

JOHN GRANTLY'S WIFE.

BY JESSIE MCKAY.

"Guess who's come home, Jessie?—guess who's come home?" cried my sister Stella in the popular raid style. That is, my time and patience were taken forcible possession of, and that without an apology.

"I can't!" I replied rather curtly, for I do dislike everything of the guess race; and then Stella has such an aggravating way of propounding her conundrums, for all the world like a mental challenge. "You know that I never ventured a guess in my life, but it was sure to turn out exactly contrary."

"Well! just say then that Jasper Grantly has returned from California in a state of celibacy, and you'll know John has arrived and brought a wife with him!"

"John Grantly home and married?" I exclaimed, suddenly interested. "O, what a simpleton—why he's not worth a cent!"

"Ah!" said my sister, settling herself gracefully in my favorite arm-chair, "what a mind you have for grasping a subject; but, unfortunately for the subject and not our cousin, you are mistaken this time, for legally and morally John has returned a rich man."

"What a tongue *you* have for paradoxical information!" I retorted as I threw myself back in my chair in imitation of my sister's position.

"Oh!" sighed Stella, in tantalizing opposition to my own impatience, "*we* have no affinity with the ancient Athenians; *we* don't care in the least whether John's home or abroad—married or single—rich or poor; no indeed! *we're* the rock that all the gossiping surf of society dashes against without a vestige of effect."

"If you've quite finished your reflections," I suggested, "I should be glad to learn how John has so suddenly grown rich?"

"There are more ways than one, it seems, of proving one's simplicity," said Stella, sarcastically; "but in answer to your query, John has married a rich wife."

"Oh!" I ejaculated involuntarily, as I resumed my former erect attitude, and caught up my pen.

"Is the audience finished?" asked my sister with mock solemnity.

"Have you anything more to tell?" I interrogated.

"Do you suppose Aunt Mattie came all the way here with no heavier bulletin than that? I should expect to see some wonderful phenomenon—a fac-simile of King George's Island rising up out in the Bay, for instance—if it should happen to be the case. No: aunt has seen John's bride, and she reports her little better than a baby. She says that he married her for her money, and as a matter of course regrets his bargain before this—that she strongly suspects the child's father must have struck

'ile' over in some of them States, and that's how she came to be so rich: and she concluded with a few general reflections, such as 'one can't expect better of the young men now-a-days, though in *her* time they were above such mercenary actions.'"

Stella disappeared with her general reflections and left me with particular ones, sufficient to occupy my mind for the rest of the evening. I was going away the next day to act as bridesmaid for my friend Emma Blount, and afterwards accompany the "happy couple" on their wedding tour.

"How provoking," I muttered, "that John should bring his wife just now when I have no time to call on her."

When I went down to tea, Aunt Mattie had not exhausted the new subject, as I had hoped. She was indulging in some of her happiest strictures when I entered, about young men, and for the particular edification of brother Tom, who, having only come in, was hearing for the first time of John's marriage.

"I went on purpose to see her," continued the old lady, "and I must say I was disappointed in John, for I used to fancy he was above the average young men of the present day. Why she's scarcely taller than Lucy," and my aunt glanced inspectingly over her spectacles, "and looks quite as much a child!"

Lucy pouted, for she was in her fifteenth year and had begun to think about trailing skirts and waterfalls.

"And then it's always a bad thing to marry a girl with money, for it is sure to make her extravagant and uppish—not but a certain amount of self-esteem is proper enough—and in this case it certainly has a suspicious look, for more than likely the gold was obtained through cheating them unfortunate soldiers, and is just equal to 'blood money,' or else it has sprung from that new fangled mint they call oil wells. I always remarked that money got in a hurry goes in a hurry."

"Perhaps she's an Anneke Jans?" observed Tom.

"A what?" cried my aunt in a shrill tone. Aunt Mattie generally received Tom's suggestions with considerable caution.

"A family in New York that claims no end of property," explained Tom, with an aside to Stella, whose auxiliary he was—a sort of social aid-de-camp—"if they ever get it."

"Perhaps so," admitted our aunt reflectively. I excused myself as soon as possible, on the plea of packing, and had hardly closed my door when I heard a quick tread on the stairs and a low rap.

I thought it was Tom, but on looking round there stood John Grantly, and in the door was