

# ELLEN NORBURY;

OR,

THE ADVENTURES OF AN ORPHAN.

BY EMERSON BENNETT.

AUTHOR OF "CLARA MORELAND," "VIOLA," "THE FORGED WILL," "PIONEER'S DAUGHTER," "BRIDE OF THE WILDERNESS," "KATE CLARENDON," "HEIRESS OF BELLEFONTE," "WALDE-WARREN," ETC.

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acters, so skilfully portrayed by the pen of a master, are still living in our midst. And we would add that, besides the great moral beauties enumerated, the story is characterized by purity of style, intricacy of plot, and individuality of character, combined with incidents of so thrilling and startling a nature, as to make the heart bound and the blood leap. It should be in the hands of every lover of literature. Every page glows with the beauty, strength and power of genius; and every passion and emotion of the human heart, is depicted with a fidelity to life never excelled. Of all the popular works of Emerson Bennett, this is certainly his *chef d'œuvre*; and we may safely venture the assertion, that, through Ellen Norbury, he will secure the blessings of the wise and good of the present and succeeding generations.

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No. 102 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia.

*To whom all Orders should be addressed, post-paid.*

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Philadelphia:

T. B. PETERSON, NO. 102 CHESTNUT STREET.

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TO

I S R A E L A M I E S,

Of Philadelphia,

THIS WORK,

WITH SINCERE FEELINGS OF FRIENDSHIP AND ESTEEM,

IS INSCRIBED,

BY THE AUTHOR.

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T. B. PETERSON,

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## P R E F A C E.

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IN presenting the following story to the public, I think it proper to introduce it with a few remarks. I had for a long time entertained the idea, that a novel might be written—founded in part upon the thrilling scenes and incidents of every-day occurrence amongst the poorest and most degraded class of a large city—which, while containing all the essentials to make it interesting to the general reader, might be subservient to a higher purpose—that of calling the attention of sympathetic and philanthropic individuals to the awful vices and miseries of beings bearing the human form, who are actually below the brutes in the great scale of progression, and of whom it may be said that they do not really live, but rather drag on a horrible existence, till death by famine, death by pestilence, death by drunkenness, or death by suicide, puts an end to their earthly career.

I knew it was fashionable to take up collections in churches to promote the propagation of the gospel in our own country; I knew it was fashionable for different church organizations to raise large sums to send gospel missionaries among the heathen; I knew it was fashion-



able in certain quarters to talk very sympathetically about the slaves at the South; but I knew at the same time, that within fifteen minutes' walk of the head-quarters of some of these charitable associations, hundreds of human beings, both white and black, were annually perishing of cold, starvation, and neglect—perishing for the want of the most common necessities of life; and I reasoned that these benevolent organizations could not know of such scenes of distress, lying so easy of access, else charity would begin at home; and so I thought it my duty to tell them, in my own humble way—hoping that a few, if not all of them, would be induced to do something for the starving poor of their own city.

I am aware that there is a great difference between a sermon in a novel and a sermon from a pulpit; but if the writer in the one case, and the preacher in the other, each proclaim the same great truth, I cannot see that the truth itself is altered by its different modes of conveyance; and the seed thus sown, I think as likely to spring up and bear fruit to one sower as the other. Hence I hold, that the writer of novels and the minister of the gospel, may both have a mission to perform; and both be able to effect much good, if they will, each in his own peculiar way and field of labor.

I know it is fashionable for what is called the religious community, to cry down novels as a whole—applying to them all sorts of offensive epithets—such as degrading, demoralizing, vicious, and licentious; and I know, too, that certain wiseacres—who care nothing about religion, but

wish to be considered very knowing, learned, and scientific—take a peculiar pleasure in adding the adjectives—trifling, nonsensical, insipid, and trashy; and although I so far agree with both classes, as to admit that all these terms may be properly applied to *some* novels; yet I must record my solemn protest against the sweeping denouncement—against the indiscriminate application of terms that are in many cases false and slanderous.

Two modern writers, of marked ability, have very justly observed:

“Sometimes a good novel is found the very best medium for conveying a useful lesson when other means fail.”

“The disguise of fiction has been, in all ages, a far more effective way to inculcate lessons of life, than dry didactics.”

We all know that when our Saviour desired to impress some great truth upon the minds of his hearers, he spoke in what was called a parable; and a parable, according to Webster, is “A fable, or allegorical relation, or representation of something real in life or nature, from which a moral is drawn for instruction.” In other words, it is a great truth, enclosed in a garb of fiction, for the purpose of making it more impressive and effective; and if it is not a species of novel, it is at least, I think, a happy illustration of a distinction without a difference. Then wherefore condemn a novel, simply because it is a novel? or because somebody has written a reprehensible one? Why not discriminate between the good and bad?

With the design, as I have said, of writing a novel

which might ultimately be of some benefit to my suffering fellow-beings, I began to look about me for *facts* for a foundation. I soon perceived that, to effect the purpose I had in view, it would be necessary to make my story, to a certain extent at least, local; for I considered it very important, if I made the statemant that human beings were annually freezing and starving to death in our land of plenty, to tell *where* they were freezing and starving to death—so that should any kind-hearted individuals feel disposed to relieve their wants, they might find the sufferers without difficulty; and none might be able to ease the troublous qualms of conscience, by supposing the scenes described to exist only in the imagination of the writer. Having been for the last four years a resident of Philadelphia, I naturally looked about Philadelphia for a locality suited to my purpose; and I regret to say, I had not to look long, or go far, to find such scenes of degradation, destitution, and misery, as made me shudder to contemplate.

I had heard frequent mention of the philanthropic labors of William J. Mullen amongst this suffering class of our population, and I thought he might be able to furnish me with such facts as I required. With a letter of introduction from the Hon. Judge Kelley, I therefore called upon Mr. Mullen, and made known to him the object of my visit. He received me with that kind and gentlemanly courtesy which is so characteristic of one who labors for the good of his fellows, and said it would afford him great pleasure to show me around through the haunts of misery, and put

me in possession of any number of thrilling and startling facts which had come under his own observation.

A day was appointed, and we visited the County Prison—of which, by the way, he is now the visiting agent—and though I had no fault to find with the prison itself, nor with the way in which it was managed, yet I soon learned that our statute laws, as construed and abused by here and there an unfeeling, unscrupulous magistrate, are made most terribly oppressive to the poor wretch who has neither money nor friends. I learned, for the first time, that a man for being merely *suspected* of crime, might be more severely punished than one actually proved *guilty*. And in this way: the man proved guilty receives his sentence, and, when his term of sentence expires, is set at liberty; while it sometimes happens that the suspected man is required to find bail for future good behaviour; but being poor, and without friends, he cannot give the necessary security, and is forthwith sent to prison; and he may remain there a long, dreary year, unless the Judge or the Lord see proper to set him free; and even when his year has expired, it sometimes requires the exertions of a friend to secure his release. I saw one poor fellow there, who had been confined in his cell six months. And for what? *Why, simply, for being too poor to give bail that he never would be a rogue!* Well, heaven help us! those of us, especially, who have no money nor rich relations.

There are quite a number of other pleasant things connected with our laws and those who administer them—though I wish it to be distinctly borne in mind, that, in

speaking of the abuse of power displayed by our magistrates, I refer only to individual cases, and have no design of casting reproach upon them as a body, for many of them are honest, honorable men. One poor wretch having a spite against another, or perhaps to conceal his own guilt, goes before a magistrate, and makes oath that such a person has stolen something, or is about to steal something, or has threatened his life, or something of this kind, it little matters what, and forthwith the victim is arrested and brought before the judicial functionary, who hears the case, already prejudged, and thinking only of his fees, and nothing of *justice*, takes no pains to ascertain whether the accusation is false or true; but coolly informs the trembling defendant that he must find so much bail for future good behavior, and pay so much costs, or be sent to prison. If he can pawn the coat on his back to pay the costs, (and this is sometimes done,) and get some friend to go his security, he is to be reckoned among the fortunate ones; and is to be envied by hundreds who have no coats to pawn, and who are sent to prison, to remain there till such time as some kind-hearted individual, like Mr. Mullen, takes their case in hand, and, either by getting the magistrate to release them of costs and bail, or by paying the one and entering the other himself, or by some such hook and crook, frees them from durance vile, to return to their starving families. Persons have been known to suffer a long, dreary, health-wasting imprisonment, to say nothing of its other horrors, simply from being *forgotten*—the committing magistrate having neglected to make a return of

the case to court! Some are bound over for trial, and the trial is months in coming on; and then they are found to be *innocent*, and are allowed to go home and find their families *starved*, or starve themselves in disgrace. Witnesses in important cases, when unable to enter bail, are frequently confined in the debtor's prison, or in an adjoining cell to the accused, till after the trial, which may be months hence, instead of their depositions being taken, and they being allowed to go at large. It is therefore a dangerous thing for a poor man to *see* a crime committed and *tell* of it; the gloomy prison is his reward; and doubtless this interesting mode of managing witnesses keeps many crimes concealed. All these things are true of both sexes.

The foregoing are only a few of the many startling *facts* connected with the Philadelphia County Prison; and had I time and space, I could narrate tales of individual suffering, that would make the blood of a feeling heart curdle, and bring the blush of shame to the cheek of a Choctaw!

In company with Mr. Mullen, I next visited that awful locality lying between Fifth and Seventh, South and Fitzwater streets; and though the day was warm and pleasant, yet the scenes of destitution, drunkenness, and suffering, which I here witnessed, made a painful impression upon my mind; and I could not help thinking, if thus it was on a day like this, what must it be at the midnight hour of winter, with the thermometer at zero! As I have endeavored to draw a faint picture of the miserable scenes of this quar-

ter in the pages which follow, I will refer any who may be curious to the work itself.

And in this connection, a sense of duty compels me to say a few words of Mr. Mullen's disinterested labors here among the poor. Some years ago, being in easy circumstances, and hearing much of the awful sufferings of his fellow beings in this vicinity, he boldly ventured among them, at the risk of his life—for here, be it remarked, are the headquarters of criminals of every grade, from the thief who would risk imprisonment to steal a penny, to the bloody wretch who would cut your throat for a dollar—he boldly ventured among them, I say, at the risk of his life, and seeing the state of horrible misery, which now enclosed him as in a vortex of night-mares, he nobly resolved to make an attempt to meliorate their condition. No sooner had he formed this resolution, than, with that energy of purpose, firmness of mind, and unyielding determination which characterize him, he set about his *Christian* task. It was in the dead of winter, and hundreds were freezing and starving to death; and he saw it was necessary to rent some building, in which to establish his head-quarters, and have a place to warm, and feed, and clothe his perishing brothers and sisters. There was a church in the vicinity, and he applied for that; but the trustees refused to rent it for any such *degrading* purpose, and he had to look elsewhere. He finally procured a building, and did all that one man could do to alleviate the distress around him. He has continued to labor in this field ever since, aided by other philanthropists, and is still as active among the poor as

ever, having spent thousands of dollars of his own money to carry out his noble plans. He is the founder of the Moyamensing House of Industry, where the suffering poor, who have neither home nor friends, are fed and cared for, and has held the office of President of over fifty other Benevolent Societies and Institutions. May God give him his reward!

I must here add a word or two more, for fear of being misunderstood. What I have said of William J. Mullen, I have said without solicitation, and I am writing this without his knowledge. I felt it to be my duty to speak of him as I have, simply as an act of justice; and I can honestly assert, that I would say the same of any other man, friend or enemy, if I could be assured he had done as much to relieve the wants and miseries of my unfortunate fellow beings. Mr. Mullen lives in Philadelphia, and keeps a record of all his transactions, which can be perused by any one who may desire to do so. But I warn you that that record, of many volumes, with its details of crime and suffering, would make your blood run cold with horror. Without the strongest evidence of its being a plain, unvarnished statement of facts, no one could be made to believe that such things could occur in our day and generation. It is a record of human wrong, human frailty, and human wretchedness, over which the very angels in Heaven must weep.

But let me hasten to conclude this already lengthy introduction.

After returning from the locality I have mentioned, I found myself in possession of all the facts I required; but

having gained these facts—many of them too horrible for narration, in a work making any pretensions to refinement—I began, for the first time, to perceive the difficulties which lay in the way of the accomplishment of the task I had undertaken. I wished to write a novel, which might please the general reader, and at the same time call attention to the vices and miseries which exist in every great city, and especially in that quarter of Philadelphia of which mention has more than once been made. But to describe the scenes as they really existed and do still exist there, without any relief, I very naturally concluded would shock and disgust the reader, and prove an entire failure.

So after much pondering of the subject, I settled upon the plan which I have carried out, and which I hope may meet the approbation of the great public, to whose candid and impartial judgment I now submit the work, well knowing that if it fail of its design, the fault must rest with the author, and not with those who render an unbiassed decision. If it be thought by any that I have lingered more than I should among the scenes of misery, vice, and crime, I can truly assert that I have done so for a higher purpose than that of merely writing a thrilling tale, and that I have labored to relieve and lighten the dark shades of a dark picture as much as I could, without destroying its power of impressing the mind with the truth of a more terrible reality.

In conclusion, let me add, I have aimed at no personalities, and especially at no religion—for true religion, the religion taught by our Saviour, I love and venerate. Of

some glaring faults and errors, as displayed by certain classes, I have spoken somewhat boldly—perhaps too boldly to please the pompous hypocrites who use religion as a cloak to cover their vices. If such prove to be the case, it may afford them some consolation to be told, that I had no design or expectation of pleasing them from the start—though I think they should rather blame themselves for the facts, than the writer for alluding to them.

It may interest some to know, that I first saw the little “Hunchback” in the County Prison, and subsequently reeling through one of the streets, with a group of ragged urchins following him, hooting and laughing. Of the other characters, I need only say, they have their counterparts in real life.

EMERSON BENNETT.

*Philadelphia, January, 1855.*

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# ELLEN NORBURY;

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## THE ADVENTURES OF AN ORPHAN.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### THE FRIENDLESS BEGGAR.

It was Christmas eve, that happy period for the young who have parents above the wants and miseries of griping poverty, and notwithstanding a heavy snow was falling, the streets of the goodly city of Philadelphia were thronged with joyous citizens, many of them returning to their cheerful firesides, loaded with toys, which were to greet the eyes of the happy children, when they should awake on the morrow, as the mysterious presents of fabled St. Nicholas. It was a gala time to all but the homeless and destitute; and, alas! there are too many such, who, with fevered eyes, can only look upon the happiness of others through that deep veil of hopeless gloom which shuts out every cheerful ray. To such poor wretches it was a time of open mockery; for they keenly felt that but one tithe of what was now so freely spent for foolish toys, would have provided them against the pangs of starvation and death.

It is an awful thing for one to die of cold and hunger in the midst of plenty; but such, we grieve to say, is too often the case; while merchants on change count their profits by thousands, and their wives and daughters roll in their carriages, and flaunt their silks along our fashionable thoroughfares.

Must it always be so? is there no remedy? Great God, forbid! We subscribe money to send missionaries to the heathen, to convert them. Convert them to what? To Christianity! Yet Christianity allows the heathen in her own country, within the sound of the bells of her sacred churches, to die of starvation. We talk of the slaves at the South, and get up meetings of sympathy and condolence; yet leave the slaves at the North—white and black—freemen in name, but slaves to poverty and vice—to die friendless and unpitied. Is this right? Have you, sir—or you, madam—who step proudly within the portals of the church, and sit luxuriously on cushioned seats, and offer up musk-scented prayers to the Throne of the Omnipotent—have you no feelings of humanity? have you no thought for your poor brothers and sisters, who lie gasping in wretchedness? If not, then do not longer insult Heaven by uttering hypocritical prayers; for He who will sit in judgment upon your acts, will say to you:

“The tree is known by its fruits. I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Depart! I know ye not; for as ye did it not to one of the least of these, (your poor brothers and sisters,) ye did it not to me.”

Perhaps you will say, with a self-satisfied air:

“My conscience is easy, for I know of no poor that I can relieve.”

Very well, then, if such be the case, follow the tracings of our pen, and we will show you objects worthy of charity—human beings wallowing in wretchedness—who, by a little judicious assistance and counsel, may yet be snatched from the jaws of mortal death, and that second death which is a thousand fold worse than the first.

We have said that the streets were thronged with happy citizens, going to and fro, on that snowy Christmas eve which opens our story. But there was one abroad, in one of the main thoroughfares, who, like our Master of old, knew not where to lay her head. This was a mere child—a little girl, of perhaps ten years of age—who, thinly clad, almost barefoot, was stealing along, with tearful eyes and pitiful look, unconscious whither her steps were tending—nor caring, so she might find some good Samaritan who would shelter her for the night and give her food. More than once was she rudely jostled and put aside by purse-proud, anxious passengers; and more than once was her thin dress brushed by rustling silks; yet not one paused to give her a kind word, or direct one look of sympathy to her sorrowful face. Poor child! May God protect you! for mankind seem to have no bowels of compassion.

At last the poor little thing, weary and discouraged, stopped under a lamp, and looked tremblingly around her. On either side of her was a row of fine dwellings, and she fancied there might be hearts in some of them that would take pity upon her. At this moment a man passed, well buttoned up in a warm overcoat; and catching his eye, and fancying there was something benevolent in the expression, the little girl impulsively made a step forward, and holding out her thin hand and half-naked arm, said, falteringly:

“Please, sir, will you give me a trifle?”

Now this man had what is called a kind heart; and had he known how painfully a little charity was needed, he



would have stopped, doubtless, and bestowed upon her a silver coin; but it was snowing; his thickly padded overcoat was snugly buttoned; and so, making a feint to feel in his pocket, he answered:

"I have no change, my little girl."

As he passed on, two large, hot tears—for the tears were hot if the child was cold—rolled down her pale, wan face; and covering it with her hands, she drew back, and leaned against the lamp-post for support.

While standing thus, the door of a house in front of her was opened, and a gentleman came out upon the steps, and deliberately spread an umbrella, while another appeared just within, holding the door with one hand.

"It is snowing finely," said the first; "and if it keeps on this way through the night, we shall have fine sleighing to-morrow. By-the-by, Deacon, if there should be a good fall of snow, would you like a drive with me out to the Wissahiccon?"

"Thank you," answered the other, in a smooth, oily tone; "I should like it very much in the afternoon. In the morning, you know, I must attend Divine service, and put in my mite to aid the poor—God help them!"

"Ah! true!" said the first; "we should not forget the poor at this season of festivity; and as I may not get down to hear the sermon, I will commission you to put in my mite for me."

As he spoke, he drew from his pocket two half-dollars, which he handed to the Deacon, who thanked him in the name of the poor, and promised to deposit them, on the day following, in the charity box of the church in which he worshipped.

"Well," continued the one with the umbrella, "should the day be fine, and good sleighing, I will call for you at three o'clock."

"Very well—that will suit—and thank you too."

"Good night, Deacon Pinchbeck."

"Good night, friend Parker—good night."

The gentleman with the umbrella walked hastily away, and Deacon Pinchbeck backed in and closed the door.

The little girl, whom neither of these persons had noticed, and who had heard every word of the conversation reported, thought, simple soul, that the house of such a pious man would be the place to solicit charity; and so, after some tremblings and misgivings, she summoned the resolution which attends despair, ventured up the marble steps, and gave a slight ring. The Deacon, who was still in the entry, exchanging some words with his wife, who was up stairs, did not wait for the servant, but answered the bell himself.

"Well," he said, harshly, as his eye fell upon the miserable object who stood trembling before him, partly with cold and partly with fear—for she was not a beggar by profession, and felt very timid: "well, what do you want?"

His voice was no longer soft and oily, but more like a file going across the teeth of a saw.

"Ple-a-a-se, sir," chattered the little girl, "I'm very hungry."

"Hungry, are you?" returned the pious Deacon, with holy horror: "why don't you go home, then, and not be out at this time of night, ringing gentlemen's door-bells? Have you not been told never to put your feet on these steps, you miserable creature? Eh! come, speak! have you never been told to keep away from here?"

"N-n-no, sir," stammered the girl, bursting into tears—"I never was here before."

"Then you are a new one, eh? one of the new beggarly impostors, are you? Well, come in here, till I teach you a lesson."



The child, much frightened, drew back, and would have darted down the steps, but the Deacon caught hold of her, and said:

"Not so fast, my little thief—not so fast; you don't escape me this way." Then seeing some one approaching along the street, he added, in a milder tone, but one that could be heard at a greater distance: "Come in, my poor child! come in, and I will see what I can do for you."

Reassured by the change of his voice, and seeing no alternative, the little girl entered the house, and the Deacon closed the door. He then bade her follow him into the back-parlor, which was handsomely furnished, and lighted with gas, with a cheerful coal fire burning in the grate and sending out a pleasant heat. A fat little boy, with rather coarse, impudent features, sat on a cricket, near the fire, with his hands locked over his knees, and a sleek, tabby cat purring in his lap. A large stuffed rocking-chair stood in the centre of the apartment; and throwing himself into this, the Deacon, in an authoritative tone, bade his trembling captive advance to his side, where she underwent a very rigid and contemptuous scrutiny.

She was one of those unfortunate beings whom we can only liken to a frost-nipped flower—beautiful by nature, but withered and faded by the chilling air of adversity. She was, as we have before remarked, about ten years of age—but small and slender—and now, alas! thin and wasted, for want of the necessities of life. Her face was not clean—neither were her hands; but she only needed washing, feeding, and dressing, with kind words and gentle smiles, to have made her a beauty of which the most fastidious could have been proud. Her features were pretty, but soiled and haggard. She had a straight nose, a prim little mouth, with even, pearly teeth, and gentle, expressive blue eyes. A ragged hood partially covered her head, the

hair of which was light, and fell down the sides of her face and neck in disorder, being uncombed and matted. A thin, ragged gown, one sleeve of which was gone above the elbow, with a draggling under garment, old slip shod shoes, both too large and unmated, and a black, faded, moth-eaten shawl, of small dimensions and coarse stuff, completed her attire. This apology for a shawl she drew close around her person, and endeavored to keep her naked arm concealed under it. She was indeed an object of striking interest to the true philanthropist.

Marked was the contrast between this poor child of sorrow, and the rich, fat, pious Deacon Pinchbeck, and his hopeful son and heir. The Deacon was a man on the shady side of forty, very plump, like one who lives well, but neither tall nor graceful. His face had an oily look; but the expression could be harsh and cold enough when he wished. The eyes were a light gray, shrewd, and rather small; the nose short, angular, and turned up at the end; the mouth large and sensual, and the cheeks plump and fresh. He had scarcely any eyebrows, and his forehead was what some would term intellectual; but it was not so in reality; for the Deacon knew very little beyond certain long prayers, certain stereotyped pious sayings, and how to get money and keep it. The forehead, it is true, looked well to one who had no idea of the noble science of phrenology. It looked high, because the Deacon was a little bald; and it looked oily, because the Deacon fed well; but from the base to the crown, it had a very unintellectual slope; and the place where the organs of veneration and benevolence should have been, was so flat, that the good man might have set a pail of water there and carried it with very little difficulty. Of course the Deacon dressed well, in dark broadcloth; and to look more sanctified, if not ministerial, he wore round his neck a white cravat,

without collar. He was fawning and sycophantic to the rich, full of cant to the pious, but a regular tyrant to those whom he could oppress with impunity.

He was of vulgar extraction—*id est*—what the fashionable term vulgar. His father was a drunkard, and his mother took in washing. His mother was still living in poverty, which speaks volumes for the baseness of his heart. In his early life he had been a pedlar; and what with cheating and stealing—for more than once, in buying his wares, he had pilfered from an honest salesman—he had scraped together a sum of money that had enabled him to purchase a grocery. In this business, for ten years, he was so prosperous, owing to false weights, over charges, etcetera, that at last he sold out, at an enormous profit, and turned usurer. His plan of doing business now was very simple. For instance, he had the money, and you wanted it: in fact you were so situated that you must have it. Very well. Mr. Absalom Pinchbeck—he was not a Deacon in those days—would not charge you any more interest than the law allowed: Oh! no—not he. But you could give him your note, with a good endorser, or good real estate security, for a hundred dollars, with interest, payable at six months, and Mr. Pinchbeck would count you down seventy-five dollars. All fair, you see; and if you wanted a larger sum, it could be done at the same rate; sometimes, perhaps, if you were not too much distressed, at a better rate. Well, suppose you gave him a mortgage on your property, and by some misfortune could not meet his demand at the proper time; why, Mr. Pinchbeck could not find it convenient to renew your note; but he would do something better—for himself. He would kindly sell your property for you, secure his debt, and perhaps bid it in for one-half its real value.

In this latter way Mr. Pinchbeck got to owning houses

and lands, and then he thought it time to marry. He found a widow who had managed to put two husbands under the turf, and he paid his addresses to her. She was larger than himself, and somewhat older; but she had some property, and very winning ways, and so Mr. Pinchbeck proposed. She knew him to be rich, and she accepted. In private she turned out to be a perfect shrew; but as she always had honeyed words for him in company, this could be borne. Sometimes, in a pet, she boxed his ears, or kicked him out of bed; but as Mr. Pinchbeck generally succeeded in cheating somebody soon after, he put this down to good luck—equivalent to throwing an old shoe after him. He really feared her more than he did his God; but he took care to keep this a secret, and always spoke of her as his dear wife, dear angel, and so forth.

Being at last married and prosperous, and blessed with a son, who inherited his mother's temper and his father's meanness, Absalom Pinchbeck thought it would be for his interest to join the church. His wife, who had some idea of respectability and fashion, thought so too; and so they both got religion together—or said they did, at least—and were made members of a church which had a high steeple, a good sounding bell, carpeted aisles, and cushioned seats. Mr. Pinchbeck being very devoted and rich, and his wife rather good-looking and fashionable, he was thought worthy of the office, and was accordingly chosen a Deacon.

Now the Deacon never alluded to his past life and his poor mother, and there were but few of his present acquaintances who knew his history. There were, however, some who did, and who, if made angry, would throw it up to him; but the Deacon would piously roll up his eyes, and exclaim, with a sigh, that the Lord had been very kind to His poor, humble servant—which was doubtless true, see-

ing he was yet out of that nameless place which *such* deacons deserve.

"Well," said the Deacon, after a long and severe scrutiny of his trembling prisoner, "so you pretend to be a new impostor, do you?"

"Please, sir, let me go, and I'll never come here again," returned the frightened child, beginning to cry.

"Hum! you want to go, do you?" rejoined the Deacon; "you are very anxious to get away, are you? that looks suspicious. Nelson, (to the little boy,) attend! Mark what now takes place! I intend, my son, that you shall one day be a great lawyer; and great lawyers, my son, have to cross-question witnesses. Now your father is going to question, and cross-question, this little impostor; and you will be able to learn something useful. We should always endeavor to pick up knowledge wherever we can, my son—at least such knowledge as will make us great in—in—a—ah—the world."

"Go ahead, dad," answered the juvenile prodigy.

"So you came here to steal, did you?" continued the Deacon to the little girl.

"Oh! no, sir!" was the frightened answer.

"Not exactly to steal yourself, perhaps, but to lay a plan for others. You see I know all about such creatures as you. What have you got in your hand, that you keep it hid under that rag of a shawl?"

"Nothing, sir."

"Let me see!"

The child showed her hand, and with it her naked arm.

"What have you done with the putty, or whatever you use, for taking impressions of locks? Ha! you see I know your tricks—so own up."

"I haven't got any putty, sir."

"But you had."

"No, sir, I never had any."

"No stories now—you know you had."

"No, sir, I never had any putty, and I don't know what you mean."

"You see what story-tellers these things are, Nelson—they can't tell the truth."

"If I's you, dad, I'd switch her—that 'ud fetch her."

"Perhaps I shall before I'm done, if she don't answer me better. Do you know, you creature, that I could put you in prison, for coming here to steal?"

"But I didn't come here to steal—indeed, indeed, I didn't!" cried the poor child.

"Why didn't you come in the day-time then? or why did you come here at all?"

"I was so hungry, sir."

"Hungry, were you? Indeed! Are you hungry now?"

"Yes, sir—some—not much."

"Ha! I see you can't tell a straight story. Where do you live?"

"I haven't any home, sir."

"Come! that's likely! if you go on in this way, I shall take Nelson's advice and switch you."

"I guess if dad switches you once, you'll be glad to tell the truth," said the boy, putting down the cat, and getting up. "Let's see your face;" and coming up close to her, he pinched her arm.

The unfortunate child uttered a cry of pain, and drew back.

"Stop!" said the father; "don't you attempt to correct her, Nelson—you are too young. Come, you beggar—tell me where you live, this minute!"

"I don't live any where, sir. I used to live with an old woman, down by the river—but she beat me so, I had to leave her."

"So! you're a runaway, eh?"

"I ran away from her, sir."

"I ought to take you back there, I suppose—for it's the duty of good citizens to return all the runaways they find. What did she beat you for?"

"I don't know, sir—I always minded her."

"You were a bad girl, I suppose. What is your name?"

"Ellen, sir."

"Ellen what?"

"Ellen Norbury."

"Ellen Norbury, eh? Hum! Have you got a father?"

"No, sir."

"Never had one, may be;" and the witty Deacon laughed at his coarse joke, and his hopeful son joined in—not because he understood the inuendo, but because he thought it proper to laugh when his father did. "Never had a father, eh?" pursued the inquisitor.

"Yes, sir;" and the recollection caused little Ellen to sob hysterically.

"What became of him?"

"He died, sir."

"Hum! Well, have you got a mother?"

"No, sir—she's dead too."

"What did your father do for a living?"

"He was an artist, sir."

"Where did he live?"

"In Dublin, sir."

"Did he never live in this country?"

"No, sir—he died on the voyage over."

"Did your mother live here?"

"A little while, sir."

"What did she do for a living?"

"After father died, she made shirts."

"Where did she live?"

"Down near the river, sir."

"How long has your father been dead?"

"Over two years, sir."

"How long has your mother been dead?"

"Most two years, sir."

"Where have you been living since?"

"With the old woman who lived in the same house with my mother."

"What's her name?"

Ellen hesitated, and the Deacon repeated the question.

"I don't like to tell, sir."

"Why?"

"Because you might take me back."

"No, I shan't trouble myself so much about you: in fact, I believe all you have told me is false. When did you run away?"

"Day before yesterday, sir."

"Where did you sleep last night?"

"I crawled into an old shed, and laid on some straw."

"Where do you expect to sleep to-night?"

"I don't know, sir."

"Hum! a pretty pack of lies, I'll be bound."

At this moment the door opened, and the stately Mrs. Pinchbeck sailed in, dressed in silk. She was a large woman, and, in her younger days, had probably been good looking; but her features now were coarse, and a near inspection showed the crow's-feet around her small, keen eyes, notwithstanding a pretty free use of cosmetics. Her hair and teeth were false, her eyebrows pencilled, and her large flabby cheeks painted. Still, by gas-light, she was as passably comely as could be expected of a woman verging on fifty, who had spent a good portion of her time in fashionable dissipation.

"What is it, my love? what is going on here?" she inquired, addressing her now uneasy lord.

"Why, my angel," answered the latter, with a look that showed he had some fears of how the intelligence might be received, "this is a little beggar wretch, who had the impudence to ring our bell, my dear, and I brought her in here to give her a lesson."

"Indeed!" said the lady, her little eyes snapping with anger: "how *dare* you bring such a creature into *my* parlor—into *my* presence—with all her dirt and filth? I'll teach *you* a lesson, Deacon Absalom Pinchbeck;" and advancing to her trembling spouse, she bestowed upon his organ of hearing a most unlady-like Christmas box—a box, in fact, that caused him to leave his seat sideways, with tears in his eyes.

She then sailed up to the corner of the fire-place, and rung the kitchen bell.

"Catharine," she said to the servant, with a disdainful air, pointing to little Ellen, "show this bundle of rags into the street."

Poor little Ellen was only too glad to escape; and when the cold pierced her thin garments, and the snow fell upon her, and the door closed behind her, she drew a long sigh of relief.

Poor child!

## CHAPTER II.

### NEW ADVENTURES.

AFTER the rude treatment she had received at the house of Deacon Pinchbeck, little Ellen felt no disposition to make further application for relief in that apparently inhospitable quarter. Fearful of she scarcely knew what, she hurried, like a guilty thing, to the street that crossed the one that she was in, and, with a frightened look behind her, turned the corner, and pursued her way with hasty steps. Soon she turned into another street, not so respectable in appearance, and poorly lighted. She knew not where she was, or whither she was going; but believing she was now safe from pursuit—for she thought it not unlikely that the pious Deacon might get some one to follow her—she slackened her pace, and gazed around her with a feeling of despair. She was very weak and faint, for she had not tasted food but once during the day; and then a kind-hearted baker, to whom she had applied, had given her a small roll and a cake. Still she dragged herself through the snow, already some inches deep, and at length turned into a darker and poorer street—a street, in fact, where beings lived but little better off than herself. Had she asked for charity here, doubtless she would have received it; for it is a well established truth—and a crying shame it is, that it is true—that the poor are kinder and more generous to the distressed, than those who live in luxury.

Little Ellen, however, had resolved to make no further application for assistance. She was completely discour-

aged, and thought she might as well die as live on in hopeless misery. She did not dread death; otherwise than through those instincts of nature which cause all animated creatures to cling to life; and so coming to an old step, which led up to the decaying door of an old, rickety house, she stopped, and sat down beside it, believing this night would be her last on earth. Closely drawing her shawl around her, she offered up a simple prayer, imploring the protection of the Deity who is omnipresent.

An hour passed away, and the constantly falling snow had thrown a white mantle over our little adventurer, and yet she sat motionless as a rock. At first she felt pain in her body and limbs, from the cold; but a kind of numbness gradually succeeded; and then a quiet, easy drowsiness, each moment leading deeper into a state of unconsciousness, as when one sinks gently into the arms of sleep. During the time mentioned, not a soul passed her, and nothing had occurred to rouse her mind from the deadening influences of the wintry air; but now, half waking and half sleeping, she became conscious of approaching footsteps; and rousing herself a little, she descried the figure of a man hurrying along the deserted street. She had no intention of speaking to him, or of attracting his notice; but the slight movement she made to get a view of him, caused a sudden pang to shoot through her breast, and involuntarily she uttered a sharp cry of pain. The man, who was nearly abreast of her, started, stopped, looked hurriedly around, and, getting a glimpse of her person, said, somewhat gruffly:

"Who are you? and what are you doing here?"

To this little Ellen made no reply, hoping he would pass on and leave her to her fate; but instead, he came close up to her, and repeated his question.

"I was tired, sir," answered Ellen, in a trembling voice, "and sat down here to rest."

"But you'll freeze to death here, child—better git up and go home."

"I have no home to go to," continued Ellen, beginning to cry.

"No home?" said the man, in a tone of surprise; "that's not a very likely story. You've got some place to go to—you don't live in the streets, do you?"

"I don't want to go back to the old woman I lived with, sir," replied little Ellen, "because she would beat me—may be kill me."

"Well, then, may be you'd like to come with me. I haven't got much of a home, but it's better than sleeping in the streets."

"I am afraid I should be a trouble to you," hesitated Ellen.

"Oh, come along, my little gal—we'll talk about that there arterwards."

There was something kind in his tone; and as he spoke, he stooped down and lifted Ellen upon her feet. But she was so weak, from want of food, and so benumbed with the cold, that it was only with great difficulty she could stand. Perceiving this, the man muttered something that Ellen did not hear; and throwing an arm around her slender waist, he lifted her easily from the ground, and set forward. He continued down this dark, narrow street till he came to one which crossed it at right angles; and turning up the latter, about twenty yards, he stopped beside an old house, from which issued boisterous sounds of many voices, mingled with the squeaking of a fiddle, and the shuffling of feet as of persons engaged in a dance.

"They're having a high time in there," said the man; "but we'll not jine 'em. Think you can walk a little



now?" he inquired, again placing little Ellen on her feet.

"Oh, yes, sir—thank you!" answered the child, who felt her heart swelling with gratitude at the kindness the other displayed.

"Well, then, give us your hand, and don't be afeard," was the rejoinder of the man, as he turned into a dark, narrow passage, between two old houses—so dark that nothing could be seen, and so narrow that two persons could not go abreast.

From this passage, which was closed overhead by the two old houses joining, little Ellen, following her guide, emerged into a sort of court, whence she could once more look up to the heavens. Just before her she could barely perceive another old building, with here and there a ray of light streaming through a crevice, showing that it was inhabited. Under this, on one side, was another narrow passage, similar to the one she had just passed through; and this, like the other, emerged into a small opening, with another old building just beyond. Turning short round the building, Ellen's strange guide now descended a flight of old steps, and rapped on the door of an underground apartment.

"Is that you, Jim?" inquired a female voice from within.

"Yes, Mag, it's me; come, hurry and open the door."

There was a sound of shoving bolts; and the door, swinging gratingly back, admitted the man and Ellen into a small, square, damp apartment. The room, however, to the eyes of little Ellen, who gazed curiously around, had some appearance of comfort. It was small; but in one corner stood a bed, occupying about one-third of the space, and a rush mat covered a portion of the ground, and served for a floor. There were two or three chairs, and a small

deal table; and against the wall, near the door, stood a large chest, which served both for a seat and cupboard for holding dishes and victuals. In the large fire-place was an old tin kettle, set up on some bricks, and used in lieu of a stove. Some scraps of iron, laid across near the top, supported the coals; while some holes in the side, near the bottom, admitted the air underneath for draught. A good coal fire was burning in this, with a frying pan on top, containing three good-sized slices of ham, the savory odor of which made the appetite of little Ellen feel very keen. On the deal table, without cloth, were a few dishes, some salt in a broken bottle, and a loaf of bread. Besides the fire, a lighted tallow candle, stuck in the nose of a bottle, stood on the mantle-piece; and by the light of this, after glancing at what we have described, Ellen surveyed the features and persons of the two beings in whose company she had been thrown by a singular freak of fortune.

The man was about thirty-five years of age, of stout build, with a face not very prepossessing. His complexion was light, but weather-beaten, and he had reddish hair and sandy whiskers. His eyes were of a pale, faded hue, of a rather sinister expression, and rested upon every object with a kind of suspicious glance, which seemed to be as much the result of habit as nature. He was evidently one not at peace with the world, whose conscience was not exactly at ease, and who regarded the generality of mankind as his enemies. He was coarsely but warmly dressed, and on the whole had rather a rough appearance.

The woman might have been a few years his junior, and had the look of a faded beauty. Her appearance was that of one, who, early in life, had commenced a fatal career of dissipation, and whose constitution was already broken and fast sinking under the effects of bad liquor and a loathsome vice. Her eyes, once dark, bright and expressive, were

now somewhat dull and swollen, and her face was both pock-marked and bloated. Still she seemed to have some pride, for her dress of faded silk was tidy, her hair was kept in order, and there was a look of cleanliness about her person.

"Well," said the man, throwing himself upon a seat, "I'm glad to see you've got supper under way, Mag, for I'm as hungry as I'm tired. Anybody been here?"

"Jake Allen was here about an hour ago, and wanted to see you—he said he'd be in again in the course of the evening. But who've you brought home with you, Jim?" continued the woman, taking a keen survey of little Ellen, who seemed to shrink under her observation.

"Well, that's more'n I know," answered the other; "but she's somebody the world haint used very well, I reckon; for I found her planted down by an old door step, as if she'd concluded to make a die on't."

"She's got pretty features," said Margaret, "and these may make a fortune for her one of these days. Come here, my little girl," she continued, in a kindly tone, "and don't be afraid—nobody 'll hurt you here."

"Thank you, ma'am," returned the unfortunate child; and as she spoke, the tears, which she strove to restrain, gushed out of her eyes.

"What's your name?" questioned the woman.

"Ellen Norbury, ma'am," replied the child, advancing to the other, who was holding out her hand.

"And a very pretty name it is," was the kind rejoinder. "Where do you live?"

"I don't live anywhere now, ma'am; I used to live with an old woman down by the river; but she beat me so every day, that I couldn't stay, and so I ran away."

"Hav'nt you got any father or mother?"

"No, ma'am—they're both dead."

"Poor child!" said the other, in a tone of so much real compassion, that little Ellen again burst into tears.

The woman looked at her steadily and sorrowfully for a few moments, and involuntarily sighed—that sigh was given to the memory of happy days, and showed that the germ of something good was still in her heart, though buried deep, perhaps, under long years of vice and crime.

"Well," she resumed, "if you've no home, you shall live with me for the present—that is, if you think you'd like to."

"Oh, yes, ma'am, and thank you too," responded Ellen, with a gleam of joy; "and I'll work hard for you, and do everything you ask me to."

"Well, take off your hood and shawl, and warm yourself, for you must be cold. Are you hungry?"

"Yes, ma'am, very hungry."

"Poor child!" sighed Margaret again; "you shall soon have some supper;" and she turned away to attend to the meat.

In a few minutes it was placed smoking hot on the table, and little Ellen was kindly invited to sit up to the humble board. It is needless to say that she did ample justice to what was before her; as also did the man who had conducted her hither; but the woman ate sparingly, and seemed unusually thoughtful and abstracted. From the time of entering the house—if the mean apartment thus inhabited could be dignified with such an appellation—till he had satisfied his appetite, the man made no other remarks than those we have recorded. When he had finished his meal, he drew back from the table, and turned to the fire, at which he gazed with a thoughtful air for some minutes. At length, without looking round to Margaret, he said:

"So, nobody but Jake's been here since I went out?"



"Nobody else," was the answer.

"Did he mention about Bill?"

"He said nothing but that he'd be back again soon."

"I hope Bill 'll come with him."

"Anything up for to-night?" asked Margaret.

Mulwrack—for such was the man's rightful surname, though he had more than one alias—looked quickly round to little Ellen, and perceiving she was not observing him, placed his finger on his lips and nodded. Soon after he got up, and beckoned Margaret aside, and the two held a conversation together in a low tone. He then resumed his seat by the fire, and the woman immediately said to Ellen:

"You look tired, child—don't you want to go to bed?"

"I am tired, ma'am," was the reply; "but if I can do anything to help you, let me do it first."

"Not to-night, Ellen," was the kind reply. "You may crawl into the bed there, and to-morrow I'll talk with you. But first," she continued, "you may give yourself a good washing;" and fixing up a temporary screen near the bed, she handed Ellen a wash-basin, a bit of soap, and a towel, and then from a trunk under the bed, she took out a clean, white, night-garment, which she gave her to put on when she should have performed a thorough ablution.

In less than half an hour, Ellen had donned a clean night robe, and crept into a bed which had a straw mattress under cotton sheets—a luxury which the poor child had not enjoyed for many a weary night. She now, comparatively speaking, felt happy; day seemed dawning upon night; and the world seemed opening before her a scene that was not all misery and hopeless gloom. Alas! how great must have been the sufferings of one so young, to make her present wretched abode seem a paradise!

Praying, with a heart full of thanks and gratitude, that

God would protect her and bless her benefactors, she laid her weary head upon the pillow, and almost immediately sunk into a sound and peaceful slumber.

### CHAPTER III.

#### SUSPECTED QUARTERS.

WHEN Ellen awoke on the following day, she perceived a dull, leaden light coming in through the only window which the apartment contained, and which barely served to make the gloom of the place visible. At first she had to tax her recollection to comprehend where she was, and how she came to be there, and then she looked eagerly around for the occupants of the night previous. To her surprise and alarm, she discovered that she was alone. The door was shut, the fire was out, and the room had a deserted, cold, and dismal appearance. Crawling from the bed, she hurried to the door, and found it locked on the outside; this increased her alarm, and caused a shudder of undefined terror to pass through her thin frame; and not knowing better what to do, she hastened back to the bed, and covered herself from the cold air.

While lying there, trembling, and wondering what could be the meaning of this strange desertion of her benefactors, she heard a noise at the door outside; and immediately after, it was thrown open, and the woman Margaret entered, stamping the snow from her feet. Ellen recognized her with an exclamation of joy.

"Have you been alarmed?" asked Margaret, kindly.

"Oh! very much!" answered little Ellen. "I woke up, and finding everybody gone, I didn't know what to make of it."

"I have been to the grocery," said the other, by way of explanation, as she closed the door, and placed a small basket, containing some articles, on the table. "Did you sleep well last night?" she continued, approaching the bed.

"Oh! yes, ma'am—thank you—I never slept better in my life."

"Did you hear any noise in the night?"

"No, ma'am—none at all."

As Ellen spoke, she noticed, for the first time, that Margaret had a black eye, and she was about to make a remark concerning it; but thinking it might give offence, she checked the words as they rose to her lips. Margaret, catching the expression, and divining her thoughts, said:

"You see I hurt myself last night. I accidentally stumbled over a stool, and struck my head against the corner of the chest yonder."

"Oh! ma'am, I'm so sorry!"

"I don't care for the hurt," continued the woman; "only some people might think I'd been fighting."

"Nobody would think that of one so good and kind as you are, I'm sure," returned Ellen.

"Alas!" sighed the other—"I'm not so good and kind as you think—I sometimes wish I were. But, come! you must get up and put on these clothes, which are better than yours, and which I altered for you last night from some old ones of my own."

Ellen, acting from the impulse of pure gratitude, seized and kissed the hand of her benefactress, and, with tears in her eyes, exclaimed:

"Oh! ma'am, you *are* good and kind—don't say you are not! How shall I ever repay you?"

Margaret turned away her face, to hide her own emotion; and going to the basket, she returned with a pair of stockings and second-hand shoes, adding:

"And these, which I purchased this morning, will keep the frost from your little feet; take all as a Christmas present, from one who has little in this world to love, and may you live to see many more and happier ones than I have!"

The poor, friendless little orphan could not find words to express the swelling gratitude of her heart; and so she threw her arms around Margaret, and burst into tears; and the latter, in spite of herself, wept too; and, for a short time, felt a happiness which she had not known for many a long year. Degraded in vice, criminal in the eyes of the law, a very wretch and outcast whom the world despised, Margaret now felt that she was clasped by innocent hands, and that from one innocent heart, a grateful and perhaps acceptable prayer was ascending for her to the Throne of Grace, and that moment became a green oasis in the desert of misery. A light, as if from Heaven, for a moment shone on her darkened path, and in guileless little Ellen she felt the presence of an angel. By that one good deed, simple in itself, she felt that a weight of sin was lifted from her guilty soul, virtue seemed to stand before her in a new light, and she wept to think it had so long been a stranger to her heart. Had there been a Mentor by, to seize upon that moment of repentance, and pour words of holy consolation into her vice-bound soul, she might have been snatched, as a "brand from the burning," and been reclaimed; but, alas! left to herself and guilty associations, she looked upon escape from the course she was pursuing as a something impossible, and regarded herself as a being doomed beyond the mercy of God and man.

While Ellen put on her new garments, Margaret made a

fire, and soon prepared a frugal repast. To this they sat down by themselves—Margaret merely observing, that Mr. Mulwrack had been called away on business, which might detain him for a day or two.

Scarcely was the meal over, when there was heard the sound of feet descending the steps outside, and immediately there followed a heavy knocking on the door. Margaret started, and turned somewhat pale—but said, in a low tone:

“Go, Ellen, and see who’s there?”

As Ellen opened the door, two rough-looking men, well bundled up in overcoats, entered rather unceremoniously, and looked eagerly around.

“I believe,” said one, in a gruff tone, addressing Margaret, “this here’s the crib of Jim Mulwrack—alias Red Head Jim—alias Peter Dodge—alias what you—please!”

“What do you want?” demanded Margaret, in a severe tone, with a look of indignant scorn.

“We wants *him*—you know well enough what we wants,” replied the man, coarsely. “I say, Spike, (to his companion,) tumble round that there bed, and don’t leave a hole unvestigated as you can stick your finger in—for Peter Dodge, you know, is a prince of a dodger;” and he ended with a broad laugh at his own joke.

“You can search as much as you like,” rejoined Margaret, sullenly; “but you’ll find nobody here but us.”

“Thank you—we’ll take the liberty of looking round, since you gin us leave,” returned the spokesman, with a grin, throwing himself in a careless attitude upon the chest near. As he did so, his eye encountered little Ellen, who, very pale, and evidently alarmed, was standing in the middle of the apartment, looking alternately at the new-comers and Margaret. “Who are *you*? where did you turn up?” continued the spokesman, eyeing her sharply.

“My name is Ellen Norbury, sir,” replied the child, timidly.

“Oh! ’tis, hey! Well, what is you doing here?—taking lessons in stealing, I ’spect.”

“I don’t know what you mean, sir, by saying that,” replied Ellen. “I hadn’t any home, and this kind lady says I can live with her.”

“Oh! wery innocent you is—ha! ha! ha!” was the coarse rejoinder. “I say, Spike—here’s a innocent as don’t know what stealing is.”

“Well, she don’t, o’ course,” replied the other, with a coarse chuckle. “Hadn’t we better take and larn her, Grubbins?”

“No doubt you *could*,” sneered Margaret; “for you look as if you might be masters of the trade.”

“Come! none o’ your imperdence!” said Grubbins, savagely; “or we’ll just fetch you over the coals, for interfering with ossifers as is doing their dooties.”

“Brave men! to come here to insult an unprotected female!” rejoined Margaret, nothing daunted, her black eyes flashing defiance.

“I’d just like to know how to go to work for to insult the likes of you, anyhow,” chuckled Grubbins. “Eh! Spike! what say you?”

“Well, I would, Grub—I would. But the—scamp ain’t here, that’s sartain,” he added, advancing to his companion.

“May be there’s some of the spile here,” was the answer; “let’s sarch for that. I’ll begin with this here chest, and you take that there bed; and look sharp—that’s the word.”

The two constables—for such they were by virtue of election, though more fit for dog-catchers than catchers of human beings—now began a vigilant search of the apart-

ment, for stolen property—peering into every nook and cranny, overhauling every thing they could find, and strewing the clothing over the damp ground, as if they really took a delight in making themselves as disagreeable as possible. When they had completed this part of their business, which gave them no reward for their trouble, Grubbins took Margaret, and Spike Ellen, and handled them roughly, under pretence of searching their persons.

“Well, Spike,” said Grubbins, when he had finished, “we’ll make nothing here.”

“Not a——thing,” returned Spike.

“Then I’ll tell you what you can make,” said Margaret, scornfully.

“What, my beauty?”

“Why, make yourselves scarce.”

“Take that for your impudence!” said this worthy specimen of an officer; and with the back of his hand, he struck Margaret across the mouth.

Margaret uttered a cry of rage, and looked eagerly around for some weapon with which to revenge the blow; but seeing nothing that she thought would serve her purpose—for she meditated killing the man on the spot—she threw herself upon a seat, and, covering her eyes with her hands, burst into tears.

“Let that larn ye better than to insult us perlice!” muttered Grubbins; and with his companion he deliberately walked out, ascended the steps, and disappeared.

As soon as they were gone, Ellen ran to Margaret, threw her arms around her neck, and tried, by gentle and loving words, to calm her irritated and revengeful spirit.

“You’re an angel!” said Margaret, at length, returning the child’s embrace; “but for one angel there seem to be a thousand devils.” And then she muttered to herself:

“If I wanted to be good, I couldn’t, so what’s the use of trying?”

She got up, and going to the chest, took out a black bottle, put it to her lips, and poured down a large quantity of the fiery poison that was killing her. She then sat down and gazed sullenly at the fire, taking no further notice of Ellen, who, for fear of being thought intrusive, did nothing to break her reverie. A few minutes passed away thus, and then Margaret had recourse to the bottle again. The third time she drained it; and then the effect of the liquor began to be apparent to the eyes of little Ellen, who looked on in sorrow, not unmingled with alarm.

“Here!” said Margaret, harshly, glaring round at her *protege*, and holding out the bottle with an unsteady hand; “take this, and get it filled with brandy!”

“Where shall I get it, ma’am?” inquired Ellen, timidly.

“I don’t care where, so you get it,” replied Margaret, crossly; “and be quick about it—for I’m bound to get drunk, to get out of my misery.”

“Oh! ma’am, let me advise you,” began Ellen—but the other interrupted:

“Keep your advice for whoever wants it. Come! be off, I say, and get the brandy!”

“Will any body trust me, ma’am?”

“Trust you?” sneered Margaret; “are you a fool? Do tigers trust their prey to other tigers?”

“But I have no money.”

“Well, you little dunce, I have;” and Margaret drew out her purse, and from it took a coin of the value of twelve and a half cents. “There,” she continued, tossing it to Ellen, “get a pint of the best brandy: mind, now, the best!”

Ellen, without reply, hurried on her hood and shawl, and, with the bottle in one hand and the money in the other, went out, with a sorrowful heart.

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE INFECTED DISTRICT.

THAT portion of Philadelphia lying between South and Fitzwater, Fifth and Seventh streets, is mainly composed of low, miserable, dilapidated hovels—for they scarcely deserve the name of dwellings—which are filled to repletion with the poorest, lowest, and most degraded class of human beings—beings, many of them, so far down in the scale of society, (if we may use that term in this connection,) that the very heathen of foreign lands would rise in the comparison. It is the very hot-bed of vice, the most hideous in all its many forms—the very sink of pollution and misery, the most loathsome in all their aspects. None live here who can live elsewhere; and many there are here who cannot be said to live at all—but rather who drag on a woeful existence, and die as it were by inches. White and black, male and female, young and old, are here, in some instances, crowded into a cold, damp, slimy, underground apartment, a dozen in a place not large enough to lodge one decently, and really not fit to be used as a dog-kennel. Murderers, robbers, house-breakers, thieves of every description, and convicts just released from our penitentiaries, here congregate, with others scarce less vile and depraved. Here flourish gambling hells of the lowest order; policy offices, which, with a show of fairness, rob many a poor wretch of the pittance which might have procured bread to save him and his family from immediate starvation; and last, though not least, the most abominable of groggeries, where the

victims of the vice of drinking are lured to destruction by the maddening poison dealt out at a cent a glass.

And such is the passion for strong drinks among this class of our population—who either seek to raise a false courage for some desperate deed, or become oblivious to the cares and troubles which oppress them—that the master-fiends who deal out the poison, flourish and wax fat upon the miseries of their fellows, even as rank weeds shoot up from noxious, slimy beds and the foulest excrements.

These groggeries are frequented by both sexes, by all shades of colour, and by all ages—for the young are ever ready to follow any example of vice set them by their seniors—and here the work of degradation and depravity is carried forward to its most frightful extent. As the maddening poison enters the lips, oaths the most blasphemous, and obscenity the most vile, issue from them; and then, in a close, foul apartment, reeking with fetid breaths and rank tobacco smoke, begins a scene of debauchery, which not unfrequently ends in a frightful tragedy, the details of which would make the blood curdle.

Remember, that the stuffs sold here, under the names of brandy, gin, et cetera, cannot, from their price, contain one tithe of pure liquor; but are almost entirely composed of such drugs as will give out a sharp, fiery taste; and are really a compound of poisons so deadly, that the smallest quantity of one taken separately would produce instant death. And this mixture is poured down the callous throats of the poor wretches, till their stomachs warm and burn with the corroding draughts, their blood becomes heated and feverish, their brains begin to reel with delirium, and their worst passions, excited and set in motion, without reason to regulate, run wild with the most fiendish desires. A few more glasses, perhaps, by stupefying all the senses, put them beyond the power of doing harm; but the wretch

whose inclination or money stops short of absolute drunkenness, is now let loose upon the street, a howling maniac, and wo to him or her who crosses his reeling path and mad desires!

Go where you will through this locality, and the very dregs of wo start up and stare you in the face. On the streets you behold faces pale and haggard from want, with eyes wild and hollow; or faces red and bloated from liquor, with eyes swollen, bleared, and bloodshot; forms thin, attenuated, and skeleton-like; or forms rotund and barrel-shaped, which seem to be walking masses of living corruption; and in all cases, matted hair, filthy skins, and dirty, ragged coverings.

Within the noisome hovels, so far from being better, it is even fearfully worse. Here, in winter especially, are wretches without food—without fire—without rags, even, in some cases, to cover their nakedness—actually starving and freezing to death. Here infants are born into the world, and forced out of it for want of the most common necessities of life. Here drunken husbands beat their wives, drunken mothers beat their children, while depraved and drunken children sometimes return the blows and beat one another. Here cracked voices, hoarse from untimely exposure and the unhealthy damps in which they live, give forth no words but those of obscenity and blasphemy. Here murders are committed which never see the light, and deeds are done which the chaste pen cannot record. Here disease takes hold of its victims, and runs riot, and leaves its most disgusting aspects in its train.

Appropriately has this locality been named the "Infected District;" and those who wish to conquer the contagious diseases of the city, should begin by planting their sanitary and medical batteries so as to rake this loathsome spot.

What enjoyment has life in these awful dens to compensate for the pains and miseries which attend it? And yet most of these beings cling to it as tenaciously as if there were no other and better state of existence. Another and better state of existence, do we say? Alas! they know of no other—they scarcely hope for another. They have no hope beyond the present. They know nothing of the consolations of the true Christian. They do not know that such a being as God exists. His holy name is only used as a by-word for emphatic affirmation or frightful malediction. They may have their superstitions of a something after death; but they are vague, undefined, irrational, the offspring of ignorance and fear. They have no books—they could not read if they had—and if they have any time unemployed, they drink themselves drunk to get rid of it.

We think we hear some honest individual exclaim:

"This is all very shocking, but not true—it really exists only in the imagination of the writer. What! Philadelphia—the City of Brotherly Love—with her broad, clean, rectangular streets—her splendid mansions—her stately edifices—her lofty churches—and her sober, moral, philanthropic population—to contain within her limits such a plague spot as this? Impossible!"

Nay, sir, we tell you that what we have stated is true—but must at the same time tell you, that not a hundredth part of the truth has been stated—nor will it be, even when this work shall have passed from our hands.

We do not ask you to believe us, if you will only take the trouble to ascertain the truth for yourselves. We have named the locality, and we invite you to visit it, and prove our assertions right or wrong. Doubtless good would result from your visit; for if you have a heavy purse and a feeling heart—if you are one who desires to see your fellows happy rather than miserable—if, in short, you are a Chris-



tian, after the order of Christ, you will do something to aid the few philanthropic hearts, who have, God bless them! already begun the work of reformation in this vile quarter.

It was in the very centre of the abominable locality we have been describing, that little Ellen found herself when she gained the street for the purpose recorded at the close of the preceding chapter. It was Christmas day—a day of general rejoicing to thousands—but there was little of real joy to be found in a quarter where poverty, drunkenness and crime reigned almost absolutely. A few ragged children were playing in the deep snow that had fallen, and a few miserable beings, of larger growth, with thin, tattered garments, and dark, dirty, bloated faces, were crawling along, here and there, shivering with the cold.

Little Ellen, a stranger in this place, looked shudderingly around her, with the bottle in her hand, not knowing whither to go to obey the command of her new mistress. While standing thus, undecided, a hunchback boy, a few years her senior, crossed over the street, and thus accosted her, with a smile:

“A merry Christmas to you, my charming little lady! what can I do for you?”

Ellen looked at him, and timidly shrunk back. His stature, owing to his deformity, was about the same as her own; but his person was large for his height, and he appeared to be healthy and very strong for his age. His features were regular, bright and animated, particularly his black eyes, which sparkled with an intellect of no common order. His smile too was winning, though by it he displayed uneven, dirty teeth. Neither his face nor hands were clean; and his garments, which appeared to have been picked up at different places, were torn and soiled, as if he had been in the habit of sleeping in them in damp, filthy lodgings. An old moth-eaten cap, with the front

piece torn off, surmounted a head of shaggy, matted, brown hair. A kind of sack-coat, buttoned across the breast, but not so as to entirely conceal the bosom of a dirty shirt, came down to his very heels; and a pair of trousers, a world too large, with the legs rolled up to a suitable length, were fastened around and above his waist with strings. A large old boot on one foot, and a shoe on the other, completed his attire; though in picturing to yourself his personal appearance, you must not forget the hump on his back, which, with his short neck and bent head, rose almost to the level of his cap, and made him a very unsightly object.

But as if repenting of her first design, or to compensate him for the hideousness of his form, nature had endowed him with an intellect beyond his years, and given him a smooth, musical voice; by which, with his comely, expressive features, he could, if he chose, render himself very agreeable. Shrewd, cunning, and an apt scholar, though without book education, he had, in his intercourse with the better classes—for he sometimes peddled small articles about the different hotels, carried trunks, and ran of errands for the wealthy—picked up a language, which, for its purity and grammatical construction, was so much superior to the low, obscene, and profane slang of his associates in this vile region, that they, in sportive derision, had affixed to him the *sobriquet* of Nabob Hunchy, which had been subsequently shortened to Nob Hunchy, and finally to plain Nob.

Now the peculiarities of this poor youth—his deformity, his comely features, his intellectuality, his soft, musical voice, and his superior language—had made him an object of deep interest to many a kind, sympathetic heart; and many a silver coin had been given him in pity, and more than one had attempted to reform him and permanently better his condition. But without being a decided villain,

he was a sad rascal after all. Money on him was literally thrown away; for he had a passion for strong drink, which consumed nearly every coin that came into his possession. To get drunk was the chief aim of his existence; and no moral persuasion, no judicious correction, no self-resolution, could effect a reform. Drunkenness was in his nature, a fixed fact—a part, as it were, of his very being—probably inherited with the life principle. As surely as the sun set upon him with money in his pocket, so surely it rose upon him in a state of filthy intoxication. Twenty times already had he been sent to the County Prison for inebriety—but he only got out to get back again for the same offence.

In view of all these things, it is not unreasonable to suppose that the bottle carried by Ellen, with the hope of getting a taste of his favorite poison, had caught his attention and attracted him to her side.

Perceiving that Ellen, in shrinking back, regarded him with compassion, mingled with aversion, he said, in a soft, gentle tone, with another winning smile:

“Come, my little lady, you are as pretty as I am ugly—but God made us both, and probably we both have kind hearts—you have, at least.”

Ellen was touched by his language, his kind manner, and gentle voice; and she answered somewhat mechanically, with her eyes fixed upon his black, sparkling orbs:

“What do you want with me?”

“Why, you seem to be a stranger here—at least I never saw you before—and perhaps I can be of service to you. You are going somewhere with that bottle.”

“Oh, yes—I want to get a pint of the best brandy, for my mistress,” replied Ellen, quickly—“but I don’t know where to go.”

On hearing this, the eyes of the Hunchback sparkled with pleasure.

“Come with me,” he said, “and I will show you a first-rate place, where you can get liquor good enough for the President.”

Ellen hesitated a little at first; but not knowing better what to do, she finally set off under the guidance of her strange companion.

“Hello!” shouted a boy, from a group of three or four on the opposite side of the street—“there goes Nob for a new drunk, by ——!”

“I say, little gal,” called out another, “don’t let him git a swig at that ther’ bottle, or he’ll see the bottom!”

“He’d spile a barrel, that ther’ Nob!” cried another, rounding off with an oath.

A shout of laughter, and a shower of snow-balls, one of which struck Ellen on the back, followed this last remark.

“See here!” said the Hunchback, turning round and shaking his fist at the juvenile party; “the next one of you that throws a snow-ball this way, will have to settle the matter with me—and you know I don’t forget.”

He was answered by a shout of derision; but no one had the temerity to disregard this warning—for Nabob Hunchy was strong, muscular, active, and courageous, and, when his blood was up, a perfect tiger. Besides, as he said, he never forgot an offence, as many a boy, bigger than himself, could testify, who had been severely punished, days, and even weeks, after the provocation.

“Don’t mind those boys,” he said to little Ellen, in a kindly tone, as they picked their way along through the snow; “they are bad boys, never had good bringing up, and don’t know any better; but they shall not harm you while I’m about.”

To hear him speak, one might have thought him a pattern of morality, invested with a legal power of protection.



Entering Sixth street, they walked on a short distance, and then turned down Small—a street more vile and wretched in its appearance than any Ellen had yet seen. Here were a few drunken men and women, and several groups of noisy boys, the most of the latter engaged in snow-balling each other. Ellen began to grow alarmed—the more so, that she perceived her companion and herself were objects of general notice, and that their appearance together excited universal derision and ridicule.

“There goes drunken Nob!” cried one.

“A regular rum cove!” cried another.

“What’s he got in tow?” queried a third.

“It’s an angel, by Jiminy!” said a fourth.

“Old Nick’s son towing an angel!” yelled a fifth.

“Let’s cool Old Nick’s son with snow-balls!” vociferated a sixth.

At this there was a shout of approval, mingled with loud laughter, and followed by a shower of the frozen missiles, several of which struck Ellen and her companion, but without doing either any injury. Ellen’s alarm, however, was increased at this fresh display of general dislike for her unfortunate guide, and she exclaimed, hurriedly:

“Oh! let us go back! I’m so afraid.”

“Never you fear—I’ll take care of you,” was the reply; “and besides, we are almost to the place.”

As they hurried along, the boys hooted; and a group, with a tall youth acting as leader, finally interrupted their peaceful progress.

“I say, Nob,” began the tall lad, striding up to the Hunchback, and speaking in a dictatorial tone, “what is you going to do with this yere little gal?”

“That is my business—stand out of the way!” said the deformed boy, a bright, sullen light gleaming from his black eye.

“Ho! ho! I’ll hev to teach you manners to your betters!” replied the other, seizing the collar of Nabob Hunchy.

As quick as lightning, the latter sprung back, and then striking the tall youth with his head in the pit of the stomach, stretched him at full length upon his back.

“A fight! a fight! hooray!” cried several voices, in tones of delight.

But the Hunchback knew too well his advantage to let the affair end in a fight; and so, gnashing his teeth with fury, he leaped at once upon his fallen insulter, and literally ground his face beneath his feet, thus putting an end to the expected combat.

“Who next?” cried the deformed champion, glaring furiously around upon the youthful bystanders, all of whom shrunk back, with looks of dismay.

Taking advantage of the momentary awe which his unexpected success had occasioned, the Hunchback instantly seized the hand of the terrified Ellen, and darted forward. Before she had time to recover from her surprise, alarm, and confusion of ideas, she found herself pushed into a dark, gloomy apartment, crowded with human beings, and rank with the fumes of tobacco.

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## CHAPTER V.

### A NOTORIOUS DEN AND CHANGE OF SCENE.

THE den into which little Ellen had been so unceremoniously thrust by the Hunchback, was one of those vile resorts of the most miserable and degraded of human beings.

It was small, and dark, and damp, and the close air was filled with the noxious smoke of rank tobacco and the steam of drunken breaths. One side of the room was occupied by the bar, as it was called, in which the intoxicating and deadly poison was kept, and over which presided the master-fiend of the place. At the end farthest from the street, a flight of old crazy stairs led to the story above, and another to the cellar beneath, and along the walls were benches devoted to the comfort of the customers.

The proprietor of this establishment was a hideous dwarf, known as Jimmy Quiglan, and was well fitted by nature to be the presiding genius of so foul a place. He was upwards of forty years of age, and something over four feet in height. His large head was covered with black, coarse, matted hair, and seemed to find a comfortable lodgment between the shoulder blades, dispensing entirely with anything resembling a neck. His body, of an ordinary size and length, terminated on short duck-legs, with monstrous feet. He had a low forehead, and a large, broad face, deeply seamed, and apparently grown old before its time. His eyes were large, dark, and cold; and while they gave some evidence of intellect, they gave none of the better feelings of humanity. His nose was long and hooked, and his mouth large, with massive jaws, and teeth like fangs. Altogether he looked the monster, and resembled in no slight degree a large spider, surrounded by his web, and watching for an opportunity to pounce upon some new victim.

Now, Jimmy, as this hideous being was familiarly termed, had a plan of doing business quite original. His den was a lodging as well as drinking-house; and here a customer could get drunk, at the rate of a cent a glass for the best brandy, and be allowed to sleep up stairs, on the floor, for three cents per night—or below, in the cellar, on the damp

ground, for one; and in case of his getting drunk through the day, the enterprising landlord would "run him" for nothing—that is to say, he would chuck him through a narrow hole in the wall, or side door, into a dirty yard, and there leave him exposed to the weather, till such time as he might sufficiently revive to imbibe afresh.

Although it was an early hour in the morning when little Ellen entered this foul abode, it was, as we have before remarked, filled with human beings, though hardly deserving a term which places them in the scale of animal progression so much above their superiors, the brutes. Male and female, white and black—all filthy, ragged, and the greater portion of them nearly drunk—were huddled together, to the number of fifteen or twenty, in this small room; and were drinking, smoking, cursing, and swearing, in a way that must have given the most profound satisfaction to his Satanic Majesty. In the bar, smiling as fiends might be supposed to smile, and rubbing his hands with delight, at intervals between supplying one customer and an order from another, stood Jimmy Quiglan, alive to the profits of that blithe Christmas morning.

And no one knew better what the profits of that day would be, than Jimmy himself; for besides those already mentioned as being in active trade, he knew exactly how many lay intoxicated above and below stairs—how long it would take them to get sober—and how many glasses to make them drunk again—calculations being only made on those having money—and Jimmy, by previous inspection, could name to a cent the value of each lodger.

It may be a matter of curiosity to the reader to know how such wretched beings obtained money at all; but it will only be necessary to state that some were bone gatherers, some rag-pickers, some professional beggars, and the rest job-workers and thieves. Like the Lazaroni of Naples,

this class of our population, which is more numerous than many suppose, take no thought for the morrow—but, with the small pittance they may have received for a day's hard labor in their respective vocations, they pay for the poison that for the time brings oblivion, and with returning consciousness repeat the dose so long as their money holds out. It is not an uncommon thing for one of these wretches to go days without food—passing, meantime, from one drunken fit to another, without drawing one sober breath.

It was into this vile place, as we have said, that little Ellen was thrust by the Hunchback, who quickly followed and closed the door. As she looked hurriedly around her, with an expression of terror on her pale features, the deformed boy took her hand, and said, in a tone calculated to reassure her :

"Don't be alarmed, my little lady—nobody shall hurt you here."

"Oh! let me go out! I'm so afraid!" she answered, in a trembling whisper.

"Well, so you shall, as soon as I can get the brandy. Give me the money and the bottle, and I will have it filled at once."

Ellen put both into his hands, and whispered :

"Oh! be quick! I'm so afraid."

"A pint of your best brandy, Jimmy!" cried the Hunchback, in a loud tone, and with an air of vast importance, as he placed the bottle upon the counter, with a force that made it ring again.

"Down with your dough, then, Nob," replied Jimmy, with a grin. "I doesn't read myself, Nob; but them as does, says as how that ther bit of pasteboard, (pointing to a card on the wall above his head, which contained the words,

'No Trust,') tells all the larned, that nobody can't come the giraff over Jimmy Quiglan—ha! ha! ha!"

"Open your eyes then, Jimmy," returned the Hunchback, with a laugh; "for here is more white money than you have seen among your ragged customers for many a day;" and he placed the Spanish real, with a loud snap, upon the counter.

Jimmy's eye fairly glistened as he seized the coin; and after a close examination, to be certain it was genuine, he said :

"Yes, that's good, Nob—the brandy's good, Nob—and so, in course, a fair exchange ain't no robbery—ha! ha! ha!"

While Jimmy was pouring out his pint of poison, the Hunchback got upon a stool, leaned over the counter, and whispered something in his ear. Jimmy grinned, winked, and nodded; and springing down from his stool, the Hunchback, much to Ellen's surprise, disappeared through the crowd.

For half an hour, in that close, noisome hole, surrounded and rudely jostled by filthy wretches in every degree of intoxication, whose horrible blasphemy and vulgar obscenity made her gentle and unpolluted spirit tremble and shrink in its mortal casement, like the sensitive plant when rudely touched, little Ellen most anxiously awaited the return of her ungainly companion. Finding he came not, she at last, in no little trepidation, applied to the landlord for information concerning him.

"He's doing well, Nob is—ha! ha! ha!" returned Jimmy. "He told me if you axed arter him, to gin you his compliments, and say he was just trying the brandy, to see if it was good."

"Well, tell him he musn't keep me waiting, as my mistress will be very angry," returned Ellen.

"Oh!" said Jimmy, with a grin, that made little Ellen shudder—"if you're going to wait till he comes, you'll want lodgings."

"Won't he come, sir?" timidly inquired Ellen.

"Not afore he gits sober, gal—ha! ha! ha! He's drunk by this time, you may bet your head."

"Then I must go without him," returned the child—not sorry, if truth must be told, to be rid of one whose reappearance in the street, she believed, would be the signal for fresh abuse. "Will you please give me my brandy?"

"Your what?" grinned Jimmy.

"The brandy that the deformed boy bought for me."

"Why, you little fool," laughed Jimmy; "that's what he's gitting drunk on; and there ain't a gill left now, you can bet your head."

"Oh! then what will become of me?" exclaimed Ellen, bursting into tears. "When I get back, I shall be beat and turned out of doors."

"Well, don't go back, then!" said the Dwarf, with a hideous grin. "Such a perty creater as you is, needn't sarve no cross mistress. Jest you stay here till night, and I'll take you round to the nicest place you ever seed."

"No! no!" said Ellen, shuddering and shrinking back—for there was something peculiar in the cold light of the Dwarf's eye, which seemed to cast a wicked influence upon her innocent spirit. "No! no! I must go right home, and tell my mistress the truth, and take the consequences."

Jimmy was about to say something more, when his attention was arrested by a fight between two of his drunken customers—a white man and a negro.

"Stop!" thundered the worthy landlord, seizing a billet of wood and springing upon the counter; and the next

moment, finding he was not heeded, he struck the nearest over the head, and knocked him down.

Now some one thought this an improper interference of the host, and immediately knocked him over behind the bar among his kegs of poison. This opened the way to a general fight; and in less than a minute, every one, not too drunk to stand up, was battering away at his neighbor.

From this *melee* little Ellen managed to escape unharmed; and the moment she gained the street, she hurried away, intending to return at once to Margaret, and report truly what had happened, although she trembled to think what might be the result.

But it proved to be less easy to find her way back to her last night's quarters than she had supposed; for she knew not the name of the street in which she had first met the Hunchback, and she had neglected to notice the turnings made afterward. As a consequence of her haste to get back, and ignorance of the locality, she lost her way, and wandered through several dirty streets and alleys, looking in vain for a spot she could recognize.

At length, by keeping on a certain course, she found herself entering a better quarter of the city; and although she knew she was now going in a direction that would not lead to the abode of Margaret, she felt it such a relief to escape from the disgusting scenes behind her, that she could not prevail upon herself to turn back; but, quickening her pace, walked on, determined to trust herself once more to the guidance of Providence. She now passed habitations that had an appearance of comfort, if not of wealth; while the passengers on the street were warmly clothed, and had generally a cheerful and happy look.

Still Ellen walked on, with something of that spirit of adventure which takes one forward, one neither knows nor cares whither, so that each passing moment is gratified by

a change; and at length, by mere accident, she found herself one of the crowd thronging the rich and fashionable thoroughfare of the city.

It was a strange sight to the poor girl; and as she stared around her at the high and splendid buildings, the glittering shop-windows, the richly attired and jewel-bedecked passers—upon all of which the bright sun of that Christmas morning was shining as though it might never be dimmed by a cloud—amid the hum of voices and the jingling of the merry bells—she felt bewildered and confused by the contrast to that loathsome and wretched quarter she had so recently left, and like the novice transplanted by the magic of Aladdin's lamp to a gorgeous scene in the Orient. Was this the same city of which she had been an inhabitant for more than two years? and was this mart of fashion within a few minutes' walk of the filthy dens where human beings famished and starved to death almost daily? It seemed impossible; and yet it was either a dream or a reality. Was it a dream? She rubbed her eyes and stared again; and at the same moment, as if to set the matter forever at rest in her wondering mind, some hasty pedestrian ran against her, and nearly knocked her down; and stumbling against the velvets and furs of a *soi-disant* lady, she was put rudely aside, with the cold, sharp words:

"Stand out of the way, you beggar!"

Ay! stand out of the way, you beggars! what business have you to be in the same street, or even in the same world, with your purse-proud brothers and sisters? breathing the same air, and enjoying the same sunlight, which God has given them? Do ye not know that these things were not made for you? that ye are the weeds among flowers, the thorns among roses, the scum of the earth, that must be removed? Back to your dens! back to your holes in the earth! back to your damps and filth! and

there pine, and starve, and die, and rot, and be damned for your iniquities; while your rich and pious brothers and sisters, clothed in broadcloths and silks, from golden-clasped prayer-books, surrounded by the gorgeous trappings of a splendid church, return thanks, that God, who made all things, has made them better than you—and, from the foundation of Creation, has elected them to monopolize all the good things of this world and the next! By their golden creeds you should learn, that it is necessary, for the glory of God, that a certain portion of mankind should be damned; and what portion is so well suited to eternal torments as you who have never known luxury—never known aught but misery in your weary pilgrimage through life? Therefore repine not at this decree; but console yourselves with the reflection, that, miserable as you may be here, it is necessary, to secure the happiness of certain wealthy saints, that you be more miserable hereafter! What if that old-fashioned book, the Bible, does say that God is no respecter of persons? Cannot the learned and aristocratic Rev. Dr. Allgrace give such an explanation as shall prove the contrary? What if that meek and lowly man, who consorted with publicans and sinners—who was followed and surrounded by such poor wretches as yourselves, collected from the highways and byways—what if he, the humble teacher, the founder of the Gospel, did give a parable of the rich and poor man—Dives and Lazarus? Cannot the Rev. Dr. Allgrace prove that the scribes, who recorded the words of Christ, made a mistake? or, if not, that Christ made a mistake himself? and that it was in fact the *rich* man who went to Abraham's bosom, and the *poor* man who lifted up his eyes in hell? Undoubtedly he can, or else he would not be fit to preach an aristocratic Gospel, and would be compelled to vacate his velvet-stuffed pulpit.

No! stand out of the way, ye beggars! groan on, ye starving millions! the wealth that would save you from the horrors of your doom, is locked up in churches devoted to the worship of God. Ye should rather rejoice than repine at this! that the God who made you has such aristocratic worshippers! and that ye are fit to be damned for His glory! Christians talk of a Millennium—of a “good time coming;” but it has not come yet—and so, groan on!

The female—we were about to say lady, but the term is inapplicable to one so devoid of Christian feeling and the graces of humanity—the female who so rudely put aside little Ellen, was a zealous member of the church over which the Rev. Dr. Allgrace presided; and by her side walked her daughter, about the same age as Ellen—no purer in heart, no fairer in feature—but so differently clothed, so differently housed, so differently circumstanced, that there seemed a bottomless gulf between them, without even the hair-bridge of connection which allows the faithful of Mohammed to pass to the Houri's Paradise.

On they went—the rich Mrs. Markham and her daughter—while little Ellen, forgetting the rude treatment she had received, (it was too much a matter of course, poor child!) gazed after the younger, with a sigh, that she had not, like her, a mother, on whose breast she could recline and pour forth the grief of her heavily burdened soul. With a sorrowful heart, and a tear-dimmed eye, she turned away, with the feeling that she was never more alone and friendless than among that jostling crowd of richly attired persons and happy-looking faces.

For half an hour she wandered up and down Chestnut street, wondering at all she saw, and lost in a whirl of thought both new and strange. At length, seeing numbers crossing the street, she mechanically attempted to follow. We say mechanically—for she was abstracted in thought,

and had no settled purpose in view, and this caused a heedlessness that came nigh being fatal. With that desire of making the most of the fallen snow, which the citizens of those cities have who see the ground covered but a few days in the year, Chestnut street, on that bright Christmas morning, might be described as a rushing, whirling stream of horses, sleighs, and human beings; and scarcely had little Ellen put her foot off the side pavement, ere she was struck by the breast of a fiery beast going at great speed. In an instant she was knocked down, trampled on, and lay senseless and bleeding on the frozen snow; while the vehicle which passed over her—containing a man in a fashionable dress, and a female well muffled up in furs—dashed on at a still more furious rate, as if the occupants were anxious to escape the censure and penalty of fast and careless driving. Besides, one glance at the dress of little Ellen, was sufficient to tell them that she belonged to that despised class of society who have no influential friends—and so, what mattered it whether she were living or dead!

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## CHAPTER VI.

### SOMETHING OF MYSTERY.

It is with joy—sincere, heart-felt joy—that, like the artist with his pencil, we are permitted to dip our pen in the brightest colors, and give some pleasing relief to a sombre picture. The great city—with its collected thousands, of all grades, from the millionaire to the beggar—has its bright as well as dark spots; and if the fallen way-



farer is passed by on one side by the Priest, and on the other by the Levite, the good Samaritan is almost certain to make his appearance, with oil for the wounded body and consolation for the wounded heart. Let us, whatever may be our affliction, ever keep this truth in view: that God, who sees the sparrow fall, will not always permit us to suffer; and that the promise of salvation is to him who shall endure to the end.

When consciousness returned to little Ellen, she found herself lying upon a soft bed, surrounded by silken curtains; and her first feeling was one of extreme surprise and wonder. Where was she? and how came she there? She thought it must be a dream; and she attempted to rouse herself to learn the truth. In doing this, she discovered that she was as weak as an infant; and that the slight movement she made, caused her much pain in her limbs and several parts of her body. With this came a dim recollection of a whirling crowd of human beings, horses, and vehicles, all mixed up in wild confusion, with a strange kind of noise, like the tinkling of many bells heard amid the roar of a waterfall. This was all she could remember; and this seemed rather to perplex and confuse, than give her any clue to the unravelling of the mystery.

"Ah! where am I?" murmured Ellen, at length, beginning to grow alarmed.

Scarcely had she spoken, when a small, white hand gently parted the silken curtains, and a beautiful face—which, to the excited mind of little Ellen, appeared to be that of an angel—looked in upon her; and a voice, as sweetly melodious and touchingly plaintive as the tones of an Eolian harp, said:

"Did you speak, dear child?"

Poor little Ellen was more astonished than ever, and more than ever convinced that what she saw was a vision

and not a reality. What! such words of sweetness and kindness, from a being so beautiful, to be addressed to her! Impossible. And yet, if a delusion of the senses, it seemed likely to be prolonged, with a wonderful semblance of the real—for soft eyes were compassionately beaming upon her; and the lips of that lovely face again parting, the silver-toned words again came forth:

"Did you speak, dear child?"

"Where am I?" murmured Ellen, with her eyes fixed upon the apparition; "and what beautiful being are you, that *seem* to speak to me?"

"Ah! I was certain I heard your voice!" cried the beautiful stranger; while a gleam of joy, like a ray of sunlight upon a lily, rested upon her pale, lovely countenance. "I have waited long, and prayed often, to have words of conscious intelligence pass your lips—and at last my prayer is answered."

"Are you one of the angels my dear mother used to tell me about?" inquired Ellen, simply—for as yet she knew not whether to regard the being she saw as celestial or terrestrial.

"No, child," answered the other, with a sweet but melancholy smile, "I am no angel, but a poor mortal like yourself."

"Then tell me how I came here, and what it means! for it all seems to me like a dream," said Ellen, wonderingly.

"Have you no recollection of being in Chestnut street on Christmas morning?" inquired the other.

"No, lady—since you say you're not an angel—I don't remember of ever having heard of Chestnut street before," answered the wounded child.

"Perhaps you never did hear the name; but have you

no recollection of being in a gay street, crowded with people, horses, and vehicles?"

"Oh, yes, lady—I do remember that, since you mention it—and I was so astonished at all I saw! But wasn't that a dream?"

"No, dear child, that was a reality—an almost fatal reality to you, as it proved. You were knocked down, run over, and picked up for dead. But you are alive now, you see; and so you must offer up thanks to God for having preserved your life."

For a few moments Ellen did not reply, but looked very serious and thoughtful. Then, to the surprise of her fair friend, she said:

"Dear lady, for all your kindness to me, who haven't any friends, I want you to think me very grateful; but (and the tears came into her eyes) may be I should have been better off if I had died. It is wrong, may be, for me to say so, but I can't help my thoughts;" and as she concluded, her tears flowed freely.

"Indeed it is wrong for you to say so, dear child," replied the other, tenderly; "for God sent you a preserver, and He does all things for the best. Come! come! you must not weep—brighter days are in store for you—and in me you shall henceforth have *one* friend at least. I know something of your history, I think—for at times, for several days, you have been delirious; and from what has fallen from your lips, I judge you are a friendless orphan, whom mankind has treated all too roughly."

"But where am I now, dear lady? how came I here? and who are you?" inquired Ellen, much astonished and perplexed.

"A few words will explain all, dear child. But perhaps we had better defer our conversation till you have gained

strength; you are weak now, and should rather sleep than talk, or even think."

"But, dear lady, unless you tell me all now, I shall not be able to sleep for thinking."

"I will let you judge your own case then. Do you think it will injure you if we converse on the subject that most interests you?"

"No, lady, I'm sure it will not."

"Well, keep your mind calm, and let nothing excite you. You must know, then, that on Christmas morning, as I was passing along Chestnut street, in company with a friend, I saw, among the crowd of human beings swaying to and fro, a little face, so beautiful, and yet so thin, pale, and sorrowful, that I found my gaze riveted there as by some magic spell. A strange, unaccountable feeling at the same time took possession of me; and I seemed to know—though by what means, and for what purpose, I cannot tell—that my destiny, and that of the sweet, lovely, but seemingly heart-broken, little wayfarer, were intimately connected."

She paused a moment, apparently abstracted from her narration by some curious reflections; and then, rather thinking aloud than addressing her little companion, she continued:

"It is certainly very strange that I should arrive at so singular a conclusion, without the aid of a single reasoning faculty—nay, with all the powers of reason arrayed against it! By what wonderful process was that knowledge of a something in the future conveyed to my soul with the startling rapidity of a flash of lightning? Is it possible that when two strange spirits meet, which are destined to act materially on each other for good or evil, there is an electric or magnetic emanation which telegraphs to one or both the important truth? Or may it not rather be



that we catch up a fancy of our own, and believing that a certain event is foreordained, so govern our actions afterward, that we of ourselves bring to pass that which we had thought fated? Ah! who knows? Life is a mystery!"

Again addressing the wondering Ellen, she continued:

"Well, as I have said, my attention was arrested and riveted by a sweet, sad face among the moving crowd; and I felt a strong inclination to spring forward and clasp the poor and friendless little creature in my arms—for that she was poor and friendless, could be seen at a single glance. I restrained my desire, however, and passed the little wayfarer, so closely that my garments brushed hers. I turned to look after her; but a crowd had already filled up the space between us, and I barely caught a glimpse of her thin form edging its way amid the throng. I walked on a few steps further, when something seemed to tell me that I must turn back; and with a half intention of doing so, I had already halted, much to my friend's surprise, when I heard cries of alarm, and saw numbers hurrying to a certain spot at no great distance. Why was it then my heart assured me that something awful had happened to the little being in whom I had just taken so deep an interest? I cannot tell; but so it was; and like a mother flying to the rescue of her child, I hurried to the excited group, already gathered around the bloody and senseless form of the little stranger. Not to prolong my story, dear child, I had you conveyed hither——"

"Me?" interrupted Ellen, with a look of astonishment.

"Yes, my child, you. Why, do you not know that it is of you I have been all this time speaking?"

"No, lady—I thought you meant some other little girl. I didn't know as there was anything about me to interest anybody, and particularly such a kind and beautiful lady as you are."

"God bless you, poor child!" exclaimed the other, fervently; "you shall not always think so;" and bending over, she kissed the little sufferer, with such affectionate tenderness, that the latter was forced to give vent to her feelings in a flood of tears. "Come! come!" she continued, as if chiding herself—"I am acting a very imprudent part, and against the orders of the Surgeon, who told me, if your senses returned, I must be so careful not to agitate you!"

"Don't go away yet!" said Ellen: "I want to talk more: I know I'll not be any worse for it. How long have I been here?"

"This is the ninth day."

"The ninth day?" repeated Ellen, all amazement. "Why, isn't this Christmas morning?"

"No, my dear, it is the eighth day from Christmas."

"And have I been asleep all this time?"

"You have been all this time unconscious, or delirious. But you must not think of it now; when you get better I will tell you all about it."

"Am I badly hurt?"

"So seriously, that we feared you would not recover. There! I must stop talking with you; try and compose yourself to sleep. How do you feel now?"

"I feel as if it wouldn't do me any harm to talk more—but I'll do just as you say."

"Yes, do—that is a good little girl. By-the-by, you may tell me your name, if you please, so that I shall know what to call you."

"My name is Ellen Norbury."

"How? Norbury?" exclaimed the other, starting and changing color: "Norbury, did you say?"

"Yes, lady, that is my name—I hope it don't offend you."

"And what was your father's Christian name?"

"William."

"Was he an Englishman by birth?"

"Yes, lady, I think he was—but he lived in Dublin when I was born."

"Indeed! What was his occupation?"

"He was an artist."

"It must be the same!" mused the other. "Strange!"

"Did you know him?" inquired Ellen, not a little surprised at the impression which the name of her father seemed to produce on the other.

"I never saw him, my child; but you must ask me no questions now; when you get stronger I will tell you more. Meantime, I must enjoin upon you, to let no one else in this house—neither my father nor the servants—hear you mention the name of Norbury! Should my father, who is a strange kind of man, chance to inquire your name, you must on no account let him know it is Norbury! From what you said, while delirious, I judge that both your parents are dead?"

"Yes!" sighed Ellen.

"Did they die in this country?"

"My mother did—but my father died on the passage over," sobbed the other. "Oh! lady, if you please, don't ask me any more questions about them now—it makes me so sad to talk about them."

"Only one more, Ellen," returned the other, with a kind of eager earnestness. "Did you ever hear either of your parents mention the name of Clendennan?"

Ellen shuddered as she replied:

"Yes—I heard my father—once."

"What did he say?" and the fair questioner fairly held her breath for the answer.

"He said he hoped the curse of God would light upon him!"

Instantly the features of the young lady grew deadly pale; and stepping back, the curtains came together, shutting her from the view of Ellen, who was thus left to ponder upon a new mystery. After waiting some minutes, in the vain expectation of being again addressed by her fair protectress, she ventured to inquire if she were still present. Immediately the curtains were gently parted again, and, to the surprise of Ellen, another strange face appeared. It was that of a woman turned the prime of life, who wore a cap, and had a neat, tidy appearance, and whose countenance had a sedate, though somewhat stern, expression.

"I am glad to find you rational, my child," she said, in a slow, dignified tone; "but it is not proper that you should talk more at present. Is there any thing I can do for you?"

"No, ma'am, I thank you," answered Ellen. "I was asking if the lady, who was just now with me, were still here."

"No, child, Miss Rosalind has just left the apartment, and I have come to take her place."

"It is very kind of you, ma'am," said Ellen. "Are you her mother?"

"No, child—her mother has been dead some years. I am her Governess."

"Will you please to tell me her last name?"

"It is Clendennan."

"Indeed!" exclaimed little Ellen, in a tone of so much surprise, that Mrs. Wyndham inquired if she were previously acquainted with the name.

"I have heard it mentioned before," said Ellen, with as much indifference as she could assume—for the recollection of her conversation with Miss Rosalind, caused her no little

agitation, which she effectually strove to conceal from the Governess.

"Very likely," was the rejoinder, "for it is a noble name, and ranks among the proudest of the chivalrous sons of Ireland."

"Has Mr. Clendennan been long in this country?" inquired Ellen.

"Some five years, my child," answered Mrs. Wyndham. "But you must ask no more questions now—it will do you harm to talk. Here," she continued, retiring for a minute, and returning with some liquid in a tea-spoon—"here, take this, and compose yourself to sleep."

Ellen did as directed; and in a few minutes, notwithstanding her recent nervous agitation, she felt a soothing, drowsy influence begin to steal over her; and presently her troubled spirit began to glide away from the cares of mortality, and rejoice in the gorgeous scenes of the fairy realm of dreams.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE MYSTERY SOLVED.

THE injuries which little Ellen received on that eventful Christmas morning, were of a very severe nature; and even after it was rendered certain that she would recover, there were serious apprehensions that she would be maimed for life. But thanks to careful attendance, and a skilful surgeon, she gradually recovered the use of all her limbs; and, at the expiration of three long months, was restored to health and her original soundness of body.

Yet were these months of close confinement—and, much of the time, of physical suffering—the happiest the poor child of sorrow had known for a long period. Rosalind was her almost constant attendant; and had she indeed been her mother, she could scarcely have been more tender and devoted. She talked to her, read to her, and sung to her; and, at intervals, made the variety greater and more useful, by instructing her in the common English branches. The education of Ellen had not been entirely neglected by her parents; and though only eight years of age when her father died, she was then able to read a little in the Simple Lessons; but sorrow, poverty, and brutal treatment, had subsequently made sad inroads upon the little book-learning she had acquired—however much it might have enlarged her knowledge of the baseness to be found in human nature—so that it was necessary for her teacher to begin with her in much the same manner as with one who had never been taught.

Aside from all this, however, there were some explanations, narrations, and occurrences, during the period of Ellen's convalescence, which the plan of our story requires us to give somewhat in detail, though not altogether in the order in which the different matters were brought to the knowledge of the different parties.

The fact of two daughters meeting in so singular a manner, in a strange land, whose fathers, once friends, had been many years estranged by an unfortunate occurrence which had ruined the peace of both families, was certainly very curious, not to say mysterious; and of this estrangement, and the causes which led to it, we will now speak, without recording the conversation which Rosalind and Ellen held together on this subject.

Walter Clendennan was an only son of a wealthy Irish Baronet, at whose death he came into possession of a title

and a large estate. Soon after this event, at the age of twenty-five, he married a lovely and amiable lady, of good family but small fortune, by the name of Lucy Norbury, a cousin of William Norbury, the father of Ellen, who was in consequence a second cousin of Rosalind. Like that of Clendennan, the name of Norbury was ancient, and belonged to a house of wealth and distinction; but some of the descendants, among whom was the father of Ellen, had become reduced to comparative poverty, though still retaining the pride of descent, and being very tenacious of the family honor.

At the death of Ellen's grandfather, he left two sons—William and James, her father and uncle—with little or no inheritance—the family means having been exhausted in giving them a good education. William, having a natural taste for painting, with some considerable talent as an artist, adopted that profession; and on his marriage with a Miss Montague, another poor descendant of a once wealthy house, he removed to Dublin, where for a time he succeeded in making a comfortable living. James, the younger—having, like his brother for painting, a natural turn for military tactics—was assisted by Sir Walter Clendennan; who, hearing of his desire, generously purchased and presented him with a Captain's commission in an Irish regiment of infantry. Not to show partiality, Sir Walter at the same time tendered a present of like amount to William; but the latter declined to receive it, on the ground that he was doing well, and did not, like his brother, stand in need of assistance.

Between these two brothers, who loved each other as brothers should love, and their wealthy and titled cousin, Sir Walter, there was such a bond of friendship as is seldom seen to exist between parties where the disparity of worldly circumstances is so great; and though they seldom met,

yet a correspondence, begun and carried on on all sides, expressed the warmth of attachment which each felt for each other, and exhibited a rare triple congeniality of soul.

The marriage of Sir Walter with the mother of Rosalind, was for many years a happy one; and the Knight and his good lady, in course of time, found themselves blessed with a daughter and two sons—the daughter being the eldest, and the one already presented in the person of Rosalind.

It was about this period, that Sir Walter and his family—with the exception of Rosalind, who had gone to spend a few months with an aunt, in a distant part of the Kingdom—paid a visit to some relatives in Dublin.

Now it so chanced, that Captain Norbury and his company were at this time quartered in Dublin; and the brothers met Sir Walter, after a separation of years, with all the warmth of feeling which two grateful natures could express toward one who had acted so noble and generous a part. William Norbury, the Artist, had risen to some distinction in his profession; and was now in what was called good circumstances, and doing well. He was at this period the father of two children—a bright little boy of four years, and the subject of our story, then in her infancy.

The brothers were at once presented to Lady Clendennan, their cousin, whom neither had seen since her marriage. She was at this time in the full bloom of maturity—of handsome person, fine mind, rare accomplishments, and affable manners—and both the brothers were delighted at the renewal of their acquaintance. Being cousins of blood, and descendants of a house of which it was the pride of each to boast—and the brothers also being among the warmest friends of Sir Walter—all formality was laid aside, and the parties met like members of one and the

same family—or, in other words, like two brothers meeting with a dear sister. From this time, Captain Norbury, who chanced to be unmarried—and who had a fine, commanding person, and, notwithstanding his profession, a poetical temperament, inclined to the romantic—became a daily visitor at the house of his titled friend; and seemed to delight more in the conversation of his cousin, who had a turn of mind similar to his own, than in that of Sir Walter, who, with all his sterling qualities, was always eccentric and sometimes morose.

The fact was, the Baronet was a man of many noble traits, whose friendship could be better maintained at a distance, and through an occasional correspondence, than by intimate personal association. Being, as before remarked, of an eccentric turn of mind, and of an irritable, peevish temperament, it was much easier for him to write a smooth, generous sentence, at such times as his mind was calm, than speak one when something, even though foreign to the subject, had ruffled his temper. Therefore it was, that Captain Norbury—prizing him for his real worth no less highly now than at any previous time—preferred the society and conversation of his lady to his own; and thus, unconsciously, was laid a train, whose final explosion was attended and followed by terrible consequences.

To be brief, the Baronet at length began to grow jealous of the attention of Captain Norbury to his fair lady; and though in reality he had no cause for jealousy, yet the “green-eyed monster,” having sprung into birth, “grew daily by what it fed upon,” till at last it assumed a hideous and formidable shape. Sir Walter, meantime, kept his own counsel, and an eye upon the parties; but when at last an unpleasant rumor reached his ear, in which their names were coupled, he decided it was time to act.

He procured a brace of pistols, loaded them himself, and concealed them about his person; and meeting Captain Norbury shortly after, in a retired street, he approached him, as if in friendship; and then, to the Captain's utter amazement, whispered in his ear:

“Sir! you are an ungrateful, treacherous villain!”

“Sir Walter, what means this language?” inquired the Captain.

“You know, and I know,” answered the enraged Baronet, between his shut teeth. “We will neither of us mention the cause, if you please. If you are not a coward, follow me!”

“But I solemnly protest,” said the Captain, “that I know of nothing I have either said or done, that can give offence to one I have ever held to be my dearest friend.”

“Captain Norbury, are you a disgrace to the commission which my money purchased for you? are you a coward?” demanded the Knight.

“No, Sir Walter.”

“Then follow me!”

The Knight led the way; and the two, without speaking, soon found themselves in a retired spot, beyond the busy hum of the town. Sir Walter here abruptly presented his pistols, and merely said:

“Quick! take your choice and your ground!”

“But I protest—” began the astonished Captain.

“Coward!” interrupted the other, with a sneer.

The Captain said no more; but, compressing his lips, took the proffered pistol, and retired about ten paces.

“You shall give the word,” said the Baronet.

“Fire!” returned the Captain, with the muzzle of his pistol pointed to the ground.

Sir Walter took a deliberate aim, and fired. The Cap-

tain staggered ; and then tossing his undischarged weapon toward his antagonist, exclaimed :

"Heaven bear witness, that I die without attempting the life of my once friend and benefactor."

With this he sunk upon the earth. Sir Walter was appalled. Had he indeed *murdered* an innocent friend? He ran to him, caught him up in his arms, and exclaimed :

"I have murdered you, James—for you did not fire at me."

"Why should I fire at you? or you at me, Sir Walter?" inquired the other, feebly. "Are we not friends?"

"We were—we were, James—but——"

"But what?"

"My wife."

"What of her?"

"I—I—believed—I heard,—in short, was there nothing wrong between you?" gasped the Knight.

"Sir Walter," returned the other, endeavoring to rise, struggling for breath, and fixing his eye, already glazing in death, upon the Knight—"I see it all. I am dying—I feel it—I know it—but she must not be wronged. Will you credit my last words?"

"Yes! yes! speak!"

"Then, as God is my Judge, and as I hope for mercy in the other world, I solemnly swear, I never wronged her, or you, even in thought."

These were the last words the unfortunate man ever spoke; and a few minutes after, he breathed his last, in the arms of the distracted Baronet, who now felt that the brand of Cain was on him. Like a madman, Sir Walter hurried back to the city, sought his wife, and told her all. Her emotions overcame her, and she swooned; and in that swoon he left her, to seek safety in flight. It chanced that a vessel, bound for the coast of France, was just weighing

anchor; and getting on board of her, the Knight was soon beyond the reach of justice.

It is not our purpose to follow him on that journey of torture, but to sum up the consequences of his awful crime in as few words as possible. Ere the first anniversary of the direful deed, Lady Clendennan was no more. Some said she died of a broken heart. Within three years, her two sons followed her; and the grief-bowed, conscience-stricken Knight—pardoned by Government, but not by Heaven—returned to his once happy home, only to feel it was a home for him no longer. As soon as he could, he now sold off his property, settled up his affairs, and sailed for the United States—taking with him his only remaining child, Rosalind, her governess, and two servants, who preferred following the fortunes of their old master to seeking a new one. After visiting various cities, he finally selected Philadelphia for his future home, purchased a handsome property, and settled down to a life of terrible gloom and remorse. As we shall soon have occasion to bring him before the reader in *propria personæ*, we will say nothing further of him in this connection.

Serious, if not fatal, were also the consequences of that tragedy to the surviving brother. Half demented by the shock, William Norbury never recovered to be himself again. A settled melancholy took possession of him; he neglected his business; took to drinking; and finally, on the death of his son, determined to leave the country for ever. He, too, as chance would have it—or, perhaps, more correctly speaking, as Providence willed it—sailed for the very city in which the cause of much of his misery was then living. But he died on the passage; his wife did not long survive him; and the fate of poor little Ellen is so far known to the reader

## CHAPTER VIII.

## THE KNIGHT AND THE SURGEON.

It was this sad tale, so deeply interwoven with the history of her own family, and in which therefore might be found the primary cause of all the sufferings which she had endured, that Ellen Norbury for the first time heard from the lips of Rosalind Clendennan—not as we have told it, however, in a connected form—but with an interchange and comparison of facts, by which the two were enabled to arrive at the same conclusion. Rosalind knew her own family history and the history of her mother's cousins, the father and uncle of Ellen, up to the period of the tragedy narrated; she knew, too, that subsequently to this, there was a sad change in the surviving brother; and Ellen, by giving her early recollections of her parents, with the loss of her brother, and the sad end of all but herself, was thus able to supply the remaining links in the chain of fatal events. Previous to her meeting with Rosalind, Ellen had never heard the name of Clendennan but once; and then it had passed the lips of her father, in a state of partial intoxication, coupled with a curse that had made her shudder, and which had produced an impression on her mind that had never been erased. The name of her uncle had never been mentioned in her hearing; and from this fact the inference was now drawn, that the subject of the tragedy was one to which her parents rarely if ever made an allusion. The history of Ellen's mother, up to the period already mentioned, was also known to Rosalind;

and as Ellen knew nothing, save that her mother's maiden name was Montague, this subject also became one of the deepest interest to her.

By these conversations, which occurred at different times, and when the parties were only in each other's company, Ellen learned wherefore it was so essential that her own name should be concealed from the father of Rosalind and the servants of the family. Of her father Rosalind said but little; but from that little it was to be inferred, that he was a miserable man—a prey to remorse and grief—at times cold, morose and misanthropic—at times peevish and wayward—always eccentric and ascetic—and striving to compound with his conscience, by secret acts of charity, for a crime he could not forgive himself. He generally kept himself closeted in his library, rarely went abroad, received no visitors, and seemed to take little or no interest, beyond the aforesaid deeds of charity, in the world without. There were times too when he locked himself against intrusion, and permitted not even his daughter to see him for days together. He wholly abjured his title, constituted Rosalind sole mistress of his mansion, allowed her to do as she pleased in everything, and seldom took the least interest in her affairs. Such was the establishment, in a country foreign to his birth, of a once happy Baronet, in which poor little Ellen found herself so singularly placed, by one of those freaks of fortune for which there is no accounting, except by the overruling power of Providence.

From the little she gleaned from Rosalind concerning her unhappy father, taken in connection with the eventful history we have related, Ellen readily perceived why it was that the sweet, lovely face of her kind protectress, at all times wore such an expression of deep-seated melancholy; and notwithstanding her own sorrows, she had



abundance of sympathy to spare to her gentle friend and cousin. Cousin! How sweet that word to the ear of one who had been so vilely abused, and so long destitute of a single relative or friend! It came like the warm sunshine and soft south wind to the freezing flower, and restored life and animation to her trouble-chilled heart. And Rosalind was one to return her sympathy with interest; and as Ellen told her sad tale of wretchedness and suffering, the tears of both were unconsciously mingled, and both felt happier without knowing why.

Rosalind was one of those gentle beings that seem expressly formed to love and be beloved. She was about twenty years of age, of the medium size, with a form symmetrical, airy, and graceful. Her fair features had a delicate refinement in detail as well as outline, and the natural expression was one of great sweetness and amiability, which lost nothing of loveliness, but increased in interest, by the pervading cast of melancholy. Her sunny hair hung down in clustering ringlets, and gave in some degree the same pleasant shade to her countenance, that her long, fringy lashes did to her soft, blue eyes. Her voice was a melody; and to hear her speak, and note the gently parted lips, with the even, pearly teeth just displayed, and mark the beaming glance of her soft, expressive eye, was to feel at the same moment the combined fascination of music and beauty. And to this fascination, her sad, sweet smile, with every feature radiant, seemed to add a charm irresistible; and the enrapt beholder could readily fancy he saw the light of Heaven upon a mortal countenance, after passing through the chambers of a soul made pure by holy thoughts and aspirations.

The painful events which had occurred during the last ten years of Rosalind's life, together with a change of country, and the peculiar condition of her father, had pre-

vented her taking that position in society to which her birth and wealth entitled her. In truth, being of a modest, retiring disposition, she did not care to mingle with the world; and since her arrival in America, she had striven to live in that seclusion which she considered most consistent with her circumstances; and in consequence, her circle of acquaintances, at the period we introduce her into our narrative, was rather limited. But it would have been almost impossible for her to live wholly retired, had she been so resolved; for common courtesy required her to see those who called upon her, and to return the visits of those whom she discovered to be congenial spirits.

In this way she became acquainted with a few families; and among these, with one by the name of Stanhope. At the time this acquaintance was formed, the Stanhopes—consisting of father, mother, son, and daughter—were living near neighbors, and were in easy circumstances; but had subsequently met with reverses, and had been obliged to part with their elegant mansion, and take up their residence in a small, unfashionable street. At the precise period this change occurred, Newton Stanhope, the son referred to, had just received his diploma as a Doctor of Medicine; and though it had not been his intention to enter upon practice for some years at least, yet he immediately put out his sign, with the praiseworthy design of doing what he could toward the maintenance of his parents and sister. We are pleased to add, that, owing to the influence of Rosalind and a few other *friends* of the family—who, unlike the generality of so-called friends, did not desert them in the hour of need—he had been successful beyond his most sanguine expectations; and had found, with a degree of pride and pleasure known only to high-spirited, noble minds, that his income would be sufficient to main-

tain himself and those he loved, in what might be termed a respectable style.

While the Stanhopes were in affluent circumstances, Newton, and his sister Linda, had been frequent visitors at the mansion of Rosalind; and she had experienced a degree of pleasure in their society which she had found in no other; and though their misfortunes had only tended to strengthen her attachment to them, yet she now saw, with pain, that one at least no longer met her as formerly. She still continued to visit the family, and to receive a cordial welcome from all but the young physician; who, from some cause, which she, in her simplicity of heart, had been unable to divine, had suddenly become reserved, cold, distant, and formal. But even this, though it pained her, and rendered her visits to the Stanhopes less frequent than they might otherwise have been, did not lessen her friendship for Linda, who was about her own age; and the young maidens became more deeply attached to each other, as time and circumstances more clearly revealed the noble qualities of both.

But to return to our little heroine.

Ellen had been more than six weeks in the house of the Baronet, and was able to sit up an hour or two at a time; but though curious to behold the person who had had such remarkable influence upon the fortunes of her family, she had not yet been favored with a glimpse of Sir Walter. One day, Rosalind having gone out with her friend, Linda, for a walk, the Knight sent a courteous word to Ellen, by Mrs. Wyndham, that, if agreeable to her, he would pay her a visit. At this unexpected communication, Ellen was not a little agitated; but promptly replied, to the effect that the proposed visit would give her pleasure. Shortly after, Sir Walter entered the apartment of the young invalid, walking with a cane, and seeming in a feeble state

of health. Ellen was seated in a large rocking-chair, propped up with pillows; and as the Knight slowly approached her, she fixed upon him a glance of curiosity, mingled with emotions akin to awe or fear.

The personal appearance of the Baronet was not very prepossessing. He was small in stature, and his body and limbs had an appearance of being withered or shrunk; and the skin, of a sallow hue, was dry and wrinkled. He stooped considerably, and there was a painful nervousness in all his motions—the nervousness of one continually startled by the least discordant sound. His hair, what little he had—for the front of his head was bald—was as white as the driven snow, and had thus changed from a jet black in a single night. His face, by no means large, had now a cadaverous, ghastly look; and his once clear, keen, gray eye, was now wandering and unsettled, with a restless, unhappy expression. In short, the whole man was an embodiment of the wretchedness of mental torture. Talk of capital punishment for the murderer! of giving him the extreme penalty of the law! It is no more in comparison with the penalty inflicted by the law of God for the same offence, than mortal structure is with the universe! Remorse—deep-seated, eternal, corroding remorse—"the worm that dieth not—the fire that is not quenched"—this it is that punishes beyond all human invention, and gives the doer of iniquity his just reward.

As Sir Walter approached Ellen, he fixed his eyes searchingly upon her sweet little face; and then stopping suddenly, he threw up both hands, and in a sharp, startled voice, exclaimed:

"In the name of Heaven! who are you?"

"My name, sir, is Ellen," replied the child, in a timid, trembling voice, for she was much startled at the question, look, and manner of the Knight.

For nearly a minute, the Baronet, with his hands raised in an attitude of surprise and astonishment, kept his eyes riveted upon the niece of his victim; and then turning away, he sunk upon a seat, covered his face with his hands, and fairly groaned aloud—occasionally uttering:

“God be merciful to me, a sinner! God be merciful to me, a sinner! for Christ’s sake! for Christ’s sake!”

After a time he seemed to grow more composed; but now and then a long-drawn sigh, or a half-stifled sob, attested how great was the struggle with himself, and how much he suffered.

All this while, little Ellen sat and watched him, with feelings of pity. Yes, strange as it may seem to such as make gold their god, the poor, despised orphan could find pity in her heart for the rich Baronet; for though deep may be the distress of innocent poverty, it is the enjoyment of Paradise compared to the sufferings of guilty wealth.

At last Sir Walter withdrew his hands from his ashy face, and, turning to Ellen, said:

“Doubtless you think, child, that my conduct is very strange; but there is such a remarkable resemblance between you and one I once called friend, that the sight of you revived painful emotions. Did you ever do wrong, my child?”

“Yes, sir—many times.”

“Yet your sweet face shows that you are innocent of any great wrong: God keep you so! What say you is your name?”

“Ellen, sir.”

“But you have another name?”

“Yes, sir!” returned Ellen, somewhat confused.

“Well, no matter—you need not mention it—*mea nihil refert*. Ah! forgetful me! I have not asked concerning your wounds!”

“I am getting better, sir—thank you.”

“Do you suffer much pain?”

“Only a little, sir, now.”

“But the pain of the mind does not mingle with that of the body—eh! child?”

“I don’t think I understand you, sir?”

“No! how should you? how should you? Well, I am pleased to know you are getting better. Do you want for any thing?”

“No, sir—thank you—I have every thing to make me happy.”

“Heaven grant you ever have! Yet Rosalind tells me, when she found you, senseless and bleeding in the street, you were friendless.”

“That was true, sir, then; but it isn’t true now; for dear Rosalind tells me she is my friend.”

“Believe her, Ellen—for her pure soul was never soiled by an untruth.”

“I do believe her, sir; and I want to live, to show her how grateful I feel, and how much I love her.”

“Good child! good child!” returned Sir Walter, in a state of partial abstraction, looking down upon the ground. A pause of more than a minute ensued. “It is strange!” he now muttered to himself; “it is very strange! such a likeness! Alas! every body and every thing seem to conspire to remind me of *him*! as if his image were not stamped upon my heart, in colors of blood!—Well, well—God be thanked! I have not to bear the earthly burden much longer. This old frame must soon perish now, and then that at least will be at rest. Oh! that I could *know*, while *here*, what lies beyond this gloomy sphere of existence! Does the mind, tortured here, continue in torture there? God forbid! God in mercy forbid! O Christ, and all holy saints, forbid! else must I suffer the conscience

fires of eternal damnation! Death! thou seemest awful; and yet I look to thee for relief; would to Heaven it could be the relief of annihilation! Yet no—no—for then I should never again behold the beings I most dearly loved on earth! Death! Ah! there is coldness in the very sound! the very thought of it sends an icy chill over my unhappy spirit. Yet none can escape it! In all the ages of the past—whether surrounded by pomp or poverty—whether happy or miserable—none have lived to see the present—none of the present will live to behold the future; and they of the future will go down, generation after generation, millions upon millions, to the same cold, silent grave, and earth will be as if they had not been! *Hei mihi! Semel omnibus calcanda est via leti!*"

While thus speaking to himself, he seemed to have forgotten that another was present; and after another short pause, he resumed:

"In the beginning of the race of man, if we are to believe the Bible, the first human being born upon this earth, became jealous of the second, his own brother, and murdered him; and God set a mark upon his forehead, and drove him forth, a miserable exile. Ah me! what need of branding and banishing? If he had a conscience, *hell* was with him, be he where he might!"

Saying this, he clasped his temples with both hands, started up, and, with an eager, trembling step, began to pace the room, to and fro. At length, his eye falling upon Ellen, he stopped suddenly; and glaring upon her, with the look of a maniac, he exclaimed:

"Great God! do the murdered dead live in the next generation?"

Ellen was terribly alarmed; and had she consulted merely her own feelings, would have called for help; but she restrained her inclination; and, trembling like an

aspen, with cold perspiration streaming from every pore, kept her eyes riveted on the Baronet's. Presently she perceived his wild, sharp, penetrating eye grow glazed and stony, as if the sight were turned inward, and the mind saw without the aid of its material surroundings. This unearthly appearance continued for perhaps a minute, during which sir Walter moved not a muscle; and then one gleam of intellect after another began to light up his countenance, till its natural expression was entirely restored.

"Ha! Ellen," he said, "you look frightened! Have I done any thing to alarm you?"

"I was afraid, sir, you were not well," answered Ellen, much embarrassed.

"Yes, I see—I had one of my spells. My health is bad—very bad. Good health is a great blessing, my child—a great blessing." He again seated himself, gave way to a moment's reflection, and then resumed: "I am told that when these spells are on me, I sometimes speak in a rambling manner: what did I say just now?"

"You were saying something, sir, about God driving away the first murderer," answered the other, with some hesitation.

"Ah! very likely—yes, very likely. *Væ mihi!*"

The unhappy Knight now entered into conversation with Ellen, and carried it on in a manner so gentle and rational, as to remove, in a great degree, the disagreeable, not to say alarming, impression which his previous language and conduct had produced. His command of language was great—his faculty of pleasing, when he chose to exert it, was wonderful—and long ere he had ceased entertaining his fair little guest, the heart of Ellen had warmed toward him to such a degree, that she felt as if she could throw her arms about his neck, and love rather than fear him, as a child should love a father.

The conversation was interrupted by a servant, who came to say that Dr. Markham was below, and desired to see his patient. This was the Surgeon who attended upon Ellen, and the husband—although Ellen did not know it—of the Mrs. Markham who so rudely put her aside in Chestnut street, and the father of the little girl after whom she had gazed so sadly, envying her more happy lot.

“Stand out of the way, you beggar!” was the exclamation of the purse-proud female, as she swept on in her velvet robes; and yet, within two hours from the time those words were spoken, the lord of that same *soi disant* lady, felt a degree of pride, that he, of all others, should be selected to approach, as a paid attendant, the bedside of that same beggar, now the honored guest of the high-born and wealthy.

Well, this is a curious world! curious, at least, in its multiform variety of circumstances—curious in the miserable conceits of human beings, who fancy that they are better than their fellows, because they have more money! What a contemptible thing is the mere aristocracy of wealth! men without brains assuming a superiority over intellect—making the pocket superior to the head—the dross of the earth superior to the fires of God-sent genius! It is a puny farce, too despicable to excite laughter, in which the biggest fools play the leading parts!

“Show him up!” said Sir Walter, in reply to the servant.

The meeting between the Baronet and Dr. Markham was polite, but formal. The Doctor was a plain, blunt, practical man, rather eccentric withal, and therefore, figuratively speaking, the antipode of his wife. His head, covered by dark, curly hair, was extremely large, with a broad, high, projecting forehead, and a coarse-featured, dull-looking face. A glance at his sober, unspeculative

gray eye, would at once convince you that he dealt in nothing but facts—facts proved to be such by actual demonstration; that, in short, he was a man of lines, curves, angles and figures, with little or no imagination. He believed in this world, because he saw it, felt it, knew it to exist; he gave no thought to the other, because there was no evidence to satisfy his mind of there being another. The Bible he termed a theological romance; and as for man's having a soul—he would believe it, he said, when he saw it, and not before. He had dissected man carefully—had laid bare every vein, nerve, muscle, and fibre—had examined the brain, the heart, and lungs; and yet had seen nothing of a soul, or even a place to put one. He had seen a dead body dance by the force of a powerful battery, and therefore argued that life was merely galvanism perfected. As to who created the different worlds, the Doctor said it was enough for him to know they were created; and if any body knew more, they were welcome to make what use they could of their knowledge, provided they would leave him in peace to make what use he could of what he did know.

As soon as the Surgeon had finished his examination of his little patient, whom he pronounced to be doing remarkably well, Sir Walter, who happened to be in a mood for conversation, and who knew something of the Doctor's skeptical opinions, thus addressed him:

“I would I knew, Doctor, whether man has an existence after the death of the body!”

“Umph!” returned the Surgeon, drily—“there are a great many in a like predicament.”

“But you have some opinion on the matter, Doctor!”

“So have you—or ought to have!” was the blunt rejoinder.

“I have heard that you do not believe in the immor-

talities of the soul—or rather, that you do not believe man has a soul!”

“Why should I? I never saw it. Do you believe a dog has a soul?”

“But a dog has no mind—no reason.”

“How do you know? you were never a dog.”

“But if a dog had mind, he would give evidence of it.”

“What do you call mind?”

“Why, that power which thinks, reasons, conceives, weighs, measures, and judges—which from cause calculates effect, and from effect finds out cause.”

“And do you tell me a dog, a horse, or a monkey, has not this power?”

“Certainly not in the same degree that man has.”

“What do you mean by man, sir? Do you allude to the mental giants of civilization? or the animal dwarfs of barbarism? The term man is generic, and comprehends all human bipeds; and boast of his intellect as much as you may, I will name you thousands—nay, millions—of the *genus homo*, who do not exhibit the sense and sagacity of a New Foundland dog! Sir, I once put a muzzle on a favorite dog of mine; and what think you the animal did first? He sneaked off and hid himself for four-and-twenty hours. He was evidently ashamed of being, as he reasoned, disgraced. Afterward, sir, he got the muzzle off, but carried it about with him, in his mouth, wherever he went, and would let no one touch it.\* Now he had reasoned again, that that muzzle was put on for a special purpose, and that it was necessary he should have it with him, but at the same time preferred carrying it to wearing it. Now prove to me, sir, that that canine quadruped did not think, reason, conceive, and judge, and I will give up the point.”

\* A fact which came under the author's own observation.

“There does indeed seem to be a continuous chain, from the lowest order of the vegetable world, up through the animal kingdom, to the highest grade of intellect; and it is hard to say where this begins and that leaves off—where instinct stops and reason starts!” said the Knight, reflectively. “Ah! true it is, as some author has observed—*Qualis sit animus, ipse animus nescit.*”

“Yes, sir!” rejoined the Doctor; “true it is, that mind is ignorant of what mind is; and therefore what authority has mind for saying that mind can exist without the body?”

“I have sometimes wished for annihilation,” sighed the unhappy Baronet; “and yet it is an awful thing to think our existence ends here!”

“Umph! very awful!” said the Doctor, sneeringly. “The world has existed millions on millions of years—a fact that can be demonstrated by the process of formation, which is still in operation—and yet I’ll wager my gray mare against your front teeth, that it never occurred to you to regret you were not born sooner! Annihilation awful! Poh! you will know nothing about it. We often lose hours in sleep that we have no recollection of; and millions and millions of centuries, without consciousness, would be the same to us as one lost second.”

“It is not the state itself, so much as the thought of it, that is so awful,” said the Knight, in the way of explanation. “But since you speak of sleep, Doctor—what do you think of dreams?”

“What should I think of them, but as a species of diseased fancies?”

“And yet they are often rational!”

“So is a maniac.”

“Have you then no faith in dreams?”

“Yes, I believe dreams are dreams; but if you mean as

prognosticators—why, *stulti confidunt somniis*—and I leave you to judge what claim I may have to be considered a fool.”

“Because fools confide in dreams, is no reason why a wise man, for doing the same, should be considered a fool,” returned the Baronet, in a tone that indicated a slight degree of irritation; “and as I hold you to be much wiser than a fool, Doctor, I want you to tell me what authority you have for asserting, that a diseased imagination, or fancy, can array before the mind’s eye a healthy and perfect picture?”

“But I never said it could, sir.”

“No! but you term dreams diseased fancies; and yet in dreams I have frequently seen the faces and forms of my departed friends, exactly as they appeared in life—while, awake, I have often labored in vain to call up a true likeness. Now may we not base the immortality of the soul upon the fact that man has a twofold existence—one visible, the other invisible?”

“I do not catch your drift, sir!” replied the Surgeon.

“Why, this it is,” rejoined the Knight: “I suppose you are prepared to admit that all my senses pertain to my animal body? Nay, more—from the fact that you deny a spiritual body, I presume you are ready to defend the idea that they belong to the animal body *only*. Well, then, how is it that, with my eyes closed in sleep, I can see objects I do not look upon? hear sounds that do not enter through the material ear? smell what does not come to the olfactory nerve? taste what reaches not my tongue? and feel what I do not touch?”

“Why, sir, I shall answer you, by denying that you see, hear, smell, taste, or feel, in the manner you allege. That you at the moment think you do, I will admit; but it is all mere fancy—a deception of the brain—which, like the

heart and the lungs, is often active when the rest of the body is still in sleep.”

“You speak with assurance, Doctor,” returned the Baronet; “but my interior perception tells me you are wrong.”

“Well,” rejoined the Surgeon, looking at his watch; “as I have not time to hold an argument with your interior perception, I will take this occasion to say, good day, sir!”

For some time after the Surgeon had departed, Sir Walter sat and mused. At length, turning abruptly to Ellen, he inquired:

“My child, do you believe we live after the death of the body?”

“I do, sir—for my mother often told me so.”

“Your mother was a good woman, my child; and she was right; yes, she was right; I somehow feel it—I *know it!*”

With this the Baronet arose, and quitted the apartment, without saying a word.

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE BURGLARY AND ABDUCTION.

As we have previously remarked, the three or four months of Ellen’s confinement in the mansion of the Knight, with the lovely and gentle Rosalind for a companion, was the happiest period she had known since the death of her father; and it came like a gleam of sunshine through the broken clouds of a fearful storm; but, to con-



tinue the simile, it was the sunshine through parted clouds which were about to reunite and make the succeeding gloom more awful, while the storm should again rage with increased fury. We know little of astrology, and are not prepared to say whether it may properly be considered a science or not; but this we do know—that there is a certain influence bearing upon every individual, which at times completely controls him for good or evil; and if the evil aspect rule, no human ingenuity, no human foresight, can avert the fated calamity. Often, without premonition, in the very height of prosperity and happiness, the awful blow is struck, and the doomed one is crushed—perchance forever—perchance to rise again, all unexpectedly, by the same mysterious power. It was his knowledge of this mysterious something, perhaps, which caused the great bard so truthfully to say:

“There’s a divinity that shapes our ends,  
Rough-hew them how we will.”

To little Ellen was still attached an adverse fate; and notwithstanding her present bright prospects, the opening future, into whose mystic depths she could not penetrate, held in store for her misfortunes of a painfully trying nature.

The residence of Sir Walter was a stately mansion, situated on the corner of two elegant thoroughfares—the out-buildings and high walls forming a parallelogram, and enclosing a court, garden, and conservatory. The main entrance was reached by marble steps, under a fine portico; over which, along the second story, extended an iron balcony, which became a favorite sitting-place during the warm pleasant evenings of spring and summer.

It was here that little Ellen found herself one delightful evening in April, with only Mrs. Wyndham for a com-

panion. The Knight and his daughter had gone for a drive to a neighboring town, taking with them two of the four servants which they kept in employ; and it was uncertain whether they would return that night or not; for Rosalind had expressed an intention of persuading her father to sleep away from home, in the hope that such a change, from his dreary, monotonous course of life, would prove beneficial to his health and spirits.

From some cause, which she could not explain, little Ellen, on that eventful night, felt greatly depressed; and when, at a rather late hour, she retired to her sleeping apartment, without her sweet companion, Rosalind, a weight of portending evil bore so heavily upon her gentle spirit, that, as she threw herself upon her downy couch, her slender frame trembled like the leaves of the aspen. She made no mention of her peculiar feelings to any one, however; and, soon after touching her pillow, fell asleep.

For an hour or two her sleep was deep and untroubled, and then she began to dream. She thought she was in a little boat, which had just passed over a dark, troubled, tempestuous sea, and entered the haven of a beautiful, fairy lake; and she was looking around with rapture upon the silvery waters, and the gorgeous scenery which enclosed them, when a bright being suddenly appeared, whose shining raiment almost dazzled her eyes. In a moment she knew this angel visitant to be her beloved mother; and with a cry of joy, she clasped her in her arms, and shed beatific tears. Suddenly the bright, joyful face of her dear mother became overcast with a portentous sadness; and her voice sounded like the wail of the Eolian harp, as she said:

“My child—my dear, sweet child—I constantly watch over you—I am ever near you; but there are dangers around you, from which even a mother’s love has not

power to guard. Over a sea of tempests dire, you have passed to this bright haven of momentary rest; but your abiding place is not for the present here, and an ocean of misery lies beyond. Put your trust in God, and call upon Him in your hours of sorrow—for He alone can safely guide your frail bark to the haven of eternal happiness. My poor, dear child, you will soon be alone, on a world of tempestuous waters, at the mercy of the wild waves, drifting you know not whither, your gentle soul filled with doubts, fears and despair. This I know, who cannot see the end—for it is not given unto mortal or spirit to know the secret designs of God. Put your trust in Him, and pray ever! Farewell!"

With this the bright being kissed the sweet dreamer, and vanished. Then the scene began to change. The gorgeous landscape resolved itself into a seemingly boundless ocean of murky waters, and the golden sky became overcast with dark, lowering clouds, which sent forth angry winds to raise mountainous waves. Through the deepening shades began to play the forked lightnings, and peal on peal of crashing thunder made the gloom more awful.

At this moment, with a stifled cry of horror, Ellen awoke—but only to find the reality of her situation as terrible as that of her sleeping fancy. A bright light, streaming full upon her eyes, almost blinded her; and ere she could utter a waking cry of terror, a heavy hand covered her lips, and a deep voice, in a suppressed tone, said:

"Make the least noise, and you won't live to say your prayers."

Terrified beyond the power of speech, even had the hand of the intruder not been pressed upon her mouth, Ellen remained motionless, wondering whether she were yet awake, or whether what she saw and felt were a part of some horrible vision. The light, which shone upon her face, came

from a dark-lantern; and its rays, being thus concentrated into one focus, left the face and figure of him that held it, as well as all other parts of the room, in deep shadow. Setting the lantern down on the bed, but keeping the light streaming upon Ellen, the Burglar—for such he was—took from his pocket an old handkerchief, which he twisted and thrust into the mouth of the trembling child, where he secured it by passing a cord around her head. Having thus gagged, he proceeded to bind her, hand and foot. This done, he took up the lantern; and as he turned away, he said, in a fierce whisper:

"If you make the least noise while I'm away, I'll come back and slit your weasand."

Glancing hastily around the apartment, he now went out, leaving Ellen in darkness, a prey to all the horrors of a fearful reality and an excited imagination. She now discovered, poor child, that her dream was not all a dream—for though the sky was fair when she retired to rest, a storm had since come up, and the rain was now descending in torrents, accompanied with a fierce wind and occasional lightning and thunder. For some time she heard, or fancied she heard, the Burglar moving about in the adjoining apartment; and breathless with terror, she listened to every sound, while a cold, clammy perspiration pressed through every pore.

In something like half an hour, the man returned to the apartment of Ellen, accompanied by another, who held in his arms quite a load of silver plate. Placing his burden on the bed generally occupied by Rosalind, he and his companion in crime, by the light of the dark-lantern, contemplated the glittering heap with a high degree of satisfaction.

"I say, Jim," said the one who had brought the valuables into the apartment in question, speaking in a low tone,

"this here's a rare go, and we'll be able to set up among the swell nobs, arter starving to death all winter."

"Well, we will, pal," returned the other; "and see if we don't come the blind over the fancy. This here pile's enough to set a feller up in business—to say nothing of the ready, and that there gal, who'll fetch a few."

"I say, Jim—how many shiners—eh?"

"Never you mind about that now, Jake—we'll count 'em when we git cribbed."

"Honor bright, now, Jim?"

"In course—d'ye think I'm mean enough to cheat in the swagger?"\*

"We must be sure and clear the beaks."†

"You must do that, Jake—for the big spile will have to go with you. I'll take the gal, and come out right side up, you can bet your life."

"But what about the gal, Jim? I don't exactly understand that part."

"I do, though—and that's enough. What comes of the gal, is my affair, Jake—but I'll tell you all about it some other time."

"Hark!" exclaimed the other; "didn't you hear a noise?"

The burglars listened for some minutes, making their lantern dark, by shutting a metal door over the convex glass through which the light streamed.

"Nothing but the storm, I reckon," at length said the one called Jim. "It howls beautiful—just the night for us. But, come—let's be off—this here's no place for con-fabulation, or whatever the — gentry call the — thing. Here," he continued, gathering up the silk counterpane; "this here rag 'll do to bag the swagger in;

\* Spoil.

† Police officers.

and so do you be off by the back way, while I stay and fasten it arter you."

"But what do you stay behind for, Jim?"

"Haint I got the gal to tend to?"

"But what do you mean about fastening the back way? Aint you coming out through there?"

"No, I goes front."

"What for, Jim?"

"Never you mind about that—I've got a reason, and it's a good one. Come, travel; for this here storm 'll soon blow over, and then the Charlies 'll be sneaking about, with dry feathers, ready to pounce upon the first miserable wretch they find. As long as it rains, we're all right—for they'll take — good care not to git wet, let happen what will. Is your barkers\* all right, Jake?"

"Yes."

"And your rib-digger?"†

"Ay."

"Well, then, put out—and don't let nothing run afoul of you and live to tell on't."

The burglars now left the room together; and after an absence of some five or ten minutes, the one called Jim returned. Hastening to the trembling Ellen, he unbound her limbs, without removing the gag, and said:

"Now, gal, hunt out all your fine toggery, right sudden."

The poor child, supposing his design was merely to rob her of her clothing, and that he would then leave her and depart, hastily complied with his command; and soon had all that belonged to her—presents from Rosalind—collected together. Meantime the Burglar, though keeping an eye on his victim, was not idle. With a false key he

\* Pistols.

† Knife.

opened the dressing bureau of Rosalind; where, to his great delight, he found a costly necklace and several jewels of value, which he immediately secured about his person. He then bade his trembling captive dress herself in a new silk frock, and put on her best bonnet, while he made as small a bundle as he could of the rest of her apparel. This done, he threw a costly shawl, belonging to Rosalind, over her shoulders, seized upon a silk umbrella that chanced to be standing in one corner, and said:

"Now, then, my little gal, we're ready for a start. We'll go softly down, and leave by the front way, and that 'll be respectable, to say the least on't."

Ellen would have remonstrated—but she was still gagged and could not speak. What could the Burglar want of her, after securing all that was valuable? Perhaps he only intended that she should show him the way to the front door; and in the hope that this was his main design, and that he would then leave her and effect his own escape alone, she obeyed his orders with some appearance of alacrity. But when the front door was opened, he took hold of her arm, and said, gruffly:

"Come, you've got to go with me—I want you. This here's no time for foolery!" he added, as Ellen, trembling with terror, drew back. "You've got to come, and that's the long and short on't! Now will you come peaceable? or shall I drag you along, and stir you up with my dagger?—Mark this, gal—for it's as true as that you've now got your breath in your body! If you come peaceable and quiet, you won't be hurt—but if you manage so as to git any of the watch down on us, I'll run this here steel into your heart!"

What could the poor child do? There was no alternative. She was completely in the man's power, without

even so much as the use of her voice to call for assistance. So she made a virtue of necessity, and yielded to a fate she could not control or change.

The Burglar, with a view of presenting a quiet, respectable appearance to the eye of any one they might chance to meet, took hold of her hand, and spread the umbrella over their heads. The course he took was through streets dimly lighted and but little frequented; and in something less than half an hour, Ellen found herself entering that dismal quarter from which she hoped she had forever escaped, and which in a former chapter we termed the Infected District. After passing several dens of misery, the Burglar at last entered an alley more dark and noxious than any; and cautiously approaching an old, dilapidated door, he rapped softly on it with his knuckles.

"Who's there?" inquired a female voice, which Ellen fancied she recognized.

"It's all right," was the answer, in a low, guarded tone.

"It's me, Mag—open quick!"

The next moment Ellen found herself dragged forward through the partly opened door, into a place of total darkness. Immediately the door was closed again, and the man inquired:

"Has Jake come, Mag?"

"No."

"The fiends take him, if he's trying any dodge, or has blundered into limbo!"

"How have you made out, Jim?" inquired the woman.

"It's been a rare go, and we've bagged the swagger without a bark. Hark!" he whispered—"there's a footstep; and—yes—there's a knock. Speak, Mag!"

"Who's there?" again demanded the woman.

"Jake," was the answer, in a low tone.

The door was again partly opened, and the second

burglar glided in, and deposited his burden on the ground, the apartment being still in total darkness.

"It's all right, pal," whispered Jim, as he busied himself with the fastenings of the door. "I's afeard you'd run afoul of a beak."

"I did come near one, and had to go a —— long ways round," answered the other. "Come, let's have a glim."

"Here it is," answered the woman, as she drew a match across the jamb of the fire-place, and lighted a tallow candle.

As the feeble rays fell upon the bloated countenance, Ellen perceived that she had not mistaken the voice of the woman, and that she was again in the presence of the degraded being called Margaret. She instantly turned to the master burglar, and saw, what she had before merely suspected—for till now his face had been constantly in deep shadow—that she was indebted for her present captivity to the very man who had once probably saved her life, by picking her up in the street when in a most destitute condition. At that time, the home of this man of crime seemed to her a little paradise: now, by contrast with her late abode, a very hell.

"Why, who have we here?" said Margaret, now for the first time aware of the presence of Ellen.

"There's a surprise for ye, Mag!" answered Mulwrack, with a kind of chuckle.

"Why, as I'm a living sinner," continued Margaret, bringing the light close to Ellen's face, "if it isn't the ungrateful little thief that stole my money and ran off! How's this, Jim?"

"You may well ax how it is, Mag," replied the other; "for the whole thing gits *me* all of a heap. You see, as me and Jake was rummaging the big crib, hunting for the swagger, I happened into one of the sleeping-rooms, and

then thought it best to know if any body'd spied me. Well, on coming up to the bed, that had somebody in it, you can fancy how the thing got me, when I seed the face of her that we'd been looking for so long. Here's luck, thinks I; and I'll bag you, if I don't nothing else. Well, I gagged and tied her; and when we'd got through with our tother business, I took her along. And what's more," he added, with a chuckle, "I made her git her toggery, and we came out the front way, arter letting Jake out the back way, and fastening all up tight. D'ye understand that dodge, Mag?"

"I think I do," answered the woman; "you mean the big-bugs shall suspicion she robbed them?"

"You've hit the nail there, Mag—though Jake couldn't guess," returned Mulwrack.

On hearing this, poor Ellen uttered a groan of mental agony, and reeled against the wall.

"Well, hang me, if I smelt the rat, Jim!" said Jake, in a tone of admiration. "It takes you! So this was what you wanted of the gal, arter all? But what'll you do with her now?"

Mulwrack and Margaret exchanged glances, and the former replied:

"Oh, leave that to me! I'll take care she'll fetch us more spile than trouble."

The last sentence he muttered to himself.

Margaret now removed the shawl which had been thrown over Ellen; and as she glanced at her rich and fashionable apparel, she uttered an exclamation of surprise.

"Why, how's this?" she said; "silks, as I live! Why, she must have been something more than a servant in the family!"

"Take that there rag out of her mouth, and let her ex-

plain!" rejoined the master burglar. "I'd like to know something about it too."

As soon as she could speak, Ellen fell upon her knees, and besought her captors, in the most piteous tones, interrupted with tears and sobs, to take all she had of value, and allow her to return to her kind friends, before they should suspect her of being so base and ungrateful as to rob them—a crime which seemed to her pure soul as black as the shades of hell itself.

"Stop your blubbering noise!" said Mulwrack, savagely—"or I'll stop it for you. It aint much of a quarter for the beaks, this here—but there's no use in letting our neighbors into our secrets. The long and short on't is, you can't go back at present—and so shut up your whining!"

"Umph!" sneered Margaret; "you make a monstrous fuss about robbing them big-bugs; as if they cared for a trifle; and as if you wasn't used to stealing! You didn't feel so virtuous, probably, when you stole my clothes and money! and from me, too, who'd tried to do you a kindness, because you was poor and friendless like myself. Oh, no—it didn't matter what you took from me—a poor, miserable, degraded wretch. Come, I like that!"

"Oh! dear! dear!" cried Ellen; "don't think I stole your money—don't! Oh! indeed, indeed, I didn't! I'll tell you how it was."

"Oh, yes—I'll be bound you have a lie ready made!" replied Margaret.

"No, ma'am—I'll tell you the truth, and nothing else, as I hope for heaven!"

There was something so convincing in the earnest, agonizing tone in which little Ellen spoke, that, after looking her steadily in the eye for a few moments, Margaret said, in a milder voice:

"Well, go on, and let's hear what you have to say for yourself!"

Hurriedly Ellen narrated the manner of her meeting with the Hunchback, on that eventful Christmas morning—how she was induced to put herself under his guidance—what took place at Jimmy Quiglan's—and how she subsequently lost her way, wandered off to Chestnut street, got run over, and so forth and so on.

"If I could only believe you!" said Margaret, on whom Ellen's story seemed to make a favorable impression.

"Oh! ma'am—you must—you must believe me!" cried Ellen. "Oh! don't think I would do wrong to anybody; and particularly to one so good and kind to me as you were!"

Hardened as she was in sin and crime, a tear—forced up from some little cavern in her soul, not yet eternally closed against the emotions which soften and save—glistened in Margaret's eye, as Ellen spoke.

"Come, come," joined in Mulwrack, gruffly—who noticed that Ellen's language was awakening the sympathetic feelings of his companion in vice—and which, if fully aroused, might seriously interfere with his design—"Come, come, Mag—what is't to you whether the gal's story's true or not?"

"It's a good deal to me, Jim," replied the other, with some spirit; "for I hate to think every body's as wicked as us—I mean as me."

"Hush, now, with such —— nonsense!" growled Jim. "I'll git mad soon, Mag."

"Oh! I can show you the scars, to prove that I was run over!" said Ellen, eagerly, who saw that her only hope of escape lay in the better feelings of Margaret, which she could the more readily excite by convincing her that she had spoken the truth.



"Oh! can you do that?" exclaimed Margaret.

"If she can, she shan't!" rejoined Mulwrack, almost fiercely. "See here!" he continued, addressing Ellen; "if you know when you're well off, you'd better keep your mouth shut! Will you do it?"

"Yes, sir!" replied the terrified child; "if you don't want me to speak, I won't."

"That's sensible; and mind you keep to your word, or I'll break your head! If you think you can keep your mouth shut now, and make no noise, you may go up that ladder there"—pointing to one in the further corner of the room, which led through a trap-door to the second story; "but if I hear from you agin, I'll gag you, and chuck you down cellar, among the rats! You know what's wanted now—so start!"

Poor little Ellen, afraid of her life, hastened to the ladder, without a word, and ascended to the floor above. Mulwrack followed her, closed the trap-door, and fastened it on the lower side. Ellen was now in an unfurnished apartment, close under the roof, and in total darkness—for the only window the room contained, was boarded up, so that scarcely a ray of light could enter. Sinking upon the floor, she buried her face in her hands, and struggled to keep down the up-heavings of her seemingly breaking heart, and stifle the sound of convulsive sighs and sobs. After the storm there comes a calm, and vented grief gives the troubled mind repose. Ellen at length became tranquil, if not resigned; and hope, which seldom leaves youth, sprung up in her breast. Till the dawn of day, she heard them moving about in the room below, and conversing in low tones—and once or twice she fancied her own name was mentioned. At last all grew still; and about the same time, strange as it may seem, she fell into a sound sleep, from which she did not awake for several hours.

When she did awake, she knew, by a small ray of sunlight, which found its way into her chamber, through a crevice in the roof, that it could not be far from the mid-day hour. She looked around her prison, by a light resembling twilight, and saw that bread and water had been placed within her reach; but all was still below, and not a living soul did she see throughout that day of wretchedness almost beyond the strength of reason to endure.

Let us now turn to another scene, and see if we can ascertain the mysterious cause which led to the abduction and imprisonment of this poor child of sorrow.

## CHAPTER X.

### THE DEACON AND THE BURGLAR.

It was on the evening of the day following the burglary, that a dark figure stole out of the gloomy region known as the Infected District, and, gliding warily along some of the more respectable thoroughfares, at length entered Eighth street, and halted before a fine dwelling, which bore upon a silver mounted plate, on the front door, the name of Absalom Pinchbeck. After one or two cautious glances up and down the street, he hastened up the steps, and rung the bell.

"Is Mr. Pinchbeck in?" he inquired of the domestic who answered his summons.

"He is, sure. Will ye walk in?" was the answer.

"First tell him a gentleman is here, who'd like to speak with him."



The domestic turned away, with a smile of contempt, at the idea of the stranger, whose dress she had scanned by the light of the street-lamp, calling himself a gentleman; and the next minute the Deacon himself appeared.

"Can we have a bit of private chat?" said the stranger to the Deacon.

"Oh! I see—it's you, Mr. Mulwrack," replied the Deacon. "Yes—walk in here!" and he threw open the door into the front parlor, and called for a light. The moment the gas was lit, and the doors were closed, he added, in a low tone: "What news?"

"The best," answered Mulwrack.

"Ah! indeed! glad to hear it!" and the oily Deacon rubbed his hands, keeping his eye the while inquiringly upon his guest. "Yes—take a seat; there—so—well?"

"You know what we've talked of afore?" said Mulwrack.

"Yes, indeed—I've a good memory."

"You know the gal was wanted to make you all right?"

"Yes—if she could be found—and—and——"

"Put out of the way," chimed in the Burglar, finishing the sentence in a business-like tone.

"Hush! don't speak so loud! walls have ears, you know. Yes! I believe that was something like what we talked of."

"Well, she's found."

"Ah! indeed! How? where? when?"

"Never you mind all that—that's my business—and I don't blow my business to everybody. The gal's safe—I knows where—and that's enough."

"Yes—exactly—excuse me! So she's found, eh?"

"Ay! and she can stay found, or be lost—you understand?"

"Yes, yes,—I see!" returned the Deacon, in a nervous tone, glancing hastily around. "There! don't speak quite

so loud,—this is a very serious thing, you know—very serious!"

"You needn't be skeered," said Mulwrack; "*you've* got nothing to be afeared of; it's me, and not you, that'll do the business."

"Yes, yes—I know; but then, you see—you see—if it should ever leak out, I would be in law accessory before the fact; and that wouldn't be at all agreeable, you see. Ah! law is a great thing; and I intend to make a great lawyer of my son Nelson."

"Curse the law!" grumbled Mulwrack; "I've had enough on't; and if I does this job, I intend to show this here town a clean pair of heels, and let them as wants law, have it, and be——! But to business—for I can't stay all night. Now you needn't be afeared of the thing's leaking out; for if I does the business, I'll do it alone; and I'm not the chap to peach on any man as pays me well."

"You say you have the girl safe?"

"I said the gal was safe—I didn't say who had her."

"But how am I to know she is the right one?"

"Can't you believe what I tell you?"

"Doubtless you speak the truth, and it may not seem right for me to doubt your word; but in a matter like this, you know, where so much is at stake, I should like the assurance of my own eyes."

"Well, would you know the gal, if you'd see her agin?"

"I think I would—yes, I think I would. She stopped here, begging, one night—at least I suppose she is the same; and I have a pretty good recollection of her features. Confound the thing! if I had known then what I do now——"

"You'd have did the business yourself, I s'pose," rejoined Mulwrack, as the other paused.

"Oh! no! no! not I!" hastily replied the Deacon.

"Well, the long and short on't is, if you're in 'arnest, you shall see the gal afore I pocket the rhino."

"Of course you don't expect your pay before you do your work?" said the Deacon, inquiringly.

"Don't I?" sneered Mulwrack, looking the other straight in the eye. "I hope you don't take me for a — fool!"

"Oh! no—by no means, Mr. Mulwrack—you must not take it in that light; but it is not customary, among us business men, to pay for a job before it's done."

"Well, I expect it's not customary, among you business men, to bargain for such jobs, neither," rejoined the Burglar. "Now the long and short on't is this here—that when the job's *murder*, (at this word he sunk his voice to a whisper, and the other shuddered,) and that job's to benefit another man, the chap that don't git his pay for't afore it's done, is a — sight bigger fool than me—that's all I've got to say about that."

"Well, well—we'll talk of that by-and-by," said the Deacon, uneasily. "For the present, it may be as well to consider how much I should be benefited by her—her—being—ah—lost."

The cowardly scoundrel could not bring himself to utter the word murdered.

"Why, you know a'ready how much you'll git," said Mulwrack, impatiently; "we've talked this here all over afore."

"Yes! but I've kind of forgotten, you see. Business is business, Mr. Mulwrack; yes, business is business; and one ought never to transact it hastily. After all, the thing seems to rest with that paper you found; and that really may be nothing but—but—a—(he was going to say forgery,

but checked himself and substituted)—but the idle work of some idle man."

"Well, I don't know—you'll have to be your own judge about that there," returned the Burglar, indifferently. "All I know is, how and where I got it; and that when I showed it to you, you thought it was genewine."

"True—true—so I did; yes, so I did; and I think so still; but thinking and knowing are two things, you see—my—my—ah! Mr. Mulwrack," rejoined the Deacon, turning and twisting himself about in a manner indicative of considerable uneasiness of mind.

"Well, what's up?" gruffly demanded the Burglar, who began to feel not a little contempt for his hypocritical and cowardly companion.

"Eh! what did you say?"

"I say what's up?"

"Up?"

"I mean what are you going to do? what do you decide on?"

"Oh! ah! yes—ahem—I see! Well, first, I think I would like to look at that paper again. Have you got it about you?"

"Yes!" answered Mulwrack, looking the Deacon steadily in the face for some time, as if to read his very thoughts. "Now I expect there'll be no trick about this matter!" he continued; "but if you *do* try to come any game over me, I'll let daylight through you, if it costs me a knot under the ear! D'ye understand?"

"Oh! no—Heaven forbid! I had no such idea—upon my honor, as a gentleman, I hadn't!" stammered the worthy church-officer. "And besides, how could I trick you? what could I do? If that paper is correct, the information is worthless to me while the girl lives; and, of course,

(lowering his voice and shuddering,) her living depends on you!"

"Well, here's the paper then," said Mulwrack, taking it from his pocket and handing it to the other. "Just read it out loud—I'd like to hear it agin myself."

The Deacon drew near the light, opened the soiled and crumpled document—which was written in a bold, free, business-like hand—and read as follows:

"THE WELDEN ESTATE.

"Archibald Welden, the younger son of the original Baronet of the same name, by the death of a rich kinsman on his mother's side, fell heir by will to a large estate and great wealth. He married, and had for issue a son and a daughter. The daughter died without issue. Charles, the son of Archibald, wedded early in life. Issue, two sons and a daughter. The brothers, Henry and John, sons of Charles, died unmarried. Mary, the daughter of Charles, inherited the estate of her father Charles, and grandfather Archibald, which she brought as dowry to her wedded husband, Edward Montague, youngest son of Richard Marquis of Landfelt. This union was productive of three sons and two daughters—but the estate was now entailed upon the eldest son, Henry Montague, and the eldest son of his body direct, legal issue, and so to continue in male descent forever. But failing male heir direct, within five generations, the estate was to revert to Willard, second son of Edward Montague, and his first-born male, as before provided; and failing heir in this line, to revert to Frederick, third son of Edward Montague, and his heir male, as before provided; and failing heir in this line, to revert to Alice, eldest daughter of Edward Montague, and her heir male, as before provided; and failing heir in this line, to revert to Jane, second daughter of Edward Montague, and

her heir male, as before provided; and failing male heirs altogether, to take descent in the female line, reverting to the eldest daughter of Henry, first-born of Edward Montague, and her eldest male issue, provided the heir should take the name of Montague; or failing heir in this line, to revert in the order of birth to the eldest daughter of the second son of Edward Montague; or failing heir in this line, to revert to the next in the same order; and so continue until an heir should be found.

"Now in the third generation, as before mentioned, John de Carp, third son of Jane, second daughter of Edward Montague, fell heir to the Welden Estate, and took upon him the surname of his grandfather. John de Carp Montague still lives, an old man, in feeble health. The issue of his body was two daughters and one son—all deceased. The daughters died without issue. The son, James, married twice. By his first wife he had two daughters. His second wife was a Montague, a distant relation, and next heir to the estate, after James her husband, failing male issue. She died, leaving two daughters. The younger died without issue. The elder married William Norbury, Artist, and for some years resided in Dublin. She had a son and a daughter—the son is deceased. The mother, if living, is the heir presumptive—the daughter, Ellen, next in succession. They set out for America, and nothing more is known of them. Supposing both mother and daughter dead, the next heir presumptive is the granddaughter of James Montague by his first daughter. She married a Ferguson, and came to America, where he died. She next married a Williams, who is also dead; and she is now the wife of Absalom Pinchbeck, and resides in Philadelphia. Failing the daughter who married a Norbury, and her issue—and the granddaughter, the present wife of Absalom Pinchbeck—the Welden Estate, now

in the possession of John de Carp Montague, descends direct to Lucy Stanhope, the wife of Casmir Stanhope, and only daughter of Flora, second daughter of James Montague, and great granddaughter of John de Carp Montague."

Such was this singular document—to which was added, in a different hand:

"It is possible! I have made strict inquiries concerning the Norburies, and think all are dead. There only stands, then, between my wife and the possession of this estate, the wife of Pinchbeck. The estate is worth £10,000 per annum."

There was no signature to this paper; but the inference was, that it had been taken from the possession of Casmir Stanhope. Such indeed was the fact. Mulwrack, in one of his burglarious expeditions during the winter, in rummaging a secret drawer, had chanced upon this paper, and secured it about his person. Margaret, who could read, had afterwards informed him of the contents; and Pinchbeck being known to him as the owner of some property in the Infected District, he had ventured to call upon him and let him peruse it. After sounding him a little, to see how much further he might venture, Mulwrack had then informed him that he knew a little girl named Ellen Norbury, whom he doubted not was the one referred to; and that if she were out of the way, he, Pinchbeck, might come into possession of this property. The Deacon had also recognized the name as the same the little beggar-girl had given him; and remembering her statement, that her father was an artist, and that both her parents were dead, it had readily occurred to him, that one so friendless and unknown could be silenced for ever, without eliciting any inquiry concerning her. On perceiving that the Deacon was ripe for his horrible scheme, Mulwrack had informed him that the

child had stolen money from his wife, (so he termed Margaret,) and run away—but that he doubted not he should soon be able to find her, when he would again confer with him on the subject. Ellen had been unexpectedly found, in the manner detailed, and the Burglar was now present with the Deacon, to close the compact which should consign her to a violent death.

"Well," said Mulwrack, when the Deacon had finished reading, "now that you're through with the paper agin, and I tell you that the gal's where I can put my hand on her, what d'ye say now?"

"I hardly know what to say," returned the other, not a little agitated. "This *seems* to be all right; but one ought to be sure before venturing upon—upon—a—ah—such a thing—as—we have talked about."

"Well, now," growled Mulwrack, with a look half-savage, half-contemptuous, snatching the paper from the Deacon's hand, and folding it hastily—"I've got something better to do than to loaf here all night; and so as you don't care to be independent rich, for a mere trifle, I'll go and see what I can make from the gal herself."

"Stop, Mr. Mulwrack—don't be too hasty!" said the Deacon; "you should always give one time to consider a proposition before withdrawing it."

"It don't take *me* long to make a bargain, when t'other side's willing, and the gains is all in my favor," rejoined the Burglar; "and the long and short on't is, I don't like to wait a year for any body else to do the same thing."

"Well, let me see!" said the Deacon, nervously; "let me see! You are certain you could put her out of the way, without leaving any clue by which I might be suspected of having a hand in the matter?"

"Yes, I told you so afore."

"And what am I to pay you for this?"

"Well, considering that you'll git ten thorsand pounds a year, when the gal's dead, I reckon ten thousand dollars down 'ud be the fair thing."

"Ten thousand dollars!" cried the Deacon, in astonishment. "Why, you are not serious?"

"Would you do it for less?"

"Oh! no! no! *I* would not do it for any sum; but you would; and that price is outrageous—especially when you consider that the old gentleman—the old Montague—is not yet dead, and that he may outlive us all."

"Well, then, what'll you give? Come! make an offer—and then I'll know you're in arnest."

"You must give me a little time to think over the matter—it is so very serious," said the Deacon.

"How much time do you want?"

"Say till to-morrow night."

"Enough said then. I'll be here at nine o'clock; and if we can agree, you shall go with me and see the gal yourself. Will that do?"

The Deacon responded in the affirmative, and Mulwrack took his leave.

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## CHAPTER XI.

### THE ESCAPE.

It is needless to say, that the long hours of her solitary confinement, after awaking from the sleep into which she had fallen, were hours of torture to little Ellen. And yet it was not the imprisonment itself, nor the danger that seemed to menace her personally, that most troubled her—

but the thought that she should be suspected by her kind benefactors of having robbed them. In anguish of spirit, she groaned aloud, and wrung her hands, and sobbed, and prayed to God to deliver her, that she might make her innocence known. Throughout that day, as we have elsewhere said, all remained silent below; and Ellen at last became impressed with the belief that the house had been deserted by its late criminal occupants, and that she was herself the only human being within its walls. Perhaps they had made off with their plunder, and left her there to escape or perish! The thought was somewhat consoling—for any fate seemed better than that of remaining in their hands.

Barely tasting the plain food which had been placed by her side—and this rather for the purpose of supporting her drooping form, than because she had any appetite—she passed the greater portion of the day in praying for deliverance, without making any attempt to examine the security of her prison. As night approached, and the house continued silent, it suddenly occurred to her, that possibly she might escape. Instantly the bare hope made every nerve thrill with a strange sensation; and she started to her feet, feeling her strength increased in a surprising degree. She now passed around the room, examining every part; and at length discovered that one of the boards, which closed up the window, had been nailed on in a manner so careless, as to require no great strength to wrench it off. With emotions of hope, joy, and fear indescribable, she clasped her hands, and murmured:

"Oh! I may yet escape!"

The hour was still too early to make the trial with safety; and so Ellen sat down by the window, her little heart wildly throbbing, and awaited with what patience and calmness she could summon to her aid, the moment when the

cover of night should permit her to carry her design into effect, without exposing it to others. If she could but succeed in removing this board, the aperture would be sufficient to admit her body, when she could drop to the ground, without much danger of being injured—the distance not being over ten or twelve feet. But it would be necessary to her purpose, to await the opportunity when none of the occupants of the miserable shanties around and adjoining might be on the lookout, or any one passing along the miserable alley—lest discovery, exciting curiosity, should lead to inquiry, and be the means of restoring her to her dreaded jailors, or of placing her in a situation as dreadful as her present one.

The sun went down at last, and night gradually gathered around our anxious, trembling prisoner; but for an hour or two, the certainty that there were a number of persons moving about in the narrow alley in which the hovel in question was situated, deterred her from making the attempt, on whose success she felt hung more than life. During the period that she was occupied in listening, some person came to the door, which was just under the window by which she was seated, and tried to gain admittance—but failed, and went away, grumbling and cursing. This, although Ellen did not know it, was Mulwrack himself, who had remained secreted in another place during the day, and was then on his way to pay that visit to Deacon Pinchbeck, of which we have given an account in the preceding chapter. And we may as well state here, that, notwithstanding the old hovel had the appearance of being untenanted, and was so quiet as to lead Ellen to suppose the occupants had all left, yet Margaret was in the room below, lying on a straw mattress, in a state of beastly intoxication.

At last the time arrived when Ellen thought she might venture to begin her work; and applying all her strength

to the board, she succeeded, after a few minutes of hard labor, in wrenching it off, without making sufficient noise to attract the attention of any one outside. Who shall describe her feelings now, as she stood within the aperture, prepared for flight, and felt the cool night-breeze upon her fevered brow and cheek? Before her were life, liberty, innocence, and happiness—behind her, misery, crime, imprisonment, and perhaps death! Could she hesitate which to choose? Taking hold of the window-casement, she gradually lowered herself, till she hung by her hands, and then dropped to the ground without injury. She was now in a dark, narrow, filthy alley, and knew not which way to go; but any way was better than standing still; and any place, she fancied, better than the one she had left. So she started forward, groping along in a darkness as black and cheerless as the dismal shades of Erebus; but had not gone far, when her foot slipped on the muddy earth, and she pitched her whole weight upon the body of some human being, stretched out upon the damp ground. Terrified nearly out of her senses, she uttered a sharp cry, scrambled upon her feet, and passed over the body, which still lay motionless—but whether dead, or drunk, she had no means of knowing, and certainly did not consider herself in a proper condition to stop and ascertain. A little further on, she reached the corner of the alley, and turned into another, which, if there could be any comparison between such vile places, was worse than the first. She now became aware that she had taken the wrong direction to reach the larger street by the shortest course—but still kept on, fearing to retrace her steps. Suddenly she found her progress terminated by an old crazy building, which stretched across the alley, and which was apparently filled with human beings of the lowest and most degraded class. Here and there a crevice showed



that there were lights within; while wild, hollow laughter, and hoarse, cracked voices, giving vent to profanity and obscenity, with an occasional demoniac yell, and the stamping and shuffling of many feet, indicated that orgies were there taking place, more worthy of the fiends of darkness than of beings made in the image of Jehovah.

Little Ellen shuddered as she listened, and she looked around in terror and bewilderment. She could not go forward, and she trembled at the thought of going back; while to remain where she was, was almost certain to lead to discovery. And then, if missed from her prison, every exertion she knew would be made to recapture her—and nowhere in this loathsome quarter could she feel herself safe for a moment. What was to be done? She crossed the street, and discovered a board fence, which ran between the larger building and a low, miserable hovel. Should she climb this fence and try her fortune on the other side? It seemed preferable to turning back, or remaining where she was; and so she made haste to mount, and descend into a small, muddy, filthy lot, which abounded with stagnant pools, dead animals, and decaying offal, whose sickening stench and malarious poison were almost insupportable. In attempting to cross this open ground, to where she saw a light glimmering on the other side, little Ellen soon found herself sinking in a miry pool; and she was forced to retrace her steps, with wet, muddy feet. She now passed around by the fence, which enclosed the lot on one side, to the rear of some low, miserable shanties; and while searching for a passage-way into the street, she trod upon a rotten cellar-door, which gave way under her light weight, and plunged her into a dark, damp vault, where, her head striking against the ground, she was deprived of consciousness.

How long she lay in a state of insensibility, she never

knew; but when her senses returned, she found herself on the damp earth, on the very spot where she had fallen, and around her a darkness impenetrable to the eye; while the stench was so overpowering, that it seemed as if she would faint with every foul breath she drew. She looked up through the broken door, and perceived one or two stars twinkling in their far-off realms; and the sight brought a ray of hope to her despairing soul. She got upon her feet, feeling cold, weak, and dizzy, and made an effort to get out of her second prison—but only to meet with failure. The slimy wall was high above her head, and there were neither stairs nor ladder, nor aught that she could stand upon, to reach the top with her hands. She was afraid to call for help, lest she should be discovered by some one who would return her to her late jailors—and yet to remain where she was, seemed little less terrible.

While she thus stood trembling, uncertain what to do, she was startled by a dismal groan, which seemed to proceed from some object enclosed within the same horrible pit as herself. She sunk down terrified, afraid to speak or move; and again that awful groan sounded in her ear, and she heard something move within a few feet of her. This was an accumulation of terrors, greater than her overtasked nerves could bear, and nature kindly came to her relief. She swooned, and for a long time lay as one dead, on the damp ground, in that noisome, pestilential atmosphere.

When consciousness again returned, the gray of morning was struggling to dispel the darkness from the horrible vault, or cellar, in which Ellen had passed that eventful night. At first her mind was too much confused and bewildered to permit her to comprehend where she was, or how she came there; but by degrees memory gave forth each event, in the order of its occurrence, and she



looked eagerly around for the means of escape—though so weak and stiff as scarcely to be able to get upon her feet. An object, at the distance of some two or three paces—which appeared to be the figure of a man, stretched out upon the earth, though barely seen in the gloomy light—arrested her attention, and caused a cold shudder of dread undefinable to pass through her slender frame. There seemed something awful in that still form, seen in that dismal abode, in that dreary, uncertain light—something that seemed to tell of death in one of its most terrible forms—of death when the soul leaves the body without a friend nigh, to speak a consoling word, or breathe a kind farewell. Should she approach that object, and learn the truth, the horrible truth? She involuntarily shrunk back, trembling at the bare thought; and yet a mysterious spell seemed to fasten her eyes there, and she fancied it impossible to remove her gaze. Slowly, slowly, she drew near the mysterious object; and at last, shuddering with unspeakable terror, bent over it. Yes! it was a dead body—a skeleton body—the body of a man who had perished of starvation and a loathsome, contagious disease—a disease that gives forth its seeds long after the breath has ceased.

Horror-stricken, poor Ellen turned away, looking for some means of escape. A hollow, unearthly groan again sounded in her ear; and for a moment she felt as if her senses were again leaving her. She looked wildly around, and, in the increasing light, saw another human form, stretched out on the damp ground, only a few feet distant from the first. This second object moved—it was alive. Nerved by the courage that springs from desperation, Ellen approached, and bent over it, in the dim light. She saw it was a woman—a woman in the last stage of mortal suffering. Partly resting on her breast, with one arm of the living mother thrown around it, lay a dead

infant—dead and cold. Father, mother, and child—the father dead—the child dead—the mother dying! Heavens! what a scene!

And yet, kind reader, a scene that is *not* fictitious, and wrought up for effect—a scene that is not uncommon in the loathsome quarter we have sought to bring to your notice. Must such scenes continue to be of almost daily occurrence in our populous and wealthy cities? Will man never learn the duty he owes to his God, and assist his fellow man, by lifting him up from the miry pit of degradation and misery?—and by feeding him, and clothing him, give him palpable assurance that he is one of the great human family, whose kind and loving Father is in Heaven? We hope so! we trust so! God in mercy forbid that it should be otherwise!

“Can I do anything for you, poor woman?” inquired little Ellen, in a low, gentle, pitying tone, as she bent over the dying mother.

“Who speaks?” returned the sufferer, opening her eyes, and fixing them upon Ellen, with a wild and somewhat vacant stare.

“Can I do any thing for you, poor woman?” repeated Ellen.

“Do! for *me*?” cried the wretched mother, striving to fix her eyes upon the cold dead infant on her bosom. “Yes! take this little one away, and nurse it, and take care of it, and look to God for your reward.”

“But the child is dead!” said Ellen, deeply affected.

“Right!” rejoined the mother, speaking with difficulty; “you are right! it is dead! and it is better off than the living. But my husband—my dear husband—he is sick and suffering—yonder—help him if you can—I am past all human aid!”

“Alas! he is dead too!” sighed Ellen.

"Dead?" repeated the woman, making an effort to rise, and speaking in a wild, startled tone. "Dead? all dead?"

She closed her eyes, shut her teeth hard, drew in a long breath, and sent it forth in a shriek of anguish.

It was her last. With that shriek her spirit parted from the clay, and stood in a better world; and poor little Ellen was alone with the dead, in that damp, dismal vault.

With a cry of horror, she turned to escape. A broken chair caught her eye. She seized this, and bore it to the mouth of what was now a charnel house. Mounting upon it, and stretching up her slender form, she was barely able to grasp the sill of the doorway above. Weak though she was, the excitement of horror and terror gave her strength; and she drew her body up into the light of breaking day, and for a few moments seemed to gulp the fresh air, as one struggling against suffocation.

She was now in the same lot or open space which she had ventured into the night before, and knew not where to go or what to do. Should she seek out some of the miserable inhabitants of the miserable hovels before her, and tell them what she knew of the horrors of the dismal vault from which she had just escaped? But for what purpose? what good could result from her information? The late inmates of that awful place were all dead; and why should she expose herself to questions of curiosity, which might lead to her own detection and return to the quarters where she had so recently been held a prisoner? more especially, since it was very likely that she had been missed ere this, and a careful search been set on foot. No! self-preservation required her to be silent concerning what she had witnessed, and fly from this loathsome quarter as from the devouring plague. Looking hurriedly around, she perceived a narrow passage-way, between two old buildings,

leading into a wretched street; and through this she passed with as much haste as her weak but nervous and excited condition would permit.

She breathed freer when she had gained the street, and perceived that only here and there an inhabitant of this vile locality was abroad at that early hour; but she was not safe even now; and she hurried on, guided more by instinct than reason, looking timidly and suspiciously at every object, and shrinking from the notice of any she met or passed, like one guilty of a deed of crime. Thus terrified, she hurried on, her nerves braced with intense excitement, and her gentle but sinking spirit buoyed up with the hope that she was about to escape and return to her friends. She had turned two corners, and was still pressing eagerly forward, through a street of better appearance than the one she had lately quitted, when she was startled at hearing herself addressed in a familiar manner, and in a voice that she fancied she recognised.

"Ah! my little lady! whither away so fast this fine April morning? Come! I pray you stop, and have a chat with an old friend."

Ellen looked quickly around, and perceived Nabob Hunchy hastening across the street to meet her. She would gladly have avoided him—but finding she could not, she stopped, and said:

"What do you want with me?"

"To say how do ye do, and apologize for the abrupt manner in which I parted from you at Jimmy Quiglan's," returned the Hunchback, with the greatest *sang froid*. "Why, my little lady," he continued, in a tone of surprise, glancing at Ellen's rich garments—which the reader will bear in mind were the same which Mulwrack had forced her to put on when he took her away from the mansion of Sir Walter—"why, you have had good pickings, somewhere, since we

met! Silks, I do declare! and soiled with mud! Where are you living? what have you been doing? and where are you going now?"

Ellen shuddered.

"Oh!" she said—"ask me no questions! but show me the way to some fine street."

"Aha! bound for a promenade?" returned Nob, laughing. "But you look pale!" he added, in an altered tone; "you appear to be weak and faint! Come! I'll stand treat this time; and a little good brandy will set you all right. By-the-by," he continued, feeling in his pockets, "I believe, upon my soul, I have left my money at my lodgings; but that needn't make any difference, since you can spare that apron, which I can pawn for enough to make us both jolly."

"Leave me! leave me!" cried Ellen, nervously; "show me the way out of this awful place, and leave me!"

"But let us have a merry drink together first."

"No! no! I never drink. Oh! I am so much alarmed! I want to get away—quick—get far, far from here."

"Well, then, I'll tell you what I'll do—I'll guard and guide you into a clean, nice street, if that is what you want, and you shall leave me that pretty apron as a keepsake."

"Yes, yes—take it—take it!" rejoined Ellen, almost tearing it from her, in her haste, and handing it to the other; "and now quick! quick! let us go!" and she looked hurriedly around, fearful of being discovered by the Burglar.

Nabob Hunchy coolly pocketed the apron of little Ellen, muttering to himself:

"I'm good for one jolly drunk on that, at all events."

He then set off with Ellen, both walking fast. As they turned the corner of a street leading out of that wretched

quarter, the Hunchback stopped before a low, miserable structure, from which projected a sort of iron trident, suspending three large, gilded balls, announcing it to be a licensed establishment for the encouragement of thieves and the robbery of the poor—or, in other words, a pawnbroker's shop.

Many of these shops, which, if properly conducted, might be of some benefit to the community, are in fact but little better than hells of vice. They encourage thieves, because most of them receive stolen goods in pledge for a trifling loan of money, and ask no questions. They rob the poor, because they loan money on every article brought to them, at the rate of about one-third, or, at the most, one-half of its real value, and, for the use of the money so loaned, charge the enormous interest of seventy-five per cent. per annum. If the poor wretch who borrows, is not able to redeem his property within a certain time, it is sold at auction, the pawnbroker receives his pay in full, and there is an end of the matter. They indirectly encourage drunkenness, because the habitual inebriate, out of money, seizes upon some article of dress or furniture, and takes it to the place where he is certain to get sufficient means to purchase enough of his favorite poison to lay him out in the gutter, or make him a dangerous maniac. They corrupt morals, because the principle upon which they start is a kind of legal swindle; and those who swindle cannot be honest, and those who deal with swindlers see no encouragement to remain honest. Vice is a muddy pool, in which none can dabble and escape being soiled.

It was before one of these establishments, of the lowest order, that the Hunchback made a halt; and turning to Ellen, he said:

"Wait here a moment—I have some business with the gentleman inside."

"I will hurry on then, by myself," replied Ellen, nervously; "so, good bye!"

"Oh, no—stay—I will only be a moment!" said Nob; "and having promised to see you safe out of this quarter, I should like to keep my word." As he spoke, he tried the door, but found it fast. The hour was early, and the proprietor had not yet opened his nefarious business for the day. "I know how to get in," continued the deformed boy; and turning into a narrow, filthy alley, which ran along one side of the building, he hastened round to a back entrance, and little Ellen lost sight of him.

For a short time, Ellen awaited his return in a rather impatient mood—during which she kept her eyes constantly roving around; while she trembled, lest they should light upon her most dreaded enemy. Suddenly she started, and a cry of terror sprung to her lips—but she succeeded in repressing it. On the other side of the way, almost opposite to where she stood, was another alley; and coming down this, toward the larger street, was a person whom she believed to be Mulwrack. Should he discover her, she felt she would be lost; and any place of refuge, she thought, would be better than remaining so exposed. So she darted into the alley nearest her, intending to follow the Hunchback into the pawnbroker's; but when she reached the back entrance, it was closed, and he was not to be seen; and not being certain where he had entered, and fearing discovery, she sped on some distance, down the filthy alley, till she came to an open gate of a small yard. Without looking back, she sprung through the opening, and, hurriedly closing the gate, looked around her, trembling and half bewildered.

## CHAPTER XII.

### STRANGE QUARTERS.

THE yard which little Ellen had entered, was small; but the dwelling to which it belonged, was of brick, some three stories in height, and, compared with the buildings around and adjoining it, had quite a respectable and comfortable appearance. A flight of stairs, a few feet distant from where she stood, descended to a basement-kitchen; and hearing some one moving about in this apartment, she thought it best to go down, apologize for her abrupt entrance, and implore protection. Accordingly she descended to the kitchen, where she found an Irish woman, in a dirty, slovenly dress, with unwashed face, and uncombed, dishevelled hair, busily engaged in making a fire in a cooking-stove. As Ellen entered, the woman looked around, stared hard at her for a moment, and, in a sharp, harsh tone, exclaimed:

"Well, and who is you? and what is't ye're wanting here, jist?"

"I beg your pardon, ma'am, for intruding here—but I saw a man out here I was afraid of, and I ran in here to get out of sight."

"Och! hoity-toity!" returned the woman, getting up from the stove, approaching little Ellen, setting her arms a-kimbo, and taking a searching survey of her person. "And if it's a peliceman ye're running away from now, ye've made a mistak in the house—for it's not Bridget M'Callan as will consale the likes of ye."

"No, ma'am," returned Ellen, in a timid tone, "it was not a policeman—but a man that—that——"

She stopped, and grew confused, for she knew not what to say.

"Troth, now," rejoined Mrs. M'Callan, sharply, "ye nadn't trouble yoursilf to invint a story to desave mesilf, as is an honest widdier, and mother of three childrer—for I knows the likes of ye, as well as I knows the grave where my poor Terrence (Heaven rist his sowl!) lies buried. It's not likely, by the look of ye, ye'd rin from ony man but a peliceman."

"Indeed, indeed, ma'am, what I tell you is true!" said Ellen, her eyes filling with tears. "Oh!" she continued, in a pleading tone—"if you are a mother, as you say, let me, a poor orphan, appeal to you for protection!"

"Appale to me, is it? Och! but ye're a cute one now, jist. Appale to me? Troth! and ye're a cunning divil for your age; and it's like ye're making up your mind now what ye can stale the whiles. It's mesilf as hasn't lived twenty year in this part of the city, widout knowing the likes of ye."

"What can I do to convince you of my honesty and innocence?" cried poor little Ellen.

"Till me where ye got the nice clothes ye has on—how ye got 'em so muddy—and how ye come to be here at this time in the morning?"

"And will you believe my story, ma'am?" asked little Ellen, nervously.

"Is it belave it, I will? Troth! it's mesilf as 'ill hear it first, jist—and think about it. And mind ye till me the truth now! or I'll give ye to the pelice when ye're done, so I will."

"It is a long story, ma'am," returned Ellen; "but I will try and make it as short as possible."

"Well, sit down there, and I'll be making the fire the whiles, and cooking the breakfast for the boorders, I will."

Ellen sat down as directed, and told her story, in a straightforward manner, avoiding detail as much as she could. She touched upon all the principal events known to the reader; and what with interruptions, and questions put by Mrs. M'Callan, the best part of an hour was consumed in the narration. The story, on the whole, seemed to make a favorable impression upon the widow, and breakfast being ready by the time it was concluded, she bade Ellen take off her bonnet, and sit quietly in a corner, till the boarders should have taken their meal and departed.

At a call from Mrs. M'Callan, the "boorders" now came lumbering down, to the number of ten stalwart, hard-featured Hibernians; and with unwashed hands and faces, and hair uncombed, but drawn down low on their foreheads, they gathered around the table, with little regard to order, and commenced a voracious onslaught on the smoking food before them—jabbering among themselves, the while, in a language that was certainly *Greek* to little Ellen. Mrs. M'Callan presided over the teapot, and took part in the conversation—but did not herself touch any of the tempting viands. Several curious glances were cast upon Ellen—but no one addressed her; and in something like twenty minutes, the boarders had all departed to their daily occupations.

"Now, honey," said the widow to Ellen, in a kindly tone, "ye'll tak' a wee bit of breakfast wid mesilf, and we'll talk the gither, the whiles, jist."

Ellen, who stood greatly in need of food, did not require much urging to comply with so reasonable a request; and though she knew the victuals before her were not any too

clean, yet hunger made them very palatable; and she ate with a relish, and ate heartily.

"It's a quare story ye's been tilling me," said Mrs. M'Callan, when her own appetite had become somewhat appeased; "and sure, it's mesilf as doesn't know whether to belave it or not. Ye look as if ye spake the truth, I'll say that for ye—but, troth! and this same is a desaving world."

"Oh! ma'am, I do assure you, I've spoke nothing but truth!" returned Ellen, eagerly.

"And sure, and why don't ye go to a constable, or a alderman, and complain of this robber villain, now?"

"I don't know where to go, ma'am; and I'm afraid to go any where, for fear he'll find me, and do something terrible to me. Oh! ma'am, I want to get back to my friends, and take their advice."

"And where d'ye say this Mистер Clendennan lives?" inquired the widow.

Ellen had not mentioned the fact of Clendennan being a Knight, for the reason that she knew he was only known in the city as Mr. Clendennan, and that he did not wish to be known as the possessor of a title; and though we have spoken of him as the Knight, Baronet, and Sir Walter, we have done so merely for convenience, and because we had exposed to the reader the secret of his real position.

At the question of Mrs. M'Callan, Ellen blushed to the temples, and became greatly embarrassed and confused.

"I—I—did not—not say where he lived," she stammered.

"Well, ye can, I'm thinking, if ye're not an imposter, jist," replied the other, sharply, looking suspiciously at her little guest.

"It may seem very strange to you, ma'am," returned

Ellen, in a nervous, but earnest tone; "but oh! I do assure you, ma'am, it is as true as I sit here—that—that while at Mr. Clendennan's, I never thought to ask the name of the streets (it was a corner building) on which the house stood—and I never heard any body mention them, as I recollect of."

"Hoity-toity, now! Sure, thin, and how did ye find your way back agin, when ye wint out?"

"I only went out a few times, and Rosalind was always with me."

"And how, in St. Pathrick's name, thin, do ye expect to find your way back now, will ye till me, jist?"

"Alas!" cried Ellen—"I do not know, unless I can find somebody that knows Mr. Clendennan."

"Well, well," said the widow, sipping her tea; "may the fiend fly away wid ye, if ye's been tilling me lies this while! and sure, it's not Bridget M'Callan as knows whether ye're lying or not, now."

Ellen repeatedly assured her that she had spoke nothing but truth, and at last the other appeared to be satisfied to take her word.

"And now, thin," she said, "it's mesilf as don't know how to advise the likes of ye. I don't think it's best to let that bloody robber git hold of ye agin, at all, at all; and what'll ye do to git back to your frinds?"

"Indeed, ma'am, I do not know!" replied little Ellen, beginning to cry and sob.

"There! there! hush, honey, mavournin!" rejoined the widow, who really had a kind heart. "I'll see what I can do for ye. There's my boy, John—bliss his sowl!—who's aslape up stairs: he's out the nights, enjoying himself, the darling, and don't git up till afthernoon: I'll git him to tak' ye; he can find onywhere he likes; and he'll be delighted, the young rascal!" and the widow ended



with a hearty laugh at her own pleasantry, in calling her darling son John a rascal—though she might in truth have substituted villain, without applying a misnomer, as we will show anon.

It was finally settled that little Ellen should remain with Mrs. M'Callan, till such time as her hopeful son should see proper to rise, and, after being made acquainted with the facts in the case, should be ready to set off with her in search of her friends. Ellen, it must be confessed, was not altogether pleased with this arrangement—for she felt extremely anxious to get out of a locality where she could not consider herself safe from one moment to another—but unable to devise anything better under the circumstances, she thanked Mrs. M'Callan for her kindness, and resolved to await the time of her departure with what cheerful patience she could summon.

Dinner-time came, and the "boorders" came and went—but still Master John did not make his appearance. A couple of hours passed away—most tedious hours to little Ellen, who began to grow very nervous—and still the darling son of Widow M'Callan slept on, as though determined to rise no more. At last, between the hours of three and four in the afternoon, there was heard the sound of heavy feet on the naked stairs; and with the delight of a fond mother, as she flew about to prepare his first meal for the day, the widow announced to Ellen that the last scion of the M'Callans was about to become visible to both anxious expectants.

And almost immediately her words were verified, by the presence of John M'Callan himself; who entered the kitchen with dirty face and hands, hair matted and tangled, with coat and vest slung over one shoulder, and the bottom of his trousers tucked inside the legs of heavy, cowhide boots. He was about sixteen years of age, tall and gaunt,

with an appearance not at all prepossessing. His face was thin and freckled, and showed the traces of the lowest kind of dissipation. He had a large, sensual mouth, a slightly turned-up nose, and small, black, sinister-looking eyes, around which the red flesh seemed swollen and feverish, with dark lines in the hollows beneath. A sort of sullen, savage, hang-dog expression pervaded the whole countenance; and little Ellen, as she gazed upon him, shuddered at the thought that she was about to trust herself to his guidance.

He stared hard at Ellen for some time; and then savagely throwing his coat and vest across a chair, he thrust his hands into his pockets, and, turning to his mother, exclaimed, in a harsh voice, which had no touch of the Irish brogue:

"Well, old woman, I'll thank you to stir your stumps, and let me have some breakfast—for I'm as hungry as be ——!"

"Sure, and isn't it mesilf as is doing that same, my darling?" replied the widow, bustling about in a great hurry.

My-darling, without deigning a reply to this tender remark, threw himself heavily upon a chair, and began to whistle—looking out, the while, from under his frowning brows, at little Ellen, who began to feel very awkward and uneasy.

"I say, little gal," he said at length, addressing Ellen, "who are you, anyhow?"

"Johnny, my dear," said his mother, stopping in front of him, "it's her I wants to spake to you about, jist, to ask a favor of ye."

"Well, old woman, just you get that ther' breakfast first, and then you can open your mouth as much as you like," was the polite response of Johnny-my-dear, who now got



up, and put on his vest, and went out into the yard, to take a wash at the hydrant.

"Och! sure, and he's a M'Callan all over, so he is!" said the fond mother, with a look of pride, as she gazed after her hopeful son; "jist for all the world like his dear father, my own dead and gone Terrence, pace to his sowl! Ah! troth, now, Miss Ellen, and isn't it yoursilf as thinks him a broth of a boy?"

"I never saw any one like him," replied little Ellen, who really knew not what to say.

"And ye may well say that same, honey!" rejoined the widow, taking it as a fine compliment. "Och! but it's a high time the leddy will have as catches my John for a husband!"

There was no doubt about this being the case, from present appearances, and Ellen did not think proper to express a different opinion.

During the next hour, Master John learned all about Ellen his mother cared to tell him, finished his breakfast, and smashed a couple of dishes to show his sweet temper. At first he objected to acting as a guide to Ellen, saying he had a pressing engagement for the evening; but afterward consented to do so, provided she would wait till dark before setting out. Poor little Ellen saw there was no alternative, and yielded a reluctant assent—trembling, at the same time, at the thought that she would be at the mercy of one, who, if looks and actions could be taken as indexes, was at heart a villain.

Having named the hour at which he would return for Ellen, Master John put on his coat and hat; and cursing his mother for an old fool, because she happened to ask if he would be sure and not forget to be back at the time he had set, he went out, slamming the doors behind him

It was a dreary and even painful time to little Ellen, the time which elapsed between the going forth and return of John M'Callan. Hour after hour went by—the men returned from their labors and ate their supper—night set in—and still the hopeful John remained away, and little Ellen cried for loneliness and heart desolation. At last, between eight and nine o'clock in the evening, he made his appearance, and growled out some excuse for not being back sooner. He said he had made some inquiries concerning the Clendennans, and thought he could find their residence without much difficulty. This would have been cheering news to little Ellen, had it come from one in whom she could have placed confidence; but there was a something in the expression of John's eye, as he fixed it upon her, that made her pure and gentle spirit shrink away as from a contamination. She felt, without exactly knowing why, that he was a secret enemy, as much to be dreaded as Mulwrack himself. She saw, too, that he had been drinking—and this had no tendency to inspire confidence. She fairly shuddered at the thought of setting out with him, in the night, alone, and in such a locality; but there was no alternative; she could make no excuse that would avail her; and so she donned her bonnet, (her shawl she had left at Mulwrack's,) and prepared to set forth.

John, however, seemed in no hurry to start. He had first to have his dinner, as he facetiously termed it—which he ate very slowly; and then he went up stairs, and remained for half-an-hour; and what with one delay and another, he managed to keep little Ellen waiting till half-past ten o'clock.

"And sure," said his mother, when at last he announced himself as ready; "sure, now, Johnny, my darling, ye had best wait and tak' another day for't. The good folk'll be

all abed, jist—and won't know ye from a tief of the night, now!"

"Old woman," replied John, "you're a fool! and may jest as well keep that mouth of yourn shut! I know my business, and I want you to mind yourn!"

"Howly Virgin! but he's like his father, so he is!" said Mrs. M'Callan, turning to Ellen. "Poor Terrence! he was a broth of a boy, that same—pace to his ashes! Well, good-bye, child; and ye'll sometimes think of Bridget M'Callan, it's like, when ye git amongst the big-bugs!"

"Indeed, indeed, I shall never forget your kindness, ma'am!" returned little Ellen, fairly sobbing aloud.

"There, go! and God bless you!" rejoined the kind-hearted widow, bestowing upon the little orphan a hearty kiss. "Tak' care of the wee thing, and allow no harm to come anigh her, Johnny, dear!" were her last instructions to her dissipated son.

"Come along!" said John, gruffly, as he sallied forth; and little Ellen meekly and timidly followed him into the darkness of the night.

The street on which stood the residence of Widow M'Callan, was, compared with some in the immediate vicinity, quite respectable—though it would have appeared dreary enough to persons accustomed to living in more fashionable quarters. A gas-light, here and there, at rather long intervals, threw out a dim, uncertain light—but sufficient to enable one to pick his way, with a little care, without stumbling over the rough, uneven pavement. A few shops fronted on this street, mostly kept by negroes and people of the poorer class; but these were now, owing to the lateness of the hour, nearly all closed for the day; and only here and there a ray of light, save from the

before-mentioned jets of gas, shone upon this gloomy thoroughfare.

For the distance of something like a square, little Ellen and her sullen guide walked along, side by side, in silence; and then, as he turned into a narrower and darker street, the latter said, in a more kindly tone than was usual with him:

"Here, Sis—give me your hand—you might fall."

He took her hand, and walked on a short distance; when Ellen, who was trembling with a secret apprehension, though she strove to be calm, ventured to inquire, in a timid tone:

"Are you sure we are going right, sir?"

"Of course I am," he answered, rather gruffly. "Umph! I know the ways round here like a book."

"But do you think Mr. Clendennan lives in this direction?" she asked again.

"Now what's the use of yer talking that ther' way to me?" he replied, half angrily. "You don't take me for a — fool, I hope! You know, as well as I do, that that ther' yarn, about the Clendennans, and sich like, is all stuff — gammon — sheer — nonsense — jest made up to come it over the old woman!"

"Indeed, sir, it is not!" said Ellen, quickly, stopping at once, and endeavoring to get a glimpse of the other's face, which the darkness of the street, where they were, prevented. "All I said to your mother was true," she continued; "and if you don't think so, and are not doing as if it were true, then leave me, and I will try to find my way somewhere by myself."

"And where'd you go this time of night, I should like to know?" said John.

"I don't know, sir, where," sobbed little Ellen; "but I would try and find a better street than this."

"Oh, well, come along!" he rejoined, in a tone less harsh; "and don't spile that ther' pretty little face of yours by crying. Come! I was only jest in fun—so come along!"

"But where are you taking me to, sir?"

"Only jest round here, to a friend of mine, who knows all about the folks you want to find."

"But it is so dark here, on this street, sir, that I feel afraid."

"Poh! come along! I'll take care of ye—nothing shall hurt you. Only round the corner here, and we'll come to where it's light."

"But you're really in earnest about taking me to Mr. Clendennan's?" hesitated Ellen.

"Of course I am—didn't I tell you so? So come along!" replied John.

Thus assured by her guide, but still shuddering from a secret apprehension, little Ellen ventured timidly forward. From the miserable street they were in, John soon turned into a dark, dismal, narrow, filthy alley—all the while encouraging his timid charge to continue on, by assuring her that the way they were taking was their nearest course to a broad, clean, well-lighted thoroughfare.

At length he stopped before a gloomy-looking, wooden structure, which seemed to frown darkly upon the poor orphan. All the shutters were closed, and not a ray of light streamed forth; and it might have been thought that the people were abed, or that the building was untenanted, had not the ear caught the faint sound of a boisterous merriment, apparently taking place in a rear apartment of one of the upper stories.

"John, without saying a word, rapped quickly and heavily on the door, giving four distinct knocks. Instantly

the sounds of merriment were hushed, and all became still as the grave.

"Oh! sir, you are not going in there?" exclaimed Ellen, greatly terrified.

"Hush!" said John. "I only want to speak to a friend."

Presently the door opened slightly, as if held by a chain, and John passed a few words, in a low tone, with some one within. Then turning to Ellen, he said:

"Come! let us go."

At the same instant, he clapped his hand over her mouth—the door flew wide open—and lifting her from her feet, he bore her across the threshold, into a place of utter darkness; and, with a sinking heart, she heard the door close behind her, shutting her from the world without. Poor child!

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## CHAPTER XIII.

### A DEN OF INFAMY.

It was with a sinking heart, as we have said, that poor little Ellen heard the door close behind her; while the rattling of bolts and chains, assured her that it was made fast against egress or ingress. But still, though much terrified, she did not faint; and presently she felt her nerves strengthened with a kind of desperation, and a secret influence for which she could not account. Strange as it may seem to those who have not made the human system a study under all the various emotions of hope, joy, grief,

fear, terror, and despair, her gentle spirit seemed to rise up from beneath its weight of despondency, and become comparatively light and buoyant, infusing strength and vigor into her weary body and limbs. In a word, she began to feel strong and resolute, at a moment when one might have reasonably expected to see her sinking in dismay beneath the stroke of a new misfortune.

As soon as the door was bolted, John M'Callan removed his hand from the mouth of Ellen, and held a hurried conversation, in a low tone, with the person who had admitted him. Then taking hold of Ellen's hand, he said:

"Come, my dear—let us go up stairs, and find a pleasanter place than this here. Don't be afraid—nobody's going to hurt you."

"I'm not afraid, sir!" replied Ellen, in a tone that surprised even herself—it was so severely calm, and cold, and firm.

"Why, hello!" said John, as she placed her hand in his, and he discovered that it exhibited not even the slightest tremor. "Why, if you're not one of the birds, may I be —!" we will not repeat his oath. "Can't fool this child! I knowed all the time you was playing possum. Come along."

Saying this, he conducted Ellen up a steep flight of narrow stairs, in the dark, the attendant following close behind. On reaching the top, they made one or two turns through a narrow corridor, when a light from an open door, in which stood three or four figures, peering out, enabled them to see clearly the rest of their way to the apartment of revelry.

"Fall back there!" said John, in an authoritative tone; "and make room for the Queen of Beauty!"

Instantly the figures disappeared; and the next moment little Ellen, with her hand firmly clasped in the hand of

John M'Callan, found herself standing in the door of an apartment, which, together with its occupants, we must pause to describe.

The room was large, but with a low ceiling, and was lighted by two very respectable chandeliers, which burned candles instead of gas. The rough walls were gaudily papered, and disfigured with French prints—some in frames and some without—many of which were hardly fit for the modest eye of purity. The floor was without a carpet, but sanded; and around all sides of the apartment, leaving a vacancy in the middle, were arranged settees, chairs, benches and tables. The occupants were about twenty-five in number, of both sexes, ranging from ten to five-and-twenty years of age. Some were standing, some sitting, some lounging, several were smoking, and all had been drinking—for on every table were tumblers, some quite empty, and some partly filled with liquors of various kinds. There was nothing like order or respectability in the assembled company—which, with few exceptions, appeared to be of the lowest and most depraved class. The girls were characterized by a premature oldness of look and boldness of manner, and were flauntingly dressed in a style that showed that excessive modesty was not one of their prominent virtues; while all the youth—some with coats on and some without—had the hardened looks of dissipation and vice—with eyes red and bleared, and faces swollen and weather-beaten. In short, the place was a kind of juvenile hell; and a fiend, in the shape of an old crone, wrinkled and toothless, with one foot already in the grave, presided over the establishment. There had been a dance, interrupted by the knocking of John M'Callan; and a negro, perched upon a stool in one corner, was now thrumming the strings of his violin, and waiting to be called on to strike up his tune anew.

Such was the scene presented to the view of little Ellen, as she found herself standing on the threshold of the apartment; and as she saw so many eyes turned upon her, with a rude, impudent stare, it required all the nerve which had recently been given her, to keep her from sinking down in dismay.

"This here," said John, in a loud tone, as he held little Ellen by the hand, "I calls the Queen of Beauty—and I want you all to pay respect to her."

Most of the company bowed, in a kind of mocking homage, and then gave way to a hearty laugh.

"She's a mighty little queen!" said one.

"But a — pretty one!" said another.

"Nothing to brag on, though!" put in one of the girls, tossing her head in disdain.

"Go along, Bess—you're jealous."

"Not of her—the minx!"

"Where'd she come from?"

"Go it, John!"

"Where'd you pick her up, Mac?"

"Got on silks—whew!"

"I'll put up a quarter agin her, John, and play you a game of old sledge!"

"I'll stand treat for the first dance with her!"

"And I another for the second!"

"Let's drink to her any how!"

"Bravo! here's your health, Miss Queen!"

"Hurrah for the dance!"

"Go it, old Ebony! come! strike up!"

Such were some of the exclamations and remarks, from different parties, that greeted the ear of little Ellen, as John M'Callan led her forward to a seat. Poor child! she saw she was entrapped into a den of infamy; and she mentally called on God for protection and deliverance, and

strength to sustain her the while through this painful and disgusting scene of trial.

"She's a beauty, ain't she? and all beauties is welcome to my nice home!" said a tremulous, cracked voice, followed by a fiendish chuckle.

Ellen started at the sound of that voice—it had something so awful, almost unearthly, in its tones; and on turning to the speaker, she was startled at the appearance of the old hag already mentioned, who was the person who had admitted John and herself into the house, and had followed and entered behind them, and now stood near her, stooped and withered, grinning, and blinking her small, dark, bleared eyes, and looking more like one of the witches of the heath, who foretold Macbeth his destiny, than a human being. Ellen felt a thrill of horror run through her slender frame, as she looked upon that toothless crone—such a thrill of horror as one would experience on finding the cold body of a deadly serpent crawling over the naked flesh; and she turned her gaze away, and strove to shut out from the mind's eye the repulsive vision. But it was in vain. The image of the repulsive crone was stamped upon her young and guileless heart, and it remained and haunted her for years.

"Come," said John to Ellen—"there's a-going to be a first-rate dance, and I'll take you for a partner."

"I never dance," replied Ellen, quietly.

"Pshaw! what's the use of your talking that ther' way? Come along!"

"I never dance," answered Ellen, more firmly, drawing back, and secretly shuddering—though she managed to appear calm and collected.

"But I say you *must* dance!" returned John, half angrily, taking hold of her arm, as if to urge her forward.

"I don't know how, sir—I never danced in my life," replied Ellen, holding back.

"Well, git up here, and I'll larn ye then—though I know you're fibbing all the time," said John.

'Oh! please excuse me, sir! I'd rather not."

"But I say you *shall*!" cried John, now really angry; "and when I say a thing, it's got to be—mind that!" and again he pulled her by the arm, and this time so roughly, that poor little Ellen, overcome by her feelings—her lonely, friendless, unprotected situation—burst into tears.

"Oh yes—*cry*!" growled John—"that's always the way with you gals, when us fellers wants you to do something you don't jest want to."

"Oh! look at the poor baby!" exclaimed two or three of the girls, who sat near Ellen, and who naturally felt jealous of her; and they closed with a mocking, heartless laugh.

"Shall it have some cake, the deary?" said one.

"Or a bit of sugar candy, for its 'ittle self?" laughed another.

"Shall it go to its dear mamma?" mocked a third.

At the mention of the sacred name of mother, little Ellen gave vent to a fresh burst of grief, and cried and sobbed as if her poor little heart would break.

"Oh, come!" said a tall youth, about the age of John, and who seemed to be less hardened in vice than his associates—or perhaps had the germ of something better in his heart, not all defiled: "come! don't be too hard on her at first!"

The words were uttered in a conciliating tone, and in a tone of sympathy; and as they fell on the ear of little Ellen, she looked up through her tears, and saw a kindly expression in the blue eyes of the boy, who was standing in front of her, and gazing steadily at her.

"Henry Crawford, you'll please mind your own business, and leave me attend to mine!" said John M'Callan, almost fiercely.

"Not if you make it your business to abuse that there little girl, I won't!" returned the other with spirit, his eyes flashing.

"Who's abused her?" cried John.

"Why don't you let her alone then?"

"'Cause I don't choose to."

At this juncture the fiddler struck up, and the dance commenced; but as only a part of the company could occupy the floor at the same time, most of the others began to gather around Ellen and the two excited youths, all anxious to hear and see—for there was a great probability, from present appearances, that the matter would end in a fight. To prevent this, the old hag came shuffling in between young M'Callan and Crawford, and in a whining, cracked voice, said:

"Come, come, young gentlemen—be easy now—be easy—no quarrelling; the chick is a nice, good girl—only give her time to get acquainted like."

"Old woman, jest mind your business! and get out the way, will ye?" cried John, savagely; "and what's better, fetch me some brandy!"

"That's right, my dear!" croaked the crone; "take a little brandy, and never mind what's been said, my dear. I'll get it for ye—Mother Grimsby 'll get it for ye, with her own hands, this very minute, my dear;" and the stooped, and withered, and toothless old hag shuffled away in haste; and soon returned with a greenish-looking bottle, which she declared contained the genuine old Cognac.

John threw down a quarter-dollar, seized the bottle, and a tumbler that stood on the table by his side, poured out a third of a glass, and gulped it down; and then setting

the bottle down hard, he invited all present, who felt friendly to him, to help themselves. Several of both sexes now advanced to the table, and took a drink, uttering the while profane and ribald words; but Henry Crawford and two others stepped back, and held a hurried conversation, in low tones.

"Why don't *you* drink?" said John to Ellen; "aint you friendly to me?"

"Oh! sir, take me away to my friends!" sobbed Ellen; "remember what your mother told you!"

At this there was a loud laugh of derision from all the girls near—some five or six in number—and several of both sexes made comments which we need not repeat.

"I say, young gal," pursued John, in a savage tone—"aint you going to drink with me?"

"No, I never drink."

"Don't drink or dance?" rejoined he, scowling darkly; "that's a — likely story! You think you can jest do as *you* like here, may be—but I'll let you know different, afore you're much older; and if any body wants to take it up, there'll be a fight on hand;" and he looked from under his knitted brows, over to where Crawford was standing. "Nance," he said to one of the girls, "jest put some sugar and water in that ther' glass! There—that'll do. Now here goes in some brandy," he continued, pouring out a small quantity of the vile liquor. "Look you, my crying beauty—you've got to drink this here decent, or I'll pour it down your throat! D'ye hear?"

"Oh! sir—remember what your mother told you!" said Ellen, pleadingly.

"She can jest go to thunder, for an old fool!" rejoined John, rising and placing himself in front of Ellen, with the tumbler in his hand. "Come! drink, I say!"

At this moment a loud knock was heard at the outer

door; and instantly the fiddler ceased playing, the dancers stopped in their places, and a deep silence ensued—broken only at intervals by whispers, or the guarded footsteps of some of the company, stealing to the door of the apartment to listen. John placed his tumbler on the table, and quietly reseated himself—while the old hag hurried away, to answer the summons for admittance.

A few minutes of anxious suspense ensued; for it sometimes happened—though we regret to say very rarely—that the police made a descent upon this house of vile resort, and arrested all they could find within; and consequently the parties stood prepared for flight, in case the present applicant, or applicants, for admission, should prove to be the dreaded officers of law.

At length those on the watch announced the fact that all was right; and immediately after, the Hunchback made his appearance at the door, and was greeted with a mixed storm of laughter and invectives—during which the fiddler again struck up, and the dance was resumed.

"Hello, Nob!" called out John, who knew something of the deformed boy's physical strength and desperate fighting qualities, and was therefore anxious to secure him on his side, in case there should be a fracas—for John, like most other bullies of his stamp, was at heart a paltry coward, and could only be courageous when supported by numbers against a few: "Hello, Nob! this way, and take a drink!—here's brandy that'll make you a gentleman—some of old Grimsby's best."

"Thank you, Mr. M'Callan!" returned the Hunchback, approaching with a smile and a bow—"I never refuse a good offer. I hold brandy to be the life and soul of man—victuals, drink, lodging, and washing included."

He took up the bottle as he spoke, and held it up to the light—as if to see if the liquor were clear, but in reality



to see how much there was of it—and then poured out a tumbler half-full.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he said, with affected politeness, looking round upon the laughing spectators, and nodding to each—"here's my——"

He stopped suddenly, with an expression of surprise, and slowly set down the glass, with its contents untasted. His eye, in going round the circle, had encountered the tearful eyes of little Ellen, fixed earnestly and imploringly upon him.

"Why, how is this?" he said; "how came my little lady here?"

At this the bystanders laughed, thinking he spoke in derision, merely to make a joke; but John, who sat facing him, fancied he saw something in his eye that implied serious earnest.

"Your little lady?" John repeated; "what d'ye mean by that ther', Nob?"

"Oh! take me away from here!" cried Ellen, appealing to the deformed boy—for she, too, saw that in his eye, which led her to hope he would stand her friend. "Take me away from here, I beg of you! You promised to see me to a nice street, and you didn't do it."

"That was because you ran away, and I couldn't find you," returned the Hunchback; while the different parties began to crowd around, and become more deeply interested in the curious turn that matters were taking.

Half-a-dozen speakers now asked half-a-dozen different questions in the same breath; but the Hunchback kept his dark eyes fixed upon Ellen, and paid no attention to any of the others.

"I ran away from where you left me," said little Ellen, eagerly, "because I thought I saw a man that I was afraid of; and I ran into John M'Callan's mother's; and she pro-

mised that he should take me to my friends; and he brought me here, and forced me into this house. Oh! do—do, now—take me away from here, and let me go back to my friends, and God will reward you for it!"

"I will!" said the deformed boy, resolutely, the tearful appeal of the friendless little orphan touching his heart—which, though enclosed in a rough, ungainly casement, unlike many others of fair exterior, ever beat sympathetically for the wronged and oppressed—at least when his brain was clear of the fumes of the poison which was his favorite beverage. "I will take you to your friends, if you've got any—and then I'll get jolly on the strength of one good act, if I never do another. I promised to see you to a nice street, my little lady—and drunken Nob Hunchy always keeps his word when he's sober."

"Spect you'll ask my leave, afore you do that ther', Mr. Nob?" said John, sullenly. "Mighty pretty airs you're putting on, 'pon my word! to come here and 'spect to take away a gal that I've fetched here, without asking my consent, or the consent of them that's here and paid their reckoning;" and he looked around to see what effect his words would produce upon the different parties, so as to be able to judge how many were likely to stand by him, in the event of his making a forcible resistance to the design of the Hunchback. He appeared to receive the encouragement he expected—for he immediately added, in a bolder tone, with a bullying air: "If she gits out of this here house to-night, Mr. Nob, there'll be a fight first, I can tell you. Aint I in the right, Mother Grimsby?" he concluded, appealing to the mistress of the establishment, who had drawn near during the conversation.

"I don't want ye to fight—I don't want ye to fight," replied the crone, shaking her head. "And I don't want the pretty, sweet little beauty to go away from me, who'll

be a mother to her," she added, looking at little Ellen with what she intended should be a winning smile, but which her old, wrinkled face converted into a hideous grin.

"Well, she aint a-going to go away!" rejoined John, looking fiercely at the Hunchback, whose black eyes began to gleam with that fiery, sullen light, which should always be noted as a warning that the possessor is resolved to conquer or die.

"See here, Nob," said the old hag, turning to him; "if I'd a known you was coming in here to raise a fracas, you'd have staid outside."

"And if I had," answered the deformed boy, quietly, "before this time to-morrow night, the beaks would have been down on your infernal den!"

"Hear him! hear him!" croaked the old she-fiend, turning pale with anger and fear.

"Yes, and hear this too!" pursued the Hunchback: "if this little girl is not allowed to depart with me quietly, I'll break up this hell of yours, Mother Grimsby, if it costs me my life!"

"And if you dare to blow on this here place, by ——! it shall cost you your life!" cried John, fiercely, while several of the others began to grow much excited.

"Look you, John M'Callan!" returned the Hunchback, fixing his dark eye, with a keen, penetrating glance, upon the cowardly ruffian, and speaking in that calm, determined tone, which never fails to produce a marked impression: "Look you, John! I know you well, and you know me; and if you *dare* to lift a hand against me, you shall rue it to the end of your miserable life!"

On hearing this, John turned pale, and began to grow nervous; but he had already gone too far to retreat, without subjecting himself to the raillery of his companions; and he also felt his drooping courage revive, by the ex-

clamations of some two or three of his friends, who stood around him.

"He's a traitor!" said one.

"A —— villain!" cried another.

"Let's break his head, and pitch him into the street!" vociferated a third.

But the deformed boy stood firm, glancing quickly from one to the other of the different parties, not one of whom seemed inclined to be the first to molest him.

"If you let me take that little girl away quietly," he said at length, "you'll have no occasion to consider me a traitor; and I'll save you the trouble of breaking my head and pitching me into the street—for I'll leave at once, and never come here again."

"She can't go with you!" said John, loudly, getting up and pushing back the cuffs of his sleeves, as if preparing for a fight. "I've said it, and I'll stick to it!"

The Hunchback made no reply to this; but while he kept his eyes warily about him, he said to Ellen:

"Come, my little lady—I don't think these boys are so bad as they pretend—and I can't see why they should harm you, who have never harmed them."

As he spoke, he motioned to Ellen to approach him; and as she tremblingly arose, and attempted to do so, John M'Callan pushed her rudely back upon the bench, exclaiming:

"Don't you dare to stir, without my leave!"

Scarcely were the words spoken, when, bounding forward like a ball, the Hunchback struck him in the pit of the stomach with his head, and sent him clean from the floor against the wall, where he struck with a dull, heavy sound, and then fell to the ground like a log. This was done almost with the quickness of thought; and as the gallant boy recoiled from the blow he had himself given, he struck

another, one of John's friends, in the stomach, in the same manner, laying him out on the floor—while with his active fists he knocked in two of the front teeth of a third.

The dance now broke up with the cry of "A fight!" and several of John's friends made a rush upon Ellen's champion. But they met with an opposition they did not expect—for young Crawford, and two or three others, came to his assistance, and soon the fight became general. The girls screamed and ran away, with the exception of a few of the more vicious, who remained to take a part in the contest. And brutal, bloody, and disgusting it was. Bottles, tumblers, and every sort of missile that could be laid hold of, were hurled by one combatant at the head of another—and chairs and tables were broken, and the fragments freely used.

At length, to stop the *melee*, some two or three of the oldest girls—who, along with the frightened old hag, had fled to the corridor for safety—dashed boldly in and put out the lights; but still the enraged combatants fought on in the darkness. At last, a heavy knock, on the outer door, resounded through the gloomy vacancies of the old building; and almost immediately the uproarious tumult was succeeded by a deep silence.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE RECAPTURE.

LITTLE Ellen, who was indirectly the cause of the *melee*, as we have shown, had fortunately managed to escape unharmed. Terrified and half bewildered, she had fled from the apartment, with several others of her sex, to the narrow corridor; and had taken occasion, favored by the darkness here, while the attention of all the rest was occupied by the fight within, to steal away to the stairs which led down to the street. Here, dropping upon her knees, she folded her little hands; and turning her sweet, pretty face, and tear bedimmed eyes, toward Heaven, prayed earnestly—oh! so earnestly—that God would send her deliverance from this awful den of iniquity. She was still here, still kneeling, and still praying, when there came four heavy knocks upon the door; and her superstitious nature and excited state of mind, led her to fancy it an answer to her humble petition.

Suddenly the idea, that she might now escape, flashed upon her brain, and fairly made her dizzy with hope; and springing to her feet, she darted down the steep, narrow stairs, with the light step of a fairy, and concealed herself near the door—so that, in the event of its being opened, she might rush out, and trust the rest to Providence.

In something like a minute from the first summons, four distinct, heavy knocks were again bestowed upon the door, by what appeared to be the fist of some one standing with out—and then little Ellen could hear the gruff voice of a

man, grumbling and cursing. Presently there was a creaking of the old stairs, as of some one descending; and then the cracked, tremulous voice of the old woman was heard asking:

"Who's there, who's there, at this unseasonable hour of the night, disturbing honest people? and what d'ye want?"

"It's me, you old she-wolf!" growled the person outside; "and you'd best open the door, afore I split it open."

"Is that you, Jimmy Quiglan?" inquired the old crone.

"Yes, it's me—now unbolt—quick!"

"In a minute, Jimmy—in a minute," rejoined the old hag, as she began to fumble away at the fastenings. "Oh! I'm so glad you've come—the young rascals have been having such a fight up stairs—dear me!"

"It's a — pity they didn't smash in your old head!" responded Jimmy, savagely, as the door swung back as far as the chain would let it, while Mother Grimsby peered cautiously out, to be certain that all was right.

Poor little Ellen's chance of escape was now at hand; and she stole cautiously up behind the old woman, her little heart almost beating audibly, while she fairly held her breath, and trembled from head to foot with the contending emotions of hope and fear.

"Come! down with the chain, you old fool! it's nobody but me," growled Jimmy.

The chain was now unfastened, and the door swung half open, still held by Mother Grimsby; and as Jimmy entered, little Ellen shot past him, and found herself in the open air.

"Hello! who're you?" called out the Dwarf, turning round.

"Who's who?" cried the old woman, nervously, who chanced not to see Ellen as she escaped.

"Some one's put out, she-wolf," replied Jimmy.

"He's dreaming, so he is!" said the crone, playfully, as she closed the door and proceeded to fasten it.

As it is our purpose to follow the little orphan, we shall consider ourself fastened out with her; and will leave the vile den, the old woman, and her hopeful guests, to *enjoy* themselves in their own peculiar way.

As fast as fear and her limbs could carry her, little Ellen flew down the alley, not heeding whither she went, nor caring, so she might put distance between her and the earthly hell from which she fled. The night was dark and cloudy, the hour late, and no light gleamed forth in this miserable quarter to guide her steps. Still she sped on, breathless with terror, turning from one dark alley or street into another, till she at last came in sight of a feeble lamp, which led her to hope she was approaching a less vile quarter than she had left behind. Suddenly, in turning another dark corner, she ran against a man, with so much force as to throw her down.

"Hello!" said a gruff voice—"who're you, little one? and what are you doing out this time of night, running so fast?"

A cold shudder passed through the slender frame of the little orphan, as that voice fell on her ear. She looked up, and was just able to catch a faint glimpse of that man's face. It was enough—enough to freeze the hot blood in her veins. Yes! judge of her feelings—judge of her horror—when she once more saw herself in the power of her most terrible enemy—in the power of Mulwrack the Burglar!

"Come! git up—git up—and travel on! What d'ye

keep down there for? you aint hurt, be you?" pursued the man of crime.

Hoping to escape, poor little Ellen quickly got upon her feet; and she was hastening past the robber, when he caught hold of her, and said:

"Stop! I want to see your face."

The awful moment had arrived—the moment of detection by the man she dreaded; and poor little Ellen, during the scrutiny of the Burglar, experienced all the feelings of horror of one suspended over a terrible abyss.

"The gal I wanted, by ——!" exclaimed the man of crime, as he peered into the face of his trembling victim by the dim light of the distant lamp. "Here's luck!" he added, with a kind of inward chuckle; "who'd a thought it? See here, little gal! you got away from where I put you, and cleared out, didn't you? May be you'll do it agin—we'll see."

Ellen looked around in terror, hoping to perceive some chance passenger, upon whom she could call for aid—but the hour was late, and the streets deserted. The Burglar instantly comprehended her design; and drawing a knife from his bosom, the blade of which Ellen could just perceive gleaming in the dim light, he said, in a low, savage tone:

"See here, gal! if you 'spect to git away this time, you've made a bad mistake. The long and short on't is, if you dare to scream, or call anybody to help you, I'll drive this here through your heart—I will, by ——! Come! not a word—me and you is going together decent."

He took hold of her hand as he spoke, and, half supporting her, for her little limbs trembled so as to need this aid, he hurried forward, muttering:

"Well, who'd a thought it? to stumble on to her that way, arter I'd gin up looking for her high and low."

Avoiding the gas-light, and selecting the dark, filthy streets, lanes and alleys, for his route, Mulwrack was not long in arriving, with his terrified prisoner, at the door of the very hovel from which she had escaped the night before. He knocked, replied to the question asked, and soon gained admittance—pushing Ellen in before him, and shutting and bolting the door.

"There, Mag," he said, gruffly—"I've got her agin; and I rather think as how she won't git away agin, of her own accord."

Margaret, who, previous to Mulwrack's return, was the only occupant of that old structure, took hold of Ellen's hand, and drew her toward the fire-place, in which were a few dying embers, and then threw herself upon a seat, without saying a word. Somewhat struck by her peculiar manner, Ellen looked up in her face; and notwithstanding her own terror and desolation of heart, could not avoid a start of surprise at the appearance of the other. That face was frightfully swollen, and almost black, from the chin upward, from the effect of blows, which the brutal Burglar, in the first vent to his rage, for the loss of Ellen, whose escape he attributed to her carelessness, had inflicted upon her. The eyes of the poor creature were almost closed by the livid and swollen flesh around them—her hair was dishevelled—her dress torn and disordered—and, altogether, she was an object for pity.

"Come! none of your sulks!" said the Burglar, with a fierce scowl, as he threw his hat upon the ground, and cast himself heavily upon a seat, directly opposite his partner in vice and crime, so that he could look full into her face, by the dim light of the dying embers. "You know, Mag, I don't allow none of them things! You see I've got the gal back agin!"

"I see!" answered Margaret, speaking in a rather hoarse tone.

"Well, you act as if you wish I hadn't."

"What do you want me to do?" inquired the other.

"I want you to say something, and not set there moping in that are kind of a way."

"How did you find her?"

"Now you're talking sensible. Why, would you believe it, Mag—jest as I was coming home, arter I'd gin her clean up, she bounced out of an alley, right agin me. Queer, wasn't it?"

"Very queer, Jim."

"I 'spect Providence put her there, Mag;" and the harsh features of the robber relaxed into a grin, at what he considered a very facetious rejoinder.

"Likely enough," said Margaret, turning to the fire, and poking the embers together with a pair of old tongs.

"Any body been here to-night, Mag?"

"Not a soul, Jim."

"Beaks is off the scent, I reckon?"

"I think so."

"Mulwrack indulged in a yawn, and a long stretch of his muscular limbs.

"Been to bed, Mag?"

"I just laid down a few minutes."

"How's the liquor?"

"I haven't touched it."

"Umph! that's odd—for you're ginerally drunk afore this time of night. Fetch it here, and I'll take a swig."

Margaret got up, and going to the same old chest, which we mentioned as serving her for a closet or pantry at her former lodgings, took out a black bottle, and brought it to Mulwrack. The robber took it, gave it a hearty shake, un-

"That's the stuff, Mag," he said, with a smack—"try a little."

"I would rather not to-night, Jim."

"Why?"

"I don't feel well."

"Ah!" said the Burglar, with a slight show of feeling.

"Taint nothing serious, is it, Mag?"

"Nothing particular."

"Hum! got any thing to eat?"

"There's some bread and cold meat in the chest."

"That'll do—fetch 'em on."

Margaret quietly brought the ruffian his food, of which he ate heartily, taking now and then a drink from the bottle.

"There!" he said, when he had finished his lunch—"I feels better now. Think there's any danger in my sleeping here, Mag?"

"You should know best, Jim."

"Well, I'm going to risk it, any how. Jake's got off, I 'spect; and we'll follow, when——"

He stopped, and gave a slight nod toward Ellen, who had sunk upon a seat, with her face buried in her hands.

"Big haul that!" he continued, mysteriously referring to the burglary at Clendennan's; "and if it wasn't for this here deacon affair," (and again he nodded toward Ellen,) "me and you would put out, and travel for our healths—eh! Mag?"

"Better let that go, Jim, and go now—something bad'll come on't," responded Margaret, also nodding toward the poor orphan.

"You're a fool!" growled Mulwrack. "Think I'd go and leave them ten thousand the old rascal promised? Arter all, it was a good thing, that are running away—for old skin-flint got skeared, for fear he'd lose the chance;

and if I got her agin, (once more nodding toward Ellen,) he swore he'd plank."

"But you can get the tin, and not hurt any body," said Margaret, alluding in this way to the contemplated murder of Ellen, which had been previously discussed between the two.

"See here, Mag!" rejoined Mulwrack, with offended dignity,—“d'ye think I'm such a — knave as to git a man's shiners for a job I don't do? You ought to know me better'n that by this time, old gal!"

Such was a murderer's idea of *honor*! He could beat his poor female partner almost to death, to gratify his savage passions; he could break into an honest man's house, and rob it, without a scruple of conscience; he could kill that innocent little girl for a certain sum; but the mere suggestion of taking a brother villain's money for a wicked deed, with the intention of cheating him, by not fulfilling his bloody contract, was highly repugnant to his sense of right and honor. Have we not others among us, moving in what are considered high circles, whose ideas of honor are about as just as those of the Burglar? How many are there among us, who would not scruple to cheat an honest tradesman of honest dues, to pay a gambling debt? How many are there among us, who would not hesitate to stake a life against a life, because of a trifling difference of opinion, and yet would feel a pride in being the author of some confiding female's ruin?

"What are you going to do with her for the present?" inquired Margaret, pursuing the conversation.

"Why, she'll go below this time—she'll keep there, I reckon." Then addressing Ellen, he continued: "See here, little gal! I'm a-going to turn in, and I want to put you where you'll be safe."

Little Ellen looked up, pale and agitated.

"Mag, raise a glim!" continued the robber. "I'm going down to see them quarters myself."

Margaret lighted a candle, and handed it to the Burglar—who immediately got up, and removing the chest from where it stood, raised a small trap-door, and descended an old ladder, into a damp, disagreeable cellar, or vault, about ten feet square, which was walled in on every side, without any means for ventilation or the admission of light, and which could only be entered and left through the trap door just mentioned. The moment the Burglar had fairly disappeared, Margaret turned to Ellen, seized her hand, pressed it warmly, and looking quickly around, in a startled manner, put her finger to her lips, as a sign of caution, and said, in a hurried whisper:

"Don't despair, poor child! I'll be your friend—though it may cost me my life."

She turned away, and tried to hum the air of a popular tune, in order to appear indifferent, and excite no suspicion—while little Ellen labored hard to force back the tears that involuntarily sprung into her eyes. The next moment the robber called from below:

"Come down here, little gal!"

"Yes, go down," said Margaret; "and we'll see if you'll escape again!"

Her voice was harsh and unfeeling; but she turned to Ellen, caught her hand, and pressed it nervously; and in this silent manner made known to the poor little orphan how deeply she sympathised with her.

Ellen seized Margaret's arm convulsively, but clung to it only a moment; and then, without saying a word, rather staggered than walked to the mouth of what seemed to her a horrible pit, and nervously descended the ladder.

"This here's not a very nice place," said Mulwrack, who stood at the bottom, speaking in a less harsh tone, as he



held the light to her pale, agitated countenance; "but you've got nobody to blame except yourself for't—for if you hadn't run away, I'd a let you staid up stairs."

"Oh! sir, don't leave me alone, in this awful place!" pleaded little Ellen, as she glanced tremblingly around upon the damp, massive, mildewed walls. "Oh! sir, please don't!"

"Must do it!" said the Burglar, firmly. "I want to keep you awhile—and you'll be safer here than anywheres else. I'll throw you down something to lie on—'taint cold, and you'll do well enough; and besides, you won't have to stay here long."

As he said this, he began to ascend the ladder, taking the light with him, and leaving the poor child at the bottom, shuddering with terror, and only sustained against giving away to utter despair, by the kind and mysterious words which Margaret had whispered in her ear. As soon as the Burglar had got upon the floor above, he seized a piece of old carpet, and threw it down, saying:

"There! that'll do you to lie on; and my advice to you is, to lie down and go to sleep. No whining now! 'cause we can't have none of them things."

With this he shut the trap-door, drew the heavy chest upon it, and little Ellen found herself in total darkness.

Soon after this, the man of crime threw himself upon the bed in the room, without undressing, and fell asleep. But in his sleep he tossed his arms about, rolled uneasily to and fro, grated his teeth, and muttered deep and savage curses. Oh! the conscience of the guilty! that ever present, continual, eternal hell!

Margaret laid down, but did not sleep: her mind was striving to pierce the vail of the awful Future which lay before her!

## CHAPTER XV.

### A MEETING OF OLD FRIENDS.

It will be remembered, that Sir Walter Clendennan, his daughter Rosalind, and two of the servants, were away on the night of the burglarious entrance and robbery of their mansion. They returned at an early hour on the following day, and were both startled and pained at the news which was poured into their ears at the very steps of the carriage. The house had been robbed of plate, money, and jewels; and the little stranger, whom they had taken in, and saved from death, and nursed so tenderly, was the thief.

"What! that child a thief?" cried Sir Walter, much excited, while Rosalind listened in dumb amazement. "'Tis false! the very accusation carries falsehood on its face!"

"I deeply regret to say it is true," replied Mrs Wyndham, who was the communicator.

"How do you know it is true?" demanded the Knight, in a harsh, irritated tone.

"Because, sir, she has fled, taking with her the clothes which Miss Rosalind was so kind and generous as to give her."

"Tut! tut! woman!" cried the Baronet, angrily; "you forget that a child like her was not strong enough to carry off my heavy plate!"

"Well, she might have had help, sir—and doubtless she had; but whoever helped her, must have come in at the front door—and been let in, sir—for that was found unfastened

in the morning, and every other part of the building just as it was the night before. And besides, sir, the girl is gone, and her own clothes gone with her; and if she is not the thief, the whole matter passes my understanding."

The Knight got slowly out of his carriage; and supporting himself, with one hand upon the door, rolled his hollow eyes, nervously and somewhat wildly, over the group of startled-looking faces that were now turned toward him.

"*Mirabile dictu! Amor habendi!*" he exclaimed, with impressive solemnity. "Well, well—if that sweet child is guilty, Heaven knows I never want to look upon another human face! Rosalind, give me your arm, and conduct me to my own private apartment."

Rosalind hastened to obey; and when she reached the door of the apartment, over the threshold of which she dared not venture without permission, she said, in a low, troubled tone:

"Father, Ellen is *not* guilty, believe me! I would stake my life upon her innocence."

The Baronet turned and seized her hand.

"You think she is innocent?" he said, with a quivering lip.

"I know it, father."

"Thank you! thank you, Rosalind!"

With this he stepped within, closed and bolted his door; and Rosalind hastened to the drawing-room, to learn the whole particulars of the affair—at least all that were known or could be surmised—from Mrs. Wyndham.

An hour later, Rosalind was pacing up and down this same elegantly furnished drawing-room, in a state of mind not to be envied. She was alone, and her features were very pale, and her eyes showed traces of recent tears. She was evidently expecting some one—for every other minute she hurried to the window, and looked out into the

street. At length the bell rung; and hastening to seat herself, she made an effort to appear composed. Presently the door of the drawing-room opened, and the servant announced:

"Dr. Stanhope."

The individual thus ushered into the presence of Rosalind, and who has been previously mentioned in these pages, deserves a passing notice. He was about twenty-five years of age, tall, well-formed, with dark, curly hair, and dark, expressive eyes. His features were finely moulded, and highly intellectual—but rather thin and pale, like one much given to thought and study. His finely turned chin, classic mouth, and slightly aquiline nose, gave character to the face, and denoted a marked degree of firmness, energy, and decision. He was elegantly dressed, without being in the least degree foppish—in every movement there was grace—and his whole manner was that of a high-toned, well-bred gentleman. He bowed politely to Rosalind, who rose on his entrance, and both for a moment or two seemed slightly embarrassed.

"I trust you will pardon me, Dr. Stanhope," said Rosalind, with just sufficient color in her lovely countenance to render her perfectly beautiful, "for sending for you, to ask a favor!"

Any thing that I can do for one who has shown herself so true a friend in time of need, believe me, Miss Clendennan, I shall perform with a degree of pleasure that I may not be able to express in words," replied the young physician, cordially.

"Pray, be seated," said Rosalind, pointing to a chair, and turning away to another—while the glow deepened on her lovely features, and she found it required no little effort to suppress all show of agitation. "My father and myself, with two of our domestics," she resumed, as she

seated herself a short distance from the young Doctor, "were out of town last night, and have only just returned, to be startled with the intelligence that our house has been robbed in our absence."

"Robbed!" exclaimed young Stanhope, with a start. "I sincerely hope your loss is not heavy, Miss Rosalind!"

"I do not know the full extent of our loss," replied Rosalind; "but that, however much or little, can easily be repaired, and is the least which troubles me."

"Indeed!" said the other, with increased interest; "something more serious? I pray you speak as to a friend. Your father——"

"Is as well as usual," rejoined Rosalind, hastily; "though I do not know how this affair may affect him. But it is of another I wish to speak. You remember my little coz—I mean the little girl who was run over in Chestnut street, on last Christmas day, and whom I had conveyed hither, and succeeded, by the aid of kind Providence, in restoring to life and health?"

"I have heard my sister Linda speak of her, as a very bright, sweet, interesting little child."

"She was every thing that was good and lovely," said Rosalind, with considerable emotion; "and oh! how I loved her, from the depths of my inmost soul! I can not, can not, will not believe that she is guilty—it would destroy my faith in human innocence."

"Guilty of what, Miss Rosalind?" exclaimed the other, quickly.

"Of robbing us—of robbing her benefactors."

"Of robbing you? Good heavens! is she suspected of so heinous a crime against law and gratitude?"

"By some she is, sir—though not by me. She is gone, however; and the clothes I presented her, are gone with her."

"You astonish me! May it not be a case of burglary, robbery, and abduction?"

"Yes! yes! it must be—I dare not think otherwise!" cried Rosalind, greatly excited. "But it is so singular—so very strange! I am half-bewildered—I know not what to think. All the servants believe her guilty, and are eager to inform the police—but I have forbidden them to speak of the matter to a single soul. If she is guilty—and I will not think she is—she must escape detection—at least *I* will not be guilty, either as principal or accessory, of hunting her down like a wild beast! How can she be guilty, Doctor? She is a poor orphan—when I took her in, she had neither home nor friends—how could she rob one who had treated her so kindly? who loved her so dearly? Oh! speak, sir! and tell me you believe her innocent of so foul a crime! let me know there is one impartial judge who thinks suspicion wrongs her!"

Rosalind spoke under great excitement, seemingly controlled by a noble, generous impulse; and in spite of herself, the tears started into her sweet blue eyes, and made them dim. The look of young Stanhope betrayed deep sympathy; he unconsciously moved his chair nearer to Rosalind; a slight color overspread his pale features; and his voice was a little tremulous, as he replied:

"Calm yourself, Miss Rosalind, I pray you! you are much agitated. I appreciate your noble feelings—they are worthy of a pure and generous mind; but try and be calm, and let me know the whole particulars, and I will advise with you to the best of my humble ability."

"Thank you!" returned Rosalind, somewhat warmly; "thank you, Dr. Stanhope! I believed you would advise me for the best; and therefore, on the impulse of the moment, I ventured to take the liberty of sending for you. I am so circumstanced, that I have but few acquaintances,

and fewer friends, of whom I may ask a favor, and in whom I can confide. I would have sent for your dear sister, Linda; but she, like myself, would be unable to do what I would have done."

"I assure you, Miss Rosalind, it affords me a high degree of pleasure and pride, to know you think me worthy of your confidence, and that I have been selected to give you any little assistance which may be in my power," replied the young physician, warmly. "Believe me," he continued, with a degree of emotion which he evidently strove to suppress—but which betrayed itself in his manner, look, and voice: "Believe me, Miss Rosalind, when I say, that though I have not made so marked a display of my feelings as some might have done, I have not forgotten, and will *never* forget, that you are one of the few friends, who, having known us in prosperity, did not desert my dear sister and family in the hour of adversity—but stood nobly by them, unchanged, save in being kinder, more generous, and more affectionate."

His voice faltered so much toward the last, that he was scarcely able to articulate the closing words of the sentence; and he turned his face away to conceal his emotion; while Rosalind, with the hot blood mounting to her very temples, experienced a degree of agitation that she would not have had the other observe for the world; and, unperceived by him, she hastily brushed a tear from her eye.

"I have ever loved Linda, as a dear, sweet sister," she hastened to reply; "and what little *I* have done, has been but a poor repayment for the delightful hours I have spent in her company. But pardon me, Doctor——"

"You once called me Newton," he interrupted, hastily; "may I not hope that the friend of my sister and family can be induced to address me as formerly?"

"Certainly," replied Rosalind, with some embarrassment; "if—if you desire it; and on condition that you will use as little formality to me, as when you——"

She hesitated, and he quickly rejoined:

"I will, Rosalind—I will. The present shall be as of old—we will forget the long interval between. I scarcely need tell you, that I am proud and sensitive; and it was *pride* that made me seem so cold and formal. I should have acted differently to one who has been so kind; I have often regretted my sullen waywardness; but, somehow, nature would out, and it seemed as if I could not do otherwise. I was poor, and you were rich; and the world sees such a gulf between poverty and riches. But as regards you, I acted foolishly, wrongly, unjustly; and I now take a pride in acknowledging my fault, and in craving your forgiveness! But I interrupted you—pardon me!"

Rosalind flushed and paled alternately, while the other was speaking—and it was some little time before she could recover the composure she desired.

"I was about to say," she resumed—"that is, I was about to request your assistance, in finding this little girl. If she is guilty, I would have her found and reclaimed from vice; and if she is not guilty, I would have her found and restored to me. I do not wish the police to know of this affair; for should she fall into the iron grasp of the law, I might not be able to save her from the disgrace of a prison, the doom of a criminal. I thought if you would be so kind as to make a search for her, perhaps——"

"Yes, yes—I understand!" again interrupted the other; "I understand; and believe me, all that I can do, shall be done. I will proceed in the matter at once; and I will search for her as if she were my sister; and if so for-

tunate as to find her, she shall find in me a brother, whether guilty or not. Please inform me of her name, age, and appearance—what dress you suppose she wore away—what you know of her history, her former associates, and the particulars of the robbery.”

Rosalind hastened to put the young physician in possession of all the facts she knew concerning the robbery and the unfortunate little orphan, with the exception of her name, parentage, her own relationship, and the events connected with the two families of Norbury and Clendenan.

“But you have forgotten to mention her name, Rosalind!” said the other, as she paused.

“She is called Ellen.”

“But she has a surname?”

“We never addressed her by any other name than Ellen, while with us,” she answered, coloring.

“But if I knew her surname, it might assist me in my search,” he replied.

“Oh! do you think her guilty?” she inquired—thus turning the conversation from the point upon which she so much dreaded inquiry, and for reasons which are already known to the reader.

“No,” he replied, after some reflection, “I cannot say I think her guilty of robbing you—certainly she could not have done so alone, to the extent you mention. I think it more probable that she was abducted—though for what purpose, it is difficult to divine. The whole affair is very singular and mysterious! Perhaps the Burglar, whoever he was, knew her—she might have seen and recognized him—and thus have been taken away for his own security. Or, what seems even more probable still, considering that she carried off her own garments, he might have compelled

her to do this, in order to attract suspicion to her, and thus be the better able to screen himself.”

“Oh! Newton,” cried Rosalind, as a wild, terrible thought flashed upon her brain—“you do not think she has been murdered?”

“No, Rosalind, I hardly think that—because, by murdering her, he would gain nothing, and would put his own life in jeopardy.”

“Oh! find her! find her!” exclaimed Rosalind, laboring under great excitement: “find her, Newton, and my gratitude shall almost be boundless!”

“I will do all that can be done, Rosalind,” he replied, rising; “and I will set about it at once. Calm yourself, I pray you—try and be composed. The first intelligence I get concerning her, shall be forwarded to you without delay; and if I am not successful, I will myself come in the evening, and make a full report of the day’s search.”

“Thank you! thank you!” returned Rosalind: “may Heaven aid you, and protect the poor child! If you see Linda, bid her come to me—tell her I feel very low spirited.”

The young physician promised to do so, and took his departure. For half an hour after he had gone, Rosalind walked hastily, up and down, over the rich, yielding carpet of that gorgeous apartment, her mind agitated by strange conflicting emotions: then she threw herself heavily upon a crimson-plush divan, and found relief to her overcharged heart in a flood of tears.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### SUSPICION IN THE RIGHT QUARTER.

As the reader already knows, the first and second day of Dr. Stanhope's search for little Ellen, was without avail; for the first day she was a prisoner at Mulwrack's—the second day a guest of Mrs. M'Callan—and, we may add, the third day drew to a close, without the young physician obtaining any tidings of the poor orphan. Each night he repaired to Sir Walter's mansion, to make his sad report to Rosalind; and when he made his appearance there on the third night, his whole look showed that he was quite disheartened.

"Alas!" exclaimed Rosalind, who almost flew to meet him, so eager was she for the news: "Alas! Newton, I see by your countenance you have again failed!"

"I have," he replied, sadly. "I can glean no tidings of her whatever."

"Oh! depend upon it, she has been murdered!" cried Rosalind.

"I think not—at least I hope not—but it is very strange what can have become of her!"

"My poor father!" groaned Rosalind; "this will be sad news for him!"

"Does he then take her loss so much to heart?"

"Yes, and says it is all his doing."

"How his doing, Rosalind?" inquired the other, in a tone of surprise.

"Why, you know he has strange spells and fancies, and

fancies to him are realities. He now fancies that he has said something harsh to the poor child, in one of his dejected moods, and that this has troubled her sorely, and been the main cause of her leaving."

"And does he think her guilty of the robbery?"

"No! he says she cannot be guilty of that—that she was too good, and pure, and guileless, to commit such a crime—but he thinks she may have taken her own clothing away, supposing it belonged to her; and that in leaving, she may have left the front door open; and that some other person, having seen it open, may have entered and robbed the house."

"That is certainly not an unreasonable supposition," replied young Stanhope, reflectively. "What think you of it, Rosalind?"

"I know not what to think," replied Rosalind, in a desponding tone. "It may be so. I would sooner believe that something might have induced her to leave me without a parting word, than that she could have deliberately robbed those who were her truest friends. Ha!" she added, with a start of surprise—"here comes father!"

The Baronet had entered the upper end of the drawing-room, while Rosalind was speaking; and now, with a feeble, nervous, unsteady step, advanced straight to the young Doctor, fixing his hollow eyes steadily upon him, with an anxious, inquiring look. The physician rose to receive him, and made a graceful inclination of his head. The Knight caught the hand which the other extended, and with a wild, searching glance at his face, exclaimed:

"The child? the child? what of her?"

"I deeply regret to say, Mr. Clendennan, that——"

"You failed!" half-shrieked the unhappy Sir Walter, throwing up his hands, with a nervous jerk. "Yes! yes! you need not speak. I can see—I can see. Oh, God!



forgive this poor wretch! Holy Redeemer! intercede for this poor wretch!" and staggering to a seat, he sunk down upon it, covered his face with his thin, wasted hands, and moaned and groaned, as one in deep distress of mind.

The young Doctor was about to offer him such feeble consolation as words can give—but a motion of Rosalind deterred him; and he quietly reseated himself, and remained silent. At length Sir Walter withdrew his hands, and said, sharply:

"You have not looked for her, sir! you know it."

"Indeed I have, Mr. Clendennan: I——"

"Tut! tut!" interrupted the Knight, almost fiercely; "don't contradict me, in my own house, sir!"

The features of Stanhope flushed, and he was about to make an injudicious rejoinder, when a sign from Rosalind induced him to suppress all show of resentment.

"Where did you look for her, sirrah?" demanded the Knight, as if speaking to a menial.

"I made inquiries in every direction, Mr. Clendennan," replied the Doctor, in a mild, gentlemanly tone; "and especially did I search for her through that vile quarter, in which, as I learned from Rosalind, she for a short time resided, previous to her being brought hither."

"Umph!" sneered Sir Walter; "at your age I could have found her."

"Whether living or dead, I suppose?"

"Dead!" exclaimed the Baronet, with a start. "Dead! What do you mean by that, sir?"

"It is possible she may not be living now."

As he said this, Sir Walter's face assumed such an expression of remorse, agony, and terror combined, that Dr. Stanhope instantly regretted having made use of the words he did.

"If she is dead," almost shrieked the Knight, "then I

killed her—I killed her. I drove her to it. My God! My God! *hoc me libera metu!* Oh! when shall I be at rest!"

"Do not accuse yourself, Mr. Clendennan," began the young physician—but the Baronet hastily and harshly interrupted him.

"Tut! tut! sir!" he said: "keep your advice for your patients, and give it with your physic, and put it in the bill! Youth should respect age, and not think age a fool and grow meddlesome. So I was taught when I was a boy. But I forgot. Boys are men now; and men are—Heaven knows what! Good night, sir!"

With this, without saying a word to Rosalind, first or last—and, in fact, without even appearing to be aware of her presence—Sir Walter arose from his seat, and tottered out of the apartment, through the door by which he had entered.

"Oh! Newton, forgive his harsh words, for my sake!" said Rosalind, with tearful eyes, as her father's form disappeared.

"I will," replied Stanhope, frankly. "Ay," he added, with considerable feeling, "for *your* sake, Rosalind, I would forgive him even a *blow*."

The features of Rosalind instantly became suffused with a beautiful glow—but she said quickly, as if to turn the conversation:

"So you think there is no hope of finding the poor child?"

"Why, the prospect of doing so, looks rather gloomy now, I am sorry to say—but still we must not despair. By-the-by, while searching for her through that miserable locality, of which I have spoken, I met a well-dressed, benevolent-looking gentleman, who had just come out of a miserable groggery, kept by a hideous Dwarf, who makes his living by dealing out poison, under the names of brandy,



gin, and so forth, to the most degraded and filthy wretches of both sexes."

"Why, I do believe that is the very place which Ellen told me about, with such a feeling of loathing," exclaimed Rosalind. "She was decoyed in there by a hunchback-boy, who told her it was the proper place to get the liquor for which she had been sent by a drunken mistress. Did you inquire in there? It is possible some one there may know of her present whereabouts."

"No, I made no inquiry in there, for I did not like to venture into such a den; but I accosted the gentleman who had just come out—and who, from his appearance in such a vile quarter, I conjectured to be a Minister of the Gospel—and put my inquiries to him. He had seen no such little girl as I described; but said if she were in that part of the city, he thought it not unlikely he might find her, as he spent most of his time in going about among those poor, degraded beings, relieving their physical sufferings when he could, and talking to them concerning the religion which saves from eternal death. He had just witnessed a scene in that groggery, he said, which had made a painful, a terrible impression upon his mind—an impression that time could never erase. He had, in derision, been invited by the Dwarf, to pray with his wife, who was dying of a contagious fever. He had accepted the invitation, and had offered up prayers for her soul's salvation; but she had just died, with bitter curses and blasphemous oaths on her lips. On my asking if he was a professional minister, he replied that he was not, but a private citizen, who felt it his duty to do all that lay in his power to relieve the sufferings of his fellow beings."

"Heaven bless him!" exclaimed Rosalind.

"Ay, and Heaven will, Rosalind, if he is sincere, which I believe. Would to God there were more like him! for

suffering humanity needs the aid of all such philanthropic hearts. Had I not seen for myself, I would not have believed it possible to find such awful wretchedness and degradation in the heart of this great city. After some further conversation with Mr. Shelden—the gentleman in question—we exchanged cards and separated—he cheerfully promising to aid me in my search. I fear our only hope of success now rests with him."

"Oh! if he do but find her," cried Rosalind, "I will never cease to call on Heaven to bless him. I will do more. Here, take this purse, and when you see him again, give it to him, and say it is for the poor."

She produced a well-filled purse as she spoke, and handed it to Dr. Stanhope, who promised compliance with her request.

"How is it," he said, reflectively, "that there can be so many starving poor in a city so noted as this for the benevolence of its citizens?"

"It is, perhaps, because those who have the means to relieve distress, do not reside in a quarter where it comes under their notice," suggested Rosalind.

"Ay, that must be it," he rejoined. "Yes, it must be so. I will think so, at all events; for to think otherwise, is to lose faith in humanity. Ah!" he exclaimed, suddenly—"by-the-by, you did not tell me the surname of Ellen; and somehow I have always forgotten to inquire since I first asked you—it may be of much importance to Mr. Shelden."

"As I told you before, Newton, she went by no other name than Ellen, while with us," replied Rosalind, with some embarrassment.

"But, surely, you know her name?" he rejoined, in a tone of surprise, looking her full in the face.

"I do know her name," she replied; "but it is a name

that I would not dare to pronounce in the hearing of my father."

"Indeed!"

"Nor would I have one of the servants hear it. You think this strange, Newton, and I cannot explain. But I will trust you with the name; and you will promise me not to mention it again in this dwelling, for fear it might reach my father's ears."

"Certainly, Rosalind," he replied, "I will withhold the name, if it be your desire."

"It is. Sometime I may be able to satisfy your curiosity—but not now." She looked quickly around the splendid apartment, and added, in a low tone: "Her last name is Norbury."

"Norbury?" exclaimed the young physician, half starting from his seat. "Ellen Norbury?"

"Have you then heard of the name before?" said Rosalind, quickly, in her turn greatly surprised.

"Speak, Rosalind! was her father an artist?" he demanded, flushed with excitement.

"Yes."

"Did he ever reside in Dublin?"

"Yes."

"Good heavens! how strange! Ah! I fear I see it all! the worst—the worst! Oh! that I had known this at first! It may now be too late."

"You surprise, alarm me, Newton! what is it?" cried Rosalind.

"Heavens!" exclaimed the other, springing up from his seat: "I must go at once."

"Go where! what is it? Oh! I beseech you, tell me, Newton?" cried Rosalind, also rising in considerable agitation.

"I must be quick, then;" and he looked at his watch.

"You remember when our house was entered by a burglar, some two or three months ago?"

"Yes! yes!"

"The thief carried off little, thanks to our poverty; but he broke open my father's *escritoir*, and, among other things, took away a certain paper, that may, for aught I know, have a great bearing upon the mysterious disappearance of this little girl."

"How, Newton? speak!" almost gasped Rosalind.

"That paper, forwarded to my father from a friend in Ireland, traced out the descent of the Welden Estate, through several generations, to the present holder, and named three heirs presumptive—the first legally claiming on the death of the holder, the second on the death of the first, and the third on the death of the first and second."

"But what has this to do with Ellen?" cried Rosalind, anxiously.

"I am hastening to tell you. The present holder of this estate, is John De Carp Montague, a gentleman well advanced in years—the first heir presumptive, Ellen Norbury—the second, the wife of Deacon Pinchbeck—the third, my mother."

"Indeed! Well?" gasped Rosalind.

"If Ellen Norbury were out of the way, you perceive, Pinchbeck's wife would be next in succession."

"Yes! yes! I understand, Newton—go on!"

"Deacon Pinchbeck, from what I know of him, is not any too good to put her out of the way, if he dared."

"Well? well?"

This robber, whoever he was, may have known the old scoundrel of a deacon—for if he don't consort with thieves, it is not from being too honest—and may have shown him this paper."

"Yes! yes!"

The burglar may have heard or known something of this child, from her having been in those vile haunts I have mentioned, and he and the Deacon may have plotted together to get her in their possession."

"You horrify me, Newton—but go on!"

"It is possible she may have been traced to this house, and the burglar have prowled around, watching an opportunity to kidnap her."

"Well?"

"That opportunity may have presented itself the night you were away."

"Great Heaven! Well?"

"If my surmises are correct, we must prepare ourselves for the worst."

"Merciful God!" almost shrieked Rosalind: "you think, then, she has been murdered?"

"I fear so. But I am now going to ascertain if my suspicions are well founded."

"Where are you going?"

"To the house of Deacon Pinchbeck. I will see him—I will mention her name. If he quail, I will boldly accuse him. He is too great a coward, and too shallow a villain, to conceal his crime from me, if criminal he be; and if I find him guilty, I will see that he swings before a year rolls around."

"But it may not be too late, even now!" cried Rosalind, wringing her hands in her excitement. "If the crime is contemplated, and not committed, you may save her yet! Oh! fly! fly! there is not a moment to be lost!"

"So think I. Adieu! You shall soon hear from me again."

"Oh! take care of yourself!" cried Rosalind, forgetting,

in her anxiety, how much she was betraying the true state of her heart.

The young physician turned and caught the glance of her soft blue eye—saw the generous blood spring upward to her very temples, as she reflected on her expression—and, with his own features flushing, and his heart throbbing with strange emotions, he rejoined:

"Thank you, Rosalind! I will remember."

The next moment he had gone; and Rosalind, pale and trembling, and agitated by wild, conflicting feelings, stood gazing on the door through which he had disappeared.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### THE PRICE OF BLOOD.

DEACON Absalom Pinchbeck was seated in his back-parlor, in front of his writing-desk. It was an early hour of the same evening of the *tete-a-tete* between Newton Stanhope and Rosalind Clendennan, as described in the preceding chapter, and the night following the recapture of little Ellen by the Burglar. The lighted gas, just in front of the worthy Deacon, poured a bright light upon his pale face, and clearly revealed an expression that would have perplexed an experienced physiognomist. It was an expression that seemed to denote a pitched battle between grasping avarice and paltry cowardice; and during the continuance of the strife, each combatant by turns appeared to get the upper hand of his antagonist. Occasionally there would be a kind of resolute twinkle of the small grey

eyes, and a thin, meagre, half-starved, sardonic smile, would peep out around the sensual mouth, make a timid advance, and beat a hasty retreat. Then the eyes would enlarge, and look frightened, the under jaw would drop a little, and the thick, nether lip would turn ashy, hesitate, and grow tremulous.

The Deacon was alone, so far as having a human companion—but dark, guilty thoughts were with him; and each thought seemed to be attended by a fearful spectre, whose presence could be felt rather than seen; for every now and then the Deacon would look hurriedly around, as if half-expecting some frightful apparition in a tangible shape; and even his own shadow on the wall, more than once caused him to start with a nervous thrill of terror.

“O Lord!” he muttered; “be kind and gracious to Thy poor humble servant, who seeks wealth only that he may do good! Help me to succeed in this, O Lord! preserve and prosper me—restore my dear child to health—and bless us with Thy Divine Grace—and I solemnly promise to give largely to the church in which I worship Thee, and freely to the poor who may need pecuniary aid to save them from death! For the Redeemer’s sake! Amen.”

Having uttered this selfish prayer, and insulted Heaven with its blasphemy, the Deacon comforted himself with the idea that he was really very pious, and that, consequently, the Lord must be on his side. He felt strengthened with this reflection, and thought he could safely venture to go on with his guilty purpose. There was a dirty little scrap of paper lying on the open lid of the desk before him; and he picked it up, and read it for the twentieth time. There was nothing very remarkable in the words it contained; but the writing itself looked like crow-tracks, and the spelling was such as no orthographer has sanctioned. It appeared

to have a charm for the worthy Deacon, however; and so we transcribe it, *verbatim et literatim*:

“*sur she’z fownd i hez gott wick iz a nuf git thay dow  
riddee see yu Ternite tin thowson git gold furm*”

“Yu No hoo.”

“Yes, it must be that he has got the girl again,” mused the Deacon; “this could have come from nobody but Mulwrack. What a hardened scoundrel he is—to charge such an enormous sum for such a trifle. I’ve a great notion not to give it—it takes every cent I can raise, without selling a house or a piece of land. Confound the thing! if I hadn’t told him I’d do it, like a fool, I could have got him to do it for less—I know I could. I’m always just such a fool when I get anxious—always getting swindled and cheated. And then, if it really should turn out nothing after all, I never should sleep again, for thinking of those ten thousand. I’ve the money here, all counted,” he continued, tapping a drawer. “I thought it was just as well to have it on hand, even if I shouldn’t pay it out. Confound the thing! suppose he should bungle, or the affair get wind!” The Deacon stopped and shuddered. “No, no—I’d better not; no, I won’t—for I might not get the fortune after all. I have half a notion to tell my wife, and get her advice. No, I won’t tell her—women can’t keep secrets—and Mrs. Pinchbeck might box my ears. Confound the thing! I’ll surprise her with the fortune, and see her stare—that is—that is, I mean, if I conclude to do it. Well, I don’t know—I don’t know. I’ll wait and hear what the scoundrel says, before I decide. Oh! if the Lord would only take the child, and save me the ten thousand—and—and—the other!”

Here the Deacon tumbled over some loose papers on his

desk, got his cash-book, made a few entries, looked at his watch, and was about to leave the room, to go and see his little boy, who had gone to bed, suffering from what was supposed to be the effects of a severe cold, when his eye chanced upon an evening paper, lying on the table.

"Ah!" he said, picking it up—"I must just glance at the foreign news."

He again seated himself at the desk, and for a few minutes very quietly ran his eye over the intelligence by the last European steamer. Suddenly he gave a violent start, and uttered an exclamation of profound astonishment. Then clutching the paper, as a miser would his purse, while his whole frame trembled, he eagerly, with distended eyes, re-read the paragraph which had been the innocent cause of such a heavy shock to his nervous system.

"Well," he said, looking up at the wall, at an angle of about forty-five degrees, "who *would* have thought it?"

As the wall made no reply to this, he repeated the observation, and then re-read the paragraph. Then looking up at the wall again, he exclaimed:

"Well, I *never*!"

This was said so seriously, with such emphatic earnestness, that any one, to have heard it, must have felt convinced that the worthy Deacon spoke the truth, and that in fact he had "never."

Just at this juncture, the door was thrown quickly open, and Mrs. Pinchbeck sailed in, with the stately majesty of a queen, and with a heavy frown presiding over the angles of the crow's-feet. From that clouded brow, the Deacon readily conjectured that a matrimonial storm was about to burst upon his devoted head; and he hastened to fortify himself against it, by jumping up and placing his chair between himself and his rouge-blooming companion.

"Yes, you may well dodge, you unfeeling brute!" cried

the amiable Mrs. Pinchbeck, in a towering passion. "If I get to you, I'll make your ears ring, I promise you!"

"What have I done, my dear?" whined the trembling Deacon, keeping his eyes warily upon his bigger and better half, just as a pugilist would watch his opponent, in order to dodge his blow.

"Done!" half shrieked the enraged better-half; "you've done nothing! You're a fool! a knave! an idiot! an unfeeling, ugly brute! There is poor Nelson up stairs, a-dying—and you haven't been near him! I only hope he may live to strangle his beast of a father!"

"Thank you, my dear; but if he's *dying*, he *won't*, you know." Deacon Pinchbeck was not in a mood for jesting—but this half-jocular expression was compelled out of him, as it were, by the force of circumstances. "But is the child really sick, my love?" he hastened to inquire, with an anxious, troubled look.

"Come and see, if you want to know—if you *care* to know—you brutish, lazy drone!" replied Mrs. Pinchbeck, leading the way out of the apartment, in the same stately manner in which she had sailed into it.

The Deacon was agitated by so many contending emotions, that he was obliged to steady himself by the railing, as he ascended the stairs behind his queenly wife. On entering the sleeping apartment of his son, he found he had some fever, and perceived a difficulty in his breathing; but attributing both to the effects of an ordinary cold, he merely said:

"Oh! poh! poh! my dear—there is nothing the matter—nothing serious, I mean; he will be well in the morning; I have some important business to attend to; excuse me—I will go and pray for him;" and Deacon Pinchbeck, with a bow and a scrape, retired; and Mrs. Deacon Pinchbeck

threw herself upon the bed, alongside of her son, in a fit of sullen anger.

No sooner had the Deacon reached the back-parlor again, than he hurried to the light, and again feasted his eyes upon the paragraph, which he had already read some three or four times. It was a little singular, certainly, that those few lines should have been found there by him, at just such a time; and seemed, to say the least, a peculiar coincidence. The paragraph alluded to, ran as follows:

"John De Carp Montague, of Welden Park, the last possessor of what is known as the Welden Estate, was taken suddenly ill, on the 10th ult., and expired within twenty-four hours, deeply regretted by a large circle of friends. What is a little curious, no heir to this immense estate, which is said to be worth, at the very least, some ten thousand pounds per annum, has as yet been found. It is supposed that the fortunate inheritor is somewhere in the United States—perhaps in indigent circumstances."

It will be readily perceived, that this public announcement, corroborating as it did the statement set forth by the mysterious paper in the possession of the Burglar, made a powerful impression upon the mind of one as grasping and avaricious as Deacon Pinchbeck. The great doubt of positive inheritance, which had thus far kept in check the guilty design of his soul, was now removed, and he was ready to stain his hands with the innocent blood of the helpless little orphan, to secure the fortune within his grasp. He never doubted that the paper referred to contained a statement of facts—for the family of Stanhope was known to him, and he knew there was some kind of relationship between Mrs. Stanhope and his wife; but so long as John De Carp Montague might live, he could not be benefitted by the death of Ellen Norbury, and this made

him hesitate. But here seemed a positive certainty—remove Ellen, and his wife was the next legal claimant—and what was the obstacle to be overcome, when compared with the result?

"And even if the crime should be found out," he reasoned, "and it should be proved that I was accessory before the fact—which is hardly possible—and yet admit all this for the sake of argument—what could the law do with a man worth fifty thousand dollars a year? Poh! poh! the idea of any thing very dangerous, is absurd. Why, I could buy up the lawyers, the jury, the public press, which is public opinion, and, if necessary, even the Governor himself. And even then, admitting that the worst should come to the worst, would not Nelson be the heir after his mother? and should I fail to make such a trifling venture for my dear son? I'll do it—yes, I'll do it. It can't surely be any great crime to put that little girl out of the way, if one only looks at it in the right light. She is miserable here, of course; and who knows but the Lord would look upon it as an act of charity, to put her out of her misery. It must be a good act; and the more I think of it, the more I feel convinced that it is. She's got no family to leave behind her—she's got no friends or relations to mourn her loss—she is certainly unhappy in this world—and so what is to hinder its being a good act to send her to the next? I can build a church with that money, and who knows but she is an infidel? I can give bountifully to the poor, whom she might be too proud to notice; and I can—in short, I can do a world of good, of which the Lord will approve. And then Mulwrack is shrewd, cunning, and, no doubt, honest in his way—so that should even he be detected, which is hardly probable, I do not think he would blow on me, considering I pay him his price. Confound the thing! I'll do it—yes, I'll do it. Nothing venture, no—



thing have, is a true maxim, in some cases, and I'll make the venture."

Thus soliloquized Deacon Pinchbeck—relieving the compunctions of conscience, as many another has done, and many another will do, by the fallacious reasoning, that evil may be done that good may follow. Beware—oh! beware of that snare of Satan! The victim lured into its meshes, is doomed to ruin and death. Remember engrave the sacred truth upon the inner tablet of your heart, and remember—*No evil can be justified!* God our Father is pure and holy—and nothing that is pure and holy, can sanction evil, be it great or small!

Scarcely had Deacon Pinchbeck finished his soliloquy, when he heard the street bell ring; and starting to his feet, he made an effort to appear composed and indifferent, and hastened out of the room.

"I'll answer the bell myself, Catharine," he called to the servant, whom he heard ascending the kitchen stairs; and proceeding to the door, he leisurely opened it.

As he had expected, James Mulwrack, the Burglar, stood before him.

"Walk in, sir," said the Deacon, making a sign of caution. "Quite a pleasant evening—though a little cool."

Mulwrack uttered a sort of growl in reply; and having fastened the door, the Deacon led the way into the back-parlor. As soon as he had locked this door against intrusion, he said:

"You are a bold man, Mr. Mulwrack. How did you know but I would betray you to the police, and bring you into a trap here?"

"Because, in the first place, I knowed you was as big a — villain as me," returned the robber, with one of his peculiar chuckles; "and wouldn't like to have the beak's

fingers in your dish, any more'n me. And besides," he added, slightly displaying the handle of a knife, "I knowed you wasn't ready to have your throat cut yit awhile; which, by —! I'll do, if you ever try to come any of your foul games over this child."

"Oh, of course, I was only jesting, my friend," returned Pinchbeck, turning pale, and getting a little nervous.

"In course—I knowed you was," rejoined the other, taking a seat, and looking rather suspiciously around him. "Well," he continued, "now to business. D'ye git my letter?"

"I must caution you not to speak quite so loud," said the Deacon, picking up the dirty scrap of paper lying on his writing-desk. "Is this what you mean?"

"Well, yes, that's it," replied the Burglar, taking it from the Deacon's hand, tearing it in pieces, and throwing the whole into the fire. "Mag did that," he continued; "she's some'at of a scholar, Mag is—I can't write myself. And arter I'd got it writ," he pursued, "it bothered me, like sin, to git it to you. You see, I didn't like to leave my crib in the day-time; and Mag she'd fell down and got a bad face, so that she didn't like to go; but she went and got a boy to take it, and that did jest as well. Well, what have you got to say to it? I 'spect your mind's made up, one way or t'other, by this time."

"And you have really got the child back again?"

"Didn't that there letter say so?"

"Certainly—at least so I understood it—the hand being a little cramped."

"Whose hand?"

"I mean the writing."

"Oh, yes."

"By-the-by, where did you find the girl?"

"Well, that, I believe, is my business, and haint got



nothing to do with this here," replied Mulwrack, rather gruffly. "The long and short on't is, is you going to do what you said you would?"

"Pray, don't be so hasty!" answered the Deacon; "you hardly give one time to think."

"Better take a couple of years," sneered Mulwrack. And then he added, with a savage scowl: "The long and short on't is, if you don't come to the pint, one way or t'other, right quick, I'll be tempted to break your head, and put out. What I does, is always in arnest—and I can't stand trifling from nobody."

"Oh, certainly—yes—well—certainly—that's right," said the Deacon, with some confusion. "Well—yes—I think, on the whole, I'll—You couldn't do it for less, eh?"

"No!" growled Mulwrack; "and I'll not do it at all, if you fool round much longer."

"But if I should pay you this money—a tremendous big sum, you know—if I should pay you this, in good hard gold—and you should do the—the—a—ah—a—what you agree to, you know—and you should ever get found out, you wouldn't blow on me, would you?"

"No, I'm not such a —— villain as to peach," returned the Burglar, in a tone of honest indignation.

"Well, I suppose I can see the girl, and be sure, before you—before it is—ah—done?"

"Sartin—that's fair, if you're in 'arnest; and, for that matter, you may stop and see me strangle her, if you like."

"Oh! no! no! I thank you—nothing of that kind!" cried the Deacon, much horrified. "No! no! Mr. Mulwrack—I could take no pleasure in that kind of thing. I am a church-going man, sir, and would not offend the Lord, (who has been very kind to His poor, humble servant,) by looking upon—upon—a—ah—that kind of thing. But I

suppose I can see her to-night—just to be sure she's the one?"

"Oh, yes—just plank, to show you're in 'arnest, and come with me, and I'll take you right to her," replied the robber.

"What do you mean by plank, Mr. Mulwrack?"

"Why, jest down with the tin, the shiners, the dust, the dough, or whatever you choose to call it."

"Oh! you mean the money?"

"In course."

"But business is business, my friend; and so I trust I shall be allowed to retain the amount, till I am satisfied all is right?" said the wary Deacon.

"Sartin, if you'll fetch it along with you—for I can't be running up here all the time," answered Mulwrack.

The Deacon wriggled about for a few minutes, uncertain what to do. He did not like to part with the money, without being sure that the Burglar really had the girl in his possession; he did not like to go with him, to see for himself; and he was too anxious to have the foul deed perpetrated, to think of putting the affair off till another time. But at last, after some rumination, he concluded to go, and just see the child; and if she were really the one he had once catechised in that same back parlor, he would know that, so far, the Burglar had not deceived him in his statements; and, this being the case, he thought he might safely venture to trust to his *honor*, as a *ruffian*, to fulfil the rest of the bloody compact.

"Well," said the Deacon, at length, "suppose I meet you at the corner of Seventh and Fitzwater streets, some ten or fifteen minutes hence? as our being seen together, might possibly, should any thing occur, attach suspicion to me."

"That'll do," replied the Burglar, rising; "I'll be where

you say; but don't keep me waiting too long. You'll be ready to plank, I s'pose?"

"Pay, you mean?"

"Yes."

"Oh, certainly."

"All right, Deacon—just show me out."

Having seen the robber into the street, the Deacon hastened back into the room, and locked the door. He then opened a drawer in his desk, and took out ten bags, each containing a thousand dollars in gold. The combined weight of these was rather heavy; and for a few minutes the good man pondered the best plan of carrying the "price of blood," with the least degree of exposure. At last he decided to tie the ten bags in two separate handkerchiefs, and suspend these, one on each side of him, by a strap across the shoulders, in the same manner that he had once carried his goods, in the days when he was a mere pedlar. By putting on a cloak, the strap and handkerchiefs would be completely concealed; and thus equipped, and prepared for a new adventure, he sallied forth, to keep his appointment with the Burglar.

But scarcely had he turned the first corner, after leaving his house, when he met an old friend, who *would* enter into conversation, in spite of him; and this resulted in making him half an hour too late for his appointment. At Seventh and Fitzwater streets, Mulwrack was not to be found; and the Deacon had the satisfaction of waiting for his partner in crime, till he himself was on the point of leaving and returning home.

The two worthies got together at last—Mulwrack cursing Pinchbeck for his tardiness, and declaring that he had been again to his house, to see what had become of him. The Deacon apologised, gave a true reason for his delay, and the two set off together, going down into the ver-

heart of the Infected District. But when the Deacon came to the hovel, in which Mulwrack said little Ellen was confined, his courage failed him, and he declared he would not go in.

"I'll trust to you," he said, hurriedly; "I'll trust to you. Here is the money, all counted—take it, and let me go home."

He hastily transferred the gold to Mulwrack, who, as he received it, said:

"Well, this here feels all right; and if I find it so, depend upon it, Deacon Pinchbeck, your woman will be a heir in less than an hour. Good-bye, old feller; and if we shouldn't meet agin in this world, I'll look for you in Brimstone Corner."

He shook the trembling hand of Pinchbeck, who turned and fled through the darkness of the night, accompanied by a thousand guilty thoughts and their attendant spectres, and closely watched by that All-Seeing Eye which never sleeps.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### A GUILTY CONSCIENCE.

WHEN Deacon Pinchbeck reached the steps of his dwelling, he felt the weight of a murderer's guilt upon his soul. He looked around in terror, fearful of having been seen and pursued by some officer of justice, and half expecting to find the very stones rise up and cry out against him. He had done many sinful things before—but none which impressed him with such nameless horror as this

crowning act of wickedness. He believed in a gigantic, all-powerful, omniscient, omnipresent Devil; and notwithstanding his recent conviction, that, in his particular case, the Lord would sanction the highest crime known to the law, he now fancied that this same Devil stood at his back, grinning a horrid approval of his last damning deed. It had been the good man's design, for the last ten years of his life, (and we regret to say there are many like him,) to be just religious enough to escape the Devil at last; but now he fancied his soul was fairly caught in Satan's snare, and might eventually find its way to the Bottomless Pit, along with such common sinners as did not regularly attend church on the Sabbath. The only fault we have to find with the Deacon's fancy is—not that he should now think himself enrolled among Satan's victims—but that he should *ever* have thought otherwise.

With a cold, clammy perspiration covering his face and hands, and his nether limbs trembling and bending under him like reeds, Deacon Pinchbeck tottered up the steps of his dwelling, about as miserable and contemptible a piece of humanity as the most morbid curiosity-seeker could wish to find. After pausing awhile, to take breath and gather a little courage, and having wiped the perspiration from his hands and face, the Deacon ventured to ring the bell. The door was almost immediately opened; and as soon as she saw who it was, the domestic hurriedly exclaimed:

"Oh! sir, I'm so glad you've got back, sure—for there's a gentleman in the parlor waiting to spake to ye, and Master Nelson is so sick."

"A-a-gentleman—Nelson—" stammered Pinchbeck; "wha-what—who, I mean—who is it? and wha-what does he want?"

"He didn't tell his name, sir—but said he wanted to see you on very particular buzness—and so I axed him in

to wait. But the boy is very sick, sir—hadn't you better see him first now?"

"Ye-ye-yes," replied the miserable man—"I'll—I'll go right up, Catherine."

But instead of going "right up," he blundered along to the back-parlor and opened the door. To his surprise—we may add, to his horror, all things being taken into consideration—his eye fell upon the person of Dr. Newton Stanhope. The parties knew each other by sight, and were slightly acquainted—for the father of the young man had borrowed money of the Deacon on more than one occasion, and once or twice Newton had taken his father's notes to him to be discounted beyond the legal rate.

"Good evening, Deacon Pinchbeck," said young Stanhope, rising and advancing, with extended hand, and fixing his eyes piercingly upon the colorless face of the host. "I trust I find you well, sir, in body and mind."

"Ye-yes, sir—Dr. Stanhope, I believe," stammered Pinchbeck, taking the young man's hand, and immediately dropping it in his confusion. "Ye-yes—I'm very well; but—but my boy is sick, sir—Nelson—quite; and—a—ah—I hope you're well too, sir!"

"Is your child very sick, Deacon?"

"Oh! yes, my friend—quite—terrible, sir—indeed he is—and that is what horri—I mean, agitates me so. I'm very nervous, Doctor—very nervous; and—and—what is good for the nerves, eh?"

"Well, a good conscience, for one thing," replied the young physician, keeping his eyes fixed steadily upon the Deacon's pallid face, and closely watching every expression.

"Ha! ha!" laughed the Deacon, in a wild, unnatural tone, and turning away, as if for the purpose of depositing

his cloak and hat on a distant chair. "I—I—think I've got that, my young friend."

"I hope you have, sir!" was the pointed rejoinder. And then he added, quickly: "But your child is sick, and I will not detain you but a moment. I called to see you concerning a matter rather out of the ordinary line of business, and I must beg you will pardon my intrusion. I believe you own some property in what is called the Infected District?"

"Some—yes, Doctor—some," replied the Deacon, seating himself, and beginning to breathe a little more freely.

"And you are occasionally down there yourself, Deacon?"

"Occasionally, sir—yes, occasionally."

Young Stanhope, as if without design, now managed to place his seat directly in front of Pinchbeck, so that he could look full into his eye, and note the slightest change in the expression of the guilty man's features.

"Well," he resumed, "the business I came on is this: Some three nights since, the house of a particular friend of mine, was robbed of considerable money, valuable plate, and jewelry; and a little girl, who was living with this friend, has ever since been missing; and all our search for her has, up to this time, been without avail. But heavens, sir, you are ill!"

The Deacon did appear to be ill, it is true; for his face assumed a sickly, deathly hue—his very features quivered, and became distorted, as if with a spasm—and he clung nervously to the arms of his chair, as if he felt himself going headlong over an awful abyss.

"I—I—do—don't feel well," he gasped.

"Well, I will hasten my story to a conclusion," said young Stanhope, who marked every effect his words produced, and who more than ever felt convinced that his

suspicious had fallen upon the proper person. "This little girl that I speak of—a very sweet, interesting little orphan, from all I can learn of her—is suspected by some of having robbed my friend's house; but others feel certain that she was not strong enough to carry off so many heavy articles as were lost. However that may be, she is certainly missing, and nearly all her wearing apparel is missing with her. As it was known that she had for a short time been among the degraded outcasts of the Infected District, our search for her has been carried through that vile locality; but being, as I have said, unsuccessful, it occurred to me, that you, Deacon, who own some property in that vicinity, might possibly have some knowledge of her."

"No! no! no! I haven't—I haven't—not the least, I assure you, Mr. Mul—I mean—a—ah—excuse me—Dr. Stanhope!" cried the guilty man, almost wildly. "Really," he said, rising, "some other time I shall be very—happy—to tell you all about her—I mean, to—to—talk to you on the subject; but—but my dear boy is very sick—tremendous sick—horrible—I should say alarming—and—and——"

"Nay," interrupted the other, somewhat sternly, "sit down for a minute—I have not yet told you the name of this child."

"I know—I know—that is, I mean, I don't want to know—or rather—a—ah—I——"

"Deacon Pinchbeck," again interrupted the young physician, even more sternly than before, "your manner is such as to lead me to suspect that you *do* know something of this child!"

"Who, me? I? me?" stammered the other, taking hold of the chair for support.

"I say, your manner is such as to excite this suspicion,"

returned the Doctor. "Pray, sit down, one minute, and I will tell you her name, and something of her history."

The Deacon, though never so anxious in his life to get away from a speaker, whose every word seemed to plunge a dagger into his guilty soul, seeing there was no chance of escape, resumed his seat, and made a powerful effort to compose his mind, and fortify it against the impending blow.

"Go on," he said, rather feebly..

"The name of this missing child," resumed his tormentor, speaking slowly and distinctly, and watching every expression of the Deacon's chalky face—"is—Ellen Norbury."

"Ha!" exclaimed the Deacon, with a spasmodic start. "Well?"

"You know her then?"

"Me?" cried the other: "I? no! never heard of her before—upon my honor, as a—as a—(he was going to say gentleman, but substituted)—church-member."

"Well, then," pursued young Stanhope, "I will tell you something about her, that must be very interesting for you to hear."

"Really—I—I haven't time—Mr.—a—ah—Dr. Stanhope," replied the other, making an effort to rise.

"Nay, sit still, Deacon Pinchbeck!" rejoined the young man, speaking in a firm, decisive tone. "You *must* hear the story—you *shall* hear it—or else the consequences be on your own head!"

"Wha-what consequences?" gasped the guilty man.

"The consequences, sir, of being brought before the bar of justice."

"I—I—do—don't know wha-what you mean," stammered the Deacon, sinking back in his chair; "but go—go—on."

"This child, as I was saying," pursued young Stanhope—"this Ellen Norbury—was the daughter of William

Norbury, an artist, who once resided in Dublin; and is a distant relation of John De Carp Montague, a gentleman of wealth, now living in Ireland; (the young Doctor had not yet seen the paper announcing his death;) and her father and mother both being dead, she is the heir presumptive of the Welden Estate, now held by this same John De Carp Montague."

"Well, and what is all this to me?" the Deacon now ventured to inquire—having, through sheer desperation, in some degree regained his natural assurance.

"I will tell you what this is to you," sternly answered the young physician; "and I believe I shall thus repeat what you already know. If this same Ellen Norbury were dead, your wife, Deacon Pinchbeck, would be the next heir to this estate."

"Indeed! this is news to me."

"Is it? we shall see!" was the rejoinder. "After Ellen Norbury and your wife, my mother would be the next heir; and a paper, containing this statement, and much more of the same nature, was in my father's possession, till within two or three months, when it was stolen by a burglar, who luckily found little else to steal. Now considering that fact, in connection with the mysterious disappearance of this orphan, and the inference to be drawn is, that some *interested* party has had a hand in her abduction, perhaps *murder*."

The last word was pronounced so emphatically, that, in spite of himself, the guilty Deacon could not avoid a kind of spasmodic start. Stanhope noticed this, and quickly added:

"Deacon Pinchbeck, a train of circumstances has fixed suspicion upon you, as the author of a dark deed—a deed that may send you to the prison, perhaps the gallows!"

"Upon me? what circumstances?" gasped the other.

"No matter what—you *are* the guilty man!"

The Deacon sprung from his seat, and the young physician rose at the same time, keeping his eye fixed steadily upon the accused.

"Where is that child?" he almost fiercely demanded.

"I—I—do—don't know—upon my word, I don't!" stammered the agitated church-officer.

"'Tis false! you *do* know! and I *know* you know!" was the emphatic rejoinder. "Now mark me!" he continued, stepping in front of the accused, and speaking in a tone that admitted of no doubt of his keeping his word: "if this girl is restored to her friends, safe and sound, within four-and-twenty hours, your part in the guilty transaction shall be overlooked, and the secret kept; but if she be not so restored, within that time, then the law shall take the affair in hand, and you shall answer for your crime at the bar of justice!"

"But—but—how—how—" began the Deacon, when the other interrupted him.

"Not another word!" he said, sternly. "I have said my say, and warned you of the consequences. Restore that child, or woe be to you! Good-night."

He opened the door into the entry, and the trembling Deacon followed him.

"Wha-what—what do you know about it, any how?" gasped the latter.

"To-morrow night, at this time, you shall learn something about what I know, if that child is not restored to her friends ere then."

Young Stanhope opened the outer door as he spoke, closed it after him, and darted down the steps; while the guilty Deacon leaned against the wall for support, and fairly gasped for breath.

"O Lord! O Lord!" he muttered—"what will become of me?"

"Oh! sir," exclaimed Catharine, at this moment appearing at the head of the stairs—"isn't you coming up, sir? The boy is so sick—choking like—and mistress is crying, and seems as if she'd go into a fit—and I'm so frightened! Oh! do, sir, come up, and send for the Doctor!"

"I'll be there in a minute," groaned the guilty wretch, hardly conscious of what he heard, or of what he was saying.

He staggered along into the back-parlor, and sunk upon a seat, one of the most miserable beings then in existence.

"Too late!" he groaned; "too late! I'm lost! I'm lost! He has done the bloody deed, before this, and fled. O Lord! O Lord! what will become of me?"

Suddenly he bounded to his feet, with the exclamation:

"It may not be too late to save her yet! Something may have happened to prevent the crime! If it isn't done, I'll stop it, and get the girl, and he may take the money and go."

He seized his hat as he spoke, and rushed out of the house like a madman. Down one street, and up another, he fairly flew, till he reached the Infected District: then he was forced to advance more cautiously in the thick darkness. But he had been to the house, knew where it was situated, and he hurried toward it by the nearest course—plunging on through dark, filthy lanes, alleys and courts, till the dismal structure stood before him, rayless and silent as the grave. Neither looking to the right nor to the left, and thinking of nothing but the bloody deed, whose guilt must be upon his soul if a single moment too late, he reached the door, quite out of breath, and gave a few hurried raps.

As he did so, a figure, which seemed to start forth from



the very darkness itself, tapped him on the shoulder; and words, that made his blood curdle, sounded in his ear:

"Sir! I summon you, as a juror, to hold an inquest upon a female body within this house! Who are you? and what is your name?"

"O Lord!" mentally groaned the Deacon; "then it is all over! and I am lost—ruined—lost!" and he clung nervously to the casement of the door, to keep his trembling frame from sinking to the earth.

"Quick! speak! who are you, sir?" demanded the Coroner—for the person who addressed the terrified and guilt-burdened Pinchbeck, was no other than that officer, legally acting in the discharge of his duty.

"My—my name—is—is—Pinchbeck," gasped the Deacon.

"What Pinchbeck? and where do you live?"

"Absalom, sir—Absalom Pinchbeck—and my—my residence is—a—ah—No.—South Eighth Street."

"Ah! Mr. Pinchbeck, I know you."

Pinchbeck felt as if every thing guilty and wicked knew him now, as well as the officer.

"I am surprised to see you here, sir, at this hour," continued the Coroner; "but it is no business of mine. Remain here till I summon the rest of the jurors! I will not keep you long."

"Oh! sir, please excuse me!" whined the Deacon. "I have a child at home, very sick—indeed I have!"

"I am sorry to say that I can't excuse you, Mr. Pinchbeck—or Deacon, as I believe you are usually termed. I want just such men as you—but they are very scarce round here. Remain, sir, till I return! I will not keep you long."

He hurried away as he spoke; and the Deacon, afraid to leave, sunk down, terrified, upon the damp, filthy ground.

It was awful enough, he thought, to be guilty of a murder, without being obliged to sit as a juror on the corpse of his victim; and in the half hour that the officer was away, he suffered the agonies of a thousand horrible deaths himself. At last the Coroner returned, with a light, in company with the rest of his jury; and the old hovel was immediately taken possession of by this officer of the dead.

As the Deacon, the last of the party, stepped over this late abode of crime, he fairly shook in every limb, and gasped for breath, and felt that hell itself was within him.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### THE SUICIDE.

It will be remembered, that we left little Ellen in the dark, damp vault of that miserable old structure, which we have just seen the Coroner take possession of, for the purpose of holding an inquest upon a female body; and it may naturally be inferred, that the Burglar kept his word with the guilty Deacon, and earned his money by a bloody deed. We will therefore now return to our little heroine, and see whether this inference is correct or not.

It was a horrible night that the poor child passed in that loathsome place, with only rats, and animals of a still inferior grade, for companions. She did not lie down on the piece of old carpet thrown to her by Mulwrack—but crept half-way up the ladder, and clung there for hours, terrified and despairing, but continually praying to her Heavenly Father for deliverance. When daylight came,



although it reached not her rayless prison, Margaret raised the trap-door, and bade her come up; and Ellen was not slow to obey this new order—or rather, avail herself of this permission.

"If you won't try to get away again," said Margaret, "and won't make no noise, and will promise to go right down below and be silent, if anybody comes, we'll let you stay up here, perhaps all day."

"Oh! ma'am, I'll promise anything, if you'll only let me be with you!" said the almost heart-broken little girl, in a piteous tone.

Margaret gave her a peculiar look—a look which Ellen knew not how to interpret—and immediately turned away, to busy herself about the chimney; but Mulwrack, who was lying awake on the bed, immediately added:

"Well, little gal, it's my opinion you'd best keep pretty quiet, and do what you're told! Mag, you know I've let her come up to please you; and I tell you agin, if she gits away, it'll cost you your life, may be."

"I'll stake my life against her escape, Jim," was Margaret's reply.

"Very well; and as I knows you for a true blue, when you set out, I'll just roll over and take another nap."

Accordingly, the robber turned himself over, with his head to the wall; and soon after, a loud snore announced that he had fallen asleep.

"Poor child!" whispered Margaret to Ellen; "don't despair! I'll save you."

She pointed Ellen to a seat as she spoke, made a sign for her to keep silent, and then busied herself with kindling a fire and preparing breakfast.

The sun was an hour or two high, when Mulwrack awoke, got up, and devoured his morning meal. Margaret handed Ellen some bread and meat; but she was suffering under

such a burden of sorrow, that she ate only a very small quantity. Having finished his breakfast, the Burglar had recourse to the bottle again, and invited Margaret to join him—but she positively refused to taste a drop of her favorite beverage.

"Mag," said Mulwrack, looking her full in the face, "either you're not well, or else you've got some ——— plot in your head."

"I don't feel exactly well, Jim," she replied.

"Well, I'm sorry for that," he returned, with some show of feeling. "'Spose you lay down awhile!"

"No," she said, turning away, and hastily brushing a tear from her eye—"I'll wait till night, Jim, and then may be I'll sleep well. I think I shall rest then."

"Why, to-night, you know, we talk of going away," pursued the robber.

"I know I'm going away, Jim," she answered; "but I'd rather not lie down now."

"Well, please yourself," rejoined the other. Then, after a long pause, during which he seemed to be deeply ruminating, he called Margaret aside, and said: "Mag, we must send word to old Pinchbeck, that the gal's found, so as he can be ready with the tin, when I call on him to-night. How'll we do it? I can't go out, for fear of the beaks; and you aint no beauty, jest now, with that there face."

"Do you intend to call on him yourself to-night?" inquired Margaret.

"Yes, that's my notion."

"What time will you go?"

"I'll start out as soon as it gits to be dark."

"How long will you be away?"

"Well, an hour, may be—may be longer. Why?"

"Nothing—only I want to know what time I'll start on my journey."

"Jest arter I git back—'twont take me long to do the job."

"Oh! Jim, don't do it!" said Margaret, earnestly.

"Come, Jim—don't!"

"Now stop this fool talk!" replied the Burglar, roughly.

"I won't stand it, Mag!"

"But see here, Jim—couldn't you make as much, or more, by telling the child what's coming to her, and all about the Deacon's wicked plot?"

"Why, she haint got no money; and the old feller is living, and may live ten year; and she can't git a copper till he's dead; and this, you know, will be right in hand."

"But, Jim, something bad'll come on't!" said Margaret, sorrowfully.

"Oh! you're always gitting skeered, Mag; so don't say no more, or I'll git mad! Come! tell me how I'll git word to old Pinchbeck. I want it to go to him kind of mysterious like, so as nobody else won't know nothing about it."

"Perhaps I'd better write him a note," suggested Margaret.

"That's it—that's it—and then you can hire a boy to take it," returned Mulwreck. "It takes you, Mag."

Accordingly, the few words, on a dirty scrap of paper, which we transcribed in a former chapter, were dictated by Mulwreck, written by Margaret, and dispatched to Deacon Pinchbeck by a boy, who found him in his business office, not far from the Exchange. The effect of that note, as has already been shown, was to induce the Deacon to prepare himself to pay in gold for the commission of an awful crime.

But little was said to Ellen during the remainder of the day, which seemed for all parties to drag heavily to a close. Mulwreck occasionally walked about the room, and

stamped his foot with angry impatience; but Margaret mostly sat in silence, seemingly brooding over something dark and terrible. As night set in, Mulwreck prepared to go forth. Just before leaving, he called Margaret to him, and said, with some feeling:

"Mag, you don't seem in good spirits; but don't mind this little affair—it's nothing alarming—and as soon as it's over, we'll bolt, and leave on the first train. We'll git away—don't you fear."

"Will nothing change you, Jim?" inquired the other.

"Nothing but the Deacon's backing out; and I aint much afeard of that—the old rascal's too anxious for futur wealth."

"Well, go!" said Margaret, in a voice slightly tremulous; and impulsively, as she spoke, she threw her arms around the Burglar's neck, and burst into tears.

"Come, come, Mag," returned the other, a little affected, in spite of himself—"you're making a fool of yourself, and me too. What's come over you all at once? You didn't use to mind trifles."

"I know, Jim, I've been a bad woman," sobbed the other.

"Poh! nonsense! you haint been no such a thing—don't think so. There! there! stop now—I can't stand this — whining."

"Jim, you've often stole money to keep me from starving," said Margaret, with feeling solemnity: "May God forgive you!"

"Why, Mag, I believe you're going mad!" said the robber, in a tone of surprise: "you'd better turn preacher and done with it. Now see here!" he continued, somewhat sternly—"don't go for to let your chicken heart work up your feelings for this here gal—'cause it's no use. If I

knowed you was going to let her off, I'd take her down stairs, and strangle her at once."

"Didn't I say, Jim, I'd stake my life against her security? and did I ever break my word to you, when I pledged it that way?"

"No, that's a fact—you never did, Mag—I'll say that for you."

"But I've many times been cross to you, Jim; and I feel so bad just now, I want you to say you forgive me."

"I reckon I'd better ax that of you," returned the Burglar, with a softened expression; "seeing as how I've beat you so many times."

"Never mind that, Jim," rejoined Margaret, quickly; "but just say you forgive me!"

"In course I do. Why, what the — is the matter with you to-night?"

"Nothing—nothing. There! I'm all right now."

"Well, don't let the gal know nothing, Mag—I won't be long away—and you can be all ready to travel when I git back."

With this the Burglar unbolted the door, cast one or two quick, searching glances around him, and disappeared in the darkness. His subsequent interview with Deacon Pinchbeck is already known to the reader.

Margaret stood at the door a few minutes, gazing upon the spot where the form of the Burglar had disappeared from her view. Then heaving a long, deep sigh, she turned back into the room, closed the door, sunk heavily upon a seat, covered her eyes with her hands, and for some time remained almost motionless, seemingly in great distress of mind. Then she got up, and, going to the fireplace, struck a light, placed it on the table, and turned to little Ellen, who sat watching her in anxious silence.

"Ellen," she said, in a low, solemn tone, "I promised to

save you, and I'm going to keep my word. You and I are going to part now; and we'll never meet again—no! never—never!"

"What do you mean, ma'am?" inquired little Ellen, anxiously.

"Hush! don't speak so loud—we might be overheard!" said Margaret, glancing hastily around. Then drawing from her bosom a diamond ring and necklace of great value, she held them to the light, and continued: "Did you ever see these before, child?"

"Oh! yes, ma'am, I think so," answered Ellen, quickly. "At least, Miss Rosalind had just such pretty ornaments."

"Was she the lady you lived with, when Mr. Mulwrack found you?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"And would you like to take these back to that good lady?" inquired Margaret.

"Oh! yes, ma'am—yes!" cried Ellen, clasping her hands, and looking eagerly, almost wildly, at the other. "Oh! ma'am, if you will let me go back, I will kneel down every night, as long as I live, and call on Heaven to bless you! Oh! ma'am, I do so want to tell dear Rosalind that I didn't take away her pretty things, after her being so good to me!" and as she said this, she burst into tears.

"Poor, dear, sweet, innocent little child!" cried Margaret, impulsively throwing her arms around the gentle orphan, and straining her to her heart. "Oh! would to God," she added, in a tone that betrayed intense emotion: "would to God, I could be as innocent as you are! Oh! what a guilty wretch I've been! so wicked, that I know God won't forgive me!"

"Don't think that, ma'am!" returned Ellen, soothingly. "My dear mother used to say, God would forgive anybody that repented and tried to be good."

"But I can't try to be good—it's too late!" exclaimed Margaret, bursting into tears.

"Oh, no, ma'am, it's never too late to try," said little Ellen, consolingly; "so don't cry, please."

"But I've been such a bad, bad woman!" sobbed the other; "and for so many years too! Ah! dear child, you don't know the wicked things I've done, since I first came to this awful city! I was once pure and innocent like you are; but I was persuaded to run away from my happy home in the country, and begin a new life of wickedness, and let my parents break their hearts about me; and God won't surely forgive such a wretch as I am! I first saw Mr. Mulwrack in the country; we were both young then; and I loved him, and took his advice, and came with him to the city. I thought he meant to do well by me, and marry me—but he didn't. But perhaps I was more to blame than he," she continued, sobbingly; "at least I want to think so now—for I love him still; but I can't see you murdered—for it was you that made me think again of old times."

"Murdered!" cried little Ellen, greatly horrified. "What do you mean, ma'am?"

"Yes, little innocent, they want to murder you, because you will one day get a great property, which somebody else wants to get hold of. Mr. Mulwrack is to have ten thousand dollars for doing the wicked deed—and he's gone now to see about it. But don't be afraid! you shan't be hurt. I told you I'd save you, and I'll do it; and my saving you will prevent him committing murder—so that I have a double reason for doing it."

"Oh! ma'am, I'm so frightened!" said Ellen, trembling.

"And well you may be, poor child!" returned the other. "But you must fly, and escape while you can. Here, take these things, and give them to the good lady,

and tell her to pray for my soul! They're all I could save out of the plunder; but they're worth something; and I shall feel better to know I've sent something back;" and she nervously placed the ring and necklace in the trembling hand of the terrified Ellen. "You won't forget to pray for me, as you promised, will you?" she inquired, eagerly.

"Oh! no, ma'am—no—never!" cried the half-distracted child. "I'll pray for you every night, as long as we live."

"Well, kiss me good-bye—and go now—for there's no knowing when Mr. Mulwrack may come back."

Ellen threw her arms around Margaret's neck, and kissed her swollen lips.

"Here," added Margaret, thrusting a crumpled paper into the hand of Ellen; "conceal this in your bosom, and don't let anybody get hold of it but your friends—it will tell you all about the fortune. Quick, now, my sweet child—put on your bonnet, and fly! for I tremble all the while you stay here. There, now; go! go! stay not another minute!"

"Won't you come with me, ma'am?" asked Ellen.

"No! no! I must stay here."

"But Mr. Mulwrack might——"

"I know what you would say," rejoined the other, as Ellen paused, for fear of wounding her feelings, and looked anxiously into Margaret's face. "You think he'll beat me—may be kill me; but he won't—you needn't fear;" and she drew a long, deep sigh. "Come!" she cried, starting up, and half-dragging little Ellen to the door, which she cautiously opened; "one kiss more; and then, good-bye—*forever!*"

The last word was pronounced emphatically, in a tone of deep, mournful solemnity.

The little orphan required no further urging, to induce her to hasten her departure from a place, where, as she

had now learned, her life was not safe from one minute to another; and so, imprinting a farewell kiss upon the lips of Margaret, she murmured, "God bless you, ma'am!" and disappeared in the darkness.

For some five minutes, Margaret remained at the door, motionless as a statue, looking out upon the night. Then, with another long, deep sigh, she turned back into the house, and closed the door, but did not bolt it.

"He'd have killed her, and that would have been murder," she muttered, walking up and down the room; "he'd kill me, for letting her go, and that would be murder too; but if I die before he comes, I'll save him; and I can never die less guilty than I am now. O God!" she continued, clasping her hands and looking upward, in an attitude of supplication; "forgive this wretched being, for the Redeemer's sake! I'm about to stand in Thy awful presence, by the last wicked deed I'll ever do; and, O God! receive my soul, and put it not into eternal torments, for the Redeemer's sake!"

As she ceased, she drew a small paper from her bosom, opened it with a trembling hand, and glanced at the white powder it contained. A cold shudder passed through her frame.

"It is terrible!" she muttered; "but it must be done; and if not done at once, I may lose the courage. I'll not think till too late to escape. Jim, I die for you. O God! forgive me!"

With a spasmodic movement, she raised the paper to her lips, and swallowed the contents.

*It was that deadly poison known as strychnine.*

"Now, then, let me pray, till death comes!" she said, kneeling upon the ground.

She continued kneeling and praying for about twenty minutes. Suddenly clasping her temples with both

hands, she cried, "I die! I die!" and fell over upon her back.

These were her last words. Life continued a few minutes longer, and then her spirit took its flight to the eternal world.

Thus died poor Margaret Cassady; died by her own hand, the death of the suicide; died in the very prime and vigor of womanhood; died alone—as hundreds and thousands of wretched beings have died—without one kind, consoling word, to lift the desolation of her crime-burdened soul, and cheer it, with a ray of hope, in its dark flight over the dread abyss which separates time from eternity; died that another, whom she loved, might not stain his hands with her own blood, or the blood of the innocent orphan. Who dare say, in the great summing up of the good and ill of her mortal life, that the doom of eternal woe shall be pronounced upon that poor, unfortunate, deeply-erring woman? Who dare step between her and her God, to give human judgment?

When, after quitting Deacon Pinchbeck, burdened with the price of blood, and ready to plunge his dark soul into the awful crime of murder, James Mulwreck entered that old hovel, he found the candle burning on the table, and its feeble, flickering rays falling upon the upturned face of her who had long been his partner in guilt. With an angry oath, supposing her intoxicated or asleep, he stooped down to raise her, and found her dead. Then, like lightning, the meaning of her mysterious words and actions flashed upon his dizzy brain; and with a yell of horror—a yell that resounded through that old hovel, and far out into the night, like the shrieking of a demon among the damned—he started to his feet, and turned, and fled; fled as one who fancied himself pursued by a ghastly phantom—fled into the deep

darkness, which covered him as a pall, and concealed him from all human eyes.

A woman was the first, after the Burglar, to discover the corpse of Margaret; and she hastened to inform the Coroner, who lived not far from the limits of the Infected District; and this will account for his presence there, at that hour of the night, and so soon after the commission of the fatal deed.

## CHAPTER XX.

### THE ARREST.

IF the Burglar fled rapidly, to escape from the miserable locality we have so often named, so did little Ellen; and both fled in terror—though the terrors of one were as different from the terrors of the other, as night is from day, or guilt is from innocence. Both avoided their own kind as much as possible, and both were more than once startled, with a new thrill of fear, at the sight of a mere shadow. But though little Ellen gained hope with distance, she was destined to remain still longer in the meshes of the web which Fate had woven around her. She had already hurried through several narrow lanes and alleys, and was on the point of turning the corner of a large and lighted street, when a tall youth, who was standing under a lamp which she had to pass, suddenly sprung forward and caught hold of her, exclaiming, in a voice which she recognized with increased alarm:

“So, my little runaway—I’ve got ye agin, have I? I thought as how I’d cast my grappling irons on to ye agin

afore long—for I knowed you’d be about these here quarters, for all of the — lie you told the old woman, about your big-bug friends, and sich like stuff!”

“Oh, John M’Callan, let me go—do!” cried Ellen, piteously, trying to disengage herself from the grasp of the villainous youth.

“Hush your noise, afore I break your head!” growled John; “and come with me! Yes! I’ll let you go, arter the trick you played me ’tother night! I’ll let ye go, in a horn, you little jade! Come along!”

“I won’t go with you!” cried Ellen, holding back, as John began to drag her forward. “Let go of me—or I’ll scream for help!”

“If you do, and a watchman or a constable comes, I’ll hand you over to him, and swear you’re a little thief—which I ’spect you is, you minx! So come along, I say, right quiet now!”

At this moment, poor little Ellen’s eye fell upon a man, coming up the street, at no great distance; and true to her word, she began to scream for help. John closely and hurriedly examined the approaching party; and seeing he was neither a watchman, constable, nor policeman—for all these functionaries, belonging to that locality, were well known to him—he retained his hold of the little girl, determined to brave it out.

“What are you doing with that child? why don’t you let her alone?” inquired the man, a decently dressed individual, though with a face that indicated a habitual indulger in strong liquors.

“She’s a runaway sister,” replied John, boldly; “and I’m trying to git her home—her poor mother’s most crazy about her.”

“If that’s it, my little girl, my advice to you is, to go

along peaceably with your brother, or else you'll get into trouble."

"That's what I tell her," said John.

"Oh! sir, it isn't true—don't believe him! I'm not his sister; and he is trying to drag me away to some bad place—indeed, indeed he is, sir!" cried little Ellen, greatly terrified. "Oh! sir—kind sir—please get me away from him! and I'll go along with you for protection, till I get away from here."

"Hear the little liar!" said John. "Oh! you're not my sister, ain't you, eh? Well, I jest wonder that ther' lie don't choke you, you bad girl!"

"I don't know which to believe," said the man, passing on; "and so I'll leave you to settle the matter between yourselves."

Ellen continued to call for help; and her cries soon attracted several other persons to her side; but as soon as they heard John's story, they all took part against the unfortunate little orphan, and no one seemed to give credence to her assertions—so true it is, that a falsehood is generally more readily believed than the truth.

John seemed about to have matters all his own way; and he had begun to drag off poor little Ellen—in spite of her struggles, appeals, remonstrances, and protestations—when some one exclaimed:

"Well, I reckon she'll have to go now, or fare worse—for here comes a constable."

"Where?" cried John, looking eagerly around.

"There!" replied the other—"Constable Pat Cafferty—coming across the street."

Instantly John let go of Ellen; and, darting through the ring of by-standers, made good his escape.

"What's all the muss here, jist?" demanded the Constable, in a pompous tone, as he came up to the group

speaking in the broad brogue of a low-bred Hibernian. "What, in the fiend's name, is ye all afther doing here, jist? disturbing the pace, wid yer infernal hullabaloo?"

The speaker was a mean-looking little man—with a red, pock-marked face, small eyes, and a short, turned up nose—who appeared to be highly inflated with the idea of his own importance.

The person who had first recognized the Constable, now hastened to explain the whole matter, as he understood it—adding, that the story of the youth might be all false, as he had run away the moment he saw the officer approaching.

"Rin away, did he, the spalpeen?" rejoined the great little man; "why didn't ye stop him? And it's yersilf, is it, that's the tief of the night now?" he continued, seizing hold of the trembling little orphan, in a very rough manner. "It's yersilf, is it, ye tief ye, as is disturbing honest paples, wid yer hullabaloo? Agh! it's mesilf as will put the likes of ye now, where ye'll be safe till the morning, jist—and for some time afther, I'm thinking!"

"Oh! sir, don't take me away—please don't!" cried little Ellen. "Oh! sir, please let me go! I haven't done any thing wrong—indeed, indeed I haven't!"

"Whist! ye tief ye! And ye hasn't done ony thing wrong? Hear that now! Whoop! hear that now! Wid yer hullabaloo, and the disturbance of the pace! And it's not wrong is it, jist? Och! ye're a dape one! ye're a cunning vagabond, now! Nothing wrong is't? Whoop! but ye're dangerous in society, wid yer contaminations and lies, now! Troth! it's mesilf as will tak' care o' the likes of ye, and kape ye from doing wrong! Raising a mob is nothing wrong, is it? Och! we'll see! we'll let you cipher that out down below,\* jist, ye tief!"

\* The phrase, "sending down below," is often used in Philadelphia, for confining in the County Prison.



Then, as this mighty Constable began to drag away his trembling little captive, he deigned to honor the crowd, whose numbers were rapidly augmenting, with some very sage advice.

"Disperse wid ye! disperse wid ye! every one of ye! and go to your homes now! and kape the pace! and beware of the law!" And then to Ellen: "Come, ye tief! and trot your trotters jist! and whist your crying now! It's a beautiful buzness ye's been afther doing, ye vagabond! to raise this mob, to disturb the pace! Och! ye'll land in the watch-house the night—and the prison the morrow—and be hanged the next day, it's like—and there's an ind for ye to tink about, ye little vagabond!"

Little Ellen, seeing it was in vain to protest against her arrest, to such a brute of an officer, now gave up the idea in despair; and suppressing her agonized emotions as much as possible, she trotted along by his side, wondering what new troubles were in store for her, and when they would have an end.

Having got fairly clear of the Infected District and the crowd, which had followed him some distance, Pat Cafferty suddenly entered a drinking house, taking his little prisoner into the bar-room with him, where she beheld some half-a-dozen rough-looking fellows, lounging about, with tumblers in their hands, alternately drinking, and swearing, and boisterously talking politics. In the bar stood a dirty, bloated, red-faced Irishman, who seemed to be every way fitted to serve as a sign that he sold bad liquors and extensively patronized himself.

"And who've ye got this time, Pat?" inquired the host of the Constable, as the latter advanced to the bar, and deposited three cents, as a new investment in his favorite beverage.

"The fiend's own tief, it's like, Mickey!" answered Caf-

ferty, with a mysterious shake of the head. "Och! but she's a dangerous cratur in society now! and it's a time I had to arrest her, sure, as little as she looks, the spalpeen! Ah! Mickey, (emptying his glass,) it's a sorry world this same—and a sorry life is a constable's, as gits no credit for his devotion to the public weal!"

"That's thrue for ye, Pat," replied the other; "and if ye had yer desarts, ye'd be Alderman, or Mayor, for yer vigilance. But what did she do, Pat?"

"I'll tell ye private, as a frind, now, so I will," replied the Constable, mysteriously, leaning over the bar, and speaking in a tone scarcely above a whisper. "Government sacrets must be kept, d'ye mind, Mickey?"

"Thru for ye, Pat; and on the honor of the ancient family of O'Rourke——"

"Troth! and don't I know ye for a frind, Mickey?" interrupted the other; "and when I knows a man for a frind, by St. Pathrick's bones! it's mesilf as can trust him, d'ye see? I'd tak' a drop more, Mickey, my friend—but divil of a dirty copper now have I got about me."

"Niver mind, Pat—ye'll drink wid me now!" said the worthy landlord, pouring his villainous compound into two glasses, which were speedily emptied. "And now let's have the sacret!"

"And sure for ye, and what d'ye say to inciting to riot, Mickey?"

"Howly mother! and so young, too!"

"Yes, Mickey; and, it's like, mesilf'll git more kicks than thanks for vinturing my life to tak' her from her supporters. Och! but it's a sorry life, this same constabbling!"

"By me sowl! ye desarve well of yer adopted counthry!" said Mickey O'Rourke, enthusiastically; "and I'll do my indivors, at the next ward-mating, to git ye nominated Mayor, so I will."

"And if I'm elicted, ye shall have ony office ye want, my frind, besides yer license for nothing, and my patronage!" returned Pat Cafferty, proudly. "But, by St. Pathrick! it's mesilf as must go now, and deposit this vagabond in the watch-house, before the spalpeens come down for a rescue, jist."

"And can you vinture with the likes of her alone, Pat, now? and she so great a vagabond?"

"I must, Mickey—it's my duthy, as the dread constable of the law, d'ye mind?"

"Are ye armed thorough now?"

"A shillalah's all."

"Better tak' a pistol!"

"Divil a bit—it's mesilf as isn't afeard, at all, at all. She'll go quiet now."

"Och! but ye're courageous, Pat Cafferty."

"The same to yersilf, Mickey O'Rourke—and a good e'en to ye."

"Ye'll come back and report now?"

"I will that same, 'pon me sowl!"

"Well, good-bye to ye—and tak' care of yersilf, jist!"

With this, Patrick Cafferty and Michael O'Rourke shook hands, with all the solemnity worthy of such a parting, and the mighty Constable immediately set off alone with his dangerous prisoner.

"Och! but ye're fearful in society, so ye is!" said the Constable to poor little Ellen, as he hurried her along through the streets. "Inciting to riot, now, and the like! Tare and ouns! but ye'll be hanged, d'ye mind!"

"I didn't do any thing, sir! indeed I didn't!" sobbed little Ellen, in reply. "I was going along very quietly, sir, when John M'Callan caught hold of me, and tried to drag me away to some bad place."

"John M'Callan, d'ye say? Agh! thin ye was in bad

company. I'll say that for him, if I am liking the owld woman, his mother. Faith! it's a clane case against ye! as plain as the nose on me face; and if the paples had ony gratithude, for sarvices rindere for their security, sure it's Pat Cafferty as 'ud be the next Mayor, jist."

"Oh! sir, please do let me go!" pleaded Ellen, sobbingly. "I wasn't doing any thing bad, sir—indeed, indeed I wasn't! John M'Callan stopped me, and wanted to drag me away, I don't know where; and I was calling for help, and that drew the crowd around. Oh! sir, I've done nothing. Please let me go to my kind friends—and I will bless you, sir, and pray Heaven to bless you too!"

The great man of the law was overwhelmed at the audacity of his dangerous prisoner, in repeating her request, and he almost fancied that his ears had deceived him. What! could she for a moment suppose that any earthly consideration—or, for that matter, heavenly either—would induce him to so far forget his duty, as to set at liberty a prisoner under his charge? and, more especially, a prisoner guilty of inciting to riot? as she really was, according to the muddled ideas that crowded his muddled brain. But most probably his ears had deceived him. He stopped by a street lamp, where he could get a distinct view of little Ellen's face, and said:

"What's that? what's that? Will ye be afther repating it to me, now? Did me siventeen sinses desave me, jist? or did ye say something about my litting ye go!"

"Oh! yes, sir!" replied Ellen: "I said if you would only let me go to my friends, I would bless you as long as I lived, and would pray Heaven to bless you too, sir!"

"Tare and ouns!" cried the Constable, holding up both hands in astonishment; "that me mother's son should iver live to hear the likes, wid me own ears! To tink of coaxing mesilf, Pat Cafferty, into a compound felony!"

Whoop! but ye're dangerous! ye'd contaminate a saint, so ye would! Let ye go now? Whoop! let ye go now? And to me, too, ye said it! to me, ye spalpeen! to me, the dread constable of the law! Och! but this same's a dangerous world we live in!"

"And won't you let me go, sir?"

"Agin!" gasped the Constable. "Come along wid yer contaminations! Ye'll be hanged the morrow, jist, and sarve ye right! Ay! by me sowl! it's trying to vartue, this same constabbling! and the man that's under Mayor, can niver be above timplations! So come along wid ye! and howld yer whist now! It's like to be hanged, ye is!"

With these consoling words, the incorruptible man of office hurried little Ellen forward; and as she trotted along by his side, he preached her a regular sermon, upon the heinousness of the offence of attempting to corrupt one possessed of such immaculate principles as himself. During this discourse, which was seasoned with all the peculiar idioms in Pat Cafferty's vocabulary, little Ellen was taken past the door of Deacon Absalom Pinchbeck. She recognized the house with a shudder—for she remembered the scene in which she had figured within those walls some months before—and instinct, if not reason, told her that there resided an enemy of all who might chance to be unfortunate. Little did she dream, though, how great an enemy to herself, individually, was the master of that dwelling; and that to his wicked plots was she indebted for all the troubles which had recently come upon her.

Passing down Eighth street to Christian, the officer, with his little charge, turned westward; and pursuing this latter thoroughfare across Ninth street, at length made a halt before a large, fine-looking building, which was surmounted with a cupola, had a lighted clock on its front, and was entered by a long flight of stone steps, under an im-

posing colonnade. Bright jets of gas, from two street lamps, threw the building into strong relief against the dark back-ground of night, and revealed, to the wondering gaze of the little orphan, the stately, massive structure, on the opposite side of the way, known as the church of St. Paul.

To little Ellen, coming from the gloomy locality we have described, into the bright light, the building nearest her looked more like a palace than a loathsome prison; but if she for a moment fancied it was a place for happy hearts and bright thoughts, she was doomed to be speedily undeceived; for the officer, after a brief halt, during which he exchanged a few words, in a low tone, with a rough-looking individual, again hurried her forward—not up the street, nor up the stone steps—but to a side door in the rear, through which she was conducted down into a dark, gloomy, dismal passage, extending along past damp, filthy, malarious cells, which, so far from being fit to contain human beings, were actually not worthy of the very swine that run at large in the streets. Opening the door of one of the filthiest of these cells, the Constable rudely thrust little Ellen into it, saying:

"There ye'll be safe, ye tief! and in the morning, it's mesilf as will appear against ye, jist. Whist, now, wid yer blubbering noise!"

He closed the door, and locked it, leaving the poor little orphan a prey to new fears and horrors.

The cell in which she was now confined, was small and close, damp and filthy, and the stench was sickening. There was nothing to sit upon, and only the moist, slimy ground, under her feet, upon which to lie; and in this awful hole, whose last occupant was a ragged, drunken wretch, she was destined to pass another night of misery—misery beyond the power of the pen to portray, if not the

imagination to conceive. While standing here, sobbing, and leaning against one of the walls, to support her tottering frame, and wishing she were dead and at rest, the key turned in the lock, the door opened, and the Constable, with a glass lantern in his hand, entered, and coolly surveyed her from head to foot.

"And, sure," he said, "it's like, now, ye'd best be tilling me where ye stole the fine clothes from, that ye've got on?"

"Oh! sir, I didn't steal them!" sobbed little Ellen; "indeed, indeed I didn't, sir! I'll tell you, sir, where I got them. I——"

"Whist, now, wid yer lies!" interrupted Constable Cafferty—"it's mesilf as'll not hear 'em now! And troth, now, and what else did ye stale? it's that I wants to know. Out wid it now, ye little tief! what else did ye stale?"

"Nothing, sir—I never stole any thing in my life—I wouldn't do such a wicked thing, sir—oh! indeed, indeed I wouldn't!"

"I'll see for mesilf. What's that ye've got in yer fist there, that ye're howldin so tight, jist? Open, till I see, ye tief!"

Ellen opened her trembling hand, and displayed, to the astonished and avaricious gaze of the officer, the splendid necklace and diamond ring which she had received from the ill-fated Margaret, to return to her sweet cousin Rosalind. Pat Cafferty snatched the jewels from her hand, and hurriedly examined them by the light of the lantern. It needed no very long scrutiny, to convince him that they were genuine; and looking quickly around to the partly opened door, to be certain that no other human being witnessed the act, he thrust them into his pocket, and said, in a low, guarded tone:

"Whist, now, wid ye! Don't spake of the likes to ony

one—it might hang ye, jist! Och! but it's grateful ye should be, now, that ye fell into the hands of sich an officer as mesilf! But don't spake of the trinkets to his honor, the Alderman, when ye come before him in the morning—it might be a hanging matter, so it might. It's mesilf as'll be asy wid' ye now, and not bring 'em against ye, at all, at all."

"But please, sir, give them back to me!" said Ellen. "They're not mine, sir—they belong to my dear friend, Rosalind—and were stolen from her by a man, that came in the night, and took me away with him, and locked me up in his house. I had just got away from him, and was trying to find my way back——"

"Ye're lying now, so ye is!" interrupted the Constable; "and, sure, ye knows it! It's mesilf as knows they was stolen—and ye're the tief; but don't mintion 'em to his honor, and I'll not bring 'em against ye."

"If you'll give them back to me, sir," sobbed little Ellen, "I'll do as you say, and say nothing about them, till I see dear Rosalind again."

"Give 'em back, is't? give 'em back, now? Troth! but ye're a dape one! wid the cunning of the Owld Sarpint in ye! See here now—ye'll not git 'em, no ye won't; and if ye spake of 'em, it's mesilf as'll swear ye stole 'em; and then it's like ye'll be hanged for your wicked doings. Give 'em back! Whoop! whist wid yer nonsense! And have ye ony more, jist?"

"No, sir."

"In yer bosom, it's like, ye have!"

"No, sir, I haven't any more," sobbed Ellen.

"Well, thin, go to slape till morning—and say nothing about 'em to his honor—and it's like I'll git ye off from being hanged."

With this the officer hurried out, and locked the door,

and little Ellen was again in darkness, and alone, and felt as if Heaven itself had given her over to the powers of evil. She wept, till the fountain of her tears became dry; she stood, till her weak and trembling limbs refused to support her; and then she sunk down in despair, on the damp, filthy ground, and moaned in her anguish—in concert with many other wretched beings, in other cells around her—till a kind of obliviousness, akin to sleep, sealed up her senses.

And so past that awful night.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### THE COMMITMENT.

THE gray of morning was just beginning to dispel the deep shadows of night, when little Ellen, partially aroused from her torpor—it could scarcely be called sleep—strove to pierce the black gloom which still enveloped her. It was some time before she could collect her scattered and half-shattered faculties, so as to comprehend her real condition; and then she fairly groaned at the thought that she was still alive.

Oh! how deep must be the anguish, in the heart of one so young, to make life seem a burden! But there are thousands, and tens of thousands, in our own broad, Heaven favored land, to say nothing of other countries, whose sands have not yet numbered ten solar revolutions of the earth, who have so bitterly felt the heavy hand of oppression, that Death, painted as it is in a form the most terrible, only seems to them a kind of gloomy gateway,

through which they may pass to a place of eternal rest, and through which their crushed and weary spirits long to pass. Ah! deeply do we regret to say, that it is as true to-day, in the face of Christianity, as when the pen of the poor peasant-poet Burns recorded it, that

“Man’s inhumanity to man,  
Makes countless thousands mourn.”

Do you, kind reader—sympathetic reader, shall we say—whose eye is now lingering upon this page—do you not know of some poor, neglected, friendless little being, whose distress you might assuage—whose sorrows you might alleviate—whose path, now strewn with thorns, a little exertion on your part might strew with flowers? Do you know of none so circumstanced? If a dweller in a great city, they are all around you—every wretched street, alley, and court will send them forth by scores, if not by hundreds. Do you know of none? Then do your duty, and seek them out, and labor for their relief and reformation! They are young—not yet hardened in vice—more unfortunate than vicious—and you can, if you will, make them good and useful citizens—and the next generation will be one step higher in the great scale of progression. Are you a Christian—a member of church—a professed follower of Christ? Then go, and do as your Great Master commanded! and look for your reward, when He shall say, “Even as ye did it unto one of the least of these, ye did it unto me.” Perhaps you are not a member of church—yet God and humanity do none the less require this duty of you, as one of the great human family, who have one common Father in Heaven, and who must be more or less a partaker of the joys and sorrows around you on earth. For what do you live? Is this life all? Is there no hereafter? If this life is all, it is very short at the longest, and you

should strive to enjoy it, by making it a happy life to such as now feel it a burden. And you will be amply repaid, even here—for one good, noble, disinterested deed, will give you more real enjoyment, than you have ever found in all the fleeting pleasures you have ever sought. But this life is not all; it is but the beginning of a life that will never end; and remember! in the next state of existence, where all the distinctions of earth will be cast aside as so much worthless chaff, you will be called upon to render an account of your stewardship! Happy you, if your conscience can say: "I did my duty to my God, to myself, and to my fellow beings!"

Poor little Ellen, as we have said, awakened to a consciousness of her own desolate condition, now groaned at the thought that she had yet to live and bear her sorrows—sorrows which seemed every moment gathering around her and thickening into a gloom as black and cheerless as the rayless atmosphere she breathed. And her groan of anguish seemed to find more than one response in the breasts of other miserable beings, in other miserable cells adjoining. And with the moans and groans that came to her ear, came blasphemous oaths from hoarse voices, mingled with curses loud and bitter; and she shuddered at the sounds, and felt as if she were one among the damned. She got up from the damp, filthy ground, her little limbs so cold, and stiff, and benumbed, that she could scarcely stand. And even then, forlorn and hopeless as she was, she remembered the sweet words of her mother in her dream, and besought the protection of her Heavenly Father; and prayed for patience and resignation to endure, uncomplainingly, all the evils which might beset her, till the end of life, or the end of affliction should come. Though no human eye beheld her, it was a beautiful sight to angels, to see that poor, friendless, almost heart-broken

little orphan, standing in the place of the criminal, alone, enveloped in the darkest gloom of earth, appealing, with the trusting faith of an innocent child, to Him who notes even the fall of a sparrow. It was a beautiful sight to angels, because it told them that she was one of the children of earth, who had secured a glorious place among their own bright, glorious homes on high!

It was not long, ere the increasing daylight began to penetrate even the wretched cell in which little Ellen was confined; and then she began to hear sounds, as of the unlocking of the different cells around her, and of the dragging forth of the wretched inmates, mingled with curses and blasphemies, and many other harsh and brutal words, passed back and forth between the officers and those who might with some propriety be termed their victims. Ellen trembled more than ever; for she knew, from what the Constable had told her, that it would soon be her turn to be brought before the mighty Magistrate, whose mere word, she in her simplicity and ignorance of law believed, would be sufficient to free her, or consign her to death.

And true to her expectations, the key was soon heard turning in the lock of her own wretched cell, the door was jerked open, and the mean-looking face of little Pat Cafferty, the great Constable, appeared to the view of the trembling orphan.

"Come!" he said, seizing her roughly by the arm—"out of this, ye little tief! and lit his honor sittle yer buzness, along wid the rest of yer ragamuffin tribe, now!" Then he whispered in her ear: "If ye spake of the trinkets ye stole, ye tief, it's mesilf as 'll be the death of ye, so I will!"

Poor little Ellen, too much terrified to speak, made no reply; and the officer hurried her along the passage, to a



little room, partitioned off near the entrance, into which she was thrust without ceremony. The room was small, and was well filled with police officers, and wretched beings of the lowest grade, ragged and filthy in the extreme. Two of the party were black; while the others might, by way of distinction, be termed white—though the complexion of more than one was the color of dirty tan.

Inside of a railing, and perched on a seat, with a kind of desk in front of him, on which lay writing materials, was the great Mogul of the occasion. He was a human biped, who, in his general appearance, had a meaner look than Pat Cafferty himself—and this is saying a great deal. He was about forty-five years of age, with a long, thin, sharp, half-starved face—a sinister-looking mouth—a snub-nose—a cold, heartless gray eye—beetling brows—a low, retreating forehead—and dark, matted, uncombed hair.

He wore an old hat—which, instead of being put on respectably, seemed rather smashed down on one side of his head—and between his teeth he held the short stem of a smoke-black pipe, from which he was very industriously drawing in, to be as industriously puffed out, the sickening fumes of the rankest kind of pig-tail tobacco. On this great man of office, who owed his position to the free suffrage of drunken beggars, thieves, cut-throats, and all sorts of scoundrels and villains—for we have too good an opinion of human nature generally, to believe one honest man ever voted for him—on this great man of office, we say—who rejoiced in the euphonious distinction of His Honor, Alderman Felix McGrabby—little Ellen at once fixed her eyes, knowing, as it were intuitively, that he was the individual who had the power to decide her fate. And what that decision would be, she knew by an instinct not unlike that which tells the innocent little dove that the soaring hawk

is its worst enemy. So intent was her scrutiny of that villainous face, that she had scarcely noticed any of the other occupants of this vile place, when she felt some one squeeze her arm; and looking around, she was surprised to see Nabob Hunchy standing by her side. His features were swollen and dirty, his cheeks paler than usual, and his eyes slightly red and bleared—all denoting that he had very recently been indulging in his favorite pastime of getting beastly drunk.

"I'm going down below for the twenty-seventh time, for being found elevated in the gutter," he whispered, with a grin. "But what brought you here, my little lady?"

Before Ellen had time to reply, an officer, to show his importance, rudely jerked the poor Hunchback from her side, and commanded silence.

"Who's that? who's that? as hasn't the fear of contempt of Court before his eyes?" cried His Honor, Felix McGrabby, with a proud look of indignation, as he surveyed the wretched group before him.

"It's Nob Hunchy, so it is, your Honor," replied the officer, another bad specimen of Hibernian extraction.

"Agh! I know the rascal—it's the like of him I've saan here mony times, so I have. What's he up for now, Pater?"

"Gitting drunk, your Honor."

"Agh! the baste! down below wid him agin, for a vagabond vagrant, jist!" He hurriedly scrawled a few words on a piece of paper, and added: "Here, Pater, tak' him away—tak' him away—out of me sight, now!"

As the Hunchback was hurried from the august presence, His Honor inquired:

"Who next now? Come! hurry, ye divils! for it's me-silf as wants a warm breakfast, jist."



"Well, your Honor,"—began a stout, broad, red-faced Irish woman, who stood near the desk.

"Whist, now!" cried Felix McGrabby. "What's your name, jist?"

"Biddy O'Shaughnessy, your Honor."

His Honor wrote it down.

"Well, Biddy," he said, "what ye got agin yoursilf?" and he winked his eye to little Pat Cafferty, as much as to say, "You see how facetious mesilf is."

Pat Cafferty felt proud, and Biddy O'Shaughnessy hastened to reply:

"It's not agin mesilf, your Honor—but that wretch there, Mary Mulholland."

Mary Mulholland, the wretch alluded to, was a pale, delicate-looking woman, whose appearance, comparatively speaking, was tidy, and whose interesting face was the picture of distress.

"Tak' your oath—tak' your oath, Biddy," said the Magistrate. And the oath being administered, he added: "Now git on wid ye—and be quick aboot it!"

"Well, your Honor," pursued Biddy; "it's afeard of me life I is. Mary lives in the same house wid mesilf, in Baker street; and last night she got out wid me, and struck me, and said she'd be the death of me."

"Your Honor," replied the poor woman, who spoke correctly, and had evidently seen better days—"it is not true that I struck her—but she struck me; and then, for fear I would complain of her, she hurried off and had me arrested."

"Ye lie! and ye knows it!" cried Biddy.

"Whist, you owld fool!" exclaimed his Honor. "I'll make short work here. Mary, ye'll have to find five hundred dollars bail, to appear before the Coort, to answer for

an aggravated case of assault and battery, wid intent to kill, and pay the costs now, or go below wid ye!"

"Oh! don't send me to prison, your Honor! I am a poor woman, with a sick husband, and three little children depending on me for support!" cried the wretched mother, in a piteous tone.

"Fiends tak' your husband and your brats!" returned Felix McGrabby, savagely. "It's mesilf as has nought to do wid them same—but wid yoursilf now. Have ye got ony money now?"

"No, your Honor."

"And ony one to go bail for ye?"

"No, your Honor."

"Thin stop your noise, till I make out your commitment!"

"Oh! don't, your Honor!"

"Whist! or I'll put ye down below for contimpt of Coort, so I will."

In a few minutes, the order for her incarceration in a gloomy prison was made out, and handed to an officer; and Mary Mulholland was hurried off to her dreary abode—leaving her sick husband and children to starve—while her vile accuser went away rejoicing.\*

"Well, you black rascal," pursued the great Felix, as his eye chanced to fall upon one of the two negroes—"it's to be hoped your vartues is whiter than your face, jist." This bit of pleasantry of his Honor, was hugely enjoyed by all but the subject of the joke, who showed the whites of his eyes, and looked indignant. "What's your name?"

"Robert Carter."

"What is't agin Robert Carter?"

\* If any one thinks this scene exaggerated, we refer him to the Prison Records of WM. J. MULLEN, Esq., of Philadelphia.

"Your Honor," replied the negro, "I jest come to 'cuse dat odder nigger."

"Guess I isn't more nigger nor you'seff," was the response of the accused.

"Whist, ye blaggards, in his Honor's prisence!" cried Constable Cafferty.

"Tak' the oath!" said Felix; "and hurry wid ye! There now—there now—what is't, jist?"

"Dat dar nigger—" began Robert.

"Stop!" interrupted the Magistrate; "what's his name?"

"Sam Johnson."

"Where d'ye live now?"

"In Small street, your Honor."

"Well, go on—go on wid ye!"

"He stole my coat, dat dar Sam."

"Who else knows about it?" inquired McGrabby.

"I do, your Honor," said a Constable—"I found the coat on him."

"That's enough—whist, now! Five hundred dollars bail now, Sam. Who'll give security? Nobody, in coorse. Ye'll come up to Coort, ye will. Here," (writing the commitment,) "tak' him down below, jist!"

Thus one after another the cases were summarily disposed of, by Alderman McGrabby, who kept pulling away at his old dirty pipe, as if he expected to get that warm breakfast from it, for which his aldermanic stomach so ardently longed.

At last it came little Ellen's turn to have her fate decided; and the thought that the time had come for her to know the worst, caused her to tremble very much, and her very teeth to chatter in her head.

"Well, Pat, my frind," said the great Alderman—"what brat have you in tow, this fine morning?"

"Och! sure, your Honor," replied Pat, scratching his head, and smoothing down the hair on his forehead—"it's mesilf as is always doing me duthy to me counthry—though it's not mesilf as should say the likes, now."

"Well, git on wid ye—git on wid ye! ye're always having too much blarney for your worst fault—and it's me breakfast as'll be gitting cowl'd the whiles, jist!" rejoined the mighty Felix, impatiently.

"Well, your Honor, ye see, as mesilf was coming up Shippen street, last night, I saan a big crowd aboot to git into a riot, it's like; and stipping over to 'em, I found this little vagabond, stirring 'em up to sedition, it's like; and at the risk of me life, I arrested her, and put her in the lock-up, for your Honor's wise judgment this morning, so I did."

"What's your name?" cried McGrabby, scowling savagely at the poor little orphan.

"E-E-El-len Nor-bu-bury, sir!" she stammered.

"Whist, ye spalpeen! where's yer manners?" exclaimed the Constable, giving her a rough shake, and looking very important and indignant. "Ye're spaking to his Honor now, as if he was a common gintleman, jist. Whoop! where's yer manners, ye little tief, now?"

"Wha-wha-what shall I—I—say?" gasped Ellen, more terrified than ever.

"What'll ye say, ye bother? Och! who iver heerd the likes! What'll ye say, now? Troth! ye're an ignoramus, so ye is! What'll ye say, is it? Say 'his Honor,' when ye spakes to the likes of himsilf. Isn't his Honor, Felix McGrabby, a Alderman? answer me that same!"

"Howld up your blarney, Pat!" cried the great Felix. "Ye've no feeling now, so ye haven't! Don't I till ye as it's me breakfast as'll be gitting cowl'd, if ye kape me here the day, wid your blather?"

"Well, your Honor, it's mesilf as'll be dacent the whiles, now, so I will," replied the Constable: "only don't hang her, your Honor!" and he winked familiarly at the great Felix, who seemed to swell with importance.

"What's your name?" demanded the Magistrate again.

"Ellen Norbury, sir—that is, I mean——"

She paused, and looked appealingly at the Constable, who gave her a shove, and whispered:

"His Honor, ye spalpeen!"

Ellen did not exactly understand the phrase—but fearing further reproof, hastened to stammer out:

"His Honor, the spalpeen."

Great men seldom like to have unpleasant names attached to them—their greatness being about as much as they can carry; and such was the case in the present instance, with His Honor, Alderman Felix McGrabby—who got very red in the face, very suddenly, and jerked the dirty pipe from between his teeth, which fortunately fell to the ground and flew into fragments.

"What's that? what's that? you impertinent scapegallows!" cried Felix, forgetting for the moment all about the warm breakfast he was so likely to lose.

"He told me to say it, sir—his Honor, I mean," said Ellen, bursting into tears.

"Me? I towld you to call mesilf a spalpeen?" almost yelled McGrabby.

"No, his Honor, this gentleman," sobbed Ellen, pointing to the astounded and indignant Cafferty.

"But I'm his Honor—not the likes of him!" cried McGrabby.

"She's a dape liar, so she is!" rejoined the Constable.

"Well, I'll fix the likes of her! calling mesilf names, and tilling me I towld her to do it, jist!" roared the infuriated Magistrate. "Where d'ye live, now?"

"I don't know where I live, sir," sobbed the poor child, not daring to venture again upon the use of the phrase, "his Honor," for fear of making another *faux pas*.

"Tare and ouns! she don't know where she lives!" exclaimed Pat, holding up both hands in astonishment. "Och! sure, but your Honor'll be after giving her a place that she'll know where she slapes o' nights, now!"

"Whist! howld your tongue!" cried his Honor. "I'll tind to her! I'll fix her, the baste! Ye'll be fined for contempt of Coort, now, so ye will!" he continued, addressing the trembling Ellen, and plying his pen rapidly at the same time; "and ye'll have big costs to pay; and ye'll go below for a vagabond; and it's like ye'll come before another Coort, for a tief—for disturbing the pace—or some sich unhowly thing, jist!" He finished writing, and dashed the paper over the desk to Pat Cafferty—adding, in great wrath: "There! there! tak' her away now—tak' her away, out of me sight, jist! and may she niver show her face in me prisence agin!"

To the closing remarks, little Ellen's heart said, "Amen."

The sun was up, and shining bright and clear upon the busy town, as poor little Ellen, in charge of the vile Constable who had arrested her, took her way through the streets to the dreary prison—which rears its massive, solemn walls, and lofty turrets, looking like some grand old castle of ancient days, upon the southern limits of the thickly-settled portion of Philadelphia. Pat Cafferty lectured her for some time, upon the heinous crime of insulting so great a Magistrate as Felix McGrabby; but Ellen had deeper sorrows in her heart, with which to occupy her thoughts; and Pat Cafferty's sage remarks, and wise counsel, made no impression upon her plastic mind, because, fortunately, she did not comprehend a word he

said. She met and passed persons who stared hard at her—some with looks of mere curiosity, and many with looks of sympathy—but she took little notice of any, and no one addressed her.

"It's in there, ye'll tak' lodgings, ye little vagabond!" exclaimed the Constable, as they came in sight of the massive prison.

Ellen looked up, and shuddered; and then she turned her eyes upon the warm, bright sun, and wondered if she would ever behold it again; and then she thought of dear Rosalind, and how happy she had been with her in her splendid home, and wondered if she would ever see her sweet face again; and then she burst into tears, and wept, and sobbed, till she reached the wicket-gate of the castellated prison, in which she was to be immured as in a living tomb.

She was now transferred to one of the keepers, and hurried forward, through gloomy passages, and across a very pretty garden, into the female department, where she was consigned to a matron, who asked a few brief questions, and conducted her again through long, stately, well-ventilated corridors, to an empty cell, which she entered with a sinking heart, and saw the door close, and heard the lock turn, and felt every ray of hope shut out from her innocent heart.

There was a straw mattress upon the floor; and as poor little Ellen discovered this, by the dull light which came in through a high, narrow window, she threw herself heavily upon it, and uttered one long groan of despair.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### RETRIBUTION.

WE left Deacon Pinchbeck entering the house of death, to sit as one of the Coroner's jury upon the body of poor Margaret Cassady. Had there been any suspicion in the mind of the Coroner of the Deacon's guilty doings, it would doubtless have received confirmation from the singular manner in which he at first conducted himself; but attributing his agitation to some less criminal cause, the officer merely noticed it, without making any remark. Nor was the Deacon's apparent agitation of long duration; for when he saw the corpse was that of a woman, and not of the child he expected to find, he so far recovered himself, as to appear outwardly composed—though the conscience-lighted fires of guilt were burning within, and every moment threatening an eruption, like the smothered flames of a charged volcano.

After due deliberation, the verdict was rendered—as verdicts generally are, in the absence of any material facts—that the deceased came to her death by some cause, or causes, unknown to the jury; and being a poor, drunken wretch, without friends, and the letter of the law being thus carried out, the Coroner was satisfied, the jurors were dismissed, and orders were issued to some hungry undertaker, to have her body decently deposited in the burying ground appropriated to poor and friendless strangers.

The Deacon breathed freer when he found himself

relieved of the unpleasant business in which he had been compelled to take an active part—but he was still very far from being a happy man. He had, it seemed to him, only cleverly got clear of one serious predicament, to find himself plunged into another. What had become of Ellen Norbury? Was she living or dead? After all the painful excitement he had just undergone, he was no wiser now concerning her fate than he was before. Had the Burglar really played a trick upon him, and got his money for nothing? It was a great sum—ten thousand dollars—a tremendous sum—a sum that, in his usual course of management, would have made him the fortunate possessor of several more valuable houses; and as the Deacon reflected upon it, he groaned at the thought of his loss. Yes, it was certainly gone, and he would never be benefited by it; for if *honestly* earned, by the commission of the horrible deed for which he had bargained, then he himself stood in danger of the gallows; and if not so earned, then had he been fairly duped by a villain, who would laugh at him, for an old fool, behind his back, and spend the money upon himself and his equally villainous associates. It was a very unpleasant, a very disagreeable, matter, view it in what light he might; and had the Deacon been a profane man, he would have indulged in a few choice oaths, at his own foolish, blundering, criminal management; but being a worthy church-member, and not licensed to swear, he merely conned over a few oaths which he would undoubtedly pronounce, were he only free to speak his mind like common sinners.

And then that impertinent Dr. Stanhope—that troublesome meddler in other people's affairs, who should have been strangled at his birth—he had somehow got the right clue to his guilty transaction; and he would be round, punctual to the time, (unwelcome expected visitors are

always punctual,) to know what had become of the girl! What should he say to him? how manage to put him off? and, in short, what would be the end of the whole matter? Something very disagreeable, to say the least—perhaps something very terrible; and the Deacon shuddered, and groaned, and wished he were, for the present, beyond the laws of civilization and the reach of justice. In fact, law and justice were not so pleasant to contemplate just now, as they had been whilom, when compelling some poor, starving wretch, and his starving family, to vacate some one of his premises, in the dead of winter, at his lordly bidding. No! law and justice were decidedly not as honest in their dealings as they used to be; and he began to entertain some serious misgivings about the profession of law being exactly suited to the precocious talents of his wonderful son Nelson.

This last train of reflection brought up a fact, which the worthy Deacon, owing to recent matters of weighty consideration, had for a short time quite overlooked; and his heart fairly leaped to his throat, as the truth suddenly flashed across his plotting brain. Poor Nelson was at home, sick—the domestic had said very sick. Goodness! what if something should happen to him? what if he should die? The anxious father now felt his hair rise with a new horror, and his very skin grew moist and clammy. Such a thing might be! Yes, it was possible! Children had been known to die, whose parents were as pious as those of dear Nelson; and therefore there was a possibility that Nelson might die; and as the Deacon very suddenly quickened his steps, which had been all this time tending homeward, he very earnestly and sincerely invoked the Lord, with whom he still considered himself on rather good terms, to avert such a dire calamity from the house of His poor, humble servant.

Somewhat consoled with the idea that the Lord would hear and answer his prayer, the Deacon's thoughts now very naturally reverted to his amiable wife; and he saw her in imagination, as he had often seen her in reality, her face swollen and red with a *feeling* passion—that would cling till death, unless tooth or nail should give out—and calling him to a strict account for disobedience of orders, or a neglect of duty; while a mean-looking shadow, whose only redeeming quality was its wonderful resemblance to himself, could be seen sneaking about behind a chair, table, or sofa, prepared to dodge the quivering bolts just shot from Cupid's bow, and which, to one not in love, had very much the appearance of an outraged woman's hand or fist. This picture, which very naturally and rapidly formed itself on the sensorium of the Deacon's cranium, was but little less pleasant to contemplate, than that of the gloomy prison, with a criminal in the cell—or that of the bar of justice, with a felon in the dock—or that of the gallows, with a murderer hanging by a rope—or that of the dying boy, with a heart-broken father bending over him; and, in the absence of all these, it was really a fearful picture, and sufficient of itself to make a man of very weak nerves very nervous.

It was therefore in no very enviable state of mind, that Deacon Absalom Pinchbeck, for the second time that night, reached the steps of his dwelling, on his second return from the Infected District, and this time at a rather late hour. Though prepared for something of a rather serious nature, as we have shown, even supposing all matters to appear in their most favorable aspect, the Deacon was certainly not prepared for the awful reality which awaited him. On reaching the steps of his dwelling, as already mentioned, his first surprise was to find the outside door standing wide open; and his second, to

hear several voices within, all speaking in excited tones, several feet moving and shuffling about, and the sounds as of persons running up and down stairs at the same time.

"Goodness! mercy!" thought the Deacon; "what can be the matter here? what can have happened?"

Pale and agitated by the wildest fears, he stumbled up the steps, his knees fairly knocking together in terror. At the door he was met by a neighbor, who was hurrying out.

"Why, is this you, Deacon?" cried the neighbor, in an excited tone.

"Ye-ye-yes!" gasped Pinchbeck; "wha-what's the matter?"

"Where is the doctor? is he coming?"

"Wha-what doctor?" exclaimed the Deacon, thinking the other might have reference to young Stanhope.

"Any doctor, my dear sir! Why, have you not been for a physician? your girl told me so."

"Wha-what is it? who's sick, Mr. Bentley?"

"Why, your little boy. Heavens! I thought you knew it!"

"Me! yes—so I did—knew he was ailing; but—but—I didn't know as it was any thing very serious. I had some business—I was called away—I—ah—good Lord support me! is he very sick?"

"He is, Deacon—dangerously—we fear the worst—and I am hastening to get another physician. Who will you have?"

"Oh! anybody—anybody!" groaned the Deacon. "Oh! good Lord! what terrible news! Why didn't some one go for a doctor sooner?"

"There is one up stairs, a young man, whom one of our neighbors chanced to see passing, and called in; and we should have hastened for your family physician, only it was supposed you had gone for him yourself, and we have



been expecting your return every moment; but the case being so bad, the young man advised us not to wait any longer, but get one of more experience than himself, as quick as we could. Shall I call Dr. Jennings?"

"Oh! yes—yes—anybody!" cried the Deacon, leaning against the wall for support.

As Mr. Bentley hurried away, a female voice, from the top of the stairs, called out:

"Have you arrived, Deacon?"

"Ye-yes, ma'am—I—I—I'm here," was the reply.

"Please come up, quick, if you wish to see your child alive!"

The Deacon nerved himself for something awful, and rushed up stairs like a madman. In the front room of the second story, he found his wife seated in the middle of the apartment, with her boy in her arms; and, standing around her, some half-a-dozen persons, all females except the physician. The Deacon, taking no notice of any one, sprung forward to the side of his boy, and gazed upon him, for a moment, in speechless horror; then staggering back, he sunk down on a seat, buried his face in his hands, and groaned out the agony he could not speak.

It was certainly a sight to rend the soul of a parent. The face of the boy was livid, his features distorted, his eyes rolled upward, and he was gasping for breath, grasping at the air and choking and groaning alternately. His mother held him in her arms, and gazed down upon him with a tearless, marble face—for so intense was her anguish, that the fountain of tears was choked, and could not flow to give her relief. She persisted in holding him, and no entreaty could induce her to resign him to another. Every thing had been done for the boy, that any one present had ever heard of being efficacious in such cases; and as an experiment, with the consent of the young physician, one of

the party was now applying a linen cloth, dipped in turpentine, to his breast and neck—while the others stood looking on, some of them weeping from pure sympathy.

"O Lord! O Lord!" cried the Deacon, springing up suddenly—"must he die? must he die?"

He turned a wild, agonized look upon the young physician, whom he had not before noticed, and felt an electric shock through his system, as his eyes encountered the steady gaze of Dr. Newton Stanhope.

"You are surprised to see me here, Deacon Pinchbeck!" the young man hastened to say; "but I chanced to be passing your door, on my way to visit a patient, when I was hailed, and so urgently entreated to enter, that I felt I must outrage all feelings of humanity not to comply. I have done what I could for your son; but I fear it will be of no avail; and as another physician will soon be here, I trust I may now be permitted to take my leave!"

"No! no! no!" cried the Deacon, wildly; "you must not go, Doctor! you must stay! you must save him! and you shall have gold—gold, sir—any amount you may name—only save him!"

"If I could save him, Deacon Pinchbeck," replied the other, somewhat sternly, "I would do so, for humanity's sake—not for your gold—which I do not want, and would not touch. But, sir, so far as my skill is concerned, my stay here is needless."

"Oh! no! no! say not so! say not so! Give me some hope, Doctor—do! oh! give me some hope! He is my only son—my only child—do not say he must die!"

"You plead, Deacon, as if his life were in my hands," answered the other; "but you should look to God, not to man, for hope."

"O Lord, save him! O Lord, save him!" cried the Deacon, clasping his hands. "Nelson! Nelson! my dear,

sweet child!" he continued, addressing the sufferer; "don't you know me, son? don't you know your father?"

The child took no notice of him; but continued to gasp, and choke, and clutch, and groan, with his eyes rolled upward, so that little more than the whites were visible; while the mother sat holding him, and looking down upon him, her eyes glaring, her features rigid, her lips bloodless, and her very limbs motionless, save when the boy moved them in his struggles for breath.

"Ladies," said Stanhope, addressing the company, "you will, I trust, excuse me, if I leave now! I have done all I can here, and I have a patient I must visit immediately."

Saying this, he bowed himself out—but the Deacon sprung after him.

"Doctor," he said, "in Heaven's name! can't you save my child?"

"I can not—I have already told you so," was the reply.

"Must he die?"

"I see no hope for him."

"Oh! this is more than I can bear!"

"The hand of God falls heavy on the worker of iniquity, because he wants the faith and hope of the *Christian* to sustain him!" replied Stanhope, sternly. "Good-night, Deacon Pinchbeck."

"Stay! one moment!" exclaimed Pinchbeck. "Do—do you—you still—still—a—ah—think me guilty, Doctor?"

"Do you dare deny your guilt, with your child lying at the point of death? Speak!"

"Yes! yes! I'll deny any thing—if the Lord will only save my poor, dear child!" replied the wretched father, scarcely conscious of what he was saying. "You say you are coming to-morrow night," he continued, "to give me fresh trouble; but, on my soul! I don't know what has become of that child, any more than you do."

Truth, earnestly spoken, seldom fails to carry conviction; and the Deacon now spoke the truth; and his words began to create a doubt in the mind of the young man, that his suspicions had been properly founded. At all events, he had the noble feelings of humanity too well developed, to wish to press home, too heavily, his mere suspicions, upon a father so deeply afflicted; and so, after a moment of thoughtful silence, he replied:

"Well, God knows whether you have had any hand in this dark matter or not! If you are innocent, I would recall my words, and crave your pardon; but if you are guilty, beware! for you are as much in the presence of your God now, as you will be at the Great Day of Judgment, and can not escape the doom which will be pronounced upon the workers of iniquity!"

"O Lord! O Lord!" groaned the wretched and guilty man—"what will become of me? Oh! do—do try and save that child—my only son—my only hope!"

"I will go back, if you insist upon it; but I tell you, most seriously, I can do nothing for him—nor do I believe it is in the power of mortal man to help him!" rejoined Stanhope, who could not help feeling pity for one so deeply distressed. At this moment, quick steps were heard in the entry; and looking down the stairs, the young man hastened to add: "But here comes a physician of more experience than myself, and therefore my services will not be required. Good night!"

He turned away as he spoke, and passed the second physician and Mr. Bentley on the stairs.

"Quick! quick! Doctor!" called the Deacon to the new-comer, speaking in a wild, excited tone. "Oh! I'm so glad you've come! You can save him—you can save him—yes, you can save him!"

"Where is he?" asked Dr. Jennings, hurriedly, a man of venerable appearance.

"This way—this way, Doctor!" and the Deacon darted before him into the apartment of the dying boy. "There he is, Doctor—there he is, poor child!"

The moment the glance of the physician fell upon the strangling boy, he gravely shook his head.

"Well, Doctor?—well? well? well?" cried the nearly distracted father.

"It is too late!" replied the physician, feeling his pulse.

"No! no! no! don't say so! don't say it's too late!" almost shrieked the Deacon. "He lives—he breathes yet—he will, he *must*, recover!"

The mother still held the child—still kept her eyes riveted upon him—but spoke not, stirred not, seemed not to hear what was said.

"You are a man," said the Doctor to the Deacon, "and it would be worse than folly for me to hold out any false hopes to you. Your child is in the last agonies of death—he can not live an hour."

"Oh! my God! what will become of me?" groaned the Deacon, sinking heavily upon a seat.

At this moment, the child gave a loud, piercing shriek, and became terribly convulsed. In his awful struggles, he would have fallen to the floor, if one of the females present had not afforded timely aid. The mother seemed paralyzed. All gathered around the little sufferer, the father among the rest. A few more struggles—another shriek, but not so loud—a quick, shivering spasm—and the poor boy lay perfectly still.

"He is dead!" said the Doctor, solemnly.

And "*He is dead*," like a blast from the trump of woe, went echoing through all the recesses of Deacon Pinchbeck's guilty soul; and he sunk down on the ground, and moaned.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### DEATH IN LIFE.

It was long past the hour of midnight, and the form of the little boy, upon whom two parents had built such fond, and dazzling, but worldly hopes, lay stretched upon the bed, white and cold—as white, as cold, as motionless, and as inanimate as a human figure cut in marble. Beside the bed, and so disposed that her eyes could rest upon the face of her lifeless son, sat the mother. She had not spoken, scarcely moved, since an hour before his spirit's departure. She had displayed no other emotion than she now displayed—a fixed, piercing look of utter, blank despair—a despair which saw no future—no hope in time—no hope in eternity! They had taken the child from her, and she had made no resistance, and had followed the form only with her eyes. They had closed his eyes, wiped the death-damps from his face, straightened out his limbs, robed him in a clean night-garment, and thus prepared him for the hands of the dresser of the dead. The mother had marked the whole proceedings, and had only moved to make signs, that she wished him deposited on the bed, with his face uncovered, and herself so disposed that her eyes could rest upon it. This had been done—the gas turned down to a dim, solemn light—and all had stealthily retired but two female watchers, who still remained with the living mother and dead boy, one on either side of the bed, and both silent. They would have tried to console the mother—but they knew that was beyond human power; and they were

strictly following the Doctor's advice—which was, not to mock her grief with any such vain attempt.

"Her case is very critical," he had told them; "and there may be two coffins at one funeral. She may recover from this shock with a flood of tears, and tears will be a favorable sign; she may be struck down with apoplexy; or she may lose her senses altogether, and become a raving maniac. I can do nothing for her now. Watch her carefully, and constantly; and if you see any unfavorable sign, call me at once."

This was the physician's departing advice; and with this knowledge of her critical situation, it will readily be perceived, the hopeless mother was constantly watched, with feelings of painful anxiety, by those whose unpleasant duty it was to remain with her and the dead.

Mrs. Pinchbeck, as we have shown, was a woman of violent passions, very selfish, and possessing but few of the gentler qualities which render her sex so attractive. She had, as we have also stated before, been married three times; and, in every instance, had married from purely selfish motives. Her first husband soon left her a widow, with one child, which died young. Two children were the fruits of her second marriage, both of whom died under five years of age. Her marriage with Pinchbeck had resulted in one son—the cold corpse which now lay before her.

Selfish people, of violent passions, have generally very few objects to love; but those few objects they love with a concentrated intensity of feeling, of which none but such as thoroughly understand all the various operations of the human heart, have any adequate conception. It is in the nature of every human being to love something; it is a law of nature which can not be set aside; and just in the ratio of the decrease in the ordinary number of heart-

attractions, all things being equal, is the increased intensity of affection for the favored one or few.

Now Mrs. Pinchbeck really loved but two beings on earth—her child and herself; and hence the voiceless woe which she experienced at the loss of her heart's idol. She had married Pinchbeck for his fortune—detested him at heart—but loved his child, which was also her own.

And now, while that child lay dead before her, and she thus sat buried in speechless grief, she felt her bosom swell with the bitterest hate toward the author of his being, to whose neglect she laid the charge of his untimely death. With this little insight into the mysterious workings of one dark heart, the reader will be the better prepared for what follows.

For nearly an hour from the time with which this chapter opens, Mrs. Pinchbeck remained motionless, in the self-same attitude we presented her to the reader. Then, with a sudden start, she burst into tears, bowed her head upon the bed, and wept for half an hour. This was the favorable sign mentioned by the physician; and the watchers were rejoiced, that at last she had found a proper vent to her grief. Until she began to grow calm and composed, they said nothing to her; but on perceiving this happy termination to their fears, they began to offer expressions of sympathy. She listened to them quietly—but for some time made no reply. At length, she said:

"This is indeed a heavy stroke of affliction, and Heaven only knows what agonies I have already suffered!"

"Indeed you have!" replied one; "and we have been deeply pained to witness your sufferings. But bear up, Mrs. Pinchbeck, and strive not to let your grief again get the mastery! You are a professing Christian; and in this stroke, heavy as it is, you should see only the hand of

Him who chasteneth, and endeavour to be resigned to His holy will!"

"He was my only son!" sobbed the mother; "and I have nothing left to love!"

"Say not so—think not so—you still have a kind, affectionate, and worthy husband!" returned the other.

"Yes, I have a husband," rejoined Mrs. Pinchbeck, getting up and glancing quickly about the apartment—"a dear, devoted husband—where is he?"

There was a singularly wild, unnatural light in her eye, as she spoke, which was not noticed by the others, or they might have had some suspicion that all was not as it should be.

"He left the room, soon after the child breathed its last, in great distress of mind, and I think he is now below, in the back-parlor," was the reply of one of the ladies. "If you desire it, I will call him—it will be a great relief to his mind to see you so much better—for we all have feared the worst."

"No! no! do not call him!" said Mrs. Pinchbeck, quickly. "I will go down to him; I would rather see him alone; there should be no third party present on an occasion like this."

She turned to the bed, and, bending over the corpse of her son, wept violently, for some minutes. Then she dried her eyes; and going to a bureau, and unlocking one of the drawers, she took out something, which she hastily concealed in her bosom.

"Be kind enough to remain here," she said to the watchers; "I would be alone with my dear husband;" and as she spoke, she quitted the apartment, and descended the stairs.

But we must precede her to the room below.

The grief of Deacon Pinchbeck, immediately succeeding

the death of his child, displayed itself, for some time, in a very violent way. He moaned, and groaned, and wrung his hands, and occasionally ejaculated:

"O Lord, have mercy on me! O Lord, have mercy on my soul! Oh! good Lord, restore my son to life again, as Thou didst to them of old! Oh! how wretched I am! Oh! how miserable I am! No child to love—no son to succeed me! Oh! oh! oh!"

At last, he became in some degree composed; but the presence of strangers was not pleasant to his sight; and he retired to the apartment below, as already mentioned, that he might be alone. Perhaps he had some feelings of sympathy for his then speechless wife, whom he certainly did not wish to lose; but, under the circumstances, he felt it a wonderful relief, to be free from the taunts and upbraidings—to say nothing of the more forcible demonstrations of her sweet disposition—which he knew he would have to encounter, were she only possessed of her usual freedom of tongue and limbs; and so that she might be finally restored to life and health, he thought it rather Providential, that he was not to be called on, at this particular time, by the only being he really feared, to give an account of himself, during the period occupied in his dark and guilty transactions.

So he retired to his back-parlor, and, throwing himself upon a sofa, gave way to some very bitter reflections, and began to have some very serious doubts whether he was on quite as good terms with the Lord as he had thought. The death of his child was certainly no evidence that his prayers were more efficacious than the prayers of others; and though a Deacon of high standing, in a very high standing church, he was not quite so sure now, as he once was, that the recording angel had not made a few suspicious

looking entries on the debit side of his spiritual account.

It was perfectly natural that he should have some very serious reflections—reflections which could not but harrow up his guilty soul. His child, on whom he had so fondly doted, with all the selfish feelings of a selfish nature—with all the worldly hopes of a worldly ambition—his child was dead; and might not his death in some degree be laid to his own neglect? Had he gone for a physician, when first informed of his illness, instead of plotting against the life of another, might not the life of his child have been saved? He groaned aloud at the very thought, and felt how terrible is the recoil of a guilty deed, when it comes back upon the guilty doer in all its native blackness, enveloping him in a thick cloud of horrors, and shutting out every heavenly ray of hope and joy. Heaven and hell are only conditions; and it is not essential that the thread of mortal life should be clipped, for the overreached man of crime to feel all the torments of the damned.

For hours the Deacon had rolled to and fro on his now thorny couch, striving in vain to lose some of his misery in the forgetfulness of sleep. At last, almost stupefied by the violence of his grief, a dim, half-conscious, drowsy feeling began to steal over him—his eyelids drooped and closed—and his mind began to wander and become filled with unnatural, hideous images, as in a nightmare-dream. Suddenly the figure of the little orphan came floating along on a sea of blood, and, stopping in front of him, seemed to shoot rays of fire from her eyes, which, by some unaccountable process, began to burn into his very soul. With a cry of horror, he started up from his recumbent posture, stared wildly around, and, to his utter astonishment, beheld Mrs. Pinchbeck standing before him, and glaring upon him,

with a fiendish expression of concentrated, malignant hate and scorn.

"Why, my—my dear—ha-ha—have you recovered?" he stammered, not yet fully satisfied in his own mind, whether he was addressing an airy phantom, or a being of flesh and blood—and in either case, feeling he had sufficient cause for alarm.

To this question, Mrs. Pinchbeck did not deign to reply; and the trembling Deacon, not knowing better what to do, repeated it.

"Murderer!" she now rather hissed than said, without removing her glaring eyes from his.

"Wha-wha-what do you mean?" he gasped, sinking back upon the sofa.

"Murderer!" she repeated, in the same hissing tone.

"I—I—don't know what—you mean—my—my—a—ah—love!" he whined out, in tremulous, doleful accents.

"Shall I explain?" she demanded, in the same low, hissing voice of passion.

"If you please—that is—that is—confound the thing—I mean if you think best, my dear."

"Who let poor Nelson die? answer me that!" she said, fairly foaming with suppressed rage.

"He—he—died himself, poor child—Nelson did!" answered Pinchbeck, cowering beneath the piercing glance of his conjugal partner, and groaning at the recollection of the awful death of his son.

"Do you not feel his death weighing down your guilty soul, Absalom Pinchbeck?" she demanded, advancing a single step toward her frightened husband.

"What did I do, my love?" he whined again, glancing quickly about him, and evidently preparing himself to beat a hasty retreat, in case the enemy should endeavor to come to close quarters.



"Do? you brute!" rejoined Mrs. Pinchbeck; "you did nothing—you let him die! Why did you not come when I sent for you?"

"Why, my angel—I—I had some business——"

"What business?" she interrupted.

"I can't—ex-ex-act-ly—say what!" stammered the Deacon; "but it was some money business—with a—gentleman—that I—that I—a—ah—wanted to get through with—and did get through with, my love."

"And you could let Nelson die for a mere money transaction, you sordid wretch!" she cried, choking with anger. "Oh! how I hate you—despise you—loathe you, from my very soul!"

"I—I didn't think he was going to—die—or I should have attended to him at once!" groaned Pinchbeck. "Don't go on so, my love—don't!" he said, pleadingly. "Oh! if you only knew how miserable I am!"

"Miserable!" she repeated, with a withering sneer: "you miserable! I only wish you were—but you haven't soul enough to be miserable! Why did you go away, and remain away, till too late? Was that to complete a business transaction?"

"Why, my love, I just stepped out, for a minute or two, to see a gentleman; and it so happened that I was summoned to make up a Coroner's jury, and couldn't get back," replied the Deacon.

"I wish the jury had held an inquest on your loathsome body!" rejoined the other, biting her lips, to keep her rage within bounds—"and that you never had come back alive!"

"It costs me an effort to thank you, for your kindness," said the Deacon, a little more boldly.

"I wish you were dead!" cried the other, fairly gnashing her teeth. "So long as Nelson lived, I managed to

endure your hateful presence; but *now* I wish you were dead!"

"So that you could swell out on my money, and wheedle somebody else into the matrimonial noose, as you wheedled me, I suppose!" retorted the Deacon, who began to feel his courage rise with his indignation. "I thought *you* were going to die," he continued; "and I knew if you did, I'd be rid of your tongue, to say nothing worse; but disagreeable people, it seems, have as many lives as a cat; and the Lord permitted patient Job to be very severely tried."

On hearing this, Mrs. Pinchbeck could hardly credit her senses; for the Deacon, though a regular tyrant to those he could with impunity oppress, had almost invariably been meekly submissive to his termagant wife, even when kicks and cuffs had spiced her arguments; and it was not on record, that, before the present moment, his voice had been heard in open rebellion but three times, since the commencement of their honey-moon. It will therefore be a matter of no surprise to the reader, that Mrs. Pinchbeck, being previously excited to a degree but little short of frenzy, should, on hearing this insulting rejoinder of her usually submissive lord, find herself actually choking with a rage that could not get vent through the ordinary channels. She clutched her throat with one hand, and her forehead and temples with the other; while the blood rushed up into her face, till it seemed to swell and grow black, and her small eyes shot fiery gleams of fiendish malice and implacable hate.

The Deacon, seeing the awful storm of passion he had raised, began to grow alarmed for the consequences to himself. And there was really more cause for his alarm, than he even now supposed; for Mrs. Pinchbeck, on going to the bureau up stairs, as already mentioned, had actually

provided herself with a dagger; and had come down with the intention of taking his life; and her now excessively violent and overpowering rage, was the only thing that prevented her design being carried into instant execution.

The Deacon, after looking at her for a moment, thought it best for him to beat a hasty retreat; and springing from his seat, he darted past her, and had just gained the door, when a strange, unearthly sound fell upon his ear, and caused him to look around. To his surprise—and we may add, alarm—he beheld his wife in the act of falling. Impulsively he sprang, forward to catch her—but he was too late. She fell, with a dull, heavy shock, that jarred the whole building; and then lay perfectly still and senseless, apparently dead, her face almost black, and her features horribly distorted.

One glance was enough to convince the now really terrified Deacon, that he could render her no assistance; and springing to the door, he tore it open, and shrieked for help.

The watchers came down in haste; and the moment their eyes rested on the senseless form of Mrs. Pinchbeck, one turned to the Deacon, and said:

“This is what we have been told to fear. “Oh! sir, if you would save her life, fly for Dr. Jennings! there is not a moment to be lost!”

The Deacon, to his credit be it spoken, made all haste to summon the physician; but, what with one delay and another, it was nearly half an hour before the latter reached the side of Mrs. Pinchbeck. He found her stretched upon the bed, in the apartment above stairs, along side of the corpse of her son, whither she had been carried by the watchers. Hastening to her side, he seized her hand, and placed his fingers upon her pulse.

“Well, Doctor?” exclaimed the excited Deacon.

The physician shook his head gravely; and turning to the questioner, said, solemnly:

“My friend, may He who ‘tempers the wind to the shorn lamb,’ enable you to bear your heavy affliction with Christian fortitude! You are wifeless and childless.”

“Surely, you do not mean, Doctor——

The Deacon paused, and looked the question he could not utter.

“Yes,” replied the other—“it is true—your wife is dead. As I feared, a sudden stroke of apoplexy has terminated her earthly existence.”

And the light of morning streamed in through the darkened windows, and seemed to rest mournfully upon the mortal remains of mother and son.

The guilty doer may escape the justice of human laws; but none ever did, and none ever will, escape the retributive justice of the eternal, unchangeable laws of God!

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## CHAPTER XXIV.

### THE LOVERS.

It was a clear, mild, delightful day in the month of May; and earth had donned her green robe; and bright leaves waved in the soft, south breeze; and brighter flowers exhaled their perfume on the genial air. Among the flowers of her own little garden, herself the fairest flower among them, stood Rosalind Clendennan, motionless as a statue, her features pale and pensive, and her eyes resting upon the ground. It scarcely needed the long drawn sigh,

which seemed to rise from the depths of her gentle spirit, to prove that her heart was not wholly at ease. While standing thus, she heard steps behind her; and starting from her reverie, she turned, and perceived her favorite domestic hastening toward her.

"Well, Kitty?" she exclaimed, quickly.

"Don't be alarmed, Miss Rosa—I'm not the bearer of bad news," said the serving-girl, who remarked the expression of uneasiness on the countenance of her beloved mistress.

"I am glad to hear that, Kitty," replied Rosalind; "but I see you have something to communicate. Have you seen my father this morning?"

"Yes, Miss Rosa, and I bring you a message from him."

"Well, speak!"

"I was passing his door, a few minutes ago, when he called to me, and said, 'Tell Rosalind to hold herself in readiness to pay me a visit in exactly two hours.'"

"Did you inquire how he felt?"

"I did; but he shut the door, and wouldn't answer me."

"Alas!" sighed Rosalind—"I fear he is failing fast; for he appears every day to grow more strange and eccentric. I know his health is feeble; I know he needs kind care—such care as an affectionate daughter might bestow; but even me, his only child, he treats almost as a stranger. In his usual health, I could bear this, Kitty, as I have borne; but now—believing, as I do, that he is gradually failing—gradually wasting away—and going down, step by step, to the dark grave—it makes my heart very, very heavy!" and as she spoke, her soft blue eyes grew dim with tears, that she strove in vain to repress.

"Don't cry, Miss Rosa!" said Kitty, affectionately: "I can't bear to see you cry. Perhaps it is not as bad as you think. Master was always strange—at least ever

since I knew him—and I don't see any thing very unusual in his present conduct."

"He was always strange, Kitty, I know," said Rosalind; "that is, he was always different from other persons; but never, at any period of his life, has he seemed toward me so very cold as now—now, when I think he most needs a companion in his sorrow. Oh! if he would only let me approach him, as an affectionate child should approach an afflicted parent—instead of shutting off all my sympathy, and making my own sad heart more desolate,—oh! if he would only let me nurse him, talk to him, and sing to him, as I have sometimes done—let me feel as if I were doing something to render his burden of sorrow less heavy to bear—methinks I should be comparatively happy!"

"He has never seemed just the same since the loss of little Ellen," said Kitty.

"That is true, and I know that loss preys heavily upon his mind. Poor child! would to Heaven we could get some tidings of her! But I fear we never may. He took a deep interest in her; and I think, toward the latter part of her stay with us, I could discover a change in him for the better; and even now, her restoration might bring about a favorable result."

And then she added, mentally:

"Strange, how mind will operate on mind! He knew not that she was one who had in her veins the blood of those he once called friends; and whom (may God forgive him!) his own hand doomed to sorrow, and himself to unceasing remorse; and yet he was drawn to her by a sympathy which to him must have appeared mysterious indeed. Ah! mind! mind! mind! the most wonderful attribute of the Almighty! who can comprehend it? Measuring, weighing, sounding, seeing, and knowing—yet

itself immeasurable, imponderable, unfathomable, invisible, incomprehensible, and eternal!"

"I wish little Ellen could be found, for dear master's sake!" said Kitty.

"Ay!" sighed Rosalind—"for his sake, her sake, and my own—but I fear it will never be!"

"Have you tried the police, Miss Rosa?"

"No," replied Rosalind; "but perhaps I had better."

"I thought so in the first place," said Kitty, with the air of one who fancied her own opinion of considerable importance.

"I will first consult——"

Rosalind paused, and Kitty rejoined, with a sly look:

"If you mean Dr. Stanhope, you can do so at once, for he is now in the drawing-room."

Instantly a warm glow suffused the lovely features of Rosalind; and stooping down, apparently to pluck a flower, she said, rather hastily:

"Kitty, why did you not tell me this at first?"

"Why, thinking of poor master, put it out of my mind."

"Did he inquire for me, Kitty?"

"Why, who else could he want to see?" returned Kitty, very innocently, trying to get a glimpse of the face of Rosalind, who, just at that moment, was very intently occupied with a modest little flower at her feet.

"Perhaps he has some intelligence of Ellen!" said Rosalind, keeping her face averted. "Run in, and say I will be with him presently."

Kitty hastened away, and Rosalind lingered not long in her little garden. She met the young physician with a pleasant "Good morning," and without any perceptible embarrassment; but her features were tinged with a glow that heightened their beauty.

"And how is your father this morning?" was the first kind inquiry of young Stanhope.

"Alas!" sighed Rosalind—"I do not know;" and a shade of sorrow swept over her lovely countenance, and left it pale as marble. "It is hard for an only child to be obliged to answer thus, concerning a beloved father," she continued, sadly; "but I have not been permitted to see and speak to him for several days. I have just received a message, that I must visit him in a couple of hours; but I know not whether I shall be received with affection, or formality—as a child, or as a stranger."

"His strange moods must be very trying to you, Rosalind!" said Stanhope, with much feeling.

"No one knows how trying!" returned Rosalind, a tear glistening in her eye. "I feel sometimes as if I could not have it so. Oh! Newton, if we could only find little Ellen! You get no news of her, I suppose?"

"None, Rosalind—none—and I fear it is vain to hope. I would that the mystery might be solved—though I no longer believe that the child herself is among the living."

"Oh! Newton, do not say thus!" cried Rosalind.

"I do not say it, Rosalind, to add to your sorrows," rejoined Stanhope, in a voice of deep emotion; "for, Heaven knows, I would joyfully relieve you of every depressing thought, by taking them upon myself; but a painful certainty can not wear down the mind like hope long deferred."

"But notwithstanding what we may believe," replied Rosalind, "it is, you perceive, a painful uncertainty still, and therefore still hope deferred. If I knew her fate, even though the worst, I grant you it would be better for the mind than its present wearying suspense."

"There is one who, notwithstanding his protestations of innocent ignorance, I still believe could tell something

about her, if he would," rejoined Newton, compressing his lips; "for never, in my life, did I see a man exhibit so much seeming guilt, as he did at the time of my making the bold accusation."

"You refer to Deacon Pinchbeck?"

I do; and were it not that he has already undergone a punishment greater than man could inflict, I think, with your permission, I would, even now, venture to enter a complaint against him."

"But you are not certain that he is guilty, Newton."

"We are often not certain of the murderer, till after his trial, Rosalind. But as I have no proof, perhaps I had better let the matter rest; nor could I find it in my nature, without positive proof, to proceed against a man so crushed with grief and misfortune as he is at the present time. There was a rumor current yesterday, that, by a sudden fall in stocks, he would lose, at the very least, fifty thousand dollars; and I learn, this morning, that he has taken to his bed, and is threatened with a brain fever."

"Poor man!" said Rosalind.

"Miserable wretch!" ejaculated Stanhope, bitterly. "He does not deserve pity, Rosalind; for he has wronged, when he could, every man that has ever been so unfortunate as to have dealings with him. Besides, he has more than once turned a poor, starving family into the street, in the dead of winter, because they could not pay rent; and a man whose heart is black enough to do that, would murder for money, were he certain that he could escape detection. A base, paltry, cowardly scoundrel, without filial affection, or one noble trait in his character—who uses religion as a cloak to hide his spiritual deformity! Faugh! the very mention of such a wretch excites indignant loathing! Rosalind, what punishment is too great for the villain who

rolls in wealth, and leaves the mother that bore him to die in the almshouse?"

"Good heavens! Newton, you do not mean to say——"

"Ay!" interrupted the other, with a flush of honest indignation—"I do mean to say, that the mother of Deacon Pinchbeck died in the almshouse, not ten days ago, whether she had been taken by Mr. Sheldon, who found her sick and destitute, and thus displayed more Christian charity toward her than her own son."

"And is it possible that he let her die there among strangers?"

"It is true she died there among strangers; but it is said that the *good* Deacon did not know of her being there, till after her death. Yet what matters that? he left her to suffer in poverty, or she would never have been taken there."

"Of all wicked things," said Rosalind, "I know of none more wicked, than that of a prosperous child neglecting an aged parent. Oh! would to Heaven, I had a mother to care for! or that my afflicted father would permit me to care for him!" She hastily brushed a tear from her eye, and continued: "But this Mr. Sheldon, Newton—you know he promised to make every effort to find Ellen!"

"He says he has done so, but without getting the faintest clue to the mystery of her disappearance."

"Ah! poor child! poor child!" sighed Rosalind: "I shall never see her again, I fear. I almost regret that I did not apply to the police at first. What think you, Newton—had we not better do so now?"

"It may be as well; we may be better satisfied that we have done right; though, I am sorry to say, I have not the least hope that she will be found. Ah! poor little thing! After passing through so much sorrow, what a pity that she should have been snatched away, just at the

moment when a fortune had fallen, as it were, into her very grasp!"

"You think, then, this immense fortune would really have come into her possession?"

"I do, most assuredly. As I told you the other day, John De Carp Montague is dead; and I certainly believe your little friend, if living, to be the next rightful inheritress; for, from all you have told me, I am satisfied that she is the Ellen Norbury alluded to in the paper which was stolen from my father."

"And how many stand between her and your mother, Newton?" inquired Rosalind.

"None, now, Rosalind—Mrs. Pinchbeck did—but she is in her grave."

"Then, if Ellen be dead, this estate falls to your mother, Newton?"

"So I now believe; and to myself next, should I outlive her."

"It is certainly very noble on your part, Newton," said Rosalind, with a kind of proud animation, "to be so anxious for the discovery of this child, when you know that she will step between you and a princely fortune!"

"I trust," returned the other, with a manly glow, "that I let no sordid feelings sway me in this matter. That I should like to come into possession of this estate, it were false in me to deny; but I have looked into my heart, and I can honestly say, that it would bound with pleasure to know Ellen Norbury lives. The fortune belongs to her, and it is but right that she should have it—so much for mere justice: but as your dear friend, Rosalind—as one who would bring happiness to you and to your afflicted father—it would afford me more joy than I can now express, could I be the means of placing her in your arms."

"Thanks! my noble friend—thanks!" said Rosalind,

warmly, with a bright glow suffusing her beautiful features, and an expression of generous admiration beaming from her soft blue eyes.

For a moment, the young physician looked at the fair being before him; and then his eyes slowly sunk to the ground, a deep crimson hue overspread his own manly features, and for a short time he seemed greatly embarrassed, like one who wished to make a communication, but was fearful it might be considered *mal a propos*. Rosalind seemed intuitively to know his thoughts; for the warm glow instantly deepened into a conscious blush; and she turned her head away, as if attracted by some object which she did not see. For a brief time, there was a kind of embarrassing silence; and then the young man, with a glance at his lovely companion, ventured to speak.

"Rosalind," he said; and his voice was low and tremulous, and the name pronounced was followed by a short pause, during which he evidently sought to gather courage: "Rosalind—should I not be so fortunate as to restore this little girl to you—should it, in fact, be discovered that she is no longer among the living—in short, should I become possessed of this immense estate—may I, can I, dare I hope—that—that one who has so long been my friend—the friend of my family; one whom I have so long esteemed—nay, *loved*—for the heart speaks now, and the truth must be told; may I hope, I say, that one fair being, whom I have long secretly, but ardently, loved—loved with a love that is true and holy, because untainted with a single feeling that an angel might not harbor in his sinless breast; may I venture to hope, that this one lovely being, without whom earth would seem a desert, will share the fortune with me?"

Gradually, while Stanhope was speaking, the color forsook the face of the lovely listener, till it became as pale



as marble; the soft eyes drooped; the lips quivered; the heart seemed to cease its motion; and when his voice died away to silence, that silence remained unbroken by one who seemed rather an exquisite statue, from the hand of a master sculptor, than a living, sentient being.

"Speak, dear Rosalind!" at length murmured Stanhope, gently taking her hand, and fairly trembling with emotions that each moment grew more rapturous with hope: "Speak, dear Rosalind! but oh! let not your tongue syllable words that will chill my heart with despair! Remember! I have only asked you to share my fortune; for though nothing may increase or lessen my love, yet I know too well the difference between my present circumstances and yours, to ask you to share my poverty."

As he said this, Rosalind started, the warm blood rushed upward to her very temples, and turning quickly toward her companion, her gentle eyes beaming a kind of sorrowful reproach, she said:

"Newton, why so cruel a remark?"

"Forgive me!" he said, quickly; "I meant not to wound your feelings; but I speak as one who has seen something of the world, and learned some bitter lessons."

"What care I for wealth?" pursued Rosalind. "It is not happiness—it brings not happiness; and though, considered by itself, it may not, strictly speaking, lessen happiness—yet I am sometimes led to think, that where much wealth is given, other blessings are taken away, to make all equal. How many pass this dwelling, and think of its owner with feelings of envy! and yet, how very few, of all, would not lose by the exchange of circumstances! They might gain in wealth, it is true; but if they lost in happiness—as I believe they would—it would surely be a loss, instead of a gain, to them."

"It is pleasant to hear one noble heart utter sentiments

so much at variance with the sordid opinions of the greater number, as regards mere wealth, Rosalind," replied the other; "but it grieves me, at the same time, to know that she who speaks, has been made so bitterly to feel the aching void which no earthly treasures can fill! Do not misjudge my heartfelt sentiments, dear Rosalind, in asking you to share with me a fortune; it was not because I fancied that mere wealth would give me favor in your sight; but because my proud nature revolted at the idea, that you should, even for one brief moment, suppose a sordid motive influenced me in asking your hand!"

Here he paused, and seemed deeply embarrassed; and Rosalind looked down, and perceptibly trembled. At length, in a voice scarcely above a whisper, he continued:

"Rosalind—dear Rosalind—you have not, so far, said aught, or done aught, to cast a shadow over my brightest earthly hope; and oh! may I still venture to hope on?—to hope that you will one day be mine—come weal—come woe?"

Rosalind trembled more than ever, and her lovely features flushed and paled alternately. She struggled to speak; but the words died upon her quivering lips; and at length her emotions found vent in a flood of tears; and she wept freely, and long.

"Speak, dearest!" whispered Stanhope, when she had become somewhat composed, again taking her hand, and seating himself by her side. "Speak, dear Rosalind—one word! I have acknowledged my love—and oh! let me hear, from your own sweet lips, that I have not loved in vain!"

"My father"—murmured Rosalind—"I cannot leave him!"

"Nor would I have you, dearest—for filial love and duty I hold to be sacred. But your father, dear Rosa-

lind—do not let me alarm you—your father cannot long remain with you; and then—”

He paused and sighed.

“And then?” murmured Rosalind.

“You will be alone!” he concluded, in a low, tremulous, solemn tone.

She raised her soft blue eyes to his—all swimming in tears, but beaming with love—and the next moment her head reclined against his manly breast, and she wept anew.

“Thank God!” fervently exclaimed Stanhope, as he stole an arm around her gentle form, and drew her closer to his noble heart, and imprinted upon her sweet lips the seal of true and holy love: “thank God! my sweet flower, I am happy once more!”

And a single bright sunbeam, like the brilliant star of truth, found its way through the open window and parted curtains, and, resting upon her golden tresses, seemed to cast around her a halo of purity, peace, and love.

## CHAPTER XXV.

### GLEAMS OF LIGHT.

FEEBLE, careworn, dejected, and miserable, Sir Walter Clendennan, with a tottering step, walked up and down his spacious library, his lips muttering prayers, and his heart full of the deepest remorse. He was surrounded with the productions of giant intellects, in every department of science and literature, and the walls of his apartment were

adorned with paintings from the hands of old masters, and busts and statuettes were so disposed as to relieve the eye and add a picturesque charm to the whole. A tiny jet of water fell, in silvery beads, with a soft, musical sound, into a marble vase, and several bright gold-fish disported themselves in the cool, pelucid element. On a marble table, in the centre of the apartment, lay books, drawings, music and manuscripts, overtopped by a pearl-mounted guitar, as if this were the last thing used to relieve the mind of the unhappy occupant. A velvet covered lounge was drawn up by the table, and a hundred other things of taste and luxury met the eye. To the innocent lover of letters, the apartment would have seemed a kind of intellectual paradise; but the unfortunate owner seldom saw aught around him but the deepest shadows of gloom. Alas! what are the gorgeous externals of earth, when a dark cloud of sorrow, remorse, or despair, closes over the heart, and shuts out the bright sunlight of peace and joy?

“It will soon be over now, sweet spirit!” muttered Sir Walter, as he stopped to gaze upon the miniature of his departed wife, which he ever carried next to his heart; “yes, deeply wronged angel, it will soon be over now; and then I trust to see thee in reality, as I last night saw thee in my dream. Oh! why did I doubt thy loyalty, sweet angel? and by my own rash act bring down upon my head the retributive justice of Heaven! and fill with woe so many other kind and noble hearts! and send them, throbbing with anguish, down the rapid stream of time? Great God, forgive me! I am a repentant man. I have suffered the torments of hell for many long, long, weary, burdensome years—and now, O God! in thy holy mercy, forgive me! and let me die in the hope of a bright resurrection beyond the grave! Oh! sweet angel!” he pursued, his eyes growing dim with tears, as he gazed upon the painted ivory, set

round with costly gems—"shall I meet thee where there will be no more parting—no more sorrow—no more anguish—no more pain? Dare I hope to see thee in the glorious realms of the blessed ones, clothed in a garb of such dazzling whiteness and brightness, that our brilliant noon-day sun would pale beside it? Didst thou breathe such sounds of holy hope into my spiritual ear, as I last night lay in my dream?"

He sighed, and pressed his lips to the likeness, and returned it to its place beside his heart, and resumed his walk to and fro.

"Ah! little wanderer!" he said at length—"sweet little pilgrim! from whose pure, innocent face, my sad heart caught a ray of sunlight—art thou in Heaven, too? and shall I ever behold *thee* again? Strange! strange! how like was she to him who fell by my hand! And Rosalind—good, sweet Rosalind!" he continued—"thou wilt soon have no unhappy father to vex and weary thee! How have I abused thy gentle affection! my heart bleeds to think of it! Oh! I am a wretch—a very wretch—and deserve not mercy. Thou wilt grieve when I am gone, sweet Rosalind! notwithstanding I have been so cold and harsh to thee. But it is thy pure, unselfish, loving nature that will cause thee to grieve—not my remembered kindness—for I have been cold and harsh to thee, sweet daughter! And what will become of thee when I am gone? For my sake thou hast buried thyself in seclusion—and hast made few friends—and among those friends, how few are friends indeed! There is *one*," he mused, "who, if I have read his noble heart aright, feels more than friendship for thee; and if, as I believe, thou art blessed with the love of one such heart as his, thou need'st not mourn the loss of thy unhappy father!"

As he ended his soliloquy, his long thin fingers nervously

closed upon a silver-tasselled bell-cord, and he rung for a servant. In a few moments the door of the library was softly opened, and the face of Kitty timidly appeared to his view.

"Where is Rosalind?" inquired the Knight.

"In the drawing-room, sir."

"Is she alone?"

"No, sir," hesitated Kitty; "at least, I think not, sir."

"Who is with her?"

"Why, sir, if anybody, I think, perhaps, it is—it is——"

Kitty paused, afraid to mention the name that was already upon her lips—for knowing the peculiarities of the unhappy Baronet, she was fearful of encountering a sudden storm of passion.

"Well, speak out," said Sir Walter, gently; "I will not be angry, Kitty."

"Thank you, sir!" returned Kitty, brightening. "I think it is young Dr. Stanhope, sir."

"Ha!" returned the Knight, with a slight start, while a bright gleam of joy passed over his pale, haggard features. "Bid them both come here at once—both, Kitty—mind! both."

"I will, sir!" said Kitty, bounding lightly away, and wondering to herself what could have caused so favorable a change in one, who, if kind at heart, was generally harsh in speech.

The dream of the lovers was broken by the somewhat abrupt entrance of the domestic, who hurriedly delivered her master's message.

"Both, Kitty?" exclaimed Rosalind, starting up and changing color. "Are you sure he said both?"

"Yes, Miss Rosa: he asked who was here, and I was

obliged to tell him, you know; and then he charged me to tell you both to come to him at once."

Rosalind looked at the young Doctor, and said, with some embarrassment:

"I fear we shall meet with censure; but oh! Newton, should he be harsh in speech, I pray you be kind in your answers, and remember not his words against him!"

"When the heart is full of joy, as mine is now, dear Rosalind," returned the other, in a low tone, "the lips can not speak unkindly. I will bear with him, and strive to be as gentle in my replies as your own sweet self."

Kitty smiled to herself, as she withdrew, but said nothing; and the lovers, with anxious hearts, immediately repaired to the library. Sir Walter was seated on their entrance; but feebly rose, extended his arms, and said, in a voice tremulous with emotion:

"Rosalind, my sweet child, come here!"

With a cry of joy, Rosalind threw herself into the arms of her father, clasped her own around his neck, and burst into tears; and amid choking sighs and sobs, she faintly murmured:

"Oh! father—dear, dear father—you make me so happy!"

"Heaven bless you, my sweet child!" returned the Knight, hastily brushing the gathering mist from his eyes, and struggling to keep down his rising emotions: "when so little can make you happy, I cannot but think what a selfish wretch I have been, to let you be miserable for so long a time!"

"Do not say thus, dear father!" cried Rosalind, starting back, and looking fondly and anxiously upon his pale, careworn features: "do not reflect upon yourself, dear father, or I shall be more unhappy than ever!"

"Well, well," rejoined Sir Walter, "I will say nothing

to make you unhappy now, dear child! I have been an erring man all my life; but if repentance—deep, sincere, heart-felt repentance—can atone for the wrong done, I hope to be forgiven at last. Dr. Stanhope," he continued, turning to the young physician, and extending his hand, which was cordially taken—"I owe you an apology, sir, for many harsh words, spoken in moments of severe bodily pain and mental anguish! Have I your forgiveness?"

"As I hope to be forgiven myself, kind sir, you have!" returned Stanhope, deeply affected by the whole scene.

"Thank you! thank you, my young friend! you have a noble heart. Come! I pray you both be seated—I have a few words to say to you. Here, sit here—there—so;" and Sir Walter himself sunk down on the lounge, by the table, with his anxious listeners facing him, and rested his forehead on his hand.

He paused for a few moments, with his eyes cast down, seemingly in deep reflection; and then raising his head, and turning to the young physician, he said:

"Dr. Stanhope, do I count too much upon you, in supposing you the sincere friend of Rosalind?"

"No, Mr. Clendennan," replied the young man, coloring deeply, glancing at Rosalind, and seeming not a little agitated; "and with your kind permission, dear sir, I trust I may one day be something more to her than a mere friend."

"Ha! is it so?" returned Sir Walter, looking from one to the other. "It is then as I would have it; and having no longer need of mortal life, I may go quietly to rest."

"Father!" exclaimed Rosalind.

"Start not, sweet child! and look not so grieved!" pursued the Baronet. "Remember, I have long wished to die, to escape my mortal wretchedness; and now I desire it more than ever—for a bright hope has sprung up in my

breast, that I shall meet your angel mother in a better world. Rosalind, I saw her last night!"

"Saw her, father?" cried Rosalind, with a start.

"Yes, dear child—in a dream; but still a dream so like reality, that it seemed not a dream. She talked to me long, and bade me rejoice; told me my prayers had been heard; that my trials would soon be over; and that my weary spirit would soon be free to roam with her the celestial regions of Paradise, where day is eternal and sorrow unknown. Oh! she looked so bright, and beautiful, and happy—and spoke so rapturously of her immortal home—of its golden lights—its balmy airs—its silver streams—its deep green shades—its clustering flowers—its thousand scenes of music, beauty, love, that my imprisoned spirit strove to burst its bars of clay and follow her to Heaven! Was this a mere dream? Once I might have thought so—but now, by the fond bright hope I have within me, I can not think it all a dream."

"I fear it was not all a dream, dear father!" said Rosalind, solemnly. "It seems rather like one of those visions which the spirit sometimes has on the verge of the eternal world!"

"So let me hope—God grant it true!" rejoined the Knight, with deep feeling. "And I have begun to set my house in order for my last journey!" he continued; "and ere I go forth, never to return, I would know how I leave you, my daughter! Speak freely, both, and frankly! Is it settled that you are to be united?"

"Such is my brightest hope, dear sir!" responded Stanhope.

"'Tis frankly said; and pardon a father for adding, you will never regret your choice. Yet there is one thing!" he pursued, after a brief pause, looking steadily at Rosalind,

while a deep shade of gloom gradually settled on his features. "Does he know all, my child?"

Rosalind blanched and trembled and gasped for breath.

"No, dear father," she made out to articulate: "I had forgotten—I did not think—I——"

"She is falling!" cried the knight.

Stanhope sprung from his seat, and caught her in his arms; and it was several minutes before she sufficiently recovered to dispense with his assistance; and then, upon her pale, sad, lovely features, rested an expression of painful, hopeless anguish.

"*Oh! omnibus modis miser sum!*" groaned Sir Walter, wringing his hands. "See, my friend, what it is to be guilty of a crime! see how retribution reaches us, even through those we love!"

"What do you mean, Mr. Clendennan?" inquired the young Doctor, with a look of startled surprise.

"It is painful to tell you!" answered the Baronet, with a gloomy brow and quivering lip; "but, under the circumstances, I feel you have a right to know. Rosalind, my dear child—had you not better retire, while I communicate this terrible secret?"

"No, dear father—no—I would remain!" she feebly replied, burying her face in her handkerchief, while Stanhope looked from one to the other in amazement.

"Be it so, then!" said the Knight, averting his face from the inquiring glance of his wondering guest.

A few moments of breathless silence ensued, during which Sir Walter seemed struggling to fortify his mind for the painful disclosure. Then, in an unsteady voice, he resumed:

"Dr. Stanhope, I am about to tell you a tale that has not passed my lips for years; I am about to mention names that have long been forbidden to my ears; in short,

I am about to make a confession, that may cause you to shrink from me with abhorrence; but in mercy, I pray you, bring not my own guilty acts to bear upon that gentle being by your side! who is as pure as truth, and as innocent of the wrong as the angels in Heaven."

"Be your deeds what they may, Mr. Clendennan, no wrong that you have done, shall weigh against the love I bear your noble daughter!" said Stanhope, with a kind of proud enthusiasm.

"God bless you, for those words!" exclaimed Sir Walter.

"Look up, sweet Rosalind! be not cast down!" whispered the lover, throwing an arm around her slender and graceful form. "Remember, dearest," he continued, "we are pledged to each other, for weal or for woe!"

She trembled, and wept, but did not reply, and the Knight continued:

"In the first place, it is proper I should inform you, of what probably you are ignorant, that I am of noble birth, and still hold the title of Baronet."

Stanhope gave a start of surprise.

"But I am no better for that," pursued the wretched man, "and have long since cast aside the hollow honor. In this glorious land of freedom, you may thank your God, every honest man is noble, and needs no long descent from a blood-stained favorite of some grasping, semi-barbarous monarch, to give him equal rank among the proudest of those who rule the state and govern one of the mightiest nations of earth! No man, sir, is the better for a title; and since I came to this country, I have disused mine. By his heart and his intellect should every man be known and judged, and not by that which comes from an ancestor, however worthy that ancestor may have been. It was wise in the framers of your constitution, aiming as they did at liberty and equal rights, to sweep away the worth-

less, though gilded fabric, which supports monarchy—namely: hollow titles and hereditary possessions. It belongs to the march of progress, for every man to regard every man as his equal, and no man as his superior; and it is this true principle, instilled into the youth of this country, which makes each generation a generation of freemen, and worthy successors of those who have passed away; and it is this proud feeling of independence and equal rights, united with a general education of the masses, which will perpetuate the liberties of this mighty country, till thrones, monarchs, and titles, shall be known as things which were, and as belonging to an age of comparative barbarism and physical rule. Sir! America has the proud distinction of giving to the world the first *true* liberty which mankind has ever enjoyed; and the time is coming—I may not live to see it, nor you—but the time is surely coming, when she will give benign laws to the down-trodden of the old world, as she now gives hope; and when to say, 'I am an American,' will be a greater honour, than to say, 'I am an Emperor!'"

The Knight paused, and for a moment a kind of enthusiastic glow rested on his care-worn, haggard features; but this was quickly succeeded by a shade of gloom; and he added, in an altered tone:

"Ah me! I have digressed, and must return to a painful subject."

He then went on to detail to the young physician those terrible events, already known to the reader, which had so embittered the closing years of his life, and which were now, through deep, unceasing remorse, dragging him down, step by step, to the cold and silent tomb. Stanhope listened, with painful interest, without interruption or reply, till Sir Walter had concluded his sad tale. Once, when the Knight first mentioned the name of Norbury,



he gave a start of surprise; and his lips parted as if about to speak; but he bethought himself in the same instant, and made no remark.

"And now, sir, that you know my secret," said the Baronet, in conclusion; "now that you know, from my own lips, what a wretch I have been and am; now that you know the source of my misery, and the unhappiness of my sweet daughter—who has, may Heaven bless her! ever clung to me with the most unselfish affection, and striven to lift the desolation from my guilt-burdened soul; now that you know all—what say you now? Are your feelings still unchanged toward my gentle Rosalind!"

"No, dear sir!" replied Newton, with a manly glow, as he turned to the trembling Rosalind, and gently took her hand—"my feelings are not unchanged—for now do I love her more than ever; and it shall be the study of my life, not only to make her happy, but, if possible, to cause her to forget she has ever known sorrow!"

"God bless you!" returned the Knight, with a moist eye and quivering lip; and he turned aside his face, to conceal his emotion.

At this moment, pale with excitement, Mrs. Wyndham burst into the room.

"At last," she cried, "we have a clue to the robbery!" and to the utter astonishment of all, she displayed the missing necklace of Rosalind.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

### BEGINNING OF THE END.

WITH an exclamation of surprise, both Newton and Rosalind instantly started to their feet; while Sir Walter, convulsively clutching the jewels which Mrs. Wyndham extended to him, exclaimed:

"Speak! explain!"

"I found this in the box of a Jew pedlar, who was showing his wares to the servants," replied the Governess.

"Bring him here! bring him here!" cried the Knight, fairly breathless with excitement.

"Quick! quick! show him to me!" exclaimed Stanhope.

"This way, then!" rejoined the Governess; and she darted from the room, followed by the excited lover.

In a few minutes, Dr. Stanhope returned, fairly dragging into the library the terrified pedlar. He was a small man, about thirty years of age, with black eyes, hair, and beard, and a very dark complexion. He hastily glanced at the Knight, Rosalind, Mrs. Wyndham, and Stanhope, and then at the servants, who now filled the doorway, and an expression of cowardly despair settled upon his features, as one who felt convinced that his last hour had come.

"Speak, Jew!" said the Baronet, holding up the necklace—"where got you this?"

"I puyed it—so helps me Fader Abr'ams!" answered the pedlar.

"Who sold it to you?" demanded the Knight.

"Vell, it vash a mans—so helps me Moses!"

"Are you sure you did not *steal* it?" cried Stanhope.

"Yaas—I knows I paid monish for it."

"Let me explain!" said Sir Walter, who saw how frightened the pedlar really was, and thought he might the sooner arrive at the truth, by letting the Jew know what had occurred, and what was really required of him. "A few weeks ago," he went on, "my house was robbed in the night, of many valuable articles, of which this is one; and a little girl, living with us at the time, was taken away, and has never since been heard of. We fear she has been murdered, and we are anxious to trace out the burglar and homicide. If you bought this, as you say, you must tell of whom you purchased it, or we shall be compelled to hand you over to the police. Now make a clean breast of all you know; and if you are innocent, you shall not be harmed."

"I ish innocents ash de pabes as vash never porns!" replied the Jew.

"Well, speak!" cried Stanhope, impatiently; "and to the point! Do you know where you got that necklace?"

"Yaas—I knows de mans himself—he ish a constables."

"Who is he? where is he? can you show him to me?" demanded Stanhope.

"Yaas—you comes mit me, and I shows him."

"Quick, then—let us begone!" rejoined the young physician.

"Take the carriage, Doctor," cried the Knight—"and let not the Jew escape! Quick, John, (to the coachman, who was standing at the door,) put to the horses! And, Stanhope, drive first to a Magistrate's, and get out a warrant, and take along an officer, for the apprehension of the guilty party. Oh!" he continued, rising in great ex-

citement—"at last we may unravel this awful mystery! I would willingly give half my fortune to see that child returned!"

"If in human power, and Ellen Norbury lives, you shall see her restored to you!" cried Stanhope.

"Who? who did you say?" fairly shrieked Sir Walter.

In the excitement of the moment, the surname of the little orphan had passed the unguarded lips of Newton, and he now trembled for the consequences.

"I mean little Ellen," he hastened to reply, first turning pale with alarm, and then flushing with confusion.

"But you said Ellen Norbury, sir!" cried the Baronet, catching hold of his daughter, to support his tottering frame, and looking wildly from one to another of those present. "Did he not? did he not? did he not?" he hastily demanded, appealing to each in turn.

"Pray, dear father, be calm!" said Rosalind, gently.

"I was thinking of Norbury, sir!" rejoined Stanhope—"for you had yourself so recently mentioned the name."

"Don't try to deceive me, sir!" cried the Baronet, almost wild with excitement. "And you are trying to do so now, sir! I can see it in your tell-tale face. Speak! is her last name Norbury?"

Newton glanced despairingly at Rosalind, who hastened to answer:

"Dear, dear father, be calm; try and be composed, and I will answer."

"Well then—well then—speak!"

"Her last name is Norbury."

"The daughter of William?"

"Yes, dear father."

"The niece of the murdered James!" shrieked the Knight. "Oh! great God! how wonderful are thy mysterious workings! Ah! I saw it, but did not know it—I

felt it, but did not know it;" and staggering back, he sunk down on the lounge, and groaned. "Why did you not tell me this when she was with us?" he asked, after a short but painful silence.

"Because I was afraid it would be too great a shock for you, dear father!" answered Rosalind; "and you know you had forbidden the mention of the name of Norbury in your hearing."

"I am to blame for all this!" said Stanhope, with deep self-reproach.

"No, sir!" returned the Baronet, quickly; "the blame is not with you, but with me—the crime was not with you, but with me. Rosalind, do you think I did any thing to drive her away from me?"

"No, dear father—no—I know you did not."

"Oh, God! restore her to me!" he ejaculated; "and let me make some atonement to the living for the wrongs done to the dead! Go, Newton Stanhope; and spare neither time nor money, to clear up this terrible mystery! Here, take this necklace—it may be of service. If she be among the living, and you bring her not, then never hope to look upon my face again."

And as Stanhope hurried from the library, with the pedlar, the Knight added, in a feeble tone:

"This is a strange secret I have learned, and it affects me much, Rosalind. I feel weak—very weak. Help me to bed."

Rosalind, with a sad heart—for she trembled at the probable result of so severe a shock to her father's nervous system—assisted him into an adjoining room; and the moment he touched the bed, he said:

"Now go, my daughter—I would be alone, till Dr. Stanhope returns."

"But, dear father, you are far from well," replied Rosa-

lind; "will you not permit me to visit you, every hour, to learn how you feel?"

"Yes, Rosalind, to please you, I will."

"Thank you, dear, dear father!" returned the noble daughter; and throwing her arms around his neck, she kissed him, and retired.

"Heaven bless her!" murmured the Knight, as she disappeared.

Dr. Stanhope paced the court impatiently, till the carriage was ready; when he hurried the pedlar into it, and sprung in after him. The driver now received his instructions, and drove with all speed to the office of a Magistrate, where Newton lodged his complaint, and, on the affidavit of the Jew, got a warrant issued for the apprehension of Patrick Cafferty. An officer to serve it was readily procured, and the parties were rapidly driven to the residence of the guilty Constable. It was not far from the hour of noon; and it so chanced that Pat, having nothing better to do, had just come home to get his dinner. The officer, leaving Stanhope and the Jew in the carriage, knocked at the door, and Pat himself opened it, looking as innocent as it was in the nature of things for so mean a little man to look. He recognised the officer with a smile; for the presence of one of his profession, so far from giving him the least alarm, excited some brilliant anticipations of a clever undertaking, in which he himself might probably figure as the "dread constable of the law."

"The top of the morning to ye, Misther Barlow, if it's not too late for that same!" he said. "And, sure, it's tak'ng a ride ye is, in style, jist!" he added, glancing at the carriage.

"Yes, and a fine day for a ride it is, Mr. Cafferty," replied Barlow. "I would like you to come with me."

"Arrah, now! and it's mesilf as was t'inking that same,

so I was. It's wanting me sarvices, ye is, Misther Barlow?" and he winked knowingly.

"Exactly so."

"It's me dinner time, so it is; but it's mesilf as'll not mind that now. I'll git me hat, jist; and lave the owld woman and childers to spile the praties, so I will."

He hastened for his hat; and the next minute entered the carriage, followed by Officer Barlow.

"Agh!" said Pat, as his eye fell on the Jew pedlar; "so it's yersilf, is it, that's the tief now? Och! sure, and wasn't it knowing, I was, ye'd come to this at last, ye vagabond!"

"You ish more tiefs ash me!" replied the pedlar, indignantly.

"Shut up now, ye spalpeen!" cried Pat, savagely.

"Sure, and it's down below ye'll be afther going, for yer insults to mesilf, the dread constabbe of the law, whilst doing me duthy to me counthry, so ye will!"

"Stop!" said Barlow: "I will have no quarrelling here. We shall soon see who is the thief."

Pat Cafferty leaned proudly back on his seat, and looked triumphantly at the pedlar, as much as to say:

"D'ye hear that now, ye spalpeen?"

Arrived at the Magistrate's office, the whole party entered the little room together, Pat Cafferty evidently swelling with importance.

"Good day to your Honor!" he said, making what he considered a very dignified bow.

"Good day, Patrick!" replied the Alderman. And then immediately added: "This is a very serious charge against you, sir!"

"Against me, your Honor?" exclaimed the Constable, in astonishment. "It's against the Jew, it's like, your Honor manes, now?"

"No, sir, against yourself!" rejoined the Alderman, sternly. "And the more shame to you, if the charge be true; for it always makes me blush for human depravity, when I see a man, authorized to execute the laws, breaking them himself! The poor, starving wretch, who steals bread to appease the hunger of himself and family, I can excuse in my heart, even when obliged, by the law, to commit him to prison; but I can find no excuse, and no sympathy, for a man in your position, who commits a felony."

Pat turned pale, and looked inquiringly at Barlow.

"You are under arrest," said that officer, "and here is the warrant for your apprehension."

"You are accused," pursued the Magistrate, "of felonously taking these jewels from the house of Walter Clendennan;" and he displayed, to the astonished gaze of Pat Cafferty, the necklace of Rosalind.

"And sure, your Honor, who accuses mesilf of that same?" faltered Pat, beginning to grow much alarmed.

This gentleman—Dr. Stanhope—has made oath, that this necklace, with much other valuable property, was felonously taken, in the night, from the house of the person named; and Mr. Isaacs, here, a pedlar, has also made oath, that he purchased it from you, some three weeks ago."

"He's a Jew, your Honor, and a dape liar, so he is!" rejoined Pat, with a half resolve to brave it out.

"That may be," said the Alderman; "but his testimony is good for the present; and in the meantime I must hold you to answer to the charge."

"Will your Honor permit me to say a few words to Mr. Cafferty?" now inquired Stanhope.

"Certainly, sir—certainly."

"Mr. Cafferty," said the physician, addressing the Constable, "I do not know whether you are guilty or not;

but one thing is certain—these valuable jewels were feloniously taken from the house of Mr. Clendennan, as his Honor has informed you; and I will add, what his Honor has not told you, that a little girl, some ten or eleven years of age, who was living with the family at the time, has ever since been missing, and it is supposed she has been murdered; and as these jewels may lead to the detection of a burglar, if not a homicide, and also to the clearing up of a terrible mystery, you see how important it is that we should trace them to the hand which took them. Now, if you, which is not unreasonable to suppose, received them from some person, not knowing them to be stolen property, you will probably clear yourself, and further the ends of justice, by stating from whom you got them. Do not think," he added, as he saw the Constable hesitate, "that this affair will blow over lightly; for it involves the fate of a child who has wealthy friends; and now that we are on the right track, no time nor money will be spared, in the investigation of the mystery, until her fate shall be known."

"And sure, and what's her name, jist?" inquired Pat, scratching his head, and looking a good deal perplexed.

"Ellen Norbury," answered Stanhope.

"Och! sure, and she's the tief hersilf, jist!" cried Pat, thrown off his guard.

"Impossible!" said Stanhope.

"Troth! and it's throe, now, so it is!"

"How do you know?"

"Agh! and wasn't it mesilf as arristed the likes of her, I'm axing? and didn't I tak her down below, now?"

"Is she alive, and in prison?" cried Stanhope, breathless with excitement.

"Sure, and she is that same."

"Thank God! ejaculated the other, fervently: "at last the poor child is found."

"Then I suppose you received the necklace from the child in question?" said the Alderman, addressing the Constable.

Pat, seeing himself caught on his own confession, turned all sorts of colors—or rather, all shades of one color—and after looking as much meaner than Pat Cafferty in general, as Pat Cafferty in general looked meaner than an honest man, he stammered:

"Sure, your Honor—she—she gave it to—to mesilf—to lit let her go, jist."

"Which you were too conscientious to do?"

"Yis, your Honor—that's it, your Honor."

"But you were not too conscientious to receive the property, believing it to be stolen, and dispose of it for your own benefit!" pursued the Magistrate, sternly. "Patrick Cafferty, this is a shameful business, and you are a disgrace to your office! I shall hold you in two thousand dollars bail, to answer at court."

"Is it possible, your Honor, for me to get this child out of prison at once?" inquired the young physician, anxiously.

"What was the charge against her, Patrick?" demanded the Alderman of the Constable.

"She was put down for a vagrant, jist, I'm t'inking," answered Pat, dolefully.

"It will be an easy matter, then, to get her released," said the magistrate to Stanhope; and he was about to give him instructions how to proceed, when Mr. Shelden entered the office.

"Ah! Mr. Shelden," cried the Doctor, joyfully—"you are the very man I want to see."

"Allow me to return the compliment," said Shelden, with a quiet smile.

"At last I have news of Ellen Norbury."

"Indeed!"

"She is in the Moyamensing Prison."

"I know it."

"You have heard, then?"

"I saw her yesterday."

"You did not tell me!"

"I have not seen you since, and I intended an agreeable surprise for you."

"How shall we get her out?"

"I have her discharge in my hand."

"Explain!"

In visiting the prison yesterday, I came across a sweet little creature; and you may judge of my surprise, on learning that she was the very one for whom we have been so anxiously searching! This morning, I waited upon the villainous Alderman—who committed her for no other crime than poverty—and by paying him his extortions, have obtained her discharge. I am now on my way to set her free."

"Quick, then—let us go—I have a carriage at the door."

"In a moment."

Mr. Shelden now addressed a few words to the Alderman; who answered, "Certainly, certainly, sir!" and immediately placed his signature to a paper which the other handed him.

"Now then, Dr. Stanhope, I am at your service," said Shelden; and both hurried from the office.

The Jew was required to find five hundred dollars bail, to appear against Cafferty; which he very readily procured, and went about his business. But the miserable Con-

stable was not so fortunate. He wrote to his best friend, Alderman McGrabby, telling him how he was situated, and imploring him to come to his release. The Alderman came, but not to his release; for on learning the whole particulars, he not only refused to enter the required security, but gave vent to his outraged feelings in a long strain of the most virtuous indignation—enough, in fact, to have lasted any ordinarily moral individual a life-time.

The truth was, Pat Cafferty, in the opinion of Felix McGrabby, had been guilty of a most enormous crime—not in stealing the necklace from little Ellen—for that, in his view, was all right and proper for a Constable to do—but in stealing, and keeping, and selling it, without making a fair division of the spoil. For this crime of ingratitude, Pat soon found himself snugly confined in a snug little cell of the County Prison; where, for several days, he was left to ruminate upon his chances of ultimately becoming one of the chief functionaries of the District of Moyamensing.\*

But unfortunately for the public good, the vile Constable was bailed out all too soon, by McGrabby himself—who, being guilty of some nefarious transactions, thought it the better policy to be friends with one who might possibly take it into his head to turn state's evidence. We may add in this connection, that, what between scoundrels in office and out, colinked in the common cause of party, Patrick Cafferty was never brought to trial for the larceny of the necklace; but being one night detected in a daring burglary, of his own planning, he was arrested, committed, tried, and

\* At the date of our story, the County of Philadelphia was divided into numerous districts and towns, each having its own municipal regulations, while the city proper itself occupied a very limited space. The uniting of all these now constitutes what is termed the Consolidated City—which is probably, in its area of ground, the largest city in the world.



convicted, and is now, we are happy to state, serving out his time in the Eastern Penitentiary, where there is still room for a few more of the same stamp. He narrowly escaped being pardoned by a notorious Governor, whose term of office fortunately expired the day before his conviction. Felix McGrabby still lives, outside the walls of a prison; but eagle eyes are upon him, and the voice of an outraged public has startled him into a show of propriety. Let him beware! for another misstep may plunge him down a dark abyss.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

### THE CURTAIN FALLS.

SWIFTLY round turned the wheels of the carriage, that bore the benevolent Marcus Shelden, and the eager Newton Stanhope, to the rescue of the bitterly wronged and innocent little orphan.

"There is one thing that grieves me," said the Doctor to his companion, as they rode along. "If this child is innocent, how came she to be arrested, with the stolen necklace in her possession?"

Shelden smiled, as he replied:

"If you knew, my friend, how many drones of officers are prowling about, seeking for victims to fleece, you would hardly be surprised, to find as many innocent as guilty persons in their clutches. But rest easy concerning your little friend! I have heard her story; and it is enough for me to say, I would stake my life on her truth, purity, and innocence."

Arrived at the prison, the great gates were thrown open, and the carriage slowly entered within the high, massive walls.

"Here are discharges for Ellen Norbury, Nabob Hunchy, and two others," said Mr. Shelden to one of the prison officers, as he descended from the carriage, and handed several papers to a gentleman standing near. "This way, Doctor," he continued: "I know you are anxious to behold the little prisoner."

They hurried from the building they were in, across an open garden of beautiful flowers, and entering the female department, soon stood beside the little orphan. She was seated outside her cell, on one of the long corridors, with some needle-work in her hand, upon which, at her own request, she was employing her time, for the benefit of the kind Matron who had charge of her. So busily was she engaged, and so abstracted in thought, that Shelden, Stanhope, and the Matron drew close to her side, before she perceived them. She looked up with a start; and the moment her eyes rested upon the pleasant features of Shelden, she dropped her work, and sprung to her feet, with an exclamation of joy. She looked pale and careworn; but her face and hands were clean, her hair neatly arranged, and her dress was tidy.

"Ellen," said Mr. Shelden, in a kind, gentle tone, taking her hand in his, "I have succeeded in doing what I said I would. You are now free; and this gentleman has come to take you to your friends, who are very anxious to see you."

"Oh! sir," faltered the little orphan, trembling all over with newly awakened hope and joy—"am I to go and see dear Rosalind?"

"Yes, my dear child!" replied Stanhope, quickly; "and

you will find her eager to clasp you in her arms, and to her heart."

Overcome with joy, little Ellen sunk down on her seat, and burst into tears; and it was several minutes before she could recover sufficient composure to prepare for her departure.

"Good bye, and God bless you!" said the Matron, with tears in her eyes, as she bestowed an affectionate parting kiss. "If you win all hearts, as you have won mine, a happy future awaits you."

"Heaven bless you!" said Stanhope to Shelden, as they separated at the carriage.

"I feel it does, sir, in every good act I perform!" was the characteristic reply of one who still lives and still labors for the good of his fellow-beings.

Ellen leaned back in the carriage, as it whirled through the streets, and rolled over the pavements, bearing her from a prison to a palace—from the dark abodes of crime and misery, to the bright abodes of innocence and happiness. She sat as one in a trance—speechless, motionless, and pale as a lily. Was she in a dream? Would she awake to new sufferings—new horrors?

We pray, nevermore!

The carriage stopped in the court of Sir Walter's mansion. The door opened, and the beautiful face of Rosalind, like the beautiful face of some angel in a vision, appeared to the view of the sweet little orphan. There was a cry of joy—perhaps more than one—and little Ellen was in the arms of Rosalind—sweet Rosalind—Cousin Rosalind—and she was sobbing on her breast—and their tears were mingling.

And the dream went on.

Hours passed—hours which seemed but minutes—and somehow the once poor, friendless, and persecuted little orphan, found herself seated upon Sir Walter's knee,

and relating her own sad tale; and the Knight was weeping; and Rosalind was weeping; and there were others around weeping; and little Ellen was weeping—though she scarcely knew why, for she felt very, very happy. And all the tears were tears which brought more joy than sorrow to the sympathizing hearts who wept; and there was sunlight in the room.

And still the dream went on.

Days passed—days which seemed but different scenes in the same bright, beautiful dream—days which seemed but links in the same bright chain of happiness; and soft southern breezes kissed the brows of some who had known sorrows; and the bright sun shed beams of joy; and the bright leaves waved; and the bright flowers bloomed; and the sweet birds sung.

And still the dream went on.

Weeks passed—weeks which seemed but days.

And still the dream went on.

Months passed—but months brought a change. The breezes blew cold from the north; and the sun hid his face behind clouds; and the leaves withered; and the flowers died; and the birds departed; and Sir Walter Clendennan "slept with his fathers." Rosalind was now an orphan; but not a lonely orphan—not a friendless orphan. The death-bed of a father was the bridal altar of a daughter; and the Knight died happy, blessing his children.

And still the dream went on.

Months passed—and months brought still another change. There was a voyage across mighty waters; and a view of great cities; and strange sights and strange faces—strange manners and strange customs—strange countries and strange languages—gorgeous scenes and gloomy—and a gladsome return.

And still the dream went on.

Months passed—and months brought still another change. And now the poor, despised little orphan was the acknowledged heiress of a princely fortune; and proud mothers bent to kiss her; and proud daughters sought her company; and the fastidious praised her beauty; and the good loved her; and the poor of two countries remembered her in their prayers; for now she held a golden talisman, and could find her way to all hearts.

And still the dream went on—bright and beautiful in the main—darkening a little at times—but with brilliant lights rising over shadows.

Years passed—and years bring us to the present. Ellen Norbury still lives, in the bloom of girlhood—a bright, lovely, angelic being. Her *home* is still with her beloved Cousin Rosalind; and Dr. Stanhope, now eminent in his profession, calls her sister; and little Ellen Stanhope—a bright little girl, with blue eyes and sunny curls—always smiles at her coming, and looks sad at her going forth. Neither time, nor fortune, nor circumstances, have made any change in her gentle disposition; and night and morning sweet orisons arise, from her grateful and happy heart, to the Throne of Grace. Sunlight falls around her steps—God keep her from shadows!

And so the dream goes on.

And now, what shall we say of those who have played dark parts in our drama of life? It was but the other day, in company with Mr. Sheldon and a distinguished friend from a distant city, we paid a visit to the Infected District, and saw the vile groggery of Jimmy Quiglan closed. We traced the Dwarf to an awful den, and entered, and found the monster still living. If the inner man is no better than the outer man appears, then Heaven have mercy on his soul! He was surrounded by the most

cut-throat-looking gang we ever beheld; and we left with a shudder, and breathed freer when we reached the open air. We entered a Mission-House—a rough, dark, and gloomy place, with low ceiling and many benches—and learned that the Gospel was here preached to the poor, without distinction of dress or color, age or sex; and we thanked God, that we had found Christian hearts laboring in so dark a field, and obeying the commands of their Great Master. We learned, on inquiry, that the Hunchback had recently left the city, on a vessel bound for a southern clime. What the fate of the poor boy will be, Heaven only knows. Of Mulwrack, we know nothing beyond what we have stated. John M'Callan is in prison, accused of a dark crime; and his mother sits in sorrow, and most bitterly deplures her too free indulgence to his youthful passions. The old hag, Mother Grimsby, is dead; and her vile den is now occupied by three poor families, who try to earn an honest living. And last, though not least, Deacon Pinchbeck is now struggling with poverty—a poor, forlorn, miserable old wretch—wifeless and childless—accursed of Heaven—despised of man.

Surely, the way of the transgressor is hard!

And now, kind reader, adieu. Our picture has been one of light and shade; but the light falls brightly on those who have done well—on those who are worthy of love—and there may it linger forever!

THE END.

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