

LOVE REASONS NOT.

CHAPTER LIV.
A MOTHER'S APPEAL.

"She would not bear it—she could not bear it," this was Lady Marion's conclusion in the morning, when the sunbeams peeping in her room told her it was time to rise. She turned her face to the wall and said it would be easier to die—her life was spoiled, nothing could give her back her faith and trust in her husband or her love for him.

Life held nothing for her now. It was moon before she rose, and then she went to her boudoir. Lord Chandos had gone out, leaving no message for her. She sat there thinking, brooding over her sorrow, wondering what she was to do, when the Countess of Lanswell was announced.

Lady Marion looked up. It was as though an inspiration from Heaven had come to her; she would tell Lady Lanswell, and hear what she had to say.

"You have been crying," said the countess, as she bent over her daughter-in-law. "Crying, and how ill you look—what is the matter?"

"There is something very wrong the matter," said Lady Marion. "Something that I cannot bear—something that will kill me if it is not stopped."

"My dearest Marion," said the countess, "what is wrong? I have never seen you so distressed before. Where is Lance?"

"I never know where he is now," she said. "Oh, Lady Lanswell, I am so miserable, so unhappy that I wish I were dead."

This outbreak from Lady Marion, who was always so calm, so high-bred, so reticent in expressing her feelings, alarmed Lady Lanswell. She took the cold, trembling hands in her own.

"Marion," she said, "you must calm yourself, you must tell me what is the matter and let me help you."

Lady Chandos told her all, and the countess listened in wondering amazement.

"Are you quite sure?" she said. "Lady Hilfield exaggerates sometimes when she repeats those gossiping stories."

"It must be true, since my husband acknowledged it himself, and yet refused to give me any explanation of it. Some time since, I found that he passed so much of his time away from home I asked you if he had any friends with whom he was especially intimate, and you thought not. Now I know that it was Madame Vanira he went to see. She lives at Highgate, and he goes there every day."

"I should not think much of it, my dear if I were you," said the countess. "Madame Vanira is very beautiful and very accomplished—all gentlemen like to be amused."

"I cannot argue," said Lady Chandos; "I can only say that my own instinct and my own heart tell me there is something wrong, that there is some tie between them. I know nothing of it—I cannot tell why I feel this certain conviction, but I do feel it."

"It is not true, I am sure, Marion," said the countess, gravely. "I know Lance better than anyone else; I know his strength, his weakness, his virtues, his failings. Love of intrigue is not one, neither is lightness of love."

"Then if he cares nothing for Madame Vanira, and sees me unhappy over her, why will he not give her up?"

"He will if you ask him," said Lady Lanswell.

"He will not. I have asked him. I have told him that the pain of it is tearing my life away; but he will not, I am very unhappy, for I love my husband."

"And he loves you," said the countess. "I do not think so. I believe—my instincts tell me—that he loves Madame Vanira."

"Marion, it is wicked to say such things," said the countess, severely. "Because your husband, like every other man of the world, pays some attention to the most gifted woman of her day, you suspect him of infidelity, want of love and want of truth. I wonder at you."

Lady Marion raised her fair, tear-stained face.

"I cannot make you understand," she said slowly, "nor do I understand myself. I only know what I feel, what my instinct tells me, and that is that between my husband and Madame Vanira there is something more than I know. I feel that there is a tie between them. He looks at her with different eyes; he speaks to her with a different voice; when he sung with her it was as though their souls floated away together."

"Marion," interrupted the countess, "my dear child, I begin to see what is the matter with you—you are jealous."

"Yes, I am jealous," said the unhappy wife, "and not without cause—you must own that. Ah, Lady Lanswell, you would be sorry for me if you knew all. See, it is wearing me away; my heart beats, my hands tremble, and they burn like fire. Oh, my God, how I suffer!"

The Countess of Lanswell, in her superb dress of black velvet, sat by in silence; for the first time in her life she was baffled; for the first time in her life she was face to face with a human passion. Hitherto, in her cold, proud presence all passion had veiled itself; this unhappy wife laid hers bare, and my lady was at a loss what to say. In her calm, proud life there had been no room for jealousy; she had never known it, she did not even understand the pain.

If her husband had gone out for a day with the most beautiful woman on earth, she would either have completely ignored the fact, or, with a smiling satire, have passed it by. She did not love the earl well enough to be jealous of him; she did not understand love or jealousy in others. She sat now quite helpless before the unhappy wife, whose grief annoyed her.

"This will not do, Marion," she said, "you will make yourself quite ill."

"Ill," repeated Lady Marion, "I have been ill in heart and soul for many days, and now I am sick unto death. I wish I could die; life has nothing left for me."

"Die, my dear, it seems such a trifle, such a trifle; one day spent together on a river. Is that anything for you to die about?"

The sweet blue eyes raised wistfully to hers were full of pain.

"You do not see, you do not understand. Only think how much intimacy there must have been between them before he would ask her to go, or she consent to go. If they are but strangers, or even every-day friends, what could they find to talk about for a whole day?"

The countess shrugged her shoulders. "I am surprised," she said, "for I thought Madame Vanira so far above all coquetry. If I were you, Marion, I would forget it."

"I cannot forget it," she cried. "Would to God that I could. It is eating my heart away."

"Then," said my lady, "I will speak to Lance at once, and I am quite sure that at one word from me he will give up the acquaintance, for the simple reason that you do not like it."

And with this promise the countess left her daughter-in-law. Once before, not by her bidding, but by her intrigues, she had persuaded him to give up one whom he loved; surely a few words from her now would induce him to give up her whom he could not surely love. It never occurred to her to dream that they were the same.

She saw him as she was driving home, and, stopping the carriage, asked him to drive with her.

"Lance, I have something very serious to say to you. There is no use beating about the bush, Marion is very ill and very unhappy."

"I am sorry for it, mother, but add also she is very jealous and very foolish."

"My dear Lance, your wife loves you—you know it, she loves you with all her heart and soul. If your friendship with Madame Vanira annoys her, why not give it up?"

"I choose to keep my independence as a man; I will not allow any one to dictate to me what friends I shall have, whom I shall give up or retain."

"In some measure you are right, Lance," said the countess, "and so far as gentleman friends are concerned, I should always choose my own; but as this is a lady, of whom Lady Marion has certain suspicions, I should most certainly give her up."

"My wife has no right to be jealous," he said angrily; "it does not add to my love for her."

"Let me speak seriously to you, Lance," said the countess. "Marion is so unhappy that I should not wonder if she were really ill over it; now why not do as she wishes? Madame Vanira can be nothing to you—Marion is everything. Why not give her up?"

A certain look of settled determination that came to her son's face made the countess pause and wonder. She had seen it there for the first and last time when she had asked her son to renounce his young wife, and now she saw it again. Strange that his next words should seem like an answer to her thoughts.

"Mother," he said, "do not ask me; you persuaded me to give up all the happiness of my life, years ago—do not try me a second time. I refuse, absolutely refuse, to gratify my wife's foolish, jealous wish. I say, emphatically, that I will not give up my friendship for Madame Vanira."

Then my lady looked fixedly at him.

"Lance," she said, "what is Madame Vanira to you?"

He could not help the flush that burned his handsome, angry face, and that flush aroused his mother's curiosity. "Have you known her long? Did you know her before your marriage, Lance? I remember now that I was rather struck by her manner. She reminds me forcibly of some one. Poor Marion declares there is some tie between you. What can it be?"

She mused for some minutes, then looked into her son's face.

"Great Heaven, Lance, it can never be!" she cried. "A horrible idea has occurred to me, and yet it is not possible."

He made no answer, but a look of more dogged defiance came into his face.

"It can never be, and yet I think it is so. Can it be possible that Madame Vanira is the—the dairy-maid to whom you gave your young affections?"

"Madame Vanira is the girl I loved, mother, and whom I believed to be my wife—until you parted us."

And my lady fell back in her carriage with a low cry of "Heaven have mercy on us!"

CHAPTER LV.
WAR TO THE KNIFE.

Lucia, Countess of Lanswell, was in terrible trouble, and it was the first real trouble of her life. Her son's marriage had been rather a difficulty than a trouble—a difficulty that the law had helped her over. Now no law could intervene, and no justice. Nothing could exceed her surprise in finding Madame Vanira, the Queen of Song, the most beautiful, the most gifted woman in England, positively the "dairy-maid," the tempestuous young person, the artful, designing girl from whom by an appeal to the strong arm of the law she had saved her son. She paused in wonder to think to herself what would have happened if the marriage had not been declared null and void. In that case, she said to herself, with a shrug of the shoulders, in all probability the girl would not have taken to the stage at all. She wondered that she had not sooner recognized her. She remembered the strong, dramatic passion with which Leone had threatened her. "She was born an actress," said my lady to herself, with a sneer. She determined within herself that the secret should be kept, that to no one living would she reveal the fact that the great actress was the girl whom the law had parted from her son.

Lord Chandos, the Duke of Lester, the world in general, must never know this. Lord Chandos must never tell it, neither would she. What was she to do? A terrible incident had happened—terrible to her on whose life no shadow rested. Madame Vanira had accepted an engagement at Berlin, the fashionable journals had already announced the time of her departure, and bemoaned the loss of so much

beauty and genius. Lord Chandos had announced his intention of spending a few months in Berlin, and his wife would not agree to it.

"You know very well," she said, "that you have but one motive in going to Berlin and that is to be near Madame Vanira."

"You have no right to pry into my motives," he replied, angrily; and she retorted that when a husband's motives lowered his wife, she had every reason to inquire into them.

Hot, bitter, angry words passed between them. Lord Chandos declared that if it pleased him to go to Berlin he should go; it mattered little whether his wife went or not; and Lady Chandos, on her side, declared that nothing should ever induce her to go to Berlin. The result was just what one might have anticipated—a violent quarrel. Lady Chandos threatened to appeal to the duke. Her husband laughed at the notion.

"The duke is a great statesman and a clever man," he replied; "but he has no power over me. If he interfered with my arrangements, in all probability we should not meet again."

"I will appeal to him," cried Lady Marion; he is the only friend I have in the world."

The ring of passionate pain in her voice startled him; a sense of pity came over him. After all, this fair, angry woman was his wife, whom he was bound to protect.

"Marion, be reasonable," he said. "You go the wrong way to work; even supposing I did care for some one else, you do not go the way to make me care for you; but you are mistaken. Cease all these disagreeable recriminations, and I will be the kindest of husbands and the best of friends to you. I have no wish, believe me, Marion, to be anything else."

Even then she might have become reconciled to him, and the sad after consequences have been averted, but she was too angry, too excited with jealousy and despair.

"Will you give up Madame Vanira for me?" she said, and husband and wife looked fixedly at each other.

"You say you will be a loving husband and a true friend; prove it by doing this—prove it by giving up Madame Vanira."

Lord Chandos was silent for a few minutes; then he said:

"I cannot, for this reason: Madame Vanira, as I happen to know, has had great troubles in her life, but she is thoroughly good. I repeat it, Marion, thoroughly good. Now, if I, as you phrase it 'give her up,' it would be confessing that I had done wrong. My friendship is some little comfort to her, and she likes me. What harm is there in it? Above all, what wrong does it inflict on you? Answer me. Has my friendship for Madame Vanira made me less kind, less thoughtful for you?"

No answer came from the white lips of the trembling wife.

He went on:

"Why should you be foolish or narrow-minded? Why seek to end a friendship pure and innocent? Why not your noble self, Marion—noble, as I have always thought you? I will tell you frankly, Madame Vanira is going to Berlin. You know how lonely it is to go to a fresh place. She happened to say how desolate she should feel at first in Berlin. I remarked that I knew the city well, and then she wished we were going. I pledge you my honor that she said 'we.' Never dreaming that you would make any opposition, I said that I should be very glad to spend the next few weeks in Berlin. I cannot tell how it really was, but I found that it was all settled and arranged before I knew it. Now, you would not surely wish me to draw back? Come with me to Berlin, and I will show you how happy I will make you."

"No," she replied; "I will share your heart with no one. Unless I have all I will have none. I will not go to Berlin, and you must give up Madame Vanira," she continued; a married man wants no woman friend but his wife. Why should you spend long hours and whole days tete-a-tete with a stranger? Of what can you find to speak? You know in your heart that you are wrong. You say no. Now in the name of common sense and fairness, let me ask, would you like me to make of any man you know such a friend as you have made of Madame Vanira?"

"That is quite another thing," he replied.

Lady Chandos laughed, sadly.

"The usual refuge of a man when he is brought to bay," she said. "No words, no arguments will be of any use to me; I shall never be really friends with you until you give up Madame Vanira."

"Then we will remain enemies," he replied. "I will never give up a true friend for the caprice of any woman," he replied, "even though that woman be my wife."

"Neither will I consent to go to Berlin," she answered, gravely.

"Then I must go alone," he said; "I will not be governed by caprices that have in them neither reason nor sense."

"Then," cried Lady Marion, "it is war to the knife between us!"

"War, if you will," said Lord Chandos; "but always remember you can put an end to the warfare when you will!"

"I shall appeal to Lady Lanswell and to the Duke of Lester," said Lady Marion, and her husband merely answered with a bow.

With them it was indeed "war to the knife." Such was the Gordian knot that Lady Lanswell had to untie, and it was the most difficult task of her life.

On the same evening when that conversation took place, Lord Chandos went to the opera, where Leone was playing "Anne Boleyn." He waited until she came out and was seated in her carriage; then he stood for a few moments leaning over the carriage door and talking to her.

"How you tremble, Leone," he said. "Your face is white and your eyes all fire!"

"The spell is still on me," she answered. "When I have thrown my whole soul into anything, I lose my own identity for many hours. I wish," she continued, "that I did not so thoroughly enter into those characters. I hardly realize this moment whether I am Anne Boleyn, the unhappy wife of bluff King Hal, or whether I am Leone, the singer."

"I know which you are," he said, his eyes seeking hers with a wistful look. "All King Hal's wives put together are not worth your little finger, Leone. See how the stars are shirring. I have something to say to you. May I drive with you as far as Highgate Hill?"

The beautiful face, all pale with passion, looked into his.

"It is against our compact," she said; "but you may if you wish."

The silent stars looked down in pity as he took her side.

"Leone," he said, "I want to ask you something. A crisis is come in our lives; my wife, who was told about that day on the river, has asked me to give up your acquaintance."

A low cry came from the beautiful lips, and the face of the fairest woman in England grew deadly pale.

"To give me up," she murmured; "and you, Lord Chandos, what have you said?"

"I said 'No,' a thousand times over, Leone; our friendship is a good and pure one; I would not give it up for any caprice in the world."

A great, tearless sob came from her pale lips.

"God bless you a thousand times!" she said. "So you would not give me up, and you told them so?"

"Yes; I refused to do anything of the kind," he replied; "why should I, Leone? They parted us once, by stratagem, by intrigue, by working on all that was weakest in my character; now we are but friends; simple, honest friends; who shall part us?"

She clasped his hands for an instant in her own.

"So you will not give me up again, Leone?" she said.

"No, I will die first, Leone. There is one thing more I have to say. I said that I would go to Berlin, and I have asked my wife to go with me; she has refused, and I have said that I would go alone. Tell me what you think?"

"I cannot—I think nothing; perhaps—oh, Heaven help me!—perhaps as your wife has told you she will not go with you, your duty is to stay with her."

"My duty," he repeated; "who, shall say what a man's duty is? Do you think I have no duty towards you?"

"Your first thought should be—must be—your wife. If she would have countenanced our friendship, it would have been our greatest pride and pleasure, if she opposes it, we must yield. She has the first right to your time. After all, Lance, what can it matter? We shall have to part; what can it matter whether it is now or in three months to come? The more we see of each other the harder it will be."

A flush as of fire came over his face.

"Why must we part?" he said. "Oh, Heaven, what a price I pay for my folly!"

"Here is Highgate Hill," said Leone; "you go no further, Lord Chandos."

Only the silent stars were looking on; he stood for a few minutes at the carriage door.

"Shall I go to Berlin?" he whispered, as he left her, and her answer was a low, sad, "Yes."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

PARISIAN MOURNING MILLINERY.

Dainty Confections in Black Crepe, Dull Silk and Sombre Flowers.

The woman who is in mourning should find much consolation in the new hats and bonnets designed for her this spring. They



TWO FAVORITE DESIGNS.

are chic and charming and so becoming that they are sure to lift many a heavy weight of woe.

The round hats for young women are seen in many pretty shapes. They are trimmed with fluted loops of chiffon or crepe and a variety of black flowers. Lilies and carnations are the favorites. For early spring open-work brims will be much in vogue. Many of them are made of braiding and a few of heavy escurial lace. A tiny puffing of crepe, studded with fine jet beads, makes a becoming outline for the brim.

Black ospreys or dull jetted aigrettes will take the place of feathers on round hats for light mourning.

The mourning bonnets to be worn when the veil is taken off are artistic little affairs. Many of them consist merely of a broad bow of crepe, black chiffon or lustreless silk with a jet ornament or Eucie caught through the loop. Beneath the bow black lilies or black lilies of the valley rest against the hair. Another fanciful idea for a mourning bonnet shows a puffing of crepe arranged as a coronet, with a bunch of black heliotrope, two or three pansies or a full-blown rose nodding above it.

The black and violet bonnet for second mourning is a dream of beauty. Black velvet or black crepe combined with naturally colored heliotrope, pansies or purple-tinted orchids, or heliotrope chiffon and black flowers, form many new and beautiful bonnets.

Very few blue-eyed people are said to be color blind.

EAKED PIES FOR VICTORIA.

EDWARD BANTLEY NOW A NEW YORK RESTAURANT KEEPER.

A Former Pastryman at Windsor Castle Says Our Queen is Very Fond of Scotch Cakes—She Also Likes Plum Puddings—The Emperor William Very Partial to Mince Pies.

There was a time when Edward Bantley made pies and cakes for Queen Victoria at Windsor Castle. Now he is the part owner of a little restaurant in New York.

"During the years I was at Windsor Castle as pastry cook," says Mr. Bantley, "I had a pretty good chance to observe the tastes of the Queen in that particular line. I had learned my trade under the instructions of one of the grandest artists in Paris in the cooking line. His cakes were dreams, his confections visions. The best people of France—the epicures, the gourmards—used to rave about them, and the prices paid for them were awful. From this man I learned about all that I considered worth knowing. I looked upon myself as a master of the art, and my head swelled a good deal when I was hired to go to London and cook for a real live queen. I had a faint kind of a notion that I might win one of the princesses, and I pictured myself strutting about with a whole army of duchesses and baronesses following me around.

"My hopes were knocked out in one round. The Queen paid less attention to me than she did to the man who herded the geese in the castle grounds.

MY FRENCH CAKES

didn't catch on. She didn't seem to like them a little bit. The truth of the matter is that the Queen sent down a quiet tip that such things might go in Paris, but that they were a little off color for an English Queen. Some way or other they were not considered digestible. It was intimated that they were a little heavy for the British stomach. All that I had learned was good for nothing, so I had to go back to the old methods."

"What did she like best?" "Scotch cakes were favorites. She used to fairly revel in them. Then she had a great fondness for plum puddings. And such puddings! I used to make great big ones. These puddings were made in quantities big enough to feed a regiment, and they were one of the features of every important dinner.

"Whenever a dinner of great state was prepared the kitchen was in an uproar. The cakes had to be fixed up in the grandest way possible, and there were all sorts of decorations to be made. There was the German royal coat of arms in sugar and the English lion in dough, to say nothing of unicorns and dragons, and harps and thistles, and all such emblems as would tickle the pride and patriotism of the family and their guests.

"Once in a while Emperor William of Germany would run over for a day or two, and then we had a turn at

GERMAN DISHES.

The Emperor liked pie, especially mince pie, and I have an idea that he must have stolen some of them from his grandmother's pantry, by the way they used to disappear.

"The German ancestry of the Queen used to assert itself pretty strongly, and she would give orders for the pastry of Hanover and Berlin. Once in a while she took a turn at doughnuts, but they always had to be light and flaky.

"Every day the Queen would come through on a tour of inspection. She walked about among the employes just like any other English housewife, but she seldom spoke to any one. She would give her directions quietly and leave.

"It was a pretty good place to work, though, and the pay was good—that was the best part of it."

THEY ATE A RAT.

Two Little Children Are Helplessly Abandoned by Their Father, a Justice of the Peace.

The community in the vicinity of Hartford, a little village south of Aurora, Ind., is greatly incensed over the conduct of Squire Robbins, a Justice of the Peace for Union Township. He is also a leading politician of that neighborhood and a conspicuous member of the church. The Squire left his two little children home alone, without food or fuel, during the recent cold spell, telling them he was going to Cole's Corner, a small village some miles distant. Several days later Albert Brush, a young farmer of that vicinity, found the deserted children almost famished and nearly frozen to death. He aroused the neighbors, and prompt relief was given the perishing children. Their ages are 5 and 7, and but for the timely arrival of Brush they would have both succumbed to the severities of the merciless fate to which their father had abandoned them.

The tale of the terrible sufferings they endured as told by the unfortunate little sufferers brought tears to the eyes of all who heard them. The only morsel of food partaken by them during the period of their abandonment, they stated, was a dead rat which the cat brought into the house, and which they fought the feline to possess. After obtaining the partially eaten carcass of the rat the starving children divided it into two parts and devoured the bloody fragments raw. Weakened from hunger and thinly clad, they huddled together in one corner of the cheerless room in their poverty-stricken abode under a pile of rags in a futile effort to keep warm, and were almost unconscious from cold when rescued.

The indignation is very bitter against the inhuman father, and threats of white-capping him are freely made should he return. Mr. Turner, Township Trustee, was notified of the condition of the unfortunate, and immediately took steps to relieve their wants.