ANNA HANSON DORSEY, AUTHOR OF "COAINA," "FLEMMINGS,"
"TANGLED PATHS," "MAY
BROOKE," ETC., ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XVI.-CONTINUED. Quickly the attendants had borne the enrale chair from the Practorium, that the pious Valerian, in his zeal for the honor of the gods, might witness at his ease the agonies of the tortured Chris-tian, who had blasphemously denied tian, who had blasphemously denied them and defied him. He saw his vic-tim's flesh, penetrated by the fierce heat, begin to shrivel and scorch. It was a brave show for his cruel eyes, but triumph; for no moan or murmur yet been wrung from the dying had yet lips: on the contrary, they had only declared his faith, his joy in suffering for Jesus Christ; and from his flery couch he reproved and warned Valcrian as the slow hours dragged on. "Learn, impious tyrant!" he cried,

"these coals are for me refreshing, but for thee they will burn to all eternity. . . Thou, O Lord! knowest that when accused I have not denied, when questioned I have answered, when tor-tured I have given thanks," (Acts of

St. Laurence.)
The Numidians stirred the glowing mass of fire to such a heat that themselves shrunk swiftly back. Again rose the martyr's voice clear on the night, whose darkness was dispelled by the fire that consumed him, while a smile of supernal joy irradiated his countenance: "I thank Thee, O Jesus countenance: "I thank Theo, of the Christ! that Thou hast deigned to comfort me." Slowly consuming, life still lingered in his tortured frame. The night waned: Laurence already saw the gleaming of a dawn which would usher in the endless day; and, while every nerve was stung with speakable agony, while heart and muscles melted in the flery glow, and the marrow of his charred bones withered, he cried out: "I thank Thee, Lord Jesus! that I am found worthy to

pass through Thy gates." It was over; the passion and pain, the bitterness of the worst that could be done by human cruelty instigated by fiends-their malignity aggravated by the knowledge that to harm only the body was the limit of their power—all was past as a dream, and Lawrence, was past as a dream, and Lawrence like gold refined by the fire, entered with stainless garments into the Land of the Living, to receive the palm and

crown he had so valiantly won. The satisfaction of Valerian was in complete; he had compassed the death of Lawrence, but had failed to reach drag down the invincible which had soared above him to the end He felt baffled and vengeful and retired to his ivory, silk-draped couch to seel oblivion in a drunken sleep.

The body of Laurence moved from his iron-grated, flery couch when life became extinct, but was left to burn until the smouldering coals turned to ashes; and when the dark hour just before dawn wrapped the in deeper shadows, the guards, either drunk or overcome with sleep or perhaps gold, relaxed their vigiland and there was no sound except the wind among the palms, that sounded like a low-breathed threnody. three dark figures now emerged cauti-ously from the shadows towards the sacred remains; with a quick move-ment, yet reverent and tender, wrapped them in rich stuffs, and glided noiselessly as they had come. It was Hippolytus and two other Christians, disciples and friends of Laurence who bore away his charred body and concealed it in the Garden of Cyriaca, n a place they had prepared for it.

In the three days that followed, Hip-polytus set his affairs in order, liber-ated his slaves, and distributed his goods to the poor. Not too soon were goods to the poor. Not too soon were his arrangements completed, for on the evening of the third day his house was surrounded by soldiers, he was arrested and taken before the procurator, on the an and of stealing the body of Laurence. He admitted that he had done so, not as a magician, but as a Christian. The pretence of a trial followed; he was tortured, cajoled; they appealed to his military pride, to his love for his family and all the horrors that awaited the well as himself, in case he should prove obstinate, were depicted to him; and Bast of all came a message from the Emperor, offering him honors and riches if he would abandon his new and return to the worship of the gods. But he rejected all for Christ, and submitted to the most cruel counting all things as nothing for the sake of his Divine Master.

Then his family, with the slaves who had been converted by the president his

Laurence in the dungeons under house-among them the old man who had been miraculously restored to sight by the holy Deacon, together with his son-were conducted outside the Via Tibertina, and put to death before his eyes. But his constancy remained unshaken; his fervor only increased; when, finding him impervious to every attempt made to seduce his faith, Valerian Imperator sentenced him to die, but not by any of the usual methods this was to be something novel, inspiriting, and would delight Rome as a revival of something classic as well as

On the appointed day, everything being prepared, with the Emperor and all Rome for spectators, two unbroken horses, with wild, flery eyes, were led forth, their ears lying back, their red nostrils expanded, their veins and muscles strained like cords in their eagerness to break from the restraints of the stalwart Dacian soldiers who held them in. Hippolytus was not appalled by what he saw before him; he and learned how to die, and joyfully yielded himself to the soldiers, who now seized and bound him between horres, who suddenly released by the Dacians, and given a stinging blow on their flanks, which was scarcely needed -sprang forward, plunged and reared to free themselves from their strange incumbrance, then dashed madly away. But before their wild race was over, the spirit of Hippolytus was reunited with that of Sixtus, Laurence, and the

martyrs of his own household, who had so brief a time preceded him. Gods of Rome, have your eyes grown dim, your ears heavy? Have your magi-cians lost their vaunted skill? Can they no longer work their mighty spells? Have your augurs ceased to read dreams and portents that shadow coming fate? What strange lethargy has stolen over ye? Does the perpet-ual incense rising from your altars make ye drowsy, or does the crimson mist ascending from the blood of the holy ones slain in your honor veil from ye the near future and the coming destruction? Can ye not hear the tramp-ing of the armed host marching down through the pleasant towards the Tiber-a host led by a cross of flame in the heavens, under which in characters of fire is writ: "In this sign conquer ?"

Do ye not see, O gods, the great, splendid army of Maxentius— whose splendid army of Maxentius—whose proud boast is that he has extinguished Christianity—waiting for the advance of the foe on the hither side of the Tiber, where it flows between Latium and Etruria? Although the time is not quite five decades distant, Valerian, 252-260, Constantine, 306-337. Between Valerian and Constantine forty-

iveen valerian and Constantine forty-six years. It is not yet too late— if ye are gods—to prepare your thunderbolts to destroy the in-vader. But ye will not awaken, and the hostile armies meet—the one the Cross, the other by the Eagles which have dever known defeat. The shock and clash of battle shake the and rend the air; Maxentius, ded and pursued, sinks in his wounded and pursued, sinks in his heavy armor under the swift-flowing Tiber; the Eagles fall and are trampled in the dust; the Cross triumphs. and advances to establish the throne of Christ on earth, in the seven-hilled

city of the Cresars.

But the vision does not arouse ye, great gods! Ye dreams as if your great gods! Ye dreams as if your thrones were founded on eternity, for-getting the Seer from the Euphrates, and his and his mysterious words on Mt. Pho-gor, in the land of Moab, seven hundred years before Rome was founded:
"They shall come in galleys from Italy they shall overcome the Assyrians, and shall waste the Hebrews: and at the last they themselves also shall perish.'

—(Numbers xxiv., 24.)

## CHAPTER XVII.

LETTER FOR LAODICE-FABIAN BACK FROM UMBRIA-SEQUENCES.

Nemesius' letter to Laodice, which he confided to the old steward, was given to Admetus on the following norning, with strict injunctions to obey the instructions he received concerning As the latter dropped it into an geniously contrived pouch, concealed the folds of his tunic, his brave, bright eyes gave assurance that he comprehended, and would be faithful to his trust; then, without question or delay, he left the villa. When the youth reached the imperial

palace his business was roughly chal lenged by the official at the great por-

"I have a message for the Lady Laodice, to be delivered in person," he answered, modestly.

He was permitted to enter—for no

ne would venture to interfere with or obstruct the affairs of Laodice, were they great or small-and directed which way to go. After being stopped and questioned here and there by various ficials of the palace, he reached the ante-room of her apartments, where he encountered the majordomo of her estab lishment, to whom he stated his errand. Not pleased at being interrupted in an angry discussion he was holding with tradesman, about some overcharges he had detected in his accounts, oughly bade the intrusive young stranger go in and wait. Yes, it was evident to Admetus that he would have to wait; for, although persons were passing to and fro, they were too intent on their own errands even to notice his presence; and he leaned against a column to rest, and bide his time.

Several female slaves, the personal attendants of their lady, I in, and, meeting in a group a short distance from the lad, began to chatter and giggle, and throw saucy glances around in quest of admiration, as well as of any incidental thing that would serve to raise a laugh. They caught sight of Admetus, posed like a fair statue of Hylas against the column, all and certainly without desire of attract ug such attention; and one of them, pretty young jade, with a significant wink at her companions, danced towards him, and asked who might be his busithere at so early an hour. He told her the same thing he had told th others who had questioned him. She laughed good-naturedly, and, with a grimace, hoped he had taken his breakfast before leaving home, as her lady had not yet risen, and might not do so

I will wait," he answered, quietly. hoping the girl would go away and leave him alone with his thoughts; but she was ripe for mischief, and beckoned her companions around her to amuse themelves at the expense of his simplicity.

For a little while they thought they were having everything their own way, for his answers to their silly questions were literal and brief; but, quickly penetrating their purpose, he turned the laugh against them by a few goodnatured sarcasms, and a sharpness of humor that admonished them it would be best to leave him to himself. But they were loth to yield him the advantage, and tried their best by cajolery and banter to induce him to confide to them the message of which he was the bearer, declaring that their lady al-ways expected such things to be delivered to her the moment her eyes were open; and if they were delayed, whoever was nearest felt the point of her stiletto, while the others were punished with the lash.

But Admetus was unmoved; it might be as they said, but fidelity to duty was part of his religion, and he continued to evade their curiosity, until, find-

less creatures, the youth found shelter in the embrasure of one of the great bidding and started, like a sleuth- pretty and very delicate. Her face

windows, where the ruffled plumes of his spirit were smoothed by meditat-ing on the holy things in which his soul delighted. His thoughts wandered away to the dim galleries of the Cata-combs; he heard the sweet, solemn hymns floating through the darkness; e saw the star-like glimmer of tapers where some sacred function was being celebrated, and upon his ear rose and fell the plaintive chaunts of the Church as the torn, broken bodies of the martyrs were deposited like precious jawels in her treasure-house, embalmed by her tears, and glorified by her joy

by her tears, and glorified by her joy at their victory over death and hell. The soft touch of a hand upon his shoulder recalled the young Christian from his waking-dream, and he saw a dark-visaged man, whose narslender, dark-visaged man, whose har-row, glittering eyes were fixed upon his face, standing before him. A som-bre-colored mantle, the hook of which was drawn over his head, partially hading his countenance, fell from his shoulders; and so impassive did he look, that, until he spoke, Admetus doubted if it were he that had touched

"My mistress, the Lady Laodice, "My mistress, the lady laddles, is informed that thou hast a message for her. Thou wilt follow me to her presence," he said, leading the way.
Glad that a successful termination of of his confidential errand was at hand,

Admetus required no urging to follow his guide. From the ante-chamber his guide. From the ante-chamber they passed through several spacious communicating rooms, all richly furnished in the luxurious style then prevailing in Rome—each more superb than the last—until the one that terminated the suite was reached. Here the Cypriot—for it was he—paused, and blew a soft note on a small whistle that hung from his wrist. The heavy curtains were drawn back instantly, and a voice bade them enter. vas excluded from this apartment by hangings rich with gold embroidery and it was only by the radiance of the and it was only by the radiates of the perfumed lamp, suspended by fine gilt chains from the ceiling, whose rays glimmered on the most salient points of the splendid appointments, that an idea of the manifectory of the splendid appointments. ould be formed of its magnificence. On a couch, over which was throw

ightly a coverlet of white silk, threaded and fringed with silver, reclined the beautiful Laodice. Her dark, indolent eyes, half veiled by their fringed lids, glanced carelessly at Admetus, as under the guidance of the Cypriot, he advanced towards her. Raising her on her elbow, she said, haughtily:

"What message can such as thou have for me, that could not have been given without the intrusion of thy I have only obeyed orders, lady,"

"Whose orders?" she flamed out.
"A letter has been confided to me to deliver into no hands except those of the person to whom it is addressed," he

answered.
"A letter!" she exclaimed; "show it, that I may see if it is for me."
"Tell me first who thou art, lady, that there may be no mistake," was the

firm reply.
"Teil him," she said to the Cypriot, while a thought and a hope as swift a

light sent a quich tremor through her The Cypriot announced her name and

"It is for thee, lady. Forgive me if I have been over-cautious," said Admetus, as he placed the letter in her

Laodice made a quick sign to the Cypriot to withdraw, and trust a gold coin into the hand of Admetus which the lad would have refused but for the thought of some half-starved children he knew of, whom it would afford him the means of relieving; for their sake he accepted it with a gesture of thanks, which she did not notice, and left her

When alone she tore open the letter, snapping the silk cords and scattering in fragments the waxen seal that secured it, so wildly eager was she to realize the reach the contents, and hope on which her very life seemed to lines that shattered her dream, that covered her womanly pride with humil-iation, and pierced her heart with the keenest pangs of disappointment, she turned her face to the wall and wept wall and wept bitterly, and in her despair grasped he stiletto with the intention of ending it all by one suicidal blow; for how could conscious of his own classic beauty, she endure life after this relentless

However, having reached this pasonate climax of emotion, a revulsion set in, and grief gave place to rage. She had placed herself at the feet of Nemesius, to be scorned and pitied, while he boasted of his love for another; to be insulted by his cold wishes for her happiness, and his assurance of forgetfulness. That is how she read his anly, honorable, delicate words; and the more she thought them over the nore furious she grew, until her wild, osssionate love was turned to deadly

Later in the day the Cypriot was summoned to her presence. Not a trace of the storm of passion she had passed through was discernible; her attire was more than usually rich and becoming her countenance more haughty, and her wonderful beauty more regal. there was pallor, it was concealed by artfully applied cosmetics. Her most costly jewels glittered over her person, and rare perfumes floated around her She, with some other ladies of rank, had been invited to the imperial table that evening, to sup with two foreign princes who had just arrived in Rome, and she resolved to appear at her fairest, and show no trace of the eclipse that had darkened her hopes.

The Cypriot slave entered and stood

before her, his head bowed, his serpentlike eyes cast down, his dark, slender folded under his wide sleeves hands waiting, yet intently alert. She spoke to him in a low voice, and if her instruc tions were brief, they were also emphatie; then she emptied gold in his palm as an earnest of future rewards, and not as a bribe to be faithful to her behests; ing their attempt a failure, they left him.

Thankful to be rid of the silly, shame
Thankful to be rid of the silly, shame-She dismissed him, and once more at her

hound, on the track of the noble Neme-Fabian was still in Umbria when

Laurence and Hippolytus won their crowns and palms by sufferings so cruel that even Rome shuddered and sickened at the spectacle. He was enjoying through all his beauty-loving, sensuous nature, the quiet solitudes and balm fragrance of the wild, forest clad hills where no sound or rumor of the dis cordant passions of men and their con flicts could reach him, until, having regained the mental poise so rudely shaken by the tragic fate of Evaristus, he decided to return home. Fate and the Furies, he thought, having done their he would from henceforth fac the sunshine, and leave the ghosts of the past to oblivion. He little dreamed of what lay before him, and how near it

So one day Fabian walked into his palace as if he had left it only an hour before, refreshed himself with a bath, took his prandial meal, drank a cup of wine, and stretched himself wine, and stretched himself upon the pillows of his couch, where he slept until late in the afternoon. When he awoke, fully recovered from the fatigue of his journey, he ordered his horse to ride to the villa on the Aventine, where he hoped to find Nemesius, from whom he would hear all that was worth knowing, of what had been going on in the Roman world during his absence; and a softer world during his absence; and see, expression stole over his handsome face, as he thought of seeing Claudia, who held a deeper place in his affections than he himself knew.

He had a new pet for his little friend,

hich he had purchased one day out on the hills from some hunters, who had brought it from the other side of the Apennines, and were on their way to their homes in the valley. It was a pecies of beautiful little antulope, known to us as gazelle) soft and furry, with great, mild eyes, and slender legs hen the hunters killed its mother, it vas too young to stand alone, and they and borne it along in their arms, alm humanizing it by their care; so that when they were lucky enough to meet it was very tame, which fact increased its value. He gave them their price, and confided the little crea-He gave them ture to the care of the peasant-farmer, under whose thatched roof he sometimes slept, and who for a generous gratuity agreed to deliver it safely in Rome, whither he was preparing to go with his lives and sundried figs and honeycarry his proombs-a long way to ducts, but he got a better price them there than at home.

The peasant faithfully fulfilled his

trust, and Fabian was well satisfied on his return to find the pretty, graceful creature arrived, and in good condition. He anticipated Claudia's delight in the possession of such a gentle pet, which she could fondle and love, and her amusement when he would relate all that he had treasured up—facts mixed with fable-for her entertainment ; for he counted no stretch of the imagination or poetic license too great, won a laugh from her. He thought of her as still blind, and that it was his chief mission upon earth to make her happy, notwithstanding the cruel de-

Fabian was full of pleasant thoughts when he got in sight of the great bronze gates of the villa, but his attention was suddenly arrested by the sight of quite a number of miserable-looking beings who had just issued from the avenue, followed by Admetus, with a basket on his arm, evidently intent on ome errand. Hearing the clatter of hoofs on the stony road, the youth looked up in pleased recognition of the noble gentleman, who had always a kind word for him whenever they met. He would have gone on his way, but

Fabian drew rein, saying:

"Aha, is it thou my choragus! Tell
me, if thou canst, the meaning of me, if thou caust, the meaning of yonder miserable procession."

"The times are very hard for the

poor, sir, and there are many in Rome who are starving, and some of them come ere for alms," replied Admetus.

## TO BE CONTINUED.

## THE LASS WITH THE DELICATE that Miss Hobbs, her companion, put AIR.

As a child even she had a thousand pretty airs and graces. When she stood on tiptoe, her wild auburn curls framing her little head, she looked like a flying sylph. Her eyebrows were two slender black ridges. Her small, white nose cocked itself two slender small, white so slightly, giving archness ever to a beauty that might otherwise have been too much of a dolly kind. Eyes blue as lobelia. A touch of vivid red in the cheeks repeated in the lips. firm white chin. A row of milky teeth. These were some of Mistress Pam's beauties.

Add to these a lively and winning disposition, clever fingers, the voice of a blackbird and an honest little heart and you have Pam. She had a figure, too, at once slender and rounded. that was later, and Pam, when old Lady Mary first beheld her, was swathed in a lilac cotton pinafore which did no injustice to her childish body.

She also wore a sunbonnet perched atop of her head as no village child be fore her ever perched such an article. The peeled willow wand which she swished behind those lazy creatures. Silky and Sukey, going home from the milking, she carried with a delicate fairy-like air, and as she swished it to keep the flies off and not by way of punishment, the creatures' great brown eyes were turned upon her as though they thanked her and loved her, as indeed they did, for all the dumb crea

tures loved Pam.
She had come to Cherry Tree Farm in an odd way, being the child of a lady who had taken rooms there when Pam

was two years old. At first her mother's stay was to have been of weeks. When she came there she had spoken to Mrs. Ashley of the time when she must return to London always as though she dreaded it. But the weeks grew into months, the months into years, and still she and her little girl were the occupants of the clean, fragrant rooms that looked into the cherry orchard from which the farm took its name.

When she came first she was very

looked as though it might once have had the archness which was so delightful in the child's face, if only it had not worn the scared expression clouded its beauty.

Gradually as time went by the scared ook became fainter and fainter. The lady ceased to start at a footstep and turn white and fluttery at an unexpected voice.

Mrs. Ashley was as comfortable as her beds, and that was to say a good deal. She was the soft, warm, pillowy kind of woman who is good for tired and buffeted people. Little by little the widow lady, Mrs. Brooke, yielded to the comfort of the place and its mistress and gave up talking of the time when she must leave. Yet the comfort and peace did not make her well. The axe had been laid to the root of her tree of life ere ever she became an inmate of Cherry Tree Farm.

About two years after her coming she sat one May day at the window over-looking the orchard—a miracle of bloom now, panting for breath, while Mrs. Ashley sat by her fanning her with all her might.

her might.

"I—am—very—glad—that—I—need—go no further," panted the sick woman between her sobbing breaths.

"What—a—rest it has been—here!"

Mrs. Ashley wiped away a tear.

"I'm sure I can't imagine the place without see and little Miss Pam. Mrs.

without you and little Miss Pam, Mrs. Brooke, dearie," the kind soul said. Why, whatever would we do without the little one, Ashley and me and Mark? She'd take the sunshine with her if so be the day came that she must go, which I pray it may never come.' Dear soul-it brings me to-what I wanted to say. Will you—keep her?—you and Mr. Ashley— and Mark. There's two—hundred pounds in bank notes-in my desk. Will you-take it

Mrs. Ashley flushed a generous red. and keep her?' We'll keep the precious lamb with-that," she said. "There, dearie, out that," don't you fret. The little one'll be safe. We'll take as much care of her safe. We'll take as much care of her as though she were our own child."

Mrs. Brooke pressed with her thin hand on Mrs. Ashley's arm so tightly that she hurt her. The hot damp of

that she hurt her. The hot damp of the hand left its mark on the good

woman's Holland sleeve.

"Will you—rear her—as your own?"

"Aye, surely will I. And watch over her as my own. And if I do not do right by her, may the Lord judge Mrs. Brooke died comforted, as she

had lived comforted, at Cherry Tree Farm, and Pamela was the light of house to Farmer Ashley, to Mrs. Ashley and to their one son, Mark, a serious, handsome lad, with a desire for learning which Mr. Ferrars, the rector, had fostered by all the means that lay in his power, assuring his father and mother that education would not make

a worse farmer of the boy, but a better.
Then came the day when Lady Mary
A'Court found Pamela driving home

the cows. She was rather a terrible seeming old woman, and a very unhappy one, people said. Her only son had inherited the wildness and wickedness of his father. When he had come to man's estate he had left her, as his father had done before him, to eat her heart out in loneliness. Those who knew her best said that behind the alarming aspect which Lady Mary presented there was a bruised and tender heart. Archie had died as his father before him had done, without a word to her, in squalid and painful circumstances, cut

midst of his sins.

The strange thing was that the A'Courts had been good, except for Lady Mary's husband and son. The present possessor of the title was re-nowned for his goodness. Lady Mary, out of the bitterness of her fate, dis-liked him for it. Why should Norman be of good report in every man's mouth while the two Archies had been such black sheep? Why, indeed? She could have tolerated Sir Norman better

if he had had a few soils on his fleece. But at the sight of the little cow girl Lady Mary began to tremble so muc out a hand to steady her.
"Who is she, Hobbs?" cried Lady

Mary, shaking like a leaf, "Who is she? Where does she come from? Ask her her name. Great heavens Hobbs, you see the likeness?

"There is a likeness, my lady," ac knowledged Miss Hobbs, a flush leap-ing into her faded cheeks that made one forget for the moment her more than forty years. She was almost as excited as Lady Mary.

Pamela was looking at them in amazement from under her big hat, while the

cows had passed them by and gone on

placidly to the milking shed.
"Who are you, my dear? What is your name?" asked Miss Hobbs, her eyes almost as hungry as Lady Mary's upon the innocent face.

"Pamela is my name." the child ansered. "I live at the Cherry Tree wered. Farm, with my granny, Mrs. Ashley."
Miss Hobbs turned and looked her disappointment into Lady Mary's face,

expecting to find it answered there.

"She is Mrs. Ashley's granddaughter, my Lady," she said. "I didn't know Mrs. Ashley had a child married." Nor has she, Harriet Hobbs"-

Mary peered more closely Lady the brilliant, delicate face—" and if she had, she wouldn't look like that. There's breeding there: don't you see it? I'm the child's granny. I'm your granny, my dear. Come and kiss me!" But Pamela only looked uncertain as to whether she ought not to run away

om the trembling, flerce-looking old lady. Then Mrs. Ashley came bustling out see what was keeping her darling.

and catching sight of Lady Mary's carriage and footmen and recognizing the A'Court liveries before she came face to face with the ladies, she was full of excitement and flurry. All the country-side belonged to the A'Courts, including Cherry Tree Farm, and Lady Mary was a just and generous Lady of the Manor. It was her first visit to Cherry Tree Farm since her return from her years of absence abroad, dur-ing which she had tried to forget that the two Archies had broken her heart.

But in the old days she had often visit-

ed there.
"Will your Ladyship step in and have a glass of my currant wine? gan Mrs. Ashley, in a flutter.

"Who is the child?" asked Lady Mary, as though she had not heard,

pointing a shaking finger at Pamela. "She is mine now." Mrs, Ashley looked frightened. "She is mine now, your Ladyship.

She is yours now. But whose "Ah! was she before she became yours?

"Run along in my pretty," said Mrs. Ashley to Pamela. "Run along in. Daddy and Mark are storing the apples in the apple loft. Run and see you can help them.' Pamela ran off, glad enough to es-

cape from Lady Mary and her alarming ways.

" Now !" said Lady Mary, turning her eager eyes on Mrs. Ashley's face, which had begun to wear a look of dis-tress and fear. "Now, how did she come to you?"

If you please, my lady, her own dear mother brought her here. Her own dear mother gave her to me. A few weeks before she died she said to

me. 'Mrs. Ashley Lady Mary su 'Mrs. Ashley,' says she—''
dy Mary suddenly leaned more heavily on her stick.

"I will come into your nice cool parlor," she said, " and you shall tell me everything. Ah! thank you, Harriet."
Miss Hobbs had offered her Lady.

ship an arm.
"I grow old, Mrs. Ashley." Lady

Mary went on, "and I cannot bear shocks as I used to. The sight of that child was a great shock to me. She is the image of my son."

"Begging your pardon, my lady, she is a dear pretty methor

is the image of her dear, pretty mother as well as of Master Archie.'

"I know, I know." Lady Mary did not seem to have noticed Mrs. Ashley's involuntary betrayal. We saw that too, didn't we, Harriet? Ah how cool this is, how sweet! Now tell me everything about the child and her other-everything.'

Lady Mary sank into the great chintz-covered armchair in Mrs. Ash ley's parior. She waved away the offered refreshments.

"No, go on," she said; go on. Tell me all about the child!"

Mrs. Ashley's comfortable face had grown frightened and anxious looking. In a dull voice she told Lady Mary all she had to tell about Pamela's

mother and Pamela.

"She left some papers, some clew to who she was?" asked the old lady, when a pause had come in the narra "There is her desk, my lady; you

will see it for yourself. But there is very little. Mrs. Brooke burnt a great many papers as soon as she found she had not long to live."
"Mrs. Brooke? She was not Mrs. Brooke. She was Lady A'Court."

" Are you not too impetuous ?" said

Miss Hobbs at her elbow.
"No, Harriet, my dear, I am not. You see for yourself that the child is Archie's child, and we know now that the pastel drawing which he called "The Lass with the Delicate Air we found among his belongings must have been a portrait of his

child is the drawing over again. "So she is, my lady; so she is," as sented Miss Hobbs, hastily. "But here comes Mrs. Ashley with the poor lady's

comes Mrs. Ashley with the poor lady s desk and workbox. Now we shall see what they contain."

But they contained nothing, abso-lutely nothing that could lead to identi-fication. Lady Mary had brought to her one after another the things that belonged to the dead lady, her garments. her books, all her things which Ashley had put by for the child. But there was nothing. Even the un clothing bore no name or initial. When Mrs. Brooke had said good-bye to her former life she had said it forever.

Once during Mrs. Ashley's absence on a quest for something more Lady Mary turned to Miss Hobbs:

"I thought once," she said, "of doing the like with Sir Archibald; I mean, of going away where he would never find me. Only the boy came to keep me. It is likely that he drove a woman away from him, as his father went near to doing before him? Oh, Archie!"

Miss Hobbs answered the cry in the old voice, the appeal in the bright old eyes suddenly grown dim.
"It is not likely," she said. "Mr.
Archie was well loved. He had a good

heart. Ah! you good soul, you good creature," said Lady Mary, pressing her

Then Mrs. Ashley was in the room and no more was said.

and no more was said.

At last everything had been examined without result, and Mrs. Ashley, with an odd air of relief, had carried away one lavender-scented bundle after another to the cupboard upstairs. She had worn a disturbed and guilty air during the examination, if there had been anybody observant enough to see it. But neither Lady Mary nor Miss Hobbs had any for her.

When the last bundle had been returned Lady Mary said something which was a bombshell to Mrs. Ashley's

half-regained cheerfulness.
"I go abroad in a month's time," she said. "I shall take the child with said. "I shall take the me."
"Oh! my lady," cried poor Mrs. Ash"Oh! my lady," cried poor Mrs. Msh. We

ley, with a scared face, "her mogave her to me, the pretty lamb. love her as our own child. I don't know what Ashley would say. And the

boy is wrapped up in her."
"She is my grandchild," said Lady
Mary, in a cold and somewhat proud
voice. "I am very grateful to you for the care you have taken of her. I hope you will allow me to—" "Not a penny, your Ladyship," inter-

rupted Mrs. Ashley, as proud as herself. "Her dear mamma left £200 for her. It is in the bank in her name. Neither Ashley nor I would ever touch a penny of it. "Twasn't much she ever cost us, the pretty dear, and the little we did was well repaid by the joy

she brought us."
She suddenly broke down and sobbed into the corner of her apron. Lady Mary looked abashed an instant. Then

she stood up an heaving should I am very you see the chi take her. You go my rights a few days longe used to the ide

When, a wee brought to the lavender mush tween her and thing to with quite a scene l arated, and wh ing and strug off to the big her little bed

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