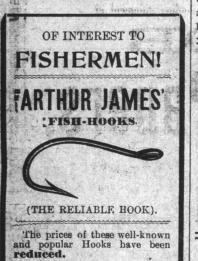


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CHAPTER XXIII. (Continued.)

HE made her way to the meadows at the back of the cottage, thinking of Geoffrey as she sauntered along, and how anxisauntered along, and how anxious and worried he would be if he knew that she had lost all her money and was not at school, in accordance with his plans for her future; and she enough money to take her back to him. Let him think her suddenly grown heartless, as he had done before, rather than that he should worry about her. Poor, lonely Geoff! He you are? had meant it for the best; but, oh, him-happy and con'ented indeed! apparition speak.

BOVRI asty gravies; adds flavour and strength to stews, hashes, BOVRIL is the true economist in the Kitchen.

She came to the end of the meadows and found herself facing a park other side, and, utterly ignorant of kept just out of reach. the English laws of trespass, she scaled the low paling and strolled on, Presently the trees ceased and the park merged into the castle lawn, and she caught a glimpse of the vast house and the magnificent gardens stretching away from it.

She stopped and gazed at it for a moment with eyes that sparkled with admiration, then, unable to resist the temptation, she went on

There was no one in sight to stop stealing,' he said. 'But we won't her, and she wandered up the smooth paths, picking the flowers as she went. Suddenly she came upon a small summer house of marble, almost covered by a magnolia in bloom; and she

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or is subject to headaches to des-cribe the suffering which attends

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wa ked up to it and was picking one I the gorgeous flowers when she au ht sight of an old gentleman who vas sitting in a corner of the summerhouse and who was watching her with eyes which glowed like points of fire from a face as white as the marble

Her hand fell from the flower, and she stood spell-bound as if fascinated as a rabbit under the basilisk stare of a serpent.

There was a faint surprise in the awe inspiring eyes and as faint a cynical curve to the thin lips as if the angered by her presence. Cottie poised as it had been in the act of resolved that she would not write to reaching for the flowers, and held her him until she had got together nearly breath, and, presently, after what seemed an age, la thin, clear voice. like the stroke of a hammer on steel, said:

Good-evening. May one ask who

The colour, which had ebbed from how she wished he had left her future Cottie's cheek, glowed back again : it alone and allowed her to remain with was a relief to hear this stone-like

know anyone was here. I-I was soon as I can get some more,' she picking the flowers-' she said, trying added, anticipating any further queso keep her voice steady; for, after all, though he looked so terrifying, this old man could not hurt her. Why she could run away from him easily

'So I observe,' he retorted, drily; but you have not answered my question. Who are you, boy? Come nearer, please. You need not be afraid.

Cottie drew nearer, holding her head erect, and, though her eyes were downcast, she saw that the old gentleman was wrapped in a dressing-grown, paling. There were trees on the and leant on a gold-headed stick;

The earl bent his brows in silence for a moment; then he started slightly and leant forward with an expression of interest and curiosity.

'I'm not afraid,' said Cottie, with her usual candour. 'Why should I

The ghost of a smile flitted across the white parchment-like face. 'Well, you are trespassing; and not to put too fine a point on it,

dwell upon that. Tell me your name and how you came here? 'My name is Ronald-Bell,' said

Cottie, as steadily as she could. The earl listlessly, regarding her with a thoughtful, speculating expression in his glittering eyes, as if he were trying to recall someone.

'Ropald Bell,' he said, after a pause. I don't remember you, and yet-Who are you-how have you come intention of being discourteous. 'I came across the wood from Betty's cottage, where I'm staying. 'What is

your name? Bassington,' replied the earl, with a grim smile. 'Sometimes I am called the Earl of Starborough.

You seem to have a lot of names! remarked Cottie, regarding him with astonished eyes; but I like the last best. Then, I suppose, this house-

you may call me Lord Starborough,'

'Yes, that's better,' remarked Cottie, with evident relief; 'the other takes such a long time, doesn't it?' He inclined his head with cynical

'Yes; this house belongs to me, as ooked at the bunch in her small brown paw.

Cottie immediately held it out to him.

'I'm' sorry I didn't know. In Aus tralia, the flowers belong to anybody vou see.'

'Thanks; you may keep the flowers. So you come from Australia?' said the earl, his eyes bent upon her

'Yes,' said Cottie, smothering a sigh; 'I ve'just come.' 'With your people, your father and your mother? You are a relative of

Betty's, the old woman in the cottage in the lane? he asked. 'No. I came alone,' said Cottie, and I've no relatives - except a brother.' The long lashes hid her

eyes. 'And he's in Australia.' 'Indeed! Pray sit down-there s room here,' said the earl.

Cottie entered the summer-house and seated herself at a little distance



om the thin, emaciated figure and roceeded with coolness and deliberation to arrange her flowers.

The earl watched her with houghtful frown as if he were musing, enthe said Were you born there?

Cottie nodded. 'Yes, and my father and mother pparition speak.

'I—I beg your pardon. I didn't in the train, and I'm going back as

> The earl smiled grimly at her readi-'And why are you staying at Betty's?' he asked.

'Because Miss Rashleigh took me here-she found me after I'd lost my money. Would you mind my picking another of these flowers?' she broke off, pointing to the magnolia

He nodded. Pick what you like, he said. (To be Continued.)

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Farrell, Miss Sarah, care
Mayers, Abraham Andrews, Miss Jessie, care P. M. G., St. John's Wood's East E. Resetaurant Marks, Stanley

Hemming, James, card Maloney, Miss Nellie, Flemming, James, card Flemming, H. you say. And those flowers." He Adams, C. E., late Pt. St. Charles Flynn, Miss Annie,

Brazil's Field Farwell, Eli Brine, John, care G.P.O. Brown, Mrs. James,
Signal Hill Road
Grant, Miss Lilian
Gardner, Archibald Gardner, Archibald,

Brown, Patrick

Burke, Annie, retd. Button, Miss Annie, Springdale Street

Butler, K., retd.

Butler, K., retd.

Harris, George, Butler, Geo. W.,
George's St. Hartery, Eliza, retd.
Hammond, Bride, car Butler, Mrs. Norah, Hammond, Bride, card Circular Road Harvey, S. J.

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Rockbound Farm late Fever Hospital Mrs. J.,
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Dugmore, A. R.

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