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33



Chocolates

His Little Girl

(Continued from page 8.)

what she called herself," the words were in themselves an ugly sneer, "yes, find out everything about her, everything," his eyes gleamed maliciously, "it is possible she had a child, there was a child in the carriage when—ah! well, never mind about that—find out everything, you are clever enough to do it all. Trace the woman; trace the child if there was a child; and above all, trace the jewel, and put it into my hands."

CHAPTER XI.

"I DON'T believe there could be a more beautiful house in all the world."

"Don't you, Sylvia? Well! I am inclined to endorse your opinion; and I can't pretend to be sorry it is mine. A fit setting for the woman who is coming here as its queen," Giles added under his breath, as he laid a hand on Sylvia's shoulder and looked out of the window across the wide landscape bathed in the sunshine of May.

"Do you mean Miss Cardew when you say its queen?" the child questioned, lifting grave eyes to his face, "will she be the queen of this lovely house?"

"Yes, dear, I meant that," a dusky colour mounted into Giles' bronzed cheeks, "you see, Miss Cardew is going to be my wife, and my wife will be the queen of my home, and of everything I have. Don't you agree with me, little woman, that there could not be a lovelier queen?"

"I think Miss Cardew's got a very lovely face," Sylvia answered slowly, "but I am afraid she might find it rather dull and quiet here. She doesn't like country things much; and won't she miss all the people and the lots and lots of parties?"

Giles laughed, and his hand rested for a moment on the child's dark hair.

"Women are so wonderful," he said, a note of triumph in his voice, "so wonderful that when a woman loves a man, she is ready to give up the kind of life she likes best herself, and live the man's life instead."

"I shouldn't think Miss Cardew was like that," came the prompt reply, spoken with childish impetuosity, and Giles looked down at her, surprised incredulity on his face.

"Ah! but she is like that," he answered slowly, "she has a soul as beautiful as her beautiful face. You mustn't think otherwise, little girl. Not that I am going to ask her to sacrifice all her social life for me. When we settle down we shall be part of the year in town, I would not condemn her too much to the country. She must not be buried here. And when she is here, the house will always be full of people if she likes it."

"I think she will like it," Sylvia said shrewdly, her eyes fixed on Giles' face, over which a shadow of wistfulness had suddenly crept.

"Then she shall have it," he replied briskly, thrusting away the dreams he had dreamt of a home in which he and Grace would revel in each other's society, with no tiresome guests to entertain and amuse. "When we come back from India," he went on, his hand touching the child's dusky hair, "we shall find you grown up and ready to help us look after the house and all the people who stay in it. You will be the queen's right hand, won't you?"

"I should like to be your right hand best," Sylvia said quickly, her eyes meeting his with a look of loving adoration, "you see, I'm not sure that Miss Cardew will want me to do things for her. I don't believe she's very fond of little girls."

"She will like this little girl," Giles answered promptly, putting his arm round the child, and drawing her close to him, "you belong to me, and Grace and I will be one, so you will belong to her as well. And we shall find our little girl ready for us here when we come home."

"I wish you hadn't got to go to India," Sylvia said, her soft hands clinging to his, "I wish you were going to be here always, you and me, just as we are now. I don't like when things change."

"Poor little girl, none of us are very fond of changes, and you have had to learn so young how many changes and



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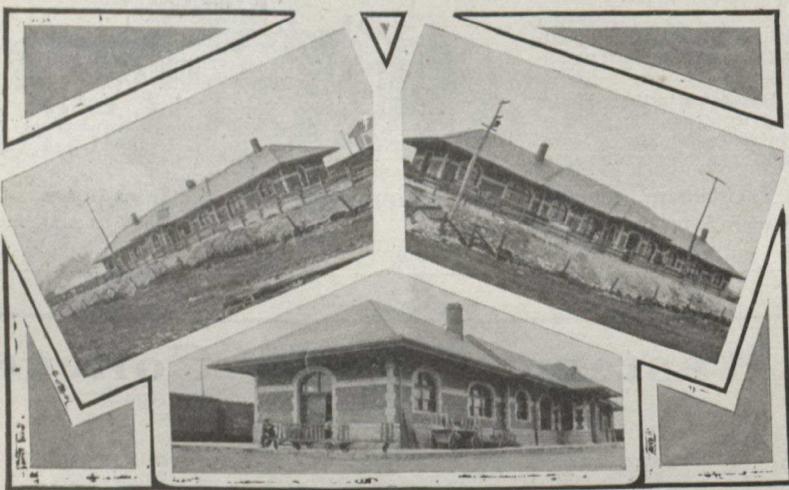
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