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The girl remained transfixed, powerless to move. Not until he turned to-ward her and spoke was the spell but-

broken. Then she came quickly to his side. He had pronounced her name. "Ycu are about to tell me somehing, Mr. Brood," she cried in great igitation. "I do not care to listen. I feel that it is something I should not know. Please let me go now. I--" He laid his hands upon her shoul- you deserveders, holding her off at arm's length. "I am very fond of you, Lydia. I do

not want to hurt you. Sooner would I have my tongue cut out than it should wound you by a single word. And yet I must speak You love Frederic. Is

She returned his gaze unwavering-Her face was very white.

"It is better that we should talk it

We have ten minutes. No doubt

your unkindness was or recent origin, 'Recent origin?" he demanded

quickly. "If it had begun with the advent of Mrs. Brood," she explained frankly, undismayed by his scowl. "I do not understand all that has gone before. Is it surprising, Mr. Brood, that your son finds it difficult to love you? Do

Brood stopped her with a gesture of his hand.

"The time has come for frankness on my part. You set me an example, my mind to tell you the truth about than Frederic, but my courage has always failed me. Perhaps I use the wrong word. It may be something very un-like cowardice that has held me back. I am going to put a direct question to you first of all, and I ask you to an Would you say that

his father. I have never seen a por-trait of his mother, but—" You mean that he looks like me?" demanded Brood.

(To be continued.)





mere is nothing your gentlemen friends will Lydia. You have the courage of your father. For months I have had it in appreciate more during the Christmas season

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Buddha.

he hesitated, and then went on harshly "as his father before him loved." Anger dulled her understanding; she did not grasp the full meaning of his declaration. Her honest heart rose to the defense of Frederic.

"Mr. Brood, I do care for Frederic," she flamed, standing very erect before him. "He loves me. I know he does. You have no right to say that he loves lightly, ignobly. You do not know him as I know him. You have never tried to know him, never wanted to know him. You-Oh, I beg your pardon, Mr. Brood. I-I am forgetting myself."

yourself, Lydia," said he levelly. 'You are young, you are trusting. Your lesson will cost you a great deal, my

myself," she said gravely. "May I speak plainly, Mr. Brood?"

"Certainly. J intend to speak plainly to you."

"Frederic loves me. He does not



"I am afraid you do not understand

"You are mistakeu. I do understand

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also am fascinated by her, and you too, Mr. Brood. The spell has fallen over all of us. Let me go on, please. You say that Frederic loves like his father before him. That is true. He loves but one woman. ne woman, and she is dead. vomán who was Fredeic's mother. Do make my meaning plain? Well, so i is that Frederic loves me. I am con tent to wait. I know he loves me.

Through all this, Brood stared at her in sheer astonishment. He had no feeling of anger, no resentment, no thought of protest.

"You-you astound me, Lydia. Is this your own impression or has it been suggested to you by-by another?"

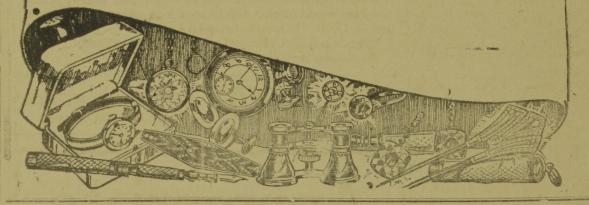
"I am only agreeing with you when you say that he loves as his father loved before him-but not lightly. Ah, not lightly, Mr. Brood.'

"You don't know what you are say

"Oh, yes, I do," she cried earnestly "You invite my opinion; I trust yo will accept it for what it is worth. Be fore you utter another word again Frederic, let me remind you that have known both of you for a lon In all the years I hav been in this house, I have never known you to grant him a tender, loving word. My heart has ached for him There have been times when I almost hated you. He feels your neglect your harshness, your-your cruelty. He-

#### "Cruelty!"

"It is nothing less. You do not like him. I cannot understand ,why you should treat him as you do. He shrinks from you. Is it right, Mr. Brood, that a son should shrink from his father as a dog cringes at the voice of an un kind master? I might be able to un derstand your attitude toward him if



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