

MATTHEW CARABY.

A NARRATIVE OF HIS ADVENTURES DURING THE AUTUMN
OF 1848, AMONG FRIENDS AND STRANGERS, IN
COUNTRY AND IN TOWN.

BY BENAULY, *psued.*

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P R E F A C E.

THERE is little to be said of the purpose and object of this book. It is not addressed to any distinct, individual end, that I know of. It does not aim to demolish any particular institution, to correct any special social evil, to aid any great reform, or to discuss any of the leading questions of the times. These are legitimate and proper objects for a story, but neither of them has been the aim of this one. My simple purpose has been to narrate one of those episodes of individual life which not unfrequently occur under the complex social relations of the present time, and in which, an unusual combination of circumstances very simple and natural in themselves, exhibits the play of human thought and feeling in a striking manner. My hope is chiefly that this narrative will give the reader wholesome recreation, but also that in a subordinate way it may do him good by introducing him to personages

from whose imaginary conduct he may derive some example or warning.

But I am well aware that if these purposes are not to some extent accomplished as one reads the book, no expression of my desire in a preface can retrieve the failure.

BENAULY

November, 1858.

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- MATTHEW CARABY.

THE SEPARATION.—A PROLOGUE.

THE shades of a December twilight gather over an utterly desolate landscape. This landscape is a landscape of Canada.

Far as the eye can see, Earth lies sullen, laden with the snows of a Canadian winter. They are the snows of 1828.

The dense clouds of an impending storm thicken in the atmosphere. The North Wind, risen among distant mountains, sweeps down, and drives across a small lake which lies in the bosom of a valley. On the South this lake stretches away and loses itself in obscurity. On the North it is bounded by a dark and desolate forest. The road which winds through this forest, skirting the shore of the lake on the North East, is now packed thick with snow drifts. The few travelers through these wilds have therefore taken course upon the solid surface of the lake itself. The runners of their vehicles have cut a track on the face of the snow-incrusted ice. This track, lightly marked, but not as yet quite obscured by the fresh falling snow, departs at a sharp angle from the easterly coast of the lake, and proceeds diagonally across,

leaving that coast further and further distant, until at length it strikes the coast upon the North, and rejoins the shore road.

The shades of twilight gather thicker over this landscape, and the snow falls steadily and rapidly.

At this time two travelers—a man in the flush of early manhood, a woman young and beautiful—emerge from the woods upon the eastern shore, and are about to drive upon the ice. Their horse steps carefully down upon it; urged by the lash he breaks into a heavy trot; and following the faint track, he takes course diagonally across the lake.

But before the trees on the right have faded out of sight in the darkening distance, the horse trips—stumbles—falls;—he screams with agony and fear;—he plunges and struggles to rise, but in vain.

The driver leaps from the sleigh to give the poor creature aid, but in vain. The horse's fore leg has been caught in a concealed crevice of the ice; he has fallen forward upon it and broken it; broken it so cruelly that the jagged end of the bone protrudes through the skin, and the blood drips down upon the snow. After a few struggles to rise, the animal lies submissive, quivering with pain, whining and moaning.

In a few words the husband—for these travelers are husband and wife—explains to his companion that he must go back on foot to seek help. He wraps the buffalo robes more closely around her. It will be but an hour, he says, before his return. One warm embrace,

one affectionate kiss, and the resolute man trudges toward the shore.

Who would dream, seeing the parting of these two, what future was before this husband, or that her name should one day come to be the terror of his life?

The twilight grows still darker over this landscape. The snow still falls.

A few moments only have passed when the attention of the wife is arrested by a cry rising in the woods upon her right;—a long-drawn, piercing cry;—a cry for help it seems, uttered bewailingly by some one lost and perishing.

Surprised—she listens for its renewal.

A moment—and it rises again upon the air.

Alarmed—she turns toward the sound; and raising her voice to the utmost she shouts in response.

A moment—and the cry is heard again.

Affrighted—she rises from her seat, disclosing now the form of a sleeping infant cradled in her arms. She steps resolutely from the sleigh. That cry is, to her ear, the voice of a husband lost in the forest, entangled in some snow drift, or fallen into some pitfall, whose only hope is in her feminine strength and love. She folds her infant closely in her arms. The falling snow has well nigh obscured the track behind the sleigh; but on the right hand the trees of the forest on the eastern shore of the lake rise in gloomy outline against the sky, a few rods distant only. And with slow and unsteady, but resolute steps, she makes her way toward the shore, whither the cry calls her.

From moment to moment, again and again, the cry rises from the forest.

Again and again that faithful voice responds, those faithful steps still turn toward the shore; until at length this woman, so resolute, so young and beautiful, gains the land, and with all her strength pushes into the dense forest, hoping to be yet in time to aid, to comfort or to die with her perishing husband.

Vain hope! Her husband is quietly pressing forward on his backward road. The cry she follows is the delusive howl of the Loup-cervier.

The darkness of a December night gathers thick over this landscape, now so utterly desolate. The snow falls noiselessly, steadily, rapidly. The wild cry dies away.

An hour passes, and the absent traveler returns, driving a fresh horse and sleigh, borrowed from some dweller in the forest. He drives down upon the ice; and now walking at his horse's head, he searches out the scarce distinguishable track, until it guides him to the spot so lately left. A dying horse!—an empty sleigh!—these are all that remain.

The terrified traveler shouts for his companion; but no voice responds. He searches the fresh snow for traces of her departure; but not a solitary footstep remains.

The voices of Nature strive to reveal to this man the secret of his loss. The tree-tops on the shore wave in the wind, beckoning him to the forest; but he understands them not. The wind draws near him and fawns upon him. It raises its inarticulate voice in his ear, and

strives to whisper to him. But he hears not, he heeds not. The moan of the North Wind has no meaning to him. The wolf in the distant forest, penitent, raises his wild cry again, and calls the distracted man to the Woods;—to the Woods!—where even now she whom he seeks lies down, weary, chilled and helpless, to die. But the wild voice speaks in a foreign tongue to the Alone. He does not comprehend it. All these voices of Nature are powerless to reach his understanding.

Only the Divine Voice can reveal to him this secret.

But the Divine Voice keeps silence.

The Alone, desolate and heart-broken, throws himself upon his knees to beseech explanation of this mystery. Prayer is an unaccustomed language to his lips; yet in this affliction he prays. His is not the prayer of a submissive heart; not the prayer of one who is wont to seek aid and guidance and support from above; but it is that inconsiderate cry which is wrung from the most thoughtless and even hardened hearts, by the sheer pressure of an overwhelming danger or affliction.

"Oh Lord! restore her to me. I beseech thee, Lord! My wife! My child! Take them not from me thus!"

Again the tree-tops beckon, and the winds sigh; the wolf raises his regretful voice again; but in vain.

The Divine Voice makes no answer.

"Oh! Good Lord! Dear, Kind Lord! If I must lose them, let me at least know where they lie. Let me see their faces once more, even in death. Let me give them at least a grave."

Again the voices of Nature struggle for utterance in vain.

The Divine Voice still keeps stern silence.

"God! If thou art not wholly cruel and pitiless. If thou dost not willfully torture thy creatures. At least destroy me also. A wild beast would not kill them and leave me alive."

And the Alone, with an inarticulate cry of agony, falls forward senseless, prostrate, in the snow.

Again the secret trembles in the tree-tops, flutters in the breeze, vibrates in the howl of the distant wolf.

But the Divine Voice still keeps silence.

Yes; and for years and years It shall keep silence;—stern, unbroken silence.

CHAPTER I.

SUDDEN WINDS BRING BAD WEATHER.

WHOSOEVER was in the little Down-Eastern village of Harsford's Mills on the 12th day of October, 1848, will bear me witness that the 12th day of October, 1848, was a very breezy day at the little Down-Eastern village of Harsford's Mills.

Harsford's Mills is a small town for houses, but it is a great town for winds. The mills of Harsford's Mills might all be windmills, and never lack a full supply of motive power, fresh from the northeast, for there is a long valley between the mountains, with steep sides, and this valley has a sharp, well-defined termination, opening out upon the village, and forming what the country people of that region call "The Gap." Down this valley, from miles and miles up country, runs a fresh and sparkling stream, much too small to be a river, much too large to be a brook, which rolls out through the Gap into the open country, and after half a mile of windings and turnings through the meadows, trips and falls over a concealed ledge, and then springs up and runs away—I do n't know where.

Right by the ledge stand those mills which give the town of Harsford's Mills its surname.

The long and winding valley down which the mill-stream flows, is the favorite playground of certain winds, some of which are potent, all of which are active, none of which are easily fatigued. They pour up and down this valley for days at a time. They run races together till they are entirely blown. When the cold winter nights come, oh, how they do roll down through the Gap, and bring the chill and tingle of the far northeast home to the very firesides of the Harsford's Millers. I have known winter winds to blow in Harsford's Mills which I verily believe to have been the spirits of departed icebergs.

So habituated are the inhabitants of Harsford's Mills to this peculiarity of the atmosphere of their village, that when, on the morning of October 12th, 1848, Mr. Richard Gault hurried past Sackett's store, on his way to business, holding his hat on his head with one hand, and keeping the lapels of his coat together as well as, with two heavy books under his arm, it was possible that he should, it never occurred to the worthy storekeeper to style the gentle zephyr which was filling the streets with dust, and slamming the blinds on half the windows within sight, a *wind*; but he only said, in response to Mr. Gault's nod of greeting:

"A sharp breeze, Mr. Gault."

Of course, it was only a breeze. It never blows a wind at Harsford's Mills as long as a man can hold a beaver hat on with his left hand.

The two heavy books which Mr. Richard Gault carried under his arm, were account books; heavy folios. They

were lettered respectively "Ledger" and "Cash Book," and each bore, in addition, the conspicuous label, "Iroquois Bank." The Iroquois bank was Mr. Gault's place of business. He was the cashier of that institution. And now, although it was nearly an hour earlier than his usual time of going to business, he was on his way—or at least to the observant eye of Mr. Sackett he seemed to be so—to the bank.

On the sidewalk, a couple of rods beyond Mr. Sackett's store, in the direction of Mr. Gault's walk, there lay an old hoop, dropped from some cask. Mr. Gault, overlooking it, either from haste or from shutting his eyes, in exclusion of the wind and the dust, too closely, stepped upon one side of this hoop in such manner as to bring the other side up with a smart blow against his knees. And this hoop did so entangle and trip up Mr. Gault that he only saved himself from falling by dropping both his books in catching at a post near by. As the account books fell from under his arm, the breeze passing at the moment snatched a loose sheet of paper which was lying between the pages of the ledger, and whisked it away behind the confused pedestrian.

Mr. Gault, not noticing his loss, rubbed his knee, picked up his books, expressed some sentiments of enlarged and liberal philanthropy respecting homeless hoops in general, and the offending individual before him in particular, and passed on. Mr. Sackett, who, from his store door, had witnessed this prank of the light-fingered breeze, called out to Mr. Gault; but the breeze instantaneously caught up his words, and hurrying along down the street, deliv-

ered them at the Post office, a few doors off, for the benefit of whom they might concern, and they may lie in the Dead Letter office to this day for aught I know. Mr. Gault hurried on, taking no benefit from Mr. Sackett's intended warning.

Mr. Sackett, actuated partly by curiosity, partly by the willingness to do the cashier a service, when he had nothing special to do for himself, stepped out to pick up the paper, with which the breeze was now waltzing down the street, about opposite the store. The breeze waited until the paper was almost within Mr. Sackett's grasp, then abandoning its partner, it seized upon the hat of the benevolent gentleman, and tore away with it, through the gutter and down a bank upon the opposite side of the street. Mr. Sackett, unable to secure both hat and paper, chose to follow his hat, which, after some running, he overtook, and picking it up and brushing it carefully with his handkerchief, he went back to his store. The breeze, meantime, catching up the paper again, danced away with it down the street, past the Post office and the village green, and finally stuck it fantastically upon a rose-bush in the corner of old Squire Harsford's front yard. Then catching up a handful of dust, and throwing it in Miss Charlotte Harsford's eyes, as she stood on the steps of her grandfather's house, the fractious breeze wheeled around, and sprang away over the house into the back yard, where Mrs. Harsford found it a few minutes afterwards endeavoring to steal one of her pocket-handkerchiefs from the clothes-line.

Miss Harsford winked the dust out of her eyes as she

best could, and casting her glance down the street, observed Mr. Matthew Caraby coming up.

Mr. Matthew Caraby is a young man of whom I am about to say so much that it would be necessary for me to introduce him formally, were it not that his face and personal bearing are the best letter of introduction you can have. In your first glance at him you discern that he is tall and well formed, prompt and graceful in his movements, that he is good looking, perhaps handsome. You read at once in his countenance, that he is "presented to your better acquaintance as a gentleman in every respect deserving of your favorable regard, and any attentions you may be disposed to show him will be cheerfully reciprocated, by ;—yours very respectfully." With his most cheerful smile, with his promptest and most spirited step, Mr. Matthew Caraby is now approaching Squire Harsford's house; and with his most courteous bow he is now bowing to Miss Charlotte Harsford.

If Miss Harsford had seen Mr. Caraby approaching before she came out upon the doorstep, it would have been her clear and well defined duty to have remained within doors in the parlor until he had absolutely passed; for when a maiden of eighteen or thereabouts comes, knowingly and intentionally, out upon a doorstep fronting on a public street, at a time when a good looking and popular young man is approaching, this, by the established canons of female conduct and its interpretation, is as much as to say to the Misses Spy and Pry and other middle aged maiden neighbors—"I desire to marry that

young man ;"—a sentiment which no young lady of well regulated feelings will express ; at least not upon front-doorsteps and in the day-time.

Or if Miss Harsford had from the doorstep seen Mr. Caraby coming in sufficient season for retreat before she was herself seen by him, it would then have been her undoubted duty to have retired within the house, and there peeping in obscurity from behind the window curtain to have awaited while he passed. For it was now but about eight o'clock A. M., and Miss Harsford was attired in a morning dress—a mere calico dress—and was not Miss Harsford at all in any strict sense of the name, but only Miss Harsford in a morning dress ; who is, as all the world that makes calls knows, a very different person. And for Miss Harsford in a morning dress, to await on a public doorstep the approach of a young unmarried man, would be to inform him, and through him to inform his young companions at large, that there existed not only the Miss Harsford whom he had met at parties, taken upon sleigh rides, and called on in summer afternoons, but another Miss Harsford ; a Miss Harsford in a calico morning dress ; a girl of no pretensions whatsoever to good looks or gentility, and only qualified to dust a room or perform like menial labor ; yet who was so mysteriously Siamese twinned to the Miss Harsford of his genteel acquaintance that whosoever should take to wife Miss Harsford the well dressed and beautiful, would find himself also wedded to Miss Harsford of calico, and—yes it might be so—curl papers. It is impossible to conceive the disastrous results which would ensue, were such infor-

mation to be given by young ladies to the young gentlemen of their acquaintance.

But Miss Harsford, either because through an ungentle education she was lacking in a high sense of feminine dignity and delicacy of conduct, or because through accident she did not see Mr. Caraby in season to avoid an interview in the ways I have described, and therefore thought it best to meet the unpleasant *contre-temps* boldly ; Miss Harsford, I say, stepped from the doorstep upon the path, and walked straightforward down the path to the gate.

"Good morning! Miss Harsford," said Mr. Caraby, repeating his bow.

"Good morning! Mr. Caraby," replied Miss Harsford. "Grandpa wanted me to ask you if you had received that plow for him. He says he saw your team go up last night."

"We have n't unpacked yet," said Mr. Caraby, "so I do n't know."

"I'm afraid your rose-bushes have done flowering," he continued, contemplating one of the bushes which grew by the gate. And Mr. Caraby thereupon plucked a half withered rose from the bush and presented it to Miss Harsford with some appropriate remark touching "The Last Rose of Summer."

"Yes," said Miss Harsford, accepting the offering and smiling in acknowledgment of the wit and graceful fitness of the quotation, "yes, I'm afraid it is the last this season ; but we had, oh you can't think how many last summer, and such beauties."

"What's this? A grafting?" inquired Mr. Caraby, picking off the truant paper from the bush, as he spoke.

"Oh, it's all the time catching some such fly-aways. I wish it was n't so near the road. It makes me laugh to see the horses. I believe the farmers around here do n't know what posts are made for. They all tie their horses to the fence; and it's the funniest thing to see them try to eat the tops of the rose-bush. They make such funny faces. Did you ever— Why! what's the matter, Mr. Caraby? That paper isn't any thing very terrible I hope."

This exclamation was called forth by a long-drawn whispered whistle of surprise,—a "wh-e-u!" issuing from the lips of Mr. Caraby.

"Eh! Oh! no,—no," responded that gentleman, emerging from an abstracted study of the loose sheet of paper in his hand, in time to save his hat from an unexpected attack by the breeze; "it's a memorandum—a— or something—a— of that sort,—I should say,—of Gault's. Perhaps he wouldn't like to lose it. It seems to be something about Bank business. Any way, I'll keep it and give it to him."

"And as to the plow," continued Mr. Caraby, folding up the paper and tucking it into his vest pocket, "I'll see. I do n't know whether it's come yet. But I'll tell you what. I shall have the team unloaded this afternoon, and I'll stop as I come down to-night and leave word."

From Squire Harsford's front gate, and his conversation with Miss Charlotte, Mr. Caraby proceeded towards

his place of business, Mr. Sackett's store. Reverting to the paper he had plucked from Miss Harsford's rose-bush, he drew it from his pocket for a fuller examination.

"Well," said he to himself, after a few moments' studying of the words and figures upon the hastily written memorandum in his hand, "if I understand this, it's a sort of a draft of a private circular to the stockholders, or some of the favored ones. 'Mem. priv. circ.' stands for 'memorandum for private circular,' I rather imagine. And the news to be circulated is that if Gault can have thirty-two hundred dollars within ten days, he can keep along till January 17th, and then the Bank must swamp any way. Gault must let me have my three hundred and sixty, and send for thirty-five hundred. That'll be better."

So soliloquizing, Mr. Caraby returned the document to his pocket, and entered the store. For certain reasons of his own he was glad to find his employer alone, and to perceive signs of a dull day, in the business sense of that expression.

"Mr. Sackett," said he, "I want to go up street a few minutes."

"Certainly," replied the proprietor of the establishment. "But be back as soon as you can. Business before pleasure, you know."

Mr. Caraby looked at his senior, who was sitting in a chair, tipped back against the counter, smoking. He thought that if Business must come before Pleasure, it would be a good while, judging from present appearances, before they could expect Pleasure to arrive.

"Matt," said Mr. Sackett, breaking the silence which permitted these reflections, "are you going by the Bank?"

"Yes," replied Caraby, "I am going *in* there."

"Going there, hey! Well, ask old Gault if he lost any bills receivable this morning. You'd have laughed if you'd seen his hat go in the wind, and one of his papers flew away. It went down street somewhere."

"Yes, I—I—"

"Well, what?"

"I'll tell him, sir."

"I called after him, but he did n't hear."

"Was it a valuable paper?"

"Well, how should I know? Like as not, but I did n't go after it."

"Well, Mr. Sackett," continued the younger man, speaking after a short pause, and in another tone, as if to change the subject, "I think I shall want to go away this afternoon, if you can spare me."

"Humph! and where now? To Enneton, as usual, I suppose?"

The young man nodded assent.

"You'll make your fortune in a hurry, you will," said Mr. Sackett, speaking with some sharpness, yet good humoredly, "unless you injure your health by over application to business in early life. You were there last week, were n't you? What do you want to go again now for? Are you aware that we've got that unpacking to do this afternoon?"

"I expect to do that before dinner."

"Pshaw! It can't be done."

"Well, but supposing I do it?"

"Well, supposing you do; what then? I've hired you to attend to my business, have n't I?"

"Yes."

I have already said that the sharpness of the store-keeper's share of this conversation was tempered with a certain good humor. The acidity of his words I can preserve in this record. But the twinkle of his eyes, and the comical twist just perceptible in the corners of his mouth, are things less easy to be transferred to these pages.

"And I pay you for it, do n't I?" continued the merchant. "Then attend to it, and do n't make a merit of doing it. What do you want to go to Enneton for?"

"I have n't hired you to attend to my business," said Matthew.

"Pretty good," said Mr. Sackett; "you had me there, Matt."

There was a short pause. Mr. Sackett employed it in industrious and energetic smoking.

"Mr. Sackett," said Mr. Caraby, "you say you pay me for attending to your business. I do attend to your business, do n't I?"

"Well, yes."

"And attend to it well, do n't I?"

"W—well, perhaps. I do n't find any fault as to that."

"So well that if I were to ask a rise of a dollar a week, to-morrow, you'd give it rather than have me quit."

"No *sir*."

"Perhaps. It's possible we shall see about that. So well, at any rate, that—"

"Oh well; you know, Matt," interrupted Mr. Sackett, "that I did n't mean to find any fault with you. You do very well. Very well, indeed. But it is n't a good plan to be running after the girls all the time. That's all."

"You would take two days to unpack that load," continued Matthew. "You know you would. If I do it to-day, and get the goods all put away this afternoon, and go at four o'clock, what's the objection? If I do two days' work in three quarters of a day, you can't talk to me about not attending to your business because I'm off the other quarter. I do twice as much about your business now as you do."

"Oh, it's all right, Matt. It's all right," interposed Mr. Sackett. "I do n't find any fault with you. You're too quick by half."

Mr. Matthew Caraby turned towards the door,—went out,—closed the door behind him,—stopped upon the threshold,—cogitated a moment,—turned back,—opened the door again,—looked in,—and said:—

"I shall go about four. Probably I'll be back to-night."

And with this he closed the door, and hastened towards the Bank.

CHAPTER II.

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WHEN THE BANK BREAKS, THE BANKER MAKES.  
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WHY there should be a Bank at Harsford's Mills, passed the comprehension of many to whom its brick front and its one iron shutter were sights of every day familiarity. The institution, however, existed; and the discussion which its establishment had caused among the citizens having once subsided, the majority of them forgot all about it.

Internally, the Iroquois Bank, meaning now the building so named, presented the appearance of a cold room,—a sort of financial ice-house,—floored with square bricks, and divided by a counter, the two divisions being balanced by a large stove on the one side, over against a small safe on the other. On one end of the counter was a high desk, on the outer edge of which was a high railing, which served to keep nobody from stealing nothing. In the window were a small pair of specie scales. And when any one in town had a piece of suspicious coin to be tested, the fact becoming noised abroad, there was always within the room a small crowd of privileged persons leaning over the cashier's shoulders, and counseling him in his attempts to test the doubted coins, and outside upon the sidewalk a large crowd of the non-priv-

ileged, looking in at the window, and deeply impressed with the wisdom of the old cashier. He, meanwhile, with his spectacles on the end of his nose, tried the various weights which pertained to his apparatus, and finally "*hefted*" the coin in his hands, to satisfy himself of the accuracy of his standard.

These and similar occasions were the only ones which brought up a throng to the Bank.

Mr. Gault was this morning in a state of considerable anxiety. He was by no means the impassable old man that he usually seemed. He was engaged in anxious search for something. He turned rapidly over the leaves of his great account books. He lifted them up. He looked under them. He scrutinized the floor. He peered under the desk. Now he would dive to the bottom of every pocket, bringing out every thing except the article sought for. Now he would rummage among the papers in his desk, mixing them up inextricably, pulling open drawers in nervous haste, and shutting them up again half examined. Now he would shuffle the papers in his pocket-book, examining them one by one from beginning to end, and then beginning anew, and going over the same task again. In the midst of such employments, on rising from the third search which he had made in the little iron safe, and turning towards the high desk again, he uttered an exclamation,

"Well, young man!"

The reader will no doubt suppose from this language that Mr. Gault has in some way become possessed of the suspicion of a thievishly-disposed boy secreted in some

hiding-place within the apartment, with intent to possess himself surreptitiously of those pecuniary treasures which the very existence of a Bank necessarily presupposes;—that he has discovered this individual concealed in the very safe;—and that it is to him that he now addresses these words of combined inquiry and reproof. If Mr. Gault were an elderly lady, and particularly if he were an unmarried lady, and the apartments of the Iroquois Bank were a suite of chambers in some strange hotel, and nine o'clock in the morning were nine o'clock at night, the notion of searching for a concealed man in a safe, or a stand-up desk, or even in a pocket-book,—so corpulent a pocket-book as Mr. Gault's,—would not be untrue to nature. But under the circumstances it is clearly inadmissible. As the sagacious reader will already have surmised, Mr. Gault's exclamation was addressed to none other than Mr. Caraby, who had entered a moment before, unnoticed by the cashier, and now stood warming his back by the glowing Franklin stove.

"How do you do, sir?" said Mr. Caraby, nodding politely in response to the searching glance bent upon him by the old cashier. "A cool morning."

Mr. Gault muttered somewhat to the effect that the coolness of the weather formed no reason why Mr. Caraby should come to warm himself at the stove of the Iroquois Bank, but made no other answer to the salutation. Taking a pen from behind his ear, he assumed the appearance of a diligent accountant.

"What's the matter?" asked Mr. Caraby. "Lost any thing?"

Mr. Gault made no reply. It does not comport with the dignity of a Bank officer to answer questions.

"Have you lost any thing?"

"No sir!" said Mr. Gault.

"Oh!" said Matthew. "Because, coming up this morning, I found a paper which I supposed belonged to you."

Mr. Gault dropped the appearance of a diligent accountant, and looked up at his visitor.

"It had no address or title," continued the young man, "but as it appeared to be a memorandum of the affairs of the ——"

"Won't you shut the door?" interrupted Mr. Gault. "It really is quite cool," he added, explanatorily, and also, it would seem, by way of polite confirmation of Mr. Caraby's remark some moments previous.

Mr. Caraby complied.

"—— of the condition of the Bank affairs," he continued, "I judged that it was a private ——"

"Won't you walk round and take a seat, Mr. Caraby?" interrupted the cashier.

"—— that it was a private document, and perhaps one of some importance," added Mr. Caraby, in conclusion of his sentence, as he walked around within the counter.

Behind the counter the cashier received him with distinction, and begged him to be seated.

Mr. Caraby complied.

"Now you speak of it, sir," said the old gentleman, after some hesitation, "I have lost a paper, and a very

important one, too;—that is to say, a mere memorandum I mean, nothing more."

"Well, sir, I suppose I have found it."

"Ah! and you've read it, eh! Well, sir, I am quite surprised that a young man of your honesty, as I supposed, should peer into private papers. It is not creditable. I had not expected it. I am quite surprised."

"Your surprise is quite unnecessary," said the young man. "If I had not read it I should n't have known it's owner. It might have fallen into other hands. I have come to return it. You will feel easier when I assure you that no one else has seen it."

"Quite right. Quite right, sir," said the cashier, perceiving that his irritation had carried him too far, and reflecting now for the first time that something might depend upon the good will of the young man. "I am very glad it fell into your hands and no other. And although it is a mere memorandum, and of no value, yet I am very happy to receive it again from you."

And the cashier extended an expectant hand towards Mr. Caraby.

"One moment, sir," said Mr. Caraby, looking down at the paper in his hand in a manner calculated at once to stimulate and to disappoint the expectations of the cashier's right hand, "there is one thing I should like to say first. And at the outset let me say that I do not ask for any further information. I do not ask you to confirm my conjectures. And I have no intention of using what I have learned, to your prejudice."

"My dear sir," said Mr. Gault, "I beseech you not to

say any thing about it. It is a great misfortune, but we have met with some severe losses in exchange, and I am sure it will be perfectly confidential if I say to you that we may be temporarily embarrassed. But it will only be temporary, unless the public get frightened, and if we have a run we may have trouble. That's all."

"Excuse me, sir," interrupted his visitor. "I am going to return your memorandum, and to say not a word of my ideas on the subject to any body. But I make this promise on two conditions. The first is, I should like to draw now what balance I have in the Bank."

"But," said the cashier, "that's on interest, and at five days."

"Very true," said Mr. Caraby, in response to the interruption; "but I expect you will give it to me now. The other is, that it is understood that I shall advise one of my friends to sell out his stock."

"I do not consider," said the cashier, "that such a course on your part is justifiable. Accident places the Bank in your power, and it is not honorable in you to take advantage of it."

"On the contrary," returned the other, "accident places the Bank, as you say, in my power,—I do n't know in what way, or how far,—and I come to restore what you call the accident, and to assure you that if you agree, the knowledge which has come to me shall go no further."

"How much is your deposit?" asked the cashier.

"Three hundred and sixty something, and interest, I believe, sir."

"And who do you intend to give to understand that the Bank will—is—?"

"Nobody. I expect you will pay me my deposit; and the only thing I shall say about the Bank will be to say to one person, 'I advise you to sell your stock in the Iroquois Bank.'"

The cashier rose and went to his big ledger; figured on a scrap of paper and returned, saying, as he handed the memorandum of his calculation to his visitor for inspection, "three hundred sixty-seven forty-nine, I make it."

"Three sixty-seven fifty, *I* make it," replied the other, after a short examination of the figures. "There's one to carry that you overlooked; that makes the difference."

"Well," said the cashier, "you're right. But I do n't count the mills. It is n't my fashion."

"It is n't *my* fashion," retorted the young man, "it's the *right* way. There's only one right way to do business, and that is the exact way. At least that's my faith."

"That's so, I suppose," said the cashier. "Well, I will pay that next week."

"I expect it to-day," returned the young man, briefly.

"Mr. Caraby," said the cashier, "I understand you to say, that if I settle your little account, you are not to mention this matter until the last of next week."

"Mr. Gault," replied the visitor, "I have assured you once, I shall say nothing about it, next week or any other time, until it is otherwise made public, except to

advise one friend as I have said; and that I shall do at the first possible opportunity."

"Well," said the cashier, "I will settle your account now, and I rely on your word. Time, Mr. Caraby, is of great importance to me—to the Bank I mean."

With these words Mr. Gault went to the drawer in the desk, and after some fumbling, and much whispered counting, he brought a little file of bills and a bright half dollar to Mr. Caraby.

"Thank you, Mr. Gault," said he, smiling, but not extending his hand to receive the money; "are those Iroquois bills?"

"Yes," said the cashier, "they're the new issue."

"Ah! very handsome bills, but—"

"Perhaps you'd prefer the old. They are better known."

"Oh! I don't doubt these are quite as good as the old. But I am sorry to have given you the trouble. I should just as lief have gold. It's not a large amount, and it won't be heavy."

"Oh! well, Mr. Caraby, you will take part bills, you will have something to pay out in the next few days, and—"

"Mr. Gault," returned Mr. Caraby, "I don't say any thing about the condition of the Bank, because you assure me that this embarrassment is only temporary, and every thing will be right again soon. If so, you ought to have a fair chance. But meantime I don't mean to take any of your money, much less pass it."

The cashier replaced the bills in the drawer, and after resorting to the safe, counted thirty-eight gold pieces into the hand of Mr. Caraby, whereupon that gentleman produced a little pass-book, and the proper entries were therein made, to balance the account.

With the amount thus paid him safely deposited in his pocket, Mr. Caraby handed the lost memorandum to the cashier, bade him good morning, bowed, and left the room.

Five minutes afterwards Mr. Sackett inquired of Mr. Caraby what Mr. Gault said about his paper.

"Oh, he has got it again," replied Caraby. "Some body found it in the road, and brought it back to him this morning."

What further conversation thereupon ensued between Mr. Caraby and his employer,—what progress and accomplishment the younger man attained that day in the labor of unpacking the new stock,—whether Esquire Harsford's plow came to light in the course of his researches or not,—whether Business arrived at Sackett's store in good season, and Pleasure followed in due course of time,—whether Mr. Gault's operations on behalf of the Iroquois Bank that day, were profitable to the stockholders, or to himself,—whether Matthew fulfilled his promise of calling at the Harsford homestead on his return,—and whether he saw Miss Charlotte—these are matters of which I shall not now speak. It is quite enough to say that at four o'clock or thereabouts of that afternoon, Mr. Caraby drove up to the store, and rein-

ing in his horse opposite the door, called out to Mr. Sackett.

"Well," said Mr. Sackett, coming to the door.

"I'm off," said the young man. "I sha'n't be back to-night. The key is in the cash drawer."

And he touched the horse gently with his whip, and was off on the road to Enneton.

The road lay right up the Gap. It was the very road down which the autumnal breeze had been a brisk traveler all the morning. Matthew had anticipated a sturdy contest with it; but it quite died down in the afternoon, and he had not gone half a mile before he threw off his overcoat. He half regretted not to meet it. He liked to face its opposition. His face always glowed and his smile brightened under the stimulus of such futile hostility.

The wind was not the only thing in whose ineffectual opposition he took pleasure. He always worked better against a current. Matthew was one of those men who, like clipper-schooners, sail better on a wind than dead before it. If obstacles did not stop him they were sure to expedite him. As it was, he laid off his overcoat—pocketed the gloves which—unsophisticated youth—he had provided for the sake of comfort and not for appearances, and addressed himself to a brisker speed by way of making an artificial breeze.

The season was fast advancing. The face of the country was grown sober. Nature was turning Quaker. She was going into drab garments and was dropping carelessly on every hand the gay colors she had until so lately worn. The valleys alone retained any brilliancy,

and that only a fading fringe of foliage along the stream edges. The mountains which lifted the Harsford horizon so high, had become monochromatic pictures of desolate grandeur. Their gray and bald heads, long time revealing such vast phrenological developments of Granite, now stripped of their hoods and vails of verdure, stood up larger and more rugged than ever. And far up upon their tops among the very rocks, standing sharp and stiff against the sky, bristled the weather-whitened, sapless stems of ancient pines. The mountains near at hand looked cold and magnificently desolate. Those far before him seemed to Matthew to be soft-hued and warm under the slanting western sunlight, and in the blue-and-purple-colored distance. So Matthew with the assistance of Mr. Sackett's horse made speed towards them.

I never could learn, with accuracy, how far it was from Harsford's Mills to Enneton. The teamsters call it twenty-five miles; the stage-driver says it is twenty-two; the aged guide-boards indicate that the ancestral selectmen of the town considered it twenty-three. Mr. Caraby justified driving there in two hours and a half by calling it twenty.

But then Mr. Caraby usually drove Mr. Sackett's horse.

I do not suppose that Mr. Sackett's horse was in the confidence of Mr. Caraby, respecting the nature of the errand which required such haste; for although Matthew took frequent occasion to speak to him, the appeals he made were not exactly to the sympathies of that friendly animal. But I have no doubt that if Mr. Sackett's horse

had known sentimentally what it was that he was carrying to the house of Mr. Reuben Mayes, that intelligent animal would have laughed a horse-laugh to think how Matthew Caraby drove,—for all the world like a sporting gentleman,—or a physician on an errand of life and death,—or a city undertaker driving home from a funeral.

Moreover if Mr. Sackett's horse had known the errand,—if he had known what he was going for—what he was to bring back; if he had only known——

But then he did not know.

Nor, yet, do you.

CHAPTER III.

HARDLY BRED IS NOT ALWAYS ILL BRED.

THE sagacious reader, who doubtless anticipates that Mr. Caraby is destined to bear an important part in this history, may feel some desire to learn, by way of preliminary, some of the previous events of his life. Twenty years is not, in the early chapters of a history, a long period; and a few paragraphs will satisfy the sagacious reader's curiosity.

THE EARLY LIFE OF MATTHEW CARABY.

Matthew Caraby was born of moderately respectable parents, in the year 1827.

His father was living until quite lately. I wish he had lived to read this chapter. His mother died while Matthew was yet too young to retain any very vivid personal recollections of her. Upon her death, Matthew, with two brothers older than himself, but separated, as to their birthdays, by comparatively short periods, together with one sister, an equal degree younger than himself, composed the surviving family of his father.

Mr. Caraby the elder, being a man of deep affections and very remarkable warmth of heart, was desirous to

pay, with cordiality, to his departed spouse, the compliment implied in a prompt and public acknowledgment that it was not good for man to be alone, and that it was particularly bad for a Caraby so to be. The affection which he bore his wife, and which, during the heyday of her life and health, had burned modestly within his own bosom, never displaying itself obtrusively in the public gaze, nor very often thrusting itself even upon his wife's attention, now in the darkness and sorrow of his bereavement, rose up as the flame of true affection always does,—we have it upon the authority of the motto candles,—with a clear, powerful warmth and light. And it now appeared, the wick of Mr. Caraby's heart,—for he had a wicked heart, although he was a moderately respectable man,—being, as it were, picked up by the sharp thrust of affliction, that his first wife had become to him so much a part of himself, that it was essential to his existence to replace her loss immediately. Still he was, in the refreshed and rekindled warmth of parental affection, unwilling to bring his four children under the authority—so generally supposed to be tyrannical—of a step-mother. In this dilemma he contrived, by a generous sacrifice of his own tenderest feelings, and, in some degree, of his pecuniary interests, to consult the welfare of all dependent upon him, as well as the memory of his decidedly better half.

In heaviness of heart, and with great tenderness of parental feeling, he called in, separately and successively, several of his nearest neighbors, and laid his

case before them; that is to say, a part of his case before each one of them. But, after canvassing the village, and his whole list of available friends, he could complete his arrangements for the disposal of only half of his jewels; for he found that the supply of jewels of that description was greater than the demand, and, in accordance with the great law of trade, the market was nearly closed against him.

Therefore, after he had, with much rending of the fondest ties of his heart, and at some expense to his pocket, disposed of:—

Charles, aged fifteen, as apprentice to a neighboring blacksmith; and,

George Washington, aged twelve, name changed for the purpose to Arthur Wellington, sent per packet, at a considerable expense of passage money, as a gift to a maternal grandfather, a sturdy old Englishman residing near London,

There still remained to be provided for, Matthew, aged nine, and Roselle, aged six.

Roselle was a very expensive child, her father said, for she was sickly, and required much medical attendance and nursing. He finally, however, succeeded in securing an excellent place for her and her brother Matthew, by engaging board for them in the family of Mrs. Bridget McCartney, a lady of Irish extraction, resident in the precincts of a neighboring town. Her own large family was undoubtedly a guarantee of a rich experience in the training of children. Under her roof Master Matthew would be in no danger of forming those

expensive habits which are so pernicious to a young man who, in future life, must rely upon himself. And there was good reason to trust, judging from the countenances of her intended foster brothers and sisters, that little Roselle would enjoy freely the wholesome liberty of playing in the dirt.

Having consummated these most considerate domestic arrangements, Mr. Caraby gathered together such of his effects as remained to him after discharging the large advances required to carry them into effect, and paying such of his debts as the circumstances of the case seemed to render it necessary that he should pay, and bidding adieu to his little ones, he unostentatiously withdrew himself from the home of his happiness, and from the community where his tenderest feelings centered, and went out West. In a young and thriving city near the Lakes he devoted the energies of his lacerated mind to business, and cleared forty thousand dollars in the first six months, by marrying a wealthy spinster to whom the delicacy of his gentlemanly attentions, and the warmth of his share of the tenderest feelings of our nature, endeared him upon short acquaintance.

Thus at least Rumor reported concerning him, for out of the considerate tenderness of his paternal feelings he scrupulously forbore to communicate to his children any intelligence of himself, or of their new but unknown mother.

The boys grew up thus separated from each other, and were therefore fortunately prevented from falling into any of those bickerings and childish quarrels which

are sure to mar the happiness of brothers who are brought up together. The sequel of their life therefore forms an encouraging illustration of the favorite theory of modern educational philosophers.

In course of time, Charles, the blacksmith's apprentice, finding that his employer spent more time in teaching him how to bear blows than how to give them, desperately resolved to follow the example of his father, and accordingly, one moonlight night, he unobtrusively and unostentatiously withdrew himself from the home of his childhood, and disappeared from the community where his tenderest feelings might have been supposed to center; if indeed we may so far contravene the public opinion of that community as to imagine that such a bad boy possessed any of those tender feelings which characterize respectable humanity.

From the time of this disappearance, Master Charles was no more heard of in the town except in the conversation of remonstrating parents and teachers, who instinctively represented him to the remaining youth of the village as going to and fro in the earth (in his small way), hungry, and seeking what he might devour.

As for Master Matthew, under the maternal supervision of the amiable Mrs. McCartney, and under the keen and noble emulation and high-spirited rivalry that united him to the junior McCartneys, he flourished and was happy—of course. The matron's system of government was a very simple and beautiful application of two of the fundamental doctrines of political philosophy: first, "Might makes Right;" second, "To the Victors

belong the Spoils." These two principles formed an exceedingly convenient system, not only because they were easy to enforce when their operation required the assistance of parental monitions, but also because they were maxims which were readily appreciated by those of the family who were old enough to see the necessity and the admirable utility of such system, and who were stout enough to aid the mother in carrying them into effect.

As respected his father, Matthew observed outwardly a circumspect silence; inwardly he entertained for him a profound and filial contempt. Towards his mother, of whom his recollection was very vague, and of whose former existence he was assured more by the philosophical reflection that he must once have had a mother, than otherwise,—towards her he was simply indifferent; except that he felt occasionally, in times of solitude and weariness of life, a half grudge against her for having brought him into the world; such a world as it was to him.

The world of a child embraces merely its home, its associates, and the simple scenes which its observation can grasp. Beyond this, it knows no more of the world than perhaps to say, by the dictation of the school geographies, that it is "an oblate spheroid, flattened at the poles." Of the great world of life, with its whirl of excitements, temptations, joys and sorrows, with its vast variety of happy homes and miserable homelessnesses, with its immense ebb and flow of common human hope and feeling, and its powerless little eddies of individual

sentiment and opinion, with its millions of foot-holds for human effort and usefulness, the child knows nothing. His personal experience of the developments of human nature immediately around him is the world, to him.

Thus Matthew's world was at first composed of a hard bed in a dark garret, coarse and stinted food, the irascible supervision of Mrs. McCartney, and the domineering companionship of the eight juvenile McCartneys. His only happiness was the care he felt for his sister, and her sympathy for him.

The children did not long remain in this poor shelter. Their stay, however, was too long. While kindness might cure it, misery often escapes notice. It is not until too late, when affliction has become hopeless, that it gains sufficient importance to be cared for. Little Roselle, with her brother, was removed from the rude home of Mrs. McCartney when the advanced progress of scarlet fever seemed about to conquer her life. Under the nursing of the charitable widow who had taken the children to her own home, Roselle gradually became convalescent; but returning strength did not bring joy to her heart, for her beautiful eyes were filled with darkness, and the visible world was thenceforward but a reminiscence in her mind. Thereafter the children were inseparable, and their orphanage seemed now complete, for if Matthew was a half orphan, certainly Roselle was the other half.

Educated by these experiences Matthew had become at twelve years old, a diminutive young man; long-headed, sober and calculating. This new affliction was

almost too much for his philosophy. It made his already comfortless world darker than ever to his thoughts; though one who saw him leading his sister to and fro in the village or guarding her through such gentle sports as she could venture to join, might well have thought that notwithstanding all the untoward circumstances of his life, there was hope for the full growth and development of his heart, so long as Roselle depended upon him.

Roselle's blindness opened a new problem to Matthew's mind. Before, he had wondered how they should live. Vague plans of earning his own livelihood and maintaining his sister, had floated in his mind. Now came the wonder if her sight could be restored. And when the village physician shook his head at the question, and said, sadly smiling down upon his little interrogator—"No, my boy, I am afraid it is a hopeless case"—little Matthew looked up to him, venerable and gray in wisdom as he seemed, with half-formed doubts whether there might not be in some great city, doctors wiser, more learned, more skillful, who knew better and could do more than Dr. Cram. All such thoughts, however, Matthew preserved as his private property. Under the pressure of his many solitudes, he accumulated much property of this kind, beginning in wonderings which gradually became positive ideas, which in turn evolved vague hopes and crude and fragmentary plans, out of which from time to time he framed some impracticable resolution.

Matthew was naturally cordial, open-hearted, generous, trustful, sympathetic; but the untoward circumstances of

his early life checked somewhat the development of these qualities, while they could not wholly conquer them. Everybody would have liked him if it had not been that he did not like everybody. The more his world enlarged the less faith he had in it; and he came at length, long before he was enough of a thinker to entertain an intellectual comprehension of the distinction, to calculate almost wholly on people's interested motives, and not at all upon their generous impulses. He began instinctively to attach himself to the interests of those around him, and to shrink from appealing in any way to their generosity or sympathy.

He knew he was not very old, and was conscious that he did not know a great deal; but at thirteen he believed himself big enough to work, and resolved to get a place in a store and earn his living. It was partly bashfulness perhaps, but it was also in great part his little headful of knowledge of human nature that counseled the course he took. For several weeks, he spent all the time he could spare from Roselle in visiting the village stores. At first he aspired only to keep out of the way, and to listen and look on, to all that was said and done. He grew familiar with the various establishments of trade, and their different branches of business, and choosing from among them one or two which best suited him, he began in little and unostentatious ways to make himself useful to the proprietors and those who dealt with them.

It was not a long time before his disposition to be useful was approvingly noticed by the frequenters of these places, nor a much longer time before he received an offer

from the landlord of the Cromwell House, the hotel in the village, of an engagement as errand boy to that establishment for public entertainment. That offer he accepted, and from that position, and a salary of five dollars per month and found, his rise was gradual but steady.

To trace in detail Matthew's progress during these years of his life, does not fall within the intended scope of this narrative. But by way of instance or sample of the sort of character which he possessed and which qualified him for the rise in life which he accomplished, it may be well to mention an incident of the 11th day of January, 1841.

The 11th day of January, 1841, followed very closely that upon which Matthew entered upon his duties at the Cromwell House; and it was upon that day that Matthew was introduced to a long row of boots and shoes collected from the various chamber-doors of the hotel, and directed to "black 'em."

"To what, sir?"

"*Black 'em.*"

What operation it was to black boots and shoes Matthew knew not, and could not guess. There was a brush upon a bench near by, and a round tin box;—but what were they for? His own well-worn cow-skins were innocent of any such refinements. In the winter weather of the years he passed in the bosom of Mrs. McCartney's family, he had been sometimes permitted to *grease* his boots, as a special preservative of their fabrics; but he was shrewd enough to feel very sure that that was not a pro-

cess through which the guests of the Cromwell House would desire that the garments of their feet should pass. He was however too shrewd to disclose his ignorance to his employer, so with the utmost alacrity he undertook the task. His first step was to go in search of John, the colored man employed as cook to the establishment. John he found occupied in some trifling labors in the kitchen.

"John," said he, "I'll bet you a fo' pence you can't black a boot as quick as I can."

"Done," said John, with great promptness, dropping his work, and rolling up his sleeves in preparation for a trial of skill. "Whar 's yer boot?"

"Out on the back porch," said Matthew. "Come along as soon as you're a mind to."

"I'm on hand," said John, and he followed Matthew to the back porch.

"You begin," said Matthew.

And he selected, as the subjects of the experiment, the muddiest pair of boots in the row.

John mixed a modicum of blacking upon the bench, with all the air of conscious skill that was ever exhibited by a master artist blending upon his pallet the colors with which he was about to depict some divine conception.

A new light dawned upon Matthew's mind.

John seized a boot with one hand, and a brush with the other, and in less than three minutes of vigorous brushing the boot was a black looking-glass.

"I give up beat, John," said Matthew, drawing a

fo' pence from his pocket. "Here's your fo' pence. I can't quite come up to that."

The victorious John smiled a smile of conquest, pocketed the fourpence, and becoming conscious that he would not receive the commendations of his employer, if he were caught neglecting his proper duties, to win fourpences of Matthew at the game of boot blacks, hurried back to his work in the kitchen.

Matthew, waiting till his exemplar was quite out of sight, commenced upon the other boot a laborious imitation of John's manipulations. After a tedious half hour of scrubbing, the subject of his efforts exhibited a dull, leaden polish with which he was forced to be content. He carried the boots up to the room of their proprietor, and putting John's boot foremost, was fortunate enough to receive back his fourpence.

The fourpence thus repaid was invested in the purchase of a tin Savings Bank, in which the gratuities thereafter received in the conduct of the boot and shoe department, were regularly deposited. At the end of six months there was a run upon the bank by the depositor, the entire deposits were withdrawn, and their aggregate amount proved to be somewhat over twenty dollars.

This sum put out at interest and increased by subsequent additions, formed the nucleus of that which Mr. Caraby subsequently deposited in the Iroquois Bank, and which was now about to be the subject of another run.

For some years Matthew remained in the employ of

the landlord of the Cromwell House; meanwhile steadily enlarging his acquaintance with both men and things, and winning good opinions for his capacity and fidelity from all who had to do with him. Time rolling on, at length opened the way for him to leave the Cromwell House and connect himself with the academy of the village, the preceptor of which interested himself in Matthew as a lad who deserved encouragement, and procured him a place where he could earn his board by services rendered out of school hours, while he himself gave him clothing and tuition for his aid and assistance about the school; not as a teacher, for Matthew had as yet hardly got upon the threshold of learning, and neither his taste nor his attainments ever qualified him well for usefulness in that character; but in those numerous services which the conduct of a large school requires. In this position Matthew remained for a year or two longer, making rapid improvement in learning, and acquiring also growth and development of character. The death of the preceptor, however, brought his privilege of free school attendance to a close, and he now began to look about for a place wherein he could render a more valuable service, and command a better pecuniary reward; to the end that he might not only be able to take care of himself, but also to render a more substantial aid to his young and almost helpless sister. He was well known not only in the village where he had thus grown up, but also, to a considerable extent, in the neighboring towns. He had made himself a general favorite among the business men of the region round

about, and whoever had had need at that time of the services of a young man in any capacity for which Matthew was qualified, would have thought it a good thing to have secured the services of Matthew Caraby.

Just at the time when Matthew was thus looking out for a place, Mr. Japhet Sackett, a leading merchant of Harsford's Mills, was looking around for a clerk. Accordingly, a bargain was struck, and Matthew transferred himself and his services from the academy to the establishment where we find him at the commencement of this history; the store of—"JAPHET SACKETT. DRY GOODS & GROCERIES. AGRICULTURAL PRODUCE TAKEN IN EXCHANGE."

CHAPTER IV.

EASY KINDLED, HARDLY QUENCHED.

A RIDE of two hours and a half brought Matthew Caraby to the precincts of Enneton.

Enneton was a village not much larger than Harsford's Mills. It had indeed two churches, while Harsford's Mills had but one, but then it had no Bank. Then again it could boast of no Mills; but on the other hand it possessed what Harsford's Mills never will,—a jail and a court-house. For Enneton was the county town. And this fact gave it a geographical importance which Harsford's Mills did not possess. I think indeed you will not find Harsford's Mills down on any ordinary map. It may be put down now-a-days, but the school atlases, such as we used to study at the Bulwinkle Academy when I was a boy, wholly ignored it,—Gap, Churches, Mills, Bank, Sackett's Store and all. Whereas I lost my place in the geography class in the Bulwinkle Academy, one day, for inability to state the location, principal business, and population of Enneton conformably to the account thereof given by the Geography.

The reader, however, is chiefly interested in Enneton considered as the residence of Miss Arabella Mayes.

Miss Arabella Mayes was the only daughter of Reuben

Mayes, commonly called "Squire Mayes." The Mayes homestead was a fine old farm-house, surrounded by far finer and older trees, standing back at quite a remove from the road, a half mile or so from the heart of the village. The broad greensward before the house, studded with large trees, was a delightful play-ground in the summer, and it was really a luxury to drive up through the great elms to the door of the house.

To the door? There were two doors. One a front door of state and ceremony, grim and cold; about the sort of door you would want to open in case of a funeral, to let the procession out by; with a vineless trellis going up on one side, and coming down on the other, and looking about as much like an arbor as a skeleton does like a statue; and this was the door which was opened when the Maternal Association met at Squire Mayes'. The other, a side door, of ease and freedom and domestic comfort; warm and sunny; just the kind of door for a Newfoundland dog to lie on the step of, and go to sleep in the sunshine. This door was on the Southerly side of the house, and opened out upon a piazza. And here in front of the piazza was no skeleton trellis, but a row of hop-poles, and hop-vines clinging to them, thick and full, and intertwining. Turning dry and golden they now were, but there was a reminiscence of summer life and verdure about them yet. The door upon the piazza stood invitingly open; and there was the Newfoundland dog himself, not sleeping on the door-step indeed, but trotting round the corner of the house to see whose wheels these were he heard rolling up to the door. Who

would go in at a Maternal Association front door, when such access as this to his friend's house stood open before him? Not I.

Nor Matthew Caraby.

Matthew accordingly drove up to the corner of the piazza; and throwing the reins carelessly over his horse's back, he entered familiarly at the piazza door, and stepped, without ceremony, into the family sitting room.

If Mr. Caraby had hoped to find a young lady in this apartment, he was disappointed. The only occupant of the room was a lady quite advanced in years, who sat in a rocking chair at the window, knitting. He greeted her as Mrs. Mayes.

"How do you do, Mr. Caraby?" said the old lady, extending her hand to him, without rising. "What a pleasant day it is, isn't it? Have you just come over from Harsford's Mills? And how do they all do there?"

Matthew said "Very well" at the beginning and repeated it at the end of this sentence, and nodded at the middle; meanwhile looking around the room.

"Where is Mr. Mayes?" he asked.

"Oh, he's gone up the river. He went yesterday. He had some business there. You know my son has a great deal to do. His business takes him off a great deal. I do n't expect him back this week much, because when he went away he said—"

"Is Arabella at home?" interrupted Matthew, with most polite petulance, his glances of inquiry being quite disregarded by the loquacious old lady.

"—that he might not be back till Monday, and when

he says he *may* not be, we all know that he *won't* be for certain, if he can help it. He got a letter from New York, Saturday, and started off yesterday, and did n't say where he was going, or what for, and I think that's kind of strange. But he'll have nice weather, beautiful weather, if it holds on like this, and it will, I guess."

"Is n't Arabella at home? Where is she?"

"Why, la me, sure enough! Why! Did n't I tell you about Arabel? I might have known you came to see her," said the old lady, with sly humor, "because, you know, you always do come to see her. It reminds me how Reuben's father used to come over to our house when I was a girl;—"

"Ho," thought Matthew, with some impatience, "I never heard Grandma run on in this way before. I suppose Arabel must be at work in the kitchen, and Grandma thinks she is n't dressed up enough to come in."

"—and how bashful I was, and—But Matthew! where are you going?"

Matthew had his hand upon the latch of the kitchen door.

"Only out to see if I can find Arabel," said he.

"Why, I was just a saying," said the old lady, "when you interrupted me, that she'll be in very soon. She's gone out, I believe, this afternoon. But she'll be back soon."

And the old lady rose, and looked out of the window down the road.

The sun was near to setting. Its horizontal rays came streaming across the landscape, and cast a warm, though

sobered light, upon the changing foliage of the hill-sides.

"Has she gone away any where in particular?" asked Matthew.

"Oh, she can't have gone far," said the old lady, apologetically. "She'll be at home very soon. It was so pleasant she thought she'd take a walk. I told her she'd better not go, but it was such beautiful weather she thought she'd go a little way."

"Which way did she go?" asked Matthew. "I think I'll ride down and meet her."

"I do n't know," said the old lady, turning the other way, and looking up the road. "I did n't see which way she went. It's too bad, now. She'll be so sorry. I told her she'd better not go. But she'll be in soon, oh! very soon."

It was a somewhat suspicious manner, the manner in which the old lady responded to Matthew's inquiries. There was so much cordiality and frankness in the air with which she told him nothing at all; so elaborate an ignorance respecting Miss Arabella's movements; and so evident a disposition to detain Matthew in conversation with the elder lady until the younger should return; that the young man felt three-quarters satisfied that there was something to be discovered, and two-thirds convinced he should not like it when he found it out. He said he would go out and perhaps ride down and see if he could meet her.

Matthew left the room as he had entered it, and stood upon the porch again; this time in some uncertainty.

Drive twenty miles to see a young lady,—find her gone out a-walking,—be desperately anxious to see her,—and undertake to go and meet her without knowing whether to go North, East, South, or West. There's a recipe for irresoluteness for you. A dog can trace his master with the utmost promptness, but a lover shall not be able, once in a hundred times, to find his mistress. Which leads me to believe that the affections of young gentlemen are not in general as strong as those of dogs.

Matthew felt the difficulty, though he might probably have dissented from the philosophical explanation. He paced irresolutely up and down the piazza. Continued reflection upon his disappointment at finding his friend absent, irritated his feelings into a state of disquiet which predisposed him to impatience and dissatisfaction.

From dwelling upon his present dissatisfaction, his thoughts reverted to the Bank. He reflected upon the probability of its failure,—remembered with a momentary complacency his little deposit so fortunately rescued,—then wondered whether Mr. Mayes would be away too long to have opportunity to sell his stock in time,—then queried whether he could not use the caution with some one else;—who?—Mr. Sackett?—he owned no stock;—Miss Harsford's father?—people said he owned half the Bank;—Matthew did not know him;—he lived off in New York,—what use to tell him?—better leave word with Arabel for her father when he got back, and let it take its chance;—and then went on to recollect how indignantly he had refused that morning to pass off any Iroquois bills,—and to reflect how diligently he was

now trying to find some one whom he could advise to sell bad stock,—which was a pretty piece of inconsistency, wasn't it?—and besides,—

Just at this point in his reverie a bare-headed, golden-haired little boy came trotting round the corner of the house, in hot pursuit of the Newfoundland dog herein-mentioned, and brandishing one of those little switch canes of whalebone which are so popular among the scions of American aristocracy. Seeing Matthew, the child slackened his pace, hesitated, stopped.

"Ah! Willie," said Matthew. "How do you do? Do n't you know me?"

Willie gave a short laugh in reply, but did not move.

"I do n't believe," said Matthew, sitting down upon the step of the piazza, "that you can guess my name in three guesses."

"Mattu," said the boy; and he laughed again, and brushed back the hair from his forehead.

"Somebody told you," said Matthew, "I know."

Willie did not wholly comprehend this very simple criticism, but he recognized it as being in some way depreciative of his guess. So he shook his head.

"Come and show me your whip," said Matthew.

"It isn't a 'ip."

"Isn't it?" said Matthew, "why, I think it is a whip."

Willie shook his head again.

"You come and show it to me," said Matthew, "and let me see if it isn't a whip. Will you?"

Willie had already come to the foot of the steps lead-

ing to the piazza. He now began to climb up those steps. Attaining the summit, he held the—whatever it was—triumphantly up before Matthew. It was a little whalebone switch, made in the image of a cane, and mounted with a fox-head, cut in ivory.

Matthew took it and examined it with an appearance of great anxiety, to determine whether it was a whip or not.

There was a silver ring just below the fox-head; a collar, as it were, to the fox. On this ring were engraved the initials, "J. G. H." These did not escape Matthew's attention.

"Whose is it, Willie?" he asked.

"Misser Gwovering's," said Willie.

"Mr. Glovering's?"

Willie nodded.

"Who is Mr. Glovering?"

This question was above Willie's comprehension. He stood still, waiting for his toy to be returned to him.

"I want my cane," he said, at length.

Matthew handed it back to him, saying: "You have n't told me yet who Mr. Glovering is."

"Misser Gwovering?"

Willie only gave a short laugh in answer to this half inquiry, and stood still, looking at Matthew.

"Come. Where is he? Won't you tell me?" asked Matthew.

"Awwy knows," said the child.

"Arry!" said Matthew. "What! has he gone to walk with Arry?"

Willie nodded assent.

Matthew swallowed an exclamation of vexation, which, if it had gained utterance, would probably have surprised his young friend. Then, bidding Willie to run into the house and be a good boy, the first of which precepts was obeyed, if not the second, he commenced a solitary promenade upon the piazza.

While he awaits the tardy return of Arabella, let us turn to see where she is, and what it can be that has so long detained her.

I shall permit the young gentleman whom the reader is now about to meet, to introduce himself to the confidence of the public, as he did to that of Miss Mayes, as Mr. James Glovering. "A rose by any other name would smell as sweet." So might the reputation of Mr. Glovering, and then again it might not,—it is entirely a matter of opinion. The point is therefore dismissed with the remark, that if the young gentleman has misinformed Miss Mayes, I feel sure that he has done so from most delicate motives.

Mr. James Glovering, then, (to speak from information derived from himself,) was a young man of nothing and twenty, elegant in his dress, independent and easy in his bearing, but with that indescribable air and manner peculiar to a certain class,—the very highest bred,—of city young men; an air sometimes fascinating to young and unsophisticated persons, but repulsive to those who know both sides of human nature.

A young person educated in the country, where hon-

esty, industry and peacefulness form the common chord of life, the harmony, to which constantly after all modulations and diversions of key, the theme reverts, one who knows the world only by its genial and goodly features, does not usually understand that "to have seen the world," "to know life," mean to have learned a great many evil things, together with a few good ones. To such an one the polish, the readiness in conversation, the nonchalance of air, the affectation of naughtiness, half as a boast, half as a self-reproach, the apparent exuberance of social qualities which mark the type of character referred to, all seem most attractive; and their supposititious excellence is so nicely spiced with willfulness (pardonable because so frankly confessed) that duplicity of thought comes to seem more intellectual than simplicity, and sinuosity of conduct more graceful than straight-forward honesty. Therefore it is that the quiet happiness of a simple heart is often so much endangered when for the first time and unguardedly it is brought into intimate association with such a character.

I should misrepresent Mr. Glovering if I led the reader to attribute to him keen wickedness. He was not very wicked, except perhaps in the theological sense; he was not smart enough to be so. He regarded himself as a promising young man, (and it was true; he had made promises enough,) of fair abilities, (nobody disputed that; the worst that even his enemies had said was, "let him prove it,") of good manners, (well, he never ate with his knife, nor appeared in a party without his white kids,) of nice taste in dress, (he was what his

tailor made him in that respect, undoubtedly,) of a clear head and ready understanding; (with occasional and in a young man quite excusable exceptions as to the clear head, and some limitation as to the sphere of activity of the ready understanding, unquestionably he was so,) and as moral as any of his acquaintance (very likely). Yes, this young man was clearly right, when on Sunday, in morning service, he shut his prayer-book just before the general confession, and put his head down to study the carpet pattern, thinking that he was not a bad young man after all, and wondering why Miss Westerby wasn't out to-day, and wishing sincerely that some of those poor wretches who pitch coppers in the streets, and sell Sunday papers, could only be taught to be good Christians like himself.

No, there was nothing vicious (yet) in him.

But then to tell the truth, (for oh, thou promising young man, friend and companion of him, take not premature comfort of my approval,) to tell the truth, there was not one whit of good in him.

Not one whit.

He had no substantial, active, productive powers. He could not raise a grain of wheat, nor form useless lumber into useful ware, nor by inventive genius give matter power to take the place and do the work of man, nor guide the produce of a surfeited region to a hungry market. He stood in no profession. Learning he had not, the parchment certificate of a college to the contrary notwithstanding. His brain generated no new ideas, whether literary, artistic, scientific, or intellectual.

Nor was he what is equal in worth and dignity to any or all of these, a man useful by his deep social or moral feelings. A grain-growing, fruit-producing country, without flowers or verdure, romantic scenery, graceful streams, waving forests, or bold mountains, would be desolate indeed; but not more desolate than Life, if thronged with wealth-producing men and women only, with no gentle, timid, loving hearts to cheer the homes which wealth establishes, with no child's voice to call upon parental love, no needy ones to give mankind the joys of generosity, no suffering ones bowed down by long affliction, patient and meek, at the gentle blow of whose example the dry rock of the long-prospered heart may flow with sympathy. The true happiness of society is not evolved by its efficient workers only, still less are the rich independent of the poor. In our social state, Lazarus is the salvation of Dives.

But Gloverling had not the heart-virtues of a Lazarus. He rendered no home more truly or wisely happy. He gave no bright example of any true or pure or sacred feeling. His heart was as shallow as his brain was dry. He possessed no enthusiasms. He knew too much about things to entertain such unsophisticated feelings. He was not the subject of any powerful, permanent principles, or any persistent, resolute motives. All sweet fruits of affection were in him immature, green, and sour. His whole nature was empty.

He was the child of luxury and of want; of false attention and real neglect. He had always had every thing he desired, and almost nothing which he needed.

And now the higher faculties with which in a respectable degree he had been endowed at birth, were dying out. His life had long since become useless to others, and was daily growing more hurtful to himself.

In short, if a disbeliever in the Providence of God, looking around for some triumphant argument of refutation, and pointing out some such young man, should say to me,

Tell me why your Deity ever made such a creature as this, and I'll believe in him;—

I should hesitate for a convincing answer.

I can understand why thistles are. They feed the bees. I can satisfy myself about butterflies. They are ornamental, and they do really enjoy themselves innocently. I can see a use in idiots and lunatics. They teach us more of the nature and value of human reason than we should ever know without them, and their presence among us is a spur to humanity. I can even imagine that the outrageous criminal may be useful as a warning to others, and by putting society on its self-defense against wrong and injustice in all forms.

But I find it hard to explain the creation of young Gloverling.

While Matthew Caraby was pacing the piazza of his intended father-in-law's house, Mr. Gloverling—being in person of a medium height, well-formed and proportioned, except that his mouth seemed slightly one-sided, and turned up at the corner when he spoke, as if it had been very much accustomed to carry a cigar; and wearing a glossy beaver hat, the flat rim of which slanted

across his brow at an agreeable angle; and over his usual dress a light fall over-coat, within which might be seen a rich velvet vest adorned with two heavy gold chains, one passing round his neck, the other, burdened with charms, being hooked to a button-hole—Mr. Glover being such as he is here described, was seated upon a hill-top a couple of miles from Mr. Mayes', by the side of a young lady, a very charming young lady indeed.

They had been diligently inspecting the sunset, and the setting sun was warmly gazing upon them.

As the sun went down an uneasiness arose in the breast of the young lady. She gathered her shawl closer around her, shivered a feminine little shiver, and ventured to put in definite words the suggestion which she had endeavored to convey by hints and implications for some time previous.

"It's getting rather late," said she, "most supper time. The afternoons are so short. Hadn't we better be getting towards home, Mr. Glover?"

As she said this, the sun nodded his head in assent. He nodded it so low that it went entirely out of sight beneath the horizon.

"Why!" said her companion, moving as if to rise, and then leaning back again as if to sit still. "Do you know it seems so queer to me to hear of supper at this hour?" And he laughed. "So odd, you know. Why, we don't think of supper till ten o'clock. In the city, you know, it's so different. Every thing. We tea at seven, but we never have supper till ten or eleven, and when we go out any where, it's—oh, ever so late."

"Do you think that's a good plan?" said the young lady.

"No," said the gentleman, "it's bad 'pon honor. But then we can't help it possibly. And then it's a deuced—that is, I mean, a great deal jollier than going to bed at nine o'clock, for all the world like a parcel of old grandfathers. Why, the night before I left, some of us took supper at a hotel, and we actually didn't sit down to the table till after twelve o'clock. We had a game supper. But you know, where every body does so—"

The young lady rose. It was growing dark.

"Well," said the gentleman, rising also, "if it's near supper time, I suppose we must go. I shouldn't object to some more of that bread and cream and honey. That's now what you don't get in New York."

"Don't you?" said his companion.

And they turned towards home.

"No. Yes, you can get cream made to order. They manufacture it with milk and eggs, and I guess a little sugar. You order cream at one of the saloons, and they bring you two table-spoonsful in a little pitcher with the foam all on it where they've been beating it up."

The young lady laughed.

This young lady, to whom the reader has not yet been introduced, was Miss Arabella Mayes. The only daughter of her father, a substantial farmer, and early in her teens bereaved of her mother, she had grown up, petted, caressed, and ill-governed. Yet the native force of her

character, and the effect of a noble maternal example in her childhood, were such that at nineteen she was now an excellent girl, an obedient daughter, a most capable and efficient housekeeper. If she was not beautiful, it was because she was handsome. She was short, and slightly, though gracefully formed. Black eyes lighted her open and pleasing countenance, and dark hair, lightly waving over her clear forehead, was gathered over her ears and carried back where it fell down her neck in a little cataract of curls. Her eyes were swift in their glance and sudden in change of expression, but although brilliant, they lacked that capacity of deep and tender expression which belongs to the most lovable natures.

She was quick of thought, and strong of resolve, self-reliant and self-possessed. She did not distrust herself, and had never had reason to distrust others. With such a character, it was natural that although quite free from vanity she should cherish a certain degree of pride, and should follow its dictates, sometimes indeed unwisely.

Altogether she was handsome, good-humored, independent; when she thought it dignified, she could be distant, and when she thought it charming, she could be willful, and her waywardness was as delightful as such vexatious qualities in a young lady ever can be.

This afternoon she looked, as her companion acknowledged to himself, very charming. Beneath the edge of her dress a very unlady-like shoe, stout and thick-soled, defying roughness and moisture, occasionally peeped forth. Partly because she was pleased with the novel manners and converse of her father's guest, and partly

from a sense that some polite attentions were due to him, she had accepted Mr. Glovering's invitation to take an evening walk. The beauty of the closing day and the blandishments of her companion had prolonged it to a late time. She was now thinking of Matthew. She tried not to do so, but she could not help thinking that he might possibly come over to-night.

They were by this time drawing near home.

"You have never been in New York?" inquired Mr. Glovering.

"Never," said Arabella.

"Never in any city?"

"Only in Albany."

"Oh, Albany is nothing. You must come to New York sometime—I should like to show you around—I should be proud—"

And he finished the sentence with an admiring glance which he had found very effective among the damsels of city society, but which Arabella did not understand sufficiently to be displeased with.

"In New York," he continued, "you'd think it was a holiday, and every body was in the streets. You'd wonder where they were all going. You could n't get along in the crowds without a gentleman, until you got accustomed to it. And then the streets are so wide, and the shops so handsome, and there are so many carriages and omnibuses. I suppose there's a heavier travel over parts of Broadway than over any other spot of ground in the world. I don't think I saw any thing in London or Paris equal to it."

"Have you been in London and Paris?" inquired the girl, with fresh interest in her companion.

"Yes, oh, yes," said he carelessly. "For business, mere business, I suppose New York is as lively as they, but there's a great deal more of the world to be seen in Paris than any where else."

At this moment they came to a turn in the road where through the trees and in the moonlight Arabel saw a familiar horse and wagon—Matthew's horse and wagon—standing at the door of her father's house.

She started; trembling so that her companion felt the tremor of her arm upon his own, and interrupted himself upon his panegyric upon the trans-atlantic metropolis, to say;—

"Why, what's the matter?"

"Matter, what about?"

"Why, your hand trembles as though it was morning after a champagne supper," said Mr. Glovering gayly.

Arabella only laughed. It was a fictitious little laugh.

"You have taken cold, being out so late. I ought not to have kept you out so long," continued Mr. Glovering, in a tone of assumed self-reproach, "but I enjoyed myself so much, I had no idea how time was passing."

Arabella made no answer. She still looked intently towards her father's house. This night, of all nights, was Matthew here? Mr. Glovering followed the glance of her eyes, and following it observed the horse and wagon. He looked back again, and noted the expression of her face, then gave a long-drawn whistle. One of those

whistles in a whisper accompanied by a slight shrug of the eye-brows, with which your gossips are accustomed to intimate the making of a surprising discovery respecting some one's private affairs.

Arabella looked an interrogation point at him to ask its meaning.

"I do hope my dear Miss Arabel—excuse me. But will you allow me to call you Arabel?"

To this somewhat free inquiry, Arabel made no answer.

"Thank you;" Mr. Glovering continued. "'Silence gives consent.' Then I do hope my dear Arabel that you will forgive me for getting you into such a confounded scrape."

"What do you mean, sir?"

"Why, really though; I hope you give me credit for sagacity enough to perceive that that is somebody's horse and wagon in particular at the door there."

Arabella evidently did not understand him.

"Why—in short—that your lover is waiting for you, and that you are to have a scene with him à la Othello and Desdemona. I'll keep within hearing, and if he gets dangerous, you call and I'll run in and—"

Mr. Glovering interrupted himself in the middle of his sentence. Arabella had withdrawn her arm from his as suddenly as if it burnt her.

"Why, what's the matter now?" said he.

"You are impertinent, sir!"

"Well, you are the strangest girl I ever saw; to take it as impertinent because I insinuate that you have a

lover. Every girl I ever knew takes it as a compliment; the more lovers you give 'em the better they like it."

Arabella made no answer. She walked coldly and proudly forward at a little distance from her companion.

"It is just as I thought," continued Mr. Glover, "you are vexed with me, it's just my luck. But I do beseech you Miss Arabel to forgive me. How could I know that *he* was coming this afternoon? It is truly my ill luck, not my fault, that I have got you into such a scrape. If he scolds about it—"

"Scolds!" said Arabella contemptuously.

"Tell him," continued Mr. Glover, "that it was my fault. Say you wanted to come back, but I would n't let you. I think he won't mind. I would n't be frightened."

"I am *not* frightened sir," said Arabella in a tone of increased displeasure. "I have no reason to be."

They had just reached the house. Arabella would have entered the front door, but it seemed to savor too much of cowardice, so she went up the piazza steps. She wished to speak to Matthew, but she shrank from the little taunts of her companion. Therefore she stepped straightway into the house.

Mr. Glover, seemingly the victim of sudden astronomical impulses, remained without, and stood with his back against a pillar, gazing into the firmament, and charmingly whistling a reminiscence of *Casta Diva*, with the latest operatic adornments. His manner would have been fascinating to the admirers of the Glover style, but to Matthew it was galling and offensive in the extreme.

Matthew was sitting in the further corner of the piazza. For a tedious hour he had been awaiting Arabella's arrival, and now expected at least her kindly greeting. Instead of this, she did not appear to notice that he was there.

"Arabella," said her grandmother to her, as she entered the sitting room, "how came you to be gone so long? Matthew's out there on the piazza waiting for you. He's been here over an hour waiting to see you."

"Has he?" said Arabella. "Well, I suppose he can come in and see me, if he wishes."

"Pshaw, child! Do n't act so foolish," said her grandmother. "Go out and speak to him, and behave handsome to him."

"Oh, no, I sha'n't do any such thing," said Arabella.

Nevertheless, after waiting a moment, she went to the door.

"Why, what's the matter, Mr. Glover?" said she, stepping out upon the piazza, "why don't you come in?"

"Arabella," said Matthew, and he rose from his seat and came towards them.

"Why, Matthew!" exclaimed Arabella, in a tone of great surprise, "are you here?"

"This is Mr. Glover, I believe," said Matthew.

"My name," replied Mr. Glover, speaking with fourth proof city politeness.

"Will you allow us, sir, to be alone?" said Matthew, addressing him with the double distilled extract of rural high manners.

"Oh! ah! tête-à-tête! eh! Certainly, sir. I would not intrude for the world."

And he descended the steps. Arabella and Matthew were left alone.

For several moments neither spoke. There was a consciousness in each that the approaching conversation was to be an encounter, and that an advantage in position would be gained by which ever should stand on the defensive and await attack. There was a silence, therefore. It was broken by Arabella, who, with a feminine shrewdness of which she was not conscious, compelled Matthew to open the dialogue.

"Well, sir," said she.

The "well" did not mean much, but the "sir" did, a vast deal.

"Arabel," said Matthew, "what is the meaning of all this?"

"Really, sir," said Arabella, "I think this is pretty well. You come here to make a call,—spend the evening on the piazza,—never speak to me when I come home,—then when I come out to see you, you ask my friend to go away, that you may talk with me alone,—and then begin your mysterious conversation by asking what it all means. I am sure, sir, I can't imagine. I was just about to ask, myself."

Matthew walked down the piazza a step or two, and then back to where Arabella was standing; then spoke:

"I came to see you to-night, at the risk of losing my situation,—in spite of Sackett. He said I should not come. I came. You were gone out; no one knew where.

Two hours, I should think, I have waited for you. The sun set an hour ago. It is dark when you return with your friend,—you drop his arm as you come within my sight, and affect a formal coolness toward your friend as you approach,—you pass me by without a recognition,—when you come to the door, it is not to speak to me, it is to your friend you come to speak. And when I ask you what all this means, you laugh at me. This is not right or kind, Arabella. I have a right to know."

"To know? To know what?" said Arabella. "What is it you want to know?"

"First," said Matthew, "I want to know who this Glovering is. Is he a puppy your father has bought for you, or has he sneaked in here for a night's lodging of his own accord?"

"You speak freely, sir," said Arabella, feeling her pride supported by the sharpness of Matthew's tone. "Mr. Glovering is my father's guest and my friend."

"If I speak too freely, Arabella," said Matthew, conscious that he was losing his self-control, "it is because I feel too deeply. But I ask you again, who is he? You say he is your friend. What do you mean by that? Do you then change your friendships so often?"

"Do you find fault with me that I have friends?" said Arabella. "I did not suppose that I gave up all other friendship because I accepted yours."

"Arabella," said Matthew, "you know that I love you—"

"I have heard you say so, sir, but I begin to think to-night that I am not the docile, easily-managed girl you

thought you loved. I have friends, you see. She whom you loved was to have none—was she?”

“I assure you, Arabella,” said Matthew, “that I *do* love you, without delusion, and without mistake. More warmly than you ever were or will be loved besides. I love you wholly. For myself, I have no other friendships. Excepting my sister, I have none in the world to care for but you; none whom I even call friends. But I do not quite expect the same from you. I do not desire to exclude you from any healthful, wisely-chosen friendships, Arabella.”

Arabella laughed. It was a crisp, satirical little laugh; a concise embodiment of the whole fable of the Fox and Grapes.

“You laugh at me for loving you,” said Matthew bitterly.

“I do not laugh because you love me,” said Arabella, “but because you are so comically unreasonable.”

Matthew began to realize that unless his feelings were somewhat milder and his thoughts more judiciously expressed, all the warmth of his affection for Arabella would not enable him to win her back to kindness without making hazardous submissions to her caprice and pride. He paced back and forth upon the piazza to gain time for reflection.

Upon this piazza at its farthest end, there stood a rustic bench which Matthew had made. In the past season it had been through many hours of summer evening the scene of delightful conversations and still more delightful moments of silence. Before it in front of the

piazza hung a curtain of vines and creeping roses, now torn and faded in the chilly winds of autumn. Through these the curious stars peered keenly. Perhaps they wondered why the lovers were not seated side by side as on former evenings,—why they did not now according to invariable custom in the intervals of conversation lean with heads close touching for the interesting astronomical experiment of seeing at once the same star through the same crevice in the leafy curtain.

There is no structure possible to be erected within the human heart which will so stoutly resist all pressure from without, the powers of all entreaties persuasions, arguments, reproofs, reproaches, threats, as an arch of pride beneath which is a hollow empty consciousness of being in the wrong. Upon such an arch as this, Arabella was now standing.

Arabella approached the end of the settee, and leaned with one hand upon its arm. She stood pale and quiet waiting for Matthew to proceed. Matthew stood beyond, with one foot upon the seat and leaning forward. From the garden walk below, the steps of Arabella's visitor were heard pacing back and forth upon the gravel.

“Arabel.”

“I listen,” said she.

“Yes,” returned Matthew bitterly, “for the footsteps of your friend.”

The temper which the girl restrained from words, flashed over her face in a burning blush.

“Have you nothing more to say to me?”

“Much. But nothing in *his* hearing.”

"I do not understand. I know of nothing which you may not say here;—so that it is short," added she, shivering slightly, "for it is chilly."

"Arabella!" he exclaimed, "I beseech you to carry this no further. If you love me be plain and honest with me. Do not let us part, I implore you, without understanding each other."

He yields, thought she. I knew he must. He intreats. Why should he call me to account? He will yield. Thus firmly planted on the arch of pride she said,

"I should be sorry to misunderstand you, but I confess I do not understand your conduct."

"And what mysterious thing is it which passes your comprehension?" urged Matthew irritated at being thus evaded.

"I do not understand," said she, with a forced smile, "what it is that must be so private, or what secret errand brings you here that requires so much seclusion and mystery."

"You are not accustomed to speak in this way of my visits."

"The present is not always like the past; nor are you accustomed to make such visits as this of to-night."

"I came because—because I loved you. It seems I have presumed too much."

"You certainly have if you think I have any thing to disclose or to conceal."

"And have you no word of explanation for the reception which I find."

"Indeed, sir!" persisted she, "and how should I? I

am always glad to see my friends. They are free to come and go, nor can I help it when they will come or when they shall go."

"What do you mean?" cried he. And then restraining himself, he said in a mild tone, "You would say that I am free to come or go. You mean perhaps that my being here is no longer a pleasure to you, and that but for your politeness I might understand it so?"

His cool, quiet, deliberate words heaped a heavy burden upon her; yet still the arch of pride stood firm. She was silent.

She must speak more explicitly, thought he. I would not restrain her a moment if she has another preference.

"I am going home now," he continued. "After this conversation, my course must depend very much on your last words to me."

She was still silent. Not a word.

Matthew turned, passed her, and stepped along the piazza towards the door. The impulse seized her to follow him, lay her hand upon his arm with its old gentle pressure, and her head upon his shoulder to whisper in his ear what her better feelings prompted her to say. She started to fulfill the impulse. But Matthew unconscious of her relenting, before she reached him suddenly stopped at the piazza step and said;

"Mr. Glover, will you do us the favor to step up here a moment?"

Arabella turned back and sank upon the seat. Her instinct told her that Matthew, from desiring to talk with her alone, had come to desire to talk with her in

the avowed presence of a witness; and that witness the very one whose insinuating words had been the stimulus of her pride. Her throbbing head she leaned upon her hand, and awaited the approach of the two gentlemen. They came up. The contrast she could not but note. Matthew tall, and though slightly built yet robust and sunburnt. His hands were clasped behind him, which threw his shoulders forward, and gave to his countenance a downcast and severe air. The other stepped lightly over the floor, looking alternately at the lovers with a nonchalant air, and tapping his teeth with the little fox-head on his cane.

"Pardon me," said Matthew, straightening himself toward the young gentleman, and affecting politeness as well as his impatience permitted, "that I speak to you without an introduction, and indeed without knowing whether your name is James Glovering or J. G. H."

The young gentleman inserted the fox-head, silver collar and all, into his mouth, and closed his lips over them.

"But it's unnecessary to say more of that, for we have never met before and may never again."

The young gentleman transferred the fox-head from the seclusion of his mouth to that of his hand, and bowed a grateful assent.

"Since you have seemed to take an interest in our conversation, and as Miss Mayes seems to desire that you should not leave her, perhaps she will repeat to you what she has just said to me of our relations."

"About your relations?" said the young gentleman. "Yes! I did not hear that part of it."

She must own me or disown me now, thought Matthew.

"Mr. Caraby," said Arabella rising and turning her head toward him haughtily, "if our acquaintance is to lead to such scenes as this, I think it had better end. End here. You are free. So am I."

With these words the humiliated girl passed by them both toward the door.

Matthew, no less humiliated himself, though from a different cause, said as she passed, "If you, Arabella, say so, so be it."

Arabella, with no response, entered the house.

"Ha! ha!" cried the young gentleman, as he began to understand the dialogue he had heard, and feigning to applaud with his cane; "ha! ha! ha! That's well done. Bra-avo. And what about the relations now? Eh? 'Our relations!' pretty good. I was n't far from right, Mr. Caraway, when I told her I reckoned you would scold. Eh?"

"You told her? you scoundrel!" muttered Matthew between his teeth.

"Ye-es," laughed the young gentleman, walking before Matthew, and keeping at a safe distance from him while he laughed; "ye es, I told her you'd be very uncomfortable, but I did n't know she would get on such a high horse as that."

"Silence!" said Matthew.

"She made herself regularly ridiculous," said the sympathizing young man. "I do n't wonder she hurt your feelings; for really I never saw a girl make herself so

completely ridiculous, just because she happened to have two beaux after her."

"There!" said the incensed Matthew, dropping his well-knit fist upon the shoulder of his companion with a power that felled him to the ground, "if that hurt *your* feelings so much the worse for your feelings. Now you have something of your own to attend to. Don't say another word to me."

As he addressed these last words to the young gentleman who was prostrate against the steps, muttering and rubbing his bruises, Matthew leaped into the wagon, turned a desperately short curve into the road, and disappeared from his vengeful eyes.

For my part, I would rather have walked to Harsford's Mills that night, than have risked my neck in that wagon, with Matthew Caraby to drive.

CHAPTER V.

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THE LADDER OF LABOR IS EASIER THAN THE LEAP OF LUCK.  
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MR. ALEXANDER HARSFORD, of the city of New York, transacted commercial business in Hanover Square, under the name, style, and firm of Alexander Harsford & Co. What was the business, or who was the Co., a stranger passing the place would not be likely to guess, for any thing that appeared from the sidewalk.

I am very glad that the scope of this chapter does not involve an investigation into the nature and variety of the business of Harsford and Company. The brief inquiries I have been able to make always met the reply:

"Oh, I believe he does a general commission business."

It is needless to persist in such inquiries; for though I do not doubt that the course of his dealings involved acts of omission as well as of commission, it is equally certain that the business transactions of this house, with which you and I as friends of Matthew Caraby have to do, will be ample to satiate curiosity.

From without, the establishment did not present an attractive aspect. In business hours the front part of the store was thrown entirely open to view, like all other

fronts in that vicinity, by swinging back the heavy doors that hung upon the stone door-posts. Not much insight into the business, however, did even this afford; for all that could be seen was a high fence, consisting of broad pickets and narrow interstices, that ran from one side straight across the warehouse until it came to a steep erection, which, in a barn or cow-house, would be called a ladder, but which Alexander Harsford & Co. denominated the stair-case. A padlock and hinges in the picket fence indicated a gateway there, and through the interstices between the pickets were dimly discernible shadows of boxes and bales and huge piles of shapeless things filling the void beyond.

The convenience of the ladder was much enhanced by the fact that directly before it a stout and very dirty cable, ornamented with an enormous iron hook for a pendant, hung from above directly before the ladder, and was adjusted at a proper height to tap the skull of any careless passer by.

At half-past nine on one morning early in November, 1848, Mr. Harsford entered his warehouse, which he did by dodging the cable and stumbling rapidly up the stairs. At the top of the stair-case there was another picket fence, and behind it in the dark a man wiping his hands upon a towel.

"Morning, Warrack," said the merchant, and without waiting to hear Mr. Warrack say, "Good morning, Mr. Harsford; it's a fine morning, sir," he opened a glass door, which made a right angle with the picket fence, and entered his counting-room.

Why Alexander Harsford & Co should use a black step-ladder to gain access to a suit of parlors; why they should ordain a trap-door, and institute something very like a gallows in the entrance to honest offices, is something more than an unsophisticated author can understand. But so it was.

The counting-rooms of the firm were three in number. There was first the business office, carpeted in oil-cloth, furnished with a safe and two high desks, and adorned with railroad maps, which showed the "favorite route" in a bright red line, straight; and all the rival routes in faint black lines, very circuitous. This room was moreover enlivened by two clerks and a loud clock.

The two inner rooms opened upon this, from which they were separated by a glass partition.

Into one of these rooms Mr. Harsford hastened, and seated himself at a large mahogany structure which would have served as a church pulpit almost as imposingly as it did for a desk. This desk stood in the middle of a brilliant carpet, and from his seat at it Mr. Harsford looked out at pleasure, through the door he had left half open, into the large office, or in the other direction, through the window into the triangle which is called Hanover Square.

But Mr. Harsford spent little time in looking about him this morning. He seated himself in a morocco-cushioned arm-chair, took off his hat and placed it on a chair near at hand, pulled off a pair of glossy India-rubbers, and tossed them out of sight behind his seat, and leaning forward over his desk, rummaged with one

hand among a profusion of papers which lay scattered there.

If I were an artist, (which the acute reader doubtless already knows I am not,) I should be very glad to have Mr. Harsford sit to me. He was so small that he would have made a capital subject; for his picture would not have taken so much canvass or so much colors as common men's by the half. His life-size portrait would have been a miniature of a man. Mr. Harsford was one of those men who did not get much when he got his growth. I think it doubtful whether he ever did get his growth. It may be that he was only a schoolboy with whiskers, wrinkles and wisdom. He looked as if he had taken permanent board when he went into jacket and trowsers, and had never allowed himself to get any bigger lest his landlady should charge him full price. He was one of your short, thin, spare, sharp, mercurial men; quick, ready, versatile. On the whole, I would prefer not to be the artist to take his likeness. I doubt whether he could sit still long enough. His daguerreotype, for instance, I should expect would have four distinct sets of eyelids, and would show the fingers of three hands dimly visible in the whiskers. He was little, lively and keen. He ran about among larger men in the street and on 'change as a revenue cutter glides hither and thither among a convoy of merchantmen. So much the better for him, and he knew it. He would not have been so promptly hailed by his business friends, if he had been like other people. They would not have so commonly said approvingly that he was "a

confounded sharp little fellow," if he had been as large as they. So he was rather proud of his little person.

He bore a dark complexion; a high and bald, but corrugated forehead, imparted to him some intellectual power; wavy black hair, adorning thickly the top and back of his head, contributed to his appearance a pleasing reminiscence of youth, and thick whiskers and beard, well sprinkled with gray, while they filled out the thin cheeks of his triangular countenance, yet elongated his chin, and spoke of age and the wisdom of experience. He was elegantly dressed. His black broadcloth coat was relieved by a crimson velvet vest, over which a gold watch chain hung. A light silk handkerchief was comfortably adjusted around his irreproachable collar.

Mr. Harsford's early history was not much known in Wall street. Those who knew most about it had heard indefinitely, and remembered indistinctly, that he was born and bred in the country;—that losing his first wife, about whose death they had heard there was an odd story, but did not know what it was, he had come to New York city to make his fortune;—that a few weeks after reaching the city he had improved an opportunity of marrying again;—that at the outset he had devoted himself in an honest and steady way to a legitimate business as a commission merchant;—that after a time, as he became more and more influenced by the city ways, and gradually lost the honest and steady tastes and habits which his rural education had been able to impress, though only superficially, upon his naturally selfish character, he became dissatisfied with the hard

work and slow and moderate gains of his business, and gradually became drawn into speculations of diverse and doubtful character.

While Mr. Harsford sat ransacking the papers that lay carelessly upon his desk, which he did with a nervous manner that indicated uncertainty what to take up rather than uncertainty where to find any thing that he wanted to take up, his errand boy came in with the morning's letters. The merchant took them up and began to glance at their superscriptions rapidly in turn, sliding them from one hand to the other. Two which were for Mrs. Beulah Harsford, his wife, he dropped into his coat pocket, to be straightway forgotten.

Mr. Harsford's pocket was Mrs. Harsford's post office. It was often innocently remarked by Mrs. Harsford how inconveniently irregular was the mail which brought her letters. At which Mr. Harsford usually replied, "Yes, the department is wretchedly managed."

Having thus put his wife's letters, as we may say, into her own box, where they were safe till called for, Mr. Harsford went on scanning his letters as if he wished to assort them mentally so that he might take them up systematically.

All this was done with a quick, nervous motion, an absent-minded air, and from time to time an effort to resettle himself in his easy chair, as if it were not an easy chair to him.

After all, the real seat of comfort is in the soul. Alexander Harsford had no such chair in his breast. Perhaps he had not room for it.

In his abstraction he turned over the pile of letters in this uneasy way. Suddenly his hand dropped upon the desk lid, and he sat motionless. The absent thoughts were recalled. The restless eye became fixed upon a small envelope. The superscription which seemed to present so strange a sight to him was this:

*"For Mrs. Martha A. Harsford,
Wife of Alexander Harsford,
Hanover Square,
New York."*

"Martha! Martha!" said the motions of his silent lips, as if the subject were too secret even for his own hearing. "Yet another?" And he cast the note upon the desk and threw himself back in that perplexity and doubt, than which there is but one lower depth—Despair!

From his hand the note fell upon its face on the desk. It was sealed with a motto wafer. He took it up to read it. It bore the figure of a bloodhound pursuing a fleeing man, and beneath this device was the word "JUSTICE."

"Oh Heavens! what does this mean? Is there more of this to come? Heaven help me!"

Ah soul, self-cheated of thy Best Friend. How does the pressure of this grief disclose thy highest instincts, perverted. All hearts must pray. And the prayer of him who does not pray to God is mockery like thine;—"Oh Heavens!—Heaven help me!"

"“Oh Heavens!” Ha! Oh Vacancy! Oh Blue and Illimitable Emptiness! Oh Infinite and Eternal Nothing!

Well, if Nothing be thy God, Nothing shall answer thy prayer.

"Can she be living now? Am I to be blasted and ruined now through the most innocent of errors twenty years ago? I thought I had heard the last of this. It's a conspiracy. Alive!" And the slight frame of the merchant trembled in a shudder at some terrible thought until the great cold drops started from their fountains on his high forehead, and wandered down till they were lost in making wet pathways over his cheeks.

"Impossible," he exclaimed again. "She never lived through that storm. We made thorough search. Impossible. I'll not touch it. It's some scheme,—some infernal— Let them do their worst. The worst they can do is,—Good Heavens! What if she should be alive? If she lives now, I wish I were dead. But it's impossible; it is utterly out of the question. Come now, it can't be. But then if,—if she is not on earth, the Devil is. I'll acknowledge that. I must find some clue to this; I must find some clue."

Repeating slowly these words, he took up the note and opened it carefully, avoiding breaking the seal. He held it fearfully, as if it were from quarantine in times of pestilence, and he knew not what message of disease and death might be concealed in its folds.

This was the letter :—

NEW YORK, 14th October, 1848.

MY DEAR ALEXANDER:

Why do you still doubt? You send to search for my remains. You hope still in my death. You need not send so far.

I have received what you sent to me. But ten times that amount will not satisfy me till I have seen you. Till you have seen me.

Am I less to you than you are to me? I must claim my rightful place. It is mine. I am your wife. She is but a usurper. I know you long to do justice to me and mine. But you shun publicity.

Will you come to me? Or must I visit you? I am ready if I must. Again I say, meet me to-night as I last requested, or send me there your reason why.

Come in time. You fear my demands may be irksome. They are. I have suffered poverty for twenty years and more. What you sent one was but the meanest fragment of justice. I do not ask for money. Come! Come! What I ask, much as it may cost you, is but insignificant compared with my rights.

Remember to-morrow night.

It shall no longer be my fault if your household mourns.

The unexpected life of one may prove as fearful as a sudden death.

For forty-eight hours adieu.

Your first,

Your only wife,

MARTHA ALVIN HARSFORD.

"Curse me for a fool," said the merchant in a lively, bitter tone, hissing between his close shut teeth; "curse me for a fool if this thing—be she wife or Devil—can make me waste one moment more;"—and he took out his gold watch, resolutely wound it up, and set it on the desk before him, as if to take a pattern from its cold, expressionless face, and the assiduity of its hands. Then falling from his resolution, and forgetting his imprecation, he took up again the letter and pondered in silence over it.

It is not probable that Mr. Harsford would have been so much disturbed by this epistle, if it had been the first one of the kind he had received. But it was not. He had, a short time previous, received a letter signed in the same name, and preferring the same claim; and although his first thought had been to rejoice in the idea that one whom he had believed to have been long ago perished was preserved, and his second to reject the claim as an imposture,—“for,” said he, “she would come and see me; she would have come to see me long ago,”—yet a longer reflection suggested so fully the embarrassments which must result to himself and his family should such a claim be established, that apprehension and dread at length triumphed over every other feeling. He was a man habitually conscious that his life was one long narrative of frauds, and wrongs, and schemes which would not bear the light; and he was habitually timid, therefore, of every exposure of his affairs. The suggestions of this letter, therefore, while they might have inspired contempt for its author as an impostor in the breast of a

man accustomed to trust his own integrity, filled Mr. Harsford with an undefinable alarm. Never confessing to himself, even in his secret thoughts, his consciousness of his wrong doing, he now spoke only of his fear that the letter might be true. But in fact his fears would not have been much diminished had he been able to assure himself that it was false; for, if false, it was evidently the work of some one who had advanced and would pursue the claim relentlessly; and who could tell how much evil and disgrace a shrewd and persistent searcher into the merchant's affairs might bring upon him?

Mr. Harsford sat gazing upon the letter for many minutes, until the entrance of Mr. Warrack, on some casual errand of the counting-house, recalled him. He looked up with a pale and vacant face, replaced the letter in its envelope, and bent himself forward over the task offered by his remaining correspondence.

The next letter which this pallid and nervous man took up was hastily broken open and read as follows:—

ALEX. HARSFORD, ESQ.,

HARSFORD & CO., NEW YORK.

DEAR SIR:

Your favor of the 6th came duly to hand. I discounted the note you sent up, and I send the \$5,000 in small bills, by express this day, as requested.

I have ten shares of our stock which I want to sell, if I can sell well. Will you make me an offer? It will

enlarge your line of discount, if you take it. I will take good short paper, such as I can use here.

I have the honor to be,

Yours, respectfully,

RICHARD GAULT,

Cashier Iroquois Bank.

Harsford's Mills, October, 1848.

"Selling out Iroquois, eh? That sounds bad. Gault must be looked to— Oh, stop; here's a postscript."

"P. S. The only reason I have for selling is that I have just learned from my brother-in-law, at the West, that he has been burnt out, and no insurance; and he wants me to lend him to rebuild. I am sorry to sell, for I never made a better investment, but I must oblige him, and my stock is all the available funds I have."

"Brother?" soliloquized the merchant; "I never heard that Gault had any relatives. He has n't, I know. Oh! Brother-in-law. Well—that may be so."

He struck a pressure-bell that stood upon his desk, and at the sound, like a wooden canary out of a Dutch clock, a clerk stepped forth from the door of the outer room.

"Sparaday," said Mr. Harsford, "here," and he held out the open letter. "Write to Gault, 'Discount received, and I'll take his stock at ninety-four in note at three months.'"

"Yes sir," said the clerk, and bowed himself out.

During all this time the merchant had not suffered his thoughts to return to the dark subject which had for them so terrible an attraction. Although dreading a strange crisis in his household, and already feeling its approaches,—although it came by steps he could not as yet trace, and with claims he would not as yet admit,—although thus struck through with the chilly terror of a disgrace he would rather die than meet,—this man, so habituated to the tracks of business, so intensive in the energy of his will, had vigorously repressed, though not quite smothered, those strange and ominous perplexities under the lighter cares of business. Behind his more active thoughts these never forgotten forebodings followed, and the desperate energy with which he gave himself to the minutiae of affairs was even quickened by the pursuit of these shadowy terrors.

In this mind he resumed the reading of his correspondence the instant Mr. Sparaday left the room.

The third letter, quickly opened and unfolded, ran as follows:

HARSFORD'S MILLS, October 13th, 1848.

ALEXANDER HARSFORD, ESQ.,

NEW YORK.

SIR:

Circumstances have just come to my knowledge which make me very desirous to say to any friend of mine who is concerned in the Iroquois Bank, "I advise you to sell out your stock." I have promised the cashier

I will not say more than this: this much I consider myself at liberty to say.

Although I can not claim the honor even of an acquaintance with yourself, I say this to you because I hope one day to earn your friendship.

I have understood you have something at stake in the Bank, and the information I received only yesterday I now advise you of.

I am aware that a letter from a perfect stranger like me, and conveying not facts but an opinion, possesses but little of that weight which I am desirous to attach to my suggestion. Beyond my word the only guarantee that I can add is that which I have mentioned.

I now expect to be in New York in a few days in search of employment in business, and shall then desire your kind advice. I have thought that if my opinion proves useful, I shall need no better letter of introduction than this.

I am Sir,

Very respectfully yours,

MATTHEW CARABY.

The merchant having read this neat and careful letter, laid it down and amused himself in drumming a little tune with his fingers upon the desk before him. "That," said he, "is either plain truth or a plain hoax." In fact he was too astute—too cunning to understand Matthew's bold, straight-forward appeal to interested motives. He thought it must be a hoax just because it seemed so honest, for he was not very much accustomed to honest

letters. "Truly," said he, bitterly, "I am favored with unknown correspondents. I think I'll send this up to Gault and see what he says to it. And the other"—he took up the first letter and turned it over to hide that seal,—took it up again holding it as he would vermin to put it away from him, hesitated, breathing fast and audibly, and finally put it in an inner pocket of his wallet; then suddenly rose still breathing as before, and lifted the windows and opened the counting-room door. He said it was close;—he wanted more air. As he turned to his seat again, his eye caught the penmanship of a familiar hand upon the envelope of the next letter. It was post-marked Enneton.

"From Jim," said the father, as he opened it.

Thus wrote 'Jim.'

DEAR FATHER,

Got here safely in due season, and started old Mr. Mayes off to the lake the same day. I gave him your letter; he says it's little use to look again now; but I have talked it into him, and if any thing is to be found he'll find it.

They've invited me to stay a week here. But it's too stupid for that. I'll stay a day or two and try it. I don't believe it will do to stay long either for I gave my name as James Glover; of course it would n't be just the thing to say who I was exactly, except to the old gentleman.

I expect I shall be back next week. I can't go over to the Mills for Charlotte very well. She can go home

alone just as well. She's made the journey a dozen times and I don't know exactly when I shall want to come.

Your affectionate son,

JAMES GLOVERING.

P. S. How do you like the name? I wish you could send me a little money. I don't want but a hundred this time. If possible send it by return mail for I shall want to be off as soon as it comes."

At the first paragraph of this letter the merchant's countenance bespoke satisfaction; at the second came a dubious smile accompanied by the paternal remark, "Jim will get himself into some scrape yet; going about under assumed names. But it's just like him;" at the third paragraph came—a slight shade of regret—and at the postscript a twinge of dissatisfaction. Let us not do the father the injustice to say that he thought a hundred dollars too much. Nobody knew better than Mr. Harsford that it cost something for a young man to keep up a respectable appearance. "It can't be done," said the paternal heart, "without money."

Let us be thankful—in a parenthesis—that since Charity has gone out of fashion in certain places, there is yet another cloak that will cover a multitude of sins. If a young man can not keep up a respectable appearance without plenty of money, let him have plenty of money by all means. In this point of view, what was seventy-five or a hundred dollars a week to Mr. Harsford

if it would make James Glovering respectable? It was indeed but a drop, and although a constant dropping will wear away a fortune, and Mr. Harsford's resources were under great pressure this season, yet he was not the man to refuse this little favor. If he had been asked for a day's personal care toward his son; if it had been a call to lay aside business for an afternoon to spend a few hours in instructing or advising him; if it had been an opportunity to sacrifice some self-pleasure for the sake of a good influence upon his son, the result might have been different. But it was only a hundred dollars, and although the merchant's balances were all the wrong way, and his bank account very low, and he was "very short" as he expressed it to himself, yet it was but to write his name; it was as easy as writing a letter; in fact the easiest way of answering the letter which asked for it. But there was a stronger reason than this. To refuse would imply inconvenience, inconvenience would suggest pecuniary embarrassment. This would never do. It was altogether too near the truth.

With the merchant, extravagance was a policy; the outlays of an expensive household were business expenses. Luxury and profuse hospitality were just as much a part of the stock in trade of this speculator as any of the catalogue of operations he had on hand. If one of his acquaintance were asked what was his chief excellence, he would say, "He was a very liberal, free-handed man. He was one of those noble little fellows to whom money was no object,—no object at all."

This reputation Mr. Harsford had always labored for,

since he knew that the only way for a poor man to pass for a rich one was to persuade the world that money was no object to him.

If there ever was a man to whom money was no object, it was Mr. Harsford. More particularly, perhaps, other people's money. Thus the grand mahogany desk which adorned his office, had been made to order regardless of expense. According to the account-books it was made for Alexander Harsford, President of the Wilmerdingle Gold Prospect Company; but according to the tenor of Mr. Harsford's conversation, it was constructed at the sole expense of Alexander Harsford, Esq. And when some one coming in said, slapping the desk approvingly, "Hallo, Alick, this is a great one! What did you give for it?"—Mr. Harsford would say quietly, "Oh! about three hundred. Money is no object you know, in getting a first rate article."

So too when Exle, the great carriage dealer, who was a customer of the Bank of which Mr. Harsford was an influential director, finding himself in need of large and frequent loans, made Mr. Harsford a present of a silver mounted barouche which would well outshine all the carriages of that director's acquaintances, he was accustomed to remark to admiring and envious friends, that it was worth,—he did not generally say what he gave for it,—that it was worth a thousand. 'That was a good deal to give for a carriage, but then when one could get a first class vehicle money was no object.'

So also this very morning Mr. Harsford was thinking that it was now becoming important that the Wilmer-

dingle Company should employ a clerk; for Alexander Harsford & Co. would like to have an additional clerk in the office very much, especially if the Wilmerdingle would pay his salary, and perhaps allow Alexander Harsford & Co. something, a little something for his desk-room,—he must sit in the outer office, for it would be inconvenient to have him in the Company's room. And if Mr. Harsford could find the right sort of young man for the Company to employ, money,—that is the Company's money,—would be no object; no object whatever.

Mr. Harsford having therefore resolved to send his son the price of another week's respectability, and having subsequently improved upon that resolution by substituting bills of the suspected Iroquois Bank in place of a check, and having further written a brief paternal note, unconsciously calculated to prove encouragement, although written in the guise of expostulation, turned his attention with renewed vivacity to the perusal of his further correspondence.

The next letter was not a letter but a large package tied with red tape, the ends of which ran into a small mass of sealing-wax.

This package was addressed to:—

"*Alex. Harsford, Esq.,*

"*Pres't Wilmerdingle Gold Prospect Co.,*

"*New York City.*"

The President scowled at the "Wilmerdingle," and

smiled at the "Gold Prospect Co," and disturbed himself repeatedly in his seat as he commenced the examination of the contents of this packet. He found within a bulky document accompanied by the following letter :

"WILMERDINGLE, 5 Oct., 1849.

To the President and Directors

Of the Wilmerdingle Gold Prospect Co.

GENTLEMEN :

I have the honor to lay before you herewith the annual report of your secretary upon the business and the condition of the Company.

The unexampled prosperity of the affairs of the Company is a subject of congratulation to which I may perhaps be allowed to refer with pride. Such is the activity of business that my presence here is indispensably requisite for some little time to come, and I shall therefore be unable to be present at the approaching annual meeting. I trust that the report will present in sufficient detail the magnificence of our enterprise, and the incontrovertible evidence of its now firmly established success.

I am, gentlemen,

Your ob't serv't,

MERCURY CORNISH,

Sec'y Wilmerdingle Gold Prospect Co."

Despite his nervousness and the serious uneasiness which Mr. Harsford had exhibited since commencing the perusal of his correspondence this morning, he actually smiled as he read this letter ;—a smile partly of amuse-

ment, partly of admiration, partly of satisfaction ; and he opened the long document which the letter accompanied, saying :—

"Well, that Cornish does understand things.

"That report will read well in print," he added, as he glanced over its pages, pausing here and there over some of the glowing passages in which were set forth the marvelous richness of the Wilmerdingle Company's mines, the miraculous action of its new machinery, and the fabulous profits of its business. "Yes," he continued, "if we bring that out right, and manage the money editors* well, I guess I can get the thing off my hands."

The reader would remain, I presume, quite in the dark as to why Mr. Harsford should wish to get such an inconceivably profitable thing as the Wilmerdingle Company off his hands, were it not that, falling from the folds of the report into which it had got slipped, came another note addressed to the merchant, and marked "*Private.*" It was very short, and indicated haste in composition as clearly as its companion did extreme care. It read as follows :

"DEAR A. H.

"I called three times last week to see you. Three notes are due this week, and the other directors say they can't do any thing about them possibly, as they are in advance already. Unless you can get a meeting before the 17th, you will have to take them up yourself. I

* What a "money editor" may be, and what it may mean "to manage a money editor," I am unable to explain.

hope you will be able to provide for them, as they are only \$7,000, and there is nothing more due until the 1st of December, and we shall have time to turn round before then.

"Yours, etc., M. C."

"Well," said the merchant, as he laid away the report and the letter in a pigeon-hole, and put the note in his wallet, "Well, we'll attend to that pretty soon. If the gentlemen of the Wilmerdingle do not stand by me I believe I shall have to put the screws on them, for I believe I have the whip hand. However, I think if we bring out that report well, I can get the whole thing off my hands. I'm sorry I ever went into it, for it's rather a small affair after all."

As he said this to himself, Mr. Sparaday returned, bringing Mr. Gault's letter and the reply which he had written, pursuant to the merchant's directions given a few moments previous, as already mentioned.

"Well!" said the merchant to himself, as he read again these letters. "Much obliged to Mr. Caraby for the suggestion—whether he meant well or ill makes little difference. If Gault wants to sell out that's the very reason why we must not let him. He must sink or swim with the rest of us. It can do no harm to look after this Iroquois business."

Upon this thought he directed a new note to be written to the cashier, declining a bargain, and kindly consoling him with assurances that though he might from the best of motives desire to sell, yet it would always be regretted if he should do so.

Mr. Harsford's further business this day will not much require our attention. It is sufficient to say that the remainder of the forenoon he devoted to finishing his correspondence, and to the pursuit of his legitimate business, from which he arose in the afternoon apparently much cheered and enlivened, if not by the success of his operations, at least by the respite which they afforded him from the first perplexities of the morning. In secret truth, though he would not confess it to himself, the merchant was much harassed by his affairs. The vicissitudes of business and the obliquities of his nature had implicated him in various sinuosities of dealings; these had brought their many and peculiar risks, and under the spurs of such a driver as his position was, he had plunged more and more deeply into the mire of secret dishonesty and unfaithfulness to trusts; until now bearing the unquestioned reputation of honor and integrity, guaranteed before society by the appearances of great wealth, he stood sinking in that slough which has no bottom but in a penniless infamy. Goaded by his growing consciousness of this state of things, the merchant turned restlessly from one task to another; undertook every thing, accomplished nothing; schemed and planned every method of escape, and achieved none. His vast embarrassments overshadowed his business, and he groped as in the dark at his affairs, only bringing them into confusion. The miserable expedients which he devised each day to stand between him and the approach of a catastrophe he would not look at, instead of supporting him sunk with him, involving more and more

widely the ruin of others in his own. Under this pressure he labored at all his affairs in turn; at nothing long enough to arrive at any result, he started rashly at every one, hesitated at every one, and left it in equal haste for another. Yet these troubles were ease and comfort compared to that whose terrifying threats had this morning been repeated. From those threats he had taken refuge in the sharp perplexities of his business and found there a wretched relief.

His mind continually reverted to the frank letter of Matthew and from that turned to the question of the Iroquois Bank, and various contrivances for getting rid of his stock before it should fail.

It has often been observed by philosophers and others that there is nothing more remarkable than the Association of Ideas. What, for instance, could be more strange than that Mr. Harsford, from thinking of his Iroquois stock should suddenly and without cause or suggestion turn to think of Widow Hopley's funds? Philosophically speaking, I can discern no natural relation or affinity between the nearly worthless scrip of a failing Bank, and the six thousand dollars which the widow had deposited a few months ago with him for safe keeping until he could find an investment safe, convenient, profitable, and in all respects suitable for the sum total of the funds of an elderly lady who was quite alone in the world. How it should happen that any idea having any bearing upon Iroquois stock should even in the labyrinth which Mr. Harsford called his mind have any connection with the idea of Widow Hopley or her money, is one of

those questions which the metaphysical reader may prefer to pursue according to his own favorite system of analysis. But such was the case.

Now it happened that Mr. Harsford had never yet been able to find a suitable investment for the fund. In a great many calls which the widow made upon him, he always said the difficulty was to place them securely.

"There are plenty of risks," said he, "but not many safe investments. You would rather have them at six per cent. and safe, than at ten per cent. and at a risk."

To this remark so appreciative of her feelings Mrs. Hopley always replied, "Oh yes, indeed sir! for it's all I have in the world sir, and I am getting old." And she went away wondering whether it would not be best to prevail upon the merchant to borrow the money himself and not run the risk of investing it; for as time progressed and the investment seemed as far off as ever, the good lady began to grow nervous lest there should be after all no earthly investment left for her.

It occurred to Mr. Harsford (and the suggestion seemed almost providential, for he expected another call soon and had neither money nor security to show her) to settle the Hopley account by investing in Iroquois Bank stock. In pursuance of this thought Mr. Harsford, as agent of the old lady, estimated the value of Iroquois stock at twenty dollars premium to the share; for, to Mr. Harsford as agent of the old lady, money was no object.

Since at that price what stock he had was not quite paid for by her fund, he made out a note for the balance due him.

The amount of the note was nearly three hundred dollars and payable on demand, but, as he explained to her perfect satisfaction when she called the next day, since the investment was first rate, of which the cashier's letter was proof, and as he did not need the money immediately—it was no object to him whether it was a month or a year—she could consult her own convenience about paying it;—or it could lie until the next dividend upon the stock should be declared. For this Mrs. Hopley was very grateful.

Thus Mr. Harsford adjusted the Hopley account and the Iroquois stock account, and had them balanced upon his books to his own profit and the widow's satisfaction.

CHAPTER VI.

JEWELS FOR THE RICH, FLOWERS FOR THE POOR;
BUT BEAUTY FOR THE EYES OF ALL.

FROM the time of Matthew's final visit to Enneton, described in a preceding chapter, he permitted no unnecessary delay in his preparations for leaving its vicinity. Every hour that he spent in Harsford's Mills, was but so much addition made to the ripeness of his pain and trouble. He was continually tormented by the impracticable idea of revisiting Arabella, and repeating the interview of the evening, though with hope of a happier result; and he felt he should not be safe in temper nor comfortable in mind, until he was at a long distance from the scene of that unfortunate dissension; until space as well as time should separate them in outward life as effectually as Arabella's caprice and haughty bearing had separated them at heart.

Matthew did not know how evanescent was that caprice; that it had lived only upon the resistance he had opposed to it;—how superficial was the revulsion of her pride, wounded as much by the reproaches of her own heart as by the severity of his words. Nor, alas! did Arabella know how deep and thorough a work that

evanescent caprice, that superficial pride of hers had accomplished. She had never understood that he, until he commenced to learn of her, had scarcely known the idea of a true friend; that all the experiences of his life had concurred in teaching him never to trust without calculation, never to rely on the kindness of another unless he could discern the selfish motive which might be depended on to prompt that kindness. She did not understand that the affection he had cherished for her was not merely a new preference, but a new feeling; the exercise of a capacity theretofore unknown within him. Hence she did not understand that in the lesson of one brief hour she had taught him to recant all that new faith which he had been so slowly learning; that she had sent him back doubly a skeptic of the sincerity of love, and more than ever a cold calculator of considerations and measurer of motives. She thought she had offended him. He thought little of offense in the painful surprise of being, as he imagined, undeceived. She would have had him return that she might express her contrition for the unkindness of her behavior, and that she might win his pardon. He would have returned, if he had returned at all, to tell her that he had learned a lesson which must alter his course; that he had found that, being without wealth or high position, he could not command the motives which would govern her feelings; and that he hoped the ill success of his attempt would be forgotten by her without pain.

This however is perhaps a more distinct expression of his feelings than Matthew himself could have given. He

was conscious only of a mistrust in the reality of disinterested affection, and of a chagrin that he had not more skillfully managed those motives of Arabella by which he might have retained his place in her regard. Predominant above these feelings, though vague and scarce even self-confessed, there was yet a bitter pleasure in feeling himself free; and he took also a proud satisfaction in recalling the circumstances of the interview to assure himself that the separation was not by his act but by hers.

A mind such as Matthew's, when brought under the excitement of such a disappointment as his, seeks by a strong impulse, a new scene of life; and the life of a great city has stronger attractions than any other. Matthew was not long in resolving to try his fortune in the city of New York. He abruptly discharged himself from Mr. Sackett's service, rejecting, without even respectful consideration, an offer from that worthy merchant of a rise of a dollar a week; and having written for himself and dispatched per mail a solitary letter of introduction which has been already received and read in the reader's presence, he one morning mounted the stage-coach at the door of the Harsford's Mills Post-office, and took his seat behind the driver. The coach was already full inside, but this made no difference to Matthew, who would have taken an outside seat in any weather less unfavorable for open air riding than an actual rain storm. The morning was clear and fine, and Matthew, elate with anticipations, felt a peculiar satisfaction, as the stage rolled down the village street, in leaving Harsford's Mills

behind him; since he had still all the world before him.

Among other things before him, though not destined long so to be, was the residence of Squire Harsford, whose roof,—the grand-paternal roof, so to speak, of Miss Charlotte Harsford,—was at the moment visible through the trees.

“Ha! The Squire’s got his flag out,” said the driver.

“So he has,” exclaimed Matthew. “I wonder who is going down.”

“Oh it’s only some bundle or letter, most likely. I stop for something of that sort more than half the time,” replied the driver.

This was so. The arrival of the stage, and its departure, twice every week, was the chief event of life in the village of Harsford’s Mills. Every body looked out for the great lumbering red-bodied, rusty-topped, muddy-wheeled vehicle. Every body knew when it went by. Every man had a nod for the driver; every woman had a quick glance into the stage to see who the passengers were; every child, jumping up from the road-way, had a round-eyed stare for the great destroyer of his mud-built edifice; every dog, even, had a farewell bark for the horses as they cantered out of town. This stage always passed the Squire’s door on its way out of the village; and frequently had occasion to stop there. So frequently, that at length, the Squire, instead of sending up word to the office, or setting a watch to run out and hail it as it passed, adopted the plan of affixing a little flag, such as surveyors use, to the post at the corner of

his door yard. The driver, whenever he saw this flag out, stopped the stage, and received, sometimes passengers, sometimes parcels, sometimes letters, sometimes little commissions to execute in the neighboring city which was the other terminus of his journey. And so often was he thus called upon to stop, that he was accustomed, in familiar conversation with the stable boys, to call Squire Harsford’s house “the down street booking office;”—and from the patronage and business of the Squire’s household and their visitors arose no inconsiderable part of the revenues of the stage proprietor.

“A very good looking bundle it is, if you call it one,” remarked an unknown gentleman who sat next the driver, as the Squire came out of the front door, leading upon his arm his fair granddaughter, who was evidently equipped for a journey. The driver, as he stopped the coach, turned a glance of indifferent contempt upon the speaker,—a stage driver never recognizes a joke unless it is about horses,—handed the reins to Matthew, jumped to the ground and bowed respectfully to the Squire. He was a fine-looking old man, tall, spare and erect, and his full, white hair, which was yet as bushy as in youth, gave an expression of vivacity and energy to his venerable countenance.

The advocates of the doctrine of the hereditary transmission of moral qualities have an ingenious way of disposing of the somewhat troublesome fact that some most excellent men have very rascally sons, some women of genius very thick-headed daughters, and *vice versa*; and their mode of accounting for this circumstance is by

saying that the moral qualities of the descendant are in such cases received from the grand parent; the immediate father or mother being only a sort of post-office or express company by whom the qualities or endowments of the remoter ancestor are transmitted to the grandchild. I presume that this class of philosophers will be of opinion, when this history is fully before them, that Miss Charlotte Harsford is a case in point for the application of this hypothesis, inasmuch as she certainly partook much more of her grandfather's character than of her father's.

Be this as it may, the two now stood together side by side, the countenance of each betraying an affectionate solicitude for the other;—his, for her comfort while she should be on her journey; hers, for his health and happiness after she should be gone. She knew not when she should greet him again, or whether she should ever again see that white head erect in life and health. Busy with these thoughts and with the preparations for her ride, it is perhaps not surprising that she did not look up, and did not recognize Mr. Caraby, nor catch the bow and smile and the salutation he had ready to launch forth the first moment he could catch her eye.

"James is not here," the old gentleman said to his granddaughter, after peering through the stage windows as they approached it.

"Is he not? Well! Then I must go alone. I did n't really believe he would come."

"I expected you'd bring my grandson," said the Squire to the driver.

"Have n't got him," said the driver with good-humored bluntness.

He was a wonder of brisk strength, this driver, and had Miss Charlotte's big black trunk up by one hand, swinging it about, anticipatory to strapping it upon the rack.

"Was the Enneton stage in before you came down?" asked the Squire. "My son, in New York, wrote me that James was going on a fishing excursion up to the Lakes and would come across from Enneton on his way back. He was to come this morning."

"Yes, half my load are Enneton folks," said the driver. "We wait for them, you know, till half past nine. That's the contract. But I hain't seen any thing of your grandson."

"Never mind, grandfather," said Charlotte, in an under tone. "I can go alone just as well as not."

"You had better wait, my dear, hadn't you? He *will* come, certainly."

"No," said Charlotte, "I think I had better go. I am not at all afraid, grandfather."

Then there was a consultation about seats. The old gentleman looked into the coach, and the driver looked into the coach, and the young lady stood on tiptoe, but could not very well look into the coach; and one gentleman passenger magnanimously volunteered to get outside to make room for the lady, but did not move an inch in pursuance of the offer; and then the young lady said something more in an undertone to the old gentleman, and then they both looked up to the top. Matthew, who

had been leaning over from his outside seat watching the scene below, suddenly straightened up, and turned his head another way, and pretended to be very busy holding the horses very hard. His first impulse indeed was to avail himself of that opportunity to give the salutation he had been holding in readiness for the young lady, and to commend the advantages of an outside seat on such a splendid morning; but in an instant he imagined that if he did *not* attract attention she would get up; but that if she were forewarned that by so doing she would seat herself by him for the day she might hesitate. So he cunningly kept silence. Foolish fellow! To think that his being there would make any difference!

His suspense was short, for in a moment the young lady gave Grandfather her parting kiss; three of them;—Matthew saw it done, out of the corners of his eyes, the difficulty of holding the horses to the contrary notwithstanding;—and in a moment more she was by Matthew's side on the broad seat behind the driver.

I do not know why it is that the setting sun paints such gorgeous colors on the western clouds, while the rising sun adorns so slightly the curtains of his chamber;—nor do I know whether the Rev. Eleazar Williams was a Bourbon Prince in disguise, or only a *bona fide* Indian Missionary;—nor do I know who the man in the Iron Mask was, nor why Caspar Hauser was denied the privileges of a common school education;—nor do I know why in New England forests the moss always grows thickest on the North sides of the trees;—and there are many other points of polite learning on which I am ig-

norant. The candid reader will not be surprised therefore when I say frankly that I do not know what conversation passed between Mr. Matthew Caraby and Miss Harsford on their journey. This much I do know however, that from the style in which, on arriving at New York, Matthew escorted his fair companion off the steamboat, and handed her into a carriage, I formed the opinion that these old acquaintances had become new friends.

A day or two after Miss Harsford had returned from the country, as thus described, she sate one morning at her bay window, amusing herself with her needle. Miss Harsford's bay window was a large projecting window in her boudoir. Her apartments were in the second story of her father's mansion,—an elegant edifice upon one of the most fashionable streets in the city of New York,—and were in the rear of the house, looking out upon a beautiful garden, which extended around and behind the house. This garden was her especial charge and delight. From her bay window she could survey this her province, and here she studied her improvements, planned new paths, and imagined the effect of intended flower-beds; or, in another mood, refreshed her eyes with the beauty of the scene, and inhaled the fragrance of her flowers.

When Mr. Harsford built the house the greater part of the block was vacant; and although the neighborhood gave every promise of being aristocratic, yet to make sure that he should have no disagreeable neighbors, he

bought an additional lot upon each side of his house. He would like he said, 'to own all the land next to him.' Imagine then his dismay when, moving into his mansion, he found that the owner of two lots on the other side of the block, fronting on the street below that in which Mr. Harsford lived, and abutting in the rear upon one corner of his garden, had commenced the erection of a lofty building with many stories and many windows which his experienced eye at once recognized as a tenement house. Here then by one of those strange contrasts which a great city exhibits in such numbers, luxury and poverty were to stand over against each other. Wealth gathers herself up to stand aloof from the touch of every strange neighbor, and scatters flowers and quickset hedges on every side to screen herself from view; and forthwith Want huddles herself in gaining shelter from the very walls built to exclude her, and matching the thorns of her neighbor's hedge by the roughnesses and asperities by which her own life is surrounded.

Although Charlotte had at first echoed her father's expressions of dissatisfaction at finding they were to have a tenement house in the otherwise elegant prospect which their back piazza and windows afforded, yet she came, in course of time, to feel an interest in its walls, dingy even in their newness;—in its many windows through which she now and then caught glimpses of the homely life of the poor tenants;—in its many stories and tedious flights of narrow, dark stairs, up which the weary feet of the dwellers there climbed to gain their cramped homes;—in its roof, so often bannered with white garments, dry-

ing in the sun and air. So that, at length, although to the ordinary observer the prospect in that direction from her windows was repulsive rather than attractive, there was no favorite flower in all the grounds Charlotte overlooked, that gave her half the pleasure she received from a little rose-bush which stood upon the sill of a small window, far up under the eaves of that populous yet desolate building. Other windows were obscured by dust and cobwebs, or disfigured by out-hanging garments, but there, looking out from a little room at the top of five flights of steep stairs, were two windows, always neat, one of which held the rose-tree and was also embowered with a climbing vine. Both plants grew from the same handful of earth, contained in a little wooden box. The vine, trained upon lengths of twine, was festooned over the window, leaving the stem of the rose-bush standing in the middle, and thus was formed a curtain, the only curtain which concealed from Charlotte's view the little cot that stood against the window within. The other window was uncurtained, even in so primitive a way. It was open this morning, and as Charlotte was looking up towards it, a little head appeared at it. It was that of a child who with a slow and gentle motion drew some seat within the room to the window and sat down, looking out with a pale face but with a quiet and happy expression upon the garden beneath him. He leaned forward a little, as if to gain a better view, and examined the whole garden minutely, studying it with great apparent interest, beginning at the most distant corner and scanning it round to the nearest, as if

he were the owner, and were come to see what had been done during his absence. At length he leaned back again slowly, as if fatigued, and rested his head against the corner of the window post; turning away his face, as if speaking to some one within the room.

"Why! there's Benny!" said Charlotte, with surprise and pleasure. "Sitting up! How glad I am,—poor little fellow! I'll signal him."

With these words the young lady went to her other room and brought out an ampelle which was filled with flowers. This she hung in the open window by fastening it to a cord which was suspended to the woodwork above for the purpose, and then, drawing it to one side, she set it swinging back and forth, and stood watching for the child's recognition. His face soon reappeared, and it was but a moment before the signal was seen, for the child started forward with more energy than he had yet displayed, and raised his thin hand which he waved gracefully in token of response. Charlotte herself made no movement, but stood by the window where she could just be seen by her little friend. In an instant after his recognition he turned away again, as if to speak as before; and immediately Charlotte could discern a figure unobtrusively standing back behind the boy and looking out through the window. This figure was that of a woman. A small white shawl or scarf, thrown over her shoulders and fastened in front, enveloped the bust, and the thin face was surmounted by masses of black hair drawn straight down over the temples. She did not approach closely to the window, but stood looking through

it for a moment from her position within the room, and then disappeared, leaving Benny still waving his hand back and forth, keeping time with the oscillations of the swinging vase of flowers. His countenance expressed a keen though quiet satisfaction as he leaned his cheek against the window and continued gently marking the time of the signal. Charlotte still stood by the curtain of her bay window. It was certainly a smile which lighted up her beautiful features, yet it was a sad smile, for her blue eyes glistened with sympathy for her puny neighbor. There was something singularly touching to her in the happiness which it conferred upon the poor boy to see that she was at home again, and to know that she thought of him. He sought nothing beyond this knowledge. He made no signal which could bear any meaning to her eye. The one simple message of the swinging flowers was recognition by a kind heart; and that was enough for him. It filled him with happiness.

But before the ampelle lost its momentum, the feeble hand grew weary, and ceased its synchronal movement; and the child sat still, looking at the bay window, and now and then at the garden beneath, refreshing himself with the air and the sunlight.

His friend across the garden stood between the curtains of her bay window. She was very simply yet elegantly dressed; and her fine form and ruddy face, slightly browned with exposure to the summer sun and the zephyrs of Harsford's Mills, glowing with health and now illuminated with the light of her kind sympathy for little Benny, made her appear beautiful indeed.

While Charlotte, the daughter, stood enjoying, almost unconsciously, the pleasure she had thus conferred, the door of the parlor opened, and Mrs. Harsford, the mother, entered. Her step, noiseless upon the thick carpet, failed to attract the ear of her daughter, intent upon the window opposite; and she herself, seeing Charlotte standing in this attitude of attention, paused a moment before speaking.

At length she said:—

“Arlie!”

“Ah! mother,” said the daughter, turning and stopping the signal with one hand as she turned, “I am glad to see you.” And she drew up an easy chair to the window, for her mother, and sat down herself upon an ottoman, by her side. “It is pleasant to be at home again. How well the garden looks.”

Her mother looked out.

“Yes,” she said,—in the tone of one weary of a long discussion of the point, and willing at last to admit it for the sake of peace.

“Why, beautifully, mother! That wisteria in the corner there, must have looked magnificently when in flower. It has grown very high. See, it’s almost as high as the second row of windows over the fence.”

“I’m sure I wish it was seven times as high again, to cut off those barracks altogether. I don’t see why you like these rooms so much. I couldn’t endure them, looking out in that direction. I should think you’d prefer the front room up stairs. Those people have no business to overlook us in this way. *You do n’t think*

they overlook us any more than we overlook them? Oh yes they do. You may be sure they do. You’ve been away so long you don’t remember how it is. Why they overlook us all the time; positively all the time. Why I don’t suppose I ever look over to the house without seeing some frowsy head or other looking directly down into our garden; and I suppose I look out first and last twenty times a day. I’m sure I think it’s a shame the place was ever built. *You suppose the poor people must live somewhere?* Yes, I suppose they must. I’m willing they should live, I’m sure. They may live anywhere they choose if they can pay their rent. Every body has a right to live wherever they can afford to. Of course I understand that my dear. I wasn’t disputing that in the least, was I? I’m sure I didn’t intend to. But what I say is this, that when there are so many other parts of the town so much better adapted to that class of people, they ought not to be allowed to disfigure such a block as this. The government ought to interfere. *You think we ought to make the best of things?* That’s just like you, Arlie, you always have something to say about making the best of things. If I only had your temperament I would be as contented as you are; a great deal more so, for I’m sure you have every thing to make you happy, plenty of money, books, a good house, and you have the best rooms in it, too, I think, and I’ve told your father so half a dozen times. But at my age one can’t always be making the best of things. Besides, I don’t think it’s our duty. We all have our trials of some sort or another. I think it’s intended we

should have our trials. And when we have a trial we ought to take it for a trial and let it do us good,—though what good that hornet's nest of a house over there does me, I'm sure I can't tell,—and not go about making the best of things and pretending we have no trials. I think it's flying in the face of Providence to refuse to be tried when He sends afflictions. Besides, you don't know what a trial it is to me. When you are my age you will value retirement, privacy, more. Now you are all curiosity. What I want is to live retired. Not that there's any thing to be ashamed of in the way we live. Quite the contrary, and I am as willing as any one to have our friends see our style of housekeeping, and even to show them over the house and grounds. But I want to enjoy privacy in my own apartments. *My room does n't look out on the garden?* No, that's very true. That's just what I say. I couldn't bear these rooms on that very account. No, those people can't look in at my windows I'm happy to say. And I don't want to see any thing of them. *You think if we did not see such people we should n't know any thing about them?* That's just what I say. You are all curiosity. Girls at your age always are. What you want is to know about their affairs. Now I respect their privacy. I think we ought to. They have their feelings just the same as we do, and we ought not to pry into their concerns. We should n't want them inquiring into our affairs, and we ought not to inquire into theirs. Besides, you can't really know any thing about people just by living next them. You can learn a great deal

more about such people by reading the newspapers than you can any other way. I always read the newspapers on that very account,—when I have time. But what do you know about any of those people? Take your washerwoman there, for instance. You don't know any thing about her. You can't. *You know she is poor, and has a sick child?* Of course. Any body could know that, just by looking in at her windows. But you don't know any thing about her private affairs. I could find out, if I once saw her. I've often thought I'd go round some time and question her. *You are going to see her?* It won't do any good. I'll get the whole story from her, though, some day, you may be sure, just to show I can make charitable visits as well as any body. There's something wrong about her case, that I know. What does she say her name is? *Alfene Temple?* Now did you ever hear such a name as that? It can't be her true name. They never give washerwomen such names as that. Besides, she's not a washerwoman, in my opinion, she's something else in disguise. I told your father so, and he quite agreed with me."

"How is father this fall?" asked Charlotte, knowing by experience how easy it was to divert the current of her mother's conversation. "Seems to me he does n't appear to be well."

"He is *not* well, I believe. He says it's business; but I think he's ill. He can't eat, and he can't sleep, and he can't go away, and when he does go, he can't stay long enough in one place to get rested. Either he's sick, or

he's got something on his mind that's worse; though he says not. *Can't we do something to cheer him up?* I don't know I'm sure. I don't know what we could do. I should like to do something to cheer him up, very much. I need something done for my own health and spirits too. Besides it's extremely uncomfortable to have one of the family get run down as your father is. But what can we do? *Get up an enthusiasm about something and get him interested?* Yes, but *what?* I can't think of any thing—unless it's a party. *That would n't do at this season?* I don't know. Yes, I think that might do. Yes! Capitally! It's just the right time. Throw open the house and the gardens! Illuminate the garden! Have a band of music in the summer house! And pass round refreshments out of doors. *Every body is out of town?* Oh! no. Not every body. A good many have got back. And besides, they would come into town to come. We could have a thousand people here, just as well as not; yes, fifteen hundred. That's a bright thought of yours Arlie;—a bright thought."

"But it would cost a great deal, mother," suggested Charlotte, by way of remonstrance. She seemed not to relish either the bright thought, or the idea of having it attributed to her as its originator.

"Yes I know—but then if it would only do your father good, we ought to be willing to sacrifice something. I am always willing to make sacrifices for the family. Of course my first duty is to consider your father's health."

And Mrs. Harsford went on to amplify the details of

the project, and opened the bay window to get a better view of the garden for the purpose of imagining more vividly how it would look illuminated and filled with music and promenaders; and from thence she went down stairs and thereafter resolved herself into a committee of arrangements on the subject of giving a grand party at an expense of two or three thousand dollars, for the purpose of relieving the business anxieties of her unhappy husband.

For some days indeed the considerate wife succeeded in exciting a great enthusiasm in her own mind upon the subject, whatever sentiment may have been aroused in the breast of Mr. Harsford; and if it were indeed true that her own health and spirits only required the stimulus of a new subject of interest and enthusiasm to raise them from their state of despondency, it is probable that they were elevated to the highest pitch. The benefit was not permanent however, for after a few days of garrulous gossip with every one of whom she could make a listener, her enthusiasm collapsed, she cast the whole responsibility of the plan upon her daughter, and went about bewailing that she could have no real help from her family, even in her best contrived plans for their own benefit.

As for Charlotte, she listened most patiently to her mother's plans and projects; interposed most sensible suggestions and advice, which were most coolly put aside and rejected; and moreover devoted herself during the few days of her mother's zeal, to performing the numerous errands, and making the very considerable number

of purchases to which the project while yet in embryo gave rise. In the end she accepted with an unprotesting and cheeful grace, the burden of responsibility which her mother chose to cast upon her.

As for Mr. Harsford, I do not know whether he ever knew what was going on. I do not believe he did.

CHAPTER VII.

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YOUR TRAP MUST BE LARGER THAN YOUR GAME.  
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IF the reader had happened, by any chance, to have been standing, on the morning of a certain day of November, 1848, upon the glowing surface of the Sun, he might probably have seen a small company of rays of light, as they started upon a short pleasure excursion of ninety-five millions of miles or so, to the Earth. These rays traversing space with incredible velocity, reached in the short period of about eight minutes, the place of their destination, a certain steamboat wharf on the bank of the Hudson river in the city of New York. There arriving they fell, as fate would have it, upon the person of Mr. Matthew Caraby then standing upon said wharf, and in the act of bowing a farewell to Miss Charlotte Harsford as her carriage drove off up the pier. They,—the rays not Mr. C. and Miss H.—were shattered into fragments, naturally enough, by their fall from so great a distance; and many of them rebounding fell upon the eyes of certain by-standers, where, finding cameras and other daguerrian instruments ready to their hands, they proceeded to take daguerreotypes of Mr. Caraby.

In other words Mr. Caraby was seen standing on the steamboat wharf, bidding Miss Harsford good-bye.

From receiving Miss Harsford's courteous thanks for his politeness to her while on her journey, and from bidding her good-bye through the carriage window, and from bowing his farewell, Matthew turned around and stepped back from the wharf on board the boat again, showing no outward token of taking any further thought of his fair companion; yet bearing, I imagine, in undisclosed thought, a certain recollection of a smile and tone not readily to be dismissed from mind. Being again on board he possessed himself of his valise, and, therewith accompanied, deposited himself in a great hack labeled "PEARL STREET HOUSE," and in due course of time was deposited with other passengers and their baggage, at that place of entertainment.

In its palmy days the old Pearl Street House looked out upon the very center and focus of business, although in the changes which Time has wrought, the penumbra of business has now enshrouded it. The old hotel itself has gone up in smoke, and for aught I know its proprietor may have gone down in ashes long since. At the time of which I speak it was yet a thriving hotel, prominent among the great hotels of the day. To live at such an institution was an extravagance which Matthew would have resolutely avoided, but he had a business instinct which brought him there for a day or two, as a good place "to hail from;" and accordingly, there was his name upon the hotel register, in a bold hand, with a fearless cross through both the "t's", and an indisputable period at the tail of the "y."

Whether it was either of these features of the auto-

graph, or the addition of "Harsford's Mills" in the right hand column, or some other cause that rendered the name striking to a reader, I do not know; but so it seemed to be to a gentleman who sauntered up to the desk, about half an hour before dinner time, to spend a few leisure moments in studying the register. He was a stout, well-built man, glossily dressed, and embellished with an admirable beard, the credit of the amplitude of which belonged undoubtedly to Nature, while the praise of its glossy blackness was as undeniably due to Art.

As this gentleman is one of a large family whose members any stranger may meet in the city, the reader will naturally expect a formal introduction.

There exists in our great commercial cities a class of persons peculiarly compounded of elegance and iniquity. They are gentlemen without,—jail birds within. It is their profession to instruct in vice. They earn a livelihood by acting as guides at the gates of Death. As Religion maintains ministers of purity and truth to recall the wandering into paths of peace, so does Commerce support an infernal priesthood to entice the weak into wickedness. The unsophisticated and wondering country merchant who, having found himself somewhat at home among the respectable attractions of the city, begins to feel a curious desire to witness, at a careful distance, some of the wonderful wickednesses of a fermented community, does not fully understand how this weakness of his nature has been reckoned up and calculated upon by the eminently respectable head of the jobbing house with which his principal dealings are had;

nor that it is conceded among many merchants that the easiest way to obtain a good run of custom is by providing ample facilities for the demoralization of the customers; that to insure patronage one must attempt to ruin the patrons.

The man who now stood reading the hotel register was a guide and showman of immoralities, one of those professors of iniquity whose employment has become so common in the rivalries of trade. He was exclusively employed and well paid by a large dry-goods house; and the duties of his position well suited his indolent and licentious nature. All the patrons of his house who were approachable by motives of immodest curiosity and appetite were turned over to him for their amusement. At the store he filled any function which for the time suited this purpose. Sometimes he officiated as salesman, sometimes sat as a clerk in the counting-room, sometimes passed for one of the firm to show a stranger over the establishment and invite him to dinner and the theater, sometimes he contrived to be taken for a gentleman of leisure and genial companionship, who was delighted to extend the hospitalities of the city to a friend of his friends. The assuming of these characters was the task of his business hours; his evenings and nights were less irksome. Since his influence commanded so much patronage the doors of all places of amusement were freely open to him. The brilliant halls of revel and the chambers of darker vice welcomed him freely; and from the theater down to a Five Points ball; from those mirrored palaces where the manners of vice are sometimes refined

into a heartless semblance of propriety lest profitable new-comers should be shocked instead of allured, down to the vilest den of Orange Street, where fallen humanity at its lowest degradation, and with its last breath, exhibits itself to the curious eye of those who would shrink fearfully from its touch; from the first haunts of folly down to the last retreats of crime, this man was a familiar and a welcome visitor. More respectable institutions recognized his influence and bowed to his favor. The great hotels looked to him for friendly recommendations, and in return for his occasional visits always presented him with receipted bills; and the most expensive restaurants were more than repaid by his companions for all the dinners they gave to him.

All this was well understood by his respectable employers. But there was a coil in his wickedness of which they did not know. He often diminished the contents of their customer's purse as much by play as they did by business. They expected him to run the round of the cheaper vices, but they did not know that the center of that circle was gambling; that which is at once the meanest and most extravagant of all.

Take him all together this man was, and still is for aught I know, one of the most utter scoundrels that ever wore broadcloth and velvet. He was commonly known and looked up to as a master by all of his companions in the profession; and the neat, dexterous swindling that he accomplished was confidentially whispered around among a circle of imitators, with admiring criticisms.

This man going his accustomed rounds in search of

confiding strangers, now nodded to the clerk with familiarity and scanned the list of the day's arrivals.

While he was so engaged, Matthew, it happened, approached the desk and asked the clerk:—

"Can you tell me if there is a line of stages that go up to Hudson street?"

"Yes, what part of the street do you wish to go to?"

"None in particular. I—I should like to go through the street. I wish to look for a boarding place."

"Ah!" said the clerk. "Go right up Fulton street to Broadway. Take a white stage marked 'GREENWICH AND CHELSEA' in red letters;—the Kip & Brown stage. Tell the driver to stop at the corner of Canal and Hudson street. Then you can go either up or down. Or you can stay in the stage and ride up through Hudson street."

"Pardon me, sir!" interposed the black whiskered man at Matthew's side, addressing the clerk, but speaking with a bow and smile to Matthew, which directed at least a third of the speaker's words to him. "Is your friend a stranger in the city?"

"Yes," said the clerk, "I believe so."

This man, so elegant in his rich dress and shaggy beard, spoke in a clear, deliberate, straight-forward way, and with a tone slightly English in its distinct, yet quiet enunciation. His manner excited Matthew's respect and elicited from him a bow that meant "I am very happy to have an opportunity of conversation with so respectable a citizen of New York."

"In that case," said the stranger, turning slightly towards Matthew and speaking with another bow and

smile which addressed another third of his words to him, "I hope he will pardon the interest which I express when I suggest that he runs some risk in going out in search of a boarding place in a strange street, and without guidance or direction. It would be well for him to take some acquaintance with him in exploring for such a purpose."

"Undoubtedly, sir," replied Matthew, "but to me the people are all stranger than the streets. What would you do, sir, in that case?"

"I am making very free upon short acquaintance," said the stranger, addressing himself now at least nine-tenths to Matthew, "but if I were you I would stay here until after dinner, and then if you will accept my company for a walk up Broadway and across, I will put you in the way of seeing Hudson street to advantage, and post you up a little as to the New York boarding houses, on our way. You can't be too careful in the matter of choosing a home. Many a young man who came to New York with good prospects owes his failure and ruin to the counsels of bad companions at his boarding place; and there are a great many tricks and traps for strangers in the boarding-house business."

"Of all things what I should like the best," cried Matthew. "To be as free as yourself on short acquaintance, I like your ideas. I should like to take a walk with you up Broadway very much."

"I can show you more in two hours than you could learn by yourself in a month," said the stranger, with the air of an expert.

"That's so!" ejaculated the clerk. "He's the best fellow to show you round that you can find. He knows all the ropes. He does."

It was hardly true, this last admiring remark of the clerk. Mr. Arent, by which name the stranger was known, did not know *all* the ropes. There was one rope that he had not yet learned.

Matthew and Arent took dinner side by side, at the public table. The gambler, to whom almost every scene of city life was trite and threadbare, and devoid of excitement, took a keen delight in the excitement of gaining the confidence of a shrewd Yankee boy, and trying upon him his powers. Mr. Arent expected no pecuniary reward for these labors. He would not have expended a dollar in ensnaring Matthew; but as the sportsman, disappointed in game, will sometimes wind up the afternoon with firing at a mark, so this blackleg, having no important end in view, was pleased to waste an afternoon in practicing upon our hero. And this shows the fallacy of the adage—"Time is money." Time is money, by one argument, it is true; they will both pass. But in every other point of view they are quite different, and men draw most important distinctions between them.

At the dinner table the two new acquaintances conversed, with scarcely a pause. Arent sounded the principles and the ambitions of the young man as well as he could, though with imperfect success, for Matthew, although he did not distrust his new companion as yet, had an instinct which preserved an impassable

barrier between his inmost thoughts and free conversation.

"You come from the country?" said the gambler, as the couple sauntered up the street after dinner.

"Yes."

"What part of the State?"

"Near Enneton."

"Enneton?"

"Not *from* Enneton;—from Harsford's Mills, near there."

"Harsford's?"

"Why!" said Matthew, struck with his companion's apparent surprise, "have you ever been there?"

"Oh no! It was only the name that struck me."

"Do your parents live there?" inquired he.

"I have none," answered Matthew. "That is, my mother died when I was very young, and my father has been gone ever since then. I suppose he has forgotten all about us before this time."

A desperate scheme came into the head of the gambler. He looked furtively at Matthew, scanning the expression of his face as he spoke to him.

"It is wonderful how many ways there are to make a fortune in New York, easy."

"Is it?" said Matthew, glad to come to a subject in which he was so much interested.

"Ways without number;—and yet it's wonderful how many poor fools drudge and drone along as honest as dogs, and as wretched as dogs, too, and daren't lift a finger to help 'emselves."

"I expect a man needs some spirit to succeed here."

"Yes," returned the other. "A man must be ready to trade for his head once in a while. You've got to do it. It's the way they do business here. Every body does."

"Trade for his head?" repeated Matthew, inquiringly.

"Yes, trade for his head, or any thing else he's got. If a man isn't afraid, he can make money fast enough. I helped a fellow to make five hundred dollars or so in a couple of days, last week. Easy as death."

"How?"

"Well, he was hard up. He's a very good fellow, but he has n't the genius that some have. Now I should dare bet you were five times as smart as he, but I showed him how to make five hundred in a couple of days; yes, and double it in the evening. It was pretty neatly done, too. I'll tell you how. He was short—he actually had n't a red left, and he came to me, and says, 'Arent, what the devil shall I do?' Those were his exact words," added the gambler, interrupting himself apologetically. "'Well,' said I, 'do n't swear so, and I'll tell you.' So I said to him, now advertise in to-morrow's paper that you have a nice business for sale; shop, fixtures and stock, or would take a partner; say the stand is first rate and the business genteel. 'What business?' said he. 'Never mind,' I told him. 'Do as I say; there's time enough to fix the business afterwards.' So I gave him a half dollar, and the next day he came to me with a half a dozen letters asking interviews to inquire about the business. Some of them were at hotels.

'There,' said I, 'those fellows are strangers in town, looking for business. They are *bonâ fide*; always deal *bonâ fide* when you can; that's my rule. Now,' said I, 'Flaggerby,' that is his name. 'Now Flaggerby, go and see each of those fellows that are stopping at hotels, and find out what kind of light business they prefer. Tell them the business you advertised was a cigar store, but you have also a—say a genteel bar, and a part interest in a drug store. You understand—you want to dispose of one, or take a good partner, because you can't attend to all three.'

"But he had n't any such thing," said Matthew; "had he?"

"Oh not too fast; it all came true enough before next day. Said I, 'find out what they want and how much they want to pay, and make an appointment to meet them to-morrow and go and see the place. Mind and name different hours.' So pretty soon he comes back and says he has made two appointments to see the cigar store. One was a Connecticut gentleman, and one was a sea-faring man. The next thing I made him do was to fly round and find a man in that business that would sell out. He ran about all the afternoon and he found several. One of 'em wanted two hundred and fifty dollars; his stock was low,—lots of boxes and precious few weeds,—and it was near quarter day. Flaggerby got his offer to sell in writing. 'That place,' said I, 'Flaggerby, is worth a thousand dollars clear to any strange gentleman that wants a business,' (I knew the place.) 'You must take one of those fellows equal partner for

five hundred dollars, and bring him to me to draw your papers.' You know I'm a bit of a lawyer. So sure enough he brought Jack Tar to me and said, 'I've taken this gentleman into partnership and we want your professional assistance to draw the papers.' So I drew the contract, and put in this clause, that if either party should become dissatisfied, he should buy out the other at a fair valuation. Well, they hadn't been together twenty-four hours when Flaggerby gets the new partner into a raging passion at some little trifle. The new partner swore he would n't be imposed on, and that the store was n't worth half what he gave. Flaggerby told him that was a matter of opinion, and he was in for it now, it couldn't be helped, and he couldn't be got rid of. So they came to me as a fair man to decide the question. I asked them who was dissatisfied, and they said it was the new partner. I told them the articles provided for that case, do you see, and that Flaggerby was bound to sell out to him. Flaggerby pretended he didn't want to sell, but finally Jack Tar, who said he was bound to be out of the scrape, paid him three hundred dollars to get rid of him. We made—that is Flaggerby did—five hundred dollars on that job, besides expenses."

"Well, but how did he double it in the evening?" asked Matthew, desirous to hear the end of the story, and restraining his indignation.

"Oh! easy as turning over your hand; I told him how. You see he called for me that night to go round with him. He felt under some obligations to me for

having set him up, and he said he would stand treat. Well, we went all around to all the fancy places just to see what was going on."

"Fancy places?" asked Matthew.

"Yes. We had some fun that night;—but I was going to tell you. We stopped at Dyce's place. There were some gentlemen playing eucere there—cards you know,—and we were looking on. I know Dyce, and I winked to him and nodded toward my friend. He took the hint and gave me a cue. So I told Flaggerby how to stake his money; he was going to bet,—and he won of course; he could n't help it. Oh it's easy enough for a sharp-sighted man to make money, if he is n't afraid; but for a poor devil who sticks up his back at a shadow and dare n't hazard himself once in a while when he has a good chance,—there's no room for such fellows here. They never earn beef till they've no teeth left to eat it with. There are two kinds of people that have no business in New York: poor folks and straight-laced folks. If they were all off the track, the enterprising men here would have it all their own way."

Matthew shrank at these words,—though more from the conception of society they presented than from the thorough depravity they revealed in the speaker. He still felt a certain fascination in the conversation of this man, and continued in his presence and prolonged the conversation, as one exploring some strange building might linger peering through a trap door into dark vaults he would not enter. With this feeling Matthew continued the dialogue.

"Well, I for one am going to make or break. I have no money to lose," added he by way of caution to the enterprising mind of his companion, "but I only want a fair chance."

Arent walked on in silence; he was hesitating whether Matthew would prove sufficiently pliable to serve as a tool in a nefarious scheme in which he wished the assistance of a stranger. He spoke.

"The way is to find out the want of somebody who has money—some great want I mean—and make them pay well for supplying it. That's the best business."

"That's very simple," said Matthew, "for instance the grocery business. Every body wants groceries."

"That's too small a scale altogether. There are bigger wants than that. The fact is every one of these rich fellows sets his heart on having something extravagant. Every one of them has a weakness of one sort or another; and all you have to do is to find out their weakness, and then you have 'em. Now I know a gentleman rich as you please, he's got a singular want. He wants a son. Very singular!"

"Why that's not so strange," said Matthew, laughing. "If I were rich—"

"Ah but he's got one, and a daughter too—fine children; splendid wife! He wants a son that he thought he lost twenty years ago. He would give any thing I believe to find that son, and yet he would n't dare to own him!"

"No?" said Matthew.

"Not he. Family reasons I suppose. Now the right

young man who should come along and have pity on him and say poor old governor—I'll be a son to him, perhaps he is n't my father, but then again perhaps he is—who knows?—stranger things have happened—here he is pining away for want of a son,—I can set him up straight;—why the old gentleman would do any thing for him. Support him traveling in Europe, or set him up in the hide business in South America. Any thing he wanted, the right young man might have, by just showing himself."

"But why does he want to find him if he would n't own him?"

"Ah! there's the point—there's the mystery of it," said Arent, speaking softly.

"I do n't understand why."

"No, I should not think you would. It's a long story. That would be a very nice affair for the right young man to take hold of—"

"I beg you will excuse me," broke in Matthew suddenly, and starting at the same time toward the edge of the sidewalk. "Excuse me, I'll see you in the morning. I must—"

The rest of his words were lost to Arent's ear as Matthew darted off into the middle of Broadway and disappeared among the carriages. The gambler instinctively put his hands to his pockets at this strange disappearance as if accustomed to be suspicious of the light fingers of his companions, but the act reminded him he had had nothing in them all day, and he felt reassured. He hastened after Matthew, and by hurrying forward caught

one glimpse of his retreating form among the vehicles. He appeared to be running behind a covered cart, aiding his speed by holding on to the end of the body. Thus running he in a moment disappeared entirely from the gambler's sight.

It would seem that the loss of Matthew's companionship must have been the slightest of losses to such a man as Arent. Yet he bore it hardly. He stood upon the curb-stone resting one hand upon a lamp-post, while he gave a stamp of vexation upon the stone beneath him; and he scowled without while he swore within. He was one of those men of strong ungoverned will and temper who will not submit to be defeated in a purpose, however trivial. Besides he was in reality somewhat disappointed. His ambition outran the short and humble course of his profession. He had in hand great and delicate business, and for some reason best known to himself, and which with us must be at most a matter of conjecture, his ready mind, quick to avail itself of every advantage, calculated upon drawing some assistance from Matthew. Already had he in imagination connected this young man, so earnest, so ambitious, so unsuspecting, so ready to be bought by a pecuniary success, with his weighty plans. So sudden, so capricious a departure, was vexatious indeed.

His disappointment however was destined to be soon forgotten. Just as he was deluding himself with the idea that Matthew could be easily found at the hotel again that night or the next morning, an expectation

which seems reasonable, yet which was destined to be disappointed through the occurrence of events soon to be narrated, his attention was attracted by seeing, among the crowd of vehicles in the street, a horse drawing a slight buggy, approaching. This buggy, fitted to carry two persons, was now occupied by only one; a young man of slight stature and effeminate frame, who sat in a careless, stooping attitude. He had a cigar in his mouth, and leaning between his knee and the seat of the carriage was a slim cane with a fox's head. The young man was threading his way up Broadway, in careless style, now trotting his horse a few steps, then walking, then stopping, then backing or turning short aside to avoid a collision. Mr. Arent smoothed his ruffled features into a facetious expression, and leaning forward, swinging himself around by the lamp-post, and holding up one finger to attract the young man's attention, exclaimed,—“Hi! Ride hup! Broadwhay! Ride hup!”

At this humorous salutation, Mr. James G. Harsford, *alias* James Glovering, looked around. The two men greeted each other with a loud laugh; and in a moment more Arent was in the seat by the young man's side.

Then commenced a dialogue which was as long as from the corner of Broadway and White street, where they started, to Bloomingdale, where they supped and turned around. The monotony of the ride was relieved by the various stoppages they made for cigars and other good things, and by various races with any chance gent of their own class they might meet, who was inclined to try speed with them.

Casual as was this meeting, the reader is not to suppose that Arent was without a purpose in availing himself of it. Scarcely was the shrewd and cunning spider fairly seated by the side of the weak and inexperienced fly, than his active brain had evolved the materials for that web of ingenious question and insinuation and suggestion, by which, when the victim should be brought to the proper condition of yielding weakness by potations and excitements, he was to be entrapped to the furtherance of Arent's deep laid projects.

"Haven't seen much of you lately, Jim," said the spider. "Married, I suppose, and cutting your old friends."

The speaker uttered the last sentence with an ironical tone; but the former more in earnest. There might possibly be a dash of satire, though, in his first remark; inasmuch as one might see Mr. Harsford, *alias* Glovering, many times, yet not see much of him, there being but little of him to see, even though he were examined under the magnifying glass of charity.

"I've been in the country," said the fly. "Only got back last week."

"Hunting, or fishing?" asked the spider. "Or pretty girls?" he added, as a third alternative.

"Not much of either," said the fly; "business for the governor. I did make rather an impression though in one quarter, I expect. And fixed one fellow's flint pretty well for him."

"How was that?"

"Why you see I was up in the country; at Enneton.

Were you ever there? Regular country place. Nothing going on. Nothing to do. Nothing to drink even. I stopped at a fellow's house named Mayes, to get him to go up the country for the governor,—to hunt up some old matters of his. While he was gone I had a few civil words with his daughter, of course, and before I knew it, the poor thing was dead in love with me. Dead. Entirely gone. Well one night we were out to walk, and while we were gone a young country spark came to see her, and when we came back there he was waiting. He'd been kept standing so long that he'd got a little sour, and nothing would suit him but a flare-up. So he talked to his girl a while, and at length he asked her point blank which she'd rather have, him or me. Well, she blushed, and simpered, and tried to pacify him, but nothing would do but she should answer, so at length she said 'me,' of course. Then he offered me some impertinence or other, and I hit him a lollipop over the shoulder and down he went, flat as a paving-stone. I didn't mean to knock him, but I do hit a tremendous blow sometimes without meaning it. He was a stout fellow, twice my size, but he saw he couldn't do any thing against my science, so he got up and walked away; and left me to comfort the pretty Miss Arabel."

"Which you did of course!" This was said in a tone that to a more observant listener would have implied,—
"I shall believe just as much of that story as I think is credible."

"Of course. Wiped her eyes. Told her all about New York. Talked in a round-about way about show-

ing her round the city one of these days. Oh! we got on nicely; like a street contractor and an alderman, as the governor says."

"How is the old gentleman?" asked the spider. "He and I dined together at Delmonico's the other day,—only two tables between us,—and I thought he was looking poorly."

This was a lie thrown out at random to catch the truth with. Arent had not seen Mr. Harsford.

"Yes. He's not in prime condition."

"Business cares I suppose. He works too hard, and lets things worry him too much. Why don't you go into the counting-room and relieve him? Or are you going to do the traveling? You were up at Enneton on business for the house, I think you said."

"No, not for the house; for father. Private affairs of his own."

"Why didn't he go himself, and get a run in the country? He's killing himself with hard work."

"No, it's not work. He's fretted a little by some old stories being raked up against him. He'll clear 'em all up in a little while and come out all right."

"Ah," said the spider, "those things are very worrying. I know what they are. I've had a good deal to do with cases of that sort. Rich men you know, and lying stories made up to get money out of them. Why a friend of mine would have been worried to death in that way once, I believe, if I had n't helped him out of it."

This was another lie, coined to buy knowledge of the

truth with. It served the purpose of exciting the young man's curiosity.

"How was it?" he asked.

"Why my friend was traveling out West once with his daughter and they got lost in the woods, and had to camp out over night. Next morning he left her at the camp, and started off to find the way out. He got on the track at last and went back to the camp for her, but she was gone. He never set eyes on her again. Hunted all round and about but could n't find a trace of her, and never heard of her again. About four or five years afterwards some rascals got hold of the story, and made a charge against him of murdering his daughter, and making up that story to conceal it. And they worked on his feelings so that first and last they had got over five hundred dollars out of him when he came to me."

"And what did you do for him?"

"I said this to him: 'You send out there, and hire some old hunter, some man that knows every step of the woods, to get up a gang of men to make a new search all round and about. Keep it up until they find something.' So he did that, and sure enough they found his daughter's bones off about a mile from the camp ground. By good luck she'd cut her name on a log with a penknife, and underneath she'd cut 'Lost in the woods,' so that was the end of the talk about murder."

"Well, but we've done that," said the fly. "I mean,—that is,—ahem—suppose you'd done that and found nothing. Then what would you have done?"

"Then I should have told my friend, 'Here now,

you'd better see these fellows, face to face, and find out what they're at. Find out what they can prove. Challenge 'em to prove any thing against you, and they can't help bringing forward their evidence. Then you'll know where you stand, and what you've got to disprove. Then come to me and I'll tell you what to do next according to what their story is."

"But suppose they'd found the woman herself and offered to produce her, alive and well."

"Then we should have beat 'em don't you see, for there would have been an end of the charge of murdering her."

"Yes, but suppose they had n't charged him with that. Suppose they had only accused him of going off and leaving her and then marrying again."

"Well, his marrying again would make no particular odds, would it?" said the spider, with a sly smile at the unguarded frankness of his victim. "That is, not if it was his daughter that was lost?"

"N—no. No. Oh! no. Of course not," said the fly, recovering himself as well as he could from this unwary plunge into the net. "No. I don't mean daughter. Suppose it was a man's wife who was lost, and they got up a story that he had gone off and left her a purpose and then married again?"

"That would have been a pretty bad case. I do n't know any thing a man could do in that case, if they could produce the woman, except to make the best bargain he could. That would be an awful scrape to have get about."

And so they rode on and conversed. At Bloomingdale they stopped for a more substantial refreshment than they had thought it worth while to call for at the various inns and saloons at which they had stopped on their way up. Their entertainment completed, to the decided exhilaration of Mr. Arent, and the very successful obscuration of the feeble intellect of Mr. Harsford *alias* Glovering, they mounted into the chaise and set out on their return.

Young Glovering sat silent, apparently revolving weighty matters in his mind. Arent drew a cigar and small box of lights from his pocket, and commenced a careless smoke. There was little need for him to pursue the conversation further. To his ready mind the unguarded admission of his companion, coupled with his previous remark respecting his errand at the residence of Mr. Mayes, and aided also by the uncalled for confusion alternating with transparent mystery of young Harsford's manner, were quite enough to reveal that Mr. Harsford the elder had been deeply disturbed by some communications calculated seriously to affect his good name; that he had sent abroad to search for means of meeting these charges, and that his search had been unsuccessful. How fully the details of this difficulty of Mr. Harsford's stood further revealed to the gambler, it is not for me now to say.

At length the little buggy drew near the thickly settled streets of the city, and arriving at the stable where young Harsford was accustomed to leave it, the two men stepped out. Mr. Glovering, *alias* Harsford,

bade his friend 'good night' with the most enthusiastic professions of regard, in expressing which his utterance was impeded,—by excess of emotion I suppose. And parting at this place, the two went their several ways.

Instead of following these gentlemen further, let us turn in the other direction to overtake Matthew whose heels are flying in an undignified manner through Broadway, at the tail of a bakery cart.

CHAPTER VIII.

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IT IS HARD FOR ROGUES TO UNDERSTAND HONEST MEN.  
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CLINGING tenaciously to the tail-board of a rattling cart whose youthful Jehu took evident delight in the perils of rapid riding in Broadway, Matthew maintained his speed down the street. The secret of his unceremonious and singular behavior was that the cart had upon it, in large letters, "HOPLEY, BAKER." Now Matthew had proposed to himself, as one of his early errands in New York, to search out Mrs. Hopley, his benefactress and foster mother in childhood; the widow to whose kindness he and Roselle owed their home when her blindness made her doubly dependent. He knew she had come to New York, and that she had come to reside with a brother who was a baker; but further than that he had no clue by which to find her. The idea of looking in the directory had not occurred to his rurally-educated mind; and now, when the very cart of her brother's establishment drove by, he saw an opportunity to find her which he might not soon have again. "If I follow that," he thought, "I shall soon be at the shop; or I can ask the driver her address, if he is not going directly there." Therefore it was that, breaking away

from his new companion without ceremony, he had dashed along the side-walk, and after two or three personal collisions of a nature which threatened serious consequences, he took to the street, and soon caught up with the cart. He was less successful, however, in his endeavor to open communication with said Jehu, whose sharp eyes were intent upon his course, and whose ears were full of the rattle of his own wheels, and the crash and thunder of the heavier vehicles around him. The only answer to his breathless calls to the driver to "Stop," were those made by a villainous looking dog which stood tipping about, or rather sliding about, among the big baskets in the agitated wagon. This faithful brute, firmly convinced that Matthew entertained sinister designs upon the contents of the bread baskets, broke into a fit of barking so violent that it seemed as if it must cause some severe internal injury, and menaced Matthew with a formidable row of teeth. What with the uncertain pavement, slipping away so fast beneath his oscillating legs, what with the lurches and sudden starts made by the wagon, what with the admonitions he heard addressed by malicious boys to the all-engrossed Jehu to "cut behind," and the glimpses that he now and then got of passing omnibus drivers leaning over in the evident attempt to crack their long whips under his flying coat-tails, and what with being out of breath with running and calling, Matthew was about discouraged, and smiling at the predicament he was in, was looking around to see if the way were clear to let go and sheer off for the side-walk, when he heard a

shout of "Stop thief," from the other side of the street, and turned his head in that direction. Just at this instant the cart gave a sharp lurch, the baskets slid about in wild confusion upon the bottom of the wagon, and among them faithful Watch, sliding upon his fore-feet and haunches, came down upon Matthew, in reality impelled by natural forces, but apparently inflamed with the thirst for blood. Matthew, who was naturally of a cool and resolute disposition, though now somewhat flustered by his exercise, preferred to face his enemy rather than to drop off and be run over; and finding no other weapon, he grasped the end of a loaf of twist projecting from one of the baskets, with the other extremity whereof he gave Watch a tap on the nose, so vigorous as to enable him to overcome entirely the natural forces which had operated to impel him in his onset upon Matthew, and sent him backwards, howling, to the forward end of the cart.

All this was done in half the time that it is read, and when the slanderous cry was repeated, and young Jehu, just about to turn into a cross street, looked around, and breathless Matthew gasped out to him to "Hold on," and his request was very promptly complied with,—he was thunderstruck at seeing Jehu leap like a flash from his seat and rush up at the head of a crowd of spectators; and at feeling himself thereupon grasped unceremoniously by the collar of his coat, and jerked this way and that.

"Let go," said he, breaking loose from the grasp, but still encircled by the crowd. "What do you mean?"

Why could n't you stop before? Did n't you hear me calling to you?"

"Nerh," said John with infinite contempt for a sneak caught in the act who would be guilty of contriving such a transparent story as that—"Nerh."

"Perhaps you heard *us* calling to *you*, eh?" said the man who had set up the cry, and had come across the street to see the result.

"What!" exclaimed Matthew, as the idea of his being alluded to in the hue and cry first broke on his mind.

"I cried 'stop thief,' as soon as ever I saw him dodging after you," said the man.

"What!" said Matthew, bewildered with visions of an early visit to one of the public institutions of the city floating before him.

"Yes, and I saw him look round to see if any body was looking, before he touched the bread," said another.

"And he dropped it quick as I looked around," added the driver.

"Impossible, gentlemen," said Matthew appealing to the crowd. "I'm not a thief. I wanted to speak to this man and ran after his cart—"

"What did you touch the bread for?"

"I only took up a loaf to knock his dog with; he was going to bite me."

At this the crowd laughed. One of them said that he was good for six months, sure. Jehu said he would n't get such good bread as that there, pointing over his shoulder with his thumb, meaning to indicate that the bread served at the Tombs was from another establishment.

"And mind, young man," continued the youth, "when you get out again, if you ever want to see me, which I guess not, you'll remember to come round to the shop, like a gentleman, and not run bobbing after my baskets in the street."

"That's just what I wanted," returned Matthew, reminded of the wish that had led him into this scrape.

"I wanted to know where the Widow Hopley lives."

Matthew having been admonished to speak more respectfully of the lady in question, repeated his wish to see her. To this the only response was a promise that he should see the police justice forthwith; and this purpose was about to be carried into effect even at the expense of a troublesome interference with Matthew's natural freedom of locomotion, when he made one more appeal.

"Gentlemen," said he, "I am a stranger in New York; but I know Mrs. Hopley. I am no thief. She knows me very well, she knows I am not. I have no need to steal bread. I have plenty of money," said he, pulling out a handful of change.

Quick as thought a half a dozen hands fell upon it, and the money was speedily transferred to the pockets of Jehu, to abide the event. This was not without its good effect however, for Jehu appeared much more inclined now to listen to Matthew's remonstrances, and it was finally agreed that the culprit should be taken in the first instance to the Widow's shop, and thence to the Halls of Justice. This course was taken; though not without objection on the part of many of the crowd, who declared that "he was a confidence man and ought not to

be allowed to bamboozle any body." These objections were overruled however by Jehu, who, there being of course no policemen in the vicinity, took upon himself the command of the capture. Under his direction Matthew was marched along the side-walk, flanked by loafers in white coats and in black coats and in no coats at all; among whom were several of the objectors, who went, as they said, "for the sake of seeing him bamboozle the old woman." Little boys ran before and followed after, and Jehu like a prudent general mounted his cart and driving slowly close to the side-walk brought up the rear of this little army.

In this array they reached the bakery of Mrs. Hopley.

The good widow however much she was surprised at the apparition of so numerous an array of visitors soon forgot that, in her greater surprise at seeing Matthew. Then and there, all unmindful of the presence of the public, she kissed "her boy" as she called him, asked a hundred times for his health, and a thousand times for little Roselle, and summarily dismissed the crowd, even before Matthew had had time to complete his volunteered explanation; so that he was, for a few days at least, free from apprehension of involuntary confinement. Jehu disgorged the change he had taken possession of,—he took it "by way of bail," as he explained,—and the entire *posse comitatus* went away in great ill humor, the objectors above mentioned alone excepted. They, having known all along how the affair would turn out, expressed themselves greatly satisfied with the confidence man's performances, and stated and agreed, that it was "a most

tip top bamboozle;"—"one of the neatest things that ever was done."

Matthew soon felt himself very much at home, seated on the old-fashioned sofa in the homely little sitting room which opened off from the shop. The widow ran out now and then to attend to the wants of occasional customers, and always ran back again, to renew with as little delay as possible their conversation.

Matthew told his old friend all his plans. How he had left Mr. Sackett's store at Harsford's Mills, (though he did not say how he had left Enneton,)—how he had come to New York,—how he was determined to get into business and make his way to a brilliant success,—how he intended to present himself at Mr. Harsford's counting-room (though he did not say, alas! what letter of introduction he had already sent in advance of his own coming),—how glad he was to have accomplished so soon the finding of his old friend,—and many details besides.

Mrs. Hopley entered into these plans with great interest and kindness. She spoke in high terms of Mr. Harsford to whom she owed much, she said—alas! it was true, not at all in the sense in which she meant it, but in far too literal a way. She further narrated to Matthew the events of her own quiet life since they had parted;—how she came to New York to be with and keep house for a bachelor brother for many years a prosperous baker,—how he had lately died leaving the bulk of his little property to her,—how she had just effected a sale of the business, stock, fixtures good will and all,

and was carrying it on for a month or two until the purchaser could perfect his arrangements to take possession, —how she had realized between five and six thousand dollars which she had safely invested, (though she did not say alas! how it was invested,)—how she was planning in the course of a short time to remove from the city, and find a quiet home for the remainder of her days in some country village. She urgently invited Matthew to make his home with her during the few weeks that might remain of her residence in town, which would give him time at least to become better acquainted with the city, and able to choose a better place intelligently. She would not hear even of his going back to the hotel that night. So he resigned himself with a good grace to his good fortune, made himself agreeable till a servant appeared from some subterranean region to lay the table in the homely sitting room; and during tea and after tea he made himself still more agreeable with cheerful conversation, enlivening the homely sitting room that for a long time had been silent and lonely to the sociable widow. And thus, with pleasant reminiscences of the past and cheery plans and anticipations for the future, the evening was far prolonged.

Early the next morning Matthew went down to the hotel and brought up his valise before breakfast. He was truly rejoiced to find so pleasant and safe a home, and he found it not easy to express his gratitude to his hostess for the cosy little bedroom overlooking the street which she appropriated to his use. After breakfast and a long consultation as to the best time to present himself

at the counting-room, and after taking a walk around the neighboring blocks to acquaint himself with the locality of his new home, Matthew finally at about nine o'clock started on the momentous expedition. He thought it an important occasion, a turning point perhaps in his history. I will not deny that premonitions of wonderful success and fabulous wealth floated through his mind. Nor will I undertake to say whether the chimerical fiction of a clerk's coming into the firm and marrying the senior partner's daughter, and doing a tremendous business, were or were not also within his foolish head. No dream is too daring to be a wide awake expectation of Young America. It can not be gainsayed that Matthew believed that important things in his destiny hung on this interview.

But this I know, that if he had had an inkling of their momentous nature he would have shrunk from putting his foot on the black stair-case of Alexander Harsford & Co.

Few things cause more surprises in affairs than the propensity of men to calculate upon each other's actions according to the motives by which they are aware they would themselves be influenced in like cases. Almost every man looks at others through himself; and for the most part what he suspects in others is what he has learned in himself.

Now Mr. Harsford, as the reader knows, was a very shrewd man. Deep, he was. Keen, too; oh! it was not words that would express his penetration and his cunning. It took looks, and shrugs of shoulders, and

winks and nods, and slow shakings of the head,—none of which are practicable in pen and ink,—to convey an idea of the sharpness of the merchant's business faculty. He could see roguery in every man. And in all his transactions, while with great politeness and a charitable consideration for the feelings of the man with whom he dealt, he intimated no suspicions, but to all appearance conversed with the honest and simple-minded man who was tangible in the person before him, he always dealt by the cunning and double-minded man who to the eye of his penetration was visible in that person. Thus he was always prepared to meet deceit, treachery, double dealing, prepared even to turn them oftentimes to his own advantage. But honesty, fidelity, straight-forward frankness he did not well comprehend because he was so little capable of them himself; and when in the collisions of business he met either of these virtues, as sometimes strangely enough he did, he always looked at it, scowled at it, set it down as a phase of roguery too deep for his penetration, and protected himself from loss by it by very carefully having nothing to do with it.

Accordingly Mr. Harsford had written to Matthew, very cordially thanking him for his letter, and inviting him to call at the counting-room when he should arrive in the city; but had thereafter proceeded gradually to nurse his curiosity into suspicions, and to educate his suspicions into distrust.

Thus it was that Matthew whose confidence remained at the point to which it was raised by Mr. Harsford's letter, entered the counting-room anticipating a cordial

welcome; and stepped up to the pulpit-shaped desk, and introduced himself to Mr. Harsford in a well-framed sentence which seemed amazingly short to repeat when he thought what a very long time it had taken to prepare it. But the merchant received him with a silent and chilling bow, and went on with his writing. Matthew stood still as long as his patience lasted, and then stood uneasily some moments longer, and then was about to turn away, when the merchant, availing himself of the very moment he had predetermined for the opening of the conversation, motioned him to a seat, and sat looking at him very intently for a few seconds.

Matthew returned his gaze with an innocent frankness; and, in an embarrassed manner, uttered an apology for his intrusion, reminding the merchant of his invitation.

There was a fine contrast between these two men as they sat thus inspecting each other, and each awaiting the other's words. The younger one sat in a rustic attitude with one arm resting over the corner of the back of the chair; and in this hand he held his hat, hanging just above the floor. His position was upright, his head slightly thrown back, and the strong light from the window illuminated a countenance which though it displayed a certain uneasiness and uncertainty, springing from the unexpected manner in which he found himself received, was yet singularly bold, open and self reliant in its expression. He properly thought he had said enough and should await a reply. The elder man, his face in its own shadow, sat bent over his great desk and half concealed by it; and scanned his visitor in a hesitating,

undecided manner. Matthew's air, instead of prepossessing this suspicious man, had revived and strengthened the doubts which had haunted his mind. For, in truth, if the young man maintained this semblance of straight-forward honesty and simple heartedness, impenetrable, the merchant wanted nothing more to do with him. He must in self-protection he felt, penetrate this mask of open heartedness until Matthew should stand revealed before him as being, what the merchant assumed him to be, a sharp fellow with two eyes to the main chance and no eye at all to honesty, an unscrupulous man into whose knowledge Mr. Harsford's private arrangements with the Iroquois Bank had fallen, and who was come now, confident of power, to make terms for keeping silence;—then he could deal with him understandingly.

The interview was therefore to a certain degree important to the merchant as well as to his visitor; and while he was scrutinizing the young man he was wondering whether he should receive a broadside of plain words or fall into an ambush of inuendoes; and was revolving in his own mind how he should make the most of the dialogue, and how probe thoroughly his visitor's thoughts and purposes without disclosing his own. "Rather young," he thought, "to be going into such an operation; but if he were a mere clerk he would have asked for a place before now. His eye is impudent enough for any thing"—and the merchant fairly dropped his gaze from before a pair of eyes whose good-natured fearlessness would have been impudent enough in a rogue

like himself, but in Matthew Caraby was a more modest and honest expression than he had met so closely for a long time;—no! I am wrong there; than he had seen, I should say, since he left his daughter at the breakfast table that morning.

Matthew had at first been somewhat perplexed by the cool impassibility with which he was received by this gentleman, for whom he entertained so much respect, both in his capacity of senior partner in the firm of A. H. & Co., and of father of Miss Charlotte Harsford. He soon however banished the misgiving with the thought that it was perhaps only the New York way of doing business,—as to a certain extent indeed it is;—and with the further thought that allowance must be made for the fact that as yet he was not even an employ   of the firm. This thought of the distance between himself and the object of his ambition, only renewed his courage and hopefulness, and he sat still, resolved to await the merchant's pleasure; though I fear he was much more willing to wait for the father aforesaid than he would have been for the senior partner alone.

"You have come to seek employment in New York, I believe," said the merchant, speaking at last, and in a conciliatory tone.

"Yes sir."

There was a pause, which Matthew improved by laying his hat aside upon a chair which stood near by that on which he himself was seated.

"I was in hopes," he added, "that I might be able to make myself useful to you. I do not know as you want

a clerk," he continued, perceiving a slight contraction of the merchant's brow as matters were thus abruptly brought to a point. "I see indeed you have several, and perhaps I may not seem very well qualified for city trade; but I have picked up some knowledge of business here and there since I have been at Harsford's Mills,—you know there's a good deal going on there, what with the Bank and all,—and I have learned a good deal I think besides the business I have been in. Or if you could put me in the way of getting a place, sir, or advise me as to my best way to set about it, I should be very much obliged to you indeed."

"By the way," said the merchant with an appearance of carelessness, "you wrote me something about Iroquois stock. How did you find out—er—what's the trouble up there?"

"Well, Mr. Harsford," said Matthew, rather perplexed between his desire to speak freely and his remembrance of the promise made to the cashier, and smiling a frank smile which the merchant took for an attempt at a very knowing look, "I am not prepared—that is—I am not at liberty just at present to say any more than I wrote to you."

The merchant's brow contracted slightly again, and he sat with his eyes turned listlessly upon the paper on the desk before him, revolving some matter in his mind.

* * * * *

The results of the prolonged conversation which ensued, are of more consequence than the details. Mr. Harsford was not quite able to feel that he understood

Matthew; and if his interests in connection with the Iroquois Bank had been less important, or secrecy in regard to them less desirable, it is probable that he would have determined to take the risk of leaving Matthew to take care of himself. As it was, however, he felt unwilling to let this young man, who knew so much more than he was willing to tell, and who might know so much more than the merchant was willing to have told, depart quite yet from the circle of his control. And as it happened, as the reader already knows, that Mr. Harsford was then deeply engaged in the affairs of the Wilmerdingle Gold Prospect Company,—an association organized for the prosecution of an auriferous business in a district of country where, as there never had yet been any gold found, it was reasonable to suppose that vast stores remained hidden and undisturbed,—and as he had been already meditating the employment of a clerk to be paid by this company, he now further decided that the best thing he could do was to put Matthew at a desk in the outer office in charge of the books and affairs of the company, to whom, of course, if Matthew should prove a competent and faithful clerk, money could be no object.

In a few days, therefore, Matthew was formally installed, upon trial, in his new position, where Mr. Harsford at first employed him in copying old minutes and making out prospectuses for the company. He was not long, however, in finding his way to more congenial employment. His readiness and energy soon gave him precedence in matters of real utility, over the senior

clerks, whose zeal had long before worn off. He labored hard to dispel the distrust with which he saw himself to be regarded, and as he appeared to be successful, he soon thought no more about it. His success in this respect, was, however, in part at least, only apparent. Mr. Harsford was not yet dispossessed of the idea that there was something to be unraveled in Matthew's course. Even his very energy and enthusiasm in work were mysterious to his employer, who could not see the plain explanation afforded by considering Matthew's youthful ambition coupled with his country habits and training. He was watching his clerk distrustfully yet.

"Mr. Warrack," said the merchant, one day, to him who was his confidential clerk, if the partial and illusory disclosures of purpose and policy which he now and then made, of necessity, to the oldest of his employes, deserved the name of "confidence," "Mr. Warrack have you noticed this young man, Caraby?"

Mr. Warrack had noticed him, though not specially.

"I took him into the office," said the merchant, "partly because I needed some one at once and I had no one else in view, and partly from private reasons,—family reasons. He has certain claims on me, and I am anxious to help him if he deserves it. Not otherwise. I'm not quite satisfied with him, however, come to observe him closely. I think he is driving at something more than he shows. I wish you'd observe him, and if you see any thing calculated to confirm my idea, let me know. I'll soon turn him to the right about."

CHAPTER IX.

DARKNESS SOMETIMES COSTS MORE THAN LIGHT.

SEVERAL days passed before Charlotte found time to fulfill her intention of visiting her poor neighbor. What with the various engagements incidental to a return to the city after a long absence, and what with her mother's preparations for the party, which, as already said, consisted for the most part in talking a great deal herself and giving Charlotte a good deal to do, it was many days before she found opportunity to go out upon one of those rounds of quiet good doing in which she was accustomed to take so much pleasure. But at length she went. She made several calls upon humble friends whose homes were accustomed to be brightened occasionally by her coming; and at last, as the close of the afternoon drew on, she bent her steps nearer and nearer home until it remained only for her to call upon her neighbor Alfene.

The small windows high up toward the roof of the edifice so obnoxious to Mr. and Mrs. Harsford, from which Benny had watched the signal of Miss Harsford's return, lighted a small room, devoid of ornaments, and almost bare of conveniences. This afternoon the occupant of the apartment had been engaged in ironing large

quantities of clothing she had washed the day previous; and although the weather was cool and the windows stood wide open, the room was hot and close with the heat and fumes of a charcoal furnace which stood on the hearth near the stove, and which had served to heat the irons for her work. Her task was uncompleted, for, upon the board, which, supported by two chairs, formed the ironing table, was a pile of rough-dried garments, one of which lay spread out, as yet but half ironed. The little fire in the furnace was dying out, and from observing that the box upon the hearth, blackened within with charcoal, was almost empty, one could infer that there was but little more fuel left to renew it with. Upon the mantel were a few odd dishes, a few vials, a faded miniature case, of morocco, and a child's slate; and a little wire save-all, supporting a bit of candle, stood in the broken bottle which served as candlestick. In the corner near the door, and almost out of sight when it stood open, were two wash-tubs, empty and turned over, leaning against the wall. The walls of the room were bare, but they were very clean, as was the ceiling also; and shining nail-heads which protruded here and there through the well-worn boards of the floor, added their testimony to the habitual neatness of the apartment. A common wooden clothes-horse which stood across the corner of the room between the hearth and the open window, was hung with garments fresh and spotless from the hand of the laundress.

In the other corner of the room, beneath the window which was curtained by the vine and rose-bush, stood a

narrow cross-legged cot. Over its lean form hung a quilt or comforter, of a dark color. Its original figure had been quite lost in the repeated washings and mendings, which had yet preserved its purity and integrity. It was so disposed as to hang like a valance from the front and foot of the bedstead, concealing that uncouth frame-work, except where an end or corner projected; and this quilt was folded down neatly at the head, disclosing a thin pillow and coarse white sheets and pillow-case.

Seated, or rather reclining upon some low seat by the head of this cot was a pale woman. Her head was thrown back and rested upon the hard edge of the cot imperfectly cushioned by the thin pillow; and her pallid face was turned upwards, and slightly toward the open window, as if to catch the air. A thin white shawl or scarf was folded across her shoulders, and the thick dark hair drawn straight down over her temples, seemed, when contrasted with the scarf and the pillow-case beneath it, and with the pallid face, to be jet black. The dress of this woman was of a plain dark material, and its faded hue and scant meager folds contrasted strangely with the flowing robes, embroidered garments, and delicate laces and muslins which hung before her. But her frame was almost as motionless as was the support on which they hung. One hand rested upon her knees; the other had fallen and hung passive at her side. Her eyes were closed or nearly closed. Her thin lips and sunken cheeks were made to appear more thin and sunken still by the position of her head. It was not possible to dis-

cern any movement of that narrow, hollow chest which should show that she was yet breathing; and only a feeble cough which returned at intervals and disturbed her languid form, showed that this woman still lived and suffered.

All these things did Charlotte see with one glance of her bright and kindly eyes, as she reached the top of the fifth flight of stairs and arrived at the open door of this apartment.

As she came to the door, Charlotte started involuntarily, as if in alarm. Not that this home of the poor laundress was an unfamiliar room to her; on the contrary in months past she had come here several times on errands of kindness. But now Benny was gone, and the sight of the mother, alone, exhausted, almost insensible, cast down against her little cot, and of the expression of suffering upon the thin face that lay upturned, was one that went to the very heart of the maiden, and caused her to exclaim with dread. It haunted her, waking and sleeping, for days, until more fearful scenes engrossed her thoughts; until anxieties and distresses of her own expelled from her mind for the time the trials of her neighbor.

She entered the room with a quick step, and hastened forward to the side of the woman, who raised her head and seeing her visitor, rose with a strong effort, compounded, it would seem, of respect and pride, and saluted her.

"Why! Mrs. Temple! Are you sick? What is the matter? Where is Benny?" exclaimed the young lady.

"No," said the woman feebly, but coughing as she spoke, "I am not sick. Benny's gone away of his errands. I wish he would come back, though,—poor little fellow! It's time."

"But what is the matter with *you*?"

"Oh nothing. I felt a little fatigued and sat down to rest. I believe I had almost fallen asleep."

There was something most extraordinary in the appearance of this singular woman as she stood before Charlotte,—so thin and wasted, yet commanding so much energy from her worn-out frame,—so poor, yet so refined and lady-like, not only in her manners and speech, but in her very mien and movement,—engaged in so menial and severe an occupation, yet bearing a brow in which the light of intellect and even of education illuminated the wrinkles of care and premature old age. Charlotte was struck, as never before, with the enigma she presented. Her mother's recent suspicious words arose to her mind. Charlotte was indeed not very familiar with poverty; if she had been, this room, which, although narrow and scant, was in reality a comfortable home, would not have seemed to her the depth of want. To her inexperienced eye, however, the small, ill-furnished room had always appeared to be comfortless in the extreme, but she had never yet felt it strange that she should now meet here one who seemed to be her equal—perhaps her superior,—in native intelligence and grace of person, and who even displayed traces of an education and habit of life worthy to compare with those of the accomplished Miss Harsford. The strange-

ness of this meeting now, however, struck her with its full force, and she stood looking in wonder at the face and form before her.

The woman, feeling that she was scrutinized, cast down her eyes with a blush in which were mingled traces of a strong pride and of a bitter humiliation, and turned away, feebly walking to her rude table.

"You will excuse me, Miss Harsford," she said, "if I go on with my work. These things must be finished to-night."

"Oh do not. Rest a little longer."

The poor woman made no reply. She had scarcely commenced her labor when a violent paroxysm of coughing recurred, and she almost sank to the floor. Charlotte led her to the cot, and partly through the feebleness of her resistance, and partly through the urgency of her own insisting, induced her to lie down, at least until it should pass off. In brief intervals of rest the invalid made efforts to rise, but was as often dissuaded by her visitor.

"But Benny will be back soon," she would say, "and we *must* carry these things home to-night."

Week after week this poor mother dragged out her existence, forgetting the misery with which the strange vicissitudes of her past life had been filled, unmindful of her disease, of her want, of her lost position in life, and devoted all her little strength and many thoughts to the future of the son whose return she now awaited. If she had been alone in life she would have long since lain down quietly in death. But her child

bound her to life; and through a sickness which in wealth would have made one helpless, she toiled on, rising from her bed to wash, when her weakness and her cough sent her back to bed again, after one hour of toil, to rest and sleep before another hour of toil. Through every hardship and privation she still clung to life, concealed her illness from others and denied it to herself, resolutely living for her boy's sake. As she lay there, breathing quick and short after the paroxysm of her cough, Charlotte sat in silence. She had never seen her thus before.

At length Charlotte spoke.

"Now you shall lie still here and rest," she said, "and I will stay with you until Benny comes. Meanwhile," she continued, after a moment's pause, "can you not tell me something about yourself? You are indeed ill. Have you seen a physician?"

The invalid shook her head.

"If you would like, Mrs. Temple," continued Charlotte, hesitating as she made the suggestion, "to tell me something about yourself, I might be able to assist you better."

The woman turned her face doubtfully towards Charlotte. The eyes of the latter, suffused with tears, testified the sympathy that was expressed in her voice. Her look seemed to reassure the poor woman; who however continued silent.

"I do not ask from curiosity. *Indeed* I do not. I do not *ask* at all. I want to do any thing I can for you and little Benny at any rate; but I have thought I might be

better able to judge what, if I knew something more—”

Still she hesitated.

“Have you no friends?”

She shook her head slowly once.

“Except yourself,” she answered, “none,—that I can call friends. Mrs. Walters has been very kind to me; but she told me last week that if I did not bring these things home to-night,—for I have disappointed her a little several times lately,—she should not pay me for them nor give me any more. She’s been very kind to me, but I think she does not care so much for *me* as she does for her things.”

“Poor little Benny! His father,—is dead, I suppose.”

“He never knew his father,” said the mother, bitterly.

“Have you any relatives?”

“I think I have some,” replied the woman, speaking very deliberately, and watching her questioner as if to see what effect the answer would have upon her. “I think I have some. I am almost sure. But I wish to know with certainty. I intend to find out before—”

“Before what?”

“Before I die.”

There was a pause.

“Can you not ascertain now? Let me help you.”

Again this woman so mysterious by all that she said, so incomprehensible by all that she refrained from saying, hesitated. She shook her head slowly once, perhaps

more as if she were doubtful whether to speak than as if she would refuse.

Charlotte, however, little conjectured what was passing in the mind of the singular woman before her. This conversation was to this lonely woman an opportunity earnestly desired, long sought. The hope that there might come a time when to some member of that wealthy family she might speak freely of herself, and above all of her boy, had been for months and years the desire of her long and hopeless days, the dream of her short and sleepless nights. In the degradation out of which, since the birth of this boy, she had been rising,—for though her way of life had been downward as men count progress, it had been, in a Wiser sight than theirs, upwards from that time,—she had set this hope before her, far distant in the dim future; that before she died she would claim and secure for him their kind offices. For this she had sought and made her home in the precinct of their stately dwelling. To realize this purpose she had labored and waited, waited and labored, in silence. This had been almost the only thing of which in her earthly future she had felt assured. To her resolute and patient determination it had been certain. But one thing in that future was more so, to her faith,—that one was Death.

Now, the opportune time, long hoped for was come. More opportune than even Hope had pictured. Here at her side the flower of that family,—good and tender of heart, the nature of all natures to whom she would trust,—young, and therefore giving promise of long years of

faithful affection to come,—she, Charlotte, solicited the very confidence long since prepared to be offered with many fears of repulses.

And yet the mother hesitates. Why? Because Death was not near enough? For her own sake her lips would never have been opened to recount to any mortal ear the strange experiences of her life. Nor did she dare to think that any friend would take up her boy, encumbered with the wreck of herself. It were hopeless to bring him to notice till her time was come to pass away from notice. When she was forgotten there might be happiness for him.

All these thoughts passed through her mind as she lay looking into the tender eyes of her fair visitor. They filled her with strange emotions. “Why should I wait?” she thought. “She cares for him. It is enough. I am ready to go. Surely the Good God has now brought the time about.”

“Charlotte!” she said, breaking silence with a tremulous yet earnest voice and startling her with so familiar an address. “Charlotte! you care for him? You *really* think of him? Oh, how he loves you already. Will you take care of him?”

And the mother raised herself upon her elbow.

“Will you see him provided for?” she continued. “Can you promise me that? I do not hope to live long, and when I die he will be without means, without protectors, without a home. Will you care for him?”

To Charlotte all this was stranger than a dream. This

woman, always singular, was now mysterious, incomprehensible.

“I shall be very glad, I assure you, Mrs. Temple,” she commenced, feeling that the dark and piercing eye of the invalid bent upon her demanded an answer, although she herself scarcely knew what to say in reply to the unexpected request. “I shall be very glad to do all that I can, all that is right for him, in case he should need my aid. But I ought to know,—ought I not?—something about his history—and yours—before I can help him aright; before I can even give you a promise such as you would wish to have.”

And she turned her kind and attentive eyes toward the sick woman’s face.

“I will tell you the whole story,” the woman rejoined without urging the promise she had asked. “It is a sad, sad story. A cruel story. I can not ask you to care for him if I conceal any thing from you. I can trust you I know. My name is nothing to me; but poor Benny. How my heart aches that I can leave nothing better than that name to him!” and for the first time the mother’s eyes filled with tears and they coursed down her hot, dry cheeks. “It is a sad story. I will tell it to you. Listen!”

And she put out her hand upon Charlotte’s arm as if to fix her utmost attention.

“What is it?” asked Charlotte, after a pause.

“Hark.”

There was a noise upon the stairs below as if some one were ascending. The steps were short and unequal, like

those of a little child, who clambers up by putting both feet upon each stair, but they were quicker and louder than the step of such a little child.

"It is Benny," said Charlotte.

"Yes; but there's some one with him; a gentleman's step it is."

And in a moment—

"Mother," cried a little lame boy, limping gayly into the room, "here we are!"

CHAPTER X.

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THE FIRST TIME IS THE BEST TIME.  
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IN the latter part of a cold and cheerless day, the very day of Charlotte's visit to the laundress, just related, Matthew, having performed all the duties of his clerkship for the day, and finding himself quite at leisure from any demands upon his time in respect of the business of A. Harsford & Co., or that of the Wilmerdingle Gold Prospect Company, seated himself at his desk with a view to the composition of certain letters which possess interest in connection with this narrative.

NEW YORK, November —, 1848.

MISS ARABELLA MAYES,

Will you be so kind as to return to me the letters which I have written to you, or to destroy them? I am willing to return yours or destroy them, whichever you may prefer. I ought perhaps to have thought to offer to do so earlier. If I have been negligent please excuse me. With sincere wishes for your happiness, I am:

MATTHEW CARABY.

P. S. Please address me in the care of Alexander Harsford & Co., New York City.

NEW YORK, November —, 1848.

MY DEAR SISTER ROSELLE,

Here I am, grandly established in New York. I wrote you about my place in my last letter, so I have nothing more to say of that. Mrs. Hopley is as kind as ever, only, I am sorry to say, she's not going to be here long. You know she came on here to be with her brother the baker. He died a few weeks ago, and she's left all alone. She is settling up his affairs, and says she is going to get out of New York just as soon as she can. It's no place for children or widows, she says, and I suppose she's right—poor woman! I should think she would be lonely—but it's a first rate place for a young man like me; that I know. His affairs, fortunately, were in a very simple condition. He left all his property to her, for he had no family, and she has sold out the business for quite a comfortable little sum; enough for her to live on the interest of it. I believe Mr. Harsford is investing her money for her. She is only waiting till the man who has bought the business is ready to take possession, "and then," she says, "good-bye to New York."

But now to come to the main object of my letter. I want you to come on and make a little visit here before Widow Hopley goes away. You could come just as well as not. There's plenty of room here. She's enthusiastic about it; and tells me to tell you you *must* come. It would be a great deal better to come now than by and by. I have no idea where I shall board after she is gone; besides it would be lonely then for

you all day while I am away at business; and now you would have a good time all day long in her little sitting room or in the shop, hearing the customers coming and going and talking; and then in the morning early and in the evening we would take walks about the city. I have found ever so many things to show you. There are some noisy streets full of crowds and business which we should not go into often, only once or twice to let you see what they are; and then there are quiet places, little nooks and corners where the trees grow, and there are gardens full of flowers, and there are little greens where the children play. I think you would enjoy it very much.

I know you say that you enjoy it very much where you are, and do not need to make such an expensive journey; but just think how much I want to see you. Besides to tell the truth I want to have you see a first rate oculist here to see if something can not be done to restore your sight.

Come Roselle, do not refuse me this time. I inclose \$15 for you to come on with. I hope I shall receive a letter from you the last of this week saying you will come right away. Only let me know the day and I will meet you at the boat when it arrives in the afternoon. The stage-driver will take you down to the boat at Troy and find you a good seat and introduce you to the stewardess. I wish I could come for you; but it will be a good while before I can leave here. But I have n't much doubt that you will find somebody coming on in the course of a few days who will take care of you.

Hoping soon to see you, for I have much to say that I can not write, I am ever your affectionate brother

MATTHEW.

P. S. Miss Harsford asked me to send her love to you when I wrote. I had so long an account of my journey to give that I believe I forgot it in my last.

M.

This last letter, which is so short to read, took a good deal of time to write, for a reason not expressed in its last paragraph;—that he could not write freely when every word must pass over the tongue of whomsoever accident or necessity should designate as the reader to Roselle of her brother's letter. This serious obstacle to their free correspondence, while it apparently separated them, operated to draw them more closely together. Neither could be happy long away from the other; and brief separations served to cause them to cling more tenaciously to personal companionship; and during the years of Matthew's growth to manhood he had taken care, in forming his plans, to be always near enough to his sister to see her frequently; to be as near to her in fact, and to be with her as much, as was possible.

For a year or two past indeed Roselle had been living for the greater part of the time in a quiet town a few miles distant from the Mills. The chief importance of this town arose from the fact that it contained an ancient academy whose long and successful operation had made its locality well known thereabout as the seat of learning

in that part of the country. To it from all the surrounding towns came students young and old, and, partly because she enjoyed the society of many young people thus collected, partly because the place itself had an air of refinement and intelligence not common in other places she had been in, but chiefly because she had there found it possible to gain instruction in a few simple studies, Roselle had with Matthew's advice and assistance sought and found a home there. She lived in a humble family whose cottage stood just back of the academy upon a pleasant road leading out of the village. Here by assisting in the care of the children, and by assisting in the plainer and easier kinds of sewing and by knitting, she made compensation for her frugal board and scantily furnished little room; while she spent such hours as she could spare from these duties, in the recitation rooms of the academy,—where she was always a welcome visitor,—listening to the lessons, always knitting meanwhile. While the classes recited, she studied, by the ear; and the rest of the day, she recited to herself; and thus by her quick ear and retentive memory, she made better progress in many things than the other children with their bright eyes. She was very fond of music, and sang at her work all day long; and every new song or tune that she could hear was committed to memory by her, and soon heard from her lips more clearly, delicately, and sweetly sung than it had been by those from whom she had learned it. Her love and aptitude for music made her even a greater favorite than she would otherwise have been. She soon became indispensable in

the village choir, and when she could be prevailed upon to join some little evening gathering of the young people, which was however very rarely, it was a pleasure to all to see her beaming face smiling over her neat but very plain attire, and to hear her voice in turn among others in the songs of the evening.

It was a bright day of happy excitement for the poor girl when one of the ladies in the town who knew how to do a good deed in a kind manner, opened the way for her to better occupation by employing her to instruct her daughters in music. The example this lady set was soon followed by others; and though Roselle at first undertook the labor with much trepidation and many protestations that she did not know enough, she soon gained confidence, and if her pupils did not begin at the very strait, five-barred gate usually set for the discouragement of children from music, the familiar songs which they soon learned to sing enlivened the home fire-sides more than thousands of the brilliant unpronounceable fantasias so popular with young ladies who can not play *Home Sweet Home* or *Auld Lang Syne* "without the notes."

But even while Roselle had been here dwelling she had been but a few miles separated from Matthew; and he had scarcely ever permitted a week to pass without one or two, or even three calls upon her. Now, since Matthew had come to New York the brother and sister for the first time felt parted by a serious distance; and Matthew knew too well how serious that separation would be to his sister, not to desire an early visit from her, for her sake as well as his own.

The two letters which he had written, Matthew now folded, superscribed and sealed; and laid them upon the upper part of his desk, to be mailed by his own hand, in due time.

This task performed, Matthew addressed himself to the duty of putting in their places, before closing the office for the night, the various books and documents which the business of the day had evoked from their dusty shelves and pigeon-holes.

As he returned to his seat, he heard the door open; and looking around he saw a small boy enter the room, and shutting the door carefully after him advance limping a little way towards Matthew's desk. Matthew had been alone some little time, the senior clerks having followed the example of their principal and gone away early, and he was rather glad of a visitor even if it were only a beggar. For though he had nothing but kind words to give away, he had those, and they were genuine; gladly spoken and gladly received. The boy looked about the room as if in quest of some person. His appearance was singular. His puny form was clad in a neat gray suit which was much mended, and hung awry upon his thin frame; but it was clean and whole, and neatly buttoned up to the neck where the little jacket was surmounted by a broad collar, white and clean, but rough, coarse, and entirely without starch. He wore on his head a queer little beaver hat shaped like a miniature man's hat except that the crown was very low and the rim more curled than even was then the fashion. This black and shining hat shaded a mild face in which the vivacity

of childhood was quite displaced by an expression of premature carefulness, of disappointment, suffering and resignation. There was nothing gloomy in the expression, but rather an air of quiet submission, as if Trouble and he, from being so long acquaintances had come to be very good friends after all, and got along together in their quiet way very well. Matthew calculated, by taking a mean between his very old face and his very young form, that he was about ten years old.

"Good afternoon sir!" said Matthew cheerily, "and how do you do?" It was a queer way he had of speaking as kindly to a beggar even as he would to his employer.

"I'm a great deal better," said the boy, standing still, but looking up with a pleased expression. "Is n't Mr. Warrack in?"

"No," said Matthew, "he's gone home. A'n't you cold? Walk up to the fire and warm you."

Is there any thing more touching than to see a human face filled with surprise at being kindly spoken to? In all our great cities are thousands upon thousands of fellow-creatures seeking their precarious living in despised employments, who are as much surprised at meeting a truly kind greeting as they would be at finding a piece of money in the street; and as much pleased too I doubt not. Little Benny, for it was he with whom Matthew was speaking, was unaccustomed to hear such a tone even from those men who befriended him. It reminded him of the kind young lady who lived near their house and visited them occasionally. At Matthew's invitation

he stepped forward, but instead of going to the fire came across to where Matthew was sitting, and stood by the corner of the desk, looking up at him, as if the feeling of a kindly heart was a more genial warmth to him than a bright fire, as no doubt it was.

"And what did you want of Mr. Warrack?" asked Matthew, looking down at his visitor.

"He lets me sell the papers," said Benny, "the waste papers in the baskets, and I came to take them this afternoon."

"They are all gone you see," said Matthew, looking in the baskets. "I suppose they were emptied this morning."

"Yes I see," said Benny, mildly. "I'm sorry. You see I've been sick. I could n't come for a long while." And he held up his hand which was so thin that the cords lay in ridges upon the back of it.

"Sorry for that," said Matthew. "But it's a blessing to be well again. You are almost well, ain't you?"

"Not quite," said the child. "I do n't expect I ever shall be well like other boys."

"What was the matter with you?" asked Matthew.

"I fell off an elephant," said the child, "and discolated my leg."

"Fell off an elephant!" said Matthew, with surprise.

"Yes," said the child, his face lighting up with a certain smile of pride at having been the subject of a calamity which his new acquaintance evidently regarded as uncommon. "Yes. I'll tell you how it was. You see I was going home one night and I came along by a door

where there was a kind of a tent hung out, and all sorts of animals painted on the tent, and some musicianers in the window, playing music, and oh! a whole crowd of boys and girls standing there and watching. So I asked one of the boys what they were watching for? So he said they were watching for the animals to come out. So I asked him if there were any animals in there. So he said 'yes, there was an elephant, and a solar bear, and a rattlesnake, and two monkeys.' So I thought I would wait awhile too and see if they would come out. By and by a man came out and asked me if I did n't want to see the elephant. So I told him 'yes.' Then he said they wanted a boy to ride the elephant, and if I would go he would give me a shilling and I might see the elephant besides for nothing. Then I asked him if I might see the other animals too, and he said 'yes.' Then I asked him if it was a fair elephant—"

"A 'fair' elephant?" said Matthew, inquiringly.

"Yes a *fair* elephant, because you know I would be afraid to ride him if he was a fair elephant."

"Oh! you mean a real elephant," said Matthew.

"Yes. A real, fair elephant. But he said 'no, it was only two men covered up under a skin.' Then I thought I would go; so I went in with him, and he took me inside and he put a little red tunic on me, and gave me a cap to put on, and then did something to my face; I did n't know what he did then, or I would n't have let him; but then he carried me into a great room like a church you know, with saw dust all up and down the middle, and there was ever so many ladies and gentle-

men all crowded in, and the elephant was in the middle, and they hoisted me up on his back and began to lead him round; and every body laughed and clapped and stamped and cheered, until we went up by where there was a great looking-glass over opposite, and I looked in and then I saw that it was a fair elephant after all, and the man had blackened my face all over, so that I looked just like a little nigger monkey. Then I got scared you see and fell down and so I hurt my leg. It was n't broke the doctor said, only discolored. Then they carried me to the hospital; and after I was part cured they sent me home. Did n't you read about it in the papers?"

"No," said Matthew. "I did n't see any thing about it."

"Why, I thought every body read about it. They had a whole biography of it in the papers. They made the man pay my mother fifteen dollars too, to help cure me."

"A biography of it?" asked Matthew.

"Yes. I expect I've got it here." And with an evidently enjoyable consciousness of being favorably known to fame, the lad fumbled in his pocket and at length drew out a soiled and worn scrap cut from the police reports of a daily paper; which recited that two men connected with Somebody & Co.'s Circus were brought before a magistrate on a charge of maltreating a lad named Benjamin Temple, by inducing him to ride an elephant, in the circus ring and negligently permitting him to fall, by which his hip was dislocated; and that the magistrate

discharged them with a reprimand, on their paying fifteen dollars to the boy's mother, towards the expenses of his cure.

Matthew read the notice and handed it back to the lad; who then in answer to further inquiries related how he lived up town with his mother, and how he had come down to this and several other offices this afternoon as had been his custom occasionally when well, to clear out the waste papers which he was allowed to sell for his own account for his labor; how he had stopped to watch the boys playing tag in the Park, and had become belated though he thought he didn't stop but a minute, and how all the other offices were closed, and he must go home empty-handed. Matthew became quite interested in his story, told in a quaint, young-old way, and his kind listening made the boy quite loquacious. He told of his mother and her washing for a living, and how nicely she ironed, and asked Matthew if he knew any body that would have work for her.

"Why perhaps I might have some work for her to do myself. How much does she ask? I haven't engaged any body to do my washing yet."

"Five shillings,—or six," said the child. "But she will do it for you just as cheap as any body will—just as cheap as she can possibly afford to. I know she will. I wish you'd come round and see her. Could n't you?"

"Have you any father?"

The child shook his head, and, with a long breath, said, "I do n't know any thing about him. Mother tells

me I must n't ask. But could n't you come and see her?"

"Could she give me any references?"

"Oh yes, she could tell you ever so many. There's Mrs. Walters, and there's Miss Harsford—oh is n't she a nice lady?"

"Miss Harsford!"

"Yes," said the boy, "do you know her? She's this Mr. Harsford's daughter is n't she? I like her a great deal the best. We live near their house. She comes round to see mother, sometimes. She's been away for a good while; but she's come back now. I saw her the other day from my window. Oh she's got a beautiful garden. Did you ever see her garden?"

"No."

"It's beautiful. You ought to see it. Then she gave me a rose-bush out of it. I keep it in mother's window by her ivy. But the leaves are all coming off now."

Matthew very naturally concluded that if Benjamin's mother could give such references as that, she was just the person he would like to employ to do his washing; so at the child's earnest urging—poor Benny had learned to put no faith in promises—he consented to go up there with him that afternoon; and as it would now do very well to close the offices, they started forthwith.

From Wall-street they walked along up Broadway until they reached the Park, where Matthew, finding that the uncomplaining child was quite weary with his walk, and that they made but slow progress coupling his

fatigue with his lameness, volunteered to treat his companion to the unusual luxury of a ride in the small cars. By this conveyance, they were brought within a few blocks of their destination.

Benny beguiled the way with quaint conversation, pointing out the objects of interest on the route, till, almost before he knew it Matthew found himself climbing the narrow stairs of the tenement house behind his little guide, who limping up the narrow stairs in advance of his new-found friend, and reaching the top, stepped gayly in at a half open door crying out:—

“Mother, here we are!”

CHAPTER XI.

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WE SELDOM KNOW A BLESSING WHEN WE SEE IT.  
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It will be easier, reader, for your quick intuition to imagine, than it would be for my slow pen to describe, the little mob of conflicting feelings which pursued each other through the agitated mind of the merchant's daughter, as she sat in suspense, while the distinct and vigorous yet gentle step of Matthew reached the top of the stair-case, crossed the narrow landing which served the purpose of an entry, and stopped before the half-opened door. Her confusion of thought became apparent in a confusion of manner, when, in response to Matthew's tap, the happy Benny called out, simultaneously with his wondering mother—“Come in!”—and Matthew's cheerful face and manly form appeared within the room. Why this kind-hearted girl, whose refinement was not so fastidious as to prevent her taking pleasure in the welfare of her poorer neighbors, and who was not unaccustomed to meeting strangers in her visits of kindness, should be embarrassed at so accidental an interview with one whom she had so many times met, and who had at least no reasonable reason for flattering himself that she took any particular interest in his welfare, must be left to

conjecture. He was indeed a handsome looking fellow, as he stood there, a few steps within the door, his countenance the picture of health, and frankly expressive of a sympathy in which were mingled curiosity at the scene before him, and sorrow at the sight of the feeble woman thus outstretched upon the cot. His head was uncovered, though the hand which held his hat had halted with it against his chest, as if it were uncertain what to do; and in the instant between the instinctive bow he made to the poor woman, and his exclamation at recognizing Charlotte, it certainly did occur to the latter, among other flashing thoughts, that his was a fine presence. Yet the embarrassment of her thoughts is certainly a mystery. It is quite out of the question to attempt to explain her feelings upon any theory of love at first sight, because it was not first sight; no, not by a score of times. This absurd notion being rebuked, there arises the conjecture that her agitation arose from the fact that the narrative she was about to hear was interrupted; but then that idea is clearly untenable, because the story might be resumed at any time. Then occurs the hypothesis that she might have thought Matthew's unexpected appearance the forerunner of some bad tidings; but this fear, if it had been entertained at all, must have been dispelled by the first few words he spoke. So there remains for us only the belief that her agitation was the unreasonable, inexplicable beating of a foolish little heart, that fluttered just because Matthew came near its handsome cage.

"Why! Mr. Caraby!" said Charlotte, rising as Matthew entered, and speaking in a tone in which pleasure was not entirely submerged in surprise.

"What an unexpected pleasure," exclaimed Matthew, advancing with a smile in which surprise appeared to heighten pleasure, and offering Miss Harsford his hand.

Stop a moment! That last clause is liable to misconstruction, to very serious misconstruction. When I say that Matthew offered his hand to Miss Harsford, I mean no more than that he extended his hand to meet hers in a shake of friendly salutation. She extended her hand in return; and it lay an instant in the clasp of his. Like a letter dropped into the post office destined to be taken out again soon and never to be put back?—Perhaps. Well, as a bird in spring time flies half timidly to a strange tree and shoots away again, but will come back and find a home in the green branches before long?—Oh! no. Wait and see.

"I did not know," said Charlotte, "that you knew Mrs. Temple."

"No;" said Matthew; "I made acquaintance with my young friend here, at the office, and came up at his suggestion, to see whether I could arrange with her to do some washing for me."

"She will do it well," said Charlotte, "that I am sure of, if she is able to undertake it. But—"

And her eyes turned pityingly toward the invalid, who had not yet risen from the cot. Matthew's glance followed in the same direction. Benny, who was glad to see the conversation take a business turn, was already

pulling his mother by the dress, to draw her attention to it.

"Mother," he was saying in a low voice, "this gentleman wants somebody to do his washing for him. I told him you would do it cheap, mother,—cheap."

The woman, thus invoked, rose slowly and with effort to her feet, and stood resting herself by one hand against the cot.

"I shall be glad to do it, sir," she said. "I am quite able, too, I think, to do it well. To-day I have had an ill turn, but in general my health is quite good."

As Matthew pursued the conversation thus opened, Miss Harsford turned to the window to examine the growth of the rose-bush which she had given, the previous spring, to Benny. And in a moment, reflecting that she had no special reason for remaining longer, and surmising also that Matthew might wonder what she tarried for, she determined that the present instant, while his conversation with the laundress was yet unfinished, was a good time for her to slip out and go home. So she turned from the window and stepped towards Mrs. Temple, on her way to the door, meaning to bid her "Good afternoon" in the first pause of the conversation, and then to leave. Matthew, however, who had a very correct notion of the perils of city streets to unattended ladies, at night-fall, already entertained an idea that it might be well for him to offer his escort to Miss Harsford, on her return. He was much too shrewd to open the way for her to leave while his own business was yet unfinished; so he stood,—the rude fellow!—as if wholly

unconscious that she was awaiting an opportunity to speak, and kept the shuttle of conversation flying back and forth with the utmost rapidity, until his agreement with the laundress was fully woven, and nothing remained but that he should write down his address for her. This he at length turned aside to do, and was now quite willing, nay, anxious, that Miss Harsford should say, as soon as she pleased:—

"Good afternoon Mrs. Temple; it is quite too late for me to stay longer. I will come again soon. Meanwhile do be careful and not work *too* hard."

And receiving the laundress's grateful acknowledgments of her kindness in coming, she turned towards the door.

It was now the most natural thing in the world for Mr. Caraby to offer to accompany her through the darkening streets to her father's door. And it would have been the most unnatural thing in the world, she thought,—and she was quite right,—for her to have declined it. She tacitly accepted his escort, therefore, and a civil word of farewell having been exchanged between Matthew and the laundress, he accompanied Miss Harsford down the stairs to the door.

As they stepped out of doors upon the side-walk, Matthew looked around him. It was beginning to grow dark, in the early twilight of a November afternoon, and there were moreover not many passers in the quiet street. Matthew thought it would do to offer Miss Harsford his arm. So he did.

Miss Harsford looked down upon the side-walk,—

which was certainly rather rough and uneven, and threatened some tripping places and occasions of stumbling. She thought it would do to take it. So she did.

And thus it came to pass, that when, a few moments afterwards, Miss Arabella Mayes met this young gentleman and lady thus proceeding on their way, it certainly did appear to her that they were walking in an extremely pleasant, amicable and satisfactory manner.

But how came Miss Mayes to meet them?

I will explain.

It so happened that Arabella Mayes, at home in Enneton, suffering from the recollection of her parting with Matthew, and not well knowing what to do with herself, in the sense of loneliness which overcame her after the unexpected quarrel, recollected in the course of a day or two, that she had an invitation from a friend in Brooklyn to make a visit there whenever she could leave home. This had been received in the previous spring; it was an earnest, and as Arabella had good reason to believe an honest invitation to "come whenever you can; only let me know when you are coming;" and Arabella had duly acknowledged it when it was received, expressing her intention of one day accepting it definitely. This done, she had, according to the custom of young ladies in preserving pressed violets, stray notes, locks of hair and sprigs of cedar, and such treasures, put it away safely between the leaves of that volume in her little library which happened just at that time to be most in use. There it reposed, until this present exigency, when, from motives very much like those which moved Matthew to a

like course, she concluded she should never have a better time to visit the city than this fall. So out came the note, flying to the floor, when she shook the volume, and with it a little flock of similar articles which had been there secreted. Having read it anew, and feeling assured that it had not, like some of the flowers, lost all its life by keeping, Arabella sent a letter to her friend apprising her that her invitation was at last about to be accepted in good earnest; and in a few days afterwards she in person followed this letter to Brooklyn.

One thing embarrassed her preparations. She had one little budget of letters,—letters that had not been accustomed to be left around between leaves of books. They were not very large letters, and altogether they did not make a very heavy budget, for correspondence had been only an occasional resource between the writer and herself, who had frequently met. Small as it was however, this packet was a great thing to dispose of. After trying a variety of depositories during her morning of packing the young lady carried it in her pocket all day; and finally the last thing at night, before her trunk was locked for an early departure next morning, she put it in one corner, under a little pile of handkerchiefs which she so cunningly disposed over it that the most you could have conjectured was that there were thirteen handkerchiefs in the pile, instead of only a dozen. Thus ensconced the little budget went with its mistress to make the long expected visit in Brooklyn.

It came about therefore that the curt note which Matthew had written to Arabella in reference to the fate of

that same budget of letters, had not yet reached her, though she had heard before leaving home that he had gone to New York, whether for a visit or a permanent home, she did not know. She was indeed not without an undefined hope that by some good fortune they might meet during her visit to the city. And it further came about, that upon this very day of which I write, she was in New York, with her Brooklyn friend, and was at this very hour riding down town in an omnibus. She was looking out at the window, when the omnibus drew near and passed the corner of the street around which Matthew and Charlotte were now turning on their way from Alfene's to Mr. Harsford's. Arabella was struck with surprise at seeing them. She instantly recognized both; for the young ladies had several times met while Charlotte had been at Harsford's Mills. Matthew and Charlotte however did not observe her.

"Ah!" said Arabella to herself. "Now I shall see him. I will call on Miss Harsford, and she will contrive to let him know for me that I am here. Then he'll call. I'm sure he will call on me if he knows I am here. I certainly will do that to-morrow."

To-morrow however was too raw and inclement for the long jaunt from the heart of Brooklyn to the upper part of New York; and so was the next day. It was not until two days afterwards, on Saturday, that Arabella found it practicable to make the intended call upon Miss Harsford.

As for Alfene the laundress, when Matthew and Charlotte had gone, the poor woman dragged herself to her

work again; and hotter and more deadly than the fumes of the half suffocating little furnace fire, was the cruel story which she treasured in her sore heart. The pride of the rich is in their ostentations; the pride of the poor is often in their concealments. This poor woman, with infinite shrinking had, for the love of her son, forced her courage to a disclosure, the utterances of which would fill both herself and her hearer with pain. And now that the opportune time had been opportunely lost, her feelings rebounded with relief, and she was half glad the privilege for which she had so long lived, was gone unimproved.

How seldom do we know a blessing when we see it.

The events in life to which we look forward with the highest anticipations and desires, the achievements for which we exert ourselves the most strenuously, the hopes which as they approach fruition give us the most brilliant promises of enjoyment,—how often do these disappoint us even in the very hour in which we seize them, or develop consequences from which we should have shrunk could we have foreseen them. And on the other hand, how often does a cloud of disappointment or of sorrow, which has filled us with apprehension as it approached, break into a refreshing shower of unexpected joy, as it passes overhead.

Here Matthew Caraby, leaving a prosperous course, so monotonous in its prosperity that he wearied of it, had unconsciously placed himself upon the threshold of abounding temptations, evils and perils, and rejoiced to think how he had "bettered his situation." And Widow

Hopley was glad of his coming, unconscious of the means by which he had opened his way. And Matthew thought he had happened in at Mrs. Temple's in the very nick of time to meet Charlotte there, when of all moments he should then most have regretted to interrupt. And the unhappy mother felt a sad deceitful relief in that interruption. And Charlotte Harsford herself, she who above all others should have known, went away, half glad to postpone to a more convenient season, so sad a task as listening to that cruel story.

Meanwhile, in the progress of events, so gradual that it mocks the patience of my pen, a different hour draws near.

CHAPTER XII.

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WHEN A ROGUE SHARPENS HIS KNIFE ON THE  
LAW'S GRINDSTONE—BEWARE.  
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At the date of these scenes, Dey street, now filled with elegant warehouses from Broadway almost to the North River, and well known as one of the busy commercial streets of the city, was a narrow dirty lane or alley, wherein the dilapidated residences that frowned upon each other over the narrow carriage-way already deserted by the families of the wealthy, were taken in possession by that miserable class who burrow in such streets. The windows of the liquor store, of the corner grocery, and the grog-shop, marked both sides of the street on every block, interspersed here and there with the cellar of a junk dealer, and in the lower end of the street with slop shops, sailors' boarding-houses and emigrant hotels. The widening of the street has since revolutionized—I will not say its moral character, for there may be as much evil behind a brown stone front as behind the most toppling wall in all the Five Points—but has revolutionized its appearance. But at that time it was one of the homes and haunts of vices, small and great.

The end of the street near Broadway, was, however, even at this time, not without its pretensions. A large hotel stood on the upper corner, and a few doors below it, among buildings less disreputable than their further neighbors, stood a house of entertainment very popular with a certain class of men, who as they combined elegance with vice, very appropriately took their stand here, between the splendors of Broadway and the degradation of the street beyond.

On the afternoon of this day, while Matthew in the counting-room was closing his duties, there sat, here, in the back parlor of this house of entertainment, in chairs opposite each other across a small cherry table, two men; and on the table between them stood a decanter of spirits, with glasses.

One of these persons was a thin man, of a sallow and unwholesome appearance as respects his person, and a very second-hand aspect with regard to his dress. His wrinkled face was lighted, or rather, I should say, dimmed, by two dull, leaden eyes, whose occasional gleams of intelligence bespoke a natural quickness and mental power, now almost destroyed by habitual intoxication. This man was well known in the lower criminal courts, not as a criminal, but as a counsel. However slight the reader may suppose the difference to be between a lawyer and an outlaw, his opinion, though perhaps widely erroneous in the general, would not, in application to this particular case, be far wrong. There was hardly a rogue in town of sufficient importance to have been brought before the notice of the courts, who

had not at one time or another availed himself of the professional aid of Jurat.* He had therefore a large acquaintance, and if it was not of an elevated class, this was no great matter, for it was congenial; and as in no part of the town did he fail to find open doors and free tables and all the hospitalities of vice for the asking, he lived freely, though after all with but a small income.

His companion the reader would have instantly recognized as Arent.

Drinking here in quiet, aloof from the more noisy company in the front part of the room, these two men entered into a conversation, which, omitting the ingenious and horrible oaths that constantly recurred with the most original variations, was somewhat as follows:

Arent. And what do you suppose I brought you in here for?

Jurat, (looking at the decanter.) I'm satisfied if you are,—that is, for the present.

Arent. I'd never bring you in here to tipple for nothing. I'd choose jollier company.

Jurat. If you want me to tell you just what I think,—you're up to some rascality, and you reckon that it would be better to have a little law before, eh! instead of after, like last time.

Arent. Come, come! I want your opinion and then your assistance perhaps. But mind, what I have in hand is a piece of strictly legitimate business.

* Other members of the family spell the name Jewrat. There are not wanting plausible reasons in favor of that orthography, though I incline on the whole to that adopted in the text.

Jurat. Yes, I understand. Let us have the facts.

Arent. Suppose a man has a wife—

Jurat. The more fool he,—ha! ha! ha! That's my opinion, ha! ha! ha!

Arent. (without regarding the interruption,) and his wife gets lost, say gets separated from him on a journey, and he gives her up for dead.

Jurat. Best thing he could do. Sensible fellow that, ha! ha! ha! Is that your case, Arent, eh?

Arent. Come, hold your tongue till I ask you a question. *I've* no time to lose, if *you* have, (looking at his watch.)

The lawyer, bearing quietly this rebuke from his companion, upon whose enmity he could not afford to venture, closed his lips upon the edge of his glass and cheered himself with a draught while waiting for his companion to proceed.

Arent (resuming.) Well, I say, the husband gives her up for dead; perhaps he's inconsolable and perhaps he is n't; for she was a poor girl, though she is a great beauty, or was in her day. However that's neither here nor there. At any rate suppose he marries again, and has children; and after all said and done she turns up again.

Jurat. I am to understand that the first wife being still living, the husband marries again, and that there-upon the second, wife being still living, first wife appears or turns up, and turns up alive.

Arent. Alive! Why you do n't suppose she'd trouble him if she were dead?

Jurat. I do n't know about that. According to my idea of a woman, I do n't see any thing impossible in that.

Arent. Of course she's alive. That's just the point of it, and he did n't know it. But that's the case I want to ask you about. Man married twice, both wives living.

Jurat. Bigamy.

Arent. That's rather a tight place, isn't it?

Jurat. In my view, after he married the second wife he's just about twice as worse off as when he had only one.

Arent. But it's a criminal offense is n't it?

Jurat. Oh! yes. If that's all you're at. It's five years more or less.* But then he can be got off. Nobody will trouble him unless the women do, and they can be shut up easy. If they show fight bring the man to me.

Arent. But it's a ball of the other color. What I

*I am informed by my friend the district attorney of Enneton, to whom I am indebted for much information which has aided me to elucidate various points connected with this history, that marrying a second wife or husband is not bigamy, by the law of the State of New York, when the first wife or husband has been absent for five successive years, and the party remarrying shall not know the other to be living within that time. But even in such case the absence and supposed death does not make the second marriage valid. It only "purges the felony," as the law books say,—that is relieves the second marriage of its criminal character and punishment. The parties to the second marriage, however sincere in supposing the first to have been dissolved by death, are exposed, if the supposition prove erroneous, to the misfortune of having the second declared null.

mean is this. I know the man. I have got my thumb on him; (and the gambler put his thumb on the head of a nail on the surface of the table to signify the efficiency of his control,) and I know the woman.

The lawyer bent upon his companion for once a very keen gaze of his usually heavy and inexpressive eyes, and asked,—“Is he rich?”

Arent. Yes. Or no. I don't know which; and I don't care. He can get money if he wants it. That's enough for me.

Jurat. You think that a man who goes in for two such luxuries at once should pay for 'em? Bring her round to my office. I know just how to manage that man.

The lawyer was not accustomed to place very implicit reliance in the word of this client; and in a matter of so great delicacy as was the case disclosed he felt a great desire to insure the safety of his professional reputation for good faith, by an actual interview. Whether Arent was unable entirely to substantiate his story, or whether he was unwilling to trust the lawyer with the whole case at this stage, or whether the reason that he assigned was the true one, or whether, as perhaps you will think more likely to be the case, he desired to try his own hand in the negotiation first at his own risk and profit, did not clearly appear to his legal adviser. But he replied, after a moment's hesitation, “She's shy; she won't see any body about it.”

The lawyer, conjecturing that he was to gain no emolument from the negotiation, thought it would be safer to

have as little to say about the means as possible; and intimated as much to Arent; who replied: “You needn't be afraid. I haven't done with you yet. Besides you can give advice I suppose. Advice of counsel?”

Jurat. Of course.

Arent. And if I pay you out of the proceeds?

Jurat. But the safer way would be to pay in advance. But it's no difference. Money has no earmarks. I'm not bound to see where your money comes from, any more than you're bound to see where my money goes to. That's my maxim.

Arent, (looking at the lawyer's red nose.) Not hard to see where yours goes to, if I wanted to. But here! (taking some papers from his pocket) I've sent him that, and that. Read 'em. Those are copies.

Jurat, (reading.) Neatly enough written. She writes a good hand.

Arent. I wrote 'em myself.

Jurat. I should say you were used to writing in other people's names.

Arent. (Laughing.) But what do you think of the way I put it to him?

Jurat, (reading the letters, the latter of which was the one which Mr. Harsford received, as related in a previous chapter.) They're very well done. They are threatening letters, but not with a view to extort money, so it's no offense. Very good idea that. You rather spurn the idea of money. You scorn it, eh?

Arent. I won't soil my hands—that is she won't—with less than a hundred thousand dollars.

Jurat. It's only a question of who is the biggest fool.

Arent. How?

Jurat. You, to expect to get it, or he, to pay it.

Arent. He can't help himself. I've had a thousand towards it already, so there's only ninety-nine more to come.

Jurat. It's none of my business what you are going to do, but as your friend I tell you you'll get yourself in a worse place than the fool of a husband. However, so much the better for me who will be called on to try to get you out.

Arent. Yes, 't is your business. I'm going ahead with it. I'll run the risk. But I want to know what it will come to.

Jurat. The devil knows.

Arent. Then you're the very fellow to answer. Suppose I go to him—this husband I mean. I tell him the case plainly. The wife waits to claim him. Very unpleasant affair. Family broken up. Terrible exposure. Second marriage criminal matter. Children illegitimate. Both wives suing for a divorce. *Scan. Mag.* I step in as a friend to know what can be done. Of course he can't propose but one thing. Suppose I, as a friend of all parties, and acting for the poor woman, accept his offer. What's the harm of that?

Jurat. If he has the sense of a sneak thief he'll burn your fingers for you before you're through. But if he do n't you're safe enough on one condition.

Arent. What?

Jurat. (with a knowing look.) Provided always, that is to say, that the *poor woman* gets the benefit of it all.

Arent. Oh, is that all? I'm easy upon that score. When I've got the funds I'll take care of the poor woman. Well now, meanwhile I'm going to hail from your office.

Jurat. No you don't.

Arent. Yes I do. Thus. I'm a friend. You're the legal adviser who in case of any difficulty will have to be called in. You understand. That's the way I shall talk about law to him. You've nothing to do but keep quiet and look on for the present, and whatever comes to your office for me let me know of.

The lawyer, thinking perhaps that in any issue of the affair he could probably make himself useful to one party or another, he was indifferent which, so long as he could be useful, was about to express his assent, when the conversation was suddenly broken off by the client, who rose, and with an oath protesting he could not be loafing about here any longer, paid his charge at the bar and went forth into the street.

As for the lawyer, he remained in his chair to finish with economy the remainder of the spirits, and reflected on the problem whether he should probably make any thing through his client's venture, and if so on which side of the contest. Meanwhile he consoled himself for not having a more active part in the negotiation, by the thought that his much abused profession was not justly chargeable with the roguery developed by it, since, after all, the roguery was in the clients, who did all the mischief and

got all the booty;—too large a share by half,—while the poor counsel were never called in till the thing was all over, when they were expected to shoulder the consequences.

Although it was hardly dark when Arent appeared in the street, the lamps were lighted. This man, whose sinister purposes we must still follow, lighted a cigar which he put resolutely between his vicious and physically-expressioned lips, turned into Broadway, and bent his steps up that street. He made no haste, but walked deliberately, looking furtively at the foot passengers, as if in hope or perhaps in fear of meeting some one.

CHAPTER XIII.

EARNESTNESS OF PURPOSE IS AN EARNEST OF
SUCCESS.

THE next day passed about as usual, so far as I know, with Mr. Harsford, with Arent, with Charlotte, with the laundress, with Benny, and with Matthew. The latter, however, leaving the counting-room for the night, and calling at the Post office on his way home to tea, found there, what was not quite usual so late in the day, a letter for his employer. It was characteristic of Matthew to perform every duty a little better than would be expected. He resolved, therefore,—quite unnecessarily so far as the demands of business were concerned,—to take this letter with him, and after tea to deliver it at his employer's house.

Carrying the letter carefully deposited in his breast pocket, and stopping now and then to look in at shop windows, the young man passed up Broadway.

While Matthew was thus commencing his walk home, Alfene, the laundress, in her elevated retreat, was carefully arranging, in a large hamper or basket, those garments upon which her labors of the day previous had been expended, and was making ready to carry them

home. A reaction seemed to have come over her feelings, for she moved, though not vigorously, yet with a light and cheerful step about the room, while completing her preparations, and looked from time to time with a gentle smile of affection toward her son, as he sat in the window. The boy had come home from school—for, thanks to the common school system which so thoroughly pervades the community, a child need not go untaught, unless its little hands must be set at work to maintain itself, or to contribute to the resources of its parents. It might be thought that a mother in circumstances so narrow and straitened as those in which this one was now passing life, might properly spare herself the additional burden of sending her son to school, and of course dispensing during the day with those thousand little services by which a child so mature and gentle in disposition as was little Benny, could save her own steps. But it is evident that Alfene did not think of care or pain in her devotion to her child.

One can carry two burdens balanced one against the other with comparative ease, where he would stagger, overladen, under the unequal weight of either one alone. This was proved in Alfene's case; and the toil which Benny unconsciously exacted from his feeble mother was the only counterpoise which lightened the burden of her own existence; which without him would have been to her feeling a useless and hopeless load. All her thoughts seemed to have this common center; and regardless of probabilities or even of seeming certainties, she laid her plans for the education and welfare of this child;—plans

that could not have been more aspiring or more inflexibly pursued, if she had been a royal mother rearing the heir of a kingdom. The child himself entered into all these plans with a gentle, almost timid interest;—the ambition, the energy, the resolution, the daring, were hers.

Was this not a worthy, a noble ambition for this mother to entertain? Could she put before her thoughts a higher purpose than to train the soul of her child to a perfect and harmonious development of all its powers and faculties? Is there any Machine or Engine more curious in its construction or wonderful in its performance than a well regulated mind; any Architecture more noble than to build a soul; any Oratory more powerful than that of a mother who speaks to generations who never know her name or voice, through the life and deeds of her child; any Art higher than to color the life-long thoughts and the thought-prompted words and deeds of a human being, with purity and happiness and universal love? As we witness the manifestations of a soul trained and habituated to the highest and purest action, when we meet with one in the ripe power and glory of adult life, it seems a palace built by some sovereign who should desire to represent in one edifice every phase of human life; and so going from room to room we seem to see every thing of which we ever heard or read;—and first, in the very lowest story, half underground, is the Will, a great engine, from which by shafts and wheels and bands and a thousand nice arrangements, power is conveyed through all the building to work wherever needed;—and in a strong room near by we

find the Passions, a menagerie of wild beasts once, but now well chained and taught to work, which day and night chafe in their cages, snarling and howling at their keeper, Self-Control;—and coming a story higher, Anger is the armory wherein are stored all manner of weapons of defense, and here sits the warder Courage;—and, opposite, Hospitality is the parlor of the soul, wherein all friendly visitors are welcomed;—and Friendship is the boudoir opening from the parlor, yet somewhat guarded from its bustle and crowd;—and Benevolence is the dining hall where all the hungry are fed, Acquisitiveness being the steward, charged to gather in abundantly that he may be able to provide bountifully;—and Compassion is a nursery for the sick, Care and Kindness the nurses;—and the Affections are a conservatory of flowers where all fair and fragrant blossoms grow;—and Imagination is a hall of paintings, with pictures of all places, things, persons, events, that were ever known or conceived;—and next door is the apartment of Memory, the king's librarian, who at a word will give you down any book or turn you to any sentence in the whole royal library;—and Knowledge is a museum crowded with a thousand and a hundred thousand curiosities;—and Doubt is the laboratory wherein all things are brought under test, Judgment the careful chemist;—and Conscience sits near by, as judge, in a white hall of justice, trying the conduct of all, and decreeing reward or punishment, with Remorse for the executioner of his condemnations;—and in the chapel beyond, Reverence worships always;—and Aspiration is the observatory where men sit and gaze on

heaven above them, and long to read the stars. Such is the mansion where Wisdom is the sovereign and Virtue the queen, dwelling and ruling therein. What human work can rank higher than thus to build a Soul; either in one's self or in one's child?

Benny's mother at least had scarcely another object in life than to rear her child and secure to him the highest education her limited means and opportunities enabled her to give. And although she had but an imperfect and partial view of the work to be done, and but an incomplete knowledge of the means by which it was to be accomplished, she spared no pains, nor sacrifice, nor effort, to attain this end. Perhaps it was from love of Art; an ineffaceable trace of the refinements of education and wealth in her former years;—perhaps it was her sanguine judgment that in that field her son would develop genius;—perhaps it was because the mother herself found a relief and pleasure in stimulating his mind in this direction;—perhaps it was because the avenues of progress in every other direction in life seemed closed to him, and in this one alone she could take even now some steps, and find no obstacles at once;—or more probably it was from all these feelings commingled, that the mother had slowly come to look forward to Benny's future as that of an artist. At any rate this was her thought; and in her silent hours of labor she built grand castles in the air, picturing success, wealth, even fame, for the possible future of her boy; and meantime, to realize these dreams, she drew upon every resource within her reach. The rich merchant's garden, which lay like a diorama beneath her

windows; the rose-bush and the climbing vine; the miniature of herself, the last relic of days gone by, that lay in its faded case upon the mantel; the figures upon the muslins, lawns and calicoes which passed over her ironing table; the pictures in the shop windows; the trees by the street sides and in the public parks; quaint groups of queer people; the flowers and the shrubs which grew in front of wealthy houses; all these were lessons with which she improved the time she could snatch from her tasks. All these lessons Benny enjoyed, as well as many hours which he spent in the window seat, with his broken slate, reviewing them; but the most inexhaustible of all was that which was to be learned from the shop windows. All the windows of paintings and of books and engravings in Broadway, he well knew; and from week to week marked the changes which took place in them, as one after another the old objects of interest were removed to make room for new ones. These windows were Benny's books; only "he had to wait for the shopkeepers to turn over his leaves for him," as he said. Windows of toys, of tools and apparatus, and of various goods, some useful, some luxurious, he occasionally looked at; but the print shops were his great resort, and formed the landmarks and the half-way houses of the street to him.

This afternoon, or rather evening, for the hour of lamp-lighting was now drawing near, Benny was waiting for his mother to complete her preparations for an evening walk; as he was going to assist her in carrying home the clothes, and to take a view, on the way to and fro, of the

shop windows. His mother seemed to feel much better than she had appeared the day before. Although she feared she had, by her delay, lost a customer, yet she had found a new one in Matthew, whose dealings, if not so important, promised to be far pleasanter. The sympathy which Charlotte had shown, and the willing desire she had expressed to hear the story which this mother was at once anxious and reluctant to relate, had in some degree reassured her. Her elasticity of feeling was however chiefly owing to one of those strange reactions or intervals of ease so common in the progress of her disease, which constantly deceive the sufferer into an assurance of convalescence. Benny too was in good spirits with the prospect of the walk in Broadway with his mother.

Although her preparations were in fact complete, Alfene busied herself with arranging, with scrupulous care, the scant furniture of her room, while she waited the closer approach of evening. Benny had observed that his mother never went out except in the evening, unless it were unavoidable, and then she evidently went with great reluctance.

"Why do you never go out with me in the day time?" he sometimes asked.

"If we go in the evening we save candles; besides the shop windows look so much handsomer in the evening."

"But mother, sometimes when you have n't any work to do you might go in the day time; and it would be better for you, I know it would."

To this the mother would make no reply.

Why she feared the daylight, and only at evening ventured forth to do the indispensable errands of her calling, and to gather such relief from toil, for herself, and instruction for her child, as she then could, was not for him to understand, poor boy.

This evening, while waiting for his mother to finish her preparations for the long expected walk, Benny was improving the time by studying the miniature which was inclosed in the faded morocco case.

This miniature, the only work of art which this young pupil had ever held in his own hands, was the likeness of his mother.

It was one of those exquisite pieces of miniature painting, for which, in years gone by, the delicate pencils of certain French artists were famous.

At this portrait, one who had known the living original only by her present thin and pallid countenance and wasted form, would have gazed with astonishment. The likeness could not be mistaken. Yet how diverse! It seemed as if the animate and inanimate had changed places. As if the bright and fresh complexion, the glossy hair, the full fair neck, the rounded form filling well the dress, so elegant yet so simple, and the brilliant eyes, whose light had been admirably reflected by the artist's skill,—as if this must be the living reality, the Divine Art-work; and as if the other, the pale cheek touched in one burning spot, by the pencil of disease, with an awkward counterfeit of the color of health, the dull, faded complexion, the weary, hopeless eyes, the thin, emaciated

form,—as if these were the inanimate copy, Man's poor imitation. In the contrast the lifeless was life-like, the living was death-like. Still, the *likeness* was unquestionable. This indeed is the true power of the art of portraiture; so to catch the whole life of the original, as by depicting a wonderful generalization of the thousand elements of its appearance, to present a likeness at once historical and prophetic. There are portraits which so completely embody the very life itself that the original may pass through all those changes which pleasure, passion, or misery have power to work, and never, not even in Death, lose the likeness. Such a portrait was the miniature of Benny's mother. Benny was never tired of studying it. And now, as darkness was coming on, he sat at the open window looking at it by the fading light.

"It is beautifully done, mother;—who did it?"

"A French artist in Paris. I think there will not be a great many more such pictures painted, at least after a few years."

"Why, mother?"

"They have a way now of taking pictures by the sun's rays. They can take one in a few minutes, and very exact indeed."

"I do n't see how they do that, mother."

"I do not understand it myself, my child. It is a new invention. I am going to learn about it if I can, one of these days, to tell you. I saw the place where they take that kind of pictures in Broadway, a few days ago. They call them daguerreotypes."

"Let us go and see it to-night."

"They are not open in the evening," said the mother.

"They can only take daguerreotypes in the day time, so that we can't go."

"Why can't we go?"

"Because it's in the day time and I don't think it's best to go."

"Well, I don't care very much. They can't be as beautiful as this is. What is this painted on, mother?"

"It is ivory."

"Is that ivory? Is it a piece of an elephant's tooth?"

"Yes."

"What broad ones he must have. Who did you say painted it, mother?"

"A French artist. His name was Isabey. He was the finest miniature painter in Paris. There was another one, some people thought better; but I liked Isabey's pictures best. They were so delicate and soft. Augustin was the name of the other; now I recollect it."

"I don't think this looks so much like you, mother, as it used to. Or else perhaps it's because I've looked at it so much. But it has n't any wrinkles in the forehead, mother."

"Have I got any wrinkles in my forehead?" said the mother, smiling, and putting her hand up to feel. The poor woman had no other mirror than her boy's eyes.

"Oh, yes. Of course I should have. They have come since that was taken. That is not Monsieur Isabey's fault. Do you know what is the painters' rule about painting wrinkles, Benny?"

"No, mother; what is it?"

"The rule is, 'never count the wrinkles.' It is a very good rule I think. If I was painting an old gentleman and should count all his wrinkles and take great pains to put them all into the portrait, he would look so old that he would n't know himself when he saw it. When the forehead is wrinkled you must give the forehead in the picture a wrinkled appearance, but 'never count the wrinkles.' When an artist paints another person, just as when we talk about other people, he ought to present a pleasant view of him and not count up his defects, and contrive how he can show up every one of them. But now Benny I'm ready I believe."

Benny took up his end of the basket at his mother's word, and the two proceeded down stairs to the street and thence out to Broadway.

Carrying their heavy burden slowly, and frequently stopping to rest, and to rub the hands that smarted with incipient blisters, the mother and child walked slowly down the thoroughfare, now brilliantly lighted.

Before a large window, filled with paintings and mirrors,—a favorite halting place in Benny's rambles,—they stopped for a longer pause than usual.

"Ah! mother," said Benny, "they've turned over the page for us. See! The picture of ships is gone, and there's a beautiful country picture. Oh! *isn't* it nice mother?"

"A landscape, Benny," said his mother, instructively.

"Yes; a landscape; ah! that's fine. If I'm ever a painter I'm going to paint country pictures—landscapes,

I mean. I like the country. Isn't that a splendid mountain? and see! there's another mountain looking right over his head;—unless it's a cloud. Do the mountains look as blue as that, mother?"

"Sometimes. Do you like that picture very much?"

"Yes."

"What part of it do you like best?"

"Well, I think I like the mountains best. I am not afraid of the mountains. I do n't like sea pictures half so well. I'm—I'm rather afraid of sea pictures, and ships, and storms, mother, but the mountains never do any harm. I should like to live in the country and have a mountain live near me."

"Do you see any thing there that you think you could draw?"

"Yes, I think I could draw the great elm-tree that hangs over in the front; and I think I could draw the mountains; that is the outline of them. I'll try that. That's a beautiful picture. But mother, shouldn't you think he would have put a river in,—just a glimpse of the river through the trees down in the meadow there; or a pond, a little pond?"

"I do n't know. Perhaps it is some real scenery; painted from nature. Then it would n't do for the artist to put in a pond or a river which did n't belong there."

"Oh, is it a real scene?" asked the boy who seemed to be disappointed at the thought that the landscape was only a copy from nature, not the creation of the artist's imagination. "I thought it could n't be a real place it's so beautiful. I never saw such a beautiful

place. I wonder who painted it. Do you know, mother?"

"No."

"Oh, there's his name on that log down in the corner, under the shadow—'Cole, 1846.' See, mother. It's Mr. Cole's picture. Is he famous, mother?"

"I do n't know."

"I thought you knew who all the great painters were."

"I do n't know who is famous *now*," said the mother sadly, but with a smile. "But now," added she as if to change the subject, "look at that engraving there."

"Which one, mother?"

"That one leaning against the large mirror."

"I see it. The prisoner in prison. There's the jailor with his big keys holding the door. Is that a line engraving, mother?"

While this conversation, and much more, was being prolonged before the window, so full of interest to these poor people, Matthew, on his way home and carrying Mr. Harsford's letter yet safe in his pocket, came by.

"Aha!" exclaimed he to his new acquaintances cordially, yet quietly, so as not to attract the attention of passers by to them. "Good evening. Taking a walk?"

"Yes," said Benny; "and looking at the pictures. See that one. Isn't it a fine one?"

"Very good-looking," conceded Matthew, "but rather a rough country."

"We are going home with some clothes," said the mother to Matthew in an apologetical tone, and turning

to proceed upon the errand she had almost forgotten.

"Will you call for mine as you come back?" asked he. "It's fortunate that I met you; as I am going up town to night of an errand, I shall only be at home a short time now."

The three stood facing the window, Benny being between his two elder companions. As they spoke a shadow fell across them.

"Mother! mother!" whispered the boy pulling her dress, and pointing furtively at the mirror in the back of the window.

Matthew looked up as he heard this timid exclamation, and saw reflected there beyond the woman's form, the black head, and sinister, scowling countenance of the man whose company he had so suddenly fallen into, and so suddenly escaped from on his arrival in the city. Cool as he was by nature and by habit, he started involuntarily as he saw that a quick glance of those black eyes met his in the glass, and he thought the recognition boded no good.

While this thought flashed through his mind he observed that the woman, meeting also a recognition from this man who stood doggedly awaiting the impression his apparition should make, started, trembling violently, and caught at the window-post for support; while she gasped to her son, "Come, Benny, quick!"

It was too late. The interview she would avoid was inevitable. The precautions she had taken so long to elude this man were now at an end. He had found her

at last. Even darkness, her last retreat and protection, no longer concealed her from him. She must meet him now face to face.

"Ah!" said Arent in a voice in which irony and a malicious joy were ill disguised under a tone of politeness. "Ah! So I have found you at last?"

The yellow lights gleamed on the poor woman's face as she turned away her head. Matthew had never seen a paler despair than hers.

"Why keep yourself so private?"

"Leave me," said the woman, faintly.

"Now, you don't want me to. You would not have me do so. You don't know how glad I am to see you."

"Is it not enough," said she, gathering strength and turning upon him vehemently, while she drew her wondering child closely to her side, as if at once to protect him and to conceal this man from his curious sight, "Is it not enough that you have done already? Let me alone. I ask nothing from you."

"Hush, not so loud, Alfene," said he, deprecatingly.

"Let me alone then. What would you have, after I'm lost? Would you poison my boy too?"

With that audacity which the maternal instinct alone can inspire, this frail woman clasping her son to her side braved his threatening frown, and gazed into his ill-omened eyes till he dropped them from her countenance.

"I tell you," said she in a quiet, low voice, but with a hissing distinctness, terrible to hear in the voice of a woman, "I tell you that I *will* be let alone. If I

have n't suffered enough, I'll suffer more. If I have n't done enough, I will *do*—more. But I *will* be rid of you."

The gambler bent forward, and whispered a few words into her reluctant ear, and stood to watch their effect.

The agitated woman raised her eyes and made as if she would speak; but she relapsed into uncertainty, and said nothing.

He whispered again to her; and then added, "Will you come with me now?"

With a sudden resolution she started forward. "Benny stay till I return," she said; and then following Arent, who had already turned down the street in anticipation of her decision, the man and the woman passed into a cross street and were lost in the darkness from Matthew's view.

Leaving the child guarding the basket where it stood, Matthew slowly turned and pursued his way homeward pondering on the strange scene. The more he thought of it the more mysterious did it seem; until it was put out of mind, for a time, by matters more serious to him.

When Matthew arrived at Mrs. Hopley's, he found that lady, usually so good-humored and cheerful, seated behind the counter, supporting her head with her left hand, while with the right she held the handkerchief with which from moment to moment she wiped from her eyes tears such as only some fresh and heavy sorrow could have caused to flow. A little fellow with bare head and

feet, and unwashed and tattered garments, attending for a penny's worth of stale rolls, (the penny for which lay unregarded on the counter, peeping out from under his grimy hand,) stood looking over the show-case at her, in mute astonishment that a lady with such piles of big loaves of bread should ever cry.

"What's the matter?" exclaimed Matthew.

The widow raised her head at the well-known voice and pushed towards him a paper which lay open upon the counter. She put her finger upon a paragraph which ran as follows:

IROQUOIS BANK. SINGULAR DEVELOPMENTS.—Facts have come to light in reference to this institution, which is situated at Harsford's Mills, that show it to be an utterly worthless concern. The cashier has disappeared, leaving "a beggarly account of empty boxes;" and the same day the sheriff took possession of the said boxes under an attachment at the suit of the holder of a protested draft,—much good may they do him. The institution has never been in very good odor, being situated in the interior, but mostly owned by parties here and elsewhere. The bills were discredited day before yesterday, but the circulation was small here, being mainly maintained at the West. We understand that under the charter the stockholders are personally liable for the debts. A small portion of the stock had been put off on parties unacquainted with the concern; but the greater part is in the hands of the original projectors of the scheme. It is said that a considerable amount is held by a well-known commission merchant on Hanover Square.

Matthew read this paragraph very coolly; and nodded as if to say he had expected as much all along. He was rather pleased than otherwise, for it verified his prophecy to Mr. Harsford. He looked at the widow again, but did not at all understand how so common-place an event

as the bursting of a bank, the defrauding of its bill-holders and the impoverishment of innocent stockholders should cause any uneasiness to her.

"Oh! Mr. Harsford," sighed the poor woman, who was by this blow made penniless.

"I'm sorry for *him*," said the young man; "but do not let that affect you. He can bear it better than you could I doubt not. It won't hurt him. He won't even feel it."

The widow rose with an air which showed that she had more to tell than she could trust herself to utter, and went back to the sitting room. Matthew, struck with vague apprehensions, hastened after her. From a little drawer, the key of which she carried, she took some papers, and showed him a handsome specimen of engraving in which, among wreaths and railroad cars, figures and flourishes, faces and scrawling signatures, Matthew picked out the information that Sarah Hopley was the owner of fifty-three shares of the capital stock of the Iroquois Bank of the par value of one hundred dollars each. She pointed to this bit of paper, so suddenly transformed to her from a treasure to a curse, and looked up at her companion without saying a word.

Matthew did not know what to say. When those in trouble will not utter a word of complaint, one does not know how to utter a word of consolation.

But when he saw in the upper corner the recent date, the truth flashed across him; and as he became conscious that it might be that his letter, cunningly devised to ingratiate himself with the merchant, had been the means

of bringing a calamity so sore upon the best friend, almost the only earthly benefactor he ever knew, he could but cry out with pain,

"Oh! *He* gave you this?"

The widow nodded.

"I see through it all," he said. "I see. The heartless man," said Matthew, speaking through his teeth. "What's that sum to him? It's every thing to you. He shall make it good."

"It's not his fault," said the widow, speaking for the first time.

"Not his fault?" cried Matthew, with indignation. "He invested the money for you? Did he not? Well! He knew that it was coming. He *knew* it. He knew 't was worthless;—worse than worthless."

"How?" asked the widow.

That little word took all the color from Matthew's indignation, and in an instant filled him with grief. He lamented, he walked back and forth, he threw himself on the sofa, he uttered extravagant self reproaches and said it was all his fault; until the poor widow, unable to get any explanation, was afraid that the loss had quite turned his head. But these self reproaches were too extravagant and severe to be uppermost long, and he soon came to relate to her quietly, but with many pangs of regret, the circumstances which led to his letter to Mr. Harsford, and what its contents were, and in turn from her he heard how the merchant, only a day or two afterwards, gave her the stock in exchange for her little fund.

If there ever is a warm and pure affection of gratitude between man and woman, involving neither the instinct of the child nor the passion of the lover, it was exemplified in the love which Matthew bore to this kind widow. She had taken him up when every other hope forsook his heart, and from the beginning of her kindness his welfare dated. Moreover, she had by patient nursing saved Roselle from death, and made her what she was, useful and happy, though a poor blind girl still. Matthew had been buffeted and played upon, bargained sharply with and almost bought and sold by all the world; and now there were but few persons of all his acquaintance in whose disinterested affection he had any confidence; and first in claims to gratitude was the widow. No interests of his own weighed a feather against the welfare of this friend, and when after tea the sight of the letter he had brought reminded him of his errand at Mr. Harsford's house, he instantly determined to lose no time, but to seek opportunity that evening to confront his employer with the charge of his fraudulent dealing with Mrs. Hopley, and to insist with all his power that reparation full and complete should be made her. This he resolved should be done if there were law enough in the State to do it; as he said. He would leave no means untried to compel the man to disgorge.

Full of this purpose, and with an indignation in no wise abated by reflection, Matthew, at about eight o'clock that evening, ran up the steps of his employer's door, and rang the bell for admission.

CHAPTER XIV.

'TIS HARD KNOWING WHAT TO SAY WHEN A KNAVE
ASKS YOU TO TELL THE TRUTH.

At the moment when Matthew, without the door, rang the bell, Mr. Harsford, within, was in deeper trouble than ever yet before.

Fifteen minutes, or thereabouts, before Matthew had arrived at the house, Mr. Arent had ascended the same steps, and rung the same bell, upon his daring errand; an errand indeed more daring than the reader fully knows; and had been admitted to the house, and within the house, to the study of the merchant. And now in that apartment, these two men, these two miserable schemers of frauds and cheats, this respectable and this disreputable trader in the ruin of the innocent and confiding, sat face to face; or rather mask to mask, for both studied to hide the real working of their thoughts behind the false expressions of their countenances.

The true character of the schemes by which Arent was accustomed to extort from the world that living which he considered the world owed him, has been developed by this narrative somewhat more fully than that of the contrivances and expedients to secure the enjoyment of

other people's money which Mr. Harsford dignified with the name of his "business."

In the popular view, undoubtedly, Mr. Harsford's business was reputable and praiseworthy, (so long as it was successful,) while Arent's was not. Mr. Harsford's modes of acquisition were certainly far more genteel, and far more cunningly contrived to avoid immediate detection and legal punishment, than the reckless tricks and extortions of his fellow swindler. But the reader is mistaken if he supposes that because the nominal commission merchant had a counting-room wherein to ensnare his victims, while Arent ranged around the town, casting his net wherever he saw a fish; because the merchant put a "Co." after his name over the counting-room door, while Arent pretended neither to a sign nor a partner; or because the former went home at night to a fine house, was received into stylish society, drove his own carriage, and was complimented occasionally in a city newspaper, while the life of the latter bore no such tokens of prosperity;—that therefore the money getting schemes of the one scoundrel were in any important respect more honorable or truly commendable than those of the other. The entangling affairs which this narrative has disclosed were by no means all of those which beset the merchant at this time. The same causes which involved him in a false position towards the Widow Hopley, had involved him, operating through other circumstances, in far more serious ways. Of all the thousands of dollars which, during a fifteen years' business, he had spent in luxurious living and ostentatious show, very few had been earned

by any benefit he had conferred on the community; very few would he ever have had if those from whom he gained them had not been deluded by specious promises and imposed on by false returns and showy but valueless compensations. A short period there was indeed, after his second marriage, and following his first settlement in New York, a period of five years or so, during which he had followed the legitimate business of a merchant; but he had gradually abandoned the slow gains of that vocation, and had involved himself, step by step, in a vast congeries of complicated and incomprehensible concerns; stock speculations, the erection of bubble companies and corporations; the receipt and management of trust funds, the negotiation of loans upon fictitious securities, and a hundred schemes of other kinds whereby he could obtain the use of other people's money for his own purposes. Once obtained, this money was not destined to be repaid, if any shift could be devised whereby his good name and credit could be preserved without it; or, when pressed by the necessity of actual payment, some new scheme of speculation would supply means to discharge the liabilities of the old one; bringing, however, in its train, an increased burden to be borne. Nothing but his fertility in devising miserable expedients and his agility in executing them, could have evaded so long the fatal result of the pressure of these things; but by means of an extraordinary skill and alertness, he had thus far succeeded in eluding the catastrophe which pursued him, and which he now saw in the distance drawing nearer and nearer upon his flying footsteps; and thus he had been able still

to maintain his place in the public esteem as a man to whom money was no object; that is to say, a man to whom money was the only object. But, down old cares in new as he would, he was conscious that he was drawing near the end of his strength, and that without some resource, as yet unfound, he must soon succumb.

And now, as if to complete the utter misery of his case, Arent approached him.

Mr. Harsford's study was a large room upon the rear of the mansion, looking out upon the garden. In this room, at the further end, before a library table under the chandelier, he sat; while his visitor, unknown to him as yet, approached him.

Mr. Arent hastened eagerly up the room, and affecting the utmost cordiality, seized the astonished merchant by the hand, exclaiming, "*How* do you do, sir? *How do* you do? It gives me great pleasure to meet you again, notwithstanding,—ah! Great pleasure. Great pleasure. But you do not recollect me."

"Your countenance, sir, is perhaps not unfamiliar, but I—I can not call your name."

"Ah, I don't doubt it, sir. It's so long since we have met. My name is Arent, sir. Ah! I presume that I know you, sir, much better than you know me. I am but a private individual."

And he bowed, smiling in indication of the compliment he intended.

"I thought you would begin to recognize me soon. I knew your father very well some years ago. Is Mrs. Harsford quite well?"

"Quite so."

"Ah. And the young people?"

"Yes."

"Ah."

There was a pause during which Mr. Harsford sat as if waiting to learn the object of the visit. The gambler seemed not to be at all embarrassed by the pause, for he deliberately took a chair and composed himself to enjoying a meditative silence.

"Ah," said he, "how time flies!"

This striking remark seemed to have reference to some reminiscences into which the merchant could not enter, and he therefore made no response.

The nervous merchant sat uneasily, as if impatient at the unexplained interruption. Arent seemed rather to wait for him to grow impatient, for he sat still, with his eyes half closed, as if the bright light were too strong; but out from beneath his heavy eyelids he was studying the countenance of the man with whom he was about to deal.

"I would not have believed," he said, "that it was twenty years ago that we had that terrible winter; 1828 it was. You remember it I suppose. You must indeed."

The merchant was not inclined to go over the past with the harrow of any chance gossip that might offer. He rose, saying, "Excuse me, sir, if I say that my time is valuable; and if you have no special matters, requiring immediate attention, it would be much more agreeable to me to see you at another time when I shall be more at leisure."

"Ah! my dear sir," said the visitor with an air of commiseration, "that's just what it is. Matters of immediate importance."

"Please proceed."

"But there's the trouble. When one brings sad news he does not know how to tell it. And when he brings very glad news to one who for twenty years has given up all hope, he does not know how to break that. But when one comes, as I suppose I do, with that which is such a great joy, and yet after all at the same time a sad calamity, what can he say to begin?"

"I do not understand you," said the pale merchant; who did understand him now, perfectly.

"Are we alone?" said his visitor looking around, "quite alone? For I come as a friend, and I know how you will appreciate my caution."

The merchant bowed.

"You have received," asked the other in a low voice, leaning forward, "some letters recently, from—from a very unexpected correspondent—a person you in fact thought dead? Eh?"

The merchant made no reply.

"I know that person," continued Arent, watching the effect of his words. "And while I appreciate the hardship of her position, and the justice of her urgent demands, I have felt also a sympathy for a family I have known so long. I have come as a mutual friend to interpose, with the hope that the interests of all parties shall be subserved. She is impatient. I deprecate it, sir, I regret it, but still I can not wonder at it. Consider what

a position she is placed in; to discover at last the home in which she belongs. Delay is irritating to her. Suspense infuriates her. I appreciate your very delicate and embarrassing position. I don't see what you can do. But she will not keep quiet long. As a friend of the family—a mutual friend—I have interposed. As circumstances have thrown the whole facts into my knowledge, and she looks on me as—as—with some respect—yes, and I may say gratitude—I have prevailed upon her to put the whole case in my hands for a very short time, and meanwhile to await quietly the result. But she's hard to manage. If I had not been determined to do what I could on behalf of all concerned, I could never have restrained her impetuosity a day. She means well I know, I concede it, sir, but she is rash; she burns with excitement. She means well; but she will make havoc if we are not careful. Mischief! Mischief!"

The merchant, still incredulous, and determined to continue so, indignantly interrupted these remarks by pointing to the door and motioning the speaker away. "Enough, sir. You've delivered your message. I've nothing to say to you. You may go."

"Certainly, sir," replied the wily man, feigning to comply, but by no means intending to do so. "Certainly. I will not trespass by saying one word more than you wish to hear, even to save your family from such a catastrophe. I must respect your wishes though I mourn for your fate."

"The whole thing," exclaimed the merchant, losing his self-possession, "is an infernal lie from beginning to

end. If you think to frighten me with your bugbear stories you are very much mistaken."

"I knew that your judgment would dictate the utmost caution in proceeding in this matter," replied the visitor, "but I had supposed that you would rather scrutinize the proofs in private, than have them for the first time laid before you in public. Still I am prepared to make great allowance for the effect of so terrible a discovery on your feelings."

If the suggestion did not at once have the intended effect on the merchant, it had another which equally answered the purpose. Though he was not prepared to continue the conversation for the sake of avoiding immediate publicity, the offering of proofs suggested to him the idea that by humoring the design which he attributed to his visitor he might draw him on, until his threats should assume the form of an actual attempt to extort money. Then the conspiracy, as he thought it, could be readily crushed.

"Stay," said he, "what would you have?"

These words revealed his purpose to the other, who replied, "I want nothing. If you are satisfied with the present course of things, I am. I have done my best, and she must take her own way now."

"If you have any thing to show for the truth of your story I will hear it. If not, the sooner you are gone the safer you are."

"It will be useless to refer to the origin of this difficulty," said the other, standing where he had risen a few minutes before. "The facts you doubtless know better

and remember more keenly than I. How and where you lost her. How, soon afterwards, you married again. The absurd things that busybodies said; impertinent people who did not know how truly, how unalterably you loved her. Yes, though circumstances did look suspicious, I have no reason to doubt your sincerity; and that she has only to appear now to be claimed by you."

"Men are not to be called in question for what they may have done so long ago. It is twenty years since."

"It was not twenty years after you gave up your wife for lost when you took up with this other one. Twenty weeks would be nearer to it. True she was rich, and there are many circumstances to be taken into account, but the time was short, certainly very short. But suppose 't is twenty years. She's your wife still. Do you suppose a woman's love fades out in twenty years?"

"But where has she been all this time? Impossible. People do n't live in silence twenty years to speak in this style at the end of it all, when—when it's just too late!"

"It does n't lie on me just now at any rate to explain all the apparent improbabilities of her history. All that in good time. The fact in hand now is that your wife you thought was dead is alive, and claims her own. People have disappeared for twenty years and come out at last before now. People have been shut up in prisons and asylums; some people have been driven mad by terrible frights; and some people," he continued, lowering his voice almost to a whisper, "some people have been shut up in mad-houses in their right minds, while twenty years passed away like a night, and have come

out at last to astonish everybody. But she's in earnest about this," he added. "She knows what she's about now. Oh if you knew what a time I had had to persuade her to wait till I had forewarned you. I don't know whether you would recognize her now," he continued, taking from his pocket a faded red morocco case. "That was taken several years ago. She's seen much trouble since;—yes, and before too, for the matter of that."

He opened the case and held it toward the merchant, who with a pale face, beaded with perspiration on the forehead, studied the miniature.

"That proves nothing," replied he at length, for the time, at least, convinced that there was possibility of truth in this fearful story. "That proves nothing. She may have been dead long ago after all. If she was alive ten years ago, she may be dead now."

To this remark Mr. Arent had no reply at hand. He did not know what an impression he had made upon the mind of his victim, already almost overwhelmed by other troubles, and he was about to concede this point by silence and pass to the next, when he was furnished with a ready and conclusive answer by an unexpected circumstance.

A servant entered; and approaching Mr. Harsford, said, in answer to his inquiring look:—

"A young man wants to see you, sir. Somebody from the office, I believe. Says he wants to see you on very particular business."

Matthew's business was somewhat particular; but he

had not so described it to the girl. She was however a somewhat timid young person, standing in some awe of Mr. Harsford; the more so that he was sometimes very severe and inconsiderate in his reproofs when she admitted to his private study unwelcome visitors whom he thought she should have excluded:—for example, duns. She was wont therefore to state as strong a case as she could, whenever she thought it probable that Mr. Harsford would feel interrupted by a visitor, to the end that she at least might seem justified in admitting him.

On this occasion the merchant was not unwilling to be interrupted.

"Show him in immediately," said he.

Although Mr. Harsford was prepared to be glad of any interruption which might break this interview, and postpone, for a time at least, the trouble which was now pressed upon his attention, yet nothing certainly could have been more unfortunate for Matthew, nothing for Mr. Harsford himself, than that Matthew should have been the one to appear just at this instant.

He entered, however; and as he entered he saw the two men at the other end of the room. He recognized instantly Mr. Harsford, whose face was toward him, he being still sitting at his desk. Arent had risen from his seat, and stood with his face turned away from Matthew. The miniature, although not yet noticed by Matthew, lay on the desk before the merchant.

"Good evening, Mr. Caraby," called out Mr. Harsford, with a cordiality of voice very unusual in his greeting,

or in his conversation with his clerk, and beckoning the young man forward.

"Now," thought he, "I shall have an interruption, or, if not an interruption, at least a witness, to this dialogue."

The stranger stood without moving, facing in the other direction.

Matthew, unconscious of the recognition he was destined to meet, walked boldly down the room with even more than his accustomed energy. He was revolving in his mind how he should attack his employer with his charges on behalf of Mrs. Hopley, as soon as this third person should leave them alone.

"That came for you to-night, sir," he said, handing the letter to Mr. Harsford. "I found it at the Post office as I came by, and thinking it might be of importance, I brought it up."

As Matthew stood before his employer the stranger at his side turned full upon him a black and sinister countenance, bristling with the same smile of covert and treacherous triumph which he had an hour before seen reflected in the mirror in the print-shop window. Matthew involuntarily started with astonishment. Instantly conscious that no good could come of being identified as an acquaintance of this man, he suppressed the glance and smile of recognition which were instinctively forming themselves upon his countenance, and assumed, as well as he could, the careless unconcerned look of a stranger to the person who stood before him. Arent, wearing still the same smile of sinister triumph, stood,

making no endeavor to win any greeting from Matthew. There was therefore that expression upon the face of each which was easily mistaken by Mr. Harsford, whose suspicious penetration was excited to its highest activity, for a mutual recognition suppressed and concealed for the furtherance of some secret purpose in which the two men were interested. Upon Matthew's countenance this expression seemed to sit uneasily, and his look and manner were embarrassed and irresolute; in reality by finding himself at one instant defeated in the object of his call and confronted with a man of whom he knew no good and surmised much evil, and who knew just enough of Matthew himself to warrant him in claiming an acquaintance which Matthew was not disposed to admit; but to the suspicious eye of Mr. Harsford the young man appeared disturbed by the consciousness that he was playing a treacherous part. Upon Arent's face there was no appearance of embarrassment nor of weakness of resolution; but the smile of sly satisfaction which denoted that the rogue saw in Matthew's unexpected arrival a further means of securing his victory over the merchant. To Mr. Harsford this smile appeared the covert greeting bestowed on a confederate.

Matthew, by way of commencing a conversation which might set him more at his ease, unfortunately remarked to his employer that the letter, as he had observed, was post-marked Enneton.

To Mr. Harsford, who had already recognized the hand-writing of Mr. Mayes in the superscription, and who very correctly surmised that it brought intelligence

of the final results of a certain search, which, as the reader already knows, he had been driven by the letters of Arent to institute under the direction of Mayes, this remark was strong confirmation of the conjecture that Matthew was cognizant of the errand on which Arent had come, and was but his confederate in it. A remark so free, and which seemed in connection with the contents of the letter as Mr. Harsford anticipated them, so impertinent, superadded to the evident recognition, evidently suppressed, and the air of indifference and ill-dissembled ease, sufficed to satisfy the employer that Matthew was banded with his enemies. If any thing was wanting to justify this conclusion it seemed supplied when Arent quietly said, continuing the conversation—a conversation which Mr. Harsford thought would assuredly have been broken off, or suspended, on the entrance of any one wholly a stranger to the plot:—

“You think she’s dead. I’m sorry to say it, but if you must have proofs you must. Ask your clerk, here, if he has ever seen the original of that picture, and how many hours ago he talked with her.”

By this appeal made to him as a witness in a matter of which he knew absolutely nothing, save that he inferred from Arent’s character and Mr. Harsford’s manner that it was some affair by which Mr. Harsford’s peace was seriously threatened, Matthew was thunder-struck. But while what this meant puzzled him much, what he ought to do puzzled him more. Whether to reach out his hand and take the miniature which Arent was holding toward him, and answer the question put,—whether

to disavow any connection with this stranger,—whether to admit his knowledge of the man, and explain how much or rather how little he knew of him,—whether to disregard the whole matter and pursue a conversation with his employer in hope to reach the subject he had most in mind,—Matthew could not decide. Not knowing what to do, he did nothing. He stood still and was silent. The ease of his appearance was not increased however by the malicious smile which Arent turned upon him, or by the scowl with which Harsford scanned his face.

After a short pause, which seemed intolerably long to Matthew, and reflecting that this would be no favorable time to broach the controversy he had come to open, he said:—

“If you’ve no further commands, sir, I will go.”

Mr. Harsford nodded assent in silence.

“Let him go,” he said to himself. “He can be neither interruption nor witness, since he is a confederate.”

But before Matthew left the room he was destined to meet with a greater surprise still. As he approached the door he heard a step upon the hall floor without, and as he laid his hand upon the door knob, he felt that a hand upon the other side was trying to turn it. The knob, however, followed Matthew’s more vigorous pressure; and as the door swung open towards him, James Gloving Harsford stepped in.

Matthew had no desire to increase his present perplexity by renewing old hostilities with the young gentleman who now stood face to face before him; and young

Harsford's brain was not quick-witted enough to suggest a good thing to say or do by way of greeting to one whose parting salutation, a week or two before, had been so emphatic and disagreeable; so the young men passed each other with merely the exchange of a cold bow on Matthew's part, for a surprised, supercilious stare on the part of James.

Matthew departed, saying to himself:

"So he's James Harsford, I suppose. Glovering, he said his name was, but it was J. G. H., I remember, on the stick. Her brother, eh! Well he's a nice brother to have, I should think. Pah!"

James entered the room, but whatever thoughts respecting Matthew, his feeble mind might have begun to evolve, were quickly dissipated in his surprise at seeing Arent standing at his father's desk. He was by no means disposed to recognize, in his father's presence, this companion of his darker dissipations; but it did not suit the effrontery of his nature to avoid a recognition by withdrawing from the room; so he drew a chair toward the fire, and engrossing himself in the evening paper by way of a semi-concealment, awaited the other's departure.

"Well," said Mr. James Harsford, *alias* Glovering, to himself, "what may these two gentry be here for to-night, I wonder? Caraboy, or Caraway, or whatever his name is, has come on some sort of business trumped up from the office, I suppose. If the governor will employ an impudent young scamp like him for a clerk, he must expect to have him thrusting his nose in at the house

sometimes, I suppose. I dare say he'll come as often as he can find a decent chance, and then brag of being on intimate terms with the Harsfords. I can see through *him* well enough. But Jack Arent! what can he have to do with the old gentleman? I never heard of their having any business together before. Hope I'm not going to be brought into any scrape. I suppose Arent could stir up a very pretty kettle of mischief for me if he liked, but I don't know as it would do him any good, or father either."

It would have little suited Arent's plans to have had James gain any suspicion of the subject of his interview with Mr. Harsford, so after assuring himself, by a moment's pause, that the young man was intending to await his departure, he brought his interview to a close by saying:

"Well sir, as you were saying, plans of this sort require some time for consideration. 'Sleep over a bargain before you make it, and you'll not lie awake over it afterwards,' my grandfather used to say. But if my services can be of any use to you in any negotiation you may wish to make, command me. A line addressed to me there, sir, will always reach me."

So saying, Arent laid down upon the table before Mr. Harsford the professional card of "DEMAS JURAT, ATTORNEY & COUNSELOR, AND PROCTOR IN ADMIRALTY. NO. 8 CENTER STREET."

"I am much obliged to you, sir," said Mr. Harsford, courteously, and directing a certain glance toward his son, intended to intimate to the gambler that the mer-

chant did not choose to discuss the matter further in the presence of a third person, "for your attention to what you consider my interests in this matter. I somewhat doubt whether I shall think it best to give any further attention to the claim, but if I should, I know of no one I should prefer to confer with than yourself."

"Very well, sir," said Arent.

And bowing and smiling and repeating the assurances of his most distinguished consideration, Mr. Arent departed.

Mr. Harsford, disregarding the presence of his son, commenced the perusal of the letter, which was from Mr. Reuben Mayes, and announced that he had returned from his expedition, but had entirely failed to make any discovery which could aid Mr. Harsford to foil the plot of Arent and his confederates.

CHAPTER XV.

BETTER DO JUSTICE AND SUFFER INJUSTICE, THAN
DO INJUSTICE AND SUFFER JUSTICE.

MATTHEW slept little that night. In fact he had so grave cause for uneasiness that we ought rather to credit his habitual buoyancy of spirit with success in measurably resisting the depressing influence of his circumstances, than charge him with weakly anticipating trouble. He had now been in the city less than half a month, and had made more enemies than friends, and had done more harm than good. In order to come here he had severed the ties that secured to him his former position, and had thus, as it were, cut off his retreat; while now the bright prospects which had opened upon him at the outset were dismally clouded. He had been instrumental in bringing a blow upon his friend, the widow, from which even his sanguine temperament could hardly promise a retrieval. He had, without understanding how or wherefore, incurred the hostility of the merchant; the cause of it he could not analyze; its bitterness he felt; and the utter unreasonableness with which, as it seemed to him, he had been selected as the object of suspicion and hatred, stimulated in his own mind a reciprocal distrust and

dislike. He related the incomprehensible scenes of the evening to Mrs. Hopley; but the poor widow, whose mind, unaccustomed to business, was already full and overflowing with the perplexities of her own affairs, could give him no assistance in unraveling these.

The one result to which his thoughts returned after every unsuccessful effort to solve the enigmas of his position, was this; that he would leave no efforts unmade to compel Mr. Harsford to reparation, or to bring him to justice. The singular circumstances which surrounded him,—the rencounter with the merchant's son,—the apparent implication with Arent,—the mystery involving the projects of Arent and the affairs of the poor woman, who seemed to be in some way connected with these projects;—all these things, instead of making him cautious, and wary, and circumspect in his action, made him desperate, and more rash and impetuous than ever before. He could not see what these affairs had to do with him. He knew nothing of them. He would pay no regard to them. Even the thought of the merchant's daughter made him the more hasty. Why should he think of her? He persuaded himself that Mr. Harsford was the worst of men and deserved the severest of fates.

In such a mood of mind this impetuous young man entered the counting-room on the morning of the day following the interview described in the last chapter.

Mr. Harsford came down late. It was nearly noon when Matthew found the first opportunity to enter his inner room and say:—

"I wish to have a few moments' private conversation with you, sir."

"I am busy now," the merchant replied.

"I hope you will excuse me, sir," returned Matthew, "but what I have to say demands immediate attention."

There was something in these imperious though quiet words that had their effect, and the merchant motioned Mr. Warrack, who was sitting in the corner of the room, to leave them. He saw that Matthew was determined to speak; and he preferred to hear him alone.

Show of secrecy stimulates curiosity. Mr. Warrack left the room; but when outside of it he did not go so far from the ground glass partition as not to be able to hear some of the sharper volleys of words which were discharged between the merchant and his clerk in the encounter which ensued.

"Sir," said Matthew, too much excited to take the seat to which he had been pointed, "some very singular circumstances have come to my knowledge, which are such that I hardly know how to understand your course, but I hope that immediate attention and prompt justice may repair the terrible wrong of which it is my duty to complain. You will recollect—"

"Come! come!" interposed the merchant. "I'll hear nothing of that. You had better leave the talking to your confederate. His tongue is more glib."

"My confederate! I've no confederate. This is no business for confederacy. What I ask is simple justice for her. You can't deny her justice?"

"You shall have justice before you're through with this blackmail business," retorted the merchant. "But you'd better confine yourself to the dumb show part of the conspiracy. You make a very good puppet,—till you speak; and then you spoil it all. You're too rash."

"'Conspiracy!'" cried Matthew, enraged in his rashness with being taunted with rashness. "You may call me puppet and rash, if you please; but when you talk of conspiracies you come to more serious matters. I won't bear that. You will please not repeat that again. But that's neither here nor there. You've ruined this poor woman, and you shall make it good. What part I've had in her trouble I'm sorry for, God knows. But now I'm bound to see to it that you put her where she was before."

"It *is* a conspiracy; the more you say the more you prove it. As for your *poor* woman! not a sixpence more shall she ever get out of me. I'll die first. It's all a swindle from beginning to end; you insinuating young rascal. Go about your business! Leave the room!"

"I'll not leave the room. You shall hear me out first. If you know what's wise you will satisfy me before I go."

"Satisfy you? Oh, you're to be bought off are you?" broke in the merchant.

"You recollect that six thousand dollars—"

"Now you come to the point;" said the merchant. "You're not quite so wary as your black whiskered accomplice. Now you show the cloven hoof. Six thousand is all you want, is it? Not quite, eh? More

yet? Not a cent! Not a cent shall you get. I tell you once for all that your woman is a sham. You'd better let her go back to the world she belongs in and not let her go prowling around making hell on earth in this style. If you don't take yourself off I'll have you locked up and the police on her tracks in half an hour. Your miniatures, and your letters, and your unexpected meetings, and your rascally coincidences won't have any effect on me. You play into one another's hands well; but it's no use."

"If you refer to any thing that occurred last night," returned Matthew, "I know nothing about it. I have nothing to do with that man. I don't know his name. I never saw him but once or twice,—and as for the woman—"

"*Silence!*" screamed the merchant. "You've gone too far to get out of it. Once or twice is enough for two such rascals to scheme together. The Devil's eggs hatch quick. If you open your mouth on that matter again I'll have you taken in custody."

"I shall *not* be silent, for I have not said what I have to, yet. It will be time enough for you to get excited about your private affairs (since it seems you have such affairs as that) when I begin to speak of them to you. I know nothing about them and don't wish to. What I want, is—what I demand, is—that you should make reparation to Mrs. Hopley. Your bank has burst; and you don't think I am going to sit quietly and see her suffer by it."

"Oh you change your tune now! You've got to the

end of one tack, and now you try another. I tell you there's no money at the end of either of 'em. You're a bold fellow to fiddle on two strings in this style. But I tell you I'm not fond of such music. I'll not listen to it."

"Fond of it or not, sir, you must hear it. You've defrauded her; at any rate you put her money in Iroquois stock when you knew better. And I believe, sir, that the stock you put off on her was your own, sir. At any rate, you can't refuse to give her up the note you induced her to make."

"Yes, I can refuse. I don't hold it now. You must ask the man who does hold it."

"The man who does? Why! you haven't passed it away, have you?"

"Of course I have," returned the merchant, who took a malicious pleasure in Matthew's alarm at this new phase of the difficulty. "We always turn these things over. You don't suppose I let any paper lie idle, do you? I can't afford that."

"But where is it? Who has it?"

"I don't know. I don't suppose I ever shall, till it's protested. Then they'll come down on me as indorser, I suppose."

"Well," said Matthew, "I demand that you make her loss good. Stock and note. She must be saved harmless. You don't know what a loss it is to her," he continued, raising his voice with excitement as his thoughts turned upon the certain destitution of his friend, if the redress he claimed were denied. "It's a matter of life and death to her."

"Young man," said the merchant, becoming cool as he saw the advantage he had in the retort, "you must have a bright head to come to me with such a complaint as that. 'Twasn't many days since I got a letter from somebody advising me to sell, and now he comes and makes a criminal charge against me of having followed his advice."

"Alas!" said Matthew, "it's too true. But that does not help this poor widow. You have had her money, and you have sold her note, and she has what to show for it—what? nothing."

"To my thinking," continued the merchant, "if your story were true, which remains after all to be proved, yet to my thinking the man who suggests the fraud, knowing the facts, is rather deeper in it than the man who ignorantly follows his advice. How should I know that your smooth-worded advice was meant to trap me into a fraud? And you, who contrived the scheme, have the face to charge me with bad faith."

"It's false!" cried Matthew. "You know it's false. I did n't suggest that you sell it for more than its worth. I did n't suggest that you put it off on her—a helpless woman."

"And who is she that it should make any difference with you? Do you want me to believe that you meant me to cheat anybody but *your* friends? And what is she to you any more than anybody else, more than any other widow? Eh?"

Matthew's temper was no longer within bounds. He seized a heavy ebony stick which served as a ruler, and

interrupted the speaker with a heavy blow upon the desk which left a deep dent there.

"I tell you," cried he, "you shall answer for this another time. What I want to know now is, will you make it good to her or must I force you to?"

"Not a penny," said the merchant, resolutely, though appalled by the fearful energy of Matthew's anger.

"I swear," cried Matthew, uttering for the first time in his life an oath, as he dashed the ruler to the floor, "I swear you shall answer for this if I have to go through all the courts of justice in the State."

So saying, and trembling with excitement and unrestrained passion, Matthew retired into the outer counting-room, where, as he passed, he was followed by the wondering eyes of Mr. Warrack and the clerks to his seat at the other end of the room.

The merchant was perplexed in regard to what course he should pursue. His evil genius, which always preferred a circuitous course to a straight-forward one, suggested a policy of conciliation, to which a consciousness of his own wrong conduct towards the widow added some weight.

Mr. Harsford perfectly understood that while he might lawfully and safely, if not honestly and honorably, have sold the stock in the market (could a sale for it have been obtained) to a stranger who dealt upon his own means of information as to its value, and not at all upon trust in Mr. Harsford, yet that having been employed by Mrs. Hopley to make an investment for her, he could not, even legally, transfer to her any thing of his own; but was bound to give her the benefit of his best knowledge

and skill and means of information, and to buy for her such stock as he would have bought for himself. He very well knew that the transaction had only to be exposed, to be pronounced a wrong for which reparation might be enforced under severe penalties; and that Matthew had only to consult a tolerably competent lawyer to learn that this was the case. Understanding this, he was, upon reflection, quite disposed to avert any immediate steps which Matthew might contemplate taking by almost any conciliatory measures not involving the repayment of the money; a thing which his selfish avarice was fully determined to resist.

While, however, he was yet undecided how to arrange matters so as to give Matthew a temporary satisfaction or an illusory hope which might postpone the difficulty for the present, Matthew returned, now more calm in manner, though not less resolute in spirit.

"After what has occurred, Mr. Harsford," he said, "of course I shall not remain here. I shall leave to-night. It is the end of my week. If you wish to see me for any thing, I shall be, for a few days at least, at Mrs. Hopley's house."

Without waiting for any reply to this announcement, Matthew turned away and left the room, and seating himself again at his desk, resumed the labors which had been interrupted. Though pale, he was assiduous and noiseless in his work; yet seemed to revolve some deep purpose in his inner thoughts, while his hands were still busily engaged in the routine of affairs. Soon after noon he went out to do an errand, as he said.

Meanwhile Wall street was in a pother. Wall street was in a tangle. Wall street was in a ferment. All Wall street was running in and out of brokers' offices, breaking into conversations on the steps of the Exchange, huddling up in little knots on the corners of the streets, stopping to put questions to passers by; and all about this strange development, this deep mystery in the affairs of the Wilmerdingle Gold Prospect Company. That world-renowned corporation which had been introduced at the brokers' board with a flourish of trumpets which astonished the entire street, and which had run up in the market at a rate and to a price which astonished the street again, and which had only a week or so before put forth a new report filled with gilded statistics and golden promises, by which the street had been astonished over again, was now the subject of a fourth astonishment, so much more profound and wide-spread than the others, that Wall street shook to its very paving stones.

For it so happened that the eminent Mr. Hokus, senior partner of the well-known firm of Hokus & Pokus, brokers, being about to take a trip to Europe, nominally for the benefit of certain great interests which he represented, though really only for the fun of the thing, was making up a schedule of the various securities which were held by the firm at this time, and among others he had occasion to make a list of ten bonds of the Wilmerdingle Gold Prospect Company. Not a great while previous, that company, being desirous to effect a loan,—that is, the directors being agreed they would like some

money,—had issued their bonds, five hundred in number, and for the sum of five hundred dollars each, and payable thirty years from date,—at which time the directors thought they might all reasonably hope to be dead, and out of the way of trouble, at least on the score of raising money for the company. These bonds they had secured by giving a mortgage on the mining and other lands of the company, valued at upwards of a million, by reason of the rich deposits of gold they were supposed to contain; and had thereafter offered them for sale to the highest bidder. And such was the enthusiasm of the report and prospectus, that the entire lot of five hundred bonds sold for about ninety per cent. on the average, netting a nice little sum, which the directors, with a flourish, paid in to the treasury on one day, and quietly drew out the next, on various vouchers for services, salaries, incidental expenses, commissions, etc., etc.; no one else drawing half as much as the President, Alexander Harsford.

Now the firm of Hokus & Pokus held no less than ten of these bonds, and Mr. Hokus being engaged in making out a list of them, by their numbers, was smitten with astonishment at finding that there were *two* numbered 224. How could that have happened? They were both very pretty bonds,—beautiful bank-note paper,—engraving in the highest style of art,—filled up in elegant chirography,—autograph signatures of the highest flourish,—fine red seal,—every thing of the most solvent and responsible character. But there were *two* of the same number. Two! It might be a mistake of the clerk in using the same number twice when filling the blanks;

but then the result would be that five hundred and one bonds would have been issued; and query, whether they were all secured by the mortgage? Or it might be,—horrible suspicion!—that somebody had been issuing some spurious bonds.

At any rate it was as well for Mr. Hokus to step over and consult his friend, Mr. Makus, of the equally eminent brokerage firm of Makus & Brakus, which firm, as he happened to know, held a large number of the same bonds.

Upon going over the bonds held by the latter firm, it was discovered that three of them were duplicates of numbers held by the firm of Hokus & Pokus, and thereupon the two brokers went over together to consult with their very eminent friend, also a leading stock broker, Mr. Tryon Fixus. In his safe they found two more duplicates; and now, having pretty decidedly discarded the theory of an accidental mistake, they settled down on the theory that either Mercury Cornish, the Secretary, or else Alexander Harsford, the President, both whose respectable autographs were officially appended to the bonds, had entrapped the other into signing an indefinite number in blank, and then after filling up and disposing of the lawful five hundred, had filled up and disposed of a few more for private account, duplicating the number so that the fraud might not be detected, unless by the accident of one person coming into possession of two bonds bearing the same number.

"But then it was impossible," said Mr. Hokus, "to suspect Mercury Cornish of such a thing."

"That would be very true," assented Mr. Makus, "if it were not equally impossible to suspect Aleck Harsford."

"That would be a very just remark," said Mr. Tryon Fixus, "if it were not still more unreasonable to suppose they both had a hand in it."

And with this the three brokers broke up their conference, and separated to trace back the history of the mysterious bonds, with a view to ascertain, if possible, from whom they had in the first instance come. But as they separated they gave each other their solemn word of honor to keep the whole thing a profound secret, until the truth should have been found out and made clear.

"For we don't want to injure the reputation of an innocent man," said Hokus.

"No; no;" said Makus and Fixus.

"Nor damage the credit of the company," said Makus.

"No; no;" said Hokus and Fixus.

"Nor spoil the market for our good bonds," said Mr. Tryon Fixus.

"No; no;" said Hokus and Makus.

"Nor for our bad ones either," said each to himself.

And so saying they parted. Now how it was I never could learn;—Hokus swears he never said a word;—Makus kept perfect silence, did not even consult his lawyer;—Fixus positively did not drop the least hint,—how it was I can not tell, but in less than two hours all Wall street was bristling with the news of the great embezzlement, or defalcation, or spurious issue in the Wil-

merdingle Gold Prospect Company; and all Wall street was alert for proofs to bring home the fraud to the perpetrator, whoever he might be.

The day had not passed away before these bonds were quite distinctly traced to Mr. Harsford as their originator.

Matthew, who had as yet formed no acquaintances in the street, heard nothing of the excitement as he passed back and forth there, his mind too full of the heavy anxieties and cares which arose out of his own circumstances to admit of his taking much note of the fevered excitement which agitated the crowd around him. Returning to the counting-room he bounded in in haste, and looked in at the open door of Mr. Harsford's private room. He was gone.

"Did you want to see him?" asked one of the younger clerks. "He'll not come back I think."

"No," said Matthew, taking his seat at his desk, and resuming his writing, "it's of no consequence."

And he wrote on, steadily, as the afternoon wore away.

At five o'clock or thereabouts Matthew, still lingering at his desk, bade good-bye to the departing junior clerks; their curiosity being too much excited by the scene of Matthew's quarrel, of which they had heard so little and conjectured so much, to allow them to assume the distant and frigid bearing of Mr. Warrack. As the last and youngest of them ceased a vain attempt to draw out an explanation of the mystery of the quarrel he had overheard, he said as a last bait upon the hook of his conversation:—

"I have got to go up to Harsford's house to-night with a box of cigars he left for me to take up. If you want to send any word, I'll take it."

"Bring it to me," said Matthew, "I have something for you to take with it. Stop. Is it in his room?"

"On his desk," said the boy.

Matthew entered the room. In a moment he reappeared at the door.

"John," said he, "I can take it up just as well as not. It will save you going up town."

"Good!" said John. "Then I can go now. But I would n't go near his house if I were you."

"I'm not afraid of him," said Matthew, smiling darkly.

Thus Matthew was left alone in the counting-room of the man lately his employer, so truly now his enemy. It is certain that whatever dark and hostile thoughts may have filled his mind during this hour, he preserved a certain appearance of fidelity to his work, for he patiently waited until the stroke of six for the expiration of the day which freed him and set him adrift again upon the world. How he occupied himself meanwhile there are no witnesses, alas! to tell. From the time that John, faithless to explicit instructions, left him alone in the counting-room with that box of cigars, to the time when as the clock struck six, having looked around for the last time on the offices so briefly familiar to him, he closed the door upon them, and carrying the box under his arm, bade good-bye to the porter whom he passed on the stairs, no human eye watched his actions.

Taking at length his last farewell of the merchant's counting-room, he pulled his hat desperately down over his eyes, and bent his steps resolutely toward the merchant's house.

Arriving there at length he rang the door bell. The door was opened by a female; for Matthew, raising his eyes from the step, saw first the lower part of her dress. He heard an exclamation of surprise at the same time that he saw a hand extended, toward which he reached forward the box, saying:—

“This is for Mr. Harsford.”

And at this instant looking up he recognized the person whose simultaneous exclamation in a strangely familiar tone, startled him.

“Matthew!”

“Arabella!”

This was all. Even this recognition seemed more than the overwrought feelings of the young man could endure. He hesitated an instant, turned quickly, pulled his hat over his forehead again, descended the steps, and walked rapidly away.

Arabella Mayes, whose sudden appearance will not be wholly uncomprehended by the reader, startling as it was to Matthew, stood with the box in her hands gazing vainly after him for some moments. She had but a moment before finished the call she had been making on Miss Harsford, the main object of which was to let Matthew know, indirectly, of her visit in the neighboring city; in the confidence that he would hasten to avail himself of the opportunity to see her. She was on the

point of coming to the front door to leave, as Matthew rang; and with the independent manner of one bred in the country, she instinctively opened the door, in response to the ring she heard.

She now handed the box to the servant who came up stairs to answer the bell; and stepping out, descended the steps, and entered the carriage which stood awaiting her coming; and which now whirled her rapidly away.

It will not be difficult for the reader to understand that the demeanor of Matthew in this hasty departure was a surprise and disappointment to Arabella.

She was already,—nay, she had been almost from the moment when his retreating wagon-wheels died away upon her ear on that memorable evening in Enneton,—sincerely repentant for the pride and temper which she had displayed in that interview. She thought Matthew somewhat to blame also to be sure, particularly for the provoking way in which he had appealed to young Glover; but she thought but lightly of Matthew's share in the quarrel. She acknowledged to herself, and was willing freely to acknowledge to him, that the first fault in the quarrel was hers; and to accept the slightest apology or concession from him. She had all along imagined him to be ready, to be desirous, as she was, that matters should be restored to their former footing between them. And she supposed she had but to let Matthew know in any of those ways which young ladies contrive for giving that sort of information to young gentlemen, that she was near, and he would at once seek a reconciliation. If he would but do that,—and it had

never occurred to her to doubt that he would,—all, she thought, would be well again.

But now she had met him, he had seen her face to face. And he had avoided her, and turned from her, and hastened away without a word.

She was astonished and grieved. Her expectations were disappointed; and she rode on her way in deeper trouble than ever.

Meanwhile Matthew pursued his walk to Mrs. Hopley's, where he was destined to meet with as serious a cause of surprise and anxiety as he had just given to Arabella.

CHAPTER XVI.

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WHEN JUSTICE IS EXPENSIVE, MERCY IS MADE  
MERCHANDISE.  
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MATTHEW, walking rapidly from Mr. Harsford's door, passed into Broadway. Choosing the least crowded and the darkest side of the street, as if the sight of his fellow-men, and the gay lights of the shops, were not attractive to him, this night, he walked on for some time; but at length he gradually slackened his pace, and at last irresolutely turned about, and appeared almost inclined to retrace his steps. Any hesitation, or uncertainty of action, was, however, a rare thing with Matthew, and was never long indulged. He soon resumed his former course, and pressed on towards home.

Arriving at the door of the bakery, where he expected to find Mrs. Hopley sitting, according to custom, in the open shop, he was surprised to find it closed. The shutters were up. A heavy padlock held, with pertinacity, two staples driven into the doors; the windows above were all closed; and to his repeated and impatient knocks, no answer came.

Matthew was not in a mood to ponder quietly upon so strange a circumstance or to await with much patience

a solution of the mystery. His pounding and rattling at the door, although it aroused no attention within the building, did attract first the ears, and then the eyes, of a sedate and modest policeman, who after discreetly "watching" Matthew from a sheltered point of observation just around the corner, and having satisfied himself that there was "only one of them," ventured gently up to the spot where Matthew stood, and asked him, mildly, "what he wanted there?" The young man desisted from the vain attempt to gain attention from within, and coolly proposed to the astonished policeman "to help him burst in the door;" and even followed up this daring solicitation with the inquiry "if he knew where he could find a fellow who would pick the lock." The policeman, overcome by the brazen character of such a proposal from a supposed burglar, resolutely withdrew himself from the scene of temptation, having admonished the young man to "be quiet and go away;" and retired to the opposite side of the street, whence he watched, as in professional duty bound to do, the conclusion of Matthew's proceedings.

Those proceedings were simple. Matthew having by his noise drawn forth a head from a neighboring window, which popped out much as a turtle thrusts his head from under his shell, a brief conversation ensued, resulting in Matthew's being informed that Mrs. Hopley had assuredly gone away, that nobody knew where she had gone, and nobody knew when she would come back. Thereafter the head popped in again, the window was shut down like a guillotine just too late for its purpose, and

Matthew walked slowly away. At this the policeman was greatly relieved. His eyes followed Matthew's retreating form, for some distance, and his ears followed the retreating footsteps for some distance further; but his alert attention was soon demanded by the duty of suppressing and dispersing a seditious assemblage of two small boys who were about to avail themselves of a vacant corner on the side-walk to engage in the unlawful and riotous game of marbles; and in the performance of this public duty, the dangerous young man was forgotten for a time.

This same Saturday, so soon to be marked as a terrible day in Matthew's history, had already brought no small trouble upon Mrs. Hopley.

Matthew had left his friend that morning with a dark and resolute expression of countenance. Instead of the light-hearted and cheerful step and smile which she was accustomed to observe in him, his tread was heavy, and there was obvious in his voice and manner the energy of an intense resolve to see her vindicated, let it cost what effort it might. Though she did not venture to call him back, or utter the warning which was upon her very lips, she almost feared more from his impetuosity than she dared to hope from his determination.

Shortly after he had gone, leaving her in this mood of anxiety, uncertainty, and gloomy foreboding, the attention of the saddened woman was attracted by the arrival of a sharp-faced, lank looking man, who was, in fact, an attorney and collecting agent of the lowest class. That he was an attorney was disclosed by his errand; and that

he was of an inferior rank amongst attorneys, was shown by his manner of performing it.

"Hopley,—Sarah Hopley,—that you?" said this man, pulling out some papers as he spoke, and singling out a slip from among them.

"Yes, sir," said the widow. And she wondered whether it was a letter, or a tax warrant, or an invitation to a funeral, or some small bill to be paid, or a summons to attend parade in the militia in place of the departed William Hopley. These were the errands which in general brought the bearers of such packages of papers to her abode.

"Yes! 'Sarah Hopley,'" continued the man, reading. "'Three hundred and,'—yes that's it. H'm. Little note of yours."

And the collector held out a note, the body of which was in Mr. Harsford's hand-writing, but the signature was undeniably the autograph of the widow herself. And as he held it forward for her inspection, he looked up indifferently at the shelving of the shop, and then at the gas fixtures, and then at nothing at all, just as a very young doctor rolls up his eyes when he is feeling a pulse professionally.

"Well, sir, I know it."

"Well, mum, it's all ready to be paid," said the man, as blandly as could be expected of him.

"But I am not ready to pay it."

"Sorry for that, mum; for we must have the money."

"But I'm not to pay it till next year; unless I want to."

"That ain't in it."

"No it is n't in it," said the widow, without needing to look at the note, for she knew it by heart, and had gone over it, sadly, twenty times since last night. "It is n't in it I know; but I was to pay it any time it was convenient. He said so. I was n't to pay it till the bank dividend came in, if I did not want to. And I can't pay it now."

"We've waited long enough, mum; and we must have the money now."

The widow's heart sank within her, and she looked up at her visitor, with surprise and fear mingled in her moist eyes.

"Them's my instructions, mum," said he, still speaking somewhat blandly for one of his class; for although grown callous by passing through a thousand such scenes, he was touched with a certain sympathy for the fair debtor to whom he brought such distress. "Them's my instructions. We must have the money now."

"I haven't got the money. He never ought to ask it. I don't believe I'd pay it if I could. I certainly would n't till I had time to see about it. He expressly said I was not to pay it until I had the money to spare."

"I don't know what Mr. Chaffer said to you, but he said to me, Do you get that money for me, by ten o'clock this A. M. That's what he said to me."

"Mr. Chaffer! Who is he? 'Tis n't his note."

"Come! come! Yes, 't is his note. But that do n't signify. I've got the note. There 't is. I want the money. Where is it? Come!"

"I assure you I can't pay it to-day. I have n't got the money. I can *not* pay it now. I don't know exactly when I could either, if indeed—; but I expect to have the money soon. I do really, very soon; and then I'll see about it. I am going to sell out my place here, for I am going to Vermont to live; and I shall have money as soon as I have sold out. I'll see Mr. Harsford about it then."

"We can't wait, mum, till that time."

"But you must," insisted the widow, resolved to do nothing in Matthew's absence. "You must. I certainly shall not pay it till I have seen Mr. Harsford. He has treated me most shamefully; shamefully. I certainly sha'n't pay it. I would n't if I had the money, after what he's done."

"H'm!" said the man, ominously.

"No!" replied the widow, "I don't believe he can ever make me pay it. He has treated me so that I certainly sha'n't pay a cent of it, if I can help it. Not a cent!"

Strangely enough these words instead of being a disappointment to the creditor's representative, seemed to give him entire satisfaction. He smiled with a mysterious and contemptuous pleasure, took a turn through the shop repeating his inspection of its contents, and without further words, went away whistling contentedly as he walked.

The widow was surprised at the abruptness of his departure; and in truth alarmed at his too easy acquiescence in her explanations. She instinctively tried to call

him back; but then it occurred to her that she had nothing to say to him if he complied with the call, and she desisted.

Filled with gloomy forebodings of unknown trouble, she sat at her post, mechanically attending to such business as required her attention, and anxiously wishing that Matthew would come home.

Late in the afternoon, after she had several times stepped to the door, to look up the street hoping to see Matthew approaching, she at length, while standing in the door-way, looking and waiting, saw three men coming towards the shop. One, she in a moment recognized as her visitor of the morning; the others she had never seen before. They came up to the door; and one of them, the most dirty and coarse of the three, in his appearance, remained outside, while the others entered. She had retreated from the door on recognizing the attorney, and they approached the counter behind which she now sat.

The attorney's companion was a stout and vulgar looking man, whose dirty dress and authoritative manner would have marked him in the eye of an experienced person, as one of the ministers of justice of the subordinate class; a sort of low priest in the temple of law; a 'deputy sheriff.' He walked up to the counter, accompanying the attorney, and seeing no chair convenient, hoisted himself to a seat upon the counter, where, having glanced around the room leisurely, he twisted his fat neck so as to look in a sidelong way at the widow, and sat waiting, apparently, for his coadjutor to open the business on which they had come, whatever it might be.

"Sorry to trouble you, mum, about that little matter again;" said the attorney.

"I told you that I could n't do any thing about it at all; but I'm glad you've come again, for Mr. Caraby will be here in a few minutes I expect, and I can't do any thing without him. He'll go with you and see Mr. Harsford about it."

Whether it was an affection of the heart, or only an affection of the eyelids I do not know, but while she spoke, this minister of justice, sitting offensively on her counter, winked both his eyes, much as we may suppose a spider might wink in view of a fly, or as an alligator should, just before he swings his tail around to knock his victim into the water.

"It's of no consequence to wait for your friend, mum," said the deputy, taking up the conversation. "You're the pusson we want to see. I've got an attachment for you, and you can take the papers and we can take the things, just as well by ourselves."

"An attachment?"

"Yes, mum. Suit of Nicholas Chaffer. Them's the papers."

And the officer handed toward her two or three shabby looking legal documents. As she made no movement to take them they fell from his relaxed grasp upon the counter.

"All the same, mum," he said. "That's due and regular service, same as if you took 'em. Now about the things."

"Why! what are you going to do about my things?"

"Attach and safely keep, mum, the goods and chattels, mum, of Sarah Hopley. Perishable goods 'll be sold, mum, that's what the law is, and them as is n't perishable won't. These 'ere goods looks perishable, though."

And the deputy took up a small cake from a pile in a tray upon the counter, and crowded it entire into his capacious mouth.

"You don't mean that you are going to take my things away?"

"That depends on you, mum;" he replied, as soon as he regained the power of articulation.

"How? But come, can't you leave it till next week? Till Monday morning; just till Monday morning. I'll go and see Mr. Harsford just as soon as Matthew comes."

"What, Aleck Harsford?"

"Yes, Mr. Alexander Harsford."

"That won't do no good, mum. *He* can't help you. Ha! there's writs out against him, now. 'No goods,' too, I'll warrant. He's a regular foot-ball. Go a-flying over anybody's head as long as he's got the wind; but prick him and he'll wrinkle up like an old woman. He's wrinkled up now, they say, so 't he'll never come out smooth again."

And the minister of justice laughed at his conceit. This was about the last job of the week to him, and he was at leisure and inclined to be sociable with the widow.

"Not Alexander Harsford, of Hanover Square! Why he's a rich man. I know better."

"Well, mum. So much the better if he is. So much the worse if he isn't. But he won't help you. He's got enough of his own to attend to,—too much to help other folks. He never was over foolish in that way either. But he's nothing to do with it, any way. Did you say you wanted me to put a man in?"

"Put a man in? What do you mean?"

"In here."

"In here? A man! No I don't. I never said so, you know I didn't."

"Come, come. Don't you understand? When we attaches we put a man in, instead of carrying the things off; that is if they wants us to."

"Why! you don't mean that you shall really carry away the things," said the widow, looking around in despair.

"That's the law, mum; as I told you."

"But the shelving and counters don't belong to me, they are the landlord's."

"So much more reason for taking care of the rest of the stuff. But we can put a man in if you want. I've got him here at the door. It's the way we always do. The law requires we should take the things, but it's just the same to put a man in."

"What! in here to stay with me. I won't hear of it."

"Oh, don't be bothered, mum. He won't trouble you. Give him a shake-down on the floor or under the counter. You won't mind him more than a watch-dog. On my soul, I would n't much mind staying here myself.

You'd feed a fellow well, I suppose. Those cakes ain't bad to take. Good chance to try a vegetable diet. Ha, ha."

"You must wait a few moments," said the widow, now thoroughly alarmed, and trying unsuccessfully to assume an appearance of self-possession. "He will be here very soon;" and she went to the door to look for Matthew.

The unprepossessing appearance of the "man" whom she was assured she would n't mind more than a watch-dog, and who now confronted her at the door, turned her back again.

During a few moments, as it was growing dark, they waited, but Caraby did not come.

"Can't stop any longer," said the deputy.

"I'll resist this to the utmost," exclaimed the widow. "Justice costs a good deal, I know, but I'll have it. I won't be imposed upon in this way. You mustn't touch any thing."

"Justice costs a considerable, mum, but then mussy isn't very dear. I can put a man in and he'll only cost three dollars a day; and then you can have things just as they are as long as you please."*

* It may be thought that the officer asked an exorbitant price for the attendance of his watchers. Three dollars a day will pay a member of the Legislature. But when we take into account the fact that these subordinate officers are not paid by the functionary whom in law they represent, but while *he* takes all the lawful perquisites, annually amounting to a sum larger than the salary of the President of the United States, his business is all done for him without expense to him by a horde of needy men, in consideration of their being allowed

"No," said the widow, "I sha'n't have any man in here as long as Mr. Caraby is away."

"Get a cart, Nate," said the officer to the man at the door.

"Can't take 'em to-night," said Nate, putting his head in at the door. "'T would be dark before we could get 'em on."

"That's so," said the other. "But she won't agree to leave 'em in charge."

The subordinate grumbled, and rattled a padlock and keys he carried in the pocket of his sack.

"We must lock 'em up then, mum," said the officer. "That's what we must do. Meanwhile you can see your man, and by Monday morning you'll have it all arranged; put a man in charge, and take your time about it."

"Can't you wait till Mr. Caraby comes?"

"No, *mum*. Our time is valu'ble; to *us* if 't is n't to you. Ha! ha! We know its valu'. It's no object to us to stay."

Perhaps, as the event turned out, it was not the wisest thing she could have done, but the widow finally resolved to submit to having her shop shut up temporarily, and take refuge herself for the Sabbath with some friends of her late brother in a neighboring street, rather than

to exact first from one party and then from the other, such pecuniary rewards as may purchase their accommodations, their zeal, or their slackness—when we consider that these men have no other remuneration than such as they may thus obtain, three dollars a day will scarcely seem too much.

purchase mercy at such a sacrifice. This plan afforded also the advantage of giving her a good opportunity to hasten down to the counting-room to find Matthew, and seek immediate redress. So she hastily gathered up a few articles indispensable to her in the contemplated absence; secreted her few personal valuables, and having made hasty arrangements with her single domestic such as the emergency required, she signified to the ministers of justice her readiness to comply with the mandates of the Law.

A few minutes before six she was shut out into the street; and staying a moment to see the padlock securely fastened, Mrs. Hopley, with her bundle in her hand, started at a rapid pace in the direction of the counting-room; the counting-room which at that moment Matthew was preparing to leave.

She hastened along the street until she reached an omnibus route, and then walking on her way until she was overtaken by one of those accommodating vehicles, she beckoned to the driver, and took her seat in the coach.

She had not gone, however, much more than half way down to the counting-room, when a sudden thought occurred to her.

"I declare," said she to herself, "I shall be too late. Matthew will be gone up long before I get there now. Why did n't I think of that? I ought to have waited at the shop till he came. However, I suppose it's no use to go back now."

She rode on, therefore; and in due time reached the

place of destination. Of course she was too late. She found the warehouse closed and silent; she turned away in deep perplexity, not however with so sore and gloomy thoughts as those with which Matthew, an hour and a half later, tried in vain the locked door of the deserted bakery.

SATURDAY NIGHT.—A VISION.

SATURDAY evening. A large and handsomely furnished apartment. No stiffness of elegance, nor scantiness of economy; but liberal luxury. Brilliant light flashing through the ground glass globes of the chandelier, and from the soft coal fire in the grate. A milder radiance reflected from the mirrors, from the windows, from the gilt cornices and bands of the window-curtains, from the glass doors of the book-case, from the brown sides and yellow edges of the cigar box upon the mantel, from the polished rosewood of the desk and table, from the bright black mohair cushions of the chairs and sofa, from the gilt wreaths of flowers which adorn the paper on the wall, from the burnished frames and varnished canvas of many paintings which hang on every side. Ease, comfort, luxury, abounding in all the appointments of the room; but in the heart, misery, woe, shame, disappointment, vexation, mortification, impatience, distress, remorse, despair.

A man pacing to and fro in this apartment. Steps hurried, yet irresolute. A manner betokening that excited, frantic struggle which the heart makes, when the late-

developed results of a long course of wrong doing rise and bear all before them in their resistless current. One can paddle out very gracefully into the stream far above the Falls, but when the boat is drawn down through the rapids to the brow of the ultimate plunge, the struggles of the boatman are fearful to behold.

Ah me! where shall I go? Which way turn, or whither fly? My credit broken! My means gone! My name a by-word in the street. What further can I do? How shall I break way through these troubles to a free Life;—or must I now wait hopelessly for Death?

Still pacing to and fro. His steps hurried and impatient, yet irresolute. Turning to the grate;—where he bathes his hands inattentively a moment in the light and heat of the blazing fire. Turning to the table;—where he bends over the evening paper, and reads again that little paragraph which foreshadows detection and disgrace, and strives again to judge what course the hounds upon his track will take, and whether he can reckon upon yet another day. Turning to the window;—where he leans, resting his hot forehead against the panes, gazing out into the gathering twilight. Opening the window, and standing in the cool draught.

Ah me! Where shall I go? Which way turn, or whither fly? Means gone! Credit broken! My name a disgrace and by-word. What remains in Life worth waiting for;—or what refuge have I except in Death?

Long standing at the window. Deep and sorrowful thinking. Then a certain bending forward and adjust

ment of something upon the some support before him. What he does, no one within the room, were any one within, could tell; though if the fire-light and gas-light shine brightly enough upon him, it might be that one in the house windows opposite, if any one were there, could tell what it is he holds in his hand;—and now thrusts in his pocket.

At length shutting down the window, with a shiver, and coming back to the fire-place. Leaning his head upon his arms, which he crosses upon the mantel. A sudden recollection. Taking a little white paper from his pocket, and dropping it into the fire, where it blazes up, and smoulders in ashes, and disappears.

Alas! what shall I do? Which way turn, or whither fly? Wealth gone! Credit broken! Disgraced and ruined! Can I, by any chance, retrieve these misfortunes? What refuge have I?

Turning to the sofa and disposing the cushions upon it to give an easy resting-place. Holding a cigar in his hand. Endeavoring to light it; but it will not draw well. Moistening a strip of paper by the lips, and winding around the upper end of the cigar, so as to bind the loosened leaves of the tobacco more closely around the roll.

Lighting the cigar by a paper match which he throws into the fire when used. Lying down upon the sofa. Disposing the newspaper at his hand, as if to read. An odorous smoke, from the burning cigar, rising from time to time, in whiffs.

Alas! how shall I escape? Which way turn, or

whither fly? Means and credit exhausted. My wife shamed. My children disgraced. Myself ruined. I have no way of escape unless Death shall open a door for me.

* * * * *

An hour passing. The white paper around the cigar crisping slowly up as the fire eats its way onward, and turning to black ashes, and falling undistinguishable upon the floor. The cigar consumed at length almost to the very end. Slumber, a deep and heavy slumber, overcoming the frame. The unburnt end of the cigar dropping from the relaxed and nerveless lips. The newspaper falling at the side. He breathes slowly, gently, imperceptibly.

* * * * *

Two — three — four — five — six — seven — eight — hours. A faint gray light of dawn glimmering in the sky. Dead and cold ashes lying in the grate; and a cold and lifeless form outstretched upon the sofa, lying in the chill morning air, and the senseless imbecile glare of the gas-light.

CHAPTER XVII.

BETTER TO TRUST TOO MUCH THAN SUSPECT
TOO MUCH.

ABOUT the time that the streets were thronged with persons returning from their various places of worship, in the afternoon of the Sabbath following Matthew's unexpected meeting with Arabella, two plainly dressed, quiet looking men paused at the front door of the Harsford mansion, and, after assuring themselves by a glance at the name on the door-plate that it was the house they sought, they descended into the area, and knocked at the basement door.

These were detective officers to whom was committed the elucidation of the sudden and mysterious death of Mr. Alexander Harsford.

Being silently admitted the officers were shown directly up stairs into one of the parlors upon the first floor, and there awaited the person for whom they had inquired upon entering.

"Very remarkable case this is, Heckoe," said the elder of the two.

He was a plump and portly man, with a very intelligent countenance, made somewhat mysterious in its ex-

pression, however, by a frequent twitching movement of the corners of his mouth. This movement was especially frequent in the intervals of conversation, when he was accustomed to close his lips and look keenly at his listener, while the corners of his mouth played, as if the little that he said was nothing in comparison with much that he shrewdly repressed.

"That's a fact," responded Heckoe, "it's most remarkable; it's my opinion that the fellow was a very 'cute one. But he took a bad time to it. If it had been any other night than Saturday, he might have cleared out next morning, and been fifty miles off before they knew any thing about it. But Sunday you see takes the linchpins right out of his wheels. By the way, Sneyer, do you know how they found it out?"

"They would n't have known it so soon if the doctor had n't happened to have been here. You see the old gentleman wasn't the most regular man in the world, and wasn't always expected home at night. So when the family went to bed they thought he had n't come in yet, and left the front door on the latch, for him; and when they got up in the morning they thought he had n't come in at all,—was out of town, or something. So they got their breakfast without thinking any more about it. But after breakfast, the girl happened to try the lib'ry door, and found it locked, and then they happened to see that his hat was in the hall after all. Then they knocked at the door till they were tired, and then they broke it open, somehow, and there they found him."

"Dead, was he?" said Heckoe.

"Stone dead," returned Sneyer. "They took it for apoplexy; though by all accounts he was n't a very likely subject for that complaint. But the doctor happened in that morning to see some one of the family, and he said, 'poison.' Then they found the end of the cigar, and that told the whole story."

"Where do you think the fellow is, Sneyer?"

"He's not gone far yet," returned the elder officer.

"No, he's not gone far yet," rejoined the other, "that's clear enough. But where is he, that's the point; he might be over in New Jersey, eh? He could have taken the ferry any time."

"He won't go out of town, I believe," said Mr. Sneyer, "till he knows the thing is done. 'T would look suspicious, and 't would be no use. He's in town somewhere, or I'm mistaken. Whether he will be long is another thing."

"Whether he will be long is a very different thing," assented Heckoe, "very different. But 't was ingeniously done though, was n't it? Did you ever hear of a neater thing?—to poison a man's cigar for him!"

"There it is," interrupted the other, "that's the very point. It was only one or two out of all the box that he poisoned, because you see the others are all good they say. Now whoever did it, and it seems pretty plain that the young man is the one, he would n't know when the old gentleman got to the right one, or if he ever did, unless he waited to see. 'T is n't as if he had put a dose in his breakfast, and knew 't would be all over before dinner. If that was the case, he might clear out, and go

with his mind easy, but by sending him a whole box of cigars, and no way to know whether or when the old gentleman will get at the right one of 'em, he leaves himself all in the dark as you may say until the right one is smoked, and he knows it is. So I'm of opinion that if he's any sort of a fellow he'll hang around here till he finds it out, and then he will make tracks."

This piece of reasoning appeared to be so conclusive to the other, that he merely replied:—

"Yes, then I think he'll make tracks. Yes. Only let his boots creak as he goes, that's all I ask."

At this moment the servant came into the room and reported that Miss Harsford sent word that she could not see any one on any account whatever.

"You please tell Miss Harsford," returned the elder, in a tone which though quiet and respectful was expressive of a firm decision, "that 't is imperative she should come down, and come without delay. Listen, now. Tell her that all the murderer wants is Time, and we do not expect that *she* will be the one to give it to him. Say that."

The servant retired, and in a few moments returned, saying that Miss Harsford would be down presently.

"She'll be down presently," whispered Heckoe, who began to be excited as they approached the duty of actual investigation. He was but recently appointed on the detective corps, and this was the first case of so serious a nature which had ever been intrusted to his exertions. "She'll be down presently. Wide awake now."

"You keep quiet," retorted Sneyer, gently, "and

leave her to me, and see what I do; and mind you remember every word she says."

"Yes," said Heckoe, "it's very important to remember every word she says; trust me for that. I've nothing if I have not a memory. Give me a talk with a man, and I'll repeat every word he says when he gets through."

As these words were uttered, the door opened and the bereaved daughter entered. Mr. Sneyer rose, and quickly met her near the door. Mr. Heckoe approached them, as nearly as seemed to him proper, and stood deferentially, appearing to be one of the group, but in reality being a mere listener.

Miss Harsford was so altered by the scenes of the past few hours, that Mr. Sneyer would hardly have known her, even if he could have seen her with the eyes of her best friends. Had they themselves looked upon that pale countenance, and those reddened eyelids still moist with tears, that hair, the disheveled locks of which hung the face in mourning, that form and attire so utterly devoid of ornament, and almost neglectful in its manner, they would hardly have recognized the daughter of the deceased merchant. All this, however, was of little interest to the visitors who now approached her; the elder of whom spoke first, addressing Charlotte in a quiet pleasant manner.

Sneyer. Sorry to disturb you, ma'am, but we've no time to lose. It won't do to let the grass grow under our feet.

Charlotte. I—I did not mean to keep you waiting. But what is to be done? Alas! my father.

Sneyer. I would like to know, ma'am, firstly, when the young man was here last?

Charlotte. Who? Mr. Caraby?

Sneyer. Yes.

Charlotte. Oh! yes. Do send for him. He'll do any thing he can. Send for Mr. Caraby, by all means. He'll do any thing for my father, and—

Sneyer. Do you think he would help us?

Charlotte. He would if he could, I know. Why did n't I think to send for him before? He is indefatigable. Oh, I wish he were here.

Sneyer, (with a look of intelligence at his companion.) So do I.

Charlotte. He may know something about it. He knows about father's business.

Sneyer. I presume he does.

Heckoe. I presume he does! Why he's the very—

Sneyer. Come, come Heckoe, do n't interrupt the lady.

Charlotte. He's the very what? He? What? he? You surely do n't—oh impossible!

Sneyer, (blandly.) He is the very man we want. If we had him here we should know how to go to work.

Charlotte, (reassured.) Do n't you think he could give you some information that could help you? There was a very ill-looking man here the other night—Friday it was. He spent some time with father. And Matthew saw him.

Sneyer. Well, we know where the young man lives, but the place is shut up.

Charlotte. But is there no one there?

Sneyer. No one.

Charlotte. But the neighbors must know where the family are gone.

Sneyer. No ma'am, they do n't seem to have left any word.

Charlotte. What shall we do?

Sneyer. We must try to find him.

Heckoe, (impatient and wondering why his companion does not tell the young lady that Matthew himself is the object of their suspicion.) Find him! Let us just get scent of him—

Sneyer. Yes, yes, never mind. When was he here last?

Charlotte. I do n't know. I have not seen him since Friday night, when he was here, and that man I told you about was here. The servant thought it must be he who was here and left the box last night. But it could not have been he.

Sneyer. Why not?

Charlotte. What! he bring the box? Oh no, it could n't have been. Besides he would have seen some of us. He never comes here without our seeing him.

Sneyer. But what made the girl think he came last night?

Charlotte. Nothing that I know of. She did not see him. She only said it might be he, because he often comes up on errands from the office about that time in the evening, and the ring at the door sounded like his, she said.

Sneyer. Did no one see him? Did no one see the person who brought the box?

Charlotte. No. No one, except Arabella.

Sneyer. Please call her, ma'am.

Charlotte. Oh, she is not here. She is a friend of mine who called here last night. She received the box at the door as she was going out, and she turned back and gave it to the servant.

Sneyer. Where does Miss Arabella live, and what is her name?

Charlotte. Her last name is Mayes, and she is stopping at—stay; here, I have her card, she left it with me. There is her address.

Sneyer. Well. She saw the person, and you think no one else did.

Charlotte. No one. I was in the hall when she went out to the vestibule, and saw her come back and give it to the servant.

Sneyer. We will go and call on this Miss Mayes immediately.

Charlotte. Yes, do. She will know who brought the box.

Sneyer. What I want to know is where he went.

Charlotte. But what about Mr. Caraby? Can't you find him?

Sneyer. Ah! I wish we could.

Charlotte. You send again to his boarding place. Perhaps they were gone to church. Meanwhile if he should come here—but then he will not—but if he should come here, I'll keep him till you return.

Sneyer. I do n't think, ma'am, he will come here, but if he does I hope you will keep him.

Having thus obtained all the information he could, and imparted as little as possible, partly because he foresaw that to state his suspicions, would render it impossible to get any calm statement of facts from the young lady, and partly because his habit was never to tell a part of his story until he knew the whole, the detective with his companion unceremoniously withdrew; leaving the afflicted daughter to sink, overwhelmed with these terrible scenes, upon a chair near at hand, where she remained till the approach of a servant aroused her.

The officers passed on together down street, discussing the course of investigation they should pursue.

In the course of the afternoon they found Arabella. She had heard nothing of Mr. Harsford's death, and had no idea of the purpose of the inquiries which the detectives made. She listened to their questions with some wonder, yet answered them frankly, although not without putting some inquiries in return, to which Mr. Sneyer replied, by telling a little truth and leaving a good deal of falsehood to be inferred. From Arabella they gained the elements of a description of Matthew's personal appearance, and then departed, leaving the young lady in quite as much astonishment as she herself had occasioned in Matthew's mind, by her unexpected appearance the evening previous.

Not long after this, the officers visiting the bakery again, in hope of finding some of its occupants returned, were disappointed in that hope, but found the watchman

who had seen Matthew by the door on Saturday night. He described to them what he had seen, but could give them no information of the young man's further movements. The next clue that they found was that the young man had been to the Post office on Sunday morning, and had taken out Mr. Harsford's letters, but had returned most of them—all but one the clerk thought—and asked to have them put back in the box, to be called for on Monday, as he had got all that he wanted. That the clerk refused to take them back, saying that he could not be troubled to deliver the same letters twice. And that finally Matthew put all the letters into his pocket, and went away. They found no clue to what had been his resting-place on Saturday night, if indeed he had had any.

Early Monday morning, when Mr. Sneyer had just returned to the house, after a tedious and unsuccessful circuit of investigation, little Benny came to the door and handed up a package of letters for Mr. Harsford. He was clambering down the high steps again, when Mr. Sneyer, learning his errand, called him back to inquire where he got the letters. He said that the gentleman in Mr. Harsford's office,—not Mr. Warrack, but the other gentleman,—met him in the street, a little while before, and gave them to him to bring. He did not know the gentleman's name, but his mother did, for she did washing for him. From the child's description, however, there was no doubt of Matthew's identity. He seemed to be in a hurry, Benny said, and went out to the corner of the street, and turned down town. He said he was

going away by the steamboat, but did not say where he was going.

Half an hour after this, Matthew, who had stopped a few moments on his way for a hasty breakfast, stepped on board the morning boat for Albany and Troy, a short time before its hour for starting. Threading his way through the crowd, noise and confusion of the scene upon the pier, he crossed the plank and ascended the stair-case into the saloon. Close behind him followed a well-looking man, who, whenever Matthew looked around, scanned his face with a gaze that was not particularly agreeable to him. This stranger followed Matthew up into the saloon. Matthew walked back and forth, but still this strange companion kept him closely in view. At last he sought a seat in a secluded corner of the promenade deck; but in a few moments Mr. Sneyer—for it was he—came up and took a seat by his side, in such a position that Matthew was quite hemmed in where he sat.

"Going up river, this morning?" said Mr. Sneyer.

Matthew looked at his interrogator in silence a moment, but seeing nothing but that bland expression which the detective well knew how to assume when he desired to gain by friendly conversation some insight into the character and purposes of the persons with whom he was to deal, the young man replied:—

"Yes, sir, so you see."

"This is Mr. Caraby, I believe,—Matthew Caraby?" continued the detective, inquiringly.

"I don't know that I ever met you before," returned Matthew.

"Well sir," responded the officer, now well satisfied that the young man before him was the person he sought, "I am sorry to call you back, but I am commissioned by Miss Harsford,—you know her, I believe?—to ask you to come immediately to her father's house. It is a matter of great importance."

Matthew started in surprise.

"I—I can not go this morning, possibly. Tell her that I must go out of town to-day, but will be back soon."

"Ah! but she needs you right away. You must come now."

"Now? It is out of the question. Tell her I am just starting for Troy to meet my sister. She knows about my sister; she is blind. I expect she is on her journey now, coming here. I am to meet her this afternoon and bring her down; and I can not possibly disappoint her, because, you see, she is blind."

"Perhaps," said the officer, quietly, "perhaps you did not know that her father was dead?"

"Dead!"

Matthew's agitation was painful to behold.

"And she needs your assistance immediately."

"I wish I could go, but it is impossible, to-day. Tell her I will come to-morrow morning. I will come right back by to-night's boat. There! There is the last bell. Quick! You'll be too late. Tell her I'll certainly come to-morrow."

The officer rose from his seat as he heard the bell clanging above all the noise and confusion of the surrounding scene. But he rose without any purpose of parting with Matthew.

He leaned over, and spoke in a clear, distinct voice.

"Perhaps," said he, "perhaps you did not know that Mr. Harsford was murdered, and you are my prisoner? Come!"

With these words, and grasping Matthew firmly by the arm, he half led and half pulled the astonished young man to the deck below, and thence to the pier, just as the ropes were being cast off. At once a carriage was engaged, and the prisoner and his custodian being placed securely within it, they were driven rapidly across the city, while Mr. Heckoe, who had been held in reserve as an additional force to meet any resistance which might be offered, sat beside the driver and recounted to him the ingenuity and success of the capture.

What gloomy thoughts and terrible forebodings filled the mind of the unhappy Matthew, as the carriage traversed the streets until it descended from Broadway into the valley which lies between that street and the Bowery, and which like a sink drains the misery and vice of the metropolis, and as they drew up before a side door of that forbidding edifice, the Tombs, may be better imagined than described.

After some preliminary ceremonies which were apparently considered to be necessary before Matthew could be considered as fairly installed in his new accommoda-

tions, and in which the officers of the prison took a much more active part than the young prisoner himself, Matthew was inducted into a circumscribed, ill-furnished and ill-ventilated apartment which he was informed would be at his service during his stay.

Leaving Matthew where the officer left him, in this cell whose walls glaring with whitewash made the scanty light that struggled through a narrow slit of a window tolerably sufficient to show him that he was now fairly in prison, we will turn to visit Roselle and observe the scenes that await her.

CHAPTER XVIII.

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TRUST YOUR KINDRED, WHOMSOEVER YOU DOUBT.  
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WHILE it was with real grief that Roselle had bid her brother good-bye the evening before he left Harsford's Mills,—at which time it should be mentioned he walked over to visit her,—she had still felt no little sisterly pride in his plans; and her quiet encouragement and sympathy supplied an additional stimulus to his purposes and hopes. When, on a previous visit, he had told her he should leave his present residence, so near her, and go to the city, she indeed wept at the thought of the separation, and besought him not to go. Yet his serious earnestness of purpose soon overcame her hesitation, and she resolved to say nothing to him upon this last interview, but words of cheer. The parting was doubtless as hard to him as it was to her. She would not make it harder. So with smiles predominant, and tears shed only by stealth, and hastily wiped away, she bade her brother good-bye, and he returned to the Mills, and thence departed next morning in the stage. Roselle, resisting an increased sense of loneliness, which at times overcame her utmost resolution, devoted herself

anew to her employment of teaching. She had now attained such prosperity in this employment, that she could make a direct and exact compensation for her board; and she experienced a new relief in finding herself released from the uncertain and ill-defined domestic obligations, the performance of which had been at first the only compensation she had been able to make. Now too she could more freely enjoy the recitations at the academy than she could when her time for attending them was snatched in the intervals of care at home. Thus then, free as a bird in the independence which her fortunate occupation brought to her, she sang and knitted, and knitted and sang through a growing circle of engagements, till almost half the homes in the village had been enlivened by her visits. It is true her tuition fees were very small, but so also her wants were very small and very few. It was thus that Roselle was engaged when she received Matthew's second letter from New York; the one urging her to come down to the city to visit him while he was yet staying at Mrs. Hopley's.

In truth the project of consulting an oculist, though always a favorite plan of her brother's, had never been encouraged by the blind girl herself. She had wholly resigned herself to her fate. She cherished no expectation, and had no hope, that she should ever be restored to sight. At the present moment, however, the request certainly came more opportunely than ever before. She felt more independence and self-reliance than she ever yet had attained, and she now began to feel that with

restored sight her life would have more of promise in it than it had ever presented. Then, again, the way seemed now opened as it never yet had been. Matthew was in the city, and in a substantial position, and the means of defraying the expenses of her journey were in her hands. The only obstacle was that the journey was a long and tedious journey,—a journey formidable to be undertaken alone, to any young girl, but almost too formidable to her, a blind and helpless girl. After advising with those of her friends who seemed most able to direct her, she resolved that her own timidity should not be the obstacle which should prevent her going; and she therefore finally wrote to Matthew by the hand of one of her companions, as amanuensis, that she would come;—that she had some hope that she might find company, but she could not hear of any one as yet, and she did not think it would be best to wait;—that she would start on Monday morning by the stage that left Harsford's Mills, and should, by the assistance of the driver, reach the boat in Troy at night, by which she would arrive next morning in New York; “where,” she said, “you will meet me, my dear brother, at the wharf.”

With these plans and expectations, she mailed her letter the day before Matthew's quarrel with his employer. This letter Matthew, who had good reason to be anxious to hear from his sister, as to her plans for her journey, obtained from the Post office on Sunday morning. And being by the events of the previous day at once thrown out of employment, and mysteriously excluded from his home, he determined to go up to Troy

on Monday morning to meet his sister there, and either accompany her down at night, or postpone the visit for a time, and escort her back to her home meanwhile.

Upon that same Monday morning, Roselle, with bright anticipations, yet not without serious foreboding and solicitude at commencing so solitary a journey, entered the stage, and was swiftly carried on her way. To venture upon such a journey alone seemed like embarking to cross the ocean in a shallop. It was not impatience that made the day seem long, yet never had she spent so long a one. Every mile that the speed of her journey dropped between herself and her home, seemed to be an addition to the burden of the responsibility and danger she was incurring. And while, as the stage was rolling on its way, she reclined in the corner of the coach quietly listening to the conversation of the strangers who surrounded her; or while at the stopping-places, when others got out, she sat in her seat, watching with an attentive ear for all the unfamiliar sounds, in such scenes; you would hardly have suspected from her quiet, passive countenance, the surmises of evil and danger, and the disquietude and alarm with which each new phase of her strange experiences filled her mind. The sudden swinging of the coach, when the burly driver threw a trunk into its place upon the rack behind; the noise of some outside passenger moving the small baggage upon the roof of the coach to improve his seat there; the unexpected starting of the horses when all was ready; the alternations of up-hill and down-hill riding, for the changes of which no glimpses of scenery prepared her; these, and many

other little things which pleasantly break the monotony of stage-coach riding to the ordinary traveler, made the poor blind girl all the more uneasy and solicitous.

Necessity makes a thousand things possible which, without its stern pressure, never could be attempted; and this girl, so helpless in such circumstances, so unused to such scenes, summoned all her courage, as the approach of evening found them near the end of their ride, in preparation for consigning herself to the conveyance of the steamer down the river. The driver with blunt kindness conducted her to the boat, as a fortnight before he had promised Matthew he would do, and hurrying her into the charge of the stewardess, left her seated upon a settee in the cabin, with the little band-box which composed her baggage by her side.

Sitting here where chance first placed her,—for she said she would prefer not to retire,—the anxious girl remained, startled from time to time by all the strange noises, which her keen ears could not but hear, but for which her inexperienced mind could suggest no explanations. The evening wore away slowly, and the night more slowly still. The tread of the promenaders upon the decks over her head diminished, intermitted, and finally ceased. The voices of the passengers about the cabin grew quiet, leaving the strange groaning of the engine to come out more strongly in the silence. The atmosphere of the cabin grew thicker and heavier, until its sleepy poison silenced even the infantile portion of the inmates, and put them one after another into a dull slumber. But still the wakeful, watchful, fearful blind girl sat

trembling at every new sound, and equally alarmed at every occasional period of silence, and longing for the morning and Matthew. Still she did not regret the undertaking, nor would she have turned back. But in patience bearing her trepidation, she watched and waited.

Morning at last came, but no Matthew. The boat being made fast to the pier, the passengers departed on their various ways. Strange faces peered in at the cabin door in search of expected friends; but Roselle, who could see nothing, was obliged to content herself with watching the footsteps as they approached, and lingered, and turned away, and with listening to the voices she heard around her. Her sharp and tutored ear would have known Matthew's step, I suppose, in a general muster, or a fireman's procession; and his voice amongst the cheers of a mass-meeting; and she was able to be sure that he had not come. Several good women, themselves waiting for friends to meet them, and feeling from their own solitudes a sympathy for Roselle, approached her with inquiries, and two of them, when their escorts arrived, respectively invited her to go with them. Her heart leaped at these kind words, and the thought of relief, but she said resolutely that her brother had promised to meet her, and she ought to wait for him. He would come soon.

"But," said the last of these departing friends, looking around upon the empty cabin, "they are all gone now. It's more than an hour since the boat got in. I do n't think your brother will come now; something must have prevented him."

"I thank you very much. I can not thank you enough; and yet I think I ought to wait. I am sure he will come, —or send. He will send if he can not come."

Attempting to encourage herself with these words, Roselle bade good-bye to her fellow-passengers, and in truth she bade good-bye to her own self-possession also; for when the last sound of their retreating footsteps was lost to her ear, amongst the noise and confusion around, her heart sank within her, and she burst into tears.

Faint and weak with fatigue, hunger, and anxiety, the poor girl resolved to await Matthew's coming till noon, and then if he had not come, to go, she knew not how, in search of him.

Already, by a presentiment engendered by her own trouble, she conjectured vague and terrible evils befalling him; and began to forget her own suffering, in imagining his. Alas! if she had known the truth, what hope or strength would she have had left?

As the church clocks of the city struck twelve, she rose from her seat, and taking her bandbox in her left hand, and in her right a slender rod or wand which she used for guidance in her walks, she groped her way to the door of the cabin. Passing out, she met the black stewardess, who accosted her:

"La! child, where are you going?"

"I do n't know," said Roselle, "I am going to find my brother. Something must have befallen him. He certainly would come if he was alive and well."

"Oh, no, they do n't come half the time. Need n't think any thing's happened to him. He's too busy."

Brothers generally are. They was generally so busy they could n't possibly come. *Husbands* ain't generally too busy, but they forget all about it. We had one woman here who made three trips with me, and then she was a great mind to go back again. You see she would n't go ashore, because her husband would n't come for her as he had promised he would. So she staid on board all day, and went back up river that night, and came down again next night; and the next day, along towards noon, *he* happened to think of it, and came down to get her. He said he thought possible she might be on board, but she was all made up to go back again. She said she felt like as if she belonged on the boat."

"*My* brother isn't too busy, and he has n't forgotten either," said Roselle. "Something has happened to him. I must go and find him right away."

"Why child! are you crazy? You go right back again and sit down. Where does your brother live?"

"With Mrs. Hopley. She keeps a bakery. Do you know where it is?"

"What street?"

"I do n't know the street where he lives, but his business is in Hanover Square. He is in Mr. Harsford's counting-room. Do you know Mr. Harsford?"

"La, child! Me? No, not I. But I know where Hanover Square is, though; it's 'way over the other side of town. My husband used to work there."

"I must go over there then. I must go right away."

"Well, then, I'll put you into a carriage, if they are

not all gone. I expect they are, though. Come, we'll see."

With these words the kind stewardess conducted the blind girl out towards the plank that led towards the pier.

Her conjecture, however, proved to be too true. The pier was crowded with drays, carts, carmen, barrels and boxes, and as far as she could see up the wharf, no carriages were in sight.

"No," said she, "not one. I expected they would all be gone. It's too bad. But come, have a heart. Cheer up! Cheer up! The captain will be down again by four o'clock. He'll fix you out. There'll be plenty of carriages then. Come! You just go back and sit down, and wait patient; and you'll get home one of these days."

"Oh my brother, my brother," sobbed the girl, refusing to be comforted by this thought. "I must go right away. Can't you take me? Oh, do take me yourself! Something must have befallen him. Something terrible! He said he would be here, and he is n't. Ah! I can not wait. He's in some trouble, I know. I will go now."

"Stop! stop! child," cried the stewardess, grasping her by the arm, to prevent her from passing over the plank, on which she had already one foot planted. "You go? You can't go. They'll run over you. You'll be killed in the streets."

"Ah!" said Roselle, turning her sightless eyes upon her friend, "do you not know that I must? He is my brother. If he can not come to me, I must go to him."

"You could n't get across the street without being knocked down."

"Oh they would be careful for me. Men do not run over blind girls as if they were sheep. They will be careful."

"Careful! If they stop to pick you up after it, you may be thankful."

"If I were hurt they would carry me to him. Do you think I can sit here while he does n't come, after he said he would? I must go. Good-bye."

"Well! stop a minute, if you will go, though I tell you it's foolish. I'll tell you what to do. There's an alley-way in the boxes on the pier. You follow that right up to the head of the pier. When you get up to the head of it, there you'll find the office. There's a door in the side, so you can go in, before you get off the pier. When you get there, you go in, and ask for Mike. If he ain't there, you wait for him. He'll be around some wheres. You ask him to get you a carriage. Tell him Jenny Montauk sent you. That's my name, named after the boat. We stewards mostly go by the name of the boats we run on. Mike'll do any thing I ask him. You tell him to get you a carriage. He can find you one out on the street. Here! Let me lead you across the plank, and I'll put your hand on the boxes to start you."

As good as her word, the stewardess led her forward, and in a moment, Roselle, who with great trepidation ventured on the plank, rejoiced to find herself upon the solid pier. Though she could see nothing, she knew

at once in which direction her course lay, for the noise of the carts and vehicles in the street at the head of the pier, directed her. There was indeed a noise of wheels upon the pier immediately around her, but this she could easily distinguish from that upon the stone pavements beyond. The stewardess led her forward, and guided her to the beginning of what she called the alley-way. It happened propitiously for Roselle's enterprise, that the surrounding freight had been left upon the pier in rows or heaps upon each side of a narrow foot-path, arranged for the convenience of pedestrians, and which led up towards the street. This foot-path was upon one side of the pier, while beyond it and parallel with it, the greater part of the breadth of the pier was left free for the passage of carts, or rather was at this time encumbered, obstructed, and wholly filled up with carts.

"There," said the stewardess, "there's a pretty straight path in the boxes; keep in that, and you'll go right up to the office. But do n't you step a step beyond that, till Mike gets you a carriage. You do n't know what New York streets are. Men may brag of their doings as much as they please, but a lone woman runs a better chance any where else than in a crowd of men. That's my experience."

Roselle expressing her thanks to her friend, and bidding her good-bye, began to grope her way slowly towards the street, guiding herself by the boxes and barrels which formed a wall upon either side, and protected her from the vehicles on one hand and from falling into the water, on the other, and feeling carefully for each

step and cautiously trying her foothold before trusting her weight. The comparative ease with which she was able to proceed gave her encouragement. The ominous presentiments which an anxious inactivity had stimulated in her mind all the morning, were relieved by the pre-occupation of thought which every step required, and she began to feel already the excitement of hope. She had proceeded a good way she thought, though in fact not half the distance to the office, when her progress was arrested by her coming against a cart that stood backed against the passage. She groped this way and that but found no way to pass. She summoned all her courage and said "Driver," but received no answer. Supposing that the driver had perhaps gone away, and might soon return, she waited with patience, and meanwhile sat down upon a box.

Sometime passed while she thus waited; at length she heard voices near by. They were gruff voices, and their expressions had so little of gentleness, that she shrank from appealing to the speakers. She could not tell the exact place or distance from which they came, but she thought they were just the other side of the freight upon her left. While waiting, she listened to their conversation.

"I say Mike," asked one, "did you hear about that chap they arrested on the Troy yesterday morning? Hand me the beer."

"There take your beer," said Mike, "if you drink such stuff. It may be very well for once in a while, but for a steady diet, give me old rye whiskey. I never drink any

thing stronger. No, I did n't hear about him. What had he been pocketing?"

"Pocketing," said a third; "that shows which way Mike's ideas run. Talk to him about spotting a man and he wants to know what's found on him. This fellow was n't a sneak, but a regular blood-sucker. There's all about it in the paper this morn'g. I brought one down to read it. You must look out who fills your pipe after this, ha! ha! Don't let the old woman get hold of it, he! he! Mike. She'd smoke you out pretty quick, eh? She'd put you where old rye wouldn't hurt you, ha! ha! nor cost you much either, ha! ha!"

"Read it," said the first speaker.

"Oh, hang your paper, tell us about it," said Mike. "You're always lugging around some rag of a newspaper, and showing off your larning. Tell us about it."

Roselle could then hear the rustling of a newspaper in a pause of the dialogue; also the gurgling of some liquid, as if running from the mouth of some bottle down some other mouth. These men were stevedores or 'long-shore men, a class who live like rats in the cellars and garrets bordering on the river, and work or lounge during the day according as they can find employment in lading and unlading vessels, and other hard drudgery required in the course of commercial business. It was now noon, and they had seated themselves in a sunny nook among the boxes, to enjoy a respite from toil, and to partake a scanty meal in which the want of the stimulus of an abundance of wholesome food was wretchedly supplied by drugged and poisoned liquors of the poorest class.

One of these men had at this moment in his hand the Daily Sun, from which he was about to read for the amusement of his companions the account of the fatal scenes of the previous few days.

But Roselle, unconscious of the terrible tidings she was so soon to hear, sat motionless upon her seat, scarcely daring to breathe, lest some danger should approach unheard by her; yet she listened with all the keenness of her sense.

It was with a singular fascination that this poor girl, sitting thus in so strange a place, so ignorant of what was going on around her, so helpless, yet in so pressing need of help, so overburdened with anxiety and care, turned her acute ear toward the voices, and forgetting her impatience at being stopped in her course, listened and waited for the reading to begin.

In a dull monotonous voice very different in tone from that in which he had conversed, the reader began. He read slowly and imperfectly, stumbling at long words, and overlooking short ones; but we may disregard, as Roselle did, his quaint and ludicrous mistakes. Listening, she heard him read how a terribly mysterious murder had been committed. That on Sunday morning Mr. Alexander Harsford, a prominent commission merchant, doing business on Hanover Square, and extensively known in commercial circles, was found dead in his study.

"Ah! my brother," said Roselle to herself, "I see now how it may be that you have not been able to come for me. At such a time there is so much for friends to do."

"The mystery of his death," the account went on to

say, "is now solved. Poison had been introduced into some cigars which had been brought to him, and smoking one of them had caused his death."

"Oh, how terrible!" thought she.

"The perpetrator of the act had been pursued, and was caught upon the very point of escaping from the city, and is now safely lodged in the Tombs."

"Ah! my brother, how glad you must be that so wicked a man has not escaped."

"The chain of evidence against him seems to be complete, and although it is with regret that we are brought to believe so young a man to be so desperate, either from revenge or other motive, yet there can be no reason to doubt that the prisoner is the murderer. The affair has been in the experienced hands of Detective Sneyer, and he has already collected overwhelming proofs. It is known that the young man brought the cigars to the house himself on Saturday night, and it was yesterday ascertained that he bought the poison at a well-known druggist's that afternoon. It has transpired also that he had a quarrel with Mr. Harsford that morning, and it is said threatened his life then. The young murderer was in his victim's employ at his store, and the quarrel arose out of some of their relations on some private matters of business."

"One of his clerks," thought Roselle. "Then Matthew knows him. Oh! how he must feel."

"Our reporter visited the criminal in his cell in the Tombs this morning. Although evidently much impressed with the fearful position in which he has placed

himself, he does not seem to have much sense of his crime. Although every fact unerringly points to him, he says he is innocent, and shall insist upon it to the last. He is recently from the country and spoke much of a sister whom he had sent for, but who had not arrived. He said he had no other friends."

These words touched Roselle's heart, not merely with sympathy, but also with a rushing current of fears and terrors she would not entertain, but could not repulse.

"His name is Matthew Caraby."

The cry that rose from the lips of the blind girl at these words, spoke a volume of misery and suffering. It was not loud nor long. It was a gentle cry in its beginning, and was cut short in its utterance, as her powers failed, her head swam, her limbs relaxed, her strength deserted her, and she fell back insensible against the boxes behind her.

CHAPTER XIX.

~~~~~ UNCERTAINTY IS THE WEIGHTIEST OF CARES. ~~~~~

THE reader may share Roselle's surprise that Matthew, even if defeated in the performance of his promise to meet his sister on her arrival, did not at least send some one in his place. I have but ill succeeded in depicting the genuine though imperfectly developed generosity and magnanimity of his native character if it appears possible that even the severe anxiety in which he was himself involved could cause him to forget his sister's helplessness. It was his misfortune to distrust the nobler qualities of human nature so much as to have but few friends, but those few he loved more warmly, and cherished more generously for that very reason. He was not so unmindful of his sister as to neglect any thing in his power to do in her behalf. But the behests of a prisoner are not so weighty as those of a free man. Matthew's first messenger, who required to be paid in advance the night before for the task which he was charged to perform the next morning, spent in his own convivial entertainment over night the exorbitant sum he had extorted, and arose next day much too late to fulfill his duty. Matthew, after

waiting impatiently all the forenoon, became convinced of the faithlessness of his first envoy, and dispatched another; the most promising one he could find in the precincts of his present abode, though by no means the sort of gentleman one would encourage in particular attentions to one's sister if it could be helped. Having learned something by experience, Matthew took the precaution to advance but a small installment of the agreed compensation, and he thereby secured a sufficiently prompt departure, and a sufficiently prompt return; but the report of his second messenger was still more unsatisfactory to Matthew than the silence of the first.

"She's come," said this envoy, returning about one o'clock. "Where's my money?"

"Where is my sister?" exclaimed Matthew, excitedly.

For the messenger had returned alone, and without sign or token of success.

"I do n't know. I could n't find her. I've been, and she is come, and that's all I know about it."

"Could n't find her? Where is she? How do you know she's come? What's become of her? Speak quick."

"Why how should I know? I went to the boat. Cut right down there. Stewardess said a blind girl had come down with them. She waited till noon, and then she got half crazy because nobody came for her; thought her brother must be dead or something worse; and went off alone to find him, in spite of all she could do or say. She had n't been gone half an hour, she said. She sent her up to the office to have a carriage got for her. I told

her that the girl was more than half right about the brother, for he was in a fair way to be dead and something worse too before long, and I came away. I expected I should find her here before me, for they say a blind girl will track out the folks she belongs to quicker 'n a dog. If she is n't here that's not my fault. So where's my money? You do n't mean to do me out of that because the girl's run away, do you?"

"Why did n't you ask at the office?"

"Why did n't I? Because I did. I'm not such a jolly fool as to go right by the door without it. The office folks had n't seen any thing of her."

By all his inquiries, Matthew could get no further information, so at last he paid the fellow, glad to have no more to do with him, and sat down again to rack his aching brain with the fruitless inquiry,—“What shall I do?” He thought of sending to Miss Harsford, but what madness was that! He was sure that for his innocent and helpless sister she would do what she could, but the bare thought of their relative positions repelled the idea of any application to her. How could he hope indeed to be permitted to communicate with her? He thought of Arabella, whom he had seen so unexpectedly on Saturday night; and he wondered whence she came. He thought of Mrs. Hopley, and wondered whither she had gone. He thought of Mrs. Temple and Benny, but felt that there was nothing that they could do. He thought of Roselle, alone, ignorant, inexperienced, helpless, and longed for some means to send aid to her. He finally resolved to wait for a time. Roselle might yet come.

She was perhaps on her way. She had yet to learn where he was, and her progress after she knew where to come, must be slow. It were unreasonable to expect her yet. Despite all his calculations, however, his fears and anxieties over-mastered these feeble hopes, until at length, in overwhelming perplexity, he threw himself on the little iron cot and groaned aloud in bitterness of spirit.

Roselle meanwhile lying where the overwhelming tidings of her brother's fate had cast down her frail form, was unconsciously exposed to new dangers, and was as unconsciously succored in a singular manner.

It was not a long time after her fall, but her returning consciousness did not at once restore her former powers. She lay for a time in that dreamy state in which one receives impressions, but can communicate nothing. She felt the sunshine upon her face. She grew conscious that she lay upon a hard and uncomfortable couch, and in a constrained and uneasy position. She heard voices, as one hears voices in a dream. She felt, or thought she felt herself touched. Gradually her sensations became more distinct. She could distinguish what was said. Now it was a child's voice; then a man's; then the child's again, more shrill than before.

"Go away I say," cried the childish voice, "you shall not touch her."

The words had no clear meaning to Roselle's mind.

"Hush! be quiet! you little vagabond. I was n't doing any thing," replied the older voice.

"You was. You was takin' her money. I saw you."

"Shut up your dirty head or I'll toss you into the dock," replied the man's voice, approaching nearer in Roselle's hearing, and growing more distinct to Roselle's wakening sense. "You be quiet. It's none of your business what I do. It's my bandbox."

"It is n't your bandbox. It belongs to the poor girl," insisted the child's voice.

"No such thing," said the man, "I tell you it is mine, and if you're not quiet, I'll give you over to the police for stealing fruit."

"I do n't believe it," said the child, "it's hers. If you touch it, I'll scream. E'ee! Young lady! Miss! Miss!"

This shriek and these exclamations uttered at the very moment that Roselle felt something pull at the bandbox, which still hung by its string upon her finger, was enough to rouse her from her insensibility. As she moved, the thief who would have robbed her, released the box, and with an oath, aiming a malicious blow at the child, which the child in turn nimbly evaded, ran away and disappeared.

"Poor girl," said the child talking to herself, "I do believe she's sick. If I had n't come up just now, like as not she would n't have had any thing left."

Roselle raised her head feebly, resting it upon her hand, and turned her face towards the speaker.

"Who is that?" she asked.

"It's me," said the child. "Are you sick?"

Roselle lay still for a few moments, making no reply.

She was endeavoring to recover her thoughts, and to recall her recollection of where she was, and how she came to be there. At length she spoke.

"What is the matter?" she asked.

"Ah! They were going to rob you," replied the child. "You should n't go to sleep upon these boxes,—that is if you've got any thing to be stolen."

"Have I been asleep?" asked Roselle.

"You did n't answer me when I spoke to you," said the child. "I tried to wake you up. I thought you were asleep. Then I thought you were sick, you look so pale and white."

"Where am I? Who are you? Has Matthew come? Oh, no! Oh, my brother! They said he was in the prison. I must go. What have I been stopping here for?"

And Roselle tried to rise, but her strength failed her.

"Ah! how sick you are," said the child, "you can hardly stand. Won't you buy an orange? Here! look! it is only four cents. See! it's a fine one. I should like to give it to you if I could."

"Where is it?"

"Here right before you. Don't you see it? It will do you good."

"Ah! my child, I don't see it. I can't see. I am blind."

"Are you blind?" said the child's voice.

There was something very touching to Roselle in this voice, soft, gentle, yet deliberate and distinct, betokening in the kindness of its tones that the native generosity of

the child had been stimulated not quenched by the severe experiences of her life.

"Are you blind?" she continued. "Oh, how sorry I am. Here is the orange. I will put it in your hand. There! But why do you go about alone if you are blind?"

"Alas!" said Roselle, as the full recollections of her troubles overcame her, and she burst into tears, "my poor brother—they've put him in prison—I was trying to find him, but now I do n't know what to do. I do n't know what to do."

"Now you will eat the orange, and that will make you feel better. There; if you are blind, I will open it for you. This is the way my mother does."

"Thank you. What is your name, my child?"

"Marie. That is, Marie Montecabella."

"Marie, you are very kind to me."

"Ah! If you were only well and could see. And then that ugly fellow was going to steal your things. He had his hand in your pocket when I came."

"And how did you dare to come near him?"

"Oh! I was n't afraid. I knew he would n't dare do any thing if he thought any body saw him. So I just let him know that I was looking at him."

"And so you drove him away, Marie. You're a brave girl. How old are you?"

"I do n't know. I expect I am a good many years. I can remember ever so many winters."

"How many?"

"Oh! six or seven. I can always remember the winters, they are so cold."

"But how is it that you come down here all alone, Marie?"

"I sell oranges, and nuts, and apples, and other things. I come down to the boats to sell to the people. See my basket there. Ah! but you are blind, I forgot. You shall feel of it. There! It's quite full. I haven't sold hardly any thing to-day."

"Come a little nearer me, Marie. You are going to be one of my friends, I think; and I always have to look at my friends with the tips of my fingers, just as I did at your basket."

With this request Marie complied, and Roselle gathered from a rapid but close physiognomical examination, that the child before her was a plump round-faced girl, twelve or thirteen years of age. That she had a smooth complexion, regular features, thick, soft hair, large eyes, and a stout well developed frame. She further detected that Marie was clad in a thin and well worn dress, neatly made, of calico, and had over her round full shoulders, a little woolen shawl which served to cover her arms, and in the front corners of which she could wrap her hands to protect them from the cold of these autumnal days. Upon her head, was a little hood made of silk already worn thin, and as it leaned back from her chubby face, disclosed a lining of similar material. If in addition to this, Roselle could have seen the look of intelligence that shone in those large and lustrous eyes and lighted up the full and healthy face, the smile that disclosed a beautiful set of pearly teeth, and the air of womanly dignity and self-possession with which the

little maiden took her basket upon her arm, and folded her hands in the shawl as if she were ready to move on,—if Roselle could have seen all this, she would have had before her complete, a very perfect picture of childhood in health, beauty, and vigor. Altogether Marie presented a spectacle not often seen amongst the children of the great city.

"Would you like to buy any thing else?" asked Marie, "any pins, needles, tape, buttons, shoe-laces? I have got some under the fruit."

"No," said Roselle, "but I must pay you for the orange; but I don't want you to go away yet; I want you to go with me."

She put her hand into her pocket for her purse, but her search for it appeared to be in vain.

"Ah, me!" she exclaimed, "where is my purse?"

"Did he take it then, after all?" exclaimed Marie. "Oh! what a shame."

"It is surely gone," said Roselle mournfully. "It did not have a great deal of money in it, for I am not rich;" said Roselle, "but it's gone, what there was. I am sorry, for now we can't take a carriage."

"And you can't pay me for the orange?"

"No, Marie, that was all the money I had, every bit. I can't pay you; that is, I can't here. But if you will come with me, and show me the way to my brother, I will pay you then. He will have some money, and he will give me all I need."

"Where to do you want to go?"

"Ah! I want to go to the prison. To the Tombs, I

thought they called it. Is there a prison that they call the Tombs?"

"Oh, yes."

"That is where my brother is, then. Poor Matthew. Come, let us go quick."

"I know the Tombs," said the child, sadly, "but I must sell my oranges. I've been here a good while now, and I must go."

"If you will go and guide me, I will pay you for your trouble as soon as we get there. My brother will have money I know. And I will pay you for your orange too. I know I am a stranger, but you can believe me. You have been a friend to me, and a poor blind girl can not afford to deceive her friends. I tell you the truth."

"I will go with you," said Marie. "Only I don't know what my mother will say, if I don't sell my oranges."

"You shall sell your oranges; or I will pay you enough to make up all you lose," said Roselle, as she rose, and essayed to walk. "Ah! I feel better now. But where is your hand, Marie?"

The child took her heavy basket upon her left arm, and twined the string of Roselle's hand-box upon that hand, and extended the right toward her companion, and commenced slowly to lead her around toward an exit from the place in which they were.

"Did you say your brother was in the Tombs?" she inquired.

"Yes, so I heard them say."

"They put my father in the Tombs, too."

"Ah! Oh! poor Matthew."

"Yes. He has an organ he plays on in the streets. He played one night very late, because he had n't earned enough to get any thing for us to eat, and they arrested him, the police officers did, for playing so late, so they put him in the Tombs. But he is going to get out again, mother says, soon."

"Is he? Come, let us go quicker. Why do you stop?"

"We must wait for that cart. I could get across the street easy, but you could n't now."

"Well let us be quick—my brother is waiting."

"What did they put your brother in for?"

"Oh! Matthew, Matthew," cried Roselle in the agony with which this question pierced her heart. "My poor persecuted, innocent brother! What will become of us? Quick! quick! let us be quick! Marie! Marie! quick!"

Thus urging her little guide, and following close beside her, the blind girl crossed the street, and they threaded their way up the crowded side-walk toward Broadway.

The foot-passengers who hurried past turned to glance at this singular couple.

Roselle, her fair face pale with excitement and weakness, and made still more strange in its wild expression by the dishevelled locks that fell down each side from beneath her hat, walked feebly and with uncertain steps. She held her rod or wand in her right hand. With her left she clung to the child, whose bright, full face, and firm step contrasted singularly with the mien of the unfortunate and unhappy young girl.

Matthew in his cell waited with a hot and feverish impatience as the hours of the afternoon wore away. His meager dinner was untouched. Mingled with all the recollections of the past, and forebodings for the future, which crowded upon his mind, there was an agony of suspense and inaction that made his suffering he thought almost too great to bear. He was a new prisoner there; his was a startling case; the eclat of so bold, so ingenious a form of crime, made him an object of great interest in the prison;—made a lion of him I was going to say. And I might appropriately say so indeed, for all the while as he lay there upon the cot, or sat up, or rose with the futile purpose of pacing back and forth, or threw himself upon the cot again, his frame convulsed with the excitement and agony which filled his soul, strange faces of turnkeys and visitors and fellow prisoners one after another looked in from the narrow gallery without through the half open door of his cell; and as they looked at his sinewy and vigorous form, and his disturbed and anxious countenance, which with uneasy eyes turned in every direction in vain search of rest, he looked like a lion caged in some great menagerie, and they like the boys who pointed to the strange creature through the bars of his cage.

He was in this mood of mind when he heard a sobbing voice he recognized, approach his door.

A child's voice said, "This is the door, stoop a little now," and Matthew saw Marie, leading his sister, enter his cell.

CHAPTER XX.

~~~~~  
 PLEASURE IN THE POCKET DOESN'T HELP  
 PAIN IN THE HEART.  
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THE arrest of Matthew brought an overwhelming surprise upon Charlotte. The thought that he might be imagined to be in some way implicated in the mystery of her father's death was forced upon her mind for a moment during her conversation with Mr. Sneyer and his companion on Sabbath afternoon. It was once or twice revived when in the course of brief conversations between herself and her mother and brother upon the chief subject of their thoughts, she heard Matthew's name mentioned coupled with harsh and insinuating epithets. But she had had no suspicion that he was, or that he could be thought to be the perpetrator of the crime. When, however, the full results of Mr. Sneyer's investigations were made known to her, she could say nothing further in his defense.

The strange death of Mr. Harsford excited the greatest attention. The newspapers were full of it. They served it up in every possible style. They gave it in full as a fresh joint in the news pages. They made hash of it in the letters from correspondents. They served it up cold

by quoting, in very small type, what each other had said about it the day previous. They boiled it down into a thin editorial soup, which trickled all the way down the leading column. And in whatever way they dished it up, it was devoured most greedily. They made it the subject of numerous and most inconsistent cuts and illustrations; showing the street and the position of the house; showing the arrangement of the rooms within the house; showing the interior of the study, and the positions of the various articles of furniture, especially the sofa whereon Mr. Harsford was found. No two of these diagrams however looked alike; but when I came to cut them out and paste them in a scrap-book I keep of curious newspaper items, my pages looked like a treatise on domestic architecture got up with plans of dwellings adapted to suit every variety of taste at every variety of price. Portraits also were not wanting; for the editor of the Pictorial Journal, having among some old cuts purchased at auction, a portrait of Jonathan Edwards taken when he first entered the university, and rightly judging that his patrons would not be likely to recognize it, he had it lettered "Matthew Caraby," and brought it out on the first page with a biographical notice, to the infinite delight of his readers, and the profound edification of many phrenologists, who found in the correspondence which they observed between the conformation of the skull of the eminent divine and the attributed character of Matthew new attestations of the truth of science.

The newspapers being thus filled with all the details

and minutiae of the case, it followed that it was discussed in every quarter of the town. Every body was busy talking about it. Every known detail of the quarrel was rehearsed, together with a great many which were not known. The various events leading to the fatal issue were reviewed separately and in their connection;—the relation of the prisoner to the deceased, and the motive which he found in their quarrel for perpetrating so daring an act, and one so unexpected from one so young and unconnected in other ways with crime. And it was not long before public curiosity, put upon inquiry, sought and found some account of the earlier history of the accused. He had but just left his former employment in the country, where he bore a good enough character, people said, except that he was quick-tempered. He left suddenly, and some people said in consequence of a quarrel, the particulars of which were not known. He had in some strange manner fastened himself upon his victim, and harassed him with some deep and sinister purpose, without doubt, until the day for the fatal blow. Mr. Warrack had disclosed, so it was reported, that the deceased had taken the prisoner into his employ unwillingly, and only in consequence of some claims which the prisoner had upon him, which Mr. Harsford did not appear to be in a position to resist, though the nature of them was not known to Mr. Warrack. The further facts that Matthew on the day of the commission of the crime *bought poison* of the description used, which was indisputably proved by evidence collected by the indefatigable Mr. Sneyer, that he was afterwards an hour alone at the

office with the cigars, having *himself volunteered to carry the box to Mr. Harsford*, and having sent away John, the only person remaining in the counting-room. That he was met on the stairs by the porter as he went out carrying the box with him; that he *left the box* at the door of his victim's house at *the close of the afternoon*, when he might probably not be recognized; that being unexpectedly recognized by the young lady who fortunately met him at the door, he endeavored to avoid an interview with her, and departed hastily and in a confused manner;—all these facts, with some minor circumstances which are omitted from this narrative as unimportant, and many rumors which were wholly false, or gross exaggerations of facts having no true bearing on the case, pointed the public mind irresistibly to Matthew as the murderer.

The funeral of Mr. Harsford took place on Wednesday morning. The house which had been so carefully guarded, was now beset by a vast crowd of inquisitive mourners and curious condolers, who jostled each other in the halls, and trod on each other in the parlors, eager for a sight of those remains which were now more famous than the living man had ever been, and they freely pointed out to one another the widow, the son and daughter, the white-haired father from the country, the confidential clerk, and other characters whom they recognized. The confusion and publicity of the ceremony, most painful to Charlotte, seemed to have a soothing and melancholy comfort for her mother. To all Charlotte's entreaties that so afflicting a scene should not be made a

public show, the mother urged resignation and the necessity of leaving things to our friends on such an occasion, and the respect which was due to public sympathy, however inconvenient its expressions might be. It was evident that notwithstanding her assent to Charlotte's regrets, she secretly enjoyed the pageant and pomp, as in some measure a counterpoise to her grief. If he did have one enemy, she said, it was a pleasure to know that he had so many friends. If he died by treachery, was it not a happy thought that he should be buried by friendship?

To this Charlotte made no reply. She could not trust herself to join the procession in which every thing so distasteful to herself combined to insult, as she thought, the memory of her father. The name of Friendship was a thin guise, to her eye, for the noisy, excited curiosity that thronged the house and swayed the crowd that hung around the coffin.

A day or two after the funeral Charlotte entered, alone, the room which had been her father's. It was the first time she had entered it since the fatal hour when the sight of his lifeless form had thrown so black a shadow across her life. Since then that scene had strangely clung to her. It seemed pictured upon her very eyelids, so that every time she had closed them there stood before her the fearful scene, and every feature of the room; the position of the furniture, the half-closed shutters, the dimly-burning gas, the pen lying where his hand had laid it aside, the paper on which he wrote, the opened box of accursed cigars before him, the

stump of one nearly burned and gone out in cold ashes, which lay fallen upon the floor; the strange, unearthly expression upon his face. All these stood out before her in sharp distinct view upon her closed eyes. And by a power of association she could not resist, her imagination acted on the sense of smell, and she felt the close stifling odor of the dead smoke that had filled the room stealing over her and completing the illusion by which she seemed carried back to that fatal scene. Thus her thoughts were haunted by this picture till she resolved to go and by actually familiarizing herself with the room in its altered condition to modify the painful image.

She found her brother James seated at her father's desk examining his papers. He looked up ill-humoredly as she entered. It was the first time she had met her brother alone since that morning.

"Oh, James," she said, coming to him, leaning her arm upon his shoulder and resting her forehead upon his head as he sat at the desk.

Poor girl. How hungry is your heart for the sympathy of a true and wise friend! It brings you even by an instinct that has been a hundred times disappointed, but which will not be undeceived, to your shallow, empty brother in the vain craving for a support and an affection which his nature can not give.

"Oh, James," she said, "I feel as if we were left alone now."

The young man moved uneasily in his seat as if impatient at his sister's presence.

"I do not know how I could bear it alone, James," she

continued, wiping the tears,—the sacred tears that would have been wasted in anointing his selfish head, "I do not know how I could bear it alone, but it brings us nearer together. We have been so frequently separated that I have sometimes thought I was not the sister to you I desire to be. But what a loss! What shall we do? Oh, James. How much we shall look to you now! How mother and I lean on you already!"

"What you will do I don't know," returned the young man, "if you come to that; it's a bad piece of business,—that it should happen just at this time too when his affairs are all in a snarl,—a perfect snarl."

To this remark, so startling in its suggestions of James' heartlessness, and the embarrassments of the estate, Charlotte made no reply.

"He could not have gone off at an unluckier time," continued James. "I don't believe that any body but himself could manage his affairs. That Warrack is a perfect noodle. He doesn't know any more about the business than I do. He says father always kept every thing to himself, and I should think he did, and does still keep every thing to himself, for aught I can see that he's left to us."

"James! James!" said the sister, speaking gently between her sobs, "how can you speak so? Please do not."

"Oh, it's all very well for you and mother to go on so, mourning, and black dresses, and crape veils, and all that,—it's very natural for you girls and women, and of course to be expected; but what would become of me

do you suppose if I were to give way to my feelings like that, instead of looking into things, to see where we stand?"

"That's all right, James; perfectly right. I did n't mean to say you ought not to attend to the business, I'm sure, but oh! oh! oh!"

"There! there! do n't cry now, Arlie. It won't help it any. It won't better it a bit. All I meant was that while you're crying after what's lost and gone, I must be looking after what we've got left. There's a precious lot of papers, but they're cursed dry reading."

At this remark Charlotte turned away with an involuntary shudder from her hopeful brother, who devoted himself anew to the examination of drawer after drawer of papers, while she, trying to dry her flowing tears, busied herself in little offices of rearranging the room to give it a more comfortable appearance.

While so doing her attention was attracted by a faded morocco case that lay upon the end of the desk, near the place where the box of cigars had been found. This miniature case had not been noticed before, perhaps because it was, where it lay, an insignificant article in contrast with others, and it was partly concealed by a pile of papers that had been pushed over it, or carelessly laid upon it. She took it up mechanically, and opened it with a vacant air, as if lost in thought and unconscious of what she was doing.

"Why! James. What is this?"

"I do n't know. What?"

"Here! This picture."

"Let me see. Oh! it's some woman. Pretty good face."

"I have seen that face," said the sister. "I know it. It must be! No! but how came it here? Impossible! It can't be hers! Yet it is certainly her face. There's no doubting that. James, where did this come from?"

"I do n't know. It's always been here."

"Why no, James."

"I mean since before,—you know,—since Saturday. I saw it here then. I recollect thinking it was a handsome face, and I would like to know the original. I wondered what father was doing with it, and in that musty old case too. Some ancient flame of his, only I'd have a new case for it, if I was going to have it lying round. But do n't bother me now. I want to see what's here."

And the young man opened a new bundle of papers.

"It's certainly she," said Charlotte, "or amazingly like her. James, I—"

"There now," said James, "shut up your old miniature and look here. Here's something worth looking at. See here!" And he held up some papers folded long and narrow, and with a partly printed and partly written endorsement on the back of each. "See here! 'Monument Life Insurance Company, on Alexander Harsford; payable to Mrs. Harsford; ten thousand dollars.' Not so bad after all,—is it? Here's an insurance on his life for mother's benefit. And here's another one for you, in the Marble Company. Five thousand. There you are. Now where's mine? Mine will be fifteen thousand, or twenty,—yes, if it's in the same proportion it will be twenty

thousand for me. Five for you, ten for mother and twenty for me. The old gentleman was very thoughtful after all to insure his life for us. He always was a good father. But where is mine? That's what I want to know now. And 't was so lucky too. Sec, 't was only done a fortnight ago,—not a fortnight ago,—last week. Just in the nick of time. I declare I never heard of any thing more fortunate; and those are good companies too. But where can mine be? It ought to be with these."

Charlotte had nothing to say. As she looked at the papers her eyes filled with tears again, at the thought that one of the last acts of business her father had performed, had been to make provision for herself and her mother. She could no longer see to read the inscriptions upon them as they lay upon the desk before her. She turned away and left the room, where James remained searching anxiously for the document which should evidence the expected provision for himself.

Going up to her own rooms Charlotte carried in one hand her handkerchief with which from time to time she checked her tears. In the other hand she carried the miniature of Alfene.

As for James he was successful in his search, though the prize did not bear the proportion upon which he had fixed, as just. But he thought it a singular piece of good fortune that his father, so few days before his death, should have thus made provision for his family.

Charlotte in her own rooms pondered long and painfully on the mystery of the circumstance she had just

discovered. That a miniature portrait delicately and exquisitely executed, and presenting so fresh and beautiful a face, and yet presenting in every light so strange a resemblance to the woman whom she knew as a laundress, that woman herself being singular in her appearance and manner, and having already excited a painful interest by the narrative which she had once prepared Charlotte to hear, but the relation of which had been unexpectedly disturbed,—these incidents so singularly connected, yet so separate and unexplained, aroused anew the curiosity, the suspicions, the vague conjectures of the girl. She went to her windows and watched for the inmates of the ivy-curtained room. The day was keen and cold, and both windows were shut. Some white garment was visible within the one usually open; hung against the glass so as to cut off all sight within. The windows looked deserted. She returned to her seat and tried to frame some explanation of this coincidence, but in vain. She tried to banish the thought that it had any real significance for her. In this she was equally unsuccessful. At last she formed her resolution.

Changing her garments for the most simple and plain she possessed, and attiring herself to attract upon the way as little attention as might be, and if possible no recognition, she passed quickly down stairs into the basement, and watching her opportunity slipped out at the area door unobserved. Turning in that direction in which she thought she should be least likely to be noticed from the windows, she bent her course around the block to the tenement house that had for her this mysterious attraction.

The finding the miniature, revived strongly in her mind the unfinished story of the laundress. She was determined to let no more time pass without inquiring at least into the details of that history which her poor neighbor had expressed herself willing to narrate.

"And I do not doubt she will also tell me," Charlotte added, in her own mind, "about this miniature, that is, if she knows anything. She must know I think. How could father have got it without her knowledge. Yet he never seemed to have any acquaintance with her. Can I have mistaken the likeness? It is perfect—perfect."

And she drew the miniature from her pocket to examine it once more. Holding it before her, and scrutinizing it, and walking slowly as she did so, she reached at length the door.

CHAPTER XXI.

SHAME IS THE SHARPEST OF SORROWS.

As Charlotte approached the narrow and black staircase of the tenement house, she slackened the speed with which she had walked, and began to ask herself how she should enter upon the errand on which she had come. She did not falter in her purpose, but she was perplexed to know the proper method of executing it.

"What I wish," said she to herself, as she reached the top of the stairs, "is to hear her story,—the story she was going to tell me when Benny interrupted us by bringing in Mr. Caraby. Let me collect my thoughts. I want her to tell me in the most natural and truthful way possible her own history. I must tell her nothing, or as little as possible, for I ought to have her story unaffected by mine."

With these reflections she knocked at the laundress' door. She stood waiting in the cold and cheerless passage or landing, for an answer. The November wind sighed through the bleak hall and stair-case, the lower door of which stood always open, and she shuddered, partly with cold, and partly with the depressing influence of her thoughts. Her heart beat faster as she heard a slight

motion within the room, and felt that she was about to discover the mystery which embarrassed her mind.

In a moment the door was opened a very narrow crack, and the thin sharp face of little Benny, inserted between the edge of the door and the door-post, appeared. Seeing Charlotte, his friend and benefactress, he looked up to her face. There was the ghost—no not the ghost, but rather the embryo of a smile upon his little features, but it was merely the feeble offspring of the recognition, and it passed away with a sigh. Strange to say he did not open the door and welcome her, but stood there looking up into her face.

"Ah, Benny, how do you do, and how is your mother?" asked Charlotte.

"She's very sick I'm afraid," replied Benny, still holding the door. "She's a feverin'."

"Who is it Benny?" inquired a feeble voice from within, which Charlotte recognized as that of Alfene.

"It's *her*, mother," replied Benny in a whisper, turning his face back towards her. "It's *her*. It's Miss Harsford."

And then as if in compliance with some signal from his mother, Benny opened the door cautiously a little way and stood aside for his visitor to pass in. She hesitated.

"Please come in, mother says, and if you please let me shut the door. Our fire is—is gone out."

Charlotte stepped in and approached the bed-side of the poor woman. Benny carefully closed the door after her and spread down some rags at the threshold. Alfene lay on her cot, from which she had not risen for

several days. Her cheeks were flushed with heat, her hair disarranged, her garments lay in confusion upon the bed over the thin and tattered bed-clothes, where they had evidently been cast in order to give warmth to the invalid. The two chairs with the board across their backs, which formed her ironing-table, were drawn toward the head of the bed, and upon the end near her stood a tea-cup full of water. The room was chilly. The cold stove instead of warming the room seemed to add to the discomfort of its cheerless atmosphere. The little coal-box, which was broken, was turned upon its side, empty of the last particle of its dusty contents. The dead embers within the open door of the stove, showed that the last little fire that had been kindled there was fed with the fragments of the broken box. A thick garment was hung against each of the windows, more to screen away the cold than to darken the room which these poor people had no other means of lighting.

Glancing an instant at these things and at Benny, who was stopping the chink beneath the door, Charlotte took her seat upon the little stool near the cot, and looked with pity upon the sick woman. Benny came up between them, and stood with one arm extended over the cot soothing his mother's hot forehead, and looking appealingly at Charlotte, as if he did not know what to say in this new complication of trouble.

"She is better this afternoon," he said at last, "I think she is. She was very badly last night. I hoped you would come. I've looked for you every day. Do n't you think she is better?"

"Indeed she is sick," said Charlotte.

"Ah no," interposed the sick woman feebly. "I should be well enough if I was only able to work. I feel a great deal better, only I have n't so much strength as I used to have."

Her feeble eyelids which she had raised to greet her visitor, fell of their own weight, as if to testify how little strength she had.

Charlotte had had little experience in the sick room, but she had the good sense which dictated the first steps to be taken.

She asked Mrs. Temple to let Benny do an errand for her, and receiving a nod of acquiescence from the mother, who was reserving all her strength to fulfill the intention which had been thwarted on the last occasion, Charlotte quietly dispatched the boy with a half dollar to be invested in the purchase of fuel, tea, sugar, a loaf of bread, a small quantity of milk and a candle. She did not attempt to enter into conversation while he was gone, but sat pondering on the scene and her errand. In a few minutes the lad returned with fuel,—the first installment of his purchases,—and kindled a little fire in the stove. While he was gone again for the residue, Charlotte heaped on the coal with so unsparing a hand that the little stove fairly began to glow as it never had done before; and when Benny came in he was quite struck with wonder at the luxury of a real blazing red-hot fire. Without inquiries Charlotte satisfied herself that hunger as well as cold was one of the inmates of this poor home, and soon the warmth of the fire and the sim-

mering sound of water on the stove preparing for a cup of tea, suffused the room with an appearance which, though still wretched and pinched to Charlotte, seemed the incoming of an age of luxury to the others.

It was not long before Charlotte had made ready a cup of tea and a slice of toast for the invalid. The latter drank the tea and seemed much refreshed. The toast her feeble appetite rejected.

"Mrs. Temple," said Charlotte, having waited some time to give the laundress the opportunity of opening the conversation if she would, "I was sorry you were interrupted the other day just as you were beginning to give me some account of your history. If you feel strong enough I should like very much to have you go on with it."

Benny sat by the stove eating a slice of bread and enjoying the friendship of the fire very highly. Alfene glanced at him as much as to say to Charlotte, "Please come a little nearer so that he may not hear."

Charlotte moved her seat close to the bed-side, told Benny to watch the fire and not let it go down, and then turned to listen to the sick woman.

"You will excuse me if I speak very low," she said. "My story is not so short as my breath. If you can not hear, please draw a little nearer."

ALFENE'S STORY.

"I was born in 1808, with a twin sister. We lived in Vermont. In the town of Calton. Alfene was not my

name. It was Mary. My sister's name was Martha. Temple was not my real name either. My maiden name was Alvin. That's the way I came to be called Alfene from Alvin. I will come to that by and bye.

"Our mother died while we were very young, and we lost our father when we were about ten years old. Then we went to live with our aunt. She was our only relative I believe. At any rate she was very kind to us. Too kind. She spoiled us. I'm afraid she never would claim me again, but oh! what would I not give to see her again before I die!

"My sister Martha was a beautiful girl. I can see her now. They used to say I looked like her then, too. We were of the same size. Her hair and eyes were black, as mine were. We always dressed alike. François used to say he could never distinguish us unless he could induce one of us to speak,—he knew our voices."

"Who was François? You have not told me about him," Charlotte said.

"I was going to do so. When I was just eighteen I became acquainted with François,—my husband. François Vincent. He was a Frenchman. He was traveling in this country. We were engaged. My aunt was opposed to him, but she did not know him. I am sure if she had known François as I did she would have loved him. But she would not hear me speak of him, and so at last we ran away. When he was ready to return to Paris he came back to Calton, and one night we were married and left the place immediately for the city; and here we went on board the packet. I bade good-bye to

Martha that night as we stood at the gate out beyond the garden. I didn't think what I was doing when I did it. I never saw her again. But François was a good husband. He was a Catholic, and he was really a noble man, though I did lead him into some foolish things. I used to laugh at his religious notions, as they seemed to me, but I believe now that if it had n't been for me he would have been a better man. It is an awful thing, Miss Harsford, for a wife,—a widow,—to lie on her dying bed and think that if it had not been for her, her husband that was would have been a better man.

"We went to Paris."

"But what became of your sister?" asked Charlotte.

"I never heard from her. I was told once that she was lost in a storm. I know she was married about a year after I went to Paris. I saw the marriage in a newspaper. They told me when I came back that soon after her marriage, that is a year or so, she was lost. So they told me. I suppose it was so. I've never heard of her since.

"We went to Paris. Ah, how time flew there! François was very successful; he speculated, as you say here, at the Bourse. His business was folly, and folly was my pleasure. We lived for more than ten years in luxury there. I had every thing my caprice could desire. I forgot the instructions of my father, and all the admonitions of my good aunt. I laughed François out of all his restraints. I was—I can not tell you—'t would do no good to tell you the career of folly I ran; since I have worse things yet to confess, we will let those pass. I

must not conceal the truth, but the darkest colors will suffice; they imply all the rest.

"One night François—But stop—that you may understand I must explain that I gambled. I was mad with it. I was unfortunate at play. I always lost. What I lost François had to supply. One night François told me he had no more money. I said I must have it. I had parted with my jewels already. I thought he did not know it. I told him I must have money. I must! Ah me! My heart! I recollect how he looked. He looked sorrowfully at me. I shall never forget it. One does not often see a man weep. The tears came into his eyes. He told me he was ruined. His plans had failed, his expectations had been disappointed, the risks of business had turned against him and he was bankrupt. I don't know what I said or did—God forgive me—but it broke his heart. He went away. I never saw him again. They found him in the river, drowned."

The excitement of these recollections—her tears in recalling them—the intense interest and anxiety with which the poor woman watched every expression of her listener's face—these or some other causes seemed to have broken or at least suspended her fever. She was bathed in perspiration; and with a weak effort attempted to remove some of the coverings under which she lay. Charlotte assisted her, and in a few moments, having gained breath, Alfene went on.

"What I suffered there I need not try to tell. No honest life was open to me. I could not trust myself there. Friends I had had, but they were friends no

longer. Who would blame them? It was my fault, not theirs. I could no longer maintain their society, even if they had wished it. I resolved to come to my home, if only to die. I did not care to live there any longer. Perhaps—but no. I was utterly wretched. I who went as a bride, in wealth and luxury, came back as an immigrant, among the immigrants. They were very kind to me, for I was sick; but still it was a contrast in my life. But I had nothing left. I was one of them. It was about eleven years ago. I barely got ashore by the aid of my immigrant friends. I was unknown and friendless except among them. I had not money enough to carry me to Albany on my way home. I could not stay here. There was no life for me here but a life of shame. I started to go home on foot. I went only a few miles. I fasted as long as I could, and then I had to beg my way. They took me up as a vagrant, and sent me back to New York, where they said the immigrants belonged. I had written home before this to my aunt, but I had no answer. That was the reason I wanted to go myself, and yet had no help. They sent me back. They meant well, I suppose, but I had better have starved on the road than have let them bring me back. But I came. Then I fell into bad company. Or rather, because I saw no resource left, I sought bad company. 'T was no excuse, I know. But do not leave me. I know it is late, but I have almost done. The rest is short."

And the poor woman covered her face with her thin hands, and gave herself up to silent tears.

In a few moments she looked up and spoke to her son.

"Benny," she said.

"What, mother?" said Benny, who was still enjoying the warmth of the fire.

"You may go out and play a little while now. You have been here so long."

"But I don't care about going out; I like the fire a great deal better."

"My child, I think you had better go."

Poor Benny, accustomed to implicit obedience, complied with this strange request, so far at least as going out of the room was concerned. Charlotte heard him limping up and down the narrow hall a few times, and then his footsteps ceased.

"Alas, my poor child," said the mother as he closed the door, "he need not know of it yet. If the time ever comes when he must, I hope it may be after he has forgotten me. I could not endure to think that he might hear me."

Here she paused some time.

"Charlotte," she said at length, "you may think it very strange in me to tell you what I do. Bear with me, and forgive me if I am going too far. If you ever are a mother you will cease to wonder at it.

"As I was going to say, then commenced my misery. I thought I had been wretched before, but now I began to learn what shame was. I do not wonder that you shrink from me. I tell you the truth. I expect you to despise me. But oh my boy, my boy."

"I do not! indeed I do not!" exclaimed Charlotte. "I pity your sufferings. What have you not endured?"

"Well, I must be brief. I told you it was a sad story. I met a man,—a gentleman he seemed to be,—who was pleased with me. Ah! eleven years ago I did not look so old. I have grown thin. This man was very kind to me. I—I—what shall I say?"

And the poor woman covered her face with her hands again. The sense of shame, that a long course of folly and vice had once seared, had since her seclusion revived within her, and now, when she for the first time began to recount these experiences of years long past, the attempt suffused her face with burning blushes, rare visitors of her pale cheeks and forehead.

Charlotte averted her gaze from Alfene, who was covered with confusion, and listened with downcast eyes.

Alfene paused, shrinking from the conclusion of her narrative; in a moment, however, she continued, but without uncovering her face:

"I—was not his wife, but I was faithful and true to him. I never did an act, I never thought a thought that might dishonor him if he had been my husband, but I was not his wife. I lived with him a year. I knew I was lost and dishonored then. I no longer desired to find my friends. I knew they would not own me. But Arent at first was kind to me. His name is Arent. I lived well, and I tried to drown all my thoughts of the bitter past I remembered, or of the worse future I expected. It came to be even worse than I thought.

"I might have known that I should be one day cast off. When he found that I,—when I began to expect

little Benny, he turned against me. I kept it to myself as long as I could; but when he found it out he,—he,—did not treat me well. I did not mind it so much myself, who had no right to complain, for I was not his wife; but his child I thought he would have cared for. But he did not seem to. Very soon he left me to take care of myself. It was before Benny was born. I do n't know how I got through it, but since then I have had nothing to do with him. God forgive me for what I was before; but since then Benny's mother has been an honest woman. It was that which saved me. What would have become of me if it had not been for Benny I do n't know. All the good I know has come by him. Since then I've been a different woman. Not for his sake alone, because I see things differently now. But if it had not been for Benny I am afraid there would be no hope for me."

"Ah! there is hope for you. There is always hope for those who will repent of wrong, and turn from it in the Divine strength."

"Yes, for myself I do not fear. There is a Goodness I have found which can bear and pardon all that even I have done. But my boy. Now you know his story. Now you know what he is. Do you think you could care for him? I am afraid I can not stay with him much longer. What will become of him if you do not own him?"

"Own him?"

"He will belong to you when I am gone."

"But, Mrs. Temple, there is one question I would like to ask you. Have you a miniature of yourself?"

The sick woman raised herself on her elbow and looked at Charlotte.

"I will tell you all about it," she said. "He took it. I ought never to have let him."

"Who took it?" asked Charlotte, wondering if the allusion could be to her father.

"Arent took it. I gave it to him. I did not understand his purpose then. I dreamed it last night."

"Dreamed it?"

"Yes. Or thought of it. I do n't know whether I was awake or asleep. I thought I was asleep."

"When did he take it? What did he take it for?"

"Listen. I told you that my name was not Alfene. François used to call me so sometimes because my maiden name was Alvin."

"Mary Alvin! yes; and your sister, Martha!"

"Martha Alvin was my sister, my own sister. She was your father's first wife, that was lost."

"Ah, my father!"

"Ah, my poor sister! Alas! you see how I have been stripped. Benny only is left."

"But what did Arent want with your picture?"

"Ah! he deceived me. I think he did. After I parted from him I learned that your father, the husband of my sister that was, was living here. What should I do? I knew he would not,—he could not,—have any thing to do with me, such as I was,—and am. But I always hoped the time would come when he might be a friend to poor Benny. Three years ago I got a room here; this room. I began to be not so well as I had

been. One's strength fails after they have seen what I have, of life. I hoped to come in some way, I knew not how, to your notice. I knew of you, though you did not of me. Ah! I have watched for years for this time to come. Arent knew about my history. Of course he did. I kept nothing from him. I did not know him then as I do now. Some time ago he met me one day, and proposed to me to claim my connection. He said a good thing might be made of it. I did not understand him. But I knew he meant no good. I refused to have any thing to do with it. He swore that he would do it, and that I must help him. He said that he knew best what would serve me. He said he would do it in spite of me; but I did not believe him. I have avoided him ever since. He did not know where we lived. I have only gone out evenings and only when I must go. I did not dare to meet him. He threatened Benny if I did not do as he said.

"But the other night, Friday night, he found me. He met me in the street. It was shortly after I saw you, the last time you were here. I began to tell you the whole story, and the young gentleman came in and stopped it. I began to be afraid I never should have another such opportunity as the one I had lost. Well, Friday night he found me in the street as Benny and I were carrying home some things. He told me Mr. Harsford,—your father,—was ready to receive me, if he were only assured of the truth of my story. He said if he took my miniature to show him it would be enough; because I looked so much like my sister, his first wife. It

was an evil hour when I consented to have any thing more to do with him; but I did not think he was deceiving me. I came home and got it for him. He has not been near me since. It came to me last night that it was for no good purpose that he wanted it. What his scheme is I do not know. But if he meant any good he would have brought it back before now."

Charlotte's tears, which had fallen often, as this story, grievous in itself, continually led her thoughts to her own overshadowing grief, now, at its conclusion, burst out afresh. Alfene evidently knew nothing of the death of her father. The mystery raised by the miniature seemed not so much solved as transformed into another and deeper one, the secret of the actions of this man of whom she now heard for the first time. The account given by Alfene, though couched in no harsh or uncharitable expressions, filled Charlotte with a terror at the thought of him.

How much evil might not be attributed to this man.

"Oh, my father! my father!" she exclaimed, as these thoughts filled her mind with a maze of perplexity. Her emotion, which would suffer her to say no more, served to allow her to recur to her own position. Not knowing how much it was wise to say she said nothing. Nothing except that which the mother most desired to hear her say.

"Mrs. Temple, Benny shall be cared for. If I am not deceived in your account, and believe me I do not doubt it, and shall not till I find reason to, neither Benny nor his mother shall want a friend while I can be one."

"God bless you! bless you! bless you!" cried the excited mother. "Ah, it is too much for me! Ben—B—."

And she fell back upon her pillow, as Charlotte rose to go. Starting forward, Charlotte took the hand of the almost insensible mother.

"Mrs. Temple!" she exclaimed, "speak to me! Are you faint? Benny, Benny! where are you?"

Alfene gasped, as if for breath. Charlotte moved towards the door, but the hand she held pulled her back. She saw that the dying woman wished to speak. "Tell—your—father—about—the min—minia—ture,—and—do n't—let him be—im—posed—on.—I was—very—very—ve—!"

The voice expired in a sobbing, gasping whisper.

But as it ceased, Charlotte saw a smile playing over the pale features. The lips slowly opened once more with a pleased smile.

"Benny! Happy—at—last!"

And as these last words were whispered by the mother, Charlotte was left alone.

Alone in the darkening room, Charlotte turned to the door and called for help. It was only for a moment that she left the bed-side. She quickly returned. But no longer was there any room for doubt. The frame of the poor consumptive, in which, for a long time, life had fought but feebly, and with constantly waning strength and retreating forces, against the approach of death, soon grew cold. The touch which Charlotte attempted was so startling to her that she turned again to the door and looked out, calling for Benny.

There was no answer.

As she stepped forward as if to go to the head of the stairs to call again, her foot touched something soft upon the floor.

It was the child, who had curled himself up crouching against the door-post, and there, with his deformed and shrunken limbs extended upon the floor, had gone to sleep; while watching in the cold for his mother's voice to call him.

A word roused him from his uneasy sleep, and in a few broken sentences, Charlotte told him that his mother had been very sick; she was afraid would never speak to him again. They called in the assistance of the poor neighbors immediately, and Benny soon understood, though he received it silently, and without outward complaint;—that his mother was dead.

It was now so late that Charlotte felt she ought not to linger any longer. She had left home in secret, and she began to feel embarrassed at the thought of so long an absence, at such a time, being unexplained. After some hesitation she entered upon the fulfillment of her promise to the dying mother, by proposing to Benny that he should go with her to her home. The child said he would rather not. He could not go away now; and he kept his seat upon the little box by the stove, looking around upon the strange scene with a countenance which touched her heart.

Promising therefore that she would come again or send for him, Charlotte left them, the corpse and the cripple, to the care of their poor but sympathizing neighbors.

From her home she soon sent a servant carrying a few such articles as she thought might be useful, and then went up stairs to her own rooms, wondering meanwhile what clue might be found in this discovery of affairs so startling, and whether after all there was not some connection between Mr. Arent's evil purposes and her father's death that would explain the mystery, and exculpate Matthew.

CHAPTER XXII.

TOO SHARP FOR YOUR NEIGHBOR IS TOO SHARP
FOR YOURSELF.

"CHECKMATED! by Heaven!" said Mr. Arent to himself, as he read one day the newspaper narratives of Mr. Harsford's death. "Checkmated, and no mistake! I thought I had him, sure. He played a pretty stiff game at first, but when I came the miniature over him, he knucked down if ever a man did. I could see it in his eye, though he said never a word. Curse me if I thought he had a move left; but I believe I'm beat after all."

So soliloquized the gambler as he sat at breakfast one morning,—or rather one noon, for it was usually twelve o'clock before the gambler, who habitually slept late after his nocturnal dissipations, reached the restaurant at which he generally breakfasted. He sat, as he thus spoke, in one of the little curtained boxes of an underground eating saloon in Broadway; one of those saloons which are crowded from evening till early morning with supper-parties of young men, while through the day-time they are frequented only by an occasional visitor of the Arent class. At the present moment, the gambler had just dispatched an overworked and sleepy waiter to bring his morning

repast, and he sat whiling away the moments of the waiter's protracted absence in the perusal of the morning papers.

"Let me see, though," he continued, as he pursued the narrative from one paper to another, gaining additional particulars from each, and promptly and skillfully combining the various circumstances in various ways, in his own mind, to note their bearings upon his own plans. "Let me see, though. Life Insurance! What's this? Ten thousand dollars payable to his wife! His wife, eh! Wife! That'll give me another move, I think. The point to be looked at then is,—which is the wife? Rather a nice question when there happen to be two wives. Five thousand more to daughter Charlotte. Five thousand more yet, payable to son James G. The two fives must be delivered as per address for what I see, but hang me if I don't get a slice out of widow Harsford's ten;—a slice for the true widow, that is. Not a bad chance for a magnanimous compromise there, I think. The other side have got the policy to be sure, that's in their favor, but then I represent the oldest wife; that again is in mine. It's a great thing in all these cases to be on the side of the first wife. She holds the trump card. I rather think it would be the handsome thing for me to call upon the present Mrs. Harsford, so supposed to be. Relieve her mind. Let her know she has not lost a husband after all. Saves her the expense of mourning dresses, and wear and tear of feelings, if she likes to cave in on a plain statement of facts. Or if she likes better, she suggests a compromise, and goes halves

on the insurance and the estate. That saves me expense of law proceedings, and wear and tear of conscience. Oh! yes! Decidedly I must call on the good lady at the outset. That's the move. Now the king is regularly taken off the board, I must play check to the queen. And as they say the first time is the best time, I think I'll go on the strength of this identical beef-steak. It's just about the hour for a call upon the ladies."

The identical beef-steak upon the strength of which Mr. Arent proposed to himself to convey to the present Mrs. Harsford the joyful intelligence that so far from having lost a husband she had in fact never had one, was now smoking hot upon the table, surrounded by other viands and refreshments suited to the refined taste of the gentleman for whom they were provided. He was not long in disposing of them, nor much longer in making his way from the restaurant to the residence of the late merchant.

I do not know that under ordinary circumstances the gambler, although quite a fashionable-looking personage in his way, could readily have gained admission to the highly fashionable presence of the lady of the house.

But the excitements of the past week had brought so many unusual callers to that mansion, that all usual inquiries as to name and business of persons not recognized as members of the family's acquaintance, had been perforce discontinued; and accordingly, on a simple inquiry for Mrs. Harsford, the gambler was ushered into the parlor, where, as it happened, Mrs. Harsford and her daughter were at this time seated.

"Ah! Miss Harsford, I presume," said Arent, addressing himself with his most stylish bow and smile to the elder lady, and affecting not to observe the younger one, as he entered. "Miss Harsford, I presume. I was in hopes to have seen *Mrs.* Harsford."

It was a stale trick, this pretense of mistaking the affected juvenility of the mother for the blooming youth of a daughter; yet it had a certain success, for *Mrs.* Harsford simpered and smiled as she answered,

"I am *Mrs.* Harsford, sir; and this young lady whom you see is my daughter."

"Is it possible?" exclaimed their visitor. "Can it be possible? Well, madam, I ask pardon for my unintentional mistake, but really your appearance misled me."

And he stood there, bowing to the daughter, and again to the mother, and looking back and forth from one of the ladies to another, as if he could scarcely yet believe that the lady he addressed could be the mother of the one he beheld; as if he thought she must be under some mistake, and that she had confused her own identity.

"I have called, madam," he continued, "to express, in the first place, my very sincere regret and sympathy in your affliction. I felt that I could not suffer time to pass until I had testified the regard I felt for your late husband, by every expression of it I had power to make to his family. Such a loss! And so sudden! Ah! madam, I can not express what I felt when I heard it."

"There was no need," thought Charlotte, as she turned to the window to hide the tears which burst forth

afresh at every allusion to the sorrow yet weighing so heavily upon her. "There was no need to distress us afresh by such a visit from a stranger."

"You knew my husband, then?" said *Mrs.* Harsford in an inquiring way, and putting her cambric handkerchief genteelly to her eyes.

Mrs. Harsford still secretly luxuriated in her woe, and in the visits of inquisitive condolence with which her affliction had overwhelmed her. Every new visit was, in her view, a new testimony to the high estimation in which her departed husband had been held, and to the importance and prominence of his social position. And therefore each new visitor indirectly caused *Mrs.* Harsford to feel afresh that she herself, as the relict of such a man, was a most important personage; which was a very gratifying reflection, and one which did her a great deal of good. She was pleased with the gentlemanly manner, and the genteel dress and air of *Mr.* Arent, and was quite willing to take his own word for it that he had been among the number of *Mr.* Harsford's friends, and to accept him, on his own offer, as a witness to the public appreciation of departed worth as embodied in the person of *Mr.* Alexander Harsford.

"Oh! intimately madam, intimately," exclaimed the gambler, responding to her question. "He was the best of my friends. I owe him a thousand favors."

Mrs. H. again applying her handkerchief to her suffused eyes, motioned the intimate friend of her deceased husband to a chair, and herself subsided into the bosom of the easy chair in which she had previously been sitting.

"I owe him a thousand favors, madam," he continued. "He has befriended me in many ways. I had the hope, a short time before his death, of being able to render him a slight service. It was my earnest wish to do something in return for my many obligations from him; and I still live in the desire to be of service to his family, if in my power."

"I am sure I am much obliged to you, sir," responded the widow, "very much. If there should ever be any thing. We should be most happy—Call upon you freely—Kindness of our friends—Yours most unexpected—Not unwelcome—"

As the good lady thought it genteel at this point in the conversation to allow her voice to be drowned in sobs, I can not undertake to state with accuracy what it was she said.

"If I might be permitted, madam, to intrude further, I would say that there is one matter in respect to which I am probably in a position to render you some trifling service."

"Oh! the bills!" exclaimed Mrs. Harsford. "Yes. Oh yes. I am sure, sir, if you could aid us at all in regard to the bills, we should be most grateful. They have come in heaps. Perfect heaps! And there is nothing to pay them with. Positively nothing. Mr. Harsford's affairs are in a most dreadful state. Nobody can understand them but himself. Oh, he had such a head for business; but they say there won't be any thing left."

"Madam, you distress me beyond measure," said the gambler.

This was true enough. He was more distressed than he would have been willing to explain at learning, what indeed he had been somewhat disposed to suspect, that there would be but a small estate upon which his demands could be made.

"Mother," interposed Charlotte, "if I might suggest, I should say we ought not to trouble this gentleman, who is a stranger, with these anxieties of ours."

She spoke in a significant tone, which, however, was much more intelligible to the visitor than to her mother.

"Oh, the gentleman will excuse it, I am sure, Arlie," replied the mother, "he was a friend of your father, and he knows we must be in trouble; besides he was so good as to say he would help us."

"You only do me justice, madam," said the gambler. "I am indeed most anxious to do all in my power for the welfare of the family of so cherished a friend. But the circumstance I alluded to was different. There was a claim pressed upon your husband's attention a short time before his death, which he thought important, and in respect to which I happened to be in a position to aid him. I am sorry to say that it will still be pressed perseveringly, nay, relentlessly, notwithstanding his death. It will be pressed against yourself. Immediate attention is necessary. It distresses me inexpressibly to bring such a matter to your notice at such a time, but true kindness requires I should apprise you of the circumstances."

Charlotte gazed at their visitor with surprise and apprehension.

"Oh, dear, dear!" said Mrs. Harsford, "what shall I

do? It was very inconsiderate of Mr. Harsford, very inconsiderate, not to adjust all these things in good season. He knew he was liable to be taken away, and leave nobody who understood his affairs."

"The claim of which I speak, madam," continued Mr. Arent, "is one of a serious nature, most serious in its consequences to yourself, and to your family. You are aware, of course, that before Mr. Harsford had the happiness of uniting his fortunes with your own, he was once married—married to a young woman of rural education and habits, and, I believe, of no property."

"Yes, sir," said Mrs. Harsford, "she died in a snow-storm. They were lost in the woods, and she perished."

"So it was supposed," said Mr. Arent, "but it has been found that she survived. She lived and still lives, and has lately made claim to the position and rights of Mr. Harsford's wife."

Charlotte's surprise and apprehension deepened into astonishment and terror. Mrs. Harsford's hands dropped powerless in her lap, and she gazed at Mr. Arent with a puzzled expression, as if unable to comprehend the effrontery and wickedness of a woman who would come to life under such circumstances, and prefer so unjust a claim.

"I had an interview with Mr. Harsford, myself, upon the subject," continued their visitor, "a short time before his death. I told him that I knew the person by whom the claim was made. That I sympathized strongly with him—most strongly—and fully appreciated the distress and embarrassment which such a demand must occasion.

I told him that some circumstances had brought the whole facts within my knowledge, and had also given me a very considerable influence over the claimant. That influence I was most desirous to exercise for his advantage, and for yours, my dear madam. I explained to him that in the hope of being of mutual service, and of alleviating the distress which such a demand would occasion, if publicly pressed, I had prevailed upon the claimant to intrust her whole case to me at the outset, in order that I might bring it privately before Mr. Harsford, and give him an opportunity to test the justice of the claim, and to refute it if possible, or if not, to propose some terms of settlement if he thought best, which would not involve the publication of the facts. I laid the proofs of her case before him. My hope was that his acute and experienced mind would be able to detect some flaw in the evidence upon which she relied, or that his recollection might supply some counter proofs by which the whole might be shown to be an imposture. But this hope was disappointed. Mr. Harsford, though most reluctant, of course, to entertain the idea, was satisfied at length that the claim was founded in fact; and being once satisfied of this, he possessed too much honor, and too high a sense of justice, to desire to evade or escape a reasonable acknowledgment, and such a reparation as should be consistent with your rights, my dear madam, and the welfare of yourself and his children. In short, I arranged with him, at his own request, that the matter should stand open a few days, as he wished to make some proposal contemplating a private arrangement of

the difficulty. Thus matters stood at the time of his most unexpected, most afflictive death. It is possible, however, that he has left some minute of his wishes in respect to the case."

The gambler added this sentence in an inquiring tone, as if he would ask the question that his words suggested. He looked at the ladies for a reply, but they sat silent, too much surprised and grieved, it would seem, to speak.

"If he has not," continued the gambler, "it will rest with you, of course, to treat the claim as you think best. There is one consideration, however, which is new, and which relieves the difficulty of some of its most serious and perplexing points. The first Mrs. Harsford has no longer any thing to gain in respect to social position or future situation in life by pressing this claim publicly. Before this she had a strong temptation before her in these respects, but now the utmost substantial benefit she can realize by the most pertinacious course of proceeding would be the recovery of a portion of Mr. Harsford's estate; of the provision he may have made, say by life insurance or otherwise, for his family. I can not encourage you to hope that you could ultimately succeed in resisting her right. But it would be in your power to put her to great delay and expense in establishing her right. This being the case, it will be easy for you,—the claim being now reduced, as I have already said, to a mere pecuniary one,—to effect a compromise, if you should be disposed to propose one. Of course it is not for me to suggest any thing of this sort. I do not even know accurately what sum the claimant would be en-

titled to receive upon an absolute proof of her right; still less can I suggest what it would be wise or right for you to offer her. If I were honored with your full confidence in respect to the situation of Mr. Harsford's affairs, I might perhaps advise you, but not at present. But if I might suggest, there are many reasons why so delicate and important an affair should not be intrusted to the knowledge of many friends, if it is to be arranged by private settlement. The circumstances are now known only to me, to you ladies, and to the claimant herself. Need they go further? Can you not confide in me as a faithful and disinterested friend of both parties? I can assure you of my most earnest desire to protect your rights and secure your welfare. With this distressing and most extraordinary claim I can not sympathize. I have indeed only acted in it in the hope that by so doing, I might, to some extent, protect the interests of cherished friends."

And the benevolent and disinterested gentleman paused again, looking to Mrs. Harsford for some expression of her sentiments.

"Oh, dear! dear!" began that good lady, wringing her hands in a querulous and irresolute distress. "Oh dear! dear! dear! This is what comes of marrying a widower. I always said I should come to trouble if I married a widower, even if he had no family. Charlotte, my love—"

But Charlotte, upon whose mind some gleams of light were now shining, bringing the truth out of these mysteries, so long dark and incomprehensible, interposed before her mother could complete the sentence.

"Mother," said she, rising to leave the room, "do not speak of this yet. Wait a moment. I think father left something which may explain this. Wait a moment till I return, and do not express any opinion while I am gone."

She stepped hastily into the hall.

Silence prevailed for a moment. Mrs. Harsford sat mentally bewailing her anxieties and troubles, recalling the brilliant matches which she might have made, if she had not been entrapped by Mr. Harsford, and if divers other gentlemen of her youthful acquaintance had only offered themselves for her acceptance. The gambler at length spoke.

"If I might be so free as to say it," he commenced, "your daughter, although a very lovely young lady, seems too inexperienced to—"

But at this moment the door opened, and Charlotte, who had bounded quickly up the stairs and back, returned.

"You will excuse my asking one or two questions, sir, but I wish first to identify this claim with one which I think my father had in mind before he died. If we are quite assured that it is the same, I think my mother will be prepared to arrange it promptly. You spoke of proofs which you submitted to my father. Was a miniature of the lady among those proofs?"

"Yes, Miss," replied Arent, "it was undoubtedly one of the strongest links, as your father recognized it at once."

"Is this it?" she asked, taking from her pocket the

faded morocco case which she had found in her father's study, and holding it for his inspection, yet holding it so that he could not without impoliteness repossess himself of it.

"Yes," said the gambler, at once, "it is."

"And your name then is,—I suppose,—Mr. Arent?"

"Yes," said the man, "I am glad your father made some mention of the matter, as it is so much more agreeable to know his wishes."

"That is quite sufficient sir," said Charlotte, returning the miniature to her pocket. "I knew the original of that portrait quite well. Mrs. Temple, quite a near neighbor of ours. She was the first Mrs. Harsford's sister. She is dead, now, however. She died a few days after my father. But little Benjamin is well,—should you like to see him?"

"The devil!" ejaculated Arent.

And he was glad enough, between the quiet contempt of the daughter, and the irresolute agitation of the mother, to slip out, and make good his departure.

"My poor father!" said Charlotte to herself, "if he was persecuted by that man, there was more excuse for him than I thought."

As there will be no further occasion to mention Mr. Arent in the course of this narrative, it will be as well to take leave of him at this point. Some pretty vigorous proceedings being quietly set on foot by the friends of Mrs. Harsford, to bring him to detection and punishment, he thought it prudent to leave the city for a time. He

spent an interval of some years in a series of trips upon the Mississippi river, where he learned some new modes of doing business, and acquired and lost large sums of money. He at length settled down in New Orleans, as I have recently been informed, where he still flourishes, and where any stranger visiting the city may easily enjoy his hospitable attentions.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A PRISONER'S GUESTS ARE WELCOME.

MATTHEW in prison found his only solace in Roselle's companionship. She soon became a favorite among the custodians of the place, who assisted her to find a comfortable, though humble lodging near by, and allowed her to visit her brother freely from day to day. Matthew was closely confined, and was not allowed some privileges accorded to those who were imprisoned for petty crimes; but his blind sister's presence alleviated the austerity of his imprisonment, and created a certain sympathy and interest in his behalf in the breasts of all who saw her feeling her way back and forth to his cell. As for her thoughts respecting the difficulties in which her brother was involved, she did not know the whole truth nor care to inquire about it. She thought she could do no good in that way. Her brother had told her he was innocent, and that they never could prove him guilty, and this was enough for her. She devoted herself to making as cheerful for him as possible the long, dull days which passed while he was waiting for his trial. She brought in little luncheons for him to eat, and newspapers for him to read—things which without the magic of her presence

he would never have enjoyed there. At first from grateful affection for her, and to cheer her up, he began to rouse himself by strong effort from his depression and anxiety, and he pretended to enter into her efforts with pleasure. From this it was not long before her kind cares and attentions occupied his mind and drove away from time to time the anxieties which filled it. The songs which she sang to him in a low sweet tone, as they sat together in the cell, charmed away many hours. Matthew's generous nature did not long permit him to be merely the recipient of her kindness, and at last obtaining one of the books in raised letters, such as the blind decipher with their fingers, he beguiled many of the days of his confinement, in teaching her the new art of reading.

Marie Montecabella too, was a pleasant visitor to Matthew's cell. She had the idea at first that Matthew was a very terrible fellow, and brave as she was, she did not at first care to go too near him, but finding Roselle there, so familiarly at home, she at first ventured in a little way at the door, and stood studying the prisoner's countenance while she talked with the blind girl; and at length she came to feel quite acquainted with Matthew himself. She had been liberally paid by Matthew for her kindness to Roselle on that afternoon of their first meeting on the pier, and the two girls soon became warm friends. Little Marie came every morning to Roselle's lodging to lead her upon her usual walk to the prison, and to aid her in any errands she wished to do.

Roselle once or twice urged Matthew to send for some

lawyer, who might make a defense for him. He explained to her that he did not know any one upon whom he could rely; he told her the stories he had heard of the professional gentlemen who frequent the prisons, and into whose hands he was sure, he thought, to fall if he invited legal counsel.

"Besides," said he to his sister, "it is all true enough in the main,—the facts they state. Only I did not know there was any poison in the cigars. I shall be acquitted for want of sufficient evidence, but everybody will believe me guilty, I suppose, and we shall want what little money I have got left, to take care of ourselves with, Roselle."

Roselle was not very well satisfied as to the prudence of this conclusion, but it was her brother's will.

Before he had been many days in prison, Matthew received a visit from Widow Hopley. She had come indeed when she first heard of his imprisonment, but had arrived at an hour when visitors were not admitted, and the troubles she had meanwhile been contending with, and which had ended in her being entirely dispossessed of her home, and turned quite adrift upon the world, were a sufficient explanation of her apparent neglect in delaying for some days to return again. This poor widow, now homeless, who came to pity the prisoner, began, singularly enough, to congratulate him almost, in her secret thoughts, upon his cell; and to think that she could make herself quite comfortable, if she only had a room like that, rent free. True, it was small, but then a small room was better than none, and though the walls

were stone, they were so brightly white-washed that they looked cheerful. The window indeed was very small, and queerly shaped too,—a mere slit in the thick wall,—but then nobody could look in at it, which was an advantage. The location of the room was not very agreeable, but then when the stout door was shut, that would no longer be a drawback.

Still, if the authorities had offered her the corresponding room adjoining, on the usual terms, and board gratis, besides, I doubt whether she would have accepted it, especially if the fact would have been likely to be put in the newspapers.

Time as it passed did not brighten Matthew's hopes. His solitary and inactive life wrought upon him the commencement of those dreaded effects which such a sudden confinement always has for active and vigorous natures. He sickened and pined. The ailing of his cramped and unexercised frame cast a gloomy shadow over his mind, and discolored all his thoughts, and as the days passed away his energy and hopefulness gradually died within him. Roselle observed with pain the progress of this change, but Matthew rejected plans which she suggested for his assistance, and indeed, in his depression, came almost to reject her sisterly sympathy. Day by day he came more and more to realize the event which at first seemed to him merely the shadow of some terrible dream. He tried to assume a cheerful air, for Roselle, but in truth his heart sickened at the Present, and shrank from the more dreadful Future. The time appointed for his trial, however, approached rapidly. Justice in New

York, though traditionally blindfolded, had not commenced that game of Blindman's Buff which of late she has been playing to the great amusement of the adroit culprits and the alarm of all honest men. Matthew began to see her sword suspended over him, and he trembled.

It was in this frame of mind that he received a visit from a person he had not expected to see,—Arabella Mayes.

Arabella had to her own surprise and terror found herself an important actress in a drama she could neither understand nor evade.

It was not until after she had frankly explained to the officers of justice, her recognition of the person who brought the box to the door, that she learned what its fatal contents were, and how terribly her ready identification bore upon Matthew Caraby's fate. When she reflected that her testimony in identifying him as the bearer of the box was an indispensable and chief link in the chain of evidence by which the guilt was to be fastened upon him, she was filled with an indescribable pain. In her grief she reproached herself with a thousand things. Her visit at Mr. Harsford's; her carelessness in suffering Matthew to depart without an explanation; her turning back with the accursed box, instead of hastening at once after him; her admission of the fact that it was he, before she knew what the consequences of such an admission would be; and deeper in her heart, and more sore than all these, lay the recollection of that first wretched quarrel which her pride had

caused, and had not even yet suffered her to explain to him.

But the thought of the Past was not so poisoned with reproaches as that of the Future was with fears. Constantly there came before her mind the picture of Matthew arraigned, and guarded in the narrow box which her imagination depicted as his place in court, while she herself stood in the witness box, confronted with him, and was compelled to complete the proofs of his guilt;—proofs which would be imperfect without the links she must supply, but after she should speak, would be clear and complete. This scene she thought she could never endure. She knew it would be useless to refuse to speak, she could not now conceal what she had already disclosed. The oppression which she felt in imagining this scene brought indeed a gleam of momentary relief in the half recognized thought that her powers would not sustain her to utter one word against him.

“They may bring me into court, they may put me on the stand,” she said to herself, “but when I see him there, I shall have no breath to speak.”

But after all there was no comfort in this alternative, and the conviction which forced itself more and more upon her mind as the day of trial approached, that she was after all the one who would be irresistibly compelled to supply the key-stone in the arch of proof on which his condemnation would rest, was a haunting fact that no effort could expel from her mind.

From time to time also, her heart overleaped the ominous events of the past few weeks, and went back again to

the pleasant scenes of their attachment; its beginning; its growth; its strange, yet delightful solitudes; its tedious separations and joyful meetings. The happy life that the lovers had just begun, rose before her imagination in painful contrast with the unfortunate offense she had given, and the fatal consequences which had ensued. And now she, who a month ago would not concede to his reasonable demand a word of explanation, would be ready to die for him she thought, if that would only retrieve the error of her foolish pride. Yet the hour was steadily approaching when her own lips must perhaps seal his doom. As to his guilt, she could not suffer herself to raise that question. He was impetuous, she knew; but revengeful, never. It was not for her to doubt his innocence,—not for her, but for whom he would still have been happy at home, but for whom he would never have been compromised in the mystery of the merchant's death. She did not for a moment entertain the belief, which nevertheless her own testimony must establish in the minds of every one else.

Harassed with these thoughts, Arabella, who saw no escape for herself or for Matthew, awaited the result. As the time approached, she sank into a despondency almost as deep as Matthew's despair.

It was but a short time before the dreaded day, when a new thought of hope entered Arabella's mind. She saw, or thought she saw, a possibility of safety for Matthew. If she could but be privileged to close her own lips, the peril might be averted.

There was a trying perplexity in respect to the expe-

dient that presented itself to her. It required from her a step from which she shrank. Under no lighter compulsion would she have dared it. But at length goaded by the thoughts I have endeavored to portray, she, without consulting any one, prepared to visit Matthew in prison. This indeed was no easy matter. But her resolution was taken; and when she had dared to purpose it, she no longer hesitated in its execution.

This was the visit which Matthew, now downcast and despairing, was destined unexpectedly to receive.

CHAPTER XXIV.

IT IS HARD TO READ MEN'S MOTIVES IN THEIR
CONDUCT.

I PERFECTLY agree with the reader in the suggestion that this was a rash thing to attempt; a thing that ought in general to be impracticable—an interview between the witness and the prisoner. The scheme was in its very nature one which Arabella did not dare to confide to any one. She knew that any friend would dissuade her from executing it; perhaps prevent her by interposing obstacles. She therefore undertook it alone. Having previously studied well the locality of the prison, she penetrated one morning that dismal region of the city, so scarred by poverty and crime, and safely reached the prison door. She did not know by what pass-word or permission she could hope to succeed in gaining admission to Matthew; that was a point on which she had no means of gaining information beforehand. Fortunately, however,—perhaps it was essential to the success of her expedition,—she met upon the threshold Roselle, who, with her little guide, was about starting upon one of her usual morning walks. Making herself known to the surprised blind girl, whom she had several times met at

Enneton and Harsford's Mills, she begged that she would lead her to Matthew with as little delay as possible, and without disclosing her name. Roselle readily complied.

As the heavy door was shut and locked behind her, after she passed into the court-yard, Arabella felt more keenly than ever the venture that she was taking. It was a bold step to take, this visit, in itself; but when she considered the interview which she contemplated, and thought of the errand which had brought her, all the risks of the adventure sank into insignificance compared with what it would cost her to try this last resource. She had not however now put her foot forward to take it back again. She passed on after Roselle, who, in turn, clung to Marie, and in a moment or two reached the door of the cell. Thanks to Roselle's well-known face, they were at last suffered to enter without such scrutiny as should lead to suspicion.

As Arabella stepped over the sill of the door and lifted her vail, Roselle and Marie turned again and departed on the errand in which they had been interrupted; while at the same instant Matthew rose, and, struck with surprise, stood gazing at his visitor. By an instinctive prudence neither uttered the other's name; but one who had watched the quivering lip of the prisoner, or the coursing tears which fell fast from his visitor's eyes, would have discerned that silence did not bespeak indifference, but rather the most keen and conflicting feelings wrought to the highest degree of excitement.

"Ah! I did not expect this," said Matthew.

These words, which were merely an expression of the

surprise which, in his apathy he felt but slightly, at seeing her, she understood as a half reproach.

"Indeed it is very kind of you," he added, perceiving from her countenance her disappointment. "It is more than I could have expected or hoped."

"I have wanted to see you Matthew, oh! very much," replied Arabella, taking the rude chair which Matthew placed for her. "Since our last meeting—"

Matthew was silent.

—"I have been very unhappy."

"It is not for you to lament now, Arabella," returned Matthew, with a somber smile. "It is better as it is after all, is it not?"

At this commencement, so unpropitious, for it showed how far Matthew's thoughts were from being prepared for that in which she had hoped he might even anticipate her, Arabella in turn became silent.

Matthew, who could not penetrate the object of this visit, which must have cost her so much effort, and in which she could scarcely have been sure of a cordial and grateful welcome, was made even more distrustful by her silence.

"I confess I think it might be a great deal better than it is," she said, at length, "if we could only have the time before us again. I want to say, Matthew, how sorry I am for what I said and for what I did that night. Ah! do not excuse me. I can not excuse myself for what I said, and still more for what I did not say. I was not so utterly hard as I seemed. It was on my very lips to speak, but I had been wrong, and I was too proud to

own it. I was very unhappy then, and I have been ever since. More unhappy than I can tell, since I have seen what has followed."

"I thank you, Arabella," said Matthew, "for this proof of the goodness of your heart. Do not weep. You have come notwithstanding my trouble and disgrace to bring an apology that I did not look for. I assure you I appreciate your kindness. I forget every thing that you could wish to retract. Perhaps I was unreasonably wounded. Now I will forget all. Your words are a thousand times grateful to me. They come from you, free and happy, to me, imprisoned and disgraced. I shall treasure them."

"Free and happy!" interposed Arabella; "I should be more happy if I were not so free. I hope you will forgive me. And trust me. Oh! if you could only trust me."

As the two sat together side by side, yet facing each other, there was strikingly evident a great change which a few weeks had wrought in them. What a contrast between this scene in the cell and that in which they had participated upon the piazza.

"Oh, if you could only trust me."

There was an imploring look in Arabella's face, which Matthew did not understand.

"I forgive you from my heart. Though indeed I have no longer any thing to forgive. I did not consider that I parted with you to carry away any hard feeling. It was an equal consent."

"I never will suffer my pride to rule me so again. Never. Can you believe me? Can you trust me?"

Matthew receiving again that beseeching look, did not know what to say. He did not yet understand that Arabella wished not merely to confess the error but to retrace it.

"Trust you?"

"Ah! I have been so unhappy since then. I wish it never had happened."

"I thank you again Arabella for your kindness so unexpected, in saying this. It is not that you retract an unkindness. You show me that I mistook you, that you were not unkind, as I thought you were. Rest assured that all will be forgotten. Whatever may be the result of my troubles, I thank you. It is all the more kind of you since my fate is so uncertain, and since you yourself are involved in these circumstances which go against me."

"Matthew! Matthew! These terrible stories! This dream!—This charge!—I do not listen to it. I do not think of it."

"I thank you Arabella, indeed I do, with my whole heart. It makes me happier that there are those whom I may still call my friends; and that they still have faith in me. And you especially, who—will—"

"I know what you would say," exclaimed Arabella. "Matthew, I would rather die than utter one word there."

"Do not be distressed. I can save you that pain," said Matthew.

Arabella looked up in surprise.

"I will admit it. When they call you I will ask them what they want to prove, and I will admit it."

"But Matthew, what will become of you if you admit it? You must not. You must not. Never! Never!"

"There is no other way. It is certain to be proved."

"Ah! if we could only avoid that."

"I thank you with my whole heart, Arabella, for your consideration; but I have thought it all over, and there is no help for it. It is the truth. There's no helping the truth. Roselle says I'm desperate about it. If that's being desperate, I am. When they come to that part of it I shall admit that. Then they will not make you testify."

"That will never do. Besides, perhaps there is a better way."

"A better way? What do you mean?"

"Will you answer me one question, Matthew?" said the girl, finding that the whole heavy burden of her plan was thrown upon herself alone; yet shrinking from it.

"He will not understand me," she said to herself, "because he is in trouble and disgrace, and he thinks he ought not to claim me again until he is clear."

"What is the question?" asked Matthew.

"If I had come to you before this—trouble—had happened—and said what I have said now, and asked that—it might be forgotten, what—would you have said to me—then, when you were free?"

"Just what I have said," replied Matthew, "except that I could not have thanked you so earnestly and heartily as I do now. I should not have seen so much of the goodness and nobility of your heart."

"Matthew," she said, after a pause, "I have come to ask something more than forgiveness. Something more."

"More? Something more? Any thing I can do or say? Ask; my dear Arabella."

"When you came away, I offended you, and besides that we separated. I want forgiveness for the offense; and I want—I want—to be no longer separated."

This sentence, begun in embarrassment and completed in confusion, was uttered with so much resolution and yet timidity, that Matthew knew not how to reply to it. Its utterance was earnestness itself, and in her suspense at Matthew's silence, the poor girl, thinking she had gone too far, turned away the face that was covered with a burning blush.

These words for the first time revealed to Matthew, though as yet only imperfectly, Arabella's purpose in coming. They took him wholly by surprise.

I suppose that ten years passed in the ordinary experiences of life would not have taught Matthew so much of the generosity and fidelity of which human nature, in its better phases, is capable; would not have tended so strongly to give him a renewed faith and trust in woman, as did these few timid, blushing, beseeching words from Arabella.

He was at this moment in the best of all moods to learn such a lesson, not merely because he was somewhat broken in spirit by his confinement; this would have been as likely to make him despairing as any thing else; but he had reason now to be distrustful of himself. He

had come to the city with the best intentions. He had made the most honest and earnest efforts. He had done his utmost to attain a useful and honorable success, by perfect fidelity to every duty, and by diligent labor for the prosperity and welfare of those with whom he was connected. Yet how had he failed. It was not merely that he was thrown into prison on an unjust charge—that he could have borne easily enough; but the thought that mortified his confidence in his old views of life was this, that the very endeavors he had made to attain unusual fidelity and unusual usefulness had been the attempts which had rebounded most fatally upon the welfare of those he sought to benefit.

A man who thought only of his own interests, and this was all that Matthew supposed most men considered, would have been satisfied if he could withdraw his own little deposit from the Iroquois Bank; and would have then left it to fall about the ears of its proprietors and creditors without further anxiety or concern. Matthew, through a genuine though perhaps an erroneous impulse of generosity, had desired to save some one beside himself, but circumstances had so directed this intention that the final result of his attempt had been to overwhelm Mrs. Hopley in ruin. A careless and indifferent brother would have hoarded or squandered his earnings, and suffered his sister to remain in her rural home. But Matthew, making his sister's welfare, and his hope of a benefit to her sight, his first consideration, had enticed Roselle to the city, only to meet embarrassments and difficulties, cares and anxieties of the most dangerous

and serious description. A clerk who should quarrel with his employer, and vacate his situation in the morning, would ordinarily, Matthew supposed, do as little work as might be for the rest of the day. Matthew had striven to exhibit an increased fidelity to his work, till the last moment of the day expired, and the scenes of the last hours of his employment had only served to involve him in the terrible fate of a criminal. He began to see, therefore, that he could not in all cases safely judge motives by the results of conduct. Arabella, whom in the excitement of their misunderstanding he had thought to be a fickle-hearted, selfish girl, faithless to every consideration but her own advancement, who had accepted his attentions because his was the most eligible offer she could expect in the circle of her acquaintance, and who had been ready to break faith with him on flimsy pretexts, at the moment she saw a possibility of securing a lover of greater wealth and higher position;—how could he assume to be sure that his judgment of her was just? How could he know after all but that her affection for him was pure and true, her purpose kind and faithful, and her regret over the misfortune of their separation as sincere as his sorrow for the evils he had unintentionally caused? How did he know but that she had been trying, through all that dialogue upon the piazza, in some mistaken way to evince her regard for him as sincerely as he had been endeavoring during the last few weeks to protect the welfare of Mrs. Hopley, secure the comfort of his sister, and advance the prosperity of Mr. Harsford?

These were the thoughts which were predominant in Matthew's mind just at that moment when the veiled figure stepped into his cell, and dropping her veil, disclosed the dearly loved features of Arabella. I did not tell the reader this at the time, because I was afraid that Arabella might overhear me; and I saw that Matthew was not then willing that she should understand his feelings. But now that he is ready to speak freely to her himself, there can be no harm, I suppose, in letting the reader know.

"Arabella!" said Matthew.

She raised her eyes confidingly to his. He passed his arm around her waist, drew her form closely to his side, her lips to his— Well, if that sentinel turnkey, who every now and then paced loungingly through the long gallery, noting that all was right in the various cells, had happened to look through the grated door behind them at that moment, he would have seen what would have surprised him, I rather think.

But Matthew was very well aware that he was a discreet man, who knew that it was not always the prisoners who paid him best for the little favors and accommodations he procured them, who needed the most watching. As for Arabella, do you suppose she had come all the way from Brooklyn to the Tombs, to think about turnkeys?

"Arabella!" Matthew said again. "My dearest Arabella, you are a hundred times kinder to me than I deserve. I never can forget,—never,—your generosity. I was wrong. Much more so than you were, for I ad-

hered to it more pertinaciously. I misunderstood you, and misjudged you. I thought you were willing to break faith with me because you were pleased with the attentions of your new acquaintance, and thought him seriously desirous of winning your regards, and that you preferred him to me."

"Matthew! Matthew! it was never so. Not one moment."

"I know it now, my dear Arabella. I understand it now. But that was where I misjudged you. I was to blame. Do you forgive me, my darling?"

"It is not for you to ask that of me, Matthew;" answered the girl; "of me, who was first in fault. If I had met you as I ought and given you the explanation you asked, and which you had a right to ask, you never would have thought so."

"I was unkind in more than that, Arabella! I ought never to have spoken of it to young Glover. I never should have done it if I had not been angry."

"I know that, Matthew. You never would have done it if I had not provoked you; so that I think nothing of it."

"Then you let me take all that I said back again, do you, Matthew?" continued Arabella, after a moment's pause, "and give me back the dear promise I rejected?"

"Oh! Arabella!" replied Matthew, "how can I do that? I confess my unkindness and injustice. I freely forgive and forget all that seemed unkind in you. I assure you of my renewed and continued affection; affec-

tion far stronger than ever before, because I have now so much more reason to admire, to trust, to love you than I had before. I rejoice more than I can express, to know that notwithstanding all that has befallen me, you love and trust me still. But how can I say more? How can I permit you now to reëxchange with me those promises which once passed between us? Now,—while I lie under this accusation? Ah! Arabella, you are far too dear to me for me to think of involving you in my disgrace.”

“But you will come free of it yet, Matthew. It will all pass away.”

“It will then be time enough to speak more of this. Now I ought not to say more than that I love you with all my heart; and rejoice to believe that you still love and trust me. If I come through this trouble so that I have left an honest name and a place among my fellow-men, I shall know to whom to come, whom to ask for the blessing of a love which I do n’t deserve, but do know how to prize and to return. If my misfortunes are irretrievable I shall cherish the remembrance of your kindness and generosity to the latest day of the few months they will allow me. I shall know that you will believe me innocent whatever others may think. But until I can come free of this charge, you must be free of any pledge or promise made to me. Do not seek to change this resolve. It is what I *ought* to say, indeed, Arabella. Nothing but that thought could induce me to say it. For I—love you.”

Arabella hesitated. She had yet a more generous, a more loving thought in her heart than she had uttered; more than she could easily bring herself to utter.

Matthew saw the working of her thoughts partially reflected in her countenance. He could only reply to her look by saying :

“Ah! Arabella, this is not the time to say more.”

“Why not?”

“It is useless. There is nothing to do. This is not the time. There is little hope, for me, but disgrace. Do you think I can consent to draw you—you whom I love; you who have been so generous and self-sacrificing towards me—within the shadow of it?”

“Ah! but there is every thing to do. This is just the time. Of all times this is the one.”

“Generous girl!” said Matthew to himself.

“This is the time,” she repeated, seeing his hesitation. “The very time. Next week may be too late.”

“But think! Wait till you see.”

“Matthew! I wait for nothing. I care nothing for the result. I am ready. Why put it off when this is of all times the very one?”

“How? Explain yourself.”

“Ah! can you not understand me? Ah! how shall I explain what I would? Matthew I am going to tell you a secret. Forgive me, and forget it if it does not please you. Shall it be sacred?”

“It shall be sacred.”

She saw in his eyes the same pledge that his words gave. She knew she might trust it to the utmost.

“I wish to say that I—”

She turned her throbbing head back, and leaned her forehead upon his shoulder; it was but a touch of the

forehead, timid yet trustful, just enough to avert her face from his sight, to bring her voice nearer to his ear, and to show her confidence in him.

"Ah, Arabella," he said, "do not fear me."

"There was a man once in Enneton," said Arabella, "who shot another. It was a long time ago. They would have punished him if they could, but they could do nothing to him because—"

"Because what?"

"Because his wife was the only witness of their meeting. She saw it; but nobody else could prove it. They do not allow a wife to testify against her husband."

Matthew looked down in amazement at the head which was bowed upon his arm. Now for the first time he understood his companion's thought, and appreciated the self-sacrificing generosity of her affection.

"And you Arabella," he said, after a pause, "you would—"

"Yes I would," she interposed, without waiting for him to finish the inquiry which he hesitated about completing. "Yes I would," and she looked up timidly into his face.

That timid look was a rare thing with her, usually so brilliant, quick, confident, and flashing with her proud eyes.

"Yes," she continued, "I have thought that if I were your wife after all;—and soon enough,"—and she dropped her head again to its resting place, "I should not have to testify, and you would no longer be in danger."

I suppose there never was a man in a happier embar-

rassment than was this young prisoner, as he sat with the fair witness for the prosecution leaning her head lightly on his shoulder.

He was silent for some time. Arabella knew that he was not accustomed to change his expressed purposes and opinions except very deliberately. So long as he remained in thought, therefore, she sat in hope.

"My dearest Arabella," he said, "it is impossible for me to express how much your generosity affects me; how much you have endeared yourself to me by what you have said. But I ought never to think of such a thing. Supposing they acquitted me. They would believe me guilty, and would believe you were my accomplice. We must wait and hope. We must trust each other, and trust in God. If—"

"If what, Matthew?" Arabella asked, as she raised her head and sat upright.

"If they only get at the whole truth—"

"And if—"

"If they do not? Ah, we need not talk about that now. It is too soon yet."

Arabella felt that this decision was final, because she felt that it was right. She rose to go. Her eyes were filled with tears, yet she smiled resolutely through them, as she received and returned the affectionate embrace and kiss with which Matthew bade her "good-bye," and passed out into the little gallery before the door; and Matthew saw her no more.

Matthew, his heart swelling with many conflicting

emotions, threw himself upon his narrow couch. Never before had life and liberty seemed so precious; never yet had they seemed so distant and unattainable. Now that this last expedient, so singular, so bold, brought to him with so much perseverance and affectionate courage, was rejected, he felt more than ever the peril in which he stood.

But there was a scheme of which he as yet had not thought, which was destined to present itself to his mind with some prospect of deliverance.

CHAPTER XXV.

THEY WILL HELP YOU BEST, WHO AT THE SAME
TIME HELP THEMSELVES.

ABOUT a week before the trial Roselle came into Matthew's cell one morning as usual with the newspaper for him to read.

From this paper he learned, for the first time, that Mr. Harsford had insured his life largely just before his death, for the benefit of the members of his family. It had not been one single insurance, but several, and it now transpired that the applications for insurance had been made by Mr. Harsford during the week or two immediately previous to his death.

"Ah!" said Matthew to himself, "that is what I did not know before; that makes a difference. I did think the cigars were poisoned before they came to the office, and that I carried them there without knowing it, but I see now how it may have been. Now if I manage right I can get the insurance companies to defend me. It will be worth their while to look into the matter thoroughly at all events.

"Roselle!"

This was an exclamation addressed to his sister, who

now sat upon the lower corner of his cot intently engaged in spelling with her fingers some of the simple words in her spelling-book.

"What, brother?" she replied, turning her face toward him, as if she could indeed see him.

"Are you tired?"

"No, brother; not if there is any thing more I can do for you."

"When is Marie coming back?" inquired Matthew.

"Right away. She has only gone round to the fruit store. Is there any thing you want us to do?"

"I should like to have you go away down town, of an errand for me. I could send Marie alone, I suppose, but you could do the errand better if you would go with her."

"Well," said Roselle, "we will go the very moment Marie comes back. Ah! here she is."

For just at the instant when Roselle spoke Marie appeared in the passage outside the door.

"Yes, here I am," she said, speaking through the iron grating which was often swung to in front of the doorway of the cell, when the thick plank door was required to be left open for a time; "what do you want of me?"

"We're going of an errand, Marie," said Roselle, "an errand away down town. Are you ready?"

"Yes," said Marie, "I should like to go. Where is it?"

"It is rather a hard errand, I am afraid," said Matthew.

"Do you know where Wall street is?"

"Oh, yes," said Marie, "I go there very often with my basket, to sell things in the offices."

"Do you know about the offices?" said Matthew.

"No," said Marie. "There's a great many of them, banks and things, but I do n't know much about 'em."

"Do you know any insurance offices?" asked Matthew.

"I know there are a good many," said Marie, "but I do n't know much about 'em."

"Then I suppose you do n't know where the office of the Muniment Insurance Company is. Stop, let me see if I have got the name right," and he looked at the newspaper.

"No," said he, "Monument—Monument Insurance Company, that is it. I suppose you do n't know where that office is; do you, Marie?"

"No," said she, "I do n't know any thing about it."

"Do you know what the Directory is," said Matthew, "and how to look out names in it?"

"Yes," said Marie, "when I can spell them. I think names are pretty hard to spell."

"Well, the first thing," said Matthew, "for you to do, is to go down Center street till you come to a store where there is a Directory. Look out the name of the Monument Life Insurance Company. I will write down the name for you. No, stop! I will give you the paragraph from the newspaper, you can read it better in print."

So saying, Matthew creased and tore out a little slip in the paper which Roselle had brought him, and handed it to Marie.

"That is the name," said he, pointing to the words in the little paragraph which she held in her hand; "look

out that name in the Directory. Don't look among the names in the first part of the book, but turn over to the end. There you'll find the courts and the express companies, and the banks, and the churches, and the newspapers, and the insurance companies, all put down in separate lists. I think there's a separate list of life insurance companies, but I'm not sure. At any rate turn over carefully till you find the insurance companies, and then look down the list until you find the Monument Company, and see where their office is. If you can't find it yourself, most likely the man at the store will find it for you, if you ask him. When you have found out where the office is, then carry Roselle down there.

"Then, Roselle," continued Matthew, addressing himself more particularly to his sister, who, however, had been an attentive listener to these directions given to Marie, "your part of the errand will come. Tell them you want to see the president. If he is not in, ask to see one of the other officers,—ask for the secretary or one of the directors. Can you remember those names?"

"President—secretary—directors," said Roselle, reciting the lesson for her own and her brother's assurance. "Oh, yes. That is easy."

"That is right," said Matthew; "if they are all busy, and can't attend to you, wait a little while till one of them is at leisure. Then tell him that I want to have the president or some other officer of the company come up to see me. Tell him I am Matthew Caraby, and am put in prison on the charge of poisoning Mr. Harsford. He will know about me, I dare say," he added bitterly.

"Tell him I can give him some information that will help the company about their policies. Ask him to bring the company's lawyer with him, and to come as soon as they can. Can you remember all that?"

"Oh yes," said Roselle.

And the two girls, their simple preparations being made, started upon their errand.

"Monument Life Insurance Company," said Marie to herself, as the iron grating was swung open for her to go out.

"President,—secretary,—directors," soliloquized Roselle, as it swung back again after their departure.

If Matthew had been less fortunate in his messengers, it is probable that his project might have failed. A brisk, smart, capable, active, energetic young man, such as you would choose to make his way through the hurry and noise of Wall street, and the selfish bustle of a great corporation's office, would have walked straight down to the door, and tripping lightly up the stair-case, would have made his way by instinct to the president's desk, would have spoken to him politely in the midst of his writing so as to lose no time, yet so as to give not the least offense by the interruption, would have preferred his request in a modest yet distinct, clear, ear-catching manner, would have received a blunt, though civil refusal from the busy dignitary, would have bowed handsomely, would have made a neat retreat, just as the president was saying to himself, "Smart young man that, just the fellow for an insurance messenger," and would have been back at Matthew's cell, as cheerful and active as

ever, and all ready for the next errand; and all this he would have done in half an hour or three quarters at the furthest. Roselle and Marie, however, had no such business tact and aptitude as this. They started in timidity, proceeded in inexperience, and returned in good fortune.

They were not long in finding, by the aid of the Directory, the location of the office. They were much longer in threading their way down through Center street, and along the crowded and narrow side-walks of Nassau, to the building which they sought. Climbing up the well worn stair-way to the second floor, and entering the rooms of the company, where Roselle's quick ear could detect the tread of many busy feet and hum of many voices, the blind girl felt that her part of the errand had indeed begun.

Roselle could not see the apartment into which Marie now led her; she could not see its large windows, its rich, though well worn carpet, its mahogany furniture, and the railing of the same wood which parted off the outer court of the visitors from the sanctum sanctorum of the clerks and book-keepers. She could not see the young faces of clerks and messengers, nor the middle aged and gray-haired heads of the older men around her. What needs it therefore that I should describe these things to the reader? Can not you imagine them as well as poor blind Roselle could?

Marie guided the blind girl up toward the most accessible of the clerks, who stood upon a little raised platform in front of a high desk; and, by way of introduction, said to him, timidly:

"Here is a blind girl that wants to speak to you, sir."

"No," said the man, waving his right hand in a negative way, and without looking up from the great folio in which he was casting up accounts, "we can't give you any thing."

"We don't want any thing, if you please, sir," said Roselle, "we only want the president."

"No, girls, no," reiterated the clerk, in a peremptory tone, "go away, we have got nothing for you."

"No, sir," said Roselle, "it is we who have got something for you. We've got a message."

"Message!" said the man, now looking up from his book for the first time, and scrutinizing his visitors through a pair of silver-bowed spectacles.

He was a sharp, weasel-eyed little man, and his optical apparatus, eyes and glasses together, appeared to be contrived for the express purpose of penetrating directly through the dress and superficial person of an applicant for life insurance, into the interior anatomy itself, and there detecting those germs of undeveloped disease which should oblige the company to reject the risk, or warrant them in charging a double premium. He bent this patent, double convex, microscopic gaze upon Roselle, as she turned her sightless eyes toward his voice. As she could see nothing of the sharpness of his look, it did not embarrass her in the least; and as Marie considered all this to be Roselle's part of the errand, she was not abashed. As these two bright and placid countenances, illuminated by enthusiasm and eager hope, gazed

toward the clerk, the optical apparatus just mentioned showed itself capable of giving dissolving views, for the frown which at first it had conveyed, melted into a look of doubt and inquiry, and this again into a certain expression of sympathy.

"You have got a message you say?" said the man, inquiringly. "Who for?"

"For the president, sir," said Roselle. "President—secretary—or directors."

"Monument Life Insurance Company," added Marie.

"Who is it from?" said the clerk.

"It's from my brother," answered Roselle. "It's about some life insurance. He could n't come himself, because—"

The clerk ran his eye along the row of desks to the further end of the room. There in the corner, at a royal desk and in an imperial easy chair, sat an elderly gentleman, reading a newspaper. He was the only person in the room who seemed to have nothing to do but to do what he liked, and as he nodded his bald and glistening head, on the back of which only a few locks of silver hair remained, over the columns of his paper, he seemed to be the sun of a great planetary system of life insurance, wheeling his subordinates around him in their various orbits by the mere attraction of his own gravity.

The clerk pointed him out with the end of his pen to Marie.

"There is the president," said he, "and if you want to speak to him now's your chance."

So saying, he leaped back again upon the ladder of

figures which he had been running up when the girls had interrupted him, and in an instant was half way up to the sum total of "three hundred ninety-seven—seven and carry thirty-nine;" while the two girls threaded their way along toward the president's desk.

As they stood before him he was just folding the paper to get at a new column, creasing it upon his knee with the palm of his right hand.

"Well girls," said he, "I guess we can't do any thing for you to-day. You should n't come so often."

"We do n't want any thing given to us," said Marie, determined that her companion should not be dismissed as a beggar. "This is a blind girl, sir, if you please, who wants to talk to you about insurance."

"About insurance, hey?" said the president, looking up with a benignant smile. "Well, what is it? Do you want to be insured?" he added good humoredly.

"No sir," said Roselle quite seriously. "I wanted to give you a message about this."

And she reached out to him the little bit of newspaper which Matthew had cut out.

The president took it and glanced over it. "Well," said he, nodding his head, "that's correct, I guess. Yes. Mr. Harsford was insured with us. What about it?"

"Why sir, my brother wants to see you about it."

"Oh, you are Mr. Harsford's daughter, I suppose. Your brother had better come himself. Tell him he must furnish us with the usual proofs of death, and a power of attorney from his mother, and we shall be ready

to pay the amount as soon as the ninety days are up. Stop, I'll give you some blanks."

"No sir," interposed Roselle, hastily, as the president was about to strike a bell upon his desk. "No sir, that's not it. I am not Mr. Harsford's daughter, at all, sir. I am Matthew Caraby's sister, sir. And he wants you to come and see him. He would have come himself, sir, but he can't, you know, because—"

"Matthew Caraby's sister? What, the young man that has been taken up for—er—"

"Yes sir," said the blind girl, "that is he. He is my brother. And he wants you to come and see him very much, if you please, sir."

"What does he want to see me for?" asked the president.

"I do n't know exactly, sir," said Roselle. "It's about the insurance. Mr. Harsford's insurance. He told me he could tell you some things about the insurance that would help the company. He would have come himself, if he possibly could, but he's in the Tombs, you know, and they won't let him. So he sent me to ask you if you would please to come. He said the president, or the secretary, or the directors, and the lawyer. Bring the lawyer with you, if you please, sir."

The president looked reflectingly at the window for a few moments, and then back again upon his visitors. "And who is this?" said he, nodding to Marie, but speaking to Roselle, "this little girl with you? Is she your sister? She does n't look like you at all."

This was true enough. Between the slight form, and pale, ethereal face of Roselle, heightened in its pallor by her

black dress, and the chubby frame and ruddy face of little Marie, no one could imagine the least personal resemblance.

"No sir," said Roselle, "she is Marie; she is my little friend."

"But I do n't see," said the president, "that your brother could possibly have any thing to say to me that would do any good, even if I were to go up and see him."

"I do not know what it is," said Roselle, "but it is something very particular."

The president did not know what to do. To ask him to withdraw the presence of his gravity from the system around him, and leave the clerks to rush madly from their orbits, and make asteroids of one another in the passageways, for want of the controlling influence of his presence, was asking a serious sacrifice; but there was something in the spectacle which the blind girl and her picturesque, if not beautiful little guide presented, which won extremely upon his attention and sympathy. He inquired still further into the particulars of their story, and caused Roselle to repeat again her errand in the presence of some other gentlemen whom he called into consultation, and finally sent for the attorney of the company, asking his attendance. The attorney coming in person in answer to the request, and the interest and curiosity of the two gentlemen combining with other considerations to induce them to this course, they called a carriage forthwith, and placing Roselle and Marie, whom they humorously termed the ladies, upon the back seat, they themselves took the other, and were driven rapidly towards the Tombs.

Arrived there, Matthew thanked them for their kindness in coming, expressed a hope that their time would not be lost, and proceeded at once to business. The mere fact of having something to do which called forth his powers, revived his spirits, and all the cheerfulness that had been repressed within him for many days past came out now in an unusual flow of good spirits in the excitement of the effort he had undertaken, to secure in his defense, by ingenuity and tact, a powerful assistance, and such as he could not pecuniarily compensate.

"Gentlemen," said he, "I suppose you are aware of the outline of my case from the newspapers. It will be unnecessary for the present for me to tell you any thing of the details of the case, but the fact is I was in Mr. Harsford's employment. I was his clerk. He died very suddenly from poison. I was innocent of any knowledge of it. I did not know it till I was arrested; but the circumstances are very hard against me."

"Have you had no counsel?" interposed the attorney.

"None, sir. I have had offers of assistance, but I found out what they meant, and I would have nothing to do with them. I am a stranger in the city, and I do not know who I can trust among the lawyers, and after all I do not suppose I have money enough to begin to pay one. Still I hope you will not have lost your time by coming to see me."

"I see to-day that Mr. Harsford insured largely in your company."

"Yes," said the president.

"Do you expect to have to pay the loss?"

"We always pay our losses sir, always. Some of the other companies contest them sometimes. We never have done it yet."

"How much was your risk on his life?"

"Ten thousand dollars."

"And you expect to pay that?"

"Certainly. When it's due. It's two or three months yet. Why should not we? When a man dies so, do not you think his family need their money as much as if he died a natural death? Certainly, we always pay our losses."

"I'm glad it's a good large sum," said Matthew.

"Why?"

"Because it's all the fee I've got to pay."

The attorney laughed.

"If that will pay you for defending my case, I should like to have you take hold of it."

The visitors looked at each other with astonishment, and then at the prisoner with the pity which we always feel for one, the balance of whose mind has been affected by terrible suffering.

"You do not understand me," added he. "What I mean is this. My idea of this death is that Mr. Harsford committed suicide, and, just before the fatal act, effected these insurances to provide for his family. I never saw it till this morning, but now it's all perfectly plain to me. If I am convicted, and they seem to be sure enough of it now, you will have to pay the insurance. If I am acquitted on the ground that it was a suicide, you never will be called on for a cent. You do not pay men who die

by their own hands. That's what I mean when I say that that ten thousand dollars is all the fee I have. I have some little money, not more than enough to pay the small expenses. If necessary it is at your service, but I do not suppose that there is enough to begin to make any compensation for so important a case."

The president and the attorney retired, if turning around at two paces distance and talking in a whisper can be called retiring, and conferred together for some time. At last, after many words from the former, and much nodding from the latter, they turned again to Matthew, and asked him to give them his account of the case.

"Do I understand," said he, "that you undertake my defense; that is," he added, seeing the hesitation, "if you find I have any sort of defense—if after you have heard it you think I may be innocent?"

The attorney looked at the president. The president nodded almost imperceptibly. The attorney said, "We will see that you are defended."

"They will do it," he said to himself, while the attorney looked to the president for instructions, "if I can show them there's any chance of success. The old gentleman is proud of never contesting any losses. They can afford to defend me better than to wait until the company is sued, and then defend. For if they beat in my case it will settle the whole thing. And if they fail, why nobody will have it to say they contested a policy. They can see that as well as I can. I can trust their word if they say 'yes.'"

Meanwhile the president nodded almost imperceptibly to the attorney.

"Yes, sir," said the attorney, addressing Matthew, "if you can furnish us with any tolerable grounds for supposing that this death may have been a suicide, we will see that you are well defended."

Matthew then gave his visitors a rapid but clear account of the events of his acquaintance with the deceased merchant, beginning with the letter he wrote from the Mills and closing by stating that he was arrested on the steamboat as he was going up to meet and stop his sister, who was on her way down, and for whom he had no home here, after Mrs. Hopley's disappearance.

"There is one very important circumstance you have omitted to mention," said the attorney, quietly. "I have understood the prosecution are prepared to prove you bought the poison."

"I!" cried Matthew in astonishment.

"You! At Clarrick's drug store Saturday afternoon, after your quarrel."

"I did. I did. I see it now. He sent me for it. Mr. Harsford did. That very day. He gave me a memorandum or prescription. It was when he first came in to the office that morning. He stopped at the other desk in the outer room, and wrote something on a paper, and folded it up, and wrote Clarrick's address on the outside of it, and told me to go to Clarrick's when I went out and get it for him. I thought it was only some little prescription and didn't read it. Yes, I bought it. I bought it for him. He gave it to me before we quarreled."

"But you did not buy it till afterwards?" said the attorney, incredulously.

"No, I did not. I went in to speak to him as soon as he was alone; it was before I went out; and one word led to another till the end of it. I did not go out of errands till afternoon, and then I got it, but when I came back Mr. Harsford had gone. Then I tied up the little white packet with the cigar box, when I carried that up to the house."

After another short conference between the president and the attorney they went away; the latter promising to come again in the afternoon to consult more fully on the details of the evidence in the case. He said there was no time to be lost.

From this hour Matthew began to hope, though he saw as yet more of hope than of expectation. He understood his own case himself now;—whether other people could be made to understand it, when his lips were to be sealed and his explanation not permitted to be heard, was another question.

He did not sufficiently reflect that, excepting in his own knowledge, which he could not legally be allowed to utter, there was no particle of the evidence that did not point to him,—to him, as the murderer.

CHAPTER XXVI.

A PAIR OF RED SPECTACLES WILL SET THE
WORLD ON FIRE.

EVEN if all those twenty thousand persons who, on that bright December day appointed for Matthew's trial, said to each other that it was a delightful morning, had looked out upon the beauty of the air and sky with one pair of eyes possessing all the keenness of forty thousand optics,—if they had inhaled the cool, crisp morning air at one breath,—if feeling one undivided sensation of exhilaration, they had said with one voice, "Delightful morning!" their combined and accumulated testimony would not have outweighed the evidence which the countenances of Matthew and his sister gave to the fact that it was an anxious and unhappy morning.

When every thing is to be lost by a failure, and nothing except a former liberty to be gained by a success, Hope is not so inspiring as when the prize is some new blessing, never yet attained, and the thought of failure has not a sting of Despair.

About ten o'clock in the forenoon Matthew was conducted from the prison to the court room. Entrance was with difficulty procured for him by the officers,

through a narrow side-door, beset by a crowd of bystanders, who could not gain admission to the hall itself, and yet desired to satisfy their curiosity with a sight of the young criminal as he passed; and at length he gained his seat in the room within. Here he found one of his counsel awaiting him, prepared with books and papers on a long narrow table. His associate, he said to Matthew, would be in, soon. Meanwhile Matthew looked around upon the scene. The hall was crowded with men; singular men, with one feature, Eyes. Eyes. Eyes everywhere. The slight noise of his entrance at the little side-door had been the signal for the attention of all. A thousand Eyes he saw. Other features were insignificant; forms and figures were invisible; but Eyes sat all around him. Eyes leaned forward upon him. Eyes walked toward him. Eyes stood up and peered over other Eyes to see him. Eyes pointed him out to other Eyes, and the other Eyes nodded back that they saw him. Eyes on the floor within the bar. Eyes in the rising seats beyond toward the door. Eyes in the gallery above. Eyes in the jurymen's seats, and when he turned away in the other direction, Eyes from the judge's bench looked down upon him. Eyes everywhere. Nothing but Eyes. Some of them glanced at him with careless pity. Some gleamed upon him with predetermined hostility. Some few glared with a thirst for vengeance. Some merely gazed with a mean and impertinent curiosity upon his person. Some gloated with a morbid interest in his fate. There were not wanting a few that glowed with a real sympathy and glistened with a tearful hope.

And in among the witnesses in an open space beyond the judge, where several ladies sat apart, he thought he could see glittering from beneath a double veil the Eyes he knew and loved so well.

Some few others he could recognize, though but very few. His best friends, too anxious, too keenly suffering with him to witness the scene, watched and waited apart. For the most part the familiar faces were not lighted with cheering or friendly expressions. There was Mr. Warrack, the confidential clerk, who was from the first suspicious of him, and now, as he saw from his look, full of evil real and imaginary, to utter against him. There was the old porter whose friendly smile Matthew had so often elicited, but who now sat as if all the Roman virtue of ages were concentrated in his grey head to enable him to tell all he had heard, conjectured and dreamed, without fear or favor. Over beyond the jury, at the end of the room most remote from his seat, was a little gallery, and up in the front seats of this gallery some noisy boys sat, crowding each other, and going through that process of pushing, counter-pushing, nudging, kicking and resisting, which is as necessary to settling boys compactly in a short seat as effervescence is to the union of soda powders. Among these Matthew caught sight of a familiar little face, pale and thin, which surmounted a considerable expanse of collar quite out of proportion to the diminutive shoulders that supported it; the face of little Benny.

By this time the space within the bar, which was at first quite open, was densely filled. Matthew's counsel were now conferring together not far from him. The

insurance companies interested had made common cause of his case, and he had the satisfaction of feeling that, thanks to his ingenuity and adroitness in attaching himself to their interests, he was to be ably represented in the contest that was to ensue, whatever might be the result of that contest.

Hour after hour of the dull preliminaries wore away; Matthew watched with intense interest the tedious steps, unimportant to the reader, by which the court was at last prepared to enter upon the trial. First there was secured an ordinary degree of silence on the part of the people by dint of extraordinary noises on the part of the officers. This interesting diminuendo occupied many minutes. Then by the officers' incessantly standing up to require it, the lawyers within the bar were prevailed upon to sit down. Then a crowd of jurymen, previously enticed or driven to the spot, were engaged and were sifted down by the counsel until twelve men of the requisite qualifications—who had not read any thing about the case, and had not heard any thing about the case, and did not know any thing about the case, and had not thought any thing about the case, and did not know that they could form any opinion about the case—were found, and were thereupon sworn to "well and truly try the case." They being all comfortably seated and ready to proceed, it was now high noon, and the court considerably took a recess of fifteen minutes, apparently for the purpose of eating a cracker and an apple, and reading a newspaper. This preliminary having been settled, (except the crumbs and the core, which were given to an

officer, as his perquisites, I suppose,) the confusion which had arisen during the recess was quieted by the same homeopathic treatment as before, and the cause begun in good earnest.

The counsel who conducted the prosecution, sustained his high reputation for ability and eloquence, and added much to it, by his powerful address, in which he laid the revolting case, as he called it, before the spectators, and, among others, the jury. He nominally addressed his remarks to the twelve men who composed the latter body, but as he warmed with his subject he gradually turned toward the spectators who crowded the rest of the room, and the latter part especially of his eloquent and stirring appeal was aimed with enthusiasm at the whole audience, and especially at three gentlemen who sat writing as fast as they could at a table immediately before the judge. Matthew innocently supposed they were the clerks of the court making record of the proceedings, but he was afterwards informed that they were the reporters who were taking the orator's speech for the newspapers.

In the course of his opening the counsel stated succinctly what were the salient points of the chain of evidence, which unimpeachable witnesses for the People would produce, and which chain, he said, would bind the guilt of this terrible murder upon the neck of the smooth-faced young prisoner who sat before them, so irresistibly, that not all the brilliant array of legal talent of which the prisoner had availed himself, could find any way of eluding it. That chain of evidence was so perfect, so painfully complete, that not all the tears of sympathy

which artifice could extort could corrode its links,—not all the acute technicality, in which he would concede his learned friends were far his superiors, could find one flaw in its continuity,—not all the sharp, hair-splitting logic, filing ever so keenly, could cut it asunder under the eyes of the court. That chain, which would so inevitably encircle the prisoner's neck, these twelve men should draw so tight, and should so securely lock with final proofs, recently discovered, of so deep and damning a nature, that not all the sophistries of interested counsel, with whole corporations at their backs, could draw the bolt; and not all the lubrications which the commendations of kind and weak people could supply, should enable even this glib fellow to slip his head out of its collar.

At this peroration, seeing the speaker stop to breathe, the officers cried out, by way of caution, their stereotyped order, "*Silence!*" whereupon the crowd, taking the hint, set up a buzz and rustle of applause that caused the very judge to knock fiercely on his desk; the orator meanwhile wiping his brow and looking around on his admiring audience, and smiling at the futility of the efforts to still the plaudits he had earned.

Then came the testimony.

The case was not a complicated one, and as the witnesses were mostly known to be fair-minded people and told the truth, the defense, for a wonder, did not badger them a great deal with cross-examination.

Mr. Warrack was the first witness called, after some simple formal proofs of *Mr. Harsford's* death had been put in. He testified to the quarrel which he had overheard on

Saturday forenoon. He was in the outer room. Was not listening, O no, but he heard what was going on. The voices were very loud and angry, especially that of the prisoner; heard him threaten the deceased. Did not know what he threatened him with, but thought that he threatened him with a ruler. Heard the prisoner strike the desk with the ruler, and afterwards the ruler struck very heavily on the floor. The ruler was a very large square ebony stick. Did not think either of the blows hit the deceased; supposes that the prisoner missed his aim, but should think the blows were heavy enough to have killed a man if they had hit him fairly. He did not go into the room while the prisoner was there. He thought it would be safer not to interfere. Was not afraid, O no, only the deceased had asked him to leave the room. Did not think of any danger at all. In fact was just about getting ready to go in when the prisoner came out. He did not say any thing when he came out, but went straight to his desk. As to the words the prisoner used in threatening the deceased, witness could not swear to the exact words, but the prisoner said that "he'd do it if he had to go through all the courts of justice in the State for it," or words to that effect. What he was going to do witness did not know. Suppose he meant kill him.

At the time of *Mr. Harsford's* death, the prisoner had been in his employment about a week. He had applied to *Mr. Harsford* in the first instance for employment. The first application was by letter; afterwards he called at the counting-room. The witness was about to relate that *Mr. Harsford* had told him to keep a sharp look-out

upon Matthew as he was a suspicious character, and he had only engaged him on account of his having some claims which deceased could not well resist; but the defense objected to the proof of Mr. Harsford's conversation with witness; and this evidence was withdrawn.

The witness continued. The deceased made on Saturday several business appointments with various persons to meet him on Monday. Knew he intended to come down to the counting-room on Monday, because he overdrew his bank account Saturday, and was not able to make it up that day, and he said he would be down early Monday, and make it right, then.

John, the errand boy, testified that the deceased brought in a box of cigars that forenoon and told him to take it up to the house that night. The prisoner inquired about it in the afternoon after the other clerks were gone, and offered to carry the box up himself and let witness go early. Witness accordingly went away at about five. Left the prisoner all alone when he went.

It was proved by both these witnesses that the prisoner went out shortly after the quarrel to do some errands, he said, and was gone some time. This was about the middle of the afternoon, and was the only time he was absent from the counting-room during the day.

A cigar dealer was called to the stand, who testified that he kept a store a few doors from the deceased's store. The deceased occasionally had bought cigars from him. He was very particular indeed about the quality; so that the witness recollected distinctly their transactions. He sold a box to deceased on that Satur-

day morning. It was a small box. The box now shown to him by the counsel for the prosecution was the identical box. There could be no doubt about it. The cigars were made by himself;—his best;—they were marked Havana, but that was one of the customs of the trade. He made them himself, and they were pure.

By comparing the hour named by this witness, and that named by John, it was evident that the deceased brought the box directly from the shop to his counting-rooms.

A gentleman Matthew had never seen before, testified that he was a neighbor of the deceased and knew him well. Witness called on him at his counting-room on that Saturday. Saw a box of cigars there. Deceased said they were some he had just bought, and thought were good. Deceased gave the witness a bunch of them. They were good. Witness smoked them, the whole bunch, during that night and the next forenoon. Did not feel any ill effects of it. Was accustomed to smoke a good deal. Knew a good cigar as far as he could smell it. That box now shown him was the one he saw; no doubt of it. It was open on the deceased's desk when the witness came away.

Just as he was leaving the room the deceased called him back, and asked him to come in again and see him on Monday. Monday noon. Deceased did not say why, but desired him particularly to call.

Mr. Clarrick, druggist, testified that about three or four o'clock on that Saturday, the prisoner came to his store, and purchased a small quantity of morphia. That

drug was in a fine white powder. Witness remarked the prisoner particularly, for he seemed to be agitated or perturbed. He appeared to be in a hurry. It was a cool day, but he seemed to be warm as if with running. Witness put up the drug for him himself. Did not remember the quantity. Witness marked "*Poison*" upon it, and then put it in an outer wrapper which had no mark upon it.

In answer to questions from one of the prisoner's counsel, this witness added that the prisoner did not ask for the drug by name, but handed him a slip of paper, and asked him to "put up that," as if it were a prescription. The name of the drug was written in the paper. Did not recollect whether the paper was folded up or not. Did not recollect whether the prisoner looked at the paper or not. The witness had not brought the paper with him. The paper had been lost or destroyed. It was not kept among the prescriptions, but was thrown with the waste papers. Such bits of waste paper as that, in the store, were thrown into a box, and used to kindle fires, etc., etc. A thorough search had been made, at request of prisoner's counsel, to find the paper, but it could not be found. It had undoubtedly been destroyed. Could not say what sort of a hand-writing it was written in, but should know the paper again if he saw it.

This witness's testimony as to the selling of the drug to the prisoner, was corroborated by the examination of his two clerks, who were in the store at the time.

The porter employed by the deceased in the ware-

house was called next, and testified that at six o'clock on that Saturday afternoon he had shut up below stairs and was coming up to the counting-room to fasten the shutters there when he met the prisoner with a bundle under his arm. It was the same size as the box of cigars now shown, and the witness should think it might have been that very box done up in paper.

Miss Arabella Mayes was called. Matthew had endeavored to carry out his purpose of saving her from the necessity of responding to this call; but he was somewhat curtly reminded by his counsel, that the insurance companies had undertaken his defense for their benefit as well as his own, and that he must permit his advisers to conduct the case as they saw fit, if they were to conduct it at all. He found himself therefore helpless. Arabella's testimony, however, was very straight-forward and simple. With delicacy and tact, but with frankness, she narrated the brief meeting which took place between herself and the prisoner at Mr. Harsford's door upon that memorable Saturday evening.

Matthew was surprised at the degree of composure with which she was able to submit to the examination she had striven so much to avoid. Her unreserved and unqualified identification of the prisoner as the bearer of the fatal box, contrasted strongly with her evident sympathy for him; and the contrast gave a terrible weight to her testimony.

By the testimony of *servants*, this same box, unopened, was traced from Arabella's hand to that of the deceased, who took it to his study. No one had entered his room

that night, so that no person could have touched the cigars.

Several physicians being called one after another, testified substantially as follows: They had been called in almost immediately after Mr. Harsford was found dead. They made the usual post mortem examination. The system appeared, in general, to be in a healthy state, with the exception of a slight congestion of the brain. There were no other symptoms of natural disease which could explain the death. All the vital organs were sound. They were shown the half burned end of a cigar, which was lying upon the floor, at the head of the sofa. It was picked up by one of themselves on their first visit, and kept for examination. It was afterwards carefully examined, and it was then found that the leaves had been separated, and a white powder scattered amongst them. That powder was subjected to the usual chemical tests, and conclusively shown to be morphia. It appeared to be introduced in considerable quantity; as much, probably, as would admit of rolling the cigar up again in compact shape. If the whole cigar were filled in proportion to the part which remained, there would have been much more than necessary to produce death. They ascribed the death of Mr. Harsford, without hesitation, to the administration of the drug by means of the cigar. There could be no doubt that death might be produced in that way. None of them recollected any case of poisoning by that method, but it was doubtless possible. The poison would not operate entirely, perhaps not chiefly, by infecting the smoke of the cigar, but the powder in

the part of the cigar which was put in the mouth would be imbibed directly. A great deal would depend on the kind of poison used. The salts of morphia would be imbibed more readily than the pure alkaloid. If it were desired to counterfeit a natural death, morphia would be better selected than almost any other, in one respect, that the post mortem appearances were very indistinct. The only trace of the action of morphia, which could be depended upon, was a fullness of the blood-vessels of the brain, and this appearance was presented in some of the forms of apoplexy. It was very difficult to distinguish poisoning by the various preparations of opium (of which morphia was one) from apoplexy, unless by the attendant circumstances. If the end of the cigar had not been found, it would have been difficult to say whether the death resulted from an apoplectic attack or by an excessive opiate. Mr. Harsford was not at all of an apoplectic habit. Under the circumstances there could be no doubt that the death was caused by the drug.

This is but the outline in the briefest form of the mass of circumstances accumulated with indefatigable industry by the counsel for the prosecution; and all of which, not only in their intrinsic nature but in the truthful coloring of most of them, coming from intelligent and in the main trustworthy witnesses, bore with a resistless effect upon Matthew's case.

When the counsel announced that their case was closed the jurymen looked at each other in satisfaction at the prospect of no defense and a speedy verdict. It becoming noised abroad among the crowd that that was all the tes-

timony against the prisoner, the crowd, who had grown weary and inattentive to the scientific testimony of the medical witnesses long before their examinations were ended, evidently thought that it was quite enough.

Matthew himself was half convinced that the terrible chain, which the counsel had flourished in his opening speech, was already about his neck; his head grew confused and Eyes became predominant again all over the room. In a moment, however, he became aware that his counsel had arisen to address the jury, and summoning again his self-possession, he fixed his attention upon the progress of the cause.

Matthew was destined, however, to feel a sad disappointment in the address of his counsel.

CHAPTER XXVII.

'TIS A FAIR DAY WHEN THE SUN BREAKS THE
CLOUDS IN GOOD SEASON.

MATTHEW, I say, was destined to feel a sad disappointment in the speech of his counsel.

The enthusiastic declamations of his adversary had filled Matthew with vague and uncertain apprehensions, and had revived all his fears. He now waited impatiently for the opening of his defense, to witness a brilliant sally upon the enemy which should meet him face to face, and drive him back with threatening gestures and commanding voice, and triumphantly discomfit him and put him to rout with his own weapons. He expected to hear a thrilling speech from his own advocate; one which should touch every heart and reduce the thousand Eyes to tears. He had made up his mind that nothing but an outburst of eloquence outsoaring the eloquence of the prosecution could save him. He looked for such an appeal as a young lawyer always makes, according to the novels; when, being intrusted with his first cause (always a case of vast importance and almost insuperable difficulty), he succeeds by sheer force of his rhetoric, and consequently is crowned with the congratulations of all his friends, and immedi-

ately afterwards marries his client by way of fee for his services,—the client of course being a young woman, fair to behold and amply endowed with this world's goods.

But his legal friend displayed no capability for this kind of success.

What was not therefore Matthew's surprise when he saw his counsel step around as near the jury as he could conveniently get, without disrespect to his adversary and the court, turn his back upon the thousand Eyes, and address himself in a plain, conversational tone to the jury, as if the matter in hand were some trivial circumstance of the moment.

He spoke so indifferently that Matthew, although he sat very near, actually had to lean forward to avoid losing any word, in the confusion which prevailed in the room. General curiosity, however, soon caused silence, and the room was quiet again. There was then no longer any difficulty in hearing.

"May it please the Court, and you, Gentlemen of the Jury," said the counsel, settling himself very comfortably in an easy, unconcerned way against the edge of the table behind him, "I think this is altogether one of the most singular cases I have ever known. I think," he continued, speaking slowly and with great seriousness, and looking from one jurymen to another, "that there can be no doubt that this young man has got into a very embarrassing position."

While the speaker pauses an instant to note the effect of this singular commencement, I should avail myself of the opportunity to say that this man was one of the most

adroit and acute of advocates. From the beginning of the case he had been watching the effect of the evidence upon the minds of the jury; and he knew too well the uses and abuses of that fervor of address which is called eloquence, to display his powers in that respect now. He employed this quiet, conversational tone and style, and assumed this air of carelessness, in order to put his own thoughts and those of the jury in harmony for a starting point.

"These witnesses," he continued, "have told their stories, and, in general, with every appearance of having told the truth. That is as to their *facts*. *Don't* you think so? Well, I'll not be certain; some of them may have a little personal feeling,—may have exaggerated somewhat. The impressions and opinions some of them have managed to express are evidently not reliable. But I think that in the main, so far as they have stated facts, they are pretty nearly right. I mean their manner impresses me so. At any rate, they are all very worthy people, and I shall not contradict what they have said. These facts, such facts as they happen to know, certainly look pretty strong. Therefore I say, as I said before, that the case looks very bad against the young man."

The speaker was fast getting a surprising reputation for fairness and impartiality with the jury. If he had been a judge he would have been more pompous and dignified; but he could not have been more unbiased than he now appeared.

"Because you see, gentlemen," he proceeded, "in investigating such a case as this we have several difficulties.

First place, the secrecy of the act; the crime, whether murder or suicide, is apt to have been committed so that no one has any positive knowledge of it. Second place, the people who know any thing about the circumstances are generally strongly interested. They generally take sides violently. Lastly, of the two persons who alone know the real truth, one is dead, the other is not permitted to speak. There he sits. But his mouth is shut. We must find out what we can in some other way. You have no way of finding out what he knows, unless we can find some one else who knows just the same thing. If we can't do that you can't hear it. He can tell it to me, but I can not tell it to you.

"But that does not make so much difference in this case, for I suppose the fact is, that he knows no more about the matter than we do. Some little minor details he might correct, perhaps, but as to the main facts stated,—not the tremendous damning facts, strong as proof from Holy Writ, which my eloquent friend talked about,—but the plain, simple, every-day circumstances told us by the witnesses,—I suppose about these simple facts there is little doubt. The buying of a drug. The carrying a box of cigars. The letting an errand boy go an hour earlier than usual. The quarrel with a nervous and irritable employer, and a sudden dismissal from employment. All these things, gentlemen, are natural and simple incidents that happen every day in our lives. There is not one of us who has not bought drugs again and again,—poisons too,—and never known what they were; yes! and ten to one the wiseacre that sold them knew no better either.

This is the worst of their facts, and I've done as terrible a thing as that, before now.

"You see, gentlemen, it is not the facts themselves that prove any thing against the boy, but it is the peculiar and unusual combination of the circumstances, followed by the death; that casts suspicion on him.

"That is all; but that's not enough. You see, all we have reached thus far is this: assume that the young man had a desire, a deliberate purpose, to destroy his employer, assume that to start with, then we have ascertained this: he *might* have bought the poison, knowing it to be such. He might have put it into the cigars. He might have carried the cigars to Mr. Harsford's house with this purpose. And Mr. Harsford might have died in consequence. These circumstances do not prove the prisoner *did* do it, but only that he *might* have done it. That's clear enough, is n't it?

"But I do n't think that is enough.

"No; I suppose the court will tell you that the law requires that they should show not only that the deceased *may* have died by the hand of the prisoner,—they've shown that, we would have admitted that,—but they must show something more. In every case of this sort they must prove, first, an adequate motive for taking the life, second, an opportunity to take it,—and third, they must exclude, by proof, every reasonable hypothesis which could explain the death consistently with the prisoner's innocence. In other words, they must show that the deceased could not have died at that time and in that way by any other means.

"Now you can see the bearings of the various facts they have shown. The quarrel in the counting-room they rely on to show a *motive*. I won't stop now to discuss whether they proved motive distinctly enough, but supposing the quarrel was violent enough and the circumstances were sufficiently serious to do that, there is where those facts would come in, in working up the case. They would show the motive and that's all.

"Then they must prove an *opportunity*. There is where the facts about the drug and the cigars come in; the buying the drug, the staying at the office alone, the carrying the cigars up to the house—all these things don't go to show that the young man intended a murder, but only that he might have committed it, if he had intended it.

"But they've got to prove something more than this. They've got to exclude all other explanations of the death. They are not bound to demonstrate absolutely that it is impossible the death should have been caused by any other means; that would not be fair to require. But, if they do not prove directly that this young man did it,—and they do not, but only that he might have done it,—then they must also show that it is not reasonable to suppose that any one else did it.

"They know this as well as I do."

"This was what they were trying to do when they put those questions to What's his name, the clerk there, Mr. Warrack, about Mr. Harsford's business appointments; and when they proved the appointment which he made with the other witness. They knew that so far as the

other facts go, in a legal point of view, it would be just about as likely that this man committed suicide as that he was murdered. They wanted to show that he had appointments for Monday, because they thought you would infer that he could not be intending suicide meanwhile.

"They'll have to prove something better than over-drawing a bank account, to make him very anxious to meet the cashier on Monday morning. I'm very glad they proved those facts, because you see every particle of truth helps along.

"It's because we do not know the whole story that we are in this perplexity.

"If the druggist had only saved that scrap of paper and brought it here, so that we might see in whose handwriting it was, that would help us too."

These sentences, uttered conversationally, colloquially, with a remarkable directness and pointedness of manner, grasped the attention of every one of those to whom he so quietly spoke. Turning from one juror to another, as he proceeded, he had dwelt upon each, and, as it were, conversed with him, until each man felt the personal influence of the speaker's mind.

"I do not know that I have much more to say at present, before I call some witnesses. I've only a very few. I propose to prove the excellent character this young man has always borne, and to give you some better insight, if I can, into this quarrel, of which we have had a sort of outside, eavesdropping account, and also to give you some idea of the character and true position of the

deceased, so that you may better be able to judge if it is improbable that—he would commit suicide for instance.

“In the first place, though, before any evidence, I had better give you an outline of my idea of this matter. I can’t prove it all. I’m not bound to prove it all. I will tell you what is our supposition of the cause of this death, and then I will show you the evidence which corroborates that view, and makes it seem to me very improbable that this young man had any idea of what was going on. Then if you think there is a reasonable possibility that the death happened in the way we suppose it did, that will raise a reasonable doubt as to the prisoner’s guilt, and you must acquit him.”

The advocate paused a moment, but soon recommenced, speaking now very deliberately, and in a sort of monologue or soliloquy.

“I imagine a merchant in great embarrassment. He has been living fast. Speculating. Building. All sorts of irons in the fire. He keeps a-going, till at length he is fairly cornered. He borrows everywhere. He uses other people’s money in underhand ways, and so gets into awkward positions. His troubles make him unscrupulous, and at length he gets into a very tight place. Well, he must have money, and plans various expedients to raise it, and is all the time beset with embarrassments, anxieties and cares; all the time getting deeper into the water, and all the time struggling harder and harder to hold his head up higher above it.

“I see this man growing nervous and thin with his trouble. At last his creditors rise to pursue him; and

one gets judgment against him, and another gets judgment against him; and another, one Saturday afternoon, obtains an order for his arrest; for his arrest in a suit for issuing false and fraudulent securities. The deputy sheriff comes quietly down with the papers in his pocket and calls upon the merchant.”

The room became perfectly still. The last pair of the thousand Eyes left Matthew now, and were fixed upon the speaker, who, standing carelessly against the table, wielded adroitly the most ingenious of all forms of eloquence, a spell by which all who heard him were bound, yet never knew it. This was the critical time of his effort; and though his external manner was simple and natural, one who understood the secret of his skill, and realized the enormous power which he wielded over hearers unconscious of his influence, would have seen in his keen, steady eye, the intense excitement he felt in this scene, and would have perceived in his deliberate utterances, his delicate modulations of voice, now no longer colloquial and familiar, but growing more and more ideal and imaginative, the care with which he presented every thought and weighed and placed every word.

“I see now,” continued he, “that this merchant finds his expedients at last exhausted. He is at the end of his career. He knows it very well. The deputy calls on him. They sit together in the counting-room. I hear the merchant, who trembles with terror at the near approach of the disgrace which impends, bargain with him for more time; for a day or two. Such things can be

done, I regret to say, gentlemen; and the officer goes away.

"Before he goes, gentlemen, he makes an appointment to meet this merchant again on Monday. When I hear this, I begin to understand it."

The grasp and power with which this speaker seized upon every minute circumstance, and gave it a new and unexpected aspect, rendered every passage of his remarks a new surprise to his hearers. Matthew himself found his flesh creep, as he began to realize for the first time the truth of this interpretation now so vividly flashed in successive revelations before him. He wished that this low-toned, quiet, indifferent man were only eloquent. Oh! if he had but an arm of power, and a tongue of fire, to give adequate utterance to such throbbing, burning thoughts as those with which his simple words filled his hearers. Matthew did not know that a gesture or an outburst would have broken the charm. To have made any signal of the power he was wielding would have been to put himself above the case, and open an impassable barrier between himself and the minds of the jury.

In the same low tone he continued after the short pause during which Matthew groaned in spirit with these anxieties.

"But I imagine that this man has recently insured his life. He is a husband and a father, and would like to leave welfare behind him. It is necessary, therefore, doubly necessary, that he should die, and that he should die so ingeniously that the true cause will not be dis-

covered, or at least so that if the fatal agent is known, the hand that administered it may never be suspected.

"I imagine that this man is also maddened with other troubles than those I yet mentioned; with others, gentlemen, deeper, darker than any of these. A startling and mysterious claim has just been preferred against him in behalf of one whom he has for twenty years, and with good reason, believed to be dead. This claim is a wicked imposture; but it is devised with such diabolical ingenuity, and sustained by such a peculiar conjuncture of corroborating circumstances, that he is led to believe it must be true; and it is pressed upon him with such relentless pertinacity that he thinks it can not be evaded. If he had money it might be satisfied; but it is money, gentlemen, which this merchant can no longer command. Without it, he can see no prospect in the future but disgrace and misery for himself and for those dearest to him; for this abominable scheme of scoundrels threatens not merely to abate his prosperity, but to blacken his own name, and make outcasts of his family. Under the pressure of such a distress, one which I am about to explain more fully to you in a few moments, this man resolves to die.

"I see him buying a box of cigars. His taste is keen. He can tell the flavor of all the grades. He knows at a whiff the true aroma. He will touch none but the best.

"I do not suppose that this man, with so exquisite a taste, is to be smoked to death unawares by a poisoned cigar, and never once detect the stench of its deadly fumes. I do not suppose he fails to recognize the odor

of the drug. I do not suppose it would be possible to foist upon him drugged tobacco in place of the pure weed, and he not detect the scent, and detect the taste, and detect the broken appearance of the cigar. Poisoned he might be by himself, but not thus by another. The doctors were not asked as to this point by my learned friend. We shall have some medical testimony on this point to offer in our turn, gentlemen.

"I imagine that when a certain friend drops in upon this merchant at his counting-room that morning, he gives him a bundle of cigars out of this very box. He commends them highly to his friend. Perhaps his wish is that if the question ever comes up, there may be those who can testify to the purity and excellence of the article.

"He requests his friend, just as the latter is about to leave, to call in and see him on Monday. He gives no reason, but insists on making an appointment. If he had made a dozen such it would not surprise me. Often when a man contemplates suicide, he feels a strong desire to conceal his tracks.

"He sits down, as I see him, and deliberately overdraws that bank account which he knows he can not make good. He has no purpose whatever of returning to face this dishonorable debt, when he *has* no money, is not *going* to have any money, and knows that he can not *get* any money. I do not imagine that after this man leaves the counting-room he ever will come back.

"I can see this harassed and guilty man, early in the day, sending one of his young men for the drug which he

desires to use. He does not go himself, nor send by any one who might probably be recognized; but avails himself of the services of one, a stranger in the city, unknown, unlikely to be recognized, and less likely than any other to be afterwards sought out and questioned in regard to such a matter. Oh! too unwary and compliant youth. Too obedient! Why did he not quarrel one day earlier, and cut himself off from this connection before this desperate and unscrupulous man should use him as a tool, and leave him to this fate?

"This young man is generous and rash. His nearest and best friend has been defrauded by this needy and ruined merchant, and he seizes the first opportunity to make a demand for reparation. He enters his employer's presence with a just indignation, but a heated judgment. The manner and tone of his employer inflame them both. Thus he is unconsciously and unfortunately drawn into a scene which marks him in the minds of overhearers as his employer's enemy. Then with the heat of the dispute still upon him, this young man, faithful to duty still, though excited and disturbed, goes to the drug store. He hands the folded slip to the druggist. His thoughts are anywhere but upon his errand. He takes the offered packet almost without thought, and returns."

The speaker felt that his failure was certain, unless the theory of the defense should be so vividly and keenly depicted, and so fully received into the minds of the jury, that the few slight, frail matters of evidence which should be given in corroboration, might only be requisite to anchor in their minds the conjecture which with so much

minuteness he was gradually unfolding. He scanned closely the faces of his listeners one by one, and watched anxiously for the signs of his progress.

"I see now," he continued, "that this employer has gone home. The cigars are to follow him. This young man faithfully waits at the counting room until the last moment of his allotted service. Without apprehension of evil, he gives liberty to his associate instead of claiming it himself. He has those relations with the family of his employer which render him quite willing to present himself at the house once more before he leaves the situation and goes beyond the circle of their knowledge. He volunteers to do the simple errand at the house. He reaches the door and there unexpectedly meets a young lady. There are reasons in their past acquaintance why they can not meet without mutual embarrassment and disturbance. In his perturbation he turns away hastily and in confusion, and disappears.

"I see the fatal box pass from hand to hand, till it reaches that of the expectant merchant. He shuts himself with it into his room."

As the speaker reached this point, his eye completed again the circuit of the twelve intent faces before him. He saw by their expression that while they followed him with intense interest, it was not with that credence, that faith so to speak, which he had labored so hard at the outset to establish, and which was so essential to his success. He paused but for one moment; though in that moment his mind, long used to quick action, flashed a searching thought along backward through the whole length of the

imaginary narrative he had been pursuing to see if he had omitted any incident or failed to turn any to the best advantage. But there was no time to lose. He wiped the drops of perspiration that singularly stood upon his cool face, and resumed.

"And now, gentlemen, he is alone. I imagine this desperate and wretched man now shut up by his own hand to his destruction. The fatal moment approaches. He takes out a cigar from its place. Its fragrance is exquisite to his keen sense. He takes up the poison. With these in his hands he is ready.

"His wish is, gentlemen, his blasphemous wish is to counterfeit one of those terrible, inexplicable, sudden deaths by which God Almighty, on rare occasions, strikes a man lifeless, never leaving a mark or a scar upon his body, to tell the hand or weapon or disease which did the work. With this wish he has contrived this ingenious but ineffectual attempt.

"I imagine that with his own hand this wretched, unhappy man inserts the poison into the cigar. He unrolls its layers and scatters the fatal powder through it. He rolls it up again and—"

"Yes, sir! That was it! That was truly it! I saw him;" cried a little voice from the gallery. "I saw him do it! He did!"

And then, dismayed and terrified at the confusion which his almost unconscious outcry had caused, little Benny, for it was his voice which startled the room, shrank back into his seat.

The whole room rose. The thousand Eyes were shot

at him. The jurymen leaped to their feet and clambered upon their chairs to look up for the voice. Men trod upon each other and climbed wildly towards the door to see the speaker who had thus come to the rescue of the defense. Matthew fell helplessly against the table; conscious of all the scene, but unable to move in his excitement.

The lawyer alone stood quietly where he had been standing. He turned his head but that was all. Bewildered, astounded, by this singular childish cry, he trembled with the fears which overwhelmed him. The spell was broken. Was it an over excited imagination responding to his too highly wrought picture which by this word, intended for assent, had defeated his effort? Or was it an unexpected deliverance for this almost hopeless case? A voice that had some truth to utter as yet unheard and unknown.

Under the intensest excitement, but preserving a calm exterior, the counsel waited until by his direction the officers stationed in the gallery made search, and the light form of the little cripple, who was weeping and wild with terror, was lifted over the balustrade, and handed carefully down over the front of the gallery, where he was received above the crowd; a hundred arms being outstretched from below to meet him. Thence he was borne or rather passed along through the excited throng, towards the witness stand; where he was at length placed. Amazed and terrified by the strange treatment he had received, and by the excitement which his almost involuntary exclamation had occasioned, he

now cowered down upon the floor, shrinking from any touch and avoiding as best he could the wondering gaze of the throng that hung over him from every side.

As Matthew's counsel turned around to look down at this strange witness who had so unexpectedly appeared, the prosecuting officer uttered half to himself, half aloud, some sharp remark about "dramatic effect."

"Silence!" said the quiet lawyer, speaking now for the first time in an elevated voice. "Say what you think best, aloud, with your head up, when your turn comes, but drop none of your hints and inuendoes. This is serious business."

To these words, uttered in so imperious a tone by this calm and plain-spoken man, the eloquent one had no reply to make. He sat playing with his package of papers as if he had not heard what was said.

"Mr. Officer," said the prisoner's counsel, who though his back was now turned upon the jury, took care that they should hear all he said, "take the lad up to the judge; if he knows any thing, we will hear it in good time."

"Why, dear me," said the learned and eloquent counsel for the prosecution, addressing his learned friend, "you don't expect to swear that child, do you? He can't know any thing, not even the nature of an oath."

"If he knows the nature of an oath," retorted the other, "he will be sworn. Then if he knows any thing about the case he will tell it, and I shall make what I can of it, and if he does n't, he won't, and you can make what you can of that. Meantime, gentlemen," he continued, ad-

dressing the jury, "if you will indulge me for a few moments, I will go on with my witnesses. I had just finished what I was intending to say when I was interrupted."

While this by-play was going on, the child was lifted again, and brought to the steps that ascended to the judicial platform. Holding on by the officer's hand he climbed the steps, and in a moment he stood by the side of the judge's chair, and behind the judge's long desk, where only his thin face and broad collar were visible to the thousand Eyes which now fascinated him as they had before fascinated the prisoner.

There was a few minutes' pause while the judge, in an undertone, conversed with the child, and the counsel put a few hurried questions to his client. Both judge and counsel arrived in a few moments at very nearly the same result, viz.: that the child was a near neighbor of Mr. Harsford's, that he knew him and knew the prisoner, and that he knew, or might know, some circumstances which would bear upon the case. • Matthew, who felt that consciousness of innocence which assured him that whatever Benny might know, it was far more likely to tell in his favor than against him, was eager to have the child examined. And accordingly, when the judge, raising his head and addressing the counsel, said:

"The child seems to have knowledge of some facts which may have a bearing upon the case, and I should think you would do well to examine him,"

—the counsel replied:—

"It is precisely what we wish, if your honor pleases; and I think we will see what he knows first, and then if it

proves unimportant it will not interrupt the course of the testimony I had proposed to introduce."

"One moment! if the court please," interrupted the eloquent friend; "before that child is examined I should be glad to have him questioned as to the nature of the oath he is to take. He looks young and not over intelligent. I hardly think he can be competent."

"I scarcely think it can be necessary,"—the judge was commencing,—when Matthew's counsel interposed.

"Oh! I trust your honor will put the boy to all proper tests as to his competency. It will be more satisfactory I think to both sides."

"What is your name, my lad?" said the judge, acquiescing in the request thus preferred, and turning towards Benny.

"Temple, sir. Benjamin Temple."

"And you live, you say, near Mr. Harsford's house?"

"I used to, sir, right against his back garden, before mother died."

"Do you know what an oath is?"

"Yes, sir," said the child; "it is swearing."

"Do you ever swear?"

"No, sir," said the boy; "it is wicked."

"Who told you it was wicked?"

"My mother, sir,—and Miss Harsford."

"Did you know that when they want witnesses to tell the truth they have them take an oath?"

"Yes, sir, I knew that."

"Who told you that?"

"Mother told me."

"When did she tell you?"

"Why, they had a court trial about me once, sir. It was when I hurt my leg. Mother went down to court to tell them how I got hurt, and you see, sir, she said it was Tuesday, and she really thought it was Tuesday, sir; she really thought so; but after she got home I reminded her; I reminded her that it was Wednesday. Then she was afraid that it was a perjury. So she had to go down to the court afterwards to tell the court it was Wednesday. But the court said it was no matter. That was how I came to know, sir. Mother told me all about it."

"What did she tell you?"

"Oh, she told me about the court, and about the judge, and how they got a Bible for her, and gave her an oath to tell the truth, and how wrong it was for her to tell any thing that was n't true."

"Do you know what a lie is?"

"Oh, yes, sir. It is telling what is n't true on purpose."

"Is it right or wrong to tell lies?"

"Oh! it is wrong, sir. Didn't you know that?"

"Suppose you should tell a lie; what would happen to you?"

"God would punish me," said the child, solemnly.

"Suppose I should give you an oath here and now to tell the truth, and you should tell a lie, what would happen to you then?"

"God would punish me," said the child, "and the policemen would take me up, and make perjury of me. But I should n't do so."

"You may swear him," said the judge, leaning back in his chair.

And the clerk administered the oath, and seated Benny in a chair upon the witness' stand.

"Now, my lad," said Matthew's counsel, stepping up as near the witness' stand as he could easily get, "do you see these twelve gentlemen here?"

"Yes, sir," said Benny.

"Well, they want to know all about Mr. Harsford,—every thing. Never mind any body else, but just these gentlemen in the yellow chairs. Do n't be afraid of any thing. Nobody will hurt you. All you have got to do is to tell the truth, and if it helps us any, everybody will be much obliged to you. Now, in the first place, tell me how old you are."

"I am almost ten, sir," replied the child, in a low and timid voice.

"I am afraid you do n't speak quite loud enough, Benjamin. Look over to that gentleman in the white coat, sitting in the furthest chair—do you see him?"

Benny looked along in the direction in which the lawyer pointed, and saw an elderly-looking man in a light-colored gray cloak. He was the furthest removed of all the jurors from where Benny sat.

"Yes, sir."

"Well, I want him, very much, to hear all you say. Speak as if you thought he was a little deaf, and you wanted to be sure and make him hear."

Benny raised his voice instinctively, and almost without knowing it, and spoke now quite distinctly;

"I am almost ten years old now, sir," he repeated.

"Where do you live, Benjamin?"

"I do n't live hardly any where now, sir. Miss Harsford is taking care of me, until she can find a place for me to live."

"How long has Miss Harsford taken care of you?"

"Ever since my mother died, sir."

"How long ago did your mother die?"

"Oh, it was about—a good while ago, sir. It was just after Mr. Harsford's burying."

"Has Miss Harsford been taking care of you ever since then?"

"Yes sir," said the child.

"And where did you live before your mother died?"

"I lived with my mother, sir."

"Did she take good care of you?"

"Oh! yes; I'm sure she did."

"Whereabouts did you live, when you lived with your mother?"

"We lived right opposite Mr. Harsford's back garden, sir."

"Did you ever see Mr. Harsford?"

"Yes sir."

"Where have you seen him?"

"Oh, I have seen him walking in his garden, sir; and I have seen him at his office, when I went to sell papers; and once I held his horse for him in front of his house, and he gave me two pennies, and he asked me how I was going to 'vest 'em, or something, and then he laughed, because I said I did n't know what he meant."

"Did you ever see this gentleman before?" asked the counsel, pointing to Matthew.

"Oh yes sir. He is Mr. Caraby."

"When have you ever seen him?"

"Oh, I have seen him at Mr. Harsford's office, and he went up to my mother's, and I saw him in Broadway one night, and I guess I've seen him some other times besides. Mother used to wash clothes for him."

"Did you know Mr. Harsford was dead?"

"Yes sir."

"Well now, Benjamin, tell these gentlemen all you know about Mr. Harsford's dying."

Benny hesitated.

"I do n't know any thing about it, sir," he said, "not any thing that I know of."

"Do n't you know any thing about it, at all?"

"No sir. I do n't think I do."

The counsel paused a few moments, to try to gain some clue for further questioning.

At length he resumed.

"Did any body tell you to come here this morning?" he asked.

"No sir," said the child; "they told me not to come."

"Who told you not to come?"

"Miss Harsford told me I'd better not come. But I told her I wanted to come very much, and she said I might come if I chose; but she advised me not to. She was afraid I'd get crowded, and hurt my foot."

"But you decided to come, did you, notwithstanding?"

"Yes, sir."

"What made you want to come?"

"I wanted to see a court, sir."

"Was that all the reason?"

"Yes, sir; except I thought I should like to see Mr. Caraby's court."

"Did any body say any thing to persuade you to come?"

"No, sir, I persuaded myself."

"Who did you come with?"

"I came with some boys I knew up there, sir, (pointing to the gallery,) because I did n't know the way."

"Oh, you came with those boys, did you? and did they get you a seat up there?"

"No sir, they crowded me off the seat, and I fell down."

"Are you the boy who spoke out up in the gallery just now?"

"Yes, sir. I am very sorry. I will never do so again."

"Oh! it was no harm, Benjamin. You must not think we find any fault with you. Think a minute, now. What was it you said? Tell me it over again."

"I said, 'That was it, sir. That was it, for I saw him.'"

"Well now, Benjamin, tell us what it was that you saw."

"I saw him fixing the cigar, sir,—just as you said. Pulling it open and putting a powder in it, and rolling it up again."

"You saw that?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well now, Benjamin, I want you to tell these gentlemen just what you saw; all about it."

"Well, sir, you see my mother was sick, and I staid up 'most all night because I was afraid to go to bed, and because she wanted me to give her the water to drink, and so I kept going to the window to see if it was n't beginning to be morning, because you see, sir, we had n't any candles. So while I was at the window, Mr. Harsford came to the window; and—"

"Stop a moment; what window did Mr. Harsford come to, the same one you were at?"

"No sir, his study window over in his house. And he opened his window and looked out. He stood looking out a good while, and I watched him."

"What did you watch him for?"

"Because I was thinking whether if he should look over at me, I should dare to halloo out and ask him to tell me what time it was. You see I wanted to know very much what time it was, because my mother was so sick. Well, sir, then he staid there a good while, and looking out to see if it was n't most morning I suppose, or else to get himself cool, I don't know which, and then—and then he fixed the cigar, sir, and then he went back, and that is all I know, sir."

"Stop a moment, Benjamin, we shall want you to tell us a little more about this. How did you see him so well? Was n't it dark?"

"Why you see, sir, it was pretty dark in our house, because we had n't any candles; but Mr. Harsford had

his gas-light burning, and so the light shone on him very bright, and so I could see him very plain."

"Did you see him have a cigar?"

"Yes, sir. After he had stood there a good while he took it out of his pocket. At first I did n't know what it was, but then he put the end of it in his mouth, and I saw it was a cigar. Then he unfastened it somehow with his penknife, and spread it out pretty flat, and then laid it down somehow, and then he pinched up something with his thumb and finger and sprinkled it in, and then he rolled it up and went away; and that is all I know, sir."

* * * * *

These details of Benny's narrative were sufficient to bring an entire revulsion of feeling over Matthew's mind, already over-strained with the long-continued pressure of anxiety and excitement. He sank backwards in his chair utterly unable to notice or understand any thing more than that the truth was revealed. As a man falls backwards, dazzled and blinded by a sudden flash of lightning in the night, so Matthew's powers of mind seemed overwhelmed and quenched for the time by this brilliant gleam which thus shot down and dissipated forever the darkness and mystery in which he had stood involved. He was dimly conscious of a light of surprise and pleasure dancing in the thousand Eyes around him; of some further questions put to little Benny; of some little discussion between the judge and counsel; of some further formal proceedings; of somebody's saying, "What's the matter, *what's the matter?*" of a call for water; and that

his counsel was bathing his forehead; of somebody's asking if he felt better; of somebody's saying "Not Guilty" in a loud, official voice; of a great rising and confusion of people getting up to go out; of many people crowding around him, and shaking hands with him, and wishing him joy, and others saying "Don't crowd him so much, gentlemen, let him have a little more air;" of the judge coming down from his desk, and saying he was very glad the truth was found out in time; of his counsel asking him where he lived; of his saying "at Mrs. Hopley's," which only seemed to puzzle them; of his being helped into a carriage, with Mrs. Hopley and Roselle on the other seat, and the president of the insurance company at his side;—but when he was safely seated on the sofa, in one of the little rooms which Mrs. Hopley had secured for him and Roselle, with his sister by his side, and the good widow bustling about to get some tea, then he began to understand how it all was.

A day or two passed before he sufficiently recovered from the excitement of these scenes to feel really like himself again, or to enter upon the details of any plan for the future. But the main outline of his purpose was already fixed. Indeed, from the first hour when he began to realize, in prison, that he might be released, this purpose sprang and grew up intertwined with his hopes, and inseparable from them.

Now that his hopes had been so amply fulfilled, and he found himself vindicated, beyond all doubt or question, against the charge under which he had nearly despaired, it was with great joy that he looked forward again with-

out uncertainty to his purpose. There was but one shadow upon that joy. The shadow was the thought of the lonely, bereaved, and beggared condition of the widow and daughter of Mr. Harsford. Of James, he then thought but little; but his mind constantly reverted to the darkness which enveloped the earthly future of Charlotte and her mother, and the pain which a natural sympathy would cause him was peculiarly heightened by the peculiar relation which his fortunes had borne to theirs.

It was easy to resolve, as he did, to share with them the prosperity which he was determined to earn; but it was not so easy to decide how he should offer them assistance, after he should have acquired the means of so doing.

But there were matters of more immediate solicitude.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

BETTER A BAD BEGINNING AND A GOOD ENDING,
THAN A GOOD BEGINNING AND A BAD ENDING.

THE first step on which Matthew decided, after the trial, was to return with Roselle. If his trial had left doubt in the public mind as to his innocence, he would have been strongly impelled to remain in the city and face the obloquy, but, as it was, he could leave with a fair name, and Roselle's wishes and a certain other consideration induced him, at least, to postpone fixing his residence in the city.

But before he left town, he received a letter addressed in a strange hand. It was a simple business letter, to the mind of the writer; but it would be hard to measure the sensations with which Matthew read it, or Roselle heard it. It was a brief letter from a lawyer at the West, communicating the fact that about a month previous their father had died leaving a large property, which, it was the object of the writer to suggest, Matthew should claim. Those in whose hands the custody of the estate was, were evidently intending to make the most of their position, and Matthew's interests required immediate attention.

For years, the father's name had been scarcely men-

tioned between the children, his existence had been almost nothing to them, yet now, that natural and irrepressible affection that his indifference and neglect had repulsed, broke forth in deep grief. Years of neglect could not entirely efface from their generous natures the instinct that now mourned his loss and cherished his memory. As for the property, they had read the letter many times with tears, before Matthew began to calculate about that, and then his calculations were somewhat singular.

"You must go West immediately," said Roselle.

"Very soon," replied Matthew, "but not immediately. There are some other things to do first. It was a month ago, he says. There is nothing to do now but to see to the property. That is important, but there are—"

"Ah! I can finish the sentence for you. You think there are things of more importance than that."

Roselle could not see, so Matthew blushed with impunity.

"Yes," said he, "I will go and see Miss Harsford. I have wanted to see her before we left town. Now I will go."

"And Arabella?" said Roselle, inquiringly.

"Ah! I forgot to tell you last night when I came in. This letter put our conversation all out of my head. I went to the house where she had been staying, but she had gone home."

Whether Arabella thought that it was fair that Matthew should take as much pains to see her now that he was free, as she had taken to see him when he was in prison, or whether she felt that having once so irresist-

ibly assured him of her constancy she should better please him by awaiting him quietly at Enneton than by meeting him again in the city, I can not say; but she had already flitted home, and when Matthew had gone to see her in Brooklyn he found nothing but a note.

On the same day with this conversation, Matthew went to the Harsford mansion to see Charlotte. He found the house in disorder. Creditors were rapidly undermining the old home, and already the day was set when it should fall about its inmates in the ruin of a sheriff's auction.

The sight of Matthew, overpowered Charlotte with the painful thoughts that were inseparably connected in her mind with him. She was still more affected when he spoke.

"Miss Harsford," he said, "I thought I could not leave the city without seeing you."

"I assure you," replied the young girl, "I thank you for coming. These are terrible scenes. They stupefy me."

"You will believe me," said Matthew, after a pause, "when I try to say how much I have thought of your distress, and how sincere a pleasure it would give me if I could be of any assistance to you."

"None, I thank you. I believe there is nothing that can be done. We shall leave here very soon. Mother is going to her sister's in Philadelphia. They have invited her to make her home there. They are all very kind to us. There is nothing that can be done."

"And James?"

"Ah! do you not know? He has gone. He went

day before yesterday. He has gone on a voyage. He went suddenly, and he will be gone a long time I fear."

"And you are left alone?"

"Oh, no. I am going to Grandfather's at the Mills."

"And is there nothing—"

"There is nothing, Mr. Caraby."

"I thought if I could do any thing you could not confer a greater pleasure upon me than by permitting me to do it. The thought that you would not hesitate would give me great satisfaction."

"Ab, Matthew," she exclaimed, "pardon me if the associations of these scenes make me appear different from what I ought. I understand your kindness. I should not hesitate to ask you if there was any thing left to be done. But I am going away. I want to get away from all these scenes and every thing that reminds me of them."

"Well," said Matthew, as he rose to go, "I am glad to hear what you have said, for I am largely indebted to you, and I hope very soon to have the means of paying you. You and your mother."

"What!"

In answer to Charlotte's exclamation Matthew explained the means he had resorted to to procure a defense, and that he had succeeded by defeating the insurances. "Now," continued he, "I have just been informed that I have some property left me, and I am glad, for I can do soon what I did not expect to be able to do for some time,—make it good to you, in part at least."

Charlotte, without understanding a great deal about business, saw clearly enough that however generous such a course might be, there was no justice in it.

"No," said she, "you owe us nothing. The debt is the other way. The question is settled now, I suppose, and you have saved us the labor and expense of asserting a claim which we could not maintain. I can not hear of any such plan. It is very generous in you to purpose it, but I should be wrong to let you think of it. Please never to mention it again. I thank you from my heart for your kindness; but there is no need of any thing of the sort. The less I have to remind me of this past month the sooner Time will help my trouble. Good-bye."

"Poor girl!" said Matthew, as he went away, "I am afraid she will never find much happiness in any thing I can do."

Matthew was in some degree mistaken. It was true that Charlotte had been so shocked by the fate which had overtaken their family, and bewildered by being left alone and penniless, that every thing that served to fasten her thoughts upon that fate rekindled the pain which it inflicted, and she was relieved when Matthew left her presence. Yet she was not indifferent to his sympathy and kindness, and was prepared without hesitation to call upon his friendship in any exigency in which his assistance might be needed.

Mrs. Harsford was soon established with her relatives, where she lived some years a quiet and retired life, occasionally receiving visits from her daughter, and she was

gladdened once before her death by the return of her son.

As Charlotte had given Matthew to understand, James Glovering had run away to sea. And that was the end of him, you think? Not at all. Rather, it was the beginning. For I have noticed that of all good beings with bad reputations, this same sea is the best, with the worst. She is rated as idle, useless, cruel, treacherous. The landmen, being in the majority upon the earth, have it all their own way about her reputation; and all unite to deplore her doings, while they wonder at her power. To her they attribute all the indolence and immoralities of the shore, and her name they put as the symbol of all deceitful cunning, and heartless, pitiless force.

But after all, the sea is your true reformer. Other reformers scheme and theorize;—constantly settle principles, but rarely descend to individual want and welfare. But the sea agitates to a purpose. Just as she patiently absorbs and washes up all the debris of the coast, and maintains herself a perpetual fountain of purity for shore and atmosphere, just so she takes upon her motherly bosom all the delinquents of all the land, and maintains a perpetual school for their instruction and reformation. She never complains of the pupils we send her, but takes them as they come, scum and dregs. All the indolent boys, and all the bad boys; all the ignorant boys, and all the rash, adventurous boys; all the boys who are so fond of excitement that they can not be kept in bounds on the land, and all the boys who are so apt to exertion that they can not be made to ea

on the land where it's not so plenty as at sea; all the boys whose parents can not manage them, and all the boys who have no parents to manage them,—in short, all hard and hopeless cases for whom the earth seems to have no further chance, and whom terra firma rejects indignantly, the sea takes up, kindly. She has a hope for every one. God be thanked for her! And if she does not reform them all, she keeps her pupils for the most part out of mischief, except in vacation time when they get ashore again, and again go astray. But a goodly portion she does work wonders with. They come home from time to time. She sends them, to show their progress. They come robust in health, that went puny and debilitated. They come active and enduring, that went indolent and shrinking. They come clear sighted, that went with dim, aching eyes. They come men of decision, that went uncertain and irresolute. They come open palmed and generous, that went with close fists. And some come reverent, humble and prayerful, that went profane and Godless.

And James Glovering has gone to sea. Then there is some hope of James Glovering after all.

The same night after Matthew's interview with Charlotte, he started with Roselle up the river. If fidelity were the only virtue of the historian it would become my duty to pause and give an account of the journey in order that it might prove as tedious to the reader as it did to Matthew. It will suffice, however, to ignore distance and time, as he would have done if he could, and wait for him at Enneton.

Arabella was at home. A bright fire blazed in the family room. Grandmother sat in the corner, which of late had become her home as it were—a home within a home. Arabella's seat was at the center-table, where lay her writing desk and an open volume. She herself was oftener at the window than in her seat. When she looked towards the village it was because she was expecting her father from the Post office. When she looked the other way, down the road, it must have been because she wondered whose sleigh-bells those were, jingling so merrily in the distance. In the course of the half hour that she spent after tea, this evening, alternately at the window and at her seat, she heard several sleighs approach. The slow jogging bells seemed to have no attraction for her. The quick ringing bells made her heart beat quick; and when at last, after many disappointments, there suddenly came within hearing, a chime of bells quicker, merrier, more dashing and dancing than all before, and the crack of the whip and the sound of the runners skimming over the hard road, and the horse's feet rattling helter skelter over the little bridge below the yard, were heard, the very speed of the approaching traveler inspired Arabella's hope, and up went the window, and she looked out just in time to see this reckless driver dashing around the corner into the yard, and stopping short, at the very last instant, against the piazza.

I said the traveler stopped—I was wrong. Strictly speaking it was only the horse and sleigh that stopped, and barely in time too; but the traveler leaped from his seat and ran up the steps with the same momentum with

which he had been riding, and at the same instant Arabella, opening the front door, found herself clasped in his arms.

Many eccentric things may be pardoned in one who is in love, it is said. As for Matthew, the excuse was doubled and twisted strong for him. Life and liberty had suddenly been thrust upon him, and with them came the revival of a once disappointed affection. Into whatever enthusiastic excesses he may have run on this occasion, you and I would have looked on, not with the embarrassment of superfluous third parties, but with all the joy and sympathy of congratulation.

After all this, when Mr. Mayes came in a little while later, it is not to be supposed that Arabella had any longer any occasion for asking him if he had brought her a letter.

That was a long evening by the clock, though a very short one by the heart. Indeed, this allowance should be made, that the evening began late. In the first place, there was a warm greeting in the cold hall, and this took longer than you would suppose, owing to the young people having entirely forgotten that it was the hall, or cold either; then there was a greeting with grandmother, which was long, because she wanted to hear all about it right away, but was hard of hearing and could not, which infirmity happily saved Matthew from being sent back, in imagination, to prison for the rest of the night; and then there was a warming before the big fire, where Matthew sat in a great arm-chair, with its ruddy smile upon his feet, taking out the frosty air from them, and with his

face turned toward Arabella, who sat at his side and looked up into his face, and her radiant smile was upon his heart, he felt it there; and then she accidentally made the discovery, as they sat there quietly, that his hands were cold,—nothing very remarkable about that,—but it caused a great deal of rubbing and chafing of his hands, in turn, between her soft warm palms, to which Matthew submitted with, I must say, a very good grace. All this took place amid the most lively conversation. Then Mr. Mayes came in, and there was a diversion of thought for another greeting, and a consultation about the horse, which he proceeded to take in charge. Then came supper, in which some of Arabella's coffee, with cream of Enneton, and smoking hot biscuit, with the butter and honey of Enneton, completed for Matthew the comfort, which both enjoyed with grateful hearts; and with all this it was nearly nine o'clock when they were seated by the fire again to begin the short evening which remained.

A day or two after this scene Matthew went West, where he remained a short time, and secured the just interests of his family there. He found that his father's second wife had died several years before, and as there had been no children of that wife, the estate devolved to Matthew, and his brothers and sister. The inquiries which he instituted, and in which Mr. Sneyer exerted his best abilities for once on a pleasant errand, to discover Matthew's brothers, were unsuccessful. George, who had been sent abroad, as already mentioned, had perished on the voyage. Charles has never yet been heard from.

But if he should read this book, let me assure him that if he will send his address to Mr. Matthew Caraby at Harsford's Mills, "he will hear of something to his advantage."

In course of time there was a wedding party at Mr. Mayes', and Arabella Mayes became Mrs. Matthew Caraby. For several years Matthew made visits to the West, as the business of the estate required, but he did not remove thither. Though he has never said it to his friends, I conjecture that he might have gone, had it not been for Roselle, who would find it a great task to acquire in a strange community that familiarity with persons and things which was necessary to make her home a happy one. A little time before the wedding Matthew went into business at Harsford's Mills. He had found that Mr. Japhet Sackett, considering that he had all his life postponed pleasure to business, was now desirous to give pleasure the preference for the rest of his days. In other words, he was disposed to sell out. As Matthew was familiar with the business, and knew himself to be capable to conduct it with advantage, a bargain between them was soon struck. A new sign soon announced to the villagers that Matthew Caraby had succeeded Japhet Sackett. And as Matthew possessed the rare faculty of uniting pleasure with business, and of entertaining both these guests at once, he not only prospered surprisingly, but enjoyed himself highly in his new employment. He is now a rich man for Harsford's Mills. He still lives in the little white cottage in which he first commenced house-keeping, and his front door yard is now usually

ornamented with one or two, or sometimes three young Carabys; and the lavish manner in which crackers and squibs are fired outside of that house on the Fourth of July is only exceeded by the profuseness with which stockings are hung up within the house on Christmas Eve.

Roselle lives with her brother. It has been found that nothing can be done for her sight. But Matthew has bought her the best piano he could find, and she has a whole library of books in raised letters. She spent a year at an asylum for the purpose of learning some arts and occupations which she could not be taught at home; and now she has a hundred means of occupying herself with enjoyment, and increasing the happiness of those around her. She is the self-appointed teacher and governess of the young Carabys, and there proves to be one advantage in placing children under the teaching of a blind girl;—she must teach them to do right without being watched.

The Widow Hopley yet lives, and thrives, and flourishes. One of the first things which Matthew did with wealth was to set her up in a new baking establishment at the old stand, with money enough to be independent of everybody but customers. When Matthew and Arabella go to New York they always pay her a visit, and on their return she always loads them with wafer cakes, ginger-snaps and the like, for certain juvenile friends of hers at Harsford's Mills.

I shall not tell the reader what became of Benny, nor give any idea of the fortunes and destiny of Marie Montecabella. How Matthew insisted upon relieving Char-

lotte of the charge of Benny's maintenance,—how he took him to live in his own household,—how he caused a simple surgical operation to be performed which nearly removed his lameness,—how he sent him to school at the Mills,—how stout and brown Benny grew up to be,—how he is to go into the store next summer,—how it is his secret ambition to “go apprentice to a painter” when Mr. Caraby removes to New York, as Benny verily believes he one day will,—how Matthew and his wife brought Marie to their house one autumn for a winter's schooling,—how much she and Benny studied together,—how they devised an innocent plan of epistolary correspondence for their mutual improvement in chirography and composition,—of all these things, and the things which they foreshadow, I shall not now speak; though I know they would be very interesting.

Charlotte found a happy employment in teaching. She began quietly, by taking a district school, much to the surprise of everybody. Her success was such, that when people began to talk about establishing a High School, of which she should be the principal, everybody wondered why Harsford's Mills never had a High School before; and everybody thought it was a capital idea. There was the very building, too, the old Bank, which had been through various vicissitudes since it left off being a Bank and became an honest building. There were some who thought it would prove too small, and they were right, as the event proved; but it was a capital place to begin in; besides, being vacant now, it was obtained by the new High School committee on favorable terms. As for

Matthew, some talkative people were of opinion that he was very backward in this work and did not make himself as conspicuous as he ought. To tell the truth, nobody seemed to know who first started the idea of the High School, and everybody wondered how the committee succeeded in raising such unheard of sums for its foundation. If Matthew knew any thing about that, Matthew knew how to keep his own counsel, I suppose.

Whether Charlotte formed any conjectures upon this point I am not prepared to say; but this I know, that there was no one among all the visitors that came to her new halls, that she received with such peculiar gratification as she did Matthew and Arabella in their frequent visits; and there was no one else whose presence elicited from her eyes those two twin tears of gratitude and joy which were the unseen tribute she paid in silence to his presence.

As for Charlotte, the cares of her work sat lightly upon her. Such was the affection she inspired in her pupils and her assistants that I verily believe she thought it easier to teach than not to teach. As she grew in experience and learning, she grew in grace, dignity and beauty.

From time to time her brother James returns from sea, spending a few weeks on shore between his voyages. The rough experiences of life at sea have somewhat improved his character, and he is cordially welcomed by Charlotte, and for her sake, if not for his own, by all her friends. In person he is much improved, being grown stout and brown. When he arrives in New York

Matthew goes down to bring him straightway up to Harsford's Mills, that he may spend such time as he has at his own control among friends who will take thought for his true welfare, and at a distance from those temptations and dangers which the city thrusts before the seaman when on shore. Matthew contrives many rural excursions and sports for the amusement of the young sailor, and the two young men are often better companions for each other than any one who had been witness of the memorable piazza scene would ever have believed possible.

Although Matthew assumed the principal charge of Benny's maintenance, Charlotte never forgot the promise she had made to the dying mother. She watched his growth and education with the kindest solicitude; and if he ever accomplishes his ambition to be a great painter, he will owe quite as much to Charlotte's later instructions as to his mother's early teachings.

A year and more ago, Matthew and Arabella called at the High School on the first day of the spring term. This time Aunt Roselle came with them, holding by the hand Master Caraby, the oldest of Matthew's family, who was about to become the youngest of Charlotte's pupils.

"There, Miss Harsford," he said, after her greeting with the family was over, "there he is. We did not intend to bring him till next fall, but," continued Matthew, with the slightest possible air of humor, "we find that we must lose no time if we would have him under your charge. So here he is."

It takes a good deal to disturb the quiet self-possession of a good teacher; but there was a perceptible embarrassment in Charlotte's smile as she replied, that there was time enough yet; and she seemed to speak to Roselle and her new pupil.

"You will not think that I am not sorry that we are to lose you," said Matthew, as they came away, "when I say that we wish you joy with our whole hearts, and all the happiness which the brightest future promises you."

What it was that was going to happen to Charlotte Harsford, and who was to gain when "Harsford's Mills" lost, is something which I can not be expected to explain here. I am not a shrewd man—not particularly shrewd. But I know too much to write all I know in one book.

THE RELIC.—AN EPILOGUE.

ON a certain summer afternoon two young men walk leisurely upon the shore of a Northern Lake. They are accoutered for a hunting excursion, but it is clearly an expedition of pleasure merely; and nothing seems further from their thoughts, at present, than hunting.

One is tall and erect, the other short and slight of frame, yet well knit and robust, and bronzed by exposure.

They behold before them a lake which lies spread out in the valley of the mountains. On the South this lake stretches away nearly as far as the eye can reach. On the North it is surrounded by a dense forest, through which the road, by which it appears these travelers have approached the spot where they stand, winds along around the lake on the North-East side. Having left the road these young men are now sauntering through the forest, towards the North, and not far distant from the very shore of the lake.

"Matthew!" says the shorter man, who walks with somewhat of the gait of a sailor, "it might have been hereabouts that she reached the shore."

"Yes, James," the other replies, "it might have been;

though to my thought she perished on the ice. In such a storm, how could she have reached the shore?"

"Very possibly. Then there would be no trace left after the ice had thawed. That may explain why all searching was in vain. I had not thought of that," responded James.

The two take seats in silence upon a fallen tree.

They look through the somewhat sparse and scattered trees before them, upon the water of the lake, which lies bright and shining beyond the edge of the forest, and which is, to their imagination, at the moment, the tomb of her of whom they speak.

The Western Sun sinks downward, approaching the horizon. His beams, reflected from the crest of every ripple on the surface of the lake before them, present a thousand glittering points to their view.

It may be imagination; but James thinks he sees another glittering point half hid in the grasses and mosses upon the bank before them. He sits musing curiously upon this dew-drop, or speck of shining stone, which appears in the side of a small mound where the grass grows more soft and green than elsewhere around.

He steps forward, in a musing, abstracted way, and mechanically searches for this glittering point, whose glitter had vanished as he moved. He kneels before the mound, to see more closely.

A moment passes without voice or motion.

"Matthew!" he exclaims, "come here!"

His companion hastens to his side. As he draws near, James extends to him a dust-incrusted ring, which they

inspect in turn. It is a wedding ring. On its inside surface they decipher the scarcely legible inscription:—

Alexander & Martha.

With gentle hands they search the mound in silence.

Nothing but dust!

This relic alone remains.