## BROTHER, OR LOVER.

IN TWO INSTALMENTS—PART I.

CHAPTER I.

Well, I must say I think you are ridiculously proud. You know dad wished us to go and live with Uncle John, if he would take us in. You had better change your mind before it is too late, Donsa' Donsa Maxwell raised a pair of deter-

mined looking hezel eyes to meet her sister's blue ones. as she replied-

'Do stop talking about i', Edith. My mind has been made up since that terrible day, two years ago, when the dear old dad was told he had not many months to live. I have born the monotony of this sort of live out of love to him; but I always meant to be tree when he was no longer here to make existence possible in this dull hole.

'I say once more, and for positively the last time, I intend to go to London and work for a living. My hundred pounds will last me for longer 5than I shall be unoccupied. It you had an ounce of spirit in you, you would come too instead of waiting for Uncle John's grudgingly offered charity.

But Edith Maxwell was as indolent and easy-going as the father who had been content to pass some of the last years of his life in idleness, though well aware that his pension-he had served his country as captain of an infantry regiment-would die with him, and that his two girls would be left to fight the world with one hundred pounds each, which was all their mother had had to be queath to them.

Donsa took after that mother in appear-

ance and character. Of medium height and slender figure, she looked taller than she was, by reason of the somewhat defiant way in wh

carried her pretty head. Her hair was short, and as curl

There was a tawny glint in it, i

there was in her eyes when they were not distinctly hazel.

The rest of her face had nothing remarkable in it in the way of beauty or character; in fact, she was an average type of a tolerably pretty English girl, possessing more spirit than was good for her perhaps, linked, as it was, with lack of judgment and a knowledge of the world gleaned from books.

But such, as she was. she took her fate and her fortune in her hands, and entrained for London one fine morning, leaving her sister standing on the little country platform, somewhat disconsolately waiting for a train going the other way, which would take her to the sheltering care of the Rav. John Maxwell, her father's elder

Donsa's last words had satisfied Edith that, after all, things would probably go well with the headstrong girl.

'It the worst comes to the worst, and can't get work I like, I shall try and find Charlie. We know he was in London up to twelve months ago, so I guess he is there still.'

Neither of the sisters had ever been within fitty miles of London, and all their reading had tailed to convince them of its

The 'Charlie' alluded to by Donsa was their only brother, who had been adopted by a sister of Mrs. Maxwell's when Captain Maxwell met with the injury which necessitated his leaving the army while still

Miss Grant-the lady in question-had died a few months before.

She had disapproved of her sister's marriage on the score of Captain Maxwell's lack of family-his people being mostly in trade, while the Grant's traced their descent back to the time of Edward III.

The boy Charlie was as entirely separated from his tamily as if he had never be-

longed to them. Once in every twelve months, Miss Grant sent news of his whereabouts to his father -his mother having died shortly after Donsa's birth-but Charlie himself gave no

sign of remembering his own people. As he was only three years old at the time of his adoption by his aunt, this was not, perhaps, remarkable, though his sisters, especially Donsa, to whom he was only a name, lived in hope of his ultimate return to them, now that Miss Grant was

dead. Donea had her boxes deposited in the clock-room at Paddington, while she pro ceeded to look about her in search of

She clung to the little purse bag which held her hundred pounds, and stepped into the first hausom she came to, feeling | hopeless lunatic, utterly without occupavery responsible and rather proud of her- tion, and with no hobby except a tendency | Lockhart, he knew all about him. self for having got so far without any buch to scribble stories which no editor would in her programme.

The cabby was an elderly man with daughters of his own, and when she told him that she wanted to find some rice lodgings, he drave ber to a house he knew of near Regent's park, . here he considered she would be quickly suited.

Dones paid and diemissed him before

she rang the rell. This was her first mistake.

The cab was out of sight before anyone answered her ring, and she soon learned that a girl without chaperon of any sort, and with no visible luggage, is not considered a desirable lodger by any 'respectable' | self. landla y.

Indignant, but not discouraged, she decided to get in o a passing 'bus and go into the city, of which she had heard so much.

Perhaps they would not be so particular

there. Mistake number two was to peep into her bag from time to time in order to ascertain that her roll of notes was sate. There came an awful paralyzing moment

when she discovered that her bag had been stolen! She looked around her, and under the

seat, and across at a man who was the only passenger except herself just then. The pallor in her cheeks and the horror

in her eyes struck him as being in marked contrast to the rosiness of the former, and the brightness of the latter, which had decided him to travel citywards by 'bus instead of cabbing it. 'What is the matter?' he asked, with

some concern. 'My bag! I have lost it! All my money

is in it! 'That is very unfortunate. Not a large

sum, I trust ? 'All I have in the world !' said Donsa

tragically, forgetting all she had read concerning the unwisdom of entering into conversation with strangers in busy, wicked

But this man spoke so kindly and look. ed so sympathetic-moreover, he was so handsome and so very well dressed-that it would have been difficult to have remained silent under the peculiarly trying circumstances.

The poor child was so stunned by the misfortune which had befallen her, that she was only too thankful to be taken in hand by anybody.

Except for a tew shillings she was absolutely penniless.

The closk room ticket was gone, too-she had slipped it into the bag for safety-so she could not even claim her luggage.

The whole story was drawn from her piteously quivering lips by the man who had come to her rescue—as she considered. His sympathy grew until it seemed to

entirely possess him. Gazing at her with carefully guarded

eyes, he said-'My poor child, this is a greater misfortune than you think. I will do my best tor you it you will trust me. Do you think you can trust me?'

She glanced shyly at the handsome face which older women than she had trusted, telegraph to Edith to lend me some monand her reply came readily.

Of course I trust you. How could I do otherwise when you are so kind?'

As she spoke she remembered a sentence which had struck her in the last novel she had read—'An inch of experience is worth a mile of reading."

Why should that recur to her just now of all times? And what had it to do with the case in point?

'I must tell you who I am, and you will then let me know your name, won't you?' continued her new friend. Mine is Lockart -Curtis Lockhart, very much at your service.'

'I am called Donsa Maxwell,' she said in response. 'Donsa? What a pretty, quaint name !

I don't think I ever heard it before.' 'My real name is Marion; but I suppose it did not sound pleasant to me when I was a child, for when my tather or any of his triends called me Marion, I used to say, 'Don't sir, or rather, 'Don', sa'; so got used to it.'

'It suits you. You are rather out of the common yourself, you know. Now, our first proceeding must be to let the police know of your loss, Miss Maxwell; and then I think we had had better have some lunch, and discuss future pla ns.'

## CHAPTER II.

Charlie Maxwell considered himself so illused by tate, that he left his luxuriously furnished rooms one morning with something more than a faint idea that he might as well put an end to his existence. Brought up in idleness, he knew nothing

of the joys of well earned holidays. While still under five and twenty he had

married a girl as purposeless as himself, and as idle, and with a tendency to insanity of which he knew nothing until it had developed into actual madness before she had been his wife many months.

Ste at empted to take her own life and his and it became necessary to put her un-

Thus Maxwell found himself in the early twenties, leagally bound in marriage to a accept.

It was not very surprising it he drifted into folly that only just stopped short of deserving the worst name.

But the man was too innately refined to

easily become vicious. The inevitable coarseness attendant on all torms of vice repelled him even while be sought ob! we of his courts hie in the very pleasure which if persisted in, must

needs make him more or less vicious. It was after an unusually excessive has read so much of the unwisdom of trustdrinking bout that he came face to face ing strangers in London with the future he was preparing for him-

Better death than that-

would imperil his soul.

to end his existence. He was so good a swimmer that he would find it difficult to drown. Shooting was too noisy; hanging he shrank from.

and he told himself that he lacked sufficient

He turned his steps eastwards, ponder. ing as he went, over the best way in which

will power to reorganize his life.

A ni e quick poison certainly seemed

Meanwhile, being hungry, he might as

He usually lunched at his club; a cab would take him there in less than fifteen

minutes. But he did not feel in the mood to meet anyone he knew, so he walked on in search of a restaurant, and turned into the first he came to, deciding that a dying man need not trouble about locality, or recherche cooking; if he got something wholesome to eat he must be contented.

There were a good many people seated at the different tables; he made for the only unoccupied one, and sat down without noticing his immediate neighbours.

He ordered mutton chops, thinking that even a second class restaurant ought to be equal to turning out decent chops.

While he waited for them he was struck by the note of culture in the voices of two people who occupied the table next to his. They were a man and a girl: a pretty fresh-coloured girl with a lovely, albeit troubled looking, eyes, and a man whose back seemed familiar.

Maxwell shitted his position a little, uriosity to see if he

was right in fancying he knew the man and as he found he had not been mista ken his interest was aroused by a question asked by him and by the answer it drew from the girl.

'Is this sister your only near relative, Miss Maxwell ?

I have a brother somewhere I think he ives in London; I must try and find him. lou know London well; I wonder if you ever met him? He is called Char

'Charliel Charlie Maxwell! No, I don't think I ever met anyone of that name. What is he? And where does he live?

and he never came home afterwards. don't tancy he is anything. Aunt Grant was rich, you see. I never knew her,

either.' 'I am afraid it will be rather a difficult matter to find him. The best way, per-

haps, would be to advertise.' 'But that costs money! You forget that I have only three shillings in the world until I find my bag. Do you think I shall get it back today? If not, I must

·I will telegraph for you it you will give me your sister's address.

'How good you are! You are doing everything for me. Her address is Miss Edith Maxwell, care of Rev. John Maxwell, The Vicarage, Penreach, Cornwall.' Her companion scribbled it in his note book before he spoke again.

'She can telegraph the money to you. know. What do you mean to do with it? Go to Penreach?

'And acknowled ge myself a failure already? No; I would rather die! I will use the money to pay for food and lodging until I can get work-if I don't get my own money back.'

'What work can you do-a dainty little

bit of womanh and like you ?' 'I have been well educated; I could teach, but I should hate it. I could go as companion; but I should hate that, too. It I can't do anything better, I would take a ituation as parlour maid, in preterence to they took to calling me 'Donsa' and I have | humbling myself to Uacle John and his

'Poor child! You don't know what you are talking about. You a parlour-maid, indeed! Have you no fancy for trying

the stage ?' Too risky for a girl so utterly alone as I am. You see I know something of the world it I have lived in the country all my

'Quite right. Well, Miss Donsa-I may call you that? or must I keep to Miss

Maxwell ? 'You may call me anything but 'Marion;' I never shall like that, even if I live

to be ninety!' 'Well, then, Miss Donsa, I am going to

suggest something which I hope will meet with your approval. I live with my mother in a cosy little house in St. John's Wood. I hope you will not refuse to be her guest until you are sufficiently in tunds once more to be

Coarlie Maxwell was despatching his grilled chops at the other table, listening attentively to every word of this conversa-

At the last words he pricked up his ears with keener attention still, for though he had no personal acquaintance with Curtis | so there is no hurry about your getting

He began to revolve things in his mind, and to ask himselt whether instead of committing suicide, be had not better intertere to save this pretty girl from a fate worse than death, such as must inevitably e ners it she consented to become, as she imagined, the guest of Cartis Lockbart's

It is very, very kind of you to wish it. Dones was flushing bail with gratitude, half with coupt.

Lockhart was an utter stranger, and she Still, it he really it

You mu not refuse me tota small request'- Lockuart spoke softly and per- tions were somewnat interesting. death could only be won to . .... wante | austively. 'I shall feel seriously uneasy about you, if I lose sight of you ments to this day's puzzle! I begin to

think of them situated as you are at this gradual degredation which threatened him if he lived-as he had been living of late; moment.'

Tois was too much for Charlie Maxwell. He fancied he had been told that both of

Curtis Lockhart's parents were dead.

sisters. and approached Donsa, card case in hand. 'I was reluctant to speak on the mere suspicion that you were the sister whom I for me. meet to day for the first time. But now, is this sufficient proof of my identity as your long lost brother?'

He handed cards to Donsa and to Lockbart, which acquainted each with the fact that the speaker claimed to be one Charles Maxwell

Lockhart frowned as he read the unwelcome intimation, but Donsa sprang to her feet with an exclamation of delight, holding out both hands as her eyes flasped with joy and relief into the grey ones regarding her so steadily.

Charlie P Oh, it seems too good to be old address, though we did not know if you were living there still.' 'Is the pater dead? I did not get the

letter. I have only just returned to town. 'He died last month.' The hazel eyes filled with tears, but she would not let them overflow. 'Dear old dad! I miss | be a brother to her always, whatever she him awfully, He died suddenly, or we should have sent to you before. We had been hoping-or at least I had-that you would come back to us after Aunt Grant's death left you free to please yourself. Or did she cherish her dislike of dad right up to the end?'

'Shall we talk of those things later on? suggested Maxwell gently. I want to know now what brought you to town. Will you introduce me to your friend?'

Lockhart was visibly uneasy, and evidently chargined at the arrived of so unlooked for a chaperon for the girl he had last time. planned to deceive.

He took his departure as soon as he could do so without exciting Maxwell's | trust. suspicion, accepting the other man's hanks for kindness shown to Donsa, with a secret consciousness that they were spoken sarcastically.

All three left the resturant together, parting at the door.

Lockhart got into a hanson, and was approprie driven westward. Maxwell hailed another for Dorsa and

himself, telling the man to drive about for an hour, and then land them at some quiet hotel somewhere off the Strand. 'Now tell me your story, sister Donsa. I know absolutely nothing about you, for

my aunt invariably retused to answer any questions concerning any of you, and vowed she would wash her hands of me it attempted to communicate with the pat-

'What a horrid woman she must have been! And, of course, you could not afford to defy her.'

And then Donsa launched into a more or less lengthy account of all the circum. stances of her one and twenty years of life which had led up to her being in London, friendless and penniless, at the present

Charlie put in a question from time to time, when any point did not seem clear to his comprehension, and when Donsa had finished, he told his own story briefly, omitting all mention of his unlucky mar-

'I cannot join in your disapproval of Aunt Grant,' he said, 'because she was un doubtedly very generous to her unworthy nephew. Perhaps it would have been better for me had I led a less luxurious life, for my present income is insufficient tor my extragavant needs.' This was pertectly true if he purposed

giving a home to Donsa. The annual sum demanded of him for his wite's board and lodging at the private asy lum where he had placed her made considerable inroads into his cepital, which h d been reduced of late, owing to his excessive

self-indulgence. He did not wish Donsa to guess. however, that her advent would prove much of a strain on his resources, so he drew freely on his imagination as he proceeded with

'I am just turning fout of the rooms I have been occupying. In fact, I am lodging bunting now, and this accounts for my opportune appearance at the restaurant pitched on by you and Mr. Lochart. My occupation lies in the neighborhood of Fleet street. I have gone in for journalism, I must tell you I want to find diggings somewhere in Brixton. Would that suit

'As I don't know one part of London trom another, I am not in a position to be critical; but you must not think I am going to let you support me, Charlie; I shall work for a living. Is Brixton a sort of place where I could get a situation as secretary, or something like that?'

'No doubt something will be obtainable. But let me assure you of my solvency. I have at least three bundred a year to keep us going in addition to what I may earn, work. And now to present plans. We must recover your luggage without delay. As you have reported the loss of your cloak room licket to the police, we sha'l have no great difficulty in the matter, I tancy. We will then make for an hotel where you shall sleep to night, and tomorrow I will shift my lodgings into rooms at Brixton, or elsewhere.'

## CHAPTER III.

As he walked back to his rooms that evening, after satisfying himself that Donsa had all she required at the hotel he had salected for her, Charlie Maxwell's reflec

Well, of all the unexpected denoue-But he did not shrink from that thought | have found a nome to your hang. I have think there must be a certain amount of as he shrank from the mental picture of sisters of my own. I should not like to truth in what Shakespeare makes Hamlet

say about 'a divinity that shapes our ends, rough-hew them how we will.'

·I started this morning very nearly determined not to be alive at sunset. This evening I find myself feeling more alive He knew for a fact that the man had no | than I have felt for years, keenly interested in a girl of whose existence I was ignorant Leaving his unfinished chop, he rose until a tew hours ago, and whom, having accepted as a sister, I am self-pledged to treat as one. The position was too strong

'I am not exactly a saint, but I could not go on yeilding to the temptation to seek oblivion from the monotonous mistakes of this life when it was in my power to rescue an innocent, unsuspecting girl from a man whom I knew to be a villain. I have, nevertheless, committed suicide today. The old Charles Maxwell is, I trust, dead for ever,

'I have something to live for now. And may Heaven deal with me as I deal with this unsuspecting child, who believes me to be her brother. She is nothing more 'Are you really Charlie-my brother than a child, in spite of her one and twenty years. What a difference to Clara! She true! But why did you not write or come | was a woman at seventeen, and most of the when dad died? Edith sent to you at the other girls I have met never seem to have been children at all.

'I hope Fate will be kind to me. If I keep carefully east of the Strand, I ought not to run up against anyone likely to recognize me Anyway, I am not ashamed of what I am doing, it I am deceiving her. I swear to may become to me. Surely it will be easy enough; and if not, I must not complain.'

He entered his champers, and looked around on their costly fittings with a feel. ing of contempt for his past life. 'I am a better man tonight than I have ever been before,' he solitoquized, with a

mental pat on the back. paid his landlady next morning, and acquainted her with the fact that he was going abroad for an indefinite period, that his furniture would be sold immediately, and that she was looking on him for the

Being a woman of vast and varied experience Mrs Crups viewed him with dis-

He had not shaved that morning. How was Mrs Crupps to know that he intended to grow a moustache by way of disguise?

His eyes did not meet hers frankly as was their wont. How was Mrs Crupps to know that he

was atraid of his general pleased owards Dones being read by her quick rain P Altogether Charlie Maxwell appeared in

an unsatistactory light to the worthy woman who had lamented over his evil course,' for the last eight months. But she listened in stolid silence, for, after all, it was no business of hers.

So long as Mr Maxwell owed her nothing she had no right to interfere with his goings or comings.

Her rooms would let again directly; there was no fear on that score. Mrs. Crupps therefore pocketed the money paid by Charlie in lieu of notice, and watched him depart with critical calm-

ness.

The desired lodgings at Brixton were easily procured, and when night tell on the second day of his acquaintance with Donsa Charlie found himself established with her in a fairly comfortable sitting-room communicating, by means of folding doors, with a smaller apartment where meals were to be served for them.

'This is lovely !' declared Donsa, as she appeared at the supper table, after unpacking her boxes. 'I begin to feel at home already. I must write to Edith tomorrow, to tollow up the telegram we sent yesterday. She will wish now that she had come with me, instead of accepting

charity trom Uncle John.' 'Cannot you be happy without her ? I have a kind of presentiment that Edith and I would not hit it off over well. She

is very diff rent to you, isn't she ?' 'Quite different. She is fairer and better looking; so far she has the advantage of me. But she is lazier than I should like to be.'

'Which of you gets most admirers ?' 'Oh, we are about equal!' Donsa laughed. 'There was no great choice of men at Stoke Leyton.' 'Either of you engaged.'

'Oh, dear, no! There was nobody

worth getting engaged to. Besides, I, at least, am in no hurry to be married." Sensible girl. Marriage is a mistake. What is the matter ?'

'My collar has slipped away from the She was fumbling at the back of her neck with both hands.

Maxwell was on his teet in an instant, and behind her chair. He noticed what a pretty neck she had

'Let me do it.'

as he refastened the collar. 'Thanks!' She put up her lips. 'Do vou know you have not kissed me yet, Charlie ?'

He flushed and hesitated, but only for a She must not be allowed to suspect that he was not what he seemed.

He bent his head and laid his lips lightly on hers. Her arms went round his neck and held

him fast, so that the caress was a longer one than he had intended. He drew a long breath when she released bim.

Had he ever tasted sweeter lips? But he trowned even as he asked himselt the question. ·How severe you look! Perhaps you

don't like kissin, people? Donsa pouted a little as she hazarded this remark. ·On the contrary, I rather like when the

people' happen to be pretty girls.' 'Do you call me pretty ?' 'Yes, Miss Vanity, I do.' 'I don't; I'd rather be like Edith. I ... lieve I have rather nice eyes, but the rest

of my tace is insignificent.' 'It is no use your fishing for compliments.

Continued on page eleven.