

# THE BANKER'S VICTIM;

OR, THE



## BETRAYED SEAMSTRESS.

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### CHAPTER I.

There's language in her eye, her cheek, her lip.  
Nay, her foot speaks; her wanton lips look out  
At every joint and motion of her body.  
O, these encounterers, so glib of tongue,  
That give a coasting welcome ere it comes,  
And wide unclasp the tables of their thoughts  
To every ticklish reader, set them down  
For sluttish spoils of opportunity,  
And daughters of the game.

It was midsummer, and twilight began to clothe the city in its sober livery, and the lamplighters were on their round of duties with ladders under their arms. The omnibusses, upward bound, were filled with passengers who were going to their several homes from their daily toils. The evening was exceedingly pleasant, and Broadway was full of carriages and persons on foot. A gentle breeze from the west swept over the city and made the air comfortably cool. A shower, too, had washed the streets and filled the air with a delicious coolness.

Every body seemed to be in good spirits. The virtuous and industrious felt as if they had performed their duties through the day, and anticipated the pleasure of passing a happy evening with their families and of retiring in order to be refreshed and invigorated for the next day's toil. The loafers were hoping that something would turn up to their advantage; the libertines were seeking fresh victims; the poor

inebriates, with jugs in hand, were trudging to some rumholes to have them filled with the liquid poison at the expense of their day's labor; the gamblers were preparing for their nocturnal operations; thieves and burglars were hovering about in various places to see where they could best secure their plunder; the bar tenders were wiping their decanters and filling and arranging them for their expected customers; the underground dance halls were being lighted up, and servants in the higher circles were putting things in order. It would seem that large portions of the population were about to turn the night into day and prepare for their regular business. The hopes and expectations of large numbers were buoyant, and the desire for money and pleasure predominated over all other considerations.

In one of the omnibusses sat a girl between two young men with a small bundle in her lap. The stage was full and rolled along quite merrily. The girl was exceedingly beautiful; and her hair hung in rich clusters over her well-formed neck and gracefully sloping shoulders.

She was returning to her boarding house in Bleeker Street from a shop down town where she wrought industriously every week day at covering parasols. Her bonnet was quite small, and showed full two thirds of her beau-

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tifully shaped head. From her ears hung very handsome gold pendants, and two rings encircled the middle finger of her left hand. Her dress was not costly, but very nicely fitted her genteel and symmetrical form. She was not large, but plump, and finely rounded out into womanhood. Upon a smooth, intellectual forehead were distinctly pencilled handsomely arched eyebrows beneath which sparkled a pair of very dark blue eyes that looked as if 'they could melt in love or kindle in war.' Her complexion was exceedingly fair and her teeth regular and of pearly whiteness. In her cheeks the rose vied with the lily, and upon her chin was a dimple which added much to her facial beauty. The moment she stepped into the carriage her beauty attracted the attention of all the men and excited the envy of some women.

Many eyes were turned upon her, but none in a more enraptured and fixed gaze than those of Colonel Mellen a broker in Wall Street who was reported to be very wealthy. The Colonel was about forty-five years of age, of handsome face, pleasing address and voluble tongue. He sat opposite to this young parasol maker, and fastened his black eyes upon her as the wily serpent fastens his upon the innocent bird which he intends to charm and draw into his devouring jaws.

Although the Colonel had a wife, and a daughter about sixteen years old; yet his eyes never turned away from beauty whenever they happened to discover it, but with extreme reluctance. The more he gazed upon this beautiful girl, the more his blood was fired and the more anxious he was to make her acquaintance. The stage turned into Bleeker Street, and he resolved he would alight when she did, whenever that might be. On went the stage, and passed several blocks in Bleeker Street, and at last the girl pulled the strap and give the driver notice to rein in his horses. She rose to hand her sixpence up to the driver, when the Colonel very politely offered to pass up the money for her. She permitted him to do so and promptly thanked him.

He descended from the stage first, and then took her hand to help her down. She had not been accustomed to such polite attention from a gentleman of his cloth, and felt very much flattered by it.

Her heart was proud and ambitious, and she had sometimes indulged the hope that her beauty might win not only a handsome, but also a rich husband. Such fancies did occasionally flit across her mind and made her heart beat quick with hopes of a higher and more honorable life than that of covering parasols, at a few shillings a week.

'A very fine evening,' he said, as her feet struck the pavement. 'It is almost too pleasant to be crowded into these rumbling, noisy, slow stages.'

'It is, indeed, sir, a lovely evening, and I had a great mind to walk home; but I was somewhat fatigued and I thought I would ride,' she said, in a very musical voice as they reached the sidewalk together.

'I suppose your employment is very fatiguing,' added. 'What is it?'

'Covering parasols,' she replied, with a smile on her countenance, and gazing up into his face.

'Covering parasols!' he repeated, smiling, and taking her rather delicate and small hand in his. 'It seems to me this hand was not made for such a hard employment. You are more fit to grace a drawing room than to sit and sew all day in a parasol manufactory.'

'I don't know, sir, about that,' she added. 'It was my luck to be poor, and so I must work, starve, or be supported by public charity. And so long as my fingers are not rheumatic I think I shall continue to ply the needle rather than to depend upon public or individual charity.'

'I admire your spirit much, and do not consider me a mere flatterer, when I say I admire your beauty more,' he added, pressing her hand, which was still in his and fondly gazing into her bewitching face upon which a gas lamp threw its brilliant rays.'

'It may be a difficult matter to tell when a gentleman flatters, or when he

does not,' she said. 'I have no beauty to boast of, and not enough to attract the attention of such a gentleman as you appear to be. I should suppose that so good looking a person as you are would have been married years ago.'

'I should have been married years ago, if such a girl as you are had just crossed my track,' he added, smiling, and again pressing her hand more warmly.

'O, sir, you have seen thousands of girls more beautiful than I am,' she replied. 'Hundreds upon hundreds day after day promenade Broadway. If you talk so I shall certainly begin to think you intend to flatter me.'

'I say frankly and honestly that I have never seen one in Broadway or elsewhere whose beauty has struck my fancy so much as yours,' he added. 'And I mean what I say. I believe thus far in life I have not been accused of being a flatterer, and surely I am too far advanced in life to begin such a course now. Do you board at this house?'

'I do,' she answered. 'I have boarded here ever since I came to the city, and have found it a very good place.'

'I should be pleased to walk with you awhile, if you are not engaged,' he said. 'I wish to have some more conversation with you than we can well have standing here.'

'I don't know, sir, as I ought to walk with a stranger,' she replied.

'O, you need not be afraid of walking with a bachelor like me,' he added. 'If a younger man had given you the invitation, perhaps you would be wise in declining it. My motives are pure, and I really feel as if I should like a further acquaintance with you.'

She finally consented to his proposal, and, after carrying her bundle into the house came out and innocently took his arm. They walked into a cross street where pedestrians were less numerous. He was very familiar, pleasant and agreeable, and she began to feel quite an interest in him.

True, he was old enough to be her father; but then she had the more confidence in him on that account. If he

had been a young man, she would not have consented to accompany him, stranger to her as he was. She felt some anxiety to ascertain whether he was rich or not; but that curiosity was now satisfied so far as his declarations could satisfy it.

'I have been long engaged in business in the city and have accumulated money enough to retire from active employment,' he said. 'Now I very seriously think of marrying and enjoying life. Why should a man continually struggle for money until he drops into the grave and loses all the enjoyment of it as many do; I intend to pursue a wiser course. To tell you the truth, I have resolved to wed just as soon as I could find a girl who pleased me, and now I think I have found one.'

'I fear you will not like me so well at a second interview as you appear to now,' she said. 'Gentlemen sometimes as well as the ladies find themselves mistaken.'

'True, but then I think I shall love you the more the oftener I meet you,' he added, pressing her arm close to his side, and speaking in a subdued tone of voice as they were just elbowing their way through a crowd who had collected in front of an old dilapidated house to witness a pulling of hair between two Irish women.

'O, I'm glad we got safely through that crowd!' she said. 'The women were drunk were they not? What dreadful swearing. I am glad I was not alone, for I should not have dared to pass them.'

'You need not be alarmed when you have me for a guide and protector,' he said. 'And I will not only guide and protect you this evening, but will also protect you through life if you will consent to such an arrangement.'

'I should be willing if I had more acquaintance with you, she replied.

'You shall have more acquaintance with me, if you please,' he added. 'I hope and trust this will not be our last interview. As at present advised, I will make you my wife.'

'O, sir, I'm not suitable for a gen

tleman's wife,' she quickly replied. 'I am but a poor girl.'

'And I'll make you a rich lady,' he added. 'I have the means, and not only the means, but also the disposition to do so. It is for you to say whether you will or not, continue to slave yourself with your needle, or place yourself under my care and protection, and become a lady of wealth and fashion. I am really in earnest.'

'O, sir, it comes upon me so sudden,' she replied, in a voice of trembling. 'I hardly know what to say. You appear to be honest, but thousands appear thus in this great city who prove to be cruel and dishonest.'

'You speak the truth, and I would sincerely warn you against all such persons,' he said. 'I suppose some gentlemen have already addressed you, have they not?'

'Quite too many, but I did not fancy them,' she replied. 'I accompanied a man to the museum one evening. He boards where I do, and is a very steady mechanic.'

'A mechanic!' he repeated, smiling. 'Your beauty will give you a much better chance for a husband than to become the wife of a mechanic. Mechanics are poor, and I'm sure you ought to have a rich husband. Did he say anything about love to you?'

'O, no, not in so many words; but he spoke of getting a wife, and asked me how I should like to be married,' she replied.

'And what was your answer to the young mechanic?' he anxiously inquired.

'I told him I was in no hurry to be married,' she replied.

'A very good answer, indeed,' he said, laughing, and pressing her arm to his side. 'I hope you will not be in a hurry to become a mechanic's wife, for if you do, you will be obliged to work quite as hard as you now do. Have you ever been any where else with him?'

'I went once with him to Burton's theatre,' she replied. 'That is all, except I have walked out with him several times; but I should not have done

that, only we have boarded at the same house together for nearly six months.'

'What is his mechanical business, and his name?' he asked, beginning to fear he might have a more formidable rival than he at first imagined.

'He is a mason, and his name is George Stedman,' she replied. 'He came from New Hampshire, where I was born and brought up, until I came here about two years ago.'

'Then you came from the Granite State, did you?' he asked.

'Yes, sir, that is my native State,' she replied.

'And it is mine, too,' he said, laughing, and pressing the palm of his hand upon the back of hers. 'I was born in Portsmouth, and lived there until I was twenty-one years of age, and then came to this city to seek my fortune.'

'Were you, indeed, born in Portsmouth?' she asked. 'I was born in Old Hampton not far off from the place of your birth.'

'Indeed!' he added. 'I have been at Hampton many times, and on the beach and Boarshead. Those are delightful places. Hampton Beach is a delicious place in the summer. It would give me great pleasure to accompany you there at some future day.'

'O, I have run on the beach many a time, and been out on the sea in a boat,' she said. 'My father was a fisherman, but he died soon after I was born, so that I have no recollection of him.'

'Did you ever have any brothers or sisters?' he asked.

'None. I was an only child,' she replied. 'And would you have a fisherman's daughter?'

'Yes, if she were as beautiful as you are,' he answered. 'I care nothing about your origin. My father was by no means a wealthy man, but I was resolved to be, and have very well succeeded. But about this young bricklayer. Have you thought of becoming his wife? That is what I desire to know.'

'I could not help thinking of such a thing because he has spoken of it,' she replied.

'But do you love him?' he anxiously

inquired. 'Because if you love him I am quite sure you cannot love me.— And surely I don't want a wife who has given her heart or any portion of it to another.'

'I will answer your question frankly,' she replied. 'I never have loved him, but have every reason to believe that he loves me. And it is possible I might consent to have him at some future day, if I did not receive a better offer. I have never given him much encouragement any way. The truth is, he doesn't happen to strike my fancy, although he is a very industrious young man.'

'He don't strike your fancy so well as I do, does he?' he asked, smiling, and chucking her under the chin.

She made no direct answer to his question, but left him to infer and an negative one. They now returned to her boarding house; but before they separated, he kissed her and she promised to meet him again at a certain time and place, and gave him her name which was Jane Clark.

## CHAPTER II.

THE EMOTIONS OF A LOVER UNDER CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES. THE BEGGAR GIRL. THE PITY OF A GOOD WOMAN, AND GENEROUS IMPULSES OF HER DAUGHTER. THE ABODE OF MISERY AND WRETCHEDNESS.

IT so happened that the young mason George Stedman had just opened the front door of the boarding house as Jane and the Colonel separated. He was not in season to see him impress a passionate kiss upon her fresh and rosy lips, but he saw that some gentleman had been waiting upon her, and that circumstance made the blood creep coldly about his heart. The boarders had all taken supper, and young Stedman noticed that Jane's seat at the table was vacant. That fact made him feel quite uneasy, for she was always at home at supper time, and when he saw her part from a very gentlemanly looking man on the sidewalk in front of the house; the pulsations of his

warm heart were very much quickened and he felt some strange emotions.

George Stedman was a smart, industrious, well-principled young man, but rather diffident in his intercourse with the young ladies. He could not, however, be considered a very bashful person in any other relation in life except when he was in company with females.

The first time he saw the parasol maker he was smitten with her beauty and charms, but that only made him the more diffident when in her presence. His love he kept concealed from her and from all his companions for a long time, and it was like a fire shut up in his bones. Very gradually after the lapse of months, he began to make advances to the beautiful Jane, but did so with much diffidence. It was evident to all the boarders and to Jane, herself, that he fancied her more than he did any girl, and yet he imagined that he had succeeded in concealing his feelings from their view.

Much to his surprise, his friends began to joke him upon the subject even before he had ever walked a step with her alone or accompanied her to any public place of amusement. Several other young men were pleased with her, some of whom had been bold enough to get her consent to walk with them. Such things hurried young Stedman along, and made him attempt to break away from his diffidence. Although he was bashful, yet Jane liked him better than she did any other young man who had addressed her. She knew well enough what his feelings were notwithstanding for a long time he endeavored to conceal them.

As Jane parted with her new and apparently warm-hearted lover and turned to go into the house, she saw young Stedman and felt rather unpleasantly. She was somewhat excited not only at seeing her lover standing in the door at that particular juncture, but also at what had passed between her and Col. Mellen during their long walk. However, she boldly ascended the steps and met her lover in the door way. More bold she would have felt, if she had

known particularly that the young man did not witness the kiss the Colonel gave her at parting.

When he came from his work that evening, he anticipated much pleasure from having a walk with her, but alas! how suddenly that cup of bliss was dashed to the ground ere it had reached his lips! Both were very much excited and hardly knew what to say as they met; but Jane had to break the ice and speak first.

'Good evening, George,' she said. 'I suppose you have all taken tea.'

'Yes, some time ago,' he replied. 'I should think an hour at least.'

'I declare I did not think I had been gone so long!' she added. 'But the evening is so very pleasant that I have walk farther than I intended to. And having worked rather harder to day than usual. I thought I would walk and see if that would not make me feel better.'

'It seems to me your walk from down town up here would have been sufficient,' he said, in a very tremulous voice.

'It would, but I was foolish enough to ride,' she said. 'I was sorry I did ride after I reached home, but then I had a bundle to bring, and I confess I am so proud that I do not love to be seen in the street with a bundle.'

'Did I not see a gentleman conversing with you?' he asked, in a voice that told plainly how very deeply he felt.

'O, yes, I fell in company with an elderly gentleman, and he walked along with me,' she replied.

'Do you know the gentleman's name?' he asked.

'I do not, for I did not question him upon the subject,' she answered. 'He said he once lived in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, and finding I came from the same State he was more sociable on that account.'

'You must be cautious how you converse with gentlemen in the street, for it is ten to one that such men are no better than they should be.'

'I am aware of that; but then this gentleman is old enough to be my fa-

ther, and appeared very honest and sociable, she added.

'There are libertines in this city of all ages, and old ones are the most to be feared,' he said. 'All will appear very honest and polite; but then they are not to be trusted.'

'I presume all you say is true,' she replied. 'But I shall look out for such characters, and don't think I shall be deceived by them.'

'I hope not,' he added. 'You know Jane, we have been together a good deal, and I did hope we understood each other. My attentions to you have sprung from the purest motives.'

'O, George, I never doubted your motives,' she said. 'But I am not aware that there is any particular understanding between us now. We are friends, no more!'

'No more!' he repeated, while a shade of sorrow came over his honest face. 'No more! I did hope we were sincere lovers.'

'Dear me,' she quickly added. 'You cannot imagine that we love each other enough to warrant our marriage. Besides, we are not in a situation to be married. We are poor, and surely it is not prudent for us to think of forming such a connection.'

He cast his eyes upon the floor and appeared sad and thoughtful for a few moments while she was anxious to pass into the house and have no more conversation at that time. She stepped over the threshold of the door, and was about to pass him he roused up from this thoughtful mood and spoke.

'Since I have been twenty-one years of age I have laid up nearly a thousand dollars, and my business is now good. It is true, I have worked hard and been very prudent and economical, and I am willing to continue to work for the sake of living with you.'

'O, George, I know you are a good-hearted and industrious fellow, but we all have our fancies,' she said. 'I must love the man I wed with my whole heart, but you have not my whole heart. I like you and am your sincere friend, but not your lover.'

He sighed, and she passed him, and

entered the house. Taking a hasty meal, she repaired to her room and there soliloquised in the following strain.

'George does indeed love me, and I should have loved him but for that gentleman. I wonder what I had better do? The gentleman is rich, and I am sure he is very pleasant and agreeable. How he did stare at me in the omnibus. I knew then I struck his fancy, but did not think he would follow me so. I have heard of love at first sight, and this seems to be an instance of it. He certainly loves me if ever a man loved a woman in the world. I could hear his heart beat while he was walking with me. And how smooth his hand felt. If I should be his wife, George would feel strangely. I pity him, but he never talked so plain to me before, and I didn't suppose he had a thousand dollars. But no doubt that gentleman has a hundred times as much money, and if I marry him I shall at once become a lady. No doubt mother would advise me to have him. I feel very much interested in him, and how affectionately he kissed me! He's a fine looking man, too. There is a good deal of difference between him and George Stedman. But I must think of the affair until I again meet him to-morrow evening.'

Thus this proud, beautiful, ambitious girl communed with her own agitated spirit, while George Stedman went to his own room and brooded over his melancholy thoughts. He was much troubled, and for a short time the night of despair settled upon his soul. But he was a young man of too much spirit to be so cast down that he could not attend to his business. It was indeed, a severe struggle, but he had courage to bear up under it.

Had he known at the time what had passed between his beloved Jane and Colonel Mellen he might, and probably would have been more severely oppressed than he was, but that matter was kept a secret in Jane's own bosom, and he was the last person to whom she would have revealed it. But we must now turn to other scenes in this drama of city life.

While Jane and Colonel Mellen were thus walking, arm in arm, and making love in the streets, Mrs. Mellen and her daughter, Ida met a young girl about ten years of age in Canal Street, who had in her hand some half dozen ivory toothpicks.

The girl was quite ragged and dirty, yet her form and face were very beautiful, and her hair dark and fine. She approached Mrs. Mellen and her daughter in a very humble and imploring manner. The good woman was at once struck with the girl's beauty and innocent face, and became interested in her.

'Will you please buy a toothpick?' asked the girl, in trembling accents, while tears were in her bright, blue eyes, and her lips quivered. 'I ask four pennies apiece for them. Mother is sick, and father is ———.'

Here the poor girl sobbed and could not finish the sentence. The good woman's heart was instantly touched with the most lively sympathy, and she was deeply interested.

'What is your name?' inquired Mrs. Mellen, anxiously gazing into the girl's face, and feeling her heart swell with pity and compassion.

'Hattie Hamblin,' replied the poor girl, still sobbing, as if her heart would break.

'And where do you live?' asked the good woman.

'In Orange Street,' answered Hattie. 'Mother is quite sick, and poor father will ———.'

'Your father will what?' inquired Mrs. Mellen.

'Whip me if I don't sell these toothpicks,' replied Hattie.

'Whip you!' repeated the kind woman. 'Whip you. That is very bad. But what were you going to say about your father just now?'

'O, he wants the pennies I get to buy rum,' replied Hattie, looking very sad, and sorrowful.

'My dear girl, your answer is what I expected,' added Mrs. Mellen.

'Will you please buy my toothpicks?' asked Hattie, imploringly. 'It is now almost dark and I haven't sold but one

all day. Do buy them and then father won't whip me.'

Mrs. Mellen was so overcome with the sad story of the girl that she could hardly speak. Her daughter, too, also felt emotions of pity for the sufferer.

'And will your father take the pennies and buy rum with them, them, if I purchase your articles?' inquired Mrs. Mellen.

'He will send me after the rum!' answered Hattie. 'Will you please to buy some.'

'Have you had any thing to eat today?' asked the woman.

'I had a little piece of bread in the morning,' replied the girl. 'I have had nothing since.'

'O, mother, I'll step into that store and buy her a loaf of bread,' said Ida, looking at a shop window in which were some loaves of bread.

'Father had rather have rum than bread,' added Hattie.

'I'll get the bread for you to eat,' continued Ida. 'I do not buy it for your father.'

'I thank you kindly,' added Hattie, gazing towards the shop window as if she was very hungry.

Ida started off for the bread, prompted by a very benevolent impulse. She soon returned, bearing a loaf and giving it to the girl who thanked her many times, and began to eat it with a good relish.

Ida was much pleased to see the poor girl eat as if it was a luxurious meal. Ida was a spirited; but kind-hearted girl. Her impulses were easily excited at scenes of distress, and she was very liberal. Hattie continued to eat and often looking kindly at the fair giver; but hunger was far from being the only desire which was in her heart, for she was seriously thinking of what her father would do when she arrived home without pennies enough to purchase his accustomed allowance of liquid poison.

'O, I wish I could by bread instead of rum,' said Hattie, after a short pause, during which Mrs. Mellen and her daughter were anxiously looking at her.

'Dear me!' said Mrs. Mellen. 'I wish so, too. Does your mother like rum, too?'

'O, no, indeed!' replied Hattie.—'She often cries when father sends me after it.'

'We will accompany you home and see your mother,' added Mrs. Mellen.

'I dare not go home until these tooth-picks are sold,' said the poor girl.

'Well, then, I will pay you more than your articles are worth and you may keep them to sell for yourself,' said Mrs. Mellen, giving the girl a dollar.

'O, I thank you many times,' said Hattie. 'Now I will go home. And may I have this bread to carry to my mother?'

'Certainly, my dear,' replied the good woman. 'And will go with you and see how sick your mother is.'

The girl's countenance brightened up, and she led the way, followed by the good woman and her daughter.—Mrs. Mellen had been many times deceived by the street beggars, and found their stories entirely false. She was now resolved to ascertain whether this honest looking and beautiful girl was a deceiver or not.

They hurried along, for it was now growing dark, and many of the streets had been already lighted up. Soon they reached an old wooden house in Orange Street.

'This is where we live,' said Hattie, descending some dirty, slippery broken steps into a dark, damp, unsavory room in the cellar.

There were many little, dirty, ragged children, several squalid women, and some half intoxicated men, standing on the sidewalk through whom they had to pass before reaching the steps that led down to the subterranean abode of this beautiful girl and her poor miserable parents.

As they entered the room Mrs. Mellen and her daughter saw at a glance that little Hattie had not deceived them, but told the truth. In one corner of the room there was a bed of rags on which Hattie's mother lay, apparently quite sick. It was quite dark, and they could see but dimly.

'Who's there?' asked the sick woman, in a feeble, tremulous voice.

'Some kind ladies,' answered Hattie. 'They have given me some bread, and money, too.'

'The lord bless them,' said the poor, sick woman. 'Light that piece of a candle, and do let me see such kind people.'

Hattie soon lit the candle whose feeble rays revealed a sight terrible to behold. There was but a single chair in the room, and that was old and rickety. There were two wooden stools, a old pine table, a small, rusty, broken cook stove, a few dishes, and a pile of straw which Hattie's father occupied as his bed. Upon the walls of the room hung some old ragged dresses and an old coat covered with mud, and on the floor was an old hat with the crown knocked out and a part of the rim torn off. Such was the furniture of this subterranean abode.

Soon as the candle began to throw its feeble light about the room, Mrs. Mellen went to the bed on which the sick woman lay, who extended her emaciated and trembling hand.

'May Heaven bless you, lady, for coming to this abode of misery,' said the sick woman.

Mrs. Mellen was so much overcome by her own emotions that she could not at the moment utter the feelings that pressed her heart. The woman was much emaciated, and her countenance was haggard and forlorn, yet there were some traces of the beauty which she once possessed. It was evident to Mrs. Mellen, that the poor woman had seen much better days.

## CHAPTER II.

THE UNDERGROUND SICK ROOM. THE STORY OF THE DRUNKARD'S WIFE. AN APPALLING SCENE. THE EMOTIONS OF A BENEVOLENT HEART.—THE EFFECTS OF ALCOHOL ON HUMANITY.

'I AM exceedingly sorry to see you so sick,' said Mrs. Mellen. 'How long have you been thus confined?'

'About a week to my bed, if what I lay upon can be called a bed,' replied Mrs. Hamblin. 'But I have been out of health nearly a year, I worked as long as I could stand and here I am. God only knows how long I shall continue, I should be willing to die, if it were not for leaving Hattie, my only child. She is now the only tie that binds me to the earth. My husband! O, I know not what to say. He was kind once, but the demon rum has destroyed all his kind feelings, and has burnt out the heart that used to love me and my little daughter. O, the thought to me is more terrible than death.'

'Where is your husband now?' asked Mrs. Mellen, anxiously gazing upon the sick woman.

'I know not, indeed,' she replied.—'He went out swearing, and said he would hunt up Hattie. O, lady, he wants Hattie to go after some rum for him! He makes her go out every day to sell small articles and to beg, and then drink up at night all she gets. He has a terrible raging thirst for rum. If it were not for that we might live happily as we once did; but alas, he thinks more of his liquor than he does of me, or his only child! God be thanked that I never gave birth to but child. O, madame, I was once happy, and should be again if it were not for rum. That has destroyed all my earthly happiness, and made my husband almost a demon. But I will not farther trouble you with an account of my sufferings.'

'Yes, do go on, my dear woman, and give me the story of your life,' said Mrs. Mellen.

'You seem to feel an interest in me, and would to Heaven you had only the power to cure my husband of drinking, but alas, I fear no earthly power can do it. I did not look once as I do now. When I was a girl I was considered good-looking, but trouble has wonderfully changed my looks; at least, I think I must have changed much within a few weeks; but I have no glass in which to see my face. The last mirror I had, my husband sold for rum some weeks ago. True, it was small,

but it was better than none; but I begged of him not to sell it, but his thirst for liquor overcame my remonstrances. You ask for the story of my life. I will give it you briefly. I was born and have always lived in this city. I was the only daughter of my parents who were honest, industrious and once well off. They were not rich, but were independent and lived respectably.—father was a grocer, and did a profitable business, but he signed his name for a friend who failed, and by the operation lost all his property. His health was somewhat feeble previous to that event, and after it occurred he rapidly declined and went down to the grave leaving my mother entirely destitute. But we struggled on and lived comfortably, supporting ourselves with our needles, and practicing the most rigid economy. A few months previous to the death of my father, Mr. Hamblin my present husband fell in love with me. He was a very handsome young man whose father had died a year before I became acquainted with the son. He left him more than thirty thousand dollars, but with no trade or profession upon which he could rely for a living in case he should waste or lose his money. When I married him I knew he was somewhat wild and expensive in his habits, but I thought he would become more steady after our marriage, for I knew he loved me deeply, sincerely. True, I was not aware of all his bad habits, if I had been I should not have become his wife. He was fond of good diners, gay company and wine, but he was addicted to the vice of gambling of which I was ignorant for a long time. His father had never taught him any trade and required of him but very little industry or work. His father loved and greatly indulged him, but knew not that he gambled. That vice he adroitly concealed from his father. In drinking wine he but followed the example of his father who indulged in that habit rather freely after the death of his wife and towards the close of his own life.

'O, then, how important that parents

should set good examples before their children,' said Mrs. Mellen. 'I have known several young men who became sots in consequence of their fathers being great wine bibbers. It pains my heart when I think of such things; but I would not interrupt you.'

The sick woman continued. 'About a year after our marriage I began to suspect that my husband was addicted to some other bad habits beside drinking, but what I knew not, and dared not ask him. He was frequently away from home very late of nights which very much disturbed the peace of my mind, and made me quite unhappy. I very well knew that his habit of drinking increased, but that did not trouble me so much as other habits which I feared he might be guilty of. Sometimes I thought of one thing and then of another, but could not satisfy myself about any thing. I noticed changes came over him, and did not believe they could all proceed from drinking. Often in the morning he would look sad and sorrowful, and my heart was grieved to see him thus, but dared not inquire into the cause lest it might disturb his peace. Thus affairs went on for a long time, until one morning he rose, turned out some brandy and drank it. That was no very unusual occurrence, and would not have induced me to speak to him, if he had not sighed while he was drinking, and tears had not stood trembling in his eyes. He was evidently much troubled. He drank his brandy and wiped away his tears. My heart was full and I could not help speaking to him.

'Are you not well this morning?' I asked, in trembling, broken accents.—He gazed upon me in silent sadness. His lips quivered, and he shook as if he had suffered a paralytic stroke, and apparently he could not give utterance to the emotions that agitated his soul.

'Tell me, dear husband, what is it that troubles you so much,' I continued. 'You ought not to fear to frankly tell your wife all. Do I not love you?—And would not I make any sacrifice for your good?'

'Yes, yes,' he replied. 'And that is what adds to my troubles! O, God, would that I had been willing to make sacrifices for your good. But now it is too late. Yes, too late.'

He buried his face in his handkerchief, and wept bitterly. The tears started from my eyes, and I could not speak for some time. We stood weeping and trembling beside each other. I knew not the cause of his extreme agony, but supposed he might have committed some crime, the punishment for which would separate us. Most keen was my anguish, and I struggled to speak.

'What is the matter?' I anxiously inquired. 'Speak, husband, and tell me. This suspense is more than I can bear.'

'Yes, yes, it is too late!' he muttered partly to himself and partly to me.

'Why too late,' I asked. 'Speak, and tell me all.'

'I am a gambler, and have lost all,' he exclaimed, in a voice whose terrible tones pierced the inmost recesses of my soul.

'Quick as the lightning's flash I saw it all, and was somewhat relieved from the heavy weight that pressed down my heart.

'I thank Heaven it is no worse,' I exclaimed after a moment's pause.

'What can be worse?' he asked, trembling from head to foot.

'O, husband, I feared you had committed some terrible crime the punishment for which would separate us forever,' I replied. 'What if all our money is gone; I can work and support us. If you will quit drinking, we can yet be happy. And you can find some kind of business that may help us along. Be not discouraged. We will be happy yet.'

'Business,' he repeated, gazing upon me wildly. 'Business! My father never taught me any thing like business. He left me money and nothing else, and now that is all gone. Would to God he had taught me some trade instead of leaving me money, and then I should have been a better man. But it is too late!'

'Not too late, dear husband,' I said, trying to encourage him, and hoping he might abandon his cups.

'Do you think so?' he anxiously inquired, gazing intently upon me.

'Surely I do,' was my answer. 'We can earn a living, and be as happy as we ever were.'

'His countenance brightened up a little and I felt relieved, hoping that he would become a sober man and believing we might get along very well. Hattie was then five years old and the pet of her father. I was quite sure that he would gamble no more, for he had nothing to gamble with. He had lost all except our clothes and the furniture in our house. The latter was mortgaged for quite as much as it was worth. Our furniture was valuable, and I immediately, with his consent, disposed of the most valuable portion of it and took the money myself; but it was sold for less than one half of what it cost. To me it seemed a terrible sacrifice to make, but I knew there was no other course.

'In a short time the house was taken from us and I hired two rooms in an old house in which two other families lived. My husband drank less than he used to, and that circumstance encouraged me. I had a few hundred dollars which I held most sacred. He tried to do something for our support; but his education and habits had been such that he did not know how to do any kind of business. Occasionally I let him have money to purchase liquor with, and continued him to use it prudently and economically. He did so for some time, but his thirst was not only kept alive by such a course, but also increased. I was really afraid that if he abstained entirely that he would die, his nervous system was so shattered. I knew not then so much as I do now. I took in washing and worked even beyond my physical strength.—Thus I struggled along, all the time hoping that he would quit his habit of drinking. He always said he would, and I have no doubt he intended to do so at some future day. But, alas! that day has never come.'



'He continued to drink, and the effects of the liquor began to sour his disposition and make him cross. O, madame, such effects I dreaded more than every thing else.

'In the course of two years my money was all gone notwithstanding I had sold more of my furniture and reduced it so low that I had no articles but those which absolute necessity required.— Again we moved into a house where the rent was still cheaper. After my money was all gone, he would occasionally take some articles and sell them for rum while I was working day and night to furnish ourselves food and clothing.

'At last he took the ring my mother gave me and sold it for rum. Yes, and a Bible my father gave me went the same way. I began to be discouraged and would have died most willingly but for my only daughter. That tie which bound me to earth I could not think of breaking.'

'When Hattie was eight years old he began to send her out to beg, and the pennies she received he spent in the purchase of liquor. There was a terrible disease in his stomach which no remedy could cure. To gratify his raging thirst he would make any sacrifice. His whole nature appears to be changed, and every thing yields to that fatal disease in his stomach. His appetite seems to be burned all out by alcoholic drinks, even that natural love which a parent feels for his own offspring. True, sometimes he will show some evidence of his former affection; but it is like the meteor's flash in a dark place, only making the darkness more intense after it has passed. These occasional flashes of his former love only serves to bring to memory happier days and to make the contrast more terrible. O, madame, no tongue can describe the agonies I have felt. Thus you have some of the incidents of my life. And may Heaven grant that no other woman shall experience them.'

'O, dear woman, you have touched the chords of my heart and they vibrate most thrillingly,' said Mrs. Mellen. 'I wish your husband would come that I

might talk with him. It seems to me that I can persuade him to a better course.'

'Would to Heaven, you could!' said this unfortunate wife. 'But I dare not even hope! I have used all my powers of persuasion; but without any good effect. Once he would seem to listen to me kindly and resolve that he would reform; but the lion, appetite, would be roused within him, and his resolution would shrink before it.'

'And does he chastise Hattie, when she does not bring home any money?' asked Mrs. Mellen.

'O, my God! would that I could answer that question in the negative,' replied the sick woman. 'But alas! truth forbids it. He has done so within a few months. It is terrible to think of. But what will rum not do?'

'True, too true,' answered Mrs. Mellen. 'Its effects upon both soul and body are most appalling. Strange it has such power.'

They now heard the grum, angry voice of Mr. Hamblin as he stood on the steps that led down to his miserable abode, scolding at a group of boys who were pointing the finger of scorn at him and ridiculing him. He ran after and scattered them, but they would return upon him again and call him by sundry opprobrious names. 'These boys, too, were ragged and dirty as well as very saucy.'

'Even the ragged boys ridicule him,' exclaimed the sick wife. 'O, my God, how low he has sunken.'

At that moment the bloated drunkard descended the steps and entered the room, and some dirt and sticks followed him, thrown by the boys as he tottered down the steps into his subterranean abode.

His face was bloated, his eyes blood-shot, his clothes dirty and ragged, and one half of the rim of his old hat was gone. His appearance as the feeble rays of a single candle shone upon him was most appalling, and yet in his bloated face were some vestiges of his former manly beauty.

He gazed upon Mrs. Mellen and her daughter for a moment in silence, and

then sank down upon a wooden stool. No word was uttered by any one in the room.

Mrs. Mellen gazed upon him with most intense feelings, and scarcely knew what to say. His appearance was such that the hope she had of ever reforming him or reaching his heart almost died out in her breast. He did not seem to her at first as if he was a man, for he looked more like a beast. He hung his chin on his breast and was moody and silent.

His wife breathed hard, and that was the only sound in the room. Hattie trembled as she held by the skirts of the good woman's dress, while tears came into Ida's eyes.

It was an appalling scene, such as cannot be witnessed even by the most indifferent without shuddering. In the following chapter will be recorded what was said on the occasion.

#### CHAPTER IV.

THE DRUNKARD AND HIS DAUGHTER. SCENES IN LOW LIFE. THE RUMSELLING GROCERY. SOTTISH LOAFERS. THE APPEALS AND ARGUMENTS OF A GOOD WOMAN. THEIR EFFECTS.

A TERRIBLE silence reigned in the drunkard's home, if home it could be called. At last the drunkard roused up from his stupor, and spoke to his daughter, in a hoarse, broken voice.

'Come here, Hattie,' he said, turning his bloodshot eyes upon his trembling daughter.

With beating heart and trembling steps she approached her father, in silence. Mrs. Mellen's eyes were upon them and her ears open to catch the slightest sound.

'How many pennies have you got to-day?' he asked, in a low, husky voice.

'That lady gave me some money, for my toothpicks and then gave them back to me,' replied Hattie, in a low, trembling accents.

'Yes, the girl speaks the truth,' added Mrs. Mellen, approaching the drunkard and feeling strange emotions. 'And the money I gave her must not go for rum.'

He looked up at her with his swollen eyes, but made no reply.

'You have a sick and suffering wife who needs some things to make her comfortable; and the money must go for them and not for liquor, that has almost destroyed both your soul and body,' continued Mrs. Mellen. 'Don't you think such is the best course? I will go out with Hattie and buy such things as your wife needs, but no liquid poison; for neither you nor she needs that. Shall I do so?'

'You can do as you please,' he replied, in a dry, husky voice. 'But let her buy me only one pint of new rum.'

'O, no, not a drop of the poison!' she said. 'I furnish the money, and have a right to say how it shall be expended.'

He gazed upon her, but made no answer. He was sullen and silent.— She and her daughter and Hattie now left the room and went to Mr. Stillman's grocery.

There were several drunken loafers in the store, and Stillman was pouring out the poison for them, and they were guzzling it down and using profane language.

It was an awful scene for Mrs. Mellen, but she was a resolute as well as a benevolent woman, and not easily frightened.

The rum seller was somewhat surprised to see such ladies as Mrs. Mellen and her daughter enter his store, but knew not that Hattie was in company with them. Having waited upon his drunken loafers, he turned his attention to Hattie.

'How many pennies have you tonight?' he asked. 'Where is your bottle?'

'O, shame!' said Mrs. Mellen, before Hattie had time to speak.

Stillman turned his red blowsy face towards the woman, and didn't know at first what to make of her exclamation. He was silent, and all eyes were turned towards the good woman.

'You do not seem to understand me, sir,' she continued, in a firm voice, and resolute look. 'I supposed that guilty



consciences need no accusers. I said, O, shame! Do you not understand that?

'I confess, madam, I do not exactly comprehend your meaning,' replied the rumseller.

'Do you know this little girl's father?' she asked.

'Of course I do,' he quickly replied, beginning to suspect what the woman was driving at.

'Yes, of course you do,' added the good woman. 'Where the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together. Do you not know that he is a man of intemperate habits and very poor?'

'I do, and know there are many others in the city like him,' he answered. 'And what of that?'

'What of that?' she repeated, while her lip curled with scorn and her countenance showed the deep horror she felt at the rumseller's cold indifference. 'Do you not know that the liquid poison you deal out has made Mr. Hamblin what he is? And do you say what of that? O, shame, where is thy blush!'

'I don't compel men to drink, nor even ask them to,' he replied. 'Drinking is their own voluntary act, for which I'm not responsible.'

'We have it from the highest Authority, that cursed is he who putteth the bottle to his neighbor's lips,' she added. 'And how do you expect to escape from that curse which is thus pronounced upon you?'

'I don't put the bottle to their lips,' he replied. 'They put it there themselves.'

Now a loud, hoarse laugh went up from the rum-seared throats of the poor loafers, and all their bloodshot eyes were fastened on Mrs. Mellen as if the rumseller had got the advantage of her.

'True, you don't raise it to their lips unless their hands tremble so they cannot do it themselves; but you put the liquid poison in it and tempt them, which is what is meant by the Scripture; so you cannot excuse yourself on that ground,' she added. 'The sense would

not be changed in the least degree, it is said, cursed are all rumsellers! That is the literal meaning of it, and the curse is upon you. Tremble, sinner, and abandon your wicked traffic. The time will come when you will repent in dust and ashes for these sins you are now committing. Dry up your running streams of moral death, and ask God to pardon you for what you have already done, before it is forever too late. Rumsellers often find a drunkard's grave, and your bloated face and bloodshot eyes point in that direction. The time may not be far distant ere you drop into such a grave, and the good Book says no drunkard shall enter the kingdom of Heaven. Quit this bloody business, repent of your past sins and become a man.'

The rumseller and his drunken customers stared at her in silence while she was thus talking.

Stillman knew not what to say; for he began to feel the stings of his own conscience, and the drunken loafers also felt the truth this good and resolute woman uttered.

'You are silent, and may your conscience lash you until you can find no peace so long as you continue to deal out moral death to your neighbors,' she continued.

She then turned to Hattie and asked her if there was not another grocery near by where no liquor was sold.—Hattie told her there was, and that her mother always traded there. Hattie led the way, and they hurried to another where Mrs. Mellen bought some tea, sugar, bread and several other articles which she thought Mrs. Hamblin needed.

They returned to the abode of the drunkard's wife. The husband still sat upon the stool with his head down and his thirst raging. Mrs. Mellen slyly slipped a dollar into the sick woman's hand unobserved by the drunkard.—The good woman then approached the husband and gently tapped him upon the shoulder. He roused up and stared at her in silence.

'You are naturally a kind-hearted, good man,' she said, in a pleasant voice,

'You can't tempt me to drink,' said Hamblin. 'You nor the liquor have the power to induce me to violate my pledge. No, Jordan, all the liquid poison Stillman ever sold or ever drank can tempt me; so you may be quiet on that subject, and set your heart at rest. Thank God, I am above the reach of such temptations.'

Soon as he had made that remark, Mrs. Mellen and her daughter entered the shop. Having been to see Mrs. Hamblin, and learning from Hattie that she saw her father enter Stillman's groggery; this good woman hurried to the place. She feared that he could resist no longer and gone to slake his thirst at this fountain of liquid fire.—His wife, too, indulged the same fears, and little Hattie's eyes were wet with tears.

'Good morning, Mrs. Mellen,' said Mr. Hamblin, while Jordan was holding his glass in his trembling hand, and Stillman was pouring out another for himself.

'O, sir, do leave this place!' she exclaimed. 'Touch not, taste not, and handle not, for your life! Let not a single drop pass your lips!'

'Don't be alarmed, my angel,' he replied, smiling. 'I came here not to drink, but only to beard the lion in his den.'

'Heaven be praised for that,' said she, breathing more freely, and gazing anxiously upon Hamblin's calm countenance. 'This is, indeed, bearding the lion in his den. O, if these men would abandon their cups and become sober, how much good they might do. But, alas! I fear they will still continue their terrible habits, and at last go down to a drunkard's grave. May Heaven save them from such an awful doom. Come, Mr. Hamblin, I'm going back to see your wife, and hope you will accompany me.'

'Surely I will; but I have been trying to induce my old companions to sign the pledge,' he replied. 'But they don't seem to be ready quite yet.'

'I don't think we shall make such

fools of ourselves this morning,' added the rumseller.

'Make fools of yourselves,' repeated Mr. Hamblin. 'And it is your liquor that makes fools of you. There's no dodging that.'

'O, yes, that is true,' added Mrs. Mellen.'

Stillman, now approached Mrs. Mellen, and whispered in her ear. 'Perhaps your husband may not drink much; but he runs after the women. Watch him; I know all about it.'

He waddled back again behind his counter, and felt as if he had performed a great feat.

His words penetrated her soul like iron for a moment, and almost threw her from her accustomed balance; but she soon recovered, and forced herself to believe that the rumseller had made up the story for the express purpose of giving her painful reflections, such as she had given him not long previous. He stood in front of his decanters and chuckled over his feat.

He noticed that his remarks had produced the effect he intended. No one seemed disposed to speak, and they wondered what the rumseller had whispered into the ears of Mrs. Mellen.

'Those that live in glass houses should not throw stones at their neighbors,' said Stillman, smiling, and gazing upon the good woman. 'There are some sins in this world that are quite as bad as others. Let us all remember that.'

'Don't add slander to your other sins,' she replied; feeling very indignant, but not daring to provoke him farther, lest he might speak out in the hearing of her daughter what he had whispered to her.

She immediately left the premises accompanied by Hamblin and her little daughter, while the rumseller was muttering something they did not fully hear or understand. They soon entered the humble dwelling of the reformed drunkard.

'You didn't drink any, did you, dear father?' asked Hattie, soon as he entered the room.

'Not a single drop, my dear,' he replied, folding her to his breast, and kissing her.

'O, I'm so glad!' she added, kissing back her father.

'And so am I,' he replied. 'Your father will never be a drunkard any more.'

'And then mother will be so happy,' said Hattie.

'Yes, and we shall all be happy!' added the good Ida.

'I have come this morning to inform you, Mr. Hamblin, that I have engaged two rooms for you in quite a good house where you can breathe a purer air than you can here,' said Mrs. Mellen. 'I think your wife is now smart enough to ride to the house. What few things you have can be removed to-day.'

'O, madam, how can we repay you for such kindness?' he asked, in a tone of voice that evinced the depths of his emotions.

'Adhere to your pledge is ample reward for me,' she replied. 'I ask no more.'

'And God helping me, I will!' he added.

She now gave him some money, and told him to hire a person to help him remove to the rooms she had provided for him.

Hattie was in extasies and so was her mother with the idea of leaving that dark, damp and subterranean abode. He went out and engaged a carman, and Mrs. Mellen took her leave, feeling as if she had done no more than her duty. To make one poor, distressed family happy, filled her soul with pure and unalloyed joy.

## CHAPTER IX.

THE ART AND CUNNING OF A BAWD.—  
THE HEROINE'S EMOTIONS IN HER  
NEW LOCATION. THE MEETING, AND  
ITS RESULTS. THE FIRST WORKINGS  
OF JEALOUSY.

'I CAN'T help thinking how fortunate you were in riding in the same omnibus with Colonel Mellen,' said Aunt Dumpford to Jane, as they sat in

the parlor waiting for the arrival of the Colonel. 'But for that ride he might never have seen you, and you would probably become the wife of a brick-layer. Ah, Jane, you are, indeed, a lucky girl!'

'I hope I am; but that ride may be my ruin yet,' added Jane, casting her eyes thoughtfully upon the floor, and remembering what Mrs. Comer had said to her that very day, and but a few hours previous.

'Nonsense,' added this woman. — 'Nonsense! Don't harbor such desponding thoughts, and indulge in such gloomy reflections. I wish I was a young girl and in your situation. I would not ask for a better condition in life. Yes, yes, you are, indeed, a fortunate girl.'

'Mrs. Comer, with whom I have been boarding, says the gentleman who has promised to marry me may now have a wife and family,' added Jane.

'Good gracious!' exclaimed this old hypocritical woman. 'What an idea! You did not mention his name, did you?'

'O no,' replied Jane. 'I told her nothing, only that I expected to be married.'

'You did perfectly right; for it is no person's business but your own,' said Aunt Dumpford. 'I always hate these inquisitive old women. The city's full of them.'

'Mrs. Comer is a very good woman, and told me I had better remain at her house until I was married,' replied Jane. 'She said I could have a private parlor to receive my company, and then she could see my lover, and the better judge of his character.'

'Indeed!' added this cunning housekeeper. 'She is extremely kind. She judge of Colonel Mellen's character! I reckon he would laugh if you should tell him of that. The Colonel's character needs no such endorsement. No doubt she would be glad to have you remain with her and pay a good round bill for your board. Some of these boarding house keepers are very great sponges.'

'I don't think Mrs. Comer is that

kind of character,' added Jane. 'She has always treated me kindly.'

'O, very likely she has appeared fair; but there's no knowing what is in her heart,' replied this wily woman.

'Neither do I know what may be in your heart or in Colonel Mellen's,' said Jane.

'No matter about mine; but there's nothing but love in the Colonel's heart for you,' she added. 'I'm thinking you will find us both pretty good-hearted after you are a little better acquainted with us.'

'Of course I expect to find you so,' replied Jane. 'I have no reason to doubt it.'

'I presume not,' added the woman. And by the way when the Colonel comes I suppose you will go to your own chamber.

'O, no, I had rather remain in this room,' replied Jane, being somewhat surprised at the woman's remark.

'Surely you had better retire to your own room, because you will probably be disturbed in this,' said the woman. 'Frequently I have callers in the course of the evening, and they always occupy this parlor.'

'Hav'n't you some other one below?' asked Jane.

'Don't be so squeamish,' said the woman, laughing. 'The Colonel has fixed your chamber on purpose to do his courting in until he is ready to take you to another and more splendid one. You need not be afraid of him; for he loves you as he does his own eyes. Your chamber is the largest one in the house and quite as convenient as this parlor.'

'O, the room is good enough; but it does not seem right,' added Jane.

'Not seem right when persons are courting with a honest intention of being married!' said Aunt Dumpford, laughing quite loud. 'You are a little more nice than wise. I love modesty in a young lady as well as any one; but I have no patience with unnecessary coyness, neither will the Colonel have. He would laugh at you if you should refuse to take him to your own

room. Why, courting is always done in private rooms.'

Thus she reasoned with this modest, innocent girl, and fairly argued her out of all her notions of propriety. Soon the door-bell rang, and the Colonel entered. He immediately rushed towards Jane and folded her to his breast and kissed her.

'O, my dear Jane, how happy I am to find you here,' he said. 'I had some fears that you would not come. I did not know but some of your friends would endeavor to persuade you to stay away.'

'They did try,' added Jane, blushing, and feeling strange emotions agitate her heart.

'Now I am happy because they did not succeed,' he replied.

The door-bell rung again, and the housekeeper advised them to retire to Jane's chamber. They did so, and took a seat together on a small sofa, which appeared somewhat the worse for wear.

'This is not a very elegant piece of furniture,' he said, encircling her waist with his arm, and pressing her to his side. 'But it will do well enough for the present. After we are married we shall have better.'

'O, sir, this is as good as I deserve,' she replied, nestling to free herself from his embrace, and partially succeeding; for he was cautious not to hold her too tight lest he might drive matters too fast.

'It will do for the present,' he replied. 'But it looks rather mean compared with the furniture I have bespoke to-day for our housekeeping, when we come to that.'

'I hope you do not intend to deceive me,' she added.

'Deceive you!' he repeated. 'No, my dear, nothing is farther from my heart.'

And the Colonel sealed his declaration with a warm, impassioned kiss, which flattered her that he was indeed sincere.

'I have thrown myself upon you for protection, and if you should deceive

me, I know not what I should do,' she said. 'The woman I have been boarding with, told me to-day about a girl who boarded with her. She was a very beautiful girl, much more so than I am.'

'No, no, Jane, that can't be true,' he quickly added. 'I will never acknowledge that so long as I live. By heavens, she was not so beautiful as you are.'

'I should think she was from what Mrs. Comer told me,' said Jane. 'That girl was addressed by a gentleman who promised to marry her, and at the same time he had a wife and family living.—The consequence was the poor girl was ruined, became a wanton, and died in the almshouse. If a man should serve me so I would be the death of him, if I had the power. I could never be satisfied until I had killed him. I firmly believe my revenge would not stop short of such a crime!'

'Did not he give her some money?' he asked.

'I don't know, but money would be but a poor compensation for the loss of her character and her happiness, she replied. 'I do not believe that any amount of money would satisfy my vengeance.'

'That woman only told you that story to frighten you and induce you to board with her,' he said. 'Probably no such occurrence ever happened. These female boarding housekeepers are full of strange stories.'

'Mrs. Comer is too good a woman to tell me a falsehood,' she said. 'I have not the least doubt but the story is true.'

'Well, it might have been true,' the Colonel added, wishing to avoid the subject. 'How did you come out with your employers?'

'O, they paid me; but would not unless I had followed your direction,' she replied. 'The man said he would not had he known I was going to quit him.'

'You did well,' he added. 'I suppose you had money enough to pay all your bills.'

'O yes, and did not need any of

the money that you gave me,' she answered.

'I'm very glad of it,' he said, taking her hand, and placing on her finger a handsome gold ring which pleased her very much; for she had but one, and that was very plain.

'You have a beautiful hand,' he continued, placing her hand to his lips, and kissing it. 'I wonder if that ring does not entitle me to one kiss from you.'

'I suppose I ought to give you one,' she said, smiling, and gently kissing his left cheek.

'I thank you a thousand times,' he said. 'That kiss makes me happy, and I feel as if I did not wish to be any where else but with you. Ah, how fortunate that we happened to take the same omnibus. Happened, did I say? It was ordered by a special Providence. We were made for each other. I feel it in the inmost recesses of my heart. Yes, our Creator at our births intended us to live on earth together, and blessed be His name.'

He rested his head upon her shoulder and held her hand. She could not doubt for a moment that he loved her sincerely, deeply. Yes, she believed it, and began to feel her heart warmly drawn out towards him. He was a very fine looking, fascinating, and artistic man.

He remained with her until near eleven o'clock, much longer than he was aware of, for time flew swiftly.—He found her in possession of a more determined spirit than he expected; but that only made the Colonel the more anxious.

As he left the chamber and descended the stairs, he met the housekeeper in the hall, who was curious to know how well he had succeeded.

'Well, Colonel, what success?' she asked. 'She is a very splendid girl. I do not now remember of ever having seen a more fresh and beautiful one.'

'She is an enchanting creature,' he replied. 'But I did not expect that she possessed such a resolute and determined spirit.'

'I found that out not long after she came here,' she added. 'She told me she should be tempted to murder a man who might deceive her.'

'She made the same remark to me,' he replied. 'Her revenge, she said, would not stop of actual murder.'

'That's rather alarming, is it not, Colonel?' she asked, smiling.

'It don't frighten me much,' he replied, laughing. 'She will soon love me as she does her own soul. The girl possesses a heart that can love deeply. Such girls I like.'

'Of course you do,' she added.—'You men are very cruel creatures.'

'Perhaps we are; but then your sex will fondly love us,' he added.

'True; but you must remember that a heart that has power to love, also has power to hate,' she said. 'Jane can love deeply, and she can hate quite as much. There are some peculiar traits in her character, some very strange combinations. She appears as mild as a dove, and no one would suspect that she could be aroused to any thing like indignation and revenge. But I have seen it in the expression of her dark eyes. You must manage her with consummate skill, or you may find more than your match.'

'I will take good care of that,' he replied, hearing her coming down stairs, and leaving.

'Well, Jane, the Colonel paid you a long visit,' said the housekeeper.—'When he is in your sweet company he forgets to note how fast the hours pass.'

'And from that I conclude you mean to infer that he loves me,' added Jane.

'He is in for it deep enough,' she said. 'It has resulted just as I have always told him. I knew he had a heart to love when he happened to come across the right girl. He has found her now. You have him completely within your power. He could scarcely exist without you. I have never witnessed such sudden and sincere love in any man. You are now destined to be the happiest couple in the city. I almost envy you.'

'Perhaps we shall not be so happy as you imagine,' said Jane. 'Mother has often told me there is many a slip between the cup and the lip.'

'True; but there is nothing on earth to prevent you from enjoying life,' said this crafty woman. 'He is rich, handsome, pleasant, and loves you with his whole heart, and I'm quite sure you can't help loving such a man.'

'But suppose he should deceive me?' asked Jane, with a dark, flashing eye, and a tremulous voice.

'Oh, he will never do that,' replied this lying bawd.

'And if he does, I swear before high Heaven to be revenged!' added Jane.

The housekeeper made no reply to that, but went into the parlor to extinguish the lights before retiring, and Jane soon after went back to her own chamber.

The Colonel hurried home; for his wife generally sat up for him until he came. She had been rocking herself in a chair alone, for Ida had retired. Mrs. Mellen was very far from being a jealous woman; but the words of Stillman, the rumseller, some how or other, had sunk deep into her heart, and made quite a strong impression there. And his long absence that evening tended to deepen that impression. She had become quite impatient, and wondered why he did not return. Never before had she passed such an unpleasant evening.

'Midnight and you have just returned!' she said, as he entered the parlor where she was sitting.

There was something in the tone of her voice that spoke louder to his soul than her words, and he was a very little thrown from his guard. He did not reply so soon as he ought under the circumstances; for the brief pause between her speaking and his reply made the matter worse for him.

'It is much later than I was aware of,' he replied.

'Then the company you were in must have been exceedingly agreeable,' she quickly added.

'I fell in company with some southern

gentleman at the Astor House, and the subject of slavery came up, of which there is never any end.

No more was said; but the wife was not fully satisfied; and yet she was hardly willing to believe that he had uttered a falsehood.

## CHAPTER X.

A NEW NEIGHBORHOOD. THE REMOVAL OF A FAMILY. THE NEW COMERS.—A LIBERTINE'S TROUBLES JUST COMMENCING. THE CUNNING OF A BAWD. THE PROGRESS.

THE next day after her interview with Colonel Mellen, Jane was sitting at her chamber window and saw a woman taken from a carriage and carefully led into a house upon the opposite side of the street.

Her sympathies were excited; for she believed the woman was very sick. A little girl, also, alighted from the carriage and assisted the woman. Jane thought the little girl was exceedingly beautiful; and it seemed to her that she had seen her in the street at some previous time. She recollected having seen a beggar girl who resembled this one in the face. She wore not the same dress but the same hair which, when once seen, could not easily be forgotten. Jane gazed upon the girl with much interest, and finally she was convinced that she was the same girl of whom she had once purchased a toothpick.

The truth is, the reformed drunkard and his family were removing into a house opposite to where Jane boarded. It was a singular coincidence. The husband had engaged a boarding house for his mistress opposite to the one his wife had engaged for a reformed drunkard and his family. The one was actuated by wicked motives, the other was devoted to deeds of charity and benevolence.

What a contrast between husband and wife! Jane was so much interested in the girl that she went down and called Aunt Dumpford's attention to her. They stood at a front window in the parlor below, looking at little

Hattie as she came out after some things in the carriage.

'She is a beautiful girl,' said Jane. 'I have seen her several times down town, selling ivory toothpicks, and once I bought one of her which I have now in my pocket. What bright shining curls hang over her neck and shoulders! She is quite well dressed now compared with the dress she wore when I saw her. She was quite ragged then.'

'She is handsome,' replied Aunt Dumpford, thinking what a prize she would be some five or six years hence, and wishing she could get her. 'When she is sixteen she will make sad havoc among the gentlemen's hearts, as you have on the good Colonel's. I wonder who she can be? We must endeavor to find out. Her parents are poor I should think, or they would not move into that house.'

'If I mistake not, she told me they were very poor,' added Jane. 'The girl's mother must be quite sick; for they had to lead her into the house.'

'I should like to have the girl live with me,' said Aunt Dumpford. 'But she may not appear so beautiful on a close examination as she does in the distance.'

'She does, you may depend upon that,' replied Jane.

'Her form is graceful, and her motions quick and easy,' said this old bawd.

'Indeed, they are,' added Jane, 'I should like to have her with me.'

'But you must not interfere with me; for I spoke first,' replied this wicked woman.

'See! a fine looking lady is just entering the house, accompanied by a younger one,' said Jane. 'I wonder who she can be? It is possible they may be relatives.'

'It is possible, but not very probable,' added Aunt Dumpford. 'Those ladies move in the highest circles, or I'm much mistaken.'

Now Aunt Dumpford did not know Colonel Mellen's wife and daughter, and did not once dream that these ladies were those persons.

Soon after Mrs. Mellen and Ida en-

tered the house, a carman drove up and carried a new bed and some articles of furniture in which the good woman had purchased that day for Mrs. Hamblin.

'How do you feel after your ride?' asked Mrs. Mellen.

'O, madame, even better than I did when I started!' replied the sick woman. 'You have, indeed, hired us some good rooms. It is really refreshing to me to breathe above ground once more. I feel as if I shall soon regain my health.'

'Yes, wife, we will renew our life and be happy, yet,' said Mr. Hamblin. 'And I'm determined to find something to do. I am willing to work now, and work hard, too, that I may atone for some of my past transgressions. O, what a terrible life I have lived; but I did not see it a few days ago so clearly as I do now. This good woman has been the means of saving me from a drunkard's grave!'

'And me from an untimely one,' said the sick wife.

'And me from begging pennies to buy rum with,' said Hattie, while a pleasant smile, played over her animated face, and her young heart beat with joyful emotions.

'And you might have added, she has saved you from chastisement at the hands of a drunken father!' continued the reformed drunkard. 'O, that seems to me to be the greatest of all. We shall never forget what this good lady has done for us.'

'O, no, indeed!' added Hattie. 'I shall forget to breathe first.'

'Ah, good people, you must not put your trust in the arm of flesh,' said Mrs. Mellen. Give your thanks to a Higher Power. I have done nothing but my duty. I hope this will prove a good neighborhood, and think it will; but we hardly ever know our next neighbors in this city. You will soon be well enough, I trust, to spare Hattie and let her attend school.'

'I have been thinking of that,' replied Hattie's mother. 'I will send her to school as soon as I gain a little more strength.'

Mrs. Mellen and her daughter re-

mained awhile and assisted in arranging the household affairs, and then took their leave. They had not been gone long, before Aunt Dumpford thought she would make a visit to her new neighbors and entered the house. Mr. Hamblin had gone out.

'Excuse me for this intrusion,' said Aunt Dumpford. 'When I saw you alight from the carriage I concluded you must be sick.'

'I am so, replied the sick wife.—'You need make no apology for thus visiting me; for I am glad to see you. Do you live near?'

'Just across the street, opposite,' she replied. 'And if I can do any thing for you my services are at your command.'

'You are very kind,' added Mrs. Hamblin. 'I rejoice that I have removed among such kind neighbors. I have been quite unwell for several weeks; but I hope I am getting better now.'

'I am glad to hear it,' replied Aunt Dumpford, turning her attention to Hattie. 'Is this girl your daughter?'

'She is,' replied the mother. 'She is my only child. Her name is Hattie.'

'A fine name, and charming little girl,' continued Aunt Dumpford, gazing upon Hattie, and wishing she was a few years older. 'How old are you, my dear?'

'Ten years old, last May,' replied Hattie. 'And I suppose, I am old enough to be better.'

'I do not know about that, my dear,' added Aunt Dumpford. 'You look good enough. How should you like to go and live with me?'

'O, I couldn't think of leaving father and mother, now; for we are just beginning to be happy,' said Hattie.

Miss Dumpford did not fully comprehend Hattie's meaning, and made no immediate reply. The mother noticed the fact, and explained.

'My daughter thinks we have now a better house to live in than we have recently occupied, and I think so, too,' added the mother, after a brief pause.

'Besides, my health is better, and of course we shall be happier I trust.'

'True,' said Miss Dumpford. 'I now understand. I'm glad you have made a change for the better. What ladies were those who visited you a short time since?'

'O, madame, I am indebted to the mother for this good change,' replied the sick woman. 'The elderly lady is the wife of Colonel Mellen, and the younger one is his daughter. They have been exceedingly kind to me, and I feel very grateful for their kindness.'

Miss Dumpford was much surprised on learning who the ladies were; but artfully concealed her feelings from Mrs. Hamblin.

'They are strangers to me; but I rejoice you have found such very good friends,' added Miss Dumpford. 'We all need friends in this world, and especially when we are sick.'

Indeed, we do,' replied the sick woman. 'Have you a husband?'

'O, no; I have never been married,' answered this bawd. 'And I do not regret it. I suppose I might have been when I was younger; but some how or other, I have never seen the gentleman of my choice. Some call me very particular, and perhaps I am.'

'By being so, perhaps you have avoided a world of trouble,' added Mrs. Hamblin.

'I saw a beautiful girl at the window, and supposed she might be your daughter,' said Hattie.

'O, no, my dear, she is not my daughter,' said Miss Dumpford. 'She is a niece of mine and boards with me for the present.'

This wily woman made a very favorable impression upon Mrs. Hamblin, who felt rejoiced that she had fallen among such good neighbors. Miss Dumpford very affectionately took her leave of the sick woman, and returned to her house.

Jane felt some curiosity to know who the new comers were, and questioned her housekeeper upon the subject; but the cunning woman was very careful to conceal from Jane what ladies had been there just previous to her visit.—She feared that some trouble might

grow out of having such neighbors, and was anxious to consult the Colonel upon the subject.

She knew very well it would not be safe for Jane to visit the family, nor have any conversation with Hattie, lest the wife of Colonel Mellen might be mentioned. How to avoid such a meeting was an important question; for Jane was anxious to see the little girl who was once a street beggar, and of whom she had purchased a toothpick.

Evening came, and the Colonel's well-known step was heard at the door. Miss Dumpford ushered him in and conducted him to a private room, while Jane was in her chamber.

'What's the trouble now?' he asked. 'You seem to be very anxious about something. Has my beautiful bird flown?'

'No—no, Colonel, she is in her chamber; but your wife has hired a house opposite for a poor woman, her husband and daughter, and just as true as Jane goes over there, she will learn that Colonel Mellen has a wife and daughter. Now, how can we arrange matters?'

'By heavens!' he exclaimed. 'I see how it is! I wish my wife would remain at home and not be trotting about the city in search of objects of charity. She has often spoken of this drunkard and his family, and not an hour ago told me she had hired a house for them and had them removed from a cold, damp cellar to comfortable quarters.—But she did not tell me to what place she had removed them. Jane must not see them at any rate!'

'True; but how shall I prevent her if she wishes to go,' said she. 'And no doubt she will; for she feels quite an interest in the little girl. And I can assure you she is a very beautiful girl, ten years old.'

'What a fool I was I had not changed my name when I first became acquainted with Jane,' he said. 'I have wished I had done so, and especially now do I see the importance of it.—Strange my wife should have removed the family to that house directly oppo-

site! I should have rather hired a large house and given them the rent of it than had them come here directly in the way. It is bad, very bad; and besides, my wife begins to feel the spirit of jealousy for the first time in her life, at least I have never seen any evidence of it until recently.'

'She has held out wonderfully,' said this vile woman. 'It appears to me that you could not have blinded my eyes so long, had I been your wife.'

'You don't know any thing about a wife,' he replied. 'You know nothing of their feelings, when women are married.'

'Perhaps I do not; but I think it would take a smarter man than you are to deceive me so long as you have your wife,' she added, smiling, and cocking her left eye at him, in a peculiar manner.

'Well, well, let that pass,' he quickly added. 'How has dear Jane appeared through the day? Does she give any favorable signs? Do you think she loves me?'

'I have no doubt of that; but if she finds you out, the devil will be to pay!' she replied. 'She has a violent temper when it is aroused; but she may feel differently when you have her completely in your power. Remember, she is not fully conquered yet.'

'I understand that perfectly well,' he replied. 'But perhaps the victory will be won before another sun shall rise. Let me see. Now how shall I work it about my name? That's the question. Suppose I should tell Jane that Mellen is not my name? How would that work? Come, you are cunning in such matters, and give your opinion upon the subject.'

'I can hardly see the way clear,' she replied. 'My fear is that such a course might awaken her suspicions that all is not right. As you said, it is a pity you did not give her a false name, and then the game might be the more easily played.'

'I know it, but I did not have my thoughts about me,' he replied. 'Well, you think upon the matter and so will I. After I have had an interview with

Jane, I will see you again. Perhaps some plan may occur to me. One thing is quite certain, Jane must not visit that family nor converse with that little girl.'

He now ascended the stairs, and knocked at Jane's chamber door. She was not surprised at seeing him; for she expected the visit.

## CHAPTER XI.

THE WAY A LIBERTINE TRAVELS TO OBTAIN HIS OBJECT. A SCENE NOT DESCRIBED. THE CURTAIN DRAWN. A QUARREL BETWEEN THE ABANDONED AND THE MEAN. A NEW DEVELOPMENT.

'How do you feel this evening?' asked the Colonel, taking Jane's hand, and fondly pressing it. 'The day has been a long one to me, I wanted to be with you so much.'

'I'm quite well,' she replied, blushing up to her temples, and feeling some very strange emotions. 'But, Colonel Mellen, it seems to me that I had better have remained at my old boarding house.'

'Nonsense,' my dear, he said, throwing his arm about her waist, and sitting her down upon a sofa. 'Do you suppose I should be willing to let you board at a house among so many kinds of characters? No, no, dear Jane. I don't wish to mingle in such society myself, and surely I am too proud to permit you to do so.'

'They are all respectable boarders,' she added, as he drew her close to his side, and imprinted upon her lips a warm, impassioned kiss.

'They may be so; but it is not such society as you will associate with hereafter,' he replied. 'You will move in a rank quite above bricklayers and sewing girls. They are well enough in their places; but there always was and ever will be distinctions in society.—And I confess that wealth principally causes these distinctions in this country. You must remember that you are to become the wife of a wealthy man, and of course will move in the higher circles. Those below you may be

good and virtuous, and many of them even intelligent, still the want of means necessarily keeps them in the lower, or middle ranks.'

Such remarks flattered her pride and inflated her vanity, and he knew it.—Very well did he know what strings to pull and what chords to touch.

The prospects before Jane looked bright and beautiful, and her feelings were excited; and yet in spite of all such views of the future, she felt a sort of consciousness that she had done wrong, or acted imprudently in leaving her old boarding house, and thus putting herself under the protection of a stranger.

'I hope we shall be happy,' she said, after a long pause, during which he often kissed her and pressed her to his bosom.

'How can we be otherwise?' he asked. 'If you love me as much as I love you, we must be the happiest couple in the city.'

'But suppose you are now deceiving me,' she added, gazing very fondly in his face.

'Deceive you,' he replied. 'Why, my dear Jane, I should as soon think of deceiving myself as deceiving you; for I feel as if you were indeed a part of myself; yes, and the better part, too.'

No more was said for some time, and her head rested on his bosom.—Her hair, having escaped from its fastenings, fell in rich clusters over his arm and down upon his lap.

Let a curtain be drawn over that scene and hide it from the world.—From Heaven it could not be hidden, and angels looked down and wept.—The city clocks told the hour of midnight and he thought of his wife and daughter, the former of whom might be waiting most anxiously for his return. Ah, Colonel Mellen at that moment was not a happy man! True, his viler passions had been gratified; but there was a sting left behind even in his hardened heart.

He rose to depart as the clocks were upon the stroke of twelve. Time has flown swiftly, and he had taken no note

of it; but now he wished he had gone two hours sooner.

'It is now midnight!' he said.—'How swiftly the time has flown. I must leave you.'

'Not forever, I trust,' she replied, in a tremulous voice, while a tear was glistening in her eye, and her bosom heaved with strange emotions.

'O, no, indeed!' he replied, smoothing back the rich folds of dark hair from her moist forehead. 'I will be with you again to-morrow evening.'

'And when do you think we shall be married?' she asked in an imploring voice.

'I cannot now tell,' he answered, gazing into her tearful eyes. 'I intend to purchase me a splendid house and furnish it in the most fashionable style. It may take some time before I find a house that suits me. I intend to have a splendid one.'

'Could not we be married before you purchase the house?' she asked.

'We might; but it would not appear so well as it would to remove into our own house on the day of our marriage,' he answered. 'I have always said I would never board out after I was married. It may do well enough for those who are not able to purchase a house and furnish it. Now, Jane, I have one thing to say to you that may make you laugh.'

'And what is that, for I do not feel like laughing?' she inquired.

'Only this, that you do not know my true name,' he replied, smiling.

'Not know your true name?' she anxiously inquired, gazing wildly upon him, and fearing that he intended to deceive her from the beginning of their acquaintance.

'Don't be alarmed, my dear Jane,' he answered. 'It was only a joke.—The first time we walked together after leaving the omnibus, you will remember I called myself Mellen, I didn't know then that I should love you so much as to make you my wife, and so I gave you a fictitious name; but since we are going to sustain the endearing relation of husband and wife, it is very proper that I should let you know my

true name which is Melville. I am usually called Colonel Melville, as I was once a Colonel in the militia.'

'Colonel Melville and not Mellen!' she said, looking him full in the face.

'Even so,' he replied, laughing, and patting her cheek. 'And so you will be Mrs. Melville and not Mellen.—Which name do you like the best?'

'O, sir, I don't know,' she replied; still feeling as if all was not right.

'Well, I assure you I like Melville best,' he added, smiling. 'And I think you will, too. If I had not concluded to marry you I should never have revealed my real name.'

'And why did not you tell me before now?'

'I thought of it; but feared if I did that, you might suspect something and would not consent to become my wife,' 'You see I was really selfish in the matter.'

'I hope you have now given me your true name,' she added.

'O, certainly,' he replied, laughing, and kissing her. 'You see the reason of my not giving it to you at our first interview. If I had done so, and not loved you as I do now, and had given up the idea of marrying you, it might have happened that you would have spoken of my meeting with you and have mentioned the name. You see I did not then certainly know what I should do, and so concealed my true name. How could I have known at our first or even our second interview that I should have you for a wife?—Surely, I could not; for I did not then know as you would have me, and I was determined that you should not know my name until I was quite sure you would accept my offer. Haven't I given you a good reason?'

'I don't know but you have,' she replied, feeling quite well satisfied with the explanations he had given.

The Colonel now took his leave, and hurried down stairs to inform Aunt Dumpford, who was still up, and waiting for him. He met her in a private parlor.

'Well, Colonel, you have made a very long visit, this time,' she said,

smiling. 'I conclude the matter is settled now.'

'All right,' he replied. 'And I have given her what she believes to be my true name. I call myself Colonel Melville, and don't you forget it and make a blunder.'

'O, I shall not forget it,' she added, laughing. 'But how did you come at it? Is she now satisfied?'

'Perfectly satisfied,' he replied.—'How I came at it I have not time to tell you now: for I have tarried quite too long, and my wife may raise the devil with me. She has grown very jealous of late, and it seems to increase upon her.'

'When did you ever know such a spirit when once indulged by the female heart to grow less?' she asked.

'True, as Shakespeare has said, it makes the meat it feeds on,' he answered. 'But I must go. Keep on the right side of Jane, treat her kindly, and praise me up to the highest notch. The girl loves me and is now completely in my power.'

'I presume so; but what the result may be, time alone can show,' she said. 'When she learns all, it may break her heart; but if it does not she may break your head.'

He left, and then hurried home; but with some fearful forebodings of the consequences that might result from his long absence from his family.

After he left her chamber, Jane sat down and seriously reflected upon her situation.

'O, she mentally exclaimed, 'what if he should be a married man? How terrible would be my condition! But I think he is honest and loves me very deeply and sincerely; and yet, hundreds of girls have been deceived and ruined by men in this city who appeared as honest, perhaps, as he does. O, I wish we were married. I must ask him to hurry on that day; for I cannot endure the thought of living long as I do now. It is all wrong; but he talks fair, and perhaps I ought to pardon something to his great love for me. I wonder if Miss Dumpford has money to live upon; for she don't seem to



have much work to do. She takes in no sewing, or any other work. And I am sure she don't keep a regular boarding house. True, I have had a glimpse of some girls about the house, but none eats with us. I will inquire. I heard female and male voices, too, last night, and the door-bell has been rung several times to-night. I have also heard voices and footsteps. Yes, and I hear them now.'

She went to her chamber door, opened it, and listened. A portion of the following conversation fell on her ears, and produced in her mind some strange thoughts.

'Pay me what you promised, or by G—d I'll make daylight shine through your mean, lank carcass!' said a female, in an excited voice.

'Get out, you miserable creature,' replied a man. 'I have paid you all I promised, and more than you ought to have.'

'You are a mean devil, make the best of you,' she added, smiting her fists together, and speaking louder.

'You are drunk, and beneath my notice,' he said, going towards the door that led out into the street, and she followed him, and swearing oaths that made the very blood curdle in Jane's veins.

'Hush!' said Aunt Dumpford, 'I will not have so much noise in my house.'

'Well, then, let the mean scamp pay what he owes me,' said the girl. 'He is mean enough to steal the cents from the eyes of his dead mother.'

'Well, well, let him go, for we don't want such mean fellows here,' said Miss Dumpford. 'You must not, my dear Julia, make so much noise.—Keep quiet, and let the mean souled fellow go.'

'You are all mean enough,' said the man, opening the door, and passing out into the street.

'Mean enough,' repeated Julia, as she was called. 'By G—d, if I were as mean as you are, I would drown myself in the North River.'

'Hush!' said the mistress. 'Let him go. Remember what I have told you. The girl in the front chamber

will hear the disturbance and think strange of it.'

'Well, she will have to come to it one of these days, or I am mistaken, that's all,' added Julia, in a very low voice.

'You have drank too much to-night,' said the housekeeper. 'How often have I told you that so much liquor would finally kill you. Strange you will do so.'

'I don't care. I had rather die than not,' replied this ruined, degraded girl. 'I didn't drink but once at that mean fellow's expense; for I could get no more out of him.'

'Well, you have got drinks out of others; for I dare say you have drunk a half a dozen times this evening,' said the mistress.

'What if I have?' asked Julia, 'I could drink that vile scamp drunk any time, but not at his expense, I can swear to that. If I had had a dagger, I believe in my soul I should have let out the blood from his miserly heart. I hate fellows who have such narrow contracted souls.'

'Do you know him?' asked the mistress.

'I don't know him from Adam,' she replied. 'I ran across him just after I left the Bowery Theatre. I reckon he's from the country. He is a great, lean, lantern-jawed fellow from all the way down east, I imagine; and his soul is as lean as his body.'

'Did you learn his name?' inquired the mistress.

'No; but I conclude it is Jonathan Spike, or some such name,' she replied. 'I can swear for it he will never get drunk; for he has not soul enough for such an operation.'

'Well, it seems you have, and you will spoil yourself,' added the housekeeper.

'Spoil myself!' she repeated, laughing. 'How can a rotten egg be spoiled? The day has gone by when I can be hurt any how. I wish I had never been born. The men are all black-hearted scoundrels. They ruin us and then seek fresh victims. Damn 'em! There is one on whom I should like to re-

venge myself, and then I would willingly die.'

'O, well, let that pass, and go to bed,' said Aunt Dumpford. 'It is now quite late and it will be useless for you to go out again.'

'I have no notion of tramping the streets any more, to-night,' she said. 'I should be afraid of meeting another Jonathan Spike. How does that girl and the Colonel get along? Has he been here this evening?'

'Yes; he went away just before you came out of your room,' replied the mistress. 'The Colonel is doing well enough; but you must be exceedingly cautious, if you and that girl happen to meet.'

'I know the Colonel of old,' she said. 'I will not spoil his fun. He's a very generous man, and has some soul.—He has paid me a few fives in months past.'

'You mean years,' said the mistress, laughing.

'Well, perhaps, it might have been a year or two ago,' she added. 'Time runs away so fast that I cannot keep track of it. I know he used to like me pretty well; and I did fancy him somewhat.'

'But that was before you drank so much,' added the mistress. 'This drinking has very much marred your beauty; and if you would quit it entirely, you might in some measure regain your former looks. Your face is now rather too much bloated, and your cheeks and nose are a little too red to please the gentlemen of taste and refinement.'

'Gentlemen of taste and refinement,' she repeated, laughing rather hoarsely, and coughing; for her throat had been pretty well burned by alcoholic poison. 'Good God!'

'Hush, don't commence again,' said the mistress, quickly. 'Be calm, and quiet.'

'I was going to say that the gentlemen are any thing but tasteful and refined,' she continued. 'True, there may be some difference in them; but muddy water will put out fire, you know. They all use us as children do

play-things for awhile, and then throw us away. Would to God we could use them in the same way.'

'Be quiet, and go to bed, and you may be in a better humor to-morrow,' said the mistress. 'You are quite out of sorts this evening.'

The poor, degraded, miserable girl retired. Her name was Julia Sandborn. Once she was a very beautiful girl.

Yes, dear reader, and an innocent and virtuous one. But, alas! how fallen and degraded. How soon such vices destroy both soul and body.

Julia Sandborn's parents were poor, but respectable. She came to the city some five years previous to the time she is introduced to the reader. She was then eighteen years of age, bright, beautiful, and innocent.

She lived one year a virtuous, industrious life, and then was addressed by a libertine in the character of a lover, who seduced her under the most solemn promises of an honorable marriage.—He abandoned her, and left the city, and she had not seen him since. It is the old stereotyped story, and the result the same as in similar cases. The name of the gentleman who seduced her, was James Carpenter. He was a widower at the time, and a man of some property and pleasing address.—His bad conduct broke the heart of his wife, and hurried her to a premature grave.

Julia Sandborn, after her fall, began to consider all men in the same category, and cherished in her bosom the spirit of revenge against her seducer. That spirit had not yet died out in her heart, and she longed for the opportunity to gratify it on the person of her seducer.

## CHAPTER XII.

THE POWER OF JEALOUSY. A DOMESTIC FLARE UP. A WILY WOMAN'S EXPLANATIONS. THE EMOTIONS OF THE SEDUCED. A DRINKING SCENE AMONG FEMALES. THE LOWER DEEPS OF CORRUPTION.

SOFTLY Colonel Mellen ascended the steps in front of his splendid house



with his night key in his hand. He saw no light, and was rejoiced in believing that his wife had retired; but as he gently turned the night key, a light suddenly flashed through the parlor window which very much changed his emotions.

His wife had not retired, but had gone out into another room as he approached the house. She came back to the parlor with a lamp in her hand just as he was unlocking the door.—The light from that lamp was not half so pleasing to him as the previous darkness in the parlor.

For a moment his fingers trembled on the night key which remained motionless; his heart beat with peculiar emotions, and his conscience smote him as his wicked acts for the few past hours came up fresh in his memory.—He stood a moment silent and thoughtful, and wished the ordeal was passed; but at last he concluded to enter with all the courage, boldness, and apparent innocence he could assume for the trying occasion.

He turned the key and passed into the hall in which the light had been extinguished. No light was burning except a single lamp which his wife still held in her hand. Having heard the door open, she stood in her tracks and awaited his coming. It was very seldom that he remained absent quite so late as it was that evening. He entered the parlor and the rays of the solitary lamp fell upon his guilty face. The evidences of his guilt were plainly to be seen, especially by a jealous wife. She fastened her eyes upon him in a fixed gaze, which, with all his impudence and self-control, he found difficult to withstand. However, he faced her as best he could, and anxiously awaited what she might say.

'It is past midnight, and you have just returned to your family,' she said, in slow and measured speech, as if she meant that every word should tell her emotions.

'I believe it is,' he calmly added, forcing a smile upon his face, which he did not feel in his heart.

'A man may smile, and smile again, and yet be a villain,' she said.

'And the same celebrated author, has said of jealousy, that it makes the meat it feeds on,' he added.

'What fresh victim have you found this evening that keeps you away so late; or has the common harlot power to draw you from your family and retain you through the evening?' she asked.

'Such a question a wife ought not to ask her husband,' he added.

'And a faithful husband would not be absent from his family through the night,' she said. 'The power to deceive me long is not with you. The marks of guilt are legibly written upon every lineament of your countenance, and it requires not a jaundiced eye to make you look yellow. I have hoped—yes, prayed that my suspicions might have no foundation in truth; but conscience will sometimes speak through the human face. Yours now thus speaks and tells a tale that is enough to make humanity weep.'

'Come, wife, lay aside these jealous fits, and let them trouble you no longer,' he said, in a sort of coaxing voice and manner. 'It gives me much pain to see you torment yourself without even a shadow of a reason.'

'And it gives me pain to believe that I have a husband who violates his marriage vows, and destroys innocent and virtuous girls,' she added.

'Permit me to say, that I am not the character your jealous spirit suspects me to be,' he responded. 'It is indeed, strange that you should suffer such a spirit to torment you after having lived so many years in peace and happiness with me in the marriage state. I'm sorry it is so; but it seems I cannot help it, neither am I to be blamed for it. The remark is true, that envy is its own tormentor, and it is equally true of jealousy.'

'The tongue can speak smoothly, while the heart is vile and corrupt,' she added. 'Heaven knows I would not willingly do you any injustice; but impressions are strong upon my mind that you run after other women, I hope

these impressions may prove false; but I fear the worst. After this we must occupy two beds.'

'Very well,' he replied. 'Just as you please. And if you say occupy two houses, I will agree to that. You may have your own way.'

'I can have my own way of living without your permission,' she added. 'Thank fortune, I own a good share of property in my own right, and am not dependent upon you. Whenever I find that I have done you any injustice by thought, word or deed, I will make confession; but I fear that time will never come. It is seldom that I am mistaken when I deliberately make up my opinion.'

'It is idle to talk of a jealous woman's making up a deliberate opinion,' he replied. 'The thing is utterly impossible, and you will find it so.—The spirit of jealousy in a woman's heart twists things into every possible shape save the right one. It destroys the judgment and corrupts the soul, makes the domestic fireside a hell upon earth, and spreads a blighting mildew over the best affections of the human heart. Beware how you indulge such a spirit.'

'Beware then, how you spend your nights among harlots,' she added.—'Such conduct does indeed spread a mildew over the soul and fits it for the dwelling among the evil spirits of the damned. Every lineament of your countenance shows your guilt in spite of your powers of self-control. Your moral corruption is telegraphed in the flesh, and even short-sighted human vision can see it.'

After having thus spoken, she lit another lamp and retired to a chamber, leaving him to occupy the marriage bed alone, and brood over his own reflections.

There was something in the expression of his countenance and the tones of his voice that convinced her that he was a libertine, to say nothing of his absence of nights.

He retired, but passed a restless, sleepless night. His conscience smote him in spite of the hardness of his heart.

That faithful monitor within could not be wholly silenced, and its stings were occasionally felt.

True, his heart was much calcined, yet not wholly corrupted. He had never been passionately fond of his wife, and would not have married her but for her money. In fact, he could not love any woman long, and especially one so good and intellectual as his wife. She was a woman of strong intellectual powers, and of noble impulses. The poor had always found in her a friend in need, and but few ladies in the upper circles devoted more time and money to objects of charity than she did. She literally went about doing good, and the poor and down-trodden everywhere greeted her with smiles and almost revered her.—Ida, too, her daughter, was actuated, in some good degree, by the same noble impulses that moved her mother to deeds of charity and benevolence.

How hard for such a good woman to have such a heartless husband. But such is frequently the fortune in this world.

Men have all the advantage over women in the present state of civilized society. Public opinion needs a revolution, and the old foundations must be broken up before women can have the enjoyments of those rights which belong to them.

We must now return to Jane Clark, who also passed a restless night. The conversation she had partially heard between Julia Sandford and her paramour, produced a sad effect upon her nervous system and greatly disturbed her quiet.

What to make of it she could not divine. Sometimes the thought occurred to her that she might be in a bad house. Still she was slow to believe that her lover would locate her in such a place. Towards morning she thought she heard others in the house. The front door was occasionally opened, and it seemed to her that persons passed out; but of that she was not certain. Immediately after breakfast she sought an opportunity to converse with Aunt Dumpford upon the subject; for there was a great mys-

tery hanging over the affair which she desired to have cleared up.

'What was the trouble, last night?' asked Jane.

'Then you heard the disturbance,' said the housekeeper, smiling, and treating the affair as if it were not of much importance.

'I did, and it made me feel very nervous,' answered Jane, fastening her eyes upon the woman's fair, round face. 'What was the matter?'

'Nothing of much consequence,' she replied. 'Julia Sandford one of my boarders has been engaged to a tailor for whom she works, and expected to marry him; but it seems he has not been very faithful to her, but has kept the company of another of his shop girls, and so Julia flared up last night, and dismissed him.'

'But she said something about his paying her,' said Jane.

'Yes, she insists upon it that he still owes her for work, and he says he has paid for all he agreed to pay,' answered the housekeeper. 'Such troubles very frequently occur in the city; but you are now far removed above them.'

'I never had any trouble with my employers,' said Jane; still feeling as if there was something behind what the woman had stated which did not appear.

'That is because you happened to be employed by gentlemen,' said Aunt Dumpford. 'All sewing girls are not so fortunate as you have been. I have known several who have been cheated out of their wages by scoundrels who employed them.'

'But I heard her swear some terrible oaths,' said Jane.

'She did, and I was much surprised at it,' said the deceitful woman. 'I have never before heard her swear; but she was so excited that she hardly knew what she did say. He not only refused to pay her what he owed for her work; but what is worse, has formed an engagement with another girl. That is enough to make a girl swear if any thing can. Julia has a high temper, but I did not think it was so violent until last night's demonstration. I pitied

the girl and tried to quiet her as you might have heard.'

'I did hear your voice; but what did you mean when you spoke of her drinking?' asked Jane. 'That seems strange.'

'So, indeed, it is,' replied this vile hypocrite, assuming a very sad and sorrowful countenance. 'I am sorry you heard that. It is true, that Julia, sometimes drinks, and I suppose that is the reason the man has transferred his affections to another girl. She does not drink much only occasionally, and that is wine. I have tried to break her of the habit and think I have succeeded in some good degree.'

'Strange she indulges such a habit,' added Jane. 'But what did you mean when you asked her if she knew the fellow's name? Surely, she must know the tailor's name for whom she has worked, and to whom she was engaged to be married.'

'I do not recollect as asking her such a question,' replied the lying bawd.

'You certainly did, for I heard that distinctly,' added Jane.

'O, I remember now,' quickly answered the wily housekeeper. 'She spoke of another fellow who wanted to have her. At least, so she represented the affair to the tailor to vex and plague him.'

'I thought I heard her say that she wished she was dead,' added Jane; not being fully satisfied with the woman's explanations.

'She did make such a remark in the excitement of the moment,' replied the bawd.

'If you have boarders why don't we eat all together?' asked Jane.

'For the very good reason that the Colonel does not like to have you sit at the same table with common boarders,' replied the housekeeper, smiling. 'You perceive he is very choice of you. And no wonder since he is so rich and loves you so much.'

'How many boarders have you?' asked Jane.

'Some three or four girls who are regular boarders, and then I have several more who hire rooms of me, and

take their meals out, thinking it comes cheaper, and I suppose it is a little cheaper, at least, they can make it so by being very prudent and economical. The girls do not have wages enough.—It is a shame that the men get their sewing done so cheap, while they tax such enormous prices for their labor.—There's nothing like equality in it.'

'I think so, too,' added Jane. 'When I worked I barely made enough to pay my board and necessary clothing.'

'Well, you'll never be obliged to use the needle again for a living,' said Aunt Dumpford. 'True, indeed, fortune has favored you, and I'm glad of it. I wish all the sewing girls could be equally fortunate; but that we can hardly hope for, because there are but very few such gentlemen as your lover. The Colonel will be found any where in town or country.'

They said no more at that time upon the subject; but Jane was not entirely satisfied. There still seemed to be some mystery about the affair and every thing did not look just right, yet she hoped for the best.

The housekeeper was somewhat surprised that Jane did not in their conversation allude to the Colonel's changing his name. She was very careful when speaking of him to call him only Colonel.

In the course of the forenoon, Jane had a glimpse of the two girls as they passed along the hall and entered a back parlor, a room which she had not seen. It was a kind of reception room where men first went when they visited the house, and met the girls. In a closet that opened into this room were kept various kinds of intoxicating drinks which the housekeeper sold to the visitors, and also to the female inmates when they had money to pay for it.—But, poor Jane knew nothing of that fact.

One of these girls whom Jane saw enter that room was Julia Sandford and the other was Louise Burbank. They were nearly of an age and both came from the eastern part of the State of Maine.

Their histories, too, so far as related

to their fall from virtue were quite similar, only the man who seduced Louise had met a violent death in a brothel at the hands of a rival. Julia's seducer was yet living for aught she knew to the contrary.

'Why hadn't you stabbed that nig-gardly Jonathan, last night?' asked Louise, alluding to the trouble Julia had with her fellow.

'He deserved such a fate,' replied Julia. 'But I don't want to think of such a mean soul. Come, let us throw the dice and see who treats; for my throat is as dry as a goose pasture.'

'Agreed,' quickly responded Louise, going to a table on which there was a back gammon board, and took up a dice box.

They threw round three times, and Louise won the treat. She now rang a small bell which brought the housekeeper into the room, who was ready to sell her liquor for the money at any time.

'Come, Aunt, Julia, says she is awful thirsty, and must have some gin,' said Louise, laughing. 'She will pay for it; for I have just won it.'

'Do you say so?' asked the housekeeper.

'Yes, hand down a decanter of your best gin; for my throat is full of cobwebs this morning,' replied Julia. — 'As the sailors say, I believe my cop-pers were rather hot last night, for they want wetting this morning.'

'You may well say that,' added the housekeeper, opening the closet door and handing down a decanter of gin. 'Drink lightly, girls.'

'Yes, for the lighter we drink the greater the profit to you,' said Julia, turning out a glass and swallowing it without sugar or water.

Louise prepared her drink and disguised the old serpent with sugar, water and some grated nutmeg before she guzzled him down.

The reader has already seen enough of the green room to know what dramas are enacted on such a stage. The curtain falls and hides the corrupt souls from sight.

## CHAPTER XIII.

THE PROGRESS OF THE LIBERTINE.—  
THE EMOTIONS OF HIS VICTIM. A  
VISIT TO A SICK WOMAN. THE STORY  
TOLD, AND ITS EFFECTS. WHAT'S  
IN A NAME? THE JEALOUS WIFE CAN  
ANSWER.

NEARLY a week had passed, and every evening Colonel Mellen spent with Jane, who was now entirely under his control and direction. His victory had been more easily won than he at first expected. The poor girl fondly clung to him as the ivy clings to the oak.

Aunt Dumpford had so managed her domestic affairs that Jane was kept in the dark in relation to the character of the house.

True, the girl indulged some suspicions, which gradually increased. But her mind was more intent upon her marriage than upon any thing else.—She urged her lover at every interview to hurry on that much wished for day. He promised, but told her not to be impatient; for he had much to do before he could be fully prepared for that happy event.

At the request of the Colonel, Jane had not been in the street since she placed herself under his control and protection.

His reason was for her not walking out that if she did the young bricklayer might see her and find out her place of residence. She was as anxious to conceal that from him as the Colonel was; but her curiosity was great to see the family who lived opposite. Almost every day she saw Mrs. Mellen and her daughter visit the family, and several times each day she saw Hattie come out upon the sidewalk, and occasionally pass down street and return with little bundles and packages for the family. Hattie she was very anxious to see; but Aunt Dumpford advised her not to have any thing to do with the family, intimating that they were not respectable, although she had been to visit them several times in the evening when Jane was engaged with the Colonel.

This cunning woman had conceived the plan of taking Hattie and training her to be a wanton. She had already given the girl several small presents, and shown great kindness to her sick mother, insomuch that she had won their confidence and esteem.

One afternoon when Aunt Dumpford had gone down town, Jane could not any longer control her curiosity, and hurried across the street to the house. Hattie at the time was standing in the door.

'You don't remember me, do you?' asked Jane, taking Hattie's hand and gazing very fondly into her beautiful face.

'I don't know your name, but remember you once bought a toothpick of me when I was a beggar girl,' replied Hattie.

'I thought you were the same girl,' added Jane, smoothing back Hattie's rich, dark hair from her polished forehead. 'You are better dressed now, and look happier than you did then.'

'O, yes, I am happier now, because father don't drink and mother is fast getting better,' replied Hattie. 'You dress better, too, and are happier.'

'I may be dressed better, but don't know as I am any happier,' added Jane.

'Do you live in that house?' asked Hattie.

'I board there for the present,' replied Jane, kissing Hattie, and fondly gazing into her beautiful face.

'The woman who keeps the house has been here two or three evenings, and give me some presents,' said little Hattie. 'She wants me to live with her, but mother cannot spare me now because she is not well yet. The woman is very kind.'

'Then she comes over to see you quite often!' added Jane, wondering what Aunt Dumpford could mean by intimating that the family was not respectable.

'O, yes,' replied Hattie. 'She always comes in the evening. She's a very nice woman. Won't you walk in and see mother?'

Jane accepted the invitation, and fol-

lowed the little girl into the house.—The mother was seated in a rocking chair, and the room had the aspect of neatness and comfort about it. True, there was not much furniture, but a plenty for convenience. Almost every article in the room Mrs. Mellen had purchased.

'Walk in,' said the sick woman. 'I am glad to see you. I suppose you are the young lady I have heard my Hattie speak of. You live in the house opposite?'

'I board there now,' replied Jane, gazing into the woman's emaciated, but animated face, and admiring her benevolent looks. 'You have been quite sick, I understand.'

'Yes; but I am better now and gaining very fast,' she replied. 'Through the kindness of a generous woman, I am made very comfortable compared with what I was before I removed to this house. O, my dear, she is one of the most benevolent and good-hearted ladies I have ever met.'

'Who is she?' asked Jane.

'Colonel Mellen's wife, a rich broker in Wall Street,' she replied.

The mention of that name suddenly started Jane, and agitated her heart with strange emotions. Mrs. Hamblin saw her agitation, and wondered what could be the cause of it.

'Are you acquainted with Colonel Mellen?' asked Mrs. Hamblin.

'O, no,' replied Jane, blushing, in spite of all her self-control.

'I didn't know but you might be,' added the sick woman, gazing upon Jane's blushing, beautiful face. 'Did you ever hear any thing of him? I have never seen him, but have often wished I could.'

'I am acquainted with Colonel Melville,' added Jane, in a peculiar tone of voice.

'I understand you,' said Mrs. Hamblin, while an arch smile played over her face. 'I suppose you are fondly looking to your bridal day, which will make you Mrs. Melville. May it prove a joyous one to you.'

'I thank you kindly for your good wishes,' added Jane, still blushing.

'It has always been said that marriage is a lottery in which there are more blanks than prizes, said the woman. 'I hope, my dear, you will draw a valuable prize.'

'I hope so, but Heaven only knows,' added Jane, feeling for the moment some doubts and misgivings which Mrs. Hamblin noticed, and which excited her curiosity to learn something of her history.

It is no wonder that such a curiosity should be indulged by Mrs. Hamblin, who was a very shrewd woman, and understood much of city life. All at once this woman's mind was impressed with a belief, or rather she indulged a slight suspicion that Jane might be hoping for that which she could not realize.

'How long have you boarded in the house opposite?' asked Mrs. Hamblin.

'About a week,' replied Jane.

'You find it a good place, I trust,' added the sick woman.

'The woman who keeps it treats me very kindly,' replied Jane.

'I think she is a very good woman,' said Mrs. Hamblin. 'She visits me occasionally and is very anxious to have my little daughter live with her; but I cannot part with her. When do you expect to be married?'

'I hope before many weeks pass by,' answered Jane.

'How long have you been acquainted with your lover?' asked the woman.

'Only two or three days before I came to my present boarding house,' answered Jane, while the red blood immediately flushed her cheeks, and her heart beat.

Mrs. Hamblin's first impressions were deepened, and she was resolved to learn more of the girl's history.

'A very short acquaintance,' added Mrs. Hamblin; looking full into Jane's blushing countenance.

'It is, indeed,' added Jane. 'I have no friends in the city, and perhaps, you could advise me.'

'I am willing to do any thing for your good,' said the kind woman. 'I really begin to feel quite an interest in your welfare; but, I cannot give you any advice until I know a little more of

your history and how you became acquainted with the gentleman whom you expect to marry.'

'I feel as if I can trust you,' said Jane; feeling as if she really needed the advice of a good woman in her present situation.

Mrs. Hamblin now sent Hattie out upon an errand; for she did not wish her to hear the girl's story. Jane now told this good woman the story of her life, how she became acquainted with her lover, and all that had happened.

'You say that when you first became acquainted with him that he told you his name was Colonel Mellen?' asked Mrs. Hamblin.

At that moment, and before Jane had time to answer the question, Mrs. Mellen entered the room.

'I perceive you have company,' said Mrs. Mellen, as she sat down beside the sick woman. 'I am glad of it, I love to see young ladies interested in behalf of the poor and distressed.'

Then turning to Jane, she continued. 'You must remember, my dear, is more blessed to give than to receive. Mercy is twice blessed, blessing him who gives and him who receives.'

Mrs. Mellen supposed that Jane was the daughter of rich parents and had come to minister to the wants of the poor.

Mrs. Mellen did not dream that Jane was dressed up so fine at the expense of her husband, and it was fortunate she did not.

'I know it is so,' replied Jane. 'But I have nothing to give.'

'I supposed you had money enough,' added Mrs. Mellen.

'She expects to have when she is married,' said Mrs. Hamblin.

'Ah, then she is engaged to a gentleman of wealth,' said Mrs. Mellen.

'I judge so from her own story,' replied the sick woman. 'And what is singular, is the fact that her lover introduced himself to her under the name of Colonel Mellen.'

'Colonel Mellen,' repeated his wife. 'Good Heavens, what does all that mean?'

'O, be not alarmed, madam,' added

the sick woman. 'He only did that at first so that his true name should not be known provided this girl did not accept his offer. The name of the gentleman is Colonel Melville.'

Mrs. Mellen cast her eyes upon the floor, and appeared to be in a very deep study. All were silent for some time, each occupied with her own thoughts.

Mrs. Hamblin could not help having some suspicions that all was not right; and of course the reader will at once conclude that Mrs. Mellen was strongly impressed with the belief that her husband was the man to whom Jane expected to be married.

'I hope the gentleman will not deceive you,' said Mrs. Mellen, in as calm a voice and manner as she could command under the circumstances.

'I trust, he will not,' replied Jane. 'He promises fair, and appears to be a gentleman.'

'Very likely,' added Mrs. Mellen, thoughtfully. 'How old is Colonel Melville? I have never heard of the gentleman before.'

'O, madam, I am almost ashamed to tell,' replied Jane. 'I suppose he's nearly forty.'

'And what kind of a looking man is he?' asked the lady.

'He is quite large, portly, has black eyes, and some gray hairs on his head,' replied Jane. 'He is very pleasant.'

'No doubt of that, my dear,' added Mrs. Mellen. 'Gentlemen are apt to be pleasant and agreeable before marriage, and sometimes they may be after that event. What dress did he wear the last time you saw him?'

'He wore checked pants, a buff vest, and a black coat, if I mistake not,' replied Jane, feeling much surprised with being thus catechized by the lady. 'Why do you ask?'

'O, to gratify my curiosity, and I may be an idle one,' replied the agitated wife. 'Besides, I feel a deep interest in your welfare, and hope you may not be deceived. You know girls are very often deceived and ruined.'

'O, yes; I have heard of several instances since I have resided in the city,' replied Jane.

'I have thus inquired about this gentleman to see if I had ever known him,' added Mrs. Mellen. 'But I confess I have no recollection of ever having seen Colonel Melville, or heard of him. It seems to me, if he is a very wealthy man and resides in this city that I should have heard of him. I hope he has not given you a false name the second time.'

'O dear me, I cannot believe he has,' added Jane. 'The woman I board with says he is a very good man and will not deceive and abandon me.—This sick lady has seen her and thinks well of her.'

'Yes, she has been to see me several times, and appears to be a good woman,' added Mrs. Hamblin. 'Her acts are very kind, and she is anxious that my Hattie should go and live with her.'

'Keep Hattie under your own care and protection,' said Mrs. Mellen.

'Most certainly I shall, for I know of no lady in the city except you with whom I should be willing for her to live,' replied the sick woman.

Having tarried longer than she intended, and fearing Aunt Dumpford might return, Jane took her leave and sought her own chamber. Her spirit was troubled, and she was unhappy.

'I fear that beautiful girl will be ruined,' said Mrs. Hamblin, after Jane had left.

'O, you have reason to fear such an event,' added Mrs. Mellen, feeling quite sure that her husband was the gay deceiver: but concealing her emotions from her friend.

Mrs. Hamblin now related to Mrs. Mellen the story of poor Jane's life as told by herself. The story was listened to with the deepest interest. It produced strange emotions in the heart of Mrs. Mellen, and convinced her beyond the shadow of a doubt that her husband had made this girl his victim.

'The girl is already ruined!' exclaimed Mrs. Mellen, after she had heard the story of Jane's life. 'Yes, is already ruined! O, Heaven, what wickedness reigns in this city.'

'Too true!' added Mrs. Hamblin.—

'I wish we could find out who the gentleman is. Do you think it is too late to save the girl now?'

'Too late, I fear!' replied Mrs. Mellen. 'The serpent has already had her within his folds, and charmed her to ruin. Would to Heaven we could have known about this sad affair some days ago.'

'I wish so, too,' added the sick woman, feeling much sympathy for the girl. 'She is, indeed, very beautiful.'

'Ah, too beautiful!' replied Mrs. Mellen. 'Too beautiful for a city so filled with libertines. Let me caution you not to be too familiar with the woman this girl boards with, for I fear she keeps a house of assignation. The evidence of the fact is too strong to be resisted. I wish I could have some conversation with her, for it seems to me I could find her out.'

'When she calls upon me again I will watch her movements more closely,' said Mrs. Hamblin. 'No doubt she will visit me soon, for she is very anxious to take Hattie.'

'Yes, and train her to be a wanton,' added Mrs. Mellen. 'No doubt she is anxious to obtain her; for she thinks her beauty will find a ready market in this city some three or four years hence. O, shame on our sex. The thought is dreadful that our own sex sinks so low in vice and degradation. But the fact must be confessed. Would to Heaven it were not true. Hundreds of women with fair exterior but with hearts as black as midnight darkness are engaged in catering for the worst passions of men. Yes, and when their own beauty fails to attract the attention and stir the blood of libertines, they procure girls and direct their steps in the same path to ruin which they have trodden themselves.'

'I will endeavor to do what I can for this unfortunate girl,' said the sick woman. 'I pity her from the bottom of my heart. But may we not hope that the man will wed her?'

'I wish I could indulge such a hope; but there is no reason for it in my judgment,' replied Mrs. Mellen. 'I will make inquiries and see if I can

hear of such a man as this Colonel Melville.

'I trust the name has not given you any unpleasant sensations,' said the sick woman.

'Why, do I look as if it had?' asked Mrs. Mellen.

'I thought you started when your husband's name was mentioned,' replied Mrs. Hamblin. 'But I don't wonder at that. It was singularly strange that the gentleman should have assumed the name of your husband, Colonel and all!'

'It is so; but strange things sometimes happen in this world,' said Mrs. Mellen; feeling as if she did not wish to talk longer upon the subject.

But little more was said, and Mrs. Mellen left. Her feelings on her way home may be imagined by a woman placed under the same circumstances; but they cannot be described.

It was fortunate that Jane left when she did; for she hardly reached her chamber before Aunt Dumpford returned from her shopping down town. The girl was anxious to converse with her; but did not immediately seek an opportunity to do so. She took time to reflect upon the subject; for she began to suspect that her friend Aunt Dumpford might be a bad woman. The poor girl was much excited, and looked on the dark side of the picture.

#### CHAPTER XIV.

A FRUITLESS INQUIRY. THE ALARM.—  
TROUBLESOME QUESTIONS. POWER OF  
A SHREWD LIBERTINE OVER HIS VIC-  
TIM. THE DISCLOSURE. CONSCIENCE  
AT WORK. TROUBLES JUST BEGIN TO  
THICKEN.

On her way home Mrs. Mellen called on several of her friends, and inquired if they knew such a man as Colonel Melville; but no one had ever heard of the name.

It was near the hour of taking tea when she reached her house. Her husband arrived a short time previous.—Luring the past week but few words had passed between them. Not a word

had been spoken by either in relation to the course that had separated them since the evening he returned so late, after having accomplished the ruin of Jane Clark. Since that time he had come home at seasonable hours and endeavored to atone for that mishap; but his wife still suspected him, and yet indulged some faint hope that he might not be quite so bad as she supposed him to be.

The truth is, she began to feel somewhat better towards him, and hoped he would reform altogether; but her interviews with Jane Clark and Mrs. Hamblin had opened afresh the wound, and filled her heart with the keenest anguish. Although she said nothing to her husband, yet he noticed a very great change in her countenance, and was troubled to know the cause, but dared not inquire.

The shades of evening had fell upon the city, and he thought of the beautiful Jane. He left his wife and daughter, and hurried to see his victim.—Aunt Dumpford met him in the hall, and conducted him to a private room.

'Well, what has happened now?' he anxiously inquired. 'Have you had any talk with Jane? Does she begin to feel uneasy?'

'I think she does from her appearance; but I have had but little conversation with her since morning. I went down town this afternoon and left her quite cheerful; but since my return she has appeared disquieted.'

'Do you suppose any one has been here?' he asked.

'I think not; but something troubles her more than usual,' she replied.—'There's a load upon her heart which you must remove.'

'O, my presence will do that very easily,' he said. 'My wife, too, seems to be troubled more than usual. I have never seen her countenance express so much feeling as it has this evening just before I left my house. What the matter is I know not. Something seems to have broken loose. It can't be possible that she came here and saw Jane while you were absent?'

'O, no,' she replied, smiling. 'Your wife has not been here, if she had Jane would have told me. But something is the matter with your Jane.'

'Well, I must see to that,' he said. 'I suppose she is anxious to have me appoint the day for our marriage. You know these girls are always anxious about that.'

'In certain cases they are,' she said. 'I conclude you are not surprised at that. Jane is anxious for the coming of that day.'

'O, no, not particularly so, he answered. 'It is all natural enough.—Sometimes I think I would marry her, if my wife were not living.'

'No, no, Colonel, you would never do that,' she added. 'You hav'nt a heart to like one woman more than a few months, and then you look round after another.'

'Perhaps you are not very far out of the way,' he said; 'variety you know is the spice of life.'

'Yes, I understand you,' she said.—'But my opinion is, you have not the power to keep Jane quiet not even two months, if you can one.'

'No trouble about that,' he added. 'But I must go and see how her pulse beats'

He went to her chamber and found the girl weeping. She was not aware that he was in the house until she heard his footsteps upon the stairs. When she heard him coming, she tried to wipe away her tears; but they would come quite as fast as she could wipe them away.

'Why, my dear Jane, what is the matter?' he asked, approaching her, and throwing his arms about her neck. 'It pains my heart to see the tears in your bright eyes. Come, my love, dry up your tears, and welcome me with a kiss.'

She did kiss him, and her tears fell on his cheek! 'O, how hard must be the heart that could not be softened by such precious drops! He wiped her tears from his own cheek, and felt no emotions but such as his baser passions stirred in his breast.

'O, that kiss, my dear Jane, is more precious than the costliest jewels,' he continued, pressing her to his bosom, and returning her kiss. 'He does love me,' said her innocent heart. 'He will not—he cannot deceive me! No, no, he loves me too well for that.'

Such was the language of her heart before her lips uttered a word. In fact, she was so overcome that she could not speak. She loved him with her whole soul, and ready to believe all he might say to her.

'Come, my sweet girl, tell me why those tears that I just saw glistening in your deep blue eyes,' he continued.

'I was thinking of what my fate would be if you should abandon me,' she replied, encircling his neck with her arms, and fondly gazing up into his face.

'Never take another such a look into the future,' he added. 'No, no, Jane, enjoy the present, and the future will always be filled with bliss.'

'But when do you think we shall be married?' she anxiously inquired. 'I should like to know; for I want to write to my mother.'

'O, Jane, I would not write her at present,' he added. 'Wait until I can find a house that suits me and furnish it in style, and then you can write her all about it and make her heart glad. I am every day looking for a house, but have not yet found one that suits me. I am determined to purchase a very splendid house, and then when we move into it we will invite your mother to visit us, and even live with us, if she pleases.'

'She would like to visit the city,' said Jane; feeling her pride excited, and gazing into that fancied bright future with the most lively hopes.

'And she shall visit us,' he added, smiling, and placing the palm of his hand upon her forehead, which was moist with perspiration. 'Has any one been here this afternoon?'

'I have not seen any one,' she replied, thinking of her visit to the sick woman and what she and Mrs. Mellen had said to her, and believing those

ladies were very much mistaken in the character of her lover, if they supposed he would deceive her.

'I didn't know but the young brick and mortar man might have found out where you were, and come to visit you,' he said.

'O, no, I don't wish to see him,' she added. 'I would not have him know on any account where I am.'

'That is right,' he replied. 'I dare say he's very anxious to know where you are.'

'I suppose he is,' she added. 'But I trust he will not find me at present.'

'After we are married, then he may know in welcome,' he said.

'Yes, I should not care any thing about it then,' she added.

'Of course not,' he said, smiling, and placing his cheek against her forehead.

Again the curtain falls and hides them from view, it rises again and Mrs. Melten and her daughter are discovered in a parlor, brilliantly lighted and richly furnished. The mother is reading an evening paper, while her daughter is turning the leaves of a magazine. The time-piece tells the hour of ten, and Ida's eyes begin to feel heavy.

'I think, my dear Ida, you had better retire,' said the mother. 'You look quite sleepy.'

'I feel so,' replied little Ida. 'I do wish father would pass his evenings at home.'

'So do I, my dear Ida,' added her mother.

'It is strange he goes away every evening,' said Ida. 'Do you know why he does?'

'Perhaps he thinks he finds better company than we are,' replied the mother.

'O, he cannot like any body else half so well as he likes us,' said the good girl.

'I hope not,' was her mother's brief reply.

Ida knew that her parents had very recently occupied two beds and rooms, and was anxious to know the cause; but she feared to ask her mother. She noticed, too, that they were not quite

so sociable as they used to be; but why she could not tell.

Ida was a shrewd girl as well as a kind-hearted, good one, and began to suspect that her father was not so good as he ought to be; still she hoped she was mistaken.

In her mother she placed all confidence. She had always loved her father, and delighted to be in his company. He, too, loved her as he did his own life, and indulged her every wish.

Her mother had very early taught her to love the poor, and generally took her along with her when she went forth to visit families in distress. To gratify his daughter he had often given her money to distribute among the poor; but his motives were rather to please her than to minister to the wants of the distressed and needy. In many respects he was a heartless man; but his affection for his daughter was deep and strong.

His wife possessed a very handsome estate in her own right, and was not at all dependent upon him for the money which she so cheerfully devoted to charitable purposes.

Soon after ten o'clock Ida retired to her chamber, and after she had placed her beautiful form in bed she wished she had inquired of her mother the cause of her not being so sociable with her father as she used to be. She thought and reflected a very long time upon the subject; but she could not come to any conclusion that satisfied her own mind. True, indeed, she was reluctant to believe ill of her father; yet thoughts that he might be guilty occasionally forced themselves upon her mind.

She would drive them hence, and again they would return and sometimes with redoubled force.

She had not long been in bed before her father arrived, and entered the parlor where his wife was sitting and waiting for him.

He sat down and took up an evening paper and ran his eye over it.—Not a word was said for some time. He occasionally took his eyes from the

paper and cast them upon her. The expression of her countenance was any thing but pleasant to him.

'Did you find her in tears, and leave her laughing?' she asked, in slow, measured accents as if she meant something by the question.

He suddenly started and anxiously gazed upon her. The question struck him with great surprise, and for a moment threw him off his guard; but he soon recovered his usual self-possession, and spoke.

'Find her in tears, and leave her laughing! What do you mean by that. You talk in parables. I fear your jealous spirit has now staggered your reason.'

'Yes, I do speak in parables, and you probably understand them, although you may pretend to be ignorant,' she replied. 'If I am crazy you will find some method in it.'

'Surely, I fear your mind is a little wandering,' he added. 'Your countenance shows it, too. The power of jealousy makes strange havoc with the mind sometimes.'

'Destroying innocent girls makes strange havoc with a man's heart and moral sensibilities,' she added, fastening her eyes upon him in a fixed gaze.

'I am not at all pleased with such innuendoes,' he said, feeling somewhat angered.

'I suppose not, and perhaps it may be possible that conscience torments you,' she said. 'If innuendoes do not please, and parables disturb the peace of your mind. I will speak more directly and to the point. Once more, however, I will inquire, if you found the poor unfortunate and once innocent and virtuous girl in tears and left her laughing?'

'I certainly begin to believe that your jealousy has terminated in a kind of monomania,' he added. 'Have you no form of expression by which you can make known your feelings?'

'Surely I have,' she replied, with her eyes still fastened upon him. 'I will ask how long before you will marry the beautiful Jane?'

With all his powers of self-control

he could not help showing signs of guilt at the mention of Jane. He hung his head for a moment and wondered how she could have known that his victim's name was Jane. That troubled him, and he began to think his wife was a witch, or in some way possessed supernatural powers. At last he concluded she must have accidentally hit upon the name. He raised his head and laughed; but it was evidently a forced one.

'I might as well laugh as weep at your strange hallucinations,' he said. 'I must confess I have never seen a sensible woman in such a state of mind as you appear to be in at the present moment.'

'I must confess I have never seen a man so fair upon the outside so full of moral corruption within,' she added. 'I spoke of the beautiful Jane, and don't you think she is exceedingly beautiful?'

'I know not who you mean!' he replied; still believing she did not know any thing of the girl who had become the victim of his vile passions.

'Perhaps you don't,' she added. 'But your countenance gives the lie to your lips. You do know whom I mean, and may the arrows of conviction transfix your soul and your conscience array your sins in a clear light before you.—It is, indeed, terrible to reflect upon such conduct as you are guilty of.—You have a daughter, a bright and beautiful daughter who loves you. Her name is not Jane, but Ida.'

'And what of all that?' he asked.—'Do not I treat her as a kind father should treat her?'

'Yes; but suppose a libertine should fall into her company and lead her from the paths of virtue as you have led the daughter of others? Would you not then feel as if the libertine had committed a very deep and dark crime?—And why is your daughter's virtue and happiness more valuable than that of others? Would you not be almost inclined to take the life of him who had seduced your own daughter? I know such questions must go home to your heart and conscience, if any you have.'



'But why do you thus falsely accuse me of crimes?' he asked. 'Wait until I have done such deeds, and then it will be time enough to question me as you now have.'

'The time has already come when such questions ought to be asked,' she added. 'You can deceive me no longer. I blame myself for not finding you out before. Many years you have been running after other women and destroying the character and happiness of the virtuous and innocent. How will your daughter feel when she learns your true character? Can she, innocent, virtuous and kind-hearted, love and respect such a father? O, no, her soul abhors sin in every form, and especially will she abhor the sin that so easily besets you. Think upon these things, and pray God to forgive you before it is forever too late!'

'Why do you thus run on as if I were guilty?' he asked; feeling the force of her words, and wishing to turn it in another direction.

'Because there is no doubt of your guilt; and there is one witness who will swear to it,' she replied.

'One witness!' he repeated. 'What do you mean by such insinuations?'

'I will not insinuate, but speak out frankly,' she added. 'Yes, there is one swift witness against you, and her name is Jane Clark!'

He suddenly started as if a sharp instrument had been thrust into him in spite of all his power of self-possession and control of which he had a large share. He knew not what reply to make, and remained silent.

'You are touched to the quick, and God knows your guilt,' she said, rising, and leaving the room.

He was petrified with astonishment, and cudgeled his brains to ascertain how she could know any thing of Jane Clark; but the more he reflected upon the subject, the more bewildered was his mind.

Some time elapsed before he retired to his sleeping apartment, and when he did so, it was not to sleep and forget his troubles, but to keep awake and endeavor to imagine how his wife could

ever have learned the name of Jane Clark.

## CHAPTER XV.

A DISTURBED FIRESIDE. THE DAUGHTER'S CURIOSITY, AND THE MOTHER'S CAUTION AND ADVICE. A STRANGE INTERVIEW. A FAVORABLE IMPRESSION. THE GIFT. THE HUSBAND'S CASE GROWS WORSE.

MORNING came and brought with it no comfort to the truant husband. Mrs. Mellen appeared calm and collected; but exchanged not a word with her husband.

The daughter noticed that her father's countenance was somewhat changed, and thought he was more disturbed and disquieted than usual. The cause, however, she could not divine; but she was anxious to ascertain what had thus separated her parents and rendered them so unsocial.

Her curiosity was so great that she resolved to muster courage and ask her mother. Sometime after breakfast and after her father had gone, she and her mother were alone in the parlor.

'Mother, may I ask why father appears so very sad and sorrowful?' asked Ida.

'My dear, you must ask him and not me, replied the mother. 'Every one knows his or her troubles best.'

'But you and father don't speak to each other as you used to,' added, Ida; feeling much grieved at the circumstance, and hoping her mother would divulge the secret of their difficulties, if any existed.

'True, my dear, we do not; but you must ask him, and not me for the cause,' she replied. 'You must not question me upon the subject.'

'I will not, dear mother, if it is not proper,' added Ida.

'I wonder not, Ida, that you ask such questions; but the asking may be more proper for you than the answering them might be for me,' said her mother.

'If I should ask him, think you he would tell me?' inquired the daughter.

'I cannot say, my dear, she replied. 'Come, the morning is pleasant, and

we'll walk down and see Mrs. Hamblin and little Hattie.'

'I shall be very glad to do so; for I love them,' said Ida. 'Little Hattie is one of the most lovely girls in the city, and I should like to have her come and live with us. I hope her father will never drink again.'

'I hope so, too,' added the mother. 'God strengthen him, he will keep a sober man. His wife has had a severe trial in the school of affliction; but she has borne up under it like a good Christian woman. My dear Ida, I would not say any thing to induce you to hate the world, for it is, indeed, a beautiful one in which we are placed to do good; but let me say that you must not anticipate too much pleasure in the married state. Husbands are not always what they seem to be. Mrs. Hamblin, when she married, anticipated great pleasure in the union with the man whom she loved; but alas, how sadly has she been disappointed.'

'O, I know it,' added Ida. 'It is a terrible thing for a woman to have a drunken husband.'

'But, my dear, it is even worse to have a libertine,' said her mother.

Ida looked up into her mother's face with an expression of countenance that indicated some very peculiar emotions; but she made no reply. The mother wondered if Ida suspected her father.

'The poor drunkard swallows the liquid poison because his stomach becomes diseased,' continued the mother. 'When he drinks, he don't intend to do harm to any one. His only object is to gratify his raging thirst; but the libertine not only gratifies a baser passion, but destroys the happiness of his own family and makes victims of the virtuous and innocent.'

'He is, indeed, more corrupt and heartless than the drunkard,' added Ida. 'I have often thought of it.'

'I am glad you think and reflect upon such subjects,' said her mother. 'I hope you will avoid such characters. It is much better for a woman to live single than to become the wife of an immoral man.'

'Indeed, it is,' replied this good girl. 'There, the door-bell rings, and I dare say it is Frederick Stephens, for I thought I had a glimpse of his person as he passed the window.'

This young man was the son of a rich merchant, and began to pay very marked attention to Ida. He was not engaged to her; but intended to offer himself as her lover as soon as he thought he should be accepted. He had recently visited her several times, and became apparently much attached to her; but she had no very particular fancy for him, and yet he was a very handsome fellow of pleasing address, very sociable, somewhat witty, and had enjoyed great educational privileges; but he had not improved so much as he might have done if his father had not been so wealthy. She knew but little about his moral character and principles, and heard less. Although he appeared fair, yet she had some doubts and misgivings in relation to him.

Ida had been familiarly acquainted with Frederick Stephens but a short time, although she had occasionally seen him precious to that time. Her mother had studied his character according to the best light she had, and especially, since she thought he intended to become a suitor of Ida. Her impressions of him was somewhat favorable; and yet he did not seem to possess any good business habits. But then such habits were not very common to the sons of rich fathers. If he had possessed and practiced them he would have been an exception to the general rule.

The young man was ushered into the parlor and treated very politely both by mother and daughter. He came to give Ida an invitation to attend a concert with him the following evening, as some celebrated vocalists were advertised to sing. Ida was very fond of music, and played and sang very well herself. She had never accompanied him to any place of public amusement. Knowing her fondness for music and her skill on the piano-forte, he had ventured to invite her to the concert.



The compliments of the morning were then exchanged and a variety of conversational topics introduced. At last he summoned up all his courage and broached the subject nearest his heart.

'There is to be a splendid concert this evening, Ida, and I should be well pleased with your company,' he said, half smiling, and half blushing.

'I noticed in the papers that one was advertised,' she replied. 'It would give me much pleasure to attend it, if mother has no objections.'

'Well, Mrs. Mellen, what do you say to that?' he asked, feeling very much elated with his success.

'I think she may go, if you will promise not to keep late hours,' replied the mother.

'I assure you, madam, we will not keep bad hours,' he said.

Soon after he took his leave, the mother and daughter went out to visit the reformed drunkard's family.

Mrs. Hamblin was gaining her health very fast, and her husband held out in his temperance principles. He found employment in writing for a mercantile house, and received a good salary.—As Mrs. Mellen and Ida were passing down the street they saw the Colonel walking very fast at some distance ahead of them. He was on his way to visit Jane. Happening to look back, he saw his wife and daughter coming, and fortunate for him he did so; for a few more steps would have brought him to the house where Jane was, and he would have entered it but for discovering them.

The Colonel passed rapidly on and was soon out of their sight. As they passed into Mrs. Hamblin's, Jane saw them, and spoke to Aunt Dumpford who happened to be in the room at the time. She had not yet told the housekeeper of her visit to Mrs. Hamblin.

'See, that same lady and her daughter have again called upon that poor woman,' said Jane. 'They must be very kind. I wonder who they can be?'

'That is more than I can tell,' replied Aunt Dumpford.

'Havn't you ever called upon the woman?' asked Jane, looking her full in the face.

'I just dropped in the other evening,' replied the bawd. 'But I shall not call again.'

'Why not?' inquired Jane.

'My opinion is the woman keeps a bad house,' replied this wily woman.

'Keeps a bad house!' repeated Jane; 'keeps a bad house! I should not think then such a fine-looking lady would visit her as that woman appears to be who has just gone into the house.'

'She's probably a bad woman,' said the bawd.

'And the young lady who accompanied her?' asked Jane, now fully convinced that Aunt Dumpford was a liar.

'No doubt of it,' she replied. 'We cannot tell any thing about a woman's character in this city by her outside appearance.'

'Very true,' replied Jane. 'But what did you see when you visited the woman that makes you think she keeps a bad house?'

'O, she talked like it to me,' she said.

'But did you see any swearing, drinking girls there?' asked Jane.

'Not when I was there,' she answered, gazing upon Jane, as if she would read in the expression of her countenance the most secret thoughts of her mind. 'Why do you ask the question?'

'Because the presence of such girls is strong evidence of a bad house,' replied Jane.

'Then I suppose because you heard a girl swear here the other night, you may think I keep a bad house,' she added, feeling somewhat disturbed.

'That is an inference of your own drawing,' replied Jane. 'But I heard a girl swear in the house last night, and I heard men swear, too.'

'Heard men swear, too!' repeated this hypocrite. 'I think you must be mistaken.'

'O, no, I am not,' added Jane. 'I heard the swearing very distinctly.—Besides, I find men are constantly coming and going through the night.'

'Then my female boarders must have sparks,' said the woman, apparently somewhat surprised. 'I have often told them I could not have any courting done in my house; but I suppose the fellows will steal in when I do not know it. I may have been too strict, more so than boarding housekeepers in general. Perhaps I ought to permit the girls to receive company, especially if any of them are expecting to be married. Don't you think that would be right?'

'I hardly know what to think,' replied Jane. 'There are a great many mysteries in this world. I believe I will go across the street and visit that woman.'

'O, no, the Colonel would not like it,' said Aunt Dumpford. 'He would not have you go on any account; for I have not the least doubt but she keeps a bad house. No—no, Jane, the good Colonel would feel dreadfully about it, if you should go.'

'But I wish to see that beautiful little girl,' added Jane. 'I cannot think her mother is a bad woman. No—no, she didn't look like it when they led her into the house.'

'I tell you she not only looks like it now, but also talks like it,' said this lying woman. 'I'm sure I shall not call to see her again. No—no, Jane, you mustn't think of seeing that woman without the Colonel's consent.'

A few more words passed, and Jane repaired to her chamber. The poor girl now strongly suspected that she boarded with a woman of bad character, but whether the Colonel knew it or not was a question not so clear in her mind.

She sat down at the window and kept her eyes fastened upon the house where Mrs. Hamblin resided. Little Hattie came to the door and stood there some minutes. Jane saw her and raised her window to attract the attention of the little girl. Hattie did look up and their eyes met. At first Jane thought she would beckon her across the street and invite her to come in; but finally concluded it was not best, as Aunt Dumpford might be offended. Hattie

soon went back into the house, and said,—

'O, mother, I just saw that beautiful lady at the window'

'Is she at the window now?' asked Mrs. Mellen?

'I guess she is,' replied Hattie, going to the door, while Mrs. Mellen went to the window and looked out.

She saw Jane still at the window, and gazed upon her with emotions which it is difficult to describe. Ida also went to the window and saw Jane; but she knew not the feelings that agitated her heart.

'She is a very beautiful girl,' said Ida. 'What splendid hair? Do you suppose it curls naturally?'

'I don't know, indeed,' replied her mother, turning away from the sight, and sitting down by the side of the sick woman, while Ida went to the door where Hattie was. Jane saw them standing there. And how glad she would have been to have a little talk with them.

'You saw the girl, did you?' asked Mrs. Hamblin.

'I did, and my heart is sad within me when I think of her fate,' replied Mrs. Mellen.

'I fear the man who has promised marriage will deceive and abandon her,' added Mrs. Hamblin. 'I wish she could be saved from such a fate.'

'I fear it is too late now,' said Mrs. Mellen. 'She appears to be a very lovely and beautiful girl. I have a half a mind to call and see her.'

'I wish you would,' added the sick woman. 'No doubt she would be glad to see you.'

While they were talking, George Stedman came along, and thought he recognized in the beautiful and well dressed Hattie the poor ragged beggar girl whom he had often seen about the streets, and to whom he had given pennies occasionally. As he came opposite the door where Hattie and Ida were standing, he stopped to speak with them. Jane saw him, and immediately withdrew from the window. Her heart beat with strange emotions, and the tears ran down her cheeks.—

Her troubles were very severe, and she wished she had never left her boarding house.

'It seems to me I have seen you before, my little friend,' said the young bricklayer.

'O, I remember of having seen you a good many times,' replied Hattie.—'And you have given me money.'

'Occasionally a few pennies,' he added, while a smile passed over his handsome face. 'You seem to be better off now, and I am very glad of it.'

'O, yes, father don't drink now, and this good girl and her mother have given us every thing we want,' replied Hattie, taking Ida's hand, and looking up into her kind, benevolent face.

'Heaven will bless her and her mother for such kind deeds,' he added, gazing into Ida's face, and admiring the expression of her countenance.

'If Heaven blesses us, we shall be blessed, indeed!' said Ida, while a sweet smile played about her red lips, and her deep blue eyes shone with Heaven's own light.

'True,' he added. 'I'm very glad fortune gave you the means to assist this little girl's parents, and God the heart to bestow them so wisely and benevolently. Often when I have met this girl, poor, ragged and begging, I have wished I was rich so that I could do as you have done; but I'm a mechanic and obliged to work hard for all I get, and yet I sometimes bestow gifts, very small gifts of course, upon those, who are poorer than I am and unable to work.'

'You are very kind, indeed,' said Ida, beginning to feel quite an interest in the young man.

'Not so kind as you are, if I may judge the heart from the expression of the face,' he replied, smiling, and giving Hattie a half a dollar.

He bid them good morning and was about to pass along; but before he did so, Ida asked him for his name which he readily gave her. He passed on and they went back into the house.—Hattie showed her half dollar, and Ida greatly extolled the young man. She

was really pleased with him. While he was talking with Ida, Jane, slyly gazed upon them through another window which was not raised.

The reader may imagine her emotions; but they cannot be portrayed. And what would they have been had she known that Ida was the daughter of him whom she expected to marry?—Mrs. Mellen did not call on Jane, but returned home accompanied by Ida.

## CHAPTER XVI.

THE MYSTERY NOT YET REVEALED TO THE HUSBAND. A SEVERE CURTAIN LECTURE. A WANTON'S HARANGUE. THE POWER OF HATE AND REVENGE. A NEW INTERVIEW.

COL. MELLEN was greatly troubled and anxious to see Jane; but concluded not to call until the shades of evening would conceal him from view. Anxious indeed he was to ascertain by what strange means his wife had obtained her information in relation to Jane.—Sometimes he flattered himself that she happened some way to stumble upon the name; but his cooler judgment and reason were against such a supposition.

There was great mystery, if not witchcraft, in the affair, and he longed to find it out by some means or other. It was evident enough to his mind that his wife was on his track, and he was most anxious to throw her from the scent.

Soon after tea Frederick Stephens came and took Ida to the concert which was to come off that evening. This young man was highly gratified with such a privilege, and believed he had so far won her affections as to become her suitor; but Ida was not so easily won as he fondly imagined. There was something about him which she did not fancy—something she could not describe. He did not seem to her to be so good and kind of heart as she desired, and yet she feared that her feelings towards him might do him injustice.

After they had gone, the Colonel and his wife were in the parlor. Not a

word had passed between them; but he was anxious to introduce the subject which laid so near his heart. How to do so was the question.

She sat down and began to read in one of the magazines that were upon the centre table, apparently unmindful that he was in the room. He seriously reflected upon the subject, but could not contrive any satisfactory way of introducing it.

The Colonel finally gave it up, took his cane, put on his hat, and was about to go out when she took her eyes from the book and turned them upon him in a burning gaze.

'You had better hurry, for undoubtedly the beautiful, but unfortunate girl is anxiously waiting for your arrival,' she said, in accents of voice that penetrated his inmost soul, and harrowed up his feelings.

'That is your opinion?' he asked, feeling his anger rise, yet exceedingly troubled in his conscience.

'It is,' she quickly replied. 'You will find her very anxious to have you appoint the bridal day which you so solemnly promised to her. O, wicked monster! How can your heart be so corrupt as thus to trifle with the affections of an innocent and beautiful girl. We cannot much longer remain under the same roof. I have remained with you too long already. We must separate farther apart than we are now.—Would to Heaven it could be otherwise!'

'Tell me who has been whispering into your ears such slanderous tales about me,' he demanded.

'Such slanderous tales!' she repeated. 'No one has whispered such tales in my ears. The Allseeing Eye is upon your inmost soul, and your conscience tells you that I do not accuse you falsely! Do not add the sin of lying to your other transgressions.—Confession would become you better, and a sincere repentance of your foul sins might yet save you, although it would require a great stretch of divine mercy. But sinners have been saved at the eleventh hour.'

'It is hard to be accused by a wife,' he added.

'Still harder to be guilty,' she replied. 'I have found you out, and no longer can you deceive me. Go, and marry the girl as you have promised. Leave the city—the State—the country with her; but do not add falsehood to you other crimes. You have my consent. Go, and let me see you no more.'

'Marry what girl?' he asked, and hoping she had forgotten the name, and appearing greatly surprised.

'Jane Clark!' she quickly replied, looking him full in the face.

'By Heavens, wife, you are crazy!' he said. 'Yes, the spirit of jealousy has darkened your reason.'

'Can the spirit of jealousy call names?' she calmly asked.

He cast his eyes upon the carpet, and his emotions were violent. His true character now began to develop itself, and his baser nature to gain the ascendancy.

'You may leave me, if you please,' he said, after a brief pause. 'But Ida will remain with me.'

'I need not your consent to leave you, and Ida may take her choice of her parents,' she replied.

She shall not take her choice,' he added. 'I have control of her.'

'Be careful what you attempt to do,' she said. 'The law has an iron grasp and may yet take hold of you! Remember there are some crimes which are furnished with imprisonment in this world, to say nothing of that more terrible punishment in the world to come. Leave me! I can say no more.'

She bent down her head and buried her face in her hands as they rested upon the book she had just previously been reading.

He stood a moment and gazed upon her, and left the house with feelings much disturbed. Never had he seen a moment in which he was more troubled than he was at that time. A strange commingling of emotions harassed his soul. Anger, fear, hate, love, sorrow; all agitated his heart, and made him

wretched and miserable. He began to find that the way of the transgressor is, indeed, hard. It seemed to him that the Fates had conspired against him, and that punishments for all his sins were about to fall upon him at once.

Superstitious fear began to seize his heart for a short time; for it seemed as if his wife had obtained her knowledge from a superhuman source.—Such was his state of mind as he directed his steps to the house that held his victim. He entered it with mind bewildered and heart disturbed. The housekeeper noticed that his countenance gave evidence of a mind ill at ease. She conducted him to a private room.

'Why, Colonel, what is the trouble now?' she asked. 'You look really wild.'

'I suppose I do; but perhaps I shall be calmer soon,' he replied.

'You must try to quiet your nerves before you go up to see Jane,' she added.

'The girl is in trouble and no one can charm her out of it but your own dear self,' she said. 'I firmly believe that Jane is suspicious that I do not keep a respectable house, and I am really tired of trying to make her believe I do. It causes me a good deal of trouble. To tell you the truth dear Colonel, I don't fancy the game of playing the hypocrite. It costs too much labor and caution. In spite of all my prudence and foresight, she hears gentlemen coming and going at all times of the night, and very seriously asks me the cause.'

'No doubt of it,' he added. 'But how in heaven's name did my wife learn that I was keeping such a girl? That is a mystery I should like to penetrate.'

'I have thought of it a great deal; but am as much in the dark as you are,' she replied. 'It is a great mystery to me.'

'How do I know but you have revealed the secret to my wife for a sum of money?' he asked, even suspecting that such might be the case. 'Money

will bribe some women to do almost any thing.'

'God love your soul,' she exclaimed. 'Now that is too bad to come from you, Colonel. Drive that from your mind; for there's not one word of truth in it.'

'Well, I will not accuse you wrongly,' he added. 'But how could my wife learn the name of Jane? That's what I want to find out. It seems as if she must have made a league with the devil himself. Jane has not seen any one, has she?'

'No,' she replied. 'She has not even conversed with any one of the girls in the house; for I have told them to avoid her and have no talk with her.'

'That is right,' he added. 'But it does not at all clear up the mystery.—Is it not possible that Julia Sandborn has seen my wife and revealed the secret? She is bad enough to do that or any thing else.'

'O, I cannot believe she ever saw your wife in her life,' she replied.—'She has just come in and I will ask her to come here.'

She did so, and Julia entered the room, laughing, and humming a tune. She had imbibed just enough to make her feel comfortable.

'How fare ye, Colonel?' said Julia, shaking hands, and pulling one of his whiskers. 'Why had not you gone to the concert this evening and taken your beautiful bird with you. It is a shame to keep her caged up all the time.'

'Perhaps it is,' he replied. 'But I'm not fond of music.'

'Some kinds of music you are fond of, I can swear,' she added, poking her fore finger into his side, and laughing.

'Have you ever had any conversation with my bird as you call her?' he asked.

'Not a word,' she replied. 'But I should like to. Come, Colonel, give me some money and let her go to the theatre with me this evening.'

'No, no, I cannot do that,' he answered. 'I dare not trust her with you.'

'You had better begin to learn her some of the tricks of the trade, or you will have trouble with her one of these days,' she added. 'I know exactly how she feels; for, I have been through the mill. I have not forgot the rascal who kept me cooped up for months under the promise of marriage. No, no, by heavens I shall not forget him so long as my heart beats! If he should cross my track I would kill him as quick as I would a snake that chanced to crawl near me. Now look out, Colonel, for breakers. Hell has no fury like a woman's hate, as the poet or somebody else has said. Yes, I hate that James Carpenter with a perfect hatred. But I once loved him as I do my own eyes. Don't you have some fears that your beautiful bird will yet be actuated by the same feelings?'

'She is not so wicked as you are,' he replied.

'Wait and see!' she added. 'She has a woman's heart in her bosom, and that heart is capable of hating as well as loving,' she said. 'I judge from the snap of her eyes that she's not a fool by a jug full. And that reminds me of a few drops in yonder closet. Come, Colonel, treat me.'

'I should think you had drank quite enough, already,' said Aunt Dumpford.

'I have just drank enough to make me want more,' she added. 'Come, let us take a social glass together, and then I will go to the Bowery.'

'Well, I'll treat you if you will only just answer me one question, truly,' he said.

'I will do it if I can,' she replied.—'What is it?'

'Have you ever seen my wife?' he asked.

'Never, so help me God,' she answered. 'I shouldn't know your wife from old mother Eve. What's the trouble now? Ah, I think I see which way the cat jumps. The old lady has found out something. Got on your track, Colonel, eh? Jealousy begins to make things look kind of blue to her. Well, you'll soon be between two fires, and if you are not burnt a little, you'll be very lucky, that's all. Come, now,

for a gin cocktail; for the cobwebs are strung across my throat in skeins.'

He paid for a drink, but took none himself. She drank off her glass with the air of one of the Bowery boys.

'Aunt Dumpford keeps good gin, that's a fact,' she said, smacking her lips, and smiling. 'Now, my dear Colonel, let me give you a little piece of advice. You had better put Jane under my training for awhile, and perhaps I can show her the beauty and charms of a wanton's life. Good God! The beauty and charms of such a life! The devil take me for a liar! There is no beauty—no charm! All is dark and desolate. Would to God I had never been born. But no matter. Let me see Jim Carpenter, and the blood of his black heart flowing, and I will be satisfied. But let that pass. Come, Colonel, let Jane go to the theatre with me to-night, and I will show her how she can get a living when you abandon her.'

'How do you know I shall abandon her?' he asked.

'Thunder!' she exclaimed. 'How do I know your nose is on your face? Of course you will put her off one of these days, and that will not be your first case either. How was it with Josephine Evans? Poor girl! I know her well! Ah, Colonel, you are an old rogue! No use in denying it; for she told me the whole story some weeks before she died. Now don't you expect that Old Beelzebub will have the picking of your bones at last. If he don't got such men as you, then there might as well be no devil at all.'

'Come, come, Julia, your tongue runs like a waterwheel,' said the mistress.

'A gin cocktail always makes it limber,' replied this abandoned girl.

'I should think it was hung in the middle,' added the Colonel.

'Never mind,' she replied. 'Now for the Bowery. What do you say about letting Jane accompany me. I will take care of her.'

'Not this evening,' he replied. Julia left the room, and hurried into the street on her way to the theatre.

'She's naturally a smart girl,' he said. 'She will kill herself with drink.'

'So I tell her; but she don't seem to care,' replied Aunt Dumpford.

'I suppose she has her gloomy spells,' he added.

'O, yes, I have known her pass a whole day without uttering scarcely a word,' she replied.

'Do you think she would kill that Jim Carpenter as she calls him?' he asked.

'I haven't the least doubt of it,' she answered. 'She would forget every thing else before she ceases to remember him. Scarcely a day passes when she does not have something to say of him. The spirit of revenge rankles more and more furiously in her breast as time passes, at least so it seems to me.'

'I do not believe Jane's heart could ever cherish such a spirit of revenge,' he added.

'I think you misjudge her character,' she said. 'So far as I have studied her character, since she has been here, I think you will find her different from what you anticipate.'

'It may be so; but I must go up and smooth her feelings,' he said, leaving the room and passing up to Jane's chamber.

When he entered she sat at the window looking out upon the street. Her mind was much disquieted, and her nerves somewhat unstrung. She had been seriously reflecting upon her situation, and looking into that terrible future when she imagined her lover might abandon her.

'Good evening, my dear Jane,' he said, taking a seat beside her, and pressing her to his bosom. 'I hope you feel happy this evening.'

'I should feel much more happy, if we were married,' she said.

'O, well, that happy bridal day will come along in due time,' he added. 'You must exercise a little more patience; for I am compelled to do so. I am quite as anxious for the coming of that happy day as you are.'

'Do then fix upon some day, even if it be several weeks or months ahead,' she said.

'Don't be impatient my dear,' he replied. 'I have now my eye upon a house and intend to purchase it, if I can at any thing like a fair price. I am sure, you have a good place here for the present, and every thing convenient.'

'I don't like to stay here,' she added, in a tremulous voice.

'And why not?' he asked. 'I'm sure Aunt Dumpford treats you kindly, does she not?'

'O, yes; but I fear bad characters visit her house,' she replied.

'That is a grand mistake,' he added. 'I have just been talking with her about that, and she is very much troubled because you think so.'

He taxed his powers to the utmost to convince her that her suspicions were unfounded, and partially succeeded in quieting her fears.

The Colonel then endeavored to find out, in a round about way, whether she had been instrumental in giving his wife any information; but he could get nothing satisfactorily from her in relation to the subject.

He remained with her until nearly ten o'clock. His visit quieted her more than it did him.

## CHAPTER XVII.

THE CONCERT. A DIALOGUE BETWEEN IDA AND THE BRICKLAYER. HER LOVER MUCH DISTURBED. OPERA-GLASSES. TRUE VALUE OF RICHES. A DANDY IN THE BACK GROUND.

YOUNG STEPHENS entered the concert room arm in arm with Ida Mellen. Never did a young gallant feel better than he did on that occasion. He fancied Ida was the most beautiful girl in that galaxy of beauty and fashion, in that fancy he was not far out of the way; for there was hardly one who made a better appearance than she did. Many opera-glasses were levelled at her, and that fact inflated his vanity. He, too, had a very large and costly glass through which he surveyed the circle of fashionably dressed ladies, but he saw no one that filled his eye so well as his beloved Ida. He offered her the glass.

'No, I thank you,' she said. 'I came to hear the music, not to gaze upon the auditors. I never use such a glass, and do not like the custom.'

'Why not?' he asked, feeling somewhat surprised at her refusal.

'I can see well enough without such aid,' she replied. 'And I must confess that I view the practice as rather a silly one. Perhaps I am odd in my notions; but such they are.'

'Does not your mother carry one?' he asked.

'Never,' she replied. 'Mother thinks the practice is ridiculous.'

'I can see the audience and singers much better with it than I can with my naked eyes.'

'Perhaps so,' she added. 'But I dislike to have such instruments levelled at me, and should think others would have the same feelings.'

It so happened that young Stedman, the bricklayer, sat directly behind Ida, and heard her remarks, which greatly pleased him. At first he did not recognize her; but she had not spoken but a few words before he knew who she was. He felt quite interested in her conversation, and listened very attentively to all she said. Some time passed ere she discovered him. But happening to turn her head partially round, she saw him.

'Why, how do you do?' she asked, smiling, and politely bowing. 'I did not expect to see you here.'

'Neither did I expect to meet you,' he added. 'A fine audience, this evening, and the singing thus far has gone off well.'

'Very well, indeed,' she replied. 'Are you fond of music?'

'I am exceedingly fond of it,' he answered. 'After a hard day's work such a concert gives me great pleasure. I need not inquire whether you are fond of music, for I have pretty good evidence of it in your so attentively listening.'

'O, yes, I was always fond of music from infancy,' she replied.

'I suppose you sing and play, too,' he added.

'I do some,' she answered. 'But I don't consider myself very perfect in the art. I wish I was.'

The above conversation took place between the parts. In addition to his large opera-glass, young Stephens had a small quizzing glass suspended by a gold chain round his neck, which he occasionally placed at his eye and gazed upon the bricklayer during his conversation with Ida.

He was not at all pleased with her

being thus familiar with him; for he saw by his dress and ungloved hands that he belonged to the working classes, which he held in very low estimation.

The young gentleman was quite uneasy and very anxious to ascertain who Stedman was; but he forbore to make the inquiry until after another conversation was had between them, which seemed to be more familiar than the first.

'Who is that young fellow you have been talking with?' asked Stephens, in a whisper.

'His name is George Stedman, and a mason by profession,' she replied.—'I never saw him but once before.—Do not you think he is very intelligent for a mechanic?'

'He may be for a bricklayer,' he replied. 'But I should not think you would condescend to converse with him. He is quite below you.'

'O, no, he is quite above me, and you, too, especially, when he is upon the top of a house, laying bricks,' she added, smiling.

'That may be; but then you know he moves in a circle quite inferior to that in which we move,' he said.

'No, I don't know any such thing,' she replied. 'I consider the mechanics and the laboring portion of the people quite above all others. It is they who are the producers and make the wealth of the country. No, no, I hope I shall never be above conversing with such characters.'

'You would not wed one of that class, would you?' he asked.

'Just as quick as I would a rich man's son,' she replied.

'That is very strange,' he added; feeling his sensibilities shocked.

'Nevertheless, it is true,' she added. 'And there is good reason for it. Now suppose, a girl weds a man of wealth without any trade, and her husband should lose his riches, what could she depend upon? Certainly not on his money, for that is gone, and not on his trade, for he never had any; but if her husband is a good, industrious mechanic she is quite sure of a respectable living. I assure you I hold the working classes in very high estimation.'

'They are all well enough in their places,' he added.

'And their places ought to be the first in our country; for they have done all the work and made all the real wealth,' she replied.

They now listened to a female vocalist of much celebrity whose bewitching strains absorbed all the attention of Ida. She was much delighted; and fully appreciated the music which her dandified gallant had not the capacity to do. Although like many others of his class he could talk learnedly and cry *encore*, yet he had no soul for the charms of music and could not tell whether a tune was sung well or not. Young Stedman, on the contrary, was a very good singer, and played the flute quite well considering the time he had for practice.

'That song was sung most admirably,' said Stedman. 'I always admired it, I think it is one of the sweetest and most pathetic airs Belini ever composed, and no author ancient or modern, ever composed more heart-touching melodies than he.'

'I think just so, too,' she replied.—

'Casti Diva was always a favorite air of mine. I think you are a musician yourself.'

'What, a bricklayer a musician!' he asked, smiling, and showing a very handsome set of white teeth which were not begrimed with tobacco juice as the dandy's were who sat at her side.

'Yes, a bricklayer,' she replied.—'Why not? Can't a mechanic possess a soul for the charms of music as well as any one else?'

'True, I make some music with my trowel when I'm cutting a hard brick,' he added; while the dandy turned up his nose at the remark.

'Well, that's the music I love to hear in a clear, bright autumnal morning,' she said. 'But I reckon you sing. Do you not?'

'I confess I do occasionally sing,' he replied, smiling.

'And don't you play on some instrument?' she asked.

'Sometimes on the flute,' he answered. 'The truth is, I am very fond of music, and wish I had more time to practice it.'

'There, I thought you were a musician,' she added. 'I don't mean a professor, but an amateur.'

'I fear my musical accomplishments will hardly entitle me to the latter name, and surely I have not one claim to the former,' he replied.

A gentleman now came forward and sang, and their conversation ceased; for both were anxious to listen. Young Stephens wished he had taken a seat in another part of the house; for the bricklayer very much annoyed him.—In fact, Ida seemed to be more interested in the young mechanic than she did in her gallant, and he felt it very severely.

The pleasure Stephens anticipated in attending Ida to the concert was very seriously marred by the presence of

young Stedman; and the truth is, she was more pleased with the bricklayer than she was with her gallant.

The concert closed soon after ten o'clock, and young Stephens was very glad when he heard the last song; for he was anxious to get Ida away from the bricklayer. As she rose to leave the room, she bid Stedman good night, and in a voice, too, that was music to his ears. He felt a deep interest in that good girl, but held her gallant in very low estimation. They entered a carriage, and Stedman walked to his boarding house.

'I mistrusted that young mechanic knew a good deal about music,' said Ida, soon after they entered the carriage. 'I dare say he sings and plays with a good deal of taste.'

'I guess all the music he can make is done with his trowel,' replied the dandy.

'I think not; for he knew all the songs and who composed them,' she added. 'I have not the least doubt but he reads a good deal while other young men are idling away their time at theatres and oyster saloons, if not worse places.'

The last words of her remarks fell very heavily on his ears, and stirred his conscience; for he was in the habit of frequenting gambling houses and brothels; but she knew it not, and yet was not entirely free from suspicions to that effect.

'Perhaps, he may; but it seems very strange to me that you think so much of him,' he said. 'I shall begin to think you are in love with him.'

'O, no, Frederick, only in love with his industrial habits and his virtues,' she added. 'That is the extent of my

love. I don't know as I can ever love any young man.'

'I trust and believe you do not intend to live the life of an old maid,' he added.

'I had better live such a life than to wed a man of dissolute habits,' she replied.

'True; but then do you not think my habits are bad, do you?' he asked.

'O, I know nothing at all about your habits,' she replied. 'But this I do know,—young men who have money enough to spend, and no regular business or trade are, apt to fall into bad habits. Depend upon it, Frederick, there is nothing like steady and useful employment to keep a young man virtuous, and it is still better when he is compelled to earn his own livelihood and not depend upon a rich father for support. It has been said that an idle brain is the devil's workshop; and I'm quite sure idle hands will not keep out of mischief.'

'You certainly have got into a peculiar train of thinking this evening,' he added.

'The channel in which my thoughts run may seem rather strange to you,' she said.

'It certainly does,' he replied.—'There is one subject that lies near my heart.'

'A good many ought to lie near it,' she quickly added, smiling; for she knew what he was about to say, and didn't care about hearing it.

'But one at a time,' he said.—'Now, Ida, I have long felt a deep interest in you.'

'And you ought to feel a deep interest in humanity generally,' she very quickly added.

'Ida, to be frank,—I love you, and desire to form a connection with you which shall only terminate with our lives,' he said.

'That, indeed, is a question of too much importance to both of us to be settled in one evening,' she replied.—'It must take time for that. You may yet see other girls whom you will like better than you do me.'

'Never!' he quickly and earnestly added. 'Never.'

'Well, then, perhaps, I may meet other gentlemen whom I may fancy more than I do you,' she replied.—'So, you can see, it is as broad as it is long.'

'I hope that gentleman will not be a bricklayer,' he added.

'I assure you, Frederick, I do not like to hear you speak so contemptuously of industrious, intelligent, virtuous young men,' she said, in a tone of voice and manner, that showed she meant what she said.

'I hope, Ida, I have not wounded your feelings,' he said. 'I'm sure I did not intend to do so. That young bricklayer is well enough in his place, and no doubt fills it; but he is not a very suitable match for you. Distinctions in society do exist, and always have existed, and it is proper that they should exist.'

'True, they do, and have existed; but I am not sure that they ought to exist in the form they do at present.—It is not to be expected that the openly vicious should associate with the virtuous, nor that the ignorant should remain on the same level with the wise and learned; but those distinctions in society, founded on riches, alone are wrong in principle.'

'True, the rich man may give a party, or an entertainment which the poor man is not able to give; but the poor man should not be passed by on that account. Let the rich man invite the honest, industrious and intelligent mechanic to his house and treat him according to his moral worth and intelligence, throwing money entirely out of the case. And suppose, that mechanic is too poor to give such an entertainment as he receives, then such a mingling of the different elements of society would do great credit to the rich.'

'Depend upon it, Frederick, there is something radically wrong in the present organization of society. My father, as well as yours, is a wealthy man, still that is no good reason why I should not treat an honest, an industrious sewing girl with as much respect as I would your own sister, if you had one. Such are my feelings and opinions upon the subject, and such are my good mother's.'

'I dare say your father entertains different notions,' he added.

'I think he does in some good degree; but then in my opinion his notions are wrong,' she replied. 'He has not thought so much upon the subject as my mother has; and, consequently, does not see it so clearly as she does. Mother has much feeling for the poor and gives a great deal every year. She says she would not know how to prize wealth if she did not possess a heart full of feeling for the poor.'

'Your mother is a most excellent woman, every body says,' the young man added.

'And permit me to inform you she

values the good opinions of the poor much more than she does the rich,' she answered.

'I know she is very charitable and kind,' he added.

'And I hope her daughter will always pattern after her,' she said, smiling. 'I value riches as much as you do; but perhaps from different motives. I value them because they enable me to minister to the wants of the poor and to relieve their distresses. Perhaps you have never taken such a view of money. Like most others you have valued it because it contributes to your own wants, without any reference to those who are exposed to the chilling winds of adversity. If such have been your only views I pray you to change them. Well do I remember when I was but a very small girl, not more than eight years old, that mother told me it was more blessed to give than to receive. Those words I have never forgot, and hope I never shall. They are the text to the great sermon of life, if I may so express myself. In the course of my walks among the poor in company with my mother I have found them to be true as the eternal principles of justice. Think of them, and strive for a heart to practice them, and you will find much pleasure.'

'Why, Ida, you have become quite an enthusiast in your works of charity,' he said. 'I was not aware that you were quite so much engaged in such works as you appear to be.'

'Perhaps you do not,' she added.—'Whom does God bless?' Answer me that question.'

'I suppose He blesses all who do right,' he replied.

'True; but there is a more ready



answer,' she added. 'God blesses a cheerful giver. Remember that, and so govern yourself accordingly. Now every person wishes to be blessed of Heaven, and the way to obtain that blessing is to give cheerfully. If one gives grudgingly, he is not blessed.—Remember that, too. You now perceive what kind of a wife you would have if you married me. Are you not afraid that I should give all your money to the poor?'

'O, no, I will run the risk of that,' he replied. 'And to come to the question I first started, will you receive me as your lover?'

'But surely you would not wish to be thus received, unless I could reciprocate your affection, would you?' she asked.

He did not answer her question, and the carriage was driven up to the door. They alighted; but it was so late he did not go in.

He parted with her upon the doorstep. He went away with a rather heavy heart; for he did not feel as if he was her accepted lover. He now directed his steps to an oyster saloon, and then afterwards he might have been found in a house of ill-fame.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

THE MOTHER AND DAUGHTER AGREE IN OPINION. THE IRISH SERVANT GIRL'S HINTS. THE HOWEY, AND STRANGE INTERVIEW. REVENGE NEVER SLEEPS THE MURDER, AND CONCEALMENT OF THE MURDERESS.

'HAVN'T I kept pretty good hours?' asked Ida, as she entered the parlor in which her mother sat.

'It will do very well,' replied her mother. 'How did you like the concert?'

'O, it was very fine,' answered her daughter. 'I never attended a better concert.'

'Well, how did you like your gallant?' asked the mother. 'Can he appreciate good music?'

'Not so well as George Stedman who gave Hattie a half dollar,' she answered.

'Why, did you see him there?' inquired the mother.

'O, yes, we happened to take a seat in front of him, and I talked a good deal with him,' she replied. 'He is very intelligent, and has read much, besides he sings himself, and plays the flute.'

'How did your gallant like to have you converse with another gentleman?' asked the mother.

'I think he did not like it very well, and expressed some astonishment that I should descend so low as to talk with a mechanic,' answered Ida.

'He was quite wrong there,' added her mother. 'Quite wrong, indeed, I'm sorry he entertains such aristocratic opinions.'

'I told him I was sorry, too,' said Ida. 'The truth is, mother, he is not half so intelligent as that hard working mechanic. Stedman has read more, and understands music better than Stephens.'

'Very likely,' added the mother.—

'Young men who have rich fathers spend their time in pleasure, while mechanics are taught to value their own time much more highly. I am glad you praised the honest, intelligent working men. It will be a good lesson for him.'

'I like the bricklayer now much better than I do Frederick Stephens,' said

Ida. 'He is really more agreeable and interesting.'

'Well, Ida, I shall begin to think you are really in love with that bricklayer, you praise him so highly,' said the mother.

'O, no, mother, I'm not in love with him; but I esteem his good character,' she replied. 'He has a generous, good heart, and such I respect.'

'So you ought,' added the mother. 'I respect and esteem them. If you should wed an honest, industrious mechanic I should not mourn about it.'

'But father would,' added Ida. 'He would think it was an awful thing.'

'I suppose he might,' said her mother. 'I fear that I shall be compelled to separate from your father; but you must not ask me the reason. You have noticed that we are not so sociable as we used to be.'

'I have, indeed,' replied Ida, looking sorrowful. 'And it has pained my heart to see it.'

'Well, my dear Ida, you must try to make the best of it,' added her mother. 'And if your father and I should separate, who should you prefer to live with?'

'O, with you, my dear mother,' she replied.

'But he might object, and wish you to remain with him,' said this good mother.

'O, no, he will let me have my own choice,' added Ida.

She wanted to say more; but could not, she was so overcome by her own emotions. Tears stood trembling in her bright eyes.

She was anxious to know the cause which was about to separate her parents; but knowing her mother did not wish to reveal it, she abstained from asking.

Seeing the tears in her daughter's eyes, Mrs. Mellen's heart was much agitated; but she concealed her emotions as best she could, and urged Ida to be calm and composed.

Soon after Ida retired, her father came and entered the parlor where his wife sat. Not a word passed between them for some time. He saw by the expression of her countenance that his wife was unusually agitated; but he was not ignorant of the cause.

'Can you keep that beautiful girl Jane Clark easy with your false promises of marriage?' she asked, after a long and painful silence.

'You talk strangely,' he replied, with much feeling.

'Not so strangely as you act,' she added. 'Do you suppose a woman who has any claims to being virtuous would be willing to live with you?'

'Take your own course,' the Colonel sharply replied, rising, and leaving the room.

Soon after he retired, Biddy Kavanah, the Irish servant girl, entered the room. She had passed the evening out, and come to inquire about some domestic affairs.

Biddy knew there was trouble between Mrs. Mellen and her husband, and knew enough about his character to conjecture the cause of their whole trouble.

After her mistress had given Biddy the instructions she required, still she lingered in the room as if she had something to say. Mrs. Mellen always treated her servants very kindly; but did not make confidantes of them as some ladies do.

'Do you expect to live here much longer?' asked the servant girl, looking very sly.



'Why do you ask such a question?' inquired Mrs. Mellen.

'O, nothing in particular, only you and your husband are after sleeping in two beds,' she replied. 'But then that be only a gentile way of living.'

'To be frank with you, Biddy, I think I shall remove to another house before long,' added the mistress.

'And if you do, I want to go with you,' said Biddy. 'I could not live alone with your husband.'

'And why not?' asked the mistress, gazing full into Biddy's face.

'The reasons I don't want now to be after telling to you,' replied the servant girl. 'I niver talks against those I live with; but Colonel Mellen is a funny man, sometimes.'

'Is he, indeed?' asked the wife.— 'Does he act funny with you?'

'He tries to kiss me sometimes,' replied the servant.

'I trust you do not suffer him to do so,' said the mistress.

'I did a few times soon after I came here; but finding such fits increased in the Colonel, I don't let him now at all at all.'

'You do now perfectly right,' added Mrs. Mellen, feeling more and more contempt for her husband's conduct.— 'Say to him if he offers to kiss you again, that you will tell me of it.'

'I did tell him that same at last, and he has been quiet since,' added Biddy. 'I don't love to say it; but I fear he's a roguish jintleman. There be lots of them in this city; but they must keep away from me.'

'I commend you for expressing such sentiments,' said Mrs. Mellen. 'Take care of yourself and be a good girl, and you will do well enough.'

'Niver mind me about that,' added the servant girl, smiling, and leaving the room.

Soon after this good woman retired, with additional proofs of her husband's want of fidelity. We leave her for the present, and turn to other scenes in our drama of city life.

That same evening Julia Sandford attended the Bowery Theatre, and there fell in with her seducer, James Carpenter. He had been absent from the city some two or three years, and had just returned.

Julia came across him on the sidewalk in front of the theatre just after the performances were over. They met near a lamp-post; but he did not recognize her.

She knew him even before the light of the lamp had revealed his face; for his form and motions had made such an impression on her heart that she could at a glance recognize them among a crowd.

'God bless you, Jim!' she said, seizing his hand, and appearing very glad to see him.

He suddenly started at the sound of her voice; for it was familiar to his ears.

'What, is it you, Julia?' he asked.

'The same old sixpence,' she replied.

'How have you been?'

'O, pretty well,' he replied, gazing into her somewhat bloated face, and noticing the change there. 'How have you fared?'

'So, so,' she answered. 'Come, go home with me to-night. I have forgotten all old affairs, and will make you happy.'

He readily consented; taking her arm and walking along. She was very

talkative, and quite cheerful and pleasant. He was somewhat surprised at finding her so; for when he last saw her before he left the city, she swore that she would have her revenge, and gave him one of the severest lectures he ever had in his life.

He had become a finished gambler, and had traveled much in the Southern States, cheating and swindling money out of all who were not so skilful in the game as he was. He had several hundred dollars in his pocket.

'How have you made it since you have been gone?' she asked.

'Sometimes good luck, and sometimes bad has followed me; but on the whole I have kept a few shots in the locker,' he replied.

'Good on your head!' she added.—

'Come, go in and treat me.'

'I will do so with pleasure,' he said, following her into an oyster saloon, where they had a set down.

They drank, and ate oysters. She was apparently in very high glee, and he was glad he had met her so soon after his return to the city, especially since she seemed to have forgotten the old difficulties that once existed between them.

'You did serve me a mean trick,' she said. 'But then, never mind. You men are about all alike, I don't see much difference in them.'

'You are not far from right,' he replied, calling for some wine to wind off with. 'I really hope you enjoy life well.'

'First rate,' she answered, reaching across the table and chucking him under the chin. 'The city owes me a good living and I mean to have it. The world is a stage and we all have our parts to play.'

'Very true,' he replied, smiling, and drinking with her. 'I have recently played a good part at the South.'

'And did you see a better looking girl at the South than I am?' she asked, laughing, and striking her foot against his under the table.

'No, nor yet a smarter one,' he replied. 'Now what has become of the baby?'

'The doctors took care of that,' she answered, feeling rather serious in spite of the fumes of the liquor she had drunk. 'Say no more upon that subject. Let the past be forgotten, for it is the present we must enjoy.'

They now left the saloon and were soon in the room. She assumed as much cheerfulness as possible, and played well her part, concealing from his view the fell spirit of revenge that was rankling in her bosom, and also making him believe that her old affection for him was again re-kindled by his presence.

'This is the evening I have so long been wishing for,' she said, concealing her terrible hate under a forced smile.

'And, dear Julia, I rejoice that it has brought us together,' he said. 'It feels like old times.'

'Indeed, it does,' she added. 'But after all, do you think you treated me just right?'

'Perhaps I did not,' he replied.— 'But, as you say, it is best to let the past be forgotten.'

'What, baby and all?' she asked, in an altered tone of voice, and in a more serious manner.

'Speaking of the baby,' he continued. 'What became of it?'

'It breathed a few hours, and then died!' she replied, grasping the hilt of a dagger, unbeknown to him. 'And can a woman forget her first born?'

'O, never mind that now,' he added, seeing that a change had come over her, and wishing to turn her thoughts from the subject.

'And does the spirit of revenge ever die out in a woman's heart?' she inquired.

'I trust it does, and gives place to a new affection,' he replied.

'Never!' she exclaimed, not in a loud, but unearthly tone of voice.—'Die, monster! Die! Your soul shall go to hell where it belongs; but your child you can never see, for that innocent spirit has gone to Heaven!'

Quick as thought she plunged the dagger deep into his heart, and he fell upon the floor a dead man! The fatal deed was done so very quick and so thoroughly that no one in the house was disturbed by it.

'Ah, he will never seduce another woman!' she said to herself as she stood and looked down upon the bleeding corse. 'He has some money and a watch. These I must take: for who has a better claim to them than me?—No one; for has he not ruined me by his vile arts and false promises? Yes, and the articles shall be mine! I will take them and flee from the city.—The deed may not be discovered until morning.'

She now searched the dead man's pockets, and found much more of value than she expected. A valuable gold watch and chain, nearly two thousand dollars in current bank notes and over a hundred dollars in gold coins constituted her plunder.

Securing the money about her person, she silently left the house and slowly walked down the street. But in what nook or corner of the wide world could she hide that crime?

She walked on, and the city clocks told the hour of midnight. She could not safely leave the city that night; for there were no means of conveyance. There was one woman in the city to whom she had related the story of her life, and who still kept the house in which she was seduced. To that house she now repaired, and found the woman up. She rung the door-bell, and the woman let her in.

'Why, Julia, do you come at this very late hour of the night?' asked the woman.

'Hush!' said Julia, handing two gold pieces to the woman. 'Let no human being know that I am here. Conceal me in your house until the time comes when I can safely leave this city.—Keep that money as a reward, and if it is not enough I will give you some more.'

'But what has happened?' anxiously inquired the woman.

'I have just let the blood out of that Jim Carpenter's heart,' she replied.—'You remember he kept me here and promised marriage.'

'I do very well; but I thought he had left the city for good,' replied the woman.

'He returned to the city, yesterday, and not more than a half an hour ago, I sent daylight through him in my room,' said Julia. 'You know I always said I would be the death of him, if ever he crossed my tracks.'

'Yes, and you have served him right,' replied the woman. 'I always thought he was a very mean fellow; for he did not pay me so much as he agreed to. Did you find any money in his pockets?'

'O, yes, nearly a hundred dollars in gold and this watch and chain,' an-

swered Julia; not wishing to let the woman know how much other money she had taken from him.

'I am glad of it,' said the woman. 'I will conceal you so that no mortal shall know where to find you.'

'Do so, and you shall be well paid,' added Julia. 'The deed was done quickly, and no one was disturbed in the house.'

The woman conducted her to a back chamber, and there she remained. The morning came, and no Julia appeared at the breakfast table in the house in which the murder was committed; but that was no unusual occurrence, for such characters are not very prompt at their meals.

Ten o'clock came, but no Julia.—Aunt Dumpford thought she would go to Julia's room and see if the girl was sick. The door was locked and the key was gone. She thumped upon the door; but the dead would not be awakened! She went back and got her key that unlocked all the doors. A girl went to the door with her. It was opened and the dead man in his blood met their astonished gaze!

They screamed, and retreated. The alarm brought Jane Clark from her chamber. She ran towards them as they stood in the hall, trembling, and looking greatly frightened.

'What is the matter?' anxiously inquired Jane.

The girl pointed to the open door of the chamber with one hand and clung with the other round the waist of Aunt Dumpford. Jane passed on and looked in upon the dead man, and hurried back much frightened.

'A murder!' exclaimed Jane. 'Who did it?'

'Heaven only knows!' replied Aunt Dumpford. 'The dead man is in Julia's room.'

'O, my God!' exclaimed Jane.—'Would to Heaven that I had never entered this house! I have been fearing that some terrible thing would happen!'

Jane went back to her chamber and wept tears of bitterness; while Aunt Dumpford called in some men. By some papers found on the person of the dead, they ascertained his name. A jury set upon the body, and it was removed to its last home.

The evening papers contained accounts of the murder, and the name of the supposed murderess. There was much excitement, and Julia Sandford was kept informed by her protectress of all that was passing in relation to the tragedy.

## CHAPTER XIX.

THE ANXIOUS HUSBAND. A DIALOGUE ON MURDER. THE WORK PROGRESSES. THE CUNNING OF A JEALOUS WIFE. THE DETECTION OF A GUILTY HUSBAND.

COLONEL MELLEN heard of the murder, and was anxious to see Jane; but dared not go to the house lest he might be discovered; he could hardly wait for evening to come, when he could go with more safety. In the afternoon his wife and daughter visited Mrs. Hamblin.

'O, I am so glad you have come,' said Hattie. 'Mother has been very much frightened about the murder, and so was I when I saw the dead man brought from the house.'

'It is, indeed, a terrible affair,' added Mrs. Mellen. 'But you need not be frightened so long as you are good.'

'It was a melancholy sight to see the dead body brought out into the street,' said Mrs. Hamblin. 'I now am satisfied the woman keeps a bad house.'

'No doubt of it, and I wish I could see that girl, and induce her to leave such a vile establishment.'

'I hoped she would come over and see me,' added Mrs. Hamblin. 'But I have not heard from her since she was here.'

'There may be very good reasons for that,' said Mrs. Mellen. 'Now I came here on purpose to ask you to sit at your window and see if any men enter that house between this and evening. And if you do see any, mark well their personal appearance.'

'I will do so,' replied Mrs. Hamblin, and wondering what reasons the good woman had for making such a strange request.

Hattie, too, said she would watch; for she was ready to do any thing to please Mrs. Mellen, who with her little daughter, soon after took their leave.

The task Mrs. Mellen had imposed upon them proved to be quite a severe one; for several gentlemen that afternoon called at the house to inquire about the murder; but no one came whose description answered to that of Colonel Mellen. He was too shrewd to show himself in broad daylight at such a house.

Soon after Mrs. Mellen and Ida had left, George Stedman came along, and lingered before the house in which Mrs. Hamblin lived, hoping he might see little Hattie.

And the reader will not be surprised if he is told that this young mechanic thought of Ida Mellen. He did think of her, and while he was thus thinking, little Hattie saw him through the window and came to the door.

'Will you not come in?' asked little Hattie. 'Mother will be very glad to see you, because, you have been so good to me.'

'I will, my dear, with pleasure,' the young man replied, following her into the house.

Mrs. Hamblin received him very kindly, and thanked him for giving Hattie such a good present. He said he would give her more, if he were as wealthy as some people.

'A terrible murder was committed across the street last night,' said Mrs. Hamblin.

'I have read an account of it in the newspapers,' he said. 'From the account, I suppose the house is of a bad character. And some journals seem to justify the girl who committed the deed.'

'No doubt the man had treated her very shamefully,' she added. 'A woman's love when turned to hate is very dangerous. There's a girl kept by a man in that house who calls himself Colonel Melville; but probably that is not his true name. The girl expects he will marry her; but I think she is destined to disappointment.'

'Have you seen the girl?' he anxiously inquired; feeling some strange emotions.

'She was here one afternoon a short time,' she replied. 'The girl is very beautiful.'

'How beautiful?' he inquired. 'Can you describe her appearance?'

'She has very bright, curling hair, dark eyes, beautiful teeth, and —'

'Do you know her name?' he asked, interrupting the woman by another question before she had finished her answer to his first.

'Jane Clark, as she informed me!' she replied.

'O, my Heavens!' he exclaimed, manifesting much feeling.

'Why, do you know the girl?' Mrs. Hamblin asked, gazing upon his agitated countenance.

'O, yes; and have been trying to find her whereabouts for some time,' he replied. 'Oh, madam, I fear that beautiful girl is ruined by a libertine! She boarded at the same house where I board; and to be frank with you, I loved and would have married her. — But the spoiler came, and she went away we knew not whither! Is it possible she is now in yonder house? O, if I could have seen her the afternoon she went away, I might have saved her; but I fear it is too late now! The serpent has pressed her

in his folds, and his charms have now spoiled her!'

'Do go over and see her now, and warn her of the danger that surrounds her,' said Mrs. Hamblin. 'You may yet save her from a worse fate! Mrs. Mellen and her daughter are very anxious to rescue her from the power of a bad man.'

'Mrs. Mellen and her daughter!' he repeated thoughtfully.

'Yes, you saw her daughter with Hattie at my door,' she added.

'O, yes; I remember her well, and saw her at the concert last evening with a dandy,' he said. 'She's a most lovely and intelligent girl. I esteem her much.'

'And so she does you,' answered the good woman. 'She spoke very much in your praise, and liked your sentiments and opinions. But I wish you would go over now and see Jane Clark.'

'I will do so; but the interview will give me great pain,' he said. 'Duty compels me, and I will go.'

He took his leave of Mrs. Hamblin, and crossed the street with a heavy heart and trembling steps. Jane saw him from the window coming towards the house, and how her heart did beat. But she resolved not to see him. It was too much for her shattered nerves to meet him. She immediately run down stairs, and told Aunt Dumpford who it was coming.

'I'll manage that affair,' said the vile woman, hearing the door-bell ring, and going to the door.

She opened it, and invited him in, supposing he came to make some inquiries about the murder. He was treated very politely; but did not like the appearance of the woman.

'I suppose, you have heard of the murder in my house last night?' she said.

'I have, and a most melancholy affair it was,' he replied.

'I have no doubt but Julia Sandford murdered the man,' she said. 'She boarded with me, and I have heard her speak of James Carpenter, and sometimes declare that she would be the death of him. Some weeks after she came to board with me, I learned some portion of her history, and was much surprised when she informed me that she had been seduced by the man. At first I thought I would not have her in my house; but she appeared so well and seemed to be so penitent for her past conduct that I hadn't the heart to turn her away. I believe she had become a strictly virtuous girl ever since her seducer abandoned her. It is an awful thing for men to conduct themselves in such a manner.'

'It is, indeed,' he replied, looking her full in the face as if he would read her inmost thoughts. 'What employment was she engaged in while she boarded with you?'

'She worked down town as a book-finder,' she readily replied, appearing as honest and sincere as if she were actually telling the truth.

'You do not know where she is, I suppose?' he asked.

'Oh no, she replied.' 'No doubt she immediately left after committing the murder. It is possible she may have drowned herself. It seems almost impossible that she could have done such a deed and not disturbed us; but we knew nothing of the affair until some time after breakfast. I never saw the man, until I saw him dead in the girl's

chamber. O, the scene was terrible when I opened the chamber door and saw him lying dead in the clotted blood upon the floor.'

'The spectacle must have been very shocking to your nerves,' he added.—'Who was with you when you saw him?'

'A girl who boards with me,' she answered.

'Were that not more than one girl who saw him?' he asked.

'I cannot remember, I was so bewildered,' she replied.

'Is Jane Clark in the house?' he asked, fastening his eyes intently upon her.

'Jane Clark!' she repeated, apparently not recollecting the name at first.

'Yes, Jane Clark,' he said, in a very emphatic voice and manner.

'O, I now remember there was such a girl boarded with me a few days,' she replied. 'But she went away, yesterday; I hardly knew her name, for she came to stay only a few weeks; but I did not board her any longer, as I began to suspect she might be a bad character, and such I have not in my house, if I know it.'

'Jane Clarke was an innocent, virtuous girl, when she came to your house, probably more so than any female under this roof,' he added.

'Well, sir, you use very strange language for a young man who appears as well as you do,' she replied. 'You must not believe all you read in the newspapers, sir, I can tell you. I keep a respectable house, and editors may say what they please. They are always putting lies in their papers to make them sell.'

'I believe the newspapers have told nothing but the truth in relation to your house, and the murder committed in it last night,' he said. 'You cannot deceive me! I can look through your fair-seeming face, into your guilty soul.'

'I will not hear such language in my house,' she replied.

'You have heard much worse, but seldom any thing like truth,' he added.

'I perceive the truth cuts you to the quick. I have no doubt but Jane Clark is now in this house.'

'You are a very saucy, impertinent man when you say so,' she replied, her eyes flashing, and her lips trembling.

'You are a very wicked, vile woman when you deny it,' he added. 'I can read your very character in your face, and God's vengeance will not always sleep.'

'You are wonderfully wise,' she said, sneering, and scornfully curling her upper lip.

'Wise enough to read your vile character,' he replied. 'Jane Clark has not gone from this house; but is now concealed in some room. Did I not see her face at the window as I crossed the street? Oh, wretched woman, you cannot deceive me!'

Now he did not see Jane's face, but asked the question to test her sincerity and truth.

'No, sir, it was the face of another girl you saw,' she replied.

'Let me see that girl, and then I can judge,' he said.

'No, sir, I shall not take that pains,' she added. 'If you do not believe me, you may get your proof where you can best find it. I'm not accustomed to have my word doubted, and especially

by such an upstart as you are. You can now leave my house, and I hope and trust you will never again darken my doors.'

'I will leave it; for I hate to breathe such a poisonous atmosphere,' he said, leaving the house and crossing to Mrs. Hamblin's, where he found Mrs. Mellen and her daughter who had again called in on their return from down town.

He was rejoiced to meet Ida, with whom he cordially shook hands. She introduced him to her mother, who was well pleased with his appearance.—Mrs. Mellen had been to hire a house, and partially concluded the bargain for one in which she intended to remove and live separate from her husband.

'Did you see the girl?' anxiously inquired Mrs. Mellen.

He related the conversation he had with the woman across the street, and he expressed his conviction that Jane Clark was concealed in some room in the house.

'O, I know she did not leave that woman's, yesterday, for I saw her at the window this morning,' said Hattie,—the woman told a lie.'

'No doubt of it,' he added. 'She is a very bad woman.'

'Yes, and she wanted me to go and live with her!' added Hattie.

'I trust, my dear, you will never do that,' he said.

'O, no, indeed, I never shall,' added Hattie.

They remained some time conversing upon the subject of Jane Clark and Col. Melville; but Mrs. Mellen kept her secrets in relation to her husband. Her suspicions she communicated to no one.

Ida and the young mechanic had a very interesting interview; for she respected him very much.

Soon as Stedman left Aunt Dumpford's, Jane made her appearance very much agitated; for she had, unbeknown to this hypocrite, overheard the conversation, or at least a great portion of it.

'O, how many lies you did tell,' said Jane.

'Why, did you listen?' asked the bawd, being somewhat surprised.

'O, yes, and how my heart did bleed!' replied the agitated girl.

'True, I was compelled to utter some falsehoods about you,' she replied.

'And, O, my God!' exclaimed Jane, covering her face with her hands, and weeping. 'And did you not utter some in relation to yourself? O, speak the truth to me! Do you not keep a bad house? Do not bad men and girls come here? Do you not know that Julia Sandford is a wanton! Speak! for my heart is breaking!'

'She was a wanton, and I hoped I should reform her,' replied this false woman.

'And do not other wantons board here?' asked poor Jane, in a tremulous voice.

'No, indeed! she replied.' 'Or, if there are any, I do not know it. We boarding housekeepers are sometimes deceived; but I think I am not now. No, no, Jane, be quiet, and not borrow trouble; Colonel Melville will take care of you, and if you do not wish to remain here, he will find another place for you until you are married.'

'I hope he will; for I don't like to stay in a house where a murder has been committed,' replied Jane.

This woman had concluded since her interview with young Stedman, that it would be the best policy for Colonel Mellen, to remove Jane to some other house, lest some officers might be sent to take her away at the instigation of the young mechanic. This bawd began to tremble in her shoes, and waited for an interview with Jane's seducer.

Mrs. Mellen was determined to make assurance doubly sure, and for that purpose had secured the services of a hackman to be near the house and wait further orders.

She was satisfied that her husband would go and visit Jane as soon as the shades of evening had fallen upon the city; at least, he was likely to do so, if he was the seducer of the girl, of which she had but little doubt. She kept her eyes upon him and watched his movements. He was reading an evening paper which contained a very full and graphic account of the murder. He rose up from his reading, looked out of the window into the street, and saw that it was dark enough, and went out. Not a word was said. Mrs. Mellen hurried on her bonnet, and followed her husband out. She saw him walking rapidly along, and pointed him out to the driver.

'Follow that man!' she said to the driver, slipping some money into his hand, and entering the carriage. 'Do not lose sight of him, and mark the house he enters.'

'Let me alone for that,' replied the driver, and moving his horse along just so as to keep in sight of the husband.

She, too, kept her eyes at the carriage window, and occasionally caught a glimpse of his form. The driver understood his business, and the money

made him faithful. He supposed that his customer was a jealous wife who was resolved to track her husband.—The carriage moved along not far distant behind the Colonel, who was now wending his way to his victim. The crowds in the streets somewhat increased and the driver kept nearer the libertine so that he might not lose sight of him. They turned into another street, and she knew by that where he was bound.

At last the Colonel reached Aunt Dumpford's house, and stepped up to the door, when the driver whipped up, and gave his fair charge an opportunity of seeing her husband enter that den of infamy.

The whole story was told, and not a single doubt lingered in her mind.—The driver turned back, and soon she alighted from the carriage.

'Keep dark,' she said, as he waited upon her from the carriage.

'I understand!' he replied. 'A bad house, madam, where the murder was committed; but I don't blame that girl for doing it. I hope she will not be found. Husbands will sometimes stray away from virtuous wives. I will keep the secret.'

He now sprang to his seat, and drove away, and Mrs. Mellen entered her house.

Her mind was now fully made up, and she resolved to separate from her husband. The proof was conclusive. And what pen can describe the emotions of a virtuous wife, surrounded by such circumstances?

## CHAPTER XX.

DANGER THICKENS. THE WICKED AL-  
WAYS IN TROUBLE. A SAD INTER-

VIEW. A LIBERTINE PUT TO HIS TRUMPS. A MEETING BETWEEN FATHER AND DAUGHTER. THE REMOVAL.

COLONEL MELLEN slipped into Miss Dumpford's. She met him in the hall.

'I am very glad to see you,' she said, leading him into a private apartment. 'I think you had better remove Jane from my house soon; for she has become much dissatisfied; besides, that young fellow Stedman has been here.'

'What! he, been here?' he anxiously inquired. 'Who, in God's name, reveals all my secrets? It seems as if the devil helps some people.'

'Jane did not see him, and I was compelled to deny that she was here,' she replied. 'But she knew he was in the house, and requested me to say that she had gone? I did so; but the fellow was very saucy, and would not believe me. He came from the house opposite.'

'From the house opposite,' he repeated, thoughtfully. 'This is mystery upon mystery.'

'And if you will believe me, I saw the same fellow talking with your daughter at the door of that sick woman's house.'

'Gracious God! what next?' he exclaimed; looking wild, and breathing hard. 'How came he acquainted with my daughter?'

'Now that is more than I can tell,' she replied. 'They appeared very cozy together.'

'Cozy together!' he repeated, more and more aggravated. 'I have a very great mind to go over and see that sick woman. I will think of it; but I

must go and see Jane and first quiet her nerves.'

He soon entered Jane's chamber, and found her walking back and forth and appearing much agitated. He approached her and took her hand in his; but it felt cold and lifeless.

'What is the matter, my dear Jane?' he asked. 'Why do you look so very serious?'

'You have placed me in a brothel,' she replied, withdrawing her hand from his, and looking him full in the face.

'Do you think so because a bad girl murdered a man here last night?' he asked.

'That is only a circumstance among a hundred which goes to prove the fact,' she replied; still staring wildly at him. 'That girl can't be blamed for killing the man who seduced and then left her. I will not remain in this house much longer; I would be glad to leave this evening. I tell you, this is a house of ill-fame. I know it to be one.'

'If you think so, I will remove you this night to another one,' he said. 'Aunt Dumpford, may have deceived me. Surely, my dear, I thought she kept a respectable house; but you shall not be compelled to stay here, if you suspect it.'

'I not only suspect it; but also know it,' she replied. 'And, O, my God! I suspect even you! I fear, I shall yet be driven to desperation.'

'Say not so, my own, my true love,' he added, folding her to his bosom, and covering her face with his meretricious kisses. 'O, if you only knew how much you pain my loving heart you would never again express such an opinion. I cannot endure to hear you speak thus?'

'God forbid that I should ever wound you feelings, unjustly,' she added, beginning to feel somewhat sorry for her rash expression.

'I know you would not willingly do so,' he replied, still pressing her to his bosom.

'Indeed, I would not; but when, O, when shall the bridal day hide our shame from the world?' she asked, with much feeling.

'It must come ere long,' he replied. 'I will now go out and seek another boarding house for you; and in the mean time, pack up your things. I shall not be gone long. I will not suffer you to remain in a house you even suspect; O, no, indeed, I love you too much for that.'

He kissed her, and hurried away in search of another boarding house for his victim. After he reached the street, he crossed over and stood before the house Mrs. Hamblin occupied, studying whether it was best to go in, or not. Finally, he concluded it would not be safe, as the woman might describe his person to his wife.

He hurried away and was soon in a private parlor with the woman, who kept the house where Julia Sandford, the murderess, was concealed. This woman's assumed name was Widow Sackton, usually called among the knowing ones, 'Old Sack.' She was a very large, portly woman, and could drink almost any man drunk, and yet her face was fair, her manners easy, and her smiles very pleasant. She could assume any phase of character which the occasion demanded.

'A bad murder, last night,' said Old Sack. 'Well, you libertines must expect sometimes to meet with a sad fate.'

These girls are the devil all over when their love is turned to hate.'

'True,' replied the Colonel, thinking over what Jane might do to him in case she should find out his real character. 'That girl did up the job very adroitly. Where do you suppose she can be?'

'Not knowing, I can't say,' she replied. 'Perhaps she jumped into the river and drowned herself. That is the way many such characters go.'

'Well, let us to business,' he said. 'I am keeping a very beautiful girl at the house where that murder was committed; but she begins to suspect all is not right there, and I wish to engage you to keep her awhile. I will see you well paid.'

'Bring her on, Colonel, and I'll take care of her,' she said. 'I understand what you want; but you must expect to bleed some for it.'

'I believe you have never yet found me narrow contracted,' he added.

'Never,' she replied. 'You have always done the fair thing with me.'

He now departed, and she went up to Julia Sandborn's room, carrying an evening paper, containing a very full account of the murder, and rather justifying it.

'You know Colonel Mellen, I believe, do you not?' asked the widow.

'Like an old book,' replied Julia. 'Why do you ask?'

'Because he has just been here and engaged board for a girl whom he has been keeping in the house where you stopped the wind of your seducer,' said Old Sack.

'Gracious Heavens! I have seen the girl there; but Aunt Dumpford would not permit me to have any interview

with her,' added Julia. 'She's a very beautiful creature, and Colonel Mellen may yet find her as hard to deal with as Jim Carpenter found me.'

Julia now took up the newspaper and read the account of the murder which she had committed.

'Very well done up,' she said. 'A good deal of truth and quite as much fiction. But the papers must always stretch the stocking. Perhaps, the writer knows me; for I have had some dealings with the gentlemen of the Press as they style themselves. Well, he seems to favor me in his account, and says I served my seducer right. He and I think about alike.'

'Yes, public opinion now sets quite strong in your favor,' said the woman, who now left and went below, expecting the arrival of the new boarder.

After she was gone, Julia read over the account in the paper again, and the tears came freely into her eyes. A new era in her life seemed to have now dawned upon her. She thought of the village where she was born, of her poor mother who was still living, of her father who was dead, and also of two younger sisters, the elder of whom she once thought of inducing to come to the city and join her in keeping a house of assignation; but she had not as yet written to her upon the subject. Since her revenge was satisfied, she began seriously about a reformation, and removing from the city. Julia Sandborn was an assumed name, at least, part of it, her real name being Julia Farnsworth. Her hands had been died in human blood, and the spirit of revenge which had been so long rankling in her bosom was satisfied, and therefore new feelings began to spring up in her

heart. Not a drop of liquor had she tasted since the murder, and no living mortal but Old Sack had seen her. She was comparatively alone, and shut out from the world, where she had nothing to do but to reflect upon her past life and future prospects.

Most carefully had she concealed from the Widow Stockton the amount of money taken from the pockets of the murdered man. She began also to sympathize with Jane Clark; for well she knew the situation of that unfortunate girl.

In the course of the evening, Jane and the Colonel arrived. She seemed to be well pleased with her new boarding house, and liked the Widow Sackton better than she ever did Aunt Dumpford.

Old Sack was all smiles, and full of kindness. She showed Jane to a room upon the same floor where Julia was located, and but a short distance from her, there being but one room intervening.

The Colonel did not remain long; but before he left he had somewhat calmed the nerves of Jane and made her strongly hope for better days. And Old Sack very much encouraged the girl, and assured her that the Colonel would never abandon her. The poor girl was comparatively happy in her new location, and seemed to breathe a purer atmosphere. Alas! she did not know that her room was so near that of the murderess.

Julia heard her and the Colonel when they first entered the chamber, and how she longed to inform poor Jane of her situation and the dangers that now surrounded her; but that time had not come.

After the Colonel had thus bestowed his victim, he directed his steps homeward. His daughter had retired; but his wife was reading in the parlor. He entered and sat down. Not a word passed between them for some minutes; but he was exceedingly anxious to ascertain how his wife had obtained her knowledge of Jane Clark. At last, she rose to retire, and, as she did so, Spoke.

'Does your victim's patience still hold out? Does hope still keep her heart whole? How does she feel since the murder was committed in the house where you keep her? Yes! *keep her!* What hateful words! Once I did not believe I should ever live to pronounce them! O, wretched man! are you not afraid the lightnings of heaven will fall upon your guilty head and send your dark spirit before the bar of a just God.'

'What mean you by such language?' he asked, in trembling accents.

'How straight you directed your steps to that house of infamy which conceals your victim, Jane Clark, from the view of the world; but remember, wicked man, God's eyes are upon you, even while concealed with your victim in that front chamber,' she continued, being regardless of his question, and moving towards the door.

'Explain yourself,' he demanded, in much perturbation.

But she passed on to her sleeping apartment and answered him not.

More and more strange was the mystery. How she knew so much puzzled his philosophy, and made him feel a kind of superstitious fear. A guilty conscience is often troubled with such fears.

'Can the devil help her?' he asked himself; 'or, does some angel whisper to her my sins? I must have a private interview with my daughter, and find out what she knows.'

A sleepless, restless night did he pass. And the more he thought upon the subject the more dark and mysterious did all appear.

He rose early, and walked out before breakfast to take the morning air; but his troubled thoughts were with him. He could not escape from himself; he might change the place, but could not get rid of the pain. After breakfast he sought a private interview with his daughter.

'How came you acquainted with young Stedman?' he asked. 'I have heard you speak of him to your mother.'

'O, I first met him at Mrs. Hamblin's,' she replied. 'You have heard me mention that sick woman, and how her husband has become a steady, sober man. George Stedman is a noble-hearted young man.'

'Well, I hope you will form no more acquaintance with that young man,' he said.

'Why not, father?' she asked. 'He is much more intelligent, and even is handsomer than young Stephens of whom you think so much.'

'Ida, my wish is that you discard all such foolish notions,' he said. 'I do not like to have you lower yourself so much as to become familiar with bricklayers, nor with hod-carriers. I have expended too much money on your education to have you mingle in such society. Young Stephens is a fine fellow, and will inherit a large fortune. Such a match is suitable for you; but

if he finds out that you condescend to place yourself on a level with bricklayers and hod-carriers, he will have no more to say to you.'

'I care not how soon he stops visiting me,' she added. 'I am quite confident I never shall become his wife.'

'And why not?' he asked. 'What is your reason?'

'Dear father, I fear that he is a libertine,' she replied. 'And surely you would not desire that I should wed a libertine, would you?'

He suddenly started at the mention of such a word, and looked guilty in spite of all his power of self-control. Her keen eyes were upon him, and how her pure heart did quake with fear lest he, also was a libertine. He very soon recovered himself.

'A libertine!' he repeated, forcing a smile upon his countenance. 'What under Heaven put that idea into your head? He's very far from being such a character. Why, Ida, he moves in the highest circles in the city.'

'And so do libertines, sometimes, both married and single,' she added, fastening her eyes upon him, in a fixed gaze. 'Mother says they do.'

He cast his eyes upon the floor; for he could not well endure her searching gaze, at least, he felt as if it was a searching gaze, and rebuked him most severely.

'Your mother has some very singular notions, I am sorry to say,' he added, after a brief pause. 'I fear she will be crazy one of these days.'

'O, I don't think there is any great danger of that,' she replied. 'O, father, why are you and she so unsocial? You did not use to be so. It makes me sorrowful.'



'It is her singular and very strange notions that make us so,' he replied.— 'I understand she thinks of living in another house.'

'I suppose she will,' added Ida, in a tremulous voice.

'And if your mother does, you will remain with me, will you not?' he asked.

'O, dear father, I shall want to live with her,' she answered, looking up at him, imploringly. 'You will have no objections.'

'I shall be very reluctant to part with your society,' he answered. 'I hope on reflection you will remain with me.'

Ida made no reply to his last remark; but cast down her eyes, and looked sad and sorrowful, as she really felt. He dared not question her further; for he did not know how to come at what he most wanted to know. He was anxious to inquire if she or her mother knew who lived opposite the sick woman's; but thought it not prudent to do so. His wife, during the day, partially engaged a house and intended to remove into it ere long.

Ida informed her mother of the interview she had with her father, and all that he said. The mother's course was fixed upon. She had not a doubt of her husband's guilt, and governed herself accordingly.

The Widow Sackton greeted Jane in the morning with smiles, and inquired how she rested. The poor girl really felt better, and the hope of happier days was strong in her heart. This cunning woman encouraged by every art within her power, and made her believe that ere long she would become the wife of Colonel Melville, and live in splendid style.

Her ambition was now in the ascendant, and she almost forgot the past.— The future looked bright to her, and she hoped on. Old Sack kept her very close, and advised her not to mingle with the boarders at all, lest some one might recognize her. Jane readily assented to that; for she was anxious to conceal herself from the world until after her expected marriage.

## CHAPTER XXI.

GREAT EXCITEMENT. A FIT OF DERANGEMENT. THE RESULT SUICIDE AND MURDER.

THE same evening Jane left Aunt Dumpford's boarding house and took a room in a house kept by 'Old Sack,' one of the girls was taken with a fit of delirium tremens, or of some nervous disease closely resembling that. Aunt Dumpford heard the outcry in the girl's room just after the city clocks had told the hour of midnight, and hastened to see what the matter was. The girl, whose name was Josephine Morse, met the housekeeper at the door, and gazed wildly upon her. Aunt Dumpford had witnessed so many tragical scenes that she was not frightened; but the wild stare of Josephine's eyes, struck her with some terror, and she was about to step back lest the girl in her wild fury might inflict upon her some bodily injury. She had not retreated but a few steps before Josephine sprang forward and threw her arms about the housekeeper's neck.

'The serpent's are after us, and death can only save us from their terrible and deadly fangs!' exclaimed Josephine, plunging a dagger into Miss Dumpford's back and then leaping from her, and thrusting the same instrument reek-

ing with the housekeeper's blood, into her own heart.

Josephine fell dead upon the floor, while Miss Dumpford staggered into the nearest room and sank upon a sofa, shrieking for help. The wound was deep, and dangerous.

Hearing her screams, several girls ran to the room in their night dresses, while their paramours made the best of their way from the house, lest they might be called upon as witnesses.— They did not wish to be called as witnesses to facts that might transpire in that house, and so took themselves off with all possible speed.

The girls soon gave the alarm, and two watchmen entered the house.— Miss Dumpford was in great agony, and bleeding profusely. A physician was sent for; but shook his head after examining the wound in her back.— She was removed to her own room, and lingered until the next day about noon, when she died an awful death. Her sufferings, both mental and physical, were excruciating in the extreme, and she went down to an untimely grave, with all her sins upon her. Fortunate, indeed, for Jane Clark, that she was then under another roof.

The morning journals were filled with the account of the tragical event, and Jane Clark, was aroused by the cry of the new-boys in the street that another murder had been committed. Such a cry thrilled upon her nerves like a shock of electricity, and she purchased a paper, and read the account with feelings that cannot be described. Julia Sandford, too, heard the news-boys' cry, and longed for a paper. Old Sack soon brought her one, which she read with a deep interest, such as no others could feel.

'Oh, my God,' exclaimed the almost heart-broken girl, as she finished reading the account, while Old Sack stood watching the changes of the girl's countenance, 'a suicide and probable murder under the same roof where I gratified my long cherished revenge. I knew the girl well; for we both came from the same quiet country town in the East. She, too, was deceived by a married man who promised to wed her. He was a planter from the South, and was passing the summer in this city when he became acquainted with, and seduced the, unfortunate Josephine.— He left her, and she never knew where he went, or what his true name was.— Would to Heaven she could have met him and wreaked her vengeance upon the heartless scoundrel. Poor girl! I knew she was somewhat deranged at times, and especially when she had been some hours without intoxicating liquors. Oh, the poisonous stuff. Not another drop shall ever pass my lips, and I advise you to make the same resolution.'

'Oh, it does not hurt me,' replied Old Sack; 'I never yet saw the man I couldn't drink drunk, if he would take as much as I did.'

'It may be so; but the time will come when your nerves will give way, and your whole system become deranged,' added Julia. 'No human flesh and blood can always withstand the liquid poison. I know it and have felt it.'

'I can take care of myself,' replied Old Sack, leaving the room, and going into Jane's room.

She found Jane in tears, and the newspaper lying in her lap.

'You made a lucky escape from that house last night,' said Old Sack.

'Oh, Heaven!' exclaimed Jane.—'Would to God I had never seen this city, but had remained where I was born. 'Oh, that I had never strayed from my good mother.'

'Nonsense,' said this old bawd.—'You will yet be Mrs. Colonel Melville, and move in the highest circles of the city.'

'Move in the highest circles,' repeated Jane. 'Perhaps I may; but God only knows. Oh, how happy I was a few years ago, when I wandered alone on the beautiful sea beach, and counted the fishing boats on the blue waters. Would to Heaven I could go back to those days and entirely forget the few past months of my life.'

'You needn't talk thus to me,' added Old Sack. 'There is not a girl in the city whose prospects are so bright as yours. Be calm and quiet.'

This vile hypocrite left the room, and Jane walked into the hall. Julia's chamber door was a little ajar and through the opening she saw Jane.—How the girl's heart did leap. She was anxious to warn Jane of her fate; but how to do so, and not expose herself was the question. Could she trust Jane? That question she now asked herself.

She believed she could. Strange as it may seem to the reader, Julia's mind, since the spirit of revenge was rankling in her bosom, had undergone a great change, and she was anxious to save Jane from the fate that was impending over her. She knew Colonel Mellen well, much better than Jane did.

'I will save her,' she said to herself. 'She will not expose me. There is something within me that prompts to

the act. I will call her into my room. I shall have no better time for Old Sack will be busy this morning.'

She opened the door and beckoned Jane to her room. When Jane's eyes fell on the girl she trembled in every muscle; but she could not resist that significant beckoning. Jane entered the room with a beating heart and trembling steps. The door was closed.—Julia appeared calm and collected.

'Can I trust you?' calmly inquired Julia. 'It is your good I seek.'

'Speak,' replied Jane, in trembling accents. 'I will not betray you. Tell me all.'

'I believe you,' added Julia. 'I am the person who took the life of my seducer.'

'I never doubted it; but feared that you had drowned yourself,' replied Jane.

'I know that it is the general impression,' added Julia. 'So let it remain. I yet live and hope to repent of, and be pardoned for, my sins. Since the spirit of revenge has been satisfied a great change has come over me. I am resolved to live a better life as soon as I can leave the city.'

'But what of me?' anxiously inquired Jane. 'Speak and tell me all! Am I betrayed? Is Colonel Melville a libertine, and does he mean to abandon me?'

'He is a libertine, and has a wife and daughter whom you have seen at Mrs. Hamblin's. Aunt Dumpford, as she is called, told me all. True, she knew not that you had visited the sick woman, but I did.'

'Then his name is Colonel Mellen,' said Jane.

'Yes; and he will never fulfill his promises of marriage,' added Julia

'I will be revenged upon him,' exclaimed Jane. 'He shall die.'

'No, no, imbrue not your hands in human blood,' replied Julia Sanborn. 'Vengeance belongs to God, and he will repay it. Let him live yet awhile and be tormented with the stings of his own conscience. Get his money. He is very rich, and make him pay you a round sum. You will need the money, and he will gladly pay you thousands of dollars.'

'What! receive money as the price of that virtue of which he has robbed me?' asked Jane. 'No amount of gold could purchase that.'

'True; but he has already robbed you of that priceless jewel, and now you need money to live upon,' said Julia. 'You must have it, or you will be compelled to do as I have done, lead a life of prostitution.'

'Never—never,' replied Jane, most emphatically.

'God be praised that you have uttered these words,' added the repentant Julia.

'No—no; I would die before I would become such a character,' said Jane.

'So would I if I had my life to live over again,' added Julia; 'but put your hand in your seducer's pocket while you have the opportunity.'

'Have you money?' asked Jane, suspecting that Julia wanted some of the money she urged her to obtain from Colonel Mellen.

'O, yes, more than two thousand dollars which I found on the body of my seducer after I had plunged the steel through his heart,' replied Julia. 'The money rightfully belongs to me, and no living mortal knows I have it but you. The woman who keeps this

house does not know it. I suppose you know she is a bad character and keeps a bad house; I could go no where else to keep clear of the officers of justice; for I could bribe her when I could not a virtuous woman.'

'I see it all,' quickly added Jane.—'It would be right for me to take the Colonel's money.'

'Yes; better take it than his heart's blood,' said Julia. 'Your revenge is of recent date and may be controlled; but mine was of long standing and could not well be resisted. Many months it had been shut up like a fire in my bones. But the deed is done, and God pardon me. Again, I tell you, get his money, and keep my secrets as well as your own. We will lay some plan to leave this house ere many days shall have passed. Keep dark.'

'I understand you,' added Jane. 'I said you might trust me, and I spoke the truth.'

'I believe you,' said Julia. 'Colonel Mellen will probably call and see you this evening, and then ask him how his wife and daughter are.'

Jane left the murderess and repaired to her own room. She believed what Julia had told her, and yet hope still lingered in her heart.

Most anxiously did poor Jane wait for the evening when she could have an interview with her pretended lover. Much did she reflect upon what Julia had told her, and resolved to question Colonel Mellen until he should confess the truth.

In the afternoon she had an interview with Old Sack, who encouraged her, and partially counteracted the influence which Julia's remarks had over her. A thousand conflicting emotions agitated her heart, and strange visions passed before her mind.

## CHAPTER XXII.

THE CLOSING SCENES IN THIS DRAMA OF METROPOLITAN LIFE.

EVENING came, and with it Colonel Mellen. After a few moment's conversation with Old Sack, he sought his victim, and found her in her chamber. He was full of smiles and pretended that his love for her increased at every interview.

Jane did not receive him as cordially as usual, and he noticed it, and thanked Heaven that he had sought another boarding house for her. She scarcely answered his questions, or made any remarks for some time; but kept her eyes fastened upon him in a fixed gaze.

There was a pause for a few moments, during which both were much occupied with their thoughts. At last Jane broke the silence in a voice whose tones sunk deep into his heart.

'Did you leave your wife and daughter Ida, well, this evening?' she asked.

He suddenly started, and his countenance betrayed signs of guilt, in spite of all his powers of self-control, which were great and usually at his command.

'Now, my dear Jane, you're joking,' he replied, after a short pause.

'Would to Heaven it were nothing but a joke,' she added. 'You are a married man, and have deceived me. Oh, my God! what will become of me. Too much have I relied upon your fair promises of marriage, which can never be fulfilled.'

'Who has been filling your ears with such stories?' he anxiously inquired; feeling as anxious to ascertain where she obtained her information as he did whence his wife got hers.

'No matter whence the stories came so that they are true,' she replied. 'I now ask you in plain language, have you not a wife and daughter? Answer me truly before God, who will hear and judge you. Speak, and tell me the truth; for if you lie it will be worse for us both.'

He hesitated to answer her question at first; but seriously deliberated upon what answer he had better make under the circumstances.

'Why don't you speak?' she continued, in a still more emphatic voice. 'If you have no wife nor daughter, you can say so without hesitation, and if you have, you ought to declare it at once.'

Her countenance was so expressive, and her eyes sparkled with such peculiar brilliancy he feared she might have a dagger concealed about her person. He sat by her side, but rose up and took two or three steps towards the door, constantly keeping his eyes upon her, and watching her movements. Now feeling more safe, he concluded the time had come when he had better declare the truth. He still hesitated and hardly knew how to begin or what to say. She was much excited, and her eyes rolled wildly in their sockets.

'Why don't you speak?' she continued. 'Oh, my God! I see how it is. The expression of your countenance tells the whole story, while your tongue is silent. Would to God I had never seen this city. You have disgraced my character, and drawn down on your own guilty soul the curses of Heaven. Speak, and tell me all.'

'I will declare the whole truth,' he said, after a long and anxious pause.—

'But permit me first to say, that my

deep and ardent love for you is the cause of all my conduct. But for that I should never have made such promises to you as I have made. The truth is, my dear girl, I was very unfortunate in my marriage. I ought not to have taken a wife unless I loved her as I do you.'

'Then you have a wife?' she inquired, turning her eyes upon him in a fixed gaze.

'True, I have, and a daughter about your age. Would to Heaven I had not, so that I might live with you until death shall part us. I confess I have done wrong; but then you must pardon something to love. Oh, that I had seen you or such a girl as you before I married the woman who is my legal wife. I ask your pardon for the wrongs I have done you.'

'O, Heaven,' she exclaimed. 'Has it come to this. What will my mother say? Ah, yes; what will the world say? How am I to live with the loss of my character? Can you tell me that. Oh, thou libertine? Where is your conscience? Or, have you no feelings in common with humanity.'

'Your beauty and charms will insure you money, yes, much more than you could earn by your needle,' he added.

'Say not that again, lest I might be tempted to commit some terrible deed,' she exclaimed. 'What! ruin a girl's character and reputation, and then hint to her to live the life of a wanton. O, my God! that is the worst of all. Do not repeat it, and if such a thought is in your mind, drive it out, and down to hell, whence it came. Don't speak it again for your own sake as well as for mine! Oh, monster, in human form.

Thou wilt suffer for all this. Remember God is just, as well as merciful.'

'I will not speak thus, again,' he added, in a trembling voice; for he really began to fear the dagger which has sent so many libertines into another world.

'I trust you will not, black-hearted man,' she replied. 'Why not offer me some of your own money instead of advising to go down to hell after it.'

'I will give you money,' he added. 'I ought to give you some, and am willing.'

'How much?' she asked. 'But, remember, I do not receive it as the price of my virtue of which you have robbed me. O, no, God forbid. But I shall need it for the purposes of living.'

'True, you will, and you shall have two hundred dollars,' he replied.

'Two hundred dollars!' she repeated. 'Do you intend to add meanness to your other crimes? Two hundred dollars. Oh, shame on your soul. That sum would hardly last me a year. Two hundred dollars.'

'I will give you five hundred,' he added.

'Say five thousand, and then you will begin to talk just like a man,' she said.

'That is a very large sum,' he replied. 'You will not need so much.'

'Pay me that sum, or fare worse,' she added. 'I know where your wife lives, and I will appear before her ere to-morrow's sun shall set.'

'Who has told you so much?' he anxiously inquired. 'Have you seen and conversed with her? Or, has the keeper of this house told you?'

'She has not; but whence I obtained my information you can never know,' she replied. 'Does not God hear the

young ravens when they cry? And think you the good Being will not care for the erring when they sincerely repent? Give me five thousand dollars ere to-morrow shall pass away, or suffer all the consequences of your miserable and dark crimes. No wonder you do not love your wife; for how can the devil love virtue?

He attempted to reason with her; but without success. She had fixed upon the sum she was resolved to have and no argument or appeal from him could induce her to take less. He left her with a troubled heart, feeling as if this job was about to draw heavily on his purse.

That night Julia and Jane Clark passed some hours together; but the mistress of the house knew nothing of the interview.

The next day the young bricklayer called at the Colonel's house. It was just after dinner when he came, and the libertine was at home. Ida introduced him to her father, who suddenly started at the mention of the young man's name, but controlled his emotions as best he could. Mrs. Mellen was glad to see George Stedman, and treated him as kindly and respectfully as she would if he had moved in the same circle with herself. The Colonel said but little, but thought the more.

Soon after the arrival of the bricklayer, Frederick Stephens called, whom the Colonel treated with marked attention; but his wife and daughter conversed more with George than she did with Frederick, whose countenance betrayed the troubled emotions that agitated his heart.

The young bricklayer took his leave

before young Stephens departed. As he was passing the house in which Jane was boarding, she saw him from a chamber window, which she instantly raised and attracted his attention. She beckoned him to enter the house, which he did with emotions that cannot be described. She conducted him to her room, and frankly confessed all her sins, informing him who was her seducer, and advising him to pay his addresses to Ida Mellen.

'Why, Jane, she moves in the more fashionable circles which I can never hope to enter,' he said, feeling perfectly astonished at her suggestion.

'No matter,' she quickly added.—'Tell her how her father has abused me, and that you were once in love with me. I say *once* in love; but you cannot be now. No no, George; you must never take the leavings of another man, and that man a heartless libertine on whom I desire to be revenged.—And what sweeter revenge can I have than to be instrumental in inducing his daughter to wed a young mechanic whom his proud spirit despises. She is a noble, generous-hearted girl, and will become your wife, if you will only manage the affair properly. Her mother, too, will be willing. Oh, if I could have an interview with that girl, I could persuade her to marry you.'

'But, Jane, she has a lover, and his riches and rank will insure his success,' he replied. 'I left him with her a short time since.'

'Let me see her, and the work can be accomplished,' she added.

'But her father will not only object, but disinherit her,' he replied.

Her mother owns more property in

her own right than he does in his,' she added. 'Yes, George, stir yourself, and let me know that you are the happy husband of the beautiful and generous-hearted Ida Mellen, and my revenge may stop short of shedding a libertine's blood.'

'But what will become of you?' he anxiously inquired.

'I shall ere long go back to my native town, and there remain,' she replied.

'But have you money?' he asked, feeling rather strange emotions in his heart.

She revealed the whole affair to him. He left Jane, but before he did so, he promised to see Ida, and ask her to be at Mrs. Hamblin's at an appointed time the next day, where they might have an interview.

The evening came, and so did the Colonel. After conversing a short time with Old Sack, he sought Jane, who was in her chamber, expecting him. When he entered the room, he endeavored to be very kind and loving; but she kept him at bay, and resisted all his advances. He offered her a thousand dollars. She gazed upon him sternly, and refused the sum that he offered.

'Not a cent less than five thousand,' she said. 'My only regret is that I had not demanded from you twice that sum.'

He then offered her two thousand; but she steadily refused all his offers, until he finally consented to give her the amount demanded.

Jane took the money and desired him to leave, and never seek another interview with her. He departed, cursing his own folly, and regretting he had ever met such a girl.

That night she and Julia were again together, and concocted their plans for the future.

At the appointed time the next day, Jane met Ida and her mother at Mrs. Hamblin's. And such a meeting seldom happens on earth.

Jane first had a private interview with Mrs. Mellen, and told her all her husband had said and done. She then communicated to her the fact that Julia Sandborn, the murderess, was concealed in the same house where she resided, and that they intended to leave the city together, assuring the good woman that Julia had satisfied her revenge, and was resolved upon living a life of repentance and virtue. Mrs. Mellen was greatly astonished at such revelations.

Jane then revealed to Mrs. Mellen how much George Stedman was once attached to her and what good advice he had given her which she had foolishly disregarded.

'And now permit me to say,' continued Jane, in an altered tone of voice, 'that your daughter can never do better than to become the wife of the honest, intelligent and industrious young bricklayer.'

'I esteem the young man very highly and so does my daughter,' added Mrs. Mellen.

'Would to Heaven they might be married, and then my revenge on my seducer would be satisfied!' exclaimed Jane.

'My daughter shall act her own pleasure,' replied the good woman.—

'I highly appreciate your motives.—But do not longer remain in that boarding house.'

'I do not intend to remain there; for Julia and I have resolved to leave this evening,' said Jane. 'We have sworn to live together, and must both leave at the same time.'

'There is a spare chamber in this house which you can occupy for the present,' said this benevolent woman. 'You will be safe here.'

'I was thinking of the same thing,' added Jane.

Arrangements were made, and the two girls left Old Sack's in the evening without her knowledge.

Julia wrote a note and left it in her room, stating that she had gone South. They took lodgings in the house with the reformed drunkard's family. They remained concealed here for several weeks.

Little Hattie was told to keep the affair a secret. Mrs. Mellen and her daughter often visited them, and the bricklayer had interviews with Ida at the same house.

George Stedman often called on Ida at her father's house; but the Colonel treated him with marked scorn and contempt.

At last he asked Ida to accompany him to his room. She did so, and what took place greatly astounded him.

'Ida, why do you permit that laborer to visit you so often?' he asked.

'Because I like his company,' replied Ida. 'He is a fine young man. O, father, he is greatly superior to young Stephens both in head and heart.'

'I desire to hear no more,' he replied. 'He shall not enter my house again!'

'Hear me, father,' she continued.—'You know he was once in love with poor Jane Clark, and would have married her, but for you! Oh, my God, how that thought now makes my heart bleed!'

Wildly did he gaze upon his daughter, and violently did his heart beat. His feelings were such that he could not speak for some time.

'You will not forbid the young man to visit me now,' she continued. 'Oh, father, may the arrows of conviction penetrate your soul, and repentance prepare you for the house of death which often cometh like a thief in the night.'

He made no reply; but immediately left the room. He passed into the

street, but could not run away from his own harrassing, burning thoughts.—The blood rushed to his head, and ere the sun went down he was confined to his bed with a raging brain fever.

Terrible was his disease, and baffled the skill of his physicians. In three days he was a corpse. During his sickness, he was deprived of his senses, and died a raving maniac.

Six months after that melancholy event, Ida Mellen became the wife of George Stedman. They adopted little Hattie as their daughter, and gave her a good education. She became the cynosure of all eyes.

Young Stephens became a sot, and died of delerium tremens some weeks before the bridal day of Ida and the young bricklayer.

Mr. Hamblin never returned to his cups, but remained a sober, industrious man.

But the the reader may ask, what become of Jane and Julia? In the course of a few weeks after the death of Colonel Mellen, they secretly left the city and found shelter in the humble dwelling of Jane's mother, near the red shore in the Granite State.

Often might Jane and Julia be seen walking, hand in hand, upon the beautiful sea beach, and hearing the cry of the ocean waters, as wave after wave rolled upon the smooth bank of sand. They became most intimate friends, and determined to live a life of virtuous celibacy, which determination they carried into execution.

They were much respected for their kind and benevolent deeds. And many young fishermen sought their hands in marriage; but their resolution could not be shaken.

They lived and loved each other in the humble dwelling where Jane first saw the light. Having seen enough of men, they resolved to live in a state of single blessedness, and do all the good they could to atone for the sins of their earlier womanhood.

Thus endeth these chronicles of city life.

THE END.