

The Governor's Lady.

[Continued from page 6, Col. 3.]

opposition papers are bound to take it up at any moment. Now, what do you advise?"

"The truth," thundered Slade. "My wife is preparing to desert me. It will happen"—Hayes jumped up and flung himself out of the room—"tomorrow—the next day—any hour."

"I see," and the senator looked grave. "Is this irrevocable, Slade?" "Irrevocable," declared Slade, positively. "As I have told you several times, senator, it is irrevocable. I'll stand by that."

Convinced that Slade knew his own mind in this matter as well as he had the reputation for knowing it in all other matters, Strickland returned to the waiting politicians.

Slade had been alone but a few minutes when Katherine returned. "Well, Mr. Slade," the girl exclaimed, "things seem to be coming our way."

Slade was in no mood for mere conversation. He was annoyed at Hayes' attitude, and incensed because his private affairs were being publicly discussed in the next room. Mentally he consigned Hayes to the devil, his wife to the far East of the country, and registered a vow with himself that he would have that divorce and the woman he wanted in spite of everybody and everything.

He resolved to sound Katherine out then and there. He turned over in his mind the most cold-blooded proposition that a man ever made to a woman. He was planning to ask her to marry him, when he should be free, to decorate his home, preside at his table, share his wealth and the honors of the chief executive of the state. There would be no warmth in his tone, no love in his heart, no hunger of his lips for hers, no yearning of his arms for her yielding figure, there would be none of the fire of youth, nothing of the love of little children, nothing of the spirit that makes of marriage a sacrament rather than a thing of convenience.

As Katherine walked across the room, moving toward him with the quiet grace and dignity of the well-trained, well-gowned woman, he had a fleeting memory of the slight, badly dressed little woman, whose diffidence in strange surroundings had always fretted him. She a governor's wife? Impossible! He rose and stood beside the woman whom he proposed to use as another living stepping stone.

"Miss Strickland," his mind fully made up, "you've done a lot for me in the last few weeks while you've been making that bust. I think I understand you in a way. The more I see of you the more I think I'd like to make a—well, a bargain with you. That doesn't seem to be quite the word," he hesitated as the girl averted her eyes. "Yet I think that's what we call it."

"A bargain?" echoed Katherine. "Yes, a bargain," he repeated. "I never knew but one woman well—that was Mrs. Slade. She's a good woman—a mighty good woman, but we can't—I never had a home—not a home like Strickland's. When I have another house—that'll be what I'll want, I'll want my friends, my acquaintances, to come there. I want—well—head-

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"You're going to marry Slade," Bob could scarcely believe his ears. "You must be crazy!"

"No." Her voice was firmer now. "But I'm twenty-seven years old, twenty-seven years old." She bit the words off with a vengeance. "Soon I'll be thirty—thirty—do you hear? And you're the only man I've ever cared a rap for. I've tried to marry other men, rich men, men with important positions. Once I nearly did it in Europe. Then I thought of you, and I waited, I waited. And it's too late now. I can't wait any longer. I've worried and wondered ever since I got home what I could do. What I could do! Slade's the answer, Bob, Slade's the answer."

"My God, Katherine!" Hayes was completely bewildered at this unexpected outburst. "Slade's married."

"I don't care," she retorted, defiantly, gaining courage as she talked. "A woman more or less is nothing to that man. He'll move a mountain. He'll soon sweep her out of his path."

[Continued next week.]

Ocean Eats Away the Land.

Little children who played on the beach last summer would be surprised if they should go back to the same place in a few years to find it quite changed. Old Ocean is not satisfied with the shore as it is, and he keeps pounding at it all the year round, but hardest in the winter. Down near Baltimore the ocean sometimes comes 30 feet farther up in a year. At Rock-away Beach, Long Island, the coast line has moved back a mile in 20 years. At a certain place on the Atlantic City beach the ocean took 76 acres away from one owner and put 56 acres on another man's shore land, all in ten years. Orchards and even forests disappear before the onward marching sand.—From John Martin's Book.

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Katherine was not surprised. She had anticipated some such move as this on his part, but now that she was face to face with the unvarnished suggestion, she found herself more shocked than she would have believed.

"In a couple of months I'll stand free," he went on. "Perhaps sooner. I don't expect any woman's going to love me—she isn't. Got to do that when you're young. But I'd do all I could for the woman. She'd have everything—money and—the power that goes with it. I want to say right here that I wouldn't speak if I thought young Hayes had a chance. I saw he didn't."

At the mention of Hayes' name Katherine had an instant's vision of

Bob's tender face—his eyes burning with love looking into hers—of his youth—his strength—his fine honor, and her heart cried out desperately, pitifully, for the shelter of his arms.

In another moment the old recurrent vision of life in the old town, dull, cheap, uninteresting, and the lure of what Slade was offering, the money, the clothes, the servants, the power to reign supreme, swept her off her feet. The thought of divorce did not terrify her. Mrs. Slade, whom she had never seen, was only a name.

As Slade watched her standing straight and white, he feared he had been too brutally blunt.

"You needn't think it over now," he hastened to add. "Perhaps you will later, and perhaps you won't. That's for you to decide. I guess I've said all I can say."

But Katherine was not a woman to shrink from a situation because of its unpleasant features. She knew that she couldn't have all the things she wanted without some suffering, some pain. Her father's world had taught her that love was a thing of small consideration where marriage was concerned, unless it went with the advancement of one's ambitions. Love was not of the world. Place, power, wealth—these were of the world and this man offered them to her.

"This isn't a matter of sentiment," she agreed with him calmly. "I'll be perfectly frank with you. I don't say I won't think it over. I know just what you want of a woman. When you can go to my father free there won't be any barrier in the way."

She offered her hand as if to bind the bargain. He held it for a brief instant and with a hurried "thank you" left the room.

CHAPTER VII.

Left alone, Katherine drew a long breath. Her face was set and her eyes were harder than it is good for a woman's eyes to be. She pictured to herself the future for which she had just bargained. There would be wealth—no more pinching struggle with masked poverty, her father at ease, his political debts all paid. There would be no more pretense that her art was for love of it and not for money—she would be free to follow her desires in this as in all else. There would be honor and power as wife of the state's chief executive—and that was but a step to further honors that she would achieve at Slade's side—with Slade—always with Slade—ah!

As she stood thus the horror of what she had agreed to do swept over her, and she sank moaning and shivering into a chair, covering her face as if to shut out the hideous vision of herself as Slade's wife. She did not hear Bob enter, and did not know he was in the room until he touched her shoulder with tender alarm, exclaiming, "Why, Katherine, what's the matter?"

He did not think he ever remembered Katherine, strong, firm-willed Katherine, looking so pathetic and helpless. She dropped her hands from her face and he was surprised to see the misery in her eyes and the drawn lines about her mouth.

"I'm cold—I'm cold! I've had an awful chill," she tried to say, her teeth chattering with the sudden cold that seemed to freeze her lips. "Don't touch me, Bob?" she choked. "I've done it. I've done it. I always knew I'd do something terrible—I've done it." Her voice was hollow and her eyes were blank and expressionless.

"Katherine, tell me what's the matter? Can't you tell me?" There was a world of love and tender solicitude in Bob's voice. His manner seemed to rouse her, and she began to pace the floor excitedly.

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what had happened. In a twinkling she divined the remedy and called James Dinsmore at the baggage desk, which is located just inside the main Broad street door. He took in the situation immediately, though he afterward admitted he never had met quite a similar state of affairs, and inside of two seconds he was telling Mike Quinn, a porter, about the incident.

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