The Biamond Coterie.

(Continued from 1st page.)

It is singular, however, that a man who possessed for her "not the slightest interest" should so often present himself to her thoughts, and certain it is that at this period of our story her mind had a most provoking habit of running away from a variety of subjects straight to Clifford Heath, M. D. But women at best are strange creatures, and subject to

singular phenomena. Mrs. Aliston just here experienced some dissatisfaction; Clifford Heath was with her a favorite; Francis Lamotte was her pet hatred. To see the favorite made conspicuous by his absence, and have his name, like that of a disinherited daughter, tabooed from the family converse, while the obnoxious Francis, because of his provokingly good behavior, made rapid strides into the good graces of the queen of the castle, would have exasperated most good, maneuvering old ladies, but Mrs. Aliston maneuvered principally for her own comfort, so she sighed a little, regretted the present state of affairs in a resigned and becoming Doctor Heath, and condescended to re-

manner, ceased to mention the name of ceive Francis graciously, after that young man had made a special call, during which he saw only Mrs. Aliston, and apologized amply and most humbly for his unceremonious ejectment of that lady in favor of Constance, on the day when the former undertook, "as gently as possible," to break to him the news of his sister's fight.

To make an apology gracefully is in itself, an art; and this art Francis Lamotte was skilled in; indeed but for a certain physical weakness, he would have been an ornament to the diplomatic service. Alas, that there must always be a "but" in the way of our moral completeness, our physical perfection and our life's success. Days and weeks passed on, and the household of Wardour remained in utmost quiet; that at Mapleton, shrouded in gloom and sorrowful seclusion. Mrs. Lamotte saw no one. Mr. Lamotte went out only to look after his

business interests. When the copy of Sybil's marriage certificate came, Frank, like a loyal knight, came to Constance with the news, told words, and went away soon and sorrow-

returned from the town where she had | sults. spent four long hours in calling upon

easiest chair, and pulled and panted

Constance looked up from a rather uninteresting "Novel with a Moral," and asked, as indifferently as possible:— "What have you found out, auntie?" "About Sybil."

Constance laid down her book, and her tone underwent a change. "If it's any thing more than gossip, auntie, tell me quick." "Oh, it isn't gossip; at least they all say it's true. And as for gossip, Con., I tell you, you have done something toward stopping that."

Con. laughed like one who is conscious

of her power. "Yes, indeed," rattled on Mrs. Aliston. "Mrs. Wooster says, and if she is a Unitarian she is certainly a very good and truthful woman, that she has heard from various ones that you have openly decalled themselves her friend, and accepted so often her mother's hospitality. And she said—these are her very words, Con. -'I was delighted, dear Mrs. Aliston, for we all know that these gossip lovers, Miss Wardour.' So much for influence,

ige along with my diamonds. Auntie, course; you always do."

"So you always tell me," laughed the elderly chatterbox. "Well, Con., they say that Sybil has sacrificed herself." "Do they?" said Con., sarcastically; "the wise heads. I hope that conclusion has not exhausted their keen intellects,

to be an accepted fact that Sybil sacrificed | more calls to make, and I really have herself to save Evan from some sort of talked too long."

and that he replied in his odd way:-"'Yes, she did it for my sake, and now the first man of you that mentions my sister's name in my hearing will go under.' You know they are afraid of Evan in his rages.

Constance opened her mouth impulsively, but she choked back the words that rushed forward for utterance, and closing her lips tightly, sat staring straight before her, a strange expression

creeping into her face. She seemed to hear anew Evan's words: will find a reason that will not be questioned, and that will spare Sybil.' And he had found a reason. The black

sheep was offered up a sacrifice. Evan Lamotte had flung away his last rag of respectability for his sister's sake. Henceforth he would appear in the eyes of the people doubly blackened, doubly degraded, the destroyer of his sister's happiness, the blight upon her life, and yet, he was innocent of this; he was a martyr; he the ne'er-do-well, the inebriate. Constance was strangely moved by

this self-sacrifice, coming from one who was so morally weak; if it had been Frank, but here her lip curled contemptuously; instinctively she knew that such self-sacrifice was not in Frank's nature, any more than was such self-abandonment to weakness. Constance began to wonder if Frank and his parents knew the truth. If they had permitted the weakest shoulders to bear the burden: or, if Evan had deceived them too, and then she murmured, almost in the lang-

uage of the tramp detective:-"It's a thing for time to unravel. It's a play just begun. It's a hard, hard

And, then and there, she took Sybil and Evan to her generous heart of hearts, and mentally resolved to be their champion and friend to the uttermost, while she would judge their parents and their brother according as these dealt by

the unfortunates. It was many days before she saw Evan, for, although in true woman fashion, she longed to scold him first for so sacrificing himself, and praise him after for his generous true heartedness, she knew that he would only be distressed by such an interview, and would obey a summons

from her reluctantly if at all. But one day, just as she was driving her ponies out through the gates of Wardour Place, she saw a horseman riding furiously up the road, and a nearer view revealed Frank Lamotte's fine horse and

mounted by Evan. His eyes were flaming with excitement.

and there was a burning spot of red on either cheek as he reined up his horse beside her, and Constance saw at a glance that, again, he was perfectly sober. "Conny," he cried breathlessly, "it

"What has come, Evan?" "The day we hoped for; we have heard "A letter! Oh, Evan, tell me all about

"I can't, there is no time; only, Con., it's your turn now. It's your time to strike for Sybil. They are holding council over the letter, and can't decide, whether the old gentleman shall go at once and see Sybil; whether they shall bring her back and swallow that Burrill; for, it seems he must be swallowed, and comfort in, for Jasper Lamotte has what society will think about it, are the questions that they are agitating. Mother it first came into his possession.

says, that Sybil must and shall come To reach Mapleton from Wardour back; father says he will go and see her; Place one must drive directly to the cen- ful horse before breeding elsewhere. and Frank-" he broke off abruptly and ter of W-, turn eastward, then cross a bent down to look at his saddle girth. handsome new iron bridge, and go south-

"And Frank: what does he "Frank is a fool," snapped Evan irrelevantly. "What he says is no matter: only, Conny, now is your time, if you will only have faith in what I say. You

are out with your ponies; drive straight to Mapleton, and don't mention me. You will be admitted to mother. Father is there, and Frank; give them the least chance, and they will tell you about Sybil, and then you can manage the rest. Tell them to bring her back, even with that beastly incumbrance. They will listen to you; they won't to me. If you fail me here, then-'

"Then your sacrifice goes for nothing. Oh, Evan, did you think I would not understand that? You have wronged yourself for Sybil's sake. But you shall have a tithe of your reward. And, dear boy, you should not have done this thing; we might have found another

"Nonsense, Conny! It was the only way. And what is my life worth, or my reputation, either? It can't hurt a poor devil like me .. Con., will you go?' "I will go straight to Mapleton, Evan. You shall see that I have faith in you. I will do just as you direct, and all will "Then I'm off. I stole Frank's horse.

I must get him back to avoid a row. Thank you, Conny; you are a true friend. "Good-bye . Evan. Come to me with all the news, or when you want help." "I won't forget," wheeling his horse about; then, in a choking voice, "God bless you, Conny," and a moment later, he was away down the road, galloping in a cloud of dust.

Constance followed in his wake, keeping her ponies at a sober pace. "I wonder how he found out thes things. Poor boy!" she murmured, half aloud, "he is not one at their family councils; of that I am sure. His father has lost all patience with him; and yet, he knows all that is going on. I wonder

If Evan Lamotte had heard this query and had chosen to answer it, he would have said: "I watch and I listen."

CHAPTER XIII.

Miss Wardour, being Miss Wardour, was apt to succeed in most things, and it with a sad countenance and in few it is fair to suppose that her visit to Mapleton, in the character of intercessor for the erring Sybil, was not a fruitless as placid as the sky overhead. One day, not long after, Mrs. Aliston one. Certainly, it was not barren of re-

sitting room, in a state of unusual ex- up the heiress and Mrs. Aliston, and the three drove ostentatiously through the "Well, Con.," she panted, pulling hard streets of W-, bowing smilingly here the while at her squeezed glove, "I've and there, as calm, serene, and elegant a found it out;" and she dropped into the trio, to all outward seeming, as ever passed before admiring eyes on velvet

This act informed W- that Mrs. Lamotte was once more visible, and "at home," and when a day or two later. Constance and her aunt, in splendid array, drove again into W-, calling here and there, and dropping upon each hearthstone a bit of manna for family digestion, the result was what they intended it should be.

"Have you heard the news?" asks Mrs.

Hopkins, fashionable busybody, running in for an informal call on Mrs. O'Meara, who is warm-hearted and sensible, and who listens to the babblings of Mrs. Hopkins, with a patience and benignity worthy of a Spartan mother.
"No! Well, I am dying to tell it, then. Sybil Lamotte is coming back-actually coming back-and that man with her; and-won't it be queer? We shall have clared against the handling of poor him in society, of course, for I am told, Sybil's name among the people who have from the best of sources, that the Lamottes will accept him as Sybil's choice,

and make the best of him. "But we need not accept him, my dear," comments the Spartan mother, whose lawyer husband is rich and indeevery one of them, will deny themselves the luxury of tearing Sybil to pieces, knowing that she has a champion in us; we shall be glad to have her back." "Yes, that's very well for you and Mr. O'Meara, who are very exclusive, and go

"Bah!" retorted Con., wise in her out little, but we poor society people generation. "So much for money, and will have to submit to the powers that how do I know that I have not lost prest- | be. Constance Wardour, the Lamottes, the Vandycks, have led us as they would, you have lost the thread of your dis- and queer as it may seem, the Lamottes are backed up in this business of forcing John Burrill upon us, by Constance, on one hand, and the Vandycks, mother and son, on the other." "And Mrs. Aliston?"

"Mrs. Aliston, of course. When did whoever 'they' may be. As if the sacri- a great furore, I can tell you; but no fice were not patent on the face of the one is going to step forward and openly hing."

oppose Constance and the Vandycks. 1

in body and soul; whatever else Sybil

for one am Sybil's staunch friend, and—

Lamotte's husband may be, let our story "Do I? Well, I'm glad of it; it would well, as Constance says, 'let us take it not be so bad to be 'a stump orator,' or for granted that this bear of Sybil's has any other sort of male animal, for the some good qualities, or he would never older I grow the more I incline to the have won her,' and, then, too, it's so belief that women are fools. But go on, romantic, about Evan you know, and auntie; I believe I get 'riled' every time how Sybil, in some way, saved him "You don't deserve to be told, you are | end of that story, nor have I found any so impatient; but I will tell you this one who knows the plain facts. Well, once. I was about to add that it seems | Mrs. O'Meara, I must go; I have seven

exposure and disgrace. And they say "She'll take him up fast enough," that some of those rough men in a mused Mrs. O'Meara, in solitude. saloon threw the thing in Evan's teeth, "That's the way of society; they can't mantel. No, not that one," as he lays oppose wealth and prestige, even when prestige and wealth command them to fellowship with a grizzly bear: rather they will whitewash their bear, and call him a thing of beauty, and laugh in their silken sleeves to see him dance.

It was quite true, that bombshell of Mrs. Hopkin's-Sybil Lamotte was coming back. Mr. Lamotte went somewhere, nobedy could name just the place, and returned, having done, nobody knew precisely what; and as the result of that journey, so said W-, Sybil and John "Do your part, I will do mine. I, Evan Burrill were coming soon, to breast the Lamotte, worthless, black sheep, sot; I waves of public opinion, and take up their abode in Mapleton.

When this fact became well established, tongues wagged briskly; some were sorry; some were glad; some eager for the advent of the ill-assorted pair. The sorriest one of all was unhappy Ray Vandyck, who realized how hard a task would devolve upon him; and the gladdest of the glad was poor Evan, who celebrated his rejoicing with one of the wildest and most protracted of all his

Constance had won Sybil's battle. In accordance with the hint given by Dr. Heath, Raymond Vandyck had called at Wardour Place, and the result of that call was patent to the eyes of all W-. Ray, the rejected, had gone over to the support of his lost love and taken his mother with him

At last they came, after the nine days' talk had subsided, after W- had become accustomed to the idea, quiet, unostentatiously. Before their arrival had become known, they were established at Maple

Everybody admitted that they displayed good taste and judgment in the manner of their home coming, but when, except in the case of this horrible choice of Sybil's, did not the Lamottes display good taste, People said "The Lamottes," without so much as recognizing the exist

ence of poor Evan. Meantime the days were numbering themselves. It was June when Sybil La motte fled away with her Bear. It i September before they return; during these three months Constance has heard from Detective Belknap. He is always afar off, always on the track of her roll bers, and she reads his reports, honor his drafts for "expense money," and troubles her head no more about th "Wardour robbery" or the "Wardour die

Of Detective Bathurst there ca never a word or sign, either to the heir or to Doctor Heath But it is time to introduce our Bear.

CHAPTER XIV.

Mapleton stands high on an eminence which may have arisen expressly to hold, and to exhibit, the splendid ediffed erected thereon by Mr. Jasper Lamette It is the only hill within sight on that side of the river, and renders Mapleton ; most conspicuous as well as most beauti ful abiding place. In front of the dwelling and its grouns

flows the river, broad and glittering in the sunshine, on this day of which write. In the rear stretches a grove, large enough to be termed "the grove" by the people of W-; and dense enough for Robin Hood and his merry men to find chosen to let it remain en naturale, since

ward a short distance, coming finally to the broad curve which sweeps up to the mansion, and away from the river, along Which the road wind. which the road winds. In the old days, when Sybil Lamotte and Constance Wardour found excellent SPECIAL gether, at least once in every twenty-four hours, this fair river was a source of alternate pleasure and annoyance to WTCHES,

them. Of pleasure, when the days were fair, and Sybil and Frank could pull their boat up stream, and land at the grassy slope in the rear of Wardour during the Holidays. All new goods, Give him Place, where, often, they found Constance | a call and a gay party awaiting them. Or, when Constance could drift down stream with scarcely the stroke of an oar necessary, until she came opposite "the hill," as Mapleton was often called. Of annovance, when winds blew cold and rough, and the waters of the river turned black and angry, and surged high between its banks. Then the two young ladies voted the iron bridge "the coldest place possible," and wished that no dark, wintry river flowed between them.

The river is very calm to-day, however; it is flowing gently, murmuring softly, and gleaming silver and blue, beneath a soft September sun. Away down, where the factories stand, and the great wheels turn, it loses its blue and silver, flowing under that ever moving, never lifting curtain of smoke, that darkens and dims the skies themselves, and gives to the sun's face the look of a disreputable celestial tramp.

It's always gray, "down at the factories," and why not? What need have the toilers there for sunlight? They have 200 work and sleep. There is nothing gray or dreary about Mapleton, as we enter there and survey the inmates who, just now, are loitering about the lunch table. Nothing gray, if we except a few silver threads in the It is a very early wheat, ripening quickly and being hair of Mrs. Lamotte; nothing dreary, unless it may be a look which, now and then, and only for an instant, creeps into the eyes of Mrs. John Burrill.

They sit about the lunch table-all but Sybil. She has arisen, and reseated herself in a great easy chair, which seems to swallow up her light form, and renders her quite invisible to all at the table, save Evan, who, from time to time, glances furtively across at her. There may be dissension in this family, but they look the embodiment of highbred ease and serene contentment. Jasper Lamotte turns his paper, sips his light wine, speaks suavely, and looks

Mrs. Lamotte speaks slow and seldom; On the day following the call from as if nothing ever ruffled the placidity of the wives of the Episcopalian, the Uni- Constance, Mrs. Lamotte came forth her mind, or the even tenor of her pleastarian and the Presbyterian ministers, from her seclusion; her carriage bore her ant existence. She looks all this, sitting for Mrs. Aliston was a liberal soul, and out from the gates of Mapleton, and directly opposite John Burrill, her reluchurled herself into Constance's favorite straight to Wardour Place. Here she took tantly accepted son-in-law, for what Mrs. Lamotte cannot overcome, she ignores, and her proud calm is the result of a long and bitter schooling.

Sybil looks paler than is usual for her, but no other expression than one of calmness and ennui can be detected on that lovely, inscrutable face; and the dusky eyes keep well veiled, and tell no secrets. Evan Lamotte is sober, and good numored, for his sister's sake; and Frank is simply lazy.

But John Burrill! there is no contentment equal to his; seated in the easiest of chairs, before a table laden with yiands upon which he has just gorged himself. he contemplates his legs and his surroundings with extreme satisfaction; his legs first, because, being stretched directly before him, they come first under his eye; and he is delighted with their size. and shape; they are a fine pair, such as would do credit to a bull fighter, or a "champion pedestrian," and with the quality and cut of the pantaloons that adorn them. It has not always been his good fortune to sit at a rich man's table. and to wear fashionable clothing; and John Burrill appreciates his "marcies."
He has feasted his stomach, and John Burrill's stomach comes in for a large share of his consideration; and now he is feasting his senses; this richly appointed room is his room; this splendid stately lady, how he delights to call her "mother," varied occasionally by "mother-in-law;" how he glories in the possession of a pair of aristocratic brothers-in-law; and how he swells with pride, when he steps into the carriage, and, beside "the rich Mr. Lamotte," is driven through W- and to the factories; and last, and best of all, there is his ing a score of lovers, yet won by him.

Only one thing troubles John Burrll, he does not quite understand Sybil;he he does not quite understand Sybil;he he thinks of the her purchase last Saturday, which included different styles of fine laced and self-cosing boots and slippers, as well as a pair of fairy spees for her little sister, wife, a beauty, a belle, an heiress, possesshas "got the hang," so he thinks of the other members of the family, but sometimes Sybil's wordless glance operates upon him like a cold shower bath, and she ever oppose Constance? It's making Mr. Burrill, like all the "gutter born,"

rather fears a shower bath. Coarse in sense and sentiment, plebian

Quitting his place now, he crosses the room, and, taking up a position where his eyes can gloat upon Sybil's face, he rests one elbow upon a mantel, and so, in a comfortable after-dinner I hear Sybil's name. What else do 'they' from something, by marrying this man. attitude, continues his pleasant medita-I never could get the right end, or any tion. Sybil stirs uneasily, but notices his proximity in no other way. Presently her eyes shoots straight past him, and she says to Evan who has also risen, and stands stretching himself, lazily with his face to the window, and his back toward

the assembly:-"Evan, just hand me that book on the his ready hand on the book nearest him,

"Oh!' ejaculates Evan, at the same moment laying his hand upon a volume directly underneath John Burrills elbow. 'Hoist up your arrum, Burrill. 'My lady's up, and wants her wollum." " John Burrill's face readens slowly. He is an Englishman, and sometimes his H's and A's play him sorry tricks, although he has labored hard to Americanize himself, and likes to think that he has suc-

"D-n it!" broke out the man, suddenly losing his after dinner calm. "You Sybil received the book from Evan's hand, opened it, turned a page or two. and then lifting her eyes to his face, replied in a voice, low, clear, and cutting

as the north wind:-"Evan is my slave, Mr. Burrill, youare my lord and master." Indescribable contempt shone upon him for a moment from her splendid eyes; then she lowered them, and became, apparently, wholly absorbed in her book. low, and probably very ugly, and dropped

John Burrill muttered something very back into his former attitude; and the others, never by word or glance, noticed this little passage at arms. Only Evan returned to the window, and standing there with hands in pockets, glowered down upon the frost-touched rose trees and clustered geraniums, savagely, and

Presently, Evan turns from the window, which commands a view of the "Constance is coming," he says, addressing Sybil. She starts up, looking anxious and disturbed; Constance has visited her, and she has driven over once to see Constance; but it has so happened that John Burrill has always been absent; and Sybil has a shuddering horror of this

meeting that must be. (To be continued.)

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JAMES D. MURPHY, Administrators. CHEAP Chatham, 26th August, 1896.

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