Dadways

LDeady

**CURES SORE THROAT** 

CHAPTER XXXIX.

"You are fond of melo-drama, Mr. Tyers," she said, as quietly as be fore, "but I scarcely see how you are going to secure even the temporary triumph which every villain or the stage is permitted to gain. You forget-"

"That you are safe, that you hav attained the desire of your life, tha you are married to Vane Tempest the man you have loved for so long and for so long hopelessly!" he broke

She looked at him with calm disdain, and did not contradict him, did not even exclaim, as most womer would have done, "I am not married the wedding is put off!" She felt that it was war between them-a war of wits-and she kept her counsel and

"You wonder why I, loving you as I did-and do-should help on your marriage-and I don't think, Lady Florence, you will ever know how much I have helped it on. You wil if I had told you that I loved you. do not think you would have married me: would you?"

She lifted her face, with a smile

He inclined his head.

"In your power?" She put 'th words with calm, cold incredulity.

"Even so," he said, quite as calmly. "What!"-he laughed with fin derision-"did you think that night smile you signed my little paper that I was

### only desirous of making a paltry sum "He-he would not believe-"

of money out of you? Oh, surely you who are so intelligent, so keenwitted, can not have so misread, un der-estimated me? No. no! It was not the money I wanted, as you wil see." He paused. "But there, why should I explain my modus operandi Florence-'

She shrunk slightly at the direct use of her Christian name, but re covered her impassive self-possession instantly.

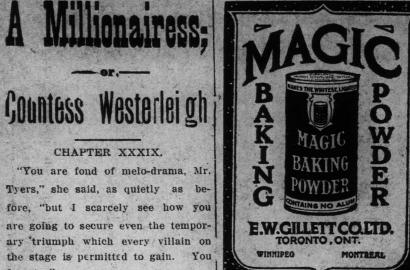
"Florence, I love you with all my heart and soul! I love you with a passion of which Vane, poor fellow. is incapable. If you will trust your me and leave your future in m hands-

"Will you not come up to the house and let my husband and the rest share in the amusement your really clever performance affords me, Mr. Tyers?" she said.

He bit his lip-she saw the thin streak of blood follow the snap of the white teeth, and nodded.

"Good! You refuse, spurn me," he





"I refuse to listen to this ranting absurdity any longer, Mr. Tyers, band's old and alas! mistaken friendship for and belief in you, I will conceal this madness of yours from him; and that is a greater conces sion than you deserve. Now, please we will go up to the house; or, you would rather not-"

"Pardon me," he said, with a smile 'I will go with you. I wish to hand

it will not need telling. Even Vanc vill understand that you would no have given me'a thousand pounds and signed this undertaking with the name you would bear as his wife. unless it was as hush-money."

"Hush-money," she echoed in a lov

He raised his brows, as if surpris ed that she should not understand. "Why certainly, Hush-mone naid to one lover to buy his silence and to bribe him into permitting you

She understood. Her face wen whiter than before, and she stoo with distended eyes glaring at hin her writhing lips trying to form

"It-it is ridiculous!" she said

Senley Tyers shrugged his shoul

"Pardon me: he could not help bu elieve. There is the evidence!" H tapped the paper with his long force "He knows that you and have been together a great deal; h will remember that you have passe hours in my studio; he will recal the night-and I shall help him t recall it-the night at your hous when you signed the paper. I wil prove it up to the hilt; and if h will not believe it, the world will Here in my pocket-book I have plainly written account of the whole ousiness; it will be in the hands of

pewildered, overwhelmed, by the completeness of the plot for her subdrank it in as a man dying of thirst drinks the water which alone can

until you were Vane's wife," he said slowly, deliberately. "If I had-well, yes, threatened you with this yesterday, it would not have been too late to set me at defiance; there would have been a scandal-yes, but very poor and colorless one compared with that which awaits you if

gled in the meshes of the net he had

"But why do you hesitate, Flor ence? How can you, who are Pride

He expected to see her start; but

lough she winced, he saw that he ad told her no news. "You know that?" he said, watch-

g her intently.

She breathed hard. "You-you are not so astute as one would think, Mr. Tyers," she said nainfully. "That last argument of

"Florence." he said, thickly, "don't

She twisted her arm from his grasp and drew herself to her full height

"You dare, dare to touch me!" she panted, with scorn and loathing in her voice her blazing eyes. "Youyou madman! Go!" she raised he hand and pointed down the avenue 'I give you five minutes to escapeyes, escape! In five minutes I will

He gnawed at his lip, his eyes fixed

"You will send your grooms-" H and bent his head and whispered-Florence, your marriage with Vane already. You are not his wife!'

CHAPTER XL.

"Married already!" Lady Florence peated the words mechanically, as When the significance of Senley Ty ers' assertion bore down upon her she uttered a faint cry and pressed her hand to her heart.

He laughed as he saw the effect he ad defeated, and the laugh stung he nto self-possession again.

"You are a cowardly liar, Mr. T rs!" she said, contemptuously. hould have deemed you too cleve o attempt to delude me with such as mprobable story."

She half turned to leave him as sh noke, but he made no movement t rrest her, and, probably because he id not, she paused and looked over er shoulder at him.

"What induced you to venture of o absurd a falsehood?" she said vith cold contempt.

He laughed again, his eyes fixed n her with sinister intensity.

"I quite expected you to take it ais way," he said, coolly. "I did no vant to tell you, but you forced m and. Candidly, Florence-"

"Be good enough to remember, Mi yers, that I am only addressed b ny Chirstian name alone by n riends and-equals," she put in. He smiled.

"Pardon me. You are Florence i ly thoughts. And when you are no my thoughts? Well, 'Lady' Flor nce, as you desire it, I say I expect d you to take my news like this andidly, I should have preferred t etain it until a later moment, but s out now, and you know that it i

"It is false! It is a clumsy lie! he said; but he detected the slight alter in her scornful voice.

"You do me an injustice," he said You insult my intelligence. Believe ne, I may be the villain, the scoun rel you no doubt deem me, but I an ot a fool-not fool enough, to empt to palm off upon one so cut s Lady Florence Heathcote-forgive

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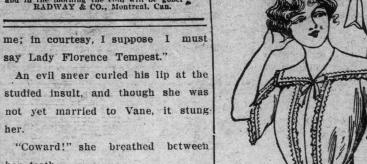
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"No: neither fool nor coward," he said, calmly. "Try me. There

been deceived? Good! I offer you-

it is your due-irrefutable proof.' like a duel between two expert swordsmen, each dreading the other's skill, and each expecting a foul lunge from his opponent.

Her lips formed the word.

He inclined his head, took a cigar ette from his case, and with a murnured "Permit me," lighted it, and smoked with an exaggerated seren-

"Yes. I am not so foolish as to nake such a statement without good vidence to prove it." She smiled scornfully.

"Oh. I know the whole proceeding!" she said: "You will produce a forged marriage certificate.'

"Oh, no, no! You wrong me. That would indeed be clumsy." he said, al nost sweetly. "I will do better than that, Lady Florence; I will take you to the lady who has the honor being Vane Tempest's wife."

'Vane Tempest's wife?

The words seemed to ring in her ars and confuse her.

"Yes," he said, calmly, with an inolence beyond all description 'Vane Tempest's wife. You are, i nything, his mistress."

She put her hand to her heart, and a faint cry escaped her lips. He sprung to her side.

"Florence! Florence! Why do you force me into torturing you? Don't you know-can't you guess-that it is still greater torture for me? I love pel me to wound you! Why will you not yield? Why will you not ac knowledge that I am not only you lover, but your master?"

now. Believe me-oh, believe me er you must throw down your arms own yourself vanquished. have surrounded you in a net from which you can not escape. Month by month I have spun it round you There is no weak place in it-none Vane Tempest, the man you think is your husband, was married before this morning. His wife is living. He loves her-loves her-not you. you think that you can keep him b your side long? That this farce of a marriage can be played for more than a few days-weeks? Why, you know that if you refuse to give your self to me, I shall make the first mar

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