

A FAMILY AFFAIR.

BY HUGH CONWAY.

(CONTINUED.)

"It is also necessary," he went on, with a covert glance at her, "to make a declaration—a mere matter of form. You must declare yourself to be twenty-one years of age."

The truth is Mr. Hervey had been to the money-lenders, and without mentioning names had endeavored to negotiate a loan upon such security as Beatrice's fortune offered. So he soon found one whose business face, but never to refuse to lend money on a forged bill or a false declaration provided the friends of the forger or the perjurer were of the stamp who would pay money to avoid criminal proceedings.

"I do not quite understand," said Beatrice. She would not understand. "It's a more matter of form, my dear girl, it can do no harm. It is only to swear that you are twenty-one. I'm sure no one would doubt it."

Beatrice covered her face with her hands, and the tears trickled through her fingers. Hervey emptied to caress her. Slightly but firmly he pushed his arm away. "You cannot do it," she said.

His brow grew black. "Damn it! you must!" he said. "I will not," she said in accents which told him she meant what she said. "I will do this much: I have some jewelry, it shall be placed in your hands. The only favor I ask is that money may be raised on an object of value that same day. I can get it back. Hervey said that her jewelry would not help him."

She did as she had promised. That evening Mrs. Miller brought him the packet of jewelry. There were some valuable articles in it, as Sir Maiting, who had great faith in his daughter's discretion, and who perhaps had feared that if not given at once, they would never be given, had intrusted her with some diamonds which had belonged to her late mother. So it was that Hervey was able to raise some two hundred pounds on the trinkets. To his credit be it said that he sent certain mysterious tickets to Beatrice which, upon inquiry, she found would enable her to redeem the things of which she had deprived herself.

What were her feelings when the truth first came home to her? When she knew she could trust herself no longer? When no imagination would account for her condition? When in plain words the fact that she was to bear the burden common to womanhood was forced upon her? Then Beatrice prayed that she might die.

Even then she would not go to her friends and tell them all. Still those long uncertain years stretched out before her. If she could only conceal this new trouble as she had concealed her marriage, there was peace—peace for years. Sarah was told what she already guessed, and upon hearing her mistress wishes simply set about executing them.

The child was born, and none save the mother and her maid knew the truth. Hard as was the task, it was no harder to Beatrice than to others who, without the aid and faithful service at her command, have concealed what it revealed meant ruin. The elder woman arranged all. She left her mistress as a servant leaves; she prepared a place, and when the time came Beatrice found her grief lightened by all a loving woman can do for another in such a plight. Of course there was deceit—deceit seemed to have forced itself into the girl's life. There was a long visit to pay some where, a visit from which Beatrice returned a shadow of her former self. But none knew, none even guessed the cause.

Until the child was born Beatrice's prayer was that both she and it might die. Can a sadder, more pitiful prayer be framed by a woman? The truth could be told to all. The early death would be the full expiation of her folly. The few who loved her would forgive and pity her. But her prayer was unanswered—death never even threatened mother or babe.

The child was born, the tiny head nestled on the mother's breast, and a strange new feeling awoke within her—the overpowering instinct of maternal love. Her thoughts which had once been, in case the child lived, to hate it for the father's sake, turned to pure, sweet affection for the innocent, helpless little being. So far from wishing it dead, she would not now have wished it unborn. When she returned to her home she left it with many tears in Sarah's charge.

For years she saw it by stealth, say it grow more and more the picture of perfect childhood; loved it and worshiped it more each time she saw it, and at last, when she returned to her father's house, and felt that her visits to her treasure would now perform for her less and less frequent, a wild craving to have it with her always, to see it every day, every hour, awoke in her passionate heart.

Then came the second quarrel, and the new home. And even as she settled to go down to her uncle's the nucleus of the daring scheme for regaining her boy framed itself in her brain, and was eventually shaped into form and acted upon with perfect success. But the five years were passing, passing. At the end of them stood what Beatrice shrank from picturing, a convict who would come and claim his wife. Beatrice had, indeed, expected that when first arrested he would find some way of proclaiming his marriage, if only in fulfillment of his threat of dragging her name into the dirt.

Yet his name no sign. He was crafty and calculating. The term of the sentence was not to him an eternity. When it ended he knew that by keeping the secret he should be in a more advantageous position to turn matters to his own benefit. Beatrice would be well past twenty-one, and in command of a large income. He meant to be thoroughly revenged for the obstinacy she had displayed in refusing to perjure herself, and so find him means to buy up the forged bills, but he meant to have money also.

This is the story of the life of the last five years upon which Beatrice looked back that afternoon. These are the pictures of the man and the woman—the husband and wife—who were to meet on the morrow like foes in a deadly duel.

thought so perfect—now no human creature on the earth could have inspired her with such loathing. She did not fear him, simply because she knew the worst he could do—the heaviest penalty she could be called upon to pay. Or she thought she knew.

"Knocking my ash off my cigar, and looking her up and down, 'you've grown into quite a fine piece of goods, quite a tip-top, no end of a swell. You haven't pined much for me, I guess.'"

She shivered as she heard his voice and coarsely, mocking compliments, but she kept her proud eyes upon him. "You have something to say to me—say it!" She spoke sternly.

"Say! I should think it was for you to say something. You who sent me to herd with felons for five years. You who would not stretch out a hand to save me. What have you to say?" He spoke with a vicious, bitter intonation.

She said nothing. She might have told him of misery which she had undergone—misery which she had to undergo to which his well-merited punishment was as nothing.

"Nearly five years," he went on, "think of that—dull, dead drudgery. Week after week, month after month, year after year the same. All through you—through you! And now, my sweet wife, which do you expect me to do, to strike you or to kiss you?"

He changed his tone to that of raillery, a tone more loathsome to Beatrice than that which showed his real nature. He took a step towards her as he said the last words. "You have done both to me," she said, slowly and bitterly. "The memory of the kiss is to-day more degrading to me than that of the blow." He scowled as he scornfully turned his back and took another step towards her.

There was a sharp-pointed knife lying on the table. Beatrice's fingers mechanically rested themselves on the handle. "If you touch me," she said, quietly, "I think I shall kill you."

"I think I shall kill you." The man knew she meant it. He threw himself into a chair, and laughed scornfully. "Come," he said, "let us go to business."

"I demand you. Give him to me. Ah, I have you now!" He had. His thrust seemed to pierce her heart. She uttered a low cry and grasped the back of a chair for support. "It is not true," she gasped.

"Go to your lawyer and find out," he said. "I have examined mine. The boy is my own. Ah, what pleasure I shall find in his company! How nice for him to be known hereafter as the forger's son! Now will you accept my conditions? Now have I got your proud knees to bend! Now will you come to me and avow yourself the wife of an injured husband?"

He almost shrieked the sentence. He felt he had his full grasp of revenge. "I must think. I must think," she murmured.

"Yes, go and think. I've got to think, too. I've got to find out whether any quibble can deprive you of the money. If so, you'll have to marry me again and keep the first marriage dark. Hang me! that will be even better."

"Let me go," she said. "Yes, you can go. But come to me again the day after to-morrow. Then I'll tell you what to do. As matters stand, you'd better have got the money I wanted years ago. I told you at the time you were a fool."

She did not hear his last words. She had left the room. Hervey threw himself into his chair and laughed long and loud. "Revenge and money!" he said. "I'll bring her down to the very dust. I'll make her beg on her knees for the boy before I spare her even him. Luck! was there ever such luck?"

CHAPTER XXII. HARRY LEARN'S A NEW WORD. I am informed, by those who ought to know, that a credit balance at one's bankers possesses great virtues as an elevator of both morals and character. That, apart from any sordid consideration or miserly joy, it enables a man to face with greater courage the smaller ills and annoyances of life, renders him less liable to many temptations, teaches him to regard his fellow-creatures with more affectionate eyes, and generally to acquiesce in the wisdom of the arrangement which made the world as it is. If this be so, the universal desire to grow rich may have for its more noble and nobler motives. As in nine cases out of ten a woman holds money in far greater reverence and awe than a man does, the possession of such a balance should be to her doubly gratifying and elevating. With money woman is a power. It was the weak concession, begun years ago for man's selfish ends, completed to-day for the sake of justice, that a woman has any right to hold property at all, which has led up to the demand for womanhood suffrage.

Beatrice had a very large credit balance in the hands of the family bankers, Messrs. Furlong, Stephens, Furlong, Seymour & Furlong, an establishment which, for the sake of brevity, and on account of its antiquity, was commonly known as the Blacktown Old Bank. It was a very large balance, so large that it annoyed Horace and Herbert to think of its lying at the bankers. With their praiseworthy regularity the trustees had every half year paid their niece's income to her account at Messrs. Furlong, and as Beatrice did not spend one-fifth of it the money had to be retained as it was for a while. Hervey's niece came to stay with them, the Talberts had, without even consulting her, invested all surplus income in good dividend-paying preference or debenture stocks, chosen because they only paid four per cent.—no well-advised borrower should think of offering more than four per cent. Doing so creates mistrust. During the last year Beatrice had asked them to let the money lie at the bank. So at the bank it was, as Horace said, not bearing a fraction of interest. It vexed him to see such waste.

Only at Christmas he had remonstrated with her. "You are simply making our friends,"—several members of the elongated firm lived in the neighborhood—"a handsome yearly present. Paying one of their clerk's salary, in fact."

I looked down from somewhere and saw myself as I must be, as it was fixed I should be before the world began, when the worm dieth not."

"My poor Sarah, be calm." "Where the fire is not quenched, I saw myself, and I saw him. He was close at hand. Oh, God means to strike, and soon, very soon."

Her voice had such intensity, her eyes such a wild look in them, that little Harry, who had watched her in that spell-bound manner common to reflective children, came to the conclusion that something was wrong, and set up a lusty roar.

"See," said Beatrice, reproachfully, "you have frightened the boy." The woman grew calm at once. The blast of fanaticism faded from her face, and she was once more the attentive nurse and faithful servant. The train hurried them on wards on their flight.

Fright! Yes, it was fright! Hervey's threat had struck home. It had carried conviction. Beatrice never doubted his assertion that although it might be impossible for him to force her to come to his side, he could legally take the boy from her. She determined to fly, to go no trace, hide for a while, and let the man in her absence do his worst. If he told her friends the tale of the marriage it would at least save her from the pain of so doing. She had not yet settled whether to go, but she meant to-night to be out of England.

The little boy, as was usual when he appeared, had attracted much attention while they waited on the Blacktown platform. So great is the interest excited by such a perfect specimen of childhood that every woman and not a few men turned and looked after him. As the first stoppage a lady who saw him through the window actually fetched her husband out of the refreshment room to look at his golden hair. She was but a young wife, or she might have known better. Pleasing as such admiration must have been to Beatrice, it seemed to trouble Mrs. Miller. As the train resumed its course, she turned to Beatrice. "It must be done, my dear. It must be done."

Beatrice, who now had the boy, hugged him tightly. "I won't—I can't do it," she said. "We shall be traced all over the world by it, my dear," said Mrs. Miller, sadly. "Oh, Sarah! It is too cruel—too cruel! See, let us twist it up and hide it." Therewith she twisted up Harry's sunny locks, turned them over on the top of his head, and fastened them with a hairpin. His cap was replaced, and very comical the boy looked with his hair growing upwards.

And very pretty he looked when, a minute afterwards, thinking this was a new sort of game, he shook off his cap, shook out the knot, and presto! down fell the glowing cloud again. It was tucked up again. It was shaken out again—and again and again. It was fine sport for the baby, but Beatrice began to glance timidly at her maid, who shook her head ominously. "We shall be followed everywhere," she said. Beatrice sighed.

"He'll be a big boy in no time, my pretty," said Sarah, "then it must come off. Don't run the risk now. There's not such hair in the three kingdoms." Strange that a woman who believed so implicitly in destiny, Mrs. Miller should be in her calm moments so calculating and foreseeing.



Second Opening

SUMMER MILLINERY

QUERY'S

I HAVE JUST RETURNED FROM THE NORTH...

Latest Novelties

Ladies so fortunate as to have yet to buy their Summer millinery will find some great advantages in seeing our New Goods and Low Prices.

Great reduction in the price of all goods in this line since the spring opening.

Large variety of Misses' and Children's Hats.

Call and See the Summer Novelties

C. M. QUERY.

A Chance For All

—A GRAND SALE OF—

Watches,

CLOCKS AND JEWELRY.

Diamonds, Silver and Silver-Plated Ware.

Spectacles, &c.

Prices cut down from Thanksgiving Day to March 4th 1885.

Those wanting any of the above goods will please call and hear my prices, they are the lowest and the goods are the best.

J. T. BUTLER.

Greensboro Female College.

GREENSBORO, N. C.

THE 50th SESSION of this well established and prosperous school will begin on

The 26th of August, 1885.

This Institution combines the comfort of a home with first-class educational advantages. Location healthful.

Bare good. Faculty competent and faithful. Instruction thorough. Charges moderate.

For Catalogue apply to June 30th T. M. JONES, President.

Condensed Time Table, No. 11

CAPE FEAR AND YADKIN VALLEY RAILWAY COMPANY.

To take effect at 6:40 a. m., Monday, June 22nd, 1885.

Table with columns for TRAIN NORTH, ARRIVE, LEAVE, and stations like Bennettsville, Liberty, etc.

WASHINGTON and LEE UNIVERSITY, Lexington, Va.

Instruction in the usual academic studies and in the professional schools of LAW and ENGINEERING. Location healthful, expenses moderate.