CHEQUE NO. 9031.

FASCINATING ROMANCE OF A LONDON SUBURB.

By the Author of "By Crooked Paths," "Sheathed in Velvet," Etc.

of Levens' weakness.

I cried in astonishment.

fit before you noticed it."

then?"

occupied.

that he broke out like this; and we've all

been hoping that he would get over the

"Is he such a favorite in the house,

"Not exactly what you would call a favorite, sir; but he has always been very much looked up to and respected since he has been with the firm; and I suppose no one likes to see a man throw-

ing away a good position like he is de-

When Richards had left the room, I

sat for some time thinking over what he

had said. "It was only early in the year

when he broke out like this." Early in

the year! Then Levens had taken to

drinking habits at just the very time

when I was least likely to notice the al-teration in him-while I was still smart-

ing violently from the pain caused by

the loss of Cynthia. True, the pain was

no less acute now than it had ever been,

but it was a different sort of pain. It no

longer came in bitter spasmodic attacks,

as it had done at first; it had simmered

down into a dull, steady, hopeless heart-

ache, a constant gnawing sense of some-thing wanting, which I was always

dimly conscious of, no matter how I was

I wondered what she was doing now?

In his last letter Horaco had told me

nothing of her beyond the fact that she

sent her best wishes. Her best wishes!

What a poor, empty mockery after all that had been!

The next morning I had Levens in and

spoke to him as well as I was able,

dwelling principally upon the loss and

ruin to himself which must at length

result if he continued his present con-

"It is trouble that has done it, Mr.

Quinton," he said, humbly, as he turned

to leave me, with every sign of deeply felt shame upon him, "I should never have done it but for trouble,"

If he had stopped I would have asked

him for his confidence; but he was so

anxious to get away out of my sight, so

crushed by the degradation of his posi-

tion, that I felt it would be cruel to keep

him, and I let him go with his trouble

unexplained. I little thought as I watched him shambling out at the door

how soon and in what circumstances

that secret trouble was to be made

A few days passed away in the usual

plodding, listless way in which all days

passed with me now, and I was again

sitting lonely and thoughtful over my

after dinner pipe, when Richards knocked at the door and told me "a person"

"Didn't he give his name?" I asked.
"No," said Richards, "he didn't give

his name, but he said you would know

Although I had one of my most misan-

thropical fits on, and would gladly have

been left free from all companionship

that night, I had no sufficient excuse

handy, and was obliged to give a grudg-

ing assent to the unknown's admission.

ed room I looked at him attentively, but

was obliged to confess myself at a loss-

"I never should have believed a beard

could have made all that difference," he

said. "To think of your not recognizing

me, even when close like this! My Lame

"Of course!" I cried, shaking hands,

'I remember you now, although, as you

say, the beard does make an immense

change. And how is the world using

"Tolerably well, sir; I've nothing to

complain of as things go! Ive gone into

the public business-given up the force altogether. I'd been wanting to do it

for some time, and a certain little affair

that took place some nine months ago"

-with a solemn wink-"put it in my

power to make a bid for a little house

"I see," I said, wondering if this visit

was due to a tardy fit of gratitude. "And

do you like your new calling as well as

"Better sir-much better on all ac-

counts! But I haven't called on you to-

night to talk about myself, but about

that same little affair. I've played as

square with you all through that business

"Thank you. As soon as I found I

was really on the right track I sheered

off and took up another clew which 1

knew would lead me right away from

the true one; and so I managed to divert

the more grateful to you because it was

"It was very good of you, and I'm all

"Well, sir, what I've come to tell you

to-night is that there's immediate danger

of the truth coming out now, in spite of

ail our past trouble to keep it quiet. The

party himself-you know whom I mean;

the principal in that little job-has met

with a nasty accident, tumbled through

a street grating, not much in itself, but

a serious matter to him owing to his

shaky state of health, and he's gone a

bit off his head. They brought him into

my house, as luck would have it; and,

when I heard what he was talking about,

I bundled him into our private parlor

and sent off for the doctor, instead of

having him taken to the hospital. He's

an old customer of mine, you see-has

used my house constantly ever since I've

had it. When the doctor came, he

looked very queer about the case, so I

left my potman in charge and came

round to see what you would like to

have done. If he goes to the hospital,

you see, he's likely to blab, and I know

"Stop a minute!" I cried, feeling thor-

oughly bewildered. "I'm all at sea! I

don't know in the least what you are

talking about. Who has tumbled down

a grating and gone off his head? You

can speak out-there is no one here to

"Why, your head clerk, Levens!"

"And what is the secret that you are afraid he will betray?"

"The forgery of that cheque, of

"But what does he know about it?" I

asked, rising from my chair in terror

and stepping towards the detective, who

also rose with an expression of over-

"What does he know about that forged

cheque?" he replied, partially recovering

from his amazement. "Well, if there

is one man on this earth who knows

more about the forgery of that cheaus

whelming astonishment on his face.

you"---

as you did with me, sir, every bit."

"I'm sure of that, Mr. Benson."

suspicion from the real party."

not so set down in the bond."

the old one?

that I'd had my eye on for some time."

is Benson—the detective, you know!"

whereat he beamed in evident delight.

When he came into the brightly light-

was down stairs asking to see me.

him when you saw him."

known to me.

"I shall go down by the mail to-night, to Plymouth," I said resolutely, standing up, and pulling myself together. "I may go on as far as Naples by the boat; but in any case I shall have the satisfaction of bidding her good-by. See to the ware-bousing of all these things, Jem, or send Levens up from the city to see to it, and lead out if there are any outstanding and out if there are any outstanding bills, and settle them. Send me up a small bag to Waterloo at half past 8 to-

The next night Cynthia and I sat in her cabin together. By the use of my name Horace had secured her a cabin to herself—not a very difficult matter at that time of the year—so we had these last few minutes free from interruption.

"I was afraid you would do this, Ger-

"I was afraid you would do this, Gerald," she said, with her sad eyes fixed on
my face. "I told Horace not to put the
labels on the luggage until he got it to
the railway station, but I suppose he forgot. It was not wise to come, dear—it
is only prolonging our sorrow to its utmost limits!"

"I came in the

"I came in the hope that even now I should persuade you to change your mind and come back with me, Cynthia." "Gerald," she said solemnly, laying her cold hand on mine, "let me try to convince you that in the present circum-

tances nothing in the world would induce me to marry you, and I shall not be sorry you have come. Though your loyal love blinds you to the horror of this crime now, it would not be so always. Can you imagine anything—any earthly torment—exceeding that which I should torment—exceeding that which suffer when your present blindness clearthey really are? Can you understand what my anguish would be day after day, when I saw—or fancied I saw your manner to me growing cooler and more reserved? How should I so able to help thinking the change was due to your memory of that shameful act? The thought would be an intolerable torture; I could not live under it; I should go mad or kill myself! The bare idea is so terrible that, if you were to tell me now I must either go back and marry you or throw myself over the side of the ship this instant, I would a thousand times rather drown myself!"

She spoke without excitement, but with a calm solemnity which carried conviction to my sorrowful heart. I had nothing to say. What answer could I give to such a declaration as she had just made?

She, too, sat quiet for a few minutes, with that vacant look in her eyes of which Jem had spoken; and then she began to speak in a low, dreamy voice that made me fancy she hardly knew she was speaking.

"If heaven, in infinite mercy, would let me wake up and find it was all a dream—a bad, cruel dream—if I could come to you and say, 'Gerald, I have been laboring under an hallucination; I did not do what I said I did; I am as innocent of the crime as you are,' I should resign myself to you with a joy you can-not realize. I would come to you and strive, by a lifelong gratitude, to show you the thankfulness that my heart feels towards you for your goodness to me and mine. But that is all fanciful non-sense, isn't it?" she said gently, as she roused herself from her languor. "Only I should like you always to remember, d, that my love is as much and as entirely yours in this moment of our earthly separation as it has ever been in the days of our brightest hope!"

The warning bell for passengers going ashore began to ring. There was a minute of keenest agony, and I was out and up on deck with my traveling cap pulled well down over my eyes and my fur collar up to my ears.

"Good-by, Quinton," said the captain; "I'll try to make the voyage as pleasant

as possible to your friends."

Try to make the voyage pleasant! I almost hated him for his civility.

CHAPER VIL Cynthia had gone from me, and still I lived. I cannot say it was a very happy, or even cheerful life-but I lived. I ither took to gambling, drinking, nor bad company, but I became very fond of my own society, had a set of chambers fitted up over the offices, and spent the

best part of my time there, smoking a great deal more than was good for me, and dwelling upon the past in a way that was not conducive to good health and Whenever I met an acquaintance about town, he told me I was looking "precious queer," and advised a trip to Canada or the States; and I knew my mother and Jem-although the latter had an ap-

ching crisis of her own to distract proaching crisis of her don't deal about her thoughts—fretted a good deal about me. I was too selfish, however, to shake off the unwholesome depression that held me fast in its grip. Living in this deplorable state of self concentration, it may easily be imagined that I did not trouble myself much about the well being of people surrounding me.

Nevertheless, and in spite of my increasing indifference to outward events, the knowledge was abruptly forced upon my unwilling mind that something was going wrong with our head clerk Levens. Formerly the most steady and sober of men, he was now-when well on in the fifties -taking to habits of intemperance.

The first time I noticed it was one afternoon in the middle of October, when he had brought a letter to me to read. A fog was gradually settling over the city, and I could not read with ease, so I ed the matches across to him and

pushed the matches across asked him to light the gas. He lighted it three times, each time turning it out again when he tried to

moderate the flame The fourth time I became impatient, and watched the operation to see what was wrong. His hand was shaking so

violently that, when he tried to turn the tap half way back, he lost all control over his fingers and put the light out again.

I took the matches from him and

lighted the gas myself; but before he left the room I had one or two good steady looks at him. What I saw set me wondering where my eyes had been not to have noticed the change that had taken place in him. His eyes were bloodshot, his skin bloated and his lips tremulous. This could not have been the work of

two or three days on the spree, but the result of some months' hard drinking at the least.

That evening, after dinner, when I had got my favorite pipe going full blast, and lichards—advanced to the post of major domo of my bachelor establishment—was clearing away the remains of the meal, I asked him a question or two; and, though he answered with manifest reluctance, I contrived to pump the information out

than another, I should say it is this man Levens, seeing he did it himself."
"You are mad!" I gasped. "What put such an idea into your head? Levens had nothing whatever to do with it; the

As I abruptly checked myself, a new light suddenly came into his eyes, and he struck his leg vigorously with his open

"Hang me if what I thought once or twice wasn't right after all!" he exclaimed energetically. "You've been shield-ing the wrong party!"
"You're mistaken," I said obstinately.
"You must be mistaken! Levens was

"I wonder if you'd give me another five hundred to prove that he was," he returned quietly; and something in his tone of calm conviction kindled in my of him that everybody in the house knew "But it never used to be so, Richards!" heart the first feeling of hope it had "Dear me, no, sir," he returned promptknown for all those weary months. But I was desperately afraid of being cheated; ly. "That's why every one's so sorry about it! It was only early in this year

besides, what was this detective's word against Cynthia's voluntary confession?

Von'es mistaken." I said obstinatelu "Suppose I told you that some one had confessed to the forgery?" I asked, trembling lest he should admit that such proof of guilt would be incontestable; but he only shrugged his shoulders for bearingly. "If it was any one but Levens I should

say they had made an untrue confession -perhaps to cover the real criminal." Even as the words were spoken a veil seemed to fall from before my eyes, and

I saw all things clearly.

When I discovered the loss of the cheque on that fatal night at Kentish Town, and accused Horace of the theft, Cynthia had also concluded he was guilty, and had resolved to save him by sacrificing herself!

The very words she had spoken in my office the next morning came back to me in support of this theory. "He told me everything you had said to him-your threats, your accusation, the conse-quences to him if he were tried and found guilty, and how strongly appearances were against him." I knew Cynthia well enough to be aware that with her feelings harrowed up by such details as these, with her naturally strong instinct of self denial worked upon by Horace's supposed langer, she was capable of throwing herself headlong into the breach, of sacrificing her good name to save him from open infamy. But again I held in check the glorious rush of hope that was threatening to take my heart by storm; again I feared to believe this bewilderingly joyful news, lest I should presently be driven back to my former state of hopelessness, only to find it a thousand times worse than ever for my fleeting glance at a brighter existence.

All this passed through my mind with lightning speed, and when I looked up I found Benson watching me narrowly. "Well," he said, "what do you think of that theory?"

"What theory?"
"That the person who made that false confession to you did it to cover the real offender?"

"I think you are partly right; but, if the forger is really Levens, you are also partly wrong."

Mr. Benson looked puzzled. 'Come," I cried-"I'll make a bargain with you. Take me to see poor old Levens-let me hear some of this blabbing that you are so afraid of, and, if I am convinced by it that it is really as you say, I will give you a full account of the whole chapter of mistakes."

In two minutes we were in the street; in ten we were in my head clerk's pres-

They had laid him on a large couch in the room behind the bar, and the doctor was with him when we arrived, having returned to administer a draught him

I stood at the foot of the couch for a few moments watching the patience of the medical man, as he again and again persuaded his patient to put his lips to the medicine glass, only to withdraw them again in shuddering horror, with a wild declaration that he was being pois-

"I won't be killed like a rat in a hole!" he shouted angrily, flinging his arms up with the evident intention of upsetting the draught. "What harm have I done you that you want to put me out of the way in this secret manner? Who are you? I don't know you-I never saw you before! What are you keeping me here for? I must go home at once-they will be missing me and making inquiries. Inquiries?" he repeated, as if the very sound of the word had started another train of ideas. "Who is making inquiries-what about? Can't they let the thing rest even now-after all these months of miserable torture? I've had my punishment over and over again; I

should have suffered less in prison!" Looking up, I caught Benson's glance fixed upon mequestioningly, and I shook my head. There was some disgraceful secret on the poor old man's mind certainly; but what proof had we that it had anything to do with the abstracted cheque? The detective's theory was too good to be true, I told myself. I was willing enough to consider any idea that pointed towards Cynthia's innocence, but could not see my way to shifting the burden of the affair bodily on to poor old Levens' shoulders without unquestion-

able evidence of his guilt. "You are an old acquaintance, I think -are you not, Mr. Quinton?" inquired the doctor, looking across at me.

"Of Mr. Levens', yes." "Would you mind trying if he will take the draught from you? He may yield to the familiar voice, even though he does not actually recognize you; and it is so essential that he should get some

"It is a sleeping draught then?" "It is something more than a mere sleeping draught; it is a powerful narcotic. Half measures are of no use here. If the present strain on his nerves is not relieved soon we may reckon his life by

I took the glass and leaned over Lev-"Will you have a glass of wine with me, Mr. Levens?" I asked, in a voice as

nearly like my every day tone as I could For a moment he looked at me with

keen suspicion, as if he doubted his own eyesight. But the doubt soon cleared away, and he answered in a perfectly rational manner:

"With pleasure, sir!" and put out his shaking hand for the glass. It was barely emptied before some new horror seized him, and he hit straight out in front of him with what

he evidently thought was a crushing blow, although in reality there was scarcely enough force in the movement

scarcely enough force in the movement to displace a fly.

"You cruel devil to torment me like this!" he whispered hoarsely, with his eyes fixed upon some imaginary object before him. "You incarnation of evil! You heap of wickedness!"

I stood at the foot of the couch again,

watching the wearying, unceasing roll of his head from side to side, and listening to the words of terror that fell from his blackened lips. Only a year ago— only ten months ago, in fact—he had been one of the keenest, most reliable of business men to be found in London; and now, what was he?

'What?" I asked myself in silent won-'What?' I asked myself in silent won-dr — "what had brought him to such a p as as this at his time of life?"
"What do you honestly think of the case, doctor?" I asked presently.
For answer he took Levens' wrist and

timed his pulse. "The narcotic has got hold of him," he said, "but he has had a very nasty shake for a man of his advanced ago and of his habits. Has he drunk all his life?

"One of the most sober men I've ever known until about a year ago." "Good heavens-you don't say so! Then he must have given his mind very thoroughly indeed to it since then. What do I honestly think of the case? Well, I think it is just possible we may patch him up for a few years, under certain condi-tions."

"And those are?" "The most important of course is that he should keep from the drink; but absolute freedom from worry and anxiety of all kinds is almost as necessary for his cure. What could have driven such a man to intemperance now?" "On that part of the matter I can give

you no definite information," I replied.
"I wish I could." "He is safely off now!" remarked Ben-

son from his post of observation by the "We must make him comfortable with rugs and pillows for the night, I suppose. How long is he likely to sleep?" Eight or ten-hours, if it is to do him any good.

'And will he know what he's about when he wakes?"

"Most likely; but there will be no de-pending on him. He will be sensible one minute and the victim of his fancies the next. But you'll not find him so difficult to manage as he has been to-night. I'll look in about the time I expect him to wake up. If you want me sooner, though, don't mind sending for

"Hold me as the responsible person in this case, doctor," I said, as he began to put on his gloves. "I don't at all know what Mr. Levens' present means are, so it will be more satisfactory for all concerned if you know who is cashier on this occasion." The clocks were striking twelve as he

left, and soon after I heard the people in the bar outside clearing out quietly under the instructions of those in charge. Then some bolts were shot, and a sudden silence fell upon the house.

"Benson," I said, when he came back presently with his wife, "I will stay here the night, if you will allow me. I shall be quite comfortable in that large easy chair; and, if he should wake up before the time mentioned by the doctor. I shall have more control over him than a stranger would have. The first thing in the morning you must send for a man from Guy's hospital, and we'll get him away to his own home."

There was a little demurring to this arrangement at first, but I meant to have my own way for a particular object I had in view. I did not quite like the doctor's tone when he had spoken of the probable length of Levens' sleep. It seemed to me that he had hinted at serious consequences in the event of the sleep not lasting the predicted time. Something in his manner had even suggested that immediate danger might be apprehended. If this were so, I would not run the risk of missing what little chance there might be of learning something about the forged cheque in the

first few moments of his awakening. The foolish hope, once planted in my mind, increased in strength every moment. I would not have confessed as much to any one, but it was true that, in spite of the warnings of common sense, which told me I was only preparing a bitter disappointment for myself, those wandering words of Levens', which pointed to an ever present consciousness of deserved punishment, would associate themselves in my mind with the theft and forgery of my cheque No. 9,031.

I kept on telling myself that I was mad to dream of such a thing, that Levens had never had the least chance of getting at my private cheque book on the night it had been sampered with, but that desperate, wild, improbable hope had been infused into my mind by the ex-detective, strengthened by Lev ens' unconscious words, and it flatly refused to leave me again.

Benson's old fashioned little tavern was situated in an out of the way side street, through which scarcely any traffic passed at the busiest time, but now, in the small hours of the morning, there was an intense silence around us, broken only by the chimes of the distant church clocks as they told off the quarters one after another.

Now and again the shouting of a street brawler would break the stillness, robbed of all its discordant coarseness by the distance, and seeming rather to accentuate than disturb the soothing quiet of

the night. Slowly the hours were away-slowly, but not wearily, for my heart was too wildly expectant of what the morrow might have in store for me, too full of delicious imaginings, to leave time for weariness or impatience. What if Levens should awake conscious, and-what was of far greater importance—repentant? What if he should confess to abstracting the cheque? How should I then have the patience to live through the six or seven weeks that would still separate me from my poor, proud, brave Cynthia? As often as I thought of her-my pure minded, my noble darling—the mad hope in my heart became stronger. I asked myself if I had ever really believed that she had done this thing? I do not think I had, for in my heart there had always been a lurking doubt of Horace, so diffi-

cult is it to uproot a strong prejudice. Closely occupied with these thoughts, 4 and 5 o'clock passed without my noticing the lapse of time; and it was only when my patient began to show increased signs of restlessness that I roused myself and discovered that it was a quarter to 6

and that the fire was nearly out. Moving cautiously, I picked a few seces of coal from the scuttle with my lingers, to avoid making any noise, and then went to have a look at Levens whose arms were beginning to twitch about nervously.

Was he going to wake? He had only had six hours of his eight or ten yet. Was that enough to serve the purpose? As I leaned over him, trying to place pillow more comfortably under his

sing head, he opened his eyes and looked me in the face. For a moment he seemed uncertain; but the uncertainty soon cleared away, and his glance went wonderingly round the room, and then back to my face, as though he were try ing to account for the inconsistencies of his surroundings.

"Don't bother yourself to think

Levens," I caid quietry. "You had a disagreeable fall last night—through an insecure grating—and they brought you here and sent for me; but you're all right now, and by and by we will get you round to your own place."

He put a tremulous hand up to his head.

"I don't remember," he muttered feebly. "I remember nothing. What is the time?" "Nearly 6 o'clock-there, it is striking

"And I have been in a faint all the night through?"
"No; you have been asleep."
"Asleep? Not all the time, surely!
Have I"—a sudden fear showed itself in

his glance as the idea occurred to him— "have I been wandering in my mind? Have I been delirlous? And did they send for you to hear what I was talking

"No," I answered at once, trying hard to speak in a way that would carry con-viction to his understanding; "the land-lord—Mr. Benson—sent for me because did not know where you lived,

"Benson!" he exclaimed, suddenly putting his hand out to feel for mine. 'Are we at the 'Crown and Thistle'?" I nodded, for sooner or later he must know, and there was nothing to gain by

making a mystery of it. He sank back upon the pillow, breath-ing with hurried gasps, his eyes fixed with a painful expression of terror upon

"Don't put yourself out about anything -there's a good fellow!" I said soothingly. "You see, you were nearer here than any other public house when you fell, so they brought you in. We'll soon get you away if you don't like the

"It's not that," he whispered; "one place is as good as another to me now. I was frightened-just at first-at the thought of your being here, in Benson's house; but it does not really matter much. I fancy I'm about done, sir; and I fancy, too, that you know more than

He paused and looked at me steadily. The terror had left his glance now; he seemed anxious only to know what was passing in my mind.

What was I to do? My whole being yearned passionately to know the truth that I saw trembling on his lips. Would it be harmful to him to speak? I won-dered. He at last relieved me from my painful indecision by saying quietly: "It is as I thought. I've betrayed my-

self, or Benson has betraved me. I don't think I'm sorry, though. Would you like to hear how it happened, sir?" "If you don't think it will do you harm to tell me," I answered, trying my

utmost to keep my desperate anxiety out of sight. "No; it won't harm me. I'm too near my end for that. I have a conviction on me that I am about done for, and I should like to tell you all about that ter-

something to moisten my throat before I mixed him some weak brandy and water and gave it to him, for which he

rible mistake of mine. Might I have

thanked me very humbly,
"You were always a considerate man," he said, as I took the glass from his shaking hands; "and the thought of many a past kindness makes it all the harder to say what I have to. You have found out somehow that it was I who took the cheque, but you don't know how I got possession of it even now, do

Heavens, how wildly my heart beat with joy as I heard the words that cleared the guilt from Cynthia's name! But I still contrived to speak quietly, as I told him he was right—that I could form no idea how he managed to secure

the cheque. "Do you remember being in a violent hurry that evening?" he asked. "You had a heap of letters brought to sign-letters for the Australian mail—and you had an important dinner to attend. While you were signing the letters I came in and told you some one had called for a cheque you had promised to some charity. Can't you recollect how you fumed at the interruption, and how you snatched up your cheque book, filled in a cheque, tore it out and passed it to me without

even blotting the writing?" I nodded in assent, and as he spoke I recalled every trifling incident he men-

"That was where the mischief came in, Mr. Quinton. If you had turned the cheque over to blot it you would have seen what you had done. You tore two cheques out instead of one, and you pass-

ed them both to me together." Was it possible? Had all this cruel trouble come about through such a simple mishap as this? I sat looking at him. dumb with amazement. I must have looked almost incredulous, for he went on again with increased eagerness.

"It is heaven's truth I am telling you, Mr. Quinton! You cannot disbelieve the word of a dying man?" "No, no," I cried; "I do not disbelieve

you—it is the simplicity of the thing that seems so wonderful to me. "Yes; it was simple enough-fatally

simple—for, if the temptation had not been put into my very hand, and then further strengthened by what followed I might have been a hearty and an honest man today, instead of the wreck, soul and body, that I am. Do you remember how early you came into the office the next morning?"

'Quite well." "And do you remember, too, that oung Debenham came into the office before I had said more than good morning to you? Well, I had the blank cheque in my pocket to give to you; and I was going to follow you into your room to tell you what you had done and to beg you to be more careful for the future, when you anticipated me by telling Debenham you wanted to speak to him, and going into your private room with him. The moment he came out I went in to you-still with the intention of returning the blank cheque. I found you with the cheque book in your hand, and I thought you had discovered your loss. The words that would have explained everything were on my lips, when some evil spirit must have put it into your mind to tell me what a fright you had had about the book, and that Debenham had had it at home with him since the night before!"

The dying man paused with some signs of exhaustion, and I tried to persuade him not to say any more just then; but he insisted upon finishing.

"Can't you see what a desperate temp tation this news was to me? I instantly saw how suspicion must inevitably fall on Debenham when the loss of the cheque was discovered. Then again, knowing of your engagement to his sister, I felt sure you would not be hard on him, even if you were sure of his guilt; and I ant d the money most urgently. The horrible thought seemed to hold me entranced; paused-the thing was done, the opportunity for speaking had passed! No matter what happened after that, I knew I could not return the cheque, because you would want to know why I had not done so before. Then came an hour or two of torturing indecision, and then-I took the next step-1 filled in and signed the cheque, indorsed it with a fictitious name and paid it away with instructions to present it at once. That is all. It is an awful thing to have to tell you; but

the tening of it is nothing compared with what I have gone through since that day. First there was the misery of knowing that Debenham was suffering under suspicion, the breaking off of your marriage, the abrupt departure of Debenham

and his sister, and your palpable unhap-piness. Then there came a new phase, in which selfish fear blinded me to all other considerations—Benson was on my

"Certain inquiries had been set on foot which, if followed up, would, I knew, lead to positive discovery. It was at this point that I began to drink to drown my fears; and when, after a time, I cound the orideness amount was not found the evidence against me was not being followed up, I continued the drink to keep me from thinking. I was puz-zied to know why the matter had been allowed to drop, for I was certain Ben-son had been close on my track once—so close that I had serious thoughts of putting a bullet through my brain. Can you understand the curious fascination that has drawn me to this place night after night? Can you understand how—knowing he believed me to be the third who stole the cheque—I was attracted to his presence constantly, how I was always watching him for signs of his suspicion, how it was torture to be with him, and yet it was impossible to keep away from him? Ah, there he is!"

I turned and saw that Benson was standing in the doorway leading from the bar.



"It is all out now, Benson," continued Levens, feebly; "I've made a clean breast of it, and I'm not frightened of

"Let him have everything he wants, Benson," I said, as I found my hat, Don't spare anything on the ground of expense. I can't stay to see to it myself. I have something else to do that cannot

I turned and groped my way out through the close bar and leaned against the wall outside, for I was dizzy with excess of joy. I clearly remembered the incident the poor drink sodden creature had alluded to. I could even recall the wording of the letter I was attaching my signature to when he came into my office and asked for a cheque which I had promised to some charity. I recollected what a great hurry I was in on account of my Masonic dinner, and how I filled in the cheque, tore it out, and passed it to him so hastily that I did not even wait to blot the ink on it. There was nothing in the least improbable in his assertion that I had torn two cheques out and handed them to him together, and there was something very improbable in the idea that he should have imagined such a thing in his delirium. No; he had spoken the truth! I knew it; I was absolutely certain of it! Cynthia's self accusation was false!

I took off my hat and raised my eyes to the morning sunlight with a feeling of reverent gratitude in my heart none the less real because it did not express itself in any set form. Then I went home, looked at my newspaper, and found that a ship sailed for Australia in two days' time. I reached our office in Collins street, Melbourne, a few minutes before closing

time one day towards the end of December. Every one was groaning under the intolerable heat, but I did not feel it; my thoughts were so much taken up with my approaching happiness that I was utterly insensible to all mere physical impressions.

When Horace looked up from his desk and saw me he gave vent to his feelings

in a great shout. "Where is Cynthia?" I said, "Take me to her directly." He glanced at the clock.

"Never mind the office routine!" I cried, impatiently. "I'll set that straight for you to-morrow. Come at once!" He put on his hat and I followed him

out into the glaring sunshine. "We are living at St. Kilda," he said: 'you'll have to exist another half hour without seeing her, although I'm afraid it's of no use. She has always held to what she said-that she would not marry you with that stain upon her

I let him go and get my ticket; and when we were in the train I leaned forward and said quietly:

"But if the stain upon her character never existed, what then?" He looked at me incredulously for a moment, and then murmured:

'Impossible!" "Horace," I whispered, "she never did it! She believed you had done it, and she took the blame on herself because she was afraid of the consequences for you. I have found out the real thief. She had no hand at all in it. There's a sister for

His eyes met mine inquiringly, and his color came and went nervously. He seemed to find it difficult to grasp the idea; but he mastered it presently, and his face softened under the influence of great sense of gratitude. "Heaven bless her!" he said earnestly. 'Heaven forever bless her! She is a

noble hearted woman! How I thank heaven to be able to say that I have never caused her an anxious thought since we left home!" We gripped hands, though I do not know what for, unless it was to let off a little of our suppressed emotion, and that

hand grip was the vanishing point of our

old mutual animosity and the commencement of a lasting friendship. When we got to the street where they lived-such an essentially colonial street -very wide, very sandy, with a row of tiny one storied cottages with corrugated iron roofs and deep verandas-Horace

stopped and pointed out the house to me. "It's possible she may not be home from her music lessons for 8 few minutes yet," he said, "because I'm here a train sooner than usual; but you won't have long to wait. She's always home in time to greet me. Tell her I'll be in

to dinner at 7." I went on alone then to the house he had indicated. The gate of the little flower filled courtyard in front was on the swing, and the house door stood wide open under the shady veranda. I went in and stood in the little tiled hall. and wondered what I should do next. Three out of the four room doors were ajar, but there was not a sound to be

A cool breeze blew through the hall, and I took off my hat, conscious of the relief after the walk under the burning

heard in the house.

As I stood there one of the doors was opened wider and Cynthia stepped into the hall and saw me.

In that dim light I thought she looked taller and more ethereal than ever, although somewhat pale and worn, in spite of the peace which shone in her dear

She stood still, gazing at me in breath-less wonderment, with her lips alightly parted and a look of fear gradually steal

ing over her face.

"Cynthia," I murmured softly, "have you no word of welcome for me?"

With a tremulous little cry she was across the hall and her dear arms were

round my neck. "I thought it must be your spirit," she sobbed, with her head upon my shoulder. "I thought you were dead and that your spirit had come to warn me."

"Cynthia, do you remember your impossible dream, dear—your dream of crime and sin—your cruel hallucination of evil doing? The time of the blessed awakening has come, my child! I am the prince in the fairy story who is to awaken you from the long dream of sorrow and trouble. The sin was only a delusion after all, the crime only an evil dream so far as you are conserved. dream so far as you are concerned, my queen among women! Another-in whom we are neither of us interestedhas confessed to the wickedness which in your dream you thought you had committed. Awake, princess, and see how fair the world is again for you. Throw off this long dream of evil, and see yourself as others see you, a noble hearted, generous, self sacrificing woman, in whose past life there is no flaw or blemish—a woman who is an honor to her sex and a pride to her future hus-

the tears rolling down her cheeks, "how came you to find out? Who is the real culprit?"

A fortnight later my wife and I sailed for England. The idiotic fuss my mother and Jena made when they heard the whole mys-tery is beyond the power of my pen to describe. They have now subsided into a chronic state of adoration of my wife. I often tell my mother she will spoil

Cynthia; but she smiles and answers quietly: "You cannot spoil refined gold." Poor old Levens was dead and buried before I reached home.

THE END.

A Famous Lawyer.
Simon Greenleaf, the famous law professor at Cambridge, and author of the best treatise on evidence ever written, was a native of New Gloucester, Me. Of poor but respectable parents, his early advantages were extremely limited. He contrived to study law, and commenced practice in Gray, a little town about twenty miles north of Portland. He was so poor as to be once arrested for debt. He removed to Portland, where he made such a favorable impression that he was appointed reporter of decisions after Maine became a state, and acquired a fine reputation. His business was large, and he stood among the first when he was invited, through the influence of Judge story, to become royal professor of law at Cambridge, where he soon acquired a national reputation. The

treatise on evidence was written here. He also wrote a work in defense of the Gospels, which was a failure, inasmuch as the attempt was made to support the testimony of the evangelists by the rules of evidence administered in courts of justice. No genius or learning could make success of a work on this basis. The Gospels are true; but the evidence is of a far higher kind than that administered in courts of justice, although law-yers sometimes affect to be very wise, and talk in a watery way on this subject. Their efforts in this direction do times tend to throw a doubt over what is clear enough when seen from another and proper standpoint. Judge Metcalf, a sturdy believer of the old sort, was not deceived by this sort of thing, and pronounced the work of Mr. Greenleaf 'the meanest book ever written by a white man."-Boston Beacon.

CULTURE OF THE GRAPE.

Requirements Necessary for the Proper Pro-duction of the Wood and Fruit.

The conditions most favorable to rapid vine growth are generally well understood, but that they are antagonistic to the production of fruit has been almost entirely overlooked. There are distinct stages of growth absolutely necessary to the proper production of wood and fruit. These are explained as follows by a Kansas horticulturist in Popular Gardening: The one is the germinating, unfolding, developing and expanding period, the other the elaborating, contracting, solidifying and maturing period. The first produces a rapid and succulent, the latter a slower and firmer growth; and conditions beneficial to the one arc often detri-

mental to the other. The first stage of development is aided by very high, stimulating culture, the latter by the opposite treatment. The one produces the stock, the other the fruit. In case of excessive stimulation the plant becomes too succulent and tender, unable to withstand the vicissitudes of the climate; in case of the opposite extreme the plant dies from negect, debility or overbearing.

Upon these principles we base the true system of pruning, training and culture, for these different stages of growth must be kept properly balanced. The first requires deep and thorough cultivation with considerable moisture and a mean temperature of from 55 to 65 decs while the latter needs somewhat shallow tillage with diminished molsture and a mean temperature of from 70 to 80 degs. To mature the grape requires 15 degs, higher temperature than it does to grow the vine. This higher temperature is not only necessary to elaborate the sap, but also to solidify and mature the seeds, harden the wood, and to oxidize and diminish the acid, thus increase ing and concentrating the sugar. All these processes take place in proportion to the high temperature and diminished

rain fall of the maturing season. Everything should be done to give perfect surface drainage and a free circulation of air, as nothing tends so much to diminish the temperature of the soil as excessive moisture and shade. Every inch of rain absorbed by the soil requires 40 degs, of additional heat to restore the lost equilibrium, and this is equal to the loss of half a day in the ripening of the grape. This retarding of the maturing season, by either excessive moisture, low temperature, cloudiness, unfavorable lo-cation or latitude has the effect of reducing the amount of sugar in the grape, and the succharemeter has shown this to reach 65 degs. to 15 degs. in the above cases, equal to one half of a pound of sugar to twelve pourses of grapes, or at the rate of six hundred pounds of sugar to the acre. Thus the excess of acid reduces the value and quality of the fruit.

Origin of a Word.

The word "tectotal" had its origin through a stuttering temperance orator, who urged on his heavers that nothing less than "te-te-te-total" abstinence would satisfy temperance reformers. Some one at once adopted "tectotal" and it sprang into general use.—London Times.