

# LADY AYLMEYER.

CHAPTER XII.  
LIT IN DARKNESS.

In a veranda of the Government House at Madras, Dick Aylmer sat smoking—smoking and brooding over the inexplicable tangle which we call life.

He had now been three months without one word from Dorothy. He did not know if the child had been born or not, if mother or child were living or dead, if Dorothy, his dear little wife, were false or true. He had heard from her once after reaching India, when she had written in good spirits and with many words of love for him, and in fondest anticipation of their meeting in a few months' time.

But after that letter there had been utter silence. He had written every week, he had telegraphed several times, and to-day the mail was in again, and there was still no news. He had three or four letters of no importance on the chair beside him, and the English papers, but nothing from her. He had had news of her—oh, yes—the news contained in that postscript of Lord Aylmer's letter, and he had dismissed that from his mind at once as an ill-natured lie, and for a week or two he had scarcely troubled himself about it. Yet as the weeks crept heavily by, each week bringing fresh disappointment, that letter came back to his thoughts over and over again. Could it be possible that his little girl—oh, no, no—nothing should make him believe it, nothing, nothing.

And yet, why did she not write? She must be at Palace Mansions yet, because his letter had never been returned, nor yet his telegrams. Once or twice he had thought of writing to the landlady, or rather the office at which he had taken the flat, but he shrank from doing that because he might be casting a slur upon Dorothy's fair name, which she would never be able to shake off.

No, that course would not do. He had thought and thought, he had turned it all over in his mind, and, except the idea of writing to a private detective and putting the case in his hands, he could think of no way of solving the mystery.

While he was sitting there brooding over his thoughts, a young man dressed in white garments, came through a doorway behind him, and pulled up a big chair a little nearer to Dick's, in which he carefully disposed himself.

"Really, Dick," he remarked, "I don't call this half a bad place. Not so jolly as London, of course, but still not half bad."

"I hate it," answered Dick, shortly.

The other, fresh from home, looked at him with amused pity. "Poor old chap! like town better. Yes, of course. Why did you come out, then, eh? You got the post that was meant for me?"

"Lord Aylmer got the appointment and I had to come—I had no choice. I shouldn't be here if I had, you may be sure," Dick answered.

"Ah! Lord Aylmer, queer old chap, eh?" "A wily old brute," said Dick, with a sigh, "but he happened for the present to be the ruler of my fortunes, and a thorough-going old martinet he is, too."

"Ah! I saw him the other day."

"Dick looked up with some interest. "Did you, though? In town?"

"Yes."

Now, town to Dick meant where Dorothy was, and for half an instant he had a wild idea that this man might be able to give him news of her. It died almost in its birth, however, and he said indifferently enough, "Were you in town long?"

"A fortnight altogether. My sister lives in town, you know."

"No, I didn't—didn't know you had a sister."

"Oh, yes; she's a widow—has a little flat."

"A flat?" Dick pricked up his ears. "Yes. Where?"

"In Kensington, Palace Mansions, they're called."

"In Palace Mansions," Dick managed to repeat.

The whole world seemed to be blotting out in a strange and insidious fashion, and it was two or three minutes before Dick came to his full senses again.

"I don't think she ought to live there," Marston went on, not looking at Dick, but attending to his pipe. "Living alone, except for the child. You never know what the other people are, don't you know. Now, there's a pretty little woman living in the flat below her."

"What number is your sister's?" Dick asked in a harsh, strained voice.

"No. 6," Marston answered.

In the flash of an instant Dick had made a wild calculation. Yes, he meant Dorothy by "a pretty little woman." "Well?" he said.

He felt sick and faint and cold; he knew that now he was on the eve of news, and Marston's tone had made him dread to hear it.

Marston, all in ignorance, went on speaking. "Such a pretty girl. I saw her several times—fairish hair and delicate-looking, almost like a lady. Well, she went to live in the flat below my sister's and was very quiet. Husband came and went. My sister fancied it was a bit suspicious, and was careful to get no acquaintance with her. Well, for some months all went smoothly and quietly enough, then she heard through her servants, I suppose, that Mrs. Harris's husband had gone off to India, and that she was going out later when the child was born."

"Was there a child?" Dick asked. He was trembling so that he could scarcely force his lips to frame the words.

Marston noticed nothing, but went on with the story. "A child. I don't know if there was one then—there's one now. I've seen it."

Dick sat still by a mighty effort—"Well?" he said.

"Well, only a few days after the poor chap had gone, my sister saw her handed into a smart carriage by an old gentleman—heard the footman call him 'my lord' a pair of high-stepping horses—all in grand style. And now that carriage is always there, and who do you think the old gentleman is?"

"How should I know?" answered Dick, who was going over and over the postscript of his uncle's letter.

"You'll know when I tell you," said Marston, with a chuckle; "it was your old uncle, Lord Aylmer."

"Impossible!" Dick burst out.

"Not impossible at all, my dear chap," said Marston coolly. "I saw her driving with him myself; and jolly wretched she looked over it. I must say I pitied the poor devil out here, but I dare say he is having a very good time all the same. Eh? What?"

"He asked of a native servant, who had noiselessly approached him, 'My lady wishes to speak to you, sir,' said the man, who spoke very good English."

"Oh, all right, I'll come," and Marston went in, leaving poor Dick to fight his battle of pain alone.

So that was it, after all. No, he wouldn't believe it, and yet—yet—how could he help believing it? Marston had told him the plain, unvarnished facts, not knowing that Dick Aylmer and Mrs. Harris's husband were one and the same man. So this was why his uncle had suddenly taken a guiding hand in his fortunes—this was why he shipped him off to India, at what might be called a moment's notice. "Ah! had seen my Dorothy and wanted me out of the way and he got me out of the way, and my darling—but no, no—I will believe nothing—nothing until I have seen her."

For half an hour he sat in deep thought, trying to determine what would be the best to do, what would be the best course to take; trying, too, to unravel the rest of the tangle, part of which had been opened out before him. But that was an impossible task for him without further information, and he began to wonder how he could get home, and how arrange a plausible excuse to Lord Skeverleigh. He must go home, that was certain; evidently his letters and telegrams had reached him of no effect, probably they had never reached her at all. Why—perhaps that wicked old savage had found means of stopping them, and in that case perhaps Dorothy was fretting her heart out, wondering why he never wrote—perhaps—well, perhaps the child's birth would be in the papers. In spite of silence and mystery she might, as a last resource, have put that in, in the hope of catching his eye.

He began hurriedly to unfasten the paper lying on the top of the little heap beside him. Ah! the Standard: "Abington—Bowers—Eade—Duchess of Dreamland—Hington"—No, there was no little babe called Harris in the short list.

He put down the paper in dire disappointment. Poor Dick! He was getting so weary of being disappointed that each blow seemed to fall more and more heavily.

And then just as he was letting the paper fall to his knee, two words caught his eye—two words—"Dinna Forget." With a great throw at his heart Dick caught the paper back again. Yes, it was a message from Dorothy, right out of the depths of despair.

"Dinna Forget. To Dick—This long silence is killing me—why do you not write. For God's sake put me out of suspense one way or the other. D. A."

For full five minutes Dick never moved; then he reverently took off his hat and thanked God that he had made the way plain at last.

Yet, though the way was plain, it was not an easy one. It would be difficult for him to get away from Madras, and neither letters or telegrams were evidently of any use, since Dorothy had not received those that he had sent. Decidedly, he must go home, even if he went the length of sending his papers in and trusting to chance and good fortune to be able to make some sort of a living—enough to keep Dorothy and the child. But in any case, home he must go, to set his wife's mind at rest, and to force that old sinner on his knees to sue for the mercy which he would not get.

As soon as Lord Skeverleigh returned to the house, Dick sent to ask him if he could see him, and to him he explained something of the position of affairs, ending with, "And I must go home; if it costs me all I have in the world."

Now, it happened that Lord Skeverleigh, though he liked Dick very well, had particularly wished to make Marston his military secretary, and had been able to refuse his old friend Aylmer, he would certainly have done so. There were, however, certain pages of past history which practically precluded this possibility, but they did not preclude him from allowing Dick to throw up his appointment and betake himself home as soon as he liked; and with the very next steamer Dick said good-bye to India and to Government House and set sail for his native country, hurrying off the boat at Brindisi and journeying homeward overland, like an avenging spirit with whom the wicked old man who was at the head of his house, would have a very hard reckoning and but scant quarter.

For always in his heart there was that piteous appeal, "This long silence is killing me—for God's sake put me out of suspense, one way or the other."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

## Her Kindness of Heart.

Madame, he said wearily. I'm a discouraged man, I am. I've been trying for two days to get arrested so's I could get somethin' to eat an' a place to sleep.

And haven't you succeeded yet? she asked sympathetically.

No'm; I'm hungry and sleepy yet. I've got ter ask for assistance. An' I ain't goin' away till I get it.

Well, she answered thoughtfully, I'll help you.

You will?

Yes. My brother-in-law's a policeman, and he'll be home in 15 or 20 minutes. You just hang around here for that time and I'll use my influence with him to have you arrested.

## MERRY MOMENTS.

Wyld—"Can't you ever overcome your thirst for rum?" Tramp—"Yes, sir, with a dime."

He—"I've been watching for a chance to kiss you for the last ten minutes." She—"You must be near-sighted."

He—"You reject me because I am poor." Heiress—"Say, rather, that you are poor because I reject you."

Kingly—"Does your wife ever try to boss you as much as she used to?" Bingo—"No; she doesn't even have to try now."

The Soft Answer—"He (just proposed)—'You hesitate. Have I a rival, then?' She—"Oh, no. On the contrary, you are my fiancee's rival."

"Father," said the boy, "what is insolvent?" "Insolvent," was the reply, "is merely a long word used to describe a short condition."

She—"I have an instinctive feeling that I can trust you." He (passionately)—"Ah, my darling, would that some others felt that way!"

New boarder—"What's the row upstairs?" Landlady—"It's the professor of hypnotism trying to get his wife's permission to go out this evening."

This world's a most eccentric place—The thought we can't dialogue—One-half is begging for the work The other wants to dodge.

"I hear, Miss Impudence, that you have the bicycle craze." "Yes. That is, I have the craze, but I'm sorry to say that I haven't the bicycle."

Stern father of the girl—"I saw you kiss my daughter as I passed the parlor a while ago, and I want you to know I don't like it." Young man—"You may not, but I do."

Proud father—"This is a sunset my daughter painted. She studied painting abroad, you know." Friend—"Ah! that explains it. I never saw a sunset like that in this country."

Perdita—"If you continue much longer to play poker with my father I won't marry you." Jack Dashing—"If your father continues to play poker much longer with me I won't need to."

Little Miss Muggs (haughtily)—"My sister never goes out without a chaperon." Little Miss Frockles (disdainfully)—"My sister wouldn't be allowed to, either, if she was like your sister."

Father—"Fritz, I saw you last evening helping home an intoxicated student. Don't do it again; it makes a bad impression." Fritz—"Oh, that's all right. I only did it to get even with him."

Debtor (apologetic)—"The payment of that account is a source of constant anxiety to me, I assure you." Creditor—"Very likely. You're afraid you might forget yourself and pay it."

Dr. Pulser—"The action of winking is not without its use; people wink to keep the eyeball moist." Soda water clerk—"Not much they don't. The people who come in here wink to keep their throats moist."

"If I could run across a horse called 'Money,'" said the gloomy man at the races, "I'd bet on it." "Why?" "Because that's the only thing that's sure to go fast enough around here."

Mrs. White—"And do you mean to say that you and your husband always agree about everything?" Mrs. Black—"Always; except, of course, now and then when he's out of humor or pigheaded, or something of that sort."

"I'm very much afraid," his mother said, "that this pie needs more shortening." "Mamma," said the boy in an audible undertone, "that isn't what my piece needs." "Isn't it?" "No'm. My piece needs lengthening."

"Keep out of debt, young man," said the philosopher. "People will think better of you for it." "Perhaps," was the thoughtful reply; "and yet I've noticed the more I owe people the gladder they always seem to see me."

Roddater—"I say, old fellow, can you lend us a pair of scales for a few days?" Married chum—"We have a pair, but sorry to say they are out of order; they weigh heavy." Roddater (excitedly)—"The very thing; we're going fishing!"

Experience is a teacher rare; The festive youth, they say, His hat of straw declines to wear Until assured the weather fair Has really come to stay.

Outertown (enthusiastically)—"Citily, old man, you ought to move out to Lonely wood. Its peacefulness and quiet would make you live twice as long as you will." Citily—"But if I were living out there I shouldn't care to live twice as long."

Old Gentleman—"Do you think, sir, that you are able to support my daughter without continually hovering on the verge of bankruptcy?" Suitor—"Oh, yes, sir, I am sure I can." Old Gentleman—"Well, that's more than I can do. Take her and be happy."

Hobbs—"My stenographer is invaluable. I couldn't get along without one." Neilly—"But you don't have enough correspondence to keep a stenographer busy!" Hobbs—"I know; but do you suppose I'm going to let the men with whom I do business know that?"

"How did Hobson manage to become engaged to the wealthy Miss Antique? I thought she was a man-hater." "So she was, but when he advised her not to get a bell for her bicycle, for when she rode it there was already one on it, she immediately succumbed."

Judge—"Do you mean to say, sir, that you prosecuted this man for theft, when you have no better evidence of his guilt than that he had \$10 on his person?" Attorney—"Yes, sir." Judge—"How dare you ask a conviction on such evidence?" Attorney—"The man is a poet your honor."

"Doctor—"I would advise you, dear madam, to take frequent baths, plenty of fresh-air, and dress in cool gowns." Husband (an hour later)—"What did the doctor say?" Wife—"He said I ought to go to a watering place, and afterwards to the mountains, and to get some new, light gowns at once."

## He Indulged.

Mrs. Brown—Have you an indulgent husband?

Mrs. Green—Oh, yes, indeed—he comes home intoxicated nearly every night.

## YOUNG FOLKS.

### A Monday Morning Surprise.

"And help mamma all you can," Gracie was reading her Sunday-school paper, and looked up thoughtfully as she came to these words in a story that a far-off auntie had written to her niece. It was Monday morning, and out of the hot, close kitchen Gracie could hear the rub, rub of the clothes on the washboard, and the splash and ding of the water-pails, as the hired man in his heedless way filled boiler and tubs for Gracie's tired mother.

"And help mamma all you can." Gracie had turned the leaf, and the words were not on the leaf she was now reading, but they seemed to be on every page.

"That was what Aunt Clara wrote little Elsie, and it does not mean me at all," she thought, with a guilty flush creeping over her face, for Gracie knew that her own dear mamma needed help that very moment.

One, two, three columns of the paper were half read in her hurry to drive away uncomforable thoughts; but she could not, and the story she had been so eagerly following had lost all its interest.

"Help mamma all I can? Well, I will." And the paper was flung aside with such a rustle that grandpa looked up over his glasses to see what the noise meant. Gracie looked about the room in which she and grandpa were sitting.

"Oh, dear! it's all upset, and I do hate to sweep and dust. Mamma won't expect me to do it."

No, Gracie's mother did not; for she had found it so much harder work trying to teach her little ten-year-old girl to do such tasks neatly and thoroughly, and willingly, than to do them herself, that she had let all the work fall on to herself.

The chairs were in a huddle, the table was littered with crumpled papers, and every rug askew, with kicked-up corners. How tired and discouraged such disorderly rooms make a jaded mother feel, when she comes in from her hard, hot work in the kitchen to put another corner of her house to rights!

Watch your mother's face some day, little girl, and see if it does not grow rested and happy when she finds her thoughtful little daughter has neatly done the work that the mother thought was waiting.

Gracie knew just what the sitting-room needed. She tumbled the dusty rugs out on to the green grass in the yard, carried the chairs into the front entry to save them from an extra coat of dust, carefully folded and placed in a pile every paper except the one grandpa was reading, and put everything in perfect order. Then she stole out into the kitchen for broom and dust-pan, and Gracie's mother bent low over her wash, was so blind with steam and suds, and so deaf with the steady rub-rub, slosh-slosh of her clothes, she did not see, or hear the little girl who scudded past her.

Did you know that any ten-year-old girl can sweep quickly and well when her arms are strong and willing and careful? And I think the careful, willing part counts more than strength. Before grandpa had thought of moving out of the windward breeze of that Monday clearing up, there was the whisk of a busy broom around his chair, and Gracie's brown braids came between his eyes and the newspaper.

"Come, grandpa, please move. I want to sweep where you are sitting," sent him and his big chair trundling across the floor upon a patch of sunshine by the window, where the light was better, and the carpet brushed free from every speck of dust.

Scratch, whisk! went Gracie's strong turkey-wing into every corner and cranny of casing and furniture. Not a bit of use for a raveling or fuzz of dust to think of hiding in that room with Gracie's broom and duster whisking after them. She had watched her mother put it in the nicest order so many times she knew just what was needed to be done, only never before had she set herself so thoroughly to do it.

When it was finished, the rugs aired and spread out without a wrinkle or askew, the chairs rubbed till they shone, put in their places, table cover straightened, the brittle cedar boughs in the open grate replaced with fragrant, fresh ones, and two mantel vases filled with sweet-scented flowers from the garden, beaded with dew and bright with color, the room looked, and smelled, and felt restful. Grandpa must have thought so, for he went soundly to sleep in his arm-chair by the window, with his newspaper across his face, and the sunshine flooding him with a warm bath.

Gracie softly clicked the latch after her when she went out to hang broom and dusterpan in their places. Some way she felt happier and better satisfied with herself than if she had read half a dozen interesting stories that forenoon, and imagined she was the good girl in each.

"Help mamma all you can." The words of Aunt Clara's letter popped right to the top again, just as soon as Gracie stepped into the kitchen, for there was the wringer she could turn for her weary, heated mother, and starch to stir, and one, two, three baskets to help carry out and spread on the green grass in the back garden, and a hundred steps to take for mother in helping clear up the steamy, sloopy kitchen.

But the best of all came afterward, and that was when tubs and wringer had been put away until another Monday, and the last floor board had been rubbed bright. Gracie's mother gave her rolled-up sleeves an extra little hitch and twist to tighten them, coiled the loosened, gray-straked hair a little closer, and with such tired arms and face, reached for the broom and duster. Then she opened the sitting-room door, and, oh, I wish you helpful and unhelpful little girls could have seen her face then! It said Gracie twenty times over for all her work. Why, the very coolness and sweet restfulness of the fragrant, orderly room seemed to come right into her face.

I do think, if I were a ten-year-old girl, I would plan just such surprises for my mother every week I lived with her. Try it, little girls, and see if a sweet share of the rest and happiness you give your tired mother does not fill your own heart.

## RESERVE FORCE OF BRITAIN.

The Vast Pecuniary Resources of the Empire if She Were Driven Into War.

For the information of cranky tail-twisters it may be useful to show some of the resources of that Empire upon which the sun never sets. Unreflecting people are apt to forget that Great Britain, with less than one-half its present population, and with India then a drag—and not as now a reserve—overcame Napoleon, then in his pride of place. He disposed of, and skillfully administered, the resources of France, Italy, Belgium, Holland, Switzerland, and part of Germany; but on the English side, although there was bull-dog tenacity, governmental and administrative skill were lacking.

The childish and mischievous conduct of the State of Nicaragua in outraging British subjects, and refusing reparation until forcibly compelled to do so, has given an opportunity for the minority of tail-twisting cranks across the line—who are the laughing-stock of sensible Americans—to make a public exhibition of themselves.

The New York Nation, their leading literary-political journal, ridicules such men. It justly observes that "nations do not arbitrate insults." Common sense teaches that if A strikes and robs B that in no fit subject for arbitration, but one to be decided by superior force, namely,

### THE ARM OF JUSTICE.

The Nation sarcastically observes that the discussions upon the affair in and out of Congress "have been worthy of the lunatic asylum."

In a recent issue attention was drawn to the fact that, including British India—but excluding all the colonies—England wields the resources of 250,000,000 of subjects, or fifteen times as many as when she faced Napoleon. Her position therefore is vastly stronger, both actually and relatively, to what it was in the early part of the century. The London Economist has recently drawn attention to a little known fact, showing the vast pecuniary resources at the immediate command of Great Britain if she were driven into war. Nowadays wars are swift in their course, and therefore those nations that have large means, immediately available, have a great advantage. The Economist explains what will be a surprise to almost all, that England has a practical reserve of £200,000,000 immediately available, which, owing to the enormous utilizable warlike resources of India, and to her vast mercantile marine, would suffice to equip and place 400,000 men in the field in any part of the world.

### THIS PECUNIARY RESOURCE.

arises thus: There is a fixed sum of £25,000,000 annually allotted in the budget to pay the interest of the national debt, and also to reduce the amount. The interest is less than £19,000,000, so that every year there remains a balance of over £6,000,000 sterling towards diminishing the debt. During the last two years it has been reduced by £12,718,000, which is at the rate of £6,359,000 per annum. The economist explains that if a great war loan was necessary the latter sum would pay the interest upon a loan of £200,000,000 without the slightest increase of taxation. This would enable the Empire to promptly exert its full strength. The circulation of such a vast sum would make hundreds of thousands busy, and thus, by preventing discontent, would indirectly add to the national effectiveness. So far as can be seen there is now no fear of a great war, but the more the vast resources of Great Britain are realized the greater is the security for continued peace. What additionally increases its likelihood is the fact that the Liberal leader and Foreign Secretary are both masculine-minded statesmen. Patriotic men of all parties felt it as a relief when Lord Rosebery became Foreign Minister. Mr. Gladstone's retirement has increased the likelihood of permanent peace.

### KNIGHT OF THE CREASE.

England's Famous Cricketer May be Made Sir William Gilbert Grace.

A despatch from London says:—It is rumored that Dr. William Gilbert Grace, the distinguished cricketer, is to be knighted.

Dr. W. G. Grace was born at Downend, near Bristol, England, in 1848, and his first appearance in important matches was with the West Gloucestershire eleven. Between 1864 and 1879 he made 29,842 runs in a total of 415 innings.

His exploits as a batsman, fielder and bowler became so celebrated that the title of "champion" was spontaneously conferred upon him. No amateur or professional has ever reached the batting average credited to "W. G.," who comes of a cricketing family.

He and his brothers, E. M. and G. F., were long known in the cricket world as the "Three Graces." The former, though in his fifty-first year still plays on the county eleven, and as a "point" he is still in the first rank. G. F. G. died in 1877 from typhoid fever, while in the height of his cricketing fame.

In July, 1879, at Lord's Cricket Ground, London, Dr. Grace was presented by his enthusiastic admirers with a testimonial amounting in value to £1,400. Only last week he scored his 100th century, playing for his county against Somersetshire.

Although pursuing the medical profession, he devotes most of the Summer months to his favorite pastime and his appearance on the field is always productive of an outburst of cheers. He is lionized wherever he goes, and is immensely popular with all classes. Dr. Grace is a non-smoker and a very moderate drinker.

He always says that he received his first lessons in cricket from his mother, who was, in addition to her fondness for that game, a first-rate shot and an excellent horsewoman. His elder brother, Dr. E. M. Grace, is Coroner for the western division of the County of Gloucestershire.

Who so escapes a duty avoids a gain.—Theodore Parker.