The House That Stood Back By A. C. ANDREWS

rant, the novelist, wrote hard at a last chapter over whose beauty and eloquence the critics bluster, stuttering: would in due season, wax deservedly enthusi-

Barraclough, lying back in his chair, was half way through a third cigaret. On the wall, ly, smiling. immediately facing him, hung a calendar of the kind known as "block." The date it showed famous that you should-I don't know whether was the 14th of May. His eyes rested upon it. And the smile that now and then twisted his was not a pleasant one.

"I conclude you don't, by any chance, happen onceto remember the date?"

"Eh?" inquired Farrant, half glancing up. He was naturally a person of brevity. "The 14th of May," proceeded Barraclough

smoothly. "You had perhaps overlooked it? Or imagined that I had? Not at all. Or that tomorrow is consequently the 15th, Otherwise, my

"You didn't want me to remind you, I suppose?" said Farrant.

"Again, not at all-it was quite unnecessary," returned Barraclough levelly. He turned in his chair, laughed, "I wonder if you also recollect a talk we once had? Just before you married Margaret, You suggested that, instead of celebrating the last night of his bachelorhood with the usual flareup, a man who saw his heaven opening would do better to spend it in haying his prayers. Don't know whether you carried out your own program-" "Yes, I did."

dispute it. I was about to say that I recollect cordially agreeing. And-privately-deciding that when my time came, if it did, I would do likewise. Which reveals me as having been a particularly crass idiot!" He stood up with a yawn. "To relapse upon the accepted parlance, I am about to make a night of it." "Don't you"-admonished Farrant of the

loquent pen and the ineloquent tongue-'don't you get making a dashed as of your-"The town," went on Barraclough, unheed-

ingly, "will be painted exceedingly red. To look upon the wine when of a corresponding hue is, I presume, the shortest road to the de- go on." sired result? We shall see."

"I wish"-growled Farrant uneasily-"I wish Margaret were here, confound you!"

Those who knew him merely well were wont to declare that he cared for but two things, his wife and his work. The few who knew him better were aware that he cared for at least a third thing, which was his friend. Barraclough laughed.

"I have," he said deliberately, "the highest respect for your wife. If she were here she would probably enter upon expostulations which I should be forced to disregard. Therefore I consider it rather fortunate that she is called out of town. As she may possibly, after tonight, decline my further acquaintance, I should like ber to know that your hospitality for the last two months has been perhaps more appreciated than either she or you-

"Rot!" Farrant rose, "The last two months!" he said bluntly, "I wonder if you realize what you have done for yourself in the last two months? O. I'm not thinking of your losses at cards and so on, though I happen to know they have been frightful. It's-things in general. Good heaven, you don't suppose people don't know? Why, you've not so much as set your foot inside your chambers. Look at the briefs you were getting, and at your age! Why, you'd the ball at our feet." He paused, watching again far from pleasant, that twitched the other's lps. "O, I might as well hold my tongue, of course! But I can't see you deliberately kick down your whole career and say noth-Ing. . . Look here, if you must go-I can

spare the evening-I'll come with you." Barraclough laughed again.

"I think not," he dissented. "Margaret advised you not to let me out of your sight, I suppose? Yes, I see she did. Fortunately for her and yourself-you are not an exponent of realism. Consequently you will remain where you are. For myself, I shall get riotously, roaringly, ravingly drunk. What may follow is on the knees of the gods. You will probably be called upon to bail me out, supposing that I am bailable. For the present-good night."

Farrant attempted no answer-the man of few words knew when it was futile to use any; he turned away with a shrug. Barraclough, at the door, stopped and glanced back. Then crossed over quickly and held out his hand. As was sometimes the case, he looked suddenly almost boyishly young.

"Thanks, old man," he said quietly, "Good night."

Farrant nodded and echoed the good night. Barraclough went out, in a few minutes was strolling leisurely through the warm, dry streets. Leisurely, because the night was still young. And before the morning there were many hours. A sudden thought, idea, presently brought him, with a laugh, to a standstill at a corner. An adjacent flower-girl, observantly on the watch, accosted him. He laughed again, waving away the white rose she extended.

"Unsuitable, my dear," he said seriously, "Red, if you please. The reddest thing in your basket. A match, if possible, for-for the occasion. Ah, yes, thanks-that'll do'"

Turning away with the offered red flower in his buttonhole, he walked now at a pace which told of a settled purpose. Which purpose took him straightway to a certain famous square that is an acknowledged center of the center of things. The house he approached was brilliantly lighted and gay with flowering window boxes; a footman hovered, waiting, near the great cream-and-gold motor that purred by the curb; the doors stood open; there were glimpses of more flowers, more footmen, an immaculate butler, a fluttering French maid.

As he halted another figure appeared, a woman's. She paused for a moment while the maid placed a cloak on her shoulders, then advanced, slowly descending the steps. The cloak was all chiffon and lace and embroideries, transparent and airy as a cloud; through it there showed the curves of a perfect figure, the glitter of jewels on neck and arms, the gleam of a wonderful frock; the light was bright upon piled blonde hair, upon the rose and white of a beautiful face; she was of a type that, while hardly past girlhood, blooms into a vivid and superb maturity. Barraclough gave a laugh, advancing. He thrust away the hovering footman, as she reached the car stood

bareheaded with the door held wide. "It is a fine evening," he said smiling, and bowed to her. She fell back with caught breath. "O!" she gasped. "O!" and stared at him; her rose overwashed with the pallor of fright.

He repeated the smile-it was very ugly. "A fine evening," he said again. "An evening to herald a perfect day. Tomorrow should be all that can be desired. You think so?"

"Why-What do you-How-how dare you-" she stammered, incoherently. And with distointed words sprang past into the car, "Go -go away," she panted, and cowered with scared eyes. "I-I-" Barraclough smiled once

"You are well content!" he suggested. suavely. "O, I do not doubt it! The diamonds are admirable. And the frock-Paquin, I think? Ah, yes-the touch is inimitable! By the way, my apologies-I once called you worthless. Most unjust! At the present moment you are,

incontestably, worth a great deal:" "This-this is hateful of you! I-I wen't be insulted" she cried, shrinking more and trembling Barraclough, sweeping a bow that in its depth touched mockery, was aware of another figure descending the steps, a man Dompous and portly, bald and florid; knew, as

broken since the entrance of the parlor after a moment's hurried colloquy, he was folmaid and the coffee, With his pad on his lowed. His stop and turn were so abruptly nee, happy, absorbed, the house's master, Far- sharp that the other started, almost recoiled. And, recovering, burst into speech of agitated

"What-what's the meaning of this, sir?" he demanded. "I-I am-"

"Frightened?" supplied Barraclough, smooth-

"Indignant, sir-most indignant! It-it is inyou are drunk-"

"Not yet," said Barraclough, more blandly. "It-it is an outrage, sir! If-if it should "I conclude"-he spoke without moving- occur again I warn you that I shall at

"Go to the devil!" said Barraclough, very pleasantly. His hand on the other's collar swung him about; he laughed and walked on. In a minute the motor passed him; he had a glimpse of a blonde head, of jewels on a white neck, and opposite a face of flushed rage and perturbation. His sauntering stride took him out of the square, took him through adjacent squares. He paused presently to glance at his watch, from it to the name of the street. Time was getting on. And near was a certain night club, heard of because unsavorily notorious, but never seen. At the back of his mind there had perhaps been some idea of the night-club? This turning should be on the way-he went down the turning. A street of flat-faced houses, dull, respectable, silent. And, but for himself, empty. Odd, how at certain hours, parts of this vast London, the thronged and throbbing could seem more utterly deserted, solitary than-

"It is gone! What shall I do? I have dropped, "Ah! Well, results have justfled you-I don't lost it! Ah, little imbecile I am! I cannot go! And there is nowhere else. My faith, what shall I do?" meaned a voice.

It spoke in French. A voice, broken, halfsobbing, bewildered, panic-stricken. And certainly feminine. Barraclough, walking in the roadway, swung round. On the pavement, in the shadow, a dark shape stooped, shook its

garments, searched, it seemed wildly with fresh ejaculations of dismay and distress. He advanced, hesitated, spoke. "I beg your pardon," he began. "I-" The

figure, girl or woman, started up. "No, no!" she cried. "You must not speak to me, monsieur, I-I do not answer. Go-

"But you are in trouble-have droppedlost something?" Barraclough persisted. "Your purse, perhaps? If so-"

"No, no! It does not matter. It is nothing, monsieur. If you please, leave me and

She had shrunk back against the railings, putting out a defensive ungloved band; from bangle encircling the slender wrist a little silver heart hung down. A small, slight thing in shabby black, a grl who was almost a child, 16 or 17 perhaps. A delicate oval face gleaming like a pearl against dark hair. An extraordinary fine finish in the curve of the cheek, in the lines of nostril and mouth and chin. Dilated black lashed eyes that, as the light of a near lamp caught them, showed a mingling color of violet and green. Barraclough looked at all these—at the little, piteous, trembling, repelling hand. And he moved to stand bareheaded under the lamp.

suit his purpose equally. Pausing to light a

elgaret, his thoughts went back to Farrant.

who would probably work himself into a deuce

of a stew before morning! A brick, Farrant,

straight, clean, honest. But every reason to

be, married to a woman who adored him and

whom he adored, who would stick to him

through thick and thin. A man might well

empty shops-a block of evident warehouses-

a patch of uneven flagstones-standing back,

beyond it a flat faced house-more warehouses

of a lightning flash. Had flared up, at the

moment that he passed it, in the lower win-

dows of the house that stood back. Flared up

behind blinds of a most unusual color, a deep

and vivid purple. And at the same instant had

for only from a woman's throat could burst

that shrilly quavered moan of anguish and

fear. It shivered into silence. And rose again

piercingly into a wild shriek of terror, while,

shadowed on one of the purple blinds, Barra-

clough caught the man's outline-the arm

swung upward menacingly, the clenched hand

grasping the knife-and shouted as he dashed

across the uneven flags to the door. The door

yielded as he touched it, was open-he dashed

in. He dashed in and the lights went out.

Something caught his foot; in black darkness

upon him in the darkness, sinewy, powerful;

he stumbled heavily to his knees. Hands were

something damp, sweet savored, sickly, was

pressed hard over his nostrils and mouth. The

darkness spread to his brain, flooding the world.

stabbed by vivid light. Closing them, he slow

ly put up a hand to his forehead and felt it

wet, was conscious of a sensation in his nos-

trils of something pungent and stinging. He

opened his eyes again. Facing him as he lay

-he was lying-a fall of drapery, of curtains,

Heavy curtains, almost but not quite meeting.

Purple curtains? Yes, purple. A hideous color.

purple. A hateful color. Turning his eyes, they

took in a patch of purple rug, part of a pur-

ple chair, a corner-there was a rustle at his

head; some one was standing before him, was

"Permit me," said a voice, courteously,

Barraclough found himself repeating the

name. It was oddly difficult to do this. It

had been oddly difficult to raise his head, to

turn his eyes. And he looked at Dr. Casimer

La Rue. A black clad figure. Tall, lean to

gauntness. Remarkable in breadth of shoul-

der, depth of chest, length of arm. Immensely

powerful, probably. White hair, rolled back

from a broad forehead; white mustache and

beard. A distinctly handsome face; intensely

serene, benign, benevolent, Yes. Yes. But stand-

ing so he blotted out the curtains. The purple

gled-Barraclough strove to lift his head.

"The woman!" he exclaimed.

"The woman-?"

Listen," said Dr. La Rue. .

curtains. The purple-memory stirred, strug-

"Who was here. I heard her scream."

"Pardon me-no. You heard no woman.

At the curtains he parted them, reaching a

hand through the opening. The movement

showed vaguely a dark room, faintly sketched

in the darkness a square window masked by

shadowed upon the blind-the purple blind-

of such a window he had seen-there was a

quaver of anguish and fear, made its shudder-

"Exactly-a phonograph. You find it real-

istic? Ah, even in her most trivial moments

science is wonderful! But we will not, I think,

have the scream. It is attended, necessarily,

with more or less risk. Though, at this hour.

with very little, very-practically none. Also

His turn, his darting arm, were lightning

swift. And the caught up knife quivered in

his clenched hand with the gesture of the

shadow on the blind! Barraclough struggled;

memory, complete, flooding, rushed upon him.

The sudden darkness-his stumble in the dark-

ness-the suffocating pressure that had stifled

his senses-the laugh-the laugh that came

now told everything. Mad! The man was mad!

clough met his smile, his gesture.

"A phonograph!" he exclaimed.

blind. The room must lie to the front. For,

looking down as he looked up.

gently, "Dr. Casimer La Rue."

Barraclough, opening his eyes, found them

And out of it, far off, came laughter.

come the cry. A cry there was no mistaking,

The lights had flared up with the rapidity

-Barraclough, stopping, swung about.

"Hallo!" he ejaculated loudly.

"Mademoiselle," he said in his difficult, slow run straight, make good, with that incentivesomething to do it for! . . . Suppose he French, "I have a sister who is, I think, not much older than you. It may one day chance chucked up this rot-after all, it was rot!--who can tell?-that she finds herself in a went back-no, hanged if he would! He went strange land, like you, in a difficulty like yours. . down the turning. As badly lighted as the other, If that should happen I hope there may be as deserted as the other. On the opposite side also a man to speak to her as I venture to area railings of what were most likely the speak to you, to offer her his services as I backs of offices. On the side he walked, some offer mine to you. I can say no more."

He waited. Of the face the girl's upward gaze searched. Farrant and Margaret, his wife, could have pointed to lines about eyes and mouth, to a stubborn setting of jaw and a certain recklessly hardened air as things that had not been there two months ago. Perhaps, seeing, she failed to read them, Perhaps saw only a face at which women, looking once, had usually looked again. Her scrutiny lasted only a moment. She put out her hand with a diffident gesture.

"I will tell you, monsieur," she said simply. "That is well. This is your way? We will walk on," said Barraclough. "And now-I was right? You have lost your purse?"

"Yes, monsieur. And I have no more money. not a sou-nothing! But first, if you please, I will explain. I came to England seven, eight months ago, to my brother, Charles, He had lived here several years and taught the languages, our French and Spanish and Italian -he was, O, very clever! But he wrote that he was ill, and wanted some one to care for him; he asked me to come. Our mother-our stepmother-had married again, her new husband had also children-there was no home for me, you understand. So I was glad, very glad, to come to Charles. I nursed him, but he did not get better-the doctor said he had worked too hard. In two months he died, monsieur!"

"And since?" asked Barraclough gently. Since she had worked, she answered-all Charles' money had gone in his illness. She had tried to teach, but she knew so little, had been taught so little, and could not speak the language. She had tried to sew, but did it "O. so badly!"-people were angry, and the pay so very small; poignantly, unconsciously, she sketched a picture of a frightened child, solitar shrinking from coming hunger-"there was no home, you understand, monsieur."

Now she had obtained a post with a South African family returning to the cape, partly as maid, partly as nurse. It was not what Charles would have wished, or her father, but to live one must work-was it not so? They had gone to the port from which the vessel sailed: she was to follow by this night's train. Now, on her way to the station, her luggage already gone, she had missed her purse, had somehow dropped it-lost it-Barraclough met the tragic gesture, with a reassuring smile.

"That, at least, need not trouble you." he said, cheerfully, "You will do me the honor, mademoiselle, of allowing me to supply what you need. It is too little to be worth thanks, blue eyes. An expression quite extraordinarily And-yes-if you desire, you shall return it-I will give you my card with my address. Then, at some time in the future, when it is more

than easy, you can send it back to me." Turning back, they were now in the thor oughfare where he had halted to look at the name of the street. He took out his pocketbook, slipping a card into the folded notes he handed her, watching as she carefully placed the packet in an inner pocket of the shabby black coat. A little lower down, posted on a refuge, that most dependable feature of modern London, a policeman, was standing-with a

word or two of explanation he led her across. The young lady did not speak English; she wanted to take a certain train from a certan station; would be whistle a taxi, see her safely click. And the moan, the terrible, shrill into it, make the driver fully understand where he was to go? he asked. The constable ac- ing outery. The doctor moved back. Barracepted the charge and its appropriate accompaniment with a cheerful alacrity. Barraclough bowed gravely over a little cold hand from whose slender wrist the silver heart hung down and turned away. Glancing back when he had gone some 50 yards, he saw the childish figure standing beside the sturdy form in blue and knew from the turn of the head that the violet green eyes watched him. Involuntarily the last realistic, was it not? And, combined with

words of her fervent thanks came to his tongue. 'his-!' "She will never forget! And le bon Dieu will bless me!" he said, half aloud. "Humph! I am not past praying for, it seems! What a child to be alone! I don't think I ever saw quite so exquisite a little face!" He laughed suddenly, cynically. "Bah-a most inappropriate interlude! Now, which way do we go?

Down here?" The turning whose corner he had reached must run about parallel with the other, would And, painted as though upon running water.

"You are to drink it-yes?" said Dr. La Rue. Checked in his rhapsody, it was after a Blue Ribbon pause that he answered, and rose to his feet, his back was still toward the curtains. The curtains parted again, parted more—Barra-clough saw, A miracle? The French girl! Her Piction little figure in the shabby black, desperate teror and horror painted upon her face and in her dilated eyes, passionate encouragement in the movement of the childish hand from whose wrist the little silver heart hung down-so, for a breath's length she was visible before the purple curtains fell soundlessly together and the other spoke again. "You will drink," he repeated. "You find

that you are able to lift your head, observe that your arm is at liberty? With intention. It is my desire that you should drink freely. To the success which must henceforth be so magnificent, to the sacrifice that is so infinitesimally small! You understand? You will drink. And you will sleep." "I shall sleep," repeated Barraclough, and felt his forehead, cold. "I shall sleep. You will observe until I wake? Afterward-?" "There is no afterward," said Dr. La Ruc. Barraclough kept his eyes upon him. But

> helpless in this frightful house. And if her nerve failed her for a moment-"There is no afterwards," sald Dr. La Rue. "You will sleep. You will wake. For a time you will suffer. Probably acutely, I think, I fear, acutely. Then will come the end. And I shall have seen, shall have made my tests have grasped the knowledge I lack! Beside

moved, were parted. Barraclough dragged his eyes away-if the other turned, saw-"I am to take your drug?" he asked.

The cartains had

He had struggled again, desperately, futilely. His head was upon a cushion. He could raise it from the neck. His right arm was free. Nothing else was free. From threat to feet, crossing, recrossing, went broad, white bandages, securing him to the bench-it seemed a bench-upon which he lay. They were nowhere painful, nowhere tight, but they held him as helplessly as a caught bird in a closed hand. The other moved to the side of the "You are bound-yes," he assented. "But not, I trust, uncomfortably. Before explaining

passersby-I should so much regret-I have waited so long!-but should there-Ah, noyou will not call!" From the street, muffled but audible, had come the sound of feet, voices, laughter-Barraclough's lips had parted for a cry. And in a flash the knife point was above his heart. The

-I desire to fully explain-may I suggest that

but for ourselves the house is empty? As for

came a vision of the street, its empty shops

and warehouses, its silence, desertion!

bench.

"I am bound!" cried Barraclough,

sounds were close, were passing, were dwindling, "I should so much regret-yet. . But you will not call, I think?" repeated Dr.

La Rue. "I shall not call," said Barraclough,

He met the pleading eyes, the kindly eyes, the mad eyes, and felt that he looked into the eyes of death. Death that might be postponed for probable minutes, for possible hours, but, without a miracle, inevitable death, Without a miracle . . . The doctor laid down the knife. He drew forward a chair, seating him-

self, and bent his whole head with a smile.

"I thank you," he said gently, "You lie without discomfort, I hope? Good. And now my explanation. Is it necessary to enter into the details of my little trap-ingenious, I think? -or into what followed your entry? No-you are intelligent-as satisfactory in that respect as in youth and physique. All, in fact, that I desire-I am most fortunate! You understand that I watched at the window? I do so always. It is long since the first time, long since all was ready. Weeks? Months? I do not know -I do not count, But I have patience-much patience. They who serve Science must possess that first of all, as they must follow her beckoning through all and in spite of all. I waited. Men passed-I let them pass-they were not worthy. You came, and the honor falls to you-the honor which you will share with me, Casimer La Rue! Share deservedly, since, understanding, you must rejoice at an opportunity so glorious. For to you it falls to prove the power of my drug!"

"Of your drug?" repeated Barraclough. His eyes were upon the purple curtains, the curtains that hid the dark room. His brain was clear-he knew his brain was clear. But at the moment when the noise from the street was loudest, at the moment when the knife had been held above his heart, there had seemed to come a sound from beyond them-a sound like a desperately caught breath, And now? Did they move? An inch? Less than an inch? As if touched by a furtive hand. But

The doctor was pouring out a torrent of words. Of his drug. The drug was his life work. The drug was the most gigantic contribution to science which the century could show. Which any century could show. The drug would render the now impossible the commonplaces of every day, would open wonders in the future of which no man had dared to dream. There were no bounds or limits to the vast, the marvelous potentialities of the drug. Throughout the ages the world's once martyred peoples would, acclaiming it, acclaim also the name of Casimer La Rue! There was but one drawback, one stumbling block-he was not sure of, had been unable to ascertain with precision the force and manner of its action upon the heart. Animals were useless for experiment-the drug was for man, was- The curtains had moved, were parted; from beyond, divined rather than seen, was flung a frantic gesture of warning! Barraclough

dragged his eyes away-if the other turned,

saw-Hope, wild hope, held his voice to steadi-"I am to take your drug?" he asked,

he knew that the curtains had moved again, that the little face peered fearfully through. How came the child there? Being there, why did she not go? Fetch help? Could she go? Who could answer for what might hold her which nothing matters. You agree?" "All!" Barraclough echqed. And stopped

He waited for the assent. Barraclough gave the assent. His cars were straining. Absolute silence in the street. A nightpoliceman within hearing? The forlornest of hopes, but not impossible. He was to drink. When the drink was brought glass and contents should be dashed in the madman's face; all the force that was in him go out in one desperate cry. . The doctor had moved to a cabinet against the opposite wall, taken out a glass and put it down on a little stand with a marble top, was, from a carefully stoppered phial, pouring some tiny tablets into his hand. The drug, he explained, was easily dissolved in wine, was colorless, odorless, tasteless. He dropped the tablets into the glass and turned back to the cabinet. Between the parted curtain Barraclough met the girl's eyes. She gave a look wildly earnest and eager, at the unconscious figure, made a gesture towards the stand, the glass, another gesture-The gesture of drinking? Of raising glass and drinking? . . The doctor was filling the glass. Barraclough watched the red shine of the wine-his brain groped, wondering, struggling-The doctor was putting down the

"You will drink with me, doctor?" asked Barraclough, dry-lipped.

"With you? You wish it? Request it? Then, most certainly," said Dr. La Rue very courteously, smiling. He brought out a second glass. He filled

the second glass. The two stood at opposite ends of the stand. He took up the drugged Barraclough made a movement with

"My name!" he cried. "My name that is to be remembered, to be immortal with yours! You do not know it." "It is true-I had forgotten. A thousand

pardons! If you will give it to me-"No. I will write it. I can do so easily if you will bring pen and paper, hold them.

In the future it may have some value." "Value? You are too modest. It will be a treasure, a treasure to posterity! In a mo-

ment," said the doctor. He put down the drugged glass. In the same spot? Carefully in the same spot. He approached the bench. He drew out a pocketbook, a stylo pen. Between the inch-parted curtains Barraclough caught a swift little nod. And a smile-yes, a smile! He had interpreted

her aright-had understood! With a step for-

ward, an extended hand, she could reach the

stand, could shift, reverse the glasses-Barraclough took the offered style. The doctor opened the pocketbook, stooped, held it, steadied it. Over his shoulder Barraclough's eyes were on the curtains. On the girl's face, the girl's hand! If it trembled, blundered, that little frail hand! It moved steadily; the glasses were reversed; the curtains fell together. Barraclough wrote his name. The doctor bent his white head in courteous acknowledgment and laid the book down. He crossed to the stand by the curtains. He took up the undrugged glass. He brought it over. The undrugged glass was in Barraclough's hand. He took ut the drugged glass. He stood beside the bench

and raised it high. "Drink!" he cried exultantly. "Drink, my friend! Drink with me. To Science, the pale goddess of my worship, in whose honor it is permitted that you die!"

"To Science!" echoed Barraclough. He drained the glass. And the doctor's glass was drained. Would he suspect-would -He put the glass down gently. He put the other glass down gently. He walked the length of the room and came back. He sat down, with his kindly, benignant smile, waiting, Minutes passed. With every muscle of his bound body tense, Barraclough watched under lowered lids. There lay the knife. If, before the drug got him-How long would the drug be? The doctor's head was drooping. He raised it, looked about him, passed a hand over his forehead. . . . His eyes were glaz-

ing, closing. . . . He started up, moved a pace, staggered down into the chair again. . . His body relaxed inertly; his head fell back. The drug held and conquered him; he moved no more

And the girl, peering, waiting, ran and caught up the knife. In a minute or two Barraclough, free, got on his feet. To drop back helplessly, overcome with a horrible faintness and nausea. He mastered the qualm, and she spoke her first word.

"He is mad, monsieur," she said in a breaking, shaking voice-"quite mad?"

"Quite mad, my child." He waited. "How was it that you came?"

"It was the card, monsieur. I wished to see your name, and between the ewo little notes found the other. I did not think it was a mistake, no-I understand. But how, if I kept it, could I hope to repay so much? I ran after you. I was almost near enough to call when I saw you stop. It was very dark-I caught my foot and fell-in the moment that I did not see you were gone. I ran on, ran past, ran back-I was puzzled. In a moment all the windows were lighted-I saw the door was open. And lying before it the red flower from your coat. was afraid to go in, afraid to go awayit was so strange, and I was sure you were here. But presently I ventured and listened-I could hear nothing. The door of the next room was open-I crept in. There were sounds behind the curtains-I looked through-he was binding you! I think the good God did not let me scream! What could I do, alone, so little, so weak? And where you had left me there were many people. I went back to the door. It was shut, monsieur!"

All the terror with which she had made the discovery was in her face and eyes.

"Monsieur, it was shut! There is no lock, no handle-nothing. And the lights went outeverywhere but here. I crept back and looked again. He had finished and sat watching you -I waited-I did not know at all what I should Once he took up the knife and tried its edge with his finger. I thought if he went near you then I would scream-I had heard him laugh, you understand, and knew that he was mad. . . . When he sat down with his back to the curtains I let you see me so that you should know you were not alone. It was only when he put the drugged glass so near that I saw I might save you if you said he must drink too, kept his attention while I changed the glasses. If you would but understand! You did understand. I did it. That is all."

because many words were beyond him, and few-! "You were by the curtains. Then when he started the phonograph-" "Monsieur, his sleeve touched me. I almost

died with fear! Oh, if you can stand, let us go! He may recover-"No, no, he is safe. Did-did you under-

stand-" began Barraelough involuntarily. A violent shudder shook her. "He is, I think, French, monsteur While

he watched you he talked to himself in French. I understood. "Forget it. Remember only that he is quite

mad. Come," said Barraclough. He rose on unsteady feet. In the doorway they looked back at the unconscious figure upon which the light was bright-the picture of a sleeping saint might have shown such a face as that of Dr. Casimer La Rue. Beside the heavy purple portiers that fell behind them a thick wire appeared, running along the wall, vanishing by the lintel of the lockless, handleless door. Barraclough pulled at this. Slowly, velvet noiseless, it glided open and stood wide. They passed out. On the uneven flags the faded red flower was lying-it showed vivid as a stain of blood. All the gray street lay hushed in the colorless chill pallor of dawn, but pale streaks of green and saffron in the eastern sky spoke of coming day. A constable passing on the opposite pavement paused and stared at the two swaying figures, staggering, holding to each other. Barraclough, as they reached the curb, heard his name in a tone of loud astonishment, found himself confronting a face he knew. He pointed with a shaking hand.

"Over there!" he said and laughed weakly. "The house with the purple blinds! The house that stands back!" And then stumbled through a few disjointed sentences which, after his hasty whistle for a comrade, who was as hastily dispatched for a taxi, sent the man hurrying across was whiter than the dawn.

"He will be taken away." she said, and shuddered-"will be kept safe, monsleur?" "He will be kept quite safe." said Barraclough gently, and repressed his own shudder. Try not to think of it, my child. Can you walk to the corner? We shall be out of sight

of the horrible place." They walked to the corner and waited until the taxi came. Barraclough helped her in. gave a direction, and got in beside her. Her eyes turned to him questioningly as it started. 'We are going, monsieur-?" the interro-

"A little way into the country. To a lady who was once a school friend of my mother. She is good enough to say that she regards me as a son. May I know who I shall pre-

sent to her? Your name-?" "It is Yvonne Dugarre, monsieur." "I think, Mademoiselle Yvonne, that we are neither of us fit to talk any more," said Barraclough.

So there had been silence when, as the sun rose, they reached a large gray house standing in staid old gardens among the Surrey orchards. Into the room where they waited there presently came hurrying a stately, black-robed ady whose handsome, benign face was crowned by a nun's white coif and veil, to whom, with all formality, he presented Mademoiselle Yvonne Dugarre. Then there followed a colloquy apart in a great window, from which the lady, turning agitated and tearful, took the girl in her arms and kissed her before she went out. Barraclough met the question in the violent green

"This is a convent, a school," he explained. "There are 20 pupils, young girls like yourself. It is arranged that you are supplied with all that you wish for or need, as they are-that you share their studies and their lives as one of them; are made, I hope, as happy. You accept -and will remain, my child?" "Accept? To live here? To learn? To be

safe? Oh," she cried, flushing, paling, trembling; "but it is too wonderful, too good to be real! For me, who am alone, have only my hands to work! How shall I thank you? But -but I fear-" She broke off, hesitating. "You are, perhaps, very rich, monsieur?" she hazard-

"Very rich?" He read the meaning that was so plain in her lifted eyes. "No; but if I were very much poorer I should still ask leave to do so small a service-the debt, the gratitude are mine. With your courage, your marvelous courage, you have saved my life, which this morning I find as precious as a sane man should. Though last night, when we met-He stopped.

"Yes? Last night?" She waited. "I was ready to fling it away, or do worse, as only a fool would. You wonder? Today was to have been my wedding day."

"Today?" she cried. "Oh, but how strange! It is also-" In her quick breakoff, in her gesture towards him of little, impulsive hands, there was the sweetest compassion. "Was to have been? Ah, but indeed I understand! She died, monsieur?'

"Not at all," said Barraclough, smiling. "I am without that justification of my folly, mademoiselle. You will hear? Briefly, then, You ask, am I rich? Compared with some, yes. Compared with many more, contemptibly poor. She chose to jilt me for one of them. Why not? With the money and all that it means he has also given her a coronet, brand new. And is, I believe, barely three years older than her father!"

"O!" she cried again. "And you leved her? "As I was so much a fool, it would seem so. But there was at least the excuse that

she is beautiful. You see." She took the offered photograph. The photograph of a superb figure of royal curves, a face that suggested a sumptuous beauty of glowing blondness well. But Barraclough look-

ed only at the small face bent over it, with the pearl-like purity of color, the finished fineness of lip and cheek and chin, the length of black (Turn to Page Eight, Column Fire)