(Continued From Tenth Page.)

room, and approached her.

Laying his hand on her shoulder, he said, close to her ear—

'If you call out, or if you refuse what I want, I shall fire, I swear it!'

She looked at him bravely enough, though every drop of blood left her cheeks as she remembered what she had overheard this young ruffian say to his mother about her only a short time ago.

The triumph in Emilio's eyes gave place to a love which an English lad of his age would not have been capable of feeling.

Not that it was really love at all; it was merely the lawless passion of a lawless nature that meant to have what it wanted, regardless of the consequence to others.

Revelling in his power to terrify a woman who had so securely kept him at arm's length hitherto, he bent nearer still and kissed her trembling lips.

She shrank from the insult, but he threw his arm around her, and held her fast, drawing her up from the chair until she stood in his embrace.

'Mine!' he whispered passionately, 'Mine! My darling, my love! You will leave him, Mona, and go with me? Promise!'

'Release me!' she whispered imperiously. 'How dare you treat me like this? Leave me at once and beware how you disturb my husband!'

'Curse your husband!' said Emilio brutally, but careful to speak still in the same cautious undertone. 'I'll kill him, as I'd kill a dog unless you give me what I want. Stand still, or I fire! Stand still, I say!'

Up went his right arm again, the pistol covering the sleeping man, who was beginning to stir, as though disturbed by what was taking place in the room.

Mona shivered with inward dread, though she looked at the young madman as dauntlessly as ever.

'What do you want?' she asked boldly.

'You!' he replied. 'I will have your kiss now, as surety that you will give yourself to me later. You will go away with me to-night, and leave him and Beaudesert. Ha! I've touched you at last, have I? It's your lover you are reluctant to leave, not your husband. He's awake, you see, and apparently rather shocked at the little discovery I have made. Lie still, Mr. Tony Hanlan, or you will be a widower within the minute.'

Mona's husband, awakened by the raising of Emilio's voice, when the lad lost control over himself, had sat up in bed and thrown aside the coverings, as though he would leap out and rush, weak and helpless as he was, to his wife's assistance.

But when the pistol, which had been levelled at himself, was pressed to Mona's temple, he sank back, and fainted with horror.

'You fiend! You have killed him!'

Reckless of the consequence to herself, Mona struggled to get free.

Apparently, things have turned out in a way Emilio had not anticipated, for the triumph in his face changed to something like concern; the pistol was returned to his pocket, and he released Mona at once, following her as she sprang towards the bed.

'What's the matter? Emilio, what are you doing here?'

Beaudesert had come along in his dressing gown, to ask how his guest had spent the night, and expecting to find Dr. Derring and the nurse still there.

Mona called to him thankfully.

'Send for nurse, will you, and the doctor? Oh, Tony's wound is bleeding again and he looks like death! That young fiend has killed him!'

'I never intended any harm!' exclaimed Emilio. 'I didn't mean him to wake. The pistol isn't even loaded—you can see for yourself.'

He flung it down and returned to go, Mona's parting words cutting him like a lash and rousing his worst passions into activity once more.

'Coward! To threaten a defenceless woman and a wounded man! I pray I may never see your face again!'

'Take care!' he retorted with an ugly oath. 'You haven't finished with me yet; and, maybe, you'll find that love can turn into hate.'

'Silence!'

Beaudesert took the infuriated youth by the shoulders and turned him out of the room; then, taking his place by Mona's side until someone should answer his attack on the electric bell, he murmured anxiously—

'My poor child! What has that young ruffian done to you both?'

Mona shook her head, answering hastily—

'I cannot tell you now. Only, let me implore of you to keep within reach of me to-day. If I get a chance I will explain, But I cannot leave my poor Tony. Oh! if we could only stop this bleeding.'

But it went on until Dr. Derring arrived in spite of the nurse's effort to staunch the fatal flow; and when at length, it ceased, Death had laid his grim hand on Tony Hanlan.

He recovered consciousness for a few moments before he died, sufficiently to ask for an explanation of the strange scene on which he opened his eyes an hour before.

Mona told him, in as few words as possible, of Emilio's mad passion for herself.

Dr. Derring and the nurse had retired to the window, and there conversed in low tones, so that the husband and wife were practically alone.

Taking up the pistol Emilio had thrown down, Mona examined it cautiously.

'It is not loaded, Tony. If I had only known this, I would have defied the young coward; but he kept it pointed at you while he asked impossible things of me.'

'I hope you would have left him fire, in any case, rather than have given in to him, my dear one.' His voice grew weaker and weaker, and his eyes closed wearily. Presently he said; 'I am not sorry to go; your mother told me you had no love for me—that was on our wedding day, when I parted from her—kind, was it not?'

Mona held his hand, and wondered why she did not tell sorrier he was going, or gladder that she would have her freedom back, or anything except the dull indifference to all things on earth and heaven which was stealing over her.

'Tony,' she said 'tell me you have forgiven me for marrying you.'

'I—love you—dear—love forgives—everything. Kiss me—wife!'

Mona's lips rested tenderly on his, and before she raised her head his last whisper reached her ear—

'Tell—Beaudesert — to make — you—happy!'

He said no more after that; but his eyes opened wide and met hers, and he smiled slightly from time to time.

Dr. Derridg crept softly to the bed and laid his fingers on the pulse of the hand Mona held.

Ten minutes passed; then—

'It is all over. Shall I close his eyes, or will you, Mrs. Hanlan?'

'She has fainted.'

It was Beaudesert who spoke.

He had entered the room some minutes before, and taken up his stand near the door out of the dying man's sight.

And it was Beaudesert who reverently closed Tony Hanlan's dead eyes.

Then he turned and took Mona in his arms.

'I will carry her to her room, Derring; she must not remain here. She has had two terrible shocks within the last six-and-thirty hours; we shall need to take great care of her.' In his heart he added: 'For she is mine—my very own—he gave her to me with his last words. She is the most precious thing life holds for me, and I will guard her with my life.'

CHAPTER XI.

Lady Darkhaven was not told the details of all that had taken place in the castle; but she could not very well be left in ignorance of the fact that Mr. Hanlan had died in the postern tower, or that his young widow lay ill with a threathened attack of brain-fever in her own room in the more central part of the building.

And had Lady Darkhaven and Zebra, or Serge himself, had any idea of the story Mona Hanlan had been so anxious to tell, they would have realized how serious to themselves this untoward attack of brain fever was likely to prove.

To be sure, Beaudesert knew that Mona wanted to tell him something; but he thought it might possibly be the same story he had to tell concerning her husband's adventures in the pursuit of the man who had robbed him.

Zebra was too unhappy to trouble herself much about anybody else's business.

She begsn to think, all too late, that her romantic fancy for the convict whom she had helped to escape was nothing more than a girl's foolish infatuation for a man who appeals to her interest and sympathy as well as to her eyes.

Her cousin Jose was certainly handsome and not without some of the instincts of a gentleman.

But he was a Calzado, out and out, which meant that he was unscrupulous in anything concerning honesty.

He could be chivalrous to man and woman; he was brave to foolhardiness; he was capable of great generosity; and last but not least, he was a true lover, and meant to be a faithful and kind husband to the girl who had won his heart.

But Zebra had become conscious that she needed something more than this in the man with whom she would spend the rest of her life.

The Beaudesert blood in her was asserting itself.

She had not dreamed of its existence—as a possible factor in her future—as long as she lived the life her mother had preferred.

It was the sudden change that had made her rebellious to her grandmother's wishes and careless to her uncle's commands.

Had they realized the wisdom of allowing her to run wild for a time at Darkhaven she would probably not have proved so intractible.

But they did the next wiset thing.

They engaged Mona Hanlan to be Zebra's so called companion and chaperon.

As a matter of fact, Mona had been more of a companion to the countess than to her grand-daughter, and of a chaperon Zebra would have none.

But Mona was essentially a lady, and the untrained Spanish girl (she was more Spanish than English up to that date) immediately felt the difference between them, and chafed in her haughty young soul that a paid companion should be a truer gentlewoman that she herself was.

The contrast between them ate into her, and quickly began its work of transforming her character and opinions.

Well for her would it have been if that most desirable change had been allowed to go on without check.

But Jose Calzado had entered her life, and had to be reckoned with as a lover and future husband.

In a reckless mood she promised to go on board the Santa Eulalia, and become his wife at the first opportunity.

But when the hour came she shrank from keeping her appointment with the men her lover had sent to fetch her.

When she learned that Mona had been carried off instead of herself, a perhaps natural, but utterly unreasoning, jealously took possessions of her.

She chose to imagine that it had not been a mistake, that Jose had transferred his affections to Mona; and her old love for him flamed up fiercely again.

But this state of mind did not last any length of time.

It was succeeded by an exultant consciousness that, after carrying off another woman, he could not expect her to keep her promise of being his wife; and, in this encouraging consciousness, she had gone her way all day, until Emilio sought her out, and told her that, after the previous night's bungling, Jose did not mean to trust to deputies any longer, but was coming for her himself.

His note had hinted as much, so Zebra was not altogether taken by surprise.

Jose entered the castle with Emilio and his mother, and Zebra could not refuse to see him.

Confident of her faithfulness, he opened their interview by telling the story which she later passed on to Beaudesert.

Then he bade her be ready to accompany him when the others had finished their midnight business, concerning the nature of which he expressed himself as being in complete ignorance.

When Zebba told him she had changed her mind, he was at first incredulous, then angry, and then threatening; departing, finally, with the assurance that she had not seen the last of him by any means.

She had promised that she would be his wife, and he swore by all he held most holy that she should keep her promise.

This assurance weighed on her mind, interfering with her sleep for the rest of the night, and walking with her as a skeleton throughout the following day.

She was puzzled, too, at the change in herself.

Why should she feel so different?

Why should the Zebra Beaudesert of to-day be a different person to the Zebra Beaudesert of three short months ago?

Elimo had not changed—except that he seemed wilder and more lawless than he had ever been before.

She did not feel the same attachment for him either; but she explained this, to her own satisfaction, by the change which had taken place in herself.

And another thing that puzzled her was the secret consciousness that, underlying all her new moods and whims—as she called them—such love as she had for her cousin was still smouldering.

She shrank from him as a criminal; she melted to him as a man.

Had he declared his intention of breaking with the old life, she would not have hesitated to go with him.

But it was clear that no such change was contemplated by him.

(To be continued.)

GETTING RID OF AN AGENT.

A Young Lawyer's Story of an Insurance Man Who Wanted Money Badly

'My insurance man came in to see me the other day,' said the young lawyer, 'and wanted to increase my life insurance from $5,000 to $10,000. I couldn't do it very well. Of course he was a great deal disappointed. He talked and talked. I could see that he was indeed distressed. But in the end I had to tell him peremptorily that I really could not meet his views about life insurance.

'Now,' he said, 'do you know I am rather glad of that? Because I have another plan here that I would a great deal rather have you go into. Of course these life insurance people are my principal employers. I have to do my duty by them.' My conscience would not let me take money from a man for any other purpose than life insurance until I was absolutely sure that there was nothing doing with him in the life insurance line. See?'

'I told him that nobody appreciated better than I his loyalty to his employers.

'"Thanks," he said, without blushing. "Now I want to call your attention to a company that has attracted my notice because of its liberality and fairness in dealing with its friends. Now have you ever thought about accident insurance? Every young man—"

Well, of course he went on until he was stopped. I succeeded in stopping him by telling him that I wished very much that he would talk to me about something new. I never made a worse break in my life.

'"I'm tickled to death you spoke about it," he said. "Now, there's some friends of mine with a mint of money behind them who have got the newest thing out. It's health insurance. For less than three cents a day they will insure you against any one of these diseases.'

'And then he unfolded a list of horrible afflictions that looked like a list of ailments which could be cured by somebody's patent medicines. It took my breath away. He had the right of way and he talked until I got my wind again. Then I told him that it was too much like an investment in cheap gold mine stock for me. If it paid it would pay a great deal, but it was more likely to result in money thrown away.

'Ain't those gold mining stocks awful, he exclaimed. 'Now, I have just had a mighty funny experience about those things. Did you ever hear of the Midas and Grand Central Pete mine out in southern California? No? Well, mighty few people have. They will before long, though. You see, going around as much as I do I get next to some very influential people and through them I got on to this Midas and G. C. P. stock. They are going to keep it very quiet until next February and then they are going to spring a surprise in it thet there will be a heap of money in. Of course all those things are crooked. The thing is to be in with the people who are doing the crooked work, I am in. Now to tell the honest truth I am awfully hard up. That's why I have been after you so hard this morning. I need the money. I need $50 more this minute than I can possibly need $50,000 next February. I have got about 25,000 shares of this M. & G. C. P. stock and for the sake of getting a little ready money quick I'll let you have a part of it for just what it cost me. Five thousand shares, for instance, at one cent a share. On the 11th day of February next that stock will be worth $2 a share or more. Not a cent less.'

'He paused and drew a lot of gold and red ink certificates out of his breast pocket and flashed them before my eyes. I waved them away. I told him with the utmost frankness that I really was not able to undertake any new investments. If I was going to gamble, I said, I thought that I would take to a regular openly confessed gambling house.

'The insurance man leaped from his chair and caught me by the hand.

'Well, say,' he said with the air of one who had at last found out what his errand actually was, 'I tell you what we'll do. I've got $5. You put in $5 and then you put me on to some faro joint around here and I'll go play faro for a while. When I've run it up to a hundred I'll bring it in and split up with you I'm lucky to beat the band on calling cards.'

'I sighed a long sad sigh and handed out the five and a note to a bartender friend who could 'put him on to a faro joint,' and urged him to hurry. I had a case to get ready; the time was cheap to me just then at that price.

'But the funny part of this yarn is that about half an hour later a messenger boy came into the office and handed me a fat envelope. It contained five ten dollar bills and this note:

'Much obliged. Excuse haste. I've gone up home to pay rent and head off dispossess notice. J. F.'

ABSINTHE DRINKING.

Observations of a Physician in New Orleans, Where There are Many Users of It.

"I see that the French Government is making an effort to suppress the manufacture of absinthe," remarked a New Orleans physician, "and that the medical corps of the army has made some very alarming reports as to the effect of the stuff on the rank and file of the troops. A similar movement was started in 1880 or thereabouts, and, if I remember rightly an order was issued forbidding the sale of the cordial to any soldier. The subject was discussed at length in the papers at the time, but the dealers brought their influence to bear and the crusade was ultimately abandoned.

'Absinthe is a strange tipple,' he continued, 'and the evidence as to its effects is singularly contradictory. Some people drink it all their lives and apparently suffer no bad results, while others are reduced to horrible mental and physical wrecks by not half as great an indulgence. More absinthe is consumed in New Orleans than any other city of the United States, and in years past I have made the habit something of a study, hoping to discover the exact toxic properties of the preparation and some fixed facts as to its effect on the system. I can't say however, that I was particularly successful. The liquor is simply a distillation of wormwood, known botanically as 'Artemisia Absinthium'—hence the name, absinthe. Wormwood itself is used to some extent as a medicine, and a fluid extract from the leaves and tops is regarded as a good tonic in cases of dyspepsia. The extract has some very slight narcotic properties, but the distillation seems to develop a new and powerful agent which in certain cases acts directly on the brain and great nerve centres and stimulates them to an extraordinary degree. The ultimate effect is a breaking down of the system, loss of memory, inability to articulate, hallucinations and something resembling palsy.

One absinthe wreck whom I treated for several months had strange lapses in which he would forget his own identity and be unable to find his own way home. Another patient was continually using the wrong words, like a man with aphasia. One day he walked into the office and said: 'Doctor I have run out of referential.' He meant to say he had run out of medicine, but was absolutely unable to do it, and to this day I never hear the word 'referential' without thinking of him. But as I said before, it all depends on the individual. Some are naturally immune to the poison and others are abnormally sensitive to it. Then, again, the symptoms differ widely, so widely that it would be impossible to diagnose a case without knowing something of its history. Altogether, the active principle of the stuff is a great mystery.

"Here in New Orleans absinthe is generally drank in combination with anisette, diluted in about six quarts of water. I think the French way of taking it is less injurious. In Paris the confirmed absinthe drinker pours about half a gill in the bottom of a large tumbler and fills it up with water. Then, as he sips he adds more and more water from the carafe. One glass will occupy him at least an hour, and he rarely takes a second."

Shrewd Norah.

The kitchen maid thrust her head inside the door of the family sitting-room and called out:

'Mrs Sthrahng, the cockroaches is thick in the pantry an' the chiny closet! What'll I do wid 'em, mem?'

'Cockroaches, Norah?' exclaimed Mrs. Strong, much displeased. 'How does it happen that you have allowed them to become so numerous?'

'They kim here from Mrs. Pairkins's, mem, nixt door,' mentioning the name of a neighbor with whom her mistress was not on very good terms.

'Came from Mrs. Perkin's, did they?' said Mrs. Strong, considerably mollified. 'Well, I don't blame them! They'd starve to death in that house!'

Peculiarities of the Black Sea.

Sir John Murray recently showed how remarkably the Black Sea differs from other seas and oceans. A surface current flows continuously from the Black Sea int the Mediterranean, and an under current from the Mediterrnean into the Black Sea. The latter current is salt, and being heavier than the fresh water above, it remains stagnant at the bottom. Being saturated with sulphuretted hydrogen, this water will not maintain life, and so the Black Sea contains no living inhabitants below the depth of about 100 fathoms. The deeper water when brought to the surface smells like rotten eggs.

"What makes any man wear a monocle?"

"Oh, I suppose he wishes to indicate that he can see as much with one eye as ordinary men do with two."