

**TWIXT SHADE
AND SHINE**

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Twixt Shade and Shine by Annabel Gray

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ANNABEL GRAY

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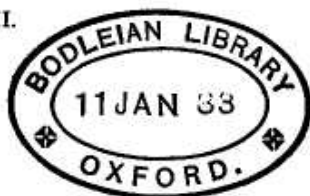
'TWIXT SHADE
AND SHINE

By ANNABEL GRAY,

AUTHOR OF "MARGARET DUNBAR," ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.



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'TWIXT SHADE AND SHINE.

CHAPTER I.

THE WRECK OF THE GALWAY CASTLE.

"The sea is the largest of all cemeteries, and its slumberers sleep without monuments. . . . Over their remains the same storm beats, and the same sun shines."

DOLLY was sitting in her well-furnished drawing room, leaning listlessly back in her chair, chatting with Lileth, who with her husband was passing a month with the Desmonds during the London season. It is really wonderful how beautifully Christian-like are certain sentiments under changed conditions of the fair sex. How readily women of fashion fraternise and forgive each other, so long as both are equally wealthy, any little grievances in the

past, when time has softened the galling sense of injury! No one seeing these two fair women chatting together over macarons and thin bread-and-butter at afternoon tea, would have guessed that Mrs. Desmond had once hated her rival, as only the doll-woman can hate; that is, with decorous regard for her own comfort and the proprieties. Dolly knew she looked less pretty when displeased and upset; so she still smiled as sweetly as ever, toying languidly with a large feather fan, as she studied the cut of Lileth's sleeve, and thought there was just the very least provincial tone about the dear thing.

Dolly looked more beautiful than ever; she was dressed *à ravir*; she was a leader of society, her opinion was sought and studied, and she was one of the most *considered* women in London. Her ponies were faultless in style and symmetry; she had an opera-box, though she found no pleasure in music, feeling jealous of the

artistes who were applauded ; she crowded her houses with the most fashionable and best-dressed people of the day, and rioted in every extravagance ; for Hugh had come into more money, on the principle that 'to him that hath shall more be given.' Elegant, *distinguée*, brainless, and full of fun ; a thorough woman of the world, with all the little sordid maxims, cold calculations, and wisdom society teaches, and possessing a husband who gave her *carte blanche* for everything, and instantly obeyed her slightest caprice, Mrs. Desmond was a good deal envied, although her smile was called sweetness itself, and her parties remarkable for select people. We have all our ambitions ; and she desired to be celebrated for collecting unique specimens of notabilities in birth and fortune. Dolly was very particular as to the social position of those she was introduced to and visited, and could be very nasty to those she did not wish to visit.

She liked wealthy connections; they wearied her less, there was more to be got out of them. She disliked having to take guinea tickets to oblige struggling artistes, and was never flattered by the smirks and smiles of any too fascinating 'Signor.' She was so very chary of her caresses, or any display of affection towards her husband, that Hugh was always at her feet. She never worried him, made him scenes, or was irritable; and was so piquante and delightful, people said it was a pleasure to see them together, and quite revived their faith in dull and honest matrimony.

So Dolly and Lileth were still excellent friends—'pals,' as Dolly laughingly called them—and far too much in each other's confidence ever to fall out; for she had half a dozen men after her whom she liked quite as well as Eric, who rather bored her; much richer men, and in far better positions, and with greater charm of small-

talk, who could get her invitations to the Pinks' and Blues' balls when she wished, without her having to beg favours of duchesses. Dolly and Hugh had just returned from Christie's, where he had bought her some costly little odds and ends and gimcracks—a Louis Quinze vase in céladon green, and other treasures which her in-artistic soul coveted. Mrs. Desmond had also admired the portrait of herself in the Royal Academy, painted by Scumble, R.A., posing near it in her best attitudes, and thinking herself far lovelier than the picture.

Dolly had just handed Lileth her cup of tea and a piece of hot toast, sitting on a very low armchair by her side. It was the beginning of June, the year following their marriage, and nothing could have gone smoother than the course of their love. Dolly was now feeding her favourite pug with small pieces of seed-cake, while Lileth stroked his ears.

“How do you think Gwen gets on in society?” Dolly was saying, her lovely head reclining on the back of her gold chair—a tiny exquisitely-formed head, of the purely feminine Clytie type, with the two-inch forehead, in which no ugly organs denoting talents could possibly have room to intrude, the smooth brow as yet undisfigured by a single line. “I feared one time we should be annoyed by her *gaucherie* and Vandalism; but she seems to take to society and pleasure like a duck to water.”

“I must confess I see no trace of any sentimental nonsense about her now,” said Lileth, in her slow purring way; “she’s altogether more human, more civilised, and wears such delicious frocks.”

“You should see the ball-dress she will wear to-night at her dance,” said Dolly, her little teeth at work on a ratafia; “I chose it. O, lovely! Lionel means to spare no expense. It must be a huge success. And I must coax my dear old