John Arthur's Ward: OR THE DETECTIVE'S DAUGHTER.

Continued from 1st page. "I-I thought it was somebody else, she said hypocritically "Come in, Mrs Ralston"

Thus invited the lady entered without making a comment on the disturbed appearance of her young friend she crossed to the window and sitting down in a cosy dressing-chair said "Come directly here young lady and sit down on that ottoman"

Looking somewhat surprised the girl "Claire my child I have a confession to make I was in the library while you sang "When sparrows build" "And" pursued Mrs Raiston, "I heard more than your song"

No reply "And more than your words!" "More than-my-my words?" "Yes; I heard your heart's secret"

Claire's face drooped "What do you mean?" she asked, deprecatingly "My darling, I mean that your heart spoke through your voice, and it belied your words; why did you deny your love for so noble a man?" Claire raised her head "I didn't!" she said, suddenly, as if driven to bay "No." smiled Mrs Ralston

were a wily little serpent But you deceived him' "I don't care," doggedly "Now you are telling a fib!" "Well, I am not sorry, then" getting hold of her monitor's hand. "Why do

you turn against poor me when I am trying to do my duty?" "Because you are not doing your duty." "Yes I am; indeed I am. You don't

know' "Then tell me and let me be your friend and adviser' "But you can't advise" objected Claire "because you don't know the -the

"Well I do know you" "There it is?" burst forth the champion of the absent "You know me but you don't know what a worthless unattractive little imp I am compared to her You don't know her but you shall! And when you do poor me will have to take a seat lower down in the tabernacle of your affections"

"I wonder if this 'other' would so readily resign her lover to you?" she "Would she!" flashed Claire "Would she not? Has she not? Ah, if you knew her, you would never say that!" Then apturing the other hand of the lady, she said in quieter but very grave | should in some way find me out Sitting tones "Can you listen to a long story, Mrs Ralston; rather to several stories

know-the story of Madeline Payne" Mrs Ralston expressed her more than willingness to hear all that Claire had to cell, and the girl settled down comfortably on the ottoman at the feet of her friend, and began at the beginning It was indeed a long story, for Claire omitted nothing As she told how Madeline had exposed to her the baseness of Percy, Mrs Ralston started up, her face pale as death, and then sank back in

combined in one? I am going to tell you

his other name?" "What is it. Mrs Ralston-you are ill?" "No," almost gasped the lady; "tell | as it is, and let him take his chances I me-his name"

"I did not intend to speak his name," Claire said, slowly "It is Edward Percy" Mrs Ralston was on her feet in an instant, her face flushing with excitement "Come with me!" she almost shrieked "Quick! to my room'

Wondering vaguely, Claire followed Mrs Ralston almost flew to her apartment She flung open the door, and in an instant was on her knees beside a trunk, opening trays and searching for some-thing eagerly "Look!" she cried suddenly thrusting

out something toward Claire; something from which she averted her own face "Look, did you ever see that face?" The girl gave one glance and uttered a sharp cry It was a miniature painted

in ivory; painted years ago, but she knew it only too well "Where did you get it?" cried Claire
"It to be; Edward Percy!" Mrs Ralston started forward and took the picture from her hand "It is my

husband!" she whispered
With the words on her lips, she fell heavily to the floor, in a dead faint When Mrs Ralston awoke to consciousness she was lying upon her bed with Dr Vaughan bending over her, Olive standing near, and Claire a little aloof, look-

ing pale and anxious Her first thought was of the picture "Where is it?" she murmured, addressing Claire, who stepped forward eagerly "It is here, dear Mrs Ralston," said Claire "I caught it from your hand

after you fell I thought-" And then she "I understand," she said, looking at the girl fixedly "Drop it from your hand Claire; drop it there," pointing to

the grate "It has done its work; we need never look upon it again" Claire obeyed her silently For the second time she had consigned to the

Percy
To the surprise of the three who had so lately seen her coming slowly back from the swoon, so like death Mrs Ral-ton raised herself to a sitting posture, relief I found my friends ready to sail. and then slowly arose from the bed and | When at last I was actually on the later, Joliffe entered noiselessly, as usual, stood upright before them, and there was a flush on her cheek and a light in her eyes that was new to that usually pale,

"Dear friends," she said turning toward Clarence and Olive, who had been watching the burning of the picture with surprised and somewhat curious eyes, "I am quite recovered; and I want to think. Will you please leave me

alone, quite alone, for a little while?" Olive, Claire and Clarence went slowly and silently down to the drawingroom, Claire keeping very close to her sister and carefully avoiding the eyes of the young man. Seating herself beside Olive, Claire told, in her own way, all that she knew of the affair.

"I wanted to tell Mrs. Ralston of Madeline," she commenced, "and, not to omit anything I told her poor Philip's story-all about the two men and how the man Percy had appeared at Oakley as the lover of Miss Arthur. When I spoke his name she ran to her room almost dragging me with her and-'

Suddenly she paused horrified at a sudden thought. How could she explain to these two who knew nothing of her "affair" with Edward Percy-who did not dream that she had ever seen his face—her ability to recognize the picture Mrs. Ralston had shown her? "And?" interrogated Olive.

Clarence Vaughan saw that there was a reason for her hesitation and while wondering what it could be, came to her rescue. And fainted, of course" said he. "Well she is better now and perhaps we shall hear the conclusion of the mystery all in good time."

If she had dared Claire would have given him a glance of gratitude. As it was she only averted her face and felt herself a great hypocrite.

Doctor Vaughan was to remain for lunch; and while he talked quietly with Olive, Claire sat considering what they would say if they knew all. Presently her reverie was interrupted by the entrance of a servant, who said—

"Mrs. Ralston wishes Miss Keith to come to her.' Mrs. Ralston advanced to meet the girl as she entered the room and laying a hand upon her shoulder said "I understood you to say that your sister knows

nothing of your acquaintance with that man. Am I right?" "Yes." "And you do not wish her to know?" Claire hesitated. "I did not then think it was wrong to conceal it from her." she said finally; "but now if you think it best I will try and tell her.

"But I do not think it best my darling I should have been convinced of his identity even had I not used the picture as a test We will say nothing on that subject And now let us go down-stairs for we have work to do!"

> CHAPTER XLV MRS. RALSTON'S STORY.

Mrs Ralston entered the drawing-room with the light of a new and strong purpose shining in her eyes "Dear friends," she said, "sit near me and give me your attention I have a story to tell, and I must not fatigue myself too much in the telling"

CHAPTER XLVI. CORA "STIRS UP THE ANIMALS." "I will make brief mention of myself," It was evening the evening of the day said the lady sinking back in the luxurion which Mrs. Ralston had made her ous chair with a slightly weary smile startling revelation. Madeline Payne "My life has never been a bright one Married for the first time at the age of stood alone in her own room, looking sixteen my childhood was prematurely

blighted and my first real trouble fell upon me It was not a happy marriage and during the years of my first husband's life I became more and more alienated from my relatives "When at last my husband died I was

wealthy Then I met a man younger

parted, however, I saw him once more,

myself unseen It is this part of my story

that will make your hearts glad"

I can't see how it will benefit you'

you for him Now listen Neither you nor

my statement if you like and accuse me

above water long. If I am arrested for

assault with intent to kill you will find

yourself in the next cell, accused of the

still more serious crime of bigamy. On

the other hand if you let the matter rest

won't use those little documents I hold,

which prove conclusively that you mar-

"I remember their very words; not one

syllable escaped me then, or has drifted

from my mind since. And I could have

predicted what the next words of my husband would be. I know his weakness

so well, and I knew too then for the

first time that my vague suspicions had

been too true-that he had indeed been

" 'I will do this,' said he, halting at

"The other replied 'I'll do it.' Then

"While they talked I was seized with

the money was counted out and the

an unaccountable desire to see the man I

had once loved. I heard my maid moving

in the next room, and I arose and went

to her. She was a quick-witted creature,

and knew just what to do. She made me

put on a hat and veil, and throw a shawl

about me and then bade me go down-

stairs, while she knocked at the door of

pretense of offering her services in case of

need I could obtain over her shoulder a

view of the occupants of the room. Her

ocean and realized that I was safe from

whose name I had not heard. But it was

too late then and I tried to ease my con-

science by thinking that after all as Ed-

ward was not dangerously hurt it might

not turn out a serious matter. I watched

the papers but somehow the accounts of

As she ceased speaking her eyes rested

sadly upon the face of Olive, and she

started forward suddenly saying "Doctor

"No," gasped Olive, half-rising, "I-

And she fell forward to be caught in

the ready arms of Clarence Vaughan.

When at last they succeeded in arousing

her from that death-like stupor, and she

could sit up and look about her, slowly

readily into the position of leader, and

"Go and see that lunch is served im-

before night, and must not work fast-

leased at last, released with every doubt

cleared away, every suspicion removed?

"It is true, dear Mrs. Girard; and now

you must not give way to weakness. We

dare not lose time. Dr. Vaughan, your-

self and I, in putting these facts in the

hands of the right parties must hasten

the legal process by which Philip will be

When Claire Keith returned she found

them deep in a discussion as to the

quickest way of effecting the release of

"Let me settle it" she said imperious-

y. "To-day you will go to see Philip's

lawyers, and when this stupid law pro-

cess is put in motion, Olive-I know her

-will go straight and set heself down

outside the very prison gates. But your

beautiful laws can lock an honest man

up much quicker than they can let him

out, and can serve a warrant sooner than

do a tardy act of justice, So if you please

I am going down to Oakley to arrest

"You!" cried the two ladies in the

"Yes, I! Philip won't want anyone

but Olive, and Olive will snub me un-

mercifully if I venture to offer myself as

an escort. I'm going to do myself the

'the man must be arrested immediately.'

"And," interrupted Olive, "you must all three go to Bellair; that is," looking

"If I will go?" interrupted that lady.

"Yes I too intend to be present when

"Are you in earnest about going to

Bellair, Miss Keith?" Clarence Vaughan

Claire bestowed upon him a wilful lit-

le nod over her shoulder, saying, as

did so: "I shall, 'really.' I am confident

that something will happen there and I

Miss Payne gives her enemy up to jus-

"Claire is right," said Mrs. Ralston;

honor of seeing Mr. Davlin arrested."

that vile Lucian Davlin and get him off

poor Madeline's hands,'

at Mrs. Ralston, "if-"

asked. "Shall you go really?"

want a chance to faint!'

"is this true? Will Philip be re-

discovery I began to think of the victim

living. Come what do you say?'

false to me more than false.

honey I must have.

the farther the better.

she is going to faint!"

turning to Claire said-

Tell me I cannot realize it.'

Philip Girard

'papers' changed hands.

of attacking you In that case I may be imprisoned; but that won't keep you

dead and buried

up the mountain

badly hurt

moodily out upon the leafless grove that was fast taking on a covering of snow Madeline had been standing, motionless and moody, for many minutes. Her eyes were full of dissatisfaction, and her lips were compressed. She had been taking a thirty-six years old and owing to illmental view of the situation, and its health looked much older But-I was present aspect was far from pleasing.

"What a knot," she soliloquized: than myself and very handsome I was 'what a difficult, baffling, miserable weak and foolish I believed in him and knot! To be kept thus inactive just be--married him For four years he squandcause the last knot in the tangle will not ered my money and made my life a come straight-good gracious, how like a burden At last when I could endure no pun that sounds! How much longer must longer and when because he had insmile upon these wretches? How much herited a fortune from some relative I longer must I conceal my real feelings? I knew he would trouble himself little as will put my forces into action, and make to particulars I caused him to believe me my last, desperate venture, for this is becoming intolerable. I must force, or buy, "In reality I was in better health than this secret from Edward Percy, at the usual and while he was spending his cost of his safety, or my fortune, if need new fortune and fancying me in the grave, I sailed for Europe Before I de-"Mercy!" she ejaculated, "who or

earth can be plowing through this storm?

And on what errand? It looks like-and

as I live, it is, yes, it is, Mr. Edward

"I was going to Europe in company with some friends of Mrs Lord who, of Percy! He is too dainty to expose himself for nothing. I must look into this" course, knew my secret They twice post-While she was musing at the window, poned their time for sailing, and while Cora, curled up behind one of the crimwaiting for them I went with my maid son curtains of the red parlor, had beto a little mountain inn where travelers come the possessor of a valuable secret only came for a day, and then went on She had entered the room but a few moments before Finding it dimly lighted, "When I first arrived the garrulous and heated to a summer temperature, she hostess made frequent mention of a huntensconced herself a la Sultana in one of ing party that had gone up the mountain the deep window embrasures, and lay a few days before, stopping for dinner at sulkily watching the flying snowflakes the inn I had been nearly two weeks in and the fast coming night. Presently the my mountain retreat when my maid sound of approaching footsteps, and alcame rushing in, one day, crying out most simultaneously the opening of the that the hunting party had come back, door, disturbed her quiet. With a quick and that one of their number had been movement, she drew the curtains together

and sat, a Alent listener, to a brief "Well, they brought the wounded man dialogue. up-stairs, and put him in the room that The newcomers were Miss Arthur and adjoined my sleeping apartment The Edward Percy. After a few sentences had partitions between were of the sham been interchanged, Percy left the room kind-merely boards papered over After and then it was that Madeline saw him he was settled and the hum of many take his way toward the village. voices died away, I went into my little Presently Miss Arthur also quitted the room; and going straight up-stairs. Cora "I had scarcely entered when a voice knocked at Madeline's door. "Now, from the next room, a man's voice, deep

and full, although then subdued startled animals " me I listened unthinkingly 'There's no Madeline did not look especially grati use in being weak about this business,' fled at sight of her visitor, but Cora enhe said 'Of course you can make me tered with scant ceremony. Pushing the trouble if you like, but hang me, Percy, door shut with unnecessary emphasis, she turned upon her, saying, rather un-"I see you are amazed, Doctor Vaughan, and Mrs Girard is turning pale You are "I have made a discovery of which,

then," muttered she, "I'll stir up the

beginning to guess the truth Yes, it was think, you will thank me for telling Edward Percy who answered the first you. And I am going to tell you because speaker and-Edward Percy is my hus-I can't spoil their plans, but you can, and I want to see them spoiled.' "At the first sound of the other voice, "Your frankness is commendable, said Madeline, ironically, "Go on "Percy and the old maid are going to be privately married to-morrow mornthere I heard him say in the half fretful wholly languid tones that I knew so well

"How do you know?" 'It's easy to talk as you do; show me Cora related the particulars of he wherein it will be to my advantage if you don't want me to knock down your ambush, and gave a concise report of the conversation of the lovers. pretty story Curse you what did you try "He has gone to the village on that very business now," Cora said. "She is "Then the other answered impatiently to walk down to the clergyman's house, 'I tell you man I was mistaken I took and he is to meet her there. Then they I love the fellow and we each hold a trifle will come back, and no one to be the of power over the other You can refute

Madeline laughed. "Be at ease," she said "I will try and prevent the necessity for such a disagreeable walk as that would be for so fragile a lady. We won't have a wedding just yet.' "What a cool one you are!" cried

Cora. "If you were not my enemy, I

could admire you vastly' "Don't, I beg of you," said the girl, gravely. "I am sufficiently humiliated by being obliged to deal with you as an ried a second wife while the first was enemy,' Cora flushed angrily "Then I should think the humiliation of being made

love to by my brother, would overcome you," she sneered "It does, almost," replied the girl, "Then let me do you another favor Mr Davlin is no more my brother than Madeline's answer fairly took her

breath away "Madame, you are very good, but I have known that from the every few words. 'If you will give me back the money you won from me up there, and will give me up those papers, "What!" gasped the woman; adding, we will not quarrel over this affair. We after a moment of silence, "Is he your will let His Majesty take the conselover as well as-' "Yours?" finished Madeline. "And quences of your act, if you choose. I like him even less than I do you. But the what then, Mrs. Arthur?'

"Then," hissed Cora; "then I hate you both," Madeline laughed bitterly "As you have told me a secret, and as I don't want to remain in your debt, I will tell you one in return. Lucian Davlin is my lover, but I am his bitterest foe!" Cora came closer and looked her

eagerly in the face "What has he done to you?" she asked, breathlessly "You may find out later; just now we are even Understand, no word of waning to him, if you value your safety. the sick-room. When I heard it open I Obey my wishes, and when I am done was to come up and while she made a with you, you may go free. Attempt treachery, and I will give you up to you," he added, after considerable blink-"I shan't put myself in jeopardy for

ruse was successful. When I ascended the him now, whatever I might have done. stairs. I obtained a full view of the two You may believe that." "I think I may," replied Madeline men. I should know the dark face of the tall stranger if I came upon it in Africa. "To do myself justice, I never once When Cora retired to her own room, to thought of the wrong they were doing chuckle over the discomfiture in store for | shoulder: "No answer!" their victim; never realized that it was | the spinster and Mr Percy, and to won-

my duty to denounce them. Having seen | der wrathfully what the mystery concernflames the pictured face of Edward | the face of my husband I had but one | ing Miss Payne and Lucian could mean, idea one desire; to get away anywhere | Madeline stood for many minutes lost in "Early the next moring I was en | Finally she threw herself down upon a

> and the girl said to her:-"When Miss Arthur retires for the night, which won't be for some time, do see Mr Percy when he is alone, mind. and tell him Miss Payne desires him to wait her pleasure in the library" Joliffe bowed and went out again like Oh! how can I wait until night!"

When, at last, the other members of that incongruous family circle were safely | the stile, through the glittering whiteout of the way, Madeline, warned by the robed grove; on, until she reached Haever-present, soundless Joliffe, awaited in the library the coming of Mr Percy Wondering much what the haughty heiress could have to communicate to him, and dimly hoping that the tide was turning in his favor, Mr Percy entered the presence of the arbiter of his fate Bowing like a courtier, he approached

recalling events, Mrs. Ralston stepped "Miss Payne has deigned to honor me with an interview" he said in his slowest softest most irresistible manner. "I can never be sufficiently grateful"

Madeline motioned him to a seat oppomediately dear. We have much to do site her own saying with an odd smile 'You shall at least have an opportunity "Oh," cried Olive, as Claire disap-

for repaying your debt of gratitude, sir and that immediately' Percy took the seat indicated and bowed gratefully "Command me, Miss

"It rests with you," Madeline began whether we shall be from to-night neu tral toward each other, or enemies" "Enemies!" he exclaimed "Oh, that would be impossible' Madeline was full of inward rage She

longed to lean across the table and dash her hand full in that smiling blonde face But she looked at him instead quite tranquilly, and said with a queer smile; Then you would do me a favor even at your own personal-inconvenience Mr. Percy?" "Would I not?" fervently. "Only com-

mand me, Miss Payne.' "I will take you at your word, then Mr. Percy you will oblige me very much by putting off your marriage with Miss Arthur one week longer.' Here was a bomb-shell. It electrified the languid gentleman He became suddenly animated by fear "What-what do you mean, Miss Payne?" starting half out of his seat and nervously sitting

down again "Precisely what I say, sir It does not please me to have my relative leave my house to be married in this clandestine manner There, don't ask me how I discovered what you thought was a profound secret You see I did discover it Will you put off this romantic marriage-to oblige

Percy was trying hard to think If he could believe it was because he had found favor in her eyes, that she asked this But no; even his vanity could not credit that suggestion Of late she had openly shown a preference for Davlin What then, could be her motive? Could it be that at the instigation of Cora she had sought this interview?

Payne, you have taken me by storm. If I may not ask how you made this discovery, may I not, at least, beg to know why you make this demand?' 'I have told you; it shocks my sense

of propriety." "Pardon me if I say there must be another motive." "You are pardoned," coolly; "now, do you grant my request?" Percy arose from the table flushed and angry. "Pardon me, Miss Payne, you demand too much. "Nevertheless, I do demand it." "And I beg to decline.

away, and the time of her triumph was "Then I must deal with Miss Arthur. The knowledge that you have one wife in the grave, and another under this very roof, may have the desired effect upon Percy dropped back in his chair, pale

commit himself. Perhaps Madeline had only verbal information. While he was Immediately the form emerged from trying to frame a speech, however, she the shadow It was the cat-like waitingknocked this last prop from under him. maid "I may as well assure you that parleying is useless. I have known, from the first moment you entered this house, just upon what terms you stood with Mrs. Arthur. Don't trouble yourself to ask how I know. Perhaps you have been puzzled to know why Mrs. Arthur and her brother so suddenly became cordial and invited you to Oakley, where you so Silently they moved on, and paused again at the side entrance; the one from much desired to be. Let me enlighten you. They fancied that you had regained

each other."

possession of important documents-two marriage certificates, in fact-for they had lost them.' "What?" ejaculated Percy. "And-I found them." added Madelin the walls of Oakley.

for in obedience to a light tap the door opened and they passed quietly within the outer room of John Arthur's prison "It can't make much difference now." said the man, sullenly "Let us understand each other fully," said Madeline. "I am not acting in concert with Cora Arthur. She is even more in my power than you are I have no desire to undeceive Miss Arthur Neither do I wish you to leave Oakley On the contrary, I want you here; you can be of service to me, by and by And I pledge you

"They are in my possession," pursued

she "Shall I show them to Miss Arthur.

His countenance fell again.

der this roof, those papers shall not be used against you" "And if I don't choose to remain?" Madeline laughed "Then you must take the consequences," she said, care-

"And what will they be?" "Exposure and arrest" Percy drew pen, ink, and paper toward him "What shall I write to the clergyman?" he asked, sullenly "Whatever you choose And I will send

it Make your peace with Miss Arthur, too, in your own way" "And when I leave Oakley, what ther?" he grunted "Then, if you have fulfilled the conditions, I will burn the papers in your | no fear for yourself." presence, and you are free henceforth.." "There is the note," he said, flinging it toward her as soon as written. "After all, I may as well be in your power as in hers," and again he arose to go from

'I am glad you take so sensible a view of it," retorted she, looking up from her perusal of his note. "Good-night, Mr

And thus cavalierly dismissed, Mr Percy bowed, somewhat less gallantly than when entering, and left the room "So, that is nipped in the bud," soliloquized Madeline, as she went wearily to Gents'. Summer Dusters. her own room once more "When will this miserable complication unrayel itself, or be unraveled?" Little did she dream how soon she

would receive an answer to this question.

CHAPTER XLVII. THE BEGINNING OF THE END.

The next morning dawned clear and beautiful. Over head, one unbroken expanse of blue; under foot, a mantle of soft, white ermine. All the trees were transformed into fairy-like, silver-robed, pearl-studded, plume-adorned wonders.

Madeline had passed an almost sleepless night But when she arose with the first gleam of sunlight and looked upon this new white imprisoned world she felt strong for a fresh day's battle "I must go out" she said to herself:

"out into this sparkling air I can breathe in the brightness; I know I can I almost feel as if I could catch it and weave it into my life" She hastily donned her wraps and set off for a brisk walk no matter where through that glorious winter glow Something that jarred upon her sense

of the beautiful, awakened her to herself, and she turned suddenly about. "How dare ugly little brown bears come out in the white glitter," she mutterede, whimsically. "I will turn about; he spoils the fairy picture. I had forgotten there were boys, or men, in the

Something came panting behind her The "brown bear" had accelerated his pace, and now came up at a round trot "Hold on a minit; darned if I can see who ye air in this snow," he cried, pausing before her and rubbing his eyes vigorously "All right; I thought it was ing "I've got a tellygram for ye, Miss Payne; orders were not to give it to anyone but you so I chased ye sharp" Madeline laughed outright as she took the telegram from his hand The boy without waiting for her words of thanks

took to his heels shouting back over his Madeline gazed for a moment after the flying figure and wonderingly opened the message This is what she read :train comes down We are ready for ac-

tion; have found a witness C V' Madeline lifted her eyes from the scrap of paper and looked about her incredu ously, as if she expected to find some explanation shining in the air

"Ready for action," she murmured 'That means-can it mean that Lucian Davlin is at last in our power? Can those detectives have solved the mystery? She fairly flew along now, eager to keep in motion. On, on she went, over gar's cottage. It was locked and deserted, as she knew, but she cared not for that. She must walk somewhere, then why not

For a moment she stood on the snowladen door stone, and gazed about her. Then swiftly, as swiftly as before, she flew down the path—the same path she had taken on the summer day when she had heard from Hagar's lips her mother's story When she reached the tree in whose arms she had nestled so often, where she had listened to the bargain between her step-father and decrepit old Amos Adams, and where she had been wooed by Lucian Davlin—she paused There, coming to-ward her, was Lucian Davlin himself

"What a fatality!" muttered the girl "He is coming to meet me; has been watching me, perhaps" She stood calmly gazing up at the snow-laden branches, and again she say herself standing underneath them, a hesitating girl, wondering if she could let her lover go away alone. Then she turned

her head and her eyes met those of Lu-"Good morning, Miss Payne," he said, lifting his hat with his usual grace. "I am happy to know that we have one taste in common-a love of nature in disguise. Is not the wintry world beautiful?" "Beautiful, indeed," replied Madeline. resuming her walk homeward. "The trees are fairy palaces. It is lovelier than

"It is very lovely," gazing not at the trees but down into her face, "but-so She understood his meaning and replied, calmly: "Cold? Yes; it is not sum

summer, is it not?"

"No," he assented, with a sad intona tion, "it is not summer. Miss Payne. Madeline, will it ever be summer again? Madeline looked up and about her, and smiled as she did so. "Yes," she replied "it will be summer-soon." He had turned and retraced his ster at her side. She was walking swiftly again and for some time neither spoke When they entered the grounds of the manor, he said, half deprecatingly:—

"I saw you pause under that tree and look about you" he said slowly; "was it because you thoughts of other days and Slowly she turned her face toward him

"Madeline, may I ask this one ques-

saying simply; "Yes." They were nearing the entrance and he half stopped to ask his next question. He rallied his forces and replied: "Miss "Will you tell me what were your thoughts, Madeline Slowly she ascended the steps, and a the door turned and faced him: "I wil tell you to-night." And with a ripple of laughter on h

lips, she entered the hall of Oakley. CHAPTER XLVIII. THE SWORD OF FATE.

At last the long day was done: the

Evening at Oakley.

day that to Madeline Payne had seemed almost endless. At last, too, the early evening hours had dragged themselves

From out Hagar's cottage a silent party issued, and took their way across the snow to the little stile just above the terrace walk. Here they paused for a moment. Some were loitering on the teras ashes. All was lost, then. Cora had race, where the shadows fell thickest. betraved him! But he resolved not to Madeline stepped through the gap saying softly: "Joliffe!"

> "It's all right, Miss," she said in a whisper "They are all in the drawingroom but I think they are getting un-"Well I will not keep them in suspense long" said Madeline and in the darkness she smiled triumphantly "Lead on.

which Cora had endeavored to escape but a short time before. Madeline opened the door, and in another moment she, with Mrs. Ralston, Claire Keith, Clarence Vaughan and two strangers, stood with-They moved on like shadows to the rear end of the hall, up the servant's stairway, and straight to the west wing. Evidently they were expected here, too.

"Close the door Henry" said Madeline. "So far, so good" she pronounced. "Now can you make yourselves comfortable here for a little while? Hagar and Joliffe will know just what to do as soon as I have, myself, viewed the field of battle; or perhaps I had better pilot you my word that so long as you remain un-"As you please," said the foremost of

> "Then we won't lose time," said Madeline. "Henry call Dr. Le Guise." Henry tapped at the door of the inner room, and in a trice the worthy Professor stood in their midst. He glanced from one to another in amazement, and the look of confidence forsook his face. "Have no uneasiness" sir" said Madeline seeing the fear in his face; "these ladies and gentlemen will not interfere with you. They are here because it is desirable that the people below should not know of their proximity just yet. You are about to aid us, and need have

> > (To be continued.)

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