

FOR THE THIRD TIME.

CHAPTER VI.—(Continued.)

He came. The fate that had struck down George Wildair spared Victor Latour. He was there, pale as a dead man, with a look in his wild eyes that made people recoil in terror; but there he was, and the ceremony went on.

It was over—Amy was a bride. There was embracing and congratulating. Breakfast was eaten; the wedding dress was changed for the traveling suit; the happy pair were in the carriage and away.

They reached London that evening, and drove to the Grosvenor Hotel. And all through that day's journey Victor Latour's lips had not opened half a dozen times. Silent, sullen, moody, mysterious, he sat wrapped in gloom; and the light of his wild black eyes made Amy shiver like an aspen leaf. Oh! what was this that had come upon him on his wedding day?

"I have something to tell you, Amy. A secret to tell you—a terrible secret, that you must swear to keep."

They were alone in a spacious chamber, and these were the first words he had spoken to her. His face looked livid in the gaslight, his eyes were blazing like coals of fire.

"Victor!"
"You must swear, Amy! Never, to your dying day, must you breathe to living mortal the secret I shall reveal to you now. Here is a Bible, lay your hand upon it and swear."

The spectral black eyes held her with their horrible, irresistible, light. She could no more have refused than she could have fallen at his feet and died. She laid her hand upon the sacred volume, and repeated after him a terrible oath of secrecy.

"And now listen to the secret of my life."

There was a secret, then. Even in this supreme moment the old leaven of romance thrilled Amy with a little tremor of romantic delight. She sat down at his feet and listened to the few slowly-spoken words that he uttered.

Ten minutes later, Mr. Latour left the room, hurriedly, ringing the bell as he left. He met a chambermaid on the landing, listening to answer the summons.

"My wife is ill," he said. "You had better try cold water and sal volatile; I am afraid she is going to faint."

He hurried away. The girl looked after him aghast; then opened the chamber door, and entered. And there, in a white heap on the carpet, lay the bride in a swoon.

CHAPTER VII.

The waving trees around Blackwood Grange were arrayed in the serene and yellow leaf long before Mr. and Mrs. Latour returned from their bridal tour. The shrill winds of October had blown themselves bleakly out in the green glades and leafy arcades around that stately mansion; and the idea of November had come when the happy pair returned home.

During the two months of her absence, Mr. Latour, for the first time in her life, proved herself a bad correspondent. She had written but one letter and that of the briefest and brusque to Mrs. Sterling. It was a polite notice to quit.

"Dear Mrs. Sterling," the bride wrote, "my husband thinks newly married people are always better entirely themselves. I shall regret your loss but of course it must be as he says. Nurse Carry is quite competent; tell her to take charge, and have everything prepared for our arrival. We shall return by the middle of November."

Mrs. Sterling smiled bitterly over this effusion.
"You might have spared yourself the trouble of ordering me out, Mr. Victor Latour, if that be your name. I would not have dwelt under the same roof with you for a kingdom. Oh, my poor little Amy! You are the fiercest puppet that ever danced helplessly in its master's hand."

Mrs. Sterling departed to St. Jude's and took up her abode in the bachelor apartments of her son. There came no more letters, and Amy had always been addicted to note scribbling.

"But what can you expect," said Mrs. Sterling, with a bitter laugh, "wrapped as she is in post-nuptial bliss? The scheme of the universe holds but Mr. Victor Latour just at present. It is to be hoped the illusion will have worn off before her return."

"It is to be hoped the illusion will never wear off," said John Sterling, gravely. "If the illusion makes her happier, don't be so bitter, mother; the poor little girl will pay dearly enough for her folly. I dare say. Heaven knows I wish I could save her."
His mother looked at him almost contemptuously.

"I don't believe you ever loved her, John Sterling."
"That is your mistake, my good mother. I love Amy so well, that if I could see her happy, with the husband of her choice, I should be almost happy myself. You love her, mother, and so do I, but in a different way, I think."

The November day that brought the bridal pair home swiftly roused the house was all in order; fires burned in

every room; the dinner table was spread and the servants in gala attire, were waiting to welcome their young mistress home.

The short November afternoon was darkening down into a cold, raw twilight when the carriage came rattling up the avenue. It had been a dull day, threatening snow; a few flakes had fluttered now through the opaque air, and the wailing wind was desolation itself. In the cold, bleak gloaming the little bride's teeth chattered as her husband handed her out, and her face looked woefully pallid, as she passed in, leaning upon his arm. Mr. Latour looked much the same—dark, and cold, and sombre, and wrapped in his dignified gloom, as in a toga.

Mr. and Mrs. Latour dined tête-à-tête, waited upon by Nurse Carry and her understrappers. The bride scarce touched the tempting viands; but Mr. Latour ate and drank with the relish of a hungry traveler.

The quiet little village of St. Jude was on the quiet vane the following Sunday to see the happy pair at church. Mr. Latour had resigned his office of organist, of course; and he and his bride walked up the aisle the cynosure of scores of eyes. Mrs. Latour shone resplendent in all the glory of London millinery; her dress was exquisite, her mantle a miracle, her bonnet a perfect love, but—St. Jude stared with all its eyes. What was the matter with Amy? The Christmas snow-drifts were not whiter nor colder than her face. Those gay, smiling blue eyes, once so sparkling and starry, looked out of that pallid face with a fixed look of unutterable fear; she stood before them the wan shadow of the radiant little Amy of ten months ago.

"She has awakened," said Mrs. Sterling, with a momentary thrill of spirit, notwithstanding her compassion. "The delusion is over; her idol of gold has turned out potter's clay."

Dr. John looked at the altered face of the girl he had loved then at the dark, impenetrable face of the man beside her, and his heart hardened.

"He is a greater villain than even I gave him credit for," he said. "He begins the work of breaking her heart betimes. I would have spared him for her sake if I saw he made her happy; now I will hunt him down as I would a dog."

The numerous friends of Miss Amy Earle began at once to call upon Mrs. Latour. Mrs. Latour received them in her spacious parlours, exquisitely dressed; and Mr. Latour was there to assist her. Call when they might, the ladies of St. Jude could never find her alone. Near her, bending over her chair, the dark, handsome face, and fathomless black eyes of Victor Latour shone, freezing every attempt at confidential conversation. He was scrupulously polite, but these ladies went away with no courteous request to repeat their calls. And Amy sat like a white automaton, and talked in monosyllables; she, who had been the most inveterate of chatter-boxes, now looked up at her husband with the wild, wide eyes of a frightened child.

Mrs. Sterling and her son were among Mrs. Latour's callers. The lady was too strong minded and too fond of her charge to be frightened away by the bridegroom's black looks.
"I'll go there now, and I'll go again and again, and still again," she said grimly. "I don't think Mr. Victor Latour will open the door and order me out, and nothing less shall affront me. I'm not going to give up my poor little girl altogether, to be eaten alive by this black-eyed ghoul."

The pale face and scared blue eyes of the little bride lit eagerly up, for the first time, at sight of her old friends. She sprang up to meet them with a low cry, but a hand fell lightly on her shoulder from behind. Its touch was light as down, but a mailed grasp could not have checked her quicker.

"My dear Amy," the soft voice of Victor Latour murmured, "pray don't excite yourself; be calm! You are glad to see Mrs. Sterling, no doubt. Tell her so by all means; but don't make a scene."

The black eyes looked down into the blue eyes, and the bride covered before the bridegroom, as a whipped hound before its master. She held out her hand to her old friends, with a few very coldly-murmured words of greeting.

The interview was short and eminently unsatisfactory. Strong-minded as Mrs. Sterling was, conversation was impossible with that frigid face, and those weird dark eyes, staring her out of countenance behind Amy's chair.

"I shall call and see you again, Amy," she said, pointedly, as she arose to go, "when the honey moon ends, and there is a prospect of my being able to see you alone."

Amy looked at her with a startled face, but Mr. Latour answered for her with a short, mocking laugh.
"Tell your kind old friend, Amy, that our honeymoon has not yet commenced. As to seeing you alone, tell her you have no secrets from your husband, nor he from you, and that he really cannot separate himself long enough from his charming bride, even for a confidential gossip with Mrs. Sterling."

He bowed her blandly out, as he spoke; and, wonderful to relate, Mrs. Sterling went without a word. She looked up into his face defiantly, but the black eyes had met hers with so strange a light in their sinister depths that she absolutely quailed before it. "He looked like a demon!" she burst out to her son. "The light of those fierce black eyes was absolutely horrible. Good Heavens! I don't believe the wretch is human!"

"He is a bad man," answered Dr. Sterling, "and a mysterious man. There are dark and deadly secrets in his life, I am sure. There is a look in his face that repels me with absolute horror at times. I have doubted—"
then he paused.

"Doubted what?"
"It is a terrible suspicion, mother, but I have doubted whether Victor Latour is really sane. There is a wild, unnatural light in these great black

eyes of his, on occasions, that never shine in the eyes of a sane man."

"There appears to be method in his madness, at all events," retorted his mother. "He was sane enough to secure for himself the little heiress."
"The subtle cunning of partial insanity is a very good substitute for a sane man's worldly wisdom. But it is a revolting subject, mother—let us drop it. Poor little Amy!"

"Poor little Amy, indeed! You may thank yourself for it. The game was in your own hands before this man came along. She might have been your wife now, instead of Victor Latour's, if you liked."

Dr. Sterling made no reply. His face wore a look of pain, almost remorse. Poor little Amy! How unhappy she looked! And he had loved her, and might have made her his happy wife.

There was a round of dinner parties given in honour of the bridal pair and Dr. Sterling and his mother often met Mr. and Mrs. Latour in society—Mr. Latour always dark, cold, politely frigid, and impenetrable, as if that handsome face of his were an iron mask; and Mrs. Latour always the same pale, scared, silent shadow. And last of all there was a grand party at Blackwood Grange, to wind up these entertainments—a very superb affair, indeed; and, after that, society saw little of the newly married couple. Further invitations they declined—Mrs. Latour's health, Mr. Latour said, precluded the possibility of gay society.

December came with high winds and snow, and Amy ceased to appear even at church. Mrs. Sterling grew seriously uneasy, and rode over to Blackwood Mr. Latour met her in the hall, and told her his wife was suffering from a chronic headache, and could see no one; and absolutely froze the blood in her veins with the glare of his black eyes—and, cowed and conquered, Mrs. Sterling left, to call no more.

Christmas came, and the New Year came, with their festivities. It was Christmas eve, and Mrs. Sterling sat alone in her little parlor, waiting for her son. Outside the winter wind wailed. Inside, firelight and lamplight and a bright little supper table, made a charming picture of home-like comfort.

The door bell rang. "John at last," said Mrs. Sterling, and rising, she opened the door.

But it was not John. A little figure, muffled up from the storm, glided in. It threw back the hood of its cloak, and Mrs. Sterling dropped into a chair, with a shriek.

"Yes, Amy; but so unlike herself, so like a spirit, that for an instant the matron recoiled.
"Have I frightened you?" said the sweet voice. "You did not expect a visit from me, did you? But it is so long, oh! so long, since I saw you, that I could not resist the temptation."
"And Mr. Latour?" Mrs. Sterling gasped, "where is he?"

"Gone to meet the captains at the Citadel; I mean to dine at Major Malloy's; and I took advantage of his absence and stole out. I have but a moment to stay; I don't wish him to discover this visit."

"He plays the tyrant well!" said Mrs. Sterling, bitterly. "And you, the submissive slave. Oh, Amy Earle! pluck up a little spirit—defy him! Don't let him trample you under his feet."

Amy covered her face with both hands, and burst out crying convulsively.

"You don't know! You don't know! And I dare not tell you! Oh, Mrs. Sterling, I wish I were dead!"
"Amy, for Heaven's sake, tell me! What is the secret of this man's power over you? Something more than a wife's fear of a cruel husband; tell me; it is not too late to save you yet."

"Too late! too late! too late!" cried Amy, wringing her hands. "I have sworn, and I dare not break my oath. His wife! I am no wife! Oh! what am I saying! I must go. Mrs. Sterling, I shall betray myself. I have seen you for a moment—that is all I wanted. Good-by! Good-by!"

She rushed from the room like one insane. Mrs. Sterling followed in a panic of fright.
"Amy! Amy! for Heaven's sake, come back! You will perish in the storm!"

But there was no reply. The little figure had fluttered away into the chill blast, and there was nothing to be seen but the black night and the ceaseless snow that was falling, falling.

To be Continued.

THE TERRIBLE WHITE ANT.

Stories of the ravages of termites, or "white ants," come from the curator of the Australian museum at Sydney. Some time ago they destroyed the roof of the museum building and it had to be replaced with a covering composed largely of steel and copper. Their work being carried on in the interior of the timber, does not reveal itself until the structure is about ready to fall to pieces, and so it has only recently that the fact came out that the ants had also destroyed the underpinning of one of the important floors of the museum.

DISCOVERY OF TEA.

Tea, according to Chinese writers, was discovered in the eighth century. The Dutch introduced it into Europe in 1591.

KEEPING HIS WORD.

African Explorer, dumdummed—What, you Clarence Vere de Vere, in the heart of darkest Africa! What in the world are you doing here?
Clarence Vere de Vere—I'm wearing the necktie Miss Darling gave me for Christmas. I promised her I would, you know!

PLAIN WORDS ON LONDON FIRE.

English Technical Journal Tells Unpleasant Truths About the Fire Department.

The outbreak commenced, about one o'clock in a warehouse on Wells street; the usual calls reached the fire brigade, and were attended to in the ordinary way, but before any considerable number of firemen could attend the fire had spread rapidly, and by the time about three hundred men of the Metropolitan Fire Brigade with forty-five steam fire engine, and the whole of the Salvage Corps had got to work its extent had already involved several streets, the first workers to arrive having been beaten back by the flames, says Engineering. It was, in fact, not until the whole of the above force had been also driven back, and at last had the benefit of some strong party walls, some open spaces, and the shifting of the slight breeze that was blowing, that the extent of the conflagration could be stopped. The extent of the damage is tersely described by the insurance surveyor as "fifty-six buildings absolutely gone, fifteen buildings burned out, twenty buildings damaged, and four buildings scorched." It is interesting to note that there was no high wind at the time of the fire, otherwise the loss would have been certainly a far greater one. Further, that the first call to the fire apparently came by telephone; that there are several fire stations in close proximity to the scene of the fire, but that the progress of the engines was much hampered by the congested state of the traffic. The roads throughout the scene of the conflagration were of

THE NARROWEST KIND

common to the city, a large number of the buildings had common areas or courts, and though the structures were in many cases by no means old ones, little or nothing had been done in them to prevent the spread of fire. There have been the usual complaints as to the dearth of water at the early stages of the fire, a dearth of coals for the fire engines, the difficulty in cutting off the gas; but these complaints can now be taken as a matter of course, at every large London fire. On the other hand, experts have accorded the Salvage Corps a considerable amount of praise for the businesslike manner in which their work was done, while the same experts certainly did not apparently see anything like good tactics in the handling of the fire brigade, excepting, perhaps, as regards a party on the lee side, which was certainly well managed.

Those who attended the fire and have afterward examined the ruins, can only tell the same tale. The lesson is that we seem to know but very little about fire protection in London, and that the sooner we take up the matter the better for all concerned, more particularly if we remember the rate at which the metropolis is growing in extent, the greater costliness of our structures, and their contents.

We are not only too far behind other countries in taking preventive measures, but we are certainly also not ahead of other modern equipped cities as regards fire extinguishing, excepting, perhaps, in the physique and acting of our firemen, our horseflesh, and driving, our new fire stations, some of our engines, the cleanliness and brightness of our brasswork, and red paint. Our fire brigade can also boast of being able to play to the gallery better than many of their colleagues elsewhere. As regards organization, general management, and appliances, tactics, and what is perhaps most serious, the principles on which our fire service is based, we are not only worse than many other cities, but actually

THE LAUGHING STOCK

of the foreigner, whom we are so apt to despise. There is not the least doubt that Sir Eyre Massey Shaw's brilliant conceptions when he took up the reins of our Fire Department after Mr. Braidwood's death, could only be realized in part during the time he held office, and that what was, however, already the model brigade of the world in the seventies, certainly no longer holds that position. Other nations learned from us at that time and adopted our methods, improved and developed them, while we have practically stood still in everything excepting numerical strength. And even in numerical strength it seems curious that to-day, in 1897, we have only about one thousand men, while Sir Eyre Massey Shaw, as far back as 1872, officially recommended that 930 men were necessary at that time, and what has been the increase of area and value in twenty-five years? We are afraid, too, that, as with the case of the army, we dislike to hear plain truths about our Fire Department, and when we want a remedy we attempt to tinker instead of introducing a thorough reform. We are even under the impression that it will be the policy of the department not to ask for any addition to its strength, because, of course, there are a great many interests, personal, political, and otherwise, to consider from the department's point of view, quite apart from the question of providing London with a thoroughly efficient fire service. We also have the misfortune to have a new fire chief, who can, of course, scarcely yet be able to appreciate what fire protection means for a city like London. It would be dangerous for him to attempt reorganization at so early a stage of his new career.

UTTERLY HOPELESS.

It's all off, darling, groaned the disconsolate lover.
No? Did papa refuse his consent?
Practically. He said that I might have you when I had earned and saved \$1,000. Pes a monster. Amie.

YOUNG

DOROTHY

Little Dorothy D. was a very pretty girl; Would you like to see her? When I tell you their names, I am sure you will say They are friends who should never be slighted.

The first guest to arrive was Miss Ought to Obey. She had walked hand in hand with Miss Cheerful. Bright Miss Happy came skipping along the way. Passing by in the street poor Miss Tearful.

Miss Polite and Miss Kind came in one large group; Dear Miss Gentle was waiting to meet them; And Miss Thankful—who sometimes forgets what to say— With the sweetest of smiles went to greet them.

Close at Dorothy's side two dear friends ever stay— Calm Miss Truthful, whom nothing confuses, And that sweet little peacemaker Love, who each day Takes the pain out of somebody's bruises.

Oh, so merry they were! Dorothy often declared, Even though she should live to be forty, If with these lovely friends every day could be shared, She felt sure she could never be naughty.

A LITTLE HEROINE.

Baron Lejeune, who played a conspicuous part at the siege of Saragossa during the Peninsular War, narrates in his "Memoirs" a singular story of that terrible time, a story that speaks equally well for the chivalry of the soldiers of France and for the courage of a Spanish girl.

There had been fearful carnage within the walls of the unfortunate city; even the convents and monasteries were reeking with evidences of warfare, and the inhabitants of Saragossa were in a desperate plight.

A band of Polish soldiers, belonging to the French army, had been stationed on guard at a certain point, with orders to fire upon any Spaniard who might pass them. Suddenly a girl of about fifteen years of age appeared among them. A cry of warning was heard on every side as she approached, but the child seemed not to hear. She only continued to utter one ceaseless and piercing wail, "Mia madre! mia madre!" as she hurried from one group of dead and wounded Spaniards to another.

It soon became evident that she was in search of the body of her mother, and the pale, agonized face of the child whose filial love had made her almost insensible to danger, touched the soldiers' hearts with pity.

A moment later a despairing cry announced that she had found that for which she had risked her life. The Polish guards watched her movements with something like awe as she stooped and tenderly wrapped the mutilated form of the dead woman in a cloak and began to drag it away. Suddenly the girl paused and seized a heavy cartridge-box that lay in her path, with an energy that seemed almost supernatural. Her frail, delicate form swayed and staggered beneath the weight of her burden, but she did not hesitate.

A thrill of mingled horror and admiration filled the astonished watchers as they perceived that there, before their very faces, she was taking from them an instrument for future vengeance upon them.

The inhabitants of the besieged city were almost destitute of ammunition, and the motherless daughter sought to put into the hands of her countrymen a means by which her wrongs might be in some degree avenged.

But the strain was becoming almost more than she could bear; she stumbled, and a cry of terror broke from her lips. The Polish soldiers glanced from one to another, and then, moved by a chivalrous impulse, they lowered sabre and musket, and as with one accord a hundred voices called out, "Do not be afraid, little one! We will not hurt you."

And the Spanish maiden passed with her gruesome burden between a double line of her country's foes, who made a silent salute as she crossed their boundaries and returned to her desolate home.

KILLED BY HEAT.

Sun's Rays Purify Rivers of Bacteria in Summer Time.

In view of the destructive effect of sunlight, especially of the blue to the ultra-violet rays, upon bacteria in winter, Prof. H. Marshall Ward would explain the comparative freedom of river waters under the blazing hot summer sun from bacteria, as against the more abundant infection of the same waters in winter. Pasteur and Miguel found that the germs floating in the air are, for the most part, dead—killed, the author holds, by the sun. Yeasts which normally vegetate on the exterior of ripening grapes are destroyed, according to Martindale, if the heat be very intense, and Guinzi has observed that the ingress of sunlight hinders acetic fermentation. When the typhoid bacillus falls into turbid, dirty water in summer, it finds a congenial propagating place. The dirt furnishes it food, absorbs heat to increase the warmth, and keeps off the hostile blue and violet rays.