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### The Dearest in the World

Continued from page 7

and undoubted beauty, to put into words what the rest were thinking.
"I wonder if Roger Allison knows.

They used to be very friendly. I remember now, they we on the river together the night before she went away."

It was the day after Margaret's omecoming. Her father had gone homecoming. Her father had gone back to the business from which he had torn himself for a day to welcome his only daughter, and Margaret was left with an autumn afternoon on her

"I'll go to the park. It will be pretty well deserted now, and yet it is at its loveliest. What joy to sniff the smoky, hazy air, to look at the glories of the trees in the river reflections and to rustly the follow loaves again. rustle the fallen leaves again. Perhaps I'll even find a small boy who wants a battle with them. I'm afraid I haven't grown up a bit."

Roger Allison had that same autumn afternoon on his hands. "There are so few things to do when one is blind until one gets used to it," he said to his grandfather.

There had followed a cautious jour-There had followed a cautious journey along the street, more cautiously still over the grass among the trees to the bench overlooking the river. He had smiled a trifle grimly over his anxiety to reach that particular bench since no river could he see. Then resolved the thought of lutely he had pushed the thought of a dark present and future out of his mind and given himself up to the past. Only treasured memories are brought back at such a time, and with every one of these there was something of Margaret Scott. So that though he had not heard of her return it was no surprise to hear her voice quite close at hand:

"Good-bye, Laddie. If your mother said to be home at four o'clock you'll have to run like anything. But we've had a fine time even if we've never been introduced. Good-bye, good-bye."

Then was laughter and youth and hope in the dear voice, and his heart beat high as he listened to it and then to her footsteps brushing through the leaves and coming directly towards his

She was close to him before she saw

who it was.

"Roger, Roger," he heard her say joyfully, but he did not know that her eyes were shining and both hands outstretched to meet his. Instinctively he rose and held out his hands, and in a second they held her tight. She had been so close to him that she could not notice that he had not come to her. He held firmly to her hand, as they sat down, afraid to lose this one held upon her.

hold upon her.
"Margaret, Margaret," he whispered,

and she, overcome by the meeting which she had pictured to herself a thousand times and more, just like this, sat with eyes cast down, content to feel the warm clasp of his hand and to hear her name on his lips.

Then she looked up, and the face she saw startled her with the agony when it

upon it.

"Roger, what is it? Tell me why you look at me so strangely?"

"Look! My God, I cannot look—

cannot see the dearest face in all the world to me!"

Blind! For one brief moment there was the bitter pang that he for whom she had yearned to grow fairer and had grown so beyond her wildest hopes, would never see the new beauty that was his right since he had inspired it. And she had so longed to have him find her fair.

"Roger, when did it come?"

"Roger, when did it come?"
His answers were brief and given grudgingly. The pain seemed bound to slip out with the words:
"Nearly a year ago."
"And you did not tell me?"
"No, it would have done no good."
Silence again for what seemed a long, long time for both. He dared not draw her pity. She was gathering her courage.

her courage.
"Roger," she said gently, in a voice that trembled just the least bit.

"Will you tell me something?"
"I do not know. What is it?"
"I think I have a right—yes, a right,

"Well?" The tone was not encourag-"Why did you say the 'dearest face in the world'?"

"Don't, Margaret. This is too hard."

"You said it twice."

"And you remembered? But I had knows!"

The public never knew the mystery of "But," she persisted gently, "why did Lady Sybil's diamond shoe-buckles.

you say it? Since you did, I think I have a right to know."

He was driven desperately, and showed it in the distress of his face and voice. Bu "Why?" But she had no mercy.

"Because-and, helpless blind that I am, I am a coward to tell you—because I love you with every atom of my be-

I love you with every atom of my being, because everything about you is dear to me, and has been for years."
"Even my plain face?"
"Even your plain face, if you will call it so. I never knew whether it was plain or not, it was the face of the girl I loved—and love yet. Heaven help me, and forgive me for telling what should never have been known to you if I had been as brave as I ought to be."

"I made you tell me. Do you know why?"
No answer.

No answer.
"Do you want to know why? She watched his silent face, and the unspoken longing in it decided her.
"I wanted you to say what want her.

wanted you to say what you have because—because I love you with said becauseevery atom of my being, because everything about you is dear to me,' even your poor blind eyes."

"But Margaret——"

"Do you need me, Roger? Be honest with me."

with me."

"Need you. Oh my love——"

"Well, I need you more. Kiss me, Roger, and then let us go home."

Grandfather Allison met them on the steps. The densest man on earth could not have failed to know, and grandfather was not dense.

father was not dense.

"Margaret, how lovely you—"
But Margaret shook her head warningly at him, and Roger smiled and

"She always had the dearest face in the world."



# Lady Sybil's Shoe Buckles

Continued from page 8

and open the window to them, and there I was, let in for the whole blooming show!"

"I know you told me something, but I bought the shoe-buckles from you in thorough good faith, without knowing how you came by them—they were so quaint, I knew Sybil would like them. I gave you five hundred for them." gave you five hundred for them.

"Yes, I know you did, you've been a brick all through, and I've been a low, thieving cur, but I'll make amends, never fear."

It was getting dark as the two men turned into the house where they shared rooms. Vandeleur opened the door with his latch-key; a slight girlish figure was standing by the fire. She turned round suddenly.

"Sybil!" cried Vandeleur, hoarsely. "Sybil! Can it really be you?"

"Yes," she answered dully, "it is I. The porter let me in. I came to bring you back these." She handed him a small parcel done up in tissue paper.

"I brought them back," she said, without looking at him. "You see, I can't wear them again, people say such

can't wear them again, people say such things." "And you believe them, Sybil?"

She gazed up at him.

She gazed up at him.

"No, no, not really—not when you look at me like this, Ernest; but, oh, what is it that is so wrong? Tell me, tell me, I want to believe in you."

"He won't tell you," cried Crosbie, starting forward; "he is too loyal for that, but I'll tell you. It was I who helped to break into that house at Portman Square. I was driven to it. I was desperately hard up, glad to do anything. It was I who got the diamond buckles as my share of the loot, and Vandeleur bought them from me. That's the honest truth, Lady Sybil! Make what you like of it."

"Thank God!" she exclaimed. "I knew, Ernest, you couldn't have been the thief, and yet, forgive me, I doubted you once or twice."

"And shall he be purished Sybil?"

long, the thief, and yet, forgive me, I doubtnot ed you once or twice."

"And shall he be punished, Sybil?
Shall I round on him now?"

"No, I am going myself to Mr. Marcus Mettheimer. I have met him, I
will give him back the shoe-buckles, and ask him not to prosecute. He has got the other things, so he will not suffer.

"By George. Lady Sybil," cried Crosbie, "you're a good plucked 'un. You've saved me this night, for if you'd chucked Vandeleur, I should you'd chucked Vandeleur, I should have given myself up. And now I'll get off to Australia and turn over a new leaf; it wants turning, goodness