



SIXTEENTH INSTALLMENT WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE

Giles Chitttenham sets out to make Julie Farrow love him, intending to throw her over in revenge for the suicide of his brother Rodney, whom Julie had cast off.

Julie, disillusioned, enters into the wild night life of London to try to drown her anguish. Lawrence Schofield wants to marry her.

At a spiritualist seance at Giles' mother's house Sadie Barrow, his wife suddenly goes blind. She calls to him and he responds, revealing the fact that she is his wife.

Schofield's reply is to return Julie's note unopened. Later he calls on Chitttenham and tells him that Lombard has told him of the night that Giles and Julie spent together at St. Bernard.

A little later Schofield meets a man who tells him that he, too, was at the St. Bernard Hospice that night and that he and Chitttenham sat up all night talking, as there was no vacant room.

When I get well I'll start all over again and show you how nice I can be," she told him. "You've been so good to me—far better than I ever deserved. I'll pay you back some day, Giles."

The reports of the specialists were encouraging. They had every hope, they said—it might be a long time naturally, but Mrs. Chitttenham was such an excellent patient.

One Saturday he and Bim went down into Gloucester to follow up a clue which they hoped might lead to news of Julie. Chitttenham had told Sadie he was going away on business.

"You treat me like a child. Nobody would think I am your wife." Chitttenham frowned.

"Oh, go! go! They all say you behave like an angel. They all think that I am a beast to you. Oh, I know they don't say so, but I know what they think."

"I'll do anything in the world to make you happy, Sadie," Giles said, but in his heart he despised himself for a coward and a traitor to the woman he loved.

of his life perhaps for ever. He kissed Sadie, hurriedly, anxious to be gone, but she clung to him.

Chitttenham went out to Bim, who was waiting for him, his face set and white, and his eyes miserable.

There was an urgent telephone call from Sadie's nursing home. Would Mr. Chitttenham please come immediately.

But it was something very different. Early that morning, just as it was getting light, they had found Sadie lying on the pavement below her window—quite dead.

Chitttenham made no answer, and presently Bim drew the nurse aside to whisper: "Would she . . . do you think she would ever have recovered her sight?"

There was a little silence before the answer came. "The doctors were hopeful—but . . . the nurse shook her head. "I don't think Mrs. Chitttenham herself ever had any real hope."

Bim walked to the window and looked out. The sun was shining, and the air was soft and warm. She closed her own eyes and tried to imagine what Sadie had suffered.

She slipped a hand into his. "At any rate, wherever she is, she can see the sunshine again."

She had no idea where she meant to go, but she had taken a ticket to Folkestone because it was the first place that occurred to her, and because she had once spent a happy holiday there.

It was only at mid-day when she reached Folkestone that the idea occurred to her to cross over to France. It was only a little journey, but there was something comforting in the knowledge that she could so easily put the width of the sea between herself and the things from which she desired to escape.

She crossed to Ostend by the mid-day boat and took a room in a cheap little pension which at any rate had the merit of great cleanliness. And there Julie stayed for a fortnight, sleeping and resting, and trying to forget.

She never thought of Schofield—it was too bitter a memory. He had been the rock in her sea of distress to which she had always unconsciously clung, and he had failed her even as everything else had failed her.

And then one evening as she was walking along by the sea with the sunset light in her face, she met him. He looked ill, she thought, and old; and as her eyes searched his face, it seemed impossible that only a few days ago she had seen him and talked to him—surely months must have dragged away since she told him he must go out of her life.

Julie managed a laugh. "Do you know that you actually sound sincere," she taunted him.

"I was never more sincere in my life. Where can we go to be alone? I have so much to say to you. . . ."

"If you have anything to say that must be said, I hardly think any one will overhear you. But I am in a hurry. . . ." Her voice broke angrily.

"We have been hunting for you ever since you left London." His agitation was unmistakable; she could feel how his hand shook as he held her wrist.

"Don't talk like that. If you only know . . . Oh, Julie, let me explain—let me try to explain—"

"You don't mean that it's not like you to be hard and cruel—"

Julie tried to speak but no words would come, and before she could resist he had drawn her down to sit beside him on one of the seats overlooking the sea, and was holding her hand in both his.

"We've been searching for you day and night, Julie—it seems a lifetime since you went away—"

"A lifetime, only two weeks—"

"So much seems to have happened since . . . you and I parted. You know—"

"Oh—Bim."

"Poor Lawrence!" Julie whispered. He winced and turned his face away.

"I always knew that you never cared."

"I don't care for any one," she said harshly. "I will never care for any one again. It hurts too much—it's not worth the little happiness one gets flung to them in return."

"Why did you send my letter back to me? why were you so cruel?"

"Forgive me? I don't understand—what do you mean?"

"It cannot matter to you whether I forgive you or not—"

"It matters everything in the world, Julie, if there is anything I can do for you—anything, anything—to make amends for the past. . . ."

"Don't let us say any more about it, Lawrence. It's over and done with. We'll part friends, shall we?"

"Come back to England . . . I never want to go back again."

"But, Julie—your happiness. She laughed mirthlessly. (Continued Next Week)

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