

"Oh, sir, I neither wish nor need for a better stand-by. I can leave all in your care, with great contentment."

"And I swear you satisfaction. Faith! in these dull days of discontent it will be a great delight to me to turn things a little upside down, and as I owe you something for the pleasure, you shall have my Lady Levin's Iceland dog. I am advised that it is for sale."

Half an hour afterwards Anastasia heard her father ride away towards Kendal. She

was not afraid, she was not sorry, for the thing she had done. She went upstairs, washed, dressed, and perfumed herself, but in all her sweet coffers there was no wash or unguent for her restless soul. Reckless and contradictory, sick with a vague trouble which she would neither face nor acknowledge, she muttered defiantly:

"Well, I have set the ball rolling. Where it will go, and when it will stop, the devil only knows!"

(To be continued.)

*Amelia E. Barr.*

## THE CRUCIAL TEST.



T was down on the Altamaha. The Dugarres always spent the summers in their large, old-fashioned mansion, on their own plantation, coming out from Savannah in May and returning in November. It was a picturesque house, with its wide halls, its piazzas, and its white columns that a man's arms could not reach more than half around. It had withstood the changes of time, and war, and the passing away of several generations. It was a landmark of the old South, and though the row of cabins in the rear still had a few dusky occupants, they were farm-laborers, hired to work by the day.

The Dugarres were famous for their hospitality, and entertained guests from all parts of the Union. An unusually large party lounged on the shady piazza one hot, languid summer afternoon, representing Charleston, Atlanta, and even New York, not to speak of the fair Savannahians, and of Valentine Dugarre, all the way from Brazil. It was too warm for exertion, all quiet amusements had flagged, and even conversation had become a stupid effort, when Edward Dugarre brought out a dusty old *CENTURY* and read Stedman's poem "Hebe." It roused both the lazy and the meditative to lively comments, all agreeing in their condemnation of Florina's revenge, so summary and so terrible. Did I say all? There was one exception — Valentine Dugarre. But some of them looked upon *her* as half savage, because of her Brazilian birth, and her perfectly frank way of speaking out her thoughts and feelings. The Dugarres themselves were half afraid of her and rejoiced when she became engaged to Frank Black, a handsome young Savannahian of good family but of rather weak, unstable nature. She had been sent up to them to have an American finish put to her education and manners; but alien blood flamed in

her veins, and she had been worshiped and spoiled in her own home until she had become as imperious and exacting as princesses are supposed to be. She could do the rashest, most unheard-of things when enraged, or when in a generous mood — such, for instance, as taking a ring from her finger and giving it to a ragged beggar when he asked her for five cents. When scolded for it by her shocked aunt she impatiently exclaimed:

"Can't you see that he is starving? What real need have I for the thing? Let it go, if it can be the means of bringing him food and clothing. I do not care to be rich, to wear jewels, while others are perishing with hunger."

And that summer afternoon she sat among those people listening in silence to all their comments, and waiting until the last to have her say about the matter.

She was an imperial-looking girl, dark, but with a faint, delicate bloom on her cheeks, and the color of a rose on her lips. Her eyes were not black but golden-brown, and her hair had the texture of silk. Her very dress seemed to set her apart from the other women, who clothed themselves according to the decrees of fashion. It was fine woven yellow linen, its full loose folds girdled in about the waist with a broad band of silver, its sleeves open half way up, revealing beautiful rounded arms. She set at open defiance all forms and rules, and laughed contemptuously at the conventionalities of society.

"I quite approve of Florina's revenge," she said at last, "only I would have killed the woman also"; then she smiled with scornful contempt to see the blood forsaking Helen Lawrence's face. "Why do you turn pale, Miss Lawrence?" she asked, leaning towards her with a gleam of mockery in her eyes.

"I — because it is horrible to hear you talk so," said Miss Lawrence, quickly recovering herself, for she shrank, if Valentine did not, from a crossing of words, as it was known by

all in the house that the young Brazilian was jealous of her.

"Val. does not mean it," said Edward, soothingly.

"I do mean it. What right had she to come between them, to use all her smooth little ways and arts to make him faithless? Yes, by all means, Hebe should have feasted upon her first."

She glanced at her lover, but he was looking intently across the sunlit cotton-fields to the shining sweep of the river, apparently not in the least interested in the conversation. Then she looked around on the disapproving faces of the other women.

"You may all look shocked, but I am different from you only in the expression of my thoughts. There is an untamed savage in every heart, no matter how finely the owner of that heart may be civilized, how highly polished."

"There is also a spirit of divinity, Miss Dugarre," said Mark Livingston, the young Charleston lawyer, in his grave, calm voice.

"But in some unguarded moment, some crisis, the savage conquers all. It is easy to be good until one is deceived or thwarted."

"But what cause have you to talk like a disappointed, soured woman of the world, Valentine?" her cousin exclaimed, a little impatiently.

"Oh, none whatever, of course." But a note of bitterness thrilled her sweet voice, and her jealous eyes saw the glance Helen Lawrence exchanged with Frank Black. She bit her full under-lip, until the blood almost started.

"You believe, then, that the evil in human nature is stronger than the good," said Livingston.

"I do; for is it not true that many a lifetime of noble deeds has been wrecked in a moment of passion, the man stripped of his goodness, as of a garment, leaving the naked savage, fierce, revengeful?"

"But if there are such instances, so we can as easily recall others, where men and women in moments of supreme sorrow, or danger, have so far risen above all personal feeling as to be willing, nay eager, to help their worst enemies."

She turned to her lover. "What do you think, Frank?"

"That it is too warm for argument, and that Ed. might have selected less tragical reading for our amusement."

He laughed a little as he spoke, to give a jesting turn to his words, and, rising, walked away into the hall. Valentine's eyes flashed with anger, but in a moment she rose and followed him into the cool, duskily shadowed library.

"Dearest, did I disgust you with my savage talk?"

"I do not like such sentiments from you, Valentine. It does not sound womanly, and those people criticize you severely enough as it is."

Her eyes darkened again, her lips curled.

"What do I care for their good opinion!"

"It is well for us to care for everybody's good opinion."

"Miss Lawrence has taught you that great and noble truth, has she? You have grown very critical of my speech and manners yourself since she came among us. Frank, Frank! what is it coming between us?" she cried in sudden, piteous entreaty.

"Your jealous imagination, Valentine. A man does not like to be doubted, frowned upon, every time he speaks to, or looks at, another woman."

"Is that all? Tell me, on your honor."

"Yes," he said; but his eyes shifted under her eager gaze, and a slight flush rose to his face. But she was too anxious to believe him to heed such fine changes of expression.

"I *am* a miserable, jealous creature, all fire and wicked temper," she humbly acknowledged. "I have tormented you, I know; but unfortunately for me I love you with all my heart, instead of just a little bit of it, and it is a great strong heart, dearest, if it is wayward and untamed."

She leaned towards him with luminous eyes, her beauty softened, as sweet and gentle as that of any other woman. What man could resist her in such a mood? He raised her arms to his neck, and kissed her on lips and eyes.

"You love me, you do really love me?" she whispered.

"Love you! How can I help it, my princess?"

They had a little dance at Dugarre that night—a merry, informal party. A large number of young people came out from the neighboring town, the parlors were cleared, and Uncle 'Riah, the old white-haired fiddler, was called in to play for them. It was a moonless night, and to add a little to the picturesqueness of the fine old house and grounds the negroes built a great bonfire on the lawn. It threw its ruddy light afar under the trees, and a rain of glowing sparks fell here and there on the grass, and some even floated away on wreaths of pearly smoke over the roofs.

The ladies of the house were all in evening dress, but it was acknowledged that Valentine Dugarre and Helen Lawrence carried off the palm for beauty. Valentine appeared her loveliest and best. No suggestion of scorn or anger marred her face. Her dress of thin, creamy

silk was Greek-like in its flowing lines and its full draperies, and her throat and arms were bare. She wore no jewels, except her engagement ring, and a single diamond star in her hair. She was radiant, yet so sweet and gentle in all her ways, that those who thought they knew her best wondered what new whim possessed her. She even smiled approval when Black led Helen out on the floor and danced with her. If he had stopped at that!—but he asked her after the dance to walk on the piazza with him. She hesitated, cast a hurried glance about the room, saw Valentine in a distant corner talking to Livingston, and consented.

They walked the length of the long piazza, and then Black drew Helen into the deserted library. She took her hand from his arm, her usually pale face burning with color, her calm eyes agitated. It was enough to set his faithless heart aflame, to call forth treasonable words of love. Curiously enough it was on the very spot where a few hours before he had given Valentine such assurance of his love. The remembrance stung him to shame, but it could not silence his tongue. His love for Valentine had been an infatuation, but Helen held his heart. So he told himself, so he had been telling himself for a month, though he had never before confessed as much to Helen. Valentine was not the woman to make him happy, with her jealous, tempestuous moods and passionate temper.

"But you, you are an angel of sweetness and goodness," he said, kissing her hands, even the folds of her pale-blue silken sleeves.

Helen shivered a little as she listened to him, and cast uneasy glances about the room, for there was a good deal of cowardice in her nature, and she feared Valentine.

"What if she should hear you?" she said, trembling, yet leading him on with her soft eyes, her half-yielding manner.

"Why speak of her, think of her, now?" he exclaimed. "My bondage is not yet hopeless, and I—I cannot help not loving her."

"But you are engaged to her, and it is all wrong to talk so to me," she said, tears starting suddenly to her eyes. What she had deliberately begun as a flirtation had become as serious to her as to him. Her emotion nearly distracted him. Still rasher words trembled on his lips, when—

"Is this tableau for the benefit of the public, or only for your own amusement?" a voice inquired near them, causing them to start guiltily apart, for it was Valentine herself standing there, white as her dress, and with eyes that were terrible in their rage and anguish. "Mr. Black will be perfect in the art of love-making if he continues his present rôle. You

need not tremble, and look as if you'd like to run away, Miss Lawrence. There is no Hebe here to crunch your delicate bones, richly as you deserve such a fate, and willingly as I would give you to it."

"Blame me for it all, Valentine, not her," exclaimed Black, feeling like a craven between them.

"So you would protect and defend her. What a chivalrous gentleman; what a man of honor! Do you think I have been blind and deaf to the sighs and glances, to the thousand little arts she has used upon you—she, the example that has been held up to me by my aunt as worthy of imitation? Well, I congratulate her on the conquest she has made. Two months ago you were ready to grovel at my feet, and to-day—yes, only a few hours ago—you assured me that you were true, that you loved me; and I believed you." Her passion rose again to violence. "I would like to kill you both; yes, with my own hands!"

"Hush, for Heaven's sake!" exclaimed Black. "Do you want all those people in here?"

"Oh, no! It does n't, of course, make any difference if you break my heart, but it would be shocking for the world to know it. I will hush, and leave you to console and reassure Miss Lawrence; but do not expect me to break our engagement. You shall never be free until I die—never."

And then she left them, disappearing through the open window as swiftly and noiselessly as she had come upon them. Livingston met her on the piazza, and, without questioning his presence there, she allowed him to take her hand and lead her to a seat. He looked almost as pale as she, and far more agitated, and when she turned from him, covering her face with her hands, his self-possession deserted him entirely.

"Don't—don't cry, Valentine. He is not worth a tear, or one pang of that dear heart of yours."

"I know his worth; but that cannot alter my feelings now. I love him."

"And I—I love you, Valentine, even as you love him."

Valentine turned and looked at Livingston.

"Then I pity you," she said, simply, but with such pathos that he himself felt like dealing out summary punishment to Black. He did not attempt to plead his own cause then, knowing that it would be not only selfish but worse than useless. She had no thought for him or for anybody or anything but her own sorrow and bitterness. "I wonder if animals can have souls, because if they do I must have been a tigress."

She laughed tremulously, crushing up folds

of her gown in her hands. "I'd like to kill them, I would indeed," she exclaimed, her eyes burning through a veil of tears.

"You think so now because you are excited," Livingston said gently, as though speaking to an angry child.

"Excited! I think I must be mad."

"You could not do them any violence, Valentine, were it really in your power. I know your generous, noble nature better than that."

But she turned away again, with hidden face, jealous rage melting into anguish.

Nobody could ever tell just how it happened. The most reasonable theory was that it caught from some of those vagrant sparks flying up from the bonfire, but deep in the darkness and silence of that night, long after the household had all retired, a little tongue of fire shot up from the roof, growing larger and brighter until its light shone across the woods and fields beyond the river.

It was Valentine who, turning on her pillow to look from the window, saw the strange illumination, and, springing up, discovered its cause. One could hear the curl and crackle of the dry boards as the flames devoured them, feel the heat, smell the rolling volumes of smoke. Confusion reigned supreme as Valentine ran through the halls, waking the slumbering people. Nobody attempted to save anything, but all fled for their lives from the old house, which burned like so much tinder. The great trees surrounding it were shriveled in the heat, and falling flakes of fire set barns and stables ablaze. The low clouds caught the lurid reflection, the river shone like a mirror, while along the horizon the darkness was so intense, so thick and inky black, that it seemed as if all the night had been compressed into it.

The Dugarres wept to see the old house falling to ashes before their eyes—all but Valentine. Its walls held no loving associations, no precious memories for her; but the force, the awful destructive fury of the fire fascinated her.

And then, from group to group, ran a cry for Miss Lawrence. She could not be found. Had she been left, forgotten in the terror and confusion? Then indeed men and women looked at one another with blanched faces and eyes of horror.

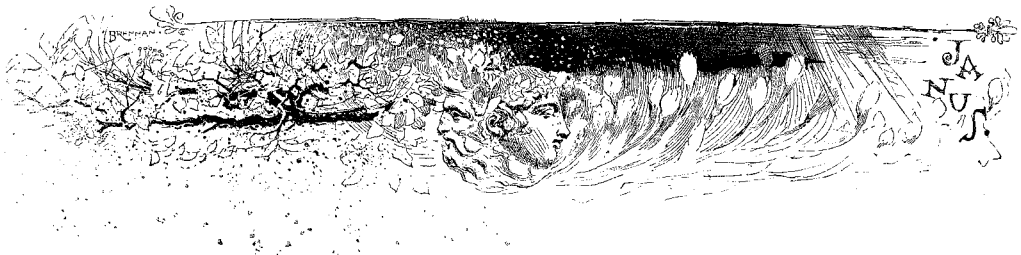
"It would be death to go in there now," said one man.

But, death or not, one had gone, running across the lawn, up the steps, and into the clouds of smoke filling the piazza and wreathing the great white columns—Valentine Dugarre. Black and Livingston would have followed her, but were forcibly restrained. It was enough, they were told, that two lives should be lost, without throwing their own away. But in a few moments a joyful shout drew all to the side of the house, where they saw Valentine at a second-story window, with Helen Lawrence half fainting at her side. She helped her through the window, and those below could hear her eager words of encouragement as Helen dropped safely down to the hands outstretched to receive her.

"Now, Valentine, quickly, dear," cried her cousin, sharply.

"Yes, for God's sake!" Livingston cried. But it was too late. A volume of flame seemed to burst up at her very feet, curling in the folds of her white gown and circling about her head. Out of that fiery nimbus her face shone for a moment, and then with a creaking of burning timbers and a great flare of light, the whole building fell in.

*Matt Crim.*



## LONGING.

ARIADNE! Ariadne!  
On the sunny lea I sought her,  
Traced her footsteps by the water,  
Followed them through grove and meadow,  
Calling in the forest shadow,  
"Ariadne! Ariadne!"

## LONGING.

Gray at even grew the air;  
 Red, behind the fire-edged mountains,  
 Dropped the tired sun; the fountains  
 Of the sea flowed dim, and weary  
 Fell the bird into its eerie  
 Nest to dream, and night was there.

While my soul lay wrapt in vision,—  
 I of Ariadne dreaming,—  
 All that is was lost in seeming,  
 All that seemed was more than real,  
 With the joy that dreams may feel,  
 With an ecstasy Elysian.

But the morrow came and found me  
 Restless, searching for the dream,  
 Lost, as are the things that seem,—  
 When a sudden turning showed  
 Naiads, where a runlet flowed,  
 Grouped in loveliness around me.

Startled into sudden hoping,  
 Thinking Ariadne nearer,—  
 She than all the great world dearer,—  
 Quickly did I scan each face,  
 But in none her own could trace:  
 And my spirit sank, a-moping.

Glad because my joy was brief,  
 Happy that my hope seemed dead,  
 Then they closer drew them to me,  
 With their arms to bind and woo me,  
 Smiled upon me, captive led.  
 But my soul turned faint with longing,  
 For, though beauty rare is thronging,  
 Love, *unloving*, still must see  
 Only happiness in grief.

So they ceased, with arms outlaid;  
 Songs of banter rudely singing,  
 Laughter from their lips came swinging,—  
 And before me, silent, white,  
 Stood the hope of my delight,  
 Ariadne, goddess-maid.

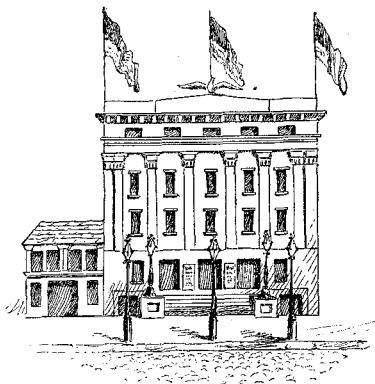
As I clasped her with a bliss  
 That with keenness stung my heart.  
 "Nevermore," I cried, "to part,  
 Mystic maiden! Bride of Light!"  
 Scarce had fed my starvèd sight,  
 Scarce I held her, when I felt  
 All her clinging softness melt,  
 Part from me as day from night,  
 Leave me, empty, wond'ring there.  
 And the unimpressed air  
 Mocking, wafted back my kiss.

Ariadne! Ariadne!

*Louise Morgan Sill.*



## THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF JOSEPH JEFFERSON.<sup>1</sup>



OLD CHATHAM STREET (NATIONAL) THEATER, NEW YORK.

FROM STOCK TO STAR.

**T**HERE is nothing a young actor enjoys more than itinerant theatricals. It is so grand to break loose from a big tyrant manager in the city and become a small tyrant manager in the country.

I was one of those juvenile theatrical anarchists who, after having stirred up a rebellion in the greenroom, would shout to my comrades, "Let's all be equal, and I'll be king!" I had annual attacks of this revolutionary fever, and having saved up all my salary during the regular winter season would lose it patriotically in the summer. It was on the eve of one of these excursions that I received my first telegram. It came in the form of a despatch from my partner, who was in Baltimore, I being in Cumberland. I could not believe it, but there it was; a reply to my letter of the day previous, which he could have received only an hour before the message was delivered to me. I called at the office to inquire if it were really so: yes, there could be no doubt about it. A small group of people had collected about the operator, some having received messages of congratulations at the establishment of the line, others sending them away to the same effect, and all wearing a look of surprise and incredulity. We began showing one another our despatches, and, looking with respectful awe at the mysterious little machine that was ticking away as if worked by some invisible spirit of the other world, wondered what they would do next. The whole town

was up in arms about it. People were running to and fro with little messages in their hands, and stopping one another in the street to talk and wonder over the new event. If I were now to receive a message from the planet Mars offering me a star engagement, I could not be more astonished than I was on that day.

It is said that the man who invented spectacles was imprisoned for daring to improve on the eyesight that God had given us; and that these comforts of old age were called the "Devil's eyes." So, in the height of this telegraphic novelty, did many wise old Solons shake their solemn heads, declaring that the wrath of God would fall on those who dared to take a liberty with lightning. The people with universal consent made the occasion a holiday, and as this was our opening, in the evening the hall was full.

We should have considered it a good house if the receipts had reached forty dollars; but when I made up the account I found myself in possession of more than a hundred dollars, all in silver. Loaded down with this weighty fortune I started after the play for the hotel, being supported on either side by the walking gentleman and the property man, utilizing them as a body-guard lest I should be waylaid and robbed. In this flush of fortune, and as a requital for their valuable services, I stood treat to my escort and dismissed them for the night. My room was in the third story, so there was no fear of burglars from without; but as I fancied that every robber in town must by this time be in full possession of all the information concerning my late acquisition, I ascended the stairs with a solitary tallow candle and a nervous step. The long, dark entry seemed so very favorable for an attack that at each landing I imagined that I should be stabbed in the back. I thought it therefore just as well to hum a tune in a careless way, as though I was quite used to this sort of thing, and thoroughly prepared for any emergency. Sauntering slowly along to the tune of "My Pretty Jane," I reached the door of my room, which I entered as quickly as possible, locking it at once. The next thing was to dispose of my treasure, which I did by placing it between the mattresses of the bed. I spread it all out so as to make it look a good deal when my partner arrived. One always takes delight in showing his partner how well

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