

OUT OF DARKNESS.

BY MRS. WILL C. HAWKSLEY.

Author of "Black or White?" "Turning the Tables," "Held to her Promise," "Shattered Ideals," "Our Young Men's Club," etc., etc.

CHAPTER V.

A WOMAN'S ENDURANCE.



HE message Mary had written to Wynne was, "Come as soon as ever Guy can spare you." A telegram, heralding her prompt appearance, which reached Thetfield on Friday morning, was hailed with joy. Oddly enough, too, the first discovery that took place, after she reached the Vicarage, was that of a former meeting between herself and Dr. Jaxon.

"I don't suppose you will recognise me, especially out of uniform," she said, with a laugh, as she held out her hand. "At the best of times we nurses are very small folk in hospital. But you were staying with the house surgeon at Shingleby, and he brought you round the wards."

"Very unkind of you to imagine that your memory is better than mine, Miss Ryder. I have a distinct picture before me of you bending over a poor girl who had been horribly mutilated in a railway accident, and could do nothing but scream, 'Oh, my poor legs, my poor legs!'

There! You see now that I recollect more than you supposed."

Mary's expostulations interrupted the conversation. "Really, my dear Wynne, you are growing quite too professional," she exclaimed. "You haven't taken off your hat or even seen your Godchild, who will certainly come down as she is if you don't very speedily go to her."

"Oh, the darling! Is she in bed, Mary? I've been yearning to hug that infant——" and the rest of the sentence died away as she rushed up the staircase at the top of her speed. Mrs. Jaxon laughed.

"I fancy she'll never become quite an ordinary, humdrum nurse," she remarked. "How odd that you should have seen and noticed her amongst so many, Harry, without even hearing her name."

"She was so singularly sympathetic," he explained. "It will be rather amusing apparently to watch her under an entirely new aspect. Your particular chum, isn't she, Miss Brookes?"

"Yes. By the way, Walter, did you engage those seats on the coach for to-morrow? If a man makes me a promise, he need never fancy that I shall let him meanly shuffle out of it."

Of course Walter had booked the much-desired coach seats for the Lazenby excursion, and it was a happy detail that the next morning dawned bright and clear as heart—even Stella's heart—could desire. A drive, even across Derbyshire moors, though a lovely village amidst the hills be its termination, and the orthodox high tea, with an accompaniment of ham and eggs, the promised refreshment, is not exhilarating upon a wet day.

However, as the party from St. Hilda's Vicarage clambered into their places, the golden sunbeams were pouring a flood of light down upon the sooty town, and lighting up the faces of the holiday makers with extra gladness. "A day off," as Walter was wont to call such an occasion as the present, was a rare matter with Mr. and Mrs. Jaxon, and—married folks as they were—they appreciated the enjoyment as much as their companions.

It was at Haresdale that the horses drew up for a short breathing space. Long ago each sign of smoke and of the crowded, noisy haunts of men had been left behind. In the pure air the spirits of every one of the party had risen, and chatter and laughter were the order of the day.