

DEATH UNTO LIFE.

I saw Life coming toward me. Then she
passed
With smile supernal.
Men, looking after, said: "Lo, Death!"
But I:
"Lo, Life eternal!"
—R. R. Bowker, in *October Century*.

LADY MARY'S MISTAKE.

BY MAARTEN MAARTENS.

"No, he doesn't love me any longer!"
said Lady Mary.

The old Countess looked up with a
troubled smile on her beautiful face.

"You are sure of that?" said the
Countess.

"Quite sure, mother."

"My dear, when a woman hesitates,
she always says she is sure. You have
been married two years; between the
first year and the third the happiest
couples doubt each other's constancy.
All women think at times that their
husbands no longer love them; many
occasionally believe it; many—"

"Know," said Lady Mary.

"And are mistaken."

The daughter rose. "You were al-
ways an optimist, dearest," she said,
with affectionate impatience. "You
think every one is as good as yourself."

"But, of course, child, if you are sure,
you are sure; there is no more to be
said."

Lady Mary bent over the back of her
mother's chair and kissed the tall white
forehead. "There is no more to be said,"
she answered. "I am sure because I
am sure. I couldn't give you any
reasons. I only know that I feel it to
be so. George is courteous and con-
siderate as ever—he is kindness itself.
But he doesn't care for me, mother, as
he used to do."

"Of course not," interrupted the
Countess.

"He could live without me. He can
be perfectly happy without me, and so
I told him only this morning."

"Of course he can. My dear, you are
exacting. Did you expect to have a
husband who couldn't live without you
—if required?"

"If he required. There's the differ-
ence, mother. I hardly ever see him.
I don't know where he spends his even-
ings. But, hush, I am not going to
complain of my husband; only I didn't
want you to think me altogether a
goose. Now I must run away. It
wants only an hour till dinner."

Lady Rothwell drew her daughter's
hand toward her, and held it in her
own. "Dearest," she said, "only don't
exaggerate! Remember, you didn't
marry an angel. Lovers have nothing
in common with angels, except wings."

Lady Mary reflected on these words
of her mother's, in the brougham, as
she drove back to Bryanston square.
Her marriage with Sir George Tresling,
two years ago, had been a love-match.
It seemed so unexceptionable in every
way, it really need hardly have been
one, but, as it happened, it was. George
Tresling, young, good-looking, well off
and fairly idle, had made a desirable
suitor and a satisfactory husband.
Cynics might opine that he had spoiled
his wife. That is to say, he never yet
had given her occasion for tears.
Which is saying a good deal, consider-
ing that she loved him.

"I couldn't give mother the facts,"
mused Lady Mary. "And really, when
I come to think of it, there aren't any
facts to give. All the same, I feel it.
For the last six months things have
somehow been very different. I couldn't
say to mother: 'Here is proof. It's six
months since he left off calling me
May.'"

Arriving at the house, she hastened
upstairs to her dressing-room. On her
way she had to pass a little staircase

nook, not much more than a cozy
corner, which opened off a landing,
built out on some leads. She noticed
that her husband was seated, writing,
at a little brown and gold escritoire he
kept there, a "genuine Riesener," one of
those spurious antiques which are now
found in every well-furnished house.
He was writing so eagerly that he did
not even observe her approach as she
swept along the heavy stair-carpet.
And by the bend of his shoulders, the
fling of his legs, the fierce scratch of
his pen across the paper, she could see
that he was greatly excited, unusually
so—although always, certes, George
Tresling must be styled a nervous man.
She was close beside him when he look-
ed up with a cry.

"Good heavens, how you startled me!"
he said, and he held his hand across the
paper before him, bending forward as if
afraid that any one should see what he
was writing.

"Startled you? Why? I have just
come in from my mother's. I had tea
there."

"Naturally. You are always at your
mother's—almost. I just want to
finish—"

"Almost!" she repeated, laughing.
"It's a good thing you added that—
what is it?—adjective?—adverb? It
saves you from exaggeration. Why,
you know perfectly well that I never go
to my mother's unless I am left in the
house alone." She laughed again, re-
solved to show a brave front.

"Well, it's a good thing you've got a
mother to go to. It saves you from
feeling lonely when I'm away." Was
that a reproach of her childlessness, or
a regret. "There's nothing more whole-
some in a family than mothers, except
when they develop themselves as mother-
in-laws. Aren't you going up to dress
for dinner? I just want to finish—"

"George," she said, lingeringly, as
if thinking many thoughts in that one
word. "Oh, there's plenty of time. I
—I just wanted to say: of course I
didn't mean what I said this morning,
about your being just as happy away
from me. Only—sometimes"—her voice
trembled—"I feel as if you didn't care
for me as you used to—once. But you
do—don't you, George?"

He started up, with an excited crash,
from his persistent stoop over the
writing table, as if breaking away from
a tension grown insupportable. "I will
give you my answer to that question
presently," he cried, with assumed
lightness, "and I'll try to make it as
satisfactory as possible. We haven't
time just now. Why, Mary, d'you
know—sometimes I think you are
rather hard to satisfy!" He had thrown
to the little lid of the escritoire, whose
two halves closed up and down with a
lock in the middle of them, and, turn-
ing the key, he ran upstairs to his
dressing-room.

Lady Mary remained standing for a
minute or two, in self-reproachful
thought. Yes, it was true, as her
mother had declared, she was exigeante.
A man cannot spend his life in maudlin
display of affection. It was positively
silly of her to dislike his calling her
"Mary." Did she call him "Georgie"
now, as she had done, once or twice, in
the early spring of their love-making?

Why, he hardly liked it even then.
True, nobody called him "Georgie"
and all his own people had always
called her "May." Yet—no, she had no
positive grievance against him. He
still brought—or sent—her flowers. He
went to his club a great deal. Of course
—especially of evenings. Of course
men go to clubs.

As she turned to leave the little alcove,
apology in every attitude, her eye fell
on a scrap of paper sticking out from
the slit at the back of the escritoire,
where the lid closed up. Papers were
very apt to slip through like this, from
the smooth leather surface and out at



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