

you.

to herself. "I will punish him for this.

She was quick to note that a kind of

so much in her tone, and to carry out

was passing him to go to her carriage

without another word; but Gerald stopped

"Pray forgive me, Lady Betty," he said.

"I have a great weight on my conscience,

and a thousand apologies to make to you.

Would it be possible for us to speak to-

but though she was elated beyond meas-

the part of prudence to perfection. She

ignored his suggestion that she should ask

"I am going to the park in about half an hour's time," she said, coldly; "per-

haps we might find an opportunity of

speaking for a few minutes there," and,

bending her head, she went forward, and

He found his way to the park, and

"Let us go to those two chairs," he

said, indicating two placed under the

Gerald beiped her to alight, and they

strolled over the grass together. She felt

that he was playing a part, and she won-

dered what truth he was trying to hide.

While he was endeavoring to make flowery

little speeches to her, she broke in upon

"I don't want any more excuses," she

said. "You cannot put aside the fact that

you treated me very radely. I don't think

there are many women who would have

done what I did the other day, to go by

myself to your rooms simply for the pur-

The smile had frozen on Gerald Ten-

by's lips. His face was now quiet and

set. He had himself well in hand, and

"To warn me!" he said, in accents of

"Of course you don't understand. How

could you, if you do not know what has

happened? I tried to explain in my let-

ters that I wanted to see you, not for a

"I have told you," Gerald said, hur-

"I don't know why, or how, you did

not receive my letters," she said, with a

touch of previshness, "I should not have

troubled about you at all; but I thought

you were my friend; but, of course, you

must have known that I called at your

chambers. That odious man you have en-

gaged as your secretary must have told

"Stanton told me something about meet-

ing a lady on the stairs, but he gave me

to understand that it was a stranger to

him. How could I have possibly imag-

ined that you would have come?" Ger-

ald tried to put a tone of affection into

his voice. "Won't you tell me now," he

said, pleadingly, "why you troubled your-

"Perhaps my information is stale

"Let me hear it," Gerald answered; but

before Lady Betty could speak a bland

voice broke in on their conversation, and

George Stanton emerged from behind their

what he really was a handsome and a

well bred man-yet had he been a reptile

Lady Betty could not have shrunk from

"Pray forgive me, Lady Betty," Stan-

ton said, raising his hat; "but I caught

sight of Sir Gerald in the distance, and as

I have some important papers for him I

was obliged to take this opportunity of

Lady Bety rose to her feet with a

"Will you take me back to my car-

When he had put Lady Betty into her

carriage, and had stood and watched it

roll away, he turned and retraced his

steps. His face was very pale, and in

his eyes there blazed a fierce expression,

"Let us be clear with each other, Stan-

Stanton shrugged his shoulders and

"You are not the master to give or-

ders," he said. "It is as much to my in-

terest as to your own that I should know

what you are doing. You are a bit of a

told. Look at yourself this moment. Why,

are ready to fly at my throat and make

a scene. Take a pall at yourself, man,

and bear in mind one thing; that, wheth- lips,

you cannot control yourself. Here we are

riage?" she said to Sir Gerald.

He was faultlessly dressed, and looked

you that he met me at your door."

Sir Gerald shook his head.

self about me so much?"

him more completely.

upon in this way."

giving them.'

flounce.

news," she said.

chairs.

riedly, "that I only received all your let-

personal matter, but I got no answer."

profound surprise. "Dear Lady Betty,

this is most mysterious! I don't under-

He glanced at her carriage as he spoke,

gether for a little while?"

him to drive with her.

sat in her victoria.

them abruptly.

stand."

ters at once."

pose of warning you."

soon located Lady Betty.

tance away from the crowd.

CHAPTER XVI.—(Continued.)

The woman sat down and stared at the I regret to say, Sir Gerald," she said. flat, white envelope, that was to be the aloud, "that Antonia is not well enough price of her freedom. Suddenly Sylvia to see you. I was just leaving her, and turned. She held in her hand a small, she begged me to convey this message to old-fashioned picture.

"That was how I looked twenty-two years ago, George Stanton," she said | relief flitted across his face as he heard "You will find no hardness, no selfishness her voice. She had managed to convey in that girl's face. I started life humbly, if you will; but at least there was this effect to a more successful issue, she purity and honesty surrounding me, Many have tried to search out my origin and few have succeeded. I have been too her careful for that. It was not of myself I thought so much, but of those who, in the long ago, belonged to me and cherished me. I have never spoken to a living soul of that past till now; but as we stand on the brink of becoming man and wife, I am driven to look back on that past. Something of my old self soems to ure at her success. Lady Betty played now ery aloud against what you would have me do. I have never willingly stooped to crime. See, this picture represents my soul. In those days, I was as white as a lily. Swear to me on this picture that this money came to you by no evil means, and I will take you for my husband."

Advancing toward her, he took the picture she held and pressed it to his lips, "I swear to you," he said, thickly, "that this money has come to me honorably."

The next moment she lay in Stanton's arms, but the lips he kissed were unregrateful shade of the trees some little dissponsive, and he knew that though he had stained his soni to win this woman, she would never really be his.

#### CHAPTER XVII.

Antonia had given very little thought to her uncle's wife in these long, sad, anxious days, and she was almost startled on the afternoon following that meeting with Gerald when a little note was brought to her with the message that - Lady Betty Marchmont was waiting below in her carriage, and desired to see her. The girl's first instinct was to refuse the request.

But even while she paused, Lady Charlotte's maid came to tell her that Lady Betty had left her carriage, and had taken it for granted that Antonia would yet somehow Lady Betty's eyes disconsee her; it would be, therefore, impossi- certed him. ble for the girl to avoid going down stairs.

Lady Betty, to carry through her plans as regards Gerald, however, had to play a role with Antonia. Therefore she be gan to probe Antonia delicately.

"There is something written in your face that seems to tell me you are still troubled, that the news that caused you to quarrel with your father is still the same."

"Hubert is still missing," answered Antonia; "for five long days he has been lost to us. You remember that I spoke to you of this faithful friend of his; it is Ben who has been searching; yet we

cannot find a trace of Hubert. "Oh! you must have help!" cried Lady Betty. "This is not the matter for an amateur: you must have professional aid. You ought to have had detectives from the very beginning."

"It is this suspense, this uncertainty," Antonia said. In a low, suffering voice. "that kills slowly."

"You must hope always, dear; I am sure you are passing through a very hard time; but, believe me, it will come to an end-a happy end, I mean."

At that moment the door was opened. and one of the maids appeared. "Sir Gerald Tenby wishes to know,

miss, if you will speak to him for a few minutes. Betty Marchmont turned very pale. She

seemed to tremble from head to foot. This was a confirmation of what she had imagined; but she found that the truth was very unpalatable. Antonia had said one word only as the maid gave her this mes-

"Impossible!" fell from her lips, and then she paused and hesitated.

Back to her memory came the task she had set herself; the acute necessity of obtaining information about Hubert, no matter at what cost to herself. Before she could speak, however, Lady Betty had sprung to her feet,

"I will see Sir Gerald for you, Antonia," she said, burriedly; "you really are not fit to see any one. Let me explain to him that you are ill."

A slight frown contracted Antonia's brows. Once again there rushed over her mind that strong feeling of distrust for this other woman. Her manner was at its coldest as she spoke in answer;

"Therex is no need to burden yourself which was comprehensible enough to Stanwith this errand," she said, "unless, of ton. As the two men stood for a mocourse, you wish to speak to Sir Gerald ment side by side, Gerald said : yourself."

But Lady Betty was already half out ton. I refuse to be dogged and spied

of the room.

"I can explain so much better than a maid," she said, and she passed down the laughed. staircase with an excitement thrilling her.

Gerald was waiting on the doorstep. He had refused to enter the house until he knew that Antonia would see him. "His face was very dark as he turned sudden- fool, you know, Tenby, if the truth is you looked good." ly and saw Betty Marchmont coming toward him.

She saw his expression, and resented with the world looking at you, and you it bitterly; but this was too good an opportunity to be lost. She made full de-

mand on her subtlety. "He does not want to see me," she said er you like it or whether you don't, I

this way. See I take this letter and read t as if it were something very important. Already I am accepted as your secretary; that will account for our being together as we now are."

mean to keep my eye upon you. Come

CHAPTER XVIII.

Gerald Tenby turned upon his companion. There was something wild in his expression-the look of an animal at bay; then the wildness went, and over his face there stole that mask that hid all expres-

"Say what you have to say," he said, sullenly, "and then let us change the conversation. I am a bit sick of talking always on the same theme. Come, let us walk in the direction of my club."

As they strolled along, speaking apparently in casual fashion, Sylvia Castella passed them in her carriage. She noted them from a distance, and her eyes followed them with an interest that was strangely new to her.

Neither man looked at her as she went by, and she drew a deep breath of relief. Though she stood now pledged to marry Stanton, she dreaded the mere thought of being in his presence.

"I cannot help doubting him," she said to herself, restlessly. "He swore last night that that money had come to him honorably, yet it would be easy enough for him to perjure himself. Oh! why was I such a fool as to have any dealings with this man? Drive me to the British Museum," she ordered her coachman.

Here in this lonely place Sylvia seemed. to feel that the shadows of coming evening were significant of the coming evening of her life. And as she sat wondering vaguely what had come to pass with her, she noticed a girl walking slowly down the room.

The girl were a long, straight, black gown that fell in folds about her. Sylvia recognized at once the proud bearing and the small head, and her approbation went out in a whole-hearted fashion to Antonia's grace and beauty.

She was conscious, too, of a strange beat of excitement at her heart. It was certainly odd that she should have met this girl two days running and in two such opposite directions.

Sylvia had risen from her seat, and was about to go. Another moment and she would have passed Antonia, perhaps never to be again in such close contact with the girl, when a little accident occurred.

Strung around her waist Sylvia wore a gold and jeweled belt; from it dangled many costly and useless objects. One of these small jeweled trifles snapped and fell to the ground as she rose, rolling to Antonia's feet. Instantly the girl stooped and picked up the toy, and turned with a smile to give it to this tall, beautiful woman, whose face seemed vaguely familiar to her.

Sylvia took the trinket, paused an instant, and then, yielding to a rush of feeling such as had not come to her for many a day, and which had been caused by the ght of Antonia's companion the day be fore, she spoke to the giri.

"Please forgive me," said Sylvia, "but can you direct me? I cannot find my way to the entrance."

"If you will allow me, I will take you there. I am on my way out of the museum; in fact, I think we must be two of the last people left in the building. Fortunately they know me," Antonia added, with a faint smile. "I come here very often."

They spoke casually as they walked together through the long room, and something in the tone of Sylvia's voice brought back to Antonia the burr of her native country. She said this quite frankly.

"I believe that you come from the same part of the world that I do," she said. "It is not a beautiful place, yet I love it very dearly."

"I was born in Lancashire," Sylvia answered; "but it is a long time since I was there. I thought," she added, hurriedly, "that I had long ago lost the accent. "Don't try to lose it," said Antonia, "I

know to Southern ears it has an ugly sound; but to mine I confess there is both music and sweet remembrance in such an accent."

They passed on a few yards in silence and then Sylvia seemed to awaken to a sense of duty.

"I think I can find my way now," she said; "it is very kind of you to have taken so much trouble for me. Perhaps I ought to tell you that I am Sylvia Castella, the actress."

"I have heard your name," said Antonia, gently, "and now I understand why your face seemed familiar to me. Do

you come here often. Miss Castella?" "I hardly know what brought me here to-day." Then quite abruptly; "Yes, I do know; I wanted to think quietly to myself. You are very young, and, therefore, you will not understand that there are moments when one has to pause and take stock, as it were, of one's life."

"I am not very old, certainly," said Antonia, with her beautiful smile; "at least, as years are counted, but I think I have grasped already the knowledge that there can be great delight and terrible

bitterness in life." "There is something about you," said Sylvia, "that makes me speak out frankly. When I saw you coming toward me just now I recognized you. I was sitting under the trees in the park yesterday morning when you passed me with your dogs. You were talking to a big. sunburned man, and you seemed both of you to be very sad. I watched you-not from curlosity, but because I was interested in you. I admire you with al! my heart, You won't mind my saying that, will you? And I thought"-here Sylvia's voice hurried a little-"that the man who was with

"Indeed, you are right," said Antonia. He is good, simple nad noble. A splendid friend. One whom I honor and love." "Yet he is a working man," Sylvia Castella said, with a faint smile on her

(To be continued.)

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