THE DEVIL'S LEAD

A: Thrilling Tale of the Australian Gold Diggings.

would have called in the aid of a ponceman to rid himself of this annoyance, but the fact was he was afraid of offending Pierre, as he might be tempted to reveal what he knew, and the result would not be pleasant. So Gaston bore patiently with the disagreeable system of espionage the dumb man kept over him, and consoled himself with the idea that once he was on his way to America, it would not matter two straws whether Pierre told all he knew or kept silent. The other thing which troubled the young man were the words Kitty had made use of in Mrs. Villiers's drawing-room regarding the secret she said she knew. It made him uneasy, for he half guessed what it was, and thought she might tell

it to some one out of revenge, and then there would be more troubles for him to get out of. Then, again, he argued that she was too fond of him ever totell anything likely to injure him, even though he had put a rope round her neck. If he could have settled the whole affair by running away, he would have done so, but Gollipeck was still in Melbourne, and Gaston knew he could not leave the town without the terrible old man flading it out, and bringing him back.

At last, the torture of wondering how much Kitty knew was too much for him, and he determined to go to the Melbourne jail and interview her. So he obtained an order from the authorities to see her, and prepared to start next morning. He sent the servant out for a hansom, and by the time it was at the door, M. Vandeloup, cool, calm, and well dressed, came down-stairs pulling up his gloves. The first thing he saw when he got outside was Pierre waiting for him, with his old hat pulled down over his eyes, and his look of sullen resignation. Gaston nodded coolly to him, and told the cabby he wanted to go to the Melbourne jail; whereupon Pierre slouched forward as the young man was preparing to enter the cab, and laid his hand on

"Well," said Vandeloup, in a quiet voice in French, shaking off the dumb man's arm, "what do you want?"

Pierre pointed to the cab, whereupon M. Vandeloup shrugged his shoulders. "Surely you don't want to come to the jail

with me," he said, mockingly; "you'll get there soon enough. The other nodded, and made a step toward the cab, but Vandeloup pushed him back. "Curse the fool," he muttered to himself,

"I'll have to humor him or he'll be making a scene. You can't come," he added aloud, but Pierre still refused to go away. This conversation, or rather monologue, seeing M. Vandeloup was the only speaker, was carried on in French, so the cabman

and the servant at the door were quite ignorant of its purport, but looked rather aston-, ished at the conduct of the dirty tramp toward such an elegant-looking gentleman. Vandeloup saw this, and therefore determined to end the scene. "Well, well," he said to Pierre in French, "get in at once," and then when the dumb

man entered the cab, he explained to the cabman in English: "This poor devil is a pensioner of mine, and he wants to see a friend of his in jail I'll take him with me." He stepped into the cab, which drove off, the cabman rather astonished at the whole affair, but none the less contented himself

with merely winking at the pretty servant-

girl who stood on the steps, whereupon she

tossed her head and went inside. As they drove along, Vandeloup said nothing to Pierre, not that he did not want to, but he mistrusted the trap-door in the roof of the cab, which would permit the cabman to overhear everything. So they went on in silence, and when they arrived at the jail Vandeloup told the cabman to wait for him, and walked toward the jail.

"You are coming inside, I suppose?" he said, sharply, to Pierre, who still slouched alongside.

The dumb man nodded sullenly. Vandeloup cursed Pierre in his innermost heart, but smiled blandly and agreed to let him enter with him. There was some difficulty with the warder at the door, as the permission to see the prisoner was only made out in the name of M. Vandeloup, but after some considerable trouble they succeeded in

"My faith!" observed Gaston, lightly, as they went along to the cell, conducted by a warder, "it's almost as hard to get into jail as to get out of it."

The warder admitted them both to Kitty's cell, and left them alone with her. She was seated on the bed in the corner of the cell, in an attitude of deepest dejection. When they entered she looked up in a mechanical sort of manner, and Vandeloup could see how worn and pinched looking her face was. Pierre went to one end of the cell and leaned against the wall in an indifferent manner. while Vandeloup stood right in front of the unhappy woman. Kitty arose when she saw him, and an expression of loathing passed over her haggard-looking face.

"Ah!" she said, bitterly, rejecting Vandeloup's proffered hand, "so you have come to see your work; well, look around at these bare walls; see how thin and ugly I have grown; think of the crime with which I am charged, and surely even Gaston Vandeloup

The young man sneered.

"Still as good at acting as ever, I see," he said mockingly; "can not you even see a friend without going into these heroics?" "Why have you come here?" she asked, drawing herself up to her full height. "Because I am your friend," he answered,

coolly.
"My friend!" she echoed, scornfully, looking at him with contempt; "you ruined my life a year ago, now you have endeavored to fasten the guilt of murder on me, and yet you call yourself my friend; a good story, truly," with a bitter laugh. "I could not help giving the evidence I did," replied Gaston, coolly, shrugging his shoulders; "if you are innocent what I say

will not matter. "If I am innocent!" she said, looking at him steadily; "you villain, you know I am

"I know nothing of the sort." Then you believe I committed the

"I do."
Kitty sat helplessly down on the bed, and

passed her hand across her eyes.
"My God!" she muttered, "I am going

"Not at all unlikely," he replied, care-She looked vacantly round the cell, and

caught eight of Pierre shrinking back into

"Why did you bring your accomplice with your" she said, looking at Gaston.

M. Vandeloup shrugged his shoulders.

"Really, my dear Bebe," he said, lazily,
"I don't know why you should call him my accomplice, as I have committed no crime."

"Have you not?" she said, rising to her feet, and bending toward him, "think again."

Vandeloup shook his head, with a smile Vandeloup shook his head, with a smile.

"No, I do not think I have," he answered, glancing keenly at her; "I suppose you want me to be as black as yourself?"

"You coward!" she said, in a rage, turning on him, "how dare you taunt me in this manner. It is not enough that you have ruined me, and imperiled my life, without jeering at me thus, you coward?"

"Bah!" retorted Vandeloup, cynically,

the point; you insinuate that I committed a crime, perhaps you will tell me what kind of

"Murder," she replied, in a whisper. "Oh, indeed," sneered Gaston, coolly, though his lips twitched a little, "the same style of crime as your own? and whose murder am I guilty of, pray?"

"Randolph Villiers's."

Vandeloup shrugged his shoulders. "Who can prove it?" he asked, contemp-

"You," with a sneer, "a murderess?" "Who can prove I am a murderess?" she cried, wildly. "I can," he answered, with an ugly look; 'and I will, if you don't keep a quiet

"I will keep quiet no longer," boldly rising and facing Vandeloup, with her hands clinched at her sides; "I have tried to shield you faithfully through all your wickedness, but now that you accuse me of committing crime, which accusation you know is false, I accuse you, Gaston Vandeloup, and your accomplice yonder," wheeling round and pointing to Pierre, who shrunk away, "of

murdering Randolph Villiers, at the Black Hill, Ballarat, for the sake of a nugget of gold he carried." Vandeloup looked at her disdainfully. "You are mad," he said, in a cold voice; "this is the raving of a lunatic; there is no proof of what you say; it was proved con-

clusively that myself and Pierre were asleep at our hotel while Monsieur Villiers was with Jasper at two o'clock in the morning." "I know that was proved," she retorted, "and by some jugglery on your part; but, nevertheless, I saw you and him," pointing again to Pierre, "murder Villiers."
"You saw it," echoed Vandeloup, with a

disbelieving smile; "tell me how?" "Ah!" she cried, making a step forward, you do not believe me, but I tell you it is true-yes, I know now who the two men were following Madame Midas as she drove away; one was her husband, who wished to rob her, and the other was Pierre, who, acting upon your instructions, was to get the gold from Villiers should he succeed in getting it from madame. You left me a few minutes afterward, but I, with my heart full of love—wretched woman that I was—followed you at a short distance, unwilling to lose sight of you even for a little time. I climbed down among the rocks and saw you seat yourself in a narrow part of the path. Curiosity then took the place of love, and I watched to see what you were going to do. Pierre-that wretch who cowers in the corner-came down the path and you spoke to him in French. What was said I did not know, but I guessed enough to know you meditated some crime. Then Villiers came down the path with the nugget in its box under his arm. I recognized the box as the one which Madame Midas had brought to our house. When Villiers came opposite you, you spoke to him; he tried to pass on, and then Pierre sprung out from behind the rock and the two men struggled

stab Villiers in the back. Then you put the knife into Pierre's hand, all bloody, as Villiers fell dead, and I fled away." She stopped, breathless with her recital, and Vandeloup, pale but composed, would have answered her, when a cry from Pierre startled them. He had come close to them.

together, while you seized the box contain

ing the gold, which Villiers had let fall, and

watched the struggle. You saw that Vil-

liers, animated by despair, was gradually

gaining the victory over Pierre, and then

you stepped in-yes; I saw you snatch

Pierre's knife from the back of his waist and

"My God!" he cried; "then I am inno-"You!" shrieked Kitty, falling back on her bed; "who are you?" She man pulled his hat off and came

and was looking straight at Kitty.

"I am Randolph Villiers!"

Kitty shrieked again and covered her face. with her hands, while Vandeloup laughed in a mocking manner, though his pale and quivering lip told that his mirth was as-

"Yes," said Villiers, throwing his hat on the floor of the cell, "it was Pierre Lemaire, and not I, who died. The struggle took place as you have described, but he," pointing to Vandeloup, "wishing to get rid of Pierre for reasons of his own, stabbed him, and not me, in the back. He thrust the knife into my hand, and I, in my blind fury, thought that I had murdered the dumb man. I was afraid of being arrested for the murder, so, as suggested by Vandeloup, I changed clothes with the dead man and wrapped my own up in a bundle. We hid the body and the nugget in one of the old mining shafts, and then came down to Ballarat. I was similar to Pierre in appearance, except that my chin was shaven. I went down to the Wattle Tree Hotel as Pierre after leaving my clothes outside the window of the bedroom which Vandeloup pointed out to me. Then he went to the theatre and told me to rejoin him there as Villiers. I got my own clothes into the room, dressed again as myself; then, locking the door, so that the people of the hotel might suppose that Pierre slept, I jumped out of the window of the bedroom and went to the theatre. There I played my part as you know, and while we were behind the scenes Mr. Wopples asked me to put out the gas in his room. I did so, and took from his dressing-table a black beard, in order to disguise myself as Pierre till my beard had grown. We went to supper, and then I parted with Jasper at two o'clock in the morning, and went back to the hotel, where I climbed into the bedroom through the window and reassumed Pierre's dress forever. It was by Vandeloup's advice that I pretended to be drunk, as I could not go the Pactolus where my wife would have recognized me Then, I, as the supposed Pierre, was discharged, as you know. Vandeloup, aping friendship, drew the dead man's salary, and

bought clothes and a box for me. In the middle of one night I, still disguised as Pierre, slipped out of the window and went up to Black Hill, where I found the nugget and brought it down to my room at the Wattle Tree Hotel. Then Vandeloup brought in the box with my clothes, and we packed the nugget in it, together with the suit I had worn at the time of the murder. Following his instructions, I came down to Melbourne, and there disposed of the nugget-no need to ask how, as there are always people ready to

do things of that sort for payment. When I was paid for the nugget—and I only got eight hundred pounds, the man who melted it down taking the rest—I had to give six hundred to Vandeloup, as I was in his power, as I thought, and dare not refuse in case he should denounce me for the murder of Pierre Lemaire. And now I find that I have been innocent all the time, and he has been frightening me with a shadow. He, not I, was the murderer of Pierre

Lemaire, and you can prove it." During all this recital, which Kitty listened to with staring eyes, Vandeloup had stood quite still, revolving in his own mind how he could escape from the position in which he found himself. When Villiers finished his recital he raised his head and looked defiantly at both his victims

"Fate has placed the game in your hands," he said, coolly, while they stood and looked at him; but I'm not beaten yet, my friend. May I ask what you intend to do?"

"Prove my innocence," said Villiers, bold-

'Indeed!" sneered Gaston, "at my expen

"And I," said Kitty, quickly, "will prove Villiers's innocence."

Vandeloup turned on her with all the lithe,

cruel grace of a tiger. "First you must prove your own inno-cence," he said, in a low, fierce voice. "Yes; if you can hang me for the murder of Pierre Lemaire, I can hang you for the murder of Selina Sprotts; yes, though I know you did

not do it.' "Ah!" said Kitty, quickly springing forward, "you know who committed the

"Yes," replied Vandeloup, slowly, "the man who committed the crime intenued to murder Madame Midas, and he was the man who hated her and wished her dead—her

"I?" cried Villiers, starting forward, "you

Vandeloup wheeled round quickly on him, and getting close to him, spoke rapidly. "No, I do not lie," he said, in a concentrated voice of anger; "you followed me up to the house of Monsieur Weddlechip, and hid among the trees on the lawn to watch the house; you saw Bebe throw the bottle out, and picked it up; then you went to St. Kilda and, climbing over the wall, committed the crime, as she"—pointing to Kitty—"saw you do; I met you in the street near the house after you had committed it, and see"—plung-ing his hand into Villiers's pocket—"here is the bottle which contained the poison," and he held up to Kitty the bottle with the two red bands round it, which she had thrown

"It is false!" cried Villiers, in despair, seeing that all the evidence was against him. "Prove it. then," retorted Vandeloup, knocking at the door to summon the warder. Save your own neck before you put mine

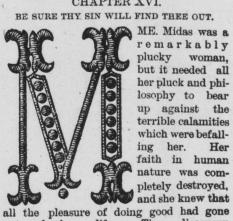
in danger. The door opened, and the warder appeared. Kitty and Villiers gazed horror-struck at one another, while Vandeloup, without another word, rapidly left the cell. The warder beckoned to Villiers to come, and, with a deep sigh, he obeyed.

"Where are you going?" asked Kitty, as he moved toward the door. "Going?" he repeated, mechanically. "I

am going to see my wife."

He left the cell, and when he got outside the jail he saw the hansom with Vandeloup in it driving rapidly away. Villiers looked at the retreating vehicle in despair. "My God!" he murmured, raising his face to the blue sky with a frightful expression of despair: "how am I to escape the clutches of this devil?"

CHAPTER XVI.



remarkably plucky woman, but it needed all her pluck and philosophy to bear up against the terrible calamities which were befalling her. Her faith in human nature was completely destroyed, and she knew that out of her life. The discovery of Kitty's baseness had wounded her deeply, and she found it difficult to persuade herself that the girl had not been the victim of circumstances. If Kitty had

only trusted her when she came to live with her all this misery and crime would have en avoided, for she would have known Mme. Midas would never have married Vandeloup, and thus would have had no motive for committing the crime. Regarding Vandeloup's pretentions to her hand, Mrs. Villiers laughed bitterly to herself. After the misery of her early marriage, it was not likely she was going to trust herself and her second fortune again to a man's honor. She sighed as she thought what her future life must be. She was wealthy, it was true, but amid all her riches she would never be able to know the meaning of friendship, for all who came near her now would have some motive in doing so, and though Mme. Midas was anxious to do good with her wealth, yet she knew she could never expect gratitude in return. The comedy of human life is admirable when one is a spectator; but ah! the actors know they are acting, and have to mask their faces with smiles, restrain the tears which they would fain let flow, and mouth witty sayings with breaking hearts. Surely the most bitter of all feeling is that cynical disbelief in human nature

Mme. Midas, however, now that Melbourne was so hateful to her, determined to leave it, and sent up to Mr. Calton in order to confer with him on the subject. Calton came down to St. Kilda, and was shown into the drawing-room, where Mrs. Villiers, calm and impenetrable looking as ever, sat writing letters. She arose as the barrister entered, and gave him her hand.

which is so characteristic of our latest civili-

"It was kind of you to come so quickly," she said, in her usual quiet, self-contained manner; "I wish to consult you on some matters of importance."

"I am at your service, madame," replied Calton, taking a seat, and looking keenly at the marble face before him. "I am glad to see you looking so well, considering what you have gone through." Mrs. Villiers let a shadowy smile flit across

her face. "They say the red Indian becomes utterly indifferent to the torture of his enemies after a certain time," she answered, coldly; "I think it is the same with me. I have been deceived and disillusionized so completely that I have grown utterly callous, and nothing now can move me either to sorrow or

man," thought Calton, glancing at her as she sat at the writing-table in her black dress with the knots of violet ribbons upon it; "what queer creatures experience makes

Mme. Midas folded her hands loosely on the table, and looked dreamily out of the open French window, and at the trellis cover-ed with creeping plants beyond, through which the sun was entering in pencils of golden light. Life would have been so sweet to her if she had only been content to be deceived like other people; but then she was not of that kind. Faith with her was a religion, and when religion is taken away, vhat remains?—nothing

"I am going to England," she said, abruptly, to Calton, rousing herself out of these painful reflection "After the trial, I presume?" observed

Calton, slowly.

"Yes," she answered hesitatingly; "do you think they will—they will—hang the girl?"

Calton shrugged his shoulders.

"I can't tell you," he answered, with a half smile; "if she is found guilty—well—I think she will be imprisoned for life."

"Poor Kitty," said madame, sadly, "it was an evil hour when you met Vandeloup.

What do you think of him?" she asked, suddenly.

"He's a scoundrel," returned Calton, dene's a scoundrel," returned Calton, decisively; "still, a clever one, with a genius for intrigue; he should have lived in the times of Borgian Rome, where his talents would have been appreciated; now we have lost the art of polite murder."

"De you know," said Mrs. Villiers, musingly, leaning back in her chair, "I can not help thinking Kitty is innocent of this rrime?"

may be," returned Calton, ambig-

uously, "but the evidence seems very strong against her." "Purely circumstantial," interrupted Mme.

Midas, quickly.

"Purely circumstantial, as you say," assented Calton; "still, some new facts may be discovered before the trial which may prove her to be innocent. After the mystery which enveloped the death of Oliver Whyte in the hansom cab murder, I hesitate giving a decided answer, in any case, till every-thing has been thoroughly sifted; but, if not Kitty Marchurst, whom do you suspect—

"No; he wanted to marry me, not to kill "Have you any enemy, then, who would

o such a thing?" "Yes, my husband." "But he is dead."

He disappeared," corrected madame, "but t was never proved that he was dead. He was a revengeful, wicked man, and if he could have killed me, without harting himself, he would," and rising from her seat she paced up and down the room slowly.

"I know your sad story," said the barris-ter, "and also how your hysband disappeared; but, to my mind, looking at all the circumstances, you will not be troubled with him again." A sudden exclamation made him turn his

head, and he saw Mme. Midas, white as death, staring at the open French window, on the threshold of which was standing man-medium height, black beard, and a haggard, hunted look in his eyes. "Who is this?" cried Caton, rising to his

Mme. Midas tottered, and caught at the mantel-piece for support. "My husband," she said, in a whisper.

"Alive?" said Calton, turning to the man at the window. "I should rather think se," said Villiers, insolently, advancing into the room; "I don't look like a dead man, lo I?" Mme. Midas sprung forward and caught

"So you have come back, murderer?" she hissed in his ear. "What do you mean?" said her husband,

wrenching his hand away. "Mean?" she cried, vehemently; "you know what I mean. You cut yourself off entirely from me by your attempt on my life and the theft of the gold; you dare not show yourself for fear of receiving the reward of your crime; and so you worked in the dark against me. I knew you were near, though I did not see you; and you for a second time attempted my life."

"I did not," muttered Viliers, shrinking back from the indignant blize of her eyes. "I can prove-" "You can prove she burstout, contemptu-

ously, drawing herself up to her full height. "Yes! you can prove anything with your cowardly nature and lying tongus; but prove that you were not the man who came in the dead of night and poisoned the drnk waiting for me, which was taken by my nurse. You can prove—yes, as God is my judge, you shall prove it, in the prisoner's dock, e'er you go to the gallows." During all this terrible speech Villiers had

crouched on the ground, halfterrified, while his wife towered over him, magnificent in her anger. At the end, however, he recovered himself a little, and began to bluster. "Every man has a right to a hearing," he said, defiantly, looking from his wife to Calton; "I can explain everything."

Mme. Midas pointed to a chair. "I have no doubt you will prove black is white by your lying," she said, coldly, returning to her seat; "I await this explana-

them the whole story of his mysterious disappearance, and how he had been made a fool of by Vandeloup. When he had ended, Calton, who had resumed his seat, and listened to the recital with deep interest, stole a glance at Mme. Midas, but she looked as cold and impenetrable as ever.

"I understand, now, the reason of your disappearance," she said, coldly; "but that is not the point. I want to know the reason you tried to murder me a second time. "I did not," returned Villiers, quietly, with gesture of dissent.

"Then Selina Sprotts, since you are so

particular," retorted his wife, with a sneer; but it was you who committed the crime. "Who says I did?" cried Villiers, standing "No one," put in Calton, looking at him sharply, "but as you had a grudge against

your wife, it is natural for her to suspect

you, at the same time it is not necessary for you to criminate yourself." "I am not going to do so," retorted Villiers; "if you think I'd be such a fool as to commit a crime and then trust myself to my wife's tender mercies, you are very much mistaken. I am as innecent of the murder

as the poor girl who is in prison." "Then she is not guilty?" cried Mrs. Villiers, rising. "No," returned Villiers, coldly, "she is innocent. "Oh, indeed," said Calton, quietly; "then

if you both are innocent, who is the guilty person?" Villiers was about to speak when another man entered the open window. This was none other than Klsip, who advanced eagerly to Villiers.

"He has come in at the gate," he said, quickly. "Have you the warrant?" asked Villiers, as a sharp ring was heard at the front door. Kilsip nodded, and Villiers turned on his wife and Calton, who were too much aston-

shed to speak. "You asked me who committed the crime," he said, in a state of suppressed excitement; "look at that door"—jointing to the door which led into the hall—"and you will see the real murderer of Scina Sprotts appear."

Calton and Mme. Tidas turned simultaneously, and the seconds seemed like hours

as they waited with bated breath for the opening of the fatal door. The same name was on their lips as they gazed with intense expectation, and that name was-Gaston

at the handle of the door, and it was flung wide open as the servant announced: "Mr. Jasper." Yes, there he stood, meek, apologetic and

smiling—the fast living bank clerk, the darling of society, and the secret assassin-Mr. Bartholomew Jasper. He advanced smiling into the room, when suddenly the smile died away, and his face blanched as his eyes rested on Villiers. He made a step backward as if to fly, but in a

noment Kilsip was on him.

the red bands.

"I arrest you in the queen's name for the murder of Selina Sprotts," and he slipped the handcuffs on his wrists. The wretched young man fell down on the floor with an agonized shriek.
"It's a lie—it's a lie!" he howled, beating

his manacled hands on the carpet; "no one can prove I did it."

"What about Vandeloup?" said Villiers, looking at the writhing figure at his feet, "and this proof?" holding out the bottle with

Jasper looked up with an expression of abject fear on his white face, then with a sariak ell back again in a swoon. Kilsip went to the window and a policeman appeared in answer to his call, then between them they lifted up the miserable wretch and took him to a cab which was waiting, and were soon driving off up to the station, from whence Jasper was taken to

the Melbourne jail.

Calton turned to Mme. Midas and saw that she also had fainted and was lying on the floor. He summoned the servants to

attend to her, then, making villiers come with him, he went up to his office in town in order to get the whole story of the discovery

of the murderer The papers were full of it next day, and Villiers's statement, together with Jasper's confession, were published side by side. It appeared that Jasper had been living very much above his income, and in order to get money he had forged Mrs. Villiers's name for several large amounts. Afraid of being discovered, he was going to throw himself on her mercy and confess all, which he would have done had Mme. Midas come to the Meddlechip's ball. But overhearing the conversation between Kitty and Vandeloup in the conservatory, and seeing the bottle flung out, he thought if he secured it he could poisor Mme, Midas without suspicion and throw the guilt upon Kitty. He secured the bottle immediately after Vandeloup took Kitty back to the ball-room, and then went down to St. Kilda to commit the crime. He knew the house thoroughly, as he had often been in it, and saw that the window of madame's room was open. He then put his overcoat on the glass bottles on top of the wall and leaped inside, clearing the bushes. He stole across the lawn and stepped over the flowerbed, carefully avoiding making any marks. He had the bottle ot poison with him, but was apparently quite ignorant how he was to introduce it into the house, but on looking through the parting of the curtains he saw the glass with the drink on the table. Guessing that Mme. Midas was in bed and would probably drink during the night, he put his hand through the curtains and poured all the poison into the glass, then noiselessly withdrew. He jumped over the wall again, put on his overcoat, and thought he was safe, when he found M. Vandeloup was watching him and had seen him in all his actions. Vandeloup, whose subtle brain immediately saw that if Mme. Midas was dead he could throw the blame on Kitty and thus get rid of her without endangering himself, agreed to keep silent, but made Jasper give up the bottle to him. When Jasper had gone, Vandeloup, a few yards further down, met Villiers, but supposed that he had just come on the scene. Villiers, however, had been watching the house all night, and had also been watching Meddlechip's. The reason of this was he thought his wife was at the ball, and wanted to speak to her. He had followed Kitty and Mrs. Riller down to St. Kilda by hanging on to the back of the brougham, thinking the latter was his wife.

Finding his mistake, he hung around the house for about an hour without any object, and was turning round the corner to go home when he saw Jasper jump over the wall, and, being unseen in the shadow, overheard the conversation and knew that Jasper had committed the crime. He did not however dare to accuse Jasper of murder, as he thought it was in Vandeloup's power to denounce him as the assassin of Pierre Lemaire, so for his own safety kept quiet. When he heard the truth from Kitty in the prison he would have denounced the Frenchman at once as the real criminal, but was so bewildered by the rapid manner in which Vandeloup made up a case against him, and especially by the bottle being produced out of his pocket—which bottle Van-deloup, of course, had in his hand all the time—that he permittted him to escape. When he left the jail, however, he went straight to the police office and told his story, when a warrant was immediately granted for the arrest of Jasper. Kilsip took the warrant and went down to St. Kilda to Mrs. Villiers's house to see her before arresting Jasper; but as before described, Jasper came down to the house on business from the bank, and was arrested at once

Of course there was great excitement over the discovery of the real murderer, especially as Jasper was so well known in Melbourne society, but no one pitied him. In the days of his prosperity he had been obsequious to his superiors and insolent to those beneath him, so that all he gained was the contempt of one and the hate of the other. Luckily he had no relatives whom his crime would have disgraced, and as he had not succeeded in getting rid of Mme. Midas, he intended to have run away to South America, and had forged a check in her name for a large amount in order to supply himself with funds. Unhappily, however, he had paid that fatal visit and had been arrested, and since then had been in a state of abject fear, begging and praying that his life might be spared. His crime, however, had awakened such indignation that the law was allowed to take its course; so early one wet, cold morning Barty Jasper was delivered into the hands of the hangman, and his mean, pitiful little soul was launched into eternity.

Kitty was of course released, but overwhelmed with shame and agony at all her past life having been laid bare, she did not go to see Mme. Midas, but disappeared amid. the crowd, and tried to hide her infamy from all, although, poor girl, she was more sinned

against than sinning: Vandeloup, for whom a warrant was out for the murder of Lemaire, had also disappeared, and was supposed to have gone to

Mme. Midas suffered severely from the shocks she had undergone with the discovery of every one's baseness. She settled a certain income on her husband, on condition she never was to see him again, which offer he readily accepted, and naving arranged all her affairs in Australia, she left for England hoping to find in travel some alleviation, if not forgetfulness, of the sorrow of the past. A good woman-a noble woman, yet one

who went forth into the world broken-hearted and friendless, with no belief in any one and no pleasure in life. She, however, was of too fine a nature ever to sink into the base, cynical indifference of a misanthropic life, and the wealth which she possessed was nobly used by her to alleviate the horrors of poverty, and to help those who needed help. Like Midas, the Greek King, from whence her quaint name was derived, she had turned everything she touched into gold, and, though it brought her no happiness, yet it was the cause of happiness to others, but she would give all her wealth could she but once more regain that trust in human nature which had been so cruelly

> EPILOGUE. THE WAGES OF SIN.



orbed, dull and yellow, hangs like a lamp in the darkblue sky. Low down on the horizon are great masses of rain clouds, ragged and angry-looking, to weigh down on

as it was-not a

breath of wind,

and the moon, full

the still earth, where everything is burned and parched, the foliage of the trees hanging limp and heavily, and the grass, yellow and sere, mingling with the hot, white dust of the roads. Absolute stillness everywhere of the roads. Absolute stillness everywhere down here by Yarra Yarra, not even the river making noise as it sweeps swiftly down on its winding course between its low, mud banks. No bark of a dog or human voice breaks the stillness; not even the sighing of the wind through the trees. And throughout all this unearthly silence a nervous vi-Concluded on Seventh Page.

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