

# lale of Mystery

CHAPTER V.

A DARING ATTEMPT.

Dessie was not to wait long before she had a startling and terrible proof ing out? asked the wide suite nly. of the desperate lengths to which her with a sharp glance. antagonist was prepared to go in prosecuting his scheme, and removing any obstacle that stood in his

The equivocal relations which the untimely arrival of Mrs. Markham him?' produced between Dessie and the Count were too distasteful for her to him, dear,' answered Dessie, evasivesuffer them to continue one unnecessary moment. She was not prepared to denounce him at once to her friend as Rolande Lespard; she was confid- on myself and run on my own mes ent in her belief, but wished to be sages. It's nothing for me to pop absolutely certain and to be in pos- my hat on and run to the post, and session of proof. Nothing short of that would open the love-sealed eves of her friend. But neither could she bring herself to allow the man to remain in the belief that she would post for in the middle of a conversatake the disgusting bribe offered for tion with Godefroi? What do you her silence.

It was not easy, however, to find what difficult to parry, as to what laughed and kissed her friend on the

enough yet. I'll tell you more a week hence.

By the bve, what were y u do no with your hat on? You weren't go

'I thought of going out; that's all, answered Dessie, indifferently.

'What with the Count de Montalt? Where on earth were you going with

'I did not say I was going with ly, but hating the necessary evasion You know I'm accustomed to wait so on.

'I don't understand, Dessie. What could you want to run out to the mean?"

"What a puzzled face you have an opportunity to speak to him dear. You're wrinkling it into a hun alone. He did not remain long that dred and fifty frowns just because morning; and as soon as he was took my hat downstairs instead or leaving it up in my room. I wish gone Mrs. Markham plied her with could make it a little mystery for questions, which Dessie found some- you. But there isn't one;" and she



she and the Count had talked about forehead. "And now, Dora, do yo

in their long conversation.

'I am so glad you like him bet- is serious. I must go home, my dea. ter," she said, when they had gone, upstairs together and the widow was changing a dainty morning wrapper for a walking costume. 'I wes sure you would when you got to know him better. He is the dearest and you think so now?'

'You can't expect me to go so far as that, Dora.'

'No, I don't want you to. But he is a dear fellow, isn't he?'

Well, that is scarcely the epi het I should use either,' sail Dessie, with

"But you can't go home to-day, no

know, we must talk of something that

to-morrow. I tell you what I've been thinking. I want you to come and stop here for a few weeks. I'll have a little study fitted up for you-just best fellow that ever lived. Don't where you like. No one shall interfere with you. You shall have your own hours for work, and a latchkey if you like-be a regular new woman and when you can spare time give yourself to me. Do! Tom Cheriton can come and see you just as he does at your rooms. I should like him and Godefroi to be friends. Do come, Dessie. Stop till we're married. Do. Let us send up for all your belong-What epithet would you use then?' ings. But there, I shan't let you say 'I don't know him thoroughly no."

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"I'll come for a time-a few days," said Dessie. It occurred to her that in this way she could the better carry out her plans. "But I won't say for how long. But I must go at once and

nake all the arrangements." "You mean see Tom," laughed Mrs. Markham. "But you haven't told me a word yet of all that you and Godefroi talked about this morning. And I'm so jealous of you're having had him all to yourself for such a long

'I can't stop now. But you shall know every word as soon as I get a fit opportunity of telling you.' And in this way Dessie escaped saying anything for the moment, and until she had an opportunity of a talk over everything with her lover.

She left the house and hurried to her rooms, where a great disappointment met her. A letter from Tom Cheriton, written hastily on the previous evening, told her that he had to

'D. D. (this stood for 'Dearest Dessie' in their language), -- Our hearts are to be subjected to the awcome saying that my uncle is ill, and vants me at once down at the Smokeole-you know where I mean, and how I love the place. But I must - sacrificing even my briefs. I don't suppose it's serious. I hope not. But the dear old fellow has been shall always be charmed to be

so good to me that I wouldn't disap- friend of yours now, Miss Merrion.' point him at any cost. I'll write you to-morrow from The Leas. If you' write me very nice letters, I'll try and help forward that little partnership the vile offer you made this morning which we spoke of this afternoon. Ever as ever.—T. A. A.

'T. A. A.' stood for 'Tom All Alone,' a Dickens reference which gave the pair of cherry lovers a great pleasure.

But her lover's absence from town now was particularly unwelcome to Dessie. The trouble with the Count de Montalt, or Rolande Lespard, or whoever he might really be, placed her sadly in need of just that strong practical counsel which she knew Tom Cheriton could give her.

Her encounter with the man in the morning had left her less confident in her own strength and fighting power than she had been before. If she was right she had had infinitely the stronger weapons to fight with; and yet he had beaten her. Even when he was no more to her than a name and a threatening shadow, she had always had a sensation of fear of him and of the desperate lengths to which she believed him capable of ng; and this fear made her unwilling to struggle with him single-

She had intended to tell Tom at ed him to know about her past, so that they together, working in complete confidence, might expose the broad steps of Mrs. Markham's house nan and save Dora. Tom would have she smiled in high glee. known what to do, she thought. But she could not write the secrets that would have to be whispered when her lips were close to his ear.

There was nothing for it but to vait, therefore—and delay must mean that she must either go on letting the man believe her as vile as himselfwilling to sell her best friend for price-or run some personal risk by undeceiving him.

Without more than a minute's hesitation she chose the latter course. She would tell him at once that he was mistaken in her, and warn hin to keep away from Dora. She resolved also to urge Tom Cheriton to come back as soon as possible; and made up her mind to go and stay at South Kensington until the crisis was over. She accordingly made all the over. She accordingly made all the Mass. All letters are received, opened, necessary arrangements and packed read and answered by women. A wosuch clothes, books, and papers as she would need for a stay of some weeks if necessary. The rest of her papers she locked in a little safe she

That done she wrote to her lover, telling him what she meant to do, and urging him to return to town as soon as possible, because there was a very important matter about Mrs. Markham's Count in which she wished to consult him. "I have made a discovery about him that frightens me and I am at a loss to know quite what to do. I want your help and advice; and I don't want you to get into trouble by making blunders, as, of course, you'll think I'm likely to do. If you want to save me from an ugly

intrigue, hurry back." Then she returned to South Kensington, hardening her resolve all the way, to tell the Count de Montalt what her intentions were. He must keep away from South Kensington until Tom's return, or she would tell Dora openly whom she believed him

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she saw the Count approaching from the other. She quickened her pace ful strain of absence. A wire has just | therefore, and passing the house met

"I should like one word with you, she said, curtly.

"A thousand if you will," he ar swered, raising his hat and bowing 'Shall we turn and walk, or would you like another appointment?

"I have not sought your friendship thank you," said the girl, coldly, "and will not accept it. What I wish to say now is that I repudiate entirely to bribe me. I only let you speak without interruption so that I might know how far you would go. I have only this to say now: If you dare to come again to Mrs. Markham's house I will denounce you at once."

His face grew very stormy, and heavy frown forced his black thick evebrows together. But his voice was courteous and even as he answered: "Do you mean that, unequivocally

and absolutely? Is there no considcration will induce you to wait at least until I have an opportunity o getting, proofs from France?"

"When you have them," said Dessie, contemptuosuly, "then by all means come. But not till then."

Delaney, Miss Bessie,

Driscoll, Mrs. C., Water Street

Dooley, Miss Josephine,

late Grand Falls

card, Cochrane St.

"You will live to repent this bitter ly, Miss Merrion. You have put upon me a wholly undeserved disgrace and if I accept your terms it is only because I wish to snare the woman who is to be my wife, and whom I love with all my heart, from the pain and sorrow which such a malignant accusation from a friend like yourself would cause her. I wish you had been as considerate. When we meet next, I shall have the proofs you

Then, to Dessie's intense surprise he raised his hat, turned and walked away. She had not for an instan believed that this single stroke would once and frankly all that she intend- have so immediate an effect. But when she saw him pass out of sight round the corner of the square her Olsen, spirits rose, and as she ran up the

To be continued.

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