KERSHAM MANOR.

CHAPTER XLI.

A WOMAN'S HEART.

soon after their interview in the office. ed ! But you know, Esther dear, you must There was no reason to wait. He had been not take it for granted that every woman a widower for more than a year. And it was | who has married the man she cares for feels better that the children should have a as you do. You have a genius for loving, I mother. The wedding took place in June, believe. Every one does not know the and then they went away together for a heights and depths of love like you." - was more, Sebastian was happy too. He peculiar experience." gave himself up to the influences of the "Ah," said Phil, "but you never can be scene, the time, the season, as he had seldom quite like other women, dear!"

I could never forget that I had known what | that he has brought me-though that is happiness means. It is a good thing to be very great to me, you know, Phil!-but happy; one day of real joy sweetens all because I am brought into relations with

grass beside her; his head was resting on longer, but really belong to the worldher dress, and her hand touched his shoul- shall really know the cares and joys and

himself and taking her hand in his own.

"Perfectly. And you?" She trembled when she had asked the "You have a 'lifted' look, as the Scotch | isfaction curved her lips at the thought. very much right to happiness except in the | faluting sort of way, you know."

He-drew her hand to his lips and kissed a new world.' it softly. "I am in heaven," he said. And | "You will not always feel so; you will hand. She did not speak at first. that was all. She was infinitely content. | get used to it."

Esther Malet.

It was easier in some ways to talk of hersouthward to meet the children in London | Maud, I shall have had my day." and take them "home." Esther did not go | "I did not know that you were so sentiyoung women making confidences, and | should pass but not press?" discoursed of their various lives and "I have so little to fear," returned bright and gleeful they were over it, how arm of Jack's chair, and said saucily: London poor. Phil's hardness and flippancy | cares for Sebastian.' were all gone; she was effectually tamed; even her slang had almost disappeared amid the stress and strain of her hard yet abundantly pleasant work. And it was delightful forever." to Esther to see how far the softening protaken the place of bitterness, and tender | waist. pity of rebellion; and how, withal, the spirit of fun and laughter had by no means | looked dreamily away. but good-humored caricature.

ed; until by and by there came a silence, thing for her would be to die while life is and then Phillis said impulsively:

"Now tell me all about yourself, Esther.' "I have told you all that there is to tell

-in letters."

"Oh no. There is a great deal more. you are growing fanciful." How do you like it?'

" Like -what ?"

"Being married my dear. Have you quarrele | with your husband yet ?" " No."

"What a significant little no! You mean that nothing will ever induce you to quarrel with him? But that's nonsense, my dear. Jack and I quarreled bitterly on our wed ding-day. You will quarrel too, some day.' "I hope not," said Esther soberly.

" And are you happy?" Phil did not need a response in words.

Esther flashed a bright look at her that was an answer in itself.

"Tell me," said Phil coaxingly, slipping her hand into Esther's arm, "do you care for him so very much ?" "Phil, dear, what an unnecessary ques-

"Is it so unnecessary?" thought Phillis, but she did not speak. She watched Esther's face a little curiously. The soft gray eyes had new light in them, the fine features seemed to have been transfigured by an inner glow of happiness. She had more bloom, more softness of expression, than of old.

"You are altered," Phil said at last with some abruptness.

"Is that wonderful?" Esther passed her hand across her brow, as if to clear away some mental cloud. "I look at myself in the glass sometimes," she said smiling, "and wonder if I am the same. It is extraordinary to see so little change! To have one's whole life reversed, and yet to show so little sign--"

"What a good thing !" Phil commented seeing her at last as she stood in the doormischievously. "It would be bad for some of us if we carried our histories in our

"But I don't do that," said Esther reproachfully. "It is only that I feel different"-she smiled and gave herself a little shake-" as if, to put it fancifully, earth itself had broken up, and I were in some pleased."

"You are a woman made to love, Esther. You have never found your true life till

now."

" Perhaps so. It is foolish, I know, Phil; but now that I am so happy I remember, as f for the first time, how many people there are who are happy in the same way, and I cannot feel any longer that the world is the poor miserable place some people would have us think."

"It isn't," said Phil briefly. "It is a very good world. At any rate, it is a very interesting one. I don't know how I shall make up my mind to leave it when my time Esther was married to Sebastian very comes—so much of it unseen and unexplor-

fortnight before sending for Muriel and Esther shook her head. "I don't want Rollo to Dunross. During that fortnight to believe that," she said. "I would rather they wandered about among some of the think that I was just like other women, loveliest Highland scenery. Esther wished just sharing the common lot-tasting the that the fourteen days would never end. common bread and wine of human life-She was perfectly happy; and what-to her rather than that I had some special and

had the chance of doing before-as she had | "Don't say so," Esther pleaded, with the never seen him do before. It was not until gesture of one who puts something unpleasthe last days of their absence from Dunross ant out of sight. "I can't believe it, Phil. that either of them spoke of their felicity. I have looked at other women and seen But one evening, as they sat together on a happiness in their faces-and have not hillside, watching the sun go down over a understood. I have even despised them grand expanse of purple moorland and for it sometimes. But now-now-I underblossoming wood, Esther's tongue was stand. And I am glad that my husband loosened, and she said rather suddenly: loves me, not only because of my own " It life were ever so dark to me again, little private happiness, the individual joy one's life afterward. It is a possession." human life which were impossible before, Sebastian was lying on the short, dry because I am not stranded and solitary any

question. Would be find it difficult to say," Phil observed, regarding her friend answer? For nobody-not even Sebastian- | with keen, examining eyes. "Are you sure since her return. A knock came to the nobedy in the whole wide world could be so that you are not going too far? Are you not front door, happy as she had been, without perhaps taking matters too intensely?-in a high-

right to love. But his answer should have | Esther laughed. "Perhaps I am," she satisfied a more exacting woman than said, very sweetly. "But I must moralize der as she opened the front door. She saw

"Oh yes. Of course I shall grow calmer kindly. self to another woman than to her husband. as time goes on. But I shall always have When that short but perfect fortnight came | the memory of these days, Phil. Then let to an end Esther and Sebastian traveled come what come may, as the lover says in

down to Kersham. She shrank a little from mental," said Phil, with an affectionate the visit, and Sebastian went alone, leaving little squeeze of Esther's arm. "I will her with Phillis in a small but comfortable give you no more warnings; you are little house near Mile End Road, where she quite clever enough to take care of yourself. and Jack Drummond seemed to have found | But, Esther dear, you really must not set their vocation. Late into the night she and | your heart too much on one thing; there is Phillis sat together, with their bair about | danger in it, I am sure. Is there not a their shoulders, after the manner of proverb-a saying of some kind-that you

interests and of all that happened since last | Esther with a smile. "Even death—death they met. At first Phillis "did the talking." | itself, Phil-could not rob me of the past." She had a great deal to tell. She and Phil shook her head rather doubtingly as

her husband had thrown themselves heart | she retired. She did not want to betray and soul into a great philanthropic her friend's confidences to her husband, enterprise, then just beginning in East but when Esther and Sebastian were gone, London; and it was amazing to see how she perched herself one evening on the

Jack's energy and Phil's buoyancy of spirit | "I've something to tell you. I don't found scope for manifestation amongst the | think I care for you half so much as Esther

> "I'm satisfied," said Jack. "That's right. She's simply devoted to him; and she thinks her happiness will last

"We know better than that, don't we?" cess had advanced; how sympathy had said Jack, passing his arm round his wife's Phil was silent for a moment. Her eyes

been supplanted, and Phil could still make | "I'm afraid for her," she said at last, with her friends laugh till the tears came by her | a note of sadness in her voice. "She is fey, wild improvisations, her power of saturical as our Dunross friends would say. One is always afraid of a downfall when one sees So, at first, she talked and Esther listen- such intensity of feeling. The happiest

at its height, Jack." "Who is intense now?" said Jack. "Would that be the happiest thing for Malet and the children too? Phil my dear,

So Phil held her peace.

CHAPTER XLIL DISPOSSESSED.

But Phillis' fears for her friend's future did not seem likely to be justified. For six months had passed since Esther's marriage, and she was still as happy as on the day when she and Sebastian sat together on the hillside in the golden light of a June evening, "the world forgetting, by the world

And Sebastian?

It is said that a man's love never grows after marriage; but in this case I think last I began to remember; but I did not cocoanut tree. The islanders bore holes in that theremust long have been in Sebastian' I nature a latent store of affection for Esther, which developed after marriage if it did not help me. I ought to have gone to an but they do not care for that. The liquor actually grow.

He worked hard, and he worked well The proof-sheets of Sir Roland's autobiography were already in his hands. He had plenty of newspaper work, and had begun to contribute critical reviews to a wellknown magazine. He seemed to find pleasure in labor of this sort.

It was on a bright November day, six months after her marriage, that Esther stood at the garden-door of her house, watching Rollo and Muriel at play. She loved them very dearly; scarcely could she love a child of her own more than she did little Muriel. At least she thought not; she could not be quite sure. She would know, perhaps, by-and-by

"Come and play with us," Rollo cried, | way. "It is jolly out here to-day."

walk down with you-about three was alive." o'clock."

"Why can't father come too ?" asked here ?"

and play. Don't catch cold."

over it, touching his cheek with her hand, whereupon he drew the caressing fingers to his lips and kissed them tenderly.

They talked a little of trivial matters, of the article that he was writing, of their plans for afternoon and evening. Sebastian had to attend a committee meeting at four o'clock, to dine with a friend at six, and to be present at a political meeting at Prince's again till ten or eleven o'clock.

He went out early in the afternoon, and Esther joined the children at the door to see him go. Her heart was warm still with the memory of his last word to her-"Good-by, my dearest." She never heard him use that term without a momentary thrill. It would have meant little from some lips, but he was not the man to use it carelessly.

At three o'clock Esther took the children ed." to Mrs. Dryburgh's. She came home again with Muriel between six and seven, leaving Rollo, at Mrs. Dryburgh's invitation, to and rain falling before they reached the sat beside her for half an hour afterward, sleepy and the white lids began to droop.

came downstairs. Her household was not large; she had two maid-servants, and of these one happened just now to be taking dear old Sebastian!" Here she stopped to a holiday, while the other had asked per. sob and to cough a little at the same time. mission to go out for an hour or two. Esther | Esther felt as if a knife were being turned was alone in the house. Subsequent events in her heart when she heard the careless made this fact of some importance.

Esther thought that she would spend her sorrows of other women. This is part of evening in the study and read her husband's "Are you happy, dear?" he said, raising what marriage means for me: a fuller share newly written paper. He would be disapin the great life of the world. I never pointed if she had not read it when he liked to be out of the current, as you know." came back. A little smile of supreme sat=

The storm had burst in its full violence

"A beggar, I fancy," said Esther, as she rose from her comfortable chair.

A cold, wet gust of wind made her shuda little, to keep my head steady. I am in a woman's figure—a woman veiled, muffled

"Do you want anything?" said Es ther self-control.

upon a face that Esther knew.

Had the sea given up its dead. Esther's drink. The servants are out." peaceful and beautiful world lay in ruins "Thank you." Then in an aggrieved

about her, if this were so. She neither shrieked nor fainted. That once.'

ears, lights danced before her eyes for one cloak. not know what to say or what to do.

"Don't you know me?" said a plaintive voice. "Am I so very much changed? They told me this was Sebastian's house. Oh, Esther, let me in."

There is a very devil of selfishness in that moment and prompted Esther to think that she might do a cruel thing. Why should she not shut the door in this woman's face, and refuse to believe that Nina Malet-long mourned for as deadfrom the waves which were thought to have engulfed her. In her present state-she was evidently weak and ill-she might never come back if turned from her husband's door.

Esther flung the fierce temptation from her. She opened the door wide and held out her hands. "Come in," she said in a

hoarse, unnatural voice "I escaped in a small boat that every ously hurt by a blow from an oar and died before we landed, and the other man, I heard afterward, was a criminal flying from that we were saved. He ran the boat ashore on a desolate bit of land where there were no houses, no people, or anything. Baby died in my arms, Esther-oh, it was terrible! . . . I was found by some kind country people, but I was too ill to tell them where I came from or to make inquiries about Sebastian-and, indeed I

did not know where mamma was, or I would As a result business is bad in the islands. have written to her. I thought, you know, Trade, outside of opium, has fallen off a that Sebastian was dead."

a harsh dry voice.

and met some English people who were for immigration. I am not sure that at very kind to me. They knew nothing of present the French government would en-"I have brought you some flowers, Sebastian; they thought that I was a wi- courage emigration." Mother Esther," said Muriel. She had dow, and so did I. They gave me money to invented this appellation for herself, and pay my passage home when they heard my Esther liked it. "I found them; they are story. I set off almost at once, meaning to almost to live on sugar during the season go to Kersham Manor. But on board the when it is made, and to thrive on it. "I can't go just now, dear darling," she steamer-it was the most curious thing-I said. "But I wanted to tell you that Mrs. found an old Athenæum, and it told me strange way made free to soar where I Dryburgh has written to ask you there this Sebastian was going to publish his uncle's afternoon. Father is going out, so I will autobiography. So then I knew that he

"Oh, the publisher. I telegraphed from "Father is busy, my sweet. Now go | Liverpool for Sebastian's address, and they sent it immediately. It was the a fearful time! Did you ever hear of any ment varying from two weeks to eight years. ously injured three persons.

Esther came behind his chair and leaned one with such a strange history? I never did. When I got Sebastian's address, I did. When I got Sebastian's address, I hurried on by train as fast as I could. Why is he living in Dunross? I came all the way by myself. And I am really very ill, Esther; very weak and ill-"And the children? Are they here? Are they well? Oh, I am so glad. I thought every one must be dead." She shuddered as she spoke. "I must see them in a min-Hall about eight. He would not be home uce or two; but I feel so tired and faint. Bring them to me, Esther-bring them at once! I am quite longing for a sight of them-isn't it ridiculous ?" And she began to laugh, in a weak, hysterical manner, as if she had no control over herself. "Where

"Rollo is away for the night," said Esther, nerving herself at last to answer the question. "Muriel is asleep; we had better not wake her now; she would be frighten-

"I will not wake her; I will see her presently when I go upstairs. I will rest for a few minutes first-I don't feel able to stay the night. A cold wind was blowing move just yet." She put her hand to her side as if she were suffering pain. But her house. Esther was anxious on Muriel's voice grew steadier as she spoke; exciteaccount, as the child was very fragile. She ment was evidently lending her fictitious herself put the little girl to bed, and she strength. "And Sebastian is out? What did make him come to Dunross !- I expected telling her stories until the blue eyes grew a servant to open the door; and I meant to walk straight in and ask him if he knew It was eight o'clock when Mrs. Malet me. He would have thought that I was a ghost, I suppose! How delighted he will be! He was always so fond of me-dear, words. "Was he terribly broken-hearted, Esther? He must have been, or he would not have thrown up his appointment and come home. Did you see him soon after his return? I can't hear what you say. By-the-bye, are you staying here?-excuse my asking you the question-perhaps you have been teaching the children?"

"Yes," said Esther, not very steadily. "How good of you! and how clever you will make them! Are you sure that it was strictly proper for you to be here alone?" asked Nina, with her old light little laugh, but also with a sharp glance of enquiry which put Esther on her guard.

"Oh, quite proper," said the miserable beyond recognition, with a small bag in her woman, who had thought herself Sebastian Malet's wife's, with perfectly marvelous

Then she drew away from the sofa, hold-The woman shifted her position. She ing up the wet cloak in her hand. "One put up her veil. The lamplight fell full moment," she said. "I will hang up your cloak, and get you something to eat and

voice, "Esther, you have not kissed me

was not Esther's way of taking news. She | She went to the kitchen, and thence to a gave one convulsive gasp, and stood staring | dark, cold scullery, where, with mechanical, in the woman's face. Noises rang in her trembling movements, she hung up Nina's

terrible, over-mastering moment. She must | She found the food for which she had have looked very white and sick; but in avowedly come in search, and prepared to the dim light her sudden pallor escaped carry it to the study. But before leaving observation. She clutched the door-handle | the kitchen she drew off her wedding-ring very tightly, and stood quite still. She did | and slipped it into her pocket. Nina should see no token of that unlawful bond.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

KILLING THEMSELVES WITH OPIUM

every tempted human heart. It rose up at | The Natives of the Marquesas and Dominique Islands Rapidly Dying Off.

W. Hoffner, for two years manager of the Societe Commerciale which owns large stores on the Marquesas and Dominique islands, recently visited San Francisco. was still alive, saved by miracle surely Every two or three months Mr. Hoffner was in the habit of cruising in a boat around these islands, making numerous landings. This has made him exceedingly familiar with the islands and their inhabitants. He says that the natives are dying off very rapidly by reason of the use of opium, and that in a short time there will be none left. The past year has made fearful inroads on

"The deaths have been so frequent," said one thought had capsized," she said. "There Mr. Hoffner to a newspaper reporter, "that were only two sailors in it; one was seri- lately the French government has been doing all it could to suppress the opium traffic, but with meagre success. It hinders it in some ways, but in the main it is carried justice, who went away without reporting on as before. The French government introduced opium into the islands about twenty years ago, and now a vain effort is being made to stamp out the evil. It is, however, too late to remedy the wrong, The natives are

DYING OFF LIKE FLIES. In ten years, if the present rate of mormade up my mind that they must all be tality keeps up, there will not be one of drowned. I had a dreadful fever, and them left. The last few years have been they took me to a hosiptal where the nuns especially severe and made terrible inroads nursed me. When I got better, my senses on the population. Where the natives can -my memory-did not come back for a not get opium to satisfy their cravings they long, long time. I could not remember substitute a brandy obtained from the how I came there, or anything about cocoanut tree, which is even worse than the myself. . . . They kept me out of kindness | product of the poppy juice. The liquor is at the convent ever so long. . . . And at nothing, in fact, but the natural sap of the know what to do. I was stupid from the tree and the sap almost immediately my illness, and there was nobody to begins to run. This process kills the tree, English Consul, or written home-but is stronger than the opium, and I have seen I never thought of doing anything the poor natives drunk on it and lying lery officers are presumably better educated for myself for a long time. It seemed as if about like dead men for three or four days. the end of the world had come. I used to sit They do not smoke the opium, but eat it, that here are enacted scenes in comparioub and think of what you said, Esther, about and in enormous quantities. They eat so my happiness being taken away from me. | much of it and have such abnormal cravings | fade into insignificance. . . . And when I grew stronger, I for it to the exclusion of almost every other wrote to old Mr. Malet, but I suppose he desire that they do not buy the amount of never got the letter, for I had no answer. I general merchandise they ordinarily would. great deal and the people seem to have lost She stopped for a moment sobbing; and the energy and desire to advance that they Esther found strength to ask a question in once had. It is so quiet there now that I think I shall return to Chile, where I was "How did you find out that he was before. When the native population is wiped out altogether, as now seems to be "Oh, at last I came out of the convent its fate, the islands will be an excellent field

Negroes on sugar plantations are said

In manufacturing operations the average life of soapboilers is the highest and that of reminiscence. grindstone makers the lowest.

"Yes. And who told you that he was model of an electric fire engine which will propel itself and work the pumps.

The trial of seventy-two members of the of the door and entered her husband's thing myself. Oh, Esther, I have had such and were sentenced to terms of imprison, was seen, and wrecked the hotel and seri-

His Lot Not a Happy One.

With the exception of the regiments of the Guards—a mere plaything of the Czar —the Russian soldier is a miserable-looking object, small (4 feet 111 inches in the lowest standard of height for infantry), sicklylooking, and dressed in a uniform out of all proportion to his stature.

He is wretchedly paid, always halffamished, and, in fact, appears more qualified to be defended than to defend. One has not to go far to find the reason for this.

The Russian commanders have, almost in every instance, sought their positions, not in the hope of proving useful to the State, but with an eye to the riches which will accrue to them in the shape of plunder from the Government and from their unfortunate subordinates.

Forage, equipment, remounts, and, lastly, the soldiers' rations, offer ample scope for plunder, and these are the sources from which large fortunes are amassed. By regulation each battery must possess fiftyeight horses, and the Government provides the commander with funds for the purchase of that number. As a matter of fact, however, only forty

horses are purchased; returns showing the expenditure for the full number are forwarded to the Commissariat Department, and the difference finds its way into the commander's pocket.

A somewhat similar system is followed in regard to the forage. The horses are kept on short allowance of hay and oats; the soldier, unable to obtain the requisite supply of forage from the proper quarter, is compelled to make up the deficiency by theft from neighbouring peasants. Of this the commanders are well aware, but they affect entire ignorance of the fact.

By regulation each soldier should be furnished with three suits of uniform, one of which he can consider his own property, the other two belonging to the Government. Every year he is entitled to a new suit, which will be considered as Government property, the one which it has replaced becoming the soldier's own.

As a matter of fact, he receives no clothes at all! One tunic, one pair of trousers, and a grey cloak are made to last the whole period of his service. These are only issued to him for some particular occasion, a special parade or review, and are immediately after returned to the battery

The Government meanwhile has been supplying the full quantity of material necessary for giving each man his regulation kit. Another most heartless kind of plunder is in the matter of rations.

Each soldier is entitled to one quarter of a pound of meat, three pounds of black rye bread, one-third of a bound of groats, and one farthing with which to buy such luxuries as salt and pepper. Even this scanty table furnishes its quota to the commander's

In the first place, the contractor for meat, by means of a tempting bribe, procures the acceptance of an article of the worst quality and not infrequently substitues horse for ox flesh. In order to permit of a still further gain,

watered, and the bread issued to the soldiers is, consequently, of the worst possible quality-pastynd half decomposed. The flour saved by this watering process is accumulated and disposed of to private

the commanders direct the dough to be well

persons. The regulation quantity of groats resolves itself into about one spoonful. Reduced by hunger and privation, it is no wonder that every Russian soldier suffersf severely from one form or another o

Once a year the commander of each army corps makes a visit of inspection. On this occasion it is in the power of any soldier to complain to the inspecting officer, but the soldier would be indeed ill-

dyspepsia.

advised who made use of this privilege. Yet it is done occasionally. After the inspection the general is entertained by the commander to a recherche dinner, with champagne, oysters, and choicest Havana cigars, and usually leaves loudly expressing his satisfaction with the

efficiency of the batteries. After his departure the complaining soldiers are brought before the commander and are mercilessly abused, and kicked, and almost carried out by other soldiers to the punishment cells.

In no other armies are such cruelties practised upon soldiers as in that of Russia. The thrashings are interminable, and even trumpets and other musical instruments are made use of in these castigations. I have known a man to be thrown under a horse's foot for some imaginary offence, and I well recollect a case where a single blow of the fist of an officer ruptured the drum of a man's ear, and rendered him deaf for life.

Those few facts will give a fair and truthful idea of military service in Russia, but the reader must not by any means imagine that I have presented the picture in its worst light.

I served in the artillery, and the artilthan those of the line, and I can assure yed with which these I have just descrison

The Old Soldier's Hint.

An aged veteran who had fought at Quatre Bras and Waterloo, and who resided at a village in Scotland, was one day visited by the master of an adjacent grammar school in company with several of his pupils.

The master, having narrated to his scholars the events which led up to the campaign, closely questioned the old soldier regarding his share in these great con

He then thanked the veteran, and was turning to go, when the ancient warrier remarked:

"Oh, but there is another thing that I mind! "Indeed-what is that?" asked the dominie, expecting to hear an additional

"I well mind that I was just as thirsty A Passaic, N.J., man is at work on the a' the time of the battle as I am the noo?' The schoolmaster took the hint.

The Anarchists of Paris have appapently Omladina Society, who were charged with adopted a new system of terrorism. They conspiracy in connection with the murder are leaving bombs with time fuses attached She was glad to be free at last to go to captain who suggested what I should of Rudolf Merva, terminated in Vienna on at small hotels to do their deadly work. Sebastian's study. She turned the handle do: I should never have thought of such a Tuesday. All except two were found guilty In one case the bomb exploded before it