

Friday, May 17, 1912.

## DR. KELUM'S PRESCRIPTION.

"It's of no use to talk about my being your wife, Charley. Your father never will consent, and mother will never even let me see you—if she can help it—without his consent. No, you must come a step further. And pretty Rose Carter drew her arm out of Charley Kelum's very decidedly, when they reached the end of the village common. 'You know I never break my heart to say it, Charley, but I don't think I can ever meet you again. Mother will be sure to find out it and it would vex her so.' And she has had enough trouble without my giving her any—poor mamma!"

Charley Kelum shrugged his shoulders. "Your mother comes before me, of course. It is no matter how I feel. You say coolly that I can never meet her again; that means, I suppose, that we are never to see each other again."

"Why, no, Charley, if you will only have patience to wait! Everything may come out right."

"Wait! You have been telling me to wait for the last two years, and things are no nearer to coming out right than they ever were."

"I can't think why your father should dislike my mother so. I think mother knows, but she never will tell me. Miss Esther Wagon says that there were lovers once, and had a quarrel that your father can never forget. But one can't believe all Miss Esther's gossip."

"I don't think it is anything more than a notion he has got into his head. He's a crochety, set old fellow, but he's got a good big heart, Rose, if one can only get at it. If you were only my wife, he would be sure to be kind and think the world of you. If you only would marry me, Rose! At the world if he wouldn't come round—he could only disinherit me, and I have a pair of good strong arms, and some passable brains to fight my way—our way—through the world."

The moonlight shined on her face, and he fancied that there was a little shadow of hesitation on it. But she shook her head firmly after a moment. "Now, Charley, don't tell me to wait—"

"The rest of the sentence was never spoken, for a heavy hand was laid on the young man's shoulder, and an angry voice mimicked his tender tones. "Rose, darling! I'll teach you to 'dangle' her, young man!"

And there was Dr. Kelum's face, red with anger, looking over Charley's shoulder. Rose at the first glimpse of it, turned and ran like a little coward as she was.

"Haven't I forbidden your seeing that young woman? What do you mean by sneaking round here with her, like a thief in the night?" pursued the doctor, furiously.

"It is not my fault that I do not walk with her open eyes, and I am not at all sure she is not my wife. It is only because she will not consent to be so," answered Charley, stoutly.

"Won't consent to be your wife, eh? It doesn't seem to me that she treats you exactly like a rejected lover!" answered the doctor.

"She would marry me, if she were allowed to choose," answered Charley, trying hard to keep his temper. "Her mother will not consent."

"Humph! not consent! That's pretty well!" growled the doctor. "So she thinks my son is not good enough for her daughter?"

"She does not object to me. If you would give your consent to our marriage, she would give hers."

"Ah, that's it! Well, my consent you'll never have, young man, you may rely upon that. And if ever I hear of your being with that young woman again, I'll turn you out of doors, sir. Not a penny of my money shall you ever have, sir. Remember that! I am not one to make idle threats."

Charley was about to reply, but they had reached the house by this time, and the doctor went into the office and shut the door behind him with a bang. So there was nothing for poor Charley to do but to take his way desolately up to bed.

In the meantime the doctor seized the poker, and stirred up the dying fire in his grate savagely.

"Won't consent, eh? That's like Rose. She's always a proud piece. Let me catch that boy with her daughter again! I'll turn her out of the house, and down the room, brandishing the poker, and with a scowl still on his face, looking not unlike a midnight assassin, in spite of the venerable aspect which his gray hairs gave him.

"Of all the miserable housekeepers that I ever had, this Barnes woman is the worst!" he grumbled, jerking himself at last into the dilapidated and comfortless looking dressing-gown, and the slippers trodden down at the heel.

"Not a drop of warm water, or anything to eat in the house!" And he strode into the dining room, which indeed was cold and void of cheer.

He went into the pantry and munched a hard dry-colored doughnut savagely.

"I'll turn her away to-morrow, and her husband too, only that the next one would be sure to be worse. They are all about of a piece. There is nothing worse to have in the house, than a housekeeper—unless it's a wife. And I don't know—"

Dr. Kelum still stood in the pantry, solemnly deliberating, after the last morsel of doughnut had disappeared. It was so long since he had a wife that he could not decide whether one was worse than a housekeeper or not. It was a question that he had been revolving in his mind for years, without coming to any definite conclusion.

"Better bear the life we have, than fly to others that we know not of," the poet says. But then, a man can't bear this state of things long; he might as well live in a cave in the woods. Some time or other I shall have to marry, and I might as well make up my mind to it at once. I said to Miss Esther Wagon, the other day, 'The widow Zilpha Thomas is a fine woman; a capital manager, too, isn't she?'"

"Manager! you may be sure of that. She managed poor Reuben Thomas into his grave," said Miss Esther.

"But then, it is of no consequence what these women say. I should leave a second helpmate, he should leave every marriageable lady of his acquaintance incoachable."

"I'll drive round and see the widow Thomas next week," he don't think it likely that she could manage me."

To be continued.

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