Continued from Tenth Page. The man came unsteadily down the

·Will you come at once, sir ?' he said. in the greatest agitation. 'Something awful has happened. Madame Rozier is

dead! Those who were near enough, heard what was said.

The gay laughter ceased. Every face wore an expression of in-

credulous horror Lady Metherel, knowing nothing of what had occurred, spoke in haughty annoy-

'What is this mystery, Martin-what has happened ?' The baronet's lips moved, but no words

came from them.

The servants stood staring at the footman who could hardly stand, while the butler hastily left the room to discover the exact cause of the disturbance.

Then at last Sir Martin gained some control over his voice and actions. 'An awful calamity has occurred,' he said, speaking in a painfully, labored way.

Madame Rozier is-dead! His limbs refused to support him longer. He sank upon his chair.

'Dead!' Lady Metherell repeated, in awestruck tones. 'Oh, impossible! Doctor Forbes you are the only medical man present would you see this unfortunate lady at once? It may not be to late.'

The doctor-who was a friend staying in the house-rose at once, and followed Lady Metherell from the room, or rather would have done so, had not Wilson, the butler, blocked the way.

'You cannot go, my lady-you cannot go!' he cried, tremulously; adding. appealingly, to the doctor: 'Don't let her go sir-it is no sight for her ladyship !'

'Stand aside! Lady Metherell command. ed, astonished at the man's manner. 'There is no time to lose.'

She swept past him, paying no heed to the doctors protest that he should go alone. Some servants were gathered in the corridor, looking terribly frightened. Madame Rozier's door stood open.

The room was all in confusion. A curtain had been dragged from the bed, on which a ghastly, rigid figure was lying beneath the blood-stained clothes. It was such a terrible spectacle, that both Lady Metherell and Dr. Forbes paused on the threshold, with a cry of

'Wilson was right' he said, 'this is no sight for you.' 'See what has happened !' she returned,

faintly. 'I-I- this is to awful!' He led her, unresisting, from the room, and then re-entered, closing the door.

When he came out, a tew minutes later, he found her waiting tor him. 'There is no hope?' she questioned.

'She has been dead for hours,' he re-plied. 'I must see Sir Martin at once, Lady Metherell. This is a serious matter.' He had locked the door, and placed the key in his pocket.

'You think,' she questioned, 'that-that the poor thing committed suicide ?' He shook his head.

'It looks like murder,' he said. Lady Metherell possessed strong nerves and plenty of sense. She neither screamed nor fainted, though

she grew very white. 'It cannot be that,' she said, quietly. 'You must surely be mistaken.'

'I trust I am,' he answered, gravely. The guests were still in the dining-room, talking together in subdued voices.

Sir Martin has gone to the library. Lady Metherell and the doctor followed him thither. 'I suppose,' Dorrien said, standing with

a little group by one of the windows, 'this will put an end to everything? Was Madame Rozier an intimate triend?'

'An old iriend of Dad's,' Gilbert said. 'It is beastly unfortunate.' 'She did not look the least bit like dying,

Shirley said. 'Poor thing, it is awful!' 'It must have been her heart,' said Lucy, swinging the blind-cord to and fro. 'It is dreadful to think of her lying there dead,

while we were all enjoying ourselves.' 'It is deuced rough luck her dying here,' Gilbert declared. 'Don't be so unfeeling!' Shirley said.

'Well, as I never saw her in my life till yesterday, and then only spoke halt-a-dozen words to her, I really don't see why I should be expected to feel very cut-up about it,' he expostulated. 'Miss Ware has taken it very much to

to heart,' Lucy remarked, dryly. Eva Ware had been weeping copiously. She was now seeking consolation from Mr. Ridley, who was holding a glass of

wine for ber. 'Poor Mr. Metherell!' Shirley said, mischievously, 'you are being cut out.' 'You mean that poor old Ridley is being

let in,' he returned. Then they all laughed in a hushed, shamed sort of way.

"You knew Madame Rozier very well. did you not?' Lady Daresdale said to Capt. Dorrien. He looked surprised.

'No; that is to say, very slightly.' 'She told me you had met in Paris,' her ladyship said.

'She told me so, also,' Dorrien replied with a little laugh; 'but I could not remember the occasion on which we met, though I was not so ungallant as to admit

Then Lady Metherell came into the Lady Daresdale was her intimate friend.

She went forward to meet her. 'My dear Clara,' she said, we all feel so deeply for you. It is so unfortunate at such a time of merry-making. Of course

can none of us experience any great selected for one whom we scarcely knew, but we are all terribly shocked.'

Lady Metherell p essed her friends band as she slowly moved to the window, where

most of her guests were congregated.
'It is, indeed, a shock,' she said, glanc ing from one to the other; 'more severe and terrible than any os you at present

imagine. You are bound to hear the truth, sooner or later, and, therefore, I have decided to tell you at once.' She paused for an instant.

No one moved or spoke. All eyes were turned to her, all were waiting for her next words. When they came a thrill of borror ran

through the assembly. 'Doctor Forbes says Madame Rozier has been stabbed through the heart. He believes she has been murdered. It is awful, is it not? We think that thieves must have got into the house, for her room is all in disorder. No doubt they intended to ransack, the place. Perhaps she awoke, and tried to raise an alarm-it is impossible to say. The police have been sent for. We shall hear of their veiws of the case.

'Why, we might all have been murdered in our beds !' Eva Ware cried, looking very frightened. 'Great Scott!' Gilbert Metherell exclaim-

ed incredulously. You don't mean this ! 'It seems incredible,' Dorrien declared. Why, it was almost daylight before we left off dancing.' 'They must have bidden themselves in

the house,' Lady Metherell said; adding: 'I think you had all better see if your ewellery is safe.'

There was a general movement towards the door.

Shirely sat down in the window-seat. 'I have nothing worth taking,' she said, 'I thought,' Lucy began, 'that I heard someone moving about very early this

morning.' 'That is queer,' Dorrien exclaimed. ' thought so, too, but imagined it to be the servants. Has much gone from the house, Lady Metherell?'

'Up to the present we have missed nothing. The plate chests are untouched. The thieves must have been disturbed at the commencement of their work.'

'Poor Sit Martin!' Shirley said, breaking a short pause. 'He looked so terribly upset.'

'Mr. Ridley had to help him from the room,' added Lady Daresdale.

'He felt it more keenly, as she was an old triend of his,' Lady Metherall explain. ed, 'At least, they were acquainted many years ago. But unfortunately, we know nothing of her people, and have no idea how to let them hear until they write. You will excuse me now; but there are many things I must see to

As she left the room with Lady Daresdale, Wilson came to tell her that the inspector and a couple of men had arrived. The dead woman's room was visited, the

house searched from attic to basement, the servants all closely questioned, but not the faintest clue was discovered. Nothing had been taken from the house,

not a single article of jewellery was miss-The whole affair seemed shrouded in

hopeless mystery. A telegram was despatched to Scotland

Yard for a detective. He reached Coddington by the last train that night, and remained at the Court unti after the inquest, at which a verdict was returned of wilful murder against some person or persons unknown.

No letters came for Madame Rozier, and, though her relatives were widely advertised tor, none came forward.

The detective returned to town, fairly baffled. The murder had put an end to all the

The guests-with the exception of one or two intimate triends-had left the day

following the tragedy. Lucy Brend accepted an invitation to stay with the Loraines, and Captain Dorrien departed on a visit to Scotland.

A heavy gloom seemed to hang over Metherell Court.

Even the servants spoke in whispers, and started at their own shadows. Lady Metherell sppeared colder and

more formal than ever, while Sir Martin seemed incapable of recovering from the Before it, he had been a young looking

man for his age; now he was an old one. His bair grew suddenly grey, deep lines came about his eyes and mouth, his shoulders were bent. He avoided all society, and spent long

hours alone in his study. He refused to consult a doctor, declaring

there was nothing the matter with him beyond being a trifle run down.

And when Lady Metherell expressed her desire to go away at once for change of air

and scene, he declined to accompany her. 'My dear Martin,' she exclaimed, in annoyance, 'I must insist that you do so. Doctor Lewis says that your nerves are evi-

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dently in a terrible state, and that you must have a complete change. 'Lewis knows nothing about it,' was the

They were sitting at breakteast alone, Gilbert not having put in appearance. 'I shall arrange to leave on the eighth,'

said he ladyship, with decision. 'Certainly; but I shall not accompany

'And why?'

'Because, my dear, I do not wish to leave home at present. He rose as he spoke, and moved slowly towards the door; but his wife's voice

arrested him before reaching it. One moment,' she said. in her quiet, icy way. 'I have a question to ask you. What was Madame Rozier to you, that her death should effect you like this?"

At the first mentioned of that dreaded name, he felt the blood leave his lips. He came back to the table, and leaned upon a chair for support.

'I do not understand you,' he said. She raised her eyebrows, one white hand idly playing with the ring of her serviette! 'Surely my question is plain enough! That you should have been shocked and grieved, one could understand; but that the death of an old friend-who you have not met for many years-should alter you

so entirely, is beyond my comprehension. I merely ask you to explain it.' Her words dispelled the sickening dread that she had discovered some clue to his

The tight pain about his heart began to

He breathed more freely. 'There is nothing to explain,' he replied. 'Say, rather, that you refuse to do so,' she returned impatiently. 'I know that there is something the matter. You are foolish to keep it from me.'

'My dear Clara, you are laboring under a delusion,' he said, and left her. She gave an angry little laugh as he

She was utterly commonplace and practical, and had no conception of the agony of mind he was suffering. Added to the terrible belief that he was

really guilty of the awful crime, was the wearing uncertainty as to what had become of the papers relating to his elder son. He had managed to secretly visit the

room before the police had arrived, and bad searched for the small bag in which he had last seen the letters. It was soon found, and, with bated breath

and nerveless fingers, he had pressed the It opened easily, but—it was empty. There was no sign of the papers any-

where; nor in the time which folllowed did they come to light. It was most unlikely that she should have destroyed them; but, if they still existed, who had them

Day and night the question haunted him. The suspense and the horror were killing

Was it possible there was another who knew the secret-another who, through the knowledge, might bring the death of

Dola Rozier home to him Then, too, there was the missing dagger. No trace of it had ever been discovered, though he was always silently and secretly hunting and hunting for it.

Up to the present no one had noticed that it was gone, though he lived in daily terror of someone doing so. No man, surely. ever suffered more

keenly for his sins than Sir Martin Mether-Sometimes the longing to speak became

There were moments when he felt an unconquerable desire to cry out: 'l am the guilty man! I am the murderer! Moments when he felt that exposure,

terable to the tortures he endured. And so the summer days went by, and people gloried in the sunshine and found or 'No' to Gilbert Metherell. pale lips cursed the glaring sun, and the rather foolish. shadow upon the house grew ever deeper. 'The old pater is going into his dotage,

shame, and death, would be infinitely pre-

said Gilbert Metherell, one day, as he lay on the bea h beside Shirley. 'I think you are horribly heartless,' she said, 'to speak in that way. Anyone can'

see that he is very ill.' 'He wont see a doctor. He declares he s all right. I supose he ought lo know.' 'It you were half a son,' she said, with a little touch of contempt, 'you would try to

'The mater has tried,' Gilbert argued.
'He doesn't want to be cheered. The poor dreamily old mother is sick of it. She is going the shore.

'And die of the blues? Not likely. I'm Then the ringing of the workmen's bell off yachting; but, before I go, Shirley, I in the town, told her it was the luncheon-

want an answer to what I have been asking you for the last six months.'

'I hate questions and answers,' Shirley 'That can't be helped,' he replied. 'You

can say 'Yes,' and it is all over. Shirley, will you marry me ?' She was not taken by surprise.

She had known for some time that the hour would come when she would have to decide one way or the othee. She looked at his weak tace, at his dandy clothes.

She did not love him-she did not even admire him-and yet she thought of Madge and her mother, and of how awful it was to be so poor, and of all she could do it she married Gilbert Metherell.

'I wish you would not ask me now,' she said, crossly. 'Can't wait any longer,' he declared,

feeling in his pocket for something. It turned out to be a small leather case, containing a beautitul opal and diamond

'If you like to take it, say so; if you don't, we can throw it in the sea.' 'But Sir Martin-' Shirley began, teebly.

'Is ready to give us his blessing,' Metherell interrupted, happily. Everyone is agreeable—you had better say 'Yes.' Shirley flung a little stone into the water, across the faint blue of which a

white gull was lazily flapping. 'I don't love you' she said, with cruel

But fortunately, her lover was not thin-skinned, and smilled complacently. 'That will be all right. I'm sure we shall hit it off splendidly. I can't talk the stuff they do in books, you know, about adoring and all that sort of thing; but

I'm awfully fond of you- you are so confoundedly pretty.' 'Suppose I grow ugly ?'

'Oh, you couldn't ! 'I might lose an eye, or otherwise disfigure my face, bicycling ?

'I'll risk that,' She gave a little sigh, then regarded hm with dissatisfaction.

'You are so young-you cannot know your own mind yet.' He smacked his leg, with a loud laugh. 'Don't I, by Jove! I say, you little

tease, don't humbug any longer. Which is it to be? 'If I say 'No' p'

'I'll go to the dogs!' 'What a stupid thing to do! Well, as you are so determined

'Gad, I am; there is no mistake about that! See it it fits, Shirley. Three cheers! I've won the day!' He threw his cap in the air.

Shirley set looking at the ring he had tossed into her lap. The sun struck bright lights from the

'I was going to say,' she said, 'that, as you are so determined, I'll think it over.' His face fell.

'That won't do. I want my answer now. 'You shall have it to-morrow.' 'I am going away to morrow.'

What time are you woing ?' 'Nine thirty.' He began flinging stones, in a savage manner, at an old basket the waves were washing up on the beach.

Shirley said nothing for a few minutes; then she looked at Metherell. He was frowning in an ugly way, that made her

'I shall say no if you look like that.' 'All right!' sulkily. 'Give us that ring.' ·You can take it; but don't throw it away, because-well, there is just a chance that to-morrow I might want it.'

'I have told you that I shall not be here to give it you. 'I shall be on the beach about eight o'clock in the morning, if you like to be

here also.' 'Can't manage it,' 'Well, then, there is nothing more to be

'Yes, there is,' he declared, 'I think you are treating me deucedly bad.' 'Poor thing! 'And I don't intend to put up with

any longer.' 'There are heaps of girls in the world.' 'Oh, heaps! Are you trying to hit the basket, or the bathing-machine ?'

'It is easy for you to laugh.' 'Yes; at least, I have always found it so.' 'Well. I am just tired of this. So I'll wish you good-morning.

'Good-morning,' said Shirley, serenely. He got up, brushing some sand from his 'Take my advice, and the next time a fellow asks you to marry him, say what you mean at once, or you'll lose him alto-

gether.' And, with this parting shot, young Metherell went off.

'That is a good thing !' Shirley said aloud, but in her secret heart she was not quite certain that it was.

There were plenty of girls eager and anxious to jump at an offer from him, plenty who would be ready to soothe his wounded And it was very possible that she might

life full of pleasure; but at Metherell Court | Shirley began to think she had been She cared for no one else, and yet-

She gave a profound sigh, as the recol-

never again have the chance of saying 'Yes,'

lection of a proud, handsome face flashed before her mind's eye. 'If I had known him,' she said, in a sott whisper, while the warm color glowed in her cheeks, 'I should have loved him-1 could not have helped it. It is a good thing he went away. I don't suppose I shall ever see him again. Perhaps some day I

shall buy his pictures. I wonder what his name is?" She sat with her chin in her hand, dreamily watching the waves break upon

'And you will stay and take care of your her eyes were very serious. There was a troubled look on her face, Half-an-hour passed away.

hour, and, picking up her sunshade and

book, she turned to leave the beach. As she reached the top, she saw Gilbert Metherell standing on the path, talking to

one of the boatmen. She wondered if he would come her; but he only raised his cap, as she went by.

'I have done it this time,' she thought, with a grim little smile. 'I wish I knew whether I feel glad or sorry.'

As she walked on, she became aware of footsteps hastening after her, and the next instant Metherell was by her side. 'Shirley,' he said, 'I am going to ask you once again. Will you marry me ?'

He looked more determined than she had ever seen him before. She knew that, if she meant to have him. now was her time for saying so; yet she

still hesitated. They walked a few yards in silence, then he suddenly came to a standstill.

'You refuse to answer me,' he cried. And I'm dashed if I ever ask you again!' 'I am thinking,' she protested.

'Thinking be hanged!' he returned, ungraciously. At any other time she would have

laughed at his ill temper, but she regarded him quite gravely, almost pityingly. 'Why do you want me?'

He shrugged his shoulders. 'Because I'm a fool, I suppose.'

A faint smile crossed her lips, 'I believe you are. But still, if you insist upon being a fool-well, shall I try that ring on?'

'You are serious?' he asked. 'Don't I look so?' she returned. 'You mean that you intend to be my

wife P'

'Some day.' He looked half-doubtingly at her. A gleam of mischief came into her eyes. 'Had you not better write out an agree-

ticular P' 'If I did, it should be a very binding one you slippery little fish!'

ment for me to sign, as you seem so par-

His moody face began to clear. He took her hand, and put the ring upon No one was looking, and he pressed his

lips to her fingers. 'Jove! I have waited long enough for this. What a dance you have led me! But I made up my mind to have you!' he declared, exultantly. 'I say, Shirley, I don't think I shall go to-morrow.'

cannot disappoint people at the last mom-'You don't seem the least bit sorry.' 'Don't I? Well, it is early yet to begin. You are not going till to-morrow.'

'Oh, you must!' she exclaimed. 'You

'Will you be sorry then?' 'Yes; I shall be inconsolable.' 'You make fun of everything.'

'I won't to-morrow.'

He laughed at the comical little grimace which accompained the words. She was so very bright and attractive, he thought, with a glow of pride; just the sort of girl any fellow would admire.

It was fortunate he neither gave nor asked any great love. A deep affection would have been entirely beyond him. 'I shall come in, this afternoon,' he said.

as they parted at the garden gate of Fairfield-Shirley's home. 'Yes, do,' she answered, indifferently. 'You shall have some tea and a piece of

of cake, in honour of the occasion. To be Continued.

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