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ALMOST LOST.

"Where are you going to-night, Estella?" asked her mother-in-law, as pretty Mrs. Cameron went into the parlor, ready dressed to go out.

"Oh, I forgot to tell you that Edmond is coming as far as Springfield to-night, and I am going on the half past 8 train to meet him there," was the reply.

"This was all very well for loving, dutiful, little Mrs. Cameron to take the trouble of a twenty miles journey to meet her husband who would be at home upon the following evening.

"Why, mother! Foolish to fly to meet my dear husband who is so unhappy with you, and so anxious to have me with him! How can you ever say mother, dear?" prattled the little wife of a half year, fastening the clasp of a dainty little glove about her slender, snowy wrist.

"I think it is very foolish, Estella, for you to start for Springfield on the evening train to meet Edmond when he is not expected to arrive in New York, and in that case you would arrive in Springfield at 8:30 o'clock in the evening alone, with no one to meet you and escort you to a hotel.

"What will you do if he does not come in on the 6 o'clock train from New York?" Mrs. Cameron laughed as she replied.

"What shall I do? Go straight to his hotel and wait there for him until he has come. Think how delighted he will be to see me! You know how much he has loved me the hours seemed never so long as when he was away from me."

"Very well, do as you like! But when you've lived in the world as long as I have you will have learned that a man always pretends the most love when he is the least. If I were in your place I should mind for as likely as not he'll console himself with the smiles of some other beauty to make up for the loss of yours."

"But you said that half way air, no official reason as to one would like to do the speaker means nor how long she had been married. Mrs. Cameron's pretty young face crimsoned as she answered quickly.

"Only that Edmond is your son I left the horse for the station."

"Big words of her mother-in-law kept coming, to her mind all the way down the rail, as words will do, until, when the train made its first pause, she was really getting uncomfortable at heart."

"A gentleman and lady entered the car at this station, and as they passed her she saw the other end of the car, Mrs. Estella Cameron thought how like her own husband this gentleman carried his head and shoulders."

"About Edmond's size, too," she thought. "Two-thirds of the way down the car the gentleman found a seat for the lady and himself, and Estella thought the lovely young creature must be a bride, her face was so perfectly radiant with some unspoken joy."

"And on the way to the next station, Estella amused herself with watching the love-making going on between the pair. 'I've somebody waiting to love me,' she sighed, soily to herself, as the twilight gathered, and she thought of the arrival at Springfield alone, and somehow she was so brave as she had been in her parlors, talking about the journey."

"The train stopped, and two gentlemen in the seat ahead of Estella were talking in the low tones of the young couple's first mention."

"I don't blame the man for being in love with a face so sweet as that, but I do blame him for the wrong he is doing the sweet little wife in W—"

"Ah! then the gentleman in a resolute voice of your town!" asked the other.

"Yes, a young lawyer of first-rate reputation. He was called to New York on a law case last week, and his wife told me this afternoon that he was expected home to-morrow."

"Indeed! And I fancy that the devoted wife is awaiting his return with the greatest impatience. I must say, Blake, that some of our sex are perfectly cruel in those respects."

"But this man's wife couldn't be content to wait until another day passed before she saw her husband. She came on the train to-night, expecting to meet the false one at Springfield," replied the other.

"Estella's breath came in quick low sobs, and she was glad when the train moved on. 'What should she do?'"

"If only the man would turn his face toward her, that she might know that he was Edmond."

death. Then she went up to the room given to the guilty pair.

Entering without ceremony, she stood before the gentleman, while the other lady clung to his arm.

"Oh, Edmond! How could you break my heart?"

"There was a stir without the door, and a rush of feet along the wall, and before the bewildered wife could understand it all, the officers had the fine gentleman handcuffed and in their custody."

"They were leading him away, when Estella sprang forward crying: 'He is my husband! I will go with him! And in the name of the remembrance of the officers the little wife followed the party down the stairs into the lower hall. A party just arrived at the hotel, having come in on the 6 o'clock train from New York."

Estella saw through her tears a tall, stern form, and heard like dream words the cry: 'You here, Estella! My wife!'"

"It was all over for poor Estella then, and she lay fainting against the broad breast of her own true husband, who had just then arrived from New York."

"A few words were spoken and the prisoner served to explain all."

"The officers dragged him along the hall to the street door, and Edmond Cameron went with his wife to a pleasant room, where everything was explained."

"After she had told him all about her sudden impulse to come to meet him, and the sad journey, with its strange ending, when he was away from me."

"Mrs. Cameron, the sister, gave her lace handkerchief a spiteful firt as she thought how utterly her stylish daughter-in-law disregarded her advice, and by way of retaliation replied:

"But you are glad to see me, Edmond?" "I am glad you are here, darling, but sorry for all the trouble the journey has caused you. My little girl must be more careful in future," he answered, gravely.

"And after all, Mrs. Cameron did not so very much regret the journey she had taken now just how much she should feel if Edmond were really lost to her or loved another."

"She knew all the bitterness of believing herself wronged and unloved, and only by the contrast of her present happiness did she fully realize what might have been."

"But she never ventured to go by rail, alone at evening, to meet a husband who knew nothing of her coming."

"She planned other surprises for him in future."

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