

POETRY.

PLAYING TEA.

In a quaint and dim old attic,
Fragrant with sage, withered herbs,
Joyous with the swift, willowy girls—
And the songs of mating birds—
In a quaint and roomy attic.

SELECT STORY.

AN UNBROKEN PROMISE.

A CASTAWAY.

PART III.

CHAPTER IX.

QUO FATA DICUNT.

Yes, that was how it must be managed;
the game of respectability was played out
the news of the forgery and of his intended
bigamy would be promulgated at once,
and there was nothing left for him but
flight. He would have time enough after
his arrival in town to get together his
most valuable articles of property, and to
start by an early train or boat to such
destination as he might fix upon without
his flying visit to London being heard of,
and while his servants and people at the office
would imagine that he was still absent
on a business tour, on which he was known
to have started. He would not see Dela-
bole, he would not see anyone; the cause
of his flight would soon be perfectly ap-
parent, and his enemies might then do
their worst. He had sufficient money to
take him to a place of safety, and then he
would work the oracle with Mrs. Ben-
dixen. Properly managed, his fate would
not be such a hard one after all. But
what a difference one week, even a few
days might have made! Had Asprey's
calculations been fulfilled, had Sir Geo-
frey died at the time the doctor predicted,
the forgery would not have been discov-
ered; Madge could have been brought to
terms; and as Mrs. Bendixen's husband,
he, Philip Vane, would have had health
and position, which were to him the only
two things worth living for! As that
bitterest thought of all, "what might
have been" crossed Philip Vane's mind
he stamped his foot with rage, thereby
awaking the commercial gentleman, who
struggling into a sitting posture, and wip-
ing the steam from the carriage window,
muttered, "London at last!" and proceed-
ed to pick up his newspaper and get his
travelling rugs together.

CHAPTER X.

QUO FATA DICUNT.

CHAPTER IX.

QUO FATA DICUNT.

he ordinarily used, commenced filling it
with wearing apparel, carefully packing,
too, his splendid dressing-case with silver-
fitting, and a quantity of plate which
he took from an iron safe in his bedroom.
He had opened the door of this safe,
and was looking through a number of
documents, bills and other securities
with the intention of seeing which could
be made available in his flight, when he
heard a sudden knock at the door. Not
an ordinary knocking—quick, hurried,
but stationary, low, as though the person
knocking were fearful of attracting other
observation than that person whose at-
tention he was endeavoring to catch.
Philip passed in his task and listened;
his heart beat so loudly that at first he
could not hear anything else, and after
the knocking had ceased, but a minute
afterwards he heard it distinctly. He
filled a wine-glass from a decanter of
brandy on the sideboard and swallowed
its contents, then he crossed the hall and
passed at the outside door.
"Who's there?" he asked, in a low
tone.
"I," replied the well-known voice of
Delabole, pitched in the same key. "I;
let me in at once—most important!"
Vane opened the door, and Delabole
entered. He knew the way, he had been
there often before, and with his host fol-
lowing him, he rapidly crossed the little
hall and passed into the sitting room.
When he saw the half-filled portmanteau
and the room littered with clothes and
papers, he started back and turned quick-
ly round.
"Halloo!" he said, "so soon? I came
to warn you, but you seem to have heard
of it already."
"Heard of what?" said Vane, looking
blinded at him.
Delabole's face was pale; there was a
strained, worn look round his eyes, his
usual gorgeous shirt front was crumpled,
and his ring-covered little hands were
very dirty; but it was with something of
his old jaunty manner that he said,
"Won't do, my dear Philip—things are
too serious just now for us to indulge in
such gaff. You must have heard the
news, or you would not be packing up
to cut and run in this way."
"I have this moment returned to town,
and I tell you I have heard no news
whatever."
"Well, then, to keep you in sus-
pense any further, the short and long of
the matter is this: Late this evening,
after business hours, I received a private
telegram in cipher from Garcia, the resi-
dent engineer at the Terra del Fuego,
and—Delabole stopped and whistled.
"—and—" interrupted Philip, who
scarcely had noticed the announcement
his companion had made to make to him, so
great was his relief.
"Ah, you are a plucked one, Philip, I
will say that for you," said Delabole in
admiration. "You take this as coolly as
though it were a trifle, instead of mean-
ing tita to every sixpence you have got
in the world. To be sure there is Mrs.
Bendixen's money in prospect, but one
ought never to reckon upon that until
one has touched it. And you ask me
what I am going to do. I will tell you,
my dear Philip, in a word of four letters—
'bolt'!"
"Leave England?"
"Leave England? very much indeed for
a short time. I had always arranged
with Garcia that when this crisis hap-
pened, he would let me have forty-eight hours'
notice before the news could reach the
city in the regular way. If he keeps his
word, and I have no doubt he will, the
interesting occurrence will not get wind
of your society, but it's hard lines to
have to run away to hiding just now."
"You can take Mrs. Bendixen with
you, my dear Philip," said Delabole, sar-
donically. "She will not know that it
is anything more than a more commere-
cial smash, and she will be doubly anxious
to have the opportunity of concealing her
own stricken deer. Besides, you might
have had to bolt in a hurried manner.
Oh, by the way, I have news for you."
"What news?" said Vane, starting.
"More trouble?"
"On the contrary," said Delabole,
"good! Just before I came out, Asprey
enclosed me this telegram, which he re-
ceived to-night. Read it for yourself."
Delabole took an envelope from his
pocket and handed it to his companion,
who opened it eagerly, and spread out
its contents before him. But he had
scarcely glanced at the first word, when,
with a heavy groan, he fell senseless to
the floor.
Delabole was a practical man; he
rushed into the bedroom, and emerging
with the water-jug, dashed a stream over
his friend's face; then, dropping on his
knees beside him, untied his neckerchief,
unbuttoned his waistcoat and shirt, and
lifted up his hand that he might feel how
the pulse was beating.
"Make him drop the hand! sddenly
as though it were red hot, letting it fall
heavily on the floor? What makes him
bend over it again as it lies there dou-
bled up and shapeless, and peer curi-
ously at the cuff and shirt-wristband?
What made him shrink back, repining
his feet with one bound, and looking
down with horror on the prostrate form?
"He did it," he muttered, "by the
Lord! What's this the doctor says?"
picking up the telegram which had dute-
rred to the ground. "Chenoweth
Springside, to Asprey, Cavendish square
Sir G. H. is dead. Killed tonight in a
struggle. Particulars by post. Shall want
you at the inquest." Killed in a struggle;
and unless I am very much mistaken, this
is the man that killed him. What's the
meaning of his falling into a fit when he
read that? What's the meaning of those
stains on his hand and cuff and wrist-
band? That was where he was all this
day, when he would tell no one where he
was going? And here are his boots and
trousers still cased with the heavy country
mud! What was the meaning of this
packing up, which I interrupted him in?
his plate and papers, too, I see, to take
with him. What did it mean but to bolt?
This is an infernal bad business," he con-
tinued, dropping into a chair and swing-
ing his forehead. "I wish to heavens I
had not come here!"
At this moment Philip Vane opened
his eyes, and after gazing wearily around

him, gradually struggled into a sitting
posture.
"Help me to get up, Delabole," he said,
in a faint voice. "Give me your hand."
"Not I," said Delabole, drawing back
and plunging his hands into his pockets.
"Who's the matter?" said Philip, still
faintly. "What has happened?"
"Nothing," said Delabole, "but I know
where you were during this
day and what you did! Henceforth we
work separate and I advise you to keep
clear of me. I don't pretend to be strait-
laced; I am not particular as to how I get
my money so long as it comes, but I have
never gone in for murder yet, and I don't
intend. And look here; you know I am
sounded enough, but if you don't want
others, who might not be so reliable, to
find out what I have found out tonight,
look to your coat-cuff and shirt-wristband,
and trousers, and boots, and be off out of
this place before the hue-and-cry is upon
you."
So saying, without another look at his
companion, Delabole put on his hat and
strolled from the room, leaving Philip
Vane grovelling on the ground.
CHAPTER X.
THE LONDON LAWYER.
The rector stepped softly into the dark-
ened room, and closing the door behind
him, advanced towards the bed, and seat-
ing himself in a chair by its side. Madge lay
with her head propped up by pillows,
over which her long brown hair, here
and there dotted with a deep, dark stain,
and damp from the fomentations which
had been applied, lay streaming. Her
head was turned restlessly from side to
side, and a cry of agony, not sharp, not
broken, but one low-pitched, long-contin-
ued wail, in which her acute suffering
often expressed itself, broke from her lips.
At first she seemed not to notice that
anyone had entered the room, and it was
not until the rector had first lightly
touched her hand, and then taken it
gently between his own, that she ceased
moaning, and calming herself by a great
effort, saw her friend seated by her side.
Even then she seemed either not to re-
cognize him, or to confound the circum-
stances under which he was present, for
she pressed the hand that was free, hard
upon her forehead, and closed her eyes
again for some minutes before she spoke.
Then she said, "I know now why you
are here."
"You sent for me," said the rector, in
his gentlest tone; "you told the servant
you wished to see me."
"Yea," she said, "I recollect it all now.
My mind is a little confused, I am afraid,
and when I first saw you sitting there
and holding my hand just as you used to
in the old days when I had the fever, I
thought that time had come back again,
and wondered whether all the things
which have occurred in the interval had
been seen by me in a dream. I wish they
had, oh, how I wish they had!"
"Your strength is not yet sufficiently
returned to enable you to think much,
less to speak of anything which is certain
to excite your brain," said the rector,
bending over her. "Margaret," he ad-
dressed her, "I must speak plainly to
you; your state is most critical, and if you
excite yourself, your life, or what is per-
haps worse, your reason is in imminent
peril."
"You mean that I shall go mad?" said
Madge, turning her eyes upon him and
clutching his hand. "If I do, it will be
from reference, not from speaking. You
have been often pleased to praise my
common sense, and I have never been
more active or more capable of doing me
service than at the present moment. I
must know from you what has occurred
this night; you must tell me nothing
to suppress or disguise anything. Do
you hear me, my dear rector?"
The rector hesitated a moment before
he said, "will you not wait until Dr.
Chenoweth, who is coming up again to-
night, has seen and spoken to you?"
"This is no matter for a doctor's decision.
You, best of all men in the world,
can judge how I can bear up against my
ownness and trouble; you alone in the world
know the story of my life, and what I
have gone through. I tell you I must
have of tonight's occurrence at once and
from you!"
The rector bowed his head. "If I re-
fuse to answer any question you may put
or stop in the midst of my recital, you
will understand, Margaret, that it is solely
on your own account."
"I understand," she replied; then invol-
untarily sinking her voice, she asked,
"Sir Geoffrey—is he—how is he dead?"
"His is."
As the rector spoke, he felt a convul-
sive thrill in the hand that lay within his,
and the pallor of Madge's face grew
yet more intense and ghastly, but she
evincd no other sign of emotion.
"Tell me all about it," she murmured.
Again Mr. Drage hesitated, until
prompted by a nervous hand clasp.
"Then the servants, whose attention had
been aroused by the sound of the struggle
and the crashing of the overturned fur-
niture and the broken glass, collected
their senses sufficiently to rush in a body
to the library, they found a man bending
over Sir Geoffrey's dead body, and en-
deavoring to raise him from the ground
on which it lay to the countess's pres-
ence on the spot was not noticed for
some moments, not indeed, until the man
had been secured and removed into the
hall."
"Secured, do you say?" Is the man
then, in custody and in the United States."
"He was recognized by Riley on the
instant; by a servant who had seen him
on the occasion of his previous visit;
finally, by Captain Cleothorpe, who
spoke to you about him in the afternoon,
when you expressed your dread lest he
should come to—"

"Ah, my God!" screamed Madge, sup-
porting herself on both hands, and
drawing herself towards him. "Of whom
are you speaking?"
"Of Sir Geoffrey's son, George Heriot."
"But at that instant Madge's strength
gave way, and she fell prone on her face
with outstretched arms, and hands work-
ing convulsively.
The rector gently raised, and laid her
back upon her pillow, and was about
to ring the bell to summon assistance,
when he saw her eyes open and her lips
move.
"Stay," she murmured, "for pity's
sake. This is now a matter of life and
death, which must be talked at once
between you and me alone; don't fear
for me, I am strong enough; but I could
not let things rest thus, even if I knew
that to speak of them would kill me.
What proofs are there against this young
man?"
"Many and various, and most convinc-
ing. Riley, sorely against his will—for
he is almost heart-broken at the turn
which affairs have taken—will be called
upon to prove the original quarrel be-
tween the father and son, when Sir Geo-
frey told him that he had discarded and
disowned his son, whose name was never
again to be mentioned in the household.
Riley will further prove that on a recent
occasion the young man came to Spring-
side to seek an interview with his father,
entered the house much at the same time
and in the same manner; and that he,
Riley, was finally ordered by the General
to show George Heriot the door, and never
give him admittance again. Cleo-

thorpe, who has some slight acquaintance
with young Heriot several years ago, will
speak to meeting him in the afternoon,
and to the young man's evident desire to
avoid recognition; and I should almost
think, Margaret, if you are sufficiently re-
covered, that you will be called upon
to state why you were so strongly anxious
that a meeting between the two men
should be prevented."
"All these facts that you have alleged,
will be taken as reasons and motives,
probable inducements for him to commit
the crime. What proof is there that he
did commit it?"
"An circumstantial evidence it can hardly
be stronger. He alone is seized upon
the spot immediately after the commis-
sion of the crime; the body of the victim
is in his arms; his clothes are stained
with blood. When you couple this with
the enmity known to exist between him
and the murdered man, with the fact of
his presence at the place from which he
had been more than once ejected and
warned, with the fact that he evidently
shunned discovery and recognition—witness
his behavior to Captain Cleothorpe—
however unwilling one may be to believe
in the existence of such a monstrous
guilt, the charge seems to be impossible
of refutation."
"Then, said Madge, "I speak what is
the fact. I knew him intimately for two
years, saw him constantly, shared his
confidence, knew the inmost workings of
his mind, and never saw aught that was
mean or dishonorable. And he has been
arrested for this crime!"
"The evidence was so strong," said Mr.
Drage, "that it would have been impos-
sible to arrest him, without the horrible
idea of the expression of public opinion had not been
lodged against him."
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