

## News of the Week.

**THE DOMINION.**—His Honour Lieut.-Governor Caron was sworn in on the 17th ult. at Quebec. The Hon. Mr. Taschereau has been appointed to the Court of Queen's Bench, and the Hon. Mr. Tessier to the Superior Court. The Welland Canal Commissioners have sent in their report. It is understood that they have recommended the route previously fixed by the Department of Public Works. Captain Taylor has been elected for Halifax by a majority of over 1,000. The Hon. Messrs. Haythorne and Laird, delegates from the Prince Edward Island Government to treat on the question of the admission of the island into Confederation, are now at Ottawa. The last rail of the Canada Southern RR. was laid last week. The Hon. Messrs. DeBoucherville and Beaubien have definitely left the Quebec Cabinet, and will be replaced, the former by the Hon. J. J. Ross, and the latter by Dr. Fortin. The Hon. Mr. Chauveau has been appointed Speaker of the Senate. The Engineers' report on the proposed route of the Bay Verte Canal has been handed in. It is rumoured that Mr. F. W. Cumberland is to have full charge of the construction of the Pacific Railroad.

**UNITED STATES.**—Heavy floods are reported from Pennsylvania and Virginia. At Pittsburg property to the amount of \$300,000 was destroyed. Driver, the Chicago wife murderer, has been sentenced to be hanged on the 14th inst. It is said that important testimony on behalf of Stokes will be offered at his forthcoming trial; among other witnesses produced will be a woman who picked up Fisk's pistol. It is believed that a bill providing for the payment of the Fishery Claims will pass through Congress before the adjournment. Martial law has been declared in some parts of Arkansas.

**UNITED KINGDOM.**—The "Murillo" has been allowed to leave San Fernando, where she was detained. Four thousand of the striking Welsh miners have resumed work. The owners of the "Murillo" have brought an action for libel against Lloyds, claiming \$10,000 damages. Emigration to Brazil is to be stopped until the investigation into the sufferings of recent emigrants has been concluded. Twenty miners have been killed by an explosion in Staffordshire. The Bishop of Clonfert and the Rev. Mr. Quinn have been acquitted of the charge of intimidating electors at the Galway elections. The estimated expenditures for the army, for the financial year of 1873 and 1874, form a total of \$86,157,000, which is a reduction of \$2,040,500 from those of the current year. The University Boat-Race is fixed for the 29th inst.

**FRANCE.**—A rumour is afloat to the effect that France will attempt to compel Spain to sell Cuba. In the case of Prince Napoleon against the ex-Minister Lefranc the court has declared its incompetency to try the case, and has ordered the plaintiff to pay his own costs. The Committee of Thirty have adopted an amendment proposed by M. Dufaure, which provides that before its dissolution the National Assembly shall enact laws organizing and directing transmission of legislative and executive powers, and also creating a second Chamber. This decision has led to a complete rupture between the Right and Left Centres. A quarrel has broken out between the Legitimists and Orleanists.

**GERMANY.**—It is said that Prince Bismarck's indisposition is due to the number of poisoned letters he is receiving. Both he and his wife are suffering from unaccountable dizziness. Measures are to be proposed for reducing the National Debt.

**SPAIN.**—The Republic has been recognized by France. Further Carlist defeats are announced. A proclamation has been issued offering an amnesty to the Carlists in the Northern Provinces on the condition of their laying down their arms in two weeks. The army supports the Republic. The Conservatives have decided not to oppose the present Government, but to press for the dissolution of the Assembly and the convocation of a Constituent Cortes. The bill for the abolition of slavery in Porto Rico has again been taken into consideration. The Governorship of the forty-eight Provinces of Spain are to be divided equally among the Radicals and Republicans. The Secretaries of the Radical Government are to be Republicans, and those of the Republican Government Radicals. Republican demonstrations have been held at Saragossa and Barcelona. It is stated that there is ground for belief that several leading Conservatives are intriguing for the renewal of the Hohenzollern candidature for the Spanish throne.

**ITALY.**—It has been decided to abolish the head houses of religious orders at Rome, but to provide an indemnity therefor. The Carnival at Rome was a success this year.

**SWITZERLAND.**—M<sup>r</sup>. Mermillod has been expelled from Switzerland.

**RUSSIA.**—It is stated that seven thousand men only will form the expeditionary force to Khiva.

**INDIA.**—Persian encroachments on Beloochistan have been restrained.

**WEST INDIES.**—The Dominican Revolutionary Generals have issued a proclamation against the cession of Samana Ray.

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## THE NEW MAGDALEN.

BY WILKIE COLLINS.

SECOND SCENE—Mablethorpe House.

CHAPTER XX.—(Continued.)

Julian's hand stole unobserved to hers, and told her, in its momentary pressure, to count on his brotherly sympathy and help. All the other persons in the room looked at her in speechless surprise. Grace rose from her chair. Even the man in plain clothes started to his feet. Lady Janet (hurriedly joining Horace, and fully sharing his perplexity and alarm,) took Mercy impulsively by the arm and shook it, as if to rouse her to a sense of what she was doing. Mercy held firm; Mercy resolutely repeated what she had said: "Send that man out of the house."

Lady Janet lost all patience with her. "What has come to you?" she asked sternly. "Do you know what you are saying? The man is here in your interest as well as in mine; the man is here to spare you, as well as me, further annoyance and insult. And you insist—insist, in my presence—on his being sent away! What does it mean?"

"You shall know what it means, Lady Janet, in half an hour. I don't insist—I only reiterate my entreaty. Let the man be sent away!"

Julian stepped aside (with his aunt's eyes angrily following him) and spoke to the police officer. "Go back to the station," he said, "and wait there till you hear from me."

The meanly-vigilant eyes of the man in plain clothes travelled side-long from Julian to Mercy, and valued her beauty as they had valued the carpet and the chairs. "The old story," he thought. "The nice-looking woman is always at the bottom of it; and, sooner or later, the nice-looking woman has her way." He marched back across the room to the discord of his own creaking boots; bowed, with a villainous smile which put the worst construction upon everything; and vanished through the library door.

Lady Janet's high breeding restrained her from saying anything until the police officer was out of hearing. Then, and not till then, she appealed to Julian.

"I presume you are in the secret of this?" she said. "I suppose you have some reason for setting my authority at defiance in my own house?"

"I have never yet failed to respect your ladyship," Julian answered. "Before long you will know that I am not failing in respect towards you now."

Lady Janet looked across the room. Grace was listening eagerly, conscious that events had taken some mysterious turn in her favour within the last minute.

"Is it part of your new arrangement of my affairs," her ladyship continued, "that this person is to remain in the house?"

The terror that had daunted Grace had not lost all hold of her yet. She left it to Julian to reply. Before he could speak, Mercy crossed the room and whispered to her, "Give me time to confess it in writing. I can't own it before them—with this round my neck." She pointed to the necklace. Grace cast a threatening glance at her, and suddenly looked away again in silence.

Mercy answered Lady Janet's question. "I beg your ladyship to permit her to remain until the half-hour is over," she said. "My request will have explained itself by that time."

Lady Janet raised no further obstacles. Something in Mercy's face, or in Mercy's tone, seemed to have silenced her, as it had silenced Grace. Horace was the next who spoke. In tones of suppressed rage and suspicion, he addressed himself to Mercy, standing fronting him by Julian's side.

"Am I included," he asked, "in the arrangement which engages you to explain your extraordinary conduct in half an hour?"

His hand had placed his mother's wedding-present round Mercy's neck. A sharp pang wrung her as she looked at Horace, and saw how deeply she had already distressed and offended him. The tears rose in her eyes; she humbly and faintly answered him.

"If you please," was all she could say, before the cruel swelling at her heart rose and silenced her.

Horace's sense of injury refused to be soothed by such simple submission as this.

"I dislike mysteries and innuendoes," he went on harshly. "In my family circle we are accustomed to meet each other frankly. Why am I to wait half an hour for an explanation which might be given now? What am I to wait for?"

Lady Janet recovered herself as Horace spoke.

"I entirely agree with you," she said. "I ask, too, what are we to wait for?"

Even Julian's self-possession failed him when his aunt repeated that cruelly plain

question. How would Mercy answer it? Would her courage still hold out?

"You have asked me what you are to wait for," she said to Horace, quietly and firmly. "Wait to hear something more of Mercy Merrick."

Lady Janet listened with a look of weary disgust.

"Don't return to that!" she said. "We know enough about Mercy Merrick already."

"Pardon me—your ladyship does not know. I am the only person who can inform you."

"You?"

She bent her head respectfully.

"I have begged you, Lady Janet, to give me half an hour," she went on. "In half an hour I solemnly engage myself to produce Mercy Merrick in this room. Lady Janet Roy, Mr. Horace Holmcroft, you are to wait for that."

Steadily pledging herself in those terms to make her confession, she unclasped the pearls from her neck, put them away in their case, and placed it in Horace's hand. "Keep it," she said, with a momentary faltering in her voice, "until we meet again."

Horace took the case in silence; he looked and acted like a man whose mind was paralysed by surprise. His hand moved mechanically. His eyes followed Mercy with a vacant questioning look. Lady Janet seemed, in her different way, to share the strange oppression that had fallen on him. A vague sense of dread and distress hung like a cloud over her mind. At that memorable moment she felt her age, she looked her age, as she had never felt it or looked it yet.

"Have I your ladyship's leave," said Mercy, respectfully, "to go to my room?"

Lady Janet mutely granted the request. Mercy's last look, before she went out, was a look at Grace. "Are you satisfied now?" the grey eyes seemed to say mournfully. Grace turned her head aside, with a quick petulant action. Even her narrow nature opened for a moment unwillingly, and let pity in a little way, in spite of itself.

Mercy's parting words recommended Grace to Julian's care:

"You will see that she is allowed a room to wait in? You will warn her yourself when the half-hour has expired?"

Julian opened the library door for her.

"Well done! Nobly done!" he whispered. "All my sympathy is with you—all my help is yours."

Her eyes looked at him, and thanked him, through her gathering tears. His own eyes were dimmed. She passed quietly down the room, and was lost to him before he had shut the door again.

### CHAPTER XXI.

THE FOOTSTEP IN THE CORRIDOR.

Mercy was alone.

She had secured one half-hour of retirement in her own room; designing to devote that interval to the writing of her confession in the form of a letter addressed to Julian Gray.

No recent change in her position had, as yet, mitigated her horror of acknowledging to Horace and to Lady Janet that she had won her way to their hearts in disguise. Through Julian only could she say the words which were to establish Grace Roseberry in her right position in the house.

How was her confession to be addressed to him? In writing? or by word of mouth?

After all that had happened, from the time when Lady Janet's appearance had interrupted them, she would have felt relief rather than embarrassment in personally opening her heart to the man who had so delicately understood her, who had so faithfully befriended her in her sorest need. But the repeated betrayals of Horace's jealous suspicion of Julian warned her that she would only be surrounding herself with new difficulties, and be placing Julian in a position of painful embarrassment, if she admitted him to a private interview while Horace was in the house.

The one course left to take was the course that she had adopted. Determining to address the narrative of the fraud to Julian in the form of a letter, she arranged to add, at the close, certain instructions, pointing out to him the line of conduct which she wished him to pursue.

These instructions contemplated the communication of her letter to Lady Janet and to Horace, in the library, while Mercy—self-confessed as the missing woman whom she had pledged herself to produce—waited in the adjoining room whatever sentence it pleased them to pronounce on her. Her resolution not to screen herself behind Julian from any consequences which might follow the confession, had taken root in her mind from the moment when Horace had harshly asked her (and when Lady Janet had joined him in asking) why she delayed her explanation, and what she was keeping them waiting for. Out of the very pain which those questions inflicted, the idea of waiting her sentence in her own person, in one room, while her letter to Julian was speaking for her in another, had sprung to life. "Let them break my heart if they like," she had thought to herself in the self-abasement of that bitter moment; "it will be no more than I have deserved."

She locked her door and opened her writing-

desk. Knowing what she had to do, she tried to collect herself to do it.

The effort was in vain. Those persons who study writing as an art are probably the only persons who can measure the vast distance which separates a conception as it exists in the mind from the reduction of that conception to form and shape in words. The heavy stress of agitation that had been laid on Mercy for hours together, had utterly unfitted her for the delicate and difficult process of arranging the events of a narrative in their due sequence and their due proportion towards each other. Again and again she tried to begin her letter, and again and again she was baffled by the same hopeless confusion of ideas. She gave up the struggle in despair.

A sense of sinking at her heart, a weight of hysterical oppression on her bosom, warned her not to leave herself unoccupied, a prey to morbid self-investigation and imaginary alarms.

She turned instinctively, for a temporary employment of some kind, to the consideration of her own future. Here there were no intricacies or entanglements. The prospect began and ended with her return to the Refuge, if the Matron would receive her. She did no injustice to Julian Gray; that great heart would feel for her, that kind hand would be held out to her, she knew. But what would happen if she thoughtlessly accepted all that his sympathy might offer? Scandal would point to her beauty and to his youth, and would place its own vile interpretation on the purest friendship that could exist between them. And he would be the sufferer, for he had a character—a clergyman's character—to lose. Not for his sake, out of gratitude to him, the farewell to Mablethorpe House must be also the farewell to Julian Gray.

The precious minutes were passing. She resolved to write to the matron, and ask if she might hope to be forgiven and employed at the Refuge again. Occupation over the letter that was easy to write might have its fortifying effect on her mind, and might pave the way for resuming the letter that was hard to write. She waited a moment at the window, thinking of the past life to which she was soon to return, before she took up the pen again.

Her window looked eastward. The dusky glare of lighted London met her as her eyes rested on the sky. It seemed to beckon her back to the horror of the cruel streets—to point her way mockingly to the bridges over the black river—to lure her to the top of the parapet, and the dreadful leap into God's arms, or into annihilation—who knew which?

She turned, shuddering, from the window. "Will it end in that way," she asked herself, "if the matron says No?"

She began her letter.

"DEAR MADAM.—So long a time has passed since you heard from me, that I almost shrink from writing to you. I am afraid you have already given me up in your own mind as a hard-hearted, ungrateful woman."

"I have been leading a false life; I have not been fit to write to you before to-day. Now, when I am doing what I can to atone to those whom I have injured, now, when I repent with my whole heart, may I ask leave to return to the friend who has borne with me and helped me through many miserable years? Oh, madam, do not cast me off! I have no one to turn to but you."

"Will you let me own everything to you? Will you forgive me when you know what I have done? Will you take me back into the Refuge, if you have any employment for me by which I may earn my shelter and my bread?"

"Before the night comes I must leave the house from which I am now writing. I have nowhere to go. The little money, the few valuable possessions I have must be left behind me; they have been obtained under false pretences; they are not mine. No more forlorn creature than I am lives at this moment. You are a Christian woman. Not for my sake—for Christ's sake, pity me and take me back."

"I am a good nurse, as you know, and I am a quick worker with my needle. In one way or the other can you not find occupation for me?"

"I could also teach, in a very unpretending way. But that is useless. Who would trust their children to a woman without a character? There is no hope for me in this direction. And yet I am so fond of children! I think I could be—not happy again, perhaps, but content with my lot, if I could be associated with them in some way. Are there not charitable societies which are trying to help and protect destitute children wandering about the streets? I think of my own wretched childhood—and oh! I should so like to be employed in saving other children from ending as I have ended. I could work, for such an object as that, from morning to night, and never feel weary. All my heart would be in it; and I should have this advantage over happy and prosperous women—I should have nothing else to think of. Surely, they might trust me with the poor little starving wanderers of the streets—if you said a word for me? If I am asking too much, please forgive me. I am so wretched, madam—so lonely and so weary of my life."