

Conquering a Husband.

"UNCLE Phil has been lecturing me again!" exclaimed Mrs. Charles Dykes, as her husband came home to tea one evening. "I cannot, and will not, stand it any longer," and the young wife dropped into a chair as though the last remaining portion of her strength had left her.

"What was the subject of the lecture, my dear?" inquired Mr. Dykes, with a cheerful smile, as though he did not regard the situation as at all desperate.

"You know very well that Uncle Phil has but one subject."

"And that is extravagance, or the reverse, economy," added Mr. Dykes.

"Of course, that was the subject of the lecture; and you always take his side of the question. Uncle Phil has ten times as much influence with you as I have. Whatever he says is right, and whatever I say is wrong," retorted Mrs. Dykes, rather warmly.

"If supper is ready, I think we had better attend to that next; and we shall have the whole evening to discuss Uncle Phil's lecture. The subject will keep for a while."

"But Uncle Phil will be here to take part in the discussion; and that is just what I don't want. He overshadows me entirely when he says anything, and I might as well hold my tongue as speak," pouted the wife.

"Uncle Phil will not be here, Marian. It is half-past six, and he has to go to a church meeting at seven."

"Very well, but I'm going to have something done this time. I won't have Uncle Phil here any longer. If he is to stay in this house I shall not!"

Mrs. Dykes was very young, and her angry pout, as she sailed out of the room, made her look decidedly pretty, at least so thought her husband. But before she was fairly out the door opened and Uncle Phil came in. The door was ajar and he must have been in the hall during some portion of the lady's severe remarks about him. But he looked as placid as though earth had no sorrows for him. He was a man or fifty, though his hair and beard were white enough for seventy.

He did not seem like a man who could be very disagreeable if he tried. He had a deaconish look about his face, that or serious though not austere man. Certainly no one would of a have taken him for a shipmaster, but he had spent most of his life at sea or in foreign ports. He used to read the Bible to his crew every Sunday, and never allow any swearing or other bad language in his presence on board the ship. Though he was a "psalm-singing skipper," no captain was ever more popular with his men than Captain Dykes.

Uncle Phil had been married in early life, but his wife died while he was absent on a long voyage. He had recently given up the sea and returned to his native town, now a place of ten thousand inhabitants. He found himself a stranger there, but at his own request his nephew had taken him as a boarder.

The gossips were not a little bothered to determine whether the retired shipmaster was rich or poor. He engaged in every Church and benevolent enterprise, and contributed moderately of his means.

Charles Dykes had opened a store in Tripleton a year before, and everybody thought he was doing well. Mrs. Dykes thought so, though Charles himself insisted that he was not making money very rapidly; he could not tell how much until he balanced his books and took account of stock.

In the main he was a prudent and careful young man, or at least was supposed to be so.

Uncle Phil made a hasty supper, and then went to his meeting. He acted just a little strangely for him, though the smile had not deserted his face. He said less than usual and seemed to be thinking very earnestly about something.

"Do you suppose he heard what I said, Charles?" asked Mrs. Dykes, when Uncle Phil had gone.

"I think not; but you ought not to say anything behind his back that you would not say before his face," replied the husband. "Uncle Phil is a good man, one of the salt of the earth."

"He is altogether too salt for me. If I should put too much salt in the doughnuts, you would not like them. Uncle Phil is saltier than Lot's wife."

"I am sorry you don't like him Marian."

"I can't like a man who is continually tripping me up, and lecturing me on economy. You ought to know better than he does what you can afford."

"I am sure that nothing but his interest in us prompts him to say anything. If one means well almost anything can be excused."

When I said that I wished you would keep a horse so I could ride out every day or two, he read me a lecture half an hour in length. Whether he heard me or not, I said just what I meant. You must get him out of the house in some way, Charles. Take your clerk to board, and tell your Uncle you must have the room."

"If I tell him to go, I shall tell the reason why I do so."

"I am willing to bear all the blame. I don't want anyone in the house to come between me and my husband," said the lady, with a good deal of spirit.

"Uncle Phil does not come between you and me, Marian. That is absurd."

"I have asked you, and even begged you a dozen times, to keep a horse. Uncle Phil takes sides with you against me."

"But he never said horse to me in his life. I can't afford to keep a horse."

"Yes, you can, Charles. They say that you are doing more business than Tinkham, and he keeps two horses; and his wife looks patronizingly down upon me from her carryall when she meets me in the street," added Mrs. Dykes, with considerable bitterness in her tone.

"I know nothing about Tinkham's business; and I do know something about my own," replied Mr. Dykes.

Before the supper things were removed, Charles Dykes had promised to buy a horse and buggy. It appeared to be the only way in which he could induce his wife to allow Uncle Phil to remain in the house. Doubtless he was weak to yield the point against his own judgment.

In the evening Squire Graves made a friendly call. Mrs. Dykes was very glad to see him, for he had a lady's horse to sell. It was just the animal she wanted, and as she had conquered her husband once that day, she intended to have the horse trade settled that evening.

"Glad to see you, Squire; anything new?" the young merchant began, doing the usual common-places?"

"There is news, but I suppose you have heard it," replied the visitor.

"I haven't heard anything; what is it?"

"Haven't you heard that Tinkham has been attached?"

"Tinkham! Is it possible!" exclaimed Mr. Dykes, glancing at his wife.