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RUTH RAY'S CONFESSION.

CHAPTER II.

"Come out of the shadows, Letty, and dry your eyes," said Ruth. "See, mine are dry."

"Oh Ruth!" I sobbed as I crept shivering to the rug at her feet. "It is not true; Dr. Baylis is mistaken. I cannot believe it."

Her hand rested fondly on my bowed head for an instant ere she answered.

"If Dr. Baylis could be mistaken, I could not, Letty. I have known this for months."

I dried the tears from my eyes the better to look up at her.

"You have known it?" I repeated. "How could you have known it? You do not look very ill even now."

"No; I shall not look 'very ill,' I expect, when I lie in my coffin. For a while after people will go on wondering what it could be that killed me so suddenly in the flush of my youth; but the comfort is, Letty, they will none of them guess that; no, not even my husband."

She spoke softly, more to herself than to me. She seemed to be thinking deeply of some matter as she sat there, her fingers tightly locked together, gazing intently into the blazing coals, utterly forgetful of me and of my sorrow.

On the very day of his return Rupert Ray brought a physician, a man famed in his profession and out of it, to see his wife. Ruth, looking in the great man's face with her clear eyes untroubled, bade him tell her openly his opinion of her case.

"It will not shock me," she said to him, simply, "whatever it may be. I only want to hear the truth. Let me hear the whole truth, if you please."

The whole truth was that she was dying.

How her husband bore the blow I neither knew nor asked. His voice, as I heard him bid Dr. Baylis "Good bye" in the hall, was firm and clear as it had ever been. When the carriage had rolled away, I still listening, heard his study door sharply locked, and then all was silent. To me the news was like the wrenching asunder of my own heart-