

MARGUERITE'S SECRET

Meantime Marguerite, in her wild and lonely home on the wooded banks of the great Potomac, lived a strange and dreary life, taking long, solitary rides through the deep forests, and among the rocky hills and glens that rolled ruggedly westward of the river; or taking long walks up and down the lonely beach, waded away to some distant meadow, or explored some unfrequented creek—or pausing lazily, dreamily to watch the flash and dip of the fish in the water, the dusky flight of the water fowl, or the course of a distant sail; getting home late in the afternoon to meet a respectful remonstrance from the elderly gentleman who officiated as her housekeeper, and a downright motherly scolding from her old black nurse, Aunt Hapzibah, who never saw in the world's magnificent Marguerite any other than the beautiful, wayward child she had tended from babyhood; or giving an audience to her parents, who were spreading the farm book before her, would enter into long details of the purchase or sale of stock, crops, etc., not one word of which Marguerite heard or understood, yet which she would at the close of the interview indorse by saying, "All right, Mr. Hayhurst, you are an admirable manager," leaving her friends only to hope that he might be an honest man.

But one circumstance seemed to have power to arouse Miss De Lencie's interest—the arrival of the weekly mail at Sawney's, the messenger who came from the moment the messenger departed in the morning until he came back at night, Marguerite lingered in the house, or mounted her horse and rode in the direction from which the messenger was expected—or returned if it were dark, and waited with ill-humored patience for his arrival. Upon one occasion, the mail seemed to have brought her news as terrible as it was mysterious. Upon opening a certain letter she grew deathly pale, struggled visibly to sustain herself against an inclination to swoon, read the contents to the close, then ordered her maid and a servant to attend her, and the same night set out from home, and never drew rein until she reached Bellevue, where sending her horses back by her servant, she took a packet for New York.

She was absent about six weeks, at the end of which time she returned home, looking worn and exhausted, yet relieved and cheerful. She found two letters from Cornelia awaiting her; the first one, after much preface, apology and explanation, announced the fact that a suit for divorce had been filed in Northumberland, in all respects very acceptable to her parents, had presented himself to Cornelia, and that, but for the mutual pledge existing between herself and Marguerite, she might be induced to please her parents by listening to his addresses, and becoming his wife. This last was a long, sentimental epistle, declaring firstly, that she, Cornelia, would not break her "rash" promise to Marguerite, but pleading the wishes of her parents, the approbation of her friends, the merits of her suit, and a short everything except the true and governing motive, her own inclinations.

Miss De Lencie read this second letter with impatience; at the close thereof it into the fire; drew her writing-desk toward her, took pen and paper, and answered both long epistles in one, a miracle of brevity, and dear Nellie! —Marguerite, and sealed and sent it off.

Apparently, Cornelia did not find this answer as clear as it was brief. She wrote in reply a long, heroic epistle of eight pages, announcing her willingness to sacrifice her parents' wishes, and her friends' approval, her lover's happiness, and her own peace of mind, all to fidelity and Marguerite, if the latter required the offering!

Marguerite read this letter with more impatience than the others, and drawing a sheet of paper before her, wrote, "Nellie! Do as you like, else I'll make you —Marguerite."

In two weeks back came the answer, a pleading, crying letter, of twelve pages, the pith of which was that Nellie would do only as Marguerite liked, and that she wanted more explicit directions. "Pish! tush! pshaw!" exclaimed Miss De Lencie, tapping her foot with impatience, as she read page after page of all this twaddle, and finally casting the whole into the fire, she took her pen and wrote, "Cornelia! marry Colonel Houston forthwith before I compel you —Marguerite."

before the little bride, with a mixture of childish petulance and envy and genuine admiration, raised her eyes to the beautiful brow of her partner, and said: "Ah! how stately, how radiant you are, Marguerite! But how shall I look, poor, insignificant, little, fady pigmy, my very bridegroom will be ashamed of his choice, seen by the side of the magnificent Miss De Lencie!" (To be continued.)

And sealed and despatched the letter. This brought Nellie down in person to Plover's Point, where by dint of caressing and coaxing, and weeping, she prevailed with Marguerite, who at last exclaimed: "Well, well! go home and prepare for your wedding, Nellie! I'll come and assist at the affair."

The bride of the only daughter of the Comptons was naturally an event of great importance, and consequently, of much parade. The bride-elect was in favor of being married in the most approved modern style, having in person gone to Europe, and seen the ceremony performed at ten in the morning, and starting immediately upon a wedding tour. But Colonel and Mrs. Compton had some strong, old-fashioned predilections, and decided to have the time-honored, old style of marriage party in the evening. And accordingly preparations were made upon the grandest scale to do honor to the nuptials of their only child.

Marguerite De Lencie arrived upon the evening previous to the wedding, and was most cordially welcomed by the family, she was carried off immediately by Cornelia to her chamber for a toilette. "Well, my little incapable!" Marguerite said, as soon as she was seated, "now tell me about your bridegroom! Long ago, you know, we divided the present generation of men into two classes—monsters and imbeciles; to which does your fiancee belong?"

"You shall see and judge for yourself, Marguerite! To neither, I think."

"Oh, of course, you think! Well, who are to be your bridesmaids?"

"The Misses Davidson and yourself, dear Marguerite, since you were so kind as to promise."

"So weak, you mean! And who are to be the groomsmen?"

Miss De Lencie took up the letter and re-read it, with comments as: "I jealous of her lover! truly! I preside over her marriage! Come, I must answer that!" And drawing writing materials before her, she wrote, briefly as first, "you little imbecile—Marguerite."

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Hurry-Out Sale of Colored Raw Silks 69c. This will prove the opportunity of the season to procure a stylish Dress at a very special price. Plain and fancy Raw Silks, in all wantable colors, comprising novelty shades, 27 inches wide, and worth up to \$1.25 yard, Hurry-out Sale price to-morrow 69c.

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Regular values reduced from \$6.00 to \$4.37 per pair. Regular values reduced from \$7.50 to \$5.00 per pair. Regular values reduced from \$10.00 to \$7.25 per pair. Regular values reduced from \$15.00 to \$10.98 per pair. Regular values reduced from \$17.50 to \$12.50 per pair.

Special Hurry-Out Carpet Sale Prices. Tapestry Carpets 55c. 1200 yards of Tapestry Carpet, hard wearing quality, choice patterns and colorings, worth 75c, Hurry-out price 55c.

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