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AGNES, THE BEAUTIFUL,

—OR—

THE GAMBLERS' CONSPIRACY.

A VIVID PICTURE

OF THE

SECRET TRANSACTIONS

OF

NEW YORK LIFE.

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AGNES, THE BEAUTIFUL.

CHAPTER I.

'Love is a smoke rais'd with the flame of sighs;
Being purg'd, a fire sparkling in lovers' eyes;
Being vex'd, a sea nourished with lovers' tears:

What is it else? a madness most discreet,
A choking gall, and a preserving sweet.'

'HUSBAND, I expect Jasper Gifford here this week,' said Mrs. Walton to her husband one pleasant evening in the month of September, as they sat in their richly furnished parlor.

'I should be very happy to see him,' replied Colonel Walton. 'He's a very smart young man so far as I can judge of his character.'

'I think so, too,' answered the wife; 'I suppose there's no doubt but his father is a very wealthy man, is there?'

'Not the least,' he replied; 'I have known him for several years, and no doubt he possesses much wealth, yet he does not retire from business. He seems to love a life of activity and business.'

'It is strange that he does when he has money enough, and no children except his son Jasper,' she said. 'I'm glad you had good sense enough to retire from the cares and perplexities of mercantile life after you accumulated enough to live on.'

'I'm glad of it, too,' he answered. 'How does Agnes feel in relation to Jasper's paying us another visit?'

'She says but little, but thinks the more I conclude,' she replied. 'She says she does not love the young man.'

'Yes, and I very well know the reason,' he said, knitting his brows, and looking sour. 'The foolish girl is in love with that Frank Homer; but she shall not marry him.'

'I trust we have power enough to drive such a silly notion from her head,' replied the mother. 'I'm not certain that she does love Frank; but I confess I very much fear she does. That Frank is a sly fellow and seeks every opportunity to be with Agnes.'

'And I think she seeks every opportunity to be with him,' he said. 'He was here last evening, was he not?'

'He was here a short time,' she replied. 'I wish he might never darken our doors again.'

'I have serious thoughts of requesting him as politely as I can not to visit us,' he said. 'He would probably take the hint if I should make such a request.'

Miss Rachel Read, the sister of Mrs. Walton, now entered the room and heard the last remark of the Colonel. Rachel was several years older than Mrs. Walton, and

believed that the denomination of Quakers was the nearest right of any religious sect. She was a very nice, particular person, but of good heart and better judgment and common sense than her sister possessed. As she entered the room, she heard enough to satisfy her that the Colonel and his wife were talking about Agnes and her lovers.—The subject had been brought up on several occasions, and Aunt Rachel had the misfortune not to agree with her sister and husband on that subject.

'Why, Colonel,' said Rachel as she entered the room and seated herself upon a sofa.—'I hope thee will not make such a request of that good, modest, unassuming young man.'

'Well, Rachel, I hope I shall,' he replied, smiling. 'Good, modest, and unassuming! You are deceived in him. He is a very sly, shrewd fellow, and determined to have Agnes; if he can get her; but I can assure him that he will not have such good luck as that.'

'No, indeed!' said Mrs. Walton. 'My daughter shall not become the wife of Frank Homer, if a mother has any power over her daughter.'

'But suppose, sister, that Agnes really loves the young man, what would thee do in that case?' asked Aunt Rachel.

'I would teach her to love some one equal in rank,' replied the mother. 'Frank Homer never aspires to be any thing more than a farmer, and can never be worth much. He will be very much like his father. And I understand he has purchased a lot of land in Northern New York, where he expects to clear up a farm and establish himself. You can't imagine for a moment that I would consent to let Agnes go there and live in a log house in the wilderness, can you?'

'Come, Rachel; now answer my wife's question, directly, and not evade it,' said the Colonel.

'I will answer it directly,' replied Rachel. 'I would let her go there or any where else with the man she loves rather than attempt to force her to marry one whom she does not and never can love.'

'Why, Rachel, you talk strangely,' said Mrs. Walton. 'But it is all natural enough. You would sing another song if you had a daughter. Single ladies are always ready to give their advice to married ones; but they know nothing about the feelings and emotions of a mother, and never will until they sustain that tender relation in life.'

'I hope and trust, that women do not lose their common sense and judgment the moment they become mothers,' said Rachel, while a smile played over her benevolent features, and her dark eyes sparkled with unwonted brilliancy.

'I trust not, too; but none but a mother can know a mother's feelings,' said Mrs. Walton.

'Perhaps not; but, mother or not, any one can see the folly and even the danger of compelling a girl to wed a man whom she dislikes,' said Rachel. 'Thee can do nothing worse for Agnes than to take such a course with her. If thee has power to compel her thus to marry, thee ought never to exercise it. She would live a miserable, unhappy life.'

'Agnes is not so deeply in love with Frank Homer that she cannot love some other person,' said the mother.

'I do not say she is, but there is one thing I do believe,' said Rachel.

'And what is that?' asked the Colonel.

'That Agnes will never love that city young man, Jasper Gifford,' she replied.

'And how do you happen to know so much about that?' asked Mrs. Walton. 'Has Agnes told you so?'

'I frankly confess she has, and believe she tells what she religiously believes to be the truth,' answered Rachel. 'I never knew Agnes to utter a falsehood yet, and don't believe she will begin now.'

'And did she tell you that she loved Frank Homer?' asked the Colonel, looking anxiously into Rachel's honest face.

'Never,' replied Rachel. 'The question I never asked her; but my impression is, that she does absolutely love him, and if she does, she cannot be made to love any one else. I think I know the cast of Agnes' mind. Although she appears to be humble and obedient, and is willing to make many sacrifices to please her parents, yet there is one point beyond which it will be dangerous to push her. She possesses much spirit and determination when circumstances arouse her. I recommend thee to be cautious, and not use any threatening language towards her, especially, in relation to Jasper Gifford.'

'Your advice may be good, but it is quite needless,' he said. 'I think I am capable of managing my own domestic concerns.'

'I trust so,' replied Rachel. 'But the day may come when thee will very distinctly remember what I have just told thee. Agnes is a beautiful and accomplished young lady, but thee may yet find she has a mind of her own.'

'And I rather think she will soon find that I, too, have a mind of my own,' he said.

'And I hope Frank Homer will be made sensible of the fact, too,' said the wife.

'He will be; for the first time he calls here I will politely request the young gentleman not to call again, for his room is better than his company,' said the Colonel, somewhat swelling up, and feeling his own importance.

'If thee does that thing I hope thee will do it very pleasantly, for Frank, too, has an indomitable spirit when it is once aroused, as unassuming and modest as he appears.'

'Well, Rachel, I shall stop the young farmer from visiting my house,' he said.—'I'm determined upon that, whether I offend him or not.'

'I have given him hints enough that he is not wanted here to satisfy any reasonable person, but he don't seem to take them,' said Mrs. Walton. 'I hope, husband, you will give him such hints as he will distinctly understand.'

'Thee would not do so, perhaps, if his father was a millionaire,' said Rachel.—'Money makes a great difference in a person's looks. Now I think Frank Homer is much better looking than Jasper Gifford.'

'Why, Rachel, he don't look half so genteel,' said Mr. Walton, manifesting much surprise.

'True, his coat may not be of so fine cloth or so fashionably cut as young Gifford's, but he has a more intellectual face and a handsomer form, and even better manners,' said Rachel. 'And thee would think so, too, if his father was as wealthy as Gifford's. Ah, sister, that makes all the odds in the world.'

'I don't desire you to judge of beauty for me,' said the mother. 'I think Gifford is the superior of Homer in every respect.'

Agnes now came down from her chamber and entered the room, and the conversation upon that subject ceased. Rachel had told a good many truths, but they made no impression upon the minds of the Colonel and his wife. They were fully determined to drive Frank Homer from the house.

CHAPTER II

Description of certain characters introduced. The meeting of the Lovers. Their hopes and fears. The arrival of a New York Dandy. The meeting of the Rivals.—The caning, and its results.

COLONEL WALTON had been a very enterprising and successful merchant in the city of New York, and had accumulated a

large property upon the interest of which he was living. He had a beautiful and even romantic situation not many miles below Albany on the banks of the Hudson River. He had but one child and that was his daughter Agnes, a very beautiful, and well-educated and accomplished young lady, whose attractions drew many young gentlemen after her. Although she had not yet reached a score of years, yet she had received several offers.

The father of Frank Homer, had a small, well-tilled farm not far from Colonel Walton's. He was a very industrious, prudent, good citizen. His wife was dead, and Frank was the only child. He had received a good common school education, and had taught a district school some two or three winters; but his natural taste led him to wish to follow the life of an agriculturalist. He believed that was the most happy and independent life a man could live. Although he was modest and unassuming in his manners, yet he possessed an indomitable spirit. His talents were far above mediocrity; and energy and perseverance in all laudable undertakings were his peculiar characteristics. No one, unless well acquainted with him, would suppose from his general appearance, that such qualities marked his character.—Colonel Walton had but a slight knowledge of the young man, and his wife knew him still less.

Frank was fully aware that the parents of Agnes were opposed to his addressing her in the character of a lover, but still he persevered, and was resolved to visit the Colonel's house and daughter until he was expressly forbidden to do so. He patiently waited for the expected interdiction, and prepared himself accordingly.

He and Agnes had reciprocated their love for a much longer time than the Colonel or his wife imagined. They were not aware of the strong and ardent affection each ex-

ercised for the other. The time had passed when their love was nipped in the bud, as the Colonel expressed it; for it had not only budded, but grown into a vigorous and healthy plant, the growth of which was not very easily checked by the exercise of parental authority. Such an attempt would be more likely to hasten than retard its growth, and Frank was fully sensible of the fact. He was not particularly alarmed, because he believed he could have interviews with Agnes elsewhere besides at her father's house, unless she was actually confined in her chamber and forbidden to walk out.

Jasper Gifford differed very much in his manners and appearance from Frank Homer. He dressed in the extreme of fashion, and sported a small mustache on his upper lip which greatly disgusted Agnes. And what made it more disagreeable to her and all other persons of common sense and good taste, was the fact that his hair was coarse and of a reddish, or of a sandy color. If his hair had been very dark and lustrous as Frank's was, he might have indulged in such an appendage to his face with more reasonable hopes of winning favor and exciting admiration, but as it was, the mustache made his face very disagreeable, if not absolutely disgusting to almost every body. His form was not well proportioned, and his motions were not easy and graceful; yet he possessed a dashing manner and a ready flow of words which commended him to persons of the class to which he belonged. He was tall, thin, and spare, and his face was somewhat freckled. His eyes were of a lightish grey color, but not altogether destitute of brilliancy and expression, especially when he was excited, and that often happened; for his temperament was very sanguine and nervous. Professing great courage, he could not brook any insults, and pretended to be ready to chastise any one who might dare to offer him the least abuse. There was not a

little of the B'hoy stamp upon his character; and yet he endeavored to conceal that when he visited Colonel Walton's daughter. But Agnes was too good a judge of human character to be deceived by him. He could never have won her affections, even if they had not been won by Frank Homer.

Gifford knew that he had a rival in Frank, still he imagined he should bear off the palm of victory, especially since he knew Agnes's parents were so strongly upon his side.—They had met but once, and that meeting was at the Colonel's house. Agnes introduced Frank to Jasper, but they conversed a very little, and appeared quite distant.—They were very far from being friends. They hated each other from the time they were first made acquainted.

But a few days elapsed after Col. Walton threatened to forbid Frank from visiting his house before he had an opportunity of carrying his threats into execution.

One afternoon Frank happened to meet Agnes, when the latter was returning from a neighbor's where she had been to make a call. Their meeting was a cordial one, and they always had enough to say at their interviews. There was no lack of topics on such occasions.

'Have you been honored with a visit from the Bowery B'hoy?' asked Frank.

'I have not, but mother is now expecting him every day,' replied Agnes. 'I wish I might never see the disgusting fellow again. It is strange that father and mother should be so taken up with him. I should rather die than become his wife!'

And the tears stood in her eyes as she looked up to her lover's face and made the declaration. Frank's heart was too full for utterance when he saw those tears. His spirit was aroused at last, and he replied.—'Thanks be to fortune! You are of age now, and can do as you please. But I advise you to keep quiet, and when asked any

questions by either of your parents to answer them properly and truly. Say to them in a cool, calm manner that you never can become the wife of Jasper Gifford.'

'I told mother as much yesterday, but she seemed not to believe me, and called me a very foolish girl,' said Agnes.

'Well, keep saying so whenever your father introduces the subject,' he replied.—'And say it too as if you meant what you said. Be calm, but firm and determined.'

'Aunt Rachel is on my side,' she said.—'She is quite as much disgusted with Gifford as I am, and don't blame me at all for not liking him.'

'Your Aunt Rachel is a sensible woman,' he answered. 'And I wish all women possessed as much good sense as she does.'

'But father is going to forbid you from coming to our house!' she said, in a tone of voice that showed how deeply she felt.

'Let him do so,' replied Frank, smiling, and nervously pressing the hand of Agnes. 'Let him act his pleasure. The house is his and he has a right to forbid me to enter it.'

'And if he should forbid you, I suppose I should not see you again!' she said, in a voice full of trembling.

'There are other places besides your house where we can meet occasionally, if we are so disposed,' he replied, gazing into her still moistened eyes, and feeling his heart pressed with strange emotions to which he dared not give utterance at that time.

'I know it; but father may shut me up and forbid me from going out at all,' she said.

'He will not drive matters to such an extremity at present,' replied Frank. 'And I very much question whether he will ever venture upon such a course. It seems to me he must have too much judgment for that.'

'O, I don't know! he is very bitter in his feelings against you!' she answered. 'And so is mother, too.'

'I'm aware of it, but heaven is just!' he said. 'Be not alarmed, Agnes. Clouds may now appear thick and heavy over our heads, but the sunshine will come, if we are faithful to ourselves, and act according to the exigency of circumstances. I will never forsake you so long as God permits me to breathe this air, unless your heart changes and you wish me to leave you.'

'O, Frank, that can never be!' she replied, and anxiously gazing into his manly face.

They were now within forty rods of the house, and Agnes wished the distance was much greater. While she was absent young Gifford had arrived and expressed much regret that Agnes was absent. Her mother advised him to walk out and meet her on her return. He cheerfully complied with such advice, and started off in the direction the anxious mother pointed out to him.

'Good heavens!' said Agnes, nervously pressing Frank's arm. 'See! Yonder comes Gifford, else I'm very much mistaken. Yes, it is he!'

'Never mind,' replied Frank, calmly; feeling some little pride in meeting his rival under circumstances so favorable. 'I think I shall gallant you home at all events.'

'I hope so, for I don't want to go with him,' said Agnes. 'But if father should see us!'

'Let him see us,' replied Frank. 'If he is determined to forbid our intercourse and command me not to visit his house, let him do it this afternoon. He will never have a better time. You be calm and yet firm in your resolution not to receive Gifford as a lover, and all be well one of these days. You may rely upon me.'

'I do have all confidence in you,' answered Agnes, in a tremulous voice. 'See how he struts! O, I cannot endure the sight of him.'

Young Gifford was rigged out in true dandy style, and came along, swinging a small cane and strutting like a turkey-cock. His hat was placed jauntily upon his head, and his sandy-colored mustache was brushed out in a very tasteful style according to the wearer's notions of taste. A heavy gold chain was about his neck, and an enormous gold ring adorned the little finger of his left hand. His vest and pantaloons were woven with many brilliant colors; and a large quizzing glass hung at his breast. They soon met face to face.

'How do you do, my dear Agnes,' said Gifford, extending his hand to her, and at the same moment gazing upon Frank with an evil eye.

'I'm quite well,' replied Agnes; not however offering him her hand.

'And how are you, sir?' inquired Gifford, addressing Frank, and gazing upon him through his glass.

'My health is good, sir, and my mind at ease,' answered Frank. 'Is your sight so poor that you are obliged to use a glass?'

'I use a glass, sir, whenever I please,' said Gifford, looking quite angry.

'Well, sir, you have a perfect right to look at me through a glass, or with your naked eyes,' said Frank, smiling. 'But one thing strikes me as singular.'

'And what is that, sir?' asked Gifford, assuming an important look, and flourishing his small ratan.

'That you should use the same glass to see near to and at a long distance,' replied Homer.

'Let me tell you, sir, that you know but little about the science of optics,' said Gifford, gazing upon Agnes, and hoping to see some appreciation of his wit in the expression of her countenance, but all was blank there so far as he was concerned; for she scarcely looked at him.

'Perhaps I do not understand that interesting and somewhat abstruse science,' answered Homer. 'But I can assure you, sir, that I shall not so stultify myself as to take lessons of a New York dandy.'

'Do you intend to insult me, sir?' asked Gifford, swinging his cane as if he was ready to strike any one who might insult him.

'O, no, sir, I seldom shoot at such small game,' replied Frank, smiling, and even wishing Homer might strike him.

'Be careful of what you say,' continued Gifford, threatening to strike, and feeling much angered.

'And you be careful of what you do,' added Frank.

'Take that!' said Gifford, striking Frank over his hat quite a severe blow.

'Will you do that once more?' calmly inquired Frank, feeling his temper rise, and looking the dandy full in the face.

'At your request, sir,' said Gifford, striking another blow.

'Twice is more than I can bear,' said Frank, dropping the arm of Agnes, and springing upon Gifford like the tiger upon his prey.

A moment's struggle, and Gifford was borne to the earth, and Frank stood with his right foot upon the breast of his antagonist. Agnes was much alarmed at first, but when she saw Gifford prostrated upon the earth, and Frank standing over him, her fears were somewhat calmed.

Gifford attempted to rise, but his antagonist pressed him down, and told him if he did not lie still he should make the blood flow over his mustache. Gifford was really frightened, but that was not the worst of his misfortune, for in his struggle he had caused a great rent in his pants, and felt some strange emotions besides those of fear. Frank kept him down for some time until Gifford begged to get up. Frank let him

rise, and told him to make the best of his way to a tailor's shop. Frank and Agnes started off, leaving poor Gifford behind.—It was the first real squabble Agnes had ever witnessed, and she hoped it would be the last.

CHAPTER III.

Talking over the affray. How it was viewed by the lovers. A meeting with the parents. The father's threats, and cowardice. Examination of the supposed wound. The Quakeress, &c.

I COULD hardly refrain from smiling,' said Frank, 'when I had that dandy under my feet. And, Agnes, you would have laughed if you could have seen the peculiar expression of his countenance. The fellow was really frightened and without cause too, for I did not intend to injure a single hair even of his mustache.'

'I was terribly alarmed when he struck you,' said Agnes.

'I suppose you were afraid the fellow would flog me,' said Frank, smiling.

'I didn't know but he might have pistols in his pockets; as they say the New Yorkers do sometimes have them,' replied Agnes.

'If he did carry a pistol he's too great a coward to fire it off,' said Frank. 'A regiment of such fellows would not frighten me. You saw how quick I had him under my foot. And did not you hear his pants burst in the struggle?'

Agnes hid her face in her handkerchief, but made no reply. Serious as the affair was, she could not keep from laughing.—Both enjoyed quite a hearty laugh.

'Now, Agnes, I desire that you keep silent upon the subject,' he continued.—'You will bear in mind that he struck me twice before I made an attack upon him.'

'O, yes, I remember that well,' she replied.

'Very well,' he said. 'He may possibly commence an action against me for an assault and battery, and if he does, I'll show him up in his true colors. You will keep silent upon the subject. And if he, or your father, ask you any questions, tell them you know but little about such quarrels. I hope he will sue me, and then I will have some sport.'

They passed along and approached the house, while Gifford was at some distance in the rear. Col. Walton was standing under the piazza in front of the house as Frank came up arm in arm. Frank stopped at the step which led up to the piazza, while Agnes passed up. Frank bid her good bye.

'Where is Mr. Gifford?' asked the Colonel, addressing his daughter, and feeling the hot blood rushing into his face.

'He is coming yonder,' replied Agnes, passing into the house, while Frank was turning on his heel to depart.

'Stop, young man,' said the Colonel; 'I have a few words to say to you.'

'Please to say them, then,' replied Frank, looking the Colonel sharply in the face.

'Young man, I have come to the conclusion to inform you that your room in my house is more desirable than your company. You understand me.'

'I think I do, sir, perfectly,' replied Frank.

'Your language is plain and needs no interpreter. I hope sir, you'll have, no occasion ever to regret that you have thus briefly communicated to me your wishes.'

'I cannot conceive of any cause for regret, young man,' replied the Colonel. 'My house is my own, and I have the privilege of selecting my own company.'

'Most assuredly you have, and would to heaven your daughter could have the same privilege!' answered the young man.

'I suppose you do,' said the Colonel, while a smile of contempt passed over his face. 'But I have a notion that my judgment and experience are greater than my daughter's.'

'That may be true, sir, but parents sometimes misjudge after all,' replied Frank. 'I believe your daughter is capable of judging for herself in some matters quite as well as you can judge for her. She is now of age, and perhaps it would be well for her and all concerned that you exercise sound discretion and much caution.'

'I don't stand here, young man, to receive lessons from you,' said the Colonel, feeling quite indignant that Frank presumed thus to advise him in relation to affairs of his own household.

'I'm aware of that, sir; but then if advice is good it matters not from what source it proceeds,' said Frank, feeling not the least intimidated by the frowns of the Colonel. 'I shall yield obedience to your commands, and not intrude myself upon your premises.—But be cautious how you attempt to force your daughter to wed a man whom she does not love. The experiment is a dangerous one, and has proved disastrous in thousands of instances.'

'You may rest assured she will never become your wife,' said the Colonel. 'I would rather follow her to the grave than see her your wife. You feel quite too important for a young man in your situation.'

'True, I'm not wealthy like yourself; but I have a mind which money can neither enlarge or diminish,' replied Frank. 'Beware how you make merchandise of your daughter. Trade her not off to him who has the most money. Marriage is an institution more sacred than that.'

'Talk not thus to me, impertinent fellow,' said the Colonel, assuming a look of very great importance, and frowning upon Frank.

'I shall take nothing back, and more I could say, but I forbear at present,' added Frank.

As Frank turned to depart, young Gifford came up, limping with a white handkerchief bound round his knee to cover the rent in his pants. This fact is stated lest the reader might have conjectured that the rent was in some other quarter. Gifford had received no wound upon his knee, but the handkerchief was bound so tightly about his limb that it actually made him walk somewhat lame. The Colonel saw him thus limping along, and was alarmed lest his young friend had received a wound. Frank did not immediately depart, but tarried a moment to hear what might be said.

'Why, Gifford, what is the matter?' inquired the Colonel, while Mrs. Walton came to the door, having seen the young man through one of the parlor windows.

'That brute has hurt me,' said Gifford, pointing his slender cane at Frank.

'Hurt you!' exclaimed Mrs. Walton, expressing much alarm in her countenance.

'I think, madam, the wound is not a very deep one,' said Frank. 'He needs a tailor more than a surgeon. The wound is not in the flesh, but in the pants.'

'You're a saucy, country clown,' replied Gifford. 'I will hand you over to the proper legal authority. I'm not disposed to be thus abused with impunity.'

'Do so just as soon as you please,' answered Frank. 'I'm ready to meet you before court or elsewhere. You did not receive half as much as you deserved; and if you had not have begged most humbly to be released from my grasp I might have given you a severe flogging.'

'I'll hear no more from you, young man,' said the Colonel; shaking his fist at Frank. 'You shall answer for all this.'

'I'm not in the least frightened,' replied Frank. 'I'm ready to be tried for all I have done. Send the dandy to a tailor, and the wound will soon be healed.'

During the above conversation, Agnes had sought her Aunt Rachel, and acquainted her with all the circumstances. The quakeress was highly pleased and promised Agnes not to tell how the affray first commenced. She and Agnes were looking out of a chamber window, and saw Frank, but could not see the others as they stood under the piazza.

'Clear out from these premises,' said the Colonel, feeling much angry.

'I believe I'm now in the public highway, and shall take my own time to leave,' said Frank. 'If you desire me to go faster, you must come and push me along, if you dare perform such a feat.'

The Colonel suddenly started towards Frank, but did not advance but a few paces before he stopped and took a second thought. The Colonel was a rather small sized man, and not remarkable for his muscular powers or moral courage, while Frank possessed a well knit frame, much athletic power, and a courage that feared nothing. Had Colonel Walton approached and made the attack, Frank would have served him worse than he did the dandy.

'Why do you hesitate?' asked Frank, smiling, and standing firm in his tracks.—Has your courage like Bob Acre's oozed out at the ends of your fingers? I can assure you I will not run a step, but receive you like a man. Advance if you are disposed, and not show the white feather.'

'Why don't you flog the saucy fellow?'—asked Mrs. Walton. 'If I were a man I would do it instantly.'

'No doubt, madam, you have much more courage than your husband, or the New York dandy,' replied Frank. 'I have tested the courage of the latter, and give him credit for great courage when he believes there is no danger.'

'You are beneath my notice!' said the Colonel, turning back.

'And so was that dandy a short time ago literally beneath my notice, for I looked down upon him and heard him beg for quarters,' said Frank, smiling.

Aunt Rachel heard high words, and, being a quakeress of peace, and in principle, and greatly opposed to war, came down to see what the result might be.

'I hope there will be no fighting,' said Aunt Rachel.

'No fear of that among so many cowards,' replied Frank, smiling, and passing down the street.

'That's a dangerous young man and his proud spirit must be curbed,' said Colonel Walton. 'He has fought our young guest here, and wounded his knee.'

'Indeed!' said the good Rachel, 'that must be seen to. Is the wound a very bad one?'

'We don't know, for we have not examined it yet,' replied Mrs. Walton. Let us go into the house and see.'

They all now walked into the parlor, and Aunt Rachel insisted upon having Gifford take the handkerchief from his knee and show the length, breadth and depth of the wound. He was at first reluctant, but there is no such thing as resisting Aunt Rachel's entreaties in the cause of humanity. Gifford untied the handkerchief, and showed an enormous rent in his pants; but his cotton drawers still covered his knee, and no wound could be discovered. Aunt Rachel insisted upon probing the matter to the bottom, and urged Gifford to slip up the leg of his drawers. After much urging, he did so, and Aunt Rachel examined the part very thoroughly through her gold-bowed spectacles; but she could not discover a single bruise, or even scratch in the skin. Mrs. Walton went and brought the camphor bottle to bathe the knee.

'I think thee is not much hurt,' said Aunt Rachel.

'It may be a sprain, and not a bruise,' said Mrs. Walton. 'O, that young Homer ought to have his neck stretched!'

'I don't belong to the hanging school,' said Aunt Rachel. 'Let the young man rub his knee in camphor, and I think he will feel no more trouble.'

'Gifford rubbed his knee as requested, and then rose and only limped a very little. He really began to think his knee was somewhat sprained, but he soon got over it, and could walk as well as usual.

'Dear me!' exclaimed Mrs. Walton, as Gifford rose and walked across the room to test the extent of his wound. 'Your coat is very dirty, and full of dust all over the back!'

'I suppose so,' replied Gifford. 'I will retire to a chamber and change my dress.'

He did so, and while he was absent, the conversation continued.

'That Frank Homer shall smart for all this,' said the Colonel. 'If there's any law in the Empire State, our guest shall have the benefit of it.'

'I advise thee to do no such thing,' said Aunt Rachel.

'Of course you do; but pardon me when I say that your advice will not be heeded,' replied the Colonel.

The conversation was kept up until Gifford came down in another suit, even finer and nicer than the one in which he received his flogging. Some time elapsed before Agnes made her appearance. And the time would have been longer if her mother had not called her.

CHAPTER IV.

The iron hand of the law is sought to redress grievances. The advice and admonitions of a Quakeress. The folly and ambition of some mothers. A daughter's struggles.

MORNING came, and the Colonel was as good as his word. He and young Gifford entered the carriage and started for the village to procure a warrant to arrest Frank Homer. During the evening previous Agnes remained quite silent, and would have kept her chamber, away from the sight and sound of him she so much hated, if her mother had not only urged, but even commanded her to stay in the parlor and converse with the disgusting dandy. Her father, too, added his authority to that of the mother, and the poor girl was compelled to keep the company of her intended husband.

The parents of Agnes had never before on any previous occasion shown such a determination to enforce her into a marriage with Gifford as they did at this time. The Colonel's spirit was aroused, and he was resolved to have his own way. And to add to the misery of the girl's situation her mother fully agreed with the father and seconded all his efforts.

Aunt Rachel endeavored to dissuade these willfully blind parents from such a course, but her efforts were entirely unavailing.—They appeared not to understand the temper and disposition of their daughter so well as Aunt Rachel did.

'Thee must have seen enough last evening to satisfy thee that Agnes could never be happy with such a husband as Gifford would make,' said Rachel to her sister, Mrs. Walton. 'Did thee not see how she dislikes him?'

'She may feel so now while that Frank Homer is in her mind,' replied Mrs. Walton. 'He'll not come here any more, and Agnes will soon forget him.'

'Ah, sister, thee reasons very wrong,' said Rachel. 'Thee seems not to understand the character of Agnes. Rouse her spirit much more, and she will be hard to conquer. Mild and amiable as she naturally is, yet there is a spirit in her which cannot be controlled. I have studied her character well, and believe thee will yet find what I have said to be true. I have often told thee and thy husband that to attempt to force a marriage against a daughter's will, is a very dangerous experiment; and, especially, is it dangerous when tried upon such a girl as Agnes. She loves Frank Homer, and hates Jasper Gifford.'

'She may think she loves him now, but out of sight out of mind is an old maxim,' replied the mother.

'That maxim may be true in some cases, but I fear thee will not find it true in the case of Agnes,' said Rachel. 'Absence from Homer will only tend to make her love him more intensely, especially, since that absence comes by force, and not voluntarily.'

'It is no use for you to talk, Rachel, said the mother. 'We have planned out our course and mean to pursue it. Agnes shall never wed a man so much beneath her in rank. It would be very interesting to go and visit our daughter in a log house in the wilderness. We desire no such connections. Agnes must wed a man who is able to give her as good a home as she leaves, and Jasper Gifford can do that.'

'But, sister, what is a splendid house richly furnished and servants at command, without mutual love between the occupants?' asked Rachel. 'If his father was wealthy, you would esteem Frank, even more than you now do Gifford.'

'In that case he would be able to give Agnes such a home as her rank and education demand,' said the mother. 'I don't believe in a girl's marrying a man below her

rank and condition. Marriage ought to raise up, not pull down. No, no, Agnes must not humble herself in that manner.'

'But would thee make her miserable in this world for the sake of gratifying thy pride and ambition?' asked Rachel.

'I have yet to learn she would be miserable and unhappy as the wife of Gifford,' said Mrs. Walton.

'Thee will never learn it then; for Agnes will never, in my opinion, become the wife of that young man,' replied Rachel. 'Thee and thy husband may break up the connection between her and young Homer, but cannot force her to wed Gifford.'

'And I suppose you will advise Agnes to disregard our wishes and disobey our commands,' said the mother, exhibiting some ill-temper in the expression of her countenance.

'Surely I could not advise the girl to yield to thy wishes or thy commands, if thee and thy husband intends to force her into a marriage with a man whom she can never love and must always hate,' replied the good Quakeress. 'Such parental wishes and commands are entirely wrong and ought not to be complied with, or obeyed. Daughters owe duties to themselves and to their Heavenly Father as well as to their parents.'

Agnes now entered the room, and Aunt Rachel went to her chamber. The mother and daughter sat some time in silence. It was a sort of quaker meeting without the presence of the good Rachel. Mrs. Walton felt the force of some of her sister's remarks, and yet she was fully resolved not to be governed by them. Her pride, ambition and self-will were more than a match for her conscience and her cooler judgment. She loved Agnes as a mother must love her first born; yet she was provoked to think that Agnes loved Frank Homer, and would not consent to her wishes on the subject of marriage.—After sitting some time in thoughtfulness and silence, the mother spoke.

'I did not once think, Agnes, that you would ever become a disobedient child. I regret it most sincerely. It makes me weep to think of it. Some poet has said, that a serpent's tooth is not so sharp as a thankless child.'

'And it makes me weep bitter tears, mother, to think that you wish to tie me to a man for life whom I so much hate! Ah, dear mother, such a parental wish is enough to make a daughter weep, and even wish she had never been born. I sometimes feel a regret that I ever saw the light; and yet I love you and father most deeply and sincerely.'

'And if you love us so much, why not gratify our wishes and desires?' asked the mother. 'Answer that question, Agnes.'

'Because by so doing I should make myself most miserable, and even give you cause of regret at some future day,' replied Agnes. 'I know you could not feel happy, if you knew I was miserable and wretched.'

'You would not be miserable and wretched with such a husband as young Gifford would make. You would live in a fine house, richly furnished and move in the very first circles in the city. Your life must be a happy one. Gifford's father is a millionaire. Splendid horses, elegant carriages, servants in livery, the richest dresses, operas, parties, every thing would be at your command.'

'Not every thing, mother,' said Agnes.—'I should lack one thing, and that would mar the pleasure of the whole.'

'And what is that, pray?' asked the mother.

'A husband whom I loved instead of hating,' replied Agnes. 'What is a splendid tree with all its green and beautiful foliage when a worm is gnawing at its roots and sucking up its very life-blood? No, no, dear mother, the possession of all such worldly splendors could never make me happy, if I were obliged to share it with a partner I hated and despised.'

CHAPTER V.

'But you would not hate and despise him,' said the mother. 'He loves you sincerely, deeply, and you could not help reciprocating his affection. You will soon forget that Homer, especially when you don't see him. You may think you love him now, but you will not think so in a few weeks. I know how it is with the girls, for I was one myself once. I had fancies when I was at your age, and really thought sometimes I was actually in love, but I soon found my mistake, and got rid of all those fancies.'

'Fancies!' repeated Agnes, gazing intently into her mother's face, and wondering at her notions of love affairs. 'I have never yet had but one fancy if you please to term it so, and have not been troubled with many as you say you were when you were a girl.'

'Well, then, it is more easy to get rid of one fancy than many,' said the mother.—'I'm fully persuaded that you will yet like Gifford. I'm sure he is a fine-looking, pleasant young man.'

'Fine-looking and pleasant!' repeated the daughter. 'He looks no better in my view than a monkey.'

'Why, Agnes, how strangely you talk!' exclaimed the mother, wildly gazing upon her daughter. 'That Frank Homer has completely bejuggled you and bewildered your mind! Why, Agnes, your talk really alarms me! I never heard you use such language before! What would your father say if he should hear you thus talk?'

'I cannot tell what he might say,' replied Agnes. 'But I pray heaven you nor he may urge me more to become the wife of Jasper Gifford, for I can never consent to that. And O, dear mother, do not ask me to do that which I cannot do and be happy; for it pains me to the heart not to gratify the wishes of my parents.'

A carriage now drove up, and an elegantly dressed lady called and put an end to any further conversation upon the subject.

The officer subpoenas Agnes as a witness. The alarm of the mother. A crowd assembles. The trial. The arguments, and acquittal of Agnes' lover. Much excitement.

THE bell of Colonel Walton's house rang out a strong peal, and an officer stood at the door waiting for admission. Rachel, happening to be passing at the moment, answered the summons.

'Is there a young lady here by the name of Agnes Walton?' asked the officer, carefully reading the subpoena so as to be sure he had got the right name.

'There is, sir,' replied Aunt Rachel.—'Does thee wish to see her?'

'I do, and wish her to accompany me to the village, immediately,' replied the officer.

Mrs. Walton had come to the door and heard the last remark of the officer.

'What in the world do you want of my daughter?' asked the mother.

'O, they have got up a kind of lawsuit at the village, and your daughter is summoned as a witness,' answered the officer. 'A New York dandy has hauled up Frank Homer for giving him a flogging. The people seem to be on Frank's side, generally. I reckon we shall have some fun. I want your daughter to go as soon as possible, for the court will soon be waiting for her.'

'My daughter was never called to such a place before,' said Mrs. Walton.

'No matter,' said the officer. 'There must be a first time for every thing. I suppose, she can get ready in a few minutes.—The parties are all there and waiting, and I am anxious to hear the testimony of the dandy who will be first sworn.'

Agnes had now approached and heard what the officer said about Frank. She was much pleased, and so was Aunt Rachel.

'I will go, sir, in a few minutes,' said Agnes.

'Yes, I'll warrant you are ready to go wherever that Frank is,' said the mother.

'The lady is not to be blamed for that; for he's a handsome, smart, young fellow,' said the officer, smiling.

'A smart young fellow!' repeated the agitated mother. 'I don't want you to judge for me about the smartness of young men.'

'O, madam, I only judge for myself,' replied the officer. 'Every body says Frank Homer is a smart young man; at any rate he gave that Broadway dandy a decent flogging, and I reckon the fellow well deserved it.'

Agnes hurried to her chamber to prepare for appearing before the court. She was not long in getting ready, and soon was in the carriage with the officer. Mrs. Walton felt strange doubts and misgivings, and Aunt Rachel thought she saw the end from the beginning.

'You never appeared in court as a witness I suppose,' said the officer to Agnes.

'Never,' she replied. 'But I think I shall not be frightened, for I shall say nothing but the truth.'

'O, there's nothing to be afraid of,' said the officer. 'Frank Homer is going to manage his own case, and that dandy has employed Squire Erskine, the smartest lawyer in the village.'

'Don't you think Frank had better employed a lawyer?' asked Agnes.

'I reckon he will defend himself well enough,' he replied. 'The case will be tried before an honest justice who will be governed by the facts of the case, and not by the ingenious arguments of the lawyers. On the whole, I think Frank has taken the best course, and that seems to be the general opinion. He can talk when occasion calls for it.'

They hurried along towards the village where the trial was to take place. The news had gone out, and quite a crowd assembled to hear the case. Colonel Walton, Gifford and his lawyer, were closeted in a room preparing for the trial.

'You will swear that Homer sprang upon and threw you down and placed his foot on your breast and held it there?' asked the attorney, slyly smiling at the appearance of his client.

'Yes, sir, I will swear to that,' replied Gifford. 'And he pressed his foot upon me very hard.'

'And he also tore his pants and wounded his knee,' said the Colonel; who felt as strong an interest in the case as the lawyer or his client.

'Are there any marks on your knee?'—asked the attorney.

'I think there are not,' replied Gifford. 'The skin was not bruised, but it felt quite sore. My pants were very badly torn.'

'Well' these facts you will testify to,' said Erskine. 'No one was present but you and Homer, was there?'

'O, yes, the Colonel's daughter was present,' replied Gifford.

'Indeed!' said the attorney. 'Then she should be summoned as a witness.'

'I understand Frank has summoned her, and an officer has been sent for her,' said the Colonel.

'That looks a little suspicious,' said the lawyer. 'Is there an intimate connection between your daughter and Homer?'

'There has been, but I broke it up, yesterday,' replied the Colonel.

'I understand,' said the shrewd attorney. 'I must cross-examine her pretty thoroughly, if I find she leans in her testimony in favor of Homer as I suspect she will from the fact of his calling her as a witness.'

While the examination was going on, Agnes arrived, and was closeted with Frank in a private room.

Their meeting was a joyous one.

'Now, Agnes, all you will have to do when called upon the stand is to state the facts just as they occurred,' said Frank. 'You can remember them well, and be careful that Mr. Erskine in his cross-examination does not entangle and bewilder you.'

'I think he can't do that,' said Agnes.—'I shall state the facts and nothing else, and those I shall stick to.'

'That is right,' he replied, pressing her hand and imprinting a warm kiss upon her lips.

They talked about other matters besides those relating to the trial, which will not now be disclosed to the reader. While they were together, the Court, the lawyer, his client, Colonel Walton and a large crowd had assembled in the room of the justice. They waited some minutes for the coming of the accused, and began to grow impatient on account of the delay.

'May it please your Honor,' said Erskine. 'I think we have waited long enough for the accused. I understand he is closeted with his witness in a private room. I trust your Honor will despatch an officer after him.—This long drilling of witnesses is not favorable to the purposes of justice.'

The justice sent an officer for Homer, who soon entered the room, accompanied by Agnes. All eyes were turned upon the handsome couple; and the sympathy of the crowd was on the side of the accused and his witness. Erskine was aware of that fact, and hence his remark about 'drilling witnesses.'

The complaint and warrant were read, and Homer, in a firm tone of voice, pleaded not guilty.

Gifford was now called up and sworn, when quite a number of the crowd laughed, and some of them so loud that the court commanded silence.

'Take the stand, Mr. Gifford, and tell the court all you know about the case,' said Erskine.

'I met the accused yesterday in the public highway,' said Jasper. 'We had some words, when he sprang upon me, threw me down, placed his foot upon my breast, and threatened me very hard if I attempted to rise. I saw that he was very angry, and I didn't know but he would strangle me, or gouge out my eyes.'

Here there was another burst of laughter, which the court silenced and ordered the witness to proceed with his testimony.

Gifford continued. 'As I was saying, he looked so wild and desperate, I began to fear that he would take my life! In the struggle to crush me down, he tore my pants and wounded my knee.'

Another outbreak of laughter from the crowd disturbed the court and the proceedings.

'I hope, your Honor, that order will be preserved,' said Erskine, repressing a smile which he felt rising from his heart to his face.

The court again commanded silence and ordered the officer in attendance to arrest any one for contempt of court, who might disturb the peace. The crowd were now more quiet and listened anxiously and attentively.

'I have no more testimony, your honor,' said Erskine. 'The case seems to be clear enough.'

'Have you any questions you wish to ask the witness?' inquired the court, addressing Frank Homer.

'A few, may it please your Honor,' replied Frank. 'Then turning his keen eyes upon the complainant, he continued: "Did you carry a cane in your hand when you met me?"'

'I did, the small one I now hold in my hand,' replied Jasper, holding up the cane, and looking anxiously at the Justice.

'Did you, or did you not, strike me twice over the head with that cane before I sprang upon you and threw you down?' asked Homer, smiling, and appearing quite cool and collected as any old member of the legal bar.

'I might have flourished my cane, but I don't think I struck you before you leaped upon me like a tiger on his prey,' answered Jasper.

'There can be no question but you did flourish your cane, for that is about the only employment that engages Broadway dandies,' said Frank.

Another loud laugh, threw the court into confusion, and even the justice himself was seen to smile. That fact gave encouragement to the crowd, and the loud laughing was prolonged more than it had been on previous occasions.

'Silence!' commanded the justice, repressing his smile, and assuming a sober look.

'May it please your honor,' said Erskine. 'I claim the protection of the court for my client. I trust no one will be allowed to insult him here in the presence of justice.'

'I only stated a fact, which goes to corroborate the testimony of the witness thus far,' said Frank. 'But I wish to put the question again directly to the witness.'

The court gave him the privilege, and Frank continued. 'I ask you again, sir, if you did not strike me twice before I offered to raise a hand in self-defence?'

'I think I did not,' replied Jasper. 'I might have struck when you rushed upon me, but not before.'

'That bears truth on the very face of it,' said Erskine. 'It is all perfectly natural.'

'Perhaps so, but we shall see,' replied Frank, very calmly and coolly.

He then put the question again to the witness and pressed the inquiry so hard that

Jasper positively swore he did not strike before Frank sprang upon him. Frank had got the witness where he wanted him, and ceased his cross-examination.

Agnes was now called up and sworn.— Her face was flushed with excitement, and she never looked more beautiful. All eyes were upon her, and the sympathy of the crowd was with her. She calmly testified that Jasper struck Frank twice before the latter made a single movement in self-defence.

Her story was so clearly told, and her manner was so sincere that not a person in the room doubted a word she uttered.

'I have done with the witness,' said Frank. 'The story bears the truth on its very face.'

And Frank looked at the lawyer, and smiled. Many others also smiled, and it was whispered round that Frank would get his case. But Erskine was not disposed to give up the case without a cross-examination of the fair witness.

'Where you and the accused not closeted together in a room just before the trial commenced?' asked the attorney.

'I don't know, Mr. Erskine, as that question has any relevancy to the case,' said the court.

'May it please your Honor, I hope the witness will be allowed to answer the gentleman's question,' said Frank. 'I have not the least objection in the world.'

The court now told the witness she might answer the question if she had no objections herself, but if she had she might remain silent.

'I have no objections, sir,' said Agnes.— 'I was in a room with Mr. Homer before the trial came on.'

'And did he not tell you what to say to the court, here?' asked Erskine.

'He told me, sir, to state the facts just as they occurred, and I have done so,' she replied.

A demonstration of applause was now manifested by the crowd; but the court again commanded silence. The Colonel's eyes were fastened upon his daughter, and a thousand conflicting emotions pressed his heart.

'You and the accused are on rather intimate terms, are you not?' asked the attorney.

'That's an improper question,' said the court. 'You need not answer it.'

'She may answer it, if she pleases,' quickly said Frank, smiling. 'I'm willing the learned gentleman shall have all the rope he wants, if he thinks he has not enough already to hang his client.'

Loud applauses now burst out from the crowd, and even the court was convulsed with laughter, so much so, that for a moment it could not command silence.— Gifford looked pale and trembled, while Col. Walton began to feel that Gifford's case was a hopeless one. The lawyer was completely nonplused and concluded it was the best way for him to join in the laugh which was raised at his expense. He did so, and for a few moments there was a joyous time. After silence was restored, Erskine asked Agnes, if she was willing to answer his question.

'Perfectly willing, sir,' she replied. 'I trust, sir, that Mr. Homer and myself are friends; but I hope you don't consider that circumstance a sufficient inducement for me to commit the dreadful crime of perjury, do you, sir?'

The lawyer remained silent, and felt himself justly rebuked.

'Do you propose to ask the witness any further questions?' asked the court, smiling, and casting a cunning look at the legal gentleman.

'I'm not aware of any more questions I wish to put to the witness,' replied Erskine.

'I should think you might be satisfied,'

said the court. 'I'm ready to hear any arguments that may be offered.'

Frank rose and argued his own case with much eloquence, fervor, and wit; placing the complainant in a ridiculous light, and seizing all the strong points in the case with a skill and an adroitness that would have done credit to any member of the bar. The attorney upon the other side complimented Homer, highly for his ingenuity and argument; but still he contended he was guilty of an assault and battery; and argued the question with his usual ability.

The Justice took no time to deliberate on the case, but acquitted Homer as soon as the counsellor had finished his argument. There was great rejoicing among the crowd, and hundreds cordially shook hands with Homer, and congratulated him on his success. The Colonel and Gifford departed with heavy hearts. Agnes was highly complimented by all.

CHAPTER VI.

Gamblers and their victim. The strange woman on the pave. The card of invitation. The intended victim of a procuress. The abode of poverty. The drunken parents, &c.

How long did our friend Jasper Gifford say he should be gone in the country?—asked Samuel Skinner, addressing Charles Camp, as they were walking down Broadway one evening on their way to a gambling saloon in Park Row.

'He said he might be absent a week, if not more,' replied Charles. 'I suppose you know what he has gone into the country for, do you not?'

'No, he never told me, and in fact I didn't ask him,' answered the other.

'He has a flame up on the banks of the Hudson, an only daughter whose father is rich as Cræsus,' said Camp. 'I hope he'

will succeed, for the more money he can command the better for us. I began to think his old father was growing niggardly, for Jasper has not been quite so flush recently as he used to be.'

'I have had the same impression,' replied Skinner. 'But if he marries that girl up country, he'll have a supply of funds, and then we must skin him.'

'Skinner is your name, I believe,' said Camp, smiling.

'Yes, and adding an S to yours would give you a true name,' replied Skinner, laughing.

'Well, we won't quarrel about names,' said Camp. 'By the way; I saw a devilish pretty girl at old Sal's establishment last evening. I haven't seen so fine a looker this many a day.'

'Who is she?' asked Skinner. 'Is she in the market?'

'I understand Jasper keeps her,' replied Camp. 'She's a splendid creature, and old Sal says she expects to marry him. He took her from a tailor's shop. I think she's from Maine. Many months will not elapse before she becomes a mother. That Gifford is a case among the girls.'

'He can play with them better than he can with cards, I reckon,' said Skinner, smiling.

'He knows just enough about cards to make him love the game and lose his money,' said Camp. 'And that is as far as we desire to see him advance in the science.'

'True,' replied Skinner. 'We must nurse the fellow, especially if he weds an heiress. Now between you and me, I don't believe his father is so wealthy as some imagine.—I heard some hints thrown out in Wall Street the other day not altogether so favorable to old Gifford's standing as they might be.'

'I shouldn't wonder,' said Camp. 'Some of these Wall Street brokers stand on slip-

pery places. A single day often makes some of them poor. For my part, I think our profession is the more respectable of the two. True, we gain and occasionally lose, but then we have excitement. Give me the gambling table in preference to the broker's counter.'

'See that girl standing at the corner of Leonard Street,' said Skinner. 'She's rigged out as gaily as a peacock. Let us cross over and meet her. I have some curiosity to know where she hails from.'

They did cross over and passed along until they came near where she stood, when they lingered and examined her in the light of a gas lamp over her head.

'Do you think you are looking at a picture?' she asked, while a smile played over her handsome features.

'Yes, and a handsome picture, too, by heavens!' replied Skinner.

'I fully endorse that,' said Camp. 'Where do you hang out?'

The only reply she made to that was to hand him her card, which he examined and then thrust it into his pocket; but not, however, before he let his companion see it.

'Will you call?' she asked; first looking at them, and then casting her eyes down street as if she expected some one.

'We'll give your establishment a call,' said Skinner. 'Why are you standing here?'

'I'm expecting company soon,' she replied, smiling, and assuming an arch look.

They passed on and left the woman standing where they first saw her.

'That's a splendid woman,' said Skinner. 'Strange I have never seen her before. I thought I knew about all the tribe.'

'Nonsense!' said his companion. 'There are thousands upon thousands in the city you have never seen. There's no end to them. As they die off others come in to take their places. They increase faster than any other class in our city. Let us see what is her name upon the card?'

'Madame Thirza Montrose,' replied Skinner, laughing. 'There's a musical name and no mistake. She keeps an establishment for the upper ten.'

'No doubt of it, and we must mingle in that society,' said Camp.

'And don't we now have the society of the upper ten?' asked Samuel. 'If we don't have the old cocks themselves, we have some of their young roasters, who can spend their money, and that is as far as we wish to go at present.'

Thus they continued to converse as they passed on to a gambling hell. Madame Thirza Montrose was still standing where they left her, and expecting some one.

'Strange the old fellow don't come!' she said to herself. 'He promised he would be here with his daughter before this time. It can't be the old drunkard has deceived me. No, that's he coming!'

True, as she said, the man was coming, leading his daughter whose age could not have exceeded fifteen years. She was a very handsome girl both in face and form, but her dress was old and ragged, and she had no shoes on her feet. She was the oldest of six daughters, and her father was exceedingly poor. Her mother consented to part with her daughter through a love for strong drink. Both her parents were drunkards. But for that terrible vice they might have been respectable and in comfortable circumstances.

The husband first fell, and then trouble, poverty and disgrace drew down the wife to the same depth of degradation. Their names were Austin. Madame Montrose had seen this girl several times with her father, and conceived the hellish plan of buying her and subjecting her to a life of prostitution. That same day she had made the bargain with her father, and he agreed to meet her where she then stood waiting for him. The price was twenty dollars, more money than he had

had for a long time. His wife had never seen the woman to whose care she was going to commit her daughter. Her husband told her she was a fine lady, and would use her well. The mother had many doubts and misgivings; but poverty, blasted hopes, and above all, a thirst for strong drink, controlled her feelings and almost destroyed those maternal emotions which are the last to die out in woman's heart.

'Ah, you have come at last,' said Madame. 'I began to think you had given up the bargain, and would disappoint me.'

'O, no, my wife was loth to give her up, but finally consented,' he replied, in a trembling voice, and reaching out his shaking hand to receive the price for his daughter.

'Well, my dear Margaret, we shall soon be in good quarters where you will have enough to eat and to wear,' said the woman, giving the father the money.

'I'm hungry now and so are my little sisters,' said Margaret.

'Your father can buy them some bread, for he has got money,' said this vile woman.

'O, I'm so glad of it, for little Sis was crying for some when I came away,' said Margaret.

The woman called a carriage, and little Margaret bid her father good night and rode off with the procuress.

The trembling drunkard immediately went to a grocery and purchased some bread and rum; but he expended more of his money for the latter than he did for the former. He hurried home, not, however, before he had taken a deep potation. His spirits were revived by the draught, and he entered his humble dwelling with more joyous spirits than he had for weeks previous. He was a hard working man when he was not so much intoxicated that he could not labor. His wife met him at the door and seized the

rum jug, while the youngest but one grabbed a loaf of bread and began to eat most ravenously. After taking a drink from the jug, she broke a loaf of bread and gave to her children. They were all exceedingly hungry and ate with a relish of which the rich know nothing.

'How did Margaret seem to be?' asked the mother, taking a second drink, and then eating some of the bread.

'O, quite happy,' replied the husband, following the example of his wife, and drinking. 'The woman seems to be a nice lady and says Margaret shall be used well.'

'Where does the woman live?' inquired a sister next in age to Margaret. 'I will go and see sister. I wish she would take me too.'

'I don't know the street where she lives,' replied the father. 'I asked her, but she wasn't inclined to tell me, and so I did not urge her.'

'That is strange she did not tell you where she lived,' said the little girl.

'I mean to go and see little Mag,' said a still younger sister, her mouth being so full of bread that she could hardly speak so as to be understood.

'Perhaps Mag will come and see us,' said the mother, wildly gazing round upon her group of children who were not half clad, and feeling strange emotions.

'There, Lizzy, had a bigger piece than I did,' said the youngest, a girl about two and a half years old.

'Never mind, I will give you another slice,' said the mother, cutting off a piece and giving it to her youngest child.

'It is good bread, isn't it, Hatty?' asked the father, nibbling a bit himself.

'O yes, father,' replied Hatty. 'I was proper hungry. We shall have some for breakfast, too, shan't we?'

'Yes, my child, we will have a good breakfast,' said the mother. 'You must all go to bed now.'

The children had filled their stomachs so full that they began to grow sleepy, and tumbled down one after another upon a parcel of rags in one corner of the room.—It was a wretched spectacle to behold five little girls lying upon such a poverty-stricken bed, but there was but one bedstead in the room they occupied, and that was covered with a sack filled with straw upon which the miserable parents slept. They once were the owners of feather beds, but they had all been sold for rum. One grocer had one of them, and paid for it, at a low price, all in intoxicating liquor.

It was not long before the children all slept, but not so with the parents. Nearly three days had passed since they had drank any liquor, and their stomachs were crying out for the accustomed stimulus. They seemed, under the influence of the maddening liquor, to renew their age and feel quite happy. The past was almost forgotten, and scarcely a dark cloud hung over the future. So excited had they become, that they did not dream that there was a bottom to their rum jug which they would soon reach, nor that their loaves of bread were half eaten up at a single meal. They seemed to feel, too, as if the price they had received for their eldest daughter constituted an exhaustless fund from which they could draw at their pleasure.

'I think Mr. Judkins keeps the best liquor of any on 'em, don't you, wife?' asked the husband, taking another drink, and handing the jug to his wife.

'I think he does,' she replied, following the example of her husband, and swallowing down another dose of the liquid poison.

'I will trade with Mr. Judkins,' he said. 'He has always used me well.'

'But don't you remember he wouldn't trust you for a loaf of bread the other day?' she asked.

'By George!' he replied. 'I do now remember it. He shan't have any more of this money. Who shall we trade with now, wife?'

'Mr. Readcoat,' she replied. 'He trusted me for a pint of gin last month when we had dreadful colds. Don't you remember?'

'O, yes, and it was pretty good gin, too,' he answered. 'He shall have all our custom.'

'So he shall,' she said. 'How much did you buy of Mr. Judkins to-night?'

'Two quarts,' he replied. 'And we must use it prudently and make it last as long as possible. It is quite good liquor, much better than he sometimes sells.'

'Perhaps it will be as well to get two quarts more of the same when this is gone,' said the wife. 'You borrowed the jug of him, didn't you?'

'Yes, and I must carry it home in the morning,' he replied.

'Then we will turn it into our jug,' she said, getting out their old jug, and turning what remained of the liquor into it.

'That rum has a good flavor,' he said, snuffing up the perfume with a very good relish.

'It does smell better than some we've had,' she replied, while the liquor was gurgling from one jug into another.

The old man touched his finger to the stream and tasted of it, while she stood over the jugs and inhaled the precious odor.

'I declare I wish the grocers would always keep such good liquor as this,' he said, smacking his lips, and drawing in his breath that nothing might be lost.

'I wish so, too,' she replied. 'There seems to be strength in this as well as good flavor.'

She might well say that, for both of them began to feel its exhilarating and maddening effects. They were fast becoming drunk.

'These grocers sometimes water their liquor, and make almost two gallons out of one,' said the husband. 'It isn't half so bad to put chalk and water into milk, as it is to water rum so. We have bought a good deal of water when we ought to have had pure liquor.'

'I think so too, for the last we had seemed to be as weak as dishwater,' she said. 'Now let us see to it that we don't get cheated.—We have the money to pay down, and we'll stand up for our rights.'

'That we will,' he said, taking the emptied jug and turning it up so that if any drops lingered behind they would run into his mouth.

The few drops he thus obtained whetted his appetite for a more copious shower, and he took a drink from the other jug. His example was very contagious, and his wife could not resist the temptation, although she began to feel a vertigo in her head and to reel and stagger. He had not advanced quite so far, for his head was the stronger of the two. The last drink, however, began to make him feel as if he was treading close upon the verge of intoxication.

'Wife, look here,' he said, gazing upon her with a smile, and lovingly patting her neck.

'Well, husband, what is it?' she asked, staggering, and dropping upon the floor.

'I say, let us have another drink,' he replied.

'I agree to that,' she said, heavily turning her eyes upon him, and dropping her chin upon her breast. 'You can hand along the liquor.'

'After me is manners,' he said, taking a good horn, and laughing hoarsely.

He gave the jug to her, and she swallowed another draught of the poison. She soon fell prostrate upon the floor, and found the drunkard's sleep. She was dead drunk, but he remained in a sitting posture upon the

floor within reach of the jug. Again and again he drank until he fell over senseless, and lay as fast in the drunkard's sleep as she was. There we will leave them, a sad picture to behold. There are hundreds of just such family pictures in this Babylon of the New World. The picture is not too highly colored. No, the truth is not half told, for it is stranger than any picture of the most brilliant imagination.

CHAPTER VII.

Traits in the character of a young girl intended as a victim of the libertine. The corruption of a Procuress. The intended victim introduced to an old libertine, &c.

THE two professional blacklegs, after their interview with Madame Montrose, as she proudly styled herself, directed their steps to a gambling room in Park Row; but before we trace them farther in their career of vice and immorality, we will follow the vile procuress and the drunkard's daughter to a splendidly furnished house in the upper and fashionable part of the city.

It is no uncommon occurrence for the daughters of drunken fathers and mothers to be picked up and led astray by vile, abandoned, heartless women. Such dark deeds are often done in the city. It is to be lamented by all good people that drunkard's habitations are not unfrequently the recruiting houses of brothels. Even young girls scarcely out of their teens are sometimes stolen away, and oftener, perhaps, bargained for by wicked women, and early trained to a life of prostitution.

These innocent girls are made miserable at home by the intemperance and consequent poverty and wretchedness of their parents; and are therefore willing to make changes in their modes of life, and abandon their parents.

There are women, and men, too, in this wicked city who are constantly upon the watch and searching for such victims. The best looking ones are sought first; and sometimes those are taken whose looks are not very prepossessing in the hope that careful training together with gay apparel, will fit them for the hellish uses of which they are intended to be subjected.

Margaret Austin, the girl whom this woman had purchased, was exceedingly beautiful. Her mother, too, was once very handsome and fascinating. The form of Margaret, or Mag, as she was called, was admirably proportioned; her movements graceful and easy, her features finely chiseled, her eyes very dark and brilliant, her hair dark chestnut, her teeth beautifully formed and of pearly whiteness, her hands and feet small, and her neck and shoulders very gracefully corresponding with each other.—Madame Montrose, the first time she saw the girl, knew that she would be a valuable addition to her establishment. Margaret's hair naturally curled, and she had usually let it fall in rich clusters over her neck and shoulders. These beautiful and lustrous curls first attracted the attention of this abandoned woman, and induced her to examine farther the beauty and charms of this poor girl.

Margaret possessed more than an ordinary share of intellectual power and brightness, and her spirits were naturally buoyant and cheerful; but poverty and the degrading and demoralizing habits of her parents had somewhat checked the flow of her animal spirits, and cast a shade over her brilliant and expressive countenance. That, however, in the opinion and estimation of many, added to her beauty. She well knew the power intoxicating liquors exercised over her parents and she had often wept in secret over their misfortune.

Before her mother had become such an inebriate, she had always given Margaret sound advice, and cautioned her against the temptations of the city. This mother was naturally a good woman, and under more favorable circumstances would have been highly esteemed and respected for her many virtues, her personal charms and mental brightness; but the curse of Intemperance had spread a mildew over her soul, and greatly blunted her moral sensibilities.—Like many others, she had been unfortunate in the choice of her husband; but she could not be blamed for that, for when he was a young man, and addressed her in the character of a lover, he promised to make a kind husband, a man of business, and an useful and influential member of society.—They were both ambitious and started in life with strong hopes of success in the world, and their aspirations for the wealth and honors of the world would have been gratified, but for intoxicating liquors.

Some few years after they were married, and when Margaret was five years old, Mr. Austin met with a loss of considerable property for which he had toiled and struggled hard for several years. That adverse wind made shipwreck of all his hopes and drove him to the intoxicating bowl.

His wife struggled with him for a long time, and endeavored to persuade him to abandon the habit of drinking; but her exertions proved unavailing, until she became discouraged and commenced taking the intoxicating draught herself. Previous to their loss of property, they were much respected and esteemed, and were among the first of the class to which they belonged.

Margaret, their first born, was greatly beloved by her parents, until the power of alcoholic poisons had eaten into their hearts and almost destroyed parental affection.—She was an exceedingly lively and animated girl, until intemperance had blighted her

prospects and well nigh ruined her parents. When she was thus bargained for and sold, she was not aware of the life it was intended she should lead, if she had been, she would not have consented to leave her parents, miserable and unhappy as she was at home. The principles which her mother in earlier life had instilled into her mind had not been forgotten.

The mother was not fully aware of the whole truth in relation to the bargain and sale of her daughter; yet she entertained some suspicions that all was not right. But the invisible spirit of rum had degraded her soul, and almost destroyed her moral sensibilities; still there were times when she seriously reflected upon the course she was pursuing, and resolved on a reformation.—But, alas, how feeble are human efforts when the night of despair has gathered round and settled upon the soul! Dark clouds hung over her, and she could see no bright star to lead her on. The future was dark and gloomy, and the present was only tolerable when she was under the influence of artificial stimulants.

Such was the condition of this unfortunate mother when she consented to sell her beloved daughter to obtain the means by which she could purchase the maddening draught to sink herself deeper and deeper into the depths of human misery and despair.

The vile procuress who had thus obtained possession of Margaret was a woman of consummate skill and adroitness in her unholy vocation. She was a portly, fine looking, and apparently lady-like person. Her appearance might deceive many even shrewd observers, if she was disposed to play the hypocrite. The house she occupied was her own, and richly furnished throughout. It was purchased by the wages of sin and the blackest iniquity.

She had been married in early life, but she had poisoned her husband before she came to the city. She looked upon all men as corrupt, and believed every woman had her price.

No wonder she believed in the last mentioned doctrine when she looked in upon her own corrupt soul; and no one can be much surprised that she viewed men through, such a medium, when he reflects upon the character of those gentlemen with whom she associated, and who patronized and sustained her in her degrading and demoralizing business. When she purchased Margaret, she was wealthy and able to ride in her own carriage and keep her coachman. Those who did not know her supposed she belonged to the aristocracy of the city, and that supposition was not far from the truth, for she had the aristocratic and wealthy men for her companions. And so much as money is at the bottom of aristocracy, she possessed even more than some men who moved in the very first classes. True, she did not give parties and associate with the wives of the gentlemanly aristocrats, but she very often had the pleasure of being honored with the company of their husbands.

As she rode home to her whited sepulchre with Margaret, she was all attention, love, and kindness to the girl and made many inquiries in relation to the history of her parents, where they came from, how long they had lived in the city, and how many brothers and sisters she had. To all these questions Margaret gave ready and intelligent answers, and expressed much regret that she was obliged to leave her parents.

'I'm quite as sorry as you are, my dear, that your parents are so intemperate,' said the woman. 'I think it will be the better way for you not to visit them for sometime to come. To visit them would only add to your unhappiness and would do them no good. In fact I think it might do them injury. I will occasionally inquire after them, and perhaps see them, so that you must content yourself to stay with me and not run about the city.'

'O, I shall not desire to run about the city,' replied Margaret. 'I have done quite as much of that as I wish to do. O, I have been a beggar girl for more than three years!'

The girl was silent for some minutes, and the procuress made no reply, for she was at a loss what to say.

'I fear my little sisters will suffer for food now I have left them,' she continued, while the tears stood trembling in her dark eyes. 'Father spends all he can earn for liquor!—O, madam, the thought is terrible!'

'I gave your father a good many dollars, and your sisters will not suffer for the want of food,' said the woman. 'Besides, I will endeavor to provide places for them.'

'But father and mother will get drunk, and I shall not be there to take care of them and my sisters!' said Margaret. 'When he has money they always have rum, and then they drink it until they are drunk! If you could provide places for them, I should feel more happy.'

'I will endeavor to do so,' replied the heartless woman. 'Your oldest sister can do something now you are gone.'

'Her health is not very good, but she goes out begging sometimes,' said Margaret. 'She does not succeed so well as I do, and hates to go.'

'O, well, she will go now until places are provided for all your sisters,' replied the woman.

The carriage was hurried along and soon they reached the spacious house which was to be the home of the drunkard's daughter. The apartments were brilliantly illuminated with gas, and several girls, gaudily dressed, gazed upon the poor girl as she followed the mistress through a long hall to a private parlor.

'By heavens! exclaimed one of the girls. 'Madame Montrose has picked up another poor wanderer in the streets! How shabbily she was dressed!'

'Yes, but she has a fine form and an expressive countenance,' replied another of this disgusting groupe. 'Old Montrose will dress her up so that she will take the fly off of us all, yet.'

'I wonder who she can be,' said a third wanton. 'It seems to me I have seen those long curls of hair before.'

'Perhaps you may; for I dare say she belonged to the begging tribe and has been much in the streets,' said the first speaker. 'Did not you notice how she turned her black eyes upon us!'

'Yes, and they are sharp ones too,' replied the other. 'If I'm not mistaken, old Montrose has got a hard case this time. I conclude her parents are drunkards.'

'Very likely,' answered the first speaker. 'But she is handsome, or my eyes deceived me.'

The door-bell now rung, a gentleman entered and these vile creatures scampered from the hall, some to a sitting room and others to their chambers. The gentleman was well dressed and seemed to be much at home. He was no stranger to this establishment.

Madame Montrose soon made her appearance, and greeted the gentleman with many smiles. The compliments of the evening were passed between them, and the mistress led him into a room adjoining that in which she had left Margaret.

'Any fresh arrivals?' asked this portly gentleman, pulling out a fine gold watch and noting the time of the evening.

'I have just arrived with the girl of whom I have spoken to you,' she replied. 'She is a most beautiful creature as I have seen for many a day.'

'Ah, then you have obtained her at last, and I dare say at a very great sacrifice of time and money,' he said, smiling, and patting her under her fat, double chin. 'You are a shrewd manager in financial concerns. Your stocks are always the best and command the highest prices.'

'I can't expect to equal you brokers of Wall Street,' she replied, laughing, and punching him in the side.

'The devil you don't,' he said. 'You have made more money for the last three years than one half of the brokers at our board. Your prices never change except upwards. But let me see your new comer, and judge of her wonderful beauty. Your geese are always swans.'

'She's not dressed fit to be seen,' she replied. 'I have just returned with her, and she has not even shoes upon her feet.'

'Indeed!' he said, smiling. 'Let me see the barefooted beauty before you rig her out and paint her up. I have come in a very fortunate time, truly. I insist upon seeing her just as she is.'

'O, no, that will never do,' she replied. 'The girl would be frightened.'

'Nonsense!' said this Wall Street broker. 'These street girls are not quite so easily frightened as you may imagine. How old is she?'

'Not sixteen yet,' she replied, intending to show him the girl on certain conditions.

'A glorious age,' he answered. 'Now I'm determined to see her just as she is, and then I can judge for myself. You want to paint her up and then introduce her as something new and fresh, when at the same time she may be an old sinner. Where is she?'

'In the adjoining room,' she replied. 'As you seem to be so anxious to see her and so afraid of being cheated I will introduce you to her on condition that you make no advances towards her at this time. I must train her before you or any other man can approach her. She is a virtuous girl, and I'm not sure that you or I can conquer her. There are some traits in her character somewhat peculiar.'

He promised to do as she requested; and she conducted him into the room, and introduced him to Margaret as Capt. Melbourne. He was at once struck with her beauty and charms, and offered no insult to her that evening. Margaret behaved herself exceedingly well, and appeared modest, and unassuming as she really was. He did not tarry long, but took his leave with a determination to ruin this innocent girl for the gratification of his own base passions. He was introduced to Margaret by this cunning and heartless woman under a false name. His true name was Gifford, and was the father of Jasper Gifford, who has been one of the actors in the previous scenes in this drama of country and city life.

A Gambling Hell. The fight. New characters introduced. The Blue Nose and the widow and her son. The pretended Yankee. The accomplices. The fate of gambling, &c.

"I WILL have satisfaction for that!" exclaimed Samuel Skinner, rising from the gaming table and smiting his fists together. "D—n your eyes! Do you suppose I'm going to be cheated in this way! Hand back the money, or I will take your heart's blood!"

Scores of gamblers ceased playing for a few moments and turned their attention to Skinner who was thus raving and demanding instant satisfaction of one with whom he was playing.

There were five at this table, and among them the friend and associate of Skinner, Charles Camp, and a fellow who went by the name of Blue Nose. Blue Nose was an Englishman and hailed last from Nova Scotia before he came to the city. He was a professional blackleg, and understood some tricks with which the New York gamblers

were not familiar. He possessed also great muscular strength, and was ready to fight at any time. Camp sat beside Skinner and endeavored to pull him back into the chair by the tail of his coat, but Skinner was full of liquor and wrath, and feared neither God, man, or the devil.

By a very ingenious trick the Blue Nose had won the money and swept it from the table and thrust it into his pocket. The stakes were quite large, and Skinner could not endure the thought of being thus cheated, although he hesitated not to cheat others whenever he could do so. Blacklegs always consider each other fair game, and practice all the tricks they know in the game. True, the Blue Nose had cheated, and practised a trick that entitled him to the money according to the rules of the blackleg fraternity; and yet Skinner forgot all rules and was governed by the impulse of the moment. But the Nova Scotia blackleg was not to be intimidated by any threats which any gambler could make, and immediately arose and faced his antagonist.

"Take satisfaction, if you think you'll be safe in so doing," replied Blue Nose. "I fairly won the money, and here it is in my pocket. And the man who gets it must be stronger than I am. Come on, and I'll make you a red nose."

Skinner made a pass at his antagonist across the table; but the Blue Nose skillfully parried the blow, and struck Skinner in the side of the neck under his ear, which staggered but did not floor him. Recovering from the blow, Skinner stepped back from the table and approached his antagonist in a threatening manner. The Blue Nose, stood calmly with his keen eyes fastened upon Skinner.

"Form a ring!" exclaimed several, rising from the tables, and surrounding the combatants. "Give them fair play Skin him, Skinner! Knock him over, Blue Nose.—Make the claret run!"

While these exclamations were being made, the combatants were squaring away and watching each other's motions. Skinner pretended to be a scientific boxer, and was not aware that his antagonist understood the art as well as he did. The Blue Nose stood firm and calm, and awaited the motions of Skinner. He did not intend to strike first, but closely watched the movements of his opponent.

At last Skinner let fly, but John Bull could not be hit, for the blow was most skillfully warded off, and Skinner received a light knock, but he adroitly broke its force, and succeeded in hitting his antagonist over the right eye.

There was a shout of applause which exasperated the Englishman, and he exercised all his skill and power; for he found Skinner more of a match than he expected.

The next round the Blue Nose laid his antagonist upon the floor. The hit was a hard one, and Skinner lay trembling, unable for a few minutes to rise. The Blue Nose stood calm, and unmoved.

Skinner squared away once more, but he was instantly knocked down, and that ended the fight. His friends took him up and carried him into a drinking saloon, where he was washed up, and soon recovered from all his wounds except his nose.

"You have fought before to-night," said young Belknap, laughing.

"O, once or twice," replied Blue Nose. "He's hardly a match for you," said the young man. "Come let us go and take something to stay the stomach."

Blue Nose followed the young man into an adjoining apartment and there they drank freely. Belknap's parents were English, and he took a great liking to this English bully, gambler and pick-pocket. The young man's father had been dead about a year, leaving a large property to his wife, and George, his only child. His mother was an excellent Christian woman, and loved her son most dearly.

The young man had not long been addicted to the vice of gambling, but having begun the bewitching games, he knew not when or where to stop. During the last six months he had lost several thousands of dollars; but that did not cure him of the vice, but induced him to plunge deeper and deeper into it. He was naturally a kind, good-hearted fellow. His intellectual powers were far above mediocrity, and highly cultivated. Young Belknap was really a good scholar, and his Christian parents had always hoped he might take holy orders and preach the Gospel; but he was now in a fair way of needing sermons himself rather than preaching them to others.

His mother began to suspect that all was not right with him because he often did not get home until late hours of the night. She had reprimanded him for his late hours; but he always found some excuse, and his principal one was that he was with Emily Evans; a young lady to whom he was engaged.

Emily was a very beautiful girl, and good as she was beautiful. She was high spirited, and began to suspect her lover of bad practices; but as yet she had no positive proof to convict him. However, she watched him with great vigilance. He loved her as he did his own life, and expected to be married ere long.

His passion for gambling had greatly increased within a few months, and his thirst for strong drink had also grown upon him. Several gamblers had marked him as their victim, and Blue Nose among the rest.—This adroit Englishman had won several hundred dollars from him, but had not yet bled him so freely as Skinner and Camp had.—He had more than once slyly hinted to him that he had better avoid those fellows because they were great cheats.

Belknap began to suspect them, and that was the reason why he was so well pleased to see Skinner flogged by this consummate knave, who had once picked the young man's pocket of quite a large sum. But Belknap never suspected him. He managed so adroitly as to completely blind the young fellow's eyes. Blue Nose would not probably have exercised so much influence over him, if he had not belonged to John Bull. Belknap's father was always strongly prejudiced in favor of true blooded Englishman, and the son in some good degree, partook of his father's prejudices and prepossessions.

The mother, too, was not destitute of these national prejudices. She never found any thing in this country that pleased her so well as she used to find in England; and now her husband was dead she seriously contemplated a change of country. True, her husband had accumulated a large portion of his wealth in New York, still she had a desire to go back to her own beloved England. Her son, too, was pleased with the idea.

Blue Nose, or Tryon, his real name being that, had studied well the character of young Belknap, and noted all the assailable points in him. He had twice visited Mrs. Belknap as an English gentleman, and she was quite well pleased with him. Had she known his character, she would not have suffered him to cross her threshold. No character she despised more than she did a gambler, and Tryon knew that fact. But he had the power to appear like a well-bred intelligent Englishman, and always before he did appear so.

Strange as it may seem, Mrs. Belknap began to feel an interest in this villain she had never felt in any other man except her husband. The second visit to her made him imagine that he would win her heart, if he were so disposed; but he had a wife and one child in Nova Scotia, and on that account he hesitated.

He finally concluded he liked his own wife as well, or better, than he should this rich widow, and if he could filch from her a great portion of her property he would be satisfied without encumbering himself with the widow.

The knave had become much reduced before he came to the city; but since his arrival in the great metropolis of the country, he had accumulated some two or three thousand dollars, and was on the way to add greatly to it.

Young Belknap had not lost much this evening, for Tryon had cautioned him not to play for high stakes, for there were many professional blacklegs in the room who would most assuredly cheat him out of his money, if he put it up.

Belknap was in some good degree governed by this scoundrel's advice. They did not happen to sit at the same table on this occasion, for Tryon did not wish to win much directly from him, himself. He had an accomplice who had not arrived in the early part of the evening. The name of this accomplice was James Hamilton, who belonged in the eastern part of the State of Maine. This fellow had his eye-teeth well cut, and understood his business.

He and Tryon were apparently strangers to each other; and so cunningly they managed that no one suspected them of being associated together, not even a single gambler, who is always upon the lookout for such associations, suspected them, and surely young Belknap could not, green as he was.

While Tryon and Belknap were drinking together, Hamilton arrived and entered the same saloon and drank a glass of brandy alone without even exchanging a nod with his accomplice or with Belknap.

The young man had never been introduced to him; yet he had seen him several times, and noted the peculiarity of his dress; for he generally wore a rather unfashionable dress, and patterned somewhat after the style of down-east Yankees. And the truth is, Hamilton did appear like a green horn, and made some singular remarks.

'Who is that fellow with the long-tailed coat, who just took a glass of brandy?' asked Belknap.

'Well, that's what I was thinking of,' replied Tryon. 'I saw him here last evening I think, and he looks to me like a real live Yankee from all the way down east.'

'So he does to me,' said Belknap. 'I wonder if he has money and knows how to play.'

He may have some money, but I doubt his skill to play much of a game,' replied Tryon. 'Suppose you ask him to play? I will sit at the same table, and perhaps we can shave him out of a few dollars.'

'I will,' said Belknap, going into the gambling saloon, followed by Tryon.

Hamilton was standing near a table and looking at five gamblers who were hard at the game and much excited; for there were piles of money before them. Young Belknap approached and touched him on the shoulder. Hamilton then turned round and grinned, saying, 'What would you be up to?'

'What do you say for having a game?' inquired the young man, while Tryon stood near him.

'I vow I don't know, they have sich tarnal great heaps o' money on the table,' said Hamilton, looking at the money piled up before the gamblers, and thrusting his hands into his pantaloons pockets almost up to his elbows. 'I'll play a little while; but I havn't got oceans of dollars as these ere fellows have.'

'Never mind; we'll play according to the length of our purses,' said Belknap.

'Length of purses, eh?' said the Yankee, hauling out a very long purse with a few dollars in silver and one gold piece in it.— 'Here's a long one, but there ain't much in it; but then I've got a few bills on the Maine banks that I guess are good, and will fetch the silver and gold; they're good as wheat down East.'

'O, the money is good enough,' said Belknap, laughing at the greenhorn, as he supposed Hamilton was. 'Come, there's an unoccupied table.'

'I don't care if I take a few games; but don't cheat me,' said Hamilton.

The three sat down and commenced playing, each on his own hook, as Belknap supposed.

The young man won a few of the first games, and felt very much encouraged; but Hamilton appeared to grieve and lament his ill-luck. He was afraid he should not have money enough left to get out of the city; but still he kept playing and increasing the stakes.

After Belknap won a few games he was in high glee, and urged Hamilton to drink freely. He did appear to drink several glasses, but he contrived to spill it. Belknap became quite high, and began to feel very courageous. They went back to the gaming table, and the luck turned on Hamilton's side, and he won nearly a thousand dollars.

Tryon appeared quite cool, and told the Yankee he should be happy to meet him the next evening, when he trusted fortune would change.

Belknap also challenged him to play another evening. The Yankee consented, because, he said, he had the shinplasters.



AGNES, THE BEAUTIFUL.

CHAPTER IX.

The widow's anxiety. The late hour. The son's story. The false supper. The widow's soliloquy. The dream, &c.

'STRANGE, George does not come home!' said the widow Belknap to herself, as she sat in her parlor waiting for her son, and looking at the time-piece on the mantel-tree. 'It is now passed one o'clock! I fear some accident has happened to him!'

At first she thought she would retire, but finally concluded to wait another hour at least; for she had some lurking suspicions that he might be at some other place than Mr. Evans'. She leaned back in a rocking chair and slept for nearly an hour, when she was awakened by a dream. She thought she saw her son brought out of a gambling house all besmeared with blood and nearly lifeless.

The dream made a strong impression upon her mind, and when she awoke, drops of perspiration were standing upon her face. The widow was not a superstitious person and did not believe in either ghosts or witches; but this dream was more vivid in her memory than any one she ever had before.

'Dear me!' she mentally exclaimed, rising from her chair and gazing wildly about the room. 'What a dreadful dream! It seemed to me that I saw George as distinctly as I ever saw him in my life, and covered with blood! He cannot stay so late at Mr. Evans'. It is very foolish and highly improper if he is there. I have slept an hour, and he has not come yet! I will now wait until he comes, and see how late it will be. It is passing strange that he should stay out so! This habit increases upon him, and he must abandon it.'

While these thoughts were rapidly crossing through her mind; she heard the night key gently turned in the door, and George softly

entered the hall, intending to find his chamber without disturbing his mother. But she met him just as he had put one foot upon the stairs to go to his chamber. He was taken by surprise.

'Why, mother, are you up?' he asked.— 'You fairly frightened me! Are you unwell.'

'Not in body, but have been greatly distressed in mind!' she replied.

'Why so?' he asked; feeling like death at thus being caught.

'I shouldn't suppose, George, that you need ask me that question. It is now almost morning and you have just returned home. Where in the world have you been? I begun to fear you were murdered? And I fell asleep and dreamed you were brought out of a gambling house, all covered with blood! O, thank heaven, that was but a dream! I should be almost as willing to follow you to your grave as to know you entered the gambling hells, those dens of sin where thousands of young men are ruined forever! But where have you been?'

He hesitated to give an immediate answer, for he thought it would not do to say that he had been with his beloved Emily, for the hour was so late that he feared he might be detected in a lie the next day, and that would trouble his mother exceedingly.

'Why don't you answer me?' she asked. 'Your silence alarms me terribly! O, where have you been?'

'Be calm, dear mother, and I will tell you,' he replied. 'I met Mr. Tryon, that English gentleman, and he invited me to join his English friends in a supper which he gave this evening. I couldn't refuse, and so I accepted his polite invitation. There were several English gentlemen present, and we had a very fine supper, stories, toasts and speeches. I was about to leave several times, but Mr. Tryon insisted on my staying. You see, dear mother, I could not very well leave; but had I known that you were sitting up, waiting for me, I should certainly have come home hours ago.'

Now this truant son could not have invented a falsehood which could have had the same effect this did. The alarmed and excited mother was somewhat calmed down, and on the whole, thought her son had not been so much in the wrong as she imagined. If the supper had been for any but Englishmen, the widow would not have been so easily reconciled to her son's absence. And the fact that Mr. Tryon gave the supper, was a happy circumstance in her estimation, for he was an English gentleman whom she highly esteemed.

'Well, George, I am glad it is no worse,' she said. 'How many were present on the occasion?'

'There were about a dozen, and a merry time we had,' he replied. 'They complimented Mr. Tryon very highly in their speeches and toasts; and he made some very witty and eloquent remarks.'

'Did you learn when he expects to leave for England?' she asked.

'There was nothing said about it that I can recollect,' he answered. 'I don't think he will go at present.'

'Perhaps he will not go until we get ready,' she said. 'And then we can all go in the same vessel.'

'That would be very pleasant, for he is much of a gentleman,' he said. 'He appears to be very intelligent, and no doubt he is a man of wealth.'

'Did you ever hear him speak of his wife or family?' she inquired; wishing to know whether he was a married or single man.

'I never have, but I judge he is a single man,' he answered.

'I have thought so,' she said. 'You must invite him to dine with us some day.'

'I will do so, now he has been so polite as to give me an invite to such a splendid supper,' he said. 'He seems to show me a good deal of respect.'

'Well, I hope you will have good manners enough to requite all his favors,' she said.

'Indeed, I shall, mother, Mr. Tryon is my friend, and I find he is very popular among the English gentlemen here.'

They now retired, but the young man's conscience disturbed him so that it was a long time before he could compose himself to sleep. He was not much accustomed to the habit of lying, and never had uttered a willful falsehood before he acquired a passion for gambling and drinking.

These vices were fast making inroads upon his moral sensibilities; still his conscience was occasionally active and accused him.—It was so on this occasion. He felt guilty of doing great injustice to his mother; of lying to her, and inducing her to honor and respect a blackleg, a character she so heartily despised. And the loss of money, too, was a great source of disquietude. His mother knew nothing of his losses; for he had many thousand dollars which were separate and distinct from hers—money invested in good dividend paying stocks. Many of these he had already sold, and the effects were lost at the gaming board; but of all this his mother was ignorant.

Although the widow had been up all night and slept only an hour, yet she was almost as much troubled to close her eyes in sleep as her son was, but from very different causes. Mr. Tryon had evidently made a strong impression upon her heart, still she could not persuade herself to believe it.

No widow ever cherished the memory of her husband more dearly than Mrs. Belknap did the memory of hers; but the appearance of Mr. Tryon had produced somewhat of a change in her feelings; at least, so much of a change as induced her to believe that she might possibly love a second time, a doctrine she had never believed in before.

Tryon was a cunning man, and could assume all sorts of forms, and make himself agreeable in any society, if he were disposed to exert himself. He was good-looking—possessed a fine portly form, pleasant voice, easy manners, wit, intelligence, and general information; and yet, if any one knew his true character, and the depths of depravity he had reached; a lurking devil could be seen in his dark eyes, but that evil spirit would not be noticed by the casual observer, and especially by a widow, who began seriously to reflect upon a second husband. After she had disrobed herself and reclined upon her bed, she thus communed with her own thoughts. 'I wonder if that Mr. Tryon has a family? I can't think he has a wife living, or he would have spoken of her the last time I conversed with him, but he said nothing about wife, or family. I'm inclined to think he is a widower. He seems so to me, and yet I can give no reasons for that supposition. If he is a widower, I wonder, if he has any children living? He said nothing about any. I think he has none; still he may have. Suppose he should offer me his hand and his heart, should I be justified in accepting them without more knowledge of his character? He may be a fortune-hunter; for there are thousands upon thousands of them in England as well as in America. I must be exceedingly cautious how I proceed in these matters. It is known I have money, and he may have heard of it, and hence the great respect he shows my son; and yet he appears to be far removed above such evil motives. He certainly appears better than any gentleman I have seen for a long time. But I must go to sleep.'

The widow turned upon her other side and courted sleep; but some time yet elapsed before that balmy restorer came to her relief. And when she did fall into a slumber, she dreamed that she was riding on the waves of the broad Atlantic Ocean, and sitting beside Mr. Tryon, who was her husband.

The dream was very pleasant and did not awaken her. She slept quite late in the morning, but not later than her son; for he was more troubled to fall into a sound sleep than she was. Her conscience was easy, but his was lashing him severely. Before he slumbered he made many promises to himself that he would never gamble more than once more; but these promises were made with some mental reservation. He was anxious to play with that Yankee once more and win back his money. Tryon told him he thought it could be done; and the villain was believed by this foolish and deceived young man.

CHAPTER X.

Scene in a drunkard's family. Workings of conscience. The power of strong drink. The benevolent lady. A scene at a grocer's. Attempt to save an inebriate. New developments.

THE drunkard's sleep is hard, and he's not easily awoken, until the fumes of the poison has passed from his brain, and consciousness is partially restored. Mr. Austin and his wife slept soundly for some hours; but she was the first to awake, and when she did so, her prospects for the future were dark and gloomy, and her stomach cried out bitterly for more liquor, and she could not resist the temptation.

The half emptied jug stood mid way between her and her husband. She rose from the hard floor to a sitting posture, threw back her tangled hair from her intellectual forehead, rubbed her eyes, smacked her parched lips and reached out for the jug.

O, who but a drunkard can know the drunkard's feelings! They are far beyond any description that was ever given of them by human language.

This poor inebriate mother's emotions at that moment were painful in the extreme.—

The image of her first born was vividly before her mind's eye, while her children were soundly sleeping upon their rug bed in the corner of the room. In despair she clutched the bottle and drank a deep potation while her husband yet snored and slept, dreaming, perhaps, of the same jug which was at his wife's lips.

Having drank, she sat the vessel down, and wildly gazed about the room which was dimly lighted by a gas-lamp in the street.—In that dim light she could see her husband still prostrate upon the floor, and her five children all huddled together on a bundle of many colored rags.

The liquor had roused her spirits somewhat, and she began to reflect upon her eldest daughter whom she had sold, or rather whom her husband had sold with her reluctant consent.

'O, my God!' she mentally exclaimed. 'How could I consent to let my first born leave me, and go with her whom I know not! The woman may be a wanton and desires to subject Margaret to a life of temptation, and all for money! O, if she were back again I would never consent to let her leave me. No! No! I have done wrong. O, this terrible thirst for liquor! How miserable it makes me! I wish I knew where Margaret is!'

The husband breathed loud and long, and turned over upon his face, groaned, and finally rose partially up. He and his wife gazing upon each other for a few moments in silence. At last he muttered. 'Well, wife, you waked up first, I wonder if it is near morning?'

'I don't know the time,' she replied, dropping her chin upon her bosom, and casting her eyes upon the floor, in deep and agonizing thought.

'Where's the jug?' he asked in a trembling, hoarse voice.

'There it is,' she replied, pushing it towards him. I wouldn't drink much now, for it must be near morning.'

'My stomach feels bad, but I won't drink but little,' he said, taking a few swallows.

They were silent again for a few minutes, and he began to feel better.

'I say, wife, that's good liquor, ain't it?' he asked, his hand still resting on the jug.—'The grocer didn't cheat us this time.—There's a good deal of spirit in it. I didn't take but four swallows, and my stomach feels a good deal better.'

'But, O, husband, if we had never drank any, how much better it would have been for us!' she replied, in a voice of trembling, while the tears ran down her bloated cheeks.

'Don't talk about that now, wife,' he said. 'We have got money enough to last us a good while. Let us enjoy ourselves.'

'Money!' she repeated. 'Yes, and we must pay our rent to-morrow, or we and the children will be turned into the street.—O, heavens, I don't know what will become of us when this money is gone!'

Perhaps that woman will take our next oldest daughter,' he replied. 'She appears to be a nice lady.'

'Our next oldest daughter!' she repeated, in a voice whose peculiar tones evinced the depth of her feeling, and the pangs that wrung her heart. 'O, that we had never let Margaret go! I fear that woman is a bad character!'

'O, I guess not,' he replied. 'She didn't look like one.'

'There's no telling by the looks of some women what they are,' she answered. 'It is strange that I should have consented to let our Mag go! Our next daughter! O, husband, you know her health is poor, and she's not so handsome as Mag. No, no, I'll never consent to part with another child to a strange woman. No, never!'

'Come, wife, take another drink and you will feel better,' he said, seizing the jug and guzzling down some more of the liquid poison. 'Don't let us look upon the dark side of every thing. You are too much cast down.'

'See yonder, our children who are almost naked, lying upon that bed of rags,' she said, pointing her trembling finger to the corner where lay her little girls. 'Heaven only knows what will become of them! They may yet become wantons and live upon the wages of their own iniquities! There are enough vile women in this corrupt city to lead them from the paths of virtue, and miledew their souls forever.'

'Don't talk so, wife,' he replied. 'Let us be cheerful, and hope for better days!'

'Hope for better days?' she repeated.—'Those days will never come so long as we attempt to drown our sorrows in the maddening draught! No, no, never! O, God! why hast thou created us to suffer such misery! Why are we so wicked!'

Thus giving vent to the emotions of a broken and bleeding heart. She clutched the fatal jug and drank freely.

'There, wife, now you'll feel more cheerful,' said the husband, following her example, and placing the jug to his parched lips.

She made no reply, but sat with her eyes fastened upon her children in the corner.—It was now near the dawn of day, and two of the youngest girls awoke, and came toddling along to their mother with their ragged gowns on their arms.

'I'm cold,' said one of them. 'Do put on my gown.'

The other little one run to her father and kissed him. He pressed her to his bosom, and who can describe that father's feelings! Rum had not yet destroyed all parental affection, but it was fast doing its work of destruction. He was further gone than his

wife, and both were on the road to ruin.—She put the tattered gown upon her daughter and kissed her.

'O, mother, how bad your breath smells,' said the little girl.

'Father's smells just so, too,' said the other little girl.

The mother buried her face in her hands and wept bitterly. Her heart was ready to break, and her emotions were too big for utterance except through her scalding tears. The little daughter threw her arms about her mother's neck and asked her not to cry.—The pressure of the child's arms about her neck, and the request not to cry, started a fresh supply of tears to the mother's eyes, and she sobbed like a child. The little girl, too, cried as she hung about the mother's neck, but she hardly knew what she was thus weeping for.

Could that child have known the mother's pangs and their causes, a more copious flood of burning tears would have gushed from her eyes. One after another of the children run from their cold, hard bed, and hung round their parents, who still sat upon the floor with the rum jug between them.

One of the little girls asked for some rum, but her mother arose and thrust the jug into a small cupboard where it was usually kept. At that moment, a thought struck her that she would never put the intoxicating cup to her lips again. But, alas, how many such thoughts had passed through her mind and been unheeded at last!

The morning came and bread alone constituted the breakfast of that poor family.—But the children were rejoiced to get even that at a seasonable hour; for they were often compelled to wait until Margaret could go out and beg cold victuals for them. But Margaret could not now beg for them, and her next oldest sister was too feeble in health to be subjected to such an employment.—

The prospects of this poor family were indeed dark and gloomy. The sun had not long been up before their bread and liquor were all gone; but they had money, and the husband staggered out with the two jugs, one to be returned to the owner and the other to be filled and brought home. As he was passing along near the grocery, he met a plainly dressed woman who first took a look at the jugs and then into the poor drunkard's bloated face.

She was not long in forming an opinion of the man, for she saw at a glance he was a drunkard and on his way after the liquid poison which had already made such fearful inroads upon his moral and physical constitution.

He gazed up into the woman's benevolent face, and saw at a glance that she knew his character and the errand he was upon his way to execute. He withdrew his eyes and looked down; for every lineament of her benevolent countenance rebuked him, and he felt ashamed. Had he met a person of a stern, rigid countenance, one who looked vindictive and showed no evidence of kindness or charity, his ill-nature would have been exercised, and he would not have felt thus rebuked.

Nothing so powerfully effects the drunkard as kindness and love. He can stand up under almost any thing better than under such developments of human character.

He would have avoided the woman and passed on; but she kindly bid him a good morning in tones of voice, which the instincts of his soul told were sincere and heavenly. He returned the compliment and attempted to pass on; but she detained him a few moments.

'Have you a family?' she asked, in much kindness.

'A wife and five young daughters at home,' he replied, in a tremulous voice.

'And you are poor, I suppose,' she added, looking very pleasant.

'I must say I am, madame,' he answered.

'And do not those jugs make you so?' she asked, half smiling.

He could make no answer to the question, but stood with his eyes cast down upon the sidewalk. She saw there were yet in his heart the feelings of humanity which alcoholic poison had not destroyed, and she thought she would attempt to save him if possible.

'You were going to a grocer's, I suppose, to purchase liquor,' she continued.

'I was going to purchase some bread, too, and carry this jug home,' he replied, holding up the grocer's jug he had borrowed the evening previous.

'Shall I accompany you?' she asked.

'A lady like you don't want to be seen in the streets with a poor man like me,' he said.

'No matter how poor a man is if he is right,' she added. 'I will go with you with pleasure, and purchase some other necessities for your family besides bread, if you'll promise not to buy any liquor.'

He gazed upon her kind countenance in surprise, and scarcely knew what answer to make. She was an utter stranger to him; and he could not help contrasting the expression of her countenance with that of the vile procuress who had bought his eldest daughter. He saw a great difference between them, and felt that this woman intended to do him good. At last he consented to her accompanying him to the grocer's; and they started off together. Soon they entered the grocery and the occupant was very polite. He paid all attention to the lady and seemed to neglect the poor drunkard.

'Any thing in my line, madam?' asked the grocer.

'Not now,' sir,' she replied, pointing to the drunkard. 'Wait on that gentleman first.'

The grocer thought that was most singular condescension on her part; and the drunkard thought so too. To be called a gentleman was to his mind the most singular of all, and by such a respectable looking lady.

'He is in no hurry, madam,' replied the grocer. 'He is an old customer of mine, and will willingly wait. I have a fine lot of groceries, and some of the best teas to be found in the city.'

'Wait upon that gentleman first,' was her laconic reply.

'I've brought your jug home,' said the drunkard; placing the vessel on the grocer's counter.

'Very well,' replied the grocer. 'That was excellent spirit I let you have last evening, was it not? I paid a high price for it and sold it to you a fraction above cost. Will you have your jug filled?'

He made no reply, but turned his eyes upon the woman who stood upon the opposite side of the store. The grocer's philosophy was at fault. He knew not how to interpret such actions. All were silent for a few moments.

At last the grocer spoke, and asked. 'Is the man a relative of yours, madame?'

'He is one of the human family, sir, and ought to be treated as such,' she replied.—'I consider all the members of that great family my brothers and sisters. And do not you, sir.'

'They may be in one sense,' replied the grocer, staring at the woman, and manifesting much surprise.

'And, sir, do you do to others as you would wish them to do to you?' she asked.

The grocer made no reply, but began to suspect the woman belonged to that class of reformers who are called fanatics by those who care nothing about reform, and let the world jog along as it is.

'My question is simple, and a courteous one,' she continued. 'I trust, sir, that selling liquor has not made you forget the Golden Rule.'

'I'm not disposed to hear long yarns this morning, madame,' he replied.

'I presume not,' she answered, smiling. 'That man you have almost destroyed by selling him your liquid poisons. And would to heaven you would cease such a soul-destroying traffic!'

'I've heard fanatics talk before to-day,' said the grocer.

'Very well, then, I hope you will heed what they have said,' she answered. Then turning to the drunkard, she continued.—

'Come, sir, follow me, and I will show you a good grocery where liquid poisons are not sold.'

She led the way, and Austin followed her to another grocery where he purchased several loaves of bread, and she bought some other necessities, and accompanied him home.

She found the poor wife surrounded by five daughters clothed in rags, and looking as drunkard's children may be expected to look. This good woman listened to the history of this poverty-stricken family, and learned the fact with exceeding regret that the eldest daughter had been disposed of to a strange lady. She at once understood why the strange woman had given money for Margaret, and was determined to find out where she was. The name of this benevolent woman was Mrs. Goodyear.

CHAPTER XI.

The change. Pride. Ambition. Virtue. The trainings of a Procuress—its effects. A strange character. The old Libertine's trial. The price. Villany defeated.—Virtue in the ascendant.

THE next day after Margaret was trans-

ferred to her new home and placed under the training of the abandoned, vile and God-forsaken woman who styled herself Madame Montrose, she was gaily dressed, and loaded down with a profusion of beautiful ornaments. Her beautiful hair was curled in a most fascinating manner and hung in graceful ringlets over her symmetrical neck and shoulders. When she looked into a large mirror that hung in the splendidly furnished parlor she hardly recognized her own person.

To say this young girl admired her own looks when thus reflected in a large mirror would not be doing her any injustice. She did admire her proportions and the dress and jewelry that adorned her.

Mag, as her mistress now familiarly called her, was naturally a proud, ambitious and high spirited girl; but the conduct of her parents, the menial office to which she had been subjected, often want of food and the depths of poverty and degradation she had reached, had crushed her spirit, but had not entirely broken or destroyed it. She had not only been taught by her mother that the city was full of temptations to sin and iniquity, but her own short experience had taught her the same lessons. Her beauty, although unadorned and even clad in the habiliments of poverty, had often attracted the attention of rowdies and libertines, and elicited from them many tempting offers; but she proudly and scornfully resisted all such overtures, and preserved her own innocence and virtue.

Having been compelled to visit various parts of this modern Babylon on missions as a beggar girl, she had witnessed many scenes, and formed quite an enlarged acquaintance with the evils and virtues of city life. She knew well enough that there were many houses of assignation and prostitution in even the most fashionable parts of the city; for she had more than once been solicited to enter them.

When she first saw Madame Montrose and got into the carriage with the vile woman, she had some suspicions that all was not right, and when she entered the house and saw so many gaily dressed girls in the hall, those suspicions were somewhat confirmed; still she did not know but she might be mistaken, and hoped she was. The mistress was aware of the character she had to deal with and governed herself accordingly.

The cunning wanton had cautioned the girls of her establishment to beware how they conducted themselves before Mag.—They were as obedient as spaniels to the commands of their mistress; but some of them were proud and envious. There was one in this hellish groupe who was particularly envious whenever there was a new arrival, especially if the new comer had any claims to extraordinary beauty; for being quite beautiful herself, she always envied beauty in others. This malicious beauty was called 'Pink.' All of them usually were dignified by familiar nicknames, and generally called by them. Not one ever passed under her own true name, the one she received from her parents. Thus was this innocent and beautiful Margaret associated; and thus was she surrounded by unholy influences from the mistress down to the humblest inmate of this whited sepulchre.

In the afternoon Mag was in the parlor examining her beautiful face, form, hair, dress and ornaments in the mirror when the mistress entered with smiles and much good humor.

'Well, my dear Mag, how do you like your new dress?' asked the mistress.

'I think it is very pretty; but why do you dress a poor girl so gaily?' inquired Mag. 'I expected I came here to work and I am willing to work; but this dress and these jewels are not fit to work in. I

feel very awkward in such gay ornaments. I'm not used to them, I should prefer some plainer dress.'

'O, Mag, you are too handsome to wear any thing else,' said the mistress. 'I love to see every thing correspond; and I'm sure your dress is not too good for you. As to doing hard work I never intended you should be subjected to that. No, no, Mag, such small hands as yours were never made for hard work.'

'But how can you afford to support me in this manner without work?' asked the girl, fastening her keen eyes upon the mistress' fair, round face as if she would look into the very depths of her sinful soul.

The question was a hard one; and for a moment staggered the vile procuress; but she was well skilled in her hellish work, and replied—

'Why, my dear, I have money enough, and it gives me pleasure to spend it on such a girl as you are. Didn't I take you out of poverty and disgrace and place you where you can enjoy yourself like a lady? Think you, Mag, there is no pleasure in making others happy? I had seen you several times and really became attached to you. I shall be most happy to support you like a lady until you are married. And wouldn't you like to be married to some nice gentleman who would support you in splendid style?'

'I'm not old enough to be married,' replied Mag; blushing, and looking down.

'O, yes, you are,' said the cunning mistress. 'I have known hundreds of girls married who were not older than you are. I think earlier marriages are the happiest, and many others think so too.'

'But do you support all the other girls in the same manner as you propose to support me?' inquired Mag.

'O, no, they are principally boarders,' answered this deceitful woman. 'They pay

me well. They are daughters of wealthy gentlemen in the country who send them here to learn the fashions of the city and accomplish themselves. You know it would not be well for them to board at a public house where there is every body and all sorts of company. Their fathers have confidence in me and send their daughters to me. Not having any children myself, I thought I should like to adopt some girl as a daughter; and seeing you, I at once concluded to adopt you if your parents would consent. Depend upon it, I shall use you as kindly as if you were my own daughter. But after all I am afraid I shall have to lose you.'

'How so?' inquired Mag; manifesting much surprise.

'You saw that gentleman who called last evening,' she replied. 'He is a particular friend of mine, and one of the kindest and best hearted gentlemen I ever saw. He is a bachelor and very rich too. Many ladies have desired to marry him; but he has never seen one yet who struck his fancy so much as you did last evening.'

'What!' me, a poor girl!' said Mag, in much surprise.

'Yes, he told me after he was introduced to you that he had never seen a girl he fancied so much,' replied the mistress.—'He has very singular notions of his own.'

'I should think so if he could fancy a poor humble girl like myself,' answered Mag; half smiling, yet feeling sorrowful, and sad.

'I mean by singular notions, that he would be more likely to marry a poor girl than a rich one,' she said. 'He has often told me that if he ever married he expected his wife would be a girl from the humble walks of life; Capt. Melbourne is very rich and also very benevolent, and you mustn't be surprised if he should make love to you. I'm sure I shall not be.'

'Why, he's old enough to be my father,' said Mag. 'I'm sure I could never love a man so much older than I am; besides, he will never think of such a thing.'

'You don't know him so well as I do,' said the mistress. 'I think he fell in love with you last evening, and be not surprised if he should tell you so the next time he sees you. And as to his age, that's nothing. The husband ought always to be older than the wife. I have known some of the happiest marriages I have ever seen in the world wherein the husbands were very much older than their wives. An elderly husband always treats a young wife very tenderly. It has often been remarked that when men marry their second wives much younger than they are that they always love them more dearly than they did their first one. And when an old bachelor like Capt. Melbourne, weds a young wife, he is always sure to almost worship her. A young wife can always control her husband and make him do just what she pleases. O, if you should become the wife of the Captain, you would be the happiest of women. And besides, he would willingly support your father and mother and little sisters. He has heaps of money and scarcely knows what to do with it.'

'I don't think of such a thing as getting married,' said Mag.

'Perhaps you do not now, but you will think of it one of these days,' said the woman.

'It must be some years first,' replied the girl.

'Nonsense, Mag, you're quite old enough to be married now; but I can assure you that I shall never consent to your marriage unless I know you are going to have Capt. Melbourne or some other gentleman as rich and good as he is,' replied the vile woman.

The conversation continued some time, and many more things were said by this cunning woman to prepare the way for the destruction of this virtuous girl, which it is not necessary to record. The girl whose nickname was Pink, stood with her ear to the key-hole of the door and overheard a portion of the above conversation. Her heart was terribly corrupt and filled with envy, malice, and hate; yet she had the power to conceal her hellish character and appear quite well before a stranger, if she were disposed to do so at any time. Her companions in iniquity and crime did not like her; but their hate, in some good degree, arose from the fact, that Pink was more beautiful than they were. It could not have arisen from any very pure motives; for all were corrupt and degraded. Pink was full of plans and enterprises, and hated the mistress of the establishment, because she did not receive so large a portion of the wages of sin as she thought she was entitled to; but she was not ready to vacate her place and come to an open rupture with Madame Thirza Montrose. That, however, was in prospect, and she looked forward to the day as not far distant when she could wreak her vengeance upon the vile keeper of the house.

As yet, Margaret had formed no acquaintance with the inmates of this den of iniquity; and for the very good reason they were forbidden to have any intercourse with her.—Pink sought an opportunity once in the course of the day and spoke to her, but did it very slyly. Had the mistress known it, Pink would have received a severe reprimand, and she knew it.

She was anxious to learn the history of Margaret, whether she had any parents living, and where they resided, but no opportunity had yet presented itself for obtaining such information. This cunning, envious and corrupt girl desired to have a shot in the locker for the mistress when the time came to use it.

Evening came and Madame and Mag, her victim, were in a private parlor together.—They had been again conversing upon the subject of marriage and Capt. Melbourne. The mistress had piled all her arts to prepare the girl's mind to receive the Captain in the character of a lover; but she felt as if she had made but slow progress in her infernal work. The more she conversed with Mag, the more she was convinced that she possessed strong intellectual and moral powers as well as personal charms.

At last Gifford, or Captain Melbourne, as he was called, under that roof, arrived, and the mistress met him in another apartment.

'Well, how is the young enchantress?'—inquired the Captain. 'She looked fascinating last evening; but I suppose you've rigged her out so now, that she will nearly upset my philosophy.'

'Ah, Captain, she is, indeed, an enchantress,' said the mistress. 'But you must approach her with extreme caution, and under the guise that you love and intend to make a wife of her. In no other way can you approach her. She is peculiarly bright as well as lovely and voluptuous. I have never had any thing to do with a girl who was her equal in every respect.'

'I understand,' he replied. 'I thought she possessed a keen eye and a very intellectual countenance when I saw her last evening. Never mind, the greater the victory, the harder we have to fight for it. I have never yet found my match, and you can swear I have had some little experience in such matters.'

'Indeed I can,' she answered. 'I procured this girl on purpose for you and at some considerable trouble and expense too, and I suppose I may now reasonably ask an admission fee. You understand, broker's money comes easy.'

'O, yes, I understand perfectly well,' he

said, taking out his wallet, and smiling.—'How much do you demand for admission to the beauty to-night?'

'I shall submit that to your generosity,' she replied. 'But I wish you to remember, house rent, costly furniture, rich silk dresses and jewelry can't be paid for with a song; besides, I paid her old drunken father a round sum before I could obtain her.'

'How much did you pay him?' he asked, wishing to drive as good a bargain as he could with the miserly woman.

'I'm almost ashamed to tell,' she answered 'I gave him one hundred dollars.'

'That was a round sum,' he said, smiling, and overhauling some bank notes upon which her eyes were fastened intently 'Take that for to-night.'

She received the money and carefully counted it over with evident dissatisfaction.

'Fifty dollars!' she said. 'Not enough, Captain. Not enough.'

He finally gave her as much more, and was introduced to the girl. After a few moments, the mistress departed, leaving them alone. He was fairly intoxicated with the girl's beauty; and felt, when he gazed into her brilliant expressive countenance, as if he was almost gazing upon an angelic creature. At first her beauty awed him, and he dared not make any very rapid advances. Finally, his base passions gained the ascendancy over these peculiar emotions which the sight of extraordinary female beauty always excites in the heart of a man who is not totally depraved.

'You are living with a very fine lady,' he said, seating himself beside her, and taking her small hand in his.

'She appears very well,' replied Mag, instantly withdrawing her hand from his grasp, and sharply gazing into his face with her sparkling, dark eyes.

He was somewhat thrown into the back ground by that movement; but he had seen such demonstrations before, and flattered himself that he should soon conquer.

'My dear,' he said; 'don't treat me so cruelly. I have never seen a girl I so sincerely love as I do you. Your beauty has made an impression upon my heart which I can never blot out; I most ardently love you and desire to make you my wife. The time has come now when I am willing to marry. You are my choice above all the women I have ever seen.'

'You had better love some woman near your age,' she said, casting her eyes upon the carpet in a serious, thoughtful manner. 'I'm not old enough to be married, sir.— Besides, I can never love a man so much older than I am.'

'O, my dear, you can love me,' he said, again gently taking her hand, which she violently twitched from him, as if she meant something.

He was now in a quandary, and hardly knew what movement next to make; but he nerved himself up to the contest, and believed he should finally succeed. He now conversed with her as pleasantly as he could, told her how much he loved her, what a fine house she should have to live in, and how much he would do for her poor parents.— She quietly listened to his flatteries, and he began to make some further advances; but he was sadly mistaken, for she resisted him with still more power and determination.— After more than an hour's severe trial he was compelled to give up his hellish work that evening; but still hoped for the success of future operations. He departed with a strange mixture of emotions.

CHAPTER XII.

A widow's anxiety. The expected guest.— National prepossessions. The duplicity of a scoundrel. The dinner party. The progress of events. American and English ladies, &c.

'You are quite sure Mr. Tryon will dine with us to-day,' said the widow Belknap

to her son George; feeling much solicitude on the subject.

'O, yes, mother, he told me last evening he should esteem it a great pleasure,' said George. 'He will certainly be here this afternoon. He's a gentleman very prompt in all his engagements.'

'That is characteristic of an English gentleman,' she replied. 'The Americans are not half so prompt as the English, and that is one reason why I don't fancy them so well. Have you learned much of the history of Mr. Tryon? Is he here on business, or has he come on a pleasure trip to see the country?'

'Indeed, I don't know, mother,' he replied. 'You know it would not be very polite in me to inquire into his private affairs.'

'To be sure it would not; but then I didn't know but he had voluntarily told you something about his business in America,' she said.

'Not a word,' he replied. 'But I think he is traveling for pleasure.'

'I should judge so,' she added. 'There's another characteristic of an Englishman; he don't tell every body his business as a large portion of the Americans do. You did not hear him say how long he expected to remain in this country, did you?'

'No, mother, not a word,' he answered. 'I think, however, he spoke of traveling South.'

'I suppose he will go South the coming winter,' she said. 'Perhaps he will remain in the country until Spring when we shall probably be ready to cross the Atlantic and see our own loved England once more.'

The widow was precisely in that state of mind which puts the most favorable construction upon every thing. The more she reflected upon the character of this Englishman, the higher he rose in her estimation. Her son was not so far gone as to wish his

mother to wed a gambler. And had he known what peculiar thoughts were passing in her mind in relation to this man, he would not have spoken so highly of him, or invited him to dine with them.

He did not once dream that she thought of him as a husband; but he had become so associated with him in the vice of gambling, that he had no objections to showing him much respect and attention.

This tyro in this terrible vice just began to feel his passion for the game almost irresistible; and, relying on this consummate scoundrel as his friend, he put himself completely in his power.

Believing this gambler had lost money in playing with the Yankee blackleg, as he called Tryon's accomplice, and relying upon his skill in the game to help him win back what he had lost. This foolish young man received his opinions as law and Gospel, and trusted him as a friend. Hamilton was exceedingly well qualified to act his part of this conspiracy with consummate skill and tact. He did not pretend to be a professional blackleg; and young Belknap did not view him in the light of a gambler, but supposed his great success thus far was owing to luck more than skill.

Tryon had put these false notions into his head, and told him the Yankee's fortune would take a turn ere long. Belknap believed that, and played on.

The second evening he gambled with this Yankee, he lost, but not so much as he did the first evening. And the reason why he did not, was because the conspirators thought it more politic not to bleed him too freely, at their second trial. If they had been so disposed, they could have drawn very heavily upon his purse; for he was all excitement and ready to increase the stakes to any desired amount. The crafty Tryon held back, and yet they took a very handsome sum from his pocket.

Feeling sure of their victim, they managed him in a polite manner; keeping his passion for the game excited, and his hopes of final success buoyant and active. These blacklegs were often together in secret, but never before the public. No one could have suspected they were ever known to each other, so much like perfect strangers did they appear.

The sun had passed the meridian, and the widow Belknap was actively employed in making her toilet in anticipation of the arrival of the English gentleman to dine with her. Never since the death of her husband had she taken such pains to adorn her person as she did on this occasion. Jewels which had been lying in their caskets since she followed the earthly remains of her husband to that 'narrow house appointed for all the living,' were now taken out and placed upon her person. The richest brocade silk dress in her wardrobe covered her genteel and graceful form. The widow was a handsome woman, and years had not made such inroads upon her beauty as it does on some ladies of less robust constitution.

Having prepared herself for the coming event; she seated herself in the parlor and waited the arrival of her guest. Tryon had also taken much pains to prepare himself for the interview, having purchased a new coat and vest for the occasion, and received some extra touches from the barber.

Having prepared himself in his best style; this adroit blackleg started from the Pewter Mug, where he had been enjoying the society of some of his professional brethren, and especially that of his accomplice, Hamilton. As he walked up Broadway his thoughts were busy and active.

'I think I shall tickle the widow, a little,' he said to himself. 'She entertains great respect for English gentlemen, and I respect English ladies. Jim, thinks I had better get

my eye on the silver plate, and the place where she keeps it. The suggestion is not a bad one. I shall have a good opportunity to examine the house and its several apartments and its bolts and bars. Jim always likes to have some knowledge of the premises he designs to invade. I will mark out the house and its apartment. I must assume my best character before the widow. I understand she is an active member of one of the Episcopal Churches in the city. Well, I can meet her on that point. And I understand from her son that she contemplates making a voyage to England, next Spring. I shall endeavor to make something out of that point. It is said that widows are not hard to please. Second love springs up in their hearts quite suddenly, sometimes. It would be a good joke, if I should entangle her in the silken cords of love.'

Thus this consummate villain communed with his own wicked heart, while on his way to dine with the widow Belknap, who was anxiously awaiting his coming. Soon his hand was on the knob, and the house bell gave the alarm.

'There, he has come!' said the widow; adjusting some portions of her dress, and casting her eyes into a large mirror that hung opposite to see if all was right.

Her son went into the hall, and conducted him to the parlor. The widow rose and received him in a lady-like, graceful, dignified manner. He shook her hand most cordially, holding it for some time and even pressing it more warmly than almost any American would have dared to do under similar circumstances.

'I hope I find you quite well, madame,' he said, smiling, and bowing politely.

'Very well, I thank you,' she replied.—Please be seated.'

He sat down in a very dignified, yet easy manner. She liked his motions because she fancied she saw in them full evidence of a well-bred English gentleman.

'We have charming weather this month,' he added.

'September is a very pleasant month,' she said, gazing full into his face.

'It is, so, indeed,' he answered. 'You have more sunshine than we have in London, but every thing here looks so new that I really desire once more to feast my eyes upon the time-honored houses of old England.'

'When do you contemplate returning to England?' she asked.

'I have not fully determined, he replied. 'I shall not return before Spring, at any rate, and may not until the first of the summer. I shall probably spend a portion of the winter season at the South.'

'The climate there is delightful during the winter months, especially in some portions of Florida,' she said.

'You have been there, I suppose,' he added.

'I spent part of the winter in St. Augustine,' she answered. 'I contemplate making a voyage to Europe next season.'

'Indeed, he replied, manifesting an apparent interest. 'Perhaps then, fortune may so favor us that we may take the same vessel. It would afford me great pleasure to have your company. I have really sighed for the society of English ladies.'

'I suppose, your'e anxious to return to your family,' she said; feeling a very great curiosity to hear the question she was about to ask him. 'Why did not your wife accompany you?'

'There is a very good reason for that,' he said, smiling. 'I'm not so happy as to have a wife. I must plead guilty to the charge of being a bachelor.'

'Indeed!' she answered, feeling a weight removed from her heart, and smiling. 'I wonder that when England has so many fine women.'

'To tell you the truth, madame, I was so immersed in mercantile affairs, that I could not find time to get married. But I have now retired from the cares and perplexities of mercantile life, and intend to enjoy myself during the remainder of my days.'

'A very wise intention,' she added.—'When a gentleman has accumulated enough of this world's goods, it is the part of wisdom to be satisfied.'

The son listened to the above conversation with a mixture of strange emotions, but he remained silent for the most part of the time, occasionally throwing in a remark which it is not necessary to make a note of. The subject at last turned upon the vices of the city. Tryon introduced the subject because he knew it would please her.

'We have a great amount of crime in London,' he said. 'But I'm thinking New York has a greater portion according to its population.'

'That is my opinion,' she added. 'The vice of gambling has increased rapidly here within a few years. It is a terrible vice, Mr. Tryon, and ruins thousands upon thousands every year. And intemperance comes in, too, for a large share of victims.'

'They are tremendous evils in any community,' he replied, assuming a long face, and a solemn tone of voice. 'I was sorry to hear that these vices are so prevalent in this enterprising city. They not only corrupt the morals of a city, but also retard its growth.'

She was delighted with his remarks upon these topics. The dining hour had now arrived, and they sat down to a most sumptuous meal. The widow had procured all the luxuries of the season, and got up one of her best dinners.

Conversation flowed easy, and Tryon had his eye upon the silver plate as well as upon the viands. The widow grew more and more pleased with him, and showed him the con-

venient arrangement of her house and its several splendidly furnished apartments. He examined them with the keen eye of a burglar, and tarried till sometime after nightfall. He then excused himself by saying that he had engaged to take supper that evening with an English gentleman. And her son was of course invited. He took his leave, promising to call again. The widow was highly gratified with her guest.

CHAPTER XIII.

The Meeting of the Conspirators. Future plans. Burglarious intentions. Gambling Hells. The disguised gambler. Two young men. The Gambler's Victims, &c.

TRYON wended his way from the widow's to the Pewter Mug previous to his repairing to the gambling hell in Park Row, where he agreed to meet young Belknap.

James Hamilton, his accomplice, was at the Pewter Mug, waiting for him. Tryon met him in secret to make out a programme for the evening's performances.

'You prolonged your visit at the widow's,' said Jim. 'I guess you found the dinner good, and the widow very pleasant.'

'That I did,' replied Tryon, laughing.—'Jim, I have no doubt I could not wed that rich, beautiful, accomplished and Christian widow in less than a month; at least, I could do so, if her son didn't interfere and let the cat out of the bag.'

'I conclude the young fellow would hardly consent to such a connection,' said Jim. 'Is she really handsome and agreeable?'

'There are no two ways about it,' replied Tryon. 'She has as fine a pair of black eyes as ever sparkled in a woman's head, a noble bust, an elegant form, graceful motions, lively spirits, sweet voice, splendid false teeth, rich jewelry —'

'There, stop!' interrupted his accomplice. 'Rich jewelry! that is of more consequence to us than rosy lips or sparkling eyes. Did you mark well the various apartments of her house, the fastenings of the doors, the cupboards, closets, and where she deposits her money, jewelry, and plate?'

'Every particular I marked well, and will map out the premises to-morrow,' replied Tryon. 'I think we can make a rich haul there; but perhaps it will be better to defer that enterprize until I have made the widow another visit.'

'Very well; and now about our friend, young Belknap,' said Jim. 'Will he meet us this evening?'

'Yes, that is agreed upon,' replied Tryon. 'His mother thinks he is going to be the guest at another English supper.'

'They had a hearty laugh over their deviltry, and continued the conversation.'

'We must manage Belknap skilfully and adroitly, or he will begin to suspect us,' said Jim.

'The fellow is bright enough, but he loves the game; and the more he loses the stronger will be his passion.'

'True; but we must not break him at once,' replied Tryon. 'He has some twenty thousands in stocks, and these will have to be converted into money.'

'But we have not yet taken all his cash funds,' said Jim.

'I know that; but he has not more than two thousand dollars on hand,' replied Tryon. 'I have ascertained about his affairs.'

'Well, let us take the two thousand to-night,' said Jim.

'Not quite,' replied Tryon. 'Let us not clean him out entirely. Let two or three hundred remain in his hands as a sort of nest egg.'

'I have it,' said the *soi disant* Yankee.

'Well, how is it?' asked Tryon, always

placing much reliance upon the suggestions of his accomplice, and always heeding his advice.

'We'll bleed him almost to the last drop, and then suffer him to win a few games just before we quit,' replied Hamilton.

'That will do,' said Tryon. 'If we do things properly, we shall find this fellow a rich customer. We don't often find so good a one; and let us manage so as not to let him slip through our fingers into the hands of that Skinner and Camp.'

'They haven't the least suspicion that we are associated together,' said Hamilton.

'No; and they will have good luck if they detect us,' said Tryon. 'Skinner must mind how he attacks me again, or I'll lay him up for some months to come. True, I cheated him; but it was a fair trick, and let him find it out if he can. He has got to learn some of the rules of gambling.'

Having thus arranged their affairs, and made their plans for the evening, they repaired to their favorite gambling saloon.

Young Belknap had arrived before them and was down at the table with Jasper Gifford who has figured somewhat in the preceding pages of these chronicles of early life. The young man had returned that day from up the Hudson, and soon found his way to his favorite place of resort. These young men were about equally matched; for neither had yet become acquainted with but a few tricks of the game. So far as they knew they played very promptly. They loved the excitement, and were bold players, considering their very limited practice and knowledge. They had played together before, but neither had gained much advantage over the other.

Our pretended Yankee entered the room sometime previous to the arrival of his accomplice, and came along in a very awkward manner, with his hands deeply thrust into his breeches' pockets; staring first on one

very much like a country clodhopper, or a greenhorn from away down East. Several who were present had seen him before, but those who had not were convulsed with laughter.

'Ah, ye needn't laugh,' he said, hauling out his wallet. 'Here's the sheepskin that covers the shinplasters. I'll bet any man a V. that I can beat him the first game, and then double the bet.'

The only response he heard was loud laughing from several who were busily employed in the games.

'I knew none of you had the pluck to face the music,' he continued, flourishing his sheepskin wallet, and coming to the table at which young Belknap and Gifford were playing. 'Go it, ye young rascals. Does yer marm's know ye are out?'

'I'll not be insulted,' said the excited Gifford, who was not in a very good humor, having just returned from an unsuccessful courting excursion in the country. Gifford instantly rose up and began to show fight, coward as he was.

'Sit down my friend before you may think a horse has kicked you,' said Jim, placing his huge paw upon Gifford's shoulder and pressing him back into his chair. 'I never fight, but sometimes wrestle with the gals.'

'Don't mind him, said Belknap. 'He won't hurt any body.'

'No, no, I'm gentle as a lamb,' said Jim, smiling, and patting the shoulder of Gifford. 'Sometimes I strikes when I can't help it, and then I use this sledge hammer.'

And he flourished his great fist, and laughed heartily at his own wit. Gifford became reconciled, and proceeded with the game. The stakes were not large; but the young men were evidently excited. They thought a good deal of victory, perhaps more at that particular moment than the odd of the money that was up. Hamilton stood watching the progress of the game, seeing how easy it would be to cheat them.

'There, by king, young man, that money has slipped through your fingers quicker than a cat could lick her ear,' said Jim, addressing Gifford, who had lost the game.—

'Never mind, pick your flint and try again; and if ye havn't money I'll lend you a few shinplasters.'

'I don't wish to borrow, sir,' said Gifford; selecting from a large roll of bank notes a twenty dollar bill, and striking it upon the table. 'Cover that, I always double the bet.'

'Good!' said Jim, fastening his keen eyes upon the money. 'I glory in your spunk.—Ye have almost as big a pile of the needful as I have.'

Young Belknap instantly put up his stakes and proceeded to shuffle the cards. The excitement now ran high, and they played carefully and cautiously. In the first hand, Gifford got the advantage and felt much excited and encouraged.

'Yer luck has turned, young man,' said Jim. 'Keep a stiff upper lip and that twenty spot may go back to its place agin and carry the other with it.'

'Don't you be alarmed,' said Gifford.—'Perhaps you would like to risk some of your shinplasters, as you call them.'

'I shouldn't mind taking a round or two, after the game is over,' replied Jim.

'I have no objections,' said Belknap, running over the hand which had just been dealt to him by his opponent with evident satisfaction. 'Come, play, and we'll see.'

'I guess yev'e got some handsome picters this time,' said Jim. 'Go it, and the devil take the hindmost.'

'The devil is sure to get all Yankees,' said Gifford, throwing down a card, and anxiously watching the motions of his opponent.

'Not as you knows on, tell yer folks,' replied Jim. 'Old Nick has a mortgage of all this big city, and its people and dandies to-boot; and he'll be calling for them one of these days.'

'Then I advise you to leave the city soon as possible,' said Gifford.

'The gentleman with the long tail, big horns and cloven foot has no claims upon the down-easters,' replied Jim, laughing.—'We don't train in that company.'

The game was now so exciting that Gifford heeded not what Jim said, but watched every card with great solicitude. At last Gifford lost again; and then dared the Yankee to sit down and double the stakes.

'That's pretty high, but I'll go a few rounds,' said Jim, smiling, and putting down his money.

Young Belknap felt quite well satisfied, and Jim was glad to see it. This was the first time he had met Gifford, and marked him as a victim. His dandy costume, and his large roll of bills, particularly attracted the attention of this accomplished blackleg. The money was up and the game commenced. It fell on the Yankee to deal first, and he commenced shuffling the cards and purposely made slobbering work of it, letting the cards fall, and awkwardly gathering them up again.

'I haven't the hang of 'em yet,' said Jim. 'But I'll soon get my hand in, and then I'll deal them as fine as a lady.'

'I think you'll hardly get the hang of them in one evening,' said Gifford, smiling.

'Perhaps not,' replied Jim; dealing down the cards, and counting them as he dealt. There's no misdeal, and I guess we've a'l got good hands.'

They played their hands, and Gifford was the best of the three that time in the game of 'Seven Up,' which was the game they were playing; each one for himself, and the devil for all, as Jim expressed it.

'Well, young man, I gave ye a good hand and now give me one,' said Jim.—'Fair play is a jewel. No gouging, my boy, but deal like a man.'

Gifford dealt the cards and gave the Yankee a very good hand and himself a poor one. Belknap's was fair.

'Now look out my boys,' said Jim, throwing down the king of trumps. 'I've got the picters this time and am after ye.'

He caught Gifford's Jack, and the next play he drew Belknap's ten, and laughed as if he would split his sides.

'Four times, by the living Moses,' said Jim. 'I guess them are shimplasters are mine.'

'Don't flatter yourself too much,' said Gifford. 'The game is not over yet. Be patient and see who has the luck this time.—Come, Belknap, deal, and give him all the trays in the pack.'

'No, no, give me the picters,' said Jim, laughing. 'I want to catch another jack.'

Belknap dealt, and before he turned the trump. 'Stop!' said Jim, addressing Gifford. 'I'll bet you a dollar that he turns up a jack.'

'Done!' replied Gifford, planking his money which was instantly covered by Jim.

Belknap turned the card, and Jim lost his dollar. The laugh was fairly upon him, and the young men enjoyed it. Jim expected to lose his money; but he had an object in view worth more than the dollar he had lost by what appeared to them a very foolish bet. They played their hands, and Gifford came out the best, but none had yet won the game. It was now Jim's turn to deal.

'Come, I'll bet you don't turn a jack,' said Gifford.

'How much?' asked Jim, running off the cards quite fast.

'A dollar,' replied Gifford, smiling at the peculiar expression of Jim's face.

'An unlucky number,' said Jim, holding the pack in his hand ready to turn the trump.

'Five,' said Gifford.

'Agreed, or miss,' replied Jim, turning

up the jack of spades, and reaching after his five dollars. 'Ill just take that V. if ye please. It will help along some.'

Gifford handed over the money, saying.—'Your'e a lucky dog.'

'That's not luck, but science,' said Jim, laughing, and pocketing the money.

'Science!' repeated Gifford, laughing, and running over the hand which the Yankee had just dealt him.

'There, haven't I given you a good hand?' asked Jim.

'You'll see,' replied Gifford, throwing down the ace of trumps, and drawing out the Yankee's ten.

'Good on your head, my young friend,' said Jim, laughing. 'Thunder, the game's yours and no mistake.'

True, as this blackleg stated, Gifford won the game. At that moment Tryon came along, and Belknap urged him to take a seat at the table; but he refused, unless the others were willing. Gifford expressed his consent.

'What say you, my friend?' asked Gifford.

'Suit yourselves, and ye'll suit me,' replied Jim. 'But, remember, I shall turn up a jack just when it happens to please my fancy.'

'Don't brag too much about that,' said Gifford.

'I'll show ye the science,' said Jim.—'Come, young man, ye are the winner, and call on some brandy smashers. I'm drier than a down east cod-fish.'

'Agreed,' said Gifford; feeling quite elated with his success, and ordering the liquor.

'You, toddy stick man,' said Jim to the waiter. 'Sweeten mine well and scrape a little toe-nail into it.'

The maddening draughts were soon upon the table, and they commenced drinking.

'Hear my toast, said Jim. 'Ye's to the pretty down-east gals.'

They drank the Yankee's toast, amid much laughter, and the spirits of the young men received a jog as the Yankee intended.

'This brandy is half middling,' said Jim, smacking his lips. 'Good as we can expect among the Yorkers, but nothing like the brandy I've smuggled over the line into Maine. Ah, there's no rot-gut in that; it's the pure stuff, making a gentleman feel as if he were in some happy place.'

After drinking round and listening to Jim's yarns, the game commenced in good earnest. Tryon and Hamilton knew they had these young men completely in their power, and governed themselves accordingly. Each one played for himself; but Tryon pretended to favor Belknap whenever there was an opportunity, but he played for the benefit of his accomplice, keeping the run of the cards, and shuffling and dealing with the skill of an adroit blackleg. Hamilton did the same; but he still continued his awkwardness, and won the games greatly to the surprise of these tyros.

Towards morning the young men found their pockets quite empty, and the Yankee's were well filled. Brandy flowed freely and the excitement ran high. Finally they all agreed to quit after playing a certain number of games. These few last games, Belknap and Gifford won, and that prepared them for the future. Skinner and Camp urged Gifford to play with them the next evening—but no. He was determined to win back his money from that darned down-easter, as he called Hamilton.

CHAPTER XIV.

An old Libertine finds more than his match. Suspicions of dishonesty among the vile and abandoned. A severe trial of a young girl. Good deeds promised from evil motives, &c.

'IN God's name, what is that girl made

of?" asked old Gifford, as he came out of a room where he had been trying his hellish arts upon the poor drunkard's daughter.—Was she born of a woman, or is she really an angel, and dropped down from the clouds? I have never encountered such a little witch before! I can make no impression upon her. Her heart seems to be encased in steel.

This was the third interview this old libertine had had with Margaret Austin; and thus far he had paid dear for the whistle.—True, as he said to the vile procuress, he could not conquer her. His temper was roused, and he began to be suspicious that Madame Thirza Montrose was playing a trick upon him; but these suspicions were unfounded; for this abandoned woman had exercised all her power to induce the poor girl to become the victim of this old broker's base passions.

'Why, what is the trouble, sir?' asked the procuress.

'Trouble!' he repeated, manifesting much impatience as well as indignation. 'I fear you have instructed the girl to resist me. I cannot account for her continued and stubborn resistance upon any other principles. I was never so powerless among the tender sex before. If you have been imposing upon me, I'll blow your establishment to the devil!'

'Why, Mr. Gifford, as heaven is my judge, I have tried all my powers of persuasion to bring the girl to your wishes, she said. 'And I now intend to try some other herb besides soft words, and persuasive arguments. I will see if she will not yield obedience to my positive commands. I'll give her such a scolding as she has never had.'

'Well, I don't know but I have done you injustice in thus suspecting you,' he said.—'If I have, I will take it all back.'

You have, indeed, done me great injus-

tice; for I procured this girl expressly on your account and have been at a good deal of trouble and expense in obtaining her for you,' she replied. 'I have feared she would prove a stubborn creature; but I think we can conquer her yet.'

'Why, she really threatened me, if I persisted in attempting to kiss her,' he said.—'I never saw such a spunky girl in my life.'

'Wouldn't she permit you to snatch one kiss?' she asked.

'No, and she looked as cross as a little devil,' he replied. 'Her black-eyes sparkled and struck out flames of fire. She said it would be the last thing she would ever do to marry a man as old as I am, even if my house was all made of solid gold. Those are very nearly her words. And she also talked of leaving you; so you must keep a sharp look out, or you will lose her.'

'I will see to that,' she said. 'The little trollop shall not escape my vigilance.'

'I suppose not, if she does she will have but one more to escape,' he said, smiling.

'I'm much obliged to you for the compliment,' she replied.

'You are perfectly welcome,' he said, laughing. 'Don't be angry, but always take a joke as cheerfully as you give one.'

'O, sir, I'm very far from being angry with you; but I confess I feel somewhat angry with that girl. Well, she's in my power, thank fortune; I have bought her and paid for her.'

'I was not aware that slavery existed in our State,' he said, smiling.

'Well, I'm not going to lose money by the saucy thing,' she said.

'I reckon I have paid you enough to cover all expenses,' he replied. 'And all I have got for it is sharp looks and very saucy language.'

'Surely, you can not to be blamed for it,' she

said; 'I didn't suppose that a poor drunkard's daughter, picked up in the street, a beggar girl taken from the abode of poverty and wretchedness, would prove so refractory as Mag has. I have never known such an instance before, and yet I have had a score of girls from such places. But be not discouraged, I'll train her yet.'

'Try your best and I will call again,' replied this inveterate old sinner.

He departed, and Madame immediately sought the refractory girl, as she called her. Margaret was seated upon a sofa, splendidly dressed, and highly ornamented with jewelry, looking steadily at a lamp which was burning in the room. The girl was sad and sorrowful, deeply reflecting upon her situation, and feeling anxious to see her parents. She feared that her sisters might suffer for the want of food. True, her vile keeper had told her that she had furnished her parents with money; but that fact, even if she had believed all the woman said, did not relieve her apprehensions; for well she knew that her father and mother, too, kept drunk a good part of the time when they had the means to purchase liquor with.

'Well, Mag, Captain Melbourne did not stay very long this evening,' said the woman, looking rather cross, and feeling more so.

'He staid longer than I wished to have him,' replied the girl.

'That's pretty well, too,' quickly responded Madame.

'But it would have been better, if he had gone an hour before he did, and better still, if he had never come at all,' added Mag.

'You talk like a foolish girl,' said the mistress, sharply. 'Capt. Melbourne is one of the finest men in the city, and no girl would reject him.'

'Then let him find such girls as I'm not one of them,' said Mag, turning her dark eyes on the woman as if she would search her through.

'You have grown mighty smart of late,' replied the mistress. 'You must curb your feelings a little, or there may be trouble.'

'O, I want to go home and see my father and mother and little sisters,' said Mag, while tears stood trembling in her eyes, and her heart beat with strange emotions.

'You cannot see them at present,' replied this cruel, heartless woman.

'I can't stay here, if that man keeps coming,' said Mag. 'I can't bear the sight of him. I never want to see him again; for I don't believe he's a good man.'

'Not a good man!' repeated the mistress. 'He's one of the very best men in the city, and loves you dearly. O, Mag, if you would marry him, you would have a splendid home, and your parents and sisters well provided for.'

'I never can marry him,' said Mag. 'No, no, never! I had rather die first!'

'Worse and worse!' said the mistress.—'Rather die first! How silly you talk! One would suppose you were crazy! I never heard any thing like it.'

'I can't help it, for I mean what I say,' replied Mag, in a firm tone of voice.

She began to feel her spirit rise within her, and she could not restrain it. Suspicions of the honesty of this woman began to take possession of her soul; and she resolved to leave the first opportunity.

'Can't help it!' repeated the mistress.—

'But you must help it.'

'Give me back my old dress, and I will go home,' said Mag. 'I can go to-night; I know the way.'

'You won't go to-night, nor yet to-morrow,' said the mistress. 'I have bought you of your father, and paid him the money. He gave you to me, and I have full control over you. But I wish to use you well, Mag. And if you will behave well, you shall be treated kindly, but if you are saucy and ugly, I shall treat you accordingly.'

The poor girl sat and silently gazed upon the floor, but she was not conquered. Her proud spirit was not yet crushed. The woman also sat silent, and gazed upon her victim; but no feelings of compassion were stirred within her dark and corrupt soul.—A long course of wickedness had hardened her heart and spread a blighting mildew over her soul.

At last she ordered the girl to her room, and for the first time locked her in. Mag was now a prisoner; but her heart was not broken, nor her spirit crushed out of her.—She threw off her jewelry, and said within herself, she would never again wear such ornaments. Had it been possible to escape from her imprisonment, she would have seen her parents and sisters that night; but the cunning mistress had used every precaution, and was determined to restrain the girl's liberty.

After disrobing herself, Mag sat down and wept bitterly; feeling strong suspicions that she was imprisoned in a brothel. Still she did not know but she might be mistaken. She hoped she was. Her night was almost a sleepless one. Towards morning, however, she fell into a slumber and slept until the mistress awoke her. But few words passed between them; enough, however, was said to convince Madame that the girl was far from being conquered.

The day previous, the envious and corrupt beauty, Pink, and the mistress had a falling out; and the former threatened to leave the establishment, unless she could receive a greater proportion of her 'wages of sin,' but the latter was inexorable, and the rupture promised to be an irreconcilable one. Pink envied Mag's beauty, and was determined to have an interview with her if it could be had without the knowledge of the mistress. It so happened that in the course of the next day after Mag was locked in her chamber, that Pink met her in one of the halls of the chamber.

'Can you keep a secret?' asked Pink, in a hurried manner, and subdued tone of voice, looking wildly round to see that there were no listeners.

'I can,' replied Mag. 'Speak, and I will not betray you.'

There was something in Mag's tone of voice and expression of countenance that convinced this heartless wanton that she could be trusted.

'See to it that you do not,' said Pink.—'Do you know the character of this house, and of the woman who keeps it?'

'I do not, but I have terrible suspicions,' replied Mag. 'Speak, and tell me!'

'It is a brothel, and the mistress is a procuress!' answered Pink.

'O, heavens!' exclaimed Mag.

'Hush!' whispered Pink. 'We shall be overheard. That gentleman who visits you is an old libertine, and hasn't the most distant idea of marrying you. He has a wife and son, now living. I know both father and son well, and I have received many a five dollar bill from them. As the old cock crows the young one learns. The son is as bad as the father. I would not stay here if I were you.'

'But why do you stay in such a place?' asked Mag, much surprised.

'I'm used to it, is the best answer I can give,' replied the ruined girl.

'As God is my judge, I will never become used to it,' said Mag.

'Tell me where you lived before you came here, and where your parents are, if you have any, and perhaps I may assist you,' said Pink.

Mag now told her all she asked; and Pink marked the street and number on a slip of paper with her gold pencil, and put it into her bosom, in a great hurry, lest some one might detect her.

'Then,' said Pink. 'Don't be alarmed, keep a stiff upper lip, and slap the old lib-

ertine's face when he visits you again.—Madame Montrose is coming! I hear her footsteps on the stairs! Run into your chamber.'

Mag ran softly to her chamber, and Pink promenaded through the hall, singing, and occasionally keeping time to her music in a waltz. When the mistress came up, Pink was singing, and whirling quite merrily.

'You feel in good spirits, to-day,' said the mistress.

'O, yes,' replied Pink. 'But I should feel still more lively, if you would pay me more money.'

'You needn't talk about that,' said the mistress. 'You fare like the rest of the girls.'

'But I get more than any one of them does, and you ought to pay me in proportion,' said Pink. 'I can do better at other places. Old Sal will give me more.'

'Old Sal!' repeated the mistress. 'She keeps a mean house. It isn't half so fashionable as mine. But I thought I heard some person talking here just now. Where is Mag?'

'Not knowing, I couldn't say,' replied the lying Pink. 'I haven't seen her; I suppose you heard me repeating to myself a funny story a gentleman told me last night.'

'Well, you know my orders,' said the mistress. 'I forbid any one of you from speaking to that girl.'

'O, yes, we all understand that,' replied Pink. 'You needn't trouble yourself about that. None of us have any desire to speak to the proud thing. She's altogether too haughty to be our familiar companion.—Do her parents live in the city?' asked Pink.

'I know nothing about her parents,' replied this lying woman. 'The girl was sent to me from the country. Don't you think she is very handsome?'

'She looks very well for a country girl,' answered Pink, archly smiling.

'A country girl!' repeated the mistress. 'Didn't you come from the country?'

'Yes, when I was very small; but I have lived long enough in the city to become polished,' replied Pink, laughing.

'Ah, Pink, you're a rude one,' said the mistress, passing through the hall into Mag's chamber; where she found the poor girl sitting at a window and gazing upon the crowds passing the streets.

'Come, Mag, it is time for you to dress, and put on your jewelry,' said the mistress.

'The jewelry is not mine, and I shall not wear it again,' replied Mag.

'Not wear it again!' repeated the mistress. 'Not wear it again!' Well, that's very pretty, indeed! But you shall wear it!'

'I will not!' replied Mag, gazing full into the woman's face.

'By heavens, you shall suffer for such insolence!' added the agitated mistress.

'I have already suffered,' said Mag, feeling too indignant to shed a tear. 'You can't make me a bad girl. I will die first!'

'Mighty resolute, I confess?' said the mistress. 'I don't wish to make you a bad girl, but a happy wife of a rich, respectable husband.'

Mag made no reply; but gazed upon the vile woman with an expression of countenance that spoke more eloquently than words to the guilty soul of this corrupt procuress.

The woman said no more but left the chamber. That piercing look of this high spirited and virtuous girl haunted her for hours; but evil passions and corrupt feelings blotted it out from her memory.

CHAPEER XV.

The promenade. The smile of recognition. The spirit of jealousy. Shopping. The carriage ride. The husband alarmed.— The young mother and her child.— Hysterics, &c.

THE morning was fair, and a pleasant September breeze swept over the city.— Crowds of pedestrians were hurrying to and fro in Broadway; and the Parks were also thronged with men, women and children. Mr. Gifford and his wife were taking a morning promenade, preferring rather to walk than to ride in their carriage on such a bright and beautiful day. Many splendid and beautiful carriages and fine horses were out. Coachmen and footmen were dressed in livery; and their masters and mistresses leaned back in their carriages with great dignity and pride as if the whole world was made expressly for their use. The monied aristocracy made its best appearance in foolish and ridiculous imitation of the nobility of the old world.

Such exhibitions never fail to make a sensible man laugh in his sleeve; for well he knows the origin of all those who thus figure in the upper circles of New York City Life. Many of them are the sons of shoemakers, and not a few sprung from coopers; but trade and speculation have given them wealth, and hence the purse-proud aristocracy of our country.

Carriage after carriage stopped in front of Stuart's Marble Store; and the aristocratic ladies alighted to purchase a new opera cloak, or some other costly article of dress. The outside of the platter must be kept clean, or such an aristocracy would dwindle away and die out.

'What elegant lady is that just stepped down from the carriage?' asked Mrs. Gifford. 'She's dressed splendidly and has a fine carriage and horses. And her coachman, too, is handsomely fitted out.'

'I don't know her from Eve,' he replied. New York is fast filling up with the upper ten, so fast that I can't keep the run of them.'

'I thought the lady recognized you with a smile,' she said. 'Didn't she look at you as she stepped from the carriage?'

'I was not aware of it,' he replied, while a slight blush of shame tinged his cheeks.— 'She must have looked at the gentleman who stood near me.'

'It might have been so, but I thought she looked directly at you, and smiled,' said the somewhat jealous wife. Let us go and see, who she is; besides, I wish to look over some of the latest styles of goods.'

He could not well refuse to yield to his wife's wishes, and yet he was sorry she made the request, for the lady in question was Madame Thirza Montrose, who was one in humble life, and the daughter of a day laborer.

They entered the marble palace, and soon saw Madame pricing some elegant shawls in the apartment where such articles are sold. Mrs. Gifford pushed into the same apartment, pulling her husband after her much against his will and inclination; for he feared she might again recognize him with a smile.— Mrs. Gifford kept her eye on the woman as she and her husband approached the place where she was standing, fully resolved to see for herself if any sign of recognition was manifested. Mrs. Gifford had become somewhat jealous of her husband, although she had never let him know the extent of her feelings. Recently she had grown more jealous, and manifested to him more of its spirit. He was aware that the 'green-eyed monster' had become an occupant of her heart, and governed himself accordingly.— As yet there had been no very serious rupture between them, although she had scolded him occasionally for being out so late of nights.

When they had approached near Madame, she slyly turned her eyes upon him, and a half smile played on her face. Mrs. Gifford saw that look and smile, and not only saw them, but also greatly magnified them.

The honest wife trembled, and a sickness came over her soul. She still kept her eyes fastened on the cunning woman, to see if she would smile again; but the shrewd procuress understood the matter and busied herself in pricing several costly shawls.— But even that did not satisfy Mrs. Gifford. How true it is that jealousy makes the meat it feeds on.

This jealous wife now became satisfied that the woman did not look again at her husband lest she might be suspected. Had she looked and smiled even a second time, the wife would not have considered that stronger evidence of her husband's guilt than she did the woman's abstaining from that look and smile.

This wife was now fairly in for it; and her husband was aware of the fact, and wished Madame Thirza Montrose's carriage, horses and liveried coachman were all sunk in the bottom of Hudson River; and if the owner had been sunk with them he would have shed no tears.

Madame purchased a costly shawl with the very money Mr. Gifford had paid her but a few evenings previous. Having made the purchase, the woman came past them and went into another apartment of the store.— As the vile woman passed near Mr. Gifford and touched him with the flowing skirts of her silk dress she could not refrain from slyly turning her eyes on him. Not a motion of her escaped the notice of the jealous wife. She saw those dark eyes again turned upon her husband, and trembled.

'Come, let us go,' she said, in a low, tremulous voice.

'I thought, my dear, that you wished to look over the goods,' he replied.

'Not now,' she said, leading the way to the street, followed by her husband, who began to fear some serious difficulty.

'Call a carriage,' she continued, after they stood upon the sidewalk.

'I thought you preferred walking this morning,' he replied.

'I did; but I want a carriage now,' she answered.

'Certainly, my dear, you shall have one,' he said, motioning to a driver who sat on his carriage in front of the Irving House.

'The carriage was soon driven up, and he offered to wait upon his wife in.

'Not now,' she said. 'Then turning to the driver, she continued; pointing to Madame Montrose's carriage and horses. 'You see that carriage.'

'Yes, madam,' replied the driver, smiling, for he knew well enough whose it was.

'Follow that carriage when the woman comes out and the horses start,' she said.— 'Follow it wherever it goes if it is to the ends of the earth.'

'I will do so, madam,' he replied, politely bowing, and archly smiling.

To use a homely phrase, this driver began to smell a rat. He mistrusted from the expressions of the woman's countenance and her peculiar, excited manner, that she was jealous of her husband. And the husband's looks and actions confirmed the driver's suspicions. These hackmen are a shrewd race, and knew all the dens of iniquity in the city. Mr. Gifford was in trouble, but remained silent.

'We'll get into the carriage now, if you please,' she said, putting her foot upon the step, while her husband assisted her. 'Mind, driver,' she continued, while her foot was on the carriage step and her husband was lifting her up by the arm. 'Follow that carriage until the horses stop, and the woman gets out.'

'I will obey your orders strictly, madam,' replied the driver.

Mrs. Gifford stepped into the carriage, and her husband followed. There they sat some time waiting for Madame Thirza Montrose to come out and enter her carriage. Not a word passed between them for some minutes. The husband began to grow uneasy; for the silence was oppressive. It seemed to him it was more so than any thing she might say.— At last he broke the silence.

'My dear, what does all this mean?' he asked.

'I'm determined to know where that woman lives who smiles on you so graciously,' she replied. 'I dare say you know well enough already.'

'This is something very singular,' he said, feeling much troubled in spirit.

'Very singular, indeed!' she replied, gazing wildly at him. 'Remarkably singular! You must be greatly surprised! O, no, you never saw that woman before! Don't know where she lives! Of course not! She may have come from France for what you know! Very singular, indeed! Wonderfully strange!'

'There, my dear, for heaven's sake, do stop!' he exclaimed.

'O yes; stop! stop! stop!' she repeated. 'Yes! Stop is the word. Would to heaven you had stopped before you formed an acquaintance with that woman.'

'I know nothing about the woman,' he replied.

'Well-dressed women are not apt to smile on strange gentlemen in a public place, especially, when their wives are with them,' she replied. 'But I desire to hear no more! Don't deny again that you have no acquaintance with that woman.'

At that moment Madame Thirza Montrose came bustling out and entered her carriage amid the gaze of quite a crowd of all sorts of people, some of whom smiled and others

looked sour. Madame's carriage started off and the other followed. Not a word was said by husband or wife. Madame knew not that she was followed.

Her carriage was driven up to the door of her establishment, and she alighted. The other carriage stopped also, and Madame Montrose stood on the front steps and gazed upon it. Mr. Gifford sat well back so as not to be seen; but his wife used no such precaution. She leaned forward and looked out of the carriage window. The procuress recognized her, turned on her heel and entered the house.

'Drive on,' said Mrs. Gifford, giving the driver the street and the number where she wished to be left.

The husband remained silent, and let his wife manage in her own way. Soon the carriage stopped at their house. Mrs. Gifford paid the driver, and when she did so, she asked him if he knew that woman.

'I believe she calls herself Madame Montrose,' replied the driver, laughing. 'I think, you will not wish to make her acquaintance.'

'O, heavens. No!' she exclaimed. 'Just as I feared and expected!'

The driver cracked his whip and drove off laughing, and saying to himself. 'I reckon there'll be some pulling of caps in that house before tomorrow's sun rises. She's jealous of the old fellow, and has reason to be. I know him like a book. She has caught him now, and the fur will fly. She looks like a resolute woman. Her husband has ruined more than one young girl to my certain knowledge, and in Madame Thirza Montrose's house, too. I know one girl who has a child by him, and she will expose him and leave the child at his house. I heard her say so not three days ago. She says he has not paid her so much money as he promised her; and besides, that the old libertine promised to marry her.'

Thus thinking, this driver hurried down Broadway to his stand near the Park. Mrs. Gifford entered the house, followed by her husband. They had not long been in the house before the bell rang and a woman and child entered, the same of whom the hackman had been thinking. She came directly into the parlor where Gifford and his wife sat in moody silence. The moment this woman and child entered, his heart sunk within him, and he thought all his troubles were coming upon him at once. But he soon recovered from his embarrassment, and nerved himself for the occasion.

'What do you wish for?' asked Mrs. Gifford, addressing the young woman and gazing into her melancholy face.

'Wouldn't you like to have a child?' inquired the young mother; first turning to the wife and then to the husband.

'O, no, I can't have the trouble of young children,' replied the wife; not dreaming of the developments that were about to be made.

'Wouldn't you like to have one?' asked the mother, addressing Gifford.

'O, no, not unless my wife is willing,' he replied, in as pleasant a voice and manner as he could assume.

'It is a very pretty baby,' said the young mother. 'It looks very much like you, don't you think it does. It has your eyes exactly.'

And she carried the child to him, and sat it down in his lap. Mrs. Gifford at first thought the woman was crazy. He gently motioned her away; but she succeeded in depositing the child in his lap. While he held the child his cheeks grew pale and his heart beat as if it would burst its narrow bounds. His wife noticed his agitation, and hardly knew what to make of it. The thought had not yet struck her that it was his child; but when she saw his cheeks blanch and his

limbs tremble, a suspicion rose in her heart. It was however, not a very strong suspicion, still it gave her much disquietude.

'What means all this?' anxiously inquired Mrs. Gifford.

'The father now holds his own child,' said the young mother. 'He seduced me on a solemn promise of marriage. O, my God! I wish I had never seen him!'

Mrs. Gifford shrieked, and sank upon a sofa, and the young mother rushed from the house.

'She's crazy!' he exclaimed, rushing after her with the child in his arms.

She had traveled some distance before he overtook her.

'Here, for God's sake, take the child,' he said, holding out the infant in the most imploring attitude. 'Take the child, and here's money, too. I will support you! I will do any thing!'

'How much money?' she asked, gazing upon a roll of bank notes.

'There are more than a hundred dollars, I believe,' he replied. 'Take the child and I will give you more when you need it.'

She took the child and money; not wishing to part with her babe, provided she could have the means to support it.

'Now go back to my house and say you were crazy, and I will call upon you to-morrow and give you another hundred dollars,' he said.

'God knows I have committed sins enough already, and I will not add lying to the catalogue,' she replied. 'No, no, I cannot. I will not utter falsehoods to shield you! You deserve all, and more too. The way of the transgressor is hard. Pay me more money soon, or I will appear to you again in your own house!'

She turned away and was soon out of his sight. He returned to the house and found his wife in great agony. He told her the

crazy woman had taken back her child: but she would not be reconciled. Her nerves had received a shock which completely deranged her whole system, and drove her into a hysterical fit. Some hours elapsed before she became rational. He partially succeeded in making her believe the young mother was crazy. This old libertine began to reap the fruits of his iniquity.

CHAPTER XIV.

A girl in distress. Bitter reflections. A corrupt woman. Trouble thickens. The meeting of the seducer and seduced. Revenge. A guilty conscience, &c.

'It is strange that Jasper does not return,' said Emma Doty to the woman in whose house she boarded. 'He said he should not be gone but three or four days, and now it is more than a week.'

'I think it is strange, too,' gruffly replied the woman. 'I can't keep you much longer if he don't pay up your board bill more promptly.'

'O, my God, I wish I had never left my father's house and come to this city,' exclaimed Emma, in the bitterness of her grief. 'And I wish, too, I had never seen Jasper Gifford! Do you think he will marry me before my child is born? He has promised many times, but he keeps putting it off!'

'Young men's promises now-a-days are often like ropes of sand, easily broken,' said the woman. 'My opinion is he will never marry you.'

'But you told me when I first came to your house, he was a good young man, and would certainly marry me!' said Emma, while the tears rolled down her fair cheeks, and her bosom heaved with violent emotions.

'I might have thought so then, but don't think so now,' replied this wicked woman.—

'He has probably seen a girl he likes better.

Young men often change their minds, especially here in the city, where there are so many beautiful girls.'

Emma made no reply, but sat down in deep thought. The tears ceased to flow from her eyes, and the spirit of revenge had taken possession of her soul. She had long suspected her seducer, and now her suspicions were confirmed. At this time but one thought occupied her mind, and that thought was revenge upon him who had made her what she was. 'Old Sal,' this woman's familiar name left the room. The reader need not be told that this woman kept a house of assignation, not a stone's throw from Bond Street.

Emma Doty had resided in the city nearly three years, and before she became acquainted with young Gifford, the 'very spawn and spudikins' of his father; her employment was vest-making. Her parents resided in Connecticut, and were poor, but respectable. Emma possessed more than an ordinary share of personal beauty, and in temperament and disposition, was lively and animated. She was naturally proud, and thought much of a good name as well as of beauty, and aspired to wed a husband who was wealthy. Gifford, she believed, was the only son of a wealthy broker, and a good-hearted fellow. He made her believe he not only loved her sincerely, but would also make a wife of her. It was more than six months after he became attentive to her before she fell, and then she expected to become his wife in a very few weeks. After she had passed that Rubicon, he persuaded her to leave her employment and become a boarder with Old Sal, as the Bowery b'hoys always called her. When she first went there to board, she was not aware of the character of the house, had she been, she would never have consented to such an arrangement. She had been in this house some four or five months, and lost her character which she once prized so highly, and

knew not how to leave. Her hope of marriage with her seducer kept her heart from breaking, and sustained her in her peculiar situation. She longed for the day to come when she could leave that house and call Gifford her husband. But, alas! that day was far off, and she now began to think so. She held out as long as she could, and trusted the young man whom she loved. He had not visited her for a long time, at least the time seemed long to her, and hope began to die in her heart.

The vile keeper of the house had for once spoken the truth, and that truth had fallen like an ice-bolt upon her heart. She now sat and meditated revenge instead of looking for happy days with the man she loved.

This abandoned woman had more than once intimated to her that her personal beauty would insure her a good living, even if Gifford did not fulfil his promises of marriage; but she scorned such intimation, and hatred her who made them. She would die before she would live the life of a wanton, and often told this heartless woman so. Old Sal had long been satisfied that Emma Doty could not be driven to such a degraded and corrupt life as she lived herself, and hence their friendship and intimacy grew less every day.

Emma desired the return of Gifford, because she hoped he would get another boarding place for her, if he did not immediately marry her. She had no suspicion that he had gone into the country for the purpose of forming an alliance with another girl, if she had she might have committed some desperate act before he went.

Gifford had been in the city some days, but had neglected to call upon her, still he intended to visit her and prepare her mind gradually for a final separation. Soon after Old Sal left the room, he entered the house, but Emma did not know it. The mistress took him into a private parlor.

'I'm glad to see you come at last,' said Old Sal. 'I've been talking with Emma and given her some idea of what she may expect.'

'I'm glad to hear that,' he replied. 'I must see her and prepare her mind for the worst.'

'Well, it is high time to do something, for she will become a mother before many weeks, in my opinion,' she replied. 'You're aware that her board bill has been running up now nearly two weeks over the month.'

Gifford was silent and thoughtful for a few moments. He was not so flush with funds as he used to be; for gambling operations had bled him freely of late, and his father began to grow more and more penurious.—The old libertine's sins had made many severe drafts upon his purse, and, consequently, the young libertine must be somewhat curtailed in his expenses.

'I suppose you can pay me to-day as well as any time,' she continued. 'My rent becomes due this week, and business of late has not been very flourishing.'

'I have not any money now, but I will pay you some before the week expires,' he replied.

He uttered a falsehood; for he had been at work that very day raising funds for gambling purposes, but he thought he had none to spare. He hoped, however, he should win back the coming evening what he had lost, and then would pay up Emma's board bill.—Fatal delusion! Such hopes are like the spider's web!

'You must pay me, or I shall turn the girl out of doors,' she said.

'O, yes, you shall certainly be paid,' he said. 'Be not alarmed about that.'

'I'm not particularly alarmed, but I have lost a good many such debts, and you know a burnt child dreads the fire,' she said, smiling.

'I understand,' he replied. 'I'm good for that amount, I reckon.'

'No doubt of that, but you let me have ten dollars, no more.'

He paid her ten dollars promptly, and then went up into his room. She was taken by surprise.

'Why, Jasper!' she exclaimed. 'I didn't expect to see you to-day!'

'I was gone longer in the country than I anticipated,' he replied. 'How do you get along?'

'O, I can hardly tell you!' she replied. 'I began to be quite discouraged. I should like to change my boarding house. The woman grows cross every day, and grumbles about your not paying her promptly.'

'I have just paid her some,' he replied. 'I think you had better remain here.'

'How long?' she anxiously inquired, fastening her dark blue eyes upon him in a fixed gaze, as if she would read the inmost thoughts of his heart.

'Indeed, I can't exactly say now,' he replied, casting his eyes down.

'Jasper Gifford!' she said, in a firm, clear, distinct voice. 'You must fix upon some no very distant day for our marriage! You have been promising me for months, and it seems we are just as far off from that day as we were when we first began to talk about it.'

'You know, Emma, that I dare not displease my father,' he replied.

'And then you will never marry, if it should displease your father!' she said.

'I haven't said that exactly,' he answered.

'Exactly!' she repeated. 'I don't like that word! There seems to be some mystery buried under it. Why do you keep saying "exactly"? Speak out plainly and let me know my fate at once! I fear, greatly fear, that you have been deceiving me with false promises! I have never spoken so plainly before, but my feelings are such I could not restrain myself. Speak, and tell me if my fears are well-founded? I'm better prepared to hear the worst now than I ever shall be hereafter!'

'I have long intended to consult my father, but have dreaded the task lest I might find him violently opposed to our marriage,' he replied.

'And will he be less opposed the longer you put it off?' she asked, with flashing eyes.

'I presume not, Emma,' he replied. 'I will consult him very soon.'

'And suppose he objects?' she anxiously inquired.

'Indeed, I cannot tell, exactly,' he replied, looking very serious.

'Exactly, again!' she repeated, in a voice that made him tremble. 'For heaven's sake, don't use that word in my hearing again!—It suggests ideas that I cannot endure! Have you no mind of your own? Must it be as your father shall dictate? If so, why did you not consult him before you made me any promises? Answer me that question, and do not utter the word exactly!'

The question was a home one, and he knew not how to answer it. There was a dead silence for some moments which was exceedingly oppressive to both.

'Can you not answer the question?' she inquired, after a long pause.

'I hope he will finally consent to our union,' he replied. 'I shall plead with him hard to do so; but if he will not, and I should wed you, he would cut me off from his property and we should be poor.'

'But can't you do any thing to earn a living?' she asked. 'I supported myself, and sent money to my parents before I saw you! I can work again, and I am willing to work. We could get a living and lay up money every year, if we were industrious and prudent. And we should be more happy in some honest business than we could be in living upon your father's money.'

'Jasper Gifford!' she continued, after another pause. 'I fear you are making yourself miserable in drinking and gambling. With

pain I have recently noticed that these vices are more and more getting the mastery of you.'

'How do you happen to be so wise upon that point?' he asked, feeling guilty, yet indignant at being thus rebuked by a girl, whom he was about to cast off as a plaything he was tired of.'

'The effects of drinking are seen in your face, and I have often heard you speak of winning money, but never of your losses at the gaming table,' she promptly replied.

'Well, I do occasionally gamble some, but I have yet to learn that you have any right to rebuke me,' he answered, manifesting a kind of haughty independence which was very far from pleasing her.

He sat some time in silence, considering whether it would be better to cast her off entirely at this time, or wait for one more interview. Finally, he concluded, as he had not paid for her board, he would postpone the matter to some future, though no very distant, day. He did feel prepared to have an open rupture with her on that occasion, for several reasons, which it is not necessary to record upon these pages of City Life.

'Jasper Gifford!' she continued, 'I don't know what will be the result of our connection thus far! Strange emotions are agitating my heart—emotions such as I never felt before. Know you not that I inherited from nature a proud spirit? And further, do you not know that giving birth to an illegitimate child sinks the mother's name to degradation and contempt? Can I bear such reproach and contumely from an unfeeling world?—How can I endure the infant's cry, when it can never pronounce the endearing name of father? O, my God! Why was I born to so much trouble? Hast Thou made men who care not for their own offspring, when the beasts of the field and the birds of the air so carefully watch over, feed, and protect their young?'

She buried her face in her hands and wept. While weeping, the spirit of revenge seized her, and she dried up her tears. — Uncovering her face, she gazed upon him with a wild look, and her eyes sparkled with an unwonted fire. She was about to speak, when her only thought was revenge; but she checked herself, and remained silent. But he needed not the aid of her tongue to tell him of the terrible emotions that agitated her soul, for her looks were more eloquent than words.

His feelings were wrought upon, and his conscience again began to sting him. He wished he had never seen her; and his thoughts ran on the infant to be born. A trembling seized him, and he even thought for a moment on marriage; but that thought passed rapidly away, and his soul was a moral waste.

'You say you will consult your father?' she said, still faintly hoping that all yet might be well.

'I will do so,' he replied, in a tremulous voice, feeling for the moment that he might do so; but a brief reflection convinced him that he should never name the subject to his father.

'Well, leave me now, and see how faithful you will be to your promises,' she said. 'I would be alone, and desire to say no more now.'

He departed, leaving her to her own terrible reflections. He went below, and held a few minutes' conversation with the mistress, and then passed into the street. In going down Broadway, he met James Hamilton, the accomplished and deceitful blackleg.

'How are ye?' asked Jim, with a broad grin on his lantern-jawed face.

'Not any the better for you,' replied Gifford, feeling the loss of his money.

'Luck is better than science,' said Jim. 'I've thinking it over that fortune is a fickle jade, and may turn agin me, and so I'd best give up the cards.'

'Don't be a coward while you're in funds,' said Gifford. 'I expect this night to win back my money.'

'That's what I'm afraid of,' replied the pretended Yankee; 'but I don't mind trying on't once more.'

They separated; and each passed his own way.

CHAPTER XVII.

A Family Scene. The drunkard's sleep that knows no waking. The Jury of Inquest. A common verdict. The burial. The removal of the family. The Lovers. The gambler's passion.

'HUSBAND! husband!' said Mrs. Austin, shaking him who had sworn to love, cherish, and protect her, and endeavoring to wake him from sleep. 'It is morning, and the sun is up, and Mr. Marshall expects you to work for him to-day. Come, do get up and stir yourself. O, how I regret that you purchased that jug of rum last night. I believe it was bad liquor, for I feel very bad in the head and stomach. Come, it is high time to rise!'

The poor inebriate was upon the floor, apparently in a sound sleep.

The children gathered round their mother, and the youngest were crying for food.

'How sound father sleeps!' said the eldest daughter, bending over his prostrate form, and brushing back the tangled hair from his forehead. 'O, mother, how cold father's forehead feels!'

'Cold, child!' repeated the mother, placing her hand upon her husband's forehead, and starting back.

'O, mother, what is the matter?' asked another daughter.

The agitated mother made no reply to her child, but seized her husband's hand, raised it, and suddenly relaxed her hold, when his

hand fell heavily to his side. She was now convinced that her voice could never wake him again! A sleep had fallen upon him that knows no waking. He was dead!

The fatherless children stood around their mother, and tremblingly hanging upon the skirts of her dress.

It was a sad and mournful spectacle to behold!

Through the kindly influence of Mrs. Goodyear, Mr. Austin had been employed by a gentleman to do a job of work for him; and for some days the poor man had been quite sober, and so had his wife. But his raging thirst called aloud for liquor; and that call he did not resist. The evening previous to the morning of his death, he had brought home a gallon of such liquor as is sold to the poor drunkards of the city by selfish, heartless, unfeeling grocers. He drank very freely of it—so freely, that his physical frame could not bear the maddening draughts, and his spirit took its flight to another world.—His wife, too, had drank of it, but not to such excess as he had.

Mrs. Goodyear had become much interested in this family, and indulged the hope that she might be instrumental in their temporal salvation. In Mrs. Austin and her children she felt a deep interest. Her hopes were strong that she could save the wife from the drunkard's grave, and no pains were spared to save the husband, also.

But the strongest sympathies of this good woman were enlisted in behalf of the oldest daughter of these drunken parents. Aware of the terrible fate that awaited this young and beautiful girl, she employed all the means within her power to ferret her out, and save her from that degraded life to which she feared she was exposed. Several policemen had already been engaged in this worthy enterprise, and other gentlemen whose sympathies were enlisted, also lent their influence and aid.

On the morning of this drunkard's death, Mrs. Goodyear called to see how the family were getting along, and her surprise at seeing the dead man upon the floor, may be better imagined than described. She was glad, however, if such a calamity must happen, that she was present to comfort the widow and the fatherless. A Coroner's inquest was called, and the not uncommon verdict, '*Death from Intemperance*,' was given by the jury; and the earthly remains of the poor inebriate were covered with the cold clods of the earth.

Mrs. Goodyear sought for another house where the widow and her children might live more comfortably, away from the scenes and associations connected with the tenement they then occupied.

A decent house was soon found, and the widow and her children occupied it. Mrs. Goodyear took especial pains to guard the poor widow from the temptations to strong drink. Now her husband was dead, this benevolent lady indulged strong hopes that the widow would never suffer another drop of intoxicating liquor to pass her lips. Through the charity of several benevolent persons, Mrs. Austin's new abode was decently furnished, her children well clothed and sent to school. The mother was an ingenious woman, and could turn her hand to many useful employments.

But we must leave the widow and her children under the supervision of the benevolent Mrs. Goodyear, and turn to other scenes in this drama of human life.

Young Belknap grew more and more attached to the accomplished gambler, Tyron. He relied upon this villain's skill to assist him in winning back the large amount of money he had already lost at the gaming table.

Supposing that Tryon had lost as much as he had, and placing implicit confidence in

his skill, and even in his honesty so far as he was concerned, this young man was completely in this scoundrel's power. Belknap had stepped his foot in so far that he thought he could not take his back track. His mother, too, was much interested in Tryon, who had visited her the third time, and insinuated himself into her good graces. We must, however, do this really good widow the justice to record the fact, that she began seriously to suspect that her son was contracting some bad habits. And the young lady, also, to whom he was engaged, Emily Evans, began to suspect her lover of the vice of drinking, if not that of gambling. The former vice telegraphs its effects in the flesh, much sooner than the latter one; and Emily saw its marks, and trembled for the consequences. She was a pure minded girl and quite conservative in her notions. Some young ladies of her acquaintance who were rather more liberal in their views and practices, occasionally indulging in wine, and living high, often accused her of being fanatical and ultra. Emily always treated her fair accusers with much kindness and respect, saying to them that it was more safe to be puritanical than too latitudinarian in one's principles.

Emily was a strong-minded girl, and generally viewed things in their true light, and not through a false medium. She belonged to what may be termed in common parlance, 'an orthodox family.' Beautiful, and highly accomplished, her society was sought after by a large circle of friends and acquaintances. More than one young gentleman who was engaged in theological studies and preparing for the pulpit, had sought her hand; but having formed an attachment to young Belknap soon after she reached her teens, she uniformly rejected all offers, however splendid, attractive and promising; and religiously cherished her first love.

It has already been made sufficiently clear to the reader's mind; that the widow Belknap was also conservative, if not decidedly puritanical, in her notions both by education and habit. Young Belknap, too, had been educated in the same school; but certain temptations were strong beyond his power of resistance. Unlike young Gifford, he was not naturally corrupt and reckless, but he cherished a good conscience in many respects. True, a passion for gambling had seized upon his soul, and began its work of corruption and demoralization; still there were many things he would not do from the very fact that he knew them to be wrong.—The vice of gambling had insensibly stole upon him, and he endeavored to quiet his conscience and make himself believe it was no very flagrant moral wrong to win money from a gambler, whose business was to rob others.

When Belknap commenced this vice, he did not expect to advance very far or plunge very deep in it; but his severe losses had whetted his appetite and increased his passion for the game. It would have been the same with him if he had been successful, and won large amounts; so in either case no young man was safe. When this vice once fastens upon the soul, and becomes a passion, it is hard to break the chain that binds, whether one loses largely or makes great gains.

One evening when Belknap was on his way to the gambling hells, in Park Row, he called upon his beloved Emily to spend a short time. He had often done so before, but the time was when he delighted to pass whole evenings with his betrothed, and recently he always seemed in a hurry to leave, especially when he made an evening call. Emily had noticed these facts, and pondered well upon them. Her spirit was troubled, and her disquietude increased at every such

interviews. Having called and tarried about a half an hour, he began to look at his watch and act as if he were uneasy. During the time he had tarried, his thoughts were somewhat scattered, his conversation desultory, and his spirit restless. Emily noted all this, and sought for the causes.

'It seems to me, George, you are quite restless and uneasy,' she remarked. 'I fear my society is not so agreeable as I once fancied it was.'

'You do me injustice in that,' he replied. 'I feel no abatement of my affections for you, and I trust that you will never again thus accuse me.'

'I would not wrongfully accuse you; but why is it your evening visits are so much shortened of late?' she inquired, looking him full in the face.

The question was a hard one and took him by surprise; but he was fruitful in expedients and by no means destitute of tact and talent.

'Indeed, Emily,' he replied, smiling—'I fear you do not take fair note of time. I am sure I do not much curtail my visits.'

'George Belknap!' she replied, in clear, emphatic tones of voice. 'The fact can neither be disguised nor disproved that your evening visits have recently been much curtailed. You know my principles and my views upon a great variety of subjects; and, especially, upon those of a moral nature; and therefore I trust you will not be offended when I express to you my honest fears that you are not so strictly conservative as you once were!'

'I know not how you arrive at such conclusions,' he added. 'I trust you do not suspect me of being faithless to you, or that any other girl has even a corner in my heart. If you do, great injustice is done me.'

'No such things were in my thoughts,' she replied. 'There are offences besides those

to which you have alluded; offences which no art can conceal, and such as show their marks upon the person indulging them.'

'I'm not sure I know what you mean, or to what you allude,' he replied.

'I allude to the vice of drinking intoxicating liquors,' she answered. 'Recently I have smelt the fumes of such liquors in your breath; and besides, the marks are upon your face. You very well know my opinion upon this subject, for you have often heard me express it. There is no true safety for any one except upon the Rock of Total Abstinence. He who drinks even moderately may become a drunkard; but he who tastes not can never be a drunkard. I presume you will not attempt to controvert these positions.'

'I do not,' he replied. 'But I fear you magnify moderate drinking. It does not follow, because moderate drinkers may become drunkards that they all do reach those depths of degradation.'

'True, it does not always follow, but that consideration furnishes no argument against being on the safe side,' she promptly answered. 'You know my horror of a drunkard, and especially, of a drunken husband. Mrs. Goodyear, has recently taken under her care a widow and five little daughters, lovely children, whose husband died suddenly in a drunken fit. Despair and grief had driven her to the intoxicating cup, also; but the poor woman I trust will be saved through the kindness of the friends of total abstinence. I cheerfully contributed my mite for the relief of this family, and intend to make them a visit shortly. Mrs. Goodyear is much interested in them, and says she has never seen finer looking girls in any family than these are. She is anxious for me to see them, and I intend to do so, ere long. O, George, if that unfortunate man had pledged himself to total abstinence, how much human suffering would have been prevented!'

'All very true, Emily,' he replied. 'I have as high an opinion of Mrs. Goodyear as you have, and greatly approve of her efforts to relieve the suffering and oppressed.' He then drew from his pocket a gold eagle and gave, and continued.—'There, take that, and use it for the benefit of those fatherless girls as you may judge most proper.'

She cheerfully received the donation and heartily thanked him therefor. Now this young man was not destitute of sympathy for the distressed. His heart was tender, and he had been educated in works of charity and kindness; but the vice of gambling was drying up the generous fountains of his heart, and spreading a mildew over his soul. Yet he was not too far gone to be reformed, if influences strong enough could be brought to bear upon him. Something startling, and even terrible, was necessary, however, to give him an impulse in the right direction. A still, small voice moves many, but thunderings are necessary for others.

After he gave her the gold eagle and she had thanked him for the same, they were silent and thoughtful for some minutes. He had engaged to meet young Gifford, Tryon, and the Yankee, the latter of whom had won all the money, although Tryon pocketed one half of it. Headed by Tryon, they were determined to make heavy draughts upon the Yankee's accumulated funds. There were three vices of which young Belknap was now guilty, gambling, drinking, and lying, but the former vice was the father of the other two.

After sitting some time in silence, and while Emily was rolling the gold eagle in her soft palms, and busily engaged with her own thoughts and reflections, the young lover again drew out his watch, and noted the time.

'I declare,' he said; 'I have engaged to meet an English gentleman this evening, and must be going.'

'I have noticed that you were anxious to leave; and, perhaps, I ought not to have detained you so long,' she replied, smiling; 'However, I hope the conversation we have had this evening will result in good to both of us.'

'I trust so,' he said, bidding her good bye, and hurrying to the gaming table where the others had arrived before him, and were deeply engaged in the game. As he entered the room, he met the two gamblers, Skinner and Camp, who urged him to play with them; but he declined, informing them that he was engaged with another party.

These scoundrels were much provoked to think that their intended victim had partially slipped through their fingers; still they indulged the hope of having some future opportunity of bleeding him.

He was soon seated at the table, and much excited. Gifford had won a few dollars by the gracious permission of Tryon, and his accomplice. This corrupt young scoundrel had forged a check in his father's name, and raised some two thousand dollars upon it, in the hope of winning enough to take it up before it became due. The game commenced in good earnest, and these tyros won some money, and became much excited with the game and the liquor they drank; but before morning they were stripped of nearly all the money they had. The gamblers permitted them to win some near the close of the game.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The scene changes. The breakfast. The folly of some parents. The Quakeress. The Irish maid servant. The alarm.—The letter. The elopement, &c.

THE curtain rises and the scene discloses Colonel Walton, his wife, and Aunt Rachel Read, at the breakfast table in a house on the bank of the glorious Hudson River.

'Why don't Agnes come down to her breakfast?' asked Col. Walton, addressing his wife.

'Indeed, I don't know,' replied his wife. 'I suppose she heard the bell.'

'She is usually pretty prompt at her morning meal,' he said. 'She is not sick, I hope.'

'I would send Mary up to see,' said Aunt Rachel. 'She may be unwell; I thought last evening she looked rather sober.'

'She has looked sober for some time, and all on account of that saucy Frank Homer,' said the Colonel. 'I conclude she has no other sickness than lying awake thinking of him, and then sleeping in the morning. I did hope she would have forgotten the fellow long ago.'

'She seems determined not to forget him,' said Mrs. Walton. 'I believe more than half of it is her stubborn will.'

'I think so, too,' he replied. 'I didn't once believe Agnes would have thus resisted her parents. Of late she has grown very stubborn.'

'Strange the girl should be so foolish!'—said the wife. 'I suppose young Gifford will be here soon. O, if she would consent to wed him she might live in a style becoming her rank and condition!'

'I think she will finally consent now that Homer has not seen her so long,' said the Colonel. 'Perhaps she will now fancy Gifford when she sees him again.'

'In my opinion, thee is very much mistaken,' said Aunt Rachel, sipping her coffee, and deliberately setting her cup upon the table. 'Agnes is of a different make. I have always told thee that the more thee attempts to force her into a marriage with that young man, the more she will hate him.'

'I know you have always been singing that song,' said the Colonel. 'But I reckon you will find you don't know so much about

girl's hearts as you think you do. Agnes will come to it yet, and laugh at her past folly.'

'Never while she breathes!' said Aunt Rachel, very emphatically. 'Depend upon it, Agnes believes Gifford has a wicked heart; and surely she is too good herself to love a young man of whom she entertains such an opinion.'

'And you have encouraged her in that opinion, he said, manifesting some little anger towards the good Quakeress, as he had often done before when the same subject was on the tapis.

'Well, if I have, thee can't accuse me of being dishonest; for I really believe the young man is a rogue, and a very great one, too,' replied Rachel. 'There is something in the expression of his face that makes me shudder whenever I see him.'

'You are remarkably wise in your knowledge of human hearts and faces he said.—'I think you had better establish a school to teach persons how to read the disposition by the expression of the face. No doubt, you could get many scholars. It would be about equal to fortune-telling.'

'Thee can make what fun thee pleases; but be not surprised if young Gifford turns out a wicked young man,' replied Rachel.—'Thee thinks a great deal more of his father than I do. He looks to me as if he was a rogue, too.'

'Well, I confess, you carry matters to a very great pitch this morning,' he said. 'I wonder who will next fall before your searching eyes? One would suppose you had the power of gazing through the hearts of persons and seeing all the workings of the soul. I wonder you have not been called a witch long before now. If they hung witches in these days your neck would really be in danger.'

'Go on,' said Rachel, smiling. 'Thee could always talk when thee could find any thing to say.'

'Mary,' said Mrs. Walton, calling her Irish maid.

'Here, marm,' replied the maid, bustling into the room, with her red face and stalwart frame. 'Was you after wanting me?'

'Yes, go up to Agnes' chamber and see why she don't come down to breakfast,' replied the mistress. 'Tell her the table will soon be cleared away.'

'Yes marm,' replied the maid, hurrying up stairs on her mission.

She had not been gone but a few moments before she came running down stairs, and before she reached the bottom stair she blundered and fell sprawling upon the floor. The noise was great and the mistress arose.

'Sit still, wife,' said the Colonel. 'That girl is always stumbling. She will break her neck one of these days. She grows fat and clumsy.'

The Irish girl scrambled up as soon as possible and rushed into the breakfast room with her eyes sticking out of her head and her hands flapping before her.

'O, mistress, Agnes ain't in her room, at all, at all, and I don't see her any where!' exclaimed this Irish maid. 'O, dear, I'm afraid some robber has carried her off.'

'Stop such blarney as that,' said Colonel Walton, rising from the table and hurrying up stairs, closely followed by his wife, while Rachel sat and reflected upon the affair like a true philosopher. The mother hurried in to the chamber and examined the bed.

'The bed is not tumbled!' she exclaimed. 'What can all this mean? She has not slept here to-night, that's certain! She came up to bed at the usual time!'

'Sure enough, what does it mean?' anxiously inquired the husband, examining all parts of the room, and even looking under the bed in his agitation, while his wife opened a clothes-press.

'Gracious heavens!' she exclaimed; 'her small trunk is not here, and some of her best

dressess are gone! Aunt Rachel! Aunt Rachel! Come here!

Aunt Rachel, hearing the call, hurried up stairs, fearing the dead body of Agnes might be found. The Colonel, too, rushed into the clothes' press, by his wife in great agitation.

'What is the matter?' asked Aunt Rachel, hurrying into the room almost out of breath. 'What does thee see?'

'We don't see Agnes, and her trunk and some of her silk dresses are gone,' replied the agitated mother. 'What under heavens can it all mean?'

The Irish maid now blundered into the room, breathing like a steam engine and gazing wildly about with her eyes as big as saucers.

'Poor Agnes is not dead at all, at all, is she?' inquired the maid, in a choked voice.

'Heaven only knows!' replied her mistress.

'Please, marm, shall I be after going for the doctor?' asked the maid; supposing they had found Agnes in the clothes-press in a dying condition.

'Thee need not trouble thyself about a doctor,' said Aunt Rachel. 'Agnes is not here.'

'No, no, she has gone!' exclaimed the agitated mother.

'Now I think of it, I heard steps on the stairs in the dead of the night, or I dreamt it,' said the maid. 'And I heard a carriage and horse's feet at a distance.'

'Gracious heavens!' exclaimed Mrs. Walton. 'Has she run away with that Frank Homer? Do, husband, go over and see, if the fellow is at home!'

'What do you think, Rachel?' anxiously inquired the Colonel.

'I think Agnes would never run away with Gifford,' replied Rachel.

'And do you think she has with that Frank Homer?' he asked; beginning seriously to fear such was the fact.

'It may be so,' replied Rachel. 'Their attachment to each other was very strong Agnes has suffered a good deal, and I have been fearing something would happen. I have always told thee that Agnes could not be driven.'

'I'll scour the country and bring her back!' he exclaimed.

'Thee must remember that Agnes is of age,' said Rachel.

'Of age?' repeated the Colonel, in much agitation. 'Yes, she is old enough not to elope and bring disgrace on the family!'

'I think as much,' said Mrs. Walton.—

'O, it is dreadful!'

'I guesses she has gone with that young man; for I have carried letters for them both, several times,' said the maid.

'Carried letters!' exclaimed the Colonel, almost frothing at the mouth, he was in such a rage. 'Carried letters! And why did not you let me know it, you Irish blunderhead?'

'Not a blunderhead, intirely, for I carried the letters safe, and gave 'em into their own hands,' said the maid.

'Death and fury! why didn't you inform me?' he asked, stamping his foot upon the carpet, and gazing wildly upon her.

'Cause Agnes told me not to tell nobody, and can't I be after keeping a secret as well as any body?' replied the maid.—

'And sure, I could keep the young mistress' secret when she asked me, and gave me money, too.'

'There, thee begins to see the fruit of thy conduct,' said Rachel to the Colonel.

'True lovers are not so easily kept apart as thee may imagine.'

'And surely sich things often happen in the ould counthrie,' said the maid. 'And among fine gintleman, too.'

'Stop your blarney!' exclaimed the excited Colonel, walking violently about the room, and snapping his thumb and finger.

'Thee had better be calm,' said Rachel. 'Raving can do no good now. A lock on a stable door does no good after the horse is stolen. My advice to thee is, to let them go, and not attempt to hunt them. No doubt they are married and many miles from here.'

'Well, I confess, you give us very great consolation in our affliction,' he said.

'I only tell thee what I believe to be the truth,' replied Rachel.

'Do go, husband and inquire if that villain of a Frank has gone away,' said the wife.

'And sure he's no villain at all, but a fine gintleman, for he gave me money too, when I brought him a letter from Agnes,' said the maid.

'Go down stairs?' said Mrs. Walton.— 'We don't want you here.'

'Yes, marm,' replied the maid, obeying the command.

Ah, here's a letter on her bureau, one, perhaps, she forgot to take with her,' said the Colonel, seizing the letter and opening it. 'It is to us, and from Agnes!'

He read as follow:—

'DEAR PARENTS,—I suppose you will be surprised, and perhaps angry when I inform you that at twelve o'clock last night, I took a small trunk with a few articles from my wardrobe and placed myself under the protection of Frank Homer, whom I love and intend to live with, if God spares my life. I have implied confidence in his honesty, fidelity, talents, and capacity to support me as his wife. It was hard for me to take this course, but there was no other alternative. You were determined to force me into a marriage with a man whom I greatly dislike. To that I never could consent. I believe his heart is corrupt, and I know his person was always disagreeable to me. I hope you will pardon this act in a daughter

who sincerely loves her parents. Heaven knows I was always willing to obey you in all reasonable commands; but when you commanded me to wed a man whom I hate and despise, I felt it to be my duty to disobey you. I have done contrary to your wishes often expressed; but my own happiness demanded the sacrifice, and I have made it. You must know that it has cost me many a pang thus to resolve and carry my resolution into effect. I have done it. Ere you read this, I shall be the wife of Frank Homer; and may heaven shower its choicest blessings on us all. AGNES.'

'That settles the question,' said Aunt Rachel, after the Colonel had finished reading the letter. 'Agnes has written just as she felt. I always told thee—'

'I always told thee!' repeated the Colonel, interrupting the good Quakeress, before she had finished the sentence. 'I always told thee! Those words are eternally rung in my ears when trouble comes, just as if you had the gift of prophecy.'

I pretend to no such gifts,' replied Aunt Rachel. 'But I think I know the disposition of Agnes. She's a good-hearted girl as ever breathed, and always obedient to her parents in all reasonable commands, as she has written; but thee did not know her resolution and moral courage when pushed to unreasonable extremities. Thee has now learnt the power of her mind.'

'The stubbornness of her will you had better said,' he replied.

Thee wrongs thy daughter, and the time is not far distant when thee will say so,' answered Rachel.

'Another prophecy!' he said, manifesting much impatience.

'Thee may call it what thee pleases,' replied Rachel. 'Thee will find I have spoken the truth to thee, and nothing but the truth. I always told thee—but I won't repeat that offensive phrase to thee.'

'No, don't,' he sharply replied. 'I'll follow the runaways to the ends of the earth, but I will find them!'

'And what good will that do thee?'—asked Rachel. 'Suppose thee finds them legally married, what can thee then do?'

'Bring home the truant girl,' he replied, feeling quite angry with the Quakeress, for thus opposing him at every turn.

The conversation did not continue much longer. These parents were determined not to be convinced of their folly by any argument which Aunt Rachel could offer. The Colonel resolved to pursue the runaways, whether the law or Gospel would justify him or not.

CHAPTER XIX.

Scene in the forest. The newly married couple. The log house. The farm.—Prospects ahead. City and country compared. Legal opinions. The broker and his baby. The surprise.

'WHAT beautiful birds those are, and how tame they be?' said Agnes to Frank Homer, her husband. 'What is the name of them?'

'Crossbills,' he replied. 'They are so named from the fact of the points of their bills crossing each other. They live here in the forests through the very long, cold winters.'

'I cannot see what they can get to feed on,' she said.

'Instinct tells them where they can best find a living,' he replied. 'Such creatures seldom suffer for want of food. He who created, guards and protects them. Their bills are crossed for wise purposes, no doubt. They probably feed on insects which are in a torpid state, and found in the bark of trees.'

'O, see, there are some larger birds!' she said.

'Yes, and they are called the "venison bird,"' he replied. 'They are a kind of hawk, and feed on meat, if they can find it. They are very tame and come close to you, if you had some meat to show them.'

'They don't appear to be so musical as the little crossbills,' she said.

'No, these don't sing much, but the crossbills are very musical in the winter,' he answered. 'They make quite as sweet music as the Canary birds. You now perceive the forest has charms as well as the city.'

'Indeed, I do,' she answered. 'I admire the native unbroken forests, or at least, I think I should, if I could travel through them.'

'I always loved to be in the wood, especially at certain seasons of the year,' he said. 'This can hardly be called the forest here, because there are a good many farms cleared up. The air is very fine and invigorating in this region.'

'How much farther have we to go before we reach your land?' she asked.

'Not more than two miles,' he answered, 'and then we shall see the log house about which so much has been said.'

'Yes, father and mother have been terribly frightened about the log cabin,' she said. 'I wonder what they said, when they read the letter I left? There was great excitement, but Aunt Rachel was the most calm I dare say.'

'She is a very sensible woman,' he replied. 'She is our friend and has been through all our troubles, but thank heaven, they are over now.'

'Aunt Rachel would come and live with us, if we invited her,' said the young and happy wife.

'She shall be invited as soon as our affairs are arranged,' he replied. 'I shall repair the log house somewhat, although I shall not expend much upon it, as I shall build a new house next season. And this is very warm and comfortable.'

They rode along over rather a rough road, through thick woods, and once in a while by some good-looking farms, and reached their future home in the afternoon of the third day after their elopement and marriage.

'There's the house,' she said, as soon as they came in sight of it.

'How do you know that?' he asked, smiling.

'From your descriptions of it, and the scenery about it,' she replied. 'There is the beautiful little lake and the mountain beyond it which I have heard you speak of, and here's the stream issuing from it which we are now crossing on this log bridge.—Yes, and there are the great sugar maple trees you prize so highly, and there's the beautiful meadow where you cut the hay.'

'You are right, Agnes,' he replied. 'That is my farm, or the land I intend to make a farm of if my health is spared me. Do you think, Agnes, you can be happy on such a spot?'

'You know I can be happy with you in any place,' she replied, gazing upon the wild and romantic scenery that surrounded them upon every side. 'I am delighted with your descriptions of it.'

They now entered the neatly furnished log cabin, their home for the future.

'Why, Frank, you have fitted it up very nicely,' she said. 'I am agreeably disappointed every step I take; I shall be delighted to be the mistress of such an establishment! I wish Aunt Rachel was here, I know she would be highly gratified, every thing is so nice and cozy! She loves to see every thing in its place. How much easier it is to take care of such a house as this than it is a large fashionable one, such as father's.'

'I see, Agnes, you are determined to make the best of every thing,' he said, smiling, and imprinting a kiss upon her fair

cheek. 'There, I have kissed you in our own house, and may heaven smile on our honest endeavors to get our own livelihood.'

'Amen to that,' she replied, returning the kiss, and sweetly smiling.

We must now leave this happy couple in the full and rational enjoyment of domestic bliss, and return again to the banks of the Hudson.

Colonel Walton, in a short time after he had made the discovery of his daughter's elopement, hurried to the village to consult with Mr. Erskine, the lawyer, in whose opinions and advice he placed great confidence.

It was soon noised over the village that the elopement had taken place; and public opinion was on the side of Frank Homer, and against the conduct of the Colonel and his wife. Frank was very popular in the village, and among all who knew him; and the successful performance of this feat added to his popularity. Almost every body said he had done just right. Agnes, too, came in for her share of the public praise. She was always esteemed an excellent girl, and this elopement raised her in public estimation, especially among those who knew the character of Frank Homer, and the peculiar circumstances connected with the case.

Colonel Walton and his wife, were greatly censured for their opposition to the match; for every body knew that the opposition did not arise from any want of good character in Frank, but simply from the fact that he was not the son of a wealthy father. Money was at the bottom of their opposition, and the public knew it; and hence these parents got but precious little sympathy from any one. In fact, almost every person said, 'Frank had served them just right.' If the Colonel had not attempted to force his daughter to wed a man she could not love, he might, perhaps, have received more of

public sympathy; but that attempt had won for him public censure, and condemnation. Besides, young Gifford, so far as he was known to the people of the village and its vicinity, was exceedingly unpopular. His prosecution against Frank had sunk him very low in public opinion, and raised his rival in the estimation of almost every person.

The Colonel saw in what direction the current of public sentiment was flowing; but he was determined to resist the tide, and brave it out. He found his lawyer in his office. Mr. Erskine had the news of the elopement, and his private opinion and feeling exactly coincided with those of the public; but these limbs of the law, sometimes entertain one opinion for themselves and another for their clients. The prejudices and prepossessions of clients must often be consulted, and even cherished when the legal gentleman thereby is not likely to suffer in their professional reputation.

'Well, Squire, the devil is to pay at my house,' said the Colonel. 'I suppose, you have heard of my daughter's elopement, for I find it is already noised abroad much more than I had reason to expect.'

'I did hear such a rumor this morning,' replied the attorney.

'How in God's name it has got to every person's ears so soon, is a problem I can't solve,' said the Colonel. 'The report could not have come from any members of my family, for no person has left the house since the discovery was made, except myself.'

'That Frank Homer is a shrewd fellow, and probably had some friends in the village to whom he communicated his designs,' answered Erskine.

'It must be so, the villain!' said the Colonel. 'Well, I'm determined to pursue them at all hazards. My daughter is not to be carried off in this manner with impunity, if there is any law for me. Now, Squire, I

want you to attend to this case, and carry it to the extent of the law. Money's no object, but my rights I will have.'

'How old is your daughter?' asked the attorney, assuming a wise look.

'She will be twenty-two next April,' replied the father.

'Twenty-two!' replied the Squire, casting his eyes thoughtfully upon the floor, and making no other reply.

'Does her age make any difference?'—anxiously inquired the Colonel.

'I am strongly inclined to the opinion that when a person has arrived to the age of twenty-one years, the law recognizes him or her, as a free agent, and no longer under the power of a natural or legally appointed guardian.'

'Is it so with daughters as well as sons?' asked the Colonel.

'I'm so inclined to think, answered the Squire.

'The devil you are!' said the Colonel.—

'You and the old maid, Aunt Rachel, think precisely alike!'

'I can't help that, Colonel,' replied the lawyer. 'Aunt Rachel, is a sensible woman; but, I was not aware that she possessed such legal knowledge as you seem to attribute to her.'

'I don't think much of her legal knowledge,' said the Colonel.

'And, consequently, not much of mine,' said the attorney, smiling.

'O, no, Squire, not quite so bad as that,' replied the agitated father. 'But is there not some way by which I can make that young man suffer?'

'You can flog him and then pay your fine,' answered the lawyer, 'that is, provided you are stout enough. Frank Homer is a very athletic young man.'

'It is the law I am after,' said the Colonel, very well knowing it would not be a very safe operation for him to undertake to chastise Frank, personally.

'Well, Colonel, if you have any proof that the young man entered your house in the night time, and forcibly carried away your daughter, you can sustain an action against him,' replied the lawyer.

'Read the letter, sir,' said the Colonel; handing him the letter Agnes had left in the chamber.

The attorney read the letter very attentively, and remarked. 'This contains no proof against the young man that he entered your house clandestinely, or burglariously; but on the contrary it seems that your daughter went away voluntarily.'

'Then you see no chance for me?' said the Colonel, despondingly.

'Not without more proof than you seem to have,' replied the lawyer.

'Well, by heaven, she shall not have a shilling of my property,' said the Colonel; walking to and fro in the office, and manifesting great disquietude.

'A man has control over his own estate,' said the lawyer.

After a few more remarks between them, the Colonel started for home. When he arrived, he found Aunt Rachel reading a New York city paper, which had just been brought.

'What news?' asked the Colonel. 'The elopement is not in the papers yet; but I dare say it will be in flaming letters ere long.'

'Read that,' said Aunt Rachel, handing him the newspaper, and pointing to the following,—

'Nuts for the Wall Street gentry to crack!' A celebrated Wall St. broker, Mr. G....d, is in trouble. He had presented to him a nice baby by its own mother, in his house a short time since, and before his wife, too.—The scene was decidedly rich. The young mother placed the child in the broker's lap, and rushed out of the house; saying its own

father had got the child and must support it. The wife shrieked and went into hysterical fits on the occasion. The frantic husband rushed out into the street, without his hat, with the child in his arms, overtook the running mother; gave her a large sum of money, when she took the baby and walked off. Some thought the broker was crazy when they saw him thus chasing a woman in the street, and carrying a baby in his arms; but it turned out that there was 'method in his madness.' Wives, be on the watch for your husbands!

The Colonel read the above through carefully, and laid the paper down, trembling.

'What does thee think of that?' asked Aunt Rachel. 'I think if the broker's name had been all printed it would have read Mr. Gifford. Ah, Colonel, you must live and learn!'

'What will come next!' he exclaimed, when his wife came in. She also read the account of the Wall Street broker and the baby.

'Gracious heavens!' exclaimed the wife. 'Can it be?'

'Verily,' replied the good Quakeress.

Next to their daughter's elopement, that account of the broker surprised them most. We leave them in their excitement and wonder. Aunt Rachel was as cool as a philosopher.

CHAPTER XX.

The gambler's progress. Contrast of character. The country, again. The disappointment. Forgery. One gambler exposing the tricks of another. Old and young libertines, &c.

Time passed on, and Tyron and his accomplice had already made sad work with the fortunes of young Belknap and Gifford; winning from them large sums, and reducing

the means of the latter very low. Gifford had also forged another paper against his father to raise funds for gambling.

Belknap had lost nearly all the property he held in his own right, and began to reflect seriously upon his present condition and future prospects.

Emily Evans now suspected Belknap of the vice of gambling, and had given him one serious and touching lecture upon the subject, and threatened to discard him forever, unless he abandoned forthwith his demoralizing practices. Still he clung to Tryon as the friend who would assist him to win back the money he had lost. This scoundrel made fair promises; argued upon the subject of fortune and luck, and assured him that the time would come when fortune would turn in their favor.

This deluded gambler had made a solemn promise to himself, that he would forever abandon the vice as soon as he had won back the money he had lost. That was a fatal delusion! Tryon had also intimated to him that he should quit when he had made up his pretended losses.

Gifford was more desperate than Belknap. He had not heard of the elopement of his intended bride with his rival, and yet he hoped he should succeed through the influence of the girl's parents in becoming her husband, and handling some of her funds.

He started up the Hudson, fully resolved to hurry on his marriage with all possible despatch. He reached Colonel Walton's just after Aunt Rachel had shown the Colonel the account of the broker and the baby; Gifford had not read it. The door-bell rang, and he was ushered into the room where sat the Colonel, his wife, and Aunt Rachel in silence and sadness. He was much surprised to see them so sad, and still more, that they did not greet him with their usual cheerfulness and cordiality. The compliments of the day were hardly passed, and the thought struck the young rascal that Agnes was dead.

'Is Agnes dead?' he anxiously inquired, in a tremulous voice.

'Worse than dead!' replied the Colonel, still holding the newspaper in his hand, and having just finished his reading of the article on the broker and the baby.

'Worse than dead!' repeated the excited Gifford. 'What is it?'

'Yes, worse than dead! eloped—and married to that Frank Homer!' said the Colonel.

'Gracious God!' exclaimed the troubled dandy. 'Eloped! married?'

'Verily so,' answered Aunt Rachel.—'Thee must now hunt thee up a wife in the city. Let the young man read the newspaper, Colonel. Perhaps, he has not seen the last report from the broker's board.'

'Has there been any great change in the stock market?' he inquired, receiving the paper and reading the article Aunt Rachel pointed out.

'Thee will find a fall in morals, if not in stocks,' replied Aunt Rachel.

Gifford read the article, trembled, turned pale, and threw down the newspaper.

'Crimes cannot always be concealed from the public eye,' she continued, while the Colonel and his wife sat as motionless as statues. It is an old saying, 'murder will out.' Gifford turned on his heel, rushed out of the house without the ceremony of politely taking his leave, and took the first boat down the river. During his passage down, he conceived the project of forging Colonel Walton's name to a note, and raising the money upon it. Having some letters from the Colonel, and being skillful with the pen, the next day he forged the Colonel's name for a large amount, and succeeded in obtaining the money. He was now once more in funds and ready to meet the gamblers.—After he received the money he met Skinner and Camp in an Oyster Saloon on Broadway. These gamblers were glad to see him

and noticed when he paid for some liquor they drank, that he had a large roll of bills. The saloon was full, and they invited him to accompany them to the Pewter Mug. He did so, and they took him into a private room.

'Now,' said Skinner, who usually talked for himself and accomplice also. 'We wish to play with you this evening. Some how you seem to have forsaken us.'

'I can't play with you this evening,' replied Gifford, much excited. 'I'm determined to fleece that d—nd Yankee. He has got thousands of my money, and I must have it back. I hate to be beaten by such a green horn as he is. His luck must turn.'

'Greenhorn!' repeated Skinner, smiling at the verdancy of Gifford. 'That fellow is no greenhorn, but an accomplished blackleg in disguise. He and that Tryon are accomplices, and divide their gains. We have found them out in their tricks. You are sure to lose your money if you play with them.'

'Then I will certainly play with them and expose their rascality,' said Gifford.

'But you can't expose it,' replied Skinner. 'Their devilry is too deep for you to reach.'

All these blacklegs said, only tended to make Gifford the more anxious to play with Tryon and the Yankee. He had great confidence in his own powers, and believed, if they had formed a conspiracy, that he could penetrate it, and expose them. These gamblers had lost their control over him. Just as they flattered themselves that they had him in their grasp, he slipped through their fingers.

Evening came and found Gifford at the gaming table with Tryon and his accomplice and Belknap. Before they were seated at the table, however he had a private interview

with Belknap, and told him all Skinner had related concerning Tryon and the Yankee. Young Belknap began to open his eyes, and did not know but his pretended friend had deceived him. At any rate his suspicions were awakened, and he and Gifford were determined to watch every motion of the gamblers.

The game commenced, and the arch Tryon and his accomplice noticed that the young men played with more than their usual caution, watched the motions of their hands and the expressions of their countenances more narrowly than they had on any previous occasion. By certain signs unseen by their victims; they cautioned each other, and proceeded with the game.

They laughed in their sleeves to see how extremely cautious and watchful these tyros were; letting them win more games than usual, and blinding their eyes in every possible way. It was past midnight, and the young men had not as yet detected any cheats; or, at least, nothing which they could pronounce as a cheat. Their losses were severe; but Tryon was now the lucky man, and the Yankee was the apparent loser, as well as themselves. This ruse was well managed, and tended more to blind the young men's eyes than any other course that could be taken.

'Confound the luck!' exclaimed the cunning Yankee. 'My marm always told me fortune was a fickle jade, and I'll be hanged if I don't believe it. Thunder! I have lost too much.'

'It is high time for you to lose,' said Tryon. 'You have bled us pretty freely, and now we'll make your wallet look as if it had the consumption.'

'You had better say I, and not we,' added Gifford. 'You are now the winner.'

'It is time I had won; but I expect every game will turn my luck over to you,' said

Tryon; dealing the cards with much apparent excitement, although he was as cool as a cucumber, and staid as a deacon.

'I'll be darned if the devil ain't in the luck,' said Hamilton, looking over the hand just dealt to him.

'No doubt, the devil's not far off,' said Gifford, rising up, much excited. 'I saw you turn the trump from the bottom of the pack!'

'I never did such a trick in my life!' replied Tryon. Then turning to Belknap, he continued. 'Did you notice any thing of the kind?'

'I confess I did not see it; but, I'm suspicious there is foul play somewhere,' replied Belknap.

'Foul play!' repeated Gifford, with sparkling eyes, and heaving breast. 'Yes, there's enough of that! You and that Yankee are accomplices, and constantly playing into each other's hands! I have seen enough to convince me of that fact!'

'Where's your proof, young man?' demanded Tryon; rising up, and casting a frown upon Gifford. 'You must not charge me with conspiracy, unless you have the proof to sustain it!'

'I'm ready to swear that I saw you turn the trump from the bottom of the pack,' said Gifford. 'I believe what I see with my own eyes. Let us see your hand. I'll bet money it is the best hand out.'

'Suppose, it is so; is that proof I have not dealt fairly?' asked Tryon.

'It is of no use; you and Hamilton have conspired against us,' said Gifford; 'I'll not play any more to-night.'

'Nor I,' added Belknap, rising from the table, and looking wildly about.

'By thunder, it will be money in my pocket,' said Hamilton. 'My luck has gone, and I'm ready to quit.'

The game was broken up; but the young men's losses had been severe. They had not, however, lost all the money they had with them, and that was better luck than they usually had.

Skinner, Camp and some others, were playing at a table near, and heard the rupture. Skinner was rejoiced to see the trouble, and hoped to take all the blood from Gifford which the gamblers had left.

With a heavy and sad heart, young Belknap went on his way home; cursing the vice of gambling, and wishing he had never seen a pack of cards.

Emily Evans and her father had spent that evening with the widow Belknap, and tarried quite late in the hope that George would return. He had been the subject of conversation; and many doubts and misgivings had been felt on his account.—Emily had freely confessed her fears that George was a gambler, and his mother had also become alarmed. Mr. Evans, also, entertained the same fears. There was great trouble in these households. Mr. Evans had taken pains that very day to learn the state of the young man's funds; and, greatly to his surprise, found that all his stocks had been sold, and the greater portion of all his shares in the bank; but these facts he had not made known to his mother, lest the sad news might too seriously effect her.—He was determined, however, to have a serious conversation with George, the first opportunity, and endeavor to check him in his career of vice.

Gifford did not go home, but called a carriage and was driven to the house of Madame Thirza Montrose. He had previously seen Margaret Austin, and become smitten with her charms. His father had not been gone but a few minutes when the son arrived. The old liberine had been with Margaret that same evening. It was his

fourth visit, and each succeeding one had been less successful than the preceding.—Yet this wretched man persevered in the face of all opposition.

Margaret was most cruelly treated by the mistress and not suffered to leave the house by night or day. A constant watch was kept over her; and her heart was almost broken. It seemed to her sometimes that death would be welcome.

This vile woman endeavored to make her believe that she had purchased her, and that she had full control over her until she had reached her majority; but the girl could not be made to believe all the mistress told her. One thing Margaret was fully determined upon, and that was, she would lose her life before she would her virtue. She was in tears, in a private parlor, receiving cruel lectures from the mistress when young Gifford entered the house. He had never had but one interview with her, and knew not that his father had ever seen her. Gifford had been drinking freely during the evening, and his brain and blood were under strong excitement. The mistress came out and met him.

'All in bed?' asked Gifford, swaggering, and feeling quite at home.

'That beautiful girl has not yet gone to her rest,' replied Madame, smiling.

'The devil she ain't,' he said. 'That's capital! Show me to her; I have a notion that she fancies me.'

Madame held out her hand, smiled, and made no other reply.

'How much?' he asked, taking out the money he had left, and assuming a very important manner.

'A ten spot and nothing shorter,' she replied, smiling, and still extending her hand.

He gave her the money and was introduced to Margaret just as the poor heart-sick girl had risen to go to her chamber.

'Good evening, my dear,' he said. 'I was passing, saw a light, and thought I would call.'

'The hour is late and I was about to retire,' she said. 'I have been shamefully abused by an old man this evening, and I wish to retire.'

'O, don't be in a hurry, my dear,' he said, slipping his arm round her waist, and attempting to draw her towards him.

She pushed him away, and darted to another part of the room; leaving him standing in the middle of the room, greatly surprised, and not a little offended. He gazed upon her flashing eyes, and debated the question in his own mind whether he had better venture to make another attempt or not.—Finally, he walked towards her, and smiled as graciously as he knew how.

'Don't come any nearer,' she said, in a voice whose peculiar tones told him that she meant what she said.

He still approached her; but cautiously, lest she might do him some bodily injury. Gifford was a coward at heart, notwithstanding all his boasting.

'There!' she exclaimed. 'Come not another step on your peril!'

He stood still, and said: 'My dear, I suppose you are aware I have great affection for you, and would marry you.'

'I have no confidence in the affections of those who visit this house,' she replied. 'I have heard so much about love, under this roof, that I'm sick of the very name of love. Don't come nearer to me; for cruel treatment has made me desperate, and I know not what I may be left to do. O, God, protect me!'

He gazed upon her flashing eyes, and examined her person to see if the handle of a dirk was any where in sight. Full of liquor as he was, and the false courage the liquid poison sometimes inspires; yet he dared not make any advances. There was something

in the expression of her countenance that inspired him with quite as much fear as the gleaming blade of a dirk, had he seen one. He, finally, left the room, and the poor girl was permitted to retire to her chamber, or rather her prison; for she was regularly locked in every night by her heartless, cruel mistress.

CHAPTER XXI.

The strange meeting. The interview of a good and vicious woman. A good deed accomplished from bad motives. The rescue of the lost girl. Deception and cruelty. The vicious punished, &c.

THE next morning after father and son had been exercising their art and skill to destroy the fair name of the drunkard's daughter, a well-dressed young lady was seen knocking at the door of the house which Mr. Austin and family had occupied before Mrs. Goodyear provided a better tenement for them; but she found the drunkard's family had removed, but to what place, the occupants of the house could not inform her.—She turned away, and felt much regret that she could not be revenged upon Madame Thirza Montrose. The reader need not be told that the nickname of this girl was Pink. As she left the house, Mrs. Goodyear saw her, and felt a curiosity to know who she was. Her first thought was, that it might be the lost Margaret, but her face looked too old.

'Are you acquainted with the family who reside in that house?' asked Mrs. Goodyear, looking the girl full in the face.

'I'm not, madam,' replied the girl. 'But I was looking for Mr. Austin's residence.—I understood he lived there; but it seems he has removed.'

'He has, indeed, been removed to another world,' replied Mrs. Goodyear. 'Were you acquainted with the family?'

'O, no; but I should like to know where they live,' replied Pink.

'I can show you,' answered Mrs. Goodyear; 'for I am going to the house.'

The two started off together. Mrs. Goodyear did not once dream she was walking the street with a heartless and corrupt wanton, so ingeniously did Pink disguise her real character.

'Do you reside in the city?' asked Mrs. Goodyear; being somewhat interested in her companion.

'Yes, madam; I have resided a year or two,' replied Pink. 'I came from Baltimore to this city.'

'Do your parents reside here?' asked the good woman.

'They reside in the country, at least, my mother does, my father is dead,' modestly answered Pink, smiling in her sleeve to think she had the company of so good and kind a lady as Mrs. Goodyear appeared to be.

'I suppose you know Mr. Austin's family,' said Mrs. Goodyear. 'O, the husband died a terrible death! But the mother and her daughters are getting along lively. They are very interesting girls.'

'I have no acquaintance with them,' said Pink.

Mrs. Goodyear wondered why this girl wished to see this poor family with whom she had no acquaintance. At last she thought struck her that she might know something of the lost Margaret.

'No acquaintance with them!' repeated Mrs. Goodyear. 'Have you never seen any of the girls belonging to the family?'

'Only one,' replied Pink.

'Only one!' repeated the good woman, seizing Pink by the arm, and detaining her. 'Only one! O, heavens! Where did you see her?'

'In prison,' calmly replied Pink, smiling at the woman's great anxiety.

'In prison!' repeated Mrs. Goodyear.—'Where? where? Speak, and tell me!'

'I call it a prison, but some would give it a more polite name, and call it a house of assignation,' replied Pink, smiling.

'Gracious heavens!' exclaimed Mrs. Goodyear. 'Is she there now?'

'She was yesterday, when I quit the place,' answered Pink. 'But you needn't be alarmed. An old man is courting her under a pretence of marrying her.'

'His name!' asked Mrs. Goodyear.

'He is known in that house by the name of Captain Melbourne; but in Wall Street his name is Mr. Gifford,' replied Pink.

'In what street is the house, and what the number?' asked Mrs. Goodyear.

The girl gave the street and number to her on a card which she had already prepared, that there might be no mistake, and she lose her revenge. Good does surely come out of evil sometimes.

'You have done a noble deed,' said Mrs. Goodyear. 'The lost girl we have been hunting for weeks, and hundreds have been engaged in the search.'

Let me tell you the girl is treated very cruelly by the woman who keeps the house,' said Pink. 'She's an awful selfish woman, and I hate her, therefore, you must credit this good deed to my hate of that woman, and not to any better motive. I would not deceive you; for I have been an inmate of that house myself. The girl is very beautiful, and I confess I have envied her beauty but I stole a few moment's conversation with her and ascertained where her family resided on purpose to be revenged on that selfish, wicked woman; I claim no higher motive for the noble deed, as you call it.—Put the woman through, that's all I ask.—Give it to her, and spare not, for she has cheated me most shamefully. I suppose, there's no need now of my going to see the

girl's mother, as you can inform her where she will find her daughter.

'There is not,' replied Mrs. Goodyear; beginning to know the true character of the girl who had given her such valuable information. 'You spoke just now of the motive which prompted you to give this information. I'm sorry you hate any human being.'

'For heaven's sake wouldn't you hate a woman who would cheat you out of your wages!' asked the girl.

'We ought not to hate any of the human family,' replied Mrs. Goodyear.

'Good Lord!' exclaimed this corrupt girl. 'If you wouldn't hate such a woman, you can't be a Christian. Why, she's worse than old Nick, himself! And surely you hate him, don't you?'

Mrs. Goodyear found the task a difficult one to argue a moral question with this girl, and prudence dictated a discontinuance of the conversation. Yet this good woman fancied that she might persuade this wanton to abandon her evil practices, if she only had a convenient opportunity. Mrs. Goodyear belonged to that class of reformers who are stigmatized as fanatics and firebrands in the community by those who think it best to let society jog along after the old fashion.

'I have not time now, neither is the street the place, to argue with you upon moral reform; but if you will meet me hereafter at any time and place you may appoint, I should be happy to give you my views at length,' replied Mrs. Goodyear.

'It's no use for us to talk,' said the girl. 'We don't look alike, neither can we think alike; but just put that woman through, and I shall be satisfied. Here's my card, if they should want me as a witness.'

Giving Mrs. Goodyear her card, the girl tripped away and soon turned a corner out of the woman's sight.

'Just put that woman through,' repeated Mrs. Goodyear, hurrying along, and exam-

ining the girl's highly finished card. 'What language to come from a girl whose face is so handsome and whose form is so genteel! Men, have accused us of being either devils or angels! It seems to me, that girl might be arrested in her career of vice and crime and reformed, but heaven only knows. O, how mixed with good and evil is human society! But the time must come when a great revolution on earth will take place. I believe that day has already dawned! O, if I could be instrumental in reforming that girl and directing her feet in the paths of virtue, how happy I should be?'

Mrs. Goodyear spoke the truth. She was always happy in doing good. She did not go to the widow Austin's, but to an attorney, and laid the case before him for advice and direction. Promptly were the papers made out, and Mrs. Goodyear, an officer and several of the Police hurried to the establishment of Madame Thirza Montrose. While they were on their way, the mistress and the almost broken-hearted Margaret were in a small parlor on the first floor, the same room in which this vile woman had lectured the girl many times before. On this occasion she was more severe than ever, proceeding to the extreme of bodily chastisement.

'There, take that, and see if you won't obey my orders for the future,' said the cruel woman, having just shaken Margaret, and beaten her severely. 'You little refractory thing! You ought to be skinned alive, and I'll do it yet, if you don't yield.'

'O, God, let me die, but never yield!' exclaimed Margaret, stretching her hands and eyes upwards, in an imploring manner.

'Shut up!' shouted the woman, severely striking the girl on the side of her head and almost knocking her over.

'Kill me, quick!' sobbed Margaret. 'Put me away from this terrible misery! Before my God, I swear never to yield to your wicked orders! kill me now!'

The woman raised her hand to strike again, but the loud ringing of the door-bell arrested the blow, and she answered the summons. The officer stood at the door waiting for it to be opened, while the others were in a carriage near by. The officer was dressed like a gentleman, and appeared as if he had come as a patron of the establishment. She opened the door and bid him walk in. He stepped in and stood with his back against the door to prevent its being shut, if she attempted to do so.

'Walk in, sir,' she said, 'and I will close the door. She smiled, and was pleasant.

'I'm in far enough for the present,' he said, half smiling, while two or three girls came into the hall, and stood gazing at them.

'You had better come in and be seated,' she replied; beginning to suspect that something might be wrong, and yet hoping for the best.

'Your name is Madame Thirza Montrose, is it not?' he asked.

'No, sir, that is not my name,' she replied feeling alarmed; for the officer began to pull some papers from his pocket, and show himself a little more clearly. 'The lady you speak of resides a few blocks above.'

'I believe, Madame, this is the right number,' he replied; first looking on a paper and then on the door behind him. 'Yes, I'm right! This is the house.'

The woman now began to look wild, and wished he stood in a different position that she might suddenly push him out and bolt the door, but the officer was too cunning for that.

'You must be mistaken in the number, sir,' she said, in a trembling voice. 'No such lady as you spoke of resides here. Her house is higher up the street.'

'It may be so, Madame, but I wish to search this house, and see if I cannot find a girl who is lost,' said the officer, manifesting much coolness.

At that moment Margaret stood at the open door of the room where she was and overheard the last words of the officer. She came rushing through the hall towards the officer, with tears in her eyes, and the marks of the blows she had received upon her face.

'I'm the lost girl!' exclaimed Margaret. 'O, protect; save me!'

The others in the carriage had stepped out and came to the door. Mrs. Goodyear rushed into the house and embraced the girl, while Madame Montrose stood trembling in the hands of the officer who had seized and made her a prisoner.

'This is Margaret Austin, I know from the resemblance to her mother and some of her sisters,' said Mrs. Goodyear, pressing the gaily dressed girl to her bosom.

'O, yes, that is my name!' sobbed poor Margaret.

'I thought I could not be mistaken in the number,' coolly said the officer. 'I think Madame Thirza Montrose don't reside a few blocks above, after all.'

'She does! she does!' exclaimed the vile woman, attempting to get away from the officer. 'You are altogether mistaken in my name. Release your hold!'

'Not yet until I place you in another establishment on Centre Street,' replied the officer. 'You have probably heard of that stone palace, and often seen its outside.—You shall now have the privilege of viewing its interior construction and arrangements. It may not be so splendidly furnished as this whited sepulchre, nevertheless you'll find comfortable quarters.'

'You have taken the wrong person,' she said, very much agitated. 'That is not my name.'

'I presume, Madame Thirza Montrose is not your true name, and I'll call you Polly Hopkins, until you are safely lodged in the tombs,' replied the officer, smiling.

The girls now took to their heels and scampered up stairs and were soon locked in their rooms. One of the police followed and frightened them exceedingly.

'O, she has treated me most cruelly!' said Margaret, still clinging to the skirts of Mrs. Goodyear's dress as if she instinctively knew she had found a friend.

'No doubt she has, and thank heaven, you are now released from her power,' replied Mrs. Goodyear.

'The girl lies!' exclaimed the mistress, wildly gazing upon the group that surrounded her.

'I speak the truth, and she wanted me to become as bad as she is herself and the girls who have just ran away; but I would die first,' replied Margaret.

'Heaven be praised for enabling you to make such a resolution, my dear,' said Mrs. Goodyear, pressing the trembling girl to her bosom.

'Come, Madame Thirza Montrose, Polly Hopkins, or whatever may be your name, prepare yourself for other quarters,' said the officer. 'My time is precious, and I cannot tarry here much longer.'

'O, you'll repent of arresting an innocent woman!' said Madame. 'That girl came here voluntarily, and begged me to keep her.'

'It is false as your own heart is false,' replied Margaret. 'You have kept me here against my will, locked me up during the night and would not suffer me to go out in the day. You are a wicked woman, and now you will be punished.'

The woman turned her flashing eyes upon the girl, and wished she had murdered her, ere she had been found in her keeping. The woman was taken to the tombs and locked up; and Margaret was conveyed to the house her mother and sisters occupied.

We will not undertake to describe the joy

of that meeting. The mother shed tears of joy over her restored daughter, and the sisters hung round her with feelings and emotions which may be imagined but not portrayed by the power of the pen. Mrs. Goodyear felt that she had done her duty, and thanked heaven that she had been made instrumental in the accomplishment of such a glorious act. The widow Austin had not tasted of a drop of liquor since the burial of her husband, and her looks were greatly improved; inasmuch that Margaret would not recognize her under other circumstances.

CHAPTER XXII.

The burglar's den. The plan of proceedings. A great burglary committed. A watchman wounded. The den watched.—A severe fight. Many wounded. One death. The scoundrels arrested.

It was a dark and very stormy night. A strong wind swept over the city, and the rain descended in torrents. The city clocks had told the hour of twelve, and two villains were examining a rough pencil sketch of the various apartments in the house of the widow Belknap, by the dim light of a lamp in a tenement situated in an obscure part of the city. The room they occupied was strongly bolted and barred, in the basement of a large wooden building used as a kind of stone house for lumber and some other articles.—No families resided in any part of it. This basement room was some twenty feet square and had been previously occupied as a low groggery and oyster saloon. Heavy shutters enclosed the two front windows, and the door was massive and strong. There was no furniture in the room except two chairs, a pine table and an old settee. There was a counter running along one side, and upon the other there were some rough stalls in

which oysters were once served; but they looked more like horse stalls in a stable than any thing else.

'You think this is a correct map of the widow's premises, do you?' asked Hamilton, the pretended Yankee.

'It is quite so,' replied Tryon, pointing to a small apartment on the paper, and smiling. 'That is the widow's sleeping room, and this side is a cup-board where she keeps her plate. She was very polite in showing me the arrangement of her house. It is really very well arranged.'

'She didn't show you her bed-room, did she?' asked Hamilton, laughing.

'Not exactly, but then she left the door of it open that I might look in as I passed if I pleased,' replied Tryon. 'It is a fine room, but no matter; you will not enter that of course.'

'No, I'm afraid I should not be so well received there as you might, according to your own stories,' said Hamilton. 'She loves English gentlemen, and not Yankees.'

'True, but let that pass,' replied Tryon. 'You'll find the door of the cupboard not hard to open, and I'm quite sure the front door might be opened, but you had better enter the back way. That will be the safest. You see how the rooms are situated there.—You'll pass through the kitchen into a hall which leads to the front door. Upon the left hand side is the sitting room, and upon the other a parlör. You'll have no occasion to enter the parlör. I think she deposits her watch on a stand on a marble mantle-piece over the grate; at any rate, there is a stand there for a watch.'

'I believe I have a pretty good idea of the premises,' said Hamilton. 'It is a good night for the operation, for the watchmen will be under some shelter to keep out of the rain. But I hate to face this storm. We shall get wet to our skins.'

'No matter for that, if we can bring back a load of silver,' replied Tryon. 'I think our game is up with the widow's son, and that young Gifford is hard pushed for money, in my opinion; besides, he has become suspicious. No doubt that Skinner whom I whipped awhile ago has been whispering into his ears. Well, we have bled them pretty freely, and Skinner may take them now.'

'I'm inclined to the opinion that young Belknap will give up playing any more with a Yankee,' said Hamilton, laughing. 'But the dog has money yet, or can raise it. He sleeps in the chamber, does he?'

'Yes, I have been in his room,' replied Tryon. 'You need not disturb his slumbers.'

It was now past one o'clock and the burglars started out into the storm and hurried on to the street in which the widow lived.

'By heavens, this is a furious storm!' said Hamilton. 'I can feel the water now running down my legs into my boots.'

'No matter, fire will dry us,' replied Tryon. 'We have scarcely seen a single watchman since we started. They are a lazy set of fellows.'

'I'm not disposed to find fault with them on that account,' said Hamilton. 'I don't blame them for keeping out of the way of this driving rain.'

They had now arrived in front of the widow's house, and the storm did not abate in violence, but rather increased. They stood a moment and looked up and down the street.

'Not a solitary soul to be seen,' said Tryon. 'Pass through that gate and you'll find the back entrance and I'll supply the place of a watchman since there is no one on this beat.'

'Look out and keep your revolver dry,' said Hamilton, as he passed through a small gate, and groped his way round.

'Be expeditious as possible,' said Tryon, walking to and fro in front of the house, and looking up and down the street, while his accomplice was making his entrance into the house.

He had a dark lantern in his pocket, and the necessary tools for his work. He was an experienced hand in such rascally enterprises, and bold in their execution. Tryon could pick a pocket better than his companion, but not so skillful in burglarious operations.

The burglar found no difficulty in making his entrance into the kitchen, where he stood a few moments and listened. No sounds were heard except that occasioned by the violence of the storm. He was fearful that the wind might awaken the sleepers, and therefore stood and listened. The room was dark as a pocket, but he had a remedy for that. He opened his lantern and a few feeble rays escaped and revealed the situation of the room. He now cautiously proceeded and found his way into the hall where he remained silent a short time, and again let out a few rays of light that revealed the doors into the sitting room and parlör.—Closing the lantern, he entered the sitting room, and again stood and listened, while the water dripped from his clothes upon the carpet. All was still, and a few more rays of light showed him the cupboard. Softly he approached it, and again listened. Now the ticking sounds of the widow's watch fell on his ears. Following the sounds, he soon secured the prize, and turned back, feeling after the keyhole of the cupboard door, and thrusting in a lock-picker which did the job in a few moments. He carefully opened his lantern, and there was the widow's plate bright and shining before his eyes and a small rosewood box highly finished. He now took a portion of the silver ware and carried it to the front door which he had no trouble in opening upon the inside. Re-

turning, he again carried another parcel to the door. Soon the shelves were cleared, and he looked round for some other valuables, but found nothing which he thought best to take.

Tryon met him at the door, and, securing their booty, they hurried on. The storm had abated, and the stars appeared in the west. Soon the rain ceased altogether, and the wind calmed down to a gentle breeze.—Now and then a watchman might be seen coming out from their places of shelter, and gazing on their beats. The plate was concealed under their overcoats.

'I'm sorry the storm is over,' said Tryon, 'for the watchmen begin to creep out from their hiding places.'

'Let us walk boldly along,' said Hamilton. 'We must not act shy, but proceed just as if we were returning from a theatre or gambling saloon.'

'I understand,' replied Tryon. 'This stuff is heavy. If it is all silver, we shall be well paid for getting wet.'

'I think it is solid silver,' said Hamilton. 'See! that watchman seems to be eyeing us rather sharply. I wonder what the fellow wants?'

The watchman approached them as if he meant something. Tryon's hand was upon his revolver. They were passing at the moment by a lamp-post, and the gas light revealed a small portion of the plate which Tryon was carrying.

'Rather late to be out,' said the watchman, looking sharply at them.

'Suppose, it is,' replied Tryon, noticing that some of the plate he was carrying was exposed, and instantly covering it over.

'O, nothing in particular, but you will go with me, gentlemen,' said the watchman.

'You go to the devil,' said Tryon, drawing his revolver, and firing.

The watchman fell upon the sidewalk, severely, but not mortally wounded, and the

scoundrels hurried on. The sound of the pistol roused the other watchmen in the vicinity who gathered round the fallen man. They raised him up and he pointed in the direction the burglars fled, saying in a low voice. 'Two of them, and they ran down that street! Follow the scoundrels!'

Two of the watchmen pursued, while the others took care of the wounded man.

'Did you kill him?' asked Hamilton, as they descended into the room from which they started, and bolted the door.

'That is more than I know,' replied Tryon, 'I shouldn't wonder, if the fellow received a mortal wound, for I took deliberate aim.'

'I was fearful that the sound of the revolver might rouse others who would follow us,' said Hamilton, depositing his load upon the old counter. 'There, I feel somewhat relieved.'

Tryon laid down his booty and struck a light. They opened the rosewood box and found several gold pieces and articles of jewelry. Among them was a large gold case containing a beautiful miniature likeness of the widow's husband.

'Ah,' said Tryon. 'A likeness of her husband! He was a good-looking man.—Don't you think he resembles me?'

'I don't know but there is a very slight resemblance,' replied Hamilton. 'Perhaps, the widow saw in you a more striking likeness than I am able to discover; for she thought very well of you, according to your stories.'

'I haven't a doubt but I might have married her,' said Tryon. 'Grace, I begin to feel cold in this damp room with my wet clothes.'

'So do I,' replied Hamilton, drinking some brandy from a small flask, and handing it to his companion who also drank. 'Let us secure our booty and go where we can find some fire.'

'I agree to that,' said Tryon. 'We must leave the city soon. I think we had better leave to-morrow for Philadelphia.'

They secured their booty, and came up into the street just before day dawned. The storm had entirely passed over, and the stars shone brightly. As they stepped upon the sidewalk, a watchman discovered them, but they did not notice him as he stood with his back leaning against a building. He did not follow them, but came and viewed the place from which they issued. His suspicions were roused, and he marked the spot.

In the morning the news of the burglary and of the wounded watchman increased his suspicions, and he communicated them to one of the police. The place was constantly watched from early in the morning until nearly night, but no persons appeared. The scoundrels had given up the idea of leaving the city that day, and did not venture to visit this room, lest they might be discovered. There was much excitement in the city, and they governed themselves accordingly. One of the police thought it best to break open the door and see what could be discovered, but his advice was overruled, and they continued to watch the place constantly. Some time after dark the following evening, the watch discovered the scoundrels unlock the door, and descend, bearing a large trunk. The news soon spread, and a strong force assembled on the sidewalk near the entrance to this room.

'Let us pack up as soon as possible and be off, for the whole city is in an uproar,' said Tryon. 'Such deeds wouldn't stir London half as much.'

'I suppose not,' replied Hamilton. 'What do you say to putting our gold money into the widow's rosewood box?'

'It will be a good plan,' replied Tryon. 'It will be as safe there as in any place, but we must put the box into the trunk.'

'Certainly, that mustn't be seen,' replied Hamilton; 'for the papers have given an account of the articles stolen.'

'Yes, and so we have learned the value of them,' said Tryon. 'It is a more valuable haul than I expected.'

'I knew the ware was none of your plated stuff,' said Hamilton. 'The widow has no counterfeit stuff about her premises.'

'Hush!' whispered Tryon. 'I thought I heard footsteps at the door.'

'There may be some boys there,' replied Hamilton.

A knocking was now heard on the door, which greatly alarmed them.

'Be silent as death!' whispered Tryon, listening with intense anxiety. 'They are not boys, I fear. See that your revolver is in order! We must not be taken alive in this place.'

Their revolvers were looked to, and in their hands, ready for any emergency. The knocking continued louder and, louder, and men's voices were heard.

'Good God!' whispered Tryon. 'They are after us! Put the box under your arm! Don't let us lose that. The silver plate may go to the devil. We must fight our way through, and escape, if they are really upon us. I wish there was some other outlet to this cursed room besides that door. I have often spoken of that before.'

'Open the door!' said one upon the outside, knocking against it with great violence.

No response was heard from within. The burglars stood silent and prepared for the worst. The blows upon the door now came heavier and faster.

'They're determined to break through!' whispered Tryon. 'And there seems to be a score of them, too. Some of them must bite the dust if they dare enter here!'

'They will enter, and that shortly too,' replied Hamilton, clenching his revolver with a nervous grasp.

'Great God, I fear it! said Tryon. 'Be steady and not fire at random.'

Smash went a part of the door, and crack went one barrel of Tryon's revolver. The ball passed through the hole in the door and the foremost man was slightly wounded.

'Down with the door, instantly!' shouted several voices.

A few more blows and a free passage was made, and some dozen men rushed into the room. There was a loud cracking of pistols, and two men fell. Tryon received a blow upon the head which leveled him, and three more fastened upon Hamilton. After a severe struggle, the death of one man, and the wounding four others, the scoundrels and their booty were secured. Tryon recovered from the blow he received upon his head, and attempted to rise with his revolver in his hand; but he was pressed down by superior force, and bound. They were conveyed to the tombs and locked up, and the articles they had stolen and a large amount of money were secured. It was a severe struggle, but the right triumphed.

CHAPTER XXIII.

The cruelty of wicked woman. Love turned to hate. The last interview. Desperation. A tragical scene. Vengeance glutted. An old libertine in trouble. A young one slain.

'I CANNOT keep you any longer in my house after this week, which is now more than half gone,' said Sarah Kane, usually honored with the soubriquet of Old Sal, by those who frequented her sink of moral pollution, to Emma Doty, a beautiful girl in the utmost distress. 'That young Gifford now owes me for a month's board, and I begin to think he grows short of funds every day. To be plain with you, the fellow gam-

bles and drinks, and his father's name has already got into the newspapers for some of his misdemeanors. I think father and son are very much alike. Besides, he has not been to see you for some time.'

'O, my God!' exclaimed the heart-stricken Emma, burying her face in her hands, and weeping most bitterly.

'There's no use in crying,' said the mistress. 'You have beauty and can get money enough unless you persist in being a fool.'

Emma cast her eyes on the vile woman in a fixed gaze, and remained silent; but a terrible spirit was working within her, and the expression of her countenance told how deeply agonizing were her feelings.

'You must not look so terrible wise,' continued this heartless woman. 'I've seen you stare before this evening and talk about virtue. Yes, it sounds well for a girl to talk about virtue who is even to give birth to an illegitimate child!'

Emma rose and walked about the room in great agitation, and wished she was in her grave.

'O, you know not the emotions that swell my heart,' exclaimed Emma, confronting this woman, and frowning upon her with the utmost contempt. 'You know not what virtue is! Your dark, benighted soul never had so much as a glimpse of it. Your mode of life has corrupted your heart to its very core.'

'You may be as saucy as you please, miss, but you shall leave my house,' replied the woman. 'I don't want to hear any more of your whining.'

'You will not hear it much longer,' said Emma. 'I'll leave your house, and perhaps this wicked world.'

At that moment the door-bell rung and the mistress hastened down to answer the summons. Young Gifford entered.

'I'm glad you've come, for I've just been talking with that girl,' she said.

'I have come to see her for the last time,' he said. 'I can't be troubled with her any longer, for I have troubles enough of my own just at this time.'

'Well, I suppose you will pay me this evening,' she said.

'I can't do it to-night, but will let you have some to-morrow,' he replied.

'Ah, Gifford, I cannot live upon such promises,' she said, looking very cross.

'I know it, but then you see I am a little short,' he said. 'And father grows very stingy.'

'And that is not all I reckon,' she added, turning her large gray eyes upon him.—'According to all accounts, you and he are alike. As the old cock crows the young one learns.'

'Pretty much after that fashion,' he said, giving her a half dollar. 'Come, a glass or two of Champagne to nerve me for a last interview with Emma, I am really very thirsty.'

'I reckon you have kept your coppers hot recently,' she said, leading the way into a room where she furnished him with the liquor.

'I suppose, you have read the account of the arrest of your sisters in iniquity,' he said.

'One of my sisters in iniquity!' she repeated. 'What do you mean?'

'O, the celebrated Madame Thirza Montrose,' he replied.

'Good Lord!' exclaimed this wicked woman. 'Don't name me in the same breath with that proud, haughty creature! I always despised her, and am glad she has a place in the Tombs. There's where she ought to be.'

'And if you had your deserts, you would be there too,' he replied, drinking off another glass of the intoxicating New Jersey cider.

'And you ought to have been there long ago,' she added, smiling.

'Well, I must go up and see Emma,' he said, taking the third glass and going up to the chamber of the girl whom he had most shamefully abused.

He found her sitting by a table writing a letter. As he entered, she looked up and then continued her writing without uttering a word. He thought it very strange that she treated him with such apparent indifference, and knew not how to account for it. Being under the influence of the liquor he drank below, he was impatient to do his business and be off.

'Why don't you speak to me?' he asked.

'I'm writing a short note to my mother,' she replied, turning her eyes wildly upon him, and continuing her writing.

'But can't you write that afterwards,' he said, impatiently.

'I have almost finished it,' she answered.

'Well, put in before you finish it that you think of going home,' he said. 'It seems to me that will be the best course for you to pursue. Go home to your mother.'

She made no reply, but continued writing, and he walked about the room, whistling a familiar tune, and occasionally looking at her as she wrote.

'There, that will tell her all in a few words,' she said; folding up and wafering the letter. 'When she reads this, she will know all.'

She seemed to be talking more to herself than to him. Having directed the letter, she raised her head and looked him full in the face. There was a wildness in the expression of her dark, tearless eyes that would have made him shudder if he had not been emboldened by liquor; for he was not a young man of much courage. In fact, he was naturally a coward, and so considered by those who knew him best.

'You think I had better go home to my mother, do you?' she asked.

'It strikes me so,' he replied. Sitting down in a chair not far distant from her, and gazing upon her.

'It strikes me very differently,' she replied. 'I suppose I may infer from such advice that I may give up all hope that you will fulfill your promises most solemnly made before heaven.'

'Those promises were rashly made without due consideration,' he replied. 'I have given up all hope of being married at present, if ever. My father would never consent, and to tell you the truth I dare not ask him.'

'Then you must leave me in my present situation!' she said, curbing the spirit of revenge which was raging in her bosom like pent up fires.

'It must be so,' he replied, manifesting a kind of indifference which greatly increased the fire that was burning within her, and hurrying her on to desperation.

'Jasper Gifford!' she said, in a clear, commanding tone of voice. 'You never intended to keep your promises when you made them to me! You began your work of corruption by deceiving me when we first met, and have continued it ever since! Is not such conduct too much for human flesh and blood to bear? Have you ever heard what woman's love is when turned to hate! What punishment is there that you do not deserve? Speak, and tell me!'

'I suppose I have done some things that were wrong; but then every one does in the course of their lives,' he indifferently replied.

'And do you expect to live to commit many more such wrongs as you have done to me?' she asked, in a voice of unnatural tones.

'I can't say how long I may live,' he replied. 'But I hope I may live many years

yet. To tell you the truth, I think of going South very soon.'

'You will never go South!' she answered, suddenly rising, and standing over him with a drawn dagger whose bright blade gleamed in the light of a lamp that stood on a table near her.

He was paralyzed with fear at her sudden movement, and the sight of the shining dagger, and dared not move. A strange fear crept over him, and froze the blood in his veins. The influence of the intoxicating liquor he had drank was gone in an instant, and he breathed hard.

'O, Emma, don't strike!' he exclaimed. 'I will marry you!'

'Make no more false promises now you are about to make a fearful leap into the dark future!' she exclaimed, in unearthly tones.

'O, spare me!' he said, most imploringly. 'I will do any thing!'

'It is decreed by high heaven, that you shall not live to abuse another girl as you have me!' she replied. 'The devil waits to receive your guilty and corrupt soul, and he will not wait long.'

Instantly she plunged the dagger into his heart. As she drew it forth, the blood spirted upon her dress, and he fell heavily upon the floor, a lifeless corse. At that moment the mistress of the house rushed wildly into the room and saw the uplifted dagger dripping with the blood of the young libertine.

'What have you done?' exclaimed this abandoned woman, gazing first on the dead and then on the bloody dagger. 'O, God! what a scene.'

'Not all I intend to do!' replied the infuriated girl, rushing upon the woman, and striking the weapon deep into her breast.—There! this blood on the dagger has mingled with yours, you vile wretch.'

The woman, staggered and fell, groaning most terribly, and rolling up her eyes to the weapon, which was uplifted over her, and the blood was dropping from it upon her shoulder.

'Wretch!' exclaimed the girl. 'Thou shalt no longer live to ruin thy sex! Thou art hard to die! Thy heart is encased with steel, and turned the point of the weapon! Another strike and I shall stop the fountain of corruption.'

And a second time she did strike, and the woman ceased to breathe.

'The world is rid of two devils!' said the enraged girl to herself, wiping the blood from the dagger. 'Faithful weapon, thou art clean and bright now! I would not let thee penetrate my own heart stained with such blood. She raised the weapon and was about to strike; but she arrested the fatal blow, and said. 'No! my body shall not lie here in such company!'

She then left the room and passed into the hall, where she put an end to her own existence.

The girls in the house soon saw the body of Emma, lying in the hall, and their screams brought in two watchmen who discovered the other two bodies lying close to each other.—The blood from their wounds had intermingled and formed quite a large pool upon the floor. Soon the alarm was given, and several persons entered the house, and witnessed the horrid tragedy. In a few minutes after two gentlemen came in and examined the dead bodies.

'My God!' exclaimed one of them as he bent over the body of young Gifford with a lamp in his hand, and gazed upon the haggard features. 'It is my son!'

True enough, it was his son; and the lightning flashes of a conviction darted across his guilty soul. There lay his son, a ghastly corpse, and he saw at a glance that his son had been guilty of the same deeds of which

he was guilty himself; or, at least, such suspicions were awakened in his heart. He knew the house was one of bad reputation, and he could not entertain a doubt but his son had committed murder and then took his own life, or had been murdered by the girl whose dead body was found in the hall.

The feelings and emotions of this father on this occasion cannot be described. His past life came up, with all its crimes in fearful array before him, and his conscience stung him to his inmost soul. While he was gazing in such agony upon his son's corpse, the gentleman who accompanied him took up the letter the girl had written just before she had committed these terrible deeds.

'Open the letter!' exclaimed Mr. Gifford. 'Some clue to these murders may be obtained from it.'

Others also urged that the letter be opened. The gentleman finally broke the seal, and read as follows:—

'DEAR MOTHER—You may be surprised to receive this, because it has been so long since I have written to you; but how could I write? You always instructed me never to utter a falsehood, and I dared not write you any thing but the truth. O dear mother, I have disregarded the advice you gave me at our parting when I came to this city, and have fallen from that virtue which I once prized so highly! I listened, O, God forgive me, and dear mother, pardon me! I listened to the voice of a young man, and believed in his solemn promises! His father was rich and I thought I should have a wealthy husband. He won my affections. And O, I yielded in an evil hour! He has proved himself a villain, and my bosom burns for revenge! Now while I am writing he has entered my chamber and refuses to keep sacred his solemn promises! My soul is on fire, with the spirit of revenge! I cannot resist the temptation! He has most terribly

wronged me, and he shall not live to ruin another of my sex. You will never see me again in this world; but I trust we shall meet in another! There is a terrible spirit raging within me, and I cannot resist its awful promptings. A voice comes up from the depths of my soul, crying, "kill him! kill him!" That voice I must obey! The fatal weapon is in my trembling hand and it must drink the blood of his corrupt heart!—And O, mother, I shall not live to be hung for the deed! I shall put an end to—! O, my God! I cannot finish the sentence!—Dear mother, we shall meet in another world! I can write no more, for my soul is thirsting for revenge! Pardon me, and may God have mercy upon my soul, and protect you from all harm. Adieu.

EMMA.

Let the curtain fall and hide these tragical scenes from view. Mr. Gifford, the old libertine, had seen enough, one would think, to make him pause in his iniquitous career.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Repentance and Reformation. Sound advice. The confession. A mother's joy, even under affliction. The trial of the criminals. False sympathy. The defence. Ingenuity of Rogues, &c.

'I HAVE long thought of having some serious conversation with you,' said Mr. Evans to George Belknap, a short time after the discovery was made that Mrs. Belknap's house had been robbed.

This gentleman had been sent for by the widow to advise her in her troubles immediately on her discovering that her house had been entered by burglars. And after ascertaining her loss, and directing the course best to be pursued, he called George into a private room and made the above remark to him.

'I suppose I know what you would say,'

replied the agitated young man. 'You think I have gambled. O, Mr. Evans, I have severely struggled to break off from that vice, and always intended to do so after I had won back the money I lost.'

'Fatal delusion!' said Mr. Evans. 'You can never win it back! Professional black-legs will never give you that privilege. I notice by the books, that you have disposed of the greater part of your stocks and all your money.'

The young man hung his head, and made no reply. He was not aware that the father of his beloved Emily had been looking into his affairs so minutely, and learning his almost ruined condition. A sickness came over his soul, and his emotions were too big for utterance, and he wept like a child.

'I'm glad to see those tears,' continued Mr. Evans. 'I hope and trust they proceed from a truly penitent heart, from one that is fully resolved on reformation. True, the money you have lost is a large sum; but, that is nothing in comparison with the blasting and withering effects of this terrible vice upon your soul. If the money you have lost could be restored back; but only on the condition that you continue the vice of gambling; better a thousand times that it never came back. A pure heart and industrious hands are more to be desired than even a large fortune with bad habits. Your money is gone, but you possess the power of abandoning your evil practices and engaging in some useful employment. And, George Belknap, will you do so? If you will, a happy future is before you. Last night your mother met with a severe loss, and it becomes you now to resolve to be a useful member of the community and endeavor to lighten the burdens that now press so heavily upon your mother's heart.'

'O, Mr. Evans, no power of words can make me feel more sensible of my guilt and

shame than I now feel!' exclaimed the young man in the bitterness of his soul.

'Such language give me courage and hope that you will here end your career of vice!' replied Mr. Evans.

'God helping me, I will never gamble again!' said the repentant George.

'God will help you, if you try to help yourself,' replied Mr. Evans. 'Be firm, and let no temptations lure you from the path of virtue and honor. Be resolved to do right for the future, and you will yet see many happy days; but let vice control your actions, and your days will probably be short and full of evil and misery.'

Mr. Evans left the young man repenting in dust and ashes, and found the police, and engaged them in the business of hunting for the lost property. The result of their labors has already been made known to the reader.

After shedding many tears and resolving to reform, George sought his mother, confessed his guilt, and gave her the strongest assurances of his firm determination to abandon those sins which had so easily beset him, and become a better and more dutiful son.

'George,' she said. 'Your confession of guilt and your resolution to reform has relieved my heart of a great burden. I can now bear the loss I suffered last night with fortitude. O, my son, you know not the keen anguish I have felt for weeks past on your account; but now I am relieved, and may heaven help you to carry your resolution into effect.'

'O, mother, I feel rejoiced to know that I have made the resolution with my whole soul,' he replied, while tears of penitence stood in his eyes.

Both were silent and thoughtful for some time, neither being inclined to speak. At last the mother broke the silence, and said,

'I wonder Mr. Tryon does not call upon

me. He must have heard the news of the burglary.'

'O, mother, I have been wishing to speak to you about that man,' he said.

'Why, George, have you wished to speak to me about him?' she anxiously inquired.

'O, mother, I must tell you now,' he replied, in a trembling voice. 'Tryon is a gambler, and has shamefully deceived you as well as me!'

'Mr. Tryon a gambler!' she repeated, in great consternation. 'Gracious heaven! can he be such a man!'

'I know him to be such a man!' replied George. 'You know all now!'

The widow repaired to another room and fervently thanked God that she had learned the man's true character from the lips of her son. Strange as it may appear, this good woman had indulged hopes and even desires that this consummate knave might become her partner for life. So adroitly and artfully had he managed that she held him in very high estimation, so high, that she was willing to become his wife. But his being a gambler had sunk him in her esteem. She rejoiced that she had made such a fortunate escape from the villain.

Two days had passed since the burglary, and the widow Belknap recognized the articles, found on Tryon and Hamilton, as her property. The culprits were brought before the court for examination. A great crowd assembled, and the court-room was soon filled to overflowing. The prisoners were brought in, hand-cuffed, and closely-guarded by officers, who had the charge of them.

Tryon gazed upon the crowd with boldness, and Hamilton looked more humble and abashed. The villains knew the evidence was strong against them both for burglary and murder, and entertained no doubts but that they should be convicted—still they indulged the hope that they might escape from the justice due to their crimes. Hamilton had

never been brought up before; but Tryon had been convicted of several crimes, and escaped from prison twice.

The silver plate, the gold watch, rose-wood box, and money, were brought into court, and attracted much attention.

At last, the widow Belknap and her son came elbowing through the crowd as witnesses, and drawing all eyes upon them.

Soon the judge ordered the prisoners to rise while the clerk read the charges against them. As they rose, Mrs. Belknap's eyes met Tryon's, and a faint shriek escaped from her, which arrested the attention of the crowd. No one present but her son comprehended the cause. Tryon smiled, and boldly held up his head, and surveyed the crowd with great apparent coldness.

Several of the policemen were called first as witnesses, who related all the circumstances connected with their arrest.

The widow was next called upon to identify the articles stolen. She readily swore to all as her property except the large amount of gold found in the rose-wood box.

'How much money was there in the box, madame, when it was stolen?' asked the court.

'I think about four hundred dollars,' she answered.

'Well, madame, we must deem you an honest witness, for there are several thousand dollars in the box,' said the judge.

'It is not my money, sir, but it may be my son's,' she replied.

The young man was now called upon the stand and examined.

'What do you know about the money?' asked one of the lawyers.

'I had no money in that box when it was stolen,' replied George; 'but the prisoners have won much more than that from me in gambling.'

The answer greatly surprised the court and the crowd.

'May it please your Honor,' said Tryon, 'that young man has told the truth; and let me here state, the money in the box was won from him, and much more, which he can have by stepping this way.'

Such a speech in open court from a prisoner, might well go through the crowd like a spark of electricity. Tryon hoped by such a movement to enlist public sympathy in his behalf, and partially succeeded in his object.

'Go, young man, and receive your money, if you please,' said the judge.

He slowly made his way through the crowd to the prisoners, and received a large roll of bank notes.

'There, my young friend,' said Tryon, handing him the money, and smiling. 'I hope you will not again gamble it away.— Then turning to the judge, he continued:—

'May it please your Honor, I have now done what I intended to do from the beginning.— Myself and partner here won this money on a wager with a gentleman who has now left town, and not paid his bet. We had another wager in relation to taking the plate of the young man's mother. When we were besieged, we were packing up the articles to restore to the fair owner. We thought we had a right to defend the property in our possession, not knowing the officers of the law were upon us, but supposing the party to be robbers. That very evening we were arrested the goods and money would have been restored to Mrs. Belknap and her son, if we had not been thus beset. I have now told the whole story; but whether I shall be believed, is more than I know or dare to hope.'

'A very singular defence, truly,' said the judge, gazing upon the prisoners, while many of the crowd firmly believed what Tryon had stated.

'Truth, may it please your Honor, is often more strange than fiction,' replied Tryon, gazing round upon the audience and marking well expressions of countenances.

'That may be; but your declarations cannot be here taken as evidence without some very strong circumstances to corroborate them,' answered the judge.

'I'm fully aware of that; but yet I feel it my duty to spread the simple facts before the public,' said Tryon. 'Heaven knows we are innocent of any intentions to commit a crime; and would that this human tribunal of justice knew it also. We here fully confess we took the articles from the house in the night time; but for the purposes which I have declared. We may be convicted, and suffer the extreme penalty of the law; but we shall enter the other world free from any moral taint so far as we are connected with this transaction.'

The prisoners were then taken from the court to the prison, and locked up.

CHAPTER XXV.

The old libertine's repentance. The death of the procurer. Margaret's happy marriage. Agnes, and her happy home. The End.

It sometimes happens, in the course of human events, that men are suddenly struck with conviction of their sins, and adopt a new mode of life. Mr. Gifford, whose life had been a series of cruelties to the softer sex, and who had been instrumental in the ruin of several once virtuous girls, had many times been reminded of his sins, but without producing any real conviction.

But this old libertine's time had come when some unseen power had produced a conviction in his soul that he 'stood on slippery places.' The death of his son, and the appalling circumstances connected with it, had produced an impression upon his mind which he could not shake off. His troubles of mind were so great, and his convictions so agonizing, that even a jealous wife was mov-

ed with emotions of compassion, and could not doubt his sincerity. He made all the restitution in his power where he had done wrong, and giving the young mother a large sum of money.

Mad. Thirza Montrose, or Anne Browne, as her real name was found to be, was taken before the court for trial, which resulted in the conviction and sentence to the Penitentiary for a long time. Margaret was the principal witness against her, and gave a most thrilling account of the cruelties and sufferings she had undergone while in the keeping of this vile woman.

The sympathy of the court, and of all who heard the trial, was greatly awakened in her favor. Her beauty and modest appearance on the stand excited much admiration, but one highly gifted and worthy member of the bar was particularly smitten with her charms, and soon after made her acquaintance. That acquaintance ripened into mutual love, and in due time they were married. Margaret's mother, the widow of the poor drunkard, and all her children, were happy and in very comfortable circumstances. No more maddening draughts passed her lips.

Madame, or Anne Browne, did not live out her sentence, but died of a violent brain fever in the course of a few months after her trial. Her last days were appalling.

It is hardly necessary to inform the reader that young Belknap, the widow's son, became reformed, and also the happy husband of Emily Evans.

His mother was exceedingly cautious how she favored acquaintance with English gentlemen after what had happened. Finally, she very wisely made up her mind not to seek for a second husband, but renew her mourning for her first husband.

Tryon and Hamilton, the gamblers and burglars and murderers, had their trial, were convicted, and sentenced to the gallows.— Hamilton became penitent, and met his fate

with a hope of a better life; but Tryon persisted in his innocence to the last, in the vain hope of a reprieve, or an escape from prison—but no such fortune awaited him. He was hung; and an appalling boldness characterized his actions to the very moment when he was launched into eternity.

It is pleasant to turn from these dark and appalling scenes in City Life, to the purer life in the country, where the birds sing gaily in the trees, the brooks meander through green meadows, and the health-giving breezes blow from the wood-covered mountains.—Amid such scenes, Frank Homer and his wife had chosen their residence. Aunt Rachel Read, the good Quakeress, was so highly pleased with the match that she gave Frank's wife a generous sum of money, which she intended as the means of their building a nice house.

Aunt Rachel daily perused the newspapers from the city, and kept posted up in the news of the day, more so than either Colonel Walton or his wife, who had not yet become reconciled to the runaway match.

'Will thee please read that,' said Aunt Rachel to the Colonel, one morning, pointing to the account of young Gifford's tragical end.

'What now?' asked the Colonel, seizing the paper and reading the account, and then handing it to his wife.

'That was a terrible death!' said Mrs. Walton.

'It was, indeed,' said Rachel. 'How think you Agnes would have felt connected with such a man?'

'I don't know but you are right, after all,' said Mrs. Walton.

'Yes,' replied Rachel. 'Thy pride and ambition came near ruining Agnes, but she had the moral courage to disobey even her parents. And if a daughter can ever be justified in going contrary to parental orders, it is when the parents command her to wed a man whom she does not and cannot love.'

'I begin to see, Rachel, that you are not far from right,' said the Colonel. 'I confess that the marriage of Agnes with Gifford would have been a sad affair. We have been taught a severe lesson, and hope we shall profit by it.'

'I trust thee will,' said the Quakeress.—'We must all live and learn.'

Two years from that time, in the month of September, on a bright and beautiful day, Aunt Rachel might have been seen holding a beautiful little baby, to whom Agnes had given birth.

The Quakeress sat in a handsomely-furnished parlor in a fine house, erected by the means her generous donation furnished. This good lady had made her home with this happy couple, and never enjoyed life better.

The location was a beautiful and even romantic one; and great improvements had been made upon the farm. Even Colonel Walton and his wife, having been perfectly reconciled, might have been seen at the same time Aunt Rachel was 'tending the baby,' standing on the piazza, and admiring the beautiful lakelet, the hills beyond, the green meadows, and the chrystal brook that trickled through the farm; while the young husband was engaged in harvesting his crops, and his wife attending to her domestic affairs. It was a happy family group.

Elolements are not to be favored, and public opinion is strong against them; but, as Aunt Rachel said, there are circumstances under which they may be justified.—Upon parents who have daughters, great responsibility rests; and let them be exceedingly cautious how they attempt to force their daughters to wed men whom they do not, and never can love. And let daughters also beware how they disobey the commands of their parents. Let an elopement be the dernier resort, and not adopted until all other attempts have failed. Runaway matches are not always happy ones; and if a young lady is resolved to disobey the commands of her parents and disregard their wishes, let her be sure that she does not run away with a young Gifford. There are more Giffords than Frank Homers in this world, who would be glad to elope with rich men's daughters. Let that fact be distinctly borne in mind by our female readers; and let them govern themselves accordingly. Let them always be calm and collected under all circumstances, remembering that

'A woman moved, is like a fountain troubled:
Muddy, ill-seeming, thick, bereft of beauty;
And, while it is so, none so dry or thirsty
Will deign to sip, or touch one drop of it.'

THE END.