

THE HEARTHSTONE.

girls, and will I am sure make your home a happy one."

Sir Richard replied with the suavity, which to him became a second nature, in the presence of Lady Hamilton, and he thanked her for the kindness she had shown to the twin girls whom he chose to denominate children; he by no means cared for the patriarchal character of Grandfather.

"You have no doubt seen and learned so much in your long wanderings, that you will make us poor stay at home court your society, in order that we may enjoy at second hand, the wonders you have seen in flood and field."

Here was the opportunity he had sought, but the children were in the room, and if they had not been, his tongue clove to the roof of his mouth; as she spoke and smiled she was every moment becoming more and more like the Isabel Douglas he so loved and longed to see, and with the likeness to her old self, came the conviction, stinging like a barbed arrow, that with him she would never wed.

"I don't know," continued the Lady, "if your daughter Agnes has had time to tell you, that she is with the approval of her father, the affianced bride of Arthur Lindsay, whom you saw with my sister last night at Haddon Castle, he has only his sword, no land nor gold, but he is of noble blood, good and true."

"No," replied Sir Richard, "I was not aware of any such engagement, and to tell the truth, I look upon such an arrangement, as very premature, the girl is a mere child, she has only passed her fifteenth year by a few months, her judgment is not sufficiently formed to enable her to decide upon the man who is to make or mar her happiness for life."

"You are right so far," returned Lady Hamilton, "yet I have known a marriage formed at even that early age a most blessed one, as she spoke her dark eyelashes fell on her cheek now whitened to marble, while her lips became scarlet, and trembled with ill suppressed emotion."

"If they are sincerely attached to each other," replied the gentleman, "it will be no punishment for them to wait a year or two; unless something unlooked for occurs, I will of course sanction an engagement approved by her father; as to his means, that is a matter of little consequence; Agnes will have enough for both."

The glance of Lady Hamilton's eye, and her flashing cheek told him, that his last remarks had made a favourable impression on his hearer, they were alone, he would follow it up, her white cheek, her dreamy eyes seemed to tell him he would be unsuccessful, but he must try, it was a quest for the happiness he had once thrown away, and which he would now give worlds if they were his, to possess once more.

Alas, alas, on her fiat was hanging the happiness or misery of more than one.

He approached the low fanteuil where she sat, and leaning on the velvet covered mantel shelf, looked down on her with eyes so full of love and admiration, that had she but raised her eyes, his tale was told without speech.

Sir Richard Cuninghame was a handsome man for his age, gentlemanly, even courtly withal, and that he could woo and win, Isabel Douglas need not be told.

"Lady Hamilton," said he, "will you for one half hour accord to me the liberty to call you by your Christian name?"

"No, Sir Richard," was the quick reply. "To what end would old people like you and I address each other as we did in our childhood. The name William Hamilton gave me when I was his bride is the sweetest I have ever known, dear to ear and heart. There are troubled waters flowing round my Christian name, young as I was when I resigned it, that never came near the name of Hamilton. Call me by that name; I have borne it for nearly forty years."

"Fool that he was not to have stopped there; but he was a gold worshipper, and he read the heart of the pure woman before him from his own standpoint."

"Perhaps I am telling you what you already know, when I say that within the last thirty years my lands have stretched their border down to the sea; the gold I could count by hundreds previous to my uncle's, Sir John Baldwin's, death, I can count by thousands now; one of the finest houses in Aberdeen is mine by the same inheritance for nineteen years back, and I am able to furnish it in velvet and gold, should she whom I love desire it so; that my old habits are all gone, I need only ask you to look on my face and frame."

As he spoke, he bent over her, and endeavoured to take her hand in his; but instantly her chair was pushed back, and her hands crossed on her bosom; his courage nearly failed him, but again he thought of his wealth, his lands and gold, he was reassured and he went on.

"Lady Hamilton, I have come here for the second time, to ask you to be mistress of Haddon Castle, to spend my gold for me. It will be all your own; you can do what seemeth good to you with it all, no one to say, 'What doest thou?'"

She never looked for this, and for the moment she was so astonished she could not answer.

Her silence seemed to him the consent he would give soul and body to buy, and putting his hand on her shoulder, so lightly as scarcely to touch it, and yet that light touch thrilled to his very heart, he said in a voice tremulous with emotion:

"Isabel, I have loved you with an undying love since I was sixteen years old, I have kissed the moss you sat upon, embraced the tree you leant against, the fiend who watches for the souls of men alone made me the wretch you cast from you; while I plighted my vows to another, your image came between me, and my bride at God's Altar, and in those eighteen years men thought me dead, I sat in solitude and wept, thinking and dreaming alone of Isabel. I have not intruded too early on your sorrow; you have had eighteen long years to mourn your dead. You can make me a good man or a fiend, a blessing or a curse."

He stopped speaking, and knelt with clasped hands before her, awaiting the words which were to speak his doom.

"Richard Cuninghame, your words have made me a more sorrowful woman than ever I thought to be in this world again; but I could not marry you were you to offer me the wealth of the Indies; I love you from my heart in the deep green forest of Invermalden, my tears falling down like rain; none but my Guardian Angel and myself knows what it cost me in my early childhood ere I was myself again, and He to whom the record of my tears was brought gave me William Hamilton in your stead. I

loved him in life, I love him in death; we have never parted, and we never shall. William Hamilton is as verily my husband to-day this very hour, as he was when he last clasped my hand in his, I could not, if I would, be your wife."

It was answered, he rose to his feet, and drawing himself up to his full height, he stood for several seconds looking down upon her with a withering stare, as if he would annihilate her where she sat; she saw, and met his gaze with a feeling half sorrow, half surprise.

"Lady Hamilton, farewell, when we meet again, you will sue to me, and I shall do even as I have been done by."

He was gone, and the gentle Lady he left retired to her dormitory to give thanks and praise to God, who in her youth had saved her from becoming the wife of Richard Cuninghame; and to pray earnestly for the poor man who never prayed for himself.

The glory of the setting sun shone on mountain peak and rocky height around the old Castle, shining on the tree tops like burnished gold, and lighting up the tall, spire of the mausoleum where the forefathers of Sir William Hamilton slept the quiet sleep God gives to the holy dead; Margaret Hamilton was laid there in her young beauty, and it was her mother's wont at sunset to go out on the balcony attached to her boudoir to look at the place where her dead child lay, ere the shades of evening had wrapt it round.

The evening of the day on which Sir Richard Cuninghame paid her his last visit she sought the balcony at the usual hour, but her thoughts were concentrated on her husband, and looking towards the mausoleum her feelings shaped themselves into words, as if he who slept so soundly beneath the waves of the Mediterranean Sea could hear her and comprehend what she said while she stood gazing on the burial place of his forefathers.

"No, William Hamilton, not to be Queen of England would I forego my right to clasp your hand, and touch your hair in the high heavens, far better I love your memory, your sea-wet hair, than Sir Richard Cuninghame and all his lands as they stretch from the hills to the sea; nay more, far more, the sweet memory of thee and thine I love better, better far, than all my kith and kin."

She leaned on the balustrade, and pressed her hands on her eyes, as if she would shut out the dazzling glory of the setting sun, the hours passed on, but she knew it not; Isabel Douglas was a happy girl again, wandering under the spreading saugh trees on the shore of Loch Lomond, her hands clasped in handsome William Hamilton's, while with downcast eyes she listened to the sweet old words that are new every time they are spoken, she heard the ripple of the waters as they came low and high on the golden sands at her feet, and her lover's voice went out on the silent air soft and clear.

"I have neither holdings or land in store to give my love, but Isabel, you shall share with me in my father's halls what my fathers have shared with their loves. I cannot deck thee with gems of pomp and pride, but you shall wear in your own bright hair the bluebell on the mountain top, and your step on the hill shall be as stately and free as the bride of a chieftain's should."

A hand laid on her arm, and Lady Morton's voice pronouncing the word "Isabel" recalled her to her present world; she raised her eyes; the stars were coming out in the dark sky.

(To be continued.)

CASTAWAY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "BLACK SHEEP," "WRECKED IN PORT," &c., &c.

BOOK III.

CHAPTER XIV.

CORNERED.

Things were very bad indeed in the City. Discount was almost as impossible as credit, and the number of iron safes that were pointed at as containing "securities, sir, worth five-and-twenty thousand pounds, upon which, I give you my word, I cannot raise five hundred," was incredible. The City correspondents of the various journals were unanimous in stating that the money-market had a "downward tendency." Consols were lower than they had been within ten years; French rentes were nowhere; and at the Turkish and Egyptian serais, in which a good deal of light and innocent gambling had recently taken place, men shook their heads ominously. The sensation of the week had been the collapse of the Great Discount Company, which two years before had been formed, on the ill-austed liability principle of the old-fashioned house of Reddie and Wryneux, a firm whose word was at any time good for a million. Whether old Mr. Reddie quietly withdrew all his money as soon as the new company was in working order, instead of leaving it in, as he promised; whether young Mr. Wryneux not merely drew out his own money, but a great quantity belonging to other people; whether it was through simple mismanagement or base fraud, no one knew, but the company came to a smash, and hundreds of families were plunged into ruin.

Then the panic began in earnest. When people unconnected with the City heard that the house of Reddie and Wryneux no more ever spoke of the company) had failed, they almost began to doubt the stability of the Bank of England. Everybody wanted to withdraw everything from anywhere where it might be deposited. There were "runs" on private banks which had stood the test of the various influences on the money-market during a century, and which now nobly responded to the call; the partners sitting in conclave in the private parlour, and calmly smiling at the eagerness of the mad crowd of customers, who were waving their cheques at the counter. All the telegraph clerks in the country were sending off messages commencing with the words, "Sell at once," and the stock-brokers were nearly worried out of their lives by the multiplicity of the commissions thus forced upon them.

In this state of affairs one would have imagined that the shareholders and others interested in the success of the Terra del Fuegos mine would have felt some little disquietude; doubtless they did; but any of them taking the trouble to make a journey into the City would have had their speculations speedily set at rest, for the forty-eight hours' notice which Garcia had guaranteed to his principals had expired, and arriving at the office the next morning the gentlemanly clerks found on the closed shutters a document, in Mr. Gillman's remarkably neat penmanship, informing the world that "business was temporarily suspended," and referring inquisitive applicants to some accountants' office close by. The gentlemanly clerks were not very much surprised at what they learned; they had been to a certain extent behind the scenes, and were always anticipating some catastrophe; they knew moreover that when the panic was ended they would have little difficulty in getting away in tolerable happiness to enjoy their untroubled holidays.

Not so the public, who came down with a swoop directly the news got wind, and raved about the doors, and read the written placard over and over again, and consulted with other in the hopes of hitting upon some method of regaining a portion of the money, out of which, as they one and all fiercely declared, they had been swindled. Some of them were weak enough to go off to the accountants' office indicated on placard, where they found themselves confronted by two very pert clerks, who told them all they knew of the business was, that the books of the company had been handed over to them for inspection, and that a report would be issued as soon as the necessary investigation had been made; they denied all personal knowledge of the directors or officers of the company, and said, as was the truth, that was the first time in which their firm had ever been employed in matters relating to the Terra del Fuegos mine. So the public departed in a crest-fallen condition from the accountants' chambers and went back and loafed about in front of the offices again, deriving some feeble comfort from talking to fresh-comers, and explaining to them the hopeless state of the investment in which they had a common interest.

But the other directors, who, whatever doubt they may have felt as to the continuance of the prosperity of the company, had risked their capital not merely for the sake of the high interest which it produced, but with the firm conviction, that long before the first rumblings of the approaching earth-quake were generally felt, they would have such warnings as would enable them to withdraw their ventures in safety, were wild with rage and disappointment. How the news had spread, in what mysterious fashion the story cross had been sent round, no one could tell; but by twelve o'clock several of the men, whose names had been prominent on the direction of the Terra del Fuegos mine, were met together in the board-room of the Friendly Grasp Insurance Office, the use of which had been temporarily accorded to them by the actuary, to whom most of them were personally known. There was Lord Hallowbury, red-headed, and red-faced, chuckling, stammering, and uttering interjectional outbursts, but yet with a certain air of breeding about him which did not fail to tell, even on his excited colleagues; there was the Honourable Paunce Dossetor, for the first time since his marriage with Miss Swanik, grateful that her trustees had invested her money in the product of a capital enterprise, and left him only a few thousands to look after; there was Sir Canoeck Chase, not attending much to what was going on, but busied in reading a report from his steward, hinting at the existence of more coal on his Staffordshire property; and there, too, were Mr. Dolobole and Mr. Parkinson, who beyond all others, were savage at the turn which affairs had taken—the former sat at the long board-table, white with rage and silent, apparently immersed in certain calculations which he was making on the sheet of blotting-paper before him, while the latter strode up and down the room, speaking now to one man then to another, and from time to time using such language as his view never could have expected would have issued from the lips of that meek and virtuous churchwarden.

"Well, gentlemen," at last said Sir Canoeck Chase, having finished the report, and deriving some gleam of satisfaction therefrom, "it is no use wasting any more time in these desultory discussions; the question is, can anything be done? If so, let us decide what it is to be; if not, let us clear out of this, as I imagine we all of us have plenty of other things to attend to."

"We must put a bold face on the matter," said Mr. Dossetor, whose stake was small, and whose income was good; "we must stand to our guns."

"Stand to our guns!" cried Mr. Dolobole, looking off the blotting-paper, and taking his dirty fingers out of his mouth and waving them in the air. "How can I stand to my gun out of debt to thousand pounds when I have been robbed?"

"Then your gun was—ho, he—a ten thousand pounder, Dolobole?" chuckled Lord Hallowbury.

"Vere is de chairman? vere is de general manager?" cried Mr. Dolobole, with more gesticulation.

"If you knew that, Mr. Dolobole," said Mr. Dossetor, "you might have a chance of getting back a portion of your ten thousand pounds. Mr. Parkinson, you seem to have taken the trouble to make inquiries in this matter; there is no doubt, I suppose, that Dolobole and Vane have levanted?"

"About Dolobole not the slightest in the world," hissed Parkinson from between his gleaming teeth. "I went round to his rooms in Penally this morning, directly I heard this news. The hall-porter at the chambers told me that Mr. Dolobole had gone away in a cab last night, taking two portmanteaus with him. He took no servants, but went alone. The cabman was directed to drive to King's Cross, but that was, of course, merely a blind; no doubt by this time," snarled Mr. Parkinson, dashing his hand upon the mantelpiece against which he was leaning, "he is safe across the Channel, with our plunder in his trunk."

"Do you think he has carried off much?" asked Sir Canoeck Chase.

"Everything that he could lay his hands on," replied Parkinson.

Mr. Dolobole uttered a loud groan and buried his dirty fingers in his stubby grey hair.

"When I say everything," said Parkinson, not heeding the interruption, "I mean everything that is at the same time valuable and portable. His rooms—I made an excuse to go up there to write a letter—are in much their usual state, and on inquiry at his stables, I found that his brogians and horses are still there; though you shall doubtless discover that they have been made away with for their full value. But, by what I learn from two or three brokers who were employed by him, he must have sold out every scrap he held in every company with which he was connected, and realised the lot."

"But if our dear Continent man muss den Palmet telegraphiren und hef ihm oute and send back," said Mr. Dolobole, nodding his head vehemently.

"Ah, to be sure!" said Lord Hallowbury, "one could send after him by the Blackie, don't you know? and that sort of thing."

"Do you imagine," said Mr. Parkinson, quietly, "that it would be polite in us to invite legal interference in our affairs? I will put it as definitely as possible, but don't you think that in any investigation which might take place, certain revelations might be made—as for instance, the allotment and manipulation of shares—which might do more amassing to the outside public than to ourselves? Don't you think we had better leave it to that outside public, who are pretty well certain to make a stir in the matter? Mr. Dolobole is one of the cleverest

of men, and would be the less scrupulous if provoked. Don't you think we had better leave him alone?"

"Certainly, most decidedly," said Sir Canoeck Chase, adding in muttered tones, as he looked across the table at Mr. Dolobole, "Dum stoupid foreigner!" With both of which sentiments the company assembled seemed generally to agree.

But Mr. Dolobole was not to be put down by clamour. "But of Fano," he cried, "you have told me nichts of Fano?"

"Mr. Fano left London three days ago," said Mr. Parkinson. "It was stated at the last board meeting that he required a few days' absence, and so far everything was regular. It was understood that he was going into the country on business connected with his marriage."

"Ach Gott! dat will now be durschgefallen," cried Mr. Dolobole. "Ven Fano had made die Penolden seiner frau, then could I my lost money have picked out of her fortune?"

"That's a contingency that is now scarcely likely to occur, Mr. Dolobole," said Parkinson.

"When Vane hears the news of the smash here, he will doubtless postpone his marriage until he has settled his affairs in such a way as to render Mrs. Bendixen's fortune unavailable to his creditors. I went to his rooms too, but I found he had not been back since he originally started. It is probable, therefore, that the principal assets were the relations between him and the chairman, our friend Mr. Dolobole kept him in ignorance of the impending smash."

When Philip Vane found that Sir Geoffrey Heriot, whom he had hitherto looked upon as likely to recover speedily from the attack made upon him, was actually dead, when the sudden thought shot through his brain that he was a murderer, the shock was too much for him, and as we have seen, he fell senseless, coming to himself only to find that his crime was shrewdly suspected by Dolobole, and to hear the few short bitter phrases in which his quondam accomplice severed the connection between them, and expressed his regret at the deed which had been committed. Raising himself on his arm, Vane made an impotent attempt to delay Mr. Dolobole's departure, to implore him to be silent and secret, and to listen to such feeble explanation as could be offered; but his voice failed him, and ere he could renew the effort, he heard the slamming of the door, and knew that he was alone.

Alone! and yet not alone. Rising to his feet, and staggering to a chair, Philip Vane saw before him the pallid cheeks and blood-stained features of the old man; saw the eyes closing, and the thin wiry figure slipping from his grasp; heard again the moan, the last sound he had heard in that accursed place. He tried to shut it all out from him, but it rose persistently before his view. He started from his seat, and attempted to proceed with the packing of his portmanteau, but found himself ever and anon pausing in the midst of his work, and recalling some incident or occurrence of the previous twenty-four hours. The mud on his trousers and boots, which Dolobole had noticed—he must have got that in crossing the plantation and the lawn. The lawn! He sprang up in guilty terror as he reflected that, with the coming morning light, the track of his footmarks across the lawn would be revealed. The boots and trousers must be destroyed; he would take them with him in his flight, and get rid of them on the first opportunity. In his flight! whither was that flight to be directed? His plans must be all changed now; the necessity for immediate escape was infinitely more urgent than it had been before, and the chances of obtaining funds less possible. He had relied on obtaining a temporary loan from Dolobole, but that, of course, was no longer to be thought of, and the funds which he had at command were barely sufficient for his immediate wants.

Nevertheless he must fly, and at once. The dawn light showed him that a new day had begun, before the end of which the murder would probably have been fully discussed, all evidence possible to bear upon it duly sifted, suspicion rightly or wrongly directed, and all the machinery of justice for the detection and the arrest of the criminal set in motion. The problem of his fate would be solved by the next day-dewy hours; if before they had passed away he could contrive—following the route indicated by Dolobole—to be well on the road to Bonicieux, with Spain, his ultimate destination, almost within his reach, he was saved. If not—What is that noise in his ears, as of tumbling table and smashing glass? There it all floats before him again; the book-covered walls, the large easy-chair, the shaded lamp, and the fragile figure with the blood-stained brow. Will it never cease to haunt him? It fades—it has gone.

Now he can bring himself once more to think what steps it is absolutely necessary he should take at once. Money; he must have money; and he must divert his mind of all this unreal fantasy, which from time to time surges up into it; he must shut out that horrible vision, which from time to time unmans him, and must make use of that common sense on which he has hitherto relied, and which has never yet failed him when anything of real importance was to be brought about. Money, where to get money for his immediate wants, that must be his first determination. Now if he were only confident of his power over Mrs. Bendixen, the course was clear. The time at which a clue to the identification of Sir Geoffrey's murderer might be given would depend entirely on Madge; and if he judged her rightly, he was tolerably safe in her hands. The recollection of the tie still existing between them; the remembrance of the old days, now seemed so far distant, and which he knew—for his wife had often told him so—were surrounded by a halo of romance in her eyes; more than all, as he thought her horror while denouncing the murderer, to have at the same time to proclaim him as her husband—for all these reasons her life would be saved. No one could tell whether in the hurry and confusion, she had recognised the man who had sprung past her and hurried her to the ground; and from what he knew of Madge, she was just the woman to avail herself of such a plea as this, and to leave the direction of suspicion to other circumstances. There was no other evidence which he need fear, save Madge. His visit to Springside was entirely unknown, and the fact of the proximate smashing-up of the Terra del Fuegos Mining Company, just announced to him by Dolobole, instead of being, as it would have been at any other time, a source of rage and lamentation, was regarded by him as rather advantageous than otherwise, inasmuch as it provided a sufficient excuse for the immediate flight which was absolutely necessary.

Now as to his power over Mrs. Bendixen. From what he knew, he believed it to be sufficient to induce her to brave all the frowns of society, and to run away with him, provided he had sufficient excuse for asking her to consent to such a step. That excuse again he finds in the ruin of the mine. If he could only see her it would not be difficult to tell her a previously planned story, in which he could represent himself as the victim of misplaced confidence in Dolobole, and by which her sympathies could be aroused. That once done, the rest was tolerably easy. He knew Mrs. Bendixen's jealous, passionate nature, and had little

doubt about being able to mould it to his will; but to achieve that result he must see her, and there was the difficulty. But one idea occurred to him. He must leave town at once by the very first train which would take him to Dover, and there was no reason why she should not come to him there, and give him an interview before he started for France. If he could induce her to do this, he relied upon himself for carrying out all that he desired.

He finished packing his portmanteau, in which he placed the trousers and boots which he had worn on the previous evening, and wrapping his dressing-gown round him, seated himself at the writing-table. Instantly, between him and the paper which he placed before him, rose the dead figure of the old man as he had just been seen in life, and it required an steady nerve to keep himself in the chair and steadily and doggedly go through his appointed task. Even then his writing was weak and trilling, and nothing like his ordinary firm round hand. He noticed this, but thought it not inconsistent with the anxiety under which he had explained to his correspondent he was suffering, and which induced him to implore her to come to Dover by the first train after the receipt of the note, and to meet him on the pier. When he had sealed this letter, he walked to the window and threw open the shutters. It was already morning; the outlines of the opposite houses stood out grey and dim in the early light, and the black London sparrows were twittering blithely on the covered way. He had ascertained that the first train for Dover left soon after six, and had made up his mind to go by that. One starting a little later, it is true, would have reached Dover sooner; but Vane's chief anxiety was to be out of London, and though he might linger on the road, he would be tolerably safe from recognition. Looking at his watch he found that he would not have too much time to get to the station; and after a little deliberation as to whether he should or should not enlist the services of the gate-porter to carry his portmanteau, he determined to do so, and walking out, roused that functionary from his slumbers, and brought him to the street. The man seemed half asleep, but brightened up sufficiently to drink a glass of spirits which Vane presented to him, and then bore off the portmanteau on his shoulders. The one which was making the Piccadilly pavement echo with its horse's feet was then secured, and in it Vane drove off to the railway.

When he arrived at the station he alighted from the cab, but before dismissing the driver he handed him the letter which he had written to Mrs. Bendixen, and giving a handsome gratuity, bade him take it at once to its address. He was hurrying into the booking-office, when he found the way temporarily blocked by a little procession of men, who were conveying huge bundles of newspapers from the ponderous red carts, in which they had hurried, to the starting point. The newspapers, it he had forgotten them, by this time the story of the murder must have arrived in town, and these newspapers were about to spread it broadcast through the country and the world; what was known about it, what was conjectured, it was all important that he should know, and yet he felt half afraid to satisfy himself.

He took his ticket, and made his way through the crowd of passengers—who were mostly of the poorer class, for the train was tardy and cheap—to the book-stall. The bundles of newspapers had already arrived there, and the smart young men behind the counter were opening and sorting them and slipping them down with refreshing vigour. An Vane approached, he saw one of those young men select two or three contents-placards from one of the bundles, and after shaking them out and perusing them himself, proceeded to hang them up in front of the counter. "Murder at Springside!" they were in large type, it ought Philip Vane's eyes instantly. He saw nothing else; the rest of the bill was a blank to him. "Murder at Springside!"—why were the letters printed in red, why—Steady! Now his head was reeling, and unless he could put more control over himself he was lost.

He steadied himself with an effort, walked to the stall and purchased a newspaper, which he placed in his pocket, and hurried to the train. There was no difficulty in securing a first-class carriage to himself, and hiding the guard lock the door, he threw himself into one of the furthest seats, and drawing his travelling cap over his eyes, buried his face in the upturned collar of his coat, and did not move until the train was fairly in motion; then he took the paper from his pocket, shook it open with trembling hands, and soon read as follows:

"Murder at Springside (by telegraph).—Sir Geoffrey Heriot, K.C.B., was murdered last night at his residence, Whiterock, near this city. The person apprehended and charged with the commission of the crime is a discarded son of the deceased gentleman, who, it is stated, has been heard to vow vengeance on his father. Circumstantial evidence against him is very strong. Greatest excitement prevails in the city and the neighbourhood."

"My luck again!" cried Vane, bringing his hand down upon the arm of the carriage. "The arrest of this man gives me another twenty-four hours to the good, and when I have once seen Esther, and arranged with her to join me abroad, I may stomp my fingers at them." The person apprehended and charged with the commission of the crime? by Jove, then, Madge must be loyal to me after all, or she would have denounced me at once, and never have allowed this man—whoever he may be—to be taken into custody."

He threw the paper down, and for the rest of the journey remained buried in thought. The train lolled along, stopping at every little station, where porters came up and roned unobtrusively, where Jolly Kentish yeomen, and red-checked Kentish lasses, looked in through the window at the solitary traveller, muffled in his wraps, who never looked up or took heed of aught that was passing around him. Now Folkestone, and then glimpses of the sea, the sun a great red globe of fire, shining down upon it. Now Dover, and Philip Vane has his portmanteau taken to the cloak-room; for he has been reflecting during the journey, and decided, as he cannot cross over till the night boat, and as it is essential that he should not be seen at the Lord Wuxton, or any other of the places in the town where he is known, he must loiter about until the time for his interview with Mrs. Bendixen on the pier, and afterwards get some refreshment at a third-rate tavern.

Three hours at least must elapse before Mrs. Bendixen could arrive at Dover, even if she rose immediately on the receipt of her letter, and was started by the next train; three long hours to be got through somehow. Under such circumstances he could have employed them well enough; he could have found friends staying at the hotels, could have watched the arrival and departure of the boats, or amused himself in a thousand ways. But now he must keep out of the chance of observation, and notwithstanding the comparative security which he felt since reading the newspaper paragraph, that horrible scene kept ever rising before his mind. He walked out to River—a pretty little village in the neighbourhood, which he recollected having visited with a pleasant party years before. Jack into Dover, and on to the heights, whence