

### THE

the Author of "A Bachelor Husband.")

CHAPTER XXVIII. suppose I was a fool to imagine that I could ever make you care for me; I suppose it was conceit that led me to think I could ever cut out this

this phantom lover of yours-He laughed mirthlessly. Esther, let me take you back home it's no use seeing Ashton-it only have been out of my mind to attempt means humiliation and pain for you."

Her lips moved, but no words came, Let me take you home to June," he went on. "She will tell you that what letters-every one of them. I-" Lsay is only the truth. She knows him

"She always hated him; it isn't likeshe would wish me to marry him." She bit her lip. "Oh, it's no use saying any more," she broke out wildly after moment, "I'm going to see him-I can't bear it if I don't see him-just once! I've got to hear the truth-" "I've told you the truth," he repeated doggedly. "It's no interest to me to his patience and tenderness had been try and prevent you from seeing him. | killed. | I know I've done for whatever chance I had with you. Oh, for heaven's sake he said she would never believe him: delieve that it's only for your sake I it was useless to waste his breath; he want to take you back!"

She shook her head. believe him: she thought of the letters she had received from Raymond. the money—the presents—why even this coat she wore had come from him; sie felt that she could laugh at this man opposite to her. A little smile curved her lips: a contemptuous smile

For the first time the injustice of it all seemed to strike him; for he who herself the sort of man he was. had done his best she had nothing but dislike and contempt, but for the man who had left her with a brutal letter be able to get breakfast in the restauralone in Paris; that she had nobody ed sweeter or more desirable. endless faith and trust, and love!

He broke out in his agitation. "I've tried to spare you-I've done my best, but you won't let me . . . I've kept back the truth, but now von'll have to hear it if nothing else will keep soften thought since he left London—he imag- you wish me to stay, surely?" he subres that you've forgotten him. It was mitted drily. he you saw at the Comedy Theatre that night when June and I were with you. He didn't even trouble to let you own fault you came." know that he was in London—that's He did not answer, perhaps he could how he cares for you—this man you not trust himself; he raised his hat fond words seemed to take on a new refuse to believe one word against and turned away unseeingly, and Es- meaning. . . ... " His eyes flamed as they met ther clutched her suit-case tightly and

She was staring at him now; her ace was white and incredulous.

"If you-if you think I'm going to believe that-" she, began, in a high, unnatural voice. She stopped; she eemed to realise all at once that he was speaking the truth. She leaned towards him. Her breath came in brok-

"Those letters!" she said shrilly. "Whose letters? They were from himthey were from him-weren't they from him?" she asked hoarsely.

"No," said Micky doggedly. Better to hurt her now, he told himself, than to let her go on to worse

There was a tragic silence; then sh asked again, in a whisper-

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inch of the Gare St. Lazare and had

herself in an agony. "I know he

She took one of the letters from her

suit-case and stared at the handwrit-

She did not know what she meant

She found hedself in some gardens

where an elderly man was feeding

It seemed years ago that she went

down to Enmore with June-since she

sat in the little inn with Micky and

The hot blood beat into her cheeks

as she remembered something that for

the moment she had forgotten-that

The man gave the sparrows his last

crumbs and went away. The little

brown birds came hopping to Esther's

The sun faded and went in, and a

felt that she wanted to go to him.

. . . Oh, whose letters were they?

for any specific purpose.

and cleared away the mists.

heard those two men talking.

Raymond Ashton was married!

and watched him.

forget him.

didn't."

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"Then who-who wrote them?" A wave of crimson flooded Micky' white face. He dropped his head in his hands as if he could not bear to meet

her eyes. "I did," he said brokenly.

CHAPTER XXIX. A long moment of silence followed Micky's broken confession. He dared not look at Esther, though she was staring at him, staring hard, with a curious sort of wonderment in her grey eyes. Then all at once she began to laugh, a laugh which held no real mirth. only incredulity.

Micky raised his head sharply. For a second they stared at one an other; then Micky said hoarsely-"You don't believe me;" and then again, more slowly: "You mean that knowing where to go. Raymond seemyou-don't believe-me?"

He half rose to his feet. "Esther, I implore you." She moved back from him.

"It was clever of you-to think of such an excuse." she said unevenly. "It's the truth: I swear it if I never speak again. I know now that I must such a thing, but it has only seemed impossible since you showed me how little you thought of me. I wrote those

ing-Raymond's writing. The whole thing was too preposterous. In the excitement of the moment neither of them had noticed that the train had reached its destination and longer seemed that she had come here was slowly stopping.

A voluble porter had already wrench ed open the door and was imploring monsieur to accept his services; i was impossible to say any more to Es-

Micky followed her out on to the sparrows; she sat down on a bench platform; he felt that the last shred of

She did not believe him-whatever might as well give up and let her go her own way; perhaps a sharp lesson In her heart she found it impossible would teach her better and more quickly than all his love had been able

> hunger alone makes a man angry. He feet, looking up at her with bright. looked at the girl for whose sake he eager eyes, as if expecting her to suphad raced all these miles of wild-goose ply a further meal. chase, and a boorish longing to hurt her, to let her suffer rose in his heart. few drops of rain came pattering Let her go to Ashton and see for down. She rose and began to walk on

He spoke with savage impulse. "I won't bother you with my unwel-

ple here understand English . . . Good-bye---" Esther gave a little gasp-"You're not going to leave me?"

The hardness of his eyes did not you from him. He's never given you a | "You are not trying to tell me that

"Certainly not; after all, it's your

I walked away with her head in the air, comes true, I will tell you the many

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igh Manufacturing Company, New York City.

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hings you would not let me say when we were last together. . . .

The one sentence caught her eve She wondered that she had never be fore thought how unlike Raymond this was. Why was it she had not realized before that Raymond could never hav written this?

a great, unanswered question in he She rose and walked on again; sh

Hardly knowing that she did so, she window: there were trays of precious stones. She felt her own ring beneath the glove-she had worn it so long when she had to take it off. Of course

Micky had once gone into a pond or bitter night to save a kitten from been there thousands of times before. drowning; she wondered what made

But her heart was beating up in her throat, and she would have given a The man who could save a drowning great deal, had it been compatible with kitten would never hurt a woman so dignity, to rush after him and beg him that she could hardly think or feel; June had claimed for Micky that he

believe anything he says," Esther tols

Supposing he had really written ing in French-Esther looked after those letters? "But he didn't," she told them vaguely. This was really Paris-this rather, ing for the good of all. She cares no with rows and rows of tiny silk

> had longed to see. A man passing stared at her, half stopped, went on again, then turned, paused irresolutely, and finally came.

He walked quickly till he drew ato do, or what he meant to go; it no breast with her, and there was a curious eagerness in his face as he stop-The early morning greyness and ped a little to look down at hers; then chilliness had faded; the sun had risen he gave an exclamation of sheer amazement:

"Lallie! Good heavens! What in the world are you doing here?" It was Raymond Ashton.

And so the dream had come true after all, and she and Raymond were to-

face it seemed to Esther that all the past hours of grief were as if they had never really existed: he was smiling down at her in the same old way: the very tone of his voice awoke forgotten memories in her heart: she felt as if a gnawing pain which had allowed her no rest had suddenly been lulled to

mond was saying nervously. "And yet slowly. The light suit-case seemed to thought of you and Paris as being in At the back of her mind was the any way compatible, and yet-"He tongue to say that she had never look-

to turn to now that Micky had deserted her; but as yet it was only in the woke the wish in his heart to know background. Raymond was somewhere. if she still radu, or if she had forget-ten him, and a little flush crossed his perhaps quite close; but she no longer face and his eyes grew tender as they Further on she found another bench met the tragedy of hers; he looked sheltered under some trees and sat hastily round.

down again; she opened the suit-case "We can't talk here. Will you come and took out a bundle of Micky's letto a cafe? There is so much I should ters . . . Micky's! No. Raymond's like to say to you. When did you come over? What are you doing here?" She opened the one that had been

They were walking slowly along, the written from the hotel in Paris. Its man's head bent ardently towards her. girl was the only woman he had ever "Some day, if all that I wish for loved, and perhaps it was right-as he

> He took her to a cafe—one where there would be nobody likely to recognise him; he ordered coffee and bis-

"Now we can talk undisturbed." he said; he moved his chair closer to Esther's-he laid his hand on hers. She did not move or try to evade his touch; she just looked down at his

handsome face which had for so long meant all the world to her. "I never thought we should meet again here of all places," he said in his soft voice. "How long ago does it seem to you since we said good-bye?"

stayed away until this moment, when fate had thrown them together. "If you knew how often I have thought about you," he said.

"Did you get my letter, Lallie? The one I wrote on New Year's Eve-and the money? I sent you some money." A swift flush dyed her cheeks; she

That had been his letter then, after all-Micky had lied to her; she caught her breath on a little gasp.

"Yes," she said faintly. "Yes-yes, got it—thank you."

"I've often thought since that I might have written you a kinder letter," he said after a moment. "But everything had gone wrong then—the mater cut up rough—and I was up to my eyes in debt. It was the best thing for both of us to put an end to it, don't you think

Somewhere in the distance a church clock chimed; Esther found herself mechanically counting the bells-nine ten, eleven! All those hours sinc Micky had left her at the station. She was cold and hungry, but it did

turned out of the gardens and found herself in a street of shops. People looked at her curiously.

stopped and looked in at a jeweller's now, she wondered how she would feel she could not go on wearing it if Ray mond was really married.

She wandered out of the station, not was the best man in the world.

ed to have faded into the background: she only thought of him subconscious- herself feverishly; she moved on again ly; it was the figure of Micky Mellow- away from the trays of flashing diaes that worried her-she could not monds.

Two girls passing her were chatter

CHAPTER XXX.

His overwhelming conceit suddenly

He had once told Micky that this

hand for a moment and then up at the

She could not answer, but the thought floated through her mind that they never had said good-bye, that he had just walked out of her life and

raised her eyes.

(To be continued)



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a tree, may cause used on most of the dance frocks. rave until you're girdled with a band of blue ostrich hoarse and on tips.

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hoot for private wees, nor marks the groove she goes, and strives to benefit the race. The storm that killed your setting hens and from your watchdog tore the hair, removed the fever from the fens, and purified the noxious air. The flood comes raging down the creek, and drowns some seven head of swine, and you, declaring life is bleak, are ready to take in your sign. The loss of seven Chester Whites will put you badly in the hole, and you will walk the floor o' nights, but Nature stops not to ondole. The rain that made the rushing flood will make the prunes and nutmegs grow, and hundreds bless the wholesome mud, where one puts up his wail of woe. Each fellow thinks his own concerns are all that count, the one big bet; but Mother Nature never turns to see whose beehives she upset. She slings some clouds across the sun, she starts a tempest on the sea; she has a universe to run, and cannot fool with you

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Black wooden beads effectively trip blouse of crepe de chine, blows your roof Long tassels of bright silk or h away, and winds hang from narrow girdles. your cow around | Tulle sashes tied in huge bows are

you to rear up Colored swiss dotted in white and say such makes charming summer dresses, caustic things as A frock of lettuce green velvet is "Hully c h e e !" trimmed with black and silver ribbon. And you may A straight frock of black crepe is

your gods de- An interesting new neckline is cut voutly call; but high on one side and low on the other. monkey fur



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