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Appointment to
HIS MAJESTY KING GEORGE V.

One in a Thousand, BUT TRUE TO THE LAST

CHAPTER XXIII.
CROSSING THE CHANNEL.
"Well, I don't want to be impertinent," he says, regretfully; "but I should be very sorry if anything went wrong which by any means I could have prevented."

"You are very kind," I murmur. "I think that you must have a good heart, Capt. Langholme."

He flushes all over his dark, handsome face.
"I am engaged to marry a good woman," he answers, tenderly.

"Are you?" I say, stupidly. "I hope you may be happier—happier than I have been," I add, with tear-filled eyes.

"You are quite sure," he says, presently, "that I can do nothing to restore peace again?"

"I am quite sure," I say, sadly.
"But what will you do at Rotterdam? Have you ever been there?"

"Never," I say. "Have you?"
"Oh, yes, many times! It is a wretched place. I don't think really you can live there. Could you not go up to Utrecht? It is not much further—twenty miles or so—and I have an aunt living there; she is married to a banker."

"But she would know me," I say, hurriedly.

"Not necessarily," he answers, gently—"not unless you wish it, certainly. I could write to her and tell her to be kind to you, without telling her your reason for wishing to live in Utrecht. I suppose you have thought of taking some other name?"

"Oh, yes! I thought 'Chester' would do. You see it must begin with a 'C', because all my things are plastered over with my monogram—I was proud of my new initials," I say, bitterly.

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"Then you had better go straight up to Utrecht and put up at the 'Pays Bas'; that is the best hotel. I always go there myself. To-morrow I will write to my aunt, and tell her to come to you, and she will get you rooms and arrange for you generally. 'Mrs. Chester, I am to call you?'"
"Yes, and you will keep my secret?" I say.

"Yes, I will keep it until you give me leave to disclose it. I hope even yet it may all come right."

"That day will never come," I say, sadly, shaking my head drearily; then, as the train stops: "Is this Harwich?"

"No, only Manningtree; we shall not be very long now."

"You are going to Harwich?" I say, presently.

"I shall see you safe on board. I can get back to Colchester by the last train."

"Then you came down on purpose to see me?" I say, in surprise.

"Exactly. I was waiting for the eight-forty, which is the last train from town, and I thought you looked in trouble; so I came by this train to see after you."

"That was very good of you," I say, gratefully.

"Not at all. Now here we are. You are quite sure that you will not let me telegraph? I wish you would."

"No," I say, firmly; "I have done with them all."

He sees me safely on board the steamer, and takes care that I have something to eat, for I confess that I have not tasted food since luncheon; and then there is a cry of, "Anyons for shore?"

"Lady Charteris," he says, all in a rush, "have you plenty of money? It would be awkward if you fell short."

"I have nearly four hundred pounds," I say, quietly; "and I thank you much for your kind thoughtfulness in mentioning it."

"That is all right, then," in a relieved tone. "You had better lie down at once, and keep still. Good-by. I shall hear of you soon."

His kindly face and tall form disappear over the gangway, and my last friend has gone! I am now quite on the world, quite alone. I shall have no more need to shrink back in a hansom, or wear a thief's veil, for now there will be only strange faces to surround me."

I wonder if they have missed me at home. Ah, the pang which spites my heart as the familiar word rises up in my mind! Home! I have no home! The four walls of a house do not constitute a home; that is in the hearts of those who love us. And who is there to love me? Only Lays and "daddy." With such a home I am not satisfied. I want my very own—that which Adrian, of his own free will, gave me within the walls of God's sanctuary; that from which Theo has thrust me, heedless whether I die for the hunger of love or no.

The night is so bitterly cold that I take Capt. Langholme's advice and go below as soon as we have got fairly away from the quay. There are not many passengers, of the gentler sex, at least. There is a young Jewish lady with three tiny children and a stout English nursemaid. Then

there is a little woman, with a quantity of fair curls, who lies on a sofa, crying quietly; an English girl, going to school in Germany, and the inevitable German governess. This one is more aggravating than usual; she is not really ill, but is quite certain she will be so before long—though, with her broad, red cheeks, and small, twinkling eyes, she does not look as if she would. We have a terrible night of it—a seventeen hours passage instead of twelve; and everyone, except the German governess, is frightfully ill. I am the worst of any; but even in my dire discomfort and overpowering weakness, I regard her with genuine amusement. She must be a wonderfully good sailor, for, when the tossing of the boat is at its very worst, he is able to rise from her couch— which I could no more do than a mad man—and walk about the saloon, exclaiming, in a mixture of the English and very third-rate German—not Nether Saxon—that no one ever was so ill before. I would give anything to be able to speak to her; and in the morning I certainly will, if I am alive, of which, at the rate I am going on, I have serious doubts. She continues her tirade so long that I make several attempts to express my opinion, but I find that I am not equal to more than one word between each gasp for breath. Before very long the stewardess makes her appearance, and the English girl, who is almost as prostrate as myself, seizes her arm as she passes.

"Tell that woman," she says, in a hoking voice, "that, if she doesn't lie own and stop that row, I'll box her ears!"

As I hear the sentence and threat athfully repeated in the young woman's mother tongue, I cannot refrain from a laugh, even though it brings on a paroxysm worse than ever.

"And I'll tell her so myself," continues the English girl, "only I can't speak German, and she'll be sure to say she doesn't know what I mean if I speak English."

"Then nasty Germans!" says Mrs. stewardess, spitefully. "I can't abide em."

For my part I am reduced to such a state of misery that I should be thankful to anyone who would speak kindly to me, and try to relieve my

sufferings. I believe I should receive even Theo with gratitude. I think, when the worst of the sickness has passed, and we are in what the stewardess calls calm water, I feel more utterly wretched than ever. Oh, if I could but wake up to find it all a dream, to tell Adrian all about it, and hear him call me "little stupid;" to hear his gay laugh, and feel myself once more in my "home!" But I cannot; all that is passed and gone; I am a widow, without a widow's sad privilege, without even a right to live again in the memory of the past. To lose those whom we love by death is not the worst affliction that can befall us; they are only gone before they love us still, with the very same love purified and ennobled—they are safe. Our love for them does not change; theirs never will for us. No; it is not thus that the heart suffers the worst pang; it is when we lose our best beloved because of their own indifference, or even of their dislike. That is the bitter pang; it is worse than the sting of death. I feel like some little, half-fledged bird, whom the cruel, strong cuckoo has thrust from its nest; yet I am worse off, even, than it is; for the "parent bird" is thrust out, also—my protecting wing is torn, belated.

I lie still and watch the different occupants of the saloon; now that we have got fairly into the river, they are able to move about and smarten themselves up a little. The small, fair-haired woman is telling the English girl that she parted from her husband yesterday, for they have been very unfortunate; and he is going to try his fortunes in Australia, while she is going for a year or so to teach her own language in a school in Holland, until they are able to be together again.

(To be continued.)

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