

SWEET IS REVENGE.

By J. Fitzgerald Molloy.

Author of "How Came He Dead?" "That Villain Romeo." "A Modern Magician," &c

[NOW FIRST PUBLISHED. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.]

CHAPTER XXX.—(Continued.)

"It is false! I know nothing of this woman or of the diamonds," the accused man said, with an air of virtuous indignation.

"Then, sir," replied the detective, "you will not have any objection to being searched, and so proving that my suspicions are unfounded."

"Searched!" he exclaimed. "I searched in my cousin's house! This is an impertinence for which you will have to answer."

He rose as if determined to leave the room, but the officer who had stood quietly behind his chair immediately grasped him by the elbows, and held him as if he were in a vice. Felton then stepped forward. "The diamonds are either on your person or amongst your possessions if they have not been disposed of, so you might as well quietly let us see," he said.

"I tell you, fellow, you will have to pay dearly for this insult," exclaimed the captain, livid with rage.

He made a violent effort to wrench himself from the detective's clutches, but was quite powerless to shake off the iron grasp that bound him. Suddenly, with a light dexterous movement Felton passed his hands rapidly over the captain's breast and round his waist in search of the missing diamonds, until with an action swift as thought he undid a belt concealed under the vest, and laid it out on the dining table. This was a rude leather band, such as is used in the Bush to secure its owner's gold. As it fell on the table a heavy clink was heard; the detective smiled triumphantly, and in another second, ripping it open, displayed a diamond necklace and tiara, which he placed before Sir Danvers.

The baronet lay back in his chair speechless and motionless from surprise. The scene transacted before him within the last three minutes seemed as the action of a drama with which he had no connection. He was roused from the first effect of his astonishment by Felton's voice, saying, "There is the stolen property, Sir Danvers, quite intact, save for one stone which I happen to have in my pocket," saying which he produced the single diamond Mrs. Fothergill had offered the pawnbroker for sale.

Sir Danvers gazed in silence on the diamonds sparkling and glittering like fire under the light of the shaded candles; and from them he raised his eyes to the livid passion-wrought face of his cousin, who stood, covered with shame, in the grasp of the detective. As yet the baronet could not frame his thoughts to speech, and express the wonder, horror, and humiliation he felt at what had just happened. But his feelings were yet to undergo another shock, for as he sat in silence he saw Felton move noiselessly until he got behind the captain, when, with a sudden movement, the officer who held him joined his wrists together. Then Sir Danvers saw a flash of steel, heard a snap, and knew his cousin stood handcuffed before him as a felon.

The captain who had been completely taken by surprise at this action, raised his head and smiled bitterly.

"It will be rather an unpleasant thing for you, Danvers," he said in a firm, mocking voice, "to see your cousin, friend, and guest in the dock charged with robbery; but I suppose you will hardly prosecute, for your own sake as well as for mine."

"Prosecute!" replied the baronet. "No, you are, I am ashamed to say, my kinsman. You may go free so far as I am concerned; your own conscience will, I am sure, inflict the punishment that you deserve."

"Conscience," he echoed; "I have never been able to afford the luxury of such a thing; a man who has lived by his wits all his life cannot have a conscience in his composition; it's men like you who have sufficient wealth to purchase all things you desire, and never know what temptation is, that can boast of your consciences. Its place is supplied in less happy mortals by a liver."

The captain had never vented his mind so freely before to the baronet, who was surprised by his cynicism. He began to think the rumors which from time to time reached him concerning his cousin, must after all have had some foundation; and it likewise occurred to him it was since the captain's arrival at the abbey these little clouds had begun to darken his life. Incapable of hypocrisy, honorable and fearless, he scoffed at his own infamy, and sought to justify his misdeeds. He would stand between him and justice, but he would see him no more; he would give him the sum he had promised but an hour ago, in hopes he might begin a new and better life elsewhere; but he should be to him neither a kinsman nor friend henceforth.

"I would rather never have seen these diamonds again than have known you had stolen them," he said, taking up the jewels in one hand and then flinging them aside almost contemptuously. They were much less to him than the honor of his family which this man had tarnished, and the mere sight of them pained him.

"If I had my way your wish would have been gratified," replied the captain, with a sneer, "but these gentlemen were evidently not aware of your desires."

"Release him," the baronet said to the detectives. "I cannot hand him over to the law."

"I regret that I can't obey you, Sir Danvers," Felton said gravely and firmly. "The master of the abbey started. 'Why not?' he asked. 'No one save ourselves knows that he is—the thief,' he said, struggling to pronounce the words, his face flushing with shame and humiliation the while, at having to describe a kinsman in this manner."

"No one," replied the detective, in the same calm voice.

"Then you have only to name the price of your silence. I'm willing to buy it at any cost. The matter can be hushed up, the authorities need never know I have recovered the diamonds, in a little while the whole affair will be forgotten."

"Impossible," Felton answered.

"He waits for you to offer a price," the

captain remarked, in a mocking tone. "Bid high, Danvers, you can afford to be liberal now, you have recovered the jewels."

His cousin glanced at him in surprise, the man betrayed neither penitence nor humility; his natural cynicism had replaced his first feeling of shame.

"Mr. Felton," said the baronet, in a low agitated voice. "I am quite in your power; it rests with you to have the name of a family, which for generations has been blameless, irreproachable, honorable, dragged in the mire. No sum I could offer would recompense the service you will render me by letting this unhappy man free, and keeping the scandal from the public. Hush the matter up and my friendship and influence are yours forever."

"I am very sorry, Sir Danvers, I cannot," answered the detective.

"What, man, don't you trust me?" he asked, warmly.

"Implicitly."

"You may rely on my silence when it suits my interest," the captain added, in a voice which had lost all trace of self-assurance and mockery.

"You cannot," said Sir Danvers, incredulously, as he met Felton's gaze.

"It is not only that you should be guilty of offering, and I of accepting bribery, and therefore liable to certain penalties for compromising a felony, but there is another and graver charge against Captain Fothergill, which should have taken precedence of this, but that I wished to clear up the robbery first and complete my business."

"A graver charge," said the baronet, looking at his cousin, whose terror at the detective's words was plain to all.

"My case is finished," said Felton.

"And I," said the detective who accompanied him, "arrest Captain Fothergill in the name of the Queen on the charge of murdering James Hawkins."

The captain's face became ghastly with terror, his black eyes stared with an expression of fear and horror, and he reeled as if struck by a heavy blow. In a moment however he recovered himself, and with a brave show of courage as he could summon, laughed, but his laughter was hollow and had no merriment in its tones. "Why, you must be mad," he said turning to the stranger.

"It was proved that Hawkins, after leaving my house, committed suicide because of his losses."

"It was surmised, not proven," answered the detective. "The matter rested there for want of evidence until a couple of months ago, when a pal of yours, Charlie Fyske, confessed on his death-bed, he had seen you carry Hawkins body and leave it outside of his own door, where it was afterwards found. He also picked up your knife, stained with blood, which he produced."

"—his lying tongue. Do you think if this was true he wouldn't have stated it before?"

"The fact remains that he didn't because of some superstitious feeling about having your blood upon his head. I warn you, Captain Fothergill, to make no statements that may incriminate you, whilst at the same time you can keep your defence for the proper place."

"Where do you take me to?" the wretched man asked.

"To Lowbridge police station for the night, to London to-morrow morning, and later on to Australia."

The Captain looked at his cousin who lay back in his chair; a crushed, hopeless, expression on his face usually so bright and buoyant. "Danvers," he said in a voice that betrayed the fears he felt, "You have always been a good fellow; don't desert me now, but see me through this charge. Set the family lawyers to work for me; they may be able to drag me out of this confounded mess."

The baronet roused himself on being addressed, and looked at his cousin with an expression in which horror and compassion were mingled. "I will do all I can for you," he answered, in grave tones. "I knew you wouldn't desert your next of kin," the Captain remarked, and his voice was not without a touch of mockery. "Remember, after all, I am your cousin and your heir. You must do your best to free me from this internal charge."

"Are you ready?" the detective asked him. "The carriage in which we drove here waits for us outside."

"May I not change my clothes?" the captain asked.

"Yes, sir, when you get to Lowbridge, not before. Your servant can pack a portmanteau whilst we wait."

"Danvers, will you ask your man to do this for me?" he said.

The baronet rang the bell, but before it could be answered went out of the room and gave the necessary directions. In a few minutes the Captain's luggage was placed in the carriage, and no further excuse offered for delay. As he was about leaving the dining-room he glanced all round, as if bidding farewell to the scene of past pleasure; then his eyes fell on the diamonds with a covetous glare.

As he hesitated a second the strange detective put a hand on his shoulder to urge him forward. To the Captain that slight touch typified the grasp of the law, and the fears he had bravely striven to baffle and hide under an assumption of indifference, returned to him with renewed force. Something in the presence of this man chilled him; some nameless feeling in his own heart weighted him with terror. Leaving the Abbey accompanied by the detectives, and followed by his own cousin, he silently entered the carriage which, on this moonless and starless night, seemed black and mournful as a hearse. As the wheels moved slowly over the gravel path he put his head out of the window and said, "Don't forsake me, Danvers."

The mournful figure he addressed bowed his head in reply, and next moment Captain Fothergill was being driven at a swift pace to the Lowbridge police station.

CHAPTER XXXI.—MRS. CRAYWORTH'S SUITE.

A good half-hour before the morning train left Lowbridge for London, the detectives had placed Capt. Fothergill in a

second-class carriage, and had taken their places beside him. News of his arrest had not yet been noised abroad, and his conveyance thus early to the station attracted but little notice. He had not slept the previous night, for scenes long past, and memories well-nigh forgotten rose up before him in the darkness of his cell, chilling him with fears, threatening him with vengeance, filling him with dismay. In the solitude of these quiet hours his usual cynicism had deserted him. Year after year of that life so early stained by dishonor, crime, deception, and hypocrisy passed in review before him; scenes that had seemed brilliant because of some successful strategy, some pleasure realized, some gain achieved; days notable as having witnessed a triumph won by trickery; weeks during which the tide of fortune seemed at full flow rose before his mental gaze. But now the remembered brilliancy appeared artificial as the glare of gas-jets; the triumph worthless, whilst the golden flood that had flowed in upon him, as he quickly ebbed and left him penniless.

He had cast shame on the honor he found pure; schemed for the ruin of women and the betrayal of men, swindled, lied, deceived, shed human blood, that he might accomplish his own ends, and yet what had he gained by a course of evil-doing never intercepted by one good deed, one sacrifice of self, one generous act? He was poorer now than when he had started in life a promising young subaltern; he was a bankrupt in honor, covered with shame, a would-be bigamist, a thief, a captured murderer. But the story of his existence spent in wrong-doing and producing misery held no moral for him. Life was to his view a game, at which he had played his part with some skill, but luck deserting him he had lost the good things which other men gained. The odds now against him seemed desperate, the blood he had spilled cried out against him threateningly, the vision of a nerveless limp figure hanging from the gallows appalled him. He had experienced these feverish delights which men call pleasure, lived his life to the full in the past, and disgrace, perhaps an ignominious death awaited him in the future. Was there no escape from the shame and misery that faced him?

Towards morning he dozed, but his dreams were more fraught with horror than his waking thoughts; and when presently he was roused by the touch of a hand on his shoulder, he sprang up with a cry as if death had clutched him in its icy grasp. But though he could leave his dreams, he could not escape from the circumstances which had placed him in a police cell. His spirits sank, he had no appetite for breakfast, and submitted to be conveyed to the railway station with sullen indifference.

His position in the carriage afforded him an excellent view of the platform, and by way of distracting his thoughts from their gloom, he watched every figure that entered. The engine was not yet attached, porters were busy filling the luggage vans, but few passengers had arrived. Presently he was attracted by the officials bustling forward and touching their caps, and immediately Sir Danvers appeared, followed by a servant carrying an overcoat and bag, and was conducted to a first-class carriage. It appeared to the captain that his cousin had lost his usual cheerful manner, and seemed careworn, shamed, and depressed.

Sir Danvers, who was aware the prisoner was being conveyed to town by this train, looked neither to right nor left, but took the place assigned him, believing the eyes of those he passed were fixed on him, either in curiosity to see how he bore the disgrace, or in sympathy for his grief. As time passed, the platform becoming more crowded, the captain recognised many persons with whom he was accustomed to interchange a few words, and supposing them to be travellers to London cursed the fate that brought them to witness his humiliation. Most passengers had taken their place when Mrs. Crayworth, accompanied by the curate, rushed into the station. The widow beamed with delight, whilst Mr. Sympington's usually bland and placid exterior assumed a look of flurry and excitement as he appeared, overburdened by cloaks, rugs, parcels, and boxes belonging to the lady who had gained his heart. They entered a second-class carriage not far from the captain, who involuntarily withdrew into the shadow on beholding her, and again cursed the fate that made her his fellow traveller.

All through his journey a nameless horror fastened on his heart, taking deeper root with every hour that passed. In vain he strove to laugh at his terror, he could not dispel its force. What was it, he wondered, that rendered him a quaking coward? He had trained himself to the belief that he had no fear of man, no dread of death, but this feeling which took possession of him turned his blood to ice, caused his limbs to tremble, made his mind a chaos of dark and threatening thoughts. After hours that seemed endless the train rushed into Paddington station, when the shouts of porters, calling of cabmen, rattle of wheels, clatter of tongues, and general noise and confusion were welcome to him as so many distractions from the dreads he had endured.

The strange detective would have got out at once, but Felton, with the consideration he had shown in the morning by taking the captain to the train whilst the station was empty, now resolved to wait until Sir Danvers, Mrs. Crayworth, and others to whom Fothergill was known had time to depart. When the crowd had partly cleared away, the detectives quietly took their prisoner to a cab, and drove with him to Marlborough street station.

Mrs. Crayworth carried out her intention of leaving Hayton earlier than she had intended. News of the arrival of Lord Hector's wife had rapidly spread through the neighborhood of the rectory, when Mrs. Crayworth, perceiving her mistake, considered it were best she should quit Hayton for some time. There was no doubt Sir Danvers would well remember her hints and suggestions regarding the disloyalty of his wife, and probably feel inclined to resent them. Capt. Fothergill assured her he would never mention the fact of her having discovered the photograph and lock of hair that caused the breach; therefore, in course of time, if she were obliged to remain at Hayton as the curate's wife, she hoped Sir Danvers would forget her interference, and allow her to visit at the abbey as before.

She had also another reason for her visit to town. Having induced Sympington to propose, she was resolved the news of her engagement should be spread at once, and that the marriage should take place as soon as possible. Men had ere now proposed, and never married the women who accepted, but Mrs. Crayworth was determined this matrimonial scheme which offered many advantages should not escape her. She therefore hastened with the yielding curate to town, that she might introduce him to her friends as her future husband, and make preparations for the happy event, having induced him to express his desire that it might speedily take place.

In London, where he knew but a few old college friends, he was, she reflected, not likely to encounter anyone acquainted with his future wife, or those who had heard of her in the days gone by. It tidings of that eventful time reached him hereafter, it did not so much matter, she would have secured him as her husband, and she trusted to her influence to disburse his mind of the truth of all scandalous gossip. But, meanwhile, as she could not be too careful, she resolved he should spend as much of his time in her society as possible. Already he was her slave, obeyed her slightest wishes, yielded his opinion to hers in all things, refrained from contradiction, and proved himself the most manageable of young men, who would no doubt make a pattern husband to a clever woman knowing how to maintain her ascendancy without permitting him to become aware of his position, or to feel the curb.

Mrs. Crayworth, during her visit to town, had invited herself to stay with an invalid aunt, an old lady who lived in a cozy house in a fashionable square. As this relative scarcely ever left her rooms, she could in no way interfere with her niece's plans or make serious demands on the time which Mrs. Crayworth intended devoting to her future husband. Mr. Sympington had meanwhile taken up his residence close by at a temperance hotel, known as Verdant house, largely patronized by elderly ladies and young curates.

By arrangement Mr. Sympington, on the morning succeeding their arrival in town, was to call for and take her to a jeweller's shop in Regent street, to select an engagement ring she was to wear forever and a day for his sweet sake. It was only by a great deal of pressing she yielded to his wishes in this respect; but afterwards confessed to him, with a downward droop of the head, meant to convey her sense of shyness, that it was her great desire to wear a sign and symbol of the bondage which made her his own, his very own. Soon after midday he arrived and found her sitting with her back to the light, looking more youthful and charming than ever. She had been watching from the window for his coming, she declared, though he was not unpunctual, nay, indeed, he was before his time. After selecting the ring, she was to lunch with him at Blanchard's, whilst he was to dine with her and meet her aunt in the evening. After a few minutes she tripped out of the room, soon to return in the most becoming of costumes, to the delight of Mr. Sympington, who nervously blushed, and then stuttered as he paid some awkward compliment on her appearance.

As the day was delightfully warm without being oppressive, and Regent-street was but a short distance, they resolved to walk there. It seemed to him, who was oblivious of all things save the woman beside him, that they arrived at their destination in the course of a few seconds, while she wished he did not look quite such a fool, and resolved to give him sundry lessons hereafter. The selection of a ring was sufficiently important to occupy over half an hour; it was not yet one o'clock, and therefore too early for lunch. A proposal that they should while away the time by looking into shop windows was agreed to, and they leisurely walked down one side the great thoroughfare and up the other, both being wholly unaware they had attracted the attention of a stout, broad-chested man, with a waxed moustache, slight imperial, fair hair, and blue eyes, who wore a decoration in the button-hole of his somewhat threadbare coat, and had the unmistakable aspect and bearing of a foreigner. On first catching sight of her as he stood at the door of the Cafe Monaco, a look of surprise gleamed in his eyes, which was succeeded by an expression of amusement, that in turn gave place to a settled form of malignity. With slow and cautious footsteps he followed, unwilling to be seen, yet resolving to track her.

As Mrs. Crayworth and the curate arrived within sight of Blanchard's, they heard the shrill noisy cries of boys calling out the early editions of afternoon papers. As they shouted the headings of the most sensational items in a rapid and incoherent manner, Mrs. Crayworth's ears suddenly caught a familiar name. She laid her hand upon her companion's arm, and stood still, waiting for the newshy to come nearer: as they did she heard the words, "Shocking suicide of Captain Fothergill." For a second a feeling of horror deprived her of the power to move or speak, but it swiftly occurred to her that possibly the man who had taken his life was not her friend, but another bearing the same name. Sympington bought a paper, but refrained from opening it until they had reached the luncheon room at Blanchard's, and had seated themselves at one of the little tables near an open window through which the voices of the newsvendors came with terrible distinctness as they cried out again and again, "Shocking suicide of Captain Fothergill."

The curate spread out the paper, ran his eyes over the columns, and came to the paragraph he sought.

"Is it," asked his companion, eagerly, "is it our friend?"

"It is; the whole thing is shocking. Are you prepared to hear it, dear?"

"Tell me all," she replied, "or give it to me."

He handed her the paper, and she read what the reporter could gather. The captain, he stated, had returned to town yesterday afternoon from a visit to his cousin, Sir Danvers Fothergill, the Abbey, Hayton, where he had been arrested on a charge of murder committed some years ago in Australia, though but recently

reference, and allow her to visit at the abbey as before.

She had also another reason for her visit to town. Having induced Sympington to propose, she was resolved the news of her engagement should be spread at once, and that the marriage should take place as soon as possible. Men had ere now proposed, and never married the women who accepted, but Mrs. Crayworth was determined this matrimonial scheme which offered many advantages should not escape her. She therefore hastened with the yielding curate to town, that she might introduce him to her friends as her future husband, and make preparations for the happy event, having induced him to express his desire that it might speedily take place.

In London, where he knew but a few old college friends, he was, she reflected, not likely to encounter anyone acquainted with his future wife, or those who had heard of her in the days gone by. It tidings of that eventful time reached him hereafter, it did not so much matter, she would have secured him as her husband, and she trusted to her influence to disburse his mind of the truth of all scandalous gossip. But, meanwhile, as she could not be too careful, she resolved he should spend as much of his time in her society as possible. Already he was her slave, obeyed her slightest wishes, yielded his opinion to hers in all things, refrained from contradiction, and proved himself the most manageable of young men, who would no doubt make a pattern husband to a clever woman knowing how to maintain her ascendancy without permitting him to become aware of his position, or to feel the curb.

Mrs. Crayworth, during her visit to town, had invited herself to stay with an invalid aunt, an old lady who lived in a cozy house in a fashionable square. As this relative scarcely ever left her rooms, she could in no way interfere with her niece's plans or make serious demands on the time which Mrs. Crayworth intended devoting to her future husband. Mr. Sympington had meanwhile taken up his residence close by at a temperance hotel, known as Verdant house, largely patronized by elderly ladies and young curates.

By arrangement Mr. Sympington, on the morning succeeding their arrival in town, was to call for and take her to a jeweller's shop in Regent street, to select an engagement ring she was to wear forever and a day for his sweet sake. It was only by a great deal of pressing she yielded to his wishes in this respect; but afterwards confessed to him, with a downward droop of the head, meant to convey her sense of shyness, that it was her great desire to wear a sign and symbol of the bondage which made her his own, his very own. Soon after midday he arrived and found her sitting with her back to the light, looking more youthful and charming than ever. She had been watching from the window for his coming, she declared, though he was not unpunctual, nay, indeed, he was before his time. After selecting the ring, she was to lunch with him at Blanchard's, whilst he was to dine with her and meet her aunt in the evening. After a few minutes she tripped out of the room, soon to return in the most becoming of costumes, to the delight of Mr. Sympington, who nervously blushed, and then stuttered as he paid some awkward compliment on her appearance.

As the day was delightfully warm without being oppressive, and Regent-street was but a short distance, they resolved to walk there. It seemed to him, who was oblivious of all things save the woman beside him, that they arrived at their destination in the course of a few seconds, while she wished he did not look quite such a fool, and resolved to give him sundry lessons hereafter. The selection of a ring was sufficiently important to occupy over half an hour; it was not yet one o'clock, and therefore too early for lunch. A proposal that they should while away the time by looking into shop windows was agreed to, and they leisurely walked down one side the great thoroughfare and up the other, both being wholly unaware they had attracted the attention of a stout, broad-chested man, with a waxed moustache, slight imperial, fair hair, and blue eyes, who wore a decoration in the button-hole of his somewhat threadbare coat, and had the unmistakable aspect and bearing of a foreigner. On first catching sight of her as he stood at the door of the Cafe Monaco, a look of surprise gleamed in his eyes, which was succeeded by an expression of amusement, that in turn gave place to a settled form of malignity. With slow and cautious footsteps he followed, unwilling to be seen, yet resolving to track her.

As Mrs. Crayworth and the curate arrived within sight of Blanchard's, they heard the shrill noisy cries of boys calling out the early editions of afternoon papers. As they shouted the headings of the most sensational items in a rapid and incoherent manner, Mrs. Crayworth's ears suddenly caught a familiar name. She laid her hand upon her companion's arm, and stood still, waiting for the newshy to come nearer: as they did she heard the words, "Shocking suicide of Captain Fothergill." For a second a feeling of horror deprived her of the power to move or speak, but it swiftly occurred to her that possibly the man who had taken his life was not her friend, but another bearing the same name. Sympington bought a paper, but refrained from opening it until they had reached the luncheon room at Blanchard's, and had seated themselves at one of the little tables near an open window through which the voices of the newsvendors came with terrible distinctness as they cried out again and again, "Shocking suicide of Captain Fothergill."

The curate spread out the paper, ran his eyes over the columns, and came to the paragraph he sought.

"Is it," asked his companion, eagerly, "is it our friend?"

"It is; the whole thing is shocking. Are you prepared to hear it, dear?"

"Tell me all," she replied, "or give it to me."

He handed her the paper, and she read what the reporter could gather. The captain, he stated, had returned to town yesterday afternoon from a visit to his cousin, Sir Danvers Fothergill, the Abbey, Hayton, where he had been arrested on a charge of murder committed some years ago in Australia, though but recently

Royal Belfast Ginger Ale, Wilmot Spa Lemonade, Wilmot Spa Club Soda and Wilmot Spa Water are all filled from the celebrated Spa Springs at Wilmot, which have effected so many cures in disease.



comfort and ease, with clothes neater and cleaner than the ordinary way. **STOP** now a moment to consider if it is any advantage to use a pure Soap like Surprise, and save yourself, your hands, your clothes.

—READ the Directions on the Wrapper.

IN A RUSH

TO stop the hard work of wash day—to stop the rub, rub, rub and tug, tug, tug, to make the clothes clean? Of course you are. Then send for "SURPRISE SOAP" and use the "SURPRISE WAY" without boiling or scalding the clothes, and save half the hard work. Have

traced to him through the deathbed confession of a witness. Capt. Fothergill was conveyed to the Marlborough police station, and next morning, on a warder entering his cell, was found dead in bed, having during the previous night opened a vein in his arm, and allowed himself to bleed to death.

Mrs. Crayworth set down the paper, and lay back in her chair within the shadow of a curtain. She was more shocked than she cared to show. This man, who had once been her closest friend, ally, confidant, and adviser, had been a murderer, and had come to a terrible end. A nervous dread came upon her, lest the shadow of his fate might encompass her, his friend and partner. They had plotted and schemed together years ago; wheedled him, his friend and partner, had fascinated out of their gold; levied blackmail upon women whose characters she had helped him to jeopardise; come between man and wife; separated young men from girls they had vowed to marry. He had met a terrible retribution for his misdeeds; would she, his partner, be allowed to throw aside her old life like a glove no longer serviceable, and begin a new existence as a wife of a man who believed her all his partner should be, meeting no punishment, but rather receiving reward for duplicity. She raised her eyes, and as it in answer to her thoughts saw before her a face once familiar, the face of the foreigner who had followed her, the face of him whom to her startled imagination, seemed like avenging fate.

CHAPTER XXXII.—VENGEANCE.

The foreigner advanced towards Mrs. Crayworth slowly, his countenance beaming with smiles, his hat held in one hand, the other outstretched to greet her. She glanced at him rapidly, as if to gauge his circumstances by his appearance, and the result increased her uneasiness. The breast and sleeves of his coat had assumed a gloss which only long wear could impart, his trousers were baggy and badly cut, his patent leather boots were chapped in the creases and down at the heel, whilst his hat had that wondrous sheen suggestive of unlimited application of a hot iron. In a moment she braced herself to play her part. He was the last man in Europe she desired to see just then; but perhaps his presence bode her no danger.

"My dear baron," she said, "this is indeed an unexpected pleasure. I had no idea there was such good luck in store for me today as a sight of so old and valued a friend."

"Ah," he said, throwing back his head, whilst a peculiar twinkle almost approaching a wink, flashed in his eyes, "you are as charming as ever. The same sweet smile, the same gracious words, the same warning expression cross her face, and then added with an elevation of his eyebrows and a wave of his hands, "Pardon. This, I presume, is the gentleman who has the happiness and the honor of being your husband?"

"No, no," she replied, hurriedly, not willing to introduce the curate, "this gentleman is merely a friend."

"But soon to become her husband," added Sympington, who regarded her hesitating as the result of bashfulness.

"Indeed," said the baron, a curious smile hovering on his lips. "My dear sir, I congratulate you," he added, extending his hand. "You will have gained a position as this lady's spouse which few men would dare to hope for."

Mrs. Crayworth shot an appealing glance towards the speaker, which he regarded with amusement. "Are you staying in town, baron?" she asked.

"Yes, madame, for a little while. I had hoped I might encounter you during my stay, and you see some good angel has granted my desire. I am," he continued, turning to the curate, "an old friend of this estimable lady. I have been, I may flatter myself by saying, a very close friend."

"Yes; when my dear husband lived," she interrupted.

"Yes, even whilst her dear husband lived," he continued. "Ah, he was a delightful man, monsieur, so agreeable, so complaisant, so philosophic."

"As an old friend of Mrs. Crayworth's, I hope you will stay and lunch with us," said the curate, believing he would please her by this act.

"It will give me delight, monsieur," he answered, seating himself at the table between them. "I have not the pleasure of knowing your name, but allow me to present my card," he added, handing the curate a small slip of card-board, on which was written, Baron Handstein, Privately's hotel.

"And this is mine," said Sympington, giving his name and address, which the baron carefully placed in a shabby purse, looking at Mrs. Crayworth shrewdly all the while.

Something in his manner beneath the polished surface of his words, caused her increasing uneasiness. She knew that a word from this man whispered in the curate's ear would shatter her future prospects as a house of cards is levelled by a breath. Never had she found it more difficult to wear the mask of smiling civility than today, but drop it she dared not. To let this man see she feared him would be to play into his hands. She had once

governed him with undisputed sway, perhaps the old fascination had not quite lost its power.

"When does the ceremony of your church happily unite you to this excellent lady?" asked the baron, as he tied a napkin under his neck, preparatory to eating his soup.

"Mrs. Crayworth has not yet consented to fix a day," answered the curate, blushing as he looked at his intended bride.

"Ah, I may have the felicity of witnessing the marriage," he said.

"I cannot say, baron; it may not take place for a month, by which time you will probably have left England."

"My stay depends on business," he answered. "Yes, I, whom you have known as a gay butterfly of fashion, a spendthrift, I have reformed and have become a man of business. I have parted with my money. I must now live by my—"