The Diamond Coterie.

(Continued from 1st page.)

Wardour, but there is a stain upon it."

"A stain! No, sir. Do you think that I believe in your guilt?"

Again the quick light flamed in his eyes, and now he came a step nearer.

"Do you believe in my innocence?"

"Beyond a doubt."

"When I said 'there is a stain upon my hand,' I did not mean the stain of guilt, but of suspicion, of accusation."

"There is no stain upon your hand, Doctor Heath. What is this I hear about you? They tell me you will make no defense."

He smiled down at her.

"I could make but one defense, and that—"

"And that?"

"And that, Miss Wardour, I would not make."

"Why?"

She was straining every nerve to preserve her composure; words came from her lips like frozen heartbeats.

"Because—Miss Wardour, do not ask me why."

"I do ask; I persist. Why? Why? Why?"

"Because—I see you are as imperious as ever—because I can only save myself by giving the real murderer up to justice."

She was on her feet in an instant, all her enforced calmness gone, unutterable misery in her face and voice.

"You know!" she cried. "You! Oh! my God, what shall I do!"

"Have no fear, Miss Wardour; have not I said I will keep my own counsel?"

"But, you! You! Oh, there is no reason why you should not speak; you are not bound! You are not—oh, what am I saying!" She sank back into her seat, panting and wild-eyed.

"Miss Wardour, calm yourself," he said, gently. "I am bound. It is my pleasure to keep this secret. Listen. A short time ago I received a visit from my lawyers. They told me—among other things, they thought it best that I should know—that you knew who did the deed, and that you would have us both saved, innocent and guilty alike. Before that, I had determined to keep silence; now I am doubly resolved. For your sake, I will not accuse Frank Lamotte."

"Frank—you will not accuse Frank Lamotte! And for my sake!" she almost shrieked. "For God's sake, explain. What is Frank Lamotte to me? Of what can you accuse him?"

It was Clifford's Heath's turn to lose his composure. How could he interpret her words? Was she trying to deceive him?

"Miss Wardour," he said, almost sternly, "do you wish me to understand that Francis Lamotte is nothing to you?"

"Nothing to me! the vilest, the basest, the most treacherous, the most abject of all human creatures, that is what Frank Lamotte is to me!"

Uncontrollable scorn rang in her voice; rising anger, too. How dared he couple her name with that of Frank Lamotte?

From the chaos of meaning and mysteries revolving through his mind, Clifford Heath seized upon and clung to one idea, held it in silence for a moment, then let it burst forth in words.

"Then—then you are not Frank Lamotte's promised wife?"

"! great heavens! no."

"And never have been?"

"And never have been."

Clifford Heath drew a long, deep breath. For a moment a look of gladness beamed in his eye, then it died out suddenly, as he said, almost gloomily:—

"And yet, you have said that he must be saved at all hazards. Knowing his guilt, I still am here in his place."

"In his place, oh," she came toward him with a swift, eager movement. "I begin to see! Doctor Heath, you think Frank Lamotte the guilty one?"

"I know it," grimly.

A look of relief came over her face. She breathed freely.

"You believe this," she said at last, "and yet you are here. If you have evidence against Frank Lamotte, why do you occupy a felon's cell? Why not put him in your place?"

"I have told you why. It was for your sake."

She lowered her eyes and drew back a little; but he followed her, and standing before her, looked down into her face with a persistent, searching gaze. "You must understand me now," he said, firmly, "when I believed that you loved Frank Lamotte, I said 'Then I will not stand forth and accuse the man she loves, for—I love her, and she must not be unhappy."

A great sob rose in her throat. A wave of crimson swept over her brow. She stood before him with clasped hands and drooping head.

"But for that meddlesome slip of paper," he went on, "I should not have been driven from the field, and this treachery of Lamotte's could never have been practiced upon me. Do you remember a certain day when you sent for Ray Vandyck, and he came to you from my office? Well, on that day Francis Lamotte told me that you were his promised wife, and when Ray came back, he verified the statement, having received the information from your lips. Once I hoped to come to you and say, after lifting for your eyes the veil of mystery, which I have allowed to envelope my past: 'Constance Wardour, I love you; I want you for my very own, my wife!' Now, mountains have arisen between us; I can not offer you a hand with the shadow of a stain upon it; nor a name that is tarnished by doubt and suspicion. However this affair may end for me, that hope is ended now."

It had come; the decisive moment.

She could go away now with sealed lips, and it would end indeed. She could turn away from him, leaving happiness behind her; taking with her his happiness, too; or, she could speak, and then—

She looked about her; and the bare walls and grated windows gave her strength to dare much. Had they stood together out under the broad bright sunlight; he as free as herself, she could have turned away mutely, and let her life go on as it would.

Now—now his present was overshadowed; his future difficult to read.

"Is it ended?" she said, softly. Then, looking up with sudden, charming imperiousness. "You end things very selfishly, very coolly, Doctor Heath. I do not choose to have it ended."

"Miss Wardour!—Constance!"

"Wait; you say that your lawyers told of my visit to them, and that I would not have the guilty punished. What more did they tell you—about my doings?"

"Very little; I could hardly understand why they told thus much."

"Did they tell you that I learned, through a scheming rascal in the guise of a detective, that a plot was growing against you; that I sent for Ray Vandyck, and set him over you as a temporary guardian? And that I sent next for Detective Bathurst, warning him that you were surrounded by enemies. Did they tell you that, when I learned of your arrest I left my place by Sybil Lamotte, who is delirious and yet clings to me constantly, and came to them, offering them all my fortune if they would only save me you?"

"Did you do this—Constance?"

"I have done this. Have I not earned the right, openly, before all the world, to be your champion, your truest friend, your—"

"My queen! my darling! my very own!"

All his calm is gone, all his haughtiness of bearing; with one swift movement he snatches her to his heart, and she rests in his embrace, shocked at her own boldness, and unspeakably happy.

Who dare intrude upon a lover's interview? Who dares to snatch the first coy love words from a maiden's lips, and give them to a world grown old in love making, and appraising each tender word by its own callousted old heart?

For the time all is forgotten, save one fact, they love each other well.

By and by, other thoughts come, forcing their way like unwelcome guests.

"Constance," he says, after a long interval, "you have made me anything but indifferent to my fate. Now I shall begin to struggle for my freedom; but—do you realize what a network of false testimony they have woven about me?"

"Do I realize it?" she cried. "Yes, far more than you do, or can, and—you said something about Frank Lamotte. Has he sought to injure you?"

"Constance, I thought you knew," turning upon her a look of surprise. "I thought you knew his guilt. Who, but Frank Lamotte, could gain access to my office, to purloin my handkerchief and my knife? He had a duplicate key, and—I found that key in the old cellar beside the body of John Burrill."

The look of perplexity on her face deepens into one of actual distress.

Could it be, that after all, Frank had forestalled that other one?

Back upon her memory came his words, "I can save him if I will." Where there is room for doubt there is room for hope. What if another hand had anticipated that of the paid assassin? She resolved to cling to this hope with desperation.

If there was evidence so strong against Frank Lamotte, let him take her lover's place. Why not? She began to see many things in a new light; she peered forward, catching a view of the partial truth, "as in a glass, darkly." One thing was clear, however, they must act at once! No time must be lost!

She sat before him thinking thus, yet seemingly powerless to act or speak!

"Constance. Has the possibility of Frank Lamotte's guilt overwhelmed you?"

"The possibility!" she exclaimed, starting up suddenly. "No. I know him capable of baser things than murder."

"Of baser things! My darling, what do you mean?"

"Don't ask me now; there is no time to waste in talking of him; I am going straight to your lawyers this moment; I am going to send them to you, and you shall tell them every thing."

"Despot!" His eyes devouring her.

"Of course! I am always that. They will say it is time some one took you in charge. Are you going to be dumb any more?"

"Never! My lips are unsealed from this hour; since you have dared to claim and take a share in my fate, and since I have not the courage to put so much happiness from me."

"Supposing it in your power?"

"Oh, I know better than to cope with you," smiling upon her fondly. "But my honor must be vindicated for your gracious sake, and—I must cease to be," with a sidelong glance, "'Doctor Heath, from nowhere.' Sit down, darling; our janitor is an accommodating fellow; he will not interrupt, nor shorten your stay, I am sure. I want to tell you my story. It is yours, together with all my other secrets."

She put up her hand, quickly.

"Not now," she said. "Not for a long time. I prefer you as I have known you; for me, you shall still be 'Doctor Heath, from nowhere.' Don't remonstrate: I will have it so; I will send Mr. O'Meara to you, and that odd Mr. Wedron; you shall tell them all about yourself."

"You will go to them? Constance, no; for your own sake, let us keep our love a secret for a time; until this is ended, somehow. Think, my proud darling, how much it would spare you."

She turned toward him, her mouth settling into very firm lines, a resolute look in her eyes.

"Would it spare you anything?" she asked, quietly.

"I? Oh, no. It is sacrifice for me; but, I wish to have it so. You must not visit me here. You must not let gossip say she has thrown herself away on an adventurer."

"I won't," she replied, sententiously; "I'd like to hear of anybody saying that! I'd excommunicate them, I'm going to close the mouths of gossips, by setting my seal of proprietorship upon you. I'm coming here every day; but, after this, I'll bring Aunt Honor, or Mrs. O'Meara with me. I'm going to say to every soul who names you to me: 'Doctor Heath is my affianced husband, defame him if you dare.' And I'm going straight to tell Mr. O'Meara that he must take your testimony against Frank Lamotte."

Constance kept her word. Before many days, the town rang with the news that Constance Wardour, in the face of the accusation against him, had announced her engagement to Doctor Clifford Heath.

Then a hush fell upon the aristocratic gossipers of W—, and mischievous tongues were severely bridled. It was not wise to censure too freely a man whom the heiress of Wardour had marked with her favor.

The lawyers found their client in a mood much more to their liking, and O'Meara scribbled down in his book long sentences caught from the lips of Clifford Heath, who was now a strong helper, and apt in suggestions for the defense.

He opened for them the sealed up pages of his past life.

He told them in detail, all that he had briefly stated to Constance, concerning Frank Lamotte, and more.

Every day now they were in close consultation, and every day the Wardour carriage drove at a stated hour, first to Mapleton, where it took up Constance, and then to the prison, where, accompanied by her aunt, or her guardian's wife, the heiress passed a half hour in the cell of her lover.

She still clung to the hope that the accumulating evidence against Frank Lamotte might break the chain that bound him, and open his prison doors; but, one day, a week after her first visit to the prison, Mr. O'Meara dashed this hope to atoms.

"We can bring no criminal accusation against Lamotte," he said. "The examination proved that John Burrill was killed as early as eleven o'clock that night, and investigation has proven that Lamotte remained at home all that evening, and was heard moving about in his room until after midnight. I'm terribly sorry, Constance, but the case stands just about as it did at first, and the odds are still against Heath. He will have to stand his trial."

The girl's heart sank like lead, and as the days passed on and no new developments could be evolved from a case which began to assume a most gloomy aspect, her position in the Lamotte household became unbearable.

Sybil had changed a very little, but for the better. Her fits of raving were less frequent, and almost always to be anticipated. So, worn in body and tortured in mind, Constance went back to Wardour, and, save for her daily visits to the prison, was invisible to all her friends.

And she did not suffer alone. Knowing her love for Clifford Heath and the terrible secret she carried in her bosom, Mrs. Lamotte lived in an anguish of suspense. Would love outweigh honor? If the worst should come, could she trust Constance Wardour? Could she trust herself?

In those tortured hours, the same prayer went up from the heart of both mother and friend—that Sybil Lamotte would die!

While these things were making the world a weariness to Constance, Jerry Belknap, in his character of prospecting horse jockey, took up his quarters in a third rate hotel near the river, and remained very quiet in fancied security, until he became suddenly enlightened as to the cause of his ill success, as follows:

Lounging near the hotel one day, he was accosted by a stranger, who tapped him familiarly on the shoulder, saying:—

"My friend, I've got a word to say to you. Will you just step into the nearest saloon with me. We will talk over a glass of something."

Wonderingly at his coolness, Belknap followed the stranger, and they entered "Old Forty Rods," that being the nearest saloon.

Once seated face to face at a table, the stranger threw a letter across to Belknap, saying carelessly:—

"Read that, if you please."

Opening the letter, these lines stared Belknap in the face:—

"You have broken your pledge, Jerry Belknap. I have had you under my eye constantly. Fortunately for yourself, I can make use of you. Follow the instructions of the bearer of this to the letter now and until further notice, if you hope for any mercy from BATHURST."

He stared at the open letter as if it possessed the eyes of a basilisk.

Instantly he recognized the power behind the scenes, and was no longer surprised at his failures. And he turned upon his companion a look of sullen submission.

"I know better than to kick against Bathurst," he said doggedly. "What does he want me to do?"

"That's just what we are going to talk about," said the stranger, coolly. "Draw your chair up closer, Jerry."

CHAPTER XL.

Over days, filled with weary waiting and marked by few incidents and no discoveries, we pass with one glance.

Clifford Heath's trial follows close upon his indictment. A month rolls away, and with the first days of winter comes the assembling of judge and jury, and his case is the first one called.

During the weeks that have intervened between his arrest and this day of his trial, Constance has been his bravest champion and truest friend; she has stimulated him to hope, and incited him to courage, with loving, cheerful words, while clinging desperately to a last remnant of her own sinking hope.

Day by day, during all this time, the ancient gig driven by Doctor Benoit, deposited that gentleman before the doors of Mapleton. Sybil's delirium had ended in a slow, wearisome fever, which left her, as the first frosts of winter touched the land, a white, emaciated shadow of her former self, her reason restored, but her memory sadly deficient.

She had forgotten that dark phase of her life in which John Burrill had played so sinister a part, and fancied herself back in the old days when her heart was light and her life unfettered. She had dropped a year out of that life, but memory would come back with strength, the doctor said; and Mrs. Lamotte dreaded the days when that memory should bring to her daughter's brow, a shadow never to be lifted; into her life a ghost never to be laid.

Evan, too, had narrowly escaped death at the hands of his rum demons; after four weeks filled with all the horrors attendant upon the drunkard's delirium, he came to his senses, hollow-cheeked, sunken eyed, emaciated, with his breath coming in quick, short gasps, and the days of his life numbered.

Brandy had devoured his vitals; late hours and protracted orgies had sapped his strength; constant exposure in all weather and at all hours had done its work upon his lungs.

"If he outlasts the winter, he will die in the spring," This was the doctor's ultimatum.

News from the outside world was strictly shut out from those sick ones. The name of John Burrill never was breathed in their presence, and both were ignorant of the fact that Clifford Heath, an old time favorite with each, was on trial for his life.

The morning that saw Clifford Heath quit his cell to take his place in the felon's dock and answer to the charge of murder, saw Sybil Lamotte lying upon a soft divan, before a merry winter fire. It was the first time since her illness that she had quitted her bed. And Evan, too, for the first time in many weeks, came with feeble, halting steps to his sister's room, and sitting near her, scanned her wasted features with wistful intentness.

"Poor sis!" he murmured, stroking her hand softly. "We've had a pretty hard pull, you and I, but we're coming out famously." And then he added to himself, "More's the pity, so far as I am concerned."

"What made you ill, Evan?" she whispered feebly. "Was it worrying about me?"

A bright flush leaped to his cheeks and burned there hotly.

"Yes, it was about you, sis. But you will soon be as well and happy as ever, won't you?" anxiously.

"To be sure, Evan; we will both get well very fast. We have got so much to live for, and we are too young to die."

CHAPTER XLI.

It is the opening hour of Clifford Heath's trial.

The court room is crowded to its utmost capacity; never has there occurred a trial there so intensely interesting to all W—.

The prisoner is a little paler, a little graver than his ordinary self. But is his ordinary self in every other respect; as proud of bearing, as self-possessed, as handsome, and distingue as ever.

Beside him sits Mr. O'Meara alone. Mr. Wedron, after all his labor, and his seeming interest, is unaccountably absent; unaccountably, at least, so far as the opposition, the prisoner, the judge, jury, and all the spectators are concerned. Mr. O'Meara seems not at all disturbed by his absence, and evidently understands all about it.

Near the prisoner sits a man who causes a buzz of inquiry to run through the entire audience.

He is tall, fair haired, handsome; the carriage of his head, the haughtiness of his bearing, reminds more than one present of Clifford Heath, as they first knew him. He is a stranger to all W—, and "Who is he? Who is he?" runs from lip to lip.

The stranger is seemingly oblivious of the attention lavished upon him; he bends forward at times, and whispers a word to the prisoner, or his counsel, and he turns occasionally to murmur something in the ear of Constance Wardour, who sits beside him, grave, stately, calm.

She is accompanied by Mrs. Allston and Mrs. O'Meara, and Ray Vandyck sits beside the latter lady, and completes the party.

Mr. Lamotte is there, subdued, yet affable, and Frank, too, who is paler than usual, but quite self-possessed.

Near the party above mentioned, may be seen the two city physicians, but, and here is another cause for wonderment, Doctor Benoit is not present; and, who ever knew the good doctor to miss an occasion like this?

(To be continued.)

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NOTICE.

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The Return Of the Pendelum.

In 1892 the prosperity of the commercial schools was at its flood. . . Desiring to find some expedient that would render them still more prosperous, the proprietors of many of these schools abandoned methods that had produced excellent results and adopted others which were wholly experimental. It may safely be said that in most cases the change was not made with the expectation that the schools would be strengthened educationally, but that the new ideas would have greater advertising value. But a reaction has set in. The conclusion has been forced upon thoughtful teachers that the school that educates its pupils best advertises itself best; that a device which may attract inexperienced boys and unthinking parents, may not commend itself to the class of people whose friendship and patronage must be secured and retained as a basis of permanent prosperity. Those schools which adhered to the tried and approved methods, which gave their pupils solid and symmetrical knowledge, which steadily refused to be carried off their feet by patented systems of education, are now reaping the benefit of their wise conservatism. Such schools have not the task before them now of repairing the damage done by experimenting with one or another of the new schemes and realizing that their reputation for real efficiency has been injured, and of seeing their more conservative co-workers forging ahead. Only a small proportion of the larger schools swung off in '92, and some of them returned as soon as the character of the road they were travelling was discovered. When pretence will pass for performance, and when claptrap will be accepted in lieu of genuine educational advantages, then, perhaps, the public will take kindly to patented systems of education.—Progress, Rochester, N. Y.

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NOTICE OF SALE.

To John Adams formerly of the Parish of Alnwick, in the County of Northumberland, New Brunswick, merchant, (but at present residing in the City of Quebec, in the province of Quebec;—Anthony Adams of the same place merchant, and Annie Adams his wife, of the Parish of Alnwick, in the said County of Northumberland, and to all others whom it may concern.

Notice is hereby given that under and by virtue of a power of sale contained in a certain indenture of mortgage bearing date the thirtieth day of September A.D. 1880, made between the said John Adams, Anthony Adams and Annie Adams of the one part and Ernest Hutchison of Douglastown, in the said County of Northumberland miliman of the other part, and duly recorded the Thirtieth day of January A.D. 1890, in volume 67 of the Northumberland County Records on pages 266, 267, 268 and 269 and is numbered 199 in said volume, which said mortgage was on the twenty-fourth day of February A.D. 1897, duly assigned by the said Ernest Hutchison to us the undersigned Margaret Snowball, which assignment was registered on the twenty-fifth day of February A.D. 1897, in volume 72 of the Northumberland County Records, on pages 592 and 593, and is numbered 427 in said volume.

There will for the purpose of satisfying the monies secured by and due on the said mortgage, default having been made in payment thereof, be sold at public auction in front of the post office in the Town of Chatham, on Monday the fifteenth day of November next, at eleven o'clock in the forenoon, the lands and premises in the said mortgage described as follows:—

All and singular that piece or parcel of land situate, lying and being in the parish of Alnwick, in the County of Northumberland and bounded as follows:—Commencing on the bank or shore of Negnac Bay at the southwesterly corner of the road leading from Lower Negnac to Stymiest's Mill Brook at the distance of forty-eight chains and fifty-seven links southerly from the Queens Highway; thence southerly along the westerly side of the said Road leading to Stymiest's Mill Brook at the distance of two hundred and sixty feet to a stake; thence westerly two hundred and thirty-one feet to the centre of the road leading from Alexander Martin's barn to the Bay shore; thence along the centre of the said road leading to Stymiest's Mill Brook two hundred and forty-seven feet to the Bay shore; thence easterly along the Bay shore to the place of beginning.

Also all that other piece or parcel of land commencing at a stake, at the Northerly side line of Alexander Martin's land touching on the said Stymiest road, thence running Northerly along the westerly side of said road two hundred and eight feet to a stake or the southerly side line of lands owned and occupied by Alexander Goodfellow, thence along the southerly side line of Alexander Goodfellow's land, westerly one hundred and forty-nine feet to a stake; thence southerly two hundred and thirty-four feet to the northerly side line of Alexander Martin's land, thence easterly along the northerly side line of said Alexander Martin's lands one hundred and forty-nine feet to a stake or place of beginning, on the westerly side of the said Stymiest road being part of the lands conveyed by Alexander Loggie and James Anderson to James C. Fish and the said Anthony Adams by indenture dated the second day of January A.D. 1880 and of which the said James C. Fish conveyed all his interest therein to the said John Adams by indenture dated February 16th A.D. 1882.

Together with all and singular the buildings, improvements, privileges and appurtenances to the said premises belonging or in anywise appertaining.

Dated at Chatham, N. B., this tenth day of August, A.D. 1897.

R. A. LAWLOR, Solicitor. MARGARET SNOWBALL, Assignee of Mortgagee.

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	Pearl Tapioca,	....	4 "
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