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[CONTINUED.] 1 1 di CHAPTER XII.

A MOTHER'S DILEMMA. Canon Valentine had intended to stop at Venice. He stopped just two days, and then, to Kathleen's secret joy and no small relief, bronchitis seized him. That stern nonitor hurried him off incontinently to Florence.

'I'm sorry, Mrs. Hesslegrave,'' he said. "I can't tell you how sorry. I'd looked forward to seeing everything in this charming place under your daughter's guidance - she's a capital cicerone, I must say, your daughter. We did so enby going round the Grand canal with her day before yesterday. It's so delightful to see all these beautiful things in company with an artist! But the damp of the lagoons is really too much for my poor old throat. We're given to throat trouble, you see. It's common to my cloth, and as I went along with Miss Hesslegrave to the academy yesterday in an open gondola I felt the cold air rise up bodily from the canal and catch hold of me and throttle me. It took me just so by the larynx, like a hand, and seemed to choke me instantly. 'Amelia,' said I at the time, 'this chilly air has done for me.' And, sure enough, woke in the night with a tickle, tickle, tickle in my bronchial tubes, which I know means mischief. When once that sets in, there's nothing for it but to leave the place where you are immediately. Change the air without delay, that's the one safe remedy. And indeed, to tell you the truth, Venice is so spoilted, so utterly spoiled, since the Austrians left it that, except for you and Miss Hesslegrave, I must confess I shan't be sorry to get out of it. Most insanitary town, I call it most insanitary in every way."

Kathleen could hardly even pretend to regret their departure. During the last two days she had lived in instant dread that the canon would somehow knock up against Arnold Willoughby. And if the truth must be told it was the very same dread on the canon's part, not bronchitis alone, that was driving him to Florence. For as they stood on the balcony of the doges' palace the day before, looking out upon the Riva and the busy quays and the panorama of the harbor, Canon Valentine beheld a man's back in the distance, rounding the corner by Danieli's, and he said to himself with a shudder, "Axminster's back or the devil's!" Being an old fashioned clergyman, the canon, you will perceive, was not afraid of a very mild unparliamentary expression. And the more convinced he became that the mysterious person thus flitting about Venice was really Lord Axminster the more desirous did he grow to avoid the misfortune of actually meeting him, for if they met face to face and caught one another's eyes the canon hardly knew how for very shame he could let Algy go on with his claim of right without informing him-which he was loath to do-that his cousin Bertie had never been drowned at all, but had been sighted in the flesh and in sailor costume in the city of Venice.

There are compromises we all make now Now, the canon was quite willing to give Algy and his wife the benefit of the doubt as long as he felt only just morally certain that the person in the street with the trick of twisting his back hair was the last Lord Axminster. But if they met face to face and he recognized his man without doubt, as he felt sure he must do when they came to close quarters, then the canon felt in his heart he could no longer retain any grain of self respect if he permit-ted the claim to be pushed through the house of lords without even mentioning what he had seen to Algy. He might have kept silence indeed and let self respect take its chance if he met the man alone, but what on earth could he do if he met him full front while out walking with Amelia? That was the question. And I may remark parenthetically that most men feel keenly this necessity for preserving their self respect before the face of their wives, which is a very important ally indeed to the cause of all the virtues.

So on the third morning of his stay the canon left Venice. Kathleen breathed freer as soon as he was gone. The load of that gnawing anxiety was much lightened

That very same day, as it chanced, Ar old Willoughby, reflecting to himself in his own room, made his mind up suddenly to step round in the afternoon and have a word or two with Kathleen. Ever since that morning when they picnicked at the Lido he had been debating with himself whether or not he should ask that beautiful soul to marry him, and now his mind was made up. He could resist no longer. He had decided that very day to break the ice and ask her. He was quite sure she liked him-liked him very, very much. That she showed unequivocally, and he had waited so long only because he could not muster up courage to speak to her. Would it be right of him, he asked himself, to expect that any woman should share such fortunes as his would hence. forth be? Was he justified in begging any woman to wait till an obscure young painter could earn money enough to keep ner in the comfort and luxury to which

she had been accustomed? He put that question to himself serious-, and he answered it in the affirmative. If he had really been always the Arnold Willoughby he had now made himself by his own act, he need never have doubted. Any young man just starting in life would have thought himself justified in asking the girl he loved best in the world to wait for him till he was in a position to marry her. Why should he not do what any other man might do lawfully? He had cast the past behind him. He was a painter sailor now, but why need he hesitate on that account to ask the girl whose love he believed he had won on his own merits if she would wait till he could marry her? Arnold Willoughby would have done it,

and he was Arnold Willoughby. So about 3 o'clock he went round, somewhat tremulous, in the direction of the Pi-He hadn't seen Kathleen for a day She had told him friends would be visiting them without mentioning their name, and she had given herself a holiday while the friends were with her from her accustomed work on the Fondamenta delle

When he got to the door, Francesca, who opened it, told him with a sunny display of two rows of white teeth that the signorina was out, but the signora was at home, if he would care to see her.

Much disappointed, Arnold went up, anxious to learn whether any chance still remained that later in the afternoon he might have a word or two with Kathleen. To his immense surprise, the moment he entered Mrs. Hesslegrave rose from her seat with obvious warmth and held out her hand to greet him in her most gracious manner. Arnold had noticed by this time the seven distinct gradations of cordiality with which Mrs. Hesslegrave was accustomed to receive her various guests in accordance with their respective and relative positions in the table of precedence as by authority established. This afternoon, therefore, he couldn't help observing her manner was that with which she was wont to welcome peers of the realm and foreign embassadors. To say the truth, Mrs. Hesslegrave considerably overdid it in the matter of graciousness. There was an inartistic abruptness in her sudden change of front, a practical inconsistency in her view of his status which couldn't fail to strike him. The instant way in which Mrs. Hesslegrave, who had hitherto taken little pains to conceal her dislike and distrust of the

dreadful sailorman, flung herself visibly at

his head made Arnold at once suspect some radical revolution must have taken place meanwhile in her views as to his position. "Why, Mr. Willoughby," she cried, holding his hand in her own much longer than was strictly necessary for the purpose of shaking it, "what a stranger you are, to be sure! You never come near us now. It's really quite unfriendly of you. Katheen was saying this morning we must write round to your chambers and ask you to dine with us. And she hasn't seen you for the last day or two on the Xattere either! Poor child, she's been so occupied! We've had some friends here who've been taking up all our time. Kitty's been out in a gondola all day long with them. However, that's all over, and she hopes to get to work again on the quay tomorrow—she's so anxious to go on with her spire and canal. Wrapped up in her art, dear girl. You know it's all she lives for. However, she'll be back at it, I'm glad to say, at the old place in the morning. Our friends are just gone-couldn't stand the climate-said it gave them sore throats-and Kathleen's gone off to say goodby to them at the station."

"That's fortunate," Arnold answered a little stiffly, feeling somehow a dim consciousness that against his will he was once more a lord and lapsing for the moment into his bad habit of society small talk, for the lights on the canal have been lovely the last three days, and I've regretted so much Miss Hesslegrave should have

missed them."
"Not more than she has, I'm sure," Mrs. Hesslegrave went on quite archly, with her blandest smile-"Mother's society smirk," as that irreverent boy Reggie was wont to term it. "I don't know why, I'm sure, Mr. Willoughby, but Kathleen has enjoyand again with our consciences, and there and spring a great deal more than she ever that quick countenance betrayed to the are points where we feel the attempt at before enjoyed it. It's been a perfect treat o her. She says she can't bear to be away for one day from the dear old San Trovaso. She just loves her work, and I assure you she seemed almost sentimentally sad because these friends who've been stopping with us kept her away so long from her beloved picture and from her fellow artists," Mrs. Hesslegrave added after a pause in some little trepidation, uncertain whether that last phrase might not go just

one step too far in the right direction. Arnold Willoughby eyed her closely All his dearest suspicions were being fast aroused. He began to tremble in his heart lest somebody had managed to pierce the close disguise with which he had so carefully and so long surrounded himself.

"Will Miss Hesslegrave be back by and by?" he asked in a coldly official tone.
"Because if she will I should like to stop and see her.

Mrs. Hesslegrave jumped at the chance with unwise avidity. This was the very first time, in fact, that Arnold Willoughby had ever asked to see her daughter in so many words. She scented a proposal. "Oh, yes," she answered, acquiescent, with obvious eagerness, though she plumed herself inwardly as she spoke upon her own bland ingenuity, "Kathleen will be back by and by from the station and will be delighted to see you. I know there's some point in that last year's picture she's touching up that she said she wanted to her forehead in her confusion. She would engaged to an at home at dear Lady Devonport's, but I dare say Kathleen can give you a cup of tea here, and no doubt you and she can make yourselves happy to-

She beamed as she said it. The appointment with Lady Devonport was a myth, to be sure, but Mrs. Hesslegrave thought it would be wise, under the circumstances, to leave the young people alone with one another. Arnold Willoughby's suspicions grew deeper and deeper. Mrs. Hesslegrave was one of those transparent people whose little deceptions are painfully obvious. He could see at half a glance something must have occurred which gave her all at once a much more favorable view of him. He measured her doubtfully with his eye. Mrs. Hesslegrave in return showered her sweetest smile upon him. She was all obsequiousness. Then she began to talk with ostentatious motherly pride about Kathleen. She was such a good girl! Few mothers had a comfort like that in their daughters. The only thing Mrs. Hesslegrave couldn't bear was the distressing thought that sooner or later Kathleen must some day leave her. That would be a trial. But there, no mother can expect to keep her daughter always by her side. It would be selfish, wouldn't it? And Kathleen was adapted to make a good man so supremely happy. And then Mrs. Hesslegrave, leaning forward in her chair, grew almost confidential. Had Mr. Willoughby noticed that Mr. Mortimer, the rich young American, thought so much of Kathleen? Well, he certainly did. He quite haunted the house, though Mrs. Hesslegrave believed in her heart of hearts Kathleen didn't really care one bit for him. And she was a girl of such high principle—such very high principle! Unless she truly loved a was fascinated, absorbed in him— out, "Kathleen told me I wasn't on any she never would marry him, though he account to mention a word of all this to

were as rich as Croesus. Kathleen meant to come back by the Zattere, she believed, and she knew Mr. Mortimer would be waiting there to see her. He always hung about and waited to see her everywhere, but Kathleen was such a romantic, poetical minded girl! She would rather take the man of her choice, Mrs. Hesslegrave believed, with an impressive nod of the coffee colored Honiton headdress, than marry the heir to all the estates in England if he didn't happen to please her fancy. As she maundered on, floundering fur-

ther into the mire each moment, Arnold Willoughby's conviction that something had gone wrong grew deeper and deeper with every sentence. He shuffled uneasily on his chair. For the first time since he had practically ceased to be an earl he saw a British mamma quite obviously paying court to him. He would have liked reminded him of the days when adulation was his bane. More still, it jarred against his sense of maternal dignity. But he couldn't go somehow. Now the doubt was once aroused, he must wait at least till Kathleen returned, that he might see her and be rid of it. Yet all this strange dangling of inartistically wrought flies before the victim's eye was disagreeably familiar to him. He had heard a round dozen of Mayfield mammas talk so to him of their daughters and always in the same pretended confidential strain when he was an earl and a catch in London society, though he confessed to himself with a shudder that he had never yet heard anybody do it quite so fatuously, transparentand woodenly as Kathleen's mother, She, poor soul, went on with bland self satisfaction, convinced in her own soul she was making the running for Kathleen in the most masterly fashion and utterly unaware of the disgust she was rousing in Arnold Willoughby's distracted bosom. At last Arnold's suspicions could no slegrave probed the more firmly convinced



You may say goodby for me to Miss Hesslegrave."

how surprised his most inmost secret and was trying all she knew to capture him for Kathleen, and trying most inaptly. This sudden change of front from her attitude of sullen nonrecognition to one of ardent sycophancy roused all his bitterest and most cynical feelings. Was this day dream, then, doomed to fade as his earlier one had faded? Was Kathleen, the sweet Kathleen he had invested to himself in his fervid fancy with all the innocent virtues, to crush his heart a second time as Lady Sark had once crushed it? Was she, too, a self seeker? Did she know who he was and what title he bore? Was she allowing him to make love to her for his moneysuch as it was-and his earldom?

With a sudden resolve he determined to out the question to the proof forthwith. He knew Mrs. Hesslegrave well enough to know she could never control her face or observer. So at a pause in the conversation, when Mrs. Hesslegrave was just engaged in wondering to herself what would be a good fresh subject to start next with an earl in disguise whom you desired to captivate, Arnold turned round to her sharply and asked, with a rapid

sweep, which fairly took her off her guard: "Have you seen the English papers? Do you know what's being done in this Axminster peerage case?"

It was a bold stroke of policy, but it committed him to nothing, for the subject was a common, one and it was justified by the result. Mrs. Hesslegrave, full herself of this very theme, looked up at him in astonishment, hardly knowing how to take it. She gave a little start and trembled quite visibly. In her perplexity, indeed, she clapped her hand to her mouth as one will often do when the last subject on earth one expected to hear broached is suddenly sprung upon one. The movement was unmistakable. So was the frightened and hesitating way in which Mrs. Hesslegrave responded as quickly as she could:

"Oh, yes—that is to say, no—well, we haven't seen much about it, but-the young man's dead, of course-or do you think he's living-I mean-well, really it's so difficult, don't you know, in such a perplexing case to make one's mind up

consult you about if possible. I shall have have given £10 that moment to have Kathleen by her side to prompt and instruct her. Arnold Willoughby preserved a face of sphinxlike indifference. How dreadful that he should have broached to her that difficult and dangerous subject! What would Kathleen wish her to do? Ought she to pretend to ignore it all, or did he mean her to recognize him? "Is he dead or living? Which do you

think?" Arnold asked again, gazing hard at her Mrs. Hesslegrave quailed. It was a trying moment. People oughtn't to lay such

traps for poor innocent old women, whose only desire, after all, is the perfectly natural one to see their daughters well and creditably married. She looked back at her questioner with a very frightened air. "Well, of course you know," she faltered out, with a glimmering perception of the fact that she was irrevocably committing herself to a dangerous position, "if it

comes to that, you must know better than any one." "Why so?" Arnold Willoughby persisted. He wasn't going to say a word either way to compromise his own incognito, but he was determined to find out just exactly how much Mrs. Hesslegrave knew about the matter of his identity.

Mrs. Hesslegrave gazed up at him with tears rising fast in her poor puzzled eyes. "Oh, what shall I do?" she cried, wringing her hands in her misery and perplexi-"How cruel you are to try me so! What ought I to answer? I'm afraid Kathleen will be so dreadfully angry with

"Why angry?" Arnold Willoughby asked once more, his heart growing like a stone within him as he spoke. Then the worst was true. This was a deliberate conspir-"Because," Mrs. Hesslegrave blurted

you or to anybody. She told me that was imperative. She said it would spoil allthose were her very words. She said it would spoil all, and she begged me not to mention it. And now I'm afraid I have spoiled all. Oh, Mr. Willoughby—Lord Axminster, I mean-for heaven's sake don't be angry with me! Don't say I've spoiled all! Don't say so! Don't reproach

"That you certainly have," Arnold answered, with disdain, growing colder and visibly colder each moment. "You've spoiled more than you know-two lives that might otherwise perhaps have been happy. And yet—it's best so. Better wake up to it now than wake up to it afterward. Miss Hesslegrave has been less wise and circumspect in this matter, though, than in the rest of her conduct. She took me in completely. And if she hadn't been to go indeed; this queer talk made him feel so awkward and uncomfortable. It and suspicions to you, why, she might very likely have taken me in forever. As it is, this eclaircissement has come in good time. No harm has yet been done. No word has yet passed. An hour or two later the result, I dare say, might have been far more

"She didn't tell me," Mrs. Hesslegrave burst out, anxious now the worst had come to make things easier for Kathleen and to retrieve her failure. "It wasn't she who told me. I found it out for myself-that is, through somebody else". "Found out what?" Arnold asked cold-

ly, fixing his eye upon hers with a stony Mrs. Hesslegrave looked away from him in abject terror. That glance of his froze

"Why, found out that you were Lord Axminster," she answered, with one burst, not knowing what to make of him. "She knew it all along, you know, but she never told me or betrayed your secret. She never even mentioned it to me, her mother. She kept it quite faithfully. She was ever onger be concealed. The deeper Mrs. Hes- so wise about it. I couldn't imagine why she-well, took so much prince of a man supposed to be nothing but a common sailor, and it was only yesterday or the day before I discovered by accident she had known it all along and had recognized the born gentleman under all disguises."

Mrs. Hesslegrave thought that last was trump card to play on Kathleen's behalf. But Arnold Willoughby arose.

"Well, you may tell Miss Hesslegrave." he said stiffly, "that if she thought she was going to marry an English earl and live like a countess she was very much mistaken. That was wholly an error. The man who loved her till 10 minutes agothe man she seemed to love—the man who. thinking she loved him, came here to ask for her hand this afternoon and whom she would no doubt have accepted under that painful misapprehension—is and means to remain a common sailor. She has made a mistake, that's all. She has miscalculated her chances. It's fortunate, on the whole, that mistake and miscalculation have gone onfurther. If I had married her under the misapprehension which seems to have occurred, she might have had in the end a very bitter awakening. Such a misfortune has been averted by your lucky indiscretion. You may say goodby for me to Miss Hesslegrave when she returns. It is not my intention now to remain any longer in Venice."

'But you'll stop and see Kathleen?' Mrs. Hesslegrave exclaimed, awestruck. "No, thank you," Arnold answered, taking his hat in his hand. "What you tell me is quite enough. It is my earnest wish after the error that has occurred never as long as I live to set eyes on her again. You may give her that message. You have indeed spoiled all. It is she herself who said

> CHAPTER XIII. A MISSING LOVER.

'Twas in bitter disappointment that Ar- gie asking for money, have you?" nold Willoughby strode away from the Hesslegraves' door that afternoon in Ven- I had," she answered, sobbing For the second time in his life his day dream had vanished. And the new bubble had burst even more painfully than the old one. He was young, he said to himself, when he fell in love with Blanche Middleton. With a boy's simplicity he mistook the mere blushing awkwardness and uncertainty of the ingenue for innocence of mind and purity of purpose. He had a rude awakening when he saw Lady Sark sell herself for money and title and develop into one of the vainest and showiest among the heartless clans of professional beauties. But this time, he had said to his own heart, he was older and wiser. No such hasty mistake for him nowadays! He knew the difference now between the awkward bashfulness of the frightened schoolgirl and the pure white integrity of a noble minded woman. Bit by bit Kathleen Hesslegrave had won back the soured misogynist to a belief in her sex, in its goodness, in its unselfishness, in its nobility of nature. He knew she could have married Rufus Mortimer if she wished, but he believed she had refused him for the penniless sailor's sake. It was because he believed her capable of real disinterested affection like that that he had fallen in love with Kathleen Hesslegrave. And now what a disillusion! He found he had been mistaken in her from the very beginning. The woman whom he had thought so far raised above her fellows that she could love a struggling artist without past, without future, for his own sake alone, turned out after all to be an intriguer more calculating and more deceitful in her way than Lady Sark herself

had been. Kathleen must have known from the beginning that the man whose advances she had accepted with so much blushing uncertainty and with such pretty coyness was really Lord Axminster. She had been saying those sweet things about respecting him so much and not caring for rank or wealth or position because she thought that was the way that would lead the effort and drew slowly from the relucher to a coronet. With incredible cunning and deceptiveness she had managed to hide from him her knowledge of his original position and to assume a sort of instinctive shrinking from his lowly calling, which she allowed her love and respect to overcome, as it were, quite visibly before his eyes with consummate cleverness. As a piece of fine acting in real life it was nothing short of admirable. If that girl were to go upon the stage, now, Arnold said to himself bitterly, she would make her fortune. Those modest side glances, those dexterously summoned blushes, that timid demeanor at first, giving way with fuller acquaintance to an uncontrollable affection, so strong that it compelled her,

against her will, as it seemed, to overlook the prejudice of birth and to forget the immense gulf in artificial position—oh, as Axminster. I must go and tell him so!" acting it was marvelous. But to think it was only that! Arnold Willoughby's brain reeled. Ah, why could he never cast this birthright of false adulation and vile sycophancy behind him? Why could he never that man, too, a common sailor, but it stand out before the world on his merits was dreadful also that Kathleen should as a man and be accepted or rejected for himself alone without the intervention of this perpetual reference to his artificial

value and his place in the peerage?

And the secrecy of it too! The basenes The privy planning and plotting! Why this woman whom he imagined all frankness and candor, with a heart as straight-

forward as that open, brave face of hers, had concocted this vile trap to catch a coronet unawares, all by herself, unaided, and had concealed her inmost thoughts from her own mother even. There was a cold blooded deliberateness about it all in a lover's fever and with a lover's fervor, saying to himself as he crossed the threshold: "There is none like her, none. I shall ask her this very day. I could risk my life for her with joy. I could stake my existence on her goodness and purity!"

And now he came out of it coldly numb and critical. He hated to think he had been so readily deceived by a clever woman's wiles. He hated and despised himself. Never again while he lived would he trust a single one of them. Their most innocent smile hides their blackest treach-

It's a way men have when they're out of conceit for a time with their wives or their sweethearts.

As for poor Mrs. Hesslegrave, the unoffending cause of all this lamentable misapprehension, she sat by herself, meanwhile wringing her hands in impotent despair in her own drawing room and wondering when Kathleen would come in to comfort her. Each minute seemed an hour. What could be keeping Kathleen? As a rule, the dear child came back so soon from such errands as this to her beloved work, for Kathleen was never so happy as when painting or sketching, and she wrought with a will, both for love's sake and for money's. But today she was somehow unaccountably delayed. Her stars were unpropitious, and the real cause of the delay, as fate would have it, was one our lives all hinge. She had gone round on her way home by the Fondamenta delle Zattere as a woman in love will do, expectng to find Arnold Willoughby at work on his canvas there and hoping to seem as if mere accident had brought her back to the place she had abandoned during the Valentines' visit. Three days was so long a time to go without seeing Arnold! But instead of finding him she had fallen in with Rufus Mortimer engaged upon his christening scene, and Mortimer, guessing her object, and generously anxious, as was his nature, to aid her in her love affair, had kept her talking long in front of the picture he was painting under the belief that Arnold would shortly turn up, and that he was doing her a kindness by thus making her presence there seem more natural and less open to misconstruction. Yet, as often happens in this world of mischances, Mortimer's very anxiety to help her defeated his own purpose. It was the kind hearted young American's fate in life to do as much harm by his well intentioned efforts as many worse natures do by their

deliberate malice. Into this unconscious trap Kathleen fell readily enough and waited on as long as she could in the vain hope that Arnold Willoughby would turn up sooner or later. But when at last it seemed clear that he was taking an afternoon off and wouldn't be there at all she accepted Mortimer's offer of a lift home in his gondola, and having wasted her day hopelessly by this time went in on her way back to fulfill a few small commissions at shops in the Calle du Moise, which still further delayed ner return to her mother's.

When she reached home and went up stairs, she was astonished to find Mrs. Hesslegrave rocking herself up and down distractedly in her chair, and the yellow honiton headdress in a last stage of disorder, which betokened a long spell of very rigorous misery.
"Why, mother, dear," she cried in alarm,

what has happened since I went out? You haven't had another letter from Reg-

Mrs. Hesslegrave broke down. "I wish it was only that! I wish it was Reggie! Oh, Kitty, Kitty, Kitty, how am I ever to tell you? He's been here since you went out, and you'll never, never forgive me!" "He's been here?" Kathleen repeated, not knowing what her mother could mean. 'Reggie's been here? Today? Not at this house-in Venice!"

"No, no, no, not Reggie," Mrs. Hesslegrave answered, rocking herself up and down still more vigorously than before. "Mr. Willoughby-Lord Axminster!" In a second the color fled from Kath-

leen's cheek as if by magic. Her heart grew cold. She trembled all over. "Mr. Willoughby!" she cried, clasping her bloodless hands. Every nerve in he body quivered. Never till that moment did she know how far her love had carried

"Oh, mother, what did you say? What did he do? What has happened?" "He's gone!" Mrs. Hesslegrave cried feebly, wringing her hands in her distress. 'He's gone for good and all! He told me o say goodby to you."

"Goodby!" Kathleen echoed, horrorstruck. "Goodby! Oh, mother! Where's he going then? What can it mean? This very sudden!" "I don't know," Mrs. Hesslegrave an-

swered, bursting afresh into tears, "but he said I spoiled all. He said so more than once, and he told me it was you yourself who said so."

For a minute or two Kathleen was too agitated even to inquire in any intelligent way what exactly had happened. Just at first all she knew was a vague consciousness of fate, a sense that some terrible blow had fallen upon her. Her mother had committed some fatal indiscretion, and Arnold was gone-gone without an explanation! But slowly, as she thought of it all, it began to dawn upon her what must have happened. With a fearful shrinking at heart she hardened herself for tant and penitent Mrs. Hesslegrave a full and complete confession of her share in the misfortune. Bit by bit Mrs. Hesslegrave allowed the whole painful and humiliating scene to be wrung out of her piecemeal. As soon as she had finished Kathleen stood up and faced her. She did not reproach her mother—the wound had gone too deep by far for reproach-but her very silence was more terrible to Mrs. Hessle grave than any number of reproaches.

"I must go, mother," she cried, breaking away from her like some wild and wounded creature-"I must go at once and see him. This cruel misapprehension is more than I can endure. I didn't know who he was till Canon Valentine told us. I fell in love with him for himself as a common sailor. I never knew he was Lord

Mrs. Hesslegrave's sense of propriety was severely outraged. Not only was it dreadful to think that a young lady could have fallen in love with a man unasked, and dream of going to see him in person instead of writing to explain to him and asking him to call round for the further clearing up of this painful entanglement.

"Oh, my dear," she cried, drawing back, "you're not surely going to call for him! It would look so bad! Do you think it yould be right? Do you think it would

be womanly? "Yes, I do," Kathleen answered, with unwonted boldness. "Right and womanly to the last degree. Most right and most

womanly. Mother, dear, I don't blame you. You did what you thought best in which disgusted and disillusioned Arnold my interest, as you imagined, but you Willoughby on the first blush of it. He have left him under a cruel misappreherhad gone into that house that afternoon sion of my character and motives—a misapprehension that would be dreadful for me to bear with any one, but ten thousand times worse with a nature like Ar-nold Willoughby's, and I can't sit down under it. I can't rest till I've seen him and told him how utterly mistaken he is about me. There's no turning back now. I must and shall see him!"

And in her own heart she said to herself a great deal more than that—"I must and shall marry him."

So with face on fire and eager steps that never paused she rushed hotly down the stairs and out into the Piazza. The pigeons crowded round her as if nothing had happened. Thence she took the narrow lane that led most directly by many bridges to the little salt fish shop and went to make her first call on the man of her choice at his own lodgings. Little Cecca was at the door playing

with a big new doll. She looked up with a smile at the beautiful lady, whom she recognized as the person she had seen out walking one day with "our Inglese.

"Is the signor at home?" Kathleen asked, too deeply moved to return the child's smile, yet touching her golden head gently.

The little one looked up at her again with all the saucy southern confidingness. "No, he isn't," she answered, dimpling. "The signor's gone away. But he gave me 2 lire before he went, don't you see, of those petty circumstances upon which and I bought this pretty doll with it at Neighbor Giacomo's. Isn't it a pretty one? And it cost all 2 lire."

"Gone away?" Kathleen echoed, a cold

thrill coming over her. "Gone away? Not

The child nodded and puffed out her lips. "Si, si," she said, "from Venice." And then she went on singing in her childish nursery rhyme:

"Vate a far una barca o una batela; Co ti l'a fata, butila in mar;

La ti condurra in Venezia bela. "But he hasn't done that," she added in her babylike prattle. "He's taken his boat and gone away from Venice, away from Venice, from Venezia bela, right away, right away from Venezia bela."

Kathleen stood for a moment, reeling. The child's words answered her. She had hard work to restrain herself from fainting then and there. A terrible weakness seemed to break over her suddenly. Gone, and with that fatal misapprehension on his mind! Oh, it was too, too cruel! She staggerd into the shop. With an effort she burst out: "The signor, your lodger-the Inglese

Signor Willoughby?" A large, young woman of the florid Ve-

netian type, broad of face and yellow of hair, like a vulgarized Titian, was sitting behind the counter knitting away at a colored headdress., She nodded and looked grave. Like all Italians, she instantly suspected a love tragedy of the kind with which she herself was familiar.

"Is gone," she assented in a really sympathetic tone. "Si, si, is gone, signora The little one says the truth. Is gone this ery evening.

"But where?" Kathleen cried, refraining with a struggle from wringing her poor hands and repressing the rising pefore the stranger's face with visible difficulty.

The bountiful looking Italian woman spread her hands open by her side with a demonstrative air. "Who knows?" she answered placidly. "Tis the way with these seafarers. A hella ragazza in every port, they say—one here, one there, one in Venice, one in London, and perhaps, for all we know, one in Buenos Ayres, Calcutta Rio-but he may write to you, signoral He may come back again to Italy!'

Kathleen shook her head sadly. Much as the woman misunderstood the situation, reading into it the ideas and habits of her own class and country, Kathleen felt she meant to be kind and was grateful for even that mechanical kindness at such a terrible moment.
"He will not return," she answered de-

spairingly, with a terrible quiver in her voice. "But it wasn't that I wanted. I wanted to speak with him before he went and-to clear up a misconception. Which way has he gone, do you know? By sea or by land, the port or the railway station?" There was time even yet, for at that mo-

ment, as it chanced, Arnold Willoughby was still engaged in registering his inggage for Genoa, whence he hoped to get employment on some homeward bound steamer. And if the woman had told the truth much trouble would have been averted. But truth is an article of luxury in Italy. The vulgarized Titian looked at Kathleen searchingly, yet with a pitying

"Oh, he's gone," she answered, nodding her head, "he's gone altogether. He got out his box and his pictures quite suddenly just now, and our Pietro rowed him off to a steamer in the harbor. And I saw the steamer sail. She's at the Lido by this time. But he'll write, he'll write, make sure! Don't take it to heart, signora." Kathleen pressed her hand to her bosom to still its throbbing and went forth into the street. All was black as night for

her. She staggered home in a maze. Her



"He will not return," she answered. head reeled unspeakably. But as soon as she was gone the woman turned to a man who lounged among the packing cases at the back of the shop with a smile of tri-

"He was a good fellow," she said, with the southern tolerance, "and I wasn't going to tell her he'd gone by the train to Genoa. Not likely I would! You know what she wanted? She would have stuck a knife into him. I saw it in hereye, and, aha, I prevented it! But sailors will be sailors, and Signor Villabi, say I, was always a pleasant one. Why should I wish him harm? He liked little Cecca and paid