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## The Day of Reckoning.

By Howard Goodwill.


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no mind to relinquish the social po-
sition to which she has so recently atiained, so she contrives to subdue hir rising anger, and turns with a at that moment showe visitors who are the are
ato the thom.
Among them is the Duchess or Among them is the Duchess of of no mean order, and Stella colors
of noth gratifed pride, for her grace is
wither recognized as a powerful factor in society, and her patronage telts heavily
in favor to any aspirant for social
success. The great lady's demeanor sticcess. The great lady's demeanor
toward her hostess is, however, frigid in the extreme, and she makes no
secret of the fact that her visit is paid to Gladys rather than to her step-
riother, to whom she is coldyly courtfiother, to whom sho is coldly court
eous and nothing more. This was galling in the extreme to a woman of Lady Castleton's temper-
ament. She had set herself to cultivate the best society, and it was an ncying to be met by so chilly a re-
ception at the outset. Gladys greets her with eviden pleasure, and the two are soon chat-
ting gaily, while Lady Castleton finds
thers Her grace issues a warm invitation to Gladys to visit her at Winterton
House House, and expresses a hope that
Lord and Lady Castleton will dine with her during their daughter's stay George Seaforth takes his leave im-
mediately after the duchess's departmediately after the duchess separt-
ure, and
uredadys
puits the room to Lady Castleton looks after he young stepdaughter's graceful figure
with a glance of ill-concealed annoy an "Apparently Gladys is a highly important young person," she says, with
a sneer.
"The duchess appeared to barely recognize my existence." answers his lordship somewhat testily,
athe she
the duchess has known Glatys the duchess has known Gladys since
her babyhood, and she was an int her erfind of my late was ants; it is
mate frem
perfectly natural that she should is perfectly natural that she should in-
terest herself in her daughter. I think you are making a great mistake in
seeking to quarrel with Gladys. She is quite prepared to treat you with
frendit frendliness, but you incessantly at
tempt to annoy her" tempt to annot, her." "Frand Lady Castle ton, with a derisive laugh. "She looks
upon me as an interloper, and is no pains to conceal her aversion to sometimes-""
Lord Castleton waves his hand im patiently. "There, there, Stella, that
will to. If yout cannot will do. If you cannot agree with
Gladys I a monvinced it is not her
fault. I always find her amiable fault. I always find her amiable
enough myself. Whereupon her ladyship breaks into a storm of weeping, which it takes
his lordship some time to soothe, and at length he quits the room with a a
sigh, sorely disturbed and iil at ease.
Siredy he is sigh, sorely disturbed and ill at ease.
Already he is beginning to ask him-
self whether his marriage is a mistake for the new Lady Castleton is bot impervious and extravagant, though
he is still sufficiently under the spell of her beauty to be unable to gauge The following afternoon Lad Castleton is driving in the Row with her smart victoria and pair of dantily
stepping chestnuts. The air is mild for the time of year, although the wind is somewhat keen, and her ladyship leans back gracefully, enjoying to
the full the evident interest her appearance excites. She bows to one two people who she knows, and
George Seaforth and one or two other men come up to speak of her when up by the rails for a few moments. Her husband and stepdaughter are past she turns to cast an canter plance at Gladys' girlish figure. The sun gleams upon her bright hair, wich is gathered into a simple knot
beneath her small riding hat and turns it into gold, and intensifying the delicate purity of her complexion.
Though Stella
does not like the giri She is forced to admit that she is exAfter a few moments' conversation with Seaforth, she gives the signal to ad driven home, and
adiu to her cavaliers.
Just before she reaches her own door her glance falls upon a shabbilyressed woman who is threading her way wearily anong, giane wange netiner
the right nor left, as she walks listessy on; but Lady Castleton's cheeks are blanched with a sudden terror as
she catches sight of the bent, dejected ligure, and her eyes grow wide with
Hastily she averts her car. Hastily she averts her gaze,
shrinking back in overwhelming dread est the strange woman may have seen is totally unconscious of the elegantlydressed lady who is driven past, but
Stella's heart almost seems to cease tellit's heart almost seems to cease
beating until the danger is passed. When she reaches her own door she springs out and up the steps. Entering
the dining-room she sinks as though completely exhausted, and her maid who appears at that moment is alarmed at the ashy-pallor of her lace. Her pale lips can scarcely frame
words, but the maid rightly interperets her request for brandy, which she administers, and in a few moments the
color begins to creep back slowly into color begins to creee back slowly into her mistress's pallid cheeks.,
"It is nothing, Robson,"
she says, a few moments later, when the fierce
pain at her heart had somewhat abated, "I am all right now, you lordship. ${ }^{\text {I }}$ am any subject to these at tacks, but they soon pass."
She rises to her feet, though with evident effort, and slowly ascends the wide staircase to her own rooms, but
her hands are clenched tightly and her lips set with the endeavor to retain
her self-control.
self-control.

