

THE
UNKNOWN COUNTESS.

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PUBLISHED
BY LORENZO STRATTON,
NO. 131 MAIN STREET, CINCINNATI.
1851.

THE UNKNOWN COUNTESS;

OR

CRIME AND ITS RESULTS.

CHAPTER I.

Dark was the night, and wild the storm,
And loud the torrent's roar.—PERCY.

It was a dark, dreary night on the 18th of November, 18—, as the clock of old St. Paul's chimed forth the hour of eleven; the wind moaned piteously among the roofs and chimneys of the houses, or swept past the dimly-lighted and almost deserted streets of New York, with a howl that made those within, feel thankful they were safely housed, and those without, to draw their cloaks more closely, and press eagerly forward in the hope of soon obtaining a shelter. Signs creaked, shutters groaned as they swung to and fro, doors and windows rattled, while the rain beat against them with all the fury of a cold Autumnal storm.

The guardians of the city had already forgotten their nocturnal rounds, in the (to them) more important matters of self, and were snugly ensconced in their old favorite corners, perhaps dreaming of

the duties they should have been performing.

Before a bright, blazing fire, which seemed even more so, contrasted with the cold, dismal aspect without, in a finely-furnished apartment of a large building standing near what is now called "City Hall Place," sat a dark-complexioned man, of the middling size, apparently about thirty years of age. At the moment he is introduced to reader, his chair was leaning back, supported in its position by his feet, which were placed against the fender—his head bent forward, resting on his left hand, in a manner so as to shade his face, seemingly in a deep study.

As the clock of St. Paul's tolled the hour of eleven, he started from his recumbent position, revealing, as he did so, a countenance little calculated to prepossess a stranger in his favor, had there been one present. His face was somewhat of an oval shape—his features regular, well formed, and withal rather handsome, but for a dark sinister expres-

sion which they conveyed, and a slight sneering smile hovering around his upper lip, engrossing the little beauty there in the more powerful trait of character developed. His forehead was about the medium height, a little sloping toward the back of the head, surrounded by dark brown hair, parted carelessly from the left, and falling off each way in negligent profusion. His eyes were black and piercing, shaded by dark, heavy brows, at this moment contracted into a sullen frown, resulting, evidently, from some dark thoughts then passing through his mind. His mouth was rather diminutive in size; his lips thin and compressed, and, when taken all in all, the whole expression conveyed was such as is seen only in the most accomplished villains.

His cloak, which was thrown across a chair, from which the water was dripping—his boots, drawn and laid before the fire, together with the steam arising from various parts of his dress, were indications of his having been out in the late storm.

In a chair to the right, within reaching distance, was a small box, the lid of which was thrown back, displaying a motley assortment of vials, papers, &c., bearing Latin inscriptions, interspersed with pill-boxes, denoting his profession, which was that of an M. D.

After raising his head, he sat for a moment with his eyes fixed on the fire, then muttering, "It must be done," he leaned forward, dropped his feet from the fender, and struck his knee with his clenched fist, as

if by way of giving force to his assertion. Then pausing for a moment, he resumed—"And yet I do not exactly like the business. I would there were some other way. Pshaw! What is it? Only one spasm, and all is over; and what physician does not kill more or less every year?" And as this seemed to be a satisfactory argument, which he had carried on with himself—for there was no other person present—he reached forth his hand and drew the before-mentioned box to him. Here fumbling for a moment, he drew forth a small paper, containing some poisonous drug, and closing the box, returned it to its former place. "This," continued he, holding it toward the light, while a dark smile flitted over his countenance, "*this* will accomplish my purpose. Now, let me see, how shall I manage it?" and rising from his chair, he commenced pacing the room. "Ah! I have it!" exclaimed he, after a pause of some minutes, during which he had walked hurriedly to and fro; "I have it!" and returning to the fire, he was about resuming his seat, when a ring from the bell connected with the street made him alter his determination, and proceeding at once to the door, he opened it, giving admittance to a figure closely muffled in a hood and cloak, which strode directly past him and approached the fire, throwing off, as it did so, the above-mentioned garments, and revealed the thin, pale features of a woman of twenty-five.

"Ha! Mary!" exclaimed the

doctor, with a start, closing the door and walking directly in front of her; "what brings you here in a night like this?"

"I come from my mistress," was the reply.

"And what of your mistress?" asked he quickly.

"She is dying, and has sent for you."

"Dying!" muttered he: "Thank Heaven, I have saved my dose!" Then turning to Mary, "Art sure she's dying, girl?" and he grasped her arm and looked steadily in her face.

"As sure as I am"—you're a villain, she was about to reply, but thinking it not exactly prudent, she checked the expression, and merely said, "as sure as I am here."

"Well, then," returned the doctor, "if she is dying, of course my skill cannot save her, and as it is a little windy out, why, you may return, and tell her I am *very* much obliged for her invitation, but think for the present I will remain within." As he said this, a slight sneer for a moment curled his lip, and resuming his seat by the fire, he requested her not to disturb his evening meditation.

"And do you refuse to go?" said Mary, indignantly.

"Most assuredly I do, my pretty one," replied he, coolly.

"Villain! coward!" exclaimed the other, with a vehemence that made him start, "Is this your treatment of one whom you have ruined; and does your cowardly soul shrink from meeting the victim of your

damnable treachery? For shame! for shame!"

"Softly, girl—softly, remember where you are," put in the doctor.

"Oh, that I were a man," continued she, without heeding the interruption, "if it were only to chastise such inhuman monsters as *you*!"

"Cease!" ejaculated the doctor, in a tone of suppressed rage, springing from his seat, his face livid with passion, his eyes flashing with a demoniacal fury that made the other involuntarily start. "Cease, and do not rouse the tiger in his den, or," he added, in another tone, while his features resumed their habitual calm, sneering smile, "I might have occasion to dispense with your agreeable company rather prematurely."

"Fool!" exclaimed the woman, passionately; "I see 'tis useless to bandy words with you."

"Spoken like yourself," returned he, ironically; "and as you are quite an adept in eventually arriving at the truth, have the goodness to return and present your mistress with my compliments. Tell her I should be extremely happy to call and see her, but the weather is so rough without that I must omit it, at least for the present."

"And can you, who call yourself a human being—can you be so lost to all moral feelings as to send such a message to a dying woman, and one whom *you*—ha! you need not look so fierce—I repeat it, *you* have ruined, degraded, and brought to a premature death!"

"Leave the room, girl," said he, stamping his foot in rage. "How dare you speak to me in this manner?"

"*Dare?*" repeated she scornfully. "Who speaks of *dare*? Think you to frighten me? No! were you a hundred times the fiend you are, I would tell you so!"

"Leave the room!" again repeated he, in a voice of thunder, his passion getting complete mastery of him.

"I shall go when I please," said she, haughtily, drawing herself up to her full height.

"I will stand this insolence no longer. Go peaceably, if you will—if not, by force you shall!"

"Until I have had my say, I move not an inch, though you were ten times what you seem."

"Ha! say you so!" exclaimed he, springing toward her like a tiger bounding upon his prey.

"Hold!" cried she fiercely, in a tone that made him pause; "for if you do but lay hands on me, by the heavens above us, I swear to plunge this to your heart's core!" And drawing a dagger from the folds of her dress as she spoke, she brandished it before his eyes. The doctor, evidently not prepared for this, started back in amazement. "Ha, coward! you thought I was unarmed, did you? You should have known me better than to think I would venture into the presence of such a scoundrel without some

means of securing me from violence, if not insult. People generally go armed when they visit the *tiger's den*—do they not?" This last was said tauntingly, but ere he had time to reply, she resumed in a more serious tone—"You have refused the request of a dying woman—one, too, whom you have basely and treacherously dishonored. Now mark me"—and she raised her finger, speaking in a low, distinct voice: "I know her well, and if you would not have all the curses of hell invoked upon your guilty head, you must see her within half an hour. Ha! you start—turn pale—you tremble! *Remember*, I have said!" and resuming her cloak and hood, she abruptly left the room.

The doctor, for a moment, seemed stupified with horror, so much had her last words and manner affected him; for, like most all great villains, he was a coward at heart, and Mary adopted the only course that would have gained her purpose. Recovering himself, he muttered, "I must go." Drawing on his boots rather hastily, and wrapping his cloak, which was still wet, about him, he rang a small bell, and as the servant entered, bade him await his return, saying he had a call which he must attend, and proceeding to the door, he was soon lost in the darkness of the night, buffeting with the storm.

CHAPTER II.

There jealous Fury drowns in blood the fire
That sparkled in the eye of young Desire;
And lifeless Love lets merciless Despair
From his crush'd frame his bleeding pinions
tear. HAYLEY.

THAT part of New York lying between two of its greatest thoroughfares, viz: Bowery and Broadway, in and about the vicinity known as the "Five Points," presents at the present day a scene of the utmost degradation and misery. Those who have never visited this part of the city can have but a faint conception of the wretchedness which there exists. The houses (if such they can be called) are for the most part of low, wooden structure, and, to judge by their appearance, have stood for more than a century. They are fast sinking to decay, and already, in many places, the timbers have rotted away, the buildings have settled, thereby leaning the upper parts in a manner so as to appear in the act of falling.

The windows present a motley assortment of boards, tin, glass, and old cast-off garments. The doors, as they swing on their rusty hinges, send forth harsh, discordant sounds, altogether in keeping with the wretchedness of the place.

They are the abodes of human beings sunk in the lowest grades (for there are grades even in this) of filth and debauchery, lost to all moral or virtuous feelings, eking out a miserable existence, their voices cracked and harsh, loaded with obscene jests, oaths, and blasphemies

of the most infamous character. Many of them, in the winter season, are without food or fire, with barely garments sufficient to cover their nakedness, and not unfrequently do they die of starvation.

Yes, reader, 'tis no idle assertion: in that great emporium, known as New York, queen of this western world, while the glittering carriage of some wealthy aristocrat is rolling over the pavements of Broadway, the sounds of its wheels are, perhaps, grating harshly on the ears of some poor human being who is dying for the want of food. However startling these things may seem to one unacquainted with such scenes, they are, we regret to say it, too true.

If there was not so much of misery and destitution at the time of which we write, it was owing, undoubtedly, to the population being far less, and of course these dens of infamy were not as densely crowded as at the present day. Still then, as well as now, they were the haunts of dissipation, where crime threw off the mask, and stalked boldly abroad, the hideous, but acknowledged, monarch of these fallen beings.

From time immemorial such things have existed, and down to the end of time they will undoubtedly continue, (unless mankind should become regenerated either by the Millenium, Fourierism, Millerism, or some other ism,) wherever there is a population like New York; and as there has as yet been found no remedy, they have become to be

considered as among the necessary evils contingent upon the human race. As such we must beg leave to consider them, and pass on without further comment.

In a narrow, filthy alley, winding in a serpentine manner among several blocks of low, dingy buildings, not far distant from the "Five Points," stood, at the time of which we write, a two-story wooden building, of somewhat better appearance than its neighbors, but evidently the abode of poverty. At the same hour which opens our tale in the preceding chapter, from a small patched window in the second story of this building, might be seen a faint light, indicating its being inhabited.

To this, then, we must transport the reader, without any of those flourishes attendant upon a performer of magic, but in a car of an instant's creation, riding the air with the speed of thought, and known by the name of *Fancy*. Passing at once up a flight of narrow, creaking stairs, and turning to the left, we open a crazy door, through the crevices of which a faint light is struggling, as if with an effort to overcome the darkness, and enter the room already mentioned.

Lying on a miserable pallet, in one corner of this apartment, and literally covered with rags—her head resting on her left hand, with her elbow inclined downward, in a manner so as to support it with as much ease as possible—was a woman, in what might be termed the prime of life. From the outlines of

her features, she might once have been handsome; but whatever she might have been, no beauty was there now. Her cheeks were thin, pale, and sunken; her eyes wild, even to madness, and glared about with a maniacal fury that told the wreck of all earthly hopes; her hair, loose and dishevelled, clustered about her face and neck; and at this moment her features were distorted, as if with pain, while the death-rattle in her throat announced the misery of life to be near its final close. The tempest without raged with a tremendous fury, making the house rock on its foundations; while the wind rushed through here and there a crevice, with a low, moaning sound, well suited to the gloom within.

Standing near the bed, with her face turned toward the sufferer, was a female, enveloped in a long dark mantle and hood, from the former of which the water was dripping, and forming little puddles on the floor, denoting her late arrival from without. A few paces distant from where she stood was a small trundle bed, on which lay a child—happily too young to be conscious of its misery—locked in the sweet embraces of sleep. A few indispensable articles, one or two broken chairs, a rough table, on which burnt a small tallow candle, completed the furniture of the apartment.

"And what said he, Mary?" inquired the invalid to some previous conversation which had passed between her and the other.

"He refused," was the reply.

"Refused?" repeated the woman, raising herself still more in the bed, her eyes glaring fiercely. "Refused, said you?"

"Even so."

"And—and did you tell him all?" said she, breathlessly.

"I did."

"And what said he then?"

"I waited not for his reply, but left him pale and trembling."

"Then he will come," returned the invalid; "nothing like working upon his fears;" and as she spoke with evident exertion, she sank back upon the bed completely exhausted.

For a few minutes neither spoke; the sufferer was the first to break the silence. "Hark!" exclaimed she, springing up suddenly, "I hear his step already on the stairs!" and the next moment the door opened and a middle-sized man, wrapped in a cloak, strode into the room and approached the bed.

"Well, Edward Barton, you have come at last," said the dying woman, glancing upon him with her fire-like eyes.

"Yes, I have come," returned the doctor—for the reader will at once recognize that it was he—"and I would fain know *why* I have come. Why have I been sent for in a night like this?"

"The first, because you feared to stay away; the last, to see me die!" replied the other, in a deep, hollow voice.

"And could not you *die* as well without my being present?"

"No! I would have you wit-

ness the misery which you have created?"

"If that is *all*, I may as well return," said the doctor, sneeringly.

"'Tis *not* all," returned she, with emphasis, raising herself in bed and pointing to where the child lay sleeping. "Look there!"

"And what of that?" inquired he unable to comprehend her meaning.

"There sleeps my child—my sweet, innocent child. I would fain have it provided for when I am gone, and you, Edward, must be its guardian."

"Me!" exclaimed he, in amazement. "Me be its guardian?"

"Ay! Edward Barton *must*, and swear to protect it!"

"And what if I refuse?"

"You dare not."

"Say you so? Then know I *do* refuse."

"Refuse!" screamed she, her eyes glaring still more wildly, and raising her right hand, "Refuse! Then may all the direst curses of—"

"Hold!" cried he. "Do not curse me! Sooner than that, I will take the oath."

"Then swear," said she, "in the sight of Heaven, as God shall be your judge, and as you hope for salvation, to honor, cherish and protect that child, called Marianne La Roix."

"I swear."

"And," continued she, in a kind of prophetic voice, "as you fulfill your sacred vow, so may your past crimes be forgiven. But if you disregard it, may your life be a life of penury and woe, loathed by your own kind, an outcast upon the world

abhorred by yourself, and your death a death of infamy and disgrace. So invoke I the powers of darkness to see it fulfilled." As she ceased she sank back completely exhausted: while the storm-rocked house seemed to groan to its very center, as if in witness of this solemn invocation. For a few minutes no one spoke, and the moaning wind and the rushing storm were the only sounds that broke the stillness of the chamber of death.

During this time the invalid seemed to recover her strength, and with much effort she again raised herself in bed; but the unwonted fire of her eyes was gone, and in its place was the fixed, dull, glassy look of death. "Water—water," she murmured, in a faint and almost inaudible voice, while she reached forth her hand and seemed beckoning to some one at a distance. Water was quickly given her by Mary, who, since the entrance of the doctor, had remained a silent spectator of the whole proceedings. This revived her, and she said, in a low, but distinct voice, "Where is my child?"

"Here," replied Mary, walking at once to where the child lay sleeping, throwing off her cloak as she did so, and, raising it in her arms, she brought it to the side of its mother. It was a sweet little thing, of three years, and, opening and rubbing its eyes, looked first at Mary and then at the sufferer, and murmured, "Mother."

"Give it me—give it me!" cried the dying woman, almost frantic,

and supporting her while she did so, Mary placed the child in her arms. Covering it with kisses, in which the icy chill of death already mingled, she pressed it to her bosom again and again, with all the fond and passionate devotion of a mother.

"Alas, Marianne! I must leave you," said she, struggling to be calm.

"Leave me?" repeated the child, in a soft, sweet voice, not comprehending its mother's meaning.

"Yes, Marianne, I am dying."

"Dying?" again repeated the child.

"Yes, my dear—you will never see me again."

"Mother!" exclaimed Marianne, passionately, the tears starting in her little eyes, at the same time nestling to her bosom, where she clung as if in fear of being torn away.

"Oh, God! oh, God!" cried the dying woman, wringing her hands in agony; "I could have borne anything but this!" while the tears streamed down Mary's face, and even the doctor, who stood as if rooted to the spot, seemed also somewhat affected. In a moment she regained her former calmness, and in a low, tremulous voice, said,

"Edward, to you I now resign the last tie of affection that could bind me to this world. Remember your oath."

At the altered voice of her mother the girl again looked up, and in the same sweet voice, said—

"You will not leave me, mother?"

"I must, my child."

"But you will come back again?"

"No, I can never come back,"

said she, her voice choked with emotion.

"Then what will become of little Marianne?" said the child—an appellation often used by her mother.

"That gentleman," pointing to the doctor, "will take care of you; you must be his child."

Marianne turned, and fastening her eyes upon the doctor, drew back with an instinctive shudder. Nestling still closer to her mother, she exclaimed—

"No, no, no! I can never be his child. I will go with you!"

"I would to God you could," murmured she, faintly gasping for breath.

Mary, who now saw she was in the last struggles of death, eased her down and took Marianne from her arms—not, however, without considerable reluctance on the part of the child.

"Mary," said the feeble voice of the dying woman, after the lapse of perhaps a minute, "come here."

"I am here—what is your wish?"

"Come nearer—I cannot see you."

Mary now came close to the bed, and took the invalid's hand in her own. It was already cold.

"Stoop down," said she; and as Mary bent over her, she continued—"If that man should forget his oath, you will sometimes look after my child, will you not?"

"I will," replied the other, squeezing her hand.

"God bless you," she sighed, faintly struggling for breath; then partly raising herself in bed, she gasped, "Ma-ri-anna"—the name died on her lips.

"Mother," said the child.

Alas! poor thing! Its mother could never answer it again. She sank back, dead! The storm howled on—she heeded it not—she was dead! The struggles and trials of life (and poor woman, they had been many with her) were now over. She had fallen a prey to misfortune—she had tasted of the bitter cup—ay, and drained it to its very dregs. But her account, whether for good or bad, was now closed—sealed till the great day of judgment. * * *

When the doctor returned that night, the servant was much surprised on perceiving with him a small child. Curiosity was much excited within him to know whence it came, and for what purpose it was there; but knowing his master was not one of the most amiable persons in the world, he deemed it the most prudent course to be silent and have patience, and therefore received his orders passively, which were to have the child well taken care of, call it Marianne, and ask no questions.

CHAPTER III.

And well the imposter knew all lures and arts
That Lucifer e'er taught to tangle hearts.
MOORE.

It now becomes our duty, for the further development of our tale, to go back somewhat in the history of the individual who closed her unfortunate career in the preceding chapter, not only to gratify the curiosity of the reader, but also to clear up some points which otherwise must ever remain clouded in mystery.

Born of respectable parents, in one of the Eastern States, she had been well educated, and was married at the somewhat early age of eighteen. Her husband dying within the year, left her a widow at nineteen. Two years from this, she wedded Eugene La Roix, a Frenchman, who, at the time, was traveling on a pleasure excursion through the country. Falling in with her in one of his travels, he sought and obtained her hand within three months from their first interview. He was by birth a nobleman, but owing to some new party coming into power, he was obliged to leave his country, and, managing to take a considerable amount of money with him, he had thus far spent his time in traveling; but quitting this on his marriage, he with his wife removed to New York, where they were enabled to live in a state of easy independence.

They had been married about three years, and had one child, a daughter, on whom they doted with all the fond affection of two loving parents, when some sickness in the family requiring the aid of a physician, the nearest one was sent for, which unfortunately for them, chanced to be Doctor Barton.

Not even the serpent who tempted our first mother to partake of the forbidden fruit, possessed more cunning and guile than this same individual. Without any principle himself, he deemed all of the same stamp, and no sooner had he planned some hellish scheme, than he set his wits to work, sparing neither time

nor money,—not caring by what means it was accomplished, so that his end was finally gained. By cunning and intrigue, he had amassed considerable property, and had married a woman about five years previous, merely because she was rich, neither caring for the other farther than their mutual interests were concerned.

Among his associates—and they were few, of a similar character—he was known as an accomplished rake. Rather handsome in appearance than otherwise; and, possessed of great affability of manner—of a lively, witty turn, when such was requisite to further his designs—he rarely, if ever, failed of his intended victim.

On the other hand, no sooner was his purpose gained, than he threw off the mask and stood revealed the damnable hypocrite he was. His taciturn disposition, his sullen and morose temper, soon left his victims open to his true character; but alas! only in time to know they were irrevocably lost.

Such is but an imperfect sketch of the individual with whom we open our tale, and who, by his profession, was introduced into the family of La Roix some time previous.

Had Madame La Roix been like the generality of her sex, it is more than probable she would have lived and died the happy and acknowledged wife of her husband. But there was a something about her, although it might not be termed beauty, which was very fascinating;

and the doctor, at once struck with her appearance, resolved from the first to work her ruin. Being successful in the case which had required his aid, and, as we before remarked, possessing that faculty which could win the favor of all whom he sought, it is scarcely to be wondered at that an intimacy should spring up between him and Madame La Roix, which, of course, he embraced every means to cultivate; and so well did he finally succeed, that they considered him as an intimate friend, and he passed in and out as one of the family. Both Monsieur and Madame La Roix were people of high spirits, and withal possessed of a touch of jealousy. This the doctor perceived, and determined to use these as weapons to complete his villainous scheme. As yet not a word of discord had ever passed between them, and, delighted with each other's society, they lived together (as the phrase goes) as happy as heart could wish.

It had now been six months since the introduction of the doctor in the way already related, and everything went on smoothly. About this time La Roix had some business which required his attendance at Albany, and learning this some days prior to his departure, and learning also that he expected to receive some letters there through the post-office, Barton determined to improve this opportunity to achieve his long-meditated design, and accordingly devised a scheme which gained his end, and at the same time ruined the peace of a happy family.

As it was La Roix's intention of being absent some considerable length of time, Barton addressed a letter to him, dated the second day from his leaving New York, wherein it stated, if he would save his wife from disgrace, he must immediately return, as the writer had overheard of her intended elopement with Doctor Barton, (who, by the way, it stated was a most consummate villain;) that they were already collecting the plate and preparing to leave; and, finally, concluded by saying, unless he returned without the least possible delay, he would find his house deserted. This epistle appeared to be written in a female hand, and was signed "A Friend."

La Roix received and read this in astonishment. At first he seemed disposed to doubt it; but calling to mind the close intimacy of his wife and the doctor, it flashed upon him like a truth, the more so as he believed it came from Mary, the servant, and with indescribable feelings of love, hatred, and jealousy, he set out upon his return. In the meanwhile, Barton, rightly judging the effect such information would produce on one of La Roix's jealous disposition, prepared a similar dose for his wife. By sending his servant to Albany, a letter was placed in the post-office there, (dated there of course,) and directed to Madame La Roix, which she in due time received. It read as follows:

"DEAR MADAME.—I am extremely loth to be the writer of unwelcome

intelligence, (which to a woman of your proud bearing and high standing in society I know must be) but, sooth to say, your husband is playing you a villainous trick, having already agreed to elope with a woman, who is no better than she should be; and is even now on his return to collect his most valuable articles, under pretence that he is jealous of you. I would advise you to collect and secrete your plate, jewelry, &c., ere his return. You may rely upon this intelligence as the truth, which his sudden return will prove—and nothing save my abhorrence for such proceedings, my strict adherence to justice, and your personal welfare, could have induced me to indite this epistle. My name, or how I obtained this information, must ever remain a secret. Sufficient for you that I remain your

FRIEND.

"P. S.—I understand this woman is from New York—that she and your husband have held secret correspondence of late—and that her maiden name is Caroline."

The doctor was present when Madame received this letter, and at the time was carelessly conversing upon some light topic, merely remarking as it was handed her, "From your husband, I suppose?"

"Yes," replied she, her eyes lighting up with joy, and eagerly breaking the seal; but as she glanced at the contents her countenance changed, and Barton read in the proud, haughty flash of her eyes the success of his plot.

"Ah!" said he, inquiringly, appearing to misunderstand the meaning of her looks—"Bad news?"

"Yes!" returned she, abruptly.

"Your husband—nothing has befallen him, I hope!"

"No—yes—that is—read that letter," stammered she, handing it to him—"read that, and judge."

The doctor took the letter, and pretending to read it, suddenly sprang up from his seat, and striking his clenched fist on the table near which he was sitting, indignantly exclaimed, "Villain! How could he dare thus treacherously to treat a loving and affectionate wife!" Then seeming to think for a moment, he resumed—"Yes, and now I recollect I have another proof of his villainy—read this;" and taking a crumpled letter from his pocket, bearing date about a week previous, he handed it to Madame La Roix, who, perceiving it was addressed to her husband, hurriedly opened it, and read thus:

"MY DEAR EUGENE.—I think in a week from this I shall be prepared to leave, and will meet you in Albany, where you can pretend you have gone upon important business. Be as loving as ever to your wife, so as to avoid all suspicion. Should anything happen to delay my departure, I will give you due notice of the same. Adieu until we meet."

"CAROLINE."

"That," said the doctor, in continuation,—as having read it she murmured "Scoundrel,"—"That I

picked up on the morning of his departure, near the door of his library, and placed it in my pocket, with the intention of showing it to you, thinking it must have been intended as a joke, where, sooth to say, it has remained forgotten until this moment."

It is needless to add that this was likewise a forgery; but coming so suddenly upon Madame La Roix, and the singular coincidence of the two letters, she would as soon have doubted the verity of holy writ as one line which they contained; for not the least shade of suspicion crossed her mind regarding the doctor, he being, as before remarked, considered only as an intimate friend, and having as yet, never in any way, by word or actions, said or done aught in the least repugnant to the most delicate feelings of a loyal wife. It is not surprising then, that, placed in such a dilemma, and scarcely knowing what would be proper for one so circumstanced, she should naturally turn to the doctor for advice, which she did.

This was the consummation of his long secret hopes, and when he heard the question, "Doctor, how would you advise me to act?" he felt his intended victim was already caught in the net which must prove her ruin; and it was, therefore, with an almost irrepressible gleam of triumph sparkling in his eyes that he answered:

"Leave him at once; collect your most valuable articles and leave here; in doing thus you will wound him with his own weapons."

2

"But what if there should be some mistake?" said she, doubtfully.

"There can be no mistake," said the doctor, "where two such letters go to prove the same thing; and even if there were, no harm could accrue to being in readiness for such an emergency; and if, as you hope, they should prove false, you will only have had some little unnecessary trouble; whereas, on the other hand, should it prove as you fear, and your husband return in the manner stated in the letter, and for the purpose therein represented, you will at least have a noble revenge by counteracting his villainous design."

"True," said she, thoughtfully; "but my child—what of her?"

The doctor mused a moment, and then replied, "Why take her with you, of course."

"Take her with me?" repeated the woman, sorrowfully. "Where shall I go. Pride forbids me to seek my friends, who are, in fact, but friends of money. To whom can I look for protection?"

"Madame," returned the doctor, soothingly, "I will provide for you—ay, and if needs be, protect you with my life. I have long admired—yes, loved; nay, start not, turn not away; I repeat it, I have fondly, devotedly and passionately loved you, and, were my life required to prove my devotion, it should be freely given. Owing to my strict code of honor, I have thus far refrained from this declaration, and had your husband proved true, I should have gone down to my grave

with this secret closely locked within my breast. Nor even now would I avow my passion, but I feared a false delicacy might debar you the privilege of looking to me for that protection which, to render, will prove one of the happiest and proudest moments of my life."

At any other time, and under any other circumstances, such an avowal would have been met with the contempt it deserved. As it was, it was received coldly and in silence.

But why need we recount all the wiles, intrigues, and soft persuasions of this villain; so well was his plot laid, and so well did he play his part, that not even a suspicion of the real facts crossed the minds of either party. Each believed the other to blame; nor were they ever undeceived, the doctor being one shrewd enough to keep his own secrets.

When La Roix returned, he found his wife in company with the doctor, all the articles of value packed away, and they seemingly on the eve of departure, as the letter had stated. Being, as we before remarked, of a proud, jealous disposition, high words ensued, each accusing the other, until, as the doctor had foreseen, it resulted in their final separation,—she taking with her the child and the servant, who preferred following the fortunes of her mistress to seeking a new home.

They never met again. He, a short time afterward receiving notice of his titles being restored to him, sailed for France, glad to leave a country which had nearly proved

fatal to his peace; and she, becoming the victim of the doctor's passion, learnt, alas! too late, that soft words do not always spring from tender hearts. Her money failing her within a year, and receiving nothing from her seducer, she was barely able to subsist by what little Mary earned; and being constantly exposed, she caught a violent cold, and fever setting in, she terminated her existence, as has already been seen, in the utmost degradation and misery. The doctor previously becoming tired of his victim, had deserted her, and fearing an issue in which he might figure publicly, he was, when first introduced to the reader, secretly planning her destruction, which fate prevented, and saved him the additional crime of MURDER!

CHAPTER IV.

Sardanapalus.—I speak of woman's love.

Myrrha.—The very first

Of human life must spring from woman's breast,
Your first small words are taught you from her lips.

Your first tears quenched by her, and, your last sighs

Too often breathed out in a woman's hearing,
When men have shrunk from the ignoble care
Of watching the last hour of him who led them.

Sardanapalus.—My eloquent Ionian, then
speakest music.

TRAGEDY OF SARDANAPALUS.

THE mighty stream of time flows on, and fifteen years have been numbered with the past since the opening of our tale. And what are fifteen years? A mere speck upon

the stream of time, and lost, completely lost, beside the boundless ocean of eternity. And yet, withal, how many changes may be wrought in that short space of time! Let but the mighty womb of Time be pregnant with events, and fifteen years may bring them forth so that the nations of the earth will stand aghast and wonder! Trace back five years previous to the glorious '76, and see what wondrous change was wrought in fifteen years!

America, our own dear, happy land was wrenched from out the tyrant's grasp,—her sons, her noble sons, made free—and she became a nation of the earth! The soaring eagle sought her new-born flag and waved it over the world, exulting that there was a land, a nation, free as her own native eyrie!

And tyrants read in every stripe and star,
That God was with us in that glorious war.

Take but the common course of events, and how many thousands—ay, millions—who but fifteen years ago were in the pride and glory of their strength, and who bid fair for long and useful life, are now sleeping in their cold and silent tombs, save by a kindred few, forgotten!

To-day is ours—so reads the world—and we whirl along amid the giddy, and, we might say, maddening vortex of busy life, heedless and unthinking;

And soon with those who've gone before
We're numbered, and are known no more.

It was a lovely morning in June, and the sun was just peeping o'er the eastern hills, throwing abroad

his golden rays, tipping the hills and tree-tops with his mellow light, and giving to nature that fascinating beauty which only the sun of a summer's morn can give. All nature was alive with music. The little minstrels had tuned their silvery voices, and were pouring forth their sweet, enchanting strains, as if to thank their Maker for the glorious day. A soft and balmy breeze swept over the fields, here and there stealing the perfume of some lovely flower with a gentle kiss, and, wafting on, diffused it where it went—then pouring in among the trees, stirred the young leaves to dance, and made them rustle forth a chorus to the joyful song of nature.

All was life, and commotion in the great metropolis of New York. There were thousands hurrying to and fro along the noisy streets to commence their daily tasks. Here might be seen the merchant, with anxious look and absent gaze, deep in study for some plan of future gain; there the clerk, thrice charged with the important business of his master, together with the mechanic and laboring man. Rich and poor, old and young, male and female, all passing on to their destined ends,

Each in his own
Thoughts wrapped up, and heeding not the other.

Omnibuses, cabs, drays, carts, &c., rolled over the pavements, with their horses fiercely urged, as though life and death were hanging on the issue, creating a din and confusion known only to city life; while ever and anon above the thunder-like rumble rose the shrill voices of the hawkers,

as he or she named the articles of which they would dispose.

About a stone's throw distant from where we first opened our tale, there stands—or stood at the time of which I write—a large elegant building, entered by five marble steps, and fronting one of the most pleasant, as well as popular, streets of the city. In the second story of this building was a large airy room, both tastefully and costly furnished, to which, for the present, we must direct the reader's attention.

The floor of this apartment was concealed under a rich Turkey carpet, on which stood several mahogany chairs, one or two sofas—all of which were arranged along the walls in tasteful order. In the center stood a round marble-top table, on which lay a guitar, several pieces of music, together with a collection of gilt-bound books, most of which were poems. Directly opposite to each other, so as to give a double reflection, were two large mirrors, on either side of which hung several portraits in beautiful gilt frames; while the remainder of the marble-like walls were relieved by other paintings of various descriptions, some of which had undoubtedly been executed by old masters. At the windows hung rich damask silk curtains, through which poured in a golden flood of light, softened and mellowed, giving to all within a rich and beautiful appearance.

At one of these windows, which was partly open, sat a lovely blooming damsel, apparently about eighteen years of age, her lily-white

hand resting upon the sill, gazing forth into the street, but altogether unconscious of what she saw, for her thoughts had wandered far away to another, and to her more pleasing theme. Beautiful she was alike in form and feature; but there was even more than that—there was an expression, a soul-like expression, in her countenance, which told of thoughts and feelings superior to most of her sex. Her eyes (and what are eyes, but mirrors of the mind?) were bright, of a dark blue color, shaded with soft silken lashes, and varying according to the mood of their owner. If roused to ire, their expression was flashing and fiery; if mirthful, sparkling and animating; if sad, (and at present they were of the latter cast,) they were soft and gentle as those of a lamb. Her hair was of a dark auburn color, and hung over her snowy neck in long golden ringlets, on which the gentle rays of the rising sun lingered and trembled as it waved to and fro in the balmy breeze, giving to it the beautiful variation of light and shade so far superior to the most delicate touches of the pencil. Her cheeks had caught the rosy tint of morning, but drawn with a finer and lovelier hue, it seemed but the reflection in miniature. About her mouth there was a sweet, smiling expression, over which presided two cherry lips, which might tempt even a rigid monk to forego awhile the thoughts of spiritual for a taste of such earthly bliss. And there she sat gazing forth into the street—a thing so

lovely, so gentle—she seemed rather an angel awaiting to bear away the spirit of the just, than one of mortal mold.

Unperceived by her, another entered the room and approached, gazing the while upon her lovely countenance with an admiration he could ill conceal, had he been so disposed. This was a comely young man of twenty, of fine form and noble bearing, dressed in the uniform of an American naval officer. His most remarkable feature was an open frankness, so clearly expressed in his countenance, that it required no great adept in the study of human nature to tell that his was an easy conscience and guileless heart. Resolved not to disturb her meditations, he stood a few paces distant, watching her with intense interest, and, as 'twere, reading her very thoughts, for he rightly imagined those thoughts were of him.

At length, starting from her reverie with a sigh, she pushed back her glossy ringlets, and, without altering her position, seemed to give her thoughts vent in words: "Ah, me! why am I thus sad? Why doth everything wear a gloom? All nature is lovely and joyful without. I see the crowd of passers-by—each wears a pleasant look; I hear the merry laugh ring loud and long—and yet all falls upon my senses shadowed o'er with gloom. What is the cause? Alas! I fear it bodes no good. Oh, Henry! I would that thou wert here. I—"

"My own dear Marianne!" exclaimed the young man, springing

forward, unable to control himself any longer.

With a bound like that of the startled roe, with an exclamation of surprise and joy, Marianne sprung from her seat, and the next instant the lovers were locked in each other's embrace. O, joyful moment that, when heart unites with heart—when soul with soul commingles! It is the acme of earthly bliss! Years of toil were deemed repaid in one sweet moment such as that. Let none despise pure, virtuous love. Love is a noble passion, planted within our breasts by Him who made us—a holy flame, lit by the torch of the Eternal. 'Tis our redeeming trait—the very essence of our being—and if we ever reach that happy place, 'twill be our triumphant song in Heaven.

There is a joy too deep for words. The fountains of the heart may be so stirred as to o'erflow with thoughts and feelings gushing in one mighty flood for utterance, until the tongue, o'erborne with numbers, will be choked to silence. Such was the joy of the lovers, as, withdrawn from each other's embrace, they stood for a moment gazing upon each other. Marianne was the first to speak.

"O, Henry!" exclaimed she, the gentle blush mantling her face, and her eyes lighting up with pleasure, "what prosperous breeze wafted you back so soon? It lacks three months to a day of the time you told of returning, for I have counted the days over and over again—ay, and divided them into hours, and

counted even the hours. But, tell me, what brought you back so soon?"

"In fact, I scarcely know," replied Henry; "for in my joy of meeting with you, Marianne, I heeded not the cause which gave me the pleasure, though I believe it was an order from government."

"Very like; but when did you arrive?" inquired Marianne.

"We anchored off the Battery at an early hour this morning," replied the young man, "and anxious to see you as soon as I could, I obtained leave of absence and hurried hither. Looking up to this apartment as I came near, I caught sight of your lovely form at the window, and, finding the outer door ajar, I thought I would surprise you, and so stole cautiously up, unbeknown to any one, and took up my position where you found me."

"And heard, perhaps, what you should not," returned Marianne.

"I heard what I would had been otherwise," said Henry.

"Indeed! and what was that?" asked she quickly.

"I heard my Marianne was sad," replied he; "I would know the cause; has anything happened of serious import?"

"Nothing, as far as I know," said Marianne. "As for the cause, I know as little as yourself. For the last two days there has hung over me a gloom—a foreboding—which in vain I try to shake off. I feared, Henry—and yet I scarce know why—that something had happened to you."

"And did I then hold the upper-

most place in your thoughts, my sweet Marianne?"

"I should be less than woman, Henry, were not my first care for him I love!"

"My own dear Marianne," exclaimed he, passionately, "and do you really love me, then?"

"Do you doubt it, Henry?"

"No, no—I do not, nor would I for worlds. And yet to hear it from your own sweet lips, would give it a double charm, and fill the already brimming cup of joy to overflowing."

"Then frankly, Henry, I do love you, although I might not have told you so—at least not yet—but that circumstances conspired in part to draw it from me."

"Dearest!" said Henry, giving her a kiss, "let that seal the bond of mutual love; for dearly and devotedly do I love you in return, and you shall never have cause to regret your love as misplaced. I would have sought your hand ere I left for my last voyage, but that I feared our acquaintance was of so late a date, you might think me presumptuous; but now that you have consented to be mine—"

"But, Henry, you mistake," interrupted Marianne. "In saying that I love you, I have given no consent to be other to you than I am."

"And what would you have me infer by this remark?"

"That at present there is a bar to our union."

"A bar to our union?" exclaimed Henry, in astonishment. "Surely you jest!"

"I would 'twere a jest," replied she, sorrowfully; "but, alas! it is too true."

"Heavens! This is madness! Am I in an instant to be thrown from my high pinnacle of hope into the yawning gulf of despair! Tell me—tell me quickly—what is it? What mean you?"

"That your rich connections will never consent to your union with a nameless orphan girl."

"A nameless orphan girl, Marianne? You speak in mysteries."

"I speak the truth; nevertheless. I am called Marianne."

"But surely you have another name?" exclaimed Henry, quickly.

"I do not doubt it," returned she; "but what it is I know not."

"Why you were introduced to me as—"

"Doctor Barton's ward," continued she, as he halted in his remark.

"True, true," said Henry, musingly; "I have never thought of this before."

"But I have," sighed she, "and it has given me much uneasiness."

"Have you ever inquired of your guardian concerning this?"

"Yes—once! He was at the time sitting in his library. I entered the room, but as I often came to look for books, he merely raised his eyes from the book wherein he was reading, and seeing me, resumed his study, making no remark. I felt a little delicate upon the subject, and thought I would retire and leave it to some future time. I turned to go, when he, ob-

serving my hesitation, inquired if I came with any message to him. I replied, my errand was to learn of my parents and name. Oh, never, to my dying day, shall I forget his look. The book fell from his hands—his countenance changed to a deadly pale—and rising from his chair, in a harsh tone he bade me be gone, and never speak to him of the like again!"

"Indeed, this is strange," returned Henry, "and there is mystery in it likewise. Have you no recollection of how you came here?"

"Nothing distinct. There is a vague something running in my mind, and sometimes I think it a dream and sometimes reality. I was in a dark and gloomy place—so dark and gloomy I often shudder when I think of it; methought I was in the arms of some being, who was caressing me, calling me her child, and telling me she was dying; presently another took me away from her, and told me my mother was dead; then came a dark, stern-looking man, and said I must go with him; I was much afraid, and tried to escape him, when methought he caught me in his arms and bore me away, I knew not whither. It was dark—dreadful dark—the wind blew and the rain poured down in torrents. From this my ideas became confused, and I can recollect nothing further, save that I was in elegant apartments and was treated kindly."

"It all seems very strange," remarked Henry; "and so you know not who you are?"

"Truly I do not."
 "Well, consent to be mine, and I will give you a name."

"Henry," said Marianne, "you would do that now, led away by your generous nature, which in after years you would regret. Perchance"—and her voice faltered—"perchance I am of mean birth, not worthy of you. I know not but my birth hath been disgraced—but that—"

"Marianne," returned he, calmly, "I know, under the existing circumstances, you can bring many arguments against our union; but truly you know not Henry Neville if you deem such of any weight with him. We are in part the creatures of circumstance, and over our births have no control. Are we, then, to set our own faults or virtues aside, and be rated according to the manner and by whom we obtained our existence? Discard the thoughts! Let us remember we are the creatures, not the creator—and who speaks against our birth speaks against Him who made us! What though your parentage is enwrapt within the mystic veil? It stands for nought with me. I love you for yourself alone; therefore, consent to be mine, and speak no more of birth."

"No," said she, firmly, "it cannot be. Although I admit your arguments are just, yet the world sees not as you see, and I would not have my husband pointed at with the finger of scorn for marrying one beneath him. Until my name is known, I will never wed. Find but that out, and prove it honorable—

my hand is yours—my heart you have already."

"Alas! then," sighed he, "I fear there is no hope."

"Not so. Go to my guardian, tell him of your intentions, and perhaps he may inform you."

"Ay, I will, and know the worst," said Henry, quickly, turning to leave the room.

"But stay, Henry—you forget this is too early an hour for my guardian to be stirring, were he at home, besides, at present he is absent, and will not return before eve; so come you and take a seat by me, nor deem that I can spare you so soon after your long absence. Let me hear of your adventures; come, I am impatient."

And Henry did come, and did sit beside her, and did rehearse his adventures—and as he saw her gentle eyes beaming upon him, he grew eloquent—he grew enraptured—his manly countenance became lit up with a noble enthusiasm—he became, as it were, inspired. And there sat the lovely Marianne—her countenance, too, beaming with pleasure—drinking, as it were, his very thoughts—treasuring each word as though it were an oracle—and both for awhile forgot their cares, the things around them, and even themselves, so enwrapt were they in thoughts of each other.

Three hours later, and the lovers had parted with mutual sighs, yet with a dawning of hope that all would in the end be right; and Marianne might be seen seated at the window with a look less sad

CHAPTER V.

His face is muffled in his cloak, but both
 His voice and gestures seem familiar to me.

* * * * *

'Tis a strange hour and a suspicious bearing.

* * * * *

More mysterious, and awful ones!

MARINO FALIERO.

IN the evening of the same day mentioned in the preceding chapter, between the hours of eleven and twelve, two figures might be seen moving along the northern side of the Park, and, to judge from the wary glance occasionally thrown around, as well as the suppressed tone of voice in which they conferred, their subject was one not likely to gain them credit for honesty by reaching the ears of a third party.

Although the weather was very warm, yet both wore cloaks, of the Spanish order, being made long and brought around from the right side, and thrown across the left shoulder, crossing the breast, so as to leave it to the option of the wearer to conceal his features beneath it or not. One, from some motive, had taken this precaution, concealing the lower part of his countenance as far up as practicable without interfering with his breathing. He was a man of the middling size, and in this respect much inferior to his companion, who was of large stature, being full six feet in height, and well proportioned.

Moving along in a westerly direction, until within the distance of fifty paces from Broadway, they made a halt, as with mutual consent, under a large tree, which threw its shadow some forty paces distant to the

than before, while Henry Neville, with graceful step, was pacing the deck of the far-famed Constitution.

Perhaps, ere we close the scene, it will not be deemed amiss to say a word of Henry Neville. Born of rich parents, in one of those beautiful villages which adorn the banks of the Hudson, he had been early sent to school, and was a graduate, at the age of eighteen, from one of the Eastern Colleges. Fancying that the sea was better suited to his taste than the land, his parents sought and obtained for him a midshipman's berth on board the noble Constitution, and already, by his gallant conduct, was he in a fair way of promotion.

About three weeks previous to his last cruise, being much on shore, he attended a ball, where for the first time he beheld the lovely Marianne. Struck with her appearance, he sought and obtained an introduction to her, and a mutual liking springing up between them, they soon grew passionately fond of each other, and the remainder of his leisure hours were, up to the time of his sailing, devoted exclusively to her. Thus love unconsciously sprang up between them, and not until their separation was either aware how much of their happiness depended on the society of the other. These relative positions in which they stood to each other when introduced to our tale. With the rest the reader has already become acquainted.

north over the sidewalk of Chambers street.

"Here," said the former, addressing his companion, "is a place where we may confer together with little danger of being interrupted or overheard, lying, as it does, so far out of the way of the more frequented paths."

"Well then," returned the other, in an accent that bespoke him both a foreigner and a Frenchman, "let us proceed with our business at once. You have heard my proposition; I await your answer."

"It is a business," remarked the first speaker, "which requires much thought, attended as it is with much danger, as well as difficulty. In fact I scarcely know how to reply. The girl's of a fiery spirit, of quick intelligence, and one not easily duped."

"Yet can you not find a way?" inquired the other. "You know the reward is ample: two hundred and fifty thousand francs is no ordinary sum for a business like this."

"And, for the matter of that, this is no ordinary business," returned the first. "Call you running a man's head into a noose, and dancing on nothing, an ordinary business?"

"But there is no danger of that, doctor—not in the least," rejoined the other. "You are not required to take her life."

"No," said the doctor, sarcastically, "I am not required to take her life—I'm only required to rob her of that which is dearer to her than life—her virtue. How long think you, she would live dishonored, worthy Monsieur?"

"Not long, I trust," replied his companion; "but with that we have nothing to do. If she commits suicide, why, the world will wonder, and say it was a suicide. I see no way that can implicate you."

"And think you my conscience would be less easy on that account?"

"Oh, as to your conscience, you must settle that with yourself. If you have come to preaching morality, why, our business is at an end!"

"Well, you are certainly very frank about it," remarked the doctor.

"And why not?" exclaimed the Frenchman.

"I own I have been paid for it—the same as I offer you, or shall be, if I succeed—and why not be frank about it? I like not your hypocritical villain, who, like Iago, consoles and stabs his friend at the same time. No! I undertook the business, knowing exactly what it was, and setting conscience entirely aside, for had that been in my way, perchance I should have left it to some more fortunate individual, who had less of the troublesome article to contend with. I thought you were a man like myself, or I should have saved myself the trouble of rehearsing much which you have learned."

"And so I am a man like yourself," resumed the doctor, "as you shall find anon. I like you the better for your frank, open manner, and only remarked about it because I thought it so singular for a man to own himself a villain. But how say you, reads the will?"

"Well, I cannot repeat it word for word, but the substance of it is this

that his daughter receive one million of francs at the age of eighteen, or upon her marriage, (with the interest of the same from the date of the will,) or in such amounts as she may please to draw after the above-mentioned time; provided her character stands fair, with no proof of dishonor. But if otherwise, or in case of her decease, the property falls to the next heir at law."

"It is a very singular will," remarked the doctor; "very singular, and seems made as a plaything for villains!"

"Yes, it is singular," returned the other, "and 'tis reported there, and I doubt not with truth; that it was occasioned by his own wife proving dishonorable when in this country, of which, perhaps, you have heard?"

"Yes, yes," said the doctor, hastily; "enough of that. But, tell me, how found you out she was living with me?"

"From a note appended to the will."

"From a note appended to the will!" exclaimed the doctor. "Was my name and residence written there?"

"It was," replied the other.

"You astonish me! How knew he the girl lived with me?"

"From a correspondent in this country he received the information, if I mistake not."

"Indeed! I knew of but one who could have given that intelligence, and she I believed long since dead."

"Was it then so secret?" inquired the other.

"Ay, so secret it was, and is, that even the girl herself does not know her father's name."

"Is it possible?" exclaimed the other, in astonishment. "Who was the villain that seduced the count's wife?"

"And heard you not of that, also?" asked the doctor, quickly.

"Not a syllable," was the reply.

"Well, well, then, of that anon. Let us attend now to the business of more importance. If the girl dies, or is dishonored," repeated the doctor, "the property falls to the next heir at law, Monsieur, who may that scoundrel be, who stands next heir at law?"

"No matter. He is a man; let that suffice. Come, to business—to business. Tell me, without prevarication, will you undertake this business or not?"

"And if I undertake it, and succeed, what proof have I that I shall receive the two hundred and fifty thousand francs spoken of?"

"Proof?" exclaimed the other indignantly; "My honor!"

"Yes, your honor!" repeated the doctor. "Such is this world. Men talk of honor, even when plotting schemes well worthy of the fiends of hell! *Honor*, indeed! Pshaw! But I will undertake the business; for money I want, and money I must have. So here, Mr. or Monsieur, (I believe I am not burdened with your name as yet,) I——"

"My name is Cartene," interrupted the other.

"Well, Monsieur Cartene, here is my hand upon it, and you may rely

upon my *honor* that what can be done shall be done. Meet me here to-morrow eve at this hour. In the mean time, I will see what can be done, and will be prepared to report progress. Till then, adieu!"

"Adieu," said Cartene, as he turned away; "I will be here at the hour."

"And now," muttered the doctor, "now for my scheme. First I must manage to get rid of this lover—this Henry Neville. Oh, cursed breeze that, which wafted him back so soon—at this time, too, of all others, when I most desired his absence. Ha! A thought strikes me. Perchance he—. No, no! He is too honest—there is not villain enough in his countenance for that, and besides he loves the girl. No, no; 'twould not do to try him. He might turn and blow the scheme. No, I must get rid of him, and then perchance, I may succeed."

And muttering thus, went one whom the reader has already recognized as the plotting, scheming villain, Doctor Barton. As his form became indistinct in the darkness, and his retreating footsteps no longer audible, there was a stir in the grass about ten paces distant from where he and Cartene had held their conference, and a moment after, from the shadow of the tree into the sickly light of a neighboring lamp, emerged a dark figure, clad in a rough female dress, which one superstitious might fancy was a lineal descendant of one of the witches who foretold Macbeth his destiny.

"Oh, you villain! You thrice-cursed, doubly-damned villain!" muttered the woman, shaking her clenched fist in the direction where the doctor was last seen. "So, so, this is your scheming is it? to ruin an innocent girl! You little think you were overheard. So you thought I was dead, did you? Thank heaven, I live to frustrate your plot. Yes, I'll watch ye—I'll watch ye! I'll be here to-morrow night. Ha! ha! ha! You thought I was dead, did you? Ha! ha! ha! I'll watch ye! Oh, you scoundrel!" and muttering in like, manner sometimes curses, and sometimes threats, she turned in an opposite direction from the one taken by the doctor, and, like him, was soon lost in the mazes of the night.

CHAPTER VI.

Time softens much,
But the stern heart, when 'tis on evil bent,
Grows callous more by years.—ANON.

On the following day, about the hour of ten, Doctor Barton might be seen seated in his study. Around him were piled books, grim with age—keys to unlock the mind, perchance to blazon forth the fame of those whose names they bore.

Fifteen years had flitted past, and save now here and there the deepening of some furrow on his cheek, or the sprinkling of the silver gray, time had left him the thing he was when first introduced to the reader. There was the same stern look, dark

smile, as then—and within his breast beat the same cold, unfeeling, treacherous heart. He was seated near the window of his library, with his eyes rivetted upon a book lying on the table before him; but the marble look, and unvarying gaze, bespoke him unconscious of what he saw, and lost in the abyss of thought. Raising his eyes from the book, after the lapse of perhaps a minute, he fastened them upon a small hand-bell, which stood a few feet distant from the former on the same table, and seemed about sinking into another reverie, when, as if a sudden thought had struck him, started, reached forth his hand, and, giving the bell a hearty ring, resumed his former position, and when the servant entered he found him lost in reverie. As soon, however, as the doctor became aware of his presence, he started, and, turning to him, in a stern calm tone, said—"Tell Marianne I would speak with her here; and, mark you, let no one, upon any plea or consideration whatever, break in upon our conference, as you value your safety. If any in the mean time would see me, tell them to wait in the parlor. In an hour you may admit them. Go, and remember your instructions."

"Yes, I have pledged my word, and it must be done," soliloquized he, as the servant left the room. "Yes, it must be done. Oh, man, man! what a thing thou art! A prey to thine one passions—a weak, short-sighted mortal! I would that I could raise the mystic vail and

glance into the future. And yet what boots it? Would it alter aught? Would it make me other than I am? No! I must fulfill my destiny—the die is cast, and I'll abide my time. I am now standing on the brink of ruin. Nothing but money can save me. If I succeed, money I shall win; and then away from this corrupted atmosphere—away to merry England or sunny France. But if I fail, I— No, no! I will not fail! I will say, with Richelieu, 'there is no such word as fail!' But, hark! she comes."

While soliloquizing thus, Doctor Barton had risen from his seat, and paced with hurried step to and fro the apartment. As he heard her step near, he resumed his seat—and when Marianne entered, she found his eyes bent on the book, as previously described, apparently engaged in reading. Turning to her, he motioned her to a seat, and rising, he proceeded to the door, which he shut and bolted, then returning resumed his own.

"Marianne," began he, "I have sent for you to speak on matters which, to you, will undoubtedly seem of importance, as well as to myself. But first, ere I proceed, let me inquire if I have not been to you all that you could wish—all that you could expect—even were I your father?"

"You have, indeed," replied she, affectionately, looking upon him with a tender smile, that, stern as he was, went to his heart, and for the moment almost unnerved him.

"Well, well," said he, recovering, "let that pass; I did but my duty. What I would say now, relates more particularly to yourself, and your future welfare. First, you love Henry Neville. Nay, do not blush and turn away. You should not be ashamed to own a virtuous love."

"Ashamed!" exclaimed she, springing from her seat, her eyes flashing fire. "Ashamed to own my love for Henry Neville? No! Were all the world to hear my answer, and were life and death hanging on my decision, I would proclaim it with a trumpet voice, I love him. Ashamed, indeed! Does not the modest blush o'ersteal the features, but that shame must lurk beneath, think you?"

"Nay, Marianne," said he, in a gentler tone, "you take it too much to heart—pray be seated. I meant no wrong in my hasty expression, which was drawn forth by the deep interest I take in your welfare. I only feared, for many a flower as fair as yourself has been plucked by the ruthless destroyer from its virgin stem, and left to perish, forgotten and alone, amid the blasts and storms of a changing, heartless world. Believe me, dear girl, I only feared for your safety."

"Forgive me, dear guardian," murmured Marianne, as she sank upon her seat, melted even to tears by his affectionate appeal. "Forgive me—I was too hasty. But such is woman's love, that, let but a shadow of doubt rest upon the character of him she loves, she will bare her heart even to the scoffs and scorn of

thousands, so that it but shield him from reproach."

"Well, well," resumed the doctor again, "let that pass. That you love Henry Neville, you admit—that he loves you in return may or may not be. Nay, no remark," said he, as he saw her about to speak; "no remark, but hear me through. I say he may love you in return or he may not; for men are such heartless, selfish beings, that but few are worthy to be trusted with that delicate thing, a woman's heart. If he loves you, as you would fain believe, why is he gallanting other women about? Why does he resort to public houses, and over his wine make it a bar-room jest, that he has caught the heart of *another* lovely female? Mind, I say *another*; and that this last will soon be added to the accumulated list of his victims."

"Gracious Heavens!" exclaimed she, "this is not truth! no, no, 'tis not truth—'tis not reality—no, 'tis a slanderous lie—a lie as black as night; and whoever first told the tale should fain repent him soon, for 'tis enough alone to damn him! Dear guardian, unsay the scurrilous report, and on my knees will I bless you!"

"I would unsay it—but"—

"But what?" asked she breathlessly.

"'Tis true."

"Oh, God!" exclaimed she, and fell senseless from her chair. Barton instantly sprang to and raised her in his arms. As he looked upon her pale, lovely countenance, seeming even more lovely for the gentle

melancholy shade of grief pictured there—his lip quivered—his eye dimmed, and for a moment there was a fearful struggle of conscience within, and he seemed about relenting from his fell design. Alas! the demon triumphed, the softness passed from his heart, and he became even sterner than before. "I fear I've gone too far, too sudden," muttered he, "I must be more careful, or in doing much I may overdo, and be myself overdone. Thus far my plot works well, and by a skillful turn, I'll yet succeed. Love is but a step from hate; and if I can make her believe he loves her not, then amid the wreck of baffled love and ruined hopes, I'll strike the fearful blow. Yet while I deepest strike, she must believe I am her dearest friend, and each counsel must be such as would seem meet from a parent to his child. Ah! she returns to conscious life." As he spoke he placed her in the chair as before. Opening her eyes with a vacant stare, she murmured, "It was a dream! a terrible dream!" Then as she became conscious of where she was, and saw the doctor standing near her, a cold shudder passed over her, and she continued, "No, no! 'twas not a dream, it was horrible, fearful reality!"

"You are ill," said the doctor in a soothing tone, "but do not let what I have said, weigh too heavy on your heart, my child. I call you child, for I feel for you the affection of a parent, and would fain give you a parent's counsel. Think no more of the wretch who would thus

dishonor you; let him be erased from your memory; or if you think of him at all, let it be as of the scorpion, or the deadly serpent, with horror, loathing, and disgust."

"Hold! hold! no more, no more!" exclaimed she, "you know not what you do, or say, or ask! Each word you utter, pierces like a dagger to my wounded heart! Ask *me* to blot him from my memory? 'Twould be to blot out memory's self! No, while reason holds her throne, and memory her sway, I'll think—I'll love—I'll pray for him, and when I cease the one, I'll cease the three; nor cease the three, until my brain be flooded with the deadly waters of the Lethean pool. Yet I may never see him more, but ask me not to forget him."

"I would not have asked you to do thus—but that another loves you dearly," said the doctor.

"And if he love as dearly as I love, then Heaven pity him, for to all others will my heart henceforth be rock—ay, adamant."

"And that he does love thus, with me there is no doubt," returned the doctor. "But you must see him, and then decide what way you choose."

"See him," repeated she, "what need is there of that? It would only be a painful interview, and effect nothing. No! better for him, for me, I do not see him."

"And yet withal, you *must* see him. I have pledged my word to that effect, and hold that word too sacred to be broken without cause, or cause so slight. In this I will

command—commanding, be obeyed."

"Certainly," returned she gently, "if you have pledged your word, I'd have the pledge redeemed. But when shall this interview take place?"

"That will I learn anon, and so inform you; and now, before you go, I would exact a pledge that you will hold no farther intercourse with Henry Neville."

"If," said she, in a calm, proud tone, "if Henry Neville is what my guardian represents him, that guardian need have no fear that his ward will throw a shade upon her character, even by intercourse with one she loves, for that character is her all; and sooner than disgrace which, would she with her own hands clip the brittle thread of life and launch from time into the unknown world beyond."

"Yes, well thou sayest *that* character is thy *all*," muttered the doctor, aside, under his ground teeth. "And little dost thou know or dream how much that *all*!" Then turning to her, "You say *if*, Marianne. Do you then doubt your guardian's word?"

"Nay," returned she, "I meant not so; you may yourself have been deceived. Love is an exacting master, and requires proof. As the drowning man will cling to a straw, so will love cling even to a doubt, and until I shall have the most positive proof, will I still doubt but that even you have been deceived."

"Foolish girl," said the doctor, angrily, "even were it *not* true, what could Henry Neville be to you?"

Would your proud spirit let you wed with one above you? What think you would be his feelings when the slanderous tongue should ask 'Who was his wife?' You once asked me of your birth and name. I then refused the tale, from fear of wounding your tender feelings. But since things have gone so far, 'twere better now you hear it. Listen! Fifteen years ago your mother died, where it matters not—suffice that it was in a den of misery and degradation. Called by my profession, I attended her in her last illness, not with the expectation of being rewarded for my services, but because I believed it to be my duty. I stood beside her bed when her spirit winged its flight to the eternal world. But ere she died, she gave me some account of her past life. I will not pain you by going through the details, farther than concerns you to know. She, like yourself, loved, and loved one far above her. They met often and in secret, and he swore he loved her as he loved his own existence, that without her life would be a blank, and many other like protestations, such as lovers generally use. She believed, confided, and in an evil moment, fell a victim to an unholy passion. He deserted her, and she was thrown upon the wide world alone, friendless, and dishonored.

In hopes of revenge, she lived, and you were born, an offspring of her guilt. But Heavens! you are ill!" exclaimed he, as he saw Marianne struggling for breath. "I have gone too far?"

"No, no, go on," gasped she, "I'm better now." And she buried her face in her hands, while the convulsive shudders passing over her slender frame, told how great was the trial.

"Well," continued the doctor, "how she lived from this time forth were a fearful tale to tell to one in your present condition. I will pass it by. Her last request was, that I should take her child and rear it as my own. You were then a sprightly thing of three years, and knowing her without friends, I consented. She then gave me much advice relating to you; and begged me, with her dying breath, to watch over and guard you from the snares and temptations of the world; but, above all things, not to let you set your affections upon one above you, or, if you did so, not to permit you to hold any intercourse with such whatever, fearing you might, like her, be betrayed and lost. Then, taking you in her arms, she blessed you and expired. Such is the tale. And now tell me, have I done right in requesting you not to see this Neville again?"

For a moment there was no answer. Marianne sat with her head bent forward—her face buried in her hands, and, save a slight quivering, motionless as a statue. The doctor, in the meanwhile, watched her with intense interest, and when, at length, she raised her head, he started back with an exclamation of surprise, so great was the change wrought by a few minutes of such mental agony.

All color had entirely vanished from her face, leaving it as white as the "driven snow." A fearful luster shone in her eyes, which glared about with a maniacal wildness, while the deep inward agony pictured in her countenance, which she in vain had tried to conceal, made her a truly melancholy spectacle to behold.

"'Tis done," said she, in a deep, hollow voice, that made the doctor involuntarily start, for he fancied it the voice of her mother, and ten thousand thoughts of his guilty career came rushing upon him with a whirlwind force, and for a moment, the stern man was unmanned and trembled, as did the ancient king when he beheld the hand write his destiny in unknown characters upon the palace wall. "'Tis done, and all is lost, lost, lost—my sad forebodings are fulfilled."

"Marianne! Marianne!" exclaimed the doctor.

"Who calls Marianne?" said she, staring at him with an idiotic gaze, that made his very blood run chill through his veins. "Who calls Marianne? Is it you? you—you?" (pointing with her finger.) "My name is Marianne! Who calls me?"

"Marianne, do you not know me?" asked the doctor, in alarm.

"Know you?" repeated she, regaining her senses. "Why, yes; you are my guardian. But I am ill—very ill; I would retire to my room."

"Yes, girl, you had better retire," said he, relieved by her returning

reason. "You look pale. I fear I have said too much."

"No; 'tis better as it is," returned she, in a melancholy tone. "I know my fate. It has been a fearful trial, and for awhile did reason totter on her throne; but 'tis over now."

"And have I done wrong in requesting you not to see Henry Ne—"

"Hold!" exclaimed she, rising from her chair, and speaking with energy. "As you value my peace, speak not that name again."

"Enough," returned he; "I am satisfied. Now go, my child, and may heaven help you to bear your ills with fortitude."

"Amen!" responded she, and, unbolting the door, left the room with a feeble step.

As her form disappeared, the doctor again rang the bell.

"Has any one called?" inquired he, as the servant entered.

"Two," was the reply.

"Their names?"

"One a stranger, the other Mr. Neville."

"Ha! Did he inquire for Marianne?"

"He did."

"And you told him —"

"She was in the library with you."

"Right. Well, what then?"

"He said he would speak with you."

"Does he wait?"

"He does, sir."

"Admit him."

"So, so," said the doctor, as the servant left the room, rubbing his

hands with delight; "So, so — just in time — my scheme works nobly. Now, then, to put him on the wrong scent. I scarcely know what passion predominates with him; however that I will soon learn. He comes."

"Good morning, Master Neville," said the doctor, approaching him with a bland smile, extending his hand at the same time. "I am most happy, sir, to be honored with your company. Pray, be seated." And such command had he over his features, and so great was the change from the dark, stern, scheming villain, to the easy, polite, affable gentleman, that one to have seen him in both characters, would have doubted his being the same individual. "You have returned somewhat sooner than you told of, have you not?" inquired the doctor, as Henry took the proffered seat.

"I have, sir," replied Henry, "much sooner."

"How long have you been absent?"

"Nine months."

"Indeed! so long? Time passes fast. So much am I engaged in study that the seasons roll around almost ere I am aware. Well, I suppose you were glad to behold your native land again; for home will ever feel like home, however short the absence."

"You say truly, I was glad—ay, my heart leapt for joy as I looked again upon my native hills," returned Henry. "Nor did the time seem short; for there was one, a lovely being, whom I held most dear, and

whom I longed to clasp unto my heart again. I come even now to speak with you of her."

"With me?" exclaimed the doctor, in pretended astonishment. "Pray, whom mean you?"

"And have you not guessed my secret yet? I mean no other than your ward, Marianne. I love her dearly."

"My ward, Marianne? Surely you jest! Does she know of this?" inquired the doctor, his countenance wearing an anxious look.

"She does."

"But did not return that passion?" said the doctor, inquiringly.

"Even so."

"What say you, did she pretend to love you in return?"

"Pretend! No, she did *not* pretend, but *loved* without pretending," replied he, indignantly.

"Oh, the deceitfulness of woman!" ejaculated the doctor. "Henry, you have been deceived."

"Deceived, sir? Pray, explain."

"Why, Marianne is already betrothed to another."

"'Tis false!" exclaimed he, starting from his seat.

"Nay, young man—pray, calm yourself, and again be seated. I assure you it is the truth; for just before you came she was with me, and talked the matter over, and even named the day of marriage."

"Betrothed to another?" repeated Henry. "Am I in my senses? Surely, I did not hear aright. There is—there *must* be some mistake."

"Then the mistake lies with yourself, Mr. Neville."

"Where is Marianne? Let me speak with her; for until I hear it from her own lips, I'll not believe it."

"Nay, Mr. Neville, I should be sorry to wound your feelings, for I feel toward you as a friend, and yet I fear I must. By request of Marianne herself, I inform you that henceforth all intercourse between yourself and her must cease."

"By heavens, this is a plot—a trick! I'll not believe it!"

"Be not rash, young man. Remember, when you doubt the *truth* of this, you doubt my word. For *honor's* sake, you should forbear."

"I humbly crave your pardon, sir," returned Henry, bowing. "My feelings were so overwrought that my tongue gave utterance to words the import of which I was not aware. Pray, tell me what reasons gave Marianne for this?"

"First," replied the doctor, "that her hand is promised to another."

"Again I say it is false!" interrupted Henry.

"Second, that her *birth* was far beneath you," concluded the doctor, not heeding the interruption.

"Ha! her birth!" said Henry, with a start; "that seems more reasonable. My errand hither was to speak of *that*."

"I have him now," thought the doctor; "I've touched the secret chord."

"Tell me what know you of her birth?"

"That she is the offspring of *guilt*," replied the doctor, speaking in a slow, distinct voice, that it

might have more effect, "and therefore not meet to mate with Henry Neville."

"Then she is, indeed, lost to me," sighed Henry; "for her proud spirit will not let her wed with one she deems above her."

"Lucky for me she does not know her name," thought the doctor.

"Yes, she is lost to me; but ere I go, I'll speak with her again, and take, perchance, (his voice faltered,) a last farewell!"

"It is impossible," returned the doctor; "she will not see you."

"Oh, say not thus! She will at least grant one last interview."

"No! I know her too well. She even charged me not to mention your name again in her presence."

"Notwithstanding, I will make the trial," said Henry, in a determined tone. "She shall know that I am here and would speak with her. *Then*, if she refuse to see me, will I believe there is no constancy in woman, and not till then."

"As you like," said the doctor, ringing the bell. "Here comes the servant, who will convey your message."

"Go," said Henry, turning to the servant, "tell Marianne, Henry Neville awaits in the library and would speak with her again, perchance for the last time."

As he left to obey his orders, there was a few moments of anxious suspense, amounting almost to agony. Neither Barton nor Neville were disposed to break the death-like stillness, for both were occupied with thoughts and feelings difficult

to describe, but each as different from the other as is day from night. In the breast of Henry was the pure and refined feelings of confiding love, saddened with grief, and alternately wavering between the conflicting emotions of doubt and fear—doubting, yet fearing, the truth of what he had heard. With the guilty doctor, fear was the most predominant. Fear, that for once Marianne might give way and grant an interview, well knowing if such took place, his villainy would be discovered, the two hundred and fifty thousand francs, which he had already begun to consider as his, lost, and he exposed to the scoffs and scorn of all honest people, his property torn from him by his creditors, (for nought but this money could save him,) and he either confined within the walls of a prison, or left to roam the world a beggar. So woven was his web of fate, he fancied all hung on the decision of Marianne—and so intense his feelings, that when he heard the returning footsteps of his servant, respiration with him became difficult. Not so with Henry; he believed this interview (not doubting it would be granted, the doctor to the contrary, notwithstanding,) would alter nothing, save that he should behold the being dearest to his heart, and hear her voice once more, though that voice should utter but the final parting word, farewell!

As the servant entered the room, both held their breath, as 'twere, to catch the slightest sound that might

shape itself in answer to their fears. Walking directly to Henry, the servant placed a slip of paper in his hand, and, bowing, left the room. With a trembling hand and beating heart, Henry glanced at the light pencil marks traced thereon, and as he did so, his gaze became riveted there, as though by a charm, his lips quivered, and his face paled to an ashy hue; while athwart the doctor's features, who had watched him intently, shot a gleam of triumph, the contracted brow relaxed, and a dark smile played around his mouth—his breathing became easy, for he had read in Henry's every look the success of his scheme.

"Am I not right?" inquired the doctor, a malicious smile stealing over his countenance; "did I not tell you true?"

"You did," groaned Henry, sinking into a chair. "Alas! you did. There is her answer," handing Doctor Barton the paper. It contained but a few syllables, and read as follows:

"DEAR HENRY:—There are circumstances which debar you all further intercourse with her who pens these lines. Go and forget her. Go and be happy. We must never meet again on the shores of time. God bless you! Farewell.

"MARIANNE."

"Yes, go, Neville, and forget her," said the doctor, as he read it. "Go and forget her—she is not worthy of you."

"Yes, I will go," rejoined Henry, gloomily. "I will go, but I never

can forget her; where one loves, one cannot forget."

"And can you love after such perfidiousness?" inquired the doctor.

"Love," replied Henry, "is not a school-boy's toy, to be used and laid aside at pleasure. Love, enkindled within our breasts, becomes a part and being of ourselves, and, unless by other passions counteracted, burns unquenchless as Vesuvius' fires. We love, without knowing why we love, and the same secret cause which creates that love, may serve, perchance, to fan the flame; so that others, who see not as we, will wonder at our feelings, when we would wonder, too, did we but see as they. You ask if I can love, after such perfidiousness? Did I see the perfidy of which you speak, it might, perchance, be different. I know not but that love may blind my eyes; but whatever the cause, as I do not see her false, therefore, I love."

"You do not see her false, because you *will* not," returned the doctor, sarcastically. "If she be not false, why does she treat you thus?"

"I see it all. She deems her birth beneath me, and therefore—"

"Pshaw!" interrupted the doctor, "you should not be thus duped!"

"Duped?" exclaimed Henry: "What mean you?"

"That she used that only as a feint."

"A feint?"

"Ay, a feint! If she loved as you believed, her whole soul must

have gone with that love; and think you she would have sacrificed her own, and the happiness of him she loved, merely on the plea that he was better born than she? Pshaw! Discard such silly reasoning; and, if you have any pride or self-respect, be a man. Believe me no woman would refuse a lover because she believed him above her; for when she marries, she becomes an equal with him; instead of his sinking to her, she rises to him; and what woman would not be better than she is, think you, if she possessed the power to be so, provided there was no other whom she better liked?"

"True, true," said Henry, musingly. "By heavens! if I thought her false. But, no, no—it cannot be; for even when I returned, I stole in upon her, unbeknown, and in her heart musings heard her make mention of my name, which she would not have done, had I not occupied her thoughts."

"Did she mention *all* your name?" inquired the doctor quickly.

"I heard but Henry,"

"As I thought!" returned he, with a gleam of triumph flashing in his eyes. "You should have known that her betrothed is Henry, likewise."

"Her betrothed!" gasped Henry, "and is it really true, then?"

"As holy writ," returned the doctor.

For the space of two or three minutes Henry made no remark; his features became deathly pale, over which settled a shade of

gloom, as a dark cloud is seen to shoot athwart the sun, when in the zenith of his glory, giving to the day a melancholy cast. Rising from his seat, with the calm, settled look of one who has determined upon some point with unshaken firmness, he thanked the doctor for his advice and information, bade him good morning, and, with a heavy step, and as heavy a heart, left the mansion of Doctor Barton.

"Fool!" muttered the doctor, as he saw him disappear, "thou hast indeed been duped; and fool thou art, a blinded fool, or thou hadst seen through my shallow scheme! But such is mankind—they ever believe the story told the last, the nearest truth. Well, well, the better it is for me; for only by such dupes can I ever gain my end. So far, my plot goes well, and if I can succeed in one more plan, my scheme is then complete. Now, then, for that;" and sinking into another reverie, the doctor was soon engaged in studying measures to carry out his base design. As these will be made known in the succeeding chapter, we for awhile will leave him and turn to that.

CHAPTER VII.

How oft the wisest, on misfortune's shelves,
Are wrecked by errors most unlike themselves!
CAMPBELL.

"WELL, doctor, what success?" inquired Cartene, as they met agreeable to appointment on the following evening.

"The best," replied the doctor, cheerfully; "everything has worked to my best desire thus far, and even exceeded my most sanguine expectations."

"Indeed! That is good news, certainly. Pray, tell me of your proceedings."

"First, then, my plan was to break off all intercourse between Marianne and her lover."

"Ha!" interrupted the other, "has she then a lover?"

"She *had*," replied the doctor, with emphasis on the latter word. "She had a lover—one Henry Neville, a stripling officer aboard the Constitution—though I much doubt if there is any love between them now. But to my story. Well, then, you must know my first and chief plan was to break off all intercourse between them. To effect this, I sent for Marianne, and, under the pretence of giving her parental advice, I, among other things, cautioned her against the said Neville—told her his whole intention was to ruin her, &c., &c. Finding this did not exactly answer the turn I desired, and knowing her to be of a lofty spirit, I determined to work upon her pride what I had failed to do upon her affections. I told her he was far above her in birth, and that for her to wed with him, would but entail misery upon them both. With a serious countenance, I then informed her she was of low birth—in fact, the offspring of guilt; that I acted but from her mother's dying injunctions in what I did; and, finally, wound up by appealing to her-

self if I had done wrong in requesting her not to see this Neville again. Ere I had fairly concluded the sentence, she interrupted me, and bade me, as I valued her peace, never to mention his name again in her presence. This was what I most desired, and, leaving me on the plea of illness, she retired to her own apartment."

"But how did she bear this in the meanwhile?" inquired the other.

"As well as could be expected. Of course she fainted once or twice; but that, you know, is generally the ladies' resource, when they hear unpleasant news."

"Fainted?" repeated the other. "How did that at first affect you?"

"Affect me?" replied the doctor, sarcastically. "Umph! I mind not such trifles."

"Trifles? Ah, I perceive you are an accomplished villain," returned Cartene, approvingly.

"I said you would find me out anon," resumed the doctor. "But to proceed. As soon as Marianne had retired, I was informed by my servant that Neville was awaiting an opportunity of speaking with me. This, of course, was good news, being the very one I most wished to see. At first I was at a loss how to proceed to sow the seeds of discord in his unsuspecting breast; but Fortune favored me—for once the heartless jade was true. He commenced speaking of his return, his joy of again meeting with his ladylove, and then said he had come to speak with me of her. Of course, I feigned astonishment that I should

know of whom he spoke, when he could do no less than inform me it was my ward, Marianne. I then told him he had been deceived—that she was already betrothed to another. This I saw he was too much disposed to doubt, so, changing my manner of attack, I touched upon her birth, and found this the very thing of which he wished to learn. I informed him, as I previously had her, that she was an offspring of guilt. This seemed to have the desired effect, for he muttered something about her being lost to him, as her proud spirit would not let her wed with one above her, which led me to conjecture this had been previously discussed by them, and that she had decided not to wed with him, at least unless her birth proved honorable; and upon this conjecture I acted with good effect afterward. Although I struck upon this mode of argument by chance, yet it proved of more service in furthering my scheme than any I could have devised. He then requested to have an interview with her, which I in vain tried to dissuade him from; so, making a virtue of necessity, I called the servant, and bade him convey his message to Marianne. Never, in the course of my life, did I undergo more agony of mind, than in the few minutes of my servant's absence; for I truly felt all hung on the decision of Marianne; and I feared she might give way and grant an interview, and my hard-studied scheme, on the point of succeeding, be detected. But, thanks to her proud spirit, she was true as steel.

The messenger returned and presented Henry with a slip of paper, whereon was traced, in fine pencil marks, a declination of all further intercourse with him, bidding him go and forget her, &c. This, together with what I had told him, and a little additional argument, settled his business, and he left, with the firm determination pictured on his countenance, of never confiding in woman again.

"Capital! capital!" returned the other, as the doctor concluded his account of the affair. "You seem a perfect master of human nature. You must have studied much."

"Ay, I have—and had some little practice, too," rejoined the doctor.

"Well, I suppose this last affair concluded your business for to-day; so now how do you intend to proceed?"

"Nay, there you are too fast; it did not conclude my business for to-day. I have done more—much more."

"Indeed! You have not already completed your scheme?" said Cartene, inquiringly.

"Well, no—I have not completed it, exactly; but I have gone so far that I already feel confident of success. But, hark! Methought I heard a noise."

"What was it like?" inquired the other.

"Like the groan of some person in distress."

"O! The breeze rustling through the trees, perhaps. But go on with your story. I'm impatient for the sequel."

"Well, then, soon after Henry left, I sent for a young man whom I had formerly known, and who I knew to be an accomplished rake. I first swore him to the most solemn secrecy as to what I should reveal, and then informed him there was a lovely female within, who, for some important reason, must be dishonored, and agreed to give him one thousand dollars, in case he would complete her ruin; to which he readily agreed. I had almost forgotten to mention, that, previous to this, I had told Marianne of one who had fallen in love with her, and made her promise to see him, on the grounds that I had already pledged my word to that effect, &c. This, of course, smoothed the way for their interview, which took place at an early hour this evening; and although she treated him very coldly, so well is he acquainted with the sex, that he assures me he is confident of success. I then told him to use his most seductive arts, and if he could complete his design without using force, I would double the sum; but that it must be done, by force, if necessary, even at the peril of her life."

"But when is this to take place?" inquired the other.

"I have determined upon one week from to-night," replied the doctor; "at which time a vessel sails for France, in which I have already secured a passage, for it will be very unsafe for me to remain longer here. I have planned everything to a nicety. He is to meet her every day during the time, and

make what impression he can upon her, by a frank, guileless manner, which he can assume at will. I shall, on the evening in question, despatch my servants in various quarters, so that no one may be near to render her any assistance, should it become necessary for him to use violence."

"But, if she scream, may it not be heard by some one without?" inquired Cartene.

"Care has been taken to provide for that," replied the doctor. "Under the pretence the room she now occupies will be wanted for some special purpose, I have so arranged it, that she occupies a center room of the rear wing, where the loudest cries are insufficient to reach the ears of any one standing close beside the walls without."

"Well, I must admit your scheme is admirably arranged, and every part shows the work of a master hand."

"Yes," returned the doctor, "I think it well arranged; and now, as for yourself, I would have you here on that evening about this hour."

"Yes, I understand," said Cartene, "and will be here with the money."

"Well, then, as our business is all and satisfactorily arranged, we will adjourn until that hour. So, adieu; and when we again meet, I trust my news will be most welcome."

"Adieu, and success attend you," returned Cartene, and the next moment these two dark, though petty, conspirators had parted.

Again the same female figure, previously described, might be seen stealing from her place of concealment and hurrying away with an agitated step, as though there was something of importance to be done, requiring caution, decision, and energy. But as at present we can follow none, individually, we will leave all three for a time, and open upon another scene.

CHAPTER VIII.

And speak, mysterious stranger! (Gertrude cried);

It is! it is! I knew—I knew him well!

And art thou here? or is it but a dream?

GERTRUDE OF WYOMING.

A WEEK has elapsed since the close of the preceding chapter, and we must now turn our attention to one who holds no inferior part in this drama of life.

Seated within a small, but well-furnished apartment, beside a table, on which rested her arm, supporting her head, in a position not unfrequently used for study, and apparently lost to all external objects, was the pale, care-worn, but still lovely Marianne. Ay, lovely, indeed, she was, which even the most fastidious critic must have admitted, were it only to show himself as such. But it was not the loveliness on which we like to gaze, nor, in fact, on which we could have gazed unmanned, with a heart less

hard than adamant. There was beauty—there was loveliness—but it was the beauty and loveliness of grief. Had we beheld it in marble—had we seen the soft, sweet shade of melancholy, pictured in her countenance, chiseled in stone—long, long, would we have gazed, admired, praised, ay, and perchance have loved the artist for his beautiful conception, his masterly execution, and the soft and tender feelings gushing o'er his soul as a thing so angelic was pictured to his mental perception, on which he must have gazed, himself entranced, and chiseled while he gazed. A great change has been wrought since last observed by the reader—a change far more easy to behold than describe. There are no striking points on which we can dwell, and picture forth by description; but, like the gentle rose, plucked from its virgin stem, there is a gradual fading and drooping throughout her lovely countenance.

The room, as before remarked, was well, and, we may add, richly furnished; but as the reader, like ourself, is undoubtedly anxious for the sequel of the story, we will not pain him or her, by going through a lengthy description of what concerns neither, but leave such things to some more fortunate author, whose patience and brains far exceed ours, and pass on—merely remarking, by the way, that the floor was covered with a carpet—that on one side stood a bed, denoting it a sleeping apartment—and upon the table burnt a small lamp, sending

forth a sickly light, as if that, too, had partaken of the grief of the fair occupant.

It was evening—and the great bell of the City Hall had just pealed forth the hour of ten, and, as its heavy tones died away, Marianne started from her trance-like musings, and brushing back the golden locks clustering around her lily cheeks, murmured;

“Ten o'clock, and have I thus unconsciously sat here two hours, which have seemed but as many minutes, when at other times even the minutes lengthen themselves, as 'twere, to hours? But I was thinking of him! And yet, why should I? He can never be aught to me? No; there is an insurmountable barrier between us! And yet to think—to let memory dwell on him—is the only comfort I now enjoy! Alas! I shall not enjoy even that long. Yet why do I sigh, alas? Will it not be better for me when I have passed the rugged bounds of time? when I have landed on that blissful shore, where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest? And yet, dear Henry, could I but see thee once again—ask thee to forgive me, methinks I could die happy. But, no! no! that can never be! I, perchance, will never see thee more until we meet (for we must meet again) at the great seat of Judgment, or before the throne of the Eternal! And I shall soon be there. This inward grief is wearing me away; and, at the longest, but a few more suns can roll athwart the boundless blue,

ere I shall number one with those who are themselves unnumbered. Yes—all my bright and happy dreams have vanished—fled as dew before the morning sun; the cloud of sorrow is hovering over me, blighting my hopes and darkening the future. Why am I thus selected as the mark, the target, for the deadly shafts of fate? Deadly, did I say? No! I will not say deadly—far, far worse than that; for they pierce even to my very heart, giving the pain, but without sending death to give relief. Why do all treat me coldly, even to my guardian, who was once so kind? What have I done to merit this? Why does this stranger persist in his advances when he must see they are repugnant to my feelings? Alas! alas! alas! There is a mystery I cannot fathom—a foreboding of coming ill! The heavy cloud of destiny seems hanging over me, charged with the artillery of heaven! I see the forked lightnings of anger flashing around—I hear the howling winds of despair mingled with the rumble of the mighty thunder of conflicting passions—while, methinks, a voice is speaking above the roar, ‘Thy doom of woe is sealed.’ Yes, there is no escape—I am hemmed in on every side—all, all is lost! But, ah! I see a light in the distance—the cloud breaks way—it is! it is the dawning of hope! O, blessed, blessed Hope! that ever comest to cheer—to break the heavy gloom! Without thee we were lost, indeed! Thy very emblem should be the noble form of the

great archangel, standing midway between heaven and earth, bearing in one hand the trumpet, to proclaim joyful tidings, and in the other, the golden torch, to light us o'er the rocks and shoals of life's uncertain, stormy ocean."

As Marianne concluded her soliloquy, she bent forward and buried her face in her hands, and for a few minutes remained thus motionless. A light, quick tap, at the door, startled her, and rising, she hurried thither with an agitated step, and, as she opened it, to learn the cause, a tall figure glided past her; as she turned to observe the intruder, the door was shut with violence, and quickly bolted, the lock sprung, and the key removed—all of which was the work of an instant, and completed ere she had time to recover from the astonishment caused by such proceedings.

"Great heavens! Merton! and here! What is the meaning of this?" cried she, in alarm, as she recognized in the individual before her the one previously alluded to, as being employed by the doctor to accomplish his hellish design.

He was a tall man, apparently about twenty-five years of age, rather high of forehead, of a dark complexion, black glossy hair, which he wore long, curled in a manner not unlike the gamblers and pick-pockets of the present day. His features were well formed, and by many would have been considered handsome; but there was an expression in his small black eyes, which was anything but

flattering in regard to his moral character.

"Hist!" replied he, in answer to her interrogation. "Pray, be seated. I merely came to have a few minutes' conversation with you; be not alarmed."

"But this is not the time nor place to talk with me, sir," returned she, sternly. "You forget I am a woman, and have a character to lose. Why is that door bolted and locked?"

"To prevent intrusion from without, and egress from within," replied Merton, coolly.

"Ha! your words have a secret meaning. What would'st thou with me?"

"Much."

"Say on."

"I would have thee mine."

"That can never be—thou hast had thy answer before. Go and leave me."

"But I say it *must* be so; thou must be mine."

"*Must!*" cried Marianne, contemptuously, drawing herself up to her full height. "Villain, begone, ere I expose thee to the contempt thy actions and thy words deserve. Go!"

"Nay, young lady, not so fast. Again I tell thee, thou *must* be mine," returned he, calmly and firmly. "Seek not to alter it—it is said."

"Art thou a man? Hast thou the feelings of a man?" said she, indignantly. "If so, *pride*, at least, should teach thee not to ask again of her who has thrice denied thee."

"Ay, my haughty beauty, *pride* has so taught me; and know I am not here to *ask*, but to command."

"What! dost thou dare heap insolence on insolence? Begone, or I will call my guardian."

"Then call, 'twill be in vain."

"Gracious heavens! What mean you?" exclaimed she, wildly, as a sudden thought flashed upon her.

"Well, then, I will tell you what I mean," replied he, deliberately folding his arms, and fastening his keen black eyes upon hers, until she shrank from their gaze as she would from those of the deadly serpent. "I will tell you what I mean. I am paid by your affectionate guardian, to dishonor you. For some reasons, unknown to myself, he considers such a course requisite. Whatever his reasons are, I care not; I have agreed to fulfill my part, and I am now here for that purpose. I pray you be resigned to your fate: there is no escape. Care has been taken to have all the servants absent; so that even should you be foolish enough to scream, which I trust you will not, it can reach the ears of none who will render you the least assistance."

"Oh, God! oh, God!" exclaimed she, "to what am I destined! But, no! no! you do not—you cannot mean what you say! My guardian, too, he would not thus attempt to destroy my peace forever."

"Lady, it is true—all I have said is true. Come, consent, peaceably; otherwise, force must be used."

"Fiend! tempter! devil! away

—away!" cried she, as he moved toward her. "Consent to my own degradation—consent to become a thing to be by honest people loathed! Never! Had I a thousand deaths to die, I'd die them all, sooner than be such a *thing!*"

There was a dignity in her manner—a holy fire in her eye (if we may so use the expression,) as she spoke, that overawed Merton, and for a moment the stubborn villain trembled before the innocent, helpless girl, as the culprit might be supposed to tremble before the judge about to give him his sentence. It was the secret power which virtue, at times, will exercise over vice. Recovering himself, in a moment—ashamed and angry at the cowardice thus displayed, and, as if to atone for this—he sprang toward her with the desperation of a madman, exclaiming—

"By heavens! I'll have thee now, nor hell itself shall wrench thee from my iron grasp, until thou art the *thing* thou loathest!"

With one wild scream of despair, Marianne sprang back, to elude his grasp—when, with a tremendous crash, the door parted in its very center, through which sprang a form with the rapidity of lightning, and, ere the startled occupants had time to comprehend the meaning, Merton, with a mighty blow, was stretched senseless upon the floor, and Marianne was caught to the bosom of Henry Neville.

Starting back, and looking wildly into his face, then rubbing her eyes, as if to assure herself it was reality,

Marianne rushed back to his arms, exclaiming—

"It is no dream! It is—it is my own dear Henry!" and overcome by the sudden transition from despair to joy, she fainted upon his breast.

"Yes, poor girl, it is thy Henry!" murmured he, as he bent over and implanted a kiss upon her marble-like forehead; and as he gazed upon her, and thought of the agony she must have suffered to work a change so visible in one short week, tears started to his eyes, and, for the moment, the man was as the child. But action was necessary, for Merton was fast returning to consciousness; and laying her gently upon the bed, he again bent over her and implanted a second kiss; at the same instant the sharp report of a pistol rang through the room, and, whizzing past his head, a ball was lodged in the wall a few feet beyond. Starting and whirling around, his gaze encountered Doctor Barton standing in the doorway.

"Ha! have I missed thee?" cried the doctor, with a look that, courageous as he was, made Henry's blood run chill, and for a moment held him in check. "I have missed thee? Then take that!" and dashing down the discharged pistol, he raised another, and deliberately glancing along the barrel, his finger touched the trigger. At this instant, when Henry's fate seemed inevitable, Barton's arm was beat down by some one from behind; and as the second report rang out, Merton, who was rising from where he had

been felled by Henry, uttered a groan, and fell back again, senseless, the ball having pierced his side.

"And would'st thou add murder to thy crimes?" cried a shrill voice in his ear, that made the doctor start and tremble—for well he remembered that voice, although its tone had been silent to him for fifteen years.

"Who speaks?" cried he, wheeling around and confronting the figure, already spoken of as overhearing the conference between the doctor and Cartene.

"Ay, well you may ask who speaks," said the woman, in a heavy, solemn voice. "'Tis the spirit of your victim, the mother of Marianne, which does and will speak to your guilty soul forever. Dost thou not remember her curse, if you wronged her daughter?"

"I do—I do!" replied the doctor, turning pale, his gaze sinking to the floor, for the moment losing his wonted self-control.

"Ah, you need not speak! Your pale countenance and downcast eye would tell as much," returned the woman. "*Remember*, that curse shall be fulfilled!"

"Who art thou, old hag?" cried the doctor, angrily, making an effort to appear collected. "Who art thou that durst enter my dwelling and talk to me thus?"

"Who am I? Canst thou not guess who I am? Behold!" As she spoke, she threw off the covering, and revealed her features to the doctor.

"Ha! Mary!" muttered the doctor, with a start; "It is as I suspected. So all my villainy will be discovered; but I may yet escape." Saying this, he turned and made for the stairs, down which he seemed to fly, rather than run, until he had nearly reached the bottom, when a misstep precipitated him upon the floor, and as he regained his feet, Henry (who had closely watched him during his conversation with Mary, and perceiving his intention, had sprung after him with the agility of a cat,) now seized him roughly by the collar, exclaiming—

"Hold! thou more than devil! Not thus shalt thou escape!" and, forcing him back in spite of his resistance, returned to the room of Marianne.

During his absence, which had been but a minute, Marianne had partly recovered from her swoon; and when he returned, Mary was bending over and unloosing her dress, to give her air, while the tears standing in her eyes told, far more than words, the feelings of her heart.

Starting up, like one awakened from a startling dream, yet doubts whether it be a dream or reality, Marianne gazed hurriedly around the apartment, and perceiving Henry and the doctor, the truth flashed upon her, a gentle blush mantled her cheeks, and sinking back, she murmured, "It is no dream." Then fastening her eyes upon Mary, they became riveted there, as though by a spell; her breathing came quick and heavy; and, partly rising, with-

out withdrawing her gaze, she gasped, "Who art thou? Surely—surely I have seen thy face before; yet when or where I cannot tell."

"Yes, child," said Mary, gently, "thou hast seen my face before, for I nursed thee when an infant. I was a servant in thy father's mansion, and stood beside the deathbed of thy mother."

"My father!" exclaimed she, "Oh! do not—do not mention him."

"And why not? His name was never sullied with dishonor."

"What!" gasped she; "Was he—was he—my—my legal father?"

"He was."

"Speak—speak!" cried Henry; "His name?"

"Count La Roix."

"Marianne!"

"Henry," cried she, rushing into his arms, "take me—take me—I am thine!" and locked in each other's embrace, for a moment the lovers forgot, in their ecstasy of joy, there was such a thing as mortality—and that it was but the word of a poor woman, and that woman a stranger, on which rested their hopes.

"Here is much mystery," said Henry, who was the first to speak. "I pray you, good woman, explain."

"Yes, I will explain," returned Mary; "but first, I would tell you, there (pointing to the doctor) stands the author of all your misery."

"My guardian!" said Marianne, affectionately. "Is it possible that you, who, until of late, have treated me thus kindly—is it possible that you can be that villain?"

"Yes, girl," replied the doctor,

calmly, "it is not only possible, but true. When I told you of your mother, I told you the truth but in part. I am the villain who seduced and brought her to an ignominious death; but you were then a child—a legal child of Count La Roix, late deceased, and by whom you not only inherit the title of Countess, but with it one million of francs, willed to you in case you married, or arrived at the age of eighteen—provided, there was no blemish upon your character; but, in case of that, or your decease, this fell to the next heir at law. This said heir at law, or his agent, learned that you lived with me, sought me out, and found me at a time when I expected every day my property to be torn from me by my creditors, laid his plan open to, and offered me an immense sum, could I succeed in staining your fair name. Goaded by my almost unnatural desire to obtain this money, in an evil moment I consented. How far I have succeeded, you already know. *Had* I succeeded, this night would I have sailed for France. But fate decreed it otherwise; I yield to fate."

"But why, dear guardian," said Marianne, tenderly,—"*why* did you listen to that villain, who was plotting against my eternal peace? Why did you not tell me of my name, and that I was an heiress? Half, willingly, would I have given you, had you required it, Ay, *all*, rather than you should have been thus dishonored. As yet, you can escape the eyes of the world. You say you would have sailed for France.

Go, then, now; if you lack the means, money shall be provided you. Go, live and repent, and become a better man." Ere she concluded, the tears rolled down her cheeks, and her voice became choked with emotion.

At first, the doctor listened calmly and coldly, as one who expects nothing but contempt and reproaches; but as he saw her disinterested kindness—saw the look of tenderness she cast upon him—his heart seemed to creep to his throat—tears started to his eyes—tears, the first he had shed for long, long years—and, unable to stand, he leaned against the wall for support.

"And you—you would have done this," said he, as soon as he recovered strength to speak. "You would do this—you would set me free—me, who have been plotting your destruction? Recall, recall those words—they pierce my heart like daggers. Say you hate, you loathe, detest, abhor me: I can bear anything but kindness, and that from you. Oh, God! what a wretch have I been!" and his whole frame shook, convulsed with inward emotions,

It was a noble sight, to see that dark, stern man, whose very heart had been but the receptacle of crime, trembling and affected even to tears by a few tender words of an innocent girl, and both Henry and Mary found it difficult to restrain the emotions caused by such a spectacle.

Recovering his former composure, and turning to Marianne, the doctor said, "Dear girl, had I met with such as you when I was young,

perchance I should have been saved the commission of crimes which are now weighing me down, as 'twere to hell; for already do I feel the fires of my coming torment—the seven times heated fires of a guilty conscience. You ask me to go and screen myself from the world: I will obey you, for I would not be held up to the public gaze. You ask me to repent and become a better man: that cannot be—my sins have reached even to heaven—my name is blotted from the book of life. Your mother's curse rings in my ears; for that must be fulfilled—and all, all, all is lost! But, ere I go, let me do one just act," and, approaching Marianne, he took her hand and placed it in that of Henry's. "You are worthy each of the other. May the blessings of heaven rest upon you! Farewell! farewell!"

Turning upon his heel, he had glided from the room ere the listeners were aware he had done speaking. They never saw him more. A short time after, a paragraph appeared in the papers, announcing the death, by suicide, of Dr. Barton; his name being discovered by papers found upon the body.

We must now draw our tale to a close. But little more need be said. Merton, upon examination, was found to be seriously, but not dangerously, wounded. He was taken to the hospital, where, after a long confinement, and much bodily and mental suffering, he recovered, reformed, and became a useful member of society.

Cartene, who, in fact, was "the

next heir at law," finding matters had taken a wrong turn, made for the South, where, in attempting to rob a bank, he was afterward shot.

Mary afterward related to the lovers, the whole particulars concerning herself and Marianne; but, as the reader is already acquainted with nearly all that appertains to our story, we will conclude by touching upon a few points. After the decease of Madame La Roix, Mary (although she had never made herself known to Marianne), had watched her in secret, according to the promise made to her mother when on her deathbed, and had written to Count La Roix, informing him of the whereabouts of his daughter. Passing through the Park, on the evening of Cartene's first introduction to the reader, she, by chance, heard the name of Marianne mentioned, and, observing the speaker closely, thought she recognized the features of Doctor Barton. Determined to be satisfied, she followed, and, as has already been seen, discovered the whole plot. Sending for Henry, she had explained to him, in part, how matters stood, which, together with what he had heard himself from the doctor, determined him to follow her advice. By bribing the servants, they had secreted themselves within the mansion on the evening in which the doctor had intended to complete his design. Finding the room which Marianne was to occupy, Henry had taken up his position near the door, provided with an axe, in case it should become necessary to force a

passage by splitting the door. He had seen Merton enter, but, fearing lest there might be some mistake, had anxiously waited without, until, hearing Marianne's scream, with one blow of his axe he severed the door, and rushed in just in time to save her. The doctor, who had also been anxiously awaiting the result of his scheme, hearing the noise, came to learn the cause, and perceiving how matters stood, enraged, and fearing lest his villainy should be exposed, attempted Henry's life, from which he was prevented, as has been shown, by Mary.

Doctor Barton's wife having been dead several years, his property was divided among his creditors, and in a few days from the foregoing events, the splendid mansion had passed into other hands. * * *

Years had rolled away, and in a

retired part of France, living in genteel, though not extravagant splendor, might be seen a gentleman and lady, who, whenever they went abroad, were generally accompanied by an elderly female, acting in the capacity of a servant, though treated as an equal. Had curiosity led you to inquire who they were, you would have received the appropriate, though somewhat singular answer, "The fair foreigners."

They mingled but little in society; occasionally an American called to see them, and was treated with much politeness. If Yankee curiosity led one to inquire of the gentleman "who was his wife previous to his marriage" (and occasionally it did), his answer invariably was, "When I wooed her, she was the UNKNOWN—when I won her, COUNTESS MARIANNE."

THE END.

THE OUTLAWS OF NEW YORK;

OR,

THE MYSTERIOUS MARKSMAN.

CHAPTER I.

Heat not a furnace for your foe so hot
That it doth singe yourself. We may outrun,
By violent swiftness, that which we run at,
And loose by overrunning.—SHAKESPEARE.

A BREAK, stormy night in the middle of December, 18—, ushers in the first features of our little story. The midnight storm swept madly onward, and every moveable object throughout the great metropolis, quivered fearfully before its desolating breath. Two men were seated on the fourth floor of a noted gambling house in the lower part of the city. They seemed to be conversing on a subject which had enlisted their feelings to such a degree that they noted not the ravings of the tempest, but appeared as indifferent to the surrounding commotion, as if the serenity of a summer's evening had been without.

A lamp, the oil of which had become nearly exhausted, threw a

sickly glare over the pale, but striking faces of the men, yet afforded not sufficient light to render objects visible at the extremities of the large and gloomy apartment. The fire in the grate had gone entirely out, for want of attention, and the gloom of the night, added to the incessant rattling of the windows in their shrunken casings, and the moan of the wind as it swept from the ocean, altogether rendered the scene indeed desolate. There were a few moments of silence in the room. It was broken by the younger of the two.

"Higgs, it's a ticklish undertaking, at best. That old Howard, you know, is a shrewd dog, and, my word for it, he will explode our whole plot, unless we go to work with cooler heads and steadier hands than we now carry."

"Oh, pshaw, Gilmore," replied the man addressed as Higgs, "I'll tend to that part of the business myself;

all I want of you is, to assist in the preliminaries."

"Well, you are welcome to the job; I crave it not; my part has been done in originating the scheme," said the former speaker, placing his elbow upon the table, and resting his forehead upon his hand.

You are right, it has, and half the spoils shall be your reward. Gilmore, you have the brains for a shrewd villain, but the heart you lack."

"Villain! I am a villain, but it was not myself that made me so. It was that woman; that faithless, faithless Florence!" and as the man spoke, over his usually gloomy countenance there passed a deeper shade of sadness. "When, oh! when," he continued, after a moment's pause, "Florence, dearest, beloved Florence, thou, who hast been to me the source of so much happiness and so much misery, when can I banish thy image from my memory! Ah! I fear not till the hand of death shall still these limbs, and the cold earth grow moldy round my flesh."

"Stop, man! you break the thread of our scheme," exclaimed Higgs; "I must hear more of that Florence matter, by the bye, when our business will give us a breathing spell. What did you say the girl's portion was? old Howard's daughter, I mean. Now don't get her mixed up with that confounded Florence you are talking so much about."

"Fifty thousand dollars."

"When to be delivered?"

"On the day of her marriage."

"Has she any suitors yet?"

"No, not that I can learn."

"If she has, I can soon dispose of them," said the elder gambler, Higgs, while a grim and meaning smile softened, for a moment, the rigid compression of his thin, colorless lips. "That pistol, there, has never failed to do my bidding yet."

"Stop, stop! Higgs, no more hints of that kind, or I leave you. Bad as I am, I loathe this murdering of our fellow men — our brothers, from my very soul. There shall be none of it where I am. I may take a man's money in fair play, but his blood, never!"

"You have a womanish heart. Gilmore, but no matter, your scruples shall be regarded for you have got the long arm of the lever. You say old Howard will have her marry no one unless he be a minister, do you?"

"Yes. He is fully determined on that point; at least so says the fellow of whom I have the principal part of my information. He says if she marries any body but an Episcopalian preacher, she marries against his will, and portionless."

"Did you ever see the girl?"

"No," replied Gilmore.

"No matter; reach me that book from yonder shelf; it has the bishop's autograph on the thirtieth page; I shall need to use his name as a recommendation — now give us a pen and ink, and a sheet of that foolscap, and I'll show you what can be done in the line of counterfeiting."

Gilmore did as desired. The

other then turned to the autograph of the bishop's name, looked hard at it an instant, seized the pen, wrote slowly along a line of the paper, then jumped up, exclaiming,

"There, I've hit it! yes, by heavens! right! right! Look, Gilmore! the devil himself can't find an iota's difference between them!"

"Perfect! perfect!" exclaimed Gilmore, as his eye fell upon the counterfeit of the bishop's name. "The old man himself would not deny it."

"Well, now for the recommendation to go over the name. That is going to pinch me, but I'll try," and he again plied the quill; and in a short time, with a loud laugh, drew back from the table, and said:

"Give us your ears a moment, here's fun for you."

"SARATOGA SPRINGS, Dec. 1, 18—."

"BROTHER HOWARD:"

"Dear Sir;—This is to make you acquainted with the bearer, Rev. Wm. Johnson. He is a man every way worthy of your confidence and esteem, as a private citizen, and meritorious, in an eminent degree, as a member of our church."

"Yours truly, B. T. O."

"Bishop of New York."

"Well done! well done, Higgs! It will be a sure key to the old man's respect and patronage."

"Yes, the girl and the portion are mine! Aglorious haul! \$50,000! only think of it! You deserve rewarding for this plot of yours."

"Not for the plot," solemnly re-

turned Gilmore, the same sadness as before mantling his features; "not for the plot, but for the stings of conscience which it causes me to suffer. I loathe the injustice we must practice in order to effect its consummation. Oh, God! that misfortune and oppression had not torn from my heart its purity, and blasted forever the nobility of my nature! Then the felon's mark had never been stamped upon this brow; then dishonesty and crime had never found a home in this bosom. Then my eyes would not cower, and their lids fall, when my fellow men look into my face."

"Curse your misfortune and your fellow men! you prate too much of honesty, man. You must quit it, or else leave off this business, and put your words to practice."

"I intend to leave it off when an opportunity offers, and —"

"But there! two strokes of the city clock! It is time we are abed if we wish good eyes for the morrow's work. I shall make my attempt to-morrow at one o'clock in the afternoon," and the two gamblers left the apartments for their lodgings in the upper part of the city.

A word or two here respecting the personages whom we have introduced to the notice of the reader, may, for a time, break the regular chain of our narrative, yet we are confident great advantage will result from it in the end. Samuel Higgs, the elder of the two, possessed a tall, slim, but lofty form, which was calculated, combined with his handsome and rather noble

countenance, to inspire the regard and even the admiration, at least, of strangers, who knew not of the moral darkness which slept beneath the deceptive brilliancy of the outer man. Although quite young in appearance, he was, in truth, verging somewhat closely to the meridian of life. He seemed, from every external indication, created for a better destiny than dealing cards and shaking dice. But, as it has often been said, the outside of the casket is not always a sure guide by which to judge of the quality of its contents. Though it sparkle with the loveliness of a thousand gems, a serpent within may be concentrating his venom for some fated victim; so with Samuel Higgs. Notwithstanding, an observer would have pronounced him formed to govern men, and hold the reins of empire, still his heart contained not a noble quality. Base, selfish, and corrupt, and withal, extremely cunning and shrewd, he would stoop to any means, employ any stratagem, no matter how degrading and brutal, for the accomplishment of his objects, and of this fact the reader will have many striking evidences, if he but takes the trouble to follow us through the dark and romantic windings of our truthful and unpretending story. From his very childhood he had been distinguished for his idle and dissipated habits, for his love of perilous adventures and his strong dislike of everything in the shape of schools. Still, notwithstanding all his defects, Higgs' mind was naturally strong

and vigorous, and with cultivation might have been an ornament to the most elevated literary circle. Uneducated as he was, he understood human nature perfectly, and knew well the ways of the higher as well as those of the lower classes of society.

Lionel Gilmore was in all respects, save in the loftiness of his stature and the nobleness of his countenance, the opposite of his associate. The habitual look of sadness which his handsome features ever wore, indicated him somewhat above his actual age; for, although he was now but five-and-twenty, an observer would have been very liable to have extended that number. Not a smile, no matter what the occasion might be, ever irradiated his pale face. There seemed to be a pall of grief spread over his mind which instantly smothered every attempt at mirthfulness. The only defect in his appearance, was the loss of the little finger of his left hand. He was a man with a whole soul, and he loved humanity. The few evil qualities of his nature had been forced into being by the oppression of untoward circumstances, and not nurtured by the inclinations of his own originally noble and spotless bosom.

Born in affluent circumstances, and surrounded by every advantage for intellectual advancement, he passed through the earlier period of life undisturbed by the cares and perplexities incident to the trying vicissitudes of poverty. But clouds were just gathering to blot the

brightness of his youthful anticipations. Enough of him at present.

Col. Howard, to whom a portion of the foregoing conversation related, was a man whose cheeks the approach of age was wrinkling, and whose head the touch of time had already whitened. He was immensely rich, and had become so by his own independent exertions. He was poorly educated, but like many others, he had a powerful mind to supply that defect. He mingled not in the higher walks of life. The great aim and object of his existence had ever been to advance the interests of his own favorite church,—the Episcopalian. He had made his will. After giving his daughter (not his own daughter, but the child of his second wife, who was a widow when he married her, and who had died a year before the opening of the story), a beautiful woman of twenty-two, \$50,000, to be delivered on the day of her marriage, the residue was to be appropriated to the interests of the church. There was a proviso in the will which rendered it obligatory upon the daughter, if she received her portion, to marry a minister. Col. Howard loved his daughter with a depth of affection which an only, amiable and beautiful child can create in the paternal bosom. Although he was immoveably fixed in his determination of having her marry a preacher, still, he was as strongly determined not to unite her with a man unworthy of so fair and virtuous a being; and Col. Howard's penetrating mind was well capaci-

tated for discrimination on that point. The reader has doubtless inferred, from the tenor of the foregoing conversation, that Higgs and Gilmore were engaged in a plot, the ultimate object of which was, to secure the portion of the Colonel's daughter. Higgs was to assume the habiliments and dignity of an Episcopal preacher, and, protected by that shield, lay claim to her hand. We have seen that he had taken the name of William Johnson, and he intended to place great dependence on the forged letter of introduction from the bishop, which forgery we have witnessed.

CHAPTER II.

The mind is full of curious changes
That perplex itself,
Just like the visible world; and the heart ebbs,
Like the great sea—first flows and then retires,
And on the passions doth the spirit ride,
Through sunshine and in shade, from good to ill,
Then to deep vice, and soon back to virtue.

HARRY CORNWALL.

"WHAT success, Higgs?" asked Gilmore, inquiringly, as the two gamblers met at their accustomed rendezvous on the following morning.

"Success?" replied Higgs, "none better could be wished for. How the thing works! Old Howard received me as graciously as he would have done the Governor of the State. The web is well spun, Lionel; we have them!"

"But what of the woman?" asked Gilmore; "you know I take a

deep interest in that part of the race, though they have treated me as a man is seldom treated."

"Ah! the girl! 'Twont do to speak irreverently of her, by the life! She is almost too beautiful to make game of! I shall have to look well to my heart, or I shall fall in love with the vixen myself, rock as I am. Ah! those eyes! Lionel, they are enough to turn a man's brain. When they meet mine, I seem lost to all other objects, and swallowed up in the pleasing spell of their mysterious fascination. The colonel introduced me to her as the Rev. William Johnson. After a long and pleasant visit, I left, promising to repeat my call, day after to-morrow evening."

He did call, and the following morning the two men were seated in the gambling-room where we first found them.

"Now comes the difficulty!" said Higgs, after he had remained for some moments in deep and silent thought; "now comes the difficulty! I confess that I am staggered for once. The old fellow has pulled a string I hadn't dreamed of."

"What now?" inquired Gilmore, leaning forward, with some little surprise depicted in his countenance.

"Why, the confounded old serpent has requested me to preach the coming Sabbath, three weeks, in the First Episcopal Church—its pastor, he told me very coolly, will then be absent. You see the pickle we are in. Blast it!"

"Ah! there's preaching to be done, then," said Gilmore, resuming his

position in his chair, without evincing any unusual anxiety in his language or appearance. "Well, I knew you would have to undergo something of the kind, but it can be easily got along with, sir."

"What! Your eyes see things differently from mine, then; for, by the saints! I see no way of getting out of the cursed snare; for, preach, I can't, no more than a dead horse. Preach! I could raise the dead as soon!"

"Don't say that, man! You must preach: I will do the writing, and you must do the preaching."

"The deuce! I never spoke in public," returned Higgs, with a shrug which clearly indicated his consciousness of his own incapacity for the performance of the required ministerial duties.

"No matter, you must do it now, or else give up all hopes of the \$50,000, and starve with me."

"That I'll not do, by heavens!"

"Well, then, I will have you a sermon prepared between this and the appointed Sabbath. Preach you must."

"That will do, and —"

"Stop," interrupted Gilmore, "let us bethink ourselves of what we are doing. Had we not better throw up the whole scheme; what think you?"

"Throw up the whole scheme," repeated Higgs, in the utmost surprise. "How is that, man? No, no, not while I have life and limbs! Throw up the scheme? By the gods! a pretty suggestion for you to make! Ha! ha! Women, or the devil, have made a fool of you."

Lionel noticed not the latter allusion, but continued:

"Think of the injury we shall be inflicting on that innocent woman, and that aged father. Had I not been so wronged by woman, this plot had never found an originator in me. I once loved them with all that fervent passion and devoted affection, to which I then thought their noble and almost divine natures, their personal loveliness, their delicate and sensitive temperaments justly entitled them. But that love, alas! Higgs, has been forever crushed, annihilated, by the cruel infidelity of one; and my heart, save that it flutters with the little remnant of life yet left it, lies here in my breast, no better than so much lead. Oh, Florence! why did'st thou forever destroy my happiness, by banishing me forever from thy presence? Why did'st thou make my earthly sunlight, gloom; my manliness, brutality; my hopes, the hopes of the doomed? Ah, why, why, Florence? I might have been respected and happy, and not the despised outcast that I am."

"Hold, man, an explanation," interrupted Higgs. "For four long years have you been muttering that woman's name, and yet I know not what you mean by it. An explanation."

"Well you shall have the story. It is long, but to me sad, and I think will be to you thrilling;" and as Gilmore spoke, a shade of melancholy stole over his pale but handsome features, seemingly to tell that what he was about to say would

call up to his mind, from the past, many a gloomy and mournful reminiscence.

CHAPTER III.

Worcester.—Peace, cousin, say no more,
And now I will unclasp a secret book,
And to your quick conceiving discontents,
I will read you matter deep and dangerous.
SHAKESPEARE.

WELL, it was six years ago this fall, when I was in my nineteenth year, that I first saw the beautiful, the sylph-like, the enchanting Florence Hamilton. This was in Boston, where, you remember, I formerly resided. There was something in her melting look, her sweet voice, her graceful and unaffected motions, that was perfectly fascinating, and so entirely different from all others I had ever before seen, or have ever since seen, that I never, never shall forget them. I succeeded in getting an introduction to her. I was requested to call at her father's mansion. On the following day I did so, and was received with the utmost cordiality. Time passed on, and I continued my calls. I was deeply in love with Florence, and she reciprocated my affections. Oh, the short-lived bliss! The ephemeral ecstasy of love! Yet man knows no such pleasure on earth, as when he feels that he is loved by a good and beautiful girl. We were mutually pledged to a union. One evening, just a week before my hopes of happiness were to be

realized, a boy entered my room and handed me a small letter. I recognized the hand-writing of Florence in the superscription; I tore it open, glanced over its contents, and my very heart seemed instantly to freeze within me. My face became locked and rigid, as if death had breathed upon it, and my breath, in hot currents, came heavily from my fevered lungs. Florence had forbidden me ever again entering her father's house. She stated that it was unnecessary for her to assign reasons for this singular prohibition, as they must already be known to myself. For several minutes, I sat like a figure of granite, my starting eyeballs piercing vacancy, with the wild intensity of madness. Then I sprang to my feet and darted from my room. It was ten o'clock. I shot through the dense darkness with a speed which I never knew before that I possessed. I stood pale, specter-like, nearly breathless at the outer door of the Hamilton mansion. With a frenzied clutch, I seized the bell knob. Startlingly pealed its agitated tones through the quiet apartments of the building. Loud steps hurriedly approached. The key turned—the door opened, and the bright glare of a lamp streamed into the darkness.

"Ho, beggar! off with yourself," instantly exclaimed the servant, who was a huge, bony white man, in the full strength of life's prime. "Off, off, I say, beggar! Old Jowler's collar shall soon be slipped, and by-the-bye, his jaws have little mercy

in them. They took half a man's calf from his leg but two nights back."

"Scoundrel! insulter! back!" exclaimed I, as in the recklessness of my anger, I drew my Spanish stiletto, and dashed, with an effort that wrenched my very joints, at the massive menial. In a second his life blood would have left his veins, had not a tremendous blow, from his heavy fist knocked me backward, blind and senseless as a lump of inanimate matter. I tumbled down the steps and crashed to the pavement, and the blood came in streams from my nose and stood in dark crimson gouts on the cold marble. How long I lay there I know not.

I awoke. A dead heavy pain was at my brain. Weak, stiff, and icy were my limbs. I threw my eyes about me as far as their weakness could penetrate the gloom. The stillness of death was around me. Not a footstep echoed from the pavement, which, a few hours ago, had been dark and dense with changing waves of human beings. It was the depth of midnight; the menial had long since gone, and the ponderous door closed up, seemed to bid a stubborn defiance to every attempt at entrance. I drew my lame limbs up the marble steps, grasped the silver knob, and pushed forward with all my remaining strength. It was a childish desperation. The barrier moved not. Uttering a cry, the infantile weakness of which, I now blush to remember, I planted my knee with desperate force against one of the broad pannels. It snapped

and gave back. A repetition of the stroke dashed it from its frame, and I darted through the opening, rushed ghost-like across the hall, and in a breath mounted the stairs and stood in the apartment of my beloved Florence. You remember that I was then as near a maniac as it is possible for a man to be.

She had not retired, but was sitting by a table with a pen in her hand. I had never seen her look so pale. The agony that must have convulsed her mind when she wrote me that fatal letter, had left its scathing traces on her lovely face, and forbade the hope of sleep. The moment I threw open the door, aroused and terrified by my unexpected, unearthly appearance, and the noise I had created, she uttered a frantic scream of terror. My appearance was now indeed terrific, nay, hideous. My hat was gone, my countenance must have been frightfully pale and haggard, my hair disheveled, hung about my brow and eyes, my clothes were beamed with the filth of the pavement, and my face, and neck, and collar, and bosom, ghastly and repulsive with the blood which the menial's fist had drawn. In this condition I made toward Florence. A second cry, more piercing and heart-paining than the first, came from her lips.

"Speak, villain!" exclaimed she, in a resolute yet agitated voice, "who are you? who is it that dares to intrude in this manner, and at this hour of the night, on the sanctity of my room?"

"None but Lionel Gilmore, dearest Florence; dost thou fear me?" replied I, with as much calmness in my manner, and kindness in my tone, as I could possibly command in the unnerving circumstances of the case.

"Away! away gambler! sensualist! away!" exclaimed Florence, with renewed energy. "Get thee instantly from my presence. Baseness and perfidy cannot exist with innocence and purity. Begone, and never again let me see thee!" and she gave additional force and meaning to these energetic expressions, by a graceful wave of her hand toward the door.

"Great God! has it come to this!" exclaimed I in a paroxysm of agony, that caused the cold sweat to come out and mingle with the blood on my face. Has it come to this! will you not listen one moment, one instant, to one whose only wish on earth is for thy welfare, thy safety! whose idol, whose soul, whose life, thou art! will you not, Florence? will you not listen? will you not let me explain?"

"Villain! leave my apartment, I say!" reiterated she, "leave it this moment! Long enough have I been deceived by your false, hypocritical tongue! leave me!"

For a moment, I stood as speechless and stiff as if frozen into that motionless attitude. My blood grew cold at its fountain, and chilled through my heaving arteries, an omen of coming dissolution. Then the holier qualities began to vanish. Something like momentary hatred

for the scornful being I had ever before so much adored and idolized, began to assume the place of love. I rushed forward, threw my arms about her delicate waist, and pressed her to my bosom with a pressure that must have been almost painful. She sank in my arms like a child, and made no effort to escape. She had fainted. I printed a burning kiss on her cold and marble-like brow, and laid her gently on the sofa. Oh God! Higgs, when I now look out over the world, and see so many selfish and ignoble hearts, twined about and supported by the undying tendrils of female affection; oh God! it makes me sick, I say, to think that one with all my noble and generous impulses, born to love and to be loved, is doomed to stand forever in the waste of life, a blasted, solitary, loathsome thing, without the light of woman's eye to brighten the gloom, or the melody of her voice to enliven the solitude of my earthly pilgrimage.

I had barely time to lay down my precious burden, when I was startled by the echo of a hurried tread, accompanied with loud vociferations from below.

"Ho here! what means! man, beast, or demon, ho!" roared the same gruff, and disagreeable voice I had previously heard at the outer door. "What leg of Satan has had the impudence to enter here, without so much as putting a knuckle to the door? By the breath of Bacchus, his skull shan't lack air holes!"

His heavy tread was on the stairs. I seized the hilt of my little wea-

pon. I threw my eyes around for some means of escape. I saw none. I feared I was too weak, from loss of blood, to resist the strong menial. I approached a window and attempted to throw it up. Nothing stirred but the piece of sash which my fingers grasped. I turned, rushed through the door, and reached the head of the stairs. The dark form of the gigantic servant grinningly confronted me. A long, heavy billet of wood, whistled twice about his head, then it came toward me with a force and swiftness that seemed to carry annihilation in its course. I dropped my head, and it passed harmlessly by, leveling a door in the rear. A moment an inhuman scowl, caused by his unexpected foilment, threw its ominous gloom over the haggard contour of the servant's visage, then changed into a settled, withering look of vengeance.

"I have you!" said he, in a low, stern, chilling voice; "I have you! Move a limb if thou art tired of life, and would end its journey."

Actions, not words, answered these nonchalant expressions. I saw him feel for his knife—I dashed toward the massive front of my huge antagonist. It seemed like the impotent onset of a summer storm on the immovable front of the mountain; but desperation, and the unconquerable fear of death, lent me unnatural strength and impetuosity. A deep, guttural yell; a prolonged, death-like, unearthly groan—a sudden, heavy crash upon the stairs, told the fearful work of

my weapon. Down, down rolled the bleeding trunk of the giant, marking its way by a line of crimson which sent up its visible exhalations.

CHAPTER IV.

There are two kinds of hearts in woman.
One loves merely with strong and passionate embrace;

The other trusts its all, stakes life on love,
With deathless ardor clasps one idle prop;
And in its breaking—breaks.

Mrs. SIGOURNEY.

LIKE a maniac, I plunged down. Soon the noise of my trembling and irregular steps on the pavement broke the dead stillness of the slumbering city. The dawn of morning was fast approaching. The sun, kindling in the fullness of his perfect glory behind the summits of the eastern mountains, now began to pencil his lines of gold on the spotless azure of the orient. I entered my room. I glanced round its confines, my eye rested on a cord, which hung from a nail in the further corner; I hesitated a moment, then took it down, made a slip-noose in one end, and attached the other to a ring in the ceiling, from which a chandelier had been suspended.

"This shall end my sorrows!" I murmured; "this shall put a period to my miseries and wrongs! This shall be the refuge of a murderer! a dear refuge—a cordial that will heal."

"Ha!" exclaimed Higgs, "Ha!

then you had the nonsense to believe, with hundreds of others who have choked themselves out of the world, that a bedcord could wipe from the heart the venom of sorrow, eh? Tush! I had believed thee of more sense. A halter is a pretty remedy for a diseased mind! Insure a hot bath in Tophet for the sake of fleeing a shadow, eh? Nice business! As well might the physician cut the throat he is healing, or the disabled lion drink his lifeblood from his own wounds."

"He who knows not what sorrow is, may reason logically against its preventives," replied Gilmore. "Higgs, when the world shall present to the vision of your inner life—your soul—the appearance of insupportable gloom which it has presented to me—when the earth shall be to you an unilluminated dungeon, cold, dreary, and comfortless; its sweetest pleasure canker to the heart—its joys, griefs; when the sun shall have no grandeur, the stars no beauty, the faces of men no smiles—when the bloom of the spring flower shall be pale and sickly, the verdure of the field faded, and the foliage of the forest sere and yellow, even at the noontide of summer, then, and not till then, will you believe that suicide is a necessity. I have seen times when one universal frown seemed gathering over the face of humanity, turning all loveliness to corruption, and freezing up forever every visible spark of earthly divinity. You may not have seen such times."

"No, and I've more than a small

amount of doubt that I shall ever see the day which you have just described," coolly replied Higgs, at the same time crossing his legs, and relighting his cigar, which, owing to the interest he had taken in his comrade's narrative, he had allowed to go out unconsciously. "The glass which you see things through, doesn't suit my organs of vision exactly. God made men for other uses than to turn life into a graveyard, or to curl up, like vegetables in a frost, and whine out existence. But above all, for a man to be smashed outright by a mere woman! Ha, ha! The thing is laughable; by jings. But go on with your hanging. I am sure of one thing; that the hemp didn't quite stop your breath, or 'tis quite probable you'd not now be telling the story."

"I stood up in the chair and adjusted the cord to my neck. I clasped my hands across my breast, and offered a silent, fervent prayer to the God of the sorrow-stricken. I prayed for forgiveness."

"Bah! prayed for forgiveness! when you were committing a crime against God and yourself that would have made Satan himself shudder. But I'm interrupting you."

"No matter. I then shoved the chair from under me, and dropped, I supposed, into the mysteries of eternity. The hard cord drew fearfully tight around my neck. The burning blood dashed swiftly through my arteries, toward my head, but, stopped by the cord, it rushed back and seemed to drown my heart.

Blind and suffocating, I began to feel the last pang of death creeping through my frame—my limbs shivered, and my bloodless hands became clenched and cold. A faint sound broke on my nearly deafened ears. With all the little might I yet possessed, I strained my dim and blood-shot vision; I caught the indistinct outline of a human form—I knew no more. Reason and consciousness had fled. I awoke—I lay on the floor, the cord still about my neck, imbedded in the swollen flesh. I examined it. The strands had been severed by a knife. But whose hand had done it, I know not. An unsolved mystery has shrouded that matter to this day. I rose slowly to my feet with extreme difficulty; my frame was weak and languid, and my head racked by a darting pain. Broad and clear, through the unstained glass of the casement streamed the golden rays of the summer sun, which a short time before I had thought never again to look upon. I crawled, as the nearly lifeless might crawl, to the window. It was high noon, and the sun threw down a boundless flood of silver light from the zenith of the firmament. I was, now that I had time for cool thought, actually glad that I had not succeeded in taking my own life. I expected every moment to be arrested for the murder of the servant. But, notwithstanding this, I determined to proceed to my boarding-house, as my physical debility strongly demanded sustenance."

"How happened it that you remained so long unarrested, from

morning till noon?" asked Higgs; "I should judge the police of old Boston slow at anger."

"I know not, unless it was the unfrequented and retired location of my room."

"Go on with your narrative."

"I accordingly removed the rope from the flesh which had settled over it—I washed all the blood from my person, changed my linen, and habited myself in an elegantly finished suit of clothes, which I had never before worn. I swallowed a glass of wine, which greatly strengthened me, and sallied forth to the street. I had gained Tremont, and was making my way up it as rapidly as possible, when, happening to look a little distance forward, I saw a policeman coming swiftly toward me. His practiced eye was upon me. Escape was impossible. I looked to the right, to the left, in front, in rear, and shuddered! The one death which I had always dreaded more than a thousand other deaths, glared me in the face with inevitable certainty. I fled not, but with a firm tread I held my way toward the stern agent of the law. I approached him—passed him—

"Hold! fellow!" suddenly exclaimed he, turning round. "A word with you, sir!"

"I tried to suppress the external evidence of my mental agitation; but in spite of my strongest efforts, I felt my chin quiver."

"Can you tell a man of the whereabouts of one Lionel Gilmore?" continued he. "I am a policeman,

bear in mind, so have a care to the words you use."

"What! the murderer of the Hamilton servant?" exclaimed I, in apparent astonishment.

"None other, sir."

"Think you I hold intercourse with murderers?" I quickly replied. "Sir, you have detained me too long already. Much better would it be, for you to let your own eyes do your searching, and not depend upon those of others."

"Come, come, lad, none of your speeches here," returned the officer, with a frown that indicated the inhuman malignity of his temper. "Speak to the point, now, and no saunce, or sixty days of bread and water may pay you for your trouble. My calling is an important one and won't bear trilling with."

"Scoundrell! knowest thou to whom thou art having the audacity to address thyself?" exclaimed I, with warmth, approaching to anger.

"It matters not. The law is not apt to judge a man by the weight of his purse, nor is it over likely to show any special favors to broad-cloth. The law cuts off the heads of the big as well as the little, when they deserve it."

"Be away, and detain me no longer, if thou would'st not have the vengeance of that law, which thou dost enforce on others, enforced on thyself."

"See here, see here, Sir Consequence," replied the officer, "see here, sir, I am a policeman, and words of that kind have little effect on me, so you can save your threats

for another time. I shall begin to take you for the criminal himself soon. I like not the motion of that under jaw, nor the paleness of that complexion. They speak plain language, and I read not a little in them. Look well, now, that your tongue-music don't get you noosed."

"Ha! ha!" laughed I, "then a man cannot fall from the wharf, and consequently, shiver with the cold, without being suspected of murder, eh? Beautiful times we have fallen upon! beautiful indeed!"

"Off with your hat, sir, and let me see your hair."

I did as requested.

"Ha! the dryness of those locks speak poorly for the truth of your assertion, stripling."

"Time and warmth can dry."

"So can they stop chills and red-den paleness. Youngster, you must go with — noise there! Ho! what means that noise? the d—!" and as these sudden exclamations fell from his lips, he turned round toward the source of the noise which had aroused his attention. Two officers, leading a tall, noble-looking youth, followed by a long, riotous crowd of boys and men, had just turned round the corner of a neighboring street.

"We've got him! we've got him!" shouted several voices in the rear; "the murderer of the servant. The dog will make us a good show on the scaffold! along with him."

The prisoner, who had been arrested on suspicion of committing the crime which I myself had committed, gave, by his noble attitude

and manly step, no evidence of agitation. It is true, his face was death-like in its paleness, but, as his dark, understanding eye roved back over the ignorant and brutal multitude, nothing but the pure radiance of conscious innocence, and the hope of final triumph, beamed from the beautifully molded lineaments of his handsome countenance. My confronter, now concluding that he was mistaken in his suspicions of me, turned away, without saying a word, and joined his two comrades. That evening I left Boston, the city of my troubles. I departed, however, with the intention of not letting the young stranger die for the deed which I had committed. But I soon after learned that the servant's wounds, although pronounced mortal, did not prove to be so; for he recovered, and there the matter rests."

"A long, but interesting narrative," said Higgs; "have you ever been in Boston since?"

"No."

"Did you ever see me while you resided in Boston?"

"No, to be sure not. Did you ever reside in Boston?"

"Yes, awhile, some years ago."

"You never knew Florence Hamilton?"

"No; I never heard a breath of her till I heard it from you to-day." Although Higgs said this with all the candor of truth, still he was well aware of its utter falsity; for the reader will yet learn that he had well known, and had no little to do with Florence Hamilton

"I do not understand who it could have been that cut you down so mysteriously, when you tried to hang yourself," continued Higgs.

"Would to God I knew!" ejaculated Gilmore.

In the next chapter, we will go back and take up the regular train of our story, passing over three weeks, however, from the time of Gilmore's relating his adventures, and bring the attention of the reader up to the Saturday night following the Sabbath on which Higgs was to act the preacher.

CHAPTER V.

When ingratitude, that sin of upstarts,
And vice of cowards, once takes root, a thou-
sand

Base and groveling crimes cling round its mon-
strous growth,

Like ivy to old oaks, to shield their rotteness.
MADDEN.

His guilt alone,
Like brain-sick frenzy, in its feverish mood,
Fills the light air with visionary terrors,
And shapeless forms of fear. FRANCIS.

MIDNIGHT in New York! How strong and various the sensations created by the contemplations of that solemn hour, when taken in connection with a mighty city! Over what poverty and wealth, what misery and happiness, what wretchedness and luxury, swept that chilling January wind! Anon it dashed against the massive marble front of the millionaire's mansion, and then rolled back with an angry roar, and went whistling away

through the tottering tenement of the starving beggar, stealing off his filthy rags like a thief in the dark. There were the revelers in the full light of their boisterous merriment, and beyond a thin partition of brick and mortar, lay the dying child, watched over by the undying constancy of a mother's love. Here was the man of wealth slumbering peacefully on his luxurious couch, and there the soulless and ragged miser, in his damp cellar, stirring up his glittering heaps to keep them from rusting.

On this January night, down a filthy lane, walled on either hand by a compact row of half decayed, paintless wooden buildings, stole a mysterious looking figure, with a step so light that it gave back no audible echo. Soon he turned suddenly to the left, followed the windings of a slippery path, turned again, proceeded several rods, passed down a flight of rotten steps, and knocked at a little oaken door. After giving satisfactory answers to several questions, put by a rough voice within, the door was unbarred, and the unknown entered.

"Ho! here then are you, Higgs!" said the man within, as he removed the bar and cautiously drew back the door. "Well is it that ye are here as ye are, though it be an hour after the time. Slow clods do you carry at the end of your legs, to be so long in measuring these few rods, though. But little life have you in your blood."

"Come, come, fellow, keep thy tongue behind thy teeth!" said

Higgs, (for it was he) a little riled by the disrespectful language of the other. "I did not come to hear you preach; I have business of more importance; and I want to hire your knife, and not your tongue."

"My knife is not so easy hired," said the outlaw, grumly, while a freezing smile ran for an instant over his forbidding visage, like a dying puff of wind over a turbid pool.

"Silence, fool, or you lose the job, and some one who will obey me has it!" exclaimed Higgs, with that kind of unreal anger which a man will often exhibit toward those he considers far beneath him in talent and respectability.

"Ha! ha!" laughed the grim cut-throat, "an eagle can take the fish from the beak of a fish-hawk. My whisper is as good in a law-dog's ear as any other man's. You see I have you by the foretop; you see it."

"Oh, Wyatt, take no offense, at the little I have said," replied Higgs, now from motives of fear anxious for a reconciliation with his lawless and desperate companion. "We two must keep on good terms, for we are kind of props to each other; knock out one, and both our foundations go through."

"Well, get a seat there, and I'll sift your proposals."

They both seated themselves on a rough bench, the only furniture, with the exception of an unplanned hemlock table and a small, dirty bed, which the little, dingy apartment contained.

Nature, always careful in the adaptation of her numerous children to their particular spheres and circumstances in life, seemed to have been unusually judicious in the case of Wyatt. She had not only given him for his lawless occupation a hideous deformity of external appearance, but had also supplied him with a shrewdness of mind which his outer man, strikingly belied. His arms were long, crooked, and unwieldy, but nature had wrapped up within them bones and muscles which were nearly resistless in their strength, and startling in the inconceivable elasticity of their movements. His right shoulder protruded some distance further beyond his body than the left, and the perpetual attitude of his long, wiry, and muscular neck, was an inclination of about forty-five degrees forward. His dark, tangled beard, relieved by now and then an irregular sprinkling of silver, swept his bosom in a careless mass, and added a double savageness to his otherwise barbarous mien. Forehead, he had none. Nothing of the kind was visible, save a narrow stripe of white just above the eyebrows; but that little stripe contrasted strangely in its marble whiteness, with the forbidding darkness which shrouded every other feature of his countenance. In his gray eyes was a fire, terrible and withering. He had long before obtained a widespread notoriety in the city, for his numerous and skillfully conducted burglaries, and for his tact and ingenuity in eluding the various

stratagems which, from time to time, had been brought into requisition for his capture.

"Now I am ready for a glimpse of the work you would have me to do," said he, addressing Higgs, as they seated themselves on the bench.

"You know Lionel Gilmore," said Higgs, with a twinge of the lower lip.

"Ay, well; and it will take more money to buy the spilling of that man's blood, at my hands, than that of any other man treading the footstool of God. He is a good soul! There is not one among a thousand like him. He has more credits than charges in God's account book."

"What! what, sir? Do you refuse to do the deed?" said Higgs, bringing his hand down upon the table with a force that made it tremble. "I have been mistaken in thee. Thou hast something of a heart; till now I had thought otherwise. Do you refuse, I say, to kill—kill—" and the words stuck in the gambler's throat.

"No, no, not if the pay be round," interrupted the desperado. "I would drink my own mother's blood, for gold enough to square the cost and rack of conscience, or stop my only sister's breath."

"That sounds manly again; I like your spunk. What sum do you demand for taking his life?"

"Five thousand dollars."

"Too much, man, too much, by heavens! Five thousand dollars! A dear charge for a minute's work."

"Say no more, then, go your way," returned the outlaw, dryly.

"Stop, be not so fast—I will give you four thousand. By heavens! more money than a man can earn honestly, at labor, in a lifetime."

"You know my terms; accede to them, or make tracks, quick! Stir! stir! I would try the virtue of my bed."

"Man, you are unreasonable—tyrannical. Look at the difference. A man will delve the earth for half a century for a fourth of the sum which you ask for doing a job, even the bare moment that it lasts, not half so laborious and wearing as his."

"Delving soil is not opening men's veins, you should have the sense to know, my good friend. Cutting farm products is one thing and cutting throats another. The man that deals in death as his profession, must have high fees to keep him whole. I have not assumed the prerogative of God, without looking well to its effects on my pocket. The lawyer will charge you an hundred dollars for services, in the time of which, the laborer, in all his sweat and toil, cannot so much as earn a half doubloon."

"The lawyers say, their profession is above the workman; then, because they go on stilts and the artisan creeps, they must make their thousands to his one, eh! Now my business is above the lawyers, and every other on earth. They deal in the arts and sciences of life; I, in the arts and sciences of death, and should men grumble at my prices?"

"It is too much," said Higgs,

biting his lip, "but I must do what necessity bids me. I give your price. Now for the payment."

"Five hundred down, and the balance when you get rid of the woman."

"Well, here it is; listen to its counting."

"Right, except that pile of fives by the bottle there, and these two tens. They are counterfeit."

"Counterfeit! by the bones of Hercules! you have a keener eye for flaws than I have then."

"It needs but practice, friend, to make a keen eye in money matters. And most men's eyes, though dull in other places, are keen when coppers clink, and dollars shine. Like the moon from the sun, men's faces borrow luster from bank bills, and we borrow that luster from the borrowers by emptying their pockets of them. Please take back those bills and give us good money." This was done.

"Do this work within ten days," said Higgs, sternly.

"I will—hist! hist! that noise. There! a head just drew back from the window."

"You must have a quick ear and eye, fellow, by heavens! for I have neither seen or heard anything."

"By the marrow in my bones! I saw a man's head," persisted the outlaw, with a firmness that left no doubt of the correctness of his assertion. "It was a gray head and I know it full well. It was that cursed old mysterious marksman. I dread him as I do the imp of darkness. He is worse than all the blood

hounds of the law put together. I have sent a dozen bullets after him, but he always comes off with a clear hide. But I'll out and give the fellow teachings that will last him this time." He clutched a dagger from the table, stole swiftly, yet with little noise, through the doorway. One low, but terribly emphatic oath, and the loud sound of rapid footsteps were distinctly audible. Like specters, with the speed of the wind, two ponderous figures darted through the mists of the midnight toward the highway, and soon their rapidly retreating forms became invisible by the dim silver of the stars, and their foot-steps lost in the silence of the distance. When they passed from view, Wyatt was but a few yards in the rear of his fugitive victim. Yes, the outlaw was close upon the heels of the gray head.

"This secures me the whole fifty-thousand," soliloquized Higgs, as he made his way up the decayed steps of the desperado's habitation, after the departure of the latter in the pursuit. "That is, if this dog Wyatt don't let Gilmore slip out of his net. Yes, it will give me his half, which will make me a clear fifty thousand. Ha, ha! I haven't been schooling myself a dozen years in this profession for nothing. This stopping of Gilmore's wind is going to grind my conscience some, but the thing must be done, it must be done! I have to preach to-morrow—confound the preaching! but I must do it. That sermon of Lionel's will carry me through. It is a good

thing; too good, a deacon would say, for the use I shall make of it.

CHAPTER VI.

Every man in this age has not a soul
Of crystal, for all men to read their actions
Through. Men's hearts and faces are so far
asunder,
That they hold no intelligence.

DEAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

Thinkest thou there are no serpents in the world
But those which glide along the grassy sod,
And sting the luckless foot that presses them?
JOANNA BAILIE.

SABBATH morning came. In the magnificent mahogany desk of the Episcopal church of New York city, stood the lofty, commanding, and handsome form of Samuel Higgs, alias the Reverend William Johnson. The snowy whiteness of his flowing, ecclesiastical robes heightened the natural majesty of his appearance, to such a degree, that the immense auditory gazed upon him in the deep silence of awe and admiration. His text, strange as it may seem, was from Matt. vii: 15. "Beware of false prophets which come to you in sheep's clothing."

At the commencement, he seemed considerably embarrassed, and a slight tremor could be detected in his voice. But the energy and might of the speaker's genius was to make those difficulties of short duration. Gradually the tones of his voice assumed a melody, and his countenance a radiance, which wrapped up the senses of the hear-

ers to forgetfulness of everything else. The gracefulness, and appropriateness of his numerous gestures, the intense flashings of his searching eyes, the awe-inspiring massiveness of his white, solid brow, all combined to rivet the attention, and enchain the will of every member of that vast congregation to the one master ruling mind. He had got about half through, and had just repeated the text, "Beware of false prophets which come to you in sheep's clothing," when a poorly attired, gray-headed man, who stood in the aisle for the want of a seat, and who had watched the orator with an intensity which boded evil, exclaimed, in a clear, distinct, and fearless voice:

"We must beware of thee, then, Sir Preacher, if we obey thy injunctions. Gambler, I know thee. Desecrate no longer the temple of God with thy damning hypocrisy! The vengeance of the Almighty's wrath shall make thee the center of its concentration. Now close thy mouth, poor, base, fool, thou shalt yet die at my hands, murderer!"

"Take that maniac from the church!" interrupted Col. Howard, in a calm voice, as his gray hairs, and venerable form became visible above the auditory; take that man from the church! The tombs shall be the abode of all disturbers of religious worship."

On this suggestion, two strong men rose and led the disturber toward the door. He made no effort at resistance, but walked along submissively between them. Reaching

the door, he wrenched his arms, by a violent effort, from the grasps of the men, turned, and in a loud and feeling tone, said:

"Members of this church! hear me! ye are harboring a wolf in sheep's clothing! beware of him! beware of him! The serpent is a serpent still, in the cage or in the brake, his fangs are just as sharp in the one place as the other, and with the opportunity, will prick the heel as quick—beware! The wolf will make his dinner on the hand that once has fed and nurtured him, beware!"

"Away, away with him! Away with the hair-brain!" exclaimed the Colonel, now becoming excited by the influence of the first shock, which anger had sent along his muscles. The fearless expositor, of whom the reader shall yet have a better acquaintance, was accordingly dragged out.

Higgs ceased speaking at the commencement of this singular scene, and had stood during the time of its enactment, with the stern, undisturbed immovability, and coolness which unlimited confidence in one's own self-existent power gives a man in the hour of peril and trial. The calm dignity of his speaking countenance was not ruffled by a single line of anxiety or care.

Again he proceeded. The meeting closed. Loudly, as they sought their homes, did the enchanted members of the congregation speak forth their extravagant encomiums on the unknown but gifted impostor. That evening, Higgs' reception by

the Howards was accompanied with unusual warmth and respect.

* * * * *

It was twelve o'clock at night. A tall, graceful figure, closely wrapped in a Spanish cloak, might be seen swiftly threading his way through the faintly illumined gloom—the silent, breezeless gloom, than which God has no mightier type of power, which had settled down in one of the narrow, unfrequented lanes of the city. It was evident, from the stern manliness of his bearing, and the unbending stateliness of his carriage, that it was none other than Lionel Gilmore. His rapid progress was soon arrested by the following fearful exclamations, which coming, as they did, from an invisible source, and from between the frowning walls of two stone buildings, where the darkness had settled in solemn and impenetrable density, added to their terrible import the appalling touch of the supernatural.

"Hold! Death is before thee, life behind. Go forward, if thou wouldst die—back, if thou wouldst live! Weigh well my words. I warn thee not again." And the silence which the voice of thunder leaves behind it was there. No sound, not even the slight echo of a human footstep, nor the faint whisper of an inaudible word came through the gloom. No sound! Like the low, indistinct murmur of a muffled drum, beat the heart of Lionel Gilmore. Stock still, motionless, he stood for a moment, his eyes riveted steadfastly on the dark

space between the buildings, and his pulses heaving with the agitations of his blood. He approached the opening. His keen vision pierced the black vacancy, but no object that boasted of vitality met its penetration. He shuddered, as the cold air, circling through the damp, contracted avenue, froze the frigid sweat drops on his brow, and fanned his pale face like the wing of death's angel. Then a blush of shame for his almost (as he now began to think,) causeless trepidation, took the place of the whiteness on his countenance. He looked back, then forward, and a pistol came in his right hand, from beneath his cloak. A moment he carefully examined it, then it disappeared.

"I go!" he said, in a firm voice. "Am I to be deterred from my purpose by the croaking of a soothsayer or a mountebank. No, I fear no danger; it is my delight; I place but little value on my life, and to lose it would be but to lose something which I care not to keep. But he who wishes to die is not often gratified in his wish by the Great Disposer of events, while he who prizes most the jewel, is often soonest doomed to be its loser,—I go." And he did. Quaillessly, and with the unmoved firmness of infallibility, he strode up the solitary pavement, the solemn solitude of the long, dismal street, unbroken by a step save his own.

Crash! upon the masonry went a wicket. Oaths, and curses, and shouts came from the darkness of

an opening between two dilapidated and unoccupied tenements.

CHAPTER VII.

How delicate is the golden thread of life!
How slightly broken! Oft the whispering wind
That murmurs by man's morning path, doth
sing

A mournful dirge above his midnight grave.

McLELLAN.

Thou little knowest
What he can brave, who, born and nursed
In danger's paths, has dared the worst.

MOORE.

Bony, and gaunt, and ghastly, out they come; three huge, ignorant, and heartless frames, as soulless as the automaton of the showman; snarling at each other like so many beasts of different species, each one angry with the fear that the prey would not fall to himself.

"Take him, dead or alive!" shouted the leaders. With the sullen dumbness and immovable rigidity, which the rock presents to the wild ravings of the storm which prostrates all less stable objects, stood Lionel Gilmore before the furious onset of his bloodthirsty foes. Coolly he raised the muzzle of his pistol to a level with the heart of the man in advance, in whose grim and repulsive visage, and long-sweeping, knotted beard, the reader will not fail to recognize the desperado whom we have seen on a previous evening conversing with Higgs, in the shabby domicile in the suburbs of the city. He touched the wire.

"Hold, there! hold! down!" fiercely roared the brigand, partly from fear of the contents of the weapon, and, partly from rage at the other's unexpected boldness and audacity. "Ta'are there! ta'are there! Fire, d—l's limb, and your good-for-nothing skin shall be riddled to a fish-net in half the time I'm saying it!"

Gilmore pulled, the desperado fell backward to the ground with the suddenness that a stone would fall. A gleam of hope chased the darkness of despondency from the countenance of Gilmore, and he felt as if a new life had sprung up within him. But these favorable indications were of short continuance. The astonishment that filled his mind, on seeing the fallen assassin, before the report of the pistol had scarcely commenced dying away, spring to his feet, with an ease and quickness which told unmistakably that he was not injured, but that in falling he had been playing a game of deception, again tinged his features with the blue, pale coloring of death.

"Now, fool, your audacity, shall reap its fruit," said Wyatt, in a tone of such meaning sternness that it went to the very heart of the other, like a warrant of death.

"My life is in thy hands," coolly replied Gilmore, seeming suddenly to have recovered from the unnerving effects of his timidity. "Take it if thou wilt; it is a something of little worth to me. But first tell me who instigated this attack, or what your object is in killing me."

"A cool lad, boys, by my bones, a cool lad have we here; but what business is it for you to know our object, or what use we intend thee for, youngster? Ere that star shall again show itself in the blue, beyond that cloud, thou must die."

"Is money your wish? if so, you shall have it."

"Money! I murder no man for the money he can carry about his person. Here, Jim, you may have the first shot at the mark; now let the fellow have a bed in perdition."

"Cut-throat! thou shalt go first to prepare the way!" said the same startling, and unearthly voice, that had previously warned Gilmore of his danger. It issued from the silence of a dismal and decayed hovel near at hand. Quick as thought the highwayman's arm was raised, and the dark muzzle of his murderous weapon looked destruction in the face of the unprotected Gilmore. His finger was ready for the fatal pull, when the darkness of the old hovel was lit up with a light which revealed a tall figure within, and the brutal desperado, uttering a groan, that made his iron chest heave up, as if parting with his very vitals, fell dead on the spot, where a moment before life had coursed buoyantly as in the opening spring of childhood.

Wyatt, in the frenzy of his suddenly created rage, his eyes flashing fire, dashed at Gilmore with a fury ungovernable. Again the hovel gave forth its welcome light and sound, and the leading assassin started back with an utterance similar to

that of his dead myrmidon. With a long shout of triumph out rushed the unknown marksman. The third robber quickly disappeared. The man, without offering any salutation, approached Gilmore and said in a solemn and almost supernatural voice:

"Stranger, follow me!"

Had Gilmore's inclination for resisting this very strange and abrupt command been ever so strong, it is doubtful whether he could have done it or not. As it was, he involuntarily followed the strange being. Swiftly, and without a syllable falling from either, did they wind their way through lanes, and through avenues, and through thoroughfares, until they passed the confines of the city.

CHAPTER VIII.

The calm of that old reverend brow,
The glow of its thin silver locks, was like a flash
Of sunlight in the pauses of a storm.

MILIMAN.

Oh, the things unseen,
Untold, undreamt of, which like shadows pass
Hourly o'er that mysterious world, a mind
To ruin-struck by grief.

MRS. HEMANS.

It stood alone, the little dwelling, old but tidy. Within its principal, but scantily furnished apartment, on whose broad hearth a few charred and half-consumed embers snapped, and smoked, sat two men. The flickering light of a waning taper, threw its sickly glare along their countenances, and revealed to

view strange and striking visages. They were Gilmore and his heroic preserver. They had just entered the building, and still preserved the same boding silence which had hung around them from the time they left the place of the attempted assassination. The name of the man Gilmore had followed, was Clarendon. It was easy to see that he was the same fearless individual, who had the same day so nobly confronted but ineffectually exposed Higgins in the church of the Episcopalians. He escaped from the men who had him in charge. Sorrow had placed its weight upon that man with such a crushing pressure, that a person less injured to the hardships of life, and with less of the iron of physical strength, and mental fortitude in his constitution, would have withered and died beneath it. Age had not lightly laid his hand upon him—full sixty winters had he seen. His countenance, where beauty and nobleness had once been enthroned, but which grief, more than years, had rendered rough and sharp, though not unpleasant, spoke of his benevolent, his generous heart. He never smiled.

"Kind, generous Sir, why hast thou taken the interest in me that I have this night witnessed," asked Gilmore. "It is an enigma that I cannot solve. I never before, in this great city, met with a man that would trouble himself for another's benefit."

"Young man," solemnly, replied old Clarendon, "for the last twelve months, I have watched thee as a

mother watches her child. Why I have done it I know not. But from the moment I first saw thee, I have been attracted to thee by a fascination as mysterious as it is irresistible. I have followed thee into the gambling house, into the tavern, and into the church. And yet thou hast not seen me. I have known all thy plans, and all thy purposes."

"You astonish me. But how came you to know of my danger?"

"Did I not tell thee that I have watched thee as a mother watches her child? I have long known that worse than monster, Samuel Higgs," and the old man's teeth ground each other fearfully, "he was bent on thy destruction — thy ruin."

"What? Samuel Higgs? How speak you? he, my best friend, bent on my ruin? It cannot — cannot be!"

"Young man, I say nothing but what I mean. I have told thee truth, as incredible as it may seem. I know the secret workings of that devil in human shape."

"You know his secret workings, how should you know them better than I, who have been his constant associate for the last four years?"

"Such inquiries matter little. It is enough for you to know, that I have been acquainted with both your histories for several years past. How I obtained that acquaintance, is not for you to know. But that I have had it, I shall yet prove to you. But we must tarry short at this spot. Even now the elements of our destruction are fomenting.

Wyatt has accomplices, and the fellow who ran away has a tongue. They will soon be upon us, and then, the fickle wind that sighs, then dies away like an infant's breathing, by yonder threshold, may have more power than I again to save you. Human strength, without the aid of the omniscient Ruler of the universe, is but a blade of grass, that browns in the autumnal frost. We will trust in Him. I fear not; why should I fear? Death would but unfetter me. 'Tis for thee alone I care."

"Thou need'st no longer. To one who fears not to die, the instrument that will produce death can have little terror."

"Well, we'll, load these pistols, and when danger comes, meet it as becomes brave men."

"Well, kind host, you have not yet told me how you learned the danger that threatened me."

"I never explain, my actions speak and not my words. I saved you, and the means are of little consequence. But I will tell you more. I overheard the plot for thy murder by the way of Wyatt's window. He discovered me; he pursued me; I turned, and with one blow, knocked him senseless to the ground and kept on."

"How came Wyatt to plot against me?"

"He did not."

"How?"

"Higgs plotted, Wyatt executed."

"Great God!" exclaimed Gilmore, in frantic wildness, "do I hear thee aright?"

"You do."

"Higgs engaged in a conspiracy against me! Can it be possible? when only yesterday he spoke of our friendship, and said his prayer was for its long continuance. He has pretended to love me like a brother."

"Apparent good may be the mask of evil. You have long been the center of his hatred."

"Possible! But what was the cause of his wish for my destruction?"

"Dost thou not know that thou wast to have half the spoils in the Howard matter, and with thee out of the way, dost thou not know too, that the whole would fall to him?"

"My God, I see! A worse scoundrel than I thought him. Black, soulless villain, may thy crimes have speedy retribution!"

"They shall! they shall!" warmly exclaimed the old man. "By the God that rules in heaven, they shall. But his poor, worthless, and beastly life will be but a meager expiation for his guilt. Six just such, would not counterbalance the injury he has done my poor old heart. Six just such, would not throw off the ice of sorrow that is rapidly spreading its cold surface over the fountains of my existence. But, he shall die! Years ago, at the couch of my poor, dying, murdered Evelyn, I swore in the name of Omnipotence, that I would have vengeance, and I will! I will!"

"Thou art a strange being, old man, and if I had much superstition in my nature, I doubt whether you

would have me long for a guest. You speak of the Howard matter as knowing as if you was at the very foundation of the scheme. How knew you of it?"

"Young man, make no inquiries. I shall explain no more. It matters not to thee, how, or by what means, I obtained my information."

"Well, it shall be as you say. Higgs has other objects to effect by my murder, than simply to obtain my share of the expected money, has he not?"

"Yes, he hates you, and has ever since the affair in Boston."

"Affair in Boston! what affair?"

"The Florence Hamilton" —

"Good heavens! knew you aught of that, and had Higgs ought to do with her?"

"He was your rival."

"My rival! can I believe you?" exclaimed Gilmore, in utter surprise. "My rival! I never saw or heard of him till I came to New York."

"That may all be true. The fox does his work in the dark."

"Ah, I understand; he was as shrewd then as now."

"Yes, but in appearance, he is a changed man. Then, he was but a young man. Now, he has assumed the matured sternness of riper years. They who saw him then would now fail to recognize him. He knew, and so did I, that Florence loved you and despised him. He saw that if he could change her affections from you, he might have a reasonable hope of success himself. He is an excellent pensman, and a perfect duplicator as you must well

know. His Onderdonk letter plainly proved that. He drew up a letter purporting to be from an uncle of Miss Hamilton, living in Salem, and whom he well knew had been informed of her intended connection with you. The letter conjured her in the most fervent and eloquent strain, by her own hopes of future happiness, by her love for her kindred, by her regard for the reputation of her family, not to unite herself in marriage with Lionel Gilmore, a gambler, a sensualist, and a horse-thief."

"By heavens! I had hardly dare suspect this! I see it all!" exclaimed Gilmore, passionately.

"Having business in Salem he took this letter," continued the old man, "and mailed it at that place. She received it. You know the consequences. But she only despised Higgs more, after the discovery of your supposed perfidy. He was never afterward allowed to enter the house but once. Florence seemed to loathe the very sight of men. She had given her whole love to you, a scoundrel, as she supposed, and she had none left for others. Here," said he, drawing a large, time-worn dirk-knife from his pocket, "is the instrument that severed the cord which would soon have strangled you. I saved you."

Gilmore's surprise, on listening to the last few words, prevented the vocal expression of his feelings. But the countenance indexed the sensations of the soul.

"I have more to tell you at some future time, and something that will

astonish you more than all I yet have said," continued Clarendon, "but the lateness of the hour now forbids; call any other time and I—hark! is that the wind, or is it steps in the distance? Pest! my old ears are too sensitive. It is nothing—I hear it no more."

"It seems this Higgs has enemies in others, as well as others in him. I see you have no little hatred for him yourself," said Lionel.

"Me, me! ah,"—and again the old man ground his teeth. "Ah, if there is one living, breathing creature on God's fair earth, that I could laugh to see writhing in the agony of one continued and eternal death, it is that beast, that hypocritical, conscience seared beast, Samuel Higgs. Ah, I hate him as the adder the heel that treads on his skull. I hate him as the mother hates the condor that has stolen her infant from her arms. I hate him as the destroyer of my happiness and the pillager of my property, the curse of my destiny. I hate him with my very soul, with my whole being."

"How came thee to hate him with such a deathless hate?"

"I will not tell thee now, thou shalt know at some future time. 'Tis he that has seamed this once smooth brow, and bleached these once dark locks. 'Tis he that has thickened the blood in these veins, shrunk up these limbs to dry, cold sticks, and stole away their buoyancy. 'Tis him—but enough: more you shall—There! great God!—too late—I believed it; out with your knife and be ready for the onset!"

CHAPTER IX.

Gloster's shrew

Beguiles him, as the mournful crocodile
With sorrow snares relenting passengers,
Or as the snake, rolled on a flowering bank,
With shining checkered slough doth sting a
child

That for the beauty thinks it excellent.

SHAKESPEARE.

The morning sun streamed with a cheerful brightness into the lodging-room of the gamblers. They had breakfasted, and had now returned. Gilmore, by the counsel of the old man, had come to the conclusion not to make Higgs acquainted with his discoveries, until matters should become more matured.

"Well, Lionel, where did you put up last night?" kindly inquired Higgs, putting on that peculiar and winning expression, so characteristic of his countenance, "you haven't been absent a night before in a three months."

"Oh, I got unexpectedly belated, and turned in with a friend up town," replied Gilmore, with an easy indifference in his language and manner.

"You look more pale than usual this morning; I hope you are not going to have another turn of that cramp. It makes me shudder now, to think of the pain you endured in your last siege."

"No, no, Samuel, I feel perfectly well, save a dullness, which the lack of my usual amount of sleep has created."

"From my very heart, I am glad of that! Now, although I am hard-

Crash against the woodwork came a heavy body. The door sank down like a door of glass, and in rushed the grim, canibal-like marauders.

"Back, back!" shouted the old man, in a voice, whose sternness gave no sign of fear, no wish for quarters: "Back, murderers!" and a flash, rendering, by its superior brightness, the pale gleamings of the taper invisible, spread around, like a girdle of electricity, followed by a report that stunned the ear, and the foremost of the outlaws, with a yell that spoke of deadly pain, sprang frantically upward, and, in a crouched, cramped, and bloody heap, crashed down, dead as the floor on which he rested. The weapon of the mysterious marksman had done the work of death.

"Out with the lamp there!" shouted the old man to Gilmore, the instant he had discharged his pistol, "out with the taper! quick, or we die!"

Gilmore, although surprised at this strange command, not understanding what possible benefit could result from extinguishing the light—still placed perfect confidence in the judgment of his old protector, and the instant he received his order, obeyed it, and darkness, ink-like, and impenetrably dense, rendered the room a solid blank of gloom. A spring snapped, a secret panel flew open, Clarendon seized Gilmore by the arm, and they both disappeared. The darkness baffled pursuit.

hearted, I actually entertain a brotherly regard for you, Lionel, and will not see a hair of your head injured, so long as I have strength to defend them."

"You are very kind, Higgs," replied Gilmore, smiling, "and I don't believe there is any hypocrisy in what you say; you mean it."

"Hypocrisy! no, I may make use of that weapon among strangers and enemies, but never, never, Gilmore, with thee."

"Yes, thy heart sometimes is good, thou dost return friendship with friendship."

"How did you like my preaching, yesterday?"

"You spoke eloquently. How does our scheme work? Does old Howard conduct himself favorably yet?"

"Yes; there is no danger of trouble from him; he is doing all he can for me, and the night after my sermon, he received me with as much cordiality and respect as if I had been bishop of the diocese."

"Well, where lies the difficulty, then, if there be any?"

"In the girl herself, and that old numbskull who interrupted me during services at church."

"Then she does not accede to your proposals?"

"I have made no proposals yet, but, from my experience in reading women's hearts in their faces, I should judge that she would be anything but favorable; but mind you, I sha'n't give up; difficulties but serve to nerve my heart for greater exertions."

"But the old man, what can he do to injure us?"

"Have you not seen with your own eyes? He is enlisted against me with an energy that I dread. An inch or two of steel near his windpipe would help us immensely. His life must be sacrificed; that part of the story is told."

"What?"

"Start not, it shall be done!"

"It shall not be done, while I have strength."

"By heavens! Gilmore, I swear you are a perfect drone; you are forever interfering with my proposals and plans. If I did not really, really like you, you should smart for some of your doings, by the life. But I haven't the heart to harm you."

"Nor the power; but enough of this. How came that old man to hate you in the way he does?"

"'Tis a slight cause he had for it. When tipsy, a while ago, I put my foot to his heel, and he tenanted a mud hole for the rest of the night."

"Is that the only cause," asked Gilmore, well knowing, from what old Clarendon had hinted, that there were other reasons, aside from the last named, for the animosity that existed between them.

"The only one that I know," returned Higgs, rising and going toward one of the windows.

"Oh, what is Miss Howard's name? I have been thinking of inquiring for that a long time, but it has slipped my memory."

"Alice."

"What do you intend to do with her after the marriage?"

"I will tell you; if I can get rid of this strange feeling here at my heart, this indefinable ecstatic sensation, this unendurable yearning—it may be love; if so, I never till now knew what it was to love—I shall get the money and then leave her to fry her own fish, and to enjoy the pleasures of single blessedness."

"My God, I believe you have no heart, Higgs, at least not such a heart as other men's. If she is as beautiful as you have told me, you cannot leave her after you have so wronged her. But no more, I must leave for a few hours. I have promised to meet a friend in Broadway, and the time has already gone by."

"Don't forget to be on hand to-night, the old Southerner will be present, and we will lighten his load for him," shouted Higgs, as his comrade closed the door behind him.

"Ha, ha! he's wound up in my tail, and yet he knows it not. Poor fellow, a few hours will put a period to his existence, and yet he will not know the cause. Ah! if he but knew more of this girl. I call Alice, how he would rave! But he shall die and know nothing of the matter. Ha, ha! I shall begin to think that I have a smooth tongue, if I can thus game a fellow of Gilmore's penetration and shrewdness so easy. Ah, he little thinks that that old man, that deadly, wolfish enemy of mine, who, like a bloodhound, is night and day dogging me, is his own father. But I must away, and see why Wyatt has not been at

his work. It should have been done last night. I must know the cause of this tardiness."

CHAPTER X.

Her face

Was pale, but very beautiful; her lip
Had a more delicate outline, and the tint
Was deeper, but her countenance was like
The majesty of angels! WILLIS.

There's not a traitor like him,
Whose domestic treason plants the poinard
Within the breast that trusted to his truth.
BYRON.

"Ho, ho! what the deuce means this? unhamstringed are you, Wyatt?" exclaimed Higgs, as he entered the wasting tenement of the wounded desperado.

"No, no, Higgs," replied Wyatt, either from shame, or motives of policy, concealing the bloody transactions of the previous evening. "No, no, nothing but two slight bruises, this right shoulder blade, and my thigh."

"How come you to be thus injured? Another affray with the police?"

"No; you know the burnt block on Franklin street?"

"Yes."

"Well, I fell into one of those cellars. It hurt me some, but twenty-four hours will set me on my legs again, well as ever."

"Why have you not done the job I spoke of?" asked Higgs, with a sterner voice and darker brow than he had before assumed.

"Well, I have had so much other business on hand, I haven't actually found time to attend to it. I thought of doing it last night, but didn't happen to meet him. Has he said anything about having any trouble last night?"

"No; but why do you ask?"

"Oh nothing, only we met a strippling in Cedar street, previous to my falling into the cellar, but he proved to be the wrong man, as I thought, though I didn't know for a certainty."

"You must finish him before the close of this week, will you do it?" said Higgs, with a dogged look that seemed to indicate that the bloody tragedy in which he was engaged had made his own callous heart sink within him.

"As true as this right hand can wield a poniard," returned the grim outlaw, with a savage gesture of the limb he had named.

"Enough, be sure and miss him not," and the unprincipled subtle gambler quickly quitted the filthy tenement of the outlaw.

That evening he was quietly and composedly seated in the luxuriantly furnished parlor of Col. Howard. Save him, the old man and his daughter were the only occupants.

"Fine weather we have now-a-days, brother Johnson," said the colonel, after the former had become seated, and the usual salutations had passed between him and Miss Howard.

"Yes, beautiful weather for the season," replied Higgs, "and our

prayers to the holy Giver of our mild climate, cannot be too fervent. Men are too forgetful of the source whence spring their blessings. They forget that all their pleasures and joys are from the bountiful hand of the all-wise Supreme. I mourn when I see men enjoying the richest blessings with which mortality can expect to be blessed—the energies of unimpaired health, the heart-born smiles and warm caresses of confiding families, the laurels of honor and fame, and the advantages of affluence. I say, when I see men enjoying all these blessings, curse the glorious source whence they receive them, I mourn, deeply mourn. Oh, human depravity! would that thou belonged to the brute creation, and not to the immortal counterpart of the Almighty's mind."

"Amen!" replied the colonel, with a fervency unwonted. "Hundreds, like the picture you have just drawn, can be found in this very city. Oh, it is a horrible place! It seems to me but a typification of the hell that is to come. Here we have gamblers, counterfeits, thieves, murderers, and hypocrites. These are innumerable."

"Ah! exclaimed Higgs, with the deepest apparent disgust, "of all those you have named, one do I abhor, and despise."

"What class is that?"

"The hypocrite. Hypocrisy! 'tis that which stints the growth of the American churches—it is that which gives the tongue of the scoffer its arguments. I do hate its very name."

"My feelings, brother Johnson, though not made known by as strong expressions, are the same as yours in regard to the abomination of which you speak!"

"Glad am I to hear that!"

"Oh, brother Johnson, you know not of the prayers I have offered up for the regeneration of this my native, my beloved city. This city which, when the air played among the curls of my boyhood, and when I sailed my little boat upon the waves of the Hudson, more than two score of years ago, was nought, comparatively, but a mere village. It grew with my growth, and strengthened with my strength, but now that I decline, she keepeth me not company. As I grow weak, she groweth stronger with my weakness. I have prayed till my lungs have ached with my exertions over the desolations of Zion's vineyard in this place, over her wrongs and her woes, over the sins of this metropolis have I wept."

"It is truly a sinful city," replied Higgs, "but I trust that, beneath the radiance of its combined religious influence, its sinfulness will be of short duration. There are some very vicious and unexemplary men here, who might with due propriety, were it not for their souls, be likened to beasts dressed up by nature in the outward semblances of humanity. There is that hypocritical gambler, Samuel Higgs, he is one of those, if I may judge from a relation of his character with which a friend has favored me."

"Oh, you have heard of Higgs,

then! If ever a villain lived it is him. Have you ever seen him, Mr. Johnson?"

"Oh no, I never saw the fellow," coolly replied Higgs, not in the least allowing his ministerial deportment to be changed by the personal application which the conversation was having.

"Nor has anybody else ever seen him that I can learn," returned the colonel. "We hear of his acts and his crimes, but we never see the man. He is a shrewd, subtle fellow, and he has the sense to keep disguised or housed in time of peril. It is said he is a man of good external appearance."

"He must be a curse to your city," replied Higgs. "I think it would be a benefit to the community at large if he could be captured and confined."

"Yes, it would so, he has done full too much injury to run at large."

"I hope his career of vice may soon end, and be followed by a sincere repentance for his crimes."

"Your hope is but the hope of the whole city. I so detest the villain, in his present vicious state, that I would not have him set foot within my dwelling for half my fortune."

"Our expressions are not exactly in accordance with the teachings of the scriptures," said Higgs, putting on an additional degree of sanctimoniousness. "They tell us to love our enemies, I think, brother Howard. But then who can love the enemies of his fellow men, even though he love his own personal

enemies, and one of those, I consider this fellow, Higgs; therefore, I think in this case we shall be justifiable in our deviations from the scriptural requisitions."

"Ah, no, no!" exclaimed the scrupulous colonel, "I had forgotten that passage, we must love our enemies. God forgive me, for what I have said of Higgs, I will try in future to love him."

"I may try, but I fear I can never love a man whose life has been made up of crimes whose flagrancy is unparalleled."

Colonel Howard now rose, and after leisurely walking once or twice up and down the apartment, left. Entering another apartment, he was accosted by a white servant of the mansion, who seemed to be a favorite, from his enjoying certain privileges, not allowed his less valued associates. He was a man of immense physical proportions, and though considerably advanced in years, straight and active as when nerved with the steady vigor of younger days.

"I tell you, Colonel, that preacher is an impostor."

"An impostor!" repeated Mr. Howard, "hold, sir! don't let me hear you say that again, or you will have to find a shelter under a different roof from this."

"Mr. Howard, I say only that which I am well convinced is true, and haven't I a right to speak the truth?"

"An impostor! because a ragged maniac, in church, pronounced him so, you catch it up, and would blaze

it forth as the truth. Away with you, good-for-nothing scamp!"

"That old man in church was no maniac. I know him well, he spoke the truth."

"Insolence! stop thy mouth, I'll not put up with this talk any longer," and with that the irritated colonel threw open the outer door and walked into the street.

"I'll know more of that preacher," soliloquized the menial, after the abrupt departure of the old man; "when he leaves this house I follow him, and if I die at the work I'll ferret the villain out."

After Mr. Howard left the parlor, Higgs rose, and, without saying a word, moved across the yielding carpet; approached a window, leaned against its casing, and for several minutes, seemed wrapped in silent abstraction, as though his mind labored with thoughts whose importance was of no ordinary moment.

"You are not unwell to-night, I hope, Mr. Johnson?" said the beautiful heiress, in a voice, the sweetness of whose loving tones would have made the coldest heart-strings vibrate.

Strange, wild, almost unearthly was her beauty. A melancholy, which, while it excited regret in the bosom of the gazer, wrapped him up in the bright charm of a seemingly supernatural fascination, added a shade of gloominess to her countenance, save when the radiance of her lovely smile shone out and lit up the soul's glorious index, with a light, whose serenity was like the star gemmed heavens of summer time.

Ay, she was beautiful, but there was something about that beauty which seemed to forbid a man's hoping ever to obtain its possessor. There is a kind of female beauty which is to a very sensitive man, especially if he is in low pecuniary circumstances, actually displeasing on account of its brilliancy. The reason is, because he thinks it next to impossible for such loveliness ever to descend to unite its existence with himself.

"Oh, no, dearest lady," said Higgs, in reply to her inquiries; and the rough gambler had put on the accomplished gentleman, and he now spoke in a tone all kindness and love, while he turned from the window and approached the spotless being whom he was exerting himself to the utmost to destroy. "Oh, no, I did but feel a little sick at heart," continued he, seating himself on the sofa close beside her.

"Why sick at heart? Is it a time for repining on such an evening as this, when God is lending his smile to the heavens, and hulling to repose the earth?"

"Sweet, eloquent one, once I could enjoy the beautiful in nature, but now my love for thee has swallowed up everything else. I look abroad over the earth, and all seems dreary, gloomy, cold; but I turn to thee, and a brightness, which seems but an emanation from Divinity, makes all things lovely with its effulgence. Thou art the sun of my being, the hope of my hope, the existence of my existence!" and the gambler spoke and looked with the

fervency of a real lover, yet he felt like a beast.

"Mr. Johnson, I shall not charge you with the crime of flattery; I know too well the vehemency of love's expressions, to believe that aught you have said has been dictated by any other feelings than those of sincerity. I think you love me deeply, sincerely. This I have long known, and you must have also known, Mr. Johnson, from my conduct, that I could not reciprocate that love."

"Not reciprocate my love! My God! I'm ruined, I'm ruined! Did I hear you say it! my hope, my life, my all? Oh, that I had never seen this hour, this cursed hour, that dooms me to a living death!"

"Be calm, I pray thee. It does not become the sternness of thy manhood to let a weak woman thus unman thee. Now, I pray thee be calm."

"Be calm? how can I be calm?" exclaimed Higgs, and even the tears rolled down the impostor's cheeks, as if he had a heart capable of being melted. But feeling called not forth those tears; they were deception's cloak.

"You will soon recover from this little freak of fancy," kindly, but coolly, continued the young lady. "Unlike the steady, unquenchable flame of a woman's love," continued she, "the brilliant deceptive light of man's affections may for a while glow with intense brightness, but, like the dwindling taper, it soon goes out, till a new object of beauty is presented."

"My God! then you will not marry me?" exclaimed Higgs, after a short pause, in a frenzy of seemingly unendurable agony. It would seem that the gambler had lost his better reason, or else had not a full knowledge of the character of the lady with whom he was dealing, for it is very certain that his present apparently agitated manner and excited expressions could have but little effect in bringing about his desired object.

"No, Mr. Johnson, I never can," said the lady, in reply to his question. "I loved once, that love was unreturned, I never can love again, and never shall marry unless I love, therefore I never shall marry."

"Then have I lavished and wasted my affections to no purpose!" broke out Higgs, not yet despairing of succeeding in his base plot. "Then has the last ray of earthly hope gone forever out. Then are the flowers which bloom on the tendrils of my heart's affections doomed to wither; and when withered, no spring shall ever return to renew their beauty, and bring back their wasted sweetness. But why this singular determination? what have you against me?" continued he, with more coolness.

"Nothing. So far from having any repulsive feelings toward you, I have a deep respect for you, and take an interest in your welfare that will only cease with life."

"Respect! Ah respect! a cold word to a lover's ear! Why then do you not love me?"

"Because I cannot; I never loved but one man, and I never can. Would to heaven that I might again see him, then I would make reparation for the rash conduct of my earlier years."

"Woman, hear me! exclaimed Higgs, in an altered voice, as he

started up from his seat. "I know who you mean; you never can see him again. Lionel Gilmore has long since made food for the sharks of the Pacific. I was on the whaler from which he went overboard. Cease to think of him, unless you wish to think of the dead."

"Dead!" exclaimed the maiden, with a choking breath, her pale cheeks assuming a deadlier paleness. "Dead! Great God! Lionel Gilmore dead! dead! Would to heaven I could have seen him once before he died; would that I could have watched by his dying couch, and smoothed his dying pillow—Dead!" Bereft of consciousness, her head sank upon the sofa, her pale, transparent cheeks and ashy lips, and marble brow, contrasting painfully with the dark, luxurious cushion on which they rested.

CHAPTER XI.

She was his life
The ocean to the river of his thoughts,
Which terminated all. BYRON.

Oh, ever thus from childhood's hour
I've seen my fondest hopes decay
I never loved a tree or flower
But 't was the first to fade away. MOORE.

Higgs stole noiselessly up the street leading to the gambling rooms, and several yards behind him, stole as noiselessly, the ponderous figure of the indefatigable menial. The gambler suddenly turned, and disappeared in a dark, narrow passage, traversed it, ascended two long flights of steps, and entered the gambling room. Four or five men were playing at one of the tables, but were too deeply buried in the fearful enchantment of the game to notice the entrance of Higgs. But

Gilmore, who sat silent and alone by the fire, with his face buried in his hands, slowly raised his head and kindly saluted his pretended friend. He looked much paler than usual, and his eyes, although they had the appearance of having been wet by tears, shone upon Higgs with a fearful, unearthly luster; for beneath their gaze, the latter started back, as if he imagined Gilmore had discovered the brutal plot which he had set on foot for his destruction; but the kindness of Lionel's salutation as he said "Good evening Samuel," quickly quieted the unwelcome fears of the suspicious gambler. It seems a little strange that he could possibly put on an air of friendship toward the very man, whom he now well knew, from what Clarendon had told him a night or two before, was exerting every secret energy he possessed, for his destruction. None but those possessed of the generous and even temperament of Lionel Gilmore, could have smiled upon such a blood-thirsty and malignant enemy. But he was now only waiting the signal of the mysterious marksman to seal the deserved doom of the black-hearted miscreant. His time had not yet come, however. There were more crimes for him to perpetrate, more villainies for him to instigate, more human blood in waiting for his insatiable thirst. The dark web of his infamy was not yet unraveled. We have not reached the middle of the sickening catalogue of his guilt. The end is yet to come—blood flows ere that, and hearts quiver in death.

"Cheer up, cheer up, you look down-hearted, man," said Higgs, in his accustomed familiar manner, as he approached the fireplace, and seated himself by the side of his intended victim.

"You read me rightly, Higgs,"

said Lionel, for in truth I feel somewhat down-hearted. I was thinking when I heard your tread on the stairs, of my Florence, my dear, dear, but faithless Florence. Memory had traveled back over the sickening desolation of intervening years, over the scattered wrecks of disappointed hopes, and blasted promises, and I again found myself by the side of her whom I loved, and still love with a strength of feeling, which nothing but the chill of death can ever obliterate. Again we strolled, arm in arm, as of yore, along the graveled lawns of her father's park, and when heaven had put on her jewelry, and the mild luster of the moon was abroad, again we wandered through the winding paths of the common, and told over and over our tales of love and constancy, and looking forward to the unknown future, thought of the happiness in store for us. But, vain, vain indeed, are all these fantasies of false-picturing memory. The glimpse of joy that has come back to me from the tomb of the past, has but added a deeper, gloomier shade of sadness to the present and future, now that reality proves the utter falsity of that fancied joy."

"Why, man, you are unusually eloquent to-night," said Higgs, placing his feet upon the fender, and throwing himself back in his capacious chair, with a careless indifference.

"If it be eloquence, it is but the eloquence of love, and feeling, and sorrow."

"By heavens! it is a strange matter to me, why you will stick to the memory of that cursed woman, in the way you do, when she has cut up your rigging in the manner she has."

"It may seem strange to you; to me it does not."

"Yes, but think of the usage," continued Higgs, with more earnestness, "and yet cling to her like a drowning man to a straw. You love her, in fact; she who has disdained, trampled, and insulted you. Bah! I would sooner put a stone to my neck, and try a nap at the bottom of the bay."

"Higgs, disdain is but fuel to the flame of some men's love; I belong to that class. Florence was so beautiful in countenance, so affectionate in heart."

"Pshaw! would you love the cur, though his hide be smooth and spotless, if he should snap at your heels? You might with just as much propriety love the lizard for his painted skin, or the chameleon for his variegated habit, as a beautiful woman for her beauty, not her heart, for face not her soul, for her tongue not her mind."

"Death, Higgs, not aught that you will ever say, can alone separate my thoughts, and my affections from Florence Hamilton. Florence had a mind and heart of finer and nobler mold than falls to the lot of ordinary women."

"That may all be, but I question it some, for we always think the girl we love full a dozen carats finer than anybody else; then I would not kick up the bluster that you do for an angel, even."

"I make no doubt that my conversation seems foolish at times, for these love matters seem foolish to us all, until we get in love ourselves, and then, nothing on earth is so important."

"Well, I give you some allowance, for you know that love has made fools of the greatest men in the world, and why should it not make a fool of you? But if that Florence was such an angel as you make her out to be, how came she to treat you

in the unlady-like manner in which she did—ship you without a provocation or a cause? Now don't talk to me! she was one of Satan's own building."

"I am not so sure as that was done without a provocation, or a cause;" said Gilmore, with a meaning emphasis, for what old Clarendon had told was fresh and vivid in his mind. "Yes," continued he "there was treachery of no common flagrancy connected with that, to me, mournful affair, and my prayer is, that a just Heaven will reveal it, ere I lay my head in the grave. Oh that I may again see my Florence, and clasp —"

"Stop! thou wilt never see her!"

"What, why?"

"The earth is above her bosom. Would'st thou look upon a handful of bones from which the worms had knawed the molded flesh, long, long ago, and remove the sods, which the grass of two summers has carpeted, from the tomb of Florence Hamilton, in the cemetery at Boston?"

"Good God, are you speaking the truth? Florence Hamilton been dead two years? Do you speak the truth, I say, or am I listening to a falsehood?"

"Truth Sir, every word truth."

"Florence Hamilton dead?"

"I have told you as it is, for I jest not in matters that concern the dead. I have heard it to-night from a source that cannot be doubted."

"Then has the star of hope that has cheered the darkness of so many years, ceased forever to brighten my dreary pilgrimage on earth! Then have the faint foreshadowings of future joys ceased to fascinate forever! all things earthly are loathsome to me, now that she, my Florence, my sweet Florence is no more. I welcome death."

It is somewhat surprising that Gilmore should have so implicitly believed this statement of the death of Florence, when he knew it came from the mouth of a man in whom he could not place a shadow of confidence; but the fearful announcement came upon him so unexpectedly, and suddenly, that it seemed to rob him in part of his reason.

"Lionel, you are foolish to let your weakness triumph over you in this manner," said Higgs, as the former closed his last remark. "Bestir yourself, and shake from your spirits this womanishness."

"Higgs, I never can shake off these feelings; they will work upon me till they wear out life. You may call it weakness in me; I marvel not at that. Even I am myself, sometimes, ashamed of my own sorrows, but I cannot flee from them; they are fastened upon me, irrevocably fastened."

"Pshaw! pshaw! Gilmore, your words bespeak the baby's intellect, and not the stern unshrinking fortitude, and iron energies of manhood. Come, drop these thoughts, and let us have a little of the 'care easier,' and then a throw or two at the table. We will go in against Roberts and the old Carolinian, they'll have light fare to pay on their gold going home."

"No, while I live, I will never touch another card. I have sinned against God and man long enough, Higgs, I'm done now."

"Ha, ha, ha! what the deuce has been upsetting your brain?"

"Hist, hist, man!" said Gilmore, pointing significantly toward the door, "did you not hear a noise there?"

"Noise! the d—I no. What heard you?" quickly interrogated Higgs, looking wildly toward the entrance.

"Something like a low, suppressed cough," returned Gilmore.

"By heavens, the throat that made it, shall never cough again. I'll try the temper of this steel upon it!" and he rushed with a terrible execration in the direction of the door.

The gamblers at the table, the accustomed placidness of whose minds had been considerably ruffled by the first exclamations of Gilmore, were now in the highest state of excitement. Shouting, yelling, and swearing, they dashed furiously after Higgs, and all jammed one against another, into the dark entry at the head of the stairs. A voice, which sounded in its startling grumness, like the voice of a beast, sent forth a long, loud yell of defiance. An instant, and a hard, sudden noise, caused by the sudden outgoing of the breath, similar to that created by a short powerful exertion, came from the same strong lungs, and a sound like the crushing of a human skull came on the ear, low, but fearfully distinct. One faint, dying groan—such a groan as the last gasp of mortality can alone utter, rose out of the dark entry, and crash! crash! down the long stairway rolled a dead lump of inanimate matter, which, but a moment before, had been strong and athletic with life, and bright and intelligent with animation. One of the gamblers had fallen beneath the gigantic stroke of the mysterious enemy, the huge proportions of whose form were slightly revealed to view by the light that found its way into the entry. The remaining gamblers uttering an exclamation of astonishment, fell back, amazed at the unexpected daring of their unknown antagonist.

"Forward here! forward!" exclaimed the clear, bravery-inciting

tones of Lionel Gilmore's voice, as he left his seat by the fire and approached the scene of disturbance. In the falling back of the men he saw the reasonable probability that one person was to defeat the whole party, unless some effective and decisive movement was quickly made. "Forward! I say, and make fast the intruder, but harm him not for your lives."

The fierceness of the giant's eye relaxed, and the loftiness of his stature contracted before the untrembling voice, and dauntless and towering front of the fearless speaker, as he now rushed upon him, with the impetuosity of madness itself.

Higgs and the others, nerved with energy by the bravery of Gilmore, and smarting with the thought of their murdered associate, now pressed forward.

The experienced eye of the cornered man, plainly saw that this second onset, directed as it was by the present fearless leader, would soon overcome him. His only hope rested in flight. He straightened up his long neck, and threw back his massive shoulders, drew up his lank, muscular frame to a height terrible in the uncertainty of the intention which called forth such a menacing attitude, and, like an enraged beast in a cage, glared witheringly around upon his foes. A powerful leap forward—a sudden shout of defiance, and with the swiftness of the wind he plunged downward, hotly pursued by the infuriated gamblers. In the knowledge of the stairway, which long acquaintance had given the latter, they possessed a decided advantage in the race over the fugitive, the darkness materially impeding his progress, while it afforded comparatively little obstruction to theirs. Notwithstanding this disparaging

inequality, the pursued nobly held his own down the first flight, but in his headlong precipitancy and bewilderment, he had forgotten that the second flight turned directly to the left, and he dashed straight forward and came in contact with the rough stone masonry, with a crushing and deadly force. Like an inebriate, rendered reasonless by intoxication, he groaned painfully, reeled back, then forward, and tumbled like a log, headlong down the long stairway.

"Come on, men! come on! our work is done for us," shouted Higgs, rushing on in the van of the party.

Gilmore ascended to the room and took his seat by the fire, and seemed in deeper thought than ever.

"Ha, ha, the fellow's skull must have got a sore bump against them stone," said one of the men.

"Yes, replied Higgs, "and a just retribution. Its his own fault; if a man runs into the fire he must himself be responsible for the burning he gets. He should have looked to his own business, and not put his fingers into his neighbor's pie. But let us on at a quicker rate, the fellow may be playing us a game."

"A dead man would not be over likely to be playing us a game, Higgs," said one of the men, as he raised the head of the giant.

"Ha! you have found the fellow, then," exclaimed Higgs, who was several feet from the former speaker.

"His journey down the stairs must have knocked the corners from his bones, or he'd not rolled a distance like this—dead, did you say?"

"Yes, dead as a dried herring."

"Ho, Gilmore! where is Gilmore?"

"He has gone up."

"It's just like him, he's no coward though, not he. He's like a lion while there's danger, but that over and he's like a lamb. There's not

so much as a pin's point of cowardice in his nature, but he dreads the sight of blood, it makes him sick. There, whose groan was that? by heavens, the fellow lives! Up with him there, boys, and bear him above, we'll know more of the rascal, if he has a tongue, and strength to use it."

The body was accordingly carried up the stairs, and into the gambling room. Gilmore quickly caught a glimpse of the countenance, as its pale and rugged outlines were revealed by the faint light of the low-burnt lamp. Hard was it for him to conceal the outward indication of his astonishment, as he recognized in the uncouth being before him, the huge servant, who, several years before, had prostrated him on the pavement in front of the Hamilton mansion in Boston. No less was the astonishment of Higgs, as he saw, in the same personage the servant of Colonel Howard.

"I know the man," said he, "by heavens, I know him! His eyes open! not so badly bruised as I thought. Out with the pannel there! We'll put the gentleman where he'll not be apt to hurt the healing of his wounds by over exercise."

A man approached the eastern extremity of the room, slipped aside a narrow molding, touched a spring, and a small door flew open, revealing a blank as impenetrable to the human vision as a wall of ebony. The man disappeared in this blank, and in a short time the snapping of another spring was heard, and he soon broke again into the light.

"Drag him in, all is ready," said he.

It was done, and the spring doors closed. The next thing to be done was, to bring up their dead associate. Taking a lamp, two men descended, and returned, bearing the body. They laid it carefully on the table, that

table, which, so short a time before, rattled with the throwing of dice, and over which the same clammy and motionless form that now rested upon it, had so often leaned, wrapped in the indescribable charms of the gaming spirit's enchantment. There he lay, ghastly and stiff; his skull crashed in, and horribly broken. Scarcely less pale and deathlike than the faces of the dead, were the faces of the living.

Not a step, nor a whisper, nor any audible sound, save an occasional mournful groan from the feeling Gilmore, jarred on the melancholy stillness of that room of death. What a change had a few moments there wrought? A gambling house transformed to a house of the dead, a gambling table, the receptacle of a corpse, that, in life, had laughed and cursed, drank and slept by its side. The dead, was a man who never had an enemy; whom all his associate gamblers held in high estimation. He was an open-hearted, jocular, and witty fellow; but his open-heartedness, his jocularity, and his wit were now forever gone. Forever closed were the lips which once shone with smiles, that their own lively repartees created. Dim were the eyes, and pulseless the temples, and still the blood forever.

The stars of that lonely midnight looked down upon several men suddenly at work in the far corner of the graveyard. A little distance from them lay a body enveloped in a sheet; it was soon raised, and let down into the grave, which the men had formed. This was the burial of the gambler. The light of the approaching morning had begun to paint its vermilion on the lower verge of a transparent drapery of clouds, which curved beautifully along the eastern horizon, ere this mournful task was completed.

CHAPTER XIII.

Oh! man may bear with suffering; his heart
Is a strong thing, and godlike in the grasp
Of pain that wrings mortality; but tear
One cord affection clings to, part one tie
That binds him to woman's delicate love,
And his great spirit yieldeth like a reed.

N. P. WILLES.

ABOUT nine o'clock, on the next night following the tragedy of the last chapter, Lionel Gilmore, enveloped in his capacious Spanish cloak, stood before the little tenement of the mysterious marksman. He knocked lightly, the door soon opened, and he stood in the presence of his preserver. Gilmore seized the old man's hand, and shook it with a warmth that proclaimed his regard as expressively as the strongest language could have done.

"Welcome, welcome, young man," said Clarendon, with a deep and fervent feeling in his manner and utterance, "I love to look upon thy face, and listen to thy voice, it makes my old heart young and light again, and robs it of its grief and care."

"I know not why, venerable, and noble friend. I never thought there was aught about me to inspire regard or attract attention."

"Not so, but I see something different in thee from what other men do. There is an inner charm in thy very nature which, somehow, links thy soul to mine, why it is, I know not."

"It is strange, strange indeed."

"I suppose you have come to-night with the wish of having me fulfill my promise of telling you more about myself, and Higgs, and other things?"

"Yes."

"Well, thirty years ago, I stood at the hymenial altar by the side of Mary Erwin. This was in the

city of Boston. I loved my Mary as I believe no man on earth ever loved before, she was so lovely, so sweet and so confiding; and then she had such a heart, so noble, so generous, and so angel-like. Yes, yes, Mary, thou wert an angel! Never have these eyes rested on one like thee! But the leaves of many autumns have strewn her grave; and when I last visited it, the little green mound above her ashes, where, years ago I planted a rose tree and an ivy vine, had sunk away and left a grassy cavity where it stood, and no trace of the tree or vine was there. But I will go back. It seems but a dream to me, as, in memory, I look away back through the gloom and tears of the past, to that nuptial scene. Oh! I was happy then, and I can now see the bright smiles, and kindling eyes of Mary as their peerless loveliness beamed upon me. Yes, I was happy then, and with my thoughts of coming happiness, I mingled not the contemplation of the sorrows, and dangers which futurity developed. Two bright-haired, laughing children blessed our union. Eveline was three years old at the birth of William. Time passed on, and William had reached his third year. As yet, a cloudless sky had hung above us, but the darkness of unexpected misfortunes was doomed soon to destroy its loveliness. They were beautiful children, at least, so thought Mary and myself. Eveline seemed but a little miniature of her mother, she looked so very like her. Her blue melting eyes, her dark, heavy ringlets, her sweet, bird-like voice, and her heart-born smiles were charming to strangers, and how much more so must they have been to me. She had an almost angelic disposition, kind, generous, and sensitive. I loved my boy dearly, but it was a

different kind of love from that which I felt for Eveline. I loved her more for herself, and the present gratifications she afforded me, than for any abstract quality or hope of future remuneration. But William I loved for that which I vainly dared to dream the future would make him—the perpetuator of my name, the defender of my honor, my solace and support, when old age should come upon me. I saw in his high, broad brow, and sharp, and piercing eye, and strikingly noble features, the spirit of genius.

"It was in the fall. Mary and myself had occasion to be gone from home two days, and we left the children in charge of our maid. On the night of the day on which we left, after laying William asleep in the cradle, she left the house for the purpose of calling on a sister of hers, who lived over the way.

"On her return, the cradle was empty, and as Eveline had fallen asleep previous to her absence, there was none to tell of the whereabouts of William. A search was commenced that night by the neighbors, but the lost was not to be found. You can imagine my surprise and sorrow on returning home, but the sorrow of Mary, the imagination cannot picture. With the untiring energy of parental affection, long did I search for my boy, but I searched in vain. He was forever gone from my sight. Oh, William, would to God I knew thy doom! Stop, I do: old Higgs, my deadly enemy, destroyed thee."

"What!" exclaimed Gilmore, starting from his seat, "who mean you, by old Higgs?"

"The father of Samuel Higgs, he who is now plotting thy destruction. The old dog was as shrewd, as merciless, as beastly as his black-hearted pup. He had ever been my

most deadly enemy, as deadly as his son is now. But years have passed since he gave up his last account. Well, that old villain, who had always sought every means in his power to do me harm, must, I think, in my absence, have hired some desperado to dispose of the child."

"Can it be," exclaimed Gilmore, "can it be that a man would be so lost to every finer feeling and nobler impulse of humanity?"

"No man could, my friend, but old Higgs was no more a man than is his offspring. If William had been our only child, I doubt very much whether Mary could have survived his loss; but Eveline was yet left to her, and the love that had formerly been divided between the two, was now centered in her. But the healthful glow which a buoyant heart and an unstricken spirit gives the cheek, never after shone on hers. She felt the blow as a woman's heart alone can feel. Long did little Eveline, she who has long slept the sleep which mortals cannot disturb, long did she mourn over the loss of her endeared brother. Her merry laugh never rang with the clear and careless thrill which marked it before. A melancholy, which she never fully recovered from, seemed to have changed her very nature. She no longer took part in the festive merriment of her playmates on the commons, for she cared not for company, she wished to be alone with her books. Yet we loved her not the less; she was more kind and beautiful, if possible, than ever."

"That struck eleven, did it not?" said Gilmore, as the solemn echo of the city clock died slowly away on the still, frosty air.

"Yes, it grows late, but I have a little more to say, yet to hear that little will make your heart ache.

But are you aware that every moment you remain here your life is in imminent peril?"

"I do not know that I am in any more peril here than I should be elsewhere."

"You will find but slight protection here."

"The proof is too strong to the contrary. But you are in as much danger as myself."

"What is the meaning of your remark?"

"Higgs has sworn that you shall die."

"He has done that years ago; but I fear not the brute, he never can harm me."

"You spoke in the outset of my peril, why is there more danger to-night than formerly?"

"Oh! young man, it is well that thou hast a vigilant guard; it is well that I watch over and shield thee night and day. Know you not that Wyatt has fixed to-night as the time for his second attempt at your life? Higgs has again visited him since I saw you."

"I thought Wyatt was dead! Then the bullet which you sent from the old hovel did not prove fatal?"

"No, no, the scoundrel is far from dead; he has not yet done his allotment of evil."

"Please proceed with your narrative; the knowledge of danger shall not interfere with the attention with which I shall listen."

CHAPTER XIV.

As I looked,
The quivering of her lids, that lay like leaves
Of alabaster on her darkened eyes,
And the slight trembling of her parted lips
Suddenly died away, and all was still,
Life was no more. J. G. PERCIVAL.

But there beamed a smile,
So fixed and holy, from that marble brow,
Death gazed, and left it there; he dared not steal
The signet ring of Heaven.

Mrs. SIGOURNEY.

"EVELINE had reached her fifteenth year. Samuel Higgs had been a weekly visitor at my house for several months. I saw that he entertained, or pretended to entertain, a strong regard for my child, and she loved him with all the strength of first affection. Yes, poor, confiding, guiltless thing! she, in her little knowledge of the deceptive snares which lie in life's pathway, she believed man too noble and God-like a being, to be capable of wrong—believed not that a heart of ice, and a mind of baseness, could slumber beneath a sunny smile and an innocent dialect. She loved him with the fervor and tenderness of childish endearment. It was the first love of her young heart. Her sensitive bosom seemed filled with a joy, and her very being surrounded by a kind of happiness whose ecstasy and brightness, the most heavenly picturings of her childhood dreams had never equaled. Again I saw the rose hue, which for years had not been there, come out on the snowy whiteness of her soft cheeks, as fresh and lovely as in other days, ere little William's loss had, for the first time, taught her that earth was not heaven. Again her laugh was as merry, though divested of the wild freedom of childish wantonness, and her smile as sweet, as they had been before the slightest trouble had impaired the melody of the one and darkened the beauty of the other. She was born into a new existence, ushered into a new world, of whose brightness and felicity she had never had the faintest conception—the existence of love, the world of affection. She sometimes almost seemed to imagine herself

free from the earth, and all mere earthly aspirations, and to be enjoying the imperishable happiness of Heaven—for all that makes Heaven is love, and the human heart is never so near it as when filled with that holy sensation. You may think I am extravagant, but I once loved myself, and I know its strength. It is mighty, it is resistless, it is stronger than death. I wondered not at Eveline's forming an attachment for young Higgs. He was young, he was handsome, he was guiltless then. Though few men have a nobler brow, and a more winning countenance than Samuel Higgs at this time, still he looked far better then. Years and crimes have wrought strange changes in his once fair face. Those who knew him even seven years ago, will not remember him now."

"I do not understand," said Gilmore, "why you should allow the son of your most deadly enemy to be so intimate with your daughter."

"Would you curse the child for the crimes of the parent? I knew no ill of Higgs; he was an innocent boy then. Besides, throughout all the difficulties which existed between his father and myself, he had always been kind and respectful toward me. But that same cursed hypocrisy which now so strikingly distinguishes him, was then the great master passion of his being, yet I knew it not. The demon of the soul slept then, but it has since awoken in the full terror of its now slumberless existence."

"It was a warm moonlight evening in June. Samuel and Eveline, as they had often done before, wandered, arm in arm, to the common. The atmosphere, low, murky, and sultry, betokened a storm. I noted, as I cast my eye to the southward, that lurid sheets of lightning spread

broadly up from the horizon, and shone through the dark, still clouds with a solemn and sullen glare. Ere half an hour had gone by, the first tone of the thunder came moaning down through the motionless air, growing louder and louder, till it rose into a booming report like that made by the discharge of distant ordinance. Ten o'clock came, but still Eveline returned not. The storm-god spoke with a more terrible voice, but the height of his wrath had not yet come. Time went on, and our child came not. Mary's alarm increased. She rose, put lamps in the window, opened the door, cast one glance against the wall of gloom that rose before her, then sank back into a chair, and from her lips there came a groan that startled me."

"The lantern, wife," said I, in a quick voice, as I hurriedly dressed myself. In truth, suspicion that foul play was connected with the absence of Eveline, began strongly to force itself upon me. I knew well the delicacy of her constitution, and the ease with which her guileless and unsuspecting mind could be led astray by the superior cunning of designing men."

"What, James!" exclaimed Mary, immediately on my speaking.

"The lantern," I replied, "I can do but little such a night as this is without a light."

"What do you mean, James?"

"I am going out to the search."

"Thank God! thank God! that you have resolution to breast this awful storm."

"I took the lantern in my hand and lifted the latch of the outer door. The wind came against it with a force and suddenness that tore it from my grasp, and dashed it back against the wall, and nearly rent it from its hinges. The night

was intensely dark, and the loud tempest swept, as if conscious of its power, down the inundated street. But I stopped not to reflect on the toil and peril before me. Obstacles, which otherwise seem insurmountable, dwindle to mere nothings in the deathless glance of parental affection.

"I rushed out, and plodded my way swiftly along the slippery pavement. I reached the common. I stood still and strained my sight into the darkness, until my eyes ached, and their weakened lids dropped down. I listened intently, but no object met my view, no sound my ear. No light was to be seen, save the pale circle of sickly radiance which my little lantern struggled to throw around it. I raised my voice to a hoarse pitch, and shouted in the wild, unearthly tones of mental agony. But the hoarser voice of the merciless storm drowned the impotent accents of my own; for it could not have penetrated a single rod into the roaring din of that conflict of the elements. I was about despairing of finding my child, that night at least, when a faint speck of light, on the opposite verge of the common, caught my eye. A second did not elapse ere I was dashing toward it with a swiftness which seemed more than human, and the line of desolation which my progress made in the tender shrubbery, was visible for a long time after. I reached the light; with a strong hand I threw open the door of the little house whence it came.

"What's to pay here, what the devil are you about?" roared the gruff voice of a savage-looking man within. "Have you no more sense than to break in upon an honest man at the dead of night, in this kind of a style?"

"Pardon, sir," replied I, "but I pray thee spare my time. The importance of my visit will apologize for the abruptness of my entrance."

"Take your carcass from my door, quick, before I have reason to help you. Dick Wyatt is not the man to be tamely trod upon in this way. Get you gone, or I'll break your head."

"Hold! for God's sake, have mercy?" exclaimed I, in a feeling tone. "I have lost my child, my Eveline, know you—"

"Ah!" interrupted Wyatt, (he was the same outlaw who now lives in this city.) "Ah! the mystery of the thing is showing itself, eh. I told that stripling there'd be an afterclap to the matter; for I knew so pretty a face as that girl carried, belonged to a family who would not willingly lose her. The imploring look she turned on me, when I took her in my arms, made my heart softer than it has been for years before. I wouldn't a done the job, if it hadn't been for the ring, but—"

"For heaven's sake, stop," again interrupted I, frantic with the suspense. "Tell me what you mean? know you aught of my child?"

"Perhaps so, be cool a moment. About two hours ago, a smooth-faced stripling hired me to take a girl to the lower part of the town; I knew there was wrong afoot, but wrong is my trade, and gold its lever, so I did the work."

"Good heavens! lead me to the spot, quick," I exclaimed, with great impatience in my appearance.

"Ha! ha!" he grimly laughed, "I work for pay."

"In an instant I drew several pieces of gold from my pocket, and threw them toward him. With a tardiness that enraged me, he counted them over and over, then said,

"Four quarter eagles; one more

must be added. 'Tis a stormy night, and the rain will bring on my *rhumatiz*."

"I threw him another handful, and seemingly satisfied, he led the way from the house. Winding through several streets, we entered a narrow and filthy alley, and after wallowing through the mud and water for several rods, a bright light on an angle of a street, suddenly met my gaze. My guide halted, and pointing toward the light, said,

"That's the spot," and without another word, he instantly disappeared. I rushed toward the house, from which wild shouts of boisterous merriment arose. My teeth involuntarily ground against each other, as I contemplated the character of the occupants. It was a brothel. I dashed open the door with a frenzied energy, and stood in the midst of the astonished revelers. A low, painful moan of agony smote my ear. I rushed toward the source of the sound—and, Oh, God! the sight that met my gaze paralyzed all my strength. My blood stood still, and seemed as if turning to ice in my veins. There, upon a rude, slovenly couch, pale, ghastly, and still as the dead, her eyes sunken, and her lips blue with the tinge of coming dissolution, there lay, oh, God! there lay my child. For a moment, I felt nerveless, and seemed as if sinking to the floor—it was but a moment that I felt thus. Revenge sent its fire through my frame and along my arteries, and the blood, heated by its influence to an unnatural temperature, dashed boiling through its channels, and every physical function seemed nerved with a force which they never before had possessed. Withering and burning must have been the glare which I then threw around upon the guilty,

and still speechless, tenants. My glance met that of the villainous Higgs, and he quailed—quailed as the guilty ever quail beneath the innocent spirit they have wounded. But quickly recovering, and fearing the consequences of longer inaction, he cried out, in the same energetic voice which has since characterized him,

"Men give us your help. Let us out with yonder intruder; what business has the drunken covey here?"

"By the gods! boy, you shall die!" exclaimed I, in a voice which made every heart in that room, save Samuel Higgs', tremble. "You shall die!" and I rushed upon him, more like a beast than a man. I felt strong enough, at that moment, to have crushed a score like him. He made an effort to resist me, but the effort was in vain. One blow paralyzed the arm which he thrust powerfully toward me, and I seized him by the throat with a suffocating grasp. The nails of my fingers pierced through his skin, and sank deep into his neck, and his face became almost the color of ink. He tried to call for mercy, but in vain. His lower jaw dropped down, and his tongue protruded from his mouth. I thought him dying, I unloosed my grasp, and he tumbled to the floor. I then carefully seized Eveline in my right arm, and taking my lantern, dashed through the midst of the amazed debauchers, I made my way home, with a speed that exhausted my frame to such a degree, that I had barely sufficient strength to lay my poor girl on the bed, when I sank down in a chair, powerless. Mary bent over the wretched sufferer, and soon proclaimed that she yet lived. Restoratives were immediately applied, and she soon revived. The silken cord on which

life hung, had been forever severed. Day after day, and night after night, did her mother and myself watch by her bedside. She was still all gentleness and all love. No murmur of complaint, no petulant expressions ever escaped her lips. Ah, while life remains, I never shall forget the agony experienced during that brief sickness. She became a mere skeleton, and all her beauty gradually faded away, till she seemed not like the same being. Her breath grew shorter, and shorter; her eyes grew dim, and her sense of hearing nearly departed, yet her smile changed not with the decay of her physical beauty—sickness could not destroy it, nay, not even death itself, for it rested on her clammy lips long after the icy tyrant had done his fearful work, and frozen up the fountains of existence. She died, yes, my poor lovely and fragile flower died, and has long since become dust. The tender stalks of some plants survive not the destruction of their blossoms. The bloom of health left Mary's cheeks, and she faded, even as the rose fades that puts forth its beauty in the chilling season of autumn. Grief for the loss of Eveline, dissolved the golden bowl that contained it. Ah! yes, scarcely four weeks had passed, ere she slept the quiet, eternal sleep by the side of poor, ruined Eveline, and I was left alone, without a friend to comfort me, or a single glimmer of hope to buoy up my sinking soul. There I stood, in the friendless desert of life, like a tree which winter has robbed of its verdure. Often did I ardently wish that God would permit me to join my departed family, in that blessed land where the 'wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.' But time has, in a measure, lessened the intensity of

my mental sufferings, but it will never obliterate the memory of those poor children, and that sainted wife, nor destroy the hatred which I feel for their soulless murderer; no, never! never! It may be a sin against high heaven to hate a fellow-being as I hate Samuel Higgs, but God knows I cannot help it."

"It is no sin to hate a beast," exclaimed Gilmore, whose mind had become unusually heated, and who had, during the old man's mournful narrative, imbibed a deeper feeling of detestation for Higgs than ever.

"True, true, so I sin not in hating Sam. Higgs."

CHAPTER XV.

All is still, and the night
Is bending from her throne of beauty down,
With still stars burning on her azure crown,
Intense and eloquently bright.

G. NELLEN.

Oh, I have left the dearly loved,
The home, the hopes of other years,
And early in my pathway proved
Life's rainbow hues were formed of tears.
Mrs. SMITH.

"HAD your boy any peculiarity by which you could recognize him, if you should happen to have the good fortune to meet him?" inquired Gilmore of the old man.

"See him, see him!" reiterated the sorrow-stricken father, "I have no wish to see the dead."

"He may be dead, or he may be alive; you do not know for a certainty."

"I remember a mark by which I could now tell him; the little finger of his left hand was gone."

As he said this, Gilmore sat as if pinioned to his seat. His lips quivered, and he fastened a look of searching earnestness on the thin and furrowed face of the old man. Then

he drew off his glove and raised his hand, and, as it caught the glance of the old man, he uttered a long exclamation of joy, in a tone of feeling such as the human voice is alone capable of assuming, when the possessor is overpowered with sudden and unexpected joy. Yet he rose not, — his strength had left him. But Lionel jumped from his seat, and rushed toward the gray-haired marksman, exclaiming, "My father! my father! thank God! thank God! I have found thee!" and he threw his arms around the neck of his aged parent, from whom he had been separated for so many long and unhappy years, and for a while they remained in that position, the tears of the father mingling with the tears of the son, the strong affection of the aged, twining itself with the intenser affection of the young.

After they had, in a measure, recovered their composure, an explanation on the part of Lionel followed.

He stated that he had forgotten all the events of his abduction, being so young at the time, memory had failed to penetrate the mists of succeeding years. The first he remembered was, living with a family by the name of Gilmore, in Salem. He was treated with such kindness, that he soon forgot his parents and became the same as a child of the Gilmore's. And until he reached his tenth year, he actually supposed them his legitimate relatives; then, for the first time, they told him that he was a foundling, and the word withered his very heart. Arriving at his sixteenth year, he left Salem, proceeded to Boston, and commenced business; and by industry and perseverance he soon gained quite a little fortune. Lionel, after his first outburst of affection for his father

had subsided, sat some minutes in deep silence, perhaps reflecting upon the strange events of his troubled life. Soon, his dark eye was seen to light up with some inward emotion. His better nature was giving way to the workings of the unnatural passions which the thoughts of his past ill treatment had aroused. He sprang to his feet, exclaiming, as he firmly clenched his fists:

"Ah, the demon! the demon! he would exterminate our whole family. He is not satisfied with murdering my mother, and sister, but he must now murder me. Omnipotent God! let thy curse rest upon him? Let him live till the pangs of conscience drain out his blood drop by drop, and rot away his flesh piecemeal. Then let him forever writhe in the deepest, darkest cell of perdition!"

The harshness which characterized these expressions, did not arise so much from the natural promptings of the heart, as from the contemplation of the wrongs which he had suffered.

He seated himself, and in a degree recovered his composure. During all this time the old man spoke not, but the gaze he riveted on his son was more expressive of the feelings that were working in his mind, than the most extravagant words.

"It would seem, father," at length said Lionel, "that we both lived in Boston for several years at the same time."

"Yes, I see it was so," replied the old man, "and yet we were ignorant of the fact—a fact, the knowledge of which, would have made us both happy. I met you often in the city, and was well aware of your intended marriage with Florence Hamilton; and of the clandestine machinations of your secret rival, Samuel Higgs."

"What became of Florence Hamilton after I left Boston?" asked Lionel.

"She did not marry Samuel Higgs, I assure you."

"What then became of her? I am impatient."

"Her mother, who you remember was a widow lady, a few months after your disappearance, married a very wealthy man of this city, by the name of Howard, and the mother and daughter soon came on to New York, with the former. In company, and even at home, Florence went by the name of her step-father, being called Miss Howard. And no other than Florence Hamilton is the Miss Howard whom Higgs is now attempting to ruin."

"Great God! I see! I see! I have been plotting the destruction of my own Florence. I must see her immediately. I must expose Higgs' perfidy."

"Be not rash, I pray thee, my boy. Let coolness direct you, and you will surely succeed. To repair to her presence at this time of night, you must know, will never do. You need not be afraid of Higgs' plot succeeding. She will not listen to him. Her thoughts are all on you."

"How, her thoughts on me?"

"Yes, she cares for no one else. She has long since detected the heartless perfidy which caused your fall in her esteem, and has sorely repented of her conduct toward you. She longs to see you. She prays for your welfare."

"Thank God! thank God!" feelingly exclaimed Lionel. "Higgs has of course known," continued he, after a short pause, "that Miss Howard is the same Florence Hamilton with whom he was acquainted in Boston?"

"Certainly, he knows it. But she has not recognized him. Time and

art have wrought such changes in his countenance, that it is almost impossible to believe him the same person."

"The servant, for whose supposed murder, I came so near apprehension in Boston, I see lives in this city now."

"Yes, I was well acquainted with that transaction. Your dagger did not hardly do its deadly work. The fellow recovered, and after the marriage of his mistress, he removed with her to this place."

"Is Florence's mother still alive?"

"No, she died a year ago."

"It is late, father; I believe I will go to my rooms, for I need rest, and feel a severe pain at my temples."

"I fear for your safety."

"Cease to do so, father. I have passed through too many dangers to quail now. I will see you again on the morrow, when I will provide a better apartment than this place for your comfort."

"God bless and be with you," exclaimed the old man, as the former was closing the door behind him.

CHAPTER XVI.

He bore a charmed life which would not yield,
To one of woman born. SHAKESPEARE.

Oh, woful night! Oh, woful night, woful night.
Ibid.

THERE WAS a piece of unfenced ground, several acres in extent, in the suburbs of the city, occupied as a kind of lumber-yard, lying in the course Lionel (as we shall still call him) pursued, which he had either got to cross or go round. A few minutes previously to his leaving the house of his father, two men were there seen sitting in deep converse on a plank elevated at either

end by blocks. The place was walled on three sides, by immense piles of staves and boards.

"If the chap slips his head from your noose this time, you lose the blunt, is that it, Wyatt?" asked one of the men.

"Yes, to-night is the last chance the bargain gives me. But that Higgs may take it into his head to add another twenty-four hours to the time. But come the worst, I've got his five hundred dollars, and its under fastenings that the devil and all his imps can't loose. But that will no more than make me good for the rough usage my shoulder blade got from that old varlet's bullet, the other night."

"'Twas a practised eye that aimed that pistol, by the holies!" said the other. "Just about an inch lower would have put not a few of your shiners into the hands of the coffin-maker."

"Ha, ha!" tauntingly laughed the other, "and hadn't it been for nature's kindness in giving you a swift pair of legs, the dissector's knife would have been chopping your flesh ere this. Poor fool! to fight for life with your heels, as long as you had sound bones at the ends of your arms. You must find another leader, if you play that game again. Dick Wyatt harbors no cowards under his wing."

"Stop, captain, look you here a breath. If I had stood still, and allowed the old devil to pour his saltpeter into my brains, what, think you, would have become of yourself? The d—d law-dogs would have been making a supper on your carcass in thirty minutes' time. I only played the coward for your sake. I'm the last man to run from danger for the fear of it. When all was clear, I dropped back, slipped you on to my shoulder, and made

to head quarters, which fact you already know."

"Oh, you done well enough, Bill, I was but joking a little."

"Cursed pretty joking, I take it, to call a man a coward, when he is no coward no more than yourself. But I'll drop it."

"You had better, and that in short meter."

"A risky and a brave old dog is that fellow who made such a sudden acquaintance with us from the old hovel, through the medium of his lead," continued the former, after a moment's cessation.

"He's all that, and more," returned Wyatt, "his hide is proof against lead; for if it hadn't been, the worms would have made a meal from his flesh long ago. I've tested him on that point at least a half dozen times, and my weapons, as you can testify, seldom graze their work. The old gray-headed rascal has thwarted me in some of my finest plots; he is ever on my track, like an infernal blood-hound."

"Yes," said the other, "and I have pulled on him twice myself, without drawing a drop of blood. He is a strange, strange being, by heavens, strange! I wish——"

"Hush," interrupted the leading burglar, while his iron muscles drew the rugged lineaments of his dark face into an expression which augured no trivial event. "Hush, did you not see a crouched human figure by yonder pile of heading to the right there?"

"No, nor you either," replied the other; "all you see, was the shadder of that bit of plank which the moonlight *jest* fell *against*. Now, *Capum*, don't let a shadder scare you out of your wits, if you do, I'm sure your footing will be on full as miry ground as my own. I run for a reality, you for a shadder."

"Silence, sir," exclaimed Wyatt, slightly enraged by the taunt of his sarcastic companion. "No more of your jargon; my eyes tell me no lies."

"There!" said the former personage, looking toward the heading, and laughing heartily, "You saw something of more consequence than I thought, a hog instead of a shadder." And, indeed, as he spoke, a ponderous specimen of the mentioned species emerged from the range of the pile, several yards beyond it, and grunting sonorously at regular intervals, lazily dragged his pampered frame behind a neighboring stack of plank. Wyatt made no reply to his comrade, but seeming satisfied that the moving object which he had previously discovered, and which had created in him no little alarm, was none other than the peaceable tenant of the sty, the muscles of his face relaxed into their wonted stern and smileless composure.

"The devil must have had a hand in the molding of that Sam. Higgs, if we are to judge from his doings," said the subordinate outlaw.

"Yes," returned the leader, "and if I had half his cunning, hypocrisy, and baseness, I would risk all the infernal sharks of the law from the Battery to King's Bridge."

"Don't we waste time, Capum? The fellow whose track we scent, may spring our trap without our knowing it. Wouldn't it be best to keep our blood from freezing, by taking a peep along the street in the rear of the warehouses?"

"When I order it, not before; I know my own business," retorted the leader, with that peculiar domineering air of affected dignity, which a man in power knows so well how to assume. "We know Gilmore to be at the old marks-

man's; we know, too, that he must return to his lodgings. We also know, that he must either cross this yard, or make his way round by the street; the party under Wagram are ready for him that way, and if he crosses here, his step must be a light one for it to escape Dick Wyatt's ear."

"Well, why set here shivering? Why not attack the house of the old varlet, and have the matter ended forthwith?"

"You might as well attack Beelzebub in h—l," returned Wyatt. "I have made too many attempts on that building and its mysterious owner. I have always lost one or more men, and never yet harmed so much as a little finger of the old man. He always manages, by means I never could find out, to escape me in safety. I have known him before to-day; yes, before I ever saw this city. No, no, clear am I of attacking a man whom I know has him for a guard. Experience has taught me not to molest the thorn, that will prick me in destroying it, more than its destruction will profit me. Attack him! as well might you attack the lion in his den, or the tiger in the jungle."

"I yield to you, for I dread the old miscreant as I dread snakes. His rifle leveled my best friend in our last onset. Wouldn't it be well to keep an eye on the rear here?"

"Yes. Take yonder piece of a ladder, and step to the top of the rear pile, and reconnoiter. By the way, a little more silence may profit us. Our talking may give the fellow's ear notice to take the back track, and so we lose him."

"Right, right," softly replied the other, as he raised the longest end of a broken ladder from a pile of staves, and setting it against the previously designated stack of

boards, he rapidly ascended to their summit.

"Hist, hist," he earnestly whispered, looking down toward the leader.

"What hear you?" whispered the latter, as earnestly in return.

"I neither hear nor see anything now," replied the man at the top of the ladder, "but a moment ago, by the powers that be! just as the moon showed a bit of her face, at the edge of yon bank of vapor, I saw a man cross the gutter, just over the road."

"Down! quick!" suddenly exclaimed the wily outlaw below, in a tone as loud and earnest as his instinctive cautiousness would allow him to assume. "Down! I'll test the strength of my own eyes, and know what meaning there is in your words."

These exclamations had barely fallen from the lips that gave them utterance, ere the man aloft descended to the ground with a celerity in his movements that plainly spoke of an habitual readiness in the obedience of his superior's commands. In an instant, a highly-polished, gold-mounted pistol shone in the steady grasp of Wyatt, as a momentary beam of light glanced from the heavens, and his savage eye, lighting up with that fearful brightness, which internal excitement ever lent it, ran over the priming, then, with the ease and rapidity of a beast injured to difficult ascensions, he darted up the frail ascent.

"Silence below, there! I have him," exclaimed he, in a low but deep tone, as he looked into the darkness, stretching boundlessly before him, with a hard and piercing look. "The gloom hides him now," he continued, after a moment's pause, "but he yet approaches — I have him! hush there! Make hand, and foot, and tongue as if dead." He

rested his chin on the inner edge of the upper plank, while his body was supported by a round of the ladder lower down, and his withering eyes glared out from their gloomy and bushy cavities, like eyes of glass set in ebony. There he crouched like a foodless panther whose natural savageness is rendered doubly savage by the gnawings of hunger. There he watched, as a hyena watches the weary footsteps of the fainting traveler of the desert. Soon, he slowly raised his head, looked piercingly forward, then threw an anxious glance upward to the immense masses of superabundant and disunited clouds which canopied the zenith and eastern portion of the heavens, their snowy and rugged edges, and gloomy centers, looking like the billows which rock on the deep when the storm has swept it. He looked to the spot where the moon was last seen, and seemed impatiently longing for the reappearance of her light. He looked not in vain. Soon a broad, black bank of vapor broke suddenly asunder, and a thousand rays that formed a solid sheet of glorious luster, poured out from behind the lower half of the dismembered mass, and gilded with their soft effulgence the irregular extremities of the broken cloud. In a moment the white brow of the sweet moon came up to view, and she scud like an animated being along the verge of the dense vapor, her snow-white edge looking like a circle of the richest silver. Coolly, and slowly did the merciless desperado raise the muzzle of his unerring weapon to the heart of his approaching, and unapprehensive victim, — whom the little light which the small visible portion of the moon's surface shed around the spot, had enabled him to discover but a few

rods in front—his fierce eye glanced along the polished surface of the fatal barrel, his finger trembled on the deadly trigger. The doom of the pedestrian, whoever he might be, seemed inevitably sealed—stop! look behind there! What means that long, dark, and slender object, rising steadily but silently above yonder pile of heading? Is it the barrel of a rifle? there! a man's head, white with age, and the frost of the night, peeringly follows it. Unerringly does the aged marksman level his fearful agent of death. It points toward the heart of the crouched outlaw at the top of the ladder, and it trembles not in the iron nerves of its practised owner.

Now, murderer, thy time has come! thou hast had thy day—thy night is now. No more morning suns shall greet thy vision. No more hours of business, no more glittering dollars, no more life shalt thou know. Thy huge frame shall rest with bleached bones and hollow skulls, and thy flesh make food for the larva of the charnel, while thy soul, the eternal element, shall make its long home with the spirits of the disembodied, beyond the stormy rubicon of life, where rolls the great ocean of eternity, in solemn and everlasting grandeur. Oh! yes, thou human fiend, thy lips of profanation shall now gasp out their last word, thy gaunt limbs perform the last exercise in the chill quivering which precedes the clammy iciness of the last great wakeless slumber! Thy eyes shall open but once more on this fair earth—this bright, beautiful garden of God—and when another morning shall break upon it in its freshness, thou wilt be with thy kindred, trying the dread, unfathomed, unfathomable mysteries of the life to come. Yes, thou shalt die! the doom which thou hast

so often meted out to others, shall now be meted out to thee. With all thy savage brutalities, with all thy countless crimes,—with all thy long-accumulating sins, shalt thou appear before the bar of a justice-dispensing God, and there shalt thou quail and shrink, but quail and shrink in vain. Like a dried leaf in a furnace, thou shalt shrivel, but unlike that, never be consumed. No, thou shalt not be annihilated, though thou shalt endure the sickening, crushing oppression that would annihilate a thousand mortal lives.

CHAPTER XVII.

His dizzy head sinks gradually low,
And through his side the last drops, ebbing slow
From the red gash, fall heavy, one by one.

BYRON.

Oh heavens, the life-blood streams,
Fast from thy heart, thy troubled eyes grow dim.

MRS. HEMANS.

The red fire streamed like a jet of blood from the dark muzzle of the accurately-aimed rifle; a sharp, piercing report broke startlingly on the silent atmosphere, like the voice of an invisible spirit, and in blue wreaths the smoke curled in the moonlight slowly, and playfully. A low moan, which quickly rose into a far-reaching groan, of the acutest agony, came from the top of the ladder, and throwing his huge arms far above his head, and clutching desperately at vacancy, as if for support, the massive, but rapidly-fainting frame of the dying outlaw balanced for a moment on his tottering foothold; the blood gushed from his chest, and, running down, trickled in streams from his feet; his bloodless fingers clutched the edge of the plank, and, for a while,

he clung to it with a tenacity which it seemed death itself could not destroy. And there he did cling till his life currents became dry, and the spark of life went forever out. Then his hold loosened, and downward tumbled a livid and stifling clod, all that remained of the notorious outlaw, Richard Wyatt. His last curse had been uttered—his last blow dealt. His companion fled at a speed which nothing but fear could have given him. By this time, the man at whom Wyatt had aimed his pistol, had come up to the spot where the desperado had fallen. The old marksman, who had saved his life, left the pile of heading, whence he had sent his messenger of death, and now approached the same spot.

Lionel, (for it was none other,) as we still continue to call him, although the reader has, of course, discovered that his real name is William Clarendon, threw his arms around his aged parent's neck, and, carried away by the feelings of gratitude which this third unexpected preservation of his life created, kissed the sorrow-wrinkled cheeks of the old man, with all that fervency of affection which ever characterized his truly noble and generous nature.

The old man said, in explanation of the present mystery, that he left the house, soon after Lionel, with his rifle. Knowing the danger that threatened his son, he hurried forward by a different route, reached the lumber-yard before him, and finding that the desperadoes were there, lying in wait for the latter, he secreted himself behind the pile of heading, in readiness for any emergency.

Lionel requested his father to go with him to his lodging, which he

did, and they remained together through the night.

He appointed the following afternoon as the time to visit Florence. The time came. Without Lionel's knowledge, Higgs had called at Col. Howard's about an hour before. We will look, for a short time, to what transpired previous to Lionel's arrival. The reader will bear in mind that Higgs had not been at the Colonel's since his refusal by Florence.

"Your daughter seems disposed to refuse me," said Higgs, as Mr. Howard and himself were seated in the parlor.

"Refuse you! For shame on the scrupulous thing. She will marry nobody so long as that Gilmore, whom she talks so much about, is in her brain—but she shall marry you, she shall not refuse."

"Be cool," replied Higgs, his instinctive cautiousness again showing itself. "Will she do as you say? Have you the compelling power?"

"I have; it is gold. If she refuses you, and disobeys me, she dies penniless."

"I fear that such a knowledge will have but little effect in altering her mind," gravely replied Higgs. "Gold does not glitter in her eyes, as in the eyes of many women whom I know. She prefers good, substantial worth, to the sordid trash called money, which in a moment may take to itself wings and fly away; and that is the very reason why I love her so. But you had best go and talk with her on the subject, remembering that kindness will change her determination much sooner than harshness."

In compliance with this request, the old colonel entered the hall, and ascended to Florence's apartment.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Oh! canst thou not
Affection from thee! In this bitter world
Hold to thy heart that only treasure fast.

WORDSWORTH.

They sin, who tell us love can die.
SOUTHEY.

"You do not refuse the hand of the Rev. Mr. Johnson, do you, my child?" asked Mr. Howard, in a kind tone, as he entered the room.

"I do," firmly, yet respectfully, replied Florence.

"Do not be too hasty in your determination, Florence. You should first take a rational look at the matter."

"I have done so, father."

"Well, now, what reason have you for refusing him? It can't be his looks; for a better-looking man you will not find among a thousand. He is talented, he is influential, he is wealthy, he is handsome, now what more can you ask?"

"Virtue."

"Virtue! the last objection I should have thought of raising against a man of Mr. Johnson's probity and moral honor. He not virtuous! A minister of our church not virtuous, and he recommended by the bishop of the State, too? Pshaw! the thing is preposterous."

"Father, you know not that man. I have good reason to believe that he is a serpent in disguise. The mysterious note I received this morning, greatly increased the suspicions of him, which were previously aroused."

"Bah! on the mysterious note," exclaimed the colonel, "It is some boy's work, there is no truth in it, and I said so when you got it. Bah on it! there is not a more virtuous man in the State than Mr. Johnson; so your objections are groundless."

"Even if I were convinced that he is perfectly so, I could not consent to marry him," returned the maiden, with a firmness that could not be mistaken.

"Girl, are you in earnest? Be careful, now."

"I am."

"By heavens! your obstinacy is intolerable! I will not endure it. Think coolly once more. Remember, the word *must* will come soon, and compulsion shall have a part in this business."

"I am determined. I shall never marry that man willingly."

"Then you will unwillingly?"

"If at all," replied Florence.

"You must either marry Mr. Johnson, or forever leave my house, and beg your own bread," returned Mr. Howard, with increasing earnestness. "You have him, and you have my property."

"Mr. Howard, your property is of little consequence to me," returned Florence, with mild disdain. "The beggar is often happier than the rich, and happiness is all that I wish. Besides, I would despise either the woman or the man who would marry solely for wealth. True love puts poverty and wealth on a level, and I assure you, that the affection of a woman's heart has little to do with gold."

"My God, Florence!" exclaimed the old man, with childish petulance, "are these the thanks you return me, this the gratitude I am to receive, for all I have done for thee? How can you, how dare you, disobey me?"

"Father," replied Florence, in a softened tone, "I never have, and I never will disobey you in aught that is reasonable; but you must be blind to think that I can unite my destiny with a man whom I never have, and what is more, I never can love."

"Who do you love, then? You must love somebody."

"Lionel Gilmore," said the maiden, in an altered voice.

"Pooh! your affections must be strong indeed, to love dry bones. I learn that the fellow has been dead some years. The sea was his grave. He fell from the yard-arm of a whaler, in the North Pacific."

"If it be so, then will I love the memory of my Gilmore; there will be a sweet and holy pleasure in that. But I am confident that he yet lives. What Mr. Johnson has said in relation to his supposed death, I have good reason to believe is a falsehood. I shall again see him ere many days have passed, and then what happiness will be mine!"

"Pshaw! you will never see him, he is dead. I put no confidence in that note; if the writer had been any one who wished to benefit you, he would not have been ashamed or afraid of attaching his name to it—but I have a proposition to make, you can accede to it, or not, as you like."

"Well, please let me hear it."

"If Lionel Gilmore does not appear within six weeks, you must marry the Rev. Mr. Johnson. Do you agree to this?"

Florence was silent a moment. Then said, "I do. But if Lionel returns within six weeks, what then?"

"You may marry him if you choose, and you shall have the same portion I intended to give you in case you had a minister."

"Father, I care not for property, all I wish is sufficient for my comfort."

"I know that, Florence, and it is the very reason I give you so much. The avaricious will find themselves not much better to do in the world

after they have been in my hands. Now will you be firm, and abide by my proposal?"

"I will; if for nothing more than to gratify you, I would willingly suffer a great deal, and forego many pleasures for your sake."

"Dutiful, and noble-hearted girl," exclaimed the colonel, "forgive me for my harshness."

CHAPTER XIX.

I tell thee, Heaven, that made all things holy,
Maketh nought more holy than the boundless
love
That fills a woman's heart. MRS. HEMANS.

Col. Howard quickly left Florence's apartment, and made known to Higgs the result of his visit. After he had concluded, Higgs whispered to himself—the excitement of his feelings making his words almost audible—

"Gilmore must die now, at all events. Six weeks is the time; she will certainly see him ere that period transpires, if he lives. But he shall die; my own hands shall do the deed. That Wyatt has had cursed bad luck in this business. His last fish have been fried though. The people seem to wonder who could have put that bullet in his breast, last night, in the lumber yard. I can quickly tell them—it was that old falcon-eyed jackall, Clarendon,—I'll bet my life on it."

The parlor door now opened, and Florence entered. She looked more beautiful, if possible, than when we last saw her. The calm, sweet serenity which then marked her angelic features seemed now to have grown into a more heavenly loveliness. Yet the sad expression which beamed from those azure eyes, and the melancholy which was percepti-

ble through the gayety of the bright smile that shone on those ruby lips, told unmistakably, that her heart was with the long-absent one. The sanctuary of the soul was vacant; nought was there, save the holy incense which the memory of the beloved idol of her happier days had shed around it. Although her beauty, and her kindness made all love her, who saw her, yet she loved none in return. Her love was with the past and the absent, and cold neglect of years had not weakened its intensity, nor faded one hue of the imperishable flower. Wait a little longer.

Oh, woman of the faithful heart! The rosy dawn of a better morning shall soon throw its effulgence upon the darkness of the long night in which thy affections have wandered. The waves which thou hast so long buffeted shall be calm; and the hopes which thou cast upon the troubled waters of life shall come back to thee, made brighter and stronger by the tempest they have outlived. Yes, maiden of the undying love; the idol of thy existence shall again come back to thee, and thou mayst again rest thy weary head upon the manly and immaculate bosom that has ever beat as ardently for thee, as thine for him. Oh is there not a divinity in woman's love? Its fidelity outlives the coldness of neglect, and the changes of time. To think of this makes one have a better opinion of humanity. It does one good, at times, to step aside from the beaten track of commonplace-life — from the stern and freezing realities of this money-getting world — and look out from the icy mantle of selfishness, to see that there is something on earth that partakes of the holiness of heaven — woman's love.

Florence had been in the room

but a few moments, when the door again opened, and a little ebony-faced, flippant-tongued specimen of the African race, made his appearance, saying:

"Missus dar be a hansum, but solemnly individual at the outside door."

"Show him in," said Florence.

Higgs looked troubled.

Steps were heard in the hall, the door soon opened, and the commanding form of Lionel Gilmore stood in the apartment.

Higgs, so cool and collected on every other occasion, and under all other circumstances, now lost his wonted composure. His color came and went, his eyes glared and wandered wildly, his lips quivered, and he was obliged to drop his head to conceal his confusion. The understanding eye of Lionel immediately recognized Florence, and his emotions, as the reader must be aware, were almost uncontrollable. But, by a powerful effort, he managed to suppress the outburst of his feelings, and coolly became seated. He was so altered in his appearance, that Florence did not recognize him. Yet the steady look which she riveted on his calm, handsome features, seemed to indicate that she had a vague, instinctive knowledge of the man.

"I think we have not the pleasure of an acquaintance with you," said she, addressing herself to Lionel.

"Lionel Gilmore," said he in a soft tone.

Then the look that Florence fastened upon the speaker, no pen can describe. Her countenance became first like marble, then the deep rose hue came out, and beautifully contrasted with the preceding whiteness, and then the snowy transparency of a corpse again was there — colorless but lovely. She made an effort

CHAPTER XX.

I have no sense of fear. A heart like mine,
Nerved by a woman's love, is mightier far,
Than monarchs with their hosts.

SIEGE OF VALENCIA.

Thou liest, thou shag-eared villain.

SHAKESPEARE.

to rise, but sank back seemingly overpowered with her emotions. A second effort more successful than the first soon followed, and she rushed toward the lover of her early years. She fell on her knees before him, and the luster of her bright eyes became dim, and her pale cheeks wet with the tears of joy and contrition.

"Lionel, my own Lionel, forgive me—forgive me!" she exclaimed, in a voice whose feeling, and pathos, and agony cannot be described. "Forgive me, I have treated you wrongly—I have scorned thee without a cause."

"I will forgive you, Florence, I will," fervently exclaimed Lionel, "if I have aught to forgive thee for. But you are not in the least blameworthy. Yonder sits the villain who has caused us all our trouble, and all our sorrow; yet I forgive him; may God do the same."

Higgs cowered. His eyes sunk, but flashed fiercely, and his teeth grated with an unmistakable meaning.

Florence, overcome by the intensity of her emotions, swooned and sunk to the floor. Lionel quickly raised her in his arms, and printing a fervent kiss on her fair white forehead, bore her to the sofa.

The amazement which held possession of Mr. Howard's mind, from the moment of Lionel's entrance, was in a measure dissipated by this act of kindness on the part of the latter. He immediately rung for servants, and Florence was carried into an adjoining and more comfortable apartment. Gilmore stayed by her bedside until convinced that she would soon recover, and he then reentered the parlor.

As Gilmore entered, Higgs sat before him, with his head bowed upon his breast, but he quickly looked up, and a blighting fire glared from his eyes—a fire that the malignancy of a demon's vision could not equal. Rage and mortification evidently held complete sway over his mind. A man with less of Gilmore's courage and stamina would have shrunk from a contact with those savage orbs, as they glowed there beneath the heavy brows of the impostor; but not so with Lionel, for he looked him steadily in the face, with an unaverted and guiltless eye. This coolness only added to the rage of the excited gambler. He sprang to his feet, but exclaimed in a low, but witheringly distinct and earnest voice:

"Man, you go not from this room alive, mark that. You have thwarted me—you die!"

"Not yet, Mr. Higgs, not yet," calmly replied Lionel, deliberately folding his arms, and standing before his enraged confronter, with as much indifference as if he had been utterly incapable of doing him fatal injury.

"We will see. I have a weapon here that does not miss."

"Scoundrel, even if Providence will not shield me, I shall not shrink. I fear thee not. Do thy worst. But stop, pray tell me wherefore you wish to kill me?"

"I hate you."

"Have I ever dealt wrongfully by you? Have I not ever been kind to

ble as a brother? Did I not watch over you, night and day, last autumn, when that burning fever was lying up your blood, and taking away your reason? Did I not watch over you then, and did I ever injure you before or since?"

"Yes, foul hypocrite, you have injured me in my present transactions. You have blasted my best hopes, and made me a cursed beggar, just when I was putting my foot upon the threshold of wealth."

"You call me a hypocrite," returned Gilmore. "Well, let it be so; but if I be a hypocrite, and a rascal, I deserve the credit of being but a poor pupil, at least, in the school of a notorious teacher. I suppose you never injured me, Higgs, at all," continued he, ironically.

"Neither have I injured you, or ever intended so to do," replied Higgs, without the quivering of a muscle to indicate the well-known falsity of his assertions.

"How! be cautious now. You never intended to injure me? How is that?" asked Gilmore, in a voice whose prying and earnest tone, changed, for a moment, the color of the other's face. "You never intended to injure me? Be cautious how you say that."

"No! point to an instance, if thou canst. I defy it."

"Have you not been, for several weeks, exerting yourself to the utmost, to effect my murder, that you might gratify a petty hatred which you had against me, and secure to yourself all the money which the nefarious plot, involving the destiny of Florence Hamilton, was expected to bring us? Did you not know, when first that plot was suggested, that the girl you represented to me as Alice, was Florence Hamilton? And how did you secretly treat me,

several years ago, in the city of Boston? think of that! I knew naught of either you or your acts then, but I have learned them since. Who but you, ruined my sweet, innocent, confiding sister, years ago, and ultimately caused her death; and the death of my own mother? Let your memory but recall these barbarities, and you will tremble. How dare you stand up here before me, and say you have not injured me? You dare not do it."

For awhile Higgs was silent, and he bit his lower lip until the blood run out of it.

"From whose mouth got you this bundle of lies?" at length he asked, dryly.

"Lies! your conscience tells you they are truths; but whence they came, I have not time to tell you. I must go."

"Not alive, I say," fiercely exclaimed Higgs, deliberately leveling his pistol at the breast of Lionel, "not alive you go."

"Neither shalt thou," suddenly exclaimed a gruff voice in the doorway. Higgs' eye darted in the direction of the unknown voice, and his gaze rested on the bony and muscular frame of the well-known servant, who, it seemed, had recovered, in part, from his wounds, and by his great strength had broken from his confinement at the gambling rooms. Without stopping for a moment's reflection, he flourished a hard, heavy rawhide furiously above his head, and rushed toward Higgs with a look and a yell, wild, fierce, and demoniac.

"Vengeance is mine," said he, as he seized the trembling gambler firmly by the collar, and ere he had time to cock his weapon, hurled him to the floor, with a force which made his very bones snap in their sockets. A groan, mingled with a

half-suppressed exclamation of in-suppressible rage came from the deep depths of Higgs' chest, as a score of powerful blows from the merciless cowhide, came down upon his thinly-habited figure, in rapid succession, with a terrible efficacy.

"Vengeance is mine," again roared the servant, as with a steady hand he continued to lay his fearful missile on the smarting back of his cringing suppliant.

Alarmed by the noise which this singular, and (the reader will doubtless agree with us) rather ludicrous scene created, Col. Howard now rushed into the room, in an astonishment scarcely conceivable. Writhing beneath the blows of the relentless whip, and unable longer to endure its murderous effects, which threatened to terminate existence itself, Higgs sprang to his feet, and made, like an arrow, for the door communicating with the street. But his deserved and novel punishment was not yet over. The speed of his unyielding persecutor was equal to his own. He followed close upon his heels, and at every step lashed him with such a deadly force and accuracy, that the sleeves and back of the gambler's extra fine broadcloth coat was soon transformed to strings, and colored with the blood that came from his lacerated veins. Gilmore and the old colonel attempted to arrest the progress of the infuriated pursuer, but he shook from his iron limbs their puny efforts, and kept on, reiterating in a louder voice:

"Vengeance is mine. This pays you for my usage at the gambling house."

The fugitive dashed through the outer door into the street, but the unyielding pursuer relinquished not the chase. They both rushed wildly forward, and long after their

forms were lost in the windings of the street, the fearful blows of the fatal rawhide were distinctly audible. Higgs was never afterward seen in New York, and the only indication that he had ever existed were the dark marks of his infamy.

CHAPTER XXI.

I saw two clouds at morning,
Tinged with the rising sun,
And in the dawn, they floated on
And mingled into one.

BRAINARD.

Ever nightfall Florence had entirely recovered, and Lionel Gilmore had the infinite satisfaction of again welcoming to his bosom, in perfect consciousness, the sweet being who had long swayed the scepter over the empire of his heart.

To attempt to depict the astonishment which took possession of Col. Howard's and Florence's minds, on hearing from the lips of Lionel, that the man whom they had entertained as the Rev. William Johnson, was in truth, none other than the notorious gambler, Samuel Higgs, would be but the puny mockery of incapability. Lionel, clearly and explicitly explained and exposed the long catalogue of his former comrade's perfidy.

The next day old Mr. Clarendon, the mysterious marksman, was a guest at the mansion of Col. Howard. It was soon found that he was the writer of the mysterious note which has been alluded to in a preceding conversation. The reader can conceive the kindness with which the old man was received. We could now easily go on, and occupy several chapters more, in presenting to the view of our read-

ers the subsequent scenes that transpired at Mr. Howard's—scenes not of bloodshed, and sorrow, and disappointment, but scenes of love, and joy, and happiness; but questioning whether the reader would be sufficiently interested to repay him for the tax that would necessarily be laid upon their time, and patience, we leave the matter to your own imaginations, and pass over the space of several weeks.

Lionel Gilmore is the happiest man, and Florence the happiest woman, at least in their own estimation, that the bright earth bears upon its bosom. The vows of their early years have been consummated by the solemn and beautiful rites of the marriage law. They were forever united by those sacred ties, which the hand of death alone has a just right to sever.

Col. Howard had died some weeks before, and Lionel was the possessor of his vast property. His father resided with him at the Howard mansion, and received all the attention, and care which his age demanded.

The old man would have been perfectly happy, had it not been for the gnawing of that ungratified revenge which had so worn upon him in former times. His hatred for Samuel Higgs abated not with time and change.

The Herculean servant, whose feats of daring we have occasionally witnessed, as we have traced out the various incidents of this little story, was retained in the family, and, notwithstanding the severe injury Lionel had received at his hands some years before, he was treated by him with the utmost kindness.

CHAPTER XXII.

There is an evening twilight of the heart,
When each wild passion is lulled to rest,
When care and grief in quietude depart,
As sinks the day beam in the rosy west.

HALLECK.

EIGHT years has the great heart of time knelled into eternity. The deep gloom of night's sunless noon has thrown its oppressive solemnity over the mighty metropolis of the fruitful garden of the globe—New Orleans. The melancholy stars look mournfully down through the thin white vapor that lays motionless over the bosom of the heavens—the broad mirror of God's omnipotence. Wailing and moaning, like the voices of the disembodied, through the silent windings of the lower Faubourg, comes the lonely spirit of the night-wind. The rusty lamp chains grate, as they swing to and fro, like the dry bones of a charnel.

Hark! footfalls are on the pavement. A tall, finely-formed man, wrapped in the luxurious folds of a Spanish cloak, breasts the wind. On he comes, and the firm step has no falter.—There! what spirit of the entombed nations? what ghost of departed mortality crawls colorless, and bloodless, and nearly fleshless from the dense darkness which bars the vision from yonder narrow passage? It rises before the cloaked stranger in its loathsome and haggard ghastliness. He shrinks back at this dreadful shadow of horror—this unearthly personification of the dead,—and he throws his eyes around in hopes of succor, but in vain. No person is visible, and no noise, save the melancholy clanking of the lamp chains, breaks the breathless, tomb-like stillness which seems to forebode the hour of doom and death. The strong man in the

cloak, though fearless, cowers like a child beneath the horrible green of those glassy eyes, which stand fixedly out, as if detached from the dark blue skin and bones that compose the inhuman figure of the phantom's face. Ah! those fiery-flashing, and restless eyes! the countenance seems to loose itself in them: the stranger sees naught but their wild, hellish glow, as he gazes. Look at that broad and massive forehead—that fleshless, protruding bone—that lofty palace of the soul, where decay has hardly dared to plant his footstep. Ah, it speaks of the former greatness of that skeleton's mind, of the mightiness of his intellect. It tells that the dome of the temple has stood unmoved amid the whirlwinds that have shivered the foundations of the edifice. The sunshine of the intellect still is there.

"Who art thou?" ejaculated the man in the Spanish cloak, after he had partly recovered from his first surprise. "Who art thou? speak, or get thee from my way, that I may proceed."

"Oh God! hell! hell!" exclaimed the ghastly skeleton, in a voice that would have made a nerve of iron quiver. "Alone! oh God, forever! none know me now,—the friends of my early years have forgotten me,—alone, alone! God has taken me from my very self," and he dropped on his knees as a thing of air would drop, and his hard, white, bony fingers clasped the knees of the stranger with a death-like grasp, as he continued,—

"Lionel Gilmore! Lionel, Lionel! forgive me; for heaven's sake, and for your sake, and my sake, I pray you forgive me! Will you, Gilmore, will you forgive me? Do, and may Providence bless you."

"Poor man," replied Gilmore,

with the warmest sympathy in every word uttered, "poor man, I know you not, but if you have ever injured me, I freely and gladly forgive you, as I do every other person who has done the same, and my prayer is, that God will do by my enemies as I wish to do by them myself. I forgive you."

"God be praised, and God bless you! Now I shall die contented, without that crushing weight of horror that has so long been grinding away my life. Lionel, ask your father to forgive me. Tell him I am sorry for the injury I have done him, and that I have paid dearly, ah! dearly, for it."

Thus spoke that wan, kneeling shadow of humanity, as its ghostly figure straightened up to its former airy altitude, and darted away like the wind of which it almost seemed a constituent part. Gilmore stood still a moment in motionless amazement, and then rushed on involuntarily after the fleet footsteps of the flying skeleton. He kept his eye on the fugitive till he reached the lower edge of the levee, then the latter paused an instant, then was suddenly lost to view. Gilmore swept over the intervening space, and stood on the spot where the other had disappeared. A second's time—one glance at the terrible element before him, and Lionel Gilmore was floundering among the dark and angry waves of the Mississippi. For a moment he was not to be seen, and it seemed as though the unsatisfied element had added him to the innumerable myriads of its victims. But he soon reappeared, and was seen bearing a human form above the water toward the levee. He arrived in safety; he laid the body on the pavement and the light of a neighboring lamp

revealed the emaciated features of the breathless skeleton: On the seal of his watch-chain, Lionel Gilmore read the name of Samuel Higgs.

He was dead. The heart of the gambler had throbbed its last throb. The chill shroud of death had gathered its silent folds around his once manly and athletic frame, and the quiet of that sleep which knows no waking, mantled the many crimes of his stormy and mysterious life.

THE END.

Reverend
Brother