

Don't Forget Light Out of DARKNESS

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CHAPTER XVII.—(Continued.)

She had a pretty little brass stand, a tray, spirit lamp and kettle, and with this apparatus she always made the tea herself with much pride, and some help from Dick. It generally fell to Dick's lot to light the lamp, but today she was all ready for him, and had but to turn up the light a little to have the water boiling.

"There," she said, after about five minutes, and handing him a cup of tea. Now tell me all—everything."

"Well," said Dick, finding himself thus fairly up in a corner, and unable to put off the evil moment any longer, "I went."

"Yes?" eagerly.

"And I saw her ladyship."

"Oh! and is she up?"

"Up! My dear child, Lady Aymer is as well as I am," he answered.

Dorothy looked at him in wonder.

"Oh! Dick," she cried, "but what a wicked old man!"

"Ah! I fancy it runs in the blood," said Dick, easily. "One man couldn't have so much original sin of his own as the old savage has; it must be heredity."

"Then do you think you will tell horribly wicked stories when you are Lord Aymer, Dick?" she asked, roguishly.

"Perhaps—who knows? All the same there is one story I shall never tell you," drawing her tenderly toward him. "I shall always be true as the Gospels when I tell you that I love you better than any other woman in all the world."

Something in his voice touched the tenderest chords of her heart, and set throbbing and beating with a sickening sensation of fear. "Dick," she said in a whisper, "is it very bad news that you are trying to break to me—does it mean India, after all?"

Dick looked straight into her clear eyes. "My dear little love," he said, "I am afraid it does mean India, after all; but if it does, it shall mean India for us both."

He told her everything then—how Lady Aymer had received him, how she had openly declared that her husband had some scheme of his own to get rid of them both, how the old savage had received him, and what end their interview had come to. But, of course, he would up, "although I took time to consider it, my mind was made up in a moment. I shall refuse the appointment."

There was a moment's silence.

"Dick, dearest," said Dorothy, in a quivering voice, "is it a very good thing to be a military secretary to a governor-general?"

"Oh, well—yes—it is, dear," he admitted.

"I mean, would you have refused it if you had not been married, if you had never seen me?"

"No, I don't suppose I should. I dare say I should never have bothered to get such an appointment, because, as you know, I hate the very idea of going to India, but, at the same time, to be quite honest, I don't suppose I should have refused. I don't suppose any man in his senses would."

Dorothy drew her breath sharply, and for a minute or two did not speak.

"Dick, darling," she said at length, "it is true that you are married, but I don't see that that is any reason why you should not be in your senses, too."

"What do you mean, Dorothy?" he asked quickly.

"Well, just this. Supposing that Lord Aymer had let you refuse this appointment, and had not made himself disagreeable about your allowance, we should have to go on just as we are doing now. And, of course, Dick dear, I should like to be Mrs. Aymer instead of Mrs. Harris, and to live with the regiment rather than in Palace Mansions; but—but, at the same time, since there is so much to be gained by it, I would just as soon be Mrs. Harris in one place as in another, if I must be Mrs. Harris at all."

Dick caught her close to him. "Dorothy, you mean—?" he began.

"I mean," she ended firmly, "that I would sooner go to India as Mrs. Harris than drag you down in your profession, and put you at loggerheads with your uncle; because he is your uncle, and the head of your family, even though he is such an old savage as he is."

"But, my dear, my dear, do you know that in that case I should have to go at once?" he cried.

"Yes, I know that, Dick," she answered.

"But I can't leave you alone, just now—I can't, Dorothy," he exclaimed. "It's impossible; it would be inhuman. Why, I should be out of my mind with anxiety and distress."

"No, no—you would know that I was proud and happy to be able to do something to help you," she replied.

"I would rather that you were here; but, there, I would always rather that you were here. That is not a new feeling for me. And I shall not be alone. I shall have Barbara, you know. Barbara will take care of me, and let you know exactly how I get on."

"No, I cannot let you do it," he said, when she paused.

"Yes, yes, you can, dear. Besides, it is not only ourselves that we have to think of. There is the child; and although if we go to India together, we might be able to get along pretty well by ourselves, we should not be able

to afford to send the child home, if the climate was bad for it. Why, Dick dear, we should not be able to afford to come home ourselves, if we could not stand the heat."

"That is true," he admitted.

"And don't you think," she went on eagerly, "that I would rather live as I am doing now for a year or two longer than I would run the risk of sending you die, perhaps, because we had not money to bring us home? Just think what I should feel like if we were in such a case as that."

"But, darling, you don't know—you don't realize how very different life would be out there," he urged. "Here, very few people take the trouble to notice us, one way or another, and if they do, it does not matter. But out there, as military secretary, I should have a lot to do. I should scarcely have a moment to myself. I should not be able to go anywhere with you, and probably very seldom be able to come and see you."

But you would be able to come sometimes," she answered, with a brave smile. "Every one knows that half a loaf is better than no bread, and if one cannot get even half a loaf, it is foolish to quarrel with the slice which keeps one from starving."

Dick's heart felt like to break. "Dorothy, Dorothy," he said, "my dear little brave, unselfish wife, every word you say makes me love you a thousand times more than I did before. My dearest, I give in to anything that you wish; you shall decide everything, and I—I will give all the rest of my life to trying to make you feel that you did not throw away your love and confidence when you gave them to me."

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"We will have a real happy day, darling," he said, when Dorothy had given way about imparting the news to the savage. "By-and-by we shall have more money than opportunity of spending it together—let us make hay while we can. First, we will go and have a look at the shops together, and I will buy you something you can al-

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that they go to the other extreme, and make their villains such unmitigated villains that it is impossible to find one single ray of virtue wherewith to redeem their character from its inky pall of utter blackness. But let me tell you that if all the women novelists who write stories in the English language were to concentrate their efforts upon the task of trying to depict the villainy of Lord Aymer's natural depravity, I am afraid that in the end they would have to call in the aid of their masculine confreres to adequately complete the portrait. For the noble lord was all bad, thoroughly bad—what up in the north country they call "bad, core through." Yet he had a delightful manner when he chose, and in early middle age had made a genuine love-match with a beautiful young woman at least sixteen years younger than himself—a penniless as well as a beautiful young woman, upon whom he had lavished so much love and attention that within three months of his marriage his love had burned itself out, and was as dead as any dead volcano. A few weeks later Lord Aymer practically separated himself from his wife, although they continued to share the same house, and he appeared before the world as much as possible as if no breach had ever been opened between them.

Not by Lord Aymer's desire, this—oh! no, but because her ladyship had never been so genuinely in love with him as he had been with her, and was, moreover, perfectly alive to the solid worldly advantages of being Lord Aymer's wife, the mistress of Aymer's Field and of the handsome town house in Belgrave Square.

"Of course I know that there are others," she said in reply to a dear friend who thought it her duty to open this young wife's eyes, "and, of course, I know that Aymer wants to get rid of me; but I don't mean to be got rid of, and I put up with the others because I think doing so the lesser of two evils. There is only one Lady Aymer, and she is a strong and healthy young woman, who means to be Lady Aymer for at least fifty years longer. Yes, I know, my dear, all that you feel about it. I quite appreciate your feelings toward me. Oh, yes, it was your duty to tell me, but I am not going to cut myself out of all that makes life worth living just to oblige a husband who has got tired of me in three months."

To this decision Lady Aymer had from that time forward kept most rigidly. As far as her husband was concerned, nothing seemed to annoy her, and whenever she wished to do so and condescended to try to get her own way by means of a little flattery, she generally succeeded; and now that Lord Aymer had got into the "sixties" she was simply a stately, even-tempered, iron-willed and exceedingly healthy woman, who looked as if she meant to live to be ninety.

It was partly on the subject of his wife's extreme healthiness that Lord Aymer was thinking that morning as he smoked his cigarette and tried to assure himself that the twinge in his left foot were merely a sign of a coming shower and nothing in the world to do with gout at all. And just as a worse twinge than usual made him wince and shiver, the door opened gently and a man-servant made his appearance.

(To be Continued.)

AS WE SEE OURSELVES.

It Never Is as Other People See Us—Engrossed with Our Own Affairs.

"Don't you dread people who meander on in long-drawn-out detail about their own concerns?" exclaimed Mrs. Ego. "I sat next to Mr. Langwellig at the B's dinner last night and I never was so bored! A clever mineralogist is bad enough, but a stupid one is unendurable. His whole conversation consisted of elaborate explanations of the why and the wherefore of unimportant events and happenings in his own family. Her listener laughed to himself, for he had just come from his club, where he had happened to see Mr. Langwellig, says the New York Tribune. "I am just going to Mrs. Ego's," he had said to Miss —, "won't you come along?" "Mercy!" was the answer. "I sat next to that lady at a dinner at B's last evening and I am sure she must be talked out as far as I am concerned; it was one steady stream about herself and her family, from soup to coffee. I assure you that I could not get in a word edgewise!" "Did you hear that Jack W. married again?" said one of