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CHAPTER VI.—Continued.

He seemed convinced of the truth of the... and brought out the paper, an old, worn copy of a New York daily. I scanned this closely, and in the marine intelligence saw a marked paragraph.

"WRECKED.—The schooner Morning Star, on the Florida coast, in a gale. The vessel was bound from London to New Orleans. All lives saved but the first mate, two seamen and a passenger, who having heroically stayed on board to the last helping of the others, were perished in the last boat half way between the wreck and the shore. The passenger lost was one Albert F. Aroid, who was bound for America to join his wife and child in one of the Southern States."

After reading this a thought struck me. Burton Aroid's mother had been an El Muza and had married in England while on a visit to relatives in that country. Could she be the one whose husband was thought to have deserted her, and was the Albert F. Aroid mentioned in the paper her husband coming to her? I found out by further conversation with the negro that the initials in the name of the negro's husband were A. F.; and I scented my mind upon this point, and came to the conclusion, from the old man's story, that the phantom lady was no other than Burton's sweetheart; also, that the people of the villa had considered Burton's legitimacy as resting under a cloud, and that for this reason the match between him and the fair Zeyna had been opposed and thwarted by the young lady's parents.

CHAPTER VII.—THE PHANTOM LADY APPEARS TO BURTON.

Words warm with the eloquence and ecstasy of love and of woe, addressed in a wild, passionate vehemence, by a manly voice, to the phantom lady, so I surmised, echoing through the grim old house, startled me from my sleep. I arose and started down the hall, but stopped midway as I saw the library door swing open, and Burton stood before me. His face was pale and set as if his soul within were wrenched with a pain of sorrow so deep and unspokeable as to even render emotion inanimate and still. I knew by his looks that his phantom sweetheart had appeared to him, and that the voice which had awakened me was his. He strode forward to the landing of the stairs, then suddenly stopped. How grand he looked there in the hall, standing so erect and solemn in the moonlight! No bronze statue standing lone and stately upon its marble pedestal, in ancient ruin, in the shadow of princely grandeur, could have presented a more striking picture. I almost expected to hear another outburst of eloquence, accompanied by some spiritualistic manifestation wilder and more beautiful than I had yet seen; but, instead, a groan echoed from the statue-like form, and it began to totter forward. I leaped to Burton's side just in time to save him from a precipitate fall down the stairway, and to convey him down its dark and crazy flight out into the air.

"Is that you, Hal?" he asked. I answered affirmatively. "Did you see her?" was his next question. I replied that I had seen no one, having been asleep in the hall until awakened by his voice. We both sat down on the front veranda railings and taking out cigars smoked them in silence. Burton brooding and dreaming, and I wondering what would come next. It must have been late in the evening when the silence was first broken. It had become tedious, and I ventured to ask Burton what the subject of his profound meditation could be. Pointing toward a wooded dell a half mile away, which I could just faintly discern through the moonlight, he answered:

"Down in yon valley, where the woodbine and the ivy cling to the noble trees, lies the grave of her who would have been part of my life if she had lived. Since her death, years ago, I have not lived; only in appearance. She was my soul; my existence. Upon her every word hung as upon the breath of life. Into her eyes I looked as into a lustreous sea, upon whose waves I should be borne away to lands of everlasting

benediction. Her raven tresses, lightly falling about her queenly bodice, were as rays of sunshine to my vision. She was my world, my heaven. Her very footsteps sounding filled me with an exquisite delight that was a sort of insane ecstasy. We were cruelly parted by her parents, and before I could arrange to secretly convey her hence she died of broken heart; and I had rather died. These miserable years have been a period of quasi-madness—a strange and wilder dream, part temporal, part spiritual. To-night the spirit of my love appeared to me for the first time, but only for a moment, holding her clasped hands above my head as if mutually blessing me. It may be that this was but an ecstatic vision of a dream distracted brain. However this may be I feel that I too must soon pass away. I feel that my strength is weakening fast."

His voice during this speech was low and feverish; fitful and wild at first, then slow and solemn. As he quit speaking his breath began to come heavily and he fell back; but I anticipated this and caught him before he could fall to the ground. I assisted, or rather carried him into the parlor where I had noticed a sort of couch sofa, and was looking around for something of which to make a light when suddenly the room became softly illuminated, and I saw the Senor Montini and a number of the revelers of the night before standing around the couch. Montini came close to me and whispered: "Senor Burton is very ill; his time is near at hand. You must go for his mother. We will see that he is kept as comfortable as possible. His mother lives twenty miles up the bayou in the town of M. The packet steamer, Katie of the Dell, is due to pass here about this time. You had better prepare to go at once."

Looking out at the window I saw a long train of sparks falling back from two tall dark pipes down the bayou, and knew that the steamer was coming. Getting a few details of direction from Montini, and taking leave of Burton, I ran over the hill to the landing just in time to hail the boat. The steamer's whistle answered my salute, the boat drew up against the bank to take me on, and soon I was a passenger, my thoughts mingling vaguely with the hissing of the engines, the splashing of the wheels, the trailing of the sparks, and recollections of the strange events at the haunted house.

CHAPTER VIII.—A MIDNIGHT ERRAND.

The packet was a fast boat, and it was but little after midnight when it drew up at the M— landing, but notwithstanding the night and the darkness I followed the direction given me and soon found the residence of Burton's mother. The house, as well as the whole town, was in the pulseless sleep of night, and the hollow thump-thump of the old-fashioned knocker at the door echoed dull along the street as I applied it. Presently a negro came to the door and asked in a frightened manner what was wanted. I told her that I was a messenger from Burton Aroid to his mother, and that it was necessary for me to see that lady at once.

The negro showed me into a small but neat drawing-room, and turning a low-burning lamp up to a full blaze left the room and went to call her mistress. In a few minutes a handsome matron, of about fifty years, stepped into the room.

"Is this the Senora Aroid?" I asked, rising. She started and stepped backward several feet. Then coming forward she took me by the hand and said: "You must pardon my being startled, but you so much resembled my brother who is dead that I thought you an apparition. You have come from my son. Is he well?" The anxious look in the mother's face showed that she feared the truth; so I immediately gave her a short account of his illness, and suggested that she should be at his bedside as soon as possible. This was an irrelevant suggestion, for while I was giving it the Senora rang for her servant, and when that person had appeared she was given the order to wake up her two brothers and have them get a carriage ready upon the bayou immediately. "We were to go down," she said, "by boat to C—, eight miles below, where we could catch the mail coach for Blank, which would take us within a half-mile of the villa."

In the course of fifteen minutes the negro returned and said that Sam and Tom were in their skiff at the landing, ready. The Senora had packed a few necessities, among which was a small case of medicines, into a sachel, and after she had wrapped up well we found Sam and Tom, two strong negroes, in waiting with a sharp-prowed skiff.

The Senora gave her orders, and the stout fellows laid to their oars with a will, and several times I "spelled" one or the other of them, to give a breath of rest.

No wind stirred the water, and the skiff sped along down the bayou with a speed that brought us to C— just as waking day was opening his eyes in the far dim east.

We had time to take refreshment at the little tavern of the town before the coach started, and soon after breakfast we found ourselves in that old away-backed vehicle, the only passengers. After having directed the driver to drop us at the nearest point to the Montini estate, we began to talk over the affairs in hand. After I had explained my connection with Burton, and told some of my experiences among the mysteries of the villa, I pulled from my pocket the old copy of the New York paper given me by the negro Sam, and showed her the marked item of the shipwreck. There are times when the heart is full, when recollections of the past crowd in upon the soul, and the commingled

anguish and joy, the pent-up experiences of years, the vicissitudes of life, perhaps, well up from the vaults of memory and overwhelm the heart.

Far be it from me to assume to describe the feelings of that widow and mother who she learned, through that old and time-stained newspaper the true cause of her widowhood away back in the tender years of her earlier life.

Her sorrow for the sad fate of her husband, and her joy to know that instead of having deserted her he was coming to join her as they had arranged, and that he had acted bravely and nobly in those his last hours on earth, was a matter that drew forth my deepest sympathy at the time, and dwells pathetically in my recollection yet, but that is a private affair and belongs only as a mere mention to this story. Her sufferings during all those years of bereavement, when she had thought that the man who had fascinated and won her maiden heart had deserted her and left that heart to eat itself away in the canker, the bitterness, the ashes of unrequited love and broken faith—these, too, I will pass over, leaving their intimations to impress the kind reader as they may.

Slumbering sorrow when once really awakened in the breast drives away all thoughts of business formality. Knowing this full well I did not disturb the Senora in her thoughts. Let the full heart work away its grief with what little of joy that may beam into it.

At about the middle of the forenoon a blast from the driver's horn warned us that we were near our stopping place, and soon the coach stopped. After getting out we walked silently and quickly to the villa.

CHAPTER IX.—A STARTLING VISITATION.

A subdued purple radiance flooded the interior of the villa; a delicately scented perfume floated about on the airy draughts that wandered in fresh from their morning dalliance with the flowers of many fields; and a soft, delicious spell seemed to reign fairlike over the semi-enchanted place. If the soul of the phantom lady had pervaded every room, carrying with it the atmosphere of the blessed realm where dwell the spirits of all like her, balmier breath could not have come to kiss the brow of him who was passing into the shadow.

I had been sauntering thoughtfully through the rooms and chambers of the old house for an hour or so, having, upon our arrival, left the mother and son alone in the sacredness of their meeting, for, under the circumstances, this meeting was sacred.

The once strong young man, now weak and at times delirious in the burning and the eating of the fever, pouring the discontented eloquence of his life's great sorrow and despair into the tender recesses of that mother's heart, and the reassuring words of love and comfort and sympathy, spoken in return by that mother, are matters to which you and I are not parties. We can only guess by what has come under our own observations, and perhaps our limited experiences, what transpired during that interview; but I do know that the heart that had been broken in early years, and left bleeding and disconsolate by the cruel neglect and cold treatment of proud and unfeeling parents; the heart to which he had been pressed in the days of his boyhood as if his very being were a healing balm that might assuage its interminable aching, aye, the most faithful of mother hearts, still yearned toward her boy in his manhood as it had in his infancy, and that its chords of sympathy would vibrate at the slightest word from that boy in a tender love as sweet as the whispered music of the Eolian harp when the evening zephyr scarcely touches it and away.

I had been wondering during this hour what should be done next; what the whole meaning could be of my mission at the villa and among its mystic and shadowy people.

As I was thus thinking, I felt a touch upon my arm, and upon looking up, beheld before me the shadowy, beautiful form of the Senora El Muza. She pointed to one side, and following the direction she indicated I saw such a counterpart of myself that I had to look the second time to ascertain that there was no mirror there to reflect back my form and visage. This person thus pointed out had the shadowy appearance I had noticed in all the spirits. A pleasant smile overspread his countenance when he noticed my discomfiture, and he said: "You are evidently surprised at the fact that you and I resemble each other so closely; still there need be no surprise when you learn that we are related by a long line of ancestry through your mother, a descendant of the El Muza stock, but of a different wing of the family."

"There are," he continued, "only two representatives of the direct lines now living on earth. These two are the Senora Aroid and your friend Burton. The Senora is my sister, so I am the young man's uncle. My parents treated them shabbily because it was thought that the Senora had allowed herself to be disgraced by being betrayed into a false marriage, followed by apparent desertion on the part of her husband; but they have fully repented of their harsh conduct since their advent into the spirit world, where we have all met her husband, who was shipwrecked on the coast of Florida while on the way to join her, and have learned that the marriage was valid. They wish to repair as well as they can the injury done their daughter's happiness. She must be kindly taken care of during the remainder of her natural life, and when she joins us in the future existence we will all be happy together forever more."

"This estate," continued he, "was a partnership one. The El Zagal are all in the spirit world, the Senora Aroid was disinherited, and the whole estate, under certain conditions, falls to a nephew (by marriage) of Montini's, who resides at Venice. The transfer is made subject to the management of an administrator. Now, there never has been any administrator appointed, but legal forms are drawn up accompanying Montini's last will and testament, wherein places for an administrator's name are left blank. We authorize you to sign your name to them, and

to take all legal steps necessary to secure your position. The two-thirds of the estate left without a will by El Zegal and El Muza are in such a position that they can be placed in possession of Montini's nephew or given over to the discretion of the state. What we want you to do is to acquaint Montini's heir with the power vested in you and to get a certified contract from him to the effect that if this property is given over to him that he will allow the Senora Aroid the freedom of the villa as a home and provide her with a proper maintenance during her natural life, and so make the transfer that if he fails in the leastwise to comply with his intrusted obligations his claim to the El Muza and El Zegal property shall henceforth be null and void.

"You will find the papers in a small iron safe in one of the closed rooms up stairs. If you go immediately for them the doors will be opened for you. The heir's address will be found among the papers."

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

IN AN OLD ATTIC.

The Many Quaint Treasures of the Olden Time It Contained. Yesterday I found a delightful book, and of course it was in an attic. Our ancestors may not have stored things in attics expressly to have us discover them, but we continue to do so from time to time, and they are undoubtedly more interesting from being a bit cob-webby and mysterious. The attic in which I found the delicious book had in it hidden things which looked as if they might be the first patterns of everything we use now. Probably the most desirable trait about this attic was that it did not possess a place for anything or anything in its place.

For instance, I found a bonnet hanging on a pair of andirons.

But for the green silk strings no one would ever dream it was a bonnet. It looked much more like a coal-scuttle, and had as many enormous bones as a prehistoric skeleton. It must have belonged to a very great grandmother. No one without several grands before her name could have worn that bonnet! Behind the andirons was a cradle, and in the cradle was a long pole with a red silk arrangement which once meant a fire-screen. Beside it stood a clock with a moon face and long chains and weights. It looked so much like a Dutch doll, with just head and legs, that I laughed aloud. But an attic is not a place in which to laugh unless one has company. Everything was rebukingly still, and so was I immediately.

Near the clock was a table shaped like a long-legged spider. It looked as if just ready to walk off alone. I was quite sure it belonged to the bonnet and the fire-screen, and that somewhere there were blue cups and saucers, which one might break by talking too loud, and that they belonged to the table.

In a far corner stood a picture with its face to the wall.

I drew it out and rested it against the table. Of course it was dusty. I never heard of the right sort of an attic which was kept dusted. It was the picture of a lady. I knew that at once, just as we always know a lady when we see one. The picture was rather dim, but young and slim, with a white throat and bright, dark eyes. Her hair, done very high, was of a ruddy-brown, and she had on a short-waisted white satin frock, and held a half-open fan primly in her hands.

It was easy to see that she was just where she belonged—beside the spider-legged table. I had no doubt that she could have told the whereabouts of the blue cups and saucers. Thinking about this lady, my eyes encountered another pair of eyes staring straight at mine. My heart jumped once and stood still until I recognized the eyes as my own. I was gazing into a mirror. It was a dim, queer mirror with a crack like an enormous smile across its face and pale enough to hold only the ghost of light which once shone in it. Two rods supported it. They held a brass candlestick aplece and rested on a little stand which had a drawer. I sat down on a hair-trunk before this little stand. The drawer had brass knobs and might have been locked once but time or rust made it open easily, and then—such an assortment of odds and ends! Faded ribbons and flowers and beads and a feather-fan which when I opened it filled the air with a musty dust that made me sneeze! Under these scraps was a box and under the box was a book—the book—A Revolutionary Tale, in St. Nicholas.

The Church and the Young Man.

How hard and faithfully many clerymen are spending themselves to gather the young men to Christ, and in great measure spending in vain, because they labor amidst. As long as the home is negative, fruits will continue comparatively small. On the reformation of the home in this respect we should bring steady effort to bear. "If there is to a parent one duty more sacred than another, for faithfulness in which more strict account will be taken, and which will more seriously affect a parent's eternal hope, it is this of raising children religiously. Its neglect not only robs God of a seed to praise Him, thwarts His glory in the world, and Christ's reward for the travail of his soul, but is a most unnatural crime against the child itself. Will not God require for the deep hurt inflicted?"—Rev. W. H. Laird.

Honey as Food.

A correspondent who inquires as to the value of honey as food will find her answer here:

Honey has been known from the earliest times. The Scriptures make mention of it, and Pagan writers celebrated its virtues. It was called "the milk of the aged," and was thought to prolong life. Honey was also used in the embalming of the body after death.

This food, as useful as it is delicious, was esteemed most highly by the Greeks, who celebrated its virtues alike in prose and verse, so that the fame of Attic honey has been transmitted unimpaired to our own day. Used in all kinds of pastry, cake and ragouts it was also esteemed as a sauce. Pythagoras, in the latter portion of his life, was a vegetarian, and lived wholly on bread and honey, a diet which he recommended to his disciples. And this gentle philosopher reached the ripe age of ninety years before he departed this life.

The true source from which honey is derived was only discovered in later years. Virgil supposed that its delicious sweetness fell from heaven upon flowers in the shape of gentle, invisible dew, a belief which he shared with Pliny and even Galen. It was left to modern observers to study with enthusiasm plant life and bee life, and learn from them some of the most wonderful lessons of nature.

Honey was often served by the ancients at the beginning of a banquet in order that the uncloyed palate might enjoy to the full its exquisite flavor. It took the place that sugar occupied after the discoveries of the properties of the sugar cane, so that all conserves, cakes and beverages were dependent on honey for their sweetness.

Library in Her Head.

The newest society sensation in St. Petersburg, Russia, is an old peasant woman with a wonderful memory. Her name is Irina Andreyevna Fedosova; she is 70 years of age, can neither read nor write, but knows by heart over 19,000 legends, folksongs and poems! When she gives a public recital the scene is a striking one. A little bent figure appears, hobbles on to the platform, sits down on a chair, with hands folded, and withered face quite expressionless. Amid a hush of expectation she begins to speak; then her face brightens, her eyes open widely and sparkle, while her voice grows clear and penetrating. She looks ten years younger in her enthusiasm, as she half speaks, half sings the legends of her youth, tales of great wars, old fairy tales, long lost tragedies or tender love stories, while the audience, carried away by her strange magnetism, listens spell-bound, laughs or weeps at her will. She is the "rage" in the Russian capital, and we hear that two eminent literary men have written down a number of her memory stored treasures which they intend to publish in book form, when it should prove a rich find for lovers of folklore.

Battle With a Bear.

Grant Earhart, who lives on Tsit-coos Lake, near Florence, Or., came near being killed by a bear while out hunting three or four days ago. As he was crawling through the brush on his hands and knees he came face to face with the bear. Mr. Earhart poked his gun at the brute and quickly fired three shots, but it did not stop bruin. Earhart thrust the muzzle of his gun into the bear's mouth, but the gun was not loaded, and the bear, curling the gun aside with his powerful paw, attacked Mr. Earhart. Earhart threw up his arm and drew his dirk knife. The bear struck the thrown up arm, breaking it in several places, and then struck him several times about the shoulders, neck and head, and tore the scalp off the back part of Mr. Earhart's head with one terrible sweep of his clawed foot. Just here his noble trained dogs rushed up and pounced upon the bear, which turned to fight them, and Mr. Earhart escaped. The bear died from its wounds while struggling with the dogs.

Advice to the Married.

At Ebenezer African Methodist Episcopal Church, Baltimore, Md., Rev. Dr. Johnson, Secretary of the African Methodist Episcopal Board of Education, preached. Bishop Gaines announced that Dr. Johnson would deliver a lecture on "When to Marry, How to Marry and How to Keep Married." "The last part of the subject," said the bishop, "is one to consider well. Some men are so mean and some women are so indifferent that it makes matters bad. It is partly the fault of both that so many people do not succeed in living happily after marriage. You women make yourselves look just too sweet before you capture the man of your choice; and when you get him, instead of keeping yourselves up to the standard of good looks, you neglect it. I tell you that I want my wife to look just as sweet to-day as she did when I fell in love with her."