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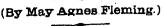
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LADY LEOLINE.



CHAPTER I. THE SOBCEBESS.

The plague raged in the city of London, The destroying angel had gone forth, and kindled with its hery breath the awful pestilence, until with its hery oreath the awthi pestilence, inbit all London became one mighty lazir house. Thousands were swept away daily; grass grew in the streets, and the living were scarce able to bury the dead. Business of all kinds was at an bury the dead. Business of all kinds was at an end, except that of the coffin makers and drivers of the peet carts. Whole stricts were shut up, and almost every other house in the city bore the fatal red cross, and the omnous in-scription: "Lord have mercy on us." Few peeple, save the, watchmen, armed with halberts, keeping guard over the stricken houses, appeared in the streets; and those who ven-tured there shares from each other, and passed appeared in the entrets; and there who ver-tured there shrank from each other, and passed rapidly on with averted faces. Many even fell deal on the sidewalk, and lay with their ghastly, discolored faces upturned to the mocking sun-light, until the dead cart came rathing along, and the drivers hoisted the body with their pitchforks on the top of their dreadful load. pitchforks on the top of their dreadful load. Fuw other vehicles besides those same dead-carts appeared in the city now; and they plied their trade bustly, day and night; and the cry of the drivers echeed dusmally through the de-seried streets: "Bring out your dead!" bring out your dead I" All who could do so had long sgo fled from the de-voted city; and London lay under the burning heat of the June sunshine, stricken for its sins by the hand of God. The pest-houses were full, so were the plague pits, whore the dead were hurled in cartfuls; and no one knew who rose up in health in the morning but knew who rose up in health in the morning but that they might be lying stark and dead in a few hours. The very churches were foreaken; their pastors field or were lying in plague pits; and it was even resolved to convert the great cathedral of St. Paul into a vast plague hospi-

cathedral of St. Paul into a vast plague hospi-tal. Cries and iamentations echoed from one end of the city to the other, and Daath and Charles reigned over London together. Yet in the midst of all this, many scenes of wild orgies and debauchery still went on within its gates—aa, in our own day, when the cholera rayaged Paris, the inhabitants of that facetious site mode is a carried so new, in London city made it a carnival, so now, in London, there were many who, feeling that they had but a few days to live at the most, resolved to tout a few days to itve no the most, resolved to defy death, and indulge in the revelry while they yet existed. "Eat, drink and be merry, for bo-morrow you die !" was their motto; and if in the midst of the frantic dance or debauched revel one of them dropped dead, the others only shricked with laughter, hurled the livid body out to the street, and the demoniac mirth grew twice as fast and furious as before. Robbers and cut purses paraded the streets at noonday, entered boldy closed and descreted houses, and bore off with impunity whatever they pleased. Highwaymen infested Houn-slow Heath, and all the roads leading from the slow Heath, and there roads leading from the city, levying a toll on all who passed, and plundering fearlessly the flying citizens. In fact, far-famed London town, in the y-ar of grace 1665, would have given one a good idea of Pandemonium broke loose. It was drawn to the close of an almost tropi-cal lung day that the ground who had through

cal June day, that the crowd who had thronged the precincts of St. Paul's since early morning, began to disperse. The sun, that had throbbed the live-long day like a great heart of fire in a sea of brass, was sinking from sight in clouds of crimson, purple and gold, yet Paul's Walk was crowded. There were court gallatts in ruffles and plumes; ballad singers chanting the not ver-delicate ditties of the Earl of Rochester usurers exchanging gold for bonds worth three reading in dolorous tones the bills of mortality of the preceding day, and solving plaque-waters and anti-pestilential abominations, whose merit they loudly extelled; ladies too, richly dressed, and many of them masked; and booksellers who always made St. Paul's a favoribe haunt, and even to this day patronize its precincts, and floarish in the regions of Paternoster Row and Ave Maria Lone; court pages in rich liveries, pert and flippant; serving men out of place, and pick pockets with a ksen eye to business; all clashed and jostled together, raising a din to which the Plam of Shinar, with the confusion of tongues and Babylonish workmen, were as

or toogues and Babylonien workmen, were as noving seriously through this discordant sea of his fellow creatures came a young man bootad and sourced, whose rich doublet of therry colored velvet, edged and spingled with gold, and jaunty hat sit slightly on one side of his head, with its long

graceful figure, and an expression of counter

the chorus of the then popular ditty ;

you been here, may I ask?"

tioner was.

"What care I for pest or plague?

We can die but once, God wot,

Kies me, darling-stay with me; Love me-love me, leave me not !"

The darling in question turned his bright blue

closing a dark and rather handsome face, settled

now into a look of gloomy discontentment. He slightly raised his hat as he saw who his ques stopped at a huckster's stall to purchase some eigarettes; lit one, and after moking for a lew minutes, pleasantly remarked, as if the fact had just struck him :

fact had just struck him : "Ormiston, you're a fool !" "I know it !" said Ormiston sententiously. "The ides," said Sir Norman, knocking the ashes daintily off the end of his cigar with the tip of his little finger—"the idea of falling in love with a woman whose face you have never seen! I can understand a man's going to any absurd extreme when he falls in love in proper Christian fashion, with a proper Christian face; but to go stark, staring mad, as you have done, my dear fellow, about a black loo mask, why-I consider that a little too much of a good

thing ! Come, let us go." Nodding easily to his numerous acquaintances as he went, Sir Norman Kingsley sauntered leisurely down Paul's Walk and out through leisurely down Parl's Walk and out through the great door of the cathedral, followed by his melancholy friend. Pausing for a moment to gaze at the gorgeous sunset with a look of languid admiration, Sir Norman passed his aim through that of his friend, and thoy walked on at rather a rapid pace, in the direction of old London Bridge. There were few people abroad, except the watchmen welk-ing slowly up and down before the plague-atricken houses; but in every street they passed through they noticed huge piles of wood and through they noticed huge piles of wood and coal heaped down the centre. Smoking zealously they had walked on for a season in silence, when Ormiston ceased paffing for a moment to inquire

What are all these for? This is a strange

time, I should imagine, for bonfires." "They're not bonfires," said Norman ; "at least they are not intended for that ; and it your head was not fuller of that masked Witch of Endor than common sense (for I believe that she is nothing better than a witch), you could not have helped knowing. The Lord Mayor of Lon-don has been inspired suddenly with a notion, that if several thousand fires are kindled at once in the streets, it will purify the air, and check the pestilence ; so, when St. Paul's tells the hour of midnight, all these piles are to be fired. It will be a glorious illumination, no doubt i but as to its stopping the progress of the plague, I am afraid that it is altogether to good to be

true "Why should you doubt it ? The plague can not last for ever.

"No. But Lilly, the astrologer, who predicted its coming, also foretold that it would last for many months yet ; and since one prophecy has come true, I see no reason why the other should not."

"Except the simple one that there would be nobody left alive to take it. All London will be lying in the plague pits by that time." "A pleasant prospect; but a true one. I have

no doubt. And, as I have no ambition to be hurled headlong into one of those horrible holes, And, Ormiston, I would strongly recommend

You to follow my example." "No: I !" said Ormiston, in a tone of gloomy resolution. "While La Masque stays, so will

"And perhaps die of the plague in a week." "So be it ! I don't fear the plague balf as nuch as I do the thought of losing her !" Again Sir Norman stared.

"Ob, I see ! It's a hopeless case ? Faith, I begin to feel curious to see this enchantress, who has managed so eff ctually to turn your brain. When did you see her last?"

"Yesterday," said Ormiston, with a deep sigh. "And if she were made of granite, she could not be harder to me than she is."

"So she doesn't care about you, then ?"

"Not she! She has a little Blenheim lapdog, that she loves a thousand times more than she ever will me."

"Then what an idiot you are, to keep haunt-ing her like her shadow. Why don't you be a man, and tear out from your heart such a goddess

"Ah ! that's easily said ; but if you were in my place you'd act exactly as I do." "I don't believe it. It's not in me to go mad

"I don't believe it. It's not in me to go mad shout arything with a masked face and a marble heart. If I loved any woman-which, thank fortune, at this present time I do not---and she had the had taste not to return it, I should take my hat and make her a bow, and go directly and love somebody else made of flesh and blood, instead of cast iron ! You know the old song,

Ormiston : 'If she be not fuir for me. What care I how fair she be !'"

"King-ley, you know nothing about it !" said Ormiston, impatiently. "Do stop talking non-sense. If you are cold-blooded, I am not; and —I love her !"

Sir Norman slightly shrugged his shoulders,

like that of the Indian almechs, who show you your destiny in a well. She has a sort of magic lake in her room, and but you will see it

magic is to in her room, and -- out you will see it. all for yourself presently." "I have always heard," said Sir Norman, in the same meditative way, "that truth lies at the bottom of a well, and I am glad some one has turned up at last who is able to fish it out. Ab! Here comes our ancient Mercury to show s to the presence of our goddess." The door opened, and the "old bag of bones,

The door opened, and the "old bag of bones," as Ormiston irreverently styled his lady love's ancient domestic, made a sign for them to fol-low him Leading the way down alorg a corridor, he flung open a pair of shining folding-doors at the end, and usherd them at once into the majestic presence of the sorceress and her major room. Both gen-tlemen doffed their plumed hats: "Ormiston" stepped forward at once ; but Sir N.rmán di roctly paused in the doorway to ontemplate the scene of action. As he slowly did to, a look the scene of action. As he slowly did to, a look of deep displeasure settled on his features, on finding it not half so awful as he had supposed. finding it not half so awful as he had supposed." In some ways it was like the room they had left, being low, large and square, and having. Hoors, wails and ceilings paneled with glossy black oak. But it had no windows—a large bronze lamp suspended from the centre of the ceiling shed a flickering, ghostly light. There were no paintings—some grim carvinge of skulle, skeletons, and serpents. pleasantly wreathed the room—neither were there seats nor tables— mathing but a hurge character and the part nothing but a huge ebony caldron at the upper end of the apartment, over which a grinning skeleton on wire, with a scythe in one hand of bone, and an hour-glass in the other, kept watch and ward. Opposite this cheerful look-ing guardian was a tall figure in black, standing as motionless as if it too was carged in show tog guardian was a tall figure in black, standing as motionless as if it, too, was carved in shory It was a female figure, very tall and slight, but as beautifully symmetrical as a Venus Celestis. Her drees was of black velvet, that swept the polished floor, spangled all over with stars of gold and rich rubies. A profusion of shuning black hair fell in waves and curls almost to her feet; but her face, from forehead to chin, was completely hidden by a black velvet mask. In one hand, exquisitely small and mask. In one hand, exquisitely small and white, she held a gold casket, blazing (like her dress) with rubies, and with the other she toyed with a tame viper, that had twined itself round her wrist. This was doubtless La Marque, and becoming conscious of that fact, Sir Narman made her a low and courtly bow. She returned it by a slight bend of the head, and turning toward his compunion, spoke:

am I indebted for the honor of two visits in two days

Her voice, Sir Norman thought, was the sweetest he had ever heard, musical as a chime of silver bells, soft as the tones of an colian harp through which the west wind plays." "Madam, I am aware my visits aro un-desired," said Ormiston, with a flushing check

and slightly tremulous voice ; "but I have merely come with my friend, Sir Norman Kingsley, who wishes to know what the future has in store for him." Thus invoked, Sir Norman Kingsley stepped forward with another low bow to the maised

"Yes, madam, I have long heard that those fair fingers can withdraw the curtain of the future, and I have come to see what Dame to the first a come to see what Dame

Deatiny is going to do for me." "Sir Norman Kingeley is welcome," said the sweet voice, "and shall see what he desires. There is but one condition, that he will keep perfectly quiet; for if he speake, the scule he beho'ds will vanish. Come forward !"

Sir Norman compressed his lips as closely as f they were forever hermetically sealed, and came forward accordingly. Leaning over the edge of the ebony caldron, he found that it contained nothing more dreadful than water, for he labored under a vague and unpleasant idea that, like the witches caldron in Macbeth, it might be filled with serpents' blod and children's brains. Ls Macque opered her golden casket, and took from it a portion of red powder, with which it was filled. Casting it into the caldron, she murmured an invocation in Sanscrit, or Copic, or some other unknown tongue, and slowly there arose a dense cloud of dark red smoke that nearly filled the room. Had Sir Norman ever read the story of dark red smoke that nearly filled the room. Had Sir Norman ever read bhe story of Aladdin, he would probably have thought of it then; but the younger courtier did not then; but the younger courtier did not thought of nothing now but of seeing something when the smoke cleared away. It was rather long in doing so, and when it did, he saw noth-ing at first but his own hatdesme, half-serious, half-incredulous face; but gradually a picture, distinct and clear, formed itself at the bottom, and Sir Norman gazed with bewildered eyes. He saw a large room filled with a starkling crowd, many of them ladies, splendidly arrayed He saw a large room filled with a parkling crowd, many of them ladies, splendidly arrayed and flashing in jewels, and foremost amoug them stood one whose beauty surpaysed anyblem stood one whose beauty surplused any-thing he had ever before dreamsd of. She were the robes of a queen, pu ple and ermine-diamonds blazed on the beautiful neck, arms, and fingers, and a tiska of the came brilliants crowned her regal head. In one haut she hild a sceptre; what seemed to be a bit of throne was behind her, but something that sur-prised Sir Norman mest of all was, to find bimself standing beside her, the cynosure of all eyes. While he yet gazed in miugled astonishment and incredulity, the scene faded away, and another took its place. This time a dungeon-cell, damp and dismal; walls and floer, and ceiling covered with green and hideous slime. A small lamp stood on the floor, and by its inclus watcaw glears he cam impeded area sickly, watery gleam, he saw himself again standing, pale and dejected, near the wall. But he was not alone; the same glittering vision in purple and diamonds stood before him, and suddenly he drew his sword and plunged it up to the hilt in her heart ! The beautiful vision fell like a stone at his feet, and the sword was drawn out recking with her life-blood. This was a little too much for the r.al Sir Norman, and with an expression of indignant consternation, he eprang upright. Instandly it all faded away and the reflection of his own ex-

ta he complacently. "All a matter of taste, my dear fellow; and

these women are noted for their perfection in that line. I begin to admire La Masqua more and more, and I think you had better give up the chase, and let me take your place. I don't believe you have the ghost of a chance, Ormis-tan

"I don't believe it myself," said Ormiston, with a desperate face; "but until the plague carries me off I cannot give her up; and the sooner that happens, the better. Ha! what is

It was a piercing shriek—no unusual sound; and as he spoke, the door of an adjoining house was flung open, a woman rushed wildly out, fiel down an adjoining street, and disappeared. Sir Norman and his companion looked at each

other, and then at the house. "What's all this about?" demanded Ormiston.

Ormiston. "That's a question I can't take it upon myself to answer," said Sir Norman; "and the only way to solve the mystery is to go in and see." "It may be the plaque," said Ormiston, besi-tating. "Yet the house is not marked. There is a watchman. I will ask him." The man with the halberd in his band was

walking up and down before an adjoining house, bearing the ominous red cross and pitcous inscription : "Lord, have mercy on us !"

"I don't know, sir," was his answer to Ormis-ton. "If any one there has the plague, they must have taken it lately; for I heard this morning there was to be a wedding there to

night." "I never heard of any one screeming in that fushion about a wedding, "said Ormiston, doubt-fully. "Do you know who hves there?"

fully. "Do you know who lives there ?" "No, sir. I only came hore, myself, yester-day, but two or three times to day I have seen a very beautiful young lady looking cut of the window."

Ormiston thanked the man, and went back to report to his friend.

"A beautiful young lady !" said Sir Norman with energy. "Theu I mean to go directly up and see about it, and you can follow or not, just

and see about it, and you can follow or not, just as you please." So saying, Sir Norman entered the open door-way, and found himself in a long hall, flanked by a couple of doors on each side. These he opened in rapid succession, finding nothing but silence and solitude ; and Ormiston—who, upon reflection, chose to follow—ran up a wide and sweeping staircase at the end of the hall. Sir Norman followed him, and they came to a hall similar to the one below. A door to the right i Ly open ; and both entered without ceremony, and looked around. Just enough light stole through the oriel win-dow at the further end, draped with crimson satinembroidered with gold, to show it. The floor was of veined wood ot many colors, arranged

OHAPTER II.

The DEAD BRIDE.

"Well," said Ormiston, drawing along breath,

"Well," said Ormiston, drawing along breath,

"Well," said Ormiston, drawing along breath,

"What do you think of that ?"

"Think 7 Don't ski: me yet," said Sir Norman, it could not be the "Arabian Nights" had suddenly turned bim into strone (a state of my spification -that I don't rightly into the shall don't free an ormamental fixture for errain whether to try moral ansion or to take had yolvor muss be enchanting,

If beantital.""

"Have I not told you that a thousand times, to rice and such hande could be otherwise."

Other of lithle faith? But why have you come to toke the are acting along the straw. Ween a providential but rather diar are rabing along the straw wice a boarse wice as the "Brow would, own it some day. Do'n maked could be otherwise."

"I the nost could be otherwise."

"I the nost excupitely be could be otherwise."

"I the nost excupitely be anothing thing. I could the otherwise."

"I the nost excupitely be anothing thing. I could he otherwise."

"I the nost excupitely be anothing thing. I could be the states when a providential but rather diar and intercept the along as the act on the the anothy for early or a state this call, and instantly followed him up stains and into the state. We anothy the state when a state of the shold y in the state. We and think her extremely dever.' I that the shold on the state. We are along as the in the along as the act and the the othe the anothy for the shold y with the state.

It was now almost dark, and as the cart It was now almost dark, and as the cart started, the great clock of St. Panl's struck eight. St. Michael's, St. Alban's, and the others took up the cound; and the two young men paused to listen. For many weeks the sky had been clear, brilliant and blue; but on this night dark clouds were scudding in wild unrest across it, and the air was oppressingly close and sultry.

aultry. "Where are you going now?" said Ormis-"Where are you for Whitehall's to-night?" "No !" said Sir Norman, rather dejectedly, "No !" said Sir Norman, "I am for the

"No I" said Sir Norman, rather dejectedly, turning to follow the pest-cart "I am for the plague pit in Finsbury Fields!" "Nonsense, man " exclaimed Ormiston, energetically, "what will take you there" You surely are not mad enough to follow the body of that dead girl?"

body of that dead girl?" "I shall follow it You can come or not,

just as you please." "Oh ! if you are determined, I will go with you, of course; but it is the craziest fresk 1 ever heard of. After this, you need never luigh at me.'

"I never will," said Sir Norman, moodily; "for if you love a face you have never seen, I love one I have only looked on when dead.

love one I have only looked on when dead. Does it not seem sacril(ge to throw any one so like an angel into that horrible plague pit?" "I never saw an angel," said Ormistor, as he and his friend statted to go after the dead cart. "And I dare say there have been scores as beautiful as that poor girl thrown into the plague-pit before now. I winder why the house has been descried, and if she was really a bride. The bridegroum could not have loved her much The bridegroom could not have loved her much, I fancy, or not even the pestilence could have scared him away." "But, Ormiston, what an extraordinary thing

it is, that it should be precisely the same face that the fortune-teller showed me. There she was alive, and here she is dead ; so I've lost all aith in La Masque for ever.' Ormiston looked dcubtful.

"Are you quite sure it is the same, Kingsey,

"Quite sure?" said Sir Norman, indignantly. "Of course I am ! Do you think I could be mistaken in such a case? I tell you I would know that face at Kamschatka or the North Pole; for I don't believe there ever was such another created " another created."

"So be its, then I Your object, of course, in following that cart is to take a last lock at her." "Precisely fo. Don't talk; I feel in no mood for it just at present.

Ormiston smiled to himself, and did not talk. nest cart, and the long white figure therein, took no heed of anything in the reaven above or carth ben-ait, a u stride along in cisnal silence till they reached, at last, their journey a.d. As the cars stopped the two young men appronched the edge of the plaque-pit, and looked in with a shudder. Truly it was a hertime were thrown in in cartful, and only covered with a handful of earth and quicklime. Govered with a handrul of earth and quicklime. Here and there, through the cracking and sicking surface, could be seen protruding a fair white arm, or a baby face, mingled with the long, dark tresses of moidens, the golden curls of children, and the white hairs of all age. The pestilential effluxia arising from the decadful mass way so coverence that bath age. The presidential emutia arising from the dreadful mass was so overpowering that both shrank back, faint and sick, after a moment's survey. It was indeed as Sir Norman had said, a horrible grave wherein to lie. Mrantime the driver, with an eye to business, and no time for such nonsense as melancholy moralizing had laid the body of the young sirl on the ground, and brickly turned his cart and dumped the remainder of his load into the pit. Then, having flung a few handfuls of clay over it, he unwound the sheet, and kneeling beside the body, prepared to remove the jewels. The rays of the moun and his dark lantern fell on the lovely snow-white face together, and Sir Nor-man groaned despairingly as he saw its deadcold rigidity. The man had stripped the rings off the fingers, the bacelets off the arms; but as he was about to perform the same operation towards the necklace, he was stopped by a starting interruption enough. In his haste, the ciasp entered the beautiful neck, inflicting a deep scratch, from which the blood spouted; and as the same instant the dead girl opened her eyes with a shrill ory. Uttering s yell of terror, as well he might, the man sprang back and gazed at her with horror, believing that his sacrilegious robbery had brought the dead to life. Even the two young men-albeit, neither of them given to nervousness nor cowardice--recoiled for an instant, and stared aghast. Then, as the whole truth struck them, that the girl had been in a deep swoon and not dead, both simultaneously darted forward, and forgetting all fear of in-fection, knelt by her side. A pair of great, lustrious black eyes were staring wildly around, and fixed themselves first on one face and then on the other "Where am I?" she exclaimed, with a terrified look, as she strove to rates herself on her elbow, and fell instantaneously back with a cry of agony, as she felt for the first time the throb bing auguish of the wound. "You are with friends, dear lady," said Sir Norman, in a voice quite tranulous between astoniahment and delight. "Fear nothing, for you shall be save.d' The great black eyes turned wildly upon bim, while a fierce pasm convulsed the beautiful face. "O, my God, I remember ! I have the plague !" And, with a prolonged shrick of anguish, bhat thrilled even to the hardened heart of the dead-cart driver, the girl fell back senseless again. Sir Norman Kingsley sprang to his feet, and with more the air of a frantic lunatic than a responsible young English knight, caught the cold form in his arms, laid it in the dead-carb, and was about springing into the driver's seet, when that individual indignantly interposed. "Come, now; none of that 1 If you were the king himself, you shouldn't run away with my cart in that fashion ; so you just get out of my place as fast as you can!" "My dear Kingeley, what are you about to

Nov, 28, 1888

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CARDEN AND THE POPULATION OF T



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and illing his smoked-out weed into a heap of firewcod. black plume and diamond clasp, proclaimed him " Are we near her house ?" he asked. " Yon-

to be somebody. A profusion of snowy shirt frill rushed impetuously out of his doublet; a black velvet cloak, lined with amber satin, fell de is the bridge." "And youder is the house," replied Ormis ton, pointing to a large ancient buildingp cturesquely from his shoulders; a sword with jewelled hit clacked on the payement as he aucient even for shose times-with three stories, each projecting over the other. "See! while he houses on either side are marked as pestwalked. One hand was covered with a gauntlet colored kid, perfumed to a degree that would s ricken, hera alone bears no cross. So it is barne any belle of to day, the other, which rest-bed lightly on his sword hilt, flashed with a splendid opal splendidly set. He was a hand-tome fellow too, with fair waving hair (for he had the good taste to discard the ugly wigs those who cling to life are stricken with death and those who, like me, are desperate, even

death shuns " "Why, my dear Ormiston, you surely are not so far gone as that. Upon my honor, I had no idea you were in such a bad way."

th n in vogue), dark, bright, handsome eyes, a thick blonde moustache, a tall and remarkably I am nothing but a miserable wretch ! and I wish to heaven I was in yonder dead-cart with nance wherein easy good manuers and fiery im the rest of them-and she, too, if she never in-tends to love me !" petuosity had a hard struggle for mastery. That

he was a courtier of rank, was appar-ent from his rich attire and rather aristocratic Ormiston spoke with such fierce earnestness. that there was no doubting his sinceriby ; and bearing, and a crowd of hangers-on followed Sir Norman became profoundly shocked—so much so, that he did not speak again until they him as he went, loudly demauding (pur money. A group of timbrel girls, stoging shrilly the songs of the day, called boldly to him as he parsed; and one of them, more free and were almost at the doc not speak again that they were almost at the doc. Then he opened his lips to ask in a subdued tone: "She has predicted the future for you-what did she forstell?"

easy than the rest, danced up to him striking ner timbrel and shouting rather than singing "Nothing good ; no fear of there being any-

thing in store for such an unlucky dog as I

am." 'Where did she learn this wonderful black art of hers?

"In the East, I believe. She has been there and all over the world; and now visite Eng.and for the first time."

yes on that dashing street singer with a cool "She has chosen a sprightly season for her visit. Is she not afraid of the plague, I won-der?" Glance of recognition. "Very sorry, Nell," he said, in a nonchalant tone, "but I'm afraid I must. How long have

"No: she fears nothing," said Ormiston, as he knocked loudly at the door. "I begin to believe she is made of adamant instead of what other "A full hour by St. Paul's; and where has Sir Norman Kingsley been, may I ask? I thought you were dead of the plague." women are made of.

women are made of." "Which is a rib, I believe," observed Sir Nor-man, thoughtfully. "And that accounts, I dare say, for their being of such a crooked and can-tankerous nature. They're a wonderful race, "Not exactly. Have you seen-ah ! there he is. The very man I want." With which Sir Norman Kingsley dropped a gold piece into the girls extended palm, and

women are; and for what inscrubable reactor it has pleased Providence to create them ——" The opening of the door brought to a sudden end this little touch of moralizing, and a wrinklpushed on through the crowd up Paul's Walk. A tall, dark figure was leaning moodily with folded arms, looking fixedly at the ground, and taking no notice of the busy scene around him until Sir Norman laid his ungloved and jewelled ed old porter thrust out a very withered and un-

lovely face. "La Marque at home ?" inquired Ormiston, hand lightly on his shoulder. "Good morning, Ormistop. I had an idea I would find you here, and—but what's the matter with you, man? Have you got the plague?

stepping in, without ceremony. The old man nodded and pointed upstairs; and with a!"This way, Kingsley," Ormiston spraug lightly up, three at a time, followed in or has your mysterious inamorata jilted you? or what other annoyance has happened the same style by Sir Norman. to make you look as woebegone as old King Lear, sent adrift by his tender daugh-

You seem pretty well acquainted with the latitude and longtitude of this place," observed that young gentleman, as they passed into a room at the head of the stairs.

The individual addressed lifted his head, dis-"I ought to be: I've been here often enough," said Ormiston. "This is the common waiting room for all who wish to consult La Masque. That old bag of bones who let us in has gone to announce us.

"Ah ! it's you, Sir Norman. I had given up all notion of your coming, and was about to quit this confounded babel—this tumultuous den of thieves. What has detained you ?" Sir Norman took a seat, and glanced cur ous-ly round the room. It was a commonplace apartment enough with a floor of polished black "I was on duty at Whitehall. Are we not in time to keep our appointment?" "Oh, certainly ! La Masque is at home to visitors at all hours day and night. I believe in oak, slippery as ice, and shining like glass; a few old Flemish paintings on the wall; a large round table in the centre of the floor, on which lay a pair of old musical instruments called my soul that she doesn't know what sleep "virginals." Two large, curtainless windows, with minute diamond-shaped panes, set in leaden casements, admitted the golden and

means." "And you are still as much in love with her as ever, I dare swear! I have no doubt, now, it was of her you were thinking when I came up. Nothing else could over have made you look so dismally woobegone as you did when Providence sent me to your relief." "I was thinking of her," sid the young man moodily, and with a darkening brow. Sir Norman favored him with a half amused, half-contemptuous stare for a moment; then orimson light. orimson light. "For the greeeption room of a sorcevess," re-marked S'r Norman, with an air of disappointed criticism, "there is nothing very wonderful about all this. How is it she space fortunes anyway? As Lilly dors, by maps and charts; or as these old Eastern mufti do it, by magic marcors and all such foolaries ?"

mirrors and all such fooleries ?" "Neither," said Ormiston, "her style is more

cited face looked up at him from the caldron. "I told you not to speak," said La Masque quiebly ; "but you must look on still another

acene. Again she threw a pertion of the contents of the casket into the caldron, and "spake aloud the words of power. Another cloud of smoke arose and filled the room, and when it cleared away Sir Norman beheld a third and less startling sight. The scene and place he could not discover, but b seemed to him like night and a storm. men were lying on the ground, and bound fast together, it appeared to him. As he looked, it faded away, and once more his own face seemed

to mock him in the clear water. έ (' Do you know those two last figures?" asked the lady. "I do," said Sir Norman, promptly ; " it was

Ormiston and myself." "Right ! and one of them was dead."

"Dead !" exclaimed Sir Norman, with a per-ceptible start. "Which one, madam ?"

If you cannot tell that, neither can I. If "I'you cannot ben that, herdet can i. If there is anything further you wish to see, I am quite willing to show it to you." "I'm obliged to you," said Sir Norman, stepping back; "but no more at present, thank

you. Do you mean to say, madam, that I'm some day to murder a lady, especially one so beautiful as she I just now saw ? 'I have said nothing-all you've soon will

come to pass, and whether your destiny be for good or evil, I have nothing to do with it, except," said the sweet voice, earnessly. "that if La Masque could strew Sir Norman Kingsley's

"Madam, you are too kind," said that young gentleman, laying his hand on his heart, while Ornision scould darkly-"more cspecially as I've the misfertune to be a perfect stranger to

this many a day; and before long we shall be better acquainted. Permit me to wish you

chemisteres out, and soon found themselves in the street, with very different expressions of countenances. Sir Norman looking considerably pleased and decidedly puzzled, and Mr. Ormiston looking savagely and uncompromis-ingly jealous. The animated skeleton who had admitted them closed the door after them.

Bridge.

window drapery, lay a cithron and some loose sheets of m si: Neur it was a small marble table, covered with looks and drawings, with a decanter of whe and an exquisite little goblet of Bohemian glass. The marble mantel was strewn with ornaments of porcelain and alabasier, and a beautifully carved vase of Parian marble stood in the centre, filled with brilliant flowers. A great mirror reflected rible sight, that heaving, putria sea of cor back the room, and beneath it stood ruption; for the bodies of the miserable vica toilet table, strewn with jewels, laces, perfume bottles, and au array of costly little femínine trifles such as ladies were as fond of two centuries ago as they are to-day. Evidently it was a lady's chamber ; for in a re-cess near the window stood a great quaint carved bedstead, with curtains and snowy lace looped back with golden arrows and scarlet r.b boos. Some one lay on it, too --at least, Ormis-ton thought so ; and he went cautiously forward.

drew the curtain, and looked down. "Great heaven ! what a beautiful face !" was

his cry, as he bent still further down. "What the plague is the matter?" asked Su

"You have said it," said Ormistor, recalling. "The plague is the matter. There lies one dead of it."

Curiosity proving stronger than fear, Sir Nonnan stopped forward to look at the corpse It was a young girl with a face as lovely as a post's vision. That face was like sucw, now; and in its calm, cold majsety, looked as exqui-sitely perfect as some ancient Greeian statue, The low, pearly brow, the swees, beautiful lips, the delicate oval outline of countenance, were perfect. The eyes were closed, and the long dark lashes reated on the ivory cheeks. A pro-fusion of shining dark bair fell in elaborate curls over her neck and shoulders. Her dress was that of a bride ; a robe of white satin brocaded with silver, fairly dazzling in its shining radi-ance, and as brief in the article of sleeves and neck as that of any modern belle. A circlet of pearls was clasped round the A circlet of pearls was chapted round the snow-white throat, and bracelets of the same jewels encircled the snowy taper arms. On her head she wore a bridal wreath and veil—the former of jewels, the latter falling around her like a cloud of mist. Everything was perfect, from the wreath and veil to the tiny sandaled for the wreath and veil to the tiny sandaled feet; and lying there in her mute repose sh looked more like some exquisite piece of sculpture than anything that had ever lived and moved in this groveling world of ours. But from one shoulder the dress had been pulled down, and there lay a great livid purple plague spot! "Come away !" said Ormiston, catching his

compainion by the arm. "It is death to remain here !"

Sir Norman had been standing like one in a trance, from which this address aroused him, and he grasped Ormiston's shoulder almost fran tically.

"Look there, Ormiston ! There lies the very face that sorceress showed me, fifteen minutes ago, in her infernal caldron ! I would

know it at the other end of the world !" "Are you sure?" said Ormiston, glancing again with new curiosity at the marble face. "I never saw anything half so beautiful in all my life; but you see sho is dead of the plague,' 'Dead ? O she cannot be ! Nothing so

perfect could die !"

"Look there," said Ormiston, pointing to the plague spot. "There is the fatal token | For plague spot. "There is the fatal token ! For Heaven's sake let us get out of this, or we will share the same fate before morning !"

But Sir Norman did not move-could not But Sir Rorman the hot hove could not move; he stoud there rooted to the spot by the spell of that lovely, lifeless face. Usually the plague lefs its victims hideous, ghastly, discolored, and covered with blotches; but in this case there was nothing to mar the

Charles and the second

10 BO

pathway with roses, she would most assuredly

"Not so, Sir Norman. I have known you

good evening !"

At this gentle hint, both gentlemen bowed hemselves out, and soon found themselves

admitted them closed the door after them; and the two friends stood in the twilight on London