

Monks' Convent.

A LEGEND.

BY A. A. PROCTOR.

The monk was preaching strong his earnest word,
From the abundance of his heart he spoke,
And the flame spread—in every soul that heard
Sorrow and love and good resolve awoke:
The poor lay brother, ignorant and old,
Thanked God that he had heard such words of gold.

"Still let the glory, Lord, be thine alone."
So prayed the monk, his heart absorbed in praise;
"Thine be the glory: if my hands have sown
The harvest ripened in Thy mercy's rays,
It was Thy blessing, Lord, that made my word
Bring light and love to every soul that heard.

"O Lord, I thank Thee that my feeble strength
Has been so blest: that sinful hearts and cold
Were melted at my pleading—knew at length
How sweet Thy service and how safe Thy fold;
While souls that loved thee saw before them rise
Still holier heights of loving sacrifice."

So prayed the monk, when suddenly he heard
An angel speaking thus: "Know, O my son,
Thy words had all been vain, but hearts were stirred
And saints were edified, and sinners won,
By his, the poor lay brother's humble aid
Who sat upon the pulpit stair and prayed."

HAWTHORNDEN.

CHAPTER XI.

HOW OUR FAIR FRIENDS FARED AT THE FAIR.

THE next morning during the breakfast hour Laura was announced, ready to proceed to her day's work. The Colonel detained Rosine as they rose from the table, to speak to her of the matter on his mind, while Doctor Hartland went directly to the library. Miss Marten was standing with her back toward the door, gazing at a portrait of himself and Aleck taken in their boyhood. He came suddenly upon her, and with a hand on either shoulder, turned her about instantly.

"Laura," he said in a stern voice, "do you know that Le Compte with whom you conducted such an intense flirtation last evening?"

"Don't be so rude," she replied in a vexed tone, endeavoring to shake herself free of him; "you are as rough as a bear, Ned!"

"No, you don't get away till you've answered my question. Do you know this Dr. Le Compte?"

"No," replied Laura, coloring slightly as she met the Doctor's piercing gray eye, "now let me go."

"Then let me tell you," said Dr. Hartland, loosing his hold and speaking a shade more mildly, "let me tell you once for all, if you burn your fingers with him, it is not without warning. He is one of the most notorious characters engendered in the foulest atmosphere of London, Paris, or New York. If I had a sister or a wife, I would rather see her—yes, I'd rather see her dead before my eyes, than to see her as I saw you with Le Compte!"

Laura was a little frightened by the very serious manner of the Doctor, but she rallied in a few moments.

"One would think, to hear you talk, that I had done some dreadful thing. I'm sure I don't remember anything so very much out of the way."

"Laura Marten," continued Dr. Hartland, "I would not trouble myself to talk to you, if I did not know that you are a young vain thing, without father or brother to check you, and with no guide but your own will, which you flatter yourself can never be matched; but let me tell you, there are men with strength of purpose and art sufficient to crush you to atoms, only give them the opportunity, and Le Compte is one of them. To great personal attractions, information gained by society and travel, and insinuating address, he adds a wonderful magnetic influence. I know him in the way of his profession, and I know no more dangerous man as an admirer of a vain weak woman. I warn you of him now, once and forever. You can't come off from a flirtation with him as you might from one with Aleck or me."

He smiled faintly as he uttered the last words, but there was no answering smile on her face, and she turned away to the window as Colonel Hartland entered with Rosine. The young girl saw that the Colonel in his heart would really be disappointed if she gave up her position at the table, and she could not plead weariness, for she was quite rested after her night's sleep; her conscience continued to fret her a little, but she had no time to listen, and the false plea that she was performing an act of self-denial quieted her for a while. She was much disturbed by Laura's proceedings, and wondered if she had entirely forgotten Aleck; Laura herself was annoyed by the warning of Edward Hartland; it sounded in her ears continually, and Aleck's ring was on her finger, while her promise had been given to Le Compte for a ride next Sunday. She wondered if what Ned said of him could be true, or if he were jealous; she remembered that Aleck had told her in one of their confidential moments that the Doctor himself was not insensible to her charms, and her woman's vanity put the Doctor's caution down to the charge of self-interest. "That's it, he's piqued," she said to herself, and tried to forget his admonition.

Each day of the fair went by much as the first. Laura was

for a day or two more guarded, but before the week was over she was persuaded that Ned Hartland must be mistaken; she knew enough of the male sex, she thought, to find out something of the villany of such a man as the Doctor had represented Le Compte, in a whole week's acquaintance. Rosine ventured to ask her the only moment they were alone, "if she thought Aleck would be pleased to see her so fond of her new admirer."

"Fond! nonsense!" she replied, "it is only for a little amusement. It would be absurd in Aleck to wish me to mope around alone during his long absence, or shut myself up like a forlorn widow! He has too much good sense to ask it."

Doctor Hartland proffered no advice, but when he saw how matters were going on, he sternly commanded her on no account to introduce her new lover, as he called Le Compte, to Rosine, on penalty of having her removed at once from the table. As Doctor Hartland had predicted, the excitement and fatigue of the fair told on Rosine's delicate nature; but the true cause of her restless nights and unquiet days was to be found in a letter, which came through Sister Agnes, to avoid the inspection of Mrs. Hartland. It was written with a full knowledge of her wants and wanderings, and she felt that her delinquencies, her want of Christian courage, had added a new weight to the already very heavy burden that rested on her beloved parent. The excitement and stimulation of the day, and the reproachful whispers of the night, soon brought loss of appetite as well as loss of sleep, but she did not complain, although she felt the strain upon her nervous system in great weakness. Lessons were resumed after the fair was closed, the money counted, the excitement over, but she found herself wholly unable to fix her attention, and she was surprised by her French teacher inquiring in the midst of her reading if she were asleep.

The next morning while endeavoring to elude the watchful eyes of Dr. Hartland, by appearing to partake of her breakfast, she became so faint as to be obliged to leave the table.

"There, Rosa," said the Doctor, rising and going to her assistance, "I have been looking for this; you'll have to give in; I have watched you dragging yourself about, but have waited till you were ready for my advice." The faintness increased as he spoke. "Here, mother," he added, "just loosen this child's dress; I think we can prevent an entire swoon. Simple exhaustion! Perfect rest and quietness is all she needs," he said to his father, who stooped over her with distressed face; "she must just lie down and rest body and mind."

Laura Marten came in the afternoon while Rosine was vainly trying for a nap on the library sofa. Her friend was excited as she knelt before her and kissed her cheek. "I'm sorry dear," she said, "this fair business has used you up so completely. I am as weak as a chicken. I've just heard the Pocahontas is in the harbor, she will bring letters from Aleck, mine will come enclosed in yours. You will be careful, dearest," she continued, seizing her hand, "I don't know but Ned would nearly kill me if he knew, but you will be careful."

"It is not right," said Rosine, her heart beating violently with the thought of being accessory to a clandestine correspondence; "this is not right, and it is a sin for you to go on so with Le Compte. I wish you would not. I asked Ned about him last night, and he was almost angry with me for speaking his name, and said it was a marked disgrace for any girl to have made his acquaintance. Do be persuaded."

"Ah, you little goosey," replied Laura, putting back the bright golden locks that had fallen over Rosine's flushed face, "you don't know much. Le Compte means nothing, neither do I; he knows this, so do I; what possible harm can there be in getting a little amusement out of the man? I have never seen anything of the monster Ned makes him; indeed, in manners of a gentleman, he bears comparison even with Dr. Edward Hartland. I tell you, Ned views the subject with jaundiced eyes, and bends his brows upon me in a most terrific manner; but I like the game, if it is only to make the Doctor snarl; but my engagement with Aleck must not come to his ear, if it did, he would pounce upon me with authority, and perhaps shut me up in an insane asylum. So my precious and only friend, don't open your letter in his majesty's presence, lest he should spy the enclosure."

"But don't you fear," exclaimed Rosine, rising in her excitement, "that he may write to Aleck about the matter; it would be most natural to speak of you in his letters? O, Laura, do you, can you love Aleck?" added she, covering her face with her hands and sinking back to her pillow, "it seems to me almost as bad as if a married woman should flirt."

Laura started from her kneeling posture and walked away to the window without a word.

"I did not mean to hurt your feelings, dear," said Rosine, again attempting to rise, "only to tell you how it seems to me."

Dr. Hartland entered before Laura had recovered herself sufficiently to reply. He bowed stiffly to her, and took his seat by the couch, noticing at once the flushed face and traces of tears upon his patient, and bit his lip in silence while he counted her pulse.

"Miss Marten," he said, with knit brows, "this young lady must dispense with your company for the present, you have talked her into a fever." Laura bowed haughtily and left the room.

"This visit has done you essential harm, Rosa," he said, modulating his voice to gentleness as the door closed, "it has put you back at least two days. What could have been the subject of conversation to bring you into the state you are at this moment?" he continued, laying his hand against her hot cheek. "I wish you had a worthier friend."

"Laura doesn't mean as badly as you think, Ned," she replied, timidly.

"Don't let her wheedle you into that notion. No woman can do as she has done ever since she was a woman without meaning harm. But you must not talk," he added, seeing the color fade suddenly from her cheek, "you would be more quiet up stairs, I will have your room prepared." He gave orders accordingly, and