The Painting of Satan.

BY ETHELYN LESLIE HUSTON.
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Although the rest of the guests of the gentler sex at the Hope Helps-some-time said unkind things about Mrs. Weston, that dignified little lady was, perhaps, like a certain person not to be mentioned in polite society, not quite as black as she was painted. It is true she did like to talk to interesting men, whether they happened to be married or not, and the men interesting and unmarried always very much to talk to her. And when Mr. Hartleigh began to be a regular visitor at the house after dinner, and Mrs. Weston fortained on the morning chairs of the mansion on Sixth avenue, Mrs. Weston took it as a matter of course.

The Hartleigh family had always shown their fondness for Southern society as good breeding would permit, and to the casual observer there was no change in their normal mood. But Mrs. Weston, who knew the inside of her husband's heart, knew that he was a thoroughbred Southern gentleman, and borne to his spiritual mate in the summer-lands.

And when Hartleigh, with his big dog-eyes, asked her if she would be an anchorage for his soul, she gently received him with the roof that spoil this not, but waits. And was not she worth unmitted gold to women, if they only knew it. A beauty.

So, she received the confession all about it. She knew that Hartleigh was not in love with her, and she knew that Hartleigh's wife was her dear, gently grand friend. She was strong about the instantaneous love that had thrust its Rasputin-like shadow upon happiness.

That evening when Hartleigh made some footless statement to her about her irritability, Mrs. Weston, generally and his opposite to Mrs. Stanton and the rest of it, Mrs. Weston nodded her sensible little head and assumed an air of fitting gratitude for the compliment paid her, and then faltered, with a becoming touch of hesitation, and a quite fetching little quaver in her soft voice "But Mrs. Hartleigh."

Hartleigh tossed his cigar behind the gas-log of the big fireplace and said, with gloomy irritation:

"Oh, she doesn't care. The best of us are converted beggars, you know.

"But Mrs. Hartleigh"

and I used to think he did, which shows what an ass a man is."

Mrs. Weston simulated a smile from her lips with her big black fan.

"And because she doesn't she is neglected, while her eyes danced. "I am to be a sop to his lordship's vanity Dear, dear. How very clumsy men are, to be sure. But I'll try to fix the thing up. Though I'll get no thanks for it. One never does."

So she purred a few sympathetic purrs, which are all a clever woman needs to do when a man is bothered, and the whole story came out.

"Hartleigh, it appeared, had gone to his wife's desk to scribble a note one evening when she happened to be out, that was retribution. And the penalty thereof is sackcloth and ashes."

"But if she is permitting some blackguard to write things—"

"You do not know what she is permitting, or anything about it," said Mrs. Weston.

"But I tell you I know—"

"Three words. Easily. And there by hangs a history which you have filched in anticipation of a vivid imagination, and dotted with some personal experience. Hartleigh, with again moved uneasily in his chair, and it has never entered your head that there may be some things in the heavens above and the earth beneath of which you are not altogether cognizant. In spite of your knowledge of the world."

"Well, I'm sorry I spoke."

"Hartleigh, I am sorry you spoke. Sorry for your sake, because I felt his weight. Sorry for my own, because I felt it slide away."

"Hartleigh, I'm sorry." he repeated, with a little bright in his eyes, and a little red in his cheeks.

"Hartleigh, I'm sorry."

"Hartleigh, I'm sorry."

"Hartleigh, I'm sorry."