

but the presence that had made my home a heaven was gone. The toothsome tarts were but mud after all, the dishes flat stones, the salad a few shreds of dusty grass.

The dream was over, and I could but go homeward and endure in gloomy resignation the scolding which, the supper hour being past, was inevitable. Yet there is a silver lining to every cloud, and before I left the sumac house I found the blue ribbon which had bound her hair, and which I hold in my hand tonight.

Dear little Graciosa! I wonder where she may be now, or if she has already gone to a land where her rosiest dreams have paled before the radiance of better things.

Alas, of all my loves that I must say—
Where art thou now, sweet love of yesterday?
Guy Wetmore Carryl.

A MODEL FOR THE MADONNA.

HE had poked his inquisitive English nose into every nook and corner of old Madrid, and was about to bid farewell to the world famed gallery of pictures, the gay Prado, and the restless Puerta del Sol, when he saw *her* coming down the cathedral steps in the glorious sunlight of a Spanish morn. She was tall, supple, matchless of form, with great dark, southern eyes, a soft white throat, and a mouth whose childish innocence and rich vermilion lines were beautiful enough to vanquish the peace of any man. Her head was erect, and the light of heaven itself seemed to linger in her eyes.

"Unpack my boxes, Pedro," he said to his attendant, as soon as he reached the hotel. "I shall not leave today. I have found the model for my Madonna; I shall begin my great picture at once. Ye gods, I do not marvel that the Spaniards put their souls upon canvas with such women for their inspiration!"

"You have found her, senor? What you have so long sought?"

"Yes, what I have prayed for ever since I crossed the Pyrenees—a woman with a face beautiful, chaste, ethereal enough to pose as the Virgin for my masterpiece. Until today I have seen only the sensuous type, the women of blood and muscle, of feeling and passion. Today I met a saint, an angel—a breathing emblem of sanctity and purity. She seems too divine for earth, with the light of the beyond in her beautiful, spiritual face; and the breath of heaven has caressed her soul and sent its luminous welcome through her eyes like a promise of redemption and salvation.

"It was quite accidental—the meeting. I went to San Francisco el Grande to take a last look at old Ribera's work, and on the threshold I met her coming out. I did not enter the church—it seemed too sacred to be desecrated by any man; I stood spellbound until she had passed from sight. As she dropped some money into a child's hand I heard her say something about the morrow. I shall go again tomorrow, feast my eyes on her loveliness, and learn who she is. Prepare the great canvas, Pedro; I

must begin my picture at once—my Madonna, the dream of my life!"

On the morrow he was before San Francisco's sacred portals again, accompanied by an old professor who had lived all his life in Madrid, and knew, by sight, every man, woman, and child in the city.

"There she comes!" the painter exclaimed breathlessly, as the great doors swung open, and a superb creature, straight as a palm, and with all the dazzling beauty of her race in every curve of form and feature, walked slowly down the marble steps. "Tell me her name; present me to that woman, and I will give you a thousand pesetas," he whispered eagerly to his companion.

The professor learned forward an angle or two, and then smiled.

"*Felicitó á V!* That is easy, senor; you shall know her before nightfall. That woman is Senorita Junita Castelar, our most famous *torera*. She will enter the arena tomorrow, senor, to kill six bulls, and she is here today to prepare her soul in case of an accident—they always do that, you know—although she will not fall, for she has killed as many as two hundred bulls. You will see her tomorrow, senor; it will be a great fight. Only Luis Mazzantini, the greatest *espada* the world has ever known, can equal her daring and the skill with which she buries her sword, up to the hilt, in the neck of the bull. Ah, it is a grand sight. All Spain is mad about her!"

"Pedro," said the Englishman, half an hour later, "you need not unpack my boxes; we will go today. I shall never paint the picture of the Virgin."

Virginia Rosalie Cox.

THE CHORD OF LOVE.

MISS VAN CORTLAND drew the small tea table nearer, and rearranged the dainty cups with fingers that trembled in spite of herself. Once or twice she glanced at the clock on the mantel—nervously, expectantly. Then she sat down and began to think—to think of "him," of the years that had flown since last they met. And he, after a silence of ten years, had written to her that he would call today. It had been like a voice from the past. She looked thoughtfully into the glowing coals in the grate. Would he find her changed? How would he look? Did he still care? She hoped not, for time is a great softener of all things; and then—he was married!

There was a ring at the door. She rose and stood before the mirror that hung above the mantel, and looked at herself. Time had dealt gently with her, but then she was only eight and twenty, after all. There was a knock on the door. She turned suddenly, and heard Parker's bland, well modulated voice.

"Mr. Geoffrey Goddard to see you, ma'am. Shall I show him up?"

"Yes."

Parker bowed, and the curtain fell behind him. Miss Van Cortland stood where she was,

with an expectant face turned toward the door. She wondered how she could be so calm. The slight nervousness of half an hour ago had vanished completely. She heard steps on the stairs. Yes, she was glad that she had arranged to see him here in her own little den—alone! It was more cozy than the library, less formal than the drawing room. A figure stood within the doorway for a moment, passive, still, until Parker had announced him, and left. Then he advanced out of the shadow of the curtain, went straight to her, and took her hand.

"Eleanor!" was all he said. It was only one word, but in spite of the control he had put upon himself, there were in it all the agony and regret, the passion and the love, of a lifetime.

"Eleanor!" he repeated.

"It is good to see you again—ten years is a long while for friends to be parted," she said quietly. Her tone and gesture were cordial, but that was all. He could hardly have expected anything different, and yet—

"Sit down here," she went on, "and tell me all about yourself. What have you been doing? Where have you been living? And your wife—I hear you are married."

"Yes, I am married," he said. "But you are Miss Van Cortland still. Why?"

Eleanor looked at him, and a slight flush rose to her face.

"Oh, you see, I am such an old maid now, no one will have me."

"Nonsense," he replied seriously. After a moment's hesitation, he went on. "We are old friends—such old friends; will you not tell me the real reason? Is it because you once loved, and—and it ended?"

"No," she said, speaking without emotion.

Goddard toyed with a cup and saucer on the table. Miss Van Cortland continued:

"It is only in novels that men and women remain single all their lives, mourning for an early love. It is not so in real life." The man dropped his eyes before her steady gaze. "You see that sort of thing is romantic—and unnatural," she added.

"Is it?" he asked absently.

There was a long silence. Miss Van Cortland lighted the little alcohol lamp beneath the copper kettle.

"You must have a cup of tea," she said. "Afternoon tea is such a sociable custom. Don't you think so?"

Goddard did not answer. He rose, went over to where she sat, and laid one hand gently on her own.

"Eleanor," he said, "why keep up this farce? I have come to see you, to talk about yourself, myself, the past. You *must* listen."

"Geoffrey"—it was the first time that afternoon that she had called him so—"oh, Geoffrey, can't you see it is not right for you to do this? Your wife—"

"She does not love me," he replied. "I do not love her. We are wretchedly, miserably unhappy. I love only you, Eleanor. I have loved you all my life!"

The woman rose and faced him. There was a touch of scorn in her voice.

"And yet you left me for her."

"Yes, I was mad, blind!"

The woman looked into the fire. She spoke softly, as if to herself.

"That summer—you and I—the little ring!"

"Where is it now?" he asked.

"Locked away," she said gently—"locked away with the other childish things I have outgrown."

"You did wear it, then—after I went away?"

"For a time, yes."

"Then you did care?"

Eleanor rested one hand on the table, and looked down upon it.

"No, I did not care," she said. "'Care' is too slight a word. I loved you as I thought no girl had ever loved before."

There was a silence. The faint humming of the little copper kettle was the only sound that broke the stillness of the room.

"We knew each other always," she went on; "but somehow I never thought of you as anything more than a friend. You were more like my brother until that summer."

Goddard bowed his head. He did not speak. He could not. The woman's voice went on—so low, so tender, yet without a note of passion or longing in it.

"And then my heart awoke and it was good to live—to live and love. You went away, and I waited for you to come back. Every day I learned to love you more. But you, man-like, forgot."

Goddard's face was pale and drawn. "And you have no reproof for me?" he asked.

"Not now."

He went up to her and caught her in his arms. "Not now!" he repeated. "Does that mean that you no longer care? And you said you loved me. Can such love die? Tell me it is not true. Tell me you love me yet!"

Eleanor wrenched herself free. "How dare you?" she said.

"Forgive me," he said humbly.

"Yes—this once I will forgive you."

"Will you answer me one question?" he asked.

"I will try."

"If I were free again, and I came to you today and asked you to be my wife, what would you say?"

"If you were free and should come to me today," she answered gently, "and ask me to be your wife, I should say no."

"Are you sure, Eleanor?"

"Yes, quite sure. In the first months of your married life, when I schooled myself to do without you, I did not learn the hard lesson in vain."

"Then if some other man were to come, and you found you loved him, you would marry him?"

"Yes."

"And the reason you have remained single is because he has not come?"

"Yes."