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IN THE TOILS;

But Happiness Comes at Last.

CHAPTER X.

AT THE THEATER.

And yet how different! The sweet, sorrowful face was changed with a stern, ambitious purpose; the kindly eyes, with their affectionate glances, had gone, and in their place shone and glittered two dark, threatening orbs, reflecting murder and the love of power; the very hair was changed, and instead of falling softly from the smooth, white brow, was lying in a dark line beside the face. Yet the face, though altered, was Katrine Haldine's.

Olive, straining eye and ear, leaned forward. Yes, the voice was Katrine's, though altered. No longer soft and loving, but sharp, metallic, repellant. But it was hers. White and trembling, Olive turned appealingly to the quaint figure beside her; but the childish face was set in a vacant smile, and, for the life of her, Olive could not speak, could not frame the question: "Is that your sister?"

Smoothly, without hitch or bar, the play went on. Step by step the fearful interest increased, and Olive actually forgot the great question, "Was it she or not?" in the emotions the tragedy produced within her breast.

After that one glance, Lady Macbeth did not look toward the box. If it were indeed Katrine, then she had forgotten Olive as completely as Olive had forgotten her. Never will Olive cease to remember the scene of the murder! When Lady Macbeth exclaimed, "Give me the dagger!" Olive's hand clenched with sympathy, and, at the solemn words, "Sleep no more! Macbeth shall sleep no more!" she clasped her hands and moaned in sympathy.

When the act closed, Olive leaned back, white and panting for breath. She said no word, she could not speak; the stage was real, the people and all before the curtain seemed like a dream.

White with fright, she stared at Banquo's ghost, trembling and crying as she looked at Lady Macbeth in her sleep scene, and wrung her hands as the guilty murderess wrung hers. Quivering in every limb, she hung upon, she watched, the fight between Macbeth and Macduff, and when the curtain fell, she dropped back, pale and wan, shaking in every limb.

A burst of applause greeted the close of the scene, applause that grew into loud shouts for the principal actors, and presently the curtain was drawn back, and Macbeth, pale and weary-looking, came forward, leading Lady Macbeth by the hand. As they crossed the stage, the thunder of applause grew louder, and three exquisite bouquets of flowers were thrown to Lady Macbeth. As she bowed her acknowledgments, and was disappearing, she shot one glance into the stage box, and Olive, perceiving it, knew that Lady Macbeth and Katrine Haldine were one.

It was all over; the people who had been so eager to enter the theater were now as eager to leave it. Scarcely five minutes seemed to elapse after the fall of the curtain, before the box keepers were covering the velvet cushions with brown holland, and turning out the gas.

John got up and collected the shawls, but Olive did not move.

Presently the box door opened and Katrine Haldine entered, dressed as she was when she had left them.

Olive stared at her, with half-parted lips.

"Well?" said Katrine, with a smile; her face was rather pale, and there was a tired look about her eyes and lips. "Well, have you enjoyed yourself?"

Olive rose and put her hand upon Katrine's arm.

"You—you were Lady Macbeth?" she said.

"No questions until we get home," laughed Katrine. "Come, John, you are the chevalier, you know; see that Olive's shawl is close around her throat. We must take care of you, my dear."

Olive, lost in astonishment, allowed John's childish fingers to arrange her shawl. This soft, sweet-spoken woman was the cruel, bloodthirsty Lady Macbeth of a few minutes ago! Was it possible? Laughing softly to herself, Katrine led the way from the box and down to the brougham. Everybody about the theater seemed to know her; the box keepers bowed respectfully; the women curtsied with admiring awe. To one and all she gave the same pleasant smile; stopping to exchange a word with the manager, who was waiting for her at the bottom of the stairs.

"Who is your friend?" Olive heard him say.

And Katrine answered, with a sudden gravity:

"A very dear friend, Mr. Malden, my sister."

And the manager bowed quite obsequiously to Olive; giving a friendly nod to John, who all serenely placid, put them into the brougham, as if Lady Macbeth had never existed.

"Well," said Katrine Haldine, "how did you enjoy yourself?"

Olive drew a long breath.

"I am too surprised and bewildered to answer," she said. "Tell me one thing: "Are you Lady Macbeth?"

"I played Lady Macbeth to-night," answered Katrine, with a laugh. "So the secret is out! To-morrow night I play Pauline, in the 'Lady of Lyons.' Yes, I am an actress, you see, Olive. It is to the theater I go every evening. Are you shocked, disgusted, disappointed?"

"Disappointed!" echoed Olive, clasping her hands. "I scarcely know whether I am in possession of my senses. And that was you! That terrible, awful woman who made me tremble and shake, was you who are so kind and gentle; you who have saved my life and been more than a mother to me! I can scarcely believe it."

"Yes, it was I," said Katrine, with a laugh that had something of sadness in it. "But I would rather that you thought of me and loved me as Katrine than as Lady Macbeth."

The brougham stopped at the house in the quiet square, and John, who had yawned a great deal, got out and helped them to alight.

A comfortable supper awaited them in the cozy sitting room, and Katrine, with her own hands, removed Olive's shawl, and forced her, playfully, into a chair.

"Now you must rest, after all your excitement," she said, with a laugh. "As for me, I am dying for a glass of ale! Dreadfully commonplace of Lady Macbeth, isn't it, dear? But I think her ladyship drank something, if it wasn't exactly British beer. John, put a footstool for Olive. Now let me look at you. Why, you are quite pale—paler than I am, and I have had all the work!"

"I can't believe it," murmured Olive—"I cannot realize it. You Lady Macbeth!"

Katrine Haldine laughed.

"There is nothing so wonderful in it, dear," she said, "especially when one has been playing for a long time. You did not find John excited, did you?"

She admitted that John did not seem excited.

"No, he is used to it, poor boy!" said Katrine. "He goes with me every night, and everywhere; he knows all my characters and almost all the best-known plays; and he is so useful to me!—he plays the other parts when I am studying."

Olive looked up, with a sudden eagerness.

"Do you mean," she said, "that he takes the character to whom you may be speaking?"

"Yes," said Katrine, with a smile; "John is sometimes Macbeth, and sometimes the Queen, in 'Hamlet.' To-morrow he will have to be Claude Melnotte. It is wonderful," she added, glancing at the boyish face that was now bent over his plate, "how well he will remember the words of the parts."

Olive looked up anxiously.

"Do you think," she said hesitatingly—"that is, I mean—should I be of any use to you? I have a good memory, and I remember a great many of the ordinary plays. I wish—oh, how I wish I could be of some service to you!"

"Well," said Katrine, smiling, "so you may, dear; not that you need trouble yourself on that score. Well," seeing the look of disappointment which shadowed Olive's face; "you shall, if you like, take John's place, and play Claude Melnotte to my Pauline, when I can study—say to-morrow."

"We could not do it to-night, I suppose?" said Olive, blushing eagerly.

"Now, if you like," said Katrine, rising and standing before the fire, "let me see how much you know of it."

Supper had been removed, John had said "good night," and gone to bed, Katrine and Olive were sitting over the fire, talking over the surprise of the evening.

Olive was all wonder, awe, and admiration.

All eagerness, also, to be of some use to her benefactress, who had suddenly assumed the proportions of a goddess.

"Do you mean to tell me that you can remember the 'Lady of Lyons' sufficiently to take Claude Melnotte's part?" asked Katrine, looking down with laughing surprise.

"I think so," said Olive modestly.

"Let us try, then," said Katrine, laughing. "Now, then," and she began with the part of Beauseant, who tempts Claude to impersonate the Prince.

Olive, after a moment's hesitation, took up Claude's part and repeated it correctly.

"Stand up," said Katrine presently.

Olive stood up, and Katrine watched her with keenly scrutinizing eyes.

Word for word Olive repeated Claude Melnotte's well-known lines.

"You see," she said, "I remember them! I can be of some use to you!"

"Yes—yes," said Katrine thoughtfully. "Now let me see if you can remember Pauline's."

"Pauline's, that is your part!" said Olive, deeply interested.

"Yes; that's my part, but I will take Claude's. Now, then!" and she commenced with Pauline's first meeting with Claude.

With some hesitation at first, Olive took the character, suddenly grew interested, and at last lost herself in it. It was a strange scene, the two women standing before the fire repeating the well-known lines—the one a world-known actress, fully cognizant of the situation; the other a woman lost in the charm and maze of the moment. It was a strange scene, but one which they both remembered in after years.

(To be Continued.)

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LONDON, January 21st, 1918.

THE BOLSHEVIKS.

It is quite interesting to note the light that is going on in the London newspapers with regard to the correct way of viewing the Bolshevik movement in Russia. Originally the movement was denounced on all sides and its leaders, Lenin and Trotzky in particular, were apparently proved to be German spies intent only upon smashing Russia and making her an easy prey for the Hun. Since the opening of the peace negotiations, however, at Brest-Litovsk differences in this view have been expressed. For example, the "Daily Mail" last week printed a surprising article written by Hamilton Fyfe, who has spent two years in Russia since the war began, in which he made a plea for a better understanding of the Bolshevist movement and its leaders. He gave a large number of interesting and new facts which obtained a wide circulation. Next day Lovat Fraser returned to the attack with a repetition of the old anti-Bolshevist views. This week in the same journal H. G. Wells, the famous novelist, has had a two-column article discussing the Bolshevists from a friendly standpoint and again appealing for a better consideration. In other newspapers something similar has been going on. In the "Daily Telegraph," for example, which is still officially very anti-Bolshevist, leading articles are written about once a week in which the Bolshevists are attacked, but in such a curious way that sometimes one would think that an article purely in their favor could not be more friendly. I mean, for instance, that the writers grant that the Bolshevists are this, that, and the other good thing and then fix their attention upon one or two small complaints against them and put these forward in a rather desultory fashion. The British Government has also "unofficially" entered into negotiations with the Bolshevist "Ambassador" here Litvinoff, whilst still refusing to officially recognise the new Russian republic. The Russian Embassy building in Chesham Palace is furthermore still occupied by the representatives of the previous republican Government, the Kerensky administration, and as they refuse to budge Litvinoff conducts his Ambassadorial duties from a little upstairs flat in a remote London suburb. The British Government also have instructed a subordinate of the British Embassy in Petrograd to likewise enter into unofficial negotiations with the Bolshevist Government. The facts I have given are just the outward and visible signs of a tremendous swing round in public opinion here and in

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