The Diamond Coterie. lithe form of the younger man in such thoughts. Slowly

(Continued from 1st page.)

"What letter, Frank?" "You know," his eyes scanning her face hungrily. "Her letter. The one I brought you two days ago. What was it?" She drew away her hand.

"It was a note of farewell, Frank. Nothing more.' "Then she told you?" he gaspedcaught his lips between his teeth, and waited for her to finish the sentence. "She told me nothing, Frank. Oh, I

wish she had." He sprang up, overturning his chair in his hasty excitement. "Nothing!" he cried, "she told you nothing?'

"Absolutely nothing. The letter was an enigma. How strangely you act, Frank. I can't understand you. Slowly the life color returned to his cheeks and lips, as he answered, or stam-

"Pardon me, Constance. I thought-I feared-I hoped there might be some explanation. I thought she must have given you some reason for so horrible a step. Are you sure there is no hint, no clue to help us?" "Frank, listen: Sybil's note explained

It only implored me not to think harshly of her, when I should know what she had done, and bade me farewell. I could not comprehend its meaning until the news reached me that she "And you can not guess why she did

this thing?" "No." He turned away, putting his hand up before his face, and uttering a groan. Then he moved toward one of the French windows, pushed it open, and leaned

"I feel as if I were going mad," muttered. "Constance, pardon me; I must have the air. I must be alone to think, and to face this—this disgrace that

has come upon us." And he stepped through the open window, and reeled rather than walked down the steps, and out among the trees. Constance watched him until the shrubbery hid him from view, and then, with a quick, nervous glance about the room, and out at the windows, she went to the door which shut our tramp detec-

tive from view, but not from hearing. "Come out," she whispered, hurriedly. "Now is your time to escape." He came out, shaking himself like water dog. "Uh!" he exclaimed. "I have been in

one position too long.' "I am sorry," began Constance.
"Not for me," he interrupted. "Like mots listeners, I heard what I did not bargain for; but-I have not heard too much. Miss Wardour, don't reproach yourself, or Fate; that little extra hearing was a god-send. And now, let me out, quickly, before some one else claims your time.

She looked cautiously out into the hall then closed the door again. "I wish I could know your opinion regarding this business-all of it," she said, wistfully. "I begin to feel helpless, like a rudderless mariner.'

"It's a hard knot," he said, going toward the door; "a very hard knot. But we will untie it. Miss Wardour, and then you will understand all these things. Now tell me, where is your detective going next?" "I do not know."

"You must find out," imperatively. "I think I can." "And come to me in the garden." "Very well," looking out once more.

"Your way is clear, sir; go straight to the kitchen entrance." He passed out, and went his way, swiftly, quietly, and unobserved; and Constance returned to Mr. Belknap, and the completion of her jewel list.

"The combat deepens," mused the tramp detective, as he paced slowly down the garden walk. "The plot thickens. I come for a catfish-I may catch a whale. Oh, what a knot; what a beautiful, delightful, horribly hard knot; and how my fingers itch to begin at it. But softeasy; there is more to be tied in. Let us pay out the rope, and wait."

CHAPTER X.

Miss Wardour and the private detective had just completed their work of transferring to paper a minute description of the Wardour diamonds, when the door opened quietly, and Francis Lamotte, pale, heavy-eyed, but quite composed, appeared before them. "Have you finished your work?" he

asked wearily. "If so, may I intrude?" "Come, by all means," replied Constance, gently. "Your are not intruding, Frank.

"Thank you." He came forward, and sank listlessly into a chair. "Constance, who brought you this news about-Constance glanced toward the detective, and Francis, interpreting the look,

hastened to say:-"It is known to Mr. Belknap, I presume—this shameful business. There is has eloped with a low brute. I am must hear it all; every word, every par-

"Doctor Heath," replied the girl, icily. The interjection came through shut teeth, and just for a moment the dark shadow flitted across his features: then he said, with quiet composure:-

"Heath? ah, yes; and he gave you all the particulars-all that he had gathered?" "Doctor Heath told me all that he had learned," she replied, still coldly. Frank Lamotte arose slowly, wearily. "I must see Heath," he said, taking up his hat. "It is small wonder that you

speak so frostily to the brother of a girl who has disgraced herself, Constance. However, I realize my fall; henceforth, I The detective arose and moved uneasily

to the window. "I am sorry to hear this absurdity, Frank," said Constance, with some seyerity. "You know my position always in I must know what has driven her to these matters; only yourself can injure yourself in my eyes; and I am sorry to hear you speak thus of Sybil. I have yet to be convinced that in some manner, she is not more a victim than disloyal. I have not condemned her; why should you, her brother?"

A hot flush came over the young man's face, and his eyes glowed with a strange light. He shifted his position uneasily; then, abruptly, he turned to the detective. "If under the circumstances, and having seen my mood, you care to accept my hospitality, it is still extended, sir." he said, somewhat awkwardly; "will you accompany me to town, and afterwards late.

lunch with me?" "I will accompany you to the town," replied the detective, coming back from the window; "but I fear I must decline your hospitality for to-day; another time, perhaps.'

Francis bowed stiffly, then turned to Constance. "Constance, good bye," he said, mourn-

fully, and holding out his hand. "I will not displease you again I will keep at a safe distance "You will displease me by doing tween set, white teeth, "I should know that," she replied, kindly, at the same time extending her hand. "I mean by

staying away; I want you to come often. and to bring me any news that may come from Sybil. Remember I intend to be her champion, and you must be mine." "Then I may come as a bringer of news?" he asked.

a trifle sharply, "and come especially and set her free. when there is news. "Thank you;" he bowed over her hand, then turned to the private detechand closed firmly upon his arm, as she

"Good morning, Miss Wardour," said that individual, coming forward; "it is probable that I shall not see you again, as I will leave for the city this evening, but you will hear from me as the case

progresses, or it is possible that I may find it expedient to pay this place another visit. "In which case, you will of course your faults. If you let this hideous idea present yourself," smiled Constance. take place in your mind now, it wil "May I ask where you intend to pass | break out some day when the demon pos your time until you leave for the city,

"I can hardly say; about the town, as "Ah! Pardon the question; I was have two curses instead of one. Tou can have purchased the Staffon Fied Hamber which I purpose to travel the coming season, 1897, throughout the principal parts of

can hardly hope to find anything new in the village." "One can never tell, Miss Wardour. If I do learn anything new, you shall hear But all this is superfluous, perhaps. I from me. Present my adieus to Mrs. Aliston, and once more good day." Constance watched the two as they listened, and then something that she Terms made known by the Groom or Owner. walked away, together, the handsome

of the detective. Only for a moment, however, then she went swiftly through the halls, out at a rear entrance, and down the path toward the rear gardens. Here she found the tramp detective busy, or pretending to busy himself with a small pruning knife. "If you want to follow him, you must make haste," she said, breathlessly; "he is walking townward with Mr. Lamotte;

intends to loiter about the town and take some evening train.' "Pray don't appear so much excited, said the tramp detective, dropping his pruning knife, and picking it up again with great deliberation. "There is a man coming up from the river, he must be turn looked up to encounter his gaze, getting pretty near us. No, don't look and to be astonished at the new, pur-

"Dear me!" began Constance. "Listen," he went on, without regarding her ejaculation. "I am going to leave here in two minutes you can say that you have discharged me. I may not see you again for months. I may return at any time. I may as well warn you here, not to confide anything to Mr. Belknap at another time you will learn why. Another thing, it is just possible that you may need my services at some future time. I was about to give you an address that will reach me at any time, but we may be observed by that fellow who is coming. I will send you by mail a card containing the address. Pray call upon me | solve. if you need my aid. I hope Belknap will find your robbers, but you were wise not to tell him that you had saved your save you trouble. And now you had better move on. I intend to follow and overtake your two departing guests."

He turned carelessly away as he spoke. and Constance, after a pretense of examining the shrubbery, faced sout and walked a few paces down the path, then lifting her eyes carelessly, they fell upon the intruder. Uttering a low ejaculation of surprise, she hastened toward him. "Evan! why Evan!" she cried, anxiously. "You look ghostly, and you must

be in trouble." "Or I would not be here." said Evan Lamotte, bitterly. "Evan, the ne'er-dowell, does not seek his friends when the sun shines. Eh, Conny? Don't go in,' laying one hand upon her arm, as she was about to turn toward the house, "I -I came to talk with you. "But you will come in, Evan?"

"Aunt Honor shut herself in her own worn out with too much excitement. We the right time comes, in the right way. have had a detective here all the morning, not to mention Frank, who has made a wonderful discovery.' "I dare say," muttered the young fellow, dryly, "Frank will make another

ing at her arm again, "have you heard?" 'Have I heard what, Evan?" "About Sybil-my sister," his voice broke, ending in a sob. "Yes, Evan," she replied, very gently.

It was noticeable, the difference between her treatment of this younger brother of Sybil Lamotte and the one who had just gone.

With Francis she had preserved, even while her heart was full of sympathy and pity for his trouble, a certain dignity even in her kindness, an arm's length repellant stateliness, that galled and tormented the ardent, impulsive, and too eager young man. With Evan she was all pity, all sympathy, full of familiar sisterly kindness and patience. Women are strange creatures; we may be as handsome as the Apollo, and they

will steel their hearts against us. If we would have the confidence, the caresses the tenderest love of a pitying woman, we must be mentally, or morally, or physically maimed, or halt, or blind. Evan Lamotte was one of the world's unfortunates, and the pitying heart of the fair heiress had no scorn for such as he. A black sheep, so they called Evan Lamotte, not yet of age, with a slender physique, a pale, handsome face, handsome in spite of his dissipations. He seemed possessed of an evil spirit, that cried incessantly, "drink, drink, drink." Every means had been tried to win him from his dissipation; tears, entreaties, threats, bribes, were alike unavailing. In spite of himself, against himself, Evan Lamotte seemed driven downward by a

relentless, unseen enemy. "Reckless, worthless, hopeless." These were the adjectives commonly coupled | will have him, with his name, and yet his sister had deemed him worth her loving; his mother worth her pitying kindness.

like me is grieved almost to madness, I tell you, Con.,, the true reason will you call him maudlin, but I never cry in | never be told. my cups, Con. And I have been perfectly me what have you heard?"

"About all that is known, I think, no use of secrecy, where all the world is | Evan. Oh! Evan, do you know, can you already agape. My sister, you tell me. guess why she has done this-this terrible thing? Come down this walk, Evan; numbed with the horror of it. But I let us sit under that tree, on that bench.' She moved toward the spot indicated, questioned, and that will spare Sybil." ticular. Who brought you the news, Con- he following mechanically, and seating himself beside her, in obedience to her

"Do I know the reason?" he repeated. "Do I guess it? Oh, if I could guess it; sister to this fate? It is the question] came here to ask. Con., help me to try. think; she must have said something; must have given you some hint." "Alas. But she never did."

"And you can not guess; you have no clue to help us unravel this mystery?" Constance shook her head. "Con., oh, Con., you don't think-you can't think that she loved that-that

"No, Evan, I can't think that." "Then," excitedly; "you must think me, and by all W-, if I can bring it as I do; that there is a mystery; that there has been foul play. Con., I don't care for anything on earth, except Sybil this; I must help hen; I can help her; I can take her from that brute.'

His face was livid, and his eyes glowed with the flerce light that we have seen in the eyes of his elder brother. Constance saw the growing excitement, and "Evan, let us not anticipate," she said, gently. "All that we can do for

Sybil shall be done, but it must be with moving away, and turning a wicked look her consent. When does your father "I don't know," sullenly "I tele-

day, no doubt. But he will come too "Alas, yes; I regret so much that it

was for my sake he was absent from home at such a time, and Frank, too." "Frank? bah! What could he do? What ould any one do?" She turned, and scanned his face

"Evan, you suspect, or you know something. "I have a thought," he replied. "I hardly dare call it a suspicion. If I could know it to be the truth," he hissed, bewhat to do, then.

"Don't look like that, Evan; you look "I feel wicked," he cried, flercely 'You can never guess how wicked. When I think of that brute, that beast, that viper; of the power he must hold over her, I am mad, crazed. But he will come "You may come as usual," she retorted, back, and then-then I will murder him With his gleaming eyes, his clench d hands, his white, uplifted face, he look of like a beautiful evil demon. Constant

shuddered as she gazed, and then her

"Evan, listen: Do you think it would lighten Sybil's burden to hear you rave thus? Do you want to make her lot stil. harder to bear? Sybil loves you. Would it make her heart lighter to have you embroil yourself for her sake? You know sesses you. If Sybil Lamotte returns, and hears you utter such threats, she will have an added torture to bear; she wil have caused her heart-aches enough already. See, now, if you can not lighten her burden in some different, better way.

wonder if Sybil will come back, at all?"

had said seemed to chain and hold his

Slowly the evil light faded from his eyes, and into his face crept a strange. fixed look. Forgetful of time, or of his companion's presence, his thoughts followed this new courr, his hands clench- SPECIAL ing and unclenching themselves, his teeth burying themselves from time to time in his thin under lip. So long he sat thus, that Constance herself, from WTCHES. watching and wondering at his strange mood, wandered off into a sad reverie, the subject of which she could hardly have told it was such a vague mixture of Sybil's sorrows and her own warest.

After a time he stirred as if arousing himself with difficulty from a nightmare; and Constance, recalled to herself, in poseful self-restraint upon his face, and the inscrutable intentness of his eye. "Con.," he said slowly, even his voice seeming to have gained a new strange undertone, "Con., you are an angel. You have set me on my feet."

"On your feet, Evan?" "Yes, on my feet, mentally at least. don't suppose any one could set me permanently on my physical, corporeal pins. Beg pardon for the slang, Conny, I don't forget how you and Sybil used to lecture me for that, and my other vices. Poor sis, she had given up the drink talks latterly, given me over as hopeless, and so I am. Con., I have made a new re-

Constance smiled faintly. "Oh, you smile. You think I am going to swear off again. No. Con., that's diamonds. Keep your counsel on that of no use, I should know myself for a 200 subject always, Miss Wardour, it will liar all the time. I shall never quit liquor; I can't and I tell you," he whispered this fiercely, "they know that I can't, and they know why I can't. Oh! you need not recoil; we are not the first family that has inherited a taint; and I am the one unfortunate in whom that taint has broken forth. Let me tell you a secret; since my first potation, my mother has never once remonstrated with me; never once upbraided; my proud, high tempered mother. She knows the folly of trying to reclaim the irreclaim-

able. But," lowering his voice, sadly, "my mother never loved me." She shuddered at the tone, knowing that this last statement, at least, was all too true, and, to direct his thoughts from so painful and delicate a subject, said:-"And your resolve then, Evan?"

"My resolve," his mouth settling into hard lines once more. "Oh, that! well, No, I should fall out with your old it is a resolve you put into my head, cat—I beg pardon, Con., I mean your Con.; although I'll swear the thought was old aunt, directly." Con.; although I'll swear the thought was never in your mind. I have resolved to never in your mind. I have resolved to act upon your advice; to curb my hearoom an hour ago, child; she has been thenish temper, and to help Sybil, when She looked at him fixedly. "Evan, are you sure this last state of mind is not worse than the first?" He laughed, ironically. "How hard it is to make you believe

wonderful discovery soon. Conny," clutch that any good exists in me." "Oh, not that, Evan, but you look s strange; not so wild as before, but-"Just as wicked." "Well, yes;"

"Well, Con., you can't expect a fellow to feel pious all in an instant; mine is a pious resolve, and the proper feeling must follow. Isn't that about how they

"That's about how they preach it, sir. Now listen, I don't intend to stir one step, or allow you to stir, until you have explained some of your dark sayings; you are going to tell me what this now Evan glanced at her from under his

long lashes, and seemed to hesitate. He

knew that Constance, in what he bad sometimes termed her "imperative mood," was a difficult element to contend with. But he was not quite prepared to divulge just the precise thoughts that were in his mind. "Con.," he said, lowly, "do you think, if my sister came back very penitent, or very miserable, that my father would

"I don't know, Evan." "Well, that's another of the things that brought me to you. I was overwhelmed with misery, and my head was choas. I was wild to wreak vengeance upon that man, and filled with dread at the thought that Sybil might come back and meet with no welcome. I believe she will come. I know that man would not miss the triumph of bringing her back among us. Now, Con., my father thinks you infallible, and you can do anything with Frank. I want you to see them, and make them take Sybil home, when she comes. Yes, and John Burrill, too, if she

'Why, Evan!' "Then, he went on, breathlessly, "the had deemed him worth her tears, and world must have a reason for this mar-Constance Wardour had deemed him riage; for, not the greatest fool in Wwill believe that Sybil freely chose that "Constance," he choked back the sobs villain. Do you pave the way for Sybil's that arose in his throat; "don't think return; I will find a reason for the marthat I have been drinking; when a fellow riage—a bone to throw to the dogs. For,

Thinking of Sybil's letter, Constance sober since Saturdday night, or if you like, yesterday morning. I drank hard that letter, too, had caused her to think all that day after they told me, Con., but that Sybil had expected, or hoped, or not one drop since; not one. Con., tell | feared, a return to W-; which, she could

"You will furnish a reason, Evans You are mystifying me. "Never mind that. I, Evan Lamotte, worthless-black sheep-sot; I will find a reason, I tell you; one that will not be

"Then, aided by you, Sybil can come back to us. Aided by my new strong that Burrill—it the advantages of the advantages of the store where no fuss was made, and they could procure just what they wanted for their respective work and sport on the rivers, "And what then?" nearly chokes me to speak his name-just it has haunted me every moment; that as Sybil shall dictate; and then, aided by strong desire to know what drove my the old man's money, we may be able to

buy him off and get him out of the coun-"Why, Evan Lamotte," cried Constance, with a burst of hopefulness, "you have actually evolved a practical scheme. I begin to feel less hopeless.' "Oh, I have a brain or two left, when

a firm hand like yours, shakes me up, sets me straight, and gets me in running order. Will you help, Con.?" "Will I help! Sybil Lamotte, if she comes back, will be warmly welcomed by

He sprang to his feet and seized her hands. "Thank you, Conny," he cried; 'my heart is lightened now; I can 'bide my time,' as the novels say. Only do your part, Con." "Trust me for that. Now come to luncheon, Evan. He dropped her hands, and turned

away abruptly. "I won't! I can't," he said, almost gruffly. "Go in, Con., and be prepared to welcome Sybil back; and I." he added. over his shoulder, "will be prepared to welcome Burrill; a low, ironical laugh followed these words, and Evan Lagraphed him Saturday; he will come to- motte leaped the low garden palings, and went back as he had come, by the river

"What can that strange boy mean," thought Constance, gazing after him; "he makes me nervous, and yet he was reasonable after his fashion. Poor Evan, he is indeed unfortunate; here he has been breaking his heart over Sybil, and before night he may be singing in some saloon, in a state of mad intoxication. Altogether, they are a very uncomfortable pair to entertain in one half day, Frank and Evan Lamotte.'

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THURSDAY, TWENTY NINTH DAY OF JULY NEXT

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ADMINISTRATORS' NOTICE.

All persons having claims against the estate of Elizabeth Walls late of Chatham, Milliner, deceased, are required to file the same duly attested with the undersigned, and all persons indebted to the said estate are required to make immediate payment to JAMES F. CONNORS, Chatham. JAMES D. MURPHY, Administrators. MARY CURRAN, Chatham, 26th August, 1896.

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