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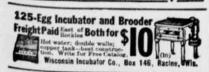
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with white mustache, a great friend of Mrs. Stuart's, who had a moment ago murmured his applause of Victor. Well, this time he murmured again, quite in my ear:

"Come, come, my pretty little lady! Your sensibility does you great credit; but you really don't expect us to believe that you feel quite so badly as that?"

I almost laughed out loud. And, sure enough, as soon as the maid had put me on the dressing room sofa, and left me quiet for a moment, like the sensible person she looked, then my tears and my gasps ceased as if by magic. For a few moments I lay supine, like a tortured beast that has just thrown off its load; content to exist, and no more, in the realization that my terrible burden was no longer strapped to my shoulders, that Lucia's dagger could never be needed any more, that I was free to love Henry with my whole heart and to let him love me. I sprang to my feet. An idea had come to me.

I fairly shrieked for the maid.

She turned back from the window. "You

I fairly shricked for the maid. She turned back from the window. "You

She turned back from the are better, Miss<sup>2</sup>

"Yes, yes!" My hand trembled on the gold bag on my wrist, and I drew a bill from it at random. "Look! Would you like five

it at random. "Look! Would you have live dollars?"

Her hand closed on the money like the snap of an automaton. She whispered, "Is it a word you want carried to one of the gentlemen, Miss?"

"No, no! Just take me downstairs and find me my wraps and put me into a taxicab. At once!"

So downstairs in one of those breath taking lifts we fell, as one falls down a well. Perhaps, after all, the Lorraine had not yet left her dock! They had said, at table, her sailing was delayed until this evening. Ah, those blessed strikers! Who knows? If they had been obstinate enough and violent enough and wicked enough, perhaps they had prevented the steamer from taking on her cargo and sailing—perhaps—perhaps, I might be in time to keep Henry from going away, after all!

Downstairs in the hall there were cruel.

away, after all!

Downstairs in the hall there were cruel delays, incredible delays, before the maid could find my little satin cloak. I should have gone at once without it; but in my white lace dinner dress, with its hanging festoons of pearls, I noticed that people stared at me as though I had escaped from the Jardin des Plantes. Besides, it was late, nearly one o'clock, and I didn't want to make poor Henry ridiculous, arriving to look for him—if he was still there—looking like a wild creature.

look for him—if he was still there—looking like a wild creature.

But at last the cloak was found and wrapped around me. Then more delays—maddening delays—for a taxi. Then finally—ah, that wild dash through the sultry streets of the city, behind a chauffeur trying to earn a ten-dollar tip by arriving at the dock of the French Line in ten minutes—and with a volcano in my heart!

As we turned in at the entrance of the long wharf shed, suddenly I heard the hoarse

As we turned in at the entrance of the long wharf shed, suddenly I heard the hoarse blast of a steamer's whistle. Ah, I knew what that meant! The chauffeur shouted to a man leaning against a pile of packing cases, a rough looking fellow with the look of a striker.

"Say, has the Lorraine left yet?"

The fellow replied with a sullen stare, "No, curse her, she ain't!"

Oh, dear, kind striker, led by Heaven, I owed this good fortune to you! Opening my

owed this good fortune to you! Opening my bag again, I tossed the man a bill, just to relieve the joy of my heart. Behind me I heard the horn of another late comer's autoheard the horn of another late comer's automobile. For a moment I hesitated. The warehouse was so long, there were so few lights, so many people! Where should I go to find Henry? With blind resolution, I precipitated myself in the direction whence the whistle had come. Suddenly I heard a voice behind me:

"Lili, Lili!"

Literal It was Mrs. Cobit

I turned. It was Mrs. Cobb!

THE sight of her, which had never pleased me too sincerely, had perhaps never been so unwelcome to me as at that instant. But for mere decency I had to check my flying steps and wait for her to catch up with me. Her eyes were wild, her bare shoulders uncovered but for a little lace scarf. I flung out my hand violently:

"No, it's no use coming for me! I wee?"

hand violently: it's no use coming for me! I won't

She seized my hand in both of hers. And together we sped down the dim, interminable length of the wharf shed; while Mrs. Cobb, gasping for breath, let fall questions and answers that were no more than half

intelligible.

"Lili, my poor child! You crazy child, to come here alone! It was the Duchess in-"Lili, my poor child! You clazy child, to come here alone! It was the Duchess insisted that I should come after you. And I wanted to see you myself, Dear, you understand that, and explain. That wretched boy! The Duchess is quite furious—she



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talksof a breach of promise suit and all sorts of things. My darling child, can you ever forgive me—and make the Duchess forgive me?

"Hurry, hurry! But, dear Madame, how did you know where to find me?" It was really too vexatious! I boaled with wrath as I tugged her puffing bulk along beside me. Again the steamer's whistle roared. After all, should I be too late?

"It was when we sent to the dressing room and found you gone, my dear, gone! I'm bound to own, everybody smiled and said, 'She's gone to find poor Henry Stuart—bully for her!' And that nice old friend of Mrs. Stuart's—Colonel Appleby, you remember him?—he said, 'Mrs. Cobb, take a taxi and drive at once to the dock of the French Line. If the Lorraine hasn't sailed yet, I think we can eat that wedding cake, after all."

"Hurry, hurry!"

French Line. If the Lorrance hash yet, I think we can eat that wedding cake, after all."

"Hurry, hurry!"

In another moment—ah! thank the bon Dien!—we emerged from behind a pile of accumulated cargo into a blaze of electric light. At the foot of a gangplank stood a group of men in uniform; porters and sailors came and went. Before me rose the high, black wall of a ship's side. My heart leaped as though it would burst.

"Monsieur!" I rushed to the group in uniform. "Monsieur, I wish to speak with Monsieur Henry Stuart, a passenger on this ship. Where can I find him, please?"

The oldest and most important looking surveyed me up and down gruffly. "The ship is just sailing. Besides, the passengers are all asleep. Is it very important?"

Ah! he was a Frenchman, of course. I had forgotten that. Quick as a flash I changed to the tongue that was his as well as mine. "Monsieur, for the love of God send for him! It's a matter of life and death—no, you understant more than life and death—no, you understant more than life and death."

"Monsieur, for the love of God send for him!
It's a matter of life and death—no, you understand—more than life and death!"
His weary face relaxed in a smile, he looked from me to Mrs. Cobb, in her lace and sparkling jewels, then back to me again.
"Mademoiselle, there's only one thing more important than life and death—I remember that, even I!"
Then he turned with a quick order to a



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