The Cruise of the "Kingfisher."

"It belongs to my brother Cecil-Lord Lisle. That was he who was here you tell me yours?"

"Stella Mordaunt." replied Stella then she pushed the hair from he forehead, and looked at her compan ion with sudden and feverish eager ness. "Where-where are we going? she asked.

"To England," replied Lady Cecil

Stella uttered a faint cry of dis

"To England? Oh, no, no! I wan to go back to the island!" she wailed. tears welling to her eyes. "I must go back! Indeed, indeed, I must!"

CHAPTER XXI.

"No, no: say nothing! I will wait! Ralph stammered as he led Mary

still, fresh from school, and a propos-Ralph, the earl, should tell her that wife, and at the very moment Edward's letter was hidden in her hand. was nothing less than terrible.

The man to whom she was engag-

furnished as a kind of "den."

The spirit steadied him a little; realize what he had done.

The old-fashioned villain of the indeed, and seldom found in real life; which is a pity-for the novelist and. dramatist. As a matter of fact, such much the creatures of impulse as if she didn't care for me. But pergood men; and Ralph had acted on loved her and asking her to be his class to receive a proposal. Her fa-

uccess; the dancing-and the chamagne—that had impelled him to the Surrounded by his titled and aris-

of Nita the music-hall artiste; and he sight of Lady Mary in all her

But he remembered it now, as sat fingering the brandy glass and

thing of his proposal; and he kney that she would keep her promise. But after a while the feeling of re

ief gave place to one of disappointvants; and Ralph wanted Lady Mary all the more badly for her refusal.

and listened to the music floating faintly from the ball-room that no of any value to him if he could not

and owning all this property, if I'm ry, and in my own sphere. How heantiful she is! She's the loveliest

sent its insidious glow through his frame and mounted to his brain, his evil courage mounted also.

"Who knows anything aboutabout Nita?" he mused. "No one; ed for the next dance came up as she and no one is likely to know. She and Ralph' entered the room, and hasn't found me all these months, and Ralph, with a bow, resigned her to it's very improbable that she will ever find me. Perhaps—perhaps she's For a space he stood looking round dead, or she may marry again; noththe brilliant scene vacantly, then he ing more likely. She's a good-lookturned and went to a small room at ing girl, and-and the sort of people the back of the hall which he had had she associates with aren't too particular in asking questions where He locked the door, and going to a they take a fancy. It's likely she's sideboard, he got some brandy, and given me up for good, and taken up with somebody else. Anyhow, I'ilyes, I'll risk it," he wound up with an and he needed steadying, for his oath, as he filled the glass for the hand was shaking and his head was third time. "Lady Mary's worth tak- said. in a whirl, and he could scarcely ing some risk for. With her for my

wife-" novel and melodrama, who calmly closed eyes, and sank into a delicious and coolly sits down and plans out a reverie. With such men as Ralph, scheme of villainy is a very rare bird passion takes the place of love, and there could be no question of his

men as Ralph Ratton are quite as tered. "She's refused me; seemed as to his mother, and closed her eyes. haps she was only startled, or it's impulse in telling Lady Mary that he the proper way for ladies of her high

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and gazed at himself in the Venetian

'I'm not so bad-looking, either: worth a million. By George! she lidn't she? There can't be anything between her and that conceited, self-

then seeing how hideous the scowl made him, he forced a smile, and

The dance was drawing to a conclusion, and some of the guests were or rather, good-morning, and they

ish in its splendour and its completeness; and I am quite sure we are all very grateful to you."

hand and murmured appropriate ac ciousness; but he was watching, out of the corners of his eyes, for Lady Mary.

She came up presently on her father's arm.

said Lord Hatherley, genially, "though, by Jove! it's late enough But Mary's rather tired heen dance ing too much. I expect, and she's no belles who are here to-night. You Ralph glanced at Lady Mary under half-closed lids.

"I hope Lady Mary has enjoyed it and that she is not overtired," he

Mary stood with downcast eyes; but she raised them for a moment He gazed before him with half- and looked at him gravely as she thanked him and wished him good-

When she and her father got into their carriage, she leant back and folded her hands over her bosom, upon which lay Edward Bryan's letter Her head was still in a whirl, and insult, like an outrage; but she told herself that she had no right to so onsider it.

Why should she be angry or rewas within his right in telling her spot that is tainted or weak. You that he loved her, and asking her to

> But though she reproached herself for her angry and resentful feeling against Ralph, the earl-had he not saved her life?—she shuddered as she

All unconscious of her feelings, her father commenced to sing Ralph's

"What a delightful evening! What a man!" he exclaimed. "By George!

into his proper niche and takes his proper place in society. I must say admire the way in which Ralph carries his honours. One would not have been impressed if he had beenwell, loud and effusive; but you se Say what you will, there is some mysterious power, some-er-instinc in good birth which enables a man t face and overcome all difficulties." Mary did not respond. Edward's letter was lying like a sentient thing

"This affair must have cost a ver arge sum," went on Lord Hatherley. think? I don't think there was

"I-I don't know. I didn't notice."

Lord Hatherlev sighed.

"Lucky young beggar!" he said musingly. He was thinking that the girl whom Ralph should choose for his wife would also be lucky. She was only natural he should think of Mary. Ralph had saved her life; he was always very attentive to her, was always running in to see them The Hatherley estates would go away from Mary to the young boy at Etor 'oved daughter's future, and reflect He was the last man in the world to hint of his half-formed wish to Mary and grew as the carriage travelled had refused him, Lord Hatherley would not have put any pressure or her; for he held that love was sacred. and marriage something more than

nercenary contract. He kissed her more tenderly than isual as she wished him good-night, and Mary clung to him for an in race, her eyes filling with tears which she hid from him.

(To be Continued.)

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