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Lady of the Tower

(Continued from page 21.)

"voice from the grave"

"voice from the grave" speeded the departing visitors. He had been in the kitchen, it was true, but only for something under half a minute.

"Yes, it was the boy," she said when she rejoined Hilda. "But he does not want us to know, and I shouldn't like to press him. He would probably be driven to lie, and being an honest little chap would hate himself for doing so."

self for doing so."

"That would be a pity, but I wish we could find out what is working in that juvenile brain," replied Hilda

The threat of foreclosure on her meagre patrimony had left her outwardly unmoved, as had the phenomenon which had caused the farcical exit of her persecutors, but she was shaken more than she knew by that menace of Wilson Polglease to "see her again shortly and steep to "see her again shortly and act as his own spokesman." The threat savoured of "the whiphand," held over her by an unmannerly boor, and gall-

CHAPTER XIV.

Treachery.

ing her pride

T HE fact that Billy Craze was absent without leave was not discovered on board "The Lodestar" fill broadfact that star" till breakfast time on the morning after sailing. During the short run between Falmouth and St. Runan's Bay Lance had been much too busy on the bridge to require his services, and after the guns had been safely shipped all concerned in that arduous task were so tired that they sought their bunks immediately, leaving the working of the vessel to the officers working of the vessel to the officers and men who had not been of the

working of the vessel to the officers and men who had not been of the shore party.

On the steward reporting that the boy was missing Lance showed more anger than the desertion of such an insignificant member of the crew would appear to justify. As soon as they were alone together he explained his annoyance to Antonio Diaz, who now that his secret mission in England was fulfilled took his place as the only passenger at the saloon table.

"I don't half like the little devil being left behind," said Lance. "He is as, sharp as they make 'em, and he's sure to have picked up something of our intentions."

"But he is loyal. He would not—what is it you call it—give us away?" suggested Diaz.

"Not willingly, but there is the risk of his being."

"Not willingly, but there is the risk of his being got hold of and having it wormed or bullied out of him," said Lance. "Wilson Polgleaze is ripe for mischief. That beauty will leave no stone unturned to got to the Tower. mischief. That beauty will leave no stone unturned to get to the Tower. He didn't see much, because I purposely downed him before he had the chance, but we are in ignorance of what brought him out to the Tower. It is just possible that he may have got hold of Billy already."

"Would there have been time?" queried Diaz thoughtfully.

Lance laid down his knife and fork

queried Diaz thoughtfully.

Lance laid down his knife and fork and considered. "It's a nice point," he said. "I took the boy with me when I went ashore for my last interview with Jacob Polglease. While I when I went ashore for my last interview with Jacob Polglease. While I went to the office he had some errands to do for me in the town, and he was to meet me at the landing-steps where my boat was waiting. He wasn't there, and I concluded that he had gone on board in the second wasn't there, and I concluded that he had gone on board in the second mate's boat, which had preceded mine by about five minutes. After that, in the bustle of getting under weigh, I clean forgot all about the little heagar." little beggar.

"At what hour must the objection-able Polgleaze Junior have left the town to arrive at St. Runan's when he

did?

"It's a long ride, and the fellow is a careful horseman. He cannot have been in Falmouth later than six o'clock."

"And you parted from Billy—say at half-past four?"

"About that. I couldn't swear to a

"Then our friend Wilson must have been quick about it if he got wind of

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