

The relation between them was lovely to see. Turner was a fine, healthy, broad-shouldered fellow, of bold carriage and frank manners, above the middle height, with rather large features, keen black eyes, and great personal strength. Yet to such a man, poor little wan-faced big-eyed Connie assumed imperious airs, mostly, but perhaps not entirely, for the fun of it; while he looked only enchanted every time she honoured him with a little tyranny.

"There! I'm tired," she would say, holding out her arms like a baby. "Carry me in."

And the great strong man would stoop with a worshipping look in his eyes, and taking her carefully would carry her in as lightly, and gently, and steadily, as if she had been but the baby whose manners she had for the moment assumed. This began, of course, when she was unable to walk, but it did not stop then, for she would occasionally tell him to carry her after she was quite capable of crawling at least. They had now been engaged for some months, and before me, as a newly-married woman, they did not mind talking a little.

One day she was lying on a rug on the lawn, with him on the grass beside her, leaning on his elbow, and looking down into her sky-like eyes. She lifted her hand and stroked his moustache with a forefinger, while he kept as still as a statue, or one who fears to scare the bird that is picking up the crumbs at his feet.

"Poor, poor man!" she said; and from the tone I knew the tears had begun to gather in those eyes.

"Why do you pity me, Connie?" he asked.

"Because you will have such a wretched little creature for a wife some day—or perhaps never—which would be best after all."

He answered cheerily,—

"If you will kindly allow me my choice, I prefer just *such* a wretched little creature to any one else in the world."

"And why, pray? Give a good reason, and I will forgive your bad taste."

"Because she won't be able to hurt me much when she beats me."

"A better reason, or she will."

"Because I can punish her if she isn't good by taking her up in my arms and carrying her about until she gives in."

"A better reason, or I shall be naughty directly."

"Because I shall always know where to find her."

"Ah, yes; she must leave *you* to find *her*. But that's a silly reason. If you don't give me a better, I'll get up and walk into the house."

"Because there won't be any waste of me. Will that do?"

"What do you mean?" she asked with mock-imperiousness.

"I mean that I shall be able to lay not only my heart, but my brute strength, at her feet. I shall be allowed to be her beast of burden, to carry her whither she would; and so with my body her to worship more than most husbands have a chance of worshipping their wives."

"There! take me, take me!" she said, stretching up her arms to him. "How good you are! I don't deserve such a great man one bit. But I *will* love him. Take me directly, for there's Wynnie listening to every word we say to each other, and laughing at us. She can laugh without looking like it."

I believe the country people round considered our family far gone on the inclined plane of degeneracy. First, my mother, the heiress, had married a clergyman of no high family; then they had given their eldest daughter to a poor artist, something of the same standing as—well, I will be rude to no order of humanity, and therefore avoid comparisons; and now it was generally known that Connie was engaged to a country practitioner, a man who made up his own prescriptions. We talked and laughed over certain remarks of the kind that reached us, and compared our two with the gentlemen about us—in no way to the advantage of any of the latter, you may be sure. It was silly work; but we were only two loving girls with the best possible reasons for being proud of the men who had honoured us with their love.

(To be continued.)

COMPETITIVE PRIZE ESSAY. TWENTY-THIRD COMPETITION.

A Book or Books of the value of One Guinea will be awarded for an Essay upon the following subject:—

"Describe for a Hospital containing fifty beds the number of Nursing Officials, Staff, Pupils, or Probationers, required; mention their duties, their hours, and the regulations necessary for satisfactory working."

RULES.

1.—Contributions must reach the Editor, at the office of THE NURSING RECORD, not later than Saturday, March 7th, 1891, addressed as follows:—"Prize Essay Competition, THE NURSING RECORD, St. Dunstan's House, Fetter Lane, London, E.C."

2.—Manuscript must be written distinctly in ink and on one side of the paper only, upon not less than 24 nor more than 48 pages of ordinary-sized ruled sermon paper. The pages must be numbered and fastened together.

3.—The real and full name and address (stating whether Miss or Mrs., of the Competitor must be inscribed on the back of each contribution, and notification of which Hospital or Institution the Competitor has been or is attached to.

4.—Trained Nurses or those personally associated with Nursing work only allowed to compete.

Winners in previous Competitions are permitted to compete, but in case of a "tie" the prize would be awarded to the Competitor who has not secured a prize before.

The decision of the Prize Essay Editor to be final, and any infringement of the above Rules will be considered a disqualification.

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