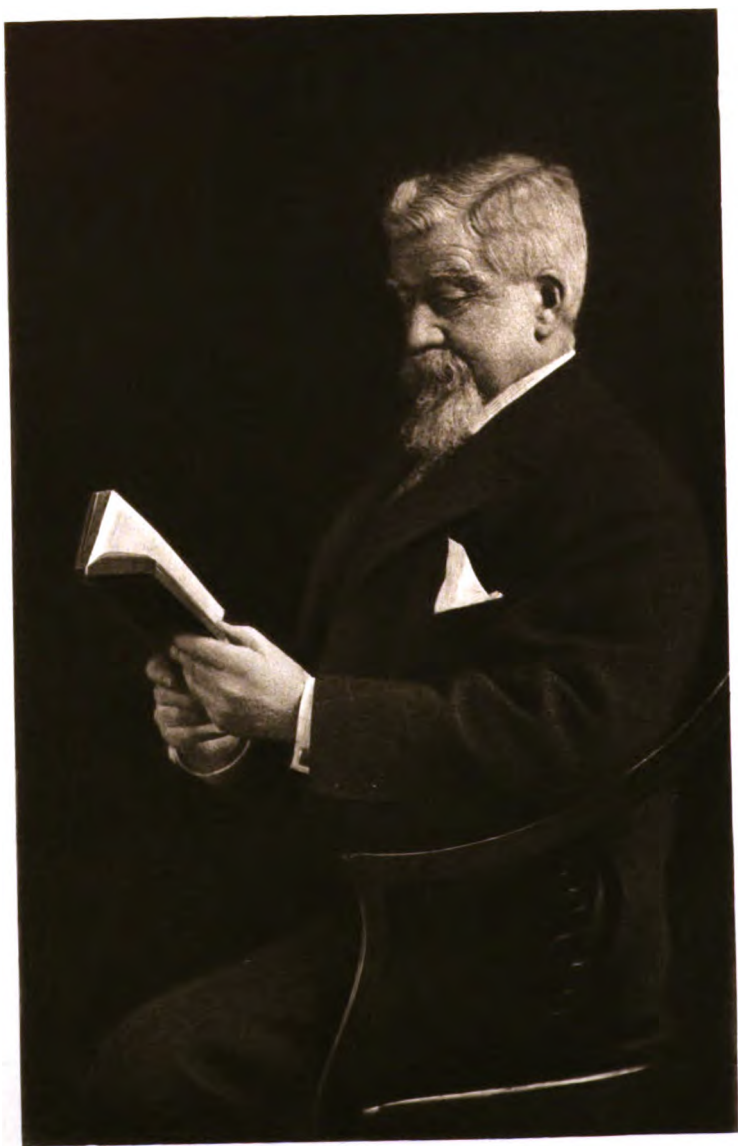


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STORIES AND ARTICLES

BY

ARTHUR W. MACHEN

COLLECTED BY

ARTHUR W. MACHEN, JR.

VOL. I

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Francis Schröder

FOREWORD

In making this collection, great difficulty has been encountered in penetrating the veil of secrecy by which my father invariably covered up his authorship. All his published stories and magazine articles appeared anonymously or under a pseudonym; and he never preserved any file, or even list or memorandum, of his writings. A bundle containing autograph manuscripts of a few of his shorter tales does indeed exist, but most of these were stories which, because of incompleteness, or of what the author deemed their inferiority, were never published, or else were rough drafts of stories which were afterwards published in more polished form. To discover other stories, it was necessary to follow up clues and allusions contained in old family letters. But so carefully did the author guard his incognito that in some cases the parts of letters referring to his authorship were studiously excised with knife or scissors.

As a result, the collection here presented is, unavoidably, far from complete. For example, tradition and passages in old letters indicate clearly the existence of some stories which cannot be now printed, because diligent inquiry in public libraries and similar repositories has failed to disclose any file of the periodicals in which they made their appearance. Undoubtedly, many others lurk unknown and unsuspected in the pages of dusty journals which could easily enough be found but which, in the absence of a clue to their author's identity, might as well, for our purposes, be non-existent. For these reasons, I am able to include only one prize story—"Ishmael"—and that not one which was thought among the author's best. Yet, in fact, he won a very considerable number of prizes offered by various periodicals for the best

stories. On one occasion, he won both the first and second prizes under a different *nom de plume*. All those prize stories, save only "Ishmael," are, however, perforce omitted.

Of the stories here printed, three have been found only in manuscript—"The Incompetent Witness," "Living at Rome," and "The University Medal." One, "Ishmael," exists in manuscript, and also, in a revised form, in the pages of *Sartain's Magazine*. The revised form, rather than the earlier draft is, of course, here followed. Three of the others,—namely, "Anderport Records," "Everstone" and "The Trenchard Property"—were published serially in *The American Review*, or *The American Whig Review* as it was known for a time. The authorship of these three is attested by several passages in letters written to or by my father, including some from the editor of the magazine.

Only one of a considerable number of published book reviews and serious dissertations which my father wrote has been found in print—a review of Thierry's "Studies in History," which appeared in *The North American Review*. Its authorship is established by a correspondence with the editor, as well as by other indubitable proofs. The remaining essay in this collection—entitled by me, "A Survey of One Field of Oratory"—exists, so far as I have discovered, only in manuscript. It is endorsed in pencil in the author's handwriting of later years "*Ætate puerile*;" but nevertheless it possesses in my judgment sufficient originality, maturity of thought, and excellence of execution, to justify printing.

All of the stories and articles were written in youth—some of them in very early youth—and all before the author was admitted to the bar. Even the earlier ones show, however, that his thoughts were directed towards the courts, and several of them were evidently composed after he had begun the study of the law. He was not over twenty-four years of age when the latest was written.

The most distinctly legal of the stories, as well as the most

original in plot, is "The Incompetent Witness." All, without exception, will be found interesting, I think, by any reader who is fond of fiction. The scene of "Everstone," the longest, most ambitious, and in some respects perhaps the best, as well as of "Anderport Records," which may also lay some claim to the primacy, is laid in "Redland County" in some unnamed Southern State; but it is not possible to doubt that the author had in mind the *red land* of his own Fairfax County, Virginia, and the red hills of Walney, his home. As a picture of life in Maryland and Virginia in the second and third decades before the Civil War, quite apart from the intrinsic interest of the narrative, "Everstone," as well as one or two of the other stories, would deserve preservation.

At any rate, the tales and articles will be interesting to my father's friends, as additional evidence of a versatility which not all of the younger generation, even of those who knew and admired him, fully appreciated.

A. W. M., JR.

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THE INCOMPETENT WITNESS

THE INCOMPETENT WITNESS

Every one who has had occasion to rummage for history among original materials must have admired the strange caprices of Time in his selection of documents to transmit to posterity. When we look for an important diplomatic correspondence, a carefully preserved file of school exercises greets us. Explanation of a great man's motive in breaking up a cabinet eludes our search, but by way of compensation we are at no loss to understand why he that same season discharged his gardener; his affection for a distinguished colleague is left in doubt, but it is made very sure that he had no high opinion of Stiffback, his farrier. And when the very fact we are after is found, it is often in the most odd, out-of-the-way place imaginable.

Full scope for reflections of this sort was given me lately upon being entrusted with the office of preparing the biography of a great man who flourished in the infancy of our Republic. While fumbling one day in a chest into which family papers of all sorts had been promiscuously thrown for nearly a century, and whose contents therefore furnished a picture of life over which one might well moralize, I picked up a letter from one schoolgirl to another. My eyes at the moment were wet with the tears wrung from me by another letter to which a bit of black wax still adhered—for I confess to a fountain of sensibility which all the dust of antiquarian research cannot choke. The schoolgirl's letter made me smile through my tears. The following passage especially amused me: "A problem! a problem, for you dear!—harder than Mr. Lemma's hardest! Given a human shape with limbs all set awry, two hands and two feet, big enough respectively for one of the Anakim, but fitted to a squat form

of less than the average height; eyes of greenish grey; a nose indented where the arch ought to rise and with an extremity energetically heaven-pointing; lips perversely leaning from each other, and disclosing huge yellow tusks which cannot well bear the observation they provoke; given also a cranium curiously irregular, and filled with a brain at once uncultured and inapt—the question is, how out of these choice materials to construct—a *hero!*”

I laughed as I wondered to myself what the writer would have said if she had been shown this bit of description at a subsequent period of her life. But very soon a more sober mood came over me as I considered the remarkable incidents which this train of reflection brought up before my mind's eye. My task-work, the biography to which I have alluded, being now off my hands (whether because finished and given to the world, or because abandoned in the midst, I do not choose to say) I am tempted to write the sketch of another life—that with which the schoolgirl letter is connected, and one intrinsically quite as worthy, I think, of perpetuation as most that find biographers. I proceed the more willingly that I do not perceive any danger of wounding the feelings of persons now living by the disclosures I am about to make.

Shortly after the Revolution, Elizabeth Duncombe came to be left for a few days at a quiet interior village in consequence of the breaking down of her father's coach. Her father himself, in whose company she had been going, was a person of note, and his early presence at the seat of government of the State was of so much consequence that without waiting for the repair of the vehicle he proceeded on horseback alone.

The good woman to whom Elizabeth (then a very lively and very pretty girl, not far in her teens) was confided, naturally felt disposed to make the most of the circumstance. She, therefore, took an early opportunity to give a party—that is, to summon her neighbors to admire the rare animal

fortune had thrown into her keeping. And a strange assembly indeed, it appeared to the city girl. The female members of it were too absorbed in contemplation of the fashion of her attire, and those of the other sex too completely awe-stricken, to use their tongues. She sought relief in dancing; but a single trial (in which one arm was nearly dislocated) deterred her from again engaging in such perilous *mêlée*. Next she she was driven to the piano (so-called), but she had better have attempted to pipe harmony from a steam-whistle—if such things had then been, than to perform on that shrieking engine of discord. She sprang up to spare her ear further torture, but perfect escape was impossible. Moving or at rest, all eyes were upon her. Unless she was saying or doing something, an intolerable stillness reigned. What was expected from her, she knew not, yet she saw every countenance fixed in awful anticipation. She grew desperate. Finding conversation quite out of the question, for not so much as an interjectional monosyllable could be drawn from man or maiden, she commenced what might be called an harangue. How it happened that she fell upon her *theme* does not appear—perhaps the sight of that surrounding stalwart band of bumpkins suggested it to her mirthful humour—but she discoursed upon the Dignity of Manhood. She had equal cleverness and spirit, and, with whatever ironical purpose she commenced, soon took up her subject with the warmth of an advocate, and expatiated with fervour upon the great things a man has it in his power to do, if he only has the courage to attempt and the energy to persevere. There were the resources of literature to fall back upon, and she used them without stint, mingling together poetry, history and romance, with a sense of perfect security, in view of the simple-minded audience she had to deal with.

As soon as she was through, and leaned upon the piano to recover breath, a huge old patriarch, with unkempt locks of snow, clapped her on the back heartily, and exclaimed in the

enthusiasm of the moment "That's a *fine* gal! Give it to the boys, *hard!*"

Elizabeth was not a whit disconcerted by this incident. She afterwards declared that in the excited state to which she had wrought up herself, anything, she verily believed, however contrary to all experience, would have seemed a matter of course. The faculties of observation, too, were sharpened. She began to distinguish individuals amidst the gaping throng. One there was in particular—a man—or rather a nondescript compound of human members and lineaments, thrown together, as it appeared, upon no particular system of adjustment. Elizabeth, in that extract I have taken from her letter, has furnished an inventory of the several constituents. The person who had the luck to be the sum total of them was painfully standing on the round of a chair, and, from that position of vantage (of which the intervening circle of heads and his lowly stature occasioned the necessity) had long been gazing at her with far-projecting head, and eyes that winked without ceasing in the ecstasy of attention. He suddenly jumped down at last, and started to push his way towards Elizabeth through the crowd. The awkward vigour of his movements produced immediate effects, for a sharp cry of pain burst from the lips of one young woman—the lout had thrown his whole weight on her foot; almost at the same moment, the shrill voice of another sounded in the accents of an agony yet more acute—and reason good, for his second step had rent two full breadths of her new gown. An expression of blank despair crossed the poor fellow's countenance, and, abandoning his rash attempt, he turned, and fled from the room.

The next incident may better than in any other way be told by an extract from one of Elizabeth's letters.

. . . . "The day after the party, towards sunset, on my return from a solitary walk my path led me along the upper edge of a meadow,. I was quite occupied with ad-

miring the landscape to my left, where the close-shorn grassy level, dotted here and there with a haystack, attended upon the rivulet that wound its lazy way through the valley, and so did not look to see what there might be on my other hand worthy of notice. An expostulatory address to 'Tom' to the effect that it would be a favour if he would lift up his foot, was the immediate cause of my at length turning my head. Beyond the fence by which I was walking was a field, half ploughed over. The ploughman whose labours it exhibited, was in the act of unloosing his team for the evening. The process was completed and he had thrown his left arm over the neck of one of the horses for the purpose of mounting, when he caught sight of me. Thereupon he instantly desisted, and tying the halter ends which he had in his fist to the handle of the plough, started himself on a trot towards me. I knew I was within ear-shot of the house and felt no alarm. On reaching the fence, he stopped and began to speak, as well as the shortness of breath, consequent upon his rapid approach, allowed.

"'Oh miss!—I want to talk to you so much.'

"I made some reply, and he added bashfully, 'That is, if it isn't troubling you too bad.'

"I assured him it gave me much pleasure to listen to him.

"'I tried hard to get to you last night,' he said.

"At this I bent my eyes upon him more attentively. It was so in very truth. The homely creature whose rough-hewn face, stretching out at right angles from the shoulders, hung with mute fascination upon my words the evening before, and who certainly deserved my grateful remembrance as the most attentive of my auditory—he it was, and none other, that now stood before me. For some reason he did not look so ugly as at first—perhaps because of a garb more picturesque in itself, and infinitely better suited to his style of form and feature, than the stiff white vest and black coat in which he was encased at the party. Yet it cannot

be denied that when you came to scrutinise him, he was very ugly still.

“ ‘Miss,’ said the clown, ‘I want you to tell me more. You are the first person I have met who understands the nature of those thoughts that have been stirring in me ever since I *could* think. If you had dropped straight from the clouds you couldn’t have seemed more certainly a revealing messenger from heaven. Yes! that’s the great truth that rouses the whole soul—a man ought to *be* a man! It’s humbling to think that one was born to go all his days either crawling like a reptile, or stumbling like a blinded fool! Some by gift of nature know how to walk along the road of life—just as some take right off,—without the tediousness of learning how, to cradling or mowing or dancing: but if ever *I* get along (which is doubtful) it must be by means of good lessons, long and sorely practised on. It is my mishap to belong to the class which that Scotch fellow, Burns, describes in some lines I saw in the newspaper the other day.

‘Poor wights nae rules nor roads observin’,
To right or left, eternal swervin’,
They zig-zag on!’

“You can but faintly imagine, Helena, the surprise which this speech caused me. How incongruous the words with the utterer! It was not so much the quoting of poetry that startled me—though that was done without the least particle of affectation or mouthing: but there was a certain tone pervading the whole—a depth of feeling expressed—which seems the most natural thing in the world when it comes from one of the characters in a romance, while we never dream of finding it in the intercourse of every-day life.

“ ‘I am anxious,’ resumed the strange creature who was giving me his unsolicited confidence, ‘to be great—to be famous—to do something which shall make me respected as a man among my fellow men. How shall I do it?’

“That was a puzzling question—wasn’t it?—to be put to

a girl not yet fifteen.¹ I am sure he took my silence for a sign of deliberative wisdom, for he proceeded very earnestly to set before me all the facts which might be supposed calculated to influence my judgment.

“ ‘You must know I am not like the common run of men’—

“He paused, ‘I don’t think you are, one bit,’ was my interjectional reflection.

“ ‘Things which come of course to other people are never acquired by me but after the greatest labour. I have no natural knack for anything. You see, for instance, how awkward I am in my motions: I can’t walk across the floor of a room without studying where to put each foot. Just as sure as I get aroused and animated at any time, and move without thinking, I either hurt myself, or hurt other people. Then again, I am as ugly as sin, and it would be only a fair compensation if I was tough and hardy; but that’s not the case. I have lots of ailments; rheumatism twitches my joints, and every now and then a misery settles in my face which makes me half distracted. I look strong, and for the fact of that, can, for five minutes, lift my end of the log with the next man; but there’s no endurance—I break down under any continuance of hard work. Folks, knowing no better,—and I can’t blame them—are apt to suppose I’m lazy and trifling. But oh! you can’t think, miss, how I suffer when I grit my teeth and determine I *won’t* give out, in harvest times and the like!’

“All along, Helena, he had been accompanying his words with expressive gesticulation, and full effect was given to

¹ On one occasion, the author’s sister, Miss Emmeline Machen, was reading this story aloud to a family group without disclosing the identity of the author, who had written it some thirty years before. When she reached this point in the narrative, the author’s mother-in-law exclaimed against the absurdity of attributing such thoughts and such words to a girl so young. Whereupon, the reader admitted that she had added two years to the age as given in the text in order to minimise the impossibility! My father never failed to chuckle when this incident was recalled.—A. W. M. Jr.

this last sentence by his clenching the top rail of the fence with both hands and resting his chin between them, while those horrid yellow teeth of his ground each other with a gnashing noise which was absolutely terrific.

“ ‘But if these outside, bodily matters were all that hindered success, I would not be troubled; but, unhappily, the *case* is only conformable to the quality of what’s inside. The mind goes as hobbling as the body. I am slow to comprehend; my memory is but indifferent; and the reasoning faculty itself is unready, and never goes the right way to work to use the little material that is furnished it.—I took up Latin a while back and made tolerable headway for a time; yet I find it impossible to remember the meanings of the words—I have to be looking into the dictionary constantly, which makes the reading very dull.—I tried algebra, but as soon as I got over into the general analysis of equations, and hadn’t any longer the comfort of practical examples in acres and miles, etc., which I could see the end of, then I stuck.’—

“I smiled at this, and told him I rather thought it was no uncommon thing for other people to get stuck in mathematics. ‘For instance,’ I continued, ‘I know a good many girls at Mrs. Galligrim’s—girls, too, who make an excellent show in society—who recite but poorly in equations of the third degree, and can do almost nothing in geometry.’

“ ‘*Girls!*’ repeated the rustic, ‘It makes no matter how *they* get along—nothing’s expected from *them*. What’s it but the very business of women—the line of destiny marked out for them from the creation—to pass through life attracting as little notice as possible? But it is very different with *men*.’

“What do you think of this precious sally? The fellow appeared to forget that I belonged to the sex he was consigning to contemptuous obscurity. And woman’s province not to attract notice! Was not that a special hit at me for engrossing so much attention at the party?

"I believe he observed I was a little hurt, and was well enough disposed to mend the matter. 'I don't mean to say exactly,' was his confused attempt at an apology, 'that girls oughtn't to let themselves be seen—and *admired* too, provided they are pretty'—

"He paused and contemplated my physiognomy very steadily; and I could not help wondering whether he thought *me* pretty.

"But then women are made of a weakly nature; so from them no great performances are expected. The fact is there is no analogy between the duties of the two sexes as is shown by their being provided with different qualities. Now for instance a woman's *beauty* wouldn't become a man!"

"You at least, sir, would be none the worse for a little of it,' thought I.

"He seemed to feel at last that he was not very happy in his mode of treating this episode to the main subject, and, resuming his first strain, said—

"But this is nothing to the purpose. I am here in the world,—a man; it behoves such an one to act his part well. How can I do that? The will is strong; but that wherewith to work is wanting. To try—try—try! and find that the harder and more protracted the exertion, the more painful the labour and the more miserable the breaking down at the end! Oh miss, pity me—pity me!"

"I *did* pity the poor fellow as he laid his shaggy head upon the fence, and wept.

"'I ought to be ashamed to cry,' he said looking up, 'and I never did cry in anybody's sight before; but you, miss, are so far above all others. I don't mind you seeing.'—

"I am only giving his own words, dear Helena.

"'Oh, it is the simple truth—I am weary with the vain labour,—I am almost broken-hearted. Give up the fight I cannot, for there is no withdrawing from the battle of life while one *has* life. The burden cleaves to my neck: I cannot get rid of it, yet I have not the strength to bear it—it is

crushing me! You, miss, know how to paint what a man ought to be—show me the way to make myself *like* the picture!”

“He stopped and awaited my answer. Really, Helena, I never was so puzzled in my life. It is one thing to rhapsodize on generalities, and quite another to go into practical details. But it was necessary to make some answer whether appropriate or not; for after being appealed to so trustingly, it would never do to confess being driven to one’s wit’s end.

“‘Some philosopher or other, sir, says that he who resolves to be great, is great.’”

“He shook his head, as I expected he would. ‘Such general maxims as those will not do. It don’t depend on volition. This kind of talking is like telling a person he has nothing to do when he drops into the water but to swim—or, when he goes into company, but to be perfectly at his ease.’—‘It is true,’ he added in a desponding tone, ‘there may be those for whom such advice is sufficient, but they stand in need of no directions at all. But what shall *I* do?’

“By this time I had managed to collect my ideas a little: I answered, ‘Choose a profession.’

“‘I believe in that,’ said he approvingly—‘But that done, what next?’

“‘Why then—why then,’ said I, ‘he must go right on in it.’

“‘*Go right on?*’—he repeated musingly—

“Just then a voice sounded from the distance—‘Gilbert!—Gilbert—*Gilbert Imray!*’

“‘I am called, and must go,’ said he. ‘But I thank you from the bottom of my heart for what you have said to me.’ And in a few moments he was out of sight, leaving me not a little astonished.”

Elizabeth’s stay in the village had not lasted many days when young Stillingfleet, a cousin, came by her father’s con-

sent, or request, to escort her home. The coach being now repaired, they were to start the next morning; and as the weather was cloudless and balmy, the two young people were disposed to spend that last afternoon in visiting such objects of interest as the vicinity had to offer. By somebody's management (it is uncertain whose) Gilbert Imray officiated as guide. After they had walked a mile or two, and were thinking to return, Imray mentioned a beautiful little mountain lake lying a short distance before them, but added that they could not go to it, as the near cut led over forbidden ground, and any other way was too long to permit them to reach home before sunset. And, further explanation being sought, he said that the short way was not only prohibited, but dangerous, leading along the base of a hill at whose top were extensive quarries, and when blasts were fired, fragments of stone not unfrequently fell to the bottom. Neither Elizabeth nor Stillingfleet seemed content to be thus balked. While they hesitated, an Irish labourer met them, and an unfortunate equivocation in his answer to the question put to him induced the young strangers—Imray not consenting, yet not opposing—to decide for the adventure. The superscription over the gate, ALL PERSONS ARE FORBIDDEN TO CROSS THIS LAND had no terrors; and though the gate itself was closed fast by chain and padlock, they soon scrambled over. Following then a disused wagon-way, they reached a narrow defile bounded on the left by a steep craggy hill. About a rod from the foot of the hill flowed a rapid creek. At the entrance of the gorge, a stake was planted, supporting a board on which was painted in ominous black letters "*The Proprietors are responsible for no Accidents.*" A little further along, some bones lay bleaching in the sun.

"Quite like Pilgrim's Progress this," said Stillingfleet gaily, "one might easily imagine Doubting Castle, or Giant Pagan's den, nigh at hand."

"But what bones *are* those?" inquired Elizabeth in a tone not altogether so firm.

"My dog Nero's," replied Imray. "And I stood right there"—pointing to a spot, not two paces off—"That poor fellow had set a pheasant—the bird was yonder, on that branch hanging over the creek. Just as I was taking aim, there was a jar and a noise, and down rattled the stones on all sides—you see them now."

Elizabeth's courage was a little shaken, and instead of taking notice of the fragments of stone at their feet, to which her attention was directed, involuntarily looked upward to the place from which they had fallen.

But Stillingfleet only remarked with a sportsman's interest, "And the bird, I suppose, flew off."

"No, I shot it; but then it dropped into the creek, and when I looked around for Nero's help, he was dead; and so I lost the bird after all."

"But see!" cried Elizabeth, "What has that man up yonder been doing?—How he now hurries away!"

"As I live, he has been lighting the match!" said Imray.

"Ay, and he makes signs to us to go back!" exclaimed Stillingfleet.

"But that way is death!" replied Imray. "Don't you see he's going from that end?"

The three cast hurried glances at one another and the surrounding scene.

"I see! I see!" cried Stillingfleet "This way!—come!" And he seized Elizabeth's arm. Imray followed passively.

Very soon they reached a place, where, as Stillingfleet's quick eye discerned, the rocky steep, after sloping outwards from the top, inclined in again as it descended, so as to afford a degree of shelter to those who should press close to the foot.

"Now snug to the hill!" said Stillingfleet—"See! we have a roof over our heads—somewhat of the narrowest to be sure, but then the stones getting their direction from the slope above may fall some distance farther out."

The fearfulness of those moments of suspense may be imagined. All clung, as for life, to that rough rocky bank, shrinking to their smallest dimensions, and scarce daring to inhale a full breath lest it should increase the exposure.

"How long is this to last?"—Elizabeth exclaimed at length.

"Ay, it must have been a false alarm," replied Stillingfleet "I believe we might as well be off."

"Not so," said Imray—"we have only been here a minute and twenty seconds."

"How do you know that?" inquired Stillingfleet with surprise.

"By the second hand of your watch."

Stillingfleet looked down, and saw that his watch, shaken out of the pocket by his hurried motion, was suspended on his breast with the face outwards.

At that instant the long expected concussion—for the interval *was* long, the testimony of the watch to the contrary notwithstanding—came. The larger masses of stone, to dislodge which the powder was expended, were thrown, as it was meant they should be, down the other side of the hill out of sight of our youthful party. A cloud of smaller fragments, however, descended into the precipitous ravine.

They were safe; but the fright that had been undergone was considered as a compensation for the loss of the lake, and they returned straightway to the village.

Imray scarce said a word all the way home, but fortune favoured his heart's desire, and he had an opportunity before night to see Elizabeth Duncombe by herself.

He commenced abruptly. "So tomorrow you go. All the light goes with you, and I am left once more in utter darkness."

Elizabeth, doubtful of his meaning, at first half anticipated, with girlish disposition to romance, a declaration of love; but she was quite wrong.

"Miserable, halting creature that I am, who or what shall be my guide? I have just waked out of non-existence, but unlike the first man I see no surrounding world, prepared for such as I. But must I, after being fired by one glimpse of day, return and extinguish thought and hope together?"

"That is not necessary;" answered Elizabeth, "Surely the world is open to you, as to the rest of men."

Imray was silent for a little while, and then said, "He who has made me *what I am* be my witness how I *try* to believe that I may become *what you say*! I could accept from your lips anything as true which did not contradict my own consciousness. If your kind eye—oh, how I *bless* its kindness!—once *really* saw me, it might still dwell in compassion, but it could no longer minister encouragement. Think of what has passed this day. What a slow-witted fool I have shown myself! While my limbs waited in a palsy, till dull thought should finish its laborious workings, *Stillingfleet* could at once think and act. And why is this? Had not I the same stimulus? Even if the instinct of self-preservation were wanting, would not I gladly have laid down a dozen lives to save *you*? What then is the difference? This; *Stillingfleet* is a *man*, whereas I—I am a worm, and *no* man.'"

There was no bitterness in Imray's tone: he seemed simply to be making a sorrowful confession. Elizabeth pitied him, and the more, because she could not resist the conviction that there was too much truth in his estimate of himself. She resolved to do what she could to cheer him. It was necessary, however, to extract the materials of comfort from himself.

"Can you tell me," she said, "what train of thought passed through your mind just after we saw the man on the hill?"

"My thoughts!" he answered, with an expression of surprise, "I can tell you some of them. The plan of crossing the creek came first into my mind. I could have got over

—so could Stillingfleet, I was thinking over I know not how many possible ways of getting you across. Unable to fix on any of these, it occurred to me I might climb the hill—I knew a path—reach the match, and put it out before the explosion. The doubt was whether there would be time. If one second too late, I would only insure my own destruction, and not benefit you. Then I took to estimating the relative chances of staying where we were, running back, and going forward. Going back I gave up at once, as only putting us more certainly in the way of danger. If we proceeded, I thought we might escape, unless, as is sometimes the case, a blast should be made at that end of the hill at the same time as at the other. If this should be so, a half-way position, such as we occupied, might be preferable. But I noticed afterwards where the stones fell, and probably either of these plans would have been fatal. Stillingfleet saved us.”

“Still,” said Elizabeth, “you have said enough to show the groundlessness of your complaint that your mind is dull. On the contrary, it was very active. The only trouble was it was too quick and wide reaching—it had too much to weigh, for the space there was for deliberation. But this abundance, which may embarrass in particular cases, must prove a great advantage in the long run.”

Imray shook his head mournfully.

Elizabeth continued, “The difference you lament as existing between you and others may really be a sign of your superiority. You know, *instinct* is far readier than reason, and as we see often gets the better of it; yet reason triumphs in the end.”

“Yes, that’s true. Yet human reason, to act effectively, must have a due proportion of animal energy; too much use of the understanding makes the will sickly and feeble.”

“You are thinking of Shakespeare, I suppose—

‘And thus the native hue of resolution

Is sicklied o’er with the pale cast of thought.’”

"No; I never saw that, that I know of—I am sorry I have read very little of Shakspeare—yet those lines are very true—too true."

Elizabeth was summoned away by the supper-bell. Before she went she said, "Remember! I expect to see you some day a great man."

These parting words of Elizabeth Duncombe were uttered in the kindness of her heart, with very faint idea of their realization. She little knew the strength of the spirit she had evoked. Imray saw her not again for years, yet her young, graceful form was ever radiant in his imagination. He himself, in his twentieth year, set about the study of the law. Most of the numerous helps that now exist (of very doubtful benefit after all) were at that day unknown. Besides, he was poor as poor could be. Without friends to guide him—indeed, for a long time he dared not communicate his aspirations—he had to put up with such few books as accident threw in his reach.

That which first introduced him into the great unknown science which it was his adventurous resolve to explore and master, was, as we are told, an odd volume of Coke's Reports. Those who have ever looked into that inviting compilation may imagine the experience of a beginner who went to it for rudimental exposition. Well was it for Imray that his mind had not been enervated by much acquaintance with common literature. This was a book—a law-book, and he girded up his loins to wrestle stoutly with every difficulty it presented; and scarce a sentence did he meet, but occasioned a severe tug. He read, and read again, put his finger on each word, and, with heroic constancy, refused to proceed till he had measured its full purport. The effect of this process, many times repeated, was to transfer the book, as it were bodily, into his head; and along with its crabbed and dark sentences entered a good deal of valuable lore. His moments of greatest discouragement were those when

he attempted to apply what he had learnt to the every-day affairs around him. The world seemed going on in utter defiance of the common law as he had seen it partially uncovered. Long afterwards, speaking of this time, he said he should have been utterly confounded and reduced to despair, but for the prefatory remarks of old Lord Coke. The cheery words he found there, addressed personally, as it appeared to himself, in a style so venerable and so kind, and exhibiting, on the part of the author, such absolute and loving devotion to the law he was expounding, furnished an antidote to all doubt. There must be, said the lonely student to himself, a *Science* here, whose principles were never destined to change with outward circumstances. In this faith he persevered. His revered preceptor, Coke, alluded with high commendation to Master Plowden's Commentaries. This much longed-for work he found in the nick of time in the book-corner of the village store. Sadly tattered was its cover, and the title page of Part First was slightly rent. The answer to his faltering inquiry as to the price, was "Ten shillings." Had our poor student been a pagan, he would have invoked all the Gods that inhabited Olympus to witness his amazement. Ten shillings for Plowden! He would have bought it at the cost of a year's earnings. This acquisition proved, of course, a delightful repast. Next he got hold of Saunders' Reports, with which he was enraptured.

But it is not my purpose to detail Imray's course of reading. After a while, he gained admission, on terms of hard-work punctually exacted and faithfully performed, into the office of a county practitioner. Abiding there till he knew a good deal more than his master, he next turned with steadfast face to the capital. Here, earning a scanty support by jobs of divers sorts—very humble, most of them, and by no means professional—he spent all his disposable time in a great law office which he succeeded in entering. In the crowd of students with whom he was now mingled, he

excited little notice except of that kind which manifested itself in uncomplimentary remarks on his negligent attire, his numberless awkward habits, and his surprising homeliness.

After completing the long term of probation, which in those days was exacted (not less for the benefit of clients than for the dignity of the profession), Imray became a member of the bar. For several years he remained quite unknown to the outside world, and almost so to his brethren, never opening his mouth in court except to make a motion of course, or to speak briefly to a point of law. The few elder practitioners, however, who from time to time were associated with him, recognized with respect the store of learning concealed under a most unpromising exterior. He eschewed criminal cases. Besides other grounds of aversion, he distrusted his ability to engage in a line of practice requiring less of those solid attainments to which he had devoted his strength, than of readiness, fluency, rhetorical address, and practical acquaintance with human nature. Yet it was in a criminal case that he had to make his first public appearance. The cause was one of considerable expectation, and at the day the court-room was thronged. The scene has been described by an eye-witness, who regarded it with the more attention because a visitor from a distant section of the country and curious to observe how things were managed under a practice different from that to which he was accustomed. The gentleman who led for the Government was one of the most eminent names at that bar. With many good qualities, he was haughty, irascible, and jealous beyond reason of his reputation. When he undertook a cause, he would strain heaven and earth to carry it through, believing a leaf from his laurels was lost if he failed. To this case he was more than usually committed, for it was well known, within the bar, that he had said P——, the prisoner, should hang. To a *jury*, the evil side of this great advocate's character never was presented. Before

them, he was all candour and humanity, at the same time that with merciless art he contrived to give his opponent the aspect of one striving to resort to every inequitable technicality. On the other side, Imray appeared to the greatest disadvantage. His countenance was not only ugly, but forbidding. Isolation from all mankind, acting upon a naturally unsocial temperament, left unsmoothed every furrow drawn by severe and protracted thought. The pain consequent upon many bodily infirmities, had also impressed its marks. In the eyes of observers he had not even the benefit of his real *youth*. His rugged features had the outline and hue of middle-aged manhood, with its selfishness and its sternness. This impression was confirmed by an habitual composure, which seemed almost apathetic, if not stolid. The jury saw him, too, through the earlier stages of the trial, manage his cause with the sedateness of a veteran. No misadventures occurred, betraying a want of familiarity with his legal harness. Points of evidence were maintained with a terse precision, and accuracy of citation, that seemed to show a mind master of all its own powers and of every legal authority. Yet all this time, poor Imray was scarce conscious of a thought, word or motion. Like one who had made a compromise with circumstances, and faithfully devoted all his strength to preserving the humble level between success and utter failure, he went on with dogged fortitude. Most willingly, in that mood of melancholy self-distrust, did he mentally sacrifice all hope of splendid distinction, to escape the risk of breaking down. And thus in all probability, he would have proceeded to the end, had this been a civil action; but his dearly bought calmness was disturbed by the thought that the making or marring of a professional reputation was not the principal thing at issue. Dare he cowardly ignore the solemn fact that a human life was in jeopardy? Those who have been in a like situation may imagine the agony of his spirit—no others can.

The time had come for his address to the jury. For upwards of half an hour, it is said, he spoke in an earnest but even tone, without use of gesture and without moving his eyes from the foreman. The scene which is represented to have then occurred was most unusual. He commenced fumbling the leaves of his brief—at first with his ordinary calmness, then uneasily. At last he found what he was searching for,—probably a leading word to some energetic appeal which he had thought over in his chamber. His eye, but not his mind, was on the paper. Then he suddenly burst into tears. The opposing counsel looked significantly and scornfully towards the jury, as much as to say, "This clap-trap imposes on neither you nor me." In truth there was nothing very engaging in that display of sorrow. Tears were too incongruous with Imray's hard-favoured countenance to improve it greatly. He would be a daring sculptor who should try to produce the effect of a Niobe with a weeping satyr.

After a brief space of time, during which all eyes were fixed on him, Imray attempted to resume his speech. He was deadly pale, and strove in vain to utter an articulate sound. He gasped, seemed choking, and was relieved by a violent expectoration. They who were close by could see there was blood in the discharge, for he had indeed broken a small blood-vessel. A low hum spread the information over the room, and then there was perfect stillness. One of Imray's brethren of the bar suggested in view of his situation that an adjournment of the cause would be proper. But he would not consent. Erecting himself, for he had been leaning upon the edge of the table, he began his real address to the jury: before, the mere instruments of the mind had been in action, as of their own accord; now, the soul itself was engaged. His first sentence has been handed down by tradition. "Gentlemen!" he said, "I declare to you that I had rather sink this moment into the annihilation I de-

serve than that a guiltless man should perish through the impotence of his advocate!" The speech that ensued was described at the time as a masterpiece of forensic eloquence. P—— was acquitted. The great lawyer who appeared for the State, had put forth all his extraordinary powers, and took the defeat (for such his jealous spirit accounted it) so much to heart as to give rise to the report that it was the main occasion of his death, which threw the community into mourning shortly afterwards.

The *éclat* of this trial, and its incidents, of course raised the young lawyer to immediate eminence. The decease of his adversary, attributed to the cause it was, seemed to substitute him in the place that distinguished man had occupied. By a curious illusion, of which there are frequent examples, in that same uncouth and almost repulsive exterior, which it had been supposed could cover at best only mediocrity, men now fancied they discerned a mark of an uncommon intellect. There was great danger this exaltation would be succeeded by a proportionate depression; and Imray must soon have tumbled from that giddy height, had the searching criticism of the bar failed to sustain the popular opinion. But our lawyer was no florid man of words, neither narrow-minded pettifogger. The excitement of thick-coming briefs was all that was requisite to infuse life into a store of dead learning, the painful accumulation of years, whose magnitude was now felt and acknowledged. Though he made no displays of oratory—for that famous first effort was his last in that line—he won verdicts; and, withal, he never spoke to the *court*, without having its profoundest attention.

A consequence of Imray's success was to make him for the first time in his life a member of society. This was the hardest part of his whole experience. He found that he was presumed to be acquainted with a system of law which Littleton and Coke and the other sages at whose feet he

had sat had never taught him and which though as unwritten as the common law did not appear to him to be, like it, the perfection of reason. Not a step could he take in this new field with any sense of security. It was not merely *inter apices juris*—the refinements of high etiquette—that he stumbled; the very elements of good-breeding were equally unknown. Nothing came to him by intuition, and this was not a case where he could look to the books for precedents. He might perhaps have made a law to himself, and assumed the impunity of “eccentricity.” His ugliness would have done him good service then. But he was too ingenuous and too bashful for this. What made it worse for him was that no one could suspect in one who appeared so rough and hard, and who was a *lawyer* besides, a sensitiveness which a suppressed smile, or a glance of surprise, wounded to the quick; and it often happened that the most kind-hearted persons inflicted the keenest torture. The misery he suffered was extreme, and there seemed little chance of its diminishing.

Indiscreet friends began to take it upon them to tutor him; and this to his proud spirit was gall. A lady of fashion, who perceived (as she thought) indications of an attachment on his part to one of her daughters, whom she had feared it would be difficult to get off her hands, judged it expedient to encourage it, and in this benevolent frame of mind assumed, rather prematurely, some of a mother-in-law’s privileges. The truth was, Imray felt not a particle of affection for the damsel, whose unattractiveness occasioned her being so deserted by others that he thought her a suitable and safe person to assay his own unpractised smalltalk upon. Mrs. ———, blind we have said, to the real state of things, seized an opportunity one day to favour him with a long and very motherly lecture upon the proprieties of life which he oftenest violated. Notwithstanding Imray’s ignorance of the world, this transaction struck him

as rather odd. Vexed and mortified he listened with down-cast eyes as the voluble dame poured forth sentence after sentence of excellent advice. She had been preparing herself for a week past, and in her anxiety not to omit any of the topics she had laid up, she never noticed the writhings of her victim. Too good a rhetorician not to reserve the strongest motive to the last, she wound up with, "For *Emily's* sake"——

This was a drop too much. With an instinctive sense of danger, Imray bristled up. "I am really at a loss, madam, to understand what the young lady has to do with me, or my behaviour."

Mrs.———'s eyes were at once opened, and it was now her turn to be abashed and mortified. But hers was a spirit ready for any emergency, and she was too gallant a player not to prefer fortifying a mis-move to the shame of retreat. Our common-lawyer, when he least expected it, was dragged into chancery; for the lady had resolutely determined to act on the equitable maxim, *What ought to be, is*. To his dismay, Imray was informed that his attentions to Miss Emily had been so marked that the usages of society demanded that they should be followed up by the offer of his hand. And to cut off all hope of escape she added, "And Emily, poor innocent creature, has received your addresses with such undisguised favour, that she cannot help accepting the proposals you are bound to make, without acquiring the reputation of a coquette, which of course is not to be thought of. You are a fortunate man, Mr. Imray, to have secured such a wife."

"Do you mean to say," faltered Imray, "that there is no help for it?—is there no escape?"

"None. And permit me to remind you, sir, that your honour is committed not to divulge the fact that you do not reciprocate her too trustful affection. If in reality you do not love her now—which, after your past demeanour,

seems incredible—I trust your sense of justice will compel you to learn to love her.”

Imray saw a horrid gulf all around. He feared to take a step in any direction; and yet to stay where he was, was impossible.

“Oh madam!” he exclaimed, in the intensity of his anguish, “Can’t I help marrying your daughter?”

“I have said, sir, you cannot, without sacrificing forever all pretensions to the character of a gentleman.”

Imray at length mustered sufficient self-possession to say that he could not see the matter in the light she did, yet would take time to consider, and if he should succeed in persuading himself that the course of duty was as she represented, he would inform her of it.

The smothering atmosphere of Mrs. ———’s parlour was exchanged for his own lodgings.—How delightful the bachelor quiet of these now seemed as the dreadful thought haunted him that he might have to abandon them for—he shuddered, as the image of Emily danced before his eyes, attended by the yet more hateful image of her mother, with lips apart, and finger uplifted as in the act of bestowing her matronly counsel. The wretched martyr to unworldly simplicity sat down and meditated upon his lot. A new volume of Reports, sent to his table in his absence by the bookseller, excited a momentary pleased glance; but even that object of interest could do no more to divert his thoughts from the melancholy subject he had to brood upon. The dumb show of a wedding-ceremony passed before him. He groaned. Indeed, I greatly fear that neither marrying a woman he cared not for, nor any other single consideration, contributed so much to his distress as the reflection that if the affair went on, he, unable as he had found himself to meet the *ordinary* exigencies of polite society, would be compelled to face the most trying of all occasions—one which even other men (widowers except) never ventured

upon without trembling. He!—Gübert Imray!—stand up as a *bridegroom*? The thing was simply impossible. The assertion of a thousand Mrs. ———'s to the contrary, *it could not be!*

Vainly he tortured himself to remember by what hapless acts he had involved himself in this dreadful entanglement. To be sure, he had once—it was *only* once he was certain—shaken the hand of the young lady on taking leave. Then, again, he had one morning unfortunately called upon her with no gloves on. Could it be that in the court of Fashion either of these things, or both together, were construed as a declaration of love?

For three days, he scarcely took food or slumber. He wanted sorely to get advice, but whom should he consult?

A ray of hope burst upon him from a newspaper, for it exhibited the name of Duncombe. Happy associations always clustered round that name. He looked, and read. The paragraph announced the arrival of Mr. Duncombe and daughter. His guardian angel, it should be stated, had been with her father throughout the whole period of his sojourn abroad, so that Imray had never seen her since their early meeting, notwithstanding his own residence in the city for several years.

“I will go to *her*—That's it!—I will go to *her*!”

And go to her, he did. He sent up his card, and was at once admitted. Elizabeth Duncombe, from a pretty girl had grown into a beautiful woman: yet it was only the Elizabeth Duncombe of former days that Imray's eyes could ever behold. That rounded symmetry which had fulfilled the the promise of girlhood, that perfection of lady-like ease which gave grace to every movement,—everything in short that spoke of change from what had been, was lost upon Imray. The vision that had awakened ambition, hope, and many a dormant energy, that ever since had haunted the student's chamber, and whose mien of unchanging youth agreed well with the spirit of its lessons, stood before him.

The enrapt votary felt it to be his first duty to give an account of himself. In a brief summary he placed before her his whole life from the time when, as he said, her presence had revealed to him the truth that he had life. With artless sincerity he made her sensible of the marvellous influence she had unconsciously exerted over his conduct and his fortune. Elizabeth, on her part, had not forgotten him. *Her* imagination, like his, was in its plastic state at the time of her visit to the mountain village, and Gilbert Imray was too remarkable an object not to have left an impression, though not exactly such an one as she herself had made. The first thought suggested by her visitor's discourse was, "Well, you are as queer a creature as ever!" But her wonder was increased when he came to unfold his principal motive in now seeking her presence. He explained that he looked to her even yet as his sole counsellor and guide. The precepts she had before given had been faithfully obeyed; those instructions had lifted him to the place he occupied in his profession, and might lift him higher. A lesson of a different kind had become necessary, and he was confident of her ability and will to impart it. Next he described in general terms the nature of the obstacles he had to surmount. "As I told you in the beginning," he remarked, "nothing comes to me *naturally*—I have to learn everything, step by step, with a continual exertion of attention and strength."

"At all events," said Miss Duncombe, "you give the world no room to doubt the reality of your advance—you have made long strides, sir."

"I come in no complaining mood, I assure you," Imray answered, "I care neither for toil nor hindrance, so long as you consent to point out to me my way. But I require line upon line and precept. Unfortunately, I am no mimetic animal—nothing that my faculties perform is spontaneous—every act must result from a special volition of the mind. Habit is no assistance to me, for all my habits

are wrong. Everthing I do—be it only to walk to that door and open it—involves a new independent train of reasoning. I should be thought pedantic by any one else to whom I should make the avowal, but it is the real unvarnished truth that I not unfrequently construct a syllogism in the midst of a drawing-room conversation, to test the accuracy of the process of reasoning by which I infer the propriety of pursuing a certain course amongst the breakers and quick-sands of etiquette. You laugh, I see, at the idea of a gawky man of books pausing, while conducting a lady to a seat, to arrange his major and minor in Barbara or Celarent for resolving the question whether he should offer his right arm or his left; you laugh, and with reason, but I protest to you I never felt like laughing while the procedure was going on.”

“Don’t take my smile to heart, I pray you; you can afford to smile yourself. Out of the hundreds of well-dressed, well-mannered coxcombs who excel you in the ball-room, not one could grasp the simplest of the abstruse arguments which are your daily pastime.”

Imray was much comforted by this suggestion; but the worst trouble of all was behind—Miss Emily and Miss Emily’s mother. He told his sad story—to Elizabeth’s great amusement. Her mirth did not displease him as another’s would, for she was not one to laugh at his calamity, and his fears must have been groundless. He kept his eyes therefore upon her face patiently and hopefully.

It was not easy for Elizabeth to realize that she was school-mistress in such a branch of science to such a scholar. Was this person, who was looking up to her with such reverential and trusting expectation, a grown man, in whose company she had never been three days in her whole life, and Mr. Imray too, a lawyer second to none of his age in the State? No, no—’twas only that same queer genius, Gilbert, the faithful disciple of olden time.

The plan that Elizabeth's woman's wit devised for Imray's extrication from his difficulty has not come down to us. All we know is, that it was effectual; for we hear no more of Mrs.——or her daughter.

Time wore away. Imray and Elizabeth met frequently in society. The first thing that made him believe she was not pure spirit, but a creature of flesh and blood like other women, was that she attracted to her a circle of very earthly admirers—mere *lovers* in short. What wonder that his own very rarefied devotion should by degrees be transmuted into something after the nature of human passion? He loved Elizabeth Duncombe, and was conscious of it. To win her for his wife was an object which he set up to strive for. True, it was the greatest by far of all the aims he had ever proposed to himself, but had he not the assurance of her own lips that everything is possible to man? He was not impatient. Great achievements exact, as they reward, great efforts. As Elizabeth was the first of women, he was content to toil for her as long as there was recorded precedent, or, if need were, longer. His principal source of uneasiness was that she might not wait for the natural consequence of his laborious suit, but, meanwhile, marry some one else. The rivals he saw most reason to fear were Mr. Callander, a middle-aged, but florid and sufficiently good looking millionaire, Maurice Ashurst, a dashing young merchant, and Elizabeth's cousin, young Stillingfleet. The last was a lawyer like himself, and of very good standing, a scholar and an orator. A considerable fortune rendered him independent of his profession; otherwise—at least so his friends said—he would certainly have already attained its highest honours.

The rivals bent forward in the race with perhaps equal eagerness, yet the demeanour of each differed from that of the rest in accordance with his peculiar temperament and character. The first classification indeed—that which di-

vides into the sedate and the impetuous—threw together Imray and Callander on the one side, and Ashurst and Stillingfleet on the other; but as soon as the observer went beyond this superficial assortment, each stood by himself. Callander was a very good specimen of the confido-indifferent lover. His air was of that kind which seems to say “I have made an excellent offer—in fact something above the very top of the market—so good an offer it is, that I know you will accept: when you do, I will abide by it, for I am a man of my word, yet at the same time a contrary result would only be your loss not mine.” Ashurst was the confident, simply—a gambler who stakes all his fortune on one throw, in undoubting reliance on his luck. Stillingfleet represented fairly enough the lover proper—that compound of sighs and flame, boldness and timidity—a chameleon, constant only in answering truly to the light it basks in. Imray among these gay suitors appeared like the beast that lay at the feet of beauty—a beast so much more ugly than common beasts that there was hope he might turn out a shapely prince at the end.

As for Elizabeth, she smiled on all—not coquettishly; but, I suppose, she had not made up her mind. Perhaps each of them gave promise of being such an one as she could surrender her heart to, though as yet none appeared quite worthy of the prize. All were awaiting anxiously some intimation from her of the course by which her favour was to be won. Imray, could the relation that once existed between them have continued under these new circumstances, would have frankly inquired what he should do; but since that day when he audaciously began to *woo* his goddess, he dared not approach her shrine as of old. He stood on the same level with the rest; and thus it happened that they all learned together what she would have of them.

At a pleasant evening gathering at the house of a lady friend, Elizabeth as usual was surrounded by her four regular

suitors and several transient ones. The conversation turned to the last novel of the popular author of the day, who had endowed his heroine with traits of character much superior to the hero's. Some were blaming the writer for this reversal of the order of nature. Both St. Paul and Milton were quoted in support of the criticism. But others maintained that however the members of the wedded pair might have stood to each before the fall, and however they *ought* to stand now, actual life shows that the probabilities are the other way, and that brilliant women are oftenest found matched to very insignificant men. A cynical old bachelor observed that there was a propriety in this adjustment; since otherwise the wife would be lost in her husband, while in this way she preserves something of the distinction which the fashion of our times allows to the unmarried woman who possesses beauty and accomplishment. This philosopher, moreover, insinuated that the sex, knowing well that the admiration they are able to excite is, in the natural course of things, very evanescent, take pains to unite themselves (whenever they have the choice) to the feebler members of the other division of the human family, so that the wane of their brilliance may escape notice when relieved by the continually deepening shadow appended to them—for the weakness of the weak husband grows more apparent every day. "Your belles," said he, "have the power to choose their husbands: they take the fools; and hence we find that only the ordinary women are left as mates for extraordinary men." This theory, as may be supposed, was received with no burst of applause. Elizabeth, especially, was highly indignant. "A pitiful set of creatures," she said, "you would make of us women! For my part I'll have none of your light-and-shadow philosophy, ingenious as it is—I'll have none of it, because it is untrue. Besides a thousand other inconsistencies, it contradicts the first law of woman's nature. You annihilate love; for an essential

element of love is respect—nay, reverence. No true woman can love a man she does not look up to.”

Here an uncommonly tall youth who was one of her auditors, stretched himself to his full height, and put on a very portly air indeed.

Miss Duncombe continued, “Yes, she must look up to him—not in any weak, unreasoning admiration; but he must be a man whose character commands respect—one whose influence is felt wherever he goes—felt by his associates of his own sex—felt by the world. He must be a man among men. He must have talents by gift of heaven, and he must have energy to use those talents. What a man is born possessor of is nothing—what he *achieves* constitutes his title to the honour of men and to the love of woman!”

While the lighted eye and impassioned tone that accompanied these words excited the admiration of the throng, the sentences themselves sunk deep into the hearts of the four lovers. Stillingfleet’s conscience warned him of their pertinency to himself. What a man has by heaven’s bounty is nothing—did not that touch *him*? How many unused talents were hid in *his* napkin! From that day, he devoted himself with a more constant zeal to the duties of his profession. He suffered not even love to take from his clients that attention which they had a right to expect. The consequence was a growing reputation, and a growing self-respect.

Even Imray—that man of faithful labour—put forth efforts yet more unremitting and intense than before.

Ashurst formed gigantic schemes of mercantile enterprise which stretched across both oceans.

As for Mr. Callander, he proceeded straightway to build a new block of houses, with marble fronts and every internal convenience—a block which should be the finest in the city.

A twelve-month passed; and the rivals, panting from their exertions, could not perceive that either had gained on his

fellows. At the end of this time, the chief justice of the highest court in the state died, and the Governor named Gilbert Imray as successor. The nomination was confirmed, though some surprise was expressed. There were men at the bar more eminent, and possessing far more of the learning which experience confers. On the bench, too, over which he was to preside, there were two judges, at least, who might fairly have claimed to succeed to the chief seat. Thus Imray had to begin his new career surrounded by jealous associates, and in face of the ill-concealed dissatisfaction of perhaps the ablest bar in the Union. But now at last he was at home. The bar, with wonder, saw him display at once every attribute of his office. Even the judicial tone and demeanour, which many able judges are a good while in acquiring, came to him as by inspiration. His brethren of the bench, however disposed to thwart their unwelcome chief, were immediately overawed by a self-sustaining decision of character which never felt the need of external support, and never looked for it. That was a time well fitted for a man who had as well the learning of his profession as a clear head and intrepid will. Cut loose from Westminster Hall by that convulsion which ruptured all the ties which united the colonies to the mother state, the courts of this country were cast adrift upon a sea where the old landmarks could no longer be followed. There was occasion then to look to first principles—to see what was Common Law, and what an extraneous addition. To find those principles in their pure state, freed from the incrustations of centuries, was no easy task, but to apply them amidst new circumstances, unguided by precedent, and under the embarrassments occasioned by crude legislation, was far more difficult. Such was the task to which Imray, and men like him, devoted themselves. The work was well done, and will last to a distant posterity if our rash hands are stayed from undoing it.

Imray became remarkable for his success in another department of his office, one where success is ever most keenly relished by a judge. While Ellenborough or Mansfield never ruled a *court* so imperiously, he possessed, along with Kenyon's homely diction, more than Kenyon's influence over a *jury*.

It might be supposed that Imray was now so decidedly in advance of his compeers as to entitle him boldly to demand the prize. But he knew his promotion had awakened murmurs, and he was determined that they should be hushed by his conduct before he opened his mouth as a lover. There were others who could not wait so patiently as he to learn their fate. Callander had made a call upon Miss Duncombe under circumstances of such form that it seemed clear it was designed to bring matters to a crisis. What the result was, did not certainly appear. He could not have been accepted, for he made no more visits, yet no mortification was manifested by him. Why should there be? His wealth could buy him a bride any day. In the same week, almost on the same day, Ashurst and Stillingfleet also tendered themselves to the fastidious beauty.

About nine o'clock in the evening, Oaks's coffee-house had for its guests a party of some half a dozen young men.

"You look blue, Ashurst," observed one of them.

"Very likely," was the answer, "nor do I care who knows the reason—Elizabeth Duncombe has proved herself a jilt."

"Restrain yourself, Ashurst—Miss Duncombe is no jilt." This was said by Stillingfleet. Ashurst angrily shook off the hand which Stillingfleet had unconsciously laid upon his arm, exclaiming, "But I say she is! She's a jilt—a cursed jilt, and I have a right to call her so!"

Stillingfleet again interposed.

Ashurst in a very excited manner answered, "A favoured suitor can be mighty calm! Keep your happiness and your advice to yourself!"—

"*My happiness!*" murmured poor Stillingfleet bitterly.

But Ashurst was speaking on—"I want nobody to preach to me of moderation—least of all you. I'll say it again and again—Elizabeth Duncombe has been guilty of conduct which in a man would be called dishonourable, and would not go unpunished."

Once more Stillingfleet interrupted him, "Maurice Ashurst! this is unmanly and unjust! No matter what answer Miss Duncombe may choose to give to you—or to me"—Stillingfleet paused for an instant and bit his lip till the blood came—"Yes!" he added, with an effort, "*Whatever* Elizabeth Duncombe may think proper to do, I stand here ready to assert that she has her reasons for it, which are not to be gainsayed nor inquired into!"

There was that in the generous zeal with which *this* rejected lover maintained the cause of his mistress which sent a thrill of sympathy and admiration through the breast of every bystander. Ashurst felt that his own behaviour appeared in very unfavourable contrast, and such a conviction is not apt to appease an angry man. His retort was uncourteous and almost insulting. Stillingfleet was provoked to rejoin in a similar tone. Each high word, as too often happens, led to another still higher, until it was no longer a case to be settled by words.

The next morning at an unusually early hour, Elizabeth was summoned to the parlour by a visit from Stillingfleet. He was very pale and addressed her in a broken voice—

"Elizabeth—cousin—Maurice Ashurst last night in a public place spoke unbecomingly of you. My expostulation was rejected with scorn. He reproached me as wantonly flaunting before his misery in the elation of successful love—you know with what little cause!—oh, what would I not do—what would I not endure to be that which he imagined me! Anything—anything, save what I *have done*—save what I *now endure*! Yes, Elizabeth, wretched and desolate

as I was, I could not bear to hear him utter reproaches against you which sounded in my ear like blasphemy. My rebukes—temperate I hope and believe they were—he returned with increasing contumely. The end was *I challenged him*”—

Elizabeth awaited the conclusion of the story in painful suspense, and dared not hasten the dreadful intelligence she anticipated, by a single syllable of inquiry.

“I challenged him, I say. We met this morning at sunrise. And—the worst has happened.”

After a pause, he added, “I know not why I disturb your peace by this communication—I had no thought to do so till your door caught my eye in passing. Then an irresistible impulse drove me to your presence. I now feel the cruel selfishness I am guilty of. Why, wretch that I am, do I come to involve you in my distress? What right have I, alas?”—

Elizabeth—woman’s kindness overcoming woman’s weakness—resisted the agitation which threatened to become uncontrollable, recalled the blood to her cheek, and said gently,—

“My true-hearted cousin! let no thought of the kind trouble you! It is I who need forgiveness for not returning your constant affection as it deserved. But let us not think of this. Are you safe in remaining here?”

“No: I must leave the State instantly. It may be that the laws are as impotent to punish as to prevent, but I must, I suppose, pay their terrors the decent respect of removing out of their reach. Farewell. Forget that I have been here—forget all that I have said—forget—oh, that such forgetfulness were in *my* power!—the deed that has been the occasion of my untimely presence!”

Scarcely had Stillingfleet left the house when he was overtaken by a sheriff’s deputy. Flight and resistance were equally vain; and he yielded himself without attempting either.

The indictment of George Stillingfleet for the murder of Maurice Ashurst was almost the only subject men could talk about for the two months preceding the trial. A law against duelling which had long slumbered in the statute-book had within a few years been revived by the legislature, and supported with additional and more stringent provisions; and the occurrence in quick succession of several fatal duels had produced the conviction in many men's minds that it ought to be tried whether a sharp example would not check a practice so destructive of society. The new chief justice, at the beginning of the very term in which this meeting took place, had, in his charge to the grand-jury, urged upon them their duty to see that the law was not dishonoured in the continued neglect of this solemnly reiterated enactment. Thus, Stillingfleet's case, from the very beginning, was by no means unattended with danger. But he himself relied, and not without reason, upon his counsel, Charles James Mahone, well remembered at this day as an Irish refugee, who had at his command all the fiery eloquence of his race, yet, in times of preparation, was as cool and subtle as if his early manhood had been spent in the office of a London special pleader instead of amidst the most exciting scenes that ever trained men to deeds of passion and daring. Mahone, it scarcely need be said, undertook the cause of his brother barrister with all his characteristic energy; yet Stillingfleet was surprised to find his confidence was not in proportion to his zeal. In reply to a question of Stillingfleet's, he said, "I don't fear S——— (the Attorney General of the State, who, it was understood, would conduct the case for the Government) but, to tell the truth, there is an adversary I *do* dread—the Chief Justice."

"Yet you never found reason to fear him while at the bar."

"I know that. He never did wonders with juries in those days, but he does now. I can't explain it. He seems to

possess some charm which enables him to turn about at will any twelve rascals that get impanelled under him. No matter what you say to them, they drink in his words as if they were those of St. Peter."

Mahone, some years previous, in defending a man on trial before one of the courts of the general government for a state offence, finding the court against him, had daringly appealed from its decision to the jury; and, to secure his end, had resorted to means more audacious still than the design. In order that the jury might disregard the instructions of the judge, he brought that judge into contempt by defying him to his face, and openly trampling his authority under foot. With exceeding skill he played his dangerous game, availing himself of his wonderful mastery of language to express his meaning beyond possibility of mistake by either the jury or the judge, who visibly writhed under the infliction, while at the same time his words on every attempt to fix them on paper appeared mockingly innocent. The counsel escaped the pains of contempt, and extricated his client when the case against him seemed almost too plain for argument.

On Stillingfleet's referring to that signal triumph, the great advocate shook his head, saying, "Let no man try that experiment before Chief Justice Imray. Dispute his supremacy with him?—I would as soon attempt to wrestle with Jupiter for the possession of his thunderbolt! No, man, no! we must try a lower flight. The prosecution to make out their case have to prove you the *challenger*. Such seems to be the construction of the law; at any rate so the indictment is drawn. I have some hope they'll fail here. Murchison could have proved it, but luckily the apoplexy took him off the other day. I hope, my dear fellow, you have never acknowledged having sent the challenge. You are not one, I apprehend, to be entrapped into fatal admissions by the common tricks of these catchpoles."—

"No; I am sure *they* have got nothing out of me." After saying this, however, Stillingfleet's countenance altered, and he added, "*Out* of prison, indeed, I admitted the fact to one person—Miss Duncombe."

"That's unfortunate," returned Mahone, "yet she's a *friend*, I take it—". And he gave Stillingfleet a keen inquisitive glance.

The unhappy prisoner sighed as he answered, "Yes, certainly."

"Then I'll see her myself immediately, and, if possible, guard against danger from this source."

Elizabeth received Mahone's communication with deep concern. Before he came, she had her own cause for uneasiness, for she had been served that morning with a writ summoning her as a witness in the case. Mahone's brow became cloudy as she made known this fact. She had trusted that the lawyer would dispel the vague terrors which the incident had awakened in her mind, and great was her dismay to find that no word of encouragement answered the appeal of her faltering tones.

"It is horrible to be obliged to appear in such a scene, and especially to appear there as even in form rendering testimony against my cousin—but surely it is only *in form*—do tell me, Mr. Mahone, that nothing I can say can be hurtful to Mr. Stillingfleet."

"What can you say?" inquired Mahone.

"Yes, what can I say? I'm sure I don't know. I am perfectly ignorant of the matter, except so far as I was hastily informed of some particulars by himself, the morning of his arrest."

"Ah, he mentioned then, did he not, that when Ashurst challenged him, he accepted, and that"—

"No—that was not the way"—interrupted Elizabeth.
"It was he that sent the challenge, not Ashurst."

"Are you sure?"

"Quite so—it was so stated in the newspaper. I'll get the paper for you in an instant—I laid it away in a drawer in the next room."

"No matter," answered the lawyer. "And so you know from the *newspaper* that Stillingfleet sent the challenge"—

"And Cousin George said so too"—

"Yes, yes—I see:—doubtless you have confounded the newspaper account with his. Very natural that you should, as the interview with him was so sudden, and of such an agitating nature."

"No:" persisted Elizabeth. "Cousin George said twice that he was the challenger—I remember it distinctly."

Too distinctly indeed, as Mahone became satisfied after some further questioning.

"But what effect can my saying he sent the challenge have?" asked Elizabeth.

"Your saying *that* is of no consequence—no more consequence, my dear Miss Duncombe, than the newspaper's saying it—but your saying that *Stillingfleet told you so* may have a very sad effect indeed."

"You do not mean, sir, to have me understand that my cousin's life depends upon my not giving that testimony?"

"I fear," answered the lawyer, "that is what we all ought to prepare ourselves to understand."

"But that cannot be, Mr. Mahone! That cannot be! Declare duelling a murderous practice as often as you please—yet when did a jury of this State ever *convict* a man of murder for slaying another in a duel?"

"True," answered Mahone, "but remember that no jury in such a case has yet been charged by *Chief Justice Imray*. We have not in these days to look for what the compassion or the caprice of twelve jurors shall dictate, but for what the law pronounces."

Elizabeth's heart swelled in despite of herself at this trib-

ute to the man she equally admired and loved. What higher honour could any judge attain to than to extort such an admission from such a man? For the moment, her being seemed to be in some measure identified with Imray's. As though seated with him on the lofty throne to which her imagination raised him, she and he seemed to be taking counsel together, or rather to entertain *common* thoughts and purposes, which were to be made known to the crowd below only in their results. Perhaps it was under the influence of this transient delusion of love that she said to Mahone, "What is it you would have? That the Chief Justice should not take part in the trial?"

"That would be best of all, of course," said Mahone, "but I should be quite satisfied if he would merely go through his part in the ordinary formal manner, and leave the jury and me to deal with the evidence and with their consciences. But Imray, we may be certain, is going to behave in no such hum-drum fashion. He is the very man to perceive that this is an occasion where there are strong inducements to act like common judges, and therefore he will arm himself to resist the temptation. This he will do so successfully as to lean, I fear, the other way. Yet obvious motives of delicacy, one would think, would indispose him to appear to press upon Stillingfleet."—

Mahone paused. He was thinking of Imray's and Stillingfleet's known relation as rival competitors for the hand of Miss Duncombe. And this was a delicate matter to broach before the lady herself. But somewhat to his surprise, Elizabeth, at once apprehending his meaning and the cause of his hesitation, said, "Do not scruple, Mr. Mahone, to speak to me as frankly as you would to any male friend of Mr. Stillingfleet. Remember if you please, sir, that our great object of concern at present must be to secure his safety. I agree with you in thinking that there are reasons why Mr. Imray would not willingly be instrumental in my

cousin's destruction: yet I believe you speak doubtfully—why will not those reasons operate?"

"In my heart I believe they might," answered Mahone, "if they but occurred to him."

"I do not quite understand you," said Elizabeth.

"My meaning is this: the Chief Justice is a strange man—in some respects. One peculiarity is a consequence of the very source of that strength which distinguishes him from other men. No one that I know of has the power of abstraction in a greater degree; and at the same time, no one, in fixing his mind on the substance of the matter before him, is more apt to escape seeing those external circumstances which strike other people first. For instance, it is not at all impossible that he should go through this trial with (for the time) no perception whatever of the fact that he and the prisoner have met in private life. In the person filling the prisoner's chair, he sees only an individual charged with an offence: a crime, and a rational perpetrator, make up all that is of the substance of the case; everything else his mind will instinctively abstract and dismiss."

"If this be so," said Elizabeth, "'Tis a pity he cannot be reminded of circumstances which, as here, it so nearly concerns his honour to appreciate."

"It is, indeed," Mahone replied; and with this the conversation closed.

A bold project occurred to Elizabeth's mind. In considering it, we must remember not only that she was a woman, and Imray her lover, but that she had been to him, by his own appointment, a preceptress and guide. It was by following the taper which *her* hand held up that he had emerged out of ignorance and obscurity. To *her* lessons, and to the influence of her encouraging voice, he himself attributed the full-armed manhood which was now so well able to buffet with the world. He had taken delight in

bowing to her authority—heretofore: would he not yield to it in this case also, where such weighty motives urged her to exert it? The experiment, at all events, was to be tried.

Without going into a detail of the means by which it was accomplished, suffice it to say that she secured an interview with the terrible Chief Justice, under circumstances that at once avoided the risk of interruption and precluded him from attempting a premature escape. Elizabeth tried her best to conjure up old times, and to assume the old familiar footing of mistress to a pupil who received her words as law; but she found it much harder than she had expected to metamorphose that stern black-browed judge back into the simple-minded plough-boy. The school-mistress tone not coming at her bidding, she was fain to have recourse to the softer influences which Love ever lends to Beauty. Beneath her smiles, the furrows insensibly melted away, the brow became as smooth as a brow naturally so rugged could be, and Imray was soon basking in the sunshine in very loverlike fashion, just as though he were no chief justice at all.

She advanced to the point insidiously. "You will not, of course, want to sit at poor Cousin George's trial?"

"I might not wish to sit then, if perfect freedom of choice were left me. But a judge must set an example of obedience to the law of the court; and the customary routine of business (which is the law of the court) requires that I should preside in this cause."

"Yet, are there not cases in which a particular judge may, if he pleases, avoid participating? If your father or brother were involved, you would not take part?"

"No; but the exceptions which the wisdom of the law has made only establish the rule as an inflexible canon in cases not excepted; to make further exceptions, from private judgment, would impair the rule."

This was uttered somewhat austere, and Elizabeth dared

not urge arguments against the dictum; but her countenance showed she was yet unconvinced. Imray continued, "Besides, there are special reasons why I should not shun my duty. I have undertaken, since I have occupied my present position, to see that the laws are judicially enforced to the last tittle. It seems peculiarly necessary that this should be so in a republic—there must be something stable, something which does not respond to every change either of public or of private opinion. The mind of the judge should act like pure reason: and such premises given, the conclusion must follow by invariable consequence, like the result of geometrical demonstration."

At the time when this conversation was taking place (which it will be remembered was near the division line between this century and the last—a time when the people of this country kept up a familiar acquaintance with English affairs), Burke's celebrated defence of his pension was in everybody's mouth. Elizabeth, with a boldness she afterwards wondered at, by way of answer to Imray's exposition of the nature of the judicial office, referred to the splendid passage in which the great Anti-gallican paints the heart of a metaphysician—of a man who, closing his heart's door to "the compunctious visitings of nature" raises himself to a cold spirituality, "incorporeal, pure, unmixed, dephlegmated, defecated"—and *Salanic*.

To this, Imray only answered, "Burke is speaking of *legislators*—but *I* am a *judge*."

"Yet if you must be Cousin George's judge, you will not, I am sure, be a stern one."

Imray moved uneasily, and his eye strayed to the direction of the door. But Elizabeth had him fast for a half hour to come, and knowing well that this was her only chance she meant to use it like a desperate person.

"Do not—I pray you, do not bear hardly on poor George!"

"I shall not bear upon him at all. If he be crushed by the weight of the *law*—drawn upon him by his own hand—neither you nor I can help that."

"Yet you will suffer the law to take such course as it would as ordinarily administered in cases like this? You will give the law to the jury and nothing more?"

"Certainly, I shall not meddle with their appropriate province of estimating the evidence."

"I am not versed in these things, as you know," said Elizabeth, "but I think I am not mistaken in believing that you may or may not, as you choose, bring certain moral influences to bear upon them—you may or may not advance considerations to strengthen them in performing their office. What I entreat is that you will simply state the law—no more is required of you by any one—and then leave the unhappy man on trial to his fate, whatever it may be."

Imray answered after a moment's consideration, "This kind of appeal is very improper for me to listen to. If any other person living were to attempt it, he should go to prison as sure as I am one of the Justices of this Commonwealth! Be content—say no more." But Elizabeth was not content. With a spirit as high as his own, she declared that though she went to prison for it, she had more to say.

"If George Stillingfleet has done wrong, remember that he did it not from any selfish or unmanly impulse. It was to defend one who could not defend herself, that he—rashly, if you please, yet generously—engaged in that unhappy strife. It was in behalf of *me* he raised his voice and his arm—of *me*, who had little cause indeed to claim such self-devotion. I cannot forget this, nor do I see how any one who has a regard for me, can forget it."

"Don't you perceive," said Imray with a voice that seemed as harsh as if he were pronouncing sentence on a convict, "that you are but heaping up motives for the more careful and stern performance of my office? Each new temptation

to swerve from rectitude is a reason why every faculty and every energy should be summoned to the support of duty. My soul, by nature, is weak—weaker than a child's—daily and hourly, do I make the confession to myself: I yield continually to assaults, because the tempter, like a crafty strategist, gives no notice of the place of his next attack. But this time I am forewarned—I thank you for it—I am likely to be culpably remiss in a case which assails my most vulnerable side. I must close up the breach betimes. Stillingfleet shall find himself standing face to face with a *judge*: neither he nor any man shall detect the lover—the weak, adoring lover of a woman who has expressed an interest in his acquittal. No Roman shall play his part better than I! Frail sinner as I am, but tell me *which* member it is that offends, and, though it be my right hand, I will cut it off—though it be the apple of mine eye, I will pluck it out!"

Imray, as he said these words, was striding about the room in a state of more excitement than Elizabeth had ever before beheld him in. Presently, however, he subsided into his usual fixed severity. All her resolution was required to enable her to break the calm, but she did nerve herself to speak—

"If *you* are a stoic, I am but a woman. You may act the hangman's part with composure, but can you expect such a triumph over nature from *me*?"

Not comprehending her drift, Imray made no answer. She continued, "Do you not know that I have been summoned as a witness against Mr. Stillingfleet?"

"I did not know it; but if it be so, your course is plain. Perform your duty, and then your conscience, like mine, will have no reproaches in store."

Elizabeth was in despair. "Alas!" she said, "Must it be that George Stillingfleet is to owe his fate to the fact that you and I join to destroy him? If the end must come, could not Heaven have chosen other means to bring it about?"

But I declare to you that I will sooner die than see him die! Oh, I beseech you, stay your hand! For you are a free-agent, while I, even in the moments when my mouth is uttering testimony against him, will be more a victim than an accuser. Proceed in the stern course you threaten, and my whole life is blasted. Spare—I pray you—spare *me!*”

It was not in man to witness without emotion such loveliness bathed in tears. With a troubled aspect, Imray answered:—

“What is there I can do?—I might, it is true, resign”—

“Oh, *do* resign!” exclaimed Elizabeth, looking up suddenly into his face with such appealing eyes as it was hard to resist.

“No,” said Imray after a pause, expressing the result of a train of reflection, “It will not do to resign. That would be a cowardly desertion of my post. At any other time indeed, and urged to it by different motives, I could abandon my seat most cheerfully; but not now—both honour and duty forbid.”

“Honour!” echoed Elizabeth with astonishment, “Honour! Do you not see how your honour must suffer in all men’s opinions by the conviction of George Stillingfleet?”

It was Imray’s turn to feel surprise. “In what way?” he inquired.

“Thus: Stillingfleet and you have been competitors in the same forum; will not the world say that jealously quickens your activity to get rid of one who threatens to rival you in legal reputation?”

Imray unconsciously half rose from his seat, “Now this is most absurd! I fearful of Stillingfleet’s rivalry! Truly this man seems to have been favoured with a singular instance of success, in satisfying *your* mind of his vast latent talents! I venture to assert that the suspicion you intimate respecting my motives will not occur to one other individual in all this city. You must find some other source of danger to my reputation than this.”

"Then there is another," said Elizabeth firmly, "which I am most unwilling to speak of, yet, since you drive me to it, I must do so, at whatever risk of misconstruction—this is no time, I think, for womanish delicacy. If Mr. Stillingfleet could not rival you at the law, he has yet been supposed—perhaps without cause, but this is no matter—he has been quite generally *supposed*, to have rivalled you in a contest of a different kind—a most trivial kind, I own, and for a very unworthy object; but the bitterness of a controversy is not always in proportion to its importance. At any rate, the imagination of the world is, that no rivalry is so apt to give rise to feelings of hostility as a rivalry in love."

To this Imray said very calmly, "In suggesting the idea of my being actuated by such hostility to Stillingfleet, do you speak with reference to what may be the opinion of the world, or to your own opinion?"

"To the opinion of the world."

"Then, as the world has no right to concern itself about such a matter, I shall pay no heed whatever to its vain imaginations. *Imaginations*—that is indeed the word—you have rightly described them."

"What if I should say," returned Elizabeth, "that the suspicion forced itself on *my* mind also."

"I must pray the indulgence of being spared having to meet that case till it actually arises."

Elizabeth hesitated: there was something in his calmness that appalled her more than his vehemence. "But there is no resort else," she murmured, and proceeded, "That you *knowingly* would give way to an impulse of jealousy, it is impossible to suspect; yet such a feeling may lurk in a mind unconscious of its presence—nay, it may disguise itself in the angelic air of stern sense of duty, in order to lead astray a soul too noble to be otherwise seduced. This is my doubt—if you choose to call it so, my *charge*."

"Then from you I appeal to your conscience, not doubting of an acquittal at that bar."

Thus Elizabeth saw her last hope extinguished, and it was perhaps not more to her relief than Imray's that the entrance of a third party put an end to her quixotic attempt.

On an impartial review of the conversation, Elizabeth was unable to persuade herself that it had done the least good. She was oppressed with the conviction that it had rather operated to put the immovable Imray, whose strictest discipline was ever exercised over his own heart, on his guard against external influences which possibly he would not have been altogether unaffected by, had no one warned him of them.

The day of the trial drew nearer and nearer, and with its advance Elizabeth's increasing distress kept pace. To enter that gloomy court-room—a scene from which even under ordinary circumstances a woman's sensitive nature shrinks—to feel—not see, for well she knew how her head must droop and her eyes grow dim that day—to feel on her right hand the ominous presence of that impassive judge who had unhumanized himself in order the more fitly to perform his dreadful part, and on her left the wretched prisoner, awaiting in mute agony the utterance of those words which, as wrung from her lips by the torture of legal inquisition, were to seal his doom—to go through all this in *imagination*, was like the pain of dying; but what similitude could describe the reality? Vainly she looked for support, under these horrible anticipations, to Mahone. The advocate, serenely confident as he appeared to the rest of the world, did not attempt to hide from her his real despondency. Still utterly without ground to build a rational hope upon as Elizabeth found herself, she persisted in cherishing a secret belief that a way would yet be discovered to rescue Stillingfleet—a painful way perhaps, but effectual. Doubtless it was the consciousness that she had resolution enough for any course, however desperate, that caused her to infer that some course

would manifest itself. Stillingfleet's friends were of those "with whom Time gallops withal," and it was already the day before that on which the trial would commence, and Elizabeth's dream of preventing a result that seemed inevitable was as vague and formless as when it entered her mind. If any thing was to be done, it could not be longer postponed. She knew Mahone's subtlety, and, sending for him, she inquired if he could devise no mode of relieving her from the necessity of giving testimony on the morrow.

"I can think of but one way," answered the lawyer, "but one lawful way"—and he proceeded to unfold it.

Elizabeth's cheek tingled, and with a faltering voice she asked if he could think of nothing else. He answered, "Nothing."

A long silence ensued, which was broken by her promising to give him her determination in two hours. Mahone, undertaking to call after the lapse of that space of time, withdrew. As he was leaving, she quite needlessly prayed him to inform no living being of what had been the subject of their colloquy.

The trial had opened. The throng of spectators who stood patiently packed away in every inconvenient nook that the politeness of the sheriff accorded, found, for an hour or two, little to reward them for the fortitude with which they endured the pressure of one another's boots, and the more galling humiliation of submitting to the stupid insolence of the tipstaff. The course of justice seemed to flow very evenly, and therefore very uninterestingly. Witnesses for the Commonwealth came forward in succession, gave their testimony, and were dismissed, very rapidly. At length, *Elizabeth Duncombe* was called.

At the sound of this name, there was quite a stir in the court-room. In consequence thereof, many persons lost a brief remark of Mahone's which evidently was causing much sensation inside the bar; and the whole crowd, keeping their

feet very still, each man leaning forward as far as possible, tried with all their might to collect from the subsequent proceedings what it was that had been said.

The young man, who, as junior counsel for the prosecution, had been examining the witnesses, was quite flustered by Mahone's interference, and knew not what to say. But the Chief Justice in a very calm tone said, "Please to state, Mr. Mahone, the nature of your objection to this evidence."

"I object to this witness as incompetent."

The court, jury, and every body in the room were all attention. Amidst the profound stillness, the slightest sound caught the ear, and for a single instant all eyes were turned from Mahone, just on the point of opening his lips, to the seats assigned to the witnesses, from whence a faint rustling noise had proceeded. The occasion of it was seen to be simply that a lady who sat on one of these benches, closely veiled, had bent her head down to the rail in front of her.

Mahone, with his usual silvery distinctness of enunciation, said, "The point on which I found my objection is *that a married woman*—except in the single case of a personal injury committed against herself—*can, under no circumstances, be admitted to give evidence against her husband.* And this lady is the wife of Mr. Stillingfleet, the defendant."

It would be vain to attempt to describe the astonishment that was pictured on every countenance. The Chief Justice alone sat grimly stern and unmoved.

By this time the Attorney General had come to the rescue of his young colleague. "When did this marriage take place?" he asked.

"Last evening," answered Mahone, "in the prison; and the ceremony was preformed by the Rev. Mr.———of this city, who is in readiness to testify to it."

"Then," said the Attorney General, addressing Imray, "I pray your honour's judgment, whether a marriage such as this comes within the privilege of the rule. This marriage

is a plain fraud upon the law—nay, it is in contempt of this court, whose process attached upon the witness long before the pretended ground of incompetency existed. Furthermore, it is a principle running throughout the law that no man shall profit by his own wrong: the law of evidence adopts that principle, and it is one of its rules that a party in a cause cannot by his own act disqualify his adversary's witness, and thus deprive him of the right which he has to that witness's testimony."

Upon this, a discussion between the lawyers ensued, to which the Chief Justice gave the profoundest attention, balancing the opposed arguments, and mentally contributing also from his own stores to each scale. The point—undoubtedly a most important one—appeared not to be settled, at that time, by any authority, and it was a case where a judge, deciding either way, could very well sustain himself.

Though the swellings of Imray's proud heart disturbed not a fold of his silken gown, there was a raging tempest within. In proportion to that disappointment, so cruel in its suddenness, which blighted his whole being—cut down his hopes, and burnt up the very soil on which hope should grow—was his indignation against the authors of his misery. And who *were* the triumphant perpetrators? There, below him, in the prisoner's box, was one of them—a wretched creature whose fate he, the occupant of a judgment seat which no criminal ever beheld without terror, up to that hour seemed to hold in his hand. And yonder to the right, lowly bent—crouching, as if to escape his eye—was the co-plotter—the object of a life-long adoration—she, who so lately, with answering voice and eye, had confessed love for love! There they were, fair in outward seeming; the man, stately and graceful above most men, the woman lovely as a poet's dream. Were they not well mated? What madness ever to have believed peerless beauty destined to wed with him—him, Gilbert Imray, who, by the good pleasure of that Almighty Former

who fashioneth every man as a potter his vessel, stood himself alone, segregated from whatever in creation was lovely and admirable? But did want of comeliness justify treachery and insult? With bitterness of spirit, did Imray recall Elizabeth's attempt to influence him in Stillingfleet's behalf. He now naturally inferred that all the affection she manifested for himself was a hypocritical show to induce him to listen with favours to her intercession. "Traitor!" thought he, "Who, to save her paramour, would willingly have made me as recreant to duty and honour as herself!"

"No man shall take advantage of his own wrong!" exclaimed the Attorney General summing up his argument in the words of the text with which he had set out.

"Ay! Ay!" responded the angry spirit in Imray's bosom, "No man shall take advantage of his own wrong!—no man—nor woman neither!"

How easy to frustrate that shameless attempt to rob justice, and to rob *him*! The question of the admissibility of the evidence of the new-made wife hung confessedly in equilibrium. Full well he knew, as every one knew, that *his* judgment would be the judgment of the court. He had but to speak—he, the betrayed and contemned—and the *sword of the law* would sunder that marriage-bond!

But Imray's weakness did not last long. I do not pretend to say that *charity* and *long-suffering* drove away the Tempter; but he remembered that he was a *judge*. A legal question was before him and required a legal decision. With the sturdy resoluteness of his character casting aside every consideration fitted to work his judgment, he applied his powerful mind, thus disembarrassed and freed, to the subject, and in an instant the work was done: "*The witness is clearly incompetent, and cannot be admitted.*"

The show of a trial went on. Save some half-a-dozen persons, nobody knew that the verdict was in effect already given.

The evidence for the State all in, Mahone, without calling any witnesses for the defendant, requested the Chief Justice to instruct the jury that the Prosecution having offered no evidence to support a material part of their case, to wit, that the defendant was the challenger in the supposed duel, it was their duty to render a verdict of acquittal: and the Chief Justice did so; and that verdict was accordingly returned.

Twelve months passed without the occurrence of anything which it is worth while to record. Immediately after the trial, Stillingfleet departed from the city, and, as was understood, had become a resident of a distant Southwestern State. Elizabeth remained with her father, a helpless superannuated man, who had almost survived his faculties, and who saw no company; and she herself withdrew as much as possible from society.

Imray, embittered and desolate, gave himself up to his judicial duties. In continual occupation he found his best solace. He seldom allowed his mind to dwell upon the past. Elizabeth's desertion he could only account for on the supposition that she had never really loved him, but had either deceived him, or was herself deceived—which of the two was the case mattered little—the result to *him* was the same. His life,—a long struggle, marked at intervals by delusive successes—had now passed under a cloud whose gloom extended as well over all the tedious waste that had been traversed as over all the seeming prosperity of the future.

The seasons had completed their course, and so completely had he succeeded in drowning memory in the cares of the moment that the anniversary of the day when hope perished in his breast went by unheeded. Yet the eventful past was destined to be recalled to his thoughts.

Elizabeth had, in her mother's brother, a very zealous and active friend. This gentleman, whose name was Willing,

was a man of the world and a man of business, and somewhat fussy withal. To this practical common-sense, the position of his niece seemed very anomalous and consequently in need of change. He turned over the matter in his mind, and came to the conclusion that things, however sadly entangled, were still capable of adjustment. From the first he had preferred Imray to all the other suitors of his niece. He perceived in him a rising man in a new and rising country and clearly foresaw that in the career of life he would thrust aside and out-strip the Callanders and Stillingfleets and Ashursts. Extreme was his vexation at learning of Elizabeth's marriage; and proportionate was his joy to cherish the belief that it was possible to retrieve that mis-step. He talked to his niece about it, but she, drooping and broken-spirited, could not enter into his plans. He was in correspondence with Stillingfleet, and was not ill pleased one day to receive from him a letter which seemed to make it necessary to settle upon some course or other. Showing it to Elizabeth, who in her now usual apathetic manner took it from his hand and read it, he said,

"I own I can't blame him much. Though *you* be content to continue neither maid, wife, nor widow. I am not surprised that he is getting restless. A state so extremely negative is not suited to the nature of a man, for he is a domestic animal. Suppose I ask Judge Imray's opinion as to what it is best for you to do?

Elizabeth did not forbid, and to Imray Mr. Willing betook himself. In a room well lined with books, the man of rosy and sleek rotundity was seated opposite to the haggard and careworn son of the law.

"The marriage, you know, sir, was merely formal," Willing was saying.

Imray appeared surprised.

"Yes," continued the other, "Articles of Separation were signed in the same hour that made them, *de jure*, man and

wife. And permit me to say, sir, that never was man more devotedly loved by woman than you were that day by Elizabeth—nay, than you are this moment loved by her.”

A crowd of thoughts rushed over Imray’s mind.

“But it is impossible,” he muttered,. “How could she, loving another, marry him? How could *he* marry her, unless he had assurance of her heart?”

He was speaking to himself, rather than addressing Willing, yet the latter took it upon him to answer.

“Fear of death will work wonders, and it would not do for one in Stillingfleet’s situation to inquire too scrupulously whether the hand that rescued him from the gallows was extended in love or in cold charity.”

“Dastard! to consent to be thus saved!”

“Nay,” continued Willing, “The fellow is not altogether without excuse. He was himself desperately in love, and probably believed that, once bound to him by the tie of wedlock, she might come to love him in return.”

“And so I suppose she has,” observed Imray coldly.

“Not at all: on the contrary, her persistence in holding him to the terms of the agreement according to which they were married has rendered him desperate. He calls on her now either to consent to live together, or to agree to a *divorce*. This latter alternative can be accomplished very easily under the laws of the State where he is now residing; and with the delay of only one year more they may both become free—absolutely free from their present yoke, and able to unite themselves respectively to whomsoever they will. Now, it appears to me that this is the very best thing that can be done. Are not you of the same opinion?”

Imray did not immediately answer the appeal, and Willing proceeded to intimate that, under the circumstances, if a divorce should be effected, he, Imray, supposing his attachment to continue, would find no obstacle in the way of an union with Elizabeth.

"Sir!" exclaimed the Chief Justice in a severe tone, "Would you make me accessory to a *fraud*?"

Poor Willing was at once abashed and astonished.

"The Law"—continued Imray with vehemence "the Law whose servant I am—the Law, whose majesty I am sworn to uphold—has been mocked! It has been defrauded, under cover of a solemn lie, of evidence to which it was entitled! Think you it becomes *me*, to ratify this shameful contrivance? Shall I be party to it?—Never!"

Willing, thoroughly frightened by the storm he had ignorantly raised, stammered something—he knew not what.

Imray cut him short without ceremony, "Elizabeth Duncombe married once, is—to me at least—married forever. Whatever facility the rash legislation of these times may have afforded to those who at their own pleasure would part the most sacred of earthly ties, I shall never countenance such wantonness—much less consent to profit by it. Tell Elizabeth—tell *Mrs. Stillingfleet*—this: divorced or undivorced, I look upon her as another man's wife; all religion and morality command that a wife should love her husband alone, and therefore shall I look upon *her* love as having no other object but George Stillingfleet."

"But," said Willing, "what shall be done with respect to Stillingfleet? He declares he will get divorced unless she consent to the cancelling of the agreement of separation."

To this Imray, after a moment's hesitation, answered, "I do not perceive that I am in any way bound to intermeddle in the domestic affairs of a household with which I am altogether unconnected; yet, since my advice is asked, I shall give it with frankness and sincerity. As far as Mr. Stillingfleet is concerned, it seems to me that after consenting to be saved from an impending danger upon certain terms, he cannot in honour insist now upon any departure from those terms. But dismissing his claim from the case, I am yet of opinion that the existing relation between him and his

wife is an unnatural one, and ought not to continue. A wife without a husband, and a husband without a wife, do not fulfill the laws of God, and add, without excuse, to the swarm of temptations that beset this mortal pilgrimage."

Willing returned, and rendered his report to Elizabeth, who sighed as she responded,—

"And does he say so? Then he shall be obeyed! I will write to George immediately. Sit down here till I have finished my letter, and then read it."

With hands that trembled nervously, she laid a sheet of paper on her desk, and taking up a pen traced, hurriedly, a few words. Then she paused, and turned to her uncle a face wearing that "likeness of a smile" which more shocks the eye than tears.

"What *time* shall I prescribe? Assuredly, I may ask such indulgence as usage accords to the timid bride. In truth, that was a *brief* wooing that won me!"

"Some delay is but reasonable, I think," answered Willing, "Suppose you tell him he may come home a year hence?"

"Thank you, uncle!" returned Elizabeth fervently; and then the letter was finished.

Shortly after this, Imray resigned his Chief Justiceship and removed to a neighbouring State, where he began that political career whose more popular fame has nearly extinguished the recollection of his early judicial honours. His new place of residence was a great seaport town. One morning as he was seated in his office alone,—his clerk was absent at breakfast—a paragraph in the morning's newspaper fixed his attention the moment his eye fell on it. So profound was his meditation that a somewhat urgent tap upon the outer door failed to arouse him. The rapping was repeated; still he did not hear. "No: it is nothing to me," he muttered at length, and with the calmness of one who has thoroughly revolved a matter and come to his conclusions thereupon, he turned to

other columns of the paper, and went on reading with neither more nor less than the ordinary degree of interest. There was a third impatient rap. This time he heard, and rising from his seat opened the door. In rushed Willing, with an air of great perturbation. Casting a rapid glance around the room to assure himself that no third party was present, he burst out with,—

"Come!—come, sir, I beg you!—as you have a human heart in your breast, *come!* She is mad—if you do not hasten to her, hopelessly mad!"

"Who is mad?—What do you mean, sir?"

"Oh, come, come! Let us be gone, and talk *afterward*. You have *driven* her into madness.—Heaven's curse be on you if you do not run to rescue her from that awful gulf!"

"Sit down, sir!" said Imray sharply, "I shall believe you mad yourself, if you do not give me a rational account of what has happened."

Willing submitted, with the air of one who appeals to such invisible beings as may be present to bear witness that the delay is none of his causing. So great however was his agitation that he had been seated some moments before he could command himself sufficiently to speak connectedly.

"I told her, sir, what you said about her duty to live with her husband. With the passive submission of a child, she answered, "What he commands, I obey;" and she wrote at once to Stillingfleet to tell him that he might come to her in a year from that time. For thirteen months, sir, after that letter was sent, she scarcely uttered a syllable. I was coming to this city on business, and thinking a change of scene might be serviceable to her, proposed that she should accompany me. She acquiesced, as she now acquiesces in everything—she that once was so high-spirited! *You* broke that spirit! *You* broke it forever; all strength of will was gone, and she would not have resisted the guidance of a child. Well, sir, we came here. It was to this port the New Orleans packet

in which Stillingfleet sailed was bound. The week came during which her arrival was expected. Day before yesterday, it was announced that she was just off the harbour—a mistake indeed, as it turned out. We told Elizabeth that the packet had arrived, and that Stillingfleet would probably be on shore early in the afternoon. Then, sir, a fearful change came over her. She withdrew immediately to her chamber, although it was just after breakfast. My wife, apprehending something might be the matter, went to her several times in the course of the morning, but found her much as usual. Once, while she was in with her, the clock on the upper landing of the stairs struck the hour. Although my wife was talking, Elizabeth, who had previously been listening to it, paid no heed to her words whatever, but abruptly began counting the strokes of the clock aloud—one, two, three, and so on, to ten, I think it was. Afterwards, at eleven o'clock the chambermaid, passing by her door, heard her within counting the hour in the same way."

"Why do you pause?" said Imray—"Go on!"

"Well, sir, just as that clock, at noon, had finished striking *twelve*, every one in the house, down to the very cook in the basement, was startled by a loud, horrible shriek. My wife ran to Elizabeth's room, and found her in a raving phrensy. So she has remained ever since—only getting worse."

Imray's eye settled on the opened newspaper.

Willing, at no loss to understand what was passing through his mind, said,—

"It is of no avail that we tell her anything; her mind is utterly gone—not a word we say excites the faintest answering gleam of intelligence. She murmurs your name continually, and now and then invokes your presence with a passionate earnestness indescribable by language. Oh, sir, I tell you if there is anything can move the stone-hard heart of a Chief Justice, that wild cry of anguish must do it!"

Imray's countenance betrayed that he was deeply shocked. Willing perceived it, and rose from his chair, "Come then with me! If there is any hope on earth for Elizabeth, it depends on your speedy presence."

Imray, without a word, rose also and took his hat from its resting place.

"Ah, Mr. Imray," said Willing, as they went out together, "depend upon it, a woman's heart is not a thing to be fooled with!"

Imray bowed his head in meek assent.

Long did the self-reproaching man watch by her who had loved him so truly. She was conscious of his presence, and it soothed her, though no rapid amendment was the consequence. More than once she burst from this tranquil state into frantic exclamations, such as, "He comes!—oh, there he is—*there!*" And she would point at vacant space or at the figure of some domestic, or other usual attendant. On these occasions, turning to Imray, she would appeal to him to save her from the approaching spectre. Then, on Imray's clasping her hand gently, and saying, "Be assured—he shall trouble you no more," she would smile on him tearfully, and sink back in calm trust.

At last, the patience of those who so faithfully waited had its reward in the restoration to that fair form of the mind which was its worthy tenant. By degrees they broke to her the tidings, of mingled joy and sorrow, that the New Orleans packet had been wrecked, and that among those who perished was George Stillingfleet. It is hardly necessary to explain that it was this news which, coming on the heels of the previous false announcement of the ship's arrival, formed the contents of the paragraph in the morning journal that had produced Imray's fit of moody abstraction, when visited at his office by Willing.

Even Imray's jealous self-punishing spirit saw no obstacle—now in the way of his marriage to Elizabeth. This event

was postponed to a sufficiently distant day to meet the scruples of those who are most censorious in such matters; yet the gossips of the town, while they confessed they could find no fault, expressed some wonder that Elizabeth should marry again, seeing her love for late husband had been so remarkable that her grief at learning his death had driven her mad!

THE TRENCHARD PROPERTY

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THE TRENCHARD PROPERTY

"The manor, sir! what hath the manor done?
The house is an honest house of wood and stone;
And all the land's as free from taint or vice
As that which Adam walked in Paradise.
In man's own bosom doth the Tempter dwell;
There springs the crime, and there is felt the hell."

CHAPTER I

Within sight of a road which constitutes the principal thoroughfare across one of the counties of Eastern Virginia, there was standing forty years ago a large frame mansion, an object of more than common notice to every traveller. A spacious portico, stretching along the front of the main building, sent its columns upward to the level of the eaves, for the support of the projecting gable and its heavy moulding; while on either side was a wing as high as the central structure, but sufficiently withdrawn to throw out the entrance in bold relief. The house, as we have said, was of frame, and, at the time to which we refer, a brilliant coat of ordinary whitewash covered the exterior of the lower story; but by way of contrast, all above the sills of the second tier of windows showed the natural hue of the yellow poplar, only obscured here and there by dingy relics of the paint which had been applied under ancient and very different auspices. The beautiful slope which had once been a lawn was now a magnificent cabbage patch. Yonder, to the left, by the rivulet that struggles so gracefully through the grassy valley, there *had* been a Grecian summer-house, half embowered in trees; the site was now occupied by a pig-sty. In the room of the garden paling, which, as furnishing such

convenient kindling-wood, had long since been converted into smoke and ashes, stood a huge but rickety worm fence. The only objects that exhibited no evidence of change were the solid wall of gray freestone inclosing the burial-place of the ancient family, and the noble willows that overshadowed each angle.

Poverty was not the excuse for these inroads of barbarism, for not even in its palmyest days had the mansion acknowledged a wealthier owner than Stephen Trenchard, with his hundred negroes and ten thousand acres of fertile hill and bottom. Nor was the old man, as might be suspected, a miser; the scores whom his bounty had assisted defend his name from such a stigma.

In the State militia, Trenchard had attained the rank of Colonel; and if an indomitable will gives claim to martial titles, he deserved them. With an irascible temperament, he possessed that usual counterpoise, easy placability; yet it was observed that if his resentment in any case survived the first interval of quiet, it was apt to rankle ever after in his mind with a bitterness that admitted of no alleviation.

Fair and open in his dealings, whether of kindness or hostility, respected by his neighbours, and affectionately cherished by his slaves, to whom he was at once an imperious and an indulgent master, he might, with all his riches, have deserved no more lengthy tribute to his memory than I have already given, were it not for one or two incidents in the latter part of his life. These I now proceed to relate. The bare facts are themselves sufficiently singular, and I shall not attempt to add any sort of artificial interest.

On an evening in September, in the sixty-fourth year of Colonel Trenchard's age, he received information that one of his distant tobacco fields had been found very much injured by the cold of the preceding night, and every thing betokened a still heavier frost during that which was about to ensue. He was anxious and vexed, and in consequence

retired to bed sooner than usual. Though the crop threatened with destruction was of many thousand dollars' value, its danger may yet seem too trivial a matter to deserve revival; but all the particulars which we are now giving—many of them of much less apparent significance than the damage to the tobacco—were at that time revolved and investigated and discussed with an animation very different from any ordinary estimation of their importance. The old man slept uneasily, and finally awoke with a start like one whom the cares of the day haunt in his dreams. It must be mentioned here that he had been an energetic overseer of his negroes as long as his personal activity lasted, and that he retained even now the practice of blowing a horn at early day-break to awaken the household, and of afterwards taking note that his field hands at least *started* to their work in due season. On the morning we have referred to, Trenchard hastily dressed, lighted a candle, and, without looking at his watch to satisfy himself as to the hour, stepped into the passage at whose further extremity was a window opening in the direction of the quarters, and out of which he was accustomed to sound his blast. In this hall he met an old black man, who, having just ascended from the lower story, was on his way to his chamber in the attic.

"Heigho, marser! what fur wid de horn now?" exclaimed the servant.

"Why, to make you all get up, you blockhead!"

"Bless us, we's got a *young* marser instead of de old; he's gwine fur to make us work early, sure enough—He-he-he!"

"What are you grinning for, Ichabod?"

"Why, look dar!"—they now stood before the window—"gwine to take moonlight for sunshine. See de moon jus' ris all red as young gal's lips—call dat *day*?" And Ichabod, bending nearly double, pointed to the eastern horizon with a tremulous, skinny finger.

"You're right, you're right, old boy. The moon rose

last night, by the almanac, at ten minutes past two, so it can't be much after three now. But what makes you a-stirring at this time?"

"Why, I hearn the sheep-bells jingle over beyint the orchard, and so——"

"The mischief you did! Those confounded curs at it again? But you didn't go alone, did you?"

"No, sir. I wuk Dick, and we went over, and sure there we did find the dogs makin' 'struction."

"How many were there?"

"Three; one ob 'em a great big, shaggy, yaller fellow, most like Mister——"

"It was Sol Frazier's, I'll be bound."

"Yes, dat's what I tink, Marser Steve," continued the negro. "Well, we driv 'em off, and Dick killed one with a fence rail. But they'd done a sight of harm; de flock so big t'udder time sim now like a poor, 'spisable free nigger's. Out o' satisfaction, I counted dem dat was deceased. I skup de small heaps, tinkin dey must be spring lambs, an' seed four dozen and a half. Dick says he counts upwards sixty in all. Howsomever, dere's a mortual loss and a mortual luck too, for de last new moon ris on my left shoulder. But Heaven save us!"

To account for honest Ichabod's exclamation, we must explain that his master, without attending to his concluding reflection, muttered rapidly to himself, "What! sixty of my prime lot gone! the best sheep in the country; not to be matched any where! It's too much—it's too much. Why didn't you get up sooner and save them, you rascal?" This was to the astounded black; and then pealing forth a thundering oath, (we are sorry to say that Trenchard was not unfrequently guilty of profanity,) he hurled the candlestick that he carried violently against the floor.

The negro had nearly dropped *his* light in the effort to express his consternation fully by expanding both palms

at once, but he fortunately retained self-possession enough to prevent the double loss. His master seemed to have relieved himself by this explosion of passion, and calmly taking the candle-stick from him, said:

"There, now, Ichabod, the moon's well up, and you can find your way to bed without a light. Go, and we'll talk more about it in the morning."

Thus speaking, he withdrew to his chamber, closed the door, and without extinguishing Ichabod's candle, which he placed on the bureau, or removing any part of his dress threw himself upon the bed. The bedstead, old-fashioned and very high, stood in the middle of the apartment, and had on one side the convenience and almost necessity of a set of steps to ascend it. An hour or two after, Ichabod, who occupied the room immediately above, and who, like most old negroes, seemed to exist without sleep, heard a noise in his master's chamber as of a sudden fall, and then a succession of slighter sounds which imagination could convert into stamps upon the floor. He lay still awhile, but heard nothing; then he arose from his pallet soliloquizing: "Must be up; mought want to 'quire more 'bout dem sheep."

The moon gave sufficient light to enable him to descend the stairs without difficulty, but he found the passage more obscure. Groping his way along it, he at length reached the door of his master's room, and peering through the key-hole, perceived the candle still burning; but nothing more was visible, nor was there the slightest sound within. He waited several minutes listening attentively, but with no result. He knocked gently and spoke: "Marser!" then louder: "*Marser!*" Still no sound. Slumber so heavy as not to be broken by these calls could not, he thought, be disturbed by opening the door. Accordingly, turning the knob as quietly as the tremulousness of his fingers would permit, he thrust his head within.

To his horror, the old black saw Mr. Trenchard hanging

by his neck from one of the bed-posts, apparently lifeless. Running up hastily he endeavoured to raise the body and release it from the noose, but his strength was inadequate. He glanced wildly around, and seeing no cutting instrument within reach, rushed into the passage, shouting at the extent of his lungs: "Hallo! Hallo! Marser's *hung*—marsers's *dead!* Help—help—marsers's *dead!*"

Then the faithful fellow hurried back to the chamber, and supported the body so far as in some measure to relieve the pressure upon the neck. His aged limbs were strained to the utmost, and broad drops of sweat bathed his forehead ere assistance came. But the interval, measured by the sluggish hands of the clock, was very brief; and persons, attracted by the cries which he continued to utter, ran to the spot from all parts of the house. Besides the negroes, came Mr. Mercer, a gentleman whose residence was some five miles off, and who had called at the house after Trenchard had retired to his chamber.

The rope was of course cut, and such restorative means used as suggested themselves at the instant.

Very soon an elderly lady, dressed in black, entered the apartment, and perceiving the state of Mr. Trenchard, addressed one of the servants: "Here, run, John, to Sally's house; you will find Dr. Middleton there; ask him to come immediately."

The boy returned in a few minutes, accompanied by Mr. Skinner, the overseer, and the Dr. Middleton referred to, a young man whose grave and quiet manner made him appear much older than he was. The skill of the physician and the assiduous efforts of the others were at length rewarded with symptoms of returning animation in the patient, who being removed to another apartment, opportunity was afforded to investigate the late event more particularly than urgent anxiety had before permitted.

Dr. Middleton commenced:

"So, Mr. Mercer, if I understood you aright, you think Col. Trenchard attempted suicide?"

"What else can I suppose? Yet Ichabod must possess more full information. Come, old man, tell us all about it."

The negro narrated at much length all that he knew of the occurrences of the night.

"Then you think nobody else had a hand in this unfortunate business, and that your master tried to kill himself?"

"Sartain, Doctor, I does tink de debbel tuk de chance when he was 'plexed and bothered, and give him de rope to hang hisself with."

"Yet I cannot think it," said Middleton.

"You would 'gree with me, sir," returned Ichabod, "if you'd seen the way his eyes did shine when he pitched the candle 'cross the passage. Thinks I to myself then, 'The Old Boy's in marser.' And then the way he sort of *laughed* when he tuk my candle and told me to go to bed was wuss than de eye-glitter. And 'sides, who else could a done it; who *would* a done it?"

"This is indeed a hard question, Ichabod. But, Mr. Mercer, I should be glad to learn from you more precisely how you found Col. Trenchard. It appears to me there is not sufficient space between the floor and where the head-board of the bed unites with the post to prevent a man's feet from touching the floor."

"Truly," replied Mercer, "this is the most singular part of the affair. I found his knees doubled up almost against his breast, and while one end of the rope was fastened to the post, the single knot, or shir, as it is called, being near the middle of it, the other end was tied to his ankles, and confined them together. The effect of this arrangement was, that every convulsive motion of his lower limbs, and every effort to place his feet upon the floor, drew the knot tighter at the neck."

"But could *he* have bound himself in this way?"

"I see no impossibility in the case. He had but to tie his ankles, then, bending his knees, to place the slip-knot around his throat; finally, having secured the other extremity—and surely, the will being made up, there was no difficulty in all this—then to roll from the bed."

"It is possible, I admit," said the doctor; "but let us look about us a little." So saying, as it was now broad day, he extinguished the light, and walking to the window, drew aside the curtain. "Ha! what's this?" he exclaimed, pointing as he spoke to the plain impression of a muddy foot frozen on the piazza roof upon which the window opened. "But I discover no similar prints inside. Ah, now I see it all; the villain removed his boots for fear of the noise. And look here, on the window-sill, where the two boots were put down together until his return. A large foot he had too; let us take the dimensions: twelve inches by four. Come, suppose we go below now."

As they passed the door of the adjoining room, Middleton paused a moment.

"How is the Colonel, Mrs. Montgomery?"

"He opened his eyes a few minutes ago, doctor, looked around, but is now fallen into a gentle slumber."

Going along further, they met a young lady.

"Ah, doctor," she exclaimed, "what is all this stir about?"

"An attempt has been made, Miss Lucy, to kill the Colonel."

"To kill my uncle! And my mother?"

"You will find her nursing him in the room adjoining his own; but we must endeavour to trace the murderer."

With this, Mercer, Skinner and he bowed and walked on.

Along the bottom of the piazza, by one of whose columns the assassin seemed to have descended, was a grass walk. Here they were at first at fault. Mercer and Skinner followed what they thought a track leading towards the front of the house, but they had just lost it when they were drawn back by the calls of Middleton, who had taken, as the most

natural course, a walk which intersected the other at right angles, and led by the wall of the old grave-yard to a corn-field. At the edge of the latter he perceived plain footseteps answering in size to those on the roof. The crust formed by the frost had evidently been broken no long time previous. They followed the trail thus gained across the wide corn-field, then over a narrow meadow to the edge of a small stream, and along this to a public road; here they were again at fault. Mercer thought the track turned to the right, and Middleton assented, but Skinner remarked that these footprints were probably those of some chance traveller that morning, and the supposition was confirmed when they perceived them also on the left side of the run, and leading in the same direction as on the other.

Middleton suggested that the man might not have got into the road *here*, but kept along the inside of the fence; and clambering back to make investigation, found a spot where he thought the assassin in the darkness had walked directly through the water. His companions came to the place, but were not satisfied of his correctness until they discovered on the opposite side the impression of one large foot in a bank of sand which the water did not cover.

"Yes, we have it now," exclaimed young Skinner; "that's the *right* foot; the other must have been put on this flat stone. And see! here the steps go along the narrow turning-row next the fence."

With renewed zeal they now proceeded onward, following the footprints in this direction for a distance of two or three hundred yards, then crossing the fence, up the road a few yards more, and after that into another corn-field on the opposite side. Through this the track was very plainly marked, though pursuing a rather winding course. It terminated at a broad fence which formed the inclosure of a yard in the rear of a small frame house. There was a shed at the side of the yard, and in the corner of this shed they

found a pair of large boots carelessly thrown together. The boots were heavily incrustated with mud, and corresponded with the dimensions taken by the doctor on Colonel Trenchard's window-sill.

There was no one yet stirring in the house, and the party, leaving the boots, withdrew to the outside for consultation.

"Whose house is this?" asked Mr. Mercer.

"Young Randolph's," replied Skinner; "Stephen Randolph's—Colonel Trenchard's nephew."

"This deed cannot, of course, have been done with his connivance," said Mercer.

"Why, I don't know," rejoined the overseer. "These are his boots, for I have seen him wear them."

"I am unwilling to suspect Mr. Randolph," observed Middleton; "yet it is but too true that Colonel Trenchard and he had an angry conversation together, and Randolph is—"

"Violent in temper, you would say," interrupted Mercer. "I know it; but this very impetuosity is incompatible with the cool, cowardly malignity of such an act as this."

"Yet this present evidence," suggested Middleton.

"True," answered the other; "it cannot be denied that even if inconclusive, it affords ground for very grave suspicion. Young Randolph is Trenchard's nearest relative."

"He is," said the doctor, "and unless cut off by a will, his heir."

"Well," said Mercer, after a long pause, "I see not what else we can do, than go to a magistrate and get a warrant for his arrest. Who is nearest?"

"Squire Selden," answered Skinner.

"He will do very well. And the sooner we are off the better. Come."

CHAPTER II

In David Chapman's house, which stood at the upper end of the little village of Delvinton, the fiddle was going merrily all night. In those lusty old days, when gentlemen and ladies were men and women, the parties or frolics—the more appropriate term for those lively merry-makings—commenced in the afternoon ere candles were needed, and oftentimes lasted until the morning sun had long mocked their feeble glimmer.

At Chapman's, persons were coming and going all night. One of those who arrived latest was a young man whose fine person and handsome countenance, though dashed, the one with a certain careless freedom of motion, and the other with a wild and sometimes dare-devil expression, seemed to make him an object of much attention, as well to the fairer portion of the assembly as to the masculine.

Stephen Randolph made his greetings rapidly and with a tone in keeping with the boisterous mirth that prevailed, and then turning to the host, he said, "So, Dave, my old fellow, your son Jack's not here?"

"No, he hasn't got home yet."

"Hurrah! then I've won the bet! Jack and I were determined to have a share of your sport, and left Fuller's—away back of 'Jumping Run,' you know—just an hour and forty minutes after midnight; he took the upper road, and I the lower. As we started, he bet me ten dollars he would be here first. But, pshaw! he hadn't my *Nancy* to ride. I have been to my house, and have walked up from there here—quite a step."

"You have been smart, indeed," said Chapman; "it must be full fifteen miles from Fuller's, and very uncertain riding till the moon rose."

"But I saved two or three miles of that; I——"

"You didn't cross the 'deep ford' surely in the dark?"

This was spoken by a third person, a short, substantially-built man, with a rubicund face, whose features seemed put together to represent the very ideal of jollity and fun.

"Ah, Sandy Leach, is that you? But I *did* take the short-cut, and through the deep ford too. It was plaguy dark, and the boiling hole below croaked mightily, as if it wanted to give me a shake; but I can't be drowned, you know—I hope I'm not born to be *hung*. Here's Jack Chapman, however. Well, sir, you have that change ready, I suppose."

"You've beat me, sure enough, Steve," said the young man who now entered; "but you mustn't give your mare Nancy all the credit of it. My saddle-girth broke as I was galloping down the 'Toilsome,' and I had a nice pitch against the rocks. I'd have been later than this if a big darkey—what's-his-name's Jim—hadn't caught my horse. But I'll be into dad's till to-morrow,—I give the old man fair notice, you see,—I'll open the till and make free with an X. So you may consider our account settled up square in preparation for another race, and, if you choose, another bet."

"Ah, Steve," cried that laughing individual, Sandy Leach, "you will soon be rich at this rate. And doubly lucky you are too, for all the girls are setting their caps for you. There in the other room sits Ellen Mills, for instance, pouting and sighing for handsome Stephen Randolph. You might have a worse chance, for if you give up your wild habits and make a steady husband to Miss Ellen, her old maiden aunt will doubtless leave you a pretty penny. Up to her, boy!"

"You had better take her yourself, Sandy. I am sure you are old enough to marry, with bad practices enough too for correction; and then you can charge an extra percentage on the shop goods you sell, to support the increase of family during the happy interval occupied in studying the Catechism and the old lady's catalogue of ailments. I'll be gen-

erous and make over all the interest I possess, so jog across and let us see a rehearsal of Falstaff's courtship; ask her to dance the next set with you."

"I will, Steve, on condition that if she *refuses* me, you will allow me to ask for *you*."

"Well, you may."

"Go around, then," said Leach, "into the little back room, and you can overhear the dialogue without being noticed."

"Come, Steve," said Jack Chapman, taking his arm, "let's see what the old chap is after."

"I am hardly certain that it would be right," replied Randolph, without yielding to his gesture of solicitation. "It is well enough to joke about the matter among ourselves, but we should not trifle with the girl's feelings."

"Heigho! then you really have the vanity to believe her in love with you?"

"Pshaw!" said Randolph, his composure a little disturbed; "go ahead, I'll follow."

When they had reached their station, Leach was standing before the young lady.

"Lovely Miss Ellen, you seem to be lonesome," he commenced, with a simper; "may I have the honour to invite you to dance the next cotillion?"

"Dance with *you*, sir?" said she, turning up her pretty nose contemptuously; "I must first be certain that you know how to dance. Come, let us have a forward-two on the floor here. Look, girls; see Mr. Leach practise his steps."

"You mistake, Miss Mills," answered Sandy Leach, pretending to blush; "I come to engage your hand for Mr. Randolph, who will be here presently. Ah, there he is now. Come, Steve."

The lady, when this explanation was confirmed by Randolph in person, accepted the offered partner very graciously, and as he took her hand, smiled upon him with evident pleasure.

"Hold, Miss Ellen," cried Leach; "that sweet smile, and the still sweeter words that are going to follow it, belong to *me*. Stephen has made you over in full, surrendered all right and title; but I'll be liberal"—a graceful wave of the hands attended this declaration—"I'll be very liberal, and allow him this one cotillion with you."

"How, Mr. Randolph?" said Ellen quite sharply, for old Leach was not much in error when he said she was attached to the dashing young man; "have you been giving me away?"

"Not so, Miss Mills; I only gave all my interest with you. I was well aware that this was nothing at all; had it been equal to the weight of a straw, I should have sought a worthier person to bestow so valuable a present upon than an incorrigible old scamp like Alexander Leach."

The general manner with which this was said seemed to express merely a lively jest, but there was something in the tone that rung out like earnest. And afterwards, when he led the pretty girl towards the position they were to occupy in the dance, the few expressions which he had time for, though they were spoken with the utmost consideration and courtesy, served to teach his companion in time that if she should cherish an affection for him, she could not hope that it would be reciprocated. An artist who had witnessed the scene would have pronounced it one well worthy of his pencil; and Randolph, distinguished not more by his splendid person than by an air of native dignity from the unpolished throng around him, whilst the consciousness of a generous and manly purpose gave an expression of nobleness to his countenance, might easily have been taken as the realization of the most poetic conception of the Gentleman.

The cotillion was over, and the couples composing it were mingled together through the room, when a constable, named Forcer, entered, and advancing indirectly to Stephen Randolph, laid his hand upon his arm as if to arrest him.

The young man laughed good-humouredly and said: "This

is the best joke yet; but you ought to have had a warrant ready filled out, with the signature of Justice Shallow."

"I am sorry, sir, but my warrant is a more real one," replied the constable, extending a paper.

"Pretty well acted indeed, most forcible Forcer," said Randolph, without looking at the document; "but Sandy (for I suppose he made up the joke) ought to have got some one else to play the constable: you are so practised in the trade that the prosy tone *will* stick to you. You don't mouth it off with the sonorous bluster that the Englishman Dunlap gave it at the Richmond theatre last winter. But what's the amount? If it is not excessive, I may coax these liberal people to give me the benefit of a collection. Or suppose I pay it with a cheque on a bank? You may name any one from Boston to New Orleans, for I believe I have equal credit in all."

"But, Mr. Randolph, I assure you there is no jesting in the matter. You know that your uncle's life has been attempted."

"The mischief I do! But what then?"

"You have been charged with committing the act; this warrant is issued by Mr. Selden, to whose house you will please accompany me."

"*Sir?*" said Randolph fiercely, "do you call me a murderer—the murderer of my uncle?—a pitiful wretch like you call Stephen Randolph *murderer?*"

"Remember, sir, that I am but the instrument of the law. You are my prisoner." As he spoke, the constable renewed the hold which he had relinquished during the conversation.

But Randolph, exerting his prodigious strength, seized the man with one hand by the collar, and, first raising him clear from the floor, hurled him contemptuously away.

"Gentlemen!" exclaimed Forcer, who was a resolute fellow, advancing a second time, "Gentlemen, I call upon you all to render your assistance."

Randolph glared around.

"Let him touch me that dares. Forcer! come not forward one step, for as sure as you are at this moment a breathing man, it will be at the peril of your life!"

"Come, Stephen," said old Chapman soothingly, "it is the *law*, you know. Don't do violence. We'll all go along and see you fairly treated."

"I won't be dragged as a felon" replied the young man more calmly. "I will walk to Seldon's of my own accord to examine into this infamous accusation; but a finger's weight shall not be laid upon me." He took his hat and strode along in dogged silence, with the constable following close behind, and the crowd covering both sides.

Just before they entered the magistrate's room, our acquaintance Mercer, who had come up the street from the opposite direction, also hurried in.

We must explain that immediately after he and Middleton had made their deposition, and seen the warrant issued, they left Skinner in the Justice's office, and hurried away to visit Trenchard.

When they arrived, the old gentleman was sitting up, and greeted them thus:

"Ah, Mercer, my old friend, how do you do? Lucy tells me that you have been hunting on the fellow's track that tried to make me kick the bucket in so rascally a way this morning. Pah! any death before hanging; it makes me choke to think of it. But did you and the doctor find out any thing?"

"Yes, sir; we have traced up the footprints to the house of Mr. Randolph," [—Trenchard's countenance altered a little at the mention of this name,—] "and have ascertained that they were made by some one wearing a pair of boots which belong to him and were found on his premises."

"Well, has any thing further been done?"

"A warrant has been issued for his arrest."

"What! a nephew of mine charged with murder? But, sir, I beg you instantly to hasten to whatever magistrate has taken cognizance of the matter, and stay all future proceedings in it. It was a *black* man that did this outrage. I had time to observe that most distinctly."

"But, my dear sir," said Dr. Middleton, "had not the law better take its regular course? Though another hand may have committed the act, is it not possible that he may be implicated?"

"No, it is not possible, for he has the blood of the Trenchards in him. He's a wild, wasteful spendthrift, to be sure, and I sometimes reprove him severely—perhaps too severely—for his faults; but a deed like this—it is not in him, sir. Who is the magistrate?"

"Selden."

"Run then to him, my dear Mercer, or if you prefer it, the boys will get you a horse. I would sooner chop off one hand than see the son of my sister dragged to jail suspected of murder."

In obedience to such earnest injunctions, Mr. Mercer hastened to the office of the Justice of the Peace, who, with this new information, was very ready, after a formal examination, to dismiss the case entirely.

CHAPTER III

It has been mentioned, or ought to have been, that amidst the barbarous innovations and tokens of neglect that surrounded the mansion of Trenchard, there were for all about it gleams of correct taste. So much of the once spacious lawn as had not been irrecoverably devoted to cabbages and tobacco, was neatly fenced off to prevent the depredations of cattle and hogs, straying from the adjoining pasture. In the rear of the piazza, upon the floor of which the long windows of the sitting-room opened, was a pretty labyrinth of walks, with grassy margins, separating trimly-dressed beds, furnished with flowers and shrubbery appropriate to each season. In this little paradise were trellises and arbours, rudely made indeed, for old Ichabod was the builder, but so contrived that their very roughness and irregularity contributed to the beauty of the whole effect, and seemed the result of design. Many other things there were incongruous with the prevailing spirit of the place; some remarkable, and noticed by the most ordinary beholder; others more minute, and requiring true taste and discrimination to distinguish them. If one had inquired to whom these charming improvements were owing, the unvarying answer would have been—Lucy Montgomery.

Notwithstanding the air of loneliness that surrounded the mansion, it was frequented by many a visitor; and though Colonel Trenchard, when in the best spirits, was never a very entertaining companion, and though no drawing-room centre-table, strewn with an ever new variety of magazines and engravings, nor library to feed the literary palate with a more substantial and sober abundance, relieved the tediousness of the day, no guest found his hours to drag heavily.

If you had asked one of them to account for his enjoyment, he would only have replied with a name—Lucy Montgomery. If a stranger had sought to know why the florid beauty of the buxom village maidens seemed no longer to be held in highest esteem by their rustic beaux, not usually as fastidious, he would have ceased to wonder when he learned that their taste had been refined by the contemplation of a model of that highest style of beauty which is both material and spiritual, and, unlike either the voluptuousness of the Medicean Venus or the severity of the “Greek Slave,” combines the perfections of both. Such beauty is synonymous with loveliness; and this word would best describe Lucy Montgomery.

The venerable pastor of Delvinton once asked a little girl in the Sunday-School what sort of beings angels are. Her reply was, she thought they must be like her teacher—Miss Lucy Montgomery. The old man smiled at the answer, and the lady blushed, but joined in the smile. We believe the child was not singular in the opinion. But Lucy was not perfect, and that she was aware of this is the best proof of her approach to perfection.

Frederick Montgomery died three years previous to the date at which we have chosen to commence our narrative, and left his widow and only child, as well as his small property, to the charge of his old friend, Colonel Trenchard. Before the latter, however, had time to enter upon his duties as executor, that property, by a fall in the stock in which it was invested, was annihilated. Trenchard, with his characteristic generosity, at once insisted that Mrs. Montgomery and Lucy should consider his house their home. What made the arrangement more natural was the fact that Colonel Trenchard’s wife, who had been dead a number of years, was a sister of Mrs. Montgomery, and on this ground the old gentleman required Lucy to style him uncle.

It is not to be supposed that so charming a person as

Miss Montgomery could be without suitors. There were two who were thought to throw the rest into the shade—one the handsome, dashing Stephen Randolph, the other the quiet Dr. Middleton, who was supposed to be compensated for the personal advantages of his rival by more consummate skill.

There was another who would have been an aspirant for her hand, had not constitutional timidity prevented his making known the hopes which seemed to him most visionary and vain, but were at the same time interwoven with every cord of his heart. Francis Herbert was one of that unfortunate number, who are so few that many more ruggedly constituted are apt to doubt their real existence—persons who, possessing talent and exquisite sensibility, are yet deficient in that nervous energy which alone can prevent the one gift from becoming an instrument of torture in the fruitless yearnings which it excites, and the other from adding acute suffering to every external injury. Francis was about twenty years of age, and from his delicate and almost feminine appearance, might have been reckoned younger. He also was a ward of Col. Trenchard, and, in additional resemblance to Lucy, was without fortune. Having just been graduated with honour at a Northern college, he returned to Delvinton about a week subsequent to the attack upon his guardian.

Randolph, since the occurrences in which he was so much involved, though some degree of coolness had before existed between him and his uncle, visited the mansion very frequently. He seemed to seek principally the society of Miss Montgomery, and rather studiously shunned private colloquies with his uncle, the subjects of which, he was well aware, were likely to be more personal than interesting. One day, however, the old gentleman caught him when there was no possibility of evasion.

"Stephen," he commenced, "you appear very fond of Lucy; I suppose you would like to marry her?"

"Yes, sir; such an event would give *me* the greatest pleasure. How it would affect the lady, I do not yet know."

"If it were to take place," rejoined his uncle, "I tell you how it would affect her: it would make her wretched."

"I am sorry that you think so; but what are your reasons, sir?"

"I'll tell you frankly, Stephen. To begin, you are hot-headed, violent and imperious: such qualities make a husband a domestic tyrant."

"Well, uncle, I stand a Bluebeard convicted; but what comes next?"

"Then you gamble."

"True, sir, I have shaken a pack of cards once or twice; but I promise never to play a game with my *wife*, so she and I can't quarrel on this score."

The Colonel shook his head gravely, but proceeded: "Thirdly, you are inclined to frequent low company; you make drinking companions of those——"

"Ah, sir," interrupted Randolph, "what can a bachelor do, living like me alone in Delviton? But only see me married, and I'll be a pattern of regularity, as well as of every other domestic virtue. Besides, I do not think I am obnoxious to the drinking charge. To be sure, I can take my two pints of champagne like a gentleman, or, not to be discourteous, even swallow my dram of old Jamaica; but it must be something that has a good supply of bone and sinew as well as *spirit* to throw Stephen Randolph off his legs."

"Fourthly, I want to know what you have to support a family upon?"

"I'll admit this sin, uncle, like a man. I am poor as Job in his worst days; that's the fact."

"Still, you have a rich old uncle; is that it, Steve? But I caution you in seriousness to indulge no expectations of this sort, for you must know——"

"Hold, uncle," said Randolph; "I beg leave to tell you that

I am thinking of *Lucy* just now—not of your money bags. Let me have her, and a fig for the rest!”

“That’s the point, though, Stephen. *Lucy*’s a good girl—a splendid girl—one of a thousand; and I don’t mean that she shall be any body’s household drudge. Your father left you property to the amount of some twenty thousand dollars, and you have been of age seven years. Now if you can show that you have five thousand dollars in the world, I will be willing that you marry whom you please.”

“To tell the truth, uncle, I am rather behind the wind just at present.”

“Not only are you without property,” continued Mr. Trenchard, “but what is worse, you are probably considerably in debt. Is it so?”

“Yes, it is the fact; and I tell you, uncle, I never knew till lately how horribly vexatious such a state of things is. That confounded old usurer Smelter was at me with every device the arch fiend has invented for the benefit of his children—the duns. Note came after note; then, through the mail, letter after letter. I could not even step into the street, without meeting the pert inquiry, ‘Can we attend to that account to-day, Mr. Randolph?’ Finally the sheriff had to meddle with the affair, and hint about agreeable lodgings in the neighbourhood of the Court House. I don’t know really what I should have done if Sandy Leach hadn’t come to the rescue, like a clever fellow as he is, and ponied up the money.”

“Alexander Leach?” exclaimed Trenchard suddenly.

“Yes, surely, Alexander Leach, who has recently moved to Delvinton, and opened a store. He was born somewhere in this region, I believe, but he lived a good while at the South.”

“And so you are quite intimate with this man?” said Trenchard.

“Why, sir, he has assisted me generously when much older

friends looked coldly, and I hope ingratitude is not one of my vices."

"Stephen," replied his uncle slowly and emphatically, "I have a favour to ask. As you have any regard for me, I wish you to break off at once and for ever all intercourse with that man. He is a scoundrel dyed in the wool."

"But, really, sir, I cannot see the grounds for such a decided and discourteous procedure."

"Grounds? I tell you, you must shake off this fellow immediately, or you are no nephew of mine. Did you not know before that I hated him?"

"Yes, uncle, I think I do remember your speaking of him on some occasion in terms of dislike, but it was said of a man then absent, and whom I never expected to know."

"At any rate, Stephen, you must be aware of this, that my wife died less than six months after our marriage. Though twenty years have since passed, I am weak enough to have my withered eyes grow wet with the recollection. She died, I say, and *I broke her heart*. That infernal wretch, Alexander Leach, caused me to do it. Have not I the right to execrate him? I tell you Iago was an angel from heaven compared to him!"

Young Randolph was silent for some minutes; then, when he supposed his uncle's passion had in some degree subsided, answered:

"But, sir, all this happened, as you say, long ago; may he not in the interval have repented and reformed?"

"Yes, he has reformed as Satan reforms, by committing new villany. My *murder* is the only thing that will now satisfy him. He left his work but half performed last Monday; when he will resume it, Heaven knows."

"Uncle, I cannot understand you. Have not you said that a *black* man made that attempt on your life?"

"I have; but Leach was on the piazza roof, consenting to the deed and directing it. I heard the tones of that voice,

which is so hateful that I believe my corpse would move in the coffin if it sounded near it."

"Uncle! uncle! how can I think this?" Randolph's countenance evinced much emotion. "Can it be that this man, who has acted toward me with so much kindness, can be guilty of such a crime as you suspect him of? And what object?"

"Object enough," replied Trenchard bitterly; "object enough Leach, would think he had, merely in gratifying his devilish hate by my death."

"Oh, uncle, be not too ready to presume motives. I at least have had a lesson in caution. I myself have borne the infamous suspicion of this act. May it not turn out that this man is no less innocent than I? By the way, uncle, you know, I suppose, that Mr. Wilson's man 'Jim' ran away that night, and has since been traced to the Pennsylvania line?"

"Yes, I have heard it from Skinner. The cook at the next house to yours in the village is Jim's wife, is she not?"

"Yes, sir."

"And when visiting her he might have taken your boots?"

"He might," answered Randolph; "but do you think Jim could have been the man?"

"I hardly know what to think, Stephen, but it is certain that Skinner had threatened him with a whipping if he came upon the place, on account of his supposed propensity to theft, and perhaps he took a grudge against *me* for it. Still, I cannot bring myself to think this of Jim; he was always a good-natured negro, and I had been kind to him. To be sure, his size agrees very well with that of the rascal who put me in such a fix. But this is unimportant. Whoever was the *instrument*, Alexander Leach was the instigator. I was dozing at the time, and hearing his voice muttering outside of the window, supposed I had been dreaming, and turning over hastily, dropped asleep. I awoke just as that

black scoundrel, having already prepared every thing, was rolling me over the head-board. Confound him! his soul is blacker than his hide! I trust he may himself some day feel what hanging is."

"Yet, uncle, is it not probable, after all, that you *were* dreaming when you heard Leach's voice?"

"No, sir, I was not dreaming, I tell you!" said Trenchard sharply; "and while I was choking in that rascally noose, I heard Leach speak again."

The old gentleman here made a long pause, which was not interrupted by any question from Randolph.

"You see, Stephen," he said at length, "the necessity of breaking off your intimacy with Leach. How much do you owe him?"

"He lent me a thousand dollars."

"That's all, is it?"

"Yes, sir, adding six-months' interest."

"Wait a moment, then."

So saying, Trenchard left the apartment, and returned after the lapse of a few minutes with a roll of bank notes, which he handed to his nephew.

"Here are a thousand and fifty dollars, which, according to your showing, will pay off every thing. Go settle the account; and as you value my good-will, have nothing further to do with the odious scoundrel."

Stephen Randolph, after expressing his thanks, left the house and proceeded to execute his uncle's direction. Leach's store was at the upper end of the village, and he had to walk half a mile to reach it. As he passed quite leisurely in front of the open door of a respectable-looking dwelling, he heard a woman's sobs within, and as he turned his glance in the direction of the sound, perceived the owner of the house leaning with a gloomy air against the mantle.

"Why, what's the matter, Patterson?" he asked, stopping.

"Nothing, except the sheriff is down on me, and going to

break up every thing for debt. You could not let me have a little of what you owe me, could you? But, pshaw! I oughtn't to bother you about it. I know you are close enough run yourself."

Randolph's hand was in his pocket, grasping the money, and itching to draw it out.

"You are a right-down clever fellow, Patterson. I have some money; I'm sort of bound to use it in another way, but hang it all if I can stand this. Here's your six hundred dollars; take it all, man. I don't know when I may have a chance to pay again. It's your due, long ago; take it."

"God bless you, Stephen! Call on me again, if you get pushed. I'll be easier by-and-by, and will have something to spare you."

Randolph walked on soliloquizing:

"There! more than half's gone; I couldn't help it. It won't do to tell the old man—he needn't know any thing about it; and as it is not worth while to pay only a part, I can use this four hundred for something else. But I must see Blapp about that big account."

Randolph was unfortunately involved in debt to a degree of which his uncle had no conception. Besides carelessness and extravagance in his affairs generally, he indulged in gaming—a vice then and now too prevalent in this section of Virginia.

He directed his steps to the office of Walter Blapp, an attorney at law, whose counsels he frequently sought upon the subject of his financial difficulties. We will outrun the leisurely course of the spendthrift, and take a peep at the lawyer as he leans back in his chair in meditation.

Blapp was a tall, stout man, whose profession was so little denoted by his full and sensual face, that a stranger who had met him out of doors would by no means have suspected it. His features naturally adjusted themselves to a mild, half-complacent, half-deferential expression which

was very slightly indicative of intellect. Indeed, he was not a man of genius, nor even of talent, but he was gifted with a deal of cunning—a commodity far more available than either.

He was alone, and held a paper in his hand which seemed to have reference to the train of thought passing through his mind, for he frequently turned his eyes towards it as he spoke half aloud, and at intervals, sentences something like the following:

“Old Leach wants to get a hard grip on him, sure enough. He has lent him money before this, I know, and now seven thousand dollars in a bunch. It’s a plaguy big heap to shovel out, and not the least security for payment. Yes, but *I endorse*. Mayn’t I burn my fingers? Wonder now if it’s possible that Sandy Leach expects to make it of *me*, in case his other strings should break? Well, if he does, he’s mistaken, that’s all. He’s ’cute, but I reckon Wat Blapp’s ’cuter; he’s slippery, but I reckon Wat Blapp’s slipp’rier. He must think for certain that old Trenchard will leave the property to Stephen. Well, I hope he may, for I know who would make some money by it. But to-day’s *Tuesday*. Jack Chapman must be home again. I’ll see him.” This resolve scarcely enunciated, the lawyer sprang up, seized his hat, and stepped briskly out of the door.

His walk terminated at the house of old Chapman, where it will be remembered the social meeting was held, so suddenly interrupted by the arrest of Stephen Randolph. Jack Chapman, the young man who was a party in the midnight race, happened to be standing in the garden, plucking peaches from a tree; and Blapp, without going to the house, climbed the fence and entered into conversation with him. The topics which first occupied them were of the ordinary kind, and in no way concern us. Presently, however, the lawyer touched upon the matter which had induced the visit.

“Didn’t you say that a black fellow caught your horse

for you that night when you had your tumble in coming down the Toilsome Mountain?"

"Yes, I did; it was Wilson's man Jim. But why do you ask?"

"Are you certain it was Jim?"

"Yes, I am positive. Tell me, though, what you are driving at."

"You know, I suppose, that Jim ran away that night?"

"No, I didn't. Has he been caught?"

"He has not, and won't be; he's safe in Pennsylvania, and the Quakers will hide him well enough. But have you mentioned to any body else that you met him that night?"

"No, I have not, unless I told his name at the party. I have been away ever since on business, and haven't said any thing about the *race* even."

"Well, Jack, I don't want you to tell that you met him at all. I noticed particularly that you only said at the party that it was a darkey named Jim. I suspected afterwards indeed that it was Wilson's man, but nobody else would have been apt to."

"But, Blapp, what do you make such a secret of it for?"

"Well," returned the lawyer, cautiously, "you are a friend of Stephen Randolph, I know——"

"To be sure I am; but go on."

"He was accused of trying to kill his uncle."

"And a rascally charge it was, too—made up, I'd bet a dollar, by that still, sly, smooth-spoken Doctor, Charley Middleton."

"But," continued Blapp, "Trenchard said it was a black man that did the trick."

"I know it; and that clears Steve."

"Hear me out, though. Wilson's Jim had a wife at the next house to Randolph's. He's a big man, and might have worn Steve's boots, which were certainly tracked from the piazza roof."

"So he might," cried young Chapman; "so he might, and then ran away for fear of being caught. I'm mighty glad indeed that it's all found——"

"Don't be quite so fast," interrupted the lawyer. "When you met Jim at the Toilsome, it could not have been later than three o'clock at the utmost. The moon was not up, was it?"

"No."

"Well, then, the attempt at murder was committed between three o'clock and day-break, considerably after the moon was up, so that if you met Jim, it is impossible he can be guilty."

"But I *did* meet him," said Chapman sorrowfully.

"Yet for all that," returned the lawyer, "it does not follow that Steve had any hand in the matter."

"Of course not. I could not suspect him, if I tried. I was only downcasted because Jim's running away seemed to open such a good chance to clear him before every body."

"Just so. *You* don't believe him guilty, Jack, and *I* don't believe him guilty, and nine people out of ten don't believe him guilty; but then it's bad for a man to have the least suspicion against him. So now I think it would be as well for you not to say at present who it was you met. Mind, Stephen did not put me up to this. I do it of my own head."

"You are very right, Blapp. I won't speak a word about it. But won't you come into the house and take something?"

"No, I thank you, Jack; I haven't time just now. Good morning."

The lawyer made his exit from the garden in the same manner that he entered, and in a few minutes was again at his office. He found Stephen Randolph there awaiting his coming with much patience.

"Ah, Steve, I'm glad to see you. I've fixed that whole matter nicely."

"Well, I am rejoiced at it; but how is it managed?"

"Why, I've got a man to advance the seven thousand, and so pay off Scrubbs and Dowling at once."

"That's glorious! What security have you persuaded the chap to receive—a mortgage on my plantation in the moon, or on lands in Kentucky, eh?"

"No; I have been smarter still, and more honest; the gentleman ponies up with his eyes open. He only requires your *note*, with one endorser."

"And what soft, innocent individual have you found to perform *this* office?"

"I endorse for you."

"*You?*"

"Yes, I myself, Walter Blapp."

"Well, I can't but wonder at it. To be sure, I have a firm intention to pay my debts if ever I have the means; but this depends on a very precarious chance; and besides, to tell the truth, I did not suppose that you were a person disposed to interpret another's motives very favourably. But I may be quite satisfied that you'll get your *quid pro quo*; so tell me who it is that furnishes the ready."

"Mr. Leach."

"Sandy Leach? The mischief!" Randolph seemed to be engaged in a course of rapid reflection; then merely added, "Well, so be it."

The note was placed upon the table, signed by the young man, and returned to the lawyer. Blapp arose, and was engaged in filing the paper away in one of the pigeonholes of his desk, as he said, in a tone of carefully assumed indifference:

"I saw Jack Chapman to-day."

His pause was followed by no token of awakened interest in his companion.

He continued: "Jack declared positively that he met Wilson's Jim as he came down the mountain—about three o'clock—before the moon was up."

Still the attorney's furtive glance, repeated at each clause of his sentence, detected no motion in Stephen. The bond by this time being laid away, he changed his tactics, and turned full around, adding:

"But I persuaded him not to say any thing about it, knowing of what consequence his course must be to you."

Stephen broke into a moderate laugh.

"Ha! ha! Well, Blapp, you don't come it. Depend upon it, my fine fellow, that if I *had* really been choking my uncle, you shouldn't worm a confession out of me in this way. Ha! ha! ha! What a shrewd look you put on. But don't be dejected, man. You made the examination smartly and with most commendable legal acumen. But let me give you a piece of advice: Don't take all your clients to be fools. In the name of the Old Boy, what do I care about Wilson's negro? Do you think I have Aladdin's lamp? That's a lively lad, truly, who starts at two o'clock in the night, rides twelve or fifteen miles over a rough and dangerous road, then gets his seven-leagued boots, walks a mile, climbs into his uncle's chamber, hangs the old man to a bed-post, walks home through muddy corn-fields, steps into pumps, and is cutting pigeon-wings and double-shuffles at a different end of the town before daybreak. Now, Wat, if you were any body else, instead of arguing in this way, I might be disposed to knock you down for the impudence of taking for granted that I would commit such a villainous act; but against a lawyer, I must use weapons like his own. Fy, for shame, man! not that you should play such a trick upon your friend, but that he should see through it!"

"Don't make such a fuss, Stephen," returned the worthy attorney. "I might answer that it's only 'real game' that fears the snare; but I did not tell Chapman to hold his tongue because you were guilty, but to prevent any body whatever from thinking you so—pretty Miss Montgomery, for instance, who is likely to divide Trenchard's estate with you, unless she herself becomes your better half."

"What do you know about *her* opinions?" said Randolph quickly. "Has she told any person that she doubted my innocence?"

"Not that I know of; but it is best to guard against any suspicion, for I think you ought by all means to make sure of her, as she stands at least as well in your uncle's esteem as you do. And the doctor's 'cute enough to get her after all, if you don't look out."

"Permit me to manage this matter myself, sir," said the young man with some haughtiness.

"Oh, certainly, but you ought to be careful of the doctor. You know it was he who took so much pains to track up the business to your garden fence, and I think he looks rather coolly at you yet."

"I have taken notice of it all, Wat, and Middleton may get some of his own bones to set, if he doesn't keep out of my way. That boy, too, Frank Herbert, who is just back from college, will have to have a switching, if he puts on many airs."

"Don't mind such a milksop as he is, Stephen. He was always tender, and has got to be mighty religious, they say, besides. He belongs to the nursery yet. Look out for the *doctor*, I tell you."

"Relieve your anxiety, Blapp: I've an eye and a hand for each."

Randolph now threw himself back in his chair, and was for a while occupied with his thoughts. Suddenly he said:

"So, Leach, unsolicited, is ready to invest seven thousand dollars in paying my debts to Scrubbs and Dowling?"

Blapp nodded.

"I owed him before a thousand."

Another nod from the lawyer.

"Now what do you suppose is the motive for such unusual liberality?"

"The motive? It's hard to tell, unless it be friendship."

"Yes, doubtless it *is* friendship," echoed Randolph in a bitter tone.

He continued the catechism: "Sandy is a shrewd man, is he not, and has a keen eye to the main chance?"

"Nobody can deny that."

"Not very scrupulous, is he?"

"Why, I cannot say decidedly; I presume not."

"Such men are very apt, are they not, to entangle other persons whom they find suitable to their purpose, in such a way that they cannot help being their tools?"

Blapp, not choosing to use words, again had resort to an ambiguous inclination of the head.

"Do you think I am going to be any body's tool?" Randolph jumped up as he gave the fierce answer of his own question: "*No!*"

CHAPTER IV

A few days after, Stephen Randolph sauntered to the mansion house, and finding the Colonel standing on the back piazza, giving directions to a servant, turned away to the cheerful little sitting-room in which he was most likely to find Lucy Montgomery. She was not there at the instant, and to while away the time, he picked up a book that lay upon the table. It was an album, and he opened instinctively at the page which contained the vigorous lines written by himself, at the request of the fair owner. These having been read over with great satisfaction, he turned to the succeeding effusion—a doleful ditty, whose chirography exhibited the professional skill of its author, the master of the village school. It began:

“One sin, alas! I’m fain to confess—
Bitter envy, I mean, of this Book,
Which lovely Lucy deigns to possess,
Greeting it with so kindly a look.”

Randolph smiled complacently, as he compared this poetry with his own. On the next leaf came some really fine and expressive, as well as appropriate verses. He recognized the handwriting of his hated rival, and was chagrined at the excellence of the contribution. At the bottom he read:

“Selected by Charles Middleton.”

“Oh! *selected*. Pshaw!”

Some stanzas followed, which were original, with the signature “F. H.,” unquestionably standing for Francis Herbert. They flowed off smoothly, and were by no means destitute of poetic merit; yet they were pervaded by a sadly plaintive tone, and testified but too clearly to the morbid sensitiveness of the writer.

Lucy entered unobserved, and glanced over his arm as he read them.

"You see my album is filling up rapidly, Mr. Randolph."

"It is, indeed; and if the pieces were all as sentimental as this last one, you would have, I think, a unique collection."

"Poor Frank deserves sympathy and encouragement," she gently answered. "He has many admirable qualities, and if they were only supported by self-reliance and vigour of purpose, he could not fail to have a noble career."

Randolph's lip curled with a slight sneer as he said: "'Tis a pity, as you say, that not being a man, he wants sufficient sense even to pretend to be one. But don't let us talk about him any more; for if he were to know it, he would die of his blushes before he could again gasp out the 'How do you do?' which already nearly suffocates him in the utterance."

She laid the volume away without reply, and taking her sewing, assumed her wonted seat by the fire. Stephen drew his chair close to hers, and after some indifferent remarks had been interchanged, started a new topic.

"*Cousin Lucy*"—for since the Colonel insisted upon his claim to receive the title of uncle from her, the nephew argued that the relationship must be shared by himself—"Cousin Lucy, the old gentleman has been scolding sharply, and tells me to *reform*. What must I do?"

"Obey him dutifully, to be sure."

"But he finds most fault with me for a matter of necessity; that is, mingling in the society of Delvinton. Now there is but one way of escape from this calamity, and my uncle's consequent displeasure. Have you any further advice?"

"Since you know the proper course, all I can say is, adopt it."

"But, Cousin Lucy, though this is a matter in which it is very easy and pleasant for me to resolve, it unfortunately happens that the coöperation of another person is necessary."

"Well, sir, I trust your proposed colleague is not unreasonable."

"Far from this being the case, I refer to the most kind and amiable person in the world—the most considerate and self-sacrificing that you can imagine; yet I have cause for doubt and fear."

Lucy made no observation, and he continued: "Were my now cheerless dwelling but enlivened by the presence of another, whose home it might be for the reason that it was *my* home; one who would guide my wayward fancy by gentle counsel; who, by the daily exhibition of true loveliness of character, would teach me gradually in some degree to imitate what I could not but admire; who would be to me a friend closer than a brother, my companion never to be parted from; one to be loved, cherished, adored! Can you, dear Lucy, be such a one?"

"Mr. Randolph, I cannot."

His impassioned glance was turned full upon hers, which timidly sank beneath it.

"Lucy! think that this is to me a subject vitally real and earnest. The time has *passed* when I could treat it with gaiety or trifling; now I leave jesting to others. I throw my whole soul at your feet. You will not, you cannot cast it back to bitterness and despair. You will not withdraw the hand which I seize as my hope of salvation!"

He clasped her fair palm in his, so as to require some degree of force to extricate it. That force was exerted, however, and the hand withdrawn.

Instantly he stood upon his feet; his frame shook with ungovernable passion; every vein of his countenance was swollen, and his flashing eye added intensity to the cruelty of the words which burst from his lips:

"Stay then as you are, a sneaking, penniless dependent; yes! a sneaking, mercenary, hypocritical, fortune-hunting dependent! Stay where you are: rob me of my inheritance, and share it with your base confederate!"

He rushed from the room and from the house, strode down

the lawn, and then along the road to the village at a rate which few could have equalled without absolutely running. It was not till he had reached the side of the tavern that he became sensible of the singularity of his motion, and to recover composure, relaxed into a very slow walk. Around the corner, and in front of the tavern, was quite a throng, composed of inhabitants of the village and others. They had been discussing the late remarkable night occurrences at Colonel Trenchard's. One of them observed:

"I don't somehow believe that *Jim* can have done it. What's your mind, Jack?"

Our old acquaintance, Chapman, the individual addressed, merely answered: "I don't know what to say about it."

"For *my* part," remarked Skinner, the overseer, "I'm inclined to think that old Ichabod was nearer right than wiser folks, after all, and that the Colonel *hung himself*, when out of his head. Indeed, he talks wild about the business even yet. What do you think, Mr. Leach? He says *you* had a hand in it; that he heard your voice through the window."

"That's queer enough," replied Sandy. "I know that I have a rough voice, but I should hardly think it would reach 'way from Davy Chapman's parlour to the house on the hill. If the old man's mind wanders in this way, I really must agree with you, Skinner, that he did the deed himself in a temporary fit of insanity. They say, too, that he was greatly vexed about the injury of his big tobacco crop."

"But did the footprints on the roof and through the cornfield only exist in imagination?" This question was addressed to Skinner by a young man in a green frock-coat, whose fowl-ing-piece and brace of pheasants showed that he had just returned from a hunting excursion. His chestnut hair curled about a face of almost feminine beauty, and his form, though exceedingly graceful, was slight, and had hardly attained the ordinary stature.

"I saw them with my own eyes," said Skinner; "but then

it must be considered that Mercer and I thought that they led from the piazza around to the front of the house, and the doctor struck upon the trail that led to Steve Randolph's sort of by guess or haphazard, without tracing them plainly along the grass to where we started from."

"And what reason could anybody have had for doing such a thing?" asked Sandy Leach.

"Truly," said the youth in green, Francis Herbert, "I do not see what motive *Jim* could have had; but as to others, there is more ground for doubt."

"Mr. Herbert, I don't see but he had as much reason as any nigger, and Colonel Trenchard says the man was certainly *black*."

"But how easy and common it is for ruffians to make white black with candle smut, or a coal from the chimney corner!"

"Do you then suspect Randolph?" exclaimed Leach.

"I have not said so; but if I were in his place, and innocent, I should be very restless till the mystery were cleared up."

Stephen Randolph had overheard the latter part of this conversation ere he turned the corner, and stepping up quickly to Herbert, said in a harsh tone:

"I did not understand your remark exactly: repeat it, sir."

Herbert drew back slightly, but answered with firmness, and in a tone which showed a natural resentment at the dictatorial manner of the interrogator:

"I do not remember the *words* I used; but since you desire it, I will tell you my thought: I fervently trust that you are innocent, but cannot help regretting that you do not show more zeal in searching out the culprit."

"Lend me this a moment." This was spoken by Randolph to a bystander, from whose hand he snatched a horse-whip, with which he made several smart blows upon Herbert's shoulder, saying as he did so, "You are a meddling puppy! Take that, and learn to behave yourself."

Herbert's face flushed to a deep crimson at the insult, and then sank to an almost deadly paleness. He raised his fowling-piece, and, with an arm as rigid as if cast of bronze, held it pointed at the breast of Randolph; the hammer was thrown back, and his finger touched the trigger.

Thus both parties stood without motion for a space of time that seemed an age to those around. Then Herbert lowered his gun undischarged. Randolph smiled contemptuously and turned upon his heel. The youth, maddened at the sight, clenched the weapon and again had it half raised; but again he let it sink, and withdrawing his right hand, smote his forehead in bitterness and walked away from the group.

As he left, some of the coarser of the party gave utterance to a brutal laugh. In that discordant sound the loud cackling of the worthy Sandy Leach was most distinguishable.

Herbert's agony cannot be described, and few indeed can imagine it in its whole extent; yet he must be less than human who is unable, in some degree, to understand how hard it is to bear a "wounded spirit."

CHAPTER V

Stephen Randolph's footsteps were yet audible along the hall, when Lucy burst into tears, and went to throw herself into the arms of her mother. Mrs. Montgomery, surprised and grieved, clasped her head to her own sympathizing bosom and tenderly sought to know the cause of her agitation. As soon as her sobs allowed her utterance, she briefly related the conversation that had just taken place, and the harsh taunts which had been heaped upon her at its close; and then added, with her tears flowing afresh:

"Mother! mother! let us leave this place instantly; not another hour let us stay."

"But alas! my child, what home have we beside!"

"Never mind, mother; let us trust to God to provide us a resting-place, Better, far better, let us be tenants of the poor-house than remain here exposed to such horrible reproaches."

"Dear Lucy, you know not what you say: here we must stay, or starve."

"Then if that is the alternative, oh! let us *starve*."

"My child, be calm. What, after all, do the wild words of young Randolph concern us! It is not upon him we are living; no right of his is touched; our own consciences, as well as the candour of Mr. Trenchard, justify us against his passionate charge. Why then should it leave a sting?"

"But, mother, it is dreadful to be subjected to the *suspicion* of such a thing. If we were away from here, the uncharitableness of Mr. Randolph himself could not soil our name with so much as a whisper. Let us pack up and go this very evening."

"*Pack and go?* Who talks about going? Why, what's all this—crying? Lucy, what's the matter?"

"Mr. Trenchard! Colonel! is this you?"

"Mister? Colonel? Why in the name of the old Harry can't you learn to call me *uncle*? Surely your mother's my sister-in-law—and in *reality* too, I shall ever regard her. But what did you say about going?"

"Why, sir, mother and I have come to the conclusion that it is best we should leave the mansion, bidding you good-bye with more gratitude in our hearts for your kindness than our lips can express. Her health, you know sir, is not very good."

"Well," said Trenchard, with a frown, "is this place sickly? just tell me that!"

"In truth, sir, there are other circumstances which forbid us to trespass longer upon your liberality."

"Come, come, I reckon I understand all about it. Stephen has been here; he left in a towering passion, I'm sure, by his savage walk; he's been saying something to you that he ought not. Confound the rascal! I wouldn't give a dozen like him for one hair of your head. So now be cheerful and like yourself, and I'll cane him if he so much as speaks to you again."

"But really, uncle, I think it is best that we should leave."

"Hush, Lucy! you shan't go; you shan't talk about it; you shan't so much as *think* about it: so be quiet. But whose step was that? Here, Ichabod! Ichabod!"

"Well, Marser."

"Who was it, Ichabod, that came in at the front door just now?"

"Marser Frank. He went right up to his room."

"Not Skinner, then? Ah, well! when Mr. Skinner comes back from Delvinton, watch out for him, and tell him I want to see him about the wheat to be sown in the new field. Do you understand?"

"Yes, sir; an' I reckon that's him now: I heard the little gate slam what leads to his house."

"Run then and head him; I'll go to the back piazza."

Thus speaking, the old man trudged away, and was not seen again by Mrs. Montgomery and her daughter till an hour afterwards, when they met him at the dinner-table along with the other member of that family of four, Francis Herbert. The latter was very pale, and spoke less than usual during the meal.

After the garniture of the table was removed, and the servant had left, they remained in their seats some moments according to custom, Colonel Trenchard glancing over the newspaper, and the others conversing. Presently he lifted up his eyes from the journal, and said in his blunt way:

"Frank, is it true, as I hear, that you have taken a horse-whipping in the village this morning?"

The two ladies started and bent their eyes instantly upon the youth. He too was startled by the sudden interrogatory; the crimson current rushed at once to his cheeks, which just before seemed bloodless, and he felt his heart throbbing in his throat. It was some moments before he answered; when he did speak, it was in a tone wonderfully calm:

"Yes, sir, I have received some blows of a whip from Mr. Randolph."

Trenchard replied:

"Well, the Herberts used to be a spunky breed; they must be changed a great sight since. I suppose, however, you are going to challenge him; but that's a poor business. Have no duels, but settle your quarrels, you youngsters, when your blood's warm and there's no sin in it. It is a pity indeed that you let the minute slip. I don't see what other course you have left open for yourself. It's wrong, though, very wrong; but Stephen's not a fellow to back out and ask pardon: it's a pity—pity—pity."

"I agree with you, sir, that duels are sinful, and have no thought of challenging Randolph to one."

"The mischief you haven't! And what then will you do?"

"What can I do?"

"Yes, sure enough, what can you do now?"

"What other course, sir, would you have had me pursue *then*? I was fearfully tempted: may I never again have such a struggle to endure. Thank God, I conquered."

"Conquered!" echoed Trenchard. "I don't understand your story: whom did you conquer?"

"Myself."

"Oh, is that it? So you take pleasure in the recollection of your cowhiding?"

All the youth's former agitation, so hardly repressed, returned. His evident suffering excited some compassion even in the stern breast of Trenchard. The ladies showed *their* deep sympathy without disguise upon their countenances, and Herbert, wretched as he was, drew comfort from the sight. Hastily dashing away a struggling tear, he said:

"What, sir, would you have had me do?"

"Had you do when a man struck you? Why, strike him back, to be sure. In such a case, don't stop to think on which side the odds are, but jump right into the fellow. I have known many a little man stump a big one. When I was down in New Orleans, ten years ago, I happened to meet a man who had been long before, and who always will be, more hateful to me than the old boy himself. He was much stouter than I, as well as a great deal heavier, but when I shook my fist in his face on the public street he dared not toe the mark. Well, shortly after I was taken down with the fever, which kept me two weeks; and the first day I tottered out, as thin as a ghost and hardly able to hold my own weight, this cowardly scoundrel took the chance to give me a cut with his whip, as Steve did you; but you may swear he didn't bestow

me a *second*. I hadn't my knife, unfortunately, or I would have given it to him in the midriff; but I clapped my fingers around his throat and clinched them tighter than ever cooper hooped a flour barrel. The villain tripped me up in a hurry, for my legs were not as stiff as a pea-vine, but I held my grip; down we came together; he battered my face till the mother that bore me would not have known it. Still I held on, and he grew blue and gasped for breath; then he got his thumb under my right eye and gave one twitch; I winced my head, and the eye-ball slipped from his clutch; the next instant his fingers stretched out with a jerk, his fat carcass rolled upon its back, and I had no call to hang on longer. He was not dead, however, and afterwards revived to do more villainy. I believe in my heart he is anxious to kill *me* in the same way I made him suffer. It is Alexander Leach I mean, that hypocritical buffoon. But to return to the present business, I must allow that you would have had no chance whatever in a regular set-to with Steve Randolph, nor would anybody else have had, for he is as strong as Samson and has the spunk of Lucifer, but then you had a loaded gun."

"And would you really prefer, sir, that I had now your nephew's blood upon my hands?"

"I tell you, Francis Herbert, if I had been in such a situation, I would have shot the man, whoever he might be! If he were my father's brother, I would have shot him as he stood—shot him with *deadly* aim."

"But, Mr. Trenchard, could you have justified such an act upon the principles of the New Testament?"

"Frank, God has made man to feel resentment, and feel it most keenly at any thing that wounds our honour; and therefore—and accordingly—"

"Pardon me, sir, for interrupting you; but Christ tells us to subdue such resentment—to hold it in check."

"Well, if it is so, we are not perfect; and surely to kill a man in a sudden passion is not like killing him in cold blood.

This is exactly the reason, as I said just now, why duels are so wicked: they are more like rank murders."

"But, Colonel, if you had ever killed a man in a quarrel, do you not think you would feel sorry about it afterwards?"

"I have known others, of whom I would not have thought it, to become sorry, and it is possible I might too."

"Well, sir, have you not also known such persons to wish that anything had happened rather than that they should have another's blood upon them?"

"Yes; Hiram Messenger was just so."

"Then, sir, if it is certain that if I had killed Randolph I should have bitterly regretted it, did I not right to refrain?"

"No, Frank; you were placed in a necessity: a man with a gun in his hand who is horsewhipped is under a necessity to shed blood."

"But I was not in a necessity, for I did not shed blood."

"How did you escape from it, though? What! to stand still under a cowhiding like a slave! It could not be endured."

"Yet, Colonel, as Christians we are bound not to slay except when our own life is in peril."

"Frank! Frank! I am not a member of the Church—you are. I could not act so: if you must, you should turn preacher, and then you would be safe."

"I cannot perceive in myself," answered Herbert, "any special qualification for the sacred ministry, and I should scorn to fly to its protection out of cowardice."

"Be Quaker, then."

"My last reason holds as to this, too, sir; and further, I do not think it right that that principle should be made the distinction of a *sect*, which the Saviour has enjoined as a characteristic mark upon every disciple."

"Frank Herbert," said the Colonel, impatiently, "it is not worth while to talk any more. You are just graduated, and may easily have too much logic for a plain old man like me; but if you are sincere in your doctrines, you of course have no

regard in such a case as this for the opinion of the world. You are content to be despised and ridiculed at every public gathering—at every family fireside; to have the very boys point their fingers at you as you pass, and, in ridiculous show, mimic the operation you have undergone; to hear some negro, after being punished for a petty theft in the way in which negroes are punished, tell his companions with a grin, that he can ‘stand a lashing ’most as well as Marser Herbert.’ You can endure all this, eh?”

Herbert was pale as death, but made no reply.

“So you are quite pleased to be the object of disgust and contempt, or else of humiliating pity; to receive the vilest insults from every bully; to be jeered at, cuffed, kicked; to be avoided by every gentleman and loathed by every woman? All this you must bear, for it is the necessary portion of the coward—or of him, that is, who *seems* to be one.”

These last words were spoken after a pause by way of extenuation, for the old gentleman, in the energy of his application of the *argumentum ad hominem*, had not noticed the increasing emotion of poor Frank, who finally had burst into tears outright. Perceiving his rather awkward apology inadequate to counteract his previous rhetoric, he added soothingly:

“Never mind, Frank; you know me; don’t take it hard, my boy. We were only *talking*, of course; you brought on the debate, so you ought not to mind it.”

“Excuse me, sir,” said Herbert, rising and hastily withdrawing.

There was silence when he left. Trenchard looked alternately at the young lady and the old one. Mrs. Montgomery murmured, “poor fellow!” Lucy’s eyes were directed to the floor, and the long lashes quite concealed their expression. The party then, by a common impulse, separated. Lucy proceeded to her chamber, and to reach it had to pass a pleasant little room which, in the abundance of apartments

in that large mansion, had been appropriated by Herbert as a sort of study. The door was ajar as she stepped lightly by, and she naturally cast a glance within. The young man sat with his head buried in his hands and leaning upon the table. She went on to her own room, but in less than an hour came out again, and walked so softly down the passage that a mouse would not have been startled by a footfall; when she was again opposite the study, she laid her hand upon the latch, and with the same quietness that had marked all her movements, looked inside. There Herbert still sat with his head enfolded in his arms. She entered, touched his shoulder lightly, and said: "Frank!"

He raised his head, and his lovely visitor perceived that his eyes were almost blood shot, and that his cheeks showed the ravages of a scalding torrent of tears.

"Ah, Lucy, is it you? Why come to look at me in my wretchedness?"

"Is it not reason enough, Frank, that you *are* wrteched?"

"Alas!" he rejoined, "why do you remind me by your company that life has anything attractive? Lucy, this world has never been an indulgent mother to me; now I am bitterly taught how utterly worthless and intolerable it is. What do I live for? Care—pain—distracting doubts—unceasing torment. Where is the pleasure that I can hope to taste which will not turn to ashes in my mouth? We exist and suffer but to die at last. Oh! what torture can be worse than that which now rends me body and mind? And to think how trifling a thing might free me from it all: the work of an instant, and then—then—" Herbert covered his face with his hands, but removing them, added, "then a deliverance from this woe—deliverance from the presence of man."

"But you could not," said the gentle comforter, "you could not lay violent hands on that life which it required Omnipotence to give you?"

"No, Lucy, I could not. I am guilty in even cherishing

such thoughts. Oh! what have I come to? How have all those resolutions, which I thought stable as adamant, crumbled? But you would pardon me if you knew—what you cannot know—the excess of suffering I have undergone.”

“I can feel for you,” she replied, “for I too have had to suffer keenly on my own account, and that within the limits of this day. The injuries of us both are inflicted by the same person. We have a common pain caused by a common author. Cannot we then sympathize?”

“What! has Stephen Randolph presumed to offer you discourtesy? Tell it me!”

The youth, as he uttered these words, sprang up as one transformed, and his fine eye sparkled with anger.

“Nay, it was nothing; I merely wished to divert your thoughts.”

“Lucy! Lucy! I must know it! What has he done?”

“He has done nothing; he merely said—some inconsiderate words.”

“Well, what were those words? Do not vex me with such vague information.”

“Well, then,” answered the maiden, “though I had no thought of repeating it, since you will have me relate so trifling a matter, he called me”—she blushed and hesitated—“Mr. Randolph called me ‘a fortune-hunting dependent.’”

“By heavens! the scoundrel shall rue it!” cried Herbert, pacing the floor vehemently; “he shall retract the base, unmanly slander, or I will cram it down the bully’s throat!”

He started to leave the room, but Lucy quietly restrained him.

“What would you do? Will you so soon cease to obey the sacred duty of forbearance?”

“Oh, I forgot—*forgot*.” There was something in the *tone* with which these simple words were spoken that must long have rung in the ears of any one who had heard them, so much was there that told of abandonment of hope and energy;

of a grief bordering upon despair; of a heart well nigh broken. He resumed his seat by the table, and as at the first, his head rested upon his folded arms.

Lucy was awed by an intensity of emotion so surpassing any thing that can be felt by minds of ordinary organization, and made no sound to disturb his sad revery. What space of time thus elapsed, we have no means of exactly ascertaining; the sun, however, in its descent had nearly reached the horizon, when the young man arose with a countenance as haggard and careworn as if years of anxiety had left their impress upon it.

"Lucy, I want your opinion. I have come to a conclusion,"—he smiled frightfully,—“it is this, that I am, as Colonel Trenchard says, a *coward*: is it not so?”

The maiden looked at him with surprise and apprehension, for she believed his mind wandering.

“Yes, I see,” he continued; “your silence acknowledges that you believe me correct.”

“No, Frank, you are not a coward; your own heart tells you you are not.”

“I am—I must be. This accounts for everything. No wonder that my guardian reproaches me, that you pity me; no wonder that men cast upon me different looks from what other persons receive; no wonder”—here the muscles of his mouth contracted spasmodically—“that I am—horsewhipped! Wherefore am I made of feebler sinews than any other of mankind? Why is an excess of bodily vigour given to one who is disposed to abuse his gift, rather than to me, who would use it to raise, and to heal, and to succour the oppressed?”

“Ah, Frank, ought you not rather to bless God for the *disposition* than to envy those who, without that disposition, incur his fearful displeasure? Choose for yourself. If the Almighty thinks not fit to confer all his gifts upon any one, how can you complain if you possess those which are most desirable?”

"True, dear Lucy. What a wretch am I to dare call in question the propriety of the appointments of my Creator! You are right, you are right. Why should I care for the judgment of man? To do so is not only wicked but weak and foolish."

"I am glad," said Miss Montgomery, "to hear you speak thus once more. That which the devotees of the world might regard as a disgrace, ought rather, as it is in obedience of the law of God, to be reckoned an honour."

"Yes, yes," replied Herbert; "but the thought will recur, 'What do men think?' To be *dishonoured*—dishonoured for ever! Oh! Lucy, what a fate!"

"Frank! have you never admired the martyrs of ancient time? Have you never felt that you could endure like things to win a place in that noble army?"

"I have—I have indeed; and were I a minister of the gospel, I think I should prefer that field above all others which should most signally try my faith; were it hedged in with pestilence or with fagot, the more eager, I think, I would be to press on."

"Then why not count your present sufferings a martyrdom, and summon a martyr's temper to endure them?"

"So I could, Lucy, were it not for one distinction, which you overlook. Those glorious men who died to bear testimony to the gospel, suffered indeed pangs which I dare not equal mine to, yet they had this happiness, that their *courage* was never called in question. I undergo an agony which to my frail strength is almost intolerable, and I undergo, I trust, from *principle*; but men—and this makes the bitterness of my lot—men attribute my conduct to pusillanimity. If now some opportunity would only occur, without the sin of my seeking it, to prove my courage in some dreadful danger—but what am I saying? Do I know myself so well? Might not I succumb under such a trial, and then my condition become worse than it is? God Omniscient knoweth, and will direct the matter in mercy. But I dismiss all my doubts and distress. I am a coward indeed, so long as I remain en-

thrall'd by them. I see my duty before me, and I will follow it—may Heaven bless the determination—follow it, whatever obstacles interpose, whether it be danger, or, what is harder to bear—yet which I *will* bear—the hatred and scorn of my fellow-men.

“Frank! you are now like yourself.”

“I *am* myself, dearest Lucy, thanks to you. How many, alas! have been as sorely tempted, and have not had such a monitor. But fear no longer for me. I may indeed sometimes fail to perform my duty, but never again, so help me God! will I feel grief or shame at *having* performed it. But stay; why do you go?”

“I am not sorry to have stayed so long; but see! it is almost night. It will soon be supper: remember—meet the Colonel firmly.”

“Doubt it not. Watch me well, and if I prove unequal to this occasion, or any other, then call me craven, and forbid me, Lucy, to tell you how I love you.”

Frank perceived, dark as it was, that this observation had brought up a blush, and sprang forward so quickly as to obstruct her passage through the door.

“Stop, Lucy! you must tell me. In case I *should* prove a resolute champion of the truth, will you allow me to whisper what, if you reject it not, I will dare avow on the house-tops?”

“Fy!” exclaimed the maiden, “there is magic at work. Where is that bashful gentleman whom I saw here just now! He has quite vanished and left no trace.”

“He is here still,” said Frank, at once changing his tone and manner; “have you nothing, Lu—I mean Miss Montgomery—to say to him?”

“Yes,” replied Lucy, coolly; “I advise him by all means to refrain from imitating a certain wild youngster, not far off, who presumes to lay restraint upon the liberty of young ladies. So good evening to you.”

Thus speaking, she tripped by him and disappeared in the passage.

CHAPTER VI

Stephen Randolph, as we have mentioned, kept house; yet, as his means became slender, he was compelled to enjoy company in the dwellings of others oftener than in his own. Some visitors, however, he still had; and, though substantial refreshment might be scanty, was always ready to place before them a decanter of peach brandy or of twenty-year whiskey. There were a very few for whose gratification he would draw upon his last box of champagne, and thus honoured was an individual who called on him about eight o'clock in the evening of the day whose events we have last been chronicling. A jolly time they had. Sandy Leach, though an innate vulgarity prevented him from being successful in more ambitious conversational efforts, had really a gift for coarse humour, and, to any one who could enjoy it, was a not unentertaining companion; and Randolph, whose versatility enabled him to appear equally at home in either low or refined society, had lately, from his unfortunate habits, learned to partake of the former with most relish. The bottle travelled briskly backward and forward over the table, and their mirth grew fast and furious in proportion.

"Here's to the health of that sweet youth Francis," cried Leach, holding up his glass; "may the soreness of his back speedily give way to good treatment!"

"But what can heal his wounded honour?"

"Oh, let him plaster that with texts of Scripture! Charming Miss Lucy can assist him to find them." As Leach said this, he watched the expression of his companion's face with peculiar earnestness.

"Hang them both!" ejaculated Stephen.

Leach appeared gratified, and answered, interrogatively:

"Well, I suppose we must set down this Montgomery girl, if things take their *natural* course, as Trenchard's heiress?"

"It is quite possible."

"Yet, it is probable, I suppose, there will be some *interference* with the natural order?"

"Ay, like enough," replied Randolph composedly; "since you will have eight or ten thousand dollars to lose in that event, I should not wonder if you were to kick against it vigorously."

"Haven't *you* also some interest in the matter?"

"Not much, so long as I have good friends to lend me all I want and take my note for payment. Still, I must say I think these broad pedestals of mine would fill my uncle's shoes rather better than Lucy Montgomery's little feet."

"Now I believe," said Leach, sinking his voice, "I believe it will be quite easy to make her quit the mansion, and at the same time to excite against her Trenchard's dislike, besides preventing any possible connection with either Middleton or Herbert."

"Oh, a fig for the *lovers*!" returned Randolph, "if the old man is but put straight; though how are you to bring about that happy state of things?"

"Why, I am confident I can let loose some rumours from the boarding school where she stayed before her father's death that will accomplish all I have said."

"And these reports will have relation to her good name?" said the other.

"That they will; nothing short would serve the purpose."

"So, Sandy, these reports have no real foundation?"

"I don't see where you get your '*So*'! But I needn't say yes or no about this. If our object is gained, what more should we care for?"

"Look here, Leach!" said Randolph, with indignant earnestness, "this is a rascally, villainous scheme. You shall not—you shall not—"

"Heigho, who would have thought it?" exclaimed the other, holding up his fat hands. "Why, to my certain knowledge, you quarrelled bitterly with the hussy this very morning; and insulted her, too, in such a way as to leave no chance of reconciliation."

"Ha!" cried the rejected suitor, "how came you to know that? Surely you have not dared trust your ears inside of Stephen Trenchard's door-sill."

"Never mind; I hear most that goes on, I can tell you. But haven't you really quarrelled with her for good?"

"For *bad*, it may well be," said Randolph, with a little sadness in his tone; "yet, bad or good, I shall never be her husband. But then, confound it, I am not going to let a parcel of hellish slanders be raised about an innocent girl, I can tell you."

"But what odds?" persisted the tempter. "You don't want Herbert or Middleton to marry her, I suppose?"

"I'll wring their necks first!" cried the young man fiercely.

"You don't mean to take her yourself?"

"I've already told you, No!"

"And you don't want her to get your uncle's property? Well, why not adopt a plan that will accomplish every thing at once?"

"I will not *think* of it, so utter not another word."

"Why, Steve, you must have been jilted badly;" and the crafty old man looked at him with well-feigned astonishment. "So you still love her?"

"I do *not*!" replied Randolph with evident vexation. "I hate her; or rather, I am perfectly indifferent; and I will show my indifference by insisting, as a mere affair of justice, that no such scandalous plot as you hint at be carried into execution. Sandy Leach, it *shall* not; I have given my answer, so be satisfied."

"But suppose I go on my own hook and set the tongues of the school girls loose, what can *you* do?"

"Do!" echoed the young giant, in a tone like the reverberations from a mountain side. "Do!" he added, knitting his brows and striking the table till the glasses danced. "Try it, and, by Heaven, you shall find out what I will do!"

Leach allowed him to become calm, and continued in a quiet manner:

"What say you, then, to the scheme I mentioned to you day before yesterday?"

"I'll none of it. Goodness! to think what you have led me to before!" The young man shuddered.

"Shaking, as I live—Steve Randolph trembling!"

"Trembling? Pshaw! Here! let's have a drink, and we'll see whose hand is the steadiest." Randolph filled the two glasses full to the brim, and then lifted his own to his mouth without losing a drop, but Leach spilled some of the wine from his.

The spendthrift expressed his exultation loudly, and the conversation for a while wandered from the subjects in debate. At length Randolph, pushing away his glass, leaned back in his chair for some moments, and then said:

"Sandy, if I believed it possible for the spirit of darkness to animate a human form, I should say there's one now in your big carcass."

"You compliment me; but why?"

"Well, you must own that the serpent and the foul fiend are nearly related. Now, if your temper towards my uncle is not *snakish*, I don't know a word fit to describe it."

"And hasn't Trenchard ever *treated me like a reptile*?"

Such a concentrated malice glistened in the small deep-set eye of Leach, that Randolph could not help averting his glance with a sensation akin to horror. The shopkeeper noticed the effect he had unwittingly produced, and, relaxing his countenance to its customary smile, added:

"You, Steve, cannot at any rate reproach yourself for any lack of meekness and long-suffering: witness your patient endurance of Dr. Middleton."

"What has he done?"

"Why, you *know* what he has done in tracking up those confounded boots."

"Oh, is that all? I thought you had something new."

"Really," returned Leach, "I never knew you so backward to give a man a thrashing before."

"Plague take you, Sandy! you are ever at your vocation. But I'm getting sick of this rowdyism, man. I have more than half a notion even to apologize to that poor boy Herbert for the hasty blows I gave him."

"That will be a great relief indeed to him, and he'll come off with flying colours. For *his* sake be quick, and give him time to withdraw his challenge before it reaches you."

"Pooh! a challenge from *him*! What a ridiculous idea! A challenge to fight with pop-guns, I suppose?"

Leach noticed the favourable turn in his subject, and skilfully availed himself of it.

"Now don't kill the little man by laughing at him, Steve. How funny he looked on the tavern pavement! What a desperate energy painted on his pretty face when he held out his shooting fix! One could observe the actual process of screwing up his courage. In general it lies so low that I doubt whether he himself suspected he had any. With the first cut of the cow-hide it moved; the second and third stirred it more; but at the fourth, which I suppose approached nearer the seat of honour, it gave a tremendous bounce, and at the same instant up went the gun. The little chap wriggled his lips and screwed so vigorously that his courage reached another notch. He worked and strained—higher he could not get it. I was certain then he'd never make it stick; and sure enough, all at once down it came with a flop. Old Stephen Trenchard's lecture, too, must have been rich—I mean the scolding he gave him in place of dessert after dinner. Sal, the house girl, told me all about it this evening, and I made her a present of a handkerchief for the story. He scolded Frank

beautifully for bringing home the white feather, and said his only chance was to *challenge* you, as your spunk was too good ever to let you take back any thing you'd done. Frank blubbered out that he had had the best of the business already, as he had scared you."

"How! he scared *me*? But go on."

"Well, he had punished you enough, he thought; and if, as it seemed, it was not sufficient, his religion would not let him send a challenge."

"He meant, as you say, Sandy, that his courage had slipped out of reach."

"Very likely," continued the narrator, "but the funniest part is to come. Trenchard asked why, in the mischief, he didn't shoot you when he had a chance. He answered that his gun *wasn't loaded*, and that he did great things when he frightened Steve Randolph with an empty barrel; and with that, Sal says, he fairly grinned through his tears."

"Confound the brat!" exclaimed Randolph, "the next time I catch him I'll pound him to a jelly."

"Don't, for his dear sweetheart's sake, Steve. But listen! Frank added that, even if his gun had been loaded, he could not have had the heart to hurt such a poor dissipated young man."

"The dev—"

"Don't swear, Steve; he ain't worth it. But, to conclude, the smart youth wound up by saying that if no other consideration had interfered, nothing could have induced him to wound so near a relative of his revered guardian."

"Fishing for a legacy, as I live!" cried Stephen.

"You may well say it. I reckon he lays that hit at a round ten thousand at least."

Leach having, as he thought, thoroughly effaced, by this admirable perversion of facts, every thing like compunction from the mind of his listener, continued: "Do you want to hear any more of the scraps I have picked up from the servants?"

"You may tell them, if you choose; of course they are half lies."

"Oh, I won't vouch as to that! but, indeed, I don't know that the darkies have any object, and I compare their accounts, so as to catch them when they trip. You must know they come to my store by stealth, as the Colonel would beat them like fury if he knew of it. Well, there's one of them had a talk with me some days ago,—an old, gossiping crone that calls herself 'body sarvant to Miss Lucy.' "

"Rachel, I should judge," observed Randolph.

"That's the one; but mind and don't say anything about it, or they will be punished, and my mail cut off. Rachel said, in her way, that her young mistress happened to be talking one night about her three beaux,—it's no matter what she said about you?"

"Yes, tell me."

"She said Mr. Randolph was too big and passionate, and too extravagant."

"Ah, did she? Extravagant,—eh? I wonder what mighty fortune she has to make her so careful?"

"You forget," replied Leach, "that she is to inherit the Trenchard estate."

"Ay, sure enough," said the other, with a bitter scowl. "But what of the rest?"

"Mr. Herbert," said she, "is too little and bashful and soft-hearted."

"She's hard to please. And the doctor?"

"Rachel says she blushed when she came to *his* name, and said, 'Dr. Middleton is as quiet and gentle as Frank Herbert, and braver than Mr. Randolph.' "

"Braver than I? That shall be tried!"

Sandy Leach smiled; that is, there was a broad smile on his heart, but the visible emotion became weaker in its passage along the nerves, till it died away in sundry convulsions of the maxillar muscles, which seemed significant rather of

lugubriousness than of complacent mirth. He was much pleased, and indeed had reason to be, on account of his successful management of the wild passions of his companion. But he had not attained his whole end; and feeling inclined to pursue it still further, with that view made an interlude of a drinking bout. Perhaps the exhilarating effect of the wine he himself had already taken had something to do with this measure; however that may be, it was not adopted with his usual prudence. Although Mr. Leach was a match for any one with the bottle, so far as mere keeping his legs was concerned, and no one had ever seen him drunk, yet he overestimated his powers of this kind when he set them against Stephen Randolph's; for that young man could bear as much "soaking" as he, with this difference, that all that he took after a certain quantity had rather the effect of quenching the natural fire of his temperament, than of kindling it higher. The justice of these observations will perhaps be seen before we get to the close of this midnight conversation, though they may be in this place somewhat premature.

"I confess freely, Steve, that I shall not be sorry to see Middleton thrashed; for he is so plaguey sly."

"You hit the nail now, Sandy. If the fellow would come right out before my face, I should not care; but this behind-your-back conduct I abominate. I'll make him come out, though; he must either show himself a man, or else, what I verily believe him, a sneaking coward. Deliver me from these quiet, composed sort of people; they can't help but be rascals, in order to make themselves of some account in the world. I don't believe there ever was a man of this nature but had something wrong about him. It may be different off among the Yankees; but here in Virginia, the fellow that is so still and steady and on his guard as never to afford opportunity for a tussle, must either be a coward or nearly as bad."

"You except the present company, of course," interposed

Leach, laughing, "for you know I am particular to keep out of mischief."

"You differ from most of this class, Sandy. You joke and laugh, and are pleasant over a bottle; but after all, you are *dangerous*; you know it."

"But then, Steve, you must admit that there are some roystering, heavy-handed chaps who are fit to give more general fear than I; lawyer Blapp, for instance."

"Tut, tut, man! he is not a touch to you! Wat Blapp is a right cute fellow, to be sure, though he is not half so cute as he thinks he is, and does a deal of mischief in the way of setting folks together by the ears; but compared with *you*, he is no more than a 'prentice imp alongside of Beelzebub. Still, Sandy, it is well enough to be careful of Wat. Don't talk too freely to him. He's in reality, I believe, friendly disposed to me, and would stick at little to serve me—that is, of course, provided I could thereby be put in a condition to do him some good in return; but it is by no means advisable to let a man know more than exactly fits him for the work you mean him to perform. So, Sandy, if it should become necessary to have recourse to any of your wild and desperate schemes, be particular as to Wat."

"Ay, ay! trust me for that! I am glad to see you quitting your whimsical notions, and turning once more to regard matters like a man of the world; and one of my plans will be necessary, as you foresee. Depend upon it, I have as little inclination as you to commit more sins than circumstances compel. I have thought over the whole business, and have thus made up my mind to the only course that offers a fair chance of success. You may not yet have come to the same conclusion, but you will. Let us talk about it rationally. You seem to have a great repugnance to the first scheme."

"I have, indeed; so say no more about it."

"Stephen, can you think of any other substitute but that which I have suggested? I perceive by your blank look that

you cannot. Now, the inheritance of this estate is your right by the laws of nature."

"Certainly; am I not the Colonel's nearest relative?"

"Well, even the rankest Methodism does not require a man to injure himself to benefit another. Why, then, should you ward off a transient injury from this artful girl, to your own hurt?"

"But, Sandy, you forget; this is a positive injury."

"No, it isn't, on *your* part. I am content to take upon myself all the responsibility of the act. Besides, the advantage to you is a lasting one; the injury to her need not be permanent—you understand?"

"Yes, I understand. A lying report can be overthrown by knocking away its false foundations. Still, slander will stick."

"I won't deceive you, Stephen. There may be truth, at least some truth, in the reports I have spoken about; but I am certain that if you wish it, I can arrange the affair so that her fame, whether the stains cast upon it are just or not, will appear spotless in the end."

"Yet," replied Randolph, "a considerable period may elapse before old Trench kicks the bucket. I can't be certain of the property till then, and it would be a long while for the poor girl to remain with a dishonoured name. Goodness knows she has given me plaguey little reason to be anxious about her settlement in marriage; but for all, I am loath to be the cause of her pining away in solitude and poverty, shunned by every honest man and woman as a creature of shame."

"Oh, I dare say she'll get a respectable husband without much trouble. She is really quite pretty, and is accomplished enough to keep any man's parlour stylish."

"That is very true, but such a foul report will conceal it all."

"No, no! don't you fear! I'll warrant her a decent husband, *if I have to be the man myself.*"

Leach was sensible that he might have committed an indiscretion in this remark, and shot a furtive glance across the table to observe its effect, resolved within himself to treat it as a jest if ill received; but Randolph only answered:

"Why, you have never heard her open her lips even."

"But I have, though. Don't you know she visits frequently at Mrs. Good's house? I am a particular friend of the old widow, and have seen Lucy there more than once."

"The difficulty of the introduction may be over, Sandy, but there is another—she'd never *have* you. I am not vain, but I think I am at least as captivating as you. To be sure, I never cared for her the breaking of a straw, except to make certain of my uncle's negroes and land; still I *asked* her."

"True enough, Stephen, I am not a handsome fellow like you; but you may depend her proud feelings will break mightily when she finds herself all at once deserted and scorned. She and her mother will be poor, too, and distressed; then will I commence to lay my train. First I'll contrive to drop in one acceptable present after another at whatever hut they may take up with, remaining myself all the time incog, as they say. Perhaps I may put on a broad-brim hat, and otherwise dress as a respectable Quaker gentleman, carefully keeping my face from observation. At the first call I'll leave a basket of oranges for the old lady, as she is weakly and complaining and at the last one, when they may be threatened with distress for rent or the like, I'll just step to the door, signify that I am leaving the country, throw in my purse with a 'God bless you,' and step away without waiting for thanks. Next, Mrs. Good shall insist upon their staying a while at her house; there I will meet Lucy apparently by accident, and show surprise and discomposure. Then, by degrees, I must become more sociable, sympathize with her sorrows, and all that. Depend upon it, my boy, she'll be Mrs. Leach yet!"

"She *your* wife!" exclaimed Stephen, with intense disdain; "Lucy Montgomery marry *you!* a pousy, bloated, vulgar shopkeeper like you! Ha, ha!"

Sandy Leach was disconcerted, and half inclined to manifest anger, for Randolph's laugh had by no means the clearing of good-humoured raillery. The young man continued: "This, then, is the object of all the nice work you have been chalking out for me. I am honoured, truly!—the faithful bully to drub Mr. Leach's rivals for him! I see now the cause of such bitter spite against Middleton and Herbert. Perhaps you have been using some cursed practices to injure *me* in her opinion. Give me but reason to think so, and as sure as I am a living man I'll beat out your brains against that wall!" He started up, and his clenched hand told that little was needed to induce him to execute his threat.

Leach felt himself sobered with a vengeance, and trembled, for he knew his danger. His self-possession, however, did not desert him.

"How can you dream of such a thing, Stephen? Confound the girl! I wish she was your wife to-morrow, or any body else's, so that would satisfy you. What I want is, to see you master of those thousands of acres. How every thing beside turns out will affect me not a whit."

"Here, Sandy!" exclaimed the other, "look me in the eye, and solemnly swear that you have done nothing, and caused nothing to be done, to prejudice my suit with Miss Montgomery. Be careful, now! If you perjure yourself I'll read it on your forehead, and it were far better for you to make a clean breast at once than have me wring the villainy out by tearing you in pieces!"

"*I swear it! I swear it!*" cried Leach with energy; and well it was for him that in this he spoke truth.

Randolph sat down again, and fresh corks were drawn. His crafty companion found all his work thrown back in confusion upon his hands. Warily did he renew his task, and indefatigably was it prosecuted. He had determined that *his* competitor, Middleton, should be humbled, and, by skilful insinuations that the hesitation of Randolph might

be suspected by some to proceed from fear, as he had been prompt enough to punish a feeble enemy in Francis Herbert, he brought the young Titan again to the determination to insult the "sly doctor." Towards the breaking up of the conversation, Leach ventured to introduce a hint at the scheme concerning Miss Montgomery, but a rising scowl upon the brow of his companion admonished him in time to give the sentence an inoffensive termination,

CHAPTER VII

The third day subsequent was that appointed in Virginia for holding an important election. Dr. Charles Middleton, whose rides for the past week had taken him in a different direction, went, this morning, around by Delvinton, and having given his vote, called for a few moments to inquire after the health of the family at the mansion.

Colonel Trenchard was not at the house, but he saw the two young persons and Mrs. Montgomery. He grasped Herbert's hand heartily, and said to him in a tone of sincerity:

"You have behaved nobly, Frank, nobly!"

The youth blushed with gratification, and answered:

"It was hard, and I expect to suffer in consequence; but if the scene were acted again, I would not do otherwise."

"You need not, indeed, my dear fellow," responded the doctor; "very few could exhibit such heroism. But where is the Colonel? I suppose he is going to the election, yet I did not see him at the village."

"No, he can't be there yet; he rode round by the lower meadow. Surely, doctor, you are not off already."

"I would be glad to stay, Frank; but I have a patient six miles off, to be visited at eleven. Good bye, Mrs. Montgomery; good bye, Miss Lucy; I will see you all to-morrow, I trust, and the Colonel too."

After he had ridden away, the trio remained on the portico.

"I am sorry," observed Herbert, "that the doctor was in such haste. I wanted to inquire how the election was going. I must get there myself before dinner, since I have sufficient land to give me a vote, if not to provide me a new broad-cloth coat."

"Had you not better wait a little later? It will then be ——"

"It will be what, Lucy?"

"I was going to say that it will then be more quiet at the village than just now."

"Why, Lucy, I am ashamed of you! Is this the way you would nerve my fortitude? No, no; I prefer to go when the greatest number shall be present—Randolph among them."

"You will not take any thing with you, Frank?"

"Yes, indeed, I will, unless you would have me leave my pocket-handkerchief and pencil behind."

"Oh, you know what I mean—your gun, and those—those——"

"The pistols, eh? Don't doubt my firmness so easily; I mean to carry no weapon whatever, not even a walking stick. An umbrella, however, I must take, for it looks something like rain. But here is Ichabod, returning from the village; the old man can tell us how matters are going. Here, Uncle Ich! we want to see you."

"Sarvant, young Marser," said the negro, removing his hat.

"Well, Uncle, tell us how things are going at the town; who's to be elected?"

"I can't say for sartain, Marser Frank; some talks up stiff for one man, and some for another; it's hard prodicting who's gwine to have most. 'Sides to speak resactly I haven't interceded much into dis matter, I was so taken up with watchin' the doctor through his scrape; but I reckon he's told you all 'bout *that*."

"No, he hasn't," said the young lady; "do *you* tell us, Uncle Ich."

"I s'pose he seemed sort o' sperrited an' 'wilderred?"

"Not at all," answered Herbert; "he was just as composed and quiet as ever. But what has been the matter?"

"You know, I judge, 'bout Marser Stephen's comin' up to him lookin' so fierce de doctor was in mighty bad fix?"

"But, Ichabod," interposed Mrs. Montgomery, "we don't

know any thing about it. Mr. Randolph been assaulting Dr. Middleton? Come, give us the whole story from the beginning; don't tantalize us—if you know what that means."

"I understand 'sizely: all one as crackin' the whip afore the horses is hitched, or settin' the wedge at the butte-end. No, Missus; I'll take the log right, and begin at the beginnin'. The doctor came ridin' along down to the front of the tavern—you know the electioning goes on in the tavern; when he gets right close to the step, he casts his eye round, a-kinder lookin' for a place to hitch his horse, and he looked plump against Marser Stephen, who was standin' alongside of Misser Leach just outside the door. Marser Steve looked very savage indeed, an' de doctor wheeled away his horse, and I thought he was afeard; but as it turned out, he only went to fasten the critter to the fence on the other side, 'case all the posts was full. He come back then, walkin' very slow and liberal; and as soon as he got to the broad sideway, Marser Steve steps right up to meet him, his forehead all drawed up in a pucker, and the corners of his mouth all drawed down, and his eyes in a glitter, and his left fist doubled, and dat arm half crooked, and a switch in his right hand. He's so tall an' big, he seemed real grand and fearsome." Ichabod here made a pause for effect, and rolled his white orbs around his small but attentive group of listeners. "What tink were next? De doctor seed he were meetin' a hurricane, and come slow, but on he did dome. He's pretty much of a man, you know; though he ain't high, he's made broad and put close together, so he couldn't back out by sayin' he wan't no match. Still all his uttermost could do in a riglar scrimmage with such an unmarciful strong giant of a gentleman as Marser Steve, would be to make him enough wuss to tear him to flinders. An' de doctor knew dat too, and were sartain and sure that if de other should once get fairly 'zaggerated, he mought as well give hisself up for gone, without fendin' a lick. I've seed many a fight of white

folks too, and it's a right nice sight, and some people looks all the better for having their noses smashed, and their eyes knocked up; but de doctor is such a quiet, civil sort of a gentleman, I'd been sorry to a seen him in such a fix."

"Come, old man," cried Herbert impatiently, "stick to the point, and tell us what happened. Did Middleton give ground?"

"Not a bit, Marser; he walked slowly on, and looked de other right in the eye. It was a queer kind of a look too, and I must say I decline very much to the opinion that there's somethin' more nor natural 'bout de young doctor. You ricollec', Miss Lucy, how he cured Delilah's child so suddint when three other doctors give it up; and even old Aunt Pilzy who come from Affriky, and was as old when I was a boy—dat's sixty years ago—as she are now, even Aunty Pilzy said it were written in de moon dat it must die; but Dr. Middleton told her, short like, 'Hold your tongue!' an' Pilzy's sperrit wan't strong 'nough to stand his sperrit, an' de child *lived*."

"But about the meeting at the tavern, Uncle Ichabod?"

"Sure 'nuff, but I'll be on a trot now. Well, afore de doctor got within two or three yards or so of the door, Marser Steve made a quick step forward with a hard grip on the switch, as if his fingers itched to use it. Sandy Leach kept close along, but a little behint. Marser Steve raised de whip half up, and said, 'I b'lieve you's been makin' slan'rous 'proaches against me; come, out with your 'pology; I'm waitin.' De doctor kept his eye right agin his all de time, and spoke in de same soft sort o' way as ever; and dat dem words of his'n should have effect is admonishin', and make me think still more there mus' be somethin' sperritual and witch-like 'bout him. Gracious, I wouldn't unplease him for the airth!"

"But what *did* he say?"

"Only four or half-a-dozen words, and they had no consarn whatsoever wid the matter. He said, 'Can you tell

me, sir, whether a black man walks like an Injun?' Now wasn't dat funny? Any body'd have thought it more like crazy people's talk; but it had de charm in it, and Marser Steve drop his switch as if it war red-hot iron, though he looked as fierce as ever. Misser Leach touch him on the arm and whisper in his ear, and den stepped between 'em and made out as though he war partin' on 'em; but I could see it war all 'possum, for neder him nor Marser Steve could a ris an arm so long as de charm was on dat de doctor laid dar."

As the old black concluded his narrative his three listeners exchanged glances.

"A negro almost invariably turns out his toes in walking," observed Francis Herbert, in a low tone, "whilst the Indian keeps them straight forward; and no Indian ever had a straighter tread than *Randolph*."

"And how were *those* tracks?" inquired one of the ladies.

"I do not know; but the *doctor* must."

Old Ichabod observed them closely, but only comprehended enough that was said to puzzle him, without his gaining a clue to the mystery.

"I must go to Delvinton right away," said Herbert.

"Not to do any thing about this we are guessing at?" suggested Lucy.

"Of course not; but I have my vote to give."

He proceeded straightway to the village, drinking in fresh vigour at every step from the atmosphere, at once balmy and bracing, which is peculiar to that fifth season unknown to Hesiod, the Indian Summer, which springs like a new Amphitrite from the beach of one ocean, gives a fresh charm to the bright sisterhood as they trip across our western continent, and deserts them in the first rippling wave of the other. He swung his arms in the exhilaration of his spirit, and his breast swelled with high thoughts. Then he felt that he could do all things, and harder yet, *endure* all things. He thought not

of his being an almost penniless dependent upon the bounty of another, nor that he was master of no profession, and at that time unqualified for any one of the countless pursuits which human ingenuity or necessity has devised; nor further that he bore a brand of dishonour which would probably adhere during life. Nothing of all this passed through his mind, but he blessed the beneficent Creator for a glorious autumn day, and in the enjoyment of the gift was happy.

In this buoyant mood he soon threaded the woods, and crossed the rivulet which divided to him nature from the world, quiet from distraction, the green and golden hills of the plantation from the brick and whitewash of Delvinton. The tavern grounds extended in the rear to the skirt of the wood through which he had passed, and indeed cut off a few of its trees. About half way from this back fence to the dwelling and offices was a nine-pin alley, and so far the throng of tavern visitors frequently wandered. But Herbert was startled by hearing loud and angry voices issuing from the very extremity of the yard, and underneath the group of trees. Instead, therefore, of keeping around the grounds to the front, he leaped the fence, and ran across the hillock which concealed the cause of the sound from his view.

But to render our narrative intelligible, we must go back a little in time, and follow some of the movements of Mr. Trenchard. The old gentleman had, as Herbert informed the doctor, made a circuit of an additional mile before entering the village; and when he did reach it, he rode immediately into the yard to the stable, for the purpose of having his horse kept securely during his stay. After he had dismounted, and just as he was about to proceed to the tavern, he observed a man coming in the direction of the stable. Sandy Leach, for it was he, changed colour when he perceived whom he was so near meeting, and turned off into the little grove in the rear. Trenchard followed after very quickly, and had nearly overtaken him, when the object of his pursuit turned suddenly around and said:

"Sir, what have you to do with me?"

Trenchard replied in a low deep tone, "Suppose I sought to do murder, how could *you* complain?"

"Man! ruffian!" exclaimed the other with agitation; "keep off; I am armed."

"What the deuce do I care for your arms, you paltry coward! When did a Trenchard ever fear any thing? Do you remember New Orleans? Don't you gasp for breath at the recollection?"

Leach's face did indeed assume a livid hue, but Trenchard continued:

"Do you remember the famine at Havana, when you brought a ship thither with a cargo of grain, for which you had paid a double price, and by the sale of which you expected to make a quadruple profit! Do you remember how three large ship loads came in the day after, and how much you lost in consequence?"

"It reduced me for the time to beggary!" cried Leach. "But for that cursed mischance I should now have been worth three hundred thousand dollars. Yet *you* surely had no hand in that?"

"There you are mistaken, sir; nobody else would have been willing to lose money to ruin you. I *was*; and I did *not* lose by that transaction, for I gained revenge—*some* revenge; but there's more to be gained yet, man!"

"Mr. Trenchard," rejoined Sandy, in honeyed accents, "we are both advanced in years; neither of us can expect to live a great while longer. You have done me a great deal of hurt. I myself, I confess it, have wronged you. Let us hold the score balanced; let us seek the pardon of Heaven, by pardoning each other; let us forget and forgive."

"Forget and forgive!" echoed Trenchard; "you do well to couple the terms. Sandy, Sandy, I could forgive were it possible to *forget*; but, treacherous villain! I have a **MEMORY**! I will follow you up to the last; no peace nor pardon shall

you have! My revenge would be incomplete were you to die calmly. Scoundrel, hypocrite, perjured liar, viper, adder, most loathsome of reptiles, forever I will hate you! ’

“And d’ye think,” said the other, speaking through his teeth, “that I cannot hate also? You have enjoyed your revenge; you shall taste mine. See who’s the best at the game.”

“Blood-sucking Leach! low-born and lower-lived rascal, I scorn and defy you!”

“Ha, ha! defy me, do you?”

“Yes, I do defy you. You have twice tried to kill me, once when I was sick, and last at night; but you can’t succeed! How you chuckled when you were on the roof; your joy sounded in your voice. But, Alexander Leach, *I live!* Stingless scorpion, I live to trample you under my heel!”

“*You heard my voice, do you say?*” Leach cast a searching glance around to ascertain that no listeners were nigh. “You heard my voice. Now, what words did that voice say? What person was addressed? Was it a black man’s name that was called? tell me that! Was it Jim’s? Was it not that of some one nearer to you? was it not—”

“Hold!” cried Trenchard, in a voice of thunder; then he added, almost whispering, “I heard indeed too much. I mean, I *dreamed* I heard it; for never could he who bears *that* name have joined in a vile, cowardly assassination. Impossible! it cannot be.”

“You heard—”

“Alexander, hush! Say not that it was he, or I’ll grind you to ashes!”

“Stephen Trenchard, you say I wronged you, and heap bitter names on me. You have an excellent memory for all this. Your wife, so beautiful, so beloved, died the first year of her marriage, killed by your cruelty—killed by her husband. Ha, ha, ha! And you say I was at the bottom of all this! a ridiculous notion, truly. Ha, ha! Well, you don’t

remember, I suppose, how you had treated *me* before that? You had a sister. Alexander Leach, a poor man, of a poor family, wasn't good enough for her. No! So you married her to Brewster Randolph; and what a fine youth has sprung from that happy marriage! A nice young man, in truth, who hangs up his own dear uncle, his namesake too! Stephen chokes Stephen! Ha, ha!"

Colonel Trenchard, violently enraged, drew a knife and sprang, with almost the vigour of youth, at the breast of his enemy; but Leach, too wary not to foresee such a consequence stepped suddenly back, drew a pistol, and fired. Trenchard tottered forward, made a second vehement plunge with his weapon, but not reaching his mark, fell at full length, whilst the knife was buried to the handle in the hard clay.

Leach leaned over the wounded man, and said in a soft, hypocritical tone, "You are studying forgiveness now, I hope, sir. Don't scorn me, Mr. Trenchard, don't scorn me *now*; pray don't!"

"Villain!" exclaimed Trenchard, raising himself on one arm; "Villain! I abominate you—yes, I loathe, I scorn you still! I believe you have killed me, Leach." Here his eyes rolled in their sockets so dreadfully that even the hardened wretch before him was struck with affright. "I believe you have killed me. Hear my last words: I die; but if ever the dead revisit the earth, your bed, Alexander Leach, shall be sleepless." As the last word left his lips, he sank back; but he soon revived, and his countenance wore a less death-like expression.

Sandy Leach, who was stricken with horror so long as he believed he had expired, also recovered his faculties. "Yes, Trenchard," he hissed, "no-son of mine should call you uncle, and now you have a nephew of other begetting, though of my *training*, to be sure; a handsome, gallant fellow, strong as Goliath too! Do you recollect how easily he doubled you up in that rope? Don't grumble and grieve now, my dear

fellow; it was not Sandy Leach, but Stephen Randolph, that tried to murder you the night of the 15th of September."

"Traitor! scoundrel! what have you told? Would you betray me?" The speaker was Randolph, who, in seeking his boon companion, had stumbled on this scene and overheard Leach's last declaration. "I have told you," he added vehemently, "what to expect; take that!" He raised his arm in anger, and as Leach held up the pistol to ward off the blow, wrenched it from him, presented it, drew the trigger, and, the second barrel having been cocked in the struggle, discharged it into the owner's side. Leach fell to the earth with a groan. "Heaven save me!" exclaimed Randolph, shuddering; "I believe I am doubly a murderer."

A great throng of men now rushed in, drawn by some vague rumour of a fight, as well as by the pistol shots.'

"There he is—Stephen Randolph—seize him!" cried Leach, with laboured and broken utterance. "Seize him! he has slain—me—me—and—*Trenchard*."

Randolph's despairing words had been heard and partly ministerpreted, and the declaration of Alexander Leach, a person of popular character and well esteemed, appeared to fix the deepest guilt upon the unfortunate young man. It deserves to be remarked, too, that his conduct at the meeting with Middleton in the morning had excited much doubt if not suspicion.

Jack Chapman, who happened to be foremost of the crowd, addressing his companions, said gruffly, "That business of the *boots* was never cleared up, was it? And to my certain knowledge, it was a lying charge that black *Jim* had any hand in the hanging--"

"Mind your own business, sir!" cried Randolph, striking him. But young Chapman, a stout, able-bodied man, was as hot-tempered as Randolph himself, and raising a cudgel, struck his powerful antagonist to the ground with a blow. Not content with this, when Randolph had got upon one

knee, and in the struggle to rise had thrown over one of the most burly of his assailants, he rushed forward, knocked him a second time prostrate, and manifested his purpose to proceed to measures still more extreme. The mob around, excited to a pitch of fury, seconded him heartily, with violent gestures and imprecations against the "murderer."

It was at this moment that Francis Herbert entered. In the confusion, he noticed not the bloody forms of Leach and his guardian, but saw before him, stretched out and senseless, Stephen Randolph, about to be trampled upon, and perhaps slain. He rushed forward and placed his own person between the angry multitude and their proposed victim.

"Stand out of the way!" shouted Jack Chapman.

"I will not, to see a defenseless person murdered."

"Mr. Herbert, you endanger yourself to no purpose. Move away, sir," reiterated the other.

"Kick him out of the road! knock him down!" roared the crowd behind.

"Why are you standing for such as him, Jack?" said David Chapman, the father, endeavouring to push the new-comer aside; but the thrust was so vigorously returned, that the old man went down upon hands and knees.

At this the younger Chapman swung his club high above his shoulder, as if to decide the matter at once. To ward off a blow like that which had felled the herculean Randolph, Herbert had only his umbrella. The crowd instantly ceased their various noise, and even Dave Chapman, who was again on his feet, held his breath to watch the descent of that fearful hickory staff. Jack himself caught the infectious pause, and said:

"Frank Herbert! I would not hurt you if I could help it; but do not stop the path any longer. That man is a murderer—the murderer of your guardian!"

"Of Mr. Trenchard? Good heavens! Where is he? But," added Herbert, firmly, "if Randolph were ten times a murderer, you have the law."

"Don't talk of law!" interrupted one in the centre of the crowd. "If we let him up now, he'll get off, and every body will be afraid to say any thing. He deserves it all; why shouldn't he have it? So hurrah, boys, let's clear the track! There, he's moving now; he'll be up; let's into him!"

The mob, excited afresh, pressed close together, and bore Chapman forward against the slight but undaunted champion of mercy.

"My friends!" said Herbert, in a firm, deep tone, "hear me one instant. You say this man has committed murder?"

"HE HAS," answered many voices.

"Well, now, suppose that one of you had committed such a crime—and if you scout at the supposition, just consider how near you all are to it at this very moment! Suppose that this man, Randolph, who is now prostrate here, should be stricken with a mortal hurt, and that you, John Chapman, should be charged with murder for having slain him; what would you claim as your right? What, but a fair trial by an impanelled jury? My friends—gentlemen—I tell you, and your own hearts tell you, if you are only calm enough to listen, that he who takes away that breath which God alone can bestow, sins to the peril of his own soul, unless the Almighty himself gives the authority; and to none does God give it, but to those that execute the law. Let him be tried; and who, in that case, would constitute the jury? Some of yourselves; and are you afraid of your own quiet judgment? Or if not of yourselves, of other true Virginians, surely, who hate murder as much as you. He has killed Mr. Trenchard—did any body see him do it?" Herbert paused, but no reply broke the profound stillness. "Is Mr. Trenchard killed?"

"Ay," said the elder Chapman; "yonder he lies under that tree, shot bad enough to die, and Steve had the pistol in his hand when we came."

"Did no one, then, see Colonel Trenchard shot?"

"Yes, sir, I seed it from the stable window."

There was a simultaneous turning of heads in the direction of the speaker, who was no other than the black hostler of the tavern.

"I seed it all. Colonel Trenchard and Misser Leach fou't; and Marster Sandy shot the Colonel, and Master Stephen shot Marster Sandy."

"Don't you lie, you black rascal!"

"It's no lie at all, Marster Jack, but fac' an' truth. I seed just what I tell and nothin' more and nothin' shorter."

This account at once put a new face upon the matter; and though Randolph had recovered from the stun and regained his feet, no one felt inclined to molest him. The younger Chapman stepped up, extending his hand, and said in a frank tone, "Don't bear a grudge, Steve; you oughtn't to have struck me, you know."

But Randolph, without listening to the apology or taking note of any one, with a haughty air, turned his back upon the scene.

Trenchard and Leach were severally removed to their homes; the former receiving the sedulous attentions of his ward.

CHAPTER VIII

Dr. Middleton could not be found, but several other physicians who were called into the mansion declared themselves unable to ascertain the precise situation of the ball. There was much reason to fear that it was lodged in the neighbourhood of the lungs, in which case it could scarcely be hoped that Colonel Trenchard would survive twenty-four hours; yet at evening he seemed to suffer little pain, and was in the possession of his faculties. After remaining with him till a late hour and perceiving no change in his condition, the medical gentlemen administered an opiate and withdrew. Herbert and a friendly neighbour undertook to attend upon him till morning, arranging together that the latter should recline upon a pallet in an adjoining room, ready to give his assistance when called upon by the other.

Herbert sat by the bedside whilst his guardian slumbered uneasily for some hours. About two or three o'clock in the morning, the wounded man awoke and asked for water. When he had emptied the tumbler which Frank brought him, he again lay in silence and without motion for a considerable space of time, but not, as before, asleep.

"Frank," he said at length, "read me some chapters from the Bible."

The young man read several passages from the epistles, the account of our Saviour's crucifixion, and two or three Psalms.

Trenchard listened with profound attention, and when he paused, said: "Read me that chapter which tells how we ought to treat our enemies."

Herbert accordingly read the Sermon on the Mount, and some other passages in the gospels inculcating forgiveness of injuries.

"Frank," said Trenchard, when he had ended, "you have studied a good deal; tell me, do you think the spirit ever visits the earth after death?"

"I know not, sir. I have not, myself, ever seen sufficient reason to believe that it is so; yet without the declaration of Deity, no man may presume positively to deny it."

"Francis, I told Alexander Leach yesterday that when I died I meant to haunt his couch and break his slumbers. In my heart I felt determined, if it were possible, to dog his footsteps even by day, so that in the thickest crowds a ghostly form should ever be at his elbow. I purposed that every night, though he might fence himself in the innermost room of his house, and doubly bolt the door,—I purposed that though every other creature were asleep unmolested, he should awake in horror and feel the clutch of skeleton fingers upon his guilty throat! Was not that a wicked thought to think, and a wicked word to say? I may die to-night, and I would not have a heathen's death. Yet, Frank, though I know I have been a bitter foe to those who have done me wrong, have I ever forsaken a friend? Surely, villains like Leach are not to be loved?"

"But, sir," replied the young watcher, "do you not remember a sentence that I read just now: 'If ye love them that love you, what thank have ye?'"

"Yes, Frank, those very words have been ringing in my ears ever since you read them."

"And then, Mr. Trenchard, our Saviour, notwithstanding the infinite blessing of redemption he has purchased for us, gives us no warrant so much as to *pray* for the forgiveness of God in any higher degree than we ourselves forgive those who have trespassed against us."

"Am I, then," said Trenchard with a suppressed groan, "certainly a reprobate and castaway, unless I pardon Leach?"

"Oh, sir, what am I that you ask me such questions? The Bible is a common guide for us all."

"Frank—Frank—but—it hurts me to talk."

"And you know, sir, the doctor forbade your speaking."

"My head feels dull too, and my eyelids heavy."

"This is probably the effect of the opiate, sir."

"Well, Francis, listen to me; I want to speak it out before I die. I forgive—yes, I forgive him without reserve—from my heart—Alexander Leach; and so may God in his mercy forgive me!"

His head sank back upon the pillow from which he had raised it to assist his laboured enunciation, and such a solemn stillness at once pervaded the apartment, that Herbert thought the spirit must have left its tenement; yet when the young man bent over him in deep anxiety, to catch, if possible, the sound of breathing, Trenchard opened his eyes for an instant, and said:

"I am not dead, Frank; not—yet."

Afterwards he dropped into a deep slumber, which was not broken when the morning rays fell upon his bed. Mr. Mercer and a number of other friends stood or sat in different parts of the chamber. The physicans were expected, but had not arrived. His pulse was very full, and his respiration difficult and attended with noise.

At length he awoke, coughing violently. Suddenly there was a gush of blood from his mouth, which streamed over his breast. All were struck with consternation. One of the physicians, who entered at the instant, declared, as well by his countenance as by words, that there was no hope, and that his very moments were numbered.

Trenchard spoke with a countenance indeed ghastly and appalling, for an attendant, in endeavouring to wipe away the blood from his lips and chin, had besmeared his whole face; he said, "I want somebody quickly to write my will."

"Lawyer Blapp passed along the road an instant ago," said Skinner, the overseer; "shall I send to overtake him?"

"Is there nobody else? I don't like Walter Blapp. Where is Selden?"

"He started over the mountain yesterday morning, sir."

"Well, time is precious; let me have Blapp: time is very precious—be quick!"

But a few moments elapsed before the lawyer entered the apartment, yet in that space Trenchard's strength had perceptibly diminished. He made a prodigious effort, however, after Blapp saluted him, and his utterance became much more distinct than it had been.

"Mr. Blapp, I see pen and paper have been set before you. I want you now to write my last will and testament: use as few words as will satisfy legal requirements. And look you, Walter Blapp! I charge you, as you would shun a dying man's curse, to put down my wishes as I tell them to you, and not to use hereafter any of the devilish craft of your profession to overthrow or misinterpret them. And you, gentlemen—my friends in the room here, Mercer and the rest of you—I beg all, as you ever felt regard for me, to mark every word I shall speak, and to testify to the same, if need be, in a court of justice, to the shame and confusion of the attorney who shall dare to betray the trust of the dead."

Another burst of blood followed this exertion, and he sank back exhausted. In a little while, he again raised his head, and supported himself on his right elbow.

It was a scene never to be forgotten by those who witnessed it. Through the gore which disfigured every feature of his countenance, his eyes gleamed with a more than natural brightness, and Blapp shrank within himself at a look so steadfast and unearthly.

"I bequeath to my ward, Francis Herbert, the farm which I own on the Rappahannock, together with all the stock now upon it, and five thousand dollars in money."

There was a pause, while the lawyer's pen flew rapidly over the paper; but as he wrote, the soul-piercing glance of Trenchard was not for an instant removed.

"Next, I wish my servant Ichabod to have his liberty, and

to be comfortably maintained so long as he shall live. All the residue of my property of every description, landed and personal, and by whatsoever other terms any part of it may in law be known and distinguished, the whole of it, after the payment of my just debts, I give and bequeath without qualification or reserve, to *Doctor Charles Middleton*; feeling assured that in this way I am taking the best means to provide for Lucy Montgomery and her mother, the only child and the widow of my departed friend Frederick Montgomery."

"But, sir," suggested the lawyer, "will you altogether exclude your nephew?"

"Not one cent do I leave to Stephen Randolph. I freely forgive all the offenses he has committed against me, but not one cent shall he have from me. Write just as I have told you."

Blapp was a considerable time in writing, and had finished nearly a page, when he made a gesture of impatience; and saying, "Pshaw! I have committed an error," commenced on a new sheet.

At length, when he had finished the document, which was after a lapse of time that denoted either a want of professional readiness or something worse, he, as well as the rest of the group, turned to the bedside and found Mr. Trenchard lying on his back, while the rigidity of his whole person seemed to show that the debt of nature had been paid.

The physician felt his wrist and found the pulse very unequal, now sinking so low as to be scarcely perceptible, and again throbbing vehemently. He remarked in a whisper to the company, "He has not yet expired."

"Oh, he must surely be dead," said the lawyer; "at any rate, it is useless to disturb him while in this state;" and he began hastily to fold up the document he had been engaged upon.

Trenchard, however, spoke in a slow, hollow tone, but distinctly: "I am—not—dead. Mercer, read me what he has written."

Mercer took the paper from the abashed lawyer, and upon reading it, found it to express correctly, though in rather more words than were necessary, what had been dictated. Trenchard seemed to listen, and said at the close, "I wish it to be added, that I desire John Mercer and Charles Middleton as act as my executors."

The attorney did as was requested, and the will was then laid upon the bed for the signature. Trenchard, after vainly endeavoring to clasp the pen in his hand as he reclined, motioned to Herbert, for he was now speechless, to support his back; then, clenching the pen with his whole hand, he signed his name in large upright characters. At the very time that he was writing, the bystanders heard a gurgling sound in his throat, and the instant that Herbert's arm was relaxed, he sank back on the pillow.

About a week after Colonel Trenchard's funeral, Dr. Middleton seized an opportunity when Mrs. Montgomery left the parlour, during a call which he was making at the mansion, to exchange a few words in private with Lucy. He commenced abruptly:

"My dear Miss Montgomery, it is now, as you will remember, nearly a month since I first openly avowed to you my affection. You replied to me with great and most considerate kindness, yet in such a way as to show clearly that you were not then prepared to reciprocate my attachment. Will you pardon me for asking whether the time which has since elapsed has made any change favorable to my happiness?" His voice, very firm and distinct at the outset, faltered a little at the close.

Lucy was embarrassed, and seemed to hesitate for want of words, but her head made the sign of negation.

"Can you then give me reason to hope that a longer time may advantage my suit?"

"It grieves me indeed to utter what may give you pain; but truth compels me to say, that as time is not able to increase the high esteem I have for you, sir, time cannot create a deeper feeling."

This answer, though it evidently affected him profoundly, did not seem to be unexpected, and he said: "I thank you, Lucy,—permit me to call you so now; and I would not that, feeling as you do, your answer should be otherwise. And am I not right in supposing that Francis Herbert has won that place in your heart which is closed to me?"

Lucy blushed, and he hastened to add: "Pardon me, and believe that I do not ask out of the enviousness of disappointment, or from an impertinent curiosity still more unbecoming. I hold Mr. Trenchard's property, as I understand his will, under a trust, for your benefit. It was you whom he designed to inherit his estate. He left it to my charge, thinking thus to secure it most certainly to you. Probably he supposed erroneously that we would some time have a common name and a common fortune; but this is no matter. Francis Herbert I believe worthy of you. He has fine talents, and what is more valuable, principle, and has lately shown himself to possess that which alone seemed wanting to complete an admirable and noble character—firmness and self-reliance. In view of all this, I should be recreant to honour and duty were I to hesitate to make over this property, for which I am trustee, to you its rightful owner."

"Dr. Middleton, I entreat you to entertain no such thought, You yourself, did not your lofty generosity blind you, would be the first to see through the unsubstantial reasons you assign."

"No, Miss Montgomery, I am satisfied, and have never doubted as to the course I ought to pursue. I foresaw but too plainly, previous to this interview, what must prove its results, and have already taken the preliminary steps in the performance of that which the merest principles of justice

imperatively demand. In a few weeks Mr. Selden and I will have wound up the settlement of the estate, and then the whole shall be made over to you."

Nothing that could be urged by Lucy or her mother, or by Herbert, could move his determination, nor induce him to retain any portion of the property to which he had unexpectedly fallen heir,

Dr. Middleton has ever since been a frequent visitor and intimate friend of Mr. and Mrs. Francis Herbert, and many persons, from this fact and some others, have inferred that he was never very deeply in love; yet it is certain that to this day he remains unmarried. During his long and successful practice, he has accumulated a handsome fortune, with which it is not improbable that he means to provide for some member of the numerous family which must eventually break the Trenchard estate, great as it is, into comparatively small fragments.

Alexander Leach expired at the very moment that the hearse which bore the body of Mr. Trenchard to the burial passed his door.

Stephen Randolph left the neighbourhood immediately, and has never since been heard from, though it is probable, from his reckless and unfortunate habits, that his career has long since been terminated.

LIVING AT ROME

LIVING AT ROME

"What Custom wills,
In all things shall we do it?"

I

A young farmer, following his plough at the edge of a cornfield in one of the James River Counties of the Old Dominion had his mind intent upon one of the greatest problems of our day. Perhaps he did not find his task very easy. For, though there was nothing about the face of the man, exuberant as well with health as intelligence, or in his robust form, to indicate that his hands were unfamiliar with the noblest of agricultural instruments, yet did he not unfrequently, like the veriest tyro, permit the unstable thing he was guiding to uproot a promising cornhill and extort from his lips an exclamation of disgust. But he perseveres—conquers his temper first, and bids fair—we say it at a venture—to achieve the solution of his problem. If he accomplishes *that*, his name will deserve embalment in the eloquence of a Burke.

But there is something far off on the hill yonder, where the Lombardy poplars tower above a venerable brick mansion, that attracts his eye every time his head is turned in that direction, and does so greatly to the injury of the tender green spires that chance to be immediately before him.

"Bah! What will father say?—Wo, Nick! Wo!—Let's see what it is."

He halts, gazes steadily toward the Lombardy poplars, and now, before you could well see what he is about, has disengaged his horse from the plough, thrown open a corner of the worm fence, leaped upon Nick's back, and set off in a gallop up the long ascent. When he reached the mansion, he found

a scene of hubbub and confusion. The servants were running up and down, fetching water from a spring some hundred yards off, while the proprietor stood on the porch, his long grey head uncovered, vociferating contradictory orders. The fire originated in the weaving room over the kitchen. These two offices were connected with the dwelling by a covered way or corridor. Though the main dwelling was brick, the back building of which the lower part served as a dining-room, communicating with the kitchen by the corridor, was of frame.

Herman DeWitt, our philosophic ploughman, stood quietly for a moment, to take a general observation.

"See!" he cried suddenly, pointing to a window above the dining-room.

"Bless us!—Water ain't no more use. Miss Emily's room's afire!" responded an old black woman.

"Whi-ew!" echoed two score of every age and sex, holding up their sable hands in utter consternation.

"Come, come!" said Herman, in a tone of authority, "No time to stand grinning—show me to that room."

Once in the chamber, he perceived at a glance the state of things. A spark wafted from the blazing kitchen had entered the open window, and set fire to the curtains and other combustible drapery of the bed. Instantly these were torn down crumpled into a compact mass and thrust into the fire-place. The flame smothered for a while, soon burst forth, and shot up many feet higher than the chimney top. There was a scorching heat in the room for a moment, but it then ceased, and the fire was so far quelled. But meanwhile the roof of the corridor was kindling!

Herman's eye lighted upon a shelf on which many a blanket was neatly folded away. He seized the whole bundle, and threw it from the window—

"Here, boys, take these!—quick now!—dip them into the branch yonder, and bring them back to me as fast as you can run."

The crowd of negroes, utterly unable to act for themselves, were yet ready to obey a clearly given order. The wet blankets were, of course, spread upon the heated roof; and Herman, setting vigorously to work, axe in hand, soon, with the assistance of the negroes, demolished that end of the corridor which was next the kitchen, and the flame then sank for lack of material to feed upon.

Mr. Carter invited in the stranger.

"I thank you, but really, if time permitted, I am not quite in a state to enter a parlour."

Herman glanced down at his clothes as he spoke:—his pant-legs were tucked into his boot-tops for convenience in ploughing, and as his coat had a rent at either elbow when he put it on in the morning, his recent exertion had rendered his shirt sleeves very conspicuous.

"Don't think of that—come in you must, and take a glass of wine after the exertions which have laid me under such obligation."

Thus urged, the young man entered. Within were Mrs. Carter, a good-looking old lady, who wore gold spectacles, and her daughter, the belle of the county.

Herman made a bow so gracefully that you might have supposed he had been to dancing school. He was a handsome fellow, and had a clear florid complexion which showed he had not always been under the influence of a Southern sun. Withal, he possessed a quiet self-confidence which could give support even under the trying circumstances of a first interview with a beautiful girl. In short, rustic as he was, he acquitted himself capitally—sipped his Madeira with a genteel nonchalance, and replied modestly to the thanks and praises of the old gentleman, and even ventured a side-compliment to Emily.

After twenty minutes of refreshment thus pleasantly spent, he withdrew, and, mounting his bare-backed steed, laughingly observed that although occasions occur to call a true

citizen from his plough, he ought not to leave it deserted in the furrow after the emergency is over. But Emily, we fear, was rather sorry to be reminded that the gallant visitor was after all a ploughman.

II—THINGS NEW AND OLD

As the reader has probably inferred, Herman's father was a Yankee settler in the South, that is, one of that sturdy band of emigrants from Pennsylvania and New York whom a genial climate and cheap lands have lately induced to settle in Maryland and Virginia. That this infusion of Northern industry has been very beneficial to the country of their adoption, cannot be doubted; yet it must be confessed that individual members of the class have not always displayed such soundness of judgment as to excite the entire respect, or justify the imitation, of the natives of the soil.

Israel DeWitt, a Low Dutch farmer from the west bank of the Hudson, committed the mistake of investing his capital in an estate too large to be conveniently or successfully managed under the agricultural system in which he was trained and to which he was attached. A small farm may be worked profitably, and a large farm may be worked profitably; but the same method is not appropriate to both cases. To this truth Israel De Witt's eyes had never been opened, and he owed that blindness in no small degree to his conceit, which made him believe there could be nothing justifiable in husbandry which was not imported along with his own stout arms from beyond Mason and Dixon's line. Illiterate, narrow-minded, obstinate, for everything Virginian he conceived at the first, and retained to the last, a contempt beyond the contempt of Triptolemus Yellowley.

His son, who belonged to a generation that learned to speak English, had more enlarged notions, and did not condemn without a hearing every person and thing that had

not found a name and place in that rich and classical dialect, the American Low Dutch. Different as he was in most of his ways of thinking from the people among whom he was now thrown, he was yet able to perceive much in their character—nay, in their husbandry too,—which deserved far other treatment than to be abated as a nuisance. The elder De Witt looked upon this land of promise as a very Canaan, and anticipated the expulsion of the old inhabitants, and the annihilation of all their works, as a necessary preparation for the proper occupation and use of the land. The besom of destruction was invoked to sweep off together every Virginian and every “Virginia fix.”

Great was the controversy between father and son—types and representatives each of a great class. Herman, like every large-minded reformer, had to contend with the difficulty that the excellencies of the social system he would amend were so intertwined with its faults that to eradicate these seemed to involve of necessity the tearing away of those. Even to distinguish between what was bad and what good was, as he felt, a matter in which his judgment might easily be mistaken. But with an earnest and resolute will, he set himself to the duty of reconciling and blending as best he might that aggressive social system to which by birth he owed allegiance with that other system which with more grace had not perhaps in due measure the vigour to resist attack. How to retain all that is worthy of preservation in the old while pressing forward to what is new—to reform without destroying—to make a true progress: that, we understand to be the grandest of political problems.

And that was the problem Herman was about when the fire at Willoughby Carter’s called him off from a zealous experiment with a Southern plough, whose strange and rude form had excited his father’s sneers, but which he thought entitled to a fair trial before being condemned to oblivion.

As time wore on, Herman’s course became the occasion of

serious concern to the senior DeWitt. The latter called in his neighbour and friend Van Schaack, who had been longer in the country, for consultation upon his son's state. Dinah Van Schaack, plump, merry-eyed lass, came with her father; and though she put on a pout at first, in testimony that Herman had been less attentive of late than he should, our friend had not half the difficulty in appeasing her which it cost him to learn to guide the shovel plough. While the young folks were gaily chatting in a corner to themselves, the old wise-heads had their grave colloquy. When the host had ended his dolorous story of Herman's declension from true Dutch habits, his friend, giving him a heavy-handed thwack on the shoulder, replied:

"Never you mind—never you mind, Israel. Let him wear gloves, eat 'mattoes and hominy, use his 'Ginny fixes, and even court the 'Ginny gals, if he will. Herman's a good boy and industrious, and isn't to be spoiled. Besides, though we old dogs can't learn new tricks, young people have more years to live through. Remember, it's our choice to come here; and you know *folks that live at Rome must do as Rome does.*"

III—"TIS A PITY

Herman had become quite a frequent visitor at Mr. Carter's. Some awkward situations consequently occurred. His own genuine independence and exact estimation of circumstances preserved him, indeed, from much uneasiness or discomfort, but how was it with Emily? She could not but perceive that the young Northerner's attentions were directed to herself, and had he been a gentleman living upon his income, or a member of a profession, or a planter taking a general superintendence of his estate through his overseer—or had he been engaged in any pursuit which did not involve, according to the standard to which she had been accustomed, some degree of degradation,—she might have listened to his suit with favour.

Though neither classically educated, nor accustomed to refined society, his natural taste prevented him from transgressing the limits of good-breeding. He thus never, like too many others, committed the unconscious suicide of making himself ridiculous. And a fair judgment being compelled, his remarkable acuteness of perception, supported by energetic, yet calm, self-reliance, could not but lift him far above the ordinary herd of gallants by whom Miss Carter was surrounded. But he was a working man—not by the way of relaxation, or exercise, or from curiosity, or whim, or any other gentleman-like motive—but as a matter of every day's earnest business and duty. He laboured with his own hands, without disguise—on highway, as well as in the secluded field: farming, indeed, was somewhat better than a mechanical employment; but the same principles, Emily was aware, which made him a tiller of the ground, might just as easily have led him to the workbench or the forge.

Well, what were *Mr. Carter's* sentiments in the premises? Though his daughter came to pretty nearly the same conclusion as himself, he differed in this, that he never for an instant considered the question worthy of being weighed at all. A plodding farmer, accustomed to work with his coat off, marry his daughter! It was absolutely inconceivable. But he was a man of most scrupulous politeness—of unbounded hospitality,—and could not bear to wound the young person's feelings: in consideration, too, of the service he had rendered at the fire, it was impossible to exclude him from the house.

So matters stood a while longer. At length, Herman's addresses became so particular as to be glaringly improper, and Mr. Carter took an opportunity to have a private interview with him.

"A-hem!—*Mr. DeWitt*—I am pleased, sir, to see that you are disposed to gratify me by frequent visits at Silvermount.

I am rejoiced that you can find enjoyment (as you will not suffer me to name any more worthy recompense) in the house which you have saved from destruction. I take great entertainment, sir, in your conversation, also—it is not only agreeable but beneficial, and I receive many hints towards a better system in the management of my estate. Thus, sir”—

Herman bowed attention.

“You perceive then—a-hem—you must be aware, sir, that it is both for my interest and pleasure to throw no obstacle—that is, to offer no embarrassment—to say nothing to render your visits less free or sociable—you understand me, sir, I trust.”

“If it be your object,” replied Herman, “to reiterate your assurances of good-feeling, it is needless, sir, for I am perfectly satisfied both of your friendship and sincerity.”

Mr. Carter thought the young rustic manifested remarkable coolness and self-possession, and was doubtful how far the same terms could be applied to himself.

“You are prepared then, Mr. DeWitt, to believe that if I shall say anything apparently rude or ungracious, it will only arise from necessity.”

Herman’s eye expressed surprise—rather more, indeed, than he felt.

“Excuse me, sir,” continued Mr. Carter, “I mean to say, that it is merely to save you some pain that I incur it myself by doing what might be mistaken, by one less discerning than yourself, for a breach of hospitality.”

“No one would suspect *any* Virginian of *that*, and least of all Mr. Willoughby Carter. But I am really somewhat at a loss to divine what it is you may have to communicate.”

“My daughter, sir”—

“I am certainly not aware,” replied Herman, “of anything with which Miss Carter is connected that can give me pain.”

"I have then been mistaken," exclaimed Mr. Carter, suddenly rising, whilst his face became flushed all over. "I have been unwarranted in supposing that you feel attachment to my daughter?"

"Indeed, sir, I *do* feel a very strong attachment for Miss Emily Carter."

The old gentleman stared at him an instant and then re-seated himself very deliberately as if to gain time for consideration.

"Ah, well—that's the point—I wish to prevent a disappointment. It is better for you to learn from my lips than from Emily's that it is impossible that she can become your wife."

"I am grieved to the heart; but assuredly I never knew of any prior attachment, or I would by no means have suffered my thoughts to wander as far as they have."

"I have said nothing, sir, of an affection for another."

"Indeed, Mr. Carter, such seemed the natural inference from your declaration."

"How so, sir?"

"If I understood your expression," replied Herman, "it amounted to this, that there is some obstacle between myself and your daughter so great as to be absolutely insurmountable. I can very well comprehend that I may not prove pleasing to Miss Carter; yet surely the time is too short for her already to have come to so peremptory a conclusion. You, sir, have given me explicit assurance of your personal good-will. Besides these two, what circumstance *can* there be to make necessary on my part an abrupt termination of the courtship?"

"Think, sir: can there not be some other obstacle?"

Herman put on an appearance of perplexity, but made no reply.

"You must know that my family," here the old gentleman straightened himself in his chair, "is one not undistinguished,

and which has always been particular to make alliances which shall entail no deterioration of blood."

The suitor's countenance, at this word, suddenly relaxed, and he breathed freely, as if relieved from some oppressive burden.

"Is that all, sir? I really thought that in this country all such distinctions had long since been thrown away; but if it be a matter of importance, I can assure you that I have good reason to draw my descent from that John DeWitt who as Grand Pensionary of Holland has secured our name a place in history. Though he was torn in pieces by the people over whom he ruled, and his flesh sold by the pound in the market, I am not aware that he is an ancestor to be ashamed of.

"Indeed!—ah!—But, however this may be, as you yourself have just observed, it is usual in this country to pay more respect to present distinctions than to ancestral honours."

"Is it a distinction of property, sir, that you are now enforcing? I am not rich indeed, but I am young. I think I possess—with such a prize in view, I know it—industry and energy. No very long period may"—

"Excuse me, Mr. DeWitt, since you compel me to it, I will speak plainly, You have been raised in habits whose respectability I do not impeach, but which are yet very different from those to which genteel—to which—to which, in fact, *Emily* has been accustomed. Is it necessary, sir, for me to say anything further?"

"To me, Mr. Carter, this is a deeply interesting subject, and no particularity can be excessive."

"Well, you will not deny that you are a working man—a working man, sir?"

"Very true; and I am descended, and you too, sir, I believe, are descended, from one to whom it was ordained as a necessity that by the sweat of his brow he should support his existence."

"Pshaw, pshaw—I shall not engage in any discussion of this sort. A regard—a *needless* regard, perhaps—for your feelings, has induced me to hint in a roundabout manner what I should have said explicitly. My daughter can marry only a person of her own station—a gentleman—I use the word in its old and proper signification. You, sir, profess yourself a labouring man, consequently you can *never* be her husband."

"Greater explicitness is indeed unnecessary," replied Herman, rising and making a bow as he put his hand on the door knob.

"Stop, listen to me a moment. I have made known to you an impossibility; it is only *because* it is an impossibility, that I have declared it. I wish still to possess your friendship."

Herman answered in a very calm tone, "I thought that friendship connected equals, and could not *possibly* exist between a gentleman and a peasant. However, sir, as the distinction inculcated is one imperceptible to me, I can continue to feel the same esteem as heretofore for Mr. Carter and—his family."

IV—THE CHOICE

About six weeks after this event, Herman received a letter communicating the information of his grandfather's death, and of a legacy of \$5,000 to himself. The first plan which arose in his mind, when meditating what disposition to make of the money, was to buy a fine saddle-horse; then, plated stirrups and a silvermounted bit glittered before his eyes; a pair of aristocratic spurs also figured in the vision; a relinquishment of farm duties, and the study of a profession, came next; lastly the picture presented itself of a call upon Mr. Carter, when his own person should be set off with gloves of finest kid, pants of French cassimer, and boots of patent leather.—But look at the man now! He stamps his foot, "Shame, shame!" he mutters, "*Principle*—

rich or poor—I'll hang by it. As sure as God made the earth, agriculture is an honourable employment, and a farmer I will be—a New York farmer too, talk as they may!"

"Herman," said old Israel to his son, two days subsequent to this occurrence, "Somehow or other I don't feel very well; so you must go to-morrow instead of I, down to Richmond in the lumber-waggon. You can take cheese to Mr. Gruff, the marchant—his shop's on the main street, you know, not far into the 'village.' The butter and poultry you must take to *market*, the morning after—wife has some eggs too, I think. You can make up the balance of the load with potatoes."

Herman started, and was uncomfortable. He had attended market in New York hundreds of times, and once or twice in Virginia, and had never felt hesitation or shame before—why should he now? Yet, Reader, to go to market in the circumstances in which he was placed was heroism—we are speaking seriously—but Herman *was* a hero.

At daybreak, he harnessed his horses, and by sunrise he was on the road. Before three miles had been passed, he observed coming from the opposite direction a party on horseback, consisting of a lady and two gentlemen. The lady was Emily Carter. What should he do? Turn off? On the right hand, was a ten-rail fence;—on the left, a morass. Escape was impossible—he could keep his eyes fastened upon his team, however, and thus pass by, if not with recognition, at least without the mortification of himself *observing* the recognition. Others might have acted in this way, but so did not Herman. Bold upright on his keg of butter he sat, his cheek of its ordinary hue, and his eye unabashed. One of the gentlemen stared at him without salutation, the other was a true Virginian and would bow even to a waggoner. As for Emily, her face crimsoned, but she bowed even more deeply than her wont.

The remainder of his trip was marked by no event worthy

of notice, except indeed that an old lady at market chuckled to find that a Yankee had given her a ninepence too much in change.

Another moon had waxed and waned when Israel formed an important resolve. He then announced it—"Wife and Son! I tell you what it is, I am goin' back to the North."

"For my part, I'm right glad on't," exclaimed Mrs. De-Witt with emphasis, "this is an awful lonesome country."

"I am not glad, Mother", said Herman. Why will you go, Father—depend upon it you'll never get another such chance to better your fortune. The lands improve, and may soon be made as rich as those of Orange, or Ulster, or Dutchess, and, after all expenses, at less than half the cost of those—so that—"

"Say no more 'bout it, Harman, I'm goin'."

"But what will you do with this farm, Father?"

"That's the bother, I won't rent it, and I'm afeard I can't clear nothin' by sellin'. Do you want to stay here?"

"If I did, sir, I should like to have my own way in the improvement of the farm."

"That's but right; listen to me, boy. You've sarved faithful, sence your time was up, two years an' better. The farm in York that Joseph's at is worth rather more nor this; but then agin wife and I are going to live on him the rest of our days. So now—not to be a-talkin'—if you'll give up a thousand dollars out of this money of yourn, you may have this farm out and out, in place of all you are goin' to git from me. What say you?"

The arrangement thus proposed was acceded to, and Herman became a farmer on his own responsibility. A thousand acres were his, and in a few years he took a lease of five hundred more. Enthusiastic devotion to his business, an excellent system of management, and a judicious yet liberal outlay in fertilizers, soon made him one of the most prosperous men in the neighbourhood. Yet although his

duties of *superintendence* were sufficient to engross his whole time, he took pleasure in showing on frequent occasions that he was still a working man.

V—THE VALUABLE CONSIDERATION

Years had passed, and Emily, now in her twenty-fourth year, was still unmarried. Mr. Carter adhered to his custom of open-handed hospitality, but there was a serious difference in his real circumstances. Improvident management had brought debts, unsuccessful speculation had doubled them. The greater part of his slaves had been transferred, a family at a time, to a distant relative, a planter in Alabama. Though advanced in years, the pressure had become so excessive that he could no longer so much as hope to postpone the evil day of confessed insolvency till he himself should be asleep with his fathers.

Herman had always continued on courteous terms with him—though each was firm to stubbornness in his own principles, and those principles diametrically opposite. He had all along made formal calls at Silvermount, but they had been directed to the family and to no individual member of it, nor were the topics discussed of any but the most ordinary character. On a pleasant morning in June, however, something less than six years after the memorable explanation, he directed the servant to inform Mr. Carter that he wished to see him in private on business. With some surprise, the old gentleman had him conducted to his "office."

"Mr. Carter, I need not to be reminded that it is always best to come immediately to the point. You are deeply in debt—"

"Sir!—this is indeed being very precise and pointed—but what next? You are not my creditor, I presume?"

"You owe twenty-four thousand and some odd dollars," continued DeWitt, without regarding him. "Your real and

personal estate in this county, if sold, would realize perhaps thirteen thousand."

"I'll be hanged if this does not approach to impudence—but you are a Northerner, sir, and some degree of bluntness may be excused!"

"Indeed, sir, I assure you that no improper motive prompts this intrusion. I am only repeating in your presence facts that are daily spoken of in the neighbourhood."

"I am deeply grateful Mr. DeWitt for your happy method of administering consolation."

"Mr. Carter, listen to me if you please. I come this morning to offer for your acceptance twenty-five thousand dollars."

"The mischief you do! What mockery is this? Old as I feel myself to be, and poverty-stricken, too, as you are kind enough to remind me that I am, no man shall insult me with impunity."

"Mr. Willoughby Carter, our acquaintance has now lasted some years, and you must be aware that my *business* habits control me so entirely that I am by no means inclined to utter bravadoes, or to make any declaration which I am not prepared to substantiate. I frankly tender the sum just mentioned. If it be received, I shall require no security of any kind in return. I only ask your verbal assurance of the performance on your part of a single condition."

"Hah! condition!" echoed Mr. Carter, "I can guess it, but you are utterly mistaken—utterly—utterly! if you imagine I will sacrifice my daughter for such sordid considerations."

"Hear me out, sir, before you condemn," replied Herman, "I am not so base as you imagine. Heavens, sir! we Dutchmen are ready to buy *many* things, but we buy not our *wives*!

"What then *are* you driving at?"

"Simply this, that no obstacle be any longer interposed between myself and your daughter's hand, excepting such as her own inclinations may suggest."

"Am I then to understand that you have clandestinely engaged her affections?"

"No, sir, I know no more this moment, of the state of her feelings towards me, than I did five years ago."

"And are you mad enough to throw away twenty-five thousand dollars for the bare chance of a favourable turn in a woman's whim?"

"What I desire," rejoined Herman, throwing his head back proudly, "is merely a *fair trial*. Let no insuperable hindrances be interposed and *then*—by my own merits, I am willing to stand or to fall!"

"Really, young man, I know not what to make of you. But how do you propose to raise this amount?"

"It is already raised; but I will be frank and not pass for any other than I am. Do not suppose that a wealthy suitor offers himself. Ten thousand dollars I own, invested in stocks immediately convertible into cash. I have made arrangement which will give me, on application, fifteen thousand more, to be secured by mortgage of my land, and by my personal bond."

"Let me have your hand, sir—I had not supposed such disinterested generosity existed, least of all—excuse me, sir—in the breast of a Yankee. And are you really willing to assume this crushing burden—to give away all you have acquired, and to mortgage all you hope to acquire?"

"Not *all*, sir—I am young. With the blessing of Heaven, I will discharge this debt, and will be once more free."

Here, Mr. Carter arose from his chair, and paced up and down the room. He was a man of vast frame, and the floor trembled beneath his tread. Finally, he stopped short, and stood before Herman.

"Sir, it would be robbery, and inconsistent with my own dignity. I will not consent to it. Pursue your own course, get wealth, marry and be happy—leave Emily and me to our own station. Sympathy, we ask not; assistance, we are too proud to receive."

"Can this be your conclusion?" stammered Herman, "Will you reduce all to distress? Make *me* wretched, yourself wretched, and your daughter"—

"Well, what of my *daughter*? But she shall speak for herself." The old gentleman left the apartment, and returned in a few minutes, with Emily leaning upon his arm.

"Sit down, my daughter, we wish the addition of your presence in a conversation of some moment. I have never made it a secret to you, Emily, that I am deeply in debt—so deeply, that my whole property would not satisfy half what I owe. This oppresses me with grief and mortification; but we have not sunk so low—have, we, Emily?—as to take advantage of any one who should offer to loan me money under such circumstances?—money which I cannot have the slightest hope of ever repaying?"

"Surely not, Father."

"And further, Emily, the individual would make the *gift*, for such it would be, on one condition which (although I should faithfully perform it) could not, I think, be followed by the consequences which he may expect. How does this new light affect your judgment of the case?"

Emily blushed, and was somewhat agitated, but replied in clear, silvery tones, "Father, no prospect of advantage could make you stoop to a mean act."

"You speak like my daughter, girl—I would not and I could not. But I have been propounding enigmas, listen to the statement of the fact. Mr. DeWitt, with very great generosity, offers to let me have the sum of twenty-five thousand dollars. In order to do this, he is willing to give up all his previous savings, and to assume a remainder of debt which will require years to cancel—or (who can tell?) perhaps his whole lifetime. No security is exacted from me, and no hope entertained by him of a repayment—his *condition* is a very simple and apparently valueless one. Look here, Emily, tell me now frankly—could you take this gentleman for your husband?"

The young lady was, of course, thrown into much confusion by this abrupt interrogatory. Herman hastened to speak; his usual gravity and distinctness of enunciation now enriched by an earnestness which gave a thrilling emphasis to every tone.

"Miss Emily, your father has distinctly explained my offer, but he has hinted at the *condition* in such a manner that you may draw incorrect inferences as to its character. The condition relates to himself alone—in its performance you, Miss Carter, would have no share. I will explain the whole matter as briefly as I can. Some five years since, your father gave me to understand that so great a gulf was fixed between an ancient Virginian family and one trained in such habits as I had been, that, with his permission, I could not even make *suit* to your hand. All that I now ask is that this prohibition be withdrawn—*against* his will, I should scorn to invade his household. In making the proposal which I have made, I entertain no presumptuous reliance upon your own favourable decision. That is a subject which I would leave in abeyance to be decided on hereafter. Permit me to add that rather than that your inclinations should be fettered in the least—rather than that I should receive your hand without your heart, I would that my own hand were withered, and that my own heart should cease to beat."

Neither Emily nor her father made reply.

The young New Yorker continued, "According to the laws which govern society here, it seems that all who engage in pursuits like mine are disqualified thereby from equal intercourse with those who do not. This disqualification in *my* case I would have removed. Let me stand, let me *sue*, as an equal. Should you not be disposed, Miss Emily, to unite your lot with mine, let not this be any obstacle to your father's acceptance of my offer. Without you—believe me, I speak not one word more than I feel—without

you, a burden of debt would be a blessing, for it would give me occupation. And—to suppose for a moment that dream of happiness realized and you mine,—would it not be better in that case that we should begin the world afresh than that your father's days should be shortened by care, and distress, and want?—Mr. Carter are you not now persuaded to gratify me?—”

“I cannot, sir—I cannot take the money.”

“Miss Carter—*do* induce him to relax. Think not of *me* or of conditions. Only entreat him to receive the money. Consider which is preferable, to have me for a creditor, who would never whisper the relation to another, who would never ask or be willing to receive a single cent in return, or to be in debt to a dozen selfish men of the world, who will persecute him to the extremity of the law, and then—it may be—reproach him as having acted unfairly in incurring debts greater than he can pay. Have some regard for *me*. Mr. Carter, you thought proper just now to commend me for liberality—let it be so, and do I not deserve some *return*? The dearest favour I ask is the acceptance of my offer. I beg you, sir, as a friend to accept it—I declare that if you do *not*, I will on my own responsibility purchase at their full amount the claims outstanding against you, and the effect will be the same—except that the first plan would be the most pleasing to me, for I think that it ought to be the least distasteful to you.”

Carter was moved. His countenance would have been a delightful study to that ancient painter who put a slave to the torture in order that he might analyze the expressions which pain produces on human features. DeWitt and he made a remarkable contrast. The New Yorker could feel deeply, but the fact had to be inferred from his words—not read on his countenance. The Virginian, on the other hand, suffered a dozen changes in his mind to be visible, before he announced his determination.

"Herman DeWitt," he said, "you have conquered. Your unparalleled generosity compels me to be, what till this instant I thought I never could be, a recipient of charity."

"Speak not so, sir. If you could see my heart, you would not doubt that *I* am the person obliged."

"It shames me," said the stately old gentleman, "that I never have appreciated your character before. But I will accept your generosity in the same free spirit in which it is proffered—to the condition, I cheerfully assent."

After this declaration, a somewhat embarrassing pause ensued. Mr. Carter was like a man who has done, under the excitement of wine or the impulse of a strong passion, some act which he is afterwards uncertain how to estimate. Herman was a gladiator who has been victorious in one contest, and is glad to have breathing time before commencing another.

Mr. Carter arose, waved his hand slightly, and left the room, only saying as he did so, "Talk to Emily, now—talk to Emily."

There were some minutes of silence, and the eyes of both were bent upon the carpet. At length, Herman spoke—

"Miss Carter, indeed I had no intention to have said anything to you at this time upon a subject which for many years has lain nearest my heart, but your father's commands force me to be precipitate. You know, dear Miss Emily, what it is I would say—you know, too, what my lot must be—can you share it?"

"After your noble generosity, sir, what can I say? How can I deny?"—

"Dear Emily—permit me to call you so—do not, I pray you think of aught that I have done—do not suffer it to weigh against your slightest inclination. Could you give me your hand if I stood to day, as I stood the first day you saw me?"

Emily could not help smiling, for she thought of his appearance after the fire—his ragged sleeves, his tattered straw hat, and his bareback steed.

Her lover in the high-strung state of his feelings did not understand the cause of her half-subdued merriment, and there was a little sternness in his tone as he continued—

“The most precious boon is valueless, if it be not freely given. Is there love or not, Miss Carter?” He turned his eye full upon Emily’s as if to read her soul, and added,

“Perhaps you prefer another—say but the word and I assure you that Herman DeWitt will never be an obstacle.”

Emily Carter with all her noble qualities had a high and proud spirit. Her fairy-like form seemed to dilate, and her eye sparkled as she replied, “Mr. DeWitt, is this catechism courteous—gentlemanly?”

Herman thought he perceived a peculiar emphasis on the last word, and old recollections touched him to the quick. His voice, however, resumed at the instant its ancient quiet and unimpassioned tone—

“Miss Carter, from my heart I thank you for having saved me from the misery of ever having to know that I had received a bride who could not love me. The bitterness of my *present* pain is hard enough to bear—*that* would kill me. Farewell.”

The young man walked deliberately towards the door; before he reached it, the impulsive girl stood before him—

“Herman, you are used to give away fortunes—can you be generous enough to accept an unworthy return?”—and she extended her hand.

Herman looked once more into her bright black eye, and he found it beaming with an admiring, trustful affection that could not be mistaken.

It was time at last that he should return to his home—a

home which was soon to loose its dreariness. As he took leave, he said with a smile—

“Hitherto, dearest Emily, I have worked for riches, now I must work for *you*—tell me, is it really so discreditable to be a WORKING MAN?”

ISHMAEL

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ISHMAEL

BY V. J. JEFFEL [A. W. MACHEN]

A young man, quite jauntily dressed, was walking one day along the muddiest street in the suburbs of Baltimore. Just as he had plunged his foot into the midst of a viscid pool—by comparison with its connected waters, a very Lake Superior—the exclamation of disgust which such an incident was likely to call forth from the wearer of a new patent-leather boot was cut short by a noise as startling as it was loud. Arrested in that picturesque attitude, which showed a well-formed person to much advantage,—with one foot on solid earth, the other buried ankle-deep in the centre of the slimy sea—he turned the upper portion of his body half round, and looked eagerly in the direction of the noise. Extending from the street at right angles, was a narrow lane of considerable length, which terminated at a cluster of board pens, and a low brick edifice, hard by a small brook. Some twenty paces from the street, the lane was cut by a stout gate. The post on which this hung suspended also a smaller gate, which served to give passage, through the fence at the left, to the door-yard of a dwelling. It seemed that a young woman who had gone up the lane was just putting her hand to the latch of the small gate, when the other flew open with such violence that she was prostrated by the concussion. The gate was hung so high that it passed clear over her, and swung back, unobstructed, to the fence. At the same instant, an ox galloped by frantically, leaping over her as he went; and at a little distance behind, a whole herd of cattle came dashing on with the same furious speed, and gave forth the discordant sounds which had attracted the

attention of the pedestrian. As it afterwards appeared, these were beeves, driven fresh from pasture to the shambles, where the temporary madness into which the first sight of blood sometimes throws these animals had excited them beyond the control of their keepers.

The young woman was in a situation of real danger. The drove of cattle, cooped in on either side by the high, strong fence, and impelled precipitately forward, the one by the other, were crowded into a dense mass, in which animal could not be distinguished from animal, while from the whole there arose a noise made up of the clatter of interlocking horns, and the bellow of rage and distress. There is something fearful at any time in such a display of brute energy. It shocks us as unnatural, to see matter gifted by inseeded life with a force which is prodigious and resistless, while reason, ordained the governor of life, is not there. But the youth in the street, as the whole scene broke upon him, had no time for any thought but of the fellow human being who lay in the path of the frantic cattle. It seemed impossible that anything could stay their course, and that, unless it were arrested, naught but a miracle could save the poor woman from being trodden to death under the hoofs of a herd in which each animal communicated momentum to the rest, but had no power of individual action. He never stopped to weigh probabilities, but bounded up the lane, and stood in the gateway with both arms extended. The foremost of the herd recoiled within ten feet of him; but, although their dread of the human form caused them to resist with all their might, the on-driving force behind was too strong, and the young man, received between the wide-spread horns of a stately ox, was pressed, staggering backwards, till he stood almost over the outstretched body of the girl. Then it was, that the front line of cattle wedged in fast between the gate-posts, formed a living wall: the resistance in front was greater than at the sides: the fence

to the right gave way; and in the space of time that one might draw a full breath, the lane was cleared, and the herd, frightened and scattered, were racing over a twenty-acre field.

The rescuer lifted up the fainting, yet not unconscious form of the female. The thick coating of soft cohesive clay that clung around her, making almost as effectual a disguise as the bandages of a mummy, suffered little else to be distinguished but a fair, oval face. A glance at this, however, which he caught as he raised her in his arms, quite regardless of the mass of mud he was at the same time claspings, enabled him to recognize that she was a pretty girl, who perhaps had seen her eighteenth birthday.

Before she had recovered sufficiently to thank him, another person appeared—a man, who ran up from the street. He was rather under the middle stature, compactly knit, though not clumsy: he wore a greasy cap, below which stuck up some short crisp hair, of grizzled gray: he had no coat on, and his uprolled sleeves left his arms bare, which were small, but round, hard, and muscular: a cotton apron, bespattered with blood, completed his costume, from all which it was evident he was a butcher, and, as his manners soon showed, by no means the gentlest of his craft.

“Well, this is sweet!—the cattle all scattered to the dickens, and drifting off twenty blessed pounds of fat apiece! *Humph!*”—(this was accompanied by a nod at the young man)—“I am beholden to you for as much as you’ve done. I s’pose you couldn’t well help the critters breaking through the fence. But I’m desp’rate busy just now—there, I’ll take Ellen. And what may your name be, sir?”

“Henry—Brooke.”

“Well, it’s like I may see you another time. Good morning to you.” At that, he carried, rather than led, his daughter into the house, and the said Henry Brooke, with a broadcloth suit none the better for his exploit, was left, “like one

astound," and had only to turn away and trudge toward his lodgings. Soon after he got into the street, he inquired of a boy he met, "Who lives in that house?"

"Ishmael, the butcher," was the answer, "and a tougher he is, stranger, if you but knew it."

Henry Brooke Fulham, a fortnight previous, was a student in good standing, at Yale; but a sudden decision of the faculty had rendered him no longer one. Under the first impulse of boyish shame, he had dropped his surname, and hurried to a place where he was not at all known. This very day he had received a letter from his uncle and guardian in which the writer scolded him roundly—not so much on account of his getting into the "scrape," but because he had not got out of it, when, by his own showing, he might have done so by only telling the truth—at the expense of his fellow-rioters. The worthy gentleman represented in affecting terms, that, in his scrupulous regard for that foolish thing, college honour, the young man had not manifested a proper consideration for *him*, dependent upon him as he was for his daily support. The uncle closed with a reference to the large family of his own, which imposed so great a burthen on him that he had little surplus of income to devote even to the son of his brother. Henry wrote back instantly, thanked him for past advances, promised to repay them as soon as possible, and added, that in the mean time, he was glad to assure him he could get along perfectly well without further assistance. And this magnanimous declaration was made at a time when he did not see his way clear to a single dollar which might go towards replenishing an entirely empty purse.

The next day was the Sabbath, and Henry on his way to church, determined to call at the butcher's. "I want to find out whether that girl's hurt." He went to the house by the mode of approach which he had reason to be familiar with. He knocked—there was no bell—but the summons

was not immediately acknowledged. The door was ajar, and the rapping had made it open wider—that leading from the passage to a side-room was also open, and it was possible both to see and hear a good deal of what was going on inside. About the centre of the room stood a small lad with the intensest awe painted on his countenance. He was an orphan, an apprentice to the butcher, who had taken him from the almshouse. It seems he had just returned from Sunday-school, and in reply to his master's question, what library-book he had brought home (for Ishmael was occasionally disposed to indulge in light literature), he silently handed him a thin duodecimo.

"Short method with the De——," read Ishmael, aloud; and exclaimed immediately, in towering wrath, "Short method I'll make with *you*, you brat!" And dashing down the volume, he seized the boy by the arm.

"Please, sir," said the child, whimpering, and shaking from head to foot with terror, "I didn't know nothin' about it—'deed I didn't. I only fotched what was given to me."

"I won't lash you then, Mordaunt; but this is what I'll do." The man went on, then, in violent objurgation against the Sunday-school, and all who had the management of it; declared the teachers thought of nothing but how to insult him, treating him as a heathen, when in fact he was as good a man as they; and closed by announcing his fixed determination never to allow the boy to go again. After a minute's interval, he proceeded afresh, and with undiminished rage. He swore he would take the boy's moral training into his own hands. "I'll train him—that I will! And if he don't learn deviltry a sight faster than the chaps over yonder learn the gospel, it will be a wonder. Daunt!" The boy started, and looked up, "you shall be an example to the world, that you shall!"

A gentle female voice was now heard expostulating. He answered: the voice rejoined, and a quick dialogue was

kept up for some minutes. The listener became much interested. The butcher, he could see, remained hard and unyielding. "Hush, Ellen! not a word more, or you'll find you yourself have made your last trip to church." To this she answered in a touching way, that it were far better *she* should lose the benefit of the Sabbath, than that the poor, ignorant child should. Ishmael appeared surprised, and referred to her "half-killing herself" in the labours of the week, for the sake of securing the seventh day's rest, and asked whether it was possible she was willing to relinquish the fruits of the self-denial for the sake of an "ugly little wretch like Daunt."

Then Ellen, all enkindled with generous zeal, came forth into the middle of the room, and Henry could see her plainly. To *hear* her now, as in perfect simplicity and forgetfulness of self, she poured forth her soul in that flowing, unbroken strain, so low, and yet so distinct in its earnestness, made the heart thrill, and the ear tingle. No preacher's eloquence could have had such power to stir the wild, impulsive student. As his ears drank in every word that fell from her lips, as his eyes watched her countenance which more than spoke—for it seemed to glow with an inspiration sent direct from heaven—he felt as if his spirit were entranced—as if he recognised, visibly emanating from the form of the Christian girl, an atmosphere, ethereal, penetrating, transporting, like that in whose midst angels walk. How she pleaded with her father for the poor boy, whose famishing soul he was cruelly robbing of healthful food, while instead, he proposed to feed him on poison—that helpless being, entrusted to him to be taught a useful and an honest calling, but whom he threatened to instruct in the mystery of sin and wretchedness, so that he might leave his forming hands at the end, endowed with the gift of an eternal curse! In words of fire she described what a thing it is to abandon one's own self to destruction;—but (she added), wantonly

to stretch forth the hand, and drag down into the gulf a wretched fellow-creature, what language could describe *that*? Carried away by the fervour of her spirit, she knelt before him, and implored him to show himself merciful as he would hope to receive mercy.

"The boy shall go!—the boy shall go! I'm not such a villain as all that! To be sure, I need Daunt's help amazingly of Sundays in the slaughter-house; for the nigger, too, has his notions of keeping the good day, so I am left alone. Still, I shan't hinder the boy, not I! He shall go to meeting—Sunday-school—everywhere you please!"

Henry Fulham withdrew from his post, walked down the steps softly, and then returned, making a studiously loud noise with his feet. His knock was this time answered by Mordaunt, who ushered him into the room. "How do you do, Mr. Ishmael?" said the visitor, when he had bestowed a bow and an earnest glance upon Ellen.

The butcher gave him a queer look, but replied, with surly courtesy, that he was well enough.

After a few further remarks had been exchanged, Henry again addressed him as "*Mr. Ishmael*."

"My name's not Ishmael, but John Pennygoes."

Henry, quite abashed, stammered some words to the effect that he had been informed his name was Ishmael.

"Yes; everybody about here calls me so—everbody, behind my back, and some to my face. They give me the nickname, I believe, because I'm something of an Arab—every man's hand's agin me, and they say—maybe it's true, too—my hand's agin every man. After all, what odds is the difference? I don't know but Ishmael's as good a sound as Pennygoes: it has the advantage, too, of bein' a scriptur' name."

Henry (who had obtained temporary employment as a draughtsman under his name of Brooke), continued for several months to visit Ellen Pennygoes, and with an in-

creasing interest. He found her, despite the contaminating coarseness of the scene in which she existed, endowed with a rare delicacy of character. By no means his own equal in literary attainments, she had so improved a good mind with the few books which had fallen in her way, that she was very far above the rude ignorance of her father. Going through daily, as she did, an amount of labour greater than that which is so often sufficient to reduce the poor creatures who perform the lower sorts of menial drudgery, into a state of semi-brutality, she retained all the pure loveliness of woman. She was able to do so because, though walking through a slough, she never came in contact with the surrounding mire. She lived in a different world—a world of pure thoughts and high imaginings. What perhaps was most remarkable about her was that notwithstanding this solitary and spiritual existence, she had all the cheerfulness which belongs to social humanity.

One frosty night in December, Henry was comfortably seated by the fireside, talking with Ellen, when Pennygoes entered hurriedly. "Ellen," he said, "I've got a great lot of beef to pack to-night. I must have some help. Wash and Daunt are busy killing, so we'll have to try for once what you can do."

"What! carry Ellen down to that hole?"

"*Hole*, indeed!—I tell you, Brooke, I never want my daughter to be in a more respectable place. *Hole!*—I have made some honest shillings there, I can tell you. But if it was the filthiest den that ever was, I must have help there to-night; the ship sails for Barbadoes to-morrow, and I have an order to make up the cargo."

Ellen was quietly putting on her shawl and bonnet, when Henry, unable to bear the sight, declared he would go in her stead. "Come on, then," said the butcher shortly; and down they walked. The night was bitter cold, and Henry, forced by the nature of the employment to dispense with

his cloak, suffered acutely. Very soon his fingers were as rigid as the frozen meat he was handling; next, his toes ached intolerably; for tight, thin-soled boots are not the best protection against the damp floor of a slaughter-house; finally, every limb and every fibre trembled from the intensity of the cold. "You look chilly, Brooke," said Pennygoes; "better let Ellen spell you awhile."

"No, no!" exclaimed Henry, and kept on heroically. After a while the butcher looked at him again. "You can't work any longer this way, that's certain; you are getting too cold for my good, as well as yours. Tell you what, go and help Wash—that will be warmer; and Daunt can come here."

"Set the boy at this? Why, he would freeze!"

"Daunt freeze! Not he! He's used to it."

The exchange was made. If, before, Henry was cold, he was now in addition, disgusted and sickened. Washington, a great muscular negro, expressed much wonder at his being so much affected. Not long after, the remark was made that it was time to blow the hide off.

"How! You don't use powder, do you?"

"*Powder!* bless me, what a child in simpleness!"

But when the old black noticed how he was suffering, both from the cold and the shock that the whole scene gave to a sensitiveness that had been kept tender by delicate nurture, he scanned him pityingly from head to foot, and said, "Well, now, Ishmael is a hard customer, ain't he?"

Henry heartily assented.

Then Washington, having peeped through a convenient chink in the wall, to see that his "boss" was out of hearing, rejoined: "He's a 'tickler specimen, and no mistake. I've seed heaps of bad people, but I never seed one that hadn't some good c'racter 'sides him. Ishmael's got no feeling whatsoever. I tell you, young master, you takes a sight too much pains with him—he ain't worth it." The operation of getting in another ox interrupted the colloquy. The

negro offered the knife to his young companion. Henry recoiled with undisguised horror, and in his sympathy for the stricken beast, forgot even the agony of his frost-bitten feet. The jet of blood took a direction he did not expect, and some drops fell upon his person. This incident completed his discomfort.

As Pennygoes and he walked towards the dwelling, the former remarked, "You have suffered some to-night." Henry admitted the fact. "And you have done it to spare Ellen." This also the young man acknowledged.

"Now, sir," resumed the butcher, "I want to know what's your mind respecting the girl. Are you thinking to take a wife out of the shambles?"

Henry, born of a family that for several generations had been affluent, had inherited, none of its wealth indeed, but a full share of its pride and fastidious refinement. At college he was called the proudest fellow in his class. Yet he had now to make his resolve: even to the shambles would he go, as Pennygoes had sneeringly said, to secure such a companion as Ellen; and so he signified to the questioner.

"I have no objection to make," replied the father; "I have given you a little sort of a trial. You are mighty tender just at present, but there's that in you which will grow out into ruggedness. You'll be able to scratch out a living, which the man should be who takes Ellen off my hands, for he gets nothing with her—not a cent of money—not a wedding frock even. It is true, I've scraped together a dollar or two, and may get more—but none goes to Ellen, though she's the only kin I have—not a dollar, either at this present or after I'm dead and gone. Perhaps I'm saving my money to found a hospital for crippled and unthrifty cattle that can't be made beef of, or for some other laudable institution for perpetuating my glory. Yes, young man, I *am* labouring for an object—for an object which in the sight of these honest and clean-handed people around here,

would seem too small and ridiculous to justify a man in sacrificing body and soul to its attainment. But this is my business; what concerns you is, to know that Ellen is as poor as a beggar's daughter. Are you willing to take her?"

The day for the wedding approached. Henry did not choose to marry under a false name. So he broke the true state of the matter to his intended father-in-law.

"*Fulham?* Fulham?"

"Yes, sir, son of Melancthon Fulham," and he proceeded eagerly to explain how it was that boyish pride and no crime had induced the concealment.

Pennygoes cut him short. "Never mind your story. You are too young, I judge, to have a wife already, and as for anything else there may be wrong about you, Ellen must take her chance."

They were married, and went immediately to New York where Henry got into business as under clerk, at a small salary, in a wholesale house. The young husband experienced then the fulfilment of the prophecy, uttered by "Ish-mael" at parting, that he would learn before long that life had hardships besides those endured in the slaughtering-pen. Poverty—poverty! what *married* man ever sung thy praises?

Five years had elapsed, when Henry received a letter from Pennygoes, in which he was requested to meet the writer at a certain hotel in Baltimore;—day and hour were designated. Wondering not a little as to the reason of the summons, he obeyed it. He put up at the hotel named—a third-rate one; and as he was seated in the reading-room, near the time appointed for the meeting, behold, Matthew Fulham, his father's brother, entered—the gentleman whose sentiments as his guardian had so little coincided with his own.

"Are you here, too, to meet Pennygoes?" said the uncle.

"Yes; and do *you* know him?"

"I have reason to—it was he who ruined your father, and nearly ruined me."

"He?—Pennygoes?—I thought the name was Cantoch."

"Yes; Cantoch & Co. was the name of the firm, but this man was in fact nearly the sole owner. For this reason, when I heard you had married his daughter—it was too late then for advice—I was not anxious to keep up such an intimacy as would bring me into connection with so hateful a set."

Presently Pennygoes appeared, and took them to a private apartment. "Gentlemen," said he with gravity, and even impressiveness, "you both, it is likely, have had hard thoughts of me. To my door you lay the loss of a good deal of money; justly, in one sense, though I didn't secure a copper to myself. The crash fell on my head as well as yours; and if it had been otherwise, the law gave you no hold on me. Therefore you had every reason to give up the case as desperate. What if I am ready now to repay you a part of that money?"

Mr. Matthew Fulham's eyes sparkled.

"But, gentlemen, I don't mean any such thing,—I mean to pay the whole—every single cent of it."

Pennygoes, after uttering this, strode about the room with arms akimbo, head thrown back, and proudly, as if he were disposed to present his face to the inspection of the whole world. Finally he stopped in front of the elder Fulham. "What I owed you was fifteen thousand dollars." Then turning to Henry, he said; "My debt to *you*, or what's the same thing, to your father, was eighty-five thousand dollars—yes, altogether, a round one hundred thousand dollars, not a cent more or less. How them figures have stood up day and night before my eyes, as if they were chalked out in fire! One hundred thousand! one hundred thousand! was

always a ding-donging in my ears. One hundred thousand, not a cent more or less!"

Again he paced the room, as if lost in old contemplations.

"I've worked some, these fifteen years. Yes, gentlemen!" he continued, with animation, "and though it is I that say it,—if to my industry there had been jined the learnin' and education that some has, and wastes in unprofitableness, I needn't have been all of fifteen years making a hundred thousand dollars. But there's business on hand:—here, Mr. Matthew Fulham are certificates of desposit for fifteen thousand; and here, Henry B. Fulham, is another set for you, to the tune of eighty-five thousand. So the job's done—clean off my hands, and off my mind."

Pennygoes received the acknowledgments of the gratified creditors with great complacency. "I have been passing," said he, after an interval, "with the good people for a reprobate; but haven't I paid up the last penny? *I have been strictly just.* Where's the man can say more than that?"

"It is true, sir," observed Mr. Matthew Fulham, "that you have acted in a splendid manner; but in posting up accounts strictly, it is usual to take into consideration the—the—in short, the *interest.*"

"The interest!" repeated Pennygoes vacantly, "the interest!—sure enough! *It is the fact—it is the fact—the interest!* None but the devil could have invented interest! Where have been my thoughts this whole time? I, a man in business all my life—never to have called to mind this! For fifteen years! Why 'tis the greatest wonder ever was telled about!"

The poor man laughed wildly—"Ha! ha! if I ain't a curiosity! Look here! You, Matthew Fulham, and you, youngster!—will you believe it, from the day of the smash down to this hour, the thought never once entered my brain; and heaven knows, now it has come, it sets me crazy!"

Mr. Fulham senior cast a side-glance at Henry, signifying

his decided impression that the speaker must have been quite out of his wits this long time.

"Never mind, though, I'll pay it yet! Let's see how much it comes to. At six per cent., that's six thousand; fifteen times six is how much? Whe-ew!—*whe-ew!* Bless my life, and I was thinking the whole time of nothing but that fine round hundred thousand!—But don't be uneasy, I'm rugged—I'll last a good while yet—there'll be time before I die. But then it will be increasing—ugh! that's interest!—every minute. Goodness alive!—it's enough to make a man jump through his skin!"

Henry hastened, and, to do him justice, so did his uncle, to beg the scrupulous debtor to dismiss all care, assuring him that they considered every obligation cancelled.

Pennygoes would listen to no representations. In order to relieve his mind of at least a part of his burden, Henry said that he himself would pay whatever was due his uncle.

"Will you, indeed? that would be great."

"I will this very day; and so, as I'm your son-in-law, and have Ellen, who is worth more than all the gold in Baltimore, you will consider yourself entirely discharged."

"Not I!" he replied curtly. "The payment of my debts is *my* business—not Ellen's. Square off your uncle though, and I'll then owe the whole to one person, which will save bother in calculating. Good-bye to you. I'm off from here—I'm tired of butchering, and I'm tired of Baltimore. That place is for me where money's to be made fastest."

As he opened the door to pass out, they heard him mutter: "This want of book-learning is a great misery! What an unrighteous fool though, to have supposed that a debt, like an onion, would stop growing, if you only laid it by on a shelf for safe-keeping!"

In days when wonders were common on the earth, a man was known to exist around whom walls of crystal reared

themselves, till at length they closed in an arch over his head. This glassy dwelling was of quite another sort from that which fairy kindness erected for the benefit of the great-nosed prince: though it did not exclude the perception of external objects, the rays of light in their passage were stripped of all colour; nature was made arid, desolate and dreary. At the same time, the lenses composing the walls concentrated the sun's heat—that flood which bore life and joy to all the rest of the world—and poured it in fierce and blasting intensity upon the solitary prisoner. And though he remained stoically impassive, visible effects were producing upon him. Even his outward form withered; but the nature of this fire is to pierce within, and feed on what it finds there: already was the man's heart scorched and wilted, and there was little doubt that it would ere long be consumed to ashes. But lo! a mighty mass is falling from above, and threatens to shatter the glittering edifice to fragments. The man, unconscious of his former evil plight, looks up in horror. Not so feels his guardian angel in heaven; not so feels one faithful friend who stands on the earth;—these hail the impending stroke with joy. They see in the fall of the crystal house,—though it may for a moment beat down the indweller himself to the dust—the signal of deliverance, of salvation from an unutterable woe.

The man was Henry Fulham. He had become a merchant and an adventurous one. Up to a certain point, his enterprise had been as prosperous as his heart could desire; and nothing but insufficiency of capital could stand in the way of complete success. His means were well chosen, provided only he had strength to give them effect. To be devoted to the acquisition of wealth is dangerous for any man; it is thrice dangerous to one of a temperament and character like his. Mammon, a pitiless god, relinquishes no suitably-prepared victim. If a man enters that service under the impulse of an imperious pride and a passionate ambition,

it had been better for him to have been thrown into the embrace of the grim image which of old used to glow amidst the flames of Gehenna.

Ellen recognised all the peril of his situation. Her only hope was of what the world calls *ruin*. The day came at last: he had stretched out his arm too far—he had coped with millionaires, and sank down now in despairing consciousness that, in this arena, neither physical force nor energy of mind may save a man from the fate of nerveless impotence.

"Oh, Ellen!" he exclaimed one morning, after a night of feverish stupor, "had I but an untouched hundred thousand dollars, I could wrestle with the strongest in New York!"

In her heart, Ellen blessed God that he had it not.

A few minutes later his messenger brought him the mail; for he had not gone to his counting-room, being determined that the stroke which was destined to smite him that day, should not find him out in the dismal den which he himself now regarded with disgust, but by his own fireside, within the sacred circle of his family.

As he read one letter, his countenance changed. "—— & Co. *have a hundred and thirty-eight thousand dollars to my credit!*"

He seized his hat and rushed out. Ellen sought her chamber and wept bitter tears.

The one hundred and thirty-eight thousand dollars which came so opportunely (or disastrously) had been sent from California. To explain the matter, the bankers communicated to Fulham a long letter from one of their correspondents, apologizing at the time for the somewhat free language in which it was couched. The writer, who had left the Atlantic coast "a wild, harum-scarum fellow," had displayed "business talent in California, and was not at bottom a bad-hearted person."

An extract only from the letter follows, the laws of space compelling the omission of much that is curious.

"Our country here has the fullest kind of an assortment of queer folks, but this old codger, Pennygoes, tops the lot. When the doctor told him it was certain death if he stayed longer, he only answered, 'Interest at six per cent. never stops, and I won't.' So, on he kept, amidst cholera, fever, and everything else. Since being driven to his bed, he in the first place proceeds to get my brains all up in a snarl by making me calculate interest in every sort of way, till at length he became satisfied that one hundred and thirty-eight thousand dollars covered his debt to H. B. Fulham. After that, instead of dying in peace, he must needs be anxious to have a clear five thousand dollars left, to be applied in building a church at the mines, by some parson or other, whom he had bluffed off a few weeks before, and who, it appears, had in return given his sins a faithful dressing. Allowing for our commissions, the doctor's fees, &c., it was found he would not have the amount he wanted, unless he could be buried for fifty dollars. What do you think? With as much alacrity as if he were entering upon life, instead of fixing himself to go out, he calls for an undertaker, and not only that, but makes the fellow fetch a whole lot of coffins, so that he may choose among them. The chaffering that followed you never knew the like of. One by one the coffins were lifted up on his bed, and he inspected each one critically. Very 'cute the old man showed himself at driving a bargain;—but that undertaker!—I tell you what; to see the ghastly manner in which his lantern-jaws worked; to hear him expatiate on the merits of his wares, inform us how good this one would be to keep out the water, and how that would last long enough to receive a second tenant, fairly made my flesh creep. After all, they could not agree. The undertaker's lowest, even for the most rickety pine-box he had, was one hundred and fifty dollars. Pennygoes sent him off, declaring doggedly that he would wait till a cargo of coffins arrived and brought down the market. He at once paid the preacher

the five thousand, and seems contented to run his chance of getting buried. He has not talked much since then: yet every once in a while we can hear him mutter: 'Pay up—pay up! Principal and (his voice always rises here into spasmodic emphasis) and *interest!*'"

The crisis was past. To the astonishment and chagrin of many veterans of the exchange, the firm of Fulham survived and stood forth in overshadowing stateliness.

One night Henry Fulham sat in his parlour, absorbed in meditation. He was alone, for his wife had gone out—he had not cared to learn whither—but it was to meet other like-minded members of her sex, on a business of mercy. A coach stopped at the door, and presently a visitor was ushered in—a man of bent form, and features haggard, gaunt, and cadaverously pale. His staff, and the left hand thrown out uncertainly to clutch the table's edge or the back of a chair, scarcely saved him from falling, till he tottered to a seat.

"I would have died in California," said the figure, "if I had been sure that I could come after death to pay you a visit. Henry Fulham! I have been right up to the dividing line—have looked over into eternity: I have drawn myself back to give you a notion of something I saw. Look at me then as at a ghost—indeed I *am* little more."

The young merchant obeyed the direction by looking most intently.

"Ever since I have been capable of observation I have noticed in the world a wonderful deal of rascality. I early made up my mind that, not to aim at perfect righteousness, I could be by long odds better than the generality, if I only took one virtue, and stuck to it. I chose justice. I did not start to ask favours of other people—I did not calculate to do favours myself. It would be enough, I thought, if I paid all I owed; and this I determined I would do. The plan was not so bad, yet a miserable fool I showed myself in the per-

formance. You know about the interest—but that was not the greatest piece of forgetfulness;—I forgot one of my creditors—the principal one. If I seemed crazy to make the other mistake, surely the madness of Nebuchadnezzar when he ate the grass isn't a parallel to this. Now, Fulham, I have some doubts about *you*. Don't talk of your greater sense, and all that, for I saw in you long ago that sort of spunk which the devil very well knows how to make a handle of when he wants to hoist a man into crookedness and folly. Besides, even in my trying to do right towards you, I've put temptation in your way. Remember, all this money is not yours—it is borrowed capital, and the interest runs on at a greater rate than six per cent., or seven either. Think the sum over—figure out the answer if you can. What are you worth at this present time—a couple of hundred thousand?"

"Probably five times that."

"So much the worse: it makes the ciphering harder. How many widows and orphans could be fed on that? Go to work now, and see how your account will stand, when the balance is struck at the day of judgment. You be calculating your sum, and I'll calculate mine."

He ceased speaking, and the two sat in silence for a long time. What thoughts were passing through the mind of each, none but himself could know.

Finally Pennygoes, turning his glassy eyes upon the merchant, said, "I am in a maze—I am bewildered—confounded—the answer's too large. Don't wait for *my* ciphering—I can't stay to finish it. Look out for yourself. Pay your debts—pay your debts! every one of them, but especially the great debt—I don't mean Nature's—that settles itself—but His—*His!*"

Henry Fulham was induced to withdraw from a pursuit which, to him, was crowded with danger. If this decision

has deprived Trade of one of its columns, who that knows anything of the unostentatious and effective beneficence it has occasioned, can call it blameworthy?—who that has recognised what serene happiness attends the doer of those good deeds will call it unwise? Be this as it may, the change of life was an important event to Fulham, if not to mankind; and yet, so far as human eye can discover, it depended on so small a thing as a debtor's honest ignorance of the truth that every principal carries with it an interest.

As for "Ishmael," himself, there are not a few persons who are ready to depose in Chancery—if occasion were—that he was unquestionably *non compos*. Perhaps they are right; yet it may be suggested for consideration whether a man ought to pronounce upon his neighbour's sanity, unless he is sure of his own.

THE UNIVERSITY MEDAL

THE UNIVERSITY MEDAL

"The next achievement must be one worthy to close a King's first campaign," said Louis to Turenne. The general bowed, and the next day the French columns were turned towards Lisle. Louvois, contemplating its mighty bastions, reckoning up the number of the troops who armed them, and estimating the stores of all kinds with which the strongest and best provided town in the Netherlands was supplied, protested against the enterprise. "Ah, M. de Louvois," replied the young sovereign, "the atmosphere of the cabinet follows you into the camp: we are here to learn from Marshall Turenne that it is not alone the quartermaster and the commissary that determine battles and sieges." The minister muttered something to the effect that without the aid of the commissary the present campaign might not have been altogether so brilliant as it was. "But," added he, "your majesty's presence is a shield against anything like disaster, and if *M. le Maréchal* give his word for it, I presume not to doubt that even Lisle shall yield to your Majesty's arms." That great and modest captain, whose deed always surpassed the promise, answered that with Heaven's favour Lisle should throw open its gates in a fortnight. On the ninth day, the Fleurs-de-lis were floating over the town.

Yet, brief as was the siege, Louis, who, during the previous part of the campaign, seemed rather to be engaged in a triumphal procession than in marching at the head of an army over a hostile country, had an opportunity to see war somewhat closer. A strong force from the garrison, making a well-concerted sortie, penetrated to within a few rods of the mound where he was observing an extension of the lines. There was no danger to his person except from some random

musket shot, yet the scene was sufficiently animated to enable the courtiers who surrounded him, to present their entreaties that he should withdraw, and to afford him the occasion to resist such entreaties, to draw his sword, and to exclaim in pointed phrase that he was glad to be there to see how well Frenchmen could perform their duty. Louis really had the courage which his flatterers were willing to give him credit for, without its display; and while his hand clasped the hilt of the unsullied blade which he had released from its golden scabbard—while the warm blood of youth rushed to his cheek, and his eye kindled and dilated—he was able to take a calm and discriminating, and right kingly, view, of transactions which are of a nature, as the accounts of every battle and every skirmish bear witness, to disorder the perception of many a veteran.

The enemy charged gallantly, and the French troops were thrown into some confusion. They were driven back from the works they were constructing, but made a stand at the foot of the hillock on which Louis and his staff had placed themselves. Turenne, in another part of the lines, had not failed to notice the whole movement, and immediately detached a strong reinforcement. Ere the succour arrived, however, there was a change in the scene. Among the French who were driven together pell-mell at the base of the hill was a tall one-armed man, who now, brandishing his sword in his left hand, exclaimed, "Gentlemen! Do you stand waiting for aid in the presence of your King? Look above you, and then follow me!"

"Ay! Ay!" shouted a young man with long flaxen hair, whose costume was an odd mingling of the military and the civil, "On, on—we want no sharers in the honour!" The soldiers did turn them and look up, and then, with an impetuosity which even the Frenchman never has except when loyalty inspires him, rushed upon the Spaniards. The thin, tall man at their head seemed not to miss his better arm,

and hacked and hewed his way like a very Benjamite. And at his side, the youth who had seconded his exhortation so well, approved himself an equally good companion in the fight. The enemy were beaten back with great loss.

"Sieur de Bonneville!" It was Louis who spoke, and his countenance was moody and dark, "Mark you that man with but the one arm? Go to him and say that wherever the Standard of France is planted, there is the soil of France."

In a few moments, the courtier had performed his errand.

The person he addressed, who had been staunching as well as he could some wounds which he had received in the skirmish, ceased from his work. He listened to the royal message, and, bending his head meekly upon his breast, answered "The will of God and of the King be done! May France never be one rood the smaller." So saying, he turned away, and was seen no more in the camp.

Meanwhile, Louis with very different aspect had spoken to another of his attendants, "Bring to me that younger man who bore himself so gallantly just now—him, I mean, with the flat, square cap."

In obedience to the monarch's summons, the youth stood before him. Louis inquired his name and condition.

"Pierre de Fronteau, student in the University of Paris."

"And what brings you here?"

"Can you wonder, Sire, that every Frenchman should think it no sin to follow where his Sovereign leads?"

Louis, smiling at the retort, answered, "It becomes a *King* to be in the camp, but the student's place is the cloister.

"Pardon me, Sire," returned de Fronteau, "But the ancient books we read in the Royal College tell us that a man is no worse a soldier for being a scholar, and I cannot bring myself to believe that one must be the worse scholar for now and then drawing sword in the service of his King."

"Well answered, sir," said Louis, "and I shall take care

that you do not suffer with Messieurs the Regents for what you have done before Lisle."

The Court soon returned to the capital. Louis had not forgotten the incidents of the siege. Recognizing the student one day in the throng that filled the presence chamber, he called him to him—

"M. de Fronteau, you are of the rank of Bachelor, are you not?"

"I *am* so far on my pilgrimage, may it please Your Majesty."

"I told you," continued Louis, "that a King should be at home in the camp. It is true; yet he deserves not to reign unless he be accompanied there as well as in his cabinet by love of letters. Was there not some distinguished captain who used to make the Iliad his tent-companion?"

"Yes, Sire, a great Prince—had your Majesty never been born, the greatest and the worthiest of those the memory of whose renown is destined to be co-eternal with—"

Louis went on apparently without heeding the remark. "It is not for any Ruler who has at heart the welfare of his people and the honour of his crown, to say that wars shall cease; yet in the midst of war care ought to be shown to cherish the arts of peace. I have, therefore, determined to mark this season by an act which shall make it clear that the King of France is no less proud of the learning of his scholars than of the valour of his soldiery. A medal of gold shall be struck off, with an appropriate device, and the inscription, *Inter Arma Pax*. This I purpose to bestow with my own hands upon that one of the students in the University, of the degree of bachelor, who shall approve himself on thorough and impartial examination the worthiest. Now go you, sir, and win it."

Pierre de Fronteau, with throbbing pulse, made his obeisance. As he withdrew, the courtiers of his own age envied

the man who had attracted the particular regard of royalty, and the fair dames admired his robust and manly form.

On the north side of a street which in those days bore the name of Rue Dauphin, stood a large dilapidated house, which from its heavy stone front and the curious carvings over the doorway may have been built for a nobleman's mansion. The window shutters—such at least of them as remained—were closed. As for the massive oaken door, in consequence of the infirmity of its nether hinge it hung a-jar, and could not be closed without an expenditure of pains greater than any one who visited the desolate building thought it incumbent on him to bestow. Between it, therefore, and the side-post was an aperture through which a man could pass. As the house extended from street to street and the rear entrance was in a similar condition, a short-cut was afforded to those who chose to save the time which would be occupied in going by the highway to the other side of the square. Except the boys, however—and not many of them were adventurous enough to invade the silence in which it was said the ghosts of more than one generation held their revels—few were inclined to stumble through those long, dark halls.

The sun had hardly risen, and the sound of his own footsteps was the only noise that smote the ear of a solitary pedestrian as he proceeded along the street; yet when he turned and entered the old building, he cast back a hurried glance as if he suspected observation and dreaded it. This individual was clad in the semi-clerical robe that formed the distinguishing costume of a student in the University, but its ample folds did not so disguise the wearer as to prevent its being discerned that, while he was of the middle stature of man, his figure was remarkably slender and delicate. Instead of keeping straight onward through the hall, he turned into one of the side passages shortly after entering, and then, counting the doors on the right till he had reached the third,

opened that, and walked into the room to which it gave him admission. The apartment, though gloomy, was not dark, for it received light from windows which opened into an internal court. By the mantel that overlooked a vacant hearth, stood a man of gaunt and haggard aspect.

"Raymon!" said he to the youth.

"Father!"

After a long and affectionate embrace, Raymon, gently withdrawing two steps, said; "Father, it is perilous for you to be here."

"I know it, Raymon—too well I know that Louis is relentless: yet how can I be an exile at once from my country and from my son?—from the only being on earth in whose veins my blood flows? Yes, Raymon, you are now without a brother."

"And is Augustin dead?" exclaimed Raymon, bursting into tears.

"Yes, and *I* might weep for his death—but why should you? You never knew him."

"Ah, but have you not said he was my *brother*?"

"He *was* your brother, and he *was* my son; but he deserves not that either you or I should shed tears for him. *You* have no cause, for from infancy you have never seen him; and far less have I. Instead of striving as a man might to redeem our honour and our name, did he not pusillanimously fly from duty and from danger to take refuge in a monastic cell? Long ago was he dead to me, and dead to the name of his ancestors—and what more is he now?"

Forgetful that his wearied frame needed the support of the mantel, the banished man stood erect, and tossed back the matted hair that overhung his brow.

"Oh Heaven!" he ejaculated, "What had I not a right to expect from that son? A man, and in manhood's full vigour—not cast by nature in a mould delicate and feeble"—there his eye glanced at the attenuated form of the youth before

him—"but with thews and sinews that qualified him to buffet his way amongst the struggling elements of the world. But no soul was there in that burly image! Yet he is gone—he died in the Church—he rests now in Heaven: and living sinful men may not rail at him."

The father paused, and mused. Then, returning from the thought of the dead son to the consciousness of the presence of the living, he said; "You, Raymon, are my hope—in you is my life bound up. You must achieve your own and my redemption. We *must* recover—and recover through you—the right to dwell on the soil of our country—permission to serve our King. I have suffered you to choose your own method for the accomplishment of the result. You have selected the path of civil life—it is not that which my own instinct would have adopted; but I know well that the road which leads over the breach and the battlefield is not the only one where greatness is attained—but remember, Raymon, you do not come to these academic halls for the sake of lettered ease. More than three years have you now been in the Royal College—are you any the nearer to renown—to the favour and pardon of the throne?"

"I am not sure," replied the youth, doubtfully and timidly, "But this I *may* say—such distinction as is given to the student who has not been a laggard where others have been active—who, without friends and future, without a name even which he dare own, has kept side by side with others who have possessed all these advantages—so much of success as this implies has been vouchsafed to me."

"I cannot doubt it, Raymon; I know that God has given you an intellect such as he has given to few: only *use* it. Yet after all, what can you do in this way? It is vain—vain—vain, to hope for the obtainment of what we need by dint of learning and scholarly exercises. Would it were possible, Raymon, you could be a soldier. Louis is ambitious as well as powerful: his reign is destined to be one of warfare and

conquest. He who contributes to the glory of his arms will win his favour. So, and so only, may past offences be expiated, and the offenders find a way to escape his vengeance. Mark my words: De Retz with his priestly robes and priestly arts will die in exile, while it is possible that Condé, who even now rests in peace at Chantilly, Condé the arch-rebel, the most audacious and culpable of us all, may yet win bloody fields at the head of the armies of France."

"But the King is not forgetful to reward literary excellence," said Raymon.

"And what sort of rewards are these—a pension—a purse of louis d'or—a trinket—a bauble:—recompence enough for the creature on whom it is bestowed, a stage-player, or a scribbler of verses—but not such as our need demands. Very different from these must be the exploits which shall win pardon for me, and for you, the inheritor and sharer of the bitter consequences of your father's fault."

The man, staggering from weakness, looked around for some resting-place, but no couch nor chair did that desolated room afford. He was fain at last to seek the uneasy support of a window-sill.

"Know you the cause of this faintness, Raymon? I have just returned from Flanders, whither I went to draw sword under Louis's eye. You start; but I tell you truth. I myself have attempted to act the part which Augustin would not act, which you, poor boy, cannot act—yes I, mutilated and helpless, the scathed and branchless and tempest-riven trunk which you see. But it is not because I am thus that I failed. What though I have now but a stump where once was an arm? Raymon! Raymon! I tell you"—he started up as he spoke—"I tell you I could throw a giant's strength into this other and remaining arm! Give me but a cause and a hope! But, alas, Louis frowned on the frantic efforts of my penitent despair."

"And he—the King—did he then know you, my father?"

"Ay, well indeed did he know the countenance which is embalmed in unchanging hate."

"He recognized you, and in anger—and yet you are here alive to-day?"

"He would not slay me there, Raymon, nor at that moment when my blood was flowing in his cause; but he gave me a warning and a threat. He sent a messenger to tell me that, to whatever region I betake myself, I may not dare to pollute with my footsteps any spot of land over which I find the French flag floating. The wrath which I awoke in the breast of the boy lives to be fed into a more intense and un pitying vehemence by the passions of the man. It is not granted to me, therefore, to appease that undying hate that my very sight kindles anew. Unless you can do something, we have naught to look to but death, or that weariness of exile which is worse than death.

Raymon was much agitated, "Would to God, my father, I had the power to save you!"

"And is it true that you have not, Raymon? You are not robust and strong, but there is a spiritual impulse that can supply the want of bone and muscle. You may fight undetected—*your* features do not bear the imprint that makes mine the speaking token of the object of royal vengeance. Besides, you are innocent, though condemned to bear as yet a part of my punishment. Think of all this, Raymon. Call up the spirit which has supplied at least one of our race in each generation to head the vanguard when battle was done for France and our King!"

"Ah, father," replied the son falteringly, "God never made me to be a soldier. I could die—I could offer my breast to the sword—I could plunge into the blazing torrent of the battery: I could die, I say, and that is all. It is not so much that my limbs are not knit into the rugged vigour which others have; but I want the temperament that is essential to the successful warrior. Believe me, I am no coward—

your son could not be. Something is wanting: I know not what, though I feel its absence. Oh, my father, urge me not!"

No audible answer was returned to this appeal; but the exile, as he leaned languidly on his only arm, seemed as much dejected in mind, as exhausted and faint in body. After a stillness of some moments, Raymon, with a quick and eager movement, approached him. The youths's pale features were lighted up; all the soul within him, stirred to its deepest recesses and quickened in every energy, spoke through eyes that gleamed with a rare intensity.

"Be not cast down my father—there is hope, nay, there is certainty. I feel it!—I feel it, here within me! I have not the stalwart frame, I have not the martial ardour, that rejoices at the noise of the battle and the shouting; but I have received from my Maker a mind, an intellect, and as he liveth who gave it me, it shall be to you in the stead of the limbs and the valour of *ten* warrior sons!"

The father gazed now proudly on his son, and there was astonishment mingled with the pride. The youth seemed transformed before him. His slender figure was dilated, and a vehement life moved in every part.

The student continued; "Louis—ay, father, the King himself—this day fortnight, is to give a medal with his own hand, to that one of the Bachelors of the College who shall acquit himself most worthily before him and the collected learning and wisdom of France. I shall be among my fellows to stand in my lot whatever it shall be. With your restoration to strive for, it is impossible that I can fail—this motive nerving me, I will give place to no man. But now I must bid you adieu—may the Omnipotent indeed have you in his care! But your exceeding weakness—I remember—you said you received wounds."

"They are nothing, Raymon—nothing. I am weak from loss of blood, but I have suffered no more serious harm."

Then, after arranging the mode of future communication, they separated.

Philippe, the wealthy and hospitable Duc d'Avagnan was giving a fête at his Chateau in the vicinity of Paris. The Duc, in his youth a man of gallantry and show, now distinguished chiefly for indolent good nature, in his better days had captivated the affections of a dame who even compared with him was high-born, for a rivulet of the blood royal flowed in her veins. They were wedded in a troublesome time when the throne had too much ado in taking care of its own tottering state to exercise its usual jealous ward over the marriageable children of France. Isabelle d'Avagnan was the only offspring of that marriage, and in her princely beauty the Bourbon was all apparent. The innumerable suitors who breathed out their sighs at her feet worshipped while they loved.

There is a new-comer whose arrival causes a stir in the gay and jewelled assembly; and yet the personage who enters is announced with the accompaniment of no sounding title. It is neither Prince, nor Noble, nor General, nor member of the dignified clergy. This observed of all observed is no other than Pierre de Fronteau the soldier-student, who, in virtue of achievements which reflect the dazzling effulgence of the royal smile that has fallen upon them, has received an easy exaltation to the rank of heroes. Modestly bearing the flattering notice that greets him, he makes his way to Isabelle, and, once at her side, the earnest deference of his manner seems to signify that in his estimation every laurel is withered and valueless compared with her favour. Her own manner does not show that she is insensible to his devotion.

Far away in the recess of an oriel window, stands one whose spirit, in contemplation of this scene, seems bowed down with heaviness. It is poor Raymon, the student whose

name is ungilded with martial glory. As he looks on, may he be saved from the sin of envy! His fortunate fellow is his rival not only in that great hope which is at the bottom of every thought of his heart, but in *love*: he stands in the way, not alone of that deep sentiment of filial duty, but of that impetuous tide of passion which too frequently has a strength beyond the might of duty to parallel.

It chanced that Isabelle's eye, lifted for an instant from the group immediately surrounding her, met that of the sadly contemplative student; and such is the soul-piercing power of a woman's eye when directed by a woman's heart that poor Raymon sank abashed, in the conviction that all his thoughts were read. Not long afterward, the whole throng broke up to scatter in small parties through the conservatories, and even the open grounds around the chateau, for the balmy evening air allowed no one to remember that the year had arrived at the borders of winter. Isabelle, disengaging herself from others, drew quietly to the side of Raymon as he was walking alone, pensive and abstracted. Her presence at first did not tend, it was evident, to soothe, but to agitate. With kind address, however, she began the conversation with topics which when discoursed upon by a voice so thrillingly melodious as hers could not but have a tranquilizing effect upon the most perturbed breast. She talked with him of Philomela as they beheld her skipping from bough to bough, then of the cloudy squadrons that were drifting so majestically towards "the beauteous west." From the charms of the scenery, and the sweetness of the music, and the serene glories of the sunset sky, they were led naturally to the influence which Nature in this guise must have upon the human mind.

"Delightful this relief must be to you, especially after the labours of cloistered study you have undergone, and preceding the ordeal through which you are to pass—for you are among those, I doubt not, who are candidates for

the glorious honour the King has set before you. In truth, when I think of the privilege of you gentlemen of the College Royal this year, I could almost weep that I am not myself a student-bachelor."

"I shall indeed strive to show myself not unworthy of the opportunity of obtaining scholarly eminence which our great King in a truly princely way extends to us. A miserable creature indeed were I else."

"But," added the student immediately after, "these moments of quiet—most delightful are they, as you have said. I ought to appreciate them, for it is not an improbable thing that this may prove the last quiet hour I shall enjoy on earth."

"Why this despondency? Cheer thee—cheer thee, Monsieur! The eve of battle is said to make even the coward brave; surely the firm-hearted ought not to falter."

"It is not the examination itself I dread—or, if I fear it, it is not for what I alone have at stake. Ah, and if I think but of myself, what matters the result to me? I may stand first—I may stand last—what difference in the prospect beyond?"

"But think of your friends. For their sake—in response to the interest they feel in your success,—strive!"

"My *friends*, Ma'moiselle. Where in all France have I a friend?"

"No friends?" repeated the lady, "The poorest, the meanest, the most low-born, have their friends."

The student's pale cheek flushed; "Poor am I, in very truth, but not mean—not low-born."

"Yet you have no friends?"

"None. Nay rather, every man is my foe, were I but known to him. If ever being had cause to shun the light, I have: yet in a few short days, if my fate is protracted so long, I must meet the gaze of half Paris."

Isabelle drew off slightly to look at him. There he stood,

his chiselled brow without a wrinkle, his full dark eye alternately bent on the ground, and raised calmly to hers. Surely, had it not been told us that fiends of darkness have appeared clad like angels of light, we should have thought it madness to couple guilt with a form so fair.

"Answer me one question, Monsieur: is it in consequence of your own fault that this danger surrounds you?"

"Of no fault of mine, M'amselle."

Isabelle d'Avagnan, who had conducted her inquisition with the look and mien of the Bourbon, now advanced with frank sincerity.

"You say you are solitary and uncared for. To one in such a situation, the knowledge of a single friend, however unworthy, may be a source of comfort. Monsieur, you are not without one friend so long as Isabelle d'Avagnan breathes."

Raymon kissed the hand of gentle support that was extended to him, and blessed the cheering voice. Then he said in those tones so soft and so deep which were peculiar to him, "Now have I cause to live on and triumph. Come what may I now have manhood to meet it."

In an apartment of the great unfinished and meanly furnished pile which was the principal seat of French learning in that age of courtly pomp, sat the famous Abbé Montmorin, the Lord Rector of the College Royal, and head of the University. There is no need to describe the intellectual yet forbidding features, which have been preserved on canvas. Opposite the Rector, and besides himself the only person in the room, sat Pierre de Fronteau, his sister's son.

"Pierre," said the Rector, "You mean to win this medal, do you not?"

"I mean to try."

Montmorin smiled grimly as he answered "If you try, you win."

The student shook his head doubtfully.

"What rivals have you to fear?"

"Not one but that Lebarre."

"That white-faced boy?"

"He, and no other."

"I believe," said Montmorin, reflectively, "you have measured your rivals well. Lebarre is, indeed, the most formidable of all: yet you have no cause to dread him. He has undoubtedly a quick mind, and for his years is admirably versed in the classics: the Latinity of Erasmus is not purer than his. But I shall take good care that logic and mathematics, Pierre, have much to do with the determination of the award."

"But, uncle, you know not this fellow's powers. I have carefully observed his mind at work, and have seen it master a subject with almost the velocity and comprehensiveness of intuition. With that puny body of his he is a giant, though unconscious of his own strength. Uncle, I do fear Lebarre."

"There is no cause, Pierre. He has been negligent of mathematics, and now the time is too short for him to prepare. What can mortal do in the space of six days. Tomorrow, I will test his capacity at the general recitation, so that we may know what measures to resort to against him. But at all events, Pierre, you must gain the medal; this done, there are no bounds you need set to your fortune. The King already looks upon you with favour. Leave the University with this the highest honour that student ever won here, you will be lifted high—high—higher far than before you ever dreamed of rising. There will be no obstacle to your obtaining the hand and princely dower of Isabelle d'Avagnan, and then—"

"This is another thing!" exclaimed Pierre, "Satan seize that boy! He balks me here too. That proud beauty who strings hearts to her belt as the Canadian savages do

their enemies' scalp-locks listens to my tender and earnest protestations as if they were only the necessary service of a slave, while she tasks her own voice to produce its softest modulations for the benefit of Lebarre."

"That is nothing," said the Rector, "but the insatiate tyranny of a coquette who is not content unless she reduce to her thralldom the timid and weak as well as the strong."

"Coquetry! There's no coquetry there. Her utterance to him has no tone which is not all in earnest. It may be love, it may be mere compassion; but whatever be the feeling, it is not heartless, but real. You are a priest, uncle—pardon me—and understand not the language of woman."

"Child," returned Montmorin, "who knows the human heart so well as he who reads it in the confessional?"

"True enough: but, uncle, you are not so much a priest as a philosopher."

At this the Rector gave a repetition of his cast-iron smile—"So be it: but whatever motives you call up to influence you—and I care not how many they are—be resolute not to be vanquished by this miserable off-shoot of poverty."

"Be assured I will not. I'll strain every nerve. And apropos of this, a man made his appearance at the entrenchments before Lisle about whom there was something remarkable. De Bonneville bore to him from the King an enigmatical sort of message, which the party concerned seemed to receive as an angry warning or command; for, though wounded, he departed, and was no more seen in the camp. Now yesterday, I noticed this person in one of the crowded thoroughfares—I think the Rue Dauphin: immediately afterwards Lebarre, who was unaware of my presence, passed by him, and exchanged significant glances with him. I thought, too, some words were spoken but did not hear them. The man has but one arm."

"But one arm, and that the left?"

"Yes. Do you know who he is?"

"I *suspect*," answered Montmorin—"Has not he a resemblance to Lebarre—not in height, for the man I mean is much taller, but in the shape of the brow and the clear, classical outline of the nose and nostril?"

"He used to be styled handsome," added the Rector, soliloquizing, "and this youth has a certain beauty."

"You describe him accurately, uncle. Who is he?"

"I am not yet sure; but if he be the man I judge, and this boy be his son, they both are in danger of a fate to which a life-long abode in Vincennes were mercy. There is no reason why I should ward off the penalty from them. Let me know, Pierre, if you can, where he lodges. It were best done quickly—before the examination. That over, it would be causeless cruelty to drag him forth. As it is, we will spare the boy if it be possible."

And so uncle and nephew parted for the day.

Early the following morning, Raymon entered the old house which extended between the Rue Dauphin and the Rue St. Antoine. He had gone but a little way in the hall when he thought he heard the footsteps of some one ascending the steps without. Hurrying on lightly, he darted down the passage to the right and in a moment was in his father's presence. They did not converse long. Raymon, as before, left him there, and issued forth upon the Rue Dauphin. Very soon, he was overtaken by Pierre de Fronteau who greeted him with a frank and cordial salutation. Raymon shuddered. Had Pierre come through the house? Did he know anything of the interview which had taken place there? Yet what reason to suppose he had? Raymon did his best to shake off the vague impression, but it clung to him like an incubus. Perhaps, a certain unusual heartiness in his fellow-student's manner jarred like a discord upon a nervous system strung to the highest tension of anxious expectancy. Pierre inquired whether he was proceeding to the University.

"Yes," answered Raymon, scarcely knowing what to say, "It is late, too, and I am aiming to take the shortest way."

He added this remark in order that it might account for his going through the ruined mansion, if perchance Pierre had observed him issuing from it.

"I am bound in the same direction," rejoined the other, "and am very glad to have your company. It is fortunate I distinguished you, and hurried on to overtake you."

"Yes, it is fortunate," murmured Raymon.

Yet very little did their mutual society do, so far as conversation was concerned, for hardly another word did either utter all the rest of the walk. They proceeded together to the spacious hall of recitation where a considerable number of their class were assembled in presence of the Rector and several other members of the faculty. Little tables were distributed about the room. Raymon had hardly seated himself by one of them, when Montmorin came around by him, and handing a small paper said, "Here is a problem, Monsieur Lebarre, which I wish you to hand me the solution of in two hours."

It was a question involving the application of algebraic analysis to geometry, and was abstruse, complicated and difficult. Raymon had just begun to fix his mind upon it, when he observed Pierre rise and approach Montmorin, with a volume of Aristotle in his hand. The Rector's chair was not a great way off, and Raymon, whose senses were now nervously acute, distinguished some words (though uttered in a whisper) which certainly had little to do with ethics or dialectics. '*Rue Dauphin*'—'*Maison de Gondi—ruinée*', came from the lips of Pierre. The Rector's cold eye wandered towards Raymon's seat: the poor fellow trembled, and put an equation or two upon his paper. A series of brief interrogatories and answers succeeded which he could not understand. Finally, Montmorin nodded his head significantly, and the agonizing listener thought he

heard the sound '*Gens d'armes.*' At any rate the Rector left the room immediately, and remained without some moments. On his return to his chair, he passed near Raymon.

"You find this a rather difficult proposition, do you not?"

Raymon started, for he was plunged in meditation upon subjects very different from the diagram on his table. Before he could frame an answer, the stately Rector had turned his back. How horrible the suspense of those succeeding hours! Was his father in hands that were dragging him to prison—and that a prison whose doors open only to the shambles of the executioner? He darted a piercing glance at Pierre, but that person was too intent on his *Artistotle* to meet it! Just then, the Lord Rector stood up to address the whole body of men there assembled.

"Messieurs, candidates for His Majesty's medal, I have to inform you that by a recent determination of the Regents, excellence in mathematics will be an important requisite to a successful examination. I need not, therefore, urge your particular attention to this branch of your studies."

Montmorin's glance did not settle on any individual student, but Raymon took the warning as directed to himself. He had been hitherto comparatively indifferent to the exact sciences: it was high time to rouse. So, with a mighty effort, casting off every thought of those torturing anxieties, forgetting for the time his father and the fate that was impending as well over that father as himself, he threw all the energies of his soul into the problem before him. When the second hour struck, he walked calmly—at least in appearance—to the Rector's desk, and reported that the problem could not be solved, as it involved an impossible condition.

Montmorin, a profound and eminent mathematician, assured him that he was mistaken. At that, the student produced a sheet of paper whereon by purely *geometrical* reasoning he had demonstrated this impossibility.

The Rector scanned it narrowly. "This has indeed the appearance of conclusiveness; but I have at my hand a manuscript treatise just sent me by a distinguished analytic geometer in which this problem, to which you object, is not only solved, but the solution made use of as a step to other and higher calculations."

Raymon cast his eye over the page that Montmorin exhibited to him, and observed that in the supposed solution a quantity was divided into its factors, and in one of these a term was prefixed with the wrong sign: he quietly pointed to the error with his finger.

Montmorin, after long and careful re-examination, admitted the student's correctness, and complimented him upon it.

Relieved at last from the suffocating atmosphere of that gloomy hall of learning, Raymon Lebarre went forth, faint and giddy. He hastened through the streets. It was the hour of dinner, and he might visit the Hôtel de Gondi without much danger of attracting notice. He found it empty. There was no sign to tell him whether the unhappy fugitive had been torn from his hiding place by force, had fled from it at the approach of pursuers, or had wandered forth unmolested except by the restlessness of deferred hope. He dared not make inquiries in the neighbourhood.

Sick at heart, and knowing nothing more that he could do he sought his chamber. There, on his table, he found a billet. It was short:

"Mademoiselle hopes to see M. Lebarre this afternoon at the Château."

He started at once to obey the call.

Mounted on a sufficiently good horse, he rode out of Paris. Within a mile of the borders of the Duc d'Avagnan's lands, he met Isabelle herself in equestrian guise and attended by a single lackey.

"I will return with you," she said, returning his greeting

cordially—"Good Basile," she added to the attendant, "You may ride on before, and await us at the Château."

"M. Lebarre," said Isabelle after a brief interval of silence, "You will have much to contend against at the examination. You will meet snares, and pitfalls too, in that which should be a fair and honourable trial in the lists. Do you know from which of your companions you have most to apprehend?"

"From de Fronteau, I suppose—at least I know of no one more conspicuous for ability and attainments.

"And can you not think of another element of strength which he possesses? He is a nephew of the Lord Rector."

"Yes, I know it."

"And you do not need to be informed, I presume," continued Isabelle, "of Abbé Montmorin's own character—how ambitious he is, and how crafty?"

"I have indeed seen enough," replied Raymon, "to teach me that I ought to fear him more than any of my proper adversaries."

"Ay, that have you. He is unscrupulous, and—in this matter—most powerful. M. Lebarre, I have said I feel an interest in your success—and I ought to feel it—not merely because it is you that are concerned, but because it is a grievous thing that unrighteousness should triumph. I know that the medal ought to be yours. Still another reason have I, for engaging heart and soul in your cause. You know I am your only friend—and I tell you, when I do undertake to be a friend, I am a real and strenuous one. It will be hard if I do not prove myself—woman though I am—as earnest and ready, and efficient too, as any who ever wrote "Sir" before his name."

The student commenced in glowing terms his grateful appreciation of her kindness.

"Stop—stop," she said, "Wait till hereafter—or rather, thank me by doing justice a week hence to those powers

with which God has gifted you. Summon all your strength—for there will be a theatre proper for its display—and show yourself worthy, I say not of me, but of your country, and of the King, by whose hand you are to be rewarded. I'll tell you how I feel—just like that good creature, Rosamond, in one of the plays of that bizarre Englishman, Shakespeare—I want to seize the tyrannous strong man by the foot. I mentioned *theatre*—that made me think of this, I suppose.”

The fair D'Avagnan blushed, as she paused.

“But now, to what I have been doing. I have learned—'tis no matter by what carrier-bird I got the tidings—that Abbé Montmorin had been making extensive interest with the circle of noted mathematicians with whom he is in correspondence, so that by means of the various discoveries communicated by them he may be able to bolster up this precious nephew of his, and to crush you. But I know quite as well as the astute Abbé how to propitiate *les gens de lettres*. By good fortune, too, I met with M. Bernouilli, who hates Montmorin and who is my very good friend. He has lent me some of his manuscripts. You will not have much trouble to read them. They are very neatly written—for I have looked at them, I assure you—and not altogether unintelligible, except in those parts where the mystic algebraic calculations come in. He tells me the reading of them will throw a vast deal of light on these troubled waters of modern science. Not claiming himself any of these floating discoveries which are circulating from hand to hand among the mathematical brethren—and which are destined bye and bye to make a great racket—a prodigious tintamarre among us unlearned folk—he has gathered them all up and has fitted them together in amiable and systematic fellowship. Here is the bundle—take it. I pray it may do you good service.”

As soon as the surprised and gratified student had reached out his hand and received the parcel, she cut short the stream

of impassioned protestations which he was again attempting to pour forth—though this time she had more difficulty.

“But bless me!” she exclaimed, “How short is the time you have for this great mass of study! What will you do? I call to mind now that M. Bernouilli—when he saw me turning over the sheets he had given me, with that wise look which I know how to put on when I converse in mathematics—made the observation that it would take a clear headed person who had had ten years training in scientific pursuits—that it would take such a person at least two months to make himself master of the new mass of knowledge contained in those papers. Two months—and you have only a week!”

Raymon smiled, and answered, “Trust me for that.”

They were now in the park, and were suffering their horses to walk leisurely along the serpentine road. Suddenly there was a noise. A human figure, bursting through the copse, staggered breathless into the midst of the road in front of them. It was a man, and as he for one moment stretched up his drooping and wasted form, he exclaimed at sight of the student—“Raymon! Raymon! Farewell—I am nearly gone!”

Without staying an instant longer, he plunged down a bank at the other side into the thick brushwood.

Almost at the same second of time, a party of troopers dashing along furiously behind them, turned the last curve of the road, and were at once in sight, and immediately upon them.

“Have you seen a man on foot run past here?” cried the petty officer in command, whose manner, whether from eagerness or want of breath, was more abrupt and curt than on another occasion he would have been guilty of in the presence of Mademoiselle D’Avagnan’s rank.

Raymon was dumb: but his companion with a woman’s ready wit replied, “I saw a tall man just now hurrying towards the bridge yonder.”

She pointed, as she spoke, in a direction opposite to that the fugitive had taken.

"'Twas he doubtless," exclaimed the officer. "Thanks Ma'mselle"—and he reverently lifted his cap. "We must haste, or he will have crossed the River."

"I told the truth," said Isabelle, when they were gone, and the clatter of their horses' hoofs had died away in the distance. "The man I told them about had an axe upon his shoulder, and altogether I am inclined to think it was Gervais the honest *boucheron*—so it can hardly be he they are seeking."

The student was too much agitated to make any reply.

"M. Raymon Lebarre."

Raymon looked up.

"Was not that your father? And is not he the long banished Marquis de St. Claude?"

"How know you that?" gasped the youth.

Isabelle answered, "It had been told me that some one like the Marquis had appeared in the camp in Flanders; and the absence of his right arm, if there were nothing else remarkable in his appearance, was enough, coupled with his address to you, to lead to the conjecture that he whom I saw just now was the same. Keep nothing back from me, Monsieur—I can be trusted."

"It is my father, and he and I *are* the last members of the unfortunate house of St. Claude."

"Will you tell me precisely how it was he provoked his exile. It took place, I know, in the time of Cardinal Mazarin, yet the King who has shown his disposition to be lenient towards many of the Frondeurs is supposed to have a personal feeling against the Marquis de St. Claude. The King never speaks of the offence that then excited and has since kept up his anger, and it is not well understood at the court of what nature it was. Let me know the whole matter plainly, if you can. Louis has some regard for me as his

kinswoman, and if I am so informed that I may know what ground to take, I may be able to bring him to a more favourable disposition."

"The tale is very short and simple," replied Raymon. "At the time in the War of the Fronde, when the Duc de Beaufort and the Duc de Nemours were pressing the party with which the Court was, most hardly, the Queen with the young King took refuge in a village near the Loire. A daring project was formed to get possession of the person of the King, and to carry him over to the Frondeurs. My father, who was high in authority in the Fronde, and who would have been higher had he not been on unfriendly terms with the Prince de Condé, engaged in this plan of surprisal. Suffice it to say, they were nearly successful. The King's attendants were slain or cut off from him, and the scheme would have been completely successful had not Louis himself violently resisted the efforts that were made by the leaders of the Anti-Mazarin detachment to induce him to accompany them. My father, who could not restrain his vexation at the delay and the threatened disappointment, finally seized the King by the arm, meaning to carry him along by main force. Before he could succeed in this, however, the Vicomte Turenne had come to the rescue, and the surprise party had as much as they could do to cut their own way back."

Mademoiselle D'Avagnan was very grave, and made no remark upon the recital.

"It was a great crime Ma'mselle—and none now feels that more deeply than my wretched father—but do not say that it is unpardonable. He has already received a sore punishment—a punishment, sharp and significant,—which came by the direct dispensation of the retributive providence that ever watches over anointed kings. At the very next skirmish, a few shot from some peasant's blunderbuss lodged in my father's hand. That hand had

sinned by being laid with violence on the King's sacred person—the poison of the guilt made the whole arm rotten to the shoulderblade. Gangrene came on; the surgeon had no power to save what was forfeited, but he saved life—for that, O Ma'mselle, was not forfeited!"—

The youth in the passionate earnestness of supplication suffered the rein to fall loose on the horse's neck, while he stretched out both hands imploringly.

"Say—oh, say, Ma'mselle, that life was not forfeited!"

"I wish I could tell you to hope," said Isabelle sadly.

Raymon went on; "Why should the King retain his anger so long. There was no *treason* in the grasp, though there was presumption—nay, if you please, impiety. The King, too, was but a boy then—a boy of fourteen years! The child Louis is as if he never existed—in his stead is the man Louis, the great Prince to whose sacred person every hand and tongue and eye pays reverence. The course of Nature has removed the injury; and the offender—the guilty arm—has mouldered into dust. Why then should the Heaven-blessed Monarch,—lifted to the pinnacle of greatness where his authority is the visible symbol on earth of the boundless government of the Ruler of the Universe—refuse to exert that prerogative of mercy whereby man may most nearly approach the inapproachable majesty of God?"

"I feel all you say," replied the lady, "but too well do I know Louis's nature not to fear that he can never pardon an offence like that. Better had it been for your father to have risen in open and uncompromising revolt—to have trodden the royal standard under his feet—better even to have threatened his King with the sword or the axe—than to have laid a finger's weight upon his person in rude and careless disrespect. That he saw in him a boy, and was tempted to treat him as a boy, is a circumstance that must only aggravate the enormity of the offence in Louis's eyes. If your father had crossed swords with him, and even drawn

his blood, there might be hope of forgiveness; but this is far worse, it is a wound to his honour, and I doubt not he writhes to this day under the thought of it. Louis never was a child. Even when he seemed implicitly obedient to the tutoring of Mazarin, he was King in the realm of his own proud thoughts. His temperament is peculiar. That high self-respect which exacts universal worship is not the vulgar appetite for flattery which it would seem to one who should judge him according to the standard of other men. It is with him not a single engrossing passion, but the result of the union and combination of the multitude of his great qualities. It is the sign, not of weakness, but of power. Hence it is, I dare promise you scarcely so much as the possibility of any yielding in the judgment which is founded on this the essential nature of his being."

"Oh Ma'mselle, do you abandon me?"

"Not so: and I can best show that I do not, by charging you not to abandon yourself. If there were a chance that I could influence the King in your favour, I would do it at the hazard of my life; but in this I feel I am powerless. Your own conduct may move Louis's heart to compassion; if this hope fail, there is naught else to fall back upon. Acquit yourself then manfully!"

This was the right tone, and its electrical influence was shown in the kindling of the student's eye, and the sudden bracing up of his form. The bridle-rein, which till now had hung slack, was seized and drawn firmly in. The hackney felt the change in his rider's mood, and pricked up his ears and arched his neck proudly.

"You shall not be ashamed of me," he said, "I am conscious of a strength which de Fronteau and Montmorin never shall be able to subdue. I defy them to do their worst—save indeed one thing."

"And that?," said Isabelle.

"If they know my relationship to him against whom they

have let loose the gendarmerie, I too am in danger of arrest. The sentence of the King, banishment forever from French ground on pain of death, was pronounced not against my father only, but all who partake of his blood."

Isabelle d'Avagnan's eye flashed; "If Montmorin does have the dastardly villany to betray you, I will *then* to Louis, and appeal to the spirit of the Bourbon in his breast! He cannot as a King—he shall not as a man—refuse to regard me!"

Raymon was on his way to Paris, his heart fervently invoking blessings on the lovely woman who had poured the oil of comfort on his sorely bruised spirit.

She, as she looked after him, murmured, "If he be not crushed by the fearful burden which is thrown upon him, it can only be by efforts surpassing the might of man. He needs—he deserves—the assistance of Heaven, and oh! may it overshadow him!"

While Isabelle was thus looking steadfastly at his receding form, she saw him suddenly rein in his horse. The cause of the stopping she detected in a man, or at least a shape which had the appearance of humanity as it crouched at the foot of a tree. Raymon was dismounting. Then he stood with one hand resting on the bridle of his horse while the other was extended towards the figure. Presently, he threw himself into the saddle; at the same instant the other half rose from the earth, and with a visible tremor of his whole frame, as even at that distance she thought she recognised, crept stealthily into the thicket. Next, she saw that Raymon, proceeding on his way, was soon met by a party of three mounted men. Two of them wore the uniform of the gens d'armes: the other seemed to have the attire of a civilian.

That third man whose features the fair watcher was too far off to distinguish was Pierre de Fronteau. He seemed somewhat abashed at being met by his fellow student—perhaps, on account of the company he was with.

"I will leave you now," said he shortly to the gens d'armes, who continued on their course. Isabelle, not caring to be overtaken by them, rode briskly towards the château.

"Come, you are for Paris, I suppose"—This was addressed to Raymon—"We will go together."

"No," was the reply, "I believe I shall ride about these grounds for a while. The air is fresher than in the city."

"Fresh enough anywhere, I should think, at this season," rejoined Pierre rather gruffly. "But good company must not be lost, and I'll make my taste for the nonce conform to yours."

"I am not sure—yet, after all"—said Raymon confused and stammering, "I believe you are right, the city is preferable. It is very late too—now I think of it—and though we go immediately, it will be dark before we get to our lodgings."

"So be it then," returned the other carelessly, and both were soon on the highway which leads along the Seine.

"Raymon!" exclaimed Pierre suddenly, "You know I am your friend. Now, I advise you to procure to-morrow morning a better steed than this you are on, then mount him as speedily as possible, and turn his head towards Holland, Spain or Italy."

"And wherefore?"

"You ought not to require to be informed that the air of France is not good for your family."

"Why, now, as to that, I must say it agrees well enough with me." The poor youth, as he spoke, forced a smile.

"There's no use of evasion, Raymon. If you choose, let the matter rest so. We understand each other: that's all I want."

Still, Raymon endeavoured to keep up a show of not comprehending him.

"This is nonsense," said Pierre impatiently. "Remember I have given you faithful warning. If you will rush upon

the fate that awaits you, it is no concern of mine: yet I cannot look on without sorrow."

Raymon turned in the saddle, and eyed his companion fixedly. Again there was a smile upon his face, but the meaning was different: it was not now a hastily assumed mask, but genuine and expressive of the thought within.

Pierre became alternately red and pale. "I know what you think. My advice does not seem to you the most disinterested in the world. Perhaps it is not. I am not such an idiot as to attempt to make you believe I am excessively desirous of your presence at the examination. In truth I'll be glad enough not to have you there. Still, I will repeat that it is my sincere advice—take it as you think proper—that you do not tarry about here longer than you can help. It is not I you have to deal with, but one far more dangerous. An excellent good friend and supporter is he: but if ever there was a man to be dreaded as an adversary, Ab—but no matter about names."

Raymon did not consider it best to make any reply.

"Hark you!" added Pierre, "A word more. If you abide by counsel, you may save not only yourself but your father. The Abbé—pshaw—but 'tis out, so let it go—the Abbé has set all this chase going. The King knows nothing about it as yet: until the news of the presence within a league of his person of the doomed St. Claude reach his ear, it is possible to hush up the whole business. Think of this."

Raymon did reflect upon it most anxiously. Finally he said, "I will let you know to-morrow morning."

"Well, to-morrow morning, then, make your decision known—but remember, if your father is captured meanwhile, there will be no help for him. The Abbé has authority to arrest the pursuit; but, the Marquis de St. Claude once in the hands of the King's officers, no voice but that of the King himself can save him from the dungeon and the scaffold."

There was a second pause—this time of more death-like silence..

"Determine now," said Pierre, "I can't promise you the offer will be open tomorrow."

Raymon thought of the thicket—it seemed to him before his eyes even now, a clump of dense evergreens—in frightful proximity to which Pierre had found him: he thought of his father, reduced to the extremity of exhaustion: he thought, and trembled, and hesitated. How was it possible that the maimed exile—faint from his recent wounds, broken down by fatigue—almost at death's door without the weight of a hostile hand laid upon him—could longer baffle and avoid his fierce pursuers? Yet, would not that father prefer to accept almost inevitable destruction, rather than that his sad and painful existence should be lengthened out a brief span by the sacrifice of the last glimmer of the hope that had been his only solace during sixteen dreary years? And as for himself, was it not his part to be *firm*—this was the beginning of the trial, and should his fortitude give way then?

"I will *not* agree to withdraw to-night."

"Then think it all over," said Pierre, "and give me your answer in the morning."

Leaving his companion after they had passed the arch, Raymon de St. Claude retired to his lodgings where he sat watching the hands of the clock till they had marked the lapse of half an hour. Then going to a Hôtellerie which he had never before visited, he procured a fresh horse. The sentry was easily bribed, and he was soon galloping along the bank of the Seine. Through the mazes of the park of Avagnan, he was guided as if by instinct to that clump of evergreens which his mind sought. Fastening his horse to one of the elastic outside branches, he stooped on hands and knees, and began to grope among the close stems of the cedars and firs. It was midnight, and the whole park was

shrouded in thick darkness. He was oppressed by a horrible thought. What deadly faintness appeared in his father's countenance when he crept into that hiding place! How possible that distress and exhaustion, and the pain of recent wounds, had wrought their fatal consequence—that Nature assailed in her last citadel had yielded! Agonized by these doubts, he each moment anticipated nothing else than that the hand he extended before him would be arrested by the contact of a cold and rigid corpse. But the whole thicket was explored and no form of humanity was there, whether in life or death.

Raymon was once more in his chamber—a narrow attic chamber, six stories from the ground. The lamp he had left lighted, still burned. Its rays fell immediately upon the closely wrapped bundle which Isabelle had given him. He opened it, glanced at the first sentences, and, sinking unconsciously into a chair was soon absorbed in what he read. Hours passed. The fascination continued. His mind, as it expatiated over the new realms unfolded before it, had lost all feeling except for the enraptured contemplation of scientific truth, and the exultant exercise of its own great and expanding energies. Just as the lamp's dim light was fading into the dawning day, he had turned the very last leaf: not, indeed, that he had mastered every minute process—but he had grasped and comprehended the whole scope of the deduction—the knowledge of the principles and their grand consequences had interfused itself through his mind, and become a part of it.

His eyes were removed from the page, and wandered slowly around the contracted circumference of his chamber. The spell was broken: he awoke from the vision, to find himself clogged with the galling fetters of reality.

His father, and the gens d'armes! He threw himself upon the bed, slept a sleep so profound that it seemed, not slumber but the insensibility of death, and awoke after four hours,

partially refreshed in body, but with a spirit how broken! He recalled the events of the preceding day—meditated on the words of Pierre,—and his mind was made up. His father's *life* spared, all else should be abandoned.

PART II

Raymon had hardly issued into the street in order to seek Pierre de Fronteau and make known to him his willingness to withdraw from the controversy on the condition stated, when a bright-faced lad who was approaching the door he had just left looked up into his face, and inquired if he were not Monsieur Lebarre. Having answered in the affirmative, he received from the boy a tiny note, which, as he read it, he found to contain only these words:

"The person in whom you are interested is well cared for. Be not anxious, but stout-hearted."

The hand-writing was Isabelle's, and, with a bosom swelling with gratitude, he went on his way. No retraction was to be thought of now! When afterwards, at the College Royal, Pierre glided close to him and whispered, "Have you anything to say?" his reply was simply, "Nothing."

It was late in the evening of the last day allowed for preparation. Seated by the table in the Rector's apartment, and facing each other, were Montmorin himself, and his nephew. Hours had thus been spent there, during which those two powerful and well disciplined minds had exhausted many a method of mathematical analysis.

"So much then," said the Rector, rising and drawing breath, "have we successfully accomplished; and now, Pierre, look over this calculation, and see if you detect in it an error."

He handed him a manuscript sheet. It was the same he had exhibited to Raymon, the morning when he set himself

to test the degree of reason Pierre had for his dread of his rival's strength even in mathematics.

The young man applied mind and eye in intent scrutiny, and as his glance was fastened on the paper, so was the Rector's fastened on him. A remarkable contrast made uncle and nephew; Montmorin with his high square forehead and angular features, and de Fronteau with rounded cheek, unfurrowed brow, and curling lip decorated with its carefully trimmed and soldierly moustache. Both had the high-arched, aquiline nose; but in Pierre the nostrils were dilated like those of the warhorse—in the priest they were compressed like a fold of ancient, tawny-coloured parchment.

In no long time, Pierre exclaimed, "There it is—I see it!—In that factor."

"Right," said Montmorin. "But further, you see what that problem undertakes—take your pen, and demonstrate, if you are able, that it cannot be performed."

It was deep into the night when the student lifted himself up from the task, and offered his diagram and calculations.

The Rector examined them rapidly, and then, passing around the table, embraced his nephew heartily.

"The demonstration is better than his! Now Pierre, fear no longer—not even Raymon Lebarre. His is a wonderful mind, but it is geometrical and deductive, and not analytic. I will bear upon where he is weakest. To-morrow and the day after shall be to him days of torture. Ay! what avail the muscles of a Milo to the man who is stretched on the wheel? Be assured Pierre, the preparation I have given you, joined to your native powers, puts you in a condition to cope with any man in Europe. What can this child do—prodigy of intellect though he be—naked and helpless, with faculties neither hardened by long exercise nor trained into activity by skillful discipline, and totally ignorant of the arena into which he is to be taken—against you who are

forewarned of every subject that will be raised—nay, of every question that will be asked? Were he Blaise Pascal himself, he must fail in such a contest.

[At this point, the manuscript of the story, which seems never to have been published, breaks abruptly off. The tale is, however, a revision of a completed but much cruder draft, evidently written at an early age. In its earlier form, the story, while holding the attention, lacks many of the most artistic features of the revision. In the earlier draft, Isabelle plays a much less important part, takes no hand in secreting the father of Raymon, and does not suggest the possibility of interceding with the King. Undoubtedly, the writer must have intended important changes in the conclusion as narrated in the earlier manuscript; but inasmuch as the revised dénouement is lacking, the original conclusion is appended, so that the reader can draw his own inferences as to what variations the writer contemplated.]

It was the second and final day of the examination. On that which preceded it, the ordinary degree had been bestowed, and the relative standing of the class among themselves so far determined as to show that the splendid Medal offered at once by the University and by the hand of Royalty—by the noblest society of letters, and the greatest monarch, in the world—must be given either to de Fronteau or St. Claude. Between them this day was to decide. That vast hall encompassed such splendour and such talent as could now seldom be found in equal limits.

The whole faculty of the University, of course, gave dignity to the scene by their presence—all the students, too, attended from each Department, Normandy, Picardy, Germany and France. The kindred bodies of Theology, Law and Medicine also swelled this side of the assembly. But who can describe the array opposite, the great multitude rising tier above tier to the very cornice—and though a multitude,

one having nothing of the vulgar about it—for it was a multitude of nobles. All of the fashion of France was there and a great part of the *beauty* too. Pearls and diamonds sparkled on brows so fair that the priceless gems seemed unworthy of their homes. On that bench—no further behind majesty than etiquette demanded—was a fair group whom the ecstatic but celebrated essayist Maubigne described by saying that the Goddesses had descended from Olympus.—First, we distinguish one whose gracefully curling lip and subdued majesty of eye showed not only that she was clothed in pride, but that it was a garment which as a Bourbon she had a right to wear. We need look no further for the Juno; yet indeed Thetis were perhaps the more appropriate name, for disdaining the blood of Saturn, her affections had been given to a mortal. The unlucky Peleus, yclept Comte de Lawsun, however, for loving when he should have worshipped, is paying the penalty within the gloomy walls of Piquerol.—Minerva (less beautiful than the daughter of Orleans) is M'amselle de R——. The gallant Maubigne feared perhaps to give the name in full. Bellona, too, was present—who had kindled a civil war—and cold Dian, with two or three Dryads, who however are half inclined to follow wave-born Amphytrite—whose terrestrial name “known to all Europe” needs no mention. But a new Goddess, continues our author, appeared to give special honour to this great occasion—one whom nor Homer nor Hesiod had described. Her “name in French is Isabelle and her favourite haunt is by the rivulet of Avannes.”

King Louis was half-encircled by a throng who, agreeing in their devotion to him, in all else differed as much as possible. He of the eagle nose on the right is the first Prince of the Blood, the conqueror of Lens—whilom, the armed Insurgent, the impetuous, the arrogant, the heroic—now the King's most loyal, most prudent and most submissive subject. Beyond, in his episcopal robes, is the blameless Féne-

lon. Next, the author of the epic *Lutoin*. A few steps behind, is the favourite of the Muse of Comedy, the author of *L'Avare* and *Tartuffe*, who only failed to be Shakespeare by being—Moliere. But we will leave the reader to imagine what others must have been present.

In the midst of the nineteen professors of the College Royal, sat Lord Rector Montmorin in his rich robes of state. At his side, hung the antique purse of embossed purple velvet—the venerable Bourse—the ensign of his dignity. All that it now contained was the massive Golden Medal.

Before this assembly, the two young men were to appear—in circumstances nominally equal—yet how different! First, was de Fronteau, whose lineage was known and distinguished, and himself admired by King and Court for his gallantry in the Army in Flanders; but far more than all, he was forewarned of the very passages on which he was to be called upon to show his familiarity. Conscious thus of the powerful aid he was to receive from a quarter where his rival had only to expect unsparing scrutiny and perverse misinterpretation, was it wonderful that he advanced with a countenance open and confident? St. Claude, whose slumbers for three nights had been but a mockery; whose mind was suffering such agony that it seemed rather to need the darkened chamber and the soporific draught, than to be fit for an ordeal that must be severe to the best-trained and stoutest intellect; who is to stand before partial judges—inquisitors rather; and who is uncertain whether the next sentence will be a question of the schools or a summons to the block—what hope had he in the struggle?

Yet that slight, delicate student stood perfectly composed. Marble from the hand of Phidias were not more impassive, more graceful, or more pale, than he. To a few questions that were first propounded, he replied in a manner as if his organs of speech moved mechanically of their own accord without the direction of his will. But a subject happened

to be started which aroused his interest. Instantly, fatigue, exhaustion, anxiety, grief, for the time left him. His senses then quickened, he read in Montmorin's eye that which aroused his anger—about de Fronteau's mouth an expression played that stirred up his pride. The whole vigour of his wonderful faculties was directed to the matter in which he was engaged.

He thought not of the profoundly attentive audience, not of the mighty sovereign, six paces from him, nor even of the apparition that crept into the box thicket in the Park of Avagnan—if a thought of *Isabelle* came, it was only to serve him the better.

For hours did that ordeal last. The lapse of time was unnoticed. King, soldiers, priests, poets, nobles and ladies, were absorbed in this exhibition as they never had been in the *Cid* or the *Phèdre*. We have said that Pierre was, in the beginning, decidedly the favourite; now, the assembly was equally divided—not that so many went for Pierre, and so many for Raymon, but every individual mind was divided, and was unconsciously longing for the success, and fearful of the failure, of both. Indeed, however biassed any one might be, there was an earnest—indescribable—thrilling tone in Raymon's voice which it was welnigh impossible to resist.

So far, the Faculty could perceive no superiority of one over the other. De Fronteau had the advantage of far better preparation and a knowledge of the precise topics to be examined, and those were such as from the character of his mind were best suited to him. St. Claude, devoid of external assistance, stood apparently helpless, but in that frail body was an intellect such as few have been gifted with. He himself, however, at last became aware how desperate was the part that he was maintaining. He had long since penetrated what was now indeed suspected by some

others—the partiality of Montmorin for his nephew;¹ but he had felt so confident that his own powers would enable him to baffle both—this confidence now began to fail. There are limits even to the most transcendent powers, and Raymon felt it. Hitherto no one could say that Pierre had gained the slightest superiority over him—yet in another hour some one of this ceaseless volley of questions might find a weak spot in his corselet. Montmorin—no man could read a countenance better—perceived an alteration in his features, and also anticipated the probability of a final breaking down under this superhuman trial. Yet, he did not anticipate the course that Raymon had resolved upon in order to escape this probability.

During a slight pause in the examination, the young student, stepping forward so quickly that none could offer question or interruption, sank on one knee before Louis.

"Sire," he said, "Your Majesty is doubtless wearied with this Academic strife prolonged so much beyond the custom of previous years. My friend and classmate, and myself, have studied and recited together so long that our minds seem to have assimilated. Our learned and respected instructors, likewise, accustomed to hear us recite from the same books in a regular course, and fearing now to do one or the other of us injustice if they depart from this routine, cannot but examine that which we are both equally well acquainted with. Sire, if I dared entreat such condescension, I would humbly pray that your sacred Majesty himself might propound such interrogatories as would be proper to make known our relative proficiency and capacity. Surely, this at least I may venture to say, that the medal, whoever should be fortunate enough to obtain it, would in this way receive a value that could by nothing else be given to it."

¹ In the revised version of the tale, Raymon was explicitly apprised by Isabelle of Montmorin's partiality. See *supra* p. 221.

After uttering these words, in a voice modulated to its gentlest tones, and in a manner which in grace and profound deference could not have been surpassed by a Grammont, Raymon bent his head low, and then stepped backwards nearly to his original position.

Louis said, "The suggestion appears to us good and proper. What say you, right reverend father Montmorin? Heaven forbid that we should assume rule in a place that ought to be governed only by thee."

The Rector was surprised and indignant at the bold move of the student, yet when it was approved by a voice that none in France dared to dispute, he could only express his cheerful assent.

"But we ourselves," continued the King, "have for so long had less pleasing cares upon us, that we should hardly be able to do justice to these admirable young men in scholastic matters. Father Jacques Bénigne, as the preceptor or our heir, none can be better suited to take our place—do you put what questions appear suitable."

The celebrated Bossuet accordingly then stepped forward. In his youth, he had himself borne off the highest academic honours; and under his skilful and impartial catechism, the great superiority of St. Claude soon became apparent. When the examiner took up one science after another, the result was the same in all, and Louis, without waiting for the regular decision of the faculty, at once pronounced that the "Medal of Honour" was due to Raymon.

At this declaration, there was a slight stir on one of the lower benches. To explain it we must go back a little. Early in the evening, a man had entered at one of the side doors, and took as unobtrusive a seat as possible. He was completely enveloped in a cloak, and there was no striking peculiarity in his appearance to excite attention,² yet was he observed, and very closely, by three other men who came in immediately after, and who were in fact members

² According to the later draft, Raymon's father had but one arm.

of the police. During the long exercises of the examination, all had remained quiet, but when the triumphant candidate was announced, the victim or criminal, whatever he may have been, rose up eagerly, and made half a step forward. The officers, suspecting a purpose of withdrawal, started forward in such haste as to be discovered by him. Aware at length of his danger, he endeavoured to elude pursuit by hiding in the crowd of those who, having come in too late to obtain seats, were standing in the aisles. Foiled in this attempt, and rendered desperate, he had pushed his way into the circle of courtiers, supposing that the policemen would not dare to attempt an arrest so close to the King's person. In this plan also, he was deceived, as he was convinced by a heavy hand laid upon his arm, and a word sternly whispered into his ear. Unconsciously perhaps of what he was doing, the man at first violently threw off the grasp, but when it was renewed, yielded tremblingly to the force which he could not resist. Such was the occasion of the noise which for an instant had diverted the attention of Louis and those about him.

This interruption, slight as it was, gave the Abbé Montmorin time to recover his composure and resolution, and stepping forward with dignity he thus addressed the King—

“Sire, not many days ago a matter came to my knowledge which has since caused me extreme disquietude and distress, but now I recognize the duty which compels the revelation of what perhaps it would be treason for me longer to conceal. This young man Lebarre, of such prepossessing appearance and distinguished talent, has been for years guilty of contempt of your Majesty's government and authority by living within this city, being, as he is, an exile on pain of death.”

Louis looked, with apparent pity, towards the student, as he answered, “Surely one of his tender age can scarcely have been guilty of treason against us. Wherefore Abbé, was he banished?”

"His father," rejoined Montmorin, "in the civil war was banished by your most gracious Majesty, and his family with him, and death denounced against any of this blood who should cross the limits of France."

"True, Reverend Father—and who will dispute the justice of the sentence? Yet this was long ago; this youth must have been a mere infant, and it seems to us that this would be no unfit time to manifest our clemency. But what was the name of this poor child's father—we remember no Lebarre among those who were excepted in our act of grace and pardon."

"His father stands yonder"—the long finger of the Rector was pointed towards the man just arrested—"whose title was once Armand St. Claude Marquis de"—

"What!" exclaimed the King, in a fury very unlike his ordinary mood,—“What, that atrocious wretch—that miscreant—that detestable—horrible—abandoned—that St. Claude who laid impious hands on our anointed person! To the scaffold with him and with his brood! Others dared”—and as he added this, he darted a look at the Prince de Condé—"others dared, indeed, to lift up rebellious standards against our armies, this man so towered in presumption as to seize us—US! Thanks to God and Our Lady, we were rescued from his power; but the indignities we endured in that hour, never can we forget—or *pardon*. Drag that wretch up hither!"

In obedience to the mandate, the officers drew their prisoner before the incensed monarch.

"What devilish purpose brought thee within our dominions?"

St. Claude raised his eyes for an instant only, and uttering not a word, tottered, and leaned for support upon the high bannister that separated the royal dais from the eastern side of the Hall.

"And what madness possessed thee, young man?" continued Louis turning to Raymon.

"Sire—Sire," answered the student, "how could I, whose first breath was drawn in the air of France—how *could* I be content to live outside of this blest land?"

"But, youth, this University is no place to become accomplished in rebellion and regicide. What induced thy father to send thee hither?"

"For this very reason, Sire, did my wretched father send me to the Capital of France, to be educated under the shadow of the ever venerable throne of Bourbon! Too late, alas, he became bitterly conscious of his own heinous sin, and lest his son from being reared in a foreign land should fail to gain true loyalty of sentiment, he cheerfully sent him into the midst of dangers. And for my own part, Sire, I will say, even in this fearful moment, that better were it that that son should lay his head upon the block, or count the sluggish beating of his pulse in dreary Vincennes, than that he, born on the soil of France, should forget the duty he owes to the Great Monarch of France."

The unaffected earnestness with which these words were uttered seemed to have produced some effect. Yet, if Louis felt any compassion, he permitted it not to be shown in his voice, which was exceedingly cold and deliberate as he replied—

"Young man, you may speak for yourself, permit us ourselves to interrogate your father as to *his* opinion and sentiment. Raise up that man's head," he added to the officers, "Well, indeed, may Heaven deny him the power of himself directing his eye to his outraged Lord!"

Every man in that assembly who was acquainted with the character of the King felt that this was the crisis of Raymon's fate as well as his father's. Louis did not often show vindictiveness; but towards the elder St. Claude he was known to entertain a bitter and irreconcilable dislike.

The incident that gave rise to it is too well known to the readers of French History to require being narrated here.* What effect the renewed sight of the countenance of the miserable man, and the hearing of that hated voice, might have upon him, those who pitied Raymon could not conjecture.

“Raise his head!”

The police captain who had given the prisoner a vain shake, at the reiterated command thundered to him by the mighty monarch, with a sudden effort of his strength threw his head back. St. Claude, as we have said, was leaning upon the railing, his hand was nervously clenched around it—and the head when the impulse that lifted it was withdrawn, immediately fell forward again. The second, however, during which the head was erect showed the King and Raymon the rigid lips and glazed eye of a dead man.

It was Louis’s governing maxim never to suffer any occurrence to cause him to drop that high impassive dignity which he considered the best attribute of Royalty; and he turned away calmly and coldly, as if nothing unusual had taken place. There was increase of solemnity in his tone, however, as he said—

“My Lord Rector Montmorin, the medal is unquestionably due to him who has been found superior in the examination—Monsieur Raymon—lately known as Raymon Lebarre, in consideration of your proficiency in study, and other considerations, it hath pleased us to confer upon you the Dukedom of Talmont with all the lands ever thereunto attached. Step forward and receive the medal which has been awarded you.”

Raymon as one stupefied—or rather as a person who in a dream seems to be engaged in actions which he cannot escape from or comprehend—walked to the Rector’s seat, made

* In the later revision, the incident had been narrated at length by Raymon in conversation with Isabelle. See *supra* p. 225.

the genuflection, received the Golden Premium in his extended palm—afterwards turned and made his obeisance to the King—then he stood without motion and perfectly erect while his eyes settled upon on no particular object. Conflicting thoughts crowded his mind; finally Nature proved irresistible—he rushed to what had been his father, threw his arms around the clay-cold neck, and as the tenacious grasp of the fingers upon the railing relaxed, fell with the body to the floor.

About two years after the "Great Examination," the French world was made acquainted with the marriage of the Duke of Talmont to Isabelle, the heiress of the Comte d'Avagnan; on the same day, Pierre de Fronteau, for his gallantry in the storm of a fortress in Flanders, was promoted to the command of a Regiment.

ANDERPORT RECORDS

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ANDERPORT RECORDS

REGINALD, SON OF ANTHONY

CHAPTER I

At the head of tide-water on Gavin Run, a considerable creek which five miles lower enters one of the finest of our southern rivers, stands Anderport. Besides its age, many considerations make it deserving of note. Its founders, less restricted in means than most of the early colonists, erected its buildings in a manner so lavish of material, and so substantial and massive, that a modern builder would call them proof against the wear of time. The town, however, has had to resist a destroyer which its first settlers did not anticipate, nor could have guarded against—that ravager, at once insidious and ruthless—neglect.

Tall brick houses frown grimly upon grass-grown streets, which were laid out for the leading thoroughfares of an enterprising and populous mart. The traveller, who in a score of miles has not passed half that number of habitations, rubs his eyes to find himself suddenly in what seems the heart of a city. Yet, wearied as he is with the wilderness through which his journey has led him, his mind meets little relief in the unlooked-for termination. Indeed, nothing in the surrounding prospect, cheerless though it be—not the hills covered with hen-grass, that ashen garb of sterility; nor the scrubby clusters of old field pines, creeping upon the dispirited husbandman; nor the wide, unenclosed forests, plundered of their younger growth and retaining only the huge patriarchs, which may defy the axe, but are sinking helpless beneath the reiterated strokes of

the elements; nor even that sluggish, dismal stream, spread over a reedy marsh, and bordered by moors of broom-sedge and dense thickets of alder and brambles—not all together can give the beholders such an intense feeling of desolation, as that gloomy assemblage of almost forsaken dwellings. Abundant signs of poverty are visible, but they are not found in the usual abodes of rural wretchedness, tottering, low-browed hovels. All is brick—brick. Man seems here to have put forth his strength at the start, and done his best; but at the same instant that we perceive this, we perceive also that his labour has been vanity.

One has no occasion to go to Tadmor, nor to Baalbek, to experience the painful pleasure of watching how desperately the poor relics of human toil and skill may struggle for existence with an engulfing desert. If Anderport present the scene less grandly than the ruined cities of the East, it has one element of impressiveness which they lack. This dingy little town, with its air of antiquity, its dilapidated roofs and crumbling walls, is not found in the Old World, where sights of decay are to be expected, but in flourishing, vigorous, lusty America. There is something striking, too, in its diminutive size. We cannot come upon it without being reminded of one of those pitiable dwarfs who carry the heavy weather-beaten features of full-grown manhood upon the small and feeble limbs of a child.

The decline of Anderport is easily accounted for. At the time of its settlement, and for some years afterward, Gavin Run was navigable to vessels of several hundred tons burden. Now, it hardly affords unobstructed passage at low tide for the fisherman's skiff. Concurrent causes might be enumerated, such as the character of the population, and the existence of more fortunate rivals; but I am not writing a history. The intelligence of those who gave it its name, is vindicated by the statement that it was once a port; and its present condition is sufficiently described, when the fact is added that it is a port no longer.

Most of the houses, as has been mentioned, line the streets, and are constructed in the style usual in cities. There are some, however, on the heights in the outskirts of the town, which have much more architectural character. These formed in fact the mansions of the original owners of the settlement. One of them, which attracts attention by its white, rough-cast front, was built by Wriothesly Ander, from whom the town received its name. To him succeeded Reginald his son, a profligate scamp, who, tradition tells us, had the credit of breaking the heart of an amiable wife. Then came Edward, and next to Edward, who died without issue, his brother Charles James, of neither of whom is anything memorable related. Anthony followed, whose wife died a year after their marriage, leaving an infant son Reginald.

Anthony Ander, a man of morose, melancholy temperament, took little interest in the growth and education of his heir. The child grew to boyhood with no society but that of servants, and of old musty volumes found in the neglected apartment which had sometimes been used as a library. In his sixteenth year he was sent by his father, who seemed to have had some prejudice against the English universities, to one of the European continental colleges. Anthony himself was shortly after taken sick in London, and died there. The estate went into the hands of executors, and Reginald, who had no ties of blood nor friendship to draw him to Anderport, passed five full years at the college without making a single visit to America. It was just a week after the attainment of his majority that he set out for the home from which he had so long been estranged.

The people at Anderport, who had looked forward to his arrival as an epoch, found little to prepossess them in his first appearance. He was below the ordinary stature, ungraceful in person, and remarkable for the homeliness of his features. Thin locks of carrotty hair dangled over his low forehead and completed the ugliness of an exterior which

was not relieved by the slightest attention to neatness of attire. Nor were there any obvious indications of intellect to redeem so much that was repulsive; indeed, his eye had a vacant, hazy look, which many characterized at once as stolid and doltish.

A single companion attended him; an elderly man, quite bald but for the scanty gray locks which hung at the back of his head, yet with a full bright eye, and a brow unmarked by a wrinkle. Altogether, Mr. Simon Rennoe, of a figure compact and rotund, but not corpulent, a composed demeanour, great suavity of address, and a countenance ever wearing a benignant smile, was one of those persons who excite, in all with whom they associate, equal respect and confidence. He saw in his young friend much more than was visible to others. Under a cold and sluggish temperament, he knew there lurked qualities which rendered their possessor capable of the highest things. The direction, however, which these energetic elements would take was yet uncertain. Consequently, Mr. Rennoe, who was a philosopher in his way, regarded Reginald not only with affection, but with a deep interest. This friendship was not, perhaps, unaccompanied by a degree of jealousy, for Rennoe was certainly anxious to prevent the youth from forming any new attachment. In this respect, he was for several weeks completely gratified. The society of the gentlemen of the neighbourhood, polished, frank, and companionable as they were, had little attraction for the student; and with his reserve and bashfulness, he found still less to please him in the ladies whom he met. The occasional sarcasms of Rennoe on the frivolous, trifle-loving sex, were evidently listened to without displeasure. Sometimes Reginald expressed his own thoughts. "I cannot conceive," he observed one evening, on their return from a visit, "how it is that man, who is fitted to entertain such lofty aspirations, can bring himself to feel attachment for a creature whom nature has made incapable of thinking."

"It is easily accounted for," returned Rennoe; "such men as we saw yonder are well fitted to be governed by such influence."

"True!" ejaculated Reginald.

"Whilst those," Rennoe continued, "who possess great faculties—who are made to be the master-spirits of the earth—who seek power, not merely for its results, but, like the strong man using his strength, from delight in the effort"—

The student, without waiting for the conclusion of the sentence, murmured, half unconsciously, "They must not let their minds become any body else's property—the man who knows how to avoid obeying may soon learn the way to rule."

The sentiment uttered was not exactly that which Rennoe desired to provoke, yet he did not choose to open a discussion.

Some days after, Reginald went alone to return the call of Mr. Chesley, a planter, whose mansion was some six or seven miles distant. He was ushered by the servant into a parlour, the only occupant of which, at the moment, was a young lady whom he had never before seen, Matilda Chesley, eldest daughter of the planter. She received him with great ease and politeness; and as he found her reading when he entered, his heart at once softened more than it had ever before done in the presence of woman. Availing himself of a pause in the dialogue, he glanced at the open volume. It was poetry—the "Seasons"—and he no longer made any exception from his sweeping contempt of the daughters of Eve.

"Do you like Thomson?" Matilda inquired, noticing the direction of his eyes.

"No; he's a pompous, second-hand affair, with much more sound than sense."

The lady's countenance was expressive of some surprise, but at that instant the door opened. The newcomer, also a visitor, was Laurence Seymour, a fine looking young man, who was met with a very cordial greeting. Miss Chesley, of

course, introduced him to Reginald Ander. As the three were taking their seats, a smile played on Seymour's lips, and he darted a glance of peculiar meaning at the young lady. Reginald took note of both smile and glance. Immediately all the torpid energies of his soul were aroused. That almost imperceptible expression of disdain, which sprang involuntarily to the handsome face of Seymour, and which vanished the moment after, had durable consequences.

Reginald, satisfied with making a brief visit, soon returned home. Seymour remained, and in the course of the afternoon persuaded Matilda that it was a delightful day for a horse-back ride. The saddled steeds were quickly brought to the door, and they galloped gaily down the noble avenue in front, then turning to the right dashed with unslackened speed along the road, and afterwards through by-way and over moor, till at last they drew rein on a lofty eminence which jutted into the vale, and commanded a prospect of its whole extent, both downward and up. In the one direction the eye swept over Anderport and followed the Gavin, until it was lost from sight in the lake-like river. Toward the southwest the view was more contracted, but the very objects that limited it had their own peculiar beauty—rocky hillsides, curtained with vines and shrubbery, and, directly in front, a bold precipice down which the little stream was joyously bounding. They gazed long and silently at the lovely landscape. When they turned away, the soft influence of the scene accompanied them, and no disposition was felt by either to resume the wild haste which had brought them thither. Their panting horses walked slowly down, not unwilling after such a race to snuff at leisure the balmy air of the evening. Seymour talked of his native England; he described a vale not less beautiful than that of the Gavin; he told how the hill which they had just left, reminded him of the site of his father's stately castle; then he painted the park, with its oaks that gave shade when the Tudors reigned; and lastly, he sighed as he referred

to the feelings with which he, a younger brother out of a numerous household, had left those dearly cherished scenes to seek his fortune in the forests of the Western World.

Matilda listened with rapt attention—why should she not? Encouraged by the expression of interest which beamed from her beautiful countenance, he went on to say that notwithstanding all which the Atlantic divided him from he yet felt that there was room in his heart for the hope of a happiness exceeding any that all broad England could furnish. He looked full towards her as he spoke, but her eyes were now bent downward, and he could not catch their expression. It was clear, however, that she was much absorbed in what he was saying, for her horse happening to stumble, the rein was held so carelessly that it fell from her grasp, and was drawn quite out of reach. He seized it promptly and restored it to the fair horse-woman, but her hand trembled as it touched his.

A great deal more was uttered on the way home—that is, by the cavalier. Matilda spoke little—yet there seemed to be something satisfactory even in her silence, for Seymour, when he assisted her to alight at the door of the mansion, would not have exchanged the gratification which that ride had given him, for the inheritance of an earldom.

Some days afterward there was a pleasant gathering at the fine seat of Mr. Marshall. Seymour was Matilda Chesley's escort. Ander saw them enter. He detected the tender feeling which lurked in each glance that passed from one to the other, and he could not but acknowledge that nature itself pointed out the fitness of their union. The most ardent lover standing in his place and beholding that sight, would have felt hope die within him. Reginald was no lover, yet he had determined that Matilda Chesley should become Matilda Ander, and he had not the slightest distrust of his ability to bring about that result.

Animation and gayety ruled the hour. To the surprise of

the party, who had on other occasions witnessed his shrinking bashfulness, no one was more full of vivacity than the ugly scholar. The gentlemen caught themselves listening to him when they should have been attending to their fair companions; and the ladies found it possible to be entertained by one who uttered not a single compliment. A consideration which aided in this sudden change of opinion must not be overlooked. This red-haired youth was no vulgar person, but came of the ancient lineage of the Anders, and his vast estates equalled the united fortunes of any two beside of the wealthiest planters in the country.

Leaving the house, the younger members of the company strolled over the grounds. Reginald, as well as Seymour, attached himself to the group of which Matilda was the centre. They chose a path leading to a rude bridge which was thrown across the Gavin. The stream here, rapid and interrupted by rocks, flowed at a considerable depth below them. On their way thither, the subject of discourse happened to be the romantic homage paid to the fair sex in the age of chivalry. The ladies came to the conclusion that times were sadly changed since then; whilst their squires earnestly protested that no knight who ever wore mail could exceed them in zeal and self-devotion.

"Let us test it," cried Matilda, springing to the edge of the bridge. "See!—here waves my scarf—when I toss it into the Run, who is ready to leap for its recovery?"

"I am!" said Laurence Seymour, eagerly.

"Ah, but you are not in earnest?"

"Not in earnest? Try me!"

"What!" said Matilda; "would you really have us think that you would risk your life for a scarf?"

"As sure as I have power to move, I would hazard it to *obey you*."

Matilda looked at him as he stood there with his eye flashing, and his noble form dilated, and thought she could not

imagine a worthier representative of the hero of romance. Perhaps she was a little embarrassed by the consciousness that she had allowed her admiration to be too evident, for she hastened to speak.

"And what do you think of it, Mr. Ander? would you be disposed to make the dangerous leap?"

"No!" said Reginald.

"So ungallant!" exclaimed Emily Marshall, a pretty girl of eighteen. "I would not have believed it of *you*, Mr. Ander."

"Hear me, however," said Reginald. "What could I expect to gain by jumping in yonder?"

"Gain?—why the love of a fair lady, to be sure; what could knight wish for more?"

"That would be a reward, indeed," replied Reginald, and as he spoke he turned from Emily to Matilda—"a most ample reward—the highest I could look for on earth; but then I ought to be in a condition to receive it. Now the love of Miss Chesley herself, I suppose, would be of little service to a dead man."

"Ah, 'tis plain you are not in love," retorted Emily Marshall, mischievously, "A lover never reasons."

"Is it so? Then I must admit that you ladies have a singular taste, if you give your hearts only to brutes."

The laugh was now on the side of Reginald, but Emily was not disposed to yield the field so soon.

"Where's the harm in that?" she said; "let the woman think for both."

"That may do in some cases, but I have heard that it is not every woman whose quantum of the rational faculty is large enough to be detected, much less to bear division."

"You are bitter, Mr. Ander," said Matilda.

"No," he replied, "truthful and loyal. It is because I see that all ladies are not angels, that I can so faithfully serve you—and Miss Emily."

The bridge was now crossed, and they pursued their walk up the Run. After proceeding half a mile or something more, the two ladies found a shady spot at which to sit and rest, while the party of gentlemen went about in search of wild flowers. Time passed and all had returned except Reginald, who was discovered plucking various plants along the water's edge at the foot of the precipitous bank.

"I wonder how he got down there," cried one, peering over the brink.

"Oh," said another, "he must have found a path by the branch yonder."

"Here, Mr. Ander," said Matilda, waving her scarf towards him, "we are going to return." He looked up an instant, bowed, and renewed his task.

As Matilda, who had been leaning upon a small tree, drew back, her foot slipped slightly upon the mossy turf, and obeying the instinctive impulse to grasp a limb with her other hand, the scarf escaped her, and falling was caught midway the descent by a shrub which extended itself from a chink in the perpendicular cliff.

"It is gone now," she said smiling, "beyond the power of knight-errantry to rescue. But is not that the trunk of a tree yonder? Let us cross to the other side upon it."

The object she referred to lay twenty feet higher up the stream. It was found to be a large pine, the victim of some violent gale, and which had for years spanned the narrow pass separating one hill from the other. The water was tumbling full seventy feet below, and the sight of so narrow a bridge might well give trepidation to anyone not gifted with steadiness of head. Indeed, Emily grew a little pale, while the features of more than one of the gentlemen assumed a sudden gravity. But Matilda was in her element. "Come," she said, "I'll show you the way."

"No, no," interposed Seymour, "let me go first."

"The ladies first, is the rule, sir," returned his mistress, springing upon the end of the log.

"Hold—hold!" cried Reginald from the spot where he was standing, beneath the suspended scarf.

"Never mind, we'll wait for you, sir, on the other side," and Matilda made another step.

Reginald at this seemed much agitated, and his eye lighting on a slender grapevine which by dint of clinging to the feeble shrubs, which here and there grew out of the cliff, had managed to reach the very top, he at once began to ascend by it.

The attention of the party at the pine log was of course drawn to the adventurous climber. On his way he was seen to reach forth and seize Matilda's scarf. As he neared the summit a jutting thicket concealed him from view, but it was only for an instant. The topmost shrub had parted its hold, and man and vine fell, one indistinguishable mass, to the bottom.

There was a cry of horror from the spectators, and all instantly sought the circuitous path which led below. When they arrived at the spot, which was not until after the lapse of some minutes, they found Reginald sitting up and quietly extricating himself from the vine which had entangled him in a knot as curious as that of Ulysses. He was fortunately uninjured. The thick foliage of the vine contributed not a little to his safety, and the small bushes which had successively yielded to the momentum of the descent must have done much to diminish its violence.

Availing himself of the knife promptly put at his service by one of the bystanders, Reginald was soon able to stand upright, relieved of his shackles. His first action was to deliver the scarf to its fair owner. Then he begged her acceptance of the fruit of his exploration—the sadly crushed, yet still beautiful nosegay of wild-flowers.

The little group at this instant received a sudden increase. Half a dozen others of the strolling company at Mr. Marshall's, led by whim or accident up the northern side of the Run, had observed Reginald's misadventure, and hurrying

down the bank had crossed the stream at a spot where some flat stones made a convenient fording place. Among these was Mr. Rennoe, who, while the rest pushed forwards, uttering half a dozen inquiries at a breath, kept himself for some moments in the background, and narrowly watched the demeanour of Miss Chesley and Reginald. What that penetrating observer witnessed by no means pleased him, but he suffered no sign of dissatisfaction to disturb the serenity of his countenance. Stepping up, and mingling easily with the party, he made just such observations as came most decorously from a well-bred, elderly man, of benevolent temper and grave habits.

Reginald, on his part, after a lively response to the sympathetic expressions of his mentor, renewed the gay converse with the ladies as if altogether unmindful of his presence.

Setting their faces homeward in animated mood, they all forded the Run upon the stones, climbed the steep, though not precipitous hill on the northern side, and then paused to recover breath near the smaller extremity of the old pine log. Matilda and Reginald happened to be some paces in advance of their companions.

"Come," cried the sprightly Miss Marshall, "let us share the benefit of Mr. Ander's disquisitions;" and when Reginald turned at the sound of his name, she said to him laughingly, "I think, sir, we shall see a lover in you after all; at any rate you are fast lessening the disqualification of too much wisdom."

"How so, if I may presume to ask, Miss Emily?"

"Oh! don't you remember the solemn manner in which you assured us this morning that a silken scarf was not a fit thing to peril one's neck for? That cliff yonder tells that your opinion has changed."

"I think not," rejoined Reginald. "I ascended the grapevine for an object, and though I tumbled to the bottom, that object was gained, and I after all stand here safe and sound."

"Yet you risked your life, did you not?"

"Perhaps so, but the object was one which the possessor of a dozen lives might be willing to venture them all for."

"Excellent! charming!" exclaimed the vivacious little lady. "The scarf this morning was not worth one life, now it is worth a dozen; let us hail the progress of unreason."

"But I did not climb after the scarf."

"No?—what then?"

"I should have paid Miss Matilda a poor compliment, I think, to have jeopardized a thing even of so little worth as my life for a bit of silk, which will be valueless next summer, when she throws it aside for another."

"What did you seek then, sir?"

"The preservation of her own life."

"*Her* life?—you speak riddles, Mr. Ander."

After remaining silent for a moment to enjoy the spectacle of the eager faces which were turned upwards toward him from all sides, Reginald replied: "I could not bear to see her about to incur almost certain death by crossing on that pine."

Matilda now spoke quickly, "Do you think so meanly of my rural accomplishments, Mr. Ander? I must show you how easily and safely I can traverse that fine broad bridge."

As she advanced to execute her purpose, Reginald interposed himself, saying earnestly: "Hear me, and you will not. As it is but a short distance between the two houses, I came to Mr. Marshall's from home this morning on foot; I crossed this decayed log, and it so trembled and cracked beneath me that I was satisfied that it could not again be passed without great risk."

The stillness that succeeded this declaration was interrupted by Emily's ringing laugh.

"Ah!" she said, "I fear me, sir, you are deluding us. This story sounds much like an afterthought—a ruse to divert our minds from the mad knight-errantry of your recovery of the scarf."

"It is so, doubtless," observed Matilda; "but I am sorry, Mr. Ander, that you have so soon become ashamed of the heroism which has excited the admiration of us all. Yet we must convince you that we are not cravens to be frightened so easily."

Thus saying, she made a light bound that brought her upon the trunk only a few feet from the edge of the declivity. Reginald at once leaped upon the log so as to face her.

"Indeed you must not go, Miss Matilda; or, if you are determined to persist, I go first to prove whether it be safe or not."

Matilda was moved by his earnestness, and several others of the party—Laurence Seymour among them—advanced to urge that both should withdraw from the log.

Reginald then said, "This is a matter, however, very easily tested; Miss Emily, will you venture your dog in the trial?"

The young lady assenting, he whistled to the fine Newfoundland, and extending a short stick, and calling him by name, said "Here, Wodin, fetch it!"

The animal made an uncouth gambol, and kept his eyes intently fixed on the fragment of wood. Reginald cast it from his hand so that it landed on the opposite hill; Wodin at the same instant gave a great spring to the very middle of the pine. The huge trunk shook with the concussion, and there was a dull cracking sound. The dog whined, and crept crouchingly to the other side. No sooner had he reached it than the old log fairly parted asunder, and both ends fell with a thundering noise into the bed of the Run.

The mirthful band were seized with a feeling akin to awe, as they watched the descent of the ponderous logs, and saw how they were dashed into a dozen fragments upon the rocks below. Meanwhile Wodin's whine gave place to a vehement bark as he stood on the very verge, and gazed alternately into the stream and across the chasm at the company from which he was so suddenly divided. Then, as if a thought had struck

him, he seized in his mouth the stick for which he was sent, and bounded away to the fording place. After the lapse of a minute or two, during which the silence remained unbroken, the noble fellow arrived, and after leaping joyously around his mistress, walked up to Reginald, and with an indescribable air of self-complacent dignity redelivered into his hand the bit of wood.

"That's a fine dog!" said Reginald, patting his head. "I am glad you have returned safe."

"And so am I," said Emily Marshall, eagerly; "but how infinitely are we indebted to you, Mr. Ander, for the preservation of a life far more precious!"

As for Matilda she said nothing, but her moistened eye was more eloquently expressive of gratitude than the most impassioned words could be. Unable for the moment to utter an articulate sound, and yet conscious that some expression of thanks was called for from her, she felt ashamed and embarrassed.

It may be that Reginald desired to relieve her; for, addressing himself to Miss Marshall, he remarked: "I informed your father this morning of the dangerous state of this log, and he promised to give direction for its immediate removal. Probably some servant has been remiss in executing the charge."

The conversation now became general, though a thought less animated than at the outset of the walk.

Simon Rennoe hung in the rear, his mind occupied with uneasy reflections. Before him was the same homely, curly-haired youth, whom he accompanied from Europe, but how unlike now to what he then seemed! Awkward, shy, unpolished, and slovenly, the youth was in one day transformed into a hero, the envy of stately men, the admiration of beautiful women. Did the change favour the execution of Mr. Rennoe's purposes? Hardly! Yet something much worse threatened. Reginald had evidently attached himself

to the lovely Miss Chesley, and was making every effort to win her affections. But Simon Rennoe never looked at an obstacle except to strengthen his resolution to overcome it. "Reginald Ander," was his mental soliloquy, "you shall still be mine!"

During the remainder of the afternoon, which was spent pleasantly, but more quietly, in the house, Rennoe seized every opportunity to study the character of Matilda Chesley. Sometimes he conversed with her alone; sometimes he joined in the talk with others; sometimes he was a mere unnoticed listener. The choice of his future plan of operations depended upon the result of his scrutiny, and a mistake here might be irreparable. She appeared lively, high-spirited, fearless—was this the result only of temperament, or did it proceed from a deep-seated, energetic enthusiasm? If the latter were the case, how unspeakably dangerous for one like Reginald to be associated with her! The few hours devoted to the examination enabled that consummate judge of human nature to take the complete measure, as he believed, of her mind. He found her accomplished, amiable, ingenuous, intelligent. There are few men whom these qualities, added to rare external charms, would not fascinate; yet Rennoe was well aware that Reginald was of no common stamp, and he satisfied himself that Matilda wanted that vigour of intellect, that inborn power, or genius, which can hold attractive communion with a lofty, comprehensive spirit like the student's. She could not sympathize with him, nor he with her. Her superiority morally was not less marked than his intellectually. That Reginald could succeed in making himself loved by Matilda he believed quite possible, but that he should be lastingly attached to her seemed contrary to the course of Nature. A great heart may become devoted to a great head, but a great head never fails to despise a great heart.

So argued Rennoe, and his measures were taken accordingly. Reversing what would have been the conduct of an angry

father, he determined to break off a threatened match by apparently furnishing every facility for its accomplishment. His pupil should be indulged with the society of the beautiful girl till appetite became cloyed.

It may appear to some that very little of the wisdom of the serpent was shown in this choice. To throw a youth just freed from scholastic seclusion into unrestricted intercourse with a charming woman, had danger; Rennoe was not blind to it, but he was as bold as well as a wary player. His keen eye perceived that Reginald had a competitor in Laurence Seymour, and ignorant as he of course was of the incidents of the first meeting, he knew well enough that nothing could give so much zest and ardour to the suit as the presence of a rival. Hence Seymour must be removed from the scene. A fertile mind had little difficulty in devising the means. A company was forming in a different part of the colony, with a view to carry on some extensive mining operations (the period in which these occurrences took place, it is to be observed, was about the middle of the last century). A large body of land was secured, but in order to ensure success certain privileges were needed to be obtained from the government at home. It was important, therefore, to procure influence with the Administration. Seymour had little capital, but he had powerful connections. Rennoe showed him how easy it would be to obtain admission into the company upon highly advantageous terms. He suggested also the most advisable method to pursue in making his advances, and offered to secure in his favour some of the leading men of the company. The young man, ardently desirous of wealth, because he would thus be able the more confidently to claim the hand of Matilda, was dazzled with the prospect afforded him of the speedy realization of his most sanguine hopes. He believed Miss Chesley herself already won, and had little apprehension, notwithstanding the affair of the log, in regard to Reginald. Not gifted with Rennoe's clear insight into char-

acter, he did not know his rival sufficiently well to fear him. Less than ten days after the party at Mr. Marshall's he set out on his journey.

Reginald, little guessing what instrumentality had caused the departure of the handsome Englishman, was disposed to avail himself of it to the utmost. He made frequent visits to Mr. Chesley's, and each visit seemed to increase not only his prospect of success, but his interest in the pursuit. The strong motive which had first engaged him, a compound of pride and love of mastery, was no less influential than ever, but softer feelings had gained concurrent sway. He began to look upon Matilda Chesley not merely as the woman whose hand Laurence Seymour must not gain, but as a person attractive for her own sake.

Simon Rennoe, who intently watched the progress of affairs, became alarmed, yet was he tempted into nothing precipitate. Reginald could not be always at Mr. Chesley's, nor was he yet so deeply love-stricken as to be able to occupy every vacant hour in thinking of Matilda. These hours, therefore, that were spent at home, made Rennoe's opportunity. He used then to direct the mind of the youth to the most congenial and exciting topics; and he put into his hand books best calculated to inflame his love of power. The plan worked well. Oftentimes Reginald would go to his mistress, pondering not on her charms, but on bold deeds and magnificent schemes. It was agreeable to enjoy the present with her, but his mind was elated with dim dreams of a mighty future, in which every part was to be performed by rugged self, and none was assigned to a tender companion.

Once it happened that a three days' rain confined him within the mansion. His sagacious companion threw in his way the Commentaries—familiar as a guidebook, yet ever fresh and delightful—of the great Roman. The afternoon of the third day the sun shone forth, and Reginald galloped to the Chesleys. He found Matilda, tired like himself of con-

finement, about to mount her pony, dragging off a reluctant brother from his business, as an escort. Reginald relieved the brother.

The road which they chose was that beautiful one which Seymour had once found so pleasant. But Reginald took little note of the scenery, though the Gavin, aided by the rains, made quite an imposing cataract as it dashed over the rock. Instead, he expatiated upon the trying times at Alesia, where a besieging army was itself besieged; the desperate extremity between the swollen rivers when exulting tidings were sent to Rome that the last resource of matchless versatility was exhausted, and that the terror of the world was to be famished like an entrapped wolf; he spoke of Alexandria, and, above all, of the campaign in northern Africa—that campaign which has all the exciting interest of a game of chess. Did Matilda take pleasure in this discourse? Perhaps she would have been as well pleased if it had been rather more in the vein of Seymour's—still she enjoyed the ride, and thought Reginald quite eloquent. But he was dissatisfied to find that she did not view things in the same light that he did. Having read Langhorne's Plutarch, and Addison's tragedy, she esteemed Cato a great and noble character. Reginald tried hard to convince her of the error. He explained that he was an obstinate, blind, irrational fellow, who never considered circumstances, and never in his life gained an end. Matilda listened patiently, but still persisted that she would rather have been Cato than Julius. Her lover was shocked and well-nigh disgusted. He did not stay to tea that evening.

Time wore away. Ander was no less assiduous in his attentions to Miss Chesley; but Rennoe thought he could detect signs of a slackened ardour. These signs gradually became more distinct. The skillful angler, however, still played out the line. Not pretending to create circumstances, he was cautious even in the use of those which spontaneously occurred. His talk with his pupil was as easy and flowing and

apparently frank as ever, yet it had really undergone a considerable change. He no longer indulged in satirical reflections upon feminine weakness, which, in the present state of Reginald's mind, must have prompted him to bestir his faculties in defense of a sex for which he had become interested. On the contrary, when the suitor spoke approvingly of any of Miss Chesley's qualities, Rennoe gave his own prompt assent, not in an ironical way, but with the manner of sincere conviction. A weak, or even an ordinary lover, would have had his affections more irrevocably fixed by finding his admiration of his mistress ingenuously concurred in by one whose judgment was not lightly moved, and all of whose prepossessions were directly contrary. But the knowledge that others entertained a certain opinion, never in the least degree biased Reginald in its favour. Rennoe was aware of this.

One morning, Reginald, who had been reading intently during some hours, laid down his book, and seemed lost in meditation. His friend was writing at the desk, near the large bay window of the apartment. Noticing the abstraction of the other, and conjecturing the cause, he cut short his task, folded the letter which had engaged him, sealed it, and turned partly around in his chair awaiting some remark. He was not disappointed.

"This is a wretchedly dull life I'm leading here."

"Do you think so?" said Rennoe; "more dull than college? and yet I believe you were contented there?"

"At college," rejoined the student, "I had something to look forward to; now I mope listless, occupied neither in action nor in preparation."

"Let this period then pass for rest," said Rennoe, "or rather that necessary interval which enables you to decide calmly in what great field of effort you ought to use the vigour which has been developed and trained in the exercises of the gymnasium."

"Ay!" replied Reginald, his eye quickening, "this is in-

deed an important decision to make. Have I capacity only for the administration of a plantation—the government of ten score negroes?”

“Judge for yourself,” said his friend, quietly. “If you are conscious of no strength, you have it not.”

“But I *do* feel strength—I will be something more.” The youth sat for some moments thoughtful and silent, then suddenly added: “What a man Ximenes was!”

“You were reading about him just now—were you not?”

“Yes! Oh, the happiness of wielding power as he did!”

“Yet the great Cardinal enjoyed none of what are ordinarily called the pleasures of life—the smiles of woman—fireside sympathy—affectionate service of children, and the like.”

“What of all this? how ridiculous to conceive a Ximenes in love!—of that giant enthralled by puny, narrow-souled woman, who disdained to have intercourse with *men* except to rule them?”

“There was another Spaniard,” remarked Rennoe, “no less great, who, soon after the day of Ximenes, governed an empire with which that of the united throne of Castile and Leon compares but as the rule of the village pedagogue with the dominion of the successor of St. Peter.”

“You mean,” said Reginald, “the man of Guipuscoa; but his part could never be mine. I would not give up half my wits, even to reign with what was left.”

“You are right,” said Rennoe, “it is better to avail one’s self of the madness of those who have gone before us. Have I not shown you a way in which it is possible to gain power without appearing unworthy to gain it?”

“Yes, you have; but I know another.”

“Indeed! what may that be?”

“I would remain here, and”—

“And what? finish my enlightenment. Tell me the height of greatness which a dependent colonist is able to reach.”

"Do not speak too hastily," said Reginald; "the American colonies are not dependent, though subject. More unlikely events have come to pass than that deputies from this side of the Atlantic should occupy seats in the Parliament of Great Britain; and a seat thus held I think might open some prospect to ambition. Conceive a parliamentary leader whose declarations should be backed, not by a shire or county, or any division of a petty isle, but by a voice of a continent. Then, a man might be eloquent—then, he might be great!"

"Such things may happen," answered Rennoe; "but depend upon it, none now living will take part in them. Reginald, you do not deceive me. I doubt even whether you are deceiving yourself. It is indeed not improbable that you will reject the glorious opportunity I offer you; and we both know what the equivalent is which you choose in its stead. I may wonder at your decision; I may be assured that you will yourself one day be convinced of the folly of it, yet I am resigned. My life has been spent in a struggle of a different sort, and I will not at this late day enter the lists with a *woman*, however beautiful and excellent. If Reginald Ander cannot defend himself against such a temptation, Simon Rennoe may well afford to waste no pains upon him."

"You need not jeer," replied the young man. "If I hesitate, it is not on account of the damsel, be assured. I could be content to go with you"—

"Why then hesitate at all?" urged Rennoe, with ardour. "You know, my friend—for I am not ashamed to address you like an equal, even as you now are, and how much more than my equal if you became what you might!—you know that I would not stoop to flattery, and you know too that I may claim some degree of skill in measuring the faculties of those with whom I come in contact; give heed to me then when I tell you, Reginald Ander, that if you fail to adopt the course which I hope, I shall not grieve for the loss of your companionship—I shall not grieve on account of the

great cause, for that must succeed whoever may or may not be its supporter—but I shall grieve at the knowledge that the most excellent of the Almighty's terrestrial creations, a powerful intellect, has forsaken the noble destiny for which it was designed."

Reginald answered composedly: "I am as well inclined as you can wish; all that is now necessary is, that I should resolve accordingly."

Rennoe, unable with all his skill to penetrate the youth's meaning, merely said: "Why not, then, make the resolve?"

"Simply because a determination once formed involves the consequence of adhering to it, and that is sometimes troublesome. I have made one rash resolve already since I came here, and I'm like to pay dear enough for it. I do not think I ever can give up a purpose, yet I am sorely tempted now. If I should give it up, why then 'tis probable I may become—what you will."

The result of the conversation was, that Simon Rennoe felt assured of having gained his point. At that moment he would willingly have exposed Reginald to the most fascinating woman that ever dazzled a court or illumined a cottage. As for Matilda Chesley, he was satisfied that she had made so slight an impression that if news of her sudden death were brought to the suitor, he would not shed a tear or heave a sigh.

The good man's self-congratulations, however, were rather premature.

Sanguine of the success of his suit as Laurence Seymour was when he left Anderport, some vague apprehensions failed not to haunt and torment him. He anxiously availed himself, in his newly chosen home, of every occasion that offered to learn how matters were going on in his absence. The information which rewarded his pains was far from being satisfactory. He heard of Ander's visits, and he did not hear that they were disagreeable to Matilda. In a mo-

ment when jealousy was more than usually active, the suspicion suggested itself that his banishment to that distant spot was the consequence of a deeply laid scheme of his rival's. The Mr. Rennoe, upon whose hints and covert persuasions he had acted, was a dependent, or at least intimate friend, of Ander's, and was doubtless ready to further any of his wishes. Seymour reflected the subject over one whole night as he tossed on his bed, and in the morning set out for Anderport.

Four days' hard riding brought him to the town. After a night's sleep, which fatigue made sound, he hurried away to Mr. Chesley's. Miss Matilda, the servant informed him, was in the grounds attending to her flowers. Dispensing with the lad's guidance, he went alone to seek her. In a bower which was half grotto and half arbour—a spot which nature had made romantic, and taste beautiful—he found his mistress, distinguishable by the snowy whiteness of her dress, amongst the roses and honeysuckles that clustered around her.

Her name was pronounced before the sound of footsteps gave warning of the approach of an intruder. Turning quickly, she discovered that her ear had not mistaken the voice which uttered the salutation. Instantly, down dropped the pair of scissors, and with it the thick, loose glove. The fair hand thus exposed was detained in Seymour's clasp longer than the canons of etiquette sanction; yet the young Englishman ought not to be harshly judged, when it is considered that there was little to remind him that he had committed any breach of decorum, either in the maiden's downcast eye or in the mingled smile and blush, that gave her countenance a charming glow like that of a summer sunset.

It so happened that Reginald, this very morning recollecting that he had not seen Matilda for several days, took himself to task for the neglect, and determined to repair his fault by an immediate visit. As he started, he asked his

friend to accompany him. It was the first time such an invitation had been given, and Rennoe receiving so good an augury very gladly, at once accepted it.

The servant at the door telling them, as he had told Seymour, that his young mistress was among her flowers, Reginald readily led the way to the bower.

It always makes an awkward scene, it is said, to break in upon an interview of lovers; this scene was peculiarly awkward. Matilda was silent, and cast an embarrassed look alternately at each of her lovers, while

—troubled blood through her pale cheek was seen
To come and go with tidings from the heart,
As it a running messenger had been.

Laurence Seymour wavered between anger and exultation. Reginald stood stiffly, with flushed brow and swelling breast. Simon Rennoe, exhibiting an aspect as sedate and pleasant as can be imagined, was at heart the individual of the party most startled and vexed.

"I trust you are all well down here, sir," said Seymour, addressing Reginald.

"Quite; but I need not inquire as to the health of the mines. One can easily conjecture that the plague must be there, from the brevity of your stay."

"Oh, no," retorted the other. "It is a very desirable locality, and fully answers to the description of Mr. Rennoe, who so earnestly advised my going thither."

"Mr. Rennoe?" echoed Reginald.

"Ah, yes," said the gentleman alluded to, "I did make mention to Mr. Seymour of some of the advantages that seemed to attend the affair, as it had been detailed to me by competent judges. I cannot, however, profess any particular acquaintance with the region itself. But I am highly satisfied, Mr. Seymour, to find you looking so well after your excursion."

"For my part," said Reginald, "I am still more pleased at the return itself. I was remarking to Mr. Rennoe, no long time since, that we were becoming quite dull without you."

"How extremely fortunate I am in being able to confer happiness so easily!" and Seymour accompanied the observation with an ironical smile.

The sneer was not necessary to confirm Reginald's resolve; yet it was of service as a stimulant.

Rennoe and he, as they rode home after the visit, conversed much about books and various miscellaneous topics, in which neither was greatly interested. When within half a mile of the house, Reginald checked his horse, and said abruptly:

"My dear sir, I mean to marry Matilda Chesley."

"Well," returned the other, "she is doubtless a very amiable girl."

"Pshaw! what matters amiability? I want to defeat Laurence Seymour; that is the prize I am struggling for, and I mean to gain it. I care not what opposition is made, or from what quarter it springs; the more obstacles there are the better, for I shall triumph over all and gain my end."

No reply was made, and the remainder of the ride was passed in silence.

Mr. Rennoe had an intimate friend across the ocean, with whom he was in the habit of frequent correspondence. The following is one of his epistles:

"An unexpected disappointment vexes me; yet it does not discourage. The Ander estate is full as large as was supposed, being itself a prize worth an earnest effort. But the boy, the boy! compared with him, a province seems a mean possession. Ah, such a mind and such a will are rarely found together! I made a sad error. We thought the scorn with which his forbidding exterior must be greeted, would drive him off in disgust. Not so; it is this which most ex-

cites his energies; and I am assured now that if we could clothe him with the hideousness of a monster, the consequence would be just the same. This strength of purpose, which makes him so valuable, gives my task its difficulty; yet I would not have it otherwise.

"Reginald strives to vanquish a rival lover, and would surely do it had not I to join against him; as it is, he must suffer this discomfiture to prepare him for future triumphs. Surely, there can be no doubt as to the issue. Reginald fights for the gratification of victory; I fight to gain my competitor. He that has the noblest meed in view deserves success, and win Reginald I will—body and soul."

CHAPTER II

Rennoe, so unexpectedly baffled in his first effort, was forced to a complete change in his tactics. Laurence Seymour had returned, and all that could now be done was to make the best of it. A new and undesired element had been thrown into the game; it could not be neutral, and must be so managed as to contribute to final success. Miss Chesley evidently regarded the Englishman with no dislike; indeed, if she made any distinction between the two suitors, it was in his favour. Rennoe saw no other scheme so simple and so likely to have a favourable issue, as to increase this bias by every means in his power. He knew that whenever Reginald found Matilda irrevocably lost to him, disappointment and disgust would be strong persuasives to the choice of a different scene and a different life.

Rennoe's plan precluded any very active measures at the outset. Seymour could doubtless make love on his own account better than any one else could make it for him.

Reginald, on the other side, felt convinced that it was only by energetic play that he could overcome the many advantages of his handsome rival. He watched eagerly, therefore, the appearance of some opening which might enable him to interpose a skillful move.

Mr. Chesley had a distant connection, a wild, dissipated sort of fellow, supposed to be reformed, who, in setting up a store, had worked upon the old man's generous nature so far as to induce him to become his endorser to a heavy amount. The spendthrift cousin failed, and Mr. Chesley found himself called upon suddenly to pay three thousand six hundred pounds sterling. The planter lived fully up to his income, and his estate, being chiefly landed, was by no means capable

of meeting extraordinary demands. He must therefore borrow; but borrowing in those days was not the easiest thing accomplished. His neighbours pursued the same system of management as himself, and were not accustomed to keep large funds in hand. Thirty-six hundred pounds could nowhere be raised.

The anxiety of the family was not unobserved by Reginald, yet for awhile he seemed not to notice it, nor to be aware of the source whence it issued. At last Mr. Chesley alluded to his situation, and threw out hints before him—he was too proud to speak urgently—that no friend could do a more acceptable thing than to advance the sum so much needed. As young Ander received the information in silence, the inference was at once drawn that it was either inconvenient or impossible for him to be of any service. The faces of the whole household became very gloomy. It was decided that the only alternative left was to dispose of two or three families of slaves, and how painful such a necessity is, a Southerner can understand. Reginald and Matilda, in walking together one morning, chanced to pass by the quarters. Matilda burst into tears, and as her companion stood gazing upon her with an air of concern, said—"Excuse me, Mr. Ander; but old Nelly, my nurse, lives in that cabin, and she, too, must go into the hands of a stranger. Her sons have to be sold, and she will not be parted from them. Oh! it is terrible to think that all those familiar, honest faces must be banished."

"I trust it may be dispensed with," said the young man.

Matilda looked up inquiringly through her tears, and Reginald added:

"I have delayed speaking till to-day, for fear of making promises which I might not be able to perform. Immediately on hearing of your father's difficulty, I wrote to the overseer on my lower plantation, directing him to sell the last season's tobacco crop, which I had been reserving in

the prospect of a better price. He has done so; and I am rejoiced at being now able to furnish your father with the sum he wishes."

Matilda's face beamed with gratitude.

Reginald felt that something was accomplished, but not enough. And all his faculties were in restless pursuit of a new and more decisive measure. Simon Rennoe learned what had been done with little gratification, but he saw no need as yet for his own interference. "She will not marry him for a loan," was his reflection.

Anderport received a visitor. Gilbert Jordan, a "professional gambler" of rare dexterity, was otherwise a man of mark. A face of the style called gentlemanly, rich, though flashy clothing, and an easy, off-hand address, introduced him to the favourable notice of the townspeople. His hand was fair and delicate, like a lady's; his wrist small enough to be clasped with thumb and finger; but the arm above swelled rapidly towards the shoulder, and a judge of thews and sinews could discern the development of great muscular power. Indeed, Jordan had obtained a terrible celebrity for feats of prowess. Besides his expertness at pistol, knife, and rifle, and a pugilistic skill which had extricated him unscathed from many a tavern brawl, he could boast the further distinction that no single man had ever offered him a wrestling "shake" without having cause seriously to repent his temerity.

Reginald had heard of the gambler, but had never seen him, when, on an afternoon in July, a heavy thunder-cloud drove him suddenly home from a ride. As he reined in his horse at the gate in front of the mansion, he noticed a man coming rapidly down the road from the opposite direction. One glance enabled him to recognize the personage who had been described to him. During the moment which was occupied in raising the latch, a thought shot through his mind, and turning towards the road, he called to the stran-

ger, and invited him to take refuge in the house from the threatened gust. Heavy premonitory drops had already fallen, and Gilbert Jordan was nothing loth to find so convenient a shelter.

Rennoe, it was found on inquiry, was not in the house; and Reginald, pleased that he had no interruption to apprehend, produced wine and fruit, and soon engaged his guest in a desultory conversation.

After awhile, Jordan inquired whether he played.

"No, sir."

"I should think," rejoined the gambler, "that in the country here you would find yourselves compelled to resort to cards in order to pass away the time."

"It might be so, if the weather every day were such as it is now; but when the sun is shining, and a man has out-of-door sports open to him, I see little amusement in bending over a parcel of bits of painted pasteboard."

"But in travelling, though," suggested Jordan, "how dull it is to spend long evenings counting the flies on a tavern window!"

"Yes," said Reginald, "and therefore I hate to travel. Young Edward Chesley (who has some money to take for his father down to St. John's) invited me yesterday to go with him, but I declined. He afterwards persuaded Mr. Seymour, I think, to be his companion."

There was a peculiar expression in the gambler's eye, and Reginald observing that he had taken the bait, added—"Such a tedious journey as that, now, might well need to be relieved by some excitement."

"I should think so, too," replied the other. "When did you say Mr. Chesley started, sir?"

"This morning; but the shower must prevent them from getting further than Shenkins' to-day."

"I have business at Shenkins' myself," said Jordan, walking to the window.

"It's a rather gloomy sort of place," remarked Reginald, "and I doubt not my friends will be glad of your company. You will not get Ned Chesley to play with you, however."

"Why not?" asked Jordan, quickly.

"Oh, he's rather a wild fellow sometimes, to be sure, and is easily excited by wine; but he never plays, and, indeed, ought to be particularly careful at this time, when he is intrusted with thirty-six hundred pounds."

"That's a good deal, sure enough," said the gambler, vacantly.

"Perhaps Seymour might play with you," Reginald continued, after a pause. "I don't think he is principled against cards."

"No. I had a game with him myself, the other day; he won a trifle, too."

"It is very well for Seymour to win," observed Reginald, in a dry tone; "for I don't think he has a great deal to lose. He may play without danger; but Ned Chesley ought to be careful."

"Certainly," replied the guest, rising, "but I see that it has cleared off—I'll be obliged to you to have my horse brought."

Within ten minutes Gilbert Jordan was on his way to Shenkins', chuckling at the thought of how neatly he had pumped his late entertainer. About nightfall he reached the tavern, and found there the party of two, which he was so desirous of meeting.

Edward Chesley was a good-hearted youth, but thoughtless, and a little too prone to the wine-cup. His father, aware of his infirmity, was unwilling to send him with the money, unless in the company of some steady, reliable person. Reginald had no fancy to go; Seymour, also, would greatly have preferred remaining by the side of Matilda, but he felt that as his rival had already done so much in the matter, it was incumbent on himself not to refuse any opportunity of rendering a service.

Seymour played occasionally, rather in accordance with custom, and to occupy a vacant hour, than from any love of gambling.

At the tavern, therefore, he sat down with Gilbert Jordan, as a mere affair of course. Young Chesley stood and looked on.

"Won't you take a hand, Mr. Chesley?" said Jordan.

Ned shook his head.

"You had better," observed Seymour: "we only play for small stakes, so there can be no risk."

"Well," answered Ned, but the word should have been "*Ill*," for he yielded and made a party at the table.

In the course of an hour or two, Jordan perceiving that Edward Chesley had become much interested, while Seymour was yawning, cunningly drew forth his watch. "Half-past ten," he said.

"So late?" replied Seymour. "Don't you think it's bedtime, Ned?"

"Yes," responded his friend, "as soon as the game is up."

The game finished, Seymour exchanged his boots for a pair of slippers, and was about to start for the chamber.

"Are you not thirsty, gentlemen?" observed Jordan. "Here, boy," he added, addressing the negro in attendance, "can't you get us a pitcher of fresh water from the spring?"

"I don't think *I* shall wait for it," said Seymour. "You'll be up to bed right away, Ned, will you not?"

"Yes."

As soon as Seymour's steps were heard on the passage staircase, Jordan proposed to Chesley to take a little game while they waited. The young man's assent was promptly given. One game led to another. Wine was brought forth, and at a time when Seymour was calmly slumbering in the room above, the youth whom he had been charged to watch over had madly commenced to draw upon the sacred fund of which he was the bearer. Hours swept by, the victim

became more and more fascinated, and at the end, having been stripped of the last of the thirty-six hundred pound notes, staggered to bed, dizzy, stupefied, and almost unconscious.

In the morning, neither of the friends awoke until summoned by the servant, announcing that breakfast was ready. The scene then may be imagined. Agitated beyond measure by the information which Edward's halting tongue stammered forth, Seymour's first impulse was to rush below and seek Jordan. The successful gambler had been gone several hours.

The two young men rode back sorrowful enough. When they reached Anderport, Seymour stopped, as if to enter his lodgings. Edward said,

"Don't leave me, Laurence; I dare not meet my father alone."

Seymour hesitated, and replied, "Ride on slowly, then, and I will overtake you."

Edward, for a mile or two, was quite absorbed in thought, but after that looked back frequently, in expectation of Seymour. Seymour did not come, and the poor youth found himself at the gate of home, to him, at that hour, the most wretched spot on earth.

Mr. Chesley, after one sharp ejaculation, listened to his son's account in profound silence. Then burst the storm.

Matilda was sitting in the adjoining room. The loud voices penetrated the oaken partition, and she heard nearly all that was said. When, at the close of the interview, Edward, burning with anger at himself and at the whole world, rushed into the garden, his sister's soft step followed him. Into her sympathizing ear he poured all his vexation and his sorrow. Before his father, he had been too proud to seem to apologize for himself by throwing any share of blame upon another. Now, provoked with Seymour for having violated his promise and deserted him, he told Matilda

how his companion's persuasions constituted the temptation which had led to his ruin. Matilda, all her tender feelings enlisted by her brother's suffering, partook of his resentment against her lover.

But where was the young Englishman? As soon as he entered his apartment at the Anderport tavern, he shut himself in, and paced for some minutes up and down the floor, distracted by the keen reflections which he could not repress. Never in his life before did he so curse his poverty as then. If, by the sacrifice of every shilling he had, he could but have made up the amount so unluckily lost at Shenkins', he should have felt relieved and happy. From the window he could see the white front of the Ander mansion. The sight made him stride yet more furiously. It suggested the picture of Reginald supplying Matilda and her father, out of his wealth, whilst he himself, in worse than beggarly wretchedness, had not only to witness the spectacle of his rival's munificence, but to bear the shame of making it, by his folly, utterly fruitless. Remembering, however, the promise to Edward, he hastened down stairs. A voice which he had heard before sounded from the bar room. He hurried thither, and met Gilbert Jordan.

"Mr. Jordan! a word with you."

"Well, sir."

"You won a large sum from Edward Chesley last night?"

"Yes, I did, and fairly, I believe."

"Hardly so, Mr. Jordan. He is a young fellow, perfectly inexperienced at play, excited with wine at the time, and besides, the money was not his own."

"I cannot help that; he ought to have been more careful, or his friends should have looked out for him."

"Indeed," urged Seymour, "you will inflict great wretchedness upon many parties by not restoring that sum."

"I don't dispute your word, sir," replied the man, with civil insolence, "not in the least sir. I feel bad myself, when I lose."

"Come," shouted Seymour, fiercely, "I'll have no more words. That money must be given up."

"So I hear you say," answered the gambler, coolly.

Seymour's rejoinder was a grasp upon his collar. Jordan immediately grappled with him, and after a brief struggle Seymour was hurled to the floor stunned, and with a dislocated arm.

It was unfortunate for Laurence Seymour that Matilda did not hear of the danger he had incurred, until she was informed that he had escaped from it with no serious injury. There was nothing in the mere fact of a bar-room brawl to relieve his character from the reproach of the previous fault. It only showed that after foolishly neglecting, not to say perverting, a trust which love for her, if every other consideration were wanting, should have made sacred, he was so inconsiderate as to rush straightway into further difficulties.

The young man, in pain from his arm, was tortured by the ill-tidings which gossiping tattlers were ready enough to give him. Mr. Chesley, it was said, exhibited signs of great distress, but was, moreover, exceedingly incensed with his son Edward; while his daughter walked daily with young Mr. Ander, and evidently received comfort from his society. The black waiter said that the young lady, chancing to meet him on one of these occasions, had inquired how Mr. Seymour was.

"And how did she ask it? Did she seem anxious?"

"No, sir,—she weren't at all oneasy, but smiled mighty pleasant at something Master Reginald was a-saying."

"Ugh!—how my arm hurts!" exclaimed Seymour.

"There's somebody comin' up," remarked the black. "The doctor, I s'pose—no 'taint, but Mr. Rennoe."

It was even so. That shrewd individual found affairs taking a direction which required something to be done on his part very speedily; for Reginald seemed nearly to have

gained the day without allowing even an attempt at opposition. The thing to be done was very evident. A lover was baffled and discouraged. He must be visited, for what more in accordance with Mr. Rennoe's disposition than to raise and comfort the mourner?

After an hour's soothing discourse Rennoe went away, leaving Seymour deeply and gratefully impressed with his disinterested benevolence.

"I am satisfied," the visitor had said, "that Matilda really loves you. She does not love Reginald, though she may possibly marry him under the belief that she does. In that case, neither can be happy. So, on every account—my young friend's, your own, and the lady's—I could not but grieve at such a union. I go now to see Miss Chesley, and to prepare the way for a visit from you."

Rennoe was as good as his word. Matilda showed much pleasure at seeing him—indeed, his mild, courteous manners, and the kindly sympathy, which he ever manifested, had quite won her regard.

"This is an unhappy business," he said, alluding to her brother's loss at Shenkins'.

"It is, indeed," was her reply. "Poor Edward!"

"Laurence is greatly to be pitied, too," said Rennoe, turning his full, lustrous eyes upon her. "I saw him this morning. He looks wretchedly."

"Is he, then, much hurt?" inquired Matilda, with interest.

"No, not dangerously as to body; but he suffers much in mind."

"Ah, that he should have acted so!" Matilda stopped abruptly.

"Yes," replied Rennoe, "it was inconsiderate in him to have left your brother alone, even for a moment, with Gilbert Jordan."

"But, sir, I do not think that was so wrong as his asking Edward to play in the first place. Why, indeed, did he play himself?"

"You should blame those who educated him," returned Rennoe. "Taught from his youth to look upon games of hazard as entirely innocent, and preserved by his own excellent judgment from their fascinating influence, is it wonderful that he forgot that what was safe for him might not be safe for another? Besides, no harm did in fact result while he was present—it was only after Edward failed in his promise to follow him immediately to bed, that Jordan, by the aid of wine—behold in that the true seducer!—was enabled to rob him of his valuable charge."

"I should not have supposed, though," said the lady, "that Laurence—that is, Mr. Seymour—would have been so overcome by fatigue as to need to retire sooner than my brother."

"It is possible that Jordan managed to drug the wine which he drank."

"Does not Seymour think so?"

"No! he said nothing to me about it; yet the suspicion arose in my mind while he was giving the account. However this may be, must you not confess, that it is unreasonable to require even a vigorous young man to be as wakeful at a late hour of a sultry night as he is at sunrise?"

"If this be all so," replied Matilda, "why is he thus backward to visit us? If it proceeds from no consciousness of fault, we can only infer that he has become reckless and indifferent as to our estimation."

"He *does* reproach himself grievously, my dear Miss Chesley. He thinks—he has heard—that you have learned to dislike him; and as regards your father's disapproval, he is willing that it should fall upon him, if poor Edward may thus escape. His last word to me was to ask whether I thought he might venture to implore your forgiveness of his momentary neglect."

"Oh, I am sure," said Matilda frankly, "that I should be pleased to see Mr. Seymour!"

The next day Laurence did present himself, and was so received by his mistress that Rennoe had good reason to felicitate himself upon the consequences of his manœuvre. Mr. Chesley, however, the father, looked coldly upon him. The old man's affliction had greatly soured his temper. He had no heart to seek again for a loan. In the bitterness of his spirit, he was prepared to see land, and slaves, and all, swept away.

Edward Chesley, as he felt his father's eye following him like a blight and a curse, was indescribably wretched. Finally, he could endure it no longer, but determined to see Jordan, and recover the money from him, or sacrifice his life in the attempt.

His departure, not known till after the lapse of a day, was received by Mr. Chesley with unmoved apathy. But it caused Matilda many apprehensions. Seymour, whom she informed of her brother's flight, shared her alarm, and promised to follow him and induce his return.

Reginald alone had foreseen the event, and taken measures to guard against any dangerous result to the young man. Four days previous he went to Moxon, who kept a store, groggery, and house of low entertainment, about three miles north of Anderport. This man's place was a notorious resort for gamblers, cock-fighters, and other classes of knaves who find their prey in the dissipated and drunken. Jordan had thought it prudent to leave the neighbourhood soon after the scuffle with Seymour, but Reginald had every ground to believe Moxon well informed of his whereabouts. Calling him aside, therefore, he said—

"Mr. Moxon, I want you to supply me with some information, for which I will pay you liberally. Here are two guineas to start with."

Moxon, a bluff, oily-faced rascal, took the gold, and paid close heed to what was said.

"You know precisely, I am sure, where Gilbert Jordan

keeps himself these times, and as I may have occasion to see him, I wish you to inform me regularly whenever he changes his stopping-place. I mean no hurt to him."

"Why, as to that," replied the man, with a grin, "it's none of my business, and I reckon he can take care of himself. I'll let you know faithful. He's now somewhere about five miles this side of St. John's."

"There's another thing, Mr. Moxon—Edward Chesley or Laurence Seymour may possibly seek the same information. I wish you by no means to give it to either. Jordan is not a man to be trifled with, and he might hurt one of them."

Moxon nodded, and said, "He's a buster, you may depend he is, and he carries tools."

"Abide by your engagement now, Mr. Moxon—you know I can make it for your advantage."

"Ay, ay, sir,—I'll keep honour bright."

"And for my part," said Reginald, leaving him, "I shall visit you again shortly."

On the morning of the second day of Edward's absence, Seymour saw Matilda, and sorrowfully informed her that his search had hitherto been fruitless. He had heard of Edward in various directions, but in spite of every effort, had been unable to come up with him. It was his purpose, however, he said, to procure a fresh horse and start out anew.

Laurence had hardly left her when Miss Chesley received a call from Reginald. His manner, always quiet and composed, was now even cheerful; and Matilda's mind, oppressed with anxiety, and meeting no encouragement in her other suitor's report, was naturally disposed to lean upon him who had on other occasions manifested not only the will, but the ability, to serve her. There was something in her gentle glance, and soft, confiding tone, which must have sent a thrill through a heart older and more callous than Reginald's.

"Do not be alarmed," he said, "for your brother—I believe I have already provided amply for his safety."

"Yet, if Edward should meet that dangerous man—that ruffian, Jordan?"

Reginald stood for a moment in silence, as if meditating. "I think there is no cause to apprehend it. Gilbert Jordan will certainly not seek the man he has plundered, and I have taken measures to have such information given to your brother as must lead *him* in a wrong direction."

"Ah, but what is to become of poor Edward?—how long must he wander about the country thus distracted?"

"But a short time, believe me—and perhaps his distress is less great while he keeps in motion than it would be here."

"Indeed, that may well be," replied Matilda, her eyes half filling with tears—"Heaven knows we are all unhappy enough—my father! my father!—I reproach myself for forgetting *his* distress, even in anxiety for Edward. How changed these misfortunes have made him—he will not be comforted. Only yesterday, mother ventured to suggest that he might procure another loan—father at once answered, in a voice we never heard from his lips before, that if three thousand six hundred pounds were offered him that hour, he would not take them, though he himself and all his family were to go to jail. 'Yes,' he added, 'that heartless boy, Edward, shall have the satisfaction of knowing that he has finished the ruin of his father's house!' Oh, it was fearful, Mr. Ander, to hear him. A father curses his son—and I, the sister and the daughter, witness it."

"Dear Miss Matilda," said Reginald, pressing her hand gently, "let not your mind dwell upon it—all shall be well!"

"I would I could think so—but I know my father—he will never be moved. The money so generously furnished by you is hopelessly gone; he will not borrow to supply its place, even if he can—unless, indeed, something terrible should happen to dear Edward—*then* he might relent, but how horrible the prospect of such relief! To think of father and son divided—my poor mother, too, her heart riven with

blows from every side—and the rest of us helplessly beholding this extremity of wretchedness!—And all owing to a little miserable gold—if *Heaven* had stricken the family, I think I could be more patient.”

Reginald walked about the room; Matilda's eyes followed him as she remained in her seat; and so strangely are our feelings modified by circumstances, that she who thought him a few months previous the homeliest youth imagination could conceive, now fancied that there was dignity in that awkward gait, and nobleness in the expression of those stolid features. The young man's own thoughts—how were they occupied? Was he, as the admiring girl supposed, engaged in devising means for the extrication of the family from its difficulties? Not at all. He who caused all this perplexity and distress, had long since fixed upon the means of terminating it. In truth, he enjoyed the situation of affairs. The sorrow of the lovely being by his side (which alone was capable of affecting him with grief) but increased his complacency, by suggesting the reflection that he, Reginald Ander, was the person who could restore the smile to her blooming cheek, and wipe away the tears that dimmed those sparkling eyes. In that very parlour, he had been stung by the proud Englishman's scornful curl of the lip—who had the best right to be disdainful now? But the thought of Simon Rennoe probably gave the youth more satisfaction than anything else. How delightful to consider that that adroit and able man, after exhausting all the resources of experience, would have to confess himself defeated by a youth!

At this instant the door opened, and a servant entered. “Somebody wants to see you at the front door, Mr. Ander.”

“No—I'm here!”

The individual who thus oracularly announced himself stepped from behind the negro, and made his whole person visible. He was one whom you would hesitate whether to

call man or boy. In size he did not bear comparison with a well-grown lad of fourteen, but his upper lip was adorned with a black streak, which, on the supposition that it was not dirt, testified to an age much more advanced. His complexion was a swarthy yellow, and his long jet-black hair, braided into small cords, hung curling about his shoulders in a manner so peculiar, that the beholder, with no great stretch of imagination, was reminded of the classic locks of the daughters of Phocys. "From Mr. Moxon," said the agreeable figure, extending a dirty scrap of paper.

The manuscript was quickly read, for it contained only these words: "Gil Jordan's at Reveltown. Sorry to tell you (but couldn't help) that Ned Chesley's got wind of it, and is off. Better get there yourself in a hurry, if you want to stop trouble; but look out, for G. J.'s got many friends down there."

"I must leave immediately," said Reginald.

"Is anything the matter?" inquired Miss Chesley. "Is my brother in danger?"

"Not yet, but he may be. This note tells me that he has learned where Gilbert Jordan is. Yet do not be alarmed," he added, observing her become suddenly pale. "I shall be able to get there before him, and prevent any harm."

"I thank you. Save my brother, Mr. Ander, do save him; but may you not incur danger yourself?"

"No! none whatever. Keep a brave heart, rely upon me, and you shall find all difficulties disappear. I must learn, however, the road to Reveltown, for I have never been there."

"Stay a moment," said Matilda, "and a servant shall accompany you."

"I know the way to Reveltown," observed Moxon's messenger.

"Do you?" said Reginald. "Is it hard to find?"

"Mighty."

"Perhaps, then, you can go with me. You shall have a sovereign if you take me there in four hours."

"Agreed."

Reginald hastened to mount, but as he did so, cast a dissatisfied glance at the steed of his guide. "You must have a better beast than that, my good fellow, or we shall be a long while in getting over thirty miles."

"Better! I 'aint so high-minded as to wish for a better. This critter's one of 'em, you may be sure. I don't like to see a horse pompered up."

"Yours certainly does not seem to have suffered from too much oats."

"No, sir—I give her air for breakfast, and water for dinner, and am careful, besides, that her supper 'aint over heavy."

"But can she travel on such fare?"

"She had ought to, for I'm certain she can't do much else."

"What's your name?" inquired Reginald.

"Buck Weeks—some name me Squeeks, but they miss it."

"Well, Squeeks or Weeks," added the gentleman, scanning him from head to foot, "what colour do you call yourself?"

"You ought to be best judge of that," answered the guide, "being as I can't see more of my face than the tip of the nose. If it's any satisfaction, though, I don't mind saying that my mother was counted a white woman—perhaps it was my father that weren't the beauty."

When they got opposite Ander's mansion, the young man alighted, and going into his sleeping-room, provided himself with a small bundle which he found in the secret drawer of a desk. He also put into his pocket a pair of loaded pistols. These preparations speedily made, he was again on his way to Reveltown.

The road answered well to Buck Weeks' prediction of the difficulty, and Reginald congratulated himself upon not having attempted to thread its intricate windings alone. The speed with which they journeyed for about two hours quite precluded conversation; then, however, ordinary prudence, as well as humanity, required some relief to be given

to their severely-tasked steeds. Buck Weeks, evidently tired of holding his tongue so long, was the first to avail himself of the opportunity afforded by the more moderate gait.

"So you see now, sir, don't you, that my nag knows how to handle her legs as well as if she had been to dancingschool?"

"Yes, she travels very well for such an ill-looking creature. We have made pretty good use of our time, I think; how much further have we to go?"

"It's hard tellin', sir. The miles never was measured down here, and folks call the distances mostly by hap-hazard, I judge."

"Are you well acquainted with Reveltown?" said Reginald.

"Yes, sir, you may be sure there isn't a grown person there this minute, from Gil Jordan down to the parson, that I don't know like a book."

"Why, I thought Jordan was a stranger about here."

"Bless you, no," answered Weeks, "he's been in this neighbourhood afore; besides, I've seen him in other parts—especially in Maryland, where I've been with race-horses."

"Jordan is quite famous for his strength and activity, I believe?"

"He is that—and he shoots to perfection."

"Good at boxing, too, is he not?"

"Why, you don't think of tackling him *that* way, do you?" inquired Weeks, with an air of surprise.

"Of course not. I have no intention to meddle with him in any way."

"Umph!" muttered Weeks. "All in my eye;" and then added, "Yes, certain and sure does he know how to box. He never had but one match, and that man had a right to be sorry for it."

"Indeed! how did Jordan manage that?"

"Why, I'll tell you," said Buck Weeks, giving himself a jerk in the saddle. "Gil took his chance to get the man first half-drunk, then a-playing cards, and last of all in a passion.

The fellow, like a fool, picked up a chair to knock him down. This was what Gil was waiting for; so, quick as a wink, out flew his pistol, and the man dropped a little suddener and surer, I reckon, than if ever a fist had struck him. The beauty of it was, too, the law couldn't touch Gil, seeing it was all in defence, you understand."

Buck Weeks afterwards regaled his companion with several other tales almost equally bloody, and of all of which the redoubted Gilbert Jordan was the hero.

"You make this man out a great rascal," observed Reginald, at the close of one of them.

"I never said so," replied the other. "He's savage when his blood's up—that's all. I once knew him do a very nice thing."

"Ah! let me hear it."

"It was at a nine-pin alley. Jordan was there; and, among a lot of others, a big butcher named Murdock. This man made several bad rolls, and laid it to the boy's settin' up the pins wrong for him. 'Twas not so, but he got very wrothy, and began staving the balls straight at the boy. The little chap—his name was Buckner—couldn't get away, because the end of the alley was boarded up tight, so he had to caper and dance as frisky as you please, to save his bones. It mought be a funny sight to look on, but 'twan't no fun to him. There was a big chest full of balls, and Murdock kept dashing away like mad. Buckner got so tired he was most ready to faint; but every now and then, as a ball would come humming along, he'd have to jump most to the rafters. It was easy to see his chance got slimmer and slimmer. Gil Jordan bounces up from the bench, and said, 'Stop, Murdock, for shame!' The butcher then swore he'd knock *him* down if he meddled. At that Gil ran up, and gave him such a thrashing that he was glad to sneak home."

"That was very well dome, certainly," observed Reginald.

"The story's not through though, quite," said Buck Weeks.

"Gil Jordan after a while went way off to some other place, and this boy Buckner's mother, as I was tellin' about, gettin' very poorly in health, bound him till twenty-one to that same butcher, Murdock, on condition his master should give her dog-meat and so forth to keep her alive as long as she lived. Murdock's spite was green as ever, and he now had the boy in such a fix that he could do what he pleased with him. The way he treated him was a caution. All butchers' boys, I reckon, are used to hard times, but others live on loaf-bread and buttermilk compared to him. What with the work, and the starvation, and the unpitiful beatings, he would have run away but on account of his weakly, afflicted mother. After a while he got a chance to send word by a drover's boy to Mr. Jordan about how he was abused. Buckner, to be sure, had little hope of any attention being paid to it—for what was a shrivelled wretch of a lad to one like Gil? But what do you think? Gil Jordan, as soon as he heard the account, came right back, a hundred and fifty miles, to see justice done. He went to the slaughter-house. There was Murdock and his brother—as stout a man as he was, and a big hired fellow besides; all three got at Gil. Then he showed what he could do. First he pitched his fist into the brother's cheek, and laid him out as stiff as dead. The hired man came at him with the cleaver. He wrenches it out of his hand, and, when the chap runs, slings it after him so true that the handle struck him betwixt the shoulders, and that was another off the track. Last, he turned to Murdock himself, picked the big villain up like a log, slammed him twice across the chopping-bench, and then let him wriggle on the floor with a broken back. That's the way to do business—*ain't it?*" And a gleam of intense satisfaction shot from Buck Weeks' small black eye.

"What became of the boy?" inquired Reginald.

"Gil Jordan took him off from there, and said that, 'prentice or not, nobody should lay a finger on him; and they

didn't. Gil fed his mother, too, till she died, and then buried her like a lady."

Reginald, who had been as much entertained by the singular gesticulations with which Buck Weeks had illustrated his story as by the narrative itself, now looked at his watch. "It is getting late," he said, "the four hours are nearly passed."

"Oh, sir, it's a long track to Reveltown, but we'll reach there safe; I don't see the use of bein' in such a hurry."

"I do," said the other.

"But why are you so anxious to run afoul of Gil Jordan? you'll find him a rough customer."

"I don't care whether he's rough or smooth, I must get to him by the time Edward Chesley does."

"Why in the world didn't they go together?" Weeks muttered to himself; then added aloud, "This is the road, Mr. Ander."

"It does not seem as much used as that other—are you sure you are right?"

"Of co'se I am."

The bridle-path which the guide adopted plunged down the steep bank of a ravine, and after following the meander of a small brook for a distance of about half a mile, turned off into the depths of a forest which the hand of man seemed never to have entered. The different majestic varieties of oak, the graceful ash, the maple, the black walnut, the tulip-poplar, and the sycamore, stood in all the uniformity and robust development of unmolested nature. Reginald's impatience, however, effectually prevented him from enjoying the wildness of the scenery, and as the narrow road, after growing more and more faint, became at last totally undiscernible, he expressed his uneasiness to his companion. Weeks showed no signs of discomposure or faltering, but wound about among the trees just as alertly as if the highway had been before him. Some miles thus passed, brought them to the brink of a large creek; here the guide halted.

"Well, what now?" asked Reginald, sharply.

Buck Weeks, after a sufficient time spent in meditation, replied, "I don't think you ought to bother with Gil Jordan."

"That's my own business," said Reginald; "pray leave me to manage it."

"Not altogether; Gil's a desp'rate chap. Indeed, sir, candidly, you had better keep hands off."

A glimmer of light flashed upon Reginald. His companion had evidently taken up the idea that he intended engaging in a fight with the gambler; hence the object of all those accounts of Jordan's ferocity and feats of strength. He assured the fellow, therefore, that he might dismiss every apprehension on this score. But Weeks was by no means convinced.

"It will do no harm to stay out here a while; I can't reconcile it with conscience to take you to Reveltown to-night. I won't be the cause of Jordan's hurt."

Reginald repressed the angry exclamation that rose to his lips, and forcing a laugh, said, "How ridiculous to be afraid of such a man as Jordan receiving any injury from me! Do I look like one apt to seek a scuffle with a bully who is the dread of the strongest? If you were leading Chesley or Seymour, now, you would have some little reason in your suspicion."

"Not exactly," said the guide; "Gil knows well enough how to handle those big, strappin', loud-jawed chaps; but you are of another grit—I'm afeard of you. All so civil, and smooth, and quiet, you understand how to go about things; you watch with other people's peepers, and, maybe, fight with other people's hands; them's the folks that are dangerous. I noticed something curious in the fix of your lips the first day I laid eyes on you. I shan't lead you any further."

Vainly did Reginald expostulate, using every motive which he thought likely to overcome his obstinacy. Buck Weeks would not budge. Finally, he resorted to threats, and raised his whip.

"Oh, I can give back cut for cut," said the guide.

"See how you like something else, then," and Reginald drew forth a pistol.

Weeks became pale, but persisted, saying, "I reckon you won't shoot; it would not help you to Reveltown. At any rate, I'll stand the chance. I'm the boy Gil stood up for in the ninepin alley, and hang me if I flinch from him now!"

Reginald was exceedingly vexed; time was flying, and it chafed him sorely that his purpose should be balked at the moment of execution, and by the stupidity of such a being. He galloped up and down the bank, in hope of striking some road. None greeted him. An object, however, which he discerned in his exploration determined his mind as to the course to be pursued. His restless eye detected a smoke arising from behind a hill on the other side of the creek, and, mounting a high bluff a little further along, he was able to distinguish the jagged outline of a log chimney. He could doubtless gain there the information refused by his intractable guide. The stream was rapid and swollen, and the banks here were quite steep. He returned, therefore, to the place where he had first stopped, and which, as it seemed to him, offered the promise of a safer ford.

Buck Weeks, who had remained there very composedly, with his right foot withdrawn from the stirrup, and thrown at ease over the withers of the horse, watched his approach to the water's edge with a good deal of interest.

"Better not try to cross; you'll be sure to get drowned."

Reginald made no reply, but gave his horse a blow with the whip.

"Hanged, if he ain't in with his *martingale* on! he's a gone case, certain!"

Reginald fortunately heard the guide's exclamation, and stopping, before it was too late, drew his pocket-knife and severed each strap of the martingale just below the ring. This precaution taken, he plunged boldly into the creek. The swiftness and depth of the current would have made the

passage dangerous to any one, and Reginald was by no means a very expert horseman. At length, however, after being carried a hundred yards down the stream, and narrowly escaping several thickets which threatened to entangle both steed and rider, he landed on the opposite side, drenched from head to foot, and almost exhausted. Without an instant's pause he urged his horse forward, and soon reached the cabin, where he found a man chopping wood.

"Can you put me into the road to Reveltown, sir?"

"Take that wagon track yonder—it leads straight to the main road; then turn to your right and you can't miss your way."

"Thank you—how far is it?"

"Nigh about four miles."

Soon after reaching the high road Reginald noticed a black man ploughing in a field close by, and calling to him, inquired whether he knew Mr. Edward Chesley, and whether he had passed by there that day."

"Yes, master, he went along about half an hour ago."

"Then he must be at the town by this time."

"Hardly, I judge; his horse was lame in one fore foot, so he can't travel very swift."

Reginald now urged his own tired animal to his utmost speed. The straggling village he was in search of soon came in view. Just as he entered the outskirts he perceived a horseman turning up to the tavern at the other extremity of the street. A fierce cut of the whip brought his own horse thither but few minutes later. Dismounting and hurrying into the bar-room, he found a tumultuous scene. Close by the bar itself was a group of sallow, cadaverous-looking beings, whom rum and the ague were fast carrying to destruction. In the middle of the floor were three or four others of different make—bloated, burly men. Two of them had hands in their breast pockets, and one displayed a knife already drawn. A few steps in front stood Gilbert Jordan, his arms crossed upon his

breast. Edward Chesley was just opposite, holding a cocked pistol, with the muzzle, however, turned to the floor. Jordan had uttered some observation, and Chesley, his cheek flushed and every vein distended, made a stride forward, and was about to raise his arm. At that instant Reginald suddenly suddenly interposed.

"Ned—Ned," he said to the young man "be calm! I can arrange all this. Mr. Jordan, I should like to see you alone for a few minutes."

"For as many as you please," answered the gambler, leading the way to a back room.

When the door was closed upon them Reginald said: "Mr. Jordan, have you still those thirty-six bank-notes which you won the other day of young Chesley?"

Jordan, after a slight hesitation, answered, "Yes; what of it?"

"I want you to give them to me."

"I'll take a trip to the other world first."

"Understand me, Mr. Jordan, I have a particular use for those notes, but I am willing to give you thirty-six hundred pounds in other money for them."

"Ah! that alters the case entirely," replied the gambler, his countenance relaxing.

The business was then very soon completed, and the exchange made.

"Now, Mr. Jordan," said Reginald, before leaving the room, "it will be as well not to say anything about this transaction. You must be aware, yourself, that it will relieve you from some danger to be supposed to have generously given up the money won from Chesley, when informed by me calmly and without any threats of the real circumstances of the affair."

"Yes, sir," returned Gilbert Jordan, "you speak very much like a gentleman; I am happy to have dealings with you, sir, and to have made your acquaintance."

At this, Reginald shook hands with him, rejoined Ned Ches-

ley, and, as well as the latter, only waited long enough to allow the horses to be fed before starting back for home.

It being late when they got to Anderport, both young men slept at the mansion, and in the morning proceeded together to Mr. Chesley's. According to arrangement, Edward kept himself in a back room, while his friend sought a private interview with his father. The old gentleman was even more depressed than when Reginald had last seen him. In spite of anger, which for a time seemed to have smothered every paternal instinct, he had become quite anxious as to the fate of his son. His first question, therefore, was:

"Mr. Ander, what do you know of Edward? Matilda tells me you have been to look for him."

"I found him, sir, at Reveltown."

"Was Gilbert Jordan there? Is Edward safe?"

"I saw Jordan, sir," answered Reginald, purposely evading part of the question, "and persuaded him to restore the money which he so shamefully won at Shenkins."

"Is this, then, really the same money that Edward lost?" said Mr. Chesley, opening the package with tremulous fingers.

"Assuredly; the very same thirty-six notes of the Bank of England."

"And Jordan gave them up willingly?"

"Yes, sir; willingly."

"But what of my son? Is Edward safe? Ah, I see it—Jordan has wounded—perhaps killed him, and gives up the money to escape prosecution. But as sure as I have life and power to lift an arm, he shall *not* escape! for every drop of Edward's blood he shall pay with ten—ay, a hundred—of his own; take the money! I'll not have it?"

"Mr. Chesley, your son is well. He is in the next room, and only waits your permission to beg his father's forgiveness and restoration to his favour."

Reginald left the apartment, and returning immediately, led in Edward. There was another grand witness of the reconciliation—Matilda, who followed after them.

At the close of that scene Mr. Chesley said in a serious tone, "My son, as you hope for happiness and virtue, never again approach the gaming-table!"

"I have already made that promise to this truest of friends," replied the young man, much affected, and laying his hand on Reginald's arm.

After dinner, Laurence Seymour dropped in, and frankly and cordially uttered his congratulations upon Edward's return, and the recovery of the important sum of money. Then, finding that his rival manifested no inclination to leave the field clear to him, he took occasion to say privately to Matilda—"To-morrow morning I must go away from this vicinity to be absent several days—perhaps a much longer time; I have business, too, requiring attention this afternoon; if I call, then, at five, may I not hope to find you at home?"

Matilda replying in the affirmative, Seymour bowed and withdrew.

Soon after his departure, Reginald, rising, proposed a walk. It chanced, curiously enough, that Matilda was the only member of the family whose engagements permitted her to join him. Though some light fleecy clouds moderated the glare of the July sun, they found it advisable to seek the additional shelter of the fine grove which extended in the rear of the garden, till it became lost in the unbroken woods. As they strolled there, arm in arm, Reginald entertained his companion with an account of the incidents of his ride to Reveltown. He dwelt upon Buck Weeks, that most provoking of guides, and admitted, at the same time, that he could not help feeling a degree of respect for the fellow's grateful remembrance of Jordan's protection.

"Yes," observed Matilda, earnestly, "I think gratitude is a trait in frail human nature capable of redeeming many faults, while its absence cannot be supplied by a constellation of virtues. A grateful being must enjoy life itself the more from the hope that an opportunity may be afforded of serving those from whom benefits have been received."

Reginald next excited her interest by a description of the creek that flowed through that sombre forest, and in expressive but brief terms told of the danger he had undergone in crossing it. Of what occurred at the tavern, however, and particularly in his private interview with the gambler, he mentioned very little. Matilda did not fail to notice the abruptness with which he turned to other and quite foreign topics. Indeed, Reginald's aim throughout had been to direct her curiosity to this point.

"Mr. Ander," said she, with some timidity and hesitation, "I can not understand how this Gilbert Jordan could have been induced to relinquish his prey—yet you have told us that he gave you the very bills which Edward staked."

"Miss Matilda," replied Reginald, "I am sure you will be willing to say nothing about a matter which I have determined to mention to no one else"—and he paused.

"I promise cheerfully," she answered, "to disclose nothing which you may confide to me—without your consent."

"The case is simply this," said Reginald: "Jordan had won the money as fairly probably as money is generally won by a gamester. At any rate, it was impossible to recover the sum by legal measures, and to attempt forcible ones was evidently the merest folly. I did, therefore, the only thing it was possible to do. I saw the man, exchanged other notes of equal value for those in his possession, and convinced him that it was for his interest to have the impression prevail that he had restored his ill-gotten gains freely and without consideration."

"And my father, then, owes you an additional thirty-six hundred pounds?"

"Listen to me, I pray you, Miss Matilda; I could have offered your father the amount at once as a loan, but you know he would not have accepted it—and supposing he had, might not the anxiety arising from the knowledge of the doubled debt have tended to shorten, or at least embitter, the remainder of his days?"

"Yet it is a debt, notwithstanding," urged the young lady.

"There is another consideration, however," rejoined Reginald, "which deserved to be attended to—think of Edward, does not his peace of mind depend upon the matter remaining on its present footing? My dear Miss Chesley, I beseech you to allow it so to remain. What are thirty-six hundred pounds to even one day's happiness of your nearest and dearest relatives? For my part, I should willingly see the original loan itself as easily cancelled.—Ah! indeed, if I could but hope that the time might arrive when that very disinterestedness of spirit which now forces you to restrain me, would become my prompter in every liberal thought. If"—and Reginald paused.

Matilda's breath came and went faster than usual, and her eye sought the ground. But Reginald did not pursue the declaration which he seemed to have commenced. Perhaps he thought he might appear to be taking a selfish advantage of the service that he had rendered. Matilda felt relief when the conversation changed to a different subject, and if it be thought that there was anything strange in this, those best acquainted with the female heart may decide whether an ingenuous maiden does not ever feel relief at the postponement of the most agitating question she can be called upon to answer.

The walk was protracted to a considerable length. Neither of the parties heeded the lapse of time. When they returned to the house, Matilda saw by the great clock in the Hall that it was half past six. Laurence Seymour had been waiting full two hours. Reginald, who, in passing the offices in the rear, had directed a servant to bring out his horse, did not enter the parlour, but walked directly through the house.

That Seymour was vexed was natural, for he was not only a jealous lover, but one who had a sufficient cause to be. Everything seemed to have conspired in his rival's favour. Was an excellent and judicious action performed—who

could it proceed from but Reginald Ander? Did any undertaking prove fruitless and full of humiliation? Laurence Seymour's name must be coupled with it. Was there sorrow at evening?—Laurence was the ill-omened bird of night. Did joy come in the morning?—Reginald was the harbinger of dawn. And even now, Matilda, so punctual and true, could neglect a most sacred engagement without scruple, for was she not in company with the triumphant lord of Anderport?

Matilda noticed the gloom upon his brow, and hastened to say in apology that her walk *had been* unconsciously extended so far from the house, that when she started to return, the space proved too great to admit of her arrival at the hour promised. In the same breath, she expressed her regret that it had so happened.

As she uttered all this, a tinge of shame rose to her cheek, for in truth she had not thought of her engagement from the moment when she left the hall to that in which her eye, on re-entering it, fell upon the clock.

Seymour, who was in a mood that makes men keen-sighted, noticed the blush, and replied ironically, "You omit, Miss Chesley, the best apology for your detention—the presence of so agreeable a companion as Mr. Ander."

The flush on the young lady's cheek grew deeper. Seymour thought he had gained an advantage by his spirit, when—unlucky fellow!—he was pressing to the brink of danger. He added, in the same tone: "Yet one might have supposed that, transcendent as the merit of that young gentleman undoubtedly is, Miss Chesley might have spared a single hour from his society to bestow it upon the most devoted of her friends just at the eve of departure.

Matilda answered with quickness: "I regret that Mr. Seymour finds my apology insufficient—especially as I have none other to offer."

"Pardon the hasty word," said Seymour, feeling that he

had gone too far, "my faithless tongue would better have obeyed my heart by expressing gratitude for the bounty which bestows the light of your presence on me even now. If the privilege of being with you were less highly prized, I could more patiently bear its abridgement."

It was the lady's turn to receive an excuse with coolness, and the only reply made to the lover was a slight inclination of the head.

Laurence added, impatiently, "Had I not some right to expect so brief an interview from Miss Matilda Chesley?"

"A *right*, sir?"

"If I am presumptuous, dear Matilda, does your heart say that all the blame should fall upon *me*? Have I weakly misapprehended those minute signs of returned affection, in which I have fondly been content to see a full reward and encouragement for the truest homage that man ever paid to woman?"

Matilda replied not a word.

"If another," continued Laurence, "is now preferred to me, will you refuse to admit that it was not always so?"

Miss Chesley answered: "I am conscious of no change in opinion. At this moment, as heretofore, no one holds a higher place in my esteem than Mr. Seymour,"

"Would you have me contented with such a position?" said the lover, impetuously. "No, Matilda, precious as your favourable regard is, it is nothing to me if it must be shared equally by any other. Nothing? It is worse than nothing; far better that I had never known you, than that, after madly devoting every faculty of my soul in the effort to win your heart, I should be compelled to sink down at the end, convinced of the inestimable value of the prize, but in hopeless despair of its ever becoming mine. Possessing your love, I see around me a glorious world—a present full of happiness, a future holding forth the brightest hopes; without you, all is blank, dismal, void. Declare which is to be my fate. Others may have more than one prospect of happiness. For

my part—I confess the weakness—on a single thread depends everything that makes life a blessed boon! Shall that thread become a cable fit to anchor a soul on heaven, or will your hand sever it? Decide.”

“Mr. Seymour,” replied Matilda, hesitating and embarrassed, “have not I said enough? I sincerely respect and esteem you—I respect and esteem no one more highly. Can you reasonably urge me to say more than this?”

“Let it be, then, that I am *unreasonable*, dear Matilda; but think who has made me so. I *am* unreasonable to expect what yet my soul cannot but hope for. No! Decide. I will not have a moiety, even of your heart. Say that you love no other, and then I sink at your feet grateful and contented. You make me no answer. Shall I allow my heart to give the interpretation of that silence? I dare not; perhaps it has already deluded me. The time has come for certainty. Let your lips pronounce that you do not look upon Reginald Ander as you look upon me?”

“Mr. Seymour, I cannot.”

“Oh, Matilda, recall that declaration! Think that this moment decides forever. I solemnly assure you that I rest everything on the issue of this answer. I look for no other. Say—whisper—show by the slightest sign—that you prefer me to Reginald Ander.”

“I cannot,” replied Matilda, firmly.

Laurence Seymour, without uttering a syllable, rose, bowed, and moved to the door. As he put his hand on the knob, he turned and gazed earnestly in Miss Chesley’s face. Her eye quailed, but no sound issued from her lips, and Seymour left the parlour.

As the rejected lover galloped furiously along the road to Anderport, he scarce noticed a man who was standing just within the fence that enclosed the shady grounds in front of Reginald’s mansion. This individual, who, with a little hammer in his hand, had been engaged in chipping fragments from the corner of a large mass of whitish stone, called out as the

horseman came opposite him "Mr. Seymour, you are in haste."

"Ah, is that you, Mr. Rennoe!" exclaimed the young man, throwing his horse upon his haunches.

"Yes, sir," replied the figure, "I have been amusing myself with mineralogy—I was always fond of dabbling a little in the natural sciences. This rock here, by the way, is of quite an unusual formation to be found in this locality. I take it to be what is called heavy-spar, though the yellowish tinge in it makes it bear no little resemblance to a very rare mineral found in one of the Orkneys. Let me hand you a specimen."

"Never mind—don't trouble yourself, sir. I am not inclined just now to finger bits of stone."

"Indeed! pray what is the matter?"

"I have been to see Matilda Chesley."

"Ah, I understand the luxury of her society has spoiled your taste for lighter entertainments!"

"Pshaw! she has jilted me."

"How?" said Rennoe, with sympathy that was not assumed.

"I really trust you are mistaken—what brought it about?"

"Why, I was determined not to be trifled with any longer, as I told her to decide at once—and *she has*."

"This is most unfortunate," rejoined the other. "How precipitate and ill-advised you have been to urge matters at the very moment when circumstances have made your rival appear most favourably! Do you not see that she and all her family lie just now under such a weight of obligation to Reginald, that they cannot but be anxious to avoid treating him with any appearance of harshness? How could she in common decency choose the very moment in which he had restored to the house peace, and happiness, and a brother, to inflict the sudden mortification of rejecting his suit?"

"Do not harass me with such reflections now," said Seymour bitterly; "the matter is past remedy. Good evening to you."

"Past remedy!" echoed Simon Rennoe, gazing after the

young man. "How wretched to have to rely on such tools? Past remedy! Is it indeed? Not yet. I have another resource, and luckily, it is one of which I can avail myself without a coadjutor. Would that I had never depended upon any head but my own! How stupid that lover!"

As these and similar thoughts passed through his active brain, Rennoe turned towards the mansion, for his geological investigations suddenly lost their relish. Upon the terrace he met Reginald, who, from his elevated position, had noticed both the fierce speed of Seymour and its interruption by the colloquy with his friend. The pair looked at each other intently. With all his art, Rennoe could not totally conceal the vexation which stirred him, and Reginald, at once inferring what had taken place, saluted him with a meaning smile. After standing thus some seconds, the young man broke silence—"Laurence rides home fast."

"Yes," replied Rennoe, "he seems quite discomposed. I think he will be ready to ask for mercy, and plead that his punishment is already sufficiently severe."

"Is it so?" said Reginald. "That should not be. A noble-born youth ought to have more spirit." Then he added, in a quiet, mock-persuasive tone—"Do you help him?"

Rennoe shook his head.

Reginald repeated the words—"Help him. It may result in your advantage, for if Seymour succeeds in winning Miss Chesley, I am ready—you know for what."

Rennoe answered, catching his tone as nearly as possible, "You may not act safely to urge me."

"Oh!" returned the youth, "have no scruple. It is only the animation of the struggle that gives the enjoyment. Better defeat than uncontested victory. So try your utmost. Adieu till supper."

Reginald, hastily returning to Rennoe, said softly—"Hark you, sir! one caution. In whatever you may say to Miss Chesley, make little mention of *me*—no misrepresentation. That is all."

CHAPTER III

A month passed away. Though Reginald during this time paid assiduous attention to Miss Chesley, and seemed to be regarded in the light of an accepted suitor, he had sought no explicit understanding. Mr. Chesley and Edward were naturally gratified at the prospect of the approaching connection. The young man's wealth may have contributed to the earnestness of their approval, yet there were higher and more disinterested considerations. Not only had Reginald rendered the family most important services, but in rendering them had displayed such qualities of mind and heart as appeared to ensure the happiness of any woman whom he should choose for his bride.

While everything flowed along thus smoothly, Simon Rennoe was not idle. Reginald himself scarcely made more frequent visits to the house of Mr. Chesley, nor was more cordially welcomed by Matilda. His age and unassuming urbanity were warrants for admitting him to familiar intercourse, whilst the kindliness of his disposition, the sympathy which overflowed from his bosom towards every human being, and the readiness with which he accommodated himself to the mood of the person into whose society he chanced to be thrown, made it impossible that he could be known as acquaintance without being honoured and loved as friend. Besides these amiable traits, he was remarkable for the possession of others of a different kind, but which are equally valuable in a confidential adviser. In knowledge of the world, in penetration, in tact, in a perfectly balanced judgment, and in rapidity of decision, who surpassed Simon Rennoe?

That he was soon able to gain a great influence over the mind of Matilda, may be easily credited. But the use to

which he applied this influence, evinces most clearly the extent of his capacity. Never was art more thoroughly concealed. Day after day added surely but imperceptibly to the effect of that which preceded. Everything tended to the result, yet no particular circumstance seemed to have any connection with it. The subject upon whom he operated was least of all conscious of the means employed. Such profound subtlety defies both analysis and description, and even a calm spectator must look to the end without attempting to scrutinise in detail the measures which conducted to it.

Sometimes Matilda would detect Rennoe gazing upon her with an expression of tender melancholy that touched her to the heart: but the very moment he found himself observed, he would assume an air of constraint, or would break out suddenly into a gaiety so evidently hollow and artificial as to be more affecting than his previous look of compassion. He appeared to the young lady to be ever stung by self-reproach for unintentionally giving her pain. Sometimes the name of Laurence Seymour fell as by accident from his lips. Rennoe would hesitate, falter, seem shocked at his indiscretion, and leave the sentence unfinished, to commence another upon a totally different topic. At last he spoke not of the Englishman at all, but whenever any transaction was mentioned in which he had been engaged, studiously resorted to a circumlocution.

Matilda was enthusiastically fond of the fine arts. Reginald had little taste that way, but Rennoe, who had been in early life an artist of no mean proficiency, took pains to gratify and amuse her, both by the exhibition of his own portfolio and by the selection of the best engravings he could find in the ill-arranged library at the Anderport mansion. One of these plates happened to contain a head which bore a striking resemblance to Seymour. Rennoe, placing it among some others, proceeded to Mr. Chesley's. While Matilda was examining the bundle, he seated himself at some distance, and

appeared deeply engaged in perusing a late number of the Public Advertiser. The beautiful girl hung long over one of the engravings—the beholder knew well *enough* which one—and a tear had time to creep from its hiding-place and glisten on the eyelid. She brushed it away, and instantly cast around her a startled glance to learn whether the action had been observed. But there sat Rennoe, his eye fastened on the printed sheet and his features clothed with the same untroubled gravity.

Though the means employed were thus refined and artful, the general policy itself was exceedingly simple. Matilda loved Laurence Seymour; Rennoe took care that she was made *conscious* that she loved him. She was unhappy: indefatigable skill was employed to prevent her from losing sight, for a single moment, of that unhappiness. The consequence was, that the poor girl drooped and lost heart hourly. She became thoughtful, nervous, prone to alternate changes of animation and depression. Rennoe watched her decline, which was so gradual as to be scarcely obvious to any but him, with intense satisfaction. "Reginald Ander," he said to himself, "give me but time, and your bride shall fade away before she reaches your arms!"

Yet that time he could not expect to be allowed him. Some more speedy course must be determined on. It was possible that, with judicious treatment, he might be able very seriously to impair the girl's mind—perhaps to make it a hopeless ruin; yet such a plan must be attended with many dangers, not the least of which was the prospect of Reginald's interference. Besides this, Rennoe was not a cruel man, and was desirous of inflicting no more suffering than the attainment of his object demanded. Matilda had been subjected to a pretty faithful preparation, and his own powers of persuasion, joined to the influence he had obtained over her, must now be adequate, he thought, to bend her mind according to his will.

An opportunity for testing it was not long in occurring. All the family was invited away on a visit. Miss Chesley alone did not go. The cause assigned was a headache, but such a headache as hers did not interfere a whit with Simon Rennoe's purpose. Everything seemed favourable. The house was still and empty, and he had the whole morning at his disposal.

Too adroit not to make very gradual advances, he suffered an hour to elapse in desultory conversation. Finally, Miss Chesley was led to inquire what were the most striking social differences which he noticed in coming to America from Europe.

"There is one," replied Rennoe, "which has impressed me very forcibly, though some others indeed are much more glaringly obvious. What I refer to is, the comparative infrequency here of those marriages—alas! so common in the Old World—which are not dictated by the affections of the parties. I thus see the Colonies freed from one of the greatest curses which can blast a land. For what more horrible can be imagined? A marriage from which love is absent—that which calls itself union, whilst in the sight of Heaven it is *no* union—is not only itself an awful crime, but it is the fruitful source of other crimes."

Matilda trembled. On another occasion, Rennoe, noticing this, would have turned the discourse, but the time to spare had passed. He looked at her long and fixedly. Her agitation increased, but that searching gaze was not removed. At last she burst into tears. Rennoe seemed much affected. "My dear young lady," he said. "I know you do not doubt my friendship. Ah, if it were less sincere, I should spare myself the keen anguish of inflicting pain on you! I ask you solemnly to-day whether you love—Laurence Seymour?"

At the sound of that name, Matilda became as pallid as marble, and as speechless.

Rennoe continued, "And loving him, are you about to wed another?"

"I know not—I know not!" burst from Matilda.

"You know not? Think, Miss Chesley, what it is you say. How can I bear to hear from your own mouth that you premeditate a crime."

"But my father's wish—my mother's"—

"Pause again, my dear girl, and reflect. Beware how you lay so fearful a charge at the door of those to whom you owe your birth. Do your parents, indeed, insist upon your marrying against your preference? Are they guilty of such cruelty and wickedness?"

"No, no," she murmured, "they are all that is kind and good."

"You speak truly," said Rennoe; "on your own conscience alone must all the sin rest. Your heart will not be able to say to itself, in its hour of suffering, that others partake of the responsibility. Then weigh the matter well. Reckon up now the reasons which drive you into this marriage. Are they strong and sufficient?"

"The reasons why I should not withhold my consent *are* strong," Matilda answered; "the strongest and weightiest. Has not Mr. Ander saved my life at the risk of his own? Should I hesitate to offer even life itself in return? Yet has he done far more than this. He is the preserver of my brother—nay, of my father also. He has restored peace to a divided household. In every action he has been most courageous, generous, magnanimous, self-sacrificing—the best, the truest of men. Shall I, the humblest of a family, every member of which he has rescued from ruin, or from wretchedness worse than ruin, falter and waver, or refuse to render any service which such a benefactor may deign to ask?"

"Yet," replied Rennoe, "examine your heart well—search and see whether there may not lurk at the bottom some reason less disinterested. Has Ander's wealth nothing to do with your determination?"

"Sir, what mean you?" said Matilda, with indignant

scorn; "and is this the opinion you have learned to entertain of me? Do I appear so despicably base?"

"I pray you, understand me, my dear young lady. Too well do I know your unselfish nature, to entertain the suspicion which you suppose. I meant simply to ask—and I do now ask you—whether you do not regard young Ander's suit with some additional favour, from a consideration of the benefit which his riches may be the means of rendering to your *father*?"

Matilda blushed, for Rennoe, who could only guess at the terms on which Reginald had recovered the £3,600 from the gambler, had given a keener thrust than he supposed; but she soon recovered, and answered with spirit: "And what if it were so? where is the harm in being unwilling to obstruct Mr. Ander's generous services to my parents?"

"I will tell you," said Rennoe, in a manner more cold and stern than usual; "or rather, you may answer for yourself. Is it right to procure the advancement of your father's prosperity at the expense of Reginald Ander's happiness? Does generosity merit this return?"

Rennoe perceived she was struck with the novel light in which he had put the case, and added, in an undertone:

"How can his life be aught but wretched, think you, when he takes to his bosom a wife whose affections are given to another? Can you be the cause of that affliction, the bitterest that man can endure, and call the act disinterestedness?"

The poor girl, at this rebuke, covered her face with her hands, and removing them suddenly as a thought occurred to her, replied—

"You are Mr. Ander's most intimate friend. Tell him, then—for it is your duty to do it—that Matilda Chesley is not worthy of him; that it may peril his happiness to admit her into his dwelling—tell *him*—I say—tell *him*—for upon him rests the decision!"

"No, no, my dear Miss Chesley, little do you understand

the ardour and impetuosity of a young man, if you suppose that he can be deterred by any representation of consequences which I could make. All buoyant with confidence, he can not believe in the existence of any obstacles which his efforts cannot overcome. No, upon you, must abide the responsibility."

"Do you, then," said Matilda, "advise that I should myself inform him, that my heart cannot be wholly his?"

Rennoe reflected, for the question was one which he had not anticipated. "The young fellow will take her, I am afraid, without caring the value of a straw whether he gets her heart or not. He is troubled with precious little sentiment, I think: yet it will not do to tell her, No." Then he answered aloud, "Yes, *you* may tell him, if you think fit, but be sure that it is done with distinctness, and that energy which makes itself felt. Speak not of the difficulty in tones so light that delusive hopes shall be excited—hopes which you yourself are well aware cannot possibly be realized. Consider that he is acting the part of a lover; a part which requires him to exhibit a temper, bold, eager, and not easily daunted."

"I shall say *nothing*," replied Matilda; "I know that however I might begin, I should end only in obeying the impulses of gratitude. No, Mr. Rennoe, my path is clear. It must be one of toil—it may be one of suffering—yet I will not shun it. Most weak and unworthy, I am conscious that I am; all my effort then must be, not to shrink from my duty, but by labour and zeal to strive to render myself less incapable of fulfilling it. When Mr. Ander has done so much, it is impossible that I can ever do enough; yet, at least, he shall never be grieved by learning, from *my* lips, that I am not all he may wish me to be."

Mr. Rennoe, after an interval in which he appeared to his companion to be undergoing a severe internal struggle, began to reply, in a very slow and deliberate manner. "Per-

haps it would be best for me to say nothing more—yet I dare not be silent—I feel I should carry a weight upon my conscience to my dying day. Are you not able, my dear young lady, to perceive the real nature of the difficulty that embarrasses you? It is your duty to be grateful, you urge.”

Matilda, whose eyes were fixed upon him, here bowed her head in assent, and the other continued: “You are right, gratitude is a duty, but are there no others paramount to it? Would you do murder to gratify Reginald Ander?”

The fair girl was much shocked at the suggestion.

Rennoe, in a low, deep, thrilling tone, went on to say—“Then would you be willing, out of gratitude, to tempt some poor soul to a fearful sin—a sin which may exclude that soul from all hope of pardon?—answer me.”

“Am I a fiend?” was the reply.

“A *fiend*, my dear child?” returned Rennoe, solemnly. “Ay, it is but too true—O, to think that your own heart is compelled to apply to itself a term so dreadful! Yes, there is a soul, which you, for Reginald’s sake, are about to tempt into awful sin—and further—yet how can I utter it?—perhaps you are about to decide the eternal fate of a human being—to destroy a soul—think of it!”

“Go on!” cried Miss Chesley, with agitation; “tell me, of whose soul do you speak?”

“Your own!”

The painful silence that ensued had at last to be broken by Rennoe: “Yes, it is your own soul that is in jeopardy. Fain would you escape the knowledge; but, my dear Miss Chesley, it is charity to urge it upon you. Do you ever think of Laurence Seymour, or rather, do you not think of him, daily—hourly?”

“Can I help it?” Matilda answered, in a low voice, and almost unconsciously.

“These thoughts,” resumed Rennoe, “are now innocent,

but what will they be when you are married to Reginald? Does not conscience tell you, that every affectionate remembrance of your lover will then become a crime? Will you seek to annihilate memory? How impossible! Every moment the form of Laurence, will rise before your mental sight; your heart will hail the vision with joy, while conscience will declare it the omen of destruction. Each morning you will supplicate pardon for your sin; and yet, before you have risen from your knees, you will insult Heaven by committing it anew. Can the imagination conceive of agonies more horrible to endure, than these? That you look forward to your wedded life, as a term of unceasing suffering, your own admission assures me; but reflect upon the nature of that suffering. Frail humanity often yields to sudden temptation, and has need to spend each moment in penitence. Yet your self-reproach must be of a different and peculiar kind. You will be oppressed by the crushing conviction that your state of unutterable woe has been brought on deliberately, and with a full knowledge of its character. Sinning hourly—doomed to despair of any escape from sin—will it comfort you to think that your own calm decision is the cause of all?"

Matilda, whose nerves—thanks to the four week's discipline through which she had gone—were less firm than they had been, was deeply agitated by this strain of denunciation. An operator, less practiced than Rennoe, would have been startled at the effect of his own words. As he ended his last sentence, she sat perfectly rigid, leaning slightly forward in her chair, and her eyes, which were fastened upon his, had that awful glassy appearance, which is seldom seen in the living.

Rennoe, quite free from apprehension, waited composedly the passing away of the spell. Presently she recovered her faculties, with a tremor that visibly shook her whole frame.

"Oh, how you torture me!" was her first exclamation.

"I, torture you?—I?" said Rennoe, reproachfully. "No, Matilda, it is conscience that inflicts the pain. Indeed, have you yet reviewed all the considerations which are fitted to give you discomposure? Are you about to ruin only yourself—or is there not another? Think of Seymour."

"Laurence has no right to complain," said Matilda, with something of her former spirit.

"Laurence may have, in truth, no right to accuse you," rejoined Rennoe; "but ought you not to accuse yourself on his account? Is it nothing to slight the whole existence of a noble being like him? That you are willing to sacrifice your own heart, does not justify you in making a sacrifice of his."

"I do not think, sir," replied Matilda, gently, "that I ever afforded Mr. Seymour such encouragement that I ought to bear the reproach of any disappointment which he may have incurred."

Rennoe, changing his manner with great readiness, to one somewhat less severe and gloomy, said—

"What would you think, my dear Miss Chesley, if Reginald, suspecting the state of your affections, had come to the determination to withdraw his suit, and leave your heart free from every motive, except its own spontaneous impulses!"

"Is it so?"—said Matilda, looking up inquiringly. "How kind—how generous!"

"Must it not be a relief," continued Rennoe, "to escape the necessity of bringing ruin on the only man you love—on him who alone truly loves you? And why need you be apprehensive on your father's account? Doubt not that Seymour can obtain a grant of land—if not in the neighbourhood of Anderport, at least in a region equally desirable—a grant so extensive that the patent even of Wriothesly Ander shall seem diminutive beside it. Will he be one to hesitate in joining you in filial services to your honoured parents? But even if you two should have no other possession than your

loving hearts, would you not prefer such an union, to the splendid misery of a life in the Anderport mansion?"

It was wonderful how Matilda's countenance brightened, as her ears drank in these words. Even her impassive companion could scarcely realize that he had before him the same creature, who, a little while previous, seemed to have abandoned every hope of comfort. Rennoe proceeded:—

"Contrast this with what you could not but suffer as the bride of Reginald; think of your vain efforts to prevent your affections from straying from the husband whom duty requires to be loved, to the strange man whom it is sinful to love; think of that husband, at last convinced of the hopeless infidelity of your heart, and seeking in the company of others that sympathy which should be afforded by her who vowed in the sight of Heaven to be his loving, loyal help-mate—add to these lesser griefs, the ceaseless sting of conscience, and how dreary the gloom of that solitary fireside! Imagine year after year dragging heavily over the head of the disconsolate wife; let her and her wretchedness, that inseparable companion, survive all the objects for the sake of which the fearful—the immeasurable—sacrifice was made. Her husband long since has learned to hate her for the self-devotion which once he asked for—her parents sleep in the grave—her brothers, scattered over the earth, scarce spare a thought for their sister, whom they believe to be favoured with so blissful a lot—the devoted lover—but who can tell what his fate shall be? Yes, the mourning woman survives—alas! may she not indeed have lost the hope that the termination of life will be the termination of her sorrows."

"Cease! cease!" exclaimed Matilda: "tell me, man, whether you have betrayed my heart with a delusion. Has Reginald given you authority to say that he has no desire that I should become his wife? Your countenance speaks—that vision of blessedness was but a lying dream—and I—am left to—"

She sank back apparently in a deep swoon. Rennoe, with the same imperturbable self-possession that ever characterized him, did not call the servants or make any noise, which would be likely to alarm them; but gently supporting Miss Chesley's head, was soon gratified by signs of returning consciousness. As soon as she was sufficiently recovered to understand him, he renewed his discourse—

"I do not deceive you, young lady; the alternative is still open, and if the decision is to be made by yourself, instead of depending on the charity of another, is this a proper cause of grief? Yes, happiness and woe both lie before you—choose—"

"Duty!" gasped Matilda, "duty!—be it happiness or be it woe."

"Assure yourself then," urged the other, "that happiness is duty; sin and misery are ever united. I say not then only, Be happy, but also, Be innocent!"

Matilda now rose from her chair and stood upright. "My decision," she said, "is immoveable. If Reginald Ander ask me to accompany him to the altar—I go."

Rennoe also rose and was about to speak, but she interrupted him. "Say no more—it is needless. You have subjected me to a sore trial; if it has been done in wantonness, may you be forgiven. I beg you, sir, to excuse me for the present." So saying, she withdrew to her own apartment.

Simon Rennoe, in no little confusion at his want of success, left the house. "Vanquished! vanquished!" he muttered, "when, too, I had so strong a cause to plead—it is unaccountable. But now I must see Laurence."

In execution of this intention, he called at Anderport, but the Englishman was not at his lodgings. He had gone squirrel-hunting, it seems, in the woods back of the mill. Rennoe, leaving his horse, went to seek him. After an hour's fatiguing exploration of the wood, during which time no sound of a gun greeted his ears, he was lucky enough to

find Seymour stretched at length upon a grassy slope near a spring, and intently watching the water as it trickled forth. Though the lover had yielded to despair upon his mistress' refusal to accept him, time failed not to restore hope to his breast. A state of suspense is not agreeable, yet he was glad to choose it in preference to the gloomy certainty of Matilda's absolute rejection.

In reply to Rennoe's inquiries, therefore, he said that whilst he could not quite call himself a contented man, he yet remained in expectation of a favourable issue at the last.

"I regret," rejoined Rennoe, "to disturb your composure, but Miss Chesley has assured me this morning, in the most unequivocal terms that could be used, that it is her intention to accept Reginald."

"Did she really say so?" exclaimed Seymour, starting from his repose.

"She did—and this notwithstanding my best efforts to the contrary."

Seymour fell into deep dejection. "Is Matilda then certainly lost? You have hitherto been my comforter, can you now suggest no ground of hope?"

"There is one," replied Rennoe, "one only."

"Well, tell it me; let no time be lost."

"The result depends upon yourself alone. I can do nothing to assist you, and I greatly fear that you will neglect this single way of extrication."

"Fear not," cried Seymour; "I cannot live without Matilda—and what will not a man do for life? I have heretofore been guilty of thoughtless folly—I know it—but I have gone through that which might make an idiot wise. You have chided me for rashness; witness now how cautious and prudent I can be."

"The present emergency," answered Rennoe, "demands the exercise of a virtue which you have not comprehended in your catalogue—*humility*."

"I do not understand," said the Englishman.

"I will explain. Do you know wherefore it is that Reginald is your rival?"

"Assuredly I do; 'tis because he cannot help it. Who can know Matilda Chesley, and not desire to win her."

Rennoe smiled. "All hearts, my dear friend, are not quite so susceptible as yours. Reginald and you are courting different mistresses: yours is Miss Chesley; his, victory. It so happens that he cannot easily win his own without taking yours also—hence the difficulty."

Laurence at this looked puzzled.

"Do you not yet understand me? Reginald took the notion that you once treated him with disdain. He determined, therefore, to conquer you in the very field where you thought yourself most secure; and he seems to have succeeded. I do not believe that he cares at all for the young lady."

"Then he is a villain," exclaimed Seymour.

"Do not speak so harshly," replied the other. "Your strong passion is love, his is emulation, and I cannot see that one less deserves to be gratified than the other."

The lover answered impatiently, "Well, what would you have me do?"

"Simply go to Reginald, acknowledge your defeat, and request him not to inflict the penalty."

"Are you mad?" said Seymour, springing to his feet. "Think you I would thus debase myself, and before him, too, of all beings on the earth; that boy Ander—that homely, dwarfish, wretch?"

"I do not see what there is so terrible in it," Rennoe replied calmly; "you would be ready enough to kneel to Miss Chesley, I dare say. Now, for my part, I would much rather submit myself to a strong-minded man like Reginald, than to any weak female. Besides, facts are facts. You are vanquished—why not acknowledge it? The real humiliation, if there be any, consists in the defeat itself."

"I do not care for plausible words," said the lover. "Beg mercy from living man, I will not—least of all from Ander. Ha! 'tis well I think of it—has not that crafty wretch set you up to this? Why are you so anxious for my degradation? I only know you as Ander's friend, what else are you?"

Rennoe answered after a few seconds' pause. "The question is nothing to the present purpose. Reflect rationally, and you must be satisfied that I have been anxious, from the very first, to prevent this threatened match. What my strongest motive may be, concerns only myself. Certainly, if actions testify anything, my interest in the matter is much stronger than yours. I have resorted to every means in my power—all have failed. One hope only remains, and that depends upon you."

"You are unfortunate," said Seymour, "to have only an impossibility to rely on. Wait for miracles, if you choose, but do not expect a Seymour to degrade himself."

"Then you give up Matilda."

"Give up Matilda? I would give up a thousand Matildas!"

The discomfited adviser departed, and Seymour was left to his own reflections. These were by no means cheerful. A Gallic lover in the same predicament would have extinguished life and love together in the nearest deep water; a Castilian would have shot his successful rival in the first place, then his mistress, and lastly, himself; the Englishman, however, could only brood over his sorrows, without hoping to release himself from them. In spite of every effort, the words of Rennoe would recur to his mind. That Matilda should marry a man whom she did not love, and who did not love her, seemed the most dreadful thing imaginable, and Seymour discussed with himself whether it was right or not to make some attempt at her rescue. Humility bore a different and more noble aspect, when he thought of it as disinterestedly assumed on her account. Pride, however, was strong, and held out stiffly. A compromise was the result; he would see Reginald, not to beg, but to reason.

The intention, once formed, demanded an immediate execution; and taking up his gun, and the single squirrel which was the justification for a morning wasted in the woods, he proceeded by the most direct course to the mansion. On the way, he composed in his mind a most eloquent expostulation—one which it seemed impossible that a heart of stone could resist. At the gate, however, his confidence greatly diminished. The errand, which before he had thought worthy of a Cicero, now appeared ridiculous enough. The quick pace of the outset was very perceptibly slackened, but the impulse which set him in motion had not yet lost its power, and he was driven, though reluctantly, up to the very terrace. Here he stopped, and occupied the moment of indecision in surveying the building before him. Used as he had been to those fine old baronial edifices which are the glory of his native land, he could not look upon the Ander mansion without an involuntary feeling of respect. The commanding situation, its vast dimensions, the air of perfect stillness that hung about it, the absence of shrubbery and of every production of nature less grandly simple than the green turf, and those venerable oaks, all seemed well to befit the homestead of the founder of a colony.

It was too late to withdraw. Reginald, perceiving the unexpected visitor, had himself come to usher him in. After the pair were seated in the parlour, a rather embarrassing silence ensued; Laurence, after vainly trying to recall the admirably conceived oration which he had so fluently declaimed on the way, had no resource but to present his business in the most plain manner possible.

"Mr. Ander, I cannot doubt that you feel disposed to contribute all in your power to the happiness of Miss Chesley."

Reginald made a gesture of assent.

The other continued: "You would not, therefore, desire to insist upon the contemplated marriage, if you supposed her inclinations to be averse to it?"

"May I beg Mr. Seymour's authority for believing that any marriage is in view?"

"Common rumour."

Reginald merely rejoined, "Well, sir, be good enough to proceed. I believe I interrupted you."

But how to proceed?—that was the rub, and Seymour found his situation not a little awkward; yet as he was in it, he determined to put on a bold face. "Excuse me, Mr. Ander, I have asked a question which is still unanswered. Do you mean to marry Miss Chesley?"

"I can only answer by another," said Reginald, "will the lady consent to be my wife?"

"Suppose," said Seymour, "circumstances should induce her to give a verbal consent in which her heart does not join."

Reginald, with a courteous smile, replied: "I cannot imagine the possibility of such a case arising. It would be doing Miss Chesley great injustice, it seems to me, to suppose that her words could ever belie her sentiments."

"Mr. Ander," said the other, with animation, "I pray you not to trifle with me; do you persist in your suit."

"I have already replied, sir. It depends merely upon the lady."

"Then," rejoined Seymour, "I have one other question: what is it that induces you to seek Miss Chesley?"

"That interrogatory," replied Reginald, with a repetition of his provoking smile, "is the last one, sir, that I should have expected from one so well acquainted as yourself with the charming young lady referred to. The more natural difficulty would be, I should think, to avoid becoming attached to so lovely an object."

Seymour, unable to disguise his vexation, rose suddenly, walked to the other extremity of the room, returned, and again took his seat, saying: "Oh be frank, man—be frank! Talk as you please to Matilda, but *I* am neither fool nor woman. You shall have sincerity on my part, at least, and

I will, therefore, express my decided conviction that you are not capable of the weakness of loving."

"Accept my thanks for the compliment," said Reginald, in a hearty tone.

Seymour resumed: "Wherefore the need of all this disguise? Come out at once, and let me know what it was that made you my rival. Have I given you offence?"

"Offence?—none in the world."

"Has my conduct, then, been in any way the provocation of your exertions?"

"I fear the information you demand," answered Reginald, "may not be gratifying, yet I cannot resist your entreaties. You inquire what first prompted me to seek the honour of a connection with Mr. Chesley's family. I will tell you plainly. There chanced to be a gentleman very intimate with that family who was so confident in his advantages as to give defiance to the world, and who, if I be not mistaken, manifested some disdain of my own humble self in particular. Now, no man, of course, can be happy unless he have some object in view; at that time I happened to have none, and under the circumstances, thought I could not select any which promised more interest in the pursuit than that, sir, which, you are kind enough to say, affords at present a tolerable prospect of being attained."

Seymour, by an effort which did him credit, restrained his rising anger. "I will not blame you, Mr. Ander, but you have by this time surely had ample entertainment. The interest of the pursuit, you acknowledge, is all that engages you; what remains, then, of the sport must be dull enough. Are you not willing to divert your attention to some new and more distant object?"

"Yes, sir, *when this is gained*." There was a marked emphasis laid on the last word.

"Can it be possible," continued Seymour, "that any man, for the sake of gratifying a petty emulation, will coldly de-

stroy the happiness of a lovely, self-sacrificing woman? Reginald Ander, think of the consequences! You are about to inflict the distress, not of a day, but of a life-time. Bring up before your sight the figure of that poor girl pining away—a wife unloving, and unloved. See her sinking every hour, till at last you lay her in an untimely tomb. Consider what your reflections would be then. In such a dreadful moment, could you derive any satisfaction from the knowledge that all that misery had purchased the defeat of a rival?"

"I could."

Seymour looked at him with astonishment. "Have you a heart in your breast? Can you contemplate with composure, a prospect of such horror that it might make Satan relent? Yet I tell you that although you may be destitute of feeling now, the time must come when you can be no longer so. You will find that crime appears very differently before commission, and after it."

"It seems to me, my dear sir," said Reginald, "that your invective is a little more violent than the occasion warrants. I use no force, no unlawful means. Miss Chesley is perfectly free from constraint; go to her yourself, if you will, and ask whether I have ever taken an ungenerous advantage of circumstances. And what gives you a right to infer that she cannot become my wife without being wretched?"

"Your own declaration, sir, that you seek merely my humiliation. Well might Rennoe assert that the best way to move you would be to throw myself at your feet and acknowledge your victory."

"Did Rennoe indeed say so? Well, he gave you pretty good advice."

"It was advice," Seymour rejoined angrily, "which no one capable of entertaining a manly sentiment would either inculcate or follow. Beware how you push matters to extremity—withdraw now from your suit, while you can with good grace. Matilda is not yet yours."

"You are very right," said Reginald, "she is not, and therefore it is out of the question that I should withdraw. Think you I would abandon a purpose unexecuted?"

"Good heavens! Ander," cried the Englishman, with great vehemence; "let it be that I have done wrong, punish not that unhappy girl for it. Dare you say you leave her mind free and unfettered? Answer me as you will answer at the last day!"

Both young men were now standing, and, as they faced each other in front of that oriel window, while the ruddy light of the setting sun cast its shadows in strong relief against the wainscotted wall, the contrast was very remarkable.

Laurence stood with one foot extended, his right arm half raised in energetic action, and every feature expressive of strong and unrestrained emotion. Opposite a form so commanding, and of such faultless proportions, Reginald Ander appeared diminutive and mis-shapen. One who had beheld him at that moment for the first time, and had tried in vain to read any signs of a soul upon that heavy countenance, and had noticed his dull eye sink beneath the steady, piercing, glance of Seymour, would have formed a very erroneous conception of the relative situations of the two.

"Answer me," continued the Englishman; "have you not enthralled Matilda Chesley by means of a weakness which comes from the best qualities of her kindly, ingenuous, unsuspecting, grateful nature? Have you not conferred services under the guise of disinterestedness whose true source was envy and malicious spite?"

Reginald replied: "Since you seem fond of catechetical exercises, allow me also to propound a question or two, and let the doctrine be the same, it is a good one—disinterestedness. Whence your strong interest in the welfare of my bride-expectant? Does it flow from Christian charity, or is it worldly and carnal? Do you display equal sympathy for the woes of other afflicted maidens? Lastly—*dost thou covet?*"

"Scoff not," returned Seymour; "I acknowledge that I love Matilda Chesley—love her, devotedly, lastingly; yet I do solemnly declare to you that the earnestness of my present expostulation comes from a pure, unselfish regard for her happiness alone. Can you suppose that I should otherwise have intruded upon you? Well might you scorn my meanness, if any consideration of personal advantage had sent me hither. Whatever follies love of woman may lead me into, it shall never make me forfeit my self-respect. If I have inherited nothing else, I have at least inherited a name which has never been thus dishonoured."

"If," said Reginald, after a pause, "you believe Miss Chesley's comfort at stake, complain of no one but yourself, for by the performance of a single condition it is possible for you to induce my relinquishment of all pursuit of her hand."

"Pursue your course then," Seymour said bitterly; "I know your terms, and I will not consent to them. Commit the worse than murder which you meditate—felicitate yourself upon surpassing in heartlessness the most brutal that have gone before you. Marry Matilda, break her heart—and then enjoy the reward of your doings. I shall offer no further obstruction—settle the matter now with your conscience. I bid you good evening, sir."

At that, Seymour bowed, and with a swelling bosom, left the house.

Before reaching the gate, however, he turned suddenly around and started back, making long strides. Passing through the hall-door, without word or knock, he proceeded directly to the parlor, and there found Reginald still standing by the oriel window.

"I come," he said, "to submit to the degradation. I will forget my birth, forget that I am a man, forget everything but Matilda's danger. I acknowledge that I have been defeated in my dearest pursuit by one whom I contemned,

and that I have no hope but in your voluntary withdrawal. There! the act of base submission is over, and Matilda is freed."

"Not so fast, if you please, Mr. Seymour; you have quite mistaken my condition."

"Mistaken it?" echoed the other; "surely this is what both you and Rennoe have declared."

"I have nothing to do with Mr. Rennoe's assertions," replied Reginald, "and if you take the pains to recall what has fallen from my own lips, you will find nothing which can give you ground to accuse me of bad faith. I might once, perhaps, have been contented with such a declaration as you have just made, but I could not now. What more indeed does it express than is implied in the very fact of your visit this evening, and in the whole conversation which has been the fruit of it? Would you have come if you had had any other, the slightest, hope of winning Miss Chesley? And what is this but an acknowledgement of defeat? I should be most foolish, as you cannot but see, to assent to such terms. In exchange for one empty sentence uttered before no witnesses, I should yield up a most lovely girl."

"What then, do you demand?" said Seymour. "Is it that I should proclaim the avowal from the house-tops? publish it in the gazettes? have it recorded for the information of future generations?"

"Not so," answered Reginald; "I ask from you no confession at all—"

"Because you have received it already," said the other interrupting him.

"Ah yes, it is true; and I have to thank you for the voluntary gift." Reginald, after saying this with an expression of countenance which Seymour thought sardonic, continued: "No, it is but just that I should receive a *quid pro quo*. Matilda Chesley is mine, and I will not relinquish her for nothing."

Here a pause intervened. At last the Englishman, who felt his nerves losing vigour every moment, could bear the suspense no longer.

"What is it you would have, Ander? Give it forth, whatever it be—let me hear your demand, though the Evil one himself have suggested it!"

"Oh, be not apprehensive," replied Reginald; "I do not ask your soul, you may dispose of that as you think proper; I am willing to give up my bride on condition that you engage never to take her yourself."

"What mean you? You cannot be in earnest; this would be the very wantonness of cruelty. You are jesting, I know."

"It is no jest," said Reginald, "unless you choose to be the laugher. For my part, I consider it quite an earnest affair to abandon Miss Chesley. Think you I have not eyes for beauty as well as you; that I have no heart to be touched by her confiding ingenuousness and noble simplicity of character? You have accused me, Mr. Seymour, of selfishness, and a savage disregard for the young lady's happiness; it may now be seen how far your own zeal is disinterested."

"Yet," urged the other, "are you not still equally unfeeling towards Matilda? You admit that she loves me."

"By no means, Mr. Seymour. It is possible, and of this one may well doubt when we have her word to the contrary, that she would prefer you to me; but who can say that she may not hereafter find some one whom she would prefer to both of us? From this window, Mr. Seymour, I observed your walk towards the gate and the return: now shall I bring to your recollection the train of thought that passed through your mind and prompted your decision? Tell me if this is not somewhat like it: 'The wretch—I could knock him over—abominable—the game's up—I've lost her—but she will not be happy, nor he neither—I am glad of it, with all my heart, for they don't deserve to be. Could not I

stop the match by telling her about this?—she would not believe me—'twould do no good—besides hardly gentlemanly to relate a private conversation. No hope—she's gone. Could I possibly own beat?—out of the question—yet to think of it!—never to get Matilda—I cannot stand this—I'll do anything rather.' At this point it was that you wheeled so suddenly around: all the way back to the terrace, your mind did nothing but repeat: 'I'll do anything rather!' On the way from there to the hall door, you became more animated in consequence of a new series of reflections:—'Tis bad, to be sure—horrible—yet I shall get her from Reginald after all—ho! ho! that's a comfort!' "

Seymour seemed to acknowledge the accuracy of this analysis by his confused silence, and Reginald added sarcastically:

"How remarkably disinterested all this was! O, it is the easiest thing in the world to be careful of another's welfare, if you believe it coincident with your own. When loving one's neighbour *as* one's self, comes to be identical, with loving one's neighbour *in* one's self, charity truly will greatly abound."

Seymour had now recovered his speech. "You are not in love, sir, and—"

"That is to say," interrupted Reginald, "I am not disinterested; very well, go on, sir, if you please; it is proper to have terms exactly defined."

The Englishman was a little disconcerted, but continued. "What I mean is, Mr. Ander, that as you are no lover you cannot understand a lover's feelings. You will turn to-morrow to some other matter, and in the course of a few weeks, or, at farthest, months, will have dismissed Miss Chesley altogether from your thoughts. In my case it must be far otherwise. To relinquish Matilda is to tear out hope itself from my breast; existence will become but a succession of separate days bound together by no common purpose or plan.

Robbed of all energy, in being robbed of all prospect of reward, I could only live as the animal lives. Would you condemn me to such a fate?"

"I condemn you to nothing," said Reginald, "Decide as you will—whatever be the choice, it is to me a matter of indifference."

"And if I should not submit to the terms, what then?"

"In that case," replied Reginald, "I go to Miss Chesley, and, if she consent, marry her."

"Trifle not with me, I beg you," said Seymour, "speak sincerely. Let me know plainly your real intention."

"I have already done so," rejoined the other. "I have told you my purpose—and my purposes are seldom altered. I do not urge you, Mr. Seymour, to make this sacrifice—if such it be to you. Consider calmly. You lay c'aim to the credit of a pure, unselfish anxiety for Matilda Chesley's happiness—I have heard of such devoted attachments, but confess to some scepticism as to their real existence. It is in your power either to remove or to confirm my doubts—yet let not your conclusion be influenced by any expectation of being subsequently released from the promise, if it be made."

"Hear me, then," exclaimed Seymour, "I promise—but there shall be no further misapprehension. Tell me, precisely, what it is you propose."

"This," said the other; "We, Laurence Seymour, and Reginald Ander, mutually agree and promise to each other, never to marry Matilda Chesley; and though one of us should die, the survivor is still to hold himself bound upon his honour to adhere to this engagement. Do you assent?"

"I do," said Seymour, in a low tone.

"Then," said Reginald, "the covenant is ratified, solemnly, irrevocably."

Resisting all Reginald's earnest solicitations that he would remain and partake of the hospitalities of the mansion, Sey-

mour withdrew in a state of mind scarcely more calm than that which had impelled his visit.

Next morning, Reginald had an interview with Matilda. He said to her in his abrupt way—"Miss Chesley, I have satisfied myself that if you were to become my wife, it would be at such a constraint upon your affections as must endanger your future peace and contentment—I therefore relinquish altogether, the perhaps presumptuous hopes which I have entertained."

Matilda was about to make her grateful acknowledgements, but he continued without pause—"Give me no credit for this act—it deserves none—I prosecuted my purpose unremittingly, till an obstacle interposed, which it does not become me to contend against. But for that obstacle, I should have persevered—though at the hazard of committing a great wrong. Thank me not for my forbearance, since it proceeds from no regard for your happiness. I was selfish at the first, and remain selfish to the last. Yet Matilda—at this moment, and to you, I will say it—whatever was the object which first impelled me to seek your hand, a deeper and stronger feeling has since sprung up in my breast—a feeling which others have not given me credit for, and of whose depth and strength I myself have not till now been fully conscious. My memory will never excite in you, Matilda, any sentiment of tenderness; it is more than probable that, when you know all, you will learn to hate it; yet be assured that Reginald Ander loved you truly, devotedly, jealously—though he never babbled nor ranted of his love."

On his return home, Reginald did not see Rennoe until they met at the dinner-table. When the meal was over, the young host said, "Well, my dear sir, how prosper Mr. Seymour's affairs? Has your assistance been of much avail?"

"Of none whatever," answered Rennoe, frankly.

"Perhaps," said Reginald, "you wish a longer trial?"

"No. I have already done everything that, as a Christian man, I dare."

Reginald rewarded this confession of his triumph, with information of his relinquishment of Miss Chesley, and of the terms of the agreement between himself and Seymour.

Rennoe's gratification was evident from his countenance, and he declared in words: "You will hardly believe me, Reginald, yet it is sober truth, that this conclusion gives me even more pleasure, coming as it does from your voluntary motion, than it would if it were the consequence of my own strenuous exertions. You are not one to stop at half-way measures; and this decision, I now feel assured, is the fore-runner of another; of one whose importance the world must acknowledge, and whose consequences will be recorded by history."

"Come, let us walk," said Reginald.

The young man led his companion through the garden at the rear of the dwelling to a wide common, in which the bastard-pine had sprung up, and even in that early day attained considerable size. Reginald pursued his course briskly and confidently through the mazes of a labyrinth, more perplexing than that of Dædalus. Rennoe, as he found all his care scarcely adequate to preserve his face from the spring burs, which every shrub eagerly threw across his path, wondered in silence what were the charms of scenery that the other had found to attract him. Finally they came to a low, worn fence, which enclosed a little bubbling spring, a cabbage patch, three peach trees, and a cabin, fifteen feet by ten, constructed of logs, well daubed with mud, and covered by great rude shingles, whose thickness bid defiance to nails, and which were kept in place by the superincumbent weight of numerous stones and oaken poles. At the door sat a black woman, whose hair, as it appeared from beneath the edges of her cap, was literally white as the driven snow; and a crutch which leaned against the wall at her side showed that she laboured under other infirmities than those which are the legitimate attendants of age. She was neatly

clad, and her countenance, though bearing the characteristic marks of her race, indicated considerable intelligence.

Reginald, leaning his arm upon the fence, drew her into conversation. In the course of it, Rennoe observed, "You must lead a dreary life out in this dreary wilderness, my good lady. Few visitors are apt to pierce through such a thicket as you have around you."

"It has not long been so," she answered. "The day Master Reginald was born, I could see the mansion plain from here; and I can remember in the time of the first Master Reginald—that's the son of Wriothsesly—when as fine tobacco was growing on it, as ever was raised anywhere, I suppose."

"Indeed! Does your memory extend thus far? Your age, then, without your other ailments, would prevent you from going abroad much."

"It's five-and-forty years, sir," answered the woman, "since I have been outside of that fence."

'Of course," said Rennoe, "you have somebody to nurse you."

"No, sir; I'm thankful I haven't yet come to stand in want of that. I've always had good masters to give me my meal and bacon, and firewood, and the garden truck I can raise myself—"

"But are you not lonely?"

"How can I be, when I have this?" As she spoke she lifted a much worn Bible, from her lap. "Well, indeed, may I thank God for this affliction, for it is only since it laid me up in a manner useless, that I have learned to read the good message which He has sent to all his servants; and what a blessed thing it is that by his mercifulness, the crippled can hope for as good wages as the strongest."

They conversed long with the old woman, and could not fail to observe both her thorough acquaintance with the Holy Scriptures, and her unwavering faith in the promises which they contain. After that, Reginald led the way

down along the little branch, till the cabin was quite out of view, then turning around he addressed his companion thus: "You know, sir, that some months ago I determined to defeat and humble Laurence Seymour; that object is now accomplished, and my mind is open for another. I have resigned Miss Chesley, and with her the hope of domestic happiness; is not this a good deal? Yet you are not satisfied, and would have me resign more; my fortune and my personal independence; tell me what recompense you can promise in return for such sacrifices."

"It is summed up in one word, Reginald—power. Look at me; how am I able to raise this arm; to extend this foot? Is it not the soul which moves? Just so, the company of Jesus is the soul of the world; all the rest of mankind are but its limbs and external instruments."

"Power—power—" repeated the youth.

"Yes," said Rennoe, "does not that content you?"

"At least," Reginald answered, "it might tempt, if it failed to satisfy—but I have brought you here, to inform you of a resolve already made. Released from all ties here, I am about to enter upon a new and graver scene, and one so important, that it demands from me an earnest preparation. I want an instructor. There are two in view; one, whose great natural abilities have been developed to the utmost—a man learned as few are learned, yet, at the same time thoroughly versed in practical affairs. The other teacher, very far inferior in natural endowments, is destitute besides of all the pretensions to the wisdom of the schools. The first is Simon Rennoe, the ablest of the Jesuits—the other Judith, the old woman who exists in yonder hovel; and of the two, I mean to choose *Judith*."

Rennoe's fine features were expressive of intense scorn, as he replied, "And has Reginald Ander sunk to this?"

"Before you pronounce judgment," said the young man, "hear me. My mother had three brothers, and a sister.

They all died prematurely of the same disease. Her father died of it also. The disease is one, whose characteristic it is to be hereditary. Seven years ago, I became aware of the fate which menaced me, and since then, that disease has been the subject of my study. Every medical work of eminence relating to it has been mastered. Without the knowledge of guardians or teachers, I have personally consulted the most distinguished physicians. I have learned what preventive measures were advisable, and how to estimate every symptom which should arise. Some weeks ago, in fording a run near Reveltown, I got wet, and could not afterwards change my clothing. That exposure gave my constitution a shock, which afforded an opportunity for my lurking enemy to show his power. I know that there is in medicine nothing which can remove the grasp of death which is laid upon me. I can almost count up to you, with the certainty of an astronomical calculation, the very number of hours that remain."

"Perhaps," said Rennoe, "the case is not so hopeless as you imagine, and let it be as it may, you cannot do better than to unite yourself with our order. Should your fears prove, as I hope and believe, destitute of sufficient ground, you will have before you the grandest field which earth can offer to a vigorous and penetrating intellect; should, alas, the worst result follow, you will have every advantage of enlightened spiritual preparation."

"Such arguments," said Reginald, "would once have had weight; but I tell you, Simon Rennoe, that the sight of death, standing upon the threshold, works a wonderful change in the estimation which we place upon the things both of this world and of the next. Within a period of less than four revolutions of the moon, I, who now stand before you, will be—can you tell me where? That old crippled being yonder has endured, for nearly half a century, misery which Zeno and Seneca would have confessed intolerable; yet she

is at this moment happier than you are. In ignorance, as gross as can be conceived, of all human lore, she can yet explain the grounds of her faith, in terms fixed, clear, consistent, rational, sublime. You, Simon Rennoe, know everything but the Bible—she knows nothing but the Bible. For five years I have been a diligent pupil in your school; during the few months which remain to me, I mean to take lessons of her.”

“Let me know, Reginald,” said the Jesuit, “whether this is your settled purpose.”

“It is,” answered the other, “and you may therefore abandon altogether those hopes which have made you my companion to America. Yet I shall be pleased to have you remain as long at the mansion as you find agreeable; can I not indeed persuade you to listen with me to Judith’s pious teachings?”

“You must excuse me,” said Rennoe, smiling ironically, “I would prefer to sit at the feet of a somewhat different Gamaliel. As you have made your determination, however, I know you well enough not to attempt to change it. To-morrow morning, therefore, I shall bid you farewell. I have already devoted to you more time than I would give to win to the service of the company any other mind that fifty years intercourse with the world has made me acquainted with; yet that space of time, Reginald, I would give thrice over to win thee.”

In the walk home, Rennoe observed, “I now understand the full force of your agreement with the Englishman.”

“Yes,” said Reginald, “and was it not a most admirable measure? How foolish it would have been in me to have made Matilda a wealthy widow for Seymour’s benefit? The fellow luckily was unaware of the predicament in which I was placed, and now, though on the point of death, I can enjoy the satisfactory reflection that Seymour can derive no advantage from his survivorship.”

"And is this," said Rennoe, "the devout frame of mind which your dusky Saint yonder would inculcate?"

"Oh," answered the other composedly, "as you are not my spiritual adviser, give yourself no uneasiness about the matter: indeed, on the whole I do not think I shall trouble even Judith with it—my conscience and I can settle this question unassisted."

Next day, the Jesuit, in accordance with the intention he had declared, started from Anderport on his way to Europe. A few hours after, there was another departure, Seymour's, who went to prosecute his mining speculations.

Reginald remained, and, with the indomitable firmness which characterized him, calmly watched the measured approach of death. For months he made daily visits to old Judith, and, it is to be hoped, derived benefit from her serious and faithful admonitions. Before the close of winter he was confined to the house, soon after to his chamber, and finally to his bed. Now, for the first time, the rumour spread abroad that the mansion was like to lose its master. Reginald during all that fearful interval had kept the secret locked in his own breast. Giving way to no grief himself, he was too proud to desire the condolence of others. He yearned not for the comfort which man is able to bestow.

Spring, therefore, was near at hand before Laurence Seymour heard of the condition of his former rival. Ever since the evening of the memorable agreement, he had cherished the expectation that Reginald, however inflexible in the determination to expose his patience to a severe immediate trial, would in the end relent and grant him a full discharge. It may be conceived how startled he was to learn that the possibility of such a release was soon to be cut off. The terrible words of the bond rose to his recollection. Though one should die the survivor must still adhere to this engagement. He loved Matilda as ardently as at the first; and was a barrier now to be thrown between, which no time, nor chance,

nor imaginable event could remove? That Reginald on the brink of eternity still retained his harsh unyielding temper, seemed most improbable, and the lover believed that if he could but kneel at the bedside of the dying man, his supplication would be granted.

Once before, had that journey from the mines been made in fiery haste. Now, a more vehement anxiety drove on the traveller. Procuring a fresh horse as each preceding one failed, he rode night and day. It was one o'clock in the morning when he entered Anderport. At early dawn, he walked towards the mansion. Opening the gate, and leaning one hand on the latch and the other on the granite shaft of the post, he gazed down that well-remembered avenue. There was a change in its appearance—a change according well with the altered circumstances. At the time of the former visit, that scene was indeed grave and sombre; but now the season gave it a dreariness yet more impressive. The oaks, which in autumn cast their dense shade, now lifted naked branches to the raw northeaster. The old mansion was clearly discernible from one extremity to the other, and its white front, unrelieved by the foliage of trees or lighter verdure of a lawn, presented an aspect singularly cold and repulsive. Though it was now broad day, the feeble glimmer of a lamp could be detected struggling through a curtained window. In that apartment doubtless lay the expiring heir of Wriothsesly Ander. It seemed to Seymour like profanity to intrude into that chamber, and harass the departing soul with the gross and selfish interests of earth. His resolution failed: turning from the gate, and still keeping Anderport behind him, the young man walked on—he knew not, and cared not whither.

After several hours spent in roaming about the woods, nature made herself felt, and he became conscious of hunger. It was necessary to return to his lodgings; but on his way his mind was made up to go through the solemn and dreaded interview.

His soft tread made no sound upon the stone pavement of the terrace, and before he had persuaded his hesitating hand to raise the knocker, a servant accidentally approached.

"How is Mr. Ander, my good man?"

"Master Reginald, sir, is dead."

Seymour moved away faint and sick at heart.

A month had elapsed since the funeral. No will was found, and neighbours as they met made mutual inquiries as to who would prove heir to the great Ander estate. Mr. Nelson, who had been executor during the long minority of the late possessor, and was presumed to have a perfect acquaintance with the family tree, declared that Charles James, (Anthony's father) besides a younger brother, Eugene, had a sister who married Giles Atterbury, the Quaker. The eldest son of Atterbury known to be then living in Philadelphia, was undoubtedly the heir, *unless* his mother's brother, Eugene Ander, who settled in Shropshire, England, had left issue, of which there was yet no evidence. Soon after this information had become generally circulated through the community, a London newspaper was received, which announced the marriage of the Rev. John Ander, second son of the late Eugene Ander, Esq., of Shropshire. Thus it was clear that the Quaker had lost the inheritance, after all. But who was Eugene Ander's *eldest son*? This remained to be discovered.

Laurence Seymour listened to all this gossip with great indifference. The estate might find an heir, but no one could inherit the right to release him from his promise—that was buried in the grave of Reginald. His mind, left to brood upon his hopeless situation, fell into a nervous excitable melancholy. He recalled the various accounts which he had heard of disembodied spirits having returned to perform acts of justice which had been delayed during life, and the wild wish would frequently arise as he retired at night, that the form of Reginald might appear in his chamber, and pro-

nounce him absolved. Dreams, of course, were the natural consequences of this disturbed state of mind. On awaking after one of these, of the particulars of which he had only a vague recollection, he felt a strong impression that Reginald would doubtless have left him a written discharge, if in the anxieties of a sick bed the subject had occurred to him at all. This impression, so capable of giving a degree of relief, gradually deepened until it almost became conviction. An instinctive sense of honour, however still restrained him. The dream, with all the exaggeration of fancy, could not be made out an approbation, and his promise was a clear, solemn engagement, entered into after full consideration of the consequences.

Matilda Chesley had not seen her lover since the evening interview succeeding her walk with Reginald. Unaware of the cause which compelled him to shun her presence, she was much pained and surprised. Reginald's withdrawal seemed to leave no obstacle which ought to prevent him from renewing his advances. And since his return from the mining region, his conduct appeared still more unaccountable. He remained in the neighbourhood evidently unoccupied by business, and, as she learned incidentally, was constant in his inquiries with regard to her health. It occurred to her finally that mortified pride and distrust of her affection, as they had formerly given a wrong interpretation to her partial refusal, might now induce him to wait for some testimonial of regard from her.

Matilda therefore wrote him a letter, so characterized by maidenly dignity, yet at the same time so pervaded by tender earnestness, and clothed in language so exquisitely simple and touching, that it was equally impossible either not to admire the writer, or to doubt the sincerity of her affection. Seymour could not resist the appeal. He must see Matilda, if only to explain to her the hardship and hopelessness of his situation.

Little of the exhilaration of the favoured lover attended him on his ride. Present circumstances could suggest none but gloomy reflections, and he could not think of the future without a dull indistinct presentiment of some great calamity which would make the burden of existence still more intolerable. All these dark thoughts, however, fled from his mind the instant that Matilda stood before him. Her countenance had at no time before appeared so lovely, for whatever it might want of its former bloom was more than supplied by the light of joy which shone on every feature. She immediately extended her hand with the frank artlessness so peculiar to her, and Seymour, as he seized it, remembered nothing but his love. Borne away by the feelings of the moment, he described in impassioned tones both the intense suffering which he had endured in absence, and that hour's full and overflowing happiness. In return, he received from her lips the faintly whispered declaration which man can never hear without a quickened pulse and agitated frame.

The door was suddenly opened—then closed—and a second time opened. The lovers were both startled. Finally a head was thrust into the room.

"Achсах!" said Miss Chesley, with as near an approach to fret as her gentle nature was ever tempted into; "is that you? What business can you have here?"

The intruder, quite unaccustomed to entering parlours, was in truth the old negro washerwoman of the family. At the greeting of her young mistress, she ventured to extend an additional portion of her body over the threshold.

"Is Mawster Laury Semer here," she asked, standing on tiptoe, and endeavouring to peer over the top of the fire-screen, which partially concealed the gentleman.

"Yes," he said, rising, "I am here, aunty—what do you wish?"

"I've brung somethin to you," said Achсах, putting into his hand a letter, and immediately afterwards shuffled out of the room.

Seymour, as he read the missive thus strangely brought, staggered and turned deadly pale. Matilda was inexpressibly shocked by his altered aspect. Consciousness seemed almost to have deserted him. Even her presence was no longer regarded, and the fervent glance which had borne witness to his affection more eloquently than words, now gave place to a wild unearthly stare.

"Laurence! Laurence!"—affright took away the power to utter more.

His only reply was to extend the letter. She seized it and read—

"Remember your engagement—I hold you to it.

REGINALD ANDER."

In answer to Matilda's look of inquiry, Seymour, in brief and burning words, informed her of the covenant which had been entered into. "I had liked," he concluded, "to have proved false to my plighted word, and see, Matilda, a letter comes from the dead to warn me!"

Miss Chesley shuddered at hearing the recital.

"Who would have believed," said Seymour, vehemently, "that such a heart could dwell in a human bosom? How hard, relentless to the last! And as he was unmatched in malignity, so was he unmatched in craft. Think of it, Matilda—think of it! Foreseeing that he must soon depart from earth, he resolved to destroy, before he left, the happiness of those who remained! And that resolve he has executed with a deep subtlety, and an unflinching pertinacity, worthy of a fiend of darkness—worthy of himself! That a man could die thus! that a soul trembling in the last agony, and with Eternity before it, could cherish a purpose so savage and unfeeling! How incredible it seems that a rational being should have had the hardihood to spurn all hope of the mercy of Heaven, for the sake of maintaining the despicable consistency of an unforgiving temper!"

"Oh, Laurence, judge not!"

"You do well to reprove me, Matilda, yet is it not impossible to leave the memory of the dead in peace, when the dead from his very grave ceases not to molest the living? Still, you are right; complaint is useless, the doer of the wrong is beyond our reach. Reginald is mighty in his coffin, while I, a walking, breathing man, am powerless. Yes, the promise has been made; there is no help, I must abide by it. Matilda—"

The manly voice faltered, and the clear eye grew moist.

"And will you then forsake me?" said Matilda, not attempting to restrain her emotion.

"I must—I must," said Seymour, "my honour is pledged; can I do otherwise than redeem it? We part, Matilda, and not as others part, but uncheered with a single ray of hope. Yes, Reginald Ander, wherever be your spirit now, let it gloat and exult over the issue of its machinations, for our wretchedness is complete!"

CHAPTER IV

It was difficult to say whether Laurence or Matilda was most to be pitied. Yet woman must ever have the advantage in bearing grief, be its nature what it may. She is less selfish than man; and though, by the allotment of Providence, she doubtless receives more than an equal share of the sum of human suffering, disinterestedness does not lose its reward. The daughter will watch with sleepless anxiety over the declining strength of a parent. As she notes the hourly sinking pulse, she feels the blood in her own veins flow more languidly. As the aged frame totters and is bowed down, she lends the support of her own blooming youth; and if the staff furnished by filial piety can only soften the fall instead of upholding, if it bend and sink and suffer beneath its self-assumed burden, the heart looks on, distressed indeed, yet pining for no relief. The wife takes to herself, as her privileged portion, every care which racks the mind of her husband, every disappointment which plunges him in despondency. Does disease bear away his boasted strength and leave him helpless, the devoted partner robs herself of that passive energy which is her peculiar possession, and cheerfully supplies his want at her own expense. A mother's bosom, more expansive still, finds itself capacious enough to contain the distresses of not one additional being only, but of many. Her children and her children's children partake of a fount of precious sympathy which seems exhaustless.

Yet the grief which is felt on another's account is not the grief that slays—such is Heaven's bounty on the heavenly duty, charity—and the very organization which makes woman devoted to alleviating the pains of others, gives her comparative immunity from the anguish of personal sorrow. Thus

Matilda Chesley, though her strongest affections were so rudely blighted, did not immediately droop and wither by the stroke. There was, perhaps, an unnatural calmness in her demeanour, yet it was not accompanied with the dangerous wasting of settled melancholy. She discharged her household duties with unflagging fidelity, and testified as warm and active an interest as ever in the welfare and happiness of those around her.

With Seymour the case was different. Patience was a word whose import he did not understand. He could struggle with manly vigour, to avert an impending calamity, but the moment which revealed the irrevocable fate, instead of bringing rest, only goaded him to efforts which were the more violent that he knew them to be fruitless.

Matilda was fortunate in another respect. She had a friend and confidant to turn to—one of her own sex and age. Emily Marshall heard her story with undisguised horror. She expressed the most fervent detestation of the being who could take pleasure in leaving behind him a legacy of torment for two innocent hearts. All the records of crime, she declared, could not furnish a parallel to such wanton malignity.

Notwithstanding the intensity of Matilda's suffering, she could not join in this undistinguishing blame of Reginald Ander. It is possible—for she was a woman—that she could not altogether hate one who had been actuated, even in his most indefensible and cruel actions, by love for her. The very extravagance and inhumanity of his jealousy testified to the sincerity of his passion. There was another reflection which the ingenuous girl would have been less unwilling to own—the generous relief which he had furnished to her father's urgent necessities. She had not the heart, indeed, to speak in defence of Reginald, yet she listened to the reproaches which were heaped upon his memory without joining in them.

After Emily Marshall had, in this way, given vent to the first thoughts excited by the contemplation of Ander's con-

duct, her active brain next bestirred itself to find some way to extricate her friend from the toils in which a skill that seemed demoniac had so fearfully entangled her. She was not long at a loss.

"I have it—I have it," she said; "there is not room for a single doubt.

The excitable young lady did not stop to meditate upon her conclusion, but, calling for her horse, was presently, on her way to Mr. Chesley's. Matilda, notwithstanding her acquaintance with Emily's temperament, was somewhat surprised at an animation which appeared to denote so little regard for the state of her own feelings. She was soon relieved from her astonishment.

"Matilda!—I've just thought of it, and have come immediately to tell you. How foolish you and Seymour, and we all, have been. This Reginald Ander must have been deranged—no sane man could possibly have acted as he did. Hence—(don't you seize the inference at once?)—it is plain that Seymour is not bound by any engagement made to him."

"How can you prove him to have been insane?" said Matilda, with a mournful smile.

"Prove?" echoed Miss Marshall, "why his conduct shows it—think of his wickedness—his unfeeling, atrocious cruelty—"

"All this certainly tends to show a bad heart," replied Matilda; "but I fear it is very consistent with a sound head. Your theory would people the lunatic asylums, but it would rob the jail and the penitentiary."

"Would it?" said Emily, with a disconcerted air. "Still I can establish my point. If there is anything that incontrovertibly distinguishes the absence of reason, it surely is labour without a purpose. Now, what purpose could Ander possibly have had in view? In what way can he be benefited by keeping asunder you and Seymour?"

"Ah, my dear Emily," said Miss Chesley, "you make sad

work at an argument. How many persons whose sanity is never called in question, strive to attain ends which cannot benefit them? Believe me that if you take the clear perception of an object, and the resolute, unwavering, systematic prosecution of all the means leading to it for a sign of rationality, then never was there human being more certainly rational than Reginald. More successful than most others, he has reached his aim: even death, which is thought to sever the best laid schemes, has not prevented the accomplishment of this man's purpose."

"Well, if that be true," rejoined Emily, "if he was not a madman he must have been a monster. On no supposition can you be bound. Look upon the matter, Matilda, as if you were not concerned it, and judge whether it can be right and pleasing to Heaven that the happiness of two living human beings should be utterly destroyed because a man, now in his coffin, entertained during his life time the wish that it should be so. It cannot be that the beneficent Ruler of the universe would bestow such a privilege upon tyranny. Suppose that I were in your place expecting to drag out all my remaining days in sorrow and disappointment—would you not believe it in your power to disenchant me from the invisible spell and set me free in the world—free to confer happiness and to receive it? How fantastic, then, would seem to you the scruples which should restrain me, a voluntary captive, in my horrible bondage!"

"Yet," answered Matilda, with an effort at cheerfulness, "what is there so very horrible in the present situation of affairs? Are you the one to affirm that life offers not a prospect of contentment to a bachelor nor a maiden? I am sure there are many gallant young gentlemen who would receive great encouragement to hear such a confession from the charming Miss Marshall."

Emily was half inclined to pout,

"I see plainly enough," she said, "that I am wasting my

pains—if you don't love Laurence, and are so glad to get rid of him, why I have nothing more to say. Let me tell him this, and I am confident that, if he has the least remnant of spirit in him, he will be ready to dry up his own tears very quickly, and probably to find a mistress who takes somewhat less pleasure in the distress of her lovers."

"You are unkind," said Matilda, "most unkind to upbraid me thus. Certainly, if there ever was woman ingenuous in the acknowledgment of her affection, I have been—indeed, I fear I have spoken only too frankly and unreservedly to Laurence Seymour. Did you but know, Emily, how much my love for him has cost me heretofore and does cost me now, you would rather comfort and console than chide. Tell Laurence what you please, however, if by so doing you can make existence more tolerable to him. Perhaps it would be better that he should think ill of me—I must be to him as one dead: let me, then, appear unworthy of so much as a remembrance or a tear."

Emily answered eagerly, "I mean, indeed, to see Seymour, but not for the purpose of saying anything like this, be assured. I will see him, because it is he who made the engagement, if there be one. He is the person to be argued with and persuaded, not you. If Laurence can make it consistent with duty to throw himself at your feet and beg you to become Mrs. Seymour, I am sure no discreet friend will be wanted to convince you of the propriety of saying yes. So good morning to you—I trust that my next visit will bring pleasanter weather."

"What!" said Matilda, "in such haste! Do you design to seek him immediately?"

"Not so," replied Miss Marshall; "but I want time to think over what I must say. You have taunted me with being a poor logician, and I must not lay myself open to the charge a second time. Trust me, I shall be able, in the course of a few days, to get my ideas all arranged in most admirable

order. See what a profound and satisfactory casuist I shall become. Pa has Taylor's Doctor Dubitantium, and I mean to study it all through—though I am inclined to suspect that it is not half so entertaining as his sermons—especially those on the Marriage Ring, sweetest Matilda."

Off she darted at the word, leading her friend somewhat encouraged, in spite of sober reason, by her vivacity and contagious good spirits.

It was more than a week before she had the opportunity which she desired of meeting Seymour. Whether the interval was entirely occupied in the laborious preparation which she proposed to herself, may be doubted, yet she entered upon her task with a firm conviction, at least, of the goodness of her cause, if not with entire confidence in the reasons which she had collected to support it.

Miss Marshall was, by instinct, enough of a rhetorician to know that the way to make the most of one's materials is first to arouse the feelings, and when they have, in some degree, dimmed the vision, to seize the chance and urge forward whatever solid arguments there may be in reserve. So she commenced her attack in something like this fashion:

"Poor dear Matilda is in a wretched way."

Seymour started.

"Yes," continued Miss Marshall, "you cannot conceive how she suffers—indeed it's a wonder how she survived the shock."

"What shock?" said Seymour.

"How can you ask? Do you not know that she has been loving you with all her heart? If I thought it was a secret in her keeping, Mr. Seymour, depend upon it I should not betray it. She has told me everything. I know how she almost died when she believed that duty to her father required her to marry Reginald Ander; I know how she was restored to health with a suddenness, like the work of a miracle, when Ander gave her a full unconditional release; and,

finally, I know how she is now every moment sinking since you have left her."

"Good Heavens!" groaned Seymour, whilst the convulsive movement of his features showed what a tumult of passion raged within.

"I pity you with all my heart," thought the lady, "but the medicine, though bitter, will do you good." Then she went on to say—

"Matilda is now, alas, more wretched than ever she was in the gloomiest day last fall. Indeed it is wonderful, Mr. Seymour, that life and reason have endured such a blow as you inflicted."

"A blow that I have given!" ejaculated Laurence; "you mean the felon stroke of that accursed Ander."

"No, sir," said Emily, "I refer to *your* cruelty."

"Miss Marshall, explain yourself. What have I done? I would die to save her a single moment's pang."

"If you had a heart made of the same stuff as a woman's, Mr. Seymour, it would need no reminder. Did you not come to the poor girl without letting her dream that any obstacle stood in the way of your union with her? Did you not declare your attachment plainly and unequivocally? Did you not tempt her unto a confession of her own in return? And did you not, after all this, say to her that what you had uttered was a mockery—that your actions were a mockery—that the very glance of love which you had bent upon her was a mockery? Did you not extend the cup of life and happiness to a famished and dying one, and the instant that her lips were about to press the brim, did you not dash it into fragments upon the ground? Throw cold water upon the heated rock, and you rend it—think you that a woman's heart is harder than granite to endure unharmed a revulsion, to which the change from fire to ice bears no comparison?"

"But what could I do?" cried Seymour, "what could I

possibly do. She wrote to me—ought I to have refused to obey the summons?"

"I do not say it," responded Emily.

"And, after I was once in her presence, could I help pouring forth my assurance that her condescending and most noble advances were not misunderstood nor undervalued?"

"You would not have been a gentleman to have withheld such an acknowledgment," said Emily, approvingly.

"When my tongue had said so much, was it in man to be able to restrain it from uttering more—from declaring the ardour of my pent-up passion?"

"I have nothing to blame in that, either," observed Emily.

"What was there wrong, then?" said Seymour, impetuously. "Could I, when that wretched hag brought me the letter, when I saw Reginald Ander's own handwriting, when I read the words which withered every muscle, which drove the marrow from my bones—could I then persist, at the moment when all power to move was stricken from me? What should I have done?"

"I'll tell you, sir," said Emily; "you had gone too far to retreat, you had voluntarily connected the existence of another being with your own. After what had been said by you, and by Matilda, your first and only thought should have been for her."

"But consider, I beseech you," urged Seymour, "what the only alternative was—to act as I have done, or—"

"To marry her," interrupted Emily; "I understood it perfectly."

"Yes, marry her," said Seymour, with bitterness, "marry her—and be foresworn."

"This last consideration," rejoined Miss Marshall, "be it worth what it may, concerned only yourself; and your only care, as I have said, *ought* to have been for the welfare of her who had entrusted herself to your protection."

"How think you," retorted Seymour, "would her welfare

have been cared for by uniting her indissolubly to a dishonoured caitiff?"

Miss Marshall answered, readily, "She need not have known anything of your engagement, nor, consequently, of its violation. Her happiness would have been secured;—whether at the expense of your own peace or not is a question which should not have been involved in the matter. As it is, you have made a sacrifice of her upon the altar of over-nice punctilio; and how much is your misery lessened by the reflection that you have made Matilda miserable, also?"

"Over-nice punctilio!" repeated the gentleman, with an expression of great surprise.

"Yes," replied Miss Marshall, hardily, "if you had really been placed under a substantial and reasonable obligation, I should not think so severely of your conduct. But when I see that you have overwhelmed Matilda with distress merely to gratify a fanciful scruple, I confess I have little patience."

"Is it nothing?" exclaimed Seymour; "does religion use her most solemn tones to enjoin veracity—does the law devote all its cumbrous machinery to the maintenance of good faith—and yet is a man at liberty to regard his plighted word as a thing to be adhered to or falsified, just as convenience may suggest?"

"Neither religion nor law," said Emily, with emphasis, "bind you to the observance of a contract like that made with Reginald Ander."

"The law of *honour* does compel its observance."

"No, Mr. Seymour, true honour never enjoins aught that religion refuses to sanction;—is it not a sin akin to idolatry to set up for reverential homage a code of ordinances purer and more refined than that which the Creator has deemed sufficient for the frail children of Adam? You are disposed to carry the creed to its full extent—would you take the life of another or throw away your own for the sake of maintaining a fantastic point of honour? It is necessary, it seems, that

the gentleman who has won a woman's affections in disregard of the law of honour may, by breaking her heart, wipe off the stain with which his own conduct had sullied the hitherto immaculate purity of his escutcheon. A worthy cause, indeed, to demand such an expiatory victim! What, though the spot be invisible to ordinary eyes, if it be detected by Mr. Seymour's nice optics, if it disturb the serenity of his demeanour in the presence of *petits-maitres* and cracked-brained followers or subjects of the phantom-tyrant, honour, right fortunate it is that the blot can be removed at so trivial a cost as the life of Matilda Chesley. How valuable the end, how small the price!"

"Is it possible," said Seymour, "that I can be mistaken? Does not every one look at the matter as I do? Can others discern no obligation resting upon me? Were it so, how gladly would I defer to their opinion—how gratefully would I fling away my own judgment and seize theirs, grasping with it life and hope and happiness! What an exchange, to give up despair for an early heaven. Yet why tantalize myself with thoughts worse than vain! the cord that binds me is no thread of gossamer, but a rigid chain of iron."

"It is a chain, Mr. Seymour, heavy and oppressive indeed, but it has its defective link. Make but one effort of a manly reason, and you are free."

"Prove this to me," exclaimed the Englishman, "and I will reverence you henceforth as never wise Solomon was revered. You have a hearer ready to be convinced. Every strong emotion lashes me onward; remove but the bar which obstructs the road, and your task is done. Yet what single argument can you bring to overthrow that fearful, immitigable covenant?"

"In the first place you had no right to make such a contract, no right to limit and confine Matilda's affections. Who gave either Ander or you the power to say whom she should or should not love, and when you could not control

her affections, it was wickedness to attempt to disappoint and mock them. Suppose she was attached to your rival, could you be justified in defeating him by means through which she also must be a sufferer?"

"I should scorn such baseness," said Seymour.

"Suppose then she loved yourself, and the case is equally strong and clear. There is doubtless a difference in the manner in which it affects you—but none as regards her. The substitution of one object for another does not lessen the sacredness of her affections."

"But I did it to save her," pleaded Seymour.

"The reason is insufficient," answered the accuser calmly.

"Why insufficient?" persisted the other. "Assuredly you do not mean to assert that the preservation of her peace was not worth any effort: still further I think must you be from maintaining that her peace would not have been irrevocably lost the instant she wedded Reginald."

"It was presumption," said Miss Marshall, "to pretend to speak in her stead. The decision was one which she had an inalienable right as a woman to make for herself. Let all your race act upon such a principle and what would become of us in the world? No, you had not any authority to gainsay the choice that she thought proper to make."

"I admit," said Seymour, "the truth of your general maxim, but this was a peculiar case. Matilda desired to please herself; she was restrained by certain powerful considerations; these considerations did not bind me; hence it was not only justifiable but enjoined upon me by duty to interpose."

"One little thing is lacking, Mr. Seymour, to make your justification complete. It was lawful, indeed, to render her a service, but not in an affair like this, without her consent. Perhaps, however, she was consulted before you ventured to form a contract in her name—tell me, is it so?"

Laurence was abashed by this searching interrogatory, and

could only stammer out, "There was no opportunity—I could not—delicacy forbade."

"Delicacy indeed!" said Miss Marshall, taking up the word. "A wondrously delicate lover you were, I must acknowledge. You thought she had rejected you, and did not dare come into her presence, yet you scrupled not to assume authority to interfere in her most delicate concerns."

"Yet, otherwise, she would have married Reginald."

"And what was it to you if she had?" continued Miss Marshall. "Had you been her father, or brother, or near kinsman, you would have had an apology for intrusion, but a lover, I trow, has no right to regulate our affairs for us. Any man who chooses may be a woman's lover, and at this rate you would bless her with a legion of masters. What liberty of choice would be left us, I pray you?"

Emily became quite excited by her theme. The curls shook about her lively face with an impressiveness almost equal to that of the ambrosial locks of Homer's Jove, and the forefinger of her right hand was raised, as if to give additional point and effect to the sharp words which issued from her lips. The unfortunate gentleman had no courage to resist the storm, and she continued—

"And has the result been so excellent as to incline you to further efforts of the sort? Suppose Matilda had thought proper to marry Mr. Ander, how much worse off would she have been than your most kind and judicious interference has made her? I am sure that were I in her place I would be glad enough to get rid of my forlorn state at the cost of a year or two's weeping widowhood. Widows, I believe, Mr. Seymour, are allowed the privilege of thinking and acting for themselves—a desirable one it is too. Let it even be that Mr. Ander had lived, she would at least have had a husband, and that it seems is more than you are disposed to allow her. No, no, I see plainly enough what consideration induced the shrewd bargain. You deemed your chance of obtaining Ma-

tilda Chesley so slight that it might well enough be relinquished for the satisfaction of barring off another creature from the hay in the manger. Yet you had far better have trusted to a woman's prudence and discretion; she might have discovered a better way to escape the marriage—at all events she could not have adopted a worse."

"Do not judge me so harshly, Miss Emily," said Seymour. "I have done wrong in making the agreement, I know, but consider that it was not my proposition. Ander took advantage of the excited condition of my feelings, and tempted me into it."

"That brings me to the end of my argument," answered the lady. "You have admitted that the covenant was one which the parties had no right to make; the consequence is clear, it is a nullity."

"I think not," said Laurence Seymour, after a pause. "If I am the sufferer by my own act, that does not release me. What I have promised is merely forbearance—the continuance of a state of things already existing—had I pledged myself to any active conduct, the case would be different."

"What conduct more active could there be, Mr. Seymour; are you not killing poor Matilda as fast as you can?"

"There is another and stronger principle," urged Laurence; "I may not take advantage of my own wrong. I prevented the threatened marriage—by unjustifiable means it may be, yet I ought not to reap benefit from those means by the violation of my engagement."

"Yet you say Ander wickedly tempted you."

"He did."

"Then," added Emily, "you are in no way bound to keep faith to him. He knew of material circumstances of which you were unaware—thus the contract was a fraudulent one and cannot be obligatory."

"It is easy," said Laurence, "to pile up specious reasons, but there is a moral instinct within us which is the best guide."

I feel that what you urge me to would involve a breach of honour. I will not depart from my word! I cannot do it."

"There it is again," exclaimed Miss Marshall, impatiently, "you will not obey reason, but blindly cling to a false, mistaken pride. Your guide is not conscience—not that instinct implanted by the lovingkindness of the Creator, but a delusive substitute, a weed of rank growth, whose germ truly is human sinfulness, but which has been nourished and reared by the errors of education and by unchristian and barbarous habits of thought. Place the matter in what light you will and the same judgment must be formed. If Reginald Ander were at this moment living, a word from his mouth would be sufficient to release you—would it not?"

"Assuredly."

"Farther; if the departed had power to communicate with the living, and he were even now to give you a discharge, the result would be the same."

Seymour did not immediately answer. His lips were firmly compressed, the muscles of his throat were rigid, and each cheek became suddenly pale and hollow, whilst his eyes rolled wildly. But he speedily recovered himself sufficiently, if not to speak, at least to nod in answer.

Emily was somewhat frightened, but proceeded. "As it is, however, Ander has no way of holding intercourse with you. How can we be certain then what his sentiments are? Suppose him ever so much inclined to set you free from your promise, what can he do? A terrible barrier is between; you and Matilda are here enduring intolerable suffering—and owing to what cause? Merely to his incapacity to give information of his desire that you should be relieved. Death dissolves his power to do good; it ought to dissolve his power to do evil. The moment that removes the master, annihilates the thralldom; you are at liberty to walk forth from the prison which the stroke of Heaven has shattered—and there is no man to question or stay you."

"Ah!" replied Seymour, "death does not annul a contract. If I owe a debt, the decease of my creditor is far from canceling it."

"Unquestionably," said Miss Marshall promptly, "for that is a right which is inheritable. If, now, Reginald's heir may represent him as a party to this covenant, you must look to that heir for release. The example which you yourself bring forward shows most plainly the true character of the contract you have entered into. It binds you to the performance of no beneficial act—your debt is not one the payment of which can advantage the creditor—all that it stipulates is harm, injury, wickedness."

Seymour answered with agitation, "I am the most unfortunate—nay, if you will have it so, the most guilty of beings, but there is no help for it. If I have committed a wrong, it is irremediable. I have forged my own fetters and shackles, it is true, but I cannot break them; nor may the promise once given, lose its force by the act of him that makes it. Cease then, I beseech you, Miss Marshall, to goad the tethered ox."

"This is folly, Mr. Seymour; do not give way to passion, but consider it calmly. Exert yourself to bring up some tangible principle to establish your position."

"I have one," he replied, "I have a principle, plain, weighty, and pertinent. Departure from this life may release from a duty, since it takes away the ability to perform it, but it cannot rob one of a *right*. Were Reginald alive I could not break my promise to him—nor can I now that he is dead."

"But contemplate, for a moment," said Emily, "the absurd and horrid consequences to which such a doctrine would lead. I have seen somewhere the story of a tyrant who, on his death-bed, in order to make his subjects grieve his decease in spite of themselves, summoned a number of the best and most influential citizens of his capital into a large public hall, or one of the apartments of his palace, and gave or-

ders to his guards to the effect that the departure of breath from his body should be the signal for commencing an undistinguishing and merciless massacre of the whole assembly. Now that man was a lawful king, his guards owed him obedience, and so long as he lived could not neglect his commands save at the peril of their lives. It was not their place to examine his motives, but to obey promptly and implicitly. The king died; did his right to their service cease? According to your principle it did not, and they were bound to execute his edicts, however atrocious, in the same manner as in his life time. The guards—hard, savage, furious, as they were,—interpreted their duty differently, and I believe history has never called them foresworn and perjured because they disobeyed the wicked order of their deceased lord.”

“I could answer you,” said Laurence, “but I am sick at heart. I feel little disposition to prolong a discussion which can produce no fruit. Though you were to array against me the authority of every divine from St. Austin to Tillotson, you could not change my conviction. It rests on a foundation which argument cannot reach.”

“If this be the case,” answered Emily, not a little mortified, “it is indeed useless to say more. Yet if you cannot reason, I suppose you can feel. Carry with you, then, the knowledge that your previous indiscretion, joined to your present punctilious adherence to a void engagement, is draining the life-blood from the veins of Matilda Chesley. Go—since you will go—and think of this.”

Laurence Seymour did think of it. The potent arrow which Miss Marshall had launched with a good intention, pierced his breast, and made a wound which rankled and festered,—consequences far different from those she expected.

The energetic and friendly young lady was visited by troubles of her own. Mr. Marshall, about a month before Reginald's death, had left Anderport for Charleston. During all the time that had since elapsed no tidings of him reached

his family. Finally they wrote letters to various individuals in Charleston; the answers brought the information that he had not been seen in that city. This was a painful surprise. Conjecture was at fault to account for his disappearance. Emily bore up bravely, and maintained that all would yet come right, but as the days of suspense succeeded each other, even her spirits sank. Matilda became in turn the comforter, and suggested many a bright hope. Mr. Marshall might have found business to take him in a different direction, or the packet in which he sailed might have been compelled by stress of weather to put in at some intermediate port, or he may have chosen not to stop at Charleston but to proceed further, &c., &c. Emily listened eagerly, but the words rather soothed than assured her.

Mr. Marshall's mysterious detention excited much concern beyond the limits of his household; yet the good people of Anderport might have been excused for not indulging in a sorrow which it was possible time would prove causeless—especially when we consider what there was going on in their midst to engross the attention of every one. Their race-course had long been the boast of the inhabitants of the village and vicinity, but it was now to have the signal honour of being the scene of contest for two of the most noted horses in the South, Caliph and Gallant Grey. The day of decision was close at hand when the boy who was to ride the Gallant Grey was taken with a colic, and in less than twenty-four hours thereafter expired. If this occurrence had followed instead of preceding the race, it would have been of little importance, but as the matter stood, it caused much difficulty. The horse was not more remarkable for fleetness than for his vicious and untameable disposition. Many apprehensions were consequently entertained, by those interested in his success, that the Gallant Grey would not prove victor in the trial.

Among those most concerned was Gilbert Jordan, the gam-

bler; and no one manifested more activity and earnestness in looking out for another rider who could be trusted.

"I know of but a single chance left us," he said at length. "There is only one fellow I would dare trust the horse to, and that is Buck Weeks. He's rather over weight, but we must make him do. Where is the chap? I have not seen him lately."

Some one answered—

"Why, I believe Buck has been taken with a fit of religion, or something of the sort. I heard him say that he had done with a wild life for good."

"Pshaw! never mind that," said Jordan, "I warrant I can coax him. Whereabouts does he live?"

"In a shanty just across the first branch on the road to Shenkins'."

"I'll have him, then, in a trice," said the gambler, throwing himself on a horse.

After fifteen minutes smart riding he reached the wretched little hovel which had been described to him. Buck Weeks was sitting in the door, busily hammering upon a last.

"What's to pay?" exclaimed the visiter. "You are not turned shoemaker, surely?"

"Yes, I am, though," responded Weeks. "I want to get shed of all my bad ways, and try to earn a decent, quiet livin' by working. It's 'bout time my manners was mended, I judge, for they promise to be past patching before long."

"This is all well enough," said Jordan, "but, in the first place, you must ride one race for me."

"O, I'm too heavy—a long ways too heavy."

"Let me take care of that, Buck—I'll bring you right."

"But still I can't do it," said Weeks. "I've rid my last race—the track isn't to be touched any more by me."

"You'll do this little thing though, Buck, I am sure. You cannot mean to stand at such a trifle when it's to oblige Gil Jordan. And what in the world's to hinder?"

"I've promised faithful not to."

"Who have you promised?"

"Mr. Ander, what was."

"A dead man!" rejoined Gilbert Jordan. "Oh, you may afford to break your word this once; he'll never know it, or if he does, will not trouble you about it."

"I'm not certain of that," answered Buck Weeks, "if there's any folks what turn to ghosts, I reckon he's like to be one of 'em."

Jordan laughed and said,

"Well, I tell you what, Buck, if he goes to pestering you any, just send him to me—I can manage a live man easy enough, and I think it can't be so much worse to take a tug with a dead one. It's natural to suppose, too, that ghosts are not extra stiff in the knees."

Still Weeks appeared unpersuaded: he shook his head and replied:

"I promised him, and I must stick to it."

"Nonsense!" exclaimed Jordan.—"What's got into you that you should make so much of your word, all of a sudden!"

"Why, you know how I tried to keep him from getting to you at Reveltown?"

"Yes," said the gambler.

"And how he got wet as a rat in fording the big creek."

"You've told me before about that, too."

"Well," continued Weeks, "the cold that he caught then was what killed him. About six weeks or such a matter before he died, he saw me walking along by the gate and gets into a talk with me, and you may depend you never heard a preacher go on as solemn and affecting. He said his being to die was my work, and asked if I didn't feel as if I ought to do him a little sort of favour to pay. Somehow or other before that he'd got me to crying, and when he says this, I spoke up that I'd do anything requested. 'What I want, then,' says he, 'is for you to change your way of life. Give

up drink, and cock-fighting, and betting, and all kinds of wickedness, and take to some respectable trade.' He told me, too, to read the Bible; and at the last he said that perhaps he would see me again to find out whether I minded my promise. I haven't seen him since, and I've a queer notion that if I get into any badness he'll come yet to make me toe the mark. So you see, Mr. Jordan, it's quite impossible that I could ride any race."

"Pshaw, pshaw!" said the other, "I'll be bound you've made promises to hundreds of persons before now, and broke them as easily as you would break a stick of candy. What was young Ander more than other people that you must mind him so particularly?"

"That's a puzzle," answered Weeks, "that rather bothers me as much as it does you. I can't tell for my life what it was that made him so, but it is a fact he had a gift of twisting folks about as he wanted. He never asked for anything but he was sure to get it."

"I can explain that without the least trouble," said Jordan; "he was rich, and there's nothing but can be bought."

Buck Weeks replied thoughtfully:

"Money helps mightily, I know, but there's many rich folks, and I'd back Reginald Ander (that is, in course, supposing he was alive) against the whole of them. A man could have come and offered me a hundred pounds, providing I should quit liquor, and so forth, and I'd have jerked it back to him and grinned under his very nose. Now, Mr. Ander hadn't given me a penny—he hadn't even paid me for showin' him the road, because I didn't take him in the appointed time. Still I'm going to mind his orders."

"See here, Buck," said Jordan, "it's not worth while to talk any more—you must just ride this once and then you may quit for good. I have staked every shilling I'm worth on Gallant Grey. If that horse beats, I'm a rich man; if he loses, I am *ruined*. There's nobody now in Anderport who

can give him any sort of a chance. He's a hard horse to manage right—but if no one else can do it, you can."

"You are correct there, certain," answered Buck, proudly. "I have been on wild and wicked horses before now."

"I know that," said Jordan, "and therefore it is you can't refuse to come out and save me from being broken. I once undertook a much more difficult job for you."

"You did," exclaimed the ci-devant cobbler, throwing away his tools, "and I'm in for it now to help you what I can. When I think, though, of Mr. Ander, I'm kind of a-feared—still your time comes first, and then I'll mind him."

Jordan carried his prize directly to Anderport, and the first thing done there was to consult the scales. The gambler's face grew long as one weight after another was laid on to balance the diminutive person of the race-rider.

"Why, Weeks," he said, "you have surely grown fatter since you have changed your life. Goodness brings laziness, I reckon."

"How much has to come off of me?" asked the youth with a rueful presentiment of the regimen that was to follow.

"I won't frighten you," answered Jordan, "by naming the number of pounds, but it's more than one or two, you may be satisfied. The time is plaguey short, besides—that's the mischief—only a week from Thursday. We must make brisk work. All this hair of yours may as well be clipped off in the first place. I really believe you have as much weight on your head as the man had that the parson told me about—a fellow that raked off half-a-stone of hair every shearing time."

"I can't spare my hair, by no manner of means," said Buck, "It's the only thing to brag of about me."

"You must, though," said Jordan.

"No, sir; I can't go that. If even Mr. Ander had told me to be bobbed, I should have stood out stiff agin him. But I'll take off an extra chunk of flesh to make it the same as if

I did. I'll wrop myself in hot blankets of night times and sweat myself down to skin and bone; so never fear for this boy; when he undertakes a thing, howsoever agin the grit, he will go through with it for certain."

It was the day before the race. Buck Weeks and his trainer had each done his part, and as the youth tottered about the tavern yard, he appeared sufficiently thin and ghastly to rival the *Anatomie Vivante*. The friends of the Gallant Grey were in high spirits. Their unmatched horse had now a rider equal to the task of controlling and directing his energies. Buck Weeks, with the applauding eye of Jordan upon him, had made the circuit of the course in a style which warranted the highest expectations of his future performance. The race-rider's pale cheek kindled with animation as he descended from the saddle to receive the congratulations and praises of the privileged few who witnessed the trial. Yet the youth was not happy. The memory of Reginald Ander haunted him. With a nature whose susceptibility and kindly impulses had survived even the degrading and brutalizing life which he had led from infancy, he possessed the dangerous gift of a lively imaginative faculty. His grateful attachments to the gambler had overcome a reluctance which had resisted unmoved all the various and seductive influences of the race-course, yet it could not free his mind from the painful presentiment of coming ill. "Something is going to happen to me, I am certain," was the thought of the untutored but generous lad. "Let it come, though: if I help Gil. Jordan in his time of trouble it's enough for me. Never mind the risk—I wouldn't have it away. Strong and rich as he is, he has nobody else to look to but Buckner Weeks—that's a thing to make a fellow's heart jump."

That evening he ate no supper. When some one urged the importance of taking something to support his strength, his wan features assumed a faint smile, and he answered,

" 'Taint best to be over hearty. I can't have too little

meat on my ribs to-morrow. Think what curses I should get if the scale master was to call me too heavy. I reckon you'd have nothing else to do then but to lash a couple of bushels of wheat on Gallant Grey's back, and fasten a bunch of thistles to each stirrup, and turn him into the track to shift for himself. I'd bet a ninepence he would do better at that fixing than with any other rider besides me that you could put on his back.

"But if you fast at this rate, Buck, you'll be too weak to ride."

The youth laughed scornfully.

"Do you think so, sure enough? Don't you fret if I shouldn't be able to crawl, but pour a gill of brandy down my throat and lift me on to the saddle, and you'll find out what Buck Weeks can do."

This apology for his abstinence was ingenious, but it did not give the true reason. There were feelings stirring in his bosom which took away all power to swallow food. When he laid himself on his pallet it was not to sleep. The day that was next to dawn would prove the crisis of his fate. Let those who believe that the dignity of self-sacrifice attaches only to the heroes of the world—the Curtii, the Damons, and the Lochiels—look with contempt upon the sorrows and intrepidity of poor Buck Weeks. Their sympathy is not called for. The race-rider knew well that his emotions were ridiculous, and therefore he concealed them. He rose from his uneasy pillow, hoping that it was dawn. When he drew aside the curtain the stars were still shining brightly, and the only sign that could be discerned of the approach of day was a faint tinge of red upon the upper surface of the long dark cloud which rested motionless on the horizon.

"Daybreak ain't very far off," muttered Buck Weeks, glad to escape on any pretence from his unwelcomed couch. Slipping in his boots he crept softly down stairs. The fresh air without seemed to invigorate his exhausted frame, and he

was encouraged to extend his walk beyond the narrow precincts of the yard. The road conducted him to the front of the white mansion. He stopped. Here it was that the conversation was held which had left so deep an impression upon his mind; and there, a few rods to the left, appeared the dim outline of the cedar hedge which encircled the spot where Reginald Ander was sleeping with his fathers. At that moment, all those solemn warnings, and the no less solemn promise which had been the consequence of them, rose before the lad's mind. Remorse and shame at the violation of that vow were the first feelings which this train of reflection produced, but he soon made a determined effort to free himself from them. "I couldn't help breaking my word—I haven't done wrong—I'm willing to stand up before anybody's face and speak right out that I haven't done a bit of wrong."

Buck Weeks felt himself nerved with new and surprising energy. Instead of shrinking away conscience-stricken, he was moved by a daring wish to brave the very presence of his monitor. As thought succeeded thought in his soul, the inclination became stronger and stronger. His whole corporeal system partook of the agitation. His hand tried the latch of the gate; it was rusted, and could not be raised. The interposition of an obstacle transformed the vague, dreamy wish into desperate resolve. He speedily climbed the paling, and hastened towards the gloomy thicket. As he groped along in search of a passage-way through the closely planted cedars, a sound from within startled his ear. Was it a groan, or a sigh, or the murmur of the breeze?

Startled beyond measure, the youth paused and listened. There was no repetition, yet his audacity had left him. He was actuated then by no desire to confront the dead. But shame came to the rescue of his faltering purpose, and parting the branches with a sudden effort he pressed into the palpable darkness that filled the inclosure. At first he was like one blinded; no object whatever could be distinguished.

When his eyes became a little accustomed to the gloom, he discerned the bright, freshly riven bars of a fence. That fence he knew enclosed the grave of him whose body had last claimed the right of sepulture in the family burial place of the Anders. The race-rider began to advance with a degree of confidence, but soon had occasion to halt and strain his vision to the utmost. One panel of the fence was divided by a dark upright form. It was not a post, but something broader and higher; to the now thoroughly frightened race-rider it seemed to resemble the human figure. His earnest and long-continued gaze could make nothing of it. The darkness proved an impenetrable veil. He made a few steps, watching the object eagerly the while. It did not move; he proceeded, and finally met the fence on the southern side of the grave. A space of only two yards width separated him from the form which he had been scanning so anxiously, and which still preserved its position unmoved. The high fence obstructed the youth's sight; and in order to gain a better view he placed his foot upon the lower rail, and was thus enabled to raise himself easily several feet. Then it was that the figure opposite stirred, and from it there burst in agonized tones, "Gracious Heaven help me—he is come!"

Buck Weeks clung nervously to the fence, without power to move a limb. Sensation, thought, every active faculty deserted him.

The figure on the other side continued to utter incoherent and broken sentences. "If you be Reginald Ander—if unexpiated crime have rent the coffin—give me back the pledge; I adjure you to restore that liberty—that peace of which you have robbed me. Now that you have felt the weighty hand of death you dare not refuse me. Hasten while there is yet time—hasten ere the living become as thee!"

Many more expressions equally wild and extravagant were poured forth without intermission. Buck Weeks perceived that he need not apprehend encountering any supernatural

being, but he was none the less disposed to relieve the spot of his presence, and as a preliminary measure slid down from the fence.

At this the other individual cried out, "He is gone—he is gone—he has left me no discharge—he has left me no hope!" Thus saying he gave a fearful groan and fell to the earth.

The flight of Buck Weeks was at once arrested. Humanity forbade him to go without some examination into the condition of the unfortunate man. He crept around therefore to the other side of the narrow enclosure. He found the man prostrate and inanimate. Calling up every power of his attenuated and feeble limbs, he dragged the body through the cedar hedge to the comparative light of the exterior. Then he was able to discern clearly, what he suspected from the tones of the voice—that the fainting man was Laurence Seymour.

This ascertained, the next thought of Buck Weeks was to procure assistance. Forgetting, in the confusion of the moment, the proximity of the mansion, he climbed the fence and proceeded towards the village. Day had faintly dawned, and out of the shade of the trees it was quite light.

Before the lad had gone very far he met Gilbert Jordan. "You scamp!" exclaimed the latter, "we did not know what had become of you. Jake said he heard you slip out of the house an hour ago. Where in the world have you been—you look pale and scared enough to have seen a ghost!"

"You might make a worse guess, that's a fact," answered Buck Weeks, "I've been in the very place for ghosts—that is the grave-yard up yonder."

"The grave-yard? Are you out of your senses?"

"There'd be no cause for wonder if I was, at any rate. I wouldn't be the only person neither that this morning has taken the wits from. There's another body, I judge, who will give you his word, providin' he ever gets able to talk again, that inside of those cedars is the spot where funny sights is to be seen."

"How now, Buck, what is all this you are talking about?"

"Just go along with me and I'll show you."

Buck Weeks took Jordan by the arm, but the stout gambler remained still without yielding.

"Do come along, Mr. Jordan; that Englishman, Mr. Seymour, is over there in a fainting fit, if not worse off."

"Is this the plain truth," said the other, "or are you trying to make a fool of me?"

"It's the fact, and no mistake at all," answered Weeks, leading his now passive companion towards the place where he had left the lifeless Seymour. When they got there Jordan saw the impression which was left on the dewy grass, but neither he nor Buck Weeks could find the form that had made it.

It is necessary now to refer to another person, to whom also that night was one of great wretchedness. Information was received the day previous, by the family of Mr. Marshall, that some fishermen had found on the beach of a small inlet, in the vicinity of Charleston, the body of a man. The face, said the accounts, was so much marred as to defy recognition, but the height and general proportions of the figure were those of Mr. Marshall. A gold watch was suspended around the neck, and the breast-pocket of the coat, which was of fine broadcloth, contained a letter without address, (having probably been sent in an envelope), but signed W. S. Thompson. The letter was an invitation to the writer's residence, and commenced with 'Dear Cousin.' It had no date, and afforded no intimation of the place from which it was sent. These facts were made known in the belief that Mr. Marshall's family would be best able to determine whether they justified the apprehensions entertained of the identity of that gentleman with the person whose remains had been found.

Mr. Marshall had no relative of the name of W. S. Thompson, but he *had* a cousin named W. L. Thompson. The

doubt whether or not a mistake had been made by those who deciphered the letter was all that separated the distressed family from the horrible certainty that the husband and the father had perished.

With such a theme for her meditations, Emily Marshall, as may well be supposed, passed an unquiet night. Before breakfast on the morrow she was informed that a visitor waited to see her below, and when she was told subsequently that it was Mr. Seymour, she believed at once, from the unusual hour of his call, that he came to bring a confirmation of the evil tidings received the day before.

She entered the parlour trembling and pale. The single glance which she was able to make at the ghastly countenance of Laurence, seemed to warrant her worst presentiments.

"You need not speak, Mr. Seymour, I understand it all. It is certain the—the body which was found is—is in truth—my father's."

"Oh, I trust not," said Laurence, "I have nothing to say about that, I came for another purpose. Yet I have been grievously inconsistent, I forgot what alarm must be excited by the news you have so recently heard. Pardon me. Even now I had better retire.

"Stay, sir," she said, "stay, I assure you I am glad to have my thoughts diverted from the subject which has occupied them. But you appear unwell, Mr. Seymour."

"Do I?" he answered. "It is not wonderful: this evening the Liverpool packet, the Royal Maiden, leaves Anderport, and I embark in her."

"Why this sudden determination, sir?" enquired Emily, with great interest. "Have you so soon succeeded in releasing your mind from Matilda Chesley?"

"No," said Seymour, "I return to England, but I have two companions thither, close companions, who go wherever I go, the memory of Matilda, and Despair. What should detain me in America? If I had any thought now for wealth,

no hope of acquisition could keep me, for the mines in which I invested the whole of my scanty means have proved an utter failure. No, I am equally a beggar in fortune and happiness. Why should I remain to prolong an agony of which the certain termination is foreseen?"

"Yet continue a little longer, Mr. Seymour; remain to comfort Matilda."

"Comfort Matilda?" he repeated passionately. "Ah, have you not already told me how successful I have heretofore been in administering consolation? Am I ignorant of the suffering which my guilty, selfish imprudence has brought upon her? Because I have wounded, must I slay outright? Were it not for her I should be less utterly miserable. But cursed as no other wretch on earth is cursed, I have made Matilda's fate as dreadful as my own, saving that she has the support of innocence, and that my torture is aggravated by the knowledge of hers. You have shown me clearly, Miss Marshall, the villainy of my conduct, yet you cannot conceive the intolerable anguish of the remorse which your faithful reproof has quickened. Well it is that you cannot know what I endure, for barely to witness each agony would be enough to poison the peace of the most innocent and happy of God's creatures."

Emily was much shocked at the abandonment of all hope and energy which was revealed, not less in his neglected attire and care-worn features than in his wild, impassioned language. She feared that she had heretofore urged matters too far, and endeavoured to assuage the storm which she had roused.

"Remember, sir," she said, "that if I painted the situation of Matilda in strong colours, it was merely for the sake of persuading you to adopt the only course which can secure either her happiness or your own."

"It is needless to recur to that," answered Seymour with a shudder, "I am convinced that my promise ought not to be broken."

"Yet think of it," said Emily earnestly, "think it over seriously and carefully, and you will see as plainly as I do that—"

"And have I not thought of it?" he exclaimed, interrupting her. "What soul has ever been exercised in thought if mine has not? For what instant have I *ceased* to dwell upon it? Do you charge me to think? I have thought till my brain can endure the rack no longer. I have thought till intellect reels from exhaustion! You have seemed to suspect me of indifference to Matilda's happiness because I will not sacrifice what you term my scruples; how quickly would such suspicions be dismissed if you but knew, Miss Marshall, to what measures my longing desire to escape my obligation has led me. I have come to you this morning with dank and tangled hair, and clothing all in disorder. Where think you was my toilet made? What scene was it that I left to proceed hither?"

Emily's countenance expressed the inquiry which she was too much frightened, by the increasing wildness of his demeanor, to utter in words.

"Ay," he went on to say with an intensely bitter emphasis, "I did think the matter over as you directed; and I was driven to the conviction that earth afforded but a single chance of escape. There are accounts—we read them—we hear them—that spirits of the departed have been known to exhibit themselves to living eyes, and to declare those wishes and injunctions which men would not otherwise learn. Are these but vain fables? Say so and I will believe you. Call them rather madmen's dreams. Yet while you are rejoicing in a sound and vigorous reason, pity the wretch who is compelled to look to the delusion of a sickly fancy as to his sole reliance. Yes, Miss Marshall, the shipwrecked, drowning man, with no plank or life-boat in view, clings in agony to the floating straw;—in dreams and in my waking hours I invoked the shade of Reginald. He mocked my impotent calls and would not appear. One night only intervened before the

departure of the packet-ship. In that last moment I could dare all things; Reginald refused to come to me, I determined to go in search of *him*. The night which has just past I spent by the side of his grave."

Seymour stopped abruptly, and looked steadfastly at Miss Marshall. There was something in the almost insane energy of his manner that fascinated the listener and carried her attention along irresistibly.

"Go on, go on, sir," she said; "saw you aught?"

"I did. What it was, I know not; perhaps an earthly exhalation, or a phantasma of the wearied vision, perhaps it was Reginald, Be it what it may, I hailed the form without dread, for had I not longed for its appearance? But I saw it sink into the grave from which it had risen; then my strength which could have endured undaunted a converse with the dead, proved inadequate to support a disappointment. I was smitten to the earth. Afterwards I revived to find myself stretched upon the long grass at a distance from the grave."

Seeing Emily quite confounded by his story, he added, "But I did not come, Miss Marshall, for the purpose of taxing either your nerves or your credulity. My object in intruding upon you in a time and manner so unseemly, was merely to inform you that after the lapse of a few hours I leave the colony forever, and then to solicit your kind and prudent advice upon a point which I am not in a state of mind to judge fitly myself. Shall I see Matilda before I go?"

"Does your purpose," answered Emily, "indeed admit of no change? Would it not be well to delay your departure if but so long a time as would enable both you and her to prepare for such a meeting and separation?"

"It cannot be," he said. "If I do not avail myself of this opportunity I must remain several months, and to stay here that space would reduce me to a condition even worse than this in which I now am. I dare not think what I might sink to. No, I must preserve, if it be possible, the degree of rea-

son which I have left. I shall not pass another night in Anderport,"—this declaration was attended with a visible tremor of the muscles of his face—"I shall go on ship-board at three this afternoon."

"I do not know what to advise," said Emily, "judging of Matilda's feelings by my own, I should say that she ought to see you, yet I may be wrong."

Laurence now spoke quickly. "Let the decision be left to Matilda herself, it is most fitting. See her, Miss Marshall, I entreat you, and if she can bear to hear me say farewell, let her attend you on your return hither. In four hours I will call again. But tell her to regulate her course from consideration only of what will least wound her own peace. To me the bitterness of the parting consists in the necessity which compels it, not in any attendant circumstances. My distress is incapable of alleviation, and the only thing that can aggravate it is that any suffering which can be avoided is incurred by Matilda. You will communicate this to her, will you not?"

Miss Marshall gave the promise, and added that she would be at home to meet him at ten o'clock, either with or without the company of Matilda, as she should determine.

As soon as the morning meal was over, the young lady mounted her pony and quickly arrived at the house of the Chesleys. With all the calmness she could summon she informed her friend of the conversation which she had had with Seymour. Then she proceeded to impart the reflection and fears which it had excited in her own mind.

"You can have no idea, Matilda," she said, "of his appearance. The severest and most protracted sickness could not have produced so great an alteration as he has undergone within a week;—it is astounding. But the terrible change in his exterior is nothing to the distemperature and disorder which his mind exhibits. You know, dear Matilda, that I could not be foolish nor wicked enough to alarm you without occasion—I should be far more inclined to err in the opposite

direction. Yet, I do assure you, that there is serious cause for apprehending that Laurence may lose his reason."

Matilda was, of course, much affected.

"May a merciful Providence avert such a calamity! But what a weight of responsibility rests on the decision which is left to me. If I refuse to see him, who can tell the effect of such an answer upon a mind in the state of his? Yet, what possible good can issue from a meeting? What do you think, Emily? Give me counsel—assist me to choose the lesser evil, where both appear equally great and threatening."

Miss Marshall replied: "I am utterly unable to distinguish between them, or rather I see but one evil—an evil which you cannot hope to moderate by any course that does not annihilate it. If he is to leave the colony with this bitter disappointment preying upon his mind, it can make little difference, it seems to me, whether or not you permit him to utter his farewell. If he quits you at all, I think,—no, I would not say that, but I *fear*—that though Laurence Seymour may survive, the light of his mind will be extinguished for ever."

"This is a day of horror," exclaimed Matilda; "I have endured anguish before, but never till now have I felt that I could be content to barter life for oblivion. To know the future and to see no means of affecting it, make up perfect wretchedness. What crushes me most, Emily, is to behold the fate that impends over Laurence, and, at the same time, to be unable to make even an effort for his succour. Would that I had power to confer on him the ability to bear."

"This is, indeed, beyond your skill," said Emily; "but can you not do a better service? It is impossible for you to give Laurence a faculty which his Maker has denied him; but are you not blessed with a prerogative still more to be desired? May not an exertion of your will save him from any occasion for the use of that deficient faculty—save him, I mean, from the suffering itself, which he is not able to support?"

"Speak more plainly, dear Emily; do not tantalize me! is

there any prospect or possibility of such a result? Can your ingenuity and zeal point out any imaginable way for his relief as well from his present distress as from that other and far worse calamity? Oh, Emily, I do not ask you now to give him happiness—only preserve him from insanity—preserve him from a living death. So long as that noble form is permitted to walk the earth, may it never cease to be tenanted by the unclouded soul of Laurence Seymour.”

“The course,” said Emily, “which, as it seems to me, you are plainly called upon to follow, besides being the only effectual one, is the most simple and direct. Come with me, see Laurence and tell him (what no dispassionate person requires to be told) that he is torturing himself unnecessarily—that he does wrong to cling to a wicked and null engagement—that he has no right to destroy himself or you for a point of honour—tell him, finally, that the reluctance with which he will yield testifies amply to his fidelity. Assure him—and your word he will accept—that when he violates a pledge, in obedience to the demands of a higher duty, his pain is not the anguish of him who commits a sin, but the noble and not dishonourable pain of the martyr who tears away one portion of his heart in order to maintain the integrity of the rest.”

Matilda mused a while, and then answered, “Let not your anxiety, dear Emily, to deliver me from present unhappiness, mislead your judgment. Is it your calm, deliberate conviction that it is incumbent on me to urge Laurence to break his word? Consider the matter well and from all sides. Ought I to contribute the weight of any influence I may possess to induce him to act contrary to his own sense of duty?”

“It is certainly incumbent on you,” answered Miss Marshall, “to guide his judgment when it errs.”

“Ah, but, Emily, would it not be presumption in me to present myself in opposition to conscience? The man who does what he thinks is right, does right; while he who prefers even a beneficent and righteous action, at a time when he

believes it wrong, sins. Remember, too, that the person who undertakes to advise another upon a question of duty must always assume a great responsibility, and especially when the case admits of doubt; but if the question have been already decided in honesty and sincerity by the individual himself, ought we not to be exceeding cautious how we interfere?"

Emily Marshall, though conscious that her gentle friend was far from intending a personal reproach, felt her conscience tingle under this observation. Then it occurred to her to doubt how far her own officious interference had tended to the profit of those in whose concerns she had been interested. Nature, however, was not to be quelled at once, and she replied,

"Would you stand aloof, Matilda, while Laurence committed suicide? and is he not, even now, laying violent hands on the noblest part of his being? The danger is instant—urgent: will you wait quietly to see it run its course?"

"No, I will not," said Matilda; "my efforts may, indeed, be of little avail; but when such a disaster happens, feeble instruments, in the absence of better, may, without folly, be put into use. I will meet Laurence."

It was exactly ten o'clock when Seymour made his second call upon Miss Marshall. She descended to the parlour immediately, and with her came Matilda. Emily must have been the least agitated of the three, but her eyes were so filled with tears, and her heart so overwhelmed by a torrent of emotions that she had little power to watch the demeanour of the lovers. She could discern, however, that Seymour had the same haggard aspect as in the morning, but was more composed. Neither he nor Matilda said much for a considerable space of time—each fearing to disturb the calm which it cost them such an effort to preserve. Seymour at length found the trial becoming too severe, and determined that the interview should be brought to a close before his self-control quite gave away.

"Matilda," he said, "can you pardon me for the folly and weakness which have inflicted such distress upon you? I meant for the best, and if I had contributed in any degree, however small, to your welfare, my pains would be lighter: yet I cannot consider how I have harassed and betrayed your heart, without being oppressed with humiliation and remorse. In my very selfishness I have been weak and unmanly and vacillating. It is anguish to perceive now that a villain, who had subjected himself to no restraint whatever, would have injured you less than I have done. Half-way crime has equal guilt, and is followed with greater suffering."

Matilda answered: "Speak not so, Laurence; this is not to reproach yourself, but to humble me by recalling how much your generous sacrifice, on my account, has cost you. To talk of having committed any wrong against me is cruel mockery. You have performed an inestimable service; for it receive my thanks."

At this she took his hand in hers, and looked him full in the eye—"With all my heart I thank you, Laurence. Will you then grieve for what has passed? Complete your kindness: you have done that for me which only the truest affection would have done—do not now make me believe that you would repent it. If your self-devotion is attended with pain, bear it, I pray you, for my sake—my heart sympathises with yours. The thought of you will never hereafter be separated in my mind from the grateful sense of an act surpassing the acts of ordinary love. Would you strive to blot out from memory that part of your life which must ever appear to me the brightest and noblest?"

Seymour's firmness was nearly overcome. Returning her glance with one full of gratitude and love, he answered:

"And is it really true that you regard my conduct in this light? Ah, I fear me greatly that it is your kindness and forgiving charity that forces your tongue to utter these words of comfort: in your inmost soul you know and feel that I have been both weak and base."

Matilda spoke up, eagerly—"Has my manner, then, been so cold and harsh as to be thus misinterpreted? Laurence, Laurence, if my countenance and tone, and word, do not convince you, in what way can I make known the depth and sincerity of my grateful affection?—such consolation as the knowledge that I worthily appreciate your devotion is capable of giving, receive with undoubting assurance."

This declaration, made in a tone of thrilling earnestness, could not, indeed, be mistaken. It gave Seymour an immediate sensation of relief. He felt like a just-awakened sleeper, who, as he rejoices at being delivered from the tortures of the nightmare, contemplates the vexations of the previous slumber with a lightened heart, and looks forward to the coming toil with buoyant content. Afterwards this feeling gave place, naturally, to satisfaction and joy at receiving from Matilda such an unequivocal testimonial of her love. Then came the chilling consciousness that he was to be torn away forever from that beautiful and devoted being. These changes succeeded each other with a rapidity which the universe affords no material image to represent. Each emotion, as it wielded the sceptre of an instant, used its power in rendering his soul less capable of withstanding that which was to follow. The last one burst the guard which he had placed upon his lips; his resentment would have vent; and he spoke of him by whom he had been inveigled into these galling fetters, in terms passionate and fierce.

Matilda Chesley, affectionate and sympathising towards the living lover, did not forget to be just to the dead one.

"We have our sorrows," she said, "but let us bear them without heaping reproaches upon another. If Reginald were alive and had done us harm, it would be our duty to forgive him, is it not now much more our duty? Let us not assume authority to judge motives. Reginald, perhaps, meant to repair the wrong; perhaps he was not conscious of the degree of injury he was inflicting. It is possible—I pray you think

of this—it is possible that he has brought about what is best for us in effecting our separation. You and I, Laurence, were, perhaps, in danger of becoming too entirely devoted to each other. May it not be that, pursuing different paths, as we now must, we shall be able to do more for the honour of our Maker and the benefit of mankind? Does not the very pain of this hour teach that it may be good for us that we part? Our business in life is to labour, and why should we murmur when one task is assigned us instead of another? Let us be diligent and faithful in the performance of duty, and then, if happiness is to be enjoyed on earth, doubt not that we shall be happy.”

Seymour was revived and greatly encouraged by her words. He answered: “Matilda, if you can feel thus, the care that was crushing me is removed. If you do not hate and condemn me for my conduct—if you believe that I have not wantonly and selfishly trifled with your affection, I can go forth into the world contented if not cheerful. In leaving you now, do I appear culpable and cruel? Miss Marshall has told me that I am sacrificing you to an over-scrupulous sense of honour—is it so? Matilda, I commit myself, my honour, my duty, my self-respect, entirely to you. Be you instead of conscience to me. Is my promise to Reginald binding or not? Speak, for I dare trust to your decision.”

Emily Marshall’s eyes brightened up. “Now,” she thought “everything will be brought right.”

The warm blood rushed, indeed, with a stronger current to Miss Chesley’s own heart. The fate of a life-time rested upon her decision that moment. A hundred considerations to justify the disregard of the covenant rose before her. All that Emily had said, all that reason could urge, all that passion could plead, came upon her mind with the vehemence of a torrent. Yet, though shaken, she was steadfast. In a tremulous voice she replied, “I do not know what course would be enjoined by the wise and dispassionate; but this I know, Lau-

rence, that the human heart seldom hesitates between the gratification of its most earnest longings and disappointment, unless duty be on the bitter side. There is always danger, even when no warnings intervene, in yielding to inclination; and whenever room is afforded for deliberation and doubt, they choose most safely who permit not the scale to descend in which the weight of self is placed. Far be it from me to change a purpose which honour and conscience alike command. I feel that I could stifle any passion, however strong or engrossing, which should dare persuade me to wish you one jot less worthy of my respect and admiration."

"I might have been assured of it," said Seymour, fervently; "It was impossible that my dishonour and breach of faith could be demanded by a regard for your happiness and welfare. Released from this, the single fear which unnerved me, I can return to England a man. I bless you, Matilda, for the lesson your lips have given: without you I cannot, indeed, be happy; but it is in my power to be useful, and what higher privilege need a created being ask?"

Then the farewell was exchanged, almost silently and with little show of passion. Afterwards Seymour took Miss Marshall's hand, saying, "Accept my heartiest thanks for the sympathy which you have manifested, and for the kind and earnest counsel by which it has been accompanied; but the path she points out"—his eyes were here turned for an instant to Matilda—"is best. Is it not so?"

Emily, who saw him in the course of that brief interview brought from the brink of frenzy to the gravity and composure of conscientious resolve, could return no denial. When Seymour immediately after left the house, still preserving his calm, manly and thoughtful demeanour, Miss Marshall whispered to her friend, "I believe in truth that your way is best."

Seymour went back to Anderport—on foot as he came. When he neared the tavern the sound of many voices struck

his ear. The cause of the unwonted confusion and clamour was at once apprehended; for the hour—it was noon—testified that the race must be over; yet it was with a sensation of pain that he saw himself obliged to encounter a scene for which the present state of his mind was so little fitted. There was no opportunity for retirement to his favourite moody solitudes;—the packet would leave in a very few hours, and go he must. It is necessary to anticipate him, and even to recur to the race-ground.

There the proprietors of the horses, and a numerous throng besides, had duly assembled. Jordan was there supporting Buck Weeks. The latter, (now the excitement of the morning was over,) appeared too pallid and frail to direct the motion of his own limbs, yet was he depended upon to rule the mettled steed that pawed the earth as the stout groom who led him into the field was compelled to keep both hands on the halter.

“Have a bold heart, Buck,” said Jordan; “win this race and I’ll make a man of you.”

The lad returned a sickly smile, and said, “I hope the Grey will win, but as for me, I reckon I’m done up: I feel the notion coming on stronger and stronger; it ain’t good to break promises—there’s no luck in it.”

“Enough of this talk,” exclaimed Jordan, almost savagely; “I believe in my heart you are going to knock everything to pieces by this cursed folly.”

“No, I shan’t,” answered Buck Weeks, “I’ll do what I’m able; and, I reckon, you’ll say nobody could have filled them stirrups better. Help me up now—hold on there, Jake.”

Three rounds had been made, and the fourth and decisive heat only remained. Gilbert Jordan was so well satisfied with the performance of the gallant Grey and his rider that he made large addition to his heavy bets. It was with intense anxiety, therefore, that he awaited the result. The trying and dangerous as well as critical moment had come. Gal-

lant Grey, who combined swiftness with his great power of endurance, was apt to do well so long as his rider could afford to bear a heavy hand upon the bridle; but the least excess of liberty spoiled him. When the demands of the race no longer permitted the rider to hold him in, and when, on the contrary, it was necessary to stimulate his energies with whip and spur, then was the time of peril. On three previous occasions he had become quite ungovernable. Once he had pranced and leaped from one side of the track to the other till the race was lost. The next time he leaped the fence and ran off to his stable with a dizzy speed far exceeding his best achievements on the turf. At the third repetition of the hazardous experiment he threw his rider and returned to the starting post.

Buck Weeks, profiting by his own experience and sedulously tutored by Jordan, was fully aware of all the risks attending his situation, and did what he could to diminish them. Caliph, however, the other horse, was nearly a match in every respect for his antagonist; and Buck, though he postponed the desperate effort as long as possible, saw that it must be made at last.

Three-fourths of the course were passed. The horses ran side by side, and the most practised spectator could not distinguish that either was a head's length in advance. It was an animated and exciting, though painful sight. The lad who rode Caliph plied the whip and was evidently urging the horse to his utmost. Buck Weeks was leaning back in the saddle, his whip hanging unused from his wrist, while both hands grasped the bridle. There was a sudden change. The Gallant Grey dashed forward at a rate to which his former speed seemed like rest;—Caliph panting and straining was left far behind. Then arose the shout, "Hurrah, Buck! hurrah, Buck!" Jordan, whose ears were insensible to any sound, held his breath and leaned eagerly across the railing. In three leaps more Gallant Grey will reach the goal. At that

instant his wild, ungovernable nature showed itself. He reared bolt upright; then, as the ready spur pierced his flank, he half wheeled and sprang to the further side of the track. The skill of Buck Weeks, equal to any emergency, returned him to his place ere it was quite too late. The maddened animal again reared, again the rowels were plunged in each flank. As that next leap should be directed the race would be lost or won. Just then a stirrup-strap broke; the hapless rider was cast from the saddle with prodigious violence; Gallant Grey, tossing the bridle to and fro, and making many a wild curvet, dashed over the field; while Caliph shot by at an unbroken gallop, gained the stand, and was pronounced winner of the race.

Gilbert Jordan ground his teeth together and turned in rage from the course.

"Don't you mean to see after Buck Weeks?" inquired a bystander; "that was a dreadful fall, and I shouldn't wonder if his neck was broke."

"No!" shouted the gambler, harshly, "let him take care of himself;" and he accompanied his answer with a volley of imprecations upon the horse, the rider, and his own soul.

Others had more humanity, or were less vexed by disappointments and losses. As they raised Buck Weeks from the ground the poor youth groaned and opened his eyes. Bearing him as gently as possible, for every motion seemed to cause acute pain, they took him to the tavern. There he was examined by a physician, who declared that an arm and two ribs were broken, and that there was also reason to fear his having suffered some severe internal injuries.

Buck Weeks received the information of his danger with great fortitude. "I knew it was a-coming," he said, in a tone of mournful resignation. "A promise ain't to be forsook without a judgment—especially when it's made to them that haven't got living eyes to watch how you keep it. But it couldn't be helped, I reckon—I was bound to mind Gil Jor-

dan's bidding. Where is Mr. Jordan, though? I'd like mightily to see his face so as to tell him that I ain't sorry."

"Oh, Jordan's gone," answered some one—"clean gone and no mistake. He went off raving and tearing mad, and you needn't to trouble yourself about him, Buck; for, you may be sure, he don't care the value of ninepence whether you are alive or dead."

This news inflicted a sharper pang upon the grateful lad than a fractured bone could give.

Laurence Seymour now came upon the porch. Learning what had befallen the race-rider, he entered the room where he lay, and inquired kindly after his condition. Buck, on hearing the Englishman's voice, instantly raised his head, "You, likewise," he said, "have had something to do with Mr. Ander."

"With Reginald Ander?" said Seymour, much surprised.

"Yes," answered Buck Weeks, "and he's a queer body, too, to have dealings with, that's certain. Are you afraid to meet him?—I ain't—no, not a bit, for all what's happened. A promise is a promise, but there's things that ought to stand higher—I'm sure there are. He was wise and 'cute and talked what was rational; and the promises that he worked a fellow up to were for a body's good, I'm well persuaded, but the heart must be first served; and if it ever leads the wrong way, don't it pay for it afterwards in suffering? I think so—I wouldn't have believed that of Gil Jordan. Well, it's all done up now, and I shan't let it worry me. I tried to do what was according to right all along—even when the Grey jumped the track I managed as well as the state of things gave leave, and it wasn't my fault that the stirrup-leather broke—was it? When that did give way I'm sure that if I had been a piece of the critter's back I must have been flung off. But I did what I thought I ought to, all through—so let Reginald Ander say what he pleases."

"His mind is wandering," remarked several bystanders to

one another. Just then, however, their attention was drawn to the outside. In front of the door a horseman had that instant drawn bridle. The eyes of all were directed to him. To many he seemed like one risen from the dead; but the hearty tone in which he replied to the cordial salutations that greeted him from every side left no room to doubt that Mr. Marshall was before them in life and vigour. As he dismounted, Seymour, who had descended the steps with eager haste, was the first to grasp him by the hand.

"How do you do, sir," said he, "I am rejoiced to see you. Your protracted absence caused us all at length to share the apprehensions of your family respecting you. We were shocked only a day or two since by the news that your body had been found in a creek in South Carolina."

Mr. Marshall answered laughing, "If that's the worst news you have to tell me I shall be well contented. I do not know what body has been picked up—indeed this is the first I've heard of the story—but I feel quite comfortable with this I have with me. By the way, I wonder if our good landlord could not supply me with a little something to nourish it? I have ridden fifty miles this morning, and I know that when I get home my good folks will keep me so busy answering questions that I shall be allowed no chance to eat."

"But satisfy at least, sir," said Seymour, "our more moderate and less exacting curiosity, while dinner is on the travel from the kitchen to the table. Explain the mystery of your detention."

"There's no mystery about it," replied Mr. Marshall, taking a seat on the porch. "That stupid captain of the schooner, instead of putting me ashore as he promised at Charleston, or in the vicinity, kept directly on to New Orleans, pretending that the winds or some other nonsense prevented his stopping. I am rather inclined to believe that he was asleep or drunk when he passed the coast, and was too lazy to turn back. I have returned from Louisiana as quick as I could, stopped

one day only at Charleston, performed all my business in that time, and am now here waiting for dinner."

"Did you return in the same packet that took you out?"

"Very far from it I assure you," said Marshall; "I would not trust the rascally captain again. When I told him, too, that he should not have a shilling in payment for the passage out, the impudent fellow smiled, and answered that he did not expect anything. But what has been going on in my absence? Poor young Ander's dead, I understand. I knew he was in a bad way when I left, but I had no idea that his notice was so short as it has proved."

"Yes he's gone," said one of the company, "and as he died intestate, Eugene Ander's eldest son will get the property."

"Eugene's fiddlestick," responded the old gentleman, "why Mr. Surecase here could have told you better, and Higgs, and Draper, too!"

Many eyes were now turned upon the three individuals enumerated. Surecase, the lawyer, spoke. "Of course I knew there was a will, and that it was put in your possession, Mr. Marshall; but the testator, when I drew it up, requested me to say nothing about it till the time came for its execution. So it is evident that professional honour made it incumbent on me to preserve silence." "And as for Draper's part and mine," said Higgs, "we witnessed the will,—that can't be disputed, but it wasn't for us to be telling tales out of school. Liars and lawyers are all one word they say, so it would have been a hard case indeed if professional spunk could do more for Mr. Surecase than honesty could do for us. Mr. Ander made us promise to keep our lips tight for a while."

"Tell us then what the will is," exclaimed a dozen voices together.

"The document, I suppose," answered Mr. Marshall, "is safe in my desk at home, but you will hardly be satisfied to wait till I fetch it here, so I may as well tell you the substance of it. Where are you going, Seymour?"

The young Englishman who had risen from his seat, replied, "I return to England in the packet which leaves this afternoon, and it is time I was preparing my little baggage—I will stop, however, sir, to hear you through before I make my farewell."

"You act wisely," rejoined Mr. Marshall, and "to reward your patient attention to an old man's prattle I will be very brief. The short and long of the matter is that the whole property is bequeathed to Laurence Seymour and Matilda Chesley, and *their heirs*."

"Is this really so?" said Seymour, suppressing his agitation.

"It is lucky for me," said Mr. Marshall with a smile, "that I am able to establish my assertion by good evidence. I should have been sorry to have lost my reputation for veracity at this late day. Yes, Mr. Seymour, I am in truth able to congratulate you on a bit of good fortune which is not met with every day. The will is plain, decisive, and I think incontestible. The only dark sentence in it you probably are able to throw light upon. Its object as well as I can comprehend it, is to release you from some bargain or other. That seems nonsense now, by your leave, friend Surecase, to tell a legatee he need not pay a debt to himself."

The lawyer, anxious to vindicate himself from the suspicion of a blunder, hastened to say in a tone raised considerably higher than usual, "I am not answerable for that; Mr. Ander would have it written just so."

A feeble voice from within the chamber was now heard to utter, "what's that about Mr. Ander?"

To Mr. Marshall's look of inquiry, Seymour answered, "it is Buck Weeks; he has had a bad fall from a horse."

"Is it indeed," said Marshall, rising and entering the room, "I have news for him too. Ander charges you, Seymour, and Miss Chesley, to take Buckner Weeks under your care and instruction, and if he should prove worthy, to establish him comfortably in some honest business. What do you think of that, Buck?"

The youth was at first somewhat bewildered by the suddenly communicated information, but as soon as the case was made clear to him, answered, "well, Mr. Ander's the best leader after all, and here's one that means to stick to him henceforth, that is if I live, and I reckon I've got some physic now that's a big sight more healing than 'intments and plasters."

Such was the manner in which the Ander estate came into the possession of the Seymours. As to the note of which black Achsah was the bearer, inquiry revealed that Mr. Ander had given it to her nearly six weeks previous to his decease, with the direction to put it into the hand of Laurence Seymour when he should make his next visit to Miss Chesley. Secrecy was enjoined till then, and so successful was Reginald in the choice of all his agents that the old woman, as has been seen, fulfilled her charge with the most exemplary fidelity. It may be added, that some expressions dropped by the captain of the schooner gave ground for the shrewd conjecture that Mr. Marshall's involuntary voyage to New Orleans was not altogether accidental. What Reginald's object was in subjecting his heirs to such a trial as he did can only be guessed. Perhaps the best explanation was that given by Buck Weeks.

"Mr. Ander," he said, "was queer, and had his own way of doing things."

The race-rider recovered perfectly from his injuries, and his subsequent life testified that his admiration of his benefactor was sincere and lasting. Mr. and Mrs. Seymour did their part, and Buckner Weeks is remembered as having been in his day one of the most substantial farmers in the neighbourhood of Anderport.

