

enough to stand against a woman who makes up her mind to captivate him; but I love him with all my heart!"

"Lina, come here!" said Miss Martin.

The girl crossed the room obediently, and knelt down by her aunt's chair. The old lady put her hands upon Lina's shoulders and looked at her with a smile.

"Now was I not right in saying you were a silly child?" she asked gently. "You love him, and yet you let him go! I never give advice, as you know, dearie; but I will tell you what I was thinking the other day. Dane had been to a theatre and was telling me about it. The story of the play was much the same as that which you have been telling me—it is an old one, Lina—and Dane told me that the wife went to the other woman and prayed to her, 'Give me back my husband!' The thought came into my head that, if I were a young and pretty woman, I would not beg for him—I would fight for him."

Lina's face flushed deeply, and, after a long pause, she whispered—

"How?"

"If I had quarrelled with my husband about her, I would go home and make it up. Then I would call upon her and invite her to stay in my house. When she was there, I would trust to my own mother wit and instinct for the rest, because it stands to reason that I should know and be able to study my husband's peculiarities and whims better than she. But there—I am a vain old woman to be talking like that. I dare say I should be as silly as any other woman!"

"Auntie Helen, you are a darling!" cried Lina enthusiastically, springing to her feet and giving the old lady a kiss. "I see what you mean—and I'll do it!"

When Bertie Errington went home sulkily that afternoon, expecting a cold welcome, he was agreeably surprised to find his wife smiling and prettily dressed. She greeted him warmly, and inquired tenderly after the headache that had been troubling him at breakfast. Little Syd's presence made awkward remarks impossible; so Bertie replied with a good grace, and, when she suggested that they should order the carriage and drive round the Park, he promptly agreed.

This sudden change of manner puzzled him; but he decided wisely to make no comment on it and to follow his wife's lead. Of course she had seen that she had acted unjustly and intended to apologize.

She was looking so pretty as he followed her into the victoria, that, so far from yielding slowly, as he had previously intended, he found it quite delightful to be in her society.

"And you are willing to be friends with Mrs. Nevil?" he asked her.

"I know her already," said Lina brightly. "I went to see her this afternoon."

"Well, you are a darling!" cried Bertie rapturously. "And what did you think of her?"

"Yes, I went to see her," Lina repeated, ignoring his question. "I saw how aggravating and childish it was to object to some one of whom I knew nothing; so I called and explained my absence from home yesterday. And now I have a surprise for you. Guess what it is, Bertie!"

"Haven't the faintest idea," he replied lazily, thinking what a charming and sensible wife he possessed. "Tell me what it is, Baby."

"Well," said Lina, as they entered the Park, "should you not think I had made the *amende honorable* if I told you I had invited her to stay with us?"

"With us! How?"

"Yes! I found her in great trouble; her drawing-room ceiling has come to grief in some way, and she must have the work people in the house. Now one can't be without a drawing-room in May; so I asked her to come to us until her house was habitable."

"That was very charming of you, dear!"

"Not at all, Bertie—I love to please you!"

Lina felt she was a great hypocrite; but the drive was a decided success, and at the "At home" to which they went that evening a good many people whispered in astonishment that the Erringtons were as devoted to each other as ever.

People were even more astonished on the following day when Mrs. Nevil and Mrs. Errington appeared in the drive together, and the latter made a point of introducing her friend to all whom she met.

"Mrs. Nevil is staying with us at present," Lina informed every one; "you must call and see her."

For the first few days every thing went so smoothly that Lina trembled for the success of her experiment. She had plenty of courage; but her patience was sorely tried when night after night she found herself ignored in her own drawing-room, while the handsome widow made open love to the young host. It was love-making—there could be no doubt about it. The gist of the whole matter—on Clara Nevil's side, at least—lay in the perpetual scarcity of funds. Theatre stalls, bouquets, and a hundred other luxuries in which her soul delighted were beyond her means; and, as the generosity of the men of her own set for the most part depended on their varying luck, it followed that Bertie Errington, with his careless good-nature and his well-lined purse, was a friend worth having. She thought Mrs. Errington, with her gentle manner and innocent blue eyes, was merely a well-drilled doll, who had been ordered to invite her.

At the end of a week Lina's arrival in town had become generally known, and invitations poured in. They came none to soon; for the poor young wife felt that another one of those evenings at home would have been unbearable. Dane Trescott had refused to come to the house; and little Syd hated the new-comer so much that he cried in the most unmusical tones whenever he saw her, and was ordered by his father to be kept in the nursery.

(To be Continued.)

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