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But the conviction was there in her

thing in her heart was saying over and

The rest of the play seemed end-

less; she rose with a quick breath of

"You are in a hurry." June said.

"Yes, oh yes, but it's hot-I want

slow as he could—he blocked the way

out obstinately; the stalls were al-

most empty when at last they left

"Micky-is-Esther ill? Look how

of them: she seemed to be trying to

"I's too hot for her, poor darling!"

"It's not that." he said. "but Ashton

"Micky-" He silenced her with a

rown. He followed Esther as quickly

Micky drew Esther's hand through

"We shall find our cab this way,

He had seen Mrs. Ashton only a few

yards away, and he dreaded every mo-

see, too, who was with her.

nent that Esther would see her, and

A sudden block in the crowd mo-

mentarily hindered them, and in that

second a man's light laugh rang out

Micky felt the girl beside him give

The crowd was moving again now;

Micky had slipped an arm round Es-

hopes. He tried to pretend that he did

"Better now you're in the air?" he

asked. "It was hot in the theatre. I-

She had swung heavily against him,

pill a dose. 250. a box, all de

lorpid

June touched his arm

get out as quickly as possible.

Micky laughed savegely.

white she is."

over again obstinately.

Brick's.



THE

(By the Author of "A Bachelor Hus-band.")

CHAPTER XIX.

Esther unconsciously put out her woul have given anything had it been girls. possib.s to run away. She saw Mrs. Ashton turn and look towards where they were standing, and in another and was shaking hands with June.

"But he tells me he already has an banteringly. engagement." Her eyes smiled at June. "I suppose you are the engagement?"

June laughed time tune when they entered the restaurant. To Esther's unaccustomed place she had ever seen. She kept close lieved.

chair, and himself took her cloak. "You don't mind being left while I ly; "she seems to have got lost."

to enjoy herself this evening; she was not going to allow one single despond ent thought.

June and Micky rejoined her almost "I thought some one had eloped with you," June said laughingly. "Where and he felt a little thrill of pride.

did you get to? Micky, how hot this room is—I'm just stifling!" She threw off her wrap and snatch-

hand and grasped June's arm; she Micky sat down between the two "Miss Shepstone didn't want to see

Mrs. Ashton, I rather fancy," he said ther leaned a little closer to him. coolly. He looked at Esther with a moment she had crossed the lounge slight smile in his eyes. "I believe she was afraid Mrs. Ashton would demand her eagerly. He could hear her agitat-"I was just inviting Mr. Mellowes to a reason for having had her kind of- ed breathing, hear too the Attle quiver come and dine with us," she said. fer so cavalierly refused," he went on in her voice when she spoke.

Esther laughed. "Yes, I believe I was," she admitted. "I'm an awful coward over explaining things to people."

"So am I," said Micky drily. He was wondering how he was ever go- dine at the same place and have ticking to explain the most difficult occur- ets for the same show?" eyes the room with its flowers and rence of his whole life, and if, when many lights was the most wonderful he had done so, it would ever be be-

to Micky as he threaded his way He looked at Esther a great deal unnatural about her, and though through the small tables till he found during dinner; he had never seen her Micky could not see her face clearly friendly to him; he was quite sorry when it was time to go on to the

As they left the restaurant he no

their own, rather at the end of the so animated; her eyes were sparkling, he knew that something had happened room and away from the noisy band. | and her cheeks were flushed; she talk- to distress her. He put Esther into a comfortable ed a great deal, and was particularly To back for June?" he asked hurried- theatre. Esther looked after him as he went ticed that she kept close to him again, fell again, but Micky had the feeling quickly back down the length of the and that she looked anxiously round that she was not paying the least atroom. She liked him in evening dress. for Mrs. Ashton. If only it had been Raymond instead! "It's all right," he said. "She's up--she stifled a little sigh; she meant stairs in the gallery."

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She smiled. She thought he was very juick to understand her. Raymond had never seemed to understand things without an explanation. She wished he had been rather more like Micky in some ways; she wished-she looked up at Micky guiltily; how could she compare the two men?—the one whom she loved, and the other whom she did

They were late, and the curtain had risen when they were shown into their seats. The theatre was dark, and Esther could hardly see her way. She put out her hand with a smothered laugh and felt for Micky's. "I can't see," she said.

His fingers closed about hers; such a little hand it felt. He wondered why she was being so kind to him to-night. He did not realise that she was enjoying herself so much that she felt Brick's.

Before Brick's Tasteless Extract of Cod Liver was perfected, people took cod liver oil under strong protest.

Lemon juice, coffee, vinegar, wine on good terms with the whole world. Esther sat between him and June,

and Micky hardly looked at the stage and Micky hardly looked at the stage all were powerless to eliminate that all. His eyes turned again and again to her rapt face and the eagerness of the children do not know they are taking cod liver oil when they are siven a dose of She had been to theatres lots of

times, so she told him in a whisper, BRICK'S TASTELESS EXTRACT OF COD LIVER. but never in the stalls before. She ask-Right now, with the streets piled high with snow and deep slush under foot, people need Brick's Extract of Cod Liver to build up the system and strengthen the natural powers of resistance against attacks of Coughs, Colds, Grippe, Influenza, Pneumonia, ed him if he didn't like some of the frocks worn by the people close by. Micky's eyes flashed. "Not so well as yours," he said.

She drew away from him a little, and he wished he had not said it. In that one moment he fest that he had broken down all the friendliness she that, if they want to know the luxury had shown him that evening. She did shown the that evening should take Brick's Extract of Cod not speak again for some time. Liver regularly.
Brick's Tasteless Extract of Cod In the interval June leaned over to

"Are you bored, Micky? You look pored to death." Micky stifled a sigh.

"No," he said rather wearily. His eyes wandered round the crowd ed house. There were several people in the stalls whom he knew. He noticed that people were looking at Esther,

the box. She tried to argue herself They were wondering who she was, out of the fancy; he would have let of course. He wished with all his heart her know if he had come to Londonthat he could stand up in his seat surely she would have been the first ed up a paper fan from the table. and announce to an interested world to whom he would have come; she that she was the woman he intended was mad to ever think the man up there in the background could be Rayto marry. When the light went down again Es-

> "Mr. Mellowes-" she said. "Yes." Micky bent his head towards

> "Did you see who was in that box on the right?—the lower box. . . .

thankfulness when it was over. thought it was Mrs. Ashton." Micky answered casually that very "Haven't you enjoyed it?" likely it was. "Odd, eh," he said, "that we should to get out." Micky was deliberately being a

Esther said "Yes-yes" twice nervous hurry.

There was something strained and

"What is it?" he asked anxiously. "Is anything the matter?" She shook her head.

June said. "Micky-" She sat very still till the curtain was up in the box with his mother. tention to what was going on on the and she saw him.' stage, and he knew that her eyes turned again and again to the stage box. What was she afraid of, he asked as he could, but she was outside in himself in perplexity, even if Mrs. the cold night air before he overtook Ashton did see her and recognise her. her. There was a crowd here toosurely—then in a flash he knew . . rows of cars and carriages outside.

the light had been turned up suddenand women in thin evening frocks and ly, and in that moment he saw the furs shivering in the cold wind. figure of a man move quickly from the front of the box to the screen of his arm. the curtains. think," he said evenly.

Micky gripped the arms of his seat; for the moment he could not move. It was Raymond-he knew it as cer tainly as if he had been told. No doubt he had seen Esther, whilst she . . . poor child! Had she seen him

He looked down at her: she was sitting up stiffly, her hands clasped in above the noise and chatter of voices. the lap of the new frock of which she had been so innocently proud; her a convulsive start. She tried to drag face was as white as the soft tulle of her fingers from his, but he held them her sleeves, and her eyes were fixed fast. on the box with its velvet curtains where Mrs. Ashton sat laughing and a second, and Raymond and his mochatting with a girl in a pink frock. ther were lost to sight. They both turned from time to time

to some, one who stood behind them ther; he was white to the lips. He in the shadow; once the curtains mov- knew now how near he had been to ed a little and a man's hand and arm discovery and the wreck of all his showed distinctly. Micky could bear it no longer: he not understand the cause of her agitation. He looked down at her.

touched Esther's clasped hands. "Are you ill?-would you like me to take you out?"

But she shook her head. "No, no please leave me alone." and looking down in sudden alarm, June had discovered a friend in a seat a row or two ahead with whom, Micky saw that she had fainted. she was trying to carry on a conver sation: she had no eyes for Micky or Esther. Micky gave a sigh of relief when the lights were lowered again; he could feel all that Esther was suffering, he could put himself in her

If he went round to the box and made sure if it were Ashton, perhaps hat would be the best way; he could nanage to give him the tip then to ceep out of the way. He half rose in his seat, but Esther moved at once laying her fingers on his arm.

"Oh, don't go-don't leave me here," she said tremulously. It was not the man himself sh wanted, but his presence somehow gave her a feeling of confidence; if,



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