a trifle as a journey to Constantinople could not stand in the way of his observations. Accordingly he wrote a post-card to John Carvel to say that he was coming, and on the following day he left England. But he likes to travel comfortably, and

especially he is very fond of finding out old acquaintances when he is abroad, and of having an hour's chat with scientific men like himself. He therefore did not arrive until a week after John had news of his intended journey.

For some reason unknown to me, Carvel did not speak beforehand of the professor's coming. It may be that, in the hurry of preparation for moving up the Bosphorus, he forgot the matter; or perhaps he thought it would be an agreeable surprise to most of us. I myself was certainly very much astonished when he came, but the person who showed the greatest delight at his arrival was Hermione. It is not hard to imagine why she was pleased, and when I knew all that I have already told I understood her satisfaction well enough. The professor appeared on the day before the Carvels were to transfer themselves to Buyukdere. His gold-rimmed spectacles were on his nose, his thick and short gray hair stood up perpendicularly on his head as of old, his beard was as bushy and his great hands were as huge and as spotless as ever. But after not having seen him for some months, I was more struck than ever by his massive build and the imposing strength of his manner.

Several days had elapsed since the events recorded in the last chapter. To Hermione's surprise, Paul had come to the hotel, as usual, on the day after the ball, and behaved as though nothing had happened, except that he had at first avoided finding himself alone with his cousin. She on her part was very silent, and even Alexander could not rouse her to talk as she used to do. When questioned, she said that the heat gave her a headache; and as Chrysophrasia spent much time in languidly complaining of the weather, the excuse had a show of probability. But after a day or two she was reassured by Paul's manner, and no longer tried to keep out of his way. Then it was that they found themselves

together for the first time since the ball. It was only for a moment, but it was long enough.

Hermione took his passive hand in hers, very timidly, and looked into his face.

"You are not angry with me any more?" she said.

"No, not in the least," he answered. "I believe you did what you believed to be best, the other night. No one can do more than that."

"Yes, but you thought I was not in earnest."

"I thought you were more in earnest than you admitted. I thought you meant to break it off altogether. I have changed my mind."

"Have you? I am so glad. I meant just what I said, Paul. You should not have doubted that I meant it."

"I was angry. Forgive me if I was rude. I will not give you up. I will marry you in spite of everybody."

Hermione looked at him, curiously at first, then with a sort of admiration which she could not explain, — the admiration we all feel for a strong man who is very much in earnest.

"In spite of myself?" she asked, after a pause.

"Yes, almost," he began hotly, but his tone softened as he finished the sentence, — "almost in spite of yourself, Hermione."

"Indeed, I begin to think that you will," she answered, turning away her head to hide a smile that had in it more of happiness than of unbelief. Some one entered the room where they were standing, and nothing more was said; nor did Paul repeat his words at the next opportunity, for he was not much given to repetition. When he had said a thing, he meant it, and he was in no hurry to say it again.

Meanwhile, also, the young girl had more than once listened, during the night, for any sounds which might proceed from Madame Patoff's bedroom;

but she had heard nothing more, and the impression gradually faded from her mind, or was stored away there as a fact to be remembered at some future time. When Professor Cutter arrived, she determined to tell him in strictest confidence what had occurred. This, however, was not what gave her so much satisfaction in meeting him. She had long looked forward to the day when she could enjoy the triumph of seeing him meet Alexander Patoff, alive and well; for she knew how strongly his suspicions had fastened upon Paul, and it was he who had first told her what the common story was.

The professor arrived in the early morning by the Brindisi boat, and Hermione proposed that Chrysophrasia, Paul, Cutter, and herself should make a party to go over to Stamboul on the same afternoon. It was warm, indeed, but she represented that as the whole family were to move up the Bosphorus on the following day, it would be long before they would have a chance of going to Stamboul again. Chrysophrasia moaned a little, but at last accepted the proposition, and Paul and the professor expressed themselves delighted with the idea.

The four set off together, descended by the Galata tunnel, and crossed the bridge on foot. Then they took a carriage, and drove to Santa Sophia. There was little chance for conversation, as they rattled over the stones towards the mosque. Chrysophrasia leaned wearily back in her corner. Paul and Hermione tried to talk, and failed, and Professor Cutter promenaded his regards, to borrow an appropriate French expression, upon the buildings, the people, and the view. Perhaps he was wondering whether more cases of insanity presented themselves amongst the vegetable sellers as a class than amongst the public scribes, whose booths swarm before the Turkish post-office. He had seen the city before, but only during a

very short visit, as a mere tourist, and he was glad to see it again.

They reached the mosque, and after skating about in the felt overshoes provided for the use of unbelievers, Cutter suggested going up to the galleries.

"It is so very, very far!" murmured Chrysophrasia, who was watching a solitary young Sufi, who sat reciting his lesson aloud to himself in a corner, swaying his body backwards and forwards with the measure of his chant.

"I will go," said Hermione, with alacrity. "Paul can stay with my aunt."

"I would rather stay," answered Paul, whose reminiscences of the gallery were not of the most pleasant sort.

So Professor Cutter and the young girl left the mosque, and with the guide ascended the dim staircase.

"Papa wrote you the story, did he not?" asked Hermione. "Yes. This is the way they went up."

The professor looked about him curiously, as they followed the guide. Emerging amidst the broad arches of the gallery, they walked forward, and Hermione explained, as Paul had explained to her, what had taken place on that memorable night two years ago. It was a simple matter, and the position of the columns made the story very clear.

"Professor Cutter, I want to speak to you about my aunt," said Hermione, at last. The professor stopped, and looked sharply at her, but said nothing. "Do you remember that morning in the conservatory?" she continued. "You told me that she was very mad indeed, — those were your own words. I did not believe it, and I was triumphant when she came out — in — well, quite in her senses, you know. I thought she had recovered, — I hope she has. But she has very queer ways."

"What do you mean by queer ways, Miss Carvel? I have come to Constantinople on purpose to see her. I hope there is nothing wrong?"

"I do not know. But I have told nobody what I am going to tell you. I think you ought to be told. My room is next to hers, at the hotel, and I hear through the door what goes on, without meaning to. The other night I came home late from a ball, and she was walking up and down, talking to herself so loud that I heard several sentences."

"What did she say?" asked Cutter, whose interest was already aroused. The symptom was only too familiar to him.

"She said" — Hermione hesitated before she continued, and the color rose faintly in her cheeks. "She said she wished she could kill Paul — and then" —

"And then what?" inquired the professor, looking at her steadily. "Please tell me all."

"It was very foolish, — she said that then Alexander could marry me. It was so silly of her. Just think!"

After all, Professor Cutter was her father's old friend. She need not have been so long about telling the thing.

"She thinks that you are going to marry Paul?" observed the professor, with an interrogative intonation.

"Well, if I did?" replied the young girl, after a short pause. "If she were in her right mind, would that be any reason for her wishing to murder him?"

"No. But I never believed she was out of danger," said Cutter. "Did she say anything more?"

Hermione told how Madame Patoff had behaved when she had entered the room. Her companion looked very grave, and said little during the few moments they remained in the gallery. He only promised that he would tell no one about it, unless it appeared absolutely necessary for the safety of every one concerned. Then they descended the steps again, and joined Chrysophrasia and Paul, who were waiting below.

"Aunt Chrysophrasia says she must go to the bazaar," said the latter.

"Yes," remarked Miss Dabstreak, "I

really must. That Jew! Oh, that Jew! He haunts my dreams. I see him at night, dressed like Moses, with a linen ephod, you know, holding up that Persian embroidery. It is more than my soul can bear!"

"But we were going to take Professor Cutter to the other mosques," objected Hermione.

"I am sure he will not mind if we go to the bazaar instead, will you?" she asked, with an engaging squint of her green eyes, as she turned to the professor.

"Not at all, — not at all, Miss Dabstreak. Anything you propose — I am sure" — ejaculated Cutter, apparently waking from an absorbing meditation upon his thumb-nail, and perhaps upon thumb-nails in general.

"You see how kind he is!" murmured Chrysophrasia, as she got into the carriage. "To the bazaar, Paul. Could you tell the driver?"

Paul could and did. Ten minutes later the carriage stopped at the gate of the bazaar. A dozen Mohammedans, Greeks, and Jews sprang out to conduct the visitors whither they would, — or, more probably, whither they would not. But Paul, who knew his way about very well, fought them off. One only would not be repulsed, and Chrysophrasia took his part.

"Let him come, — pray let him come, Paul. He has such beautiful eyes, such soft, languishing eyes, — so sweetly like those of a gazelle."

"His name is Abraham," said Paul. "I know him very well. The gazelle is of Jewish extraction, and sells shawls. He is a liar."

"Hair, Effendim — sir" — cried Abraham, who knew a little English. "Him Israeleet — hones' Jew — Abraham's name, Effendim."

"I know it is," said Paul. "Git!" — an expression which is good Californian, and equally good Turkish.

They threaded the narrow vaulted

passages, which were cool in the warm spring afternoon, taking the direction of the Jews' quarter, but pausing from time to time to survey the thousand articles, of every description, exposed for sale by the squatting shopkeepers. Cutter looked at the weapons especially, and remarked that they were not so good as those which used to be found ten years earlier. Everything, indeed, seemed to have changed since that time, and for the worse. There is less wealth in the bazaar, and yet the desire to purchase has increased tenfold, so that a bit of Rhodes tapestry, which at that earlier time would not have fetched forty piastres, is now sold for a pound Turkish, and is hard to get at that. It may be supposed that the Jews have made large fortunes in the interval, but the fact is not apparent in any way; the uncertainty of property in Turkey forcing them to conceal their riches, if they have any. Their shops are very fairly clean, but otherwise they are humble, and the best and most valuable objects are generally packed carefully away in dark corners, and are produced only when asked for. You see nothing but a small divan, a table, a matted floor, and shelves reaching to the ceiling, piled with packages wrapped in shabby gray linen. It is chiefly in the Mohammedan and Greek "tscharshis" of the bazaar that jewelry, weapons, and pipes are openly exhibited, and laid out upon benches for the selection of the buyer. But the Jews have almost a monopoly of everything which comes under the head of antiquities, and it is with them that foreigners generally deal. They are as intelligent as elsewhere, and perhaps more so, for the traveler of to-day is a great cheapener of valuables. Moreover, the Stamboul Jews are most of them linguists. They speak a bastard Spanish among themselves; they are obliged to know Turkish, Greek, and a little Armenian, and many of them speak French and Italian intelligibly.

Chrysophrasia delighted in the bazaar. The flavor of antiquity which hangs about it, and makes it the only thoroughly Oriental place in Constantinople, ascended gratefully to the old maid's nostrils, while her nerves were continually thrilled by strange contrasts of color. It was very pleasant, she thought, to be really in the East, and to have such a palpable proof of the fact as was afforded by the jargon of loud but incomprehensible tongues which filled her ears. She had often been in the place, and the Jews were beginning to know her, scenting a bargain whenever her yellow face and yellow hair became visible on the horizon. She generally patronized Marchetto, however, and on the present occasion she had come expressly to see him. He was standing in the door of his little shop, as usual, and his red face and red-brown eyes lighted up when he caught sight of Miss Dabstreak. With many expressions of joy he backed into the interior, and immediately went in search of the famous piece of Persian embroidery which Chrysophrasia had admired during her last visit to the bazaar.

"Upon my honor" — began Marchetto, launching into praises of the stuff. Patoff and Hermione stood at the door, but Cutter immediately became interested in the bargain, and handled the embroideries with curiosity, asking all manner of questions of the Jew and of Miss Dabstreak. Somehow or other, the two younger members of the party soon found themselves outside the shop, walking slowly up and down and talking, until the bargain should be concluded.

"I could not go up to the gallery in Santa Sophia," said Paul. "I am not a nervous person, but it brings the story back too vividly."

"What does it matter, since he is found?" asked Hermione.

Patoff was struck by the question, for it was too much at variance with his own feelings to seem reasonable. It was not because he preferred to avoid all remi-

niscence of the adventure that he had stayed below, but rather because he hated to think what the consequences of Alexander's return had been.

"What does it matter?" he repeated slowly. "It matters a great deal. What happened on that night, two years ago, was the beginning of a whole series of misfortunes. I have had bad luck ever since."

"Why do you say that?" asked Hermione, somewhat reproachfully.

"It is true, — that is one reason why I say it. But for that night, my mother would never have been mad. I should never have been sent to Persia, and should not have gone to England during my leave. I should not have met you" —

"You consider that a terrible misfortune," observed Hermione.

"It is always a man's misfortune when he determines to have what is denied him," answered Paul quietly. "Somebody must suffer in the encounter, or somebody must yield."

"Somebody, — yes. Why do you talk about it, Paul?"

"Because I think of nothing else. I cannot help it. It is easy to say, 'Let this or that alone;' it is another matter to talk to you about the bazaar, and the Turks, and the weather, when we are together."

Hermione was silent, for there was nothing to be said. She knew how well he loved her, and when she was with him she submitted in a measure to his influence; so that often she was on the point of yielding, and telling him that she no longer hesitated. It was when she was away from him that she doubted herself, and refused to be persuaded. Paul needed only a very little to complete his conquest, but that little he could not command. He had reached the point at which a man talks of the woman he loves or of himself, and of nothing else, and the depth of his passion seemed to dull his speech. A little more eloquence,

a little more gentleness, a little more of that charm which Alexander possessed in such abundance, might have been enough to turn the scale. But they were lacking. The very intensity of what he felt made him for the time a man of one idea only, and even the freedom with which he could speak to Hermione about his love for her was a disadvantage to him. It had grown to be too plain a fact, and there was too little left to the imagination. He felt that he wearied her, or he fancied that he did, which amounted to the same; and he either remained tongue-tied, or repeated in one form or another his half-savage 'I will.' He began to long for a change in their relations, or for some opportunity of practically showing her how much he would sacrifice for her sake. But in these days there are no lists for the silent knights; there are no jousts where a man may express his declaration of love by tying a lady's colors to his arm, and breaking the bones of half a dozen gentlemen before her eyes. And yet the instinct to do something of the kind is sometimes felt even now, — the longing to win by physical prowess what it is at present the fashion to get by persuasion.

Paul felt it strongly enough, and was disgusted with his own stupidity. Of what use was it that during so many years he had cultivated the art of conversation as a necessary accomplishment, if at his utmost need his wits were to abandon him, and leave him uncouth and taciturn as he had been in his childhood? He looked at Hermione's downcast face; at the perfect figure displayed by her tightly fitting costume of gray; at her small hands, as she stood still, and tried to thrust the point of her dainty parasol into the crevice between two stones of the pavement. He gazed at her, and was seized with a very foolish desire to take her up in his arms and walk away with her, whether she liked it or not. But just at that moment Hermione

glanced at him with a smile, not at all as he had expected that she would look.

"I think we had better go back to the shop," said she. So they turned, and walked slowly towards the narrow door.

"These Orientals are so full of wonderful imagery!" Chrysophrasia was saying to Professor Cutter, as the pair came in. "It is delightful to hear them talk, — so different from an English shopkeeper."

"Very," assented the learned man. "Their imagery is certainly remarkable. Their scale of prices seems to be founded upon it, as logarithms depend for their existence on the square root of minus one, an impossible quantity."

"Dear me! Could you explain that to Marchetto? It might make a difference, you know."

"I am afraid not," answered the professor gravely. "Marchetto is not a mathematician, are you, Marchetto?"

"No surr, Effendim. Marchetto very honest man. Twenty-five pounds, lady — ah! but it is birindji — there is not a Pacha in Stamboul" —

"You have said that before," observed the scientist. "Try and say something new."

"New!" cried Marchetto. "It is not new. Any one say it new, he lie! Old — eski, eski! Very old! Twenty-five-six pounds, lady! Hein! Pacha give more."

"I fear that the traditions of his race are very strong," remarked Chrysophrasia, languidly examining the embroidery, a magnificent piece of work, about a yard and a half square, wrought in gold and silver threads upon a dark red velvet ground; evidently of considerable antiquity, but in excellent preservation. "Paul, dear," continued Miss Dabstreak, seeing Patoff enter with Hermione, "what would you give for this lovely thing? How hard it is to bargain! How low! How infinitely fatiguing! Do help me!"

"Begin by offering him a quarter of what he asks, — that is a safe rule," answered Paul.

"How much is a quarter of twenty-five — let me see — three times eight are — do tell me, somebody! Figures drive me quite mad."

"I have known of such cases," assented the professor. "Eight and a quarter, Miss Dabstreak. Say eight, — I dare say it will do as well."

"Marchetto," said Chrysophrasia sadly, "I am afraid your embroidery is only worth eight pounds."

The Jew was kneeling on the floor, squatting upon his heels. He put on an injured expression, and looked up at Miss Dabstreak's face.

"Eight pounds!" he exclaimed, in holy horror. "You know where this come from, lady? Ha! Laleli Khanum house — dead — no more like it." Marchetto of course knew the story of Alexander's confinement, and by a ready lie turned it to his advantage. Every one looked surprised, and began to examine the embroidery more closely.

"Really!" ejaculated Chrysophrasia. "How strange this little world is! To think of all this bit of brodered velvet has seen, — what joyous sights! It may have been in the very room where she died. But she was a wicked old woman, Marchetto. I could not give more than eight pounds for anything which belonged to so depraved a creature."

"Hein?" ejaculated the Jew, with a soft smile. "I know you want. Here!" he exclaimed, springing up, and rummaging among his shelves. Presently he brought out a shabby old green cloth caftán, trimmed with a little tarnished silver lace, and held it up triumphantly to Chrysophrasia's sight.

"Twenty-five-six pounds!" he cried, exultingly. "Cheap. Him coat of very big saint-man — die going to Mecca last year. Cheap, lady — twenty-five-six pounds!"

"I think you are fairly caught, aunt

Chrysophrasia," observed Paul, with a laugh.

"Who would have guessed that there was so much humor in an Israelite?" asked Chrysophrasia, with a sad intonation. "I cannot wear the saint's tea-gown, Marchetto," she continued; "otherwise I would gladly give you twenty-five pounds for it. Eight pounds for the embroidery, — no more. It is not worth so much. I even think I see a nauseous tint of magenta in the velvet."

"Twenty-four-five pounds, lady. I lose pound — your backsheesh."

How long the process of bargaining might have been protracted is uncertain. At that moment Balsamides Bey entered the shop. It appeared that he had called at the Carvels', and, being told that the party were in Stamboul, had gone straight to the Jew's shop, in the hope of finding them there. He was introduced to the professor by Paul, with a word of explanation. Marchetto's face fell as he saw the adjutant, who had a terribly acute knowledge of the value of things. Balsamides was asked to give his opinion. He examined the piece carefully.

"Where did you get it?" he asked, in Turkish.

"From the Valide Khan," answered the Jew, in the same language. "It is a genuine piece, — a hundred years old at least."

"You probably ask a pound for every year, and a backsheesh for the odd months," said the other.

"Twenty pounds," answered Marchetto, imperturbably.

"It is worth ten pounds," remarked Balsamides, in English, to Miss Dabstreak. "If you care to give that, you may buy it with a clear conscience. But he will take three weeks to think about it."

"To bargain for three weeks!" exclaimed Chrysophrasia. "Oh, no! It takes my whole energy to bargain for

half an hour. The lovely thing, — those faint, mysterious shades intertwined with the dull gold and silver, — it breaks my heart !”

Marchetto was obdurate on that day, at least, and with an unusually grave face he began to fold the embroidery, wrapping it at last in the inevitable piece of shabby gray linen. The party left the shop, and threaded the labyrinth of vaulted passages towards the gate. Cutter was interested in Gregorios, and asked him a great many questions, so that Chrysophrasia felt she was being neglected, and wore her most mournful expression. Paul and Hermione came behind, talking a little as they walked. They reached the bridge on foot, and, paying the toll to the big men in white who guard the entrance, began to cross the long stretch of planks which unites Stamboul with Pera. The sun was already low. Indeed, Marchetto had kept his shop open beyond the ordinary hour of closing, which is ten o'clock by Turkish time, two hours before sunset, and the bazaar was nearly deserted when they left it.

Paul and Hermione stopped when they were half-way across the bridge, and looked up the Golden Horn. Great clouds were piled up in the west, behind which the sun was hidden, and the air was very sultry. A dull light, that seemed to cast no shadows, was on all the mosques and minarets, and down upon the water the air was thick, and the boats looked indistinct as they glided by. The great useless men-of-war lay as though water-logged in the heavy, smooth stream, and the flags hung motionless from the mastheads.

The two stood side by side for a few moments, and said nothing. At last Paul spoke.

“It is going to rain,” he said, in an odd voice.

“Yes, it is going to rain,” answered his companion.

“On parà! Ten paras, for the love of God!” screamed a filthy beggar, close behind them. Paul threw the wretched creature the tiny coin he asked, and they turned away. But his face was very white, and Hermione’s eyes were filled with tears.

F. Marion Crawford.

REPROOF IN LOVE.

BECAUSE we are shut out from light,
Each of the other’s look and smile;
Because the arms’ and lips’ delight
Are past and dead, a weary while;

Because the dawn, that joy has brought,
Brings now but certainty of pain,
Nothing for you and me has bought
The right to live our lives in vain.

Take not away the only lure
That leads me on my lonely way,
To know you noble, sweet, and pure,
Great in least service, day by day.