

I replied, "Yes, if you will sign a paper agreeing not to make any claim against me as your husband, and pledging yourself to sue for a divorce on the ground of desertion, immediately that you are twenty-one."

There was no time for parleying, as the train would arrive soon, so we sprang into a hack and drove to the office of the solicitor with whom I had been transacting business. While he made out the necessary papers, one of his clerks went for a magistrate. In a few minutes afterwards the ceremony was performed, and we were again in the hack on our way to the station. I took her servant's address so that I could write her, for I thought a letter addressed to herself would be intercepted. I told her when I located I would send my address, and if I was needed, I would go to New York, and, as her husband, bring her tyrant guardian to time.

I particularly charged her not to use her marriage certificate, or say a word about her marriage unless her guardian undertook to force her into a marriage with him. Then at the last minute she must produce the certificate and confound him, as he would not dare to try to force a married woman into another marriage.

We had scarcely a moment to spare when we reached the station. I saw her into her train and then stepped into my own, and we were soon moving in different directions.

CHAPTER IV.

After being seated in the car for a few moments and circumstances were favorable to deliberate thought, I said to myself: "Well, what a fool you have been. Suppose this is the trick of an adventuress, you have spoiled your future peaceful life which you intended to be spent in company with Harry; but yet, you surely could not have been deceived. No young woman on earth could have done such acting as that. You must not allow yourself to believe it possible. Even so, what can she make of it? You don't own a foot of land, and you have only to hand over your bonds and securities to Harry and take his obligation, to keep you in such a way that you would virtually control, while he legally owned the whole of it." And thus ended my mental soliloquy.

I visited two or three cities and then decided on the one in which I would locate. I took rooms in a furnished house and paid liberally for the privilege of being the only lodger, while I looked around for a property to buy, suited to my taste, both for a home and office for a medical man. This was not so easy to find, and I made up my mind to take my time and not have to regret a too hasty decision.

I wrote a letter to the address of the young lady's servant, but no reply reached me. I concluded either that I was not needed, or the tyrant guardian had dismissed the servant to whom the letter was addressed, and it had not reached its destination. I thought that perhaps I should go to New York and make sure whether I had been deceived or not, but concluded not to act too hastily. Six weeks had passed since I had written and I began to feel quite uneasy lest the young lady might have been unfairly dealt with. In fact, I began to reproach myself. One day I started out to look at a property that was for sale, and while going along one of the main streets, I was astonished upon being stopped by two females; one wearing a thick veil. At first, I did not recognize the voice which spoke with such evident emotion. "Oh, sir; I am so glad to have met you. For God's sake help me." I stammered out, "I fear you are mistaken;" but before the words were fairly out of my mouth I recognized the young lady I had married. The first thought

that struck me was that she was an adventuress after all. Without saying anything, I offered her my arm, and the three of us walked along until we came to a public park where we would be able to find a spot to converse without being overheard. I felt certain that my worst fears were realized and I was in no gentle mood. During our walk I had time to collect my thoughts and lay my plans. I would pretend to acquiesce in what she proposed; but would on the first opportunity give them the slip and take up my quarters in another city.

I commenced the conversation by asking if they got my letter?

"No," they both answered at once.

Then the young lady said, "There has been nothing but trouble since we left you. As I expected, my guardian met us with a carriage and saw us home. The next day he came and wanted an interview. He told me he must have my answer at once. He intended to have the ceremony performed within a week, as he was compelled to cross the ocean and he wished to make it his wedding trip. He said that it was the best thing for me to do; that love was bosh, business was everything in this world, and that if left to myself some adventurer would snatch me up for my wealth and ruin my life. He could provide for me as no one else would, and it was a sacred trust from my dead father. He went on to say that he had no personal feeling in the matter, he was making the sacrifice for his dead partner's sake. He knew all about what was for the best and he expected me to submit. I told him firmly never to let me hear any more of it, for my mind was fully made up; I never would marry him. He turned pale with rage and said I would never leave the house until I consented. I was his ward and as he had full control of me he would keep me a prisoner until I learned sense. He went out, locking the door after him. I tried every means to escape but without success. For five days I was kept a close prisoner, my food being passed to me through a transom. On the fifth night I heard a key being cautiously turned in the lock of my door, and I started up so frightened that I could not speak. The door opened a little and I heard a whisper, "Don't be afraid it's only Tillie." It was my servant there. She explained that the servants were all hired to keep me a prisoner, and were well paid for it, and she had also agreed to help them so as to be in a position to help me. They had all gone to bed and Tillie had stolen the key of my room, and had come to find in what way she could help me.

It ended in my determining to run away. I gave Tillie some jewellery to sell to provide us with money, and told her what things to prepare to take with us. I thought I would go to some place and stay in hiding until I was of age. When Tillie had everything ready and the coast was clear, she was to go and place a ladder under my window. Three taps on the shutter was the signal. When I heard this, I was to descend the ladder and meet Tillie in the garden. Tillie left me and succeeded in replacing the key without detection. It was the second night after this, about eleven o'clock, while I was anxiously watching that I heard the welcome signal. I hastily threw on my bonnet and cloak, and taking all my jewellery in a casket, which I placed in a reticule, I gently raised the window and was soon in the garden. I found Tillie waiting and we left by the gardener's gate. We each had a small satchel in which Tillie had placed the things I had indicated. Tillie knew the way and we had no difficulty in reaching the station. We were in time for the midnight train, and in the morning were in the city of Albany. After leaving the train at Albany, we walked a long way towards the suburbs, where we procured board. We