Continued from first Page.

"Gone !" repeated Miss Hastings. "It is impossible! You must be mistaken ; you must have overlooked them. What did they amount to ?"

"Exactly one thousand pounds," he replied. "I cannot understand it. You saw me replace the notes in the box ?"

"I did; I watched you. You placed them in one corner. I could put my finger on the place," said Miss Hastings. I locked the box and carried it

with my own hands to the study. placed it in the drawer of my writingtable, and locked that. I never parted with my keys to any one; as is my invariable rule, I placed them under my pillow. I slept soundly all night, and when I woke I found them there. A I tell you I have been to the box, and the notes are gone. I cannot understand it, for I do not see any indication of a theft, and yet I have been robbed." Miss Hastings looked very thoughtful.

"You have certainly been robbed," she said. " Are you sure the keys have never left your possession ?'

"Never for a moment," he replied. " Has any one in the house duplicate keys " she asked.

" No; I bought the box years ago in Venice; it has a peculiar lock—there your account." is not one in England like it."

"It, is very strange," said Miss Hastings. "A thousand pounds is no trifle to lose

Panline Darrell, her face turned to the flowers, attered no word.

"You might show some little interest, Pauline," said her uncle, sharply ; "you might affect it, even if you do not feel

"I am very sorry indeed," she returned, coldly. "I am grieved that you have had such a loss." Sir Oswald looked pacified.

"It is not so much the actual loss of the money that has grieved me," he said ; "I shall not feel it. But I am distressed to think that there should be s thief among the people I have loved and trusted."

"What a solemn council !" interrupted the voice of Aubrey Langton. "What gloomy conspirators !"

Sir Oswald looked up with an air of great relief.

"I am so glad you are come, Aubrey you can advise me what to do." And the baronet told the story of his

Captain Langton was shocked amazed ; he asked a hundred questions, and then suggested that they should drive over to Audleigh Royal and place the

affair in the hands of the Chief Inspector of police. "You said you had not taken the number of the notes; I fear it will be difficult to trace them," he said, regret- THE BEST PAPER fully. "What a strange mysterious

robbery. Is there any one you suspect, Sir Oswald ?' No ; in the wide world there was not one that the loyal old man suspected of

robbing him. "My servants have always been to me like faithful old friends," he said,

sadly, "there is not one among them who would hold out his hand to steal from me." Captain Langton suggested that be-

fore going to Audleigh Royal, they should search the library.

"You may have made some mistake, sir," he said. "You were tired last night, and it is just possible that you may have put the money somewhere else, and do not remember it." "We will go at once," decided Si

Oswald. Miss Hastings wished them success but the proud face directed toward the flowers was never turned to them The pale lips were never unclosed to utter

one word. After the gentlemen had left them, when Miss Hastings began to speak PATENTS, In connection with

eagerly of the loss, Pauline raised her hand with a proud gesture.

"I have heard enough," she said. "I do not wish to hear one word more." The robbery created a great sensation; inspectors came from Audleigh Royal, and a detective from Scotland Yard, but no one could throw any light upon the subject. The notes could not be traced; they had been paid in from . different sources, and no one had kept

a list of the numbers. Even the detective seemed puzzled. Sir Oswald had locked up the notes in the box at night, he had kept the keys in his own possession, and he had found in the morning that the box was still locked and the notes gone. It was a nine day's wonder. Captain Langton gave all the help he could, but as all search seemed useless and hopeless, it was abandoned after a time, and at the end of the week Captain Langton was summoned to London, and all hope of selving the mystery was reling a hed

CHAPTER XXII.

FULFILLING THE CONTRACT,

The preparations for the wedding prepared for the bride were a marvel of luxury and beauty. There was a boudoir with rose-silk and white lace hangings, adorned with most exquisite pictures and statues, with rarest flowers and most beau iful ornaments-a little fairy nook, over which every one went into raptures except Pauline; she never even looked at thealterations, she never mentioned them or showed the least interest in them. She went on in her cold, proud, self-contained manner. hiding many thoughts in her heart.

" Miss Hastings," she said, one morning, "you can do me a favour. Sir Oswald has been saying that we must call at the Elms to See Lady Hampton and Miss Rocheford. I should refuse. but that the request exactly suits my plans. I wish to see Miss Rocheford we will drive over this afternoon. Will you engage Lady Hampton in conversation while I talk to her niece ?"

"I will do anything you wish, Pauline,,' returned Miss Hastings; "but, my dear child, be prudent. I am frightened for you-be prudent. It It will be worse than useless for you to make an enemy of the future Lady Darrell. I would do anything to help you, anything to shield you from sor row or harm, but I am frightened on

Caresses and demonstrations of affection were very rare with Pauline; but now she bent down with a softened face and kissed the anxious brow.

"You are very good to me," said. "You are the only one in the vide world who cares for me."

To be Consinued.

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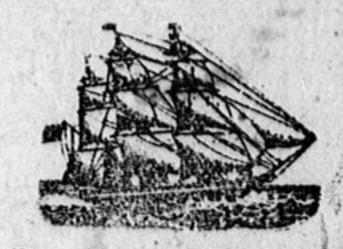
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