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IN THE TOILS; But Happiness Comes at Last.

CHAPTER XXXVI. IN GOOD COMPANY.

LADY HEATHERDENE'S drawing-room was full. Three nights had elapsed since Stephen Rawdon, utterly cowed and enslaved, had slunk out of Hastley Derrick's chambers in Grafton Street. There had been a great dinner in Grosvenor Square, and the gentlemen had just risen from their wine and joined the ladies. It was not the first dinner by many which Lord Heatherdene had given during the season, but this one was chiefly notable in consequence of Lord Livermore's presence.

For the first time for many years the old earl had left the castle and paid a visit to town.

Hitherto all attempts at persuading him to emerge from his retreat had been made in vain. To one and all he had given the same refusal, based on the same grounds. He was too old to leave his hermitage, too much the subject of the great tyrant, gout, to appear again in the gay world in which he had been so prominent a figure; he had even pooh-poohed the idea when it had been suggested by Lord Charles himself; but when Lady Heatherdene had made a point of his coming, the old earl had given in, and had suffered his people to bring out the traveling chest and "drag him," so he said, up to London. But, in truth, he did not need much dragging. During the few short months of his daughter-in-law's stay at the castle, he had tasted for the first time for many years the delights of domestic life. Her presence had brightened the



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ducement could be strong enough to overcome it.

Lately, Katrine had felt, by intuition rather than by any logical reasoning, that the one woman she loved had need of her.

No actual words had passed between them, nothing approaching an explanation; but Katrine, who knew Olive's every expression by heart, was conscious of an indefinable shadow, an inexplicable weakness, in the beautiful woman whom she had rescued and cherished years ago in her bitter need; and Katrine Haldine was not the woman to forsake her.

Scarcely a day passed without Katrine's presence at Grosvenor Square, and whenever she came Olive greeted her with a sense of relief that was palpable to the keen eyes of the actress. The nature of the secret, trouble, fear, apprehension, whatever it was, that lay hidden like a canker in the life of the beautiful Viscountess, Katrine could not conjecture. She knew only that the wistful, watchful, restless light in the dark eyes, and the sad droop of the mobile lips were not caused by ill health, and surmised that something was preying on the mind and heart of the young wife, who, surrounded by everything that should make life joyous, was not happy.

So Katrine was ever by her side, protecting her friend from she knew not what, ever watchful and on the alert, while seeming to be ignorant that there was anything to be watchful and concerned about.

One other woman watched also. Not with a loving anxiety to avert harm and unhappiness, but with a jealous, malicious eagerness for the revenge which she had been assured should be hers.

If Katrine Haldine did not betray her affectionate anxiety, neither did Lady Florence her jealous, envious impatience. Both were playing a part, while Olive, unconscious of their scrutiny, was absorbed by her own.

But to-night there was little or nothing of the wearied, wistful apprehension in her manner or face. They say that the condemned wretch will invariably eat a hearty breakfast on the morning of his execution, and to-night Lady Heatherdene seemed to revive all her old witchery, youthfulness, and spirits.

Magnificently dressed, wearing the Livermore diamonds, she sat at the end of the table, serene and smiling. The old earl by her side looked at her from time to time, and tapped his snuffbox approvingly; while from the head of the table Charlie glanced down with loving pride, at the wife, who, in beauty and grace, outshone even the noblest woman in the land.

"Adrienne is looking well to-night," said the old earl, as he passed into the drawing-room, leaning on his son's arm—"very well. She is one of the few women who can stand the magnificent in color. I never saw her look better."

Charlie smiled with glowing pride.

"Yes, Addy comes out well anywhere, sir," he said. "You think she is looking particularly well to-night? She has been rather pale of late, and I thought of taking her out of it, somewhere on the Continent—"

"Hang the Continent!" said the earl. "Bring her down to Livermore. What an absurd fashion this is of rushing off to some stuffy villa on a stagnant Italian lake; there is nothing like English country; you can breathe there. Bring her down to Livermore, Charlie."

Charlie laughed.

"I believe she would rather go there than anywhere else," he said, laughing at the old man's eagerness.

"Very well, bring her then," said the earl. "God, I'll ask her myself. That is, if I can get near her," he added, with a grim smile as he looked across the room where Olive was surrounded. "It looks as if only a body of horse could get at her."

Charlie laughed.

"She is always surrounded like that," he said, with pardonable pride. "What she manages to say to them all, I can't conceive."

"I don't suppose they want her to say much," rejoined the earl, and he made his way across the room to the little group in which Olive was the center.

She was sitting, with Katrine by her side, on a low ottoman, and was, as Charlie had said, completely surrounded by men, old and young, who, with their teacups in their hands, were paying that court which always

goes on round a popular leader of society.

Charlie walked over to where Lady Florence was seated at the piano with her circle of admirers round her, and, as if by right, was accorded a chair close to the music stool.

Olive looked up and saw the earl coming across the room, and with a smile made room for him beside her on the ottoman.

"An old man's privilege, gentlemen," he said, with his courtly smile, laying his hand lightly on Olive's white arm. "I could stand with the best of you one time. You have never had the gout, have you, Hamilton? Ah, that's a pleasure to come. What are you talking about?" he added, looking around at them.

"Feeling for a charity," my lord," said Fitzgerald. "I am glad you have come to exert your powerful influence."

"What is it, my dear?" he asked of Olive.

She smiled, but did not reply.

"We want Lady Heatherdene to help us in some amateur theatricals," said Lord Hamilton.

"Amateur theatricals!" said the earl grimly. "You may well call it charity—in the looker-on. I remember only once attending an amateur performance, and I think I never suffered so much in my life."

Katrine laughed softly.

"Eh?" said the earl, looking round at her, with a smile—"that is true. It reminded me of poor Kean—you remember Kean? God bless me, no! you must have been in your cradle then. They persuaded him to witness some amateur theatricals, and he sat silent and grave while the ladies and gentlemen played several scenes of 'Richard the Third'; but presently a supernumerary made his appearance on the stage, and Kean, brightening up, exclaimed, 'Ah! here is an actor, at last!'"

"Don't discourage us, my lord," said Fitzgerald. "We are trying to get up an amateur performance in aid of a hospital, to take place at the Boudoir, admission by tickets only. If Lady Heatherdene and Miss Haldine could be persuaded to take parts, the thing would be more than a success."

"I am not an amateur," said Katrine, quietly.

"Nor I," said Olive, with a touch of pride.

The old earl looked at her under his heavy eyebrows, and tapped his snuffbox. The lookers-on wondered how he would take the reminder of his daughter-in-law's past career; but, to their surprise, he smiled approvingly.

"Quite right," he said grimly. "Let them make fools of themselves by themselves—you two would spoil it! I know only one man who could play an ordinary part decently, and that is Mr. Hastley Derrick. By the way," he added, looking round, "I haven't seen him to-night."

He turned to Olive questioning, and Katrine noticed a change come over her face, as if she had suddenly assumed a guard.

"No," she said; "he is not here. I do not know why."

(To be Continued.)

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THE GERMAN LOSSES.

LONDON, April 2. (Via Reuter's Ottawa Agency.) Telegraphing from British headquarters in France to-day, Reuter's correspondent says: A local attack on the south of Hebrurton improved the position amongst the quarries, and besides the prisoners and machine guns quoted officially, the enemy's killed and wounded number over a hundred. Our dashing attack, which won the wood southwest of Hangard, which two German battalions had penetrated, resulted in our capturing fifty men and thirty machine guns—a hand-to-hand fight. The general situation at the moment is that the main advance of fresh enemy divisions continues towards the zone between the Somme and Mont Didon, whilst north of the Somme we have succeeded in establishing our lines. Figures which are available give further insight into the extent of the German losses. It is estimated that the 208th division has lost seventy per cent. of its effectives. The 83rd division lost thirty per cent. the first day of the attack, and forty per cent. in the Mezieres attack of March 29th. The attack by the 4th division to the north of the Scarpe collapsed on account of casualties. One prisoner says definitely that his battalion lost eleven officers. The 62nd infantry of the 12th division attacking along the Arras-Cambrai road lost over 800 men and had to be withdrawn. The Guard Ersatz division lost twenty-five per cent. of its strength. The average company state of the 119th division was down to forty of all ranks on March 28th. The 40th division lost 45 per cent. on the 23rd; the 5th division 50 per cent. in taking Ham, and further losses in forcing a passage of the Somme. In a recent attack north of the Scarpe one regiment lost 24 officers. A considerable increase in artillery activity against Passchendaele and Guldberg spur has taken place, but the enemy is so heavily committed to the present battle that it is not easy to believe they will try an offensive elsewhere.

ONLY AIR WORK.

LONDON, April 2. (Via Reuter's Ottawa Agency.) Telegraphing from the British headquarters in France this evening, Reuter's correspondent says: This has been the quietest day since the offensive began, excepting for the tireless activity of our airmen, who continue to harass the enemy along the front and miles to the rearward. It should be remembered that in consequence of the salient the enemy have extended their front about thirty miles, and protection against counter attacks means drawing largely on their reserves. The Australians are particu-

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