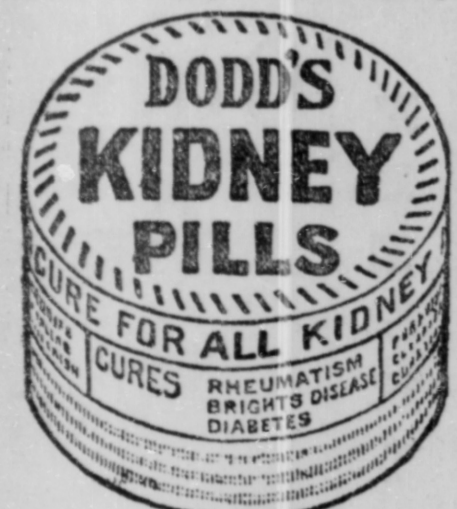


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A LOVER AT LARGE.

By BESSIE CHANDLER.

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"But, Kittie, you are perfectly unreasonable."

"Not at all. I know what I saw with my own eyes."

"Well, what did you see, then?"

"You sat by her all through a waltz, you talked to her and—looked at her, and then you got up and danced with her, the horrid lancers, too, that nobody thinks of dancing nowadays! And then you went out and put her in her carriage and tucked her in. I saw it all."

"But, Kittie—"

"You needn't say 'Kittie' to me! The idea of that little widow being attractive! She's old enough to be your mother!"

"No, she's not. We were born the same year, and I'm six months the older."

"Oh, you found that out, did you? Well, I wouldn't believe her. She's a sly, deceitful thing! She's had one lover—at least I suppose her husband loved her. I don't see why, though! I should think she'd be contented now to stay at home and behave herself, instead of trying to rob other women!"

He looked at her helplessly—the big, handsome, simple minded fellow. He was no match for Kittie. She buzzed all around him, like a tormenting insect too small to catch, too aggravating to be ignored.

"Kittie, you shall hear me!" he exclaimed. "What were you doing when I sat beside Mrs. Millicent? Waltzing with Captain Graham! Now, I can't waltz till that confounded knee gets right again, and do you think it's such a pleasure to watch you circling round me—with other men? Mrs. Millicent talked with me, which is more than half the girls do with a man who doesn't dance. Then came the lancers. I can get through those. I looked for you; but, as usual, you were off with somebody else, so I danced with Mrs. Millicent. Surely it's no crime for me to dance one square dance with another woman when you dance a dozen round dances with other men."

Miss Kittie Nicholson was unappeased.

"It isn't so much that you did it," she said haughtily, "as that you enjoyed it so."

He looked at her in amazement.

"Would you prefer to see me weep as I dance? I'll remember that next time and drop a few tears as I go."

"Oh, it isn't that! I can't make you understand. I'm not jealous, not at all. Still, every one says you are a great flirt, and it seems so queer that you should be loving me, as you say you do, and yet so perfectly contented with another woman, at the same time."

"But I don't see anything of you, Kittie. You won't let our engagement be announced. I have to stand with the rest of the mob and take my chance. I can hardly ever see you alone. I'm perfectly happy when I'm with you—you know I am—but you won't let me be with you. You turn me off and laugh at me and starve me. Then I pick up what crumbs I can from other people's tables. I presume now you're going out tonight."

Miss Nicholson colored and looked confused. "Well, yes, to tell you the truth, I am. But not right away. Mand has a little supper tonight."

It is undoubtedly a fact that our grandmothers, the pioneer women of the country, led more laborious lives than the housewives of to-day.

In spite of this fact, they bore their husbands' healthy, robust sons and daughters, and did not become weak, complaining invalids as a consequence.

There are probably several reasons for this. One is, that they lived more in the open air, and another, and probably the most influential of all, is that they were less prudish than the women of to-day.

They were not ashamed to know something of their own physical make-up. They were not too nice to take care of their health in a womanly way. Women now-a-days suffer untold tortures in silence, because of weakness and disease of the distinctly feminine organism, rather than consult a physician, or even talk upon the subject to their own husbands. They imagine that troubles of this description can only be cured by undergoing the disgusting examinations and local treatment insisted upon by the average modern physician. Doctor Pierce's Favorite Prescription cures all diseases peculiar to women in the privacy of their own homes. It does away with the necessity for examinations and local treatment. It acts directly on the important organs concerned, making them strong, healthy and vigorous. It fits for household and the burdens of household duties. It allays inflammation, heals ulceration and soothes pain. It tones and builds up the nerves. It banishes the discomforts of the time of expectancy and makes baby's advent easy and almost painless. Thousands have testified to its merits.

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He looked at her savagely. "That's always the way. I shall go and see Mrs. Millicent."

"If you do, Gerald Hayes, I'll never speak to you again. The idea! Why, Gerald, I believe you really like her."

Her tone had changed entirely, and a strain of real anxiety showed itself above the assumed petulance with which she had been teasing her lover.

"I do like her. What do—you want me to do? Mrs. Miller hasn't invited me. It's too early to go to bed yet. Shall I go up and sit on the steps until you come out? I'm rather big to play lamb to your Mary, but I will if you wish it."

"Dear Gerald," said the girl, slipping her hand in his, "just wait a little longer. You've been so good and patient. I will tell everybody in a few days. It frightens me a little; that's all. But you know I love you, Gerald."

The last words were very low, but he heard them, and his arm was around her in a second, and he felt that he was being more than paid for all that he had suffered.

He left her half an hour later with a much lighter heart. She was an unreasonable, spoiled beauty, he said to himself, but the dearest darling in the world.

He went up the street, whistling softly as he went.

Where should he go? It was, as he had said, too early to go to bed, and of course he would not go to Mrs. Millicent's now. In fact, he no longer wanted to. He was full of the afterglow of his last moments with Kittie.

Suddenly he bethought him of a friend of his mother, a charming, middle aged woman, who lived right on the way. He owed her a dinner party call, too, and this was just the night to make it. So he walked along until he came to her door, keeping up his low, happy whistle.

But "who can contend with his lords?" Gerald Hayes, trying his best to do his duty, walked straight into the trap which fate had set for his unwary feet, for as he stood in Mrs. Norwood's hall he heard music—a woman's voice singing. He stopped a moment, listening, but the servant pulled the portiere and announced him, and there was nothing for him to do but enter the drawing room. The lights were dim, but he saw Mrs. Norwood sitting in her accustomed corner and went at once to speak to her. The music stopped, and the figure at the piano rose hastily. He looked across, to find that it was Mrs. Millicent.

"Don't get up, Annie," said Mrs. Norwood. "I'm sure Gerald will enjoy hearing you as much as I do. Gerald, have you ever heard Mrs. Millicent sing?"

"Never. I am so glad to have that pleasure."

"Well, sit right down and begin again, Annie. That was a lovely thing, that last."

Gerald Hayes moved nearer the piano. Mrs. Millicent looked at him and smiled.

"You are quite sure this isn't going to be a nuisance?"

"What an ideal! I shall love it, I know."

She began to look at her music, turning it over and selecting it, while he looked at her.

She was a small woman, less brilliantly pretty than Kittie. Her yellow hair waved away from her face and over her head and was gathered in a low knot. Her eyebrows were extremely level and quite dark, much darker than her hair. It was this peculiarity which gave her face its character, for her cheeks were pale, and her mouth, although sweet, was very small. She wore a white dress, made very simply, it seemed to Gerald, and yet there was something about it that appealed to him as essentially womanly.

Why is it there are certain laces, certain bits of jewelry, certain fabrics and colors that we instinctively associate with a gentlewoman? Other things may be just as delicate and pretty, but they lack the subtle fragrance of long association. We are not quite sure of them.

Gerald Hayes' eyes looked approvingly at Mrs. Millicent. Here was a restful woman—one who, whatever else she might do, would never torment a man.

Then she began to sing. She had a sweet voice, carefully trained, and she sang with great feeling. She sang a number of love songs, and Gerald's heart thumped wildly through them all. He knew it was only singing, only the art of rendering a given emotion, and yet he felt that he would like once to hear a woman tell him that she loved him in such sweet, low tones, so full of passionate feeling. Kittie had never done so. She had either announced the fact flippantly or allowed it to be reluctantly dragged from her.

He cared nothing at present for Mrs. Millicent, but within half an hour he was deeply in love with her voice. Whenever she stopped, Mrs. Norwood would cry out: "Oh, do go on! I am enjoying it so!"

Her eyes were closed, and she had every appearance of nodding in her corner, but she roused herself each time with the stopping of the music.

Finally, when Mrs. Millicent was really too tired to sing any more, Mrs. Norwood rang and gave some orders, and then they settled themselves in one of the cozy corners and chatted away like very old friends.

Mrs. Millicent's maid came for her, but Mrs. Norwood said: "Send her

away. Don't make her wait. It's too early to go yet, and here is Gerald Hayes, with nothing in the world to do but see you home."

Mrs. Millicent hesitated. "Oh, do let me!" Gerald hastened to say. "It will be the greatest pleasure." And so, after some demurring, the maid was dismissed, and the three sat down to a delicious little supper. Everything at Mrs. Norwood's was good, and she herself seemed to be fully awake at last and most amusing. She rattled on, telling one naively funny story after another, and Gerald found that he and Mrs. Millicent were glancing at each other with a perfect understanding of their hostess. That is always delightful sympathy when two people think the same of a third and know they do without expressing it.

It was late—later than any of them imagined—when Gerald found himself walking home with Mrs. Millicent. The spell of the evening was broken now. He was simply a tired man, escorting a silent little woman home.

(To be Continued)

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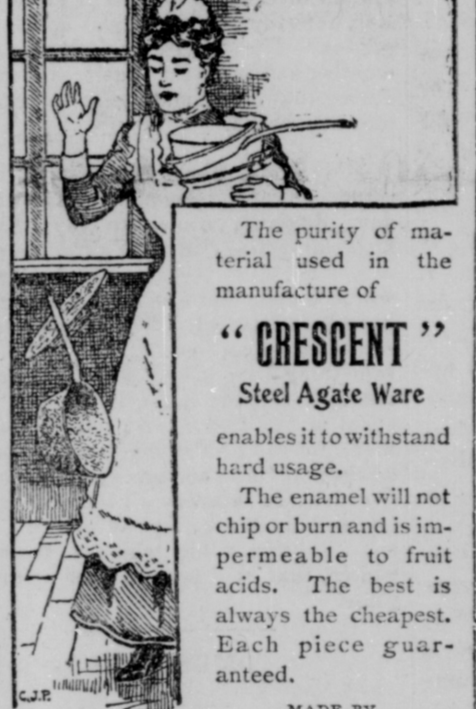
Dr. C. M. Harlan, writing in The American Journal of Health, said: "We know that Dr. Chase's Ointment meets all the requisitions of the highest standard of worth, that it will be held in high esteem wherever it is used, and consequently we endorse it to every reader."

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