

The Die is Cast For Better or For Worse."

CHAPTER X.
Engaged.

It was not her fault; she had been driven, swept away by the force of his love. And she loved him. If any punishment were lacking, that fact supplied it; and it was this fact that was a source of her weakness; for though at intervals she resolved to write to him and make full confession, she felt that her resolution would not hold, that she would not be able to do it. And through all the gamut of emotions ran the one, predominant chord: "It is he he loves; it is he, myself."

She went next morning to the spot where the farce which had turned to tragedy had been enacted, and, closing her eyes, called up his face and listened to his words, impressing the reality of it all upon her; and holding tightly in her palm the ring he had given her, the ring which she had slipped on to her finger again, when she had locked the door of her room; but for the ring she could almost have believed that she had been living in a dream.

As the days passed, the whole place became almost unendurable to her; there was nothing in its quietude, in its solitude to divert her mind; she grew restless under the strain of always thinking, thinking of her great secret and its terrible import; and yet she gained strength, for at times the fact that he had made love to her, that he had not known the difference between her and Miss Lyndhurst, thrilled her with a glow of joy and happiness.

The bore the torture of the place another week, then she told Mrs. Bickers that she must go. The old lady's heart was wrung at the thought of parting from the girl, and she begged for another day; Kittle yielded and remained two; but on the third, the farewell was spoken with tears on both sides, and Mrs. Bickers, mopping her eyes, watched the train as it carried Kittle back to London.

Bickers met her at the station and explained Mr. Norton's absence. "The fact is, he's not very well today," she said airily. "Been rather seedy lately. Working too hard, I expect. Or a touch of gout, perhaps. I persuaded him to stay at home, and let me come. How well you're looking, Miss Kittle." The journey, the excitement of returning home had brought a flush to her face. "The boys will be delighted to see you! I've got all kinds of messages. We must have a beno to celebrate the return of the goddess. No, no! It's nothing," he said airily, in response to an anxious question about her father; "just a little seedy, nothing more; he'll be all right now he's got you back. Who wouldn't miss you? I expect mother's crying her eyes out."

Kittle tried to tell him how good the old lady had been to her, and how grateful she was. Bickers got the cab and the luggage and they drove to Denbigh Street. Kittle tore up the stairs; her father, calling on her name, came to meet her, and she hugged him and scanned his face.

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anxiously. "I'm all right," he declared. "I can see Bickers has been gassing about me, he's a regular old woman. Come and tell me all about what you've been doing."

Her heart smote at the question; she winced guiltily and hid her face against him as she sat in her old familiar attitude on the arm of the shabby old chair. She told him about the cottage, about Mrs. Bickers, her goodness, kindness, loveliness, and all the care she had taken of her.

"We must have her up to London to stay with us, dad, and take her about to see the sights. She would enjoy it so."

He seized on the idea eagerly. "Yes, yes! You must take her about, to the kind of places she would like; Earl's Court, and so on. Of course!" Kittle unwound her arms and rose from the chair.

"I must go and unpack, dear," she said. "Oh, how good it is to be home again!"

"I say!" he called after her. She stopped at the door, but did not turn her face. "We must have a bit of a flare-up to-night. I've asked the boys, all of them, to come in to supper. They're all mad to see you."

"I assure you he has been most insufferable while you've been away, Miss Kittle," said Vilorne. "To hear him talk any one would think that there was only one mother in the world, and that Bickers, by some special virtue, had got her. And he gasses about the 'cottage by the wood' until we have to go and stare at Buckingham Palace to get rid of

it. If you hadn't come home, we should have killed Bickers."

"That's so," said Teddy Wilson. "I tell you, Miss Kittle, that I've had the greatest difficulty in keeping the words 'mother' and 'cottage by the wood' out of my articles for the Daily Telephone."

"You're just in time to see the new play at the Comus, Miss Kittle," said Maudeville. "I should have refused to play, I would have made 'em put it off, if you hadn't come back. I've got a fine part; and I want to go over it with you, as you did last time."

"And I've got a set of verses I want you to hear," broke in Percy Vilorne eagerly. "Best thing I've ever done. I've called it 'The Wood Nymph.' It's about a girl, a beautiful girl, who goes into the country—"

Kittle responded to one and all of them, her face flushed, her eyes sparkling with happiness. Her father, sitting opposite her, his face more than flushed, his eyes beaming with fond pride, presided at the feast with a geniality and aplomb which were worthy of even De Courcy Norton. They were all hungry; the wine passed freely, and freely ran the laughter, the jest, the bit of literary gossip, the note of good-natured criticism. They were at the height of their enjoyment, when there came a knock at the door.

"Come in!" cried Norton. Hagnes Hevangeline opened the door and discovered the tall, spare form and wrinkled face of Mr. Levison. "Hello, Levison!" said Norton. "Come in! You're just in time—Hagnes Hevangeline, a chair for Mr. Levison."

Levison bent over Kittle with a murmured apology; but she had the

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chair squeezed in next her own and made him sit down. The feast took on a new lease; what remained of the eatables was presently removed by the perspiring Hagnes; the big, cracked punch-bowl was placed in front of Mr. Norton, cigars and tobacco were distributed, and the room soon grew hazy. Percy Vilorne, very red in the face and with a sudden and astonishing air of bashfulness, knocked on the table with his pipe, and said:

"Silence, gentlemen, for a toast!" The demand was met by a fearful noise of banging tumblers, and shouts of "Bravo, Percy!" Norton leaned back in his chair with an anticipatory smile; and Percy began with much stammering and nervousness.

"I feel that on this occasion—that on this occasion I feel—I say that on this occasion I cannot but feel—"

"You ought to feel like an ass, for hat's what you look like, dear boy," said Wilson, quite good-temperedly.

"If you think you can do better yourself—" retorted Percy indignantly, but with equal good temper.

"Shut up, Wilson! Go on, Percy; don't mind him. It's only envy. We can't all be orators."

"Well, look here," said Percy, abandoning the idea of a speech. "You know my toast well enough. It's Miss Kittle! Miss Kittle, and God bless her!"

Kittle still smiled, but her eyes were full of tears. She looked at them all with a little piteous entreaty, and her lips opened, but they quivered so much that she could not speak.

"Oh, I can't say anything!" she murmured to Levison, who was looking round with a dry smile. "Father!"

De Courcy—every inch the Dook—rose with his hand thrust in his bosom, looking down on them with a genial, bland, paternal smile of pride and benediction.

"Gentlemen," he said, clearing his throat, "my daughter is so overcome by the great honor you have done her that she has deputed to me the pleasant and welcome task of thanking you for the great kindness, the affection—the affection—the affection—"

He paused, the color began to fade slowly from his face, a look of wonderment, of something like terror shone in his eyes, the hand in his bosom clutched at his heart; he swayed to and fro, then gasping, as if for breath, fell back in his chair, with his head dropped on his breast.

There was a moment of terrible silence; then they sprang to their feet, overturning some of the chairs, and hurried to him. But Kittle was already at his side. With a cry of alarm she threw her arms round him and threw his head to her bosom.

"Oh, what is it, father, what is it?" she cried. "He has fainted—fainted! He is ill!"

Levison stepped between her and the crowd around them, bent over the stricken man; then laid his thin hand on Kittle's shoulder. Something in his touch, in the expression of his dark eyes, softened now, conveyed the truth to Kittle.

Her father was dead. (To be continued.)

If alcohol drops on polished wood wipe the spot immediately with cloth dipped in vaseline.

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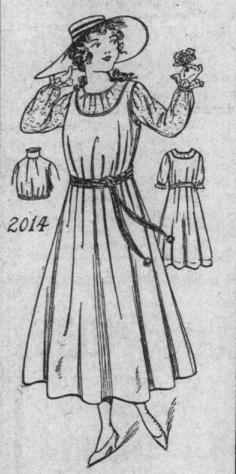
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The Woman the Child and the Fairy

Paper Read to the Ladies
Club by Mrs. Hector

This was, at first, to be a simple little paper on "The Bookshelf." However, in anything passably well, I think seriously,—must do fountain-head,—so to speak,—going to the nursery book deep things. In a short article by Mrs. sen, describing a churchy across these lines:—"How well, it's a very mournful here rests a man who seven years considering his should get a good idea. sject of his life was to a thing, and at last, feeling in his own mind that he was so glad of it, that he joy at having caught an idea.

Now, an idea came to me, sincerely hope that when will have come to an end, wish that it had been striking to have sent me a old gentleman company!

In the first place we every good fairy-tale is of that Tree of Knowledge of and Evil. It is the glory of Eden which it had all beautiful things, branches into the 'spare-time' of the future.

For the spirit within lay- ing to the Spirit without, the most ignorant savage search earth, sea, and sky, for the Mystery of Life, and myths of the ages have us as the strange lord of hood of the world.

The fairy-tale is the stepping-stone to a knowledge of Universe—for the faculty is the basis of religion. That tence is suggestive. It is nursery as being the child, which human life revolves.

The artists of a bygone ev- ly thought so—if we take the curtsie subject of the Mamma Child into consideration, (who herself wrote fairy-tale for grandchildren) has said that could trace the ceaseless her imagination back to the days of her childhood,—and suppress the marvellous of a child, is to set at naught the of nature. A child lives in conditions; for all without his wonderful, and all within his first sight, appear wonderful.

When we learn that one of our best schools of theology declares "given a child up to the age of years old and they have the child life," we know that some of importance must be going in child mind. Plasticity is their are its chief features.

Nathan Oppenheim, A.B., M.D. (Coll. P. & S., N.Y.) author of eral books on the development medical diseases of children has to say:—"His (the child's) plasticity is so great, that it assumes the

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