'A traitor to what?' he asked. 'To all love and to all women, she re

'Nay, you are too harsh. I am a man and I love after the fashion of men.'

'Then I wish,' she cried, with sudden passion, that all men were struck dead.' He turned to her in wonder, but she had vanished from his side.

"What a tragedy queen," he' said, were dead. She would find it rather a the air heavy and oppressive. dreary world on the whole, if there were no men in it.'

many superb rooms. Her heart was amuse me, Allie, if I stay at home?, beating, her pulse throbbing, every nerve was on fire with indignant anger. Did only the way in which people talked to the masked ball?" each other at fancy balls?

She came to a small anteroom, and lying on a chair was a black domino. with a hood.

'I will speak to him again, she thought. Quick as lightning she drew off the lover dancing with Camila, and watched her opportunity again. It came after the grand banquet was over, and she saw the colonel in one of the grand saloons alone. She did not know that he had just gone through a most sentimental hand.

'Let me tell you your fortune,' she said to him. 'I have told many to-night.' 'I know my fortune,' he replied; though I thank you for the intention.'

she said, 'from the palms of men's hands; cannot find her though.'

shall I read what I see in yours?' 'Yes; that will be a novelty,' he replied, drawing off his glove and holding out his

recognize by instinct her touch

'It is a white hand,' she said, poring over it-'white, warm, soft, yet strong. Has it ever clutched a man's throat or chocked the last breath from a little child?" He drew back, half offended.

'A rude question and a cruel one,' he 'Has it ever done worse?' she asked.

flung it away?" 'Yes,' he replied many and many a

'I thought so. I did not know whether it was man, woman or child; but I saw lines of murder on it.'

'We do not call that kind of thing murder,' he said, quietly.

'Do you not? Men use milder words for that crime, but women call it murder, and they are right. I see other pictures change. here. I see a river, a swift, deep stream, and on it floats a dead woman, with her face turned to the sky.'

He looked up in wonder.

'Who are you?' he asked. 'I will know. 'You will never know,' she replied. 'I have been puzzled twice to-night,' he

said. 'I will not be puzzled again.' He laid his hand lightly on her arm, as though he would detain her. She

shook it off with a fierce cry, and the next minute she had quitted the room. 'English again,' he said. 'I seem to

have a fine reputation among them. understand it.'

Alison had flown as though for life; not for worlds would she have had him discover her identity. He had been puzzlthe expression of his face. She hastened from the ball-room, and then rememberthat she had forgotten to engage any carriage to fetch her home. Fortunately for her the night was dark, and she reached home without notice. She went at once to her room: she was exhausted, would not think; if she were to give way to reflection, she should go mad. She laid should be annoyed at that.' her wearied head on the pillow, and slept the sleep of exhaustion.

'It was early in the morning when she heard the colonel return; the birds were you. We will say no more about her. singing in the trees outside, and the Alison-I do not like to mention it.' flowers were all fragrant. Then her great sorrow woke and cried. She re- she kissed his hands and face. membered all that had happened-all her hopes and fears; but there is some- the time would come when you would thing hopeful in the morning sunshine; cease to love me?' the most terrible part of death is that we must shut out sunshine; whereever affection than he had shown toward her it is my wish, Alison, that you them of this little entanglement in Florthe light of the sun comes it must bring hope. It brought hope to Alison; it was so hard to despair in the midst of all that laughing, brilliant loveliness. The dark fears and darker doubts seemed almost insensibly to vanish with the glori-

ous morning light and song. Perhaps she was jealous without cause; perhaps he loved her truly and well; his answers might have all been given in jest, believing the questions to be asked in jest. Oh, if she could but believe in him! Everything fair and beautiful seemed to rebuke her want of faith—the sunshine and the bright laughing flowers.

If she might but be happy as they were and then, as she stood watching the light on the roses, it came home to her forcibly that she did not deserve to be hand. happy for she was not good. It was late when she saw Colonel Montague, and his first cry was:

bring me a bottle of soda-water.'

quietly. I thought you were going to vers. His face changed as he opened inquire if I had missed you, and if I had the envelope; as he had looked two min- know when they began or when they bride he hoped to take there.

thought about you.' 'I believe you will be a sensible Woman

after all, Alison. ven pity me. It will be when thy heart

CHAPTER XXVIII.

AN IMPORTANT TELEGRAM. Two days have passed since the masked ball, and not one word concerning it had ever passed the colonel's lips. Alison had not seen much of him, as the He saw the gold and purple domino no greater part of his time had been spent away from home. But this morning he declared himself tired; it was a very with a low, light laugh. 'She must be warm morning, too; the heat of the sun cannot tell which, to wish that all men the flowers was so strong that it made nearer. He waved her away.

'Very delicious,' said the colonel, as he stood looking out on the lovely, laughing, He forgot her. Such little rencounters; sunlit world-'very delicious, but decidsuch little incidents were not uncommon edly enervating. I have three or four at such balls. He went back to his beau- engagements this morning, but I shall before him. What was it—this thought why had I not the courage to tell him?" tiful Camila. Alison wandered through not think of fulfilling them. Can you in which she had no share, this sudden

'I think that is doubtful; but I am quite sure that you can amuse yourself,' he mean what he had said, or was it replied Alison. 'Arthur did you go to

> His face changed suddenly-the laughing good-humour seemed to die from it. 'Yes, I went,' was the reply.

'Did you enjoy it?' she continued. 'After a fashion, Alison. Will you domino of purple and gold, and put on a few drops of brandy in this soda-water, the black one with the hood, then has- then I shall feel able to exert myself. It tened to the ball-room. She saw her was a curious ball. I met two curious

> 'Did you? What were they, or rather who were they?' she asked.

'One was a tall and stately English lady, who wore a gold and purple domino; and, by the bye, there has been a great excitescene with the pretty vivandiere, but ment at the pallazzo. She was the only thoughts.' she went up to him, holding out her lady present in gold and purple. Long quite suddenly, the domino was found in should he treat me so?" one of the antercoms. She was English -she talked English to me-and there 'I have been reading fortunes to-night.' that it would seem easy to trace her; they he said:

'That seems strange,' said Alison.

'Yes; there is quite a sensation about lect myself.' She took it wondering that he did not the purple and gold domino at the every limb. Palazzo Orsini is requested to call or send for it, but no one has applied for it.' 'Perhaps it was not of much value,' said ever did before. The earl is dead.'

'Yes, it was superb. There was a report that it had been worn by Miss Lornhaven, and her mother was much annoyed at it. They found out where it had been made, and asked the modiste 'Has it held a woman's heart and then for a description of the lady who ordered it. Still they could make nothing of it.' 'Did you see her?' asked Alison.

'That I did. She told me-it amuses me to think of it-she told me that she wished all the men in the world were

Alison laughed. He did not notice how

forced the laughter was. 'Who was your other strange friend?' she asked, and again she saw his face

'A fortune-teller, who told me I had the lines of murder in my hand.' 'Of murder!' repeated Alison.

'Yes,' he laughed lightly; 'she called breaking hearts murder. Why, that is

every-day pastime.' 'Is it?' she asked, briefly. 'Then it is sorry pastime, Arthur.'

'We cannot alter the world, Alison, or make it different. Men will be men

always.' 'I do not see why they need be quite so wicked,' replied Alison.

'Are they wicked?' he said lazily. 'Well Some of them have got to hear about Ali-that is decidedly wrong; women's hearts son, I suppose. What a misfortune. It should be warranted not to break. After will not matter, though, unless they all, it is nonsense, you know—they never should tell Camila; but she would not do break. It is only a figure of speech. How many times in one's life does a woman declare that her heart is broken? Now, if I wanted to express real sorrow, I should use the Irish expression-'My ed, and pained, too, she was sure, from heart is scalded'-that is far more ex-

'It was a curious thing for any one to say to you, Arthur,' she continued. 'So I thought. The droll part of the matter is that the fortune-teller was English. I tried too detain her, but she sprung away from me. She said such his own away. no less by physical fatigue than by the strange words to me that I should have emotion she had undergone. She said to unmasked her. It made me feel uncomherself that that night, at least, she fortable, Alison, for I am afraid people in Florence here begin to suspect us, and I

'Did she say anything about me?' asked Alison.

'Well, it was, and yet it was not about Alison flung herself down by his side;

Arthur, Arthur! did she fortell that

for many a day.

'No, Alison, no-nothing of the kind. you want. Will you promise?' Of course I love you—why should I not?' Yet, even as he said the words, he knew that they were false as any that had ever passed his lips. She was comforted by them; and as she knelt there, caressing with her light touch the clusters of hair round his brow, there came the gallop of a horse, and in a few min-

the colonel. What barbarity! Where than to leave her thus. is it from, Allie?'

utes one of the servants came in to say

that a messenger had arrived with a

She took the envelope from the man's

It is from England,' she replied. Arthur Montague flung away his cigar son Trente. and started to his feet. He knew there Death to all sentiment, Alison, and was only one circumstance which would cause a telegram to be sent from England 'Death to what sentiment?' she asked, he had only sent his address to his law-

tites before-careless, happy, and debon- ended; terrible days for her, for her lover presence was required in England. He read the words several times be-

'Is there any answer?' Alison asked.

fore he realized them.

want a few minutes in which to recover him her secret it would have made al

He walked back to the window, and

love her with an immortal love. She down the letter with a bitter smile. could not endure it, this division of their bring me that box of cigars? I will take interests—this stand, as it where, outside his life. She went up to him.

'Arthur,' she cried, passionately, 'what not have written so coldly.' has happened?" He did not even hear her, he was so

absorbed in thought.

'Nothing very dreadful; something that then the haunting fears came round

shocked me and sobered, me as nothing again. 'The earl!' she repeated what earl?' 'I am his heir-I am Earl of Cardyne.'

She looked at him, poor soul, with words never came. eager, trembling gladness.

ought to be a king!' son,' he said gravely. 'I shall have to him the vices of his youth. A peer of live in England now.'

'Of course, dear,' she said, clasping thing from the colonel in the army. him with trembling hands, 'of course you must be in England, I know. Are you must abandon all flirtations-they were going to-day, Arthur-to-day?"

hold me in your arms just one minute fancy as no other had taken it. As for longer. Must you go-must you leave poor Alison; that was a thing of the past; me? What shall I do? Oh, great Hea- he must be careful and steer clear of all Speaking Tubes, Stoves and Furnaces fitted ven! what shall I do?'

'You are going in ten minutes,' she moaned, 'and I-oh, Arthur, I had some-

thing to tell you!' 'Tell me now,' he said.

I thought that I would tell you some feel it, he said to himself-it was only time to-day-this evening; but now-' natural to expect that, but no doubt; 'I have not really a minute to spare, after a time, she would forget all about it, Alison.' But she clung to him with despairing Nothing was more probable—she was a

hands; until the day he died he never beautiful girl, and worth any man's love. quite forgot that touch. He tried to unclasp them to free himself from her grasp, came over him as he thought of the but it seemed to him as though the force future that awaited him. No remorse of her agony had driven her mad.

I am coming back.'

'When shall you come?' she whispered. ning to a new life.

'I cannot quite tell, Alison: there will be a great deal to do. I shall be incess- and tell her that her fate was sealedantly occupied. I shall have no leisure that he would not return to Florence.

you will come back to me?' but one minute longer-you must remain tion for himself. you need; you must stay here and keep and there was no more to be done. He Her passion of love, her agony of fear, up the house just as though I were at went to his solicitors one day when he touched him; he kissed her with more home. Try to be happy; but, remember, had nothing particular to do, and told

'I will not. Good-bye, Alison.'

He clasped her ln his arms, knowing full well that it was for the last time; knowing that he kissed her face for the last time; dimly realizing, by the light of her great love, the wrong he had done her, and that it would be a thousand 'A telegram on a day like this!' said times more merciful to leave her dead

'What sins are murder, if this be not?" he thought; and in that one mement, the first remorseful one of his life, Lord Car dyne wished that he had never seen Ali

CHAPTER XXIX.

A STARTLING LETTER. so cheerless, that Alison never seemed to ficent mansion, and prepare it for the

naire—he never looked again. Just as had left her with her secret untold. There down to Hargrave; he summoned the he had expected, the telegram was from had been something in his manner—she best firm in London to his assistance, and 'If I ever am,' she thought, 'may Hea- his lawyers, to say that the Earl of Car- could not tell what words would define it. he commenced the decorations and imdyne was dead, and that his immediate neither could she decile in her thoughts provements on such a scale of maga distance from him. He was Earl of about them; and so a month passed by. Cardyne now: he could never be more grand or more noble in Alison's eyes-he 'Yes, Alison, write for me-my hand was always a king among men; but this the servants in the villa, to the only Engtrembles. Say that I shall start for home would, she knew, entail upon him greater lish doctor in Florence, and to the old responsibilities, and he would bear them French nurse, but she had not told it to Her face grew deadly pale as she wrote well, she thought. She did not think the words-she dare not speak them. that the change in fortune would change There was something in his face she had him toward her. She knew that if, by never seen before—a sudden and new ex- any extraordinary change of circumpression of dignity. She did not speak stances, she could have been made queen until the servant left the room with the of the whole world, she should only have either an actress or a grand duchess, I was almost intolerable; the perfume from answer in his hand, then she drew a step valued her sovereignty because of sharing it with him. She brooded ever over 'Be silent, Alison, for a few minutes, I the same thought, that if she had told

the difference in the world to her. 'He must have cared for me more than stood looking thoughtfully on the scene for all the world,' she would say. 'Oh,

She heard from him once; a short letter shock; the nature of which she did not expressing his hope that she took care of even know? For the first time as stood herself-that she was well and happylooking at him, Alison realized how com- that for his own part he was so entirely pletely and utterly she was outside his overwhelmed with business he feared he life. He had not turned to her in his should be unable to find any time for perplexity, whatever it was, rather he writing to her, but when she required turned from her, as though the thought anything she could write to his solicitors, of her repelled him; yet he had sworn to Messrs. Walton & Walton. Alison laid

> 'I shall want nothing,' she said. 'What are solicitors to me? Oh, if he knew-if mistake she had opened the wrong letter, I had but told him my secret, he would a letter meant for another person. It be-

Her mind was in a turmoil of ideas: there were times when she believed him untrue, faithless, deceitful, lost to all 'I asked you for silence, Alison.' he blame for listening to anything that was after she had vanished, which she did herself. 'What have I done? Why the sake of effect. Why should she judge her lover, whom she loved for that? wide world who had ever loved her, no fore, communicate with us in reply.' 'I am not impatient, Alison, but I really one else had ever cared for her; he had wanted a few moments in which to col- done much to prove his love. She would be content and wait. He said he should it. All the journals have contained an 'What has happened, Arthur?' she ask- return. He would return, and then all was so easily deceived? It was a sorry

> She wrote to him little loving letters that might have touched the heart of a 'The earl-my kinsman,' he replied. stone-loving, pathetic, all pleading for kind words in return; but these kind

tent herself for two or three days, and

Arthur, Earl of Cardyne, was quite 'You-are Lord Cardyne! Oh! Arthur, different from Arthur Montague. With I am so glad for your sake; indeed, you the new mantle of dignity that had fallen over him came a new character-he 'It will bring about great changes, Ali- seemed to give up at once as beneath England, he argued, was a very different

He must maintain his dignity, he very well for a colonel, they would not do Plumbers, Gas Fitters and He drew out his watch and looked at it. for an earl-he should have to marry 'I must be gone from here in ten min- and settle. From all the world of utes" he said, 'Help me to get ready, women there was but one whom he cared to make his wife, and that was the 'In ten minutes! Oh, Arthur! Arthur! beautiful Camila-she had taken his SHEET such nonsense for the future; he must, as He was so touched by her agony that soon as he could possibly attend to it, despite his hurry, he stopped to kiss the see that affairs were arranged comfort-

ably for her, and bid her good-bye. As he lay back in his luxurious chair, thinking over all these arrangements, Houses Fitted up with Hot and Cold Water there came before him a vision of her face, as he had seen it last-so full of the 'No, I cannot,' she replied, despairingly. tragedy of woe. She would be sure to and, perhaps, in the end marry well.

A feeling of most serene satisfaction over Alison troubled him-she was but 'Let me go, Alison, I shall be too late, one of many. He never stopped to think my dear. It is not good-bye, you know; that she loved him with an exceptional love-that she was as different to the She looked at him with such woful, de- common order of women as is a rose spairing pain in her eyes, that he turned from a posy. He flattered himself that he was making quite a creditable begin-

The Messrs. Walton must write to her. time; but the very day that everything They must tell her what income he had is settled, I shall come back to Florence.' decided upon allowing her, and advise 'God bless you, Arthur!' she cried, for- her to retnrn to England; then when she getting, poor girl, that her lips had lost was gone, he would return to Florence their right to bless. 'You will not forget and make Camila his wife if she would me? you will not forget how I love you? accept him. He did not feel much doubt of that, and he smiled to himself as he 'Of course; and, Alison-see, I have remembered her unmistakable admira-

here, I will take care that you have all So it was all settled in his own mind, should not go into Florence; send for all ence. He did not wish to arrange i himself; he owned to being 'tender of I will do anything you tell me. Oh, heart,' and not liking to cause anything Arthur you are the very light of my eyes, like pain. Would they write for him the life of my soul-do not stay long from and say that the little nonsensical affair, between them must come to an end? They were to be very liberal over money arrangements; but he explained that it was imperative she should leave Florence, as he intended to marry there. Then he dismissed the matter from his

'Poor little Alison!' he said. 'I really hope she will not care much about it,' He quite forgot that when he wooed her he had sworn to love her with an immortal love.

The Messrs. Walton distinctly understood that there was no hurry over the early matter-not the least in the world: it was to be done at their own convenience. He himself was going to Hargrave Park, contest. Address, where in all probability, he should remain for the next few months. He in-Long days, so long and dreary, so sad, tended to entirely refurnish that magni-

Lord Cardyne lost no time. He went -a something that seemed to put her at nificence that half England was talking

Alison was anxiously waiting. Her secret-a secret no longer-was known to Arthur Montague. He was returning; he had been gone so long now that he could not possibly remain away much longer. and, when he came back, in the very midst of the happiness of their reunion she would tell him.

Hapless Alison! She wrote and received no answer. She watched and watched in vain. She spent long hours at the window, always hoping to see him coming, always hoping to catch the first sound of his footsteps, but he never came. And one morning-he had been away nearly four months then, and the autumn had set in-she saw the postman with an English letter for her.

There was a little cry of rapture on her lips, a glad light in her eye, a thanksgiving in her heart, as she went to take it. 'He had written at last,' she cried-'at

But the letter was in a strange hand writing, not in his. She opened it, and it seemed to her at first that by some "Walton Bros."

'DEAR MADAM,-We are instructed by our client, the Right Honorable the Earl of 'Arthur,' she cried again, 'tell me what honor, to all truih, lost to her; there were Cardyne, to ask your acceptance of a times again when she believed herself to fixed income of three hundred per annum, paid on condition that you leave Florsaid. 'I want to be alone with my said at the masked ball; people talked all ence and settle in England. We are 'What have I done?' cried the girl to meant; it was all nonsense, all said for earl makes this arrangement in consequence of his approaching marriage. We are also desired to express his regret at She stood by, her face as pale as death, A revulsion would come; she would not being able in terson to say farewell her lips trembling, until he turned to blame herself for having thought coldly to you. All arrangements for your future are so few English families in Florence her; then, touched by her drooping aspect of him. He was the only person in the have been made with us. You will, there-

She laughed aloud as she read. Did any one think for one moment, that she advertisement saying the lady who left ed, and he saw that she trembled in would be well again. So she would conthe handsome, gallant soldier who had won her would not abandon her. She laughed aloud-a terrible laugh, the fell on her knees, weeping and crying aloud that she was a most miserable sinner-Heaven pity her !- a miserable sinner; but believe in that story-never! She took up her pen and wrote.

To be continued.

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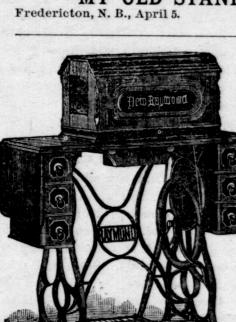
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