

"It was so hot indoors, but, ah, how black the night is!" She shivered, and drew closer to her companion. He put his arm about her, and she nestled to him with a happy sigh. "You won't leave me again, will you?" she said wistfully.

"If I leave you," Max answered, with caressing tenderness, "I will come back again. You can spare me for a little while, Lillian, dear!"

"Ah, you have some other love!" exclaimed the girl excitedly. "I will not trust you!"

"Hush, Lillian! you are my only love."

"Your true wife!" she said, growing calmer. "Nothing can undo that, can it?"

"No, nothing, my wife," he said, holding her to him, and his voice trembled.

Lillian lifted her face for his kiss, and he bent down and put his lips to hers.

His wife! What then was the woman who heard the avowal from the lips that had pressed her own a thousand times with all the passion of a man's strong heart? Had he lied to her, Beryl Clavering, or to this fair-haired woman he held to his heart now? Was there no faith nor honor under heaven? Was the whole world a huge lie?

They turned away, these two, and re-entered the house; the door closed behind them, shutting out the light that had shone on such hideous treason; blotting out the light for ever from the soul of Beryl Clavering.

CHAPTER XI.

FLIGHT.

At ten o'clock at night Beryl reached her home, if home that could be called in which she had no more a place. She went to her dressing-room and rang for her maid. The maid went up at once. The lights were turned low, and Mrs. Deverell was sitting at her davenport, and scarcely turned round as she spoke quickly:

"Louise," she said, "my friend is very ill; I must return to her the first thing to-morrow. I shall have to be off very early, so no one need get up. Let Williams order a cab to come round at half past six. That is all. I am writing a note for Mr. Deverell, to be given to him when he returns, so that he will know where I am."

"But madame must have some breakfast."

"Nonsense, Louise! I shall be in time for breakfast. Why, when I lived in the country I have walked three miles before breakfast. I shall not want you any more to-night."

"Very well, madame," and Louise retired, somewhat puzzled.

There was something not quite *en règle* in these proceedings; but, still, the maid had no thought that her mistress was doing anything wrong. Madame adored her husband, and he adored her; so there was no danger of her leaving him.

But Louise's opinion on that head might have been shaken had she seen Beryl's actions when left alone. The girl hastily put into a large carpet bag a few changes of apparel and some jewels and money, and having done this she made another effort to write to her husband—though husband, alas! he was not.

Again and again she had tried and failed; her brain was in a whirl. When at length the letter was finished it was sadly incoherent, but she could do no more; she was utterly shattered and distracted; her one wild idea to fly from this house—from the man who had so betrayed her; whom she still loved with such passion, despite the unpardonable wrong he had done her. She dared not wait, dared not incur the risk of meeting him; she was swept down the torrent of her agony, and shame, and terror; in truth, Beryl, at this time, was hardly in her right senses.

She passed the night pacing up and down her room, in such torture as only those could fully understand who have passed through a similar experience; and in the morning she enveloped herself in a large fur cloak, put on a small fur cap with a thick veil, and stole noiselessly downstairs, bag in hand.

The cabman was punctual.

Beryl stepped into the cab, and told the man to drive to Charing Cross. But she took no ticket there.

She simply watched until the cab was out of sight, and then she walked out into the Strand, and straight up to Euston Square, where she took a ticket for Liverpool.

Among the passengers by the White Star Liner that sailed that afternoon for New York was Miss Margaret Calton.

So Beryl Clavering put the wide Atlantic between herself and her betrayer.

CHAPTER XII.

A LETTER.

"Is Mrs. Deverell at home?" asked Max of the footman who opened the door to him.

The man changed color.

"No, sir; she went away the day before yesterday to see someone who is ill, I think, sir. I think she left a message with Louise."

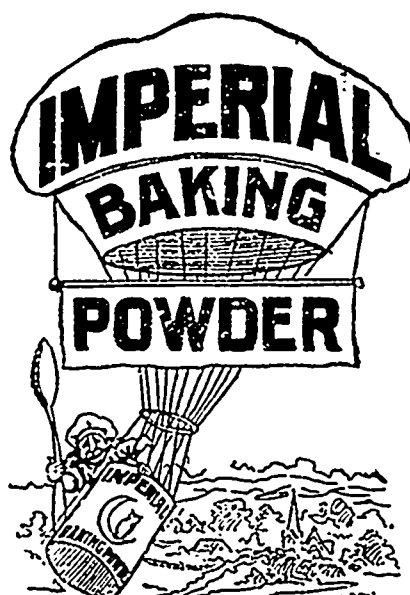
"Thanks," said Deverell quietly, though an odd chill went to his heart.

"Send Louise to me. Ah, here she is."

The maid came forward and gave her master the note Beryl had left.

He took it from her, and went straight to his study.

(To be continued.)



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