

North Carolina Argus.

This Argus o'er the people's rights doth an eternal vigil keep: No soothing strain of Maia's son can lull his hundred eyes to sleep.

NEW SERIES--VOL. I.

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Miscellaneous.

MIRA, THE MARBLE HEARTED.

"Who is that beautiful girl yonder—the one dancing with Leshe? Do you know her, Paul?" The young man addressed as Paul raised his eye glass and looked long and steadily at the young girl, and replied, "That is Mira Swain, the marble-hearted."

"Why do you call her the marble-hearted? It seems a strange name to bestow upon a beautiful woman."

"Yes, it is a very strange name, but very appropriate, for yonder lady, who, as the story goes, is like the icebergs of the polar sea."

"I do not question the fitness of the name; I only ask why it was given her. She is by far the most beautiful girl in the room."

"Yes, she is beautiful," replied Paul, but as heartless as she is pretty." She has had half the gentlemen in the room at her feet, but treats them all alike," said Paul, bitterly. "She is heartless, and is a mystery to us all."

Warren Dagon smiled and said: "Please introduce me, Paul. I like her appearance, but I am a stranger to all present. Ten years in a foreign land renders one a stranger to his own family. Any way, I am a stranger here."

"I will introduce you with pleasure; but I caution you and kindly admonish you against loving her, for remember she is marble, and your heart will have to pay for it if you do."

"Lead on, Paul, you have cautioned me of my danger, and I still remember the old adage, forwarned, is forearmed, I am not a boy, Paul, to break my heart for a woman."

"Boys hearts often bend, when men's break," said Paul.

Mira Swain was pretty, and an only daughter. Her slight, rounded form was perfect in symmetry. Her small mouth, with even white teeth, half seen when her rosy lips dimpled into smiles, her rich, black hair, which rippled over a broad white brow, was looped up from her face and fastened at the back in a mass of shining curls, and gave a very beautiful effect to her appearance. She was also very prettily dressed, being attired in crimson silk, with an overdress of rich black lace, fastened at the top with a scarlet garnet blossom—a cluster of the same gleaming in her hair. Mira cared more for the buds, and blossoms, than for pearls and diamonds. She was gay and brilliant, yet when any of her lovers whispered of the grand passion, she would be a very queen in her haughty self-possession.

Warren Dagon was introduced, and was soon floating with her thro' the intricate masses of the dance. He paid her the assiduous attention throughout the evening. Mira knew him by report to be a gentleman of unbounded wealth and

and few men could be more fascinating than he, for he had travelled extremely in his own, and foreign lands, and when he chose to exert himself to please, his dark eloquent eyes, pure classic language, and high bred elegance of manners were irresistibly charming. He evidently desired to please Mira, and his manners toward her implied as much.

Mira listened, spell bound to his beautiful conversation, thereby awakening the jealous indignation of a dozen other less fortunate admirers. They felt themselves aggrieved, for she always treated them with such cool indifference. One lady, resplendent in brocade, and diamonds, muttered to herself, "The marble-hearted warms at last."

Mira cared little for admiration, and less for the opinion of her fashionable friend so freely expressed. She was walking in the cool piazza in the moonlight, with young Dagon, listening to his musical voice, whose low, sweet tones were stirring a strange, wild melody in a heart that never before vibrated with love. She was listening to a thrilling description of Rome, the eternal city enshrined on the seven hills. He delineated, with an artist's enthusiasm, her grand old marbles and inspired paintings, over which the dust and decay of ages rest, like the grey shroud on the bosom of the dead. In eloquent language he described the wonders of dismantled Pompeii. He pictured temples, theatres and dwellings where lived and loved the people of two thousand years ago. He told her, in glowing language, of the graceful minaret, feathery palms and grand and solemn pyramids, and while listening, she seemed to scale with him the dangerous pass of the Alps, and stood in breathless awe looking up the dizzy heights, crowned with ice and snow. And in imagination she wandered down the golden Nile, and admired the rich beauty of its fertile valleys, rendered gloriously

beautiful by its frequent inundations. His voice took a deeper and sweeter tone when he described the ruined cities of the far East, the fretted arches and vast cathedral aisles of the Old World, made grand by the work of art, and rainbow-painted windows, whose artists, dying, left immortal names behind them, way-marked for other gifted spirits who are destined to follow them down the broad aisles of coming ages.

She drank in the tones of his softly modulated voice, making no note of time. When supper was announced he led her to the table. During the repast she watched him narrowly, and when wine was served she became pale with excitement. She offered him a glass with a smile; he gave her a searching look and refused it, calling for water in its stead.

"I cannot pledge you with wine; for I do not drink it; but with this glass of water, Nature's purest beverage, I drink to you. May love and happiness be your portion in life."

"I thank you." It was all she said; but a bright smile rewarded him better than words. Mira had, indeed, met her affinity. Love budded in their hearts that night, and ere the year had passed, it blossomed into a hymeneal wreath.

It was moon-light upon the Hudson. The home to which Warren Dagon took his young bride was beautiful with vines and summer blossoms. He and Mira were walking arm in arm on the cool piazza, conversing of the past and dreaming bright dreams of the future—long years to come, crowned with earthly happiness.

"I never could comprehend the reason that your friends called you marble-hearted. You were never cold to me, darling," said he, drawing her down to a seat by his side. "It is a sad story, dear husband; let us sit here in the moonlight, and I will tell you of my fair young sister who died three years ago. I shall never again meet a spirit like hers, so proud, so pure and free. Elsie was but seventeen when she gave her heart to Atwell Chandler. He loved the wine cup better. He was no ordinary man; many and rich were the gifts bestowed upon him by nature. He was a dark haired man, with eyes of rare depth and feeling. He was very handsome; in manner he was gentlemanly and pleasing. We all loved him; father loved him as a son, and so gave him Elsie. They were married and went to dwell in his beautiful home in the South, and, for a few years, they were happy."

"Then Atwell began to neglect his business for a downward path, which ended in the drunkard's grave. Five years from her bridal Elsie came home broken-hearted. Atwell died by his own hand, for they found him in the lumber-house with his brains blown out by a pistol-shot; and my dear, beautiful sister came to her girlhood's home broken-hearted; came home to die."

"It was just such a night like this, a beautiful night in midsummer, when Elsie died. She lay upon her pillow looking so white and fair. She was perfectly calm, no fear of death thrilled her pure spirit; her face would have charmed Raphael, it was so spiritual in its child like beauty. If the angels on the other shore are fairer than Elsie in her dying hour, then indeed will heaven be glorious in its brightness."

"I knew that she was dying, for I saw the hue of death steal over her features. Her bright eyes were growing dim to earthly sight, yet they had a strange inward light, as though her spirit had penetrated the gloom of the immortal day, which shines with eternal summers in the city of God." As I stood by her bedside, moistening her lips with water, and wiping the cold dews from her forehead; her long, silken eyelashes were lifted for a moment, and, fixing her eyes upon me with an expression of earnestness and tenderness, she said:

"Mira, sister, this is death. My weary feet are e'en now treading the brink of the river that rolls between the other world and this; I do not fear to die; 'tis joy unutterable to know that I am almost home. Poor Atwell! I shall soon meet him again. The morning of his life was very fair, giving promise of a long and useful day; but his sun went down in darkness before it had reached the meridian, and his own hand hastened its untimely setting. I trust I may find him in the land to which I am going. Mira, promise me that you will never marry a man who is not temperate, for intemperance is the fountain of misery. Think how many bright homes are made desolate by it—fatherless and motherless go down in sorrow to the grave, and wives and little children are made to suffer more than death by intemperance. O, Mira, I would far rather have you die now while your heart is pure and free from sorrow, than have you live, and in the long years to come, find misery and woe in a drunkard's home. Remember poor Atwell and promise what I wish."

"I promise, and may heaven help me to keep my secret," I replied. She smiled and whispered, "I am going to sleep; good night, sister." It

was a long, good night to me; for, ere the rising of the morning star, Elsie, my beautiful sister, had gone to meet her God.

"There was not one in all my circle of friends and acquaintances who refused wine in the festive halls, and many of them imbibed freely of strong stimulants. I turned coldly from them all. There was nothing to attract my love, and I could not marry any one of them and keep my promise to Elsie. I kept my promise sorely unbroken, and my coolness to all who whispered of love won for me the name of 'marble-hearted.'"

"Till I came, darling," he said, drawing her nearer to his bosom.

"Yes, till you came; and, though I loved you dearly, had you drunk that glass of wine, I should have refused to marry you. Oh! Warren, you can never know what unutterable joy I experienced when you refused the cup I offered you."

"May heaven and the spirit of your sweet sister help me to be worthy of your love, for it was the happiest hour of my life when I met with Mira, the 'marble-hearted,'" said he, smiling.

"Yes, it was a happy hour; and I know, by the sweet content of my heart to-night, that the spirit of Elsie is smiling upon me for having so faithfully kept my promise."

An Awkward Predicament.

Out in Miascord, lives a Mrs. Hempdale, who has or had a daughter named Laura, who loved a man named Jack. This man Jack she didn't like, but she was informed by a neighbor that Jack and Laura had arranged a plan of elopement.

Her mind was quickly made up. She announced to Laura the next morning that she was going to Bellville on a visit, to be gone two or three days, and that she must be a good girl, and not tear the house down while she was gone.

That night Jack knew of it, and as he read the nice little note that bade him "come over and stay until mother comes home," he smugly knocked the ashes off his cigar, and resolved on the course he would pursue.

Jack went over, but there is no earthly use in our attempting to describe the delectable things he enjoyed; it was a sugar season at that plantation, sure.

Just before dark, while Jack was running over full of the occasion, in rushes Laura's waiting woman with,

"Lor bless me, oh! ef yer ain't missis at the gate."

"My God! Dinah, what shall we do with Jack?"

"Pop him in the closet, Miss Laura," said Jack who was popped in the closet in a twinkling.

In stalked the old lady, who, sharply scrutinizing the disconcerted and blushing countenance of Laura, felt sure that Jack had been there.

"Come here, Laura. Now you can't deceive me. That abominable Plaine has been here, and you and he have fixed upon a runaway match, to come off to night, I know, you see."

Laura was silent, and the old lady continued:

"But you'll find that your mother is no fool, and too sharp for you, my lady. Sooner than you should marry that miserable Jack Plaine, I'd see you laid in your grave. He is not going to squander my money, I assure you."

The old lady rose, and going to a clothes press returned with several comforters and a pillow.

Then walking up to the closet where Jack was concealed, threw them in and said to Laura:

"Now march in here, miss; step along; I'll look out that you don't see that low born meebanjo this night."

Laura protested that she didn't want to, deploring that her mother might be sorry for it some day.

But, without paying any attention, her mother gave her a push, shut the door and locked it, put the key in her pocket and went to bed.

Early in the morning the old lady arose, and without waiting to dress took the key from her pocket, and opened the closet door to bid Laura come forth, gazed wildly for an instant, and uttered a most piercing scream.

Recovering very rapidly, she started away from the door and called faintly to Laura:

"Laura, dear, go into the kitchen and see about breakfast."

Then presently:

"Jack, I say, Jack."

A Fight to the Death Between Women—Jealousy the Cause—Revolted Details.

One of the most extraordinary murders that it has ever fallen to the lot of Virginia Journalists to chronicle was committed in Henrico county on Sunday last. It was a duel in which two negro women were the belligerent parties, and of which jealousy was the moving cause.

'Twas About A Man.

There was a man in the case. He was one George Gills, a gay and festive fieldhand, who, though possessing a dark skin, rejoices in the reputation of a Lothario of the first water. Until a few months ago Julia Ann Gill, who lives on a neighboring plantation, was the happy possessor of his affections, and although never united by the parson they were living together, in the latest very fashion, as man and wife. Like most married people, they were supposed to be happy in the conjugal relation, until one black day when the shining star of Ella Woodson arose upon George's horizon, and this sable beauty won his heart, and he—a naughty man—sang 't'other one's sway.

THE GREEN-EYED MONSTER.

To cut a sad story short, Georgia's amatorial advances culminated in the desertion of Julia, his first love, and his taking up with Ella, whose heart he soon had gained. Jealousy was rife between the two women. They back-bit each other, they sneered, they "jowed," they quarreled, they threatened, and, finally, they fought it out on a line rather new in the history of female pugilistic encounters.

A CHALLENGE PASSED.

On Sunday morning Julia's wrath boiled over, and, no longer able to restrain her temper, she went over to the "negro quarters" on Colonel Knight's place, and, standing at the door, boldly challenged her rival to a fair fight, with nobody to interfere. Ella promptly took the gauntlet up, and together they went to the dueling grounds, without the seconds or surgeons who generally accompany more civilized persons engaged upon such murderous errands.

THE FIGHT BEGINS.

The spot chosen was a deep ravine, a long distance from any dwelling-house, and completely hidden from the view of persons who traveled by the ordinary country roads. Each woman had a good stout walking stick with which they were to fight, though the use of teeth, fists, feet and finger-nails, was not interdicted by their code. Side by side they walked into the glade, and then, without a moment's parley to agree upon distance and signals, they flew at one another with the fury of enraged wildcats. Sticks were soon abandoned as unwieldy and requiring too long a range to be of use, and then the combatants closed in, armed only with the weapons God had given them for defence.

HORRIBLE.

They wrestled a moment in silence—one woman with all the hate of an outraged wife bubbling to her finger ends, and the other burning with jealousy and fighting for life itself. Presently they fell to the ground. Ella, though the strongest, and strongest, was beneath. By some means one finger of her antagonist's hand got between her teeth, and she bit it to the bone.

DEATH, AND WHAT FOLLOWED.

Then came the death struggle. With her other hand, which was free, Julia, as she admits, managed, in spite of all resistance, to choke her antagonist till the breath left her body. This done, she relinquished her hold and her dusky rival lay dead at her feet.

The murderer enjoyed but for a moment the wicked sweetness of revenge. A sense of her crime and dread of punishment induced her to give the prostrate form one last blow, to make sure that no tales would be told by those icy lips, and then she dragged it toward the ditch, hoping to hide it from human sight. But this design was frustrated by a negro, who, happening to take a short cut through the woods on his way to church, was horror struck by the sight of a wild-looking woman dragging a corpse through the briery undergrowth in the ravine below him. He gave the alarm at once, and upon his information the negro who committed the murder was speedily arrested.

BROUGHT TO JUSTICE.

A jury of inquest, summoned by order of Justice Woodworth, viewed the body on yesterday morning. Julia made her appearance before the coroner and acknowledged the commission of the bloody deed, and an account of the circumstances attending it, but claimed that it was perpetrated in self-defence. The jury found that the deceased, Ella Woodson, came to her death from wounds and bruises received at the hands of Julia Ann Gills.

The accused was brought to town and lodged in a cell at the jail, where she will be fully investigated by a court of magistrates. The deceased has been decently buried.—Richmond Dispatch.