Or, Agatha's Recompense.

CHAPTER XVII.—(Contrued.) "I have," said her niece. "I do not pretend to say which was which, but I am sure they were not equal. It is pessible he may have been below her in staton, or she may have been below him; but that there was some disparity I feel sure."

Then some little change appeared. Sir Vane, who had shrugged ris shoulders at his wife a invitations to made le's nicce, said froquently:

Lot us ask mademichelle to go out with as this evening;" or "Mademoiselle Valerie will go with us on the luke, if you ask her, Agatha. She amuses me.'

After two years' unswerving constancy, he telt that he was really entitled to some little reward, and if this brilliant young beauty could amuse, please and flatter him at the same time, why should she not? So it came to pass that the invitations were more frequent, and at last Valerie spent so much time with them they were almost like one

family.
Sir Vane never dreamed of a flirtztion with her, it was the last thing that occurred to him. But Valerie was queen of the whole science, and it was impossible | your hand.' slways to aroid the plots she laid for him. She had a peculiar faculty for finding out when he was alone; for meeting him in the not quite as it should be. garden and grounds when Agatha was absent; and Sr Vane was never very strong at resisting the advances of a beautiful woman. He met smiles with smiles, reparted with reported. If she gathered a flower for him, he one or twice kissed the waite hand which held it. Yet, in jus-tice to him, it must be said that he behaved in the same manner to her when Agatha was present as when she was absent. She had lest nothing of her charm for him. Insensi bly they drifted into a half sentimental kind of flirtation, which delighted Valerie, but was the most dangerous and fatal thing which could have happened to her. Agatha was too simple and unsuspecting to notice it, although one or two things did seem to her strange. They had arranged one morning to go on the like; but when the appointed hour came, Agetha had a headache, and could not Sir Vane would at oace have given up the idea, but Agatha begged of him not to disappoint Valerie. And Sir Vane turned to her with laughter in his eyes.

"It will be a terrible infringement of the law of eliquette, if I do persuade you to go, mademoiselle," he said. "I am quite ready to infringe them," she

replied, "indeed, I would enjoy it." "Then we will go," he said. And, to him, the idea of rowing this bril-

liant beauty on the lake was by no means dis Pleasing.
Once ont on the clear blue waters, she

baraed to him. "I love the lake," she said, "and I was

afraid you were going to disappoint me after "Why need you have thought that?" he

"You seem to have such notions of eti

quette and propriety. I do think English people are se-"So what?" he asked, seeing that she paused and laughed.

"En stapid," she replied, "and so narrow in their ideas." "I can bear that, and more, from you," he

And then she became her most brilliant self : she talked to him and amused him. until he was really attracted by her roady wit and brilliancy. She took a sudden and pretty caprice for learning to row, and her little hands firshed so white and fair with their chining jewels, he could not help admiring them; and while giving her lessons in

"I have enjoyed that hour," she said. "I am affects sorry that we must go back. Will

Mir. Herier think you too long?"

"I hope not," he replied, suddenly growing serious. "I should be very sorry if she microsl me."

"Ven spoil your wife, Mr. Heriot. She

will all aya expect the same amount of attonbiog from you, He briefed at her in wonder.

"base will always receive it," he said gaictiy. Aud Valeric laughed to hide her confu-

CHAPTER XVIII. THE MARKED HANDKERCHIEF.

There were times when Sir Vane looked at his young wife and wondered whether it was private papers were locked; the locks were possible to excite the feeling of jealonsy patent, and he carried the keys with him, or possible to excite the feeling of jealousy within her. Not that he wished to do so; it was amuly curiosity to know whether one so perfect, so seemingly far above all the meaner passions of earth, could feel as other people did. He would have been pleased to know that Agatha was just a little jealous; he would have liked those white, tender arms laid round his neck. a faint gleam of reproach in the violet eyes, and a sweet voice to whisper Did he really love her best." That was the kind of thing that he understood and was accustomed to.

If Agatha had been inclined to jealousy she had plenty of cause. The time had been when Sir Vane had shrugged his shoulders at the mention of madame's nieco, and lamented that their solitude was broken; but now it was quite a different matter; he seemed to look with eager longing for her.

"Ask Valorie to go with us," were the words constantly on his lips, and Agatha meyor once hesitated.

It was natural, she said to herself, that he should like some one who could talk to him about his own world, of which she knew nothing. Sir Vane never meant to burt her. When they were all three out together, it often happened that Valerie, laughing and jesting, walked with him, while Agatha went on alone. Then suddenly his heart would be touched, and hastening to her, he would

say:
"Darling, why are you alone? Come with

And it struck him with wonder that she always turned to him a face as sweet and bright as a loving face could be. It would have been better for them all had she looked just a little more keenly after her own in-terests; for Valerie, day by day, disliked her and liked her husband more and more.

There came a day, at the end of the beautiful summer, when the lovely air was faint with perfume, that they arranged to go to Lucerne together. Sir Vane was ready first, and waiting for the ladies in the drive. Madame could not go; she was only too well pleased that her niece should have the opportunity offered to her. She said Sir Vane. He was walking through seldom, if ever, accepted an invitation for madame's garden to look at some wonderful

Valerie, walking slowly down the drive, him, and came quite unexpectedly upon saw Sir Vane put his hand into the Valerie reading busily. She leoked very pocket of his coat—a coat that was beautiful as she beat, in the most graceful of

curiously. There was a crest, halt worn away, and underneath the letters "V. H. C"

She repeated them over and ovr rather mexpected," again... V. H. C."—they were not his She dit not contra initials, they would have been simply "V.H." still it was strange that they should be iden. | the volume. tically the same with his, with the addition of another letter-"V.H.C." She tried to make out the crest, or mark, but could not, and a faint idea that she had been right in suspecting a mystery came to her.

"I will see what he says when I give it to him," she thought, and she arranged it in such a fashion that the letters were the first thing on which his eyes must fall. "Mr. Heriot," she said, suddenly, holding it out to him, "is this yours?"

He looked to see what it was, and, as she anticipated, he saw the initials at once. She looked straight into his face, no passing expression could escape her, and she saw distinctly, when his eyes fell on the three letters,

his color change.
"Is it yours?" she said, looking up at him with great innocent eyes. "I hardly know," he replied, with some

heritation.
"The initials are right,' she said, laughingly; "but there is a 'C' added to them
which is not yours; yet I saw it fall from

"It has been put with my things by mistake," he said, but Valerie saw that all was

Sir Vane little dreamed, as he talked o her, and amused himself with her brilliancy, that she was trying to penetrate the nearest and dearest secrets of his heart. A few days afterward they were driving over to see some fine ruips, and as usual Sir Vans suggested to Agatha that Valerie should go with them, but she doclined. She had quite made up her mind that the next time they went out she would ook through their rooms, and try and find cut it there was any repetition of these mysterious initials; so while medame took her usual siesta, and the servants were all busily anguged, she went quietly to the suite of rooms occupied by Sir Vane. She was a lady by pirth, and had all the instincts of good breed. Her face flushed botly when she found

erself in those rooms. "All is fair in love and war, she said to herself. "I know that which I am doing is mean-false-lad-but it is the only way in which I can discover the mystery, and I am quite justified in adopting it."

She did not remember that in no possible way could this mystery concern her. There was a lingering hope always in her heart that something or other-she cared not whatwould arise that should part husband and wife, and that she herself should take

Agatha's place.
"I am a thousand times better suited to him. He likes brilliancy as much as he likes beauty, and that fair piece of perfection has none," was her constant thought. She had hardly admitted even to herself that she should like to see them parted, but it was exasperating to see so much love and devotion lavished on one, while there was none for

Since the arrival of the lodgers at the hateau, madame had never entered the part of the house reserved for them except once or twice by special invitation. A certain number of servants had been left in charge of it, and madamo knew all was well. Valerie said to herself that even if all the servants came in a body it would not matter. She had but to say that madame had desired her to inspect the rooms-no one could offer any objection to that. There was no prying eye or curious lady's maid to interrupt her.

She was struck with the amount of luxury distribyed in those dressing rooms. No want of money here, she was quite sure.

The first thing that attracted her attention was a magnificent dressing-case mounted in LABA (hat i.e should hold those pretty hands in his. She grow more beautiful and more billiant as he grow more demonstrative in his almost every article of value belonging to him, she saw the same initials. "Villa" crest; and she admired the crest very much -a crown supporting an olive branch.

No modern crest, that," thought Valerie to

Then on the toilet table lay a book that scomed to have been well used-"Keble's Christian Year:" and here, to her great delight, she found the coat-of-arms-an eagle, surmounted on either side by lions rampant.

"A warlike house!" she thought. "And now, if I have any wit at all, I shall find out who he is. The initials are V. H. C., the crest a crown and olive branch, cost-of arms an eagle supported by two lions; motto, as written hero, Lruth Conquers-Vincit Veritas. If, with all these landmarks I cannot make my way, I am dull of wit, and de-

serve to lose the game." Sir Vane's drawers and boxes containing Valerie would soon have found out who he

was and all about him.
"I will send to London for 'Debrett's Peerage," she said to herself; "and then, if these initials and arms are his, I shall know all about bim.

She went into Agatha's dressing room. There was a magnificent dressing case, far more coetly than Sir Vane's; there were articles of luxury such as she had seldom seen -all presents given to Agatha by Sir Vanethe most exquisite and besutiful toilet appointments; but on no single thing were there either marks or initials.

"Just as I thought," she said to herself, with a triumphant smile. "No name, no crest, no coat-of-arms here. Ab, Mrs. Heriot, you may be very fair, and you are very sweet, but why do you not share your husband's orest and motto? There is something to find out-and, as sure as I live, I shall find it

out. She searched through everything. On one worn collar she found, marked in red cotton, the two letters "A. B."

"I will remember them," she said to herself. "'A. B.'-it may be Agatha Blythe, or Berdoe; there are many names beginning with 'B.'"

She was better rewarded for her trouble when among some books she found a copy of the oratorio of Samson. A name had been carefully erased—so carefully that, with all the skill in the world she could not make it out; but she did make out the word " White-

"Whitecroft!" she mused; "that is the very name for a country village-I shall remember it.".

And long before Sir Vane and Agatha returned, she had collected information enough to help her in making out a far more intricate history than theirs.

CHAPTER XIX. IN QUEST OF THE SECRET.

"What are you poring over there, mademoiselle? It looks like a large family Bible, flower of which La Baronne had spoken to either too small, or the pocket was too full, attitudes, over the huge book. Evidently There was no doubt but that he loved Agatha for a white handkerchief fell out and flut, she had not expected to see him; she looked with his whole heart—loved her well enough tered to the ground. She took it up and startled and discomposed; her face flushed, to live in exile his whole life long for her

worm Heriot studying a Bi le," he said, "I should not have been surp ised; but you-well, it is

She dit not contradict him at first, but drew the folds of her dress more closely over "I cannot help asking," laughed Sir Vane, to what phase of your character this love

for study belongs ?" She saw that he was inclined to laugh at her, and ridicule kills love.
"I am not reading a Bible, Mr. Heriot

perhaps all the more unfortunate for me. have a profound respect both for the Bible and its readers. Any little witticism you may feel inclined to make on that score will be entirely lost on me.' 'I beg your pardon indeed, mademoiselle;

I had no intention of offending."
"I am not offended," she said, with a sudden change of manner, and laughing in her brightest fashiop. "You will be amused when I tell you this is only a book of old family receipts. My aunt is very proud of it; it contains four hundred receipts for

puddings, and a countless number for BAUCES, "Why are you studying it? Neither pudding nor sauce are at all in your line," said

Sir Vane. "No, not at all," she said ; "but madame thinks the cook does not give you variety enough, and I am searching for something

quite new." "There is no such thing under the sun, laughed Sir Vene; everything is old, and very often the oldest is the best."

"I must not stop to listen to treason. Old Old wine, old books, old friends are al right; but what about old maids and old women, Mr. Heriot? You need not answer me-I must go, or my aunt will wish to know something about my absence. An revoir, monsieur.

"I wonder if it is a receipt book," he said to himself. "Sne looked very guilty and there is certainly nothing wrong in receipts. While Valerie, covering the precious volume entirely, hastened with it to her room.

"What an escape!" she sighed, as she laid "Debrett's l'esrage" on the table. "If he had seen what I was reading, he might have suspected me, I am sure. What un escape ! I will keep it here for the future."

She spent the whole of the bright, sunny morning in literally poring over the book. The only way in which she could be quite sure was by beginning at the first leaf and going straight through to the last; then if there was any truth in her suspicions, with what she knew already, she should soon know his secret. It was a tiresome task, from the table of contents and list of abbreviations to the word 'finis" at the close of the volume. She was a in England. picture of earnest intent as she rested her white arms on the table, and bent her beautiful head over the puzzling pages. Her head was soon in a whirl-dukes, carls, marquises; but among them all, nothing that auswered to what she wanted. An, yes, here was an earl whose name was Victor Hay Carrington. The very initials, but according to the entry he must be quite six y. Again she found the motto, Vincit Veritar, belonged to several families; the crest of the crown and olive branch she could not fin!. Still she was not discouraged; she could not wade onefully through a thick volume in a few hours, but she could return to it again and

agais At last she came to the end of this long list of peers. She had been through it carefully-she had not missed one single entryand the was slightly disappointed; she would like to have found out that he was an earl at loast. Then she went to the baronetage.

"I may have better fortune here," she said zo heraelf.

It was night then ; every one else in the household was asleep; she alone was awake, vigilant and active. The moon shone, as it does in that levely land, bright as day. She could see perfectly well to read by it; and a very fair picture she made, leaning by the open window, the moonlight failing on her face and hair, and on the open pages of the book she held. She went through the letters A and B without any result. Her face clouded. What if it were all a myth? She came to the letter C, and her interest deepened. If she could find a name those initials filled. She must be right.

"Carlyon; oreation 1603: of Silverdale." The name took her fancy. She read on. "Sir Vane Heriot Carlyon, sixteenth baronet, born 18—, succeeded his father, Sir Artnur Carlyon, 18—; Baron of Silverdale; seat, Garawood and Silverdals Abbey; Lord of the Manor of Berkdale; Silverdale House, Mayrair. Arms: an eagle, supported by lions rampant. Crest: a crown and clive branch. Motto of the Carlyon family: 'Vincit Veritaz'—Truth Conquera,"

As she read her eyes flashed, the breath came in hot gasps from her lips : her hands trembled so that the book almost tell. "I have it," she cried. "I have found

him at last She was almost petrified with astonishment; she had felt quite sure that he was not what he seemed to be, a rich English commoner, of no great account; but she had hardly anticipated such perfect success. There could not be the least doubt of his identity.

Now, for what reason in the world had Bir Vane Heriot Carlyon laid aside his rank and title? Why did he choose to hide himself in the solitude of a Swiss chateau! Could he possibly have done anything which compelled him to leave his native land? No. that was not the reason she felt sure; she remembered the saying of the French king, that a woman was at the bottom of every thing. Then it flashed across her suddenly that he must be in exile for Agatha's sake-

for Agasta. Her face suddenly grew pale, and a light came into her eyes that was not pleasant to see. She turned to her book again, and looked at the date. It was that same year, 18-, and there was no entry of his marriage; on the contrary, it said, "Heir presumptive, Arthur Blackbury, There was no entry of a marriage. cousin." Yet Agatha, speaking the other day to her, said it was nearly three years since they

were married. How could that be? Had the marriage been a private one? Was she below him or above him in position—or—if it were possible such a dreadful thing could be —perhaps they were not married at all? She laughed at the notion-this handsome, aristocratic man, who worshipped his wife with the fondest love that could be lavished on any creature—it was quite impossible that he could have stooped to such folly with that beatiful, angelic Agatha, who seemed to belong to heaven rather than earth. As well she might believe that the stars could fall from heaven as that one so pure and perfect could have gone wrong. In her own mind Valerie had often thought that Agatha was a little too good for this worldly world. Of course the idea was utter nonsense, yet it grew upon her. She could not thrust it from her mind. That fact have wept over her—and her face grew pale, would explain everything if it were true. "No one cried! Was there no one corry There was no doubt but that he loved Agatha to lose you !"

her well enough to give up rank, title, position, and everything for her, why had he not married? Or was it possible that this was a private matriage-one that he would, perhap, never acknowledge? She longed to know the truth; she would have given anything she had in the world to have found it out there and then. If they had been pri-vately married, and he dare not, for some reason or other, let his marriage be known, even then the knowledge of the secret might be of value to her. If there had been no marriage—and her thoughts inclined that way-how could she tell what might happen. She might, in all probability, be his wife herself!

A thousand plans and schemes rushed through her brains. She would find out -- he would know whether they had been married or not, and then shape her plans accordingly. Not one word would she say to madame; it would be fatal; but she would watch and lay in wait. There were little signs and little words that must betray the truth. She laid the book aside.

"No one must see that," she said to herself, "or I shall lay myself open to suspicion at least. Can it be possible that that quiet, fair, fond girl is Lady Carlyon! I do not taink it; but it lies within the houndaries of fate that I may sometime be Lidy Carlyon myself. If she is not his wife, and I can win his heart-win him to better ways-I shall do so. She can go back to her friends, and I shall be happy, or I am sure he is beginning to like me.

She was too agituted to sleep. Little dil Sir Vane think that under the same roof there was one who had followed story, whose keen wits had locked through his disguise, and whose heart was set upon finding out the truth about the girl whom he loved and honored with all his leart. If he had known it, he would have left Bellefleurs that same hour, never to return.

Valerie lay thinking how, without attracting attention, she could ask such questions as would at least disturb their self-command. "I must ask more from her than from him," she thought, "and I will make my questions so general she shall suspect no-

thing. She tried Sir Vans first. As they were all together the day following, she turned the conversation to English scenery. "Mr. Heriot," she said, "do you know

Loamshire? Garswood was in the very heart of Loam shire, but Sir Vane had too much self control. "Loamshire, mademoiselie," he repeat-

ed. "Certainly, I know it well; it is one of the prettiest and most fertile counties " Is it?" she said, "The scene of the last

English novel I read in Paris was laid here. I thought the scenery must be very "I do not think it is so fine or picturesque

as either of the neighboring counties," said Sir Vane, cooly. "You should extend your travels still farther, and go to England, made noiselle."

The words made her heart beat. "I hope to do so some day," she said, but just then she felt a little doubtful.

If all she suspected was true, he was co thinly able to keep his own connect. Not a muscle of his face moved us he answered her. The next attack must be made on Agatha, whom she was better able to manage.

CHAPTER XX. "I HOLD HER DEATH WARRANT."

I" Co you believe that May marriages are unhappy?" asked Valerie, suddenly. She was with Agatha in the music room, where the grand organ stood, and singing together for some time they stood talking at the open bay window, and Valerie thought it a fire opportunity for asking some of the most searching ques-Do you believe that May marriage

are unhappy?"
"I never thought about it," said Agaths. "I should think not-it is the loveliest month in the year. Why should anything about it

be unhappy? "I like weddings where there are plenty of flowers," said Valerie. "They seem very dull to me without. What month

were you married in, Mrs. Heriot?" Taken quite by surprise, and without time to reflect, she answered :

"In Jane," Suddenly there rose before her a vision of that scene in the wood, and her face flushed, not a common blush that came and went, but a scorching flame of fire that seemed to burn even to the roots of her hair, and which was noted with supreme

satisfaction by Valerie.
"In June," she rereated; "that is a more beautiful month than May. You were married in some grand church by a bishop, I suppose. I should like to see an English marriage very much." She spoke in a low, musing tone, and was looking at the far-off waters of the lake. "Were you married by a bishop, Mrs. Heriot?"

"No," was the brief reply.

And for the first time it occurred to Agatha, what would any one say who knew how she had been married. Would knew how she had been married. they think it very curious? What, for instance, would this brilliant French girl think? She fully believed in her marriage herself, but she felt now that it might seem a little corious to others.
"I thought," said Valerie, "that all rich

people were married by bishops," No, not all; indeed, I think very few, but I bank very little about it-ue one less.

"I like the form of an English wedding," repeated Valerie. "Of course you had a ong train of bride-maids-young and beautifully dressed ."

It was a pointed question, and Valerie looked into the young face as she asked it. Again the deepened flush, "No," replied Agatha, "I had no bridemaids. Do not talk about marriages, Val' erie; I do not think them the most cheer-

tul subject one can discuss. "They seem very cheerful to me," laughed Valerie. "Where did you go for your honey-moon, Mrs. Heriot?"

"To Paris," replied Agatha.

honey-moon was a safe subject. "What a curious expression it is-'a like the English expression best; tell me about your wedding, Mrs. Heriot. I am zelf to be his wife. She paid her that much sure it must have been a pretty one, and I respect quite unconsciously. must own to a great weakness in the matter of weddings. I like to hear about them-who cried-why they cried-who laughed-who made speeches, and what they

said-tell me all about it." "No one cried at my wedding," replied Azatha.

Then she bethought berself. How many years must have followed it-how her futher and Joan, the women and the children must

"Yes, many; but I saw no tears."

THE VILLAGE ANGEL; her attention was at once atracted by a mark and she draw the felds of her dress over the sake; that being the case, why had he not smiles either, but she was growing nervous tortured her, she would have slain her; yet in the corner. She looked at it long and book. "If I had unexpectedly found Mis.

There was a flaw in her case. To be looked. It was perfectly natural that she recognized the value of the corner. There was a flaw in her case. The looked at it long and look. "If I had unexpectedly found in the corner. She looked at it long and look." There was a flaw in her case. The looked at it long and look. "If I had unexpectedly found in the corner. She looked at it long and look." The looked at it long and look in the corner in the case, why had he not smiles either, but she was growing nervous tortured her, she would have slain her; yet and confused. It was perfectly natural that she recognized the value of the case, why had he not smiles either, but she case, why had he not smiles either, but she case, why had he not smiles either, but she case, why had he not smiles either, but she was growing nervous tortured her, she would have slain her; yet and confused. It was perfectly natural that she recognized the value of the case, why had he not smiles either, but she case, why had he not smiles either, but she case, why had he not smiles either, but she case, who had not smile the case, who had not smile the case, who had not smiles either, but she case, who had not smiles either the dugs; but she knew so little what to say, If she could have given even ever so small an account—if she could have said, "I was married in such a place-in such a church" -there would have been a story to tell. must be broken for my sake." How would it sound if she told Valerie that Sir Vane had knelt down by her side and had read the marriage service over with her, and had then solemnly assured her that she was his wife-how would that sound? Valerie. of course, would not understand it, even though it were all true.

"I have nothing to tell. My marriage was, I suppose, like others." Valorie's heart best high with triumph.

To herself she said: "I do not believe there was any marriage at all, and if not, I will be Lady Carlyon after all."

The nervous confusion and agitation of Agatha convinced her that she was right. If she had been married legally, with all proper form and ceremony, she would, of course, be able to tell when and by whom From that moment she gave her life to the finding out of that secret and the winning of Sir Vane's affections for herself.

Looking over one of the English daily papers, she come across the advertisement of

a private inquiry office.
"The very thing for me," she said, and that same day she wrote to John Micklevitch, asking for all information concerning Sir Vane Heriot Carlyon, of Garswood, whether he was married-whether he was supposed to be paying his addresses to any one, where he was, and if his name was mixed up with scandal of any kind. She arranged the terms herself, enclosing one-half of the sum she considered sufficient, and promising to send the other half when she had his reply. Then came a week of anxious suspense; the answer came saying that in three wicks he would be able to send every particular.

They were three weeks of great anxiety She made the most of them to her. by assiduously sucking Sir Vane, by doing her best to amuse him, to draw him inco a sentimental flutation, and she did not The answer came at last, and she vowed

to herself that it was worth double the money sho had epent upon it. Sir Vane Carlyon, of Garswood, was immeasely rich-twenty-eight years of ege, exceedingly handsome, was not married, nor had there been any rumors of his engage-

ment. He had had many affaires de caur, and did not bear the highest reputationmore than one ruined life lay at his door. fle was now on the Continuat-somewhere, it was believed in Switzerland, but the whereabouts was not certain, and-he was not alone-a young and beautiful girl had left England with him, of whom nothing was

Valerie's face flushed and her hear; beat with triumph, as she read this te'ter. "I hold her death warrant in my hands, he said to herself, with a smile, "but I must

kaowa.

take my time." After a few days she wrote again, asking John Micklevitch to find out a place called Whitzeroft, where Sir Vane had been visiting, and to do his best to discover whether he had been privately married there, or whether he had cloped with any one from that place. There was to be no question of expense, she said to herself. She would fling her whole fortune on the die. If she succeeded, she should be Lady Carlyon-if she failed, it would matter little enough what became of her. The answer was longer this time in coming, but when

it did come, she was repaid for the waiting.

Mr. Micklevitch, find no the inquiry to be an important one, and likely to be lucrative also, had gone down to Whitecroft himself, and made all his discoveries with his own hand. It would be useless to narrate all his the distance, you avoid me. When Mrs. disguises—how he went to the rectory as a Heriot sends you pretty little notes of invitafootman—now he heguited old Joan as a Heriot sends you pretty little notes of invita-fortune teller, and, after condoling with her what here we done? over the faithless butcher, won her to talk of Miss Agatha, who had disappeared so wonderfully.

He found his way nto Croft Abbey disguised as a groom, and from other grooms there learned plenty of Sir Vano. He did still more-he searched the marriage or understand no reason why you should registers of all the churches in the neighborhood; he found out the exact date on which Agatha had di-appeared from Whitecroft; and he discovered the exact date on which they went to Paris; and he knew that (on you. English ground at least) there had been no

time for a marriage.
He went on to say how Agatha Brooke was loved and worshiped a how her memory was shrined among the poor as the memory of a saint; how they associated her with the figure on the stained-glass window; and how she had been known among them as the "angel of the paor." There was no house he entered where the had not taken hope, comfort and relief ; but there was no man or woman who spoke of her with dry eyes. "Not a very likely person, he added, "to

have run away with Sir Vane." Nevertheless, the proofs that she had done so were incontestable. He added that among the villagers there was a certainty that she was married; that they had also a sure conviction that she would return to them some day, beautiful and good as ever, and better able to help them. But old Joan and the doctor wept over her as one that was lost and would never return. Did mademoiselle wish to know

It is still an open question whether the most good or the most harm is done by detectives. They may, at times, serve the most useful and honorable of purposes; again, they may be used in the most disloyal inshion, and for the most dishonorable purposes. Certainly, Valerie E'Euvers would never have found out Sir Vane's secret but for them. Now, at last, she held the secret in her own hands. She could stab her, slay her, do as she would with her; at one word from her the whole of the fabric would fall at once into ruins; at one word madame would rise in righteous wrath and expel them. But such words Valerie was not likely to speak. She would wield her power as she liked, and always with the same end in view-that she should be Lady Carlyon herself.

Knowing the real purity and goodness And this time she spoke so frankly that of Agatha's character, she felt quite Valerie saw if there had been a marriage, the pertain that Sir Vane had deceived her in some way over the marriage. She was too keen a reader of character to believe for one honey-moon," she said laughing. "Lune instant that Agatha had willingly or wilfully de miel (a mouth of honey), we say, but I gone wrong, or that she had been with him and the flattery of it was very dear and very like the English expression best; tell me all this while without firmly believing herrespect quite unconsciously.

What a power it was to hold! She looked

at the lovely, refined lady, olad in gorgeous dresses and costly gems by Sir Vane's desire, and thought to herself that by one word she could strip her of all this, and bring her down to the very dust; by one word she could hurl her from this, the height of her social grandeur, to the very lowest depths of shame and disgrace. Yet she was Yet she was woman enough to feel sorry that another, and so peerless a woman, should be sucrifiedd. She had a strange and complex nature; she would have done snything to She might have added that she saw no beauty from Agatha's face, she would have brighter and fair faces fairer for him. The

Was about to destroy.

"I have read," she said to herself, "of generals who have made a ladder of the dead badies of soldiers to scale a fortress; I shall have to tread upon one human heart, and it

CHAPTER XXI.

" NOW I CAN BEAR MY PATE," One holding the sword in the hand natural. ly lengs to strike. There were times when Valerie had the greatest difficulty in refrain. ing from striking the blow. The one thing that restrained her was this-she was not yet sure of Sir Vane. Many a heart, she knew, was caught in the rebound. What she really hoped for was that when Agatha was dethroned, no matter in what fashien it happened, Sir Vane would turn to her, would seek comfort and amusement from her. Even if he did not love her so much at first, it would not matter-that would come after. ward. In the meantime she must try more than ever she had done to fix his attention on

Sae knew every art in the science of fittation. She knew when to laugh or to look ead, when to advance, when to retreat, when to be coy, and when to be demonstrative; she understood the whole science. Hitherto she had been most amusing; she had helped them to while away many hours; she had been ready to respond to their invitations, and had seldom neglected a chance of placing herself in Sir Vane's way. Now the did exactly the opposite. She declined most of the invitations on one pretext or another; she avoided rather than sought Sir Vane. When with them, her brilliant spirits seemed to have left her—she was silent, very often sad. When Sir Vane addressed her, she never looked at him, and she did just what she had wished to do-she piqued him. More than once he found her in her favorite seat by the marble faun, and the moment she saw him she rose hastily and went away, instead of welcoming him, as she had done before, with kindly words and bright eyes. One morning, when this happened, he has tened after her. Hearing his footateps, she

quickened hers. "If it's to be a race, I shall most surely beat you, mademoiselle," he cried. "I must speak to you."

He overtock her and held out his hand in kindly greeting to ber

"I never see you," he said, half-reproact-fully. "How is it?"

"I cannot tell," she replied."

But the frank pleasure with which she had been wont to greet him was all gone; her eyes drooped, her face was turned from him. Vane, "or I should feel quite sure you avoid ed me purposely." She made no answer.

"Mademoiselle, speak to me, I beg of you. Have I done anything to displease you."

"No," she replied, hurriedly; "you could never do that." "Then I am very fortunate," he said. But how is it we spent such very pleasant

hours together, and now we never meet ! She was silent and turned away her face. Sir Vone understood that he was in for a sentimental scene, and his best plan was to go through with it. He was rather amused that the gave such evident signs of admiration for him; it pleased his vanity-showed him that he had not lost his old power over the fairer sex. A little in cense burned before him was very sweet.

"I have not displeased you, and nothing has happened; then why are you not the same with us, mademoiselle?"

She raised her eyes suddenly, with one

swift, sharp, mesmeric glance into his face, then dropped them. "How do you say that I am not the same?" she cried. "I see it for myself. When you see me in

hat have we done?" " Nothing," she replied, briefly.

"Then why do it?" "Can you not understand," she said, in-terrupting him, "that there are reasons one

can hardly explain—hardly speak of ?"
"No, I lo not," he said. "I can imagine avoid us. "With equal certainty I must add, that

if you see no cause I shall not enlighten The accent on the "you" caught his attention. He looked in the dark, beautiful

"Do you not know," she said, "that some pleasures are too dearly purchased?"
"I do not know," be replied. "I have never counted the cost of a pleasure yet."

Nor had she-of a caprice. "You will have to count it some day," she said.
The day is, I hope, far distant," he replied. "Let me see what I can find in your words; you evidently mean that you find a

pleasure in being with us, but that you have to pay a price for it; now what is that price?" " Can you not guess?" she asked.

"I dare not guess," he replied, in a low tone of voice. In his heart be cared nothing for her; he thought her very brilliant and very amusing, he admired her wit and her accompliehments, but he was not the least in love with her. She was the kind of woman who might attract his fancy for a short time, but she would never win his love ; yet he could not resist the opportunity

of a sentimental flirtation. He had thought to himself that she was evidently fond of him, and it was some time since he had had any little affair of the kind. It was no breach of trath and fidelity to Agatha, because he cared nothing for her; at the same time, if a pretty girl did admire him he could not be so ungaliant as to refuse to perceive it. He knew nothing of the strong passion that filled the girl's breast for him; he did not know that she had for him the maddest love one creature could have for another; he might have paused, might have been careful, had he done so. How was he to guess that this girl, with the beautiful averted face, had mastered his secret, knew his whole story, held the death warrant of his beloved Agatha in her hands? All he saw was a beautiful woman who, from constant association with him, had grown to love him. He must not deal hardly with her, for,

"I dare not guess," he repeated, "but you will tell me. Do not haston away. Surely you can give me a few minutes after being cruel to me so long. Come down this

after all, it was a great compliment to him,

ilex grove." I must not-I cannot," she cried. "Yes, you will; you have riqued something more than my curiosity, mademoiselle -Valerio; let me use your name. You

must come !' He took her hand in his and led her to the

shady grave. "Who would have thought of a love adventure here," he said to himself, "in the solitudes of Lake Lucerne?" It reminded achieve her ends; she would have trampled the him of olden days, when bright eyes grew