

The Picnic **WoodallForest** CHAPTER XV. No! I will work. My mission is to recover what is gone! I will devote

Lord Cecil's

Dilemma

my life to it if necessary, and you need never fear of being homeless, mother."

Lady Hastings subsided into tears. She was disappointed-hopeless. She knew that his brave words were but the' beginning of youthful ignorance. "If my home is sold over my head, I shall die," she sobbed. "Oh, my son, you do not know in what peril I stand. I had no legal right to sign away any portion of the estate until you were twenty-five years old, and with your consent. Lawyer Caddick has discovered this, and knows that the executors of my father's will are all powerful. He threatens that he will prosecute me if the money is not repaid You will not see me a felonyou will not let your mother die in

"Oh, Heaven," ejaculated Sir Charles. "I had no knowledge of this. I have been kept in utter darkness. What am I to do?"

He paced the room, a terrible fear in his heart. It was his duty to shield his mother, at any cost.

"Has this Caddick-this lawyermade any proposals?" he demanded suddenly. "Has he any precious schemes of his own?"

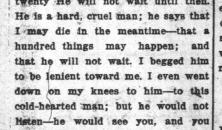
"He was here a week before you came home, and wanted to see you, was the evasive answer. "He will come again the first of next month He says that he cannot wait after that time for some kind of a settlement." "For some kind of a settlement?" echoed Sir Charles. "The man wants his pound of flesh, I suppose. He

has been misled, and fears to lose all. I can see why he is afraid. He has advanced his money upon what he cannot seize."

He laughed harshly. "His threats may be idle, but they

are well founded. He shall have his money, if every stick and stone has to be sold."

twenty He will not wait until then.



should determine what was to be done.' Sir Charles took his unhappy

mother in his arms, and soothed her. "If it rests with me, then you shall be plucked from all danger. mother." he said. "There is nothing I would not do to ease your heart. I see why you have grown so old of late-my poor mother!"

She sobed hysterically on his breast for a little while, but was relieved to know that her terrible secret was a secret no longer.

"I will not wait until the first of next month." he said. "I will not wait one day for Lawyer Caddick. I will see him to-morrow, and if it be possible to settle with him, even to the imperiling of my immortal soul. I swear that it shall be done, for your

leave him until it is done. I have no



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to the extent of many thousands of ounds. She was unable to pay even the interest: she was unable to meet current expenses even, had the the mysteries within. On the glass ability of Lawyer Caddick been dis- the words, "Jabez Caddick, Solicitor harged. She had obtained the money