

PUBLISHED BY SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT.

Her Promise True.

BY DORA RUSSELL.

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"A Man's Privilege," etc.

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CHAPTER I. HUGH GILBERT and Belle Wayland are bidding each other good-bye at Brighton as he is about to sail for India with his regiment. Belle promises to be true and writes to meet him that evening for a final farewell. Upon her return to the hotel, where she and her mother are stopping, she finds that Lord Stanmore, whose brother was the husband of Mrs. Wayland's sister, has arrived and has invited her mother and her to dine with him that evening. Mrs. Wayland goes, but Belle remains at home, and is left alone in the room. After dinner Mrs. Wayland discovers that Belle has gone out to meet Gilbert and is very angry. Mrs. Wayland writes an account of the affair to her sister, Lady Stanmore, and the latter comes immediately to Brighton.

CHAPTER II.—Lady Stanmore comes to Brighton and has an interview with Mrs. Wayland, in which they decide Belle's future. Lady Stanmore reads a letter from Gilbert to Belle and lays her plans accordingly. She then writes to the lovers. Lord Stanmore becomes deeply interested in Belle and invites his sister-in-law, Mrs. Wayland, and Belle to spend a few weeks at his country residence.

CHAPTER III.—Belle begins a diary in order that she may send an account of each day to her absent lover.

CHAPTER IV.—Lady Stanmore thinks over the situation. She decides that Belle is not in love with Jack. Lord Stanmore calls upon the party, and invites them to dine at his house. He is greatly smitten with Belle. Lady Stanmore opens a letter from Hugh Gilbert to Belle and burns it.

CHAPTER V.—Lord Stanmore becomes jealous of Sir Dick. Belle tells Lady Stanmore of her engagement and that Lady Stanmore's idea. They go to Hurst Hall.

CHAPTER VI.—Belle's diary continued. She tells Lady Stanmore of her dream about Hugh. That lady decides to write Mrs. Balfour.

CHAPTER VII.—Lady Stanmore destroys a letter Belle has written to Hugh Gilbert. Jack Stanmore confesses his love for Belle to his sister-in-law, Mrs. Wayland, and she tells her of the letter. Belle is shocked. Sir Dick proposes to Belle and she refuses. Lady Stanmore writes a letter from Mrs. Balfour who went to India on the same ship with Hugh Gilbert. It contains the story of the marriage of Hugh and Belle, and is greatly shocked. In taking a morning walk she breaks through the ice.

CHAPTER VIII.—Stanmore rescues Belle from drowning. She takes cold and has a severe illness. A letter arrives for Belle during her illness and is destroyed by Lady Stanmore. Belle is convalescing. Stanmore proposes to her and in her anxiety to show Hugh Gilbert that she has forgiven her she accepts the offer. Stanmore and his sister-in-law, Mrs. Wayland, matters and Belle acquiesces. The marriage is arranged for an early day.

CHAPTER IX.—The eve of the wedding. Lady Stanmore writes to her friend in Bombay and tells her of the marriage and specially requests that the news be told Hugh Gilbert whom she represents as a friend only of Belle's. Belle is greatly shocked. In taking a morning walk she breaks through the ice.

CHAPTER X.—The wedding. Lord Stanmore and Lady Stanmore return to Redvers Court. Belle is not happy and Stanmore sees that she has not learned to love him. Sir Dick and Lady Stanmore call upon them and invite them to dine at Hurst.

CHAPTER XI.—FLYING WITH FIRE. Sir Dick grows more in love with Lord Stanmore's wife which causes him to grow more and more uneasy. Lord Stanmore also notices the young man's infatuation and warns Belle against encouraging him. They dine at Hurst and Belle is presented to Mr. Trevelyan, the vicar and Sir Dick's old tutor, and his daughter, Amy who has known and loved Sir Dick from his boyhood as they have grown up together but who only regards Amy with a sisterly affection.

CHAPTER XII.—Sir Dick offers a diamond pendant to Belle but she refuses; she tells him that his confession of love must end a pleasant friendship and he goes home in despair. He decides that life is not worth living and attempts to shoot himself but his mother who had feared nothing and had followed him screams when she sees what he is about to do and the bullet goes through his cheek. Lord Stanmore believes Belle is to blame for encouraging Sir Dick and reads her a lecture which she resents.

CHAPTER XIII.—An unfortunate face. Lord and Lady Stanmore have an understanding and are better friends. She tells him all about her interview with Sir Dick. The Stanmore's get an invitation to a ball at Marchmont Court. They go and there Belle and Hugh Gilbert meet. After the shock has somewhat died away she requires for his wife and learns that he has never been married.

CHAPTER XIV.—The last letters. Belle and Captain Gilbert have mutual explanations in which Lady Stanmore's treachery is revealed. Lord Stanmore is introduced to Gilbert and asks him to dine with them the following day. Belle accuses her aunt of destroying her letters and the latter acknowledges her guilt but nothing of the situation is told to Stanmore who receives Captain Gilbert very kindly and invites him to Scotland for the shooting season and at Belle's request the latter consents to go.

CHAPTER XV.—THE LAST LETTERS.

He led her to a more secluded part of the grounds, and placed her on a seat under a great branching elm, whose huge boughs were, like the rest of the trees, hung with colored lamps. But there was no one near; only the sound of the music in the distance and the hum of voices from the open windows of the house. Gilbert sat down by her side, and then said, in a low, earnest voice:

"Now, tell me everything, Belle. How was it you never answered my letters?"

"Because I never got any," replied Belle. "The last letter I received from you was when you were on the eve of emigrating at Southampton, when you told me you were going out with Miss Vane and Mrs. Balfour."

"But you surely got the one I sent you after we had actually embarked—when poor Webster broke a blood vessel, and died, and his wife promised to post a few lines from me to you immediately she landed?"

"I never got such a letter. I never heard of it until now."

"And the one I posted myself when we touched at Aden, that must have reached you?"

"It never did. The letter I received from you when you were at Southampton was the only one I ever got—after the night when we parted at Brighton."

Belle's voice broke and faltered as she uttered the last few words, and Hugh Gilbert started up impatiently.

"This is incredible, Belle," he exclaimed. "I wrote again and again to you from India. Wrote Mrs. Balfour showed me your aunt's letter, in which she told her you were going to be married immediately to Lord Stanmore. Then I thought I understood your silence—then I give up all hope."

"Oh! who has done this, Hugh?" said Belle, rising and in bitter distress and excitement. "It must have been some plot, some shameful plot to part us! Mrs. Balfour? It was Mrs. Balfour's letter to Aunt Lucy that I saw; the letter where I read you were married to Miss Vane; that you had married her the very day after you both landed at Bombay."

"It is a hideous lie, then!" answered Hugh Gilbert, passionately. "I do not believe Mrs. Balfour ever wrote such a thing—she could not. No thought of marrying Miss Vane ever entered my head. The letter must have been a forgery."

"It came from a Bombay," continued Belle, in a tear-choked voice. "I had

written to you again and again, and had watched and waited for an answer, but none ever came. Then, one morning when Stanmore opened the letter-bag, he handed an Indian letter to Aunt Lucy."

"Were you married to Lord Stanmore then?" interrupted Gilbert.

"Married to him?" repeated Belle, in great surprise; "but for this letter I should never have been married to him! The letter was from Mrs. Balfour, and presently Aunt Lucy brought it to my room; she said there was a postscript in it that she thought I should see. Hugh! Hugh!" continued Belle, wringing her hands together in the extremity of her distress, "what do you think that postscript contained? The words were written in fire on my brain then—I see them now! Mrs. Balfour wrote that she had opened her letter to tell Aunt Lucy a surprising piece of news; that young Gilbert Hugh Gilbert—of her husband's regiment, was actually married to Eliza Vane; had been married the very day after they had landed at Bombay. There was much more—that she was rich, and that her father was very angry."

"It is inconceivable that Mrs. Balfour ever wrote such a thing!" again interrupted Gilbert. "She is a nice woman; she could have no possible purpose for writing such a lie."

"I saw the words with my own eyes," said Belle, in a broken voice; "there was no mistake; they were written in that letter, and when I read them—I did not care to live."

Hugh Gilbert was deeply moved. He took her hand and led her back to the seat beneath the tree, while tears she could not restrain streamed down her cheeks.

"Someone has done this," said Gilbert, in a low tone, "someone has plotted to destroy our happiness, but I do not believe it was Mrs. Balfour. Were you at Brighton when the letter came, Belle?"

"At Brighton? Oh, no; we had left Brighton for long. We were at Redvers Court, staying with Lord Stanmore—my mother, Aunt Lucy and myself. I had written to you always from Redvers Court, Hugh; you surely got some of my letters?"

"I never got one; where, and how, did you post them?"

"I placed them in the letter-bag at Redvers Court; I wrote again and again; I told you everything as I said it would."

"They must have been taken from the bag then, and never reached Bombay. Belle, can it be possible that Lord Stanmore had anything to do with this?"

"I am sure he had not; he never thought of me then—never till he saved my life. But your letters? Where did you direct them to, Hugh?"

"Always to Brighton, to the hotel you were staying at. I had no other address. Then they were intercepted!" cried Belle excitedly, putting her hand to her brow, as if to think. "Hugh—I begin to understand now—it has been Aunt Lucy!"

"And she too probably added the postscript to Mrs. Balfour's letter. But that I can soon ascertain; I will write to Mrs. Balfour, and have this cleared up—though it is too late."

"Yes," murmured Belle in a low, faint tone.

"They were silent for a while after this; it seemed not a time for words. A fountain was playing near them, and the sound of the water fell softly on their ears. But even at this moment a strange thrill of joy passed through Belle's heart. He had not been false to her; he had not deceived her, though others had."

"You did not quite forget me then?" she said suddenly, her lips following her thoughts.

"How could I?" he answered, in a low, impassioned tone. "You who were a part of my life—the dearest part."

Again Belle was conscious of that thrill of joy; it was like the echo of the music that had once filled her soul, before the benumbing chill had fallen on her which had destroyed the sweetness of her life.

"And you have been ill?" she asked gently, turning round and looking at his somewhat worn face.

"Yes, I had a sharp attack of fever last year, and a slight return of it this, and so the doctors ordered me home on sick leave. When I was off my head, Belle," he added, "I thought I saw you twice, and both times you were dressed like a bride; I suppose I dreamed this, but it seems so real."

Belle made no answer, she was remembering her wedding day; remembering the evening before, when they had decked her in her wedding gown.

"And have you been long home?" she said at length.

"Only a week or so, and I chanced to meet Marchmont in town, for they are distant connections of ours, and he asked me to come down here for his coming of age. I knew I should meet you, Belle," continued Gilbert, with a slight break in his voice, "Marchmont told me so."

"I am so glad," answered Belle, and she held out her hand which Gilbert took, and clasped tightly in his own.

"And I may see you again?" he asked.

"Yes, you must come and see me. But they will be missing us; we had better go back to the house."

"Just as you like, if I may sometimes see you."

He rose and offered her his arm, which Belle took, and just as they were again entering the ball room the soft strains of a new waltz flowed through the room.

"I wonder if you would waltz with me?" said Gilbert in a low tone.

"Yes; but are you strong enough?" replied Belle. "To dance with you? Yes."

In another moment or two they had joined the rest. Belle felt excited, almost happy. Her pulses stirred, her heart beat fast, and her feet seemed winged. Stanmore, who had gone back to the ball room to look for her, stood watching her with admiration. She was the prettiest woman present, the most charming and graceful. He wondered who her tall, dark soldier-like looking partner was, and a vague idea crossed his mind he had seen him before.

At length they paused, and Belle looked up and smiled. There were no tears in her bright eyes now, they were shining and beaming with a new light, that Stanmore had not seen before. He went round the room to speak to her, and lightly touched her arm to attract her attention. Belle gave a little start when she saw him, but quickly recovered herself.

"I have been admiring your dancing, Belle," said Stanmore, smiling.

"Have you, really?" she answered, also smiling. "Lord Stanmore, Mr. Gilbert."

The two men bowed as she introduced them, and Stanmore looked at Gilbert keenly.

"I fancy I have seen you before?" he said.

"I have no remembrance of meeting you," answered Gilbert.

"Ah, I remember now," continued Stanmore. "It was at Brighton, and you were sitting on the sea-wall with my wife; but she was not my wife then."

"Yes, we are old friends," said Belle, quickly.

"And are you staying in this part of the world?" asked Stanmore, addressing Gilbert.

"I am staying here at present. I am home on sick-leave from India."

"You must come over and see us," said Stanmore, hospitably. "Belle, you must fix a day for your old friend to dine with us."

"Well, which shall it be?" answered Belle.

"I must consult Jim Marchmont—I am his guest, you know—before I give myself the great pleasure of accepting your invitation," replied Gilbert.

"Well, we must settle it before we go," said Stanmore. "Ah, here is Mr. Marchmont."

Mr. Marchmont, the master of the house had come to ask to have the honor of taking Lady Stanmore in to supper, and Belle's dance with Hugh Gilbert was over, but not its memory. Neither would dance again during the evening, and before the Stanmores left Marchmont it had been arranged that Gilbert and young Marchmont were to dine on the following day at Redvers Court.

"Who was that good-looking dark man, Belle, I saw you and Jack talking to?" asked Lady Stanmore, when they were driving home.

"It was Mr. Gilbert," answered Belle, quietly, but with a strange intonation in her voice.

"Captain Gilbert, my dear," said Stanmore, who was half-asleep, rousing himself. "Young Marchmont told me he has just lately got home. He seems a very nice, gentlemanly fellow, but does not look over wrong. I suppose it's that confounded Indian climate; plays the very devil with the constitution."

CHAPTER XXIII.—A DANGEROUS COMPROMISE.

The next morning Belle rose early, and shortly after breakfast went out into the grounds feeling restless and excited. She was asking herself what she should do; how should she act under the circumstances in which she found herself placed. She had no doubt in her own mind now, who it was who had intercepted her letters; no doubt who had forged the postscript in Mrs. Balfour's.

"No one could have done it but Aunt Lucy," she told herself. "Mother was lying ill; Hugh is sure Mrs. Balfour never wrote such a lie. In my misery the handwriting deceived me. It was a dreadful sin—worse than a murder. And how can I ever speak to her again?"

But on the other hand she knew that if she openly quarrelled with Lady Stanmore, that Lady Stanmore would probably prevent her seeing anything more of Hugh Gilbert. Stanmore would then have to be told the whole story, and that would be the natural consequence. That he would not care to have the man in his house whom he knew his wife had once loved. And not to see him; now when she knew all—when he had been true—was more, Belle felt, than she could bear. The subtle happiness that his very presence had given her, the deep sympathy between them, which had filled her soul with joy, even when she knew he was lost to her, was too sweet and precious to be risked.

"We can be friends," Belle whispered to her heart; "and life will not be dull and dreary to me any more. I will see him sometimes—the very thought makes me almost happy."

Up and down the garden walks she paced in her restless mood. She thought of his illness, when his soul must have wandered to her; when he fancied he could see her in his fevered dreams.

"And I saw him. Oh! if I had only known. Oh! Hugh! Hugh! why did they part us?"

She stretched out her arm as if to lessen the distance between them. She looked across the misty land in the direction that Marchmont lay, though she knew that miles and miles divided them.

"But I shall see him to day; I shall see him to day!" her soul joyously cried within her. This was much it not all; something to live for, to hope for, and each moment the time grew shorter until he would come.

Presently, when Belle thought her aunt Lucy would be ready to receive her, she returned to the house. Lady Stanmore was not an early riser, and loved her ease, and Belle knew this. But at half-past eleven o'clock she went upstairs and rapped at Lady Stanmore's door. She was pale and trembling now; she knew a stormy interview was before her, but she was determined to face it.

"Come in," cried Lady Stanmore from within, and Belle entered. Lady Stanmore was sitting in an easy chair, near a bright fire, reading a French novel, and she looked up smilingly.

"Well, Belle, how are you this morning?" she said. "The affair at the Marchmont's was really very well done, wasn't it?"

"I have something to say to you, Aunt Lucy," answered Belle, gravely, but her hands were trembling with agitation.

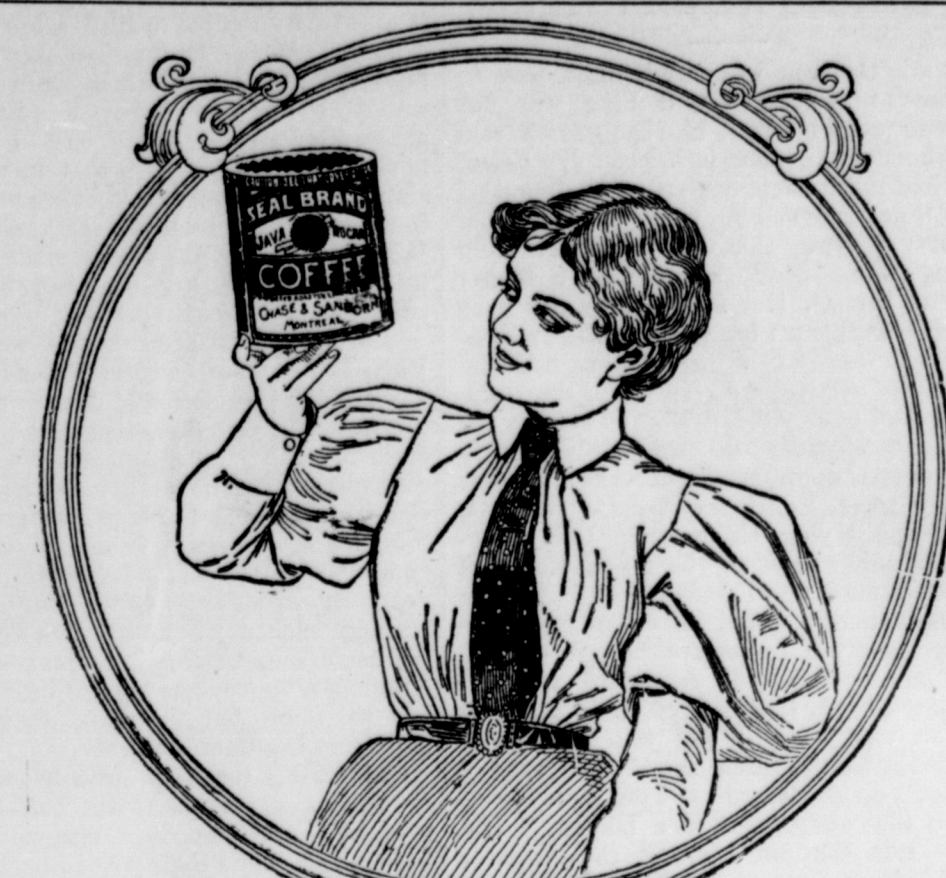
"Well, my dear, what have you got to say?"

"You asked when we were driving home last night who it was Stanmore and I were talking to?"

"The tall, good-looking, dark man? He was decidedly good-looking, and Stanmore said he was a Captain. Someone or other—I forget the name."

"Aunt Lucy, that man was Hugh Gilbert, the man I was engaged to; the man whose letters you destroyed; whom you made me believe was married when you knew he was not."

"To write would be later; give me a line after lunch, and I shall see that it is delivered. By the bye, that dress of yours that you wore last night was very becoming; the prettiest gown in the room, I thought. But now run away and write your note, and I will go back to my novel. So Belle left the room, but Lady Stan-



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Lady Stanmore's eyes fell, and her face flushed as Belle made her accusation in a ringing, trembling voice. The French novel fell on her lap, and she stirred uneasily.

"I don't know what you are talking about," she said.

"Oh, yes, you do!" continued Belle, with kindling lips. "You did this great wrong for some purpose of your own; some purpose that I cannot understand, but not the less did you do it. You wrote the postscript in Mrs. Balfour's letter, knowing it was untrue. Hugh Gilbert never married Miss Vane, or thought of doing so, and he says he is sure Mrs. Balfour never wrote such a lie. But he will write to her today and will learn the truth."

"What is the use of bringing up all this old story now?" asked Lady Stanmore, after a short pause. "Now, when you are a married woman, and it can do no possible good?"

"It is good to me," answered Belle, with quivering lips. "Good to know that the man I loved and trusted had not betrayed his trust! Aunt Lucy, do you know what your wife has done? You have spoiled two lives: Your young man can never be repaired."

"I do not know what you call a 'wrong,' retorted Lady Stanmore. 'I have given you position, you say? And what else did you give me, Aunt Lucy? A heart-worship which made the world all dreary and dull. Nay, you did worse! You taught me to believe in nothing good or true. My youth seemed to die that morning when you showed me Mrs. Balfour's letter, and I believed Hugh Gilbert false.'

"But what do all these heroics mean, Belle? You have met your old lover again, and discovered there has been some misunderstanding—some letters lost, and so on. But you are a married woman, and it your old lover is a wise man, and you are a wise woman, you will let things rest as they are. You do not, I suppose, wish Stanmore to know all this?"

Belle hesitated, and Lady Stanmore instantly saw her advantage.

"If Stanmore knew that this Mr. Gilbert had been your old lover, he would not, of course, allow him to come here. He is to dine here today, isn't he? I advise you not to make any disagreeable scenes before he comes."

"And Stanmore knew nothing of all this?" asked Belle.

"He knew nothing, and shall know nothing if you are discreet. There is nothing to prevent your receiving Mr. Gilbert, as it is, but if you tell Stanmore anything of this, it will make nothing but mischief."

"I will not tell him," said Belle, in a low tone.

Lady Stanmore nodded.

"And I will not," she answered. "Let us each keep our own counsel, Belle, it is much wiser. And I must say your old lover had one thing in his favour; he is a very good-looking man."

Belle made no answer. She quite understood the compromise Lady Stanmore intended to make with her. She was not to quarrel with her aunt, or seemingly to resent the suppression of her letters, and Hugh Gilbert was not to write to Mrs. Balfour to make any inquiries; and in return Lady Stanmore would say nothing to Stanmore about Belle's early engagement to Gilbert. Lady Stanmore put it in a little plainer language, however, a few moments later.

"You had best write a line to this young man, Belle," she said, "this morning so that he may get it before he comes to dine here. I suppose you were both abusing me to your hearts' content last night, and Stanmore might notice something in his manner when he is presented to me this evening. Tell him in your note that I do not wish to have any quarrel with my friend, Mrs. Balfour, and that I shall be very pleased to make his acquaintance. How will you send your note? If you like I will drive over after lunch and leave it at the lodge at Marchmont."

"Is there any reason to write? I will speak to him," answered Belle, with downcast eyes.

"To write would be later; give me a line after lunch, and I shall see that it is delivered. By the bye, that dress of yours that you wore last night was very becoming; the prettiest gown in the room, I thought. But now run away and write your note, and I will go back to my novel. So Belle left the room, but Lady Stan-

more did not go back to her novel. She sat with it still lying on her lap, thinking.

"It is an awkward affair," she reflected; "but Belle dare not quarrel with me, and it would not suit me to quarrel with Jack. I suppose she still likes this man; but she's not a girl, I think, to make a fool of herself; she has too much to lose. But what a little fire-brand she is, to be sure, when she is roused."

Belle in the meanwhile had gone to her own room, and after some consideration she determined not to write the note to Hugh Gilbert, that her aunt wished her to send.

"I will tell him to-night," she decided; and when she met Lady Stanmore at lunch the note was still unwritten; and somehow she felt glad this was so when with apparent perfect frankness Lady Stanmore approached the subject.

"By-the-bye, Jack, what is that good-looking man's name, again, that you asked to dine here to-night with young Marchmont? It has slipped out of my memory?"

"You mean Belle's old friend, Captain Gilbert," answered Stanmore. "I could not think where I had seen him, Belle, and then I remembered it was at Brighton with you."

"Yes, I remember," said Belle, without looking up; "that was just before he went to India."

"Did you know him well?" asked Stanmore.

"Mother and I once stayed at a place where his father is vicar," replied Belle; "that was how I knew him."

Belle's voice was very assured as she said this, but Stanmore did not seem to notice it, and Lady Stanmore quickly went on with the conversation.

"He is certainly good-looking," she remarked. "I wonder if he'll go in for one of the Marchmont girls, as they will have good fortunes; and if he is only a poor parson's son money will be very acceptable to him. I suppose he's not married?"

Belle made no answer. It was distasteful to her to listen to Lady Stanmore's words, but Lady Stanmore's manner was perfectly indifferent.

"You had better ask him if he is married before you begin to settle his affairs for him," said Stanmore with a light laugh. "What match-making you women are to be sure! You no sooner see a man than you think of some wife or other for him."

"Very well, I'll ask him," answered Lady Stanmore, smiling, "so as to keep up the character of a match maker that you have so kindly given me, Jack. You cannot, however, say I made up yours."

"No," said Stanmore, a little grimly. "And then he rose from the table and presently left the room, and the moment he was gone Lady Stanmore turned to Belle.

"Now give me your note, my dear," she said.

"I have not written it," answered Belle. "I will say everything that is necessary to-night."

"Is this wise, Belle?"

"I have not written it, and do not mean to write it," repeated Belle; and then she, too, left the room, and Lady Stanmore looked and felt anything but pleased.

She, however, made the best of it, as she did of most things. She went out to drive during the afternoon, as she said she would, though now it was only for the sake of her complexion, and when dinner time came she lingered a little while upstairs after the gong had sounded, and after she had heard the two young men from Marchmont arrive. She wished, if possible, to give Belle time to speak to Hugh Gilbert, before she herself was introduced to him.

And this actually happened. Belle was in the drawing-room alone, ready to receive their two guests, when "Captain Gilbert," and "Mr. Marchmont were announced. She went forward with a fluttering heart, and a trembling hand, to welcome them. Gilbert also was agitated, and young Marchmont did most of the talking for the next few minutes. Then he turned away, and discreetly went to one of the windows under the pretext for admiring some flowers. Belle seized the opportunity, and said in a low tone to Gilbert—

"We were right last night; it was Aunt Lucy, Lady Stanmore, who suppressed the letters, and added the postscript; but do not show that you know this by your manner when you are introduced to her. I will tell you why I ask this afterwards."

"I will do as you tell me, of course, but I shall find it very hard," answered Gilbert, also in a low voice.

Nothing more was said. Belle began complimenting young Marchmont on the success of his feet, and presently Stanmore and then Lady Stanmore entered the room.

Stanmore introduced his sister-in-law, and Gilbert bowed his well-shaped head low, but did not speak to the woman who had destroyed his happiness. He took

Belle into dinner by Stanmore's request, but the party was too small for any private conversation. Lady Stanmore, who was very gracious in her manner to him, but it was all that Gilbert could do to treat her civilly. So strong indeed was his indignation that he could not understand Belle's request.

Later in the evening, however, she had an opportunity of explaining why she had made it. They had all gone into the billiard-room, for Marchmont was an enthusiastic player, and Stanmore by no means averse to the game. Gilbert, however, declined to play, and Belle did not care for it. They stood a little apart, watching the others, and presently Lady Stanmore declared she felt the room chilly and retired to the drawing-room. Belle and Gilbert were thus virtually alone. She hesitated a moment, and then she raised her bright eyes to his face.

"Now I can tell you what I meant," she said; "I spoke to Aunt Lucy this morning, and charged her with destroying my letters. She did not deny it, and when I told her you were going to write to Mrs. Balfour, and thus prove that—she had added the postscript about Miss Vane—she got frightened, I suppose, and said—"

"What did she say?" asked Gilbert, quickly, as Belle hesitated.

"She said—that she supposed I did not wish Stanmore to know—of our old engagement, and she said she would not tell him, if you did not write to Mrs. Balfour. In fact, she admitted her great wrong, but now I think it best to say nothing—you see if Stanmore knew—there might be some trouble."

Belle was confuted, and her words faltered and Gilbert looked at her earnestly.

"You mean that perhaps I might not be allowed to come here, not allowed to see you again?" he said.

"That is what I mean," answered Belle in a relieved tone; "that