

Old Man's Darling.

BY MRS. ALEX. McVEIGH MILLER,
AUTHOR OF "QUEENIE'S TERRIBLE SECRET," "JACQUELINE," ETC.

CHAPTER XVI—Continued.

He did not in the least understand the swift, appealing look of the eyes that were raised a moment to his own. A swift thought had rushed over her and she had given it words:

"Oh, that he would adopt me for his daughter and save me from either of those two alternatives that lie before me," she thought, wildly. "He might do so for papa's sake, and I would make him a very devoted daughter!"

But the sighing lover did not want a daughter—he was after a wife.

"I will take you even on those terms," he replied. "Let me give you the shelter of my name, and we will see if I cannot soon win a warmer place in your heart."

She shook her head, and a heavy sigh drifted across her lips.

"Do not deceive yourself, Colonel Carlyle," she said. "My heart is dead. I shall never love any one."

"I will risk all that," he answered. "Only say yes, most peerless of women, and so that I call you mine I will risk all else!"

"Do you mean it?" she asked, earnestly. "The hand without the heart—would that content you?"

"Yes," he answered, bent on attaining his end, and foolishly believing that he could teach her to love him. "Yes; am I to have it, Bonniel?"

"It shall be as you wish," she answered, quietly, and leaning slightly forward she laid in his hand she had withdrawn awhile ago.

Colonel Carlyle was beside himself with rapture.

"A thousand thanks, my beautiful darling," he exclaimed, pressing passionate kisses on the small hand. "Nay, do not take it away so soon, my love. Let me first place on it the pledge of our betrothal."

Still and white as marble sat Bonniel while the enraptured colonel slipped over her taper forefinger a magnificent diamond ring, costly enough for a queen to wear. Its brilliant stone flashed fire, and the opal on her third finger seemed to glow dull and cold.

So Bonniel had made her choice. Her nature was tender, refined, luxurious. She was afraid of poverty and cold and darkness; yet if Leslie Dane had lived she would have faced them all rather than have chosen Mrs. Arnold's alternative.

But Leslie Dane was dead. Life was over and done for her. There was nothing to do but to die or forget. Death would have come soon enough in the streets, perhaps, but she was so afraid of such a death. So she took "the goods the gods provided," and blindly threw herself forward into the whirling vortex of fate.

It was not to be expected that Colonel Carlyle would be willing to defer his happiness. He was well-stricken in years, and had no time to spare in idle waiting. He therefore pressed Bonniel to name an early day for the wedding.

She had no choice in the matter, and allowed him to name the day himself.

Armed with her permission, he consulted Mrs. Arnold in regard to the earliest possible date for his happiness.

Mrs. Arnold, tutored by Felise, was all smiling graciousness, and fully appreciated his eagerness. She thought it quite possible that a suitable and elegant *trousseau* might be provided for a wedding on the twenty-fifth of June.

CHAPTER XVII.

Bonniel's wedding-day dawned cloudless, fair and beautiful. The sun shone, the flowers bloomed, the birds sang. Nothing was wanting to complete the charm of the day.

Nothing! Ah! yes. The most important thing of all—the light and happy heart that should beat in the breast of a bride was lacking there.

She was beautiful "in gloss of satin and glimmer of pearls," but she looked like a statue carved in marble. No warmth or color tinged the strong pallor of her face and lips, no light of love shone in the violet eyes that drooped beneath the sweeping lashes. She spoke and moved like a soundless automaton.

Bonniel had pleaded for a private marriage, but Colonel Carlyle had set his heart on a marriage at church, with all the paraphernalia of a fashionable wedding. He wanted to show the whole world what a peerless prize he was winning. He had urged the point with the persistence and almost obstinacy that is characteristic of age, and Bonniel had yielded recklessly. She told herself that it did not matter what they did with her. Her heart was broken and her life was ruined.

She was not in a position to dictate terms. Wretched, dejected, friendless;

what mattered this crowning humiliation of being decked in satin and pearls and orange flowers, and paraded before all eyes as a beautiful slave that an old man had bought with his gold.

Well, it was over. She had gone to the church with him, the wide portals had opened to receive her, the wedding march had pealed over her head, the beautiful bridesmaids had gone with her to the altar in their gala dresses, and carrying little baskets of flowers on their arms, and she had spoken the words that made her the bride of Colonel Carlyle. The fashionable world had flocked to witness the pageant, and nodded approval and congratulated both. And now!

Now the wedding breakfast was over, the "dear five hundred friends" had departed, and Mrs. Carlyle stood arrayed in her traveling dress.

Long Branch was to be the first destination of the wedded pair—they had made no further arrangements yet. Mrs. Arnold and Felise had promised to join them there in a few days by the groom's express invitation.

Felise had behaved so decorously after being thrown overboard by her fickle suitor that the colonel felt that it behooved him to show his appreciation of her conduct by every delicate attention that was possible under the circumstances.

He had, therefore, insisted on their company at Long Branch while he and the bride remained there, and the two ladies had promised to join them there in a day or two at farthest.

Nothing but the coldest civilities had passed between the outraged Bonniel and the mother and daughter since the day when Mrs. Arnold had cruelly insulted and threatened the helpless girl.

Bonniel had kept her room almost entirely after that day, acquainting her uncle's wife with her acceptance of Colonel Carlyle by a brief note sent by Lucy, though she might have spared herself the trouble, for Mrs. Arnold and her daughter had both been witnesses of the colonel's happiness.

The bride-elect had been threatened by an avalanche of milliners and dressmakers at first, but she had resolutely declined to have anything to do with the details of her bridal outfit.

She had suffered a fashionable *modiste* to take her measure once, and after that Mrs. Arnold was forced to give her *carte blanche* in the whole matter of taste, expense and arrangement. Bonniel would dictate nothing in the preparation of those hated garments in which she was to be sacrificed.

It was all over now. She stood in the hallway of the splendid home that had sheltered her childhood, waiting for the carriage that would bear her away on her honey-moon trip. She was leaving that dear home forever; a quick tear sprang to her eyes as the servants crowded around her with their humble, sorrowful adieux.

Lucy was to go with her, but the others many of whom had been valued domestics in the house for years, she might never see again.

They all loved her, and their farewells and good wishes were the most fervent and heart-felt she had ever received.

Colonel Carlyle, though a little impatient, was pleased at these humble manifestations and distributed gratuities among them with a liberal hand. He wondered a little at the tears that crowded into the blue eyes of his girl-wife. He did not know that she was thinking of the dear uncle with whom she had spent so many hours beneath this roof. Ah, those happy days! How far they lay behind her now in the green land of memory!

"Come, dearest," he said, drawing her small hand through his arm and leading her away; "you must not dim those bright eyes with tears."

He led her down the steps, placed her in the carriage that was gay with wedding favors, and Mrs. Arnold and Felise airily kissed the tips of their fingers to them. Janet threw an old slipper after the carriage for good luck, and then Bonniel was whirled away to the new life that lay before her.

"I came very near being the bride in that carriage myself," said Felise, turning away from the drawing-room window. "But there's many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip."

The tone was light, almost laughing; but Mrs. Arnold, turning to look at her, read a different story in her eyes.

The slighted beauty looked very fair and handsome to-day. She had been the first bridesmaid, and her dress rivalled that of the bride itself for richness and elegance.

It was a creamy satin, heavily embroidered with pearl beads and draped with rich lace, caught up here and there with deep-hearted yellow roses. Her glossy, black hair was adorned with the same flowers, and a necklace of sparkling topaz made a circlet of pale flame around her

white throat. A dainty little basket of yellow roses had hung upon her arm, but she had thrown it down now and stood trampling the senseless flowers with fury in her eyes.

"My dear!" exclaimed the mother, in some trepidation.

"Don't 'my dear' me," Felise answered, furiously. "I am not in a mood to be cajoled."

She began to pace the floor impatiently, her rich dress rustling over the floor, her white hands busy tearing the roses from about her and throwing them down as if she hated the beautiful things whose crushed petals sent out a rich perfume as if in faint protest against her cruelty. There was a wild glare akin to that of madness in her dark eyes.

"Hell has no fury like a woman scorned!" she said, repeating the words of the great poet. "Oh, mother, how I hate Colonel Carlyle and his wife! I seem to live but for revenge."

"Felise, you frighten me with your looks and words," Mrs. Arnold said, a little anxiously. "You seem like one on the verge of madness."

"I am," she said, stopping in her hurried walk a moment, and laughing a low, blood-curdling laugh, "but never fear, mother, there is method in my madness!"

"I wish you would give up this scheme of revenge," pursued the mother, anxiously. "I hate them as much as you do, I know, but then we have got rid of the girl, and the misery she feels as the wife of a man she cannot love is a fair revenge upon her. Remember we have despoiled her of everything, Felise, and given her over to a life that will make her wretched. Is not that enough?"

"No, it is not!" exclaimed her daughter, in low, concentrated tones, full of deep passion. "But, mother, what has changed you so? You used to be as vindictive as a tigress—now you plead with me to forego my revenge."

"Because I am afraid for you, my dear," Mrs. Arnold answered in troubled tones. "I fear that your mind will give way under this dreadful strain. I have never told you, Felise, but I will do so now that you may guard yourself against yourself. There was a taint of madness in your father's family, and when I see you brooding, brooding over your revenge, I am afraid, afraid!"

The excited creature only laughed more wildly as she continued her walk.

"Felise," the mother continued, "we have wealth, power, position, and you are beautiful. We can make life a long summer day of pleasure. Let us do so, and throw every vexing care to the winds."

"Mother, I cannot do it," Felise exclaimed. "I have been cruelly humiliated in the eyes of the world—everyone expected Colonel Carlyle to marry me—do you think I will tamely bear their sneers and contempt? No; the man who has brought such odium upon me shall bitterly rue the day he first looked upon the siren face of Bonniel Vere!"

"My love, do you remember the prediction of Wild Madge the sybil? She said 'you would have everything and lose everything, because the gods had made you mad.'"

"Who cares for the predictions of that crazy old witch? What can she know of the future? I wish she were dead and out of the way!" exclaimed the angry girl, clenching her small white hands impotently together. Mother, have done with your warnings and pleadings. "I will not have them! You seem to be undergoing a softening process of the heart and brain—perhaps both," and with a mocking laugh she swept from the apartment.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Among all the radiant beauties that promenaded the beach and danced in the ball rooms at Long Branch, the young bride of Colonel Carlyle became immediately distinguished for her prominent loveliness.

Wherever she went she created a great sensation.

People went to the places where they heard she would be, just to look at that "faultily faultless" face "star-sweet on a gloom profound."

Artists raved over her form and features. They said she was the fairest woman in the world, and that her beauty had but one fault—it was too cold and pale. One touch of glow and color in that "passionless, pale, cold face," they said, would have made her so lovely that men would have gone mad for her—gone mad or died.

And then she was so young, they said. She had never been presented in society. Colonel Carlyle, the cunning old fox, had married her out of the schoolroom before anyone had a chance to see her. The fops and dandies swore at him behind their waxed mustaches, while better and nobler men said it was a shame that such a fair, charming girl should be wedded to such an old man.

There were some who said that the girl, young as she was, had a hidden heart-history. These were the poets and dreamers. They said that the language of those pale cheeks and drooping eyes was that she had been torn from her handsome lover's side and bartered for an old man's gold.

But these were mere conjectures. No one knew anything about her certainly, until Mrs. Arnold and Felise came down

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after a week's delay. Then they knew that she was the daughter of General Vere and the niece of Francis Arnold, the murdered millionaire.

Felise told them of the artist lover who had murdered the millionaire because he would not give him his niece. The excitement only ran higher than before, and people looked at the young creature with even more curiosity and interest than ever.

Bonniel could not help seeing that she was an object of interest and admiration to everyone about her. She saw that the men sought her side eagerly and often and that the women were jealous of her. At first she was vexed and angry about it. She could not get a moment to herself. They were always seeking her out, always hovering about her like butterflies round a flower. She wondered why they came round her so, but at length she remembered what she had almost forgotten. Uncle Francis had often told her so; Leslie Dane had told her so; she had heard it from others, too, and even Wild Madge had admitted it.

Ah! Wild Madge! Over her memory rushed the words of the fearful old hag, freighted with a deeper meaning than they had held at first.

"You are beautiful, but your beauty will be your bane." "Years of sorrow lie before you!" "You will be a young man's bride, but an old man's darling!"

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

HEALTH REPORT.

City of Fredericton, N. B., Showing Marked Decrease in Deaths from Kidney Disease

Bright's Disease, Diabetes, Rheumatism, Heart Disease, Dropsy, Bladder and Urinary Complaints, Woman's Weakness, Blood Disorders—All Kidney Diseases decreasing—Dodd's Kidney Pills the Cause.

FREDERICTON, N. B., Dec. 18.—There has been a decided falling off in deaths from the various forms of Kidney Disease in this city of late. This decrease can only be ascribed to Dodd's Kidney Pills, the wonderful remedy so much used throughout the Maritime Provinces, and the whole of Canada, this last ten years.

Deaths from Bright's Disease are now-a-days very rare. Formerly death was certain to follow in the due course of the malady. There was positively no cure. Dodd's Kidney Pills was absolutely the first remedy discovered for Bright's Disease.

Similarly there are few if any deaths from Diabetes now-a-days. Diabetes was also incurable not such a great while ago. Dodd's Kidney Pills was the first medicine to reach it, and up to date it is the only one, though there are worthless imitations of it.

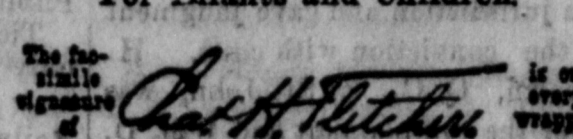
Rheumatism, Heart Disease, Dropsy, Bladder and Urinary Complaints, Female Weakness and Blood Disorders—all forms of Kidney Disease—rarely develop into a dangerous stage owing to the universal use of Dodd's Kidney Pills.

BURNED TO DEATH.

YARMOUTH, Dec. 14.—Fire at six o'clock this morning destroyed a small dwelling occupied by Thos. Carr, boiler maker. When discovered the fire had complete control of the house. Mrs. Carr, about 70 years old, who was alone in the house, perished. The family came here from St. John several years ago. The adjoining house caught and was badly damaged. Both were owned by the Burrell Johnson Iron Co. The latter was occupied by Arthur Smith, truckman, whose furniture was mostly saved. No insurance.

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- Ladies' Jackets,
- Ladies' Underwear,
- Sacque and Coat Cloth,
- Flannelette,
- Flannels—all colors,
- Eiderdown Flannel,
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- Chenille Table Covers,
- Lumbermen's Socks,
- Etaffe Jumpers and Pants,
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