

no shock at finding the money gone. It was as though she had known it all the evening. She turned over in a perfunctory fashion, the few papers the box contained, then sat staring blindly ahead of her while the numbness gradually gave way to terror.

"There was a tap at the door. Lena stood, respectfully smiling. "Has madam any objection to my going out this evening?"

Mrs. Chater's scattered faculties seemed to snap into their places as she rose from her knees.

"Come in, Lena. I wish to talk to you," she said quietly, and put herself between the girl and the door. She had meant to wait for Henry; but she could not stand it. "Lena, there was a great deal of money in that box just before dinner, and now it is gone."

Her voice was grave, but not unkind. Lena looked frightened.

"It has been taken out?"

"Naturally. And no one knew it was here but my husband—and you."

The colour rose faintly in the girl's face; her eyes grew wide and bewildered.

"I, madam?" she whispered.

"You were on the porch by the window when we decided where to put it. Weren't you?" she added with a touch of sharpness.

"Yes, madam."

"Ah, Lena, how could you?" There were tears in Mrs. Chater's eyes.

"Madam believes I took it?" The wondering, wounded tone moved Mrs. Chater to anger.

"What else can I think?" she was beginning when Henry's voice called to her jubilantly from below. His news preceded him as he mounted.

"The old man's all right, dear! He had a small knock-down and was taken to a hospital, but he's out again and keen for his bargain. So the nine—" he paused in the doorway. "What's up?" he demanded as his eyes fell on the two pale women.

"The money is gone out of the box?"

"Oh, by George!" He laughed ruefully. "I changed it to the desk, dear, to make you easier. I was just about to confess my weak-mindedness when the boy came. I'm so sorry—"

Mrs. Chater turned swiftly on Lena. "Well, then, you didn't take it, and I apologize," she said hotly; "but why have you been creeping about spying and listening? What are you trying to find out? I have seen you again and again, watching us like a cat. Why have you done that, what have you been after, if you are an honest girl?"

Lena had grown very white. She smiled piteously.

"I will tell madam the whole truth. It is perhaps very foolish. She looked down, twisting her fingers tightly together. "I am to be married very soon, to a countryman of my own. I have been troubled, for, madam, so many marriages in my country are not happy: I have learned that since I came to America and saw how your marriages were—so friendly, so gay, so kind. And as I watched madam and Mr. Chater on the beach, it seemed to me that this marriage was the most beautiful of all; and I said in my heart, I will go to them and learn what is the secret."

Her voice broke, but she steadied it and went on:

"It was easy to persuade Hattie to go away for a short time. I have done no wrong except to listen, and once to read a page of a letter—madam must forgive that, for I did so want to understand! And I have learned much!" Her voice grew suddenly brave. "I have learned that a wife must remember every day all that is good and beautiful in her man and must keep her heart open to him—yet always a little hidden; that she must know his work so that he may talk to her as to a comrade, and yet leave him alone when he is not ready to talk; that when she has scolded she must come back quickly and say, 'I am sorry'—but say it with laughing. No tears, no piteousness; always the little laughing, the little game, the pretended scorn—perhaps we cannot do that in our country. But I have learned much, and I am grateful, even though madam thinks me a thief."

"You dear, dear soul!" It was more sob than laugh, and Mrs. Chater's hands were on Lena's shoulders. Mr. Chater slipped away with the furtive air of one who finds himself not wanted.

IV.

Two weeks later the Chaters stood on the steps waving while the children

threw rice after the departing bride and bridegroom.

"Now come in out of the road or the policeman will get you," said Hattie.

Mrs. Chater turned to her husband with a worried, quizzical smile.

"We have lost a jewel," she said. "And yet—"

"Yet—?" he encouraged her with a comprehending twinkle.

"Well, if we had been obliged to be the model married couple for one day longer, do you know what would probably have happened?"

"I do. I should have struck you," said Henry. "I am not going to be kind or loving for six weeks." They laughed happily, and turned into the house, where he belied his words by drawing her to him. "They've been all for Lena lately," he said, "but here's one for yourself, old girl!"

Royal Shoppers.

Quite an interesting little page of history might be written in regard to Royalty and shopping. In the books of a famous old firm which were dissolved about six years ago, there were repeated entries as to the visits of King George III., with his daughters, when it was customary to ask any who might be in the shop on their arrival to leave. The doors

were then closed, and it is stated that the Princesses would themselves open drawers and boxes in the quest for pretty things. It is believed that Queen Victoria only once entered a shop during the whole of her long reign. Her Majesty established the custom, which King Edward and Queen Alexandra have continued, of commanding large selections to be sent to the Palace, from which they can make their choice. The shopkeepers receive instructions from members of the household that the Queen wishes to see goods of a particular class, it may be of jewellery, enamel, silver, the equipment of the boudoir or writing table, or whatever else is desired, and considerable latitude is allowed as to what may be sent in. A day for their arrival is fixed, and they are forwarded in charge of a responsible member of the firm. He can have as many tables as he requires for the display of his wares in the rooms set apart for the purpose, and every separate item must bear a label with the name of the firm from which it comes and the price. The Lady in Waiting may be informed of any features of interest to be laid before the Queen, who always devotes much time to her task of selection, and endeavours to find what she thinks will be pleasing to the honoured recipient.

Although Queen Alexandra does not visit the shops in London, she often does so at Windsor, and two years ago, with Queen Amelie of Portugal, as well as

recently with Queen Maud of Norway, she spent some time at different counters choosing old curios or quaint trifles that appealed to her fancy. Abroad, too, at Copenhagen, or during the cruises of the Royal yacht, when her Majesty lands she explores the shops for characteristic souvenirs, while picture-postcards for the Royal children are also largely purchased. Queen Amelie when in town went to many of the leading shops, and bought largely, especially of English china, which enjoys great favour at the foreign courts. It is not long since the Tsar presented the Empress of Russia with a lovely tea-set, made in England, every piece bearing her private cypher. During the visit of the King of Spain prior to his marriage he visited many shops, and the household linen for use in the private apartments of the Queen was entirely purchased here, an old custom of the Court of Spain being that the Sovereign's bride should bring this from her own country.

The princesses of our own Royal house generally go to the shops themselves to make their own purchases, their rule being to visit them rather early in the day, and before they have become crowded.

"Going to take the family abroad this winter?"

"No; we have given up the trip. Our cook has decided to stay."

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