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WHEN THE SHADOWS FLEE AWAY.

A STORY OF CANADIAN SOCIETY.

BY

BERNARD.

MONTREAL:

JOHN LOVELL & SON, PUBLISHERS,

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IN TIME OF PEACE: IN TIME OF WAR.

CHAPTER I.

THE yellow rays of the afternoon sun are gilding an October sky and throwing into bold relief the grey stone pile of the Church of St. Sauveur, as it stands on the rocky heights overlooking the River Rance—that restless boundary of the picturesque old town of Dinan. The sun is shining, as it has done many times during the past eight hundred years, through those windows of varied hues, and dyeing regally with crimson and blue the aisle of this old Cathedral of God, and pausing devoutly before its altar, there to linger upon a figure kneeling in prayer. The bent head is crowned by a cap of spotless cambric, which fails to conceal the luxuriant hair beneath; the long cloak of black cloth which has slipped from the bending shoulders exposes the round bodice and white chemisette; the dark blue skirt with

its bands of silver braid falls in soft folds about the small feet that have slipped from the wooden sabots. In the distance can be heard the full impassioned tones of the organ responsive to the touch of Father Demouret. As the last notes of Gounod's *Miserere* sob out their being, and die away in echoless vibrations among the strong arches that span the lofty roof, the kneeling peasant rises, and, with eyes whose expression bespeaks her thoughts still before the throne of grace, murmurs a final prayer, her fingers reverently touching her rosary. Gathering her cloak about her shoulders and slipping her feet into the sabots, she steps from the flood of crimson and gold into the shadow, out of the radiance into the gloom, save for the light from the soul within that shines from her pure eyes. Turning her steps towards the main entrance of the sacred edifice she makes one more obeisance on passing the altar, and disappears behind the curtained portal.

The scene has not been lost upon two people who are standing in the shadow of one of the pillars. The beauty of the music and the unworldly surroundings have had their effect upon both. In one it produces a feeling of unreality, as if the noisy camp life in Egypt which has made up his experience for the past twelve months were only a dream. In the other it awakens a feeling of regret that her life among these old-world associations of piet

and reverence is drawing to a close. The dim light of the gloomy old church, broken at intervals by the rays of sunlight that stream in colored bars through the deeply tinted glass,—the stately columns that are almost lost in shadow before they reach the roof they support,—the mellow notes of the organ throbbing on the air,—combined with the odor of incense that pervades the atmosphere, all tend to arouse feelings that for a moment shut out the prospective pleasure of a reunion with the friends of her childhood in her native country, and arouse in their place a desire to remain where life is so devoid of worldly strife.

Stepping out into the yellow autumn evening, and inhaling the fresh air that blows off the river, both brother and sister feel as if they had suddenly awakened from a trance. "Ding-dong-ding," "Father, Son and Holy Ghost,"—says the full tone Cathedral bell, reminding all who hear that the hour of Vespers is at hand. "Dong-ding-dong,"—answers the bell from the neighboring hill. "Ding-ding-dong." Two holy fathers with eyes bent upon their books, followed by a procession of surpliced boys, are making their way along the shaded fossé, their feet falling softly on a yellow carpet of leaves flown from the overhanging trees,—another priest, then a group of rosy children with white caps, the noise of whose saboted feet is only muffled by the rich foliage over which they scurry.

As Constance Lestrange and her brother walk on, they pass a number of peasants who are wending their way back to the neighboring farms after the day's marketing. The different styles of caps worn by the women denote that they come from various Brittany villages. As the deep notes of the bells ring forth, bare-headed men and many-capped women bend the knee, and murmur an *Ave Maria*,

CHAPTER II.

AFTER three years' absence Constance Lestrange is returning to Canada. The first eighteen months of her sojourn abroad has been spent in Dresden at school, the last eighteen have been passed at a Convent in Dinan, where her almost undivided attention has been given to the study of painting; the surrounding country abounding with scenes that are well fitted to stimulate an already artistic mind.

Hector, her brother, is on his way home from Egypt, having obtained leave of absence in consequence of recent illness brought on by the many hardships of the late campaign. The brother and sister to-morrow leave for England, thence they sail for Canada. To-day they are spending in bidding farewell to some of the scenes that have grown so dear to Constance.

Wending their way through the old street that leads from the Cathedral they quicken their pace, and after a half hour's walk, which takes them through a wood where the trees are clothed in golden foliage, and over a stream in which many gabbling women are washing (their tongues as busy as their hands as they dip the white clothes in the stream before

pounding them with the flat stones on the bank), Constance and Hector stop at the entrance of the poplar-lined avenue that leads to the ruin of LaGaraye.

Before them for half a mile stretches a straight carriage drive, flanked on either side by a symmetrical row of stately poplars. The cold nights and sunny days have turned the leaves to bright and varied hues. Many of the branches stand out bare against the evening sky, while, what so short a time before served as their covering, now lie a restless and quivering mass on the ground beneath. In the distance rise the turrets of the old Chateau, the walls crumbling away, but over whose ruin the friendly vine spreads a leafy screen. Here, as if conscious of the decay they would conceal, the leaves still hang thickly.

As Constance and Hector stop under the archway that spans the entrance to the old courtyard, the scent of a wild rose, which grows about its stones, is wafted in their faces. Long afterwards in a crowded ball-room a girl who carries a bouquet of roses passes close by Constance; a whiff of their sweetness brings with so much vividness the recollection of this autumn evening, that the dancers and all the brightness of their surroundings are completely shut out, while before Constance rise the vine-clad walls of the old chateau—the lofty towers now crumbling into ruin, broken here and there by narrow openings

which are all that remain of the windows of by-gone days, and stretching away in the distance the avenue of poplars perfect as of old, to remind the beholders of the vanity of the work of men's hands, and of the immutability of nature's efforts. With the recollection of this scene came to Constance a rush of passionate regret and heartfelt longing, that caused the tears to fill her eyes and blur the scene that was passing before her.

A word of description of the girl whom this scene so vividly impressed. Standing now, her graceful figure leaning against the old archway, with the mellow light playing on her bright chestnut hair, she is a fair picture for the eye to rest upon. Her large gray eyes, shaded by pencilled brows and upturned lashes, have at present an expression soft and thoughtful; her nose is small and delicately formed; but good as are the other features, it is the mouth that bespeaks the tenderness of the young girl's nature. The soft color is warm in her usually pale cheeks, and by contrast adds to the whiteness of the forehead and creamy throat. The contrast is rendered more striking by the deep brown color of her cloth dress and plumed hat. As Hector's eyes rest upon her, he realizes that the little sister who left him three years ago is growing into a beautiful woman. There is a strong likeness between brother and sister, but the brother's complexion shows the effects of

exposure to the burning suns and dry winds of the desert. His eyes, which are not so large as those of his sister, are darker, but with an expression of merriment, as if, so far, life had proved a pleasure. In looking at Constance, one wonders why so young a creature should have so much thought in her face, not realizing that one usually sees that look accompanying a nature that is through its sensitiveness conscious of the suffering about it, rather than of any personal experience of pain. Has not some Frenchman said that he would take any person's photograph, and tell from the expression he caught at that instant what would be the predominant feeling, whether of pleasure or of pain, at the crisis in that person's life? It is difficult to realize that coming events cast their shadows so long before.

As Constance and Hector stand in the shadow of the old archway under which many a gay cavalcade has wended its way in days gone by, a cart drawn by two brown horses and with a little dapper man in blue blouse and round hat, his russet trousers tucked into long boots, passes through the outer courtyard. The cart is full of rosy apples gathered from the trees at the foot of the old garden. As the cart trundles out of sight, and the Frenchman's voice, droning out a ditty, grows fainter and fainter, Hector and Constance retrace their steps, leaving the chateau with its vine-clad walls alone with its memories—"a

rown of sorrow"—save for a sombre bird which, perched on the extreme pinnacle of one of the turrets, s calling plaintively to its tardy mate. The rays of he sun grow more and more oblique, and the even- ng shadows grow longer and darker.

CHAPTER III.

As Constance and her brother drove away the next morning from the Convent where Constance had passed so many happy if uneventful days, their eyes rested lingeringly upon a fair girlish figure framed in by the old stone gateway—the morning sun turning to gold the light curly hair and adding to the bright blue of the eyes. Thus stood Cecile Stuart, her hand waving farewell, till a Sister with black gown and white bands approached and led her quietly away; the heavy gate closing in upon them and shutting out the retreating figures.

CHAPTER IV.

SIX months later finds Constance in her Canadian home—"The Poplars"—and very glad her father is to have her with him once again. Their mother having died when quite young, Mr. Lestrange clings with all the greater affection to his two children. It has been a great trial to have had them both so far away, but believing it to have been to their advantage, he has not allowed his personal feelings to stand in the way. Hector has been hurriedly recalled, and is once more on his way to Egypt, so that Constance and her father, with the old housekeeper, Constance's former nurse, and their few servants are at present alone at "The Poplars." Mr. Lestrange, who is member for ——, is leaving on the morrow for Ottawa. Constance goes with him to enter into that whirl of gaiety peculiar to the seat of government.

. . . . . .

It is the night of a ball at Shorncliffe. Their Excellencies Lord and Lady Henley, seated on a dais at the end of the long room and attended by the ladies-in-waiting, are chatting with the Premier and some of the members of his cabinet, who are accompanied by their wives and daughters. The

gracious bearing and gentle courtesy of Lady Henley make all about her feel at ease. Dressed in a cream satin gown with a necklet of diamonds sparkling at her throat, and numerous stars of the same precious stones fastening the lace of her bodice and shining in her dark hair, she looks very queenly. To her right is standing Lord Henley in plain evening dress with numerous orders on his breast: his retiring but friendly manner is making its impression upon a rather agitated member of Parliament whose first session it is, and whose former experience of social gatherings has been limited to harvest home festivals and husking-bees. He has come fresh from the congratulations and adulation of his political friends and, though he knows himself to be the most influential man in his County, he is beginning to realize that there are people in the world who may not have heard of Thomas Dingle, M. P. for Comewell. The fresh, young, English-looking girl standing just at the foot of the dais is the Hon. Mrs. Pratt; she is a bride, and has come to Canada with her husband, one of the aides-de-camp. Her dress of soft cream tulle caught here and there with satin ribbons and buttercups sets off her light brown hair and eyes; several strings of pearls about her slender throat challenge the freshness of her complexion, but do not dim it.

The ball is at its height. The band of the Governor General's Foot-Guards at the far end

the room is playing a selection of waltzes, and as the bright figures sail by in perfect time to the music—as is generally the case in a Canadian ball-room—their Excellencies find themselves wondering if this be the backwoods of comparatively a few years ago.

The ball-room at Shorncliffe is a long room, with tall windows on either side, hung with draperies of Turkey-red, which makes a good background for the light dresses, and is not too dull to dim the effect of the numerous uniforms. Two archways on either side of the stand occupied by the band lead to the main hall; under one of these Constance has agreed to meet her partners. At present her chaperon, Mrs. Chester, has gone for a stroll through the ante-rooms—knowing Constance's programme is full to overflowing, she feels no necessity for remaining stationary. Mr. Lestrange, having found a chair for an old lady who has been slightly overcome by the heat and crowd of the room, turns with a smile to Constance, who has just come up flushed and radiant after the waltz. As her partner for the next dance advances to claim her, Mr. Lestrange's smile is exchanged for a slight look of surprise. "My dance, I believe, Miss Lestrange." Is there anything in the tone to cause that intense look to come into Constance's face? Certainly the voice is soft and musical, with a

tone of sadness too, perhaps, but not enough difference between it and other voices to make such an impression. "Father, I should like to introduce Mr. Anstruther."

"How do you do, Mr. Anstruther? When did you come to Ottawa?"

Mr. Lestrange knew who this Mr. Anstruther was, and if his greeting was somewhat cold, it was only because this man had just claimed Constance for the dance. Mr. Lestrange was not one to be hard on men for follies committed or faults uncorrected, yet to see any man in Constance's society at once challenged his criticism.

Most people would have agreed in calling Mr. Lestrange a handsome man. He had the straight nose and dark grey eyes that were part of his daughter's attractions. His hair, which was still thick, was snowy white, but his moustache was of a dark brown, which gave him, with his erect carriage, a very distinguished air. One looking at the two at this moment would instinctively feel they were more than father and daughter, they were friends.

As some one else claimed a few words with Mr. Lestrange, Constance and Mr. Anstruther moved off. They wended their way through two or three of the rooms thrown open to the guests, and at last found comfortable seats on a sofa in one of the

quietest of the number. The room had a cosy, home-like look with its old-fashioned chintz-covered furniture, and quaint tables, covered with books of foreign views, and here and there a portfolio containing sketches made by Lady Henley during the last salmon fishing expedition on which she accompanied the Governor General. Near the sofa stood a tall brass lamp, its rays softened by a rose-colored shade, and as the mellow light fell on Constance's delicate face and brought out in strong relief her refined profile, Anstruther could scarcely refrain from expressing the admiration he felt.

A word of description of the man who caused that look of surprise to cross the face of Constance's father. He was a little above the medium height, with thick, strong, dark hair, which curled close to his head; his eyes were dark and soft, and, with their present expression, one would call them beautiful; a clear olive skin and well-shaped chin helped to make up his claim to good looks; the moustache, which was long and silky and of a lighter color than the hair, concealed a mouth with lips too full to be in keeping with the rest of the face.

More than one person turned to look at the picture made by Anstruther and Constance as they sat on the old-fashioned sofa within the rays of the rose-colored light. On the wall opposite hung a copy of Edwin Long's "Flight into Egypt."

To the right of the canvas is portrayed a procession led by the dusky dancing daughters of the East, with their dark flowing hair and lustrous eyes, and their soft transparent draperies, which but half conceal their graceful forms; in their midst is borne one of the gods of the Egyptians. To the left of the canvas stands a happy pair of lovers consulting a fortune-teller, while close at hand in the throng gathered to do honor to their deity, a mother is stretching forth her hands across her dying child, beseeching the god of stone to save its life.

In the centre foreground of the picture walks a sombre masculine figure leaning on a staff and leading a mule; seated on the mule with an infant in her arms rides Mary, the Mother of Jesus. Her head is bent with weariness which the surrounding scene seems but to intensify. Ruskin tells us that all great artists have acknowledged their inability to treat anything successfully but that with which they have been familiar from their youth. The Madonna of Raffaelle was born on the Urbino Mountains. Long, being English, gives Mary the golden hair and blue eyes peculiar to the women of his own country. Neither attempts to portray her as a Jewess. In this picture, the contrast of the fair hair and holy face, with the dark complexions of those surrounding her, marks Mary as a creature among them but not of them, as does the quiet and sorrow-

ul dignity of her bearing. As Anstruther's eye ested upon the picture he thought the face of the Virgin, with its halo of golden hair and its downcast eyes, was not more out of keeping with its surroundings than was the face of Constance in the crowded ball-room.

CHAPTER V.

"ARE you fond of the country—I believe you have spent part of your life there?"

"Before I left our country home, I thought I could never be reconciled to live in town during the entire year. Even now, though I enjoy the brightness of Ottawa life, I do not like to feel that when the spring comes, I shall not be there to find the first violets, and to feel that fulness of joy which comes naturally only to one in the country when all nature is bursting out anew. I have never spent a spring in England; but, though we hear much of its beauty, to me the fact of our waiting so long for its joys and then their coming upon us so suddenly adds one of the charms to a Canadian spring," replied Constance.

This was the first time Constance and Anstruther had met, yet she felt that feeling of repose when sitting beside her companion that comes to some people once in a lifetime, but more than once to none. It does not follow that this feeling of repose is given by one who could only make one happy, were he or she to bear the sacred name of husband or wife. There may be faults in the nature, that, at

times, would cause the loving heart to ache with anguish, and possibly, after a while, bring a daily feeling of despair, but there would still be moments of great if blind happiness. In such a case, better a thousand times would it be to turn away from the pleasures of that society. But where two hearts with such a bond between them come together, and have strength to live their lives fearlessly in the sight of God and man—happy are they. Yes, such happiness will be theirs that all troubles will but draw them closer, and make their home a refuge of love.

"My early years," said Anstruther, "were spent in a country home in England, and I think I may say they were the happiest of my life. At my father's death it was hard to give up a home that had so many happy recollections, and harder still to ask my mother to leave it too, but stern necessity brought our happy days in Somerset to a close."

"Have you never revisited the spot?" asked Constance.

"Never, nor has my mother, it would have been too painful. If I should ever be a rich man, which is almost beyond possibility," he said, with one of those sad smiles which many found so attractive, "I should dearly like to end my days where I spent such a happy childhood."

"One naturally loves a place where one has been

happy. and no doubt many places are beautiful in the eyes of some people, through the power of association, that to others appear devoid of beauty. But you must not think I doubt your home was beautiful independently of its associations, as one hears so much of the beauty of Somerset," replied Constance.

. . . . . .

"In this quiet nook one is apt to forget one's proximity to the ball-room. I can scarcely hope for another dance this evening as I know your card is already full. May I hope to see you at the tobogganing party to-morrow?"

For the time being these two people felt as much alone as if all the merry-makers in the adjoining rooms were miles away, such was the sympathy, even then, between them. It was not that Anstruther thought Constance so beautiful, though had he been asked he would have acknowledged that such was his opinion; it was simply that mysterious effect of the personality of the one upon that of the other. This feeling has been described and commented on by able writers without convincing their readers of its cause; only testifying to the fact that such a feeling has existed, existed often, to produce somewhat sad results. It was a feeling surely akin to this that made Romeo at first sight of Juliet forget his vows to another whom till that moment he really

believed his love. It was, doubtless, something more than ordinary love that kept Armand's heart true to Camille, notwithstanding the vicissitudes of her life, of apparent sin and recklessness, and that made Camille in her dying hours spend her fast failing strength in penning her confession of "deception for his sake." Poor misguided Camille, one must pity her. How often the elements of great happiness are found in natures so misguided that they only lead to sorrow and shame.

The ball is drawing to a close; many guests, after having partaken of the sumptuous supper served in the good style peculiar to the present regime, are patiently, and some impatiently, standing in the vestibule of Shorncliffe waiting for their sleighs. Outside, the snow is falling softly, and the rows of evergreens grow whiter and whiter, the bright light streaming from the entrance making the snow sparkle like diamond dust.

As Constance and her father drive in their open sleigh down the avenue leading to the entrance gates, the fresh air blowing in their faces, they pass many pedestrians on their way homeward. When they drive through the gates Anstruther raises his cap and the snow falls on his wavy hair, till the tinkling of the bells as it echoes through the trees grows faint, and the sound of the horse's hoofs as

they strike a stray stone falls no longer on his ear, and the father and daughter have dashed on out of sight.

CHAPTER VI.

It is four o'clock on the following afternoon. Many of the same people are again at Shorncliffe. But on this occasion the toboggan slide is the great attraction. Girls dressed in their blanket costumes of various colors, and with bright tuques on their heads, and moccasins on their feet, are chatting and laughing in that bright way that the fresh air and vigorous exercise seem to make natural to all. Men in their knickerbockers and blanket coats, with the habitant sash of many colors tied about their waists, add to the picturesque appearance of the scene.

The top of the slide is reached by climbing a stairway of 60 feet in height, but though the descent from the platform at the top of the slide to the end of the run, which extends far into the park, is never more than a matter of two minutes, the ascent to the top being on an occasion like this so crowded, more than three trips is impossible in an hour. Not far from the slide, and between it and Shorncliffe, is an open skating rink, where some of the guests are enjoying themselves, and with them is His Excellency, clad in a short buckskin jacket embroidered

with Indian work, and knickerbockers to match; on his head a round cap made of the same material with a squirrel's tail over the side.

In a little log-cabin which stands among the pine trees, hot tea and coffee with other light refreshments are being served. This cabin, which comprises two rooms, was put up by request of the Princess Louise and is an exact copy of many of the log-cabins which were the only shelter of the earlier settlers, the forefathers of those very people who are now viewing it with so great a curiosity. In one of these rooms in a large open fire-place are blazing huge logs, and scattered about the floor are buffalo robes and deer skins brought by shooting parties from Muskoka.

Seated in one of the rough but comfortable chairs surrounded as was her custom, is Mrs. Sherbrooke—her husband is M.P. for L——. She is unusually bright and handsome this afternoon, and seems to devote the greater part of her attention to the man leaning against the corner of the mantel-piece. Not far away, the leader of the Government is conversing with a tall, handsome girl, with dark eyes and dusky hair. This girl is looking charming in her toboggan costume, and appears fully aware of her charms; she is one whose appearance more extorts homage than surprises admiration by its subtle charms. Of the latter sort is Constance, and many there are who think Canada's belle—for such is the dusky beauty

onsidered—was not uneclipsed at the ball of the ight before by the more refined and graceful, if not striking, figure of Miss Lestrange.

The cabin door opens and Constance, accompanied y Captain Ardor, of the Governor-General's Foot uards, enters the room. She looks so bewitching her white and blue flannel costume that even the aughty Miss Foster acknowledges she has a rival, ut only feels a pleasant interest, with nothing of nvy in it, for the pretty girl whose chestnut hair and ark eyebrows are so well brought out by the color f the soft blue cap on her head. Mrs. Sherbrooke, ot being of so generous a mind, looks critically at he new-comer, and, having surveyed her through he medium of a pair of eye-glasses, asks Anstruther —for it is he who is standing at the fire-place—if he ad found Miss Lestrange very interesting on the vening before. "Confess that you did, for I passed wice through the room where you were occupying hat very comfortable sofa, and while I hoped that ou would soon let some one else enjoy it, you did ot even see me pass, though I almost brushed your rm with my dress."

"Your question is already answered. One must ave been unusually interested not to have felt Mrs. Sherbrooke's presence near," said Anstruther with a smile.

At that moment Mrs. Sherbrooke's attention was

called away by an old gentleman who was alway ready to exchange a little small talk with thi vivacious lady. Anstruther found his way to Con stance's side and was greeted with a bright smile.

"Been down the slide yet, Miss Lestrange?" h asked.

"Not yet; I am just fortifying myself for th ence"—holding up a little wafer of bread an —"it looks rather formidable, judging from that I saw as we were coming here. In any case, I am anxious to see what the sensation really is. You know I have never tobogganed anywhere, and they tell me it is one of the swiftest slides in Canada."

"I hope you are entrusting yourself to some one who thoroughly understands steering, as since this slide is very smooth, sheer ice really, one requires to understand a toboggan thoroughly before taking ladies down, I think."

Captain Ardor now suggests their trying the slide. After rather a long time spent in climbing the stairway, but which is shortened by a pleasant intercourse with others bound on the same errand, Constance and Captain Ardor find themselves on the platform at the top of the slide; the toboggan is held in position by one of the men who is there to superintend the starting. Constance is put on first, and takes hold of the little rod running along the side of the toboggan, her blanket skirt and coat

tucked well round her; Ardor jumps on behind, the man loosens his hold, and Constance feels as if she were dropping through the air, so steep is the descent at the top; she then knows the toboggan is flying over the icy surface, but scarcely touching it. Presently they jump, it seems to her three or four feet in the air; down they come again, and shoot on over the snow and ice. By this time that breathless sensation is leaving Constance, she is beginning to enjoy the quick passage through the air when the toboggan slackens its speed and she realizes they are safely at the bottom. She is shaking a little, not at all from fear, but from excitement; her pretty hair is somewhat blown about, but she is surprised to find herself in such good order, and is glad that she has been guided in choosing her costume by one of experience.

. . . . . .

Constance and her father, with Ardor still in attendance, find their way to the reception room, where their Excellencies are now moving among their guests, who have come in to take a little refreshment and get warm before leaving for town. Presently there is a lull in the conversation, as it is seen that Mrs. Sherbrooke is going to sing.

Seating herself at the piano, which is placed across one corner of the tastily furnished room, Mrs. Sher-

brooke begins her song. As her rich contralto voice fills the room, one and all seem enraptured; some may detect a lack of sympathetic tone, but all will agree that the voice is magnificent. As Mrs. Sherbrooke rises to leave the piano, Lady Henley advances with Anstruther. Mrs. Sherbrooke having expressed her willingness to play his accompaniment, he now prepares to sing. His voice is a baritone, and as the notes fall from his lips there is no one present who misses the sympathy in *their* tones. There is a slight tremor at first, which was not noticeable in Mrs. Sherbrooke's singing, but only at first; after this he loses himself in the beauty of the song, which is "Adelaide," as does everyone who listens. Constance feels herself carried away by a rush of sympathy. As she listens, a painting of a branch of crab-apples on the back of the door, and which is wonderfully true to nature, seems to hold her eyes; she almost imagines herself back in the old garden at home, the soft air about her and the breeze gently lifting the leaves on the branch, as the soft tones float to her ear. Never again did she hear the song without a slight return of the sensations, and never did she see a crab-apple tree without catching a faint echo of the song.

As the last notes died away, she turned, and her eyes met the eyes of the singer.

CHAPTER VII.

IT is evening, and the stairways leading to the galleries of the House are unusually animated, which would lead one to suppose that the subject up for debate is one of more than ordinary interest. The crowd at the entrance to the gallery has become somewhat dense. It is yet a few minutes before the doors will open. Close to the entrance stands Mrs. Sherbrooke. Her long cloak of crimson plush, unfastened at the throat, displays the soft folds of her pale pink dinner dress; in her dark hair shines one diamond star, and another of larger size glistens at her throat. Her dark eyes are bright, and she is talking in her vivacious way—still keeping her hand on her husband's arm—to Anstruther, who in his turn listens, but appears expectant of some one else's arrival, as his eyes constantly turn to the head of the marble stairway. Leaning against one of the marble pillars which support the ceiling stands Miss Foster, looking somewhat annoyed at having arrived before it is possible to gain admittance to the gallery. She is with Sir Charles Foster, who, as Speaker of the Senate, is free to-night, there being no night session

for that Chamber, owing to the expected debate on the "Deceased Wife's Sister Bill." He and his daughter make a handsome picture as they stand side by side, so like but for the difference between youth and age.

Miss Foster is dressed in a rigidly plain black satin dress, a necklet of pearls and diamonds clasps her throat, and in her hand she carries a large bunch of yellow roses.

As the doors are opened, some pass into the Senators' gallery, which is the first after entering by the doorway at the head of the stair; others pass into the Speaker's gallery, which is the second, and is much the best gallery for hearing and seeing, being in possession of a view of both the Government and Opposition sides of the House. There is a good show of members in their places. Just opposite the Premier sits the leader of the Opposition, with his large soft hat, as is his custom, well drawn over his eyes. He presents a somewhat sombre visage, and on comparing his appearance with that of the Premier, one partly understands how, notwithstanding his undoubted intellect, and, as those who know him best say, his integrity of purpose, he would repel where the other, by his brightness and magnetism, would attract.

Just now the Premier is conversing with some of his colleagues, and as he pauses there is a smile on the

faces of all about him. Perhaps not a little of his popularity is due to the fact that he seldom fails to amuse. For are we not all seeking amusement? Each member has his own seat and desk, and is altogether more luxuriously treated in this respect than are the members of the Imperial House of Commons. Many of the members are in evening dress, and with prettily gowned women in the galleries—which are not, as in Westminster, screened off from the view of the members—the well-lighted Chamber presents a bright and attractive appearance.

As the remarks of the member for D—— are drawing to a close, Anstruther, who has found a place for Mrs. Sherbrooke in the front row, and is now leaning over the partition which separates the ladies' gallery from the passage leading to the people's gallery, is somewhat relieved to see Mr. Lestrange and Constance enter, followed by Captain Ardor and a party of several friends. For the past month, Constance and Anstruther have met very frequently at balls, toboggan parties, snowshoe tramps, and, as to-night, several times in the galleries of the House. Anstruther's admiration for Constance has become quite pronounced. Captain Ardor is, if somewhat more diffident in his attentions, quite as anxious to enjoy the pleasure her society affords. As the party advances, Anstruther goes to meet

them. "I am afraid you will have difficulty in securing a seat just at present, but some one may be leaving the gallery before very long," he said; "May I join your party?" to Constance. Mr. Lestrange does not look too pleased to see Anstruther and Constance together. Some of the members who have accompanied ladies to the gallery now leave to take their seats in the body of the House; in that way seats are found for Constance and her party, where they can both see and hear. Mr. Lestrange being also obliged to leave, Anstruther seats himself beside Constance; Captain Ardor is next Mrs. Chester, who has two pretty girls with her.

"I do so enjoy being here in the evening, everything looks so bright. I used to feel very sorry for my father when we read of the House sitting during the Letellier debate till three and four in the morning; but now that I know how pleasant it is, I am beginning to think it was not so miserable after all," said Constance.

"Lady N——" (Lady N—— is the Premier's wife) "does not object, apparently, to being here, as every night she waits and drives home with her husband. Sometimes, when she knows the debate will be long, she does not come till midnight; but she thinks it less dreary for Sir George to know

there is some one waiting to go home and have a little supper with him," said Anstruther.

"I like her," replied Constance, with that clear decided look in her deep gray eyes.

"Most ladies reserve all their praise for Sir George," continued Anstruther.

"Yes; I think him charming, too—but I admire the women who make it easier for men to carry out their good work. After all, it is the little worries that so often paralyze a man's energies, and a happy home with sympathetic companionship must be a great assistance to a man holding a public position."

Constance's remarks, like those of many very observing and sensitive people, often suggested an experience that could never have been hers. It was this, and a frank fearlessness in expressing her opinions, that gave one of its chief attractions to her companionship. There was no self-assertiveness in her manner; her fearlessness was simply the result of having been encouraged to form opinions for herself and having those opinions respected when expressed. It is this that lends a piquancy to the conversation of most American girls, but whereas it sometimes makes their manner aggressive, it seldom has this effect upon Canadians. This, perhaps, is because the Canadian is still much more English than American, notwithstanding the proximity to Uncle Sam's country, and the wide billows of the

Atlantic that separate her from the mother land. The tendency of the higher education of women, as exemplified in the American women, is naturally to render them more independent. The knowledge that they are capable of gaining their own livelihood without losing their position in the social world, and the natural refinement that is invariably the result of the cultivation of the intellect, will make women more difficult to please in the choice of a husband; but that, rather than being an evil, will produce good in creating an incentive to men to become more worthy.

Where many women marry for a home, they will then, with the knowledge of their ability to provide for themselves, only marry men whom they can love and respect, and they will cease to condone in men what they condemn (and justly, too) in women. It is natural for men to wish to please women, as it is for women to wish to please men; but heretofore the average woman, seeing how poor a position an unmarried woman of small means and no intellectual prestige held in the world, grew to believe her one goal to be matrimony. In this way she was often led to marry a man whom she did not love, and sometimes did not even respect. We all know there are many love matches which do not turn out happily; but we have only to study French history and the modern French novel to realize how great is

the unhappiness where the *mariage de convenance* is the rule rather than the exception.

There is much to be said on both sides of the subject of woman suffrage. If, as some argue, only the women of the lowest grades of society will go to the polls, by all means keep such a degrading influence away; but, on the other hand, if the knowledge that they have a voice in the government of the country lead women to study the public questions of the day in which their husbands, brothers and sons take an interest, they will be all the better companions for the men of their family. Many men do things in public life the knowledge of which they would shrink from having their women friends possess. If women then understood the subjects before the public for discussion, and followed as men do the course of events, would not men be more circumspect in their public lives? One naturally expects women to be more rigid in their ideas of right and wrong. If their censure or approbation be a thing to be avoided or sought, by all means educate them so they can bestow the one or the other wisely. There is no wish to imply that there are not many honorable and upright men in public life; but it is also a fact there are many in that position who are not wholly the one or the other. If, then, women's closer knowledge of public affairs will make men more careful in the course they

pursue, by all means educate women so they may have that knowledge; and if a voice in the government of their country will encourage them to exercise the judgment God has given them as to what is for the public weal, let them have that voice. Why the more educated and refined women should shrink from going to the polls in the present state of things one can see; but with all great changes come attendant evils, and if the refined and better class of women will at first endure the unpleasantness now experienced upon visiting a polling booth, in time the rough men will not feel comfortable lounging about, and will find some place else where there is no element to make them feel their inferiority, or will try and make themselves smarter for the occasion. There is a something within every man that makes him reverence what is pure and good; in some the feeling is stronger than in others, undoubtedly, but there is that element in all, and why, in time, should not the refinement improve the brutal element, rather than that the brutal element should destroy the refinement? On the other hand, it is argued that a too keen interest in public affairs will lead women to neglect their homes. If that be beyond a doubt the natural result, by all means frown down the new movement. But is it so? Will a reasonable knowledge of what is going on about them make woman forget those duties that nature has so eminently

fitted her to perform? Would not the time spent in stitching useless covers for chair backs be *better* spent in studying the subjects that are occupying the leading intellects of the day, so that a wider knowledge of human nature, its motives and its aims, may lead women to be more competent to judge *justly* of their fellow-men, and make it distasteful to them to spend their time in idle gossip and unjust criticism? This is a digression suggested by the mention of the American girl, whose ambitions are not without their pathetic side, and which appeal to us.

To return to the ladies' gallery—

"Why would you consider," continued Anstruther, "this sympathy more necessary to a public man? Do you not think that many a poor beggar, who has none of the public applause, needs sympathy too?"

"I think we all need sympathy; but when a man gains applause it is generally when he is successful; but when he fails, after a hard struggle, for what he believes to be right, and fails often through no fault of his own, the public will not hesitate to censure and misjudge him. It is then he feels the blessing of his sympathetic home. At least I think I should feel so."

"May you always remain as womanly as you are now, Miss Lestrange." Constance looked up, surprised, not being aware that she had said anything that would call for that tender ring in a

voice always soft. Her glance was met by a loo
that held her own. What love and sad longin
that look expressed.

CHAPTER VIII.

MARRIAGE with Deceased Wife's Sister Bill." rder for second reading read. The member for —— rises and expresses to the House that, through s experience as a lawyer, he has been brought to ame this Bill. He tells of some sad cases that ave come under his notice where the marriages ave taken place, and the father dying leaving roperty, the children by the second marriage do ot inherit, but are left penniless. This he tells he House and a great deal more, and appeals to is fellow members' sense of justice, by reading xtracts from speeches made in the Imperial House y such men as Mr. Bright, Earl Russel, and others. The member for H—— (one of the Opposition) ises and opposes the Bill from a Scriptural Point, 'on the Divine Law laid down in Leviticus, chapter xx, verse 21." This speech of thirty words is the only speech made by this member during the fifteen years of his holding his seat.

After a lengthy discussion the vote is now to be taken, the whips are calling in the absent members. Presently a melody is begun by one of the members of the Opposition, and by degrees the whole House

joins with him in singing the "Old Folks at Home." Very pretty it sounds as the soft notes ascend to the galleries, and so soothing is its power that one regrets to hear it die away. The stray members are now in their places. The vote is taken. Majority in favor of Bill.

The galleries begin to thin out.

Mr. Lestrange comes to escort Mrs. Chester with her party back to the hotel. They take their way to the supper-room, and are seated at a table with Mrs. Sherbrooke and her small party, of whom Anstruther is again one. Once more he is seated beside Constance, and is telling her that he and Mr. Bolton, whose private secretary he is, are leaving for S—— to-morrow. "I shall hope to see you in S——. Are you to remain here much longer?" he asks.

"I expect one month longer."

Constance still has her opera cloak over her shoulders, but has removed the covering from her head and is looking a little pale and wistful, but her loveliest, Anstruther thinks. His eyes scarcely stray from her face, as he realizes that he may not see that face again for weeks; strong impulse impels him to seize her in his arms and carry her off where there are no forms and ceremonies, and no cold worldly criticism to thrust the past in his face, and tell him he is not worthy of such a prize. Not

orthy! Well, he feels it to be true, and yet, can leave this sweet girl without even as much as lling her how he loves her—telling her that, from e first, he felt she was the one woman in all the rld for him, and having at least the satisfaction f seeing those deep gray eyes raised to his with look of—what would it be? He could not believe he was quite indifferent to him, and yet he felt she was not as yet conscious of any strong feeling for him. What joy to be the first to awaken that pure heart to a knowledge of its capacity for joy and sorrow! To feel, if only once, those soft lips pressed to his.

"You are looking tired, Constance; I think that, if Mrs. Chester will excuse us, I will take you off, dear," said Mr. Lestrange.

All having finished their supper the party dispersed. At the foot of the staircase Anstruther bid good-night to Constance and her father. Constance noticed that he did not say "good-bye."

. . . . . .

As Constance was waiting in the drawing-room the next morning for the sleigh that was to take her to a luncheon party, Anstruther was announced. Constance was dressed in a dark blue velvet suit, the jacket bordered with fur. A wide rimmed hat with dark blue feathers shaded her face. Anstruther

came quickly on the heels of the footman who announced him. He looked somewhat pale.

"I did not leave this morning, Miss Lestrange, because I felt I must bid you 'good-bye,' and last night I could not do so with so many eyes upon us. I want you to tell me, just once, that you are sorry I am going away. Will you?"

Surely that was a simple request and one easily granted, but Constance felt, rather than heard, the emotion in the voice that addressed her, and she seemed to grow in that moment a woman with a woman's heart. She raised her eyes and once more met that look of sad longing and regret.

"Will you not say you are sorry?"

Her voice trembled as she held out her hand and said, "I am sorry."

"The sleigh is at the ladies' entrance, miss," announced the footman. The moment was over.

"I will see you to your sleigh," said Anstruther.

His voice seemed flat and dull, his face had turned a shade paler, but the old conventional manner had returned. He raised his cap as the bells jingled and the restless horses dashed off with their light burden, but his eyes did not seek those of Constance again. Did he regret what he had seen there already?

CHAPTER IX.

MR. LESTRANGE is seated at his desk in the House of Commons, and has just finished reading some letters telling him of professional matters to be attended to. He has opened a few envelopes containing cards of invitation for himself and Constance, and is now half wondering if he has done wisely in bringing his daughter into this world of gaiety while she is yet so inexperienced in the ways of the world. He does not remember with pleasure the evident signs of interest Constance has shown in Anstruther above her other acquaintances in Ottawa.

There is a chapter in Anstruther's life that Mr. Lestrange would find it hard to overlook. On turning to his letters again, Mr. Lestrange's eye is caught by an envelope addressed in an irregular hand. He glanced at its contents, and saw at once that it was something out of the common. These are the words which were penned on a piece of blue water-lined paper:—

"DEAR SIR,—

"As ceremony is an idle thing upon most occasions, more especially to persons in my state of mind, I shall come at

once to the point which is of importance to us both. I would inform you that my present situation in life is unbearable to me. I should prefer death to a continuance in it. Desperate diseases require desperate remedies, and you are the man I have selected either to make or mar my career. It has employed my invention for some time to find out a method to destroy another without exposing my own life; that I have accomplished, and defy the law. Now for the application of it. I am desperate, and must be provided for. You have it in your power, it is my business to make it your inclination, to serve me which you must determine to comply with by procuring me a genteel support for my life, or your own will be taken before the last term of this Parliament is over. I have more motives than one for singling you out first upon this occasion, and I give you this fair warning, because the means I shall make use of are too fatal to be warded off by a doctor's skill. If you think this of consequence you will not fail to meet the author to-morrow afternoon on the road running through the pines behind Shorncliffe, where it takes a turn to the right, at half-past three o'clock. A few hours after you receive this will determine me your friend or your enemy. You will understand that you are to be alone. If I discover any artifice on your part it will be fatal to you. So long as I keep my own counsel I am secure, for my own lips can alone condemn me. You will understand that I mean you to come quite unattended.

(Signed), PARSONS."

Mr. Lestrange was much surprised by this letter

ut not alarmed, as he at once took it to be the work f some political crank who imagined he had a claim pon the Government, and took this foolish way of nforcing it. There was a slight feeling of pity for he poor wretch who could be so desperate as to lay imself open to the danger that the writing of such letter would incur, for the boast, "my own lips can lone condemn me," did not carry much weight to is mind. "At the turn of the road, at half-past hree." Mr. Lestrange looked at his watch. Five minutes past one o'clock—two hours and twenty-five minutes till the appointed time of meeting. Not intimidated, but surprised at the letter, he resolved to try and discover the author and have him arrested.

Accompanied by a detective, Mr. Lestrange, at three o'clock, drove towards Shorncliffe. The sun's rays were beginning to grow warmer, melting the snow; the roads, because of the thaw, were rough and sloppy, and drops of water were dripping from the eaves of the little French houses as the sleigh drove by. Mr. Lestrange threw open his heavy fur overcoat. As he did so, the detective respectfully suggested his not exposing something bright and metallic that protruded from his inner pocket and caught the sun's rays.

After passing the gates that led to Shorncliffe the road takes a sudden dip and rises again about four hundred yards beyond, thus

forming a hollow through which runs a little stre
which, in its turn, is spanned by a rather rick
wooden bridge. The ice which had formed on
top of this running water was about two inches thi
but the water could clearly be seen running rapi
under it. Just near the bridge, where the current
most rapid, there were little air-holes, and every
and then the stream bubbled up and overflowed
ice, till it was stopped by a small bank of sno
where it gradually froze, forming at first crys
spider webs, and then becoming hard and firm,
they were as a part of the underlying strata. J
so a good impulse will cause our heart to overflo
with kindness and good-will, that in its course w
overspread a cold exterior till it be checked by so
barrier of selfishness, when it will struggle faint
against the obstruction "still beautiful in its death
till it cease altogether, and, becoming hardened, w
but add to the density of the cold exterior, whic
unchecked, it would have washed bright.

On the far side of the stream is a clump of pine tre
—a part, but separated from it by the hill, of the sma
forest of pines beyond. On the dark green of the
foliage rests a sprinkling of snow, in some place
thick enough to weigh down the branches. As th
sleigh pulls up, after crossing the bridge, some of the
snow is shaken from the branches and falls, makin
small perforations in the earth's pure covering

eath. Though only three miles from the town, piece of road is lonely.

Leaving the horse and sleigh in the hollow with detective acting as coachman, Mr. Lestrange unted the short but steep hill. At the top road took a sudden turn to the left, and here pines on either side of the road grew thicker. re also they were patched with snow. The had gone behind a cloud, and the cold wind w some of the snow from the trees into Mr. strange's face. He brushed it away and turned up e collar of his coat; he had not noticed the wind hen the pines had shed their snow in the valley hind him.

The detective, on being left, prepared to make the rse, which was quiet, fast to a tree which stood ose by the side of the road, and then, drawing up e buffalo robe, he sat with one foot on the side of e sleigh ready to obey the signal, should it sound.

CHAPTER X.

LOOKING before him, Mr. Lestrange saw that the road was quite clear as far as the spot where it took the turn to the right, which was as far as it was in view, as there again it took a steep and sudden dip. Drawing out his watch, Mr. Lestrange saw it was twenty-five minutes to four o'clock. "No one in sight. It is probably some practical joke. I do believe there will be a laugh at my expense. I will go to the turn and then rejoin Tinder." He quickens his pace, and is just at the turn, when a man hastening round the bend in the road, but still looking back over his shoulder down the hill, would have run into him, but that Mr. Lestrange, more watchful, and with his eyes looking before him, steps to one side. The man starts, on discovering he has almost run into some one—"I beg your pardon, I was not looking where I was going."

"Not at all—are you going far, Mr. Anstruther?" For it is he, who, for some reason, is also out in this comparatively unfrequented road. Mr. Anstruther looks somewhat confused, and explains he is out for a constitutional before being shut up in the train all night.

Mr. Lestrange has always observed a dignified erve towards Anstruther, so it is quite natural that should now pass on with no further remark than a Good-afternoon." Mr. Lestrange goes on, but, as turns the corner, slackens his pace, and goes wly down the hill; when half-way down, he traces his steps still very slowly. On coming to e top of the hill again, he sees Anstruther stand- g at the end of the straight piece of road, his head nt and his hand raised to his chin. His whole titude denotes thoughtful indecision. He once more oks back, and, seeing Mr. Lestrange, pulls himself gether and hastens down the hill, the one at the ot of which the sleigh is waiting. Mr. Lestrange alks once more back to the appointed rendezvous, en retraces his steps and returns to the sleigh and inder.

"Met no one, sir?"

"No one who had anything particular to say to me."

"A young chap went by here and looked kinder ard at me; I sort of think I've a seen him about own, a darkish looking chap—you met him, I eckon, sir?"

"Oh, Mr. Anstruther, Mr. Bolton's private secre- ary; he is out for a constitutional."

"Oh, I guess long walks is good for the heart, and e looked gloomy enough in no mistake, till a smart ookin' lass almost frightened old Bess into boltin'

by comin' out so quiet like from behind them p
just as the dark young chap he come down the
They've gone on together now," said Tinder.

"Odd," thought Mr. Lestrange. "I underst
Anstruther was to leave this morning. It is do
odd to find him walking with some woman away
here."

Old Bess quickened her pace, and they were
on their way to the town when they saw, a l
before them, Anstruther talking most earnestly
girl who walked by his side. The girl was dre
all in black, which well set off her pretty figure.
small black turban rested above a coil of soft l
hair, Alaska sable trimmed the neatly fitting bl
jacket. Just now she is holding her handkerc
to her eyes and appears to be crying. This seem
irritate Anstruther, who makes a vigorous lunge w
his walking-stick at an overhanging branch o
butternut tree that grows by the wayside.
Lestrange takes the road that leads to town b
roundabout way, but, by doing so, avoids passi
Anstruther and his companion.

Mr. Lestrange decided to say nothing to Consta
of his drive that afternoon, not wishing to cause h
any anxiety; and knowing her love for him, he f
she would be apt to see dangers where none exist
In this way he told her nothing of having se
Anstruther, or of his companion.

CHAPTER XI.

NADA is only a colony, but it is a very loyal one. all events such is the case if the names of its ks, hotels, and other public places indicate anyg of the spirit of the people. For instance:— e "Queen's Royal Hotel," the "Victoria Restaut," the "Connaught Roller Rinks," the "Brunsk Arms," etc., etc., all of which our American sins seem to regard with keen amusement—an usement almost as keen as our own on reading tracts like the following from the English Society pers:—

"MARRIED, on Tuesday, May 12, at St. George's, Norton uare, Miss Esperance Fitz-Smith, only daughter of tancedeoil Smith, of Goldacre, Illinois, to Prince Sangux, of Chateau Illustre, Normandy. After the ceremony, e bridal party repaired to 26 Handover Square, South ensington, the London residence of Mr. Cotancedeoil ith, where a sumptuous wedding breakfast was partaken . Among the presents to the bride was a handsomely uminated Geneological Tree of the family Sangvieux, owing their descent from Charlemagne; this was presented the groom. The father of the bride, Mr. Cotancedeoil ith, settled an annuity of £50,000 upon the bride, and equal sum was settled upon the bridegroom, also by

the father of the bride, to be paid to each individually long as they live together, and after, if a separation found more conducive to their happiness. The hap pair left for Monte Carlo, where they are to spend th honeymoon."

To their credit be it said there are many America who hold in great horror these marriages, which ha been so numerous of late and prophesy great troub in the future; but the Republic is not, alas! unite on this subject.

The skaters are in full swing at the "Royal" Rin In the centre of the ice eight people are dancing th lancers on skates. The band is playing the Mikad music arranged for that purpose. They are at th last figure, each person has caught up a differe colored ribbon that hangs from the Maypole. No they draw them out to their full length, the ban strikes the opening chord and they start off skatin now in, now out, plaiting the ribbon as they do s round and round the pole. A pretty sight it is to se the skaters glide gracefully in and out, with the brig ribbons growing shorter and shorter above their head and their circle of evolutions growing smaller an smaller till the ribbon is all plaited tight round th pole, and each one is face to face with his partne when the music stops and the set breaks up and th skaters glide off. Constance and Captain Ardo take two or three turns round the rink. Constan

ooking bewitching, the exercise has deepened her or to a deep carmine, her eyes are bright, and the l of soft hair is resting gracefully on her slender ite neck; she again wears the dark velvet suit mmed with fur, and many there are who envy rdor his partner. Captain Ardor is looking quite nscious of his good luck.

Ardor is a fair man, of medium height; his ure is very straight and well-set. He has the repu tion of being a splendid officer, though still quite ung. He went through the Egyptian Campaign ith Constance's brother, Hector, which is a bond etween them. He is never seen without a glass in he eye, and no amount of jolting, even on horseback, islodges it from its place. There is a hole in the glass o allow a string to pass through it, but no string is ever ut to that use. On one occasion when the captain, ho is by no means without humor, was asked by ne of his brother officers what the hole was for, s he never put a cord through it, he replied, "To ee through."

The captain and Constance seat themselves on a hair at the head of the rink. Presently Mrs. Sherbrooke and Mr. Todeson skate gracefully by them. Mr. Sherbrooke's skating days are over, but he s not far off. He is one of those people who persuade themselves that they are among the most fortunate people in the world. If he be

not a great man, he believes himself one; and, after all, that is, as far as he himself is concerned, perhaps better: a truly great man is sometimes doubtful of his own greatness, and, compared with what he hoped to do, his achievements to him seem small. The man who believes himself great also believes that all he does, being done by him, must be great; his horses, chosen by himself, could not be better; his home, planned by himself, is perfect; his last speech in the House was worthy of him. If some of the members, having heard him speak on the same subject before, believed they had heard enough and left the Chamber, this great man pities minds so incapable of appreciating the importance of the occasion. The fact that Mrs. Sherbrooke receives a great deal of attention from young society men only confirms him in his impression that all connected with him is worthy of admiration. If at times he thinks women are inclined to turn the cold shoulder upon her, is it not envy?—they are not the wives of great men. Some people wonder that Mr. Sherbrooke is not jealous when the attentions of some of these society butterflies become too marked. Not at all; compared with him, what are they? And is not his wife a woman who has shown her appreciation of him by marrying him, and having married him, could any of those ordinary beings for one moment cast a shadow across the steady light of his attraction?

"Are you to remain in Ottawa much longer, Miss Lestrange? Till the end of the session?" asked Captain Ardor.

"No, I think not. I expect to leave here in about a month. Hector is coming back from Egypt in May, and I am anxious to be at home a little time before him."

"I should like to see Hector again. Will he be at home for long?"

"Only two months' leave, I think, this time. He has not been at all well, poor boy, otherwise he would not be with us so soon again."

Captain Ardor has on a short dark blue pea-jacket trimmed with Persian lamb; he is not handsome, but his features are small and delicate, and with his fair hair, which is always perfectly smooth—so smooth that Constance calls it provokingly smooth after having tobogganed with him and known the effect of that pastime upon her own wayward locks—presents a very refined appearance. His mother was one of the best horsewomen of her day in her little world,—I say little, because after all the world of society is small as compared with the struggling and seething mass of humanity which is regarded as quite beyond its pale. The captain, who is singularly like his mother, and whose only child he is, inherits her taste for horses, and never looks so well as when on horse-

back. He will inherit her fortune,—it is not ve
large but it is a competence.

When Constance mentions her brother's ind
position a shade crosses his face. He knows ho
fond this brother and sister are of each other. Sh
in her woman's way making an idol of her handsom
brother, and he in his man's way being proud of he
beauty, to say nothing of the links of early associa
tion that do so much to keep the hearts of brother
and sisters warm for each other when the clos
association has so entirely come to an end. Happines
with many of us is so largely made up of the recol
lection of former joys that, when a sorrow come
that renders the memory of those joys painful, muc
of the light has indeed gone out of our lives. Well h
knows from his experience in Egypt how apt Hecto
is to abuse his constitution; well, too, he knows th
careless disposition that disregards all counsel from
more experienced heads.

"I think I shall run down to S—— when you
brother is at home. I should like to talk over old
times," said Ardor.

The truth is Ardor realizes that Ottawa will be
somewhat of a desert to him when Constance leaves.
But he likes to deceive himself with the thought that
"old times" is the attraction that will take him to
S——. He is not at all sure how Constance regards
him, but he knows each day her society is more

necessary to him. Her very friendliness, while it causes him to be envied by others, makes him at times somewhat hopeless. In reality Constance, who has been conscious of her increasing interest in Anstruther, and for some reason almost unknown to herself has felt uneasy in the consciousness, has always turned to Ardor with an undefined hope that he would protect her from herself. The strange feeling when she first saw Anstruther, and their immediate mutual understanding, gives her a prophetic feeling that their lives are to have an influence the one on the other.

Constance is claimed by her partner for the next band, who is a bright young boy, and so rapidly does he skate that the onlookers are surprised he knocks no one over, as there are so many on the rink this evening. After three trips round the ice Constance finds herself in much the same frame of mind as Alice in "Looking Glass House," after she and the Red Queen have been flying with such speed through the air as to render her breathless, only to find themselves on stopping in the place from which they started. When the boy offered her a chair she quite expected him to say, "There you may rest a little," and was ready to answer in the character of Alice, "I'm quite content to stay here, only I am so hot and thirsty." This is not necessary, however, as one of the managing

committee suggests an ice or a cup of coffee. S
all three wend their way to the refreshment roo
Mrs. Sherbrooke is once more going to sing, at lea
Constance gathers as much as she approaches t
room, observing Mr. Sherbrooke, who is standing ne
the door, his head well back and his arms folde
across his chest; his face expresses extreme com
placency, his whole attitude says, "Now we are t
hear something worth while. You may all listen,
know you cannot all appreciate it, but it will giv
pleasure to all, most of all to me, of course, because
fully understand how wonderful my wife's voice is."
Constance has seen this expression and attitude be
fore, so enters the room quietly to listen for the song.
After it is over, those who have not been partaking o
the refreshments, regardless of the music, begin now
Mrs. Sherbrooke takes a chair beside Constance and
says in her usual off-hand style, "You here, Captain
Ardor, and your glass in your eye"—she prides her-
self on saying just what one does not expect to hear
—"we were just wondering if you sleep with that
glass in your eye."

"Of course I do, to see the girls I dream about,"
said Captain Ardor. "Some of them are growing
so slight that I can scarcely see them even with its
aid," with a very decided look at Mrs. Sherbrooke's
figure. As that lady lives in hourly dread of growing
too stout, and makes no secret of wanting to prevent

such a catastrophe, the humor of this remark is not lost upon her.

"In future, Captain Ardor, I am at your feet. Hear him, Miss Lestrange; he insinuates I shall soon be too slight to be seen, even in a dream. Henceforth I am at his feet. His slave!"

CHAPTER XII.

MR. LESTRANGE was prepared, on the morning following his expedition to the road bordered with pines, to receive some intimation that he was the object of a practical joke; but nothing further transpired to make him think so on that day or on the next. On Saturday morning, however, he received the following letter in type-writing:—

"DEAR SIR,

"You receive this as an acknowledgment of your punctuality as to the time and place of meeting on Wednesday last, though it was owing to you that it answered no purpose. There was no intention of doing you any harm, so your being armed and accompanied was unnecessary, and only prevented my explaining what I expect you to do. If you will serve me I will be your friend and can save you much trouble. Any attempt to convict me must fail, and will only lead to your own destruction. You shall hear from me again.

"(Signed) P."

CHAPTER XIII.

TWO months later, Constance and her father are back at their home in S——. Hector is also at "The Poplars" on sick leave. He is quite able to go about and enjoy himself, however. Cécile having left the Convent School at Easter is once more in Canada, and is now paying Constance a visit. Looking very pretty, she is enjoying every moment of her stay with all the enthusiasm of youth. Ardor has carried out his intention of renewing his acquaintance with Hector, and is also a guest at "The Poplars." This afternoon there is to be a driving party. The waggonette is already at the door, drawn by a pair of bay ponies. One, "Stella," has a white star on her forehead, her eyes look a little wild this afternoon, and she is pawing up the gravel as if anxious to be off. The nigh mare is an exact mate for "Stella," but that she has one white stocking on her off hind leg, and across her nose is a blaze of white. She, too, seems quite ready to start; she tosses her head, and the silver mountings of the harness glisten in the sun. A smoothly kept lawn stretches before "The Poplars;" a gravel walk leads to the door and makes a sweep round a bed of scarlet geraniums, which

form a pretty patch of color in the bright sunlight. In the middle of the velvety lawn which slopes from the French windows of the drawing-room stands an old-fashioned fountain; its water spurts into the air and tumbles again into the basin below, making a cool and refreshing accompaniment to the merry voices of the young people who are assembling on the doorsteps.

Constance, who is to drive the bay ponies, mounts the box of the waggonette. Ardor takes the seat beside her and hands her her parasol whip. Mr. and Mrs. Simpson and Anstruther are in at the back. Hector is seated in the dog-cart, waiting under the horse-chestnut tree. The dog-cart is drawn by a large flea-bitten grey, and as the breeze blows the blossoms off the trees they light on the horse's broad back, making him whisk impatiently his short heavy tail.

Constance gathers up the ribbons and starts off to make way for the smart looking grey and dog-cart.

Cécile gets into the dog-cart beside Hector, and with the coachman behind they, too, are off.

A tea-cart, with its party already made up, drives to the door. Mr. Carr, who is better at stroking a four than driving a pair, is jehu to this party; the geraniums nearly lose some of their bright heads as he wheels the tea-cart into line. At the gate they are joined by a handsome

girl on horseback, Miss Williams, and her cavalier, Mr. Moore. Miss Williams is a tall girl with quantities of fair hair. She wears a dark brown habit and tall hat; a short net veil is drawn across the upper part of her face and increases the deep blue of her eyes. She is riding a bright chestnut, with three white feet, who looks quite conscious of his own importance and of the precious burden on his back. Moore, who is also well mounted, sits his horse as straight as a die.

Constance, by arrangement, takes the lead, and Hector brings up the rear. The whip is flicked over the backs of the bays, and, after a little rearing and plunging, they settle down to their work and make the waggonette spin along the even road. Ardor, who is a perfect horseman, is surprised at the masterly way Constance handles the ribbons, and thinks if she looked well in her tobogganing costume she is at her best here. She is dressed in a simple grey dress with white linen collar and cuffs, a gray English walking-hat is on her head; her rich chestnut hair is coiled in a knot beneath the rim of her hat, and curls softly about her pretty pink ears. The pleasure and excitement of driving gives a color to her cheeks and a brightness to her eyes, and for the time dispels that thoughtful look from her face. Mr. and Mrs. Simpson are both young, and appear to enjoy thoroughly the fresh air through which they

are passing; but Anstruther is evidently making an effort to keep up his share of the conversation, and from time to time lapses into silence. After the party has been on the road a little less than an hour, the sky becomes overcast, and presently large drops of rain begin to fall, making dark blots on the gray of the dusty road.

"This looks as if we should be obliged to turn back," said Ardor in a disappointed tone, and continued: "Is there any shelter near here that you know of?"

"Yes, we are very near the village of A——, and we can drive under the sheds used by the country people for their horses on Sunday. It would be such a shame to turn back, do you not think so?" said Constance, who had no intention of foregoing the afternoon's pleasure.

"Yes, I do think so, but I hope it will be all over in less than half-an-hour."

Umbrellas and waterproofs always being kept under the seat of the waggonette, Mrs. Simpson is made comfortable, and Constance touching up the ponies they are soon in A—— This village was well known to Constance, as indeed was the country for miles round. She drives direct to the shelter referred to, and awaits the arrival of the others. Presently Miss Williams and Moore gallop up, the former looking handsomer than ever, the bright color deepening in her

cheeks. They guide their horses into the next stall. The tee-cart is driven onto the neighboring shed, and seeks shelter there; after two or three vain attempts the nigh hind wheel is safely under cover, not having lost much more than the paint off its hub. Hector pulls up the gray under the verandah of the village post office, shoemaker's shop and grocery store combined. After the drive Mr. and Mrs. Simpson are glad to get out of the waggonette, and stand at the end of the shed looking at the rain. Arbor is at the ponies' heads, preventing their rubbing their bridals.

Anstruther moves to the seat next Constance. "Is it absolutely necessary," he says, addressing her, "to drive back in the manner in which we have come? I mean, cannot I sit beside you?"

Constance always finds it difficult to resist his plaintive voice, but she is quite aware that Ardor expects to occupy the seat beside her for the entire drive, and as he is a guest in her father's house she feels compelled to reply: "I think we must remain as we are for the drive, but we can have a chat together at the Springs, while we are taking tea."

"Well, you will give me a little of your society while there, will you not? Do not be hard on me. I have looked forward to this afternoon so eagerly." His eyes are very dark, and there is the same quiver in his voice noticed before by Constance as denoting too great a capacity for suffering.

When the rain cleared off—it was only a shower—Constance prepared to back the waggonette into the road. As Mr. and Mrs. Simpson are getting back into their places, all notice that Carr is experiencing some difficulty in getting the tee-cart out from its shelter. Having once got it in, he does not seem able to get it out again; he jerks one horse and then the other, till they are both irritated almost to wildness. At last, by some chance, they both back at once, and out into the road comes the tee-cart, almost bringing down the shed as the fore wheel catches on the supporting beam and nearly tears it away. The noise, added to their previous treatment, frightens the horses, and off they start, dashing up the road. Fortunately they are not very high-spirited animals or nothing would stop them now, Carr having lost what little control he had over them, though he still holds manfully to the reins. The women do not scream, and before long they are spinning steadily enough, but still nervous, along the level towards the bubbling Springs. In this way the tee-cart leads, the waggonette second, the dog-cart next and the equestrians last.

On leaving the village of A—— the road to the Springs takes a turn to the right; beyond the turn it is a remarkably good level road. After the shower the sun comes out all the brighter for its temporary concealment; a soft mist rises from the damp

fields, and as our party drives along, the soft air filled with the aroma from the refreshed earth blows in their faces, making one and all realize what a good thing it is to be alive on a day like this. Not all perhaps. Carr still feels that his horses are going at this quick pace more to please themselves than to please him, and is in consequence a little uncomfortable, but trusts to this breather to make them more tractable. To the left of the road is a plantation of firs, a clump which has afforded shelter during the rain to a few cattle which are now cropping the tender grass. As the tee-cart dashes by, they raise their heads and look after it, with wonder in their soft brown eyes that anything could be anxious to hasten past such a thoroughly refreshing resting place. A horse which had been standing a little further on, looking over the fence, throws up its head as the pair of excited bays draws near, and starts off at a gallop by the side of the road, coming in view and then disappearing as the fence winds in and out among the trees. This is more than Carr's already frightened horses can endure, and taking the bits between their teeth they dash off faster than ever. Down the short hill, by the farm-gate, over the corduroy bridge, round the turn and straight away again; till trees, fence posts, stumps, stones, green fields and sandy road are all a confused and swimming panorama to the eyes of the four people sitting, now thoroughly

frightened, behind the maddened brutes. As Co… stance brings her bays to the top of the short h… before reaching the farmer's gate, she sees from h… elevated position that Carr's horses are off, and th… he is being pulled gradually off his seat. She al… knows that the one steep hill in all this drive is sha… on the next turn the horses must take, but what sh… does not know is whether Carr is aware of the exis… ence of this hill. Somewhat pale she turns to a… Mr. Simpson, the one most likely to know, if h… thinks Mr. Carr has ever driven over this road befor… Anstruther and the others in the back of the wag… gonette, sitting opposite each other, and with onl… their side faces turned in the direction of the runaway… have not been aware of what was going on. Con… stance's pale face makes Anstruther leave his last re… mark to Mrs. Simpson unfinished. Simpson replies… to Constance's question by saying he should say Carr… had never driven over any road, if one might judge… from the manner in which he backed his horses from… under that shed; but gathering from Constance's face… that something serious is transpiring, he stands up on… the floor of the waggonette, and, resting his hand on… Anstruther's shoulder to steady himself, looks after… the rapidly disappearing tee-cart. "Carr cannot… know of that hill or else his team is clear away. By… Heavens, I hope the harness is strong."

Constance gathers her reins a little more firmly i…

er hands. "Come Vixen, come Stella," and with a ight touch of the whip across their backs the ponies nicken their pace, as Constance explained after- ards, when she felt able to joke about it, "In rder to be in at the finish." With her ponies doing eir work steadily, Constance can still keep the tee- rt in sight, without being near enough to increase e terror of the already maddened horses. Now ey are at the turn that brings them to the top of break-back hill," so called from a horse having run way here, thrown his rider and then fallen and roken his own back. Those in the waggonette can e the horses in the tee-cart swerve to the left, they ear a faint scream, and then the noise of the wheels ttling down the hill. Constance once more touches er ponies; unaccustomed to feeling the whip so often so short a time they almost fly over the ground. rdor, who is a thorough horseman, sees long before is that Constance is quite equal to her task, and oes not distract her attention by a single suggestion. nstruther, less accustomed to horses, can scarcely onceal his anxiety to help her, but is obliged to con- nt himself with keeping his eyes on her delicate rofile, ready to spring at the slightest sign. The int scream has turned Constance's face a shade aler, her hair is somewhat loosened by the rapid iving, but her lips are drawn firmly together and er hands are steady on the reins. As they near the

top of the hill she slackens the ponies' pace, an
speaks soothingly to them; they seem to understan
and gradually quiet down to a more reasonable stride
Scarcely a moment has passed since they heard th
scream, and Constance, on coming to the turn, sees
woman lying apparently insensible at the side of th
road. Pulling the horses up on their foam-bespattere
haunches, she hands the reins to Ardor, and is in a
instant bending over the prostrate figure. Anstru
ther follows quickly, as does Simpson. Constanc
who has never lost her presence of mind, asks Ardo
to drive on and discover the fate of those in front.

CHAPTER XIV.

CONSTANCE wiping the dust with her handkerchief from the unconscious girl's face, and, brushing back the fair hair, takes the head on her lap and is relieved to see it is not hurt beyond a bruise just above the eyebrow. Anstruther, on seeing them thus, turns away, and a look of anguish comes into his face.

"There is a stone house in among those trees, you must carry this poor girl there, the pole of the cart must have struck her. I know the woman who lives in the house, and we can send from there for a doctor," said Constance.

Anstruther comes forward to help raise the girl. As he bends over her, she opens her eyes.

"You here. Why, what has happened?" she asks in a faint voice, and once more swoons away.

"Poor, poor girl," murmurs Anstruther. He and Simpson carry her across the road through the white gate and along the neat tan-bark walk to the verandah of the house, where there is a rustic bench on which they lay her nerveless form.

"Better let Hector drive back to A—— for a doctor," said Constance; "he will surely be passing soon now, as he was not very far behind."

"I will go and stop him," said Simpson.

"Do not send for a doctor, please," begged the girl resting on the seat. "I shall soon get over this faintness, and then I shall go on to my aunt's; she lives in a farm house close to this," looking at Constance. "I have been staying with her for a week, she will wonder what keeps me so long."

"Do you not think it would be wiser to have a doctor before leaving here?" asks Constance kindly. "I could wait with you till he came, and after if he wished."

This remark causes a struggle in the mind of Mabel Arthurs (for this is the girl's name), which shows itself in her face; her blue eyes fill with tears; she shakes her head and says she knows her faintness will quickly pass away. Simpson goes to the gate to stop Hector, who is heard coming along the road. While he is gone the woman of the house comes to the door and takes Mabel Arthurs into one of the rooms, and after bringing her some cold water, once more disappears. Constance goes to the window with the intention of letting in a little fresh air. As she does so she hears Mabel Arthurs say, "Does she know who I am?"

"I think not, but if she did she would be no less thoughtful," Anstruther answers.

"Most likely she would not have noticed me," says Mabel bitterly. Constance is quite aware by

this time who Mabel Arthurs is, but she is surprised that she and Anstruther know each other apparently so well. She is conscious of a sharp pain at her heart that surprises herself, and of a strong wish to get away and be alone. Looking out of the window she sees a man harrowing in the next field; he wears a wide straw hat and has his dark-blue shirt sleeves rolled up, showing how brown and strong his arms are; his boots, all muddy, are drawn outside his rough trousers. One horse that draws the harrow is grey, with a short tail—an old carriage horse, Constance thinks, that has lived in comparative ease during his youth, and now that he is old and his good looks gone is turned out to hard work like many another of his kind. The other horse is a dark bay, and flicks the flies from his sides and back with his long tail. A few yards from the man with the harrow is a grove of trees, on its borders is a large stump against which rests a bundle of fagots,—all that was left of what was once a beautiful tree, thinks Constance.

It is only a short time since Constance went to the window, she is still conscious of the voices at the back of the room. Hector and Simpson come to the door, and after a short consultation it is decided that Mabel Arthurs is left in good hands; and, as she assures them that she will soon be able to go on to her aunt's house, Hector with Constance

and Simpson leave her, not, however, before Constance goes to the side of the couch and says she will be glad to hear that Miss Arthurs is quite better. There can now be no doubt in Mabel's mind that Miss Lestrange knows who she is. A bright flush comes into the pale face, and Mabel thanks Miss Lestrange, and assures her again that she feels already quite well. Anstruther has moved to the window, and is looking thoughtfully out at the horses and their driver as they slowly disappear behind the trees; he also notices the bunch of faggots, and envies the woodman who has felled the tree. Constance slips a bank note into the hand of the farmer's wife, and thanks her for all she has done, and, leaving her card and address, asks to be told if Miss Arthurs is not better on the morrow. Hector jumps into the dog-cart, and he and Cécile are soon with the rest of the party at the Springs.

Constance and Simpson, who had known each other all their lives, walked slowly down the hill. After a time, Simpson says:

"There are not many men who would 'face the music' like that, Connie. I cannot understand Anstruther's connection with that girl; but whatever it may be, he was plucky to face the comment his absence will excite now. Extraordinary we should have run across the girl out here."

"Mr. Anstruther has known Miss Arthurs before, then?" asked Constance.

"They say he was engaged to her, but I cannot help hoping this may not be the case."

Ardor found the others quite safe at the foot of the hill. No part of the harness had broken, and climbing the steep hill on the other side of the Springs had quieted the wild horses. When Ardor and Mrs. Simpson arrived they found Miss Phunyone, Mrs. Bridge and Mr. Knowles looking white and somewhat shaken, but otherwise all right, and anxious to go to the assistance of the girl whom they fear they have knocked over. They are told that Constance and Anstruther are looking after her. Mrs. Bridge slightly raises her eyebrows and looks wise. Presently Hector and Cécile join the party and are quickly followed by Constance and Simpson. The baskets are emptied, and all prepare to make the picnic a success and overlook their recent narrow escape. Caviare sandwiches, pigeon pie, cold chicken, lobster salad, cold lamb and mint sauce, with lettuce, and various kinds of cake and fruit, washed down by a few pints of claret, and a cup of delicious tea for the ladies, made a nice little repast. As they sat about in the light of the bonfire which had boiled the kettle, a very picturesque group they made.

Constance had laid aside her hat, her soft hair

shone bright and glossy in the fitful gleams from the fire. The cushions from the carriages have been strewn about, as the grass, though apparently dry, notwithstanding the shower, has a treacherously fresh look. Resting on one of the cushions, Constance, her white hands clasped in her lap, is looking thoughtfully into the flickering light of the blazing wood. Ardor is near her, and seems to be affected by her mood, for he too seems deep in meditation.

Hector and Cécile have all the fun in their neighborhood. Mrs. Bridge is explaining *sotto voce* to her American friends, Miss Phunyone and Mr. Knowles, that she does not like to repeat gossip, but she has heard queer stories about Mr. Anstruther, and thinks it rather a brazen thing for him to leave the party and remain with that girl, particularly as he is Miss Lestrange's guest. Miss Williams, who is sitting with one neatly shod foot and spur peeping out from under her habit skirt, does not encourage a continuance of the topic, as she knows of old Mrs. Bridge's tendency to disseminate startling intelligence.

"Have another cup of tea, Miss Phunyone?"

"No, thanks, Mr. Lestrange; I have had so much already that one would be obliged to get into a life-boat to find my back teeth."

As Anstruther joins them, he walks close to where Constance is sitting and quietly says: "I feel I ow

you an apology for being so late in rejoining your party, I trust you will excuse me;" and, still lower: "May I hope you will not misunderstand?"

Constance is very proud, and she feels, after the marked attention Anstruther has paid her on all former occasions, that the course events have taken this afternoon will excite not a little wonder among those who have seen it. She tries to persuade herself this is the only reason she is feeling pained. She replies rather coldly, "I quite excuse you, certainly," and then turning, looks bravely in his face and adds, "I think I understand, and believe you have done quite right."

What a relieved look passes over Anstruther's face she only sees, and she alone hears the almost inaudible words, "I thank you."

When the horses were brought out for the return drive "the moon was up and yet it was not night." Constance was unusually jolly and talkative during the homeward drive, notwithstanding her fatigue. It may have been a wish to conceal Anstruther's unusual silence. As they drove by an apple orchard she noticed one or two trees had been broken by the wind; one limb, which is half broken off from the parent tree and resting on the ground, is still blossoming, "Like one making merry while one's heart is breaking," she thought.

CHAPTER XV.

A FEW days later Mr. Lestrange found under the door of his office the following communication, addressed and written in type-writing :—

"If you will walk in Queen's Park alone on Sunday afternoon, near the large maples, towards four o'clock, you will see some one who will wish to speak with you. He will give you his address, where you will not fail to send four or five hundred dollars. Your being quite alone will insure your safety. Do not be curious too soon.

"(Signed) P."

"Another letter from my friend Parsons," thought Mr. Lestrange, and slipping the note in his pocket said nothing of it till he and Ardor were alone on Saturday evening. Mr. Lestrange then told the captain of the other two communications, and how he had gone while in Ottawa to the rendezvous and had seen no one—no one at least but Anstruther. Ardor asked if Mr. Lestrange thought of going to Queen's Park, and was told yes ; that at first he thought he would pay no attention to this third note, but on second thoughts he decided to try and discover who his correspondent was, and to tell the man he would have him arrested if these letters were not discon-

tinued. "I confess I am somewhat curious who the man is."

"You are told that being accompanied frustrates the object of the meeting, but will you go alone, sir?" Captain Ardor asks.

"In case I should wish to apprehend the man later on you see, I should have some one with me to corroborate my statement, and at all events I only wish to discover that the man is really there. I am not anxious for an interview further than that."

"Will you allow me to go with you? or perhaps you have already decided upon whom you would take?"

"No; if you do not object we could go together, and as there are generally a number of people in the Park on Sunday afternoon we could separate without losing sight of each other. Tinder's presence at the other rendezvous was evidently objected to. The writer of this second letter must have either been at the rendezvous himself, or had some one there watching events for him, as he reminds me that I was armed and attended, both of which the first letter enjoined upon me to avoid," explained Mr. Lestrange. "The first letter," he continued, "is written in an evidently disguised hand, the last two are written in type-writing. I have compared the type-writing, and find it is done by the same machine. You will see," showing the two letters, "how the letters t, e, r, in

afternoon in both are the same, being imperfect, and imperfect in just the same way in both communications. The same in the word o'clock, you will notice how imperfect the cl is in both. All three letters are on the same paper. There can be no doubt, I think, they are all sent by the same hand."

On Sunday afternoon towards four o'clock Mr. Lestrange and Captain Ardor parted at the gate of Queen's Park—Mr. Lestrange turning his steps towards the large maples, Ardor keeping him in view but going towards the cedar grove at the opposite side. Mr. Lestrange passed several people before reaching the maples, as many were taking their Sunday outing.

When he reached the spot which he imagined would be the place referred to he stopped and looked about him. He could see Ardor not far off walking near several other pedestrians; no one was just at this spot, however. Presently a man overtook and passed him quite quickly. He was a short fair man, as well as Mr. Lestrange could see, and wore a brown coat and a pair of large checked tweed trousers; he carried a hunting-crop in his hand that was decidedly loud in style and heavy in weight. His black silk hat was a little on one side of his head. Mr. Lestrange watched him on his way for a few moments, as he was not the style of man one often meets far from a race-course or training stable, and he looked out of place among

the mechanics with their wives and families, who were taking the air on this Sunday afternoon. The man stopped to speak with some one just beyond the maples. The man to whom he spoke scarcely stopped to listen, but with a curt nod of the head passed on, each step bringing him nearer Mr. Lestrange, who soon saw that it was Anstruther, and was surprised.

On speaking of it afterwards Mr. Lestrange explained it should not have surprised him to meet Anstruther there as he lived just beyond the Park, and to come into the town must pass that way, but he was expecting to see some one quite different at the time. Quickening his pace, as he was not anxious to be seen loitering about, Mr. Lestrange quickly met Anstruther. They exchanged a few commonplaces, and then Mr. Lestrange asked Anstruther if he knew the man who had just passed; he was rather an uncommon looking person, said Mr. Lestrange, that was his reason for asking.

Anstruther said with some hesitation that he knew him, and that his name was Arthurs.

"Rather a sporting man, I should say," said Mr. Lestrange.

"Yes, I believe he does affect that style," Anstruther replied now indifferently.

After waiting and walking up and down for quite half-an-hour Mr. Lestrange joined Ardor, and they left the Park. When they got beyond the crowd Mr.

Lestrange said: "I met only one man who looked at all the manner of man I expected to see; he was in a great hurry, and appeared to have no intention of stopping to speak to any one. Anstruther, whom I met, too, by the way, told me his name was Arthurs. What can be the object in sending me these letters? If it be to extort money from me, so far I have seen no one to whom I could give money even if I were so disposed. I shall not bother about it further, but I do not like to think a man can write, threatening me, without being punished for it."

CHAPTER XVI.

ON Monday morning, as Constance was arranging some flowers for the dinner table, the maid brought her the following note :—

"DEAR MISS LESTRANGE.

"If you will be at home this afternoon I should be very glad if you will allow me to call. I would come on the chance of finding you at home, but I should be greatly disappointed at missing you, and feel that sending this note a few hours earlier may make it less difficult for you to grant me an interview. May I trouble you to give the bearer an answer? Try and make it favorable.

"With kindest regards,

"Believe me, yours very sincerely,

"DUDLEY B. ANSTRUTHER.

"The Lodge,

"Monday morning."

Constance sent the following reply:—

"I shall be at home at three o'clock.

"C. L.

"'The Poplars,' Monday."

Constance was sitting in the little room that opened off the conservatory. It was her own sitting-room. A walnut book-case, well lined with books,

stood against one of the walls. A sofa covered with light-colored liberty silk, and laden with cushions, stood across one corner; close at hand was an escritoire, at which Constance wrote her letters and kept her household accounts. On a table lay a number of papers, among them the *Illustrated News*, the London *Times*, and *Punch*, for Constance took an interest in the events of the day, and liked to keep up with the times. There are not many flowers left in the conservatory, most of them being bedded out; but a grape vine or two is still there, and a few creeping roses nod their pretty heads as the breeze blows through the open door. The French window is partly open, and the unsteady play of the fountain can be heard in the distance. Constance, seated in one corner of the large sofa, is reading "Bleak House," and has just reached the point where Lady Deadlock is viewing her lover's grave through the iron gate. Having laid her book down, she is wondering if poverty and obscurity to Lady Deadlock with the man she loved would not have been Heaven compared with the life of elegance she passed with Sir Leicester. She is not experienced enough to know that there are some kinds of mental torture that must be borne before their depths can be fathomed. One can more readily realize physical hardships without enduring them. No one can summon up all the spectres that will torment the soul

under certain conditions, till one has really experienced those conditions; then it is too late to escape from them, even to face the more apparent, but less painful, ills. We need only walk through our poorest streets to see evidence in abundance of physical suffering; but who can count the multitude of heart-aches that throb out their existence in isolated woe amidst the throng of our wealthiest thoroughfares? What is before our eyes we realize. What we can simply imagine we only half believe, and often forget.

Anstruther made his appearance upon the stroke of three. After shaking hands and finding a chair close to the sofa upon which Constance is sitting, he and Constance interchange a few commonplaces. Anstruther, picking up a copy of *Punch* that is lying near, turns to the cartoon; it is Tennell's "What o' the night?" and represents *Europa* looking out, her hand shading her eyes, from the watch tower of an old feudal castle. In the distance the Russian bear is outlined in stars against the cloudy sky; it is one of this artist's boldest drawings, and rivets one's attention immediately.

"Does it ever strike you," asks Anstruther, "how we are all spending our lives in trying to shape our future? I think it is Washington Irving who says, 'the secret of being happy is in realizing one's

present blessings and enjoying them; not in passing our time thinking of blessings to come.'"

"No doubt Irving is right, yet there must be times in every one's life when to look forward is a relief," answered Constance.

"Oh, yes, in cases of sorrow, hope is the only balm," and then he continued: "I have been very anxious to see you, Miss Lestrange, to ask you if I may explain what must have puzzled you on Friday at the drive; but before explaining, there is something much more important to me, of which I must speak." Here he rises and stands leaning over the back of the sofa. "Constance, I love you." A wave of bright color sweeps over Constance's face, then ebbs away and leaves it whiter than before; she turns her head away, but otherwise she does not move. "I cannot feel that my love is wholly unknown to you. It has been so much a part of my life since I first met you that I feel all must have seen it; surely you have felt it? Do not turn away from me," his voice trembles with emotion; "is there no hope that I may in time win your love?"

Still no answer.

"Constance," he says fervently, and so near to the pretty shining hair that his lips almost touch it, "I cannot hope I may ever be to you what you at this moment are to me, but give me the right to devote my whole life to a constant effort to win your love."

Passing to the front of the sofa, and placing his hand under the small chin, he turns the face suffused with blushes till their eyes meet. "My darling," he murmurs and lifts her with his strong arms till her head rests against his shoulder, "I scarcely hoped for this. My beloved, teach me to be worthy of your love."

After a pause, during which his cheek is pressed against hers, he says, "You have not told me yet, Constance, do you love me?"

"I think I must," faintly, is the reply.

"Still let me hear you say it."

"I love you." And their lips met.

CHAPTER XVII.

CONSTANCE draws herself away, murmuring "Oh, no," and stands hesitating near the table.

"Well, Constance," said Anstruther in a voice still deep with emotion, "you are not happy to stay with me longer," a pained look in his face. "You regret already what your eyes have told me, is it so? Some recollection comes to your mind and crowds out the feelings the strength of my love has surprised. Is that not it?" and taking her firmly but gently by the arm, "Tell me, Constance, what is it makes you turn from me?" Still no answer but a trembling of the white eyelids, and a nervous turning of the papers on the table. Then somewhat sternly, "It is better that you should tell me. I think I know the cause, but it is better that you should tell me with your own—" a slight pause as if a recollection made him relent a little, and then in a gentler tone—"sweet lips. Oh, Constance, how I would wish you to trust me implicitly, now that you have told me you love me. An hour ago such knowledge seemed all that I wished for—more than I expected—now I am greedy for your trust too. Could you not put your hand in mine and say

'Dudley, I love, and loving you will trust you implicitly?'"

Constance turned as if to speak, but turning away again, "I wish I could do so, since I do love you, but there are some things difficult to understand, and perhaps you could make it easier?" laying one hand gently on his sleeve. At that touch the disappointed look leaves his face, and taking both her hands in his he leads her to the sofa, and once more stands behind her.

"In saying some things are difficult to understand, I know to what you refer, Miss Arthurs, is it not?"

A slight inclination of the head from Constance.

"In acknowledging to the world your affection for me, Constance, you would have much to face. I feel I would give years of my life to undo my past for your sake only, not that my own conscience does not acquit me; on the contrary, it does. But I know it is hard for a woman to face the disapproval of her friends. They will probably only see in me a man who has recently been engaged to another woman, and that other woman one whose name has not been above reproach. Constance, do you credit me when I tell you I believe that woman has been misjudged? If you will believe that, Constance, you cannot be very cruel to me. I thought I might make her life a little happier and save her from worse evils. I do not

say my motives were wholly unselfish. In many ways Mabel Arthurs appealed to me, but most of all by her helplessness. I need not enter into particulars of how I met her and became interested in her, suffice it to say that some time before I met you I realized my mistake. After seeing you I knew that mistake was fatal to any hope of happiness I might entertain. I came back from Ottawa with a feeling of hopelessness at my heart that I trust you may never experience. Meeting you again, as I did from time to time, was agony to me, yet I could not remain away from you."

"Have you been engaged to Miss Arthurs till —till recently, then?" asks Constance somewhat proudly.

"You think me capable of that, do you, Constance? Of being engaged to one woman and showing another—and that other yourself—by every action, as I must have done, that I adored her? Oh, Constance, you are hard on me." Anstruther walked to the window, and stood for a few moments looking absently at the fountain as it bubbled and sparkled in the sunlight.

Constance was of too true a nature to say she had not thought so, for since the scene at the driving party she had come to that conclusion; and while she had assured Anstruther that evening after his return from the farm-house that she considered what he had

done was quite right, she meant as regarded his duty to Mabel, nor had she any intention of resenting his conduct on her own account. Now that Anstruther had told her that he loved her, she had a right to hear his explanation.

Coming back from the window, and standing before Constance, Anstruther continued: "I was quite free from any engagement before I met you in Ottawa, but I was aware that, in consequence of being so recently conspicuous because of that engagement, I was wrong in seeking your society so persistently; but, Constance, when I saw you surrounded by others I felt I could not leave you, and then you were always so gracious and sweet to me, my darling,—I may call you so, may I not?" pressing his lips to the pretty forehead. "I felt it impossible to remain away from you, can you not forgive me that? Say you can."

"Oh yes, but tell me—tell me how you remained with Miss Arthurs last Friday, not being engaged to her?"

"You must love me, Constance, or I should not be holding you like this, but I hope the day may come when you will love me much more trustfully." Then, after a pause, "I remained behind at the farm-house because I was sufficiently aware of the girl's lonely position to know it would pain her to leave her there alone."

"She loves you still then," said Constance rising. "Much better be true to her as you have won her love. You should not have come here to-day."

Constance was not devoid of the weaknesses of other human beings, and it hurt her to think she had been surprised into confessing her love for a man who had so recently listened to a like confession from other lips. She was also one of those women—they are much too rare—who always felt a warm sympathy for those of her own sex, and the fact that Mabel Arthurs had been to a certain extent under a ban did but increase that sympathy rather than lessen it.

"Once more you misjudge me," was Anstruther's reply. "Mabel Arthurs did not love me. Gratitude and I think respect she did feel for me; a marriage with me would have meant a life of comparative comfort for her, but it would also have meant a complete barrier between her and the man she really loves. When I discovered her love for another, our engagement came to an end. I believe at one time the girl thought she could forget a man whom I now know to have been thoroughly selfish in his dealings with her, and she confessed to me at the last that it was consideration for me that had prevented her marrying me before. She realized that such an alliance would be greatly to my disadvantage, she said, but she could not give up all hope of comparative rest

while I appeared happy in what I was doing. I was content, Constance, but nothing more. Mabel Arthurs still hopes to marry this man, who has only recently returned from Buenos Ayres. I trust there is a better fate in store for her."

Anstruther walks to Constance's side once more, and, taking her firmly by the shoulders, turns her face towards him, and looking into her gray eyes asks,

"Constance, my queen, can you so overlook the past as to face its consequences in the future with me?"

"I will do all I can to make your future happy."

Anstruther's strong arms encircled her and pressed her dainty head close to his shoulder.

CHAPTER XVIII.

CONSTANCE felt that her father should at once know of her love for Anstruther. She decided to tell him that evening, and trust to time to prove him more worthy than her father at present believed him.

Hector was late in returning, and Mr. Lestrange, Captain Ardor, Cécile and Constance sat down to the prettily appointed dinner-table without him. The fruit was being brought in when Hector took his seat beside Cécile. Constance saw at a glance that things were not as they should be. Who that has seen a beloved face flushed, the bright eyes heavy, and the dear hand unsteady, does not remember the sickening feeling of dread that creeps over one when this sight is first becoming familiar? Ardor bravely threw himself into the breach, and kept the attention as much as possible upon himself by telling all the interesting stories he could remember of life in Egypt, and told, not for the first time, of how Hector, in the trip up the Nile, had risked his own life in saving a man who had tumbled out of one of the boats, and how one night, when they were lying ill in hospital, they had heard the bugle call sounding to arms, to warn them that the

enemy were advancing on the hospital. When they heard the call, some of the men, already at death's door from fever, rose in their beds and staggered towards their guns, only to fall back fainting on their cots. How Hector, though very ill himself, went to the assistance of the poor fellows and tenderly drew the scant covering over them, and assured them it was an alarm sounded by our friends just to discover if the troops told off to be on guard were in readiness.

"By the way, old man, you told the truth that time by mistake, did you not? It was a false alarm, Miss Lestrange," added Ardor.

"But why excite the poor sufferers? They surely had enough to endure," replied Constance.

"Must always be ready for the enemy," said Hector with an absurdly serious stare.

When Constance and Cécile withdrew, Constance felt this was not the time to make her confession to her father, sad as he was already, so the night closed in and no one knew of their secret but Anstruther and herself.

After leaving the dinner-table, Mr. Lestrange and Ardor strolled in the garden, smoking their cigarettes. Constance and Cécile were sitting on a rustic bench under the horse-chestnut tree. All about them was suggestive of "fragrance, quietness, and trees and flowers." Feeling out of harmony with her surroundings, Constance's thoughts are still with

Hector. The lighter nature of Cécile considers such an occurrence more trivial than does the thoughtful Constance.

"I shall be obliged to take a run up to Ottawa next week," Mr. Lestrange is telling Ardor; "by-the-bye, I hope my ticket has not run out. I have one of those commutation tickets; but it has been renewed once already, and I should not wonder if it had expired again." Taking the ticket from between the paper, Mr. Lestrange continued: "I did not run backwards and forwards so often during last session." He finishes the sentence in an abstracted manner, his attention appears to be riveted on the piece of blue water-lined paper, on which the following words are written:—

"D. J. LESTRANGE, Esq., M.P.

"DEAR SIR,

"I have much pleasure in renewing your railway ticket between S—— and Ottawa. It is now enlarged to the latest possible date.

"I remain,

"Yours, obediently,

"(Signed) H. BOLTON.

"D. L. R. Offices,

"March 23rd."

Handing the note to Captain Ardor, Mr. Lestrange asked,

"Do you see anything peculiar about that, Ardor?"

After looking attentively at it, Ardor replied:

"If it were not that you knew from whom this came, I should say it had been written by the same type-writer and on similar paper to the communications from the mysterious individual who signs his name 'Parsons.' There is the same imperfect 'er' too, sir."

"This ticket was renewed towards the end of March. Let me see: just about the time of that second communication—this is odd. But, dear me, it is absurd to suppose that there is any connection between the writer of this and the sender of those other letters. It weakens my proof, however, that the others were all written by the same type-writer, because of the peculiar defects in the type. Mr. Bolton's type-writer has that faulty 'er' too, evidently. Ah, there are the girls going in, they are early to-night. Good-night, Cécile," as she and Constance come towards him. "You are tired, are you, dear?" with a kind look into Constance's pale face; "you are wise to go off early. Something pleasant for to-morrow, I hope. A ride is it? Godolphin will be glad of that."

Mr. Lestrange and Ardor went back to the library. "Shall we look at those letters again? here they are," unlocking a drawer in the writing-table. "Here is the

second one I received, which is the first that came to hand in type-writing. It is dated from here March 26th, just three days after the date of the first communication." Then comparing it with the one enclosing the ticket—"Why, this is extraordinary! Look at this, Ardor," resting the point of his finger on a small blot at the edge of the paper on which the note from Mr. Bolton was written, and then placing the note signed "P." beside it. "See there has been a blot rubbed off the second letter, but one can see the traces distinctly, as if it had been rubbed with a damp cloth. They might also be parts of the same blot."

"It does look like it certainly. Mr. Bolton could have nothing to do with it. What kind of men are in his office?" asked Ardor.

"I know none of them but Anstruther, he is Bolton's private secretary, and of course he would know nothing"—pausing to think. "It is strange I should have seen him on both occasions when expecting to see the author of those letters."

There is a pause during which Ardor takes his glass from his eye and puts it back again, looking somewhat puzzled.

"Oh, no, nonsense. Anstruther is too much of a gentleman to have any connection with a man who could send communications of that kind."

CHAPTER XIX.

As Anstruther was walking back to the lodge after leaving Constance, he was accosted by a horsey individual wearing a suit of large check tweed and a small silk hat, and carrying a hunting-crop—the same man in fact who excited Mr. Lestrange's curiosity that day in the Park, and whose name was Arthurs. Anstruther on meeting this man was quite ready to pass on with a slight recognition, but Arthurs turned and walked with him. They had walked together some distance when Anstruther came to an angry halt, "I have given you all the money I intend to give you. If I had never given you any, I believe now it would have been better both for you and your sister. You might have been forced to work and gain an honest living—if such as you can be honest."

"Look you here, Anstruther, don't goad me too far. Now you have grown tired of my sister, damn you, you think you can get rid of us both, but you don't shake me off so easily. I'm no milk and water woman with my sense of gratitude, I'm not. Lots I owe you, don't I? Such as I can't be honest, can't we? Well, you may live to regret the day you refused to say a good word for Bill Arthurs." And shaking

his stick in Anstruther's face he turned and hurried away.

Anstruther looked for an instant as if he would follow and give him a good thrashing, then thinking better of it went on his way. Arthurs slackened his pace, stopped, turned and overtook Anstruther, who looked far from pleased at the thought of a renewal of the conversation.

"Look here, Anstruther, I ask you just once to use your influence in that quarter to help me and I will be your friend."

"It is impossible, Arthurs, that I should use my influence for you there. In the first place I have no influence, and, if I had, I know from experience that I cannot depend upon you to keep sober."

CHAPTER XX.

THE following morning brought Constance this note.

"MY DARLING,

"May I hope that you are willing that I should see your father to-day, and tell him of my aspirations and hopes? You will understand my anxiety that he should know my feelings for you. Unworthy as I know myself to be, I am very hopeful of the future now that I know you love me. I am obliged to go with Mr. Bolton to Carswell this evening, but will hope to see you immediately on my return to-morrow. Think of me during your ride, dearest, and know that every moment of absence from you is spent in longing to be at your side.

"DUDLEY."

That afternoon Constance's saddle-horse is brought to the door. Ardor, has brought two horses with him to S——, one of which he is to ride in the "Gentleman's race" at the summer meet of the A. O. J., which is to take place on the following Wednesday; the other is a horse he keeps for his own private use. As he himself admits, if he is extravagant, it is where horses are concerned; but in reality the captain lives considerably within his means, which are more than ample for his requirements.

On this afternoon he and Constance are going for a gallop together. Constance, on hearing the horses on the gravel, comes to the door dressed in a dark green habit and pretty top boots. She wears a tall black hat which suits her perfectly; the white linen collar at her throat and white dogskin gloves on her hands, in one of which she carries her hunting-crop, all look and are quite correct. Ardor in his cords and short coat, with the glass still in his eye, looks quite at home when mounted on his spirited chestnut with the white face.

Godolphin, Constance's horse, is a bright brown, of about 15½ hands in height. His eyes are full and gazelle-like, with that soft expression which is indicative of good manners and high courage when roused. His nostrils are wide and open. Above the eyes his head is wide and full, giving room for the brain, which Constance claims, and justly too, is his. His ears, which are pointed and well set on his head, are long and thin, the muzzle almost small enough to drink out of a glass tumbler—at least so it looks before a gallop; after a gallop his nostrils stand out stiff, and admit the air freely, which they could not do if they were smaller. Godolphin's body is light, but the ribs are set well apart; the somewhat arched loin, glossy coat with its net-work of veins showing beneath it, the thin withers and finely boned leg, all show that he has some right to the claim of being a

thoroughbred. Ardor, who has seen Godolphin before, cannot refrain from expressing again his admiration for this piece of perfection in horse flesh.

A gentle trot through the quiet part of the town brought Constance and Ardor to the road leading up the side of the hill that skirted the town on the south. As they wended their way along this road, all four seemed to enjoy the beautiful scene that lay before them. In the distance the pretty bay which washed the northern boundaries of the town shone blue in the sunlight; the hills beyond the water were thickly wooded with trees, whose green foliage was softened into azure by the distance. Immediately before them the larger houses with their neatly kept lawns nestled on the side of the hill, and were almost smothered from sight by the rustling trees surrounding them. As the riders ascend, they can see the streets running through the business places of the city, like dull rivers through a smoking forest; carts and waggons appearing to glide over their surface as smoothly as canoes paddled down those rivers by the dusky Indians.

Quickening their pace, Constance and Ardor soon find themselves on the border of a wood, the approach to which is guarded by a snake-fence. Constance trots Godolphin up to it, and he leaps it in his stride. Blaze and his rider follow, and they now

wend their way through the wood, the trees meeting above their heads. The foliage is so thick that only here and there the sunlight makes a bright stream across their path, like gold threads on a ground of mottled brocade; the crackling of the twigs beneath the horses' feet startles a little red squirrel, who leaves unfinished the cracking of the acorn between his teeth and sits up on his haunches, listens an instant, his bright eyes awake, then drops the acorn and scampers off to disappear among the leaves of a tall pine tree, like a flash of sunlight under a thunder-cloud. Ardor and Constance are affected by the stillness of the wood, and no sound disturbs the quiet but the snapping of the underwood and the tip-tap, tap-tap, tip-tip-tip of the woodpecker's yellow hammer as he makes his cruel and lonely meal.

After a ride of a mile in this twilight of the trees, Ardor and Constance find their path crossed by an open road which divides the wood and opens the way to the next concession. Turning to the left, they allow their willing horses to break into a gallop. A stretch of two hundred yards brings them to a stream that has been bridged by a few crazy planks, none of which are left now, the recent rains having so swollen the stream as to wash the crossing away. Constance turns in her saddle and asks, "Shall we jump it?"

"Blaze does not like water, but I will try him at it if you will give me a lead."

With a "Come, my beauty," Constance rides him at it. Godolphin pricks up his ears and quickens his pace, gathers himself together on the bank and clears the stream. Constance becomes aware that Blaze's hoofs are not coming up behind; turning Godolphin face about, she sees Ardor is having a battle on the other side of the stream. He rides Blaze at a sharp trot for the second time close to the bank, and with a cut of the whip tries to make him take the jump that will bring him safely to the other side, but Blaze, all quivering and with nostrils distended, refuses, and then the battle begins in earnest; for a third time and then a fourth Ardor rides him at it with a similar result, his flanks now all white with lather, and more than one welt on his pretty side showing where the whip had done its work. Once more Ardor turns him round and rides at it, this time at a gallop. Blaze with a tremendous jump that would have cleared a six-barred gate, and which shews his want of knowledge of water-jumping, carries his master safely over. He stops short as soon as his hoofs touch the ground. Ardor feels the steel of his left stirrup give, and knows it is broken. He has scarcely realized this when Blaze bolts.

The road which runs along the brow of the

mountain, and which is narrow here, takes a sweep to the right. A farmer is driving his empty hay-rick round this curve; this leaves little room for Ardor to get by. He could have done so, however, but for the handle of a pitch-fork which was protruding over the side of the rick, and which struck Blaze across the chest. Ardor saw this must happen and had the reins firmly in his hand. The swerve and plunge made by Blaze, combined with the former loss of his stirrup, unseated him, and he went off over the left side of his horse.

Constance, who had followed quietly and as slowly as she could do and still keep Blaze and his rider in view, now came up. She is very white, fearing Ardor must be hurt, as he lies so still. Disengaging her foot from the stirrup and holding her habit skirt and whip in her left hand, and taking a long hold of the reins with her right, she slipped from her saddle, then fastening Godolphin to a branch of a tree that grew by the road, she hastened to Ardor's side. Raising his head she asked anxiously,

"Can you tell me if you are hurt?"

Ardor opened his eyes and looked about him in a puzzled way, then, as it all flashed back upon him sat up and looked for the horses.

"I'm awfully sorry, Miss Lestrange; I hope I did not frighten you," noticing how pale she was; "the wretched pitch-fork must have struck Blaze.

wonder how far Blaze has gone. Have I been here long? Just an instant? Then this whistle will bring him back, or I am mistaken," and drawing a whistle from his pocket, he blew it. Presently Blaze came trotting along the road, his head high in the air and his ears well up, looking about from side to side as if in quest of something; then seeing Ardor, he came and stood close beside him. Ardor, who had risen to his feet, asked him what he meant by such conduct; to which Blaze replied by rubbing his nose caressingly against his master's arm.

Ardor still looked pale and shaken, and Constance suggested his resting a little before beginning the ride home.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE two horses being fastened to the tree, Constance and Ardor sat down on the soft turf to rest. Constance, with the back of her head resting against the mossy trunk, her hands clasped and lying in her lap, as was usual with her when resting, had laid her gloves with her whip at her side; the folds of her habit displayed in its beauty rather than obscured her figure.

Ardor was reclining on the grass near by; he picked up one of the little gloves that was still warm from the pressure of her pink fingers and raised it to his lips. Constance, who was watching a speck of white, which was really a yacht, on the bay in the distance, was startled to feel his strong hand take hers as he said,

"I love you! Will you marry me?"

Drawing her hand away, and turning from him, Constance said,

"Oh, why do you say this? We are so happy as we are. Please, please, forget this. Do not spoil our happy friendship."

"Can you not give me a little hope? I will be patient. You are worthy of more than I can give

you; but no one could love you better," Ardor pleaded, his voice deep with feeling.

Constance rose; "Believe me, Captain Ardor, this cannot be. You will soon forget this—love—will you not? If I pain you—I am so sorry," she pleaded.

"If you pain me? Oh, you women are so cruel."

"Have I then been cruel to you? Never, never have I meant to be so," protested Constance.

"No; forgive me. You could not prevent that your sweetness should steal away my heart. I was unjust. And yet, at times, I hoped you did not regard me in the same light as the other men about you. I must hope—life would be so empty without the thought of you," his eyes taking in every detail of the pretty picture before him—the thoughtful face, the delicately turned ear and throat, the bright shining hair, the slender waist and soft white hands.

"Then I must tell you that—that there is someone else," said Constance, bravely, turning her face to his. Then seeing the gray look overspread his face and the hollows beneath his eyes which bespeak the mental struggle that he is going through, she turns and walks away to where Godolphin stands cropping the fresh grass. She leans her cheek against his glossy neck, and her eyes are dimmed with tears.

Ardor stands for some time as if stunned, then brushing what remains of the dust from his coat, and

readjusting the glass from his eye, he looks at his watch. Walking towards Blaze, he tightens the saddle-girths and arranges the strap of the broken stirrup.

"It is five o'clock, Miss Lestrange; if you are rested, perhaps it would be better to jog on."

Constance, who is quite ready to do so, places her foot in Ardor's hand, and with a light spring is quickly on Godolphin's back and ready to start. The speck of white on the bay in the distance has disappeared from sight.

As they reach the level road leading back to the town, Ardor says in a voice in which the effort to make it cheery is scarcely perceptible: "Did I ever tell you of an experience I had in Bazutoo Land? One night I was out in command of a company of volunteers, there were just a hundred of us. We were out reconnoitering, and had taken up our position for the night in a plain at the foot of a hill. Some of the men were lying before the bivouac fire, and others were sitting about in groups discussing the chance of an encounter with the natives, and wondering if reinforcements were on the way to join us. It was just growing dusk when, looking towards the west, I saw a body of horsemen outlined against the evening sky. They were consulting together, and from their gesticulations I knew they had discovered us. Then I saw they were forming in line to charge. I gave the com-

mand to prepare to receive cavalry. Many of the men under me were mere lads, and none of them regulars, nor had any of them come face to face with an armed enemy before. They obeyed orders quickly, however, and there was soon a square. You know the formation? A hundred men to meet a charge of at least 500 mounted Bazutoos. As they poured down upon us with their assegais raised in the air, the feathers standing out from their heads, and their black faces distorted with wild lust of blood, they looked more like devils than anything human. There was a young fellow in the front line of the square just four from the end. I knew him well in Capetown, as well as his sister, whom at that moment he resembled amazingly—they say all likenesses come out more vividly in moments of intense feeling. I saw this youth turn as white as paper and swerve to one side, almost fainting. I knew our slight and only hope of safety depended upon our keeping our little square solid."

"What did you do?" interrupted Constance, anxiously.

"Well, I drew the revolver from my belt and said, 'The first man who flinches from his post I shoot.' A wave of color, partly from shame I think, spread over the hitherto ashy face of young Stuart, and taking a firmer hold of his gun, and setting his teeth firmly together, he awaited the advance of the Bazutoos."

"And"—said Constance.

"Oh," answered Ardor, as if the object of his narrative were attained, "you want to know if we were cut to pieces? Oh, no. The blacks came within a yard of us, but they could not make their horses charge the bayonets; the brutes swerved just as they were upon us. Why they did not return and kill every mother's son of us we could not at the time make out, and you may imagine we spent an anxious night; but afterwards we discovered that the Bazutoos did not return because they believed our reinforcements much nearer than they really were."

"And the Capetown boy?"

"Poor Walter, he was found at the close of the last engagement in the campaign with an assegai through his right lung, and the bodies of three Bazutoos close to him. I have never met a braver lad than he proved himself to be; there was no position of danger he shrank from. That first experience I had of him was simply the result of his fully realizing his danger, but I should have been surprised if my words had not called him to himself, and aroused the courage that I even then believed to be in him. I did not for one instant expect to be forced to put my threat into execution. God forbid." Then after a pause—"There are natures, Miss Lestrange, that almost succumb when first realizing what is in store for them; but those same natures can sometimes

rally and face their fate unflinchingly though it mean days of pain and—" here his voice has a catch in it —"hopeless longing."

CHAPTER XXII.

As they pass through one of the quiet streets, Constance is struck by the beauty of a Japanese ivy that almost completely covers a small cottage standing back from the road. Constance on Godolphin's back sees it, notwithstanding a high board fence that surrounds the garden. She gives it a last admiring glance before turning the corner, when to her surprise she sees Anstruther open the door and then turn to speak to a fair-haired girl in the hall. Constance recognizes Mabel Arthurs. Ardor, too, sees this; he notices that the color completely leaves Constance's face before she makes Godolphin break into a quick trot which soon brings them home. Ardor realizes who that "someone else" is. Immediately on reaching her home, Constance consults the time-table. The train leaves for Carswell at 6.30 p. m. She looks at the clock, it is half-past seven. Anstruther must have changed his intention of leaving town with Mr. Bolton.

CHAPTER XXIII.

CONSTANCE is seated at the head of the breakfast table pouring out the coffee. Hector is at the sideboard, and has just, with carving knife pointing to the ceiling, asked in a tragic voice, "Who says steak?" To which Cécile replies, "I say steak." Ardor, who is looking pale this morning, is removing the doily from some hot biscuits before passing them, when Mr. Lestrange, who has gone to the window to take a peep at the morning paper, says:—

"Why, what is this? Here is the window pane broken, and lying all over the carpet. Ring for Esther, Constance." Esther, who answers the bell at once, is a tall girl with a beautiful figure. Her hair is of that reddish color so popular with artists; her complexion is fair, and of that transparent appearance that is usually seen with red hair: here her claims to good looks end. Her eyes, which are of a light blue in color, are small, and their lids fringed with white lashes. At first sight one would say she was devoid of eyebrows, but a second look would discover that they, too, were white and scarcely perceptible, except when some feeling would cause the blood to rush to her face, when they would form clearly

defined white curves. Her mouth when closed was good but somewhat drawn in expression, but the teeth displayed when the lips parted gave the face a cruel look, being uneven and sharp in form. In a word, to see Esther as she walked gracefully if somewhat stealthily away, with her beautiful figure clothed in a well-fitting black dress, and her bright golden red hair coiled beneath her housemaid's cap, or crowned by a neat little bonnet, and just enough of the neck and cheek visible to show how fair and soft was the skin that covered them, one would say, "What a remarkably good-looking woman!" One could not help being disappointed when she turned and one encountered her cold blue eyes. Esther's hands were long and narrow; the second finger of her right hand was straight and stiff, a window having fallen on it when she was a child, and she had never been able to bend it again. Esther had been parlor maid at "The Poplars" since Constance returned from France. She had proved herself an excellent servant, if somewhat taciturn.

Esther answers the bell. Esther is surprised. The window was not broken an hour ago, as she raised it before setting the breakfast-table. Esther brushed up the glass; she had nearly finished when something arrested her eye and hand at the same moment. Stretching forward she picked up a paper tied round something with a string and handed it to Mr.

Lestrange, who cut the string. A stone rolled out. Glancing his eye over the paper, this is what he sees:—

"I have reason to believe a Mr. Anstruther is aware of some facts that concern your safety. He will be out of town when this reaches you, but will only be gone a day, when you might seek an opportunity of questioning him. There would be nothing gained by my giving you my name, it would only imperil my safety.

"Your friend,

"ANONYMOUS." (No date.)

Mr. Lestrange folded up the note and put it in his pocket. All were anxiously waiting to hear what the note contained, and Hector called out,

"What is it?"

"Oh, it is just some nonsense; some foolish boy must have thrown the stone through the window. Come, let us have breakfast. Esther, put that screen in front of the broken window. That will do. A cup of coffee, daughter."

As Esther places a cup of coffee beside her master's plate, something in the paper which Mr. Lestrange is reading, and which she sees over his shoulder, causes her to start; she recovers herself, and, though paler, goes on with her duties. She seems anxious that Mr. Lestrange should be properly attended to as she passes him everything on the

table, going so far indeed as to pass the hot biscuits twice. In time her duties are over and she leaves the room. When Mr. Lestrange finished his breakfast he took the paper with him to his library, where Hector and Captain Ardor found him.

Constance and Cécile sit for a little while over their coffee and discuss their plans for the day, indulging in a little speculation as to the broken window. Constance's thoughts soon drift into thinking of Anstruther, and wondering what his explanation will be of his visit to the ivy-clad cottage. She did not doubt, though somewhat mystified, that his explanation would be a good one.

The heading of the paragraph in the paper which caught Esther's eye as she looked over Mr. Lestrange's shoulder, and which is now being discussed by the three men in the library, is as follows :—

"CRIME IN OUR MIDST—LITTLE WOOD STREET.

"YOUNG GIRL FOUND INSENSIBLE ON THE FLOOR OF HER SITTING-ROOM—THE BROTHER'S HORROR—HIS INTERVIEW WITH THE POLICE.

"Last night, at half-past twelve, Chief Constable Keefe while sitting in his office at Row street, was called upon t send assistance at once to 79 Little Wood Street, where girl had been found murdered. On going to this addre

with one of his men he found the doctor and William Arthurs watching by the bedside of Mabel Arthurs. The brother explained that, on coming in a little before twelve o'clock, he found his sister lying insensible on the floor in the next room. On going towards her he found that her forehead had been cut open just above the eye, that the cut was deep, and that at first he thought his sister was dead; but, on closer examination, he found that she still breathed, though faintly. He lifted her and placed her on the bed in her own room, where she still lay unable to speak when your reporter visited the scene of what is likely to prove a tragedy. The doctor holds out little hope of ultimate recovery.

"MISS ARTHURS' LIFE AND APPEARANCE.

"Miss Arthurs is English by birth, and has only lived in this country for the past three years. It is known that for the past two years of that time she has occupied the cottage on Little Wood Street, and has carried on the occupation of copying legal documents for different law firms in the city. Mabel Arthurs is a slight fair girl, with pretty features and light golden hair. The last person seen with her was a man by the name of Dudley Anstruther, to whom she had formerly been engaged. This man was seen to leave the house so recently as the evening before the person or persons unknown made the assault upon her which may result in her death. This individual is at present out of town, but his return will be anxiously looked for, as he may be able to throw some light upon what is now a mystery. After seeing the unconscious girl, your reporter

was taken to the sitting-room. The table-cloth was stained with ink, and one chair still lay overturned on the floor, but no other signs of a conflict were apparent. The room was neatly and tastefully furnished. A book case containing an edition of Scott's Novels, more novels by Bulwer Lytton, several copies of the Century Magazine and a few odd books, among them Macaulay's Essays, stood in one corner of the room. Near the window stood a table with a type-writing machine on it. On the mantel-piece were a few pretty but inexpensive ornaments. In the second window was a flower-stand, on which were a number of plants in bloom, and hanging just above them a caged parrot sitting with ruffled feathers, a picture of misery. The whole room presented an appearance the least calculated to suggest crime."

CHAPTER XXIV.

As Mr. Lestrange sat in his library later in the morning the door opened, and Anstruther, looking very pale and anxious, was shown in. After an interchange of the ordinary greetings, Mr. Lestrange asked Anstruther if he would not be seated.

"Thank you, sir, but my time is very limited. I called in the hope of seeing Miss Lestrange, the maid perhaps understood me to ask for you. I am sorry if my entrance has interrupted you," continued Anstruther, noticing the papers lying about the table.

"Now that you are here, Mr. Anstruther, perhaps you can tell me the meaning of this note." Mr. Lestrange picked up the note he found that morning on his breakfast-room floor and read it to Anstruther, who looked more annoyed than surprised at its contents. "This note says you were to be out of town to-day, but I see that is a mistake," continued Mr. Lestrange.

"It was my intention to be out of town to-day at the time that note was written," answered Anstruther.

"How do you know, sir, when this note was written? There is no date on it, neither have I told you when I received it. Is it possible that you are the

sender, and are you connected with the sending of the notes I have received from time to time during the winter?" asked Mr. Lestrange.

Anstruther turned a shade paler, and his eyes grew deep and bright.

"Mr. Lestrange, I knew that you would receive a note similar in tone to that note you have just read to me, but as to the existence of other correspondence I know nothing. Neither had I anything to do with the writing or sending of that note."

"I scarcely expect you to say otherwise even were you guilty of having so far forgotten yourself as a gentleman," said Mr. Lestrange, when Anstruther interrupted him—

"There are times when a gentleman may be very desperate, sir."

"Then you make excuse, do you, for the sender of these letters? I am surprised, and I must say," added Mr. Lestrange, "that it looks very much as if you did know of the rest of the correspondence."

Anstruther drew himself up, and with the look of indignation still in his eyes said:

"I must remember that you are much older than I, sir, but even that does not give you the right to insult me. I say again, a gentleman in desperate straits may resort to desperate measures; but I say also that whatever may have been in those letters, I knew or know nothing of them."

Both men have been a little more than excited. After a scarcely perceptible pause, but in an altered voice, Anstruther continued :

"The knowledge that you doubt my word is more painful to me than you can imagine."

The thought that the father of the girl whom he loved so ardently believed him a liar was indeed bitter to Anstruther. The knowledge which had been forced upon him, that his Constance loved this man, if painful, yet silenced the angry words that sprang to Mr. Lestrange's lips. In consulting the notes again that morning, and viewing them by the light of the suggestion contained in the one received by him just a few hours previously, Mr. Lestrange was inclined, though against his will, to believe Anstruther might know something of them. The arrival of the second note with the postmark S——, where he knew Anstruther had returned just the day before; the third note appointing a second rendezvous, his going there and meeting Anstruther only, and the man whom Anstruther knew and said was Arthurs; the similarity between the type-writing in the note sent with the railway ticket (which was in all probability written by Anstruther, as it came from his chief's office) and the type-writing in the notes signed "P"; the similarity in the paper in all, all looked suspicious. Then the note of the morning, and later Anstruther's remark, "It was my intention

at the time that note was written to be out of town to-day," only confirmed these suspicions.

On reading the report in the morning paper of Mabel Arthurs' misfortune, and the reference to her engagement with Anstruther, made Mr. Lestrange's cheek burn as he recollected Constance's half confession made the night before. With both subjects in his mind at once, the fact of the man whom he met in the Park on that Sunday afternoon being a brother of the girl whose name had been connected with Anstruther's, struck him for the first time, and explained Anstruther's knowing and being spoken to by that man, on that Sunday afternoon. On the other hand, what object could a man in Anstruther's position have in writing and demanding assistance from him? Anstruther, though not rich, was in receipt of a salary larger than any within the gift of Mr. Lestrange. Was it likely a man of education, and evidently a gentleman, would lay himself open to the charge of writing such letters?

His daughter's almost acknowledged love for Anstruther pleaded strongly with the father for the man before him.

Mr. Lestrange answered in a quieter voice, "This last note, of the existence of which you admit you were aware before seeing me this morning, tells me

that you know of something that nearly concerns my safety. Is that the case?"

"I know nothing, Mr. Lestrange," answered Anstruther, in a weary voice, "but that you were to receive this note, and that it would throw suspicion of something upon me."

But you are aware who wrote the note?"

I know full well who wrote the note, but I can do nothing to help you to discover him. I am in honor bound to disclose nothing." Anstruther, who is aware that he is asking Mr. Lestrange to believe improbabilities, imparts this information with a half-heartedness that contrasts strongly with his indignant manner of a short time before.

"If you are not the writer, allow me to say, somebody else who is the writer owes you very ill-will."

A brighter look comes into Anstruther's face, then leaves it again as he says:—

"It is no time, sir, when your mind is so full of suspicions of me, to tell you what I am most anxious for you to know, but I feel it is due to tell you at once—Mr. Lestrange, I love your daughter. It must seem presumption to you, and I know myself to be unworthy of her, but still I must go on loving her. In all humility, I believe, unworthy as I am, that your daughter in a measure returns my love. If, sir, you become convinced that I have had

nothing to do with this—miserable letter writing, can I hope for your approval?"

Anstruther is so much in earnest that he has forgotten his indignation of a few moments before. Mr. Lestrange is standing at the window, his back partly turned towards Anstruther, but the earnestness in the latter's tones is not without its effect, notwithstanding other views he had entertained of securing his daughter's happiness. He turns from the window and comes nearer Anstruther, who is standing pale and agitated, his hand clasping the back of a chair.

"Explain away this network of circumstances that now entangles you, and then we will discuss this—other matter. I wish for my daughter's happiness, but at present I cannot see that a union with you would ensure it. Have you seen the morning paper? Then you know that to-day the whole town will be speaking of you in connection with that unfortunate girl."

"I know it, and I could face that without shrinking, but that it makes me appear so unworthy of what I prize more than life itself. If you will it so, Mr. Lestrange, after all this dreadful mystery is cleared up, I will go away till you are willing to acknowledge me in the eyes of the world as your daughter's accepted suitor. Only leave me the hope, and try not to so thoroughly misjudge me." Anstruther

appeared as if about to say something more, then hesitated, and finally added, "Believe me, sir, you are misjudging me, but I will trust to time to show you that I am not quite as unworthy as you think. May I hope to see Miss Lestrange before leaving your house this morning? I promise not to detain her long."

Mr. Lestrange hesitated and then said: "My daughter knows nothing of these letters. I trust you will let her remain in ignorance of them." He rang the bell. Esther answered it with almost impossible promptitude. "Tell Miss Lestrange Mr. Anstruther waits in the morning room." Esther with a quick look at Anstruther leaves the room. Anstruther is taken to the morning room by Mr. Lestrange, and left there to await Constance.

It is the same room in which just two days before he learned that his love was not wholly unreturned. The Venetian blinds are drawn together to keep out the warm sun, but through their open slats Anstruther can see the water of the fountain sparkling in the light. The room is filled with the fragrance of roses, which nod their damask heads over the sides of china bowls and fragile glasses. Anstruther, though deep in thought, notices the silver thimble and spool of thread which have tumbled from the work-table and rolled on the floor. He is about to pick the thimble up when the soft frou-frou of Constance's dress makes him turn

to meet her. Constance is dressed in a white embroidered morning gown, a frill of soft lace is at her throat and wrists. Cecile has pinned a white rose in the belt at Constance's waist. As she enters the room a wave of soft color deepens her usually pale cheeks. Anstruther never forgets her as she looked at that moment, coming towards him through the soft light of the rose-perfumed room. With one stride he is before her, and holding both her hands in his strong clasp is looking hungrily into her face.

"My beautiful darling," he murmurs. Constance cannot hide the pleasure his presence gives her, but Anstruther notices a slight constraint in her manner, and attributes it to her natural reserve. So intent is he upon what he has to tell her, he does not allow himself further time for speculation as to its cause. "I have come here, Constance, with sad news. Come and sit on the sofa and let me tell you what has happened."

Anstruther tells Constance of what he has seen in the paper and continues:

"On reaching the Lodge, after having left the office yesterday, a note was handed me from this poor girl, who is now in such danger. The note asked me, Constance, to go to her cottage that evening at six o'clock, as she had something of importance to tell me."

Constance is toying with a paper-knife, it now snaps in her hand.

Anstruther continued: "I knew at once it was of importance, as Mabel Arthurs was not a girl to exaggerate I knew from experience. In order to do as she asked I was obliged to obtain permission to follow Mr. Bolton to Carswell on the midnight train, which permission he granted, but this delay with my packing made it half-past six o'clock before I was able to get to Miss Arthurs' house. I need not tell you I think, Constance, that there are times when the recollection of the little I have been able to do for this girl does not prevent my wishing our paths had never met. I mean no disloyalty to her in saying that, but when I feel that my past intercourse with her may separate me for a time at least from you, I cannot help regretting that we should ever have met. Miss Arthurs gave me the information in her possession which concerned me. It was important; I am bound not to disclose what it was. On returning this morning (my chief found he must return to S—— at once and make the trip to Carswell again on another day), I bought the morning paper on the train; this is what I saw." Anstruther drew a paper from his pocket and showed Constance the paragraph we have already seen. Placing it in her hands he rose and went to the mantle-piece, leaning his head upon his arm.

Presently he felt Constance's hand on his shoulder. "This is dreadful. Has the poor girl good medical attendance? Is she alone? Without another woman?

What manner of man is her brother?" All these questions Constance asks hurriedly, her face ashy white.

Anstruther turned with a look of deepest gratitude in his face. "I have come this morning to you, Constance, to ask you if you will object to my going and doing what I can for the poor girl. My first impulse was to help her, but I knew it was due to you after what has passed between us to consult your wishes in the matter. I know there will be much comment on what has already occurred, you see my name is in the paper. I shrink from it for many reasons."

"It will be unpleasant—very; but we must do what we can for Miss Arthurs. The paper says no hope—that is perhaps an exaggeration. You should go at once;" then in a shy and sweet voice, "at once, Dudley."

It was characteristic of Constance that with the knowledge of Mabel Arthurs' suffering came all forgetfulness of the resentment and doubt she felt on seeing Anstruther in her society so unexpectedly the night before. Though loving Anstruther, she was too proud to ask him for further explanation, putting doubt out of her mind for the present and trying to feel that in due time all would be explained.

"Before going, my pure angel, I want to ask you earnestly and beseechingly once more to trust me

implicitly. Will you try?" asked Anstruther, looking searchingly into her fair young face.

"I will, Dudley, try and believe all that you do right. What you cannot explain now you will, perhaps, make clear to me by-and-bye," was the blushing response.

"Heaven bless you, Constance, for that assurance," said Anstruther, and was about to take her in his arms, when, as if at some sudden recollection, he took both her hands in his, and with a fervent "Good-bye, my queen," left her.

As Anstruther passed through the gateway leading from "The Poplars," he was joined by Alert, detective of the S—— police force.

"Good-afternoon, Mr. Anstruther. A fine day. Going this way? May I join you? Sad affair this Arthurs case is."

Anstruther replied rather shortly, "Yes, very sad."

"Perhaps you ain't well to-day, Mr. Anstruther—would rather be left alone?" asked Alert, leaving very little of the pathway between them, however, and scarcely removing his eyes from Anstruther's now thoroughly fagged faced. "My idea of this affair is," continued Alert, "somewhat peculiar."

"And what is your idea?"

"Oh, as to telling what my idea is, that you know," laying his not too clean finger on the side of his nose,

"would be unprofessional. Now, you, Mr. Anstruther, are not of my profession, and there would be no kind of harm in your expressing an opinion. What is your idea of the affair?"

"I cannot think who has been guilty of attacking that helpless girl. It is probably some tramp who has come to help himself to whatever he might find in the house, and finding Miss Arthurs resist him, has struck her, not intending to kill her. Men are not so ready to put their heads in a halter, and I can see no motive to induce any one to murder the girl," said Anstruther, now thoroughly roused.

Anstruther quickened his steps and was soon at the cottage in Little Wood Street, Alert keeping close beside him.

On entering the sitting-room, Anstruther asks Arthurs, who is there, whether his sister has regained consciousness?

"Seemingly not," Arthurs gruffly replies.

As Anstruther sighs and raises his hand to his chin, as is a habit with him when in deep thought, Alert notices an ink stain on his right coat sleeve; laying his hand on Anstruther's shoulder he said,

"It is my painful duty to arrest you on suspicion of having assaulted Mabel Arthurs."

Anstruther starts and looks at the man as if stunned—

"Arrest me for this vile outrage? You must be mad."

"Very sorry, sir; merely on suspicion, sir. If you will come away with me now, you will hear what the grounds of suspicion are. No necessity for these, I think," showing a pair of hand-cuffs; whereupon Anstruther's eyes flash and, turning to Arthurs, he said:

"Do you think me guilty of this crime?"

Arthurs, who has been standing the picture of surprise, replied,

"I never suspected such a thing."

Here, the parrot, eyeing Anstruther and trying to force its way through the bars of the cage, called out, "Poor, poor Polly."

CHAPTER XXV.

THE evening of the day of Anstruther's arrest, Ardor finds Constance in her little sitting-room. As she rises to meet him, Ardor notices how white is her face and how heavy the dark rings beneath her eyes.

"May I speak to you for a few moments? There is something I should like to say unless you are too tired to listen."

"I am not at all tired," answered Constance, who really seemed full of energy and suppressed excitement, "and shall be very grateful if you will stay and talk to me a little while."

Constance seated herself on the sofa, and then, as if an unhappy recollection occurred to her, crossed the room and rested her head on her folded hands on the back of a wicker chair that stood close to the open window. She is usually so self-possessed that even this little show of feeling affects Ardor deeply. Coming a little nearer to her he said:

"I see you are in trouble, Miss Lestrange. I want you to let me help you. Believe me, nothing will please me better than to aid you. After what you told me yesterday I know I cannot make you happy in the way I till then hoped; but I can surely help to

remove difficulties from your path, and, who knows? may soon see you quite happy"—and here he falters —"with another."

Constance had raised her head at Ardor's approach, but let it fall again on her tightly clasped hands.

"I think I know whom you love, Miss Lestrange. Forgive me if I appear intrusive. I want to tell you that I believe him quite innocent of this charge"—Constance again raised her head—"and that I wish to help to prove him so. No, do not thank me," as Constance extended her hand with gratitude shining from her face. "I felt," continued Ardor, "that after what had passed between us I could not remain longer near you; but if you will allow me, I feel now that I should like to remain a week or so even yet."

"I shall be oh so glad if you will do so. It is like you to believe him innocent. I know he must be so, but can we substantiate what we feel? Oh, Captain Ardor, he will feel this so keenly. I had just written a few words," said Constance blushing, "to tell him I trust him and believe in his innocence, I think it would comfort him. Think of his being charged with such a crime!"

Constance walked to the window and looked with troubled eyes at the shadows cast on the lawn by the chestnut trees. Ardor, who in his heart considers Anstruther the most enviable of mortals, is conscious of a dull pain at his own heart, but said,

"I was going to see Anstruther, would you like me to deliver the note?"

"Very much; you are indeed a true friend. I am so comforted to think you are not leaving us now."

Constance had got back all that feeling of security with which Ardor's society had always inspired her, but which was somewhat dissipated by their interview of the previous day.

"The day after to-morrow you must be in Toronto to ride Surefoot, I know," said Constance, smiling for the first time during the interview.

"Will you not still go to the races, Miss Lestrange? It would only excite comment if you were to remain away, and I did hope you would see Surefoot clear those hurdles," said Ardor now smiling, too.

"I have not considered the subject; it may be everything will be explained before then, and we shall be our happy selves again," said Constance, wistfully.

"In any case do not decide to give it up just yet," urged Ardor.

"Very well, but it would be very miserable to go knowing that poor girl to be in such a critical state, and one whom we know charged with having ——" Here Constance broke off, all her unhappy thoughts rushing back upon her. "Oh, it seems dreadful."

"I will go with this note," said Ardor, "and who knows what to-morrow may disclose."

Ardor found Anstruther—who, on proper securities being given, had been set at liberty to await a further investigation—seated in his room at the Lodge. After shaking hands with him and making a few encouraging remarks, he placed the note before Anstruther and took his leave, saying he would come again in the morning.

Anstruther, by the light from a lamp that flickered on the table, read :—

"Have courage, dear Dudley, all this must be explained before long. Does it comfort you to know that I am thinking of you constantly, and loving you more than I deemed possible? Let me know if I can help you in any way, further than by my love and prayers. These you have for all time.

"CONSTANCE."

Such was the magic power of this scrap of paper that Anstruther's face lost its weary and troubled expression, and a hopeful light came into his eyes once more as he pressed the signature to his lips. Again and again, he read and re-read the hastily written words before he closed his eyes to pass in sleep the hours that must be born and die before the morrow would be to-day.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE evidence furnished by the Crown at the investigation on the following day was in substance as follows :—

Anstruther was seen leaving Little Wood Street alone at half-past seven o'clock on the evening of the same night that Mabel Arthurs was found lying unconscious on the floor of the room used by her in the said cottage as a sitting-room. Anstruther was known to have signified his intention of leaving S—— that evening by the 6.30 train, the Crown believed this showed an intention of misleading certain parties as to his whereabouts. An ink stain on the right sleeve of Anstruther's coat and the finding of an empty ink-bottle on the floor of the said room further connected him with the crime, as the blow which rendered Mabel Arthurs unconscious was evidently caused by a sharp pointed object such as the corner of this square glass ink-bottle, which was unusually ponderous and heavy, and quite sufficient to inflict a mortal wound, if well directed.

On Mr. Bolton's offering a thousand dollars and Captain Ardor another thousand dollars, with a

surety of five hundred dollars from Anstruther himself, the prisoner was admitted to bail, to appear on Wednesday the week following, to stand his trial.

On Anstruther's explaining the next day to his chief that he would like a free week to devote to efforts to solve the mystery surrounding the attack upon Mabel Arthurs, Mr. Bolton willingly excused him from his duties as private secretary. Anstruther returned immediately to Little Wood Street, and was shown by William Arthurs, who appeared to have been drinking again, into the room where the nurse was watching Mabel. Anstruther looked more pale and worn than even the day before, and as he looked at the sunken eyes and drawn lips of the girl before him a spasm crossed his face. Taking a chair close by the bedside, Anstruther raised one of the girl's hands in both his own and said quietly but firmly,

"Mabel, do you know me? I am Anstruther; can you not speak to me?"

Mabel slightly moved her head on the pillow and her eyelids quivered, but that was all.

"If you can understand me, Mabel, hear what I say to you. I am charged, poor girl, with having struck you. Can you not tell me in whose place I am suffering? Just one word, Mabel. Can you hear me?"

Still no sign of recognition or consciousness.

Anstruther dropped her hand, and, turning to the nurse, asked how soon she expected the doctor. On being told it was nearly time for him now to come, he turned and went back to the sitting-room with William Arthurs. Between these two rooms, Anstruther hovers all that day and night; but no sign of consciousness hoped for or dreaded by him is shown by Mabel.

Constance, who has been instrumental in securing a good nurse for Miss Arthurs, finds her powers of assistance here at an end, as indeed nothing can be done but trust Mabel to the care of her physician, and hope that time will bring her consciousness and strength to explain this mystery, and enable her to take up the thread of her somewhat complicated life. Constance has seen the doctor, and learned from him that there is nothing more to be done for the present.

Mr. Lestrange is most urgent in his persuasions that Constance should keep to her original intention of making one of a party for the coming races at the "Woodbine." When he sees with what great reluctance she entertains such a thought, he fain would desist; but firm in his belief that her absence will excite comment, he at length prevails upon her to yield.

Ardor is greatly relieved by her decision, as he feels it will, for a time at least, divert her thoughts from their present unhappy groove. Constance, like

many young people, cannot realize the extent of the pain she has caused Ardor; and, though very grateful for his present thoughtfulness, is not aware what it costs him to remain near her, knowing that her heart is given to another.

CHAPTER XXVII.

IT is Thursday, the day of the races at the "Woodbine." Since eleven o'clock in the morning the road leading from the town to the race-course has been thronged with every imaginable kind of vehicle, from the four-in-hand driven by young Plumley with its beautifully dressed occupants, and smart looking dog-cart drawn by a tandem, to the butcher's cart drawn by a worn-out bay, and the street cars overflowing with human freight—the freight looking better able to walk than do the straining and tugging horses to pull it. It is rather warm and sultry and the road dusty, but all the people are in holiday humor and make the best of their surroundings.

Constance and her father are of the party made up by the Lieutenant-Governor, as is Ardor. Mrs. Sherbrooke and her husband are also with them, having come to town with many others from all parts of the country to see the races, as this meet is looked upon as being quite the event of the season. Constance is dressed in a soft dress of heliotrope crape; her bonnet, which is one mass of violets and rich green leaves, sets off to perfection her fair skin and burnished hair; her little hands are encased in tan-

colored gloves, and on her left wrist is twisted a gold snake with an emerald head ; her parasol of heliotrope silk is lined with white, and tied to the handle with a knot of white ribbon is a bunch of violets.

Constance is looking sad, notwithstanding the bright conversation going on about her. Her anxiety for Anstruther shows itself in her face. Ardor sees it, and once more resolves to try and bring that anxiety to an end.

After half an hour's drive, in which they have passed another four-in-hand which has come to grief through one of the horses having the blind-staggers, and have just missed being thrown into confusion themselves by a lad with more assurance than sense trying to pass them with his tandem, our party reaches the paddock.

The ladies dismount from the top of the drag, as, in order to get the best view of the races, it is necessary to be in the grand stand. A box is there reserved for the party from Government House. After a stroll across the green, Constance and her father are comfortably seated in as good a position as possible for seeing the "events." Ardor, who is to ride his own horse "Surefoot" in the gentleman's hurdle race, has gone to get into his colors and go through the necessary preliminaries before mounting. Hector and Cécile are also in the stand, having come with Mrs. Williams' party.

Miss Williams, whom we have not seen since the driving party, is looking very handsome in a closely fitting tailor-made gown of tweed, and is talking to Moore, who is as usual not far from her side. Cécile, who is dressed in China silk of much the same shade of blue as her eyes, and a wide leghorn hat smothered in pale pink roses, is looking like a piece of Dresden china. The stand is crowded with well-dressed women, with a slight sprinkling of the male sex; but the majority of men are down in the front, where a good deal of betting is going on. Sitting just behind Constance is Miss F——. She is dressed in a canary-colored gown of soft clinging material; her bonnet is trimmed with nasturtiums, a diamond pin fastens the strings of her bonnet. The color of her dress but adds to the dusky beauty of her face, which is to-day unusually animated.

Sitting next Miss F—— is a tall man with a long moustache. His whole interest appears to be centered in the girl beside him. When he stands up one cannot help admiring his manly and perfectly proportioned figure. There is an expression on his face in repose that is not pleasing, so hard is it; but when interested in a pleasant conversation the gleam of his white teeth and the fairness of his complexion destroy the unpleasant impression produced by the face when quiet.

This man's name is Walter Charles. Scotch by

birth, cosmopolitan by habit, Walter Charles is a man of small private means, just sufficient to enable him to live economically (which he does not do), not enough to confer the high privilege or incur the clear responsibility of absolute wealth. Enough to prevent any effort at self-maintainence being absolutely necessary, while not enough to meet the expensive tastes engendered by a life of idleness.

Miss F—— leans forward and exchanges a few words with Constance. Charles volunteers to get up a pool on the coming race. The names of the horses are written on different slips of paper, and, with a sufficient number of blanks to make up the number who wish to join in this small venture, are thrown into a hat and passed about. As Charles passed the hat to Constance he was introduced. Constance put in her pretty hand and drew a blank. All the slips of paper being disposed of, the next amusement was to watch for the horses.

Three jockeys are now mounted, two of them walking their horses quietly over part of the track; the third gallops by the stand at full speed, at the will of the horse or rider it is difficult to decide. Three numbers with their respective colors are displayed on small signs on the judges' stand, which is just opposite the starting post. There are still three horses to come, before the list entered for the race be complete.

Looking from the grand stand, a view of the complete course, which is in the shape of an oval, a mile in circumference, can be had. A fence running round the inside of the track forms an enclosure which is covered with green turf. It is in this enclosure that the hurdle races are to be run. The hurdles, six in number, run four of them at right angles to the main course, thus the spectators have a side view of the horses as they take their leaps; the other two are placed in the middle of the paddock and run parallel with the course, so that in taking one the horses face the spectators, and in turning and taking the second the horses are going the other way, namely, from the spectators. In this way three different views of the horses while jumping are presented.

A few trees growing within the enclosure wave their leafy branches responsive to the fresh breeze which is now blowing off the lake that washes the shore just beyond the course, and whose waters are now sparkling in the sunlight. Some yachts are anchored close to the shore, their occupants thus being enabled to have a fair view of the course.

The first race for "the trial stakes" has just been won by "Gold Finch," after an exciting half mile at the finish, when "Oliver" ran her pretty close, but only succeeded in coming in a good second.

The race for the "Queen's Plate of Fifty Guineas"

is the next event on the card. This is always looked upon as the race of the day.

First bell for saddling and to clear the course has been rung. There are fourteen horses entered for the start, already eight are on the track. Hector has left Cécile, and is standing below the ladies' stand. He is evidently unusually interested in this race, as his bright eyes and flushed face testify. The truth is he has backed "Cobweb" much more heavily than his purse warrants, but from certain tips which he has received he believes her chances are as good, if not better, than those of any other in the field.

"Cobweb" is a bay mare with one white foot. As she appears on the course a murmur of admiration goes through the crowd, and well does she deserve it. Her arched neck shines like satin in the sun; her little pointed ears move first forwards then backwards, as if not accustomed to so much bustle; her eyes, naturally kind and gentle, have a somewhat strained expression as her jockey trots her by the stand; her light body and clean legs carrying out the idea suggested by her name. Her jockey, in a pink jacket, takes her some yards down the course, leaning forward in his saddle and patting her on the neck, to which she responds by a graceful bend of the head and a backward glance of the eye as if she would say, "I am nervous this morning, and had almost forgot-

ten you were there; but, now I see you are there, I will try and quiet down."

The next horse to pass the stand is "Herod," another bay without a white hair about him. Nothing seems to disturb his equanimity as he walks sedately by the stand, carrying his rider with the lemon and brown jacket as if he quite knew the importance of the occasion but was not at all dismayed by it.

Not much has been said by the book-makers about "Herod," and his appearance sets many among the spectators thinking. One man who had been a few moments before in close conversation with Hector is now standing on two chairs, a foot on each, his hands crossed behind his back holding a heavy mounted hunting-crop; his light overcoat is thrown open, displaying a watch guard made of leather with a miniature steel bit as a cross bar; a large gold horseshoe fastens his cravat, which is of china blue with large white spots; the buttons on his coat tell a whole history in coaching life, from the start, with the man on the steps blowing his horn, to the pull-up at the hostelry, with the steam curling from the horses' sides in thin circles, which suggest steam after the manner of like suggestions in works of art of this kind.

This man watches "Herod" closely, not removing his eyes from him from the time he makes his appearance till he walks in his dignified way to where

"Cobweb" is still fretting and tossing about her head. Then William Arthurs, for it was he, jumped down from the chairs and renewed his conversation with Hector, the result being that both betting books were taken out, and Hector was in deeper than ever, to sink or swim with "Cobweb."

Three or four more horses now pass the stand almost abreast. Presently a cheer greets the appearance of the favorite, "Spanker." "Spanker" is a chestnut with a white face. His jockey, in scarlet and white, trots him quickly by the stand. His ears are back, and there is an irritated look about his eye, but he steps out in such an easy and powerful manner that the betting, which has been two to one on the favorite, is carried on by a few at three to one.

All the horses are out now except "Barbelle," who report says broke down the day before and is out of it. The second bell rings, which means the start will take place in five minutes. The distance to be run is one mile and a quarter, so that a quarter of a mile down the track the horses are to start, thus passing the stand twice: first a quarter of a mile after the start and again at the finish, which in this as in all the races takes place just opposite the stand.

How bright the scene is! The glossy coats of the horses shining in the sun, the light breeze puffing out the jockeys' jackets and sleeves, blowing the branches of the stately maples and making their leaves quiver

as if they, too, partook of the general excitement. "Cobweb" is still restive and apparently dissatisfied. Her jockey is trying to soothe her, but to only a certain extent succeeds. "Herod" is coming down the track steadily towards the starting point. "Spanker" is coming up in line with several others ready for the word. "Cobweb" and "Herod" draw nearer, "Cobweb" a little ahead.

The word is given, they are off. Down they dash, a capital start of nine abreast and four at a very short distance behind. Among the latter "Cobweb" and "Herod." "Spanker" is among the first nine. Now he leads them and passes the grand stand half a head in front of any of the others; now two or three shoot forward and are close on "Spanker's" heels.

"Herod," whose jockey appears to be holding him in, is fifth; now he gains a little, he is fourth. "Cobweb," who is close behind "Herod," is shaking her head, fretting terribly, and losing at each stride; she is still next "Herod," however. Now "Herod" increases his speed a little and passes the horses between him and "Spanker," and is second.

It appears as if the race were to be between these two. During this much of the race a loud barking is heard coming from one of the stables. Whether it is this or something else that disturbs "Cobweb" her jockey cannot tell; he only knows that he

riding the animal that should be if not first at least making it close work for the one that is, and instead of that he is a poor fourth. As the field is now, "Spanker" is first, "Herod" a close second, "Highflyer" and "Disaster" third, and "Cobweb" a poor fourth. The other horses, though still running, are clearly out of the race. Half a mile has been run; the horses are now on the opposite side of the course from the stand.

As "Spanker and "Herod" pass the yachts anchored close to that side of the course, they are greeted with a cheer from those on board. The barking has stopped. Is that a black dog running across the paddock, dragging a broken rope behind him? Yes, there he goes close to "Cobweb's" feet. On darts "Cobweb" as if shot from an arrow. How she goes! "'Cobweb' will have it yet," they cry. Quickly she passes "Highflyer" and "Disaster," and is now steadily gaining on "Herod."

"Herod's" jockey touches him for the first time with a whip and he darts ahead of "Spanker," who seems to feel the quick work he has done from the start. "Herod" first, "Spanker" second, and "Cobweb," with the dog close beside her, steadily gaining on them both; but that was valuable time lost for the first half mile, and hasten as she may, it does not seem possible that little "Cobweb" will regain the ground lost then. On she goes, however, the dog close at her

heels; now she is even with "Spanker," now half a head before him. A cheer breaks from the grand stand, as the horses come round the last turn, where begins what is called the home stretch. "Herod" is first, "Cobweb" second, and "Spanker" still only half a head behind her. On they come, the dog still close to "Cobweb." On! on! tirrup! tirrup! tirrup! as they draw nearer. Now "Cobweb's" jockey calls to her, "On beauty, on there!" and as if encouraged by his voice she, if possible, travels faster than ever, and is now shoulder to shoulder with "Herod."

"Spanker's" jockey is now using his whip freely, but "Spanker" has done his best; he is still close on the heels of the other two, but cannot pass them.

"Cobweb's" nostrils are distended, and as the horses draw nearer, the people in the stand can see that her jockey's jacket is scarcely pinker than they. "Hurrah for 'Herod'!" "Hurrah for 'Cobweb'!" "Three cheers for 'Cobweb'!" "Keep at it 'Spanker'!" Now "Cobweb's" jockey brings down his whip; he hated to do it, he afterwards said, as he felt the mare had already done wonders to recover so much lost ground. Down came the whip, on went "Cobweb." Steadily beside her crept "Herod." Another sharp cut and "Cobweb" shot ahead and passed the winning post, just half a head before "Herod," with her pretty sides shewing the two sharp cuts made by the

cruel whip. "Spanker" a length and a half behind "Disaster" and "Highflyer" fourth and fifth.

Hector, who has been down in front of the stand during the race, returns to Mrs. Williams' box; he explains to Cécile and others that "Cobweb's" extraordinary behavior at the beginning of the race was explained by the trainer, who said that each morning when "Cobweb" was taken out for exercise, "Raven," the dog, went with her, and when she found herself out without him at the beginning of the race she would not do her work. "Raven" objected just as strongly to being left behind, and at last succeeded in breaking the rope that tied him. Hence the result we have witnessed. There is a suspicion of tears in Cécile's eyes after witnessing "Cobweb's" efforts and ultimate success. Hector thinks he never saw her look so lovely. Constance, too, has been quite carried away by the excitement of the last race, but her greatest interest is centered in the hurdle race, which is to come off next. Gentlemen riders.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

"DURING hurdle races the spectators must stand clear of the fences."

The paddock within the course is cleared. The gentlemen jockeys have adjusted their weights under the ladies' stand, and have passed the scales at the judges' stand. "Merlin," ridden by Walter Charles, is the first to appear on the course. As Charles rides him by the ladies' stand, the horse's light body and powerful haunches show him to be every inch a jumper. "Merlin" is the property of his rider, and it is not with a little pride that Walter Charles, in his black and red stripped jacket, allows him to walk sedately along the course towards the starting point. "Touchstone," a wiry little bay with black main and tail, now trots briskly by; her jockey, Arthur Ferris, in his brown and yellow stripped jacket and cap, making a pretty dash of color on the green turf.

"Surefoot," an iron gray, quickly follows, looking ready to go at anything. Captain Ardor touches his cap of dark and light blue as he passes, and raises his eyes to that part of the stand where Constance and Miss F—— are sitting, keen interest shining in their faces. As Ardor rides by, many are struck by

the perfect ease with which he sits his horse; and a recollection of the terror she felt when seeing him lying white at the side of the road the day "Blaze" bolted came to Constance with a feeling of thankfulness that her fears on that occasion were exaggerated.

"Matchum," a bay, with two white fore-feet, ridden by James Horsey—colors, black and white—hurries by and joins the others preparatory to making the start.

The course for this race is laid out inside the paddock. The horses are to be ridden over it twice, taking all the hurdles, including the water-jump. This being accomplished, the riders are to bring their horses into the main track a quarter of a mile from the finishing post; thus having a clear dash for that distance, and finishing directly opposite the ladies' and judges' stands.

The second bell rings, the riders bring their horses up; now they are ready. They are off. "Merlin" and "Matchum" first, Charles and Horsey securing a good start for their horses.

Ardor not being so successful in this way is a little behind on "Surefoot," "Touchstone" coming close behind him. In this order they approach the first hurdle.

"Merlin" takes it easily, Charles riding him like a bird. "Matchum" ticks the rail with his hind feet,

Horsey having lifted him at it a little too quickly. "Surefoot" takes the jump in his stride, shaking his pretty head with glee and quickening his pace as his feet touch the ground on the other side; "Touchstone" still close behind him. Thus they approach the second hurdle, all pretty well together.

"Merlin" jumps the second hurdle simultaneously with "Matchum," the latter making up for ticking the rails at the last hurdle by jumping at least two feet higher than necessary. Ardor is gaining a little, and is now a length in advance of "Touchstone," whom Ferris is riding rather wildly. In this way "Surefoot" approaches the second hurdle alone; he takes it so easily and gracefully that, though he is yet only third in the race, a cheer of approval bursts from the grand stand. "Surefoot" is going very steadily with no urging from Ardor, the dark and light blue jacket coming nearer and nearer the two in front.

As the field is now, "Matchum" and "Merlin" are neck and neck; "Surefoot" just one length behind; "Touchstone," now three lengths in the rear, having almost refused the second hurdle and only taking it after a severe cut from her rider's whip.

As they approach the third hurdle, Walter Charles urges "Merlin," and he shoots half a length before "Matchum." "Merlin" takes the hurdle somewhat

hastily, but clears it safely and is now going at a rapid pace. Horsey touches "Matchum" with his whip, who, with a bound, clears the jump.

Ardor is keeping "Surefoot" well in hand and rides him at this, the third hurdle, quietly and steadily. He is going so sedately and takes his jumps with such ease that one feels a little anxious lest he should "wake up" too late. Poor "Touchstone" flounders again at this hurdle, but manages to plant her two fore-feet on the opposite bank, and, after a scramble, is off again on the level. The field is now—Walter Charles first on "Merlin," Horsey second on "Matchum," Ardor bringing "Surefoot" up a good third; "Touchstone," several lengths behind, being urged with more determination than good judgment by Ferris.

The next hurdle includes the water-jump. Ardor now shakes his reins over "Surefoot's" neck, and the gray quickens his stride and pricks up his ears as he sniffs the water. Closer and closer he comes to "Matchum." Now he is up with him.

Charles allows "Merlin" to rush at the leap a little too soon; he clears it, however, but just manages to fix all four feet on the opposite bank and start off again. "Matchum" is not so successful, and so insecure is his hold on the bank that his hind feet slip down its side, and some time is lost by him in recovering himself. That time is employed by

"Surefoot" (who feels the good result of being well jockeyed) in clearing the hurdle, water and all, at a bound. Ardor gives him his head. Now he is side by side with "Merlin" who is still going well and looking quite fresh. As Ferris brings "Touchstone" up to the water-jump she limps perceptibly. Whether he is conscious of this or not, he does not heed it, but lays on his whip, and the plucky little mare, though feeling her own incapacity, makes her last effort, responsive to the call and ignorance of her rider. She rises in the air, tips her feet against the hurdles, and stumbles headlong; her fore-feet touch the opposite bank, she tries to paw herself safely up, but, with strained and terrified eyes and distended nostrils, she rolls over into the water, crushing her jockey beneath her. Freed from his weight she struggles back to the turf, where she stands panting and trembling, her pretty ears wet with the moisture that bespeaks her agony, and her sleek sides dripping with the muddy water of the ditch.

Some men rush forward from the crowd and pull Ferris, or what so few short moments before was Ferris, from the water.

He is white, and as they lift him his arms fall helpless from the shoulders—blood is oozing from his mouth and nose; they carry him off the course and lay him under one of the tents. As "Touchstone" was led off, each time her fore-foot

touched the ground her agony is so apparent that more than one finds time to spare a moment from watching the other horses to pass the verdict, "used up."

After the water-jump, "Merlin" and "Surefoot" keep close together and clear the next hurdle abreast. Now "Surefoot" gains a little, and is half a head before "Merlin."

"Matchum" clears the hurdle well, but the paces of the other two horses are leaving him gradually more and more in the rear.

On they go, "Merlin" and "Surefoot" neck and neck. They approach the next hurdle in this way and take it like the last—together. This hurdle is facing the stand, being placed at right angles to the rest of the course. So pretty do the bay and the gray look as they lift their noble crests to take the leap, that a cheer of admiration bursts from the spectators. Over they come! On they speed! The cheer seems to have electrified "Surefoot." How he shoots forward! He is half a length ahead.

"The gray leads," shouts the crowd. "'Surefoot' will have it." Charles gives "Merlin" his head, but though his pace is no slower than it has been, it does not quicken.

"Matchum" is clearly out of the race but bravely keeps on his course, now gaining a little, now losing more. The pace kept up by "Merlin" and "Sure-

foot" is now something tremendous, and the final tussle for first place is entered into in earnest.

The second round of the course is half over. Two more hurdles before the final, which is the fatal water-jump. The first of these is taken clearly by "Surefoot."

"Merlin" follows, barely missing the rail with his hind feet. Charles strikes him with the whip and he makes a dash forward, which once more brings him alongside "Surefoot." Ardor, though making capital time, is still keeping "Surefoot" steadily in hand.

"Merlin" is excited by that blow of the whip and spends more energy than necessary on the next hurdle, which is the last before the water-jump. Not so "Surefoot." Though quite alive to the situation, he takes the leap steadily and without flurry. "Matchum" follows quite six lengths behind. "Merlin's" dash at the last hurdle brought him even again with "Surefoot."

"Keep at it, 'Merlin,'" cry the spectators. "My money on the gray," shout the others. "Pretty, pretty," cry many more. Thus they approach the water-jump, which is the last leap, after which their course is on the main track. Neck and neck the gray and the bay approach it. As they draw near it, Cécile, who has witnessed all the catastrophe which befell "Touchstone" and her luckless rider, covers her eyes with her hands. Constance, who

has scarcely removed her eyes from "Surefoot" and "Merlin" from the first, is conscious that something dreadful has happened, but so centered is her interest in the two leading horses, she has not realized what that something dreadful is. Her eyes are large and dark; that white look which comes to her face in moments of great excitement is there now, making her penciled brows look black and distinct on her clear forehead; her hand is crushing the programme of the races, and with her lips slightly apart, her whole being appears lost in the excitement of the contest going on between "Merlin" and "Surefoot."

As the two horses approach the water-jump once more, "Surefoot" pricks up his ears, as if fully realizing that this is the jump of jumps. Ardor gives him his head. Gathering himself together as if for an extra effort, "Surefoot" goes at it and clears it in a way that calls for a shout of applause from the onlookers, and a dry sob of relief from Constance, who has noticed with pride that not once has the noble gray kicked the hurdles, or failed to respond loyally to the calls upon him.

As Charles brings "Merlin" to the jump he is conscious that his horse is flagging just a little, he therefore brings down his whip once more. "Merlin" clears the hurdle, but not without a scramble does he reach the opposite bank. That

scramble seems as if it would be disastrous to his chances, for, as he settles into his stride again, Charles realizes that "Surefoot" is leading by two lengths.

"Matchum" gets over somehow.

Now they dash for the home stretch. They enter the main course—"Surefoot" still two lengths in advance, and going at a rate that gives promise of his increasing that distance. "Merlin" second, going splendidly, but Charles feeling conscious that the pace is telling. "Matchum" still a poor third.

"Keep it up 'Merlin'!"—"Plucky 'Merlin'!" shout this horse's backers.

"Bravo! 'Surefoot'."—"Oh you beauty!"—"Three cheers for the gray!"

Presently there is a confused shout of "Mind the horses"—"Clear the track"—"Ride over the fool," from a hundred throats.

Ardor, who, leading, is in the inside track and nearest the fence, sees a figure making its way across the course. Heedless of the shouts, the man still persists in crossing just in the track of the horses. At the moment when two more steps would have taken him under the railing and out of the way, the shouts seem to force themselves upon his hearing. He stops, looks up with a tipsy leer, and vaguely realizing his danger makes a lunge forward and falls just in front of "Surefoot." Ardor with all his force pulls

the right bridle rein. "Surefoot" makes a rapid swerve and just misses trampling the man under his feet. Ardor realizes this with a feeling of thankfulness. The next instant he sees at a glance that "Merlin" is a length ahead. The ground lost in that swerve must be made up or the race is lost to "Surefoot." Charles is using his whip freely, and "Merlin" is doing his best. Ardor finds that the vigorous tug that he gave his right rein has all but torn it from the bit, and that he must bear on it no more. So "Surefoot" has his head. How he goes!

Steadily he is regaining his lost ground, now his head is up with the bay's haunches, now it is even with his jockey's legs. Still he gains. But the distance is too short in which to make up for that fatal loss of time, and "Merlin" passes the finishing post just half a head before "Surefoot."

Deafening cheers greet the close of one of the closest things ever seen at the Woodbine.

As Walter Charles rides by the winning post, the cheers of the multitude ringing in his ears, Mabel Arthurs breathes her last in a world where her love has been counted of so little worth.

CHAPTER XXIX.

ARDOR has some difficulty in bringing "Surefoot" to a standstill as he is still comparatively fresh, and feels no weight on the reins. In time, hearing no horses behind him and being soothed by his master's voice, he slackens his pace and allows himself to be taken to the stables. When Ardor dismounts and goes to "Surefoot's" head the soft nose is pressed close up against his rider's cheek and held there, as if "Surefoot" were seeking consolation for having lost what he rightly felt he should have gained. On leaving him, Ardor makes his way to where he knows "Touchstone's" stall to be; on reaching it he sees her being examined by a veterinary, who in a few minutes explains that her off fore shoulder is dislocated and that she is pretty well ruined. As she stands, it is evident that her suffering is intense; the perspiration is pouring from her sides, and every few minutes a tremor passes over her body. It is decided to end her misery, and the groom is dispatched with a heavy heart to ask further instructions of Ferris, who is lying helpless but conscious in a neighboring tent. "Touchstone" has been this groom's special charge. He has scarcely left the stable when "Touch-

stone" with great effort hobbles about so that her head is turned towards the door through which he has disappeared; she whinnies and tries to force down the bar as if to follow him, but, finding this useless, stands perfectly still listening to his footsteps. Regardless of the others standing about she keeps her position, her body quite motionless and her ears strained to catch every sound long after the echo of the retreating footsteps has died away. Then a shudder passes over her frame, she whinnies once more, sinks on the floor of her stall, and heaving one long breath dies.

Never again will "Touchstone" carry her rider over the green fields and turf-edged lanes. Never again will the saddling bell sound for her. Never again will rise for her the treacherous hurdles, or fall the cruel whip. She is at rest.

"Sheer exhaustion," said the surgeon.

What acts are committed in thy name, oh, sport!

. . . . . .

As Ardor wends his way back to the ladies' stand not few are the admiring glances turned in his direction by soft eyes, and not a few remarks, such as "Hard luck, old fellow!" greet him from the sterner sex. As he takes his seat beside Constance he sees how deep the light in her gray eyes, and notices the sympathetic quiver of her tender lips. The old pain

rushes back upon him, and he wishes he could ride a race every hour in the day if only for the forgetfulness it brings.

"Oh, Captain Ardor, who won that race?" asked Mrs. Bridge, stepping down from one of the higher seats. "Miss Baker was giving me some London addresses—she is that girl who is dressed so beautifully on the seat above—and I missed half the race. 'Merlin' won? Is 'Merlin' your horse? No! Oh, so sorry. Was that jockey killed?"

"No; only stunned."

"Oh, so sorry. I lost then, because I drew 'Matchum.' 'Matchum' last? Dear me, I'm so sorry. Oh, there goes my paper over the stand with all the dressmakers' addresses in it. Oh, I am so sorry."

"There will be another race, Mrs. Bridge, so you will have time to write them down again," replied Ardor.

"So I must; but it is provoking, is it not? Such good addresses. I am so sorry." Mrs. Bridge rattled on regardless of the irony in Ardor's last remark.

To the right of the stand is a green lawn, on which are pitched two or three refreshment tents. Constance and other members of the party are only too glad to move about now that the principal races are over, and they quickly act upon the suggestion made by Walter Charles, who is again beside Miss F——

that they should partake of some refreshment. Waiters in the livery of the jockey club are passing about trays of tea and iced coffee; from another tent can be heard the popping of corks. As Ardor brings an ice to Constance she notices that he does not in the least show signs of chagrin at the loss of the race, and the thought passes through her mind that some natures take all things lightly. So are we misjudged at times by those nearest and dearest to us. Ardor's deep devotion to Constance was too unselfish to allow him to betray to her what her rejection of his suit cost him, and so far did he succeed that Constance believed he was already reconciled to it.

"What became of the man who got in your way?" asked Constance.

"I have no idea, but I hope they let him go without punishing him," Ardor surprised Constance by saying.

Miss Phunyone, who was standing near, said,

"Well, if I were in your place, I should think no punishment bad enough for him, and here you are wishing you had a Sedan chair to place at his disposal, I have no doubt, to see that he gets comfortably off the field."

Mrs. Bridge, who is a little out of sorts this afternoon, having been unfortunate in backing all the unsuccessful horses, here joins the group:

"Was I wrong in thinking that was the man who has been pointed out to me as Arthurs?"

Good taste should have prevented her mentioning that name in the present society, as she knew Anstruther's intimacy with both Ardor and Constance; and she also knew, as all present must, with what he was charged. Ardor looked annoyed, as he did not wish Constance to know the man who had so narrowly escaped was a brother to the unfortunate girl whose path had so unexpectedly crossed her own.

"Mrs. Bridge must not be surprised if in time people refer to her as the town's oldest inhabitant, she is so well posted in all that goes on in and about it."

Ardor made this remark in his most polite tone, but that did not prevent the shaft going home.

Mrs. Sherbrooke touched Ardor lightly on the arm:

"Admit, sir, that for once you would have been better without that glass in your eye; if you had not seen that man you could not have lost the race in getting out of his way."

"A glass of another kind is responsible for that contretemps," Ardor answered smiling.

Here a gipsy, holding a tambourine, approached and asked for largess. All are struck with the singular beauty of her face. A tattered blue skirt

hangs about her waist, and pinned across her chest is a soiled red shawl; her feet are bare; her hair, which is very thick, but black and glossy, is parted and drawn back from her brow, which is low and full, and devoid, as yet, of wrinkles; her eyebrows, finely pencilled, are arched above a pair of soft and large dark eyes; her eyelashes are long, and the curled tips are now gray with dust, which but adds to the darkness of the orbs they shade; her skin, which is of a dark olive color, is smooth, and in her cheeks the gipsy blood shows rich and red; her teeth look all the whiter that the skin is dark. As she turns and holds the tambourine to Ardor to receive something from the "rich gentleman," Constance notices the exquisite formation of the nose with its chiselled nostrils, which suggest a possible intermingling in days long gone by of the Egyptian blood of the gipsy with the blood of the inhabitants of Greece, as the tribes sojourned in that country on their way to more northern and western climes. As the gipsy approached Constance, she put out her small brown hand and said in a soft voice, and with a look of mysterious and child-like sorrow in her eyes, "Tell the pretty lady's fortune?"

Constance, who is already interested in this singularly beautiful and evidently very poor woman, unbuttons the glove of her left hand, and, drawing it off, places her fingers in the hand that is not larger

than her own. A look of professional cunning dispells the habitual look of sorrow in the gipsy's eyes, which is probably the result of the years of oppression endured by her forefathers. After a glance at the white palm she said:

"Fair lady, your life will be checkered; great happiness in early life; trouble overhangs one dear to you. Turn not from the dove to mate with the falcon——"

Here Walter Charles joined the group with a cup of tea for Miss F——. In handing it to her his eyes rested on the gipsy. He gave a slight start, causing the cup to slip in its saucer and some of its contents to drop on Miss F——'s dress. Miss F——'s exclamation caused the fortune-teller to look up. As the child-like sorrow before gave place to the look of professional cunning which robbed it of its lustre, her eyes now blazed forth with sudden fear as they rested upon Charles. With an evident effort she turned to Constance, and pointing to the sky said, lapsing in her excitement into her native tongue: "Miro baro devel dela berchindo" (My great God gives rain), and hurried off, not waiting for the coin that would pay her for her fortune-telling.

"That girl looks as if she were going to have a fit," drawled Charles. Constance was disappointed at losing sight of the pretty gipsy, but as the clouds overhead were growing darker, they all saw that this

one prophecy of the gipsy's was likely to be fulfilled very soon, and a move was made in the direction of shelter.

. . . . . .

Driving toward the town that evening the party passed not far from the "Woodbine" a breezy common. On it was pitched a tent made of brown blankets fastened to poles by pin-thorns. In the doorway or opening to the tent sat an old gipsy crone. She was as ugly as our acquaintance of the afternoon was beautiful. Indeed it is a subject of remark what vivid contrasts are to be seen among the gipsies—not only between members of one tribe, but between the members of the same family. Not far from the tent a stalwart gipsy was hammering at a horseshoe on an anvil, and near him cropping the grass stood a horse, some bronze ornaments and utensils hanging from the pack on his back. The gipsy is droning a weird Hungarian chant suggestive of the winds sweeping through the reeds in his native land, and to which he unconsciously beats time with his hammer. As the coach draws near with its bright-looking party the man looks dreamily up. What makes those eyes which a moment before were picturing the sighing reeds and starry skies so far away in his native Hungary blaze forth with a look of sudden passion as they sweep the top of the coach and rest on one of its occupants?

CHAPTER XXX.

THE day passed by Mr. Lestrange at the "Woodbine" was spent by Anstruther at the Wood Street cottage. Arthurs also being at the races, the professional nurse and Anstruther were left alone with the unconscious girl. The doctor paid his morning visit and reported Mabel's condition weaker. Anstruther's anxiety can be more easily imagined than described. Those who have watched by the bedside of the dying know what it is to experience that feeling of utter helplessness as they note the life slowly ebbing away, and know themselves powerless to stay it. All day long Anstruther did not leave the bedside.

The room in which Mabel lay was neatly but somewhat scantily furnished. The floor was covered with Indian matting; on a small table by the bedside stood two bottles containing restoratives. On the toilet table stood a bottle of cologne, and a few of those nick-nacks of the toilet necessary to all women of refinement. A whiff of cologne never afterwards failed to recall to Anstruther's mind the small room, the muslin curtains before the window, the sunlight creeping through the slats of the Venetian blinds

and falling in gold threads across the white coverlet, and weaving bright meshes with the fair hair that was brushed back from the thin pale face, resting heavily on the pillow.

Towards evening the nurse opened the shutters. The rays of the setting sun fell full upon Mabel's face. For the first time since she was laid unconscious on her bed, Mabel raised herself on her elbow and opened her eyes. She looked about her anxiously and tried to speak. Anstruther put his ear close to her lips. She threw up her arms and fell back dead.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Time—A fortnight later.
Place—Court House in the town of S——

QUEEN *vs.* ANSTRUTHER.

The Hon. Mr. Justice Hearall presiding.

AFTER Mr. Sharp had opened the indictment, Mr. County Crown Attorney Ketchum spoke as follows:

"May it please your lordship, and you, gentlemen of the jury:—I am counsel in this case for the prosecution against the prisoner at the bar, who stands indicted before you on a charge of murder. I will open to you, as concisely as I can, the several circumstances we have in evidence, in order to affect the prisoner at the bar. They are circumstances of that nature corresponding so exactly with the prisoner's case that they do infer almost an impossibility of his innocence.

"Gentlemen, on the evening of June fifth, the prisoner was seen entering the cottage then occupied by the late Mabel Arthurs at the hour of half-past six. He was seen again half-an-hour later to come to the door with the said Mabel Arthurs and stand for a moment on its threshold, and then turn and re-enter

the house, to appear again in another half-hour, alone. He was then seen go alone through the gate. When William Arthurs returned to the cottage at twelve o'clock that same night, he found his sister lying on the floor of her sitting-room in a state of unconsciousness, from which she never recovered." Here a sympathetic murmur went through the Court room. "After raising his sister and laying her on the sofa, Arthurs looked about the room for some explanation of what had happened. One small chair had been overturned, and was lying on the floor; close to where he had found his sister lay a cut-glass ink-bottle." Ink bottle is produced. "Your lordship and gentlemen of the jury, observe that the ink on the outside of the bottle (I am prepared to prove the bottle was empty when picked up by Arthurs) bears the impression of one finger, so"—here the learned counsel shows (with some difficulty) how a person about to throw an ink-bottle would naturally (he says) place his finger in such a position as to leave just the impression that is evident upon it now. "I hold, gentlemen, that, in picking up the ink-bottle, the prisoner upset the ink; not only so, it would flow all round the finger pressed against the side of the bottle and thus mark out the place where the finger had been, but that he upset it so it ran over the sleeve of his coat." Here prisoner's coat is produced with sleeve stained with ink. Another murmur, but not

of sympathy, ran through the court. "It was held, gentlemen, at the inquest that the deceased met her death through the effects of a blow on the forehead caused by some sharp-pointed object similar to, if not identical with, the glass ink-bottle found on the floor of the room on the night of the finding of the said Mabel Arthurs in that unconscious state. I will call witnesses to prove that the prisoner was seen entering and leaving the cottage on that evening between the hours of six and eight o'clock. I will also prove that at one time prisoner was engaged to be married to said Mabel Arthurs. My argument is, that after going to Mabel Arthurs the prisoner quarrelled with her, and that the prisoner in a fit of anger picked up the ink-bottle and threw it at deceased, thereby causing her death."

After a few further remarks the following witnesses for the Crown were called.

Jane Thompson, a stout woman in a white bonnet trimmed with red poppies, and a lilac-colored calico dress, being sworn, said :—

"I live at No. 18 Little Wood Street. My husband is a carpenter. On evening of June fifth, I saw prisoner open the gate and go into the garden in front of the cottage then occcupied by Mabel Arthurs. The fence around the garden is a close board fence. In a minute or so I saw prisoner on the top of the steps leading to the front door of the cottage. I saw him

knock, and presently the door was opened and he walked in." Witness was sure it was half-past six o'clock because she had her husband's tea ready as usual at a quarter past six, and as he did not come in at that hour, she went to the door to watch for him. Had been there some time when she saw prisoner enter Mabel Arthurs' cottage.

Witness continued;

"There are six steps leading up to the front door of the house occupied by my husband and me. The house stands high, that is how I come to see the front door of Miss Arthurs' cottage. Prisoner had not been in the cottage long when my husband came home. I asked him why he was so late, and he said he had been finishing a culvert on the railway. We both looked at the clock and noticed it was twenty minutes to seven. After supper my husband took his paper and sat on the doorstep."

Henry Thompson, being sworn, corroborated his wife's statement as to his coming in late on the evening of June 5th, and as to the time being twenty minutes to seven when they sat down to supper, and continued: "After supper I took the *Evening News* and sat on the doorstep. Generally took fifteen or twenty minutes to finish my supper. While I was reading the paper I heard the door opposite open—the door of Miss Arthurs' cottage I mean—and looking up saw prisoner and Miss Arthurs come to the

door. They stood there a few minutes, and then both went back into the cottage. I finished reading my paper and got up to go into the house when I heard the door opposite open again and saw prisoner come out alone; he looked at his watch, and walked quickly down the steps. As he came out of the gate I noticed he held up his arm and looked intently at the right sleeve of his coat, and shook it as if something were sticking to it, then pulled down his shirt cuff and walked quickly up the street. Yes, I have seen prisoner at this cottage before, but not for a considerable time before this. Had seen him there quite frequent during last summer and winter. I am sure the clock is to be depended upon as I go to work by it and my wife gets the meals according to it, and she is always up to time, is my wife." With this compliment to his better half the witness is allowed to leave the box.

Other witnesses are here called to prove that prisoner had been seen going and coming from the cottage frequently during the preceding year, but not within the last few months.

Thos. Tinder, sworn:—"Come from Ottawa, and employed on Police force there; sometimes act as private detective. Was engaged in that capacity on the 20th of March. Drove out to the road behind Shorncliffe. Was waiting for a person who does not wish his name to be mentioned if it can be avoided.

saw prisoner come down the hill to the hollow where I was waiting; he looked about as if waiting for someone. Presently a neat lookin' lass comes up from behind a clump of pines as was standin' there, and then they walks on together. Drivin' home arterwards I seen them on in front. Yes, the person referred to before, and who does not want to appear, was with me. The girl was cryin', and the prisoner was hittin' the cow angry like with his cane. No, it was not till arterwards I knew the girl was Miss Arthurs. Yes, I saw her that evenin' goin' away by the train with the man I knew was Arthurs. I was told he was her brother. Yes, I saw deceased's body at inquest; I could have known her again anywhere. I call her uncommon lookin'."

William Arthurs, being called, entered the witness box; he was looking thinner and paler than when we last saw him at the race-course. His eyes are haggard, and his whole appearance bespeaks anxiety. Under oath he said:—"My name is William Arthurs. I was born in May, 1854, at Churchville, Somerset. My father was a farmer and a native of Somerset; my mother was the daughter of an Irish lawyer. Her people thought she married beneath her when she married father. My father and mother died four years before my sister (here a quiver passed over his face) and I left England. We came to this country just three years ago last March. My aunt, who lives

on a farm near the bubbling springs, wrote to m
sister very often, advising us to come to Ameri
About two years ago we rented the cottage on Lit
Wood Street. My sister had some money left h
Yes, I had spent all that had been left to me. Y
my sister did copying; she was much better ed
cated than me. I sometimes drink. Prisoner brou
me home one night last November twelve-mont
said he found me on the corner of the street. Y
that was I am sure the first time he met my sist
Came often after that. She told me in Decem
(that is a year last December) he had asked her
marry him. No, she said she had not made up
mind; they were a good deal together during
next year. On New Year's day she told me
thought of anything between them was given u
On being asked if he knew what the quarrel
about, witness asked the judge if it were necessary
answer that question, and on being answered in
affirmative he continued—"A former friend put in
appearance and this led to the unpleasantness.
name? Walter Charles."

CROSS-EXAMINED FOR DEFENCE.

Q.—"You mention your sister having done so
copying. Did she do this by writing in her
hand?"

A.—"Not always. She generally used the type-iter."

Q.—"Did you give her the type-writer?"

A.—"No; the first one she bought second-hand, d the one she used all this spring was given her the prisoner."

Q.—"When did prisoner give her this type-writer?"

A.—"After we returned from Ottawa this spring, r. Anstruther sent the type-writer to my sister. had noticed the one she had been using was rn out."

Q.—"This was just an act of friendship?"

A.—"Yes; prisoner always tried to help us when could."

Q.—"You are quite sure there was no engagement any kind existing at this time between your sister d the prisoner?"

A.—"Yes."

Q.—"Was there any blue water-lined paper with type-writer when your sister received it?"

A.—"There was."

Q.—"Did you ever use this type-writer?"

A.—(After some hesitation and a repetition of the stion)—"I have used it once or twice."

"I would remind you, William Arthurs," said the unsel for the Defence, "that you are under oath. d you use this type-writer in copying work for er people or for your own correspondence?"

Arthurs looked more disconcerted, and replie hesitatingly through his dry lips:

"For my private correspondence."

Q.—"Do you believe the deceased, your sister, ha any hold over the prisoner at the bar that woul lead him to wish her out of the way?"

A.—"None that I ever suspected."

Q.—"When did you first hear of your sister engagement to the prisoner?"

A.—"As well as I can remember, my sister told m the prisoner had asked her to marry him early i December, 1878."

Q.—"When did this engagement come to an end?"

A.—"On the evening of January 1st, 1880, my siste told me the engagement was off between them."

"You have already given the reason for th decision having been come to between them. I wi let my cross-examination of this witness close her but will request that the witness be not discharged."

Mrs. Belt, a tall, large woman, with a sun-bonn tied under her chin and a Paisley shawl pinned tightl across her chest and partly covering a stiff black si gown, was now called by the counsel for the Defenc

"I am a widow; I keep house for young gentl men at the Lodge; have only done so for the la two months. Have always found prisoner co siderate and obliging. Prisoner told me on th morning of 5th of June that he was going to Ca

ell that evening with Mr. Bolton by 6.50 train, and
ould want his dinner at half-past five. Yes, a note
as left by a boy that afternoon. It was addressed
lady's writing to 'D. Anstruther, Esq., The Lodge.'
e picked it up immediately; he sat down and read
It was a quarter to six before he got in; I
ticed this, because the chops were overdone. The
tter seemed to annoy him; he looked at his watch
d asked me to be as quick as I could. I placed
e soup before him (it was clear soup with a little
accaroni in it—I flavored it with sherry)."

"Did the prisoner take his dinner?"

"Oh, yes; he never was what I'd call a large eater;
ving been used to cook for Mr. Belt (that's my
te husband), but he took something from each
sh. I had lamb chops and green peas, and——"

Here counsel interrupted witness and asked her
t to mind the bill of fare, but to tell all she knew
prisoner's movements on that evening.

"Prisoner was not more than fifteen minutes at
ner, and, after going to his room for a little while,
came out and said he would not take his bag with
n then, as he did not expect to get off on the 6.30
in, but would probably go by the midnight
press. Then he went out with a letter in his
nd."

Q.—"What time was it when prisoner went out?"

A.—"I should say it was twenty minutes past six

o'clock. I know it was about that time, because when Mr. Anstruther was finishing his dinner I noticed it was ten minutes after six, and that I should be obliged to look sharp to have the dinner ready for the other gentlemen. They usually dine at half-past six."

Q.—"When did you see prisoner again?"

A.—"It was eight o'clock when he returned. He went directly to his room."

Q.—"How long did he stay there?"

A.—"Till he left the house to catch the express train for Carswell."

Q.—"Did you see him between the time he came in at eight o'clock and the time he left to go to the station to catch the midnight train?"

A.—"No; I did not see him. I knocked at his door before retiring for the night and asked him if I would leave a little supper for him; he said, 'No, thank you; not to-night, Mrs. Belt.' This was about half-past nine; that is the time I usually retire. On that night I set brown bread. There were none of the other young gentlemen in. Yes; I am sure they all went out; I saw them go."

Q.—"Did you hear prisoner leave the house again that night?"

A.—"Yes; I heard the door close; it woke me; I lit the candle and looked at my watch; it was a quarter to twelve; I read a little while; I heard M

St. John come in and go to his room. I know it was Mr. St. John, because of his room. I then fell asleep again, after having put out the candle. I believed it was Mr. Anstruther, because I knew he intended to leave that night, and I know his step. The next I heard of him was that he had been arrested."

Here the witness' face became very red, and, with a defiant shake of the head that sent the roses in her bonnet quivering with indignation, she cast an indignant glance at the counsel for the Crown, who now stood up to cross-examine her:

Q.—"Can you swear positively, Mrs. Belt, that the prisoner did not leave his room between eight o'clock, the time you say he returned, and a quarter to twelve, the time you say you heard him leave, as you thought, to catch the midnight express?"

A.—"I cannot swear positively, but that is my belief."

Q.—"Do you know the different steps of all your lodgers?"

A.—"Those who have been with me some time I can tell."

Q.—"Would you swear to them?"

A.—"I could swear to Mr. Anstruther's, because he takes such long strides."

Q.—"Is there a window in the room that was

occupied by the prisoner during the first part of the night of June 5th?"

A.—(Witness draws her shawl more tightly across her chest, and answers sharply): "Aye, there is a window, whiles how waud the laddie see?"

Q.—"Oh, there is a window. Now do you know does the prisoner sleep with his window open?"

A.—"Whiles aye, and whiles na." (In her agitation at the thought of being questioned by the enemy, the witness lapsed into her Scotch accent.)

Q.—"Was the window open on the morning of June 6th?"

A.—"I could nae be positif, but the windows are generally open in the morning when I gang in to red up the rooms."

Q.—"How did you pass the time between the prisoner's return on that evening and the time you knocked at his door?"

A.—"I had just finished my after dinner work, and was setting the bread (I always set brown bread on Tuesdays, and white bread on Fridays), when I heard Mr. Anstruther come in and go to his room. I finished setting the bread and took up a book and read. The book? Rob Roy."

Q.—"Have you not read Rob Roy before?"

A.—"I have."

Q.—"Is it not possible, Mrs. Belt, that you fell asleep over its pages, say just for half-an-hour?"

A.—"I could read it again and again without falling asleep."

Q.—"Where is Mr. Anstruther's room?"

A.—"On the ground floor."

Q.—"Could he get out of the window and back again without your hearing him?"

A. (given with some hesitation)—"He maught."

Next witness for defence is Mrs. Cowper. She is a little woman with a thin sallow face; her nose is long. It would be difficult to say what shape her mouth was before the utter absence of teeth rendered it shapeless. Her eyes, which are large and brown, are overshadowed by a high and full forehead, which seems to make it impossible for her to hold up her head. The weakness of the chin is emphasized by the massiveness of the brow. A black straw bonnet is tied by black ribbons at her throat; a thin black cashmere shawl is fastened at her breast by a brooch of cornelian. Her dress is black, as are also the gloves which cover the hands so tightly clasping a shabby umbrella. A greater contrast to the last witness could not be imagined. This is increased on hearing her voice. While Mrs. Belt's tones were full, clear and decisive, those of Mrs. Cowper are thin, muffled and hesitating. This is intensified by the whistling sound which precedes each utterance, due no doubt to the utter absence of teeth referred to.

Being sworn, and having left the umbrella to the care of one hand for the space of time occupied by the other in being placed before the thin lips to stifle the shadow of a cough, due no doubt to nervousness:—

"My name is Elizabeth Thin; am a widow. I live at No. 14 Little Wood Street. I remember the evening of June 5th. 'My boy" (here the poor lips quiver, and the umbrella this time trusted to the guardianship of the other hand, while another cough is stifled), "my little boy had scarlet fever. I was waiting for the doctor, he said he would come at half-past-nine; he was late. At ten o'clock, the boy being asleep, I took a pitcher and went into the yard and pumped some water. As I was returning to the house I heard the side door of Miss Arthurs' cottage shut quietly. I noticed it, and felt glad it was shut so quietly, as the house being so close, and my boy" (another gulp) "being in the room on that side of the house, a bang of the door would have disturbed him. I heard a light step come down the steps from the cottage. I returned to the room where my boy was, and found him delirious." (Here the tears come and flow over the wasted cheeks—a few moments are allowed the witness to compose herself.) "The doctor came in in a few minutes and sat down by the bedside, and took out his

watch to count his pulse. I noticed it was ten minutes past ten."

Questioned by counsel for defence:

"Would you say it was a man's step that came down the steps from Ivy Cottage when you were in your yard after hearing the door close?"

"I did not think at the time, I only noticed they were light. They might have been the steps of a woman."

Cross-examination failed to shake witness in any of her statements.

Dr. Finn corroborated last witness' testimony as to the time of his visit at her house, on the night of June 5th, being ten minutes past ten.

The summing up of the evidence so far amounted to this: prisoner had been seen with deceased as late as half-past seven o'clock on the evening of June 5th. Prisoner was known to return to the Lodge, his place of abode, at eight o'clock. There was evidence to show that he was in his room as late as 9.30 p. m.; also that he was heard leaving the house at a quarter to twelve, presumably to catch the midnight express (there was no corroboration of this point). There was no evidence to show that prisoner did not leave his room by the window, and return the same way, between the hours of 9.30 and 11.45 p. m. Deceased was found in a state of

unconsciousness on the floor of her room, not earlier than twelve o'clock, by her brother, William Arthurs.

There was evidence that the side door of Ivy Cottage had been opened and shut at about ten o'clock. There was no evidence to prove who it was had opened and shut this door—whether prisoner had left his room at the Lodge, unknown to any one there, and had come again to Ivy Cottage and left again by this side door or not. The witness who heard the door close swore as to its being her impression that the step leaving the cottage was light enough to be that of a woman, but would not swear positively it was a woman's. This might suggest the idea that deceased had left the cottage at that hour, and was perhaps followed on her return and assaulted.

Next witness called by the defence was Esther Bright. Witness was dressed in a dark green cloth dress, which fitted her beautiful figure to perfection; her bright auburn hair was coiled in a large knot at the back of her head, soft and fluffy about her face; a small white bonnet trimmed with a wreath of ivy rested on her abundant hair; a white collar at her throat, and cuffs equally spotless at her wrists; her hands, which were long and slender, were encased in tan-colored gloves—the taste of the woman is displayed in each article of her dress. As she took her stand in the witness box, not a few were struck by the grace of

her movements and the perfect proportions of her figure. Her eyes were downcast, and she trembled visibly. On being sworn she raised her eyes, and those who were before inclined to admire experienced a revulsion of feeling as they met the cunning and furtive expression of their cold glance.

"I am parlor maid at 'The Poplars;' have been in Mr. Lestrange's employment since last September. I knew deceased. Her brother took me to his cottage several times when his sister was there."

Question by counsel for defence:

Q.—"Were you and Mabel Arthurs friendly?"

A.—"Our acquaintance was only slight."

Q.—"Had you any reason for disliking her?"

A. (after slight hesitation)—"I thought she patronized her betters sometimes."

Q.—"Do you think she had a friendly feeling for you?"

A.—"No, I do not think so" (decidedly).

Q.—"Have you known William Arthurs long? you say it was he who took you to the cottage at Little Wood Street?"

A.—(More hesitation, and with a heightened color which makes the eyebrows look likes marks of white chalk): "I have known him about seven months."

Q.—"Known him well?"

A.—"Yes. I have known him well."

Q.—"Were you engaged to be married to him?"

A.—"Yes."

Q.—"Did Mabel Arthurs know you were engaged to marry her brother?"

A.—"She may have gathered so much from seeing us together."

Q.—"Did she treat you as if she were pleased at the thought of your marrying her brother?"

A.—"I did not pay much attention to what she thought."

Q.—"Still did you not feel sometimes that she would rather such a connection did not exist?"

A.—"Yes. I think she would have parted her brother from me if she could."

Q.—"Then naturally you did not feel kindly towards her, you scarcely could?"

A.—"I had not much feeling for her the one way or the other."

Q.—"You are sure you did not feel angry with her that she would part you from the man you cared for?"

A.—"Perhaps I did."

Q.—"When did you see Mabel Arthurs last?" (A ray of sunlight forces its way between the chinks of the window blind and rests upon the witness' face, which is now strangely pale.)

A.—"Have not seen her for some time before her death." (The ray of sunlight gathers in the tightly clasped hands.)

Q.—"Will you swear, Esther Bright, that you did not see her for a week before her death?"

A.—"No. I may have seen her within the week."

Q.—"Will you swear when you last did see her?"

A.—"No. I cannot swear positively."

Q.—"Did you not see her on Sunday, June 2nd?"

A. (positively given)—"No, I did not see her on that day."

Q.—"Well, then, Monday, Let me see, now that would be June 3rd?" (Here counsel plays carelessly with his pen and puts a book in its place on the table before him.)

A.—"No."

Q.—"Did you happen to see deceased at all on June 5th?"

A.—"No."

Counsel here asks to be allowed to see the ink-bottle that had been produced by the prosecution as the one found on the floor of deceased's sitting-room on the night of the murder. The ink-bottle was handed to him, and he continued in a quiet tone as if no doubt of witness' veracity had crossed his mind.

"You did not happen to see witness on June 5th? Did you ever see this ink-bottle before?"

Witness, who is becoming more agitated, replied that she may have seen it at the cottage.

Q.—"You are not sure. You are on your oath. Of course you are sure of that. This is the ink-bottle

my learned friend has brought into court as the instrument used by prisoner to inflict the wound upon Mabel Arthurs which caused her death. My learned friend also ingeniously showed how any one taking hold of the bottle and spilling the ink over its side would leave the impression of one finger. Now, I am not as clever as my learned friend in taking hold of this bottle. If I held it as I naturally should if about to throw it, I am sure I should leave two finger marks at least, on the side where the ink is. I am inclined to think, if the ink had not been upset over the side of the bottle and allowed to remain there some time before it was picked up to be thrown at deceased, there would have been small trace of a finger mark at all, as the instant the fingers relaxed their hold, the ink being thin would have quickly covered the spot where the finger had been. Now, the idea was that this bottle was upset say one hour or two before it was used as an instrument of attack upon Mabel Arthurs. That the ink being thick it stuck to the side of the bottle, but did not turn quite hard. Suppose now," added the counsel, "an hour or so later some one came to the cottage and got into an argument with deceased, and suppose this person picked up the ink-bottle." Here counsel tried to handle the ink-bottle as if he were going to throw it, but showed that he could not do so and make only the impression of one finger on the side where the ink

congealed. "You will see," continued this man of the law, "I must either press both fingers on that side or put my fingers on the other side where there is no ink at all. I ask you, witness, to try if you can hold that bottle and only make one finger mark." Here counsel passed the bottle to witness; her hand was trembling so that, as she took it in her left hand, it almost dropped. "Take it in in your right hand, Esther Bright, and put your first finger on the bare place and show the gentlemen of the jury how difficult it is not to place the second one on the ink stain."

Witness by this time was very white and looked as if she might faint; at the second request, however, she pulled her glove from her right hand and placed her first finger on the bare place surrounded by the ink stain.

CHAPTER XXXII.

NOR does the witness show that it is difficult for her to place her first finger there and keep her second one out of the ink, for her second finger is quite stiff, and the difficulty would be for her to bring it on the ink if she wished to do so.

Counsel for defence: "I see, witness, what was very difficult for my learned friend and impossible to me is most easy and natural for you. Now I am of opinion the person who threw that bottle had a stiff second finger on her right hand not unlike yours."

Witness, who was visibly trembling, looked anxiously about the court room as if for help. As her eyes rested on William Arthurs, a dry sob shook her frame and her head fell forward on her breast. She was surely an object to be pitied. The prisoner, who had been more surprised than any one else at the turn events had taken, half rose as if to go to her assistance, but was waved back by his counsel. Esther recovered herself and faced her tormentor with a defiant light in her eyes.

Cross-examination continued:

Q.—"Did you not go to Little Wood Street on the evening of June 5th?"

A.—"Perhaps I did."

Q.—"Suppose I told you that I have proof that you did, would you then be certain?"

A.—"Yes, I did go, but I only stayed a little while."

Q.—"And you left at about ten o'clock by the side door, did you not?"

Witness here burst into tears, partly from anger and partly from fear.

Counsel continued:

"While there you and deceased got into a little altercation, and you losing your temper threw this ink-bottle at her?"

Counsel for prosecution objects that his learned friend is putting leading questions.

Q.—"On your oath did you or did you not throw this ink-bottle at deceased?"

A. (broken by sobs)—"I never meant to kill her."

The case for the prosecution was so broken down by the evidence of Esther Bright that the charge forthwith was withdrawn.

On Esther Bright's leaving the witness box she was arrested on a charge of murdering Mabel Arthurs.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE following is a statement drawn up by Dudley Anstruther, and given by him to Captain Ardor to do with as he thought wise. He felt that some explanation was due to a man who had taken such an unselfish interest in him. The statement was made more explicit than it otherwise would have been, at Ardor's request, in case of their being permission granted to read it at the trial. Esther Bright's evidence rendered this unnecessary :—

"Came to Canada in the spring of 1879, having received the appointment of private secretary to Mr. Bolton before leaving England. I met Mabel Arthurs on the evening of September 8th, 1879, having gone home with her brother. The Arthurs formerly belonged to my father's congregation in Somerset, I discovered. Continued to call at Mr. Arthurs' house for some time—became engaged to Mabel Arthurs in December, 1879. Continued to be engaged to her till January, 1881, when our engagement was broken off by mutual consent. In January I accompanied Mr. Bolton to Ottawa. On afternoon, while walking towards the Parliament Buildings, I met William Arthurs. I had felt and

shown an interest in Arthurs, and regretted to hear from him that he had lost his situation some days before, and that he had come to Ottawa to try and get something to do in the Civil Service Department. I told him it was necessary to pass certain examinations before he could do that. Arthurs, who had been drinking, grew surly at this, and said I could help him if I would. He told me his sister wished to see me particularly, and asked me if I would agree to meet her the next day on the road behind Shorncliffe at half-past three o'clock—there would be no chance of any one seeing us, and in that way causing gossip, as it was a very quiet road. I replied, I would be glad to help him or his sister, for whom I felt a strong sympathy; but that I could not see that such a meeting in such a place would be to any one's advantage. After much persuasion, however, I consented to put off my return to S—— till the evening of the next day (I had intended leaving by the morning train), and said I would go to the rendezvous appointed at half-past three o'clock. I had scarcely left Arthurs when I regretted having made the appointment; that night I wrote a note to Miss Arthurs, explaining I was leaving town in the morning and could not keep my appointment. I intended sending this note before taking the train in the morning. For other reasons I did not leave in the morning as I intended, and having remained over I could not

well find an excuse for not keeping the engagement. I went to the place agreed upon. The interview was not at my seeking, nor were my affairs the subject of discussion. I discovered, however, that deceased had come there to use her influence on her brother's behalf after a great deal of persuasion on his part, and that she would not have brought me there nor come herself voluntarily. I felt sorry for the girl and did what I could to reassure her, and said I would do what I could to aid her brother.

"After returning to S——, I sent the deceased a type-writer, which I thought would be of service to her as I heard her say her own was worn out. I did not see deceased again till the afternoon of May 30th when I saw her lying unconscious on the side of the road. I was with a driving party. The horses in the tee-cart, which was just before the waggonette in which I was, ran away, and I believe the tongue of that conveyance knocked deceased over. I and one or two others carried Mabel Arthurs to a farm house. The woman who lived in the house and I remained with her. I stayed about an hour after the others of the party had left the house. I heard or saw nothing more of Mabel Arthurs till June 5th. On going to the Lodge to take an early dinner at six o'clock (I had been detained on the way or should have reached there at half-past five, as I had told Mr Belt I would), I found a note from deceased awaiting

me. This note asked me to go to her cottage as she wished particularly to see me. I knew it was something of more than usual importance, as deceased had never written to me in that way before, and I knew she would not do so without a reason. I reached Ivy Cottage at half-past six o'clock. Deceased told me the object she had in sending for me. It was entirely in my interest that she sent for me; but when she asked me in no way to disclose what she had told me, I was reluctant to comply, and was leaving the cottage, having only assured her that I would try and observe her wishes in the matter. She followed me to the door and entreated me to promise to maintain a strict silence on the subject. I returned to the sitting-room with deceased and sat down on a chair close to the table, leaning my right arm on the table. I had my hat and stick in my left hand. I dropped my hat, and, in leaning forward to pick it up, I dragged the cloth partly off the table; the cloth, in its turn, bringing with it the ink-bottle, which upset, the ink running over the cloth and on to my coat-sleeve. I was not quick enough to prevent the bottle falling on the floor, and when I picked it up it was empty. I noticed in replacing the bottle on the table that the ink which had run over its side was thick. I noticed the same on my coat-sleeve.

"Remembering that it was her solicitude for my

welfare that had led Mabel Arthurs to send for me, and knowing what she had told me, if divulged, would implicate one in whom she took the deepest interest, I at length consented to keep her confidence and came away.

"After leaving the cottage I did not feel inclined to go directly back to the Lodge, so I strolled down to the station and inquired if the midnight express were likely to be on time. I found it was, and returned to the Lodge at about eight o'clock. I went to my room and threw myself on the bed. At about half-past nine o'clock, Mrs. Belt came to the door and offered me supper, which I declined. At half-past eleven o'clock, I got up and put on my coat, having taken the ink stain out of the sleeve as well as I could. I walked to the station, carrying a small bag and took the express for Carswell, which place I reached at 2.30 a. m. I went to the Exchange Hotel, where I knew I should find Mr. Bolton. At breakfast the next morning, Mr. Bolton said he found it was necessary to return to S—— at once, and that the Carswell business must be put off for a few days. We accordingly returned by the nine o'clock train. While on the train I bought the morning paper, and it was then, for the first time, I saw what had happened at Little Wood Street. I drove to pay one call directly when I arrived in S——; the call was upon Mr. Lestrange. From

there I went direct to Ivy Cottage, in the hope of being able to be of some assistance. While there I was arrested; till that moment it had not occurred to me that any suspicion could rest upon me. My subsequent course is known.

"(Signed) D. ANSTRUTHER."

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THREE days previous to the trial, all the furniture in the cottage at Little Wood Street was offered for sale. Mr. Lestrange employed Detective Alert to buy in the type-writer that had been used by Mabel Arthurs in her copying work. The type-writer stood on a little table placed across one corner of the room. On trying to open what he thought was the drawer in the table, he found it was only an imitation drawer, and that the knobs, which he thought were handles, were there for ornament merely. This led Alert to examine the table further, it having become second nature with him to get at the bottom of everything. Pulling the table out from the wall, he found the true drawer opening from the other side, and a small bunch of keys hanging from its lock. He opened the drawer and found a small book lying open in it. This proved to be Mabel Arthurs' diary, and had been pushed hurriedly into the drawer without being closed, probably to let the ink dry on its last page. Detective Alert turned the key in the lock unseen by any one and slipped it in his pocket, and went away to return with a search warrant. Having secured the diary, he was not long in discovering of what

importance it was to the prisoner. He at once placed it in the hands of Mr. Anstruther's counsel. It was the contents of this diary that led to Esther Bright's close cross-examination. Why Esther did not find some excuse for leaving "The Poplars" and getting out of reach immediately after the night of June 5th, can only be explained by similar cases where a peculiar fascination seems to have kept criminals in the neighborhood that it was most to their interest to leave. The hope of Mabel's recovery and the belief that she would shield Esther, combined with the girl's strong infatuation for William Arthurs, kept her in S—— till she was summoned as a witness. It was not till in the witness-box that she realized how great was her danger.

We only insert here the entries in Mabel's diary that most directly affect the people, a portion of whose lives we are endeavoring to sketch:—

MABEL'S DIARY.

"*September 5th.*—I sometimes feel that I must give expression to my thoughts, so I have decided to keep a diary. Went to the post office again to-day, still no letter from Walter. I am beginning to realize that he has grown tired of me and means to desert me. I cannot make up my mind to this, he cared so much for me once. I have made such sacrifices for him. William is growing more restless

than ever. I fear he will not keep his present situation long. I met him walking to-day with a fine-looking girl with red hair. He bowed and passed on, did not offer to introduce me to his friend.

"*September 6th.*—Got more copying work to-day. It is now eighteen months since, yielding to my aunt's wish to join her in America, my brother William and I came to this country. I recall, as I sit here alone, anxiously waiting for William's return, with what grief I saw our last peep of England melting away into the melancholy mist. The thought that it would be so much better for William to start in a new country bore me up, but now it seems as if I left our pretty little home amid the hills of Somerset to no purpose, but to come to suffering here.

"*September 7th.*—My trouble in going to the post office was rewarded to-day. Did I say trouble? It is the greatest pleasure the day brings me, but so often ends in sickening disappointment that it is a pleasure from which I partially shrink. To-night I am so happy. Walter Charles writes that he will be in S—— on Saturday. Do I regret leaving all that formerly made life dear to me in England? No. By so doing, have I not known what it is to love and be loved by such a man as Walter Charles. Just two days.

"*September* 8th, 1879.—Last night William was brought home by Mr. Anstruther, who was very kind. He stayed and talked a little while; he, too, comes from Somerset. He seemed delighted when we discovered that I had sat in his father's church for so long.

"*September 9th*, '79.—Met Mr. Anstruther as I was coming home this evening; he walked to the gate with me; was very polite. To-morrow I shall see Walter. Will he find me changed? It is now three months since I have seen him. He promised to come at least once a fortnight to S——, but I must not think of all the disappointments between this and then, but only of the joy in store for me to-morrow.

"*September 29th*, '79.—It is nearly three weeks since I have written in my diary. I have been ill. I am better now, and am quite aware that I must face the future without the hope that has been so much to me in the past. Walter Charles came. I put on my prettiest gown to meet him. He had told me he liked me best in white. I arranged my hair in the style that pleased him best. For what did I do this? To meet a man who loved me no longer. He told me the hopes he had of making money in America were dissipated, it was only fair to give me my liberty; I might do better; I was young and decidedly pretty; he was sure I would soon forget him in the society of some one more worthy. He

was sorry if he caused me pain. Could I forgive him? All this to the girl who had given him her all. And yet, and yet I love him. When I remember what I was when I first met him, my heart full of hope for the future and no bitter memories in my mind of the past! Heaven give me help to bear this grief. William tells me Mr. Anstruther called several times during my illness.

"*October 7th*, '79.—Have seen seen Mr. Anstruther several times lately. He helps me very much with William; indeed, if it were not for his encouragement I fear that I would grow hopeless. Saw William yesterday with that tall red-haired girl.

"*October 9th*, '79.—William brought Esther Bright to see me. I do not like her, and I am afraid she saw it. William appears to be quite infatuated with her.

"*November 3rd*, '79.—Mr. Anstruther has asked me to let him try and make my life happier. He has asked me to marry him. My heart is given to another and cannot be recalled, but I was too great a coward to tell Dudley Anstruther so.

"*December 1st*, '79.—I have told D. A—— if he sees no one for whom he cares more in a year's time I will marry him. He is so good and thoughtful for me, why does the prospect make me sad?"

Here a whole year's entries in the diary are omitted.

"*January 3rd*, '81.—As I was coming home fro

church on New Year's morning, I was more than surprised to meet Walter Charles. He turned and walked home with me. On coming in he asked me to return him all his letters as he was about to be engaged to some one else, and said he hoped no one had seen him walking with me for both our sakes. As he said this, all my pent-up indignation burst forth and I said some bitter things. He was leaving me in a temper when Dudley Anstruther came in. An explanation followed. Our engagement is at an end.

"*February 3rd*, 1881—D. A. called for the first time since the breaking off of our engagement. He was as kind as formerly, and expressed the same interest in William.

"*February 7th*, 1881—William tells me that Dudley Anstruther is in Ottawa with Mr. Bolton; he also tells me that D. A. said he would send me a type-writer on his return as he noticed mine was worn out. I feel it would be ungrateful to refuse so kind an offer, as it is no doubt intended to reassure me of the interest he feels in William and me still.

"*March 1st*, 1881.—William has lost his situation. He and Esther are coming in so I will write no more.

"*March 10th*, 1881.—William thinks he could get something to do in Ottawa. I do not think so without interest; however, we leave for Ottawa to-morrow.

"*Ottawa, March* 12*th*, 1881.—William has applied for two vacancies in the Civil service, but finds he is not eligible.

"*Ottawa, March* 18*th*, 1881.—William tells me Dudley Anstruther might help him to get something if I would only ask him to use his influence. I have agreed to meet D. A. on the road behind Shorncliffe to-morrow afternoon. D. A. has conferred so many favors on us I would rather ask for no more but if he could help William now I must not consult my own feelings.

"*March* 14*th*, '81.—Went this afternoon to meet D. A., who said he would do what he could for William. He was kind, but seemed anxious that the interview should be over. I cried a little during our interview. I felt so hopeless. I must not give way to despair. I am writing on the train.

"*March* 16*th*, '81.—Returned to S——, yesterday. William has obtained no situation, but seems hopeful of securing something before long. Dudley Anstruther has sent me the promised type-writer. I have done a good deal of copying on it to-day.

"*March* 17*th*, '81.—William uses the type-writer. I wonder for what? We seem to be drifting more and more apart. Perhaps because I try to discontinue his intercourse with Esther. I cannot like that girl she appears to me so sly, and yet at times her eye

flash as if a burst of violent temper would not be impossible to her.

. . . . . .

"*May 28th*, '81.—The Home Farm.—Have been spending a month with my aunt in the country. It is very still and peaceful here. My aunt has lived in this same house for the past fifteen years. I had been so anxious about William for the past few months that I got quite ill; now that I see nothing of Walter Charles my aunt is very kind to me.

"*May 30th*, '81.—The Home Farm.—Yesterday afternoon, as I was crossing the road at the turn leading to the bubbling springs, I heard a noise as if a pair of horses were running away. I had not time to step to one side before they were almost upon me. They swerved in their course, but something struck me. I must have fainted, for the next I remember was feeling a violent pain above my eye, and hearing a gentle voice speak to me. On opening my eyes I saw a lovely girl. I must have fainted again, to regain consciousness and find Dudley Anstruther bending over me. The pretty girl I afterwards saw was Miss Lestrange. Her face is lovely, but there is something in her voice that is irresistible. I expected her to turn away from me when she discovered who I was, but she did not. No one can tell the feeling that came over me when I discovered she knew me and still

wished to befriend me—no one who has not hun
gered and thirsted for a sympathetic word—no one wh
does not know what it is to give up all for the sak
of one person and then find that one person cold an
indifferent; but I must not dwell on this. How lon
can one endure sorrow and not despair? How long
I wonder? Miss Lestrange and Dudley Anstruthe
and another gentleman took me to a farm house no
far from the road. Another gentleman came after
wards, Miss Lestrange's brother; he seemed anxiou
to take his sister away. D. A. remained behind, h
said, because he might be of assistance. This ma
does not love me, but he has never failed in his ch
valrous bearing towards me since he asked me t
marry him; and now that all idea of that is over, h
still behaves almost as if a slight to me would be
slight to himself. I know he believes in me. It di
comfort me to have him remain behind when th
others left. There are times when I feel, oh, so desc
late. A woman is so powerless to conquer her fat
Does a man ever realize, I wonder, the moments
helpless feeling that are so constant in many women
lives; they must be experienced to be understood,
fear. I go back to S—— in a day or two.

"*June 5th*, '81. S—— I got home yesterday, and wa
welcomed by poor Polly. I found a letter under m
type-writer yesterday addressed to Mr. Lestrange.
was not folded, and some of the words which caug

y eye interested me at once, so I made bold to read all, and found it was a note to Mr. Lestrange concerning Dudley Anstruther. For some time it has struck me that William was maliciously disposed towards D. A., who is really his friend.

"Some natures grow bitter under a sense of obligation. I wrote and asked D. A. to come to see me this evening at six o'clock, when I knew William would be out. I cannot understand what object William has in writing to Mr. Lestrange about Dudley. I am glad I told D. A., as now he can be prepared in case William sends a letter in the place of the one which had got in the leaves of my paper. In any case it was only fair to warn Dudley, who promised that he would not betray the fact to Mr. Lestrange that William wrote the letter, as William hopes Mr. Lestrange will help him. I am greatly puzzled to know what William's object can be. I will ask him. I had my tea alone after D. A. left, and have spent the time since in confiding my perplexities to you, my diary. I see Esther coming up the walk. I must put this away for the present as she is at the door, and evidently has come to see me."

This is the last entry in Mabel's diary.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THIS diary also clearly pointed to the more than possibility of William Arthurs having been Mr. Lestrange's correspondent.

The diary was proven beyond all doubt to be in Mabel Arthurs' writing, and recognized as such by William Arthurs under oath. On being faced with the danger in which he himself stood in being charged with the authorship of the letters which had so excited Mr. Lestrange's curiosity, Arthurs made full confession of having written them, also of having tried to throw the blame upon Dudley Anstruther. He confessed he did not wish Anstruther any serious harm, but he thought by throwing suspicion on him he could keep it from himself, his sister's acquaintance with Anstruther making it easy for him to do this, as he always arranged that the appointment of place of meeting in these letters should coincide with a place where he knew Anstruther would be at the time. This he arranged in case Mr. Lestrange should be accompanied by any one in order to apprehend him, not hesitating to make use of his sister's solicitude for himself to draw Anstruther into the trap. As Mr. Lestrange never appeared at the appointed

place unattended, Arthurs never spoke to him. The note thrown into Mr. Lestrange's dining room window, and directly naming Anstruther, was the result of temporary malice borne by Arthurs towards Anstruther because of their interview on that afternoon, when the latter refused to use his influence on Arthurs' behalf. Arthurs did not believe, he said, it would do more than cause an unpleasantness between Mr. Lestrange and Anstruther, which he knew the latter would regret deeply for many reasons.

This was the substance of the statement made and signed by William Arthurs in the presence of Mr. Lestrange's solicitor and Captain Ardor. Mr. Lestrange stated through his solicitor that he did not wish to prosecute William Arthurs, and that he might go at liberty on giving a full and complete confession.

William Arthurs stated his sole object in writing the letters was to force Mr. Lestrange to help him, as at times he felt desperate. It was not till the death of his sister that he realized whither he was drifting.

The type-writer used by Arthurs in writing these letters was the type-writer sent to Mabel Arthurs by Dudley Anstruther, and had been used by him in all his correspondence previous to the time of his sending it to her; hence the similarity between the type-writing in the note enclosing Mr. Lestrange's railway ticket, and the type-writing in the anonymous letters.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

WALTER CHARLES was noticed to be quite lame the day after the races. On being asked if one of his horses had kicked him, he explained he had tripped and fallen coming downstairs the next morning.

Could the moon tell what she saw during the hours between eleven and twelve at night, when some of the guests who had been dining with Sir C—— F—— at his summer residence near S—— were taking their way home, there might have been a different tale. She might have told how a tall man in evening dress, preferring the open air and a walk to a drive in a covered cab, had stopped in the shadow of a cedar hedge to light a cigar; that just at that instant a sharp "ping" was heard, followed by a muttered exclamation from the tall man, who staggered for two or three steps and then fell; how, after a few moments spent in trying to bandage a wound in his leg, he picked himself up and hobbled on towards the town.

The moon might also have told of a crouching figure clad in a tattered red shirt and leather breeches stealing behind the hedge. And had her rays been bright enough they would have illuminated a set of bronzed and regular features, dark lanky

hair, and eyes that flashed with a satisfied gleam as they saw the tall figure stumble and fall.

Any one driving over that piece of road next day might, or might not, have noticed a pile of sticks and stones at its side,—one of the signs used by the gipsies to let stragglers of their band know by which road they have pursued their wanderings.

Yes, poor Mabel Arthurs, the bullet from the gipsy's rifle failed of its mark, else your wrongs would have been avenged by the protector of another, to whom the shame of one of his tribe was as a storm cloud that shuts out the sun, and casts a gloom over all that hitherto was smiling and happy.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

EIGHT months have passed away since the trial of Dudley Anstruther resulted in his honorable acquittal. In compliance with the urgent wish of Constance's father, she and Anstruther had parted with the understanding that, if at the end of a year's time they are of the same mind, he will no longer withhold his consent to their marriage. Anstruther is passing his term of probation in his native land. How gladly he would have deferred his trip till he could take Constance with him, he alone knew.

Two months after Anstruther's departure Hector Lestrange gave up his commission in the —th regiment, and elected to try farming in Manitoba.

In the beginning of October, when the maples were putting on their bright and varied garb, and a purple haze hung over the sleepy meadows, Cécile and Hector were quietly married. A fortnight later the bride and bridegroom left for their new home on the prairie. As the train steamed out of the station on that autumn afternoon, a feeling of desolation took possession of Constance which she found hard to dispel; but, ever mindful of others, she

returned to her father with a bright face, and tried to forget her own loneliness in cheering his.

Ardor left S—— immediately after the trial to travel in the Southern States.

When January came, and Mr. Lestrange was obliged to return to Ottawa, Constance, in compliance with the entreaties of Hector and Cécile, consented to visit them in their new home. Hector had taken the ponies with him as a present from Mr. Lestrange to Cécile. "Godolphin" was still with Constance, nor was there any thought of parting with him. So when Constance went to Manitoba, where we again take up the thread of her life, "Godolphin" went with her.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

SITUATED on a farm some twenty miles from Battleford, Hector's home is one of the most comfortable houses in that part of Manitoba. The farm, comprising fifty acres, was well under cultivation when Mr. Lestrange bought it, believing that a vigorous life, such as all farmers in the North West are obliged to lead, would be better for Hector than the somewhat idle existence of an officer in Her Majesty's service when not on active duty. The Englishman who had worked the farm before had come in for a small fortune at home, and was glad to part with the property at a reasonable price.

The nearest town, "Newton," is only three miles off, and comprises a population of about eight hundred people, mostly made up of settlers from Ontario, who have come to try their fortunes in a newer country and grow up with its prosperity, and of a few Englishmen who have come for a like purpose. The farms about are also principally owned by Englishmen, who finding the mother country overcrowded, and possessing few openings for young men, have invested their younger sons' portion here.

It is an afternoon in the early part of March. The cold winter days are already over, and the spring that comes so suddenly in Manitoba is treating its inhabitants to one of her brightest days. The sun is shining brilliantly in a blue sky that is only here and there flecked with soft diaphonous clouds; the prairie grass is only beginning to force its way through the earth. The utter absence of hills in this locality, combined with a scarcity of trees, is in a measure compensated for by the glorious sweep of sky which is thus exposed to view.

Two equestrians, following the road which was originally an Indian trail, are approaching Hector Lestrange's house. As they draw near the horses break into a canter which soon brings them to the door. Constance—for it is she who has ridden up with Reginald Lloyd—rosy and radiant from the exercise in the bracing air, throws her arm affectionately about Cécile, who has met them at the door, and draws her into the little drawing-room.

Though spring-like in the open air, the sun is not yet warm enough to make a fire indoors unwelcome, so they draw their chairs within a comfortable distance of the crackling logs that burn in the fire-place. Lloyd, who has led Godolphin round to the stables and left him with his own horse in the hands of the stable boy, now follows the two girls (for Cécile looks

absurdly young to aspire to the title of woman), and seats himself on a sofa in the back-ground, apparently to enjoy the picture of the two girls resting gracefully within the rays of light thrown by the blazing wood. Cécile is dressed in a loose gown of dark blue, soft lace falling from the neck and exposing the rounded throat, and adding to the lustre of the golden hair that is gathered in a soft puff on the top of her head; her eyes have a deeper and more thoughtful expression than of old, which but adds to their beauty. Constance has removed her small riding hat, and is resting her dainty head gracefully against the back of the comfortable chair. With her head in this position, and the fire-light dancing among the meshes of her chestnut hair and illuminating the transparency of her complexion, she does indeed look beautiful. A word of description of the man who, sitting in the shadow, lets pass unobserved none of these charms. Lloyd is above the average height; his broad shoulders are covered by a perfectly fitting jacket of tweed. His brown hair is cut short to his head; but, short as it is, it curls about his forehead; his eyes are of a gray blue, and of that fearless expression that goes so far towards inspiring confidence; his hands and feet are small and slender, noticeably so amid his present surroundings, where work has rendered those of his fellows large and hard. The man is unmistakably a gentleman, and

one feels, on looking at him, that he would be equally at his ease conversing with peer or peasant.

The maid, a rare luxury in this part of the country, but who has come from Ontario with Cécile, now brings a tea-tray and places it on a small table by her mistress' side, leaving the brass kettle on the hob before quitting the room. In a window is a flower stand with pots of geraniums, one or two of which are in bloom; hanging before the door is a heavy curtain, which helps to keep out the draughts; across one corner of the room stands a piano, and a book-case well lined with books occupies another.

The light from the setting sun shines through the window and lights up the flowers, casting a net-work of shadows over the carpet; beyond the folding doors, which divide the drawing-room from the next room, the neatly laid table awaits the dinner hour. The panels of the doors have been decorated by Constance, and add a little more color and beauty to the already cosy room. Let Englishmen go where they will, they will have their home comforts about them if it be at all possible. It was possible to the late owner of this house, and what comforts were left by him have been added to by Cécile's good taste and Hector's thoughtfulness. Not many homes like this are to be found on the prairies; indeed, many who have formerly been accustomed to luxurious

homes live in absolute discomfort; but this is an evil time will remedy.

Lloyd came to Manitoba during the preceding autumn, the prospect of a good winter's sport and hopes of finding good investments for part of his money leading him to do so. Hector and he met, and with a taste for shooting in common, and the prevailing spirit of "bon camaraderie" which exists in this country, where all are more or less strangers in a strange land, have led them to see much of each other. Constance's presence does not tend to make his visits to the homestead less frequent. Indeed Hector's house possesses attractions for all the people for miles around, its comforts and the society of the two refined women being to them like a peep of the homes they have left.

"While you were out," said Cécile, pouring out a cup of tea, "I had a visitor."

"Had you?" asked Constance. "Who was it? Mrs. Gorgeous or Peggy Wise?"

Mrs. Gorgeous is an American who has married a contractor, and is living in Newton just now while her husband is superintending the building of a new railway that is to help open up the country. She considers it a grand opportunity to exhibit all her bright and costly dresses; her idea of the fitness of things leading her to think the more plainly other people are dressed the more vivid must her costumes

be. "Peggy Wise" is a slow-witted half-breed who has taken a violent fancy to Cécile, for whom she occasionally does a day's work.

"No, not either. My visitor was an Indian, he quite startled me at first. I was trying my hand at ironing one of Hector's collars. I knew he wanted to be particularly smart for the dance to-night, and poor Mary is not much of a laundress——"

"Are you?" quietly interrupts Constance.

"Well, no. I think when you see the collar you will decide that I am not. However, as I say, I was very much interested in trying to make the collar look as if it were not made of Turkish towelling when I felt as if some one were watching me—you know the feeling. On looking up I saw this Indian, with his face pressed close to the glass, peering in through the window. It gave me quite a nervous feeling, but I went to the door and asked him what he wanted. He moved his hands about and said 'Boy, Boy,' but seemed able to say nothing else. Knowing the Indians call all white men boys, I supposed he was asking for Hector, so I shook my head to imply that he was not in. The Indian then tried to slip by me and come in, but hearing William at the pump getting water I called to him, and as he came in the back door my visitor took another searching look about the hall walls and walked slowly away. William followed him, but found he would not speak. I sup-

pose he came to see what kind of a place it was.—More sugar, Mr. Lloyd? I only gave you one lump."

As Lloyd held his cup for another lump Hector's step was heard on the verandah. A blush deepened on Cecile's cheek, which caused a smile to come to Constance's lips. As he came into the little room, with his wide grey hat of soft felt in his hand and his heavy boots damp and muddy, he looked much broader and sturdier than when we last saw him. A collie is close at his heels, but stops on the threshold of the drawing-room and stretches himself across the door, where he is presently rewarded for his obedience by a piece of currant cake from Constance. Hector rested his hand caressingly on Cecile's shoulder and with the other takes the tea offered him, and with a "How d'ye do, old man?" to Lloyd, seemed glad to seat himself and rest after his day's ploughing. Constance repeated the story of the Indian to Hector, who looked a little grave for a moment and then said,

"Well, I do not think he will come back again, as 'Heather' saw him skulking along by the fence, and rushed at him and almost knocked him over. Such antipathy did the dog seem to have for him that I had some difficulty in calling him off."

"Heather" who has heard his name, and knows he is being talked about, thumps the floor with his tail and fixes his eyes on his master. "The Indian seemed

to think I had set the dog on him, for he turned and shook his fist at me in a very fine style."

Cecile had turned very pale, which was not unnoticed by Constance, who changed the conversation by asking Lloyd if he were going to the dance which was to be given by the ladies in Newton this evening.

A few minutes later Lloyd is astride his horse and trotting briskly towards the village, saying to himself more than once by the way, "What a fool I am to be carried away by a pretty face. This will not do; I must not forget my plighted troth to Mary so far away. I believed we should be happy too, and now I seem bewitched. This must be conquered." By way of conquering which he allows himself to wonder how Constance will look in evening dress, and this leads his thoughts to dwell with amusement on this life he is leading in the prairie land.

After Lloyd had gone Constance went to her little room to exchange her habit for a simple evening dress. Hector drew his chair closer to Cecile, and putting his hand under her chin raised her face to his, asking, "How are you feeling, darling?" A lovely color dyed her cheeks and she hid her face on his broad shoulder, "You are happy here, little one, are you not? You do not regret having come so far away with me?"

"Quite happy, dear, but sometimes a strange fear comes over me, and when you spoke to-day of that

Indian I felt quite terrified, but I know these fears are foolish. We are very happy here, are we not? If you were not obliged to work so hard I should like it much better, but then I feel quite proud of you, too, when I see you out in the field. I often watch you from my window, sir, and—and—love you all the time."

"My dear wife." After a pause, "Come for a little walk before dinner and see if all is right about the place."

They go together and walk about the little garden, and feel glad it will soon be time to plant their flowers. The cows and horses are visited, and found to be enjoying their evening meal. All looks peaceful and full of comfort. They return to the house and prepare for dinner.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

IN a doorway festooned with flags Mrs. Gorgeous and one or two others of the leaders of Newton society (for no society appears to be too small to have its leaders) are standing receiving their guests. Passing through this door one finds one's self in a long room whose walls are hung with bunting. True, it is only lighted by coal-oil lamps placed in brackets against the wall, but the globes which shade their light are clean and bright, and with a few pots of flowers and palms the room looks quite pretty, and not at all suggestive of a store-room off a grocery shop, which in reality it is.

An open piano stands at one end of the room. Two French windows opening on to a verandah add to the attractive appearance of this hall of merriment. One of these windows being open admits the cool refreshing air, and gives a peep of the bright moon sailing serenely aloft in a sky that even at this hour is blue.

A fair number of guests having arrived and placed their small baskets of light refreshment, which each contributes towards the supper, in a smaller room at the back of the "for one night only" ball-room, Mrs.

Gorgeous seats herself at the piano and strikes the opening chords of a set of lancers. There are not more than thirty people present, but all are in evening dress. Hector and Cécile are near the piano, and are evidently not inclined to dance. Cécile is dressed in a soft white dress open at the throat, showing a square of white neck on which rests a dead gold cross; she is laughing with Hector, and apparently quite forgetful of her fears of the afternoon. Hector, who is realizing that his coat has grown somewhat tight, is looking very handsome and manly, and if his collar be not quite irreproachable as a consequence of Cécile's handiwork, he seems rather proud of that than otherwise.

Lloyd is standing at the head of the room with Constance, his black evening dress well setting off his strongly-knit figure. His aquiline features and well-shaped head would make him conspicuous in any room, as they do here. Constance is dressed in black tulle. One wide braid of hair is arranged above her head like a coronet; others form a bright coil, that rests on her soft white neck; some wayward tendrils curl about her brow and shell-like ears. Her eyes, that seem to have gained more of that thoughtful expression, are now lowered, and a wave of warm color suffuses her cheek as she notices the look of admiration Lloyd is bending upon her. Her neck is clasped by a small necklet of pearls and diamonds that might

look out of place on this occasion, but that all Constance wears seems but to be an accessory to her natural charms. Her hands are covered with long black gloves, and in one of them she carries a large fan of peacock's feathers.

Opposite Constance and her partner stands a girl in white. Her face is bright and intelligent. She is the daughter of the German consul. Her partner is the manager of one of the local banks. The fact of his having repaired the sidewalks and peddled water in the days when he first came to the country does not appear to have destroyed his ease of manner or sense of enjoyment. Fulton, for that is his name, hails from South Africa. Having lost a good deal of money in gold mines in that country, he, too, resolved to try the much talked of Manitoba.

That big lumbering man with a voice from his boots they say deserted from the Navy, and the little prim woman with the cold blue eyes is his wife. Opposite them again is a very small man with a bald head and long beard. He is talking to a tall girl in blue. This man is the husband of the grand lady at the piano, and contractor for the new railway. He manages the men splendidly; his wife manages him.

. . . . . .

Constance is claimed for the next dance by the man from the Cape. After a few turns round the

room he leads her to the verandah to enjoy the cool air. As she approaches the window, Constance sees a black face pressed close to the glass. She starts; but, before she can explain to her partner the cause of her surprise, the face has vanished, and she wonders if she only imagined its presence.

A little later the dancers take their way to the supper-room, where sandwiches and cake are passed about. As Hector and Lloyd, with several of the other men, are standing, taking their refreshments, Hector notices two squaws standing looking in at them through another of the windows.

"Those black devils seem to be uncommonly curious," said Lloyd, annoyed at feeling startled by the apparition.

"Oh, after you have spent a few months here, you will be quite accustomed to that kind of thing. That is their way of expressing an interest in our welfare," said Hector.

"All the same, it is a doocid uncomfortable way," replied Lloyd.

Robinson, who was one of the mounted police, and who had just returned with a handful of men from the North Saskatchewan, was standing by, and in reply to a question how things looked in that neighbor answered:

"That madman Riel is trying to make trouble again among the half-breeds; a thousand pities they

did not hang him in 1870. There is dissatisfaction about the way the farms are being surveyed. People living in sparsely populated countries, no doubt, find it an advantage to build their homesteads close together; for that reason they prefer to have their farms with a narrow frontage, on which they build their houses, and running far back in long narrow strips. The new survey broke up this plan, and this I believe is one of the grievances which Riel is taking advantage of to promote his own ambitious schemes."

"How are the Indians about there?" asks Lloyd, raising a glass of ale to his lips. "Big Bear and his band are always troublesome, and rumors reached us that Beardy is only waiting to see Riel is well supported to join him with his braves."

"As the Government admitted the justice of the half-breed claims in 1883, by providing for their adjustment by special Act of Parliament, it seems a piece of carelessness that it should neglect to have those claims attended to. The position of the half-breed in Manitoba is a peculiar one, and requires peculiar treatment," said Hector.

"As a matter of fact," continued Robinson, "I do not believe the Government is aware of the unsettled state of our half-breed population. Whether that be the fault of the officials in charge or not, it seems difficult to discover. However, I do not anticipate any violent measures. The fact that a provisional

Government, with Riel at its head as president, may look somewhat threatening; but, on obtaining reasonable guarantees from the Government that their claims will be attended to, this assembly will disband. In the meantime a body of our men leave with me to-morrow to convey government stores to a place of safety at Prince Albert."

"Is such a precaution necessary?" asked Lloyd, pulling out his watch to see if it will not soon be time for the next waltz to strike up.

"Oh, till what Riel and his followers consider reasonable guarantees be given, they will continue to collect supplies and provide against the emergency of war. So it behoves us to see that our supplies are protected and out of their reach," and finishing his sandwich, Robinson turned and left the room.

Lloyd found Constance seated at the piano, the rest of the ladies and two or three men standing about the dancing-room. Constance has yielded to their entreaties and is playing the opening chords of "Home, Sweet Home." Her voice is a mezzo-soprano; it is sweet and full, and sufficiently powerful to fill the room. As Lloyd stands in the hall, he can, unobserved, see the whole picture. The fair girl, with the light falling on the coronet of burnished hair and catching the gleam of the stones on her white full neck—the deep gray eyes, with that far away look which appeals to and yet checks his curiosity—the

outline of the well-shaped nose, with its delicate nostrils—the parted lips that display a glimpse of the small white teeth. The soft sympathetic tones float towards him. There is a pathos in Constance's voice that sometimes puzzles herself, and to-night it is very pronounced. As the last verse of the song draws to a close her voice completely breaks, and with a shake of the head and a nervous laugh she breaks into the Eton boat-song, being joined in the chorus by several of the men present, a few of whom are old Eton boys.

The eyes that were growing dim are now bright, and as another waltz is struck up all appear in the mood to enjoy it. Lloyd offers his arm to Constance, and after a few turns to the music, which is rather faulty as to time, he arranges a wrap about her shoulders and leads her through the open door. They stand and drink in the pure fresh air. It is turning colder, and a decided frost is in the air. The moon is disappearing behind the willows that grow on the bank of the slough, silvering the prairie in her flight, and emphasizing the patches of snow that are still on the ground. The stars are bright and twinkling in the blue vault spanned above their heads. The smoke from a neighboring chimney ascends in a straight and undisturbed column so still is the air. The beauty of the heavens and the tranquillity of all about her impresses itself indellibly upon Constance's mind, the

faint sound of the halting music from within but intensifying the spirit of repose breathed forth by nature.

Lloyd, who finds the society of this Canadian girl dangerously sweet, is drinking in the very essence of her presence.

"Are you homesick, Miss Lestrange, that you found it so difficult to finish your song?" he asked, not without a feeling of jealousy of the attractions in which he of necessity had no share.

"I do not know what made me feel sad, but when I look at the people here, and realize how far the greater number of them are from all who made their early life, it suggests sad thoughts. There must be a longing sometimes to go back to their former homes."

"No doubt most of them expect to do so later on, but in the meantime they strike me as being very jolly," answered Lloyd.

"No doubt they are," continued Constance, "and I need only see my brother's home to realize how possible such a state of things is. Some feeling seems to oppress me to-night that I cannot shake off. It may be foolish, but I do not like to see so many Indians prowling about—in such a way to lead one to suppose there may be method in their actions, too."

"You must not give way to feelings of fear on that score." But while he spoke a recollection of what he

had recently heard from Robinson, and the thought of the dangerous state the people of this locality would be in should the Indians, infected by the spirit of discontent now prevalent, rise and join with the Métis in making war, oppressed him.

"Will you soon be returning to Ontario?"

"We are expecting my dear father to come and see Hector in his new home. I have purposely avoided telling him how bright and cosy it is, as I know he will be surprised and delighted. The father is so fond of Hector, he did not like his coming here; but," after a pause, "it was thought wise for him to come, and Cécile was willing. It is such a pleasure to see them so happy together that I feel quite reconciled to the thought of my old playfellow having some one else to take care of him."

"Mrs. Lestrange looks quite a child, but her devotion to her husband is anything but childish."

Lloyd feels he will lose his head if he stays much longer in the society of this girl whose every movement possesses an attraction for him. As he turns his eyes in the direction of the fast disappearing moon, "o'er whose disk an envious cloud is driven," a picture of an old oak growing beside a stone gate, with a young girl standing beneath its shade, rises before him. He inwardly resolves to quit this neighborhood to-morrow.

On returning to the dancing-room, Constance and

Lloyd see that the guests are preparing for departure. Hector is talking to a rather languid young lady, who, having been at school for two years in England, is now prepared to out-Herod Herod in the way of accent. She is at this moment telling Hector that he is the first Canadian she has danced with during the evening. Hector, who has a true man's abhorrence of affectation, is telling her he is sure the Canadians cannot have known how nice she is. The languid one looked for an instant as if she saw that this remark was intended to be complimentary, when Constance and Cécile approached to say good-night.

"Had a good supper, Lestrange? Those sandwiches were good;" said Lloyd, who has been known to find fault with the cooking at the Criterion.

"Oh, yes, I never pay my hostess the empty compliment of eating nothing."

There is a flurry of snow in the air as the two-seated conveyance is brought to the door. Constance and Cécile being well wrapped in furs, for it seems like a return to winter, they take their way towards home, Constance still hearing with friendly regret Lloyd's parting words, "I leave to-morrow for a trip through the North-West Territories."

CHAPTER XL.

A WEEK later, as Constance is standing in the pantry, her sleeves turned up, displaying two rounded white arms powdered with flour, Mrs. Sewell, the Indian agent's wife, riding on a buck-board drawn by an Indian pony, pulls up at the window. She jumps down from her not uncomfortable, if somewhat odd elevation, and giving her two milk cans to the maid to be filled, she, obedient to a call from Constance, enters the pantry. Without further delay she asks for Hector, and being told that he is out nailing up a fence prepares to go to him.

"Wait till I put this cake in the oven and I will come with you," said Constance.

"You must follow, Miss Lestrange; I must see your brother at once. Which part of the farm is he on? Can I drive to him?"

On being told the direction in which she is likely to find Hector, Mrs. Sewell is off at a brisk pace to impart to him her tidings. Hector is nailing up a somewhat dilapidated board fence, and with his hat on the back of his head and his coat thrown off, notwithstanding the change in the weather, is whistling vigorously, emphasizing each fall of the

hammer with a crescendo. Mrs. Sewell, who is a dark little woman with quick decisive movements, loses no time in preliminaries, but tells him hurriedly that her husband has sent her to warn him that there is danger of a half-breed rising; that the contingent of mounted police under Robinson, with a few attendant volunteers from Winnipeg, have been attacked on its way from Carlton to Duck Lake—the force was conveying government stores to a place of safety at Prince Albert; and that the half-breeds under Dumont being much stronger in number than the police, the latter were obliged to retire, but not, unfortunately, till many casualties occurred among the volunteers. The loss to the half-breeds was slight in comparison. Mrs. Sewell, being a clear-headed little woman, gives this information exactly as she has received it from her husband an hour before; he in his turn having received it from a mounted policeman who had come direct from the scene of the conflict to warn the settlers of their danger, and to advise their withdrawal to the fort at Battleford till the troops can be called out to quell the black devils, who, whatever their grievances, were not justified in resorting to bloodshed to redress them. The telegraph wires have been cut, rendering communication with the East most difficult.

Hector on hearing what has occurred looks very grave, and, gathering up his carpenter's tools, turns

and seats himself, at an invitation from Mrs. Sewell, on the buck-board, and they both drive quickly towards the house. As they pass the well-stocked farm-yard, Hector realizes the difficulty he will find in making preparations to leave his little homestead so hurriedly. After a short interview, in which they agree not to tell Cécile, who is in a delicate state of health, of what they have heard till absolutely necessary to do so, Hector once more takes his seat on the buck-board, and Mrs. Sewell, with her cans of milk behind her, drives him into town. On reaching there he finds the people talking of nothing but this open act of rebellion. On enquiry Hector found that an Indian rising was feared, and Big-Bear was reported to have left his reserve and to be threatening mischief. All seemed possessed by the greatest alarm and uneasiness. The telegraph wires and mails not having as yet been tampered with between Newton and Winnipeg, that afternoon brought news that troops would be forwarded to the scene of disturbance immediately. With the assurance that this intelligence gave, Hector returned with anxious haste to his farm, there to find Cécile very ill. He despatched the man in all haste for the doctor, who on arriving enjoined perfect quiet and utter avoidance of anything in the nature of excitement, pleasurable or otherwise. He feared an attack of typhoid fever. This he explained was his advice as a medical man.

As Hector stood with the doctor in the little sitting-room below, he told him what he had heard in the town.

"I, too, heard of this, and as I drove out here I noticed that all the people were preparing to leave for Battleford. I know it will be most dangerous to move Mrs. Lestrange in her present condition, but I could not advise you to remain here unprotected in view of the unsettled state of the country. It might mean something most serious for you all. You have your sister with you, have you not?"

"Yes, I will call her."

Hector's voice is troubled, but there is a firmness in his tone as if he had just decided upon a set course of action. Constance had learned of the danger attendant upon any attempt to move Cécile. Hector took her to the sofa that stood near the window, and seating himself beside her told her of the rising of the half-breeds and the attack on the mounted police; also of the danger attendant upon their remaining upon their farm. "I propose, sister, to remain here with Cécile. As soon as she be able I will take her to Battleford. To move her now means certain harm to her, to remain means only possible danger to us both—I will remain. But you, dear, for the dear father's sake must go where the danger is not so great. You must be ready to leave this afternoon with Mrs. Sewell, she

and her husband will be glad to have you with them."

As Hector speaks he is holding Constance's hand between both his own. Constance raises one of those hands that show signs of their recent rough work, and holding it close against her soft cheek for an instant while she controls her quivering lips, and lifting her eyes deep with the light of pride and affection to Hector's face, she says,

"I forgive you, dear, for thinking I could leave you and Cécile at such a time, but do not express such a thought again. I stay with you both. I can help nurse Cécile. Oh, Hector, how could you suggest my going and seeking my own safety, knowing all the time you were in danger."

"Think of the father, if he knew we were all in such danger. Your safety at least would comfort him; think of that, Constance," urged Hector.

"Under such circumstances, my duty is here, and here I mean to stay." With a faint smile she continued: "Besides, it may be that these reports are exaggerated, and danger not so imminent."

"God grant it," said the doctor, his voice thick with emotion on witnessing the courage of this slender girl. "I will not try and dissuade you," he continued, turning to Constance, "from your purpose. I will come again in the morning, and this afternoon I will send you a supply of whatever I think our patient may require."

"Will you not be leaving the town to-day?" asked Hector, not being able to hide the relief such a thought brought him.

"Not to-day, so au revoir."

As he settled the buffalo robe about him in his little gig, the doctor's mutterings were something to the effect of weak women putting strong men to the blush.

On going to the farm-yard to see if all were right there, Hector's man met him, and inquired whether he, Hector, would be taking all the cattle into the Fort at Battleford.

"We shall not be leaving for some days at least." Which piece of news caused O'Leary's face to fall perceptibly, on seeing which Hector said: "I will be glad if you see your way to staying with us, but of course I cannot, or would not, insist. You might think about it and let me know. We are remaining because Mrs. Lestrange is too ill to be moved."

Two hours later O'Leary appeared at the side-door, twisting his hat in his hand and looking sheepish, but resolved. He had others to consider, he explained, and had decided to go that evening with a young party who expected his escort.

"Very well; *leave* hay for the horses, and give Godolphin a bran mash, and if you have time you might feed the cow."

Constance finds Cécile's little maid of all work more loyal, quite unwilling to desert her; so Hector and Constance, with Cécile and the little maid, are left.

The next morning the doctor calls, and shakes his head, reluctantly pronouncing Cécile no better, but somewhat more feverish. He leaves one of his medicine chests, and, with full instructions to Hector and Constance as to its use, takes his departure; not without telling them, however, that the news is more reassuring, the troops under General Middleton being on their way from Winnipeg, and that there is no word of fresh outrages by the half-breeds.

Standing at her window Constance watches the night closing in. The monarch that rides upon the gale is travelling apace, scattering hail and snow in his flight. With the growing dusk comes the consciousness of their isolation, and a deep longing for the protection of the man she loves comes upon Constance. So intense is the feeling that when the moment has passed she feels as if that longing must have been shared by him, were the ocean that rolls between them twice as wide and deep.

CHAPTER XLI.

"If there be one circumstance more than another that gives hope for the future of Canadian nationality it is to be found in the alacrity and enthusiasm with which the youth of the country rally on occasion for its defence.

. . . . . .

"The Dominion authorities were fortunate at this juncture in having in command of the militia, a distinguished officer of the British Army who had seen varied service, and was known to possess in happy combination the essential soldiery qualities of courage and discretion. This officer.....proceeded instantly to Winnipeg, thence to Qu'Appelle, to place and take charge of a small army in the field." *

The call for aid from Manitoba met with prompt and hearty response from the sister provinces. Ontario was not alone in her willing rendering of assistance. Quebec, whatever injustice racial jealousies may have caused after the fret and fever of war was over, at this time the French were not tardy

*See G. M. Adam on the North West, its History and its Troubles.

offering their services to put down the common oe.

The shadows of night had scarcely grown dim eneath the rays of the morning sun as it rose over he town of S—— before the red coats and green ere hurrying to and fro in picturesque excitement, ll alike animated with a strong desire to be off to the ene of strife.

On Monday, the 30th of March, orders came "to he front."

The news of the uprising of the half-breeds was eceived in Ottawa with surprise. Whether this be xcusable or not, the news was met with a promptiude which spoke well for those at the helm of state. Alas! that a cure is of so much less value than a reventative.

To Mr. Lestrange the news was freighted with he keenest anxiety. A hasty telegram to Hector rought the following reply:

"The Winnipeg force passed through here to-day. All iet. Cécile ill. Constance refuses to leave her

"(Signed) H. LESTRANGE."

As Mr. Lestrange finished reading this somewhat omforting message, a page brought him a card nd said a gentleman was waiting in the library. eaving his desk in the Commons chamber Mr. estrange hastened towards that room so justly elebrated for its beauty, to find Captain Ardor in

one of its alcoves. After a hearty greeting Ardor said,

"I only got back from the South last week, and have volunteered for service in the North-West. My offer has been accepted, and I leave this evening with a company of the Governor General's Foot Guards for Manitoba. I felt I should like to see you before leaving. Is Hector still near Newton?"

"Yes; and I have just heard from the dear boy that Cécile is ill, and that Constance will not leave them." A quiver in the voice and a hasty biting of the lip told of the effort it cost this loving father to control himself.

At the mention of Constance's name the color mounted to Ardor's face, but in a firm voice he told that he had not known Constance was with her brother, and continued:

"The danger cannot be so very great in that neighborhood, as the troops from Winnipeg have already taken the field under General Middleton, and our men leave almost at once."

"I cannot let myself think of the danger that threatens them. Keep me well posted if you can, Ardor. As soon as possible I will leave for Manitoba myself."

With a hearty assurance Ardor made his way to the drill hall, from which he was to leave with his company that evening.

CHAPTER XLII.

WHEN Anstruther bade adieu to Canada, e believed that he should not set foot on its shores again till the year had passed away. Amid the scenes of his earlier life, and with those to whom his society was very dear after these years of separation, he was never forgetful of Constance; and as the months went by, the longing to see her again and hear the sound of her sweet voice, and rest beneath the tranquil light of her deep gray eyes became a misery. So one day in March, after a loving and regretful farewell from those he is leaving behind, Anstruther once more turns his back upon Old England with her manifold attractions, and is borne over the billows to the land of his adoption, where dwells for him so much that is precious.

Thus it it is that Ardor, on reaching the drill hall on the afternoon of his interview with Mr. Lestrange, is met at the entrance by Anstruther.

"You here, Anstruther? I thought you were at home?" retaining the hand that is stretched toward him in greeting.

"I only arrived in Quebec the day before yesterday. The first news that greeted me was that the

troops were leaving to put down a rebellion in Manitoba. I applied at the Citadel to see if a contingent were going from there, only to be told that two batteries had left that morning. On enquiry I found that a company of the Foot Guards was going from here. I have come to offer my services. I must not be refused, Ardor. I hear you are going in command; will you take me in your company as a common soldier, sergeant—in any capacity? For go I must," exclaimed Anstruther.

These two men looked into each other's eyes, and each knew what was the chief cause of anxiety to both. "That can be managed, I think," was what Ardor said.

That night saw the Foot Guards en route for Battleford. Of the hardships and privations, and the manly courage with which they were endured and overcome on that long journey, and of the misery of the marches over those long gaps through the blinding snow and sleet, it is not necessary to the completion of this tale to tell, but one cannot pass such heroism by without a lingering thought of gratitude and admiration.

CHAPTER XLIII.

MORE than three weeks had been passed by Constance and Hector in close attendance on Cécile. No further news of the half-breeds, and no return of the people who sought refuge at the Battleford Fort.

Sometimes at night the sky would be illumined by the glare from a burning homestead—presumably the work of the rebels. Hector trusted to the fact of their house standing among the trees, and to their care in lighting no fire unless it were absolutely necessary, to escape attracting the attention of any wandering Indians.

Cecile had passed the crisis, and, though still very weak, the fever was abating. Constance and Hector, both looking worn by the anxiety of the last three weeks, have left Cécile in a peaceful slumber, and are standing on the verandah, taking in welcome draughts of the cold fresh air. As they thus stand, each leaning against the slender pillar that supports the roof, they look strangely alike. The head is thrown back with the same careless ease; the merry twinkle that comes so readily to Hector's eyes is banished to-night

by a look of deep thought, which adds to the resemblance between the brother and sister.

"The troops must be drawing nearer. Will they remember us in Battleford, I wonder?" asked Constance.

"I was thinking of that, Connie. We cannot tell in the excitement of relief that we may not be forgotten. If we could leave at once we might reach Battleford before the troops get there; but our movements must of necessity be so slow with the little woman in her present weak state that it would not be safe."

As he speaks, the sky to the south-east grows red. So red that a faint reflection tinges the tops of the trees. Constance and Hector look at each other, and make their way quietly but quickly to one of the upper windows.

"It looks like McPherson's ranche," said Hector, his voice hoarse with excitement; "the black serpents are destroying the buildings. See—I can almost distinguish the gabled roof."

So clear is the atmosphere, and so level the sweep of land between them and the conflagration, that the roof is discernible against the blaze of light.

"How far is that building from here, Hector?" asked Constance, in a whisper.

"Not more than four miles."

There is a pause of a moment, it seems like an

hour to Constance, then she turns—her face pale but her eyes bright and brave—and, clasping Hector's arm lovingly with her two hands, she says in a voice clear and full:

"Hector, there is only one thing to be done. It may be our turn to-morrow night. We cannot leave here with Cécile, it would not be safe you think. I must go for assistance. No, do not interrupt, darling," as Hector bursts out with a hasty disclaimer. "You know how fleet of foot Godolphin is. Give me your brace of pistols"—here a still whiter shade comes over face—"and I will mount Godolphin at once."

"At once! Constance, you must be mad. There may be Indians in any numbers between this and Battleford. You—and alone on the prairie at night," protested Hector.

"Time is precious dear, dear brother; think of Cécile; think of the child that may one day call you father." A spasm crosses Hector's face and Constance continues: "Think of our father"—here the first sound of tears is in that persuasive voice. "Think, dear," more gently, "how quickly Godolphin will carry me over the prairie. The night is my safeguard. Once at Battleford, the garrison will—must—spare me an escort to bring Cécile back."

As she finishes her pleading, the flaming light blazes brighter in the sky for an instant and then

grows dull. The roof is no longer visible. Constance presses her lips to Hector's burning hand and hurries to her room. Once there, she wastes little time in slipping into her riding-habit and fastening a small dark hat on her head. Going into Cécile's room she bends over the bed long enough to press a kiss on the short fair hair, and brushing a tear from her eye hurries down the stairs. She finds Hector reluctantly saddling Godolphin.

"Tight girths. Now, one kiss, my dear, dear Hector. Do not be anxious about me; there is not a horse in all Canada can beat this beauty"—caressing Godolphin's neck lovingly, which piece of attention he acknowledges by a mild whinny of appreciation. Constance winds her arms tightly round Hector's neck, and presses her warm, tremulous lips lovingly to his.

"I cannot let you go, Constance. Think what danger."

"Think what danger here, dear boy. Your hand for my foot. There—" settling herelf in the saddle and tightening the reins. "Now, the pistols."

They are secured, and in another moment Hector sees Constance disappearing beyond the gate. He calls after her, his feeling of dread for her overmastering him. But Constance speeds on. Through the trees —over the road that borders the slough—on, on. Now she is on the open prairie. How glad she is she

has ridden over this trail before—she remembers it well—it is one of the trails used by the Indians, and is the shortest possible route to Battleford. There is something exhilarating in this night ride across the open plain with no companion but the stillness and the stars, the air whistling in her face. Thoughts come and are quickly succeeded by others. Her father far away—the man she loves still further—the terrified refugees at the fort—their surprise at seeing her—they refuse to lend her assistance. Oh, no; such a thought is too dreadful.

Hector has gone back to Cécile; he watches the fire in the distance. The fire must be dying down by this time, it cannot rage all night. Whose homestead next?

On, on, Godolphin. How he flies! The spirit of adventure is in him; no need for the whip here.

"Nearer succor—Life and death—Life and death—Nearer succor—" echo the hoofs.

The prairie swims beneath them. A few miles more, three at most, and horse and rider will enter Battleford.

Hark! what is that? a gun-shot? Godolphin strides on—he flounders, he stumbles, he falls.

Constance slips from the saddle, her hand on a pistol. What is this on the beautiful shoulder? Something liquid, something warm, something thick.

CHAPTER XLIV.

HIS whole body quivering, Godolphin regains his feet. Constance slips the reins over her arm and stands with her back against his shoulder, a pistol in each hand, her eyes turned in the direction of the approaching horseman. Her pale lips are drawn closely together; the rapid ride has loosened her hair, which falls in a waving mass to her waist, the cool wind lifting the stray locks from her face; her eyes are wide and dark. She is conscious that her enemy is drawing nearer, but she sees much more vividly a cosy library in a stone house far away—an arm-chair drawn close to the fire, a gray head resting against its back and catching the flickering light from the burning coals. Outside the chilly breeze is blowing the dead leaves round in an eddy in one corner of the wall. Some are lodged in the dry basin of the fountain—now they make a wild dash for liberty, and now they are still, save for the rustling that is but a protest at their enforced captivity.

There is Hector's step on the gravel, he is whistling "I dreamt that I dwelt in Marble Halls." Now he comes in; how bright and happy he looks. Where is Cécile? "Hector and Cécile. Heaven protect them.

Heaven help me," comes from the dry lips. Godolphin turns his lovely head and presses his soft nose close against the pretty hair, as if conscious of the anguish in the stifled tones. The horseman is now close upon them: he reins up his horse and is standing, surprise and horror not unmixed with relief in every line of his face. The sky to the north is brightly illumined. "The Indians on the approach of the troops set fire to all the buildings in Battleford." By that light the stars grew dim, and Dudley Anstruther and Constance Lestrange recognized each other.

. . . . . .

"After a long and tedious journey the relieving column under Col. A. arrived within three miles of Battleford. Captain Ardor's company with one or two exceptions had undergone the hardships of the transport with little show of fatigue, though they had averaged a march of thirty miles a day under most trying conditions." *

On Thursday evening, April 25th, the camp was pitched for the night (notwithstanding the strong desire of the men to make a dash through the poplar and underbrush), within sight of the burning buildings of Battleford.

Anstruther's anxiety to get on quite overcame any

* See G. M. A. on North West.

feeling of fatigue, and it was with a sense of relief that he received orders to go on outpost duty. After being on duty from eight o'clock till ten, he was relieved for a two hours' rest. At twelve o'clock, with a piece of hard tack in his pocket, and mounted on a sturdy gray horse, he once more took up his position at the outpost. He had walked his horse up and down for upwards of an hour when his ear caught a sound as if of stealthily approaching horsemen. Before long he saw his suspicions were correct, and that a body of Indians were trying to surprise the camp. He gave the alarm, and quickly the troops were ready to meet the attack. The Indians, finding their enemy on the watch, hastily retired, the whites firing on the retreating figures. It was one of these bullets that had struck Godolphin.

CHAPTER XLV.

WHEN Constance first recognized Anstruther, she thought the strain of the past three weeks, culminating in the terror of the past few moments, that seemed like hours, had been too much for her, and that her mind was wandering. Her head swam, all grew dark; her form swayed, and she would have fallen had not Anstruther placed his arm firmly round her. For one instant her arm clung tightly round his neck, while his face was pressed close to hers. With a great effort Constance checked the feeling of faintness that was threatening to overcome her, and placing her still trembling hand on Anstruther's arm she said in an eager voice,

"Hector and Cecile—they are alone, unprotected. Help me to save them."

At the sound of that voice, so hungered for during the past dreary months, and remembered as uttering such cherished words of encouragement to himself, a wave of emotion almost choked Anstruther as he answered—

"We will save them, Constance. I am only one of many come to help you; our troops are not three

hundred yards off. Thank God, my dearest, that I found you."

Constance now explains in as few words as possible whither she was bound, and that only Godolphin's wound had stopped her. She does not yet know that the bullet which struck Godolphin prevented her from riding into the thick of the enemy, who were lying in ambush on this side of Battleford. This knowledge is brought home to Anstruther with a sickening horror of what might have been.

A hasty examination in the dim light shows Anstruther that "Godolphin's" wound need not be fatal if attended to at once. It is a matter of a few moments to unstrap and change the side-saddle to the back of his own horse, then to lift Constance into it. Leading "Godolphin" by the bridal, they make their way as quickly as possible towards the camp. On the colonel's once hearing Constance's wish to return to her brother's farm with sufficient men to form a body guard for Cécile, he immediately tells off a company for that purpose, and does not refuse the request of Ardor and Anstruther to attend it. Constance will not listen to any entreaties to remain and rest in the camp but insists upon going with them. Thus it is, that hours sooner than she hoped Constance is galloping, but not on "Godolphin," who has been left in camp to

have his wound attended to, back over the road that leads to the homestead.

As the little cavalcade draws near the farm, the dawn is breaking. The tops of the willows that surround the house are tipped with morn's roseate hues. The water in the slough is turned to a rich purple. Some duck quietly floating on its surface take fright at the approaching noise and dive out of sight, the ripples of water which tell the spot whence they disappeared vanishing in golden circles.

What is that beyond the trees? Ah, two Indians. They turn and look towards the little company, then springing on two ponies, which were grazing at the gate, speed over the prairie towards the south.

"Hasten, hasten," calls Constance, and urging on her own horse she is the first to dash through the gate, closely followed, however, by all. Gaining the verandah she jumps from her horse. She tries the door and discovers it is fast. How still it is! Hurrying round to the back entrance she finds it ajar. She cannot call, the words stick in her throat. She hurries up the stairs. As she passes the little parlor she notices the two chairs at the window just as she and Hector left them a few hours before She hastens to Cécile's room. Yes, there is Cécile, sleeping peacefully,

the morning sun making her golden hair look on fire. Beside the bed on the little table stands the glass half empty of its sleeping draught. But where is Hector? Returning, at the head of the stairs she meets Anstruther; he is deadly pale.

"Where is Hector?" Anstruther never heard words to cause him such pain.

Seeing the look on his face, Constance pushes by him; he could not detain her if he would. Down the stairs, through the hall, out again into the fresh air she hurries, till she comes to the plot of ground behind the hedge. There she pauses. Why are they all standing about that one spot? That one spot! She walks steadily forward. Ardor advances to meet her and tries to lead her aside. It is no use, she waves him off. A few more strides and she is beside it. Yes,—it—what so few short hours, aye, almost moments, ago was Hector Lestrange. She kneels down beside the loved form, she presses her hand to his heart, she raises his dear hands to her lips, then spies the sickening pool at his side.

No scream, no raving, no call for help now. Only the two words, but oh what anguish they express! "Too late." She falls senseless across the manly breast beneath which so short a time before there beat so warm a heart.

As the sun burst forth from behind its battlement

of billowy clouds its rays fell on two upturned faces, strangely alike in feature as in their white impassiveness.

CHAPTER XLVI.

CONCLUSION.

ON a September evening of the following year the sun's declining rays are resting lingeringly upon an old-fashioned house in Somerset, and gilding its windows till they look as if they were ablaze in honor of some festival.

Standing on the turf that skirts the south side of the house are two people: one a dark graceful man, the other a lovely woman with burnished hair and deep gray eyes. The vine leaves that grow about the windows and creep over the posts of the doorway are gently swaying in the breeze, and softly whispering to each other as if loathe to disturb the tranquillity but forced to express their admiration—as one stirred by exquisite music would fain burst into applause though reluctant to drown the faintest echo of its sound.

As far as the eye can reach stretches the park of Bishop's House, which is now the home of Mr. and Mrs. Dudley Anstruther, most unexpectedly made so by the death of the former's uncle. In the distance some deer are cropping the grass beneath the

old oaks, and close at hand the hydrangeæ droop their heads as if surfeited with sweetness, while beyond all the Quantocks stand, tall sentinels in blue, by day and night.

Anstruther advances, and taking both his bride's hands in his, and looking earnestly into her eyes, he draws her towards him:

"Tell me, Constance, before I go to meet your father and Cécile——"

"Do not forget my small godson," interrupts Constance.

"And your small godson—tell me, Constance, that I have so far made you happy?"

Stealing one arm round his neck, Constance answers:

"Perfectly happy, my husband."

"My queen."

CHAPTER XLVII.

YES, at last Dudley Anstruther has claimed his bride and brought her to his new home—not, however, till time had made the recollection of that dreadful night in March less vivid, and softened the misery caused by its deeds.

On the eve of her departure from her Canadian home, Constance bade good-bye to the grave that had closed, now more than a year before, over all that remained in this world of her much loved brother. The wild roses which she laid at the base of the broken column were wet with more than dew as they hid 'neath their beauty the words—"Give peace in our time, O Lord," and the stillness of that evening was broken by more than the call of the robin awaiting the return of her mate.

Close to the gate of the churchyard Constance turned aside and stopped before a grave, at whose head stood a plain white cross:

MABEL ARTHURS.
BORN, April 12th, 1860.
DIED, June 13th, 1884.
"AT REST."

Kneeling with one hand upon an arm of the cross, Constance placed with the other a bunch of passion flowers at its foot.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

"DURBAN, August 23rd.

"The alarming rumors from Matabeleland are declared on official authority to be well founded.

"A night attack made by the rebels on L—— resulted in many casualties on both sides. After an hour's vigorous fighting the attacking party was driven back.

"Captain Ardor, of —th regiment, is recommended for the 'Victoria Cross,' having rescued a wounded comrade from the enemy while under a hot fire."

THE END.