

And up sprang Andrea to read the paper over his shoulder.

Papa put his finger on the following paragraph:

"An alliance has been arranged between the Marquess of Rivière, heir to the Dukedom of Beauvais, and the Honble. Rosabelle Lanark, heiress in her own right to the barony of Lanark. The engagement has aroused widespread interest in the social world, and the marriage will take place at an early date. It is now three years since the present Marquess succeeded to the title—upon the tragic death of his brother at Rome."

"Ah," sighed Papa—"that was a sad affair—such a fine horseman. It seemed the irony of a fate—but the half-broken brute took fright in a storm—and the gates of the villa were closed—it crashed—"

"Oh! why—why aggrandise death?" cried Andrea—"surely it is only life which is. Come—come into the garden, and see how the earth is sprouting—the Spring is here!"

THE CRY OF ISHMAEL.

Andrea ran out without cloak or hat.—It was just such a spring day as her soul loved. A boisterous gale was blowing from the West, before which low-lying dusky little clouds scudded to eastward across a colourless sky.

From the resinous buds of outbursting trees the raindrops of a passing shower dripped slowly, and the earth was damp and redolent of fresh mosses, violets hidden in the hedgerows, and the vigorous nodding daffodils which grew in the grove. Andrea ran down the shadowy avenue of chestnuts—and out into the upland pastures, where the early lambs gambolled, and the swift shadows of passing clouds skimmed the dewy grass. A turbulent, over-full stream rushed along at her feet, spanned away down to the right by a narrow plank bridge, flung across the water for the use of the shepherd, when in the early dawn he heard the bleating of the ewes in travail and hastened to their relief. He came now, this tender shepherd, striding across the field, grasping in each hand the four trotters of twin lambkins just newly born, their mother ambling at his heels. He was a bent and angular creature, but as "fond" over an unhappy cade lamb as a woman over a stray babe, as he fed it gently with fresh milk from a teated can, with many endearing words.

Andrea cupped her mouth with her hand, and called good morrow to the shepherd. She could not catch his answer distinctly, but she opined that "it was a melch day—a fine lambing season, and no cades so far." The girl was country bred, and had no mock modesty concerning the laws of mother Nature.

The day was young and buoyant, beneath her feet were silvered blades of fresh grasses, and her heart was in unison with young and tender things. She was dimly conscious that somewhere sorrow held sway. Physical wrongs, hunger—thirst—cruelty—pain, that some day she must come in touch with them—some day; but her keen, appreciative soul had drunk so deeply of Nature's

pure elixir, that she also realised the store of reserved force with which she would stand straight, and fight to right wrong when the time came—that would be easy. Had she not met grief, and looked up—and passed on?

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Across the field a woman came. A slight laggard figure, with bent head, and face hidden under the shadow of a cotton bonnet, by the hand she guided a toddling child, and as she came nearer Andrea recognised in this shadow woman Lois, the blacksmith's daughter. All knew her sorrowful story. She was close to Andrea before she raised her head, then she made to pass her without speaking. But Andrea stood in the path, and she stooped down, and took the child up in her strong arms, and pressed his pale cheek to her bosom—his little face was seared with suffering—and one eye had withered in its socket.

"Oh! Lois. You poor thing. what injury has happened to his eye—surely a mother has strength to protect her own flesh and blood—as a tigress does?"

The mother paled and flushed, her poor trembling hands clutched at her bonnet strings, tears sprang to her big sad eyes.

"Father can't never forgive me," she cried. "And now mother is dead he beats and clenches the child—it was him as blinded his eye—he flung his 'ammer at 'im, and me his mother a-standing by."

The souls of the women shivered in sympathy,—the one upwelling from the fathomless spring of maternal passion—the other sunk in an abyss of shame and woe.

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Half-an-hour later Andrea was still standing beside the stream—all the beauty had died out of the day. Hunger—cruelty—pain, she had seen them stalking afar off—but they were here—close at hand, clamouring at her heart strings. Half unconsciously her eyes followed the woman and her child, as they stepped hand in hand on to the narrow plank bridge over swollen hurrying waters. For a moment the two figures stood side by side over mid-stream, then the woman threw up her arms, the baby child swayed, a great gust of turbulent wind swept across the uplands—and the woman came over the bridge alone!

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Then Andrea knew that she had looked upon the horrible face of murder.

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Later the whole heartrending story was made known to the world through the press. It was reported that "yesterday Lois Bellamy was found guilty of the murder of her illegitimate child. On the jury returning their verdict, a most painful scene ensued. In an incoherent speech, broken with sobs, and with blood streaming from her nostrils, the wretched prisoner related how she had been maddened by the desertion of the father of her child, and by the sight of its suffering

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