storm had burst upon him, and, strange to say, he was calmer than he had been since he had no tragedy to disturb the even tenor of his life. "Here!" and he placed her in an arm-chair, "let mis go and get rid of Chet-wynd. He must be wondering at our ab-sence."

But she clung to him desperately: Tell me, tell me, John, what your trouble is. What did you mean by your re-

ference to her ?" Before he could reply the door opened. and Edith entered.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

Never was interruption more inopportune. To her father, as it relieved him of the pressure of his wife's question, it was less inwelcome than to her mother, but their child so far had never witness-ed a scene between them. Their married if a scene between them. Their married life had been as near the ideal as perhaps it possibly could. There had been times when slight differences had taken place, but these minor things had been known to Edith.

If mother was the first to recover her self-possession, and with a woman's ingenuity she saved the situation by ac centuating it in another direction.

centuating it in another direction. "That young man Barking has upset your father," she said. Edith coloured. She recalled his familiarity of the morning, and his late visit to the house that evening. "I don't see why father should be annoyed by him," she remarked, with the tone of a question in it. "I consider it was very rude on his part to detain napa, when he knew he had a guest. That young man wants a decided snuo, and he will get one from me the next time he dares to address me. Futher, and he will get one from hie the next time he dares to address me. Futher, dear, you are too kind to him. He is a nasty, common person, who is in-clined to take liberties at the first opportunity." Mrs Langthorne signed. "I think I

Mrs Langthorne sighed. "I think I will retire now." "See to your mother, Euith," Mr Lang-thorne said, as she passed out of the room. "I will say good-night to (het-wynd for you. Is he still in the draw-ingroon?" "Yes," and she balf hesitated; then without a word, she followed her mother.

mother,

"I um very sorry, Chetwynd. My wife came into the library and she has had to go to bed, she is not at all wel." The young man was all concern at once. "I trust it is nothing serious. It is so very sublam. Use Investments

once. "I trust it is nothing serious. It is so very sudden. Mrs Langthorne was so well a minute ago." Then he saw the troubled look upon the other's face and refrained from saying more. "Oh. mothing serious, Chetwynd. I have sent Edith upstains with her so she will be well looked arter. You will have not which cost of here.

have a whisky and soda before you go?

He rose at once. "Oh, no thanks. J won't detain you, for I think you will be anxious to see to Mrs Langthorne as well. Can I do anything—I mean, can I go for a doctor?" "Thanks, no. It is nothing more than a slight faintness."

"Eh -you will say good-night for e?" he ventured. me?" "Certainly, Chetwynd. I don't think my daughter will come down again to-

night." He looved disappointed, but his face brightened for it dawned upon him that the mother's indisposition afford-

that the mother's indisposition afford-ed him an excellent excuse for calling again next day. "And I will not, under the circum-stances, press you for an answer to the quest 1 put to you in the drawing-room. I mean in reference to our anymout mean in reference to our engage-

duest 1 pit to you in reference to our engagement." "That is very kind of you. Another time would perhaps be better. You are sure you won't have something be-fore you got?" He was anxious to cut short this interview. He wanted time to think, to grapple with the suggestion that troubled him there and then to say: "Yes, marry my daughter when you like." The two men shook nands, and Mr Langthorne walked with him to the front door. He stood on the steps and allowed the cool air to beat upon his hat, flushed temples. There was no doubt in his mind now that Barking was determined to play the game of blackmail. It seemed to him that his course was to consult a good lawyer and act upon his davice. Then he wondered what the full price might be that his tormentor required. Langthorne was a rich man. Twenty thousand pound or even fifty thousand would have made no material difference to him. It would not mean a single servant less, or foregoing one of the many huxuries he enjoyed, but his com-mon sense told him that the demands of the blackmailer, when once conneded, grew rather than diminished. Yet from series coil time that the demands of the blackmailer, when once conceded, grew rather than diminished. Yet Barking had been brought up in poverty; a sum like £10,000 would be a fortune to him. Would he take it and leave the country? It was a possible solu-tion tion.

Hom. He turned into the house, a worn, miserable man. This had been his sanctuary. Now his wife's suspicions were aroused, maybe his daughte's. What lies would he have to tell in order

What lies would he have to tell in order to put them off the painful subject? He bitterly regretted that a morning of acute agony had wrung from him so unhappy an admission as he had made. "And all this in less than twenty-four hours," he repeated to himself, as he sat down in the library. "And God only knows what the next few hours may bring." He took up the "Times." Then he put

knows what the next few hours may bring." He took up the 'Times.' Then he put it down again. There were the even-ing papers too. He shudderd as he looked at them. Pechaps in those sheets lay the story of his crime. By this time the discovery might have been made. There was no guarantee of the truth of Barkings story, or of his pro-iestations as regards his safety. "Un-less some relief comes, this will drive us mad.' he said. Every man, however good he may be, has yet a better man dwelling in him, which is properly himself, but to whom he is often, alas! unfaithful- bat this does not describe Mr Langthorne's cuse. His conscience was his one and sole tri-

His conscience was his one and sole tri-burnt. He was a man prepared to do right at all costs, so far as he himself was considered, but his very conscience bade him pause where it involved other people. Left to himself he would have surrendered and told the tale of his past in all its bitterness rather than suffer the indignity of being blackmailed, but the thought of his wife and daughter deterred him.

"Why cannot I bear the weight of this alone why must my crime press on others?" he asked hercely. "Is there no solution to this? Am I to drag on a miserable existence to a dishomaired grave?" Then another thought came into his head. "Why not end it all? One shot from a revolver—a few drops —."

He rose to his feet with his heart eating quickly. The law could not He rose to his tect with his heart beating quickly. The law could not follow him out into the Great Beyond. His wife and Edith—they would be rich. His blackmailer would get nothing. "I am not afraid of death God, the Judge of all, knows all, and he is just."

There was a medicine cupboard in the There was a medicine cupboard in the library. His affairs were all in perfect order. There would be the blow of his death and the consequent sorrow. He throught of this as he opened the little oaken cupboard and took out a bottle round which was a flaming red label "Peison."

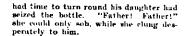
He smiled grindy, as he handled it, "Yes, yes," he murmured, thoughtfully, "I must make it as easy for them as I con. Better to say I am suffering from sleeplessness."

He scribbled a note He wished to convey the idea of an accident, and that death was caused by an overdose. He read the letter through calmly and nod did his approval. 'That will do.''

did his approval. "That will do." "Yes, it will be a great sorrow to them, but it suves them from a much greater one, did they only know. He was sur-prised at his own calmness now. "It will be regarded as another case of se-vere mental strain, with a verdict to cor-respond." he muttered. "Now for the

"Now for it," he said. great secret." "Father!"

It was a terrified whisper; before he



(To be continued.)

## Preferential Joe.

Among the lighter features of the "Elector," in its new form, is a song to the air of "John Anderson, My Jo," which which whit to become popular at election time It runs thus:---

Joe Chamberlain, my jo, Joe, When we were first asquent, Yon were a rising Rad. Joe, On great reforms intenf. But now you've turned Conservative, And hoss the Tory Show. You're really quite phenomenal, Joe Chamberlain, my jo.

Joe Chamberlain, my jo, Joe, You uttered scatting words, About the Land and Church, Joe, And the wicked Honse of Lords. On Education you were want To fainthate but oh! You've swallowed every blessed we Joe Chamberlain, my jo. blessed word.

Jos Chamberlain, my jo, Joe, Before you turned a linder, And got the Empire on the brain, You were a stanneh Free trader. But now you're in for Zollverein. Froteeficoist-What, ho! You're Mr Seddon-Armingeddon, Preferential Joe!

Clarke's World-Famed Blood Mixture. "The most searching Blood Cleanser that science and medical skill have brought to fight." Sufferers from Scrothia, Scurvey, Eczema, Bad Legs, Skia and Blood Dis-eases, Phoples and Sores of any kind are sulkited to give it a that to test its value, Thousands of wonderful cures have been effected by it. Bottles 2/9 each, sold everywhere, Beware of worthless initiations and substitutes.

FOR

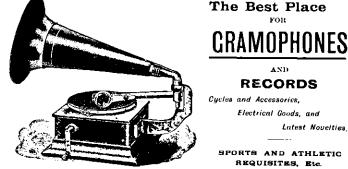
AND

RECORDS

Electrical Goods, and

SPORTS AND ATHLETIC REQUISITES, Etc.

Latest Novelties.



This Season's Cricketing and Tennis Goods just arrived. WRITE FOR CATALOGUES.

CHAS. M. CUMMER, <sup>142, KARANGAHAPE ROAD.</sup>

