

A LOVERS' QUARREL.

Dick and I had quarelled and parted. I cannot tell you how it all began, or why it ended in this serious fashion, but I can assure you I felt very miserable as I saw him striding away over the fields, although I had told him no no secret, still I was bound to wish he had taken me with him.

"What shall I say to Aunt Maria? I thought as I turned my steps homeward. This was a very serious reflection indeed, for it had been the desire of Aunt Maria's existence to see me wed to Dick Johnson, the handsomest boy in our wealthy neighborhood, Mr. Henry.

Dick and I had played together as children, almost together, until we grew up, and finally left in life with such affection.

We were to have been married in a month, and now I had sent him away, and had him I never wished to see him again.

What was to be done—oh, what should I say to Aunt Maria? There was no help for it, however, but to go home and explain the situation to her by the ability and exceedingly honest heart.

Aunt Maria was in the drawing room, and I stood quietly and took up a book, hoping she would not notice me.

She was now more dignified and important.

"Where is Dick?"

"He has gone away," I replied, trying to assume an uninterested manner, and telling most truth in the attitude.

"Gone away? What! Did you not tell him I expected him to dinner?"

"Yes."

"Then why is he not coming?"

"He had an engagement," I responded, "For goodness' sake, child, run out and come here where I can see you. How good your face is! What is the matter?"

I was evidently too much astir to be able to speak, so I sat down again upon the sofa.

"You have been crying," she said.

"Now, just tell me the truth as every body does."

"Yes, I faltered.

"And what about?"

"I don't know."

"You don't know? This is a very serious topic."

I remained silent and trembled till my poor handkerchief.

"Who begins it?" panted Aunt Maria steadily.

"I don't know."

"Have you broken off your engagement?"

"Yes, I burst forth, "I have, and I will never speak to him again." Then I began to weep again.

"If you're going to live here, said Aunt Maria, with bitter irony, "you had better leave the room. I shall require a full explanation concerning Dick, both you and Mr. Johnson."

I sat up straight and did not appear to notice the remark. A few moments later and had a frosty smile with Aunt Maria the next morning, when she strolled and expostulated, but I remained firm in my resolve to return Dick's ring and presents that very day.

Accordingly I spent a couple of hours in crying over them and packing them up.

After luncheon Aunt Maria announced her intention of visiting some penitentiaries

offices in a village about three miles distant, and ordered me to accompany her, so I prepared to do what I could to please her.

"Take my coat. Let me get the children to wash their hands, and then we'll go to the office," I said.

Dick had turned his back and was walking away.

"Wait a minute, Dick. I am going to wash my hands, and then we'll go to the office."

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