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"And do you consider this the best neavy way to break off all communication with him?" he asked, sadly, "to pur-

really in earnest?"

"I am, oh, I am!" she cried. "Won't you believe me? I have done wrong, but I have prayed for strength this

"I would like a few words with you, Dr. Egerton," Steele continued abruptreally in earnest?" you believe me? I have done wrong, but I have prayed for strength this it is not too late."

Steele could no longer doubt her sincerity, as she lifted her eyes, swimming with tears, to meet his gaze. "It is never too late," he said, "but did you consider that you are placing your-elf in the way of temptation to see him again? As a married man there is no word that ought to pass between you that could not be as easily sent." "I've no one to send," she inter-

"I will go, myself," he said, quietly. 'I do not think it would be right for you to meet him, even though your intention was unalterably fixed. We cannot judge our own weakness; besides, you might be seen, recognized, and too many are interested in you to

forced down the rising desire which had lurked beneath her earnest intention of right. "Yes, go," she said, breathlessly. "Tell him, tell him, it was my duty—he knows all—I asked to be a second to be a

how it had happened. She had yielded As they gained the doorway the blaze so implicitly to all the minister had of the pine knot burning on the hearth unable to resist or devise differently, but the strengthening pressure of his kind, firm hand upon her own seemed to rouse her to the reality of what had occurred. She started to her feet, and made one step forward, then sank on her knees beside the chair, with set teeth and clenched hands, but the wild yearning found no expression in weeping, convulsive tremors shook her frame, but she had conquered; and gradually the rest of exhaustion suc-

CHAPTER XIII.

"GO BACK TO YOUR WIFE." Not only by the inmates of Steele's mansion was the night felt to be discordantly calm and still by comparison with the tumult in their own bosoms. Before a small log hut, not five min-utes' walk removed from the Dalton depot, in a lonely spot half hidden by trees, a figure was pacing up and down in the restless expectation. His coat was fastened closely about him, and though the air was chill with the coming frost of the last week in Octobe it hardly seemed cold enough to de-mand so much musting. His hat was drawn down over his eyes and shaded a face which, had there been any moon that night, would have been revealed as worn and jaded. Trouble had written its lines deeper on the handsome features during the past two months, and with the uneven step of one ill at ease, or bearing the weight of more than customary care, he crossed and recrossed that measured space that bounded his restless walk. As 12 o'clock approached his bearing became more composed; inward excitement mounted to an intensity beyond demon-stration; and he paused for moments, gazing inquiringly through the dark-ness. Time flies rapidly when once the crisis moment long expected has



when the minutes joined

themselves together and began drift-ing into the half hour, and still no sign of any one approaching, his manner became perturbed again. Half an hour past the appointed time and his eyes had grown wearled of straining through the gloom, for the glare of the torch within the hut did

not aid the sight for many yards beyond the doorway. Overhead the stars were looking down with an intense brilliancy, but

only casting the earth into darker shadow, a darkness well befitting the scheme upon which this man was in-He quitted the close vicinity of the

cabin, however, and wandered out in the direction of the depot, half hest-tating, as one doubtful of the explicit directions himself had delivered as regarded the place of rendezvous, keeping a wary lookout meanwhile, for his observation at a village railway sta observation at a village railway sta-tion where matter for remark was scanty and the arrival of a stranger afforded scope for speculative conver-sation. There had been some drum-mers, too, beside the officials loafing about the ticket office when he entered it but so far he had seemed recogniabout the ticket office when he entered it, but so far he had escaped recogni-tion; and by assuming an air of un-concern he might yet challenge sus-picion as to his true personality. As this comforting reflection crossed his mind, despite the anxiety occasioned by the lateness of the hour, a quick footstep sounded behind him, and a

"Dr. Egerton"—
The stranger turned sharply around posely see him again? Ask yourself, upon the intruder who had thus penewhy do you wish to see him? Are you trated his disguise to behold Ernest

night, and I will atone for the past, if ly, in a low, concentrated voice, for the Edith's avowal of guilt had only held in abeyance during his hasty walk the smothered wrath of his soul, which now, at sight of this man, the author of all her misery, culminated to the point of revengeful indignation.

Egerton stood embarrassed. At any moment Edith might appear, and here was a man who would be a disagreeable witness of their meeting.

"Excuse me," he said, hesitatingly.
"Will any other time do as well? I am sorry to say that at present I have business of pressing importance," and his voice sounded with a constrained coolness he had ne er entertained towards the minister before.

"You need not be uneasy about your engagement." Steele returned quietly,

was my duty—he knows all—I asked and a sudden chil rar through Egertim not to come—yes go, at once, or—or, I can't bear it." r, I can't bear it."

Steele stepped into the hal', and took

far? These questions coursed through Steele stepped into the hall, and took up his hat, then came back and pre-sed her hand, encourageingly. "God help you," he said, softiy. "God he'p and bless you, my poor child."

He was gone. It had all been arranged so quickly she hardly knew how it had happened. She had yielded so implicitly to all the minister had of the pine knot burning on the hearth.

proposed, her brain had felt weak and threw a lurid light over the miserable purable to resist or devise differently, rough logs, with their numerous aper-tures, affording free ingress to the night air where they were not chinked with old garments; the usual contents of a negro cabin, the untidy beds with their renowned patchwork quilts, the broken table propped on the shorter side containing scraps of the last meal, and two or three dilapidated chairs and blocks of wood that served for seats. On one of the latter an old woman was seated, bent double over

the fire, who rose at sight of her forthe fire, who rose at sight of her for-mer guest and his companion, as if by previous agreement, and hobbied into the adjoining room, closing the rickety door behind her; but Steele did not enter. Pausing on the threshold, he turned and confronted the doctor, and by the glare of the resinous touch the face of each was revealed to the other. Steele's firm, if deadly pale, and sternly sorrowful; Egerton's dark with the rage of demoniac resentment against this interlocutor who dared question those actions for which he felt unprepared to offer any defense.

"I wish as few words as possible, Dr. Egerton," Steele continued, distantly, noting the gathering storm and feeling his own temper too uncontrollable to argue with an angry man, "The situation hardly requires an explana-tion. You are here by appointment to meet Miss Norton, and I am here to say, thank God, that the meeting will not take place."

"And what have you to do with it? broke from Egerton's lips with vio lence, for he began to suspect the pas-tor had divined his whole plan and had frustrated it. Anger was render-ing him blind to his own interests. "What right have you to interfere with Miss Norton's motions?"

"My rights of interference I don't propose to discuss with you," Steele returned coolly. "It is totally irrelevant to my business here with you to-night which is to deliver a message from the young lady's own lips. She bade me say to you that she could not fulfil her engagement of meeting you; that though late, she had returned to the

nath of duty." A sneer gathered upon the lip of Egerton during this speech, as the position of affairs dawned clearer upon his distorted vision. Steele, then, had dis-closed his history to Edith and she had dispatched him to bid her adicus to

her treacherous lover. Mortification, mingled with rage that she should have, as he supposed, confided in the minister, dashed all the tenderness of his feeling towards her

with bitter resentment.
"Well!" he ejaculated, after a pause, turning his heel upon the doorstep, "I think she might have informed me of her change of plans sooner. Had she intimated the fickleness of her determination she might have spared me"— His lips refused to lutter the meanness with which he intended to end the sen-tence.

Steele glanced at him contemptuous ly that at this moment his thoughts were filled with considerations of his own wounded varity, and he added bitterly: "Yes, she might have spared you the exposure as a heartless scoun-

Egerton started, stung by this first word of direct reproach, and a hot flush overspread his brow. His hands clenched, the veins in his forehead swelled almost to bursting, and his whole frame trembled with passion. One involuntary step he made towards Steele as though he could have struck him to the earth, but the minister received his advance towards hostility with an unperturbed mien.

He knew the violent nature of the man well, but knew too that he could control him. Egerton, torn by unruly passions that owned not his mastery was no equal for the self-contained, firm will of Steele, whose steadfast soul shining through his clear eye in the majesty of truth charmed and quelled him as by mesmeric influence. His glaring eyes gradually fell beneath that steady gaze, his hand relaxed, and he turned aside as one who suddenly recognized his own degradation.

"Go on," he said in a broken, strangely altered tone, "Heap me with reproaches. You may say what was was no equal for the self-contained

piease, Mr. Steele, for I can never for-get your kindness to me as a friend-less, penniless boy in bygone years. Despise, insult me as you may, I can-not sink so low as ingratitude. You saved me once from starvation—you gave me the first belief in human kindness, the first aspirations of my youth, the first enthusiasm in my profession. the first delusive hopes of religion. Good God! that it should all have proved in valu!" and he covered his face with his hands.

Steele's generous nature was deenig buched, and every other consideration is priest and the care for a suffering soul. "Need all have been in vain; he said, half in admonishion, half i "Need one disappointment bay wrecked a whole life? There is still an inward rest for those who chira to virtue; there is comfort in the per ance of duty even when most hard and stern; there is peace of conscience"-"By heaven?" Egerton interrupted savagely. "Don't preach to me to-night; I can't stand it; keep your religious doctrines for those who can appreciate them and are as little fitted to judge my position as yourself. Let them pass through my triffis, let then bear one-half of the burden I shoulder daily, and see if they come through the furnace unscathed; see if they remain immaculate-if they do not snatch at any possibility of pleasure, even if be through sensual degradation."
"Still," Steele replied resolutely.

"there is no need that suffering harden" ns into disregard for the pain of others. that misfortune should drive us to depths of folly and sin such as involve the souls of other human beings. Grief should teach us compassion for our fellow-men, a tenderness for human-

"There is little I have to thank hu manity for," Egerton retorted bitterly: world where my presence was not desired, where I have ever been regarded as burdensome and in the way, Mr. Steele," he exclaimed suddenly. "Do you blame me that, harrassed, insulted even, suspected of the vilest motives. my best intentions misinterpreted by those nearest to me, from whom my affections had never wandered could they have found an abiding place, do you wonder that there was solace for me in the trusting giance of that innocent young girl. Do you blame me that when I saw the possibility of re-viving my faith, of renewing my whole nature, of rising to a truer manhool in the light of her sweet influence, that I sought her companionship, selfishly, perhaps inconsiderately-but it was a strong temptation-till I discovered that had won her affections-and then there was no duty so sacred as the one I owed that confiding, loving heart. Whatever my past life has been, I did not intend to play the villain with that girl. She should have known all this night, and then had she trusted her-self to me I would have folded her in a love that could never fail, by a tie stronger than any this world can fash-ion, for it would have been founded upon the divine law of attinity." "There is something stronger than

love," Steele answered solemnly, "which if love has not as its fundamental principle it will be fickle and powerless; and that principle is duty. When she had yielded to your wishes, when she had given up her own will and sense of right, when she had be-come the slave of your desires, the purity and innocence for which you now esteem her vanished, all respect must inevitably have ceased; gazing on the ruin your own hand had wrought, you would have spurned her sullied beauty; love finding no stay in principle, would have reacted in hatred; passion once satiated, you tred; passion once satiated, you would have left her, a victim to the world whose opinions you had taught her to disregard and defy; alone, her faith betrayed, her gentle crushed, either to harden into indifference or die of a broken heart. You think not now, but has not this sad tale ever been the result of passion inconsiderately indulged? Cr, granted you never failed in your devotion, do you think that her spiritual nature could have rested content and satisfied beneath the reproof of conscience's Women are by nature purer than we. She would have mourned her departed innocence, and no love of yours could have replaced the blessing of God in

her heart. "Though she suffer now, it is nothing in comparison of the ageny of remorse that would follow her disobedience to the dictates of conscience God's broken law would wreck its own revenge—nay, hush," he continued, turning aside from the doctor with a gesture of deprecation, "do, not repeat that miserable sophistry, the pretext of those who seek to excuse their own neense; time air uncongernar marriage is not of those which God has sanctioned. When you stood before the altar, Egerton, you believed that God sanctioned it, and your vow that faith is as sacred and obligatory now. Though she may have failed in the performance of her promise to love and reverence you, her faithlessness does not render your oath less binding Go back to your wife, Egerton. Be a man and bear the crosses of your own rash act, and resolve to fulfil worthly the responsibilities you voluntarily as-sumed, if for nothing else the duty you owe your children that no reproach may fall mon the name they bear, and ask God's forgiveness for the sin you this night contemplated."

Egerton moved uneasily under the last sentences, not caring to betray how deenly they really affected him. To be Continued.

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