## "A Sorrow's Crown of Sorrows.

CHAPTER XX.—Continued.

So Mrs. Laidlaw attended a reception at Lady Mordaunt's, and drove in the Park in Lady Mordaunt's carriage, and was carried off by her to luncheon. On all three occasions she met Aubrey, all three occasions she met Aubrey all three occasions all three occasions she met Aubrey all three occasions she met Aubrey all three occasions all three occasions she met Aubrey although he did not join them in the drive, but only stood with other friends of his sister about the carriage. He spoke very little to Lola, and was only as courteous and kind in manner to her as to any other lady of his acquaintance. But he power took his eyes from her face; and other lady of his acquaintance. But he never took his eyes from her face and ed her own, the blood rushed to her cheeks, and a curious fear as of an unterpretation of the said. Why do you though danger record the said of the said.

known danger passed through her heart.
She might have forgotten this sensation, or dismissed it from her mind, but for an incident that occurred subsequently, exactly one week after her husband's departure. Whilst lunching with Lady Mordaunt, Lola had lamented the absence of a garden in her London life. and of the roses for which Dr. Marsden's acre of land had been famous. Hearing her words, for which he was always listening, Aubrey had slipped out after lunch, and when Lola returned home later in the afternoon, she found her sitting-room a very bower of perfume and fragrance, the lovely tints of the multitude of cut roses being enhanced by the cool green of the pots of waving by the cool green of the pots of waving solve, she sat down to write to her hus-ferns and tall tropical plants, which band. Not a word of Aubrey did she littered all the available space of the apartment.

Delighted at first, Lola speedily grew thoughtful and embarrassed. She knew quite well that her husband would ter at once. strongly disapprove of such attentionfrom her former admirer. She guessed at once from whom the flowers came, although the servants, when she questioned them, professed ignorance as to

While she was debuting how best she could avoid Aubrey without hurting his feelings, the servant entered with a parcel of novels and magazines from . Lady Mordaunt, brought, so the girl said. by a gentleman.

than Aubrey himself, directed the girl to run after him down the street, and, if he would call in and see her mistress.

the next minute she heard Aubrey's step on the stairs and his knock at her sitting-lt w

his sister's house. There were roses all about her, and her hands were full of them. He drew a deep breath as he looked at her, and waited, with curjously shining eyes, until she should speak.

"I sent for you, Mr. de Vaux," she began rapidly, "to thank you for the books, and to say that—that it was very kind of you, but I wish you had not sent these

received flowers from him; and he never ance drove slowly down the mean-look-forgets any wish of mine."

would rather not speak to you at all. Nothing makes me so angry as a reflec-tion upon those I love. And, please, go now, for I am tired."

"I shall see you on sunday at my sister's? he said, as he moved towards of the theatre.

Machanically Lola got down from it. Lola hesitated.

to come.

ly. "Well I shall see," said Lola, nervous-

stood directly before her.

"Well, yes, a little." she answered at arm.

Inst, desperately, looking straight up Before the deor of a pastiyeook's shop into his face. "I had not thought of it, they paused, and an extremely pretry but I fear I have make a mistake. I did little girl, fair-haired, and so much like not want to go to Manchester, so I-I Mrs. Granville as to be unmistakeably her persuaded my husband to start without me. Then, as I tell him everything in my letters, I asked him if I might go to Lady Mordaunt's as I was dull. He gave me his full permission to go anywhere, except to your mother's. And I have been thinking since then that he may have forgotten who I adv. Mordaunt is some intellectually delice the control of the mandal transfer. have forgotten who Lady Mordaunt is, some intellectual looking man, and the

mother's lest you should meet me, and ly fashion as he talked. that he would be angry if he knew that you see me at my sister's house?"

friends coming from Paris to-morrow, and not room enough in the house for them all. I can take that as an excuse

other society. The idea of turning you

if I can see you pass by now and then in the streets, or in the Park, why, that be a miserable woman." is all I can wish for, all I can hope for now. Good-night."

His voice was breaking as he spoke, dead! If he were only here now, that she He did not try to touch her hand, but might creep to his side and lay her achturned abruptly away as he finished ing head upon his knee, and live out the speaking, and, almost before she realised residue of her broken life under his pre-

that he was going, he had left the house.

For a few moments Lola stood quite
still: then, as if seized by a sudden restrange faces say; but, with more tenderness than she had ever yet dared to show, she begged him to let her come to him in Manches-

"Only telegraph and say you want me. or just say 'Come' 'I cannot tell you how much I want to see you. I am tilled with the silliest fears and the silliest faneies. You would laugh if you heard tioned them, professed ignorance as to the sender's name; and, for the first time since her marriage, the difficulties them away. Dear Bruce, I know I have them away, bear Bruce, I know I have I had a ways been specified at home, and the most acute pain. She could never the most acute pain. just because you were more busy and the most acute pain. She could never he neglected and or the pain just because you were more busy and the most acute pain. She could never he neglected and or the had seen in her than the bear to look upon his face again; it was that blank despair he had seen in her than the bear to look upon his face again; it was out meaning it you have frightened me, and checked me when I wanted to tell proach isin. you how much I loved you. And I have a great deal to explain to you about what ady Mordaunt, brought, so the girl-aid, y a gentleman.

Acting upon the impulse of the most and have treated others hadly the rundle of the wholes seemed to restrict the rundle of the rundle of the wholes seemed to restrict the rundle of the rundle o ment, Lola, who guessed from the description that the bearer was none other and but one but weakness and ignorance and I will ance. But never you, dear; and I will tell you all this when I come."

It was growing dark when she tinished she overtook him, to ask him whether this letter, and her eyes were blinded Her messenger had scarcely departed before Lola regretted the stepshe had taken to but it was then too late to go back, for Bruce, and place it in Mrs. Laidlaw's still more by tears as she was closing it.

It was kindly written; it reproached her for not having come to Manchester. Entering the room, he found her standing by the table in the subdued light of a summer evening. She were the black lace gown in which he had seen her at touch of constraint in its wording that touch of constraint in its wording that seemed to render her own impulsive effusion hysterical and silly by comparieffusion hysterical and silly by comparison. With a chilled feeling at her heart, Lola tore up the closely-written sheet she had just written. Then she read her Aubrey de Vaux: but Lola did not see husband's letter again and again, and all through the night she thought of him and of Aubrey and was haunted by nightmare fancies of a hideous trouble that was pursuing her, creeping up to

vexed you. Indeed, that was far from out of the house before anyone in it was

ling street leading to the stage-door, two

be dead long before he returns."

"Now you make me really angry," said Lola, flushing hotly. "I sent for you to ask you never to give me flowers again. But I may have to tell you I would rather not steak to you at all would rather not steak to you at all.

#### CHAPTER XXL

paid the man, and then stood for a mo-"I am not sure whether I shall be able ment on the narrow pavement, star-ing before her, too much shocked by "But you have premised to come to what she had seen to be capable of lunch; it is settled, and several people thought. The sound of a voice asking are invited to meet you." he said eager her whether she wanted anyone at the theatre recalled her to herself. Shaking her head, she moved off rapidly in the ly pulling a flower to pieces, and inwards direction her husband and Ella Granville.

Ly resolving to pass Sunday at home.

Aubrey came away from the door and der they were walking slowly, absorbed in earnest talk. Slackening her pace. "Will you tell me," be asked, rather Lea followed them at a little distance, unsteadily, "whether I have anything to with clouded hands and burning checks, do with your change of plans!"

She was silent, and he repeated his question.

Beth Bruce and his compatible to excited, and at one point Lola saw Mrs. Granville lay her hand upon Bruce's

lovely chi'd who learned against him and "That he would not let you go to my with whose fair hair he played in father-

A dry sobrose to Lola's lips; she would have turned then and left them, with that picture of the three painted on her Aubrey was silent for a moment. Then | mind for ever, but that, as Bruce and he said very sadly:

"As my sister is, you say, your only friend in London, and as you are dull, out their distination. So she followed and I am the obstacle to your visits to them again through the crowded streets, her house, may I make things right by deaf and blind to everything but the going away from it? She has some sight of her husband and that woman

pair echoing through her aching heart. the direction of Lola's house; and in After a time—Lola could never tell such a frame of mind he met her, and how long—the three turned down a saw the misery of his own heart surpass-quieter street off the main thoroughfare, ed by the stony despair in her face. and entered a house bearing a card of "Apartments to Let" in the window. Lola looked up at the number, and at the name of the street, and recognised the address of her husband's letters. Then she turned, and in the same mechanical way, as though she were living painfully through an ugly dream, she asked her way back to the railway-stat on. It : ever once occurred to her to face her husband and accuse him of his faithlessness. Like some stricken animal that feels its own death-wound, she "Not at all," he said. Why do you think I stay there? Or what should keep me in London? I will leave her house to-morrow, and I will never meet you there again, if you wish; then Mr. Laidlaw can't be angry. And if I can just hear from my sister now and then that you are well, and seem happy, and if I can see you pass by now and then wanted to creep home and die, away

less girlhood.
"Whoever marries Bruce Laidlaw will How right he had been! how right ne

always was, her one friend who was dead! If he were only here now, that she

so she wandered on through the strange faces in a strange city-hopetaken that woman to his home. He was living there with her and the child, on with his moustache, he said, whom he layished caresses his wife "Will you take this back to would have given a year of her life to obtain. He had neglected her, treated her with distant coldness, while his love was given to the vulgar and ignorant woman who had insulted his wife, and had of only boasted of the old tie between herse f and Bruce. Yet, while the memily bying down in the sitting-room, and she ory of Mrs. Granville's complacent smile | sent me away when I went up, and told and artificially heightened charms filled (me she didn't want anything." Lobs with burning anger and disgust, the ! The picture her words called up tilled equally impossible to forgive or to re-

Her lave for him, her marriage, and her present misery were the inevitable

peat her condemnation, and the strange aces around to watch her with a scornful pity. A deserted, unloved neglected wife, with no friends, no future! She felt that the curious eyes around her read all this in her eyes, clouded by a tearless anguish.

numb despair that weighed down her brain, she resolved to walk to her rooms instead of driving thither in a cab.

In the street in which she lived, passing through it in the twilight, absorbed said in her miserable thoughts, she came face to face with a man who fell back a step him, and he turned and watched her cress the road to her house and stand on the steps after she had rung the beli-a beautiful, bright-haired woman in dusty black garments, with a look of fixed des-

Yet be leaves you here alone when persons, a man and a woman, issued from the goes to Manchester," said Aubrey it, and walked along the narrow pave cured me because I never trusted myself is charged with the duty of selecting to speak of her. But you were wrong, three names from the magistracy list of And now to see her neglected and alone is sending me mad. I feel I shall kill that husband of hers if I watch the solemnly selects the first name in each shadows growing in her face much long- trie, thus appointing the unhappy man er. I have changed my address because to the office of high sheriff, which he is he—that brute she has married—would bound to accept or pay a fine of 500 be angry with her, she says, if he thought | pounds in default. Lots of magistrates she met me at my sister's. And this sent excuses on Thursday, mostly plead-beautiful child knows no one in London but Alice is heating her wings out in an be exempted because he was "the but Alice, is beating her wings out in an ugly, dingy London lodging-house, all youngest son of a younger son, and of alone, the steny-heavted monster she has small means." Another wanted to be alone, the stemy-hearted monster sin married is away in Manchester. She tells me she refused to go - she will not a small income from his wife's property, and had eleven children, whom he sent sent section in the county. that if I meet him I shall kill him.

ier party at an afternoon reception, and



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and child, and the voice of her own des- had wandered off, almost insensibly, in

Shocked, wondering, and fully of pity for her and mad rage against whomsoever had made her suffer, Aubrey lingered near the house which Lola had entered, longing passionately that he might fol-low and strive to comfort her, but not tempt. More than an hour he spent in daring to risk offending her by such an atpacing up and down the street and the environs, until at length, his love and anxiety on her account beating down all scruples, be resolved on making some conventional enquiry of the servant as to Mrs. Laidlaw's health. Some excuse for so late a visit being indispensable, he hurried to the nearest book-shop, and bought there at random a new novel which the shopman recommended. Armed with this, he proceeded to Lola's

It was eight o'clock and when the servant opened the door Aubrey put into her hands the volume he had purchased, and apologised for the lateness of his

"I happened to be passing," he explained, "so I brought Mrs. Laidlaw this

book from my sister. Is she quite well?"
"No; Mrs. Laidlaw is not very well," the girl informed him. "She's been to Manchester and back to-day, and I think it's tired her," she said;

'Aubreys face changed at the news. He less, friendless, and desolate. He had grew paler still, and at length, after standing a moment in silence, fidgetting

"Will you take this book to Mrs. Laidlaw and my card, and will you ask her if she could see me for a few moments, as I am leaving London to-morrow:

"I would rather not, sir," said the girl, I really think Mrs. Laidlaw is iil, and

Aubrey with the deepest agitation, Lola ill, neglected, and ab ne, lighting with face two hours before, with no friend to help her, no human soul to sympathise with hers in its greatest need.

At these thoughts a very agony took results of her own rash folly—of misers possession of the mind of the man who able mistakes, for which she was atoning loved her. She taid been to Manchester; she had seen her husband; and he had driven her from him to break her heart in helpless grief at his cinelty. It was well for Bruce Laidlaw that he could not meet his former rival at that moment.

The little servant stood with the book in her hand, holding the door open, Aubrey's back was towards her. She could not see the excitement that convulsed his features; nor, in the semi-It was half-past six in the evening darkness of the half, could she notice when she reached London, and thinking how the young man trembled from head that physical motion might relieve the to foot, and nervously elenched his hands in the pauss that followed her words.

Yet, even to her unobservant ears, his voice sounded forced and strange as he

"If Mrs. Laidlaw is ill, her friends should be sent for. I will go up and ask if I can be of any use.

(To be Continued.

Avoiding the Honor.

The ancient ceremony of nominating high sheriffs of the counties of England for the ensuing year took place last week "Indeed, I know nothing about them."

"In when she interapted him.

"Now, you know that is not true. Of course I guessed it was you who sent them, because—"

"Because at Oidford I used to fill your rooms with them. Flowers are your most natural companions. You always look as if you had been brought up among them. But pray forgive me if I among the neighbourd, and stole downstairs and look of fixed destent on her pallid face.

"Aubrey had seen her quite clearly, as he was haunting the neighborhood of the neighborhood of the neighborhood of the course in the large of a glimpse of her at the windows or passing to and from her late Mr. Goschen, by virtue of his office, but she had passed quite close to him, and early train to Manchester. There was one at half past seven. Lola packed among them. But pray forgive me if I the cupboard, and stole downstairs and out of the house before anyone in it was on the face and unhappy. So much so that out of the house before anyone in it was on the hotel to pied the lower seats. The office of high on this same morning, from the hotel to which he had just removed, he had written to to his mother a long incoherent letter to the said humility of his tones. "Only I to the theatre where Bruce's piece know my husband would rather I only received flowers from him; and he never forgets any with of min; and the forgets and min; and the lower seats.

I must go also define from the hotel to which he had just removed, he had written to his mother a long incoherent letter to his mother a long incoherent let growing so mendurable to him that he could not bear it much longer.

"I must go abroad again," he wrote.
"I cannot come to you, as I should only county court over which the chancellor of every county for submission to the Queen, who, afterward sitting in council. to the office of high sheriff, which he is He frequently had to borrow money With such thoughts in his head, from his banker, and so on.-Hosbar Re Aubrey had suddenly left his sister and public.

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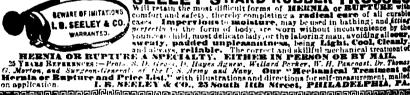
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