- AN -Old Man's

Darling.

BY MRS. ALEX. McVEIGH MILLER.

AUTHOR OF "QUEENIE'S TERRIBLE SECRET," "JACQUELINA," ETC.

CHAPTER XIX-Continued.

Every word is spoken with such a pretty air of excusing and defending the young wife's errors, and condemning her dead uncle as their cause, that Colonel Carlyle is entirely deceived. He did not know that Bonnibel was so neglected and unformed before, but he takes it on trust since Felise is so confident of it, and the thought rankles bitterly in his proud heart. But he passes over the subject in silence and returns to the primal one.

"So you would not, as a rule Miss Herbert, commend the practice of married women waltzing with other men than their husbands?"

She drops her eyes with a pretty air of mingled confusion and earnestness.

"Perhaps you will call me prudish," she says, "or perhaps I may be actuated by the more ignoble passion of jealousy; but I have always felt that were I a man it would be insupportable shame and agony for me to see my wife, whom I loved and sir?" she inquires timidly. revered as a being little lower than an angel, whirled about a common ball-room public nodded and winked."

She saw a look of shame and pain cross his face as his eyes followed the white figof Byron Penn's arms.

who feel as strongly on that subject as you do," he says, slowly.

would not permit their wives such license," is the quick reply.

The waltz-music ceases with a bewilder- "Would it please you very much to ing crash of melody, and some one comes up and claims Felise for the next german. She floats away airily as a rose-colored cloud on her partner's arm, and leaves her by the promise?" victim alone. He stands there quite silently a little, seeming lost in troubled thought, then goes to seek his wife.

He finds her the center of an admiring | mise." circle, the young poet, Byron Penn, conspicuous among them.

With a slight apology to his friends he offers his arm and leads her away from the throng out to the long moonlighted piaz-

"Shall I find you a seat or will you promenade?" he inquires politely.

"Oh! promenade, by all means," she answers a little constrainedly.

They take a few turns up and down the long piazza, Mrs. Carlyle's long robe trailing after her with a silken "swish, swish; " he makes no observation, does not even jook at him.

Her large eyes wander away and linger upon the sea that is glorious beyond description with the radiance of the full moon mirrored in its deeps, and making a pathway of light across its restless waves.

She thinks vaguely that the golden streets of the celestial city must look like

"I hope you are enjoying the ball?" her

liege lord observes interrogatively. "As much as I ever enjoy anything,"

she returns listlessly. "Which means-" he says, quickly, then checks himself abruptly.

She finishes his sentence with a dreary

little sigh : "That I do not enjoy anything very

He looks down at her, wondering at the

unusual pathos of her tone, and sees a face to match the voice. Moonlight they say brings out the true

expression of the soul upon the features. If that be true then Bonnibel Carlyle bears a sad and weary soul within her breast,

The white face looks very spirituelle in the soft, mystical light, and the delicate lips are set in a line of pain.

No man likes to see his wife unhappy. It is a reflection upon himself. It is his first duty to secure her happiness. Col. onel Carlyle is nettled, and says, half querulously:

"I am sorry to see you ennuyed where everything seems conspiring to promote your happiness. Can I do nothing to further that end?"

Her large eyes look up at him a moment in grave surprise at his fretful tone. Then she says to herself in apology for

"He is old, and I have heard that old people become irritated very easily."

"Pray do not trouble yourself over my thoughtless words, sir," she says, aloud. "I am tired-that is all. Perhaps I have danced too much."

"It was of that subject I wished to speak with you when I brought you out here," he answers, abruptly. "Are you very fond of the waltz, Bonnibel?"

"I like it quite well; " this after a moment's study. "There is something dreamy, intoxicating, almost delightful in the music and the motion."

A spasm of jealousy contracts his heart. He speaks quickly and with a labored

"I have never waltzed in my life, and cannot, of course, enter into the feelings of those who have, but I can see what I am about to ask may be a great sacrifice to you."

She glances up inquiringly into his face but he will not meet her eyes.

"Bonnibel, I want you to give up waltz. ing altogether-will you do it?" he asks.

"Give up waltzing?" she echoes, in surprise. "Is not that a very sudden notion, Colonel Carlyle? I did not know you harbored any objections to the Terpsichorean art."

"I do not in the abstract," he answers, evasively. "But you will pardon me for saying that I consider it exceedingly indelicate and improper for a married woman to dance with any man but her husband. That is why I have asked you to give it up for my sake."

"Do other people think the same way,

"All right minded people do," he answers firmly, quite ignoring the fact that in the arms of another, while the gaping he is a perfectly new proselyte to his boldly announced conviction of the heinousness of the waltz.

Silence falls between them for a little ure floating round the room in the clasp time. They have stopped walking and stand leaning against the piazza rails, "I suppose there are not many women Quite unconsciously she has pulled a flower from his elegant boutonniere, and is tearing it to pieces between her white-"Oh, dear, no, nor men either, or they gloved fingers. She looks up as the last rose-leaf is shredded away between her restless fingers and asks, quietly:

have me give up waltzing, sir?"

"More than words can express, my darling; are you going to make me happy

"I am quite willing to please you, sir, when it is possible for me to do so," she answers quite gently; "you have my pro-

"Bonnibel, you are an angel!" exclaims the enraptured colonel. He draws his arm around her an instant and bends to kiss her lips. "A thousand thanks for your generous self-sacrifice!"

"You need not thank me, sir-it is not much of a sacrifice," she answers, dryly. She has drawn out her programme of the dances for the evening and is hurriedly consulting it.

"I find that I am engaged for one more waltz," she says, carelessly. "I suppose you do not object to my dancing that? It would be embarrassing to excuse myself."

"Your partner is-whom?" he inquires, with a slight frown.

Again she consults her programme. "It is Mr. Penn."

"Cannot you excuse yourself? Say you are tired? Your head aches? Women know how to invent suitable excuses always- do they not?"

"I will do as you wish, sir," she answers in so low a voice that he does not catch its faint inflection of scorn.

Other promenaders come out on the piazza, and one or two laughing jests are thrown at him for keeping the "belle of the ball away from her proper sphere."

"Perhaps I am selfish," he says. "Let us return to the ball-room, my love."

"As you please," she answers: He leads her back and lingers by her side awhile, then it strikes bim that les proprietes do not sanction a man's monopolizing his wife's company in society. With a sigh he leaves her, and tries to make himself agreeable to other fair wo-

He has hardly left her before the band strikes up "The Beautiful Blue Danube," and Byron Penn starts up from some re mote corner, from which he has witnessed her return to the ball-room.

"This is our waltz, is it not?" he says with a tremor of pleasure in his voice. A slight flush rises over Bonnibel's

cheek. "I believe it is," she answers; "but if you will not think me very rude, Mr. Penn, I am going to ask you to excuse me from it. I am tired and shall dance no more this evening."

"You are very cruel," says the poet, plaintively, "but if you wish to atone for your injustice you will walk down to the shore with me and look at the moonlight on the sea, and hear how delicious the music sounds down there. You can form no conception of its sweetness when mellowed by a little distance and blent with the solemn diaposon of the waves."

"If you will go and tell my maid to bring me a shawl," she answers, indifferently, "I will go with you for a minute." He returns with a fleecy white wrap,

and they stroll away from the "dancers dancing in tune."

CHAPTER XX.

Colonel Carlyle soon misses his heart's fair queen from the ball-room, and immediately the whole enchanting scene becomes a desert in his love-lorn eyes. He | a blaze of color rushing over her face and

glances hither and thither; he wanders disconsolately around, yet no flitting glimpse of his snow-maiden rewards his eager eyes. She has vanished as completely from his sight as if a sunbeam had shone down upon and dissolved her into

"Have you seen Bonnibel anywhere?" he inquires of Felise, meeting her on her partner's arm as he wandered around.

Felise looks up with a low, malicious laugh.

"Bonnibel?" she says. "Oh, yes; she and Byron Penn have been down on the beach this half hour in the moonlight, composing sonnets."

Her partner laughs and hurries her on, leaving the anxious old husband standing in the floor like one dazed. A dozen people standing around have heard the question and its answer. They nod and wink at each other, for Colonel Carlyle's patent jealousy has begun to make him a laughing stock. After a moment he recollects himself and turns away. People wonder if he will go out and confront the sentimental pair, and a few couples, on curiosity bent, stroll out to watch his proceedings. They are rewarded directly, for he comes out and takes his way down the

Felise's assertion of a half an hour is merely a pleasant fiction. It has not been ten minutes since she left the house on the arm of the young poet. They are standing on the beach looking out at the glorious sea, and the young man whose soul is so deeply imbued with poetry that he can think and speak of nothing else, has been telling her what a sweet poem is "Lucille," Owen Meredith's latest. He repeats a few lines, and the girl inclines her head and tries to be attentive.

"O, being of beauty and bliss! seen and known In the depths of my heart, and possessed

there alone. name thee never. Thy place in my poor life is vacant for-We have met, we have parted, no more is

recorded In my annals on earth."

come up softly and unnoticed. He sees the graceful head graciously inclined, hears the lines that Byron Penn has, unconsciously to himslf, made the vehicle for expressing his own sentiments, and his heart quakes with fury. He strides before them white and stern.

accents, "will you come with me?"

The young wife lifts her drooping head with a start and sees him standing before her, wan, white and haggard, quite a different man from the enraptured lover who had kissed and praised her but a little while ago.

"I-oh, dear me-has anything happened, Colonel Carlyle? Are you ill!" she falters, in her innocent unconscious-

"Will you come with me?" he repeats, grinding his teeth in a fury.

"Certainly," she says, thinking that something dreadful must have happened surely, and simply saying, "You will excuse me, Mr. Penn," she bows and turns away on her husband's arm.

The handsome young fellow looks after them blankly.

"Upon my word," he exclaims, "what a furious, uncalled-for outbreak of jealousy! So that's what it is to be an old man's darling, is it? Truly an enviable position for such a peerless angel."

He throws himself down on the beach, to the detriment of his immaculate evening costume, and resigns himself to some rather melancholy musings.

Meanwhile Bonnibel, as she walks away, again asks, with sweet unconsciousness: "Has anything happened, Colonel Car-

"Let us go to your private parlor; I will tell you there," he answers, coldly.

Inside that safe retreat they confront each other in momentary silence, Bonnibel anxious, troubled, and totally unconscious, Colonel Carlyle pale with anger and wild, unreasoning jealousy, his brain on fire with contending passiors that have been seething there ever since Felise's consummate art had been employed to torture him this evening.

"Now you will tell me?" she inquires, standing before him with loosely-clasped hands, the fleecy drapery falling from her shoulders, the fairest vision his eyes ever

"Bonnibel, you surely do not pretend to be ignorant that you have given me cause for offence?" he exclaims, hoarsely.

Her blue eyes dilate; she retreats a step with genuine surprise depicted on her face. Then she remembered her promise about

"Surely, there is some misunderstanding," she answers, slowly. "I assure you, sir, that I have not waltzed any more since you asked me not to do so."

"You have done worse, much worse!" he exclaims, passionately, "and your affectation of innocence must certainly be eigned. No woman in her senses could be oblivious to the fact that your open flirtation with that silly rhymester, Byron Penn, is simply scandalous!"

In his excitement he characterizes her offense in terms more forcible than true. She is dumb with astonishment for a moment, then she walks straight up to him.

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neck, while her eyes flash lightning scorn upon him.

"This to me!" she exclaims, her girlish voice ringing with passion and resentment. "Such an accusation to Harry Vere's daughter! Oh! for shame! How

dare you!" "You provoked it yourself," he answers, retreating before her, for her little bands were clenched wildly as if she would Horse Rugs, strike him down to earth; "I gave you my honored name to wear-a name as proud as your father's-and you have dragged it through the mire of a moonlight flirtation with a dandy, an idiot."

"It is false," she answers, proudly, "I never flirted in my life, I should not My days know thee not, and my lips know how to do it. And there was no harm in my short walk down to the shore with Mr. Penn. No one could make harm of it except a man blinded by jeal-

A glimmer of the truth had begun to The pretty lines have a more attentive dawn upon her. It angered him bitterly listener than Bonnibel. Her husband has to know that she had detected his weak-

"I have been blinded by many things," he answers, furiously. "I was blinded by your beautiful face before I married you, and could not see that you had never received the proper training and education to fit you for the position to which I ele-"Mis. Carlyle," he says, in low, stern vated you. My eyes have been opened by your recent conduct, and I find you simply an unformed child, utterly ignorant how to maintain your dignity as my wife!"

Word for word he is going over the specious sophistries of Felise, but he is utterly unconscious of the fact. He has been merely a pliant tool in her artful hands, but he believes that he has found out all these facts for himself, and he asserts them with a perfect conviction of

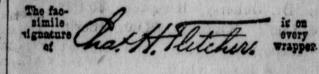
For Bonnibel stands listening in stunned silence to his vehement rhodomontade. She has walked away from him a little way, and stands clinging to the back of a chair, as if to save herself from falling. The angry flush has died out of her face, and she looks marble-cold, and white even to her lips. As he pauses, she speaks in low, resentful accents:

"Colonel Carlyle, you are the first man who has ever offered me an insult!"

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

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