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Love a Conqueror

OR—
WEDDED AT LAST.

CHAPTER XLIII.

He was turning away when her
voice arrested him.

"Dr. Lloyd!" Shirley said sharply.

He looked at her in some surprise.

"Dr. Lloyd has gone to London,"

he said, quietly. "Did you not know
it? He went with poor Mrs. Pitt.

and—"

A groan escaped from Shirley's lips
and she sank down upon a chair, her
hands hanging helplessly by her side.

Dr. Lloyd was an elderly gray-haired
man whom she could have trusted;

but Mr. Litton was a stranger.

"Shall I not do?" he said gently.

"He left me as his substitute, you
know, and, in default of better pro-

fessional aid, I can only offer you
mine."

Shirley shook her head despairing-
ly.

"I do not doubt your ability," she
said unsteadily, "but—"

"Nor my willingness, I hope?" he
put in warmly. "I shall be happy to

believe me, if I can be of any use to
you."

"You are very good," she answered,
covering her face with her hands for a

moment; and, seeing how terribly
agitated she was, he quietly left the

waiting room, and going into the
surgery, mixed her a soothing

draught and a restorative, with
which he presently returned.

"Drink this," he said gently but
firmly; and Shirley, because it was

too much trouble to resist, obeyed
him, looking up as she finished into

his face with wistful wondering eyes.

"Mr. Litton, can I trust you?" she
asked, a great earnestness in her

voice and on her face.

"I hope so," he said, smiling a lit-
tle. "My dear Mrs. Grant," he added,

with a gravity which sat well on his
handsome face, "in the profession to

which I have the honor to belong we
become the recipients of many se-

crets, and a doctor is obliged to be
as trustworthy as a confessor him-

self. If what you have to tell me is
something which you hesitate to di-

vide because you fear it may get
wind, you can dismiss your fears.

You may safely trust me, for your
secret will never pass my lips."

"It is not my secret only," she

said, looking up at him with wistful,
troubled eyes. "Oh, if I dared tell

you—if I dared tell you!"

"Is it my loyalty you doubt?"

"No—oh, no!"

"Then why do you hesitate? I am
not as old as Dr. Lloyd certainly,

but I can keep a secret as well as
my hair were gray."

Shirley rose in her uncertainty
clasping and unclasping her hand

in her excessive agitation.

"Mr. Litton, forgive me," she said
brokenly, after a pause. "I am a

very great distress and perplexed;
and I do not know what to do.

I hardly dare trust any one."

"Would you like me to give you
my word of honor that I will see

nothing of anything you tell me?" he
asked gently, pitying the intense dis-

tress from which she was so evident-
ly suffering.

"Will you?" she said eagerly, turn-
ing to him with outstretched hand.

"Yes—willingly, if it will alleviat
your distress."

"Oh, thank you—thank you!" she
cried. "Will you promise me to as-

sure no questions but such as are abso-
lutely necessary, to tell no one in all the

world where I shall take you to-
night, and what you see there?"

"I promise."

"It is a matter of life and death,"
she said brokenly. "Oh, if I could

only be sure of what I ought to do! It
seems as if there were no alternative

as if I must trust you; and yet—and
yet—"

She wrung her hands passionately.
Roland Litton looked at her with

sincere compassion; he could not
feel offended at her want of confi-

dence in him; every other feeling
merged in pity for her distress.

"Oh, help me!" she said passion-
ately. Roland Litton looked at her

with sincere compassion; he could
not feel offended at her want of con-

fidence in him; every other feeling
merged in pity for her distress.

"Oh, help me!" she said passion-
ately. "Tell me what to do."

"How can I, Mrs. Grant? I can
only say that you may safely trust

me."

She looked at him eagerly and keen-
ly for a moment.

"Yes," she said then, "I will trust
you. Will you come with me?"

He looked surprised for a moment,
then said hastily—

"Certainly! I am at your service."

He opened the door for her, and,
with a desperate effort, she regained

sufficient composure to precede him

out of the room, across the little pas-
sage, and into the garden.

"Don't sit up for me, Saunders,"

Mr. Litton said carelessly. "I have
a latch-key, and in all probability I

shall not be required to-night."

"Very well, sir," said Saunders,
who shut the door noisily after Mr.

Litton, as he followed Mrs. Grant
down the path, joining her at the

gate.

She was calmer now; the draught
he had given her was taking effect,

and the face she turned toward him
had lost its agonized expression of

fear.

"Are you well wrapped up?" he
asked gently. "I fear not," he added,

as he drew her shawl round her and
gave her his arm. "I wish I had

brought a wrap for you."

"I do not need it," she answered
quickly. "I am quite warm, almost

too warm indeed."

"Too warm on this bitter night!"
he said, incredulously. "It is not a fit

night for a delicate woman like your-
self to be out."

Notwithstanding the intense ner-
vous excitement under which she was

laboring, Shirley Glynn noticed, and
never forgot, her companion's

thoughtful care of her that night. He
talked easily and pleasantly, thus

avoiding the embarrassment of a si-
lent walk, but without giving her the

rouble of answering. He described
the dinner party at the Rectory;

meanwhile taking care not to walk
too fast for her, but suiting his step

to hers, and making her lean upon
him when they came to the hill on

which the school house stood. And
then, seeing that his light chat dis-

tracted her, he ceased, and gave his
whole attention to affording her the

support she needed far more than
he owned even to herself.

At last they reached the school-
house, and Shirley's trembling fin-

gers unlocked the door and admitte
him into the little passage. When

he had closed the door, she fastene
d securely on the inside, and then

led the way into the sitting room.
The lamp was burning on the table

and there was a bright fire.

With an abrupt gesture, Mrs.
Grant pointed to a chair and bade

him sit down for a moment; then
rowing off her shawl and bonnet

she went upstairs, leaving Mr. Litton
alone. Five minutes passed while he

waited for her, and the sound of
voices reached him as he sat—muf-

led voices, it seemed to him, broke-
nce or twice by a dreadful cough.

Then she came down and beckoned t
the doctor. He put his hat on the

table and went to the door at whic
she stood.

"I have trusted you," she said, and
you have promised. Now come with

me, and remember the promise you
gave me."

"I will remember it," the young
man said gravely, as he followed her

up the narrow staircase into the
room whence the voices had pro-

ceeded.

CHAPTER XLIV.

"It is a very painful business alter-
gether," said Lady Oliphant gravely.

"I really do not know what to do for
the best."

"I am afraid, my dear, that you
have no one but yourself to blame for

the annoyance," said Sir Frederic
quietly as he looked up from his

newspaper. "You took Mrs. Grant on
trust; although you might have

guessed that there was some mys-
tery about her. That a woman of

Mrs. Grant's appearance and educa-
tion and manner should be wandering

about the country in a state of des-
titution was in itself a most conspic-

uous circumstance which I pointed out
to you at the time."

"My dear Frederic, you were almost
as much infatuated about her as we

were!"

Sir Frederic smiled.

"I am glad you said 'almost,'" he
remarked. "Because, if you had said

'quite,' I should have thought you
were jealous. Yes, I will own to you

frankly that the singular and uncon-
mon charm of manner which Mrs.

Grant possessed was not without its
effect upon me. But I cannot con-

scientiously say," he added, smiling,
"that I ever approved of the child's

great intimacy with her."

"She seemed so good and sweet and
honest," Lady Oliphant said sorrow-

fully. "I cannot even now think of
her as anything else."

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read the directions with every box.

"My dear Margaret," said Sir Frederic,
putting away his newspaper

and going to his wife's side as she
stood at the window looking out on

the terrace in front of the hall. "W-

omen to all appearance as sweet and
true as Mrs. Grant have turned out

depraved and worthless, and al-
though I hope I should be the last

man to judge any one hastily, I can-
not help thinking that you have been

grossly deceived in your schoolmis-
tress, and that the sooner you get rid

of her the better."

"Oh, Fred!" Lady Oliphant ex-
claimed sadly, as she recalled Mrs.

Grant's pale sad face and wistful eyes.
"Do you really think it is so bad as

that?"

"It is not desirable to retain a
schoolmistress about whom the whole

village is chattering," he said grave-
ly. "You can go nowhere without

hearing some remarks about her. The
frequency of Mr. Litton's visits at her

cottage at all hours of the night is
sufficient in itself to damage her re-

putation seriously, and she has been
seen walking with him and letting

him out of the house in the middle
of the night. Moreover she must have

had some good reason for dismissing
the little servant and living alone, as

she has been doing, ever since Christ-
mas. We cannot blind ourselves to

these facts, my dear, however much
we may wish to do so. Besides—"

"Besides what?" Lady Oliphant
looked up eagerly.

(To be continued.)

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