

## The Die is Cast For Better or For Worse.

CHAPTER XXIX.  
To the Rescue!

Mr. Levison shrugged his shoulders and shook his head regretfully. "I have an important engagement for which I am already late. And, my dear young lady, I fear I cannot help you. The other young lady is lost, here in London." He was silent for a moment or two, his brows drawn together, his eyes shadowed by their thick lids. "No, I can't help you," he said, "and I make it a rule never to interfere in any business unless I can do so successfully. Give me your address, and I will communicate with you if there is any cause for doing so. I have just left Mr. Lashmore—he paused a moment—and his friend, Mr. Osborne."

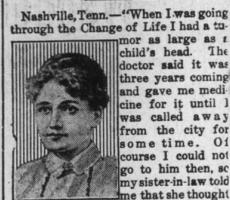
He did not look at her, but he saw the burning blush which suffused her face. "Mr. Osborne is a great friend of Mr. Lashmore's and has been a great help to him. He is a fine fellow—Mr. Osborne, I mean." Again the blush rose. "But you know him, I think? It is a great mystery. I wish it could be solved for Mr. Lashmore's—I mean Lord Herdale's—sake. I'm afraid I must go now. Let me take you to a cab."

Eva went for no more shopping that day, but drove straight home. Levison gazed after her, then went on to his appointment. His lips moved; he was saying to himself: "A strange likeness! Kittie Norton herself! No wonder Lashmore was deceived. A sweet-looking girl, too; far too good for that fellow Herdale. And she blushed when I spoke of Osborne. That's the man she cares for, though she's going to marry the other. And I can guess why. But where is Kittie Norton?" He stopped and frowned thoughtfully and a trifle impatiently. "Why, it—it looks like a case of personation. It's a mystery; and I hate mysteries—especially when I'm expected to clear them up. And my hands are too full already."

He shook his head as if to shake the business of his mind; but it came back upon him immediately after his successful interview with the financier, and refused to be shaken off. The secret which Kittie had found among her father's papers would have greatly affected her under other circumstances; as it was, though she was moved by it, its effect was not perceptible in her mode of life or manner. She toiled at her monotonous work, met the boys occasionally, and, when she was alone, brooded and longed for a sight, only a sight, of Lashmore. Presently she came upon the report in a newspaper on "The Strange Case of Mistaken Identity in High Life." What she had feared had come to pass. Lashmore had met Eva Lyndhurst, had mistaken her for

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his wife, and had discovered his real wife's terrible deceit.

She trembled as she read, and buried her face in her hands. She dared not look back on the past; the future loomed before her dark and threatening, an infinity of hopelessness and despair. Of course she made herself ill, and for some days she was unable to leave her room; a lassitude seized upon her which gave place to a desire for punishment. She wanted to expiate her sin, to find relief, peace; her mental anguish, the acute pain of longing for the love of the man who was all the world to her—this was not punishment enough. She wanted to throw herself at his feet to obtain forgiveness, just his forgiveness, then crawl away somewhere and die. But, alas! she knew that she was nowhere near dying; notwithstanding her lassitude and her misery, the tide of life was moving strongly in her.

One evening she went out to take her work to the shop; her veil was closely drawn and she walked slowly and with downcast head; she did not see a tall, carefully dressed, elderly man, who stopped suddenly on the other side of the street and looked after her; and she started when he followed her as she left the shop, and coming up to her said, in a calm, impassive voice:

"So here you are, Miss Kittie!" She started and gasped, as her hand went to her heart.

"Mr. Levison!"  
"Yes, here I am, Miss Kittie," he said with commonplace cheerfulness. "No, it's not an accident. I've been looking for you."  
She trembled so that she could

scarcely stand; and he took her hand and drew it through his arm, in a most natural and fatherly way.

"Yes, I've been looking for you. I want to have a talk with you." He looked around and saw a quiet little confectioner's shop. "We will go in here and have a cup of tea. I am like an old woman for my tea."

He led her into a small tea-room at the back of the shop, and said nothing until the cups were on the table; then, closing the door so that they would not be overheard—there was no one there but themselves—he leaned forward and patting her trembling hand soothingly, said in a low voice:

"Now, Mrs. Lashmore—"  
Kittie started and her face went white.

"You—know?" she gasped.

Mr. Levison nodded and smiled. "Yes, I know," he said. "I know that you are the wife of Harry Lashmore, as he called himself, and I can guess, though it's only a guess, why you left him. I can't even guess the whole story; I don't want you to tell me. The reason I have been looking for you is because I have something to say to you. I can put it in one sentence: You must go back to him."

Kittie shuddered and clasped her hands.

"I can't, I can't!" she breathed. "You don't know what I've done! It's impossible, impossible! I shall never see him again. And, oh, I do want to see him so!"

"Not more than he wants to see you," said Mr. Levison. "If ever a man wanted his wife, your husband wants you. I have seen him nearly every day—he is wearing himself out with longing for you. You know—or don't you know?—that he is the Earl of Herdale? You are a countess, Miss Kittie. It is scarcely the thing for a countess to be living alone, to be earning her livelihood by what is fit, teaching?"

"Needlework," said Kittie, faintly. She was scarcely listening to him. She was thinking of her husband.

"Come now, be sensible! You always were; one of the cutest, the cleverest of girls. Forgive me for speaking so plainly. I forget I am talking to a countess; I remember only the Miss Kittie I knew. You must go back to him or you will ruin his life."

"I have ruined it," said Kittie with a dry sob. "It is too late. I can never undo what I have done." Terror came suddenly into her eyes. "You won't tell him that you've seen me, Mr. Levison?"

"I ought not to give you the promise," said Levison. "I ought to go straight to him and tell him that I have found you."

"Ah, you will not, you will not!" She clasped her hands and looked at him imploringly.

Mr. Levison was silent for a minute or two; then he said gravely:

"I can't refuse you anything, Miss Kittie. I won't tell him; but you must give me your address, where I can find you."

She hesitated for a while; but at last she gave him the address.

"I can trust you?"

"Yes," said Levison, "you can trust me; that's my strong point. Do you—forgive me—but do you want money?"

She shook her head, the tears started to her eyes. "No; I only want one thing in all the world, and that I have lost forever—my husband's love and trust in me. I must go. I rely on your promise."

She gave him her shaking hand and, with her veil lowered, passed out. Mr. Levison ordered another cup of tea, but did not drink it. He was regretting that promise, but he had given it, and he was a man of his word.

He went round next morning to Forbes. The old man seemed surprised to see him.

"Didn't his lordship tell you, Mr. Levison?" he said. "His lordship has gone down to Herondyke, with his cousin."

Mr. Levison's lips twitched and his heavy brows went up; then they drew together, and Forbes instantly became anxious.

"I didn't like the idea myself, Mr. Levison," he said. "I tried to persuade his lordship not to go; but he laughed in that sad way of his, and asked me why not. Of course I

## A Minister's Evidence.

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couldn't say. It was only a kind of feeling, on my part; a fearsome kind of feeling, as if something—something might happen. I didn't explain to his lordship, for he would only have laughed at me."

"Naturally," said Mr. Levison, with a smile.

But the smile faded as he turned away; and at the end of the street he called a cab and drove to the address Kittie had given him. He climbed up the stairs to her attic. "Nice place for a countess," he murmured to himself. She came to the door, pale and wan, and with a little start of apprehension.

"Do you know Herondyke?" he asked quietly, as he held her hand.

She shook her head.

"I'll tell you where it is and find the train for you," he said. "I want you to go there."

She gazed at him with fear and doubt in her eyes. "He is there!" she murmured breathlessly.

"He is," said Mr. Levison as quietly as before. "Wait! When a man is in danger, who is the proper person to be by his side, Miss Kittie?"

She leant against the table, her hands gripping its edge, her eyes fixed on him.

"Danger?" she breathed almost inaudibly.

"Yes," said Mr. Levison. "I think there is. He has gone down with a man I should not trust out of my sight. You see, I speak openly. You used to have plenty of pluck in the old days, and I fancy you have it still. That's why I tell you what is in my thoughts. Put on your things; we'll go straight down to the station. Don't be alarmed. Nothing can have happened yet, nothing will happen if you are by his side."

She was white, but she was not trembling. At that moment she forgot the past, forgot her sin; she was only conscious that the man she loved was in danger and that she could help him. In less than five minutes she was ready. Mr. Levison took her arm and they went down to the cab, which he had kept waiting. She was silent as they went to the station; but her lips moved and formed the word "Danger." They had to wait for over an hour for the train, and Levison took her to the refreshment-room and, in his quiet way, persuaded her to take some food.

He held her hand and pressed it as he put her into the train, and she fixed her eyes on him in a speechless gratitude and comprehension. He had given her no particulars, no directions, and she had asked for none. It seemed to her to be sufficient that the man she loved, her husband, was in some vague, nameless peril, from which she could save him. And she was going to him.

(To be Continued.)

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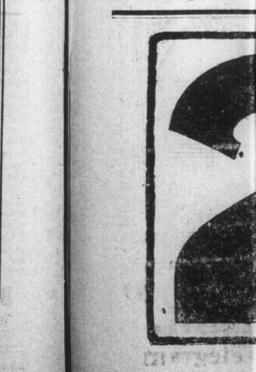


LONDON

LONDON, April 19.—Princess Mary completed her year on April 25th. Highness was looking very charming when I saw her at St. Paul's Cathedral on the 17th. She is obviously enjoying the break from life in town. The Court's stay at Windsor is meeting some interesting personages at Windsor, including a Miss Pool Controller (London), Lieut.-General Smuts, and the King's guests during the past fortnight. Most of them are night guests. The Royal Overseas visitors have been by full week-end commands those invited recently was Hartidge, British Ambassador, who was able to give us an authoritative view of the title of Spain towards the explanation of the news.

THE "BLIGHTY" In spite of the summer wounded soldiers are not only deprived of the usual "blighty." The Bow across the Channel, which though naturally it is smaller than in the past, present the light cases of their cures in France, the cases will be retained in they are well on the way, and then shipped home to their convalescence. They been adopted because that the trip home play a part in restoring the wounded men. A medical authority me that cures are effected in country in little more time that is required in abroad. The reason, of course in France the war is too to be easily forgotten.

THE KAISER'S No surprise seems to be created in diplomatic circles.



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