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MISS MORTON FINDS HERSELF DISGUSTED.

For the Favorite.

HARD TO BEAT.

A DRAMATIC TALE, IN FIVE ACTS, AND A PROLOGUE.

BY J. A. PHILLIPS,
OF MONTREAL.

Author of "From Bad to Worse," "Out of the Snow," "A Perfect Fraud," &c.

ACT III.

DRAM.

SCENE IV.

MISS MORTON FINDS HERSELF DISGUSTED.

Miss Howson was alone when the doctor arrived. Miss Morton, who amongst other peculiarities had a perfect mania for walking, had gone for a constitutional, accompanied by Julia, who went under protest, and Mr. Howson was in his study looking over some new magazines; the parlor was, therefore free to the lovers, and they were nothing loth to enjoy the pleasures of a life-together.

The doctor soon managed to get himself forgiven for his apparent negligence. He pleaded that important business had called him out of town, but forgot to mention what the business was or where it had called him, and Miss Howson was so well pleased to have him with her that she did not press him very closely with questions.

She informed him of what had passed between Charlie Morton and herself, and he bit his lip with vexation as she said that Morton had half promised to use his influence with her father to gain his consent to her marriage.

"Annie," he said, half-sternly, "I don't want Charlie Morton's interference or assistance; I think I am quite able to manage my own affairs without his help, and I am sorry you spoke to him at all about our engagement."

"But, Harry how much longer is our engagement to be kept secret. I want it known as soon as possible; there is no use being engaged unless the other girls know it."

Dr. Griffith was not in quite so great a hurry to proclaim his engagement as Miss Howson appeared to be. Somehow a thought of that lovely grave in Longueuil would recur to him, and he felt as if he would prefer that a little more time elapsed before he took to himself another wife; yet he did not let Miss Howson fancy that he was not as anxious as herself to proclaim their engagement, so he said:

"I think to-morrow will end our concealment. I have paid more attention to your father of late, and I think I can venture to ask

him for you now with a reasonable chance of success. Yes, to-morrow I shall ask him for you, Annie, and if he refuses his consent we must—"

"Do without it," whispered Miss Howson. "Oh, Harry, I hope papa won't force me to it, but I'd run away with you to-morrow night, if you asked me."

"Then I do ask you. Promise me that if your father refuses his consent you will cope with me to-morrow night. We can easily arrange the details without exciting any suspicion; the train leaves for Toronto at eight o'clock, you can take a walk with your aunt about half-past seven; it will not be very difficult to induce her to walk in the direction of the depot; I will meet you there and before she can recover from her surprise we will be far beyond pursuit. I will try hard, darling,—here he placed his arm around her waist,—to gain your father's consent; only, should he refuse it let us carry out our plan." Miss Howson's head had gradually drooped towards his shoulder until it finally rested on it; her face was raised to his, and bright, happy tears stood in her eyes:

"I'll go with you, Harry, anywhere you ask me," she threw one arm round his neck and held her lips up to be kissed. Of course he kissed them; they were warm, sweet, kissable lips and it would have needed the soul of an anchorite to resist the temptation; there was no show of resistance, and he kissed her again and again, getting more and more determined to win her with or without her father's consent.

"Well, I'm disgusted," exclaimed a hard, cold, clear voice, and the astonished pair saw the rigid figure of Miss Morton standing before them. "Annie, I'm ashamed of you, as for you, sir, it's a shame, a perfect shame," and the flexible nose went up and the angular figure drew itself more pointedly together.

The fact was that Miss Morton's pedestrian predilections had not been thoroughly gratified, and she had been forced to return home somewhat summarily; Miss Julia had obstinately refused to walk the many miles Miss Morton had purposed to travel, and had resolutely set her face towards home; this placed Miss Morton in a dilemma; propriety forbade that Julia should walk home alone; propriety also forbade that Miss Morton should continue her walk untended, and while propriety was thinking the matter over, Julia was obstinately walking towards home; it did not take Miss Morton long to discover that she had the worst of the position, and to induce her to accompany Julia, and so it chanced that returning long before she was expected, and entering without any noise, Miss Morton found Miss Howson in her lover's arms.

"I assure you, Miss Morton," said Dr. Griffith, starting up; "I assure you that—"

"Never mind your assurance, sir," replied Miss Morton, in her most severe, and acid tones, and with an extra upturn of the flexible nose. "I see you have assurance enough and to spare; but I think it is quite proper that Mr. Howson

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