

Villa were paid off, with the exception of the faithful Cranston, whose services were retained. With her assistance Virginia entered on the task of packing her wardrobe, ornaments and jewels.

Callers were numerous, prompted chiefly by curiosity, but the young wife, who now felt that she had broken entirely with that gay world in which she had till lately played so conspicuous a part, returned answer through Cranston that she did not receive, and was soon left in peace.

According to Virginia's predictions, Miss Ponton on her arrival in Montreal hastened without delay to Weston Villa, and begged the happiness of carrying off her niece and husband at once to her own quiet home. No poignant regrets over Virginia's recent loss of position and fortune; no allusions to the feminine obstinacy that had placed her young relative's wealth entirely in another's hands; no doleful lamentations over Mr. Weston's misfortune or mismanagement disturbed the harmony of the meeting.

"Now for another subject, my love! Are you sure," and she laid her hand timidly and appealingly on her companion's arm, "that you and Mr. Weston are on good terms with each other?"

"Yes! Better even than in the first days of our married life."

"Oh what joyful news for me, my darling! Such unkind reports have been circulating that you and your husband were living in open discord—never seen together—that you and some Captain Dacre were flirting, and that you would end by running away with him altogether. I thought my old heart would break when all this was told me by an acquaintance in the cars. I hastened here to find in your affectionate mention of Clive the first refutation of the calumnies I had not courage to repeat to you till I was certain that they were false."

Before twenty-four hours had elapsed the young couple were installed in Miss Ponton's

old-fashioned but comfortable residence some distance out of the city.

The falsehoods alluded to by Miss Ponton at her first interview with her niece, and refuted after a time by the evident attachment of young Mr. and Mrs. Weston, were traced directly to Miss Maberly, but neither Clive nor his wife took any notice of them beyond treating that young lady, when they met her, with distant civility. After a few more years of flirtation and husband-hunting, interspersed with bitter disappointments such as Captain Dacre had inflicted on her, she married a suitor whom she had already twice refused, and passed her existence in a struggle to keep up appearances.

Captain Dacre, wearying suddenly of Canadian life and climate, and more deeply wounded by the repulse he had received from Virginia than either she or any one else suspected, soon exchanged into another regiment, and left Canada without his departure exciting any serious regret, except in the bosom of Létty Maberly.

Clive Weston devoted himself with renewed energy and hope to business, and fortune soon smiled on him again. Five months after his bankruptcy, as he stood by the sofa on which Virginia lay, and tenderly looked down on the tiny nursling resting on her arm, he said, "My darling, even now I could place you in a comfortable home of your own, but I will not urge it if you prefer remaining here with good Aunt Ponton."

"Thank you, dear Clive, it would break her heart if we were to leave her, now especially, that she has this little love to pet and fondle. See he is waking! What lovely eyes! Clive, is not the measure of our happiness full?"

"Yes, even to overflowing, thanks to that Heavenly Father who hath been merciful to us beyond our deserts!" And Clive Weston and his young wife bowed their heads in mute gratitude to the Giver of all good.

THE END.