

CONQUERED FOR EVER.

"I'm sure I beg your pardon," said Mr. Dalton.

"There is no occasion for apology," said Lina, looking like a queen—or, rather, like a beautiful young princess—as she stood there in the soft, daffodil glow of the spring twilight, with a little early-headed girl in either hand, while a chubby boy of five played in the grass at her feet.

"Oh, but I beg your pardon—there's twice I've done it—there is occasion for apology," gently uttered Mr. Dalton. "Just look at the awkwardness of the whole affair. Here I've been abroad for five years; and when I come back, I learn that my poor dear cousin is dead, leaving three children. I at once recognize that it is my duty to provide for them. I come here and discover to my surprise, that you, the sister of their mother, have assumed the charge—that you decline to give them up."

The girl drew up that queenly figure of hers straighter than before.

"You have expressed yourself correctly," said she. "I am the sister of their dead mother. Do you think it likely that I wanted them to be bound out to respectable farmers or apprenticed to trades?"

A pained expression stole over Mr. Dalton's face.

"I shall be more than glad," said he, "to assume the care of one or all, if—"

"I want no help," interrupted the high-spirited girl. "We have learned to love each other, these little ones and I. Henceforward our lot must be cast in together. Will you walk over the garden? We have some beautiful roses in bloom, and I have been unusually successful with my carnations this season."

The young fellow eyed Miss Westfield as if she were a riddle that he could not read.

"You have a lovely place here," said he, tentatively.

"Yes," said Lina.

"But is it not lonely?"

"Not at all."

"Wouldn't it be a deal more amusing in town?"

"Not for me," decidedly.

"But you are forgetting plays—operas—theaters—all the delights of an evening in the city," argued Mr. Dalton. "These little cousins of mine, now—won't you let me take them in to see a real play? Just for once?"

The children's eyes sparkled—they nestled close to the fascinating stranger whose proposals were so entrancing, and cast pleading glances in the direction of the princess-like Lina. She shook her head gravely.

"I do not approve of the theater for children," said she.

Mr. Dalton lifted his hands in comic amazement.

"But, Miss Westfield," said he, "how exceedingly narrow-minded all this is! Our theater, for example, is the educational level of our age. The superb lessons which it impresses on the—"

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Dalton," said Miss Westfield, "but there is not one of your arguments which I have not listened to before. I am excellently well posted upon the subject. But it is getting late—my engagements—"

"A thousand pardons!" cried the young man. "If I must say good-evening—"

"Good-evening."

There was no temptation to further lingering in the crisp, curt tones of her voice. Mr. Dalton turned away not without disappointment.

"I don't understand these girls," said he. "There isn't a trace of the 'Jolly Girl' element about this one! Well—one can always console one's self by going to see the divine young actress that Hillsdale raves about—the cold, the calm, the unapproachable beauty of the tragic stage."

And so Mr. Dalton bought himself a white silk tie, a pair of primrose-colored kid gloves, and a bouquet, and went to the theater.

But while he sat there, waiting for the gold-fringed curtain to rise, his thoughts wandered back to the cottage where he had left.

"My unknown cousins!" he mused. "Pretty little sprites they were, too. Yes, it would have been a pity for them to be sent to the workhouse. She is a

spirited girl, that Miss Lina Westfield. But a woman is nothing more than a woman after all, and I don't see for the life of me how she does it. A house like that costs money to keep it up! How does she get it? Embroidered frocks,—blue velvet blouses,—roses and cabinet pictures! Edwin Dalton certainly married a poor girl, and neither of them left any estates but debts. By Jove; I mean to be at the foundation of this family enigma! The girl will find that she can't bluff me!"

But when the curtain rose and the beautiful actress glided on the stage, Mr. Dalton had neither eyes nor thoughts for anything else.

The next day he drove out once again to the cottage. It was noon, the children were playing under the shadow of a monster elm on the miniature lawn, and in a blue-ribboned wicker chair, with a book in her lap, Lina sat watching them.

"Again?"

She raised her queenly black brows as he advanced, doffing his cap, so that the sunshine turned his ruddy Saxon hair to gold.

"Yes, again," he said, smiling. "Miss Westfield, I have your secret. You, and no other, are Leonora West, the superb actress whose grand impersonations are now stirring the heart of this great city."

"An open secret," she said, smiling.

"Well, and what of it? You know, now, how I support these little ones—what has bought my cabinet pictures and paid the wages of the groom who takes care of the pony? It was necessary to do something, and I do not believe in doing starvation work for starvation prices."

"Miss Westfield!" he cried, "I honor your spirit—I respect your independence."

"Because I have chanced to succeed," she uttered, not without a certain royal scorn. "And if I had failed—"

"If you had failed I think I should have honored you still more," he said.

There was something in his earnest look, his frank tone, that established friendship between them at once. She smiled, and the little cousins flocked eagerly around the new-comer.

"May I stay?" he asked.

"Yes," she responded; "you may stay."

And, when Mr. Dalton went away, there was a strange, uncertain stir at his heart, a new revelation.

When the season was over, the manager of the theater respectfully interviewed Miss Westfield as to a second contract.

"Judging from our receipts," said he, "we shall be able to pay you a still higher salary. And I may venture to hope—"

"I shall not play anywhere this season," she said; "to tell you the truth, Mr. Daly, I am going to be married."

"Married!" gasped the manager. "Heavens and earth! At this rate the tragic stage is going to be ruined! You geniuses leave the footlights—"

"Not at all," said Lina. "We only change our audiences."

And so the matter was settled. Mr. Dalton took the beautiful young actress to his home, and with her went the children.

"I could not part from my little ones," said she, wistfully.

"My darling," cried Edwin, "everything that you love is doubly dear to me!"

She had conquered him—CONQUERED HIM FOR EVER!

WILD DOGS OF ATLANTA.

A Curious Result of the Late Rebellion.

Did you ever hear of the wild dogs of Atlanta? At one time the country around here was at the mercy of these savage animals. Horses, elephants, and camels can be made to take an almost human interest in war, but dogs can not stand the racket. The din of battle and the smell of villainous saltpeter breaks them up entirely.

Our dogs had a hard time during the siege. There were thousands of them in those days, and when the season of short rations set in they were the first to feel it. In many instances they were abandoned by their refugeeing owners and had to literally forage for a living.

The thunder of the big guns, the unearthly shrieks of the shells, the noise of falling buildings, the rattle of musketry, and the heavy tramp of marching soldiers all struck terror to the canine contingent. Toward the close of the siege nearly every dog in the city was half rabid or in the last stage of nervous prostration. The wretched brutes sought shelter under houses and in bomb-proofs. Majestic mastiffs and surly bull-dogs curled their tails between their legs and yelped mournfully at every unusual sound. Hundreds of the bolder ones made a frantic break over the breastworks and ditches, and made their way through the lines of both armies, never stopping until they reached the woods.

It was even worse after Sherman's army entered the place. The citizens were driven out in such a hurry that they had no time to think of their pets and no means of transportation for them. Later, the destruction of the city by fire, and the general pandemonium that ensued, scattered the few remaining dogs.

These innocent victims of the ravages of war had a terrible experience during the rigorous winter of 1864-5. Their misery drove them to form strange partnerships, and it was a common sight to see them roving in bands of a dozen or more. The old saying, "Banish the dog from his kennel and you have a wolf," was illustrated in this case. In the course of five or six months the country people for fifty miles around were spinning marvelous yarns about "them wild dogs from Atlanta."

The dog belongs to the genus which produces the wolf, the jackal, and the fox. Tame dogs of course lose many of the characteristics of these animals, but when persecution and misery cause them to relapse into a wild state they take the appearance, the habits and the tastes of wolves and jackals. Such was notoriously the fact with the Atlanta dogs. They lost every trace of domesticity. They grew to enormous size, with savage eyes and cruel-looking fangs.

Occasionally a gang of these ferocious beasts would swoop down on a farm-yard, devouring chickens and pigs, and attacking men when they stood in their way. It took the liveliest kind of shooting to drive them off. Sometimes they would surround a lonely cabin and wait for the inmates to come out. They even made raids into little villages, forcing the inhabitants to shut themselves up in their houses. The disappearance of many a negro in those perilous times was fully accounted for when his skeleton was found with every particle of flesh gnawed off and with the ground around showing evidences of a desperate struggle.

Early in 1865, when a few refugees began returning to Atlanta, they had to struggle with these wild dogs for the possession of the ruins. Bloody encounters occurred among the ash heaps and piles of debris. Every cellar and hole in the ground held these ravenous brutes, and they leaped upon men, women and children without the slightest provocation. At that time it was dangerous to ride or drive out in the country. On the main road between here and Decatur, in broad daylight, dogs were known to attack horses attached to buggies, forcing their drivers to open a hot fusillade with their revolvers.

After getting this taste of a wild life the Atlanta dogs went to the bad altogether. They never reformed. A relentless warfare was waged upon them from Stone Mountain to Kenesaw, and one by one they bit the dust until they were all wiped out. The reader at a distance must not jump to the conclusion that this indiscriminate slaughter has caused any unusual scarcity of dogs in this region. Thanks to the universal human weakness for pets, we are abundantly supplied with bench-legged fices, terriers, pugs, Newfoundlanders, mastiffs, and bulls. If some unexpected calamity should cause them all to go wild, after the fashion of their predecessors, they would be an uncommonly tough crowd to deal with.—*Atlanta Constitution.*

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R. G. Head, whose signature as president of the International Range association of America, demands justice at the hands of the president of the United States and an act of congress to suppress the rebate system of shipping cattle and to check pleuropneumonia, formerly stuck type as a printer in Corvallis. Bob has made the rifle, and rounds up a handsome pile. His present address is Denver, Colorado. In his letter to President Cleveland he says: "I am empowered by the live stock men of the plains, who have more than \$600,000,000 invested in cattle alone, to respectfully invite the attention of your excellency to the imminent danger threatening our herds by the existence of contagious bovine diseases, which, if once introduced to the open ranges of the west, will sweep our entire interests from the earth."