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CHAPTER XXXIX.
"We will send over to Monte Carlo," said Mr. Belford. "We will get all the information we can out of him. But we will not bring him over till the last moment, for the man makes a nuisance of himself."
Then they went, and Sir James used strong language outside the prison.
A little later Gaunt had a visit from Bobby; and, at any rate, Gaunt was glad to see him.
"Your sister has gone home?" he asked, anxiously.
"Yes," replied Bobby.
"It was good for her to come," said Gaunt; "but you must not let her come again. This is not a fit place for her. You will take care of her, Bobby?" he added in a low voice, and turning his head away.
"Aunt Pauline will do that," said Bobby. "I can't leave London till after the trial. I want to see you every day, I'm wretched when I'm not here."
Gaunt put his hand upon the boy's shoulder.
"You are indeed that friend in need, Bobby," he said.
Bobby's eyes grew moist.
"Is there nothing, nothing I can do for you?"
Gaunt shook his head. Then he said, as if he were glad to find something: "Yes! The night I arrived in London I met a man, a fellow-passenger on the unlucky 'Pevensy Castle'. The poor fellow was in a wretched plight, and I took him to the hotel with me. He seemed fearfully ill—seriously ill. I should say—but he left the hotel the next morning before breakfast. I don't like the man, but I feel a strange kind of interest in him, and I wish you'd go down to the hotel and see whether he has turned up again."
Only too glad of something to do, Bobby went off to Morlet's. He came back with the information that nothing more had been seen of Mr. Jackson. He had paid his bill before leaving, and had not returned to the hotel.
"I'm almost glad to get rid of him," said Gaunt; "but I hope no harm has come to him. He was dreadfully ill."
"It is the man you rescued, isn't it?" asked Bobby.
"You can scarcely call it that," said Gaunt; "he took his chance in the boat with the rest."
"You gave up your place to him?" faltered Bobby.
"Willingly enough," remarked Gaunt, indifferently.
"I'm going off now to help Belford," said Bobby, as he took his leave. "We're going to leave no stone unturned. We must find the guilty man!"
"And you will, I am sure, if he is to be found," said Gaunt, gratefully.
The days dragged on slowly and wearily. Gaunt suffered, of course; but it may be truthfully said that his sufferings were light compared to those of Decima. She was down at Learmore, where everything reminded her of the man whose life was in

peril. Never at any time since their first meeting had she loved him more deeply and devotedly than now.
Lady Pauline had told her that she must crush this love from her bosom, and she tried to do so; but it is not when the object of a woman's devotion is in mortal peril that she can harden her heart against him.
Decima bore herself bravely; she uttered no moan; she tried to look and to speak cheerfully; she performed her household duties, and went about the village as of old, as if there were no weight crushing down upon her heart. But every time she went out she saw something that recalled him to her, and the people unconsciously stabbed her by references to "the case" and Lord Gaunt's probable fate.
Mr. Bright was amazed at her courage, for he seldom met her without breaking down.
It was only in the solitude of her own room that Decima gave way to her grief and her love. Perhaps no one but Lady Pauline suspected that the girl who came down to breakfast punctually and quietly each morning had spent the night in tears and prayers.
As the day of the trial approached, Decima spent more of her time in her own room, and Lady Pauline began to dread that the girl would break down. But the determination to appear at the trial and help Lord Gaunt, if it were possible for her to help him, supported Decima.
The day of the trial arrived. The court was crowded, not only with the general public, but with many distinguished persons; for the interest in the case had revived and become intensified by the added romance of the shipwreck and Lord Gaunt's heroic conduct.
The public, as is fickle as the wind. It had all along regarded Lord Gaunt as guilty and been deeply incensed against him—the public always is when the wrong-doer happens to be a person of rank. But although Lord Gaunt was still deemed guilty, popular feeling had swung round. After all, the unhappy woman had been "a bad lot," and then again, she had been Lord Gaunt's wife, and, with Englishmen, there still lingers a trace of the old feeling, though they would not admit it, that a man has a right to do what he chooses with his wife.
And then the story of Gaunt's unselfish conduct on board the "Pevensy Castle" had touched the public in its tenderest part—its sentiment. It argued that a man who could so cheerfully risk his life for his fellow-men ought certainly not to be hanged, though it should be proved that he did kill his wife in a fit of passion.
So the court was crammed, and the sentiment which animated those present was that of sympathy with the accused, and the feeling grew much stronger when Lord Gaunt stepped into the dock.
Gaunt was a good-looking man, but he possessed that which is more valuable to a man than regularity of features—that peculiar air which we call "distinguished," and which always impresses the individual or the crowd.
He was pale, of course, but he was perfectly calm, and, though grave, did not appear at all anxious. Every eye was turned upon him and he met the concentrated gaze—that gaze which fills most of us, even under the most favorable circumstances, with nervous terror—Gaunt met it quite steadily. Only for one moment did his eyes falter and the expression of his face change; it was when his eyes rested upon the sweet, pale face of the girl who, clad in Quakerish simplicity, sat beside Lady Pauline in an inconspicuous part of the court.
Decima met his glance, saw the color rise to his face, then leave it again; saw his lips twitch as if with a sudden pang of pain, and her own eyes filled with unshed tears, and her own lips quivered. He turned away instantly, as if he could not bear to see her there, and she understood.
The venerable judge on the bench had been a friend of Lord Gaunt's father; amongst the titled and distinguished people present were many who knew Gaunt personally; all of them knew him by repute as a famous traveler and a man absolutely without fear. The women sighed as they looked at him; the men exchanged glances of pity.
"Marriages are made in heaven. Oh, are they?" remarked one man to another. "Just look at that chap! I suppose there isn't a better fellow in the world than Gaunt. I was at Eton with him, and I've known him all my life. He's as straight as a dart and has the pluck of the very devil. He wouldn't hurt a fly in cold blood, and he thinks nothing of risking his life for some bounder on board the same ship. And yet that fellow's whole life is made miserable because he stood up before a parson for ten or twelve minutes and remarked that he took a certain woman for his wife. Not only is his whole life made miserable, but he's going to be scragged, because, driven pretty well mad, I dare say by the woman, he puts an end to her."
"Yes," assented his friend, "matrimony's the very deuce. But the 'New Woman' is going to abolish it, isn't she? If so, I shall vote for her all the time. I suppose there's no doubt of Gaunt's having done this?"
The other man shook his head.
"I'm afraid not," he said. And it was the general opinion.
The attorney-general rose to open the case for the Crown. There is no

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need to trouble the reader with a word of his speech or an account of the witness and the evidence; for nothing new, nothing that had not already been proved at the inquest, was advanced.
The attorney-general was neither bitter nor vindictive, but his speech was necessarily a strong argument for the conviction of the prisoner; and all who heard it, even before the witnesses were put in the box, felt that the case was very black against Gaunt; and as the evidence was skillfully marshaled by the prosecution, every one in court was convinced that unless Sir James, the counsel for the prisoner, was in possession of some very strong evidence to meet that of the prosecution, the verdict would be one of guilty.
The interest, keen enough at starting, increased as the trial proceeded; women grew pale, men frowned and leaned their heads upon their hands, or folded their arms and bit their lips, as they listened to the story of the chance meeting of husband and wife, and the murder of the latter.
Gaunt stood erect, with his hands resting lightly on the edge of the dock; or now and again, he leaned against the partition with folded arms. He was not indifferent as to the result of this wordy war between the legal gentlemen who were fighting for and against him, but he was thinking, not so much of the coming verdict, but of the white-faced girl who sat with tightly compressed lips and downcast eyes, which now and again she raised to his with a glance of infinite compassion and infinite sorrow.
The short day was drawing to a close, or, rather, the light in the badly windowed court was fading, when the case for the prosecution closed. As the last witness left the box, the audience—for they resembled the audience in a theater in the closeness of their attention and their eagerness to grasp every detail—the packed crowd drew a long breath.
Just below the dock stood a little group of Gaunt's friends. They were Bobby and Bright and Mr. Lang. They all turned and looked up at Gaunt with a smile which they endeavored to make encouraging; but Gaunt saw behind the smile their anxiety and apprehension. The attorney-general and Mr. Boskett, between them, aided by the evidence, had for the present convinced the jury of the prisoner's guilt.
Sir James rose with his well-known air of quiet assurance and complete confidence in his client's innocence; and he spoke as if no man in his senses, certainly not the twelve intelligent gentlemen in the jury-box, could for one moment be induced to believe that such a man as Lord Gaunt, could be guilty of so cowardly a crime as the murder of a defenseless woman—even though that woman was his wife.
It was a magnificent speech, and it brought the tears to the eyes of many of the listeners. But though the jury might feel inclined to weep at the eloquent description of Lord Gaunt's ruined life, wrecked by his unfortunate marriage, Sir James's speech had not, they felt, disposed of the evidence against the prisoner.
Sir James called witnesses after witness, and they one and all testified to the noble character of the prisoner, and declared their conviction that he was incapable of the crime with which he was charged. The evidence intensified the sympathy of the court, but, alas! it did not prove Lord Gaunt's innocence. Everything that could be proved in his favor was brought forward by Sir James; but how little it was, how small it appeared against the black mass of evidence which the attorney-general had brought against the accused.
(To be continued.)

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