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**IN THE TOILS,
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CHAPTER XXVII.
WAIT—AND WIN.

Luncheon, never a very elaborate meal, was simply hurried through at the castle, and punctually at five o'clock, the time appointed, the party was in its place.

"Who do you think will win?" asked Olive of the earl, who had come down in the barouche, and was in the best of humors.

He tapped his snuffbox, and eyed the men and horses critically as they at that moment went to their places amid a loud and ringing cheer.

"Charlie rides Chestnut, doesn't he? Ah, horse and man too heavy. That's a good-looking, rakish animal under Hamilton; but the race is between Mr. Fitzgerald and Hastley Derrick. There's a power in that black horse which one would little credit him with. But then—and the earl raised his eyebrows—"Hastley Derrick rides like a jockey. That man seems to do everything well. I remember seeing him ride a few years ago; and if he had not forgotten his art, or lost his pluck in that beastly India, I should back him."

"You think he will win?" said Olive, so gravely, and with such evident disappointment, that the old earl turned to her with a smile of surprise.

"What!" he said, "have you staked a fortune against him? Whom have you backed?"

"Mr. Fitzgerald," said Olive, blushing at her earnestness; "but I don't care whether he or Charlie wins."

"So that my friend, Mr. Derrick, loses!" laughed the earl. "Here they come! Well, the black horse is the best on the course; but, by gad! Derrick can ride."

He raised his hat as the riders came past in the preliminary, and waved their hands to the brilliant group of gayly dressed ladies.

"Now they are off!" was the cry a few moments later; and presently they swept past, and Olive, with an unreasonable delight, saw that Fitzgerald was leading, Charlie second,

and Hastley Derrick third, the rest going after in a heap.

Pale and absorbed, Olive watched them, her heart in her eyes. If only Charlie would win!—if any one of them would but come forward and snatch the victory from that cool, impassable being whom she so feared!

It seemed, not only to her, but to many others that Lord Heatherdene would ride the chestnut to the post, for he had crept upon Fitzgerald and was now ahead, much to the delight of the Livermore people, who shouted and cheered vociferously.

But presently the little black horse put on extra speed and shot in front of the chestnut. Behind them Hastley Derrick rode, well within himself, clearing the hurdles over which Charlie's chestnut thundered, and Fitzgerald's black hopped, with cool confidence. The crowd cheered him also, and many an old hand nodded knowingly.

"That gentleman can ride," said an old farmer, "and he'll win if his horse'll let him."

Presently they came to the steepest jump and Charlie's horse thundered over it ahead again, somewhat discomposing the black, which faltered and, jumping short, threw Fitzgerald. He was up again in a moment and in the saddle, but Derrick was now alongside. Then, amid breathless excitement, commenced the real race. Charlie and neck they went, the brown and the black, clearing every jump side by side, contesting every neck. The excitement grew intense as the water jump was approached.

Olive stood up in the barouche, pale and statuesque.

"Now," said the earl, "Derrick will exert himself."

As he spoke, Derrick was seen to bend forward and strike his horse, which, with a bound, shot past Fitzgerald, leaving Charlie far behind, cleared the water as if it were a common ditch, and, with a beautiful specimen of close riding, swept past the post, with Fitzgerald a length and Charlie the third, behind.

A tremendous shout went up, and Olive sank back, white and disappointed. It was of no use assuring herself that it was of little consequence, the cool and powerfully masterful way in which Derrick had set himself to win, showed her the terrible power of his cool, calculating temper.

Fitzgerald rode up, quiet as usual, to express his regret, Charlie laugh-

ing and contented whichever way it went, as usual; then Derrick rode up, his whole bearing that of one who had been amusing himself with a gentle gallop.

He came up and raised his hat, and Olive, feeling constrained to say something, said:

"You won very easily, Mr. Derrick."

"No," he said, coming quite close to the carriage and fixing his dark eyes on her with a respectful impressiveness, "not easily, but by waiting my time. A minute earlier or later and it would have been no use striving. I think, Lady Heatherdene, that the man who knows how to wait may win—anything."

Olive, with a heavy dread at her heart, sank back, with a faint smile.

CHAPTER XXVIII.
THE SERPENT'S TONGUE.

"PALE, yes; I think she is paler than she ought to be, and looking anything but well," said Lord Heatherdene.

It was some months after the festivities at Livermore, and the scene is the drawing-room of the Heatherdene mansion, in Grosvenor Square. Lord Heatherdene and Katrine were standing in one of the wide bow windows looking out upon the just-lighted gas lamps in the square; Katrine, unchanged, quiet, and self-contained as ever, and Charlie are good and constant friends; he is never so well satisfied as when she is with his darling Adrienne, for he knows that his wife is never so happy herself as when her sister is by her side; and lately Lady Heatherdene has seemed to need some such companion. She is still the leader of fashion, still the autocrat of that select kingdom yelet the upper ten, and still looks little more than a young schoolgirl lately made a bride; but Lady Heatherdene has changed lately, and it is of the delicate pallor and languid indifference which seems to have fallen upon her like a heavy, yet intangible, cloud, that Lord Heatherdene and Katrine are speaking.

"I want Sir William to see her," says Charlie thoughtfully; "the other man said she wanted time. That appears to me to be their usual formula; it sounds deeply satisfying, but it is not much assistance toward the recovery of the patient. Some times"—and his handsome face grew troubled—"sometimes, Katrine, I have a vague, an uneasy feeling that she is not happy."

As he speaks, he glances over his shoulder toward the end of the room. It is furnished in the prevailing taste—and modern antique, hung round with costly hangings, and brightened by medieval metal work, and rare china. At the end, in a kind of recess, is a piano. Lady Heatherdene is seated at it, and, leaning against it is the tall figure of Hastley Derrick. Olive, exquisitely dressed, musingly touches the keys; her face, upon which rests that pale, absent expression, droops wearily; above her, the masterful face of Hastley Derrick looks down with a strange intensity. Framed in by the dark, rich hangings they make a perfect little picture.

Katrine looked at it with rather a strange expression on her expressive face.

"Mr. Derrick does not think of going back to India?" she says.

"No," answers Charlie, "I am glad to say. I don't know what we should do without him."

"He is very often here," says Katrine musingly.

"Yes," assents Lord Heatherdene, "scarcely a day passes but he drops in. He and Adrienne are great friends."

"Are they?" says Katrine, half assenting, half questioningly.

"Oh, yes, thick as thieves," says Charlie. "You see, Hastley Derrick is a clever fellow, knows how to talk about most things, has all sorts of tricks at his fingers' ends, and, of course, Addy, who is so clever, is amused. They talk about all sorts of things that I cannot take a hand in; pictures and books, and the French school of acting, things Derrick knows all about."

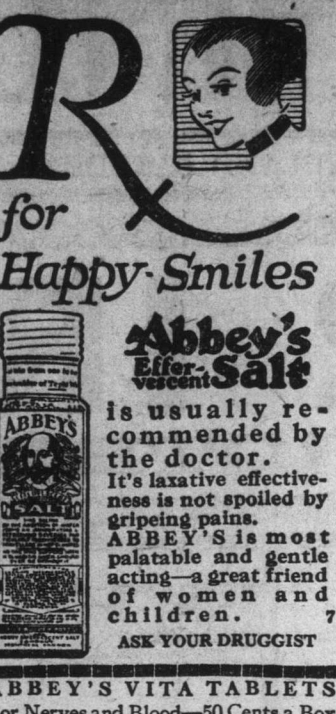
"I don't think Adrienne talks much," suggested Katrine; "she generally sits and listens."

"Well, that's the same thing," laughs Charlie. "At any rate, they get on very well together, and we should miss him terribly if he were to leave England again."

Katrine thought a moment.

"The Morgan and Lady Florence come home to-day?" I hear."

"Yes," assents Charlie; "I told Ad-



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dy that we must call there to-morrow, but she seems to dread going in the damp air, so I shall put it off for a day or two; perhaps look in myself to-morrow and explain."

Katrine nodded.

"You have not seen Lady Florence since you both were married?"

"No," said Charlie, with a slight flush. "The fact is that—well, you know all about it, I dare say, Katrine. There was a slight breeze between us over in Paris, when I was going wrong about Adrienne. Lady Florence seemed to think that there was something like an implied engagement between us—and—and—well, you can understand."

Katrine nodded again.

"I understand. Yes, certainly Adrienne ought to call upon her at once."

"Not if she is not well enough," said Charlie quickly. "She shall not go out unless she feels quite inclined to do so."

Katrine looked up, with a smile.

"You spoil her!" she said.

"That's impossible," he said, naively and tenderly. "Addy's is a nature that cannot be spoiled. I wish I could see her look a little happier than she does lately—"

He broke off suddenly, for from the end of the room rose a soft sonata of Bach's. Through the music came the voice of Hastley Derrick, but all indistinct to the two by the window.

All too distinct to Olive as she sits, her pale face set into an unnatural calm, her eyes upturned to his, his that seem to penetrate to her innermost soul.

"You see, Lady Heatherdene, the plot would make an excellent modern comedy—indeed, almost a tragedy. If I were anything of a playwright I would set to work at it. What do you think of it? Your judgment in such a matter is, of course, infallible. Have I made the plot clear to you? On the one hand you have the trusting, confiding husband, the young fellow of rank and title, who has married the beautiful and charming wife; a woman to whose attributes rank and wealth could add but little, one whom to see is to admire, but to know is to—love."

(To be continued.)

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