

## TO THE BITTER DREGS.

By the Author of "Cast up by the Sea," "The Fog Woman," "The Secret of White Towers," etc.

THE FOLLOWING  
Is a synopsis of the chapters already published; it will be able to show the course of the most interesting serial without any perplexity.

Martin Metherell, a young military officer, secretary of the Lillians, a governess in the employ of his stepmother, some time afterwards, he is summoned to the bedside of a dying uncle—Sir Robert Metherell—who promises to make him his heir, on condition that he marries his (Sir Robert's) only surviving child, Clara.

Dora Koski, an operatic singer, who in love with Martin, and hates Lillian for having become his wife, suggests that he should permit her to lead the girl to suppose that her marriage is null and void. Tempted by his uncle's wealth, he gives way, and the scheme is successfully carried out. Lillian disappears, and Martin marries his cousin.

In due course a son is born to Lillian. Dora visits her, and pretending she has secured a good home for the boy, persuades her to part with him. A few weeks later Lillian is told that the child is dead, and therefore, it is believed commits suicide.

Martin Metherell—who becomes Sir Martin on the death of his uncle—has only one child, a son, named Gilbert. On the eve of Gilbert's coming-of-age, Dora Koski—now known as Dora Rozier—reappears on the scene, and by telling Sir Martin that Lillian's child did not die, but still lives, and threatening to expose his villainy, induces him to admit her into his house as a guest.

Among the other guests is a man known as Captain Dorrien, whose real name is Jim Harland. He is an ex-member of a gang of Parisian criminals, betrayed by him to the police, and to which Madame Rozier herself belongs. The two recognize each other, and Dorrien fears that Dora will denounce him to his enemies.

That night Sir Martin dreams of himself murdering Madame Rozier, and when it is found that she really has been murdered, and with the very weapon which figured in his dream, he believes he is a murderer.

Later on, a young girl, who claims to be Dora's daughter, Cora, presents herself at Metherell Court, Sir Martin's residence, and investigates the mystery of her mother's death. She comes to the conclusion that Sir Martin is the murderer, and threatens to give him up to justice unless he brings about a marriage between her and his son, Gilbert.

Gilbert is engaged to Shirley Lorraine, the younger of two daughters of a widowed lady in reduced circumstances. Shirley, however, is in love with an artist, who has lately come into the neighborhood, and she breaks off her engagement with Gilbert.

The artist—Vivian West—is in reality Sir Martin's first son and lawful heir, though the young fellow himself is unaware of the fact. Sir Martin, however, more than suspects it, and Cora has a very strong inkling of the truth.

Gilbert proposes to Cora, and is, of course, accepted. Sir Martin giving his consent, but Lady Metherell refusing her consent, she privately tells of the relationship existing between Vivian West and the baronet, and Lady Metherell dies of the shock occasioned by the revelation.

After a great deal of mutual misunderstanding, Vivian and Shirley became engaged to each other, as do also a wealthy friend of Shirley's—Lucy Brent—and a certain Harold Ridley, who, in the meantime, has been the fiancé of a scheming girl named Eva Ware. She, however, jilts him in favor of a Sir Peter Hawley, whom she considers a more eligible party.

Captain Dorrien has, by an artifice, tapped Lucy into an acceptance of himself, but she breaks away from his hold upon her, and pledges herself to the man she really loves.

Madge Lorraine, Shirley's sister, marries a titled roe, Sir Henry Ayerst, whose home, Royal Heath is not very far distant from Cordington, a little seaside village near Metherell Court. She does not love her husband, and he is not particularly in love with her. There are two other men, however, who greatly admire her. One is Ralph Devitt, who bought her childhood's home when, on the death of her father, it had to be sold, and whom she detests on that account, and despises because of his peevish origin. The other is Lord Carsborough, to whom her husband is financially indebted, and who exercises considerable influence over her.

Some time after marriage, she entertains a number of people at Royal Heath, among whom are Lord Carsborough, Shirley and her fiancé, Lucy Brent and Harold, Cora, Gilbert Metherell, and Sir Henry Ayerst's sister, Lady Gillette. The last named has with her on account of delicate health, a woman known as Nurse Patience, who is really Lillian West, Sir Martin Metherell's lawful wife, whose reported suicide turns out to have been false.

She sees the artist among the guests, and learning that he bears the name she gave to her own son, it occurs to her that, perhaps, after all her boy did not die. This idea gains strength as time goes on, and at length she seeks an interview with her husband, reveals her identity to him, and begs him to tell her whether Vivian West is not their son. Sir Martin denies the relationship, and she goes back to Royal Heath broken-hearted.

In the meantime, the party at the Heath not being to his liking, Gilbert Metherell returns to his own home, and is there joined by Captain Dorrien, who has just come down from London. Cora, who stays on at the Heath, and Dorrien meet accidentally, and the adventurer fears the girl will denounce him to those whom he betrays. He meets her by appointment on the cliffs, and telling her that it was by his hand her mother died, throws her over, and flies from the spot. The girl's fall is broken, however, and she is rescued.

Returning to Royal Heath, she writes a letter to the band in Paris that is Dorrien's death-warrant.

Two or three days go by. Dorrien does not hear of Cora's rescue; he believes her to be dead. On the third day, however, he, while out walking with Gilbert Metherell, learns the truth. When the two return to Metherell Court, they find Shirley Lorraine there. She has ridden over on her bicycle.

### A CARD.

We, the undersigned, do hereby agree to refund the money on a twenty-five cent bottle of Dr. Willis' English Pills, if, after using three-fourths of contents of bottle, they do not relieve Constipation and Headache. We also warrant that four bottles will permanently cure the most obstinate case of Constipation. Satisfaction or no pay when Willis' English Pills are used.

A. Chipman Smith & Co., Druggists, Charlotte St., St. John, N. B.  
W. Hawker & Son, Druggists, 104 Prince William St., St. John, N. B.  
Chas. McGregor, Druggist, 137 Charlotte St., St. John, N. B.  
W. C. R. Allan, Druggist, King St., St. John, N. B.  
E. J. Mahony, Druggist, Main St., St. John, N. B.  
G. W. Hoban, Chemist, 357 Main St., St. John, N. B.  
R. B. Travis, Chemist, St. John, N. B.  
S. Watters, Druggist, St. John, West, N. B.  
Wm. C. Wilson, Druggist, Cor. Union & Rodney Sts., St. John, N. B.  
C. P. Clarke, Druggist, 100 King St., St. John, N. B.  
S. H. Hawker, Druggist, Mill St., St. John, N. B.  
N. B. Smith, Druggist, 24 Dock St., St. John, N. B.  
G. A. Moore, Chemist, 109 Brussels St., St. John, N. B.  
C. Fairweather, Druggist, 109 Union St., St. John, N. B.  
Hastings & Pineo, Druggists, 63 Charlotte St., St. John, N. B.

from Royal Heath to see Sir Martin, and is on the point of returning. Gilbert begs to be allowed to walk with her as far as the gates, and she permits him to do so. The conversation which ensues between them ends in his upbraiding her for having broken off her engagement with him, and in his suddenly flinging his arm round her waist, and kissing her half-a-dozen times.

The enraged girl rides away at full speed, and, when close to Royal Heath, meets Vivian West, to whom she relates what has happened. Leaving her at the gates he walks over to the Court to determine to administer to young Metherell a well-merited chastigation. Arrived there, he finds that Cora Rozier also has come over, and is talking to Gilbert and Dorrien on the lawn. Vivian calls Gilbert aside, and going with him into a plantation, picks up a stick and thrashes him. Leaving him lying on the ground, he comes face to face, on emerging from the plantation, with Sir Martin, to whom he explains what he has done.

Gilbert does not appear at dinner that evening. He has arranged to go to London with Dorrien by a late train. At half-past eight the latter, who has an appointment with Cora in the plantation, sets out to walk through it to the station. Cora does not keep her appointment. She has laid a trap for her mother's murderer. One of the Paris band, Duval, by name, has come over to England in answer to her letter, and she has planned that he shall be in the plantation at half-past eight, and murder Dorrien.

Time goes on. Nothing is seen or heard of Gilbert several days pass by. All inquiries fail to bring to light the whereabouts of either young Metherell or Dorrien. Detectives are employed. At last the body of a murdered man is discovered in the plantation. It is Gilbert's. There is no trace of Dorrien, however. At the inquest a verdict of wilful murder is returned against Vivian West, based on the fact that he was the last person seen with Gilbert, and that a broken gold link of his was found caught on one of the buttons of the dead man's coat.

### CHAPTER XXV. CONTINUED.

He knew not what he expected. He had refused to believe that anything terrible had happened to the missing men; but the blood drained from his cheeks as his eyes rested on the detective's solemn face.

"You must prepare yourself for the worst," Hatchette said, with some attempt to break the awful news gently. "We have found a man in the plantation—a young man, in a light tweed suit. He was lying under the brushwood, Sir Martin—dead."

Cora uttered a piercing cry. Sir Martin stood like a man turned to stone. "Dead!" he said under his breath. "Dead!"

"But how comes it that he is dead?" Cora wailed. "How is it he died? It is terrible!"

"Which one is it?" Sir Martin gasped. "Mr. Metherell, sir, we think," was the answer. "Light hair, medium height, slenderly built, Williams is arranging about a stretcher."

"I will come with you," Sir Martin said. But Hatchette had to support and guide him.

He walked like a man who had gone suddenly blind. Cora had sunk upon a chair. She was holding her handkerchief over her eyes; but when she looked up there were no tears in them, only an expression, of dread and despair.

"It is a mistake," she panted, pressing her hand to her heart. "It must be Dorrien. He cannot have escaped. The man is a fool; he doesn't know what he talks about. Ah, mon Dieu, how he terrified me! Slenderly built—Dorrien is broad, strong, and heavy. The man is mad to say such things. There can have been no mistake—I saw him go—with my own eyes I saw him go!"

She sprang up, and began pacing the room, her face as white as the damask cloth covering the table, her trembling fingers tying, twisting and rending the handkerchief she was holding.

The news of the discovery had spread through the house like wildfire, filling everyone with horror.

Cora found several of the servants standing in the hall, looking towards the door with ashen faces.

"Are they bringing him here?" she asked of one.

And then, without waiting for an answer she went outside, and looked to where a little knot of men, with bare heads, were walking slowly towards the chapel.

She went down the steps to them. She felt that if the suspense lasted another instant she would become insane.

Sir Martin lifted his haggard eyes as he approached. "Who is it?" she cried. "For Heaven's sake tell me."

"It is Gilbert," he answered brokenly. The poor boy has been stabbed to death. She clung to his arm.

Her shrieks rent the air. "No, no, not Gilbert! It is not! It cannot be! Let me see him. You are all mistaken. It is not Gilbert!"

"Would to God there could be a mistake," Sir Martin cried, miserably. "Let me see him," she screamed. "I will not believe until I have seen."

She would have drawn the cover from the dead man's face, had not Hatchette interposed.

"It is no sight for you, miss," he said, trying to draw her away. "Let me take you to the house."

She turned upon him a frenzied stare, flung her arms above her head, tottered a few paces, then fell to the ground insensible.

They carried her to the house, and laid her on her bed. Stealthily figures crept about the place, drawing the blinds to every window.

The servants spoke in whispers and shivered at the shadows which fell, as the sun sank low in the west.

Sir Martin was shut in the library, and none dared disturb him.

Now and again the old butler, with his eyes red and swollen, listen outside the closed door, but he could hear no sound or movement within.

Sadly and drearily the darkness fell at

Metherell Court, while through all the country side the news was fast travelling that Gilbert Metherell had been found, stabbed to death.

"By whom?—by whom?" Every horrified listener eagerly asked that question, and the next day the answer came.

### CHAPTER XXVI.

It was the day of the inquest. A little crowd of people were standing outside the quaint red-tiled building in which it was taking place.

A policeman stood at the door. The long, low room within was closely packed.

The doctor had given his evidence to the effect that the deceased had been stabbed in the back and side.

It was impossible that the stabs could have been self-inflicted.

Then came the long examination, and, as the time went on, people began to look askance at Vivian West.

It was proved by each witness that Dorrien and Metherell had been on the most friendly terms.

Then, too, Gilbert had disappeared an hour-and-a-half before Dorrien left the house.

Dorrien's disappearance was altogether inexplicable; but the universal opinion was that he had not murdered his friend.

On the other hand, it was known that between West and Metherell there had always existed ill-feeling; that on the very evening of the murder they had quarrelled.

Sir Martin unwillingly admitted he had heard cries for help.

One of the keepers also said that he had heard someone cry "Help!—help!—murder!"

He was going towards the plantation, when he met Sir Martin and Mr. West coming from it; as they said nothing to him, he imagined it was all right, and did not go into the plantation.

Cora, looking very pale and ill, repeated all she had told Mr. Hatchette, adding that Gilbert Metherell had appeared unwillingly to be left alone with Mr. West, who seemed greatly put out about something.

When Vivian West stepped forward to give his evidence, there was a stir through the crowded room.

Heads were thrust forward to get a better view of him.

Sir Martin sat with his hand shading his eyes; but Cora's gaze never left the tall, graceful form standing before the coroner.

He had visited Gilbert Metherell on the seventeenth, with the intention of giving him a thrashing, he said. In the plantation he picked up an ash rod, and gave him several cuts with it.

Asked what deceased was doing when he left him, he said, "Lying on the ground, where he fell the moment he was released."

He was asked the cause of the quarrel, but refused to say.

The questioning went on. "Did Mr. Metherell call out 'Help!—murder!'"

"He called out something to that effect." "Did he move after he fell to the ground?"

"Yes." "Did he attempt to rise?" "Not while I was there." A broken gold link was handed to him. His monogram was engraved upon it.

It was one of a pair which had been a present from Shirley, and he had been vexed at the loss of it.

Hatchette had found it caught on one of the buttons on Metherell's coat.

Vivian said, at once, that this was his. He did not know how it came to be there.

Every word he uttered seemed but to make his position more serious, and none were surprised when at length the verdict was given of—"Wilful murder against Vivian West."

The artist received the sentence quite calmly.

He had seen, from the beginning, how dead against him every scrap of evidence appeared.

But he was innocent, and when the case was properly investigated, he would receive justice.

Till then, he must stand before the world as a murderer.

He looked at the faces turned to him, darkened as they met the unfriendly glances fixed upon him.

It was all over, and people were hustling each other through the door.

A policeman came and tapped him on the arm.

Come this way, please, sir."

The detective, Hatchette, was standing by.

## TOO WEAK TO SEW...

An Ottawa Lady Relates Her Experience for Benefit of Others.

Mrs. William A. Holmes, 530 Concession St., Ottawa, Ont., testifies as follows: "For some years past I was greatly troubled with weakness both of the nerves and heart. My heart would beat very irregularly, sometimes throbbing, and at other times seeming to go up into my throat, thus causing a terrible smothering sensation. Finally I grew so weak that I could not sew. I could obtain no relief, and was almost in despair of a cure. "One day, however, I heard of Milburn's Heart and Nerve Pills and began to use them, and am now better than I have been for years. I work right along now, and the pains and palpitation have left me, much to my relief. My blood seems to be enriched and full of vitality, and my entire system is in a healthy and vigorous state."

"You are in custody, Mr. West," he said. The meaning of the words came to the young man like a shock.

He drew his breath in a quick, sharp way through his teeth, and looked from the window.

A group of children were coming up the beach.

Their gay voices and laughter reached his ear.

Somehow it seemed to bring his position home to him.

They were free, and he was a prisoner. He thought of Shirley, and all his being seemed to ache with longing for a sight of her.

Then Sir Henry Ayerst came bustling up.

"This is preposterous!" he declared. "Never heard such nonsense in my life. Accusing you of murder—consummate absurd! Are you under arrest? Because, if you are, I had better bail you out at once."

A sudden flash of hope came into the young fellow's face.

"Is it possible?" he questioned, eagerly. "I think not," Mr. Hatchette interposed, dryly.

"What do you know about it?" Sir Henry cried, furiously. "I think I am of some little importance in this county, and I'll have my way, or make it hot for everyone."

Sir Henry was very wrathful. He looked upon the verdict as a personal insult.

That a friend of his—a guest staying in his house, a man engaged to his wife's sister—should be accused of murder, was an indignity which was not to be endured.

He had not been present at the inquest, but had driven over with Madge and Shirley and had arrived as the people were streaming out of the hall.

Vivian West had never cared much for Ayerst, in fact had disliked what little he knew of him; but on this occasion his coarse red face and loud angry tone appeared to the prisoner as the face and voice of a friend.

Someone was striving to do something on his behalf.

It relieved the sense of utter loneliness which had oppressed him a moment or so before.

As Sir Henry bustled off, Sir Martin Metherell came into the room.

Ayerst buttonholed him at once. "I say, my dear sir, you surely do not agree with the way these fools have been behaving? You cannot honestly believe that young West had a hand in your poor son's death. It is absurd, preposterous! They want to lock him up now; but I intend to have him released at once."

"I have been trying to get him released," Sir Martin replied, in the low, level tones of one who had suffered greatly. "They refuse bail. He will have to appear before the magistrates next week. I believe him innocent. I could never believe him anything else."

"Of course not; no one with an ounce of sense could. But these country bumpkins, can't see an inch beyond their noses."

Sir Henry went on his way, and Sir Martin Metherell came up the long narrow room to where West was still standing with the policemen and detective.

Sir Martin gripped the younger man's hand. His lips, moved but no words came. His eyes looked through a mist of tears.

"Thank you—thank you, sir," Vivian said brokenly.

And the elder man turned and went away.

The Ayerst coachman had drawn his horses up in the shanty shade thrown by the building in which the inquest had taken place.

Madge and Shirley were seated in the carriage, waiting for Sir Henry to return with Vivian West.

"The heat is awful!" Lady Ayerst said languidly. "It must be all over; everyone is coming away. How excited they seem! I wonder if they have discovered the murderer?"

"In my opinion Dorrien is the guilty man, else why should he have disappeared?" "But they say there was no cause."

"They don't know everything. There must have been some reason. Besides there is no one else who is at all likely to have done it. Ah, here is Sir Henry!"

Sir Henry was almost livid with anger. His commands and prostrations had been in vain.

He had come forth swearing vengeance—he was swearing it still when he reached the carriage.

"What is the matter?" his wife exclaimed looking serenely at him from beneath the chiffon frills of her sunshade.

"Matter!" he cried. "Why, I have just come out of a lunatic asylum, that's all! Whom do you think they had the impudence to arrest on a charge of wilful murder? I never heard anything so insane. West! Would you believe it—a friend of ours, a guest in my house. They will be asking me up next."

"Vivian accused of murder! Shirley exclaimed, with a very white face. You don't surely mean that?"

"How utterly absurd!" Madge said. "But, of course, he can soon prove he had nothing to do with it. I shall really faint if I have to stay in this heat much longer. Do tell him to come at once."

"My dear girl, you have not grasped the situation. Not content with the insult of accusing him of such a dastardly crime, they intend to keep under lock and key like any common criminal."

"They won't put him in prison?" Lady Ayerst was horrified; she certainly had not grasped the situation.

"But they will, though," Sir Henry said with an angry laugh. "Well, they won't listen to me; so all we have to do now is to drive home home."

Shirley stood up. "I must see him," she said, in a low, breathless voice. "I must see him."

"You cannot," Madge expostulated. "I am certain he would not like it. Shirley, do be reasonable."

Someone passing claimed Sir Henry's at-

tention, or, no doubt he also would have objected.

As it was, Shirley, heedless of her sister's entreaties, jumped out of the carriage, and hastened to the open door, near which a little group of men were earnestly talking. They deterred her made way for her to pass.

A policeman, who was standing just inside, gravely saluted her.

"I want to see Mr. West," she said, feeling as if her heart was beating in her throat. "Can I see him at once?"

The man looked doubtful. "I don't know, miss," he said. "Perhaps you aren't aware that he is under arrest?" "I know; but I must see him."

He went to find out if it would be allowed, while she waited, in an agony of suspense, with her teeth set hard over her quivering lip, and her hands clenched together.

She was not kept many minutes before the man returned, and motioned her to follow him.

Vivian had been taken to a smaller room. Two policemen stood on guard. They moved on one side for Shirley.

She noticed them not; she saw no one but her lover, as, with a little passionate cry of pain, she went to him.

"Shirley!—you!" he said, in surprise. "My dear one, you ought not to have come here. They should not have let you come."

"As if they could have prevented me!" in an accent of scorn. "Oh, Vivian, what a disgraceful shame that you should be treated like this! Are they all mad, or what?"

"They have made a mistake, that is all. The evidence looked very black; but when they come to put two and two together, they will find I am not guilty, and this will be but an unpleasant experience."

He spoke with an assurance he was far from feeling.

His position was a grave one and he knew it.

It was impossible to tell what the end might be.

Innocent men had been hanged before. He drew her a little nearer to him.

"It will soon be over," he said. "I shall go before the magistrates on Monday, and then it will be all right."

"Till then," she said, forcing back a sob, "you will be in prison. And it is all my fault. I have brought upon you, I seem to bring you nothing but pain."

He tenderly regarded the lovely sorrowing face.

"You have given me all my happiness," he said. "You have made life worth the living. Don't ever think otherwise, for what I tell you is true."

The police sergeant came forward then. "I am sorry sir," he said, respectively, "but the trap is here, and we cannot wait any longer."

"I am ready," Vivian replied. Will you take Miss Lorraine to her carriage?" Then he turned again to Shirley, who was clinging despairingly to his arm. You must go now. Good-bye—good-bye!"

She lifted her face to his, caring nothing for other eyes, conscious only that she was parting from the man she loved—leaving him in trouble, to suffer hardships, perhaps insults; her heart felt bursting with its grief.

One last kiss, one long look, and she was blindly following the sergeant down the narrow passage to the open door, before which the Royal Heath horses were impatiently pawing the ground.

Shirley never forgot that drive. The heat and dust seemed intolerable.

Sir Henry talked in angry gusts; but his anger was all for himself.

He had been slighted, insulted and he did not intend to let it pass quietly. Madge listened in quiet weariness.

"What a fool he is!" she said to herself with weary disgust.

She had often felt like this of late. What had passed unnoticed before now sickened her.

When he was coarse, or foolish, or brutal, she thought of Lord Carsborough, clever, grim, and stern, yet as polished a gentleman as one could find in the whole length and breadth of Europe.

She had thought to speedily forget him, yet she found herself continually thinking of him, and, though she would not own it even to herself, regretting his absence