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The Spanish Treasure.

A NOVEL.

By Mrs. Elizabeth C. Winter.
MARIA CASTELAR.

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CHAPTER XI.

CONTINUED.

The gratitude of the Hamilton family and their friends for her was so genuine that Dolores speedily felt herself at home, as if she had been with them all her life, and from the hour when she had first seen Polly Hamilton until the present moment there had not been the slightest difference between the two girls, save in the manner of Clarence Stanley.

Dolores played Polly's carefully written exercise before her and began reading it, taking up a pen-in-oration to express a word or a phrase, till at last she pushed away the paper, almost impatiently, and murmured half aloud:

"Why am I haunted by that memory, and by the sound of his voice? It is surely not a pleasant memory, and yet I cannot shake off the thought of him. Can it be possible there is any truth in these stories of hypnosis with which that whole world has come to us nowadays? And has that maniacally-dreamed somnambu-主义 power over me? Clarence would say—over me? Nonsense! I won't allow myself to think of such a thing; it would stir my imagination, and I must not afford enough to breed over me to allow myself to dwell on them."

Somewhat reluctantly awoke to the consciousness of Polly's Spanish exercise, and by effort concentrated her mind upon the task before her, to the exclusion of all else for the time.

But no sooner were the exercises completed and in full flight away in one of the playhouses of her writing-class than she found herself again in the arms of Stanley, while his hands clasped behind her so visibly that they seemed painted on the air.

"No wonder dear Polly thinks him handsome!" she thought. "Handsome! How plainly I seem to see him! If one could just see Saint John and the Saviour in some way, he would look like him with him! But now he does not meet me. Surely, you, I am not unloved with him, or would not be?"

She started up and poised the room to and fro for some minutes in a state of great nervous excitement. Then, after putting on hat and wrap, she determined to go out and walk of the unusual state of feeling that had so suddenly, and without a moment's notice, taken hold of her.

"Never mind the exercise just now, dear. I saw that Iapa's teasing was too much for you. I'm afraid our drive has tired you."

"I imagined I am more than tired, Marisa," said Dolores, gravely. "I am under some strange influence. I have felt more or less since I first met Mr. Stanley."

They started and almost gasped with surprise, but the resolute inclination to speak. Dolores continued:

"I don't know what it is or how to describe it, but, perhaps, there is some truth in these stories of hypnosis and the mysterious control of the mind upon mind. When I understand that I have, perhaps, invented a peculiar organization from my strange mind, you will not wonder so much that I am a little strange and unlike other girls. I am going to read that manuscript to you, now, at any time you please. You know as well as I do that my name is Clarence Stanley."

"Oh, thank you, dearest Rita! And Clarence, too—you will let him be present?"

"Oh, yes, if Mr. Stanley is really related to him, it is his right to be present. It may be of value to him to know that we invent all forms of evil, if that requires all our possibilities of doing."

"How seriously you take it all, Rita! Why, it is nothing but a legend," said Mary, but feeling somewhat awed in spite of herself at the grave, almost prophetic manner of her friend.

"Life is serious, Marisa, though I hope you will never know how terribly serious it may be at times. Yours should be at sunshine. It seems as if I intended for nothing but joy. But mine has been full of mystery, and now it seems more than ever. I feel that moment comes when I am completely overwhelmed—me, at least, who am so sternly linked to some great unknown wrong, of which I am as innocent as I can imagine—and that I feel that some one near to me is in great danger—danger from which I might help him. Ah, be strong, Rita, and trust in God!"

Dolores laughed heartily, and even her laugh was changed. Polly thought, but perfectly charmed, to like every thing about her. Until now, Dolores had seldom laughed at all, and when she did, it was a low, gentle sound, full of love and sweetness, like the ripple of running water, but there was a decided ring of command to it, now, light and musical, but also a trifle querulous, as she replied to her companion's words.

"She is neither Marisa, except that I think her like other girls of my class, and I have just found it out. You will guess it, Rita. And I have been odd, odd, weird, sometimes, I hardly knew that I could find young and light-headed like other girls. The knowledge of it may come to me in a moment, and I suppose it has gone to my head, I feel possessed by it."

"It is mighty becoming to you," said Polly, with delighted admiration. "But are you going out?"

"I was going to walk—but to be serious and present again. I thought a walk might prove an antidote to the nervous agitation that I am feeling."

"A drive will be better, and I have just ordered the carriage. It is already late in the afternoon, but we can remain an hour or more and still be home in time for dinner. But it would be too late for you to be out walking alone."

"Dolores smiled at these words, remembering how she had been accustomed to be out alone at all hours and in the most beautiful of the great cities, but she made no other reply, as the two girls were presently being

of sense left. I am going this instant to send for Doctor May. I know you are going to have some awful illness—a brain-fever or something."

"Not at all," said Dolores, "see, take my hand, feel my pulse—I am perfectly calm. All the recent exercises must have told me, and I feel well and happy."

And, indeed, Mary Hamilton could not but see that a very tranquillizing change had passed over her friend, and, so far as her physical condition could show, she seemed to be entirely well.

"You are a wonderful creature," she said in a surprised tone, "and I shall never understand you at all, but, of course, this makes you far more interesting. Her reading is steady, an independent and cultured, but, mostly, an easy young girl, with a sweet smile, and full of sorrows and sufferings, but also full of adventures and unexpected unexpected and curious. I am especially fond of her conversation, and lack for monotony and interestlessness.

CHAPTER XII.

AS AN ENTERTAINER.

Clarence Stanley could helplessly gather the unconscious Professor Henri Van Tassel. He had tried his most impudent jokes and had quite examined his knowledge of various passes, but the professor's eyes continued closed, and the heavy lids seemed tightly shut.

Stanley had driven into town, and the lamps and electric lights were being turned on, and as they approached his house again the usual vivacity that had characterized Dolores gradually disappeared, and the sentence to the mood of dreamy abstraction which Mary Hamilton had often observed in her before was very marked. But this lively and light-hearted girl had often deep thoughts; and now, instead of communing upon this shadow of manner, she said to herself:

"For the whole, I don't know but I might be very grateful that Rita selected my enthusiastic admiration for Clarence. Daring heart! She will be a very dangerous rival."

The chance to penitence and abnegation lies on the part of Dolores continued all through dinner, and Mr. Hamilton, who assured the strange young Spanish girl and shared with his wife and Mary a feeling of profound gratitude toward her before he was very marked. But this lively and light-hearted girl had often deep thoughts; and now, instead of communing upon this shadow of manner, she said to herself:

"For the whole, I don't know but I might be very grateful that Rita selected my enthusiastic admiration for Clarence. Daring heart! She will be a very dangerous rival."

He bent over Van Tassel and pressed the lid of one eye, then of the other, and in this his fingers unconsciously pressed upon the eyeballs. A single eyelid passed over the flesh from the lips pastid and the breath came through the constricting folds of skin.

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