

Love a Conqueror —OR— WEDDED AT LAST.

CHAPTER XLV.

"There is nothing the matter with me which would prevent my fulfilling them," was the slow pleading answer. "I have been exact and punctual, and have neglected none of them since—since—"

Her voice failed, and her head sank forward on her breast.

"I am complaining of no neglect Mrs. Grant. I have never had greater reason to be satisfied than at present, which makes me regret all the more bitterly being obliged to dismiss you."

"To dismiss me!" She looked up in sudden terror as she uttered the words; then, after a moment's pause she said brokenly and tremulously—"Oh, Lady Oliphant, you do not mean to do that!"

"It is with great—the greatest reluctance that I am forced to do so; but I have no alternative."

"No alternative!" she repeated melancholy, looking at Lady Oliphant with dazed, bewildered, fright end eyes, which seemed to see an executioner in the gentle lady in velvet and furs.

"None."
A silence followed—a silence so complete that it seemed to have some effect on Mrs. Grant's nerves. She glanced around her fearfully, as if she was afraid of hearing some sound in the house or seeing some apparition; but she could not force her parched and trembling lips to speak; and Lady Oliphant went on gently—

"Mrs. Grant," she said, a little unsteadily, "I do not think I need explain to you my reasons for doing this. It costs me so much, and it will give my daughter so much pain, that I should not have done it without being forced to do so."

"But I do not understand, Lady Oliphant!" Mrs. Grant faltered tremulously. "Why should you send me away?"

"Your ignorance must be feigned Mrs. Grant—there was a little sternness now in the lady's voice. "You cannot conscientiously tell me that you are ignorant of my reasons for dismissing you."

"I am quite ignorant," the schoolmistress answered more steadily and her manner vexed Lady Oliphant.

"You are a young woman, Mrs. Grant; but you are not so unversed in the ways of the world as to imagine that such conduct as yours has not been noticed in the village."

"My conduct!" echoed Mrs. Grant, biting her head with a momentary flash of haughty resentment. "Yes, your conduct in allowing Mr. Litton to visit you so frequently, and any hour which suited his convenience. Do you deny that he has been seen leaving the cottage at night, and that you have been seen walking with him at hours when an action at other times harmless becomes a perfect impropriety? He comes here, it would appear, three or four times in the course of the day and night, and his visits have given rise to a great deal of talk in the village."

"He is a doctor," the schoolmistress said, faltering.

"Yes; but you are not in such need of his professional services; and there can be only one construction put upon his visits here."

"And what is that?" Mrs. Grant said vaguely.

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Frank Main, 409 4th St., New York, writes: "My wife suddenly fell very sick with influenza. I called in the doctor, but he failed to help her. We have no time to be sick. So I bought my own bottle of Radway's Ready Relief and Pills. I gave her according to Radway's directions, and she went back to work two days later."

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Apply the Balm to the throat and chest until the surface smart and redens. Give Radway's Pills in such doses as will freely move the bowels. For a sudden cold take a large dose Radway's Pills and a teaspoonful of Relief with a teaspoonful of molasses, in a tumbler of hot water. Retire at once to bed, in the morning the cold will be gone.

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When cross, constipated or if feverish give "California Syrup of Figs" then don't worry.

Mother can rest easy after giving "California Syrup of Figs," because in a few hours all the clogged-up waste, sour bile and fermenting food gently moves out of the bowels, and you have a well, playful child again. Children simply will not take the time from play to empty their bowels, and they become tightly packed, liver gets sluggish and stomach disordered.

When cross, feverish, restless, see if tongue is coated, then give this delicious "fruit laxative." Children love it, and it cannot cause injury. No difference what ails your little one—if full of cold, or a sore throat, diarrhoea, stomach-ache, bad breath, remember, a gentle "inside cleansing" should always be the first treatment given. Full directions for babies, children of all ages and grown-ups are printed on each bottle.

Beware of counterfeit fig syrups. Ask your druggist for a 50-cent bottle of "California Syrup of Figs" then look carefully and see that it is made by the "California Fig Syrup Company." We make no smaller size, and back with contempt any other fig syrup.

"That he is your lover."
A peal of shrill hysterical laughter broke from Mrs. Grant's white lips, laughter which was terrible to hear, and which rang through the quiet room, startling Lady Oliphant out of her calm self-possession.

"My lover," Mrs. Grant repeated in a moment—"my lover!"

"Yes," Lady Oliphant answered bravely. "The supposition is a very natural one; and if Mr. Litton's intentions toward you were honorable, no one could oppose your reception of him; but he himself has told Dr. Joyd that he has no thought of marriage, and—"

Again the shrill bitter laughter broke forth.

"Of marriage with me?" the schoolmistress said, with a strange expression on the lovely little white face. "No, he certainly has not!"

"Then why does he come here?"

"He comes here professionally," as the almost sullen answer.

"That is absurd! And this is a very serious discussion," said her ladyship, angry now, and incensed. "We will end it. As soon as you can make convenient to do so, Mrs. Grant, you will leave—"

"As soon as," Mrs. Grant began, when her voice failed her for a moment; the next she went on huskily—

"Lady Oliphant, I entreat you, do not send me away. Indeed—indeed I have done nothing wrong! Oh, will you trust me a little longer?"

"How can I trust you, Mrs. Grant? You have already abused my confidence; you cannot have forgotten now, without references, or any knowledge of you—"

"I have not abused your confidence. I have done nothing wrong. Lady Oliphant, if you have any pity, do not ask me to leave the cottage now. I cannot—I dare not face the winter—think—to be houseless and desolate in such weather!"

"Mrs. Grant, you are paining me terribly," Lady Oliphant said unsteadily. "I have no wish but to be just to you; but really Sir Frederic is exceedingly annoyed at the scandal which has troubled the village for some weeks. Do you know that Miss Venn, to whom Mr. Litton was paying attention, has been obliged to be sent away for a time, she fretted so much at Mr. Litton's visits here? Indeed, I cannot tell you how much has been said, nor is it necessary."

"But, Lady Oliphant," the sweet broken voice was husky and strained, and the little trembling hands were held out in passionate supplication—"do not send me away now. Oh, I cannot go! It is impossible—oh, be pitiful!—trust me a little while. I may only have to ask your forbearance for a very little while; but in mercy, grant it to me."

Lady Oliphant shook her head sadly; Sir Frederic's injunctions had been imperative, and she could not disobey them; but her heart ached for the agony and despair on the pleading face.

"What can I do, Mrs. Grant? You do not justify yourself. You cannot refute the accusations, and I cannot let them pass unnoticed."

Mrs. Grant fell upon her knees, and

caught at Lady Oliphant's dress entreatingly.

"For the love of Heaven, do not leave me thus!" she implored, with anguished gestures and wild miserable eyes. "Oh, for the love of Heaven, take back your decision! If it were only I who had to suffer, but—oh, if you have one grain of charity, of compassion in your heart, have pity upon me now! I have done nothing wrong. I—oh, Heaven have mercy upon me!"

Her head sank forward in a voiceless agony of supplication; the little hands still clung desperately to the velvet and fur of Lady Oliphant's cloak, which that lady was trying to disengage from her grasp.

"No, no. I will not rise. You shall not go until you tell me that I need not go," cried the schoolmistress wildly. "Oh, if you knew—if I could tell you—if I could trust you—oh, have pity, have pity!"

Her voice died away in a wail of pain—low, faint, despairing. Lady Oliphant lifted her to her feet; and she stood looking at her with dim eyes, panting and exhausted from her passionate excitement.

"My poor child," her ladyship said tremulously, "you are paining me beyond all words. Let this cease now I will see you again. You must try to think it over calmly. Believe me I am only doing what I conceive to be my duty, and I will do anything in my power to help you to another home."

"It is not for that; it is not for my sake," Shirley said pitifully; "but I would kill—What am I saying? she added, pressing her hands to her forehead with a troubled gesture. "What am I saying?"

"I am afraid so much excitement will make us both ill," Lady Oliphant said, nervously, now anxious only to end the interview. "I must leave you, and you must try not to distress yourself more than you can help. Do you not think you had better let me send you some assistance for your household work?" she added, glancing at the fireless grate.

"Oh, no—oh, no!" Mrs. Grant answered, trying to be calm. "I do not need it, and—I have a fire upstairs."

"Do you sleep upstairs then? Surely the next room is warmer!" "Yes," was the faltering answer; and as Lady Oliphant, with a little gesture of farewell, passed out of the cottage, the young schoolmistress sank on her knees by the table and covered her face in a silent agony of tearful sobs, which shook her slender frame like a reed shaken by the wind.

"What shall I do?" she moaned presently, rising and pacing to and fro in the little room. "It would kill him; and yet, if they insist, of course I cannot resist. Oh, Heaven, help us! What are we to do? Where can we go? Even Mr. Litton has suffered for his goodness to us. Ah, he was good indeed not to betray us, and rather to let himself be misunderstood by the girl he loves! I bring misery everywhere; but some day I will go to Miss Venn and tell her, and he will be happy. I must write to Jack—I must write to Jack."

She broke off restlessly, and stood silent for a moment; then she went into the inner room, bathed her face with cold water, and smoothed the soft chestnut hair.

"He must not see me so distressed," she said, with a pitiful little smile. "And I am never safe from interruption. Oh, I am so tired!" she added, with a long heavy sigh. "My limbs ache with fatigue, and yet I must not be ill—I dare not be ill."

She broke off restlessly, and stood silent for a moment; then she went into the inner room, bathed her face with cold water, and smoothed the soft chestnut hair.

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It was pitiful to see how she tried to be cheerful and to efface the marks of weariness and sleeplessness which were so evident on her face. She went slowly back to the sitting room, and, even as she had done on Christmas Day, she took out writing materials to address her brother when now the letter would have to be sent to Etendale Hall. Drawing up a chair to the table, she sat down at the heart-weariness overcame her, and her head sank forward on her arms in an agony of low, pitiful weeping, which although it exhausted her, eased the burning brain to which the relief of tears was a mercurial one.

How long she lay there she did not know; she felt no chill, although the room was cold; nor did she hear the sound of heavy firm footsteps on the little brick-paved path at her door; but the door opened quietly, and when a gentle touch upon her bowed head made her start up in alarm she met the earnest, pitying, compassionate gray eyes which had once made all her sunshine, but which now she would have died rather than meet.

"Guy!" The white lips parted to utter his name, yet no sound came from them; but he guessed the word. "Yes," he said very gently. "Shirley, it is Guy!"

(To be Continued.)

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