



EDITED BY MRS. LOUDON, ASSISTED BY THE MOST EMINENT WRITERS AND ARTISTS.

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## HELEN FAIRFAX.\*

A TALE FOUNDED ON FACT.

BY MRS. JAMES WHITTLE.

**S**UDDENLY they told her Ladislaus was gone without taking leave of any one, or revealing, even to his mother, the reason of his departure.

Relieved by his absence, Helen yet trembled to think to what imprudence hopelessness might drive him; she knew him well, and that love having once taken possession of his heart, would leave it but with life. She could not cheat herself into the belief that he would forget her; by her own true heart she judged of his, nor was she deceived. Eternal and unchangeable love! how is thy name desecrated; how often is the meteor light of passion mistaken for thy pure and holy flame; and sin and crime are veiled from the infamy they merit by the borrowed sanctity of thy divine attributes! Love and Duty are heaven-born twins; one cannot be separated from its celestial associate; part them, and Love dies, for unhallowed passion bears but the semblance of Love's majesty.

At the period of which we write, the second struggle for freedom in Poland had broken out; Ladislaus had long been in secret the friend of this oppressed nation: his heart had burned with indignation at the miseries inflicted on the wretched Poles, and with difficulty he had hitherto stifled the expression of his feelings, in obedience to prudence. He had often given utterance to the wish that he had been born a peasant in a free land, that he might have drawn his sword and spent his energies in the cause of liberty. Helen's rejection of his suit had planted another sting in his heart; he scorned rank, wealth, and the distinctions which had severed him from the woman he loved, and reckless now as to his future fate, he madly rushed into danger, the consequences of which he waited not to consider.

One night, when all the family had retired to rest, Helen sat at her desk, meditating on the wisdom of returning to England, and endeavouring to bring herself to write the letter which should seal her fate, and separate her from Ladislaus. She knew that it must be done, but who would blame the heart that lingered ere it crushed for ever the brightest hopes of life? Lost in a reverie, she did not hear a low knock at the door, but a voice calling her gently by name, startled and roused her; she opened the door, and Ladislaus entered; covered with dust, breathless with emotion, he threw himself at her feet. "Helen," he cried, "my destiny is fulfilled; I am an outcast, an exile; the soldiers are on my track; in a few hours I shall be on my way to Siberia; my career in life is ended; in gloomy solitude I shall spend the remainder of my days, yet give me the hope that your thoughts and prayers will follow me; tell me that I shall be remembered by you, though only with

pity. Helen, hear me; I no longer ask your love,—the exile dares not think of Paradise; I come to bid you a last farewell,—bid me God speed,—bid me be firm to meet my fate, and I will go forth with courage." Pale and cold as a marble statue Helen stood: could these words she heard be true, or was it all a painful dream. She listened, she gazed on him, as if to penetrate his soul, and the tide of blood rushing back upon her heart, she sank into a chair. "Ladislaus," she exclaimed, "is there no hope? Your father is powerful, —you are yourself beloved by the Emperor; you will be pardoned—fear not."

"Talk not of pardon,—my own hand has signed my death-warrant. My name stands on the list of conspirators; the papers are already before the Emperor; there is no hope for me, Helen,—none, save in Him who heareth the sighing of the captive's lonely soul!" Helen listened breathlessly; as he proceeded her face beamed with seraphic joy; for a moment she bowed her head in silence, then raising her eyes to his, and holding out her hand to him, she said, "Now I am thine! take me Ladislaus for your wife, man dares not part us now!" She fell upon his neck, and in silence were the vows of these two noble hearts ratified.

Ladislaus gazed upon her with unutterable tenderness, but gently disengaging himself from her embrace, he said, "No Helen! I were less than a man to accept such a sacrifice; I will bear with me to Siberia the memory of this moment; it will cheer my dreariest hours; but your gentle nature could never survive the hardships I must endure; enough that your love is mine; tell me once more this blessed truth, and I will go on my lonely way rejoicing."

"Ladislaus, I love you—for months I have laboured to overcome my love; dearer to me far than my own happiness was yours: I believed that your parents, that the world had claims upon you, with which an union with me would have interfered; I loved you well enough to resign you.—Now in sorrow, in exile, in disgrace, it is my privilege, my right, to stand beside you. Earth has no home for me, Ladislaus, but in your heart. I am yours, only yours, in time and in eternity, cast me not from you!"

Would it have been human to resist such pleading? Ladislaus did not try; his faith in the power of love and in Helen was such, that he no longer opposed her wishes; he felt she would be happier in a Siberian desert with him, than in earth's brightest regions without him. He clasped her to his heart. "May God in Heaven reward you according to your love, noblest and best of women!" was all that he uttered.

A few hours only were granted to them; Ladislaus sought his parents, revealed to them his danger, told them of Helen's devotion; amidst tears and anguish they received her as their daughter; blessed her for her faithful, honourable conduct, and accepted her sacrifice, for they knew her heart. As a wife Helen could claim the right of accompanying Ladislaus, and before the altar of the chapel, in solemn secrecy, their nuptials were performed. The ceremony was scarcely ended when the officers of justice appeared—their orders were to

\* Continued from page 371, and concluded.



convey Ladislaus to Siberia without delay—that night they were to begin their march.

Bitter as was the parting between Ladislaus and his parents, the misery was alleviated to them by the thought that he went not forth to exile alone, that faithful devoted love would henceforth share and lessen all he might be called upon to endure. Scarcely less tender than the farewell to her son was that bestowed by the Princess on her new daughter; and as Helen hung upon her neck and whispered "My parents, my beloved parents, who will tell them the fate of their child!" she pressed her with a deeper tenderness to her heart, pity for those who were unconsciously about to suffer the same bereavement as herself, mingling with her own anguish even in that hour of sorrow.

The hour came when the prisoner and his escort were to begin their melancholy journey. Helen accompanied them with unflinching step and courageous heart; he was beside her,—what could she fear?

Years passed, and all intervention on behalf of Ladislaus had proved unavailing. The conspiracy in which he had been engaged was too widely spread, its plans had been too deeply subversive of Russian policy to be forgotten or forgiven; it was darkly hinted to the unhappy parents that any further attempt to obtain pardon or even mitigation of the sentence would be regarded as implicating them in the treason of their son. The Princess, in her sorrow, remembered the griefs of others; she maintained a regular correspondence with Helen's father and mother, seeking to comfort these afflicted parents, and finding in their sympathy a balm, which nought else could impart. Every report which reached her ears concerning their children, was carefully transmitted to England, but they were few and far between, and gave but feeble comfort to those disconsolate hearts. Once, happier news reached them, that the exiles were well, that two lovely children claimed their tender care; but mingled with the joy occasioned by such an event, was the pain of knowing that these children were born to slavery and ignominy. At the end of several years, a letter from Helen arrived at Westminster by post. Great was the amazement at the sight; the well-known writing awakened a host of slumbering memories, and Mary Fairfax long held the letter in her hand, ere she could break the seal. Seated by her husband's side she at length opened it, and the hearts of these sorrowing parents ascended to Heaven in grateful praise, as they read the following words:—

"My beloved Parents!—How shall I write? what shall I say to you? My heart o'erflows as I now, after so many years, once more address you. Do you still live? will these lines, penned amidst so many varied emotions, ever meet your eyes? What have you thought of your Helen? in one moment, all ancient ties discarded for a new and alien friend! Yet who shall question the holiness of the claims which love makes upon our hearts? Not you, beloved parents, whose life has been blessed by its finest influences. Well do I know that had you been beside me in the hour when my decision was made, your blessing would have followed my choice, nor would you by word or sign have sought to keep me from the side of him who was my heart's master. Yet often has my soul pined for an assurance that your blessing rested upon my act, and in the silence of the night I have prayed that I might yet receive it. A happy chance enables me to send this letter, and I hasten to profit by what may never return. A priest of the Greek Church, a worthy excellent man, has visited us many times; on each return he has shown an increasing interest in us; and I have at length ventured to speak to him of you, and ask him to convey this letter to some post-office, whence it can safely reach you; he is forbidden to be the bearer of any written document, but he thinks the transgression of the law pardonable when enabled by it to transmit a child's greetings to her parents. This excellent Father Ivanoff has been a comfort beyond all price to us; he has brought us books, warm clothing and medicines; he has received our children into the Church of Christ. Do not be alarmed, my dearest father, that your grandchildren have been thus baptised into a different Church from yours. Oh! how in these vast solitudes, alone with the Creator, one feels the littleness of all distinctions erected by creeds between man and man. Christ's fold is ample, and he will not exclude my children because a priest of another form of faith has blessed them in his holy name.

"I wish I could give you an idea of our life: I am sure you think of our dwelling-place as wild, savage, and dreary! but far otherwise is the reality. God is here as everywhere, and He scatters innumerable blessings in our path. At first, it is true, we

found many hardships; the inclement winter frowned roughly on our early married days; but time has softened much that was then painful, and now that Ladislaus is inured to the climate, and that I no longer fear for its effect upon his life, all is happiness. Could I but make you know my husband, you would feel that where he is, there must be sunshine and joy; his love brightens our darkest days. In our children too we are indeed blest. Would that I could show you these dear ones! Edmund is already the companion of his father in his hunting excursions; he is like him in all things, what mother's heart could ask more? Our little Mary, beloved mother, is yourself in miniature; when I see her soft eyes searching mine, I think of you, and pray that our sweet child may resemble you in all ways. Gertrude, our last born, is as gay and beautiful a creature as ever drew the breath of heaven. A sun-beam gladdening our home. Do you need to ask if I am happy? Would that those who thus persecute us knew half the joy that dwells in this solitary hut! One thing I will tell you, since it will make you better understand Ladislaus' character than any praise of mine. From the moment when he accepted my vow at the altar, he has never once done me the wrong to speak of it as a sacrifice; he takes my love freely as I give it, never wounding me by an allusion to the privations of our life: he has faith in me, dearest parents, and believes me happier with him than were I Empress of Russia, or even Queen of England. Once only have I seen his bright soul darkened. I lay on a bed of sickness,—he feared my death; my little Mary was just born,—no physician, no human aid was near; then hope forsook his spirit, and he murmured against Heaven, which had doomed him to such a fate,—upbraided man as the instrument of God's wrath, and heaped reproaches upon himself for having subjected me to such a life; but the shadow passed,—God in mercy spared me to him, and never again will such thoughts visit his mind.

"To the kindness of Father Ivanoff I owe the power to write this short imperfect transcript of my full thoughts. We are denied the use of paper; I have but this small sheet, which he has given me, and it is already full. To-morrow he leaves us, and we shall be once more alone with God. Farewell, beloved parents, brothers, sisters! my heart is ever true to you; in another world we shall be reunited, and then you will know Ladislaus. Once more, farewell!

"HELEN SOLTIKOFF."

## GRAPHIOLOGY;

OR, THE DELINEATION OF CHARACTER FROM HAND-WRITING.

IN human nature there exists no such thing as a real contradiction; no member of the human body is at variance with another, consequently every motion of the body, even to the movement of the hand in the operation of writing, must be modified by individual character and temperament. Upon this principle proceeds the estimate of human character by hand-writing, to which there has been at all times and in different countries a general tendency. With this view, men of acknowledged learning and sound judgment have, in various places and at different periods, been collectors of autographs, as materials for the study of these characteristic delineations. Amongst them are found Lavater, Goethe, and Von Humboldt, amid the Germans, giving their testimony to the value of these graphiological indications. Lavater, in his *Fragments of Physiognomy*, says, "How many different strokes, lines, and curves go to the formation of the simplest word, that it takes but a moment to write. Is not the difference between every hand-writing universally acknowledged? Nay, are not formal decisions pronounced in courts of justice upon the physiognomy of hand-writing, even by those who deride as absurd any inferences from the physiognomy of the whole man? Is not this to assume as the highest probability that, with some rare exceptions, every man has a hand-writing, individual, peculiar to himself, and if not wholly inimitable, at least never to be perfectly imitated without the greatest difficulty? And is this diversity, that cannot be controverted or denied, to have no connexion with the diversity of human character? It is objected, that the same individual who yet has but one and the same character will write at different times as differently as possible. To this I answer,—the same man who has but one and the same character often acts, to all appearance, at least, as differently as possible; and yet even those different actions have the one impress, the one line, the one spring. But be this as it may, the diversity in the writing of one and the