

Won By Devotion

- BY -

Mary A. Fleming

she were not a pretty woman, and who did not look as though, under any combination of circumstances, she would go into hysterics. She was very much admired in Washington society, that first winter; had a number of admirers and one offer. They went to Europe in the spring—Vera was a good American, but she felt that she must see Paris before she died—must see Venice, Naples, Vienna, Rome—most of all Rome. It was the dream of her life, and Dora indulged her in all things; that old sisterly love, the one pure, unselfish thing in Dora's meagre, selfish life, was stronger than ever. It rested and comforted her to come to Vera after one of those stormy scenes with her indifferent husband. Her health was failing, too; she needed travel and change; the heart trouble of her youth was more troublesome than ever. So they went, and Vera, happier than most of us, had the desire of her heart, and did not find it turn to dust and ashes in her mouth. Paris, Venice, Rome, she saw them all—she grew brighter, healthier, happier, handsomer every day. If the memory of the man to whom she was married ever crossed her thoughts, Dora did not know it. She never spoke of him. But taking up a home paper one day, she read there of the capture of Las Tunas, and among the list of mortally wounded was the name of Captain Richard French. He had fought like a lion, and had fallen with a bullet through his heart.

There was a grand ball to be that night, and a superb toilet had come home for Vera, but she did not wear it, did not go. She was deadly pale when Dora met her next, but if she suffered she made no sign. She went on with her life just the same, and hid her heart jealously from all the world. But the next mail contradicted the report—it was not death, only a bad wound—a ball through the lung, not the heart. Richard French was not dead, or going to die. Dora watched her with great interest and curiosity, but was baffled. Dying or living, they could hardly be more asunder than they were but why did he not die? It would be so much more comfortable in every way!

In the spring of the second year they returned to London, intending to remain until July, and then go home. And this June night—morning rather—Dora Fanshawe stood smiling under the chandelier, and holding out one diamond-tinged hand to Colonel Richard French.

CHAPTER IV At Dawn of Day

She came trailing her rich dress over the carpet, and holding out her

Black as Dirt About the Eyes

Liver Was All Upset and There
Was Pain Under the Shoulder-
blade—Two Inter-
esting Letters.

So many people suffer from derangements of the liver that we feel sure these two reports, just recently received, will prove interesting reading and valuable information to many readers of this paper.

Mrs. F. L. Harris, Keastley P.O., Sask., writes: "I was suffering from liver trouble and a heavy pain under one shoulder blade all the time, and was nearly as black as dirt around the eyes, so I concluded to try some of Dr. Chase's Kidney-Liver Pills. I did so, and before I had taken one 25c box the pain had left me and I commenced to gain in flesh, and by the time I had taken two boxes I was completely cured and felt like a new person. My trouble was caused by heavy work out-of-doors, and of course, heavy eating and constipation. I would advise anyone suffering from kidney or liver trouble to give Dr. Chase's Pills a trial."

Mrs. Charles Terry, Tweed, Ont., writes: "Before I was married I was troubled with enlargement of the liver. My liver became so enlarged that you could detect the swellings on either side, and it was only with difficulty that I could get my clothes on. A friend advised me to get Dr. Chase's Kidney-Liver Pills and take them. I commenced this treatment, and used nine boxes, which cured me at that time. Then, about two or three years afterward I was troubled again with the swelling, but only on my right side. I secured some more Kidney-Liver Pills, and took them, which finally cured me. I have not been troubled in this way since. I can cheerfully recommend Dr. Chase's Kidney-Liver Pills to anyone having kidney or liver trouble."

"We have also found Dr. Chase's Linseed and Turpentine excellent for coughs and colds. In fact, any of Dr. Chase's medicines which we have used have been good."

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jewelled hand "in her lovely silken murmur, like an angel clad with wings," he thought, some misty memory of his Browning reading in the old Eleanor Carlton days returning to him. Only, after all, Dot was not the sort of little woman in any attire to suggest angelic metaphor—rather, she was like an opera fairy in that shining pink silk, and all those milky pearl ornaments. He wondered as he looked at her—such ripples and ringlets, and twists and puffs of fluffy gold hair! On whose head did it all grow? Such glimmering small shoulders, half veiled in frosty lace; such a dazzling small face, all snow-white and rose-red; such gleaming blue eyes, and such a thin, thin little hand. He could span the fragile fairy with one hand, it seemed to him—such an old fairy too, when one was near. Out of his dark, wondering eyes a sudden compassion looked. Poor little Dot! It was a hard life, this treadmill of fashion, and it was telling on her. And was Vera a younger copy of this, he wondered, as he held for a second those tiny, ringed fingers, and, if so, what a pity!

For Dora, she looked upon the stately figure of a toll officer in uniform—she had been in order, it seemed, to be semimilitary tonight; she looked at the "burnt-sienna" complexion, the dark, resolute eyes—but from the fixed gaze of these latter she rather shrank. They gave her, they always gave her, an uncomfortable sense of being transparent as clear glass to this man; they seemed to look straight through the pink and white so artistically laid on, and read the empty heart, the hard little soul below. He disconcerted her before he had opened his lips, but she laughed gayly, and greeted him after the airy fashion he remembered so well.

"Ever so many apologies for interrupting your gay party, and at this hour. How surprised you must have been at receiving my card. And at three in the morning! As if it were a matter of life and death. But you know how impulsive I always was, and I grow worse every day. And, really, I wanted to see you so much. Take a seat."

She waved him gracefully to a chair, and sank into another, the pink silk dropping into flowing folds, and the point of a tiny, kidded foot peeping out effectively.

"Let me see—it is two, yes three years, actually three, since I saw you last. You do not change much with the revolving seasons, Captain—I beg your pardon—Colonel French. We read all about that, you know—your bravery and your promotion. Ah! how terrible it was—the wounds I mean. Report said you were dead. And then, again, we read of your being surrounded, and captured, and prodigies of valor, and sent a prisoner to the El Toro. And how you once were sentenced to be shot at day-break, and only were rescued at the eleventh hour. We know all about you, you see; we have followed you through all your deeds of 'derring do.' What a charmed life you must bear, Colonel French!"

He smiled ever so slightly. She ran on so rapidly that she gave him no time to speak, even if he were so inclined.

"I only found you out this afternoon through a paragraph in the 'Times,'" she continued. "How long is it since you came to London?"

"Three days."

"Did you know we were here? But, of course, you did not. Do you remain long in England?"

"That is uncertain."

His curt replies were in contrast to her easy volubility, but they did not disconcert her. She had got over her first awkwardness and was quite herself once more.

"You return to Mexico, I suppose? Ah! your fire eaters are ever satisfied away from the field of glory. And how about that shot through the lungs? Quite convalescent, are you not? So far as appearances go, I think I never saw you looking better."

It was a compliment that he felt he could not honestly return. Certainly those steadfast eyes of the darling colonel saw more than Mrs. Fanshawe intended they should see—paint, powder, perfume, pencilled brows, darkened eyes, false hair, false figure, false tongue, false heart, he saw all. And Vera was like this—poor little Vera.

"You did not know we were here—how could you? Our names would tell you nothing. To think you should be our very next door neighbor! how odd. Did you visit New York before coming over?"

"I did not."

It was as hard to extort an answer from him as though he were in the witness box, and she the counsel for the other side. But she would make him speak before she was done with him.

"Then you have not heard of my

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marriage?"

She smiled with perfect ease as she said it, and played coquettishly with her fan. He looked at her, but not in surprise.

"Ah! Mrs. Fanshawe, please—Mrs. Dane Fanshawe. It is nearly two years ago now, and we were married in New York. I sent you cards, but, of course, you did not get your mails regularly, and there among all that fighting. It is late in the day for congratulations, but they never come amiss."

"You have my best wishes for your happiness, Mrs. Fanshawe."

"Almost immediately after our marriage we came abroad, and have been travelling ever since. We were merely stopping here for a few weeks of the season, and—because we cannot induce Vera to leave."

Her name had been spoken at last. But Colonel French took it very calmly. He did not speak—he sat quietly, and a little coldly, waiting for what was to come. He had always distrusted this woman; he distrusted her more than ever to-night.

"Vera is with us of course, and—need I say it?—it is entirely on her account that I have asked an interview. Living in the same hotel, it is quite impossible but that you and she shall speedily meet. And before that meeting takes place, for her sake, for your own, it is best I should speak to you."

She was warming to her work. He was not a very promising-looking subject, as he sat there with that impassive countenance, but Dora's faith in herself and her strategic abilities was boundless. She was one to whom all success was possible, because they believe in themselves. She was resolved by fair means or foul, to give Vera back her freedom. If sisterly tact, and a few sisterly lies, could do it, she was resolved that Vera should be Lady Talbot. This man was the only obstacle in the way, and this man, though he was twice as big and brown and determined-looking, should soon be an obstacle removed.

"Colonel French," she said, leaning a little forward, and tapping emphatically with her fan, "six years ago a great mistake was made, one that I have never ceased to regret. The fault was mine, I freely admit that. All the same, it was a horrible mistake, but I trust not an irreparable one."

She paused, but the calm, attentive face before her was impassive as a handsome mask. What she had said needed no reply, and received

none.

"From the day of that marriage, Vera changed—from a frolicsome heedless child she became silent, dispirited, almost morose. She had fancied you in wild childish fashion, as little girls almost always do fancy young men. She consented heedlessly to the marriage, and the moment it was over repented of it. That repentance has deepened with every passing year. She refused to write to you, though I urged her to do so; she refused to see you on your return from Honduras; she has never—no, not once—spoken your name voluntarily in my hearing since that time. Unjust to you this undoubtedly is, but women do not reason, you know; they act from their feelings. And Vera's feelings, so far as you are concerned, and so far as I can read them, for she is sensitively secret on this point, have undergone a total reversal. From a girl's foolish fancy they have changed to a woman's unreasoning aversion, and she has never, but the truth is always best."

The shadow of a smile dawned and faded on his soldierly face. Truth from the lips of this glib little liar! Slight as it was, Dora's quick eyes caught it, and she bristled up defiantly at once. She sat very erect, her gleaming blue eyes flashing upon him.

"Pardon me, Colonel French, do you doubt what I tell you? If so—" "Pray go on, Mrs. Carl—Excuse me, Mrs. Fanshawe. Why should I doubt it? It is perfectly natural, and precisely what to be expected. So Vera detests me. Ah! I am sorry for that."

"Detest is perhaps too strong a word; her liking has changed to dislike, to intense annoyance at finding herself bound, bon gré mal gré, to a man she did not care for. But it is only of late—"

Dora broke off in pretty embarrassment—the subject was evidently growing delicate. Colonel French watched her, and, despite his seriousness, there was an unmistakable gleam of amusement in his eyes. The face was well played, but what a farce it was!

"I scarcely know how to go on," pursued Dora, that kittenish confusion still upon her, "the subject is so—is so—Colonel French, you must not blame my sister too much; remember, our feelings are not under our control 'to love or not to love.' And Vera is so young, so attractive, so—"

"Pray do not distress yourself to find excuses Mrs. Fanshawe," said Colonel French coolly. "My wife has fallen in love with another man, that is what you wish me to understand, I think?"

She laughed a short, uneasy, angry laugh.

"You put it in plain English at least; but that was always one of your virtues, I remember. Yes, Colonel French, unconsciously to herself, with pain, with remorse, with fear for the future, Vera's heart has gone from her—her woman's heart, for the first time."

"Let us hope, at least, it has gone into worthy keeping. Might one ask the name of one's favored rival?"

"Presently—all that in time. Would that every husband were as amenable to reason as my dear colonel! But then, every husband does not marry, and desert his bride under the same exceptional circumstances. She has given her love to one in every way worthy the gift, to one who centers in himself high rank, great wealth, ancient lineage, talent and—"

"Title!" interrupted Richard French, and smiled. "You rank the gentleman's perfections in the order, the ecclesiastical processions, I see—the greatest comes last."

"And," continued Mrs. Fanshawe, the angry glitter deepening in her eyes, "to one who loves her truly, deeply, greatly. There is but one obstacle to their perfect happiness, and that—"

—by no means uncommon one, I believe, in those unified circles—an obnoxious husband. All this time, my dear madam, I sit in ignorance of the name of this paragon—this rich, highly born, highly bred, titled gentleman who aspires to the hand—no—the heart, of the lady at present my wife."

To both hand and heart, Colonel French, with your permission. The gentleman is Sir Beltran Talbot, baronet; his devotion to my sister has been from the first the talk of the town."

"Ah, and she returns this very ardent devotion, you tell me? And I am in the way. But to so clever a lady as yourself, Mrs. Fanshawe, what does an obstacle more or less signify? I am in your hands. What am I to do? You made this match—how do you propose to unmake it?"

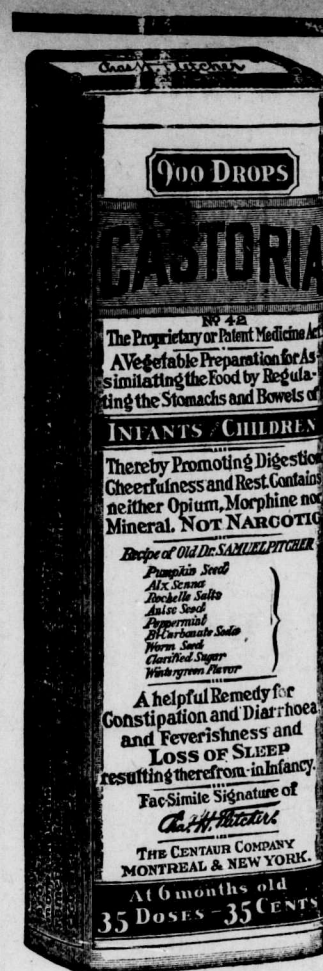
"Sir, if you treat this subject as a jest—"

"Not at all; I am profoundly in earnest. Far be it from me to show unseemly levity where the happiness of a young, rich, and titled heart is concerned! And Vera's welfare—for old time's sake—is necessarily dear to me. I merely ask for information."

"There is such a thing as divorce," began Dora, but she had the grace to redden under her rouge; "the marriage was so exceptional, and—considering everything—the years of your absence—desertion, perhaps, we might call it—"

"It will be the better word, certainly," he said, with gravity, "for a divorce court. Pardon me—is this your idea, Mrs. Fanshawe, or Vera's?"

"Vera has grown up with some



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very strange ideas," returned Dora, with a smile. "I suppose, it is not Vera's. She has notions of duty, and the sanctity of the marriage tie, and all that—romantic and nonsensical. It was a mistake to shut her up for three years in a convent; I cannot imagine where else she can have acquired them."

"It is, indeed, and with the benefit since of your excellent training too. On the whole, though, it is a relief to hear she has those romantic and nonsensical ideas. They are old-fashioned, I am aware, and almost obsolete in fashionable life; but I am such an old-fashioned fellow myself, that I believe I prefer them. Still, no doubt you can talk her into a more advanced and practical frame of mind before long."

"I shall certainly do my best," said Dora, with dignity. "She shall not sacrifice her life for a sentiment. As the wife of Sir Beltran Talbot she will be a perfectly happy woman; as your wife—what will she be, Colonel French? A poor woman, an unloved wife, an unloving wife, a widow during the best years of her life, in the abnormal and doubtful position a woman always holds who is separated from her husband. Yet such are the notions she has imbibed that I am positive if you went to her tomorrow and claimed her as your wife, she would go with you. Such are her stringencies of duty that she would go with you loyally though it broke her heart. But will you demand this sacrifice, Richard French?"

He was grave enough now; the amused gleam had left his eyes, the sarcastic curl his lips.

"God forbid!" he answered; "I demand no sacrifice. Vera was my little friend once—she shall never break her heart by act of mine. If she can get her freedom, let her get it. If she can marry Sir Beltran Talbot, let her marry him. But—I hope she will not!"

"You hope she will not!"

"From the bottom of my heart. I, too, Mrs. Fanshawe, am one of the sentimentalists who believe in the sanctity of marriage. I made your sister my wife—if I gave her little love, I have given her at least perfect and unbroken fidelity, in thought and deed. That she has not done the same is a fact that, though it may grieve, does not surprise me, and for which I cannot greatly blame her. All things considered, it is, though wrong, natural. If she is capable of seeking a divorce, I shall not lift a finger to prevent it; if she is capable of marrying Sir Beltran Talbot, she is certainly not fitted to be a wife of mine. But I say again, I hope she will not."

"If you mean to tell her this when you see her," said Dora angrily, "we may as well end the matter at once. That I hope she will not will turn the scale. She will not."

"I shall not try to influence her," he said coldly; "no word of mine shall turn the scale. But on what ground shall you apply for your divorce?"

"On the ground of desertion—it is sufficient," said Dora, her resolute little face hardening; "there are States in which it is amply sufficient. It will be necessary for her to return to America, of course, and if you do not defend the suit—"

She paused; in spite of her hardness she winced under the chill contempt of his eyes.

"There need be no publicity unless you make it," she began rapidly; "no one in England need ever know. Sir Beltran need not know that—"

She broke off again. She was en-

raged with herself for her weakness. Down to the depths of her rapid soul he was making her blush. He broke the pause.

"And Vera will marry any man like this! Well, she is changed, of course, but what a change it is! She used to be true as truth, brave, honest, pure. Mrs. Fanshawe, I am going to ask you a question, and I want you to answer it—why did you insist on my marrying your sister?"

"You were told at the time—to console, to repair her imprudence in staying with you that night at Shad-deck Light. Why do you ask again?"

"Because I no more believe that than you do. Just at first, assailed by you, by Mr. Carlton, by my stepfather, I did for a little accept the idea. But a few days' reflection convinced me of its absurdity. I thought at the time that I knew your motive, but since you became mistress of Carlton I confess I am at sea. Possessing the Carlton fortune, you had absolutely nothing to gain from the preposterous marriage you so strenuously insisted on."

"Shall I tell you then?" said Dora, and flung back her head. A sort of reckless, defiant audacity flashed out of the blue eyes. She knew it was absolutely impossible for him to think worse of her than he did, and her very dislike of him spurred her on to outrage the last remnant of his good opinion. "I will. Listen!"

She leaned forward, a fine smile on her thin lips. "When I first came to Carlton, it was with the deliberate purpose of marrying you. I tell you this for your vanity will not be elated by personally I never liked, but I did like the heir of Carlton. I very soon saw what love you had to give—and it never was worth much—was given to Eleanor Carlton. But she refused you—she had another lover, you know, whom she met by stealth in the grounds after night, and then a new hope dawned. You and Vera were fast friends, but you only cared for her as a little girl who amused you and the hope was a strong one. Then came that night at Shad-deck Light, and the way was made clear. I knew you had quixotic notions of honor and all that, and simply worked on them. Mrs. Carlton abetted me through sheer malice, and—your married Vera? My motive was to remain at Carlton; as the sister of its mistress I could do so. If you had remained at home instead of running off on that wild-goose chase to Central America, a sister of its mistress I would be this day, and no more. Mr. Carlton never have married me had you not forsaken him, but you did forsake him, and—never mind why—he married me. How could I tell you would go—how could I forecast he would make his wife and heiress? Could I, rest assured you would never have been troubled with all that talk and tears, Vera would still be free. But I acted for the best—I never was among the prophets. It is, I regret my mistake, and will do all I can to set it right. It will be best for you, as well as Vera, to get your freedom back—some day I presume even you may marry again. There! for once I have told the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth."

(continued on page 8)

Children Cry
FOR FLETCHER'S
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HOW MRS AVOIDS OP

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