THE STOWMARKET MYSTERY:

A LEGACY OF HATE

By LOUIS TRACY

Copyrighted, 1904: R. F. Fenne & Co. ***

CHAPTER V.

FROM BEHIND THE HEDGE.

The man's swarthy rage added force to the taunt. David Hume leaped up, but Brett anticipated him, gripping his arm firmly, and without ostentation.

Margaret, too, had risen. She anpeared to be battling with some powerful emotion, choking back a flerce impulse. For an instant the situation was electrical. Then the woman's clear tones rang through the room.

"I am mistress here," she cried. "Giovanui, remain silent or leave us How dare you, of all men, speak thus of my cousin?"

Certainly the effect of the barrister's straightforward statement was enfooked for. But Brett felt that a family quarrel would not further his object at that moment. It was necessary to stop the imminent outburst, for David Hume and Glovanni Capella were silently challenging each other to mortal combat. What a place of ill-omen to the descendants of the Georgian baronet was this sunlit IIbrary with its spacious French windows!

"Of course," said the barrister, speaking as quietly as 17 he were discussing the weather, "such a topic is an unpleasant one. It is, however, unavoidable. My young friend here is determined, at all costs, to discover the secret of Sir Alan's murder. It is imperative that he should do so. The happiness of his whole life depends upon his success. Until that mystery is solved he cannot marry the woman he loves."

'Do you mean Helen Layton?" Margaret's syllables might have been so many mortal daggers.

"Is David still in love with her?"

"And she with him?"

David Hume broke in: 'Yes, Rita. She has been faithful

to the end." A very forcible Italian oath came

from Capella as he passed through the window and strode rapidly out of sight, passing to the left of the house, where one of the lines of yew trees ended in a group of conserva-

Margaret was now deadly white. Bhe pressed her hand to her bosom 'Forgive me," she sobbed. "I do not feel well. You will both be always welcome here. Let no one interfere with you. But I must leave you. This afternoon-

She staggered to the door. Her cousin caught her.

'Thank you, Davie," she whispered. "Leave me now. I will be all right soon. My heart troubles me. No. Do not ring. Let us keep our miseries from the servants."

She passed out, leaving Hume and the barrister uncertain how best to act. The situation had developed with a vengeance. Brett was more bewildered than ever before in his

"That scoundrel killed Alan, and now he wants to kill his own wife!" growled Hume, when they were

Brett looked through him rather than at him. He was thinking intently. For a long time-minutes it

seemed to his fuming companionhe remained motionless, with glazed immovable eyes. Then he awoke to "Quick!" he cried. "Tell me if this

room has changed much since you were last here. Is the furniture the same? Is that the writing table? What chair did you sit in? Where was it placed? Quick, man! You bave wasted eighteen months. Give me no opinions, but facts." Thus admonished, scared some-

what by the barrister's volcanic energy, Hume obeyed him.

There is no material change in the room," he said. "The secretaire is the same. You see, here is the drawer which was broken open. It bears the marks of the implement used to force the lock. I think I sat in this chair, or one like it. It was placed here. My face was turned towards the fire, yet in my dream I was looking through the center window. The Japanese sword rested here. I showed you where Alan's

body was found." The young man darted about the room to illustrate each sentence. Brett followed his words and actions without comment. He grabbed his

hat and stick. 'We will return later in the day. he said. "Let us go at once and call on Mrs. Eastham."

'Mrs. Eastham! Why?" "Because I want to see Miss Helen Layton. The old lady can send for

Hume needed no urging. He could not walk fast enough. They had gone a hundred yards from the house when Brett suddenly stopped and

checked his companion Behind the yew trees on the left, and rendered invisible by a stout hedge, a man was running-running at top speed, with the laboring breath of one unaccustomed to the exercise. The barrister sprang over the strip of turf, passed among the trees, and plunged into the hedge re-

rardiess of thorns. He came back instantly. There is a footpath across the park, leading towards the lodge gates. Where does it come out?" he asked, speaking rapidly in a low

"It enters the road near the ave-

aue, close to the gates. It leads from farmhouse."

"A lady is walking through the path towards the lodge. Capella is running to intercept her. Come! pay hear acmething."

Brett set off at a rapid pace along the turf. Hume followed, and soon they were near the lodge. Mrs Crowe saw them, and came out.

'Stop her!" gasped Brett. Hume signalled the woman not to open the gate. She watched them with open mouthed curiosity. The barrister slowed down and quietly made his way to the lenfy angle where the avenue hedge joined that which shut off the park from the

He held up a warning hand. Hume stepped warily behind him, and both men looked through a portion of the hedge where briars were supplanted by hasel bushes.

Capella was standing panting aear a stile. A girl, dressed in muslin, and wearing a large straw hat, was approaching.

"Great Heavens! It is Helen!" ex-:laimed Hume Brett grasped his shoulder.

Restrain yourself," he whispers! earnestly.

"Luckily, Capella has not heard you. I regret the necessity which makes us eavesdroppers, but it is a fortunate accident, all the same. Not

a word! Remember what is at Stake. They could not see the Italian's face. His back was heaving from the violence of his exertion. Miss Layton was walking rapidly towards the stile. Obviously she had per

ceived the waiting man, and she was not pleased. Her pretty face, flushed and sun burnt, wore the strained aspect of a woman annoyed, but trying to be

It was she who took the initiative "Good day, Mr. Capella," she said pleasantly "Why on earth did you

"Because I wished to be here be fore you, Miss Layton," replied the man, his voice tremulous with ex-

"Then I wish I had known, be cause I could have beaten you easily if you meant to race me.'

citement.

'That was not my object." "Well, now you have attained it whatever it may have been, please at low me to get over the stile. I will be late for luncheon. My father wished me to ascertain how Farmer Burton is progressing after his spill He was thrown from his dogcart

mund's fair." It was easy for the listeners be hind the hedge to gather that the girl's affable manner was affected She was really somewhat alarmed. Her eyes wandered to the high road to see if anyone was approaching, a Mr. Brett? and she kept at some distance from

whilst coming from the Bury St. Ed

the Italian. "Do not play with me, Neille," said Capella, in agonized accents. "I am consumed with love of you. Can

you not, at least, give me your pity"" "Mr. Capella," she cried, and none but one blind to all save his own passionate desires could fail to note her lofty disdain, "how can you be so base as to use such language to me? 'Base! To love you!'

"Again I say it-base and unman-What have I done that you should venture to so insult you: charming wife, not to speak of the insult to myself? When you so far forgot yourself a fortnight ago as to hint at your outrageous ideas regarding me. I forced myself to remember that you were not an Englishman, that perhaps in your country there may be a social code which permits a man to dishonor his home and to annoy a defenceless woman. I cannot forgive you a second time.

or I will strike you!" Brett, in his admiration for the spirited girl who, notwithstanding her protestations, seemed to be anything but "defenceless," momentarily forgot his companion.

A convulsive tightening of Hume's muscles, preparatory to a lean through the hedge, warned him in

"Idiot!" he whispered, as he clutched him again.

Were not the others so taken up with the throbbing influences of the moment they must have heard the rustling of the leaves. But they paid little heed to external affairs. The Italian was speaking.

"Nellie," he said, "you will drive me mad. But listen, carissima. If I may not love you, I can at least defend you. David Hume-Frazer, the man who murdered my wife's brother, has returned, and openly boasts that you are waiting to marry him.

"Boasts! To whom, pray?" "To me. I heard him say this not

fifteen minutes since." "Where? You do not know him He could not be here without my knowledge. "Then it is true. You do intend

marry this unconvicted felon?" "Mr. Capella, I really think you ar

what English people call 'cracked.' "But you believe me-that this man has come to Beechcroft?"

"It may be so. He has good rea sons, doubtless, for keeping his presence here a secret. Whatever they may be, I shall soon know them."

"Helen, he is not worthy of you He cannot give you a love fierce as mine. Nay, I will not be repelled. Hear me. My wife is dying. I will be free in a few months. Bid me to hope. I will not trouble you. I will go away, but I swear, if you marry Frazer, neither he nor you will long enjoy your happiness!

The girl made no reply, but sprang towards the stile in sheer desperation. Capella strove to take her in his arms, not indeed with intent to offer her any violence; but she met his loverlike ardor with such a vigorous buffet that he lost his temper.

He caught her. She had almost surmounted the stile, but her dress hampered her movements. The Italian, vowing his passion in an ardent flow of words, endeavored to kiss her.

Then, with a sigh, for he would have perferred to avoid an open rupture. Brett let go his hold on Hume indeed, if he had not done so, there must have been a fight on both sides

He turned away at once to light a igarette. What followed immediately had no professional interest for

But he could not help hearing Helen's shriek of delighted surprise, and that Glovanni was being used as a going to the Hall. You two will be

football by his near relative by mar-Mrs Crowe came out of her cot-

tage. "What's a-goin' on in the park sir?" she inquired anxiously. "A great event," he said. is kicking Mephistopheles."

"Drat them colts!" she cried, adding, after taking thought; "but we haven't any horses of them names, sir.

"No. You surprise me. They are of the Italian pedigree." Meanwhile he was achieving his object, which was to drive Mrs. Crowe back towards the wicket.

Helen's voice came to them shrilly: "That will do, Davie! Do you hear

Why, bless my 'eart, there's Miss Layton." said Mrs. Crowe. What a fine little boy this is!" exclaimed Brett, stooping over a curly haired urchin. "Is he the oldest?"

"Good gracious, sir, no. He's the

"Dear me, I would not have thought so. You must have been married very early. Here, my little man, see what you can buy for halfa-crown."

youngest."

"What a nice gentleman he is, to be sure." thought the lodge keeper's wife, when Brett passed through the smaller gate, assured that the struggle in the park had ended. "Just fancy 'im a-thinkin' Jimmy

grandmother come August if all goes well wi' Kate." The barrister signed to the groom to wait, and joined the young couple, who now appeared in the roadway. A baggard, dishevelled, and furious

was the eldest, when I will be a

'Mrs. Crowe," he almost screamed "do you see those two men there?" "Yes, sir."

hedge and ran across the drive.

man burst through the avenue

The good woman was startled by her master's sudden appearance and his excited state.

They are never to be admitted to the grounds again. Do you under-"Yes sir."

Capella turned to rush away up the avenue, but he was compelled to limp. Mrs. Crowe watched him wonderingly, and tried to piece together in her mind the queer sounds and occurrences of the last two minutes. She had not long been in the cottage when the butler arrived.

You let two gentlemen in a while ago?" he said. "I did."

"One was Mr. David and the other "Oh, was that the tall gentleman's

name? "I expect so. Well, here's the missus's written order that when-

ever they want to come to the 'ouse or go anywheres in the park it's O. K.

keep her own counsel, but when the butler retired, she said: "Then I'll obey the missus, an' mas-

CHAPTER VI.

AS OLD ACQUAINTANCE

Helen was very much upset by the painful scene which had just been enacted. Its vulgarity appalled her. In a little old-world hamlet like Sleagill, a riotous cow or frightened norse supplied sensation for a week. denly switching the conversation Frazer, or I will score my first fallknown that the rector's daughter had are well acquainted with all the cir- give you another holiday, and I can been attacked by the Squire of cumstances connected with Sir Alan's secure you some shooting in Scot-Beecheroft in the park meadow, and saved from his embraces only after a theory about the crime, its motive, vigorous strungle, in which her deory about the crime, its motive, or its possible author?" fender was David Hume-Frazer, concerning whom the villagers still spoke

with bated breath? Of course, the girl imagined that many people must have witnessed the occurrence. The appearance of Brett, of the walting groom, and of a chance laborer who now strode up

the village street, led her to think so. She did not realize that the whole affair had barely lasted a minute. that Brett was Hume's friend, the man-servant a stranger who had seen nothing and heard little, whilst the villager only wondered, when touched his cap, "why Miss Layton was so flustered like."

Brett attributed her agitation to its right cause. He knew that this healthy, high-minded, and athietic young woman went under no fear of Capella and his ravings.

"What happened when you jumped the hedge?" he said to Hume

"I handled that scoundrel somewhat roughly," was the answer. "It was Nellie here who begged for mercy on his account.

"Ah, well, the incident ended very pleasantly. No one saw what happened save the principals, a fortunate thing in itself. We want to prevent a nine days' wonder just now."
"Are you quite sure?" asked Miss

Layton, overjoyed at this expression of opinion, and secretly surprised at the interest taken by the barrister in the affair, for Hume had not as yet found time to tell her his friend's

"Quite sure, Miss Layton," he said, with the smile which made him such a prompt favorite with women. had nothing to do but observe the mise-en-scene. The stage was quite clear for the chief actors. And now, may I make a suggestion? The longer we remain here the more likely are we to attract observation. Mr. Hume and I are going to call on Mrs. Eastham. May we expect you in an hour's time?"

"Can't you come in with us now? exclaimed David eagerly.

She laughed excitedly, being yet flurried. The sudden appearance of her lover tried her nerves more than the frallan's passionate avowal. "No, indeed," she cried. "I must

go home. My father will forget all about his lunch otherwise, and I am afraid I w ant to cry!' Without another word she hurried off towards the rectory.

"My dear fellow," murmured Brett to the disconsolate Hume, "don't you understand? She cannot bear the constraint imposed by my presence at this moment, nor could she meet Mrs. Eastham with any degree of composure. Now, this afternoon she will return a mere iceberg. Mrs. certain other sounds which denoted Eastham, I am sure, has tact. I am

left alone for hours." He turned aside to arrange with the groom concerning the care of the not told you what happened in the

horse, as they would be detained park?" some time in the village. Then the residence. That good person, a motherly old

lady of over sixty, was not only sur- Hume?" prised but delighted by the advent of David Hume 'My dear boy," she cried, advancing to meet him with outstretched

hands when he entered the morningroom. "What fortunate wind has blown you here?" "I can hardly tell you, auntie," he said-both Helen and he adopted the

did not exist-"you must ask Mr. Brett. Thus appealed to, the barrister set forth, in a few explicit words, the ob-

ject of their visit. "I hope and believe you will sucimagine how miserable that man Capella makes me."

"Why?" cried Hume, darting a

look of surprise at Brett. "Because he is simply pestering Nellie with his attentions. There! I must speak plainly. He has gone to extremes that can no longer be misinterpreted. In our small community,

Brett." she explained, "though we dearly love a little gossip, we are slow to believe that a man married to such a charming if somewhat unconventional woman as Margaret Hume-Frazer-I cannot train my tongue to call her Mrs. Capellawould deliberately neglect his wife above the level of the Police Ga- quite sane and dare to demonstrate his unlaw- zette. ful affection for another woman, es-

on?" Inquired Brett, for Hume was too furious to speak

"For some month, but it is only a fortnight ago since Helen first com- killed Sir Alan Hume-Frazer." plained of it to me. I promptly told Mr. Capella that I could not receive him again at my house. He discovered that Nellie came here a good deal, and managed to call about the panese art, and he is really clever in tell you what I know." that respect-

"Clever," interrupted the barrister. "Do you mean that he under- Brett, it is the truth," stands lacquer work. Satsuma ware, painting or injaying? Is he a con-noisseur or a student."

"It is all Greek" in me!" exclaimed the old lady, "but unquestionably the bits of china and queer carvings he often brought here were very holiday! For how long?" beautiful. Nellie did not like him personally, but she could not deny his knowledge and enthusiasm. Margaret, too, used to invite her to the Hall, for Miss Layton has great you off with a fine." taste as an amateur gardener, Mr. Mrs. Crowe was wise enough to Brett. But this friendship suddenly ceased. Mr. Capella became very strange and gloomy in his manner. At last Nellie fold me that the ter can settle it with her. I don't wretched man had dared to utter hold by Eyetalians, anyhow."

words of love to her, hinting that his words of love to her, hinting that his tool of, wife could not live long, and that she would come in for her fortune. Now. as my poor girl has been the most faithful soul that ever lived, never for an instant doubting that some

> was to her." "Mrs. Easthom," said Brott, sudmurder. Have you formed any land. What say you'

an injury, but in these last few days was in earnest I have had my suspicions," she ex-

claimed.

"Tell me your reasons." "It arose out of a charme remark me her inexplicable antipathy to Mr Capella, even during the time when they were outwardly good friends. She said that once he showed her a piece of workmanship, with veins of and part of the blade. To the upper part of the scabbard was attached a sitting-room at the hotel there I will Capella was reduced to a condition

knife-a small darver-similar-'Yes, I understand. An implement like that used to kill Sir Alan Hume-

realized its significance. Then she hastily told Capella to take it away but not before she noticed that he thing. It is fastened in its sheath by how to open it. Any person not ac-

deavor to pull it out by main force." Brett did not press Mrs. Eastham to pursue her theory. It was plain that she regarded the Italian as a though she left the ball at 12.15. man who might conceivably be the murderer of his wife's brother. This

was enough for feminine logic. Hume, too, shared the same belief, and had not scrupled to express it

openly. There were, it was true, reasons in plenty, why Capella should have in the wrong!" committed this terrible deed. He was, presumably, affianced to Margaret at the time. Apparently her father's will had contemplated the cutting down of her annual allowance. The young heir had, on the other hand, made up the deficit. But why did these artificial restrictions exist? Why were precautions taken by her father to diminish his daughter's income? She had been extravagant. Both father and brother quarreled with her on this point. Indeed, there was a slight family disturbance with reference to it during Sir Alan's last visit to London.

Capella mixed up with it? At last there was a glimmering perception of motive for an otherwise fleudishly irrational act. Did it tend to incriminate the Italian?

A summons to luncheon dispelled the momentary gloom of their thoughts. Before the meal ended Miss Layton joined them. Brett looked at his watch. "Fifty minutes!" he said.

Eastham, who marveled at the coolness of the meeting between the girl and David. But the old lady was quick-witted. "Have you met before?" she cried.

Then they all laughed, except Mrs.

"Dearest," said the girl, kissing her: "do you mean to say they have

"That will require a special sittwo mea approached Mrs. Eastham's ting," said Brett gaily, "Meanwhile, I am going to the Hall. I suppose you do not care to accompany me,

> "I do not." The reply was so emphatic that it created further merriment.

"Well, tell me quickly what this secret is," exclaimed Mrs. Eastham, "because in five minutes I must have a long talk with my cook. She has to prepare pies and pastry sufficient to feed nearly a hundred school chilpleasing fiction of a relationship that dren next Monday, and it is a matter of much calculation."

Brett took his leave.

"I knew that good old soul would be tactful," he said to himself. "Now colossal mistake as to imagine that ceed," said Mrs. Eastham impul- Hume murdered his cousin. He was sively. "Providence has guided your sure of the affections of a delightful steps here at this hour. You cannot girl; he could not succeed to the property; he has declined to take up the title. What reason could he have for committing such a crime?"

Then a man walked up the road-a man dressed like a farmer or grazier. rotund, strongly-built, cheerful-looking. He halted opposite Mrs. Eastham's house, where the barrister still stood drawing on his gloves

"Yes," said Brett aloud, "you are an egregious ass. Winter. "Why, Mr. Brett?" asked the un-

abashed detective. "Isn't the makeup good?

Mr. Winter yielded to not unnatpecially such a girl as Heien Lay- url announce. With habitual cau- | rel in the first instance? Perhaps. tion, he glanced around to assure "How long has this been going himself that no other person was within earshot; then he said vehemently

"I tell you, Mr. Brett, that swine

"You use strong language" "Not stronger than he deserves." "What are you doing here?"

"I heard he was in London, and

watched him. I saw him go to your same time as she did. Then he chambers and guessed what was up, up the magnificent oak staircase that found that she was interested in Ja- so I came down here to see you and "Out of pure good nature?" "You can believe it or not, Mr.

"He has been tried and acquitted.

He cannot be tried again. Does Scotland Yard-" "I'm on my holidays " Brett laughed heartily.

"I see!" he cried. "A 'bus-driver's

Fourteen days You are nothing if not professional. I suppose it was not your first offence, or they might have let

The detective enjoyed this departmental joke. He grinned broadly.

"Anyhow, Mr. Brett," he said, 'you and I have been engaged on too many smart bits of work for me to stand quietly and let you be made a The barrister came nearer, and said, in a low tone:

"Winter, you have never been more mistaken in your life. Now, attend to my words. If you help me

day the cloud would lift from Davie, you will, in the first place, be well you may imagine what a shock this paid for your services. Secondly, you will be able to place your hand on the true murderer of Sir Alan Hume-What would happen when it became away from the Italian's fantasy, "you ure. Thirdly, Scotland Yard will brave?"

> The detective looked thoughtful. Long experience had taught him not "God forgive me if I do any man to argue with Brett when the latter "I will do anything in my power,

he said. "but there is more in this

"Quite so, and a good deal that has transpired since. Now, Winter, amuse me. don't argue, there's a good fellow. Go and engage the landlord of the Japanese sword, a most wonderful local inn in a discussion on crops. I into a torrent of expostulations. am off to Beechcroft Hall. Mr. Hume silver and gold let into the handle and I will call for you on our way back to Stowmarket. In our private rare merit of achieving its object.

explain everything. They parted. Brett was promptly admitted by Mrs. Crowe, and walked

rapidly up the avenue. Winter watched his retreating fig-"He's smart, I know he's smart, mused the detective, "But he doesn't seemed to understand the dreadful know everything about this affair. He doesn't know, I'll be bound, that a bidden spring, and he knew exactly David Hume-Frazer waited for his cousin that night outside the library. customed to such weapons would en- I didn't know it-worse luck! until after he was acquitted. And he doesn't know that Miss Nellie Layton didn't reach home until 1.30 a.m., and her house is, so to speak, a minute's walk distant. And she was in a cariage. Oh, there's more in this case than meets the eye! I can't say which would please me most, to find out the real murderer, if Hume didn't do it, or prove Mr. Brett to be

CHAPTER VII.

HUSBAND AND WIFE Brett did not hurry on his way to the Hall. Already things were in a whirl, and the confusion was so great that he was momentarily unable to map out a definite line of

The relations between Capella and his wife were evidently strained almost to breaking point, and it was this very fact which caused him the perplexity. They had been married little more

than six months. They were an extraordinarily handsome couple, apparently well suited to each other by temperament and mutual sympathies, whilst their means were ample enough to permit them to live under any conditions they might choose, and gratify personal hobbles to the fullest extent.

What, then, could have happened to divide them so completely? Surely not Capella's new born pas-

sion for Helen Layton. Not even a hot-blooded Southerner could be guilty of such deliberate rascality, such ineffable folly, during the first few months after his marriage to a beautiful and wealthy wife.

No. this hypothesis must be rejected. Margaret Capella had drifted apart from her husband almost as soon as they reached England on her return as man and wife. Capella, miserable and disillusioned, buried alive in a country place for such must existence in Beechcroft mean to a man of his inclinations had discovered a startling contrast between his passionate and moody spouse, and the bright, pleasant mannered girl whose ill fortune it was to create discord between the in-

mates of the Hall. This theory did not wholly exonerate the Italian, but it explained a good deal. The barrister saw no cause as yet to suspect Capella of the young baronet's murder. Were he guilty of that ghastly crime, his motive must have been to secure for himself the position he was now dowonder how Winter made such a liberately imperilling-all for a girl's pretty face.

The explanation would not suffice. Brett had seen much that is hidden from public ken in the vagaries of criminals, but he had never yet met a man wholly bad, and at the same time in full possession of his senses.

To adopt the hasty judgment arrived at by Hume and Mrs. Eastham, Capella must be deemed capable of murdering his wife's brother, of bringing about the death of his wife after securing the reversion of her vast property to himself, and of falling in love with Helen-all in the same breath. This species of criminality was only met with in lunatics, and Capella impressed the barrister "It is the make-up that always as an emotional personage, capable of leads you astray You never theorize supreme good as of supreme evil, but

The question to be solved was this: Why did Capella and his wife quarthat way, light might come

He asked a footman if Mrs. Ca-

pelia would receive him. The man glanced at his card. "Yes, sir." he said at once. "Madam gave instructions that if either you or Mr. David called, you were to be taken to her boudelr, where she

awaits you." The room was evidently on the first floor, for the servant led him. climbed two sides of the reception hall.

ie reached the landing, was confronted by the Italian. "A word with you, Mr. Brett," was the stiff greeting given to him.

"Certainly. But I am going to

interruptions. The barrister, when

But this was fated to be a day of

Mrs. Capella's room." "She can wait. She does not know you are here. James, remain outside until Mr. Brett returns. Then conduct him to your mistress. Capella's tone admitted of no ar-

gument, nor was it necessary to pro-

test. Brett always liked people talk in the way they deemed best suited to their own interests. Without any expostulation, therefore, he followed his limping host into a luxuriously furnished dressing room. Capella closed the door, and placed

Does your friend fight?" he said. fixing his dark eyes, blazing with anger, intently on the other. That is a matter on which your oninion would probably be more val-

himself gently on a couch.

uable than mine." "Spare me your wit. You know well what I mean. Will he must me on the Continent and settle our quarrel like a gentleman, not like a hired "What quarrel?"

"Mr. Brett, you are not so stupid. David Hume, notwithstanding his past, may still be deemed a man of honor in some respects. He treated me grossly this morning. Will he fight me, or must I treat him as a

Brett, without invitation, seated business than perhaps you are aware himself. He produced a cigarette and of-more than ever transpired at the lit it, adding greatly to Capella's irritation by his provoking calmness "Really," he said at last, "you "Slience!" he cried imperatively.

> when the Italian would have broken "Listen to me, you vain fool! This method of address had the of speechless rage.

"You consider yourself the aggrieved person, I suppose," went on the Englishman, subsiding into a state of contemptuous placidity. You neglect your wife, make love to an honorable and pure-minded girl. sires?" stoop to the use of unworthy taunts and even criminal inuentos, lose to petrify his hearer such control of your passion as to lay sacrilegious hands upon Helen Lay- murmured, and the words appeared ton, and yet you resent the well-mer- to come from a heart of stone. ited punishment administered to you by her affianced husband. Were I a cleared up, but I do not wish to dissurgeon, Mr. Capella, I might take tress you unduly. Can you not refer an anatomical interest in your brain, me to your solicitors, for instance? As it is, I regard you as a psychological study in latter day blackguard-

ism. Do you understand me? "Perfectly. You have not an- fair myself." swered my question. Will Hume fight?"

"I should say that nothing would

give him greater pleasure." Then you will arrange this matter? I can send a friend to you?" "And if you do I will send the po-

matters somewhat."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that my sole purpose in man who killed Sir Alan Hume-Frazer. Until that end is achieved, I I am good and unhappy. Then I was will take good care that your crude ideas of honor are dealt with, as they happy. Strange, is it not? were to-day, by the toe of a boot."

Brett's threats and insults. He gave that enarling smile of his, and toyed impatiently with his moustache. "Your object in life does not concern me. Your courts tried their best to hang the man who was responsible for his cousin's death, and failed. I

duel? "Then I will fight David Hume in my own way. You have rejected the fair alternative on his behalf. Caramba! We shall see now who wins.

He will never marry Helen."

"What did you mean just now when you said that he was 'responsible for his cousin's death'? Is that an Italian way of describing a cold-

Capella leaned back and snarled stiently again. It was a pity be had cultivated that trick. It spoilt an otherwise classically regular set of

"James!" he shouted.

The footman entered "Take this gentleman to your mistross I have done with him? "For the present, James," said

Brett. The astonished servant led him along a corridor and knocked at a door hidden by a silk curtain. Mrs. Capella rose to receive her visitor. She was very pale now, but quite

calm and dignified in manner. "Davie did not come with you?" she said, when Brett was seated near to her in an alcove formed by an original window.

"No. He is with Miss Layton." "Ah, I am not sorry. I prefer to talk with you alone."

"It is perhaps better. Your cousin is impulsive in some respects, though self-contained enough in others."

"It may be so. I like him, although we have not seen much of each other since we were children. I knew him this morning principally on account of his likeness to Alan. But you are his friend, Mr. Brett, and I can discuss with you matters I would not care to broach with him. He is with Helen Layton now, you sav?

'Yes, and let me add an explanation. Those two young people are devoted to each other. No power on earth could separate them. Why do you tell me that?"

"Because I think you wished to be assured of it?" You are clever, Mr. Brett. If you

can interpret a criminal's designs as well as you can read a woman's heart you must be a terror to evil doers. A slight color came into her cheeks. The barrister leaned forward, his hands clasped and arms resting on his knees.

'I have just seen your husband," She exhibited no marked sign of

emotion, but he thought he detected a frightened look in her eyes. "Again I ask," she exclaimed, "why do you tell me?"

a quarrel this morning between him and David Hume. Your husband wished me to arrange a duel. I promised him a visit from the police if I heard any more of such nonsense," 'A duel! More bloodshed!" she almost whispered.

"Do not have any alarm for either

of them. They are quite safe. I will

guarantee so much, at any rate. But

your husband is a somewhat curious

person. He is prone to strong and sudden hatreds and attachments Margaret pressed her hands to her face. She could no longer bear the torture of make believe quiescence. 'Oh, what shall I do!" she wailed.

"I am the most miserable weman in England to-day, and I might have been the happiest." Why are you miserable, Mrs. Ca-

pella?" asked Brett gently.

"I cannot tell you. Perhaps it is owing to my own folly. Are you sure that David and Helen intend to get married? Yes.

"Then for Heaven's sake, let the

wedding take place. Let them leave

Beechcroft and its associations forever." That cannot be until Hume's character is cleared from the odium attached to it.

"You mean my brother's death. But that has been settled by the courts. David was declared 'Not Surely that will suffice! guilty." No good purpose can be gained by reopening an inquiry closed by the "I think you are a little unjust to your cousin in this matter, Mrs. Capella. He and his future wife feel ats name. You know perfectly well

very grievously the slur cast upon that if half the people in this county were asked, 'Who killed Sir Alan Hume-Frazer?' they would say 'David Hume.' The other half would shake their heads in dubiety, and prefer not to be on visiting terms with David Hume and his wife. No: your brother was killed in a particularly foul way. He died needlessly, so far as we can learn. His death should be avenged, and this can only be done by tracking his murderer and ruthlessly bringing the wretch to justice. Are not these your own sentiments

"There are many items I want

when divested of all conflicting de-

Brett's concluding sentence seemed

"In what way can I help you?" she

swer all my queries." "No. I prefer to deal with the af-"Very well. I will commence with you personally. Why did you quarrel with your brother in London a

I imagine they will be able to an-

few days before his death?" "Because I was living extravagantly. Not only that, but he disapproved of my manner of life. In lice to you, thus possibly anticipating those days I was headstrong and wilful. I loved a Bohemian existence combined with absurd luxury, or rather, a wildly uscless expendit life just now is to lay hands on the ure of money. No one who knows me now could picture me then. Yet now wicked, in some people's eyes, and

"Not altogether so unusual as you may think. Was any other person Capella was certainly a singular person. He listened unmoved to interested in what I may term the result of the dispute between your brother and yourself?"

"That is a difficult question to an-

swer. I was very careless in money matters, but it is clear that the curtailment of my rate of living from £15,000 to £5,000 per annum must take it you decline this proffered make considerable difference to all connected with me." "Had you been living at the form-

er rate? "Yes, since my father's death

What annoyed Alan was the fact that I had borrowed from money lenders. Who else knew of your disagreement with him besides these mone; lenders and his solicitors?" 'All my friends. I used to laugh

at his serious ways, when I, older and much more experienced in some

"The reason is obvious You ought to know all that goes on. There was