

the very dust. Now, I have only to add, leave this house, never to enter it again, and never address to me another word. I forgive you for the terrible insult you have put on me, the greatest that could be offered to a woman, whether wife of peer or peasant, in consideration of the valuable lesson given at the same time."

The young man rose to his feet, and turned full on her the usually listless face that strong emotion had rendered colourless as marble.

"Mrs. Weston, I have made a woful mistake and bitterly regret it. To ask your forgiveness would be useless. But if I possessed such a wife, I would not neglect her as Clive Weston does," and without parting word or look he strode down the stairs and left the house.

After the door had closed on him, Virginia still sat there, stunned, bewildered by the interview through which she had just passed. Oh, how abased, degraded she felt, how she loathed the vain folly that had exposed her to such bitter humiliation, and longed with a sick longing for the support of that strong, upright nature which was hers by right, but to which she had no longer courage to appeal.

Would that she had a friend wise and trustworthy to whom she could turn for counsel, in whose sympathy she could confide. Not once did Miss Maberly rise before her in such a light. Instinct told her that Letty was the last to be taken into her confidence, especially on the present subject. But even while she was revolving this conclusion the door opened and the subject of her thoughts entered, looking unusually pale and harassed.

"Did you get the flowers, Letty?" enquired the young wife, endeavouring to assume an air of unconcern.

"Yes, though not without some difficulty; but was not Dacre here? I met him in Sherbrooke street, just as I was returning home, and stopped the carriage to tell him

something about our coming ball. Judge of my annoyance and surprise when he abruptly said he would not be present. On my pressing him for a reason, he answered, crossly as a savage: 'Let Mrs. Weston tell you that,' and then, without even saying good-bye, started off. Now, Virginia, please explain what he meant."

"He should have done so himself, if he really desired such a thing. Captain Dacre's words and actions are really beyond my powers of explanation at times."

"Oh! Virginia, I will not be put off in this manner. I insist on your telling me all that passed between you and Henry Dacre this morning."

"You speak rather authoritatively, Letty. Suppose I should refuse compliance."

"But you have no right to do such a thing. I love this man, and will not that give me a claim, at least in your estimation, to know all that you can tell me about him?"

"Well, we quarrelled, and parted in mutual anger."

"But what about?"

"You are too exacting, Letty. I have said all I mean to say on the subject, so pray let us leave it."

"Some absurd love nonsense, I suppose," rejoined Miss Maberly, instinctively divining the truth, or at least a considerable portion of it. "I do not see why married women should permit such scenes."

"Retract that, Letty, at once! Love or temper is urging you too far, and there are things I will not bear even from you."

"I do retract it, and everything else that you wish, if you will only tell me when you intend making it up again with him."

"I cannot even tell you when I will see him again. In informing you he was not coming on Thursday evening, he gave you more information about his future movements than he did to myself."

"Virginia, once again bear in mind, I entreat you, that I love Harry Dacre deeply,