

CHIFFON'S MARRIAGE

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Chiffon's Marriage by Sibylle Gabrielle Riquetti de Mirabeau (Gyp) & Mrs. Edward Lees Coffey

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CHIFFON'S MARRIAGE



GYP

THE COUNTESS DE MARTEL-JANVILLE.

CHIFFON'S MARRIAGE

BY

GYP

Translated from the French

BY

MRS. EDWARD LEES COFFEY

NEW YORK
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1895

R. T. P.

To
MADAME MAURICE BARRÈS,
THIS WORK
IS
AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED
BY
GYP.

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CHIFFON'S MARRIAGE.

CHAPTER I.

"WIFE of an officer! What an occupation? I would rather be an orderly in a Lyceum!"

The Marchioness de Bray shrugged her shoulders: "When you know what officer is in question——"

"Though it should be M. de Trêne, that every one thinks so distinguished, I would not think of it."

"You would not wish it, indeed! You have no right to be so hard to please, for——"

"Your father has left only debts and you have not a cent.' Ah! I am accustomed to this from you, you say it so often I can never forget it."

"Well, then?"

"Very well; even though I have not a cent, I will never marry without love."

M. de Bray said with some timidity: "Without being rich you have some expectations—probably a fortune."

"A fortune?" the child repeated with astonishment—"a fortune that you may give me?"

Her soft gray eyes under long, thick brown lashes rested affectionately upon her stepfather.

Mme. de Bray said angrily: "It is useless to teach her what she need not know; it will only make her more difficult to please."

"How difficult?" Coryse answered with indignation; "difficult in what? I was only sixteen a few months ago, and no one has asked me in marriage that I know of."

"If some one should ask you—and you refuse before knowing who?"

"I don't wish to marry an officer, never! I see the officers' wives here; there are plenty of them in the four regiments. I would not be in their place for anything. I am not like them—not polite enough. I know that if my colonel had a wife like Mme. de Bassigny for example, I would not visit her, nothing would induce me!" Looking toward the end

of the room to find an ally, she said: "Am I not right, Uncle Marc?"

Without giving him time to reply, Mme. de Bray said: "That is not your uncle's affair. Will you listen to me an instant?" In solemn tones she said: "The Duke d'Aubières has asked you in marriage."

She stopped a moment to see the effect upon her daughter. The little baby face seemed stupefied. Mme. de Bray understood this expression to be joy, and with a triumphant air asked her decision.

"Why, I am only a child!" and without seeming to notice her mother's anger she said: "Yes! he is at least forty,—he must be as he is colonel; he is ugly, and they say has very little money."

The marchioness, looking scornfully at her daughter, said: "This is enough. She wishes a fortune 'also!'"

Leaning her blonde head forward, Coryse answered: "Oh no! the money is nothing, as I am not to be duke—duchess, I would say. It is ridiculous, a big title and small fortune. If I had been born rich I would not hide it though it would bore me, and I would bear

my title, as it would not be my fault. It is not for this reason that I now say no; it is principally on account of the man."

"But you have said a hundred times that the Duke d'Aubières was charming, and that you liked him so much."

"Certainly, I like him very much! but not to marry him. First, he is old, and to spend a life with him would indeed be funny."

The marchioness, looking angrily at her husband, said: "One does not marry to be funny."

"Well, I will marry in my own way."

"Why, this child is crazy! I had better go away;" rising to go in a way she thought very noble, but really ridiculous, the marchioness left the room with long strides.

When the door was shut with a great noise, M. de Bray said quietly: "You are wrong, my little Coryse."

Coryse was calmed by her mother's noisy exit and threw herself in a big old chair covered with faded silk in which she almost disappeared. Looking up she said:

"Why do you call me Coryse? Why not Chiffon? You, too, are angry with me."