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kindly of you. Only the other day he Le was sounding your praises; and he went ever so far out of his way with a parcel for your sister last night, though it harm, I should say." was wet and cold, because he thought it was something she wanted particularly. I was there and saw it all. And there's cause I can't help it. I am a fool." Lady Julia, too," proceeded the speaker, "she who likes everybody, and who, I never thought, knew one from anothershe has not a good word for him! When I bring him to the Abbey, she draws herself up, and is so laboriously polite, that it is quite oppressive. He is the only person with whom I have ever seen her in the least like-like poor Lady Caroline."

"Does he see it ?" "Not in the least. He told me the other day, with a wink, that he could always come round the old ladies. She had just been particularly bad to him."

"But Lady Julia's 'badness'began Stoneby, laughing.

"Oh, we know what it is, of course. don't blame his want of perception there," said Hartland, emphatically. To the surprise of his friend he was now down. I saw it directly you came into frowning and biting his lip, while some- the dining-room; stand still, and let me thing evidently lay behind.

"After all," aid Mr. Stoneby, quietly, "none of this really signifies much, does it? It cannot be of any real importance to Major Gilbert that he is not altogether popular among us. We have our own ways and habits. He has his, and his, I believe, serve him in very good stead among his brother officers and in society generally."

"Society? Hum!"

"His society. The society he habitually moves in. Soldiers are at home everywhere, you know-"

"You telling me about soldiers You are in a hole, my friend, and you are only blundering further and further in. I understand you perfectly. Gilbert's class is not ours, and that we have both found out."

"His true worth must outweigh that in the long-run, Hartland."

"I have told myself so a hunared times," said Hartland, vehemently; "it is what I have consoled myself with over and over again. But, Stoneby, if-if it should

"If it should not?"

"If-if-did it ever strike you, Jack, that it might be awkward for a man if his wife did not-eh?"

"His wife, Hartland? We were not speaking of a wife."

to wear off, and the wife-we'll say my cousin-supposing she did happen to feel about Gilbert as we do-"

a thing? In that case what reason could she have had for accepting him ?"

"True-very true; as you say, what reason? At the same time-by heavens!" exclaimed Hartland, suddenly, "Lady Caroline had only herself to thank that it came to what it did. Any person of sense could have seen with half a glance that it was a tug-of-war between mother and daughter, and Rosamund-poor Rosamund-won." His accents, which had begun by ringing out harsh and sharp, sank and faltered at the close. There was reality, passion, grief in every note. "I say, don't speak of this," he went on hurriedly, "don't you ever remember that I said it-unless-unless things should be different. But it's God's truth, Stoneby, that's what it is. That poor girl is entangled in a net woven by her own hands, and she will never, left to herself, cut her way out of it. What's worse, he is blind, and stupid, and deaf, and drugged to sleep by the intoxication of his own happiness. He can't see. He has no eyes to see. They have got themselves so completely caught-no, it is not 'they '-'tis she alone who has played the fool. That's why I stand by Gilbert, d'ye see? I don't like him; I don't take to him; I shirk him I get out of his way whenever I can,-but I am ashamed to look him in the face. He is a frank, straightforward, honorable fellow; and yet because he does not understand the tittle-tattle of the drawing-room and has-yes, he has a beast of a laugh-I somehow never care to remain in the same room with him. And Rosamund-" he stopped short.

Stoneby said nothing.

"It is all very well for you," pursued the speaker,-" you have only to tell yourself that is no business of yours, and have done with it; but I have to go over there day after day and see it going on-"

"Why do you go often?" "Why-why-why? Of course I go. always have gone. It would seem very

odd-if I did not go. Why shouldn't I

"Only if it pains you --- " "'Pains' me! Who says it 'pains' me?

It disgusts and irritates me. It makes me mad with Rosamund, and unjust towards poor Gilbert. But that's my affair. I had rather be there and see it all, than stop away and know it's going on. That is what I can't do. I cannot keep out of the way and let this interloper have the run of the place. To see him strolling about now with his hands in his pockets and his hat stuck on the back of his head, and to remember that less than two months ago he was but just admitted to Caroline lived, even this engagement For SALE AT SHORT'S DRUG STORE.

cheerful over it, that I hardly know which | would hardly have procured him intimacy way to look when I have to thank him, I -it is altogether too much. If he is to go fell so beastly cold and ungrateful. And about saying and doing all sorts of ob-I am sure, Jack, he always speaks most jectionable things, I must be there too

"Do you do any good?" "Good? None whatever. Rather

"Then again, why go?" "Because—as I say—because—well, be-

CHAPTER XXIII.

GILBERT UNDOES IT ALL.

"Did you hear that about the Abbey?" whispered Henrietta Gilbert to her sister, as soon as she conveniently could that evening. "We are to go over there tomorrow and take luncheon, and see the place; so it must have been all nonsense about Lord Hartland."

"'Sh," frowned Emily glancing round in apprehension, for Etta's asides were by no means always inaudible. They were, however, at a safe distance from the rest of the party, having gone off together to inspect an old cabinet, and, under cover of so doing, exchange confidences. "Don't let them see us talking," further counselled she. "Etta, your waistband is hanging tuck it up. How well Rosamund looks in black !" tucking vigorously. "I don't believe she could look better in colors; it must be Frederick's fancy, because he never likes anything doleful."

"Did you notice how prettily the skirt was hung?" murmured Etta back; "those large bunches falling so softly? That is the new fashion. I wish we had seen it before we got these," somewhat ruefully. "I never did like the drapery of these, and mine is so dreadfully tight too. can scarcely breathe."

"You will do yourself no good by wriggling about; you should have had it seen to before you left. There: the band is all right now, at any rate; but do remember to fasten it another time."

"What shall we wear for to-morrow's luncheon, Em?"

"Our bests, of course." "The new plush skirts?" said Etta, in a

"Of course. When could we have a better occasion for them?"

"And if we are asked to walk about, and it comes on to rain?"

"Nonsense. We got them to wear, not to lie in the cupboard. Frederick will ex-

pect us to look our best."

"Is Frederick going?" "Ask him now," as Frederick approached. He had detained his betrothed, "I am now. Suppose the glamour were alleging that she had done nothing but run away from him ever since he came, and had had his complaint allowed, and all his demands granted :- furthermore, "My dear Hartland, why suppose such | the pretty diamond fly which had waited for an opportunity to emerge from his waist-coat pocket and settle on her fair neck, had been gratefully and timidly received, while the eyes that sank beneath his were to his certain knowledge suffused with moisture.

> He had excused her following him into the room thereafter, and now made his way towards his sisters alone, and supreme-

"Eh! what-what mischief are you two hatching ?" said he; "whenever I see you two together, I know there's mischief in the wind. Am I 'going'? 'Going' where? One at a time-one at a time. Oh, to the Abbey, is it? I have heard nothing of it. Whose idea is it? Your W. own, or Resamund's?"

"Lady Julia Verelst's," replied Emily, with unction. "Lady Julia has invited

"For to-morrow, eh? To what?

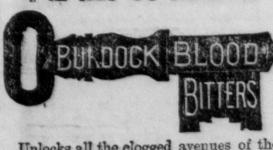
"Luncheon. Luncheon at two o'clock." "Luncheon? That's a pity. I doubt whether I can get over to luncheon. When did the invitation come? Just

"I don't know when it came; but Rosamund told us-or rather told me just now," said Henrietta. "She said it in a sort of off-hand way-'My aunt hopes to see us there at luncheon to-morrow,' and I saw the note lying about afterwards. It was lying open, and I saw 'Do not be later than two,' for some reason or other. There it is now-"

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

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