

# The Diamond Coterie

BY LAWRENCE C. LYNCH.

(CONTINUED.)

But she did hesitate, not knowing just how to tell him that she was Doctor Heath's friend, in spite of appearances, without telling, or revealing otherwise too much. How could she set the matter before him, as she wished him to see it?

Seeing her hesitate, Ray unwittingly came to the rescue, and Constance seized upon the idea he gave her, with hasty eagerness, little thinking of the results that were to follow her implied deceit.

"I can't feel too grateful for your confidence at any price," he said, laughingly; "when I think how Lamotte glowered at me when he saw me coming here. But, then, if rumor speaks the truth, he has a right to be jealous, eh, Constance?"

Here was a way out of her dilemma; let Ray imagine her engaged to Frank Lamotte, and he would not misconstrue her interest in Doctor Heath; as for Frank, he had been a suitor, and a most troublesome one, for so long that she thought nothing of appropriating him to herself, as a matter of convenience, and only for the moment, and she never thought at all of the injury she might do herself by this deception.

"Oh, yes," she replied, "I have given Frank the right to be as jealous as he pleases." And the hot blood flamed into her cheek, as she saw how readily he had taken her words as she had meant them to be understood.

"Lamotte's a lucky fellow," said Ray, "although I know a better man I would like to see in his shoes. But we won't quarrel over Frank. Is it him that I am to serve?"

"No," she replied, coloring again. And once more he misapprehended her confusion.

Constance was silent and thoughtful for a few moments, and then she came directly to the point.

"Some strange things have come to my knowledge concerning Doctor Heath, Ray. They have come in such a manner that I would be in a measure violating the confidence of another were I to make a statement in full, and yet—in some way Doctor Heath must know that danger menaces him."

"Ah!" uttered Ray, Vandeyck, and Constance, lifting her eyes to his face, caught a fleeting look that caused her to ask suddenly—

"Ray, have you heard anything about Doctor Heath anything strange, I mean, or unexpected?"

"Why," replied Ray, slowly. "I have nothing very strange to relate, but—Heath's encounter with Burrill a short time since has made some talk."

"I don't understand you."

"Then is it not about this affair that you have sent for me?"

"I will explain myself. What of this affair, as you call it?"

"Why, you see," began Ray, plunging into his recital after a manner peculiar to himself, "about a week ago, yes, it was quite a week ago, on that stormy blustering Monday night, when sensible people staid indoors, Heath, after the manner of doctors, was straggling about that lovely precinct known as Mill avenue, trying to find the shortest way out after paying a visit to some sick child, or woman, I won't swear which; as I was saying, he was on his way out of that blessed avenue, when he heard screams coming from the cottage he was passing. It was the voice of a woman, and Heath made for the house, and rushed in just in time to see that latest addition to society, Mr. John Burrill, in a state of partial intoxication, raining blows about the head and shoulders of the woman who was once his wife. Heath rained one blow upon him and he went down under it. Then he got up, not quite satisfied and thirsting for more fight, and Heath felled him once more."

"It seems that the thing had been done so rapidly, that Burrill had not had time to get a fair look at the face of his assailant; but the second time he scrambled to his feet, Heath stood facing him full, brazen and ready, when, behold, Burrill, after one look, turns as pale as a specter, utters a yell of fear, and dashes out of the house like a madman. By this time several people had come in, and the thing puzzled them not a little. Heath asserted that he had never, to his knowledge, seen Burrill before; and yet there stood the fact of Burrill's fright at sight of him. Some believed it a case of mistaken identity; others, that Heath was trying to mislead them, and that he did know Burrill. The affair became noised about as such things will be, and some were curious to see another meeting between Heath and Burrill. And here comes the queer part of the business. In his sober moments, Burrill avoids Heath, and can not be brought to mention his name. But when he gets a little too much on board—beg pardon, Conny—I mean, somewhat intoxicated, he becomes very loquacious; then he throws out strange hints, and gives mysterious winks; states that he could tell a tale about Heath that would open everybody's eyes. He talks of 'borrowed plumage,' and insinuates that Heath would like to buy him off. He says that he took to his heels because he knew that Heath did not mean fair play, etc. Finally, two or three evenings ago, when Burrill was remarkably tipsy, and therefore, unusually ripe for a combat with any one, Heath and I, crossing the street opposite Spring's Bank, encountered him coming toward us, surrounded by a party of roughts. As we approached them, Burrill, making some uncouth gestures, came forward in advance of the rest, and as he came opposite Heath, leaned toward him and whispered a few words in his ear. I don't know what he said, but the effect on Heath was magical. For a moment he seemed staggered, as if by a blow, and then he took the fellow by the throat, and shook him until his teeth rattled; then loosed his hold so suddenly that his man dropped to the ground. Heath by this time was a little cooler; he stooped over the prostrate man,

took him by the collar, and fairly lifted him to his feet, then he said:

"Understand this, fellow, I allow no man to interfere with my business. This is only a sample of what will happen to you if you ever try this dodge again; keep my name off your tongue in public and private, if you want whole bones in your body; then he marched past the whole astonished crowd, minding them no more than if they were gnats. I followed, of course, and said as I came up with Heath:—

"Quite an adventure, upon my word; you seem to possess a strange attraction for Burrill!"

"Burrill," he exclaimed; "who the mischief is the fellow, Ray?"

"He is Mr. Lamotte's son-in-law," I answered.

"Ah," he mused; "so Jasper Lamotte has married his daughter to a black-mailer; and after that he said never a word more on the subject. I had it in my mind to tell him of the hints and insinuations Burrill in his unguarded moments was putting into circulation, but his reticence closed my lips."

He paused, and looked to his auditor for some comment, but she sat with her eyes fixed upon the carpet, and a troubled look on her face.

"Don't think, Conny, that I am one of those who construe this against Heath," said the loyal fellow. "He is the best fellow in the world. The whole thing, for me, lies in a nutshell. Heath is not a man to disturb himself about his neighbor's concerns, and he don't expect his neighbors to interest themselves in his. This Burrill has picked up, somehow, a little information; something concerning Heath, or his past life, that is not known to W—, and he is trying to make capital of it. The secret in itself may be a mere nothing, but Heath is the first man to resent impertinences, and the last man to make explanations. And he's right, too, especially under the present circumstances. I like him all the better for his pluck and his reticence; let him keep his secrets; so long as he gives me his friendship, I am quite content."

Constance felt a thrill of satisfaction and a return of courage, as she listened. Here was a friend, loyal, enthusiastic, not to be alienated by slander or suspicion. She had known Ray from his childhood, and they had always been the best of friends, but she had never admired and honored him, never valued his friendship so much, as she did at this moment.

His enthusiasm was contagious; she forgot all her fears of a personal nature and became in an instant the true woman and unselfish friend.

"Ah, Ray," she exclaimed, lifting two admiring gray eyes to meet his, "you are a friend indeed! a friend to be proud of; but tell me, did you hear nothing more of Burrill after that second encounter?"

"He made some pretty loud threats," replied Ray, "and a fellow named Brooks, a sort of crony of Burrill's, took it upon himself to call upon Heath the next day, and advise him to keep a pretty close lookout for Burrill, as he was quite likely, in one of his drunken rages, to make an assault upon him. Heath thanked the fellow, and assured him that he was quite capable of taking care of himself, and Burrill, too, if need be; and Brooks backed out, declaring that he meant no 'arm by intrudin'."

"Ray," said Constance, earnestly, "John Burrill is not the only man Doctor Heath has to fear. I may have acted hastily in sending for you, but I was so troubled by certain facts that I just could not rest without doing something. It's almost an abuse of confidence to ask so much of you and tell you so little, but in a few days I hope to be mistress of my own tongue, and then you shall have all the particulars. For the present, Ray, promise to follow my instructions blindly."

"I have promised that, Conny."

"And, Ray, you will keep this all a secret; you will do your part without hinting to Doctor Heath your true motive, unless circumstances compel an explanation?"

"I promise that, too."

"When I sent for you, it was to ask you to warn Doctor Heath, in the most delicate way you can devise, that he was menaced by an enemy, and under hourly surveillance; but, since you have told me of this Burrill it occurs to me that in some way he may be mixed up in this matter, and—I have thought of a better plan."

Ray nodded, and looked full of interest.

"Your description of his manner of receiving Burrill's interference, and of his reticence throughout, makes me feel that it might be only precipitating a catastrophe if we warned him, and oh, Ray, I want you, for three days, to be his constant shadow. Devise some excuse for remaining in town; trust yourself upon his hospitality; observe any strangers who may approach him. If possible, do not let him get out of sight, even for a short time; in three days you shall be relieved."

"By whom?"

"She lifted her hand, warningly. "No questions, Ray. Can you manage all this?"

He pondered a while, then said: "I think I can; I am a pretty good actor, Conny. What do you say to my feigning illness?"

"He would find you out."

"Not if I did it well, perhaps. I think I could manage for a few days."

"It won't do, Ray. He would send you to bed and walk away and leave you."

Ray groaned.

"Tell him your room is under repairs, and throw yourself on his mercy; then feign low spirits, and make him think it is his duty to entertain and cheer you up."

"Capital, Conny! we can make that work I know; your wit is worth more than my wisdom; for three days then I am your watch dog."

"And your friend's guardian."

"Precisely. I begin to swell with importance. But seriously, Conny, let me have your confidence at the earliest moment. For, whoever does battle with Heath, will find me arrayed against him, and—it's difficult fighting in the dark."

"You shall know all as soon as possible, Ray, and now—"

"And now," repeated he, rising with alacrity. "Heath's horse stands outside, and Heath himself waits my return; so, lest he should grow impatient, and go where mischief awaits him, I will go now and begin my task."

"Thank you, Ray, I know I can depend upon you. All this seems like a scene out of a melodrama, but it's wretchedly real for all that. Ray, I am just waking up to a knowledge of how much plotting and wickedness there is in this world; even in our little world of W—."

"We all wake to that knowledge," he said, a spasm of pain crossing his face. "You know how the lesson came to me, Conny."

"Yes, poor Ray! and I know that another suffer even more than you, because of it."

"And the cause of it all is another mystery. But no more of this; unless something noteworthy occurs, you will not see me again for three days."

She gave him her hand, and a look of gratitude, and trust; and, in a few moments more, the red roan steed was speeding back toward.

Francis Lamotte had found the doctor dull company; and, as he scarcely ever remained in the office to read now-a-days, he had taken himself and his dissatisfaction elsewhere, long before Ray returned to the office ready to begin his new role. He found the doctor sitting in a despondent attitude, almost where he had left him, holding in his hand a crumpled letter.

Without appearing to notice his abstraction, Ray came at once to the point at issue.

"Heath," he said, "your red roan is returned to you, and the loan of him encourages me to ask another favor."

"Well!" said the doctor, without looking up or changing his attitude.

"The fact is," said Ray, with splendid ingenuously, "I am a sort of outcast. My quarters are undergoing that misery they call 'repairs,' and—the truth is, Heath, I want you to tender me your hospitality, for, say, two or three days. I can't go to a public place; I don't feel like facing the music, for I am a little sore yet, and I find that I still am an object for commiseration, and I do get low spirited in spite of myself. It's cheeky, my asking it, I know, and you'll find my constant society a terrible bore; but my heart is set on quartering with you, so don't say no, Heath."

Clifford Heath threw off his listlessness and looked up with his usual cheery smile.

"Why, Ray, you young dog," he cried, "you beseech me like a veritable tramp, just as if you were not as welcome as the sunshine; come along, you shall share my bed, and board, and—I'll be hanged if you shan't share the daily dose of abuse I have to take from my old housekeeper. I'll make a special arrangement to that effect."

"Thanks, Heath," replied Ray, and then he turned to the window to hide the fire that burned in his cheeks, because of the doctor's being practicing upon this open-hearted friend. "But it's all for his benefit," he thought; "at least I hope so."

"Well!" said the doctor, moving uneasily in his chair; "I hope your mission prospered."

"Oh, yes," carelessly.

"You—found Miss Wardour well, I hope?"

"Quite well; only wanting my valuable assistance in a little scheme she has on foot, a sort of benefit affair."

And Ray congratulated himself on the adaptability of his answer.

"Is it too late to drive, Heath?"

But the doctor made no answer to this question, nor did he seem to hear it. Rising, he walked to the window, looked down thoughtfully into the street for a moment, then without turning, he said—

"Rumor says that Miss Wardour will marry Lamotte."

"Lamotte just now made the statement."

"Ah!" contemptuously, "it's like him to boast; but I'm afraid he tells the truth; Constance admitted as much to me to-day."

A long time Clifford Heath stood motionless and silent at the window; then turning as if spurred by some sudden thought he threw the crumpled note, which all the time had been clasped in his hand, upon the table between them, saying:—

"Here's a mystery, sir; read that and pass your opinion on it; as you are to become my guest, you should know what society you will find yourself in."

Ray eyed the letter with his head on one side.

"What is it?" he asked in a stage whisper.

"A note, a billet doux, a solemn warning; came under the door a little while ago, while I was off in a reverie; came by a spirit hand, maybe, for I never heard a sound, but there lay the letter waiting to be observed and perused."

And the doctor laughed contemptuously, and turned away to prepare for his drive. But Ray's face lengthened perceptibly, and he took up the note with sudden eagerness, and read:—

at the spot just inside the door where he had first perceived the letter, and then resumed his occupation without observing the trouble in Ray's face. "Sensational, isn't it? but I can't think of quitting W— just as it begins to grow interesting."

"Then you take no stock in this warning?"

"Bah! why should I?"

"But if you should have secret foes?"

"Let them come on," quoted the doctor, theatrically; "bring along that precious document, Ray, and come along yourself."

Ray Vandeyck, still looking troubled and anxious, arose, and, with lagging steps, followed his friend; as he noted with a new curiosity the tall, lithe, well knit figure striding on before him, the handsome, haughtily poised head, and the careless indifference of mien; he asked himself:—

"What can it be, this mystery and danger that surrounds him, that has caused Constance Wardour to take such unprecedented measures to insure his safety, and has wrung from Sybil Lamotte this strangely worded, oddly and ineffectually disguised warning, for Ray, seeing not as the world sees, but with the eyes of love, had recognized in the strange scrawl the hand of the woman he had loved and lost."

"Heath is in some peril," thought he, and then, with a rueful sigh, "Oh! I would risk dangers too to be watched over by two such women."

## CHAPTER XXII.

The three days that followed were days of unrest to Constance Wardour. The intangible, yet distinctly realized trouble, and fear, and dread, were new experiences in her bright life.

The mystery round about her, her inability to cope with the unknown, the inaction, the waiting, was almost more than she could calmly endure; and all this distress of mind and unrest of body was for others. Personally, she had nothing to fear, nothing to annoy her; but the warm-hearted heiress made a friend's cause her own. From the first she had grieved over the sad fate of Sybil Lamotte; not lightly, not as society sorrows over the fall of its proteges; but deeply, from her heart of hearts. And now there was added to this, her concern for Clifford Heath, and the danger that menaced him tormented her.

## Success.

Most people have many things in which they desire to succeed, innocent in themselves, except when they interfere with a higher aim and worthier purpose. It is this conflict of aims, this gradation of duties, that makes life often so complex and so difficult. The questions come continually before every thoughtful mind: "Is this aim which I set before me the highest I can reach? Is it not merely a desirable end, but the most desirable? Is it likely to lead to still better and worthier purposes, or is it likely to hide them from view?" As we answer these questions to ourselves intelligently and conscientiously, the rightful limits of each will become clear, and our desire to succeed in each will harmonize with those limits.

Thus the desire for health, the care of self by the care for others, the love of money by the love of honor, the effort to please by the effort to do right.

## Flotian's Unjust Treatment of the Rich.

A grievance that has been treated very injudiciously in many works of fiction is the relation of the rich to the poor. Absolutely false ideas as to how the rich get their wealth, and what they do with it when they get it, have been persistently floated by novelists, for whom (as for the journalist) a millionaire is always fair game. It is not worth while to expend any sympathy upon the millionaires in this matter, as they can struggle along under a considerable weight of vituperation; but the rest of us cannot afford to be put continually in a false attitude toward wealth. Hatred or envy of the rich is not a pleasant companion for our leisure hours, and the poorer we are the less pleasant company it is likely to be. It interferes with our working to the best advantage, and cuts us off from opportunities of accumulating the very wealth that might ease our pains.—"Droch" in Ladies' Home Journal.

## A Nauzeous Terror.

M. Calino—Listen! Here is a very good proposal for our daughter—a young man, rich, honest, unselfish, good looking; only—there is an only—he is a foundling—without a name.

Mme. Calino (with a start)—Without a name! Then I should have a son-in-law who will write only anonymous letters! Never in this world!—Le-Monde Comique.

## Two On One Wheel.

A new bicycle seat has been invented in order to permit two persons riding on one wheel. This seat is fastened over the front wheel in such a manner that the rider sitting on it faces to the left, so as to leave an unobstructed view for the rider in the saddle. Besides the seat, which is ample and of velvet, there are a step and a wire skirt guard on a steel frame. Most of the weight of the rider on this seat rests on the front wheel, though part of it is carried back by a double steel arm, which runs to the middle post in the bicycle frame.

A new bicycle alarm, which can be attached to any wheel with clips at the fork and the handle bar, was recently placed on sale.

It consists of a rod with a roller at the lower end and a clapper at the upper end. In operation the rod is pushed down, bringing the roller in contact with the tire of the front wheel. This causes the clapper to strike against the stationary piece of wood, producing, it is claimed, any degree of noise. It can equal the terrific racket of the Mexican looust, keeping up a continual alarm as long as desired. The point is made that this is a distinctly bicycle alarm, as the sound is not heard on street cars, or on vehicles.—Boston Advertiser.

## GRANNY'S YARBS.

She dosed the boy with calomel, Then gave him castor oil, And yet he didn't feel quite well. He had the grip, you see.

She gave him tansy, boneset, squills, Rubbed tallow on his chest, And fed him lots of blue mass pills, Which quickly did the rest.

By this time John could not get up, And as he lay in bed, She drenched him from a quack's cup Till he was nearly dead.

And when at last the doctor came And fetched poor Johnny round, Folks said, "Twas granny, all the same, Kept him above the ground."

—J. L. Heaton in "Quilting Bee."

## "THANK YOU."

### It Is the Small Courtesies That Make Life Worth Living.

"On every hand one hears of the neglect to say 'Thank you,'" writes Edward W. Bok on "The Saying of 'Thank You,'" in The Ladies Home Journal. "I wonder sometimes if some people really know how little of what comes to them is their due and right and how much of what comes to them is by favor and courtesy. The vast majority of things which come to us come by pure favor, by courtesy. And we should recognize this. No act of kindness, however slight, should go unnoticed. A 'Thank you' is a simple thing to say. It requires but a few moments to write it, but it often means much. It means everything sometimes to the person receiving it. It means a renewed faith in human nature in some cases. A word of thanks is never lost, never wasted. If it sometimes seems to be lost upon the person to whom it is directed, its expression has not been lost upon some one else who has heard it. It is certainly not lost upon ourselves. The most of us are quick enough to thank some one who does us great service. But the small courtesy, just as great as the large service in reality, we overlook. It doesn't seem worth while to give thanks for small things. And yet what would we be today and where would some of us be but for the small courtesies of life? They are what make life worth living.

"It is all very well, to have the last Thursday of each November set apart as a day of Thanksgiving, but it would be far better if a great many of us carried the spirit of the day into all the other days. Perhaps if we did so we might have more mercies to be thankful for on Thanksgiving day. Do not let the spirit of thanks stop with night-fall on Thanksgiving day. Let us extend it to all the other days of the year, to the people whose lives touch ours. When we receive a favor at the hands of any one, no matter how small it may be, let us say the words, 'Thank you.' If they should be written, let us write them. Let us not delay them, but take advantage of the instant when our heart is touched. Let there be more 'Thank you's' said by everybody—thousands of them. And the world will be a better, brighter and happier place to live in because of them."

## Music and Health.

Music, if we are to believe ancient historians, has produced some very extraordinary effects. The fierceness of Achilles was allayed by playing on the harp; Damon, with the same instrument, quieted wild and drunken youths, and Asclepiades in a similar manner brought back seditious multitudes to temper and reason. The corybantes and effeminate priests of Cybele were incited by music to cut their own flesh. Pindar addressed his harp thus: "Thou quenchest the raging thunder!" Music is also reported to have been efficacious in removing dangerous diseases. Mirandola observes, in explanation of its being appropriated to such an end, that music moves the spirits to act upon the soul as medicine does the soul by the body. Theophrastus, in his essay on "Enthusiasm," reports many cures upon this principle. The Thebans used the pipe for the cure of many disorders, and Zenocrates is said to have cured several madmen. The bite of the tarantula is said to have been cured by music, and the Phrygian pipe was recommended by many of the ancient fathers as an antidote to scintia. We could enumerate many other instances of the estimation, amounting, as it would seem, to palpable superstition, in which music was held among the ancients, but the above may be considered sufficient.—New York Ledger.

## His First Thought.

Bookkeeper—Mr. Tulpenhal, the cashier has run away with your daughter, but he didn't take any money.

Head of the Firm—Lord, what a bad head for business!—Flegende Blatter.

## Not Alone.

'Tis not the dead alone that lie In the graveyards, still and dead. Too often do the tombstones tell What isn't true, I fear.

—Cleveland Leader.

## Very Handy at Times.

Blinks—Insanity is a terrible curse, is it not?

Winks—Depends a good deal upon whether you've just killed a man or not.—Brooklyn Life.

## When He Wavered.

There's none who can his nature plan And tell just what it will be like. He was a plain, straightforward man Until he first bestrode the bike.

—Washington Star.