

THE ORANGE LILY.

VOL. VI.

BYTOWN, NOVEMBER 21, 1854.

NO. 42.

MR. MALFORD'S MARRIAGE.

AN AMERICAN INCIDENT.

"Have you got any houses to let, Mr. Malford?" asked a man named Pickard, of a large real estate owner.

"But one, I believe. Are you looking for yourself?"

"No: an old friend of my wife's—a Miss Fletcher—requested me to make a few inquiries for her benefit."

"Miss Fletcher—was she once a nurse?" asked Malford, in a musing tone.

"Yes," rejoined the other: "but she is desirous of taking a house, keeping a few boarders, and thereby securing a more permanent home."

"I think I have seen this Miss Fletcher. Pray how old a person may she be?" resumed Mr. Malford, abruptly.

"About sixty, I should think," replied Pickard, thinking it odd that a landlord should require to know the age of a tenant.

"What kind of a woman is she? By that I mean is she capable, industrious, and the like?"

"None more so. She is a good manager; will be careful of your house as though it were her own, and your rent will be sure."

"Good-tempered, I suppose?" added Malford, carelessly.

"I know nothing to the contrary," responded Pickard, with some surprise, for he had never heard Mr. Malford ask precisely such questions before, although he recommended several tenants to him at different times.

"Well, Mr. Pickard," he rejoined, after a moment's reflection, "I think the lady can have the house if it suits her. It is situated on J— street."

"Good location, Mr. Malford; the lady will consider herself fortunate. When can the premises be seen, Sir?"

"Oh, at any time, any time. Where is Miss Fletcher stopping at present?"

Pickard named the street and number.

"I have business in that part of the city this morning, and not to trouble you farther, I will speak to her on the subject myself," added Malford.

"He must want a tenant for his empty house, for I never saw him display so much interest on the subject before. Perhaps his affairs are not so prosperous as usual," thought Pickard, as he walked down the street. Business cares engrossed his attention for two or three days, and the foregoing conversation was driven from his mind.

After leaving Pickard, Malford went home. He flung himself upon his lounge—reflected deeply upon some topic for an hour, and then started off to see Miss Fletcher—his tenant in perspective. He found the place without difficulty, and was ushered into a neat little parlour by a young girl. That lady soon entered the room. She was tall, good-looking, dignified in manner, and certainly did not look to be sixty years of age.

"I believe we have met before," said our landlord, after he had introduced himself.

"You are correct, Mr. Malford; ten years ago, if I mistake not, I nursed your wife through a severe illness," replied Miss Fletcher, with a smile, "I

do not much wonder that you did not at first recognize me—ten years will change one's appearance a great deal."

Malford thought that in this case the change had not been for the worse, though he did not say so, but proceeded, in a business like manner, to make known his errand.

"I am exceedingly obliged to Mr. Pickard, and to you too, Sir, for your trouble in calling, for it is unnecessary to say that I am pleased with the prospect of securing a house so soon," said Miss Fletcher, when he had finished.

The gentleman begged that she would not mention it.

"On what terms am I to have it?" she continued.

"Oh, we won't quarrel about the terms?" he answered.

"But that is no unimportant item to me, Mr. Malford, for I am not rich," was the rejoinder.

"Never mind, we'll arrange the conditions after you have looked at the house, he added, evasively. "When will you examine it?"

"To-morrow will suit me as well as any time," was Miss Fletcher's answer, and so it was agreed that Mr. Malford should call for her at eleven, and show her the premises.

Mr. Malford had been a widower for several years, and his large, nicely-furnished mansion, was superintended by a house-keeper, who had tried in vain to induce him to make her Mrs. Malford; but as the gentleman was so stupid as not to take hints, didn't value flattery, and seemed entirely unconscious that she was making unusual efforts to please him, she vented her disappointment by sulks and scolding the servants.

Punctually at the hour appointed, Mr. Malford was at the door with his horse and chaise.

"Why, Mr. Malford, I could have walked just as well," urged Miss Fletcher, as he helped her in.

"But my horse has nothing to do, and I'd rather he would have exercise," he replied, seating himself beside her; and driving off at a good pace.

In some ten minutes they stopped before a handsome four-story house. Mr. Malford stepped out and secured his horse, while Miss Fletcher remained still, supposing he had a call to make. But, much to her surprise, he offered her his hand to assist her in alighting.

"This is the place," he remarked, perceiving that she hesitated.

The lady made no reply, but followed him up the steps.

"Why, it's your house?" she exclaimed, as her eye fell upon a silver door-plate. "But that don't prevent my letting it, does it?" said Mr. Malford, blandly, in reply to her look of astonishment.

"I thought they had entered." "These are the parlours," he added, pointing to two large, elegantly-furnished rooms on either side of the wide hall.

Miss Fletcher was delighted, and could not suppress exclamations of pleasure as she followed her guide through the different apartments, and remarked how very convenient everything was, and the air of comfort that universally existed. Not a nook,

niche, or corner had escaped examination. Mr. Malford seemed particularly scrupulous that she would be satisfied.

"Well, what do you think of the house?" he added, motioning the lady to be seated. "I am very much pleased with it; I have never seen one that I liked better," was his reply.

"And are the terms I named satisfactory?" "Perfectly so; I only wonder at their extreme reasonableness."

"So far, so good. Now, I have a proposal to make; my housekeepers and servants trouble me a good deal, and afford me but little comfort; supposing I discharge them all and board with you?" continued Mr. Malford.

"I have no objection to that arrangement, I would as soon board you as anybody else; besides," added Miss Fletcher, "it would seem more like home to you here."

"Then it is settled you are to board me?" "Yes."

"You will need furniture; why not take mine?" continued the gentleman, looking askance at Miss Fletcher.

"It is much too expensive, Mr. Malford; I could not afford it," she replied, promptly, at the same time glancing at the carved work on a chair near her.

"But if I give you the use of it, a fair compensation, you won't mind that, of course?"

"Miss Fletcher said "No," innocently enough; but it appeared to her that Mr. Malford was standing very much in his own light. She had not formerly given him credit for so much unselfishness and Christian sympathy. He had really acted the part of a disinterested friend.

"But there is one thing, Mr. Malford, that I must insist on; these carpets are too nice to be used so roughly, as they must be inevitably, I should prefer cheaper ones."

"Very well, Miss Fletcher, if the carpets don't suit, after two or three weeks' trial of them, we can have them taken up," was the rejoinder. "I only hope," he added, good-humouredly, "that all your requests will be as reasonable as that."

"I shouldn't wonder if he should prove a good friend to me, after all," thought Miss Fletcher. "He certainly talks like it now; and he'll be a reasonable landlord, I'm sure."

She arose and walked across the room, looked out of the window, and then tied her bonnet, as though indicating that she was ready to go. But Mr. Malford didn't seem in any hurry; he was at that moment thinking that she looked very well in her neat black silk dress, and she appeared perfectly at home, also; no awkwardness or diffidence (Miss Fletcher had seen better days) manifested itself in her actions.

For a few moments nothing was said by either.

"As it's all settled, please to name the day," observed Mr. Malford, at length. "We are both old enough to waive ceremony, and it is useless to spend two or three months in talking about a thing when it can all be said at once. Don't you think so, Miss Fletcher?" and the speaker drew his chair nearer to the lady.

The latter laughingly replied, that "she did not feel inclined to procrastinate, lest she should take it into his head to let his house to somebody else on the same reason-