

FATE'S AIDE-DE-CAMP.

BY LEIGH WEBSTER.

From New York Ledger:

WHAT SHE THOUGHT.

"There is Mr. Parshall again! He doesn't know that I saw him, but I did. Why does he keep coming here? The goose! How I long to put some sense into his head. Haven't I been as sweet on him as I could be? Haven't I made it a point to speak to him, no matter who else was with me? And I am always deferring to his opinion—what more than I have done could any self-respecting girl do, to show a man that she liked his society? Yet the other night at the Van Dykes, he did not come near me! But I know, I know he saw Tom Blake kiss my hand in the conservatory. I saw his face as he turned away—it went to my heart. I know he will never come near me again—I can see just how it looks to him. He doesn't know how tired I am of the empty jargon which I hear all the time, and thinks I am perfectly satisfied with my life. Apparently any one of 'my friends' would throw his life at my feet. But none of them would! Not even Tom Blake. He is so polished, his mind is perfectly smooth. He wouldn't consider it 'good form' to fall violently in love anyway.

"Doesn't he think I have intellect enough to know a real man when I see one? How manly he is! Working away so quietly, and yet with such confidence, you feel sure that he will succeed. Oh! if it was not for that money, I know what would happen, and what a happy girl I should be! Yes, for just once I will admit it to myself; I should be glad, glad to know that he loved me. But even if he does, he will never tell me so; perhaps it would spoil the charm if he did. But I would be willing for him to try it. Blushing! Well, I should think I might, after that. I wish I did not think of him so much. He doesn't know that I heard what he said to Mr. Carter, the other night, that 'a man who will let his wife cut a way through the world for him with her money, is nothing but a parasite.' Well, I might as well realize the fact that we are as far apart as the two poles, and shall never come nearer by motion of him. How that would sound to any one—just as if I contemplated making a move myself! Why is there not something that it be right for me to do? Must I see the best gift which life could give me drift away, and not move a finger to stay him? 'All things may come to him who waits,' but they don't to her. I don't know why I laugh. Its no laughing matter. Perhaps I had better give up thinking about it, and listen to the sermon. I might—oh, St. Valentine's Day! Why couldn't I? There wouldn't be any harm in that. I will!"

THE CONSEQUENCE.

Some days latter, a young man sat smoking his after dinner cigar in his lonely room. Convinced that he had been cherishing a foolish dream, he had undertaken to cure himself by hard work, and had succeeded very well; for he was thoroughly interested in his profession, and did not find life a waste after all. To-night, just through with an important case, in which he had been allowed to share the honor as well as the work, he felt disposed to

allow himself a little relaxation; and directly a pair of gray eyes rose up before him, now smiling, now pensive, and the old question—"Might it have been?"—rose once more, as if it had not been settled "forever," again and again. He finally pushed back his chair from before the fire, and began impatiently walking back and forth in the room.

A knock on the door, and the elevator boy passed in the last mail for the night. Two or three business letters and a little box. The letters were thrown carelessly down on the table; the box he kept in his hand in some curiosity. It was small and light, and sealed at either end carefully, as if it contained something precious. Being a man he did not spend much time in conjecture, but broke the seals and brought to light a plain jewel box. In much surprise he took off the cover to find the box apparently filled with cotton. Inside the cotton something cracked. "Dynamite!" flashed into his mind. Then with a laugh to himself, he pulled open the cotton to find a harmless slip of paper wrapped in a little coil around something which fell into his hand as he began to unroll the paper. It was a ring he noticed hastily, and then turned his attention to the paper, which seemed of more importance to him. And this was what was written on it:

(To be Continued.)

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