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From Grahams Magazine for March

The Mock Marriage,

BY MRS. ANN S. STEPHENS

(Concluded.)

Gilbert was standing that night in the little portico of his bride's dwelling. It was a lovely evening; every thing was deluged with a flood of pearly moonlight, and the dew lay like rain drops among the crimson flowers which shed a rich fragrance from the honeysuckle vine. *She* was by his side, his arm had been around her waist, and but a few moments before his eyes had bent with tender and affectionate earnestness on her face, but now his arms were folded, and he looked almost sternly upon her.

Do you really desire this, Louisa? he said, in a deep, constrained voice; would you ever respect me again, if I could do so cruel, so unmanly an act?

I will never love you again, if you do not! was the petulant reply.

An expression almost of disgust swept over the young man's face, and his lips trembled as he spoke.

Tell me, have you been to Miss Smith's room to-day? he inquired.

Yes, I was there just at sunset. But why do you ask?

No matter. Have you thought this all over; are you resolved to deceive this poor girl?

Resolute!

And you are willing that I devote myself to win her affections!

They are already given, without the trouble of asking.

Gilbert's brow contracted in the moonlight and the word 'Unwomanly!' was smothered between his compressed lips.

And you will assist me—will tell her that you resign all claims on my hand—on the homestead and property? he added, with a slight and bitter emphasis on the last words.

She did not observe it, but answered eagerly—

Yes—yes; I will do my part to perfection—how mortifying the truth will be when she thinks herself Mrs. Gilbert and finds that it is all a joke.

But think of the shock it will give her pride and delicacy—

Add refinement; pray, add refinement! said the young girl, scornfully; pride delicacy and refinement are such common attributes to the daughters of our washer-women.

You are only doing this to annoy me, said the young man; so good night, you will throw off the cruel wish before morning.

Shall I? replied the girl, with a slow bend of the head.

Gilbert turned away, and taking up his hat, was about to leave the house, but she laid her hand on his arm, and looked smilingly in his face.

They tell me the house is finished—will you take me to look at it in the morning?

If you desire it, was the cold and abstracted reply.

Well; I shall be ready at ten. Good night! and gaily kissed her hand, the young creature glided into the house.

It *was* her voice then, and she was planning this design with that infamous milliner, I would not believe my own senses, till she confirmed them. But she will not persist in any thing so cruel; it is absurd to suppose so. If she does—if she does—I will obey her.

As he muttered these words, the young man walked slowly from the house.

How melancholy poor Lida had been all the previous day; how many strange conjectures had passed through her brain regarding the remarkable absence of Mr. Gilbert. They haunted her all night, and in the morning, when she came along the foot-path through the fields tears stood in her eyes more than half the way. She had cast many a sad, earnest gaze through the shop window, before she saw Gilbert and Miss Warner coming through the opposite portico. The sight made the heart struggle with a throb of pain Lida's bosom, and a mist came over her eyes till they could scarcely discern the needle with which she seemed occupied. They were coming toward the shop, and the sound of their foot-steps in the entry made the young girl tremble in her seat.

Come, said Miss Warner, addressing the milliner, put on your bonnet. We are going up to the house and want your opinion.

Miss Smith ran for her bonnet, and for the first time in her life, the young lady addressed the apprentice.

Get your sun-bonnet, she said; you can go with us.

The blood rushed over Lida's face, and she would have refused; but Miss Warner whispered a word to her lover, and he pressed Lida to go with such respectful earnestness, that she arose, tied on her little straw cottage, and was ready to attend them long before Miss Smith made her appearance.

The homestead was a large and superior old mansion for a country village. Its material was heavy, and touched with the brown tinge of age; the trees around it were majestic, and its shrubbery luxuriant; its furniture was that of another century, old fashioned and massive, but Gilbert had interspersed it with chairs and tables of lighter and more recent model; and the gloom which low ceilings give to an apartment was relieved by tall mirrors and modern windows, which were cut from ceiling to floor. Altogether, it was the dwelling which a domestic and studious person would have preferred above all others.

Lida had never seen any thing half so splendid before, but there was a heavy feeling at her heart which mere novelty could not dispel. She followed her conductors up the broad stairs, heard them admire the balusters of dark mahogany, and walked through the chambers like one in a dream. She was pale, bewildered, and sick at heart, almost for the first time in her life.

There was one room on the first floor which Gilbert had fitted up exclusively for his bride. On a curious little table, with legs carved and twisted together like a knot of serpants, lay a guitar, with an azure ribbon just attached, and as yet unused; a superb old book-case, crowded with neatly bound volumes, stood opposite a bay window, and a little French work-table perfectly new, occupied a corner close by.

Miss Warner flung herself on a seat, and taking up the guitar, began to trifle with the strings, as she turned with an unpleasant smile toward Lida.

How would you like this room for your own? she said.

Me, said Lida, faintly, I have never dreamed of living in such a place as this.

But you can live here if you like, replied the milliner.

My mother was well off once, and she would not let me live out for anything, said the apprentice, for she could only imagine that Miss Warner wished to engage her for help, when she should take possession of the homestead; besides, I am not strong enough for very hard work!'

Oh, we did'nt mean that, replied the milliner; Mr. Gilbert wants a wife, and as this lady here has taken a fancy that he likes you rather better than he does her, she is quite willing that he makes you mistress of the homestead, instead of herself.

Don't say so—it is cruel to joke in this manner! said the bewildered girl, turning very pale; I am sure, quite sure that Mr. Gilbert never thought of me! Lida, spoke hastily, but in a faint voice, and she had a look of troubled doubts in her eyes, as if she almost hoped they would contradict her.

But he does think of you—he told me so last night! said Miss Warner; and if I am willing to give him up, what harm can come of it?

And could you give him up? said Lida clasping her small hands with an energy which bespoke her astonishment that any one could resign, of her own free will, a being so perfect.

Oh, Mr. Gilbert is not the only agreeable man on earth, replied the young lady, removing the azure ribbon from her neck, and laying down the guitar, I am perfectly willing to resign him at any moment; so prepare for the wedding to-morrow, that is, if you like!

As she spoke, Miss Warner and her companion glided from the room. Lida had no power to follow, she was confused and strenthless, a mist came over her sight, and sinking to a seat she covered her face with both hands, and remained in a state of mental bewilderment, almost unconscious of the solitude which surrounded her.

Miss Warner and the milliner met Gilbert in the hall, and both were laughing as they moved toward him.

We have broken the ice for you, said Miss Warner; she is in the little room yonder, quite prepared for a proposal.

And you are really determined to carry this hoax to an end? inquired the lawyer gravely.

Oh, by all means, was the reply; it really is ridiculous, the idea of her believing us.—I wish you had seen her clasp those hands, and wonder how I *could* give you up. Go—go—before she takes it into her head to follow us. But I say, Gilbert do remove that horrid little table with the twisted legs—it is such a fright.'

It was my mother's, replied the lawyer, quietly.

Well—well; it can be put in the garret, and kept quite safe. But go along—your lady-love is waiting

Mr. Gilbert stood motionless in the hall till his affianced and her companion disappeared amid the oaks; he then turned with a calm face and resolute step toward the little room where Lida had been left. She was still sitting in the easy chair, sobbing like a child, and tears wore breaking, like half confined jewels, through the slender fingers that concealed her face.

Gilbert approached with a noiseless tread, and gently taking one of the hands from her face, pressed it to his lips. She started up, and tried to conceal her tears with the remaining hand, while her brow and face and neck were deluged with crimson.

His voice was strangely tender and musical for the cruel plot he was acting.

They have told, you no falsehood, Lida, he said, I do indeed love you, very, very much. Will you come and live with me here in this pleasant old house where my parents were so happy? Can you love me, and study for my sake, when we are married?—or if you can answer yes, to what I have said, with your whole heart, in three days you shall be my own sweet wife!

The poor girl could not answer—she was perfectly overcome by the sensation of exquisite happiness that thrilled every nerve.

Why do you weep so, Lida? Am I annoying you by these questions?'

No—no, said the young girl, half lifting her eyes to his face it is not that! I am so surprised, so shocked—so very, very happy—she broke off in confusion, turned her head away an instant, and then looked him earnestly in the face

You are sincere with me? she said; I half suspected that Miss Warner guessed how much—I mean how well I thought of you—and so was trying to punish me with false thoughts; but you, Mr. Gilbert, you could not have the heart to trifle with me so dreadfully—it would kill me, it would indeed.

Gilbert tried to look in the soft eyes, lifted so full of eloquence to his face, but he felt the hot blood rush up to the forehead, and answered hurriedly that he was most sincere, most earnest to make her his wife. He kissed her forehead as the words were uttered, and when she became suddenly conscious that they were alone in the house, and wished to leave it, he drew her arm respectfully through his, and conducting her to the hall, went in search of Miss Warner and her companion. They were in the garden, chatting in high spirits, and full of laughter at the success of their scheme.

And how did you succeed? did she suspect? how did she act? they exclaimed together, running eagarly toward him

'As you predicted,' replied the lawyer, with a grave smile; 'your pleasant little hoax will be carried out three evenings from this

But I have just been thinking—who can we find that will play the minister?' exclaimed Miss Warner.

'Here is a dilemma!' chimed in the milliner

'Not in the least,' replied Gilbert; 'I have thought of that already. My friend Morris, who graduated with me at Yale last year, is just the man. He looks as much like a parson as if bred to the cloth—I will ride into town in the morning, and let him into our frolic.

There—now all is arranged. We must give her a wedding dress, Gilbert, and that will cousole her for your loss,' said Miss Warner.

They walked toward the house, and found Lida standing in the hall. She advanced to the milliner, as she came in.

I am not well enough to work this afternoon—can I go home?'

Oh, certainly! We cannot expect you to think of a trade now,' said the milliner, casting a glance of sly redicule at Miss Warner. 'Mr. Gilbert, of course, will see you home.'

The blood burned in Lida's cheek but she answered, with quiet dignity, that she wished to see her mother alone.

Then she is not out washing to-day?' inquired the milliner, with another covert look at Gilbert and his companion.

Lida could not understand the low malice of the question, so she answered quietly, that her mother was athome, and left the party, when they went toward the milliner's work-room.

The next morning the washerwoman was at our house very early—she wished to consult with those who had been kind friends to her, regarding the strange proposal which her daughter had received. Mr Gilbert had been at her house the night before, she said, and everything was settled for a wedding on the next evening but one. Of course no opinion could be given after affairs had gone so far; so consenting that the children might come to see Lida on her wedding day, our mother allowed the the kind woman to depart without expressing any of the misgivings that beset her own mind.

Mr. Gilbert drove by our house during the afternoon, and took the New Haven road.—The second day from that we were permitted to visit the washerwoman's house, behind Castle Rock.

It was a bright day, and the little house looked neat and cheerful as we approached it, through a foot path cut across a meadow, golden with butter cups and motted lilies. Lida was gathering flowers from a little yard which surrounded the door in her dwelling, and in a few moments we were busy as herself gathering daisies from the medow, and wild honeysuckle from the rocks, which we bro't down in armsful, and heaped on the door-step ready for use.

Before sunset the widow's house might have been mistaken for a sylvan lodge, it was so fragrant with blossoms. The whole dwelling contained but three apartments, a kitchen and two small sleeping rooms; but these were as neat as human hands could make them. The pine floors and splint chairs were scoured as white as it was possible for wood to become, the little old-fashioned looking glasses were crowned with asparagus branches, where the red berries hung thick and bright as coral drops along the delicate green spray; the scant window curtains, of coarse but snow white muslin, were festooned with wild blossoms and ground pine woven together; while that in the 'spare bed-room' was looped up to a single wreath of wild roses and sweet brier, which filled the window with a delicious fragrance. On the little table, in this apartment stood a japan waiter, with a decantar of wine in the middle, surrounded by slender wine glasses; and a fine napkin was spread over a loaf of cake close by. A dress of purest muslin, lay upon the counterpane of old fashioned dimity, that covered the bed like a sheet of snow.

We stood by while the old woman arrayed her child for the bridal, and wondered why the hand should tremble so, and why tears should fill our Lida's eyes so constantly, when she observed her mother's agitation.

It was scarcely dark when we saw a party of two ladies, and as many gentlemen, coming along the foot path toward the house. The washerwoman closed the bed-room door;—and went out to receive the guests, leaving us with the bride. How beautiful and pure she looked in the simple dress, that had exhausted all the money which her mother had hoarded up for the winter, in the purchase. A bud, with the blush leaves just bursting asunder, lay within the folds of sheer muslin that covered her bosom. When she placed it there, Lida's cheek grew pale and her hands began to tremble, for that moment she heard Gilbert's step in the next room But when her mother came into the room, folded her in a kind embrace, and led her toward the young man who came forward to receive her, a soft blush broke over her cheek, and her fingers wove themselves in his confidingly, and if she had nothing to fear then, yet could not help trembling all the time.

Be kind to my child, said the washerwoman, gently; when I was married to her father, he was prosperous, happy and proud as you are. He died and left me in poverty. His child has never heard a harsh word beneath this humble roof—be gentle to her, as I have been.

The old woman sat down, and bending her head began to smooth the folds of her faded silk dress, and thus she tried to conceal the tears that her own words had unlocked.

Gilbert did not answer, but his cheek turned a shade paler, and he bent his eyes almost sternly on the two females who had urged him into his present embarrassing position.

The young student arose. He had been wisely chosen by the plotters, for never was clerical dignity more thoroughly put on. He looked serious and earnest enough to have deceived more suspicious persons than Lida and her honest hearted mother. He pronounced the ceremony with impressive solemnity—so impressive that Miss Warner and her companion could hardly suppress their laughter at his successful acting.

The young couple sat down. Lida, pale, confused and trembling; but Gilbert sat motionless, and with his eyes bent steadfastly on the two females who were a little nearer the door. They were whispering together. Miss Warner seemed striving to suppress her inclination to mirth till proper time, and a sight giggle now and then broke from the milliner at the exquisite success of their joke.

The washerwoman arose and brought forth the cake and wine. Lida could not taste a drop, but she touched her lips to the glass, while Gilbret drained his to the bottom. The milliner was compelled to set her wine on a table, to conceal the laughter which shook her hand—while Miss Warner gracefully drank to the bride.

And now, said that the young lady, setting down her glass, and dusting the crumbs of cake from her white gloves, 'as our amusements is over for the evening, we will return home, if you are ready, Mr. Gilbert.'

Lida lifted her eyes almost in terror to the man whom she believed to be her husband, while the washerwoman arose from her seat and looked Miss Warner keenly in the face.

You need not look at me so voraciously, good woman,' said the unfeeling girl; 'if I have lent Mr. Gilbert to Miss Lida here, it was for our mutual amusement; but play cannot last forever, and as it is getting dark, we must go home again.

Very much delighted with our little party, chimed in Miss Smith; if you ever get up a wedding *in earnest*, this would be a delicate pattern. I trust the bride will not feel so much exalted that she cannot come to her work in the morning.

The washerwoman was deadly pale; she lifted her hand as if to enforce silence on the flippant mockery with which she was insulted, and stepping a pace forward, was about to address the man who had violated the peace of her home; but Lida had risen on her feet, in trying to reach her mother staggered, and would have fallen, but Gilbert reached forth his arm, and drawing her to his bosom, kissed her forehead, and her pale lips, while he trembled from head to foot.

What means this? exclaimed Miss Warner, grasping his arm in passionate amazement; 'what means this, in my presence, sir?'

It means, said Gilbert, who lifted his head and looked firmly around, it means that she is my wife, my own beloved and wedded wife, before God and in the sight of man! Weak, wicked girl; did you believe me so base—so utterly devoid of all manhood, that I should lend mysely to a plot so atrocious? I loved you, Louisa—at least I thought so—and when I was flung into the dangerous society of a creature so good and lovely as this young girl, who is my wife, I felt that your fears were well founded, that my allegiance to yourself was in danger. I consented, as an honorable man should, to see her no more. You were not satisfied with this submission to a just demand; but would have made me a villian; and after that would have married the dastard for the sake of *his property and the homestead!*

Before the last words were fairly uttered, Miss Warner had dropped to the floor in violent hysterics, and some two hours after she undertook rather an unpleasant walk home through the damp grass, between the crest fallen milliner and the young clergyman.

The next day she had the satisfaction of seeing Gilbert drive toward the homestead in a barouche which had been purchased for another occasion, and in the back seat was the washerwoman, in a new straw bonnet and that identical red cloak, by her side sat our Lida looking as pretty as a snow drop, a sight which made the village aristocrat rather out of conceit with the mock marriage; but we were perfectly satisfied; true, we were obliged to look out for new help; but the homestead gained a capital house-keeper in the washerwoman, and the most lovely, joyous and warm hearted little mistress you ever saw, when it received, our Lida.

An honest Woman.—A New Orleans paper says, that soon after the Treasurer of Mississippi fled, his wife called on the Governor of the State and delivered $96,000 in gold and Treasury notes, with a parcel containing State Bonds. Here is another instance of the superior honesty of the gentler sex. Doubtless that wife persuaded the dishonest man, for the sake of his family's reputation, to leave his booty.

Lusus Naturæ.—A hen, belonging to Benj. Gallaway, Esq., of Weakley county, Tennessee, was sometime ago bitten by a rattlesnake, but by proper attention, the wound was cured However, strange to tell, we are informed that every egg laid since that time by this hen has a picture of a rattlesnake represented upon the shell. Mr. Gallaway, who is afraid to use these eggs in the family, has kept them, and will with pleasure exhibit them to the inspection of the incredulous.—[Mills Pt. Herald.

To Raise good Radishes—Take pure sand, some depth from the surface, or pure earth below where it has been tilled or mowed, or sea sand washed by the waves,—make a bed in the garden, six or eight inches deep and as big as you please; in this sow your radish seed, and they will grow well without manure, and be free from worms;—we have tried it frequently, and never failed—Radishes that are grown very early in the season are of slow growth, and inferior to those grown after the weather is warm enough to hasten them; as the faster the growth, the more tender, and the finer the flavor.—*Yankee Farmer.*

Shocking and Disgraceful Outrage—On Sunday evening last, the Rev. Joseph Dickey minister of the 3d presbyterian congregation of Rathfriland, had assembled his hearers in the meeting-house for evening service, and while in the act of concluding his sermon the report of a gun and the crashing of a window beside the pulpit were suddenly heard, and the rev. gentleman was observed to stagger & fall, and, upon being lifted up, it was found that a number of slugs had entered both arms passing across his breast. A rush was instantly made by the people to the outside of the house, with a view to securing the assassin; but owing to the darkness of the night, and the consternation which ensued, having for some seconds held them as it were spell bound, the miscreant escaped being discovered. A part of the blazing wadding of the gun was found on the window sill.—*Ulster Times.*

Freshets.—The rivers throghout the Province are swolen to an unusal height.

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