LOVE IS BEST

By Florence Hodgkinson

CHAPTER XII

It was springtime at Easthill-on-Sea, and things were settling down again. Mrs. Dynevor, with her son and daughter, still lived at the Uplands, but with no fear now of the mortgage foreclosing. It was generally believed—and specially so by Harold—that the interest was paid to the young master of the Manor, really it went into the local bank account of "Kitty Dynevor," for Lillian knew that the Squire's wrong would soon end, and wished Kitty to have a nice little sum in hand for her trousseau.

Well, time came at last for Lillian's marriage, and it took place at the Manor and not at the church, Mrs. Dynevor and Lillian thinking it more in keeping with the sisterly love existing between the hundred years' friend, as she called Mrs. Harold, not to have a second wedding again.

Mrs. Dynevor and Kitty were often at the Manor, and Lillian ever better and better for that sweet Mass Jean-don't Harold never went there, and when he met his cousin at Uplands treated her with a cold reserve that at last broke her heart.

"Your brother was ill-very ill-when I saw him last," she said, one day, when she was alone with Kitty. "And that accident, Kitty, was a terrible thing for him. I fancy-I am sure-that it has affected his mind."

"Oh, no, Mrs. Dynevor," Kitty answered, with a sad smile. "Harold is not mad, only-only-"

"Only what, my dear?"

"Only he has taken a dislike to me, and-and-I don't know why."

"Kitty, I am sure he loves you," Mrs. Dynevor said, gently. "I am sure he does, but-"

"But what?" Kitty asked, as the lady paused.

"I think he is afraid of you, my dear," Mrs. Dynevor answered, with a little hesitation. "He is afraid that you will not accept him, and-and-"

"Oh, Mrs. Dynevor, you don't think that I would refuse him?" Kitty cried, with a sudden flush. "Why, I would-I would-"

"Hush, my dear, hush!" Mrs. Dynevor said, soothingly. "I am sure you would not, but Harold is not to know that. He is very proud, and-and-"

"I will tell him," Kitty said, with a sudden resolve. "I will tell him that I love him, and that I will be his wife."

"Kitty, you must not," Mrs. Dynevor said, gravely. "Harold must ask you himself, and-and-"

"He will not," Kitty said, with a sad shake of her head. "He will not, Mrs. Dynevor, for he thinks that I am-am-"

"Engaged to Mr. Lisle," Mrs. Dynevor said, gently. "Yes, my dear, I know that he thinks so, but-"

"But what?" Kitty asked, as the lady paused.

"Only that I am sure that Mr. Lisle is not engaged to you, my dear," Mrs. Dynevor answered, with a little hesitation. "He is very much in love with you