

CHILDREN OF DESTINY.

A Novel by William J. Fischer.

Author of "Songs by the Wayside," "Winona and Other Stories," "The Toilet," "The Years Between," etc. etc.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE STOLEN CHILD.

When Gravenor reached the hotel the clock in his room pointed the hour of four. Already the Dawn was creeping over the eastern hills with her crimson cloak about her, and the birds were beginning to stir in the trees. Arthur felt tired—very tired and he was glad to be able to stretch himself on his soft comfortable bed. Soon he was fast asleep.

The past few hours had been trying ones for him, but he gloried in the deed that was about to be done. Mazie had ruined his life, he argued, and now he had a perfect right to ruin hers. Why had he not called upon God to help him in those dark hours? Now it was too late—too late! The last vestige of goodness had crumbled away. He was fast losing his mind. His thoughts no longer sought the spiritual. They clung only to things earthly—and were changed and dirt-bespattered. The influence of religion was missing. His mind was filled with mad impulses, wild desires. He was now Arthur Gravenor, hero of his own fancies, wronged man of the world, turned conqueror at last. Had he been in his right senses, his heart would never have dictated the details of such a crime, but when one's mind becomes diseased and wanders along a certain narrow groove all interference and pleading is useless. What did it matter to him now, whether the mill at Kempton was running or not? What did it matter, whether Aunt Hawkins inquired after him, saying this and that, or whether Muriel worried about his condition? He cared for nothing, now that he was about to ruin the life of the woman he had once loved. To drive a dagger into her heart was a satisfaction his hungry, jealous soul revolved in.

Several times he woke in his sleep with nervous startings and called out laughingly: "The hour is come and Arthur Gravenor triumphs at last." About nine Muriel stole to his bedside. He had slept soundly for some time.

"I am so glad that you slept so well, dear," she said as she brushed his hair from his forehead. "See, I have brought you a cup of cocoa. It will refresh you."

"Thanks Muriel, it is very good of you." Muriel could not help noticing the vacant stare in her brother's eyes. She also perceived that his face had become thinner; but she said nothing.

"Have you received the morning's paper?" the girl asked gently.

"Yes, dear, it is there on the table. The hour has come and I am—"

"What is that you are saying?" "Oh, nothing, nothing, sister."

His mind had wandered along the groove of his old delusion, but he suddenly summoned his senses.

"What's this?" exclaimed Muriel as she picked a red wig and beard from off the table, while looking for the morning paper.

Arthur bit his lips and a crimson blush stole to his face. He had placed the disguise there thoughtlessly upon his return from Mad Nance's rendezvous. Ah! Muriel had discovered him—what was he to say?

Instantly the words came to him. "It belongs to one of the actors at the Olympia, Muriel," he answered. "I am to take it back to Madam Amyot's at Kempton for him. Some changes have to be made."

Muriel placed it on the table, settled herself in a comfortable arm chair and began to read the morning paper.

After a few minutes' silence her brother began: "Muriel, we shall have to pack our trunks to-day."

"Why so soon, brother?" "We leave to-morrow morning at one-thirty. The steamer arrives about one o'clock and is generally on time."

"My, this is sudden," exclaimed Muriel somewhat disappointed—"and all our plans for the week upset. Could you not remain another week?"

"No, I must away. Every day brings me more suffering. So ask no questions, but be contented like a good girl!"

"Very well, we shall get ready," the girl remarked, with a touch of unwillingness in her answer. She knew it was best not to cross her brother in any of his plans now, for she could not help feeling that hourly almost he was becoming a changed man. She was beginning to divine in him another self—a selfish, scheming spirit—and her heart ached for she knew not what the outcome of it all might be. So she and Kitty set to work to prepare for the homeward journey. Later in the day Arthur said to his sister:

"Muriel, I have decided to adopt that little, fatherless girl and take her back to Kempton with me."

"Where is she? I would so like to see her."

"You shall see her soon. I shall go for her before we sail. It would be too bad to ask the woman to bring her here now."

"By all means go for her. Oh, it will just be lovely to have such an angel with us always at Blair House."

Mad Nance tip-toed stealthily to the window. The blind was partly drawn and she could see clearly into the sleeping chamber. A light shone on a table flickering quietly. In one corner of the small room stood the bed in which Mary Sorel, the deaf-mute, was sleeping; in the other the two children smiled in peaceful slumbers.

"Everything's nice and quiet now," she said to herself, "and I'll get through that kitchen-window."

She turned and hurried around the corner of the house.

"Good! it's open," she whispered. The next moment she stood in the Lescot cottage facing the three sleepers. She tip-toed over to the children's bed. Then her nose began to bleed. Some of the blood trickled onto the white bed cover. When the bleeding ceased she put her hands upon the sleeping girl and lifted her into the blanket on the bed.

Just then Mary Sorel stirred, stretched herself and yawned slightly. Mad Nance's fingers quickly turned down the light. She waited a minute. The child was sleeping soundly in her arms. When the deaf-mute was settled again she turned up the light and hurried out of the room, and opening a side door, disappeared into the darkness of the night.

On and on Mad Nance stumbled through the darkness, over uneven ground, until she reached the edge of the river. The child was now wide awake. The sound of the waves stole into the woman's ears like so many voices, accusing her of the crime she had just committed. But her conscience was hardened and she paid no attention to them.

Presently the child began to cry. "Mama, mama!" it called sorrowfully.

The old wretch drew a soiled rag out of her pocket and stuffed it into the little girl's mouth.

"There you little devil! there's a sugar plum for you," she whined heartlessly.

Soon she reached the bend in the river, where Arthur in his red wig and beard stood awaiting her.

"I see you are on time, Nance," he said as she stumbled up to him in the darkness. Thereupon he lit a candle.

"You can bet your life," she continued, "when Nance Drowler takes it into her head to do anything she does it up to the queen's tastes."

"Is the child sleeping?" Gravenor asked nervously.

"No, she's been crying most of the way, so I stuffed a rag into her nasty, little mouth," Nance said breathlessly.

"See it is thinly clad. Here, woman, are some clothes for it," Arthur had sent Muriel to purchase them in the early afternoon.

Constance, the child, cried loudly, her cheeks, bathed in tears: "Mama! mama!" But neither paid any attention to the little one.

"Is the child dressed now?" the man asked excitedly. "I'll soon hush that crying. By the way, here is the other hundred," he said as he gave her the money.

Thereupon Mad Nance handed him the child. He poured a clear liquid upon a tiny handkerchief which he held to its nose and then remarked: "There, that will send you to fairyland in a few seconds."

Quickly the child's cry died into a sob, then into a sigh—soon the breath came slowly and quietly.

"I must go," Gravenor exclaimed. "Remember woman that you keep this secret! Remember it will cost you your life, if you should ever reveal it."

Mad Nance sank upon her knees, grabbed his arm and moaned:—"I swear—I swear that I shall keep this secret until my dying day—my dying day!" she repeated.

Arthur threw the burning candle into the water. It hissed for a moment and then disappeared. Turning, he said good-bye to the woman whom he hoped he would never meet in this life again.

Thus the two little children of Mazie Lescot were parted—the little son still fast asleep in his cosy bed, and the daughter going far away into another country among strangers.

Arthur pushed the steamer just a few minutes before it pulled out of the wharf. Hundreds of guests were leaving that morning. Quickly he hurried to the stateroom, where Kitty and Muriel awaited his return.

"When the door opened the two women rushed over to meet him.

"Let's see the little dear!" cried Muriel.

Arthur handed her the child. She lifted the heavy blanket and presently the child's beautiful face greeted her.

"She is just a perfect dear," observed Muriel.

"The little darling," exclaimed Kitty. "She seems just fresh from the hand of God."

Muriel kissed the little face wreathed in sleep.

very cruel, oh, so heartless! God! forgive—forgive me!"

But the voice of the angry ocean, restless and vast, alone thundered in his ears.

In that moment of introspection, Arthur Gravenor had realized the gravity of his crime but it was too late to turn back.

CHAPTER XIV.

IN THE HOUSE OF PAIN.

When Mazie Lescot returned to her home early in the morning she was surprised to find the kitchen door wide open. Hurriedly she ran into the house with strange misgivings in her heart. The sitting room was just as she had left it and from the adjoining room came the breathing of the sleepers. Again she passed through the kitchen door into the open air. Noticing fresh footprints on the ground, she traced them to the street, where she lost track of them. She was very restless, her heart beat wildly within her and her breath came in interruptions. Retracing her footsteps she noticed some glittering object lying before her on the wet ground. Bending down she picked it up. It was a tiny cross of gold with two initials "C. L." upon it.

"Great heavens!" she shrieked, "it is Constance's little golden cross—her father's last gift to her. Only last night I tied it round the child's neck. I wonder how it ever got out here?"

Back to the children's room she ran, wild distraction in her eyes. Feeling now that the worst had come she hurried to the children's bed. The boy was still sleeping soundly. Constance was missing. A wild cry escaped her lips. Then she sank to the floor, her heart breaking with convulsive sobs. In a minute she was on her feet again, her face white as death and in her eyes the sorrow that was too deep for speech.

"Constance! Constance—child! Where are you?" Her cry sounded loudly through the room, and presently the little boy awoke. He raised himself in bed, rubbed his eyes and yawned.

Mary Sorel also awoke, and seeing Mrs. Lescot shedding bitter tears, she wondered what it all meant.

"Where is Constance? Speak for God's sake, child!" the mother commanded the boy.

The boy looked at his mother and then at the empty place in the bed.

"I don't know, mama," the child sobbed nervously. "I don't know now an' I heard no noise all night." Then he called:

"Constance! Constance! tum to y'r brother!"

The deaf-mute's eyes stole from the empty bed to the woman's face.

"Where is Constance, Mary? Tell me! tell me! Did you hear anything during the night?"

Mary seemed to understand what the trouble was all about. She pointed to the empty place in bed and tried to speak, but she could not. The sad silence which God had given her still lingered upon her lips.

Mrs. Lescot's eyes stole to the white blanket on the bed. She bent over and examined it more closely.

"Great heavens!" she shrieked, "there is blood upon it. Constance has been murdered—murdered! See—there's also blood here!" she moaned as her eyes stole to the floor.

The little boy looked at his mother, his little face all sadness. Mary Sorel's eyes, too, were filling with tears. She seemed to understand.

Mrs. Lescot grew weak and sank upon her knees a second time. She folded her hands and for a moment prayed fervently.

She rose and threw a shawl over her shoulders. "Stay here, children," she cried, "I'll not be gone long."

As she passed out into the quiet, morning air the sound of her sobs stole back into the little room. From door to door the wailing mother ran, begging the neighbors to come to her aid and help find the missing child. In a few minutes scores of kindly people poured into the Lescot home. The men stood around, took in the surroundings and argued and pondered and the women tried to speak consoling words to the grief-stricken mother.

"Constance!" she sobbed continually. "Why did I leave you over night? You poor little thing! Oh God, I shall go mad if my Constance is dead."

Sympathetic friends would whisper messages of hope into her ears. Her eyes would brighten a moment, then the look of sorrow would return.

Crowds of men and women and children thronged to the spot, many through sympathy, some through sheer curiosity. The wailing glided into the afternoon—and still no note to the mysterious crime. The detectives were utterly at sea. No one in the neighborhood had heard or seen anything, and the only two, who might have been witnesses to the crime, were too young to give assistance. The boy was only a mere child of four and Mary Sorel was a deaf-mute.

The strange mystery was the general topic of conversation. On the street corners, in the shops and in the hotels originated all manner of theories. In the hearts of hundreds genuine pity was felt for the Rose-Queen. The people were hopeful that before sunset, a gleam of light would be thrown upon the mysterious tragedy. The detectives, however, were the most hopeless of all. In their hearts they felt that the murderer—for they had expressed the opinion that it had been a case of murder—could not be caught for weeks or months—perhaps never. They had not the merest shred of a clue to work on.

"That evening in their secluded room, Mad Nance and Mag, her colleague in crime, were chatting briskly. Upon a table in front of them stood glasses and an empty whiskey bottle. The air reeked with the odor of the intoxicant.

"Come, drink Nance!" cried out the jovial Mag in her drunken voice. "There's lots more here—enough to soak your wrinkled hide. That two hundred comes in handy, eh?"

"Pour me out another mouthful," Nance demanded from her lips she said: "Ah, 'tis delightful stuff—a fit drink for a king. And how glorious to find that you own the whole world! By the way, Mag, did you get the evening paper?"

"Yes—I'll get it for you."

The corpulent woman rose from her chair, staggered into the adjoining room and soon returned, paper in hand. Seating herself, Mad Nance asked nervously: "Any mention of the Lescot affair?"

"I don't know, but 'twill take only a minute to see."

There was a momentary silence and Mag's small, blood-shot eyes wandered over the paper.

"Ah, yes," she exclaimed. "Here is a half page. Shall I read the head lines?"

"Every line. Go on."

Mag drew a little closer to the candle light, wrinkled her forehead, placed the newspaper at the right distance from her eyes and then proceeded:

"The Lescot Tragedy—Four Year Old Child Missing—Foul Play Suspected—"

"Great heavens!" burst in Mad Nance, somewhat frightened. "Go on!"

"Child probably murdered—Drops of Blood Found on Blanket and on the Floor—"

"Drops of blood?" Nance interrupted. "Ah! the old fools. As I was about to lift the child out of bed my nose began to bleed and some of the blood must have trickled onto the blanket and the floor. Read on!"

"Here it says," Mag repeated, "the murderer is supposed to have carried the child out of the house, as a golden cross, bearing the latter's name, was found in the path that led to the road."

"I remember quite well seeing the cross in my breast. It must have been torn off in my excitement when I carried the child in my arms."

"Fresh footprints," Mag read slowly, "have been traced from the kitchen door to the road. They are thought to be those of the murderer. Measurements prove conclusively that they are the footprints of a man and he must have worn a number eleven shoe."

Thereupon Mag gave vent to an outburst of laughter.

"Pretty hard on you, Nance. Think of wearing a number eleven shoe. Any one could make skating rinks out of your footprints in winter. Ha! ha! ha!"

"Is there any more startling news," anxiously asked Mad Nance.

"Yes, listen! The detectives spend a day in vain. Still no clue. They fear it is a hopeless case."

"No clue—fear it is a hopeless case," repeated Mad Nance. "Ah, I'm glad. Come, fill up the glasses again! Never mind reading the rest. That 'no clue' is enough for me."

The glasses were filled, and again the two drunken women drained them.

"Listen, Nance!" Mag began, after a few minutes, "here is what Detective Given thinks of the case. I know it will interest you. Detective Given feared that the tragedy would never be cleared up, that the guilty party had every precaution so as not to leave any clue to the crime. Poor, old Grivy! Mary's time you've been fooled!"

"Oh, Griven has hanged!" hissed Nance indignantly, "the old woman! He'd better be doing fancy-work and peeling potatoes than hunting murderers. Yes, I've outwitted him many a time. This Lescot affair's another instance."

Had the detectives been listening at the wretch's window, they would have discovered a clue to the strange mystery, but they had not looked with suspicion upon the little cottage, past Wortley and Lancaster Road, and its two wicked occupants. And, on that account Mad Nance could feel secure. So far her name had not been implicated in the mysterious affair, and she hoped that the unexpected would not happen.

CHAPTER XV.

SEEING THE DAYLIGHT.

It had been the longest dreariest day in Mrs. Lescot's life. People came and went continually. All the excitement had been too much for the suffering woman. A doctor was summoned, but he found her heart quite weak and ordered entire rest. All day therefore, she lay in bed, but she could not sleep. There was such a heavy weight upon her brain. She had thought dreadful thoughts and hid them before her continually with hideous, mocking faces. In the early morning she had expected that her child would be restored to her within a short time. Now that evening had set in and there had been so much talk of murder, hope had given way. One by one her friends gradually disappeared. Several however lingered, loath to depart, and declared that they would stay over night, but Mrs. Lescot begged them not to remain as it was not necessary.

"I am very tired," she said, "and I know I shall sleep. It cannot be otherwise. I shall try to worry as little as possible."

So they bade her good night, and she and her little son were alone. It was very lonely without Constance, and, as Mrs. Lescot looked at the empty place in the bed, hot, bitter tears came to her and again she wept. Shortly after she retired for the night, her son nestling sweetly in her arms. Sleep—soothing, tender sleep—seemed to be far away. Her mind was being tossed about in the frenzy of wild imaginings. Very soon she experienced difficulty in breathing. At times this necessitated her sitting up in bed. Through the growing hours Mrs. Lescot's thoughts dwelt continually upon her lost child. Vainly her brain had searched for a clue that might lead her out of darkness into light; vainly she had asked the detectives all manner of questions, hoping to receive the consoling answer that at last they had tracked the murderer.

The clock struck the hour of midnight—and still no sleep. Presently she sat up erect in bed. Her mind was pondering over some weighty problem—a problem upon which life and death depended.

"At last! at last!" she gasped. "I feel that I have the correct clue."

Quickly her thoughts stole back to that evening long ago at Kempton, when Arthur Gravenor cursed her and all she held most dear, and swore that some day she would suffer for all the wrong she had done him. Then she pictured that second meeting but a few nights ago at the garden-recital and

heard again the self-same words. She remembered distinctly having heard him swear: "I shall never forget nor forgive you!" Might he not have heaped all this sorrow upon her just for the sake of satisfying the impulses of his jealous heart? He hated her bitterly for the cool reception she had given him the other evening. The longer her mind dwelt upon these memories, the stronger grew the belief that perhaps, after all, Arthur Gravenor was the man who knew more about this tragedy than any other being. He was the only man in the world whom she had ever dared to fear, the only man who had ever dared to curse her—the only man who at the present moment carried a deadly hatred in his heart. And now she seemed to have thought of him long before. In excitement very often the mind plays strange antics. This had been Mrs. Lescot's experience. She had thought out many motives, but had overlooked the most probable one. At last she felt as if she had her fingers on the culprit.

She jumped out of bed greatly agitated and began dressing. "I shall go to Detective Griven at once and tell him the whole story. Arthur Gravenor will not feel so spiteful when the law fastens its iron chains about him. But perhaps he has left the Clarendon. However they will be able to trace him. Thank God! I am beginning to see the daylight."

The woman staggered a little. "It is very late," she said, "I should not go out."

She threw a long cloak over her shoulders. "I feel so strange," she gasped faintly. "My head is dizzy—and I cannot catch my breath. I am—choking."

Her lips took on a bluish tint. She gasped for breath and swayed to and fro several times.

"Water! Water," she whispered faintly, and then sank to the floor.

"I am dying!" sounded the faint, weak voice. "Ah! I see—the daylight—God—is—good—God—is—good," she repeated slowly again. Then her head sank back, there was the faintest smile, and the struggle was over.

Sometime after the little boy awoke. Noticing that his mother was gone, he cried pitifully. Then he crept to the edge of the bed.

There on the floor lay the mother who had fought life's battle bravely, beautifully with the smile of peace upon her face.

In a moment the child was down beside his mother's form sobbing bitterly in the moonlit room. He called loudly to her and tried to rouse her, but there was no answer. Then the two little lips sought the tender cheeks. They were already cold.

Again the pleading, child-like voice sounded. The wind outside alone sent back answer. Poor, little fellow! He was all alone now in the wide world. He seemed to understand. Lovingly he laid his curly head against hers and folded his trembling hands.

In the morning they found him asleep on his mother's breast, his tiny arm about her neck. He looked like one of God's angels, guarding the precious dead.

TO BE CONTINUED.

TRUE LOVE.

Along dusty clay roads, fringed by feathery fir trees, past great tracts of undulating land where recumbent groups of cattle "rested on their cuds" over rocky elevations and again through still, rugged canyons, a solitary horseman pursued his meditative journey. His sun-banned face was shaven clean, and he wore his nut-brown hair cropped close. There was an unmistakable air of breeding about the stranger in the blue flannel shirt and corduroys. And it needed but a glance to see that he was no native but a man prepared to live like one. Carstairs was still under thirty, though his face had already begun to line perceptibly. His eyes, as he glanced up from beneath a wide sombrero from time to time, to take inventory of the sun, showed alternate gleams of cynicism with a studied expression of calm.

An only son, a college pet—and a handsome young fellow of unlimited means, Carstairs had not been content with anything short of the full length of the string. His release had left him jaded and skeptical. But on the whole, he considered himself fortunate to have emerged from his numerous escapades with an intact neck. The death of his mother changed him somewhat. His father's health was failing, besides; and the family exchequer was sadly dwindled. He must begin to look out for his future.

With the legacy his mother had bequeathed to him, he acquired a fourth interest in the "Lady Lucie," a malachite mine of rich promise, in Arizona. And as soon as he could wind up his affairs in the metropolis, he went West.

Soon after Carstairs' arrival in Maricopa county, he met Letitia Ainsley. Her quaint, unconscious beauty; her youthful naivete; her frank, enthusiastic interest in him, appealed to the man of the world. And attracted by his culture, his handsome face and irresistible magnetism, the girl gave him her heart without ever knowing it—till Carstairs' offer of marriage showed her the truth.

It was of Letitia he was thinking now, as he pursued his lonely journey through the wilderness. He was happier than he had ever dreamed it possible that he could be. He was inexpressibly glad he had chosen the life he had; it had brought to him what no other life could have—this girl. She was very young, she was brave and honest—and she loved him. It would be no very difficult task to mold her to his own ideal.

Suddenly his horse shied sharply, startling Carstairs from his reverie. He gave a swift glance up, tightening rein as he pushed back his sombrero, and peered sharply into the bushes on the left side of the road.

A tinkling laugh rang out, echoing in musical cadence down the ravine, as Letitia stepped out from behind a clump of shrubbery.

"It was the edge of my red skirt," she said, "that challenged Tenderfoot. I was just preparing to jump out and surprise you."

Carstairs dismounted and stood looking down at her, the hand stroking his horse's glistening coat breath her eyes.

Letitia lifted her eyes to his with a new expression of wonder and delight. She had never seen him look so well. He leant his arm on Tenderfoot's neck. "I'm glad you failed of your purpose, if that is the case," he said, "because this old boy is a bit dangerous. He might have gotten tricky and—"

Letitia interrupted him with her musical laugh, and for an instant, regarded him with a touch of satirical questioning in her gray eyes.

"And have you such a poor opinion of me as that? Dear me, Preston, I've ridden and had to do with more beasts like that than you ever heard of!" She put up her hand to stroke the bay's silky coat, and Carstairs captured it in his, holding it fast. Abruptly he bent down and kissed her twice on the lips.

Letitia caught her breath; her eyes fell and swift roses opened their crimson petals in her cheeks.

"I'm foolish, of course," returned Carstairs, looking away, but I can't help it. It's because I love you so. I was thinking awhile ago how much I really did love you, and how all unworthy I am of such a creature as you are. I've realized at last, that to love a woman is not merely an accessory, but the vital principle in a man's life. You—you've made me!"

An awkward pause fell between them. Evidently he had said something not altogether comprehensible to the girl, and she shifted the subject by an adroit little laugh and a kiss.

"Let's sit down by the roadside, here, sweetheart; there's something I want to say to you."

Letitia turned her eyes upon him in puzzling surprise. She was not used to anything of this sort, and the gravity of her lover's remark had sounded portentous to her untutored ears.

He smiled, reading her thoughts like an open page.

"It is just a little confession, that's all. As we are to be married so soon, and I am so eminently in the mood for it, I think I ought to tell you some things. I can't come to you unswayed, as you are giving yourself to me. But I can be honest, and I mean to live right hereafter. And—and if you really love—"

"If!" The interpolation came in a hurt, almost a piteous tone. With the little gesture that belonged to her, the girl suddenly lifted herself from her tip-toes and laid her arms about his neck.

Carstairs kissed her again, quickly, but did not, at once, speak. He fastened his horse to a tree-limb, then led Letitia to a plat of grass by the roadside, and they sat down.

Upright and alert, a strong young tree, she sat beside him, never speaking till he had finished. At last she looked up.

"But all this, dear—all this has nothing to do with our future, has it?"

"Nothing in the world, if you will have it so, little girl."

She smiled and gave him her hands. She sought his face with wondering eyes. It was different, illumined. The shadow had fallen away, leaving joy in its place.

"Oh, by the way, Letitia," he broke out irrelevantly at a pause, "I wish you'd promise me one thing."

"Any number of them," she cried gayly, glad of an escape to lighter things.

"It's occurred to me several times, about your riding alone in these woods. I don't want you to do it."

A transitory gleam of annoyance crossed the girl's face, but she argued down her irritation with a laugh.

"Good gracious, you silly boy! What diff'rence does it make in the country? One feels so stupid and uncomfortable with a booted and liveried individual always in the background. This is Arizona, you must recollect, and not New York!"

"It makes this difference," the other answered sternly, "that you are a woman—and I rather you wouldn't. Is not that enough?"

Letitia could not repress a shrug at her lover's persistence. But then, he was an Easterner and had a different code for women. She yielded to what she termed his ridiculous "whim." She thought, except to say:—

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