JUSTICE AND MERCY;

THE FEAST OF ALL-HALLOWS.

CHAPTER VI.

The benevolence of her new but strange friend had set the mind of Flora at rest as to pecuniary circumstances; but there was still reason for auxiety enough, as far as her tather's state sf health was concerned. To Flora he had ever been a kind and indulgent parent, and she now watched with feverish anxiety every change in

the malady of the old man, who seemed to cling to her with such childlike confidence. October had set in, and its gray morning mist still wrapped the city in a partial obscurity, when Flora was summoned to the bedside of her father, who was ill during the night; but aware that she had to undergo much fatigue in course the previous day, had with much patience forborne to disturb her. The faint rays of the sun piercing through the mist shed a sickly light on the countenance of her father, on whose altered features the hand of death had already set its unmistakeable impression. In much alarm Flora called for assistance; but Mr. Douglas was past human aid, and beckoning her to his side he whispered such words as fond parents speak to the children they love, when about to leave them for ever in this world; and yet, breathing these words of tenderness and love, expired without that fearful death-agony so sad to the survivors to witness. On the whole, Douglas bad led a

blameless, quiet life; latterly he had faithfully observed to the strictest letter the precepts of the Church he had entered at so late a period .-And all that that Church could do for him had been done but a few days previous to that of his death, so that on this score Flora had no cause for unhappiness; and after having rendered him the last sad duties, she threw herself on her knees, and found a sweet consolation where every

Catholic never fails to find it, viz., in praying earnestly for the soul's repose of him she loved. One of her first cares was to write to her new friend, Lady Harcourt, who immediately real had a heart to be newed the invitation she had given her some yielded it willingly.

weeks previously. Within a fortnight, then, after the interment of her father, Flora prepared for her journey to the Elms, where she arrived in safety.

It might be a little nervous agitat to one entering amongst strangers, especially under such peculiar circumstances, and so quickly atter the deaths of both parents, which made the check of Flora a thought paler than its wont, as she entered the library at the Elms, in which the family were then assembled. Each one present, however, save Inez, felt intuitively a sympathy for that fair, delicate girl, whose sable garb contrasted more strongly with the natural delicacy of her complexion; but Lady Harcourt started involuntarily as she approached -she could almost have fancied the once dearly-loved Flora of former days stood before her, as she did twenty long years since, so striking was the likeness between Flora and the late Mrs. Douglas. Indeed, all present, save one, received Flora with heart-felt warmth, and she, the nearest relative in fact, regarded her with an instinctive aversion, an aversion only the more deep, from the fact that Lady Harcourt and Eustace Vere should of all others appear to evince the deepest interest in Miss Douglas. But why when alone at night, some five weeks hence, when all are buried in sleep, does Inez give way to such after anguish and desolation of spirit, her always pale face is now strangely flushed, her dark eyes gleam with an unnatural brilliancy, the tiny foot is tossed impatiently to and iro, and the small white hand is clenched convulsively. Ah! Inez has an angel's form, but a heart in which the Evil One 100 often holds dominion. Why does she couple the name of her unoffending cousin with that of Eustace Vere? Why, but that she is already plotting and planning, with the craft of a cunning old woman, and digging a pit for another which she may ere long fall into herself.

Flora was the very soul of frankness. Ah! your very frank and candid people are sometimes great enemies to themselves, for they often speak lated to the Mortimers of Ravensbourne: I canwhen they should be silent, and really are no not be mistaken in those features.' match for the wicked persons whom more or less we must all expect to cross in our passage thro' this world. Now, every emotion of Flora's heart was at once laid open to those with whom are you who thus rudely detain me and question | really ill and unrefreshed by the restless slumber | me to such actions. she happened to associate; too guileless to act me? otherwise than virtuously herself, she never suspected wrong in others. There was one, how-ever, in the household of Sir Godfrey Harcourt, who read the character of both cousins, and this was none other then Eustace Vere; Eustace, the sole remaining scion of a noble family, who, luxuries of life at his command, was meditating, unknown to all his friends, a retreat into some style of beauty which she possessed; but there whom do you think I bear a strong resemblance? household had retired to rest at an early hour, Flora could hear the snap of a lock, the clink of lers.

man seeks to please, she would first find out what require you take.' dreamed that he eyer entered into her mind, save and recklessness, she traced a close resemblance as a mutual friend of all. And who, indeed, if to Lady Harcourt. thing-virtue-was sadly wanting.

Unfortunately for Flora, as Ravensbourne owned but a bachelor for its master, it was necessarily but a dreary abode for Inez; so that shortly after her first arrival in England, Lady Harcourt had given a general invitation to her to spend the greater portion of her time at the Elms; and being the far more cheerful habitation of the two, Inez failed not to avail herself of the offer. Moreover, she very speedily encouraged in her beart an attachment which never should have been suffered to gain admittance there; so that the Elms was, in every senso of the word, the more pleasing place of the

Poor Flora! lately she had lived only in the hard school of adversity, she was always true to nature, unaffected as a child, and so frank and candid that whatever frailties she possessed were on your taking an oath immediately to that purnot hidden in the background; her very candor expressed that which many would have had sufficient art to conceal.

To the poorer tenantry on Sir Godfrey's estate she soon became a well-known and welcome visitant, administering to them the charities of Sir Godfrey and his mother; yet all was done with such unaffected simplicity, that she was not long a resident at the Elms before its inmates learned to love her, and the admiring Eustace, if he had had a heart to bestow, would certainly have

CHAPTER VII.

The winter season has passed away, and Lady Harcourt, attended by her son, Inez, and Eustace Vere, bade farewell for a short time to the Elms, leaving Flora there during their short stay of three weeks in London. With her books, her music, and her pencil, however, Flora could not feel ennui, and felt it even a reisef for some little time to enjoy the sweets of solitude.

Five days had elapsed since their departure, and one bright evening towards the end of May she left the Elms with the intention of carrying some little assistance to a poor family in the village, and had been for some few moments in conversation with the cottager's wife ere she noticed a travel-stained, wretched looking man, clad in the garb of a sailor, who was intently regarding her whilst she spoke. Somewhat offended at the earnest gaze which was fixed upon her features, she drew her veil over her face, and slipping some silver into the woman's hand, hastily withdrew. The sun had already set when she began to retrace her steps homewards, and after the first few moments, she had forgotten the annoyance she had received, and, regardless of the now rapid closing-in of the evening, continued her walk, unconscious that evil lay in her path.

About half of her journey was completed, and her path now lay through a somewhat lonely valley; but she had been accustomed to walk in the evening through the crowded streets of Edinburgh and in the meadows and valleys around her new home, and no fear entered her mind. Suddenly, however, just as she was about to emerge into the high road, she heard the depraved life, yet she was convinced that no unquick step and the burried breathing as of one in pursuit. Seized with terror, she now quickened her pace; but the next moment her arm was strong to allow her to doubt the truth of his as- of losing life or booty for a puny girl. rudely grasped, and a harsh voice commanded her to stop, and, raising her eyes, Flora beheld the sailor she had met in the cottage.

'Your name,' he exclaimed. 'You are re-

What would you with me?' exclaimed the terrified girl. ' My name is Douglas; my grandmother was married to a Mortimer; but who

'I detain you because I want money for food and raiment, was the reply; 'and, in answer to the second part of your question, I require you to swear before I release you that you never make known to Sir Godfrey and Lady Harcourt, who I am, that you have ever met with or spoken with a large fortune at his disposal, and all the to me, whom they happen to know rather too well,' he added with bitterness. 'Now, look at me, Miss Douglas,' he exclaimed; ' by the light austere order of monks. He had been struck, of yonder moon you can see every line of my was most anxious, and every preparation had work of spoliation. when he first beheld her, with the commanding features, as plainly as I can see your own; to been made to receive them. As usual, the But the barking became more incessant, and which they had managed to elude their pursu-

untrue to nature, and putting on a mask to hide the strange man who held her, and her gaze once return, sought her couch. the deformities which so often he under a fair ex- riveted on those features, could not be soon reing Flora; and for what? to gain the kindly doubted the evidence of her senses, for beneath

he ever spared a thought for her, it was one of Well, young lady, whom do I resemble? unfeigned pity, that endowed as she was with he asked, in a jeering tone. 'You shall say who health and wealth and beauty, yet the one best I am like, for that likeness is allowed to be not to reveal my appearance here, I will release you, and not before.'

'Lady Harcourt,' now gasped the terrified Flora. 'Can my surmises be correct?' she added, 'no, her ladyship has no son but Sir Godfrey; you are only playing with my fears. Take my purse,' she added, placing it in his hand as she spoke, 'and detain me no longer.'

'You have guessed right, Miss Douglas,' replied the man; - I am Lady Harcourt's elder son by a former marriage. I had not the good fortune to be her second son, you see; and you have not chanced to hear about me because my antecedents have not been very creditable to her ladyship and her beautiful son; and as I have to be in this village some time longer, and do not choose to have all my plans frustrated, I insist pose. Here, swear upon this, he added, drawing forth a crucifix which he wore round his I, the outcast and reprobate, should have anything to do with sacred emblems; but, you see, my good mother threw it round my aneck when she sept me off as midshinman, after she became a fine lady; and terribly hardened, as you doubtless think I am, I could never make up my mind to part with this.

Flora's lips paled, and he felt her form tremble within his arms as he thus spoke. Again she made an effort to extricate herself, but she was as an infant in the arms of her captor; but shriek for help,' fell from her lips.

ever tall from your lips to implicate me in any port,way, or indeed by which it may ever be known

existence. As he spoke, he rudely grasped her by the arm, and passing the other arm around her waist. forced her on her knees; and now overcome by fear, her pale lips pressed the emblem of salvation, and the words of her strange outh were tremblingly uttered.

'Now, young lady, you may go in peace,' said the man. 'I must, however, relieve you of the purse you offered me, for my wants are many and pressing. If you wish to know my real name, it is Frederick Seymour, though I am known amongst my mates as Frank Hilton .-Farewell! and remember your oath.

With quick though often-faltering steps, Flora wended her way to the Elms, and on entering forced. In a few moments the work of pillage the house, fearful lest her excessive agitation was over, and then lifting the almost inanumate should betray her, she drew her veil over her face and hastened to her own room.

Numerous indeed were her fears and great her surprise, that Lady Harcourt was thus allied to one whom she was well aware had led a very truth had been uttered; the likeness between her ladyship and this wretched being was too sertion for a moment.

Pleading a violent headache, which was indeed no untruth, for the fright occasioned by her meeting with this man had made her feel very ill. Flora prepared immediately for rest .--To sleep, however, was impossible; a presentiment of approaching evil forced itself upon her my conscience at rest, as you see I do not call mind, connected with and growing out of this what I take from my nearest relations theft; kennel; and that all was perfectly quiet in the unhappy meeting. She arose in the morning, having plently themselves they should not drive house until about two in the morning, when they

of the previous night; very fear, too, kept her a prisoner to the house, -nay, she even dared Lady Harcourt's room, passing through which, not advance to the window lest she should again he was about to place Flora on her bed, when see her tormentor.

sumed her walks, though she took especial care not to prolong them beyond a very early hour in bidding him, however, to touch her, whatever had however, failed to take aim, and the two had the evening, and gradually her mind became should happen; and breathing in her ear the joined in a pursuit which had proved utterly more composed. It wanted but two days of the words 'Renember your oath,' he darted again fruitless, and it was evident to all that the robreturn of the family, an event for which Flora into Lady Harcourt's chamber, to complete the

was a something even in the expression of her Fancy me dressed like a gentleman, not a com- and with a feeling of thankfulness that she should com and precious gems; and with these faint

feelings of one whose thoughts were raised far the rude aspect of the man, his elf-locks, his room, which opened into that occupied by Lady any such communication as she might have to ened attentively, for a terrible fear seized her, and she could almost hear the beating of her t was pushed open, and a man sprang into the outside the quilt? room. A cry was already on her lips, though room, in whom she recognized the sailor.

> Advancing to the bed, he made a sign to the man to remove, and then, taking his place, he whispered,--

'If you value your life, be perfectly quiet; I know that the next room belongs to Lady Har-I give you but two minutes, for time must not bed. be lost.'

'What do you require of me?' she exclaimed, in hurried accents. 'I will not betray my benefactors, and be made your tool in such evil doneck. 'You look surprised, Miss Douglas, that logs as those you are engaged in. You have We must send a messenger off by day-break, forced an entrance into the house; search it and the police must be set on the track dithen by yourselves, I cannot follow you.'

'Remember your oath, and accompany me at whilst my mother and her son live in a filuence | valuables would not have been stolen.' and luxury?

Even as he spoke, the bright rays of the moon oath. 'If you shrick, there is no one at hand A thrill of horror seized her as she observed him to hear you; and if they did, it would be no pause at a small cabinet to which several valugratitude to your benefactress to let it be known able articles were placed; she felt as if she was that I am here. This moment then swear, he about to be seized with a fainting fit, and feebly exclaimed, 'upon this cross, that no word shall whispered whilst she clung even to him for sup-

'For heaven's sake, do not detain me a mothat you are aware such a person as myself is in | ment; let me lead you to the chamber you require, and then do what you wish; I promise you I will not shrick or thwart you.'

One glance at the almost livid countenance of Flora told the miscreant, in whose hands she was now passive, that he must not delay; and passing his arm around her waist, he supported her through three apartments, and then crossed a gallery which led to that of Sir Godfrey Harcourt. - Closely followed by his companion, lay to the Elms. whose countenance was more revolting in its expression than his own, the infamous Seymour gave Flora into his care, and then proceeded stealthily and rapidly to purloin many valuable iewels, as also a large sum of money which he found in a drawer, the lock of which was quickly girl in his arms, she heard him whisper to his companion.—

'We must be quick back, for were a woman's ht to seize her, it would alarm the house; and, moreover, we might not find our way back very quickly to the room we still require to search.

Flora shuddered in the arms of Seymour as tremble as he held her, and whispered .-

Be silent, my pretty girl and I will not harm you, or any living thing. All I want is the means of making money; and I can easily set

As Seymour thus spoke, he again entered the shrill loud bark of a dog rung through the A week, however, elapsed, and she again re- house. Muttering a deep oath, he commissioned

and the stage of the product of the track is the term of the

countenance which, to say the least, was far from mon sailor, and tell me candidly who you think be soon released from the charge which had sounds, as she relapsed into a state of insensipleasing. Well indeed would it be, it when wo- I am, and then you will not refuse the oath I partly been imposed upon herself, although a bility, was mingled the loud peal of the alarmbell trusty housekeeper was left at the Elms, Flora, the report of a pistol, and the trampling of many those think of her for whom she is so frequently | Flora raised her eyes to the countenance of on this the last night but one previous to their feet. When she recovered, she found herself supported by the housekeeper, who had busily She had fallen into a heavy sleep, out of which employed herself in administering such restoraterior. What a delusion did she labor under; - moved. Then she shaded her face with her she awakened with a consciousness that some tives as she had at hand to restore her to conalready was she prepared to injure the unoffend- hand, and again raised her eyes, as if she almost noise had disturbed her. The strong rays of sciousness. Near her, too, stood the butler and the May moon lighted up every object in the three serving-men, who were anxiously awaiting above the daughters of men-of one who little haggard features which told of a life of crime | Harcourt when she was at the Elms. She list- make which might serve to throw a light on a robbery which was considerable in its extent. That the robbers had entered by Flora's window heart, so violent were its pulsations. As she was certain; that she had heard them, and been raised herself in the bed and gazed around the alarmed, was equally so, or why had they found room, a rustling sound, a slight noise, as of glass her in a fainting fit? and, moreover, she had evistriking; and when you have told me, and sworn gently broken, met her ears. A dark shadow dently left her bed, or why had she a mantle on. passed across the casement, and in one moment and was not within the bed, but merely lying

> These were questions difficult to solve; and fear for a moment had paralysed her; but, dart- consciousness had scarcely returned fully, ere ing to the bedside, a hand was placed upon her they all with one accord begged to know all mouth, whilst immediately another entered the that she could tell them of the mishaps of the

> 'I can tell you nothing,' she faintly whispered, save that I was awakened by two men, who had forced an entrance through my chamberwindow, and who threatened me with instant death unless I immediately showed them Sir court; rise instantly and conduct me to that of Godfrey's room. Having forced me to do this Sir Godfrey Harcourt. Not a word, now, he they carried me back, and I must have fallen added, observing that Flora was about to speak. into a fainting fit as they replaced me on my

> > ' Nice tidings for Sir Godfrey,' muttered one of the men, ' that the night before his return everything most valuable had been taken out of his room, and my lady's jewel-case gone also.rectly.

'Well,' simpered a maid-servant, 'I am very once,' replied Seymour. 'I have means by glad the robbers did not enter my room instead which I and my man will enforce compliance, if of Miss Douglas's; I should not have liked to you compel me to use them. Think you that I tell master that it was I who showed them his am going about in poverty and wretchedness, very room, without which perhaps Sir Godfrey's

' Nor would you have liked the dreadful fright the unfortunate choice of Miss Flora's room has flashed full upon a pistol which he carried in his caused ber, Martha,' replied the housekeeper;the words, 'I will not swear, release me, or I hand; and, aware that resistance was useless, it is a pity your life has not been threatened in-Flora now rose, and throwing a mantle over her stead; but give me a hand, Giles, 'she continued. 'I will not release you,' he added with an shoulders, led the way to Lady Harcourt's room. turning to one of the men, 'and bear the poor young lady into my room, for she is going off again into a dead faint.

The worthy Mrs. Fenton's commands were immediately obeyed; and then, taking especial care that the impertment Martha should be singled out from the others, she ordered her to light a fire immediately, and bring her hot water and flannel as soon as possible.

Her motherly care, however, was some time before it was rewarded with success; for Flora relapsed from one fit into another, until towards morning, when perfect consciousness returned, but with it a high fever ; and the same messen ; ger who was sent to London to tell the disastrous news of the night to Sir Godfrey was commissioned to send a medical man without any de-

Early in the day two detective officers were sent down to examine the house and apartments which had been entered; the little which Flora had it in her power to tell was taken down in writing, the county was scoured in every direction, and a large reward was offered by Sir Godfrey for any information which might lead to the discovery of the robbers.

In much consternation the little party, consist ing of Lady Harcourt and ber son, Inez and Eustage Vere, arrived at the Elms; her lady ship and Sir Godfrey most anxious to ascertain the real extent of their loss. The constant applications made to Flora, who alone could be 'Silence ber. Frank,' answered the ruffian, said to know anything of the matter, aggravated with a tremendous oath; 'do not run any chance her malady, and her medical attendant at length observed that he would not answer for her life unless she was left quiet, unquestioned, and nothhis brutal companion spoke: the former felt her ing said which should tend to bring before her, whilst still ill, the terrible events of the previous night.

As to the servants, they could say nothing but that they found a house-dog, which was the terror of the neighborhood, stiff and dead in his were alarmed by the loud and continued barking of a small dog which was kept in the house .-One of the men had then sounded the alarm-bell. whilst another, accompanied by the butler in his search, had fired a loaded pistol at a man whom he observed in the act of retreating through the his rufficulty associate to watch by Flora; for- door of Lady Harcourt's apartment; the pistol bers understood well the spot from which they had to make their escape, by the dexterity with

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