Guelph Evening Mercury

WEDNESDAY EV'G, DEC. 16, 1874.

HELENA GRAHAM,

—OR—

THE BRIDE'S SACRIFICE.

CHAPTER XI.

"Well, I came with a friend of mine—a certain Captain Graham—who owns a residence here, and I am for the present his guest, though unexpected business for a time called him away. Anything for a change, you know," he added laughing, "and this island is not quite devoid of attraction."

"By no means," said Mrs. Vaughan, glancing demurely at Jessie. "I certainly admire your good taste in saying so. Once here, with such a divinity as this, I can easily account for the attraction that binds you, most fickle of men, here," she added, in a lower tone.

"Pshaw, Fanny," he said, striving to hide by a laugh the guilty flush that lingered still on his face, "you surely do not think I have forgotten you so soon?"

"If it were any one else, I would not, but you—oh, you never would be true to any one longer than a month. Talk about woman's fickleness! I'm sure the wind never was half so changeable as you."

"Yes, you gave me great encouragement to be true to you," he answered, with some bitterness.

"Did I?" said Mrs. Vaughan, with a yawn. "Well, I know I was a horrid little simpleton once, but I've grown old and wise now. And if it's all the same to you, Mr. Clinton, I'll leave you now. I feel tired and ill yet after last night."

She rose and went into the room with a weary, tired air.

"So you know her?" said Mrs. Ben. "Who'd ever thought it! So that tall, dark-looking fellow, with all the whiskers and mustaches, is her husband? I declare if it ain't scandalous the way lassies will get married before they're out o' short frocks. I jist wish I had a daughter—no, I mean if I had a daughter. I'd like to see her tryin' to get married at such an unchristian age."

Jessie turned scarlet, and bent lower over her work.

Herbert stood leaning with one arm on the mantle-piece, gazing thoughtfully into the fire.

"What did you say her name was?" inquired Mrs. Ben, sitting down, and beginning to reel off yarn.

"Mrs. Charles Vaughan now; she was Fanny Tracy when I last met her," he said, as if half speaking to himself.

"S'pose you've known her a long time?" continued Mrs. Ben.

"Yes, we were children together," he replied, in the same dreamy tone.

"And her husband—known him long?" pursued Mrs. Ben.

"Yes, I know him for a cruel, jealous, passionate tyrant!" said Herbert, starting up so suddenly and fiercely that Mrs. Ben dropped the ball she was winding and sprang back.

"Well, you needn't make such a fuss about it!" she exclaimed, recovering herself, and indignantly resuming her work. "Scaring a body out o' their wits for nothin'. I 'spose she knowed all that afore she took him."

"Pray Pardon my vehemence, Mrs. Ben," said Herbert, recovering himself by an effort, as he saw Jessie's troubled gaze fixed on his face; "I forgot myself for a moment. But this patient of yours, this Mr. Vaughan, may need a doctor. I am going over to Craig's End to-night, and if you wish I will bring one to-morrow."

"It would be better," said Mrs. Ben, thoughtfully. "He's got a tremendous cut right in his head. I did what I could for him; but, of course, a body would feel more satisfied if they had a reg'lar doctor."

"If I were ill, Mrs. Ben, I should trust to you in preference to any doctor ever warranted to kill or cure," said Herbert, as he took his hat to go.

Mrs. Ben smiled benignly at the compliment, quite delighted at this tacit acknowledgement of her skill.

And an hour after, Herbert and Evan were on their way to Craig's End.

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