

vantage of the flogging to slink off, so seizing his hat Clifton coolly observed.

"Hark ye Mr. Parsons, or whatever your name may be, mock marriages are all very well to blackmail a man on the stage, but in real life, we are not so easily hoodwinked. Did you think I would believe the lies that you and your precious friend told against the word of his wife, whom you have insulted and whose reputation you endeavored to ruin? Do you suppose, I cannot see the object of keeping a false marriage secret? You miserable cur, let me hear a whisper from either of you again, and I will show you, that even at the distance of five thousand miles bigamy and abetting the same can be traced."

It was a chance shot but Clifton saw that he had hit the mark, and walked off leaving Parsons in a state of mind more easily imagined than described.

CHAPTER IV.

That same evening Clifton and his wife were seated side by side in their home; he was relating the events of the afternoon, and she was listening with a pale face, as he repeated the evidence of the two conspirators. When he came to the production of the letter, she trembled violently, so that he put his arm around her, fearing she would fall from her chair.

"What followed?" she whispered using the same words as her husband had done.

He told her what Rodney had said, and she shuddered as he paused.

"Could you—did you still trust me Howard?" she asked.

"Through good report and evil report," quoted Clifton gently.

Then she turned, and looked up at him for the first time during the conversation, and as she gazed, the cloud passed from her face, for she needed no word to inform her what had taken place. Her arms went round his neck and with her head on his breast she murmured "Oh my husband, teach me to be more worthy of you."

"Pooh! pooh! Jessie dearest" he said soothingly "Did not you tell me to trust you, and was I going to fail, because a couple of villains tried to spring a melodramatic plot upon me? And now, little woman, if it will ease your mind, you can tell me all about the matter, otherwise you need not say another word."

"I will never keep anything back from you again Howard," was the reply "It was wrong to do so at all I know, but I was afraid of losing you, and then life would not have been worth having."

"Did you care for me so much?" cried Clifton "I had fancied—"

"Ol Howard I did not dare to show you how much I loved you," broke in Jessie hurriedly. "What I had gone through must be my excuse, but I will tell you my tale. My father, a younger son of a good family, ran away with and married my mother and was disowned by all his relatives. I need not go through all his struggles, which ended with his death, when I was seven teen, leaving nothing but debts behind him. We had lived in France during the latter part of my father's life, afterwards returning to London, where I endeavored to support my mother and myself by giving lessons in French and singing, and in the house of the Rodneys I first met that man, who did his best to ruin me. My mother was a great invalid, and doctors' bills and medicine kept us very poor. I do not wish to speak harshly of her, but I think poverty and hardship, had somewhat blunted her moral perceptions, at any rate, when Denis Rodney asked me to marry him secretly, (for family reasons he said), saying he would send my mother to the country and support her, she pleaded so hard, that believing her removal to be the only chance of saving her life, I—consented upon one condition, namely that I should live with my mother until the marriage was made public, and to this I adhered in spite of all his efforts to shake my resolution. The ceremony was performed by the man Parsons—who I am now convinced was a clergyman at all, and my mother and myself took up our abode in a cottage not far from Canterbury. Shortly Rodney insisted upon my going to live with him, which, as you know, I refused, and he then did what I ought to have foreseen, namely stopped remittances, thinking to starve me into submission. In this he might have succeeded, but for an anonymous letter I received stating that the wretch had a former wife still living. You cannot judge of my shame and misery, for though I had done nothing strictly dishonorable, I felt he had disgraced and ruined me. My poor mother sank under the blow and died praying my forgiveness, leaving me friendless and unprotected. I determined to hide myself and returned to London, where sinking all my pride I obtained an engagement to sing at the Caledonian Music Hall under the name of Ida Montmorency, and on being discovered, I determined to put the ocean between that hateful man, and myself and start a new life. The rest you know, and oh Howard have pity on me, for not having the courage to tell you this before. I have not deserved your noble trusting love, but indeed I will try to do so, if you can forgive me."

As Jessie concluded, she sank on her knees before her husband, but he stooping lifted her in his strong arms, and pressed her to his heart.

A long pause followed, which to one of them was like a peaceful calm after a violent storm, then Clifton spoke.

"Your history has been a very sad one so far Jessie darling, but it is only the first volume. Let us close that for ever, and begin a fresh one."

Which they did.

THE END.

Virginia Rice Muffins.—Beat the yolks of two eggs very light and add to them one pint of milk and stir into it one tablespoonful of melted lard or butter, mix two teaspoonfuls of yeast powder in one quart of meal and sift into the milk and eggs. Beat very light, then add the whites of the eggs, beaten to a froth, and stir in a teacupful of cold boiled rice. Beat all once more and bake in muffin rings. In Virginia, only the white meal, never the yellow is used for corn bread.

Cream Custard.—Line a pie tin with good pastry, pour into it a custard made with a pint of new milk, three eggs, sugar to taste, and a pinch of salt. Bake in a hot oven. When perfectly cool, pile over it, in pyramid shape, some good whipped cream flavored with vanilla.

Baked Apple Pudding.—The yolks of four eggs, six large pippins, grated, three tablespoonfuls of butter, one-half cup of sugar, the juice and half the peel of one lemon. Beat the sugar and butter to a cream, stir in the yolk and lemon with the grated apples. Pour in a deep pudding dish to bake. Whip the whites and add them last. Grate a little nutmeg over the top. Eat cold with cream.

HIS ONLY TRUE FRIEND.

Judge—You are an incorrigible scoundrel and should be locked up.

Tramp—How should I know that? You are the first gentleman that ever had the decency to tell me so.

That Temyson is dead we know,
And though it seems a crime,
The poets mean to keep him so
Neath tons and tons of rhyme!

"Is foot-ball a gambling game?"
Kasher—"Well, Dodger lost twenty-five dollars in gold yesterday."

"Why didn't he leave it at home?"
"He couldn't, it was in his teeth."

His Honor—What made you steal this gentleman's door-mat?

Prisoner—Sure, yer honor, it said "Welcome" on it in letters as long as yer arm.