

HELENA GRAHAM,

THE BRIDE'S SACRIFICE.

CHAPTER VII.

Once only, fearing that her suspicions might be aroused by his absence, he had visited Helena, whose rapturous greeting and confiding love made him feel far more of a villain than ever.

And so, when Mrs. Macmont proposed that Helena should remain with her another week, instead of returning to the dreary isle, instead of feeling irritated now, he backed the proposal, saying that perhaps it would be better for her to do so, more especially during her brother's absence.

And Helena, in her deep love and woman's trust, suspecting nothing, fearing nothing, consented, to the inward joy and sincere relief of her false lover.

Resolving to visit her frequently, and so allay any suspicions that his absence might give rise to, Herbert Clinton returned to the island and to Jessie, yielding himself without further effort to the wretched spell of her love.

Mrs. Ben suspected nothing of the clandestine courting carried on under her very eyes. It was the most natural thing in the world, she thought, that, in the absence of Helena and her brother, the young man should spend whole days with them; for it was not pleasant having no one to talk to but a couple of servants, as she very well knew.

"But, I suppose," was always her conclusion, "it's because it's Miss Helena's home, and for her sake he stays there until she comes."

But Jessie, though she only blushed and was silent, was of a different opinion—one that she would scarcely own to her own heart. As to his being in love with Jessie, Mrs. Ben would have scented the idea with scorn and unbelief had she heard it.

He was rich, highly connected, and proud as a prince of the blood; she was poor, unknown, and compared with him uneducated. Besides, in the good widow's opinion, she was a child in feeling, as she certainly was in years, scarcely knowing the meaning of the word love.

Ab, she had been till he came, and his fervid, impassioned words, his burning glances, his thrilling touch, had swept away the glamor of childhood and simplicity, and revealed to her the passionate woman's heart within her.

As yet, she knew not whether that love was returned; for unfaithful as he was in thought to Helena, passion had not yet so totally conquered his reason as to make him sin in words. He had never said, "Jessie, I love you;" but, ah, how often had his eyes said this, and much more; and how long would even this slight barrier stand before the fiery impetuosity of unstable youth?

And so that day passed, and the next, and the next, and the next, with every passing hour the temptation grew stronger, and harder to be resisted. Matt. must come to a crisis now, or never. Helena, in a day or two, would be home, and this wild frenzy of his could be hidden no longer. If she should come, as matters stood now, all would be lost.

And thus, torn between conflicting emotions, Herbert sought Jessie, on the day before Helena was expected home, with the determination of bringing this struggle to an end then and there.

It was a glorious August afternoon. The island wore its bright dress of green, and nestled in the blue shining river like an emerald set in sapphire. The birds in the deep forest were filling the air with melody, and the odor of the wild roses came floating softly on the summer breeze.

But Herbert Clinton was in no mood to admire the beauties of nature. The morning had been spent in pacing up and down the room, hesitating, resolving, doubting, wishing, yet undecided still. For when duty and principle would appear for a moment victorious, the warring golden hair, the blue, beautiful eyes, and gentle, loving face of Jessie would arise before him, scattering all his good resolutions to the winds.

"Oh, that I had never met this dark, passionate girl," he murmured, distractedly, "who now stands between me and the heaven of my dreams; or would that I had seen this beautiful, enchanting Jessie first! Oh, for that angel as my wife! And but for those fatal vows once made to Helena she might be mine. I was mad, crazed, to mistake my fancy for that dark, wild-eyed girl for love! And now, for that one mistake, am I to be wretched for life? Shall I give up this beautiful, radiant creature, who loves me, for one I care for no longer? No; the struggle is past. Jessie shall be my bride, and I will brave the worst that may follow."

He set his teeth hard; and as if fearing second reflection might make him change his mind, he left the house, and hurried out to meet Jessie.

MANUFACTURE OF COPOL.—We will now give an account of the process adopted by Messrs. James Epps & Co., manufacturers of dietetic articles, at their works in the Euston Road, London.

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