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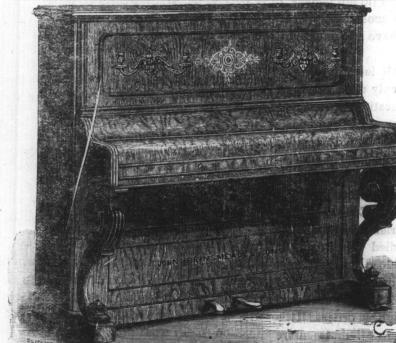
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By the Author of Dora Thorne. CHAPTER XXIII.

(Continued.)

She took her place in the train, still feeling ike one in a dream, and then, as it sped on through the sweet, soft, dewy night, her ideas all became clear to her. She would go and live at Walton as companion to Miss Cameron. and she would not let any one know her whereabouts. People had kept secrets from her;

even Lord Rylestone himself. 'If he had trusted me with the secret,' she said to herself, 'I should not have to find i

she in her turn would keep hers from others.

No one should know what she was doing-not

out now for myself.' Of after consequences she never thought that there was anything mean or dishonorable in the plan she proposed never occurred to her. It would have occurred to Adelaide Cameron at once. She would not have done such a thing to save her life. And herein lay the dif-

ference between the two women.

Adelaide had a noble, passionate sense o honor; Margarita had the keenest and most passisnate love; Margarita would have moved heaven and earth, would have scaled the steepest heights, would have gone to the lowest depths, for her love's sake; while for her love's sake Adelaide Cameron would not have left the clear sunshine.

No idea of treachery or meanness occurred to Margarita. Her husband, whom she loved with such passionate love, had a secret which he shared with another, and not with her. For her love's sake she must find it out. The grand, broad, generous faith to believe all and trust all was wanting in her-the noble love to trust even without understanding. She would have braved torture and death to know what wait until her husband should tell her. Nor was it curiosity that prompted her; it was nothing but love of him.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE two servants looked with something ike wonder at the beautiful restless face of their mistress when she reached home. It was as though years of terrible suspense and terrible anxiety had passed over her. She look ed like one whose thoughts were so entirely concentrated on one subject that naught else could distract her. She was asked respectfully enough if she was ill, and the answer was a puzzled 'No.' She could not tell whether she was ill or not. Her brain was slightly dazed, the one paramount idea eclipsed and absorbed all others. She was going to Walton, and would see the will.

It took her some days to accustom herself to her new project. Sleeping or waking, the thought of it was always before her. She grew thin and worn. She looked as if the pain of a great and secret trouble was gnawing at the very core of her heart. As the fierce fever burned away - as the dull red mists seemed to clear from her brain-she began to wonder how she should accomplish her plan. It was no selfish motive that actuated her-no mean curiosity-no hope of doing herself any service -no thought that she might in the future he the richer for it. It was all for love of Allan. He was shadowed by some terrible cloud-she longed to clear it away; he was caught in a web of circumstances-she longed to free him. He had lost his fortune and with it all hope of maintaining his posi tion; she wanted to know how and why he had lost it, and whether her woman's wit could not find a way of giving it back to him. She wanted to find out if there was a flaw in the cruel will-something that would invalidate it she wanted to find out why the money was left to this girl-heiress instead of to her husband she wanted to know Allan's secret for Allan's sake, and to do her best for him.

That she had not the keen sense of hono which would have forbidden her to seek out knowledge not voluntarily given to her was the one great fault of her character. The depth of her love was greater than anything else. She trampled down all scruples, and sat down one fine summer morning to think how she could best carry out her plan.

It so happened that she had taken her seat by the window, where the flowers and foliage made a pleasant bower. It recalled her husband's words-how, when he returned, he

him there. So he should; she would return before he came home—nay, she would leave Walton on the very day on which she discovered the secret; and, oh, if she could but meet him with good news-if she could but say to him, 'While you have been away from me have not rested, I have not been idle, but ! have worked hard-I have won by hard toil and deep thought the knowledge of your secret-I have found out for you how you can win your fortune back!' Oh, if she might but meet him, and say this! A passionate cry came from her lips. She stretched out her hands as though she would fain embrace him -as though he were near. She felt that she could suffer anything for this one great end

How was it to be accomplished? It was no ight thing she had undertaken, but it must be done. How was she a total stranger, to find her way into the home of Miss Cameron? How was she to secure an engagement as companion-she, who had no friends, no references, no one to help her?

'I will not be daunted,' she said to herself. I will go, even if I have to go as a house-

Presently she remembered that Lady Davenant would permit any references being made to her; she had always been kind to her, she had been sorry to part with her; and now, if she asked her, she felt sure that the mistress of Lanston Priory would say all that was good and kind of her.

That one great difficulty removed, the rest seemed easy in comparison. Miss Cameron was in London, she knew, with Mme. de Valmy; her best plan would be to go thither and try to see her.

She was glad afterward that she had not been too hasty, for, on taking up a fashionable paper, she found that Miss Cameron was staying at the Ranegond Hotel, Cowes, Isle of Wight. She wondered whether it was a direct interposition of Providence in her favor that in the next column she saw that Sir Charles and Lady Davenant, with their family, were staying there also. She believed it was; it seemed so to her excited imagination.

' Now that Heaven blesses what I am going to do,' she thought to herself, 'I need not mind anything else.'

She would go to Cowes, and there renew her acquaintauce with Lady Davenant. The children had always loved her, and would be pleased to see her—she knew that—and her ladyship would be sure to smile on her for the children's sake. Then, if Miss Cameron should make her want of a companion known there, she would be able to apply at once for the situation. Lady Davenant would be on the spot to speak for her, and all would go

But there were other things to consider. What was she to do with her house, and what should she do as regarded her husband's letters? She soon decided, being prompt in action as she was quick in thought. She would keep the house on just as it was, allowing sufficient for the expenses; and, as to the letters, they should all be forwarded to the general post-office St. Martin's le Grand. She could either go or send for them-they would be safe enough; and, as they would arrive only once perhaps in every two months, she would be sure not to miss one. Lord Rylestone had told her, as the Earl of Barton would be travelling about the country, not to expect a letter by every mail; above all, not to feel uneasy when she did not receive one. It was just possible that she need not be long absent from home. Of course all would depend on how soon she had a chance of securing the situation, and, when it was once secured, how long she would be at Walton before she had an opportunity of discovering the secret. She might be absent only for three monthsshe might be away more than a year.

Another thing occurred to her. If she was to secure Lady Davenant's favor, she must call herself by her maiden name of Avenel. It was as Miss Avenel she had left Laston Priory-left it to go home. She had not said where that home was ; there had been no mention of her marrige; nor did she intend Lady Davenant to know that she was married. would only have to tell her that she did not like home, and intended resuming service; even should Lady Davenant suggest a return to her, she had but to say that she did not intend to teach, but wished to live as companion to some

The whole plan seemed to shape itself out clearly and distinctly in her mind. She would succeed in obtaining the engagement-some sure instinct told her that-and then she would soon find out the secret of the will.

(To be Continued.)

should hope to see her sweet face waiting for HEAVY BLACK OATS.

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