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USE "COURIER" WANT ADS.

HESTER, AND A LEGACY
 But Lily was not to be reasoned into good humor, and the next customer who came to buy fared badly at her hands. Even Harry Vereker, who was now particularly attentive to his future sister-in-law in public, could not persuade her to come and eat ices at his expense when he lounged up to the stall a few minutes later. She was thoroughly cross for the rest of the day; her future as Lady Lynnmoor was vanishing into thin air, and now that Harry was appropriated, who was there to fall back upon? It would be too galling if she made a worse match than Trix after all.
 Lord Lynnmoor, unconscious that he had shattered a whole castle in the air at a blow, moved away from the lady who had intended to inhabit it, and keeping the flower in his hand, stood talking first to one person, then to another, as long as her eyes were upon him. But presently he made his way towards the house, and entering the grounds which were divided from the park by a wall, took a path through the little fir-wood. He had seen Hester go that way some time before, and he hoped to catch her either at the house or on her return journey.
 He was lucky enough to meet her in the middle of the plantation, coming face to face with her suddenly on the little sandy path with the dark fir trees hemming them both in on either side. She was carrying a gorgeous Eastern rug and Lady Lynnmoor's big black fan, and was walking rapidly. She wore her garden a low, broad-brimmed straw, with bunches of poppies and corn among its bows—and from beneath its shade she looked up at him, and in her eyes there was an expression that struck him as he caught it as one of absolute fear. But the next instant her face had changed; she had drawn her lips together, and her eyes had grown hard and set.
 "I was looking for you," he said abruptly, ignoring her treatment of him on the last two days.
 "How gratifying!" she exclaimed, the hard, cold tone in her voice corresponding with the expression in her eyes. "What a pity you are not looking for some one who has time to listen to such flatteries! For myself, I am far too much occupied."
 "I don't care who claims your time—you must give me a little first," he said with determination, barring her way. Then, changing his tone to one of entreaty, "Please don't look like that, and please let me say what I want to say."
 "I have no time to waste, nor do I want to hear it. Oblige me by moving and letting me pass."
 "I will not. I will not be treated like this. What have I done? How have I offended you? You have been most unkind to me the last two days, and have caused me infinite pain!"—speaking with passionate earnestness.
 "Why should you do this? What have I done to deserve it?"
 "I was not aware that I had been unkind; there can be no question of kindness between us any more, since there is between Lady Lynnmoor and me."
 "That is different. She does not love you," he blurted out.
 "Love me," she ejaculated, turning pale.
 "Yes, love you!" he repeated passionately. "I love you—I don't deny it. I wanted to tell you long ago, but you gave me no chance. You are the only person in the world I really love, and I love you deeply, truly, and honourably. I want to ask you to be my wife—my nearest and dearest on earth."
 Hester almost dropped the rug and fan, and nearly sank upon the earth herself, but she was saved such disgrace by putting off her hand and studying herself by a tree. It was awful—this temptation, but for love of him she held her resolution. Shaking from head to foot, she held her hand for support against the tree, and the whole world seemed going round her in a mad whirl.
 "Perhaps I have been too sudden," he went on, noticing her agitation, "but I tried to make things plain, and I thought you understood. Don't look like that. I don't want to frighten you. I won't press for an answer today. Only pin this flower in my coat to give me a little hope—the right to try to win you if I can."
 "I can't," she said with trembling lips.
 "Why not? It will not pledge you to anything—it will only mean that you do not utterly dismiss me and send me away without a shade of hope."
 "I utterly dismiss you. There is not a shade of hope," she said in a low voice, but with increasing steadiness.
 He saw her agitation and pried her sincerely. She seemed to him like a poor little fluttering bird that is caught in a trap, but he could not let her go. He had taken her too much by surprise, he told himself; he certainly thought that he had paved the way sufficiently, but apparently it was not so. He tried to speak less passionately, so as not to frighten her.
 "I am not asking you to decide any thing now," he said quite gently. "I would not hurry or vex you for the world. You are very dear to me. I only want you to be happy. I want you to do as you like, but I want you to let me love you and try to win you."
 She raised her eyes, and he saw at once that her verdict would be against him. His heart failed him as he met their expression.
 "There must be no misunderstanding on the matter," she said, and now her voice was quite clear and steady, and its coldness cut him like a knife. "It is best to say at once what is the

fact. I am going to leave Lynnmoor's Chase; it will be my desire and endeavour never to see you again. I know my own mind, and I shall never change. You are the very last man on earth I should ever dream of marrying!"
 The words struck him to the heart, and his face grew deathly white. He stood aside to let her pass, and she went by him, down the little sandy path between the fir-trees, her face as white as his, trembling beneath the weight of the heavy rug that filled her arms and the still greater weight of her emotions. But she had done it. She had made things absolutely clear; she had spoken so strongly that no man with a vestige of pride would ever petition her again. She had saved her own life, and buried her happiness for ever in the little fir-wood.
 She had done it, and she believed that she had done right, but there was a cry in her heart of exceeding bitter pain, and the rest of the day, with its gathering and laughter and lament, was one long-drawn-out misery.
 CHAPTER XXII.
 Hester saved the necessity of immediate leaving Lynnmoor Chase by finding the next day that Lord Lynnmoor had left himself. He had gone up to London on sudden and urgent business, so she heard, but she suspected the business of being nothing more or less than the desire to avoid meeting her.
 His temporary absence however could not materially alter her plans, and she felt that to get away from the Chase before he returned was the only consistent course of action left open to her. She therefore spoke to Lady Lynnmoor on the subject during the day.
 Her ladyship was both upset and annoyed at the idea of Miss Phillips leaving her. It was unspokeably vexing, so entirely uncalculated for, so inconsiderate. Hester stated that she wished for many reasons to go abroad to pursue her studies; that she had not been very well lately and felt that a thorough change would be beneficial; that, in fact, she wished to go. To all this resolution she kept in the face of all arguments and persuasions, and the month of Lord Lynnmoor's absence in London passed heavily in a wearying reiteration of the same thing.
 Before the end of the month however something happened which changed the face of things completely. Lady Muriel was taken dangerously ill with a fever, and for many days her life was despaired of. Great was the consternation and anxiety at Dovercourt, where a specialist from London shook his head ominously over the little fever-stricken heiress lying on her bed, and Doctor Turner's kind eyes shined with tears as he held her hot hand in his and counted the quick throbs of the pulse that told him the fever was burning her life away.
 Throughout the most critical part of her illness carriages were constant, and the month of Lord Lynnmoor's inquiries, the footmen wore list slippers, doors were propped open, bulletins were issued at the lodges, the very gardeners went about with sad faces. Fruit and dainties, all descriptions were massed in the ante-room to the sick-chamber, to which poor Lady Augusta was relegated by the trained nurses, and there she sat, speaking to her, whispered Lady Augusta at his side. "I think she would hear you."
 He stooped over her and took her hand—the burning, trembling little hand that seemed to resent being captured. But he held it firmly and spoke her name.
 "Muriel," he said—"dear Muriel! Don't you know me?"
 She opened her eyes and fixed them on his face. They dilated, and she seemed to be making an effort to collect her scattered senses and realize who it was that was speaking to her. Then her hand closed on his with a sudden joyful recognition.
 "You?" she exclaimed in a trembling whisper. "I didn't think you cared."
 "Then, never think that again! You must make haste to get well, for so that we may be very happy together. Will you try?"
 Tears of weakness and delight began to flow down her cheeks, and he half turned away, thinking that it might be dangerous to agitate her further, but Lady Augusta made a sign to him to stay a little longer.
 "I thought you didn't care," she half sobbed, "and I was so unhappy! Why did you pretend you didn't love me?"
 (To be Continued)

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the rest take care of itself; it will all settle down beautifully after that, believe me. Lovers quarrel, madam; Lovers quarrel—that is all. And they will both be only too glad later on to see me interposed with a little common sense and acted as their providence."
 He hurried off back to town, and Lady Augusta, with very mixed feelings, sat down to write her letter to Lord Lynnmoor, while a groom galloped over to the Chase for his London address. And that evening's post carried the letter that was to seal Lady Muriel's fate, and perhaps Lord Lynnmoor's—if, that is to say, he acceded to Lady Augusta's urgent request.
 The following day, late in the afternoon, he arrived at Dovercourt, and Lady Augusta went to receive him in the great state drawing room. She was anxious and nervous, and although, his immediate response in person to her letter made her hopeful, she was in reality doubtful as to how far his intentions towards her niece would carry him. His manner was subdued and sympathetic as he asked for news of the invalid.
 "She is very feverish and more often delirious than not," replied Lady Augusta, pressing his hand warmly in both her own; "but she knew me just now, and I think," she restated, then added more firmly—"I think she would know you to if you went in to see her."
 She waited anxiously for his reply. Lord Lynnmoor laid his hat upon a table and said, without looking up.
 "I will see her if you like—if you think it will do any good."
 She only said, "Thank you," but as she led the way upstairs she knew that if Muriel recovered she would be Lord Lynnmoor's wife, and her heart beat high with hope and fears.
 The sick-room was large and airy, and the blinds were let down to keep out the glare of the August sun, giving a cool, dim, green tone to the whole. A nurse who was at the bedside as they entered withdrew to an inner room, and Lady Augusta went forward, followed by Lord Lynnmoor beside her. In silence he looked down on the prostrate figure and his heart went out to her in compassion. "Speak to her," he whispered, Lady Augusta at his side. "I think she would hear you."
 He stooped over her and took her hand—the burning, trembling little hand that seemed to resent being captured. But he held it firmly and spoke her name.
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 (To be Continued)

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