CHARLIE STUART

AND HIS SISTER.

BY MRS. MAY AGNES FLEMING.

CHAPTER VI .- CONTINUED.

Which he should have been undressed and tucked away for the night half an hour ago, bless him, she remarked; " but I could not make up my mind to face my lady after that row. Poor thing! It does seem hard how she can't be mistress in her own house. It is a pity Sir Victor can't turn Turk and marry 'em both, since he can't abear to part with neither.'

Mrs. Pool made her exit and wended her way to the nursery. She tapped at the door —there was no reply—she opened it and went

in—my lady has quitted it, no doubt.

No—to her surprise my lady was still there.

The window still stood wide open, the white, piercing moonlight streamed in. An armchair stood near this window, and lying back in this arm-chair was my lady, fast asleep.

Fast asleep. Jane Pool tiptoed over to

She was pale as the moonlight make sure. She was pale as the moonlight itself. Her lips quivered as she slept like the lips of a hurt child, her eyelashes were yet wet with tears. Sitting there alone she

had cried herself to sleep.
"Poor thing!" Jane Pool said again. She was so young, so pretty, so gentle, that all the household loved her. "Poor dear thing! I say it's a burning shame for Sir Victor, so fond as he is of her too, to let Miss Inez torment her. I wouldn't stand her hairs and her 'aughtiness, her temper and her tongue; no, not to be ten baronets' ladies, ten times hover ! "

In his pretty blue silk, white lace, and carved rosewood nest, Master Victor lay still, sleeping also. Mrs Pool softly folded a shawl around her lady's shoulders, lifted babe without awakening him, and stole softly out. The night nursery was an upper room. Jane Pool carried him up, disrobed him, fed him, and tucked him up for the night. He fell asleep almost instantly. She summoned the under nurse-maid to remain with him, and went back to the lower regions. Half an hour had passed since she left; it struck the half hour after eight as she descended the stairs. "I'm sore afraid my lady will catch cold

ought to go in and wake her." While she stood hesitating before it, the door opened suddenly and Miss Catheron came out. She was very pale. Jane Pool was struck by it, and the scarlet shawl she wore, twisted around her, made her face look

sleeping in the night air. I do think now I

almost ghastly in the lamplight. "You here?" she said, in her haughty way. "What do you want; where is baby?" "Baby's asleep, miss, for the night," Jane answered, with a stiff little curtsey; "and what I'm here for, is to wake my lady. Sleep-

But perhaps she is awake." "You will let my lady alone," said Miss Catheron sharply, "and attend to your nur-sery. She is asleep still. It is not your place to disturb her. Go!"
"Drat her!" Nurse Pool exclaimed inward-

ing in a draught cannot be good for anybody.

ly, obeying, however; "she's that 'aughty and that stuck up, that she thinks we're the dirt under her feet. I only hope she'll be sent packing to-morrow, but I has my doubts. Sir Victor's afraid of her—anybody can see

that with half an eye."

She descended to the servants' regions again, and encountered Ellen, Lady Catheron's smart maid, sociably drinking tea with the housekeeper. And once more into their attentive ears she poured forth this addends to

her previous narrative. "What was Miss Inez doing in there?" demanded the maid; "no good, I'll be bound. She hates my lady like poison; Sir Victor jilted her, you know, and she's in love with him yet. My lady shall be woke up in spite of her; she'd like her to get her death in the out into the night. night air, I dare say. I've an easy misses and a good place, and I mean to keep 'em. I ain't afraid of Miss Inez's black eyes and face. sharp tongue; I'll go and wake my lady

She finished her tea and left. She reached the nursery door, and rapped as Nurse Pool had done. There was no reply. She turned the handle softly and went in.

The large, crystal, clear, moon was high in the sky now; its chill brightness filled the room. The arm-chair still stood under the window; the small figure of my lady still lay motionless in it.

"My lady," Ellen said gently, advancing,

4: please wake up." There was no reply, no stir. She bent

closer over her. "Please my lady, wake up; I'm afraid

you'll catch your death-" The words ended in a shrick that rang through the house from end to endwoman's shrill, ear-splitting shrick. She had laid her hand upon my lady's bosom to arouse her; she snatched it away and sprang back in horror. Asleep! Yes, the sleep that knows no waking, Sir Victor Catheron's pretty young wife lay there in the moonlight-

Dead 1 There is blood on the white dress, blood on the blue shawl, blood on Ellen's hand, blood trickling on a small red stream from under the left breast. Ethel, Lady Catheron, lies there before her in the moonlight stone dead-foully murdered.

dead.

CHAPTER VII.

IN THE TWILIGHT.

She stands for a moment paralyzed-struck dumb by a horror too great for word or cry. Then she rushes to the door, along the passages into the midst of the startled household like a mad creature, shricking that one most awful word, " murder!"

They flock around her, they catch hold of her, and keep her still by main force. They ask her questions, but she only screams still that ghastly word, " Murder !"

"Who is murdered? Where-what do you mean? Good Lord! young woman," cries Mr. Hooper, the butler, giving her a shake, "do come out of these hysterics if you can, and speak! Who's murdered?"

"My lady! Oh, my lady! my lady! my

lady !" She is like a creature distraught. There is blood on her right hand; she sees it, and with a gasping cry at the grisly sight, and before they know what she is about, she falls down in a faint in their midst.

They lift her up; they look into one another's pale faces.

"My lady!' they repeat, in an awe-struck whisper. "Murdered!"

"Here!" cries Mr. Hooper, his dignity coming to his aid, "let us investigate this here. Lay this young woman flat on her back on the floor, sprinkle her with water, figure between her and them.
and let her come to. I'm going to find out "Miss Inez," he says, "will you please give and let her come to. I'm going to find out What she means."

They lay poor Ellen stiffly out as directed, some one dashing water into her face; then in a body, with Mr. Hooper at their head, they march off to investigate.

"Sue was in the day-nursery," Nurse Pool suggests in a whisper, and to the day-nursery

On the threshold for a second or two they in a cold, hard voice; the murderer must be halt, their courage failing. But there is no- | found."

thing very terrilying. Only the solemn moonlight, only the motionless little figure in the arm-chair. And yet a great awe holds them back. Does death—does murder stand guilty in their midst?

"Let us go in, in the name of Providence." says Mr. Hooper, a tremble in his voice; " it -can't be what she says. O, good Lc ad, no l"

They go forward on tiptoe, as if afra id of awakening that quiet sleeper whom on ly the last trump will ever wake now. The y bend over her, holding their breath. Yes, there it is-the blood that is soaking her d rees, dripping horribly on the carpet--- ooz ang slowly from that cruel wound.

A gasping inarticulate sort of grean comes heavily from every lip. Old Hooper takes her wrist between his shakin'g fingers. stilled forever, already, with the awful chill of death. In the crystal light of the meon till sweet young face had rever looked fairer, calmer, more peaceful than now. The old butler straightens himself up, ash-

"It's too true," he says, with a sort of sob. G Lord have mercy on us—it's too true! She's dead! She's murdered!"

He drops the wrist he holds; the little jewelled, dead hand falls limp and heavy. He puts his own hands over his face and sobs aloud.

"Who will tell Sir Victor? O my master! my dear young master!"

No one speaks—a spell of great horror has fallen upon them. Murdered in their midst, in their peaceful household—they cannot comprehend it. At last-"Where is Miss Catheron?" asks a sombre

voice. No one knows who speaks; no one seems to care; no one dare reply. "Where is Inez Catheron?" the voice says

again. Something in the tone, something in the ghastly silence that follows seems to arouse the butler. Since his tenth year he has been in the service of the Catherons-his father before him was butler in this house. Their "Who was that?" he demands "Of

course Miss Inez knows nothing of this." No one had accused her, but he is unconsciously defending her already. "She must be told at once," he says. "I'll

go and tell her myself. Edwards, draw the curtains, will you, and light the candles." He leaves the room. The valet mechanically does as he is bid-the curtains are drawn, the waxlights illumine the apartment. No one else stirs. The soft, abundant light falls down upon that tranquil, marble face—

upon that most awful stain of blood. The butler goes straight up to his lady's room. Wayward, passionate, proud Miss Inez may be, but she is very dear do him. He has carried her in his arms many a time, a little laughing, black-eyed child. A vague, stck-

ening fear fills him now. "She hated my lady, he thinks, in a dazed, helpless sort of way: "everybody knows that. What will she say when she hears

He knocks; there is no reply. He knocks again and calls huskily;
"Miss Inez are you there? For the dear

Lord's sake open the door!" "Come in !" a voice answers. He cannot tell whether it is Miss Inez or

not. He opens the door and enters. This room is unlit too-the shine of the moon fil's it as it fills that other room below. Here too a solitary figure sits, crouches rather near the window in a strange, distorted attitude of pain. He knows the following black Oh, poor lady-poor lady! to think that the hair, the scarlet wrap-he cannot see her face she does not look round. " Miss Inez !"-his voice shakes-', I bring

won bad news, awful news. Don't be shocked -hut-a murder has been done." There is no answer. If she hears him she

does not heed. She just sits still and looks "Miss Inez! you hear me?"

He comes a little nearer—he tries to see her

" You hear me?" he repeats. " l hear you."

The words drop like ice from her lips. One hand is clutching the arm of her chair—her wide-open black eyes never turn from the night-scene.

" My lady is dead-cruelly murdered. O, Miss Inez! do you hear?-murdered! What is to be done?

She does not answer. Her lips move, but no word comes. An awful fear begins to fill the faithful servant's heart. " Miss Inez!" he cries out, " you must come

they are waiting for you below. There is no one here but you-Sir Victor is away. Sir His voice breaks; he takes out his hand-

kerchief and sobs like a child. " My dear young master! My dear young master | He loved the very ground she walked on. Oh, who is to tell him this?"

She rises slowly now, like one who is cramped, and stiff, and cold. She looks at the old man. In her eyes there is a blind, dazed sort of horror-on her face there is a ghastliness no words can describe.

"Who is to tell Sir Victor?" the butler repeats. It will kill him-the horror of it. So pretty and so young—so sweet and so good. Oh, how could they do it-how could they do it?"

She tries to speak once more—it seems as though her white lips cannot shape the words. Old Hooper looks up at her piteous-

"Tell us what is to be done, Miss Inez," he

implores ; " you are mistress here now." She shrinks as if he had struck her. "Shall we send for Sir Victor first?"

"Yes," she says, in a sort of whisper, "send for Sir Victor first.' The voice in which she speaks is not the voice of Inez Catheron. The butler looks at

her, that great fear in his eyes. "You haven't seen her, Miss Inez," he says.
"It is a fearful sight—but—will you come

down?" He almost dreads a refusal, but she does not refuse.

"I will go down," she answers, and turns at once to go. The servants stand huddled together in the

centre of the room. It lies there, in its dreadful quiet, before them. Every eye turns darkly upon Miss Catheron as she comes in. She never sees them. She advances like a

sleep-walker, that dazed, dumb horror still in her eyes, the whiteness of death on her face. stupidly at the speaker. She walks over and looks down upon the dead mistress of Catheron Royals. No change comes over ker—she softens neither into pity nor tears. So long she stands there, frigid, she looks, so threatening are the eyes that watch her, that Hooper interposes his portly

your orders? Shall I send for Sir Victor at

once, or-" "Yes, send for Sir Victor at once." She arouses herself to say it. " And I think you had better send to Chesholm for a doctor and -and the police."

"The police!" "A murder has been committed," she says,

Something of her old calm, stately haughness returns as she speaks.

"This room must be cleared. Let on one touch her," she shudders and looks away, until Sir Victor comes. Ellen, Pool, Hooper, you three had better remain to watch. Edwards, mount the fastest horse in the sta bles, and ride to Powyss-place for your life." "Yes, miss," Edwards answers, in a lov voice; and please, miss, am I to tell Sir Vic

tor? She hesitates a moment—her face changes her voice shakes a little for the first time.

Edwards leaves the room. She turns to another of the men servants: "You will ride to Chesholm and feich Dr. Dane. On your way stop at the police station and apprize them. The rest of you, go. Jane Pool, where is the baby?"

"Yes," she answers faintly, "tell him."

"Upstairs in the night nursery," Jane Pool answers suitenly.

"And crying, too ... I hear him. Hannah," to the under nurse, "go up and remain with him. I am going to my own room. When, she pauses a second and speaks with an effort when Sir Victor comes, you will receive your further orders from him. I can do no thing more."

She left the room. Jane Pool looked ominously after her. " No," she said, between her set lips; " you

have done enough.' "Ob, Jane, hush!" Ellen whispers in ter-

There has still been no direct accusation, but they understand each other perfectly. "When the time comes to speak, you'll see whether I'll bush," retorts Jane. "What was she doing in this room fifteen minutes before you found my lady dead? Why wouldn't she let me in? Why did she tell me a lie! What made her say my lady was still asleep? murdered here, while we were all enjoying ourselves below. And if I hadn't took away the baby, it's my opinion it would have

"Ob, Jane!" "Ob, Jane,' as much as you please, it's the gospel truth. Them that killed the mother hated the child. When the time comes I'll speak, if she was twice the lady she is, Ellen ?"

heen—"

is the dagger ?"

"Lord!" Ellen cried with a nervous jump. "don't speak so jerky, Mrs. Pool. You make my blood a mask of ica." "What is it?" "Ellen," Jane Pool said, solemnly, "where

"What dagger?" "The furrin dagger with the gold handle and the big ruby set in it, that my lady used as a paper knife. I'll take my oath I saw it lying on the table there, shining in the moonlight, when I took away baby. Where is it

now? The dagger the nurse spoke of, was a curious Eastern knife, that had belonged to Sir Victor's mother. It had a long keen steel blade, a slim handle of wrought gold set with a large ruby. Sir Victor's wife had a fancy to the pretty Syrian toy, and converted it into a paper knife.

"I saw it on that there table when I took away baby," Jane said compressing her lips; It would do it. Where is it now? "Gone," Ellen answered. "O, Jane, do

vou think-" "She has been stabbed, you see, right through the heart, and there isn't much blood. That devilish little glittering knife has done the deed. There it was ready for its work, as if Satan himself had left it handy.

toy she used to play with should one day take her life !" While they whispered in the death room, up in her chamber, while the hours of the dreary night wore on, Inez Catheron sat crouched in a heap, as Hooper had found her, her face hidden in her hands. Two hours had passed, an awful silence filled the whole house while she sat there and never stirred. As der of horses hoofe on the avenue below came to her dulied ears. A great shudder shook her from head to foot—she lifted her haggard face. The lull before the storm was over-

CHAPTER VIII. IN THE DARWNESS.

Half an hour's rapid gallop had brought Ed-

Sir Victor Catheron had come.

wards, the valet, to Powyss-place. The stately mansion, park, lawn, and terraces, lay bathed in the silvery shower of moonlight. From the upper windows, where the sick man lay, lights streamed; all the rest of the house was in deep shadow.

In one of those dimly lighted rooms Sir Victor Catheron lay upon a lounge fast asleep. He had remained for about two hours by the sick man's bedside; then, persuaded by his aunt, had gone to lie down in an inner apartment.

"You look pale and ill yourself," she said tenderly; " lie down and rest for a little. If I need you. I will call you at once."

He had obeyed and had dropped off into a heavy sleep. A dull oppression of heart and soul beset him; he had no mind to slumber -it had come upon him unawares. He was awakened suddenly by some one calling his name.
"Victor! Victor!" the voice called,

"awake !"

He sat up with a bewildered face. Was that his aunt's voice, so hoarse, so strange! Was this his aunt with that white, horroretruck face?

"Victor!" she cried, the words a very wail.

Oh, my boy! my boy! how shall I ever tell you? Oh, why did I send for you this dreadful night? Ethel "---her voice choked. He rose to his feet, staring at her blankly.

"Ethel!" he repeated. "E hel—"
She covered her face with her hands and burst into a hysterical outbreak of tears. Edwards, standing behind her in the doorway made a step forward.

"Tell him, Edwards," said Lady Helena. "I cannot. It seems too horrible to tell or to believe. Oh, my poor Victor! my poor, poor Edwards came forward reluctantly, with a

very pale, scared face. "It's dreadful news, Sir Victor-I don't know how to tell you, but my lady, I'm afraid

she-she's dead." " Dead !" " Dead " He repeated the word dully, staring almost

Dead, Sir Victor!" the two repeated solemply. "I'm sore afraid, murdered!" There was a sudden, headlong rush from the room; no other reply. Like a flash Sir Victor passed them both. They heard him clear the stairs, rush along the lower hall, and out of the house. The next instant the valet

and Lady Helena were in pursuit. He was mounted on Edwards' horse and dashing furiously away, before they reached the court yard. They called to him-he neither heard nor heeded. He dashed his spurred heel into the horse's side and flew out of

voice of anguish, "what does it matter sight like the wind. "Follow him!" Lady Helena cried. breathlessly to the gloom. "Overtake him, for the love of Heaven! Oh, who can have done this awful deed? Edwards, you are sure by the couch. He drew down the white satin spect? He did come—there was a quarrel. As the dusk falls, Lady Helena, passift of

there is no mistake? It seems too unnatural too impossible to believe."

"There is no mistake, my lady," the man answered, sadly. "I saw her myself, the blood flowing where they had stabbed her, cold and dead." Lady Helena wrung her bands and turned

away.

"Ride for your life after your master!" she
"Ride for your life after your master!" she said. "I will follow you as soon as I can." She went back to her husband's side. He was no worse-he seemed, if anything, better. She might leave him in her housekeeper's charge until morning.

She ordered the carriage and rapidly changed her dress. It was about one o'clock in the morning when she reached Catheron Royals. The tall turrets were silvered in the moonlight, the windows sparkled in the crystal light. The sweet beauty and peace of the September night lay like a benediction over the earth. And, amid all the silence and sweetness, a foul, a most horrible murder had been done.

She encountered Mrs. Marsh, the housekeeper in the hall, her face pale, her eyes red with weeping. Some dim hope that up to this time had upheld her, that after all, there might be a mistake, died out then. "Oh, Marsh," she said, piteously, "is it

true?" Mrs. Marsh's answer was a fresh burst of tears. Like all the rest of the household, the gentle ways, the sweet face, and soft voice of Sir Victor's wife had won her heart from the

first. "It is too true my lady-the Lord have mercy upon us all. It seems too horrid for belief, but it is true. As she lay asleep there, four hours ago, in her own house, surrounded by her own servants, some monster in human form stabbed her through the heart-through the heart, my lady-Dr. Dane says one blow Asleep. Oh, poor soul, to think of her being | did it, and that death must have been instantaneous. So young, so sweet, and so lovely. Oh, how could they do it-how could anyone do it."

Mrs. Marsh's sobs grew hysterical. Lady

Helena's own tears were flowing. "I feel as though I were guilty in some way myselt," the housekeeper went on. " If we had only woke her up, or fastened the window, or anything! I know the monster whoever he was, got in through the window. And, oh, my lady!"-Mrs. Marsh wiped her eyes suddenly, and lowered her voice to an excited whisper—"I wish you would speak to Jane Pool, the nurse. She doesn't dare say anything out openly, but the looks she gives, and the hints she drops, are almost worse than the murder itself. You can see as clear as day that she suspects-Miss Inez."

"Marsh!" Great Heaven! Lady Helena cried, recoiling in horror. "Miss Inez!" "Oh, my lady, I don't say it -I don't think it-Heaven forbid-it's only that wicked, spiteful nurse, Pool. She hates Miss Inezshe has hated her from the first-and she loved my lady. Ah! who could help being tond of her-poor, lovely young lady !-with a sweet smile and pleasant word for every one in the house? And you know Miss Inez's high, haughty way. Jane Pool hates her, and will do her mischief it she can. A word from you might check her. No one knows the harm a babbling tongue may do.

Lady Helena drew herself up proudly." "I shall not say one word to her, Marsh Jane Pool can do my niece no harm. The bare repetition of it is an insult. Miss Catheron-that I should have to say such a thing !—is above suspicion."

"My lady, I believe it; still, if you would only speak to her. You don't know all. She saw Miss Inez coming out of the nursery a quarter of an hour before we found Lady Catheron dead. She wished to enter, and Miss Inez ordered her away. She has been talking to the police, and I saw that inspector Darwin watching Miss Inez in a way that made my blood run cold."

But Lady Helena waived the topic away haughtily. "Be silent, Marsh! I will not hear another

word of this—it is too horrible! Miss Inez?" "In her own room, my lady. And-I beg your pardon for alluding to it again-but I think she suspects. She seemed dazedlike. stunefied at first; she is more like herself now. Will you not go in and see her, poor soul, before you go to Miss Inez? Ob, my lady, my lady! it breaks my heart when

look at her-when I look at Sir Victor." For a moment Lady Helena shrank. "Sir Victor is in there-with her?" she fal-

"Yes, my lady-like a man all struck stupid. It frightens me to see him. If he would only speak, or cry, or fly out against the murderer—but he just sits there as if turn-

ing to stone."

His aunt covered her face for an instant with both hands, heart-sick with all these horrors; then she looked up and moved for-

"Where is she?" she asked-"in which room ?"

" In the white drawing-room, my lady; the doctors brought her there. Sir Victor is with her, alone.

Lady Helena slowly advanced. At the door she paused a moment to nerve herself for what she must see; then she turned the handle and went in.

It was one of the stateliest rooms in the house-all white and gold, and dimly lit now by wax tapers. Lying on one of the white velvet sofas she saw a rigid figure, over which a white covering was drawn; but the ing in the waxlights as beautiful as ever in

He sat beside his dead wife-almost motionless, almost as cold, almost as white. He loved her with a love that was akin to idolatry—he had grudged that the eyes of man should rest on his treasure-and now he sat beside her-dead.

If he heard the door open, he neither moved nor stirred. He never once looked up as his aunt came forward; his eyes were riveted upon the ineffably calm face with a vacant, sightless sort of stare that chilled her blood. voice; " Victor, speak to me. For pity's sake

The dull, blinded eyes looked up at her, full of infinite, unutterable despair. "She is dead," he said, in a slow, dragging sort of voic—"dead! And last night I left her well and happy-left her to be murdered _to-be-murdered"

don't look like that!"

The slow words fell heavily from his lipshis eyes went back to her face, his dulled mind seemed lapsing into his stupified trance of quiet. More and more alarmed, his aunt | true?—that Juan is back—that he has been gazed at him. Had the death of his wife turned bis brain?

Victor!" she exclaimed, almost angrily, "you must rouse yourself, you must not stay here. Be a man! Wake up. Your wife has been murdered. Go and find her murderer." "Her murderer," he replied, in the same slow tone of unnatural quiet; "her murderer it seems strange, Aunt Helena, doesen't it, that any one could murder her? I must find her murderer,' Oh," he cried, suddenly, in a

about her murderer! It won't bring her back to life. She is dead, I tell you-dead? He flung himself off his chair, on his knees counterpane, and pointed to that one dark,

small stab on the left side. "Look!" he said, in a shrill, wailing voice, through the heart—through the heart! She did not suffer the doctors say that Through the heart as she slept. Ob, my love, my darling, my wife!"

He kissed the wound-he kissed the hands, the face, the hair. Then with a long, low moan of utter desolation, he drew back the covering and buried his face in it. "Leave me alone," he said, despairingly;

I will not go-I will never go from her, again. She was mine in life - mine only. Juan Catheron lied; she is mine in death. My wife—my Ethel!"

He started up as suddenly as he had flung himself down, his ghastly face flaming dark red. "Leave me alone, I tell you! Why do you

sll come here? I will not go! Leave me, I command you-I am master here!" She shrank from him in absolute physical terror. Never over-strong at any time, her worst fears were indeed true-the shock of his wifa's tragic death was turning Sir Vic-

tor's brain. There was nothing to be done-

nothing to be said—he must be obeyed—must be soothed. "Dear Victor," she said, "I will go. Don't the nursery with the baby, my lady peaceful-be hard with poor Aunt Helena. There is ly asleep in her chair—the Eastern pointed on the table. At half-past eight, returning to am. Only tell me this before I leave youwe not send for her father and

mother? "No," he answered, in the same fierce tone; they can't bring her back to life-no one can now. I don't want them. I want nobody. Ethel is mine, I tell you-mine alone!

He motioned her imperiously to leave him -a light in his eyes--a flush on his face there was no mistaking. She went at once. How was it all to end she wondered, more and more sick at heart---this mysterious murder, this suspicion against Inez, this dreadful overthrow of her nephew's mind?

"May Heaven help us!" she cried. What have we done that this awful trouble should come upon us!" "Aunt Helena"

and stony face.
"I have been waiting for you—they told

me you were there." She pointed with a shudder to the door. "What are we to do?" "Don't ask me," Lady Helena answered, helplessly. "I don't know. I feel stunned and stupid with all these horrors." "The police are here," Miss Catheron went

suppose they will hold an inquest to-mor-Her aunt looked at her in surprise. The calm, cold tone of her voice grated on her sick

on, "and the coroner has been apprised. I

heart. "Have you seen him?" she asked almost in a whisper. "Inez-I fear-I fear it is turning his brain."

Miss Catheron's short scornful upper lip curled with the old look of contempt. "The Catheron brain was never noted for its strength. I shall not be surprised at all. Poor wretch!" She turned and looked out into the darkness. "It does seem hard on

"Who can have done it?" The question on every lip rose to Lady Helena's, but somehow she could not utter it. Did Inez know of the dark, sinister suspicion against herself! Could she know and be calm like this?

"I forgot to ask for Uncle Godfrey," Inez's

him.

quiet voice said again. "Of course he is better, or even at such a time as this you would not be here?" "He is better Inez," she broke out desperately. "Who can have done this! She had

not an enemy in the world. Is -is there any one suspected?" "There is," Inez answered, turning from he window and facing her aunt vants suspect me.

"Inez?" "Their case isn't a bad one as they make it out," pursued Miss Catheron coolly. There was id blood between us. It is of no use denying it. I hated her with my whole heart. I was the last person seen coming out of the room, fifteen minutes before they found her dead. Jane Pool says I refused to let her go in-perhaps I did. It is quite likely. About an hour previouslý we had a violent quarrel. The ubiquitous Mrs. Pool overheard that also. You see her case is rather a strong one."

"But-Inez-!" "I chanced to overhear all this," still went on Miss Catheron, quietly, but with set lips and gleaming eyes. Jane Pool was holding forth to the inspector of police. I walked up to them, and they both slunk away like beaten curs. Orders have been issued that no one is to leave the house. To-morrow these facts are to be placed before the coroner's jury. If they find me gullty -- don't cry, Aunt Helena-I shall be sorry for you-sorry I have disgraced a good old name. For the rest, it doesn't much matter what becomes of

such a woman as I am." She turned again to the window and looked out into the darkness. There was a desperate bitterness in her tone that Lady

Helena could not understand. "Good Heaven!" she burst forth, "one would think you were all in a conspiracy to drive me mad. It doesn't matter what begolden hair and the fair, marble face gleam. comes of you, doesn't it? I tell you if this last, worst misery falls upon us, it will kill me on the spot; just that." The girl signed drearily.

"Kill you, Aunt Helena," she repeated mournfully. "No—we don't any of us die so easily. Don't be afraid-I am not likely to talk in this way before any one but you. am only telling you the truth. They will have the inquest, and what Jane Pool can say against me will be said. Do you think Victor will be able to appear?"

"I don't think Victor is in a condition to appear at an inquest or anywhere else. Ab, "Victor !" she cried out, in a frightened | poor boy! he loved her so dearly, it's enough to shake the mind of a stronger man." But Miss Catheron was dead silent-it was

evident her feelings here were as bitter as ever-that even the tragic death of her rival had not softened her.
"He will survive it," she answered, in the same half contemptuous tone. "Men have died and worms have eaten them, but not for

·love." "Inez," said her aunt, suddenly coming a step nearer, "a rumor has reached me-is it here?"

out turning round; he has been here. He was here on the night Lady Catheron first "There is another rumor affoat, that there was a violent quarrel on that occasion-that he claimed to be an old lover of Ethel's, poor

"It is quite true," her niece answered, with-

then it is said he has been seen more than once prowling about the grounds. For everybody's sake I hope it is not true." Inez faced round suddenly-almost flercely. "And what if I say it is true in every re-

child, and that Victor turned him out. Since

and Victor ordered bim out. Since then has been here-prowling as you call it-try ing to see me, trying to force me to give hir money. I was flinty as usual, and would give him none. Where is the crime in all that " Has he gone?" was Lady Helena's

sporse. "I believe so—I hope so. He has n thing to stay for. Of course he has gone." "I am glad of that at least, And now, as it seems I can do nothing more at present, I will return home. Watch Victor, Inez-he needs it, believe me. I will return at the earliest possible moment to morrow.

So, in the chill gray of the fast-coming morning, Lady Helena, very heavy-hearted, returned to Powyss-place and her sick husband's bedside.

Meantime matters were really beginning to look dark for Miss Catheron. The superintendent of the district, Mr. Ferrick, was filling his note-book with very ominous information. She had loved Sir Victor, she had hated Sir Victor's wife--they had led a catand-dog life from the first--an hour before the murder they had had a violent quarrel-Lady Catheron had threatened to make her husband turn her out of the house on the morrow. At eight o'clock, Jane Pool had left arouse my lady, she had encountered Miss Inez coming out of the nursery, and Miss Inez had ordered her sharply away, telling her my lady was still asleep. A quarter of nine, Ellen the maid, going to her room, found my lady stone dead, stabbed through the heart. Miss Inez, when summoned by Hooper, is ghastly pale at first, and hardly seems to know what she is doing or saying.

A very pretty case of tragedy in high life, Superintendent Ferrick thinks, pursing up his lips with professional zest, and not the first murder jealousy has made fine ladies commit, either. Now, if that Turkish dagger

would only turn up. Two policemen are sent quietly in search of it through the grounds. It isn't likely they'll find it, still it will do no harm to try. He finds out which are Miss Catheron's She looked round with a little cry, all her nerves trembling and unstrung. Inez stood before her—Inez, with dark, resolute eyes, ings everywhere, he brings up presently in the stables, and finds them untenanted, save by one lad, who sits solitary among the

He is rather a dull-looking youth, with a florid, vacant face at most times, but looking dazed and anxious just now. "Something on his mind," thinks the superintendent, and site sociably down on a box beside him at once. "Now, my man," Mr. Ferrick says, pleas-

Out with it—every little's a help in a case like this." The lad his name is Jimmy—does not need pressing—his secret has been weighing uneasily upon him for the last hour or more ever since he heard of the murder, in fact, and he pours his revelation into the superintend

ent's eager ear. His revelation is this:

antly, "and what is it that's troubling you?

Last evening, just about dusk, strolling by chance in the direction of the Laurel walk he heard voices raised and angry in the walk —the voices of a man and a woman. He had peeped through the branches and seen my lady and a very tall man. No, it wasn't Sir Victor-it was a much bigger man, with long black curling hair. Didn't see his face. It was dark in there among the trees. Wasn't sure, but it struck him it might be the tall, black-visaged man who came the first night Sir Victor brought home my lady, and who had been seen skulking about the park once or twice since. Had heard a whisper that the man was Miss Inex's brother-didu't knew himself. All he did know was, that my lady and a man were quarrelling on the evening of the murder in the Laurel walk. What were they quarrelling about? Well, he couldn't catch their talk very well—it was about money he thought. The man wanted money and iewels and my lady He threatened to do something or tell something; then she threatened to have him put in Chesholm jail if he did. He, Jimmy, though full of curiosity, was afraid the man would spring out and catch him, and so at that juncture he came away. There! that was all; it it did the gentleman any good, he was welcome to it.

complicated matters beautifully. Five min utes ago the case looked dark as night for Miss Catheron-here was a rift in her sky Who was this man-was it Miss Catheron scapegrace brother? Jimmy could tell him nothing more. "If you wants Inez's brother, said Jimmy, "you go to old Hooper. He knows. All I know is, that they say he was an uncommon bad lot; but old Hooper, he knowed him ever since he was a young 'un and lived here. If old Hooper says he wasn't here the night Sir Victor brought my lady hems don't you believe him-he was, and he's been seen off and on in the grounds since. The women folks in the servants' hall, they say a how he must have been an old sweetheart my lady's. You go to old Hooper and wo rie it out of him."

It did the gentleman a world of good-

Mr. Superintendent Ferrick went. How artfully he began his work, how delicately and skilfully he "pumped" old Hooper dy no words can tell. Mr. Juan Catheron was an "uncommon bad lot," he had come and forced an entrance into the dining-room the night of Lady Catheron's arrival-there had been a quarrel, and he had been compelled to leave. Bit by bit this was drawn from Mr. Hooper. Since then, Jackson, the head groom, and Edwards, the valet, had seen him hovering about the grounds watching the Mr. Ferrick ponders these things in

heart, and is still. This vagabond, Juan Ca theron, follows my lady to Catheron Royals is expelled, haunts the grounds, and a my answering to his description is discovered quarrelling with my lady, demanding money etc, two or three hours before the murds The window of the room in which she take that fatal sleep opens on the lawn; any out may enter who sees fit. No one is about The Oriental dagger lies convenient to his hand on the table. "Here, now," says Mr Ferrick to Mr. Ferrick, with a reflective frown, "which is guilty—the brother or ele-

He goes and gives an order to one of h men, and the man starts in search of Mu Juan Catheron. Mr. Catheron must be found, though they summon the detectives Scotland Yard to aid them in the r search.

The dull hours went on—the new day, sur ny and bright, is with them. The whit drawing-room is darkened—the master of Ca theron Royals sits there alone with his dead And presently the coroner comes, and talk with the superintendent, and they enter softly and look at the murdered lady. The corone departs again—a jury is summoned, and the inquest is fixed to begin at noon next day is the " Mitre " tavern at Chesholm.

Lady Helena returns and goes at once her nephew. Inez, in spite of her injunction has never been near him once. He sits the still, as she left him many hours ago; he h never stirred or spoken since, left to bimse he is almost spathetic in his quiet—he rous into fury, when they strive to take him aw