A Terrible Bond

IN TWO NSTALMENTS-PART II.

CHAPTER I.

STRANGERS AT NEWTOWN STATION. A more unpleasant night it would be

difficult to imagine. Snow was thickly falling, covering the ground like a fleecy mantle, picturesque enough, but desperately disagreeable to those whom necessity forced to be abroad. At the small wind-swept platform at Newtown station, the Dublin train had just come to a standstill, depositing a few pas-

There were only four in all-three men and a women, at whom the stolid officials | shake of the fist, which showed in which

stared as though she had been a ghost. Ladies-for it was evident by her dress and bearing that she was one-were not want to arrive alone by the last train from Dublin.

It must be a visitor to one of the officers up at the camp, they said to each other, but-begorra, it was a funny thing that no one had come or sent to meet her!'

Two of the three men who had just alighted from the train strode away chatting to each other, in the direction of the town, the other man and the woman being left sole occupants of the quickly deserted plat-

Presently the lady entered the badly lighted waiting room into which she looked in a strangely nervous, furtive way, which was not lost on the station-master and his ! subordinates.

Irish wit is proverbially quick, and an aptitude for taking in a situation at a glance a national characteristic.

'Oh, these officers, these officers!' said Nolan the station master, to himself, as he went forward to proffer his services. 'Bedad, but they've a deal to answer for! 'Is there anything I can be doin' for ye, miss?' he inquired, touching his cap, re-

spectfully. The young lady had by this time advanced to the big peat fire which blazed away cheerily in the open grate.

A thick veil obscured her features, but even beneath this disguise the susceptible Larry Nolan could perceive that this interesting passenger was undoubted pretty.

He caught a glimpse of brilliant eyesbrilliant with the restlessness of a spirit illat-ease.

He noted also that the pale cheek was softly rounded, and when she spoke her red lips disclosed a perfect set of teeth. She was young; she was beautiful.

She appeared in trouble, or, at the least, was in an unpleasant position in a cheer less place, on a night of exceptional inclemency.

This was enough for the gallant Larry. He forgot Mrs. Larry, who was not young or handsome, and was some. what of a termagant; he forgot everything in his desire to be of assistance to this mysterious beauty, who still stood as though undecided whether to answer him or not, with one slender foot

Diffidence was not one of Larry Nolan's

upon the fender.

'May be, miss, you might be expectin' to be met,' he hazarded, 'or where was it liberty.'

'There will be no one to meet me-at least'-as an afterthought-'I-I don't the camp—the Curragh Camp?

Nolan thought that in all his life he had never heard so sweet a voice. As he afterwards remarked to his subor-

diante-'It was for all the world like a chime of

silver bells But that was only the poetry, which is inherent in the Irish race, finding an outlet

in metaphor. In truth, however, he was right. There was a richness and sweetness about the tones or this woman's voice not

easily forgotten. 'She's English, entoirely,' decided Larry

and again he was right. 'The camp, miss? Why, ye could niver get there this blessed night! We haven t

had such a fall of snow, not since—let me He scratched his curly head in a vain

endeavored to remember dates. The young lady became impatient. She walked swiftly to the door of the waiting room, which opened on the the

station yard. Her walk was grace itself, and the movement showed that she was above the aver-

age height of woman, and decidedly of slender make, although beautifully proportioned. 'If you won't tell me,' she began

By Saint Patrick, miss, I'd tell ye any thing, or do anything for ye, for the matter of that; but ye couldn't niver get there in this weather,' repeated Larry. 'I must get there,' was the curt reply,

'and tonight. How far is it?' 'Three miles. Irish miles-perhaps you would call it four.'

'And which way should I turn?' She was standing on the step by this time, looking out into the darkness.

'To the right, miss, and thin to the left, and thin up the hill. Oh, but it's a moighty climb up to the Curragh Camp. Ye'll never do it.'

And then, in spite of Mrs. Larry, and against his own better judgment, the gallant station master begged the young lady to stay the night at his house. But in vain.

'I must go,' she repeated, and, drawing her heavy cloak about her, she glided into

the snow and the darkness. 'There's a shorter cut.' Larry murmured,

but I daren't tell her of it; she'd lose her way. Even as it is-He shook his head, as he locked up his

office for the night. He was half an-hour late; and now that the beautiful vision had disappeared, another arose of a delayed supper and an

irate spouse. 'Whoiver the chap is up there, I'd loike to have the bastin' of him!' he said, with a

direction Mr. Nolan's thoughts lay. He was used to the officers and their ways, but this was a little too bad.

'I'd know her ag'in amongst a thousand, he muttered, as he turned into his own door, from which an appetising smell of' Irish stew proceeded. 'I'd know her anywhere. Her walk and her voice, and the bright eyes. I'll look out for all the up trains. She's bound to go back-they all

Larry Nolan kept his word, but the beautiful stranger did not again use the line, nor did she appear on the platform of Newtown Station.

Whilst Larry Nolan was eating his sup per, the woman whom he had directed to the camp was slowly struggling up the hilly road leading to it.

The snow was still falling, although not so heavily; but, in any case, it was a hard enough matter to make headway against the bitter wind which blew cuttingly from the hill top.

Every now and again the tall, slender figure would stop and steady herself against a wall or the trunk of a tree, holdiug her hand against her heart, as though to still its wild throbbing.

She never once looked backwards, always forward to the goal she hoped to

reach in spite of every obstacle. She had flung back her veil, and thus disclosed the fact that her exquisite features were white and drawn with the unwonted physical exertion she was undergoing and the mental anxiety which is

harder to bear than mere bodily fatigue. Had she glanced behind her, she would have discovered that she was not the solitary pedestrian she fancied herself to be.

Her fellow passenger. whom she had not noticed, so wrapped up was she in her own thoughts, was following her in a stealthy fashion that suggested he intended to keep her in view at all hazards.

When she stopped to regain her breath, he slipped into the shadows by the way-

When she moved on, he went cautious ly forward likewise, yet keeping a certain distance behind her.

It was impossible to obtain a glimpse of the man's countenance, so high was the collar of his coat, and so further disguished was he by a thick, black muffler which was twisted round his neck.

Furthermore, he wore a slouched hat, from beneath which his eyes—the only ye might be goin' ?- if you'll excuse the | visible features-looked out with a sinister gleam that boded no good to the woman

he continued to follow. 'Ha, my lady!' he muttered, as, catching think so. Can you tell me how far it is to her foot against the root of a tree, she stumbled and fell, picking herself up directly and leaning pantingly against a brok-en gate. You did not reckon on me You have set yourself a task tonight far harder than you think. You will not ac-

complish it, I have you in my power! A sardonic light came into the pale eyes. He could hear the heavy breathing of

the woman. In falling she had apparently hurt her toot, for she stooped and rubed her ankle for some minutes.

The man crouched against the wall

laughed softly. 'Your delicate ladyship is not used to rough walking! Shall I proffer my valuable assistance? How would she look were I suddenly to start forward as if I had sprung from the earth beneath her feet? No-no-best not. I know a more paying game-but I must see him first. There is a short cut hereabouts—so they told me in Newtown-and yet I don't like to lose sight of my beauty even for a moment. By

longer on such a night as this—phew! A sudden gust of wind blew the snow in a shower upon him, and a muttered curse escaped his lips.

George! no woman can struggle on much

The woman still leaned against the gate. The man wished she would resume her

ourney. He was tired of waiting. 'I believe she has really hurt herself,' he said to himself. 'It I thought so I would

The statement of what he would or would not do was suddenly checked by a whistle-a blithe whistle-that seemed to defy the elements to damp the cheeriness of the whistler.

'By Jove!' A man had leaped over the ricketty gate



almost knocking down the woman, who uttered a cry of terror, which queikly changed to one of surprise, not unmixed with relief, and flung herself without another word into his arms.

'Arthur !' 'Euid-you-you-here!'

CHAPTER II.

DARK CRIME AND A SILENT WITNESS. 'Help! Help! Oh, what shall I do? I have killed him! He is dead-he is dead !'

A woman's cry rang out shrilly. The snow was again falling rapidly, lying like a pall upon the still figure at her

The cry had been spontaneous. Surely there was no one in all this vast

solitude to answer or to help. With a voiceless prayer she looked around, the consequences of her madness forgotten in the desire to save the life which, alas! was now forever beyond the reach of human aid.

Like a sceptre, from the darkness beyond the man who had been the sole witness of this tragedy glided to her side. So distraught was she, that at the mom.

ent she evinced no surprise. 'Help me; oh, help me, whoever you are! Surely he is not dead!' She caught her breath with a quick sob of agony. I never meant it! As heaven is above me I did not! My love! oh, my love!

Down upon the cold form she cast herself, kissing the lips and hands fast stiffening in death's icy grip. The man bent down beside her and

placed his hand on the heart which would beat no more. 'Yes, he is dead-stone dead. Neither

I nor anyone else can help him now, Lady Fancourt. The fact that he called her by name

passed her by. For the time being she was capable of but one hideous thought—the man whom she loved with a reckless, mad love lay dead before her, shot through the heart, and she had done it.

Again she called upon him. 'Arthur-Arthur! My love-my darling! Speak to me one word - only one word. It

is I-Enid! 'Lady Fancourt, cease your raving. fact, they were snowed up. This is no time to indulge in hysterics over | The officers were in despair, grumbling the corpse of the man you have murdered. I am here, and will help you; only, mind, I shall expect my reward. You know me, recollection? I should not have thought | the Fiji Island. that it was necessary.'

He laughed coldly. Enid Fancourt raised her beautiful, haggard eyes to his face, but spoke no word. Her companion began to fear that the

shock had turned her brain. He shook her roughly, and picked up the revolver.

'Do you see this?' he said. 'It is yours. With this weapon you shot the man you called your lover. I-and I only-am witness of your crime. I will save youdo you understand me?-I will save you from the consequence of your madness. But, I repeat, I intend to have my reward. From this moment you are mine. Long ago I sued in vain for your love. You | yawned Captain Seaton. 'Mrs. Hardy's spurned me from you with coldness. But

now I can compel you to marry me! Still no answer. Enid Fancourt only stared at him, a frozen horror in her eyes.

'You know me now?' he said. He had pulled down his collar and removed the muffler from his face. It was a handsome face, and, just at this moment, was lighted up with a dia-

bolical expression of triumph. She staggered up from her knees. 'Yes I know you! I know you! - and I am in your power! Don't look at ms!'don't look at me, Randolph Sterne! you

are so like-him---She pointed to the dead man at her feet, and moved a few paces away, shuddering

The keen wind blew her cloak from her shoulders. Randolph Sterne went up to her.

He drew the fur-lined mantle round her, and, as he did so, kissed her on the lips. 'Now you are mine forever! I vowed you should be, and with this'-and he kiss-

ed her again-'I seal my vow.' With a passion of tears and sobs, she struck him across the face. He did not seem to mind in the least.

He only smiled. The tears will relieve your brain,' he said, and he waited patiently till the hysterical attack had passed away.

Presently Enid spoke. 'I am in your power,' she repeated. What am I to do? Will you give me that revolver to—to——

She paused, and her lips trembled like those of a frightened child. She was young, and life is very sweet to

the young-particularly so was it to Enid

'To turn it on yourself? No, Enid, you must live-you shall live-for me. Listen! Sooner or later this'-he pointed significantly downwards-'must be discovered. There will be enquiries. I saw you conversing with the station-master. You cannot possibly leave this place unseen, the net will tighten round you, there will be no escape. Do you realize what this

means ?' 'But I did not intend to-to-' 'Murder him? Perhaps not, yet you do so nevertheless.'

'There was no witness---' 'Pardon me, I saw and heard all.' 'Fiend! And you would give evidence

against me.' 'I would do far more than that to gain you, Enid. Come, a truce to all this, no time is to be lost. Just now you remarked on my extraordinary likeness to my unfortunate-relative. In this lies your salvation. Now, do as I desire-leave me

wonder you are pale and shaken. He poured a stiff dose of brandy into | right enough, but Lord Sayce wants to



The potent spirit brought a little color to the exquisite face.

'I do not want to die,' she said piteous-'Of course you don't, neither shall you. Either by this'-holding up the revolver-

His look was significant. With a low moan Enid turned away, and suffered him to lead her into the wood

some little distance off. For thirty years there had not been such a fall of snow as that which had now

visited the whole of the County Kildare. On the heights, whereon the Curragh Camp is situated, they telt it most; in

over the cessation of the hunting. 'It was bad enough before,' said one, 'now its unbearable. Absolutely nothing

do you not? or must I recall myself to your | to do; one might as well be quartered in 'Better,' replied a brother officer, 'for there would find originality. I believe the

savages are awful fun----'Oh! come, it isn't as bad as all that,' a young subaltern put in. 'I'm sure the tobogganing is good enough for anything. Why don't you fellows come down to

night ?' 'All right, perhaps we will; but we all know your attraction, Robbins-Old Whiteley's daughter. A pretty little girl is Maisie Whiteley. But what is one

amongst so many ? 'There's Mrs. Hardy and her sister,' began Robbins eagerly.

'Can't stand the sister at any price,' right enough, but then one has to reckon with Hardy-a petect Othello. I remem-

Captain Seaton's reminiscenses where cut short by the entrance of the major of their regiment, who was at the present time in command of the detachment stationed at the Curragh.

'Anything the matter, major ?' inquired Captain Legard, who was the major's particular chum.

'Well, yes,' was the reply, gravely spoken. 'Can any of you fellows tell me what is wrong with Vivian? Besides, there's something up at his quarters.

The younger officers exchanged glances, and Robbins turned away to hide a smile. 'I have thought there was something strange about him the last few days,' said Captain Legard, thoughtfully tugging at his heavy moustache. 'But come to my hut, major, if you will. We can talk bet-

ter there over a brandy and soda Major Henderson agreed, and as the two senior officers walked away the suppressed laugh broke out in good earnest. 'The chief's so deuced particular,' said Robbins. 'Vivian's all right, only he doesn't want anyone poking round his quarters just now, when he's got as pretty a piece--'

'Have you seen her then ?' in a chorus; but before Robbins-who was elated by his superior knowledge-could answer, Captain Seaton's voice was raised above

the din-'I advise you chaps to hold your tongues about Vivian and his doings. It's plain to be seen the major's lawfully put out, and there's no denying there's something fishy abo t Vivian lately. My belief is that he's been drinking hard.'

quiet-looking man, 'not all the years I've been in the regiment.' the younger men turned at once to him.

'I never knew him to do that,' put in a

But you must own that the last few 'Yes; but don't you think his stroke of | ing her face in her hands, crept closer to luck has had something to do with it? One her mother's side. doesn't come in for a large fortune, a magnificent estate, and a title every day of

one's life.' 'No. By Jove! you think he's off his head, then? 'I don't know what to think,' was the

grave reply. 'He has changed strangely; so much I'll grant you; but I'll stake my existence it's not drink. By the way, Mr. Robbins, is it true that he has sent in his papers? You ought to know you know awful eyes, I met another pair so like, everything.' Everybody laughed, no one more heart-

ily than the young subaltern himself. 'Well, somehow or other, news does be surprised. Captain Arthur Vivian's factorily.

a travelling cup, and placed it to her pale | throw up soldiering. By Jove! he is a lucky chap.' Robbins sighed.

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There wasn't much likelihood of luck coming to bim.

He was only the younger son of a country rector in Kent.

Meanwhile. in Captain Legard's quarters the seniors were talking. 'I, for one, am glad he has sent in his papers. If he hadn't, I'd have been obliged to have taken notice of his conduct. After all these years, who'd have thought it of

Vivian-a man so respected in the regiment? Legard, I can't understand it.' Major Henderson moodily sipped his brandy and soda.

He was a general favourite, and never interfered with his subordinate officers unless positively compelled to do so. Nor can I. He knows how strict the rules are. Such a wretchedly bad example

to the youngsters, too! Has she gone 'Gone! Oh, yes, I believe so! Legard,

she was a lady, if ever I saw one. 'Impossible!' 'So one would think; but it is a fact. There is more underlying this than meets the eye. However, to simplify matters, I have advised him to go on the sick list, and by Jove! he looks changed enough. I wouldn't have known him to be Vivian, had I met him, say, in the streets of Dub-

'Is that so?' 'Yes; and Whiteley, who saw him as a matter of form, says he is suffering from a nervous shock of some sort, accelerated by

drink.' 'By Jove! You do surprise me! Well one never knows what prosperity will do for a man. It has turned this poor tellows

head to a certainty.' And that was all Legard could say, to account for the strange change in his brother officer, Captain Vivian.

CHAPTER III.

AT DOVEMORE VICARAGE.

'I can't understand it. I can't make out Arthur's silence; It is so unlike him. The sweet sensitive lips trembled, the

dark hazel eyes filled with tears. 'Mother, you don't think anything can have happened to him? Oh! if I thought The tears fell in earnect now, coursing

each other down the cheeks, which paled

at the mere idea of peril to her beloved.

Mrs. Collingham looked up, a shadow on her comely face. 'It is unlike him, dear,' she admitted, unwillingly; 'but you must take into consideration the weather we are having. Why, in the North, and at the Curragb Camp, they are snowed up, or next door to it. Be patient, Alice; he'll be here tonight, depend upon it. Occupy your mind, the

the anthem for tomorrow go?' 'All right,' was the answer, listlessly given; 'but I'll go down to the church and practice it over again. Mother, do you believe in presentiments—in dreams? I had one last night about Arthur.'

time will pass all the quicker. How does

'I bardly know whether I do or not,' was Mrs. Collingham's thoughtful reply. Strange-almost unearthly-things have happened, but'-seeing a deeper shade of melancholy steal over her daughter's face

- 'why ask that question now i 'Because last night I had a dream, in which I saw Arthur alone in a wood. He was lying face upwards in the snow, and from his heart blood was flowing, staining the pure whiteness all around him, I knelt It was the quartermaster who spoke, and | beside him and called his name, but in vain. He was dead. Mother, I saw his eyes! Oh, I shall never forget it—never!

> Mrs. Collingham was now thoroughly alarmed.

Alice Collingham shuddered, and, hid-

Gently she soothed the agitated girl, bidding her 'be sensible'-advice easily given, but hard to follow, when wary nerve was on the rack.

'I can't help it. The horror is with me still; and even what I have told you, awful as it is, does not seem to me the worst. As I lifted my head from starring into those yet so unlike. I saw the whole face-it was Arthur's; and yet he was lying dead at

my feet. 'Which proves that he was not dead at alone with-him. In ten minutes I will seem to come my way,' he said. 'Yes, I all,' said Mrs. Collingham briskly, glad to come for you, Here, drink this. No believe it is true. After all, one needn't find a point which she could combat satis-

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