MIPIER VII. - (CONTINUED).

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Jik Madge," was all Ceoil said. herror-stricken. The reem wim round; yet she comprehend. si slance, and wasted no words. the paused to steady her voice;

must ge. Shall I go with you, be ready in a moment. Madge ! replied the strick-"And yet it will hardly

annot think of that new, Cecil; tis the place for me. I can leave fer mother with Parkins, and

Deane, his face lacerated and scaris haggard as if he had endured seffering, with his right arm in a dragging himself painfully and up and down the deserted hall of which a few of the sufferers in this railway accident had been car-Cod and Madge Graham entered evening. Cecil's fierce words blips as the wretched man came fered the husband followed mutely whe had tempted his unleved wife silegiance led the way, with a siinto an empty sitting-reem It was Madge who first found ad she speke in a breathless whisper.

the-how is she?" died an hour age," said Lawis anhly through his set teeth, turnthe pale girl, whose eyes he could at and cenfrenting Cecil. "She is we have killed her between us. The a black account written up for this; and you are werse than though I am !"-and he spoke fast Hy. "If you had shown her one flove or one atom of kindness, you have bound her to you ferever. Noadd have tempted her to fersake But you made her mad with woundand pride and jealousy, and I took an of her madness. I would have willie to have saved here just now." his voice growing faint and

truck to the heart, made no anad Madge, her face buried in her pobled audibly, while Lawis Dane ent of the room and out of the He was indeed reaping the bitter sef remorse and shame.

defigured body of the unfortunate rife—the once gay and innecent Nel--was brought home, and buried the pomp and or cumstance of death. such there was much surmising, that at some great scandal and faux m not wanting, yet as nething was w knewn, the bereaved husband and dy appearing in deep mourning, and sintenances decerously sad, the nine-

under was seen fergotten. is an interesting young widowermantic, you know, my dear; they been married a month or two, and weach a pretty little creature, whom relout of pure love !"- was more a an ever. He had published a new nel poems, which the critics had alrulmously praised; but it was not e in which Argent Veriston was imind. The slight melanchely depresthe river, thich hung ever Cecil increased the intelt in the charming peet by some lides, who thought it was "so it." The idea of some cruel disapment, some tragedy in his life, of a h put, vaguely hinted at, vaguely ad, added the crowing fascination of

by to the fame of the literary lion. inet to be wondered at that, petted well-behave they, and his conscience thus gently the sleep, Cecil should begin to look limself as an illused individual, to the had been exceptionally cruel; he would begin to pity himself as deinther than as deceiver, and as unat rather than as reprehensible; is should imagine a bright untroubled rought new, in common justice, to be on and st m; s future, he even told himself, by the disappointment, grief, and of the past. Anyhow, that was the men at which he arrived within six of his wife's untimely end.

CHAPTER VIII,

hink I shall go over to Veristen this dady, Mrs. Mill, as she brought him

act a bit of something to eat, as a "temach 'll do nebedy ne goed." improve there are no changes at the saked Cecil, smiling.

is dr; which there are none yet." thalmost a wonder Miss Veristen is wried, Mrs. Mill. She was a very

owit wen't be leng first."

to you mean? Is she going to again! said Cecil, bringing the words his agony of suspense."

did say as 'ow he thought marrying whight wicked, and he's nearly as shoulder. Veristen's father. Hewsumdcounting for tastes, and he's feed soul, be he what he may; and, amount of him, why no one else need betreives. That's what I say !" red weman paused for breath.

Rese ?" repeated Cecil. "Yes, I once or twice at Veriston; thought—I cannot think there

he not, sir, maybees not! Only down to Easthore de say she presence. tegether constant, only that's here nor there Be it true, or be it

not, you'll find to but soon chough, str, if you're going to the Mere House."

. It was a gray afternoon in March, and the landscape looked bare and desclate as Ceoil walked down the well-remembered path, through the flowerless meadows, and by the river flowing so sullenly beneath the lewering sky. Fellewing some fancy of his own he went first to the mere, where he used to sit of old with Argent in the glerious summer time which seemed so long ago. He could hardly imagine it to be the same place. The gloomy silent waters, stripped of their bravery of flowers and leaves, the melanchely level sheres, the bare trees, their branches waving with a mouning sound in the chill and rain-laden wind, filled Cooll with vague disquiet.

Could it indeed be true that Argent was lost to him, that she was perhaps even new the plighted bride of another, that another had leave to press the hand she had withdrawn from his, and that another might kiss the lips denied to him? The thought stung Cecil to madness. No, it could not, it should not be! She was his, and no more power on earth should take her from him new His brow grew dark and his ince stern as he hurried on, away from the memory-haunted mere, through the sodden grass, the gloomy dells and shrubberies of the park to the house.

How familiar, yet how strange it all was! There was the garden, once se bleeming and sweet, new a damp, dismal wilderness. There were the creeper devered walls of the old mansion, darkened by the early twilight of a dull March day. Was the past a dream, or was the present a dream? Oecil could hardly tell. All was so strange and so unnatural.

Once within, however, the sense of unreality passed away and the actual present returned. A bright wood fire glowed on the big hearth in the hall, and threw its fantastic radiance on the stained windows, the grim armour, and the ancestral por-

"Master's busy in the liber'y, sir, and | inspire. giv' horders he was not en ne account to be disturbed," respectfully exclaimed the gray-haired domestic; "but Miss Veris-

As it summoned by the mention of her name, the drawing room door epened, and, clesing it seftly behind her, Miss Veristen advanced towards the fire.

"It is growing dark, Mapleson," she of Argent! said. And her veice thrilled Cecil s heart painfully. Then she started, as she perceived a gentleman with the servant. "Mr. Graham, miss," anneunced the

man, with deferential readiness. And then she left the hall.

They were seen talking, apparently en easy friendly terms, ever the glowing embers. Then Mr. Veriston appeared, and the trie partook of tea in the small coay

chatelaine, letting his eyes dwell upon her ripe beauty, taking the cup she filled for him from her hands with trembling fingers. listening eagerly to every word she spoke, envying the light that touched so softly ly tinted beauty.

ence of his daughter; and, oh, joy and she answered in low tones-

ceme !"

really rejected his love, or had he dreamt | cing-day! that she had? Of one thing only was he sure, that he would not leave her again without asking her the question. Come what might, he would hear his sentence frem these sweet lips that very night!

Fortune favoured his resolve; for, after tea, Mr. Veriston, failing in his attempts to beguile his guest into one of his favourite discussions, went off to his study, and Cecil and Argent were left alone,

At first a constrained silence fell upon them. Then Cecil began abruptly, his voice seunding unnatural in his ewn ears-

"Se you thought I should return, Miss have come ?"

her old brief manner, but blushing as she had never been wont to do.

bolder-"yeu remember, Argent, when you crushed me with the cold cruel words dn't feand se, sir!" she replied, bleeming and you speke, I never meant, never thought of her aristocratic ledger, en her and to pluck you from my heart!" He with whom she never dreamed of paused; but the girl made no reply, no "D'm't yeu be in no 'urry to get | without you, I must have your leve !" light as her heart; the could not help sing rising ever higher and higher round his It so happen as we've gene to Then, seeing that she did not speak, he ing, emulating the lark which revelled shrinking spirit. Truly his sin has found Mye enly to walk in; and I'll leave added, "What made you think that, in overhead. Creesing the park and making him out! Truly Nellie is amply avenged! spite of your rejection, I should seek you brief visits to all the places she held dear, Leaning over for the lilies, the poor girl

again ?" By this time Cacil was on his knees befere Argent's low chair. He had seized the two cold hands, totally oblivious of the Reverend Mr. Stene's suppesed claims, and, scarcely conscious of what he did, he pressed them in his own until Argent's vell, sir, felks 'as their different fancies rings cut into the tender flesh. Cecil was and I don't say but what she ain't looking up with intense passionate yearnway with, and pretty 'air for light ing into her blue witching eyes; for Arwith talk o' married—well, sir, they do gent's verdict meant life or death to him, "Why did you think I should seek you

that do you mean? Is she going to again?" he demanded almost fiercely in

It must have been, came at the which have been, came at the which have been, sir, perhaps you nigh inaudibly from the sweet lips which many the speke, because— Mr. Stene, as is the parson at St. had grown pale while he spoke, "because he is the parson at St. | had grown parson, Cool, all the time;" because I leved you, Cool, all the time;" and the blushing girl hid her face on his

In after years Cecil tried vainly to recall the ecstatic thrill which ran through him, almost agenising in its costasy, at this

confession. Little by little, Cecil wen from Argent a confession of how his words, and his face, with its passion of love, haunted her. Everywhere she heard his veice, everywhere she naw his face; and, in his absence. in the silence which seemed se new to her, she had learned to love and long for his

would draw him back to her.

"And you see, it has done so !"-smil- they were like me ing up at him as they sat together her leved me-sunk in periences.

vulsive mevement-"nothing can separate lilles. us now, nothing can come between us any mere! I must have you all my own seenat ence;" and he raised the bluehing face Graham, whe, having just despatched his and kissed the soft lips. "When will yeu breakfast, stood before the little square mirgive yourself whelly to my keeping, dear-

"It shall be when you will, Cecil," was the answer, in so low a tene that he could scarcely hear it.

CHAPTER IX.

-a glorious glowing windless merning in July ; for, on account of Mr. Veriaten's Illness, a tedious attack of gout, the wedding haunted him, and her voice-merry, rehad been put off more than ence. This had caused good Mrs. Mill so shake her head eminously and predict evil things to her gessips. However all had gene well; and the fateful day had arrived. The wedding was to be a quiet affair. There were to be ever, a celd bath, the levely merning, and no guests and no breakfast ; the happy pair were merely going to walk down to Easthore Church, where the ceremeny was to be spirits, and no dark memory of the mid-

Not even Madge Graham was to be him jey. present; for Cecil had determined to keep his marriage secret until it really was ever, although his engagement was course known. He wished to surprise his family as once before, but in very different circumstances, by the sight of his bride, He reflected with happy pride on the sensatien her superlative loveliness would produce and the leve she would be certain to

Once more Cecil was light-hearted, genial, and intensely, perfectly happy; no shadow from the evil past darkened the radiant glery of the present. All its hosts were laid to rest; net one reproachful spirit dis turbed his slumbers in the silent night, and net one remerseful memory haunted his dreams, which were all of leve, of joy, and you know."

And she? Day by day her soul and her intellect expanded in the sunshine which filled her innecent life. It seemed to the lovers as if every one, even Nature herself, rejeiced in their love. Never had there been so fresh and exquisite a spring, never so royally beautiful a summer; and new it was their wedding morning!

fields and greves. A light breeze stirred upon Cecil Graham's wedding-day. the pink rose leaves that framed the case

farewell to the dear bowers of her child- "white, pure, and calm," day before, took her large sunshade and name. Veristen! Are you glad to see me new I stele from the room. She went along the corriders and down the silent staircase; for to me once more—only once more—one word "Yes," she answered, in semething of no one but herself was stirring yet. She to keep my heart from breaking!" But still passed through the hall, on the floor of the slept unmoved-slept and smiled! which the light from the stained glass fell "When I left you," he went en, growing | in rich tints. Seftly she opened and closed the heavy door and stood outside

> " 'The birthday of my life Is come ; my love is come to me,"

she reached at length the dearest place of must have capsized the frail beat, and, all—the mere.

and love it was new !

ently from the depths of her grateful passed beyond his mertal reach for ever. heart, raising her eyes to the untroubled

A moment longer she steed : then her fleat ence mere alene en her beleved mere : she would have one more row on its inhad ence termed it. Then she let the sculls drop, and they trailed along with epalescent bubbles in their wake as she fleated in luxurious idleness, drinking in with rapt eyes the loveliness of the scene, thinking happy thoughts of love and of the future that had dawned for her with this exquisite summer.

she had felt certain that he would return, | favourite flowers at my wedding. Cool leves we me.

head on his breast, too happy to give a calm, and pure! On feelish dear Occil, to

The stient say phire mirror below showed "Say rather it was my love for you," her a levely blushing face, its tender eyes he answered, "which would not let me; and tremuleus lips smiling up at her, its rest without you. Oh, my darling "-and golden hair falling round it like a cloud, as he strained her to his breast with a con | she steeped ever to gather the floating waxen

> ror that aderned his chimney-piece, fastening a white rece-bud in his coat.

He had had a restless night, disturbed by miserable dreamy, The face not of his fair young bride, but of his injured and guilty wife-had haunted him through the hours of darkness, sometimes smiling and childishly gay, sometimes pale and wild as when she It was Cooll Graham s wedding morning left him on the balcony the last time he saw her in life, sometimes dead and cold with a deep gash across its gray paller. Thus it preachful, revengeful by turns-rang in his affrighted cars. Altegether he had been illtreated by imagination, and he had awakened with throbbing head and weary eyes strangely depressed and melanchely. Howmore pleasant waking thoughts had brought him back to his normal state of health and quietly performed by the Reverend Maurice night's trouble dimmed the brightness of eyes and smile as he bade his landlady wish

"That I does, sir," responded Mrs. Mill, who had replaced her black dress by the eld feative flawered silk-for after all ne serrew could bring back the dead to life; and Miss Veriston, she thought, was a more suitable bride for the well-bred young poet than simple countrified Nellie. "'Appy is the bride as the sun shines on, and sure enough the sun'll shine en ye both this day. As my Willum say, ony this minute, it's a good he men, and he's a rare one for knowin', is Willum, though a bad one to speak."

" Well, I hope he's right this time," said Cecil, laughing gaily; "but how slowly the time passes! "I'll take a turn or two in the garden by way of keeping up my spirits,

" Mrs. Mill joined in his laugh, but finally turned away with a sigh from the contemplatien of his tall figure as he strolled along, whittling blithely.

"How soon the dead are out o' mind !" she mused, with half a sigh, as she went to see after her baking. "Poer Nellie!" Twilight solemn and serene-warm, balm-

Argent was awake before the sun had ly summer twilight, aderned with a crescent risen. Net feeling the slightest inclination moon and "one star its chrysolite," with into sleep, she rese, threw the window wide numerable seft mysterious sounds anneunc-As of old, Cecil sat opposite to the young open, and sat by it to watch heaven and ing the advent of night. The golden hours earth "partake the sacrament of morning." of the day had passed one by one, the birds' A few early songsters were already on the songs were hushed, the lilies closed, the dew wing, calling to each other from the dim falling, and Evening had set her dusky seal Tranquil and beautiful as ever, the mere

the pale gold of her silken tresses and the ment and dashed the girl's fair hair with lay beneath the purple sky, one thin line of shadows that lurked in the folds of her dew as she leaned out among them. A silver wavering over it cast by the sinking black velvet dress, a dress more than any large white star, "the planet of leve," moon. Beautiful as ever the flower-wreathother calculated to set eff her fair, delicate- shone in the east. Argent watched it fade ed walls of the Mere House rose among the en "a bed of daffodil sky," that grew trees, a faint cloud of blue smoke rising "We never thought we should see you | brighter every moment. A few resy clouds | from one of the chimneys, lights glimmering again, did we, Argent?" the eld man asked | hung in the zenith; gradually these be | here and there through the mulliened panes came yellew tee, then white and lustrous. -a fair picture indeed of home and peace!

wender ! her eyes droeped before Cech's | Presently the sun appeared above the dis | The bed-room belonging to Argent was a burning glance, and her voice faltered, as | tant sea, and rese grandly and silently in | small pretty reem facing the east. The to the heavens. Another day was born, walls were delicately tinted, and the hang-"Yes, father; I-I thought he would Jeyous songs burst forth from the birds to ings all of white and silver. A bex of mighall its birth, the dew dreps flashed in the nonnette on the sill scented the whole apart-Was he dreaming or awake? the young sunlight, and the dancing waves sparkled. ment, and climbing reses borded the winpoet demanded of himself. Had this girl A fair new day was bern-Argent's wed. dew. A few photographs and statuettes were the ornaments of this maiden bower-Suddenly an impulse came over her to a room, as her adoring lever would have visit all her old haunts once more, to bid said, quite characteristic of its occupant-

heod and girlhoed, and to bear away with "It was not empty new; fer, on the lither a special memory of their beauty. The tle bed, with its snewy draperies, Argent ceremeny was to take place at nine e'cleck. lay asleep. Over the silken coverlet her She would go now, and dress after break- hair, smooth and shining, trailed its amber fast. The white silk dress she was to wear curls. A faint sweet smile was on the hung in her wardrebe. She glanced at it mouth, so softly closed, and the eyelids restlevingly, streking its glistening folds with ed on the pale cheeks. Ah, very fast asleep caressing fingers. There were her little she was! For even Cecil could not wake bonnet, her veil, and her gloves-she smiled her, though but an heur since he had called tenderly on them all. Then she put on -first, in love's ewn persuasive accents. the blue merning dress she had wern the then in ageny that was almost frenzy-her

"Argent, Argent! Oh, leve, leve, speak

Cecil is alone with his bride. Worn out with his wild grief, wern out with the love whose depths he has not even begun to fathem, he kneels by the motienless form of ever, still wearing black for her of such a thing as returning or seeing your sang Argent, as she passed through the his lost leve. His eyes rest on one of her the beloved and lamented wife, as she face again. My one idea was to forget you, garden with its dewy leaves and awakening cold hands, hidden in the white folds of the rebe she wears. His breast heaves with a Argent felt like a glad child-life seemed painful effort, and now and then a convul-"It'll cheer you hup a bit, sir;" mevement even. "But I could not do it; se fresh and se joyous. Her heart bound sive shudder shakes him from head to feet, wiped her eyes with a corner of her I could not forget, Argent! I cannot live ed with gladness, and her feet were as The bitterness of death, like a tide, is

> with none to hear her despairing cries, none It lay before her in still radiant beauty, to aid, she had sunk beneath the laughing with here and there patches of dark leaves, waters, like fair-haired mad Ophelia-to snew white lily cups rocking in delicious "muddy death." A lily, with its long coolness on its asure besom. Lost in happy stem and large dark leaves, was found reverie, Argent steed on the flowery brink tightly clutched in one of her hands—the among the harebells and irises, gazing over worthless flewer for which she had given the serene expanse. How solltary, hew her glad young life! Instead of the leveempty, save for Nature's loveliness, her ly living bride who was to have met him life had once been ! How full of pleasure at the altar, this dead, drowned form was put into the bridegroom's arms—unloving "Thank Heaven !" said the girl rever and unresponsive, whose gentle seul had

> Cecil has looked upon his past life with eyes rested on her best. Yes, she would eyes from which the sears have fallen. At one stroke all has been torn from himheps, leve, and joy; and, smitten to the viting surface. Lessening the little skiff, heart, all his "refuge of lies" in ruins she took her place, and, with a few swift bitter groans and scalding tears, he has acknowledged in the furnace which yet shall purify his erring soul that his unutterable woe which has overtaken him is indeed a righteeus retribution.

THE END.

No man knows the state of another; it is always of some more or less imaginary man A I will have a bouquet of lilles," she that the wisest and most benest is speak-She had not been unhappy, she said; murmured presently. "I will wear my ing, therefore we should be careful of what

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