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A Terrible Tangle.

CHAPTER XXI.
"GOD GIVE ME STRENGTH!" She went away without another word, and left the house without attempting to see Lord Garland. Neither did she feel equal to seeing Beth again. She went home to her big, lonely house instead, and tried to see some way out of this tangle; tried to hit upon some method of circumventing Ottershaw. Strong and subtle as he was, she was a woman of resource, and he roused the spirit in her, and called up all the energy she possessed. "At least," she said, between her teeth, "he shall not beat me in everything. If Lil must go to the wall, she must go, but I shall stand all my life between him and Beth. For," mused Mrs. Griffin, "in some way or other, Mark has lost his hold on Beth's heart. She did care for him once, but now she dreads him, and I believe despises him. The love she gave him once has passed into love for that poor dead man. I know he had Beth in his mind when he spoke as he did just now, and unless she feels herself to work with me, he shall never have her, never!" While Mrs. Griffin was pondering and planning, Beth was going through a fresh ordeal. She had given orders that she could see no one save Mrs. Griffin, but when Mary came to her and told her that Lord Garland was below, and was most anxious to be allowed to speak to her, Beth had not the heart to send him away. Indeed, she lost count of her own sorrow and trouble, as she went down to that little study on the ground floor, and put her hands in Henry

Garland's thin, nervous ones. The man had become much more feeble; he could not stand to greet Beth, and as he would have spoken, a fit of terrible coughing choked him. Beth's eyes filled with tears as she watched him struggle for breath. "Oh, that is nothing," he said, almost brightly. "I have had a cough all my life. And I wanted to see you so much, Beth—so very much. I want to give you my loving sympathy, for I know that you are very unhappy; and, oh, my dear, I am so sorry! I hoped to have seen you and your husband together, dear Beth. But you must be brave. God is always good, though sometimes we cannot see His goodness very clearly." Beth could not speak, she could only put her hand into his and press it tenderly. Lord Garland looked at her white face and bowed head. "I love you so much, Beth, my dear," he said, and his voice had a broken sound, "and I have come to you, not to tell you how I grieve for you, but to ask you to render me a service"—he caught his breath—"it is about Lil," he said then, in a murmur. Beth's heart contracted. The pain was so sharp it made her wince, and her hand trembled. Lord Garland seemed to understand her silence. "Yes, you know already what I have to say, Beth, dear. I—I have tried to deceive myself, tried to hope—but the truth is too strong, Beth. My days, perhaps my hours, are numbered. I—I cannot tell even you what the thought of separation from my darling means, but death has no pity. I am called. I must go. Only before I go, I must provide for Lil. I must know that she will be cared for, loved as I have loved her—surrounded by all the brightness and comfort, without which she would never live—

and it is to you I turn. Beth, she was your child, you gave her to me; now I am giving back my treasure! You— He had to break off, his strength was exhausted. Beth bent over him with a new pang of fear and anxiety. Hurriedly she obeyed a gesture he made, and drawing a small phial from his coat pocket, put this to his lips. Henry Garland had to rest with his eyes closed for a moment or two, and Beth stood and looked at him with a sob in her throat. "If he only knew what he asks! If he only knew at what a cost I shall do this! Oh, God! give me strength and forgetfulness!" CHAPTER XXII. MABEL WHITE ASTONDED. Ottershaw was awakened from the state of intense satisfaction that came to him when he knew that the game was entirely in his hands, by a communication addressed to him by some doctor, who wrote from a humble address in the east of London, saying that a certain Mr. James Malcolm, whom he was attending professionally, had desired that he should be summoned. "Mr. Malcolm is very ill," the letter said; "I am not sure what may not eventuate." Lord Ottershaw threw this letter into the fire. For some reason it annoyed him to remember that he had yet to settle with Malcolm. The doubt that had possessed him in the first days after Malcolm had gone had ended, of course, when the news came that the work he desired done had been accomplished so thoroughly, but still he had acted incautiously in putting so much confidence in a man of James Malcolm's disposition. He had bought Malcolm's services, and he felt that the man was really honest and loyal; but he was a drunkard, and what dependence could be put on a drunkard's loyalty? However, he would have to endure this interview, but he would permit no indulgence in sentiment. And Malcolm should be paid off, and there would be an end to the matter. Just as he was leaving his house, to drive to the address given by this doctor, a man who was approaching the house paused and then spoke hurriedly. "My lord!" Ottershaw turned.

A quick frown caught his face, and he seemed to grow a little pale. Then he smiled, and held out his hand genially. "Ah! Hammond! What brings you to town? Were you coming to see me?" The man seemed to hesitate before taking the earl's hand, then just touched it for an instant. He was very respectable-looking, having the air of a farmer, or a man from the country. "Thank you, my lord," he said. "Yes, I did wish to speak to your lordship, but you're just going out now, so I'd best not keep you. I can come again later." "Oh, no time like the present," said Lord Ottershaw, pleasantly, but his pallor increased, and his lips had a drawn look. "You can say what you have to say here, Hammond." The latter paused an instant. "Well, dare say I can, though I'd rather we'd been indoors. Perhaps your lordship can guess what's brought me to town?" Ottershaw shook his head, and then his face took a grave, pained look. "I was about to say I could not guess why you should come to London, Hammond, but I fear I can only too well understand what has brought you. You have come to make inquiries about your daughter, have you not?" John Hammond's face, which had a worn look, grew very hard. "That's right, my lord; it isn't a very hard thing to guess—for your lordship must know that such a trouble is the one, the greatest thing to me and mine." Lord Ottershaw drew a very quick, sharp breath. "Well," he said, in a low voice, "and how you come upon any clew?" "Yes," Hammond said, quietly, "I have a clew, and I've come to you, my lord, to know if you can help me to make it more certain." He started a little as the other man answered: "I?" exclaimed Ottershaw, and he turned and looked at Hammond haughtily, almost angrily. "Yes, my lord," was the quiet reply. "You—"

"Explain yourself, Hammond." A look of pain contracted the face of the earl's interloper. "I've traced my girl. She left her home with—with some one else. It's just the old story, my lord. A pretty girl and a man who wants a toy for a little while. My child took the dress for gold, as many other has done afore her, and will do again. Then she was thrown one side—she went down to the gutter. I've seen the room where she lived and worked, my lord—it hid choked me. I've spoken with the other poor child, as was her companion. Then I learned of my poor bairn's attempt to destroy herself, and how some brave fellow, God bless him! save her, and how this seemed to show her that though her heart was broken, her life ruined, that life was not hers to destroy. Ah, my lord, it's a sorry story for a man like me to hear!" Ottershaw bit his lip and put out his hand again, but John Hammond shook his head. "Wait, my lord; I've not finished," he said. "In that there dark, miserable room, the girl as worked with my girl told me certain things; she had no names to give, Mabel's lips had been sealed but she said enough—and suspicion is easy born sometimes." John Hammond drew a deep breath. "If you can honestly and honorably give me your hand, my lord, I'll take it gladly, and my heart'll grow a shade lighter than it's been these many days." Lord Ottershaw looked at the speaker gravely. "Why should I not give you my hand, Hammond? Do you suppose that I could know anything about poor Mabel? The idea is a mad one!" Ottershaw said these last words with that cold arrogance that was so powerful. John Hammond looked at him doubtfully. "Once, and only once, this girl saw my child speaking with a man whom she saw by chance in the street; she described this man to me very surely, my lord!" Ottershaw turned on his companion. "By God, you go too far, Ham-

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