

certainty that the work would bring him numerous commissions from personal friends of Merivale and others.

When Loring left the office he had accepted the commission. He heard the banker's words ringing in his ears.

"I'm not going to hamper you with any instructions, my boy. Just build the house as if it was your own, and as if it was for your own honeymoon."

Loring decided that the chances of his meeting Elsie again were very slight. Undoubtedly, long before the foundations had begun to be dug Merivale would have mentioned his name to his future bride. But the ghastly irony of the situation mocked him. It was certainly a dreadful situation.

And because of its biting irony he set to work to build just such a house as he and Elsie had often planned, in the days when he looked forward to the success which had now arrived. The time came at last when he had the contractor at work.

"I don't want to see it until it's finished," said Merivale to him. "Never mind worrying about my opinions, young man. Just you get busy and build a house that's weatherproof and has some stairs in it, and a kitchen and parlor, and I'll let you do it in your own way."

A little more than a year after the plans had been completed the house was ready. Not ready for occupation, but ready without the plumbing and other "fixings." And then Loring told Merivale and asked him to come and see it.

"You've finished it just in time, because we are to be married next month," answered the banker. "And what do you think, Mr. Loring? I haven't told my future wife a word about it! My! Won't she be pleased with it?"

He looked critically at the photograph which Loring had just handed him.

"It's a dandy honeymoon house," he said. "Now, Mr. Loring, I can't make a definite engagement to go out and look at it, but I'll call you up when I have a morning to spare and arrange to meet you there."

It was some five days later that Loring received his telephone call. Merivale was to motor out to the suburb and meet Loring, and he would take him back in his machine.

Loring found that the banker had not arrived when he reached the place. As he stood looking at the house the bitter thought would intrude itself upon his mind that it would have made just the place for Elsie and himself. He had been thinking of her a good deal lately.

Then it was that he saw her.

She came round the house and for the first time in all those years they stood face to face. He gasped. It was the same Elsie, but more womanly, more matronly, and with a look of maturity upon the beautiful face.

"Robert!" she cried.

"Elsie!"

And in that instant all the past was forgotten and they stood clasped in each other's arms. Merivale was as completely forgotten as though he had never existed, never come into their lives.

It was not for several minutes that they remembered. And Robert, releasing her, looked into her face in doubt and terror.

"You are to be—married again!" he whispered.

"I hate him, Robert."

Robert Loring's eyes suddenly perceived the banker standing in the doorway of the new house. There was a look on his face that startled Loring. It was the expression of a man who was amused!

He came down the wide steps briskly and planted himself in front of them.

"So you've made up again, have you, young people?" he asked, laughing as though it were the greatest