

EMILY: OR, THE ORPHAN SISTERS.



BY CHARLES F. BARRINGTON.

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EMILY.

— OR —

THE ORPHAN SISTERS.

A TALE OF MYSTERY, CRIME, AND TERROR.

BY CHARLES F. BARRINGTON.

Author of 'The Escaped Felon; or, Woman's Faith Triumphant,' &c, &c

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EMILY: OR, THE ORPHAN SISTERS.

CHAPTER I.

THE ORPHAN.

ON one boisterous January evening, Mr. and Mrs. Mandeville were seated in the elegant parlor belonging to their house in Union Square, New York. The winter had so far been severe, and the wind blew in fitful gusts, attended with snow and hail. The little park opposite the mansion was covered with snow, the naked trees contrasted with the green foliage that a few months previous, had rendered the place a popular resort for young and old, especially the former, who, with their hoops and little carriages, presented a picture of innocent enjoyment that reminded one of Paradise itself. But now the branches were clogged with snow, and the fountain, instead of sending up its silver stream into the air, was gelid, silent, and deserted.

The poor people had suffered much; but Mr. and Mrs. Mandeville had done a great deal towards the relief of the necessitous, and had even sought out, in the blind alleys and narrow streets of the city, objects on which to bestow their benevolent attentions.

'How awfully the wind whistles,' remarked Mrs. Mandeville to her husband, looking towards the window, the blinds of which were drawn: but the snow could be heard pattering, as it was driven with great fury against the glass; 'alas! what must be the sufferings of the houseless poor in such terrible weather as this? How thankful ought we to feel to that beneficent Being, who has so amply provided for our necessities, and saved us from griping misery attendant upon penury and want? We can never be sufficiently grateful.'

'You are right, my dear Emmeline,' replied her husband, 'and the only way in which we can evince our gratitude, is by endeavoring to relieve the distresses of our fellow-creatures, and by making those who are deserving of it, participate in those comforts which we enjoy. But, hush!—there is somebody singing outside; what a beautiful voice—it is melody itself!—It is evidently that of a young female.'

There was heard the music of an organ, which seemed to be an accompaniment to the voice. At length both were silent.

Then came in their daughter Arabella Mandeville, who expatiated on the charms of the young musician, whom she had invited into the house, and who had been sent to the kitchen to get something to eat. Arabella, attended by her father and mother descended the stairs, and found the young stranger eating greedily of the food which the cook had placed before her. Upon the entrance of Mr. and Mrs. Mandeville, she arose and curtsied gracefully to them both. Never had they gazed on a more interesting object; and they started back with amazement, little expecting—notwithstanding the glowing description which their daughter had given of her—to see so much beauty concentrated in one being.

She was evidently not more than seventeen years of age, and the regularity and beauty of her features came as near perfection as any created thing could approach. Her eyes were hazel, and beamed forth rays of lustre that penetrated the soul. Her skin was delicately fair, and notwithstanding that care and hunger had fixed their marks upon her cheeks, a delicate tinge suffused them, which added greatly to the fascination of her appearance. Her mouth was most exquisitely and beautifully formed; her hair, which was a dark auburn, hung down her shoulders in negligent tresses, caused by the wind, and

her eye-brows were arched, and of a glossy silken texture. Her dress was old and patched, but very clean; and the graces of her form shone forth pre-eminent, even from beneath her humble garb. Her legs and feet were entirely bare, and her elegantly-turned ankle would have formed a model, which the most eminent artist might have been envious to obtain.

'Unfortunate girl,' said Mrs. Mandeville, in accents of pity, 'and have you no other means of obtaining a living than this?'

'Alas! I have not, lady,' replied the girl, in a voice of sweetness, while a tear started to her eye, as she marked the compassionate expression of Mrs. Mandeville's countenance; 'I am driven to it by the most abject distress.'

'But, have you no parents?'

'None, that I am aware of, lady,' was the reply; 'I have neither parents nor home; I had not tasted of food since yesterday morning, until now, and, but for the kindness of this young lady, I verily believe I must have perished in the streets.'

'And how long have you been so poor?' asked Mr. Mandeville.

'More than two years, sir, and a dreadful two years has it been for me.'

'Poor girl! then you are quite deserted?'

'By all, but the Almighty,' said the girl, with energy, and her countenance brightening up with hope as she spoke—'by all, but the Almighty, who, I sincerely believe, will not abandon me while I put my trust in Him!'

Mr. Mandeville and his lady were much touched by the poor girl's answer, and stood gazing at her with admiration, for a short time, in silence.

'And what is your name, pray?' asked Mrs. Mandeville.

'I have ever been instructed to call myself Emily—Emily Fitzormond,' replied she.

'What do you mean by that, my girl?' said the lady.

'Why, I have some suspicion that that is not my right name, madam,' returned Emily, (for so we shall in future call her.) 'Indeed, there is a mystery attached to my birth, which I have never been able to penetrate, and I probably never shall.'

The interest of Mr. Mandeville and his wife were now more than ever excited; and they were convinced from the girl's manner that she spoke the truth, and was not attempting to arouse their sympathies by any false representations.

'In what part were you born?' inquired Mrs. Mandeville.

'My first recollection of myself, was in a humble cottage, in a small village, in Pennsylvania,' answered Emily, 'where I lived under the direction of an old woman, whom I was instructed to call my grandmother: her name was Fitzormond. She was the only relation I ever saw to my knowledge. She has been dead nearly three years.'

'And did you never hear of a father or mother?' said Mr. Mandeville.

'Never,' answered Emily; 'my grandmother was always very reserved towards me, and answered any questions I asked (with the simplicity of a child,) concerning my family, and why I had not a father and mother like other children, with a peevish anger that effectually prevented me from resuming my inquiries till long after.'

'But how did you live?'

'My grandmother had a small annuity that was allowed by some person in New York,' replied the musician, and once a gentleman called at our cottage, and gave her a sum of money. He took particular notice of me, and his look made me shudder.'

'This is very remarkable!' said Mrs. Mandeville, 'there is a strange mystery attached to your fate. Remain here for the

present; and Martha, do you see that the poor girl has a comfortable chamber to lie in.'

Emily expressed her warmest thanks, and the lady withdrew with her husband.

CHAPTER II.

THE FEARFUL APPARITION.

ON the borders of some desert land in Pennsylvania, stood a small hamlet, the wretched hovels of which were inhabited by the poorest people. There was one, however which stood apart from the rest, and had a comfortable appearance, although it had not been inhabited for many years on account of a report that it was haunted. It was called 'The White Cottage,' and had formerly been occupied by a man named Luke Stanton, his wife, and two children.—This man was a ruffianly-looking fellow; and report spoke of him in no very favorable terms; he associated with no one in the village, and it could never be ascertained in what manner he contrived to live—for he never appeared to be in any kind of distress.

His wife was a remarkably pretty woman, apparently much younger than himself, and and her countenance was always overcast with a cloud of deep gloom and melancholy, which showed plainly that her breast was the abode of some heavy care. She seemed fearful of contracting any acquaintance with her neighbors; and if she accidentally met them in the village, she never, by any chance, exchanged a word with them. Yet, as much as Luke Stanton, her husband, was hated, so was she respected and pitied—for it was the firm opinion of most persons, that he brutally ill-used her, and that he held her under the restraint which she evinced in her conduct.

Two or three years elapsed, when Luke Stanton was suddenly missed in the village;

neither had his wife or children been seen for several days past; and, as the shutters of the cottage were closed, and the door quite fast, suspicion was excited, and permission having been asked of the landlord, the door was burst open, when a dreadful spectacle presented itself. The lifeless body of Mrs. Stanton was stretched upon the floor, mangled in a most appalling manner. Luke Stanton and the children had disappeared.—There was no furniture of any consequence in the cottage, and they could not find any thing which could lead them to the discovery of the assassin.

Every possible inquiry was immediately set on foot, but without success; all traces of the murderer or children, were, ever after, lost.

The cottage was immediately closed, and no one would take it; for it was said that the spectre of the murdered woman constantly haunted it; and many of the neighbors declared that they had heard such dreadful shrieks and groans issue from it at night, that were enough to appal the stoutest heart.

The landlord of the estate had been several times requested by his tenants to pull it down; but, although there seemed to be no chance of its again letting—for some reason, which every person was at a loss to imagine, he obstinately refused to comply, and there it stood, a source of terror to all the inhabitants around.

Several years had passed away, and still 'The White Cottage' remained the same as when the murderer had left it; even the stain of blood had not been removed from the floor; and the rustics who lived on the spot, protested that the noises were continued nightly, and some went so far as to assert that the spectre of the murdered woman had been seen to walk forth from the cottage, at midnight, dressed in long flowing robes of white, which were stained with blood in several places.

In the truth of these stories, of course, it was only the vulgar and the superstitious that placed any reliance. One night, however, some laborers returning from their work, in passing the cottage, observed an unusual light reflected from the casement—the shutters being unclosed—and it had every appearance of being inhabited. As they passed by the casement, they caught the glimpse of a dark form, moving in the room, and concluding it at once to be some evil spirit, they took to their heels, and scampered away just as fast as their limbs could carry them.

The next day, much to the astonishment of the neighbors, it was discovered that 'The White Cottage' was occupied—not with preternatural, but human beings—for an aged woman, neatly attired, and accompanied by a sweet pretty child—a little girl, apparently about three years of age—was seen to totter from it, and take the direction to the landlord's house.

The form of the old woman, although now bent with age, had, evidently, been stately and graceful, and traces might be easily discovered in her wrinkled countenance of former beauty. Poorly as she was clad, there was an air of superiority about her, which immediately excited attention, and created a feeling of interest in the beholder.

The little girl, as we have before said, was remarkably pretty; and its countenance sparkled with childish mirth and innocence, as it skipped and frolicked before the old woman, who hobbled slowly behind, with the assistance of a stick.

Towards Emily the old woman behaved in the most mysterious manner, and, although she generally treated her with the most affectionate kindness, as she grew older, and began to have judgment to reflect, whenever she questioned her as to who were her parents, and whether they were alive or dead,

the old woman would become terribly agitated—her countenance would turn ghastly pale—and, in a voice of mingled wrath and terror, she would exclaim:—

'Girl, forbear! you know not how you torture me by such questions! As you value my love, never mention the word parents to me again, upon any account, or I may be tempted to—but no matter, no matter; do not so again, child; the name of those who gave you being you must never know; be contented to bear that of Emily Fitzormond, and be happy in your present condition.'

On one occasion a stranger visited the cottage. Emily shuddered at his gross and malignant appearance. He gave some money to her grandmother, and muttered that he hoped he should not much longer be obliged to pay that money. Who could this strange man be? 'Can it be possible,' said Emily to herself, 'that this is my father?'

A good voice and a taste for music led Emily, frequently, to sing some simple ballad for the amusement of her grandmother, by which means numerous admiring listeners were attracted round the cottage, which they had formerly shunned with terror, under the impression that it was haunted.

Years passed away in this manner, till Emily had attained her fourteenth year. The grandmother was now very old and infirm; and on one occasion when Emily returned to the cottage from a visit, she found the old woman in the agonies of death. The old woman knew her, and motioning her to come nearer, she fixed upon her a ghastly look, and, after several ineffectual efforts, said, in a hollow voice:—

'Emily, you see in the poor, dying wretch before you, a guilty—a terrible sinner. Nay, do not weep for me; I am unworthy of your tears; I have injured you, deeply—perhaps, irreparably injured you. Listen to me, and, ere my eyes are forever closed in death—let

me impart to you a secret, on which your future fortune and even happiness depends. Know, then, that you are—'

Just at this critical moment—when Emily was listening with breathless attention, and her future fate probably hung upon a few words—her grandmother was seized with strong convulsions, and in less than ten minutes, she was a corpse, and the secret she was about to divulge, had died with her.

It would be impossible to describe the powerful emotions which distracted the bosom of poor Emily, as she stood over the corpse of her who was the only friend she had ever known in the world, and who was now taken from her forever. Scalding tears of bitter agony streamed down her cheeks, and when she reflected upon her lone and desolate situation, she became the perfect image of despair. Who could she now look to for protection—for comfort, under her affliction? Whither good she go—how subsist? She was almost driven to madness, and was quite inconsolable—although a compassionate neighbor, to whose cottage she was conveyed, did all she could to soothe her anguish, and to impart consolation to her bosom.

But that which agonized her more than all, was the remembrance of the death-bed scene—the last words of Mrs. Fitzormond—and the secret which death had prevented her from revealing. Here, then, was all chance of the mystery, in which her fate was involved, being unravelled, lost forever, and nothing but a dreary prospect of misery and suffering was before her.

'Oh, God!' soliloquized the poor girl wringing her hands, 'am I then born for nothing but misfortune? Am I marked out by Fate to be its sport? If so, how much better had it been, had I died in childhood. ere a knowledge of my affliction, or my des-

titute condition, were made apparent to me. And whither can I now go? Where shall I find a friend? Alas! I am, as it were, alone in the world. Oh, cruel, heartless parents, thus to desert your unfortunate offspring, and leave her to the mercy of an unfeeling world!

Her tears flowed with increased violence, as these reflections flashed across her brain, and her heart felt ready to burst. The poor woman at whose cottage she was staying, reasoned with her, in her homely manner, on the folly of giving way to excessive grief, at an event that might be reasonably expected, from the advanced age to which her grandmother had arrived; Emily made no reply, but, in vain, endeavored to check the effusions of affectionate regret that would burst forth at every turn of painful thought.

The woman and her neighbors, were surprised to find that Emily literally knew no more relative to the affairs of her deceased grandmother than themselves; not even the gentleman's name who brought the annuity—the only time she remembered seeing him, and consequently could not apply to him.—Besides, the bare idea of pleading for assistance from that man, caused Emily to feel the utmost horror and repugnance.

It was thought advisable to insert an advertisement in the newspapers, purporting that an aged woman, named Elizabeth Fitzormond was now lying deceased at a cottage in ———ville, and her grandchild Emily, was left destitute, requesting that if she had any relatives, they would hasten to her relief. At length, a letter arrived, without a name or signature, enclosing a bank note of fifty dollars to defray the expenses of Mrs. Fitzormond's funeral; and the writer added that Emily was to hold herself in readiness to attend a person who would be sent down, in a few days, to take charge of her.

The woman with whom Emily was staying

affected great tenderness and complaisance towards her; but she had, in reality, only assumed a mask of duplicity for interested motives.

Mrs. Fitzormond was buried decently, and Mrs. Dartmouth took upon herself the management of it, and paid the undertaker. In this she did not fail to indulge her cupidity, charging several dollars more than the funeral expenses came to; at the same time that she made a great boast of her kindness; and Emily, ignorant as she was at that time of the ways of the world, had no suspicion of the hypocritical part Mrs. Dartmouth was playing, and really felt very grateful for what she thought to be such disinterested kindness.

But nothing could efface the deep melancholy which the death of her grandmother, and the uncertainty of her future destiny, had caused, from the mind of Emily; and the time which intervened, prior to the arrival of the individual, to whose charge she was to be committed, was passed by her in a constant succession of distracting ruminations. More particularly than all, where the last sad moments of her grandmother recalled to her memory; and when she remembered the mysterious words she had uttered, and the secret which she had, in vain, tried to communicate to her, she became lost in the labyrinth of conjecture.

The secret must have been something of a terrible nature, or it would not have agonized the old woman so violently! She had also confessed that she was a guilty wretch—that she was unworthy of her's (Emily's) tears—and that she had greatly injured her—and every word tended to convince her that Mrs. Fitzormond was the agent of those who, it seemed, doomed her to misery, and not a relative, as she had represented herself.

A terrible feeling came over Emily, as these ideas darted upon her imagination, and something seemed to whisper to her that

the spirit of the deceased, Mrs. Fitzormond, could never rest until she had been permitted to divulge the dreadful truth, which had weighed upon her conscience at the awful moment she was called into the presence of her Almighty judge.

'And, Oh, may Heaven pardon her for the errors, whatever they may have been, of which she acknowledged, with her dying breath, that she was guilty,' exclaimed the poor girl, her eyes filling with tears as she spoke, and the fervor with which she raised her clasped hands towards Heaven, showed at once her sincerity; 'may her soul rest in peace; and if her spirit is allowed to look down upon this earth, it will see how earnestly I pardon her for whatever injuries she may have inflicted upon me; and——'

It was night, and Emily was in the little room which was allotted to her to repose in, when she was thus soliloquizing; and at the word, where we have so abruptly left off, she suddenly paused, and looked fearfully around her—for she was almost certain that she heard a deep sigh breathed near her, as if from some bosom heavily afflicted. She could see nothing but her own shadow, which was reflected on the walls. All was silent in the cottage. The recollection of her grandmother again darted across her memory; a cold sweat came over her, and her limbs trembled violently, with an emotion she found it impossible to conquer.

Emily arose and went into the room of Mrs. Dartmouth, who started up in bed, with terror in her countenance, on hearing the relation of Emily.

'Well, I shouldn't at all be surprised,' said she, 'if the ghost of Mrs. Fitzormond should haunt the neighborhood, for she will never rest in the grave, depend upon it, until she has divulged the secret she was endeavoring to reveal when she died. God bless my soul, what was that? Did you not hear some one groan?'

At the request of Mrs. Dartmouth, Emily got into bed with her, and the woman soon went to sleep again, and snored loudly. At length Emily slept, and then she seemed to be standing by her grandmother's grave. A terrific shriek rent the air; a sulphurous smell arose from the earth; the grave of her grandmother was split as by an earthquake; a blue vaporish cloud gradually arose from it, and the phantom of Mrs. Fitzormond stood before her. Her awful countenance had an expression so terrible, that it was sufficient to freeze the blood to ice to gaze upon it; and her eyes darted forth even more than a supernatural fire. The expression of the spectre was of the most dreadful torment, and its appearance, altogether, enough to excite the greatest terror.

Shuddering with the intensity of her feelings, Emily imagined in her dream that she made a desperate effort to get away from the spot, but she tried in vain; she was transfixed, rivetted, spell-bound, and she had not the power even to remove her eyes from the countenance of the spectre; which, at length, raised its hand, and pointing towards our heroine, its lips parted, and the following words, in a hollow, sepulchral voice, smote her ears:—

'Child of misfortune! pray for the troubled spirit of her you believed to be your grandmother; all rest is denied to me, until I have imparted to you that secret my dying lips would fain have revealed. Listen!—and mark me! You are the——'

At this instant, Emily imagined, in her dream, a loud peal of thunder shook the air; the spectre groaned, and in a moment there started from behind a tomb, the tall figure of a man, who, darting in between the phantom and Emily, seized the latter fiercely by the arm, and placing the point of a knife to her bosom, exclaimed in a voice of thunder:—

'Spirit!—fiend!—accursed!—avaunt!—'

The secret shall never be disclosed—for thus I rid me of the being to whom alone it is of interest, and whom I have to dread. Die!

Emily imagined that the phantom vanished as the man spoke, and looking up with terror into his countenance, she recognized the features of the man who had visited 'The White Cottage,' when she was a child. She screamed frantically, as his upraised arm was about to descend to strike the fatal blow, and trembling violently in every limb, she awoke!

Whether it was the powerful and appalling effects of the frightful vision, that still worked upon her imagination, or not, we cannot say; but upon the instant she awoke, some invisible power appeared to raise her in the bed, and a sense of some approaching horror enchained all her faculties!

Again a deep drawn sigh vibrated in her ears; followed by a low moaning sound, like the stifled agony of some person in great suffering.

This time she was certain she was not mistaken; terror smote her heart; she endeavored, but in vain, to awaken Mrs. Dartmouth; and then tried to throw herself back on her pillow, and to cover her face with her hands; but some inscrutable power seemed to prevent her from doing that.

At that moment, the village church bell tolled the hour of one, and scarcely had its last solemn vibration died away on the air, when Emily once more heard a sigh, and a rustling sound in the chamber.

Another instant, and the curtains of the bed were drawn back—and, Oh, horror!—Emily beheld gazing, with an awful expression upon her, the spectre of Mrs. Fitzmond, exactly as she had beheld it in the vision. But a moment did she look upon the appalling sight, and then, uttering a loud scream, she became insensible.

When she recovered, she found that it was

daylight, and that Mrs. Dartmouth, and two or three of her officious neighbors, were standing around her bed; but the remembrance of all the dreadful events of the night, rushed immediately upon her recollection, she uttered an exclamation of terror, and nearly relapsed again into a state of insensibility.

'Goodness me!' observed Mrs. Dartmouth, who was all anxiety and impatience, 'what ever can have happened, to frighten the poor girl in this manner? Do, pray tell me, poor child!'

It was, however, sometime before Emily was in a fit condition to gratify the curiosity of Mrs. Dartmouth, or her inquisitive neighbors; and when she did, she very prudently concealed the fact of the phantom she was positive she had seen, and only said that she had been alarmed by a frightful dream.

The next night Emily slept with Mrs. Dartmouth, but nothing occurred to excite her fears. In the morning Emily heard the noise of a vehicle driving up to the door, and in a few seconds, the voice of a man in conversation with Mrs. Dartmouth in the front room.

CHAPTER III.

THE JOURNEY.

Emily trembled when she heard this, and very soon, the room door was thrown open by Mrs. Dartmouth, and the next moment she was ushered into the presence of the person who was sent to take charge of her, and who called himself Mr. Chesterton.

He was an elderly man, short, and thick-set, but with a disagreeable cast of features, although he endeavored to assume an aspect of benevolence.

Emily shrunk from this man with a feeling of disgust, such as she had only once felt before, when she saw the man whose image had ever since been impressed on her memory in such vivid characters.

Mr. Chesterton appeared no less struck with the beauty of Emily than she was agitated at seeing him; and there was something in the expression of his countenance which called the blushes deep mantling to her cheeks, and she averted her head. Mr. Chesterton, however, attempted to assume a look of kindness, and taking her hand, said,

'And so, child, you are Emily Fitzmond—are you?'

Emily could make no reply; but Mrs. Dartmouth, who was very officious on that occasion, with the expectation of shortly receiving some liberal remuneration for the trouble she had been at, and answered for her:—

'Yes, sir,' said she, 'this is her, poor girl, and I'm sure I don't know what she would have done—I cannot form any idea of what would have become of her, when her grandmother died—had it not been for me. I took her in, and—'

'It was very kind of you, no doubt, ma'am,' interrupted Mr. Chesterton, with an ironical smile; 'and I am sorry that it is out of my power to reward you with any thing but thanks. Now her grandmother is dead, poor Emily has no one but a distant relation in the world, and, certainly, none whose duty it is to support her; as for the annuity which Mrs. Fitzmond used to receive, it ceased from the moment of her demise—and, indeed, she had, for some years past, been paid a quarter in advance. Emily has, therefore, nothing more to expect than from the kindness and humanity of the distant relative to whom I have alluded, who has deputed me to put her in a situation, where, by perseverance and industry, she may probably do well.'

The countenance of Mrs. Dartmouth fell when she heard what Chesterton said, and which entirely crushed the sanguine expectations she had formed; while the heart of Emily was full almost to bursting, and while her eyes streamed with tears, and sobs, that almost choked her utterance, said—

'Oh, sir, rather than I would be beholden to the charity of one, whom you say is a very distant relation—and who, at any rate, is a stranger to me—let me be left to my fate, and Heaven, I trust, will become that protector which those who had an undoubted right to be, have neglected becoming, and have so long, and cruelly deserted me.'

'Nay, nay, my dear girl,' said Chesterton, in even gentler tones than before, 'you are inexperienced yet in the ways of the world, or you would not have made use of the rash expressions you just now gave utterance to. What, think you, a young girl like you, could do in it, left to yourself, and without friends or protectors? Your destruction would be sure to follow!'

'And where are my parents?' said Emily, with more firmness than she had hitherto assumed; 'what has become of them? Why have they abandoned me—who are they—and what care can they have whether my destruction takes place or not?'

Chesterton seemed to be rather confused for a minute or two; but, at length, replied—

'When I told you just now that you had only one distant relation left in the world, you might have understood, child, that your parents were no more; but, upon that subject I cannot enter further. Let it suffice that the relation of whom I speak, has full authority to take charge of you, and that I am chosen to convey you to a place which he has selected for your future residence, where you will be treated with every kindness and indulgence; and you will have, I

am certain, no cause to regret the change. Come, come, dry your tears, and prepare for the journey which we must undertake directly.'

Emily trembled more violently than before, in spite of the assurances of Mr. Chesterton, who, all the time, was eyeing her with looks of admiration, and with other demonstrations that were only calculated to excite disgust.

'Well, sir,' observed Mrs. Dartmouth, who had been standing by, and biting her lips with vexation, and impatiently awaiting an opportunity to speak. 'I suppose you will, at least, pay me for the fortnight's board and lodging that she has had of me.'

'I thought you acted from disinterested motives,' said Chesterton, with his disagreeable sarcastic grin. 'You can, however, have the furniture of the late Mrs. Fitzormond.'

'What! a few wretched sticks that are only fit for firewood.'

'It is all that you will have, and quite enough, too, I think,' said Chesterton.—'Come, my dear, are you ready to depart; for our journey is a long one.'

Emily's heart sunk within her, and she shrunk back with a feeling of terror, as Mr. Chesterton attempted to take her hand.

'Whither, sir, would you take me?' she asked, as with a sensation of horror she thought upon the man who had visited Mrs. Fitzormond at 'The White Cottage,' and she feared that it was to his power she was about to be consigned; tell me, under whose protection is it settled by my unknown relative, that I shall be in future?'

'Be satisfied, my dear girl,' answered Chesterton, 'that you are going where you will be properly looked after, and that everything is being done for the best; more, at present, I cannot tell you. But, come, this delay is useless. We will partake of refresh-

ment on the road, and I am anxious to pursue our journey as quick as possible.'

The sun was shining in full meridian splendor, as the vehicle drove away from that scene where Emily had passed the days of her childhood—days which, while they brought to her memory many things that caused regret, likewise reminded her of many joyful associations, she could not quit without the most intense anguish.

A dismal presentiment filled her mind that she was doomed to be the victim of misfortune, and a dead weight pressed upon her heart, and made her more wretched than could well be expressed.

And whither was she going? To whom had she intrusted herself? To an entire stranger; to a man who refused to give any satisfactory explanation of his motives and intentions, and whose very looks convinced her that he was a villain and a hypocrite! But, Mr. Chesterton had stated that he acted only by the instruction of the only person who was related to her, and she knew that opposition on her part would have been of no avail.

They were travelling a cross-country road, and the prospect was very romantic and diversified; but Emily's mind was too fully occupied with other subjects to feel any pleasure in gazing upon it.

Mr. Chesterton had been, nearly all the time, gazing at her with looks of admiration, which Emily had, once or twice, noticed with much uneasiness.

At length, he asked her what made her so sad.

'Oh! sir,' replied she, timidly, 'is it at all strange that I am sad when about to quit the scenes of my early life, and go among strangers?'

'You are no stranger to them, child,' said Chesterton, although you may not remember them.'

'And have they, then, seen me before, sir?' eagerly asked Emily, catching quickly at his words.

He seemed confused and anxious to recall what he had said.

'There is a peculiarity attached to your life,' said he, 'which, at present, must remain a mystery.'

'Will the secret be ever divulged?' inquired she.

'That all depends upon circumstances, child,' was Chesterton's answer; 'but you say that none of your relatives have acknowledged you, when, at the same time, have you not been brought up by your grandmother, Mrs. Fitzormond?'

'Yes,' returned Emily, with an incredulous look, 'if she was my grandmother!'

'If she was,' repeated Chesterton, with some surprise and confusion in his manner; 'and have you, then, any reason to doubt that she was—eh?'

'Why,' said Emily, in reply, 'I do not know that I ought to doubt our consanguinity, for she ever behaved with kindness to me; but, then, there was a mystery in her manners which created my suspicions, and raised thoughts in my mind that would not otherwise have entered it;—and, then, the poor soul, on her death-bed, told me she had a secret to impart, on which depended my future happiness; but before she could give utterance to it, she slept the sleep which has no morrow.'

'Ah!' cried Chesterton, starting, and turning pale as Emily spoke, 'and did the old woman try to—But, are you certain she did not reveal anything?'

'Nothing,' replied Emily, noticing, with much astonishment, the perturbation of her companion; 'but, alas! I fear me that something weighed heavily upon her conscience, for she died in much agony—mental agony I mean—and she accused herself of being a guilty wretch, unworthy of pity.'

'The old idiot!' exclaimed Chesterton, in a tone of passion, and with an expression of countenance, which rendered him still more revolting than ever to Emily, 'after keeping her counsel for so many years, and about to blab after all! It was lucky, however, that death prevented her.'

Emily turned from him with a look which sufficiently explained to him the disgust his brutal speech had excited in her bosom, and Chesterton, after endeavoring to banish the demonstration of his emotion from his countenance, said,—

'But are you still positive that Mrs. Fitzormond never divulged anything which could lead you to surmise to whom you belonged, and what could be their reasons for wishing you to be brought up in so private a manner?'

'I have before assured you, sir,' answered our heroine, 'that she did not.'

'Tis well,' muttered Chesterton, in a low tone to himself, but which Emily overheard; 'then, all is safe.'

'And what danger have you to apprehend, sir,' interrogated Emily, 'from my coming to a knowledge of any of the circumstances connected with this dark mystery? Oh, surely where there is so much secrecy and precaution used, it must be prompted by some guilty cause.'

Mr. Chesterton frowned, and made no answer for a few minutes, but it was evident that the words of Emily very much disconcerted him, and that he repented having entered upon the subject.

'Whatever are the motives (which you have been pleased to put the worst construction upon) that have prompted your friends to act in the manner they have done,' at length, he replied, 'rest assured that they originated in a sense of justice and prudence, and that time may, perhaps, unravel, what to you now appears so ambiguous and suspicious; but enough of this for the present.'

'One question more, sir, ejaculated Emily, with considerable agitation, as strange ideas flitted through her brain, 'tell me, are the authors of my being still living? I implore you not to deceive me!'

'Have I not already informed you, child,' replied Chesterton, in a voice of assumed sympathy; 'have I not already informed you that you have now only a distant relation living? But do not let that afflict you; you have friends who will look after you and protect you, and while you continue to deserve it, there will be no moderate or reasonable enjoyment which you will not experience. Of this be satisfied, that among those friends you have not a more attached or sincere one, my dear girl, than Mr. Chesterton.'

As he spoke, he endeavored to take her hand, and an expression passed over his features which filled the bosom of Emily with a sentiment of fear and disgust.

'Nay, child,' he continued, after a pause, 'you must not evince this coldness and indifference of manners, especially towards those who have sincerely your best interests at heart.'

'If you really were sincere in your protestations, sir,' answered Emily, 'you would not hesitate to reveal to me all that you know of my family and connections, so that I might know on what I have to depend; but where there is so much mystery, there cannot be any good. Would to heaven that I had not quitted that spot where I passed my early days, in the company of one whom I know not, and whose intentions, from the ambiguity of his conduct, I have so much cause to suspect.'

'How much you wrong me, Emily,' said Chesterton, in accents of reproach; but time will show you how little I merit the unfavorable opinion you have formed of me.—Believe me, my dear girl, that although this is the first time we have met, the feeling I

entertain towards you is one of the most ardent description, and that there is nothing in my power which I would not willingly do to contribute to your happiness. Pray, then, endeavor to stifle your unaccountable prejudices against me, and let this kiss—'

'Sir,' exclaimed the blushing maiden, while her eyes flashed with indignation as she spurned Chesterton away from her—'this rudeness, and from one who has but just this moment boasted of being my friend. Forbear! or instantly suffer me to quit the carriage, and leave me to my fate; it cannot be worse than that I have reason to apprehend from a man like you!'

Chesterton was evidently abashed, confounded, and astonished to hear such observations from one so young, while, at the same time, the beauty and dignity of her countenance and demeanor, as she gave utterance to these words, served to increase those guilty passions with which she had inspired him; he, however, quickly recovered his self-possession, and with a look, which could not conceal his dissimulation from the penetrating eye of the offended Emily, he observed,—

'Pardon me, child, I meant not to offend you; my conduct was only suggested by the feeling, of what I may call parental love, which I imbibed for you the moment I saw you. But I see that you have been brought up in that simple and secluded manner, as to render you entirely ignorant of the ways of the world, and which causes you to put such unjust constructions upon actions that are blameless. But, pray quiet your apprehensions, and I assure you that that which has offended you shall never be repeated again.'

Emily returned no answer, but she averted her head with a sentiment of resentment, and the tide of feeling which rushed to her heart, when she thought upon her destitute

condition, and the uncertain and dangerous situation in which she was placed, overcame her, and covering her face with her handkerchief, she gave free indulgence to her grief. Mr. Chesterton watched her earnestly for a few minutes, but did not offer to interrupt her; and then affecting to be regarding the country they were travelling through, he became buried in deep thought, and Emily was thus left to herself.

The scenery now became exceedingly wild and unpleasant. They stopped, for refreshment at a road-side inn, the landlord of which seemed to know Chesterton, as they exchanged compliments, and the former directed a wink first at her, and then at her companion. The fears of Emily increased; but when they were alone at their repast, Chesterton treated her with the most respectful attention. He tried to engage Emily in conversation, but she answered him with coldness and showed by her manner that she wished to be left entirely to her own thoughts.

'But tell me, Emily,' at length asked her companion, have you no recollection of anything which happened to you previous to you and your grandmother going to the village from which I have just taken you?'

'I was not more than three years old at that time,' answered our heroine, and of course, cannot remember much. Yet I have some faint idea of living somewhere else, although it is like a dream to me. All that I can remember was sleeping in a very large and gloomy apartment, which had the portrait of a man suspended from the wall, and which, as well as I can call to my mind, represented features so repulsive, that my grandmother used to frighten me with it, whenever I proved refractory.'

'And did no one live in the house but you and your grandmother?' demanded Chesterton, after a considerable pause.

'Oh yes,' answered our heroine, 'I well remember now that there was a man of whom both I and my grandmother were afraid; he used to swear dreadfully and was very savage in his appearance.'

They journeyed all the afternoon, and when night set in, they entered a dreary wood through the foliage of which the beams of the moon faintly struggled.

'Good God!' thought Emily, 'should it be the design of my enemies to murder me—I am lost!'

They had now entered a wide and barren heath, and Emily perceived a light glimmering in the distance.

'There is our destination,' said Chesterton, pointing towards the light. 'Our journey will soon be ended.'

'Oh! heaven! what will become of me?' exclaimed the trembling girl, unable any longer to conceal her terror. 'Why am I brought to such a place as this, so lonely, and so frightful, if some harm is not intended me? Oh, sir, if one spark of pity still remains within your bosom, suffer me to depart and I will never appear to trouble you, or those by whom you are employed.'

'Silly girl,' returned Chesterton, 'thus to give way to groundless terrors; I tell you again that no harm shall befall you; on the contrary, you will receive every comfort and attention from those into whose care I am going to commit you. There—there—be composed, my poor child, and all will be well.'

Chesterton really did now seem to speak sincerely, and Emily became more composed; and soon afterwards the vehicle stopped before a large stone house, built in the gothic style, the front of which was nearly concealed beneath the moss and ivy, which grew thickly upon it.

A light (which was the one they had seen on the heath,) glimmered from a small,

pointed upper-casement, and the whole aspect of the place, standing as it did on the borders of the heath, with no house near it, was dismal in the extreme.

Emily could not help feeling a renewal of her fears, as she looked upon this gloomy fabric, and once more she implored the pity of Chesterton, who again tried to re-assure her, and alighting from the carriage, he advanced to a low porch, and knocked loudly at the door of the lone house. A second or two elapsed, and the casement, from which the light issued, was slowly opened, and a man's head protruded from it, and a surly voice demanded who was there, and what they wanted.

CHAPTER IV.

THE LONE HOUSE.

'Come, come, open the door, Gerald,' said Chesterton, impatiently, in reply to the man's interrogatory, 'don't keep us here all night, for the wind blows pretty keenly across the heath. I thought you would have expected me.'

'Oh, it's you, Mr. Chesterton, is it?' said Gerald; 'I beg your pardon—but, you see, I was not to know what sort of a visitor it was coming to me, it and behoves me to be rather cautious, or the traps—'

'Psha!' interrupted Chesterton, in a stern voice, 'have you lost your senses, Gerald? But, make haste to the door.'

Gerald left the casement, and soon afterwards made his appearance at the door, with a lamp in his hand.

During the short colloquy which we have quoted above, Emily had been trembling in the vehicle, and the appearance of the man was by no means calculated to abate her terrors.

He was a tall, stout man, dressed in a dark velveteen coat, with immense pearl

buttons, light corded breeches, and long leather gaiters. He appeared to be about fifty years of age, and his features were strongly marked, and very irregular. There were several scars upon his face, which added much to its repulsive character, and a pair of immense sandy whiskers, nearly covered his cheeks, and extended beneath his chin.

This unprepossessing object whispered a few sentences to Chesterton, which the latter replied to in the same low tone, and then approached the carriage and offered his arm to Emily to alight, but she shrunk back in the vehicle with terror.

'Oh, do not place me in the power of that man,' she earnestly supplicated, while her tears flowed so fast that she could scarcely speak; 'his very looks are sufficient to strike terror to my heart! In pity, spare me, and I will for ever bless you for the action!'

'Nay, my dear, this is ridiculous,' observed Chesterton; 'once more I repeat that you have no cause to fear any danger.'

She clung to Chesterton with fear, and exclaimed, 'Oh, sir, why am I brought to this frightful-looking place? And what are the designs of those who call themselves my friends against me? For pity's sake, tell me, and pause ere you plunge into misery, perhaps destruction, the unfortunate girl who is totally unconscious of having injured you.'

'Humph!' ejaculated Gerald, surlily, and scowling upon her, 'the young lady appears to be rather particular: but she may think herself very well off, if she never has a worse roof than that of the Lone House on the Heath to live under, or such friends as Gerald Darnley and his wife. I am not to stand here like a fool all night; are you coming in Mr. Chesterton, or not?—if not, say so; go somewhere else to night, and call upon me, if you like, in the morning.'

'Come, come, Gerald,' said Chesterton, 'be not so impatient; the poor girl is naturally alarmed, for she has not been used to travel among strangers, but always been brought up tied to her grandmother's apron strings.'

'Her grandmother,' repeated Gerald, emphatically, and an ironical smile overspread his repulsive features. Chesterton gave him a significant look, and then observed,—

'No doubt she will soon grow contented and happy enough when she finds how kindly you behave to her.'

'Aye, aye,' said the man, 'I dare say she will.'

'Now, my dear,' remonstrated Mr. Chesterton, 'pray arouse yourself; I tell you again, you have nothing to fear. Come, come, the night air is chilly standing here. Just hold the light up a little higher, Gerald; it is rather awkward footing here, and you have suffered the rank weeds and furze to grow so in the door-way, that a person can hardly make their way in.'

'This way, this way, gently,' observed Gerald, as Chesterton led the trembling Emily from the carriage to the ancient porch of the Lone House, which fully answered the description he had given of it. She felt an icy chill upon her heart as she crossed the threshold of this dismal place, an awful foreboding, of she knew not what, crossed her mind.

Having traversed a dark passage, Gerald Darnley threw open a heavy oaken-door, and ushered them into a room of such capacious dimensions, that part of it was buried in darkness, notwithstanding the light which Gerald carried in his hand, and the remains of a large fire which was in the grate. It had a most ancient and dreary appearance, and was hung around with portraits, in a state of decay. The table and chairs were of oak, and of the most massive description, being probably co-eval with the date of the building, and, in fact, all the furniture corresponded with the Gothic appearance of the house.

'You ought to consider yourself a happy fellow, Gerald,' observed Chesterton, looking around him; 'you have this old mansion all to yourself; you are not frequently troubled with visitors, I presume.'

'Oh, no,' answered Gerald, 'and the less the better; the set that we might expect

would, doubtless, be more free than welcome. But the young lady had better draw up to the fire; it is none too warm to-night, and the wind begins to howl without at a rare rate.'

'Where's Will?' asked Chesterton; 'I want him to assist in putting up the carriage.'

'He's out on a little business,' answered Gerald, winking his eye significantly at Chesterton, 'and it is uncertain what time he may return. But the men who drove you can manage to put up the vehicle, I should think, by themselves. What, ho! Madge! Madge!'

While Gerald Darnley was speaking, Emily had been watching his countenance narrowly, and its savage appearance smote her heart with terror. She was interrupted in these reflections by the entrance of Madge as Gerald had called her. She was a tall, bony, masculine woman, about fifty, with very prominent cheek bones, a large nose, small, cunning eyes, a wide mouth, and teeth that projected far over her lips. She was a Scotchwoman, and spoke with a broad accent. She soon brought in the repast, and was attended by a young girl of about sixteen, of rather a pretty and interesting appearance. A ray of pleasure darted into the bosom of our heroine when she saw her, for she hoped in her to find a companion, and one who might sympathize in her misfortunes. While Madge and her were spreading the cloth, the eyes of Emily and this girl frequently met, and the former thought she could discover an expression of kindness and pity in the countenance of the latter, which inspired her with hope, and she longed for an opportunity to speak to her. She soon ascertained that she was the only daughter of Gerald and Madge Darnley, although there was such a vast disparity in their appearance.

Emily partook sparingly of the supper, not because she wanted it, but for fear of exciting the displeasure of those in whose power she now was; Chesterton and Gerald drew their chairs closer into the chimney corner, and commenced talking to each other in an under tone.

It was not long before they were interrupted by a loud knocking, and accompanied by the tones of a man's voice, who requested them to open the door.

'It is my son, Will,' remarked Gerald, rising; 'he has returned sooner than I expected.'

Gerald Darnley quitted the room, for the purpose of admitting the new comer, and soon afterwards returned, accompanied by a tall, powerful-made young man, who was dressed exactly like his father. His countenance, which was good-looking, was, nevertheless, determined in its expression, and when he entered the room, Emily perceived a frown upon it, as if something had occurred to vex him.

'Well, Will, my boy, said Chesterton, familiarly, 'I have come to see you again.—What success now?'

'Oh, don't ask me,' said Will, dashing his hat on the table, and throwing himself carelessly into a chair; 'confounded bad luck; I have been disappointed to-night.'

'Ah!' quickly exclaimed his father, starting to his feet, and gazing intently upon his son; how's that?'

'He did not come!'

'Damnation!'

'Aye, so I say,' returned Will, for it has disappointed us of one of the richest—'

'Hush!' hastily interrupted Gerald, nodding his head, and directing his son's attention to Emily, who was sitting in a corner, where Will could not perceive her on his first entrance into the room; but when he beheld her, he jumped up with an exclamation of surprise, and approaching close up to her, looked in her countenance with evident astonishment and admiration.

'Why, who have we here, father?' demanded Will.

Gerald Darnley briefly informed him; and his son evidently heard that Emily was about to become an inmate of the house, with a feeling of pleasure.

'Well, as I live,' remarked he, 'she is a fine wench—even prettier than sister, Patty

—and that's paying her no mean compliment. How are you, my dear? I'm glad to see you!'

Chesterton frowned, and was evidently displeased at the tone of familiarity in which Will spoke; while poor Emily felt her situation becoming every minute more painful.

'Why, bless her blue eyes, how bashful she is,' observed Will; nay, Mr. Chesterton, you need not look so black; there is no harm in a young man admiring and complimenting a pretty girl, only you old men—'

Mr. Chesterton frowned more deeply than he had done before, and interrupted Will, by saying,—

'Hold your tongue, Will Darnley, or I may be offended; Emily has not been used to hear such language as this.'

'I dare say not,' replied Will, with a significant smile, 'if she has been long in your society. You are not quite insensible to female beauty yet, although you are not so young as you were formerly.'

'Hold thy peace, boy,' commanded Gerald, peremptorily; 'Mr. Chesterton, perhaps the young woman is tired and fatigued, and would like to go to rest; so Patty shall show her to a chamber.'

Emily gladly availed herself of the opportunity to escape from the disagreeable situation in which she was now placed, and having intimated her anxiety to seek repose, after the fatigue of her journey, she arose, and, making a powerful effort to conquer her agitation, she faltered out 'good night,' and advanced towards Patty, who was standing with the lamp in her hand, ready to conduct her to the chamber allotted to her.

'The blue chamber!' said Gerald, addressing himself to Patty; 'don't you understand? What do you stand there staring for, as if you were silly? The blue chamber, I say.'

'Good night, child,' said Chesterton, with his usual affection, 'you need not be under

any apprehension, but that Mr. Darnley and his good dame will do every thing for your comfort and accommodation. Good night!'

Emily could not respond to this wish; but, placing herself under the guidance of Patty, she was glad to hurry from the room as quick as possible, more especially as she beheld the eyes of Will Darnley fixed upon her with an expression which created an unpleasant sensation in her bosom.

Patty unlocked a door in the wainscoting of the room they had been sitting in, and a flight of stairs were immediately revealed.—They ascended these, and came directly to the door of the chamber mentioned by Gerald Darnley, when they entered, and Patty set the light upon the table.

The room was a small one, and certainly had not an uncomfortable appearance; it was furnished in the same old-fashioned style as the apartment below, and in one corner was a bed, which was remarkable for the cleanliness of its appearance.

Emily having taken a hasty survey of the chamber, turned her eyes once more upon Patty, and perceived that she was gazing upon her with looks of sympathy and the utmost affection.

'Oh, tell me,' exclaimed Emily—'Oh, tell me what am I brought hither for? what are the intentions of—'

'Hush, Miss, for goodness sake!' interrupted Patty, fearfully, and placing her hand upon Emily's lips, 'should my father overhear us, I know not what might be the consequence. Good night, and God bless you. You will find a friend in me. Some other time I will tell you all I know, and—'

'Are you going to stay there all night, Patty?' at that moment exclaimed the gruff voice of her father; 'come down stairs, I say.'

'I must go,' whispered Patty, in great haste; 'good bye, and Heaven protect you from all harm.'

For a minute or two after she was gone, Emily sat herself down on the side of the bed, and gave way to the numerous reflections that arose to her mind.

'Alas!' she soliloquized, 'what a terrible fate is mine! Almighty Father, rather take me hence, than suffer me to remain in the world merely to be its sport.'

A loud talking below excited her curiosity. She listened and distinguished in the tones, the voices of Gerald Darnley and Mr. Chesterton, who appeared to be engaged in loud altercation. She advanced to the door on tip-toe and listened.

'Come, come, man,' said Chesterton, 'have a little reason. Fifty dollars, in addition to the money which thy employer agreed to give for the assassination of the girl, to save her life, and accede to my wishes, by retaining her for the indulgence of those desires her charms have inspired me with, and—'

At this moment, Emily uttered a faint scream of horror.

Darnley said—'What voice was that?'

'It sounds like a scream,' was the reply; 'but, nonsense! it was only the owls.'

'No doubt of it,' said Chesterton, 'and now let us understand each other. Two hundred dollars is the sum the old gentleman offers you to rid him of this girl.'

Well.'

'The two hundred dollars are yours—I add fifty more to them, save your conscience a deed of blood, and yet you refuse.'

'To be sure I do, and will refuse. As for the deed of blood, I wish it was done out of the way, for should my employer discover I have deceived him, and that the girl is living, I should lose a good customer. On the other hand, if this young and beautiful girl is not worth more than fifty dollars, why, she is not worth having at all.'

'What do you require, then?'

'An equal sum to that which has been offered for her destruction,' answered Gerald Darnley, boldly, and in a very determined manner.

'What! two hundred dollars?'

'Aye; not a farthing less; if that is not paid, she dies.'

'Hear me, Gerald—'

'I have told you my resolution, and have nothing further to say upon the subject,' interrupted the villain, Gerald Darnley; 'do you agree?'

'Think better of it, Gerald; your demand is unreasonable.'

'Psha.'

'One hundred I will give, and take all the responsibility upon my own shoulders, should it be found out that you have not made away with the girl.'

'Not a cent less than I have demanded; as for my employer, you need not think that I am going to let him off so cheaply. He shall add many a bright dollar to the two hundred before I have done with him.—Come, decide at once; I am not going to stand parleying here all night.'

'I suppose I must yield to your demands,' said Chesterton; 'I have fixed my mind upon the girl, and will have her; although it is a great deal of money.'

'A mere trifle to a man of your resources,' replied Gerald Darnley, sarcastically; 'you know your master will have to pay for all! Ha—ha.'

'Bah! I am not in a humor for jesting, Gerald.'

'Indeed, it is no joke, as your master's coffers must feel,' returned Gerald.

'Well, no matter,' hastily observed Chesterton, 'then, it is an understanding?'

'You are to give me just two hundred dollars?'

'The life of the girl is to be saved?'

'Of course.'

'You are to make your employer believe that she is no more?'

'Exactly.'

'You will also behave kindly towards her, and use all your best endeavors to promote the success of my designs upon her?'

'Aye, aye.'

'Enough then, it is a bargain! Here is the money. I will remain in the neighborhood for a short time, (having written my tempter a letter, informing him that his fears are at rest,) and will pay occasional visits here; if I fail to persuade her to yield to my desires, you must then admit me, some night, to her chamber secretly, and my triumph will be certain.'

'It shall be so!'

Language would be too weak to pourtray the feelings of horror that harrowed up the soul of Emily, as she listened to this base and guilty plot; supporting herself by the door-post, she was again unable to restrain a louder expression of terror than before.

'Did you hear that?' ejaculated the harsh and discordant voice of Gerald Darnley.

'I did,' replied Chesterton; 'that was not the screech of an owl, I am certain; it seemed to proceed from the room up stairs.'

'Ah! by Hell! should she have been listening, her life shall pay the penalty of her curiosity!' cried Gerald. 'Fools that we were to act so incautiously. Follow me, Chesterton. I will ascertain the truth of this.'

The trembling Emily ran to her chamber, extinguished her light, jumped into bed with her clothes on, and feigning a deep sleep.—They arrived in her chamber, Gerald having passed the light two or three times across her eyes, turned to his companion and said, 'She sleeps sound enough: so it is very clear that we have been again mistaken.'

'By heaven!' ejaculated Chesterton, 'I could gaze on her forever, and with each glance would my transport increase.'

'Psha!' testily exclaimed Gerald Darnley, as he laid hold of the aged libertine's arm, and hurried him out of the room. They closed the door after them, and Emily had no sooner heard them descend the stairs, than she rushed from the bed, and falling upon her knees, with streaming eyes, she

poured forth her gratitude to the Almighty, for her preservation from the dreadful fate which had only a minute or two before threatened her. She carefully locked the door.

CHAPTER V.

THE TRYING ORDEAL.

THE distraction, the agony, the suffering, which Emily's mind underwent, after the event we have described in the foregoing chapter, may be imagined, but cannot, by any possibility, be properly described. To retire to bed, she could not think upon, and, involved in complete darkness, she traversed her chamber, and gave vent to the powerful emotions, which the horrors she had overheard had given rise to in her bosom. Then, this friend—as the wretch Chesterton had described him to be—had doomed her to a horrible death, from which it appeared she was only to be saved to meet with a still more dreadful doom.

Good God! could there possibly be such monsters in existence? And who was this man, to whom she was so obnoxious? Why should he wish to take her life, when she knew him not, and had not any means, therefore, of annoying him? What relation could he be? Her heart recoiled from the bare idea of being connected by the ties of consanguinity with such a monster? And, yet, perhaps that wretch, that miscreant, was her father. The thought drove her to madness, and her anguish became almost insupportable.

In the morning Patty appeared in her chamber motioning her to silence, and at the same time evincing by her manner, how sincerely she sympathized in her sorrows; and preceding her down the stairs, they soon afterwards entered the room in which Gerald Darnley, his son, and old Madge, were already assembled.

How the poor girl shuddered with horror, when she again beheld the wretch, Gerald,—the miscreant who had been paid to shed her blood, and who had since bargained for her violation with the villain, Chesterton.—For a moment she averted her head, and such a deadly sickness came over her, that she could hardly support herself. She was aroused, however, into recollection, by Will Darnley, who approaching her, offered her his hand, and with the same insolent air of familiarity as he had assumed when he first saw her, greeted her, and handed her a seat.

'By George,' exclaimed the young man, 'the circumstance of this fair lass coming will put fresh life into us here, at the Lone House of the Heath, as it is called. Nay, don't look so shy, my girl; you will have a rare time of it here, and never fear but that you will soon be quite at home. But, how's this? How pale you look! Are you not well, my dear?'

'I—I—I am not quite well, sir,' faltered out the trembling Emily; 'but, doubtless—it is—that is, I have not been well since the death of my poor grandmother.'

'Ma conscience!' exclaimed old Madge, 'an' I can judge by her pale looks, an' her sunken een, I should think it unco strange, if the poor chiel ha' had ony sleep last night. Is it nae sae, lassie?'

Emily felt confused, but quickly recovering herself, she replied,—

'I certainly could not sleep much; but that I attribute to my being in a strange place.'

'But did you not sleep at all?' hastily and fiercely demanded Gerald Darnley, partly rising from his chair as he spoke, and darting a keen and penetrating look into her countenance.

'Yes, for more than two hours, I should imagine,' replied Emily, with greater firmness than she had given herself credit for being able to assume.

'Ah!' growled Gerald, with a look of satisfaction, and he then muttered to himself. 'Tis well. But,' he added, after a moment, 'did you hear anything in the night?'

Emily trembled, and she could feel the color mantling in, and fading from her cheeks, alternately; she did not like to tell an untruth, and yet if she did not, her life would most probably be sacrificed; at length, she hit upon an evasion, which answered the purpose just as well,—

'I heard the owls, who seem to have taken up their abode in this old house, screech several times, sir,' she replied; 'but what did you expect me to hear?'

'Nothing, nothing, particular,' returned Gerald, 'only some of the foolish rustics who live across the heath have reported this place to be haunted, as is generally the case with all old buildings. However, it is no bad thing for me, seeing that it enables me to get a spacious dwelling for almost as little money as it would cost me for a hut.' He then muttered to himself—'I was right in my conjectures, then; the girl did sleep, and it was only the owls that we heard.'

After breakfast, Gerald Darnley said to Emily,—'If you want amusement, young lady, you may find plenty in rambling over the ancient rooms of this house: there are some books; in one of them, which I found when I first came to reside here; they may, probably, afford you some amusement.—In fact, as far as the range of this building goes, you are at liberty; but beyond those walls, I have particular reasons, for the present, not to suffer you to go.'

'By what right do you make me a prisoner?' inquired Emily.

'I have the power to do so,' said Darnley—'that is enough for you to know.—Here are the keys of some of the apartments, and you will find sufficient to amuse you in them, I'll be bound. Come, I must desire

you to retire from hence, as I have business to transact which it is not meet for you to hear.'

Meditating deeply on what had taken place, she ascended the lofty staircase; and as it was a matter of indifference to her what part of the building she visited, she proceeded, and at length, found herself in a kind of gallery, round which hung several full length portraits, dropping to pieces with age and damp.

Everything she saw denoted the former comfort, and even magnificence of the place; and as she proceeded, the curiosity excited by what her eyes encountered in the different rooms she traversed, for awhile diverted her thoughts from her own miseries. The furniture did not appear to have been disturbed for many years, and dust and cobwebs had been suffered to gather thick upon it. In some of the rooms, it was in an excellent state of preservation, while in others, it was rapidly falling to pieces.

The apartments were, most of them, very spacious, and it seemed remarkable that an edifice of that description should be built in such a lonely and unfrequented part of the country,—for, from whichever direction Emily gazed, she could behold nothing but the wild uncultivated heath, or the gloomy shade of the distant wood beyond. Well did she imagine, had it gained the appellation of the Lone House of the Heath.

At length, after wandering from room to room, until she was almost tired, she came to one, the casement of which opened upon a kind of terrace. She walked on to it, and looked down below—it was a great height from the ground—but all at once a dreadful idea rushed across her brain.

Here, at once, was the means of escaping the loathsome caresses of the hated Chesterton, by death,—which was by far, in her estimation, the less terrible fate of the two

and as she gave indulgence to this thought, her bosom felt a sensation of hope and relief.

She was aroused from the train of thought into which she had fallen, by a gentle voice repeating her name, and, turning round, she was pleased to behold Patty at her elbow.

'Well, I have found you at last,' said Patty, 'I have been looking for you everywhere for I was so anxious to see you that I might speak to you. Emily, you will not think bad of me, will you, because of the behavior of my father and brother?'

Emily could not help melting to tears at the kindness of the girl's manner, and taking her hand she pressed it fervently between her's; but was unable to give utterance to what she felt.

'I can understand you, my poor girl,' said Patty; 'I knew you would not blame me. From the first moment I beheld you, my heart warmed towards you with the affection of a sister, and, oh! you cannot imagine how sincerely I pity you, for the trouble and misery into which you are brought. Would that I could serve you; but I am afraid it is out of my power to do so, any more than to offer you my sympathy.'

'This is kind—very kind, indeed,' said Emily, 'and gladly do I accept your friendship. But, oh! tell me, I beseech you, do you know any thing of my origin, who I really am, and who are those that pretend to be my friends, but are, in reality, my persecutors?'

'Alas! I do not, Miss, replied Patty; 'I never saw Mr. Chesterton but once before, and my parents but seldom, before lately, for I was brought up by my aunt. Perhaps it is wrong in me to say so, but, indeed, I have too much reason to believe that my father and William are two very bad men; I cannot feel that affection which I fain, in consistency with my duty would. Oh, that I

had been suffered to remain with my aunt, who behaved very kindly to me, and had never known that I had a father or a brother in existence.'

'We are both the children of misfortune, I can see, Patty,' said Emily, 'and earnestly, and sincerely can I feel for you. But tell me, in what way do your father and brother exist?'

Patty evinced extreme emotion at this question, and shuddered.

'I will spare your feelings, Patty,' said Emily; but I will ask if you have strength of mind to support the relation of certain facts of the most revolting description, in which your father is principally concerned?'

Patty looked at her with astonishment.—Then Emily detailed the horrible conversation which she had overheard, between Gerald Darnley and Chesterton.

Frequently did Patty interrupt her to give utterance to an expression of the most unqualified horror; and when our heroine had concluded, she exclaimed in accents which fully evinced the violent emotion under which she labored—

'Good God! and can I then have heard aright? Oh! my wretched guilty parents! Heaven turn your heart, and render you penitent, after the crimes, I fear, you have already been guilty of.'

'Heartily do I respond to your prayer, my poor girl,' ejaculated Emily, taking her hand. 'But tell me, am I not awfully situated?—Am I not to be pitied?'

'You are, Miss!' replied Patty, eagerly, 'and I tremble for you; the wretch, Chesterton—that man whose grey hairs should remind him that he totters upon the brink of eternity, and—but what is to be done?—I have no power to aid you to escape; and if I had, whither could you fly? Where seek refuge, and a shelter—friendless—destitute as you are?'

'Oh, Patty, for that I care not,' returned our heroine, 'could I but escape from this dreadful place, and the power of Chesterton, who will, there is no doubt, persist in his infamous designs, I care not whither I go!—Let me wander a houseless beggar; that would be a life of happiness, compared with the fate with which I am threatened. I would put my trust in Providence, who would not, surely, abandon me to utter misery, and despair!'

'Put your trust in Him, now, dear Emily,' said the poor girl, 'and rest assured something will happen to frustrate the diabolical schemes that are devised against you, and to restore you once more to liberty and happiness!'

'Happiness!' repeated Emily, with a melancholy smile—'alas! I fear me, that happiness is never fated to be my lot; I am the child of misfortune—the victim of sorrow; but, oh, let me escape dishonor, and I will not fear to encounter any other calamity, however severe, which the Almighty may think proper to inflict upon me.'

'Something must be done, and, yet, how?' said Patty, placing her hand to her temples, as if in meditation; 'alas! I cannot think of any thing for the present, that is likely to succeed. Oh, my wretched father, wicked as I really thought you, little did I imagine that you possessed so base a heart as you do.'

'Alas! then, there is no hope for me but one,' said Emily; and as she spoke, she looked earnestly at the terrace, and the open space beyond.

'What hope is that, Emily?' eagerly demanded Patty.

'Death!' replied our heroine, solemnly, 'and, by heaven, sooner than the villain Chesterton shall triumph in his diabolical design, I would cheerfully meet it.'

'Know you to whom this house belongs?' interrupted Emily, 'and how your father

came into possession of it? It has evidently been no insignificant building, formerly, and, even now exhibits undoubted proofs of the wealth and station of its original inhabitants.'

'This old house,' answered Patty, 'belongs to the gentleman to whom Chesterton is the agent, by whom my father is allowed to inhabit it. Before we occupied it, it had remained empty for some years, and had never been inhabited but a short time, I believe, by the family to whom it belongs.—Any further particulars concerning it, I am entirely unacquainted with, more than the wild reports that are spread about of its being haunted; but, although I am certainly not one of the most courageous in the world, I am not so superstitious as to place any belief in the preposterous stories that are circulated about the ghosts and hobgoblins that are said to wander through its dreary apartments.'

'But is not your father and his family looked upon with an eye of suspicion and curiosity, for residing here?' asked Emily, 'and have not strange conjectures, of the manner in which he lives, ever been indulged in by the persons in the neighborhood?'

'Of that, of course, I cannot know anything, Miss,' replied Patty,—'as I am never in communication with any but our own family; and the nearest village is seven miles from this place, so, that you may very well imagine that we have very little opportunity of judging how far the curiosity of its inhabitants extend. This is a strange old fabric, and you have not seen it half yet; it has vaults and subterraneous passages, just the same as you may have read of in a romance, and they would actually frighten you to look upon; and there are many dungeons underground, where, formerly, no doubt, many hapless wretches have been confined, and, perhaps, lingered out a life of misery

and torment, the victims of tyranny and oppression.'

'Ah!' hastily exclaimed Emily, as a latent ray of hope darted across her mind, 'and know you not of any secret outlet, from whence I might—'

'Oh, no, Miss,' interrupted Patty, 'there is no hope that way, all the underground places are well secured. There might have been a chance formerly, but since my father has made them the receptacles of such property as—' Patty checked herself suddenly, and endeavored to recall her words; exhibiting, at the same time, much confusion and emotion.

'What property, Patty?' quickly inquired Emily, who noticed the confusion and agitation of the young girl; and immediately caught at the truth.

Patty turned pale, and hung her head in shame, and our heroine, who pitied her feelings, forbode to urge the question further—but she could perceive in a moment that her surmises were just, and her horror, at the situation in which she was placed increased.

They now opened a heavy oaken door—'Ah! that room!' screamed Emily, as Patty opened it. It rushes forcibly on my recollection now, although I was so young at the time; the same dark, frightful-looking place in which my grandmother used to sleep when I was a very little child. I remember it as well as if it was but yesterday I saw it before. There is the same grim, and ugly-looking portrait. There is the old clock with its broken hand and worm-eaten case, the same old broken chairs; the low wooden pellet, and humble mattress. I could swear to the place. Good God! this is wonderful!'

'You speak in problems, dear Emily,' said Patty, whose curiosity was excited—'to whom do you allude?'

'You shall hear,' returned Emily, and she immediately informed her.

'It is strange,' observed Patty, 'but, yet, I do not think it could have been my father whom you mean. This room, however, has never been inhabited by one of our family, since we came to the house, and everything has remained undisturbed in it.'

'I know it; I am certain of it,' cried Emily; 'it is the same, I could almost swear, as when I and my grandmother quit- ted it; nothing but the mattress, in which I used to sleep, and the bed-clothes seem to have been—Merciful God! what is this? Look, look, Patty! The sheets are stained with blood! Some dreadful crime has been committed here.'

Patty uttered a scream of horror, as she fixed her eyes upon the sheets which Emily had turned down, and beheld them clotted and marked with blood, which appeared to have been there for some time. There was the print of a hand plainly discernable, and the sheets were cut in several places, as if they had been perforated by some sharp instrument.

They both stood aghast for some moments, and continued to gaze upon the object which had so excited their horror, without being able to utter a word!

'Gracious heaven!—at last, ejaculated Patty, 'what deed of blood has been perpetrated here? Who has been guilty of a crime so fiendish?'

A deadly chill fell upon her heart, as the name of her father rushed upon her thoughts; but she recoiled from the dreadful thought with a sensation of sickening horror, and became paralyzed to the spot.

'Some unfortunate wretch has evidently here met with his death,' said Emily, 'and if his murderers still live, may the Almighty bring a just and fearful retribution upon their heads. Let us quit this dreadful place—come, come, my blood runs icy cold in my veins while we remain here.'

Thus speaking, with ghastly looks, Emily was about to hurry her companion from the room, when her foot kicked against something on the floor, and stooping down, she picked up a black morocco pocket-book, with the clasp torn off, and looking at the contents, she noticed nothing but a few memorandums in different places, and on the back of the cover were marked the initials 'J. D.'

'This, probably, belonged to the murdered man,' said Emily; 'and if it did, it is very clear that the assassin committed the deed for the purpose of robbery. I will keep this in my possession; and should I ever escape from this place, it may serve the ends of justice.'

'I am quite appalled at this dreadful discovery,' said Patty, 'and shall be fearful in future of moving about the house, lest I should encounter the ghastly spectre of the murdered being. But, for heaven's sake, Miss, do not give the slightest hint to my father or my brother of what we have seen, or even that we have visited this apartment at all?'

Emily hastily promised to obey, and they then hurried from the mysterious chamber, and closed the door after them, Emily having taken care to conceal the pocket-book in her bosom.

They had scarcely descended the first flight of stairs, when Emily was astonished to hear her name pronounced, and the next moment she was struck with a feeling of disgust and unconquerable horror, when she beheld Chesterton ascending the stairs. She paused, and trembled; while he, with an insinuating look, came to meet her, and having endeavored to take her hand, which she hastily withdrew from him, he said,—

'My dear Emily, where the deuce have you and Patty been? I have been making many inquiries for you of Mr. Darnley, as I heard that you looked pale—'

'Hold! Mr. Chesterton!' cried Emily, 'Your pretended kindness agrees not with your repeated deceptions.'

Chesterton told Patty she might go, as she was not wanted.

'And I also will go,' said Emily.

'Stay,' cried Chesterton, placing his back against the room-door, and preventing her egress, 'I will not suffer this, Emily. What mean you by saying that I have deceived you?'

'Did you tell me that I was to be made a prisoner, sir?' cried Emily. 'Unhand me, sir; young and unprotected as I am, you shall find that Emily Fitzormond has the spirit to resent an insult; and that she will be enabled to oppose and defy the insidious artifices of her enemies. She trusts in the goodness of heaven.'

Mr. Chesterton could not return any answer immediately, he was so abashed and astonished at the dignity and firmness of her manners; but, at length, he somewhat altered his tone, and with an air of haughtiness, said, 'The insinuations that you have thrown out, young lady, but ill become one, methinks, who, but for the attention and kindness of those whom she has thought proper to designate her enemies, would even now be without a shelter or a home, and whom it is their anxious wish to make happy.'

'Suffer me to take that care and anxiety off your hands,' said Emily, 'and I will bless you for it.'

'You must be mad,' cried he, softening his tone. 'Here you can have books and every thing which you may wish for. Come, come, Emily, your nature is too suspicious. I request you will attend me below. I have something to say to you before the return of Gerald Darnley and his son which is of the greatest importance to you. Nay, I will not be refused.'

'If you would wish me to believe in the

sincerity of your protestations of friendship and esteem for me, sir,' said Emily, who began to be seriously alarmed at his manner, 'you will allow me to retire to my own room for the present; I am not well, indeed I—'

'This is a mere obstinate excuse, and will not have any effect with me,' said Chesterton, still remaining with his back against the room-door. 'Emily, I would not appear harsh, but I cannot, and will not, neglect the present opportunity afforded me, of talking to you upon a subject on which my happiness and your own depends. Nay, you must excuse me, and blame yourself, if your obstinacy compels me to use a little gentle violence.'

Emily trembled with terror as Chesterton spoke, and grasping her hand, forced her from the spot, and compelled her to accompany him down the stairs into the parlor.—When they had entered which, he closed the door at the bottom of the staircase, led her to a chair, into which she sunk, exhausted, with the exertion she had made, and the alarm she underwent, while he stood gazing at her for a short time with looks of admiration. At last, however, Emily so far conquered her fears as to be able to rise from the chair, and, in tones of firmness, she demanded,—

'What mean you, sir, by this strange, this violent behavior? What would you of me? If your intentions are honorable, or you really are the friend you wish to appear to be, you surely would not act in this ambiguous and violent manner.'

'Emily, dear Emily,' cried the hoary villain, in a tone of rapture, 'consent but to one request which I have to make, and you shall not only be restored to liberty, but have every thing your heart can wish for. Oh! avert not your face, most beautiful girl, nor seek to conceal your maiden blushes, but listen to the vows of a man who is prepared to adore you; who, from the first moment

he beheld you, became ardently, irrevocably devoted to you, and would now willingly make any sacrifice, to hear those lovely lips pronounce a confirmation of his hopes, his desires. Emily, I love you—I worship you—say, then, that you will return my passion, and command me your most devoted slave.'

As Chesterton spoke, he sank on one knee, and took the hand of Emily, and pressed it with vehemence to his lips, she being too much agitated, frightened, and bewildered, to be able to offer any resistance.

'Emily,' continued the aged libertine, 'you have the chance of every felicity before you, do not, then, rashly, madly, reject the offer while it is yet at your command.—Escape from your unprotected state, by accepting the love and protection of one who will make it his sole study to render you happy; think not of the disparity of our years; I will love you with the ardor of youth, and with none of its evanescence—

No fresh object shall allure my fancy;—nothing shall ever alter my sentiments, or weaken the passion with which your young and blooming charms have inspired me.—You shall have no care, no wish unstudied or ungratified. My whole soul shall be devoted to you, and no trouble shall ever darken your brow with a cloud of sorrow.—Still you turn away from me; you scorn me; you hate me; you—'

'Cease, sir, for the love of heaven!' exclaimed our blushing and terrified heroine, starting from the spot where she had hitherto stood, and turning upon him a look of reproach and indignation; this language, addressed to a poor, friendless, girl, to one who is but a child to you, is not only disgusting, but brutal. Away, sir, you have unmasked yourself: leave me; the sight of you is loathsome to me. Oh, how have I deserved this cruel fate?'

As the poor girl thus spoke, she burst into a torrent of tears, and wringing her hands, afterwards covered her face with them, and sobbed aloud with the emotion caused by wounded delicacy, and the fear occasioned by the danger of her situation.

'Silly girl!' ejaculated Chesterton, once more advancing towards her, 'why should you thus afflict yourself? Surely there is nothing so alarming in being offered the homage of a heart which beats only for you, and will continue to do so, until it shall cease to throb forever. Nay, I cannot, will not, beauteous maiden, see you weep thus. Here let me kiss off those pearly drops caused by—'

'Wretch! villain!' screamed Emily, retreating to one corner of the room as Chesterton attempted to fling his arms around her waist, and to press his lips to her's;—'stand off! pollute me not with your touch! or the vengeance of offended heaven shall be invoked upon your head; that heaven to which I now solemnly appeal, and which will not suffer the guilty to triumph over the innocent and the unprotected. Villain stand off!'

The countenance of the villain Chesterton was inflamed with the unruly passions of desire and admiration, which Emily's opposition only served to increase; instead of to abash; and as he rushed immediately towards her, he ejaculated,—

'By hell! you resist me in vain! Your beauty has created in my bosom the most ungovernable passions, and they must, they shall be gratified. Your cries are useless.—Here there is no one at hand to fly to your aid. You are completely in my power; you are mine; you are mine!'

'Help! help! oh, God!' shrieked the distracted Emily, as she struggled in the arms of Chesterton, while her strength was nearly exhausted, and despair had almost settled upon her heart.

'There is no help nigh, girl!' shouted the villain, triumphantly; 'ha, ha, ha! My success is certain.'

'Tis false!' exclaimed a female voice behind him; release the trembling girl, or I will discharge the contents of this at your head!'

It was Patty who thus spoke, and who, having on the stairs listened to all that had passed between Emily and Chesterton, started forth just at this critical juncture, and seizing upon a loaded gun which stood in one corner of the room, placed herself in an attitude to put her threat into execution.

'Confusion! death!' shouted the miscreant, staggering back to the further end of the room, when he beheld the attitude in which the heroic girl stood. Before he could utter another sentence the door was thrown open, and Gerald Darnley and his son entered.

'Hollo! hell and the devil!' cried the latter, 'what's the meaning of all this—Patty—Emily looking as white as a sheet, and Chesterton as stupid as an owl;—what's amiss here?'

'Psha! it's nothing, I dare say, Will,' remarked his father, who, no doubt, guessed the truth; 'I have often warned you against playing with that pop-gun, Patty, and some of these times you'll have reason to repent it, or else I'm mistaken.'

'I shall never repent having used it upon such an occasion as the present one,' said Patty, 'when it has stood my friend to save an unprotected female from the ruffian attacks of a —'

'Ah!' exclaimed Will Darnley, looking fiercely towards Chesterton; 'damme, if I didn't think so. Why, is it possible that a grey-headed old fellow like you, Master Chesterton, should—'

'Hold your tongue, boy, will you?' said his father, sternly and peremptorily; 'I have

no doubt Mr. Chesterton has only been up to some foolish frolic or the other, and surely he can do that without being called to an account by you. These girls are so very squeamish when there's no occasion for it.'

Will Darnley muttered something to himself, and scowling upon Chesterton, he placed himself by the side of Emily, who all this while remained fixed in the same attitude as she had assumed when Patty had so courageously come to her assistance, and saved her from destruction.

'What say you, lass,' added Will, in gentler tones, and addressing himself to Emily; 'let us hear your version of the affair. D—n the man who would ill-use a female, I say, and Will Darnley will always be the first to stand her champion against the very devil himself.'

'Headstrong fool!' exclaimed Chesterton, with resentment.

'Ay, what?' demanded Will, fiercely, and clenching his fist. 'Fool, say you? Damme, but no; it is lucky for you that you are an older man than me, or you might have to pay dearly for that compliment, mayhap.'

'Hold your peace, Will,' remonstrated his father; 'what the deuce do you want to quarrel about? It is no business of yours, that you need take it up so warmly.'

'Oh, if you are men, if your hearts are not quite steeled against every feeling of humanity,' supplicated the weeping Emily, 'you will pity me; suffer me to depart, and go where I may no longer be exposed to the brutal treatment of this hoary ruffian.'

'Girl, beware!' exclaimed Chesterton, his eyes flashing with indignation; 'you had better endeavor to conciliate my friendship than to make me your enemy; you may repent this language; nor would you venture to repeat it, did you but know the power I hold over you. For the present I bid you adieu; I shall see you again to-morrow; and, rest

assured, that I shall not readily give up my designs; if persuasion fail to make you assent to my wishes, force is sure to prove efficacious. Perhaps by to-morrow, Will Darnley, your boasted courage may have cooled a little, and your father may have told you better than to give way to such intemperate language to one whom—'

'Whom I thoroughly despise,' added Will, with a scornful look, as Chesterton quitted the house.

'No more of this nonsense, boy,' said Gerald, with a frown; nay, I insist upon it.'

Will Darnley turned sullenly away, and, throwing himself in a chair, folded his arms, and crossed his legs carelessly; while his father, turning to Emily, observed,—

'You will do well, girl, not to make such a fuss in future, when a little harmless joke is played off upon you. Mr. Chesterton means you no harm; but, on the contrary, would make you much more comfortable than a person in your station of life has a right to expect, and I should advise you not to repulse, but rather to encourage his addresses.'

It would be impossible to describe the feelings of horror and disgust with which Emily listened to the words of Gerald; and when she thought upon his character, the deed he was employed to perform, and the awful discovery which she and Patty had made in the old room, her terror and emotion exceeded all bounds. She returned him no answer, for she could not speak to him, and his looks filled her bosom with alarm and abhorrence.

Will heard his father, apparently, with a feeling of any thing but pleasure, and the glances he occasionally fixed upon the countenance of Emily excited the greatest uneasiness in her bosom. The charms of the beauteous maiden had evidently struck the

heart of the young man, and such was the impression that had been made, it was not very probable it would be easily eradicated.

'You can retire to your own room, girl,' said Gerald, after a pause. 'I have something for your private ear, Will. As for you, Patty, I warn you not to make yourself so officious in future, or you and I, perchance, may quarrel.'

Emily was hastening away, when the pocket-book, by some means or other, escaped from her bosom and fell upon the floor.—The eyes of Gerald became fixed upon it in a moment, and as it did, his countenance changed, his eyes rolled in their sockets, his limbs trembled, and in a voice of indescribable emotion, he cried—

'D—n! what do I behold? This pocket-book; this infernal proof of —. Girl, speak! instantly—how came this into your possession? Ah! the old room—you have been there—fool that I was to suffer you to have that key. You have seen all, and must pay for your curiosity! die!'

Will Darnley seized his father's arm as he was about to draw the trigger of a pistol.

'Mercy! mercy! spare my life!' screamed Emily. 'I solemnly promise you that what I have seen shall never be divulged by me to mortal ears.'

'Will you swear?' demanded Gerald.

'Ay, an oath will be quite satisfactory enough,' said Will Darnley; 'her countenance much belies her if she would ever break an oath once administered to her.'

'Hark, girl,' said Gerald, dropping his arm, and fixing a searching glance upon her countenance, 'are you ready to take the vow required of you?'

'Name it; I will do all that you require of me.'

'Swear, then, that you will never reveal to mortal ears what you may have seen in the old chamber; and if you break your

oath, wish that every possible misery may attend you throughout life, and that eternal perdition may light upon your soul!'

'I swear!' said Emily, solemnly.

'Enough,' observed Gerald. 'Now rise, and away to your room; remember your oath.'

With a bursting heart the unfortunate Emily tottered from the parlor, and hastened up stairs to her own apartment, where she threw herself upon her knees in a paroxysm of despair, and gave vent to her anguish in a burst of tears and sobs.

CHAPTER VI.

THE FEARFUL DISCOVERY.

LANGUAGE would be far too weak to pourtray the state of Emily's mind after these multifarious, exciting, and painful events.—Young as she was, and with such an alarming prospect before her eyes, it is a wonder that it did not turn her brain.

'My God! what will become of me?'—she said, in a voice rendered almost inarticulate with grief; 'in the power of robbers, murderers; wretches who glory in wading through human blood. I am lost! lost!—Chesterton, too, the miscreant. Oh, how my heart shudders when I repeat his name! How shall I escape the fate he has doomed me to? What can my girl's resistance do against him and Gerald? Alas! nothing.—Situated as I am in this lone house, without the means of assistance nigh, how can I save myself from destruction, Oh, Heaven! in mercy look down upon me, and shield me. Rather let me die than suffer the wretch Chesterton to triumph in his guilt. I can meet death, but not the destruction of my virtue.'

As night approached, so did the apprehensions and the terror of Emily increase;

must she pass another night of horror in this chamber, after the villanous attempt of Chesterton, and the resolution he had expressed of obtaining his brutal desires by some means or the other?

And should he be admitted to the house for that purpose, what means had she of resisting him? None! A deadly faintness came over her, as she thus reflected, and she gasped for breath!

She examined the fastening of her door, and found it to be so weak, that the least force would prevent its being any obstacle to the entrance of any person, and this, of course, was an additional cause of terror to her, and served to increase her despair. She could in fact, see no cause whatever to indulge in the slightest hope, and the dreadful excitement of her feelings in consequence, almost overpowered her.

Ever and anon, she would go to the top of the stairs and listen, but all was still, and although there was a light burning in the parlor below, she could not distinguish any person moving.

Then she descended the stairs, and cautiously tried the door, which, however, she found was fast, and at length the voice of old Madge smote her ears, in querulous tones, singing the burthen of an old Scotch ballad.

There was something in the idea of Emily, peculiarly dismal in listening to the tones of merriment in that gloomy place, which she had every reason to imagine had been the scene of many horrible crimes, and she returned to her own apartment, and closed the door. She seated herself by the casement, and leaning her head on her hand, gave free indulgence to the dismal thoughts that harassed her mind.

All was so quiet in the house, that she could plainly hear the ticking of the old clock in the room below, and its monotonous sound had anything but a pleasing effect,

Hour after hour, elapsed in this manner, and still Emily did not retire to bed; she feared to do so; and the anguish of her thoughts, and the strength of her terrors, kept all signs of sleep from her eyelids.—Presently, however, she was aroused by a knocking at the outer door, which she had, no doubt, was Gerald Darnley and his son returned.

Her heart throbbed with alarm as she thought of the wretch Chesterton, and the probability that he accompanied them, and she was, for a moment or two, unable to move.

At length, determined to satisfy her doubt, she once more quitted her room and going to the top of the stairs she looked eagerly through the casement before-mentioned, and which commanded a full view of the room, and she felt relieved when she saw that Chesterton was not there.

Gerald and Will, however, were attired in rough coats as if returned from a long journey. Having barred and bolted the door, they unloaded themselves of a great quantity of gold and jewelry.

'The wretches have been committing murder and robbery,' she reflected, 'and these are the fruits of their crime.'

They at length spoke of having murdered an old miser, and chuckled over the fact that 'dead men tell no tales.'

'Now,' said Will, 'I'll tell you what I've an idea of doing, though I don't know whether you'll approve of it or not. The beauty of that girl, that Emily, has made a strong impression upon me, and—'

'Well, and what then?' interrupted Gerald, abruptly, and frowning.

'Well, and what then?' reiterated the son, 'why, you needn't be so sharp, father. I see you will not approve of my design. But I tell it to you. I have some idea of doing the matrimonial with that wench, and I want a short rest from this sort of business, my share

of my booty will enable me to do so.—Why, you look as black as a thunder-cloud, father!

'Fool!' exclaimed Gerald, fiercely, 'know you not that I have already bargained with Chesterton about the girl, and that she is to be his?'

'Then you must break the contract, that's all,' returned Will, carelessly, 'it will not be the first time you have done so; Emily is too rich a prize for that hoary-headed old libertine, she must be mine.'

'She must either be his or die,' said Gerald, 'you know well what interest I have at stake in obeying the will either of the steward or his master!'

'And his master has too much cause to fear you, to be very ready to withdraw his patronage from you;' said Will, in the same cool and careless manner; 'become the mistress of Chesterton, or die,—psa!—she shall neither do one nor the other.'

'Ah! dare you?'

'Why, hark you, father,' said Will, 'you ought to know my character pretty well, and you are well aware that I will not easily be baulked in anything that I have set my mind upon; besides, I have now arrived at years sufficient to be capable of judging and acting for myself; and the whole of the matter is, my mind is made up, the girl is mine!'

'Then it must be when Chesterton is tired of her,' answered Gerald, 'since you seem to be so determined.'

'Never!' cried Will, fiercely, 'neither you nor any other person shall move me from my resolution; and it will be well for those who do not attempt to thwart me in my desires.'

'You get bold and saucy, boy!'

'Perhaps I may, and if I do, I am indebted to you, I believe, for all the excellent accomplishments I possess!' returned Will, in a sarcastic tone.

Gerald struck the table furiously with his

clenched fist, then hastily arose, and with compressed lips, and contracted brow, traversed the room for a second or two with uneven footsteps, while Will crossed one leg over the other, and shook his foot with the most consummate nonchalance.

'Will, I advise you not to arouse my wrath,' at length observed Gerald, walking back to the table and fixing a look of deep resentment on his son.

'I wish not to do so,' replied the latter, 'but seek not to frustrate my wishes.'

'I cannot consent.'

'You must.'

'I must?'

'Ay, if you do not, I shall only take French leave!'

'Suppose I take means to prevent it?'

'If you study your own interest and safety, you will not attempt it:' was the reply.

'What if I obey the injunctions of my employer, and murder her?'

'You must first slay me!'

'D—n!' cried the wretch Gerald, furiously, 'this is insupportable! Will, beware, I repeat, how you exasperate me, or I will not answer for the consequences.'

'I will risk them all, anything,' replied Will, 'but I will not abandon my designs; I have taken a fancy to the wench, and have her I will, though the devil stood in my way.'

'Headstrong fool!' vociferated Gerald, 'but you will think better of this if you're wise.'

'I am wise enough not to be easily intimidated, as you know,' retorted Will, boldly.

Vain would be the task to endeavor to give even a faint idea of the intense horror, disgust, and alarm, with which our heroine had witnessed the scene, and listened to the discourse of the wretches;—her faculties seemed to be completely suspended, and she was unable to move from the spot on which she had been standing for several minutes after Gerald Darnley and his son had retired; at length, however, she staggered into her own apartment;—her limbs failed her; her head grew dizzy, and she sunk upon the couch in a state of insensibility!

When she recovered, she remembered with horror what she had heard. How could she escape the miserable fate which threatened her? She remembered the terr

'Ah!' she exclaimed, 'should the door of the apartment which leads to that be open; if I cannot escape from it, I can, at least, end my life, and avoid a fate more horrible than death. I will venture to search.'

She took up the lamp, and stepping forth from her chamber into the lobby, she proceeded by another door into a gallery, which led her round to the flight of stairs that ascended to the room mentioned. She was pleased to find that the door was unlocked, and, after first listening, and finding that not sound disturbed the utter stillness of all around, placed her hand on the handle, and entered the room. She put her lamp on the table, for fear the wind should extinguish the light, and then walked on to the terrace.—The keen air came fresh and reviving to her, and she felt more firm and composed than she had done for some time past. The moon was sailing through an ocean of clouds, and afforded her the means of distinguishing the objects around for some distance. The country it looked upon, as we have before stated, was wild and uncultivated, and its height from the earth was considerable.—To leap from thence, would be to jump immediately into the jaws of death.

Emily stood and gazed around her for some minutes, and awful as it was for one so young to contemplate self-destruction, she felt a sentiment of satisfaction, when she perceived that she could thus escape from her foes.

At that moment, a strong ray of light darted across her eyes and filled the apartment, and the eyes of Emily rested upon the phantom of her grandmother. Appalled—aghast—she started back, and held by the balustrades, or she must have fallen.

The spectre stood in the centre of the room, and a thin vaporish fluid seemed to play around her. Suddenly the spectre re-

ceded towards the door, and motioned our heroine to follow it. Emily obeyed. It ascended a flight of stairs which Emily firmly believed led to the old chamber. They did so, and they entered the apartment. The spectre pointed to the blood-stained sheets, and three sepulchral groans issued from its chest, and awfully through the dismal place Emily tried to speak, but tried in vain, and the phantom then glided towards the old clock, to the case of which it significantly pointed, and then gradually faded away, and our heroine found herself standing alone in the gloomy old chamber.

It was some time ere Emily could recover from the surprise, consternation, and awe, into which this mysterious and supernatural adventure had thrown her; but, when her reason was in part restored to her, she fell upon her knees, and clasping her hands vehemently together, exclaimed:—

'All merciful God! direct me how to act! and instruct me what to do in this awful and mysterious affair. Why are the dead thus made to revisit me on earth? What is the secret that my poor grandmother was not permitted to impart to me ere she died; oh, teach me, I implore thee, how to unravel this mystery.'

She arose from her knees with renewed firmness, and suddenly she recollected the strange and significant manner in which the spectre had directed her attention to the clock-case, and it occurred to her immediately that there was some secret attached to this, which she was destined to discover.

No sooner did this idea cross her mind, than she hastened towards the old clock, which she remembered had stood in the same situation when she was an inmate of the room, and held the lamp close to it, and examined it all round, to see whether she could discover any thing to verify her surmises.

It was some time before she could perceive any thing at all to justify her suspicions; but, at length, her hand touched some cold substance in the wainscot immediately behind the clock, which, on closer inspection, she found to be a spring. She was, of course, unacquainted with the nature of it, but after trying in various ways, she bethought her to press upon it with all her might, and almost immediately it took effect, and a panel in the wainscot flew back, and revealed to our heroine a small closet.

Emily felt a shuddering sensation come over her, and she paused ere she entered the closet, her mind predicting that some dreadful circumstance was about to be revealed to her. At length, however, she mustered fresh courage, and boldly stepped into the closet. But she started back with a piercing shriek at the dreadful object which her eyes immediately encountered.

It was a human skeleton, with the tattered remnants of apparel clinging to the fleshless bones, and from which it appeared that it was the remains of a man. It was stretched on the floor, and seemed to have fallen from an old chair which stood close by, and in its hand was clasped a prayer-book. On a small table in the room was an empty pitcher, and a pen and ink.

It would be a needless task to seek to depict the feelings of our heroine at this terrific sight, as the reader must readily imagine them; alone in that silent place, at that solemn hour of the night, and after the appalling adventure she had but just before met with, it is a wonder that she could sustain herself for an instant; but she conquered her feelings as much as possible, imagining that she was the humble instrument in the hands of Omnipotence of revealing a frightful crime, and, probably, bringing the guilty wretches to punishment, and stepped forward towards the mouldering and ghastly remains

of mortality, and examined it more minutely. With difficulty she took the book from the hand of the skeleton, and hastily turning over the leaves, could discover no other marks than those on the back of the wrapper, which corresponded with those in the pocket-book she had before found in the old chamber, being 'J. D. 1721,' and were written in the same elegant hand. From what she could see, it appeared to her, that the unfortunate man, whoever he might be, had been confined in this room, and there left to die of starvation by his fiendish murderers.

This, then, was, probably, part of the dreadful secret which Mrs. Fitzmound had endeavored to disclose when death abruptly terminated her mortal career, and she was, most likely, in some measure connected with the unfortunate being who had met with so shocking a fate. Perhaps (and the blood ran icy cold in her veins as the idea darted across her brain) they were the ghastly remains of the author of her existence; but the thought was too horrible for her to dare to encourage it.

After another pause of a few minutes, she advanced towards the table, and, looking behind the pitcher, was astonished to behold a number of manuscript papers, that were greatly defaced by time.

'Ah!' she cried, as she hastily seized them, 'these, these are the precious documents that will, probably, reveal the dreadful secret, and be the means of bringing retribution upon the heads of the guilty, if they are not already summoned to their dread account.—From these, too, may I ascertain the mystery of my birth. Merciful Heaven! I thank you for this!'

As she thus spoke, she took the manuscripts and the prayer-book, and casting one more fearful glance upon the skeleton, she hastily quitted the closet, pushed back the panel in its place, and hurried from the room.

Astonishment, horror, and mystery had so bound up the faculties of our heroine, that after she had left the old chamber she scarcely knew what she was doing, and went the wrong way, taking that end of the gallery which led to that part of the building where Gerald Darnley and his family resided, and she did not discover her mistake until she laid hold of the handle of the door which belonged to the chamber of Gerald, and turning it, attempted to open it. It happened that Gerald had been in no humor to go to bed after the occurrences of the night, and was sitting up and ruminating upon the obstinate determination of his son, and endeavoring to imagine how it would be best to act to conciliate all parties, without compromising his own interest. Startled by the noise, he jumped up, and in a voice of alarm, cried,—

'Ha! what noise was that?—Who is there?'

Filled with almost inconceivable terror, when she heard the well-known voice of the ruffian, Emily extinguished her light, and fled with breathless haste along the gallery, dropping the MSS. and book in her way, and never stopped until she had gained her own chamber; where, completely overcome with the power of her terrors after the several exciting incidents of the last half hour, she hastily locked the door, threw herself upon the bed, and was unconscious of any thing but her own fears for several minutes.—Then she listened attentively to ascertain whether any one was approaching, but all was quite still, and she felt grateful to Heaven for giving her the presence of mind to extinguish her light; for, had she not done so, she had very little doubt but that Gerald, seeing its rays through the crevices of the door, would instantly have come out, and discovered her, and, in all probability her life would have fallen a sacrifice to his savage wrath.

She now, for the first time, remembered the MSS. and the prayer-book which she had dropped in the course of her flight, and she was in a terrible state of agitation and alarm when she thought of this untoward circumstance. At first she thought of returning and searching for them, but, then, the fear of encountering Gerald prevented her, for, should he see her, nothing, she was certain, would save her from his fury. And, then, again, should he find them, his suspicions might be excited, and she would in that case be placed in the same dangerous situation as she would have been had he caught her on the spot. Besides, on these MSS. probably her whole happiness depended; from these she might at last obtain that information respecting her origin and her relations she had hitherto tried in vain to become acquainted with, and without which the secret might remain, forever concealed; she doomed to perpetual misery, doubt and anxiety, and the guilty be suffered to escape with impunity the punishment due to their crimes.

Stimulated by these ideas, she arose, gently opened the door, and was proceeding to step forth into the gallery, when again her heart failed her; an irresistible dread arrested her intention, and she returned to her room, leaving the MSS. to chance, but resolving to search for them at an early hour in the morning, before she thought that Gerald would leave his chamber.

The awful events she had that night undergone now again came to her mind, and, being involved in utter darkness, they were more calculated to excite her horror; but, at length, exhausted nature could support no more, and she sunk into a sound sleep from which she did not awake until the morning had far advanced, when, remembering what she had resolved the previous night to do, she hastily arose, and, looking into the parlor,

she beheld them all seated at the breakfast table, therefore, she knowing the coast was clear, stepped cautiously on towards the spot where she must have dropped the book and the manuscripts, but they were not there, a circumstance which not only excited the greatest consternation in her bosom, but filled her with the most unqualified regret and disappointment, as the hopes that had been excited in her mind of unravelling the mystery were thus almost as suddenly crushed as soon as they had been formed.

She returned to her chamber in a state of great uneasiness, and had not long been there, when Patty tapped at the door, and was immediately admitted.

'I am glad to think, Emily,' said she, with a smile of satisfaction, 'that you have been enabled to sleep so soundly; I have knocked twice before, but could not make you hear me. It seems, however, that your sleep has been any thing but refreshing, for, bless me my dear girl, how pale you look, and how violently you are agitated; for heaven's sake, what has happened to you?'

'Oh! I have many awful and wonderful things to tell you, Patty,' replied our heroine, 'but I am afraid to tell them here. Meet me as soon as you can on the terrace; but say, have you noticed any thing particular in the manner of your father this morning?'

'Why, he seems rather out of temper, and agitated,' said Patty, 'but there is nothing extraordinary in that.'

'Thank heaven!' exclaimed Emily, 'and yet it is very strange; but, perhaps, he did not—'

'What in the name of patience, my dear Emily, are you talking about?' asked Patty.

'You shall know all, by and by,' said our heroine, 'but do not stay with me any longer, lest your father should grow impatient, and suspect that we are talking of something which—'

'Come, Patty—Patty,—what the devil are you loitering about?' at this moment Gerald shouted out.

'But you will attend the morning repas will you not?' asked Patty.

'Oh! no, no; pray make some excuse for me,' said Emily. 'I cannot, dare not, meet those wretched men; I—'

'I will tell them you are unwell,' hastily interrupted Patty; 'it will be nothing more than the truth, I am certain. They will be going out presently, and then I shall have an opportunity of joining you.'

Patty then left the room, and descended the stairs; and did not return to Emily for some time.

At length she heard the light footstep of Patty upon the stairs, and immediately afterwards she tapped at the door of her apartment.

'I could not come before, Miss,' said Patty when she had entered and closed the door after her, although I was most anxious to do so, especially after the mysterious hints which you threw out this morning. Oh, Emily, I am certain that something unusual has happened, from the dark insinuations and surly behavior of Will, and the great perturbation of manner evinced by my father, but they are both out of the way now, and my mother is so deaf, that if she had her ear to the key-hole even, she could not hear what we are talking about. Do for goodness sake, tell me what you have seen or heard.'

'I have both seen and heard that which has smote my heart with horror,' returned Emily.

Patty listened to the relation of our heroine with exclamations of horror. Had the terrific tale fallen from any other lips than those of Emily, she could not have believed it.

'Oh! Emily,' observed the poor girl, 'to what a tale of horror have I been listening. It seems scarcely possible that there can be such monsters in existence, and those mon-

sters my — no, no, I cannot, I dare not, call them by the names I have been taught. Heaven forbid that I should be linked with such wretches by the ties of consanguinity.'

'You are not, you cannot be, dear Patty,' said Emily; 'of that I feel confident;—we are both the children of mystery and misfortune, and we will together share the same fate.'

'We will,—we will!' eagerly cried Patty. 'Dear Emily, whatever troubles may attend us, whatever dangers and miseries we may have to encounter, they cannot be greater than those we are now exposed to, and — but I had forgot myself; Gerald is still in the house, and should he listen and overhear us, our lives would, most undoubtedly, fall a sacrifice. Let us hasten to the terrace, it is never frequented by him, and therefore we can commune there in safety.'

Emily complied with the request of her companion, and they soon reached the room which opened on to the terrace.

'Emily,' said Patty, in a low tone, when they had first looked round and ascertained that there was no one near them, 'are you willing, are you ready to join me in attempting to make an escape from this frightful, this awful place?'

'Oh, Patty, why ask me such a question?' replied Emily; 'how thankful should I be were the means placed in my power. But what mean you by making your escape?—Have you not free egress from the house whenever you please?'

'No, Emily,' returned Patty, 'I am as much a prisoner as yourself. Since I have been taken from the care of my aunt, this terrace has been the full extent of my liberty.'

'You surprise me! and yet, why should I feel astonished at any act of cruelty and injustice which such wretches may be guilty of?'

'The outer door,' continued Patty, 'is ever kept securely locked; and whichever of the three, my father, mother, or Will, are at home, they keep it in their possession, so that all getting away by that means is out of the question.'

'Then how do you propose making the attempt?' eagerly asked Emily.

'By this terrace,' replied her companion. 'The way I was thinking of myself,' said Emily; 'by tearing the bed-clothes and fastening them together, we might reach the earth in safety.'

'We might,' observed Patty; 'but still I have a better method than that. Amongst the old lumber, in one of the uninhabited rooms of this building, the other day I found a rope-ladder, which has, in all probability, been used by Gerald and Will in some of their nefarious transactions, so that our descent might be effected without any difficulty. Oh! let the consequences be what they may, they cannot be half so terrible as to remain under the same roof as robbers and murderers. Even should I afterwards perish of hunger, I am determined that this night shall be the last I will remain here.'

'And why remain here another night?' asked Emily, with a shudder, as the events of the previous evening recurred to her memory.

'Believe me, were there any possibility of accomplishing it with prudence,' answered Patty, 'our flight should take place this instant; but, it cannot be; I have arrangements to make, which I cannot, by any possibility, complete before to-morrow evening.'

'I cannot deny but that you speak both reasonably and justly,' remarked Emily, 'but, oh, Patty, the idea of remaining another night in this dreadful place, is more than sufficient, after the horrors, the unprecedented horrors I have witnessed since I have been a prisoner, here, is more than enough

to create alarm in the bosom of one much more courageous than I am myself. But, should we succeed, whither do you propose going?

'I have already said, to my aunt's,' replied Patty.

'But, observed Emily, 'would not your father easily discover the place of our retreat; and, what could the opposition of your aunt effect against his will?'

'My opinion is,' replied Patty, 'that it is the last place he would suspect we should fly to, as he would consider that I should be sure not to imagine I should seek the protection of the only friend I knew in the world, and that is the very reason I have chosen it; we must, however, act with the greatest caution, or all our schemes will most assuredly be frustrated.'

'Then, to-morrow night,' said Emily.

'Yes, to-morrow night, if Heaven aid us, we will quit these accursed walls, I hope forever,' answered Patty; 'and something tells me, that we shall not be left to destitution and misery, while rectitude and virtue guide our conduct.'

'We shall not, I am sure we shall not, dear, dear Patty,' exclaimed Emily; 'your words inspire me with redoubled hope and courage. Oh, how shall I ever be able to repay the debt of gratitude I shall owe you for being the means of releasing me from so terrible a fate as that which threatens me while I remain here?'

'Talk not so, Emily, I beg,' said Patty, 'am I not your sister in misfortune? What credit, then, can I take to myself for the performance of that in which I cannot but say I have been guided by something of a selfish feeling. Henceforth, I hope nothing but death will divide our affection, and that some day or the other, we may be as ample partakers of happiness, as we are now of misery.'

'Heaven ordain that we may, fervently ejaculated our heroine, and her eyes beamed an expression of reciprocal affection upon Patty, which could not be misunderstood by the latter;—'by to-morrow night, then—'

'Every thing shall be arranged,' rejoined Patty, 'and we will make the attempt to quit this hateful place, and the merciless wretches whom I dare not designate my kindred.'

'At what hour?' asked Emily.

'I cannot, with any certainty, inform you,' replied Patty; 'We must not make any attempt until they have all retired to rest; when you hear the house quite still, you may expect me.'

'Enough, my dear girl,' exclaimed Emily, her eyes filling with tears of hope and gratitude; 'and oh, should we prove successful, there is no trouble, no labor, I shall consider too great to contribute to our mutual benefit.'

Patty then left with the promise of putting her design into effect on the next evening.

CHAPTER VII.

A TALE OF HORROR

It was a dark and tempestuous night.—The rain pattered loudly against the ivy-covered casement of Emily's dreary chamber, and the wind howled, in fitful gusts, through the different rooms and avenues of the ancient building; when Emily took up the old manuscript to read it. She read the following words:—

'They have torn me from my wife; they have taken me from my smiling infants, and here am I incarcerated in this lone house, with nothing but a horrid and lingering death before mine eyes. How dismal is every thing around me! how horrible is this living tomb! How the fierce wind howls without and the owl screeches through the

ancient chambers. Fit place for deeds of blood; and the wretches who inhabit it!—Their very looks are sufficient to fill the human breast with horror. They mock at my anguish; and they revile my tears, my prayers, my supplications; they are instructed to insult and torture me! * * *

'Oh, my poor wife! Alas! my unfortunate children! What have become of them? Perhaps exposed to the same misery as myself! But how my mind wanders; I scarcely know what to write * * *

'It was midnight when they brought me hither! I was so closely muffled up in the mantle which the ruffians threw over me when they seized me, that I could scarcely breathe. My heart sunk with horror when I looked upon the place, for the very walls seemed to frown despair and death! I implored them to tell me for what I was seized, why torn from my wife and family, and brought hither? But they bid me ask no question, and lifting me from the vehicle in which they had conveyed me, I was led along a dark passage, and up a long flight of stairs, until we reached the old gothic chamber, which adjoins this closet. Here * * *

In vain I tried the door; it was secured by lock, bolt, and bar. I endeavored to force open the casements, but in that effort I was equally unsuccessful.—Alas! they had taken too many precautions for me to hope to effect my escape. I wrung my hands, and cried aloud in despair. The rolling peals of thunder alone answered me! The lightning glared fiercely in at the casements, and made the horrors of my prison more apparent. * * *

'How the old clock ticks—and yet I feel a melancholy pleasure in listening to it. It is the only companion I have. I sit and gaze at its venerable face for hours together; and trace in its figures, and the movement of its hands, a source of amusement. *'

* * * He has twice visited me My God! is it possible that such a hypocrite such a heartless, cold-blooded villain can exist in the world? And is it possible that that man, whom I have nurtured in my bosom; whom I loved as a brother, could have been such a consummate wretch? This day he racked my mind to madness; he told me that here I might make up my mind to remain for the rest of my days, and that the only release from my earthly sufferings which I might expect, would be death!'

Here, again, several pages of the manuscript were so defaced, that Emily could make out only a word here and there, and she was about to take up the other portion of the papers to peruse them, when she was startled by a loud knocking below, and her mind filled with the greatest apprehension, she hastily concealed the manuscripts where she had before placed them, and with a trembling hand, having unlocked her door, she stepped on to the landing, and the first object her eyes encountered was Chesterton, being let in by Gerald Darnley.

A deadly sickness came over her as she saw this, and fearing that the purport of his visit at that unseasonable hour was for some terrible purpose, in which she was interested, she trembled violently, and mentally invoked the protection of Heaven.

Chesterton was attired in a great coat, and seemed to be very wet, so he immediately took his seat in the chimney-corner, the fire still burning briskly in the grate.

Gerald Darnley seemed in no very pleasant humor, and looked at the steward with a surly expression of countenance. They spoke, and every thing was so still in the house, that Emily could distinctly hear every word they uttered.

'Where the devil have you been till this hour?' demanded Gerald, 'I thought you was never coming. It is well for us that that

headstrong boy of mine, Will, has not yet returned home, or he would, doubtless, spoil the sport you have in view.'

'I think Will is gone mad,' answered Chesterton; 'and had it not been for the respect I have for you, I do not think I should have been inclined to have looked over his conduct so easily as I have done.—But the girl?'

'Oh, she's right enough,' replied Gerald; 'she has been in her chamber for hours, and, doubtless, sleeps sound enough by this time.'

'Tis well,' observed Chesterton, 'then I have no time to lose. How shall I gain access to her chamber? No doubt she has locked herself in.'

'Oh, that don't matter,' said Gerald, 'for I have a key that will unlock it.'

'Give it me,' demanded Chesterton;—'quick, quick, I am all impatience for the accomplishment of my wishes. The key.'

'It is here,' replied Gerald, taking the key from a large bunch, and giving it to the steward, 'you don't want my attendance.—'you had better not take a light.'

In a state of the most inconceivable consternation, the distracted Emily, with that presence of mind which seldom forsook her on the most trying occasions, extinguished her light, as she heard Chesterton unlock the door at the bottom of the stairs, and mentally implored the protection of Heaven. She heard him ascend a stair or two, and then he paused, apparently for the purpose of listening.

It was a moment of terrible excitement to our hapless heroine, and she felt the same dreadful sensation as the wretched culprit must experience a few moments before his execution.

'Good God,' she reflected, 'what chance is there of my escaping? None, none at all!'

Still all remained silent for a second or two longer, when she heard the villain Chesterton speaking apparently to himself:—

'All is quiet; there is no light in her chamber; she is, doubtless, therefore, asleep, and little dreams that the man she has dared to despise and hate, approaches to the certain consummation of his wishes. How fortunate that that headstrong boy is out of the way, or he would, doubtless, have frustrated my designs. Now, then, for the deed for which my soul has long panted!'

'Merciful God! protect me!' gasped forth Emily, as she heard the villain ascending the stairs with stealthy footsteps, 'save me, oh Heaven, or I am lost?'

She stood for an instant in a state of fearful suspense and uncertainty in which way to act. She heard the hand of the hoary ruffian upon the handle of the door. He turns it; the door is partially opened; Emily with difficulty suppressed a shriek; when a thought, like lightning, flashed across her brain. She stepped behind the door, so that when the miscreant Chesterton opened it wide, she was concealed from view, and as he walked eagerly towards the couch, thinking to find her there, she stepped with the lightness of a sylph from the chamber, and flew along the passage beyond. She had only just reached the door which communicated with the apartments in that portion of the building, and which she found fortunately open, when she heard Chesterton in a loud voice of fierce indignation, exclaim,—

'Damnation! the girl is not here. What, ho! Gerald,—Gerald Darnley, thou hast deceived me.'

What's the matter now, Emily heard the other ruffian demand, in a gruff voice, as he began to ascend the stairs on hearing the exclamation of the steward; 'what are you making all this noise about?'

'I tell you the girl is not in this room,' answered Chesterton, 'and you was well

aware of that. You have played me false, but you shall repent of it.'

'Why, are you mad, or drunk?' cried Gerald, as he ascended the stairs with increased speed.

'I am neither,' replied Chesterton, 'and so you will find. Emily has escaped.'

'Escaped! the devil!'

'Convince yourself,' said the steward. A momentary pause ensued, and then our heroine heard Gerald give utterance to an expression of rage and astonishment.—During this time she had passed into the gallery upon which the door opened, but notwithstanding the danger of her situation, fear completely rivetted her to the spot.

The two miscreants now issued from the chamber, and the light from the lamp which Chesterton carried, streamed along the passage, but still Emily, was unable to move from the spot. She tried to close the door, but found that it was impossible to do so, as the lock was broken off, and there was no bolt upon that side. By the lurid rays emitted from the lamp, she could behold the savage expression of wrath and disappointment in the countenances of Gerald and the steward.

'I tell you,' said the former; 'I tell you that she must be somewhere in the house. How the devil could she escape when I was below, and every door was secured?'

'How she did so, I can't say,' replied Chesterton, 'but that she has done so is very certain; and, moreover, it strikes me very forcibly that you are not so ignorant of the manner in which she made her escape as you would seem to be. There has been some treachery in this business; that is the plain English of it.'

'Treachery,' cried Gerald, in a voice of much wrath, and frowning ferociously upon Chesterton, 'and dare you say that I—'

There, there, come, perhaps I have been

too hasty,' interposed the steward, seeming to imagine that he had, in all probability, proceeded rather too far; 'at any rate, it is very clear, that, as you lately observed, she must be somewhere concealed in the house, and while we are thus cavilling, it may give her the opportunity of obtaining her liberty.'

'Impossible,' remarked Gerald, 'she cannot effect her enlargement, unless—but ah, the terrace! Should she be bold enough to venture to make the attempt from thence, she may have succeeded; and yet I should not think she would be so mad, as almost certain death would, undoubtedly, be the consequence.'

'It appears to me,' remarked Chesterton, 'that she has been listening to our discourse, and I cannot help thinking, that it was not at all prudent for you to place her in the apartments you did; in the immediate proximity of the parlor, and where she could not only overhear all that was spoken there, but, if she was inquisitive enough, view from the casement above the door at the foot of the stairs, all that took place.'

'Why, certainly,' replied Darnley, 'I cannot deny but that your argument is very just; it was rather silly of me to put her in those rooms; but it is too late to say any thing about the matter now; in the house she must be, and while we are talking here, we are only wasting time. Let us search the place, and if she is not to be found, I will not only give you leave to brand me with the name of traitor, but return you the cash you have given me for doing this business for you, and the money sent by you from my master for—'

'Enough,' interrupted Chesterton, with a shudder, 'I don't like talking about these matters at this time of night, and this is not one of the most cheerful places in the world into the bargain.'

'You may think so, Chesterton,' remarked the ruffian Gerald, with an ironical grin, 'but use is second nature, you know, and my profession has inured me to it. I would not change my situation for a palace.'

'I dare say not,' was the answer, 'unless you were out of danger, and had sufficient to keep you from following your profession in future. But, come, we waste time; your mad fool of a son will probably return soon, and then there will be an end to the business, for this night, at any rate. Let us immediately prosecute our search.'

'Very well; I am ready,' quoth Gerald, and suddenly starting, as he directed his eyes towards the door behind which our heroine was standing, he added;—'Ah! the door; it is open; I remember that the lock is broken off; doubtless, that way she has fled. Follow me, and we shall soon find the fugitive, never fear.'

It is needless for us to attempt to describe the horror of Emily, when she heard these observations, but they immediately aroused her into action, and she fled with the utmost precipitation, uncertain in which direction she was going; for it was completely dark, and she heard the footsteps of her pursuers close upon her heels. She made her way as well as she could, however, towards the room which opened upon the terrace, being determined to sacrifice her life, rather than fall a victim to the nefarious designs of the miscreant Chesterton.

Terror gave speed to her feet; and she was fortunate enough to reach the turning in the gallery, and to enter one of the apartments, which led towards the old chamber, before the two villains entered the gallery, or the rays of the lamp carried by Chesterton would have revealed her in an instant.—In the darkness, however, she was led astray, for it was not the old chamber to which so many horrors were attached, that she wished

to gain; but the one which, as we have before stated, led to the terrace, and no sooner had she discovered this mistake, than she heard the two ruffians at the door. Terror almost overpowered her and she gasped for breath; but, wound up to a state of desperation, she rushed into the old chamber, and finding here her further progress was impeded, she hastily crouched down in as small a compass as she possibly could, behind some old rubbish collected in one corner, shuddering as she reflected upon the awful situation in which she was placed, and the terrors by which she was surrounded. She had scarcely had time to do this, when she heard Chesterton and Darnley open the door of the outer apartment, and immediately afterwards, the former exclaimed:—

'Confound the wind. It has extinguished the light.'

'Thank God!' ejaculated Emily, mentally, 'then they probably will not prosecute their search further, until they have obtained another light, and that will give me time to elude them.'

She was too soon, nevertheless, undeceived, for the villainous steward almost immediately observed:—

'Never mind! we will not wait to get a light, for something strikes me very forcibly that she is concealed just at hand; and the delay might give her the opportunity she requires.'

'Psha,' said Gerald, 'she has not gone this way, I am certain, for beyond this, is the old chamber, where her further egress would be stopped, and having once witnessed its horrors, I do not think it is likely she would have the courage to brave them again. Besides, I gave Will strict orders to fasten up the door of that room, and consequently, she could not gain access to it.'

'Nonsense!' returned the other, 'I must still think you are leading me astray; for here, see, the door is wide open.'

'Ha!' cried Gerald, 'then by hell, Will has deceived me. But do not enter that room; I shudder with horror at the bare mention of it.'

'Fool!' exclaimed Chesterton, 'you are getting as weak as an infant. What is there in that apartment that should so fearfully alarm you. Let me set you an example.'

As he thus spoke, the steward threw open the door, and Emily felt a deadly sensation of horror come over her, when she heard him and Gerald enter. She endeavored to compress her body into a still smaller compass, and scarcely ventured to breathe, lest it should meet the ears of those terrible enemies she had so much reason to dread.

The door closed after them with a loud bang, and immediately afterwards, Chesterton, in a voice of anger, exclaimed:—

'Curses on the door! Why did you not shut it more cautiously? We must return to the parlor for another light.'

'Well, that will not occupy long,' returned Gerald. 'Give me the lamp, and I will be back in a minute.'

'What, and leave me here?' demanded Chesterton, in tones of fear; 'oh, no, I do not fancy being without company in this lonely place.'

'Oh, then you are not quite so courageous as you would have given yourself credit for a short time since!' remarked Gerald, with a satirical laugh, which sounded particularly awful in that dismal place; but, come, we will go together.'

Emily, in breathless suspense, heard them moving across the room, and immediately after, a heavy weight fell upon the floor, which convinced her that one of them had fallen.

'Damnation,' cried the disagreeable voice of the steward, 'what an idiot you must be to cause me to extinguish the light. Ah! what is this? By hell, it is the fleshless bones of a skeleton!'

'Come, come,' said Gerald, in accents of subdued terror, 'let's away; you know well what that skeleton means; the secret panel must have been left open by whoever was last in here and you have fallen into the closet.'

'It must be so,' remarked Chesterton; 'this is a terrible place, and I cannot imagine why such horrors have not been removed.'

'They shall be,' replied the other villain; 'but do not tarry; somehow or the other I can't keep a limb of me still while I am here. Let us begone, and prosecute our search in another part of the house, for I cannot imagine that a timid girl would choose such a place as this to secrete herself in; and if I thought she had—'

'What then?'

'Why, my dagger should instantly open a passage to her heart,' was the terrible reply.

'Not so,' said Chesterton, 'at least not for the present; she must first serve my purpose, and then you may dispose of her as you may think proper. Give me your hand, it is so confounded dark, that I shall be breaking my legs over some of the old rubbish, there appears to be such an abundance of it here.'

The two ruffians now again groped their way across the room, and the horror of our heroine may be readily conceived, when they once or twice approached so near the spot where she was concealed, that she was fearful they would fall over her. At length they seemed to have reached the door, and the heart of Emily was immediately smote with a feeling of the most indescribable dread when she heard Gerald exclaim,—

'Come along, and I will lock the door after us; it is not likely I should want to visit it again in a hurry.'

The idea of being locked in this awful chamber, surrounded by so many ghastly

objects, and with the almost certain prospect of a slow and dreadful death, so completely overcame her, that, unable any longer to repress her terrors, she gave utterance to a loud scream.

'Ha! what noise was that?' cried the steward, turning back.

'Come, come,' replied Gerald, in a hoarse voice; 'it was no earthly sound.'

'By hell! but I have my suspicions that it was,' said the other; 'it was the scream of some one in terror, and I am much mistaken if the bird we seek has not flown hither. Stand by the door, and mind that no one passes from it, and I'll search the room.'

'Lost! lost! oh, God!' mentally breathed Emily, in a state of the most frantic despair. The ruffian Chesterton groped his way round the apartment, and as every step brought him nearer to her, her agony was so great that it defied the power of language to do adequate justice to it. She feared to move, she feared almost to breathe, lest she should betray herself. Even the pulsation of her heart she dreaded would be the means of directing the wretch Chesterton to the spot where she was concealed. He approached her so near, that his hand knocked down a portion of the rubbish behind which she was concealed, and once more he moved to the opposite side of the room, and she breathed more free; but yet, should he not discover her then, what means had she of ultimately escaping, and would she not be left to a fate equally as terrible, in being locked up in that dreadful apartment, in which human blood had evidently been shed, and in which the spirits of the murdered seemed to stalk?

'Well, I do not find her anywhere, and yet I feel almost certain that the scream we heard proceeded from a human being, and from this room; too,' said Chesterton.

'Psha,' returned Gerald, 'are you mad?

I tell you again, that it is not at all likely the girl would select a place of concealment like this. Let us begone; while we are wasting time here, she may be making the place of her retreat secure, and in the meantime Will may return, and spoil the sport you have in contemplation. If you are obstinate and are determined to remain here, poking your way about in the dark, you shall do it by yourself.'

At this moment poor Emily, having been cramped up by remaining in one position so long, gently moved herself, but, unfortunately, in so doing she disturbed some of the lumber, which fell with a loud crash, and left her completely revealed to the view, had there been any light in the room.

'Ah! by Jupiter she is here, now,' exclaimed Chesterton, springing immediately towards the spot where our heroine was on her knees, and grasping her arm, 'I have her, by heaven!' he added; 'ah, damsel, you have in vain sought to elude me; I have destined you to become the mistress of my passions, and you must yield; resistance is vain.'

'Oh! mercy, mercy!' shrieked the horror-struck maiden, as the villain dragged her forcibly from the floor, and endeavored to take her from the apartment.

'She has been listening to our converse, and she dies,' cried the ruffian Gerald, fiercely, rushing, knife in hand, towards the terrified girl. Chesterton, however, interposed, and arresting Darnley's arm, he ejaculated, in a determined tone,—

'Hold! Gerald Darnley, or we are mortal foes. Harm her not; has not an oath of secrecy already been extorted from her?—Besides, is she not in our power, and what have we to fear?'

Gerald sullenly returned the knife to his belt, and said,—

'Well, well, I can't deny the truth of your

last observations, so e'en let it be as you wish. But mark me, I will take especial care that she shall not have any opportunity of breaking her oath, should she be disposed to do so.'

'Unhand me, villain!' shrieked our heroine, as she endeavored to release herself from the hold of Chesterton; 'are you not fearful that the vengeance of an offended God will overtake you for this brutal outrage upon an unprotected female? Unhand me, villain, I say.'

'Perverse girl,' answered Chesterton, 'you supplicate in vain. Your charms have inspired me with passions that I find it impossible to resist; and even where the forfeiture of my life to be the immediate effect of such a course, I would not forego the chance that is now in my power of gratifying my wishes. Nay, nay, this resistance is worse than useless: I am determined, and your obstinacy but increases the desires you have excited in my bosom. This night shall witness the consummation of my wishes, let the consequences be what they may.'

'Almighty God!' exclaimed Emily, as she in vain endeavored to release herself from the ruffian hold of the steward, 'look down upon me, and shield me from the infamous designs of this bad man. Rather abruptly terminate my existence than suffer me to meet with such a fate as that with which he threatens me. Gerald Darnley, in mercy perform the deed which you just now threatened me, and stretch me a corpse at the feet of this hoary miscreant.'

'Away, Gerald,' cried Chesterton, as he forced the now almost powerless Emily from the old chamber into the chamber beyond, his arm encircling her waist, and inflamed by the base passions that existed in his wife's breast—'I need not your aid any further than to procure me a light. You will find me in the Blue Chamber.'

Gerald Darnley departed without saying a word, and Chesterton succeeded in forcing our distracted heroine from the room, and in spite of her shrieks, conveying her to the apartments she had occupied since she had been in the old lone house.

It was a wonder, under the dreadful circumstances, that she could retain her senses; but she did, and, having reached her suite of rooms, the miscreant Chesterton placed her upon a couch, and awaited with apparent suspense and impatience the appearance of Gerald with the light. The latter was not long in coming; and, having placed the lamp on the table, after bestowing a significant look upon the steward, in spite of the supplications of Emily, who wrung her hands in despair and wept torrents of tears, he quitted the room, and left her and Chesterton together.

The steward, after the departure of Darnley, fastened the door, and having gazed upon Emily for a few seconds with glances of lewd desire, he took a seat by her side, and endeavored to embrace her; but she broke from his hold, and throwing herself at his feet, looked up in his face with tearful eyes, and looks of the most impressive supplication, as, with clasped hands and great energy of manner, she exclaimed—

'Oh, sir, if one spark of humanity remains within your breast—if your heart is not entirely callous to all sort of feeling, pity me, and forbear. I will pardon you for all the grief, the bitter anguish, the fear, the suspense, you have hitherto caused me, and even endeavor to forget that you have so far suffered the unruly passions of your nature to overcome you, and to treat you with respect. Imprison, confine me—nay, more; seek to gain my regard by honorable means, and I will try to make you a due return: but, for the love of heaven, do not persist in this cruel, this inhuman outrage, or the vengeance of heaven will most assuredly pursue you.'

'Lovely maiden, said the venerable libertine, 'I would not appear the brute you seem to think me; but your charms, and the opposition you have evinced towards my passion, have increased my desires to an insupportable degree, and those desires must, and shall be indulged. Nay, do not turn away from me with that disdain—that air of repugnance; rather seek by a less freezing demeanor to conciliate my forbearance. Say that you do not hate me; promise me that you will try to look upon me with the regard I covet, and——'

'I will—I will promise to endeavor to do so,' eagerly interrupted our heroine, 'if you will now leave me. Oh, in pity to my youth, and my destitute, unprotected state, relent and leave me.'

'On one condition I will,' returned Chesterton; 'I will give you a week to consider of my offer. If, at the end of that time you will solemnly promise to yield compliance to my wishes, I will immediately depart, and will not seek your presence again until the expiration of that period. Do not hesitate, sweet girl; believe me, my love for you is sincere, and that there is nothing that I will neglect to perform to contribute to your happiness. You shall not have a single wish ungratified; my whole, my sole study shall be to make you happy! I will ever be your fondest, your most devoted admirer, and in your felicity find alone mine own.'

'Oh, spare me, sir; for heaven's sake spare me!' implored Emily, as the tears fell rapidly down her cheeks, now blanched with terror, as she beheld the increasing warmth with which he urged his hateful and lawless suit, and still endeavored to enfold her in his loathsome embraces.'

'Will you promise me?' impatiently demanded the villain.

'Never!' firmly answered our heroine; never will I promise to make a sacrifice of

my honor; sooner would I suffer death—that death with which your blood-thirsty minion has threatened me, and which hideous crime he has been hired to perpetrate.'

'Ah! say you so?' cried Chesterton, his eyes flashing with rage and savage determination; 'rash girl, then thy doom is sealed: this hour, this moment you shall be mine! I heed not your cries: I mock your struggles—they are futile! There is no one here to render you assistance. The time I have long panted for has come: prepare you, my sweet maiden, for this instant gives you to my arms.'

'Help! help!' shrieked Emily, as the ruffian threw his arms around her, and endeavored to kiss her in all the wildness of his detested passion; 'is there no power to save me from this fiend in human form?—Spirit of her who so long protected me, I invoke thee! I solicit thy aid—thy interposition! Save me!—shield me from the power of the guilty seducer!'

Scarcely had Emily given utterance to these exclamations when the light seemed to burn blue; a loud peal of thunder shook the ancient building to its foundation; an unearthly shriek rent the air: the villain, aghast, released his hold of the terrified damsel, and retreated to the other side of the room; and in an instant there appeared, standing between him and our heroine, the shade of Mrs. Fitzormond, attired in all the awful paraphernalia of the grave. Her hollow eyes were fixed with a look of severity upon the countenance of the hoary libertine, which seemed sufficient to freeze the blood in his veins; and her long bony finger was pointed in a menacing attitude towards him, while, in a voice of sepulchral horror, the following words smote his terrified ears:—

'Forbear, villain! The spirit of the dead riseth up to interpose between thee and the guilty deed thou wouldst commit. Forbear!'

'Horror! horror!' cried the appalled villain, as he covered his face with his hands and rushed from the room, leaving our heroine alone. The instant he had gone, the phantom faded into thin air before the eyes of Emily, and almost immediately disappeared.

She had been rendered completely immovable, enchained to the spot with horror, on this the third supernatural visitation; but instantly after the spectre had vanished she regained her usual fortitude, and finding that the wretch Chesterton had left the room, she clasped her hands together, and, raising her eyes with solemn earnestness toward heaven, she fervently returned her gratitude to the Almighty Power that had rescued her from the danger with which she had only a few minutes before been threatened.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE ESCAPE.

The day at length arrived in which the attempt was to be made to escape from the Lone House. When twilight set in, Emily perceived old Madge retire from the parlor, which she had no sooner done, than our heroine heard the light footsteps of Patty ascending the stairs. The critical moment that required all her fortitude, had now arrived, and she trembled. She quickly, however, aroused herself, and by the time Patty entered her chamber, she was quite composed and collected.

Patty put her finger to her lips significantly, and made a sign to our heroine to follow her; Emily raised her eyes towards heaven, and mentally offered up a prayer for the protection of the Almighty in their undertaking, and this having been responded to by the expressive looks of Patty, they both with noiseless footsteps, quitted the room.

As well as placing the rope-ladder in the chamber which opened upon the terrace, Patty had taken the precaution to have there in readiness also, such articles of dress as they would require and she had also secured the money she had saved.

As far as their eyes could penetrate through the darkness, the coast seemed to be entirely clear. Emily and Patty soon fastened the ladder to the balustrades, but then they were sadly at a loss to secure it at the bottom. This, however, they were unable to accomplish, so that the descent by it would be a very hazardous one.

She would not listen to any persuasions that Emily could offer, to allow her to make the first attempt, and the next moment, after having commended herself to the care and protection of kind Heaven, she placed her foot upon the ladder, and was swinging in the air, in a manner that made our heroine shudder, imagining every moment that she would be compelled to let go her hold, and would be precipitated to the earth, in which case she must have been killed upon the spot.

For a few seconds, Patty hung in this perilous situation, and was unable to make any effort to proceed on her descent, but at length she did succeed in somewhat steadying the ladder, and slowly reached the earth in safety.

'Thank Heaven!' cried Emily, fervently, and clasping her hands, 'she is safe.'

'Quick, quick, dear Emily, the ladder—the ladder! Delay not a moment, or our scheme will be frustrated.'

Emily immediately let down the ladder again, and Patty having made it fast at the bottom, the former descended without much difficulty, and Patty and her threw themselves into each other's arms, and embraced each other affectionately, while tears of gratitude gushed to their eyes, and flowed down their cheeks.

They were aroused into action, however, by the danger of their emotion as well as possible, with hasty steps they quitted the spot, and made their way in silence and precipitation across the heath.

In little better than an hour, they arrived at the cottage of Mrs. Burton, which was situated in the midst of a woody dell, and quite secluded.

The good woman beheld Patty and her companion with much amazement, as did also her daughter Ellen, who had come from service on a short visit to her mother, but they received them with much kindness, and offered to afford them all the accommodation in their power.

Patty briefly related the the melancholy story of our heroine; the persecution and cruelty they had both been subjected to, and the manner in which they had affected their escape.

Mrs. Burton, and her daughter were much astonished at all Patty had told them, and expressed in no very measured terms, their detestation and horror at the villany and cruelty of the steward, Gerald Darnley, and his son, applauded the resolution of Patty, and wished them every success.

After sitting for some time in conversation, and having partaken of the repast which Mrs. Burton had provided for them, they retired to their chamber.

'It seems to me, Patty,' said our heroine, when they were once more alone, 'that we are children of mystery, and there appears to be a similarity in our fates, which makes it not at all surprising that our hearts should warm towards each other.'

Emily trimmed the lamp, and then taking the manuscripts from her bosom, read the contents alone to Patty. She was frequently interrupted by the tears and exclamations of terror that escaped the bosom of the latter, and when she concluded, she ejaculated,—

'Good God! and can it be possible that monsters such as these exist, and that they have been hitherto able to escape the vengeance of offended Heaven? And who can the villains that have committed these atrocities be? Can those men, whom I have hitherto been led to suppose to be my father and brother, have anything to do with these monstrous crimes? That William Darnley could not, there cannot be a doubt, for he was but a mere child at the time; but, I have too much cause to suspect his father. Oh, all merciful Providence, confirm my suspicions, I beseech thee, and let me no longer think myself the daughter of a robber and a murderer!'

'Abate your anguish, Patty,' said our heroine, 'and rest assured that something will ere long transpire, to bring about that explanation which you so much desire, and which none can more ardently wish than I do myself.'

'I know you do, dear Emily,' returned Patty, 'and our thoughts are mutual.—To see each other happy is a source of happiness to us both; and I firmly believe that our wishes will one day or the other, either sooner or later, be realised. Poor, unfortunate creature, how dreadful must have been his sufferings, doomed to that horrible lingering death, and torn from his wife and children. It strikes me forcibly, Emily, that the other hapless victim to the enormities of this fiend or fiends in human shape, was the wife of that unfortunate man whose mouldering bones we saw in the secret closet.'

'Why, that thought has occurred to me,' remarked Emily, 'and I have never encouraged the idea, but my mind has been wrought up to a pitch of horror I have seldom, if ever before experienced. But hark! it is eleven o'clock, we had better go to bed, Emily.'

They then retired to rest.



A SCENE IN THE 'LONE HOUSE.'

SEE CHAPTER FIFTH.

CHAPTER IX.

NEW SCENES AND NEW CHARACTERS.

Nothing disturbed our heroine and her companion during the night, and in the morning they were aroused by Ellen, who came to inform them that breakfast awaited their presence. She inquired kindly after their health, and how they had rested; to which Emily and Patty replied in a suitable manner, and then followed Ellen down stairs into the neat little parlor, where they found the frugal repast spread upon the table, and with that cleanliness, and precise attention to order, that appeared to invite them to the meal.

The breakfast passed over in the most agreeable manner, and during the time it was going forward, Patty gave Mrs. Burton and her daughter some necessary precautions as to how she should act, if at any future time there should be any inquiries made of her concerning them. But they needed not such precautions, for independent of both of them being naturally very shrewd, they so sincerely commiserated with our heroine and her companion, that they were prepared to encounter a good deal rather than betray them. Mrs. Burton next enquired of Patty how she purposed they should complete the remainder of their journey, which was a considerable distance. Patty had not yet come to any decision upon this subject, and she was glad that Mrs. Burton had broached it. She informed her that she had not made up her mind, and she would be glad of her advice.

'It would, however, not be prudent for us to remain in this neighborhood a moment longer than can be helped,' said she, 'for fear that those from whom we have fled, should discover the place of our retreat, and get us once more in their power.'

'Of course, the distance is too great for

you to think of walking it, and were it not, it would not be safe for you to do so,' remarked Mrs. Burton.

'Certainly,' replied Patty; 'but a public coach is a very little more secure, when there are a number of passengers, and, perhaps, among them the very persons we wish to avoid.'

'Why, that is very true,' replied Mrs. Burton, after a few minutes' reflection, 'but I'll tell you what it is, Miss Patty, my brother, who only lives in the village, has got a carriage of his own, which he depends upon for a living; he is a man whom you may safely trust, and I have no doubt but what by my speaking to him, he would take you both to the place you want to go to very reasonably. If you like, I will send Ellen for him, and you can speak to him on the subject.'

Both Emily and Patty uttered their thanks to Mrs. Burton for her kindness, and expressed themselves glad of the offer, which could not have happened better, under the present circumstances. Ellen left the cottage to request the attendance of her uncle.

Sam Burton, as Mrs. Burton's brother was familiarly called, was an honest, good-hearted fellow, and in every respect the prototype of his sister. He commiserated our heroine and Patty, on being briefly made acquainted with their misfortunes, and the bargain being quickly struck, they were soon on the road to the place of their destination.

We will pass over the journey of our heroine and Patty, during which nothing took place worthy of any particular notice, and by the following day they arrived at the residence of the latter's aunt, which was very romantically situated.

The astonishment of Mrs. Seagrove on beholding her niece, may be very readily conceived, but she embraced her with the most unbounded affection; shed tears of

compassion when she related what she had to undergo at the Old Lone House; shuddered with horror at the guilty course her brother and his son were pursuing, and welcomed her once more to that home in which she had passed her early days, and promised to protect her all that was in her power.—She received Emily with that cordiality which went immediately to the latter's heart, and made her accept the obligation with less repugnance than she might otherwise have done; but when Mrs. Seagrove looked more narrowly into the countenance of our heroine, she started and turned pale, and then muttered something which was inarticulate, evincing considerable agitation which surprised both the young girls, and Patty, with much eagerness, inquired what was the matter?

Emily could not resist a tear at the kind manner in which Mrs. Seagrove had received them, and after warmly thanking her, they entered the little dining-room, where a plentiful and delicate repast was placed before them, of which they partook heartily. She was frequently interrupted in the course of it, by an exclamation of surprise and grief from Mrs. Seagrove, and when she related the conduct of Gerald Darnley towards her, and the conversation she had overheard between him, Chesterton, and his son, from which it appeared that they were familiar with, and ready to perpetrate any deed of blood, her emotion was so great, that she could scarcely support herself. She arose hastily from her chair, and traversed the room with disordered steps, and frequently gave vent to such exclamations as showed the emotion which struggled in her bosom.

'Can it be possible!' she cried, 'that, bad as I really believed, nay, knew him to be, he can be such a monster! A cold, deliberate murderer, a robber, and—Oh, horror!—horror!—What a stigma upon my name'

'Oh, no, my dearest aunt, no one will be so unjust, so ungenerous, as to reproach you for the crimes and faults of your brother,' said Patty; 'your amiable character is too well known. But, is it not strange that there should be such an extraordinary difference in the dispositions of relations!—Who could imagine, for a moment, that you were the sister of that ferocious, that guilty man, whom I shudder to call father, and whom I confess, I cannot help entertaining doubts, of his being related to me.'

'Not related to you, my dear!' repeated Mrs. Seagrove, in a voice of amazement and confusion; 'whatever can have put such an idea into your head?'

'I know not, my dear aunt,' replied Patty, 'but certain it is, that I cannot divest my mind of it. You, of course, ought to know all about it, for I was entrusted to your care from childhood, and before I can remember; you, I know, would not deceive me; tell me, then, I beg of you, whether you know any thing relating to me, to give strength and confirmation to my surmises?'

'Patty,' at length her aunt observed, 'now that I see your suspicions are excited, I am ready to admit that I have always had my doubts as to Gerald Darnley, my unfortunate brother, being your father; but, you will, I am confident, believe me, when I assure you, that as to any direct certainty upon that point, I have not the least proof.'

'Now,' ejaculated Patty, in accents of disappointment, 'you astonish me!'

'I dare say I do, my child,' returned Mrs. Seagrove, 'but such, I assure you, is the case. Listen to me:—I have never related to you the particulars I am now about to detail, before. My father was a man of excellent principles, and in affluent circumstances, and he brought up myself and Gerald, who was my only brother, with every care and attention. But Gerald, even from a child,

evinced a morose, cruel, passionate and sullen disposition, and as he grew up, in spite of the good example he had before him, and the excellent advice he had ever received from his parents, it grew with him. Our mother died when we were both young, and after some years, a bank failing, in which my father had invested the greater portion of his money, we became nearly ruined. This circumstance, I have, no doubt, tended to shorten his days, for he did not live but a very short time afterwards, and was enabled to leave me and my brother but a very small annuity. Gerald launched forth into every scene of vice and dissipation, and left me, and I heard no more of him for several years afterwards. In the mean time, I married the late Mr. Seagrove, of whom I was so unhappily deprived only two years after our nuptials. I have no occasion to dwell upon that melancholy subject. A short time after his demise, I recovered some property which belonged to him, and which was sufficient to keep me in future independent, if not in affluence. I made several inquiries after my brother, but could not hear any thing of him for some time. One day, however, guess my astonishment, when he made his appearance before me. He was very much altered, and his countenance bore testimony to the intemperate course of life he had been leading. He was, however, well dressed, and informed me that he had married a woman with some property, who had borne him two children, a boy and a girl. His wife, he further stated, had been dead about two months, and—

'His wife dead! interrupted Patty, in accents of amazement; 'what can this mean? I always imagined that Madge was the woman who had brought us into the world.'

'If we are to believe Gerald,' answered Mrs. Seagrove, 'she was not. But hear me

out. Gerald informed me that he was, at that time, living in the Old Lone House, which had belonged to the family of his wife, and added, that the only thing which annoyed him was the girl, whom he was fearful he could not bring up as he could wish. I felt interested in the fate of the poor child, whom I was aware would have but a very bad example set her. I had no children of my own, and I, therefore, made my brother an offer to take it, and bring it up with the same care and affection as if it had been my own. He accepted of my offer with much apparent pleasure, and a week afterwards you were brought to me. I was struck with your beauty, and my heart instantly warmed with maternal fondness towards you. Gerald laid very strict injunctions on me about you, and cautioned me not to satisfy the idle curiosity of any one as to who you was, and how you had come into my possession. This, at the time, did not create much surprise in my mind, but it has done since, and the more I reflected on it, the more I became involved in mystery and doubt, as to what could be the cause of Gerald's being so fearful that it should become known that you were his daughter, and I must confess, that the idea has frequently occurred to me that you were not really his child, though whose could you be, and what could possibly be the motives of Gerald in asserting his paternity to a child that did not belong to him, I could not form the slightest conjecture. What followed, you are already acquainted with.'

Emily and Patty again thanked the good woman for her unexampled kindness, and our heroine assured her that she should never cease to remember it with feelings of the most unqualified gratitude.

'But, my dear Madam,' said Emily, 'you have not explained to us what occasioned the extraordinary emotion you evinced when you first beheld me.'

'It was the remarkable resemblance you bear to one who is long since no more,' replied Mrs. Seagrove, with a sigh; 'and the more I look upon you, the greater does your likeness to her appear to be.'

'And was the lady to whom you allude,' asked Emily, whose interest was deeply excited, 'was the lady to whom you allude, unfortunate?'

'She was, indeed, unfortunate,' replied Mrs. Seagrove; 'but excuse me, this is a subject I cannot bear to dwell upon—let us drop it.'

Emily obeyed, but she felt a more than usual curiosity to be made further acquainted with the female of whom Mrs. Seagrove had spoken, and who had created an inexplicable sensation in her bosom which she, in vain tried to conquer.

They now conversed freely upon other topics, and they were evidently all very much pleased with each other. Mrs. Seagrove was a remarkably sensible, accomplished, and intelligent woman, and Emily could not but most sincerely pity her for having the misfortune to be connected with such a wretch as Gerald Darnley. It seemed, in fact, totally impossible that the same blood should flow in the veins of two beings so diametrically opposite in disposition, habits, and every other respect; and appeared to be one of those singular vagaries of Fate, for which there is no accounting.

'And does the good Mr. Walton and his amiable family still reside in this neighborhood?' asked Patty, in the course of conversation.

'He does,' replied Mrs. Seagrove, 'and in their society I pass many, many happy hours, that else might prove dull and languid.'

Emily was quite enraptured with what she saw, and expressed her most enthusiastic admiration of it.

'Yes, Mr. Walton is deserving of every praise,' said Mrs. Seagrove; 'but I will in-

troduce you to him and his family, Emily, and you will, doubtless, be delighted with him, his amiable wife, and lovely daughters.'

'Yes, that she will, I am certain,' remarked Patty, 'and I am very glad to think they are still such close neighbors of yours. How astonished and pleased they will be to see me again!'

'You are right, Patty, that they will,' returned Mrs. Seagrove; 'for they ever treated you as one of their own family, and were never happy but when you were at the farm with them.'

Thus the day passed away in the most agreeable manner, and at night Emily and Patty retired to the chamber allotted to their repose, in comparative happiness. For the first time for many weeks did our heroine enjoy a night's repose undisturbed, and she and her companion arose in the morning in better health and spirits than they had experienced for some time.

They kept themselves closely confined to the house for more than a week, and no one in the neighborhood knew that they were residing there, with the exception of Farmer Walton and his family, whom Mrs. Seagrove entrusted with the secret, and had introduced to them.

The family of the worthy farmer consisted of himself, his wife, two daughters, and a son. Grace and Ellinor were twins, and two more beautiful girls could not be imagined. Innocence, virtue, and transcendent loveliness beamed in every feature, and they were so alike in every respect, that it is quite unnecessary to describe them separately.

Henry Walton was three years the senior of his sisters, and to the excellent intrinsic qualities of the latter, he added all that manly beauty which is calculated to create admiration and esteem in the breasts of those who knew him, but more especially the fair sex; and Emily had not been many days acquainted

with the family of Mr. Walton, ere she discovered that Henry had made an impression upon the heart of Patty. This the latter admitted to our heroine, and acknowledged that they had made a mutual acknowledgment of a reciprocal affection. They had passed many of their younger days together, and the impression they had made upon each other's heart, time had strengthened instead of decreasing.

By the industrious habits of Henry, the circumstances of the family had undergone much improvement, and they were now in a very prosperous condition.

Several days elapsed, and nothing whatever occurred to disturb the serenity of our heroine or her companion, Patty, nor did they hear of any thing to lead them to suspect that Gerald Darnley or Chesterton, had discovered any means which might lead them to trace out the place of their retreat. But still it cost Emily many hours of sorrow, when she reflected upon her low, dependant, and destitute condition, the mystery by which her fate was enveloped, and the melancholy prospect that was before her, without any protectors except strangers.

Patty's ideas and her own perfectly coincided upon this point, but she was equally unable to form any opinion that was likely to arrive at the truth. The account, however, that her aunt had given her concerning Gerald Darnley, and her own suspicions that he was not really her father, eased her mind of a dreadful weight, while, at the same time, it added to the mystery in which all the circumstances were involved.

They had hitherto kept themselves as much secluded as possible; and their time had been passed more frequently at Mr. Walton's, than at Mrs. Seagrove's, and their friends thought it was advisable for them to continue to do so; and, indeed, the rational

pleasures that were provided for them within this little circle, left them scarcely a wish beyond.

The horrors she had endured, and the many dreadful circumstances which had occurred to her, together with all she had seen and heard while she had been at the Old Lone House, were constantly the subjects of our heroine's thoughts;—the blood-stained sheets, the secret closet—the skeleton, and the pocket-book; and the more she dwelt upon them, and the circumstance of her remembering the old room to have been the place she had inhabited when a child, the more thoroughly convinced she became that she was connected with them. Upon the latter subject Mrs. Seagrove had frequently questioned her, and it seemed to make a deeper impression upon her than any thing else.

'It is evident,' she observed, 'that if, as you believe, Gerald to be the same man who, at that period, was an inhabitant of the place, he must have seen you before, and I am fearful that he knows more about your origin than he would like to divulge.'

'Oh, yes, there cannot be any doubt of that whatever,' replied Emily; for the frequent conversations I have overheard between him and Chesterton, fully proved so; and, moreover, that he was employed by some one to put me out of the way. It must, indeed, be something very desperate that could urge this gentleman, whoever he is, to such a course.'

Mrs. Seagrove shuddered.

'Atrocious villains!' she exclaimed, 'Providence surely will not suffer their cruel blood-thirsty deeds to remain much longer involved in their present mystery. It was strange, too, Emily, that your supposed grandmother should take up her residence in The White Cottage, a place made notorious by a deed of blood, which struck horror in the whole

country when it took place. This was a murder perpetrated by a man who was known by the name of Luke Stanton. It is about sixteen years ago, I remember. The unfortunate wife of the villain was found in the cottage dreadfully mangled, and the wretch, with the two children that were supposed to be his own, had disappeared, and have not been heard of since, notwithstanding every possible endeavor was made by the officers, and a large reward offered for the apprehension of the assassin. It is more particularly stamped upon my recollection, because I noticed at the time, in the advertisements, the striking resemblance there was between the description of the man and Gerald Darnley; it is a fact, so remarkable was it, that had it not been for the difference of the name, I could almost have sworn it had been him. It is my horror and misfortune to call him my brother.'

A sudden idea flashed upon the brain of Emily, as Mrs. Seagrove thus spoke, and she hastily observed;—

'But might not the villain, whoever he was, have changed his name? I do not think it is probable that a man whose means of living were always questionable, would be likely to go in his real name.'

'Ah!' ejaculated Mrs. Seagrove, 'what a terrible idea—what awful suspicion is it that takes possession of me?—A man who has been guilty of other crimes equally as bad, and who is ready to do any thing for money, would not hesitate to perpetrate a deed so atrocious.'

'Oh, Heaven forbid, madam!' said Emily, fervently; 'Heaven forbid that your suspicions should be correct; for then, indeed, would that man, whom you believe, but whom I can never think, is your brother, be a monster of ten-fold deeper dye than I already know him to be.'

'The horrible idea gains still more strength with me,' continued Mrs. Seagrove, appar-

ently taking no notice of what Emily had said, being completely absorbed by the thoughts which had thus suddenly taken possession of her mind;—'I recollect now that it was not more than three months after this murder, that Gerald made his appearance before me; and then the story he told me of the death of his wife, and her having left him two children—all, all corresponds so with the circumstances, that it almost brings conviction to one's mind.'

'Of what sex were the supposed two children of the murderer?' asked Emily, hastily, and trembling with a strange and irresistible feeling of emotion; 'a boy and girl I think I have heard.'

'You are right,' returned Mrs. Seagrove, turning very pale, and her agitation greatly increasing;—'ah! William Darnley and Patty!'

'Oh, no, for heaven's sake banish such an idea!' remarked Emily, with a shudder; 'for the consanguinity of Darnley and his son with poor Patty would be almost established beyond a doubt; in spite of the terrible coincidence I cannot, dare not believe that Luke Stanton and Gerald Darnley are one and the same person.'

'God grant that it may be as you would believe,' said Mrs. Seagrove, 'but I cannot, and shall not, be able easily to erase from my mind, the powerful suspicions that have taken possession of it. We will, however, change this subject for the present, as we cannot come to any satisfactory conclusion, and it will be the cause of the most poignant anguish, doubt, and uncertainty, to us both. Do not mention any thing to Patty about this, for it would, I am certain, have the effect of making her truly miserable, when, at the same time, upon this point, she has not the least cause to be so. I have often thought of mentioning what I am going to say, to you before, but it has always slipped

my memory. If I recollect aright, Emily, you mentioned something about the discovery of some manuscripts, but you did not describe to me the nature of them.'

'True, I had forgotten that,' said Emily, 'and yet I wonder that I should do so; for on those documents I think depends a great deal of the unravelling of this terrible mystery.'

'Did you bring them away with you?' asked Mrs. Seagrove, eagerly.

'Fortunately I did,' answered Emily;—'I will go and fetch them immediately, and you will doubtless, feel a melancholy pleasure in perusing them; although the dreadful recital is in such detached fragments, and in many parts so illegible that it is not possible to arrive at any conclusion as to who the victim was.'

Emily left the room as she spoke, and soon returned with the manuscripts in her hand. Mrs. Seagrove took them with much avidity, but scarcely had her eyes fallen upon the first few lines, when her limbs trembled violently, and her face turned very pale.

'Gracious heaven!' she exclaimed, 'this hand-writing—the name, too—but no, it cannot be the same; she fled, and —'

'Of whom do you speak, madam?' inquired Emily, taking advantage of the confusion of Mrs. Seagrove.

'Of an unfortunate lady who bore the same Christian name as the one mentioned here, and to whom you have before heard me say, you bear such a remarkable resemblance,' replied Mrs. Seagrove. 'I have hitherto avoided this subject, because it gave me pain, but I know not why I should wish to conceal the facts from you, whom, I am certain, possess a heart that will deeply sympathize in the lady's misfortunes.'

'The lady and you were friends, then, madam?' asked Emily.

'Friends!—oh, yes, we were more like

sisters, in fact, at one time. Alas! did I ever imagine that the circumstances would have taken place which afterwards occurred to her, or that she could have become the guilty being she was represented to be.'

'I think you said that the lady was married?' said our heroine; 'I beseech you to pardon me for my apparent impertinent curiosity, because what you have already told me about the lady, has excited a deep interest in my bosom.'

'Yes, she was married, and to one of the best of men,' replied Mrs. Seagrove;—'to a gentleman who adored her, and of whom she seemed to be doatingly fond.'

'Had they any children?'

'Yes, two; but they both died soon after they were born—they were twins.'

'But you say that the lady and gentleman were fond of each other; what then, pray, was the cause of the misery at which you have hinted?'

'A short time after the death of the two infants,' said Mrs. Seagrove, 'the lady disappeared in a most mysterious manner, and no one was certain what it was that caused it, although it was reported that she had fled with a paramour. This would have met with a direct contradiction, (for the affection that existed between her and her husband seemed to increase,) had it not been confirmed by a letter which she left behind her for her husband, and in which she bade him adieu forever.'

'Strange!—most unaccountable!' ejaculated Emily. 'Any person would scarcely believe it possible. But was not the name of the gallant ever ascertained?'

'It was not,' returned Mrs. Seagrove, 'but it was suspected that they had fled to Canada.'

'But what of the unfortunate husband?' demanded Emily.

'Why, as you may be sure, he was driven nearly to madness by this terrible and unex-

pected blow; and when he had sufficiently recovered himself, he went in pursuit of the fugitives. He never returned.'

'No!'

'No; a body was picked up in a river in Canada, in a state of great decomposition, which, from the description of the dress it had on, was supposed to be the unfortunate gentleman's; and it was imagined that, having failed in his endeavors to find out his wife and her paramour, in a fit of despair he had committed suicide, by precipitating himself into the water.'

'But was there no further inquiry made into the affair, by any of his relatives?' asked our heroine.

'He had only a very distant one living, who had been his constant companion, and of whom he was as fond as if he had been his own brother. He seemed to exert himself very much, but it was all of no use; some time afterwards it was found that the unfortunate gentleman had left a will, which had evidently been made after the elopement of his wife, and in which he bequeathed the whole of his wealth and title to his friend and relative.'

'And does that friend and relative still live?'

'He does; but he has sold the estate which originally belonged to his relative, and resides chiefly in New York.'

In the neighborhood of Mr. Walton's farm were two villains called Captain Bellingham and Squire Sappington. These fellows had frequently annoyed our heroine and her companion while they were walking out together. One afternoon when the two females had been thus engaged, they had been so deeply immersed in a conversation upon past days that they remained later than was their usual custom, and the night air which began to blow chilly, first aroused them, and they turned their steps towards home.

They had not proceeded many yards, when they heard a rustling sound in the bushes behind them, and before they had time to look round to see from what cause it proceeded, they found themselves seized forcibly and by the light of the moon, to their terror and dismay, they beheld they were in the hands of Bellingham and his fellow.

Patty immediately fainted, and was borne by Sappington precipitately away in his arms, towards a carriage, which was waiting at a short distance from the spot; but our heroine struggling violently, screamed aloud for help; and seemed determined to resist Captain Bellingham with her life.

'Nay,' exclaimed the libertine, endeavoring to force her along, 'your cries are in vain; I have had trouble enough to get possession of you, and I will resign you now only with my life!'

'Oh, help! help!' again screamed Emily, almost exhausted with the power of her exertions to release herself, but the captain had succeeded in raising her in his arms, and was about to hurry after his friend, when, before he had proceeded any great distance, the report of a pistol was heard, the captain uttering an oath, declared he was wounded, and resigning Emily, fled as fast as he was able from the spot.

Our heroine heard somebody advance towards her, and not doubting but it was her preserver, and she looked around, but she shrieked with terror, and immediately became insensible when she beheld the detestable villain, Chesterton standing over her.

'Ah! girl!' cried the wretch, in a tone of exultation, 'you are again in my power! By the infernal host this is fortunate! Take her, comrades, and bear her away to the cottage, from whence we will all immediately make our departure for the Old Lone House.'

These latter words were addressed to three desperate looking ruffians who accompanied him, and the unfortunate girl was immediately raised in their arms, and borne away with as much expedition as possible in the direction to which Chesterton pointed, and who followed close at their heels, unable to keep his savage delight within the bounds of reason.

CHAPTER X.

THE DUNGEONS OF THE 'LONE HOUSE.'

GREAT was the rage of Gerald Darnley and Chesterton when they discovered the escape of our heroine and Patty from the Lone House. Will Darnley insisted that they had carried her off some where and secreted her out of his reach, in order that she might become the paramour of Chesterton. He threatened vengeance against both Chesterton and his father; and when the former retorted, he even struck him, and felled him to the floor.

Perceiving that they could not manage Will, nor persuade him that Emily had fled, they concluded to confine him in one of the dungeons in the cellar of the old house.—But fearing his fury, they resolved to seize him in his sleep, and convey him, bound, to the dungeon. They accordingly moved forward to his sleeping room, on the same night, as he had, fortunately for their purpose gone to bed in a state of intoxication.

At the door of the young man's chamber they paused, and both listened attentively, and the heavy breathing of Will distinctly met their ears.

'He still sleeps,' whispered Chesterton, in a voice of exultation; 'fortune favors us; let us not delay a moment.'

Gerald immediately opened the door, and they entered the room, where they beheld Will Darnley stretched sleeping upon the bed

With the most savage and revengeful looks, Chesterton viewed his insensible foe, and the remembrance of the blows he had at different times received from him, rushed upon his brain, and rage, almost ungovernable, filled his bosom.

'Ah!' he suddenly ejaculated, advancing towards the bed, 'now is he completely in our power: why should he live to endanger us further? Mine be the deed to —'

He had hastily taken a knife from his pocket as he spoke, and was about to plunge it in the bosom of Will, when Gerald starting forward, seized his upraised arm, and wrenched the murderous weapon from his grasp.

'By hell!' cried the ruffian, 'if you make another such attempt, I will plunge the weapon in your own heart! Is this the faith you keep towards me, when you agreed that there should not be any bloodshed?'

'I was wrong; I was wrong, Gerald,' hastily replied Chesterton, 'and I hope you will think no more of it. But to our purpose, for should he wake, we should probably be foiled in our attempt!'

The ruffians both rushed upon the sleeping man, as Chesterton spoke, and in a moment they had secured his legs and arms tightly with the cords. The action, however, awoke Will, who, opening his eyes, feeling the manner in which he was pinioned, and seeing his father and the steward hanging over him, uttered a yell of rage, and made a desperate effort to release himself, but all to no purpose.

'Ah! villains! miscreants!' he cried;—'have ye then triumphed? Unhand me! release me! or——'

'Gag him!' exclaimed the steward, whose looks showed how he exulted and gloried in the rage of the young man. 'Gag him!—stop his noise, and then let us bear him to his new apartment, where he may probably learn whose turn it is to triumph now!'

Chesterton was obeyed, and then the two villains dragged Will from the bed, and endeavored to raise him in their arms; but he struggled with the desperation of a madman, and in vain endeavored to burst the cords which bound him asunder, while his face was completely discolored with the effects of his infuriate passion.

The violence of his struggles, however, at length overcame him, and they succeeded in bearing him from the chamber, and conveying him down stairs. When they entered the parlor they were compelled to pause to rest themselves, and to regain their breath, and they placed him in a chair. Here again Will, who was ready to choke with the power of his rage, made an endeavor to release himself, but his strength was entirely exhausted, and he had no more power to offer them any further resistance. When he beheld his father approach the secret panel, a deadly paleness came over him, and he fixed upon Gerald such a look that he could not withstand, and he averted his eyes.—Gerald hesitated, and when he thought of the awful place into which he was about to descend, and to which he was going to consign his son, a cold shuddering came over him, and he became irresolute.

'Psha!' cried Chesterton, 'this is no time for silly fears;—why do you hesitate?'

Gerald made no answer, but after a severe struggle with his feelings, he touched the secret spring, and the panel slid back.

Will now appeared to have given himself up entirely to horror and despair, and he suffered them to do as they liked with him, but he fixed upon his father a reproachful glance, which was sufficient to make an impression upon the most callous heart.

The cold air came in a gust up the narrow and gloomy staircase, and froze the blood within the veins of Gerald Darnley and Chesterton, while the light they had with them would not penetrate into the darkness beneath.

As they passed through the aperture and began to descend the stairs, Gerald, who proceeded first, almost imagined he beheld the ghastly countenance of the murdered man, whose skeleton was in the vault beneath, staring up at him, and he trembled violently in every limb. As for Will, he seemed completely paralyzed with horror, and remained in their hands as passive as a child. They descended very slowly, for the steps were broken in many places, and Will was a considerable weight, therefore, they were fearful of falling.

Chesterton pretended to a considerable deal more courage than he actually felt, and as a low, dismal, mournful sound, caused by the wind, came along the narrow passage into which they had now descended, he trembled.

At length they arrived in the vault where the skeleton was deposited, and when Will saw the half dug grave, and the chest by its side, which contained the sad remains of the murdered man, his fears seemed to overcome him, and he uttered a groan of horror, and glanced up in his father's face, with a look of mingled reproach and supplication. But Gerald noticed him not, his mind was too much absorbed by the terrors of the place, and not daring to cast his eyes upon the skeleton of the grave, he hurried on as fast as his trembling limbs would permit him, and opening an iron door at the farthest extremity of the vault from a bunch of keys which he carried suspended from his waist, they entered another cell beyond, and which Chesterton was not aware of.—Here they placed Will upon the damp earth, and looked around them in silence. It was truly an awful looking place, and Chesterton could not help shuddering when he beheld it. There was a heavy chain affixed to a staple in the wall, and in one corner of it was a heap of straw, upon which some poor victim

of cruelty had, in all probability, stretched his limbs many years before.

Will cast one look around the dreadful dungeon, in which he had no doubt it was the intention of his father and the villain Chesterton to confine him, and he then uttered a deep groan, and seemed in a state approaching to apathy.

Gerald Darnley pointed to the chain, and the steward understanding him, they once more dragged Will to his feet, and secured him to it by an iron belt which went round his waist. During the time they were doing this, Will never offered to make the least resistance, and, in fact, he appeared to be nearly unconscious of what they were doing.

They now released him from the cords that bound his arms and legs, and removed the gag from his mouth.

All this time, Chesterton, notwithstanding the frowns and insignificant looks of Gerald, could not restrain the expression of his exultation at having thus securely got the enemy, and one whom he so heartily detested, in his power.

'Well,' he exclaimed, in a tone of bitter irony, and looking round the place, 'I must say that this is a very comfortable and healthy habitation, a very fit apartment for refractory boys and those who threaten vengeance. I wish you Will Darnley every enjoyment in it.'

'Hold, Chesterton!' cried Gerald; 'hold, I say, unless you would make an enemy of me. Is it not enough that I have complied with your wishes by going to this extremity, but you must add mockery to the horrors which my foolish headstrong son will have to undergo in this place through his own obstinacy?'

'And have I not reason to exult at his misery after the many taunts, insults, and personal acts of violence he has offered to me?' demanded the steward.

'Then keep the expression of it for your own private gratification,' returned Gerald Darnley, scowling fearfully upon Chesterton. 'Come, let us begone. Will, you may thank yourself for being placed in this situation, for had you not have held out threats that rendered your being at liberty dangerous, and not so obstinately have persisted that we knew what had become of the girl Emily, all would have been well. Here, then, you will remain a prisoner until you are brought to your senses, and we are convinced that you have abandoned your designs against us.'

'Which you will have some difficulty in doing,' added Chesterton, with a malignant grin.

Gerald once more fixed upon him a stern look.

'Will you hold your peace?' he demanded.

'Dastardly miscreant!' exclaimed Will, in a hoarse voice, and his eyes flashing the utmost indignation and fury; he had taken but very little notice of what his father had been saying, but had directed the whole of his attention towards the steward. 'Dastardly miscreant,' he repeated, clenching his fists, 'dare but approach me, and, shackled as I am, I will press your life out.'

'Ha! ha! ha!' laughed Chesterton, in scorn, and his voice sounded awfully in that dreary place. Will now became completely furious, and made a rush at him as far as the extent of the chain would allow him to do; but finding that he could not reach him, he stamped with rage, and uttered the most terrible maledictions.

'Will,' said Gerald, 'this fury is all useless; here you are powerless, and it is not by storming that you may expect to get your liberty.'

'He shall never be restored to it again, if I can help it,' said Chesterton,

'Enough,' cried Gerald Darnley, impatiently, shuddering with the coldness of the place, and anxious to get away from the presence of his son, whose reproachful looks he could not bear to encounter; 'we have accomplished our task, and now let us begone.'

He laid hold of Chesterton's arm as he spoke, and urged him towards the door, which Will observing, and his natural determined spirit being broken by the terrors of his situation, and the prospect of being left in that horrible place, in which it did not seem possible that any human being could exist for a few hours even, he was wound up to a complete pitch of despair, and turning his eyes towards his father, he exclaimed—

'Father, cruel as I know you to be, you cannot, you surely will not leave me in this dreadful place to perish?'

'Did you not threaten me, boy?' demanded Gerald.

'And was I not driven to it?' said the young man; 'did not your conduct as regards that girl upon whom I had fixed my mind, drive me to desperation, and had you not have secretly conveyed her away from the house—'

'Liar!' interrupted Chesterton.

'Once more, perverse, obstinate fool,' said Gerald Darnley, 'once more I tell you that you accuse us wrongfully. But here you must remain until you have been brought to see your folly.'

'Father!' ejaculated Will, 'hear me.—You have brought me up to every vice and cruelty, and why, therefore, upbraid and punish me for displaying those feelings that have been instilled into my breast by you? But cruel as you are, I cannot believe you monster enough to condemn me to a fate like this.'

'Have you not threatened to do that which would have placed my neck in the halter?' demanded Gerald.

'I will renounce that idea, I promise—nay, I swear to do so,' said Will.

'You swear!' ejaculated Gerald; 'did you not treat me with scorn when I offered to do the same, to swear that neither myself nor Chesterton knew any thing whatever of the girl; and is your oath to be taken any more than mine?'

'He must not—he shall not be believed!' said the steward; 'were we to grant him his liberty directly, the first use he would make of it would be to go and peach against us.'

'Villain!' cried Will, gnashing his teeth, and shaking his clenched fist at him.

'Ha! ha! ha!' again laughed the steward.

'I can bear your taunts now. But come—why do we delay leaving this place? Good morning, William Darnley, and I wish you every pleasure that this place can afford you. Now Gerald, our business is completed, so let us away from hence, and take a glass of wine over the success of our plot. Come—come.'

'Father, once more I ask you—nay, I even implore you,' cried Will, in a tone of frenzy; 'not to leave me in this awful prison. Do with me as you think proper in any other way, since you will not take my promise not to betray you, but do not leave me here, and in the proximity of that ghastly skeleton, which—'

'Let us begone,' said Gerald, hastily, in a low tone, and casting a fearful glance around him as he spoke—'let us begone! Will, you supplicate to me in vain. My safety demands your security, and your own folly has alone brought this upon you.'

'Oh, I will do any thing to convince you of my sincerity,' ejaculated Will, whom terror had made a complete child.

'Ha! ha! ha!' exclaimed the steward ironically, 'where is the desperate Will Darnley now?'

'Away!' cried Gerald, unable to meet the

gaze of his son; and before Will could utter another word, he dragged Chesterton out by the arm, and, closing the iron door after them, he locked it securely, leaving his wretched, guilty son, in darkness and alone.

Gerald and Chesterton both placed their hands before their eyes, to prevent them from beholding the skeleton, and hurried through the different vaults, and along the dreary passage towards the staircase as quick as possible, and without speaking a word.—They were not long in reaching the steps, which having ascended, and finding themselves once more in the parlor, they were enabled again to breathe.

Gerald looked upon Chesterton, as he closed the secret panel, with a pallid countenance, and a quivering lip, and then sinking into a chair, he said:—

‘There! now I hope you are satisfied after this unnatural job, of my readiness to serve you.’

‘Psha! ejaculated Chesterton;—‘what nonsense you talk, what have you and nature to do with one another; you have long, I should think, been strangers.’

‘To immure my own son in that vault of death,’ said Gerald, ‘and ———’

‘There, there; no more of that,’ interrupted Chesterton, ‘it is done now, and you ought to feel satisfied that we have succeeded so well; had we not done so, after the threats which Will held out, it is not at all unlikely that we should, ere many hours have elapsed, been the inmates of a prison.’

‘I like not the deed.’

‘Nonsense! your own safety demanded it.’

‘He can never live long in that fearful place.’

‘So much the better, muttered the steward, partly to himself; ‘then he will be beyond the means of working us any injury. But come, Gerald, I never saw you so dull in my life before. Here is wine on the table

I see, take a glass; it will revive your spirits.’

Chesterton filled a couple of glasses as he spoke, and handing one to Gerald, he took the other himself, and they quaffed off the contents. It did seem to have the effect the steward guessed it would on his companion, and he became more composed.

‘And now this task is accomplished,’ said Chesterton, ‘we must turn all our thoughts and energies to the discovery of Emily and Patty, and something convinces me that we shall at last be successful.’

‘And why do you think so?’

‘Why, I have no particular reason for doing so, but, at any rate, we have got rid of one of the greatest obstacles.’

‘Ah!—And how do you purpose proceeding?’

‘Did you not say that you had a relation living at ———’

‘Mrs. Seagrove,’ added Gerald Darnley; ‘she believes herself to be my sister.’

‘Believes herself to be, and is she not so?’

‘She is not.’

‘Nor in any way related to you?’

‘Not in the least.’

‘But you were brought up together?’

‘We were.’

‘And the parents of this Mrs. Seagrove ever behaved to you with affection, and called you their son?’

‘True, they did so.’

‘That is strange. I cannot understand you.’

‘They knew not but that I was their own child,’ said Gerald.

‘How!—you surprise me, Gerald.’

‘Doubtless I do, but what I say is nevertheless true. My mother was wet-nurse to Mrs. Darnley, and was confined with me a few days only before that lady. The latter also was delivered of a boy, which was com-

pelled to be taken away from its mother, and committed to the care of mine a short time after it came into the world. It was a sickly child, and died when it was not more than a week old. Tempted by the hope of gaining a future reward, my parents pretended that it was their own son who had died, and palmed me off upon Mr. and Mrs. Darnley as their offspring.’

‘It was a cunning stratagem; but was it ever suspected?’

‘It was not,’ replied Gerald.

‘And your real parents never offered to betray you?’

‘They studied their own interest too well for that; for when they made me acquainted with the truth, and I had every reason to believe that they were not imposing upon me, I well rewarded them.’

The next morning, all the arrangements being made, Miles Chesterton took his departure from the Old Lone House.

We shall not trouble the reader with an account of his journey, as nothing occurred on the road of any interest; and in due time he was set down within a few miles of the place of his destination. He walked there, and put up at an obscure inn, where he thought his appearance was less likely to excite any curiosity or suspicion, and determined to commence operations in the morning.

The persons who frequented the inn while Chesterton was there were very few; and after he had taken sufficient time to rest himself, therefore, he walked from the house, and took the direction which he had been given to understand led to the residence of Mrs. Seagrove.

Night had set in when he arrived there; and although he did not expect to see anything of them, if they were there, at that hour, he felt a sort of gratification in taking a survey of the house in which the object of his search might, in all probability, be se-

creted. He walked around it and examined every window, but he did not perceive any light in either of them; and he was, therefore, compelled to believe either that Mrs. Seagrove was from home, or had retired to rest.

After waiting on the spot for a few moments without any prospect of his gaining any intelligence, he left it and returned to the inn, still indulging in the hope that he should at last succeed in finding Emily and Patty in that neighborhood.

On his return to the inn, there were several persons assembled in the bar-room, in order that he might not appear singular, and might also gain information from their discourse which might be of service to him, he took his seat in the same room.

The conversation was of general nature, but principally devoted to the subjects more commonly discussed than others in the parlor of a country tavern—namely, the state of the crops, the markets, &c.; and Chesterton was beginning to yawn, and was thinking about seeking his own chamber, when he heard one of the company mention the name of Mrs. Seagrove. His ears were open in a minute, and being seated near the individual who was speaking, he listened attentively, but without appearing to be paying any attention.

‘They were two fine girls, from New York, I think,’ said the person alluded to.

‘Yes,’ said the man to whom he was addressing himself, ‘the wenches were well enough, but they were too simple, I think, to be from the great metropolis.’

‘I remember one of them from quite a child,’ said the second speaker, ‘she was brought up by Mrs. Seagrove, who is said to be her aunt—Patty, I think they call her.—The other one I do not remember to have seen before, although they are so very much

alike that I should take them to be sisters.' 'Yes, there is a great likeness between them,' returned his friend; 'but they have left Mrs. Seagrave's.'

'Yes,' said the gentleman, 'they have; so I suppose they only came upon a short visit. Have you any idea whither they have gone?'

'I have not,' answered the other; 'but it strikes me that they are in the neighborhood, and that they have some reason for being so sly in their movements, and in not letting the place of their destination to be known.'

'Why, as for that, I do not see anything at all remarkable, seeing that it was of no business to any person but themselves and their friends.'

'Very true; but these two girls, somehow or the other, have excited such an interest in my breast that I cannot help feeling that I should like to see them again, and to become better acquainted with them.'

'Which it is not very probable you will ever do,' observed the previous speaker's companion, with a smile; and there the conversation dropped.

But it would be utterly impossible to describe the feelings of Chesterton during the time it was going on. His agitation was so great that he had much difficulty in concealing it from the observation of the persons present.

Not being disposed, after having gained this information, to listen to, or join in the common-place conversation which was going forward among the guests, Chesterton now retired to the chamber allotted to him, and he there indulged meditation upon the subject which had so long occasioned him the utmost care and anxiety, and endeavored to devise some scheme which would be likely to bring his efforts to a successful issue.

So elated was he with what he had heard, that he could not sleep for thinking upon it,

for some time after he had retired to his bed, and when he did, dreams of the most flattering description haunted his imagination. He fancied that he had succeeded in his stratagems—that he was once more at the Old Lone House, and that Emily was again in his power. He thought, moreover, that he had triumphed over the objections of our heroine—that she returned his passion—that he held her in his embraces, and pressed warm kisses upon her lips, which she returned with the same ardor; and in the midst of his ideal happiness he awoke to the reality of disappointment.

The next morning he left the inn, and made his way towards the place where he had appointed to meet three men whom Gerald Darnley had provided to aid him in the plot, and who had started at the same time as himself, but by a different coach.

He found that they had arrived, and were at the cottage which belonged to one of their friends.

In the meantime, Chesterton accidentally became acquainted with the sentiments of Captain Bellingham and Mr. Sappington towards our heroine and Patty, and he had not the least doubt but that it was their determination to elope with them, the first chance which was offered them, consequently he had no time to lose or they would succeed in thwarting his scheme, and getting possession of the prize it had cost him so much care, trouble, and danger to obtain. How he succeeded, we have already shewn the reader, and we will now, therefore, return to our unfortunate heroine, whom the ruffians conveyed according to the orders of the delighted steward, to the cottage, without meeting with any interruption.

We will pass hastily over this scene, and merely state that, when our heroine again recovered her senses, she found herself in a carriage by the side of Chesterton, and the vehicle was proceeding at a most rapid rate.

CHAPTER XI

THE ABDUCTION.

CHESTERTON did not give Emily much time for reflection, and during the brief interval that had elapsed since her recovery, he had been eyeing her with looks of the utmost boldness, while at the same time his delight was so powerful that he could not help giving full expression to it.

'Beauteous Emily, need I tell you the extacy your restoration has imparted to me?' he observed. 'Oh, did you but know the state of anxiety, of distraction which I have been in since your flight, you would no longer doubt the power of love I feel for you, and might be inclined to lend a favorable ear to the assertions of my passion.'

Emily turned upon the villain a look of the most ineffable disgust and contempt, but recollecting she was in his power, and that if she exasperated him he might be induced to act with violence, she lowered her indignation as much as possible, and, in a voice of the most impressive supplication, said—

'Oh, Chesterton, and will pity forever remain a stranger to your bosom? Why will you not suffer me to remain at liberty, or if you have the power to detain me, prove to me the authority by which you act? Whither are you now conveying me? Oh, in mercy do not again take me to that fearful place, but suffer me to remain at liberty, and all that you and Gerald Darnley have previously inflicted on me, I will freely forgive, and never reveal to any one that might be the means of working you harm.'

Chesterton shook his head.

'And think you, Emily, after all the pains I have taken to find you out again, and the passion which you have inspired me, I will so easily resign you?' he exclaimed. 'No, no—you are mine now, and we part no more.'

'Alas! alas!' groaned Emily, wringing her hands, 'what will become of me? Oh, God! do not suffer, I beseech you, the guilty to triumph over me!'

'I seek your affections,' returned Chesterton; 'those obtained, every happiness that the world can, afford you, shall be at your command.'

Emily made no answer to this speech, but she clasped her hands vehemently together, and raising her eyes, she breathed a prayer to Heaven for its Almighty interference.

'And whither are you conveying me?'—she demanded, after a pause, and during which interval she had become more composed.

'To the house from which you made your escape,' answered the steward.

'Alas!' sighed our heroine, 'to endure a repetition of those horrors I have already undergone there?'

'To enjoy every happiness but liberty, if you will not obstinately oppose my wishes,' returned Chesterton.

'Happiness with you!' cried Emily; with a look of disgust.

'Yes, happiness with me,' replied Chesterton. 'I tell you again, that if you will but look with favor upon my suit, there is no comfort which I will not study to procure for you.'

'The bare idea of such a thing fills my mind with horror,' said Emily, and she covered her face with her hands to shut out the bold and disgusting glances which the steward fixed upon her.

'Nay, Emily,' observed Chesterton, who bit his lips with vexation at the hatred and disgust which she expressed towards him; 'it is useless for you thus to seek to exasperate me by insulting speeches, and treating my vows with scorn. To obtain possession of you I have run every risk, and I am determined, let the consequences be whatever

they may, that in spite of your opposition, I will gain the gratification of my desires, and if you do not yield to my solicitations, force shall compel you.'

'Heaven will, I trust, interpose to prevent you,' ejaculated our heroine. 'Oh, Patty, kind-hearted and equally unfortunate girl, what has become of you? Perhaps your fate is as terrible as mine.'

'Ah!' exclaimed the steward, 'it was a very unfortunate job that Sappington succeeded in bearing her away; for should she betray us, we are lost.'

The whole circumstances of their seizure by Captain Bellingham and Sappington now recurred to the memory of our heroine, and she suffered her anxiety for the fate of her friend to make as great an impression upon her as her own. And yet her seizure by Sappington, Emily could not help thinking was preferable to her having fallen again into the power of Gerald Darnley, as she might be able to escape from the former, and be the means, by divulging all she knew to the proper authorities, to rescue her (Emily) from the danger which threatened her.

Finding that it was completely useless for her to complain, or to appeal to Chesterton, for pity, Emily at last resolved to remain silent, and throwing herself back in the vehicle, and covering her face with her handkerchief, she gave herself up entirely to the gloomy meditations that her situation gave rise to.

The sun had only just begun to peep above the eastern hills, when the vehicle reached the heath upon which the Old Lone House stood, and in a short time afterwards, Emily beheld that dismal place, from the window of the vehicle. Her heart sunk with the most indescribable terror, as she gazed once more upon that lonely building, in which she had suffered so much, and encountered so

many terrors, and she dreaded to meet again that guilty man, whose soul was stained with so many crimes, and who had undertaken to become her murderer.

Emily trembled violently and hung down her head when she once more beheld the detested Gerald Darnley, while the latter uttered an exclamation of gratification, as he hastened towards her, and taking hold of her arm rather savagely, assisted Chesterton to lead her into the house.

'Ah!' he exclaimed, 'by hell, this is a fortunate job! The girl once more in our power! She shall escape no more. Welcome, young lady, to your old quarters!—Chesterton, this business does you credit. But, where is Patty?'

'She is not with me!' answered Chesterton.

'Ah! has she then escaped?' exclaimed Gerald, 'confusion! Our danger is then not at an end!'

'I know not that;' said Chesterton, 'but I will explain every thing to you, presently.'

'And so,' exclaimed Gerald, with a fearful scowl, 'you thought to elude our vigilance, girl, did you! But you find you have deceived yourself, and I will take good care that you shall never have another opportunity of releasing yourself. Had you acted differently, you might have averted your fate, but now—'

'Hold, Gerald Darnley,' interrupted Chesterton; 'it is no time to talk in this manner. We must confer together anon upon the subject.'

Completely overcome by the terrors which the words and demeanor of Gerald Darnley had created in her bosom, Emily threw herself at the feet of the two villains, and, with tearful eyes, implored their pity and forbearance.

'You supplicate in vain, girl,' cried Gerald, fiercely; 'you have proved by your conduct that you are not to be trusted, and our own safety demands that we—'

'Come, come, Gerald, there has been enough of this; myself and my companions here are hungry, for we have not stopped to partake of any thing upon the road. Let us have some refreshments, therefore, without any more delay, and Madge can see Emily to her apartments, and look to her wants.'

Gerald ordered the old woman to spread a repast upon the table, which having done, she motioned Emily to follow her, and led the way to a different part of the building to that in which she had been previously confined.

Chesterton then related every particular with which the reader has already been made acquainted, and Darnley listened to him with the greatest attention and the deepest interest.

'How cursed unfortunate it is,' he exclaimed, when Chesterton had concluded—'how cursed unfortunate it is that Patty should have escaped.'

'It is,' returned the steward, 'but it could not be helped. If we had pursued the captain and Sappington, we might have been surprised, and the girl Emily taken from us.'

'Should Patty contrive to escape from this Sappington, as you call him,' added Darnley, 'we shall still be in danger of our evil deeds being discovered.'

'Had you not been either thoughtless or obstinate,' said Chesterton, 'and have mentioned the fact of Mrs. Seagrove, or your sister as you call her, being living, and have agreed in my opinion, that Emily and Patty had sought refuge there, they would both have been in our power long ere this.'

'Yes, I will own I was to blame,' returned Gerald; 'but it cannot be helped now.—We must not fail to use every exertion to discover where she is, and to get her into our power.'

'True; but I am doubtful of our success,' said Chesterton. 'But what of Will? Is he still in the same place of confinement?'

'He is,' replied Gerald, 'and expresses great regret at the threats he held out to us. But now that Emily is again in our power, I have a scheme by which we may release him, and without being under any apprehension for the consequences.'

'Psha!' ejaculated the steward, with a frown, 'nothing but his safe custody ought to satisfy us. But what is your scheme?'

'Give him up Emily, and compel him to banish himself with her, from the country forever,' answered Gerald.

'And think you I will agree to this?' interrogated Chesterton.

'If you are wise, you will,' replied Gerald.

'What!' exclaimed the steward, 'and do you suppose, then, that after I have had all the trouble I have to get the girl in my possession, I should be that egregious fool, to bestow her upon my rival?—Ha! ha! ha. You must be mad to think of such a thing, Gerald.'

'But you must consent!'

'Must!—that is a bold word, but I tell you I will never consent!'

'Then the girl dies!'

'She shall not!'

'How!—would you oppose the will of your master?' demanded Gerald.

'I have fixed my mind upon the girl, as you know,' returned Chesterton; 'and I am determined to have her. I think, after all the trouble I have been at, I am fully entitled to her.'

'While the girl lives, or is in this country, we shall not be safe a single hour,' said Gerald.

'Nonsense!' said the steward; 'I will be bound for her security. Come, Gerald, you and I must not quarrel over this business. It is necessary for us both that we should remain friends.'

'I have no wish that we should be otherwise,' observed Darnley; 'but upon this

point we cannot, unfortunately, agree. I think I have suggested a very good plan for the ensurance of our mutual safety, and to prevent the shedding of human blood.'

'The proposition is unreasonable, and one to which I cannot accede.'

'You had better take time to consider of it,' remarked Darnley,

'Well, well, I agree, but I do not think that any thing will alter my determination,' replied the steward. 'What apartments do you think of confining the girl in?'

'Two in the left wing of the building,' answered Gerald, 'I think they are more secure than any of the rest.'

'Tis well,' observed Chesterton, 'we must keep a strict eye upon her this time, for should she again escape, it is a chance if we should be able to get her in our power again, and she would, in all probability, seek the protection of those authorities who would afford her redress, and bring us to punishment for our crimes.'

'I will take care that she shall not have such an opportunity.'

'To-morrow or the next day, I must leave here for New York, to join my master,' said the steward, 'but as soon as I can I will return hither, and during my absence, I shall trust to your honor in taking proper care of the girl, and not to endeavor to act in regard to her derogatory to my wishes.'

Madge now entered the room, having conducted our heroine to the apartments allotted to her use, and the conversation was abruptly terminated.

Madge took up some refreshments to the fair prisoner, who, on her entrance into the room, she found on her knees, earnestly supplicating the mercy and protection of the Supreme Being. She stood a few moments and gazed at her in silence, and, for the first time, the old woman could not help feeling a ray of pity stealing to her heart; it was only transient, and placing the provisions she had brought with her on the table, she quitted the room.

Although it was several hours since Emily had eaten any thing, her mind was too much distracted to suffer her to partake only but very slightly of the repast which Madge had brought her; but the little she did eat, refreshed her, and recruited her exhausted strength.

The apartments she was now confined in were large and gloomy, but comfortably furnished, and there were several books upon a shelf in one corner of the inner room; but Emily could not attempt even to abstract her thoughts from her own sorrows by reading, and the time, therefore, passed heavily and tediously away.

Tears here came to the poor girl's relief, and she became silent and abstracted for some time, a living statue of despair and misery.

Chesterton did not offer to visit her that day, and after her first being brought to the house, Emily saw no one but old Madge, who only came to her when she came to bring her her meals, and then seldom made use of more than one or two observations, which always fell listlessly upon our heroine's ears, and were seldom replied to by her.

It was the intention of Chesterton, she understood, to lodge in the house, which served to increase her alarm, especially when she recalled to her memory the different events that had taken place when she was before a prisoner there. She examined the rooms around, but there was nothing to afford her the least hope that she would be able to make her escape, the doors and windows being too well secured. Towards night, however, she became more composed, and having committed herself to the care of Omnipotence, feeling very much fatigued, she retired to rest, and sleep came to the relief of her agitated mind.

CHAPTER XII.

FATHER AND SON.—THE CONFLAGRATION.

AFTER the conversation, which we have described in the last chapter to have taken place, had concluded, Chesterton having some business to transact with the three fellows whom he had employed to assist him in bearing Emily away, quitted the house, and, on being left alone, Gerald having sent old Madge to another part of the building, lighted a lamp and opening the secret panel, began to descend the steps, with a determination to visit his wretched son in his horrible place of confinement.

'Trust to my honor,' he soliloquized, as he proceeded; 'ha! he! ha! What a mockery! He shall find that in this instance Gerald Darnley will have his way; if the boy agrees to my proposition, as soon as Chesterton shall have departed for New York, I will release him, and let the girl be the companion of his flight. It will be better than shedding her blood.'

Gerald Darnley had now become so used to the terrors of these dismal places, that he could enter without the slightest feeling of dread, and he passed through the different vaults without bestowing the least attention to their horror, until he arrived at the door of the one in which Will was incarcerated.

The young man, whose constitution was greatly impaired from confinement, did not make any effort to arise from the pallet of straw on which he was reclining on his father's entrance, and he stood looking at him for a few seconds earnestly and in silence.

'Will,' at length said Darnley, 'has the punishment you have received, yet brought you to your senses, and would you still put your threats into execution?'

'Father,' replied Will, in a subdued tone, 'why do you come to torment me?'

'I came not for that purpose, boy.'

'Was it then to give me death? It would be far preferable to this lingering state of misery,' said Will.

'Answer me my first question.'

'It is useless; I have so often assured you that I would abandon such designs, but you would not believe me.'

'I am inclined to trust you now.'

'Ah!' exclaimed the young man, in a tone of joy, and starting to his feet as well as his almost exhausted strength would permit him, 'can you really mean what you say, or do you only mock me?'

'I am sincere,' answered Gerald, 'I have only to exact certain conditions from you, and then, to-morrow or the next day, I will give you liberty.'

'Can I hear aright?' cried Will, 'or do my senses deceive me?'

'You do not deceive yourself, nor are you deceived, Will,' replied his father. 'I will not only release you from this awful dungeon, but give you Emily.'

'Emily!'

'Ay; Chesterton discovered the place of her retreat, got her in his power, and she arrived here this morning,' answered Gerald.

'Emily an inmate of this house again, and you offer her to me! What is the meaning of this change in your resolution? You bewilder me!'

'I would defeat the designs of the steward,' said Gerald, 'and save the life of the girl. It rests with you whether those wishes shall be accomplished or not.'

'How!'

'You must promise me that you will depart with the girl to some foreign land, and never return to this country,' said Gerald Darnley.

'Promise,' said Will, 'oh, willingly—sincerely.'

'You must also promise that nothing shall ever induce you to reveal any of the circumstances that have occurred to us, or the crimes of which we have been guilty.'

'My own safety will of course, prevent me from doing that,' answered Will.

'Enough, then; to-morrow night, or the next, you may expect me.'

And before the young man could make any reply, Gerald had departed from the vault, and fastened the door after him, leaving him in a state of the greatest astonishment, to reflect on the singular proposition which he had made to him.

A suffocating smell suddenly awoke our heroine, and starting up in the bed, on which she had laid down without undressing herself, she was horror-struck at beholding a large glare of light in the apartment, and beheld flames forcing their way through the panels of the bed-room door.

She screamed loudly with terror, and starting from the bed, rushed towards the casement, and tried to open it, but it defied all her efforts, and completely distracted, she turned her eyes towards the door, but all hopes of escape that way seemed futile, as the room beyond appeared to be involved in flames, and the poor girl wrung her hands, and looked despairingly towards Heaven, as nothing but the prospect of a horrible death was before her.

The crackling of the burning timber, the roaring of the destructive element, and the falling of different portions of the building, formed a concatenation of noises that were awful in the extreme; while the dense clouds of smoke that filled the room, almost took away her senses.

Wound up to a pitch of desperation, at last Emily made a rush towards the burning door, and forcing it in, dashed madly through the flames until she reached the passage beyond, (the outer door having been destroyed,) without sustaining any material injury.—

Here, however, all further egress seemed to be entirely cut off, for the staircase was in one mass of flames, and to have attempted to have descended it would have been certain death.

She had not a moment for thought, but turned towards the left, believing that it led to a small gallery, and with which a staircase communicated. Here the flames seemed not yet to have reached; and Emily hurried hastily on.

She was just about to descend the stairs when a portion of the opposite side of the building fell in, and she plainly distinguished the form of a man, who appeared clinging to the rafters, fall with it, and sink into the raging gulph beneath. She had but a moment to look, but that was enough to convince her that the form she had seen was that of the guilty Gerald Darnley. She hurried down the stairs, and making her way towards an opening in the building, in spite of the flames that roared and hissed around her, gained providentially the outside of the house, and hurrying to a short distance across the moor, where she was in safety, she sunk on her knees, and returned her thanks to Heaven for her miraculous preservation.—She could yet see the livid glare reflected from the conflagration in the heavens, and when she thought of the awful death of Gerald Darnley, although it ridded her of one of her bitterest enemies, she could not help shuddering with the intensity of her horror.

After racking her brain for some time, in uselessly endeavoring to think of some place where she would be likely to obtain a shelter, Mrs. Burton, who had so kindly treated her and Patty on their escape from the Old Lone House, recurred to her recollection and, although it was some distance from the place where she then was, as her only pros-

pect of a lodging for the night rested there, and probably of advice in what manner it would be best for her to proceed in future, she determined to make the best of her way thither.

It was long past midnight when she arrived at the cottage of Mrs. Burton. She knocked at the door of the cottage, but she had to repeat it two or three times before any notice was taken of it, but at length she observed a glimmering light in one of the casements above, and almost immediately afterwards it was cautiously opened, and the head of Mrs. Burton protruded itself, and in a timid voice demanded who was there, and what they wanted at that hour of the night?—Our heroine answered her as laconically as she could, and Mrs. Burton uttered an exclamation of astonishment as she recognized Emily's voice.

'Bless my soul! is it possible?' exclaimed the old woman, 'whatever can have brought the poor child into this neighborhood again, and alone? Stay there, my dear, and I will come down stairs immediately and let you in.'

'Oh, thanks! thanks!' cried our heroine; but Mrs. Burton had taken in her head, and was already descending the stairs; therefore she did not hear her.

Emily had not to wait many minutes before the cottage door was opened, and Mrs. Burton made her appearance in her night-clothes, and immediately recognizing Emily, embraced her with all the same affection as if she had been an old and intimate friend, and welcomed her to the cottage.

'Ellen has gone to service,' said the old woman, 'and, therefore, I can very well accommodate you, and shall be very glad of your company, for it is remarkably lonely here by one's self. But bless the child; what has again brought you to this neighborhood, and alone;—what has become of poor Miss Patty?'

'The story is too long to tell now,' answered our heroine, 'but I will furnish you with every particular in the morning. In the mean time, it may be enough to inform you for the present, that I know not what has become of my unfortunate friend, Patty; that I once more fell into the power of my enemies, and was conveyed to the Old Lone House again, which this night was totally destroyed by fire, and I believe that Gerald Darnley, Chesterton, and Madge, have all three perished in the flames.'

'Heaven's will be done!' piously exclaimed the old woman, clasping her hands together, 'what a terrible visitation of the vengeance of the Almighty; and to think that I should not see or know anything of the fire. Well, for certain it is a very good job that the old House, is destroyed; for it was a nasty, dreary, frightful looking place, and I am much deceived if there have not been deeds perpetrated within it, equally as black as its aspect.'

'Oh, yes, indeed, there has; too well have I experienced the truth of these surmises,' returned Emily.

'I do not doubt it,' returned Mrs. Burton; 'but I will not put another question to you to-night, for I am certain you must be fatigued and require rest. Come, child, you will find the bed in which you reposed before, in the same room where I sleep, and I am very happy, indeed, to think that I should have in my power to render you this trifling assistance.'

As was her usual habit, she awoke at an early hour in the morning, notwithstanding which, she found that Mrs. Burton had already arisen, and had descended down stairs to the parlor, preparatory to their taking their morning's repast.

Mrs. Burton desired that she would favor her with the particulars which she had promised to furnish her with on the previous night, with which request Emily instantly

complied, and made her acquainted with all that had happened to her and the unfortunate Patty, since the last time she had seen them, until being re-captured by Chesterton, taken to her old place of confinement, and the subsequent destruction of that house of crime by fire, and her own hazardous escape from the burning ruins.

Mrs. Burton listened to her with the deepest attention and interest, and when she concluded, she inquired of our heroine what she thought of doing under the awkward circumstances in which she was placed. Emily informed her that she intended once more to return to Mrs. Seagrove and the Waltons, and to solicit their protection for the present, or until something could be done for her, hoping that she should be able to obtain a situation. Mrs. Burton persuaded her to remain for awhile with her; for, she said that she had the means of supporting her well enough, as she had recently had a little property bequeathed to her, and that moreover, she would be society for her, now that Ellen was away from home.

We will now pass over a period of two months, during which time Emily remained at the cottage of Mrs. Burton, and was treated with every kindness, but was unable to learn anything of her friends, neither did she see any prospect of her obtaining a situation. She became daily more uneasy, although Mrs. Burton sought all in her power to make her comfortable, but our heroine's heart revolted from the bare idea of eating the bread of idleness, and her anguish daily became more insupportable.

At length a circumstance took place which promised a change, and once more inspired Emily with hope. A lady came down on a visit to a family in the neighborhood, and during the time she was there, she visited the cottages of the poor people to see on whom she could bestow her charity, and her name

was soon spoken of in terms of the highest esteem, she being regarded as a female of the most benevolent and philanthropic disposition. She was a lady of about forty years of age, stout, with good-looking and insinuating features and of the most amiable and prepossessing manners.

Among others that she visited, was Mrs. Burton, and immediately on beholding Emily, she appeared to be greatly struck with her, and put several questions to the former about her. When Mrs. Burton had answered her, Mrs. Eldridge, for such was the lady's name, paused for a few minutes, and seemed to be buried in thought, at length, turning to Mrs. Burton, she said—

'The story you have told me about this poor girl deeply interests me, and I should like to do something for her. Would she, think you, have any objection to go out to service?'

'Oh, no madam, answered Mrs. Burton, eagerly, 'that is the very thing she wishes to do, and most happy should I feel could I but hear of one for her. Poor thing! there is something about her appearance of a superior description, and she seems to be too good for a menial situation.'

'That is very true,' said Mrs. Eldridge; 'I am quite taken with her appearance, and as I am in want of a female companion, being a widow, and if she has no objection to go with me to New York, to which place it is my intention to depart the day after to-morrow, I shall be happy to engage with her.'

'Oh, madam,' answered Mrs. Burton, joyfully, 'I am sure Emily will be delighted at the offer, and feel eternally grateful to you for your kindness. I will immediately go to her, and make known to her your proposition.'

'Ay, do so, my good woman,' returned the lady, and I will wait here to hear her

CHAPTER XIII.

THE TEMPTATIONS OF OUR HEROINE.

answer. There is no time to lose, and the sooner business of this kind is settled the better.'

Mrs. Burton proceeded up stairs to our heroine, to whom she imparted the proposition of Mrs. Eldridge. As Mrs. Burton had anticipated, Emily expressed much pleasure at the offer, and accompanied Mrs. Burton to the parlor below, where Mrs. Eldridge was impatiently awaiting her answer.

When she was made acquainted with our heroine's determination, she evinced much satisfaction, and behaved to her with so much kindness and urbanity of manners, that Emily was quite captivated with her, and mentally blessed the good fortune which had thus opened a prospect of relief from her difficulties.

Mrs. Eldridge having desired Emily to hold herself in readiness to leave for New York the day after to-morrow, and repeated her promises, took her departure from the cottage, and left our heroine and Mrs. Burton to converse upon the circumstances.

Emily had very few preparations to make, and by the time appointed she was in readiness. But as the hour of her departure arrived, her heart palpitated, and she felt a sensation of dread, mingled with the other anticipations in which she had ventured to indulge. She had heard much of the follies and vices of the gay metropolis, and dreaded being exposed to them; yet surely, under the protection of a lady like Mrs. Eldridge she had nothing to fear.

The parting between her and Mrs. Burton was a most affectionate one, and they promised to correspond frequently with one another, and the former to send our heroine any information which she might obtain of the Waltons or Patty. Emily then stepped into the stage coach along with her future mistress, and the vehicle was driven off.

As they rode on towards Philadelphia, Mrs. Eldridge endeavored to direct Emily's thoughts by agreeable conversation, and in pointing out and describing to her the principal objects on the road, and although she at times succeeded, yet when Emily reflected upon the sufferings of the past—the mystery of her birth—the cruel persecution she had been subjected to—the death of Mrs. Seagrove, and the abduction of Patty—it is not to be supposed that she could help feeling the most poignant anguish; and which was not a little increased at the thoughts of going amongst strangers, and entering upon such a different course of life to that which she had hitherto been used to. As they approached, however, nearer to Philadelphia, the novelty and variety which her eyes encountered, for awhile estranged her ideas from such tormenting subjects, and she listened with much pleasure to the vivid and graphic description which Mrs. Eldridge gave of the manners of the inhabitants of the metropolis, and the different amusements with which they enlivened the winter evenings in the city.— Sometimes Emily thought she discovered a tone of levity about some of the pictures which Mrs. Eldridge drew of the fashionable vices and frivolities of New York. But she imagined that the manners of city people must be different from those of the country and tried to forget what had, at first, given her some little apprehension.

When they entered the streets of the city of Penn, the eyes of our heroine were sufficiently employed. The stately buildings, the number of persons moving about the streets, the shops and stores offering every variety of articles to the purchaser, the lofty shot tower, and the gay attire of the ladies, excited the admiration of one who had, heretofore, dwelt in the most moral districts.

They put up at a large hotel in Market Street, where every accommodation was to be had, and the waiters hastened to perform their slightest wishes. In the evening Mrs. Eldridge took our heroine to Peale's Museum, and there she was again astonished at the multifarious curiosities brought from all parts of the world.

On the next day, they started for New York. During the passage, Mrs. Eldridge was very attentive to Emily, and strove, in every way, to cheer up her spirits and inspire her with some portion of her own gaiety. She partially succeeded, and when, at last, the steeples of the city appeared in view, Emily felt that she had, indeed, escaped the fangs of her persecutors, and that, at last, a home and a place of rest was found for her. As they came in sight of the Battery and she saw the trees and green grass from the deck of the boat, it appeared to her like a Paradise, and her spirits rose in unison with the scene.

A score of carriages crowded to the wharf to solicit their patronage as they landed, and Mrs. Eldridge having made choice of one of them, they were whirled up Broadway, over the rattling stones, at a swift rate. First the Bowling Green, then the City Hall, came under the observation of our heroine; and if she had been surprised at the crowds of Philadelphia, here she saw throngs of people hurrying backwards and forwards, carriages, carts, and other vehicles which made the Quaker city like a wilderness in comparison with the streets of the great metropolis of North America.

They were set down at the door of a fashionable house, in a fashionable part of the city, and not far from Broadway. On entering, Emily saw that it was furnished in the handsomest style, while three young ladies very gaily attired, welcomed them home with cordial smiles.

There was, however, something rude in the manners of these nieces, and they sometimes made use of loose expressions at which she was a little surprised, and laughed when there seemed to be no occasion for merriment, and when she gazed with a timid look of astonishment, she frequently noticed Mrs. Eldridge fixing upon them a significant glance, which she was at a loss to understand. She could not suppress a sigh, when she thought of the friendless state she was in, amongst strangers, and in a place like New York, where she knew not by what snares she might be surrounded, nor could be acquainted with the various schemes that are adopted by the guilty and unprincipled to entrap the upstart. Two or three times she regretted that she had so readily accepted the offer of Mrs. Eldridge, without having previously heard more of her character; but when she remembered the many acts of benevolence she had performed in the place where they came from, and the great kindness with which she behaved to her on the journey, she could not but think her exactly what she appeared to be, and reproached herself for having entertained a suspicion which was in the most remote degree calculated to do the lady an injustice.

Having partaken of some refreshments, the three young ladies made themselves very agreeable, although there was something in their conversation and general deportment altogether, which our heroine could not approve of; however, she imagined that they only conformed to the rules of city life, and that the difference of it from that simple life she had hitherto been used to, made it appear strange and unnatural to her.

'You must excuse Miss Emily, my dears,' said Mrs. Eldridge, 'if she appears strange in company with you; but, having always been brought up in the country, of course it cannot be expected that she can know much of the manners of New York life. No doubt, however, under my tuition and yours, we shall make a wonderful alteration.'

'Oh, I have not the least doubt but that we shall, my dear aunt,' said one of the young ladies, and then there was another titter amongst the three, which made our heroine blush, and no doubt it would have been prolonged, had it not been for Mrs. Eldridge, who gave them a look which enjoined them to forbearance.

'In the first place, we must see to an immediate alteration in her dress,' resumed Mrs. Eldridge; 'this unseemly rustic garb must be thrown aside, and, until we can get some clothes made for her, I must get you, Lucretia,—for I think your things will fit her,—to lend her one of your dresses, and then, when her hair is properly dressed, and she has that pretty little gold watch, and those diamond bracelets of mine, which I intend to lend her, she will look charmingly, and fit to see company.'

'Oh, my dear madam,' said Emily, 'you overwhelm me with so much kindness; such finery will ill-become your servant and dependant, and, indeed, I would prefer wearing the humble dress I—'

'Nonsense, child!' interrupted Mrs. Eldridge, 'when I engaged you, it was to be my companion, and to treat you as one of my own family, and I insist, therefore, that you conform to my wishes. I shall introduce you to my circle of acquaintance, but there is one request I trust you will comply with, especially as it is meant for your own welfare.'

'Oh, name it, madam,' uttered Emily, eagerly, and anxious to show her willingness to comply with the wishes of her new found benefactress.

'I will tell you,' answered the lady; 'as you might not be so well received in society, were your real circumstances made known, I have thought of introducing you as the daughter of my late brother, and, therefore, desire that you will assume the name of Rosina Deloraine.'

'Oh, madam,' exclaimed our heroine, who felt a repugnance to adopt such a course; 'I would rather that were avoided. I like not to tell an untruth; and, therefore, if it is your opinion that such is the kind of reception I am likely to meet with in my real character, pray excuse me, and do not introduce me at all.'

'Lucretia and her two companions again giggled, and they exchanged glances with one another, which Emily saw, but could not understand.'

'My dear girl,' returned Mrs. Eldridge, 'I must persist in my request; I ask it as a particular favor, and I trust you will not refuse to grant it me.'

Emily made no immediate reply, and recollecting the singular glances of the young ladies, she felt very much confused, and far from comfortable in her situation.

'Into what am I to construe this silence, Emily?' demanded Mrs. Eldridge.

'If it is your will, madam,' answered our heroine, 'of course, it is my duty to obey; although I must confess that I would much rather it could have been done without.'

'Tut, tut, you will think differently, by and by,' observed Mrs. Eldridge; however, remember, from this time, you are Rosina Deloraine.'

'I will not forget, madam,' replied Emily, and the conversation was changed to a different topic. Mrs. Eldridge seemed to exert herself to the very utmost to render herself and her companions agreeable to our heroine, but she felt far from comfortable, and there was something in the behavior of the young ladies which she could neither understand nor admire.

Early in the evening she was glad to avail herself of the excuse of being fatigued with the journey, to retire to the chamber which was to be allotted to her use, and to which she was shown by a female servant, a young

girl with a very red face, and excessively vulgar appearance, and manners altogether. But Emily, although she immediately retired to bed, did not, by any means, feel disposed to go to sleep; and she lay for some time revolving in her mind the circumstances of the last few days, and the reception she had met with at the house of her benefactress.—Notwithstanding the kindness of the latter, there was something in the general conduct of the young females whom she had introduced as her nieces, which, so far from prepossessing, had filled her bosom with a sentiment bordering on disgust, and imparted to her mind strange misgivings, which she could not shake off; but, nevertheless, she did endeavor to conquer the feeling all in her power, thinking that, in all probability, she might be imbibing a wrong prejudice against them.

The chamber in which Emily was, was immediately above the drawing-room, so that she could hear all that passed therein; and, it was not long after she had rested, that she heard several loud knocks at the street door, and from the noise which proceeded from the room below, it seemed pretty evident that company had arrived. Soon afterwards the sound of several voices met her ears, in which she distinguished those of men, and then followed loud laughter, and other noisy demonstrations of mirth.

Emily knew not how it was, but she could not help trembling violently, and she almost feared to remain in the chamber, though for what reason she had no distinct comprehension. Several hours had elapsed, and the party, for such it evidently was, had not broken up,—when Emily, at last overpowered by sleep, yielded to the influence of the drowsy god, and soon became insensible to all that was passing.

In the morning she was awakened by a knock at her chamber-door, and, on request-

ing the person who knocked to enter, Lucretia, as Mrs. Eldridge had called her, made her appearance, *en deshabille*, with a dress of the most elegant description hanging across her arm, and greeted our heroine with much apparent cordiality; but she could not help thinking that her eyes looked heavy and bloodshot, and her countenance pale and wan, like one who had passed the previous night in dissipation.

‘Now, my dear Rosina,’ she said, putting on a most bland smile, ‘if you feel disposed to arise yet, I will assist you to dress; and according to my aunt’s request, I have brought you one of my dresses; for we shall have company to-day, and my aunt intends to introduce you to her friends.’

‘Mrs. Eldridge is very kind,’ said our heroine, ‘but I wish she would suffer me to occupy only the place for which I thought she had engaged me—that of a servant.—Indeed, I dread entering into the society of those above my station, for which I am not qualified, and by no means ambitious of.’

‘Nonsense,’ said Lucretia, ‘you will soon brush off this timidity, I have no doubt; and you will find the acquaintances and friends of my aunt, the most agreeable people in the world. To-day we only expect Mr. John Darlington, Mr. and Mrs. Bevington, Captain Romaine, and one or two more.’

‘Are the parties of your aunt generally formed principally of gentlemen?’ inquired our heroine, with a look of astonishment.

Lucretia appeared to be rather confused at this question, but at length she assumed an air of perfect indifference, as she replied—

‘No, not always; but then these are such very fine gentlemen, particularly Mr. Darlington, who, although not by any means a young man, is the very epitome of gallantry. I am certain he will be quite struck with you, Rosina, for you will really, without any

flattery, look remarkably lovely when you have on this dress, which, I am certain will fit you to a T.’

Emily blushed deeply, and was at a loss to express herself as she would wish; she, therefore, made no reply, but suffered Lucretia to assist her to dress, and to place the watch which Mrs. Eldridge had mentioned, by her side, and the bracelets on her wrists. When this was completed, Lucretia declared she looked most charming, although our heroine had really never felt more uncomfortable in her life; and, as she caught a glimpse of her person in the mirror, she felt the crimson blushes suffuse her cheeks, and she would have given any thing to have been allowed to have resumed her humble clothes again.

After some few observations of no interest, made by Lucretia, they descended the stairs, and on entering the parlor, beheld Mrs. Eldridge and the other two young ladies, seated at the breakfast table, and only awaiting their arrival.

On seeing our heroine, Mrs. Eldridge and the others exchanged the most significant glances, and then the former launched forth into the most fulsome compliments to Emily upon her beauty, and the elegance of her appearance, which confused her the more, and left her in a state of perturbation which was deserving of the utmost pity.

The morning’s repast passed over without anything worth recording taking place, but Emily was forced to listen to the extravagant compliments that were so lavishly bestowed upon her by Mrs. Eldridge and her nieces, until she was heartily sick, and already began to feel that her situation under the roof of Mrs. Eldridge would be more irksome, and less agreeable than she had at first anticipated it would be. We will pass over the state of trembling suspense which Emily endured in the interval which elapsed prior

to the arrival of the expected guests, and introduce the company to the reader, as they were introduced to our heroine.

The first was John Darlington, a dark, swarthy-looking man, about the middle age, who, notwithstanding he endeavored to make himself appear a very amiable gentleman, and did the gallant to perfection, he had sufficient in the expression of his countenance to show that he was familiar with vice.—Emily no sooner beheld him than he started back in amazement, and he seemed no less struck than herself, and was unable, apparently, to speak for a minute or two. The countenance which he bore, was one which was stamped indelibly on our heroine’s recollection. She was confident she had seen it before, but where it was, for the moment, she could not call to mind. At length, it darted upon her brain with the rapidity of lightning, he was the same individual, who, upon one or two occasions, when she was a child, had called upon her grandmother, but who, she was now confident, had not been in any way related to her, and the words he had made use of to Mrs. Fitzmond, had ever since been most vividly present to her recollection.

Could it be? or was she mistaken? No, she could almost have ventured to swear that it was the same man who then stood before her. The gentleman also evinced considerable emotion, and his lips quivered, and he turned pale, but he quickly recovered himself, and went through the ceremony of introduction with greater ease than might have been supposed. Emily, however, could not help shuddering when he took her hand, and she felt a sensation at her heart, which she found it impossible to subdue. In spite of his emotion, the extreme beauty of our heroine appeared to excite his warmest admiration, and he fixed upon her a look which brought the blushes, deep mantling to her

cheeks, and trembling, she cast her eyes to the floor, and was violently agitated.

There were two other gentlemen, and a lady, only, named Mr. and Mrs. Bevington; the former, a tall, ordinary, and extremely stupid looking personage, and the latter, a female, fat, vulgar, and unprepossessing; and Captain Romaine, who had all the appearance of a finished *roue*.

We will not recapitulate all that took place on that, one of the most wretched days which Emily ever recollected to have passed. The manners of the company were bold, and even indelicate; lewd jokes were bandied freely about, and Mrs. Eldridge and the other females seemed to enjoy them with as great a relish as the gentlemen.

Disgust, terror, and indignation, filled the bosom of Emily: could this be the amiable, the benevolent Mrs. Eldridge? She could scarcely believe the evidence of her senses! But, alas! it was too true; and horrible ideas began to take possession of her mind, which she found impossible to conquer. What added to the anguish and disgust of Emily, was, that Mr. John Darlington seated himself by her side, and kept urging his conversation upon her, and every time she gazed into his countenance, and listened to the tones of his voice, she became still more convinced than ever that he was the same individual her suspicions had first lighted on. Whenever she caught the eye of Mrs. Eldridge, she saw her watching the gentleman and herself, with an earnestness and anxiety of demeanor that not a little added to her astonishment and distress, and the expression of her countenance was so changed that she could scarcely believe it was the same woman.

Emily made but few observations, but her heart was almost full, to bursting, and her agony was not a little increased, when the company, with the exception of Mr. Darling-

ton, arose, and left the apartment, and she was about to follow the example, when he seized her hand, and placing his back against the door prevented her.

'Stay, beauteous Rosina,' he observed, 'I must have a word with you alone.'

'Sir!' exclaimed the indignant damsel, and she attempted to withdraw her hand.

'Nay, frown not, lovely Rosina,' cried he, and an alarming expression glowed in his countenance; 'those looks ill become such transcendantly charming features!—Rosina, listen to me, while I confess the sentiment with which you have inspired the heart. I love you, Rosina, and would fain convince you of the strength of my admiration. Ah! not one look of kindness? By Jupiter, this must not be! On those ruby lips, that invite the amorous kiss, let me—'

And, as he thus spoke, he attempted to throw his arms around our heroine's waist, but she broke from him.

'Hold, sir,' she exclaimed, with a look of offended modesty and resentment; 'this language I must not listen to. Why am I left alone?'

'Do not be rash, Rosina,' continued Darlington; 'I will soon explain everything.'

'I seek no explanation from you, sir,' retorted Emily, 'but an apology for the insult you have offered me. If Mrs. Eldridge sanctions such conduct as this, she shall find that the poor friendless girl has the spirit to resent it. Let go your hold instantly, sir, and suffer me to pass unmolested.'

'Not until you have sealed my forgiveness with a kiss!' ejaculated he, attempting to throw his arms around the maiden's waist; but, wound up to desperation, and offended virtue adding strength to her, Emily broke from him, and, rushing out of the room, she hastened up stairs, entered her own apart-

ment, and locked the door; and, throwing herself into a chair, burst into a violent paroxysm of tears.

She was afraid to retire to rest while the noisy guests were still in the house, and it was not until a very late hour that the bustle from below made her imagine that they were at length about to depart.

In order to make sure that her surmises were correct, she arose from her seat, gently unlocked the door, and stepped cautiously on to the landing to listen.

Their voices, bidding each other good night, convinced her that she was correct, and hearing the street door closed, she imagined that they had departed; when suddenly she heard a footstep on the stairs, trembling with terror, she was about to re-enter the chamber and close the door, when the voice of Mrs. Eldridge arrested her purpose, and she was constrained to listen.

'No, Darlington, hold!' she heard her say; 'not to-night. To make such an attempt would be to frustrate all.'

'Well, well,' returned the rake, in a reluctant tone of voice, and after a pause, 'I suppose I must yield to you. But mind, I will not wait longer than three days, or I shall not fulfil the agreement which has been made between us.'

'In three days from this,' replied Mrs. Eldridge, 'I promise you that the girl shall be yours.'

'Enough,' said Darlington. 'Remember! Good night.'

'Good night!' responded Mrs. Eldridge; and immediately afterwards Emily heard the street door opened and closed again; and, half dead with horror, she rushed back into the chamber, locked the door, and, throwing herself on her knees, groaned aloud in the agony of her feelings, and implored the protection of the Most High!

The truth, the danger of her situation, was now confirmed—she had fallen into the power of an infamous female panderer to the vices of the libertine, and unless she could effect her escape, her ruin was certain.

She slept but little that night, but by the morning she had so far conquered her emotions as to appear more composed than could have been anticipated, and when she descended to the breakfast-room the following morning, there was nothing in her appearance and behaviour which could excite the suspicions of Mrs. Eldridge, or the fallen creatures whom she called her nieces.

That day passed without anything particular occurring, but Emily determined at all hazards to make an attempt to escape from that infamous house that very night.

Night came, and Mrs. Eldridge having made an appointment to go to the theatre, the opportunity appeared propitious to Emily for her purpose.

The three girls remained at home, and when Mrs. Eldridge requested our heroine to accompany her, they pressed her so warmly to allow her to remain at home to keep them company that she yielded.

Emily hurried to her own chamber, where she knelt down, and implored the protection of Heaven in the attempt she was about to make.

With noiseless steps she now began to descend the stairs, and although her heart throbbed violently against her side, she reached the hall in safety, and, silently opening the door, the next moment was in the street, and at liberty!

It was a fearful night—a perfect deluge of rain descended upon the earth, and the wind blew a complete hurricane. Poor Emily was soon drenched to the skin, but, still she proceeded on her way without any fixed purpose, and without the prospect of a shelter for the night.

She had proceeded in this manner for about an hour, she felt her strength suddenly fail her, and she sunk exhausted and fainting on the step of the door of a large mansion. Here she had not been long when the watchman came up, and seeing her wretched condition, was about to convey her to the watch-house, when, at that moment, two meanly but cleanly-dressed young women who happened to be passing at the time, interceded, and requested the watchman to allow her to be removed to their humble residence, which was in a court close by, where she should receive every attention, and that he could make any further inquiry into the matter which he should think proper.

The watchman, who was a humane man, and liked the appearance of the young women, assisted them with our heroine to their humble dwelling; which had a very clean appearance; and having laid her on the bed, and the watchman having seen that they were using all their endeavors to restore her to sensibility, and also ascertained that Emily was entirely destitute of money, left her in their care.

We will not seek to describe the feelings of our heroine when she was restored to consciousness, and found the novel situation in which she was placed. From this time to that period at which we commenced this tale, our heroine's history may be very briefly told.

The young women who had acted so kindly towards her who were sisters, and had been very early left orphans.

Illness, and a long series of misfortunes, had reduced them to such a painful extremity that they had no other means of obtaining a living than the organ-singing.

This precarious avocation they were pursuing when they met with Emily; and from their cleanly appearance, and possessing ex-

cellent voices, they were enabled to make a better living than they could probably have done by any other means.

We have now but little to add to what we have already related of the circumstances and vicissitudes, almost unparalleled, that brought the unfortunate Emily Fitzormond to the deplorable situation in which she was introduced to Mr. Mandeville and his lady, at the commencement of this narrative. She had never been able to learn anything of Patty, and she had almost made up her mind that she should never see her again.

She had not been many months with the singers, when they were unfortunately attacked with a most malignant fever, of which they died; and Emily, who had as great an attachment to the poor girls as if they had been her own sisters, thus found herself once more alone, and without a friend in the world; for Mrs. Burton, she had heard, was dead, and her daughter Ellen was married, and had gone abroad with her husband. And Emily Fitzormond soon afterwards became known about the different streets of New York as the pretty musician.

We have now brought this narrative down to that epoch from which we have so long digressed.

CHAPTER XIV.

HAPPIER DAYS.

EMILY slept tranquilly in the hospitable mansion of Mr. Mandeville in Union Square. The kind and gentle manners of Mr. Mandeville, his lady, and their lovely daughter Arabella, had quite overwhelmed her.

In the morning, she found her old clothes replaced by clean and respectable garments in which she dressed herself; and hope being revived in her heart, the roses had resumed their place in her cheeks, and she looked as lovely as she had ever done.

She had not been risen long, when there was a gentle tap at her bed-room door, and, on opening it, Arabella tripped lightly into the apartment, and with a sweet smile, requested to know how our heroine had rested, and informed her that her father and mother requested to see her in the parlor. Emily curtsied and obeyed, and Arabella leading the way, they quickly entered the room in which Mr. Mandeville and his lady were seated at breakfast. Emily entered with a timid air, and they seemed forcibly struck with the alteration of her appearance, but there was another individual who at that moment entered, and upon whom the extreme beauty and interesting countenance of Emily seemed to make even a more lively impression, if possible. This was Augustus Mandeville, the only son of Mr. M. and his lady, a young gentleman, possessed of the greatest personal and intrinsic merits, and was in all things the very counterpart of his amiable parents. He thought he had never before gazed on so lovely a creature, and the simplicity of her dress, and the peculiar circumstances under which she had been introduced to the family, rendered her an object of still greater interest than she would otherwise have been. Emily blushed as his eyes met her's, and with an air of modesty she held down her head.

'Come hither, my poor girl,' said Mrs. M. in her usual gentle tones, 'be seated, and partake of some refreshment. Be not afraid; your answer to the questions we put to you last night, have greatly interested Mr. M. and myself, and as you do not look like one who would attempt to practice deceit, we have a wish to assist you.'

Tears of gratitude trembled in the eyes of Emily, and she was for some moments unable to return any answer, but when she did, she expressed her sincere acknowledgments for the kindness of Mr. M. and his lady, in a manner which more than ever convinced them that she was no imposter. She was, however, too bashful to avail herself of the honor which they had offered her, until they pressed the invitation, and to which were added the intreaties of Augustus and Arabella, and at length Emily took a seat at a small table, near that at which Mr. M. and his family had taken their places.

The breakfast passed over in silence, and when it was finished Emily was requested to relate her melancholy story, which she did, in nearly the same words in which we have detailed it in the previous pages of this story. As she proceeded, it would be utterly impossible to pourtray the deep interest, sympathy, wonder, and horror, which it created in the minds of her auditors, and they frequently interrupted her, to give expression to their feelings, which were excited in such an extraordinary manner.

When she had concluded, there was a simultaneous burst of commiseration escaped the lips of them all, and Mr. Mandeville, after a pause, during which he had been reflecting deeply upon the remarkable facts they had heard, arose, and kindly advancing towards our heroine, and taking her hands, said—

'If what you have related be true, my poor girl, and I have every reason to believe

that it is, you have been one of the most unfortunate of Heaven's children, and shall henceforth find friends in me and Mrs. Mandeville, who will do all in our power to unravel the mystery of your birth, and to bring to condign punishment those who have been guilty of such atrocious crimes. You shall remain here, under my protection, and if I find that you merit it, you shall never have cause to regret the day when you sought charity at the door of Mr. Mandeville. The deserving child of misfortune shall never cease to find a sincere friend and benefactor in him who now addresses you.

Emily sunk on her knees, overpowered by her feelings, and clasping her hands, looked up in the face of Mr. M., with looks that expressed more than a volume of words could have done.

'Oh sir!' she cried, 'this goodness; it is more than I can or do deserve, and—'

Sobs choked her utterance, and she could say no more. Mr. M. gently raised her, and smiled benevolently in her countenance.

'And you think then, that this Gerald Darnley and Miles Chesterton, the steward, both perished in the ruins of the Old Lone House?' said Mr. M.

'Both, sir, I have every reason to believe,' answered Emily.

'That is unfortunate,' said Mr. Mandeville, 'for had either of them escaped, there would have been some chance of their apprehension, and then the whole mystery would be unravelled. But the young man, William Darnley, he was from home at the time.'

'So I have been given to understand, sir,' replied Emily.

'Then he may still be alive, and search must be made after him. And in all the conversations which you overheard between Gerald Darnley, his son, and this Chesterton, you never could ascertain the name of the miscreant who employed them in their principal nefarious transactions?'

Emily replied in the negative.

'But probably he might be traced through the name of his steward,' observed Mrs. Mandeville.

'No, I do not think that,' returned Mr. M., 'because it is most likely that the name of Chesterton was only an assumed one; he would be sure to take the precaution to do that. Have you the manuscripts you say you discovered in the secret closet?'

'Unfortunately, I left them at the house of Mr. Walton,' replied Emily.

'That is indeed unfortunate,' returned Mr. M., 'for they are a material part of the evidence against the guilty party. However, it will be better for us not to make any stir in the matter at present, but to use every precaution, and something may possibly transpire to forward our inquiries.'

Every one agreed as to the propriety of this suggestion, and after some further conversation upon the deeply interesting subject, it was dropped, and our heroine was engaged upon other topics, upon all of which she showed such quick perception and superior understanding, that they all became more charmed with her, every moment they conversed with her.

We will now pass over a period of nine months, during which interval, Emily had so ingratiated herself into the favor of Mr. Mandeville and his family, as to be looked upon with almost the same attention as one of their own.

The adventure which had introduced our heroine to the family in so remarkable a manner, and the conduct of those benevolent people towards her, caused no little gossip and excitement amongst the servants, and the persons in the neighborhood for some time but it gradually wore away, and Mr. M. and the others had taken particular care not to let any persons become acquainted with her singular history, and they also took the pre-

caution to go in an assumed name, so that there might be no chance of the inquiries they were secretly making being frustrated.

Augustus every day became more and more enamored of Emily, and he was never happy but when he was in her society, and the passion he had imbibed for her soon became known to our heroine, whose heart beat responsive with his own. She, however, endeavored to subdue her love for one, to whose hand she had no prospect at present of being able to aspire, and sought by absentsing herself from his presence as frequently as she could to drive her image from his heart. But, alas! the very means she adopted, but served to increase the flame, and affection was too deeply implanted in their hearts to be easily eradicated.

It was on the anniversary of Arabella's eighteenth birth-day, that Mr. Mandeville determined to celebrate the joyful event at his mansion; and accordingly, cards of invitation were issued to a considerable number of the aristocracy, and the day was anticipated to be one of unusual festivity.

At an early hour the guests began to assemble in the saloon, where Mr. M. and his family awaited to receive them, and Emily was also one of the party.

This ceremony was gone through with all the usual formalities, and our heroine was an object of universal curiosity and admiration, and there was not a person present, who could not help acknowledging her exquisite beauty and her captivating sweetness of demeanor.

'Mr. Egremont, allow me to introduce to you, my fair ward, Miss Hollingbrook,' said Mr. Mandeville, introducing our heroine to the gentleman he addressed. Emily raised her eyes, but they no sooner rested on the countenance of the gentlemen mentioned, than she gave utterance to a half stifled scream, and tremblingly clung to Mr. Man-

deville scarcely able to save herself from falling. Her astonishment and terror will not be wondered at, when, in Mr. Egremont, she recognized the villain, Darlington, as he had chosen to call himself, when she had met him in the house of that infamous woman, Mrs. Eldridge.

Egremont seemed no less thunderstruck than she was, and started back a few paces, and gazed at her with looks of mingled surprise and incredulity unable to speak.

Before either of them could recover themselves, Mr. M. could inquire the reason of this extraordinary emotion, a person standing by Egremont, informed him that his steward desired to speak with him immediately on business of importance; and he had only just given this intimation, when a man was seen making his way across the saloon towards Egremont, and when he had got within a few paces of the spot where they stood, our heroine fixed her eyes upon him, but immediately screamed aloud, and, exclaiming:

'Chesterton! Chesterton!' fainted with terror in the arms of Mr. Mandeville.

'Confusion!' cried the steward, for he it was;—'Emily Fitzormond here?'

'Damnation!' vociferated Egremont, his eyes flashing fire, and his whole frame convulsed with the most powerful emotion;—'Emily Fitzormond, say ye, and alive?—Villain! wretch! traitor! You have deceived me? But you shall suffer for it! Die, infernal scoundrel, and with you the secret you would probably some time or other reveal!'

As the infuriated man gave utterance to these words, he snatched up a knife and before any of the astonished guests could interpose, he plunged it twice into the body of the guilty steward; who fell bleeding on the floor, but was quickly raised in the arms of one of the bystanders.

Egremont, seeing that Chesterton still lived, would have rushed upon him again,

but he was seized and held back by several persons, and Chesterton, with a ghastly look, cried:—

'Hold him back! hold him back! let him not complete his bloody work, until I have had my revenge, and disclosed a tale of blood which will make the murderer tremble. Bear me hence—quick! Bind up my wounds, or I shall bleed to death ere I can make the only atonement in my power. But let not yon usurper escape; I repeat he is a murderer! Oh—'

Miles Chesterton was quickly taken to another apartment, where his wounds were bound up, and a surgeon was sent for; and Egremond, upon whose brow madness and guilt were stamped, was conveyed to a room, in which he was for the present confined.

All this was the work of less than five minutes; in that time, the author of all our heroine's misery was revealed, in Egremond, and he had partly admitted his guilt in the words he had uttered, and the sanguinary vengeance he had inflicted upon his wretched myrmidon.

It was some time before Emily recovered her senses, but when she was made acquainted with what had happened, her feelings may easily be conjectured, but cannot be properly described. The whole was so sudden, that she could scarcely persuade herself but that it was a dream; but when she was convinced of its reality, astonishment, and admiration of the wonderful ways of Providence filled her breast, and she waited with the utmost impatience for the return of Mr. M. and other persons, who had gone with him to bear witness to the dying confession of the unhappy Chesterton.

There, propped up by pillows, the dying wretch with difficulty gave utterance to the dreadful tale of crime, while his horror-struck listeners attended to him with the most painful interest.

We shall not attempt to give it in the precise words of the dying man; but it may be thus briefly detailed:—

The present Egremond was the first cousin of the late Jerdan Egremond, and being his only relative, and the next heir to the estates, if Jerdan died unmarried, or without issue; they had been brought up from infancy together, both the parents of the former having died when he was very young. When boys together, John Harlington, which was his family name, exhibited none of those unfortunate traits in his character which afterwards distinguished him, and ultimately led him on to the perpetration of the most horrible crimes; but, on the contrary, his disposition was very mild and affable: but beneath all, secretly lurked the hypocrite, and it only required excitement, as was found in his after career, to render him capable of the basest deeds.

Towards Mr. Jerdan, who had ever behaved to him with the kindness of the most affectionate of brothers, he secretly nurtured the most envious and inveterate feelings; jealous of his superior fortune, although he had shared it freely with him, he only waited an opportunity of gaining full possession of it, and, consequently, his greatest dread was that the former should get married, and he endeavored by every means in his power to prevent it. It was with that object in view that he avoided the company of the female sex as much as possible, and as Jerdan was seldom out of his society, he hoped by that means to bias his inclinations, and to lead his mind to other objects. Whenever the fair sex became a subject of discourse, Mr. Harlington had ever some argument ready to excite prejudice against them, and being very eloquent and forcible in his observations, they had a very dangerous tendency.

Mr. Egremond, however, was a man of too powerful a mind to be influenced by any

thing which Mr. Harlington could say; and he frequently discussed the subject with him with much ability, and warmly reprobated his unnatural prejudices. Egremond was a most enthusiastic admirer of woman, and always the first to champion their cause, and, therefore, that Harlington should meet with a strong opponent in him is not at all to be wondered at. When alone, this was the source of much uneasiness to Harlington; he would curse the warmth of his friend's temperament, and, although in reality no one could be more attached to the sex than himself, he secretly cursed all womankind.—Proud, haughty, and ambitious, the principal hopes of Harlington were fixed upon the wealth of him to whom he pretended to be a warm friend, but who, in fact, he utterly detested, and would have been happy had some accident occurred to deprive him of life; indeed, there were not any means, however base, scarcely, that he would have hesitated from adopting to further his wishes.

But how very different was the character of his friend, Mr. Egremond. Every manly virtue had a place within his mind, and his greatest delight was in performing acts of pure charity and benevolence. A most warm and enthusiastic friend, he was the admired of every one; and his general affability engendered the highest esteem of all ranks and classes.

The Christian and the philanthropist were exemplified in him to a most eminent degree, and he was looked upon by all who knew him as the general friend of mankind. The poor and unfortunate in him ever found a friend; humble and striving talent a supporter; and genius a most enthusiastic admirer. He was a liberal patron of the fine arts, and his taste was of the most refined order. To all these virtues and accomplishments, Egremond also added a most noble person, and handsome manly countenance;

and it was not to be wondered at, therefore, that he should be as great a favorite among the fair sex as he was with his own. Thus Harlington saw all his hopes crushed that way, and he set his base mind to work to devise some other means to obtain the object of his ambition.

'By all the infernal host, I swear,' he frequently soliloquized, when alone, 'that the wealthy estates of Egremond shall be mine, in spite of every thing, and even though I purchase the possession of my desires by the most fearful crimes. I am no despicable coward to tremble at the performance of trifles to attain the object of my ambitious wishes; nor was I made to linger on in this manner, the mere dependent on the bounty of another. No! I will achieve the object for which my soul has so long panted, and which I am ready to run any risk to accomplish. It may take time, and I will not by precipitation frustrate my designs; but, ultimately, I am convinced that I shall triumph. Would that death would release me from the only obstacle to my becoming possessed of rank and honor. But it must be—the time must come, and something whispers me that all my wishes will be gratified.'

Mr. Egremond frequently rallied Harlington on his prejudices against the fair sex, and the latter, fearful that he might by his constant perseverance in speaking against them, at last create no good feeling in the bosom of the former towards him; and likewise perceiving that all the arguments he could make use of were not likely to alter his opinion, he at length affected to be convinced of the force of Egremond's observations, to abandon his own prejudices, and to become a convert to the opinions of his friend, although, in fact, as we have before observed, he was always of the same, and not only a warm admirer, but, in private, a zealous devotee at the shrine of beauty—

This, although it caused Harlington no little regret to be compelled to adopt, was a wise plan, inasmuch as it strengthened the attachment of Egremond towards him, and, consequently, afforded him greater opportunities of forwarding his infamous designs.

Thus passed away several years, and so well did the hypocrite play his part, that Egremond had not the slightest suspicion of the guilty intentions he had towards him, and little thought that, at the very time when he professed for him the greatest friendship, he was actually endeavoring to conceive the readiest means to get rid of him. Murder he trembled to commit himself; he was too great a coward for that; but he would willingly have employed any other wretch to have waylaid his intended victim, but he feared to make the proposition to any person, neither did he know of any individual who was at all likely to undertake the foul deed.

It was soon after this that Harlington became acquainted with the villain, Woodthorpe, who has hitherto been known to the reader only in the name of Chesterton; and he took him into his service as valet, and well knowing the depraved character which he possessed, he was enabled to prevail upon him in his diabolical wishes to assist him.

It was, however, not for some time after Woodthorpe, alias Chesterton, had been in Harlington's service that the latter ventured to unburthen his mind to him, and it was not then, until after he had bound him by a heavy oath of secrecy, that he did confide his thoughts to him, and ventured to propose to him to murder Egremond, promising him at the same time, a very large sum of money for the performance of the deed. Guilty, however, as Woodthorpe most assuredly was, his hands had never then been stained by human blood; and he, therefore, shuddered at the bare mention of such a deed, and al-

though he promised that he would do all that was in his power to get some miscreant to undertake the bloody crime, and in which he said that he had no doubt he should ultimately succeed in doing, as he was well acquainted with several fellows who were perfectly familiar with crime, and who, upon the promise of a good reward, would not hesitate to perpetrate any deed, however enormous it might be.

With this, Harlington was forced to be content, finding that it would be useless to endeavor to prevail upon Woodthorpe; but he severely reproached him for his cowardice, and enjoined him by a more stringent oath than before to secrecy.

He placed but little dependence in the promise of Woodthorpe, and he was rather fearful of it also, for he would then be left entirely at the mercy of the ruffian, who, in the hopes of being better rewarded, might divulge the whole to Egremond, and thus all his infamous plans would not only be frustrated, but himself brought to exposure, disgrace, and punishment.

For several years more the villain was compelled to linger on, impatiently wavering between hope, fear, anxiety, and disappointment; and still he saw no more prospect of his being able to accomplish his designs than he had done at first; neither had he been able to persuade Woodthorpe to commit the deed, nor had the latter seen any one yet to whom he could venture to submit their designs, and to propose the assassination of Mr. Egremond. The friendship of the latter towards the villain who was plotting his destruction, increased, and there was nothing in the behavior of Harlington which could in the least tend to excite suspicion; indeed, his friendship appeared to keep pace with that of Mr. Egremond, and they were looked upon, by most people, as brothers. Mr. Egremond had hitherto remained single, and

thus far the hopes of Harlington were somewhat encouraged; but he was very quickly doomed to be disappointed, and to have his alarm excited in a considerable degree, and not without sufficient cause.

Mr. Egremond proposed travelling for some time in Europe, to which Harlington readily gave his consent, trusting that abroad some opportunity might present itself of putting the designs he had so long had in contemplation in execution, and, he secretly vowed that Egremond should never return to his native country alive. They left, and having settled for a short time in Italy, there became acquainted with an English gentleman, resident there, whose family only consisted of himself, his lady, and an only daughter, of great beauty and intrinsic acquirements, of whom, it was very evident that Mr. Egremond soon became deeply enamoured, and Harlington perceived, to his chagrin and alarm, that the lady reciprocated his sentiments, and the gentleman, her father, who had noticed their attention towards one another, seemed to approve of their attachment.

We need not attempt to describe the feelings of rage that filled the bosom of Harlington on this discovery, and a thousand times he cursed the ill-fortune which had introduced them to the family of Mr. Beaumont, which was the name of the gentleman, but his indignation was greatly increased when his surmises were confirmed by Egremond confessing to him the impression which Adeline Beaumont had made upon his heart, and that it was his determination to make to her a confession of his love, and to seek from her a return. But fearful that he might excite the suspicions of Egremond, if he offered any opinion regarding the lady contrary to his own, he affected to approve of his taste, and Egremond, encouraged by the behavior of Mr. Beaumont, and that of the lady, sought

an opportunity of confessing to the latter the passion with which she had inspired him, and had the felicity to receive from her an acknowledgment of a return, and a request that he would apply to her father.

On the wings of love and hope, Egremond flew to the feet of Mr. Beaumont, and informing him of the sentiments which himself and the beautiful Adeline entertained for each other, supplicated his consent to their union, which was granted without hesitation, and a day appointed for the ceremony to take place.

Harlington, who now at once saw his hopes partly destroyed, was in a state of rage which needs no description from us, and he secretly determined, at all hazards, to destroy the lady ere that which he had so much reason to apprehend should have taken place.

Towards Adeline, however, he behaved with the same hypocritical urbanity of manner which he ever evinced towards Egremond, and she, as well as others, were completely deceived by them, thought him a most estimable man, and was delighted to think that Egremond possessed such a devoted friend.

Harlington and Woodthorpe had frequent conversations upon the subject, and consulted what was to be done, but when the former proposed the murder of Adeline, Woodthorpe shuddered at the bare idea of it, with the same horror as when his master had hinted to him about the death of Egremond, and positively refused to have any thing to do with it.

Cowardice, and not humanity, made him revolt at the thought, for although there was scarcely a crime besides of which he had not been guilty, from the perpetration of that he shrunk with a feeling of horror which we cannot adequately describe.

Harlington was terribly enraged at the refusal of Woodthorpe; but he was afraid to

offend him, knowing that he was entirely in his power, and trusting that he should be able in time to wean him to his purpose, and persuade him to become a ready instrument towards effecting the accomplishment of his wishes.

The day appointed for the solemnization of the nuptials, was agreed to be celebrated with much splendor, and there was to be a grand banquet given in the mansion of Mr. Beaumont. A thought suddenly suggested itself to the mind of Harlington, and a sanguine hope of its success sprang up in his bosom.

'Ah!' he muttered to himself, when he was alone; 'it shall be so; success seems certain to attend it, and I will muster courage sufficient to perpetrate the deed, for, upon me suspicion can never light. Poison might easily be mixed with her refreshment at the banquet, and thus at once I shall rid myself of one of whom I have such cause to be in fear. This deed, too, might work a double effect, for the sudden death of Adeline might to shock him, that he might never recover from the effects of it; and thus he should have got rid of every obstacle to wealth, and that without drawing down upon himself the least suspicion.'

The wretch actually prided himself upon this idea, and exulted in the anticipation of its success. He confided his diabolical intention to Woodthorpe; who would fain have dissuaded him from it, but he found it was of no use to endeavor to do so, and, therefore, he said nothing about it.

As the day of the nuptials approached, the determination of Harlington became stronger, and having banished from his mind all the former scruples he had felt, he awaited for the moment when the crime should be accomplished, with the greatest impatience.

Woodthorpe, cruel as he was, could not think upon the dreadful and heartless mur-

der of so beautiful and innocent a female as Adeline, without shuddering with horror, and several times he was half inclined to divulge all he knew; but then again, fear of the consequences to himself, prevented him, and the miscreant remained faithful to his inhuman master.

At length the auspicious day arrived, and Egremont and Adeline Beaumont were united in the indissoluble bands of matrimony. The ceremony was over, and the time fixed upon for the banquet had arrived. The guests were all seated at the table, Harlington near his intended victim; whom he watched with eager and malignant eyes. The villain had watched his opportunity, and had contrived to mix a subtle poison with her drink, and he knew that if she quaffed off the contents of the glass, she would be no more in a few minutes, and that no remedy would save her life.

It was a moment of the most terrible suspense to the intended murderer; but his rage and disappointment were beyond all description, when she declined taking any wine, and thus his villainous design was, very happily, frustrated. He was fearful, however, that some other person would drink the contents, and, therefore, he, as if he had done it by accident, upset the glass, and spilt the contents upon the floor. No one took any particular notice of the action, and suspicion was not, therefore, in any degree excited. But Harlington was glad when the guests arose from the table, and he had an opportunity of retiring, for he was afraid that he should not be able to conceal the emotions that filled his bosom from the observation of the persons present. He walked into the garden, and there alone gave vent to the fierce and ungovernable feelings of rage that filled his bosom in the most violent manner. It appeared to him as if a spell was upon him, and that he was to be foiled in all his evil designs.

'But I will not,' he ejaculated to himself; 'no, by hell! I will not be entirely thwarted, even if I lose my own life in making the attempt.'

The day passed over without any thing more, worthy of particular notice, taking place, and the day after the ceremony, the happy couple, attended by Harlington, Mr. Beaumont, and one or two more of their friends, set out to some little distance in the country, to spend the honeymoon; and in anticipation of the most unbounded and uninterrupted happiness.

We will pass over several months, during which time Mr. and Mrs. Egremont had returned to the United States, and Harlington had made two or three attempts to put his diabolical designs into execution, and at every fresh failure his rage increased until he could scarcely contain himself within the bounds of reason and prudence.

But yet, in his behavior to Egremont and his fair bride, he never gave even the slightest symptoms of hatred or jealousy, but, on the contrary, acted with the same strict urbanity which had before so firmly established him in their regard.

But now there was another circumstance to add to his alarm and rage. Mrs. Egremont proved to be *enceinte*, and in the birth of a child, if it should live, Harlington saw, of course, an end to all his ambitious hopes. In the due course of time, Mrs. Egremont presented her delighted husband with a lovely girl, which had every appearance of health, and thus the villain Harlington saw another obstacle to the gratification of his desires.—He, however, resolved to use every possible endeavor to remove it, and to place himself in a fair way to the possession of the wealth he coveted.

Another year elapsed, and yet Harlington was unsuccessful in all his stratagems. Mrs. Egremont had given birth to another daugh-

ter, and the happiness of her and her husband was unbounded. Little did they imagine that they nurtured a serpent in their bosoms, and that he was, under the mask of brotherly affection, contemplating the most atrocious crimes.

A short time prior to this event, Woodthorpe had become acquainted with Gerald Darnley, just after he had ruined himself in acts of dissipation, and quickly finding that he was a man, who would not shrink from the perpetration of any deed for money, he introduced him to Harlington, and who, after some hesitation, thinking at last that he might trust him, he imparted to him his wishes, and offered him a most handsome reward if he would undertake to remove the different obstacles to the gratification of his ambition.

Gerald readily agreed, and it was not long ere he concerted a plot with Woodthorpe to remove Egremont first, and then the others afterwards.

A favorable opportunity was soon afforded them. Mr. Egremont was compelled to go a journey to a distant part of the country upon business, and Harlington excused himself from accompanying him, by pleading indisposition. Of this opportunity, Gerald Darnley determined to avail himself to put his nefarious scheme into execution.

We have before mentioned in the course of this narrative, that the Old Lone House was the property of Mr. Egremont, but it had been deserted by the family for several years, and suffered to fall into decay. In this place Gerald Darnley and two or three others, who lived by plunder, had taken up their residence, and also an old woman who was the mother of one of them, and who was introduced to the reader, at the commencement of the tale, as Mrs. Fitzormond, and the pretended grandmother of our heroine. Gerald Darnley had not been married more

than two years, and his wife had presented him only with one child, a boy. She was a poor, delicate, gentle creature, and worthy of a much better husband. Gerald brutally ill-used her. This old house was promised to Gerald by Harlington, as part of the reward he was to receive, if he executed his plot well; and he was, therefore, the more anxious to meet with success.

From where Egremond was at that time residing, the Old Lone House was situated about fifteen miles, and they could, therefore, calculate from the hour he had fixed upon to start on his journey, what time he would cross the moor.

There Gerald, with his companions, determined to surprise him, but not to take his life, according to the express command of Harlington, though for what reason they could not very well imagine, as he had before been so anxious to have him removed altogether. They were instructed to convey him, a prisoner, to the Old Lone House, and there to await his (Harlington's) further orders.

We need not say what success attended this design; the reader has seen it from what has transpired in the course of this narrative.—The unfortunate Egremond was only attended by one servant, and was surprised, and quickly overpowered, according to the plan laid down.

He was conveyed to that dismal place, the Old Lone House, where he was destined to meet a horrible lingering death, as described by him in the manuscripts which our heroine had found.

We need not attempt to describe the agony which Mrs. Egremond endured at the disappearance of her husband, and for some time her grief was so intense that Harlington began to entertain strong hopes that death would put a period to her existence, and thus save him the trouble of getting rid of her by forcible means.

He also pretended to suffer much anguish at the uncertain fate of his kinsman, and affected to go in search of him, but he went no further than the Old Lone House, where he taunted the wretched victim of his cruelty in the most fiendish manner, and exulted in the dreadful suffering he was undergoing, and the awful fate to which he had consigned him, although he had never behaved any otherwise than as a most affectionate brother towards him, and had not given him the slightest reason to entertain such feelings of deadly revenge towards him.

We will not harrow up the feelings of our readers by detailing all the sufferings that the wretched Jerdan underwent in his place of confinement in the secret closet, until death mercifully terminated them; the manuscripts, and other events that have been recounted in the course of this tale, have sufficiently explained them. After his death, the closet was fastened up, and never afterwards was entered above once or twice, until Emily was accidentally led thither.

All search of Mr. Egremond having, of course, proved fruitless, it was at length concluded that he had been waylaid, and murdered, and that the assassins, in order to escape detection, had buried the body.—Mrs. Egremond was for some time, inconsolable at her heavy and irreparable loss, but at length, time somewhat mellowed her grief, and she turned her whole attention towards her two children, whom the wretch Harlington had also marked out for his victims, on the first opportunity which should present itself.

A few months only had elapsed after the dreadful melancholy event which we have been relating, when both the children were missed from the nursery, where the nurse had only left them for a few minutes, alone, while she went to fetch something from another apartment, and, although a strict and

immediate search was made after them, and large rewards offered to any person who could give any information concerning them, they could never be heard of afterwards.

Harlington had taken good care to be from home at the time of their abduction, and when he returned, and was informed of the circumstance, he affected such violence and apparent sincerity of grief, that not the least suspicion attached itself to him.

This terrible event was a final blow to Mrs. Egremond; she was seized with an illness from which she never recovered, and died of a broken heart only a few months afterwards.

Nothing afterwards being heard of the children of the late Mr. and Mrs. Egremond, it was concluded that they were also dead, and Harlington, after waiting some months, took upon him the title and estates of his murdered kinsman, according to the will of that ill-fated gentleman, and flattered himself that he was secure from detection.

In the mean time, Gerald Darnley had the two children safe in his power, although Harlington imagined they were no more, and had given Darnley a large sum of money for the inhuman part he had acted in the plot.—Their innocence had touched even the flinty heart of that guilty miscreant, and unable to do the hellish deed he had been instructed to commit, he took them to the Old Lone House, where he placed them under the care of his wife, and old Nance, as she was called, otherwise Mrs. Fitzormond.

The guilty steward also confessed about the removal of the remains of the murdered Egremond from the secret closet, by himself and Gerald Darnley, and their interment in the vault underneath the building, and, therefore, he gave every possible means for the confirmation of his statements, had there been any doubts of the truth of his confession on the minds of those that heard it,

which it was almost impossible that there should be, so clearly was every thing stated, and only a minute before he expired, he appealed to Heaven to attest that he spoke the truth, and affixed his signature to the written document which had been taken from his own lips.

The termination of his confession finished the earthly career of the guilty steward, and he was summoned to answer for his manifold crimes at the bar of his Almighty Judge.

CHAPTER XV.

STARTLING REVELATIONS.—THE END.

SCARCELY had breath left the body of Chesterton, than a message arrived at the house of Mr. Mandeville, stating that Harlington was dying. Mr. Mandeville hastened, with medical attendance, to the chamber of the dying man, where he was found in strong convulsions. His death was near at hand, and in his ravings, he confessed the truth of his steward's revelations, mingled with the most horrible imprecations, and died with blasphemy on his lips.

If there was one who tried more than the rest to console our heroine, and who succeeded better, it was Augustus. To his gentle and impressive arguments, Olivia, for such we must now call her, listened with peculiar pleasure; and it was very evident that love had gained a place within her heart, which time would best serve to strengthen.

Augustus soon perceived the conquest he had made, and his ecstasy knew no bounds; Olivia was just the gentle, beauteous being, which his warm imagination had long since pictured as the woman upon whom he could fix his whole soul, and he only awaited to see her restored to tranquillity, to be superlatively happy.

There was another subject now upon which our heroine expressed the greatest and most natural anxiety, and that was, that the ruins of the Old Lone House should be searched, to see whether the remains of her unfortunate parent were still in the vault, where they had been removed by Darnley and the steward; in order that they might have Christian burial, and of course, there was no time lost in complying with this request.

The vaults underneath the Old Lone House had suffered but little by the fire, and the mouldering bones of the murdered man were found in the chest, as described by the steward.

The remains of the late Mr. Egremont were deposited in the family vault of his ancestors; and were followed by a vast concourse of persons, many of whom were old people, who very well remembered him and his lady, and had resided on his wide domains from childhood.

In spite of the persuasions of Mr. Mandeville and the others, who would have prevailed upon her to return to New York, Olivia expressed her determination to take up her residence for some time at the Mansion-house, and finding it would be useless to endeavor to alter her determination, they yielded, but insisted upon remaining with her, to which, of course, she willingly assented, and had always contemplated.

The persons who resided on the estate, had ascertained all the particulars, and were delighted when they heard of our heroine's restitution to her rights, and were anxious to congratulate her upon her accession to wealth; but their modesty under Olivia's peculiar circumstances, prevented them for the present.

A few weeks passed away without anything of particular importance occurring, and our heroine had somewhat regained her tranquillity; and in the society of Mrs. Mandeville

and her amiable family, she seemed likely to be soon restored to all but complete happiness.

Augustus was one of the visitors at the Mansion-house; and in his society, Olivia felt happier than any of the others.

Two months had elapsed after the interment of the remains of the late Mr. Egremont, that Olivia and Augustus were seated alone in the grand drawing-room, when they heard the sound of carriage wheels rattling along the avenue, and going to the casement, they beheld a very elegant carriage hastening towards the house. It stopped at the gothic portal, and no sooner was the door opened, than alighted from it the graceful form of a gentleman, who handed out a lady most elegantly attired, who was immediately escorted into the house by the gentleman.

Olivia felt a trembling sensation come over her, and she was obliged to lean upon Augustus for support. Something of a particular nature, she was certain, was about to happen.

She was not long kept in suspense; Mrs. Mandeville hastily entered the room, and addressing her, said:—

'Olivia, my love, compose yourself, I beg, and prepare yourself for a surprise!'

'Ah!' ejaculated our heroine, and her heart bounded to her lips; 'I know what you mean! My heart presaged it! Let me fly!'

And before Augustus and his mother had recovered from their astonishment, she darted from the room with the speed of lightning, and bounded down the stairs, followed by Mrs. Mandeville and her son.

She did not pause a moment at the parlor door; but rushing into the room, uttered a scream of joy when she beheld Patty and Henry Walton!

She uttered a frantic cry, and exclaiming:—

'Sister! Dear sister!' She rushed into the arms of Patty, and immediately fainted!

Yes, it was Patty, otherwise Amanda, looking more lovely than ever, and Henry Walton, the alteration in whose appearance was most remarkable.

For a few moments the persons present seemed to be completely paralysed to the spot, with astonishment, and Amanda, who supported her sister in her arms, wept tears of joy, upon her pallid cheeks.

'And do we, indeed, behold the sister of the much-injured Olivia, whom we have so long been anxious to see, and whom we had begun to fear we should never behold again?' said Mr. Mandeville, advancing with his lady towards Amanda as he spoke, and gazing with admiration upon one of the most lovely beings, with the exception of our heroine, that he had ever beheld.

Amanda, with the assistance of Henry, gently laid Olivia (who still remained insensible) upon the sofa, and turning round hastily, seemed to be for the first time conscious that she was in the presence of any one but Henry. Deep blushes suffused her cheeks; she curtsied very low, and endeavored to speak, but failed, and stood trembling, the very picture of confusion and powerful emotion.

Mrs. Mandeville smiled affectionately upon her, and endeavored to re-assure her.

At length they partially recovered themselves, and Olivia, in a voice of the utmost sweetness, said:—

'This happiness is so great and so sudden, that I can scarcely persuade myself even now that it is reality. Patty, for still is that name most familiar to me, most dear to me, being the one under which you was first introduced to me; after being separated from me so long to be once more restored to me, and after such a marvellous change in circumstance; it seems scarcely possible.—And you are looking so well, too;—and—Henry Walton—what does this mean?'

'In Henry, my dear sister, said Amanda, in a more collected tone of voice, 'in Henry you now behold my husband!'

'Your husband!' ejaculated Olivia;—'Wonderful!—Oh, what a deal have we to tell each other. But our kind friends; our best friends; Mr. and Mrs. Walton, and their amiable daughters; oh, say, what has become of them?'

'Oh, dear Emily,' observed Henry Walton, 'they are all quite well, and will be here to-morrow, or the next day.'

'Oh, happy news,' fervently ejaculated our heroine; 'I shall never be able to support such an accumulation of joys!'

'For the present, my dear girls,' affectionately observed Mrs. Mandeville, 'pray endeavor to compose yourselves, and by and by all will be explained, and you will then be entirely happy.'

'But tell me, Patty,' said Olivia, 'for you appeared to be acquainted when we met with the manner in which we are related, how did that come to your knowledge?'

'Why, my love,' answered her sister, 'your advertisement, and the lengthy accounts given in most of the daily papers, afforded me that knowledge. But it is four days since they first met my eyes. I will not attempt to describe my emotions when I perused them; you, my dearest Emily, will thoroughly understand them.'

The sisters returned their acknowledgments, and gladly availed themselves of this suggestion, and hastening to the chamber of our heroine, Mrs. Mandeville and the gentlemen made their way to the principal sitting-room.

There Henry Walton and the others soon became as familiar, and as much at home, as if they had been acquainted for many years, and in answer to questions, although he said it was his intention to leave Mrs. Walton to relate her history herself, he said that he had

been trepanned in a shameful manner, thro' the base designs of Colonel Bellingham and was hurried off to Mexico, and from thence, in a very short time, sent with the remainder of the regiment into which he had been enlisted, inland, where he was in several actions, and was wounded.

At the end of two years he returned to England, found out his parents, and discovered, that by the death of a distant relation, of whom they knew nothing, they had come into the possession of immense wealth, and, that handsome fortunes had likewise been bequeathed to himself and his sisters. Of his subsequent meeting with Amanda, in what way, and their marriage, he would say nothing, as he thought they would be more gratified to hear it in the narrative which Amanda would give them. He added, that having imbibed a great taste for the army, he had purchased a commission, and now held the rank which he had previously told him.

Mr. Mandville and his lady were extremely glad to hear of the fortunate change in the circumstances of the amiable family of the Waltons, and were quite prepossessed in favor of Henry; who evinced all the manners of a gentleman of education, notwithstanding the situation of society he had formerly moved in. He possessed intrinsic virtues that could not fail to make themselves apparent, and which must excite the admiration and esteem of all who noticed them.

The sentiments of Augustus Mandville and himself, it was soon very evident, entirely corresponded, and as soon as they beheld each other, their hearts throbbed with an ardent feeling of friendship.

In the meantime, the two sisters, when alone, gave unrestrained indulgence to their feelings, and for some time their bursts of transport took precedence of all conversation.

At length, they became more calm, and then our heroine so far conquered her emotions as to be enabled, to detail to her sister every particular that had happened to her since their last separation, and finally came to the discovery which had been made of their origin, and described the fearful confession of the guilty steward, and the fate of him and his base master.

We need not occupy the time of our readers by attempting to pourtray the feelings of horror, astonishment and grief, with which Amanda listened to this eventful narrative; and when her sister had concluded, it was several minutes before she could find power to speak.

'But Bellingham,' inquired Olivia, as a sudden thought crossed her mind—'what has become of him?'

'He is where he cannot again work any one harm,' replied Amanda.

'Ah!' ejaculated our heroine, 'what mean you?'

'He is no more,' answered Amanda.

'No more!' repeated Olivia, with astonishment.

'He has been long since dead,' said the former;—'he never recovered from the wound which he received from Chesterton.'

'Unfortunate, guilty man!' ejaculated Olivia; 'may Heaven pardon him his numerous errors.'

'He died truly penitent,' said Amanda.

'And most happy am I to hear it,' observed our heroine, fervently; 'but what has become of that most egregious fop and libertine, Sappington?'

'He also has gone "to that bourne from whence no traveller returns!"' answered Amanda.

'Mr. Sappington also dead?' ejaculated Olivia, with a shudder of horror.

'It is true,' returned Amanda; 'he was

slain in a duel about six months since. But pray wait until the morning, dearest Olivia, and you shall be informed of all the particulars.'

'Certainly, my dear Amanda,' said our heroine; 'I do not wish to put any questions that might torment your mind.'

The Mansion house of Egremond was a fine old gothic pile, and covered an immense space of ground, having a handsome park of several acres attached to it.

Harlington had resided but little in it, since he had become so unlawfully possessed of the estates of Egremond, but it had been properly attended to by his orders, and was, therefore, in excellent repair, and the park in good order.

The mansion-house was a most spacious edifice, and was celebrated for the beauty of its gothic architecture; it contained innumerable apartments, and they were all fitted up and furnished in the most costly manner.

As we have said, John Harlington, although he did not inhabit the house himself, for it reminded him too much of his crimes, had taken especial care to keep it in thorough repair, in order that he might prevent suspicion, and no person could take a survey of the interior of the mansion without feeling most lively admiration for the taste and magnificence of everything upon which the eye rested.

Its style had not been in the least altered, and it had still its lone chambers, and long winding galleries, as of old, and all the other particulars that gave it an air of feudal splendor.

It was getting late, and both the sisters feeling tired, once more committed themselves to the care of Providence, and embracing each other, they dropped off into a tranquil sleep.

It was a lovely morning, and the sisters arose, and having dressed themselves, they

agreed to ramble over the building, our heroine undertaking to show Amanda the different beauties of the fine old gothic seat of their ancestors.

With what feelings did our heroine and her sister Amanda traverse every apartment, and, as they recalled to their memory the sad fate of the authors of their being, whom they had never beheld, the melancholy with which it inspired them, found vent in tears.

'Oh, Olivia,' said Mrs. Walton, after a long pause, during which she had been giving free indulgence to her emotion; 'had those unfortunate beings, to whom we owe our existence, been living, what a delightful charm could everything we now gaze upon have possessed. But now, alas! they serve but to harrow up our feelings, and to recall more vividly to our recollection, the dreadful fate to which our father was doomed, and the premature death of our unfortunate mother.'

'Tis true, dearest Amanda,' replied her sister, 'but still, it is both sinful and useless for us now to repine. It was the will of the Almighty, and terrible, indeed, has been the retribution with which He has visited the guilty. They are all now summoned before the awful bar of eternity, where they will have to answer for the manifold crimes they have committed during their earthly career. Let us, my dear Amanda, by our future conduct, prove ourselves worthy of being the children of parents whose virtues yet live in the memory of all who knew them.'

'We will, indeed, my sweet sister,' said Amanda, conquering her feelings, and appearing almost completely tranquilized; 'fully, indeed, do I appreciate the excellence of your advice. Blessed in each other's society, and that of our dear friends, we will endeavor to forget the melancholy of the past, and look forward to the future with hope and resignation.'

'And Heaven, I trust,' exclaimed our heroine, 'after the many heavy trials we have had to endure, will not suffer our hopes to be disappointed. We shall yet live to be happy. Oh, Amanda, when we come to reflect only for a moment upon the many dangers by which we were formerly beset; how frequently our lives were threatened, and yet the Supreme Being has rescued us from all, and reinstated us in our rights, how thoroughly grateful ought we to be. We should never cease to pour forth to Heaven, our thanks for its mercy.'

Olivia had scarcely finished the last words, when a carriage was driven along the principal drive, and Mr. and Mrs. Walton with their daughter were announced. With a cry of delight, our heroine rushed forth to meet

them, and the next moment was clasped in the arms of each of them.

A few words will close this eventful narrative. Nothing but happiness now reigned at the mansion-house of Egremont, and the melancholy events of the past were forgotten in the present bliss.

In a few weeks, Augustus Mandeville confessed his passion for our heroine, and Olivia Egremont was led to the altar by the beloved of her heart.

The sisters continued to live together, having made a vow that nothing but death should separate them, and the old mansion house was soon made as cheerful as it had been in the days of the late Mr. Egremont, their father.

THE END.

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