How they loved him, Vol. 2 (of 3) : $b A novel

Florence Marryat

MUNDO DE LIBROS

Vista previa gratuita · Mundo de Libros · tiendamundodelibros.com

How they loved him, Vol. 2 (of 3) : $b A novel

Florence Marryat

Edición digital de dominio público.
Texto original: Project Gutenberg.
Mundo de Libros

Italic represented by underscores surrounding the _italic text_. Bold represented by equals signs surrounding the =bold text=. Small capitals have been converted to ALL CAPS.

HOW THEY LOVED HIM.

A NOVEL.

BY

FLORENCE MARRYAT

(MRS FRANCIS LEAN).

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON: F. V. WHITE & CO., 31 SOUTHAMPTON STREET, STRAND, W.C.

1882.

THE POPULAR NEW NOVELS AT ALL LIBRARIES.

=THREE FAIR DAUGHTERS=. By LAURENCE BROOKE, Author of ‘The Queen of Two Worlds,’ etc. 3 vols.

=SWEETHEART AND WIFE=. By LADY CONSTANCE HOWARD. 3 vols.

=MY LADY CLARE=. By Mrs EILOART, Author of ‘How He Won Her,’ etc. 3 vols. ‘“My Lady Clare” is a pleasant, readable novel.’--_John Bull_. ‘The interest is maintained with undeniable force and skill.’--_Daily Telegraph_.

=A LOVELESS SACRIFICE=. By INA L. CASSILIS, Author of ‘Guilty without Crime,’ etc. 3 vols. _John Bull_ says:--‘The story is a pleasant one--healthy in tone, lofty in teaching, and very sympathetic in manner and style.’

COLSTON AND SON, PRINTERS, EDINBURGH.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I. PAGE FOR EVER, 1

CHAPTER II. IN A STRAIT, 28

CHAPTER III. DESERTED,

72

CHAPTER IV. OVER,

123

CHAPTER V. SIR GILBERT CONROY,

164

CHAPTER VI. SMOOTH WATERS,

217

CHAPTER VII. A REVELATION,

241

CHAPTER VIII. THE INDISSOLUBLE LINK,

288

HOW THEY LOVED HIM.

CHAPTER I.

FOR EVER.

‘It is the same together or apart,
From life’s commencement to its slow decline:
We are entwined; let death come slow or fast,
The tie which bound the first endures the last.’

Byron.

To describe the feelings of Fenella Barrington at this period would be almost impossible. Not because no one has ever felt so deeply as she did, but because such thoughts are not to be adequately portrayed in black and white. Arraigned before the judgment of the world, they would appear foolish, romantic, overstrained, and perhaps culpable; to each individual heart alone, according to the circumstances under which they found it, must they answer for the consequences. Fenella’s heart was in an exceptional condition when the passion of love overtook and conquered it. In the first place, she was very young; and youth, like charity, ‘believeth all things and hopeth all things.’ She was too ignorant of human nature to doubt its truth--too ignorant of life to distrust its possibilities. And in the second place, she was very lonely and unhappy. She had no watchful parent to shield her innocence; she had not even any one to call her to account for her actions. She was free as the air, unguarded as the birds that flew in it, unloved as the most friendless waif that was ever forsaken by its natural protectors.

Disappointed and alone! What girl under such circumstances could be expected not to answer with the whole strength of her nature to the call of love? Her heart was so empty of affection--it yearned so for it--that it would not have been strange had she succumbed to the appeal of any fellow-creature who desired to show her kindness--least of all to that of Geoffrey Doyne. For there was a fascination about

him that was far above any physical attractions he may have possessed--a fascination which every woman felt who crossed his path, and many were left to rue. His tender eyes, and sensitive mouth, and dreamy poetical nature made him appear the most sympathetic and warm-hearted of human creatures; as indeed he was--whilst the humour lasted. But there were two formidable foes in his breast to war against his better feelings, and usually to overcome them, and these were a want of moral courage and a great love of self.

Geoffrey Doyne generally wanted to do right, and, as a rule, he generally did wrong. His head told him the proper thing to do, but his heart failed him at the very moment he called upon it for support and courage. So he was the worst possible guide that could have been found for a young and susceptible girl who loved him ardently.

Fenella would have proved far the most trustworthy of the two. Her innocence made her the better fitted to lead the way, had she not loved him so blindly as to be incapable of believing him to be in the wrong.

The reverend mother had said of her to Eliza Bennett, ‘She possesses the most dangerous attributes with which a young girl can encounter the world,--a heart so large and warm and generous, that where it loves it cannot see a fault, and a strong resolute nature that will act on its own impulses against all conventionality or advice.’ And the reverend mother was right. Fenella was that most dangerous combination--a child in experience, and a woman in feeling. In her eyes Geoffrey Doyne was simply perfection; and from the day he said he loved her, she yielded herself up to his control in everything. She looked on him rather as a god than a man. She could not understand

how it was that so perfect a creature condescended to dwell amongst ordinary mortals. The air he breathed, the flower he touched, the ground he trod on became sacred to her from mere contact with him. Hers was not the frivolous, giggling, open-mouthed admiration of a school-girl; it was the silent, awe-struck adoration of a woman! She would sit for hours absorbed in the contemplation of his features. Each movement of his supple figure was a poem to her, each tone of his voice a melody, each glance from his eyes a dream of heaven. She hung upon his words as if they had been inspired; and his touch, however careless, had the power to thrill her with a pleasure that was next door to pain. A few days of intimate communion, of mutually-confessed and openly-avowed passion, made Geoffrey Doyne her ruler--her inspiration--her very life.

And he knew it but too soon. He saw that the girl had become his slave--morally and physically; that he had but to lift his little finger to command her obedience; that with a glance of his eye he could direct her actions or sway her mind. And he loved her for it in return. Let him have justice done him at this, the fairest portion of his life. There is no question that _he loved her_! Although he was not sufficiently heroic, nor high-minded, nor courageous to rank her purity and child-like trust in him above his own selfish gratification--although his religion was not potent enough to gain the mastery over the more natural religion of love--still _he loved her_! Fenella was the first woman who had ever touched his heart, as he was the first man who had ever attempted to win hers. Her face was not more charming, perhaps, than many he had met with before; her talents (if of a high order) were crude and undeveloped; her love for himself, though deep and glowing, was no more than he had a right to expect from the

other sex. But she was the first whom he had ever loved; and there is a magic charm in those words, _the first_. The first kiss, the first woman, the first child, the first disappointment, the first death! Can any future joy or sorrow equal these? They are events that stand alone in our lives: they can never be repeated; once gone, they are gone for ever! In all the rest of his life, though Geoffrey Doyne might love a dozen other women, and swear a thousand oaths of fidelity to them, he would never love _in the same way_ he loved Fenella Barrington. More, he would never feel the passion of love in his breast, even though it burned ten times as strongly as it burned for her, without giving one short, quick sob of remembrance to the girl who gave him her whole heart, and placed her very life in his hands, upon the sands of Ines-cedwyn! And if he could forget--if his mortal nature proved so weak--Heaven is still above us all, watching, noting, jotting down on tablets of stone each crime we commit against the heart of a fellow-creature, to hold them up before our eyes to all eternity. The time will come when we shall be unable to forget!

After the day on which they discovered their mutual affection, Fenella Barrington and Geoffrey Doyne met, if possible, more frequently than they had done before. Each morning found them on the sands together, or if the young man pleaded an unwelcome engagement with his sisters, it was only to impress upon Fenella the double obligation of meeting him when the evening shadows should have fallen on the landslip. Ah! Those dangerous moments spent beneath the soft veil of dusk--when they sat side by side upon the golden sands, and watched the stars come out upon the summer sky, and their fresh, young voices rose up in unison to heaven in the thrilling notes of some love melody, or the more solemn tones of an

evening hymn; when their hands lay fast locked in one another's, and Fenella's head was pillowed on her lover's breast, till she heard no sound but the throbbing of his heart answering to her own. And they talked of the future--that glorious and apparently certain future, when they should always be together, and have no need to steal out, under cover of the evening, to meet each other on the sands.

It was provoking that, as yet, Geoffrey had been unable to write to Mrs Barrington and make a formal proposal for her daughter's hand, because but one letter had been received from that lady, dated from Genoa, and averring the intention of her party to move about for a few weeks in the South before they settled down in Mentone. But that was of little consequence--so the lovers told each other--because as soon as Mrs Barrington _was_ settled, Geoffrey would go over and see her, which would be far better than writing--and they could not be happier than they were.

It was now the end of June; two months had slipped away in this sweet courtship, and every day might bring the letter to say that Fenella's mother was settled at Mentone.

Eliza Bennett was up and about again. She had even discarded the crutches with which Dr Redfern had provided her, but her leg was still stiff, and she had not yet ventured to walk as far as the beach. But some rumours had reached her ears of the company in which her young mistress so constantly indulged. Of course the boat and fishermen had seen the courtship from the beginning. Tugwell, who had so often to put up at the public house, would have told them of it if they had not had eyes to see it for themselves. But it was nobody's business to carry the news up to Benjamin Bennett's cottage. If the

Hasta aqui llega la vista previa gratuita.

Sigue leyendo este libro completo en tu biblioteca:

compralo por $20 MXN o leelo con la Membresia ($149 / 30 dias).

tiendamundodelibros.com