

LOVE REASONS NOT.

CHAPTER XXIV.

IN THE HANDS OF A CLEVER WOMAN.

"In Rome," said Lady Marion Erskine, to her cousin; "how strange it seems to be really here! Do you know that when I was a little girl and learned Roman history I always thought it a grand fable. I never believed such a place really existed. Rome is a link between the old world and the new."

"Yes," replied Lady Cambrey, "it is quite true, my dear."

She had no notion, even ever so vague, of what her beautiful young kinswoman meant.

Lady Cambrey was not given to the cultivation of ideas, but she was always most amiably disposed to please Lady Marion. It was something very delightful to be the chaperon of a beautiful young heiress like Lady Erskine, and she was always delighted to agree with Lady Marion's words, opinions and ideas.

Lady Marion was submissive and gentle by nature. She was one of the class of women born to be ruled and not to rule.

She could never govern, but she could obey. She could not command, but she could carry out the wishes of others to the last letter.

Lady Cambrey, from motives of her own, wanted her to go to Rome. She had managed it without the least trouble.

"Mario," she said, "have you decided where to spend the winter?"

"No," was the quiet reply, "I have not thought much about it, Aunt Jane, have you?"

The words were so sweetly and placidly spoken.

"Yes, I have thought a great deal about it. I hear that a great many very nice English people have gone to Rome. They say that there will be one of the nicest circles in Europe there."

"In Rome," said Lady Marion, musingly. "Do I know many of those who are going?"

"Yes, some of our own set. One of the great Roman princes, Dorio, has just married a beautiful English girl, so that for this year at least the English will be all the rage in Rome. I should like to go there. I know some of the Dorio family, but not the one just married."

"Then, if you would like it, we will go there," said Lady Marion; "I shall be pleased if you are."

So without any more difficulty the first part of the programme was carried out, and Lady Marion Erskine, with her chaperon, Lady Jane Cambrey, settled in Rome for the winter. They took a beautifully furnished villa, called the Villa Borgazzi, near to some famous gardens. Lady Cambrey took care that, while she reveled in Italian luxuries, no English comfort should be wanting—the Villa Borgazzi soon had in it all the comforts of an English home.

She came home one morning, after many hours of shopping, with a look of some importance on her face.

"Marion," she said, "I have heard that the Lanswells are here. I am very pleased. I thought of calling this afternoon; if you are tired, I will go alone."

And from the tone of her voice, rather than her words, Lady Marion fancied that she would prefer to pay her visit alone.

"You remember the Countess of Lanswell; she was la grande dame par excellence in London last summer. She admired you very much, if you recollect."

"I remember her," said Lady Marion; then with some interest, she added, "It was her son, Lord Chandos, who got himself into such difficulties, was it not?"

Lady Cambrey was slightly taken by surprise; her ward had always shown such a decided distaste for gossip of all kinds that she trusted she had never even heard of this little escapade. However, Lady Marion's question must be answered.

She shook her head gravely.

"It was not his fault poor boy!" she said; "his mother has told me all about it. I am very sorry for him."

"Why does he deserve so much pity?" she asked.

And Lady Cambrey answered: "He was but a boy at the time, and she, this person, a dairy-maid, I believe took advantage of his generosity, and either persuaded him to marry her, or wrung from him some promise of marriage when he should be of age."

"I thought," said straightforward Lady Marion, "that he was married, and his parents had petitioned that the marriage be considered null and void as he was under age."

"I think, my dear," said the diplomatic aunt, "that it would be as well not to mention this. Two things are certain, if Lord Chandos had been properly married, his marriage could never have been set aside; the other is, that the Countess can never endure the mention of her son's misfortune."

"Do you know Lord Chandos?" asked Lady Marion after a time.

"Yes, I know him, and I consider him one of the most charming men I have ever met, a perfect cavalier and chivalrous gentleman."

"That is high praise," said Lady Marion, thoughtfully.

"I know of none higher," said her aunt, and then with her usual tact changed the subject; but more than once that day Lady Marion thought of the man who was a cavalier and a gentleman.

Meanwhile the time passed pleasantly

for the countess and her son. They were staying at the grand palace of the Falconis—once the home of princes, but now let by the year to the highest bidder. Lady Lanswell took good care that her son should be well amused; every morning a delicious little sketch of the day's amusement was placed before him; the countess laid herself out to please him as man had never been pleased before.

The countess saw that he received letters from England continually. She was above all vulgar intrigues, or she might have destroyed more than one-half which came, without seeing them. She would not do that; the war she carried into the enemy's camp was of the most refined and thorough-going kind. She would set aside a marriage on a mere quibble, but she would not destroy a letter. She had said, openly, and defiantly to her son's face, that she felt sure he would not remarry Leone in June, but she would stoop to no vulgar way to prevent it.

It often happened that the countess herself opened the letter-bag. When she did so, and there was a letter from Leone, she always gave it to her son with a smile, in which there was just a shade of contempt.

"Another letter," she would say; "my dear Lance, you contribute quite your share to the inland revenue."

She never alluded to Leone, but she did permit herself, at rare intervals, to relate some ludicrous anecdotes of people who had suffered from a severe attack of love.

Lord Chandos found the time pass very pleasantly: he said to himself he might as well remain in Rome and enjoy himself, as go back to England and be miserable. Wherever he went, he could not see Leone. He would not trust himself; he loved her too much, if he were in the same land not to be near her.

Being in Rome, he did as the Romans did; he amused himself to the very utmost of his power; he seized every golden hour that passed, and though he loved Leone as much as ever, he ceased to feel the keen pain which their separation had caused him at first. One morning, from the Countess of Lanswell to Lady Jane Cambrey, there passed a little note. It said, simply: "Shall we take the first step to-night? Bring Lady Marion to the Princess Galza's concert, and leave the rest to me."

Lady Cambrey lost no time. She sought her ward and said so much to her about the concert, for which they both had invitations, that Lady Marion was eager to go.

"I must superintend your toilet, Marion; as it is your first appearance in Roman society, you must make a favorable impression."

She selected one of the loveliest toilets that could have been chosen—a white brocade, embroidered with flowers of the palest blue.

"You must wear pearls and pale-blue flowers," she said, "and you will find that to-morrow every one will be talking of the new beauty that has risen over Rome."

Lady Marion looked perfectly beautiful; she was perfect in her style, the very queen of blondes, with her soft, shining hair, and eyes blue as the summer skies. Her face was the purest mixture of rose and white, with the dainty, delicate color described in that one line:

"Crimson shell, with white sea foam."

She had a beautiful, fresh mouth, a dimpled chin, a neck and shoulders white as ivory, arms so rounded and white it was a treat to see them. She was of the queenly type—tall, with the promise of a grand womanhood; her white throat was firm, her arms rounded and strong; she was the ideal of an English gentlewoman; her pure, proud face, clear eyes, and sweet lips were beautiful beyond words. When she was dressed that evening for the princess's concert she looked most charming. Lady Cambrey had said truly that among the dark-eyed daughters of Italy she would shine white and fair as a white dove among colored ones.

Her dress was the perfection of taste—it was trimmed with pale-blue forget-me-nots and white heath; a string of pearls was twisted in her fair hair, and another around her white throat.

"If he does not fall in love with her," said Lady Cambrey to herself, "it will be because he has no admiration left in him for any one except his dairy-maid."

Lady Lanswell had been very successful in her diplomacy. She had spoken of the concert before her son, who had received an invitation, but said nothing about his going. He listened in silence, wondering if she would ask him to go with her, saying to himself that he should decline, for he did not like concert-going. Then, as she did not ask him, he began to feel piqued over it and wonder why.

After a short time he volunteered to go, and my lady took it very coolly, reminding him of how often he had grown tired of a hot concert-room. Then he resolved to go and made arrangements accordingly, his mother smiling sweetly all the time. When all was settled, and he had quitted the room, my lady laughed quietly. It was wonderful with what bland sweetness and fine tact she managed men. She could lead her son as though he were deaf, blind, and dumb, yet of all men he believed himself most firm and secure in his opinion.

Heaven help the man who falls helplessly into the hands of a clever woman!

CHAPTER XXV.

THE INTRODUCTION.

If Lady Lanswell had purposely designed the meeting between her son and the beautiful blonde to have taken place in the most picturesque spot in Europe, she could not have chosen better. The great salon of the Palazzo Golza had, in former days, been used as a royal audience-room; the noblest princes in Rome had met there, and had given audience to the grandest nobles. It was a superb apartment; there was a background of purple tapestry from which the blonde loveliness of the English girl shone resplendent as a snow-drop on a black ground. There were many beautiful women present; the Princess Aina, whose dark beauty was the wonder of all who saw it; the famous American belle, Miss Sedmon, whose auburn hair resembled that given by the old masters to the Madonna; but there was not one in that vast assembly who could vie with Lady Marion.

The Countess of Lanswell, with her son, was one of the last to enter the salon; with one keen, comprehensive glance the countess took in, as it were, the whole situation;

she saw the pure, proud face of Lady Erskine, saw that she was seated in the very place where her beauty was seen to the best advantage, then she took her seat, never even looking in that direction, and saying nothing to her son.

It was just like laying a trap for a bird—he fell into it with the same helplessness.

Lady Lanswell neither looked at Lady Erskine nor her son, yet she knew exactly the moment when his eyes first fell on her. She saw him start; then she sat quite still, waiting for the question she knew must follow.

It came at last.

"Mother," he said, "who is that beautiful girl?"

My lady looked at him with languid eyes.

"What beautiful girl, Lance? There are so many."

"An English girl, I am sure. She has a string of pearls in her hair. Who can she be?"

Still Lady Lanswell feigned ignorance. She looked on the wrong side of the room, and she affected not to understand where he meant, and when she could affect no longer, she said:

"Do you mean Lady Marion Erskine, the young lady near Princess Galza?"

"Yes, it must be Lady Erskine," he replied. "How beautiful she is, mother. She shines like a fair pearl with that background of dark tapestry. I heard some one say yesterday that she was in Rome. What a perfect face!"

My lady looked at it coolly.

"Do you think so, Lance?" she said. "I thought that you gave the preference to dark beauties."

His heart went back for one moment to the beautiful, passionate face he had seen by the mill stream. The gorgeous salon, the beautiful women, the peerless face of Lady Marion, the exquisite music, all floated away from him, and he was once more by the mill stream, with Leone's face before him. So strong, so vivid was the memory, that it was with difficulty he refrained from calling the name aloud.

My lady guessed by the sudden expression of pain on his face where his thoughts had gone. She recalled them.

"Tastes differ so greatly," she said. "Do you really consider Lady Marion beautiful, Lance?"

"Yes, I have seen no one more lovely," he answered.

Then the countess dismissed the subject—too much must not be said at once. She did not mention Lady Marion's name again that evening, but she saw that her son looked often at her, and she smiled to think the bait had taken.

Again they were walking through the vast gardens of one of the Roman palaces, when the whole party met. Lady Cambrey was with her niece; Lord Chandos was near the countess; but not close by her side. The ladies met, exchanged a few words, then parted, the countess not having made the least effort to introduce her son; he spoke of it afterward.

"Mother," he said, "you did not introduce me to Lady Erskine."

Lady Lanswell smiled calmly.

"It was out of pure consideration for her; they tell me she has so many admirers in Rome. From what I know of her, you would not be quite in her style."

The words piqued him.

"Why not?" he asked.

His mother laughed again.

"She is very proud, Lance, and very exclusive. I need say no more."

My lady always knew exactly when to leave off. She turned away now, leaving her son with the impression that Lady Erskine would not care to know him, on account of his unfortunate love affair.

They were destined to meet again that evening. A ball was given by an English lady, Mrs. Chester, who had one of the best houses in Rome. Lady Erskine looked very beautiful; her dress was of pale blue velvet, superbly trimmed with white lace; she wore diamonds in her hair, and carried a bouquet of white lilies in her hand. She was the belle of the ball, and it was Mrs. Chester who introduced Lord Chandos to her. She was quite innocent of any intrigue, but had she been the chosen confidante of Lady Lanswell, she could not have done more to further her views. She had been dancing with Lord Chandos herself, and began to speak to him of the beautiful blonde.

"Lady Marion Erskine realizes my idea of a fair woman," said Mrs. Chester. "I have read the words in prose and poetry, now I understand them."

"I do not know Lady Erskine," said the young earl.

"Not know her. Why I should have thought that all the Englishmen in Rome knew their beautiful country-woman."

"I have never been introduced to her," said Lord Chandos.

"Then this is the last hour in which you shall lay any such complaint against fate," said Mrs. Chester. "Come with me, my lord."

Like all other English ladies in Rome, Mrs. Chester had a great admiration for the heir of the Lanswells. It was impossible to withhold it. He was so handsome, so brave and gallant, with the bearing of a prince, the chivalry of a knight, and in his temper the sweet, sunny grace of a woman. They all liked him; he seemed to have the gentility, the generosity, the true nobility of an Englishman, without the accompanying reserve and gloom. At that time there was no one more popular in Rome than the young lord, about whom so many romantic stories were told. He followed Mrs. Chester to where Lady Marion stood, the brilliant center of a brilliant group. It pleased him to see what deference was paid to him—how Italian princes and French dukes made way when Mrs. Chester presented him to the beautiful heiress.

The first moment the proud clear eyes smiled in his face he liked her. She was most charming in her manner; she had not the fire and passion of Leone; she was not brilliant, original or sparkling, but she was sweet, candid, amiable, and gentle.

One found rest in her—rest in the blue eyes, in the sweet, smiling lips, in the soft, low voice, in the graceful, gentle movements—rest and content.

She never irritated, never roused any one to any great animation; she received rather than gave ideas; she was one of those quiet, gentle, amiable women whose life resembles the rippling of a brook rather than the rush of a stream. She looked with a smile into the handsome face of the young lord, and she, too, liked him.

They stood together for a few minutes while Lord Chandos begged for a dance,

and even during the brief time more than one present thought what a handsome pair they were. Lord Chandos was much pleased with her—the low voice, the exquisitely refined accent, the gentle grace, all delighted him.

She lacked passion, power, fire, originality, the chief things which went for the making up of Leone's character; no two people could be more dissimilar, more unlike; yet both had a charm for Lord Chandos; with the one he found the stimulant of wit and genius, with the other sweetest rest.

They had several dances together; in her quiet, gentle way Lady Marion confided to him that she preferred Englishmen to Italians, whom she thought wanting in frankness and ease.

"Why did you come to Rome?" asked Lord Chandos and the beautiful blonde was almost at a loss how to answer the question. The only answer that she could give was that Lady Cambrey had first mentioned it.

"It was not from any great wish, then, to see the antiquities or the art treasures of Rome?" asked Lord Chandos, thinking as he spoke with what rapture Leone would have thought of a visit to Italy.

"No it was not that, although I would not have missed seeing Rome on any account. What brought you here, Lord Chandos?"

He also hesitated for a moment, then he answered: "I really do not know. I came, so far as I know my own mind, because my mother came," and then their eyes met with a curious, half-laughing gaze.

It was strange that they should have both come there without having any clear or distinct notion why.

"It seems to me," said Lord Chandos, "that we are both under guidance."

"I am glad, for my own part," said Lady Erskine. "It is much easier to be guided than to guide. I find it easier to obey than to command."

"Do you?" he asked, laughingly. "You will find it very easy some day 'to love, honor and obey.'"

"I do not doubt it," said the beautiful heiress, calmly. "I should not care to go through life alone; I want a stronger soul than my own to lean on."

And again Lord Chandos went back in thought to the noble, self-reliant girl who would hold her own against the world if need should be.

And yet he liked Lady Marion; her graceful, languid helplessness had a great charm for him. When he bade her good-evening, it was with the hope that they would soon meet again.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

AFFAIRS IN INDIA.

Some Interesting Figures—The Population, Religions, Police Officers, Opium Revenue, etc., etc.

There are some big figures in a recent blue-book upon Indian affairs that has just been published in England. The grand total of the population, including British India and the native States, according to the census of 1891, was 287,223,431, as compared with the 253,793,514 at the census of 1881, the males numbering 146,727,296, and the females 140,496,135. Taking the distribution of population according to religion, there were in 1891, 207,731,727, Hindus, 57,321,164 Mohammedans, 9,820,467 aborigines, 7,131,361 Buddhists, 2,284,380 Christians, 1,907,833 Sikhs, 1,416,638 Jains, 89,904 Parsis, 17,194 Jews, and 42,763 of other religions. Of the Christian population 1,315,263 were certified to be Roman Catholics and 295,016 Church of England. The total number of police offences reported during 1892 was 135,639, as against 124,550 in 1891, and 115,723 in 1890, the police force being composed of 150,516 officers and men. The opium revenue in 1892-93 was Rs. 7,993,180, and the expenditure Rs. 1,622,496, giving as the net receipts on opium Rs. 6,370,684. In the last ten years the net receipts from opium have been Rs. 62,922,987, while the average annual number of chests of Bengal opium sold for export during the last ten years has been 53,994. The actual area on which crops of various kinds were grown in India in 1892-93 was 195,897,389 acres, of which 65,743,812 were devoted to rice, 21,484,889 to wheat, and 92,927,655 to other food grains, including pulse. The area devoted to cotton was 8,940,248 acres, to jute 2,181,334, to oil-seeds 13,545,025, to tobacco 1,149,548, to sugarcane 2,798,637, to tea 360,463, and to coffee 122,788. The length of railway lines open for traffic in 1893 was 18,459 miles, the number of passengers conveyed was 134,700,469, the goods and minerals carried represented 28,727,386 tons, the gross receipts were Rs. 23,955,753, and the net earnings Rs. 12,679,200. In 1892, 21,988 human beings and 81,638 head of cattle were killed by snakes and wild beasts, the chief human mortality—19,025—having been due to snake-bites. Tigers claimed 947 human victims, leopards 200, wolves 182, bears 145, and elephants 72. On the other hand, whereas only 4,498 cattle were killed by snake-bite, no fewer than 29,969 were devoured by tigers, 30,013 by leopards, and 6,758 by wolves.

Colored Plaster for Walls.

Colored plaster is now so frequently used for finishing the walls of new houses that workmen do not object to its use as they did a few years ago, and it is now a common thing to see the walls of one room colored a pretty buff or yellow, and of others soft reds, old rose, and other colors. It is asserted, however, that too much of the colored powder added to the plaster injures its quality. Builders are, however, experimenting with mortar pulp that comes in all colors, and which it is claimed improves the mortar. A writer in the Art Interchange says that in one of its green shades it is "cool, delightful and fascinating," and gives the following directions for its use: "To prepare mortar in this manner, a small quantity should first be mixed with coloring matter and a portion dried before the fire. If the shade is too light or too dark, more color or more mortar can be added until it suits. Be sure to mix all that is needed for one room at a time, as it is difficult to match. The ceiling should be several shades lighter than the walls."

WHAT UNCLE SAM IS AT.

ITEMS OF INTEREST ABOUT THE BUSY YANKEE.

Neighborhood Interest in His Doings—Waters of Moment and Mirth Gathered From His Daily Record.

The Kansas wheat crop is 70,831,000 bushels.

It costs \$2.68 per word to send a message from New York to Demerara.

Mrs. Jefferson Davis has denied that her daughter believes in woman suffrage.

Smith Young, colored was sentenced to hang at Louisville, for assaulting a six-year-old girl.

The Philadelphia Ledger has on its staff a reporter who has celebrated his eightieth birthday.

Donald Duffon, a well-known lawyer, was mistaken for a burglar at Lilly, Pa., and fatally shot.

A Savannah street railway company gives the cheapest railway ride known—two rides for one cent.

Eugene Schaweecker, of Cincinnati, O., committed suicide at Baltimore, Md., on the grave of his first wife.

The two hundredth anniversary of the founding of the Reformed church of Tappan, N.Y., was celebrated in the church.

Twenty years ago Southern planters paid men to haul away cotton seed and burn it. Now they get from \$6 to \$8 a ton for it.

Judge Bregy, of Philadelphia, has been sued for \$10,000 by T. W. Siddall, who claims he was mistreated in a divorce suit.

Dr. Stephen T. Delamater, of Palmyra, N.Y., who killed himself, left a letter addressed to his son, advising him never to marry.

A crank caused a sensation in a Gotham bank by trying to enforce payment of a draft for \$1,000 with a revolver. He was arrested.

Steuenville flint glass workers passed resolutions which may lead to a general boycott of the United States Glass Company's goods.

John Carl and Patrick Edwards, of Livingston Manor, N.Y., have been ducked in the river by whitecaps for mistreating their families.

The State Forestry Commission thinks that unless restrictive laws are passed the deer in the Adirondacks will be extinct in two years.

It is reliably reported that a worm has made its appearance in Edmunds County, South Dakota, that is destroying the Russian thistle.

The Citizens' Bank at the little town of Rossville, Ill., on the Chicago and Eastern Illinois Road, was robbed of between \$9,000 and \$10,000.

Columbus Hayes, who has been twice convicted of murder in the first degree, and is now under sentence of death, escaped from jail at Savannah, Mo.

A weasel which had killed a whole brood of chickens on the farm of Sharpless A. Walter, at Lenape, Pa., has been captured and killed by the family cat.

Werner Neuson of Newark was arrested charged with torturing a horse to death. He poured kerosene oil on the horse and set fire to it to cure the horse of colic.

Edward Emerson, a son of Ralph Waldo Emerson, is lecturing in England on his father's correspondence with John Sterling and on the story of the life of Thoreau.

The heroic bronze statue of Sir Harry Vane, which will occupy a prominent place in the main room of the Boston Public Library, is said to be an exceptionally fine work of art.

The Southern Pacific is continuing its policy of retrenchment by dismissing all the baggagemen employed on the road, the work on the trains to be performed hereafter by the express messengers.

The exports of breadstuffs, provisions and mineral oil from the United States during September were of the value of \$8,646,567, as against \$18,152,886 during the corresponding month last year.

Capt. Charles A. Sawyer, Port Townsend, Wash., is dead. He commanded the Orpheus twenty years ago when it collided with and sunk the Pacific, entailing a loss of 400 lives and \$1,000,000 in gold dust.

The Liquor Dealers' Association of Albany has appointed a committee to employ an attorney to secure the enforcement of Sunday law against newspapers, barbers, grocers, druggists and others.

An eagle attempted to carry off the infant child of Thomas Richardson of Huntingdon, Pa. The child's clothing tore and it fell to the ground without serious injury and its mother drove the eagle away.

A novel suit is being brought by an Indiana woman against a number of prominent people of that State. She wishes to recover \$6,000, which she alleges, her husband lost to them gambling.

Judge Oliver Wendell Holmes, of Boston, the son of the poet, was a lieutenant colonel in the civil war, and was wounded at Antietam and Fredericksburg. After the war he became professor in the Harvard law school.

Mayor Hopkins, of Chicago, has sued John R. Tanner, chairman of the Republican State Committee, \$50,000 damages for alleged libel, because Tanner charged him with collecting campaign funds from proprietors of disreputable resorts.

Mrs. Melville W. Fuller, wife of the chief justice, recently lost a bag containing \$1,200 worth of diamonds from her dressing case. Workmen were about the house at the time, complaint was made to the firm that employed them. Yesterday the gems were found where they had been left.

Louis Dumont, a Canton, Ohio, grocer, was fined \$50 and costs for selling oleomargarine without attaching a list of ingredients to the label. The fine was paid by Armour & Co., Chicago, who announce a determination to settle the constitutionality of the law through a parallel Cleveland case.

James Mulligan, the United States Consul-general at Samoa, writes to a friend that Robert Louis Stevenson is a very lively man for one who is supposed to be in bad health. He plays tennis for hours, and no one can outlast him at a dance. He will put off writing a story at any time to attend a ball.