

don't mean blackmailing them or anything like that."

"Mildred," said Miss Verinder with an unexpectedly firm tone of voice, "you and I must talk very seriously. And you must listen to me, dear, and not be impatient if what I urge—Ah, yes." Here the advent of tea made an interruption, and "in spite of her emotion, or because of it, Mildred was hungry, and she ate freely of the thin bread and butter and the sugar-covered cake, till gradually these dainties seemed to turn to dust and ashes in her mouth while she listened to Miss Verinder's advice.

"Mildred must not be silly; Mildred must be a sensible girl; Mildred must summon patience to her aid, consider other people's feelings as well as her own, allow time to work on her behalf."

Miss Verinder would help to the best of her ability, she would take the first chance of a chat with Mrs. Parker. But really and truly it was all nonsense to speak of kicking over the traces, outraging propriety or convention, or that sort of thing. Mildred must wait. At any rate, one must not give way to one's passions."

"Then Mildred blurted out, clothing her thought in very plain words, 'But, dear Miss Verinder, perhaps you don't know what the passions are.'"

"Why should you assume that?" said Miss Verinder gently.

Then Miss Verinder gently, but firmly, summed up. "Mildred must promise not to act rashly. In time—the young man proving patient and worthy—her parents may agree to an engagement. But this suggestion of unsanctified bolt, an irregular union, entered into for whatever aim or purpose—oh, no never."

"Believe me, Mildred dear, it is only the very strongest characters that can brave public opinion—and you must remember that public opinion is represented by your father and mother. Yes, I am sure—to go right through with anything of that kind immense self-control, almost an iron nerve is required. That is, if it is to be done successfully . . ."

"And you have to think of your Alwyn and the effect it might produce on him. . . . Perhaps it is only the very finest natures that can—accept—ah—this particular kind of surrender or self-sacrifice from a woman and still hold her quite as high in their minds as they did before—ah—the surrender occurred."

Miss Verinder was right. Mildred's "affair"—very genuine in its way—was of quite ordinary quality. The book is not concerned greatly with her story but with that of Miss Verinder herself, who a quarter of a century previously had fallen in love, with a love so intense that it burned at white heat all through the years, and held the affection of the man she loved. Anthony Dyke—explorer—had been cruelly used by fate. He married young, only to find immediately that his wife was insane. He endeavoured vainly to get the marriage annulled, and for twenty-seven years the insane wife barred the way to any legal tie between Dyke and Emmeline Verinder.

At last release came to the wife, and Dyke and Miss Verinder were free to marry.

"On that first Sunday of their banns they sat in the church side by side.

" 'I publish the banns of marriage between'—The clergyman paused as if startled.

"Anthony Dyke was standing up. Emmie gently pulled his coat, and whispered, 'Sit down, dear.'

" 'The banns,' he said, in a gruff whisper, and because of his deafness louder than was necessary, 'Get up yourself.'

" 'No, dear,' she whispered, in a flutter, 'It's not done.'

"But he was offering her his hand as if to assist her. Again inviting her to rise. It was the old country custom still prevalent in the West of England when he was a boy. . . . Dyke in the Antarctic and other remote places, had not learnt that the practice was no longer usual and proper.

"Then Miss Verinder, comprehending the cause of his solecism rose at once; doing what she had always done for his sake, smashing through the barriers of convention, trampling etiquette under foot, caring not twopence-halfpenny what anyone else thought about it. She stood by his side proudly, yet demurely, as ready to brave the world, to defy the universe, as she had been twenty-seven years ago.

"The clergyman, after clearing his throat, had gone ahead with the little list:

" . . . 'Also between Anthony Penfold Dyke, widower, of the parish of Endells in Devonshire, . . . and Emmeline Constance Verinder, spinster, of this parish.' "

P. G. Y.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

Whilst cordially inviting communications upon all subjects for these columns, we wish it to be distinctly understood that we do not IN ANY WAY hold ourselves responsible for the opinions expressed by our correspondents.

KERNELS FROM CORRESPONDENCE.

NOTA BENE.

Miss E. M. Robinson writes: Miss MacCallum is, of course, right in saying that nurses other than nurses in mental hospitals should have an opportunity of conferring with their employers through their organizations in regard to their conditions of work. All the same I think the Managers of the Metropolitan Asylums Board are right. The constant change of nurses is not in the best interests of the patients, who should be our first consideration.

OUR PRIZE COMPETITION QUESTIONS.

September 2nd.—How would you deal with a case of suspended animation after submersion in water?

September 9th.—Detail the nursing of a patient suffering from failing heart, with general oedema.

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