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IN THREE VOLUMES.

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BY

MRS. HENRY WOOD.

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BERNHARD TAUCHNITZ

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E A S T L Y N N E.



PART THE SECOND.

(Continued.)

CHAPTER III.

Quitting the Danger.

LADY ISABEL was seated on one of the benches of the Petit Camp, as it is called, underneath the ramparts of the upper town. A week or ten days had passed away since the departure of Mr. Carlyle, and in her health there was a further visible improvement. In her strength, the change was almost beyond belief. She had walked from her home to the cemetery, had lingered there, reading the inscriptions on the English graves, and now on her departure sat down to rest. Tired, it must be owned, but not much more so than many a lady would be, rejoicing in rude health. Captain Levison was her companion, as he mostly was in her walks; shake him off, she could not. She had tried a few stratagems; going out on unusual hours, or choosing unfrequented routes; but he was sure to trace her steps and come upon her. Isabel thought he must watch: probably he did. She would not take more decided steps, or say to him, you shall not join

me: he might have asked for an explanation, and Isabel in her conscious state of feeling, avoided that, above all things. It will be but for a little time she reflected; I shall soon be gone, and leave him, I hope, for ever. But meanwhile, she felt that this prolonged intercourse with him was bringing its fruits; that her cheek blushed at his approach, her heart beat with something too like rapture. She tried to put it down: why did she not try to stop the breeze as it filled the sails of the passing vessels? It would not have been a more hopeless task.

It was a still evening, cool for July, no sound was heard save the hum of the summer insects, and Lady Isabel sat in silence with her companion, her rebellious heart beating with a sense of its own happiness. But for the voice of conscience, strong within her; but for the sense of right and wrong; but for existing things; in short, but that she was a wife, she might have been content so to sit by his side for ever, never to wish to move, or to break the silence. Did he read her feelings? He told her, months afterwards, that he did: but it might have been only a vain boast.

“Do you remember the evening, Lady Isabel, just such a one as this, that we all passed at Richmond?” he suddenly asked. “Your father, Mrs. Vane, you, I and others?”

“Yes, I remember it. We had spent a pleasant day: the two Miss Challoners were with us. You drove Mrs. Vane home, and I went with papa. You drove

recklessly, I recollect, and Mrs. Vane said when we got home that you should never drive her again."

"Which meant, not till the next time. Of all capricious, vain, exacting women, Emma Vane was the worst; and Emma Mount Severn is no improvement upon it: she's a systematic flirt, and nothing better. I drove recklessly on purpose to put her in a fright, and pay her off."

"What had she done to you?"

"Put me in a rage. She had saddled herself upon me, when I wanted — I wished for another to be my companion."

"Blanche Challoner."

"Blanche Challoner!" echoed Captain Levison, in a mocking tone: "what did I care for Blanche Challoner?"

Isabel remembered that he had been supposed in those days to care a great deal for Miss Blanche Challoner — a most lovely girl of seventeen. "Mrs. Vane used to accuse you of caring too much for her," she said, aloud.

"She accused me of caring for some one else more than for Blanche Challoner," he significantly returned, "and for once her jealous surmises were not misplaced. No, Lady Isabel, it was not Blanche Challoner I wished to drive home. Could you not have given a better guess than that, at the time?" he added, turning to her.

There was no mistaking the tone of his voice or the glance of his eye. Lady Isabel felt a crimson flush rising, and she turned her face away.