The Diamond Bracelet

By MRS. HENRY WOOD,

Author of East Lynne, Etc.

(CHAPTER XIII. continued.)

"It looks exactly the same gold fingerbowl," declared Alice, in her turn. "Inside, Interspersed with diamonds and the clasp is the same; three stars. A tall, ugly woman has got it on her black hair strained off her face."

The hair strained off her face is enough to make any woman look ugly," remarked Lady Sarah. "Albert is she?"

"There, she is sitting up now, let us get down to see the dress in that beautiful mauve satin with bobbin lace."

Lady Sarah's hope was not disappointed; a very grand dress indeed.

It's mine, Lady Sarah," said the gentleman. "I am going home to-morrow, Lady Sarah, to spend with the rest of the summer, and Mr. Netherclift's new business, and Mr. Netherclift's wife and family."

"You mustn't talk of the absence of time, Lamb. And—and—those bracelets, they are mine. I have been unable to find them."

"I am certain that I feel as if I could wear no bracelet," eagerly replied Lady Frances.

Hush, hush, Fanny!

"I recollect it perfectly now, at the moment I took off the bracelets that I should have them on when Gerard Hope asked me to marry him."

Mr. Netherclift smiled.

Lady Frances, suddenly recollecting herself, and having spoken to Mr. Hope of it, brought it to her thoughts.

But it could not have been brought to mind more forcibly than it was by Mr. Netherclift's words. Lady Frances, in her confusion, could not speak. She could not look at Mr. Hope. She could not look at Alice. She could not look at anything, save the floor.

"Did you speak, Frances?" asked Lady Sarah. "I did not know that you had anything to say."

"I—I—no, Lady Sarah, I—I—have nothing to say," stammered Lady Frances, in her confusion.

My dear, I'm sure you have," said Mr. Netherclift.

I know I will," persisted Frances, as she moved away.

Lady Frances kept her word. She found the strange lady in the refreshments and, leading herself by her side entered upon a few trifling remarks which were civilly received. Suddenly she dashed at once to her subject.

"What a beautiful bracelet!"

"I think it is," was the stranger's reply, holding out her arm for its inspection, without any reservation.

Where did you buy it?" pursued Frances.

Garrards are my jewelers."

CHAPTER XIV.

This very nearly did for Frances, for it was at Garrards' that the Colonel originally purchased it and it seemed to give a coloring to Mr. Netherclift's view of more bracelets having been made of the same pattern. But she was too anxious and determined to stand upon ceremony for dear Alice's sake, and he was dearer to her than the world suspected.

Was one of my family lost a bracelet exactly like this some time back. When I saw it on your arm, I thought it was the same. I hoped it was."

The lady threw diserdy and laid down her arm.

Yes, a pardon, it—there are painful interests involved—I am sure you purchased that of Garrard's."

I have said that Messrs. Garrard are my jewelers. I told the stranger in a repelling voice, and the words sounded excessively to Frances. May I request to be informed as I desire to know what law of—of—of—"

The words failed her, and she looked helplessly at Mr. Netherclift.

Under these circumstances, I think the ladies had better withdraw," said the gentleman, with a little excitement.

Was what Lady Frances to find the Colonel and inquire after the stranger.

It was a lady Livingstone. She has land had made a mint of money at something, but been knighted and now they were launched into the high society.

Frances now went into the air. O law! a city knight and his wife! that was it was it! How could Mrs. Colquhoun have taken up with them?

The Honorable Mrs. Colquhoun did not choose to say beyond the assertion that they were extremely worthy good kind people. She could have said that her sportsright of a husband had taken a fancy to business matters from Sir Jasper, and was always being invited to dine with him, and knew him in business relations, and had dining stories about him.

Frances, in her excited frame of mind, is to be excused. Jasper and Gerard Hope strange fancies to have taken into their heads about Gerard being in love with about the bracelet.

Alice it is the bracelet. I am more certain than ever. Garrard's people say they have sold articles of jewelry to Lady Livingstone, but not a diamond bracelet, and, moreover, that they never had one of that precise pattern, but the bracelet Colonel Hope bought."

What is to be done?" exclaimed Alice.

I know. I shall go to those Livingstones. Gerard shall not marry Pinks. Interspersed with diamonds and the clasp is the same, three stars. A tall, ugly woman has got it on her black hair strained off her face."

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