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THE AMERICAN COUNTESS

By ETTA W. PIERCE.

(CHAPTER XXV-Continued.) Dismayed, bewildered, she stood confronting this unexpected and almost incomprehensible misfortune. Discor-do's threat in the haunted house rushed back upon her memory. He had de-ceived the Blacks with his falsehoods —made them to doubt her, Mercy—set their hearts against her, perhaps! his conviction came upon her with a great shock. Whither had they gone? How shock. Whither had they gold.

could she find and undeceive them?

She remembered the banking house.

Val would be there—there he was to be found every working day in the week. She had only to hasten thither then and tell him all.

Mercy departed from Seedy Court, and reached State street long before the banking house was open. Nothing was left for her to do but hover about its vicinity, walking up and down, too desperate and anxious to care for any-thing but the errand which had brought her there. She looked in vain for Val. People began to crowd into the street but he came not.

Presently a handsome carriage drove presently a nandsome carriage drove up to the door of Sardis & Co., and a man, tall, imposing, autocratic, alight-ed and entered. Business, then, had begun. Mercy glided straight after the important-looking person—straight in-to the handsome banking room, where the clerks had now assembled to their daily work. She cast one wild look d. Val was not there!

"Oh, sir, will you tell me where can find Mr. Black?" She spoke to the gentleman who had entered before her. He turned and saw her standing just inside the door—a forlorn little figure in a shabby gown and crumpled hat and shawl, her beautiful face as colorless as ashes, the golden hair disordered about it, the great den hair disordered about it, the state sorrowful eyes heavy with unshed tears. Cullen Sardis gave a perceptible start.

"Mr. Valentine Black," sir," faltered

Mercy, an unspeakable eagerness and anxiety breaking into her voice. "He is one of the clerks. I do not see him. Is he here this morning?"
"Black!" answered Cullen Sardis, gazing in a sort of fascinated curiosity at the wan, uplifted face. "No, he is not here—he sailed for England two or three days ago."

The room, the cold, high-bred face of the speaker, whirled before Mercy's "Oh, sir, you cannot mean it—you

"Oh, sir, you cannot mean it—you must be mistaken!"

"Not at all," answered the banker. "I will call Mr. Phillips to tell you about it. You are some relative of Mr. Black's?" She wrung her hands involuntarily.

"I am his promised wife, sir."
Mr. Sardis elevated his gray brows.
"And do you not know of his recent good fortune?"
"No, sir. I have been away—out of

the city, sir, for nine days." Mr. Sardis motioned to clerk, who came out from behind a handsome railing and approached the two. The banker whispered something in his ear and walked away to a pri- in tonight?" Jacob Phillips went up to

Our late clerk, Mr. Valentine Black," he began, as if he were giving business details to some customer, "has fallen heir to a title and fortune in England. He is, or will be, a baronet. Nine days ago an English lawyer, who had been sent to America to search for the rightful heir, found him out, and acquainted him with his good luck. He new possessions. It appears that his family, and was disinherited because of heart.

Mercy clutched the door to save herself from falling.
"A baronet!—Val! I am very ignorant, sir—I suppose I do not quite un-derstand it. He was so poor and humble, sir-almost as humble and as poor

Phillips seemed impressed with the girl's appearance.
"It is quite true. Can I do anything for you?" he said. She caught her breath, as if choking.
"Oh, sir, he left some word for me

did he not-some message?" "Did he say nothing about me-

try to remember-nothing?"
"I fear not-I am sure not."

She turned blindly, groping with one hand to find the door.
"Thank you—I will go now—I am sorry to have troubled you."
How she reached the open air never knew, but presently she found herself upon the street again, feeling as stunned and helpless as if some one had dealt her a blow. Val rich and a baronet!—Val gone to England with Miss Affry, leaving no word for her-it was incomprehensible! Should she down to the wharf and throw herself into the water and so make an end of this confusion of brain, this agony

of heart that assailed her? The deep religion which controlled the girl's na-ture strangled that temptation at its birth. She crossed one street and turned into another, never knowing what she was doing, for the pavement seemed to heave under her feet, everything was blurred and misty beinstinct, went on and stopped at last at the Aid Society rooms. Here a new disappointment awaited

her, though she was now incapable of feeling or even comprehending it. The rooms were closed. Work had failed. and the door was fast against appli-cants. Ignorant of this fact, however and because she was too weak to stand Mercy sat down mechanically upon the topmost stair to await the appearance

Now and came to open the rooms. then some person passed by, stared at the beautiful, pinched face and blank, desolate eyes of the waiting girl, but

Morning dwindled into noon. Still Mercy did not move. She was hungry Mercy did not move. She was hungry and faint; she was homeless, friend-The only thing of value she possessed in the world-the only thing by which she might secure, perhaps, a little food or a night's lodging, was Val's ring, shining there, mocking and bright, on her cold hand--sooner

than part with that she would die hundred deaths. After a long the stair and gave Mercy a surly

glance. "You'd better move said; "it's growing dark here."
Growing dark! She cast a frightened look around. Yes, it was quite true. She had been there the entire day. The matron was not coming.

Mercy descended to the street and

away-whither, she neither Was there any one in the wide world to whom she could go now? No one! The evening lights began to glimmer. ple jostled her along the pavement -happy people, hastening to friends and home. Nobody paid any heed to the shabby girl with the wild, white beautiful face and the blank, lost air.

She was but one small atom in the great maelstrom. Darkness settled down upon the multitudinous roofs. Carriages rumbl-ed by, bearing happy girls to concert

not upon this night so forlorn a cr

ture as Mercy Dill. And yet some angel was guiding her tired steps all the while—guiding them straight to meet a certain strange event that waited to change entirely her whole dark, joychange entirely her whole dark, joyless life.

It was half-past seven by the clocks
when she found herself at the entrance
of a small West End square. Her confused brain had at last conceived the
foriorn purpose of returning to Seedy
Court and passing another night on
the steps of deserted No. 10. As she
reached a corner where the street ended and the square began, her sad eyes
were attracted to a big building just
before her—an imposing hotel,
algleam with lights from garret to
basement. Even as Mercy looked, a girl
whither the outcast had been carried,
in the parlor of the sovereign surgeon

in a rich evening dress came to one of the brilliant, lace-draped windows, showed a smiling, high-bred face for a moment, flirted a costly fan, adjusted a bracelet and then vanished. Before the entrance several carriages waited, among others, one that was to convey mong others, one that was to convey guest of the house to an evening train at a neighboring depot.

As Mercy held by that fascination which ease and luxury always have for

which ease and luxury always have for want, stood wistfully surveying the lighted windows, a human figure crept stealthily down another street on the right of the hotel, and paused in the shadow at the corner of the building.

It was a woman in shawl and bontary of coorse grown with a haggard.

"Is she likely to recover?"
"No. Her constitution is shattered net and coarse gown, with a haggard, shrunken face, round which some disordered wisps of black hair strayed. Her shawl was dragged down upon one side of her body, and in its shelter one hand was held out of sight. Standing with only the width of the crossing with only the width of the cross ing betwixt her and Mercy, she gaze intently toward the entrance of hotel, her figure bent, her head uplift-

ed her wasted face alert and wolfish It was Moll Dill. Had the woman been drinking? As suredly not. She looked gaunt and ill. A feverish hunger consumed her, but

not for food or drink.

Mercy gave a great start; then ran quickly, and laid her hand upon the lurking shape, glad indeed to find the last and only being in the world upon whom she had a claim.
"Mother!"

Moll leaped violently, and turned on "What! is it you?" she answered, in a hoarse, surprised whisper, and the hidden right hand made a curious, convulsed movement under her shawl. "Step back a little—speak low—where have you been?"

"It is a long story, mother," answer-ed Mercy, wearily, and making no re-sistance as the other thrust her back n the shadow of the wall. "You look as if death had struck you. Fool! what made you leave your lover on your wedding-day?" "Come with me," said Mercy, "and Moll stared darkly at her child.

"Come with you—where?" she hiss-i. "The house in Seedy Court is shut b. Have you found another home? up. Have you found another nome. Have you any place to lay your head

Moll Dill struck the wall so flercel with her clinched hand that the blood started from the bruised flesh. "Have you any money, girl?"

"No more have I. I left my place the country when I heard you were lost, and came back here to look for you, and I've had a hundred devils in acquainted him with his good luck. He me ever since—raging devils, tearing sailed at once with Miss Black, for his me by day and night!" Something in the woman's wasted

father was the younger son of a noble face struck a strange terror to Mercy' a low marriage, and that his name was not Black, but Arbuckle. You look faint—be seated."

"Mother, you frighten me! You are sick. Let us move on. I will beg a shelter somewhere tonight, and tomorrow I will find work. Oh, come! what

are you doing here?"
"Hist! I'll murder you if you cry
out like that! I'm waiting to speak
with a—friend." She rolled this last word like a sweet morsel on her wick ed tongue. "Do you see this big ho-tel? There's a man inside it who can help us if he will—a man worth his millions-steeping in luxury while you and I starve-curse him! Go and wait

or me on the other side of the square. can't stir from this spot until I have word with that man he?" said Mercy, blankly. "Who is he?" sa "What is he to us?" "He's a cruel devil!" hissed Moll
"Stand back! Don't come so near me

-don't ask questions. Off with you, I "No." said Mercy, firmly, not leave you for a moment. There is something wrong with you tonight. with me, mother

-come with You are prowling here for no With a face full of baffled fury, Moll turned and struck the girl a blow.
"I'd trample you, if it wasn't for bringing a crowd around!" she whis-

pered, savagely. "Loose my shawl-As this last syllable quivered on her wrathful lips a servant issued from the hotel, bearing a gentleman's valise, which he placed in the depot carriage waiting at the curbstone. Immediately after, two persons appeared in the door and descended the steps together. One was Jacob Phillips, the other, Sardis, the banker, 'The latter was

talking earnestly to his old, gray clerk
—so earnestly that he looked neither to the right hand nor the left and cer-tainly saw nothing of the two women. Moll Dill made a menacing gesture to her daughter.
"That is the man!" she whispered "Stay here while I speak to him."
She glided round the corner of the hotel and approached the pair as they

paused before the carriage. Undis-mayed by blow or threat, impelled by the great, nameless fear that was tugging at her heart, Mercy followed her. "Good-by, Phillips. I think I have given you the necessary instructions,' said Cullen Sardis. "Good-by, sir. I I wish you a pleas-

ant journey," answered the old clerk. "My regards to Miss Beatrix."
The two shook hands. The banker's cold, stern profile was turned toward woman creeping along the pave-nt. How eloquent was his whole stately person of wealth, importance ease! Moll pulled her bonnet over her brows, and, averting her face a little, went up to him and twitched his sleeve.
"Money!" she muttered, extending her grimy left palm.

He turned, saw what he thought to

be a common beggar, shook off her touch, and answered: "No."
"Money, sir, for God's sake!" urged, with stifled vehemence.
"No, I tell you—move on!" he replied, not deigning this time to glance

Swift as lightning she flung back the trailing end of her shawl, showing the hidden right hand at last, and the thing which it clutched, with the concentrated rage and hate of many a

"Curse you! take that from Moll!" in a voice that rang half cried, way across the square. A leap, an ugly gleam of coarse steel and then a piercing shriek in a sirl's voice. "Mother! mother!" the rush of something betwixt the weapon of the woman and the breast of the man, and Mercy Dill's hot blood spurted out upon the banker as, with a cry of of horror and amazement—a cry of recognition, too—he caught her falling of horror and amazement acry of recognition, too—he caught her falling of horror and amazement acry of recognition, too—he caught her falling of horror and amazement acry of recognition, too—he caught her falling of horror and amazement acry of recognition, too—he caught her falling of horror and amazement acry of recognition.

the fairest, a pure as the purest, wandering, for saken, hungry and hopeless, and, like the dove outside the ard, without a resting place for the sole of her foot. In all the great city there was

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CHAPTER XXVI.

Changes In a moment the spot swarmed with

of his clerk. "For God's sake, let there be no scandal! I will attend to the he other."

An officer lifted Moll Dill from pavement. She was foaming at mouth and writhing in frightful con-tortions. He exchanged a few words with Cullen Sardis; then a carriage

would-be murderess.

A door opened at last, and the surgeon himself appeared—a small, thin man with a firm mouth and calmly speculative eye.
"Spasms of the heart," he said, in a

low voice that was vibrant with secret

"Is she likely to recover?"
"No. Her constitution is shattered by excesses. It is doubtful if she lasts Cullen Sardis grasped his friend's rm convulsively.
"Is she conscious?"

"In Heaven's name, bring her to her senses for a few moments! It is a matter of the greatest importance—she has something to tell me!" "I will do what I can."

Yes, that wicked, wasted life was drawing now to a sudden close. The murderous hand had done its last work The restless brain, maddened with long years of drink and ineffectual agonies of hate, remorse and despair, lay dor-mant under a terrible weight. mant under a terrible weight.

Swiftly the end was coming. Stretched on her white bed, Moll Dill awaited it, senseless as a log, and not far away Cullen Sardis, the banker whom an indulgent fortune had lifted far, far come, and Mercy lay in her white chamber, sinking, fainting, dying in above such creatures of the gutter-Cullen Sardis, I say, walked the surgeon's parlor in a maze of troubled thought, unable to quit the place, will-ing to barter half of his earthly pos-sessions for speech with this miserable dying outcast. Verily, his aristocratic wife and peerless daughter would have

ondered greatly to see him then and It was almost morning when the surgeon came to the door again and look-

that he said. She was lying upon her pillow, her hands moving in a ghastly, uncertain way over the counterpane, her black eyes set in a fixed stare. The attendant drew back from the bed as the banker approached. She recognized him instantly. A wild gleam shot into her cavernous eyes: with a stifled cry. she sought to lift herself up. He bent over her. A name which he had not spoken

for many years fell mechanically from his ashy lips: She heard it; a shudder passed over her wretched figure. The subdued gleam of the night-lamp wavered along the bed over the awful face of woman, who seemed strangely out of place in a scene like this.
"Then I did not kill you!" she gasp-

ed, burying her long fingers convul-sively in the counterpane. Was it regret at the failure of her which sent a spasm over her death-

which sent a spash over her dead stricken face?
"Where's Mercy?" Then with shriek she added: "Did I kill her?"
The banker could not answer, for having been at the hospital all night he knew nothing of the condition of the girl who had saved his life at the risk, perhaps at the sacrifice, of her

"Whom do you mean by Mercy?" he voice "The girl-the girl!" whispered Moll "On your soul, tell me the truth! Is that the child who was once called Mabel—the child that you stole nine-

She nodded. "Yes—yes! Did I kill her, I say?" He drew back a step and passed his hand across his eyes.
"I hope not—I trust not. Mercifu Ieaven! what an unutterable curse

ou have been, alike to yourself to me!" he groaned.

Moll Dill glared up at him with something of her old ferocity; but her strength was too far spent to give it

"The girl-the girl!" she whispered

Sardis drew nearer to the bed.
"I am listening. What do you wish

"Take care of her. Don't visit any sins upon her head. You are rich—take care of her!" "I will!" answered Cullen Sardis Moll Dill shrank suddenly into her pillow, as if clutched in an invisible grasp. The hands in the counterpane

further questions in mind, it was now too late to give them voice.
"Tell—Mercy—to—forgive"— These words, spoken with great dif-ficulty, closed the drama of a dark, sad, perverted life. The surgeon and attendant hurried to the bed, Moll Dill

neaved herself up once on the latter' sustaining arm. There was a ground sustaining arm. With a face like ashes then silence. With a face like ashes then silence. With a face like ashe Cullen Sardis cast one look upon th lead, and turned and rushed from the Half an hour later he left the hospi tal, and, haggard from want of sleep and the wear and tear of many dark End

thoughts, he set his face toward a re-tired street in a highly respectable, though not fashionable, South End the primrose sky; the city-that part of it at least-was still sleeping. have mercy on the dark soul which she muttered, extending had passed with the night! Cullen Sardis mounted the steps

an unpretending house and rang the bell. It was the home of Jacob Philmaster.
"Is she living?"

That was the banker's first question put in an agitated voice.
"Yes," answered Phillips. "Is she much hurt?" "Yes."

wan morning, Phillips thought he had er. She asked for her with such pernever seen his master look so weary sistency that Mrs. Phillips was obligand worn and troubled. "I wish to see her for a moment," he
Phillips led the way up a softly carthe girl's shadowy hands in her own, peted stair. At its head a gray-haired, "I hope you are strong enough to bear placid-faced woman, gentle and moth-what I shall say. Your mother died a erly of mein met them—Jacob Phil-lips' wife. Without making any com-ment upon the invasion which she had nave talked a great deal in your desuffered in her quiet, childless home, lirium, and I know, without being told, she beckened the banker along a corthat you must have suffered extraor-

With protruding eyeballs she stared at Cullen Sardis and the bleeding figure he held, then turned to fly; but before she had taken a dozen steps, staggered and sank, without word or sound, a writhing, convulsed heap, to the pavement.

Her eyes were closed; the black lashes clump heavily to her marble lashes clump heavily to her marble lashes. Her golden hair spread out on least two controls and specific property of the pavement.

The banks good. The terrible wound made by Moll Dill's knife healed rapidmade by Moll Dill's

Moll Dill, in dying, had left to his care.

There was something more than curionity in his eyes—something more than the natural interest which he might be expected to feel in this young person.

To babyish rings and curis about the throat and forehead, giving her an odd, childish air.

"I rejoice to find you out of danger," said the banker, in a peculiarly gentle years.

"I have come all the way from

"What does the surgeon say of her?" he whispered to Mrs. Phillips.
"He says that her life hangs by "The wound was dangerous, then?"
"Mortal, I'm afraid, sir. She is unconscious, as you see. I cannot bear to look at her; yet she frightens me; she is the picture of death. I am sure she cannot live."

He bent over the insensible girl ouched her hand, laid his fingers on her slim, almost pulseless wrist, then retreated silently from the chamber. The old gray clerk and his gentle-fac-ed wife meekly followed the man of

the city. I shall rely on you to do your utmost to save her. No pains nor expense must be spared; it is of the greatest importance to me that she greatest importance to me that she should live. My dear old friend, I depend upon you in this emergency; see that you do not fall me."

Divillag greated the hand which his

Phillips grasped the hand which his employer held out to him in earnest appeal. No words were spoken, but Cullen Sardis knew well that he had enlisted these people, body and soul, in the cause of the wounded girl who had been thrust so abruptly upon their protection. If money and skill and watching could save her their

she be saved. Not many hours after, a plain hearse followed by a single close carriage, bore all that remained of Moll Dill out of that city, where she had suffered and sinned so much to a quiet grave in a lovely green corner of Woodlawn. The close carriage contained two gen-tlemen—Cullen Sardis and the old clerk who shared all his secrets. This silence and witnessed the outcast's burial, after which they returned to the city, and the banker departed at once

Jacob Phillips and his wife.

Day succeeded day. Autumn had come, and Mercy lay in her white chamber, sinking, fainting, dying in the agony of fever and delirium. Now she was a child again, starving and freezing in some North End attic with freezing in some North End attic with her wretched mother; now she was flying from her dark, wicked persecutor, Discordo; then it was Val Black's name upon which she called with piteous pleading—the lover who had loved her for a little space and then left her to her fate, while he himself went away to fortune and happiness over the great see Sometimes she was sewed in at his friend.

"She is conscious. Come!" was all ing for bread in her chamber at Seedy Court, singing her Gospel hymns and In utter silence Cullen Sardis foi-owed him to the bedside of Moll Dill. ness her glorious young voice would and ring through the darkened chamber, sweet as an angel's from heaven. Sometimes she was dead,

and lying stark and motionless in a cool, green grave, and she heard the stealthy footsteps of the world over her head, and the whisper of voices that seemed afraid to disturb her re-"It is time to telegraph again to Mr. Sardis."
"Was it not a great pity to cut off

her beautiful hair?"
"No flowers in the room, Mrs. Phillips—the doctor will not allow it." Mercy tried to lift her hand. The effort gave great agony to her whole body. She shrieked aloud. Some one body. She shrieked aloud. Some rushed to her side, bent over her held a glass to her lips.

"Where am I?" she tried to ask; but her hollow voice was thin as voices from the grave. "With friends, my dear child," was the answer. "That cannot be-I have no friends."

protested Mercy, and fell asleep with the words on her lips. After many days she became aware that she was lying in some downy, white place, full of warmth and silence -that cautious feet trod about heranxious, kindly faces watched her. She was not dead; on the contrary, she "Whom do you mean by Mercy?" he was drifting back from the dark gates said, scarcely able to control his first her mind was too feeble for questions; but one day she awoke and found a man standing by her bedside

"You are better," he said, gently. She did not answer, only looked up at him attentively, conscious in the midst of all her weakness that somewhere she had seen that face before. "You are better," he repeated. will soon be well." "Who are you?" said Mercy.

"The person whose life you saved," nswered the man.

"Where is my mother?" she gasped.
"Be calm. Do not think of her. Bynd-by you shall know all." As her strength returned many facts dawned upon Mercy's comprehension. She was in some blessed refuge where she was being cared for most constantly, most tenderly. The tall strong woman who was always by her bed was the nurse. The small, gray lady who often leaned down and kissed her and called her "dear child" was the mistress of the house. The cold, grave gentleman who appeared not only at long intervals in the chamber, and who came from some unknown distance, was the man she had seen i. the banking house of Sardis & Co., the man her mother had sought to kill— yea, it was Cullen Sardis himself, for she heard the name frequently spoken by the small, gray lady. Every moment a great, guardian watchfulness compassed her about. She was fed upon strange delicacies; rare fruits and flowers appeared daily on the ta-ble by her bed. For the first time in her life she felt the blessed delight of being protected cherished, thought of. Aye, truly, she was with friends!

One morning the little gray woman came to her side and said, sweetly: "Now that you are growing stronger my dear, I think I had better tell you who we are, and how you chance to b with us," which she at once proceeded to do.

Mercy gazed at her with great, holquarter. A pure, sweet wind was low, moon-like eyes.
abroad; the dawn hung tremulously in the primrose sky; the city—that part faltered, feebly. "I'm afraid I can nev-God er thank you as I ought. Why is Mr. "Good gracious! my dear child, of course he feels very grateful to you— it would be strange if he did not" relips, and that small, gray, perplexed his wealth, he is a man of great good man appeared in person to admit his feeling. I want you to be well and master feeling. I want you to be well and your old life is dead and buried; every strong when next he sees you. He is tie that bound you to it is now disnow in New York, and is not likely to solved. I have other plans for you." visit Boston for some weeks, but we send him daily news of you." Val's employer! How strange and send him daily news of you.'
Val's employer! How strunreal it seemed to Mercy! bewildered, she was grateful, but she As the two stood face to face in the had not forgotten her wretched moth-

ed, at last, to tell her the truth.

upon it a human shape lay stretched, as cold and motionless as the dead—Mercy Dill.

Her eyes were closed; the black lashes clung heavily to her marble cheek. Her golden hair, spread out on the pillow, made a sort of mocking glory about the ghastly rigidity of her face. All her own garments had been removed, and others of fine linen substituted, so that she was as white as Elaine when she drifted down the river to her burial.

Chillo Serdis stepped forward and

woman had stabbed a young girl and fallen in a fit.

"Take her to your own house, Philips," said Cullen Sardis, hastily placing his inanimate burden in the arms of his clerk, "For God's sake, let there" er to her burial.

Cullen Sardis stepped forward and looked down at her as she lay—the girl who had saved his life, the girl who model to his care. There was something more than curi-throat and forehead, giving her an odd on the same of his clerk, "For God's sake, let there or to her burial.

Cullen Sardis stepped forward and looked down at her as she lay—the girl who had saved his life, the girl who had saved his life, New York to talk with you."
She lifted her large, patient eyes. It

was an angelic face, and Cullen Sar-dis felt its beauty and innocence as he had felt nothing before for many s "I am glad you are come," she an swered, simply. "I have much—very much to thank you for. Oh, sir, what would have become of me but for

He grew very grave. "But for me you would not have been hurt at all. You received your wound in my cause, remember. The least I could do was to provide proper care for you. I am in your debt, my child, not you in mine. I doubt if I can ever quite cancel accounts with you. I came here today to hear the story of your life, Mercy. Tell it to me, and omit nothing—try to forget nothing. I want to know everything possible con-

erning you."
Mrs. Phillips, who was sewing in window, arose at this juncture and left the room. Mercy and her new friend antly. Mercy fixed upon him he great earnest eyes.
"You knew my mother?" she said. Mercy fixed upon him her

A curious change swept his high-bred face. "Yes—many years ago."
"And she tried to kill you! she must have been mad!" "Quite likely—sometime we will talk about that; but first I must know how and where your life has been liv-

ed, Mercy. Begin—I am impatient!"
She had nothing to conceal. Beginning with her first recollections of poverty and want in a North End tenpoverty and want in a North End ten-ement-house, she went on through the succeeding years, faithfully relating their whole story of misery and priva-tion—all that she had endured with Moil Dill, until she arrived at the few months spent with the Blacks at Seedy Court. Here her voice faltered, and Court. Here her voice faltered, and the painful color arose in her white cheek; but something in Cullen Sar-dis's face encouraged her to the sarthe deep pain and sympathy of his look made her feel that he was sorry

for her, and was profoundly stirred by all she said. "Go on," he urged, as she hesitated; "keep nothing from me. I am more anxious than I can tell you to hear your whole story."

She told him of Val Black's love, of her attempted marriage, of her imprisonment by Discordo her escape and her last interview with Moll Dill,

pregnant with such unexpected results.

The banker arose from his chair and walked across the chamber like a man walked across the chamber like a main unable to control himself. Presently he paused by her side.

"The scoundrel!" he cried. "Have you no clue to his whereabouts? What was he like?—this Discordo."

No, Mercy had no clue; but she described his appearance so accurately.

that Cullen Sardis gave an involuntary "A striking portrait! I know a per-

son who might answer to it very well, were he a vagabond teacher of music instead of a gentleman moving in the highest circles of society. As it is," with a faint smile, "I think I can scarcely accuse him of being Discordo. These Italians bear a marked resemblance to each other, and have I suppose, the same tricks of speech. It would be well, perhaps, to offer a reward for the villain's apprehension. What punishment would you like to

She shook her fair head. "None. I am safe—he can harm me tace again or hear his name. Don't try to find him. Is it not better to let him go—to forget him altogether?"

Cullen Sardis laid to the control of the cont Cullen Sardis laid his hand on back of her chair.
"And that other person—Valentine

Black who was once a clerk in my banking-house. I have taken pains to learn something about his change of fortune, Mercy. I know men's hearts, worked convulsively; then a great storm of pent-up sobs shook her from head to foot. The banker, alarmed be-yond measure, caught her in his arms. "Mercy, is it as serious as this? He is an English baronet. He has forgotten your very existence by this time.
A great, hulking lout, if I remember rightly—not the man to take any girl's fancy. Dear child be calm—you will

lo yourself injury."

She wept as if her heart would break. It was many moments before the storm passed; then, with a great effort, she looked up at the banker, a strange, solemn light in her great, wet

eyes.
"He was the first person who ever cared for me in the least—who was ever kind to me. I am glad—oh, so glad!—for his fortune—glad that he glad!—for his fortune—glad that he will never be ill-paid or overworked or pinched with poverty more. If he has wronged me in any way, I forgive him freely, freely! I bless him from my heart; from my heart I pray that he will be happy in his new life. Men are not always happy, I suppose, even though they are rich and great. It is as if he were dead, you know, and passed into another world; but I shall never forget him—never, never!" never forget him-never, never!" Cullen Sardis took another

another turn around the room. "You are young, Mercy; you have much to learn," he said, almost stern-ly. "Your life, I see, has been one long ers the production of this cotton torment, without a single bright spot anywhere in it. To me your courage and endurance seem marvelous. You brave, patient girl! You noble heroic girl! Would to God I could have restorment, without a single bright spot cued you from your misery long ago, Don't look so startled"—and here a sickly smile crept over his agitated

discuss your future."

"My future!" The tears thickened in her mournful eyes; her sweet, spiritless mouth drooped; she looked at the glowing fire, twisting her white fingers nervously together. "It will be like my past, I suppose. I shall go back to the old work, somewhere; I shall earn my bread again, somehow."

"Never!" He smiled down upon her.

"Never!" He smiled down upon her. "Never!" He smiled down upon her, his cold aristocratic face wearing such a look as neither wife nor daughter had ever seen upon it. "Never, Mercy! She arose to her feet in her great agitation, her face all startled and

amazed. "You sir!" "I' You are alone in this world. Henceforth I am your guardian—you belong to me. Remember the grati-tude I owe you. Resign all care for yourself—I know far better than you what your needs are. You will remain in this house until your strength is fully established; after that you will immediately be sent to school. Forget an instrument that he found no diff-your old life from this moment, and culty in selling it for \$75. The work take no further thought for your fu-ture. As God hears me, you shall never, so long as I can prevent it, hnow want in any form again!"

word more—I cannot bear it! To com-pensate you for your past suffering is now impossible; but I may help you, perhaps, to forget it. Kiss me my poor child." He took her pale face in his hands, and pressed his lips to it with remorse-

ful, yearning tenderness.
"Kiss me once Mercy." She obeyed, and, as she did so, she saw that his eyes were full of tears.

A few days later, Mercy Dill was placed at school. And so it was that Cullen Sardis found a ward, of whose existence, singularly enough, he never spoke, either to wife, or daughter, or

(To be Continued.) ENGLAND'S SHIPPING KING

Sir Owen Phillips, a Man Varied Activities. All the British business world is talking of the amazing enterprise of Sir Owen Phillips, familiarly styled the colossus of shipping, says London Letter. Still on the right side of 50, his exploits as a business builder have placed him in the very front line of the magnates

of commerce. All this has been achieved in seven strenuous years. Sir Owen Phillips first began to make good when he took charge of the affairs of the Royal Mail Steam Packet company, which he reorganized and raised to a position of financial security. This done, he cooperated with Lord Pirrie in the forwere alone and together. He drew a mation of the large shipping trade chair to the fire and sat down expectand amalgamated the two interests into one concern with a capital of \$10,-

000,000. Realizing the importance of the fuwill follow the opening of the Panama canal, he secured control of the Pacific Steam Navigation company and at one bound became a magnate in the South American shipping trade. By the subsequent purchase of the Forwood Line he secured a considerable share of the a vehicle of life, and its spirit is al-Mediterranean and North American

line as the next prize.

Before Sir Owen Phillips hustled to such startling effect in British shipping only "because the president has the nacircles, he sampled life as a politician tion behind him and congress has not." and entered parliament as a liberal member for a Welsh constituency. He did not offer himself for re-election at the last general election, and thus cut short a promising political career. In spite, however, of his shipping combine. Sir Owen is not a man of one idea. He is one of the active presidents

of the London and Southwestern rail-road and of the St. Thomas Dock Engineering company, vice chairman of the port of London, authority and ments of men, and no part of any govchairman of the West African section of the London Chamber of Commerce. whom that part is intrusted." And as he is also actively interested in various philanthropic institutions, one wonders what leisure he has at his disposal to use any of his four London clubs, or to visit Amroth castle, his

He is one of three brothers, all well over six feet in height and all self-made millionaires. These sons of a and their mother, a sister of the fifth Baron Wynford, devoted herself to se-curing the best education for her boys, for she had no fortune to give then She has succeeded beyond her hope Besides the colossus of shipping, there is Lord St. Davids a name to conjure with in big financial undertakings all and military record has been in keep-the ing with the family prowess in other

Tobacco and Brains.—That over 90 per cent of all boys who fall in the is asserted by Prof. M. V. O'Shea

"Most boys do not learn to smoke because they like tobacco, but because their school fellows smoke. It is a social thing with a boy. By doing it he thinks he is one of 'the crowd' and not an 'outsider.' Unruly boys are almost always addicted to the cigarette habit. Smoking robs pupils of their docility. Records kept of the work of students who were not addicted to the successions. When the scene of the treaty which, in 1856 marked the conclusion of the Crimean students who were not addicted to the war. "Most boys do not learn to smoke be students who were not addicted to the smoking habit when they entered the At high school but who acquired it later, show that not only did these pupils become harder to manage, but the quali-ty of their school work also declined greatly. What a hold the smoking evil has gained on public school boys is in-dicated by the statements made by a number of high school principals who high school pupils are now using cigarettes. It is an interesting fact that the strongest sentiment against smoking has arisen in communities in which he raising of tobacco is the principal industry. Tobacco men do not want young boys in their own community to smoke, and in a number of places in Wisconsin, various organizations have

taken a stand against smoking school children."—Literary Digest. opinion of Savannah Sea Island dea! no longer be profitable, because Egyp tian is running it out of the market. Egyptian is produced and delivered in the United States at a cost which Sea Island growers cannot meet. For manufacturing purposes it is declared to be as good, if not better. Egyptian now fixes the demand and price for Sec lips—"I should be an ingrate, indeed if I did not henceforth regard your welfare as my own. Now that we have disposed of your past, Mercy, let us discuss your future."

Island, which has thus become a mere supplementary crop. In consequence of these conditions the Sea Island factors of Savannah have decided not to assist in financing Sea Island growers.

ed.
The Sea Island growers are now turning to short cotton and, probably with more judgment to trucking crops apparent necessity of planting com-paratively little of their long staple ple growers, who need fear nothing from Egyptian, is in a general way enlarged.—Charlotte Observer. from

Although he was 67 years old when he made his first violin it was so excellent was all done by hand, and Dr. Hallman fashioned the various parts himself. He dication of Napoleon. The escape of has just finished a violin, which he latter from Elba and the subsesays, is far superior in tone and work-With a cry of mingled surprise and manship to any he has ever made be-joy she sank upon her knees at his fore. The tone is brilliant, resonant, of

Miscellaneous Reading.

Embodied in Lectures While He War

President of Princeton. Four years before his election to the presidency, while still at the head of Princeton university, Woodrow Wilson expressed his views of the presidentia office, in a series of lectures that wer printed in book form under the title o 'Constitutional Government in the

United States," says the Kansas City

Star, These lectures are of especial interest in view of recent events. In the first place, he insists that the office "really does not demand actual experience in affairs so much as particular qualities of mind and character which we are at least as likely to find outside the ranks of our public men as within them." These qualities, he explains, mean that the man "would seem to the country in some sort, an embodiment of the character, and purpose it wishes its government to have -a man who understands his own day and the needs of the country, and who has the personality and initiative to enforce his views both upon the people

nd upon congress." In other words, a leader of public opinion, rather than an experienced

politician, is to be desired. "The president," Mr. Wilson con tinues, "may stand, if he will, a little outside party and insist, as it were on the general opinion. The president may also, if he will, stand within the party counsels and use the advantages of his power and personal force to control actual programmes. If he leads the nation, his party can hardly resist him ture opportunities in the far east that His office is anything he has the sa gacity and force to make it."

But timid souls inquire, does not th constitution set bounds to the power of the presidents? Yes, the presidentelect replies, but the constitution is "not a mere lawyers' document; it is ways the spirit of the age."

trade, and he has now entered the South African field by the absorption of the Union-Castle line. By this final deal Sir Owen Phillips becomes boss of the greatest mercantile fieet any one man has ever controlled, totaling 300 ships, with a tonnage of 1,270,000. Merchants are now asking one another if the Phillips combination is out after a correct in shipping, and persistent rua corner in shipping, and persistent ru-mor has already marked out the Orient liberty "to be as big a man as he can." iberty "to be as big a man as he can." If congress be overborne by him it is

What becomes, then, of the soulful contention of patriots of generations that "this should be a government of laws and not of men?" Well, on Page 17 of his book Mr. Wilson comes out bluntly: "There never was such a gov ernment. Constitute them how you will, governments are always govern-

Evidently the president-elect holds imself free to lead his party to meet the demands made by modern industrial conditions. In carrying out this practical theory of presidential leadership he will have the support of all

progressives.

SCENES OF PEACE PACTS Famous Modern Treaties and Where They Were Signed.

The French capital has been the scene of several peace pacts, some of which have had a mighty influence on the destiny of the British empire. This remark applies with force to the agreement which brought the Seven Years' war to a close in 1763. In the course of this war, in which the English and the French were the chief combatants, we grammar and high schools are smokers acquired Canada, and by Clive's victory at Plassey established our position one that the public schools have to the United States. At the same time contend with. We read: we made peace with France, Holland,

At a period when The Hague has become the synonym of peace it is interesting to remember that at Ryswick, a village two miles from the Dutch capital, was drawn up the treaty which ended the eight years' war between William III of England and Louis XIV of France. In the course of this war we achieved one of our greatest nava! a decoration on the old pilot, at the victories-off Cape La Hogue, in 1692. Holland was destined to be the scene, pilot in Norwegian waters.—Westminsa few years later, of another treaty much more important in its bearing upon British history. Utrecht, now known as a university town, was the place at which England reaped the fruits of Marlborough's great victories over the generals of Louis XIV. Here, in 1713, there passed into British possession Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, Hudson Bay territory, and Gibraltar. Aix-la-Chappelle, the German city chosen as his capital by Charlemagne, is intimately associated with the close

of more than one great conflict. Beau-tifully situated near the frontiers of Holland and Belgium, its waters at tract thousands of visitors every year from many parts of Europe. A notable treaty signed here in 1748 was that which concluded the war of the Austrian Succession. In this war England successfully took the part of Maria Theresa, who, on succeeding to the do-minions of her father, the emperor of Austria, was attacked by France, Prussia and Bavaria.

More famous in the history of Aix-a-Chapelle is the congress of 1818.

This congress met to arrange the withdrawal from France of the Allies' army of occupation, which had entered that country on the downfall of Napoleon. The congress was a brilliant assembly of sovereigns and statesmen. The emperor Alexander I of Russia, the Emper-or Francis I of Austria, and King Fred-erick William of Prussia attended in person. The Duke of Wellington and Lord Castlereagh represented Great Britain. Three years earlier a congress had

Greenwood Index: The Rev. Dr. assembled at Vienna. "Never before," samuel T. Hallman, of Spartanburg, a says one writer, "had Europe seen such prominent Lutheran minister, has a collection of rank and talent." The assembled at Vienna. found an interesting and profitable four allies—Great Britain, Austria, pastime in the manufacture of violins.

Although he was 67 years old when he secure the curative forms and talent." The found an interesting and profitable four allies—Great Britain, Austria, Russia and Prussia, who had united to were represented at this congress, to-gether with the minor powers of Europe. The object of the assembly was to readjust the map in view of the abtralized the decisions of the congress.

Nowadays we hear nothing of Tilsit,

NO. 15. Russia and Napoleon, who met for the purpose on a raft moored in the middle

of the stream. The treaty which created the kingdom of Westphalia is nota-WILSON'S VIEW OF HIS JOB ble as attesting Napoleon's supremac; over the German princes,
Of treaties which have concluded

great modern wars, Zurich, in Switzer-land, witnessed that which effected the expulsion of the Austrians from Italy and crowned the labors of Cavour and Garibaldi.—Tit-Bits. THE BULGARIAN ARMY.

Organization Moves Like Cleckwork and Shows Fine Discipline.

A correspondent of the London Telegraph writes that the Bulgarian army is wonderful organization and moves like clockwork. Continuing he says: When driving through the mountains I have been frequently astonished to see long lines of ox carts heavily laden

with army stores slowly plodding along

and wondered how such primitive

transport could be adequate to a mod-

ern army. The needful explanation was afforded me at Kostendil, where I have had ocin the adjoining departments had been requisitioned to the number of 1,000. They were then divided into five sections of 200 carts each. The drivers, with their whips, astrakhan or ordinary sheep wool caps and long sheepskin or goat hair coats, look picturesque beside their two small Greek oxen or African buffaloes. Every day 200 cars are laden and they start away at a slow pace, the driver walking before his team, humming an air or smoking a ci-

garette. He thus trudges up and down

the mountain roads for a distance of

fifteen kilometres, or nine and a half

miles, which is one day's march. Then

he lights a fire for himself at the road-

side, has a warm meal, feeds his oxen or buffaloes and lies down to sleep on straw near the cart or in a barn, if a farmhouse is near. Next day he covers another nine or ten miles. Here his load is taken into horse-drawn carts, which carry it more rapidly to the nearest fighting troops perhaps twenty miles away. The teamster then returns, taking two days, as he had on the outward trip, and on the

fifth day rests while his cart is being reloaded. Only bread was thus transported from Kostendil. It was in good, round. appetizing loaves, weighing two pounds of half wheat, half rye bread, which remains soft and palatable for fifteen days. I had partaken of it myself, as no other was available. The entire population lives on this bread now. No one thinks of baking any other during

time of war. Life in these places is now entirely absorbed by the war. Two-thirds of the shops are shut and the owners are carrying rifles and wearing uniforms. All bakeries have been requisitioned for the army and are baking army bread day and night. Women and children wear neat uniforms and help where they can. The students are clerks at the railway stations or public offices and act as police and contables. On leaving my hotel I saw a young student scarcely more than fifteen, in uniform, dragging a long sabre by his side. He was the village policeman and was

A Kaiser Story .- The following an-

proud of his office.

ecdote of the kaiser is taken from Excelsior, where it is stated to be vouched for by a member of the German Yacht club. The Hohenzollern was entering a Norwegian harbor some time ago. The kaiser became very impatient with the slow progress made, and himself sounded the telegraph to quicken up the speed. Immediately, to the kaiser's great amazement, the pilot, a gray-headed Norwegian named Norohuns, rushed to the speaking-tube and and I fear he was only too ready to be deceived by Discordo, and wash his hands of you when his rare luck came. My poor child, do you love him still?"

My poor child, front. "Pilot, . . . consider yourself under arrest." "I shall not leave this place," replied the pilot without turning a hair. "I am in command of the ship, and no one-not even an emperor-shall give me orders." The end. of the story is inevitable. "The officers present looked at each other in silence," it continues, "knowing that all the rules of the sea were on the pilot's side; but they were amazed to see his majesty leave the bridge and allow the pilot to take the yacht through the straights without interference." The finale reads like any fairy story. The next day the kaiser's bad humor had entirely disappeared, and he bestowed

> ter Gazette. Electricity and Its Usez. There was an old sign in a downtown window which read:

It was a standing invitation for lone

bachelors to go inside and be patched

and mended and have buttons resewed.

But if a couple of enterprising women

"We will be a mother to you."

same time appointing him his official

offered to be a mother to a comparatively few men, what name shall we apply to electricity? Is there anything now that the electric current is not called upon to perform?

In some homes it not only lights the house, but warns it of burglars. It rings the front door bell and sweeps the floor. It curis milady's hair and brushes the husband's shoes. If the house gets ablaze it rings the fire alarms. Attached to a fan it makes a cool breeze on a hot day and in winter it warms the room. It summons you to the telehundreds of miles in any direction. brings the servant with a cup of coffee to your breakfast table, while at the same time it whirls the brush that grooms your horse in the stable. does not run your automobile, at least it saves the husky arm of your chauffeur by starting the engine for him. Hitched to a brush, this elusive but allpowerful force will polish your silver-

are, or it will massage your face. By car it will carry a man to his of-fice, where all the motive power in his farmer, electricity can and does do wonderful things. It first separates the cream from the milk and then churns the butter. It does the family laundry and cuts the feed for the cattle. Coupled to a saw, electricity converts a tree into firewood. It grinds the flour for bread and shells the corn for horses. With a little suction apparatus, elec-tricity wil snatch the dust from your beloved books and make your picture to talk across an ocean and pretty soor no one will come to Philadelphia away from it except in a railway pull-