

A DELIGHTFUL WOMAN.

BY JOSEPH HATTON.

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down in Bath and he said you were not on speaking terms."

"Did he?" said the young fellow; "then I suppose we are not."

"Surely the trouble has not arisen out of your marriage?" I said; "fathers no longer impose their choice upon their sons or daughters."

"Well, the fact is," said Ned Henshaw, whom I had known since he was a child, "I don't think I want to talk about it."

"But I am anxious that you should. You were honest Tom Henshaw's only son; you lived with him, shared his professional business, and he and you were what one likes to see so much in father and son—shams, companions, friends."

"Yes, that is so," said Ned. "Won't you smoke? My wife has gone to an 'at home.' She will return very soon, I hope, and then we are going to drive to Richmond to dinner. Will you join us?"

"Thank you, I cannot," I replied, lighting a cigar, and waiting for Ned to talk.

He was a successful architect, had inherited a moderate fortune, and he and his father together owned considerable property in the western city.

"Who was your wife, Ned?"

"A widow," he replied.

"Indeed! Well, old Weller warned us against them, but I have known some very charming widows."

"My wife was a very charming widow," said Ned, "and is a very charming wife; but must I tell you all about it?"

"I think so. Your father was so reticent that the business strikes me as mysterious, and I want to know with whom I am to be friends, with father or with son."

"Oh, with both," said Ned, "though I suppose he will never forgive me."

"You speak regretfully."

"It was like this, you see," said Ned, "when my poor mother died my father was inconceivable, at least for a whole year; said he could no longer live in the house, must leave it, the associations were too much for him, and so on. I felt a good deal like that too until father engaged a housekeeper, and the management of the place began to assume its old complete style, a place for everything and everything in its place, nice breakfasts, good dinners, servants well under command; in short, the house what it had previously been—a model establishment. Then we both settled down again, and began to find consolation in our sorrow, and something like compensation in our admirably managed establishment. I say ours, you know, because I had never left home except to serve my articles, and for the reason that I was practically joint controller with my father."

"Her name was Sinclair, this model housekeeper, Mrs. Arkel Sinclair. My father heard of her through a friend. She was only two and thirty. Her husband had died two years after their marriage, leaving her a beggarly fifty pounds a year; she had been obliged to take a situation as a housekeeper, and she had left it, not because she was proud, but because she could not put up with the haughty manners and superior airs of her mistress—a lady of title, by the way. Mrs. Sinclair had herself been very well brought up, could sing and play the piano, was well read, and

was in every way an admirable housewife. A friend advised her that she was just the woman my father wanted, and my father, having been introduced to her, came to the same conclusion."

"Mrs. Sinclair became more and more the mistress of the house, and the friend of the heads thereof, my father and I. When the Italian opera came to Bath my father suggested that we should take a box and give Mrs. Sinclair a pleasant evening; it would, he said, be some compensation for the treatment she had received at the hands of a certain lady of title. I seconded him heartily in every little plan for Mrs. Sinclair's happiness. She was invaluable to us; and we were both sincere in trying to make her understand that we were grateful. As time went on I found myself getting home at unusual hours, laying traps to catch Mrs. Sinclair for a gossip. In the midst of my work her face would come into my mind; it was a cheerful, bright face, a combination of beauty and intellectuality; somehow she didn't look a bit like a widow; and yet there was a glaze in her eyes now and then that well

there, what is the good of beating about the bush—I fell in love with Mrs. Sinclair. I didn't tell her so; but she understood it."

"I had a woman for that," I said, "it is a matter of instinct with them."

"No doubt," said Ned, "and it is a very happy thing for us fools of men that it is so. When we were alone Mrs. Sinclair and I called each other by our Christian names; she was Marie, I was Ned. In my father's presence we treated each other with ordinary courtesy. One day my father said to me: 'Ned, I want a word or two with you. I have resolved to marry again.' He was a man of few words, as you know. I replied that I hoped he had made a good choice. 'Oh, yes,' he said, 'I am sure of that, and convinced that you will approve of it. What do you think of Mrs. Sinclair?' I exclaimed: 'You are old enough to be her father!'

He said she was nothing of the kind, and if he were, surely that was a matter for the lady's consideration. I said I thought there might be some one else to consider besides the lady. I felt that I was pale. 'Something in my manner betrayed my feelings to the excited old man. His eyes were fixed upon mine. I could not look him in the face. 'Good heavens, Ned!' he exclaimed, 'you don't mean to tell me that you are in love with Mrs. Sinclair?' 'I did not mean to tell you; had no thought of it,' I replied, 'but it is true I am in love with her.' My father flung himself into a chair by the table and buried his face in his hands. I walked about the room, feeling very sorry for myself, but no less sorry for myself. 'Have you told Mrs. Sinclair the nature

of your feelings towards her?' he asked presently, looking up at me in a fearfully anxious kind of way that made my heart ache. 'Not in words,' I said. 'Not in words,' he repeated, still looking at me, 'but she knows?' 'I have not told her,' I said. 'No!' he replied, 'not in words, again repeating my answer. 'Have you asked Mrs. Sinclair to become your wife?' 'Yes,' he replied. 'When?' 'Almost this minute,' he answered. 'And what was her reply?' 'Her reply,' said my father, rising from his seat and looking about him in a perplexed way, 'was that if I had your full and free and absolute consent, she would marry me.' 'My free, full and absolute consent,' I said, now repeating my father's words, 'I would give you. I would lay my life down for my father, but I could not give up Marie Sinclair. It was one thing to be in love, another to tell the woman that you love her, the very confession you feel may be your loss of her. I felt as if I would like to go to my father and take his hand, but somehow my heart was against him; it seemed to me that he had acted an unkind and a cruel part towards me, his only son. Then tears came into my eyes, and I felt a perfect fool. His voice brought me to my senses. 'Speak Ned,' he said, 'speak! Have your full, free and absolute consent to marry Mrs. Sinclair?' 'No,' I said, 'by the Lord, no!' My father staggered where he stood, but he stiffened himself with an effort. I felt that he was suffering. I longed to fling myself into the old man's arms and say 'yes' the moment after I had said 'no.' 'Then we leave it to her,' he said. 'I love you both too well to come between you; without it is her absolute wish; but—' he pushed past me and rang the bell. It seemed a prosaic thing to do, and it brought me out of my cloud of romance. 'Father,' I said, going up to him and laying my hand on his arm, 'forgive me!' He shook me from him, without a word, as a servant entered the room. 'Tell Mrs. Sinclair my son wishes to speak with her.'"

Just as Ned arrived at this dramatic situation it happened that another bell rang. In real life incidents do not always work up to what is called a dramatic climax, though in the present case Mrs. Henshaw's return from the "at home" Ned had mentioned was in itself not altogether inappropriate. As the great hall bell rang Ned paused in his narrative, saying: "That's my wife; she will be here in a moment. I have just time to tell you that I married Mrs. Sinclair, and that we have neither of us seen my father since the day when he had those few words with me about his matrimonial intentions. I left the house within an hour of Marie confessing her love for me, and the dear old chap's last words to me were: 'Ned Henshaw, I will never forgive you!'

"But he shall!" I said, just as Mrs. Henshaw, the heroine of Ned's story entered the room, a handsome, well-dressed, happy-looking woman, not as old as she had had a delightful time and informed him that the carriage was waiting; all this before Ned had time to introduce us. On second thoughts I concluded to go with them to Richmond, and as we sat chatting on the terrace after dinner I could not feel surprised at the division in the Henshaw household at Bath, but I made up my mind that I would close up the breach and bring father and son together on friendly, if not familiar, terms. After the age of sixty one has not many missions in life. This is

poor old Henshaw!

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The following sermon was delivered by Rev. T. DeWitt Talmage to a congregation that filled every nook of the Brooklyn tabernacle, and which had barely been dismissed when fire once more deprived the church of a house of worship. The subject was: "A Cheerful Church," and the text: "Behold thou art fair, my love—Solomon's Song, iv, 1."

"Higher criticism" says that this book of Solomon's Song is a love scene, a forlorn maiden sighing for her beau. If so, it is an unclean and debauched utterance inserted in the pure Word of God, and is not fit for common reading. My opinion is that it is an inspired ode, setting forth the feeling of Christ toward the Church and of the Church toward Christ. Christ is the bridegroom, and the Church is the bride. The same words we can utter to-day truthfully, whether in regard to the Church of God in general or this Church in particular: "Behold, thou art fair, my love." The past week has been one of prolonged congratulation for that we have for twenty-five years been permitted to associate with each other in the relation of pastor and people. When I came to Brooklyn I found a small band of Christian disciples who from various causes had become less and less, until they stood upon the very verge of extinction as a church, and the question was being agitated from time to time whether it would be possible to maintain a church life longer. Indeed, had not those men and women been consecrated and earnest, they would have surrendered to the adverse circumstances. They marshaled a congregational meeting, and, gathering up all the forces possible, they cast 19 votes for a pastor, all of which I am happy to have received.

It was not through any spirit of personal courage or reckless adventure that led me, from one of the warmest and most congenial pastorates in Philadelphia that a man ever enjoyed, to this most uninviting field; but it was the feeling that God had called me to the work, and I was sure that He would see me through.

I have thought that it might be profitable to us to state briefly what kind of a church we have been trying to establish.

In the first place, I remark that we have been trying to build here a Christian church; distinctly such; in other words, a church where we should preach the Lord Jesus Christ and Him crucified. My theology is all gone into five letters—Jesus, Jesus, the pardon of all offenses. Jesus, the foundation of all structures. Jesus, the balm of all wounds. Jesus, the eyesalve for all blindness. Jesus, the guide through all perplexities. Jesus, the hope for all discouragements. Jesus, the reform for all wrongs. I have faith to believe that there is more power in one drop of the blood of Jesus Christ to cure the woes of the world than in an ocean full of human quackery. Jesus is the grandest note in any minstrelsy. He is the brightest gem in any crown. The center of every circumference. The pacifier of all turbulence. The umpire of all disputes. Jesus! Jesus! At His table all nations are to sit. Around this throne all worlds are to revolve. He is to be the irradiation of the universe. Jesus! It is that truth that we have tried to preach in this tabernacle.

Do you ask more minutely what we believe? I can tell you. We have no faith, withered, juiceless theology. We believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of Heaven and earth, the deliverer of the distressed, the home for the homeless, the friend for the friendless. We believe in Jesus Christ, able to save to the uttermost, pardoning the guilty, imputing the righteousness to the believer. We believe in the Holy Ghost, the comforter, the sanctifier, cheering up the heart in life's ills, and kindling bright lights in every dark landing place. We believe that the whole race is so sunken in sin that nothing but the omnipotent arm of God can ever lift it out. We believe in grace—free grace, sovereign grace, triumphant grace, eternal grace. We believe in a Bible—authentic in its statements, immense in its teachings, glorious in its promises. We believe in Heaven, the abode of the righteous; and in Hell, the residence of those who are soul-soldiers—of their own free choice refusing the divine mercy. We believe in the salvation of all men who accept Christ by faith, be they sprinkled or immersed, worship they in cathedral or in log cabin, believe they in Presbyterianism or Episcopacy, dwell they under Italian skies or in Siberian snow storms, be they Ethiopian or American. All one in Christ, one Lord, one faith. We built the tabernacle for the purpose of setting forth these great theories of the Gospel of the Son of God. Would that we had been more faithful in the pulpit!

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I remark, further, that we have tried here to build a church distinctively unconventional. Instead of asking, as some people are disposed to do, how other people do it, we have asked the question how people do not do it. Impious custom has decided that churches shall be angular, cheerless, gloomy, unsympathetic, forgetting that what men call a pious custom is the most comfortable, and that that is the most efficient Christian service where the people are made most sick of sin, and most anxious after Christ, and Heaven. And the one called the church hearing the one first called how shrunken she is!

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