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ALICE THE FISHER GIRL:

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—OR—



THE OLD MAN OF THE WRECK.

A STORY OF OLD ENGLAND.

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BY AUSTIN C. BURDICK.  
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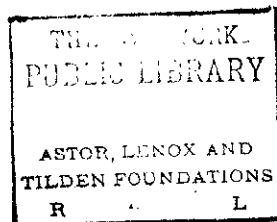
presented by Sylvanus Cobb



NEW YORK:
PUBLISHED BY SAMUEL FRENCH,
121 NASSAU STREET.

N B F p.v.

1. Fiction, American.



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Published every SATURDAY, by

F. GLEASON,

Corner of Bromfield and Tremont Streets, Boston, Mass.

WHOLESALE AGENTS.

S. FRENCH, 121 Nassau, Street, New York.
A. WINCH, 116 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia.
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THE
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ALICE THE FISHER GIRL.

CHAPTER I.

AN IMPORTANT CONFERENCE.



BETWEEN Dunwich and Aldborough, about half way, on the coast of Suffolk, there is a small indentation in the shore, and into this empties a small stream known as Mundham River, yet it hardly deserves the name of river, for it is but a moderate sized brook at best. The course of this stream is a very little south of east, and the scenery upon its banks is delightful in the extreme. The shore of the inlet into which it empties is mostly a smooth, level beach, and at a short distance out the water is quite deep. To the south of the stream, and at a short distance from the sea, was situated a large and elegant manor house known as Linden Hall, and it was the dwelling of Sir William Brentford, a wealthy old baronet who owned many tenements in the adjoining district. The hall was built upon the brow of a gentle eminence, and the wide lawn, which extended to the river, was thickly set with lindens, elms, and oaks in regular rows, and prettily marked with neatly gravelled walks and flanks of roses and evergreens. The house itself was a handsome structure, large and roomy, with two broad verandahs running clear around it, and amply supplied with commodious stables and other outbuildings. Then back of the building was an extensive garden, well stocked with the choicest fruits, both foreign and domestic, and regularly dotted with arbors and little artificial lakelets.

At the time on which our story opens, the occupants of the hall were Sir William Brentford, his son Thomas, a young man five-and-twenty years of age, and a girl named Belinda Warner. This latter person was an orphan, and connected with the old baronet by way of marriage. Her father was an earl, and very wealthy, and at his death, which occurred a few years previous to the time of which we write, he gave his child in charge to Sir William, and also placed his vast property in the same keeping. Besides these

there were any number of servants, both male and female, for the wealthy baronet kept a great table, and lived for the animal luxuries of life.

There had been a sort of hope before Lord Warner died, that Belinda and Thomas Brentford should marry with each other, but such was not to be the case, for, after an intimate acquaintance of some five years they were only on the terms of common friendship, and totally without love for each other, nor did there seem to be any probability that their hearts would ever call for a closer union.

Thomas Brentford was a good-looking youth, with black hair and black eyes, of medium size, and of ordinary intelligence. His features were regular, but they bore in every line the characteristics of the epicure. And then he was vain and proud, and his bearing towards his inferiors was haughty and overbearing. Yet he was a social companion, and his society was much sought by those of his equals who were used to his mode of life. And then the young man had some love of the beautiful, too, and in many cases his appreciations were just and reasonable. As far as his moral character was concerned his qualities were rather of the negative kind. He had but few positive qualities, being almost entirely the creature of impulse and passion.

Belinda Warner was about eighteen years of age, tall, and well-proportioned, but not very comely in appearance, though some might have called her handsome. Her features were regular, but her nose had a tendency to turn up at the end, and her lips were rather thinner than the good judges of female beauty generally like to see. Her hair was decidedly sandy in its hue, and her eyes were of a sort of bluish gray. Her face had a tendency to freckle, and her brow was rather low and contracted. Yet when Belinda Warner was perfectly good-natured she looked well enough, and at such times she might even have been called pretty. But she was not always good-natured. Very often was she sulky and peevish, and she had a peculiar faculty of making herself miserable without any just cause.

Sir William had seen the noon of life, and his days were drawing fast towards their evening. He had lived the full span of three-score and ten, and his frame was still stout and strong. His head was bald upon the top, and the hair which clustered about his neck and ears was silvered and crisp. His eyes were of a deep, dark blue, and their light was often dim and flickering. He had seasons of strange melancholy, and it

required much social lenity to bring him out to real enjoyment. Whenever he was left alone the clouds came upon his brow, and the sad light dwelt in his eyes. He liked not to be left alone much, but he could not keep company now as in former years. He could not join in the chase, for his limbs refused their accustomed duty in the saddle, and his hand could not hold the rein as of old. Yet the old baronet had much company, and he still enjoyed something of life. Most people thought him a happy old man, for he lived his pleasures before the world, while what of sorrows he had were hidden from the world's gaze.

It was a clear afternoon in early summer, and the lawn and the garden of Linden Hall were clothed in their regal robes of foliage and flowers. There was a low rumble of wheels in the distance upon the Dunwich road, and the old baronet heard it. He knew that the mail from Ipswich had passed, and that the mail from Yarmouth was not yet due.

"Somebody must be coming to the hall," he said, as he walked out upon the broad piazza; and his words proved true, for soon afterwards a heavy travelling carriage came rolling up one of the broad avenues that led through the park. Sir William forgot his gout—for he had a touch of that disease in his feet—he forgot his gout, for he recognized the livery of the postillions.

Ere long the carriage was at the landing steps, and in a moment more a hale old man—or rather a middle-aged man—jumped out upon the piazza.

"Lord Tiverton, upon my soul," exclaimed the baronet, hastening forward and grasping the new-comer's hand. "Why, bless you, old boy, the sight of you is like an angel—the angels we see painted, and read about. Ha, ha, ha."

Tiverton returned the old man's grasp with a hearty good will, and then they adjourned to the house. Lord Arnot Tiverton was Earl of Winchester. He was a portly, healthy-looking man, yet in the prime of life, a good liver, and one who seemed to enjoy the good things of earth with all zest. His face, which was round and full, betrayed considerable good nature and kindness of heart, but at the same time the physiognomist would not have failed to detect the signs of a quick temper and a most stubborn will. Lord Tiverton and Sir William Brentford had long been on terms of the utmost intimacy, and their friendship was mutual and abiding.

Wine was drank, and all the affairs of the day which presented the least interest were discussed,

and then there came a lull in the conversation. Dinner was eaten, and the lamps were brought in, and then Tiverton opened the especial business which had brought him down from Hampshire.

"Sir William," he said, shoving his glass one side, and drawing his chair closer up, "you have a girl—a ward—living with you?"

"Yes," returned the baronet, turning around and elevating his eyebrows. "Yes."

"And who is she?"

"Egad, my Lord Tiverton, what'll my lady of Winchester say if—"

"No more of that, Sir William," interrupted the earl, with a laugh. "Just answer my questions, and you shall know what I want. 'Now who is this girl?'"

"Well, her father was the Earl of Ixworth. You remember it was a title made on purpose for him in consideration of his services on the Peninsular. The title died when he died, but the revenue of ten thousand a year comes to the girl."

"That's good," said Tiverton, with an air of appreciation. "That's decidedly good. Now how old is the girl?"

"Just eighteen, I believe—perhaps a few months over."

"And that's good," continued the earl, with evident satisfaction. "And is the girl good-looking?"

"Well, as for that, every man must be his own judge. I call her a fair-looking girl."

"And her disposition?"

"So-so," replied Sir William, with a shrug of the shoulders. "Most of the time she is pretty good-natured. But she aint ugly—not a bit of it—only sometimes she seems to be a little sulky like. It is natural, you know, to some. But on the whole I call Belinda Warner a good sort of a girl."

"Ah, Belinda, her name is?"

"Yes, and let me tell you that I've seen girls a good deal worse than she is."

"Now, one question more: Have you any particular plans laid out with regard to her future life?"

"Why—as for that—I should say, not exactly. I did mean that she should marry with my son Tom; but Tom is a graceless dog—he wont do it."

"Then you would like to have her for a daughter-in-law still?"

"Yes; but it's past all hope. Tom wont mar-

ry, and I don't think she will have him. The truth is, my Tom is a proud fellow—perhaps a little too proud—and the girl is about as proud as he is; so you see they don't gibe."

"Now," resumed Tiverton, after a few moments' silence, "I'll tell you my business. You know my son—Albion, his name is—is in the navy. He is a most excellent officer, and has already received the highest encomiums from his superiors. He is now a passed-midshipman, and his commission for a lieutenantcy is already made out and signed by the admiralty. But the truth is, the young dog is too wild, and they wont give him his epaulettes until he calms down a little. He is only twenty years old, but I'm determined to marry him to somebody. He's got some queer notions, and 'twill take considerable of a girl to suit him, but if you say you'll give your ward up, he shall marry her at any rate. Now what say you?"

"Of course I will, with all my heart. To be sure, it'll make a hole in my family, and I shall miss Belinda a good deal. But you shall have her, my lord—that is—provided your son will take her for a wife."

"If he'll take her," repeated the earl, with marked emphasis. "By the dome of St. Paul's," he added, bringing his fist down upon the table, "if I say so, the matter is settled. He will do as I bid him."

"Then you can do more with your son than I can do with mine," remarked Sir William.

"What!" exclaimed the earl, starting to his feet and bringing the clenched fist of the right hand into the palm of the left with an expressive movement. "Do you think my son would dare to disobey me? By heavens, let him try it! I'd disinherit the dog as quickly as I'd tread on a spider. I'd turn him out upon the world to beg his bread. I would—I would—by the powers, I would! He disobey his father? He knows better—aha—the dog knows better."

Tiverton sank down into his chair, and when he saw the smile upon Sir William's face, he wondered if he hadn't been making himself slightly ridiculous.

"Excuse me," he added, while the passion-marks left his face. "Excuse me, my old friend; but this idea of my son's disobeying my orders rather touched me. But never fear on that account. Just say that I may have her, and I'll answer for the rest. She shall be a wife in less than a twelvemonth."

"You shall have her," replied the baronet, "and I shall be glad to see the girl so well settled. I don't know of another family in the kingdom I'd rather see her united with."

"So, that's settled," said the earl; and as he spoke he poured out a glass of wine, and then pushed the bottle over to the baronet. "And now," he added, after he had drank the sparkling juice, "there is one more thing I want you to do. You must open the subject to the girl, and tell her to treat Albion as well as she can. He is a sensitive fellow, full of heart and soul, and anything like coldness or bad-heartedness on her part would turn him in an instant. Tell her all this, and beg of her to use all her efforts to secure his love and esteem. The dog shall be married—for he'll never get his commission until he does—and it'll be a blessing on his head,

though he may not think so now. Ten thousand a year, and of a good family—By the powers, he can't find anything better in the whole kingdom, I know he can't."

"But when will Albion be here?" asked the baronet.

"O, yes—upon my soul I liked to have forgot that. His ship is at Sheerness, and he has a leave of absence for three months. There is a transport coming around to Yarmouth with a mess of provisions, and he takes passage in her. Very likely she'll be off here sometime to-morrow."

The baronet gave his consent, and so the plan was settled. A noble-hearted, wild young midshipman was to be forced into wedlock at all events and costs.

We shall see.

CHAPTER II.

THE FIRST IMPRESSION.

On the following morning Thomas Brentford was early on the watch for the transport. He was some five years older than Albion Tiverton, but he had known the young midshipman when a boy, and then they had been most joyful companions, and Thomas promised himself much pleasure in the society of the youth now. All the forenoon he watched, and just as he was about giving up with hunger and fatigue, he discovered a white sail coming around the heights of Aldborough. He hastened down to the little bay where one of his father's boats was in readiness, and having got the boatmen seated at their oars he put off. Yet he had some time longer to wait, for it was full half an hour before the transport came up and hove-to; but when she did do so, Thomas was quickly at the gangway, and as soon as his boat's painter was secured inboard he went up over the side. Near the gangway he saw a young man dressed in the uniform of a midshipman, and he at once recognized him as Albion Tiverton.

"Al, my boy, don't you know me?" cried Thomas, removing his hat, and leaning forward.

[SEE ENGRAVING.]

"Eh? 'Tis Tom Brentford—old Tom himself," said Albion.

"Not very old, though," returned Tom, laugh-

ing, as he stepped forward and seized his friend by the hand. "But come—my boat is alongside, and we'll be off."

As soon as young Tiverton had returned the salutation, he turned to the commander of the transport and informed him that a boat was alongside for him. Accordingly the midshipman's luggage was soon on deck, and with the assistance of four stout men it was lowered into the boat. Albion exchanged warm farewells with the officers of the vessel, and then he followed Tom to the boat. The painter was cast off, the boat's head shoved around, and soon afterwards the transport filled away and stood on her course again.

Albion Tiverton was, as the reader is already aware, only twenty years of age, but he was a stout, full-built youth, with a vast quantity of bone and sinew. In stature he was about medium height, straight and broad shouldered, with a full, expanded chest, and ample, well-proportioned limbs. His eyes were of a deep, dark blue, full of fire and intelligence, his hair a dark brown, and his features perfectly regular and symmetrical. His face was somewhat bronzed by long exposure to sunshine and storm, but that did not detract from his real manly beauty.

There was much contrast between the two friends. Thomas Brentford had none of Albion's sunny smiles and sparkling humor, nor did his

face show any of that depth of soul which beamed forth from the countenance of the other. Of course young Brentford smiled, and he laughed much when he enjoyed himself, but his smiles only came from the physical man with sensual pleasure. And Albion Tiverton betrayed none of that haughtiness that generally marked the bearing of Brentford when in contact with inferiors. Yet the two were destined to find much of enjoyment together, for they both loved life for its pleasures, and they both had the will to seize upon pleasure wherever they could find it. But Thomas Brentford was not low or immoral in his mind or habits; but, on the contrary, he had a nice sense of honor, and he would have scorned to do a mean or degrading thing.

"I say, Tom," uttered the midshipman, when the boat was about half way ashore, "where's the governor?"

"You mean your father?"

"Of course."

"He's at the hall."

"So I feared. Why couldn't he clear out before I came?"

"But you aint afraid of him?" suggested Brentford.

"O, no. He's one of the best fathers in the world. Only I shall be sure to get a regular lecture now, and I'd rather kiss the boatswain's daughter any time."

"Kiss the boatswain's daughter?" queried Tom.

"Yes. Don't you know what that means?"

"Upon my soul I don't."

"Well, I'll tell you. You see when a middy happens to go it very strong on the wrong tack he sometimes get's a taste of the cat, or a rope's end, and to facilitate that delectable operation, Mr. Middy is lashed to the breech of a gun. He has to bend over and hug the gun with both arms—and that is called kissing the boatswain's daughter! but I never saw it done. They don't try it much now. But about the governor: He'll just be sure to give me my orders in regular sequence. But never mind—we're in for fun, and I'm mistaken if we don't have it, eh?"

"Of course we will," cried Tom, and thereupon they both joined in a shout of merriment, which ended by Albion's singing a song about one King William of England, who was once in the royal navy, and by the time he had finished the second verse, Tom took up the chorus!

"Then messmates pass along the grog—
We'll drink enough to scald a hog;
And as we drink we'll merrily sing,
Long life to Bill, the sailor king."

By the time the boat reached the shore the oarsmen, who were all in the employ of the baronet, had made up their minds that the young midshipman was a capital fellow, and they conceived a strong attachment for him forthwith. There was something in his very face that made them love him, and when he slapped them on the shoulder and bade them join in the chorus of his song, they inwardly swore that while they lived he should never want for a friend. That was the way the youth often made first impressions.

It was near the middle of the afternoon when Albion reached Linden Hall, and he was soon introduced to its inmates. The old baronet was glad to see him, and so was his father; and the face of Belinda wore an extra wreath of smiles as she held out her hand for the handsome young officer to shake. Sir William had been instructing her, and she had promised to do the best she could. And her duty was not likely to be a very hard one, for she liked the youth the moment she looked upon him.

Lord Tiverton held a long consultation with the baronet upon the subject of informing Albion of his intentions, and it was finally concluded that the young man should not at present know why he was to remain at Linden Hall. Perhaps, if he were told of what his fate was to be, he might at once, in a spirit of rebellion, conceive a dislike for the girl, and that would not answer. So Albion was to remain in ignorance of his father's intentions for one month, and during that time he was to be thrown into Belinda's company as much as possible, and she was to make herself as agreeable as could be.

Lord Tiverton saw Belinda alone, and he found that she was already smitten with the beauty and wit of his son. This flattered the earl not a little, and it moreover made the maiden more comely in his eyes. In fact, he was convinced that Belinda Warner would make his boy a most excellent wife, besides having the faculty of holding his wild passions in a prudent check.

On the next day Tiverton took his leave, promising to call again in one month. Albion bade him good-by with a full heart, and promised to behave himself as he ought. He did love his father, and tears stood in his eyes when he saw the old family carriage roll off. But the stout earl did not know the whole heart of his boy.

Now the two young men were left for a while to themselves, and they enjoyed their sports with zest, and for several days they were left to hunt and fish, and to ride and walk, as they pleased. Thus a week passed away, and at the end of that time Sir William remembered that he had business at Ipswich, and Thomas must accompany him. To this arrangement all manner of objections were made, but the baronet overruled them all. Then Tom was determined that Albion should accompany them, but to this the old man objected. He would not have Belinda left alone. Master Tom expressed some very hard wishes concerning business and Belinda, but to Ipswich he went with his father, and young Tiverton was left to take care of Belinda, the baronet only meaning to be gone over one night.

The young officer did not feel very much at home in Miss Warner's company, for he had seen enough of her to know that her disposition and habits were not at all congenial with his own; yet he resolved to make himself as agreeable as possible on the present occasion, and as soon as they were seated in the drawing-room for the evening he commenced to remark on the difference between life on shore and life upon the ocean. She listened very attentively, but only replied in monosyllables. Next he tried to get some conversation from her by asking questions, but he did not succeed at all. One thing he did not fail to notice, and that was, that she looked upon him with a very modest, retiring expression, and that all she said was lisped out with a sort of school-girl timidity, which was not at all in accordance with the expression which Dame Nature had written upon her face. He saw very plainly that this was all affected, and it disgusted him.

Belinda did at length talk some, but what she said was only a mass of meaningless twaddle which had neither sense nor thought. She arose once to move the curtains, and when she sat down again she took a seat nearer to the young man than was the one she had before occupied. There was something in her tone and manner which Albion could not fathom. She seemed to lean towards him with a strange sort of interest, and yet the light of her countenance betrayed nothing save childish affectation.

At length, after all other subjects were exhausted, the young man happened to think of something he had seen, and he seized upon it as a subject for question.

"Ah, Miss Warner," said he, trying to look animated, "I saw you speaking with a young lady last evening in the park. Who was she?"

"O," returned Belinda, answering more quickly than she had before done, "that was only a poor fisher-girl who sometimes comes up here to the hall with fish. I was not conversing with her, sir—only answering a question. I would not refuse to answer a simple question, even to one so low as she."

"Then she is low, is she?"

"Very low," answered Belinda, with an expression of pity mingled with disgust. "Very low."

"Ah, I am sorry to see a young female fallen so early in life."

"Fallen?" repeated Belinda.

"You said she was very low."

"O, yes, certainly; and she always was. She has not fallen, that I know of; but her occupation and station in society—they are low."

"Then the girl is virtuous and honest?"

"I suppose so. I don't know anything to the contrary. Indeed I hope so, for I could not wish harm even to one so low as she is."

For some moments Albion did not speak. There were two strong emotions at work in his bosom. First, he was gratified to find that the poor girl was not what he had at first been led to fear; and second, he had discovered a new feature in his companion's character, and it made him feel unpleasantly, to say the least.

"I noticed the girl," he at length said, "and I thought her appearance was very neat and becoming. Does she live with her parents?"

"She lives with her mother—she has no father."

"And she is a fisher-girl, you say?"

"Yes, she catches fish in the river. She has permission from Sir William—and I have no doubt that she takes quite a number. I think I have heard that she supports her mother."

"Do you know her name?"

"Alice Woodley, I think. I have been so told. I never asked her, for I make no conversation with such persons—I don't think it safe. Once I suffered some familiarity on the part of a low-born girl, and afterwards she even bowed to me in the street while I was in company with several ladies of my acquaintance. It was very annoying, I assure you."

"It must have been," uttered Albion, with ill-concealed contempt.

"O, it most surely was," added Belinda, totally unable to see the hint contained in the young man's tone and manner.

The conversation continued for some time longer, and when young Tiverton retired for the night he had seen pretty clearly through Miss Warner's character; and he had done this the more clearly from the fact that he had not premeditated any such plan. She had opened her natural disposition, and it was a most unpleasant one to him. Upon his noble, generous heart her smallness of human feeling struck most chillingly.

Naturally of an open and frank disposition, and with all his father's manhood added to his mother's kindness of heart, his life upon the wild ocean had served to develop more fully the

real characteristics of his nature. He had never learned how to dissemble or affect, and it made him feel disagreeable to see others do so. He had seen enough of ocean life, among the stout hearts of British seamen, to show him that the brightest soul-gems often dwell beneath the roughest exteriors. So he never looked upon the outer person for the thing he was to love or dislike. Then, again, he had learned to read character easily, and he had read the character of Belinda Warner most truly.

Before he went to sleep he blessed his fate that he was not destined to become fixed to such a companion for life, and while he was indulging in pity for the unfortunate man who should chance to get her for a wife, he fell asleep.

CHAPTER III.

AN ADVENTURE, WITH A CALAMITY.

On the following morning Albion met Belinda in the breakfast-room, and he caught her just as she was in the act of throwing a pewter basin at the head of one of the serving-women. She turned very red when she saw the young officer, and she would have stammered forth some apology, but he did not stop to hear it. He passed directly out through the wide porch into the garden, and there he remained until the bell rang for breakfast. He went in, but Belinda was not at the table, and he was glad of it. He finished the meal, and then taking his hat he strolled off alone towards the little bay which formed the mouth of the river. He reached the shore and sat down upon a rock, and he was very lonesome. He wished that Tom were with him, but Tom would not return till evening, and he must pass the day alone, for he was determined not to go back to Miss Warner's company.

As he sat there upon the rock he looked off upon the other side of the bay, near the sea coast, and he saw a small cot, surrounded by rose-bushes and shrubbery, and he wondered if that was not where the Widow Woodley lived. It seemed a charming spot, and he thought he should like to find an excuse for visiting it, but he knew them not, and as for framing a falsehood for the purpose, he had no such desire. Yet he thought he should like to see the girl whom

he had once seen in conversation with Belinda. He had never seen her face, but he knew that her form was exquisite—and then he knew that she had native grace, too, for he had seen it in her movements.

"Sometime I shall see her," he murmured to himself. "She comes to the hall with fish, and — But what is she to me? Pshaw!"

Then Albion's eye chanced to fall upon one of Sir William's pleasure-boats, and on the instant he determined to take a sail. The boat was sloop rigged, and a pretty heavy one, but the young man knew that he could manage it, and without more reflection he sprang on board a small dory that lay upon the sand and soon paddled out to the sloop. He made the dory's painter fast to the same buoy to which the larger craft was made fast, and then got on board the cutter. It was but short work for him to cast loose the sails and let go the bow-fast, and in a few moments more the sloop was standing out to sea with both sheets hauled close home, for the wind came in from the northward and eastward, and was quite fresh, but none too fresh to suit the taste of the adventurer.

Albion found that his boat was an excellent sailer, and that she had also been used for small parties, for there were some tons of ballast beneath her floor consisting of snugly-packed tiers

of pig-iron. She answered the least change in the helm quickly, and laid up to the wind like a spanker. On he went, with the spray leaping off like snow to the leeward, and while he thus sailed he could not help thinking if Miss Warner missed him. And he laughed outright as the idea presented itself.

At length he went about and stood upon the opposite tack, and thus he stood on until he was very near to the cot where he supposed Alice Woodley lived. He saw a female form at the door of the cot, but he was sure it was not the one he had seen before. Soon, however, there came another form in sight from towards the river. That was Alice, surely. Yes, the same light, buoyant step, the same graceful movement, and the same sylph-like form. But the youth found that he was running dangerously near the shore, and he put about again, and when he next looked around the maiden was gone. He saw a light skiff upon the beach in front of the cot, and he wondered if it belonged to Alice. Then he said "*pshaw*" again as the thought came to him of how foolish he was making himself in thus thinking of a perfect stranger, whose face, even, he had never seen.

On stood the noble boat, and with a feeling of old friendship did the youth snuff up the fresh air. And as he sailed, and steered his craft just which way suited him best, he began to imagine himself the commander of a ship; and he saw officers bowing to him, and half a thousand men awaiting his command. Then he commanded a fleet, and his broad pendant floated proudly from the mast-head.

Albion Tiverton forgot the past, and his soul was stretching away into the future. He was a man now—he forgot the wild pranks of the boy, and the mad schemes of the impulsive youth. He saw long years of manhood in the track he had passed over, and he felt himself respected and honored for the glories he had gathered to himself. The youth had more ambition than his father gave him credit for, and his ambition was noble, too. In his soul he was determined that if gray hairs ever covered his head they should be honored ones. He often thought of this.

Thus the youth sailed on in his day-dream, heeding not that the hour of high noon had passed. The breeze was fresh and sweet, and the sky was clear as the brow of an angel. His face was turned toward the broad bosom of the German ocean, and nothing ahead broke upon his vision to disturb his reverie—for he only saw the dim

line of ethereal blue where the heavens rested upon the bosom of the sea, and only the spirit of the Eternal One was with him or about him.

On he flew, and his day-dream changed. He held the helm with a firm grasp, and he caught each coming sea and lifted clear of it—and yet he dreamed. Now he saw that fairy form that had flitted twice before his sight, and imagination painted an angel face and placed it with that form. He saw her plainly, and he saw her smile. His eye rested upon a snow-crested billow that came majestically towards him, and this same imagination placed his angel upon the foamy throne of that coming sea. He saw her smile, and half-stretched out his arm to embrace her. While thus he gazed, and while thus his arm was stretched forth, the billow came. It struck the stout boat, and in a moment more its cold flood had swept the deck—and the dreamer started up and awoke. He shook the water from his dress, and then he began to think of things that had a dwelling about him. He turned his eyes back over the track he had come, and clear away in the distance he could just distinguish the dim line where the shore came down to the sea.

Albion Tiverton uttered an exclamation of surprise as he saw how far he had sailed, and more surprised still was he when he looked up and saw the sun far down from its zenith on the road to evening. With hurried, yet careful movements, he put his bark before the wind, and started back towards the shore he had left. Now the light bark fairly flew over the water, and ere long our youthful adventurer could see where the bay of the Mundham river indented the coast. Proudly careened the boat to the fresh breeze, and the straining sheets seemed all nerve and muscle. Albion laughed at the rolling seas as he swiftly overtook them and left them behind. He looked ahead, and straight towards the bay he went, but he was not upon the same track by which he had gone out. His several tacks had crooked his course while outward-bound, but now he sailed in a direct line for his point of departure.

He looked ahead, and already could he detect even the rocks that lay upon the shore, and to the right he could see the small cot among the rosebushes and sweet thorns. He thought he saw a female form upon the doorstone of the humble dwelling. It was a female, and she waved a handkerchief in her hand. Then she started down towards the beach, and the 'ker-

chief was again waved high above her head. It was the maiden, for the matron could not have moved so quickly to the seashore. Our hero looked about upon the broad expanse of waters, for he expected to see some other boat to which this signal was made, but none was in sight. He alone dwelt there upon the waters of the coast. Could it be that she was waving this signal to him? He looked again, and still was the maiden swinging the 'kerchief above her head. He saw her plainly, her long, loose hair floating wildly in the wind, her feet fairly washed by the waves, and the signal still given to the breeze.

What could it mean?

Once more Albion looked towards the bay, and as his eye spanned the distance he detected a spot directly ahead where the waves rolled unevenly and were broken. The boat was flying on like a frightened dolphin, and the strangely marked place was directly under the bows.

Albion started to his feet and uttered a cry of horror. With all his might he pushed his helm down, but 'twas too late. The sunken rocks which he knew not of were in waiting, and while he yet stood up and urged his helm down the boat struck. There was a stunning crash, and the youth was thrown forward upon the deck. Then there came a tremulous motion, and directly the stricken bark sank over upon her side, and Albion Tiverton felt the cold flood swallowing him up. The blow of falling had not hurt him, and the moment he found himself in the water he put forth all his strength and arose to the surface. The boat still remained fixed upon the rocks, but he had been washed some distance to the leeward. His first impulse was to swim back to the boat, but this he found impossible—his clothing cumbered him, and against the in-setting sea he could make no headway. As soon as he was fully assured that he could not swim back to the boat, he cast his eyes quickly about him to see if anything had floated off upon which he could grasp for assistance. Within reach he saw a board—it was one of the light quarter-thwarts—and he seized it, and it helped to bear him up.

The youth cast one more longing look upon the capsized boat, but he knew that he could not reach it, and then, with a fervent prayer upon his lips, he struck out for the distant shore. It was distant—a long, dismal distance—but the swimmer prayed that he might reach it. The board was some assistance, but only a very lit-

tle—he had to exert all his strength to rise above the surface as wave after wave knocked him under. Once he looked towards the cot where he had seen the maiden, but he could see her no more. But he knew now, though, why she had waved her signal.

At length the youth's strength began to fail him. He cast his weakening gaze upon the shore, and it was yet a long, long way off. His limbs were becoming numb, and his strokes grew weaker and more weak. Still he struck wildly out, and held the frail board beneath him. Once more he looked for the shore, but he could not see it. He could only see a dim, cold, chaotic space about him, and he could hear the rushing of the waters over his head. His limbs still had motion, and still he raised his head above the flood.

Once Albion leaped wildly up with the last effort of his departing strength, and the board slid from under him—and then he began to sink. He knew that the ocean grave was opening beneath him, but he had no power to escape it. All his energies were gone—all, all. He felt the board strike him upon the shoulder, and it pained him—and then some fragments of the splinters became tangled in his hair, and it kept him from sinking. At least, such were the thoughts that ran through his bewildered mind. He was conscious of pain about the head, as though some mighty power were tearing his hair out by the roots. There was a struggle—a slipping of something about his shoulders that felt like the cold folds of a snake, and the youth had sense enough to feel that some dwellers of the great deep had seized upon him to devour him. The thought sent a thrill through his frame, and with one last effort he put forth both his hands and closed them upon something firm and hard. Then he strained every fainting nerve, and he leaped high up from the monster his imagination had painted. He felt the folds gathering more firmly about him, and then, as the last spark of vital energy fled he folded his arms to sink. But he sank not far. The rushing of the waters in his ears was gone, and he felt a freezing chill in every nerve. He opened his eyes, and a blinding sensation followed—he could see nothing but a blaze of red, glaring light that darted painfully to his brain—and when he closed them again the night of utter unconsciousness had gathered about him.

CHAPTER IV.

HOW A FATHER'S PLANS ARE PROGRESSING.

ALBION TIVERTON opened his eyes, and the broad light of day shone upon him. He felt but little pain—only a parched sensation about the mouth, and a numbness of his limbs. The memory of a frightful dream came over him, and he closed his eyes to think. He remembered that he had taken a boat and sailed out upon the sea, and he remembered how far he had gone. Then came the memory of the signal from the shore, and of the sunken rocks. Then he recollected of being thrown into the water, and of the life-struggles that followed. He remembered the last effort of his strength, and the monster that had seized upon to devour him. This was the last. A moment his mind dwelt upon the terrible recollection, and then, with a wild cry, he leaped up and gazed fearfully about him.

"Hallo! Al., my dear boy. Alive and safe! God be thanked!"

The youth started further up, and his gaze fell upon Thomas Brentford, who sat by his side, but who in a moment more sprang up and took him by the hand.

"O, Albion, what an escape you have had," continued Tom, as he gazed earnestly into our hero's face.

The young midshipman gazed about him, and his mind was clear and strong. He found him-

self now sitting upon a bed, the snow-white coverlid of which had been drawn closely over him, and he was in a small room, neatly, but plainly furnished. At the windows he saw honey-suckles creeping up over light trellises, and roses clustering thickly about them. Beyond he could see the blue ocean stretching away into the viewless distance.

"Tom," he said, stretching forth his hand and resting it upon his friend's shoulder, "how long have you been here?"

"All night, Al., all night."

"But where am I?"

"Safe—safe. You are in Dame Woodley's cottage."

"Dame Woodley?" murmured Albion, half-closing his eyes, and suffering his mind to run back a short distance into the past. "Yes—yes—I know. And how long have I been here?"

"Since last night. O, Al., you have no thought of how frightened we were. We came home just at sundown last night and found you gone. Some of the servants said you went down towards the bay, and down there I hastened after you. I saw that our sloop was gone, and I looked out to sea, and there I saw the boat, hard and fast, capsized upon the Imp's Rocks. The sails were snapping in the wind, and the sea was

breaking over the hull. My heavens, for a while I was almost crazy. I knew not what to do. At first I started back towards the hall after assistance; then I turned to the shore again and determined to swim out to the dory and get another boat that lay at anchor in the bay. But while I was beginning to strip I heard some one call out to me from the opposite side of the bay, and I saw Dame Woodley. She told me you were at her house. Perhaps I didn't move in a hurry. I came here and found you on this bed, but you were insensible. A doctor had already been called, and he said there was no danger. You were not hurt—only you were utterly exhausted. Then I sent word home all about what I had found. My father came over, and after he had seen that you were well provided for he went back, and left me here, and here I have been ever since. It is now near ten o'clock in the forenoon. Now tell me how you feel?"

Albion instinctively stretched out his arms, and drew up his legs, and after he had made the trial he said:

"I am pretty strong—pretty strong. But tell me—"

He hesitated, for he had not fully framed the question he would ask, and before he could collect his thoughts upon the subject that struggled up to his mind, Tom interrupted him.

"Now you just lie down again and catch a bit more rest, and I will hurry home and get the carriage. I wouldn't attempt to get up now, for you may not be so strong as you think for, and when I come, I will bring you dry clothes and clean. The clothes you had on last night are dry, but they ain't fit to put on. Lay quiet, now, and when I come back I'll tell you all about it. You will, wont you?"

"I'll try to," returned Albion, his mind still wandering off upon the subject that had taken possession of his thoughts.

"O, you must, for I must go, and I wont certainly leave you unless you promise to remain quiet. My father is most anxious, and he would be here now, only his gout prevents him. And then there is Belinda—she would have fainted last night if she had known how. Poor, dear thing! How she did scream and tear her hair. It was as good as a play at the theatre. But forgive me—I mustn't make sport of such a thing. Now you'll be quiet, Al."

"Yes—I will."

And with this assurance young Brentford started off after the carriage. After he was gone

Albion lay back upon his pillow and thought of the dreadful scene that had passed—and he wondered what miracle had saved him. For a long while he pondered upon the subject in all its bearings, and still he was bewildered and at fault, for, let him think of what part he would, the memory of the signal upon the seashore would keep itself foremost in his mind.

At length our hero felt the parching sensation coming back to his lips, and he looked about for drink. He saw a pitcher standing upon a table near him, and he reached forth and took it up, but there was nothing in it. By the side of the pitcher stood a bell, and this the youth rang. Shortly afterwards he heard a light, almost imperceptible footfall at the door, but no one entered. He listened, and he thought he could hear a brushing against the door, accompanied by a low, deep breathing, as though some one were anxiously listening there.

"Let me have drink, some one," cried Albion, feeling sure that his request would be heard.

The light footstep was heard again, but this time it moved more quickly, and receded from the door. Not many minutes had elapsed, however, before the door was opened, and a female form entered.

"My mother is out, sir, or she would have answered your first call; but I have taken the liberty to bring you both water and wine, and I trust your own judgment will tell you which will be the most safe for you."

So spoke the person who had entered, and the words fell upon the listener's ears like the notes of a sweetly warbling bird, save that they were tremulous with evident timidity, and bore an air of plaintiveness. Albion looked up, and he saw the maiden of his day-dream. He did not start, nor did he seem surprised. In fact there was at present no manifest emotion upon his manner or his features. He gazed upon the face that dwelt before him, and the result was in his soul.

There stood the same fairy-form, full of health and vigor, and her face was turned full upon him. He saw the long curls of sunny-brown hair, as they swept down over a pair of shoulders that might vie with the sculptor's marble—he saw the open, smooth brow, with its load of intellectual wealth—he saw her deep, large, lustrous, blue eyes, with depths like the bosom of a crystal lake, and he saw her whole face, with its more than matchless beauty and loveliness. Over the whole countenance dwelt a halo of sweet, purifying truth, and in every feature struggled

forth the great soul that was made for sympathy and virtue. The youth had dreamed of beauty, but never had such perfect purity visited his imagination.

"Dare you taste the wine?" she asked, as she set the things down upon the table.

"Yes, yes," Albion uttered. He saw that his ardent gaze had made the maiden timid, and he had the good sense to withdraw it. But he had seen enough, for he had transferred the image to his memory.

She filled a glass partly full of wine, and having poured in some water, she handed it to him. He drank it and asked for more.

"Be not afraid," he said, as he noticed that the girl hesitated. "I am only benumbed and thirsty. Let me have another draught like that."

The girl hesitated no longer, but having poured out the beverage she passed it over, and as soon as the youth had drank it she said:

"I will leave these things where you can easily reach them, and of course you will be careful."

She spoke thus, and would have then turned from the apartment, but Albion quickly called her back.

"You are not very busy?" he said, gazing once more earnestly upon her.

"No, sir," she timidly replied, stopping near the door and turning.

"Then sit thee down here by my side, and tell me of what has happened."

"Master Thomas will tell you all, sir," said the maiden, trembling.

"But I cannot wait. I am racked with curiosity to know. Did I not see you upon the beach yesterday, waving a signal to me?"

"Yes, sir."

"And your name is Alice Woodley?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then come. Sit thee down and tell me about my coming here, for surely you must know. Do you not?"

"Yes, sir," she whispered, while she trembled more than before.

"Then tell me of it?"

But Alice still stood by the door, and her looks plainly showed that she would rather not be questioned further. As the youth gazed upon her, suddenly there came a cloud upon his face, and in a deep, pained tone, he said:

"Alice Woodley, answer me one question: Dwells there in your mind one single thought that I could mean you harm? that I could breathe a breath, or imagine a desire, that could spot

the purity of your soul, or jar the peace of your being?"

"O, no, no, sir," quickly and energetically answered the fair girl, while her deep blue eye beamed more brightly, and a richer tone mantled her cheeks.

"Then I pray you come and sit here by my side. Come."

The maiden moved toward the couch, and with strangely varying features she sat down. Albion was silent for some moments after the fair being had seated herself, but at length he spoke:

"You waved the signal to me," he said, "and it was to warn me of the danger that lay before me?"

"Yes," returned Alice, shuddering with the recollection of the scene. "I knew you were running directly for the Imp's Rocks, and that if your boat struck them she would surely be wrecked. I saw you first from the window—this very window, here—and I ran out, and went down to the beach, but I could not make you understand. I saw you when you struck."

"Yes, yes," whispered Albion. "I saw you there only a moment before, but how was I saved?"

"Master Thomas will tell you, sir. He knows all about it."

"And how did he learn?" asked the youth, gazing keenly into his companion's face. "Tell me how he knows it?"

But the maiden's eyes fell, and she was silent.

"Did not you tell him?"

"Yes."

"Then tell me. You shall not be judged quickly. You will not refuse me?"

Alice Woodley looked into the youth's face, and after she had overcome the tremulous emotion that seemed almost to tie her tongue, she said:

"When I saw your boat strike the rocks, I was at first almost paralyzed, but the thought of your danger quickly called me to myself, and without waiting to call for assistance, or to inform my mother where I was going, I ran to my own light skiff which lay upon the beach, and shoved it off, and then with all my might I started to row out to the rocks. When first I looked, after I had put off, I saw that you had struck out for the shore, and from the manner in which you handled your arms, I judged that you had some support. The terror of your situation lent me unwonted strength, and my light bark sped

rapidly over the waves. Before I reached you, I saw plainly that your strength was failing, and once I was sure that you had sunk. But you came up again, and in a moment more the bow of my skiff grazed your shoulders. I dropped my oars and sprang forward just in time to seize you by the hair of your head as you were sinking again. I was able to lift your head above water, but with all my strength I could not raise you up. I think I was nearly frantic then. But my presence of mind did not wholly leave me. An unseen power was with me, and a voice, seemed whispering in my ear—'His life is thine!'—But what ails thee?" the maiden asked, suddenly stopping in her narrative.

"Nothing, nothing," uttered Albion, starting. "I was only remembering the terrible sensations that thrilled through my soul at the moment of which you then spoke."

Ah—there was another thought mingled with that—and it was of his day-dream—it was of the form that came to him upon the foam-crest of the wave. But he spoke not of it.

"Go on," he continued, sinking back once more. "Go on."

"At that moment," resumed Alice, "I noticed the painter of my skiff, which lay coiled up at my feet, and while I held your hair with one hand, with the other I slipped a bite of the painter down over your shoulders until it caught beneath your arms. This gave me a better hold upon you, and just as I was considering what means I should next adopt, you threw both your hands suddenly up and caught the bows of my boat with a death-like grasp, and I felt that you were trying with all your might to raise yourself. The opportunity did not escape me. I lifted with the whole of my strength, and your form came up so that your breast rested upon the gunwale. Then I saw that your energy was gone, for you would have sunk wholly back had I not caught a turn of the painter about the forward thwart. There you lay, and after a while I managed to get you on board. I never could have got you over the side without upsetting the boat, but you came in over the bows, and came in safely. As soon as you were placed as well as I could place you, I bailed out the water which had come in, and then resumed my oars. It was sometime before I could do more than to keep my skiff's head towards the shore; but at length my strength came back to me, and I reached our beach without farther trouble. My mother helped me bring you here, and here my

mother cared for you and nursed you. She is a good woman, sir."

The maiden bowed her head as she closed, and in a moment more she felt a hand upon her arm. It was a gentle pressure, and she raised her eyes to the youth's face. Tears were rolling down his cheeks, and he drew the maiden nearer to him. He drew her face down to his own, and he imprinted a warm kiss upon her burning cheek—and then he murmured:

"God bless you—bless you forever!"

It was all he could say. That movement, and those words, were the result of noble, generous impulse, and the spirit that gave them birth seemed to pervade also the bosom of the maiden, for she did not start when she felt the kiss upon her cheek, nor did she speak when she heard the blessing that was breathed for her. She only bowed her head upon the pillow, by the side of the man she had saved, and tears she could not keep back flowed forth, in sweet, pure drops. It was a season when the heart beats with strange emotions, and when the song of the soul is of a joy that swallows up gratitude in a flood of heavenly blessing.

There came the sound of carriage wheels upon the ears of those two youthful life-pilgrims, and Alice started up and would have left the room without speaking, but Albion started to his elbow and detained her.

"One moment," he said.

She stopped and looked into his face. She did not falter now, but she seemed to dwell anxiously upon the yet unspoken words.

"Pardon me," he said, taking her hand, and gazing fondly into her sweet face, "pardon me, for I am almost wild now. You know little of the heart you have touched with your heavenly wand. We shall meet again. You shall study my soul, and know its every thought and feeling. You shall know me better. One word—speak to me one word: Is your heart all your own? When I came beneath this roof did your soul give home to an image more fondly than your mother's? Speak—fear not."

"No, no," the maiden murmured, dropping her eyes to the floor.

"Then I shall come again."

Ah, Alice Woodley, the wand of the mystic magician of Eros has touched thy heart, and the transformation shall abide while life is thine. No power of earth can undo the work thy soul has accomplished now.

CHAPTER V.

A DISCUSSION, AND A MYSTERY.

THOMAS BRENTFORD started and turned a shade pale when he saw the tears upon Albion's cheeks.

"What is it, Al.?" he asked, starting to the bed and seizing his friend's hand. "You've been weeping. Is it pain?"

"No, no, Tom," returned the youth, raising himself to his elbow. "It is only the thoughts that have been floating through my mind. I tell you I came pretty near my end."

"So you did, Al., so you did. But I wouldn't think of it any more. Come—here are your fresh clothes. I'll help you."

Young Tiverton arose, and after he had taken a few steps upon the floor, he was considerably surprised to find his limbs in perfect working order. He felt strong and well, and nothing save a natural stiffness seemed to be the result of the calamity of the day before.

"Ah," said Tom, as his eyes rested upon the wine which still remained upon the table, "so you've had a visitor?"

"Yes. My lips were fairly parched up, and I rang for drink."

"And who brought it?"

"Alice Woodley, I think she said her name was."

"And it's to her you owe your life—did you know it?"

"I was led to judge so, from some words

which I coaxed from her," replied Albion, while he bent over to draw on his socks.

"Well, so it is, and when we are in the carriage I'll tell you all about it."

Ere long our hero was ready to set out. He had washed and arranged his hair, and in some respects he looked like a new man. Tom called for some one to come and see them off, and soon afterwards Alice came down. All traces of tears were gone from her cheeks, but there was a strange light in her eyes which a close observer might have detected.

"Ah, Miss Woodley," said Brentford, with stiff formality, "you shall be paid for the noble work you have done."

"In Heaven's name, Tom, talk not of pay for such a deed as that," uttered Albion, whispering softly and quickly in his friend's ear.

But Tom took no notice.

"You shall be suitably rewarded," he continued, turning again to Alice, "for your conduct deserves it. We must go now, but you shall not be forgotten."

The young man listened till he heard the maiden murmur some simple answer, and then he passed on, and as soon as his back was turned, Albion caught Alice by the hand and pressed it to his lips.

"God bless you ever," he whispered. "You

have saved my life—it is yours if you will. Adieu till we meet again."

Then the youth turned and followed his friend, but before he went he saw Alice smile a sweet, heavenly smile, and in his soul he knew that she was happy. There was something in the light of the smile that dwelt upon her beautiful features which the appreciating heart could not mistake. It was not the faint smile of a melancholy heart, nor was it the ephemeral smile that comes from fleeting pleasure, but it was the quiet, lovely smile that makes record of a joy deep down in the heart, where the soul-treasures are stored away for the use of a life-time.

Ere long the two friends were seated in the carriage, and the driver had orders to hurry home as fast as possible.

"Upon my soul, Al.," said Tom, shortly after they had started on their way, "you didn't seem to be very thankful to Miss Woodley for the good turn she did you."

"Eh—how so, Tom?"

"Why you hardly so much as thanked her. And then you even would stop my thanks."

"Ah, *mon ami*, you don't understand my feelings half so well as I understand them myself," returned Albion, with an assumed laugh. "I could thank a person for saving my dog, or gun, or purse; but it is hard to thank one for saving life, even, too, at mortal risk."

"Well, well, I suppose you feel differently from what I do, though I can't tell how I might feel if I was placed in such a situation."

After this the conversation lagged for a few moments, and then Tom resumed:

"Now, Al.," said he, "I will tell you all about this affair." And thereupon he went on and related the circumstances just about as Alice had related them, save that he did not speak of her soul-struggles while she had held the drowning man by the hair, for he knew nothing of them. Albion listened most attentively to the recital, and when it was concluded, he expressed himself very much astonished at the intrepidity of the heroic girl, and he managed to descant somewhat upon the nobleness of her soul, without betraying the deeper emotions of his heart.

"It's a pity," said young Brentford, after Albion had spoken, "that we couldn't have some such girls as that in our own sphere of society. I declare I am sick and tired of female society. It is nothing but silly, twaddling, scandal-mongering, meaningless talk from morning till night. Bah! I'm tired of it."

"Don't be an anchorite, Tom. Now you don't know one half the female world, for even in the upper circles of life there is much real female worth and intelligence. And then among the humbler classes how much of real mental wealth there is."

"I know it, but then we can't associate with such classes, you know, and so we lose it."

"Can't associate with them?" repeated Albion, elevating his eyebrows. "And why not?"

"Why not?" repeated Tom, also elevating his eyebrows. "Why, what a question. How can we associate with those below us?"

"I would not associate with those who were really below me."

"Ah, so I thought."

"But," added Albion, "I should be my own judge of what sort of characteristics made the gradations of the social scale. Now what think you of Alice Woodley?"

"A noble girl, truly," replied Tom; "but not one with whom you or I could associate with propriety. My dogs are noble animals, and they would risk their own lives to save mine or yours, at any time; yet you know their social position. Only we must be more guarded in our deportment toward the human species."

This was spoken with a deal of sober earnestness, and Albion seemed for a few moments to be lost in blank surprise; but he could analyze his friend's character, and after a while his surprise wore off. He knew that Tom was haughty, and proud of noble station; but he knew also that deep down in his bosom there was a mine of real humanity which was to be reached at times. Only that humanity was lumbered upon, and cumbered by the worldly notions which had been stowed away a-top of it.

"Tom," said Albion, "I want to ask you one serious question. You know that England is famous for her wealth of mind and science."

"Certainly."

"Now will you tell me where that wealth all comes from?"

Tom thought a few moments, and at length he said, but with evident hesitation:

"It comes from the English people."

"So it does," returned Albion. "And let me tell you that the son of the humble wool-dealer shall outlive the mightiest monarch England ever saw. Shakespeare shall be remembered when Elizabeth Tudor is forgotten. But tell me again. In our upper circles there are many

noble minds—many brilliant, educated, virtuous women. Where did they come from?"

Thomas Brentford did not answer.

"Let me tell you," continued Albion. "They came from the PEOPLE. Wherever you find a noble house that has for generations maintained its so-called purity of blood, by circumscribed marriages, you shall find sons demented and daughters half-foolish and simple. But where you find a noble stock of mind and soul, you may know that a wife and a mother has been taken from the PEOPLE. I speak now what I know."

For some moments Tom was silent, but at length, he said:

"I shall not deny what you have advanced, but it weighs not with me. God has placed me in a particular station of life, and I shall maintain it."

"Stop, stop, Tom. Don't say that God placed you in your social position. 'He hath made of one blood all nations of the earth.' He made you but a helpless infant. Circumstances have done the rest."

"Well, well, Al., you may have your way—only let me advise you on one subject. If such are your real sentiments—which I do not believe—then don't see Alice Woodley again, for I am free to confess she is the most perfect female I ever saw. 'Tis a pity she is not of higher birth."

Albion gazed a moment into his companion's face, and then, while a deeper meaning flitted across his handsome features, he said:

"Tom, will you pardon me if I ask you one simple question?"

"Anything you please."

"I have heard your mother was a most noble woman. Now who was she before your father made her his wife?"

"The daughter of General Lascelle."

"When she was born General Lascelle was a common foot soldier. Is it not so?"

"You are right, Al.; but her father nobly earned his title, and its honor descended to his daughter. She was a noble woman, Albion, and when she died I lost one of the best mothers that ever drew breath."

"I know it, Tom,—that is if I can believe my own parents, for they knew her well. But now I have one more question. Did General Lascelle ever do anything more ennobling than Alice Woodley did yesterday?"

"That is a question, *mon ami*, that I cannot directly answer. You know we must be governed more or less by the circumstances that

surround us, and, in our estimate of men and things we must take rules as we find them. Iron is a most valuable metal, and the world could not do without it. In fact, gold could better be spared, and as far as the real, moral worth of the two is concerned, iron has the preference. Yet society has ordained that gold shall pass for a certain value, and both you and I recognize it. You would not give your coffers up as depositories of iron, from the very fact that society has fixed its place in the social scale; and it takes rank among the rough things of earth, to be valued, certainly, but not to be cherished as we cherish the more useless article of gold. So it is in a great measure with humanity. We could ill afford to lose the hard-fisted humble yeomanry and artisans, for they are absolutely necessary to our very sustenance, but society has fixed their social position, and neither you nor I can alter it."

Albion smiled at the argument of his friend, and in a good-humored tone, he said:

"We won't argue any more, but I will only say I am perfectly willing to recognize the right of society to fix the social scale, as I am to recognize the right of government to fix the value of gold; but when we come down to the sterner realities of life, we are often forced to be governed by absolute necessity as well as by our own judgment. I might like the looks of a case of golden knives, but for my own use I should prefer one of tempered iron—and that same rule I would apply socially. But," continued Albion, changing the tone of his voice to one of sudden interest, "we will say no more on this point at present. Another thing has entered my mind, and it has come to me most strangely since I took my seat in the carriage. It must be that I have seen Alice Woodley before. I know I have. Now can you tell me where?"

Brentford looked up with a shade of surprise upon his features.

"I am sure," he replied, "I cannot tell."

"But I know I have," resumed Albion, with a shake of the head. "I did not think of it while I saw her, but I see it now. Can't you think?"

"No."

"How long has she lived here?"

"Let me see. It is nearly five years, I think, since she came and bought the cottage."

"Do you know where she came from?"

"She has told some of our folks that she

came from Northumberland. I never asked her, for I have never seen her but a few times."

"Well, I am sure her countenance is familiar—Alice's, I mean."

Thomas Brentford gazed into the face of his friend, and a smile dwelt upon his features; but gradually that smile faded away, and, while a change came over his countenance, he said:

"Upon my soul, Al., the same idea now opens upon me. I never thought of it before, though

I have met the girl often. She brings fish up to the hall once or twice a week regularly. But I can't think what it means."

"Can't you study up anything?"

"Not a thing. But, after all, it may only be a flight of fancy."

"No, no," said Albion, who had become strangely impressed with the new idea.

But before he could make any further remark the carriage stopped at the door of Linden Hall.

CHAPTER VI.

A STARTLING MEETING.

SIR William's gout troubled him much, but it did not prevent him from rising to his feet to embrace his young guest; and the tears that stood in his eyes told how full of real gratitude his heart was. And then, Belinda Warner—she, too, was joyed to see the youth safe back again, and she even went so far as to wipe her eyes after she had shaken hands with him.

"O," she murmured, with a melancholy look, "you don't know how frightened I was. My poor nerves received such a shock—O!"

"Be comforted, Miss Warner," returned Albion, with as much gratitude as he could call up, "for you see I am safe back again. But I am sorry I gave occasion for uneasiness on your part. However, you may rest assured that I sha'n't repeat the experiment if I can help it."

"It was very kind of the poor fisher-girl to assist you," said Belinda, "and I shall make it in my way to thank her personally, for I can feel gratitude, sir—gratitude even to such as she is. I shall personally thank her, for I think she deserves it. I was not allowed the happiness of being the instrument of your salvation. I wish that office had been mine." And Miss Belinda laid her hand upon her heart and looked most touchingly upon the young officer.

Albion thanked her, and then he sat down by

Sir William's great chair to tell the old baronet all about the catastrophe and how he felt, and what he thought, while he was undergoing the operation of drowning.

In a few days young Tiverton was as nimble and well as ever, and he had the satisfaction of seeing the boat he had left upon the Imp's Rocks got off, and made good as new, with but little trouble and expense. And once more he and Tom went in for fun and enjoyment.

One day, while his son and Albion were off hunting, Sir William determined to ride over and see the Widow Woodley. He had not been to her cot since she moved into it, and he had only seen her at a distance. For nearly five years the widow had paid him a rent of six pounds a year for the cot, but since the event of the rescue of Albion he had resolved to let her have the little place free for the rest of her days.

The old baronet felt very lonesome in his great hall, and he felt very lonesome in his library, for Belinda had a touch of the sulks, and she kept her own room. The gouty feet were more easy now, and he resolved to venture out; so he ordered his carriage, and having taken his seat in it, he ordered his coachman to drive around to the little cot on the opposite side of the bay.

In due time the old baronet was set down at the door of the humble dwelling, and for some

moments he stopped upon the gravelled walk to admire the quiet beauty of the spot. He could walk now with only the assistance of his cane, and having ordered the coachman to wait for him, he slowly limped up to the door, where he was met by Alice. She extended her hand to assist him in, and she did it, too, with a grace and native freedom that might have become the most experienced courtier. The old baronet smiled upon her as he took her hand, and after he had entered the sitting-room, the maiden rolled up a softly-cushioned, wide arm-chair, and then took the visitor's hat and cane.

Sir William gazed about upon the neatness that everywhere met his view, and then he turned his eyes upon the fair girl who yet remained standing near him.

"Would you like a drop of wine, Sir William?" she asked.

"Yes, Alice, yes." And while the maiden went to bring the wine the old man watched her with an earnest, admiring gaze.

The wine was brought, and the baronet praised its quality.

"Now take a seat," he said, after Alice had placed the wine upon a table. "Here—come and sit close by my side."

So Alice sat down by the old man's side, and then he placed his hand upon her arm.

"My sweet child," he said, "do you know what a noble, generous soul you are?"

"Ah, Sir William, do not flatter me," tremblingly uttered the girl, blushing and hanging down her head for a moment, but immediately afterwards looking up into his face.

"I would not flatter, noble one. I would not flatter, for you richly deserve all I say. But where is your mother?"

"She has only gone up to the road to meet the stagecoach, for she expects a letter from Newcastle."

"Then she will be back soon, for the coach has passed."

"So I thought."

Then Sir William gazed into Alice's face again, and a shade of sadness passed over his aged features. Ere long the widow returned. She was a tall, finely-built woman, somewhat bent with age, and bearing still upon her face traces of much beauty. Her hair was white as snow, and her eyes were still bright, and of a rich hazel color. She started back and trembled when she saw the baronet, but with an effort

she overcame the emotion, and then advanced and stood before her guest.

"This is my mother, sir," Alice said.

The old man arose to his feet and bowed, and in a few words the widow bade him welcome to her humble abode.

"Madam," said Sir William, after the widow had taken a seat, "I have called over to-day for the purpose of expressing some slight token of my esteem and of my gratitude for the favor we have all received at the hands of your fair child. It is my wish that you shall consider this place as your own for the remainder of your sojourn here on earth. To be sure it is but a mite from my store of wealth, but it will be a home for you. If you would prefer you may have a home at the hall."

"At the hall?" uttered the widow, starting. "No, no, Sir William, I would not live there; but most joyfully will I accept your other proposition. Of course I can remain but a short time longer on earth, but my purse is scant, and it feels slight drafts much. I accept your generous offer, and bless you too."

There were tears in the woman's eyes as she spoke, and her voice trembled considerably. The baronet gazed hard upon her, as though he had just detected something that fastened his attention. He still gazed, and slowly he bent forward. The widow trembled more violently, and her eyes fell to the floor. Soon she summoned back her composure, and turning to her daughter, she said:

"Go, Alice, and try your luck at the river. The air is cool now, and you will find it agreeable."

Accordingly the maiden arose and left the room, and ere long she set off with her basket and line. She had not noticed the strange manner in which her mother spoke, or if she had, she thought 'twas only the presence of a new guest that moved her.

"Woman," said Sir William, after Alice had gone, "who are you?" He spoke in a whisper, and his right hand was half advanced in a nervous attitude.

"My name is Elizabeth Woodley, sir, and I am a poor widow, thrown upon the love and care of my child, and upon your bounty for support."

Again the baronet looked into the woman's face, and the longer he looked the more moved he became. And she, too, trembled with a fearful shudder, though she tried with all her might to maintain her composure.

"You are more than that," uttered Sir William, with increased earnestness. "You have been something more. What is it? Tell me of years gone by."

"I have nothing to tell of the past," she answered, with a mournful shake of the head.

"But you must—you shall!" cried the old man, starting to his feet. "I have seen that face before. Where was it?"

"Sir William Brentford," returned the woman, now more composed, but yet speaking under intense excitement, "I can tell you nothing. If you cherish for us—for my child and myself—the least gratitude, I pray you to show it by letting this matter pass. Ask me no more."

The old man sank back into his chair, but his eyes still rested upon the old lady's face.

"No, no," he uttered, vehemently, "I cannot give it up. Tell me what I ask, for your very manner betrays you. By Saint Paul, I have seen that face before, and it starts a strange turmoil in my soul. What is it? Tell me."

The widow bowed her head, and for some moments she remained thus. The baronet was sure he saw a tear trickle down through her fingers, and he would have started forward, but as he was upon the point of moving, the woman raised her head and gazed upon him. There was a look of sadness upon her features, and her eyes were dim and moist.

"William Brentford," she said, "listen to me, and then show me whether you be a man or not. You force me to speak, and I will speak to your own sense of honor. Years ago I was struck down with a blow that broke my heart, and the mantle of shame fell upon me. But I have arisen. My soul is pure, but the world knows nothing of it. Alone I would live, and the past I would bury in oblivion. I have come to this lone, seaside cot to die. Let me die in peace, I adjure you!"

Sir William started from his seat once more, and he would have sprung forward, but the woman waved him back.

"William Brentford," she said, "you have heard all that I can speak. I am nothing to you—nothing at all. The hour that saw my friends has long, long since passed. Now show to me that you are a man."

The baronet uttered a low groan and sank down into his chair. He covered his face with his hands, and then he looked up again, and again he spoke:

"Woman—I am a man, and I have a man's

feelings—and I have a man's forgetfulness, too. Who are you—for the love of heaven, tell me."

The woman returned the man's gaze, and for the instant her eyes flashed; but quickly that sad light came back to them, and while she pointed her finger towards him, she uttered:

"Go ask the man, who in the moment of passion killed his best friend, to tell you of the deed after long years have healed partly the wound. Go ask the mother to tell you of her son's shame, or the wife to confess a husband's guilty crimes; and when you have their answers, then come to me. I can speak no more."

"Why have I never seen you before?" murmured the baronet, half to himself, but with his eyes still upon the widow's face.

"Because you have never sought me."

Sir William started up.

"I will do as you request," he said; "but I may see you again. You will not leave this place?"

"Only for the next world."

The baronet turned to the table and took his cane and hat, and then he looked back upon the widow. He moved on to the door, and then he stopped and looked back again. But he did not speak, though his lips moved. He reached his carriage, and the coachman helped him in, and in a moment more he was on his way home.

Some hours later a servant went up to call Sir William down to dinner. He was in his library, with his head resting upon the edge of the table, and it was not until he had been called the third time that he looked up. His face was then very pale, and his lips trembled.

"I will have my dinner brought here. I am not well," he said.

The servant went down and gave the order, and when Thomas heard it, he went up to find out what was the matter.

"What is it, father?" he asked, as he stood by his father's side.

"O, nothing, nothing, Tom. Only a kind of faintness—that's all."

"But you are very pale, father."

"Am I?"

"You are, most surely."

"It will soon pass away. I shall be down to supper. Do not be alarmed."

"But will you not have the doctor?"

"No, no, I am not sick, Tom—only I have over-exercised—that's all. Now go and get your dinner." Thomas went down to the dining-hall, and the old baronet was left alone.

CHAPTER VII.

THE FATHER'S PLAN PROGRESSING WONDERFULLY.

WHEN Alice Woodley returned to her home she found her mother upon the bed weeping. She quickly dropped her fish and bent over her, but as soon as the widow found her child present she started up and brushed the tears from her cheeks.

"What is it, mother?" tenderly inquired the maiden, throwing her arms about her parent's neck.

"Nothing, my child only I have had a scene recalled to my mind that has made me sad—that's all. I have been thinking of scenes far back of your memory. But I am well now. Let us have dinner."

Alice had seen her mother thus too often to be much surprised, and without asking any questions, for she knew that such questions always gave her pain, she set about preparing dinner.

After the meal was finished, and the things all cleared away, Alice went out to the small shed and cleaned her fish, and having got this task from her hands she strayed away to her garden to train up her vines and flowers. She was engaged in this occupation when she heard a footfall behind her, and on looking around she saw Albion Tiverton. The color fled from her cheeks, and her limbs trembled with a thrilling emotion.

"I told thee I should come," said the youth,

as he advanced and extended his hand. He saw how pale she looked, and he quickly added:

"I hope my coming gives no offence?"

"No," murmured Alice, at the same time laying her hand into the palm that had been extended towards her.

"I have recovered now," resumed Albion, "and I have come to converse with you. I saw a seat back here a few paces—a seat beneath a cluster of vines. Will you not walk thither with me?"

The maiden did not answer in words, but she turned towards the spot which Albion had mentioned, and accompanied him thither. When they reached it the youth sat down, and then drew the fair girl down by his side. He could see that she trembled violently, and he was well aware that he, too, trembled considerably. It was some moments before he could speak, and when he did at length find words his voice was very low and tremulous:

"Miss Woodley," he said, "I have not come to thank you for the service you have rendered, but I have rather come for addition to my already overrunning cause of gratitude. Unless I have entirely misjudged your character you would have me speak plainly and freely. Is it not so?"

"Most certainly," returned Alice, at the same

time folding her hands upon her lap. "I would always know the truth if I know anything, and where the truth may be spoken at all, it may be spoken freely."

"You are right, lady. You speak as I would speak. And yet I trust that my object is not wholly unknown to you. I trust you have reason to know something of my mind already. But I shall speak on." Albion looked tenderly into his companion's face as he spoke, and his voice was now firm and clear.

"I was born and reared in the lap of luxury, as you probably know," he continued, "and from infancy up to the present moment all that I could ask has been mine. At an early age my father placed me in the royal navy at my own urgent request, and there I have seen much of life in all its forms and phases. I have studied character much, and I have seen many springs of action that are concealed in the bosom of society on shore. I have been wild—perhaps very wild; at least, so the admiralty informed my father; but I have never been chastised, and but twice reprimanded. But enough of that. I am growing to be a man, and boyish things I mean to lay off. If I live I wish to be an honored and respected man—not for the title I may wear, or the estates that may fall to my ownership—but for the man I can make myself. Do you understand?"

"Yes," murmured Alice, earnestly, for she was deeply moved by the tones that sounded in her ears; and her heart, too, answered back the sentiments she heard.

"Then I must live as other honored men live," resumed Albion, "and for a life-companion I must find one in whom I can trust when the hour of need shall come. I have seen many females, and I know there are many who would take my hand on the instant, but they are not such as I could love. My soul turns from them with loathing, and in my heart they could never find an abiding-place. Alice, fate threw you in my path—I saw you once when you knew it not, and in the day time, even, I dreamed of you. I saw you again, and you had snatched me from the grave and given me back my life. I gazed into your face, and I heard your sweet words, and your image was fixed upon my heart forever. Nay, turn not from me, but listen: I saw you then only to love you—to love you as only a true, noble heart can love. To love your honor, your virtue, and yourself. So have I spoken plainly."

Alice Woodley bowed her head, and she trembled more than before. She did not withdraw the hand that Albion had taken, but when he would have drawn her upon his bosom she started back.

"No, no," she faintly uttered. "It is not for you and me to mate together. You do not mean it?"

"Not mean it? I mean this, my brightest, sweetest star of life: If you will be mine—if you will become my wife—you shall be all that I can be. My every thought shall be for your peace and joy. That is what I mean."

"Ah, you forget the barrier that separates us."

"But I will trample the barrier down. I know of no law above that which God has planted in every virtuous heart."

"You forget your father."

"My father?"

"Yes. The proud earl."

Albion's face grew pale, but it was for the moment. Then pressing the small hand he held more warmly, he said:

"I do not think my father would make me miserable. But I shall soon be of age—soon be where I am my own man—and then I will make you my wife."

"But even then your father can command. He can disinherit you."

"Not of my manhood," proudly exclaimed the youth. "Not of my manhood. He may strip me of my property. No, he cannot even do that, for I have no property now, save the pay I get from government. But pass that."

"Not so, sir," said Alice, now speaking calmly, but earnestly. "I could never stand between yourself and a father's will. You may now think that you could give up property, and all, but the hour may come when your feelings would be different—the hour when adversity lowers darkly about your path—and then you may suffer for the need of the patrimony I should deprive you of. Stop—I know what you would say—but listen to me yet one word more: I know that your love might sustain you, and that to the wife you had chosen you would never utter one word of your trouble; but ah! if that wife had the soul she should have to mate with such as you, she would suffer in knowing what your love would keep you from telling. Be calm, now, and you will acknowledge the truth of what I say."

Albion Tiverton gazed fixedly into the maiden's face, and for a few moments he forgot the

words she had spoken, for he had found a new development in her character. He could not but acknowledge to himself the soundness of her judgment, and he saw that she was calm and candid. And there was one other thing he saw, too. He saw that she did not reject his love, but that she rather leaned towards his heart.

"Alice," he said at length, still holding her hand, "I shall not deny one word of what you have said. But you shall yet answer me one question. Do you return my love?"

The maiden bowed her head, but did not speak. She trembled again, but she did not withdraw her hand.

"Answer me," the youth said, in low, thrilling tones. "Do you love me?"

Alice looked up, and in a moment more she rested her head upon her companion's bosom, and burst into tears.

"Dear Alice," cried Albion, raising her head, and gazing into her face. "My own, dear life, I have not offended?"

"No, no," she whispered, again hiding her face in his bosom.

"Then what is it? O, you do love me. I know it."

For some moments the girl reposed there upon the bosom of the man she had saved, and when she at length looked up again, her tears had ceased flowing, and there was a strange light in her dark, blue eyes.

"Albion," she said, softly and sweetly, like an angel whispering in the zephyr, "you have spoken plainly, truly, and I can but do the same. I cannot speak falsely, though I would have chosen not to speak at all. I risked my life—my poor life, to save yours, and when your eyes first beamed upon me in gratitude, my heart was touched with a feeling that went strangely to my soul. That whisper which I heard in the wind—'His life is thine,'—has ever since dwelt in my ears, and sounded through my every thought. It is no will of mine—no framing of my mind or thoughts with passion or desire—but the shaft came—it struck my heart—and when I awoke from the spell I knew that I loved. Pardon me."

"Pardon you! O, and you love me?"

"Yes, with every idea of my soul; and hence I would not make you miserable. Were I capable of loving less, I might throw myself upon you at once; but I will not. At some other time—when this first transport has passed away, and the great sea of thought and feeling is calm, then may we speak again."

"And yet one question more," cried the enraptured youth, as he strained the lovely being to his bosom: "If my father's consent were already ours, what would be your answer?"

"Read it in my heart which is all—all your own. Read it in my love which would—But you have seen what I can do for one whose face I never saw—for you I would—"

She stopped and pillowed her face once more in her lover's bosom, and again she burst into tears. Her tender heart was overwhelmed by the strange flood that had set in upon her soul, and she only felt that her all of earth had flown to the love which had so suddenly found its abiding-place in her bosom.

"Dearest one, I would ask no more," said, Albion, as he raised her face and imprinted a kiss upon her sweet lips. "I know all now. Let all further pledges rest until I know my father's will. Only you must bear in mind one thing: If he should most peremptorily refuse my request I should simply have one of two things to choose for life. I should either choose a pile of paltry gold—a heap of worldly wealth, which could feast my eyes, and minister to my passions and appetites, or I should choose that greater wealth—that soul of souls, which should be a very heaven to me on earth. Do you think which I should choose?"

Alice looked up into her lover's face, but she made no reply. There was a waking smile upon her lips, and about her eyes, as though she hoped which choice he would make.

"You know which would be my choice," he continued; "and in either case your position would be one of self-denial—if so you felt. You say you could not be happy to be my wife, and know that you were the means of keeping from me the money and estates which would otherwise fall to my lot. But look upon the other side of the picture. How will you feel to know that I am rendered miserable for life from having lost that which you alone can give? You will see me surrounded by a wealth which you would not take from me, and then you will look into my heart and see all cold and blank there. And more still—you will see the thousand butterflies of fashion, with their designing mothers urging them on, laying siege to the heart you have once conquered. Do you understand?"

"O, say no more," uttered the maiden, trembling violently. "Say no more now."

"I will not; but you must think of this."

"I will."

Shortly afterwards the lovers arose and moved slowly towards the cot. They were now calm, and they spoke at length of their love as though it were a thing of years. At the door of the humble dwelling they separated—but a vow had been made, and their loves were pledged. Alice watched the noble form of her lover until it was lost amid the distant shrubbery, and then turned into the cot. Her mother sat there, and she looked steadily into the face of her child. The maiden's face was all covered with a rich, joyous glow, and the parent noticed it.

"My child," she said, calmly and slowly, but yet with deep meaning, "the young lord of Winchester has been here."

Alice started at the sound of that title, but she quickly recovered herself, and gave her mother an affirmative answer. The old lady gazed calmly into the fair girl's face for some moments, and then she said:

"I saw him sitting with you. Did he thank you for the service you had rendered him?"

"No, mother," cried Alice, starting quickly to her mother's side and throwing her arms about her neck. "He has told me that he loved me, and that he would make me his wife."

The woman placed her hand upon her child's shoulder and held her off at arm's length.

"Why do you look at me so?" Alice tremblingly asked, for her mother was staring strangely at her.

"Albion Tiverton love such as you?" the mother uttered.

"Ay, I know he does."

"And when would he have you become his wife?"

"He would not make me promise. He would wait until he was free, and then he would ask me for my hand. He would not speak of it again, unless his father would consent, until that time."

"Ah," said the widow, while her features relaxed. "And what was your answer?"

"Plainly, that I could never, never be his wife without his father's consent. And Albion did not urge it. O, I do love him, mother, for he is a noble, generous man."

The parent folded her child to her bosom, and while the tears ran down her furrowed cheeks she said:

"You were right, Alice, you were right. I think he is an honorable youth. But—"

She hesitated a moment, and then she drew her child closer to her bosom and whispered words of counsel in her ear. They were deep, true lessons, and Alice little dreamed that every word she heard was the offspring of long remembered experience. But they did not make her unhappy—only they made her more than usually thoughtful.

CHAPTER VIII.

PROGRESS.

WHENEVER Albion could get the opportunity he strayed away to the little cot by the seashore, and he had so won upon the widow's affections that she even loved him as a child. There was something in his every word and movement that spoke of true moral worth, and even those lighter traits of character—those which had made him wild—now that they were softened and subdued by the sweet society he had found, only showed his bold and fearless soul, and they spoke, too, of a heart that knew no guile.

Yet Mrs. Woodley had seasons of pain and apprehension. She knew the proud standing of the earl, and she feared that the blow might come which should crush her child's heart. She had spoken of it once to Albion, but he only laughed at the thought. He told her that his mind was fully made up, and that he would not be swerved from the purpose upon which hung the whole of his future happiness in life. And so matters went on at the cot.

At Linden Hall Albion was cheerful and gay, except when in the presence of Belinda. She seemed to operate as a check upon his spirits, and when she was present he was taciturn and demure. This worked hard upon the aspiring maiden, and she had about given up all hopes of conquering the youth's heart, though she still believed that she should be his wife, for she be-

lieved his father would force him to marry her. Tom mistrusted that his friend visited at the little cot, and though he was somewhat surprised, yet his sense of honor prevented him from broaching the subject. He knew that Albion was all honor and manhood, and that if he associated with Alice Woodley, it would be for just and honorable purposes. And then Tom could not but acknowledge to himself that Albion had every inducement to love the beautiful fisher girl. He himself had been drawn towards her as he had never been drawn towards any other girl, and in his soul he felt that she was worthy of the highest, noblest love.

Sir William was often gay and joyous, and the gout had nearly left his feet. The young midshipman had been playing the doctor, and with all the dignity and severity of an ancient Esculapius he had made the baronet follow his prescriptions. First—he allowed Sir William to drink only one bottle of wine in two days. Second—he made him rise early and eat dry toast for breakfast. Third—he made him eat only a given quantity for dinner, and fourthly—he tickled the old man at least a dozen times a day till he made him fairly dance. At first Sir William took it very hard, but gradually, as his gout began to disappear, his respect for the doctor and his prescriptions increased, and now his

gout was almost all gone, and Albion had found a place within the very depths of his heart. In short there never was such another youth as Al. Tiverton, and the old man often wished that Tom was more like him. But then he had no cause of complaint in his son, for he knew that Thomas was an honorable, high minded man. But he loved Albion's society for the real joy he found in it.

All this appeared when Sir William was in the presence of others, but there were times, when he was alone in his chamber, or in his library, that he was sad and melancholy. The first time he walked out any distance, after his gout began to leave him, he strayed away towards that little cot by the seashore. He passed through the little back gate that led to the garden, and when he found a seat he rested upon it. It was the same seat upon which Albion and Alice had sat when they first confessed their love. He sat there, and he gazed off towards the cot. He could see the windows peeping out through the flower-laden trellices, and he saw a female form sitting at one of them. It was she with the snow white hair and furrowed brow. Sir William gazed upon her for some moments, and then he bowed his head upon the top of his staff. He had remained thus some time—longer, perhaps, than he was aware of, for his mind was wandering off to the dim and distant years that had long passed away, but which were recordless now to him of what he sought. He had sat thus some time, when he was aroused by approaching footsteps. He started up, and he stood face to face with Albion Tiverton. But the youth was not alone, Alice Woodley leaned upon his arm.

For a few moments both parties were dumb. Alice would have fled back to the cot, but her lover held her fast, and her effort to escape served to bring him to his senses, and in a moment he resolved to hide not a thing of all he knew from the kind-hearted old baronet.

"No, no," he uttered, turning to Alice. "You need not flee. I am not afraid that Sir William should know the truth. Before God and man I am not ashamed to own my love for thee."

O, how proud—how happy, was Alice Woodley at that moment. Those simple words, spoken so boldly in the presence of the baronet, told more than all else she had heard how true was the love she possessed in the young man's heart. She thought no more of fleeing. She only clung more closely to her companion's arm, and awaited for the old man's speech. But Albion spoke first.

"Sir William," he said, "you now know my secret. Have you fault to find, or can you blame me?"

"No, my noble boy—no," fervently uttered the baronet. And as he spoke he gazed fixedly into the maiden's face.

"You shall know this noble being better," continued the youth, advancing a pace. "O, you do not even dream yet of how good, how—"

"—sh," whispered Alice, blushing and trembling. "Say no more if you would please me."

So Albion stopped, and then, for the first time, he wondered what the baronet was doing there, and why he had come. And all this time Sir William was still gazing into the fair girl's face. He was evidently moved by some strong emotion, and his countenance was worked upon strangely.

"You have walked far?" said Albion.

"Yes, yes," uttered the baronet, starting up, and seeming to arouse from the reverie into which he had fallen. "Yes, I have. But we will return now. I came here just for a walk, and I had no idea of finding you here."

"Will you not walk into the house and take some refreshment?" asked Alice.

The baronet hesitated a moment, but at length he complied.

"Come in and rest a few moments," said Albion, "and then I will return with you."

So they adjourned to the house. The widow met them with dignity, and to Sir William she bowed with modest composure. But a keen observer might have detected a twitching about the corners of her lips, as though she were using much force to maintain this outward composure. Sir William caught her eye, and she shook her head with a warning motion. He knew her meaning, and he governed himself accordingly. After a few moments of trial he succeeded in placing his emotions under check, and in a short time the conversation became free and unrestrained, though upon no topic of interest or importance. In fact, the very position of all parties precluded the possibility of important topics, for each one had a subject near the heart not to be spoken then, and the conversation seemed only broached for the purpose of hiding real thoughts and feelings.

Ere long the baronet arose and signified his intention of moving towards home, and of course Albion arose to follow. The youth had intended to remain longer, but he could not do it now with propriety. So he bade Alice an affection-

ate adieu, and then followed Sir William from the house.

For some distance the two walked on in silence, both seeming sufficiently engaged with thoughts of their own. Albion was the first to speak.

"Sir William," he said, "I wish to ask you a question. Since I first became acquainted with Alice Woodley, there has an impression become fixed upon my mind that I have seen her before; but where, or when, I cannot tell. Have you any idea of what such an impression can spring from?"

The baronet stopped in his walk and looked into Albion's face. Twice his lips moved before he spoke.

"My young friend," he said, starting on again, and speaking in a sort of hushed voice, "I have had the same thoughts, and with about the same result. I know that woman, but I cannot call to mind who or what she is."

"Do you mean Alice?"

"No, her mother."

"Have you asked her?"

"Once I asked her, but—"

The old man hesitated, and looked down upon the ground, and in a moment more he added:

"But it can matter not to you now. I hope to find out the thing I have lost, and if I do you shall know."

He spoke not as one who tells all he thinks, but rather as one who would shift off the subject as quickly as possible, for in truth he wished not to speak upon it at all. In his mind there was a chaotic mass of ideas, and they were wildly mingled and confused; and then there were some thoughts he did not dare to breathe even to himself.

Albion was too much taken up with the struggles of his own mind to notice fully the manner of his companion, and so the subject was dropped without his having suspected the deep, soul-heaving interest that worked in the old man's soul.

After a while Sir William succeeded in entirely throwing off all traces of his late perturbation, and looking into the face of the youth with a smile, he said:

"Ah, Albion, I fear you are putting your foot on dangerous ground."

"How so?" asked our hero, starting, and looking up.

"Do you imagine your father will ever give his consent to your marrying Alice Woodley?"

"I don't know. Perhaps he might."

"No, no, my boy, he will never do it. I know him too well."

"Then, Sir William, I can do it without his consent if I choose; but I hope no such necessity will come to pass. I do fear my father will be very angry if he knows it."

"That he will."

"But what should you advise me to do?"

"You did not seek my advice at first," said the old man, with a smile.

"No, for it was one of those things in which the human heart can ask none. God himself alone works in such seasons. He made my heart, and my heart asked not my advice, but straightway left me and flew off to the sweet home heaven itself had provided. O, I could not help it, and I would not have helped it if I could. But give me your advice now. What shall I do?"

Sir William was in a quandary. He saw the plans of Lord Tiverton blown to the wind, and he had expected it from the first, though he had not looked for such a finale. At first he thought he would reveal to Albion what had been the plan with regard to Miss Warner, but upon second thought he resolved to keep that to himself. At length he replied:

"I'll tell you what, Al., I shall not meddle with this affair at all, on either side. Only I will say this much: If your father finds out that you love the poor fisher-girl, and would make her your wife, I will intercede for you with all my power, for I do sincerely believe that on the whole earth another such girl cannot be found. She is true and noble, and when God made her he only left off the pinions from an angel."

The young man caught Sir William's hand and pressed it warmly.

"Bless you, bless you, my kind old friend. O, do intercede for me, and I will never forget it."

"I will, Al., so you need not fear on that score; but you must not place too much dependence upon my succeeding, for your father is very wilful in his way."

"I know it—I know it; but if you tell him all; how noble she is—how kind and generous, and how virtuous—and how she risked her own life to save mine—perhaps he will relent. You can tell him all this better than I can, and he will listen to you, when he might not listen to me. O, just make him feel that at this moment, that at the moment he hears you—he would have

been childless but for her. Make him feel this, and perhaps he will give his consent."

The old man promised, and when he did so he did it with the hope that he might succeed, for he had become more than usually interested in the youth's love. It even had the power to make him forget, for the season, the strange emotions that had come to move himself.

When they reached the hall the youth sought his own apartment, for he had letters to write—and Sir William repaired to his library. There was one in the hall who had watched their approach with nervous anxiety—and that was Be-

linda Warner. She had just come from the cupola at the top of the building, and beneath her robe she had a small telescope concealed. This cupola was quite an observatory, and from the top thereof even the little cot by the sea could be seen, and by the aid of the glass visitors to that place could be detected. Belinda had her suspicions aroused before, and she had been up now to strengthen them. There was a spark in her eye, and her thin lips were almost purple. The name of the poor fisher-girl was hissing upon her tongue, and a storm was raging in her soul.

CHAPTER IX.

SOMETHING ASTONISHES THE FATHER.

TIME wore on, and a month had passed away since Albion Tiverton came to dwell beneath the roof of Sir William Brentford. One bright, bracing morning there came a rumble of wheels up from the road, and shortly afterwards the carriage of Lord Tiverton rolled up to the hall. The earl got out upon the piazza, and the first to greet him was his son.

"By my faith, boy, you look as bright and hearty as a buck," was the father's first remark, as he grasped his son by the hand, and gazed proudly into his handsome, healthy features.

"And I am joyed to see you looking well and happy, my father," warmly replied the youth.

By this time Sir William had come out, and the two old men exchanged greetings the most hearty.

"But this is a most strange time to come," said the baronet, as he led the way into the hall. "You haven't been upon the road all night, eh?"

"No, no, but my stupid coach took a notion to break down last night about six miles the other side of Framlingham, so I waited to have it repaired. But you are looking wonderfully. And your gout—where is that?"

"Aha—ask Al."

"Al?"

"Yes. Your boy has proved himself the best

physician I ever had. By the mass he gave the prescription, and made me follow it, and you see he's done the work. Tiverton, you've got a treasure in that boy."

"So I have," returned the earl, while the sparkle of his eye told how proud he felt of the compliment. "But how has Albion managed? Has he behaved himself?"

"Never saw a more perfect gentleman in my life," earnestly replied the baronet. "He has just life enough in him to make all joyous about him, and in all other points he is a model—a perfect model."

But at that moment, Albion and Thomas entered the room, and the conversation became general.

"By the way," said the earl, after the usual amount of small-talk on such occasions had passed, "I stopped at Framlingham last night, and at the tavern I heard something said about somebody's being capsized in a boat, or something of that kind, and I thought Albion's name was mentioned in connection. What is it all?"

Tiverton looked at his boy as he spoke, but Thomas Brentford took upon himself the task of telling the story. So he went on and told it, and he did it justice, too. He made the thrilling points tell to such purpose that his lordship fairly started up from his chair half a dozen times

during the recital, and when it was finished—and Tom related the whole, even to Albion's arrival at the hall—he sank back and clasped his hands like one exhausted, and the pallor upon his face showed how his father's heart had been worked upon.

"God bless the noble girl!" he at length ejaculated. "But she shall be rewarded. She shall, upon my soul."

The old baronet cast his eyes furtively upon Albion, and he saw that the youth was trembling. The earl noticed the same, and he thought 'twas the memory of the nigh approach of a terrible death that made his son tremble.

But Lord Tiverton had to ask a hundred questions. In fact he asked questions until the whole affair had been repeated over and over again; and through the whole of it he betrayed a love for his son that he might never have spoken in words.

But the proud Earl of Winchester could love his son, and be iron-willed, too, in his parental rule.

Ere long Belinda came in, and her face looked tearful and sad. She received the earl's salutation with an humble meekness, and her voice was very low and tremulous.

"You are not well, my child," tenderly said the earl, as he looked anxiously into her face, upon which the traces of tears were yet to be seen.

"Yes, yes, my lord, I am well," she murmured. And as she spoke she laid her hand upon her heart and bowed her head. Then she sank into a chair and looked the very picture of woe and distress.

The baronet was for a few moments lost in surprise, for he had seen Belinda not half an hour before, and then she had appeared well enough, save that she had on a fit of ill-temper. But light soon came to his mind, and he bit his fingers with vexation. He saw plainly now what she was up to, and he could have pulled her ears with a good relish.

Lord Tiverton looked first at Belinda, and then at his son, and he saw that the latter looked peculiarly. It was in fact pure disgust that moved Albion's soul, but his father thought he only looked sulky and ill humored.

"Ah," he uttered, with a faint smile upon his features, but yet with a tone and manner of mild reprimand, "I see how it is: you two have been having some childish freak of misunderstanding. Albion, you should know better."

"Me? Know better?" uttered the youth, in blank surprise.

"Yes. You know what I mean. Have not you two been having some falling-out?"

"Us two? What do you mean?"

"Why—that you and Belinda have been having some difficulty. Ah, I understand it. I know what foolish things young people will do under such circumstances; but it is not well. You had better not try it too often, for you may go too far.—O, you need not deny it, for I can see it in your face."

"But my father—will you tell me what you mean?" stammered Albion, gazing first upon his parent, and then upon Belinda, who now sat with her face in both her hands.

"Tut, tut," uttered Sir William, "let the matter pass now. And you, Belinda, if you are not well, had better go to your room."

The old baronet spoke this last sentence with considerable severity, and the girl at once arose from her seat and turned towards the door. But she uttered a deep groan before she left, and she took good care to reveal enough of her face to exhibit the fresh tears which she had managed to draw out from her eyes.

In the course of the afternoon the earl found Sir William alone in his library.

"Now," said the former, "we can talk as we please, and I can find out how thrives my plan. Now tell me how works the love-match?"

"Do you mean the match between Al., and Belinda?"

"Most assuredly."

"Then I fear I can't give you any very explicit information. Only I will tell you one thing, Tiverton: I have reason to change my mind somewhat in regard to Belinda Warner."

"Ah," uttered the earl, elevating his eyebrows.

"Yes. Since you were here before I have examined the girl's character more—"

"Her character, Sir William?"

"Her disposition, I mean."

"Ah, that is different. But go on."

"Well, I have seen something more of her disposition, and I do not really think she would make your son a good wife—that is, not one calculated to make him happy."

"Fudge! I will risk his happiness. Only assure me that the girl's morals are good, and that she loves him, and I will answer for the rest."

"O, very well. You are at liberty to carry her off as soon as you please."

"So I mean to. But tell me, Sir William, do they often have quarrels?"

"I never knew them to."

"But they had had one this morning?"

"I think not."

"Then what was the matter with the girl?"

"I'm sure I couldn't tell; but suppose you ask her?"

"I faith, I will," returned the earl. "I will ask her, and if I find the dog has been abusing her I'll punish him. He can't back out now, for if the girl loves him it would be cruel to break her heart in that way. You know I as much as told her with my own lips that she should have him if she could learn to love him. It wont do to break her heart now."

"But your son's heart is of as much consequence as her's," suggested the baronet.

"Don't talk about his heart. I'll see the girl," he answered.

Sir William made no further remark in reply, but he had his thoughts—and he thought that Tiverton knew but very little concerning his son's heart. He knew that Albion's heart was as nobly tender as Belinda's, and that it was far more honest.

But Lord Tiverton sought Belinda without delay. He found her in tears, and he thought she wept with sadness—he did not know that she was really angry and sullen. He sat down by her side and took her hand.

"Belinda," he said, speaking very tenderly, "how have you thrived with my son?"

"Alas, my lord, do not ask me," returned the girl, with a tone and look calculated to mislead one who did not know her.

"But I wish to know," resumed the earl, gazing earnestly into her face. "Tell me if you have learned to love the boy?"

"O—learn to love him? I did love him when first I saw him, and for a while I thought

he loved me. I loved him with my whole heart and soul; but, alas! he loves me no more."

"Loves you no more? Ah, you have quarrelled—he has vexed you—you have suffered from his quick temper, and you imagine he does not love you. I see."

"No, no, my lord—it is not so. He does not love me."

"Pshaw! I tell you it is only your imagination. This will all blow over."

"But if you knew the truth, my lord."

"Ah the truth! Then you have other cause for what you say?"

"Yes. He loves another."

"Loves another!" exclaimed the earl. "Do you know this?"

"I am sure of it."

"But who can it be? Who has he seen?"

"The poor fisher girl."

"Poh! You jest, my child. What—a child of mine fall in love with a low-born beggar? Monstrous!"

"And yet it is true," said Belinda, rousing from her melancholy now that she found the earl on the right track. "He visits her regularly, and he walks out and talks with her. They sit together in her garden, and he pressed her to his bosom and kisses her."

"Impossible!"

"But I have seen it."

"Then you have followed him?"

"No. But the other day I went up into the cupola, and for my own amusement I took a telescope up with me. By accident I chanced to look towards the widow's cot, and I saw them walking through the garden, and they went into an arbor and sat down. The arbor faced this way, and I saw them rest there in each other's arms."

"I would not have thought it possible," he uttered. "But," he added, while his eyes snapped, "you have nothing to fear. I'll see how far the rascal shall go! Take heart, my child, and dry your eyes. O, the villainous rebel!"

CHAPTER X.

THE STORM WITHOUT, AND THE STORM WITHIN.

It was nearly dark when Lord Tiverton left Belinda, and passing down into the hall he commenced pacing up and down the floor with quick, nervous strides. He had not noticed how quickly it had grown dark, nor how the wind came howling about the angles of the buildings. A servant came and lighted the lamp that hung in the hall, and when he was gone the earl began to realize that a terrible storm was brewing without. Yet he gave himself up to his own reflections awhile longer.

At length great drops of rain began to patter upon the window-panes, and the dry leaves and dirt came crashing against the glass as though they would break it. Louder and louder howled the blast, and the rain came down thicker and faster. The earl went to the window and looked out, but he might as well have looked into the depths of a bolted dungeon, for all without was as black as the utter night of chaos. While he stood there by the window trying to peer out into the utter blackness, he felt a touch upon his arm, and on turning he beheld his son.

"Isn't this terrible, father?" the young man uttered, with a look of earnest interest.

But the earl made no reply. He had forgotten the storm without, for there was tumult in his own bosom. He gazed into the face of his son, and his lips were compressed, and his brow

contracted. Albion noticed the look in an instant, and with considerable anxiety, he asked:

"What is the matter, my father?"

"I'll tell you," the earl said, in short, whispered tones. "How have you conducted yourself since you have been here?"

"Conducted myself?" repeated the youth, in surprise.

"Yes, how have you conducted yourself?"

"Look ye, father," returned Albion, after a few moments of thought. "To-day you spoke to me in the presence of others in a manner which I could not understand, and then I would not ask an explanation. Now you repeat the strangeness. What does it mean? Has Belinda Warner anything to do with it?"

"She has."

"Then may I ask an explanation?"

The earl had the first words of a hasty answer upon his lips, but he kept them back, and after a few moments' reflection he said:

"I allude to your treatment of Miss Warner."

"Go on, father," calmly and firmly resumed the youth. "I wish to know the whole case."

"Do you not know it now?"

"Not at all. When I know what you mean, then I will give you such explanation as I can."

"You shall know what I mean, sir. Did you not, during the first part of your sojourn here,

give Belinda Warner reason to believe that you loved her?"

For an instant Albion was fairly paralyzed with astonishment.

"Give—Belinda Warner—reason to believe—that—I loved—her?" he at length repeated, in slow, measured accents, and dwelling distinctly upon each separate word. "My heavens, sir, what do you mean?"

"I mean just what I say," returned the earl; but he spoke more calmly, for his son's manner moved him some.

"My father, I yet can scarcely make out what you mean. But to your question I distinctly answer, no! Why, sir, from the very moment I set my eyes upon that girl I disliked her, and from the time I first passed an hour in her society I have utterly loathed and despised her."

"And suppose I were to tell you that she was to become your wife?" The earl spoke quickly, but with much meaning.

"The matter has become a serious one, and I would not jest upon it," returned Albion.

"But I am not jesting."

"Not jesting? Then what can you mean?"

"I mean that I had planned for Miss Warner to become your wife."

"Really? In earnest?"

"Most assuredly so."

"Father," said the youth, folding his hands together, and speaking with that peculiar calmness which marks the noble mind when a resolution is taken which even the presence of death could not shake, "if you mean this as a simple question, and yet mean it earnestly, I will give you an earnest answer: Before I would marry with that girl I would join the beasts of the field—get down upon my knees—strip off my outward signs of manhood, and crawl in the dust for life. Not even to save life itself would I do that thing."

"But I may command it."

"No, my father, you will not command it."

"But I am your father."

"Ay, so you are; and you have given to your son some of the nobleness of soul that belongs to your blood. You could not have given birth to the blood of a craven, or a slave?"

The earl looked into the face of his boy, and his heart was touched. There was nothing defiant in the words he had heard, but they had been spoken gently and with respect.

"Father," continued Albion, "will you an-

swer me one question? Did you ever mean that I should marry with Miss Warner?"

"I did mean it, and it was for that very thing that I left you here."

At that moment there came a flood of blinding light upon the earth, and on the next instant came a crash as though the very firmament were rent into atoms. Both the father and son started; but as soon as the thunder crash had passed, and the shock had ceased, Albion spoke:

"But you said nothing of this to me?"

"Because I feared you would naturally rebel if you knew my plan. But Miss Warner is of a noble stock, she is very wealthy, and she is virtuous and honorable. I had meant that she should be your wife."

"Father," resumed the youth, laying his hand upon his parent's arm, "I will speak now plainly. From the first moment on which I became acquainted with Miss Warner, her conduct has been such as to literally disgust me. The first and only evening I ever passed alone in her company—and then Sir William and his son were both absent, so I was obliged to do it—she was disgusting in the extreme. She showed herself ignorant and bigoted, and betrayed feelings not worthy of even a first-water popinjay. On the very next morning, I caught her in the very act of throwing a pewter vessel at the head of one of her servants. I have hardly spoken with her since, though she has taken occasion to force herself in my way whenever she could. Lord Tiverton, compare that girl with my mother!"

The earl started as he heard these last words. Instinctively did his mind turn to that gentle, lovely being whom he called—*wife*, and he remembered how much of life's joy and peace he owed to her. Albion saw the effect he had produced, and he followed it up.

"Just look upon my noble mother, and then look upon this thing whom you would fasten upon my youthful, aspiring soul. O, father, you do not know the girl. Ask Sir William—go and ask him, and he will tell you without prejudice or partiality."

Lord Tiverton moved now in the soul, and he resolved at once that he would push the matter no farther. But in a moment more the cloud came upon his face again, and he looked sternly upon his son. The storm without had increased—the rain came down in torrents, and the wind howled more fearfully than before. But again the earl had forgotten the raging of the elements.

"Albion," he said, "I will say no more at present of Belinda Warner, and perhaps I shall urge her upon you no more. But there is yet another subject on my mind, though I hope I have been misinformed. Perhaps you know to what I allude?"

"Go on," said Albion. He trembled slightly, and spoke carefully, for he mistrusted what his father meant, though he wondered how he could have come to a knowledge of it.

"I have heard that you visit a poor fisher-girl, not far from here. Is it so?"

"It is, sir."

"And did you not know that such conduct was very wrong?"

"The girl whom I have visited is the one who saved my life; she but for whom you would now be childless."

"I do not blame you, my son, for feeling gratitude, and for expressing it, but if Miss Warner—"

"Then Miss Warner has been informing you of my doings?" said the youth, as his father hesitated—for the earl had let out the secret of his source of information without intending it. Albion spoke bitterly, and a look of contempt curled about his finely chiselled lips.

"Yes, she did tell me, though I did not mean to expose her—but it can't be helped now—and on the whole we should both be very grateful to her, for it may be the means of saving you from evil. In truth, my boy, you have been very careless and reckless of that girl's happiness. Do you not realize that you are a man in every way calculated to inspire the warmest love in the female bosom?"

Albion made no answer.

"You have even allowed yourself to walk and converse with this low-born girl, and—you have taken her to your bosom, and even impressed her with kisses."

"Miss Warner has been in fine business, truly!" uttered Albion, in the most bitter tone. "She plays the spy well!"

"She has not followed you, my boy," said the earl. He spoke with considerable kindness, for the idea of Belinda's littleness of character now struck him more forcibly, and even though he was thankful for the information thus revealed, yet he could not but detest the manner in which it had been collected. "She has observed you from the cupola at the top of the house. Has she told me the truth?"

"She has," returned the youth, trembling.

"And do you not see how wrong such things are? I may even call them wicked. I cannot believe that you would— But no, I *know* you would not do that."

"What? Speak plainly, father."

"I know you would not harm that poor girl. You would not rob her of the only—"

"Stop, stop, my father. I know what you mean. Tear out my heart and give it to the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air. Saw my body in quarters, and burn it to ashes, and cast those ashes to the winds of heaven, so that no more remembrance be had of me among men forever, when I could be guilty of such a deed!"

The father felt his love for his son awaking afresh, and for some moments he gazed into his noble features with true paternal pride. But he had more yet to say, though his anger was all gone.

"Then, my child, you must see how fatally your thoughtless conduct may operate. Do you not know that Alice Woodley may love you, love you with a love which shall break her heart when she knows that you can never return her love? Ah, my son, you have been blind indeed."

Albion hung down his head, and he trembled with a wild, thrilling emotion; but another thunder-crash at that moment broke upon the earth, and the earl did not notice his son's trembling.

"Father," at length spoke the youth, laying his hand again upon his parent's arm, and speaking in a soft, persuasive tone, "will you not let this pass until you can see the maiden of whom we speak? I would have you see her and converse with her."

"And wherefore, my son?"

"That you may know her as I do."

"Albion, I know not that I understand you," said the earl, moving the youth's hand from his arm, and looking steadily into his face. "It may be a foolish question, I hope it is—but nevertheless I will ask it: Do you love that girl?"

"How can I help it?"

"That is not an answer. Do you love her?"

"With my whole soul."

"And you would make her your wife?"

"Would you but give your consent to such a consummation I should be the happiest man that dwells upon the earth."

A moment the earl was silent. The wind howled fearfully, the rain fairly crashed upon the windows, and ever and anon the deep-toned thunder rolled through the heavens as though

the very throne of mercy were quaking at its foundations; but neither the father nor the son heard the elementary war there.

"Albion," at length said the old man, and he spoke with strange and calm distinctness, "before I would see you wedded with such a wife I would have you—"

The young man darted forward and seized his father by the wrist.

"Stop, stop—for the love of mercy, stop!" he cried, while his whole frame shook. "Speak no more now. Do not make a vow yet. Wait—wait for a while, at least."

"And why should I wait when my mind is made up?"

"To save me. Give me time for reflection, at least."

"But I would rather have you in your—"

"My father," interrupted the young man, in a tone that fairly startled the parent, "forgive me if I speak as may seem to unbecome the child; but you must not speak now. Beware what words you let fall from your lips. You must see Alice Woodley before you make up your mind. I know not what sort of feelings you may allow to govern yourself, but I can assure you that I am not prepared to throw away my very soul, just to please an empty, hollow prejudice. Alice Woodley risked her own life

to save mine, and she did it, too, before she had ever seen my face. She is one of the most lovely beings that earth ever bore, and purity and virtue sit upon her soul as their regal throne. And then for another thing I would have you see her. I think you have seen her somewhere. There is a mystery about her. Speak no more, I beseech you—not now."

Lord Tiverton gazed into the face of his son, and twice his lips moved as though he would have spoken; but there was something in the look that met his gaze that kept his words back. He was not angry, for Albion had uttered forth his speech with too much depth of feeling to call up such a passion. He was almost awe-struck, and he was surprised, too. He had called his son to him with the fixed, firm purpose of tearing him away from his heart at once and forever unless he would promise on the spot to see Alice Woodley no more; but his purpose was not carried out, nor was it to be then. In truth that stout nobleman was moved by another will than his own. But he only kept his words back for the while. His purpose was still fixed, and in his heart he resolved that he would not relent from it.

He would have spoken further, but at that juncture, Sir William and Thomas entered the hall.

CHAPTER XI

THE WRECK!

THE storm had now reached to a fearful power. The rain still fell in a deluge, and the wind seemed to have increased until it fairly roared with the voice of continuous thunder. The vivid lightning played in the heavens, and the loud crashing of the thunder peals reverberated with terrific grandeur.

"God have mercy on any craft that may be caught on our coast without an anchorage to-night!" ejaculated Sir William, as he joined the earl.

"This gale comes from the eastward, doesn't it?" asked Albion.

"Yes," replied Tom, "from the northward and eastward. It comes sweeping down the whole breadth of the sea, and it seems as though 'twould wash the whole German Ocean upon our coast. My soul, how the waves break over the shore."

"What thunder!" uttered the earl, who had now laid aside the subject that had been occupying his thoughts. "Al, my boy, you are better off here than you would be at sea."

"O, give me plenty of sea-room, and this would be rare sport," replied the youth. "I've stood some tough gales in my time."

"Ah, there's a peal of thunder in the distance," said Sir William, as the sound of a clap more low than the others broke upon their ears.

"Yes," returned Tom. "Ah, there it is again.

Egad, I'd like to swap with those who have that thunder at their doors. It aint so heavy as ours."

"'Twould be heavy enough if it were here," said Sir William.

"That is not thunder!" uttered Albion, as the third peal came sounding above the storm. He started forward towards the window as he spoke, and the others followed his example.

"Not thunder!" repeated the baronet.

"No—hark— There it is again. Do you not distinguish it. My heavens, 'tis a gun! Death is at our doors! There is a ship on our coast!"

"Not a ship, I hope," said the earl, shuddering. "Perhaps some small vessel."

"Not with such a gun as that," added Albion. "It is a heavy ship that carries that fellow."

Just then came the fourth report, and as the dull sound rumbled in with the voice of the tempest, Albion Tiverton started towards the door.

"Call up the servants," he cried, "and let us have lanterns and ropes. We must go down to the beach. Come, Tom, on with your duds. I have a storm-suit in my chest, and I'll don it in a twinkling. Sir William, you call the servants and light the lanterns."

"But my son," urged the earl, in a hesitating voice, "you will not expose yourself."

"My soul, father, talk not of exposure now. Ha, hear that gun again! You stay here—

there is no need of your exposure to such a storm, but it is part of my profession. Don't you come out. You stay and watch here, and if danger comes to me, then you must remember me in your prayers. Now, then, Tom, look alive."

As Albion thus spoke, he seized a candle from the hand of a servant who had just entered the hall, and hastened away to his room. The old earl looked after him as he disappeared, and a light of pride danced in his eyes.

"He is a noble fellow, after all," he uttered.

"So he is," added Sir William, who had called the servants and returned.

"And he mustn't throw himself away," added the earl.

"No he mustn't," responded the baronet.

"I shan't let him."

"Nor would I if he were my son."

"I'll see him—anywhere, before he shall cast himself away on a fisher-girl."

"Yes," suggested Sir William, "what is a fisher-girl to do with loving the son of an earl?"

"Nothing. It's preposterous."

"So it is, my lord. She ought to be transported for daring to touch him with her hands. How dared she save him from drowning? It was very low and ill-bred of her to do so."

His lordship looked into Sir William's face with a look of surprise.

"It ought to have been the daughter of some earl, or duke, or some princess," added the baronet; "and then the poor fellow could have loved her for her nobleness. I think most any of our delicate, lisping, gentle-blooded ladies would have done the work full as well as that low-born, degraded fisher-girl did. But then, honestly, I think she ought to have a few shillings for her labor. The risking of her life is nothing, for what is her life compared with the life of a gentlewoman? I don't think fisher-girls count more than half a soul, at the most, in heaven! And they hadn't ought to. They aint so good as other folks. What! have such a noble youth as that marry with a fisher-girl! Preposterous! What could she do as a wife?

Only just love him, and honor him, and cherish him with her whole heart, and make him a faithful, heavenly companion, for life, in whose bosom he could ever find a retreat from the sorrows of the world, and in whose arms he could ever find a heaven on earth. No, no—such as he should have a *lady* for a wife. *He* wants more *gold*, and more *titles*, to make him happy. Fisher-girls? Preposterous!"

At that moment Tom and Albion came in. The face of the latter was flushed with excitement and hurry, but he was yet calm in judgment. He had thrown on an oil-cloth suit throughout, and on his head he wore a stout leather cap. Tom was also rigged for exposure; and the servants who stood in waiting, six in number, were well prepared for the storm, though they had the prospect of a thorough drenching.

"Now," cried Albion—

"Wait a moment," interrupted the old baronet, "I am going."

"Not by any means," firmly replied Tom.

"Nor shall you father," said Albion.

The earl raised his head, and asked his son what he had said. In truth, my Lord of Winchester and Tiverton had been thinking of those strange words which the baronet had spoken, and he had not noticed what was passing.

Albion repeated his order, but it availed nothing, for in a moment more the two old men put their heads together, and swore they'd go.

But our hero did not wait for them. He saw that his men had ropes, and having assured himself his lantern was so fixed that the wind could not extinguish the light, he set out. When he reached the gravelled carriage-path he was forced to stop a moment to collect his energies, for the tempest was more terrific than he had thought. He soon braced himself, however, and then, with a word of encouragement to his followers, he started on again.

Tom, like Albion, had on an oil-cloth suit, but the others only had on thick woollen garments, and they were wet to the skin in a few minutes, but they thought not of that. The rain fell—or rather, was driven—in a perfect torrent, and for awhile it was almost blinding in its power. The sea broke upon the coast with a roar that set the thunder at defiance, and the spray was thrown far up over the land. Ever and anon the lightning flashed through the heavens, revealing the scene around, and the boiling, hissing sea was terrible to look upon.

At length the party reached the shore of the bay, where they could look about them without the intervening of trees. The signal gun was still heard at short intervals, but the roar of the surge was so deafening that its direction could not be made out. Albion had hoped that he should be able to make it out from the light of its flash, but the driving rain, and the thick spray which was thrown high up into the air, shut out its view.

"Here we'll stand," said Albion, "and wait for the lightning, and then if we look sharp we may make her out. Keep your eyes seaward, now, and look sharp."

In a few moments the lightning again leaped along the black sky, and the sea was bathed in the lurid glare for miles around.

"There she is!" shouted one of the men, who had perched himself upon a high rock. "I have her berth, and I'll make her out next time."

Albion raised his lantern and jumped upon the rock by the side of the man, and when the next flash came he made out the vessel distinctly. She was a ship—a heavy ship—with a close-reefed maintopsail set. He could tell thus much. He waited for the next flash, and he saw that she was laying to upon the larboard tack, and that her lighter spars were all off, and her fore and mizzen topmasts housed. He had also seen that the sea was breaking wildly over her, and that she was fast drifting towards the shore. By this time Tom had made his way upon the rock, and at the next flash of lightning he saw the ill-fated craft.

"Merciful heavens!" he cried, "she is drifting upon the Imp's Rocks as sure as death! See! see! She is almost upon them now!"

"She is," echoed one of the men.

"Then no power on earth can save her," said Albion, who was watching with nervous anxiety for the next flash.

At this juncture our hero heard the voice of his father near the rock, and on turning he saw both the old men with each of them a lantern.

"What is it?" cried Sir William.

But before his question could be answered the great night-torch of heaven flared out again through the terror-laden space, and the ship was plainly seen. The lightning played through the black vault in wild, fantastic shapes, and the glare was unusually long in continuance. Albion could see where the sea was broken more terribly by the sunken rocks, and he saw, too, that the ship was not half a cable's length from them, and that she was being tossed about like a plaything in the hands of a reckless boy.

Once more the heavens were black as ink, and the lanterns looked like dim sparks just dying amid their own embers, after the blinding light of the electric flame had gone. In a few words as possible Albion told the story of what he had seen, and then he bent his ear towards the spot where he had last seen the ship. The surge roared on, and the rain fell in blinding torrents,

but our hero noticed it not. He waited for the death-howl he was sure must come. There was one more boom of the gun, and while its dull voice was yet lingering with the roar of the tempest, there came a sharp, wild cry over the water. Albion shuddered, for he knew that the death-angel was at work there!

"The hour has come!" he cried to Sir William. "The ship has struck. We will stay, for we may find some who will wash ashore."

Both the old men worked their way upon the rock, and in a few moments more the heavens burned again. The ship was upon the rocks—her mainmast gone, and her hull upon its beam-ends. The sea was washing madly over it—leaping and towering above its broken form, and its boats and spars were being fast washed away. Albion was sure he saw men clinging to the rigging, and his heart beat with a painful emotion.

"Alas!" he uttered, turning to his father, who now stood by his side, "we cannot save them."

"Most assuredly not."

There was another flash—bright and glaring.

"What is that?" cried the earl; and he pointed off to the low beach on the opposite side of the bay.

It was a female form which he had seen, and Albion's quick eye had caught the same.

"What can it be?" the earl repeated, in tones of surprise. "A woman out in this storm?"

"That is an angel of mercy," replied the youth, in a subdued tone. "No storm nor tempest will stay her when danger calls, or suffering humanity wants succor."

The old man gazed into his son's face. The glare of the lightning had gone, but he held up his lantern.

"Who is it?" he asked.

"Alice Woodley—the fisher-girl," replied Albion.

The parent made no further remark, but he murmured something over to himself which sounded very much like regret. But that was not the time for such subjects, and Lord Tiverton turned his attention to the ship. Not so Albion, however. When the next flash came his eyes were upon the opposite beach, and he saw that same form standing there yet, right where the surge washed up about her feet, and he could see that in her hand she held a lantern.

It was pitchy black once more, but away off upon the other beach, our hero could see the tiny spark of a lantern. He was nervous and anxious.

"Father," he at length said, "I am going

over upon the other beach. If any people are washed ashore, some of them will be as likely to wash up there as here."

"And is that all you would go for, my boy?" the old man asked, holding up his lantern and looking into his son's face.

"No, sir, not by one half. I would go to send that noble girl into her dwelling, and myself take her place on the watch."

"Go then; but remember you are her friend."

Albion quickly called off three of the men to follow him upon the other side of the bay, and Tom was determined to go, too.

"Yes, Master Thomas, you go and keep him company," said the earl, quickly, as though he were anxious that there should be a check upon the actions of his son. "Your father and I will look out for this place. Go—and look out for—"

But Tom heard no more. He saw Albion's lantern clear away ahead, and he hastened on to overtake him. They were obliged to take the upper path, for the lower one was so washed by the sea that it was impossible to keep it. The lanterns were held out ahead, and they cast their dim, struggling light far enough into the utter blackness to enable the adventurers to keep on at a respectable pace. The walk was somewhat of a tedious one, but it was, at length accomplished, and Albion found Alice standing watch upon the beach. He spoke to her a few hurried words of love before the others came up, and he chided her for being there; but at his urgent request she consented to retire to the house when she was assured that the place should be watched, and any unfortunate cared for who might chance to come ashore.

The three men who had accompanied Albion and Tom, were loud and earnest in their blessings upon the head of the beautiful girl, and Albion felt grateful to them.

After our hero had succeeded in getting Alice beneath the shelter of her cot, he once more turned his attention to the ship. The rain began to fall more slowly, and the lightning came not so often, nor was it so bright or lasting. It was more distant—so distant now that its thunder could not be heard. But the wind still maintained its power with howling fury. Our hero could see that the ship was fast coming to pieces, her masts were all gone, her bulwarks stove off,

and her stern broken, and the deck of the poop gone. And yet no human thing had come ashore. Not long, however, was he to wait for the shadow of the death-angel. Half an hour had not passed when something was washed up, and Albion found it to be a human body. In fifteen minutes more three other bodies followed it—and that was all. The hours dragged slowly away, and no more dead bodies came. At length the youth looked at his watch, and it was midnight. For two hours there had been no lightning, and the wind howled coldly and dismally.

"Tom," our hero said, "there will no more bodies come until the ship is in pieces. It is now past midnight."

"Then let us return to the hall, and in the morning we will come down again. There is no use in remaining here."

"So be it. But one of these men must go and sleep at the widow's cot."

"Yes, Mosely will go. He has often remained there when he has been at work for the widow. Mosely, you will go?"

"Certainly," returned the man, who was one of Sir William's foresters—a stout, powerful man, somewhere between forty and fifty years of age.

"You will sleep with one eye open, and jump if there is need."

"Certainly."

"And tell the women that we will be down early in the morning."

"Yes, sir."

"All right."

So Mosely went towards the cot, and Albion and his companions turned towards the road that led over the bridge and up to Linden Hall. When they reached the house they found that Sir William and the earl had already retired, and without further ceremony they threw off their wet clothes—drank some heated wine, and then followed the example of their elders.

Albion Tiverton was worn and fatigued, but it was sometime before he slept, for the events of the day were enough to work unwontedly upon his mind. At length, however, he slept, and while he slept he dreamed, but he did not dream of the strange unweaving of mystery which the ill-fated wreck had in store for him.

CHAPTER XII.

THE OLD MAN OF THE WRECK.

WHEN Albion arose on the following morning he found that the sun was just rising, and that the storm had all passed away. The wind was gone, and only a gentle breeze played about his window. Yet he could hear the roar of the surge upon the coast, and a cold shudder crept through his frame as he thought how solemn was the requiem those waves were sounding. When he looked out at the window he saw the tracks of the storm-fiend. The whole park was strewn with fragments of boards, and shingles, and broken boughs which the gale had swept from their former places. Great trees were bent over, as though they had suddenly grown old and decrepit, the great branches were twisted and broken, the smaller boughs hurled about, and many of the bough-houses and trellises torn in pieces and laid prostrate.

It was truly a scene of desolation, but our hero did not stop long to contemplate it. As soon as he could dress himself he hurried away to Tom's room, where he found his friend still fast asleep; but he awoke the sleeper, and in a short time they were both ready to set out. Albion made his way first to the bridge, meaning to seek the widow's cot at once. Tom of course made no objections to this, for he would have chosen that course himself.

The sun was well up when the two young men

reached the cot, and they found that Mosely was already upon the beach at work. Alice was pale and agitated, for not far from her door there was a pile of ghastly corpses, and she had been helping to place them there. But Albion made her retire to the house now, and she complied without resistance. After this our hero joined Mosely.

The ship had been mostly knocked to pieces, but yet a good part of her hull remained upon the rocks. Her back was broken, but she had not yet been rent in twain, though all her bulwarks were gone, and the greater part of her spar deck ripped up and washed off. She lay now with her stern and bows both in the water, and her waist higher up, both ends having fallen while her centre rested among the rocks. The beach was strewn with pieces of the wreck, but there were no more dead bodies upon this side of the bay, Mosely having gathered up all he could find. He had found seven, and they were reposing upon the greensward near the cot.

"I've been up, at work here, ever since daylight," said Mosely, "and you see I have gathered up all the dead ones I could find. There's more of 'em up the bay, and some on the other side. But I guess the ship only had her common crew aboard, for you see all these be common sailors."

"Yes, I see," returned Albion. "But have you found the name of the ship?"

"Yes, I found it on a bucket that came ashore. It's the *Fintona*, of Newcastle."

"Ah, she laid at Gravesend when I came out. But she's done for now."

As soon as our hero became satisfied that there was nothing more for him to do upon that side of the beach he started around for the opposite shore, having first, however, seen Alice, and made her promise to have some regard for her own physical welfare.

Along on the shore of the bay, after they had crossed the bridge, they found other dead bodies, and when they reached the rock where they had stood the night before they found more of the sad mementoes of the wreck. In all they had found twenty-four corpses, and they supposed there might be more on board the wreck. There was a surge-boat on shore belonging to Sir William; and the men, eight of whom had just come down from the hall accompanied by the coroner and others, agreed at once to man it, if Albion wished to go out. This surf or life-boat, our hero knew would be perfectly safe upon the sea, and he at once made up his mind to venture out to the wreck. Tom agreed to go with him, and the boat was at once hauled down and shoved off.

The sea was running high, but the stout men bent themselves to their oars, and the boat bore proudly up. Albion took the helm, and with a practised hand and eye he steered over the seas with the least possible danger, and at length the wreck was close at hand. Directly under the lee of the hull, amidships, there was a space of comparatively smooth water, where nothing could touch the boat save the spray that came dashing over the wreck, and for this our adventurers cared nothing, for they were wet to the skin now, and if the boat should fill with water it could not sink, and could, moreover, be easily bailed out; so up to this place Albion steered his craft, and in a few moments more he stood upon the wreck.

The hull had by some means been lifted up from its beam-ends, and now lay so that a man could stand upon her deck with comparative ease so far as the position of the stand-place was concerned, but the seas which came dashing over rendered it necessary for them to keep their hands upon some firm holdfast. The whole of the poop had been washed away, leaving the cabin bare, and the whole deck had not only been

swept clear, but more than half the deck itself was gone. Albion looked down into the steerage, and he saw that the mid portions of that deck were bare, though the water washed over them every time there came a heavy sea. Our hero let himself down into this part of the ship, and everything there was in wild confusion and disorder. The two extremities of the deck were low down in the water, and boxes, trunks, chests, bags and a variety of other stuff, were floating about. The youthful adventurer looked around for some signs of humanity, but he could see none from where he then stood. Upon the opposite side of the deck, however, he saw three bunks, against which a mass of the wreck from above had been piled, and through one of the apertures in the jammed mass he thought he saw portions of a man's dress, and he at once started to go over.

Carefully the young officer made his way along the sea washed deck, and ere long he reached the spot, and on gazing in through the stuff that had been piled up there he saw, in the middle bunk, something that he felt sure was a man. He could not see the face, nor any part of the flesh, but beneath a mass of clothing there was something like a human form. He tried hard to start some of the rubbish away, but he could not move it. Then he called for the men on deck to come down to his assistance, and at length, by dint of much labor, they succeeded in clearing the stuff away. Albion reached in and drew back the blankets and quilts, and beneath them he did find the form of a man. Quickly the blankets were torn off, and the form was drawn forward to the light. It was the face of an old man that thus came to light. His eyes were closed, but the other features could be easily made out. The face was worn and sunken, the beard long and bristling, and the hair gray and crisp. It was certainly an old man—far past the goal of threescore, and something prior to the wreck had surely prostrated him.

"Is he dead?" asked one of the men who stood back.

"I can't tell yet," returned Albion, at the same time laying his hand upon the wrinkled brow and shuddering. "His flesh is cold and clammy, but not rigid like a dead man's. But come, we'll get him out of this, and we can tell more then."

Accordingly the body was drawn out from the bunk and lifted upon the upper deck, and after considerable examination both Albion and Tom came to the conclusion that there might be

life present. At any rate he was carefully wrapped in an old sail, and then lowered into the boat. It was evident that there was nothing more on board the wreck worthy of further attention, for the whole contents of the cabin had been swept away, and the store-rooms were smashed in and filled with water. So the adventurers returned to their boat, and having bailed out the water, they cast off from the wreck and turned back towards the shore. It was easy rowing now, and soon our men stood upon the beach, where they found Sir William and the earl.

"Ah, what have you got there?" Sir William asked, as he saw some of his men lifting a body from the boat.

"You see," returned Albion, who had been and greeted his father; "it is the body of an old man I found on board the wreck, and I am not sure that he is dead."

"O yes, he is," said the baronet, as he went up and gazed into the sunken, ghastly features. "There's no life there, you may depend on't."

"Ah, but I am not so sure," Albion returned, with a dubious shake of the head. "He hasn't surely been drowned, and I know he hasn't been bruised. His flesh is easily moved, and you see his limbs are not stiff and rigid like they would be if he was dead. We'd better take him up to the hall and call a doctor, at any rate, and then if he is really dead we'll give him a decent burial. Of course you have no objections?"

"Most certainly not. And perhaps you may be right, after all. Let some of the men take him up at once."

A litter was quickly made from the fragments of the wreck that had washed up on to the beach, and four of the stoutest men lifted the load to their shoulders and started off.

It was now near the middle of the forenoon, and both Albion and Tom were tired and hungry, and as there were enough to look after everything upon the beach, they concluded to go up to the hall and get some breakfast. There were full two hundred people collected now upon the shore, some of them having already arrived from Framlingham, whither Sir William had sent for the officers.

When our two young friends reached the hall they found the physician already there. He had come over to see if his services were needed, and having found nothing but dead men, and well, at the beach, he had come up to rest and refresh himself. As soon as the body of the old man

was brought in, Thomas had it conveyed to a comfortable bed in the servants' quarters, and the doctor followed on to examine the case.

"What do you think, doctor?" asked the young midshipman, after the man of knives and drugs had run his hands and eyes over the body.

"I think there's life here," was the reply, "though how long 'twill last I can't say."

"I thought so," resumed Albion, "and I hope you'll be able to bring him to. I suppose you'll have help enough without us?"

The doctor replied in the affirmative, and Albion and Tom left the apartment, leaving the four men to assist in the work of resuscitation, while they went for their breakfast. The women servants, some dozen in number, gathered about the breakfast-room to hear the news from the wreck. Master Thomas would have ordered them off, but Albion bade them stay, and while he ate he told them all that had happened, and when they had heard all they went away and talked about the matter; and then they talked about Albion Tiverton, and they said that he was a much better man than was their young master. But Master Thomas would have cared little had he even heard their remarks, for he gave no weight to the opinions of those beneath him. Tom had a good heart—a big soul, naturally—but his head was educated to rebel sometimes even against the very dictates of his more manly judgment. But he was being led now into a new field. The work of the past night and the present morning had opened a new idea into his mind, and he had experienced a certain degree of pleasure in having helped even the poor old man who was now under the doctor's hands.

Then there was another thing that was silently at work in Tom's soul; and that was, the relations existing between Albion and Alice Woodley. Had the subject of Albion's loving the poor fisher-girl been mentioned to him a month before, he would have fairly sickened at the thought, but now he felt differently, and more than once he had calmly asked himself if he should not be likely to act just as Albion had acted if he was in Albion's place—and he had not yet decidedly answered the question. The fact was, he loved Albion Tiverton, and he moreover knew that the young officer was one of the most true-hearted, noble fellows in existence, and he could not long look upon Albion's habits and course of action as wrong or ungentlemanly. Tom was gradually becoming more of the true man.

After the meal was eaten the young men again went up into the room where they had left the doctor, and they found him bending over the bed, while the other men were standing by with anxious countenances.

"How is it, doctor?" whispered our hero.

"He's coming," replied the operator, without looking up.

Albion drew near to the bed and gazed over the head-board, and he saw signs of life plainly working upon the old man's features. The eyes were partly opened—the lips were parted, and the nostrils moved. And the breast, too, seemed to rise and fall, as though the lungs were at work.

"He is surely coming," said Albion.

"O, yes, he's had his eyes open once, and his lips moved almost with speech. He has had a touch of catalepsy, and must certainly have been sick some time. There has been fever upon him, and most probably he was just getting up from it when this accident happened."

Albion still stood at the head of the bed, and Tom joined him, and ere long afterwards the old man fairly opened his eyes and turned his head.

"Do you know where you are?" asked the doctor, bending his head low down.

The patient looked up, and a ray of intelligence gleamed upon his face.

"Do you know where you are?" the doctor repeated.

"I am not dead," the man murmured, trembling violently.

"No, not a bit of it. You are safe as need be. Look up and see if you know me."

"Doctor Randassel?" said the man.

"No. Who is Doctor Randassel?"

"Our good doctor of London; but you are not him. I aint in London."

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"No. Don't you remember where you have been?"

The invalid gazed anxiously about him for a moment, and then he closed his eyes. Directly he uttered a quick, wild cry, and started up.

"Lost! lost!" he cried. "The ship has—" He stopped and gazed again about him, and then sank back once more upon his pillow.

"You are safe," said the doctor. "So you need not fear."

"And where am I?"

"Where you will be taken good care of."

As the physician spoke, he looked carefully into the invalid's face, and then took his pulse, and while he held on by the wrist he told the poor man how he had been saved. The old fellow made no reply, but seemed trying to remember the scenes he had passed through.

"Now, gentlemen," said the man of medicine, turning to Albion and Tom, "we will leave him in the care of a nurse, and I will go down and prepare such medicine as I want him to have. The most he will need for the next twenty-four hours will be rest and quiet. Of course you can supply a nurse?"

"Certainly," said Thomas.

So the party left the apartment, and while the doctor went to prepare his medicine Tom went to select one of the women to attend to its administration, and after that both the young men went out to meet Sir William and the earl, who were just coming up the road. The baronet was very anxious to hear how the sufferer got along, and he was joyed when he heard the result.

"One man saved, at least," he said.

But little did Sir William dream who that sufferer was!

CHAPTER XIII.

VISITORS AT THE WIDOW'S COT.

It was on the day after the old man had been rescued from the wreck. All the dead bodies had been taken away by the proper authorities, and men were engaged in clearing away the rubbish of the wreck that had been washed on shore. Alice Woodley was in her little sitting-room, and her mother was busy in cooking. The maiden had been sitting with her sewing work upon her knees for some time, when her attention was arrested by the approach of a woman who bore a basket upon her arm. The woman was apparently old, and bent with years, and upon her head she wore a black hood that almost entirely concealed her face. Her dress was of faded black silk, and probably one that she had either stolen or begged. She entered the house without knocking, but stopped at the inner door until Alice invited her to come in. She came in and set down her basket, and then threw the old hood partly back from her head. Her hair was of a yellowish flaxen hue, and hung in dirt-caked, matted masses about her face and neck, and such of her face as could be seen was dirty and begrimed. She gazed around the room with furtive glances, and then turned her eyes upon Alice.

"My good girl," she said, in a strange, creaking voice, "I am very thirsty."

Alice at once arose and quickly procured

water, which she brought in a pitcher. The woman drank, and then set the pitcher upon the table near her.

"I am a poor, destitute woman," she said, as soon as Alice had taken her seat again, "and I am sorry to say that I am reduced even to begging. For the love of mercy give me something, if it be no more than a groat."

"We, too, are poor," returned Alice, looking with compassion upon the woman despite her dirty appearance; "but we are not so poor but that we can assist those who are more needy than ourselves. We have but little money now."

The maiden arose and went to a little room adjoining, and when she returned she had a half-crown in her hand.

"This much you may have with our blessing; and even that may assist you some. If others will only help you according to their means you need not suffer. Have you called at the hall?"

"The hall?" repeated the woman, looking up as though she did not understand.

"I mean at Linden Hall—the dwelling of Sir William Brentford," explained Alice.

"O, yes, I called there, and they gave me considerable. And they gave me these plums, too, in the basket here. They seem to be kind people."

"So they are," said Alice.

Shortly afterwards the woman arose to go, and as she took up her basket, she said:

"I cannot carry all these. Do you not love plums?"

"I eat them sometimes," returned the maiden.

"Then get me a dish and I will leave you part of these."

"No, no, my good woman, I do not want them. You may find opportunity to sell them."

"But I can't carry them any further. Were I young like yourself it would be different, but they bear heavy on my arm."

Rather than have any further argument, Alice fetched a basin, and the woman poured out some two quarts of her plums. They were the common black damson, and looked quite ripe and nice.

"You will find them most excellent," she said, "and I hope you will not think you are robbing me, for upon my soul I cannot carry them."

Alice professed to be very grateful for the gift, and shortly the woman turned towards the door.

"Which is the nearest way to the road?" she asked, after she had reached the inner door.

"Follow right back over the bridge, and take Sir William's carriage-path, that is the nearest," answered the maiden.

The woman thanked her, and then took her leave.

"Ho, mother, do you want some plums?" called Alice.

"Not now, my child. But how much did you give the woman?"

"Half a crown."

"It is considerable for us, but we can better spare it, perhaps, than she can do without it. Where did she get her plums?"

"She said at Linden Hall. I love plums, but I most certainly shall eat none of those."

"But why not?" asked the mother, advancing and looking into the basin.

"Why, if you could have seen her hands you would not ask. I never saw such dirty, filthy hands in all my life before. My stomach turns at the very thought. And see—there is dirt upon some of them. Just look at that one—see—it is half covered. It's flour, isn't it?"

Alice took up one of the plums as she spoke and showed it to her mother, and while they were examining it the sound of carriage wheels was heard at the door. The basin was quickly moved back upon the table, and Mrs. Woodley hurried out into her little kitchen, while Alice went to the door.

It was Sir William's carriage which had arrived, but the baronet himself was not there. The doctor, whom we have seen at the hall, was the first to alight, and a companion was with him.

"Doctor Dillon," said Alice, as she extended her hand to one who had been very kind to her mother; and there was a bright smile upon her face.

"I have come, my sweet child, to see how your mother is," said the doctor, as he passed into the house, "and you see I have brought a friend along with me, but he has only come to see the sights about our coast."

"He is very welcome to our humble cot," the maiden returned, as she set out two chairs, and then, with a smile, she added: "But he will find our coast at a disadvantage now, for we have had a rough visitor."

"We are aware of that, and a severe time it has been. One poor fellow is now at the hall who was rescued from the grasp of the storm."

"Was there one saved from the ship?" asked Alice, eagerly.

"Yes."

"But many, alas! will know the things of earth no more," she said, softly, while a moist light shone in her eyes. "God receive them!"

There was a moment's pause, and during that time Alice looked up into the face of the doctor's companion, but her eyes fell again, for she found him gazing steadfastly upon her. Little did the fair girl dream that it was the father of her noble lover who now sat there and gazed upon her. But so it was. Lord Tiverton had come over with the physician—just for the scenery, he said—but surely he had come to see for himself the sort of being with whom his boy had fallen in love.

"I am a privileged character here, and I shall take the liberty of going to see your mother, for I see she's in her kitchen."

The doctor said this with a smile, and as he spoke he arose and left the room. He was privileged, truly, for he had attended the widow through a long siege of sickness, and he would accept of no remuneration for it. He often called when it came near his way to see how she got along, and sometimes he left her small packages of invigorating medicines. After he had gone, of course the earl and Alice were left alone, and both of them seemed a little uneasy. Lord Tiverton was struck with something peculiar about the girl's appearance, and so was she impressed with the same idea respecting him.

In fact, there was a striking resemblance between the father and son, though Alice's suspicions were not aroused in that quarter, for the idea of her visitor's true character did not enter her mind.

"You have a delightful residence here," the earl said, after he had viewed the maiden for some time.

"Yes, sir," she replied, looking up. "Most of the year it is very pleasant."

"I suppose it has its disadvantages, as have all other places," the earl resumed. "It is retired, and to some it would be lonesome."

"Yes, sir, but it is not lonesome to us, for in truth we have few friends to leave behind, go where we will; and I believe it is the absence of friends that makes what we call loneliness."

"I think you are right; though a dreary prospect may be lonesome, while a bright and joyous one would not be."

"Certainly, sir. You speak the truth. I should not want to live in a drear and cheerless home, for I should surely be miserable then. But here we have the fields and hills, the streams and the vales, the trees and the flowers, upon one hand, and the great ocean of mystery and grandeur on the other. O, sir, this is a very beautiful home."

It was not the words which the girl spoke that caused the earl to gaze so steadily into her face, but it was the manner in which they were spoken, and the strange, transcendent light that beamed in her countenance. A waking smile was upon her lips, and its soft, sweet tone went even to her eyes.

"After all," said the earl, "it is the spirit of contentment that makes the beauties of any home. Even heaven itself would be no home without contentment."

"True, sir, very true; and yet sometimes, in view of what we see here on earth, we might be almost led to think that there would be some who would be even discontented in heaven. Too few realize the blessings which are showered upon them. The joys and pleasures of a year pass away and are forgotten, while the misfortunes of an hour are held firmly in remembrance, and made the source of repining and regret."

"You speak advisedly for one so young, my fair child," said Tiverton, becoming more and more interested.

"Do not flatter me, sir, for I have but treasured up a few simple truths that are whispered in the breeze of every changing wind."

"And did you not know that the person who gathers instruction in that manner is by far the most worthy?"

"I know that the world does not so consider it, sir."

"Yet it is so, lady."

"Perhaps you are right there, sir; but yet you must admit that very many—too many—are governed by the opinions of the world, even though in some cases such opinions may conflict with their own better judgments."

"Yes, yes," said the earl; but he spoke in an absent tone, and his eyes were bent to the floor. He knew that the maiden spoke the truth, and he knew, too, that it rubbed hard upon his own course of life.

Soon Lord Tiverton led off upon another subject, and thither Alice modestly followed him. She showed plainly that her mind was not only stored with valuable information, but that she possessed a calm, clear, discriminating mind. Her judgment was not only superior, but it was readily at hand. Truths were intuitive with her, and analogy was thoroughly at her command. The very expression upon the earl's features showed that he was charmed. His gaze was fixed upon the beautiful face before him, and at length he suddenly stopped in his conversation and bent his eyes to the floor. He raised his right hand to his brow and remained thus for several moments.

"Has your mother lived long here?" he asked, at length raising his head.

"Only about five years, sir," returned Alice, somewhat moved by the man's manner.

Again the earl gazed into the maiden's face, and he seemed to be studying deeply upon something that had come to his mind; but before he could ask any more questions the doctor returned, and with him came the widow.

"You see, Mrs. Woodley," said the physician, with a smile, as he entered the room, "took the liberty to invite a guest. He only accompanied me to see the beach here."

Dillon did not introduce his companion by name, for the earl had requested him not to, stating as a reason that it annoyed him to have his rank known among common people.

Mrs. Woodley very graciously bade the stranger welcome, and then took a seat near her daughter. The earl gazed upon her after she had sat down, and their eyes met. Lord Tiverton started—and so did the widow. Tiverton half started from his chair, and the widow shrank back and tried to overcome her emotion.

CHAPTER XIV.

A STRANGE DISCOVERY.

LORD TIVERTON sat back in his chair, and turned his gaze upon Alice. Then he looked once more upon the mother, and he saw that she was much agitated. She noticed his look, and she could not repress the emotions which his presence called up.

"I wish I were sure," he murmured to himself, while he bowed his head.

The doctor heard his words, and he turned towards him.

"Did you speak to me?" the latter asked.

"To you?" the earl uttered, starting up and looking his companion in the face. "No, no—I spoke to myself."

Dillon smiled, for he did not know how deeply the earl was moved, and he was upon the point of making some light remark, when he detected the plums which lay upon the table.

"Ah," he uttered, "you must excuse me if I help myself to some of this fruit. I am extremely fond of it."

"You may have as much as you please," returned Alice; "but I should hardly recommend it. I cannot eat it."

"And why not? Is it not ripe?"

"It may be ripe, sir, but not very clean."

"Not clean? Why the plums look clean enough."

"And perhaps they may be," said Alice, as

she arose from her chair and approached the table. "They were left here by an old woman who came begging, and her appearance was filthy in the extreme. You will notice that some of the plums are quite dirty."

As the maiden spoke she picked up one—the one she had examined before—and some of the dirt was still upon it.

"An old woman dressed in black, wasn't it?" said the earl.

"Yes, sir," answered Alice.

"I saw her. She came out of the park this morning."

"Yes, yes," added the doctor. "I remember now of having seen her. Very likely she stole these plums, for I think Sir William has some just like them."

"She said she got them there; and that some one gave them to her," explained Alice.

In the meantime the doctor had taken up some of the fruit, and was examining it attentively. While he was doing this his countenance changed, and his hand trembled.

"What is it?" asked the earl, who had been watching him.

Dillon held the same plum in his hand which Alice had picked up, and had found a place where the skin had been punctured and then closed over again. He opened the plum, and the

substance which Alice had thought looked like dirty flour was found to have been jammed down into the fruit.

"This is dirty," said the doctor, as he placed that plum one side, and then pawed over the dish for another. He found several which had been operated upon in the same way, and at length he looked up from his work, and his face wore a look of startling meaning.

"An old woman, you say, left these here?" he said, turning to the maiden.

"Yes, sir."

"And do you know who she was?"

"No, sir."

"Did you ever see her before?"

"Not that I know of."

"But you would know her if you should see her again?"

"Should."

"You must take these plums in the basin and bury them. Bury them so deep that nothing can dig them up. These which I have picked out here, I shall keep."

"But what is it, doctor?" asked the widow, with nervous anxiety.

"What is the matter with them?" added Alice.

"Ay, doctor," said the earl, "what in the name of wonder have you found?"

"I'll tell you," returned Dillon, slowly and emphatically; "These plums have just about half of them been poisoned!"

"Poisoned!" uttered the widow.

"Poisoned!" echoed Alice.

"Good heavens!" cried the earl. "Poisoned, did you say?"

"They have, most assuredly. There is poison enough in this single plum to destroy life."

The mother and child both started to their feet, and moved towards the table, but the mother was the most pale and excited. She trembled violently, and her lips were like chalk.

"This is a most strange affair," the earl said, "and one which should be looked into."

"It must be that Sir William's gardener prepared this fruit for the purpose of punishing thieves," suggested Alice. "Perhaps the fruit has been often stolen, and this was for a lesson to the marauders; and then perhaps the woman did steal these from the garden."

"No, no," returned Dillon, with a shake of the head. "No sane man would have dared to do that. If thieves are in the habit of troubling the fruit the gardener might possibly place some

powerful medication in their way, but he would not use a deadly poison."

"He might not have known 'twas such."

"Such virulent poison as this would not be likely to get confounded with simpler compounds or simples. No, there must be some design here."

"And it shall be looked after, too," added Tiverton. "This old woman may be a villain."

The widow moved close to the earl's side and laid her hand upon his arm, and while she looked earnestly into his face she uttered, in a low, hoarse whisper:

"You do not think Sir William would have—"

"Would have what?" asked the earl, starting to his feet.

"No, no," the poor woman uttered, "he would not—I know he would not."

"Ah, I see now!" said Lord Tiverton, in slow, marked tones. "You are—"

"Arnot Tiverton, speak not a word. You have sought my roof, and I have opened my doors. When you go forth, let your lips be sealed. I am but what I seem—a poor, degraded—No! a poor honest woman. Now let it pass."

The widow had spoken very lowly, and with a strange emphasis. The earl sat back in his chair, and as his eyes wandered to where Alice sat, he saw that she was pale and trembling. When she heard her mother pronounce that name she knew that she had been conversing with the proud father of her lover, and under the influence of the emotions that seized upon her she had sank down into a chair and covered her face with her hands. She looked up once, and found the earl gazing upon her, and then she bowed her head and covered her face again, for her heart was beating wildly now, and the blood was rushing up with more than its wonted force to her brow.

The doctor gazed upon the strange scene in blank surprise, but he caught the eye of the earl, and he read there a sign for him to keep silent.

"Lady," said Tiverton, looking steadily into the widow's face, "there is surely harm meditated here in this poisoned fruit, but I trust you will not so deeply wrong a noble and generous man, as to entertain for an instant the idea which you came nigh whispering to me. I do not think that poison was meant for you."

"Then it was meant for my child," said Mrs. Woodley, bringing her mind back to the fruit.

"I think it was—that is, if it was meant fatally for either. But I will look after it. Miss Woodley, will you give me a description of the woman who left these plums?"

"Yes, sir, as near as I can," returned Alice, looking up, and speaking in a tremulous voice. "She appeared to be quite old, if I might judge from her form and carriage. Her dress was of faded, dirty black silk, and on her head she wore a black hood. Her hair was of a light flaxen hue, and seemed to have a yellowish cast. I could tell but little of her features, for her face was very dirty, and she kept it turned away as much as possible."

"Was she a large woman?"

"No, sir, she was rather small, though of a medium size."

"And did she seem perfectly easy while here?"

"Well—I should say, not. She rather appeared uneasy and anxious, though I did not particularly notice it at the time."

"I may come across her; and if I do she will most assuredly hear from me. Come, doctor."

The earl arose as he spoke, and the doctor followed his example, and then they both turned towards the door. The widow started from her chair as though she would have detained the nobleman, but she did not speak. He noticed the movement, however, and he turned towards her.

"My good woman," he said, "I am not here to pry into your secrets, and I have discovered nothing that is worth the telling. You have nothing to fear."

As he thus spoke he turned from the apartment and passed out into the front garden. The doctor just waited to tell the widow that he would call again when he could make it convenient, and then he turned towards Alice, and once more admonished her to bury the poisoned damsons deep down in the earth where they could do no harm. After this he followed his companion out to the carriage, and soon they drove off.

The mother and child were once more alone. Alice went and sat down by her parent's side, and looked earnestly up into her face.

"Mother," she said, "will you not tell me what all this means?"

"What, child?"

"This strange conduct of yourself and Lord Tiverton. And then, too, the same strange thing when Sir William Brentford was here?"

"Alice," spoke the widow, after a few moments' hesitation, "I know that you would not pain your mother."

"O, no, no. You know I would not."

"Then let this matter rest for the present where it is. Sometime, perhaps, I may tell you all; but not now. Go, now, and destroy that fatal fruit."

The maiden started at the mention of the fruit, and her face turned pale again.

"O," she uttered, "it cannot be possible that this bitter cup was meant for me—or for you. Who lives that could wish us harm?"

"I know not, my child," returned the mother, with a sad shake of the head. "It may be some mistake. I hope it is. But go now and bury them, and we will talk of that afterwards."

"Yet we have one friend," said Alice, as she took up the basin of fruit. "One friend who will not forsake us."

The mother looked inquiringly into her daughter's face.

"He has saved our lives to-day," continued the maiden, "and we need not fear to trust him. I mean the mighty Spirit of all things—the God of mercy and love."

Alice walked past where her mother sat, but the latter did not look up. She dared not let her child see the expression which she knew dwelt at that moment upon her face. She was wondering if God was *always* kind. Sometimes she had almost lost her hope even in him!

* * * * *

Doctor Dillon and the earl were riding on towards the hall, and for a long distance they had ridden in silence.

"My lord," said the doctor at length, "you seemed to recognize the widow."

"Yes," was Tiverton's reply.

"You have known her before?"

"Have I?"

"It appeared so."

"And so it may be. But we will say no more on that subject."

The doctor took the hint, for it was a palpable one, and after a few moments of thought he resumed:

"Well—let that pass; but what can you think of those poisoned plums?"

"You are sure they were poisoned?"

"Sure?" iterated Dillon. "Why, the first plum I examined contained nearly two grains of pure strychnia, and less than a grain will destroy life. Once I tried its power upon a rabbit, and

half a grain, blown into its throat through a pipe-stem, caused death in four minutes and a half. You can judge for yourself."

"Then it must have been meant murderously," said the earl.

"Of course it was, and now have you any idea of who did this?"

"Not yet, not yet, doctor."

"And can you imagine *why* it was done?"

"No, not yet. But I shall try to find out. I have not even well-founded suspicions yet."

"It is a severe thing," said the doctor, shaking his head impressively, "and it should be sifted to the bottom. The woman was surely at the hall this morning, and we may find out something concerning her from some of the servants."

"Doctor Dillon, I must ask of you a favor," uttered the earl, looking into his companion's face earnestly.

"Speak on."

"You shall not mention at the hall a word of what has happened this day. Let me have the handling of the subject, and if the truth is to be arrived at, I assure you I will find it out."

The physician promised, and he promised, too, without asking any questions, for he knew that he should be made acquainted with the facts when they came to light.

The truth was, Lord Tiverton had his suspicions, though they were very vague and undefined.

CHAPTER XV.

A STARTLING RECOGNITION. LIGHT ON A DARK SUBJECT.

THE old man who had been saved from the wreck was now quite comfortable, though very weak. According to his account he had had a severe fever in London, and as soon as he had been able to venture out he had secured a passage for Newcastle in the ship "Fintona." He stated that the ship was off the Naze when the storm first came on, and that the captain stood off, hoping that it would not last long. He dared not attempt to run into the Stour, and hoped he could make a good sea-berth and ride it out; but when he got up off Aldbrough the storm had increased so that he was obliged to house his top-gallant masts, and with what sail he had left he tried for awhile to work off to sea. But at length he was obliged to heave-to with a lee-shore close at hand, and from that moment all government over the ship was lost.

There was considerable intelligence in the man's eyes, and his language was well chosen, and spoken with clear pronunciation. He would not tell his business, his name, nor anything else by which any idea could be gained of his character or habits. It was towards evening, and the weak man had been bolstered up to a sitting posture; and thus he sat when Sir William Brentford entered the room. It was the first time the baronet had seen him since he had been brought to the hall. The invalid looked up as the host entered, and a perceptive tremor shook his frame,

but he quickly composed himself, and turned his face from the light as much as possible.

"Well, my friend," said the baronet, taking a seat near the bed, "how do you feel to-day?"

"Much better," answered the invalid. "I am in hopes to soon be able to relieve you of my company."

"I beg you will not make yourself uneasy on that account. We saved your life from drowning, and we want to finish the work now we've begun it. You will find a home here as long as you need it, and good nursing, too."

"But I cannot repay you, sir."

"Will you have the kindness to wait until we ask you for pay. I would have you understand that Sir William Brentford doesn't take pay for doing deeds of kindness."

The old man upon the bed started at the name of the baronet, but Sir William thought 'twas only a twinge of pain, and he paid it no attention.

"You were bound for Newcastle, I think?" the baronet said, after he had waited some time for some remark, but without getting any.

"Yes, sir."

"Do you belong there?"

"No."

"Ah, you belong in London, I presume?"

"Well—as much there as anywhere."

"I don't know that I have heard your name yet!"

"And I do not know that I have told it yet," was the laconic response.

"Have you any objections?"

"Not if you merely wish for a name by which to call me."

"Of course we should like to know how to address you."

"Well, then, you may call me Brown. That is a good name, and an easy one to pronounce. You may call me Brown."

Sir William was a little moved by this manner of answering, and for a few moments there were anger marks upon his face, but he soon overcame his feelings, and he thought that perhaps the man's mind was a little injured, or that he might have some good reason for keeping his real name a secret. At all events the baronet knew that the cognomen he had given was a false one. After awhile he resumed:

"The doctor informs me that you will soon be well again if you have proper care."

"So he told me, and I am thankful for it, for I should like to be on my way as soon as possible."

At that moment the sun, which had been behind the top of a thick tree, threw its beams into the room, and they fell upon the invalid's face. The profile was relieved most strikingly, and as the baronet saw it he started forward and leaned over the bed. The sick man quickly turned his face away from the sun, but in doing so he presented it more fully to his host.

"By my soul, I have seen that face before," Sir William uttered, with much earnestness. "I have, most surely."

"One like it, perhaps," the man said, quite coolly.

"No, by heavens—I have seen that same face. God never made two faces like that."

"Don't be too sure, sir."

"Ah, I know you!"

The man started and covered up his face with the bed-clothes, but the baronet tore them off.

"Look ye, Sir Harrold Radston, I know you!"

"Are you sure?"

"By the Holy Book, I am."

"Well, then it's no use for me to deny it."

"It is not, for I know you."

"Then let it go so."

The baronet sat back in his chair and clenched his hands together. His face had turned pale, and his teeth were set firmly together. He

gazed upon that man before him, and his eyes burned almost like coals.

"Harrold Radston," he said, in a low, grinding tone, "I would save the life of the dirtiest dog in the world if it laid in my power, but had I known you, you should never have passed my threshold, even though you had died at my door like a worm."

"Your wish is very kind, Sir William," returned Radston, while a faint smile worked about his bearded lips; "and you can even now have me carried out and laid upon the earth. You might not wait long to see me die!"

"No, no, I wish you no ill. I would not lift a finger to harm you. When you have fully recovered I will even furnish you with money to set you on your way; but had I known you, you should not have slept beneath my roof."

"Ah, Sir William, as we grow old we should grow forgiving."

"Forgiving? Did you say *forgiving*, Harrold Radston?"

"I said so."

"And you talk of forgiveness. O, I should like to see the angel that could forgive such as you!"

"You are that angel, Sir William," spoke the sick man, calmly and coolly.

"Me!" uttered the baronet, starting up again and clenching his fists. "O, I call on God to witness: When I forgive you—may my—"

"Stop, stop, Sir William Brentford. Beware how you speak!"

There was something in the tones of that voice, and in the manner in which those words were spoken, that caused the baronet to hesitate, and his sentence was not finished.

"Well," he said, after some apparent consideration, "let it pass. We are both old now, and death will soon come to settle up our earthly accounts. You know best how you can meet the black spirit."

"Well enough, Sir William. I can meet him as well as I have met other spirits that come occasionally to visit me. Don't you sometimes have spirits come to visit you, that make you melancholy like—that make you almost feel as though death would be a—"

"Harrold Radston, stop! I would hear no more. Neither you nor I have the power to wipe out the deep condemnation of the past, and we should not drag it up to sight now. If you would even remain here until you are a well

man speak no more like that. I hope you understand?"

"Perfectly."

"Then beware! I shall leave you now, and I hope I shall see you no more. Yet the doctor shall visit you, and you shall have kind nursing. I hope you will not speak your name to any other soul within this dwelling."

"I have not spoken it yet."

"Well—and you must not. I hope you may recover, and I hope, too, you may live long enough to die a happy man."

"That sounds wonderfully like forgiveness, Sir William, did you know it?"

"Let it be what it may, I mean it. I don't wish to have my heart loaded down with ill feelings now, for they make me miserable; and God knows I have enough to make me unhappy without cherishing anger. O, Sir Harrold, you have been a sore thing in my soul!"

The baronet bowed his head as he spoke, and a big drop rolled down his furrowed cheek and fell upon the floor. The sick man saw it, and the expression of his face was changed, but he did not speak.

"Farewell," spoke Sir William, starting up from his chair, and turning towards the door.

"You will see me again?" said Radston.

"Not if I can help it."

"But you shall not try to help it."

"Never mind that now. I can read my own will better than another can read it for me. So I bid you farewell, and I hope, if we do meet again, that we shall both be happier."

Sir William turned towards the door as he spoke, and passed out from the room. He sought his study, and when once there he sank down into a chair and buried his face in his hands. He was deeply moved, and for a long while he sat there and murmured over incoherent sentences to himself. He had been thus some half-hour or more, when he was aroused by the opening of his door, and on looking up he beheld the earl.

"How now, Sir William? at your sulks again?"

"No—only thinking, Tiverton, that's all."

"Then your thoughts must be very weighty."

"So they are—to me. Do you not sometimes have weighty thoughts?"

"O, very often. I have had some very lately."

Gradually the old baronet became social, and the smiles began to lighten up his features; and

for awhile the earl rattled away on all sorts of subjects. At length, however, he drew his chair nearer to his friend, and soberly asked:

"Have you any poison in the house, Sir William?"

"Poison? Why, what on earth are you going to do with poison?"

"I'll tell you after I get it; but you may rest assured I don't mean to make any human application."

"Well, I believe I have some."

"What kind?"

"Strychnia, I think. I got it to poison foxes and skunks, and other vermin that trouble my poultry."

The earl started slightly, but he did not exhibit any unusual emotion.

"Did you use it yourself?" he asked, carelessly.

"No."

"You let your gardener use it, I suppose?"

"No—I was afraid to trust such dangerous stuff in the hands of a bungler, and I didn't let any of my thick-skulled fellows use it."

"Ah—that's right. One cannot be too careful of such stuff."

"That's a fact, Tiverton."

"I suppose that you wouldn't trust such an article out of your own hands, except to Tom," said the earl.

"I faith, Tiverton, I wouldn't trust him to keep it. I'd let him use it, but if he should attempt to keep it, he'd be just as likely to leave it out on his wash-stand as anywhere."

"Then I should like to know whom you do trust?"

"Why, if I remember rightly, I got Belinda to take that. But what's the matter?"

"Only a twinge in my side, Sir William. I am subject to them."

"Then get your son to doctor you. He cured me of the twinge in my feet."

"Perhaps I shall."

"That's right. And now if you want any of that strychnia I'll send to Belinda and get some."

"No, no, never mind. When I want to use it I'll either let you know, or else go to her myself."

"Do just as you please."

"I will. But, by the way, Sir William," uttered the earl, as though a new idea had suddenly come to his mind, "did you see anything of an old woman about here this morning?"

"What kind of an old woman?"

"An old woman with a faded black silk dress, and a black hood, and flaxen hair, and somewhat bent?"

"No, I did not."

"You don't know of any such woman about here?"

"No, not now. We used to have an old woman here something like that. Ha, ha, ha—she was a jolly old thing. She was my nurse—she served my father many years, and was old when I was born. She had flaxen hair—only she stole it—'twasn't her own. She was bald as a fish, and wore a wig. She used to tote about with an old black silk gown and hood, and her wig was flaxen enough, for I candidly believe 'twas made of flax. But she's dead—and been dead these ten years, so it couldn't have been her, even if there was such a one seen."

"I think there was such a one seen," said the earl, "and she was about here this morning. She had some plums which she said were given her here."

"Zounds!" cried the baronet, in high dudgeon, "I'd like to know if that rascally gardener has been giving away my fruit. I'll call him and find out."

"I would. Call him at once," urged the earl, who was somewhat anxious on the subject.

"I will." And as Sir William spoke he started up and pulled the bell cord with great violence.

Soon a servant appeared, and the baronet ordered that the gardener should be sent up at once. Ere long the man made his appearance. He was a stout, rough, honest looking fellow, and one whom a thief would be likely to avoid if possible.

"Hugh," said the baronet, speaking rather sternly—a thing he seldom did to the faithful man; "did you know there had been fruit stolen from the garden?"

"Yes, zur—I did know it," returned the gardener, in broad accents.

"And do you know who did it?"

"No, zur, I doant. Last night I zhut th' garden up, an' this mornin' I found the plom trees be robbed. An' it's a fact, zur, there b'ant no tracks at the gate nor at the wall."

"That's strange," said the baronet, considerably vexed. "But tell me, Hugh, did you see an old woman about here this morning?"

"I did, zur," replied the man, speaking quickly, and elevating his eyebrows. "She be an old 'ooman in black, an' she was so coomin' nigh to your old nurse, Sir William, 'at I could 'ave took my bounden oath afore the 'squire 'at she was the nurse. But you see I had the young colt by the nip, an' I couldn't git away to hail her. She be gone now, tho', for I couldn't find her nowhere."

"And where did you see this woman, Hugh?"

"In the park, an' she was makin' way for the road."

Sir William was puzzled, and he looked inquisitively at the earl.

"I'll tell you what," said the latter, "just let this matter drop now, and I will get at it some how. And you," the earl continued, turning to the gardener, "must keep perfectly silent about this affair, for we want to find out who is the thief. You wont mention it."

"No, zur—indeed I wont."

The gardener was then dismissed, and after he was gone, Sir William said, with a light smile:

"Seems to me you are very eager all at once to save my fruit."

"I am, Sir William, and when I have found the thief I will tell you why." The earl had found some light on the subject of his search.

"But you aint going to use poison?"

"No—sir. But wait until I find the thief, and then you shall know."

The baronet said no more, for he had confidence enough in the earl to feel sure that nothing would be done out of the way, and also, that whatever was done, would be done for the best.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE FATHER AND SON. AN EAVESDROPPER.

ALBION TIVERTON had been sent for to attend his father, and without hesitation he answered the summons. He found his parent in the drawing-room which had been appropriated to his private use, and after he had entered and closed the door behind him, he remained standing for some moments awaiting his father's commands. The earl was sitting at his table engaged in writing, and he did not look up until he had finished his sentence. Then he said, in a calm, business-like tone:

"Take a seat, Albion."

The youth seated himself, and his father continued writing. Our hero could see that the earl was very sober and earnest, and that the subject that rested upon his mind was of more than ordinary import. At first he trembled with apprehension lest he were to receive some severe reprimand, but as he studied the countenance of his parent that fear vanished, for he saw that every emotion depicted upon it was of a kindly character. At length the earl laid his pen aside and leaned back in his chair.

"My son," he said, while a proud light beamed in his clear, bright eye, "I have good news for you."

Albion leaned forward, but did not speak.

"I think that the history of our navy records but few instances of one so young as yourself

receiving such honor. I have received from the admiralty your commission."

"Commission?" uttered the youth, starting up. "My commission?"

"Yes, my son. You are a lieutenant in the royal navy."

Albion Tiverton gazed a moment into his father's face, and then he sank back into his chair, and it was sometime ere he could speak. He had not anticipated this. It was even beyond his most sanguine hopes. The most he had dared to hope for was, that he might receive an appointment in some small vessel as acting master. But to receive the full commission as a graded lieutenant was to him almost an anomaly. Not that he felt incompetent to perform the duties of the office, but he had never allowed himself to think of such a thing.

"I have received a letter from the Lord High Admiral, and he states that you have— But I will read that portion of the letter."

The earl took up a heavily sealed envelope from his table and drew therefrom a letter, and having unfolded it he ran his eyes down the page until he found the paragraph to which he alluded.

"Now listen, my son, and you shall hear it. 'And furthermore,' writes his lordship, 'let me say that your son richly merits the distinguished

honor we have unanimously conferred upon him. At his examination, when he was passed, he evinced more practical knowledge and intuitive sense than many an older officer. In giving him his commission we are actuated alone by the desire to serve our nation, and we believe that he will be an honor to the important station. To be sure, he had been somewhat wild and untamable, but he was young and buoyant. His superiors inform us that the first sign of insubordination yet remains to be shown by him, and that he has ever been faithful to his commands, and immediate upon duty. We believe that the importance of the station he is now called upon to sustain will impress itself upon his mind, and that henceforth he will assume that dignity which should characterize an officer of his rank. He will feel this, we are sure. In concluding, allow us to congratulate your lordship upon the pride which must result to you from the possession of so noble and brave a son. Lieutenant Tiverton will be called into service on the 29th day of September next, and at that time he will report himself here. So he has yet over two months for recreation, and, we trust, profitable study."

As the earl ceased reading, he folded the letter up and placed it back in the envelope, and then turning to his son he said, while a rich moisture gathered in his eyes:

"My boy, this has given me more real pleasure than any other event that has happened since the moment when I first beheld your infant face, and knew that God had given me a son. Now what are your feelings on the subject?"

"I cannot explain them, sir," replied the youth, struggling to keep back the happy tears that came to his eyes. "I can only say that they shall find me as generous of duty as they have been of kindness and honor. I will never cast a stain upon the epaulette I am now entitled to wear."

"I believe you, my noble boy," cried the earl, arising from his chair, and grasping his son by the hand. "I believe you, and I believe, too, that you will honor your station. You must not forget that you are now a man."

"I shall not, sir," answered Albion, as he once more seated himself; and then, while a change came over his countenance, he added: "Perhaps you have not known fully the real feelings that have grown up in my soul. You have not known what hopes and aspirations have found a home in my heart. You know not how

often I have looked forward to the manhood that is coming upon me, and studied how I could best make it honorable and respected. To be sure I have been wild, but never recklessly so—I have been at times thoughtless, but not when duty demanded thought. The future shall show you whether your son shall honor the proud name he inherits, or whether he be unworthy of it." The earl's lips trembled as he spoke, for his emotions of gratitude and pride were deep and soul-sent:

"I fear not for that," he said, "I fear not for that. I only fear that I may be too proud—too happy."

"Cherish what pride you will in me, my father, and I will endeavor never to crush it," uttered Albion; and as he spoke he laid his brow upon his hand, and the tears trickled down his cheeks.

For some time there was silence in the apartment, and gradually the thoughts of both father and son seemed to wander off upon another subject. Albion was the first to break the spell, and when he spoke it was in a hushed, eager voice:

"Father, you spoke to me of Belinda Warner."

The earl started as he heard that name, and his eye burned strangely. For the moment Albion feared that there was evil to him in that look.

"Yes, yes, I did," the parent replied, as he laid his hands together and clasped them tightly.

"You remember you said you had selected her for my wife?"

"Yes," returned the earl, vacantly, as though he were trying to think what he had said on some former occasion.

Twice did our hero attempt to speak before the words would come forth, but he calmed himself, for he saw that his father still looked kind.

"Then let me ask what your mind is now?" he said at length.

"You need not mention the girl's name to me again. I was blind when I conceived the idea. Belinda Warner is not the woman for your wife, nor yet for any man. She is—"

"What, father?"

"Never mind. Let her name pass for the present."

Albion felt much relieved for the moment, but soon there came a cloud over his soul, and he trembled. But he was resolved to speak now, and he turned towards his father with the fixed

purpose of knowing the fate that was in store for him, for he had made up his mind since he had entered that room that he would take no important step in life without his father's full and free consent.

"Father," he said, in a tremulous tone, "you remember that on the night when you spoke to me of Belinda Warner, there was also another name mentioned?"

"I remember," returned the earl, speaking coolly and thoughtfully.

"It was of a poor fisher-girl," resumed the youth, nervously.

"Yes, of Alice Woodley."

"Yes. And I wanted you to see her."

"I have seen her."

"But I wanted you to converse with her."

"I have conversed with her. I have seen her alone, when she knew not who I was."

"You have?" uttered Albion in astonishment.

"Yes. I called there yesterday with Doctor Dillon."

Albion gazed hard into his father's face but he could read nothing there, and after another effort to calm himself he said:

"If you have seen her, then you may have learned something of her character?"

"I did."

"And is she not all that you could ask for in a wife?"

"I am not sure of that, my son."

"Not sure," iterated the youth, convulsively.

"Is she not beautiful?"

"Yes—very beautiful."

"And intelligent?"

"I have seen but very few females of her age with so much true intelligence."

"And is she not pure-minded and virtuous?"

"She must be."

"And of a superior disposition?"

"I am sure of it, my son."

"And do you not think her capable of loving a husband with her whole soul?"

"Yes."

"And of being most true and faithful?"

"Yes, yes, Albion—I cannot deny it. Alice Woodley is a remarkable girl. I do not know that I ever met with one more perfectly beautiful, or less endowed with objectionable qualities."

"Then may I not make her my wife? I have resolved that I will not take an important step in life without your full and free consent, though

if Alice Woodley be torn from me I shall never marry another."

"O, Albion," the earl said, while he shook his head reprovingly, "you must not express yourself too decidedly. You are yet young."

"I know I am young, but yet I can judge deeply of those feelings that have entered into my soul. The very circumstances under which my acquaintance with Alice Woodley commenced are peculiar, and with them her presence will ever be associated. I love her with my whole soul, and that love is founded, not upon sudden passion created by her matchless beauty, but first upon deep gratitude, and next upon a knowledge of her worthiness and virtue. That love has become a part of myself, and I might as well think to tear out my manhood from my soul as to tear her image from my heart. Ah, father, it would be a dangerous experiment. But of one thing I am as sure as you are sure that the sun shines: No other person can ever find that place in my heart which she has taken up. Were I to give my hand to another while she lived I should give it without love, and were I to pledge a husband's love before the holy altar I should but perjure myself before God. I speak now only the deep convictions of my soul."

The earl gazed for some moments upon his son without speaking. His countenance underwent a variety of changes, and it could be plainly seen that he was deeply embarrassed. At length he said:

"I cannot give my consent to your union with that girl, Albion."

The youth's countenance fell in an instant.

"You have not thought," he gasped, "you have not considered. You would not have me believe this?"

"I cannot give my consent."

"Tell me truly—do you mean so? Are you fixed in that opinion?"

"I am, my son."

"Then," said Albion, in a tone which showed how poignant was the sting he felt, "my fate is fixed. I will not break my self-made promise. In me the house of Tiverton and Winchester must end, for I shall never—"

"Stop, my boy, you know not what you say."

"Ah, father, I know too well," the youth said, shaking his head sadly. "You have spoken that which shuts my heart up forever!"

"You forget your age, Albion. A few years of excitement in your noble profession will wipe

this all out, and then you will thank me for what I have done."

"Say no more, sir," uttered the young man, rising to his feet. "You do not know me as I know myself. You have crushed the last hope of joy in my soul, and henceforth I am but as an old man who has left earth and its pleasures behind him. If you could see my heart you would understand what I mean. But I shall not blame you, as I once thought I should, for I hope you mean me well. I shall see you again when this blow is worn away with prayer, and I hope I may live to be yet what once I pictured to myself. Farewell, father—"

"Stop, Albion."

The young man stopped and looked into his father's face. The earl had expected to see his son weep, and hear him burst forth into a paroxysm of grief and anger. He had not looked for such keen, deep anguish as he now knew possessed his son's soul, and he was moved. He saw the tearless anguish that tortured the boy's handsome features, and he knew that the heart was strained to its utmost.

"Albion," he continued, after gazing a few moments into his son's face, "I did not say that I would *never* give my consent."

"How?" uttered the youth, starting forward.

"I did not say that I would never give my consent to your union with Alice Woodley. But I cannot give it now. Do not ask me why at present. Perhaps—mind—I say, *perhaps*—at some future time I may give my full and free consent; and if I do I will take Alice Woodley to my bosom and love her as a child. I

hope you will place confidence enough in me to trust me without asking further questions."

"O, most joyfully, father. You will consent, I know you will."

"Be not too sure; but of one thing you may be sure: Be my decision what it may, I shall be governed alone by the dictates of a desire for your welfare."

Albion sat down again and leaned his head upon his hands, and now the tears started from his eyes, but they were few, and the youth soon succeeded in forcing them back.

"I shall write to the admiralty that you will be on hand at the specified time," said the earl, again taking his pen and dipping it into the ink.

"Of course," returned Albion, looking up.

At that moment there was a movement near the door, and from sudden impulse Albion started up and opened it. He looked out into the corridor, and he saw the skirt of a female dress just disappearing around the angle of the passage.

"What is it?" asked his father, as he returned to the room.

"Only an eavesdropper, that's all."

"Ha! Who?"

"It was Miss Warner's dress."

"Miss Warner had better be thinking of the future," said the earl, and as he spoke, he resumed his writing. His hand trembled slightly, as though something of startling moment was upon his mind. Albion noticed it, and he thought his father was only vexed because the girl had been listening to their conversation.

CHAPTER XVII.

A GLOOMY TRANSACTION.

WHEN Lord Tiverton came out from his room he inquired for Belinda Warner, but she was not to be found. One of the servants at length informed him that she had gone down the road some half hour before, and turned into the cross path to Aldborough; and soon afterwards he found Miss Warner's maid, and she informed him that her mistress had gone to see an old woman who lay sick a few miles distant. The earl shook his head when he heard this, and then went to seek Sir William, while Albion rejoined Tom and took his gun for a hunting excursion.

It was on the following day that Alice Woodley sat in her sitting-room sewing. She had been very sad and thoughtful of late, for she had much to make her so. The visit of Lord Tiverton—the strange conduct of her mother, and her subsequent melancholy—and the startling event of the poisoned plums. At times one of these subjects alone would engross her thoughts, and at others the whole of them would dwell in her mind in wild, troublous confusion. She had not seen Albion since the visit of his father, and she feared that she should see him no more. She tried to school her heart to this belief, and to this end she told herself that she could never be the wife of the man she loved, and that it were best she should see him no more; but she could not make this stay in her soul, for just when she would fain believe that she had succeeded the image of the noble youth would leap to her mind, and the startling love would spring up in her heart, and then she would hope that Albion might come to her once more, at least. She could not hide from herself the fact that lasting

separation from the idol of her soul would make her very miserable.

The widow spoke but very little now. She moved slowly and thoughtfully about her humble dwelling, and often tears would come to her eyes. Yet it did not seem to be for herself that she suffered, for when her cheeks were wet, and when she looked most sad, the name of her sweet child was upon her lips. She tried to hide all this from her child, but she could not. Yet Alice asked no questions.

It was towards the middle of the afternoon, and Alice had sat there by her window since dinner. She was just leaning back from her work, and thinking of taking a run in her garden, when she heard footsteps without, and on turning her head she saw a man approaching the house. He was a stout, powerful fellow, habited in the rough garb of a sailor, and when he reached the door he knocked loudly.

"Be there a Widow Woodley lives here?" he asked, as Alice made her appearance.

"Yes, sir."

"I must see her."

Alice called her mother, and in the meantime she invited the man to walk in; but he said he could not stop, as he was obliged to keep on towards Dunwich. Soon the widow appeared.

"This be Mrs. Woodley?"

"It is, sir."

"Do you know the folks 'at live in the 'ouse beyant the hill on the Saxmundham road?"

"Yes."

"Well—the old 'ooman what lives there be almost dyin', and they want ye to come right

over, an' I told 'em as I 'were coomin' by here I'd tell ye. So good-by to ye."

The man having thus delivered his errand turned from the door and kept on his way. The widow was not a woman to shut her ears to the call of the needy. She knew the honest people to whom the man had alluded, and without hesitation she prepared herself to visit them, promising her child that she would return before dark. Alice felt some strange misgivings when she saw her mother turn away from the cot, but she would not call her back. She tried rather to quell her uneasiness, and make herself cheerful. She did not go out into the garden as she had intended, but as soon as her mother was out of sight she returned to her window and sat down. She had hardly resumed her sewing when she heard footsteps again, and on looking out she saw the same man, who had just called, returning, and another accompanied him.

"Look here, miss," he said, entering the house without ceremony, "your little self is wanted too."

"Me—wanted?" uttered Alice, starting to her feet. She was frightened, for the men, both of them, looked reckless and bad.

"Yes—you be wanted, so put on yer duds and coom along."

"But what—what mean you?" asked the poor girl, trembling at every joint.

"Never mind—only just coom wi' us, an' we'll tell ye in time. Where's yer hood an' yer shawl?"

Alice started back and grasped her chair for support, for a fear of some dread evil came over her. She remembered the poison, and this seemed something of a piece with it.

"Are you goin' to move?" cried the man, roughly. 'Cause if yer aint we'll just help ye. B'aint this yer hood an' shawl, eh?"

The fellow had espied these articles hanging on a peg, and he took them down without further ceremony. Then he stepped forward and laid his brawny, heavy hand upon her shoulder.

"B'aint these yourn?"

"Yes, sir—but I cannot leave the house now."

"Can't, eh? By the top o' the skies ye must. So coom along. An' don't ye cry, neither, 'cause if yer do you'll just get yer mouth stop-ped. D'ye understand?"

Alice sank down upon her knees and clasped her hands, but the ruffians took no notice of her entreaties. They roughly lifted her to her feet and started towards the door. When they had

reached the little front garden she sprang from them and ran with all her might, but she could not run far. She was soon overtaken, and when she cried out in her agony they tied a dirty handkerchief tightly over her mouth, and then hurried her away up the beach. Neither of them spoke for some time, but only seemed intent on hurrying as fast as possible. At length they came to a point where the beach took a sharp turn about a bluff, and just beyond here Alice saw a large boat moored close in to the shore. It was a sort of lighter, and must have been of some thirty or forty tons burden. When the men reached the place where the boat was fast one of them lifted Alice in his arms and waded out and put her on board, while the other cast off the bow fast, and then waded out himself. The heavy sails were soon set, and ere long the lugger was shooting swiftly out to sea.

Now the bandage was taken from the girl's mouth, and she was advised to put on the shawl and hood. The wind was from the westward, and as soon as the boat was well out, her head was hauled to the southward.

"Now, miss, you may go into the cuddy if ye want to," said the man whom she had first seen, at the same time pointing to a door forward which opened into quite a large berth.

"Not now, not now," uttered the poor girl. "First tell me what this means? Tell me where you are carrying me?"

"S'pose'n we didn't know ourselves?" was the response.

"But you must know. You surely know why you have torn me away from my home?" Alice cried, with her hands clasped, and her eyes glaring almost wildly upon her ruffianly captors.

"We don't know nothin'," answered the first villain, who held the tiller. "So you needn't ask no questions, for you won't get no answers. If you ken understand plain English I should think you might understand that, now."

Alice looked up into the man's face, and she saw by the cold hardness that dwelt there that she had nothing to hope from him. At that moment she cast her eyes upon the shore and found herself just opposite her little cot. She could see the door open as it had been left when they dragged her out, and she could see the rose bushes and creeping honeysuckles that grew about her window. Then she thought of her poor mother, and she wondered how the stricken parent would feel when she returned and found

the cot deserted. The thought shot like an ice-bolt to her heart, and she groaned in agony. But the wind was fresh, and the lugger flew on. Soon the little cot was indistinct in the distance, and when Alice looked shoreward again she saw the stout walls of Linden Hall. She thought then of him whom she so fondly loved, and she wondered if he would not save her if he knew where she was. Then she thought of the proud earl, his father, and, like a spectre at night, came the thought of this outrage in connexion with him.

Alice Woodley started up and gazed towards the hall as though she expected to see a bloody hand extended from it. The thought was in her soul, and she gave it heed. Perhaps, this was the way he had taken to save his son from the alliance. O, mercy! how the wild image of her fears ran riot upon her heart. She sank down and covered her face in the folds of her shawl. Could it be that it was he who had prepared those poisoned plums? She thought a moment, and she knew it was not. First, his manner at the time of the discovery was proof enough, but, secondly, she had a stronger proof still—a proof that admitted of no question, and that was, the man's very self—his noble standing, and his pure character. And if the earl did not that, then he did not this; for surely the same hand was in them both. The thought was a relief to the girl's mind—a relief so great that for a moment she almost forgot the sad fate that had overtaken her. Awhile she sat there and wondered who could thus meditate harm against her, but she could not imagine. She could remember many, many people to whom she had been kind, but not one—not one human being—not one living, sensible, feeling thing—could she remember of having harmed by either thought or deed.

"Don't you find it cold, miss?" asked the man at the helm.

Alice raised her face from beneath her shawl, and gazed up.

"O, sir, if you have mercy carry me back to my home—carry me back to my n. her. For the love of God, have compassion upon me. Tell me—O, tell me—how I have ever wronged you or done harm against you."

"You haven't, not as I knows on," replied the man.

"Then why do you treat me thus?"

"Didn't I tell you once that I shouldn't say a word?"

"Yes, yes—but you will answer that. You will tell me why you do this—whom you do it for? In mercy's name, tell me?"

"It's no use, miss, for I won't speak one word, so there's an end on't. Don't ye understand?"

Alice did understand very well, and once more she hid her face beneath the folds of her shawl. The sun was fast sinking towards the distant hills, and the air was already becoming cool. The boat had now run off to the southward and eastward until the land was dim in the distance, and ever and anon as Alice would turn her eyes towards the coast she would look towards the helmsman as though to speak, but she remembered his vow, and remained silent.

At length the sun went down, and the shore was lost in gloom. The men got out their compass and set it, and having lighted a lantern they placed it where its rays would fall upon the needle, and then the men changed places.

"Now, miss," said the man who had just been relieved from the helm, and who was the one that had been foremost in her abduction, "if you're a mind to get into the cabin an' lay down you are welcome to it. It's gettin' cold, an' I can promise ye it'll be colder yet afore it's warmer. If you'll go into the cabin I'll bunk outside; but if ye don't, I shall take it myself an' then you'll have to stay out here whether or no. Come, what say ye?"

Alice pondered a moment, and then asked:

"How much longer shall you be out?"

"Don't know," was the laconic response.

The poor girl said no more, but gathering her shawl more closely about her she went forward and entered the cuddy. She found the place almost spacious enough for her to stand erect, and there were four bunks in it. She selected one of the upper ones, and got into it. She could feel that the bedding was coarse and ragged, and from the faint glimmer that came from the last gleams of daylight that still lingered upon the water, she could see that it was dirty and rough. But she gave little heed to this—a simple shudder was all—and then she lay down.

But what feelings came to her as she lay there in the deep gloom and heard the dull breaking of the sea upon the bows at her head. Her heart did not leap wildly now—it was crushed and aching. The very torture of agony was rioting in her soul, and the fire of keenest pain was running through every nerve and vein. She heard her captors conversing in low tones, and for

awhile she listened attentively, for she hoped to learn something of their purpose concerning herself, but she could not understand them, and after trying some time in vain, she gave over the task and laid her head on the hard pillow. Grief had made her eyelids heavy, and at length she sank into a drowse.

The dull breaking of the waves mingled with the creaking of the blocks and the hum of the voices without still sounded in the poor girl's ears, and the sleep spirit waved its wand over her. She slept—but it was to be visited only by the most distressing dreams. She was back in her cot, and she sat by her own little window. Suddenly there came a cloud over the earth, and it grew dark and drear. She looked out upon the ocean, and a dread storm was upon it. The wind howled like a roaring beast, and the big seas lashed the shore like frantic giants. Still she sat there and gazed, and presently she saw a mountain of water, black and frightful, rolling slowly and fearfully towards the shore. It came nearer and nearer—it passed the bounds of the sand, and still on it came, black, terrible, and threatening. A deafening roar broke from its huge form, and in another instant it would have been upon her. She sprang up, and her head struck the solid beam above her. A low cry of fear and pain broke from her lips, and half fearful that she should see the black sea still rolling upon her she opened her eyes. The lantern sent its dull gleam into the place, and she saw the dim outlines of the opposite bunks. With a deep, heavy groan, she sank back again upon her cheerless pillow.

And at length again she slept. She was still at her window, and the storm was still upon the waters. The wind howled as before, and even the snug, firm-built cot was shaken to its foundations. Now there arose upon the surface of the ocean a great black monster. It had neither shape nor form, nor had it substance—but it seemed a spirit of gloom, and a dull death-groan went before it. Slowly it arose, and its way was towards the cot. Gradually the huge gloom dwindled in size and began to take form, and come from chaos into shape. It came on, on, on—and its form was now palpable and of import. Up the beach it made its way—through the garden fence it passed like air—the walls of the cot seemed gone—the window faded away—and she was upon a drear and lonely heath, with the wind howling fearfully, and the tall grass, all crisp and sear, waving like the rolls of the

sea. And that black presence was by her side. It had now become distinct, but when Alice looked up she only saw it as a shadow. She again bowed her head to the howling blast, and in a moment more she felt a sharp grip upon her shoulder. She turned her eyes upwards, and that form was now fully developed. It was the same that she had seen once before; there was the faded black gown, the close, black hood, and the dirty hands—only the face was the face of a demon, and the matted flaxen hair had changed to hissing serpents. The presence had a basket, and it was filled with all sorts of venomous reptiles—there were asps and scorpions, vipers and adders, lizards and toads, and with a fiendish, mocking laugh the black presence turned her basket up as though she would have emptied its frightful contents into the girl's lap! Alice uttered one long, loud shriek, and sprang from her berth. She sank down upon her knees, and in a moment more she felt a rough hand upon her shoulder, and another wild cry broke from her lips.

"What for the love of wonder and misery be you up to, miss?"

The frightened girl looked up and saw a man stooping over her, and by the fitful glare of the lantern she could see the features of her captor.

"What's the matter?" he asked, as she opened her eyes.

"Let me go, sir," she cried. "Let me go back to my bed. I only dreamed."

The man stepped back with a coarse laugh, and Alice crawled back to her bunk, but she slept no more. She lay there and heard the rushing of the breaking waves upon the bows and the rattling of the ropes and blocks as the lugger rocked upon the seas. But she did not hear the hum of her captors' voices any longer, for one of them slept.

Alice had no means of knowing how many hours had passed away, but she knew that it must be past midnight, and she also knew that the breeze was yet fresh and fair; and she knew enough of maritime affairs, also, to know that the lugger was going very fast through the water, for from the heeling of the craft she knew that the wind was yet upon the beam. Ten miles, at least, were run off every hour, and at this rate she knew that she must be far below the mouth of the Thames! And yet she knew by the motion of the vessel that she was far at sea, and that she was yet being borne farther and farther from her home!

CHAPTER XVIII.

SOMETHING IMPORTANT.

BELINDA WARNER was gone from the hall all night, and when she returned she hastened at once to her own room, and thither Lord Tiverton followed her. She was pale and agitated when she saw him, and would have got rid of his presence could she have done so.

"I wish to see you but a few moments," the earl said, as he took a seat near her. "You of course remember that I once spoke to you about becoming the wife of my son?"

"I remember that you promised me—that you pledged me your word—that I should be his wife," returned Belinda, lowering her brow and closing her lips.

"Let that pass for what it is worth."

"But the word of an English peer, sir, if it is worth anything, is worth remembering."

The earl bit his lips, and allowed his hands to work nervously together, for Miss Warner spoke firmly, and with bitter sarcasm.

"Very well," Tiverton said. "We shall come to that anon; and in the meantime I would ask you if you still hope to obtain my son's hand?"

"Assuredly I do, sir," returned Belinda, in a tone and manner which plainly showed that she was sustained thus firmly by wilful anger.

"But would you accept the hand of a man without his love?"

"I would be Albion Tiverton's wife, sir. And mark me, my lord; I should never have sought this of my own accord. You broached the subject to me, and of your own purpose, without the least advance or intimation on my part, you assured me that I should be his wife. Perhaps

you remember, sir," she added, with keen sarcasm, "that you said he should be my husband whether he wished it or not?"

"I remember," said the earl, looking with surprise upon the girl before him, for he had thought she would be dumb in his presence. "I remember well, but we generally understand that all human promises must be based upon circumstances, and over these circumstances we have no control."

"Ay, you did not foresee that your son would fall in love with the poor fisher-girl, I suppose?"

"Of course I did not," returned the earl, not at all moved by the girl's irony, but yet startled at her perfect *sang froid*. "Nor," he continued, looking her keenly in the eye, "did I foresee that this poor fisher-girl would risk her own life to save that of my son."

"Ah, you did not!"

"No—nor that in return the poor girl's life would be in danger from an unseen hand."

"Is it possible?" Belinda said, but her eye drooped for an instant as she spoke, and her lip quivered. But the emotion quickly passed.

"It is possible, and I have come to ask you if you would be willing to aid me in discovering the person who made the villainous, fiendish attempt?"

For some moments Belinda gazed fixedly into the earl's face as though she would read the full meaning of his intent; but he had managed to overcome all outward manifestations of emotion, and she did not gain her object.

"It is not very likely, sir," she at length replied, "that I shall trouble myself to hunt up

Miss Woodley's affairs; but if you are much interested in the welfare of our country paupers you had better go about the work."

The earl's eyes flashed now, and his reserve was gone in a moment. The blue veins upon his high brow stood out more boldly, and his teeth were set with a firm will. Belinda saw the change, and she quailed. A perceptible shudder crept through her frame, and she turned a shade paler.

"Belinda Warner," said Lord Tiverton, in a low, meaning tone, "Sir William told me if I wanted any strychnia, I should find it in your keeping."

"Strychnia!" uttered the girl, starting.

"Yes. It is a virulent, fatal poison. Have you any?"

"No, no—I know nothing of it."

"Then perhaps it was stolen from you by the same person who stole the baronet's plums!"

The girl started again, and turned pale as death.

"What of—of—the plums?" she uttered, convulsively.

"A woman in a black dress and black hood got them—the dress was of faded black silk, and the hood was of the same. Some thought, when they saw her, that it was the ghost of Sir William's old nurse, but more likely it was only some one with the dead and gone nurse's clothes on, wig and all. Well—the plums were poisoned with strychnia—and then this same woman carried them over to the widow's cot and gave them to the poor girl. She told there that the fruit was given her at the hall, but we cannot find that it was given to her at all. She must have plucked the plums herself, and she must have gained access to the garden through the house—and then, more strange still, she was seen going away from here, but not a soul saw her when she came. Can you explain it?"

"Why—why—should—I—know of—"

Thus far the girl spoke in convulsive, incoherent tones, but she could get no further, for her throat was choked, and she trembled like a reed.

"Belinda Warner," uttered the earl, starting from his chair and laying his hand suddenly upon the girl's arm, "tell me what you know of this? Tell me where is the strychnia which Sir William gave you to keep!" He spoke deeply, terribly.

"O, mercy! I know not! I am not—not—"

She faltered, and clasped her hands upon her bosom, and her face was ashy pale. She looked up once into the earl's face, but she found his dark eyes fixed searchingly upon her, and with a deep groan she sank back, and her chin rested upon her bosom. Lord Tiverton removed his hand from her arm, and then turned towards the door. His hand was upon the knob, and he had raised the latch. On the next instant, Belinda sprang wildly up and darted towards him. She caught him frantically by both his arms, and in maniac tones she cried:

"It is all false—false as Satan! I never did it—and you cannot prove it. If you say that I did it, you will lie! If you tell others that I did this—"

"I shall tell nothing at present," interrupted the earl, removing the girl's hands from his arms with a strong effort. "I leave you now to your own meditations, and I hope you will find no cause of sorrow or pain in the memory of what you have done."

"Then you will not whisper this foul lie—you will not lisp—"

"I shall say nothing about it at present, so you need not fear anything but yourself and your God!"

Tiverton pushed the girl away as he spoke, and then passed out from the room. He knew he was much agitated, and he went directly to his own apartment. Ere long, however, he overcame his deep emotions, and when he met Sir William he was as free and sociable as ever.

On the following day, while the earl was walking alone in the garden, his son approached him in a state of the most intense agony and excitement. The parent was startled, and in quick, anxious tones he inquired what had happened.

"I went this forenoon—only a short time since—to the widow's cot, and I found Alice gone!" uttered the youth, in tones of anguish.

"Gone!" iterated the earl. He was anxious, for he had conceived a strange interest for Alice Woodley.

"Yes," resumed Albion. "I found the poor mother overwhelmed with grief, and she told me all that had happened, and she wondered if you had had a hand in it?"

"Me?" uttered the earl, starting with astonishment.

"Yes. She knew not but that you had removed the girl from me."

"O—blind fool! But what is it? Tell me?"

"Yesterday, towards evening, a rough-looking

man called and told the widow that the old woman who lives just over the hill was dying, and that she was wanted immediately. The fellow then went off and Mrs. Woodley started at once for the woman's house. When she arrived there she found that she had been imposed upon, for no one was sick or injured. Fearing some foul play, she hastened home, and on arriving there she found her daughter gone, and she was nowhere to be discovered. At the gate she found tracks, as though there had been a scuffle. She also remembers that while she was looking for her child she saw a lugger sailing off to the southward and eastward, but it was too distant to see any one on board. To-day I followed the tracks and they led me to a cove towards Dunwich. She was surely carried off in that lugger."

The youth trembled violently while he spoke, and the changes of his countenance showed how poignant was his anguish. The earl, too, was deeply moved, and for awhile he gazed into his son's face in silence.

"What does it mean, father?"

"It means that some one is determined to have Alice Woodley out of the way."

"But who can it be?"

"Albion, can I trust you with a secret?"

"You know you can."

"But you must not show by look or word that your suspicions are aroused."

"Upon my soul I will not," said the youth, looking anxiously into his father's face.

"Then Belinda Warner has some designs upon Alice. I am sure of it, and you can judge the cause as well as I."

Albion started forward and laid his hand upon his father's arm. He remembered when Belinda listened at the door to overhear his father and himself converse, and he remembered, too, what he had seen of her character and disposition.

"Is it possible?" he uttered, gazing half-wildly into his father's face.

"Remember—you are not to show that you suspect this?"

"I will not—by my soul I will not."

"Then," said the earl, speaking calmly and distinctly, for in cases of emergency his mind was quick and clear; "do you prepare at once and go towards Aldborough, and find out where Belinda Warner went to there, and what she did—learn all that you possibly can, and spare not gold if thereby you can unlock anybody's tongue. She was there day before yesterday. While you

are gone I will look out for things here. You may trust Tom, if you please, and take him along with you. Hasten now, and Alice Woodley shall be found though it cost me the half of all my possessions."

What a gleam of joyful gratitude danced in the youth's eyes at this last remark! But it quickly passed away, and anxious fear assumed its place. In half an hour more both Albion and Tom were on the road to Aldborough.

The earl pondered a long while upon what had happened, and he resolved that he would not at present say anything to Belinda about it, for he knew that she would not hesitate to lie; but he was determined that she should not leave the hall until matters were cleared up, and to this end he called into requisition the services of his two grooms. These were men who had been in his service for many years, and he knew that he could trust them implicitly. He bade them keep an eye upon Miss Warner's movements, and if she attempted to leave the place to detain her—by force if necessary.

Lord Tiverton visited the widow, and he found her frantic with grief and agony, but a change came over her countenance when the earl expressed his sympathy for her, and when he sat down and promised to exert himself to the utmost to find Alice and bring her back, the poor mother felt more joy than can be expressed. To be sure it was not the joy of perfect peace, but of gratitude and relief.

When this was understood the earl drew his chair nearer to the widow, and in a low, frank, earnest tone, he opened a new subject. Mrs. Woodley started and turned pale, but the noble spoke on, and gradually the poor woman grew more composed and listened attentively. In time her own tongue was unlocked, and she spoke thoughts that had been locked up within her own soul for years. The earl laid his hand upon her arm, and he told her that he believed all she said—that he had perfect confidence in her, and that he would do all in his power to make her last days light and peaceful, and to lift the veil from her evening of life so that the stars of promise and hope might shine upon her.

The woman listened as listens the prisoner to the sentence that sets him free from death, and when the last word fell upon her ears she bowed her head and wept till the tears ran in big drops down her furrowed, time-worn cheeks. They were tears of gratitude, deep and heartfelt, and her soul was filled with earnest, hopeful prayer.

CHAPTER XIX.

FAR AWAY!

ALICE did sleep again at length, and she did not dream as before. Yet her sleep was not a perfect rest, but only an uneasy, forgetful slumber, serving to relieve her soul of the passage of pain-laden time. When she was next aroused it was by hearing her captors conversing in a loud tone, and she thought, when she looked out, that the first gray streaks of dawn were breaking upon the sky. She knew that the course of the lugger was now changed, and from the motion she felt she judged that the shore was close at hand. In not more than ten minutes longer she saw the man at the helm shove the tiller hard down—the sails flapped in the wind—and then came a shock, as though the vessel had struck some solid, fixed body. Shortly afterwards one of the men came into the cabin and ordered her to get out upon the floor. She obeyed him, and he then seized her and bound her mouth up, and then her eyes. She did not resist, for she knew it would be of no use. Next she was taken up in the strong man's arms and carried out, and in a moment more she felt some one grasp her from above and lift her up, and when she was set down again she stood upon the solid ground.

"Now, miss," said one of the ruffians, "you may walk with us, for I s'pose you'd rather walk than be carried."

Alice made no resistance, for both her arms were held, and as they started on she followed their example. In this way she walked for some half an hour, and at the end of that time she knew that she entered a house of some kind, the floor of which was either stone or brick. Soon her conductors stopped and left her, and then she heard their footsteps as they departed, and shortly afterwards the grating of bolts fell upon her ear. Her hands were at liberty, and as soon as she was satisfied that she was alone she removed the bandages from her mouth and eyes.

It was daylight now, and Alice found herself in a small room, the windows of which—two of them—were grated, and the furniture of which consisted only of a rough table and two pine benches. The floor was of tiles, and the walls were of soft sand-stone, arched overhead. She went to the window and looked out, and for some moments she thought of only things that were far distant, but at length she began to examine the scenery about her. One thing puzzled her not a little. The sun, which was just rising, was upon her right hand, and yet ahead of her lay the sea. At the distance of some two miles to the eastward was quite a city, but the walls and towers were unlike anything she had ever before seen. She stood there by the window when her door was opened, and on turning she

saw an old woman. She turned quickly from the window and approached the new-comer.

"Good morning, mademoiselle," said the woman, with a strong French accents, "I suppose you would like some breakfast?"

"Not now," uttered Alice, moving forward and laying her hand imploringly upon the woman's arm. "But tell me where I am?"

The woman looked into the maiden's face for some moments, and then she said:

"Well, I don't know as there's any harm in telling that. You see that city over there?" pointing out the window—"that's Dunkirk."

"Dunkirk!" exclaimed Alice, starting in amazement. "Do you mean that I am in France?"

"You are, most truly."

"Then tell me why I am here. O, for the love of mercy tell me."

"No," said the woman, shaking her head, "I can't do it. Now I mean to treat you as well as I can, but I don't know anything about why you were brought here, nor what they mean to do with you when you go away. Some men came here with you, and made me promise to keep you till they came back—and I shall do it. You may stay here a week, and if you would be treated well you mustn't give me any trouble. I have promised to keep you, and to answer no questions. I hope you understand, and for your own sake I hope you will be wise."

Alice listened attentively to the woman, and though her English was not very good, yet she understood every word perfectly. She knew what was meant, and she had presence of mind enough amid all her sorrow to remain quiet, and all her hopes were fixed upon the possibility of some other turn in the wheel of her strange fortunes. She told the woman that she should like some food, and something to drink, and with a look which was far from being malignant or threatening the hostess left the room. After she was gone, the maiden sat down upon one of the benches, and her gaze chanced to fall upon the bandages which she had taken from her mouth and eyes. One of them was a dirty silk handkerchief, and Alice thought she saw a piece of paper protruding from it, and with a feeling of curiosity she went and picked it up. It was a piece of paper, and there was writing upon it. Alice read it, and a sudden pallor overspread her features. She read it a second time, and then with a deep groan she clasped her hands together and gazed vacantly upon the floor. Soon

she refolded the paper and placed it in her bosom, and then she started to her feet and began to pace the floor. She was deeply agitated, and tremulousness showed that something of more than ordinary import had burst upon her.

Soon the woman returned with a tray, and upon it were some light biscuit, and some coffee. Alice ate sparingly, but the coffee she drank freely, and after she had concluded her repast the woman took the things away, taking care to bolt the door after her.

Our heroine had become more composed now, and she looked around to examine more particularly the place she was in. Upon the tiled floor she saw bits of cigars and tobacco, and in the fire-place were broken pipes and numerous scraps of paper. From curiosity she examined some of these bits of paper, and she found that they had been used to reckon on. There were the marks which stood for "*barrels*," and "*boxes*," and "*bales*," written in plain English. She concluded from this that her room had been used for a business place of some kind. Soon her attention was turned to the table, and she saw that it had a drawer beneath it. This drawer she opened, and her heart leaped with a whelming emotion, for within she found not only several sheets of white paper, but also an inkstand and pens. She was but an instant in concluding upon her next movement. The paper was quickly laid upon the table, and the ink and pens taken out. Then she drew up one of the benches, and having selected the best of the three pens she set about writing. Her hand trembled, but not so but that she could write rapidly and legibly. She addressed Sir William Brentford, and explained all that had happened to her, stating that she was about two miles to the westward of Dunkirk, near the shore, and also described the location as well as she could from the view she had taken from the window. She wrote that she might only be kept there a few days, and for the love of God she urged him to send for her, and also to inform Albion Tiverton of the circumstances. Having written all that was necessary she folded the letter up and carefully superscribed it. She had no wafer, but upon the wooden bench which was of pine, she found several hard globules of pitch, and with one of these she sealed the letter securely.

But the work was not yet done. The letter was written, but not sent. The probability of finding any one in the house who would mail it for her was dubious, to say the least. But the

work must be done quickly, if done at all, and she resolved to trust to fate. So she took another sheet of paper, and upon it she wrote as follows:

"Whoever you be that finds this, I beseech of you to place the within letter in the post-office at Dunkirk or Calais as quickly as possible, and for you I will ever pray. Do this, and you will serve one who needs your aid. Within you will find the money to pay the postage to England."

Alice wrote this in both English and French; her mother had taught her French—and then folded the sealed letter up in it, also inclosing a shilling piece which she fortunately had with her. With a string which she found in the fire-

place she tied the whole up, and then upon the outside she wrote—"Open it." Then she placed the pens, ink, and paper back in the drawer, and put the precious packet in her bosom. The day wore slowly away, and as soon as it was fairly dark she went to the window and raised the sash, and threw the package out into the street where she had seen many people pass and repass during the day. There was an earnest prayer upon her lips as she let the messenger go from her hand, and then she returned to her seat just as the hostess came in to conduct her to her chamber. She followed without speaking, and when she reached the place where she was to sleep, she found that her bodily comfort, at least, was to be cared for.

CHAPTER XX.

LIGHT.

ALBION TIVERTON had been to Aldborough, and he had learned more than made him happy. He had traced Belinda Warner to a hut near the sea coast, which he ascertained was the haunt of a band of smugglers, and from an old woman whom he had found there he learned that Belinda had been there, and that she took two of the smugglers one side and conversed with them a long while. The old woman did not know her business—only she knew that the young lady sat down and wrote something which one of the men demanded, and that when she went away the two men went off and put to sea in their lugger. This was all the youth could learn, and for this piece of information he paid a golden sovereign.

When Albion and Tom returned to Linden Hall, which was on the morning of the day following their departure, Alice had been gone two nights. Our hero was almost frantic with agony, and he was determined that Belinda should at once be summoned, for he now knew that she it was, who had been the villain. After some conference on the part of the earl and Sir William, Miss Warner was sent for, but she refused to come, and without further debate the men started at once for her room. They met her in the hall, dressed in her bonnet and shawl, and one of the earl's grooms was holding her. She was at once taken to her chamber, and when

the door was closed upon her she sank down in a chair.

"I know! I know!" she gasped, as she gazed wildly into the faces of the men who had gathered about her. "You have come to fasten a fiendish lie upon me. I know nothing of Alice Woodley—nothing."

"Belinda," said Sir William, approaching and speaking calmly, but yet with evident pain, "you need not think to deceive us longer, for we have proof. Now tell us—"

"I will tell nothing! It's a lie! all, all a lie! I will not speak a word, so help me God!"

And Sir William urged her, and so did the earl, but she would not speak, and when they had tried a long time in vain, they turned sadly from the room; but before they went the baronet informed Belinda that she should not leave the hall until Alice Woodley was found, or she had confessed all she knew. Belinda laughed wildly at this, and then threw herself upon the bed in a raging paroxysm.

All the rest of that day Albion and Thomas were together, but there was no thought of sport or recreation. Tom confessed to himself that he had entertained an anxious interest for the poor fisher-girl, and at times he wondered if he were not losing some of his natural pride; but when he came to remember the sweet girl's face, and reflect upon the fearful fate that had befallen

her, his heart would run away and dwell in sympathy for the sufferer.

On the next day, towards the middle of the forenoon, the courier from Framlingham rode up to the hall and left some letters for the baronet. In a few minutes later Sir William was running through the house like a wild man. He found Albion and the earl, and to them he read a letter he had just received. It was from Alice, and she was in France! Albion Tiverton seized the letter, and as soon as he had read it over again, he crushed it up and thrust it into his bosom. Then he turned to Thomas Brentford, and said, in quick, clear tones:

"Now, Tom, be off with me. The wind is fair and strong, and with your little yacht we can make the run to Ramsgate in six hours sure. There we can charter a steamer, and I'll take some of our navy officers who I am sure are there. Not a moment to lose. Sir William, you are a justice—sit down and make out some sort of a requisition—I don't understand your legal terms—and let my father witness it as Earl of Winchester."

No objection was made to Albion's quickly concerted plan, and while the young men made a few simple preparations, Sir William furnished documents to be used in case of need. Six of the baronet's men were drafted to go in the yacht, and in half an hour from the time of the reception of the letter, Albion was being wafted swiftly over the water on his mission.

* * * * *

Alice Woodley still remained a prisoner in the house whither she had been first conducted. She had been there five days—or rather the fifth day had dawned, and she had eaten her breakfast. The woman had been kind to her, and provided for all her bodily wants. The poor girl was now alone, and she was wondering if her letter had gone on its mission. She knew of course that it had been picked up, but perhaps some of the people of her prison-house might have found it. She was pondering thus when the door of her room was opened, and the two men who took her from her home entered. She uttered a low groan when she saw them, and half started from her feet.

"Well, well, miss," said the leader, "you're looking better 'n I expected, 'pon my soul you be. Now what say you to another move?"

"Let me stay here, sir," uttered Alice, clasping her hands. "I will stay here in peace."

"But that don't suit our fancy, my lady.

You must go with us, an' we'll be after you as soon as it is dark, so if you've got any preparations to make you'd better make 'em. You needn't say any more," the fellow continued, as he saw Alice was about to speak, "for we know just what we're going to do, an' we mean to do it."

Alice sank back in her seat and covered her face with her hands, and the two men left the room. During the rest of the day the poor girl suffered agony the most excruciating. Her frame was already bowed down with care and sorrow, and now she felt her very soul crushed within her. The day passed, but how she knew not. It was all gloom and darkness to her. She touched none of the dinner which had been brought, and of the supper she only drank some of the tea.

At length the hour of darkness came, and with it came the two ruffians. They entered the room, and one of them bore a stout rope in his hands.

"Now, miss, we're off," said he who had thus far acted as leader. You see I've got a rope to bind you with, but I hope we shan't have to use it. Shall I bind up your mouth or not?"

"No, no—O, no!"

"Then I won't. But mind—if you make the leastest noise in the world you'll suffer."

Alice did not speak further, for she could not. She looked up into the brutal faces of the men, and she knew that there would be no use in crying to them for mercy, for it would only make her sufferings more. She put on her hood and shawl, and then one of the men took her by the hand and led her from the room. She did not resist in the least, nor did she hang back, for there came over her a dim hope that some chance for escape might present itself. She might meet some party of men—and she would suddenly break away and claim their protection—and then her captors could not prove any claim to get her back.

But the ruffians seemed prepared for this, for when they entered upon the street they held her firmly by the arms. It was quite dark now, and objects at only a short distance were indistinct, yet our heroine could see that she was being conducted down towards the sea.

Half the way had they reached towards the dock, when the sound of voices was heard, and in a moment more the dim outlines of a party of men could be seen ahead, and the two villains crossed quickly over so as to avoid them. Alice

turned her eyes towards the coming party, and she could see their dusky forms revealed against the white stone wall that flanked the street. The idea now came to her of breaking away, but the grip was tightened upon her arms, and she could not move. At that instant she heard a sound that struck thrillingly upon her ear. The opposite party were conversing, and one voice she knew—its tones were not to be mistaken.

"ALBION! ALBION!" she shrieked, with all her might.

"I'll Albion ye!" hissed the leader of the ruffians, giving her arm a grip that caused her to shriek with pain. "I'll Albion ye!" he repeated, clapping his hand over her mouth.

But he was too late, for the party upon the opposite side of the street had stopped, and several of them had started across. The two ruffians lifted Alice from the ground and started into a run, but they were soon overtaken.

"Hold, here, villains!" shouted a manly voice.

"Albion! Albion!" cried Alice.

"It is Albion," the youth returned, as he struck one of the men a blow with his fist which sent him reeling off some distance; and on the next moment he laid his hand upon the maiden's arm.

The other members of our hero's party now came up, and both the villains were quickly secured and bound. Alice fell weeping upon her lover's bosom, and her power of speech was gone.

"Now, my men," cried the young lieutenant, while he supported Alice in his arms, "let us back to our boat at once. We will not stop for French authority now. Come—you, my boys, bring those two villains along, and if they resist put them beyond the power."

Albion moved on as he spoke, and his stout boatmen brought up the rear, leading the prisoners, while Thomas Brentford and two naval officers who had accompanied them from Ramsgate, went ahead. When they reached the dock they found some French officials there who had been attracted by the entrance of the steamer, but Albion soon explained the matter to their satisfaction, and though they had the power to detain them, yet they allowed them to pass on. Alice was lifted carefully into the boat, and as soon as the rest of the party were aboard they shoved off, and soon hauled up alongside of a small steamer which lay out from the shore. In

one hour more the steam-tug was on her way towards the coast of England.

In the small cabin of the steamer sat Alice Woodley, and Albion Tiverton was by her side. The rest of the party were on deck.

"Alice," said our hero, after he had embraced her, and wept with joy over her safety, "can you imagine who it is that has thus caused you to be torn from your home?"

The maiden looked up into her lover's face, and for some moments she did not speak.

"Albion," she at length said, in a husky, tremulous tone, "the man who carried me off bound up my mouth and eyes before they led me on shore, and when they had conducted me to the house where I was to remain awhile, they left me with the bandages on. I tore them off, and in one of them I found a piece of paper. It bore upon its face a thing so fearful that I could hardly believe it, but yet it seemed truthful."

"Did you preserve the paper?"

"Yes," Alice replied, and at the same time she placed her hand in her bosom and drew forth a dirty, crumpled piece of paper.

Albion took it and read it, and his face changed color. It was an agreement with one Mark Hammerton. Said Hammerton was to remove Alice Woodley, and keep her out of England until the writer had become the wife of Albion Tiverton! And in consideration thereof, Hammerton was to receive two hundred pounds. It was signed by BELINDA WARNER!

"I understand it all," said the youth, as he folded the paper up. "It is true. You can see its meaning."

"Yes," murmured Alice, laying her head upon her lover's bosom, "I can understand it."

"But, dear Alice, let it trouble you no more. She, wicked girl, will be the only real sufferer, and there be few females in the kingdom who would change places with her at this moment."

Alice still rested her head upon her lover's bosom, and in her soul she thanked God for the aid that had come so unexpectedly to her. They sat there and related to each other all that had happened, and when the stories were told they went upon the deck and joined the party there.

* * * * *

"Shall I go at once to my home?" asked Alice.

The yacht had landed them at the little bay of the Mandham River, and it was almost evening.

"Not to the cot," returned Albion; "your

mother waits for you at the hall, for my father assured me he would have her there."

So towards Linden Hall the party started—the same party that had left the place upon the mission which had been thus happily accomplished, save that the two smugglers were still with them—the officers who had joined them at Ramsgate had remained with the steamer. Alice leaned upon her lover's arm, and her weight bore heavily upon him, for she was dizzy with the wild emotions that thrilled through her

soul. In all his deportment thus far, Albion had acted and spoken like the same fond lover he had been at first, and she wondered if he realized how fondly her heart turned towards him, and if he knew how deep were her hopes which had been born from his late manner. Surely he would not thus cherish and fondle her, if he was to throw her off as soon as she was restored to her mother. Yet there came painful doubts to her soul, and she dared not dwell too much upon the fitful dream which her love would cling to.

CHAPTER XXI.

CONCLUSION.

It was evening, and the great drawing-room of Linden Hall was lighted up as though for a party. Alice Woodley had returned, and the kind old baronet had resolved that the happiness of the re-union of mother and child should transpire beneath his own roof. The aged mother had clasped her loved daughter to her bosom, and she had wept tears of joy over her. The news had spread through the great house, and the servants all flocked to see the returned maiden. There was one alone who did not come—and that was Belinda. She was in her own chamber. Yes—there was another who had not yet come—the old man of the wreck. He had not yet left his bed.

The servants had all congratulated the fair girl, and retired, and the old baronet had heard her blessings and received her smile of gratitude. The mother sat upon an ottoman near one of the heavily curtained windows, and Alice had seated herself by her side.

Again Sir William gazed upon that mother and child, and the cloud came over his brow, and a tremulousness shook his whole frame.

"Mother," said Alice, loud enough to be heard by all present, "do you realize how much we owe to Sir William? O, he has been very kind. But what is the matter?"

"I am not well, Alice," the widow replied, as

she laid her trembling hand upon her child's arm. "Let us go to our own humble home. I shall be better there."

The maiden had arisen to assist her mother, when Sir William stepped quickly forward.

"What?" he uttered. "Would you leave us now?"

"Yes—I would rather be at my own home," murmured the widow.

"Very well," said the baronet, in a tone of regret. "If you like not the company of a poor old man like myself, then you are at liberty to go."

The poor woman gazed a moment into the baronet's face, and then she sank back and burst into tears. She bowed her head, and her sobs broke forth as though her heart were breaking. Sir William was astounded. He moved forward and laid his hand upon the woman's head; but before he could speak he felt a hand upon his own shoulder, and on turning he saw the earl.

"Sir William," said the latter, in a whisper, "do you not know what this means?"

"By my soul I do not."

Before the earl could speak further they were startled by an exclamation from Tom, and on looking down the room they saw a ghostly figure approaching them. It was the old man of the wreck! About his tall form was drawn a white

shroud, and his face—still covered with bristling beard—looked almost frightful in its death-like, ghastly hue and feature. Alice uttered a cry of terror and crouched nearer to her mother, for she was startled; but she soon had another protector. Albion saw her emotion, and he sprang to her side and bade her not be alarmed.

"Now, Harrold Radston, what means this?" cried the baronet, as soon as he could recover from his first startling emotions. "Why have ye come from your death-bed to freeze us with your presence?"

The old man of the wreck did not answer then. He advanced slowly and with evident pain, until he had reached a point close by the baronet, and then he gazed fixedly into Mrs. Woodley's face. She was past all emotion now, for when the name of Harrold Radston first fell upon her ears she had uttered a low cry and sank back almost insensible. After gazing upon her for awhile the feeble old man turned his sunken eyes upon Sir William.

"William Brentford," he said, in a deep, hollow voice, "I told you not long since that ere I died you should forgive me for the past. Tonight I heard—my nurse told me—that these people were here, and I have come to see them. This mother and child I have seen before."

"So have I," whispered Sir William, convulsively.

"So you have. But I am weak. Let me have a seat."

Thomas brought a chair, and the sick man sank down into it.

"William Brentford," he said, "do you remember when we were both young? when we both started in life to run the race of living?"

"Yes," returned the baronet, trembling fearfully.

"And you remember, too, that I loved a fair maiden, and wooed her—and that you whispered words of warning in her ear till she turned away from me. You remember that?"

"Yes, yes," uttered the baronet. "But you know, Harrold Radston, that I told her the truth. You were a riotous spendthrift, and a libertine. You cannot deny it."

"Perhaps I was, but I loved that fair girl, and when you poisoned her against me—"

"I did not poison her, Harrold—I but told her the truth. did it alone for her own good."

"And yet you wooed and won her," said the other, with a tone of deepest irony.

"So I did, but I thought not of it then. It

was while trying to save her from you that I first thought of loving her. As God is my judge, and as unto him I must render all account of life, I did not warn her selfishly, for it was not till afterwards that I loved her."

"Yet, William Brentford, you trod upon a snake when you did it."

"O, I know I did!" gasped the baronet, seizing the back of his chair for support. "O, God! I know I did!"

"Ay," continued Radston; and as he spoke his eyes burned strangely, "you did. When I found what you had done I resolved to be avenged. I went upon a journey on the Continent, and when I returned I found that you were married, and that a son had blessed your nuptial state. O, I planned a sweet revenge!"

"Stop! stop! For the love of God, stop!" groaned Sir William, shaking with agony.

"Not yet, William Brentford. Hear me through. I say I planned a most sweet revenge. I resolved that you should think your wife unfaithful. I visited her in your absence—I went often to your home, and I hired men to watch me go and come. They did not see your lady spit upon me and spurn me—they did not see your wife turn from me in loathing—they only knew what I told them, and that they told to others. When they told the tale I had learned them they thought they spoke the truth. They did not know that the sweet lady of whom they spoke was true as an angel—ay, as true as Heaven itself, to her husband; but they believed she was false!"

"Harrold Radston, you lie now!" gasped the baronet, springing forward and clinching the speaker by the arm. "You lie now!" he repeated, like a wild man.

"No, no, Sir William, *I lied then*; but I speak the truth now. Lady Brentford was as true to you as the sun is to his daily course!"

"Great God, it cannot be!"

"As I live, and as I must shortly die and render an account to God of my last act of life, I say she was true to you as Heaven. When I went to see her—to try to ruin her—she spat upon me as though I were a toad, and once, when I would have placed my hands upon her, she aimed a pistol at my head. She carried that pistol when I came!"

"Mercy!" groaned the baronet, as though his heart were fully broke. "And she died innocent!"

"*Died*, Sir William?" uttered the sick man,

looking up in astonishment. "Died, did you say?"

"Yes—away off in Scotland."

"Ha, ha—and you have never yet found—But I am astonished. Your wife did *not* die. She sent word to you that she was dead—or, rather, she hired others to do so—that she might not see you again. You had turned her from your doors, and when she went away on that cheerless morning she bore your own infant in her arms. O, Sir William, I was close at hand, and saw her go, and I knew that you were driving an angel from your door, and that the cherub she bore was of your own flesh and blood. My revenge was complete then!"

"O," groaned the baronet, sinking down upon his seat and bowing his head, "so have I dreamed a thousand times. A spirit has ever been with me, from that moment to the present, always whispering in my ear that my wife was innocent. O, God, have mercy!"

"But tell me candidly, Sir William, did you think your wife dead?"

"Yes—yes! most assuredly!"

A moment the old man of the wreck gazed upon the stricken baronet, and then he said, in a deep, calm tone:

"William, my hour of enmity is passed. We are both old now, and I know that I must shortly die, for I feel the icy finger even now upon me. God must have sent me hither. It must have been his hand that struck our ship down with the storm. You have been kind to me, and sheltered me, and you would have saved my worthless life if you could. My revenge has been fearful, but 'tis past now. Your wife lives—and your own sweet child lives, too. O, Sir William, you must have been blind. That woman who sits trembling there—she who has lived for five years within sight of your door—she who has seen you oft, and wept when you knew it not—she came back here to die amid the scenes of her youth—amid the flowers of life that were faded—*She is your wife!* As pure and free from stain as when first you led her blushing to the holy altar. Now—now, Sir William, forgive me."

The baronet started up from his chair and gazed full into the speaker's face. Then he sat down again and bowed his head upon his hands. He shook convulsively, for the light was breaking in upon him. Now he began to see why the sight of the widow, as she had been called, and as she in truth was, had moved him so.

He soon saw it all, and with one more effort he started again to his feet. He looked upon the woman, and he moved towards her. He placed his trembling hand upon her bowed head, and she looked up.

"ELIZABETH!" he whispered, faintly.

But she spoke not. She only bowed her head and sobbed.

"ELIZABETH," he repeated, "come to me and bless and forgive me. O, I have deeply wronged you—but God knows how foully I was deceived. Come—this heart is all your own, and it has been for years. Come—forget and forgive the past, and let joy be ours. Come, Elizabeth, my own, my wronged, but yet fondly beloved. Come and be again my wife, my all on earth. All, all is past of misery—all of joy shall be ours in time to come."

The woman looked up—she arose—and with one low, wild cry, she sank insensible upon the bosom of her husband.

"Now, Sir William, forgive me?"

The baronet still held his wife in his arms, but he replied to Harrold Radston:

"Yes, yes," he uttered; "before God and these witnesses I forgive you."

"Then my hour has come. I thank you, Sir William; and you may rest assured that I shall die happier now that I have torn the veil from a foul lie that has crushed your soul for years. Come and see me in my room soon, William. Farewell. Come soon, if you would see me alive." And as Radston thus spoke he arose from his chair and feebly tottered to the room.

* * * * *

O, how the heart of Alice beat as she rested now upon Sir William's bosom, and murmured forth the sweet name of—"Father." And how her soul thrilled when Albion drew her aside and kissed her—and then when Thomas came and called her "*Sister*." And then Lord Tiverton kissed her, too, and he whispered in her ear that he would be a father to her. O, it was joyful—it was pleasure even to delirium.

And they all sat and heard the restored wife tell her story—how she fled to Scotland, and how she gave out that she was dead—how she reared up her child under an assumed name so that the stain of suspicion might not rest upon her. And how, in time, she wanted to come back and die amid the scenes of youth, and look sometimes upon the man whom she yet fondly loved. And she told how she felt when her

husband first came and saw her, and asked her who she was, and how she gave wild, false answers so as to blind him to the truth. She told, too, how she felt when she knew that Lord Tiverton recognized her.

"Ay," said the earl, "I knew you the moment I saw you, and for that reason did I tell my son that I could not give my consent to his union with Alice, for I feared that the report of shame might be his. But it is passed now. The darkness has all gone, and to God belongs the praise forevermore."

* * * * *

The old baronet went up on the following day to see Harrold Radston, but the beggared man had gone from earth. His body lay there upon the bed, with one hand upon the pulseless heart, and the other upon the brow—and the soul had fled. A grave was made near the corner of the little churchyard over the hill, and the remains of Radston were laid away in it.

The two smugglers were tried for numerous other crimes besides that of abducting Alice, and they were transported for life.

Belinda Warner called Sir William to her room and begged him to send her to the home of a distant relative in the northern part of Cumberland. She would see none others of the household. He did not refuse her, and he promised, too, not to send an account of her character along with her. So he gave her all her money which he held, and also all bonds and deeds which were hers; and all crushed and broken with torture and shame, she went on her lonely way. Sir William never saw her again, but he heard from her—and she was a better woman.

Time passed on, and Albion Tiverton did his duty most faithfully in the sphere he was called upon to fill. The aspirations of his youth were

not forgotten, nor had the day-dream passed from his mind. He was yet a young man when he received from the admiralty the commission of a full captain in the royal navy. But that was not the only joy that awaited him. When he was thus honored—and elevated he went with his father to Linden Hall. He went there to claim his wife. Alice met him—and she wept upon his bosom as she had often done before. He and Tom had grown more steady now, but on that evening they were men indeed, for Sir William and Lord Tiverton were the children. Those two old men were so happy that they fairly became childish in their quaint demonstrations. They kissed Alice as soon as she had become a wife, and they really cried with joy.

But there was one who took the joys of this almost heavenly occasion most deeply, soberly to heart. It was the mother; and amid all the flowers of peace and joyousness that had sprung up so plentifully about her, she did not forget that the life upon which her sweet child was entering had its stern duties as well as its joys, and that those very duties, when truly done, constitute our highest and most lasting good. All this she whispered to her child; and when she knew that she had told all her lesson, then she went and stood by the side of her own husband.

And there they stood—the aged couple, and the young; the husband and wife who had seen so much of earth's most bitter sorrow, and the husband and wife who were just to commence the active work of wedded life—and it would be hard to tell which were the happiest, for the sweet flowers of joy clustered alike about the heart of each, and they all had seen enough of life to learn that those alone who know what sorrow is, can truly appreciate the blessings of joy and peace.

THE END.

[FROM "THE FLAG OF OUR UNION."]

THE LOVE AND THE MONEY MATCH.

BY MRS. E. WELLMONT.

It was a matter of curious speculation among the friends of Ida Archer which of the two offers of marriage she would accept. There was the fine-looking Mr. Singleby, cast in the mould of one of nature's noblemen, who inherited a fortune never estimated at less than half a million, having nothing to do but enjoy the pleasures of life, fond of society at home, in all convivial parties which were always spiced by his comical humor, and made attractive by the ready flow of his wit; and he had offered himself to Ida Archer, the old merchant's only daughter, as her future husband.

There, too, within a few paces of the rich lover, was the office of young Dr. Masters—a physician who had made his way almost entirely by his own exertions, and whose energy and indomitable perseverance had secured him a most enviable rank among the cultivated of his profession. No tongue of scandal ever breathed a report to his discredit—honorable, high-minded, enthusiastically devoted to his business, but still burdened with a debt which he had assumed for his education; and with all this drawback to the consummation of his wishes, he likewise offered his hand and heart to Ida Archer; so that the vulgar adage seemed verified, that Miss Ida had "two strings to her bow;" and what was

more remarkable, both these proposals were made the same day, each of course being utterly ignorant of the fact of the other's propositions.

Affairs of the heart appear sometimes to leak out so mysteriously, that it seems as if Cupid himself proclaimed them; and very soon it was current among Ida's friends that she had received "two offers."

Most of the calculating, plodding, money-loving acquaintances were ready to pronounce at once that the rich Mr. Singleby would carry his suit—while a few shook their heads doubtfully, adding: "Ida always disappointed expectations."

Not a few related strange incidents in her history. One recounted the fact that she refused an invitation to her daughter's levee, that she might attend the death-bed of an aged woman to whom she had ministered through the cold winter; while yet another had known for a certainty, that upon her father's presentation of a rich brocade silk, she entreated him to bestow the gift upon her mother, and in lieu thereof, she took the money which was paid for it, and dispensed it in wood and coal among the children of poverty whom she attended.

These accounts were not quoted, however, in justification of her high moral character, nor

because they reflected a peculiar lustre upon her, but simply to show that she was a very singular person, and generally acted by contraries from other people, and therefore it would be just like Ida to reject Mr. Singleby for the poor Dr. Masters, who was penniless but talented. Shrewd old men, however, predicted the parents would settle this matter; for riches had a peculiar charm in the eyes of the old merchant Archer, who had made an assignment of his property some twelve months since, and a lift from Singleby would now turn to good account. So while the friends are conjecturing to what conclusions our young friend will arrive, let us follow her to her chamber where she is now seated, to meditate upon the importance of the subject before her. Let us first take up Singleby's letter, and read what it promises:

"MY DEAR IDA,—Would that I could prefix the little word 'my' in quite another sense from what its common usage denotes. Do not blush, Ida, when the object of this note is made apparent to you—perhaps, it will be unexpected, but be assured it is not made without due consideration. I have long been looking for a wife. I have an idea that I shall enjoy more in the married life with a congenial partner, than it is possible for me to do singly and alone. For months my eyes have rested on you as the ideal which my fancy dreams have portrayed. You must be aware that my means are sufficient to give you every indulgence—should you desire to attend upon fashionable pleasures every evening, you can do so. Our style of living will be equal to any ideas you may have formed as to making a paradise of home; works of art, tasteful designs, and all the requisites for an elegant home in the city, shall be placed at your command; nay, more, a cottage covered with woodbine and honeysuckles intermingled, shall be added, if your love of rural life craves it. I want a companion. I weary of reading and grow sick of conversation; but as I have no employment for my time, but to extract enjoyment from a life of ease, I am desirous of imparting my treasures to one who shall take the vacuity out of idleness, and minister to a mind and taste diseased and perverted. I think you will not have the disposition to reject the full offer of my hand and heart, when I assure you they are proffered to you, first of all the fairest of creation; and in return be assured all my wealth shall be freely expended to make us both completely happy.

You shall know no more exposures in attending the sick nor ministering to the diseased, save to him who has a claim upon all your love. You will please communicate these thoughts to your parents, and give me an immediate answer to the subject. With much esteem,

"GEORGE SINGLEBY."

And now we will look over Ida's shoulder and read a communication on the same subject, from Dr. Masters.

"MISS IDA ARCHER,—My friend, certainly you will allow me to call you such; but when I tell you how devotedly interested I have become in your history, and that I have so long enshrined your good deeds in my heart, that you are unspeakably dear to me, you may be surprised at the honest avowal. Then again it may seem presumptuous in me to make the disclosure that I desire that our lives may be linked together as one. True, have no fortune to throw at your feet, no palace to invite you to occupy, no outward gifts with which I could bribe or allure you to myself; had I every one of them, I feel assured you would throw them away for the wealth of a disinterested love, and the pleasure that clusters about a true and manly heart, whose steady aim is to serve his fellow-men, and seek the favor of Heaven by an approving conscience.

"Ida, what say you to my proposal? What if we do begin life relying upon our own exertions? Shall we be any the less happy for industriously improving our time and talents? What if you adorn no marble palace? Is there no contentment in a quiet simple home, where frugality without meanness and plenty with the handmaid of economy, sits at the social board? Life may not be one uniform holiday, but because we have the working days, will not the holidays be enjoyed with far greater zest? Think of these things, and remember when I pledge to you my affections, I feel they are committed to one who will not trifle; and should you refuse my request, you may find those who may proffer you more enviable distinctions as the world call them, but never, never, will a heart be found whose love will more uniformly flow to make you a happy wife, than his who asks in return your warmest sympathy and regard. From your devoted,

HENRY MASTERS."

And Ida gazed first at one and then at the other. She compared the sentiments together, and thus she soliloquized:

"So, Mr. Singleby, you imagine you should be happier with a wife? one who would minister to your idle fancies and become a sort of passive being, live in idleness, bask in pleasure, extract from ennui a balm of contentment, sit beneath rich and gorgeous drapery, chat with those whom wealth alone has elevated to high stations, and herein I am to find my happiness! And then in the rural cottage I may train the woodbine and honeysuckle just as fantastically as I please, hey? And better than all, from an entire life of ease, I am to extract the pleasures of Paradise. No more exposure in administering to the poor and needy; but all the wealth to be lavished upon myself, thus making me supremely selfish and happy of course. Poor mistaken man! Your money looks to me like a most worthless possession, with the heart that thus confines it to minister only to selfish gratifications. Think you, I could cure your weariness, or relieve the dull monotony of a life of idle and luxurious ease? O, no, the premises are all false—nothing would induce me to accept your offer. I cannot be victimized to sordid gold. I thank you for your offer, but totally reject it.

"And now, Dr. Masters, let me speak to you. Tell me not about 'palaces' or 'outward distinctions.' read the nobility of your heart. Do I not see your daily struggles, and have I not secretly felt what a triumph you have won by your untiring industry? Have I not heard the high encomiums of praise which fell from those of thy profession, which would have been withheld, had not thy splendid acquirements extorted their meed of praise? Yes, I will cheerfully link my fortune with thine; it shall be my delight to add to thy outward stores, and above all, we will improve our interior life, whence all true happiness has its foundation. Yes, Henry, I will encounter all the scorn of friendship, nay, even obloquy, and feel myself all the richer for having made the choice. And now I will go to my parents and lay open the whole matter."

Mr. and Mrs. Archer were sitting alone in their back parlor. Ida had a flushed cheek and a tremulous tone, but with a true, unshrinking desire to do her duty to all interested in her welfare, she read the two letters we have transcribed. Mr. Archer laid down his glasses, and looked pleased; then the mother inquired of her daughter if she had concluded which offer to accept? Her father answered, "of course the child is not a fool, mother? Sentiment is one thing, and talent is one thing, but real genuine cash is worth them all."

"If you were sick, father, which would you prefer, a bag of gold or a sympathizing friend at your side?" gently inquired Ida.

"Money will procure sympathy," tartly replied the old man.

"Yes, Ida," joined the fond mother, "your father and I have lived over what you have in prospect. We have known what money will give, and have felt what it will take away."

"Money with a miser's heart is no coveted possession by me, I assure you," replied Ida.

"If you reject George Singleby for Henry Masters, you deserve the consequences which will surely follow. With Singleby what a life is before you—not a want but will be gratified; nothing but live in wealth, go and come as you please."

"And," interrupted the mother, "you can travel in foreign parts—you know how much you have desired to do so—but with Henry Masters nothing but poverty awaits you. You must listen to a little reason."

"And who is so fit to give you suitable advice as your parents, Ida? Don't we wish to see you well settled in the world? and what a promotion it will give us all should you marry Singleby. Perhaps he would lend me a small capital to invest in my business; he might do it as well as not."

"But father would not ask me to give myself away, when my affections do not go with the act."

"Pshaw, nonsense! love will come fast enough when you have all your wants supplied. It isn't half the people marry for love. Didn't Mary Gray marry Captain Tweed for money?"

"And what a miserable life they lead," replied Ida. "He sends the servant man with her when she rides out, and stays at home to talk about her with his domestics."

"Well, there's Tom Hunter—he married a fortune, what of that?"

"Only that Tom has been a real loafer ever since," remarked the daughter. "Money, father, I tell you, is not everything in the married life. I begin to think that those who begin poor, and are frugal, after all end the best and often the richest. Now I do not mean to distress you, but it does seem to me I should be happier in a mean shanty, with Henry Masters, than in a palace with George Singleby. That is my present belief, and I cannot help expressing it."

Mr. Archer grew wrathful—he was vehement in his use of language. Ida shed tears, but did not change her convictions of duty. She left the room, and before midnight she wrote her re-

fusal to George Singleby, and her acceptance of Dr. Masters!

The news soon spread of her decision, and then what scores of nice people deprecated that "a young girl should stand in her own light, and be so obstinate, and wilful, and blind to her own interest," and those who scrupled to tell her so, informed her parents of their feeling.

But Ida went on leading the same beautiful life, doing good wherever her hand found it to do, and if her purse was empty, the rich mine of wealth which a ready sympathy caused to flow made her the friend of the friendless and the widow's stay. Her parents were silenced by her example, and although they received Henry Masters with a cold reserve, yet they permitted him to enter their dwelling, contrary to the advice of many who would have sowed the seeds of discord.

George Singleby had now become engaged to Miss Herbert, the daughter of a rich wine merchant. He was about erecting one of the most splendid mansions, and the bride elect seemed to glory in her choice. She appeared in the richest attire, wore the most brilliant diamonds, always asserted that it was a falsehood that George ever thought of marrying Ida, and with a magnificent sense of importance, she dropped the acquaintance of the Archers, while she often gaily fluttered past their dwelling, looking from her coach windows.

Henry Masters, however, had so far accumulated property, as to justify him in the purchase of a horse and light buggy, with which his visits to his patients were greatly accelerated, besides the growing demands upon his time which his reputation was exciting far and wide kept him continually busy; and with such an activity combined with prudence, daily gains begin to swell to quite an amount—so that at the end of the second year of his practice, his debts were all discharged, and several hundreds were invested.

The fame of his professional skill had been often re-echoed in the ears of the Widow Ashley since her husband's decease, and now that consumption had clearly marked her for a prey, she resorted to Dr. Masters for some palliative for the distressing cough and uncomfortable night sweats which attended her disorder. The doctor's manners were of that frank and cordial turn which at once invites confidence and excites cheerfulness; and in a short time Mrs. Ashley found his visits quite indispensable to her comfort. As she resided about a mile from the city,

in a most elegant cottage, planned with true architectural taste, whose exterior and interior corresponded, and as her walks were adorned with flowers, the doctor invited Ida to accompany him in one of his excursions thither. Had an angel dropped from the celestial regions into Mrs. Ashley's dwelling, she could not have been more attracted by the sweetness and delicacy of her movements and conversation than with Ida Archer's. Perhaps we do not think enough of our manners in visiting the sick and melancholy sufferer. There is a gentle approach, a modulated tone, a quiet adjustment of ourselves, a winning and soothing way of speaking the right words, which linger long in the ears of the stricken, and the sweet vision stands by them in hours of wakefulness, and we feel the reality of such sympathy to mitigate much outward distress. This art was perfectly understood by Ida, and her first visit to Mrs. Ashley left an impress which never faded from her remembrance.

It was now advancing toward autumn, and Mrs. Ashley seemed declining. Her delightful house and grounds needed some one to superintend them, and to whom could she make the offer of taking them but to Dr. Masters? It came so opportune too, just as they desired to enter into the marriage state, but their prudent forethought concluded must be postponed on account of insufficient means, and it so accorded with their tastes, that no word of obligation was raised; besides, no outlay was required, for the kind old lady desired them to freely use all the furniture and entire contents of the dwelling, just as best suited them.

Old Mr. and Mrs. Archer raised but one objection, and that was, that a physician, whose practice was in the city, should not live in the suburbs; but the doctor had anticipated that, and retained his office in the city, leaving a young student at night to attend to orders.

It was a curious fact, that George Singleby and Henry Masters fixed upon the same wedding-day without ever speaking to each other upon the subject—but Ida Archer was married in church, simply attired, and attended by a few select friends, while George Singleby and Miss Herbert stood in a most gorgeously furnished apartment, attended by scores of fashionable people, who came to gaze, admire and criticise. The wedding, however, deserved the reputation it received, as "a magnificent affair."

But the foundations for happiness were as dif-

ferent between the two brides as was their outward apparel. One was to be transferred to a palace, imagining that revelry and the gaieties of the hour made the zest of life, while the other felt that true peace must be lodged within; and in ministering to the need of her who had so generously placed her own comforts under her charge, she felt that life might be irradiated by the sunshine of sympathy, and the helping to bear one another's burdens.

Is it not wonderful that the experience of others so little impresses ourselves? Do we not always find the law of compensation fulfilled even here? As we sow, we certainly reap.

Two years from the date of the above marriages have passed away, and what do we now behold? In yonder marble palace a light is dimly burning, whose faint rays are just perceptible between the heavy folds of muslin drapery. There is stillness in that apartment—the physician is hurrying towards it at midnight—there is a deep anxiety upon his brow; his patient is Mrs. Singleby, who from continual exposures, has brought on an inflammation which it is feared may prove fatal. Strange as it may seem, her husband is at the "Club House." He has gone thither, as was his habit, just to see a few choice spirits and try the power of a game at billiards, to drive away "the blues" and make him forget his troubles at home. All winter long he has been plunged in gaiety—sometimes he has attended his wife, and sometimes he preferred "the Club;" there is the seal of the wine cup on his cheek, and a bloated exterior which denotes a life of sensuality and epicureanism quite revolting. But this very night he returns home to meet the physician just leaving his door. In the morning he cannot remember what was told him in the evening—but he awakes the next morning to hear the announcement that his wife is better; but he breathes no thanksgiving to Him who directs "the issues of death."

In a few days a dinner-party celebrates convalescence, and while the invalid wife is pillowed to look out in yonder garden, the merry shouts of revelry from below fall on her ears! She craves other sympathy besides her nurse and her physician, and the thought flits across her brain, why did I not marry for love instead of money? She cannot smother it—it comes again to her at midnight, when the massive door is opening and her husband is just entering. She looks upon those brilliant diamonds, her wedding gift. She

craves something better than diamonds. She surveys that splendid apartment she occupies; but the poor woman whom she called upon to do some upholstery work, had only a neatly furnished room, and beside sat her husband full of good humor, and somehow such a vision strangely rises before her. She longs to get strong and go out in the world, and mingle in fashionable life, for such vapors will not annoy her then. George Singleby's life of luxurious ease is now envied by no one.

And there is the untenanted cottage, where the Widow Ashley lived, which Dr. Masters inhabited two years ago. The widow is dead, and having no children to provide for, and no near relative, she selected the doctor as her heir, and made a will bequeathing him nearly the whole of her estate, estimated at twenty thousand dollars! But Masters's fame has reached a distant city, and he has been invited to accept a professorship richly endowed, in a large city. He has gone to enter upon his duties, but he has left behind him the affectionate regards of hundreds of patients. Now just let us take a look upon Ida before she leaves her numerous friends, among whom the poor and needy come first in her benevolent regards.

There is the poor crippled boy, Jamie, whom a rheumatic fever has left in a helpless condition. She fits him up a small room and stores it with a juvenile library; then she places before him a little shelf attached to his easy chair, and directs him how he may amuse many a listless hour by writing from slips; and a few school books are marked, assigning the lessons he must commit ere her return, and a few dollars are placed in his mother's hand for special emergencies, and so she kisses Jamie's pale cheek, and bids a kind farewell to his mother, and this family never doubts the ministry of angels.

Ida next knocks at the Widow Beman's—she has ordered her coal and groceries, provided her with plain sewing, caused the carpenter to cut an extra window, which will give the poor woman additional light and air, and then she says such comforting words that they will re-echo in that heart until death stops its pulsations. And there are yet many others who share in her benevolence, whom the world has never known, struggling with small incomes, and these are annually provided for; and yet from the Ashley fund there is enough and to spare for herself—because she has no superfluous wants! Besides, she has not neglected her own parents,—those

who felt she committed such a wrong by her marriage with Dr. Masters; they would fain forget it now; for since the world is according to him such splendid attainments they feel a pride in reckoning him as their son. Of George Singleby they would be ashamed. His wealth confers happiness on no one—and this has taught them that old precept, that marrying for money without affection, is a dangerous experiment.

"Yes, marrying for money," although volumes have been written upon it, still can we not recall

one and another who would never have made the choice they did, had only pure affection lighted the torch of love; and so they danced in the giddy round of a short honey-moon, and by and by the fires of passion were cooled, mere sentimentality became stale, there were no reserved funds of inward resources—life became monotonous, domestic cares burdensome, and too late the mistake is discovered that the foundation of happiness which must be based on mutual respect, is wanting; and life is only endured, not enjoyed.

[FROM "THE FLAG OF OUR UNION."]

A LONDON FOG.

BY WALTER FOSDICK.

THE traveller who has never visited London about the month of December, cannot picture to himself a genuine and complete fog in this city, or imagine the tribulations, the losses and the dangers to which the imprudent man exposes himself if he attempts to go out on such a day. But, before going out, the stranger suffers more than one anxiety; the noises in the house and in the street warn him that it is day, and he sees no day.

He seizes his watch and listens; it goes; but unable to consult the hands, he strikes it.

"Nine o'clock!" exclaims he, in despair; "am I then blind?"

He rubs his eyes, runs to the window, casts towards the street a frightened glance, which falls upon thick darkness, and believes himself, indeed, deprived of the most precious of all the senses. He rings violently; a servant comes; but at the moment of his entrance, the candle which he holds in his hand is extinguished.

"What does the gentleman want?" exclaims he, amid the darkness.

"A physician! a physician! an oculist!—the best oculist! Quick! quickly run! Here is a half guinea for you."

And shivering with cold, the poor man throws himself despairingly into bed, waiting two hours for the physician, whom the fog arrests, like everybody else, in his dubious journey. Imagining the sensations of the supposed blind man during these two hours.

The physician arrives.

"Sir, save my sight, and half of my fortune—"

He does not finish, struck at once by a gleam of joy and of light. By the light of the lamp, borne by the servant, he sees the servant; he sees the physician; he sees himself! His blindness was but a dream—a nightmare.

But the physician does not admit this explanation; he has paid a visit; he taxes at two guineas the hallucination of the patient, explaining to him the cause, which is no other, he says, than the fog—the fog which, two or three times a year, makes London resemble the ancient kingdom of shadows.

"A fog!" exclaims the stranger; "but, sir, it is night, the darkest night. How long does this last?"

"One day, at least; often two; and sometimes more," replies the phlegmatic doctor.

"Ah! I will leave this instant," says the stranger; "I will quit forever a country which the sun himself abandons."

"Ah, sir, stop!" says the Esculapius, with a jesting air; "a few moments of anxiety, and the visit of a physician, are your slender tributes to a London fog. Thank Heaven that you are let off so cheaply. If you had, by misfortune, left the hotel this morning, hear what would have happened to you:

"To walk at this time in the English capital, is absolutely to plunge yourself into a soup of yellow peas, ready to be placed over the fire; for the fog, in taking away your respiration, offers you, in return, at once a kind of food and drink.

"A poor nourishment for asthmatics! On one side of the street a fit of coughing, issuing from some aged breast, responds to a similar fit which resounds from the other side. So that if you cannot see the passengers, you have the satisfaction of hearing them scold about their atmospheric breakfast.

"Breakfast, did I say? The dinner, tea and supper are of the same sort. You cannot open your mouth without swallowing a throat-full of fog; and as all day—if one may call this a day—you are obliged to have lights, you consume, by the fog, a notable quantity of gas, oil, or tal-

low-smoke. These poor lights, themselves submissive to the scourge, give but a dubious, reddish and gloomy ray. They are, like yourself, cold, and illuminate only the least possible space.

"The entire city appears covered with a vaporous tent, beneath which one hears the confused noise of invisible beings. You think that all the smoke which, during twenty years, has escaped from the fifteen hundred thousand chimneys of London, is falling at the same instant from the clouds, after having become corrupted there.

"The odor which it sheds, not only makes you cough, but it seems as if all the colds in the world had given each other a rendezvous in your head, to lodge there. You breathe much like a whale, caught between moving sands and the keel of a seventy-four; and three persons, conversing in a street, make a noise like the bellows of a forge which has a rent in its side.

"So much for the lungs," said the doctor. "To-morrow I shall have, with all my London brethren, some hundreds of invalids to attend. As for surgeons, they will not the less be needed to mend the broken limbs and heads of this cloudy day.

"You walk with the greatest caution, groping your way along the walls, by the doors, the windows, everything you can seize, and at last fall into a cellar, on the shoulders of a shoemaker, who makes his dwelling there; fortunate if, at the moment of your fall, his awl is not pointed upward. You may fall again, head foremost, into the subterranean shop of a coal-merchant, overturn the mistress of the place on her scales, and receive from the rude hand of her husband a salutation which will leave you as black as his merchandize.

"You flee. Alas! you run against the iron pot of a milkman, the overturned contents of which render still more slippery the pavement which the fog has made so muddy. The irritated man seizes you by the collar; but, warmed by your misadventures, you give him a push which sends him into a basement kitchen, to break some dozens of plates, or the head of the cook.

"To escape the consequence of this catastrophe, you run at random, and directly before you, until the moment when an enormously fat gentleman stops you short. So violent is the shock that you roll into the gutter, and the large man into a shop, the door of which his weight has broken open. A new flight to avoid a new af-

fair; and you thank Heaven, muddy as you are, that you did not fall three paces farther on, where an immense drain opens its gaping mouth, which would have engulfed you, its tenth or twelfth victim since morning.

"But as you raise your eyes to heaven—which you do not see—you set one foot in a pile of quicklime, and the heat you feel in this foot warns you not to put the other in it. You turn round a certain corner, which seems to you the entrance of a yard, where you can clean yourself a little; but you strike your head against a bucket suspended to the wall, and full of whitewash; the thick liquid inundates you, and you are like a phantom in its white shroud. Before you recover your identity, you find yourself face to face with a chimney-sweep, laden with a bag of soot, half untied, the contents of which are partly emptied on you; so that, on one side you would be taken for an old chimney, and on the other for a newly-painted building.

"Some charitable person, on seeing you thus, lends you a dozen napkins and a bucket of water, to purify you from so many stains. This done, you again set out, and become prudent to excess, scarcely daring to put one foot before the other. You arrive, groping, at the stall of a fishmonger, with your arms extended like a blind man. All at once you utter a piercing cry, thinking one of your hands caught in a vice. A great black and live lobster has seized you and clings to your fingers, as a shipwrecked man to the plank of safety. The fishmonger seeing you take flight, runs after you, shouting, 'Stop thief!' It is fortunate for you that in his race he tumbles into a tar-barrel placed at the door of his neighbor the grocer. The monster which has tortured you has, by dint of being struck by you against the wall, at last let go his hold, and you go on your way groaning, uneasy at what may yet happen to you.

"I do not speak of the shocks, jars and pushes which you receive from errand-boys carrying burdens, merchants of cresses, oranges and matches—all this is nothing compared with the rest. Jostling, jostled, overturning, overturned, you confess that the chances are equal for you or against you; unless sometimes the passengers insinuate their umbrellas into your mouth, and, having forgotten your own, you cannot retaliate, unless, mistaking a dimly-lighted shop for a street corner, you thrust your head through a shattered pane. Nothing then remains but to withdraw it (your head) as gently as possible, and go on your way as if nothing had happened.

You are sure that the shopkeeper will seize by the collar the first passenger who comes after you, to charge him for the damaged pane. The passenger pays, though innocent, for, like yourself, he might have broken this window.

"It is useless to mention two or three dozen dogs running about in search of their masters, and who have overturned you in your race. As for your watch, you had not gone fifty paces from your house, when it was, at a hundred paces from your pocket, in the hands of a pickpocket as strong as Robert Houdin. After twenty questions to the passengers, who reply to you by twenty others, exhausted with fatigue and cold, you perceive a tavern and enter it. But you know no more than an inhabitant of the moon in what part of London you are.

"Installed in a gloomy and damp parlor, a disorder of the spleen seizes you after the disorder of the fog. You ask if one of those hooks, used to suspend hats, could not suspend the weight of your body; you try with a convulsive gesture, the strength of the bell-ropes; you glance with gloomy and sinister eye around the room, astonished at not seeing there thirty unfortunates hung in despair, in such a day. In order to escape these lugubrious ideas, you light a cigar, and calculate the number of glasses of grog necessary to throw you into a slumber or oblivion. But, at the fifth glass, summoning all your philosophy, you decide to enter an omnibus, if there is a driver bold enough to venture into the street in such weather.

"You wait for one at the door, summoning, instead of an omnibus, a dozen coal-carts. The desired vehicle arrives at last at a snail's pace; you jump in and crouch in one corner, unseen by your tailor, provided with a bill of fifty crowns to your address, which is, at least, one compensation for so many evils. You are about to congratulate yourself that all danger is passed, when a bewildered cab-horse thrusting his head through the window of the omnibus, places his warm and smoking nose on your face, and thereupon oaths are exchanged between the two drivers, he, of the cab, wishing to the omnibus horses a disease like that of his own horse. At these words you shudder at the embrace you have just received, and for a week believe yourself a prey to the equine malady.

"Whither is the omnibus going? Little do you care; to be sheltered is all you desire. But great is your anger when the omnibus, after a journey of ten minutes, stops, arrived at the terminus of its route. It took you up at Bridge-

court, and leaves you at Cross Keys, which is three miles from your lodgings! Here are twelve pence thrown away, and new dangers to be encountered. You have, nevertheless, some little pleasures. There, you see an old lady put her foot into a basket of eggs; here, a young lord stumbles into the shop of a librarian, in the middle of a row of richly bound books.

"On such a day a man who is milking his cow at his door, is obliged to hold her by the tail with one hand, for fear of losing sight of her; and the butcher, who is carrying roasting pieces of beef to his customers, finds three or four missing from his basket, which abridges his calls, and also the dinner of three or four clients. But the said roasting-pieces are found safe and sound on the tables of skilful marauders from St. Giles, or Rosemary Lane, the quarters of the dishonest poor.

"If the fog happens on the day of the cattle-market at Smithfield, the traps of the good people in the neighborhood are all open, and more than one stray sheep falls into them. On a foggy day the laws of optics are reversed. Through a sort of mirage, objects assume gigantic proportions; a dog has the appearance of an elephant, a gas-pillar that of a pyramid; houses acquire strange perspectives, the length of streets becomes a mystery, and their names, hieroglyphics lost in the night of time.

"For a genuine Londoner, the thickest December fog is an ordinary thing; he lights up his shop at eight o'clock in the morning, without more ceremony than at eight in the evening. But to the traveller, the stranger, it seems something horrible—this capital enveloped in an obscurity, which is neither day nor night, and against which thousands of gas-lights contend in vain. The multitude of torches, borne and waved by the passengers, add to this fantastic and prodigious scene. These smoky and sombre gleams, reflected on the faces of the inhabitants, present the image of an infernal city, where everything burns without consuming.

"On the Thames, where the fog is most dense, the accidents are most numerous; boats run into each other, or are crushed in passing through the arches. From the top of a bridge, you cannot see the boat which passes beneath; so most of the steamboats suspend their trips, the pilot, who holds the helm, being unable to distinguish even the bow of his boat."

After these confidences of the doctor, the traveller has nothing better to do than to return to bed, until the sun shall have dispelled the fog.

FROM "THE FLAG OF OUR UNION."

THE ROSE OF ACADIE.

BY JAMES DE MILLE.

At the time when the events transpired, which we are about to narrate, the Neutral French of Nova Scotia had already begun to experience the wanton oppression of their royal master. Edicts had been promulgated restricting the privileges of the peaceful Acadians, and the quiet streets of the town of Grand Pre' had more than once resounded with the martial notes of English soldiers, who had come to maintain espionage over the actions of its peaceful inhabitants.

Though in hourly expectation of some gross outrage, the Acadians took no precautions against aggression, but continued their simple agricultural avocations in the open fields, without arms,—conscious of their own perfect rectitude, and humbly relying upon the protection of God. The dames of Acadie manipulated fearlessly in the dairy, or at the spinning wheel, protected only by their guileless simplicity, and consciousness of innocence. At evening, the pious elders gathered their families around the fireside, and after expounding the truths of the Bible, offered up fervent prayers for the happiness of the relentless sovereign who was persecuting them so ruthlessly. Such was the only

defence against oppression, which they had been taught from infancy.

It was at this period, teeming with peril to the Acadians, that a couple of travellers, emerging suddenly from different quarters of a dense wood which encompassed a lake, about three leagues from the hamlet of Grand Pre', unexpectedly met each other face to face. They were both clad in an anomalous garb, consisting of part hunting jacket, and part military dress and each bore upon his shoulder a heavy French musket.

"Ah, Max!" said the stouter and older of the two, dropping the butt of his gun upon the grass, and cordially extending his hand, "I expected to meet you about here. Have you crossed any trail, shot any game, or got into any scrapes since you left camp?"

"I believe there haint a man left a trail, nor a bird taken wing, since these English came so near us!" replied the other. "I left the French fortifications early this morning, and you're the first biped that has crossed my path since—"

"We're now about nine English miles from Grand Pre'," said the first speaker. "If we go round this lake, it will be a league farther, and we shall be detained too long. There used to

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be a boat here, but during the recent troubles, it has been removed, I suppose."

"Let us swim across."

"But the guns?"

"I'll arrange that. There's the boat, or rather what is left of it, smashed in pieces, at the foot of the rock. I did it myself the last time I crossed. We'll make a raft for the weapons, and shove them before us."

The fragments of the demolished boat were soon fashioned into a rude raft, upon which the two young men first adjusted their garments, and then placed their muskets.

"This is not the time to be lounging round barracks, Bernard," said Max, as they parted from the shore, and began to cut the smooth lake, in measured and powerful strokes, "when one's father, and mother, and sisters, are hourly threatened with imprisonment, and perhaps, death!"

"Assuredly not. We were justified in leaving the camp, to warn our friends of the impending danger. I met a man at Brook's garrison, who informed me that the English had already commanded the Neutrals to deliver up their arms, and that a descent upon Grand Pre' was hourly expected!"

"Indeed! Then the danger is more imminent than we had anticipated!" said Max, in voluntarily quickening his strokes. "Perhaps we may yet be too late!"

"Look out, Max! you're nearly capsizing the clumsy craft. You've suspected truly—the peril is considerably greater than we had supposed yesterday."

"The English will ever rue the day when they disturbed the tranquillity of the peaceful Acadians. It will be a perpetual reproach—a stain upon their arms, which time will not efface from the remembrances of men. Bernard, when I think upon the injustice which these haughty masters of ours have already inflicted upon us, this last crowning tyranny stirs to fury all the revengeful passions of my soul!"

"It is indeed a heinous wrong, but one which I fear is too easy of perpetration!"

"Yes, and one which will too easily escape retribution! How easily we might be captured now, Bernard. Suppose some one should spring out of the woods, and oppose our landing. We should make but a poor figure, defending ourselves here in the water, *sans rifles*!"

"That's true!" replied the other, and quickening their motions simultaneously, Max Drum-

mond and Bernard St. Verd speedily stood upon the opposite shore of the lake.

After resuming their clothing, and carefully examining the priming of their weapons, they pursued their journey in a course due south, at a speed which precluded all attempts at conversation. Max peered anxiously through the openings in the forest, and ever and anon stopped to listen if any sound disturbed the deep stillness of the measureless wood. His companion, however, strode on, with his eyes fixed steadily before him, and his right hand cautiously grasping his gun-lock. Though the external manifestations of solicitude were not so marked, Bernard St. Verd was not wanting in affectionate concern for his friends and relations, who were in jeopardy. They had advanced about a league and a half, when Max suddenly shouted, in feverish excitement:

"Look there, Bernard! See that smoke rolling up over yonder hill! By St. Denis, they're burning Grand Pre'!" Max was of French extraction, and when powerfully excited, often exhibited his French proclivities.

St. Verd cast his eyes round, and beheld a black nebulous mass, rolling away in dense, lazy volumes, in the direction of the wind. His brow grew dark, and his lips closed together in deep, concentrated wrath.

"If they injure but a hair of my father's head, they shall feel a son's terrible vengeance!"

"And if they dare offer a breath of insult to your peerless sister, they shall again experience the power of a Drummond's arm!" said Max. "We must proceed hastily, but warily, if we would be in time to furnish any assistance."

Knowing that they must now be in close proximity to the English troops, the young men advanced with redoubled caution, holding their guns before them ready cocked, like fowlers coming up with their game.

They had advanced in this manner about a mile, when a pistol-shot re-echoed through the forest, and a voice followed, ringing with startling clearness among the stems of the trees:

"Prenez garde!"

Max and Bernard stopped a moment, and beheld behind a clump of trees, at the distance of a hundred yards, a French soldier, guarding a couple of saddled horses.

"I recognize those horses!" said Bernard.

Advancing carefully they were soon within hailing distance of the Frenchman.

"*Vous criez, comme un aigle, mon ami!*" said Max.

"*A qui sont ces chevaux ?*" asked Bernard, sternly.

"*Ces sont a Monsieur St. Verd !*" replied the Frenchman.

"Then what are you doing with them here?"

"I guard them, *pour Monsieur.*"

"We'll relieve you of your charge," said St. Verd, and mounting one of the animals, he consigned the other to the charge of his companion. Max coolly got into the saddle, and after admonishing the astounded Frenchman not to "*prenez garde*" so vociferously in future, and politely bidding him *bon jour*, rode away at a tearing pace.

On reaching the summit of the hill which overlooked the valley of Grand Pre', and over which clouds of murky vapor were still constantly pouring, a scene presented itself which would have shocked the stoutest heart. The whole valley, as far as the eye could reach, was enfolded in flame and smoke. Here and there could be seen human forms, bearing away articles of domestic use, but otherwise the valley seemed totally deserted. Fields of rich grain were yielding to the devouring element, and far in the distance was a train of cattle, urged on by the bayonets of English dragoons.

"This is too much!" said Max, checking his horse.

"See, the St. Verd house still stands!—we may yet be in time!" said Bernard, dashing instantly down the hill, followed closely by Max.

They reached the dwelling, which was situated upon the outskirts of the town, only to find it deserted. An English soldier, with a torch in his hand, was about to set fire to a pile of rubbish, at one corner of the building. Max rode fiercely up to him, and striking the torch from his grasp, demanded what had been done with the St. Verds. The man shook his head sullenly, but made no other reply. Max dismounted, and presenting a pistol with his right hand, while he seized the soldier's throat with his left, threatened him with destruction unless he divulged all he knew. Completely intimidated by Max's impetuous style of attack, the Englishman informed him that the elder St. Verds had been taken to the coast with the rest of the Acadians, to embark in English ships for the American colonies.

"But the young lady!" demanded Max.

"The colonel took charge of her!" replied the soldier, with an insolent leer.

Max stretched the caitiff upon the parched

sward with one blow, and turning to enter the house, confronted Bernard, issuing from the door.

"Read that!" said he, presenting him a note. It ran:

"DEAR BERNARD.—They have taken father and mother to the sea side, with the rest of the people. Myself they have reserved for some special insult. There are about half-a-dozen mounted men on guard at the door. What is their purpose I cannot tell. I'm in fearful anxiety. Would that Max or you might come."

"BEATRICE."

"This villain outside knows the whole matter, but it won't be in his power to give us any information for some time," said Max, contemptuously touching the prostrate incendiary with his boot.

"There's no need of it. Here is their trail—a dozen feet in width;—they have taken no pains to conceal it."

The grass was furrowed up by horses' hoofs for a considerable space around the door, and from this broken track there issued a broad trail, which appeared to pursue a course nearly due southwest from the hamlet of Grand Pre'. The horsemen evidently did not apprehend pursuit, as they had taken no precautions to conceal their path.

"My course lies in the direction of these tracks!" said Max, tightening his saddle-girth, and putting his pistols in the holsters.

St. Verd paused an instant, with one foot in the stirrup. After a moment's reflection, he said with the air of one who had finally determined a difficult point:

"I believe mine does, too, Max."

Following the broad path, they soon reached the limits of the valley. Here Max, who was foremost, was about to proceed in a right line, through a deep glen, which led from the valley, when Bernard shouted:

"Stop! We're off the trail!"

Max waited until the wind took up the glen a cloud of smoke which just then enveloped him, and then proceeded to examine the road. Not a track was visible before him, and behind could only be discerned his own horse's footprints.

"We have lost the trail! Let us return and recover it."

They slowly and carefully pursued their way back for the distance of a quarter of a mile, when they suddenly struck the last trail, which, though as broad and distinct as ever, appeared

and here; there were no diverging tracks to right or left.

"They have doubled!" said Max. "Keep a good lookout, and we'll circumvent their cunning yet."

They returned in the line of the hoof-prints, until they reached the margin of a little creek, when both simultaneously halted.

"Leap the creek, Max; and if I'm not greatly deceived, you'll find horses' feet have trod the opposite bank."

Max leaped the little run without much difficulty, and shouted as he alighted on the opposite shore:

"Here they are—as distinct as ever! Cross quickly!"

St. Verd crossed; and as he observed the new course which the trail took, remarked:

"This will conduct us directly to the sea-shore, where they have taken all our people to embark them for the south, and where the whole British army is encamped."

"True," replied Max; "but if we hasten we shall be able to intercept this detached party before they can join the main body."

The sun had already begun to decline, and as there was no time to be lost, and the trail was perfectly clear, the two horsemen urged their steeds to the top of their speed.

The sun went down, and twilight began to deepen into night, but still they had not come up with those of whom they were in pursuit. The forest began to assume the dusky, gloomy hue of a moonless night; and the trail began to grow indistinct in the darkness.

"I shall have to wait until morning," said Bernard, "I've come near losing the trail."

"They must have encamped near here," replied Max, "unless they intended to finish their journey to-night, which is not at all probable. Hark!—a horse neighing, by St. Denis! Bernard, we are upon them!"

Both young men appeared to know how to act in the present emergency. They both dismounted, fastened their horses securely, examined the priming of their weapons, and cautiously advanced in the direction of the sound which Max had heard. After proceeding half a mile, they suddenly emerged from behind a dense thicket, under cover of which they had been advancing, and beheld within a score of rods, the British encampment. A fire was blazing in the middle of it, around which three

or four soldiers were seated, apparently partaking of their evening meal.

"Hold me, Bernard!" said Max, in intense excitement. "Do you see that fellow in epaulettes, sitting beside Beatrice? If he moves an inch nearer her, I'll roll him off that log into the crackling fire!"

"Wait till we're nearer!" said his companion.

"By Jupiter! I believe he's putting his arm around her! Do you take the tall fellow with a red cockade, and I'll arrange matters with that colonel!"

Two musket-shots following each other in rapid succession, woke up the echoes of the vast forest, and without stopping to ascertain the result of their fire, Max and St. Verd rushed fearlessly into the encampment, pistols in hand.

"Come on, my men!" cried Bernard, as if a whole company were at his heels.

"Yield, or expect no mercy!" shouted Max, discharging his pistol at a man who had levelled a carbine at him.

"Steady, men! steady!" feebly vociferated the bleeding colonel, from under the log on which he had been sitting.

But his men were all down before he gave the order. Max, after discharging his pistol, grappled with a fellow who was guarding the horses, and after a short conflict hurled him bleeding to the ground. There were but two others in the party. One of these Bernard shot down as he advanced from his concealment, and the other was made prisoner without much resistance. When the victory was achieved, the two young men turned to the lovely Beatrice—the rose of Acadie.

"Dear Bernard!—Max, dear Max! how kind in you to incur all this for me!"

"I would have incurred ten times as much rather than have forfeited so sweet an acknowledgement of the favor!" answered Max, his tones displaying a manly tenderness, that became him well.

"I knew you would not forsake me, Bernard," said Beatrice, smiling, "and I thought," continued she, her cheeks mantling, "that Max might remember her old playmate!"

"Max merits the largest share of your encomiums, for he decided instantly to go in pursuit of you, while I was hesitating whether to follow your captors, or go in pursuit of father and mother," said Bernard.

Beatrice bestowed a glance upon the delighted Max, which amply repaid him for all the dan-

gers he had undergone, and all the anxiety he had felt for her.

"We must now decide upon our line of march," said St. Verd, "for it is impossible to remain here. The firing will attract people to the spot."

"Let us return to the French camp," said Max.

"And leave my parents in the hands of the English?"

"We shall not be able to rescue them from the force that guards them. It will be better to rejoin them after they have arrived in the American colonies."

"That is true," replied Bernard, sorrowfully. "Even if we should succeed in rescuing them, they could not live in tranquillity in Nova Scotia. It is better for them to undergo the perils of a sea voyage, than endure all the insults and hardships to which they would be inevitably subjected here. Even you, Beatrice, will not be allowed to remain here."

"I have no desire to dwell in the land from which my friends and parents have been so mercilessly expelled!" responded the lovely girl, a tear moistening her eye.

"A sentiment to which I respond with all my soul!" said Max. "Never will I tread this soil

as a 'weller upon it, after this humiliating extinction of our race!"

The fair rose of Acadie smiled a sweet approval of the determination. She had apprehended that he would continue in the French service in Acadie.

Too much time had already been consumed, and they made hasty preparations for departure. A rude litter was constructed for the wounded colonel, and lashed between a couple of horses. Beatrice was assisted to the saddle by the attentive Max; the two young men brought up and mounted their horses, and the train took up its line of march for the French encampment. They rode all night, and arrived at their place of destination at morn, the next day.

Three weeks after the occurrences which we have narrated, there was a joyful family meeting in the town of Philadelphia. The St. Verds had been taken to the American province of Pennsylvania, whither Beatrice, Max and Bernard had followed them, as soon as they were able to make preparations for so long a journey by land. Joyfully the fond parents welcomed back their lost children. They could welcome them all as children—for Max had won and wedded "The Rose of Acadie."

THE END.