

Outside the Gates.

BIANCA'S DAUGHTER.*

This story opens with a ball in a London house, where Creighton Blake, an elderly man, recognises a beautiful young girl, by an extraordinary resemblance, as the daughter of a woman he had years ago taken from the husband. The husband, as we are told later on in the story in the words of an old servant, "froze her like wid his sharp tongue and quare ways—she feared him," and young, loving, and longing to be loved, she found in Creighton Blake, that for which she looked in vain from her husband. "Sure it was many times they was together in the garden—the little gaarden wid the owld wall round ut. She wud always have me there, too. But I remember wan time—the last time. Mister Fleming he kem there and found thim—not that they had been astealin away to mate there. They did it open. He was in his black rage, and did not pick and choose his words.

"And what kind of a woman do ye call yourself, then?"

"An' she says, lookin' in his eyes—

"'A slave, Pender. A slave waitin' for death. God send it soon!' says she . . .

"Then she kim away, and we went down through the house and out, and I wint wid her across the gaardens to the wood lanes. He was waitin' there. An' she kissed me wance and rode away."

That happened years before, and the little babe that she left behind is the beautiful Vittoria Fleming, who has so startled Creighton Blake by the likeness to her dead mother.

Pender Fleming is about as repulsive a person as one can imagine. "A stout man, with a great pallid face, and a slow unwieldy body. He had a very high and hairless brow, and his eyes, like his face, were pale. . . . His lower lip protruded a little, and when he was displeased or was immersed in gloomy thought, he outthrust it still more." Still one can well sympathise with him in his anger against Richard Blake, the son of his wife's lover, when he offers himself as the husband for his daughter. And we quite agree that "the very facts, whatever softening and extenuating circumstances may have draped them, were clear enough and even to Mrs. Pudley, who was a very modern person and no prudé, they seemed to loom very high across the path of Vittoria Fleming and Richard Blake—an insurmountable obstruction, with *Rue Barrée* printed black across it."

Vittoria, it must be remembered, had been brought up in entire ignorance of her mother's history, and from the first meeting she is strongly attracted towards Richard, who, though by no means indifferent to her, "was fighting for what he loved best in the world, his freedom and peace of mind," and is determined to stifle the feeling she has aroused in him.

"They parted and went their different ways, Blake morosely to his club, and Vittoria, her head very high and a flush on her cheek, to her cousin's home. An older and wiser woman would have realised that the man was paying her powers a high

compliment by trying to avoid her. . . . She beat one small hand on the table before her. 'That's over and done with. I think we shall be able to get on without Mr. Richard Blake. There seems to be a number of other people in the world.'"

Wounded and piqued she accepts Beau Temple, a middle-aged man, who has been all her life devoted to her. "It's possible, Vittoria; it's just possible that I could make you happy. What do you think?"

The face of Richard Blake came before Vittoria's eyes. She imagined him to say:—

"You might as well answer 'No' to this good man before you, and so have done with it, for you do not love him, and will never love anyone in the world but me. I do not love you, and do not want you, but I will come between you and all other men so long as you shall live, and you shall never forget me. Now answer 'Yes' to Beaumont Temple if you dare."

But she answers yes all the same. We feel all the while that Beau will never attain to his desire, and are justified when young Richard reappears. After stormy and violent scenes with Vittoria's father, and generous surrender from Beau, we leave them "down in the gardens beside the gold fish-pool."

Beau Temple said: "They look very happy—one of them has her head on the other's shoulder."

The Frenchman drew a little sigh.

Ah, si jeunesse savait!"

"Knew what?" demanded Beau.

"What it costs," said Raoul de Courcy. I was thinking of how much pain there has gone into the making of that happiness down yonder."

A brave and gallant gentleman squared his shoulders and reared his head.

"It's worth it," he said.

H. H.

COMING EVENTS.

June 6th.—Public Meeting. To consider the present position of the Nursing School of St. Bartholomew's Hospital. Medical Society's Rooms, 11, Chandos Street, W., 7.30 p.m.

THE WOMEN'S CONGRESS.

June 6th to 11th.—Japan-British Exhibition. Great Hall, Cascade Café. 3 to 5 p.m.

June 6th and 7th.—"The Co-operation of Women in Local Government."

June 8th.—"A University Standard in Home Science."

June 9th.—"Woman's Suffrage" and "The Woman's Charter."

June 10th.—"National Health."

June 11th.—"Nursing." Chair, Her Grace the Duchess of Montrose. Territorial Nursing and Red Cross Organisation: Miss E. S. Haldane. Japanese Red Cross Work: Miss Ethel McCaul. The Trained Nurse's Sphere in Red Cross Work: Mrs. Netterville Barron. Nursing as a Profession: Mrs. Bedford Fenwick. District Nursing: The Lady Hermione Blackwood. Social Service Nursing: Miss H. L. Pearse.

WORD FOR THE WEEK.

Drudgery—the grey angel of success.

* By Justus Miles Forman. (Ward, Lock, and Co., London.)

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