

drink, ma mere—it will put
temper.

deeper drank her glass of

heart, my dear," she said.

er try a little."

u can drink my glass as well

for you must be tired, and I

elp you lay the cloth. Don't

es, for I am determined to

at the bride. They won't

stand behind the curtain,

ve had a peep I will go out

which lead to the studio, and

the other way."

new protested against this

heart being warmed by the

length gave way on the

Mademoiselle Julie would fly

tain the moment the bell

stay more than a minute—

enough to satisfy her curi-

man having lit the gasrotted

chen, leaving Julia putt

and giving the finishing touch

on of the table.

ing left alone stood for a

g at herself in the oval glass

any piece.

ch the glass reflected was

certain style.

rk hair grew low down on

the eyebrows were heavy and

t the long lashes shaded

ht well be soft and loving,

looked with a hard cold

mirror.

mp, and yet he has tired of

attended to herself. "I won-

t would have taken him to

puppet. But then, she is

is bound to her, and can-

de as he has me. Ciel, how

ish woman! And he! He

h a letter. Why he could

a dog out of the house

. He should have known

to think that I could live

other woman has taken my

endure, to the leaving him

woman to his heart. What

tomorrow in the morning,

self up and turned from the

adainal smile on her full,

what they will," she mur-

shall not hear. Praise or

all the same to me them!"

to the dining-room, after

flowers in a vase and re-

table, took some bottles of

white, and proceeded to un-

minutes over this, stand-

board with her back to the

aced over her shoulder, as

ad reached her ear; but

t she turned again to the

having finished her task,

es on the table.

he done so when the door

out of the girl's face, but

her presence of mind.

she had seized her hat,

a chair, and had passed

n, and seemingly forget-

to catch a glimpse of the

ed past the old house-

the little staircase

studio.

ace, hobbling along in her

ok her head in dispassion-

the men in general and the

her face was decked with

threw open the door and

he Siran and his lady with

urries.

ted Laura in due form.

dame Godace," he said.

Godace," has been to me

keepers, and you will find

(CONTINUED FROM TWENTY PAGE.)

bottle of wine, which stood on the side-board with its cork drawn, on it, and then, wishing monsieur and madame bon soir, took herself off for the night, saying that she should be back early the next morning if madame should wish for a cup of tea or coffee.

Horace lit a cigar, and helped himself from the fresh bottle, pouring Laura out a second glass.

"Come, dear," he said, "a little wine will bring back some color to your cheek, for I see the journey has tired you. What toast shall we drink? Our unceasing love?"

"That would be tempting Fate!" Laura answered with a laugh. "No," she added raising the glass to her lips, "we will drink to forgetfulness. Let us live for the present, and forget that there is a past or a future."

"She emptied her glass as she spoke, and Horace followed her example."

"Bah!" he said. "That bottle is worse than the others. I will have it out to-morrow with the old sinner who sold it, and make him take it back. Deuce take it, it's strong enough, though; it makes me feel sleepy."

He aroused himself with an effort, and drank more of the wine, but gradually ceased to talk, lolling back in his chair with a vacant look in his eyes.

Laura, too, was strangely weary, and, rising from the table, felt her head swim.

What could it mean?

Surely it must be more than a coinci-

dence for Horace and herself to be simi-

arly affected in such a manner at the same time.

She tried to shake off the feeling of

stupor which was fast overcoming her.

The effort was a vain one, however.

All sorts of strange thoughts began to

crowd upon her, and to chase each other

through her mind.

Could it be that she had been poisoned,

and that Horace had already succumbed to

the action of some deadly drug?

"If so, by whom had the poison been

administered? And for what reason?"

Surely it was not Horace himself who

had drugged the wine of which they both

had partaken.

The very idea was preposterous.

There could be no advantage to himself

in dooming both of them to death.

The advantage lay quite in the other

direction.

He must have wanted to live for many

a year to come, and to share those years

with her.

What, then could be the explanation of

the mystery?

Had there been a mistake—an accident?

She remembered now that he had com-

plained of the taste of the wine, and had

threatened vengeance on the merchant by

whom it had been provided.

Perhaps the latter had inadvertently

poisoned it.

Or could he have done so deliberately,

owing the artist a grudge, and resorting to

such means to be revenged upon him?

The girl's mind became utterly con-

fused at this point.

She could think no further.

She sank into a chair, and fell almost in-

stantly into a doze.

After a few minutes her eyes opened,

and it seemed to her confused senses that

there was a third person in the room—a

woman—who stood by the table, looking

down on Horace, who lay back asleep in

his chair.

She tried to speak, to move, but both

tongue and limbs seemed paralyzed.

Then she saw the figure standing by the

table, take what seemed a packet from her

bosom, and shake its contents into a glass,

which she filled up with wine.

She saw the woman drink from the

glass, and then, stooping over the sleeping

Horace, kiss him passionately.

This was the last thing she remembered,

for her eyelids closed, and with confused

idea that all was a dream, she sank into

oblivion.

CHAPTER VII. HONOUR RETRIEVED.

Philip Lacy, after passing a few days of utter boredom in London, and finding that his regiment had landed, and were to be quartered at Shorncliffe, made up his mind to rejoin at once.

However, he determined to see Laura

once more, for the last time.

He told himself it was folly, worse than

folly, utter weakness, and yet he could not

bear to think that she had parted from him

for the last time in anger.

"I will ask her pardon, he said to himself

"and we will part as friends. I shall live

it down, I assure you, but I should not be

happy for a moment if I thought these ill-

chosen words of mine stood between us."

As he had left part of his luggage at the

Peacock, he had an excuse to return to

Moat; so having made up his mind, he

drove at once to the terminus.

To his surprise, he met Sir Godfrey on

the platform.

The knight was unusually gracious, and

as soon as they were settled in their com-

partment, he offered Philip a cigar.

"Yes," he said, "I am very glad to have

you for a travelling companion. My return

is quite unexpected. It was only this

morning that I learnt a certain party I

wished to see could not leave the Hague

till next month, and, as we shall be in

London by then, and I have nothing else

to detain me now, I thought it best to re-

turn to the Hall at once. It will be a little

surprise for Lady Lyzette, as I found

hardly time to telegraph."

Sir Godfrey and the young officer had

not many subjects of interest in common;

but they managed to keep up a desultory

conversation till they were close to Church-

When, sick and dizzy, he managed to pull himself up, he found that the carriage was on its side, and that Sir Godfrey was lying huddled up in a fearfully contorted attitude, at his feet.

By an effort of strength he wrenched open the upper door, and, with assistance, managed to extricate the knight, but only to find that he was quite dead, his neck having been broken.

Dreadfully distressed as he was in thinking of Laura's bereavement, Philip felt that his first duty lay in doing what he could for others who had been injured.

Fortunately the accident happened within little more than a mile of Churchford, and assistance was soon obtained.

No sooner had he seen the body of Sir Godfrey decently cared for than Philip made all haste he could to break the news to Laura.

Arrived at the Hall, his surprise was great when he learnt that she had left for Paris that morning to pay a visit to Miss Talbot, and that Sir Godfrey was to have joined her there.

Full of disquietude—for he remembered that the knight had spoken of his wife as being at the Hall—he hesitated what to do.

If there was any mystery, telegraphing to Miss Talbot would only complicate matters, and if Laura was with his aunt—which seemed incomprehensible—she would have to make the journey back alone.

At length he determined to go himself to Paris.

The line would be cleared in a few hours

and he would be able to catch the night

mail.

The butler accompanied him to Church-

ford, to see to Sir Godfrey's body being

brought home, and after a dreary wait at

the station, Philip found himself again in a

train speeding back to London.

He was fortunate enough to catch the

night express, and, on arriving at Paris,

drove at once to an hotel, where he changed

his clothes and ate a hasty breakfast,

after which, although it was still early, he

made his way to the private hotel at which

he knew his aunt always stayed.

He found Miss Talbot seated opposite a

commissioner of police in a state of great

excitement.

Philip listened to the commissioner's tale

with mingled feelings of sadness and relief.

What he had more than half feared had

happened; and yet, even at the last mo-

ment, Laura had been plucked from the

hand of her would-be-destroyer.

He gathered that an old woman, who

looked after the rooms of M. Horace Sal-

ran, the artist, had been horrified on enter-

ing the flat at her usual early hour, to find,

as she thought, three dead bodies in the

dining room, her master, a young woman

named Julie Toldain, an artist's model, and

his—her master's—newly-wedded wife,

whom he had only brought home the even-

ing before.

She called the police at once, and on a

doctor being summoned, he found that the

artist and the young woman, who had

doubtless been his mistress, were dead,

but that the wife lived; in fact, she had

already begun to recover consciousness.

She soon recovered enough to give the

address of Miss Talbot, but refused to say

anything more than that she and her hus-

band had recently arrived from London,

and that she knew nothing of the woman

Julie Toldain; in fact she was too ill and

weak to bear much questioning, so the

commissioner had left her in the hands of

the doctor, and had hastened at once to

interview Miss Talbot.

After a little consideration, Philip took

the commissioner into his confidence, and

told him all that had happened, as far as

he knew it.

The police-agent supplied the missing

links without difficulty.

"An old story, monsieur," he said, "but,

as things have turned out, no one beyond

yourself and madame here, who, I under-

stood you to say, is your aunt, need know

the truth. The lady is in no danger, hav-

ing evidently taken but little of the poison,

and can be moved here in the course of

the day. Her evidence can be taken in

her own room, and I will see that no par-

ticulars get into the papers."

Philip thanked him warmly, and pro-

posed at once accompanying him back to