"A GOLD LADEN DERELICT

The Impecunious Adventuress.

CHAPTER XX. A NOBLE ACT.

he said.

Before he could reply the door opcame in. When he saw Ashley his face prison." grew purple with anger; he pulled an envelope out of his pocket, shook it at him, and shouted:

"Ah, I thought perhaps I should that he had nothing to say. find you here! You scoundrel! you he read the latter in a thick, tremul-, that may send others to prison besides

"Lady Beauclerc presents her compliments to Mrs. Henry Montagu, and Montagu, with an almost magical begs to inform her that the inclosed eards were not signed or sent by her. They are forgeries. Lady Beauclerc do you mean? Out with it." does not impute any fraud to Mrs. understand that her name is not upon her ladyship's visiting list."

ing. Ashley?" exclaimed Redman angrily. "Isn't there trouble enough practically his last card. about without you going looking for

Montague, turning toward him. "He wrong; but I was in a desperate posihas committed more forgery and theft, tion, as Redman here can tell you, and he has insulted me and my wife. was mad to get into society. This thief personal injury that I have caused told me that he was intimate with Mrs. Montagu or yourself, I most Lady Beauclerc, and, being fool sincerely apologize, and if you'll give enough to indulge my wife's craze, I me the chance I'll make amends." two cards for the reception. Her lady- snorted the indignant Jew, "but is ship took time to make quite certain, there a reason for me giving you a and I have taken time, too, and I have chance?" proof that he is the only person who could have stolen them. As for the

people. What would some of our aris- wife."

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with civilization,—on merits!

"Now what do you think of that?" I tocratic directors say if they knew that Mr. and Mrs. Henry Montagu got into that Beauclerc's reception with ened quickly, and Mr. Henry Montagu forged invitations. Yes, he shall go to

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ot possibly have impure blood they just feel fit—no head-ches, dyspepsia or bilious

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"The deuce she has!" exclaimed

Montagu and Redman, almost at the

ame moment; and Montagu continu-

"It is true," said Ashley quietly

"and you will see the engagement an-

quite understand that I am a poor

man, but they also know that I have

a very good chance-in fact, it is prac-

tically a certainty now-of being re-

sognized as my late cousin's successor

to the baronetcy, and also that on my

mother's side I am pretty near to the

earldom of Munford. Therefore, what

pretty liberal, and within a week after

my marriage I shall be able to give

you five thousand pounds for that

other thousand. Furthermore, I'll un-

son-in-law to persuade the old man

to take seats on one or two of your

boards, and I needn't tell you that

that would put anything through. I

flatter myself that Belinda is pretty

fond of me, and, like most American

daughters, she can just twist her fa-

Ashley sat silent in his chair trembling slightly and gnawing his mustache, for the very good reason

"Look here, Monty," interposed Red forger! you thief! Look at these!" he man, "I grant that Ashley has treatwent on, taking out of the envelope ed you infernally badly, but there's with trembling fingers a letter and two something even more serious than invitation cards for Lady Beauclerc's that on hand. Sit down and get cool reception. "And listen to this." Then and listen. Something has happened

> Ashley, and you might be one of them. "Eh! What's that?" exclaimed Mr change of manner and temperature ed, in a very different tone: "Well, if "Send me to prison! What the deuce

Then he sat down, and Redman told Montague, but she must request her to him the message which Ashley had brought from Lilias.

By the time he had finished, Ashley of course, Montagu, it is in your power "What the deuce have you been do- had recovered some of his nerve, and to stop that marriage and ruin me. was determined to play what was The question is, whether it would pay you to do so or not. The Vanderleens

"Look here, Montagu," he said, a very fair show of bravado, "I plead has he done?" continued Mr. guilty and I admit that I did very and I had either to remain in it, or take a desperate way out. For any

"That sounds all right in talk,"

"I am going to tell you of one which you will find pretty good," replied forgery, we know how well he could Ashley, gaining confidence with every "And now he goes to prison, not so you, genltemen, that yesterday my much for the thousand pounds, but suit for the hand of Miss Belinda Vanfor insulting me and my wife, and derleen came to a happy termination making us ridiculous before these and she has promised to become my

"I think that's a square offer, Monty," said Redman, while the Jew was considering. "You know we can't afford to be very particular with each Nature's Greatest other in these matters; and, besides if you go prosecuting Ashley, and get Washers his back to the wall, he might go into the witness box and give the whole show away."

ther around her finger."

"You may be perfectly certain of that, gentlemen," laughed Ashley, pletely turned the tables. "In fact you couldn't reasonably expect me to do anything else. Wouldn't you do the same vourself?"

"I suppose I should," said Redman quietly, "and I'm quite sure Monty would. Therefore, Monty," he continued. "I think you had better listen to reason. Let us accept Lilias' terms. If she doesn't split-and I know she'll keep her word-it will be practically impossible for Burnett to find out where those papers came from, and in time they'll get tired, the things will be pigeonholed, and there they'll stop, and everything can go on just as nicely and comfortably as before."

Finally, after considerable deliberation, the wrathy Jew came to the conclusion that five thousand for one thousand was a respectable return for his money; and, moreover, the prospect of handling some of the Vanderleen millions was a quite irresistible temptation. So, after a minute or two. he looked up smiling, and said, in hi most genial tone:

"Right, my boy. On those terms forgive you. It's an agreement, and we'll have a bottle on it."

The next morning Lilias, to her amazement and horror, read in the Morning Post the announcement of the engagement of Miss Belinda Vanderleen to Mr. Walter Ashley. Her aunt had been strangely ailing of late, in fact, ever since Sir Arthur's death, and so Lilias was breakfasting alone. "Great heavens!" she exclaimed; "is it possible! What an unspeakable i: famy! That poor, innocent girl, with youth, good looks, and everything the world can give her, to be deceived ino marriage, a union for life, with a swindler, a forger, and a card sharper! I suppose this is the work of Redman & Co. No, gentlemen, you shall not commit this last infamy, whatever it costs to thwart you! There shall be

at least one good action done in my wicked, miserable life, and, if I have Fashion to go to prison or the scaffold for it. I will save this innocent girl from your filthy clutches!"

CHAPTER XXI. AN ASTOUNDING LETTER.

It would be of little interest to desribe in detail the legal batte for the plendid fortune which Sir Arthur Eversley had left to the woman who had been his first and only love, the loss of whom had driven him to seek exile in foreign service, to be stricken down by wounds and disease in the outlands of the earth, whence he had only returned to the splendid inheritance that fortune had given him, a drink and drug-soddened wreck of a man who might well have been an oboct of pity or contempt to a sober artisan earning his thirty shillings

The proceedings in the court of pro bate and divorce present a somewhat curious contrast. On the one side public interest is as keen as it is unhealthy. On the other, the proceedings the public ignores them, unless circumstances have occurred to render the case important, such as Eversley

For all that, the brilliant assemblage which had gathered to witness the final forced to sit and listen to an absolutescarcely audible tones, by learned cents in silver or stamps. leaders who had made probate their sions of the story which the news

These eminent gentlemen contented technicalities which hardly one of said assemblage dispersed and went

was called to the witness box and sworn, and Kenneth Markham rose to ommence the examination.

(To be Continued.)

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A pattern of this illustration mailv uninteresting recital, sometimes in ed to any address on receipt of 1

A SPLENDID WORK DRESS.



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