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# Phelps Grocery Company

## GLORIA

By MOLLIE MATHER.

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Gloria was so light haired and fleet of foot, that she seemed to Everton, like an elusive bit of thisedown. When he would glimpse her shining head at the foot of the garden, and go swiftly in pursuit, Gloria would be sure to disappear, her golden head popping out to mock him presently, from an upper window. It was this elusiveness of the girl which first drew, and then flung his fancy. Everton, of the old and honored Evertons, was not usually graded by the fair sex. And if Gloria seemed to him a bit of thisedown, Everton, upon his part impressed the girl just at first, pathetically, and as an old, young person of depressing character. Frankly, she did not care to know him. She had heard so much from grandmother, since her arrival at the homestead, concerning the desirability of this same dignified young man as a future husband, that she was in revolt at the possibility.

To Gloria, families of old and unquestioned standing or circumstances of like unquestioned stability were matters of indifference. She had come to enjoy in full the novel experience of country life, and the sweet old experience of occupying the very room that her own mother had occupied in her far-away girlhood. After that, Gloria wanted to go back to her father. The mother, whose picture on the wall, was so like herself, had died before she might even become a memory.

Father Bob, Gloria preferred to call him "Bob," had cared for her in childhood as tenderly as that mother might have done, and had sent her later with tears in his eyes—away from him to school. And though Bob's money was hard won, Gloria never lacked for the things that her associates enjoyed. She looked forward to graduation, merely as a time when she would be reunited to her father, and then he had sent her abroad. Upon her return he urged that she try life in her grandmother's home. Gloria was grieved at Bob's desertion. It was difficult for her to see the unselfishness of his plan. When Mrs. Everton Blaine learned of her son's infatuation for the little stranger, she was distressed.

Mrs. Blaine remembered Gloria's mother as a graceful young person who had married out of town, and gone away, never to return. Everton came to her with the startling announcement of his engagement. Gloria had consented to marry him, he said joyously.

"Everton," she bemoaned, "if you had but waited! Now, your engagement will only have to be broken. An Everton may not bring dishonor upon his family. I am sure, no Everton would—"

Her son flamed.

"Dishonor!" he exclaimed. Mrs. Blaine nodded sadly. "If not," she said, "how do you explain the fact of the girl being engaged to you, professing in love with you, and being each evening not only in the company of a flashy-looking individual—but being—yes, my dear, in the man's embrace as well."

"I don't believe it," Everton cried. "Then you must disbelieve your mother's word," she told him, for I have repeatedly witnessed that embrace from my seat in the car. The girl upon whom you have wasted your affection, was evidently keeping a tryst each time I saw her, with her companion on the bridge by the mill."

Without response the son turned blindly, and made his way toward the same hidden little bridge. He scarcely realized why he chose that direction or why he was going. But as he approached in the deepest misery that he had ever known, he saw Gloria there before him, her blonde head swaying in its thisedown fashion, in evident time to some merry tune that she was humming. And near her stood the man; fashionably flashy, as his mother had said, but with handsome eyes resting in unmistakable tenderness upon the girl's face. Without a qualm, Gloria beckoned her lover. Confusedly Everton came. "This," she said gently, "is my dear, dear father. Mother ran away with him years ago, Everton, and married him. Had I been in her place I should have done the same. Father happened to be a young traveling circus man then, and mother's people never forgave. Now, father owns that circus and loves still every animal and every creature in it. He is trying to persuade me to allow him to efface himself for my sake, to forswear the best father a girl could know, because of the difference of his life from the lives of your people. I had not thought of that difference."

The blonde head bent to rest against the gray tweed shoulder. "I love you both," Gloria said, "but I must be true to Bob."

"Good-bye, Everton."

Then Everton Blaine, smiling his vast relief, put forth his hand to Gloria's father.

"Why should it be good-bye, dearest?" he asked.

Superstitious Persuasion.

"Do you influence your wife's opinions?"

"Yes," replied Mr. Meekton. "But I have to go about it with great tact. The best way is for me to put a little extra pressure on the only board so I'll answer questions according to my way of thinking."

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