

Four Months before her Wedding Day she Became Blind but he Married

her in Spite of His Friends' Persuasion

MRS. JOHN HARLOCKER of Cleveland is absolutely sure of her husband's love, for he married her in spite of the fact she suddenly became totally blind four months before their wedding day. The wedding took place in the presence of the opposition of Harlocker's parents and friends and against the urgent advice of his employers. His betrothed herself in the first three months of the darkness of night that had come into her life refused steadfastly to consent to the marriage, and only yielded at last when she became convinced in the depths of her own heart that her refusal would blight the life of the man she loved.

So earnestly did the young woman wish to spare her betrothed from what she insisted was the sacrifice of his entire life that when two weeks ago she gave a reluctant consent to the wedding, she insisted that he should avail himself of the right to draw back even at the altar itself.

"Even if we are all in the church, John, dear," she said, "and the minister is half way through the ceremony, you must say 'no' if at the last moment you decide you cannot make this great sacrifice; and I will turn away from my happiness and love you just the same—just as much."

Smiles at Thought of Sacrifice.

And John Harlocker only smiled—a smile that the blind girl at his side could only feel as she passed her white fingers curiously over his face.

"It's not a sacrifice, Leeta," he said, in reply. "Before this blindness came to you I needed you and you needed me. Now I need you just as much as I ever did; and you need me all the more, so we will say no more about it."

All her romanticism ended the same way. John Harlocker refused to give up his betrothed.

His mother, with only in her love for him, begged him to give up his purpose to marry his blind sweetheart.

The day came and the wedding party assembled. The blind bride, lovely even in her blindness, stood beside the man she loved and heard the minister speak the words that made her the wife of the man who had refused to give her up.

She told him afterwards that if she had felt the slightest reluctant tremor in the hand that clasped hers—if she had detected even the suspicion of hesitancy in his voice—she would even at that last final moment have broken away from him and refused to go on with the ceremony. But the clasp of John Harlocker's hand was firm and his voice rang clear and true—and she was his wife, for better or for worse.

From the Altar to Happiness.

After the wedding John Harlocker gave his bride the first proof of the tender care he intended to bestow upon her during all the eight days of her life. She knew he had prepared a home for them, but at his request had asked him no questions. Together they drove in a carriage to the home in waiting. The carriage rolled over smooth pavements and through a little park. As the wheels rung across a little stone bridge and then left the macadam road and turned into a

ten of brick paved streets, the bride, who had been chatting with the arm of her husband around her, suddenly became silent and seemed to be listening for familiar sounds. The carriage crossed a railway track and a street car passed by with a peculiar whirling sound, skirting the broad curve on the edge of the park. The bride turned her sightless eyes to her husband's.

"John, O, John, you—"

She stopped to listen again. The carriage drove through a shaded street and stopped at a gate.

"John, John," she cried, excitedly—"It's home—my old home. I knew it the moment we crossed the bridge and I heard the street car whirr along the edge of the park. It's my old home, isn't it, John?"

"Yes, dear," said John Harlocker, "it's your old home and your new home, for you shall live there until you are tired of it and me."

That was John Harlocker's surprise for his bride, and it

revealed the whole of the romance that had joined them.

It was a strange romance for a modern, workaday world—and there have been few like it outside of cheap novels and chapter theaters.

Old Home Bought by Her Father.

Fifteen years ago James Anderson, the bride's father, was a merchant in Cleveland. He was not particularly wealthy but he was well to do. He had purchased a piece of ground in the suburbs of Cleveland and built a home. His daughter Leeta was born there. Property was cheap at the time and Anderson purchased a whole square, bounded by four streets, and across one of the streets was a bit of ground, probably twenty-three acres in extent, which ultimately passed into the hands of the city and was transformed into a handsome little park.

Anderson took a great deal of pride in his square of ground and embellished it with many trees, a lawn, and a rose garden. His house was not large but it was picturesque, and in the course of years Anderson's place was even handsomer than the little park across the street.

Trees Her Childhood Playmates.

In this house Leeta Anderson was born. As a child she played among the trees and romped over the lawn. She knew every tree and shrub on the place. She had a lively imagination and had read much, even as a little girl, and with the romance of childhood, had even given a name to every tree and bush and flowering shrub.

The big cherry tree was "George Washington" and the one beside it was "Martha Washington." The elm tree outside the bay window was "Thy Sentinel Am I," because, she said, it was always on guard outside her window. The larch tree at the foot of the rose garden she called "Gen. Green," because it is always so green, she declared. And so she had her own name for every tree, and these names became known to her parents as well. When they heard her cry, "O, daddy, come quick, Jimmy Jones has fallen out of George Washington," daddy knew in an instant that Jimmy Jones had come to grief while stealing cherries.

So, too, in the springtime when Leeta had rushed in with the joyful tidings: "Mamma, what do you think? Two little birds are building their nest way up in 'Thy Sentinel Am I!'" they knew in just what particular tree to look for the bird's nest.

Leeta Anderson was 16 years old when she was compelled to leave the home in which she had lived all her life. Her mother had died, and her father,

grief-stricken, had let the lines of his business slip from the grasp that had always been firm, and when the banks failed his business and his home were swept away in the common flood of ruin. He did not long survive. Leeta, forced to leave the old home, went to live with an elderly aunt.

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His Love Revealed to Her.

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Stricken Blind Without Warning.

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