

as other girls are; if I could see her go to church and kneel in prayer, ridden at a word of praise, to feel one by one as in a new childhood the emotions and affections of which she has lost all knowledge; and if I could say that I had brought about the change, that I had forgiven her all the hopes of youth, and redeemed her for her family and for love, oh! my friend," he exclaimed, grasping the doctor's hand, "I would think myself a god; I would believe that I, too, had created a human being, to possess two souls and to live two lives—hers and mine. She would seem to belong to me; I would think that destiny had sent her, and I would take her to my mother as if she were an angel. I think I would go mad with joy. If it only were true!" And his head fell forward in his hands as he sobbed violently.

"My treasure!" They were the words spoken by a familiar voice upon the piazza. He jumped up resolutely, and, turning to the doctor, said: "Leave me." They grasped hands warmly, and the doctor went at once.

The lieutenant remained standing in the middle of the room for a few moments, lost in thought, then stepping to the window, opened it and looked out. It was a calm, clear, beautiful night. He could see the whole village, the roofs, the deserted streets, the harbour and the shore, the sea quiet and still, and far away the Sicilian mountains; and over it all fell the brilliant white light of the full moon. "If I could only possess this peace!" he thought, and with a sigh he leaned out of the window, and looking down saw Carmela seated before the door.

"Carmela!" he called.

"My dear!"

"What are you doing?"

"What am I doing? I am waiting, you know. I am waiting for you."

"I am coming down to open the door."

Carmela clasped her hands in joy.

The door opened and the officer appeared with a light in his hand. Carmela entered and taking the candle passed in front of him and climbed the stairs hurriedly, and saying: "come dear, give me your hand," she dragged him after her.

When they reached his room he had her sit in front of him; and patiently, as he had done so often before, he rehearsed his trials and misadventures; he invented new ones, experimenting in different ways, speaking slowly, thoughtfully—simulating love, hate, anger, desperation, pain. She would look at him attentively, and when he had finished she would ask, laughing:—"What is the matter?" or she would murmur: "Poor little darling, I pity you!" and she would take his hands and kiss them, feeling apparently the deepest sympathy.

"Carmela!" he exclaimed at last.

"What do you want?"

"Come here," she motioned her to come to him. She approached slowly, looking at him lovingly, and then she suddenly fell into his arms, kissing him and whispering: "My dear, my darling." He passed his arm around her waist and drew her down upon his knee and held her so, stroking her hair, looking intently into her eyes. She got up of a sudden, and seemed to be thinking of something. She finally murmured a few words, which he did not hear at first. She repeated them: "He will leave me."

The officer saw a ray of hope, and remained silent, watching her anxiously. Carmela was thoughtful or seemed to be for a moment longer; then smiling strangely, but not in her usual way, he could hear her say: "Two months—two months!"

He could hardly restrain a cry of joy at this evidence of a partial return of the reasoning faculties. At that instant Carmela raised her head, saw a high hat near her, and with a burst of laughter snatched it up, put it on and began to dance around the room.

"Carmela," cried the officer sadly.

But the remonstrance only seemed to increase her excitement.

"Carmela," he cried again and then ran after her, but she rushed down the stairs and was soon out of his reach in the very centre of the piazza, laughing and dancing.

He returned and could see her from his window.

"Carmela! Carmela!" he sobbed, and covering his face with his hands he fell upon a chair.

The following morning he called at the doctor's house at a very early hour. A glance at his face showed that he was in need of comfort and advice, which were at once lavishly bestowed. At first the officer seemed to listen, but soon was lost in thought. Suddenly he brightened up and said:

"It is strange that I had not thought of it before."

"Of what?" asked the doctor.

He did not answer, but drew his chair up to the table, and wrote rapidly for some minutes. When he had finished, he read as follows:

DEAR LIEUTENANT.—I shall be brief, as is the custom among military men. I am stationed at Pantelleria, in command of the division of which you were in charge three years ago, during the month of July, August

and September. In this village I have met a girl about eighteen years of age, Carmela by name. She has been insane for about two years, reports say on your account. I understand that you have been informed of all the particulars, and know what has happened since your departure from the island, as well as the general traits of her insanity. I have taken great interest in her unfortunate condition, and am now making every effort to restore her lost reason. In this endeavour I have imitated your dress. I learned to sing and play as you did. I informed myself of your habits. I told her I loved her. I tried to make her believe that I was you—all apparently to no avail. I cannot express the sadness that has come over me at seeing my hopes shattered. One chance alone remains, and my ability to make use of it must come from you. The best authorities state that the insane may often be cured by reproducing for them with the utmost exactitude every minute particular of some great event that occurred prior to their deprivation of reason, though it may or may not have been the direct cause of it. I have thought that repeating for Carmela in this way the scene of your departure might prove efficacious. I made inquiries of several in the village, but only succeeded in eliciting the fact that you left in the evening, and that before leaving you dined with the mayor and several others. What happened at that dinner they do not recall, or recall only in part. I beg you to give me these details; it will cost you little and may confer great happiness upon me. Write me all you remember; tell me who were there, all that was said; describe the actions—everything. And, above all, try to give me the exact time and correct order of each incident. Do this for me, and I shall be grateful for the rest of my days. I add nothing else; I rely upon the nobility of your heart.

With a cordial handshake from your comrade in arms, I remain anxiously awaiting your reply.

"What do you think of it?"

"Beautifully conceived," answered the doctor, who had listened with the closest attention while he read; "but do you know his name? His regiment? Where he is stationed now?"

"The mayor knows all that."

"Do you think that he will answer?"

"I think so."

And he did answer—he answered with a letter of eight pages. He gave all the desired particulars, mentioned the people who were there, stated the subjects of conversation, described the speeches, all in the order in which they occurred; but not a word beyond that—not a word about Carmela; not a word that did not refer to the dinner and to his departure; not a word beyond the mere answers required by the lieutenant's questions; not a remark of sympathy. But perhaps the very formality of his reply was an attempt at concealment of the remorse he felt—a remorse too deep to be expressed by the ordinary words of sorrow and regret. In sending his letter, he had only said: "At one in the morning the boat left. Good bye." And then the name.

"I understand," said the doctor, when his friend had finished reading the letter, "I now understand why no one of the many present at that dinner has a very clear recollection of any of the details. No wonder their memory fails; the wine flowed so freely."

That same day they began preparations for this last great experiment. They went to the mayor, the justice, the receiver, and all the other officials, with whom they were now more or less on terms of intimacy. The doctor, with the arguments of science; the officer, with simple earnestness of appeal, by reasoning, explaining and demonstrating, at last succeeded in making each one understand what was expected of him. This assistance thus assured, nothing remained but to rehearse the part each was to act. They sent for Carmela's mother, but she needed few explanations—less than many others of the good people who were not quick to comprehend matters of that nature.

Carmela had not been feeling well these last few days, and had remained at home most of the time. The officer and doctor went to look for her. She was seated on the floor near the door, with her back to the wall. When she saw them she got up, but much more slowly than usual, and approached the lieutenant. She tried to kiss him, and murmured the wonted words.

"Carmela," said the lieutenant, "we have news for you."

"News! News! News!" repeated Carmela, smoothing the officer's face with her hand.

"I am going away to-morrow."

"I am going away to-morrow," repeated Carmela.

"I, I am going away. I am going to leave the village. I am going to leave with all my soldiers. I am going on the steamer and shall be carried away."

"Far away—far away," muttered Carmela, looking in the direction the officer had motioned. For a moment she seemed to be thinking of something—then she said:

"The steamer—the steamer, that

smoke?" and she tried again to kiss the officer, calling him by the accustomed name.

"Not the faintest sign," he thought, shaking his head.

"You must repeat it," whispered the doctor, "but better wait until later." And they went away, after having told Carmela not to follow them.

The dinner had been planned for the morrow. That same evening found Carmela again seated in front of the officers' quarters. He called her in as soon as he entered, and they found his orderly, according to the directions that had been given him, quite intent upon packing. The table, the chair, the sofa all covered with linen, clothing, books, and papers thrown together in confusion; and the man was in the centre of the room, stowing the different articles away in cases.

At first sight of this disorder Carmela seemed surprised, and looked questioning at the officer.

"I am preparing to leave," said he.

Carmela looked around the room again, knitting her brow. He had never seen her do that before, and watched her attentively.

"I am going far away; I am going by the steamer."

"Going by the steamer?"

"Yes, I am going to-morrow night."

"To-morrow night?" she repeated, and, seeing his guitar on a chair, she touched the strings gently.

"Are you not sorry I am going away? Are you not sorry you will see me no more?"

Carmela looked at him steadily, and then lowered her head and seemed to be thinking. He did not disturb her, but appeared to be busily engaged in giving his orderly directions about the packing. She kept her eyes fixed on them, without making the slightest movement or uttering a sound. He did not allow her to remain there long, but after a few minutes said:

"Come Carmela, you must not stay," and taking her gently by the arm he led her toward the door. She turned around and put out her arms to embrace him.

"No, you must not," said the officer.

Carmela stamped her foot two or three times; and then, unconscious that she had just been repulsed and now meeting with no resistance, she again extended her arms and passed her lips over his cheeks with that vacant expression seen sometimes on the faces of those whose minds are filled with many thoughts, but who are confining the attention to no particular object.

"Does this denote improvement?" he asked himself. "If God would only have it so."

The next morning he remained indoors, and would not see Carmela, although he knew that she was seated outside waiting for him. The afternoon was fully occupied in rehearsing for the evening. His apartment consisted of two rooms and a kitchen; between his bedroom and the entrance at the head of the stairs was a larger room, with windows opening on the piazza. It was in this that he intended to give the dinner. The hotelkeeper next door lent him a large table and came himself, as he had done three years before, to prepare there a few special dishes that were necessary.

The doctor arrived first that evening about nine o'clock. "She is just outside," he said as he entered. "She told me that she had not seen you to-day. I asked her if she felt well, and she looked at me and answered 'Steamboat,' and without a smile. Who knows what was going on in that little head? God alone. Is everything arranged for your guests?"

Having settled a few final details regarding the position at table, they had only to decide upon the best way for presenting one or two of the scenes of this drama. These minor difficulties had just been disposed of when they heard the sound of voices and treading of feet.

"Here they are," said the doctor, and he looked out of the window. "Yes, they are here."

The orderly went down to open the door, while the doctor lighted the candles that were placed at the four corners of the table.

"How my heart beats," said the officer.

"Courage, courage!" whispered his friend, grasping his hand. Then they heard Carmela exclaim: "I, too, am going on the steamer," and she clasped her hands.

"Courage!" repeated the doctor in his friend's ear. "Have you heard? She begins to think; that is a good sign. Courage. Here are your guests!"

The door opened, and the mayor, the justice and the others who had met at the café came in smiling. While the officer was greeting them and first thanking one and then another, the doctor whispered a few words to the servant, and he hastened down the stairs. In a moment he returned with Carmela, and passed into the other room with her without any one showing that he was aware of her presence.

"Let us be seated," said the lieutenant.

The squeaking caused by the chairs being drawn up to the table, and the buzz

of conversation completely drowned the noise the servant made in trying to hold Carmela's back, who, exclaiming, "I have not seen him for a whole day," had tried to rush to the lieutenant. The orderly succeeded in restraining her, and placing a chair near the door forced her into it. None of those present turned toward her or looked at her, and she soon became quiet.

The rattle of forks, knives, plates and glasses then began and increased gradually, with the additional discord of voices engaged in the more or less successful attempt to overpower each other. All except the doctor and the lieutenant ate heartily, and drank freely of the good wine that had been provided. They began by praising the virtues of the soldiers, the corporals and sergeants, their valour and courtesy; they praised the wine, but the conversation finally degenerated to that last of all topics, the weather. It was remarked that it would be a beautiful night for the trip. Then followed a repetition of the former laudations of the soldiers, and a renewed discussion of the trip they were to take. Their voices grew louder, their laughter more boisterous, and the rapidity with which the glasses were being emptied ceased their faces to glow and their eyes to sparkle. Words followed each other without apparent meaning or connection, and unconsciously each one had taken his part seriously and acted to perfection. But try as he might the officer could not enter into the scene with the spirit that he had considered necessary, though the only one who noticed it was the doctor, whose attention was divided between the two—the officer and Carmela. She had remained motionless throughout the entire dinner, watching closely every slightest movement. Three soldiers entered and carried out several trunks that had been piled near the door. Carmela's eyes were fastened upon them until they withdrew entirely, when her attention was once more directed to the table.

The doctor whispered to the mayor.

"A toast!" exclaimed the latter, immodestly, as he arose with difficulty, holding the glass in his hand, "a toast to the health of our gallant lieutenant. We grieve at his departure, but he will ever remain as a sweet memory in our hearts." He then proposed three cheers for the lieutenant, and they all arose, and noisily clinking their glasses, spilling the wine in doing so, they gave three hearty cheers. The mayor fell heavily in his chair. A few other toasts were given, and the talk about the soldiers and the trip was again renewed. The doctor suggested that the receiver give one of his favourite songs; several others requested it, and the receiver yielded. He sang only a few stanzas before he was interrupted by the laughter and joking of two of his friends who were seated near him.

The officer took advantage of a slight lull and cried, "My turn, my turn now!" and they were all silent. He took up his guitar and tuned it. He was pale and his

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