

LILIAN, THE EDITRESS.

"I can hardly say I came to inform you of your cousin's movements," replies he, laughingly; "rather to ask you if you will accept my aid to get down stairs."

"You?"

"No, thank you," with slow surprise, as though she yet doubts the fact of his having again dared to offer his services: "I would not trouble you for worlds!"

"The trouble is slight," he answers with an expressive glance at the fragile figure below him.

"But you are a trouble! Do not distress yourself, Sir Guy; Parkins will help me, if you will be so kind as to desire him."

"You nurse?"—hastily—"I would be able, I dare say."

"Oh, no. I can't bear trusting myself to women. I am an arrant coward. I always think they are going to trip, or let me drop, at every corner."

"Then why refuse my aid?" he says, even at the price of his self-respect.

"No; I prefer Parkins!"

"Oh, if you prefer the assistance of a footman, there is nothing more to be said," he exclaims, angrily, going towards the door much offended, and with just a touch of disgust in his tone.

"Now, Miss Chesney does not prefer the assistance of a footman; in fact, she would prefer solitude and a lonely dinner rather than trust herself to such a one; she pockets her pride, and, seeing Sir Guy almost outside the door, raises herself on her elbow and says pettily, and with the most flagrant injustice:

"Of course I can stay here all by myself in the dark, if there is no one to take me down."

"I wish I understood you," says Guy, irritably, coming back into the room. "Do you wish me to carry you down? I am quite willing to do so, though I wish with all my heart your cousin were here to take up the slack. It would evidently be much pleasanter for all parties. Nevertheless, if you desire to accept my aid, proudly, if I shall neither trip nor drop you, I promise."

There is a superciliousness in his manner that vexes Lilian; but, having an innate horror of heights, she goes down the stairs with a good grace.

"You are good-natured, but you give me plainly to understand how irksome it is this duty to you. I too wish Archie were back, and, as it is, I am glad to be able to do it," she says abruptly; and Guy, stooping, raises her quietly, tenderly, in his arms, and, with the angry scowl upon his face, and the hanker still within his usually kind blue eyes, begins his march down stairs.

It is rather a long march to commence, with a young woman, however slender, in one's arms. First comes the corridor, which is of a goodly length, and after it the endless picture-gallery. Almost as they enter the latter, a little nail, half hidden in the doorway, catches in Lilian's gown, and dragging it roughly, somehow hurts her foot. The pain she suffers causes her to give way to a sharp cry, whereupon Guy stops short, full of anxiety.

"You are in pain?" he says, gazing eagerly into the face so close to his own. "My foot," she answers, her eyes wet with tears; "something dragged it; oh, how it hurts! And you promised me to be so careful and now—but I dare say you are glad I am punished," she winds up, vehemently, and then bursts out crying, partly through pain, partly through nervousness, and a good deal of self-torturing though long suppressed, and hides her face childishly against his sleeve, because she has nowhere else to hide it. "Tay me down," she says, faintly.

There is a lounge-chair close to the fire that always burns brightly in the long gallery; placing her in it, he stands a little aloof, cursing his own ill luck, and wondering what he has done to make her hate him so bitterly. Her tears assuage his heart. At last, unable to bear the mental agony any longer, he kneels down beside her, and, with an aspect of the deepest respect, takes one of her hands in his.

"I am very unfortunate," he says, humbly. "Is it hurting you very much?"

"It is better now," she whispers; but for all that she sobs on very successfully behind her handkerchief.

"You are not the only one in pain"—speaking gently but earnestly—"every sort of your causes me absolute torture."

This speech has no effect except to make her cry again, harder than ever. It is so sweet to a woman to know a man is suffering tortures for her sake.

A little soft look of her hair has shaken itself loose and has wandered across her forehead. Almost unconsciously, but very lovingly, he moves it back into its proper place.

"What have I done, Lilian, that you should so soon have learned to hate me?" he whispers. "We used to be good friends."

"So long ago"—in a stifled tone from behind the handkerchief—"that I have almost forgotten it."

"Not so very long. A few weeks at the utmost—before your cousin came."

"That is only idle reminiscence. I know I once erred deeply, but surely I have repented, and—tell me why you hate me?"

"I cannot."

"Why?"

"Because I don't know myself."

"What! you confess you hate me without cause?"

"That is not it."

"What then?"

"How I can tell you," she says in-

patiently, "when I know I don't hate you at all!"

"Lilian, is that true?" taking away the handkerchief gently but forcibly that he may see her face, which after all is not nearly so tear-stained as it should be, considering all the heart-rending soliloquies to which he has been listening. "Are you sure? am I not really distasteful to you? Perhaps even—with an accession of hope, seeing she does not turn from him—"you like me a little, still?"

"When you are good"—with an airy, laugh and a slight pout—"I do a little. Yes"—seeing him glance longingly at her hand—"you may kiss it, and then we shall be friends again, for to-night at least. Now do take me down, Sir Guy; if we stay here much longer I shall be seeing bogies in all the corners. Already your ancestors seem to be frowning at me, and a more dark and bloodthirsty set of relatives I never saw. I hope you won't turn out as bad to look at in your old age."

"I'll all depends. When we are happy we are generally virtuous. Misery creates vice."

"What a sententious speech!" He has taken up his fair burden again, and they are now (very slowly, I must say) descending the stairs. "Now here comes a curse," she says, with a return of her old sauciness: "please do not drop me."

"I have half a mind to," laughing. "Suppose, now, I let you fall cleverly over these banisters on to the stone flooring beneath, I should save myself from many a flout and many a scornful speech, and rid myself forever of a troublesome little ward."

Leaning her head rather backwards, she looks up into his face and smiles one of her sweetest, tenderest smiles.

"I am not afraid of you now, Guy. Quaintly," she murmurs, softly, whereas his foolish heart beats madly. The old friendly appellation, coming so unexpected from her, touches him deeply; it is with difficulty he keeps himself from straining her to his heart and pressing his lips upon the beautiful childish mouth up-held to him. He has had his lesson, however, and refrains.

He is still regarding her with unmistakable admiration, when Miss Beauchamp's voice from the landing above startles them both, and makes them feel, though they scarcely know, partners in guilt.

There is a metallic ring in it that strikes upon the ear, and suggests all sorts of ladylike disgust and condemnation.

"I am sure, Guy, if Lilian's foot be as bad as she says it is, she would feel more comfortable lying on a sofa. Are you going to pose there all the evening for the benefit of the servants? I think it is hardly good taste of you to keep her in your arms upon the public staircase, whatever you may do in private."

The last words are uttered in a rather lowered tone, but are still distinctly audible. Lilian blushes a slow and painful red, and Sir Guy, giving way to a naughty word that is also distinctly audible, cries her down instantly to the dining-room.

CHAPTER XXII.

The next day is dark and lowering, to Lilian's great joy, who, now she is prevented by lameness from going for one of her loved rambles, finds infinite satisfaction in the thought that even were she quite well, it would be impossible for her to stir out of doors. According to her mode of arguing, this is one day not lost.

About two o'clock, Archibald returns, lame for luncheon, and to resume his care of Lilian, who gives him a gentle scolding for his desertion of her in her need. He is full of information about town and their mutual friends there, and imparts it freely.

"Everything is as melancholy up there as it can be," he says, "and very few men to be seen: the clubs are deserted; all shooting or hunting no doubt. The rain was falling in torrents all the day."

"Poor Archie, you have been having a bad time of it, I fear."

"In spite of the weather and her ruddy looks, Lady Belle Damascene has secured the prize of the season out of season. She is engaged to Lord Wynternere: it is not yet publicly announced, but I called to see her mother for five minutes, and so great was her exultation she could not refrain from whispering the delightful intelligence into my ear. Lady Belle is staying with his people now in Sussex."

"Certainly, beauty is in the eye of the beholder. She is painfully ugly," says Miss Beauchamp. "Such feet, such hands, and such a shocking complexion!"

"She is very kind-hearted and amiable," says Cyril.

"That is what is always said of a plain woman," retorts Florence. When you hear a girl is amiable, always conclude she is hideous. When one's trumpeter is in despair, he says that."

"I am sure Lord Wynternere must be in despair, for he will never be disappointed in her. And, after all, there is no such great advantage to be derived from beauty. When people are married for four or five years, I dare say they quite forget whether the partner of their joys and sorrows was originally lovely or the reverse, custom deadens perception."

[To be Continued.]

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6 20 A. M.	Express for St. John.
10 10 A. M.	For Fredericton Junction connecting there with train for St. Stephen, Hamilton, Woodstock, Frege Lake, Grand Falls and points North.
10 30 A. M.	For Fredericton Junction, connecting there with train for Bangor and points West, and for St. Stephen, St. Andrews, Hamilton and Woodstock and Grand Falls.
3 20 P. M.	For Fredericton Junction, St. John and points East.
ARRIVE AT FREDERICTON	
10 20 A. M.	From Fredericton Junction and St. John.
3 40 P. M.	From Fredericton Junction, Bangor and points West, and from St. Stephen, Hamilton and Woodstock.
5 00 P. M.	From Fredericton Junction, connecting there with train for Bangor and points West, and for St. Stephen, St. Andrews, Hamilton and Woodstock and Grand Falls.
7 30 P. M.	Express from St. John.

LEAVE GIBSON

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