

thing, he told himself, and he was always telling Lucinda that she was the pride and darling of his heart.

Patty, too, almost always lived with her sister. Two lively young women trying to please him was a new experience in the home life of the Squire, and he decidedly liked it. He was vain and pompous, but he meant well in his narrow way, and he was really fond of his young wife. "She had played her cards well," her father said, but Lu had not only played well, but was a very pleasant and unassuming winner.

She and Patty Featherstone knew, of course, all about the great lady at Massam Park. Lady Hamilton had all but cut her old friends, and never thought of inviting them to meet her new ones. But her mother-in-law, Lu, and her neighbour, Patty, still continued to know a good deal about her doings. They had heard the rumours about Mr. Hannaway's devotion, and it had come out somehow that as soon as the breath was gone from the late lawyer's body, that Sir George had ridden over to Combe Lodge, and shut himself up in the library, and that since then the husband and wife had lived on bad terms.

Isabel thought that she hid this, but she did not. Her maid overheard Sir George speaking in a stern voice to her, when he had first returned from town, after Mr. Hannaway's death, and the lady's maid had reported this in the servants' hall, and so the stormy interview and its upshot had crept out.

When Lady Hamilton's child was born, most of her friends and neighbours knew that she and her husband were anything but friendly. But the good-natured ones argued well at the birth of an heir. "This will make it all right," they said; and the ill-natured ones sneered, and wished it might do so. But both the good-natured and the ill-natured came to congratulate Lady Hamilton of Massam. Isabel was a great lady still, even though Sir George might have some cause to be annoyed at her conduct.

Some ten days after the little babe had made its advent, to take its share amid the lights and shadows of the world, Isabel was lying on a couch in her luxuriously-furnished dressing-room. Hilda Marston was sitting near her, and was reading a novel aloud to her, when the cries of the newly-born child, who was in the adjoining bed-room, disturbed the mother.

"Hear that little wretch!" said Isabel. "Do, Miss Marston, go and tell the nurse to take it at once to another room."

Hilda rose to obey her command, and went into the bed-room and directed the nurse to take the child away.

"Did my lady say that?" said the nurse, casting up her eyes in horror, for in her mind babies were the kings of earth, and everything ought to give way to their comfort and convenience.

"Yes, the child disturbs her," said Hilda, bending down and kissing the little pinched red face, enclosed in embroidered flannel and lace frills.

"Does it?" said the nurse, but she said it like an anathema. "Lady Hamilton would come to no good," she was thinking, "and deserved no good after her unnatural conduct, and we would see what would be the end of it."

After all, the nurse was not far wrong. The woman who hears her baby cry unmoved is not a good woman, and will probably—as the nurse thought—"come to no good." The heart must be hard and cold when no tender instinct thrills through it at a baby's trustful touch.

As Hilda was returning to the dressing-room after having delivered her message to the nurse, Isabel's lady's maid rapped at the door, and brought in several letters. There were five for Lady Hamilton, and one for Miss Marston, which, unlike the others, bore neither monogram nor crest. But Hilda knew the handwriting, and retired at once to one of the windows to read her letter.

It was from Horace Jervis. A manly, affectionate letter, in which he told her he was coming to Massam on the following day, and that he hoped to prevail upon her to consent that their marriage might take place almost immediately. Hilda read thus far with quickened breath, but presently a burning flush spread over her face as she went on with the letter:

"I told Hayward," wrote Horace Jervis, "why I wish to come to Massam, and he has kindly invited me to stay with him. He will keep little Ned with him while we are away, so you, my dear one, may be quite sure that he will be well cared for. Do not let us wait any longer, dear Hilda. Lady Hamilton will, no doubt, give her permission that our quiet wedding may take place from her house, and Hayward will act as best man if one should be required. But we need not many attendants to the altar, Hilda. If God's blessing goes with us that will be enough. May it be you, my Hilda, now and forever."

It was a solemn letter to receive—serious and solemn. Hilda knew that Horace Jervis never doubted her as she read it; that he believed her heart was as it should be, and that she would make him a loving as well as a faithful wife. With a deep sigh she restored the letter to its envelope, and as she did so, Isabel called out from the other end of the room.

"What a sigh!" she cried. "I declare I feel the draught it made here. What has he done this lover of yours? Jilted you? Parsons you know are always carrying on semi-religious, sentimental flirtations with the young ladies of

their congregation. 'She works religious petticoats,' eh?" And Isabel gave a little scoffing laugh as she made the quotation.

Hilda made no answer to this speech, but she rose from her seat by the window and went and stood by the fire, near which Isabel's couch was placed.

"Here's a lot of flattery and nonsense," said Isabel, once more addressing her, and pointing to the various notes of congratulations that she had just received, and which were lying on the table before her. "There's one just worth having, though, for it's from the handsomest man I know—Hugh Warrington."

"I think I remember him," said Hilda. "He is Mrs. Woodford's brother, is he not?"

"Her half-brother, and the coldest, handsomest, most fascinating man I ever saw."

Again Hilda made no remark. Then presently she said, with some hesitation:

"Lady Hamilton, Mr. Jervis is coming here to-morrow."

"Is he really?" said Isabel. "Well, you are quite delighted, I suppose?"

"He is going to stay with Hayward," continued Hilda.

"Ah, indeed. Well, I shall be pleased to make his acquaintance. Mr. Hayward tells me he is a very gentlemanly man."

"Yes," said Hilda, with rather a sad smile.

"When do you talk of getting married?" asked Isabel.

Hilda hesitated and blushed.

"A brilliant idea has struck me," went on Isabel, before Hilda could well answer her question. "Why not get married here? We could arrange it in ten days or a fortnight, and it would make a little amusement in these dull times. We could ask the Woodfords, for, of course, the Vicar would have to marry you, and I will ask Captain Warrington. I declare it would be great fun!"

"But—" began Hilda.

"My dear, spare me the 'buts,' and 'it is such a short time,' and so on, of the blushing bride. My advice to you is—get married when you can. Not many men will marry a girl entirely without money like you."

"No," said Hilda, "it requires some generosity," and her face flushed as she spoke. She was thinking of Hayward. He, too, had asked her, though she had no money. God bless and keep him for his generous thought!

"I should think it does require some generosity," said Isabel. "I'm not given to matchmaking in general, but I think I shall try to arrange yours. I shall tell Mr. Jervis how much nicer it would be for you to be married from here than from a London lodging."

"That is what Mr. Jervis thinks himself—what he urges in this letter," said Hilda, with just a little touch of womanly pride.

"Then you don't say you are hesitating?" asked Isabel. "Nonsense, my good creature! I will settle it all with the lover before I have been half an hour in his company. We shall have a wedding at Massam, and get up some little gaiety for the occasion."

"No, please don't," said Hilda earnestly. "It is most kind of you to wish me to be married here, but don't have any company if it is arranged so. Both Mr. Jervis and myself would really dislike it."

"Well, we shall see," said Isabel. And so at once she began planning and arranging everything in her own mind. The wedding became one of her fancies. When an idea took possession of her, she remained immersed in it for a while, and then another fancy succeeded. But when Horace Jervis arrived at the Park, on the following day, she was still full of wedding, and determined that it should take place at Massam.

Hilda was very much agitated when she saw again the calm sweet face of the young man whose wife she had promised to become. She felt somehow as if she were guilty towards him. His perfect truthfulness, his serene faith in her, filled her heart with self-reproach. It seemed the greater wrong because he never suspected that her love was not entirely his own.

Lady Hamilton received him with great courtesy when he was presented to her. She was, indeed, impressed by his simple, yet dignified bearing, and smiled her sweetest smiles during the interview which took place between them. Yet, she did not feel quite as much at ease in his presence as she expected. She had donned her most becoming dressing-gown for the occasion, and was indeed fair to look upon, and yet after Jervis's steady gaze had rested on her lovely face for a few minutes, something in its expression repelled him. Beautiful as Lady Hamilton was, the memory of Delilah's snareful charms rose once or twice hauntingly to the young clergyman's mind.

"So you and my friend, Miss Hilda, contemplate taking what I consider the very rash act of matrimony?" said Lady Hamilton smiling, addressing Jervis, after they had talked together some little time on ordinary subjects.

"Yes," answered Horace Jervis, and he looked at Hilda who turned her head slightly away.

"And when?" continued Lady Hamilton.

"I hope you don't think of having a long engagement, for they are such wretched things!"

"It is about this that I have taken the liberty of coming to Massam," answered Jervis.

"I most earnestly wish Hilda to marry me at once."

"Quite right," said Isabel, with a little decisive nod of her head. "Miss Marston is an old friend of mine," she continued the next minute, "and it will give both Sir George and

myself great pleasure if she is married from Massam."

After this it was settled. It seemed to Hilda that she had no voice in the arrangement, but stood there with burning cheeks and beating heart, listening while Lady Hamilton and Jervis fixed everything between them.

"My dear, the bride elect never speaks on these occasions," said Isabel, repressively, when Hilda once, in a faltering tone, ventured to make some objection.

Yes, it was all arranged. When Hilda and Jervis left Lady Hamilton's dressing-room, their wedding-day was fixed, and their destiny sealed. It was to be a fortnight from this time, Isabel settled, and the wedding-dress was to be her gift.

"May this be for your happiness, my dearest," said Jervis, taking his promised bride in his arms, and kissing her cold cheeks, when they were alone. But Hilda's tears fell fast in reply.

"You are so good," she murmured, "far, far too good."

She thought this many and many a time during the next few days. He was so good. Always thinking of her, and trying to make things easy and pleasant to her. He was not a man who cared for gay dress, or indeed ever noticed it, but he sent Hilda a cheque for a hundred pounds on his return to town to buy her modest trousseau with, and the poor girl shed some bitter tears over the kindly tender words which accompanied it.

"I am not a rich man, my dear one, you know, or I should have sent much more," he wrote. Ah, he was rich, Hilda thought, rich in treasures that money could not buy. This was what filled Hilda with such constant self-reproach and pain. If he had been a shade less perfect; if he had been selfish, rough, or unkind to her, she could have borne it better. As it was she felt as if she wronged him every time that the recollection of Hayward recurred regretfully to her heart.

These were very unhappy days also for Hayward. Of course he heard all about the wedding, and the bridegroom's gift, and even the wedding dress. Isabel sent for him and told him about these things, and wondered to him what made the bride not appear elated by her good fortune.

"I think she is a most lucky girl," she said to Hayward, but Hayward made no answer to this opinion.

He never saw Hilda. The girl shrank from him, and dreaded the idea of seeing his face again, after the time of her marriage was fixed with Horace Jervis. Sometimes Hayward would ask himself impetuously if all this were right. Was it right thus to deceive Jervis? Far better tell him the truth, he would mentally argue, and let him decide. But then, again, the remembrance of the complete unselfishness of Jervis' character rose before him. Hayward knew how he would decide. He would give up self. "He is so good," Hayward also repeated to himself, as poor Hilda had done. They both owed him so much that their lips were bound to silence. But we can understand the struggle. Even Sir George noticed, and spoke both to Hayward and Isabel, about the change in Hilda's appearance.

"Is this marriage any arrangement of yours, Isabel?" he asked of her, in the cold, stern way in which he now habitually addressed his wife.

"My good creature," answered Isabel, shrugging her shoulders and putting on her grandest air, "what do you mean by any arrangement of mine? Miss Marston was engaged when she came here, and had been engaged for some time, and Mr. Jervis came by her wish, I understand, to settle the exact time of their marriage."

"Well, all I can say is," said Sir George, "she looks anything but happy. I never saw a girl so much altered."

"Well, all I can say is, then, that she is a fool," said Isabel, contemptuously. "Mr. Jervis is a gentleman—is well off, and certainly not ill-looking, and she has simply nothing to offer in return—not even beauty."

"She is better without it," said Sir George briefly, and he turned away. But he said something of the same sort to Hayward, and his words left a very painful impression on the young man's mind.

"What is the matter with Miss Marston?" he asked, addressing Hayward, who was writing some business letters for him in the library at the Park. "She looks so utterly wretched."

"I—I—do not know," answered Hayward hesitatingly; but he made up his mind at that moment to try to see Hilda once more.

He wrote a note to her to ask her if he could do so, during the day. But before night came, a few ill-written and tear-stained lines were brought to him.

"I cannot see you, Philip," the poor girl had written, "I dare not. May God bless you."

"H. M."

There was nothing more. In these brief words Hayward felt that she took leave of him. On his desk was lying an invitation to be present at her wedding. Lady Hamilton had carried out all her plans, and her favourite, the handsome guardsman, Captain Warrington, had written to his sister, the vicar's wife, to say that he would be down in Yorkshire on such a day, after receiving a private intimation of the approaching marriage from Isabel.

It wanted only a few days to the time when Hayward wrote to Hilda; only a few days, and the girl who loved him so well was to be married to another man! It was at least a very bitter

reflection. True love is not lightly won or lightly lost, and Hayward felt that Hilda's love was very true.

He would have left Massam for a time if he could have done so, but it was not possible. His old friend Mr. Irvine was still with him, and Jervis had written to ask him to put him up the day before the marriage. And then there was little Ned.

Thus Hayward was forced to hide his feelings as best he could. They were anything but happy ones, but it was for Hilda that he felt more than for himself, when he held out his hand to welcome her lover, the day before her wedding day!

(To be continued.)

BRELOQUES POUR LAMES.

A CLEVELAND man, being asked by his wife to buy for her the latest pattern-sheet, called for "the latest pattern for a sheet."

A NOVELTY and a luxury now among Baltimore ladies is a perfumed glove; the odor is made delicate and lasting.

THE pedestrian mania has proved that women can walk. Married men will remember this when their wives ask them to carry the baby.

ONE of the saddest and most vexatious trials that comes to a girl when she marries is that she has to discharge her mother and depend on a hired girl.

THE Chicago Journal thinks there is a great and growing demand in this country for girls whose front names do not end in "ie." It wants to go back to the days of plain "Sal."

THE editor of Cincinnati Saturday Night discovered that his girl wore two sets of gold-mounted false teeth, and he sat down and wrote a poem entitled, "Rich and rare were the gums she wore."

WHEN a woman goes visiting she wants shoes fully two sizes too small; but it's astounding what a deal of comfort the same woman can extract from a pair of slippers three sizes too large, in her own house.

"WHAT'S the matter, John? You look very much depressed. Has your bank burst?" "No, but my sweetheart and I have had a quarrel, and I'm so afraid that she'll make up with me that I don't know what to do."

"WHAT does your husband do?" asked the census man. "He ain't doin' nothing at this time of the year," replied the young wife. "Is he a pauper?" asked the census man. She blushed scarlet to the ears. "Law, no!" she exclaimed, somewhat indignantly. "We ain't been married more'n six weeks."

WHEN a woman spends three hours in a hot kitchen and roasts her brains out almost in preparing a tempting and appetizing dinner for her husband, to which he sits down without a word of commendation and replies, when asked how he likes his dinner, "Oh, it will do," the tired-out wife doesn't feel encouraged to waste much time on his supper.

A CITIZEN went into a Norwich hardware store the other day and inquired: "How much do you ask for a bath-tub for a child?" "Three dollars and seventy-five cents," was the reply. "W-h-e-w!" whistled the customer. "Guess we'll have to keep on washing the baby in the coal-scuttle till prices come down."

A NEW YORK bridegroom recently sent a pair of diamond ear-rings to his bride, inclosing the box containing them in a jewel-casket, fourteen by sixteen inches, and nineteen inches high. The sides of the box were of solid selected Maréchal Neil buds, bound by a rim of tea rosebuds; the cover was of superb white rosebuds. A ring of violets was the lid-lifter. The inside of the box was lined with white satin.

A YOUNG lady, being addressed by a gentleman much older than herself, observed that the only objection she had to a union with him was the probability of his dying before her and leaving her to the sorrows of widowhood. To which he made the apt and complimentary reply: "Blessed is the man who hath a virtuous wife, for the number of his days shall be doubled."

"IF I ever can be freed from these adverse environments," said the despondent working-man.—"Oh, dear, John," broke in his tender-hearted wife. "Have you got that? It is too bad, you have such luck. Is it catching? I do hope that the children won't have it, especially the baby, for he's teething, and—" John didn't wait to hear more, but started for the environments of the woodshed, where he chopped adversity out of his mind, getting the kindlings ready for the morning fire.

THE SAFEGUARD.

A baby crept to his father's knee,
And was lifted up and lulled to rest,
Till the blue eyes closed, so tired was he,
And his little head fell peacefully
At ease on the ready shoulder there.
While the baby hand so soft and fair,
Lay like a shield on his father's breast.

Of old 'twas said that when men drew near
To fierce temptation or deadly strife,
And lost their way in a maze of fear,
Or periled their souls for worldly gear,
By a way unknown an angel hand
Would lead them, out of the dangerous land
Into the light of a noble life.

The story is true for the world to day;
We see no white-robed angels mild;
But out of the dark and perilous way
Where men and women forget to pray,
Into a place of a purer land,
They are led by a gentle, shielding hand—
The hand of a little, helpless child.