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"O, MY LAMB! NO ONE HAS THE POWER TO TAKE YOU FROM ME NOW."

"NO INTENTIONS."

BY FLORENCE MARRYAT.

Author of "Love's Conflict," "Veronique," etc.

CHAPTER XIII.

In order to explain the foregoing statement to my readers, it is necessary that I should take them back to the time when Joel Cray left Priestley.

It seems a hard thing to say, but there is no doubt it is true, that the lower orders, as a rule, do not feel the happiness of loving, nor the misery of losing love, so keenly as their brethren of the upper class. The old-fashioned idea that

virtue and simplicity are oftener to be found in the country than the town, and amongst the poor than the rich, has long since exploded. Simple the half-heathen villagers may still remain; but it is oftener the hideous simplicity of open vice, so general that its followers have not even the grace left to be ashamed of it, than the innocence that thinks no evil. If the inhabitants of our great towns are vicious, they at least try to hide it. Even with the virtuous poor the idea of love (as we think of love) seldom enters into their calculations on marriage. They see a girl whom they admire, who seems "likely" in their eyes, and, after their rough fashion, they commence to court her, "keep company" with her for a few years, at the end of which time perhaps she falls in with a "likelier" young man; and then if the first suitor has been really in earnest, a few blows are exchanged between the rivals, separation ensues, and he looks out for another partner. The women are even more phlegmatic than the men. They regard marriage simply as a settlement in life, and any one appears to be eligible who can place them in a house of their own. If the first comer is faithless, they cry out about it loudly and publicly for a day or two, and then it is over; and they also are free to choose again. I suppose this state of things has its advantages. They do not love so deeply or intellectually as we do, consequently they separate with greater ease. Disappointment does not rebound on them with so crushing an effect, and I believe for that very reason they make the more faithful wives and husbands of the two. They expect little, and little satisfies them; and they have to work and struggle to procure the necessaries of life. There is no time left to make the worst of their domestic troubles.

Yet we cannot take up the daily papers, and read of the many crimes that are committed through jealousy, without feeling that some of the class alluded to must be more sensitive than others. A gentleman will suspect his wife of infidelity, and break his heart over it for years, trying to hoodwink himself and tread down unworthy doubts, before he will drag his dishonored name into the light of day, and seek reparation at the hands of law; but a husband of the lower orders has no such delicate consideration. Most of them think a good beating sufficient compensation for their wrongs; but a few, under the sense of outraged honor which they experience, but cannot define, feel that nothing short of blood will satisfy them, and quietly cut their wives' throats from ear to ear. I have always had a sort of admiration for these last-named criminals. They must have valued what they destroy at the risk of, and often in conjunction with, their own lives. The act may be brutal, but it is manly.

Beneath the list of ignorance and butchery, we see the powers of mastery and justice, and the hatred of deceit and vice, which in an educated mind would have brought forth such different fruits. But, above all, we recognise the power of sentiment.

Joel Cray was one of these men—a rare instance of sensibility in a class whose whole life and nurture is against the possession of such a feeling. From a boy he had been taught to look upon his cousin Myra as his future wife; and when he believed that Mulraven had betrayed and deserted her, his rage and indignation knew no bounds. For a while he thought that he must see her righted; that it was impossible that any man who had loved Myra in ever so transient a manner—Myra so delicate and pretty, and (compared with the other girls of Priestley) so refined, who in Joel's rough sight appeared almost as a lady—could be satisfied to live without searching her out again. But as time went on, and no penitent seducer appeared upon the scene, his old feelings for her regained the ascendancy, and he began to look upon her as one who was to be his wife. He did not mind the first rebuffs she gave him. He had faith in the charm which being replaced in a

