

LITERARY.

TRUST NOT A FLIRT.

Trust not a fickle flirt, (And legion is their name!) Her skill she does exert To catch unthinking game. Then trust her not; Her presence shun.

She loves to be admired, And to be flattered too, Nor much pains is required This fickle flirt to woo. Yet trust her not, But from her run.

She likes to have a beau To follow in her train, And to be sure of one, Will trifle perhaps with ten. A swell strung bow She will possess.

From such an empty thing Save me! let me gain A noble-minded girl, With heart as well as brain. Thenshall I know True happiness.

Pride and Jealousey, Or a Wronged Husband.

The bright sunshine of early May poured through the folding windows of the sumptuously furnished drawing room in Delgrave House, and fell aslant the full, round figure of its owner as he reclined luxuriously in his easy chair. A loving smile illumined his florid features, and lent a merry sparkle to his sharp grey eyes. The wreath of thin white hair that crested his broad forehead, and the deep lines that furrowed the corners of his pleasant-shaped mouth, would have given credence to the belief that he had long since turned the summit of life's hill, but it was not so; and upon taking a more earnest gaze at Mr. Samuel Babington, the reputed wealthy banker, as he sat there with that spring sunlight resting on him, the conviction forced itself upon the observer that he was not only revelling in the noontide of healthful life, but that the warm glow of unshaded happiness dwelt in his ruddy face. The tall, stately figure of his motherless daughter stood beside him, with one hand gathered fondly round his neck, and the other raised to support her drooping, pensive head; whilst over the delicate surface of her pale featured was spread a blushing, haughty frown.

Now don't deny it, Grace,' said her father; 'I know by that tell-tale colour on your cheeks that you are glad to hear your cousin is soon returning.'

'Why should I be otherwise?' was the daughter's supercilious response. 'Was he not my playmate long years ago? and—'

'You hope he will be your life-mate in long years to come,' interrupted her father in a merry, laughing voice. 'And I hope so too. He is a frank, generous, kind-hearted fellow, and rich into the bargain—immensely rich.'

'His recommendations are numerous and great I admit,' and Grace, with the same languid coldness; 'especially the last.'

'Yes,' said her father, 'there he is, like a ripe, golden plum waiting to be plucked.'

'Dear me, how very tempting!' laughed Grace; 'my mouth quite waters. What do you think, Clemency?'

Clemency Maybrook, who was seated by the folding window, deep in the mysteries of a crayon drawing, looked up from her sketch and turned the light of her full dark eyes on Grace, saying quietly, 'Blessed is her fate who chooses well and wisely.'

'Well said, Clemency! well said!' exclaimed Mr. Babington.

'I tell you, father, that my cousin Hugh is not my choice,' exclaimed Grace, sharply, whilst a resentful expression of anger gleamed in her eye.

'Then he shall never marry you, said Mr. Babington, seriously. 'If he were as wise as Solomon and as rich as Plutus, he would be too poor in wealth and wisdom for my child, unless she love him.'

A servant entered the drawing-room at this juncture, and announced that Mr. Rudderforth was desirous of an interview. A passing shadow swept over the banker's face when he heard the name, and chased away his light humour. 'Show him into the library,' he said, with an imperious gesture of dismissal to the servant.

The name had fallen with a different effect upon Clemency Maybrook, and brought an unusual lustre into her

dark eyes and a brighter look into her face.

'You will not let him detain you?' said Grace, nestling her head upon her father's bosom as he rose to leave the room.

'No, darling, no,' he replied; 'merely some trifling business; we shall soon despatch it. Order the carriage for a drive.'

He drew his hands caressingly through the fair girl's golden hair, and leaving a kiss upon her soft pale cheek, followed the servant from the room.

'Frankly now,' said Clemency, throwing aside her drawing, and regarding Grace with an observant gaze, 'has your heart no touch of woman's love or sympathy for your cousin?'

'None, believe me,' replied Grace; and then she asked coldly, 'why?'

'Why?' echoed Clemency. 'Do you suppose I have forgotten, although two years have elapsed since he left us for Italy and Switzerland, how strongly he testified his affection for you? and if, through time and absence that affection still exists—'

'The affection of a cousin, Clemency, I may almost say a brother, nothing more,' interposed Grace. 'You are aware that he was left an orphan to the guardianship of my father. We were reared beneath one roof together, shared in the same pastimes as boy and girl, and when he passed to man's and I to woman's estate, surely there need be no marvel if our old affection still lives on untouched by the glow of any deeper feeling.'

'You cannot answer for the promptings of his heart,' said Clemency, musingly.

'True,' replied Grace, lightly; 'but I can for those of my own.'

'He is young, amiable, and handsome,' pleaded Clemency; 'do not be too fastidious.'

'I am not fastidious, and I grant my cousin's virtues,' retorted Grace. 'I will even acknowledge that I have tried to love him at some very bygone period, I tell you, Clemmy, that grave, sober face of his, seems to me as if it had no right on his young shoulders. So much sense and prudence as he possessed, belong to the acquirements of age, but not to the attractions of youth; and in his absence those unpleasant characteristics have increased, he must be perfectly unbearable.'

'Indeed, Grace Babington!' said Clemency, reprovingly, 'I think if he marry you, his double amount of sense and prudence would be highly requisite.'

'He would doubtless enjoin me to study economy and retrenchment,' continued Grace, with sarcastic playfulness; 'perhaps expect me to live in some outlandish country village, with the privilege of visiting the doctor's or the vicar's family; and, as a great indulgence, attend the assize ball twice a year. No opera, no park, no—'

'You do your cousin a great injustice, in confounding avarice with manly forethought, a quality that cannot be too highly prized in a husband, especially if he happens to have an extravagant wife,' said Clemency.

'I am sure Hugh Sherwood ought to be proud of your championship!' exclaimed Grace.

'He is worthy of it,' replied Clemency, 'and you know it. Nay, more, he is worthy of your serious better thoughts.'

'Extravagant!' exclaimed Grace, following her own train of thoughts, and unheeding Clemency's remark.

'Am I not the only child and sole heiress of a kind father, who, prematurely widowed, has lavished his huge wealth of affection upon me? To gratify my lightest whim, to administer to my every caprice, has been his greatest joy. He weighs not gold against my wishes. Because I found the discipline of a school too irksome, did he not consent that I should be educated at home, with a companion at my side to share my pastime and dispel the ennui of learning? Was he not rejoiced to have me always with him? and did he not bring you to live here, Clemmy, because your father and he were old friends?'

'Yes,' said Clemency, in her grave, quiet manner; 'and it is to his goodness that I owe the brightest years of my existence; the only bright years, alas! I am perhaps ever destined to know.'

'Oh no,' said Grace, with ingenuous warmth, 'my father will not pass lightly over the loving kindness you have always shown his wilful daughter. You will not go a portionless bride to John Rudderforth.'

The tears started to Clemency Maybrook's dark eyes as she burned aside her head from Grace's arch look.

'I know,' continued Grace, 'that my father intends to give you a thousand pounds as a wedding dowry; and it

has ever been his wish that our two marriages should take place on the same day. But, alas! I have still to sigh for a lover.'—There is Sir Everard D'Oyley,' remarked Clemency, slyly.

'Thank you, Clemency,' retorted Grace, with alight laugh. 'I fear his chest is too well padded for Cupid's dart to pierce. No, I suppose I am doomed to wear the willow all my life, whilst you—Ah, John Rudderforth will be a happy man.'

'I fear,' said Clemency with a sigh, 'that if his happiness or mine depends upon our union, we shall both have need of patience.'

'Why so?' asked Grace.

'Because,' said Clemency, as she twined her arms round Grace's neck, 'our two lives have become too closely interwoven to be readily disunited.'

'Now confess,' said Grace archly, 'you love John Rudderforth.'

'I do,' replied Clemency without hesitation, 'gratefully and truly, but with no disloyal thought towards you.'

'Still you would like to hear me say, I will be Hugh Sherwood's wife,' said Grace.

'If you love him, yes,' responded Clemency, 'if you can take to the altar a true wife's devotion, and with a joyful willingness resign the vain, frivolous pleasures you prize so highly to receive in their stead a husband's earnest affection and his wise supporting counsel, through shade and sunshine, then, but only then, I should say to the dear companion of my girlhood—welcome the bright destiny that awaits you.'

'Bless your dear heart, Clemency!' exclaimed Grace, with touching emphasis; 'you are always an angel! We shall see; perhaps your happiness is only briefly overshadowed, I have a sanguine belief that our mutual destinies are involved in each other's fortunes.'

'Strange,' said Clemency reflectively.

Perhaps no two characters were over more dissimilar than Grace Babington and Clemency Maybrook's. Grace was the petted idol of an ever indulgent father. Beautiful from childhood, as she grew in years her loveliness of form and face expanded into richer and more graceful culture. Although of a proud, despotic temper, she yet possessed qualities that by whole some training alike generous and unselfish. But her mental education had been greatly neglected, and she had grown to be headstrong and capricious, full of vanity and possessing a passionate love for display. Her most extravagant and childish fancier her fond father had accepted as graces, and felt a foolish pride in ministering to them.

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Board of Works, 18th Sept., 1890.

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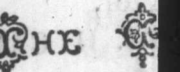
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