

THE EVENING NEWS.

Thursday, June 15, 1871.

(From the Louisville Journal.)

SUBSTITUTION.

[CONTINUED.]

"I'll take him," said she impetuously. "If the ladies will let me have him."

"No fear about that," said the man. "There wasn't a scrap of any kind left in him, that could lead to his identification, except this," and she produced a card on which the letters "E. M. E." were faintly written.

"We called him 'Byron' Mervyn Eastman," said the man, "but he hasn't been christened, so you can give him any name you're a mind to."

"Have you ever shown the card to anyone?" asked Charlotte.

"Never to a soul," was the reply.

"Then don't, for fear some one should claim him as so to get bought off," said the young lady. "If the real parents should appear they can prove it by the initials."

The committee of management were only too happy to have one of their little orphans so well provided for, and the child was soon transferred to Charlotte's care. Now at last she had found her true vocation. Other duties were not wanting, but a strong, warm, passionate affection for this boy took the place of all the love she had ever known. She forgot that it was possible to feel any other emotion than this profound and overwhelming one which mastered her whole soul. She hung over him while he slept, and wept and sobbed in secret, and sports with an intense eagerness such as she had supposed she should never feel again, and forgave in her heart the foolish woman who had said when her baby was taken away that she had nothing else to live for. She was once more happy, though with a trembling happiness that was new to her, and seemed to grow stronger every day. The possibility of losing her treasure gave increased zest to the possession of it.

Not caring to perpetuate fondling memories she had the boy christened Robert, which had always been a favorite name with her, and bestowed on him the surname of Redmond, to which others were no heir. By this title he was known in the circles of fashion, and many of them were under the impression that she had taken some orphan nephew or cousin to bring up. But this would not have accounted for the wealth of love she lavished on him. He twined himself about her very heart-strings, and all the tenderness which she would have been filled with if she had mothered was concentrated on this poor object.

He was not then for the first time that he had Georges, the old Lord St. Clair's only surviving child, now girl of eighteen. He had been seen at Harvard during his college life, and had at these times renewed a friendship begun at dancing-school in the days of jackets and short dresses. The growing intimacy between them caused Charlotte much anxiety, for Georges was alarmingly like her mother in looks and action.

"It would be strange," she mused to herself, "very strange. Bob looks so like St. Clair, and George so like her mother—I can't let him be caught off! And very cautiously she sounded the young man on the subject.

"You needn't give yourself any trouble about that, Aunt Charlotte," said he, laughing. "When I do fall in love, which won't be for sometime yet, it will be a very different girl from George Rainford. I like her well enough, and she's amiable to talk to, but she's nothing but a puffball. As soon as you'll find me a young woman like yourself, I'll all ready for her." And he pointed his remark with a caressing smile.

Charlotte's father was now forty years old; but she had loved him more than when at eighteen he had snatched out her whole soul on her light-minded lover. Many suitors had presented themselves, from time to time, before the rich and beautiful Miss Ashley; but she turned calmly, though not unkindly, away from all. Her heart was too full to admit another human being into it than Robert; he was her all in all, and she knew that it should be so. She had married off one son to another, who had successively been her companion, and always had some young girl with her who was the recipient of her beauty and her tender care. Her home was the center of cheerful gaiety, and all guests were made welcome, but when they overstepped the prescribed boundary and seemed to become over familiar, she would rise at once between them and the object of their interest. They might look, but they must not touch.

The hardness of these refusals had been that given to St. Clair Rainford. His thoughts or worse than thoughts of wife and son, after somber years of married life, led him with only the one daughter who had survived him, all his other children having died in infancy; and some years after this, Charlotte's old lover tried to effect once more an entrance into her heart.

The temptation was great, and she was almost on the point of yielding, for years and years had made a great change in the looks of Rainford. His character, and she could once more respect him; but the new love proved too strong, and she determined to devote herself wholly to her boy.

"It's too late, St. Clair," she said, when he urged her. "If you let this subject drop now, we can always be friends, but we must be strangers."

Robert was still young, but had a taste for it, and Charlotte was quite able to maintain him through the years that must elapse before he would be able to support himself. He was fond of pleasure or a gentlemanly kind, but developed no low taste or base instincts such as had been prophesied for him by Charlotte's friends when she first brought him home. On the contrary, he was winning her heart to show that he had not been born in the station of life where he was now admiring and courted by every one.

It was not long after his return home that word was brought to Charlotte that a woman was at the door who wished to see her on very particular business. Supposing this to be one of those cases in which she was called on to release some one in distress, she sent for this person from the room, where she was sitting with a young companion.

To be continued.

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