

the man to make the continual advances that the spoiled child of fortune was likely to exact.

CHAPTER II.

FOUR weeks after their wedding day the newly married couple returned from their trip, and installed themselves in a handsome and elegantly furnished villa residence on Sherbrooke street. The bride joyously entered on her new duties, which consisted, according to her idea, principally in paying and receiving visits, attending concerts, balls and matinées, entertaining on a large and fashionable scale at home, and presiding over the selection and fashioning of the elaborate and costly toilettes which distinguished her as much as her rare beauty in all those scenes of fashionable amusement. It was truly sad to see a woman whom God had endowed with intellectual qualities of a high order, calculated to render her in every way friend and counsellor of her husband, or to enable her to exert a marvellous influence in elevating and ennobling those of her own sex with whom she came in contact, devoting hours of deep thought to the fashioning of a dinner robe or the trimming of a ball dress.

Mr. Weston, on his side, devoted himself as closely to business pursuits as ever, and toiled unceasingly in his dingy office in St. Paul street. Scion of an old and respected English family, he had emigrated at an early age to Canada, and after passing some years in a leading mercantile house in Montreal, had entered into business for himself, meeting with rare and brilliant success. Clever, wealthy, gentlemanly in appearance and manners, he was greatly courted in society, and many bright eyes had smiled encouragingly on him. Foremost in showing her preference was Letty Maberly, and when it became evident that Virginia Bentley was his choice, Miss Maberly's love, at best a selfish feeling, turned to dis-

like. It was this sentiment that prompted the equivocal advice given by her at the hour of parting to the young bride, who, by the way, did not seem to stand in need of such strengthening counsel.

Left an orphaned heiress at an early age to the care of a kind but weak-minded female relative, Virginia Bentley reached the age of womanhood without ever hearing the accent of reproof. Indulged in every whim when the thing was possible, when not, condoled with and petted, it was not wonderful that the noble qualities of her nature were smothered by the evil ones, even as the grains of wheat in the parable were choked by the thorns.

By deferring her marriage till she had attained her majority she gained her point, that of bestowing her fortune on Mr. Weston without reserve or stipulation, and her baffled guardian, a quiet, punctilious old gentleman, shook his head, and secretly pitied the new-made husband, thinking he would in the end pay dearly enough for the fortune thus given him.

The domestic sky at Weston Villa was still cloudless, however, and Clive, devotedly fond of his beautiful wife, indulgently overlooked occasional caprice or waywardness. He seemed tacitly to admit that the mere butterfly sort of existence she led was quite correct; and never remonstrated or reasoned with her on the subject, satisfied that she met him with a smile on his entrance, even though she seldom had anything more serious to ask him than his opinion on a new toilette, or on some frivolous item of feminine gossip.

An uneasy fear at times haunted him that his own absorbing love was but feebly returned, and Virginia's careless, undemonstrative manner, served to confirm him in this unfortunate impression. Still he cared not to go deeper into the question, and was contented, or strove to be so, with things as they were.

"Who do you think is coming to stay