

## A GIRL'S WAY.

THERE was nothing unusual in the situation. So Ellen told herself with a little grim smile, as she looked steadily from one to the other of the two photographs that lay in her lap. She was not the only woman in the world to whom had come the necessity of deciding between two good men, both in a measure eligible, and both undoubtedly attractive; but she had found herself shrinking more and more from the making of a final decision, with a cowardice that surprised her and was certainly entirely foreign to her nature. Now, however, as she lay back in a great easy chair in the pleasant sitting room, she drew her red lips very closely together in a way that, to one who knew this maiden of determined spirit, betokened a farewell to indecision, and a brave facing, and if possible a speedy solving, of the problem before her.

"No one knows any better than I," she told herself with severity, "that I cannot go on in this way any longer. If there were only some objection to one or the other! But there isn't—bless their hearts! And how good they are to me—too good. Oh dear!" and she sighed. Then, sitting up very straight, "This will never do. Now"—taking up one of the pictures—"here is Henry C. Dillard, aged thirty three; by inheritance, very wealthy; by profession, an artist; character, excellent; temper, amiable; personally—good looking, very popular, and a great catch." She meditated. "The truth of the matter is, the girl who refused Mr. Dillard would be a very foolish girl indeed."

She took up the other photograph. "Now, here is Richard W. Wheeler, familiarly known as Dick Wheeler; by inheritance, poor; by profession, a lawyer; character, good; temper—well, temper a little quick; while as for looks"—and she held the picture at arm's length and gazed at it critically—"I do think"—smiling in spite of herself—"that Dick has one of the very nicest faces in the world."

She leaned back with her hands behind her head and stared up at the ceiling with unseeing eyes.

"I must decide," she thought. "I suppose I am just an average woman, but it does seem strange that I do not know which of

these two I like the better, or if I really love either of them. I do believe I think as much of one as the other. In that case, it is just a question of expediency, fitness, in fact. Why, that is simple enough. Now, which is the better match of the two? Mr. Dillard, undoubtedly. Which could provide for me the better? Which would be the more acceptable to my relatives and friends? Mr. Dillard, of course. There it is in a nutshell;" and she sprang to her feet with animation and laid the pictures on the table. "There, the matter is decided, and how glad I am!"

She went to the window and leaned out. "Poor Dick," she said softly, "how grieved he will be, but he will get over it, of course. I am so glad I have acted sensibly in the matter. I always said I would when it came to a question of marriage. Now I come to think of it, I don't see how any sensible girl could make any other decision."

The portières parted and an older lady entered the room, attired for the street.

"I am going down town, Ellen," she said pleasantly. "Is there anything I can do for you?"

"Nothing, thank you, mamma."

The pictures lay in full view side by side on the table.

"Ellen," said her mother gently, "those are two good men who love you. I have hesitated to speak to you about the matter before, trusting that you would realize the necessity of making some decision one way or the other."

"I do realize it."

"I am sure you do. Personally, I have no objections to either of them. They are both estimable men, and I would have you act according to the dictates of your own heart, but I trust you will use good sense in your decision. In fact, I am sure you will. You are used to having everything you want, dear, and Mr. Dillard is wealthy and would be very kind."

"Still, papa was a poor man when you married him," said Ellen, acting upon—who shall say what impulse?

"That is true, but I would have you avoid the trials of my early married life. Not that I have any serious objection to Dick. He is a nice boy, but a trifle too near your own age, and then I am afraid I should al-

ways worry about that—uncle, was it not?—of his who died an—an—inebriate.”

“Why, mamma,” exclaimed Ellen, “that was not his uncle—he was a second cousin or something of that kind. Besides, what on earth has that to do with Dick?”

“Nothing, dear. Of course he is not responsible. But those things run in families, you know. But no matter. I am sure I can trust to your decision, only you owe it to both to decide one way or the other. Good by, dear;” and with a kiss she was gone.

It was with a sober face that Ellen crossed the room to her work basket and took up a piece of embroidery. Before she had seated herself, however, light footsteps were heard and the portières were parted to disclose one of the most up to date of maidens: voluminous skirt, immaculate shirtwaist, demurely parted hair, jaunty hat, and all.

“Good morning, Ellie,” exclaimed this bewildering apparition. “I met your mother on the steps and she told me to come right on in. Embroidery? Oh, put it up! I want to have a talk—a nice, good, old, uninterrupted talk;” and Ellen found herself seated on the sofa, her hand tightly clasped in that of her friend.

“I am glad you have come,” she said with a smile. “I was feeling a little—well, a little lonesome, I guess.”

“No wonder! Cooped up in a house a fine day like this. Isn’t that a picture of Mr. Dillard?”—reaching over and taking up the photograph from the table. “I thought so. What a handsome fellow he is! I tell you, Ellen, you are a lucky girl.”

“Indeed! In what way?” and Ellen straightened up a little.

“In what way? Now don’t you know it is perfectly absurd for you to put on that innocent air with me? It is scarcely to be believed that he has been paying you such devoted attentions for nothing. And that being the case, my dear, you needn’t tell me you are going to refuse him.”

“And why not, pray?” asked Ellen, with some spirit.

“Why not?” echoed her friend. “Because no girl in her senses would. Why, he is handsome, rich, distinguished—everything a woman’s heart could desire.”

Ellen was silent, and her friend regarded her thoughtfully for a moment.

“I see you have a picture of Dick Wheeler, too,” she remarked presently. “I declare, it is a shame the way you have treated that poor boy.”

“Why, what do you mean?”

“You know well enough. Dick’s a nice boy, but such a temper!”

“Is his temper bad?”

“Is it?” said Miss Kate, with fine sarcasm.

“I suppose you have forgotten that night you and Mr. Dillard called at our house and found Dick there. We had been talking about you, and I thought it only kindness to tell the poor boy how in my opinion matters stood. Then when you two came in it only confirmed what I had been saying, and my, wasn’t he angry! Do you remember, he insisted on leaving immediately, when he had told me only a moment before that he had come in for a long talk. I never saw any one more furious. I thought I would be sorry for the woman who married him.”

“Really, Kate, you are very unjust. Don’t you think any man might have been a little—well, perturbed under those circumstances?”

Kate shook her head.

“He is too quick tempered to suit me.”

“I *like* quick tempered people,” exclaimed Ellen suddenly.

“Oh, ho! So that’s the way the land lies, is it? I never supposed for a moment that a girl would hesitate between Mr. Dillard and Dick Wheeler. I see I have made a mistake.”

“You have done nothing of the kind,” began Ellen. “I—”

“Who is that coming in the gate?” exclaimed Kate, looking out of the window. “Your aunt, Mrs. Williams, and some clerical appearing gentleman—old Dr. Watson, is it not? So here’s an end to our talk. Good by, Ellie. I’m sure the lucky man is Mr. Dillard after all, and I do hope you are not angry at anything I’ve said. I want to be on good terms with the future Mrs. Dillard. She will be a person worth cultivating. By by;” and this animated young woman was gone.

The next moment Mrs. Williams, short, stout, and good natured, entered the room, followed by the kind, benignant countenance and stately figure of the Rev. Dr. Watson.

“Good morning, aunty,” said Ellen cordially. “Good morning, Dr. Watson. I am very sorry, but mamma is down town.”

“So John told us at the door,” remarked her aunt, sinking into a chair and fanning herself vigorously. “I only dropped in for a moment, and chanced to meet Dr. Watson just coming in the gate.”

Hereupon followed the usual remarks about the weather, and inquiries regarding the health of the respective families.

“I hope you are well, dear child,” said Mrs. Williams. “It seems to me you look a little flushed and feverish this morning. Don’t you think so, doctor?”

"I think Ellen looks to be in her usual good health," said the doctor, with a smile.

"I am quite well, thank you, aunty."

"Well, I am glad of that," said her aunt. "Oh, I have been hearing some interesting stories about you, young lady. Haven't you anything to tell us at all? I think she might take us into her confidence, don't you, doctor?"

"Ellen knows I am always interested in anything that concerns her welfare."

"Indeed, I have nothing to tell," Ellen hastened to say, with a flushed countenance.

"Then you have not decided," exclaimed her aunt. "Now, dear child, I know you don't mind my speaking of it before such an old friend as Dr. Watson, and I am sure you know I love you as though you were my own child. I do hope you will be careful, dear. A matter of this kind is not to be decided hastily. The choice of a husband is a very serious matter, isn't it, doctor?"

"Most certainly it is," assented the doctor.

"I am sure I would not wish to influence you, dear," went on the good lady with animation. "It is of course a matter for your own heart to decide. I am sure Richard is a very nice young man, but of course we all know how unusually desirable Mr. Dillard is in every way. Is he not, doctor?"

"Both are excellent young men," remarked the doctor.

"Yes, indeed, of course they are, and I am the last person in the world to wish Ellen to be influenced by worldly considerations. I am fond of Richard, but he is a lawyer, my dear, and lawyers are apt to drift into politics, and the life of a politician's wife is very hard. Now Mr. Dillard, with his position and wealth, could make you so comfortable. He is such an unusually fine man. Don't you think so, doctor?"

"He is a liberal hearted, Christian gentleman," said the doctor. "His wife would be in a position to do much good."

At this juncture a boy's voice was heard from the rear of the house calling lustily, "Ellen, oh, Ellen!"

"It is only Jim," explained Ellen, but her guests arose.

"We will not detain you," said her aunt. "We only dropped in for a moment. Give my love to your mother, and think well over what I have said."

Ellen found her twelve year old brother on the back steps rocking himself back and forth apparently in great agony.

"Why, what is the matter?" she inquired in alarm.

"I've hurt my arm," he groaned. "Get the witch hazel, won't you?"

"How did it happen?" Ellen asked sympathetically, as she bathed the injured member.

"Fell off that old bicycle. It ain't fit for a fellow of my age to ride. I do hope, Ellen, when you marry Mr. Dillard, he'll give me a decent wheel."

Ellen drew herself up.

"James," she said tragically, "how dare you speak to me like that? Here, take your lotion, and don't you ever mention that subject to me again."

"I don't know what is the matter with me," she thought, as she returned to the sitting room. "This has been a horrid day"—and there were tears in her eyes.

She was more than surprised as she entered the room to find Mr. Wheeler awaiting her. He was standing by the mantel, and looked taller and more grave than usual, she thought.

"I was just wondering what to do," he said. "I was told I would find you here."

How glad she was to see him! She was amazed at her own gladness. She explained her absence, and then touched lightly and with unusual animation and charm on a variety of subjects.

"You seem to be in a happy mood this afternoon," he remarked gloomily.

"Do I?" she returned. "You don't."

"No," he said slowly, "I am not. I have come to say good by."

"Good by?" she echoed. "Are you going away?"

"I am not coming here any more."

There was silence for a moment. Then she said with dignity,

"Have I offended you in any way?"

"You understand well enough," he answered bitterly. "Do you suppose that I do not know what every one else knows—that you are going to marry Dillard?"

Ellen rose and faced him steadily.

"I am going to do nothing of the kind," she said, with distinctness. Then she went over to the window and lowered the sash.

"You are not!" he repeated. "Why?"

"Because I don't care to," she answered, drumming lightly on the pane.

He went over and stood by her side.

"Is there any one you *would* marry?" he asked earnestly.

"Yes," she said, after a pause, "there is."

"Ellen," he asked huskily, "am I the man?"

"You are the man," she said.

*Lulu Judson.*

# LITERARY CHAT

"ENGLISH AS SHE IS WRIT."

The first issue of a new French periodical entitled *Nos Actrices Chez Elles*, printed in both French and English, reminds us forcibly of the renowned José da Fonseca's "New Guide of the Conversation in Portuguese and English." The latter, which is now a rare and valuable book, made its appearance in 1855, and has been called the "finest example of unintentional humor in existence." A short extract from the preface will serve to demonstrate the quality of this humor.

A choice of familiar dialogues, clean of gallicisms, and despoiled phrases, it was missing yet to studious portuguese and brazilian Youth; and also to persons of others nations that wish to know the portuguese language . . . We expect them, who the little book (for the care what we wrote him and for her tygraphical correction) that may be worth the acception of the studious persons, and especially of the Youth, at which we dedicate him particularly.

As a matter of fact "he" was so heartily appreciated that when Señor Fonseca, discovering the enormities of his work, endeavored to buy up and destroy the whole edition, he found it was too late, and to this day a few copies remain to delight the eye of the lover of curious books.

The second part of "The New Guide" contained a number of anecdotes, one at least of which is worth quoting:

A first actor of the Opera being fall sick in the time from a new representation, was choiced for to succeed him a subaltern actor. This sang and was whistled (hissed?) but, without to be disconcerted, he had looked fixedly the partiere and told him, "I don't conceive you; and you ought to imagine than, for six hundred pounds that i receive every year, i shall go to give you a voice of thousand crowns?"

The fatal results of implicit faith in an English dictionary are almost as startlingly evident in *Nos Actrices Chez Elles* as in Fonseca's artless translation from the Portuguese. Its purpose is thus naïvely stated:

As yeldance to a general wish we beg to undertake just now the publication of peculiar precedentless an album.

Two of the actresses dealt with are well known to New York audiences, and their characteristics are set forth as follows:

Jane Hading is a Marseille's native. Her correct beauty as much as her right talent, which the modern playing and classic taste are thrilling in, prove that some blood of Phoecean emigrants from old and artful Ionia is flowing into her veins. Then, as an hereditary consequence, she is passionately fond of emigration. Madame Hading alternately glittered on our most greatest theatres. Even she reached the "Français"; but the Boulevard without her seemed to be sky without sun. Now she is again at the Gymnase, which recovers with her assistance its formerly fashion.

And of the incomparable Yvette Guilbert we are told that:

She is more than a glory, she is an idol. Happy idol; she conquered the world before her thirtieth year of age—as Alexander did. But, indeed, what a perfect incarnation of the to-day song! Not at Loïsa Paget's rose stockings song, nor short petticoat one at the 'Caveau,' but the song only dressed with a pair of black gloves, and all at once brightening in meadows, woods, streets, and alcoves. With her bulky sheaf of couplets and strophes, she appears. The acclaim suddenly claps. Her slyness is so piercing one, so bewitching her cleverness, that everything is pleasingly received from herself. Nicely minded she likes to be surrounded with artful works in order to take some rest when her songs are over. Sometimes she is tired, having sprinkled salt and pepper to her authors. Fortunately she has an unexhausted stock. She made a compact with Devil, and, nevertheless, she can occasionally have many pure and soft repentance accents.

Palpably we poor Americans know but little of the resources of our language.

## A NEW DEPARTURE IN FICTION.

As a general thing the verdicts of newspaper critics, favorable or otherwise, are to be taken with a grain of salt, but the reviewer who has pronounced Mr. Martin J. Pritchard's "Without Sin" "the most startling novel yet" has come unaccountably near to telling the exact truth. It is startling first of all, then interesting, and finally, when one has had time to think it over, unpleasant. It will probably take its place among the books which attract considerable attention without arousing any great amount of discussion.

As a matter of fact, it contains nothing to discuss. "Without Sin" is innocent of problems, in the accepted sense of the word, but nevertheless it is one of the most daring pieces of fiction which have come under our notice—so daring, indeed, that to review it without giving offense is a matter of some difficulty. Mr. Pritchard's story deals with the betrayal of a young and beautiful Jewess, unknown to herself. From earliest childhood she has been intensely, almost morbidly religious, and when the knowledge of her condition breaks upon her, believing herself absolutely a virgin, she announces that she is the chosen woman, the mother of the expected Messiah. Without going into details, this will suffice to show wherein "Without Sin" is startling. Mr. Pritchard displays remarkable skill in handling a very delicate subject, yet with all his ability—or her ability, for the author is said to be a woman, a member of London society—"Without Sin" is distinctly an unpleasant novel. Though it does not cater to the cravings of those who enjoy the fiction of immorality, yet it is not a volume for the Sun-