

# THE MANIAC'S SECRET:

—OR,—

## THE PRIVATEER OF MASSACHU- SETTS BAY.

A Story of the Revolution.

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## THE MANIAC'S SECRET.

### CHAPTER I.

#### THE FISHERMAN'S COT, AND THE PLEDGE THAT WAS GIVEN THERE.

Our story opens at a time when patriot hearts were beating fearfully, and when the prayers for liberty were uttered from souls that could not bear a tyrant's rule. Throughout the country all eyes were turned towards the scenes which were occurring around Massachusetts Bay. In Boston was quartered the British army, under General Gage; in the harbor lay a British fleet, under Admiral Graves; while the suburbs were occupied by Washington and his patriot forces. Everything was ripe for hostilities. The patriots had begun to form societies in opposition to the king's officers, and the tories were loud and rank in their abuse and condemnation. In fact, the Britons themselves never vented one-half the low abuse upon the patriots that came from the tories; for the latter had a double cause for opposition. They not only wished to bow the neck to England's king, but their wealth was endangered by revolution.

But the political heavens were black and portentous. Every day saw some new wrong or insult heaped upon the colonists, and every night covered with its darkness some new movement of wickedness and shame on the part of the invaders. These noble men who were truly the fathers of our nation, were armed in soul with such resolves as England could not shake, and their influence upon the hearts of the liberty-loving people was fast spreading.

It was a cold, bleak day in mid-winter—towards the latter part of January, 1775. At the head of the low, pebbly cape which makes down between the mouth of North River and the Bay, in what is now called South Scituate, stood a small cottage. It was built near the river, and not far from the point where vegetation commences. The cot was only one story high, and connected with it were a shed and boat-house, the latter forming a right angle with the other buildings, and opening upon the river, the high tides reaching almost to its doors. A neat fence of quaintly arranged cedar pickets enclosed the yard, and here and there a leafless, thorny twig which appeared above the snow told that roses bloomed there in the summer time.

Within the cot, in the principal living room, burned a generous fire which sent out a cheerful warmth into the apartment. Upon a high-backed, settle, on one side of the wide fire-place, sat a man engaged in reading. He was a short, thick-set man, some five and fifty years of age, with broad, heavy shoulders, and a wide, full chest. His head was bald upon the top, and his long, shaggy locks which hung down about his ears were gray and wavy. His face was broad and open, bronzed by long years of exposure, and beaming with soul and generosity. His eyes were of a bright hazel, and still undimmed. Such was Matthew Clyne. He had once been

captain of a merchantman, but of late years he had spent most of his time in fishing. In early life he had met with a misfortune which crippled his energies for a while, and since then he had not been far from the waters of Massachusetts Bay. As he sat there now, with the glowing fire-beams lighting up his face, he showed the pure patriot in every lineament; and he was such an one, too, as might do much service in an emergency, for those muscles were like networks of steel, and the stout cords like thews of twisted hemp.

And there was another occupant of the room, and one who, save in soul and heart, was as unlike the other as possible. It was a girl—a bright-eyed, joyous looking creature, with sunny brown curls floating about her neck and temples, and the beauty-marked dimples playing upon her cheeks and chin. She had hardly seen twenty years of life yet, and the warm blood of youth flowed generously in her veins. In form she was as near perfect as one could hope to find—of a medium height, full and symmetrical, and glowing with the health of exercise and frugal temperance. From her lustrous hazel eye beamed that lovelight which so readily captivates the beholder, and which can never find birth save where the soul is pure. This gentle, loving being was the light of the old man's humble cot, and her kind care and sweet notes had long since dispelled the gloom of the past.

"Belinda," spoke the fisherman, resting the paper he had been reading upon his knee, "we are to have a squad of those British troops close by us."

The girl laid down the pin with which she had been rolling out some dough, and turned towards the speaker. A shade of quick fear dwelt upon her fair face, and her bright eyes threw an anxious glance towards the newspaper, which was the last number of the "Boston Gazette."

"What is it, father?" she asked.

"A company of British troops are coming down to Marshfield, under Captain Balfour," returned the old man, while an expression of indignation worked upon his features.

"But for what?" asked Belinda. "Why should they be sent this way?"

"Why, you see the villainous tories have formed a league in Marshfield, under old Tim Ruggles—the black-hearted scoundrel! and they are trying to form more of 'em. The members bind themselves by an oath to oppose our continental Congress, and to put down all pa-

triot meetings. So some of the patriots of Plymouth threatened to break this nest of tories up, and Ruggles has sent to Boston for help."

"But are you sure they will find help, father?"

"Why, sartin. General Gage has ordered a hundred of his soldiers here, and they are coming now, with three hundred stacks of arms, so that the tories can be armed in case of need. What d'ye think of that?"

But Belinda did not reply. She was engaged with her own reflections. She had heard of the brutal conduct of the British soldiers when they could get rum and opportunity, and she knew that her father's cot would be directly in the way of the marauders should they chance to turn their steps towards Scituate. And more still: she knew that a large quantity of finely cured fish was stored in the boat-house, and some of the Marshfield tories knew it. This might offer an inducement to the cupidity of the soldiers.

"You aren't afeared, Belinda?" said the old man, noticing the girl's look.

"No, no, father, I am not afraid," she quickly replied. "But yet you know what the nature of those men is. O, I wish they could be swept from our land. They are a foul pest here, and a blight upon our soil. How long will they stay?"

"Not long, my child—not long. The people of our colonies will not long brook their insolence; and when the stroke falls, it will fall with a crash."

"But why not rise now?" uttered Belinda, warmly. "Why not start up and throw off the yoke?"

"Ah, sweet one," returned the old man, shaking his head sadly, "we must bear it yet awhile longer, for we are not yet prepared. And there is another thing: the first blow must be struck by the tyrant."

"But has he not already struck the first blow?" cried the maiden, with kindling eye. "Is not his continued oppression enough?"

"Not quite, Belinda," answered Matthew, who when deeply affected spoke freely, and without that peculiar idiom which marked his conversation in lighter moods. "We can oppose the acts of the tyrant without a direct resort to arms so long as those acts aim only at the curtailment of our national rights; but should we take up arms now, and thus be the first to resort to force, we might be blamed by thousands who will be with us while we only act on the defensive. But the time is soon coming, my child. The Briton

is chafing and mad, and his temper will ere long break forth. Let him but strike one blow—let but one man fall in a conflict of his own seeking, and the clang shall awaken every true heart in the country. Wait, wait, my child, and be sure the work shall commence ere long."

As the old man ceased speaking, Belinda turned to her work, but her countenance was heavy with fear and sadness. She had allowed a spirit of dread to come upon her, and she could not drive it off. She had made her bread, and placed it upon an iron pan before the fire, when a quick step was heard upon the snow-crust without. Belinda seemed to recognize the step at once; for she turned her ear quickly towards the place from whence the sound came, and a look of joy sprang to her face. In a moment more the door was opened, and a young man entered.

The new-comer was habited in a seaman's garb, but the dress was nearly new, and made up with more than ordinary neatness and care. He was not very tall, nor yet was he short, but he had a squareness and solidity of frame that made him look less tall than he really was. His hair was light brown in color, and clustered about his neck and temples in closely curling ringlets. His eyes were of that bright, deep gray which bespeaks genius, and his other features were noble and bold in outline, and full of real manly beauty. He was, in truth, such an one as a keen-eyed commander-in-chief would have selected to lead an adventure where cool, dauntless courage and calm judgment were required, for these qualities were plainly written upon his face. He stood erect, like one who knew his power, and his movements were characterized by that ease and grace which denotes experience in the world. Such was Rolin Lincoln, an orphan—a native of Plymouth, and a descendant of one who came over in the "Mayflower" on her second voyage to this country. He had followed the sea since boyhood, and his last voyage he made as first mate of an Indian man, which sailed from Salem.

Rolin bowed respectfully to the old man, and then, with a faint smile, he turned towards Belinda. He took her hand, and it trembled within his grasp. A rich flush suffused his face, and a warm moisture gathered in his eyes. She noticed the strange expression of his face, and, while the tell-tale blood mounted to her fair brow, she dropped her eyes to the floor, and her answer to the youth's greeting was low and tremulous. She placed a chair near the fire for

him, and then seated herself where she could watch her bread.

"Well, Rolin," said Matthew, as the youth sat down, "so we are to have the British soldiers close at hand?"

"Yes," returned the youth, while an involuntary clutching of his hands told how deep were his feelings. "They are coming to-morrow."

"So soon?"

"Yes, on the twenty-third, and to day is the twenty-second. I am sorry that they are coming, for I fear their presence may stir up premature trouble."

"And will they not be committing depredations through the country?" asked Belinda, tremulously.

"I cannot tell," returned Rolin. "I only know their dispositions, and if they do leave our people in peace, it will be because they fear the cold weather. They are to have comfortable quarters at Marshfield!"

After this there was a silence of some moments. Rolin seemed to be dwelling upon some subject which weighed heavily upon him, and the old man seemed to be waiting for him to speak. Belinda was more tremulous than ever, for never before had Rolin regarded her with such strange looks, and never before had she felt so strangely in his presence. Surely there was an electric chain connecting those two souls, for without a word to guide their thoughts they had both arrived at a point where the angle of friendship meets, and where the life tracks must cross and diverge. At point more and more, or where they might unite forever.

A little while the youth sat with his head bowed, and then his eyes rested a moment upon Belinda. A slight tremulousness was visible in his nether lip, and his face turned a shade paler.

"Captain Clynne," he said at length, looking the old man in the face, and speaking low and deeply, "the time has come when those who have hopes to set at rest should rest them now. In the events which are clearly foreshadowed over our land we must know our friends, and especially must we know those who will demand our care and protection. He is doubly armed in battle who holds protection over some loved one that looks to him for safety. At this moment I am alone in the world, with only my country and my friends. All ties of kindred have been severed, and for many a long year my

heart has been alone on earth in its deepest beatings. But I would have it so no more, nor can it be, for already another has found its holiest love, and another image than my own appears upon its tablets. I must speak plainly, and you will answer me the same. We can neither of us know what dangers may fall upon our homes, nor what evil may come upon the unprotected. Will you, can you, give—to my keeping—to my love and care—give to my soul—your sweet child? Not to take her from you, but rather to take me to your home, and make me your child, too?"

Matthew Clyne started up from the settee and caught Rolin by the hand; but he did not speak. He gazed a moment into the noble face of the youth, and then sank back upon his seat again. In the meantime, Belinda had covered her face with her hands, and the warm tears were trickling down between her fingers. The old man gazed upon her, and when he could trust his voice, he said:

"Belinda, my child—you must answer our friend. Or, perhaps you have already?"

"Not in words," quickly returned Rolin. "I have not asked her the question that has been laid up in my soul, for I knew not all your wishes. I only knew that she was as your very soul and life to you, and to you I felt in duty and honor bound to make the first proposal."

"Speak, Belinda," said Matthew, struggling with his feelings.

"Ay," added Rolin, moving his seat near to Belinda's side, "speak to me."

The maiden raised her face, and a joyous smile beamed through her eyes. Rolin moved still nearer, and extended both his hands.

"Come," he whispered. "If to me you will give your love and trust your life, then come to me now."

Belinda cast one quick, searching glance into her father's face, and she saw a look of such holy joy resting there that she could not mistake it. Then she turned towards Rolin. For long months—ay, for years—she had loved him, and many a time had she prayed that he might love her, and that God would make her worthy of him. She felt a wild, thrilling realization of the fruition which had thus answered her prayerful hopes, and with a low murmur of joy she arose to her feet and moved tremblingly forward. The youth's stout arms were wound about her fair form, and on the next moment she was upon his bosom.

"You love me, Belinda?" Rolin said, while the tears dropped from his overburdened lids.

"Yes," she murmured.

"And henceforth thou art mine to love, to cherish, and to protect. Father," he added, turning to the old man, while the fair girl still rested within his embrace, "you give her to me freely?"

"Yes, Rolin. O, I have prayed for this. I am happy now, for my dear child has a protector upon whom age has not yet laid the finger of frost. The winter of life is gathering about me, but I shall heed not its blasts now, for the jewel of my soul's most anxious care is safe. I have prayed for this, Rolin."

"So have I," returned the youth. "And you," he added, gazing into Belinda's face, "have you ever hoped for it?"

"I may not tell you all now," she answered; "but I have prayed that I might be worthy to love you, and to receive your love in return."

At that moment the old man discovered that the bread was beginning to burn, and as he arose to move it Belinda detected the danger and sprang to avert it. She turned the loaf, and was just upon the point of moving out the table for dinner, when she was again arrested by the sound of a footfall upon the snow-crust. It was a slow, irregular tread, and unlike any with which she was acquainted.

"That sounds like some one in distress," said Rolin; and he would have arisen and gone out, had not the fact of the stranger's safe arrival been announced by a loud rap upon the door.

## CHAPTER II.

### POLLY POLL, THE BROKEN-MINDED.

BELINDA went to the door and opened it, but she started back upon beholding the applicant. It was an old woman, threescore years of age, at least, and dressed in a garb of bear skins. She was tall and slim, with sharp, wrinkled features, and a face almost as dark as an Indian's from exposure. Her hair flowed down long and shaggy from beneath her bear-skin hood, and was of a light gray in color, while her eyes, which were small, and deep sunken in her head, were black as jet. In addition to all this, there was a strange expression upon her face—a sort of wild, wandering look, which gave her an appearance calculated to inspire a timid person with fear.

"I'm cold, sweet lady, very cold," she said, looking up into Belinda's face. Her voice was harsh and discordant, and instinctively the maiden moved further back; but at the same time she bade the old woman enter.

The strange woman hobbled into the room, and seated herself in the chair from which Belinda had arisen. She then bent over the hearth and stretched out her long arms, and held her bony hands almost in the blaze. Thus she remained for some minutes, and during that time both Matthew and Rolin watched her narrowly. The latter seemed only moved by pity and curiosity, but the former regarded her so earnestly, and his face wore such an eager look, that he seemed to have found something in those bel-damish features which awakened more than curiosity.

As soon as she had warmed her hands, and rubbed them till the sluggish blood began to course through them again, she gazed up. She encountered the old man's look first, and for some moments they gazed steadily at each other. Both Rolin and Belinda noticed this, and they were not a little puzzled.

"My good woman," spoke Matthew Clyne, after he had found that she could stare more keenly than he could, "might I ask you your name?"

"Sartin you may," returned the guest, while every feature seemed to work with a sort of convulsive movement. "But don't you know it now? Don't ye know me?"

"I do not," replied Matthew.

"Well, now that's curious. You the great general of England, and don't know my name?"

"I am no general, madam."

"No? aren't a general? A colonel, perhaps?"

"No."

"Only a major?"

"I am not a major."

"Then a captain?"

"I am called captain sometimes."

"Ha, ha—so I thought. Captain who?"

"Clyne. My name is Matthew Clyne."

"Matthew Clyne?" uttered the woman, gazing more sharply than before into the old man's face. "Clyne, did you say? Matthew?"

"Yes. Did you ever hear the name before?" The old man spoke nervously, and instinctively moved nearer to his guest.

"Matthew Clyne—Clyne—Clyne," soliloquized the woman, gazing fixedly into the old man's

face. "I have heard it, sir; and you must be a general. Now don't deny it, for I won't expose you. Tell me the truth."

Of course, Matthew saw by this time that the woman's mind was wandering, but yet he felt a strong desire to find out if possible who she was, and to that end he thought it best to humor any peculiar fancy she might have; so he replied:

"You mustn't tell that I am a general, for it is not known about here. Now will you tell me your name?"

"Sartin. Ha, ha, ha. I knew you the moment I saw you. But I won't tell. I won't expose you. But, O, Clymy Clyne the general, when you destroyed your whole army—when you rushed 'em all into the mad, boiling sea! when you drew your sword and drove 'em all, all in—'twas a terrible scene. 'O, you might have heard the shrieks of the women, and the groans of the prisoners, and the wails of the poor little sucklings that snuggled close to their mothers' breasts for salvation! You might have heard 'em, and listened one moment. But I won't tell."

Matthew Clyne turned pale as death, and his hands trembled violently.

"Who are you?" he uttered.

"Polly Poll, I am, general. My name is Polly Poll."

Both the old man and Rolin had heard that name often, and they now knew who their guest was. She was a poor woman who had for years been wandering about through the country, bereft of reason, and full of strange fancy and whim. Where she came from no one could learn, for she never could tell, and no one knew her save for the wretched thing she now was. Yet this was the first time Matthew had ever seen her. He had heard of her often, for she had often been in the villages both north and south of him.

But this revelation did not remove the old man's anxious desire, for to him the poor crazy woman appeared more than she did to others. He saw in her something which led his mind back to the past, and in the words she had spoken, wild and incoherent as they were, he saw a key to something which he believed had its origin in stern reality.

"Polly," he said, laying his hand upon her arm, and speaking in a tone as soft and winning as he could assume, "did you ever know a woman named Marcella Paul?"

The beldam started, and for a moment the fire of her small black eyes burned like coals.

"Did you know her?" she fairly shrieked, while Belinda, started with affright, at the harsh, ungenial sound of the cracked voice.

"I did know her well," Matthew answered.

"So did I know her. She was my own mother."

"That could not have been."

"What could not have been?"

"Marsella Paul could not have been your mother."

"But she was—my own mother. Ha, ha, ha. Ye think I'm a child of earth like yourself. But I aren't. I was born in heaven. My mother was driven up there in a storm! A mountain reached up there, and she was on the top of it—a mountain of water! You won't deny that."

"No, Polly. But don't you think that you are Marsella Paul?"

"Me? Me my own mother?"

"But think a little. Were you not once named Marsella?"

"Never! You'd make me out to be my own mother. Try that again and I'll tell. I'll tell all you did years ago when you had a great army. I know—I know when you drove 'em into the sea. I know, for I was there!"

In a few moments the old man put the question in a different form, but he could get no satisfactory answer. The old woman's mind ran off upon the subject of the British troops, and she accused Matthew of being a British general in disguise, and upon this subject her thoughts ran until dinner was ready. She was asked to sit up to the table, but she refused. Yet she was hungry, and she took some bread and fish and ate it by the fire, all the while talking, or rather muttering, with herself, about the British, and occasionally about storms at sea.

After Belinda had cleared away the table the poor woman gathered her garments about her, and arose from her seat.

"You will not leave us now," the host said.

"I must," the woman replied, "for there's danger in the country, and I must overcome it. You have not heard that the British were here, and that the tories are going to be married to them. But it's only a left hand marriage. The tories 'll be but servants after all. Ha, ha, ha, fanny, isn't it?"

"It is fanny," returned Matthew. "But you need not leave us now. It is bleak and cold, and you need rest. Come—remain with us a while. You shall find a welcome home here."

For a moment there came a gleam of grati-

tude over the woman's face, and the light of her dark eye burned more softly; but the same wild look quickly returned, and with a spasmodic laugh she turned towards the door.

"If I were of earth born," she said, "I might need rest, but those born in heaven never tire. Yet I'll bless thee sometime for the kindness you've done to me now. You've entertained an angel."

With these words the woman opened the door, but ere she had passed out she caught the fixed gaze of Belinda, and stopped.

"Sweet one," she whispered, while a strange shade passed over her face, "I know you. You came from heaven with me. Don't you remember?—sh! Do not fear me. Why should you? Do you think I would harm you?"

"O, no," quickly uttered Belinda, shrinking in spite of herself. "I know you would not harm me."

"Of course I would not. But don't you remember when we were up there together? You must remember it. I know you are the very one. Don't be afraid. I will not harm you."

The woman moved nearer to Belinda as she spoke, and finally laid her thin, dark hand upon her head. There was something so earnest, so eager, in the beldam's look, that the fair girl seemed fixed by it, and she did not move.

"You aren't your own mother," the strange being continued. "Of course you aren't, and no more can I be. Marsella Paul was my mother in heaven, and my name is Polly Poll. You see Paul is the heaven name, and Poll is of earth. So your mother's name was Paul Marsella, and your name must be Mercy Poll. Aren't it?"

"Not quite," tremblingly replied Belinda, hardly able to restrain a smile which the ludicrousness of the woman's remarks called up.

"Yes, it is, and one of these days you shall find it so. Give me your blessing."

The beldam sank down upon her knees as she spoke, and bowed her head. Belinda hesitated, for she hardly realized what was meant.

"Bless me, angel," whispered the strange being. "O, bless me ere I go out again into the cold world. I shall never forget your face—never."

Tremblingly the maiden placed her fair hand upon the woman's head, and in a faint voice she uttered:

"God bless you—bless you ever—and so will I pray."

The old woman arose, and big tears were in her eyes. A moment she gazed into Belinda's face, and then, with her finger's point pressed upon the centre of her brow, she muttered:

"Once—O, 'twas a long, long while ago—I knew you well. We were both young then. I was just your age. We were mates in those times long passed. O, you remember it?"

Belinda at that moment caught her father's eye, and he silently bade her to answer in the affirmative.

"Yes, yes, I remember," answered the maiden.

"You do! You do!" poor Polly cried, vehemently. "O, I knew you would. How could you help it? Don't you remember that dark, dismal night—that night when the wind howled like a mad wolf, and the great mountains of water came to bury our mothers up—and how they went to heaven, and then we were born there? you and I on the same day? And then don't you remember how we came down to earth together—you and I—long years ago. O, we were children then. You remember?"

Again Belinda looked towards her father, and she found him pale as death, and trembling violently; but he made a sign as before, and she gave an affirmative answer.

"I knew you would remember," resumed the maniac, "for we were so young and fresh then. But I am forgetting," she continued, as the wild expression came once more to her face. "The British are upon us, and danger broods over our land. The tyrant is here, but fear him not while I remain on earth, for my arm shall be outstretched over this house, and all that in it dwell. God be and abide with ye now and forever!"

Thus she spoke, deeply and solemnly, and then she turned again to the door. She was urged to stay, but she would not. She passed out, and in a few moments more her steps were heard upon the snow-crust. A few moments the old fisherman remained in his seat, and then he arose and seized his hat and went out. Belinda went into the little room which looked out upon the back walk (the winter's snow had so blocked up the front yard that it was not used now), and saw her father just laying his hand upon the beldam's shoulder. She did not stop to watch—she only saw that he had gone to speak with their strange guest—and then she returned.

"Who can that woman be?" the maiden uttered, as Rolin drew her down by his side.

"I cannot imagine," returned the youth.

"But do you suppose she ever talks to others as she talked to me?"

"I think it very likely."

"But why should my father be so moved?"

"Surely I cannot tell. But he may explain it all when he returns. She is a strange woman."

"I have heard of her often."

"So have I. She has been around here several years, and she has been the same during the whole time. She is perfectly harmless, and as I have been informed, generally talks about the great storm which took her mother to heaven. She thinks the gale really lifted her parent up to the mansions of eternal bliss, and that she was born there. It must be that she has at some time been cast away at sea, and that some injury, or fright, then received, turned her brain. But let this pass until your father returns, and in the meantime, let us talk of the other thing that has this day happened. O, Belinda, you know not the happiness that dwells now in my heart. Henceforth I am to live for a new and holy purpose—to find joy and peace and rest for thee. You have seen my love, Belinda—you have known that I loved you for a long while. Is it not so?"

"I have hoped so, Rolin," the generous girl replied, looking up into her lover's face with a happy smile.

"Ah, sweet one, such hopes are generally based upon pretty sure foundation. And yet you speak truly, for though I felt sure you loved me, yet I have not until now been fully blessed."

Before Belinda could make any reply her father entered. His face wore a troubled look, and without noticing his child or her lover, he removed his hat, and resumed his seat upon the settee. For some minutes he sat there, with his brow resting upon his hands, and his gaze directed towards the smoke which was curling up the wide mouth of the chimney. At length he seemed to remember that there were others in the room, for he suddenly started up and gazed upon his companions. He saw how eager they looked, and of course he knew how much they had to arouse their curiosity.

"I know you wonder at what has passed, my children," he said, "but I could not explain it all if I should try. That woman looks like one whom I knew long years ago, and who was with me in the darkest hour that ever gloomed over the face of humanity. But she cannot remember it—or, at least, she cannot be made to see it."

as it was. I may be mis— No, I cannot be. It is she—it must be. O, why cannot she speak! Why cannot the deep mystery of her soul be freed! Would that some kind power could unlock the mind that holds the past so close shut up! I cannot tell you all now; but at some time you shall know it. It is of little moment, of no moment save to me. You will not blame me. I may see her again—the poor crazy woman, I mean—and she may be more calm. You will not blame me now?”

“Not at all, father,” quickly returned Rolin. “Think not of us.”

“Bless you, Rolin—bless you. And I know Belinda will not blame her father.”

The maiden stepped quickly forward and threw her arms about her father's neck, and as she kissed him, she said:

“If there's anything unpleasant in the past forget it, for surely we have enough in the future for both hope and fear. Joy in our household—fear for our country. But think of it no more, my dear father; or, if you do, be sure we shall not pry into the burden of your thoughts.”

The old man kissed his sweet child, and soon afterwards the conversation turned upon the subject of England's king, and England's soldiers in America. Yet, ever and anon old Matthew's thoughts would turn back upon the past, and while, at such moments, he was gloomy and sad, his companions could not but wonder what could be the nature of the secret.

### CHAPTER III.

#### MAKING AN ENEMY.

THE British soldiers, under Captain Balfour, had taken up their quarters in Marshfield, and the tories were much pleased with their presence. Of course the patriots were indignant at this fresh piece of impudence, but they offered no resistance, nor did they make any offensive demonstration, yet they were prepared to resist any physical outrage. Among the tories of Marshfield, Jonas Danton stood as one of the leaders. He was a wealthy man, and had made most of his money as an officer under the crown, and more than half of all his possessions had been wrung from the hard-earned wages of the working classes of Plymouth colony. He was a tall, spare man, with gray hair and black eyes, and with features sharp and angular. He had passed the bound of threescore, and each succeeding

year seemed to add hardness to his heart, and cupidity to his soul.

Danton was in his private room—it was on the third morning after the arrival of the British troops—and while he was engaged in looking over some papers connected with his official business, the door of his apartment was opened, and his son entered. This was his only living child, and a single glance at the features of the younger Danton would have satisfied any one that Jonas was his true father. Abner Danton was thirty years of age, nearly as tall as his father, with the same sharp features, the same black eyes, raven hair, and a narrow brow, with considerable width of head from the ears backward.

The old man laid aside his papers as his son entered, for he paid much deference to that youth. Abner had helped him in most of his pecuniary schemes, and not one deed of condemning guilt had the parent put through, without the assistance of Abner. Hence the child held a double rein upon the father, for he was not only a real partner in the gaining of the wealth, but he held the old man's character in his hands. Jonas Danton would not even have dared to let the tories know of the frauds he had committed, for he had spared neither friend nor foe in his grasping after wealth.

“Well, father,” said the son, as he took a seat near the old man, “I am going up to Matthew Clyne's.”

“Ah,” returned the parent, while a slight shade of dissatisfaction passed over his features.

“What will you do there?”

“Ask Belinda to be my wife.”

“Are you determined on this, Abner?”

“I am, most surely.”

“But there are others who have wealth, and who would be full as glad to be your wife as Belinda Clyne.”

“I know it, but who are they?”

“Why—there is General Ruggles. He has two of them.”

“So he has; but what are they? One is old enough to be my mother, and the other is as homely as an old rick. No, I must have Belinda, for she is the handsomest girl in the colony. Why—I would give more for her beauty than for all the gold old Ruggles ever saw.”

“But these handsome girls are generally high tempered things, my son.”

“I care nothing for that. Let a woman show temper to me if she dare. She wouldn't do it more than once. But we have money enough

and if I go to England, as I expect to, I want a handsome wife.”

“Of course, Abner, you will do as you think best, but I do not like the idea at all. Old Clyne is a rebel of the rankest kind, and I suppose his daughter takes after him.”

“Never mind that, father. By the holy piper, I'll soon cure her of all the rebellion she has in her, so have no fears on that account.”

The old man did not dare to offer much opposition, and after a few more words, Abner left the room, promising to be back before night. He then went to the stable and saddled his horse, and started off. He had seen Belinda often, and from the first he had been captivated by her beauty. Whenever he had stopped at her house, which he did on the previous summer when going up the river, on hunting and fishing excursions, she had treated him respectfully, but had maintained a cool reserve. This latter the young tory attributed to her natural deference to his wealth and high station in society.

“She'll be amazingly astonished when I offer her my hand,” the adventurer said to himself, as he rode along. “And if I wasn't going to England, and didn't really want a wife, bless me if I don't think she'd jump at the chance of taking my hand, and sharing my home, without any marriage ceremony. But I'll marry her honestly, and then there won't be any noise about it among these infernal rebels. But if 'twasn't for the old man, I don't know about even that.”

Thus the young tory talked with himself until he pulled up at Matthew's door. He hitched his horse in the shed, and then rapped at the door. Belinda gave him admittance, and he smiled most graciously as he greeted her. Old Matthew received him with becoming politeness, but the salutation was cold and formal. Abner took a seat near the fire, and for a while the conversation was upon the subject of the weather and other matters of like general import. Danton knew the fisherman's political opinions, and he did not care to say anything about the events which had transpired in Marshfield, or which were taking place in and about Boston.

At length, however, the visitor concluded to broach the matter which had called him there. He was seated upon one side of the fire-place, while the old man and his child were both upon the settee on the opposite side.

“Captain Clyne,” he said, with some hesitation in his manner, “I have come upon a busi-

ness of some importance, and I trust that I may have your friendship in its transaction.”

“I should wish to be the friend of every good man in all honorable transactions,” returned Matthew, very guardedly.

“I could wish that I might have a few moments' conversation with your daughter, sir.”

Belinda turned pale in an instant. Abner saw it, but he did not think that the sign could be opposed to his wishes; he rather concluded that she mistrusted his secret, and that an excess of joy worked with a sort of astounding effect upon her.

“You can speak with my child here, sir,” returned the old man. “It is too cold to leave the room, and of course you have nothing to say which a parent may not hear, for if you have 'twere better unsaid.”

“O, not at all—not at all, sir—only I thought that perhaps Belinda might prefer it. But it matters not to me. You know my position in society, and you know the rank I hold in worldly matters. I have pondered long and seriously upon the subject which has brought me here, and have made up my mind that I have enough of earthly goods, and that for the rest of life I should look for something higher. I wish, sir—a—I would ask you if you have any objections to my asking your fair and beautiful child for her hand, sir?”

Belinda turned first pale, but the pallor lasted but for a moment. The fire of just and deep indignation sent a glow to her face, and her dark eyes burned with a speaking light. Matthew Clyne seemed to have expected this, for not a muscle of his face moved, unless a slight curling of the lip might have been perceptible.

“You can speak with Belinda, sir,” the old man replied. “She is old enough to answer for herself.”

The maiden had hoped that she should be spared this ordeal, but when she heard her father's reply, she nerved herself to the task.

“Sweetest, dearest girl,” uttered Danton, turning to Belinda, and clasping his hands.

“I will not stop now to tell you of my love, but I have simply come to offer you my heart and my hand.”

“You will excuse me, Mr. Danton,” returned Belinda, her lips trembling as she spoke, “but I cannot accept your offer.”

“Perhaps you misunderstand me, Belinda. I mean to make you my lawful wife.”



"Misunderstand you, sir?" uttered the fair girl, speaking with emphasis and distinctness, her lips now set, and her eyes flashing. "Misunderstand you, sir!" she repeated. "Did you not speak plainly?"

"Ay, certainly," returned Danton, hardly knowing how to take this sudden vehemence. "But I did not know but that you might think one in my position would not condescend to offer honorable marriage to one like you. But I assure you—"

"Stop! stop, sir!" interrupted Belinda, rising to her feet and standing proudly erect. "If you think I could construe such a proposition as you have hinted at, you do not know me. Had I understood you as you profess to have feared, my only answer would have been to have spurned you as I would a viper! No, sir—I understand you well, and my answer was such as I meant. I cannot accept your offer."

"How!" gasped the tory, hardly believing that he heard aright. "Do you understand me, and yet refuse? Refuse me—the most wealthy man in the place? You surely do not mean it?"

"What has your wealth to do with the matter?" promptly returned Belinda. "You said you would look for something higher than that."

"Ay, because I have enough already."

"And so have I. And now, sir, I trust I may hear no more of it. You have my answer."

"But this is sudden. You may change your mind. You have not yet had time to consider."

"I have had time enough to consider of this, sir. It is one of those propositions, which, appealing directly to the soul, require but little strain of judgment."

"Then I am to understand that you refuse me?"

"I do most decidedly."

"And you, sir," uttered Danton, turning to the old man, "what say you? Will you see your child recklessly throw away such a chance in life? Surely you will not allow it."

"I told you, sir, that my child was old enough to speak for herself," returned Matthew, never thinking of concealing his sentiments from a rank tory. "But had I thought she would have accepted your offer, I should not have allowed her to answer."

"How, sir? What am I to understand by this?"

"Simply that never would I consent that a child of mine should wed with one occupying the position which you occupy. But beyond

that, you are not what I should wish for in a protector to a confiding woman."

"By the sacred canon, old man, you are impudent!" uttered Danton, arising to his feet. "You—you—shall retract all this!"

"Easy, easy, young man. Remember, I have only answered questions of your own asking; and if you would hear no more of my answers ask me no more questions."

"By heavens, sir, I'll teach you what those gain who refuse me thus. You may fancy that you can insult me with impunity, but you shall know your mistake."

Matthew Clyne arose and went to the door. He threw it open, and then turned towards his visitor. His lips were pale, and his fists were nervously clenched.

"There is my door, sir," he said, in tones which sounded like a smothered volcano, "and you will be wise if you leave my dwelling."

Abner Danton trembled with rage, but he dared not resist the man before him. He hesitated but a moment—and then the whole expression of his countenance changed. The flush of anger passed away, and an ashy hue of deadly hate and revenge took its place. He took his hat and moved towards the door, but before he passed out he turned:

"Matthew Clyne," he said, in a low, hissing tone, "to-day I came to ask, when I come again 'twill be with different motives. Look to your daughter well!"

With these words he left the house, and was soon galloping away towards his home. For some time after he was gone neither the old man nor his child spoke, for they were both much moved, and seemed both to have some deep thoughts on the subject.

"I wish he had not come," Belinda at length said, with some fear in her tones.

"Be not afraid, my child," the old man replied, "for you may rest assured that he will not dare to offer us harm. We have more friends among the people than he has."

Shortly after this, Belinda arose to prepare dinner, and she tried to gain some hope from her father's assurances.

But they little dreamed of the power a wicked man may wield!

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### THE SCHOONER-OF-WAR.

MATTHEW CLYNE sat in his little dwelling on the morning following the visit of young Dan-

ton, enjoying a comfortable smoke. His pipe was an antiquated one, and had been a faithful companion to its owner. The old man now sat upon the big settee, with his head thrown back over one of the high arms, and his feet stretched along upon the curving seat. For sometime he had been watching the tobacco smoke, which was curling up in fantastic wreaths about his head, and muttering to himself half formed sentences. At length he turned to Belinda, who was engaged in mending some article of her own dress.

"Belinda," he said, as he knocked the ashes from his pipe, and then pressed down the burning tobacco with his hard finger, "I know there must be some hard fighting ere long."

The maiden stopped from her work, and looked up into her father's face.

"There must be," he repeated, "for every day adds something to the burden of our people. By the power of right, they can't stand it much longer—and they won't. It's no use to hope we are ever goin' to have peace till we fight for it."

"I fear you are right, father," returned Belinda. "But what more were you thinking of?"

"I'll tell you," the old man said, after a few moments' hesitation: "I have been thinking what I should do towards this work."

"Why—you are too old, father. Surely they will not expect you to fight."

"Too old, child? Pooh! Why, I am just in the prime for such sort of business. No, no, pretty one, you shall not see your father remain idle when his country needs him. But how shall I work? That's the question. I don't fancy this carrying a musket on shore, and there aren't any navy yet to enter. By the holy piper, Belinda, I'd like to have a snug, trim craft on my own hook. We'd find a place of safety for you, and then we'd be off."

"We'd be off?" uttered Belinda. "Who are we?"

"Why, Rolin and me, to be sure. Who else should it be? Of course I couldn't venture out without him."

"Of course, if the strife comes, Rolin must go," the fair girl murmured; and her fingers trembled as she tried to ply her needle.

"Why, sartin he must. And would you keep him at home if you could?"

"O, no, no."

"I thought not. O, I wish I had a vessel, for I know our Congress must soon send out some-

thing on the water to stop these villains from bringing over their sojers and provisions. But it's no use. I haven't got one, and don't know of one."

As the old man thus spoke, he resumed his smoking, and Belinda resumed her work. They had remained thus for nearly half an hour, when they heard footsteps approaching the house. The door was unceremoniously opened, and a middle-aged man entered. He was habited in the rough winter garb peculiar to the seashore—thick pea jacket, plaid cap, and stout, thick boots, the tops of which reached above the knees. He was a stout, honest-looking man, with sandy hair, light gray eyes, and a face full of quaint wit and humor. His name was Doolittle, and originally he had doubtless been christened Samuel, but he disdained a first name of more than one syllable, and consequently he owned to nothing but Sam. He shook Belinda warmly by the hand—assured her she looked like a "pictur," and then turned to the old man.

"Well, capt'n," he said, as he grasped Matthew by the hand, "I'm glad to see yer well an' hearty, for we've got some work for ye. What d'ye say to that, eh?"

"I hope it's good work, Sam," returned the old man, as he swung his feet down from the settee so as to afford his visitor a seat.

"Tis grand work. There's a little schooner jest come down from Boston. She's come with stuff for these consarned sojers at Marshfield. O, she's a beauty, Mat. Carries six guns, an' I should reckon, 'bout fifty men."

"Well," said Matthew, laying his empty pipe upon the mantel, and then turning an inquisitive glance upon his friend. "What 'ye goin' to do about it?"

"That's what I ax ye. By the jumpin' piper, that's jest what we want ye to say. Don't ye remember what you was sayin' over to Martin's store last week, 'bout a snug, trim vessel?"

"Yes," uttered the old man, starting up. "I do remember."

"Wal—why aint here a chance?"

"But, Sam, we must have men to do such a thing."

"And we can have them in plenty. We can count on twenty here in Scituate, an' then we can raise any quantity in Plymouth. We can send to Plymouth, an' have the men here before night. In course, ye see that?"

"Yes, I see that," said the old man, meditatively. "I see that."

"Wal—there's only one more question! Will you go ahead?"

"Me? Me go ahead, Sam? Why, there are plenty of men better than I am for this. I am getting old, Sam."

"Yes, we know all 'bout that. We know ye like a pictur, an' we know ye 're jest the man. Now say the word. Jest say 'at you'll take command, an' we'll raise a crew right off."

"But what d'ye mean to do with the schooner if we take her?"

"Run her right into Plymouth, an' there keep her till we want to use her. 'Twont be a great while, I'm thinkin'."

"No more it wont, Sam. If things keep on as they are goin' now, we'll soon have liberty to begin some savage kind o' work."

"That's the sort, capt'n. Neou ye talk. Of course you'll go in with us?"

"Yes, but I'd rather have some better man take the lead."

"By the piper, I wish we had a better man, but seem' as we haven't, we must put up with what we've got. So I guess you'll have to stand, eh?"

"Well," returned Matthew, after a moment's hesitation, "I will either take it or give you a better man, for I know where to find one."

"Eh? Where?"

"Rolin Lincoln."

"Ah, capt'n, you're out there. Rolin's been with us, an' he says he wont be capt'n while you are up an' able. He says he'll do all he can, but you must be commander. Now aout with it. What d'ye say?"

"I'll be with you, at any rate, if you'll tell me when and where to find you."

"That's the talk. Come at five o'clock to-night, an' you'll find us at Martin's store."

Thus the matter was left, and as Sam had other men to see, he hurried away as soon as possible. After he was gone the old man arose and commenced to pace the floor. His hopes were high now, and his daughter felt a degree of pride in knowing how much confidence was reposed in her father by those who were true to the best interests of her country. She offered no objections to his going, but rather sought to encourage him in the patriotic work.

While this was passing in the cot of Matthew Clyne, the English schooner lay at anchor just at the outer edge of the harbor of Marshfield. She had brought around provisions, and also a passenger who had come to visit the tory leaders,

and spend a few weeks' furlough. This was no less a personage than Major Barton Fitzgerald, an officer serving under General Gage. The schooner was a beauty, and as she lay there so quietly, anxious eyes were upon her. The honest fishermen of the Old Colony, who had always maintained themselves in winters by selling their cured fish in Boston, and shipping them thence for other ports, were now suffering and exasperated. The port of Boston was closed to them, and their fish lay upon their hands almost useless. Long had they wished to get hold of some fleet vessel, for they were determined to make war upon the British merchantmen whether they could get a commission or not. They knew that one schooner had been already fitted out from Marblehead, and that the tug of war had got to come.

And here was a chance. Some half-dozen of the hardy, brave fellows had fixed their eyes upon the Englishman, and they had determined to take her if they could. They resolved first that Rolin Lincoln should be their leader, but he suggested Matthew Clyne, and the old fisherman was unanimously agreed upon.

Just as the shades of night began to gather over the snow-clad earth, the fishermen began to assemble in a large back room connected with Martin's store, and ere long Matthew was with them. By six o'clock several teams arrived from Plymouth, having come around by the way of Bridgewater to avoid passing through Marshfield. When these arrived there were forty-eight men in all, and they were anxious for the adventure. They had come armed with various weapons—swords, cutlasses, hatchets, and whatever could serve them in offence or defence, and they felt confident of their strength.

At about ten minutes before seven they set out. They felt sure that their movements thus far had not been discovered by any of the tories, and they were yet very cautious until they had got clear of the little village. They took their way down the narrow, pebbly cape which lies between the North River and the sea, for the schooner was not anchored far from its point. The distance was over four miles, the night was dark, and the travelling was difficult. But the adventurers pushed on, and before nine o'clock they were upon the southern point of the cape. The schooner was not over a mile distant, and in a southwesterly direction, being further in shore. Her top-hamper could be plainly seen against the snow-capped hills, and even her low, black

hull was visible. There were three large boats close at hand, which had been brought there since dark from the opposite side of the river, and these were at once prepared for pushing off.

"Now what's the plan?" asked one of the Plymouth men.

"Just as simple as can be," returned Matthew Clyne. "We'll most of us lay low in the boats, and push right ahead. Of course the schooner 'll hail us, and I'll pretend we're coming in with a load of fish. They wont see only those that are on the thwarts, and I don't fear that they'll suspect anything till we 'rise on 'em. Ye see we wont pull right for her when we come within sight, but we'll make as though we was goin' around ahead of her, and then we'll take the tide and drop alongside in a jiffy."

This was perfectly satisfactory, and ere long the men were all in the boats. The oars were muffled, and at the word they pushed off. Over thirty of the men were either lying beneath the thwarts, or so crouched away that they could not be seen at any distance, leaving only five men to each boat in sight. The tide was setting down from the river, and the wind was from the northwest, cold and bleak. But they noticed not the cold—they cared little for the biting frost—for their hearts beat quick and warm, and their blood flowed freely through their veins. They spoke with each other in low tones, and their words were full of cheer and hope.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE HIDDEN PRIZE.

THE British schooner *Asp* was a splendid little naval craft, and on account of her fleetness General Gage sent her out when there were messages to be carried. She was built after the model of the Portsmouth yachts, carried six brass guns—twelve pounders—and had at present a complement of fifty men, though she had accommodations for more. Her deck was flush fore and aft, and highly ornamented. One of her boats was on shore, the captain and lieutenant being on a visit to General Ruggles, and a passed midshipman named Rodney had the deck. There were some dozen men beside the officer on deck, six of whom being stationed as lookouts, and the others were stowed away under the lee of the bulwarks forward. The wind was keen and cutting, and even the men upon the lookout kept their faces shielded behind the collars of their

pea-jackets, and ever and anon they would jump down and dance around to keep their blood from freezing up.

The officer paced up and down the starboard side of the quarter-deck with short, quick steps, sometimes slapping his hands, and then, again, stamping his feet. In fact, some one was either clapping or stamping about all the time, but the men were cold, and this was pardonable, for the only danger which was apprehended from it was keeping the men awake below. Mr. Rodney had just finished a clapping of his hands more energetic than usual, when he was suddenly started by the sound of oars not a great distance off. He sprang over upon the larboard side and gazed towards the town, for the first thought was, that the captain was returning. But he could see nothing, and when he next heard the sound he knew that it came from the opposite direction, and just as he was starting back, one of the lookouts reported to him that boats were approaching.

"Where are they?" the officer asked, leaning over the rail, and gazing out upon the dark sea.

"There. Don't you see? Right off here to the northward an' eastward."

"There are two of them," said the officer, after gazing a moment.

"As many as that," added the man.

"Ay—there are three," Rodney resumed, after gazing a few moments more. "By the kingdom, Marlton, there's mischief here, I'm afraid. Have the tompions taken from the guns on this side, and get up a match."

This order was obeyed, and by the time the match was lighted the boats could be plainly distinguished—three of them—moving along towards the town.

"They are going across our bows," said Marlton, as he noticed that the boats were steering clear of the schooner.

"So they are; but then you can't tell much by the movements of these infernal Yankees. They are cross-eyed, every mother's son of 'em, and look you right in the face when you don't know it. But I'll hail 'em."

"Wouldn't you call all hands, sir?" suggested Marlton.

"For what?"

"Why, in case of danger."

"Danger? What—from three fisher boats? No, sir. But you may have all the watch up, every man of 'em."

Marlton went down to see that all the watch



were on deck, while the officer went forward to hail the boats, which were now on the starboard bow, having not yet crossed, and not over a cable's length distant.

"Boats ahoy!" shouted Rodney, in a strong, clear voice.

"Hello-o-o!" came back, in a tone full as strong.

"What boats are those?"

"Sam Doolittle's boats. Naow who be yeon?"

"His majesty's schooner-of-war, Asp."

"Jerusalem! When 'd ye cum in here? We thought ye was 'Squire Little's fishin' schooner."

The Yankees had stopped rowing, and the tide was consequently setting them fast towards the Englishman.

"Rather honest, aren't they?" uttered Marlton, as he heard this last answer.

"Bloody green, at any rate," was Rodney.

"What ye got aboard?" the officer next asked.

"Co-odfish."

"But you haven't been catching codfish this kind of weather."

"We sartin have. Been gone three hull days, an' got pooty well filled up, I tell ye. Bite like nippers jest off the island here."

"Wont you bring us a few alongside?"

"No yer don't. I know ye. Ye'll steal every blasted one on 'em ef ye get yer hands onto 'em, I've hearn tell 'baout yeou Britishers."

"Well, you'll sell us some in the morning, wont you?"

"Sartin. But say; when d'ye cum daown here?"

"Never mind. Poke along now and mind your own business."

"Wal, that ero's perlite, ennyheow. I swow ef 'taint."

By this time the boats were within thirty fathoms of the schooner, and as the last response was made, the fishermen dropped their oars into the water and gave one or two pulls ahead. That brought them directly under the Englishman's fore-foot, and then they changed their course.

"Why, the lubbers are coming this way?" uttered Marlton, as he noticed the movement.

"So they are. Boat ahoy!"

"Hello-o-o!"

"What you after? Keep away, or I'll fire into you."

"We was goin' to let ye have some fish, seein' as ye wanted 'em so bad."

"We want none of them; so keep off. Keep off, I say, or I'll fire into you. Bless their impudent souls," uttered Rodney. "Why don't they mind?"

"Very likely they don't know the difference between an English man-of-war and one of their own fishing smacks. They are most emphatically the greatest set of clowns that I ever came—"

The quartermaster was cut short in his speech by a very strange movement on the part of the Yankee boats. All of a sudden they had shot alongside like rockets, and the concussion made the schooner tremble.

"Avast there!" shouted the midshipman, springing first to the mainmast and seizing a pike, and then leaping to the side. "Turn up here, boys, and push these lubbers off! Out of this, you fishmonging clowns! What d'ye mean—"

But even the doughty officer started back aghast as he saw the bottoms of the three boats literally turn into living men. He had just time to call for all hands when the strangers came pouring in upon his deck, and ere he could fairly collect his senses the long pike was wrested from him. He had no sword with him, having removed it when he put on the thick, clumsy overcoat he now wore.

"Who's capt'n here?" asked Matthew Clyne, pushing forward towards the mainmast, and knocking down three men with his clenched fist as he went.

"I have command here now," answered Rodney, growing more respectful now that he saw the force of his enemy.

"Then you'll surrender, I suppose, without any useless shedding of blood," resumed Matthew.

"Surrender to whom?"

"To us!" thundered the old man, in tones that made the young Englishman quake. "To the men who have captured you."

"But," stammered the officer, "what—"

"Look to the hatches, boys!" cried Matthew, as he saw a head arising from below. "Let not a soul come up. And bring some lanterns here, too. Now say on, sir," he added, turning to the officer.

"I meant to ask by what authority you thus demand one of the king's vessels?"

"By the right which God has given to every man—to protect himself and his home! Why are those foreign soldiers here in our midst? Why is our peace disturbed, and our rights trampled upon?"

"It is by authority of your lawful king."

"Not my king, sir. But we have no time to waste. Do you surrender, or not?"

This was a hard question for the poor midshipman. He was the highest officer now left in the vessel, and he must speak the word. He cast his eyes around, and he saw that his hatches were guarded, and that on deck the Yankees outnumbered him two to one.

"Of course it would be madness to fight you now," he said, "for you have taken us unawares. We did not dream of such a piratical visit."

"No—I s'pose not. But you are in for it now. However, we wont pass hard words, because your feelings must be hurt now, and if you should start mine much you might find yourselves worse off than you are now."

Some of the English seamen were inclined to be pugnacious, and one of them was severely wounded ere he could be captured, but they were secured without much trouble, and then Matthew Clyne called his men about him to confer with them upon the subject of disposing of the prisoners. They knew of no place to carry them where they could be retained as prisoners, and after a short deliberation it was resolved upon that they should be landed upon Long Island. This would be a convenient place, and would prevent them from giving immediate information on shore of what had occurred.

Ere long the schooner's anchor was hove up and sail made. The wind was fair, and she started out swiftly. As soon as the northern point of the island was reached, the schooner was hove to, and the prisoners put into two of the boats and rowed on shore, and there left, the Yankees taking the boats back with them and towing them astern.

Before morning the schooner was snugly moored in Plymouth harbor, and her masts unstepped. An hundred patriots were called up, as soon as she got in, which was near two o'clock in the morning, and she was hauled up among a lot of fishing vessels. As soon as her masts were unstepped, shears were raised over the main hatch, and the six guns lowered into the hold. Then the deck was lumbered up with old barrels, boards, crates, and such stuff as would most readily conceal her real proportions; the figure-head taken off; the sides bedaubed with such dirt as would easily wash off. A guard was then set, and the rest of the adventurers dispersed, with the understanding that they should

meet again at any time which Matthew Clyne should designate.

"It wont be a great while, depend upon it," said old Matthew, as he was about to take his leave. "And when we do meet again we will bring our hearts and our blood with us, determined to give them in the cause we have espoused, if they are needed."

When the sun arose on the following morning, not a soul out of the secret would have discovered anything new among the fleet of fishermen and coasters which were hauled up at Plymouth; and the former captain of his Britannic majesty's schooner Asp would have passed by that lumbered, dirt-bedaubed hull many times on the search without dreaming that his eyes rested upon his lost charge.

In short, everything worked just as was wished. The schooner was safe in a patriot town, and those of her captors who belonged elsewhere got safely home without detection.

## CHAPTER VI.

### AN ASTOUNDING EVENT.

MARSHFIELD was in an uproar. The king's schooner was missing, and nobody knew where it had gone to. The commander had gone off about midnight, but he could not find the light which should have been suspended at his vessel's main peak, and after rowing about the harbor for half an hour, and cursing and swearing at the negligence of the officer whom he left in charge, he returned, half-frozen, to the town. But in the morning the mystery was solved. The schooner was gone. At first it was thought that the crew might have mutinied; but at about nine o'clock a signal was made out upon the island, and on going out the crew were found there almost in a state of utter exhaustion, for they had been forced to keep upon their feet all night to keep from freezing. Mr. Rodney told the story of his capture, and also gave as good a description as he could of the appearance of the patriot leader; but he could not tell which way the schooner had gone, for she had sailed about due east as long as they could see her, though the probability was, that the Yankees had gone to the southward.

However, three light sloops were at once manned and sent in pursuit—one to the north, and two south. They cruised up and down the coast all day, and on the next morning they

crossed over to Cape Cod. But nothing of the missing schooner could be found, nor could they find any one who had seen or heard of such a vessel. And in the end the search was given up. The English commander, sad and chop fallen, with his officers and crew, returned to Boston in two fishing sloops, and that was the last ever heard from them by those who had captured their vessel.

It was on the fourth day from the capture, and Matthew Clyne was once more smoking his pipe by the chimney corner, while Belinda was engaged in clearing away the dinner things. The old man was quite happy now, but not so his child. She felt lonesome and sad, for she knew that ere long both her father and lover must be absent from her amid dangers and perils, and she knew not what dangers might beset her while they were gone. But she spoke not of her fears, and tried to hide them all she could.

The day was warmer than it had been for some time, and the door which communicated with the next room was open. Belinda had just got the table set back, and the floor swept, when she heard the sound of horses' feet, and on looking through the open door to the window beyond she saw three horsemen approaching, one of whom she at once recognized as Jonas Danton, the father of Abner, and the other two were dressed in the garbs of British officers. She turned pale in an instant, for she feared that her father was surely to be taken away from her.

"Run! run!" she uttered. "Run, father, for they will carry you away!"

"I guess not," returned the old man, knocking the ashes from his pipe and placing it upon the mantel. "They are only coming to question me—that's all."

"I fear not. Jonas Danton wouldn't come for that."

Before Matthew made any reply, a rap was heard upon the door, and the old man answered it. Jonas Danton was the first to enter, and behind him came two English officers, one of whom he introduced as Captain Balfour, and the other, as Major Barton Fitzgerald. Balfour was a short, thick man, full of rum, which gave his bloated face a glowing look, and about forty years of age. Major Fitzgerald, with whom we have more to do, was a man somewhere about ten years older than Balfour, and not very unlike him in appearance. He was heavier, and his face was all animal in its sensual expression. His eyes, which had once been gray, were now

of a reddish, purple hue, and his hair was of that peculiar grizzled hue which marks the sandy head when it is turning prematurely gray.

Fitzgerald eyed Belinda with a searching look, and then took a step nearer to her. She would have shrunk away from him, but he placed his heavy hand upon her shoulder.

"You are not afraid of me?" he said, in a tone which could only be compared to the wail of some animal in distress. "O, it is her face—her nose—her eyes. O, what joy is this!"

In utter amazement Belinda started back. The look of the man frightened her.

"Mr. Clyne," spoke Danton, trying to assume a friendly tone, but wholly unable to do so, "we have come upon a very peculiar business, and I have no doubt that you will be much pleased to do a piece of justice which will plant joy and peace where sorrow and anguish have long reigned.

"Speak plainly, sir," returned Matthew, with a look of wonder upon his bronzed features.

"I will speak plainly. Or, rather, I will let my friend, the major, speak first. Major Fitzgerald, will you tell your story?"

The party were seated, Belinda crouching close to her father, and Fitzgerald commenced:

"It is now seventeen years—or will be the coming spring—since I visited Boston with my wife and child. We spent the summer in Boston, meaning in the fall to go to the colony of Virginia. We got ready to leave Boston in the latter part of October, when, one morning our child was missing. At first I thought she—it was a girl—might have strayed away, for she was then two years and a half old, but such could not have been the case, for no one who lived around there had seen her, and she could not be found. I offered heavy rewards, but all to no purpose. Our darling was not to be found."

The major stopped here and wiped his humid eyes.

"O, it must have been painful," groaned the arch tory, Danton.

"Very!" slobbered Balfour.

"It was painful, my friends," added the major; and as he spoke he went into another wiping operation.

Instinctively, Belinda cast her eyes up towards Matthew's face, and she found him ashy pale, and trembling violently. A wild, vague phantom of terror arose to her soul, and convulsively she clasped her hands and pressed them upon her bosom.

"Go on, major," said Danton.

"After we had had Boston searched all through," resumed Fitzgerald, "we sent out into the suburbs. In Roxbury we found a man who said he saw a crazy woman, or a woman who, he thought, was crazy, with a child answering to the description of my darling. Upon this we made new exertions, but we could hear nothing more of the child until, one morning, about a month after my little one was lost, a man told me that a crazy woman was seen carrying a child in her arms through the woods in Middleborough. So down to that place I posted, but could find nothing. Some of the people there had seen the woman and the child, but they said she had gone away they knew not whither. From that time I lost all traces of my child, and at length gave up the search. We returned to England, where my wife died of a broken heart, and since then I have been a lonely, sorrowing man, seeking death at the mouth of the enemy's cannon, but yet spared."

"Ay," uttered Danton—"and spared for a most wise purpose. Surely a wise God has spared you that he might return your lost child to your keeping."

"O, I hope so."

"But what was the name of your child?" asked Balfour, "for a child at two and a half must have remembered that, and given it when she was asked."

"Her name was Belinda."

Matthew Clyne groaned aloud, and Belinda uttered a low cry of anguish as she sank forward and clasped him by the knees.

"Mr. Clyne," spoke Danton, turning to the old fisherman, "did you ever see that old woman—or that crazy woman and child?"

"No, no—I never did," gasped Matthew, spasmodically.

"But did you never see the child?"

The poor man made no reply to this, only to clasp his hands and bow his head. Belinda saw his emotion, and when she knew that he was faint and pain-stricken her own soul grew stronger. She started up, and turning her gaze upon the tory, she said:

"Speak out, sir. Let me know your whole meaning."

"Why, Miss Belinda," spoke Danton, with a peculiar curl to his lip, "I should suppose that you might see it all by this time. Major Barton Fitzgerald is your own father!"

"O, merciful God, protect me from this! It

cannot be. Say, my father," she cried, seizing the old man by the arm, "is this thing true? O, are you not my father? You are—you are!"

"Tell her the truth," said Danton.

"I shall not speak falsely," returned Matthew. "It will be seventeen years ago come next November, that I found this sweet child upon my door-step. I took her, and protected her, and she can now tell you whether I have been a father to her."

"Yet she is my child," said Fitzgerald. "I am thankful to you for the care you have taken of her, and you shall be rewarded."

"But I shall not leave here," cried Belinda. "You will not take me from my home?"

"How, my only loved one?" answered the major. "Would ye refuse to go with your own father?"

"But you may not be my father."

"Ah, that is settled beyond any dispute. I know how my child was lost—and where I tracked her abductor—and I know how you came here. Mr. Danton knew all about the circumstance of Matthew Clyne's finding you on his door-step, and the moment he told me the story, that moment I knew who you were."

"O, father," cried the stricken girl, turning towards the old fisherman, "why did I never know of this before?"

"Because it would have only made you unhappy, my love," returned Matthew, throwing his arms about her fair form and drawing her upon his bosom. "I knew not why you should have occasion to mourn for those who were lost to you, or why you should ever be burdened with doubts and surmises concerning your parentage. So I meant you well when I taught you that I was your father. And more than that, Belinda—and to you, too, gentlemen; I once had a child snatched from me—a helpless infant—and it seemed to me always as though God sent this child to be mine—and at times I have even hoped that she was mine—my own child returned to me. You will not—shall not take her from me now unless she wishes to go."

"How, sir?" uttered Fitzgerald, in wrath, but in an instant growing calm, and assuming an affectionate tone, "would ye keep a child from its parent? It may be for the while she will hold a fondness for her old home, but my love shall soon teach her to remember it only as an abiding place of youth, while her heart shall reform those ties which were sundered years ago."

Come, Belinda, I wish you to accompany me now. I will take you with me."

"No! no! no!" shrieked the poor girl, in terror. "Do not take me now. This is so sudden, so new and terrible. "O, let me have time to think."

"What! think whether you shall go with your own father?"

"But, sir, I know not now what to think or say. Let me have time."

"Perhaps during that time you would escape," suggested Danton.

"No, sir, I would not."

"Stop," interrupted Balfour, whose voice sounded like the gurgling of beer from a big bottle; "let me tell you how to fix it. Let the girl go home with you, with the promise that she shall return within such a time if she is not satisfied. That'll be the best way. By staying here she won't make up her mind any better than she can now, for she knows all about this place now. But it's the other home she needs to try before she makes up her mind."

"That's the idea," continued Fitzgerald. "Don't you see it, Belinda? Now go with me, and if, at the end of a month, you wish to return, you shall have full permission from me to do so."

"No, no," still persisted the terrified girl. "O, I cannot go."

"But you must!"

"I will not."

"Ha, then you'll make me resort to force. That will not be pleasant, but I must do it if you persist in refusing. I had thought that the fact of my being your parent would have been sufficient, without having to exercise any of the authority of one. You will go with me now, Belinda! so you may prepare as soon as you can."

The maiden knew not what to do. She gazed first upon the man who now professed to be her father, and she could not like the face, nor the general tone and bearing. Then she looked upon the kind, noble man who had ever been a friend and protector, and her soul yearned towards him. She could not realize that Matthew was not her true father; and much less could she realize that she was a child of that dark, bloated man who thus claimed her.

But the visitors were anxious, and would not wait. They saw that persuasion would do no more, and Major Fitzgerald placed his hand

upon Belinda's arm. She shrank from him, and he seized her more roughly the next time.

"You can go with me quietly if you please," he hissed; "but at some rate you must go!"

Matthew Clyne saw the poor girl writhe with pain, and without stopping to consider, he sprang forward and dashed the major across the room. This movement aroused the vengeance of Captain Balfour, and seizing a stick of round wood which lay near his feet, he dealt the old man a blow upon the head which stretched him senseless upon the floor. Captain Balfour seized a thick shawl which hung up in the room, and having thrown it over Belinda's head, she was borne by main strength from the dwelling. She wept and prayed, but all to no purpose.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE OLD MAN'S LIFE-STORY.

TOWARDS evening Rolin Lincoln came to the cot of Matthew Clyne. He entered the little sitting-room, and he found it cold and cheerless. The fire upon the hearth was all gone, and the wide settee was empty. He looked around, but no one was to be seen. He called upon Belinda—upon Matthew, but he gained no reply. With a sinking heart he pushed open the door that led to the old man's bed-room, and there lay the poor fisherman stretched upon his couch.

"Ha," the youth uttered to himself, "he is taken sick, and Belinda has gone for the doctor. Matthew—Matthew," he cried, laying his hand upon the old man's shoulder, "what ails you? Here—look up. It is I—Rolin. What is the matter?"

Matthew Clyne started up to his elbow and gazed vacantly about him.

"No—no!" he uttered, grinding his teeth, "you cannot have her! You shall not have her. Leave my house at once, for she shall never be yours! Out, I say!"

"Matthew Clyne! Matthew—do you know to whom you are speaking? Matthew, don't you know me? Don't you know Rolin Lincoln?"

"Rolin—Rolin Lincoln?" whispered the old man, rising to a sitting posture.

"Yes. It is I. What ails you? Tell me?"

The old man raised his hand to his head, and Rolin saw blood there, where the gray hair was discolored and clotted, just back of the temple. He started forward and placed his hand upon the spot, and he found a wound there.

"How came this?" he asked, anxiously.

"Have you fallen?"

Matthew Clyne gazed strangely into the young man's face, but yet he made no reply. His gaze was not fixed, but vacant and meaningless, as though his thoughts had all left him. Rolin raised him further up, to an easy sitting position, and then examined the wound upon his head. It was a heavy bruise, but the skull was not fractured, and the blow was made with some sort of a club. As soon as the youth was assured that the hurt was not absolutely dangerous, he tried once more to get at some knowledge of what had happened, and gradually the old man began to manifest signs of returning reason.

"What has happened, Matthew?" the youth asked, sitting down by his old friend's side and placing his arm about his neck. "What does all this mean? Have you got a fall—and has Belinda gone for a doctor?"

"Belinda!" gasped Matthew, starting, and clasping his hands. "Rolin—she's gone!"

"Gone!" repeated the youth, starting with terror. "Gone where?"

"Gone away forever! O, I have feared this more than I dared to tell. I feared they would come and take her!"

"But who? Who came and took her? For the love of mercy, Matthew, tell me what you mean!"

"It's cold here, Rolin. Who put me to bed? Why am I here? Let's go out where there is a fire."

"The fire is gone out. But I will build one at once. Only first tell me where is Belinda?"

"Her father has taken her away."

"Her father?"

"Yes—her own father."

"And you—are—not— But you know not yet what you say. She has gone for the doctor," said Rolin.

"For the doctor?" murmured the old man. "Why should I want him?"

"For that wound on your head."

Matthew put his hand up, and soon a look of intelligence passed over his features.

"Ah, Rolin, they struck me there when I would have protected my child. But let us go where it is warm, and I will tell you."

Rolin was almost frantic with agonizing fears, but yet he saw that if he found a warmer berth for the poor man he should be more apt to get the truth plainly, so he went at once to the other

room, and having found some kindling stuff, he soon had a brisk fire burning. He saw that the tea-kettle was hung over with only a small quantity of water in it, so that it might quickly heat; and then he went and mixed a glass of spirit and sugar. By this time the room was beginning to grow warm, and the youth went in to help the old man out. He found him quite weak and unsteady, but he helped him to the settee without much difficulty, and then he noticed that the water in the kettle was hot; so he poured some of it into the glass of spirit he had mixed, and handed it to the old man, who drank it down with avidity.

"That helps me, Rolin," said Matthew, as he handed back the glass. "That helps me."

"Now tell me of Belinda."

A cloud came over the old man's face, and his frame shook with emotion, but he soon gained composure enough to tell the story just as the events had happened. He gave the conversation just about as it took place, and ended with the blow which felled him, and the last wail of distress which he heard from the lips of Belinda.

"Then she is at Danton's now," uttered Rolin.

"I suppose so."

"Then I'll hasten there at once," cried the youth, starting to his feet. "By the heavens above me, I'll take her from them if I have to take every tory life in their house!"

"Hold on, Rolin. Wait a moment. Be not in a hurry. She will be kept there a week yet."

"What—wait and see her kept there? See her beneath the very roof with Abner Danton?"

"But her father is with her now."

"Her father?" groaned Rolin, sinking back into his seat. "But tell me, Matthew, why you never told me of this before? Belinda always thought you were her father."

"I know it, Rolin, but—"

The old man stopped and put his hand up to his head, for it pained him much. The youth in his hurry had forgotten the wound, but he started up now, and having cleansed the place with soap and water, he bathed it in spirit, and then bound it up. After this the fisherman went on:

"I was alone in the world. My wife and child had been swept away from me, and I was a poor, miserable man."

"But you never told me of this before," said Rolin, with some surprise.

"No," returned Matthew, with a shudder—"because I never could bear to recur to it. Many

men not so stout as I am, have borne such things better, but O, that stroke went to my heart, and I did not dare even to think of it. But I will tell you, Rolin. When I was thirty-three years old, I commanded as noble a ship as ever carried a sail; and at that time I was married to one whom I loved as only a devout worshipper can love. I had been engaged to the maiden of my choice several years, but I had resolved that I would not marry until I had command of a ship. That came, and I was married. I may have been foolish, but yet I worshipped my wife. She was all in all to me, and I knew that she loved me equally as well. Time passed on, and we were blessed with a child—a girl—a little bright-eyed thing—like other children, I suppose, but all to me. My child was three months old when I was called upon to sail again. I could not leave my wife—it was impossible. I intimated that I would rather give up the sea. She thereupon offered to go with me—said she should like it, and I took her with me. I was bound to Bristol.

"For three weeks the weather was pleasant, and we were happy. O, how happy I was then. The sailors loved my wife, and they used to play with my child. The rough men, with their great hard hands, would handle the darling just like a feather, and she used to cry to go to them and be tossed about in their stout arms. At length I smelt the land breezes of Old England, and just at sundown, one warm, pleasant day we left Lundy Island on our quarter. In an hour after that the wind came out from the northward and westward, and commenced to blow a gale. I had the sail reduced to close-reefed main-top-sail and foresail. At nine o'clock the sea ran so high that the foresail was of no use, and I ordered it taken in and the fore-topsail set. Had I set the fore-topsail first, all would have been well, for the foresail had been drawing some; and no sooner was it taken wholly off than the sea overtook us, and ere long the old ship was pooped. A mountain of water struck her dead aft and swept the deck. I was knocked into the loose bunt of the main spencer, and not hurt, but more than half of my crew were swept overboard, and all through my own carelessness. But fear for the safety of my wife had unnerved me. I hardly knew what I did, and as the gale increased, which it did every moment, I, who had always before been looked upon as the very pattern of coolness in times of danger, now grew more and more nervous, and my mind was fairly unhing-

ed. I heard ever and anon—or thought I did—the groans of my wife, and they struck like fire-darts to my soul.

"Of course my first object, as I picked myself out from the bunt of the spencer, was to get the fore-topsail set. I passed the order—the second mate had gone overboard, but I thought he was on the yard. The lubbers hauled out both clues at the same time—or, rather let them both go. There was one snap—and the sheet-blocks were flying over the bows, and the sail snapping to pieces like wet paper. But all this time we had been driving on at a fearful rate. While the topsail was snapping, I heard the roar of breakers under our starboard bow. I knew 'twas the Bull's Head, or, Marle Point. Just then my wife came up from the cabin with her babe in her arms. I had turned towards them to send her below, when my eye caught a dark mountain astern. 'Twas another sea! I made one step and it was upon us! I had gained a head-long movement, and I made a grasp for my wife. I caught her dress—it tore from me, leaving a wide piece in my hand—I was jammed in between the mizzen rigging, but—my wife was—gone! My wife and child! I know I heard her shriek—I know I heard the low wail of my child, and I know I saw one white speck dance upon the crest of a mad wave, and then disappear—forever! I disengaged myself from the shrouds, and just then I heard my mate's voice by my side. I spoke to him: 'Save the ship if you can,' I said, 'for I am going with my wife.' Then I made a movement towards the rail, but the mate threw me back upon the deck, and I remembered no more until I found myself in my bunk, and the ship as still as a mouse. I went on deck, and we were safely moored at our wharf in Bristol. I had lain insensible four days!

"I went down on the coast of Devonshire, where we were on that dreadful night, but I could find no signs of my wife's body. I came home, and went to sea no more. Life was nothing to me then, and more than once did I think of putting an end to it myself; but I overcame the evil wish, and lived on. I came here and built this cot, and here I made it my home. I had money enough, but I fished to keep myself busy. Two years had passed away, when, as I went out one morning to go to my boat-house, I found a bundle of cloth upon my door-stone. I picked it up, and found a female child within. The little thing looked up into my face and

smiled. I took it in and warmed it by the fire, and fixed it some warm milk. She could prattle then, and I knew she must be between two and three years old. I judged by its teeth. I asked her name, and she said 'twas 'Linda.' I asked her if 'twas Belinda, and she said yes. I asked her a hundred questions, but all I could get from her was, 'Mammy gone,' and 'Linda 'tarvin', poor Linda 'tarvin'. I supposed, of course, that she had been taught to beg food, for she spoke this with a parrot like exactness, and with that peculiar expression which one gives when imploring charity. I kept the little one, for no one came after it, and I felt that God had sent it to me to help atone for the bereavement I had suffered. She soon learned to call me father, and by degrees she seemed to forget that she had ever had any other protector. She grew up kind, generous and loving, and I could not bear to let her know that she was really a beggar's offspring. I knew she would be happier to think she was my own child, and I really felt that it would be wrong to dispel the illusion. She took that vacant place in my heart, and, O, how truly has she filled it. Now, Rolin, you know all."

For some time after the old man ceased speaking, the youth was silent. He was deeply affected, and he now fully sympathized with his old friend.

"But," he at length asked, "how came Jonas Danton to know of this secret?"

"Ah, Rolin, there were no such things as republicans then, for we all rested quietly under the rule of the king. Danton was very friendly to me, for he used to amuse himself in my boats, and get me to take himself and wife out on pleasant days to sail in the river and harbor. He was a justice, too, and I asked him, when he next came to my house, if there was any law by which I was required to advertise the child. He told me there was not. Of course, he then learned all about it, but he promised never to speak of it."

"And do you believe that this British major is really her father?"

"He must be, for his statement was clear as could be. But he has promised that at the end of a month, if Belinda is not satisfied, she shall return."

"And don't you know better than that?" cried Rolin, vehemently. "Has not Abner Danton sworn revenge? Has he not sworn that Belinda should be his? and is she not now beneath his own roof? And more, too: Is not old Dan-

ton able to do as he pleases with these British officers? O, she will never come back unless we can liberate her. At any rate, I will know her wish, and if she wishes to remain here she shall. I don't believe they could hire her to accompany them to Boston of her own free will; but I know they will force her there if they can! By my soul, I'll know, at least, what her wishes are."

"But be careful that you do not make Belinda's position worse."

"I'll be wary and guarded."

"And one thing more, Rolin: Why will you not come and live with me now? For I am all alone."

"I will, Matthew, I will. But first I must see Belinda. I will see her this very night, if I can."

"But you will come back here?"

"Yes. But it is near night now, and I must be off. It will be dark ere I reach Marshfield. I will see you before morning. Be careful, now, and keep in the house until I return. Don't worry, for your head won't bear it. Keep up a good heart, for God will bless the right."

With these words Rolin Lincoln left the house, and ere long his quick steps had died away in the distance. Poor Matthew was once more alone, and the deep gloom settled down again over his soul. He once more saw the mad sea that bore his wife and child away; he saw the little child that came to bless him in after time, and anon his mind reached the present with its thoughts. He gazed into the fire awhile, and then he bowed his head and wept aloud.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### A COMPACT.

WITHIN the private room of Jonas Danton, at Marshfield, sat that old tory with Balfour and Fitzgerald. A blazing fire burned upon the hearth, and upon the table around which the trio sat were several richly ornamented decanters and glasses. A kettle of water was standing upon the hob, and the sugar bowl, nutmeg grater, toddy-stick, and so on, plainly told how happy the party calculated to be.

"It's very plain," spoke Fitzgerald, whose tongue was already slightly thickened, "that the girl don't fancy us much, and I think we'll find it hard work to wean her affections from the old fisherman."

"Time will do it," replied Danton.



"It will, if you don't go at work to oppose her too strongly at first," resumed the major. "You can see she's got spirit and grit, and you may be sure you'll make nothing by trying to force her at present. Howsomever, I'll take her to Boston with me, and there I'll show her all the sights, and perhaps she'll forget all about her home down here in time."

"Of course," said Danton, "there is no use in commencing too harshly, but then we can have no sympathy for such a rank, unmitigated rebel as Matthew Clyne is; and the sooner such ideas are eradicated from the girl the better. Why, she is as rank as you please. She defies the king and all his troops, and even wishes she were a man, so that she might fight with the rebels. Now it's my opinion that Clyne knows something about the missing schooner; and if he knows about it, why may not the girl know?"

"Well, perhaps she does; but then 'twont do to commence right off to make a fuss with her. I'd like to get some hold upon that old man. By the holy kingdom, I wish I could know that he knew something about that scrape, I'd have it out of him. Balfour, mix another pitcher of that toddy. You make it capitably."

"Ay," answered the dumpy captain, rising from his seat, and reaching over after the pitcher. "I'll fix it, and fix it strong, too; for we that need so much strength in our profession must use strong drinks."

Of course the major laughed at this exhibition of wit, and while the toddy was being mixed, Balfour indulged in a slight sally at his host.

"Now you mustn't be too severe," he said, "for I've taken a sort of fancy to the gal myself, and if a British captain of infantry offers his hand, your boy 'll stand a poor chance."

"I acknowledge that," answered Danton, not at all moved by the remark; "but then I don't fear you, for I trust your honor above your winning rank."

"Right—right, sir," uttered the doughty captain, proudly. "You need not fear, for since I know your son has the prior claim, I shall not put myself in the way. Ah-h-h!" he added, as he tasted of the beverage he had prepared, which consisted of equal parts of rum, brandy and water, with sugar and nutmeg, thereby making the liquid only one third water. "That's better than the last. Try it, major."

The major did try it, by swallowing two tumblers full, and then filling the third to sip while he talked. Balfour followed suit, while Danton

was more moderate, he only filling his glass and placing it by his side to sip as he felt inclined.

"Now, Danton," commenced the major, whose tongue was growing thicker, "to set all argument aside, of course you can do as you please about this girl. If you don't want her to go to Boston with me, why, I won't take her."

"O, yes," quickly returned the tory. "I want you to take her with you, and Abner shall go there and marry her. That will save all noise and all trouble, for when she's once there, she'll have no one to look to but you; and I know you will not deceive me."

"De-de-ceive (hic) you, Danton? Never! I'd (hic) sooner cut off my own (hic) boot. By the holy kingdom, she's yours. She's (hic) yours, ole feller, an' you shall make her your wife jes' as quick as you s'please."

The major had got drunk very suddenly, for those two glasses of hot liquor, strong, and mixed at that, were quick and powerful in their operation. And Balfour was not much better off, for twice had he already burned his nose in trying to drink out of the lamp. Mr. Danton saw how matters stood, and he knew that if he had business to do it had better be done quickly; so he went to his desk, and in a few minutes he had drawn up a short instrument, the purport of which was, that Major Barton Fitzgerald bound himself to give the hand of his daughter Belinda, "the well-beloved and only child of said Barton," to Abner Danton in marriage. Then there was another paragraph, in which it was stipulated that Jonas, the father of said Abner, should settle upon said Belinda, the sum of one thousand pounds—said money to be paid to said Barton Fitzgerald, to be used by him as he may see proper. It was a funny kind of a document, but then the last part—the idea of the money's being settled upon Belinda—was one of the major's own. He fancied 'twould sound better so than to have it appear plainly that he received the money as a sort of purchase sum.

"There," said Danton, as he handed the paper to the major, and placed the pen and ink upon the table; "now you can sign that, and the business will be mostly settled. You will find it all right."

Fitzgerald took the paper, and after bowing and winking over it for some ten minutes, he managed to make it out.

"On'y one 'ittle mistake, Danton," he said, looking up with a comical leer.

"Ah, what's that?" inquired the old tory, in

a tone, and with an expression, which seemed to indicate that he feared some mistake would be detected. "What is it, major?"

"Why, (hic) a ver' funny mistake. 'Yer (hic) don't spell (hic) twelve right. 'Yer (hic) spell it with a t an' a e an' a n. 'At don't spell twelve, ole feller—(hic) eh?"

"Ah," uttered Danton. "I don't understand. I guess it's all right."

"But it isn't though, (hic) not by a quart. That ere leetle (hic) bit o' difference in spellin' that one 'ittle word makes a (hic) difference of a matter o' two hundred pound. Eh?"

"Ten hundred was the figure, wasn't it?" inquired Danton, trying to look an innocence which he did not feel; for, in fact, he had presumed a little upon the major's drunkenness.

"Not 'xactly, ole feller. Jes' make that (hic) twelve, an' then it 'll be all right."

"O, certainly, of course," uttered the old tory, finding that he could not escape; and without more words he altered the numeral as required, and then the major wrote his name.

Just as the pen was laid down, Captain Balfour gracefully slid from his chair and landed upon the floor where he lay just as he fell, with his feet under the table, and his head under his chair, while the music from his trumpet-like nose came up loud and deep.

"That's jes' like 'em," grunted Fitzgerald. "He's drunk—drunk as a hog. I (hic) can't learn 'im not to do so. He's—a—decided—disgrace (hic) to me. Ha, ha, ha, (hic) 's funny you should make sick a 'stake (hic) in writin' that ere word, aren't it? Ha, ha, he-he-e-e. T—e—n for twelve. Where's the toddy? I say, ole feller, you 's a—a—"

The major's speech gradually failed him. The toddy had been made rather strong, even for strong men, and the major had drank very freely of it. For some time he seemed endeavoring to find out where the pitcher stood, but before he could concentrate his confused vision his head dropped forward and hit the table. This gave him a start, and as he attempted to discover who had struck him he lost his balance, and would have fallen heavily to the floor had not Danton caught him and eased him down. In a few moments afterwards the two brave men were snoring in concert.

It was now about nine o'clock, and in a few minutes after this some one rapped upon the door. Danton bade the applicant enter. It was Abner. He stopped suddenly as he saw the two

officers, and a look of contempt stole over his features.

"So quick?" he uttered, as he smelt the strong fumes of rum.

"Yes," answered his father. "They drank like fools while they could sit up."

"Then you've made no arrangement," said Abner, with a look of disappointment.

"O, yes. That's all settled. I kept them sober long enough for that. The girl is yours, my son, but we have concluded that she must go to Boston with the major; and you can follow them, you know."

"That is just what I wished, father. Only I shall go to Boston when they go, for most assuredly I would not trust Belinda with such a brute as this."

"You are right, Abner. You shall have the girl now, if 'twere only in spite. By the heavens above me, we'll see if every ragged rebel can lord it here. Have you seen her yet?"

"No; and I thought I wouldn't to-night. She will be more composed to-morrow."

"But I wouldn't intimate that she's to be your wife, even then, Abner, for there is no knowing what sort of fancies she may take. If you will take my advice you will not broach the subject until you reach Boston. Let the major have the handling of her here. He is already afraid we shall spoil all by exciting the girl's fear. O, you need not fear on that account," the old man continued, as he noticed that his son was regarding the prostrate man with a dubious look. "He will not be thus often. Let him have the handling of her while she remains here, and he may so appeal to her duty as a child that she shall not wish to run away even had she a chance."

"You are right, sir, and I will be governed thus. I will converse with Belinda only as a friend, and in this way her fears of me, if she has any such, may be set at rest. But isn't she a beauty?"

"She is handsome, Abner."

"The handsomest girl in the colony, by all odds," added the young man, zealously. "By my faith, I wish she'd love me. But she shall be mine, at all events. I have sworn that; and only death can prevent it. Ha! What noise is that?"

"What?" asked the old man.

"I heard a voice in the yard; and a crashing of snow near the garden porch. Isn't there where Belinda's room is?"



"Yes. She occupies the chamber directly over the porch."

"Then there's some one there. Hark! By heavens, that's a man's voice. There's mischief in the wind."

"I hear nothing," said the old man, bending his ear towards the designated point.

"But I do, though; and I smell mischief, too."

As Abner thus spoke, he started to his feet and hastened from the room, for his fears had taken a startling turn.

## CHAPTER IX.

### DUBIOUS,

WHEN Rolin Lincoln reached the dwelling of Jonas Danton, he hesitated awhile, to calculate upon what plan he had better pursue next. He knew it would be of no use to ask to see Belinda, for of course he would be refused, and there was but one other way, and that was to hunt her up if he could. So he noiselessly entered the yard and passed around to the back side of the house, noticing the windows carefully as he went. He saw a light in one of the lower back rooms, but that was evidently the kitchen. He passed around by the back yard, and next came to the garden, which was enclosed by a thicket fence. He found the gate which opened to it, and by this he passed in. On looking up on this side of the house he saw another lighted window directly over the porch which guarded the entrance to the house from the garden, but to which now there was no path. This window was guarded by a curtain, upon which Rolin plainly saw the shadow of a human form—of the head and shoulders. It was surely a female head, and was bowed, for he soon discovered what appeared to be the shadow of an arm and hand supporting the brow.

The youth took a few steps nearer, and gave a low whistle—the same whistle which he had many a time joyfully given to announce his coming at the fisherman's cot. He saw the shadow move, and the head turn. The whistle was repeated, and the figure arose. Now he knew 'twas a female. He waited a moment more, and when he saw that she still stood in a listening attitude, he repeated the signal. At this the curtain was raised, and some one looked forth. It was Belinda—Rolin knew from her form. He stretched forth his arms in an imploring manner, and soon the sash was raised. The youth quick-

ly moved closer to the building, but in doing so he forgot his usual precaution, and his feet made considerable noise in the snow-crust. But he stopped not to think of that now.

"Belinda!" he uttered.

"Rolin!" returned the fair girl, for she it was.

"Will you not come to me?" the youth hurriedly asked. "O, you do not wish to stay here?"

"But my father is here," groaned Belinda, hesitatingly.

"Not your true father, dearest. He is not the one who has spent years in making you happy and joyous. He is not the one who is broken-hearted now because you are away! Come—come with me!"

"But how?"

"Get out upon this porch, and then you can easily leap into my arms. O, do not hesitate."

"Alas, Rolin, I know not what to do. I told my father this evening that I would not leave him until he saw me again. He is my father, and as such God will hold me in obedience to him, so long as his commands are kind and right. O, Rolin, you shall not lose me. I will never be else to you than I am now, until kind fate makes me all your own for life."

"Then you would rather stay here?" said the youth, almost reproachfully.

"No, no, no," quickly and energetically cried Belinda. "O, I would rather go with you a thousand times; but I have given my word that I would not go. O, I cannot break it. I cannot tell a lie, Rolin."

"But 'twould be no lie, dearest. You are a prisoner, and as such you cannot be required to give a pledge."

A moment the poor girl pondered, and then she asked:

"And can you take me home?"

"Yes, yes," quickly and joyfully uttered Rolin. "Come with me and I will—"

Before he had time to finish the sentence, he heard a bolt move close by him, and in a moment more the porch door was opened, and a man sprang forth with a sword in his hand.

"Aha—whom have we here?" cried the newcomer, stopping within two yards of where Rolin stood.

Our hero was thunderstruck. He heard a low cry from Belinda, and on looking up he saw that she stood with her hands clasped.

"Shut down that window!" cried Abner Danton. "Shut it down!"

"But you will not harm Rolin. He only came to—"

"—sh, Belinda," interrupted the young patriot. "Fear not for me. Close your window now."

The maiden uttered one exclamation to her lover, bidding him flee, and then lowered the sash.

"Now, dog!" hissed Danton, flourishing his sword as he spoke, "what means all this? What are you doing here? Answer me before I run you through!"

But Rolin had not ventured into the midst of such people unprepared, and throwing open the light cloak which he wore to disguise his seaman's suit, he drew a heavy cutlass. The first thought which crossed his mind was to slay the man before him, then seize Belinda, and flee; but it only flitted across his mind—it was not entertained for a moment. He could not do a deed quite so near like murder. A moment more he thought, and then he said:

"If you wish to converse with such weapons, you see I am prepared, and I assure you I understand the language well."

"But what are you doing here?" the young tory repeated, with less venom, for the sight of the cutlass and Rolin's show of courage cooled him wonderfully. He was not a brave man.

"I came to see a poor girl who has been torn away from her home," returned our hero.

"And I caught you just in time to prevent you from tearing her away from her father, I take it," retorted Abner, with much bitterness.

"Ay," cried Rolin; "I would have taken her hence had you not come."

"So I thought. But now make yourself scarce; and let me assure you that if you are ever found here again, you shall be taken prisoner—and I rather think 'twould go hard with you if you should fall into the hands of the king's troops."

"Don't threaten me, sir!" spoke Rolin, growing angry.

"By the host, villain!" hissed the tory, "if you aint out of this in one minute you shall be taken as it is! What ho, there! Soldiers!"

"Stop, sir—stop," interrupted Rolin, who supposed that there might be some of the English troops about the premises. "I have nothing to keep me here, but ere I go I wish to give you one word of warning. If harm comes to that girl; or if, by any means, you try to make her your wife, I'll kill you as sure as death! Now

mark me, for I mean it. Try to make that girl your wife, and I'll plant my sword in your heart though I have to hunt over all the earth to find you. Now remember this, for you have it from one who does not break his word!"

Thus speaking, Rolin Lincoln turned and walked swiftly from the place. He leaped over the garden fence into the road, and when he turned to look back he saw Abner Danton standing just where he had left him. The young patriot stopped and gazed once more towards the window where Belinda's light was still burning, and with his hands clasped over his sword hilt he uttered a quick, fervent prayer. Perhaps 'twas well for him then that he did not know that those two British officers were helplessly drunk. Had he known that he would surely have made the attempt to liberate Belinda by force. Could he have shown her the new-found father in that situation, she would most assuredly have fled with him. But he knew it not, and he turned sadly away.

The youth had reached the outskirts of the village, and had begun to slacken his pace as he walked thoughtfully along, when he saw a dark object ahead of him. It seemed to be a human being, and was coming towards him with a sort of sidling shuffle. As he came nearer he recognized a female form, and when he had come to within a few feet he found it to be none other than that strange being, Polly Poll.

"Polly," he said, quickly, while a ray of hope darted to his soul, "is this you?"

"Sartin it be, general."

"I am glad to see you. Have you been to Matthew Clyne's lately?"

"No, I haven't. I wout go there, neither."

"But why not?"

"Because he means to kill me."

"O, no he doesn't. I heard him say 'only the other day that he loved you. He does love you very much, Polly."

"Do you think so?" asked the poor creature.

"I do, most certainly, for he told me so himself."

"I wish I could be sure of it, for I should love to go there."

"You'd love to see Belinda, wouldn't you?"

"Belinda? Who's she?"

"I mean Matthew's daughter."

"O, you mean little Mercy Poll?"

"Yes," returned Rolin, remembering that that was the name which Polly had once before given her.

"I love that angel, general."

"But do you know where she is now?"

"Perhaps in heaven."

"No—she is at Jonas Danton's, in Marshfield," said Rolin.

"At Danton's?" uttered Polly, sharply and shrilly. "What is she there for?"

"They have come and torn her away from Matthew's cot, and carried her there; and an English officer came and said she was his child. It was Major Fitzgerald who said so—who claims her as his child."

"Claims Mercy Poll as his child?" shrieked the woman, tearing the hood from her head and planting both hands in her hair. "A man of earth claim a sister of Polly Poll as a child of his. You are lying! You are cheating me!"

"Indeed I am not. The man did come—and he swore that he was Belin—was Mercy Poll's father—and he took her away—and she is now at Jonas Danton's house. Do you know Jonas Danton?"

The old woman let her hands drop, and a cold shudder crept through her frame.

"I do know him!" she whispered, in tones that thrilled her hearer to the very soul. "Jonas Danton pushed me out into the snow one cold, stormy night, and I should have frozen had I been a human being. I know him well. I am going to see him one of these days."

"But will you not keep your eyes on poor Mercy Poll?"

"I will keep her safe if she needs it, depend upon it, general. She the child of Jonas Danton!"

"No, no. I said 'twas a Major Barton Fitzgerald, who claimed to be her father."

"It makes no odds, general. They are all alike. I know 'em."

"But you can help her."

"Of course I can. And I must be at it, too. So good-by."

With this the strange woman started off. Rolin stood there and gazed upon her until she was out of sight, and then he started on his own way. He had little assurance in Polly's doing anything for Belinda's benefit, but then he felt sure she would do no harm, and she *might* do some good. At any rate, dark and mystic as was the character of the crazy being, the youth felt easier at heart, after he had seen her, for she gave him basis for a hope, frail though it was.

## CHAPTER X.

### THE DIE IS CAST.

ABNER DANTON was much moved by the result of his meeting with the young patriot. He knew that Lincoln was a brave, fearless man, and he knew, too, that he loved Belinda Clyne. On the following morning he related to his father the events of the night before, and the result of their conference was, that Belinda had better be taken to Boston at once.

"I do not fear any open enemy in the world," said Abner, after Major Fitzgerald had been called in, "but these rebels are like the murderous Malays our people encounter in the east. They will mark their victims, and butcher them in the night."

"They are murderous fellows, to be sure," uttered the major, in a languid tone, "for the effects of the last night's debauch was upon him with an enervating touch; but a glass of 'stiff' toddy had helped him some, and he was planning for another one soon."

"And, major," said the elder Danton, "could you not return to Boston soon?"

"At any time, sir. Say, to-morrow."

"That will answer," added Danton.

"Ay," resumed Abner, "the sooner the better, for I am sure there is a regular plot on foot to get the girl away. Early this morning I found that old witch of Endor, Polly Poll, under her window talking with her, and I heard some words about escaping from us. Once in Boston, and all is safe, for if Lincoln shows his face there we'll have him in prison so quick that he won't see how it's done. We'll start to-morrow, major."

And so this was settled.

It may seem strange that Jonas Danton should have entered into this plan so deeply, especially as he was at first opposed to his son's marrying with the rebel girl. But the spirit of revenge was a deep seated principle among his incentives to action. At first he had only consented that his son might stoop to wed with Belinda; but when he learned that she had spurned him as the son of a tory, and that the old fisherman had joined her in it, his rage was bitter, and he resolved that they should be brought down to a compliance with the wish of his son. He held the old man's secret, as we have seen, and the coming of Major Fitzgerald gave him an unlooked-for opportunity of using that secret to a most powerful advantage. The old tory had now made up his mind that

Belinda should wed with his son, and as it had become a purpose with him he was not to be turned from it.

That evening, Major Fitzgerald sat with Belinda alone. He was sober now—or, at least, sober enough for business, but he had just spirit enough in him to create a maudlin affection, and give him assurance. Belinda instinctively shrank from him as she saw his bloated face, but she dared not give expression to the feelings which moved her. She gazed into that countenance, and she wondered if the woman could be found who could love such a man. The major was quick of observation, especially when in the beginning of his more moderate cups, and he guessed at the girl's thoughts, and that he guessed rightly his first remark proved.

"Ah, my sweet child," he said, with a show of feeling which his cups worked for him, "had you never been lost to me, I should not be what I am now. I have been a reckless man since I was left all alone. But your sweet presence shall lead me once more to joy. O, you don't dream how happy I shall make you. When we settle down in our own home you shall be a very princess—indeed you shall. Lords and brave knights shall do you homage."

Belinda thought that perhaps her new-found father might make her happy after all, and she resolved to try him now with a question which lay dearest to her heart.

"Father," she said, speaking the word with difficulty, "I hope you will do nothing to make me miserable."

"Do anything to—to—make you miserable? to make you miserable? Why, how can you express such a thought? You should know better than that."

"You will forgive me, I know, for entertaining the fear, when you know its cause." The fair girl hesitated a moment to gain courage, and then she went on: "I love a noble youth, and our vows are plighted. If you tear me from him I shall be happy no more."

"Who is this youth?"

"His name is Rolin Lincoln."

"I shall not forbid your marrying him, my child."

"O, will you not?" cried the maiden, starting from her chair and seizing the major's hands.

"Will you let me marry him?"

"When the time comes, my child, and he shall ask for your hand, I shall not refuse him."

The poor girl fairly wept for joy, and Fitz-

gerald knew no better than to congratulate him; self upon the happy hit he had made, for he never did calculate to refuse this, meaning that Belinda should be placed beyond the power of giving her hand ere the young rebel could ask for it.

"Now," said the major, "be seated, and I will give you my plans. We must start for Boston to-morrow."

Belinda started up again, but soon sank back into her seat. She turned pale, and her lips trembled.

"To-morrow!" she uttered. "O, not so soon as that!"

"But we must. Sudden business has turned up, and I must return at once."

"And need I go with you?"

"Why, you wouldn't stay here, would you?"

"No, no, but I would go home—go and see my kind old—protector once more. O, you promised me I should visit him."

"Ah, but that was when I thought we should remain longer here. You won't have a chance now, I'm afraid. But some other time will do just as well."

"O, no. Let me go now, sir. Pray do."

"What? go in the dark?"

"Yes, sir. I can reach there by nine o'clock, and I will be back at any hour in the morning you may name."

"Ah, my sweet child, you haven't as much strength as you think for. 'T would be really wicked for me to let you go."

Belinda arose and sank down upon her knees at the major's feet.

"Let me go and see that good old man!" she prayed, in earnest tones. "O, think how much we owe him. If you love me, and promise yourself happiness in my companionship, you will remember that we owe all to him. You cannot refuse me this boon. 'Tis the first of my asking. O, do not refuse me."

"Why, confound it, girl, you are worse than an East India Klingh. I thought nobody could beat them in begging, but you do. But 'tisn't no use. I must go to-morrow morning."

"But you can let me stay a few days, a few hours. I will come to you in Boston."

"Hang it, no. What's the use? You must go."

Belinda arose to her feet, and as she sank once more into her chair she burst into tears. She covered her face with her hands, and wept aloud. For some moments the major gazed upon her in silence, and could she have seen his face during

those few moments, she would have pressed her suit with renewed earnestness, for he was not only deeply perplexed, but real pity stood plainly out upon his red visage. He was not used to withstanding the importunities of pretty girls, and he had not worn the parental authority long enough yet to feel its force. But he soon managed to overcome the emotions, and in a half-persuasive tone, he said:

"Now get ready as soon as you can, for we must be prepared to start early in the morning. What things you have at Mr. Clyne's, will be sent along in time."

The major started towards the door as he spoke, but Belinda sprang towards him.

"Who is going with us?" she asked, spasmodically.

"Nobody."

"Abner Danton is not going?"

"No."

"Stay one moment. O, if you would have me bless you always, if you would see me happy, if you would make me love you, and pray for you, let me go and see—"

"Hang it, girl, what's the use! It's too late. You can't go now. Wait till some other time. We'll come down here on a visit this spring."

"Will you?"

"Why, sartin I will. I have planned to come down here in pleasant weather and spend a month or two. We'll go then, and both of us stop with old Clyne, and perhaps young Lin—what's his name?"

"Lincoln, sir. Rolin Lincoln."

"Yes, perhaps he'll be there then, and we'll have a nice time. We'll sail, and walk, and fish; and young Lincoln may take it into his head to pop the question then, eh? Egad, if he does, and does it ship-shape, he shall have you—bless me if he sha'n't. You can write to him, you know, and let him know when you are coming, and then he can be there. That'll be better than 'twould to go poking off down, or up, there in the dark now, eh?"

In all probability the major could not well remember, at the close of this speech, ten consecutive words which he had spoken, but it nevertheless gave Belinda great comfort, for it had been spoken very candidly and earnestly, as though it were really a darling plan of the speaker's, upon which he placed much promise of joy for himself, and she believed every word of it. Fitzgerald saw how it worked, and he put the cap-sheaf on by saying:

"Now you may have your choice; you may go off alone to-night, and be back here by sunrise, or you may come down with me when I come in the spring."

"O, I would rather come then. But I may write a note now to be sent to Ro—to my old protector, and tell him where I am going, and when we are coming back?"

"Certin, you may."

"And can you get me the writing materials?"

"Yes, I'll get them right off; and then you'll write, and then get ready to go with me in the morning?"

Belinda promised, and the major left the room. He procured the articles desired, and sent them up by one of the female domestics. An hour later, Belinda sent for him, and gave him a note directed to Matthew Clyne. It was of good size, well-filled, and securely sealed.

"You will not let Danton see it," she said.

"I will not."

"And how will you send it?"

"I will put it into the Scituate post this very evening, for I've got to go and put in a letter for Plymouth."

With this assurance on his lips, Fitzgerald left the maiden's apartment. He went to the room which had been appropriated to his use, where a fire was burning upon the hearth, and sat down. He first swallowed a glass of rum and water, and then tore open Belinda's letter, and began to read.

"Ha, ha, ha," he laughed, as he read on, for the chirography was plain and distinct, and he could read it easily. "I'll learn to love him if I can." Good. She means to try, at all events. 'But he aren't what you are, my more than father.' More than father. Well, that's good. 'But we shall meet again in the spring.' Will you? Ah, here's to 'Dearest Rolin.' Egad, she loves him. Gracious, how she can pile up the love on paper! 'Yours now and forever.' Don't know 'bout that."

The major was too drunk now to have much feeling over a bare letter, though one or two sentences there moved him a little, and he hurried over them. But he found nothing to excite any ill feelings towards the maiden, for she had written nothing against him, as he had expected when he opened the letter.

"Rather guess Abner'd be a little touched if he should read this," the old fellow resumed, as he refolded the letter. "How she hates him!"

With this remark on his lips he tossed the let-

ter into the fire, and when he had seen the last of it turn black and charred, and then fade away to an imperceptible ash, he turned towards the decanter and filled his glass. He drank this off, and then raked up his fire rather clumsily, and shortly afterwards he went to bed. At ten o'clock a servant came up to see that the fire was safe. It was one of the major's own men. He found no actual damage done, though the coals were some of them in rather dangerous proximity to the floor. But he raked them carefully up, and then turned towards the bed. He saw only one boot upon the floor, so he pulled down the coverlid, and pulled the other boot from his master's foot. Having done this he drew up the bed clothes, poured out a glass of rum for himself, drank it off, fixed the lamp in a safe position, and then left the brave major to his slumbers.

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE PRIVATEER'S FIRST PRIZE.

MATTHEW CLYNE soon recovered from the effects of the blow he had received upon the head, but the blow upon the heart left traces not easily healed. Rolin was thunderstruck when he found that Belinda had been taken to Boston, and his fears were agonizing when he learned that Abner Danton had also left the place. Our hero ascertained that Major Fitzgerald and Belinda had started for the metropolis on the second morning after his visit to Danton's house, and that Abner did not leave until two days afterwards. Rolin went to Boston, and after some search he found Major Fitzgerald, and of him he asked to see Belinda, but the major assured him that the maiden had gone to Virginia to visit some of her relatives of wealth and rank who had been restored to her by having found her father. Rolin asked if Abner Danton had gone with her, and Fitzgerald assured him that he had not.

"I don't know where Danton is, unless he's gone to England," said the major. "Belinda is in Richmond, or else further south. And now let me prove my friendship for you. My child has spoken highly in your favor, and for once I am willing to help you. You are a marked man here. Your part with the rebels of the old colony is known. If you are found in Boston another day, even I cannot save you."

With these words the Englishman walked away. Rolin was startled, for he knew he had acted a conspicuous part in the taking of the schooner, and feared that he might really be in

danger. As he had nothing more to look for, he prepared to start for home. He had learned that old Polly Poll was in Boston, but he could not find her. He went and saw the confidential agent who was to give the patriots of Plymouth all the information he could concerning the incoming and outgoing of English vessels, and having made such arrangements with him as could be settled upon, sad-hearted, he turned away from the town.

The further the youth got from Boston the more he believed Fitzgerald had lied to him. He pondered the matter in all its bearings, and he remembered now that some things that man had told him must be false. Then, again, when he thought of the way he had been warned to leave the city, he was sure it was only done to get rid of him. Once he was almost tempted to turn back; but calmer reflection told him such a course would be utterly useless, for he could not hope to find Belinda without finding Fitzgerald, too, and that gentleman would surely have him imprisoned if he went there.

Rolin reached Matthew's cot just at night-fall, and found the old man anxiously waiting for him. His story was soon told, and the stricken ones wept together. But other feelings were rife within them. There were other wrongs besides these private wrongs, and other sufferings than those they now labored under. \* \* \*

Time had passed on—the snows of winter had gone, and the genial breath of spring was on the earth, fanning the buds with a warmer breath, and coaxing the coy May-blossoms from their repose. The blow had been struck. The cry had been raised—the sound had gone forth. The greensward of Lexington had been baptized in martyrs' blood, and Concord had heard the roar of English war-notes. The country was aroused.

Washington was with his army in Cambridge, and he wanted ammunition and food. Rolin Lincoln awoke from his anguish, and Matthew Clyne shook off his lethargy. The captured schooner was hauled out from her resting-place one evening after the dusky shades had gathered about the earth, and fifty stout men were at work putting her in sailing trim. Her masts were stepped; her sails banded; her sides cleaned; her guns hoisted out from the hold and secured in their places; provisions and water put on board, and long before morning she had disappeared from the harbor. No tory had seen her go, and probably not even the hulk would be missed from its resting-place.

When the sun arose the schooner was off Cape Cod, under command of Matthew Clyne. Rolin Lincoln had been unanimously chosen as second in command, and a stout, middle-aged fellow, named James Ransom, was chosen as second mate. Sam Doolittle had been asked by Rolin to take the place of first mate, but he would only take the gunner's berth, for he felt qualified for that. The crew mustered fifty-seven men in all, and before nine o'clock the watches were arranged, and the men stationed. There were arms sufficient, and all that was now wanted was to find the enemy. They knew that several store ships were daily expected, and that no great precautions would be taken, as the English did not yet dream of finding any obstruction upon the sea.

"I don't know, boys," said Matthew, as his men were collected aft, "what the world will call us, nor do I care. We know that the British have destroyed our provisions and stolen our ammunition, and burned our buildings, and thus we are thrown upon the defensive. Ere long our noble army will want these things, and we must furnish what we can. One crushing blow in the beginning may seal our fate forever."

For three days the schooner cruised off Massachusetts Bay without seeing anything but one small coaster; but on the morning of the fourth day a sail was reported to the eastward. The wind was now from the southwest, and the schooner had been running to the eastward since midnight, and the captain concluded that he was not far from two hundred miles distant from Cape Cod. Ere long the sail was made out to be a ship and standing in towards the bay with all sail set.

"It's surely a ship," said Sam Doolittle, who had just come down from the fore-topsail yard, leaving Ransom on the crosstrees with a glass. "It's a ship, for I could make out her mizzen top-gallant sails."

"Maybe a man-o'-war," said Matthew.

"No," replied Rolin. "I should think not. There's no man-o'-war expected just now, except such as may be in the convoy."

"But would a merchantman or store-ship, as that, come in the convoy?" suggested the surgeon.

"O, as for that," returned Rolin, "there may be several vessels in the convoy, and if one of 'em happened to be a smarter sailer than the rest, she'd shoot ahead. I rather think there's more behind."

"On deck, there!" came from the second mate shortly after this.

"Ay, ay," returned the captain.

"That's a merchantman, but I guess she carries guns."

"An old Indiaman, perhaps," remarked Matthew, "armed against pirates."

"So much the better," cried Sam. "What's the fun of takin' a poor thing that can't offer no resistance. By the pipin' monster, we want to try our metal."

This idea met with much favor, and Matthew was glad to see it, for it proved to him that he had men who were not afraid of a few shot.

In half an hour more the ship could be plainly made out from the deck, but she displayed no port-holes. She was a heavy craft, looming up rather dubiously when compared with the schooner.

"I should think such a ship would have guns," said one of the men, who stood near the binnacle.

"I guess she's got some stowed away somewhere," returned the captain; "and perhaps they'd have them open if they knew who we were. They don't dream of such a thing as a Yankee privateer."

By this time the ship had got so near that Ransom could look upon her deck, and he reported that she had a pretty good crew.

"Can you count 'em?" asked the captain.

"Pretty near, sir. I can make out about thirty on her deck."

"And does she carry any guns?"

"I guess only one. I can see one bull-dog on her fore-castle."

"Only a signal gun," said Matthew.

During this time the schooner had crossed the line of the ship's course, and was now to the windward of her; the latter was standing nearly due west, with her larboard tacks aboard, while the schooner was on her weather bow, taking the wind nearly abeam. In a few moments she eased off her sheets and kept away a little.

"We must lay her to," said the captain.

"Of course," responded Rolin, "for we can never board her while in that speed."

"Fire one of the starboard guns, Mr. Doolittle," ordered Matthew.

"Mister Doolittle!" soliloquized Sam, as he cast off the apron lashing, and sent a hand to light a match. "Mister Doolittle! Wal, now that sounds kind o' funny. Who'd a ever thought it? Me—Sam Doolittle—with such a handle? Howsomever, I s'pose it's all—Here,

you—I'll jest take that match ef you please. Now's the time, cap'n. Jes' say the word."

"Fire!" ordered Matthew.

Sam applied the match, and the brass gun spoke handsomely. A minute afterwards the ship had clewed up her courses, and her main-topsail was soon to the mast.

"Now, Mr. Lincoln," said the captain; "I want you to run us directly under that fellow's lee main-chains."

"Ay, ay, sir," responded Rolin, and placing himself by the binnacle he gave the necessary orders. The schooner was now about a quarter of a mile distant, and had to run down almost directly before the wind. The breeze was fresh, and the distance was made in a very few minutes. The sheets were carefully manned already to round in the moment the order should be given. The men were all armed, ready for boarding, and their hearts beat high.

"Ship ahoy!" shouted Clyne, as the schooner came near enough.

"Ay—ay-yi!" returned the Englishman.

"What ship is that?"

"The store-ship, Dunstable."

"Bound for Boston?"

"Yes. What schooner's that?"

"'Twas his majesty's schooner Asp."

"O, yes—I know—"

While this conversation was going on, Rolin had given the order for putting down the helm and rounding in, and the schooner came up under the ship's lee rail in fine style, the lofty sides and canvass of the latter taking the wind all from her, so that there was little flapping and slatting of the sails. The grapplings were nicely thrown, and on the next instant the Yankee captain gave the order to board.

Sam Doolittle was the first upon the ship's rail, Rolin next, and Matthew Clyne next; and after them the tide set quick and strong.

"Who's captain here?" asked the old fisherman, gazing around upon the wonder-stricken Englishmen.

"I am," answered a short, dumpy, red-faced man.

"Then this ship is mine, sir; and you are my prisoner!"

"Eh?—a—your pris—eh? For heaven's sake, sir, tell me what you mean!" gasped the dumb-founded Englishman. Not only he, but all the crew, were perfectly astounded by this movement, and they stood like so many electrified subjects at a show.

"Why," returned Matthew, "it means, that this ship is mine."

"But what have I done? Who sent you to take me?"

"The patriots of the colonies sent us, we have come to take every English vessel we can find. We are Yankees, sir. Perhaps they call us rebels where you come from."

"Ha!" gasped the captain, whose obtuse mind now comprehended. "Then you aren't Englishmen?"

"No, sir. We are Yankee rebels of the bluest kind."

"But there aren't no war. You don't mean to say that you are commissioned by anybody to do this?"

"Yes, there is war. Your soldiers have commenced it themselves. Blood has been spilled. Your army is cooped up in Boston like the way we coop up geese in plantin' time. But say—you aren't alone, are ye?"

"No, sir," cried the Englishman, while his eyes brightened. "There's a sloop-of-war astern with two transports, and you'd better leave us alone if you know what's good for yourselves."

"Mr. Ransom," said Matthew, turning to his second mate, and speaking very rapidly and distinctly, "take a glass and go aloft—up to the top-gallant crosstrees—and keep an eye to the eastward. Mind that you sweep the whole horizon that way." Then he turned to the Englishman and resumed:

"Now, sir, will you surrender?"

The commander looked first into the Yankee skipper's hard face, and then around upon the half-hundred stout fellows who followed him. He saw them all well-armed, and he could moreover read the firmest kind of resolution on their faces. Then he looked upon his own men. There were thirty-four of them in all, and some of them had armed themselves with handspikes, belaying-pins, and whatever else came handy—not for attack, but for defence. Not one of them had any kind of a regular weapon, for, though there were weapons on board, they had not dreamed of a downright attack; and hence were not prepared. But that made little difference.

"Why," at length spoke the poor fellow, "I don't know as I can make but one answer."

"Then out with it, quick."

"Why, of course I must surrender. But I can't see how you claim such a capture, unless you acknowledge yourselves to be—"



"Sail-ho!" at this moment came from the main-topgallant crossrees.

"Where away?"

"Right astern."

"Then quick, boys!" shouted our Yankee captain. "Find some sort of irons as soon as possible. Down upon the schooner's deck, some of you, and fetch 'em up. Here—only two of you go. That's enough. Bring your arms full. Now, boys, let's have these fellows secured, for that's the sloop-of-war astern. Take it quietly, my poor fellows, and you shan't be hurt," Matthew continued to the prisoners. "If you make any resistance, it shall go hard with you."

The men soon returned with the irons, and the work of putting the ship's crew into them was quickly done. Some lusty fellows resisted from a natural habit of resisting any kind of force when applied to themselves, but the tap of a pistol-butt quickly settled them, and ere long they were secure.

"That's a square-rigged craft," cried Ransom.

"All right," shouted Matthew. "Come down now." And then turning to his men, he continued: "Bear a hand and remove part of these fellows to the schooner. Mr. Lincoln, you will take charge of the prize, and you may have as many men as you want."

"Let me have fifteen or twenty, sir," answered Rolin.

"Take twenty. Mr. Ransom, you are just in season. You have a list of the men. Detail ten from each watch to man the prize, and mind that you have some good seamen."

"We haven't got any poor ones, sir," replied the mate, as he leaped upon the schooner's deck, disappeared down the cabin companion-way, and returned, almost in a moment.

The twenty men were read off, their bags thrown on board, and then in a few hurried words the captain and Rolin agreed upon the course to be followed in running for Plymouth harbor.

"Remember," said Matthew, as he was about to step over the side, "you probably have a valuable cargo. Find the ship's best point of sailing, and stick to it if you can. Remember your light at night, and keep an eye on mine. Good-by. We'll have an overhauling in old Plymouth."

The two commanders shook hands with a beaming, joyful look of pride, and in a few moments more the vessels were separated. The schooner shot ahead, and then Rolin gave his

main-topsail to the wind; let fall the courses; braced all up, and gathered headway, just as the sloop-of-war's lofty canvass appeared from his deck like a white speck on the distant horizon.

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE VEIL IS REMOVED.

ONE warm, pleasant afternoon, Belinda sat in the chamber which had been appropriated to her use. The house in which she was confined was on Bishop's Alley, leading from Milk to Summer Street, and now called Hawley Street. Her apartment was on the second floor, and was furnished with all the articles of convenience which she could desire. She had permission to range over the house at will, and several times she had been out into the town, but on such occasions the major accompanied her, for on no pretext was she allowed to go out alone. Though three months had passed away since she had been there she had not seen Abner Danton, nor had she heard his name mentioned but once, and that was in simple course of conversation. From this the fair girl took hope, for she now believed that the young tory was not to trouble her.

But all this while young Danton was kept away by business which he could not avoid. News had reached the ears of the parent that a heavy planter in Virginia, on the James River, had died without making any sort of arrangement for the settlement of his business affairs, having been accidentally wounded while parading a fiery horse, and lying from that time until his death without sense. This man owed Danton several thousand pounds, and it became necessary, in order to obtain the debt, that either the father or son should go to Virginia. The former did not feel strong enough for the work, and the latter was consequently obliged to go. He saw Fitzgerald first; made everything safe in that quarter, and then started off.

But to come back to Belinda: She sat in her chamber trying to read, when her door was opened, and Major Fitzgerald entered. He came and sat down by her side and asked her what she was reading.

"An account of that dreadful affair at Lexington and Concord," she replied.

"Pooh—that wasn't very dreadful, my child. We lost but a few men."

"It makes little odds what the aggressors lost, sir," replied Belinda, with a burning eye. "It

is the American blood that was spilled that makes me shudder."

"Ho—this isn't a circumstance, Belinda, to what's got to come."

"I am sure of that, sir. When once the vengeance of the patriots is aroused there must be dreadful work. If a handful of mere rustics dare face such a party of troops as were sent to Concord, and having faced them, drive them back to their quarters, you can imagine what must be the result when a whole army of them is raised."

"But perhaps a whole army of them couldn't hide behind fences and rocks."

"Nor would they wish to."

"You stick to the rebels yet, eh?"

Belinda had once before discussed the question of England's right here upon our soil, and as the major then got angry she concluded to turn the subject now—and upon a subject which possessed full as much interest for her.

"Never mind about these things," she said, "but tell me when you are going down to Marshfield?"

"Ah, my child, these affairs, I fear, have shut up the roads to us in that direction."

"How, sir? Do you mean that you are not going?"

"We cannot go."

"But, sir," cried Belinda, in tones of mingled fear and surprise, "you will certainly let me go, as you promised. O, you will not refuse me?"

"But, Belinda, we can't go. It's no use talking. The bloody rebels have blocked up all the roads."

"But they would not harm me, sir."

"Wouldn't, eh? By the kingdom, girl, you don't know 'em half as well as I do. But never mind this now. I only came up to see if you were in your room, for a friend wishes to see you."

"A friend, sir?"

"Yes—and after you have seen him, you may not wish to take the journey you propose."

"Who is it? It is my old friend—Matthew Clyne! Is it he?"

"You shall see soon."

"But tell me—is it old Matthew?"

"It is one that loves you most dearly, my child."

The major arose as he spoke, and turned from the room. Belinda was in a fever of excitement, and she trembled so violently that even her breath came and went with difficulty.

"O," she uttered to herself, "if it is Matthew! or—or—Rolin! O, they may take me away from here. They may have some means of taking me away."

She clasped her hands upon her bosom as though she would keep her heart from bursting forth, and thus listened for the coming footfall. It came upon the stairs—it was not Matthew—'twas too quick and light for that. But it might be Rolin's.

Her door was opened—she started to her feet—and found herself in the presence of Abner Danton!

With a deep groan she sank back into her chair and covered her face with her hands.

"Dearest Belinda," spoke the young tory, approaching her and laying his hand upon her shoulder.

"Leave me, sir!" she cried, shrinking away from him. "Touch me not! Do not lay a hand upon me!"

"But, sweet one, you must not treat me so. You know not how I love you."

"Love, sir! O, why talk of love to me, when you know how I loathe and despise you!"

"Be careful, girl, or you may make a thorny bed for yourself. I have come to offer you my heart and my hand, and I did not come to be refused."

"But you are refused, sir; and you know that I can never accept an offer from you. Let this be the last of your offers to me."

Danton gazed upon the lovely girl before him, and had he not felt sure of possessing her he would have been angry; but as it was, he only experienced a sort of triumphant feeling, which partook strongly of that demoniac cast which marks the character of rank cowards in power.

"My dear girl," he said, "you are laboring under somewhat of a mistake. You must be, or you would not speak as you do. I do not really come a begging at your hands. No, no—you are to be mine—you are mine now."

"Out, liar! My father will never give you entrance to our doors again."

"Be not too sure of that, pretty one. Your father has more sense than to throw away such an opportunity of bestowing his daughter's hand."

"Leave me, sir, or I shall call my father at once. Leave me, I say; for you shall never have my hand. You know how base you are—how cowardly you must be, to thus pursue a



poor girl who you know hates you for your wickedness and falsehood! Leave me, sir!"

"By the holy rood, girl, you are going a little too far. Sit down, and I'll convince you—"

"No, no, sir; leave me. Leave me, or I'll—"

As Belinda thus spoke, she started towards the door, and would have opened it, had not Danton pulled her back.

"Stop," he said; "you cannot leave this room until we have some sort of an understanding."

"Understanding, sir! Are you a dolt as well as villain? Do you not understand me now? Let me go, sir! Let me go, or I shall call for help."

"But you shall not go. By heavens, girl, you shall know ere long whom you have to deal with."

Belinda made another effort to get away from Danton, but she failed in this, and then she uttered a scream which made even her companion start.

"Silence! You'll start up the whole town."

"So I wish to, villain! Unhand me, or I shall—"

Her exclamation was cut short by the entrance of Major Fitzgerald.

"What is all this screaming about?" he asked, as he hurried up.

"Save me from this villain!" gasped Belinda, all breathless with excitement. "Send him away, father."

"But what is it all?" the major asked. "What have you been doing, Abner?"

"Simply trying to get her to say that she would be my wife; and when she tried to rush from the room I held her back, and she gave that unearthly screech, because I wouldn't let her run away from me."

"Sit down, Belinda—sit down," said Fitzgerald. "We'll look into this matter."

The poor girl obeyed, and Danton took a seat near her.

"Now," resumed the major, "what does this all amount to? Belinda, what is it?"

"Why, sir—this man has asked me for my hand—he has asked me before—and I have refused his offer. He came now, and would not take my refusal, but swore I should be his at any rate. I asked him to leave me, and he would not. I told him I hated him, and he began to show his anger. Then I would have left the room, but he caught me by the arm, and would not let me go. Then I screamed for you."

"That's about the way, major," rejoined Danton.

"Well," uttered Fitzgerald, regarding Belinda with a strange look, "all I have to say is, you have acted very much like a fool. I should like to know what you have against this friend of mine?"

"Sir—a friend—" uttered the fair girl, turning deadly pale, and gazing fearfully into the speaker's face. "Will you not shield me from this man's importunities?"

"Certainly. I can very easily do that. Marry him, and you may be sure he'll importune you no more."

Belinda clasped her hands with a convulsive movement, and for a moment she seemed like one shot through the heart. But at length she found utterance, and in a faint tone she murmured:

"And are you against me? Are you mine enemy?"

"No, no, girl—an enemy would advise you to refuse this offer, but a friend, never. As I am your only living parent, of course I feel some desire to see you settled in life, and as such chances as this don't turn up every day, of course I have concluded to take up with it. Mr. Danton came to me and asked me if he might address you—and I told him yes."

"But, sir," cried Belinda, "you will not allow this to go on now that you know how miserable it will make me."

"You'll be a fool to be miserable."

"A fool, sir? O, if you have one spark of feeling—one atom of truth—you will not allow this."

"But I must allow it. I have given my word."

"Ay, sir, you gave your word to me. You cannot have forgotten what you told me?"

"It makes no odds what I told you. All I have to say now, is, that I have given my word to this gentleman, and I cannot take it back. You are to be his wife."

Belinda sprang forward and grasped the major by the arm, and gazing imploringly into his face she cried:

"Do not—O, do not do this thing! Kill me if you will—kill me at once—but spare me this. O, listen to the prayer of a poor girl who never did you harm! remember her life is in your hands. Spare me, O, spare me!"

"Zounds, girl, it's no use. I can't help it. Here, Danton, you must settle your own busi-

ness. Egad, I aren't good for this kind of work."

"O, don't give me up to him," shrieked Belinda. "Don't give me up to him. You are my father, and you can save me."

The major was really worked upon. With all his evil he was not the man to withstand, unmoved, the tears and prayers of a poor, defenceless girl. He had no moral principle—not a particle—but he had a heart that was not all hard yet, and sometimes it could be found. He felt awkward in his present position. He looked into Belinda's face a few moments, and a ray of hope shot athwart his face.

"Egad, Belinda," he said, "I don't know exactly what to say. But we'll leave you alone awhile. You'll have time to think then, and so'll we."

As Fitzgerald thus spoke, he turned to Danton and beckoned for him to follow. The young tory understood the signal, and without another word he followed his host from the room. As soon as Belinda was left alone, she rushed into her sleeping apartment, and threw herself upon the bed, and there gave way to her bitter grief, in hot, burning tears.

### CHAPTER XIII.

#### A DARKER SCENE YET BEHIND THAT VEIL.

EVENING came, and still Belinda was left alone. Her supper was brought to her room at the usual hour by the woman who waited upon her, and she ate sparingly. When the servant came to take the things away, Belinda asked her if Major Fitzgerald was in the house.

"No, ma'am," the woman answered. "He went out after supper."

"And was there another man with him?"

"Yes'm—a Mr. Danton—a very fine gentleman. P'raps you know 'im?"

"I have seen him," answered Belinda with a shudder. "But do you know if he is coming back here?"

"No, ma'am, I don't. I should think, though, he was goin' away somewhere, for I heard 'em talkin' about some place somewhere."

With this explicit piece of information the woman left the room, and Belinda retired once more to her sleeping room. Nine o'clock came, and as she was sure of having no visitors after that hour, she retired. For a long time she laid awake and pondered upon the scene of the afternoon. She remembered all that Fitzgerald had promised her, but she knew not now how much

confidence she could place in him. She had tried to feel towards him as a child should feel towards its parent, but she had not yet been able to realize them. She then wondered if she owed such a man the duty of a child. Here her heart answered one way, and her judgment another. Her heart said, No; but when she came to think of the absolute tie between a child and its father, she could not answer so readily. Yet upon one point she resolved before she slept: If the suit of Abner Danton were pressed upon her, and her new-found father attempted to consummate such a union, she would make her escape if she could.

On the following morning Belinda had her breakfast brought to her as usual, and after she had eaten it she was left alone until near the middle of the forenoon. It was about ten o'clock when she heard a step upon the stairs which she knew to be the major's, and ere long the door was opened, and Fitzgerald entered.

"Well, my child," he said, "you are looking pale after your excitement. I came to offer you a little walk. The earth is dry, and the air is fresh and bracing. We will go out on to the Common. Zounds, the grass is as green there as ever it was. Will you go?"

"With pleasure," answered Belinda.

"But stop. You sha'n't utter one word on the walk about what happened yesterday, for I don't want our pleasure marred by such allusion."

"O, sir, I will not—surely I will not," uttered Belinda; and she gave the promise with a sudden thrill of hope, too, for she felt that the request came from a desire to forget the affair altogether; and if such was the case, then of course she had reason to hope that he would never allow such another scene to transpire.

"Then fix at once," said the major, twirling his sword-knot.

Belinda was but a few moments in getting ready, and when they reached the street she took her companion's arm. They passed into Summer Street, and so on up Winter Street to the Common, where they spent some half an hour in viewing the soldiers. Then they passed out by the way of Long Acre into Tremont Street, keeping on to Sudbury, and thence to Hilliers Lane, which latter place is now a part of Court Street, towards Cambridge and Green.

"Are we not walking rather far?" suggested Belinda, as she began to feel fatigued.

"No, guess not," pleasantly replied the major. "I didn't mean to come so far, but when I found

myself here at the entrance of this lane, I thought we'd just call and see an old friend of mine. Egad, I'm thirsty, and I take it you are tired, so I'll find some wine, and you some rest."

"But how much further is it?"

"Only a step—it's right here. You see that post with a lamp on it. Well, it's right in there, up that narrow passage. The man that built the house—he's a comical fellow—didn't want to face the street, so he put his house t'other way. You see he originally built a garden between his house and the lane, but afterwards sold it for another to put a house on. That's why his house now stands so far back. Are you very tired?"

"O, no, not very."

"Here's the passage."

As the major thus spoke they entered a small, or rather a narrow, passage, at the entrance of which was an arch. Upon the left hand of this passage was a solid wall of buildings, but they only presented their low backs, and had no windows looking into it from that side, while upon the right were three houses—low, wooden buildings, with the doorways lower than the pavement, so that to enter them it was necessary to step down one step to reach the door-stone. It was to the third house that the major made his way, and when he reached it he stepped down and plied the brass knocker which adorned the door, if such a thing could be called an ornament.

Belinda was not very favorably impressed by the appearance of things about her. The pavement was very dirty, seeming to be used as a sort of place for the reception of all the offal in the house; and then the doorstep, which, it will be remembered, was a foot lower than the pavement of the passage, thus forming a handy receptacle for dirt, was completely hidden by the rubbish which had probably been collecting there for months. And the aforesaid knocker, too, was not a very strong index of neatness, for the verdigris was thick upon it, and its indentations and crevices were filled with dirt.

"Zounds!" uttered the major, as he saw how narrowly his fair companion regarded these signs, "what a queer sort of a man old Tom is, to be sure—to let things go to ruin in this way. Eh, the lazy dog! it's lucky he's rich, or he'd go to destruction fast."

As he ceased speaking the door was opened, and an old woman showed her face. She was a dried up, tall, bony thing, somewhere over threescore, with deep-set gray eyes, tangled gray hair

partly collected beneath a dirty cap, and wearing a ragged dress of quilted woolen stuff. Her face was repulsive, both in feature and color. The former was sharp and sour, and the latter of a dingy yellow, not unlike the hue of Scotch snuff.

"Is old Tom within?" asked the major.

The woman peered sharply into the applicant's face, and at length answered in the affirmative.

"He's up and well, isn't he?"

"Ye-es. Coom in."

Fitzgerald walked in, and as he reached the narrow, dark hall, he took Belinda by the hand.

"Come," he said, "we'll find more light up stairs."

"You tremble, sir," uttered the fearful girl.

"Eh? tremble?"

"Yes—your hands tremble. What is it?"

"Why, I'm thirsty—perhaps tired. Ha, ha, ha—tremble—ha, ha, ha."

But the major's laugh was a sardonic one. It came out at spasmodic intervals, and was surely forced. He led the way up stairs, and when he reached the landing it was surely lighter.

"Where's Tom?" he asked of the woman, who still remained below.

"Up in the next story," squawked the hag.

So up another flight of stairs they went, and here they came to a small square entry-way, with only two doors leading from it. The major opened the one to the left and handed Belinda in, and then followed her. The apartment to which they thus gained access was of a medium size, perhaps some twelve feet square, or more, and very well furnished. It contained a dark, cherry table, four common chairs, one rocking-chair, a sort of couchlike sofa, covered with Nankin stuff, and a wash-stand and dressing-table and glass.

"Take off your bonnet, Belinda," said Fitzgerald, as he sat down.

"We won't stop long, sir?" returned the maiden, interrogatively.

"No, not long."

"Then I won't remove anything. I should like to get home soon."

"'Twon't take us long to get home after we start. You know we came a round-about way in coming, but the way home is nearly straight. But it's curious where Tom is. You hold on a minute, and I'll go and find him."

"You will not be long away," said Belinda, shuddering.

"No, no, not long—of course not. I'm only

going to find old Tom. I'll be right back, right away. I'm only after Tom—I wonder where the fellow is? He ought to be here. Zounds! he's a sad dog—Tom is. I won't be gone long, Belinda. Good-by. Ha, ha, ha, one would think I was going away, to hear me talk good-by so. Deuce take that Tom. Tom! Tom!"

As the major closed this strange course of remark he opened the door and passed out, and the last part of his speech was spoken in the hall. He closed the door after him, and Belinda heard his steps as he descended the stairs, still calling after "Tom."

"He looked very strangely," murmured the fair girl to herself, after she could hear the sound of her companion's steps no more. "And he talked very strangely, too. I wish he had not gone."

Yet she tried to assure herself that all was right, and to pass away the time she arose to examine the scenery about the house. There were two windows in the apartment, one looking to the west, towards Cambridge, and the other to the south, towards Valley Acre and Beacon Hill. To the west she could look down over the houses to the water of Charles River and the Back Bay, and to the south she could see the fortifications on the hill. As she turned her attention nearer to the house she could see that the building was surrounded on three sides by a very high fence of heavy frame-work stoutly boarded, the coping of which was armed with long, sharp spikes. This was evidently done to protect the few consumptive fruit trees which grew in the yard, and also, perhaps, to keep off robbers, for surely no one could have got over that fence without a ladder.

Belinda examined all this, and then she sat down again, but she was too uneasy to sit long. She wondered why her father did not return. Perhaps he had found "Tom," and they had sat down over a bottle somewhere else. She thought she would go to the door and see if she could hear them anywhere. She went, and having opened the door she passed out into the entry. She listened, but she could not hear the voice of her companion. After a while spent thus vainly she returned to the room and sat down again. While her eyes were wandering about the apartment she noticed a small door opposite the west window, which had not before attracted her attention. She went to it and raised the latch. It was not curiosity which prompted her, but a vague idea possessed her that she might see or

hear something of the major. The door opened easily, and she passed through. She found herself in a smaller apartment than the one she had left; in it was a bed and two chairs. A coarse carpet, with warp of hempen cord and woof of twisted rags, covered the floor. One window looked from this room down into the narrow passage by which she had gained access to the house. She could see no one moving in the passage, nor could she hear any voices. She thought of raising the window and looking out, but when she came to try it, the thing was found impossible, for the sash was all of one piece, and set firmly into the frame, so that it could not be moved at all in any direction.

By this time, Belinda began to have the worst of fears. She had now been alone nearly half an hour, and she began to think of finding some means of egress from the place, or, at least, she resolved to go down and see if she could find her father. So she opened the door again and passed out into the entry. She listened here a moment, and hearing nothing, she descended the stairs. This brought her to the hall of the second floor, and when she came to pass around to find the other stairs which led down to the lower hall, she could not find them. She found a stout door which she knew must be at the head of the stairs, but it was closed and locked.

What could this mean? Was she a prisoner? The thought came to her with a whelming force, and she leaned up against the partition as a sense of faintness came over her. Perhaps the door was locked accidentally. It might be stuck in some way. Surely her father would not have left her thus on purpose. With such vague hopes she knocked upon the door until her knuckles were sore, and then she plied her foot. As the reverberations of her repeated blows sounded through the house she stopped her clamor a few moments to listen—but no answer came to her summons. Ere long she plied her foot again, and this time she added her voice. She called out with all her might, and ere many moments she heard a slipshod, shuffling step upon the stairs. In a few moments more Belinda plainly heard the snapping of a lock, and when the door was opened the same old woman who had given her entrance to the house made her appearance.

"What's all this racket here?" she asked, coming into the hall and closing the door behind her.

"Where is my father?" asked Belinda, shrinking away from the hag.

"Who's yer father?"

"The man who came here with me."

"Oho. Well—he's gone. Yer see bizness called 'im off, an' he bid me keep ye till he coom back. So rest azy, an' doant be makin' any more noise."

"Gone!" gasped the poor girl, turning pale, and clasping her hands to her temples. "Gone and left me here! Then let me go. Let me go, good woman. I shall reach home in safety."

"No, no," returned the old woman, with a grim, threatening look. "You are safe enough here; an' more'n that, your father said you'd stop here till he coom for ye. So ye'll jest stop. Now make yerself azy."

"No, no, let me go! let me go!" cried Belinda, starting towards the door.

"Ye can't, I tell ye."

"But I will!" persisted the terror-stricken girl. Fear lent her strength, and with a recklessness of consequence she pushed the hag away and tried to open the door.

She had got the door half open, when she felt a strong grip upon her arm, and heard the shrill voice of the beldam in her ear:

"Ye'll make mitey powerful work now tryin' to coom wid yer strength over old Jiley. Coom back out of that, an' go to yer room!"

Belinda struggled with all her might, but the hag seemed to possess the strength of an ogress, for she drew the fair girl back, and held her there. Our heroine felt the sharp nails in her flesh, and the pain gave her one more resolve. With all her might she threw the woman from her, and then leaped to the door. With a quick movement she threw it open, and had passed half through, when she was caught again. This time the ogress seized her with both hands and drew her back; then she laid out all her strength, and with one effort of her long, bony arms she hurled the struggling girl across the hall. Belinda's head came in contact with the wall, and beneath the effects of the blow she sank senseless upon the floor.

#### CHAPTER XIV.

##### THE BRIG-OF-WAR.

ROLIN LINCOLN found the ship he had in charge to be a good sailer, and she obeyed her sails and helm readily. In heading his true course for the bay he was obliged to brace sharp up on the larboard tack, but the ship sailed well on the wind, and ere long it was evident that

the sloop-of-war was being left farther and farther out of the way, and by two o'clock in the afternoon the eastern horizon was clear. As soon as matters were attended to on deck the young commander hunted up the ship's papers, and found a list of all the articles on board. There were provisions—beef, pork, and bread; ammunition, consisting of powder, bullets, round shot, grape and cannister, of various sizes; and some small arms. The whole was represented as being in charge of Sir William Howe, so Rolin knew that general must be in one of the vessels astern.

The men were delighted beyond measure when they knew what a valuable prize they had taken, and their hearts beat with a strong hope that this was but the beginning of a glorious career.

That night the wind changed to the eastward, and the schooner and her prize kept on all sail. The next day at noon Cape Cod was upon the larboard beam, and the privateer had just got in far enough to lay on her course direct for Plymouth, when a sail was discovered to the northward and westward, in the direction of Boston. The wind was now northeast, and in the course of half an hour the strange sail was made out to be a brig coming down with the wind on her beam. Rolin had discovered this, and one of his men was sent aloft with a glass. He went to the main-topgallant crosstrees, and ere long he returned to the deck and reported that it was a brig-of-war, and of course an Englishman. Our hero's first movement was, to run under the schooner's quarter, and hail Matthew.

"Schooner ahoy!" he shouted, as he saw the old man standing by the quarter-rail.

"Ay, ay," was the captain's response.

"That's an English brig," continued Rolin—"a war-brig; and she must overhaul us. Eight men can take the ship into Plymouth, and the rest of us had better come back to the schooner."

"You will run her into port," said Matthew.

"No, sir. I must return, for I shall be wanted with you. Any eight of my men here can run her in, for the course is now direct, and not over three hours run. Shall I select eight at once, and come to you with the rest?"

Matthew Clyne conferred a moment with his men, and then bade Rolin do as he thought best.

"That's the talk," said Rolin, turning to his men. "Now, boys, we have but a few moments to spare. That brig is coming down fast, for you see she has the wind on her quarter now.

I want twelve of you to follow me on board the schooner to meet that fellow, while the rest of you run the ship into Plymouth harbor. Now step forward those who wish to go with me."

And the whole twenty men stepped forward at once.

"Well, my noble companions," said Rolin, with a beaming smile, "I had expected this, and so have thought of an expedient."

As he spoke, he took his pocket-knife and cut some six inches from a piece of tarred rope which hung over the rail of the stern boat. From this he selected twenty yarns, and in eight of them he made a single knot. Then he took the bunch in his hands, and bade his men arrange themselves.

"Now, boys," he said, "here are twenty yarns, and eight of them knotted in the middle. Those who draw the knotted yarns will remain on board the ship."

He commenced with the man at the wheel, and then went around to the rest. The eight men who held the knotted yarns were disappointed, but they made no objections, though they could not repress a few murmurs of regret that they should have to run away with a ship while their brave fellows were having a hand-to-hand conflict with their enemy.

"Send your boat!" shouted Rolin, hailing the ship again.

While Matthew was getting his boat off, Rolin attended to the directions for the crew he was to leave behind. He bade them select their own commander, which they did at once, and with only one dissenting vote, which came from the candidate himself, and which of course was not counted.

Ere long the boat came, and Rolin, with his twelve followers, jumped in. Then the ship laid her yards, square-set her studding-sails on both sides—and bore away for Plymouth, her captors feeling sure that with regard to her all was safe.

By the time the youth and his men had reached the schooner's deck, the brig was within two miles, and coming down fast; but Ransom, who was aloft with a glass, reported that he could not see any preparations on her deck for a fight.

"Never mind," said Matthew, "she'll fight fast enough when she discovers who's got the schooner, so we'll be ready before hand. Sam, set your gunners at work. Where's the cook?"

"Here, sir," answered a man whose turn it was to act as cook for the then present week.

"Are those shot in the fire?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then see that a good fire is kept up, for we want the shot red—ay, white heat if you can. By Jupiter, we mustn't run the risk of that fellow's guns if we can help it; but we'll board him if we must. I rather guess we can show 'em a pretty good game of hand-to-hand work."

"In course we can," returned Sam Doolittle.

And in his opinion all the crew were agreed.

The Englishman was now made out to be an eighteen gun brig, carrying medium eighteen pounders. Of course, it would be hardly politic for the privateer to venture in the way of a broadside from such a battery, as she could only present three guns upon a side, and twelve pounders at that. Yet she had one advantage. Her brass guns were longer than those of the brig, and would command a longer range. It was also evident that with the wind abaft the beam, the brig was the best sailer.

Ere long the brig's mainsail was clewed up, and in a few moments more Ransom called out from aloft, that the enemy was preparing for action.

"He smells the rat," said Matthew.

"Ay," returned Rolin, "and he probably thinks of catching it."

"We'll see," was the remark of Sam, as he called for some of his crew to help him run back one of the guns. Then turning to Matthew, he added:

"I ken send a shot pooty nigh on to her deck now, cap'n."

"You may try it."

Sam had his gun—he chose the after one on the starboard side—charged with powder, and having put in a solid wad of oakum saturated with salt, he next drove home a circular piece of board prepared for the purpose. Next he elevated his gun, and then put in a round shot. He took a cold one this time, for he wanted to try the force of the charge, and ascertain the elevation necessary to his purpose. When all was ready, the schooner was luffed a little, and the match applied. The range was perfect, but the shot passed over the brig and struck in the water some hundred yards beyond her.

In a moment more the brig put up her helm and fired a broadside. Her shot fell short, all of them, but it was not from lack of force, for

they plowed up the water in a manner rather too savage for spent balls.

"By the kingdom!" muttered Matthew, as he saw this "if those fellows elevate their guns a little more, and aim as well as that again, they'll run the risk of hurting something. Get your hot shot off as soon as possible, Sam."

Just as the captain spoke, Sam had rammed home the screen of wood, and in a moment more the cook came up with the hot shot. It was white with heat, and being quickly dropped in, the wad was instantly driven home upon it to hold it, and then the gun was elevated several degrees higher than before.

"Now port your helm," cried Sam; as he caught the match, and settled his eye for the sight.

All watched the gunner with anxiety, for they knew that much depended upon his skill. Something must be done to keep the brig's broadside silent if possible.

At length the moment came. Sam could see that his gun covered the brig's foremast. He applied the match and sprang back. All eyes were turned towards the brig, but the shot was not seen to fall.

"In with another," cried Matthew.

But even before this order was given, Sam had commenced to reload. He had this time prepared all three of his guns upon the starboard side, and intended to discharge them in succession. The after one was elevated first, and the hot shot put in; but just as he gave the order to port the helm, a wreath of smoke was noticed to curl up from the brig's deck.

"She's afire!" shouted Ransom from aloft.

"Let'r slide!" cried Matthew.

"Stand by with another shot," said Sam to the cook; and in a moment more he fired.

No sooner had the after gun belched forth its load of iron, than the cook dropped a shot into the next gun, and in less than half a minute that too was discharged. Sam waited not for a long gaze. He only assured himself that his elevation was right, and then he leaped to the forward gun. The shot was in, white with heat, and the match was applied.

"The two last ones bit her," shouted Ransom, "and her men are all in confusion."

Both Matthew and Rolin sprang upon the quarter rail, and they could see that the brig was on fire. Her courses and jib were off, and the men could be seen in the chains drawing

water with all their might. Matthew turned to Rolin.

"Mr. Lincoln," he said, "we must rake that fellow. Can you do it?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then do so at once. Mr. Doolittle, load all your guns with double-headed shot. We are going to rake."

"Ay, ay, sir," responded Sam, as he sprang to obey the order.

Rolin at once assumed the duties of sailing master, and he was not long in proving himself thoroughly acquainted with his profession. The schooner was very quickly brought into a position under the brig's fore-foot, and her broadside given, and as soon as this was done, Rolin immediately put his vessel about, tacking instead of wearing, and was soon ready for another broadside, without having yet exposed himself to the brig's guns.

In the meantime the fire was raging on board the enemy, but ere long 'twas evident that they were beginning to subdue it, though even yet they appeared to have no men to spare for anything else. But the fire was not now their only misfortune. At the first broadside from the schooner her forward stays had been nearly all shot away, and at the second her fore-topsail yard was carried away. This of course parted the fore-topgallant sheets, so that that sail was also rendered useless. In a few moments after this the brig lumbered around with her head to the wind, but her commander had the presence of mind to discharge a broadside as he came around, though without damage, however, for every shot passed ahead of its mark. Here was another opportunity for raking, and our heroes took advantage of it, and in less than ten minutes they had discharged two broadsides through the brig's stern—the first taking the starboard main shrouds, and the second carrying away the rudder. This last event was the most decisive, for the brig now lay perfectly helpless, and the privateer had everything her own way.

"Now, boys," said the captain, "we can do as we please. If we had found it necessary to run that brig by the board in order to prevent her from getting our prize back, of course we would have done it; but there's no need of that now. I suppose that fellow has over a hundred men, and 'twould be of no use to board her now, for she aren't hardly worth the risk we'd have to run. What say ye now?"

"I think we've shown 'em what we're made

of," added Rolin, "and that's enough. Our metal isn't quite heavy enough for a close encounter. I think we'd better follow our prize now, for the getting away from that fellow as we have is more than most people would believe us capable of."

It was soon agreed that the schooner should be at once headed for Plymouth, and it was accordingly so done. The crew of the brig had by this time succeeded in putting out the fire, and the last that our privateersmen saw of her she was laying with her head in the wind, while her men were probably engaged in repairing damages.

In due time both the privateer and her prize arrived in Plymouth harbor, and there were shouts of joy and gladness arising on all hands. Most of the arms and ammunition were put into heavy wagons, and were conveyed to Washington's camp by the way of Bridgewater, Canton, Milton, and so on to Cambridge; and at the same time a pressing request was sent to the commander-in-chief, that commission might be given to Matthew Clyne and his crew. None such had yet been issued, but the subject was already in the hands of the members of Congress. Washington's warmest thanks were returned, together with the promise that the commission should be given as soon as possible.

## CHAPTER XV.

### AN UNPLEASANT RECOGNITION.

ROLIN LINCOLN's first object, after having seen the ship and her cargo disposed of, was to make inquiries after Belinda, and to this he was not able to devote much time until some two weeks had passed away, for he had had much to attend to. The cargo of the prize much of it had been sold to merchants around Plymouth, and the ship itself was sold to a company from Salem for eight thousand pounds. The prisoners had been confined in the old jail, but on the fourth night of their confinement they broke out and made their escape. They were followed as far as Cohasset, but here they had seized upon a large boat, having first destroyed two others which were near by, and thus they made good their escape. Of course the news of the capture of the store-ship spread rapidly, and caused intense excitement in all quarters. The patriots were now more anxious than even that commissions should be at once given to all who would venture into the naval service, while the Tories

made loud wailings concerning the piratical tendency of the rebels. These latter were horrified at the atrocious crime, and promised all their aid and interest in bringing the offenders to justice.

It was some time ere Rolin could learn anything definite of Belinda, but at length, about three weeks after his arrival in port, he met the captain of a coaster, who informed him that he had seen Belinda Clyne only a week before walking in the street, in Boston, with Major Fitzgerald. Rolin made himself sure that the man was not mistaken, and then he resolved to go to Boston once more, and this time find the maiden at all hazards. He knew now that the major had lied to him before, but he meant to take some other means now besides applying to the officer.

Matthew Clyne would have dissuaded the youth from going to Boston again, for he knew there was much danger.

"Speak not of danger," said Rolin. "With such an object before me, danger is but one of the necessary obstacles. Were there no danger, why, then any child might go. I tell you, Matthew Clyne, I know she would come to us if she could, and if such is the case, shall I remain here and let her live on in suffering, just because there happens to be danger in the way? When you gave me that noble girl to love, did I not swear to love and protect her always? Ay, Matthew, I did; and now I'll do it."

"Noble boy," cried the old man, grasping the youth by the hand. "God bless you for your goodness. I did not mean that you should sacrifice much to such fear, but—but—"

"But you fancied that I was going to do this for you?" suggested Rolin, as the captain hesitated.

"Yes, Rolin, you are right. I did not at first stop to realize how much you had at stake. I rather felt as though 'twere my duty to go on this mission. But if you will go—then go—and may God protect you."

"I shall disguise myself," said Rolin. "I shall not venture myself in Boston without being pretty thoroughly covered up. I'll sail under false colors once."

"If you find her," murmured the old man, "tell her to come to me if she can. Tell her how—how sad I have been."

"I'll tell her, and I know 'twill affect her; but I know she is already anxious to come home to you."



"Ah," returned Matthew, "she has another father now, and this can no more be her home."

"Why may it not be?" quickly cried Rolin. "If she will come with me, my home will be her home, and your home shall be our home."

The old man again caught the youth by the hand, smiling gratefully through his tears as he did so.

"God grant that you may succeed!" he said.

"Of course, you will not sail until I return?"

"No. I am in hopes to have a commission before I sail again."

On the following day Rolin Lincoln was ready to set out. He was habited in a suit of plain citizen's clothes, and from an old man in Plymouth who had once been a play-actor, he had obtained a red wig, with a pair of stout whisks to match. The hair was carefully powdered and curled, and it altered his appearance so much that even Matthew Clyne hardly knew him at first sight. In this guise he set out on foot. He reached the peninsula of Hull towards the middle of the afternoon, and there he found a boatman who agreed to carry him up to Boston for a crown. He was stopped twice on his way up by the British. He gave his name as *John Thomas*, and said he was coming to Boston to get away from the rebels. He was allowed to pass on, and about four o'clock he landed at Long Wharf, paid the boatman, took his small portmanteau, and made his way up into the town. He was anxious concerning Belinda, but he dared not go at once to Major Fitzgerald's house, for he knew that he should thus run a dangerous risk of having his power to help the maiden unceremoniously taken from him. He concluded that his safest course would be, to find some trustworthy person to work for him—some one who would be willing to help him—who would go to the major's, and who would have wit enough to his work without "showing his hand."

In order to carry out this design, the youth determined to seek help from the only man in Boston with whom he was acquainted, and whom he knew he could trust. That man was the patriot agent, of whom we have before spoken, and who kept a store on Hanover Street. So thitherward Rolin bent his steps. He entered Hanover Street from Queen Street, and having proceeded down as far as Wing's Lane, he came to a shop, upon the sign of which appeared—"GEORGE SLIPTON, Groceries and other Goods." But the door was locked. The youth looked

about some moments, but he could see no signs of any one in the store. He knew not where Slipton lived, so he looked about for some place to inquire. Directly around the corner, in Wing's Lane, was a tap-room, or tippling shop, and into this Rolin took his way, assured that he should find some one there who could give him the desired information.

When our hero entered the room he was at first almost choked by tobacco smoke, but he soon managed to accommodate his lungs and his eyes to the place. He found himself in a moderate-sized apartment, one side of which was occupied by a sort of bar, behind which were arranged some dozen casks of liquor, while in front were four round pine tables, and a lot of small wooden benches. Upon each table was a box of tobacco, made stationary, and on the present occasion some fifteen or twenty men were collected around the tables smoking, drinking and discussing various topics.

Rolin looked around upon the motley crowd, and among them he noticed several British soldiers, and, he thought, two or three sailors. The rest of the company seemed to be composed of artisans and common people—all in good fellowship so far as outward appearance was concerned, though the youth thought he could detect some meaning glances given the soldiers which did not betray the best feeling.

"Can any one inform me where Mr. Slipton can be found?" he asked, not finding any one behind the bar. But just as he spoke a man entered from a back room, and assumed the publican's place. He was an elderly man, and evidently a Scotchman.

"What is it, man?" he asked, simply hearing the last part of Rolin's question.

"I asked if any one could tell me where Mr. Slipton could be found?" explained our hero.

By this time all eyes were turned upon the new-comer.

"Din' ye find 'im in his shop?"

"No, sir, his door is locked."

"Then I dinna ken at all where's he gang."

"Can you tell me where he lives?" asked Rolin.

"O," returned the host, "ye're not acquaint wi' 'um. He lives i' the rooms over his shop. He may be gang awa the while. Wait a bit, an' tak' a stoop o' sumthin' warm, an' he may coom back."

Rolin knew of no better place to go to, and as this was close by the place where he wished most to stop, he concluded to wait until Slipton made

his appearance. So he called for a cup of wine, and was just upon the point of sitting down, when one of the men who had been regarding him very closely since he came in, and who was habited in the garb of a sailor, arose and stepped towards him.

"Look'e, stranger, haven't we met somewhere before?" the man asked, coming close up and looking him sharply in the face.

"Why—really—" uttered Rolin, taken somewhat by surprise, "I know not that I ever saw you before."

The fellow exchanged significant glances with the companions whom he had left, and then turned to Rolin again.

"I'm sure we've met before," he persisted. "You'll pardon me, but I do love to overhaul old mates. Ha'n't you been to sea?"

"I used to follow the sea once," replied Rolin, at a loss to understand what the fellow was after, though he thought this might be a man who had once sailed with him.

"How long since you've sailed?" pursued he.

"May I ask what this all means?" returned our hero, showing his dislike to being thus questioned.

"Why—only. I want to know where we've met before, that's all."

"Well—I don't think we ever did meet before, so let it rest at that."

"But you'll allow one to hunt up an old friend, won't ye?"

"You may hunt up as many as you please, so you don't try your search upon me any more."

The fellow did not wince at all at this, but he looked at his companions again with a very peculiar look, as much as to say, "Now watch him," and then he turned once more to Rolin, and in a tone full of peculiar meaning, he said:

"Look'e, sir—wa'n't ye ever aboard the store-ship *Dunstable*?"

In an instant Rolin recognized the fellow as one of the prisoners who had escaped from Plymouth, and who had been taken on board the privateer's first prize. In the excitement of the moment the youth forgot everything that could favor him. He forgot his disguise, and that he might, by boldly denying all knowledge of any such ship, have escaped. But even that was too late now, for his very startled manner had betrayed him, and before he could speak the fellow made a dexterous movement, and pulled the red wig from his head. The whiskers came with it, and there were at once revealed the

brown curls, and full, noble features of the privateer!

With one blow Rolin knocked the sailor half-way across the room, and then springing towards the corner next the door he drew a pair of pistols, cocked and presented them in an instant. His noble blood was up, and he forgot not only danger, but he also forgot all fear.

"I find myself betrayed," he pronounced, in a deep, proud tone, "and concealment would be now useless. Move but a step towards me, and you are a dead man! I have set my life for the liberty of America, and I can lose it here as well as anywhere if you choose to cross me. I was on board the *Dunstable*—I was second in command of the little schooner that took her. I was next in command of the ship herself when we had given her a Yankee crew! I left the ship and went back to the schooner only when I saw a heavy English brig-of-war coming down on us. I sent the brig, a well-laden store-ship into a patriot port, with only eight men on board, and then helped cripple the brig. Ye know me now; and now tell me, if I stand here alone! Is there another man here in whose bosom beats an American heart?"

As Rolin ceased speaking the fellow whom he had knocked down got upon his feet again, and, boiling over with rage, he gasped:

"There's a thousand pounds reward for one of the leaders of them pirates. At him, soldiers, and take him at once!"

Upon this four soldiers arose to their feet, and drew their short swords. They then advanced a few steps, and Rolin was upon the point of making another threat when he detected a movement which kept him quiet. Half-a-dozen of the stout artisans had arisen, and four of them had seized the stout stools; and almost simultaneously the four stools descended upon the four heads of the four soldiers, and their four bodies were prostrate upon the floor.

But the scene ended not here. Five more Englishmen—three of them sailors, and two soldiers—sprang forward upon the artisans with drawn weapons. Rolin saw it, and he felt it to be his duty now to mix in the affray. The host shut and barred his door at this juncture, and as he did so the youth detected a stout, oaken or hickory staff which had stood behind the door. He immediately put up one of his pistols and seized it. It was a noble cudgel, and with it raised above his head he sprang forward. At its first sweep one of the soldiers fell, and on



another instant it had performed the same office for a sailor. In the meantime the others had not been idle, and now there was but one party upon their feet.

"Here—quick! my noble master," uttered a stout, bold-faced mechanic, catching Rolin by the sleeve. "You'll not be safe here at all. Follow me. There'll be more of the infernal villains poking along soon. I'll show you, the way. Come, you aren't afeared of me."

The youth had seen enough of this man to know that he might trust him without fear, and he followed him without speaking a word.

The noble fellow led the way out through the same door by which Rolin had seen the host enter, and here he found a narrow entry-way which received light only by the glass in the doors on either hand. A door beyond was opened, and this led to a sort of cook-room, from which was a passage directly to the back yard; but the guide turned not that way. He turned to the left instead, and made his way up a flight of stairs—and then up another flight—to a window which overlooked the flat roof of an adjoining building. Out through this window he clambered, bidding Rolin close it after him—then along upon this strange path until two buildings had been crossed. Upon the roof of the third was a Lutheran window through which the guide made his way, with Rolin close upon his heels. Here they descended to the basement, where they startled an old man and woman who were just eating supper.

"What? Eh? This you, Tom?" uttered the old man, his fright giving way to surprise.

"Yes," returned Tom, in a hurry. "Mind—shut your eyes now, for here comes a man you mustn't see. If you're asked if you've seen a rebel escaping, of course you'll say no. Mind ye, old Adam, I'm giving escort to one of the noble souls that took the British store-ship, and beat off the brig. But ye haint seen him."

The old man tried to shut his eyes, but he couldn't. He had to take one peep at the patriot; though, as he afterwards told his "gude wife," "'twasn't a fair sight. I didn't see 'im."

In the meantime, the stout guide had entered a narrow alley which ran back towards Brattle's Street, and having reached very near to the end he stopped at a door which was reached by ascending a short flight of steps. He opened it without ceremony, and passed in, and having gained the hall he led the way up the front stairs to a small bed room, where he stopped and faced his follower.

## CHAPTER XVI.

## THE SERPENT'S HISS.

WHEN Belinda came to herself all was dark about her. She felt a dull pain in her head, and a sensation of lameness in her limbs. She reflected upon what had occurred, and it was some time ere she could fully comprehend the events last fixed in her experience. She remembered leaving her new home with her new-found father, of walking upon the Common—of then keeping on to an out-of-the-way house, where her companion left her alone. Then she remembered of searching for some means of egress from the house—of meeting with the old hag, and of the encounter which followed. She had a faint remembrance of being hurt, but she could not tell how, though she felt sure that the woman had done it.

This train of reflection brought the poor girl's mind to a clearer state, and she began to wonder where she was. She soon discovered that she was upon a bed, but not the least ray of light came to relieve the utter darkness. At length she carefully arose from the bed and stood upon the floor. She found that her clothes had none of them been removed, not even her shoes, only her dress had been loosened about the waist, and a wet cloth laid upon her head. When she first found herself upon her feet she felt very weak and dizzy; but gradually her strength came to her, and her head grew more calm, though there was still much pain there. Awhile she groped around in the utter darkness, and by and by she found a door. She opened it, and her heart gave a quick bound as the star-beams greeted her vision. But the hope was not to become fixed, for, by the dim starlight, she soon discovered that she was in the very room in which Fitzgerald had left her, when he professed only to leave her for the purpose of finding his "old friend." She arrived at this knowledge partly by the dim outlines of things in the apartment, and partly by the things she could see without. She could see the high fence beneath the windows, and the starlit water of Charles River in the distance. She drew a long breath as she came to a full knowledge of where she was, and once more she determined to find some means of escape if possible. She could now see objects about her quite distinctly. She went to the door which she knew led to the entry, but it was fastened upon the outside. Her strength was applied, but without other effect than to

convince her that escape that way was hopeless. She then tried the windows, but they were both of them made after the same fashion as the one in the bed-room. The sashes were whole, and firmly screwed or bolted to the casement.

After this, Belinda drew a chair to the western window and sat down. The heavens were cloudless, and the myriad stars looked down upon the earth without a single veil to hide their twinkling eyes of light. As the poor girl gazed upon them her mind ran back into the past, and she tried if she could remember anything beyond the fond embrace of Matthew Clyne. There was a faint, dim thought—a sort of ideal mind-dream—of something beyond that, but 'twas all confused, and offered no picture upon which memory could find one familiar thing. She did have a dim remembrance of being carried through deep, dark woods, and of sleeping many a time on a warm bosom beneath the forest trees. And at times she felt sure that 'twas a female who thus bore her so strangely about. Yet all of life that had a single warm, generous thought, was connected with Matthew Clyne; but that good, noble man was not her father, for he had so admitted.

But was Barton Fitzgerald her father? This question came to her mind with whelming force. In outward argument he had proven his father-ship, but there was within the bosom of the doomed girl a voice that continually whispered a negative to the idea. He was not what Matthew Clyne had been. If he had even been kind, that kindness was more the outcome of fun and reckless jollity, than the deep love of a parent. Gradually her thoughts came thickly and confused. Matthew Clyne, Rolin Lincoln, Fitzgerald, Danton, Polly Poll, and the old hag whom she had last seen, all crowded to her mind in a mass, and she bowed her head in an absolute chaos of ideas.

At length one hope—and one alone—dwelt upon her mind. Perhaps the major would yet come and take her away. He had promised to come back, and the old hag had assured her of the same result. Perhaps he had been detained by some unavoidable circumstance—he might have received a peremptory order from his commander-in-chief—or he might have met with some accident; in short her hope conjured up many causes which might have led to his detention, and she tried to believe that he would soon come back. And this hope had the more hold upon her from the simple fact that she could

not possibly conceive of any cause why she should be left thus on purpose.

Belinda had been sitting by the window surely an hour, and she felt faint and weak, so she made her way back to the little bed-room, leaving the door open so that she might know if any one entered the outer apartment. She now found that the cause of the utter darkness in this bed-room was a thick curtain which was suspended over the window. This she raised, and then, without removing any of her clothing save her shoes, she lay down upon the bed, and ere long a dreamy, uneasy slumber came to her relief.

When Belinda awoke the sun was shining into her window. She leaped quickly up, and at first she seemed surprised to find that she had retired without undressing; but in a moment more she remembered the events of the night before, and with a deep groan she sank back upon the bed. She soon arose again, however, and on rising to her feet she felt better than when she was up before from the same bed. Yet she was very faint, for she had now been four-and-twenty hours without food, and even without drink. She passed out into the other room, and looked into the glass which hung over the dressing-table there. She was startled at first to see how pale and wan she looked, but she had little time to reflect upon it, for at that moment she heard footsteps approaching her door. A key was turned with a harsh, grating sound—then the door was set ajar—and in a moment more the old woman pushed it open with her foot and made her appearance with a large tray, which she brought and placed upon the table.

"Now, miss," she said, "I guess you'll want summat to eat, wont ye? Here's stuff 'at's good, an' I reckon ye'll prove it. How d'ye find yerself this mornin'?"

Belinda gazed into the woman's face some moments without answering. She was sure she had never seen so ugly and repulsive a face, for in the whole countenance she could not find one single line, or mark, or shade, that revealed the presence of a soul. There seemed to be animal life, and human speech, and that was all.

"D'ye feel sore?" the woman resumed, finding that Belinda did not answer.

"I am weak and faint," returned the maiden.

"I'd think that widoot yer tellin' it, for folks doant grow strong on air. But are ye sore any?"

"Not much," said Belinda, looking into the woman's wire-like, bony face with a shudder.

"I'm glad o' that. But now coom an' eat. Here's summat good, an' some coffee to drink. It'll make ye a nice breakfast."

"Has my father come yet?" the girl asked, tremblingly.

"Not yet."

"O, where is he?" Why don't he come?" poor Belinda uttered in agony.

"Mayhap he'll be here afore long, so ye'll be wise not to trouble yerself about it. Coom, eat now, for I want to get yer dishes oot o' the way."

The woman turned towards the door as she spoke.

"Do you think he'll come soon?" Belinda faintly asked.

"I can't bring him, so yer asking questions of me wout do ye any good. Eat yer breakfast."

The poor girl burst into tears as the door closed upon the retiring form of the hag, but the paroxysm soon passed, and then she turned to the victuals which had been brought. They certainly looked neat and clean. There were some warm muffins, and Belinda was somewhat surprised to observe that they were not only of the same shape and size, but that they also bore the same peculiar impress from the ornamented dish in which they were baked, as had marked those she had eaten at the major's. And the coffee, too, tasted just the same, while the tarts were of the same make exactly. Little did Belinda then think that all these things had come direct from Fitzgerald's table—she knew not but that all the muffin griddles in Boston were alike, and that all cooks followed the same culinary rules.

She ate heartily, and when she had finished she felt much refreshed. Ere long afterwards the woman returned and took away the things. Belinda did not speak to her, nor did she hardly dare to look upon her, for her very appearance was chilling. After the hag had gone and locked the door behind her, the maiden sat down by the window again, and there she remained for nearly an hour. At the end of that time she again heard footsteps upon the stairs. It was a slow, cautious tread, and so careful in its fall that the girl could not determine whether it was a male or female step. But soon the key was turned in the lock, the door was opened, and—Abner Danton entered the room!

Belinda's first movement was to start to her feet; but then, as she saw the new comer turn and lock the door behind him, she sank down

again. No sound had yet escaped her lips, for she was utterly astounded. After the door had been relocked, Danton advanced towards the spot where Belinda sat.

"Lady," he said, "we meet once more, it seems?"

The poor girl looked up, and her dark eye flashed, but she did not speak.

"I trust," continued Danton, "that you will receive me more becomingly than you did the last time."

"That depends, sir, upon what your business may be," said Belinda, bracing every nerve.

"My business? Ah, what business but one can I have? If the stray lamb could speak, would he ask the anxious, searching shepherd why he had come?"

"Sir?"

"Do you not understand me?"

"I hope I may not be deceived. If your simile touches my case, then you have come to take me back to my home."

"Ay, I have, lady."

"To take me back to my—to Major Fitzgerald?" uttered Belinda, with sudden hope.

"I will take you there if you wish, for of course I would as lief take you there as anywhere."

"Then we may go at once. I am ready, even now."

"But I am not yet ready, lady," returned Danton, while a strange look dwelt upon his face. "Ere you leave this place you will become my wife."

"You are jesting, sir," spoke the maiden, faintly, seeming to speak without thought.

"Not at all, Miss Fitzgerald, I assure you. I am not only in earnest, but all the powers of earth and heaven combined cannot take you from me now, nor take me from you."

"You do not mean it!" Belinda gasped, clasping her hands, and bending eagerly towards her visitor.

"I do most assuredly mean it, my dear girl. Ere you can go from this place, you must be my wife."

"But—but—my father—"

"Fear not for him. He has sent me, and he says you must be mine. He gave me his plight-ed word that you should be my wife, and to that end did he bring you here."

"How, sir?" cried Belinda, in quick surprise.

"Left me here on purpose, do you mean?"

"I do."

"I'll not believe it!"

"You can do as you please about that; but 'tis true."

"He could have had no reason for such a thing."

"He had the best of reasons."

"Ha, sir—how?"

"Why, lady—simply this: He had determined that you should be my wife, but he knew you would oppose him to the last, and for this he was not prepared. He was determined that his child should obey him, and yet he could not bear the thought of having to absolutely contest the point against your will and stubbornness. He wants peace, and he told me that rather than sit for ten minutes in your presence again when your passions were up as they were on the last day you spent in his house, he would see you shut up in a prison, and himself banished. So he brought you here, and bade me come and make known to you his purpose. Now you know it."

The maiden listened to this without once breathing, for every word bore conviction to her soul. She felt sure that Danton now spoke the truth, for every movement and look of Fitzgerald, when he had brought her hither, and which she had then thought so strange, was now explained.

"O, I did not think he had such a heart!" groaned the poor girl, after she had reflected awhile upon what she had heard.

"Why, this surely proves him to have a tender heart," quickly returned Danton, "else he might have coolly withstood your tears and stubborn prayers."

"O, if he had had a noble heart he would not have wished to withstand them. He would not have wished to make me miserable."

"Now you are talking nonsense. Would you have a parent be governed by such things when he sees and knows his duty?"

"Duty, sir! O, how hollow—how basely false, is the heart that can prompt such thoughts! You know there is no duty lies that way. Only the lowest passions of sense and will!"

"Softly, softly, miss. You are going beyond your province. You now know your father's purpose, and upon that there needs no argument. Be my wife you must. Now when will you assume that relation?"

"Never! Never!"

"Remember, lady. You leave not this place until you are my wife."

"Then here let me die!"

"Is this your decision?"

"Ay, it is. Rather let me die here than make for myself a living hell on earth! Your wife I will never be."

"Oho! now I see your drift. You are stubborn yet—your will needs bending. And—mark me—we can do it! Do not think that you are to have just the way you choose. No! for by the great heavens and all that in them dwell, I'll have ye for my wife, or— But I wout threaten. Yet let me say this: Mine you shall be, just as sure as there is a God in heaven. You may be my wife, or not, as best suits you!"

"I will die here—"

"What—with your father's curses on your head?"

"He will not curse me."

"But he will, though. He'll curse you if you refuse to obey him."

"Then let his curses come. 'Twere better to die with the curse of such a parent, than bear the living curse of such a husband!"

As these words, spoken with powerful distinctness, fell upon the ear of Abner Danton, he started to his feet. His face was livid with rage, and his arms were folded. A moment he stood thus, as though he would put his hands upon the girl before him, but he did not move towards her. He only gazed into her eye, and when he spoke his voice was low and hissing, like the bubbling of a boiling cauldron.

"Now, girl," he said, "you shall know to whom you speak! When I see you again, tell me if your will is not bent! By the powers of heaven, you've got to yield, and the longer you remain stubborn the longer shall you suffer. Mark me—you leave this place when you are my wife, and not before."

"Hold, sir!" cried Belinda, as the man was about to turn away. "O, what can you want of an unwilling wife? I am not responsible for my feelings, nor can I hide them. What—O, tell me what—can you want of a wife who can only loathe you?"

"I'll tell you, lady. 'Tis because you loathe me. There are two springs of passion in the human bosom; and no man has yet learned which, the world over, is the most powerful. They are, love and hate; and the strongest love that ever yet grew upon the tree of the soul, can be changed to the bitterest hatred."

"No, no, sir—you speak falsely now. True love can never be turned to hatred—never. It may be scorned and trampled under foot, but it

can never be changed to its opposite. Sorrow may surround it, and grief shut it up within the dark cell of despair, but if it be true love the spark is of heaven, and must live until earth with all its hatred shall have passed away. No, no, 'tis only the hot passion of the senses which you call love, and not the creation of a noble soul. True love may weep itself into a whelming sea of bitter tears, but its life even then is not quenched. Such love you never felt!"

For a full minute Abner Danton stood and gazed into the glowing face of the noble girl before him. But he felt not the influence of her pure soul—he only wondered at her eloquence, and, anon, gloated over the marvellous beauty which at that moment sat upon her face.

"You are a philosopher," he said, with a bitter curl of the lip, as he turned half away. "But I don't believe in it. I can love you if you will let me, and then marry you for love. So I can hate you if you remain as you are now, and then ten thousand times more will I marry you that my hate may have its full revenge! You understand my philosophy now. And now, let me tell you all: I alone have power over you here, for your father has placed you so. He has given me charge over you, and will have no more to do or say with you, until you have obeyed him by becoming my wife."

"Hold once more, sir," uttered Belinda, while a look of bitter contempt rested upon her face. "Will he not even give his child the order he would have her obey? Never yet has he spoken one word to me of marrying with you, save to assure me that such should not be the case if I did not wish it. Now how can I know that 'tis his order?"

"You have my word, and such should surely be enough. In all the seeming concessions he has made to your whims he has only been governed by the wish not to be led to witness one of those scenes such as he witnessed the last time we three were together. He could not bear it, and to avoid it he chose to deceive you. But this very fact—this guardianship which I at present hold—should be enough. Yet you may have a clearer proof if you persist. And now mark me! When you wish to leave this place, you will send for me—and I am the only one who can come at your bidding. Send for me, and I'll come."

"I'll send when I do wish to see you, sir."

"Ay—and you may send much sooner than

you dream of. But just tell old Jiley when you wish me to come, and I shall be with you."

With these words Abner Danton turned away, and Belinda was once more alone. She bowed her head and deeply pondered upon what she had heard. Surely she could not doubt that she had heard the truth with regard to her father, for it seemed the only reasonable deduction she could make from all the circumstances. The thought, fully developed, was almost overpowering, and had it not been for the stout resolution she had called up, she would have sunk under it.

Alas! she little dreamed how that resolution was to be tried.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### A METAMORPHOSIS.

"UPON my soul, sir, you've had a narrow squeak," uttered the stout artizan, as he turned towards Rolin.

"I have, in truth," returned our hero, "and I may bless you for my escape."

"Well, I sha'n't refuse your thanks, as some would, for I rather like to have an honest man thank me. I tell ye, I don't believe in this refusing to accept thanks when ye know ye've done all ye could to help a fellow-creature out of trouble. But I tell ye truly—I'd 'ave died afore I'd 'a' seen ye lugged off by them 'cussed sojers—blow me if I wouldn't."

"I believe you, my noble friend," quickly replied Rolin, seizing the man by the hand. "Surely I may know your name?"

"Sartin. My name's Tom Wilson, an' if ever ye go down to the ferryway ye'll see my shop towards Hudson P'int, close by the shipyard. I'm a blacksmith."

"My name is Rolin Lincoln, and I am first mate of the only Yankee privateer that floats yet, I think."

"Rolin Lincoln? Ye aren't the son of old Walter Lincoln?"

"My father's name was Walter," answered Rolin, eagerly.

"He wa'n't capt'n of the old ship *Cancer*?"

"He was; and on board that ship he died. I was but a child then."

"Ay," said Wilson, in a softer, lower tone; "that was just fifteen years ago last November. I was a youth of five-an'-twenty then."

"And I a boy of ten," added Rolin. "But did you know my father?"

"Did I know him? Ay, that I did. Tom Wilson was his second mate that voyage—an' Tom Wilson brought his ship home."

Rolin started, and the rich blood mounted to his face.

"I remember now," he said. "And you are the man who came with the box which contained my father's body?"

"Yes, Rolin—I am."

"Then isn't this a work of Providence that has brought us together now?"

"P'raps 'tis. At any rate, it's a stroke of good fortune for us both."

"I don't know about that," said Rolin, rather dubiously. "Seems to me the good fortune is all on my side, while nothing but danger is left for—"

"Stop, stop. None o' that. By the ghost of Neptune, that's all the good of the thing. Where's the goodness of helpin' a fellow when it don't cost nothin', and there aren't no danger? Anybody'll do that. But never you fear for me. You'll find the British'll stand more'n this from me, afore they'll dare to drop a flipper on me. But now tell me all about your takin' that schooner—an' then about the ship—an' then about the brig. An' then if ye want help, we'll attend to that."

The two sat down, and however anxious Rolin may have been to inquire about other matters, he could not refuse this request, so he commenced with the first onset upon the schooner, at Marshfield, and went through to the safe arrival of the store-ship at Plymouth; and the intense interest which Wilson manifested, both in looks, and in sundry emphatic ejaculations of delight and approval, more than paid him for all his trouble.

"By the immortal Peter!" cried Tom, jumping to his feet and slapping his hat on the floor, "I'd 'ave given all I'm worth—every farthin'—to have been with ye. But wasn't ye rather resky in comin' here, especially when ye knew them 'cussed runaway prisoners were here?"

"Ah, that brings me to my business here, and in which I want help."

"Help? Just name it. Your father, boy, was the next best friend to my mother I ever had. Now go ahead, and if Tom Wilson can help ye, ye shan't want."

Rolin pondered for a few moments, and he concluded to tell his companion his whole story; and he commenced. He told his love for Belinda—told of his plighted vows, and then of all

that had subsequently happened, in which Jonas and Abner Danton, and Major Fitzgerald had figured. He told of Belinda's being brought to Boston, and of the lie the major had told him concerning her being in Virginia.

"And now," he added, "I know she is in this town. But I dare not go to the major's, for he knows of my hand in the matter of the schooner, and of course he will arrest me, if he sees me to know me. And yet I must see Belinda. I must speak with her—and if she would return with me she shall if I can get her away. I know that Abner Danton is also in town, and you can judge how anxious I must feel."

"By the immortal Moses, in course I can judge—an' you shall see the gal, too. I can fix it somehow. In the first place I will go to the major's myself, and in the meantime you can stay here. This is my house, and you shall see my wife just as soon as I go down and find out who's in the house. I can find plenty of friends for ye, for let me tell ye, Boston's full of true souls."

Rolin did not try to express his thanks in words, but extending his hand, he said, while a warm glow suffused his face:

"You will not refuse thanks which you deserve, nor will I refuse that assistance which I need. Nor shall I attempt to thank you now. You can well imagine how your own heart would beat beneath the load of such a generous friendship."

"I understand—I understand. If I can help ye, that's all the thanks I want. But hold on a spell while I run down, for I want supper off, an' then I take a cruise of observation around the major's premises this evening."

With this Tom Wilson went out, and when Rolin was left alone, he began to reflect upon the strange circumstances that will turn up in the path of human life. The unfortunate affair of being detected by the British sailor had turned out most fortunate, and his hopes were high. He now remembered Wilson well, though he would of course never have recognized him but for some such accident.

In a few moments Tom returned.

"The coast is clear," he uttered, as he came in; "so follow me at once."

Rolin followed his guide down to the kitchen, and there was introduced to Mrs. Wilson. She was a good-looking woman, short and round, and full of good nature and kindness, which seemed continually trying to escape through her eyes.

and lips. She received our hero kindly and generously, and seemed anxious to make him comfortable, and at home. Supper was soon ready, and then two curly-headed boys came bounding in, one about twelve years old, and the other younger.

"Them's my boys," said Tom. "Thirteen years ago this very month, I cast anchor in Boston, an' took this galliot in tow— You needn't shake yer head so, Molly, for ye know ye're built more like one of them Dutchmen than anything else. An' mind ye, too, ye never saw better sea-boats nor them fellers are, eh? But, as I was sayin', Molly and I spliced cables, and here we are both moored at our anchor. I tell ye, Rolin, there's comfort in doors for them as has good wives an' little ones, even though it storms without. I often tell my Molly here, 'at I should be a poor stick if I couldn't find smiles and love at home, for I don't find 'em much of anywhere's else. And yet there's many a poor fellow as has the worst time 'neath his own roof."

Tom might have said much more in this strain if his wife had not stopped him; but yet Rolin was not long in making himself sure that his friend told the truth in every word of praise he bestowed upon his wife. However, the meal was finished, and then Tom prepared to leave.

"You'd better go back up stairs again," he said, turning to our hero, "for there's no knowing who may happen in here. Molly 'll bring ye a book, an' see to your comfort while I'm gone; and I'm in hopes, when I come back, to bring ye some word of Belinda."

Rolin grasped the noble fellow's hand, and then turned his steps once more up stairs, while Tom went out by a back way. Ere long Mrs. Wilson brought up half-a-dozen books, one of which was a volume of Ben Jonson's plays. This Rolin selected, and was soon deeply interested in it. When it grew dark the lady brought up a lamp, and as she seemed to hesitate, as though she wished to say something, Rolin spoke to her. She stopped and sat down.

"You've found a true friend in Tom, sir," she said.

"I know it, madam," returned the youth, warmly.

"I've often heard him speak of your father, sir. He loved Capt'n Lincoln."

A tear stole to Rolin's eye, partly in memory of his father, and partly called forth by the kindness he now experienced.

Gradually Mrs. Wilson approached the sub-

ject upon which her thoughts dwelt with the most desire, and that was to hear from Rolin's own lips an account of his adventures with the British. The youth at once laid aside his book, and entered into the recital with much spirit, and in this way the time passed until Tom returned, which was shortly after nine o'clock.

Rolin watched the countenance of his friend with the utmost anxiety, but he could not tell much by the countenance of what the feelings might be within. Yet the noble fellow wore not a sad countenance by any means; though there was not quite so much of joy there as he could wish to have seen.

"Well," said Tom, after his wife had left the room, "I've been to the major's."

"And—and—saw Belinda?" uttered the youth, eagerly, yet hesitatingly.

"Not exactly; but I saw those who knew her."

"And can you see her?"

"Well, I don't know about that. The fact is, she aren't with the major now; but she's in the town somewhere."

"Not with Major Fitzgerald?" cried Rolin, in alarm.

"Don't be afear'd yet. We'll hunt her up, Rolin; for I've done something else besides seein' the major's folks. I've got another friend for ye, and he'll be here to-morrow mornin'. It's Dick Bolton. Didn't ye ever hear of him?"

"Not that I know of," replied our hero, thoughtfully.

"Well, he's a noble fellow—a comic actor—a play-actor. O, 'twould split yer sides to see Dick play old Jack Falstaff. Ha, ha, ha,—O, but he's a noble fellow. He's coming with a dress for ye, an' when ye have it on as he'll fix it, yer own mother wouldn't dream 'at she ever saw ye afore. And ye see, when ye have this on, an' yer face fixed up to match, we'll go into a regular hunt for the gal. We'll find her somewhere, so don't fear."

"But why has she left there? Did she leave of her own accord?"

"I don't know. All I could learn was, that about a week ago she walked out with her father, and didn't come back again; and that the next day an old woman came after some vittles, which they found was for Belinda. So she is very likely in Boston, and p'rhaps shut up somewhere. But we'll find her some way."

Rolin asked numerous questions, but he elicited no other information, and after a while the two descended to the kitchen, where over a bottle

of wine, they sat and chatted in the presence of Molly.

On the following morning, very soon after breakfast had been eaten, Dick Bolton arrived. He was a man about forty years of age, short and corpulent, and wearing a face of the most palpable fun and good humor. His conversation was half-made up of snatches from old plays, until he came directly to the 'business' in hand, and then he took a more practical turn. He brought quite a bundle with him, and having untied it he displayed a suit of clothes, such as were then worn by men who had passed the ordinary bounds of life.

"Now," said Dick, at the end of half an hour spent in a rattling conversation, "we'll fix ye so that your own kinsmen would bend the knee in reverence to your green old age. I' faith, sir, I'll a tale unfold from the back of your head that'll instantaneously add threescore years to your life. Eh? how that?"

As he spoke, he held up a wig from which depended a queue of magnificent length. The hair was white, and the crown was of a very adroitly contrived oiled silk, and so arranged that it required a very close inspection, when once adjusted in its place, to tell that it was not really the skin of a bald pate.

"Now these togs'll fit ye, I'm sure," resumed Dick, as he shook out the breeches and long stockings. "Let's have 'em on as quick as we can."

So Rolin prepared for the metamorphosis at once. The black silk stockings were drawn on and they fitted to a hair. Then the breeches followed, and when they were buckled and buttoned about the knees, they proved that Dick's eye was good for measuring. The long, flapped waistcoat was just the thing, and the broad-cuffed, deeply trimmed coat seemed to have been made for its present wearer. The coat was then removed, and the shoes were adjusted, with their huge buckles glittering like mirrors. The wig was then adjusted carefully, all the original hair having been securely drawn up out of sight and bound, and then Dick proceeded to arrange some colors which he had brought with him.

"Now we'll fix your face to match the dress and wig," said Dick, "and then ye'll be done for. By the piper's cow, ye won't know yer-self."

Dick mixed his paint thoroughly, and having drawn such lines as his long experience in the

business taught him just how and where to lay on, he said:

"There, water won't wash them off, I can assure ye. When ye want to remove 'em just take a little pure spirit, and that'll eat 'em off in a hurry. Now, Tom, what d'ye think?"

"Think?" uttered Tom, in a transport of wonder and delight; "why, his own mother would swear 'twas her grandfather—blow me if she wouldn't. But let's just call up Molly, and see if she'll know him."

Molly was called up, and when she entered the room Rolin stood leaning upon a stout, hickory staff, and trembling with apparent age and infirmity. The good woman gazed at him with astonishment.

"Don't ye remember old father Williams, Molly?" said Tom, soberly and honestly.

"Surely I remember him," returned Mrs. Wilson, regarding Rolin, earnestly; "but I never thought he had grown so old. And yet time passes swiftly away. Thirteen years ago seems but yesterday. You remember your little Molly, don't ye, father?"

Rolin was spared the necessity of a reply by an uproarious burst of laughter from Dick Bolton.

"Don't strike me, Molly, for my impudence to old age," the actor cried, "but I have a right, sin' I made him auld meel."

By this time both Tom and Rolin joined in the laugh, and Mrs. Wilson began to see into the mystery. After this Rolin was permitted to go to the looking-glass, and at first he absolutely seemed to doubt the evidence of his own senses. But he soon came to realize the fact of his metamorphosis, and turning to his companions, he said:

"I'm sure I shouldn't know myself."

"That's a fact," returned Tom.

"And now let me tell ye a bit of secret," added Dick. "You must forget entirely that you are Rolin Lincoln. Don't you even once think that such a man ever lived. Your name is Adam Williams, you are fourscore and eight last Christmas. You can't walk fast, nor stand straight, if ye do 'twill break yer back. Ye can't help trembling—and ye can't stand without leaning both hands on your staff. Ye haven't got a loud voice, and ye can't under any circumstances, speak only after this fashion." And here he gave a perfect imitation of an old, decrepit man.

Rolin copied after his tutor, and succeeded admirably.



"There, sir," cried Dick, with a flourish, "you'll do. Stick to that, and mind your role, and you'll pass muster anywhere, and before anybody."

Ere long afterwards, Rolin Lincoln was in the open air. He tottered along tremulously, and the people in the streets bowed reverently to him as he passed. Surely he had nothing to fear now.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### THE TRIED SOUL FAINTS.

ALL that day, after Abner Danton had gone, Belinda saw no living person, nor did she receive any more food, and late at night, weary and hungry, she threw herself upon her bed. She slept some, but horrible dreams disturbed her, and twice she had to arise to dispel the fearful phantoms that haunted her. On the following morning she was aroused quite early by hearing some one enter the outer room, and she arose and went out, but not until the intruder had gone. She saw something upon the table, and going up to it she found a small loaf of black corn bread, and an earthen mug of water. She started back at beholding this, but in a moment more she remembered the threat of Danton, and a look of triumph rested upon her face.

"Ah," she uttered, "and this is the means he would adopt to curb my will! O, such food is ambrosia, and such drink is nectar, so that the partaking of it keeps him at bay."

And thus speaking she sat down to the coarse repast. Her appetite was keen, and she did ample justice to the loaf. But in half an hour afterwards, came a darker cloud. She was sitting by the window, when she heard some one ascending the stairs, and when the door opened her new father entered. His face was flushed, and his step was unsteady. Belinda started up, but she did not speak, for she saw by the dull, heavy tone of the major's eyes, that he was drunk.

"Belinda," he said, in a thick, hurried tone, "I have come to tell you that you must be the wife of Abner Danton! Now, don't ye contradict me, nor disobey me, because if ye do, I'll—I'll call down dire vengeance on yer head. Ye shall marry him!"

"But, my father—"

"Stop! I won't have a word! I've said all. You shall marry him."

"O, father, if you were yourself now, you would not speak thus. If you love me—"

"Away! avaunt! out! I'll no more of it! By the—the—But you know what I mean. I mean that Danton shall be your husband. Marry him, and be happy; or refuse him, and be accursed of God for disobeying your own lawfully wedded father! Now mind yer eye. Forward! Don't ye dare to disobey me! Mind, I aren't a fooling now."

As these words left his lips, he made a dive for the door. But he need not have hurried, for Belinda wished not to detain him. She saw that he was not himself, and she wished not for his presence. After he was gone she sat down again, and she was not long in coming to the conclusion that he had made himself drunk on purpose to brace himself up to the task of coming to her with that order. And this led her to another reflection. She asked herself if such a man could feel one spark of a father's love—and if he could not, was he her father?

O, how that question thrilled to her soul. Could that man be her father? She could not dwell upon the thought without agony. Proof said he was. Instinct said no. She could reason upon it no more, for her fear, her worst fear now—chained her belief. She feared that Barton Fitzgerald was truly her parent; that he had promised her hand to Danton, and that he would not now break that promise. Also, that her refusal had made him angry, even to ugliness, but that his father's heart was softened in her presence. Yet, holding his pledged word above all else, he did not hesitate to sacrifice to it all parental love. Let her mind wander with hope as it would, she came back to this hypothesis at last.

The day passed away without a visit from any one else, and just as the sun sank behind the western highlands she ate up the last of her loaf. She passed another night of wakeful, dreaming slumber, and on the following morning she found another loaf and mug of water.

Thus she passed three more days, and on the morning of the fourth she encountered Jiley, for such she had learned was the hag's name, just as she was coming in with the bread and water.

"Well, miss," said the woman, dryly, "how much longer d'ye 'spect to live in this way?"

"As long as they choose, I suppose."

"But ye can be clear, can't ye?"

"I know not how."

"Why, the gen'l'm'n told me as you would be clear when ye became his wife."

"Then I shall live here until I die," calmly responded Belinda. She had no more thoughts of trying to move the hag's heart to compassion, so she only answered her questions.

"But ye don't want to live on bread and water?"

"Yes, I like it."

"Umph!" And with this Jiley set down her things and left.

On the next morning from this, Belinda found that Jiley had been there before her in the outer room, but the aspect of her food had become changed. The bread was not only reduced one-half, but it was dry and mouldy. She ate a piece of it, but it was ungrateful. She next raised the mug to her lips, she took one swallow, and the vessel dropped from her hands. The water was brackish, warm and nasty, utterly nauseating! A fearful shudder passed over her frame, and with a deep groan she sank back.

"God of mercy!" she uttered, "and will they do this? Will they starve me, inch by inch, to death?"

"Yes!" uttered a voice at the door.

The poor girl looked quickly up, and saw her father. She sprang towards him and sank down upon her knees.

"Mercy! mercy!" she prayed.

"Not a bit of it," replied Fitzgerald. "Ye'll have no mercy on me. Once I gave my solemn word to Abner Danton that you should be his wife, and I can't perjure myself. Whatever befalls you here is of your own make, and you must abide it. When you are willing to obey me, you can send for either me or Abner—we shall both come together. Remember—I only ask you to obey me."

"O, and in that obedience be ever miserable!"

"Nonsense! Stuff! I know better. Danton's rich and good-looking, and if ye treat him with even a decent share of respect, he'll make a loving and kind husband. I thought I'd come this morning and see how you stuck it out. You understand me now."

"Water! water!" gasped the poor girl, as her father turned away.

"You'll need a husband first!" was the cool response.

"One drop!"

"You shall swim in it if you choose, when you send for your husband."

"But—"

"I'll hear no more!"

The major quickly started through the doorway as he spoke, and shut and locked the door after him. Belinda heard his retreating footsteps, and when she could hear him no more, she sank down upon the floor, with her face buried in her hands, and groaned in the deep agony of her soul. She was weak now, and gradually a sense of faintness overcame her, and she was soon lost to all the horrors of her situation in a fit of utter unconsciousness.

It was near noon when Belinda became fully conscious of things about her, and the first movement she made was towards the water-trug. She raised it to her lips, but she could not drink the disgusting contents. Her lips were dry and cracked, her tongue parched and furled, and her head hot and aching. She thought not of food—she thought not of friends—she only thought of water—water—water! She remembered a little brooklet in the woods, where a silvery spring bubbled up from beneath a huge rock, and then ran off through many a story by winding fantastic ways, now dwelling for a while in a sandy basin, as if to repose, and then leaping away over a pile of rocks, and then rushing on with merry voices and song.

Many a time had the fair girl knelt beside this brooklet with her birchen dipper, and scooped up the icy, sparkling water, to quench her thirst. And now that brooklet came back to her mind. She could think of nothing else, and with her sires were turned upon that well remembered song of the gushing waters! It now seemed to her that for one sweet, enrapturing draught from that cool spring she would give years of servitude and suffering. She went to her bed and threw herself upon it. Her tongue grew more hot and parched, and her lips were dry like ripened husks.

"O, God!" she cried, "how long must this be!" And there came up an answer—low and fearful—"Thou shalt marry him!"

"Water! water!" groaned the afflicted one, as the fever burned in her blood. And the same low, searching voice answered, "You shall have it when you send for your husband!"

The sun looked red and gloomy as it seemed to rest upon the tops of the western hills, for a dense vapor had gathered upon the water, and the blinding rays of the day king were all drunk up. The doomed girl looked out upon the mist, conquered, and all her hopes and joys of life seemed centered in it. Earth was fading.



fast, and the spirit yearned for the rest which was refused her here. The thirst had now become intense. Since the noon of the day before she had tasted no drink, and the fever had now reached to every part of her system. In the agony of a bursting soul she bowed her head to ponder upon the grim fate that was before her.

Had there been but the two considerations—of death, or marriage with Abner Danton, she would have suffered on, at least while her soul held its power. But the voice of her father—his command and his malediction—were thrown into the scale, and the beam turned!

She looked out once more, and the sun's upper disk was just visible. She watched it until it had disappeared, and then she started to her feet. She rushed to the door, and kicked upon it with her feet, and with all the strength she could command she called for Jiley. Ere long the steps of the ogress sounded upon the stairs, and in a few moments more she entered the room.

"Water! Water!" gasped Belinda, with her hands clasped, and her body bent forward.

"Shall I call Mr. Danton?" asked the hag.

"O, mercy!"

"Then ye don't want it?"

"Yes! yes! Call him! But give me water first!"

"Ye shall have it right away!"

"The water first! The water first! O, water! water!"

## CHAPTER XIX.

THE CLOUDS IN ONE QUARTER BEGIN TO ROLL AWAY.

WITH slow, feeble steps, old Adam Williams, for so we will know him now, took his way towards the dwelling of Major Fitzgerald. He reached the house, and just as he was upon the point of plying the knocker, the major himself ascended the steps from the street. The first searching glance of the officer's eyes made the old man wince perceptibly, but a firm assurance of the impenetrableness of his disguise quickly restored his composure, and he greeted the major freely.

"This is Major Fitzgerald's house, is it not?"

Adam asked:

"Yes, sir; and I am that man."

"Ah, I am happy to see you. My name is Adam Williams. Perhaps you may have heard of me?"

"Can't say that I ever did. But come, walk in; and we'll talk of that when we are seated."

So Fitzgerald led the way, and the old man followed.

"You may think it strange that I should call upon you thus," said Adam, after they had become seated; "but I could not resist the temptation to come once more and see my old home. For many years I have lived in the country, but the rebels are increasing there, and I wished to escape from them. Ah, sir, I cannot forget all my king has done for me."

"Right, old father—right," uttered the major, enthusiastically. "If all the colonists would feel so they might have peace and plenty. But they are fools! Fools, sir, I say. Then Boston was originally your home?"

"Boston, sir? Ay, not only Boston, but this very house."

Our old man had made himself sufficiently sure that his host knew nothing about the former inhabitants of the house, and as he knew the building was a very old one, he ventured upon this excuse for his visit. He handled his voice to perfection in its tremulous accents, and in all other respects he maintained the peculiarities of decrepid old age.

"Ah," returned the major, "did you live in this house?"

"For many years," said Adam, "feeling that circumstances fully justified the equivocal course he was pursuing. And you will not wonder, sir, that I should feel a longing desire to see the old homestead once more. But do not fear, I mean not to afflict you with my presence, long."

"Tut, tut, man; it's you who mustn't fear. By my soul, you are welcome. But let's talk with something to oil our tongues, for, to tell you the truth, mine is kind o' dry. What say you to a bottle of old Madeira?"

"If it would not be taxing your generosity too far—"

"Pooh, not at all." And as the major thus spoke, he reached up to the mantel and rang a small bell which stood there.

This was just what the visitor could most have desired. He saw at a glance that Fitzgerald had already been drinking, and that he showed its effects plainly. Another bottle might loosen his tongue so that even important secrets might be got from him, for the visitor's purpose was to obtain from him a most important information.

A servant quickly presented himself at the ringing of the bell.

"A couple of bottles of that old Madeira," or-

dered the major. "Aha," he uttered, with a peculiar smack of his lips, turning to his guest, "good wine is good. I could live on it. It not only gives growth to the soul, but it expands the heart, and warms the system. What, what should we do without it?"

"It is truly a blessing," returned the old man, "a blessing which, when wisely used, can hardly be excelled."

The major had his mouth made up for a reply, but the appearance of the wine at that moment prevented the speech. The glasses were set, the corks drawn, and the wine poured out, and for nearly half an hour the conversation turned upon the relations between England and the colonies. But at the end of that time the wine had mounted into the major's head in such quantities that his tongue began to swing very loosely. His visitor thought that he might venture now upon the subject that lay so near his heart.

"By the way, major," he said, in a jolly, off-hand tone, at the same time pouring out more wine for his host and a little for himself, "how happens it that I don't see your daughter here?"

"Eh? My—daughter? Ha, ha, ha. Why what d'ye (hic) mean?"

"I was told you had one of the handsomest daughters in town."

"Oho-o-o—yes, yes. But she aren't here now."

"Ah, gone away on a visit, I suppose?"

"Ha, ha, ha—yes. She *lets* gone on a visit."

The visitor felt a sudden fear that he might yet miss his object. But he resolved to push on.

"Well, here's to her health," uttered the old man, "and may she never give you any trouble in selecting a husband."

"By Jupiter, I'll go that," cried the major, tossing off his glass. "The vixen! aren't she already given me trouble enough?"

"Ah, has she?"

"Ay, she has; and enough of it, to."

"Then I know how to pity you, for I once had a case of the same kind. I once wished a child to marry."

"And was (hic) she stubborn?"

"Yes, very."

"Then what d'ye do?"

"I shut her up."

"And did that bring her to?"

"Yes, perfectly."

"Then she wasn't so stubborn as mine is. Jehosaphat! she sticks it out like a martyr."

"But what are the circumstances?"

"Why, I want her to (hic) marry with just the finest fellow you ever saw—and—and—(hic) she won't! Now aren't that a go?"

"I should think it was. But perhaps you haven't shut her up tight enough. Ye don't make her feel your wishes. You ought to take her away from home, and put her somewhere where she can't see her friends."

"By the powers, haven't I done just (hic) that thing. I've done it, sir, and yet (hic) she sticks it out."

"I think I could bring her to," said the old man, after a few moments of thought.

"Eh? Do ye, though?"

"I'm sure I could. Why, you may think I exaggerate the matter, but I speak from experience when I assure you that I would willingly wager my head that I could make her marry whom I wished."

"You don't (hic) mean it," uttered the major, with expressive eagerness.

"I know it. Could I have her under my entire control for one week, I would give my head away if she did not within that time marry as I bade her."

"But could ye (hic), could ye make her marry the man she now (hic) refuses?"

"I should have but to speak the word. Let me command it, and within the week she should obey."

"And will ye do it?"

"With pleasure, if 'twould please you."

"By Jehosaphat, 'twould (hic) make me blessed. You shall do it. You shall make me blessed—I'm blessed if you sha'n't. We'll go an' see her now."

"No, no, not now, major, for I have other business on my hands for to-day and to-morrow."

"But ye'll do it?"

"I should like to."

"Then ye shall. Ye'll do it next day after to-morrow?"

"Yes. But how far is she from here?"

"O, not a great ways."

For a moment old Adam was at a loss how to proceed, for he did not like to ask a direct question. But his wife favored him.

"I did not know," he said, "but that we might make a call to-morrow, if she were anywhere in the direction of my business."

"Have you any business near Miller's Lane?" the major quickly asked.

"Not to-morrow. Then she's in that neighborhood, I suppose?"

"Yes. I found good, safe quarters for her there—up a little ways from (hic) the street. Glorious old place, with a saug wo—a—eh, (hic) a' old woman to look out for her. Only the old hag in the house."

"Is it at old Molly's house?"

"No, taint no Molly. It's Jiley, this woman (hic) is—old Jiley."

The old man sought to know no more. He had gained enough for his purpose—all he had even hoped to gain, and now he was ready to leave. He excused himself on the ground of business, and though urged to stop and "crack one more bottle," he tore himself away.

"Remember," said the major, as they started towards the door; "you'll be here day after (hic) to-morrow, and make the girl marry him."

"I won't forget."

"But ye'll do as ye said?"

"She shall marry if she lives."

"Good! I'll trust ye. Come early, so 't we can crack a bottle, ye know."

The visitor promised, and then turned away. Several times on his way towards Tom Wilson's house he found himself walking rather faster than his appearance would seem to warrant, and with considerable exercise of self-control, he kept his moderation from running away from him. It was just dinner-time when he reached Tom's dwelling, and he was not a little surprised on entering to find Mrs. Wilson in tears; and with considerable fear he asked what had happened.

"It's them ugly soldiers, Mr. Lincoln, that have come and carried poor Tom off. O, if they should shoot him!"

"And this is all on my account," cried Rolin, throwing off his three-cornered hat and sinking into a chair.

"No, no—no it aint. Tom bid me say to you not to worry a bit. But O, if they should shoot him!"

"Of course they will not dare to shoot him, Mary."

"O, you don't know what the villains dare to do."

And poor Molly was just going into another paroxysm when Rolin placed his hand upon her arm, and said:

"Fear not. I will save him. Only tell me what they said when they took him."

"Why, sir, you see there was a sargent and six soldiers come and asked for Thomas Wilson,

and when poor Tom asked what they wanted of him, they told him he was arrested for rescuing a pirate from the hands of the king's troops. Wont they shoot him?"

"No, Mary, they will not," replied our hero, starting to his feet, "for I shall at once go and deliver myself up. They will very quickly give him in exchange for me."

"No, no," vehemently exclaimed Mrs. Wilson, "you must not do that."

"But I shall do it, for your husband shall not lie in prison on my account, I can assure you. O, what a payment 'twould be for all his kindness to me to now let him suffer in my place. No, Mary, get your dinner, and believe me I'll send him home to eat it. If I never make my escape from their power, you will at least remember me as one who had too much honor and gratitude to allow my friend to—"

Rolin was interrupted by the loud stamping of feet in the hall, and while the good woman started with fresh alarm, the door was thrown open, and Tom Wilson himself rushed into the room.

"Clear! Clear!" he cried. "All safe, Molly!"

He spread out his great stout arms as he spoke, and his wife uttered one low cry of joy, and rushed to their embrace.

"They couldn't harm me, dear Molly, for they dare not."

As soon as the passage of joy was over, Tom gave an account of what had happened.

"Ye see the sojers carried me right up to the Province House, an' I was taken before General Gage almost as soon as we got there. He told me I had been accused of aiding and abetting, he called it, the escape of a pirate. In course I was astonished, an' he saw it. I told him I was in the tap-room, an' 'at a man came in and set down. The next thing I knew there was a row, an' I saw one of my cronies knocked down, so I pitched in. I didn't know no pirate, nor didn't know what all the row was about. But I come pooty near gettin' floored when them three sojers come in an' swore 'at I knocked down two of em', an' then lugged you off through a back way. But I hooked to 'em. I swore 'twas the feller that got knocked down 'at I lugged off, an' 'at I saw you run out at the door. I stuck to this like a leech, an' by-and-by, the old general whispered with somebody 'at stood side of him, an' I heard him say—this other chap, just as plain as could be, these words: said he, 'Guess

I wouldn't. He's one of the most popular men in that part of the city, and if ye harm him for helpin' a friend off you'll make more fast than ye can take care of.' That's just what the feller said, an' then they let me off, only the general preached a sermon to me first."

"It's lucky you come as you did, Tom, or Mr. Lincoln, here, would have been lost, sure."

"Eh? How's that?" asked Tom, in wonder.

"Why, he was going to give himself up."

"Give yourself up?" uttered Wilson, turning to Rolin. "Ye wasn't goin' to do such a foolish thing?"

"I should have done it in fifteen minutes more, Tom, if you hadn't come."

"But they'd 'a' hung ye."

"Very well—I should have died with the consciousness that an honest heart wasn't breaking on my account. Of course they'd have set you free for me."

"Would ye have done that, Rolin Lincoln?"

"How could I have helped it? Why, had I known that you were suffering for me, you, and your wife and children, I should never have held up my head again."

"God bless ye for a noble fellow, then," Tom uttered, while the tears started to his eyes, at the same time grasping his guest by the hand, "I don't blame ye, for I should, sartainly, 'a' done the same myself. But I'm yours now. I'll stick to ye till ye get clear of Boston. An' now, have ye found out anything about Belinda Clyne?"

"Yes, Tom. I know pretty near where she is." And thereupon our hero related the incidents of his interview with Major Fitzgerald.

"Jiley? Jiley?" muttered Tom to himself. "Why, I know where she lives. Up Hillier's Lane, in a narrow alley—furthest house up. I made a set of hinges for her money-cheat, and went up to put 'em on."

"Then we can save her?"

"In course we can."

## CHAPTER XX.

### AN UNWELCOME INTERUSION.

OLD JILEY soon returned, and in her hand she bore an earthen pitcher, which she sat down upon the table, and then quickly left the room. Belinda noticed her not—she only saw the pitcher, and with one low sob of gratitude she grasped it in her hands. To her lips she pressed it, and one long, sweet draught sent the cooling, grateful sensation over her whole system. It

was with absolute difficulty that she removed the vessel from her lips, for she had reason enough left to tell her that much danger stood in the way of too much of the beverage at first. She waited a while, and then she drank more—nor did she stop until the pitcher was empty.

A little while, and the fair girl's senses were calm, and then came the thought of the price she had paid for the draught. She now wished that she had not called for it. Now that the extreme agony was gone, she wondered that she could have suffered enough to move her thus. But the word had passed her lips! The deed was done! She looked upon the empty pitcher, and she knew that for a drop of water she had bartered away her all of life. No, not for that alone. That one dread command of her father had turned the scale.

Gradually the shades of night settled down over the town, and when it was fairly dark, old Jiley came in with a pair of silver lamps.

"Have you sent for them?" Belinda whispered, fearfully.

"Ye'll see anon," was Jiley's reply.

She could ask no more.

When the woman had gone the poor girl crossed her hands upon her bosom and turned her eyes towards heaven. She sat thus, perhaps, a full minute, and then her lips moved, and she uttered only a simple sentence; but, short as it was, it spoke all she could have told of her soul-story.

"God of my spirit's life, forsake not thy suffering child. Open thine arms, for henceforth thy bosom alone offers rest to my weary soul. Smile upon me, for no more on earth are smiles for me. Bless me with thyself in hope, for no more forever shall my hopes turn from thee. O, lift me up in this dark hour of trial, and when this heart of earth shall burst with its grief, gather me to thyself, that I may find rest at last. If I have a nigher there, send her to me that she may bring my weary spirit away from its sorrows, and my soul from its bondage!"

Having thus spoken she dropped her eyes, and a few tears started forth. Suddenly a strange light passed over her face, and while a tremulousness was perceptible in her whole frame she murmured to herself:

"Mother! O, what a holy word! Yet I know it not. Surely, once a mother smiled upon me, but the smiles I remember not. And yet sometimes—mayhap only in my dreams, I see a sweet, mild face looking down upon me with

smiles. 'Tis not all a dream, for always that face seems the same. *Mother! mother!*"

Her tears stopped, and while her hand was pressed hard upon her brow, as though she would recall that face once more, there came the sound of feet below. Soon they were upon the stairs, and ere long her door was opened. Fitzgerald entered first; then followed Abner Danton; then a black-robed man, who wore the surplice of the church, while Jiley brought up the rear.

Belinda arose to her feet, but she could not stand. She sank back, and her head drooped, as might have done the poor condemned upon seeing the executioner.

"Belinda, my daughter," spoke the major, "you have sent for us, and I trust you will remember the absolute duty you now owe." He drew nearer, and when he had gained her side he continued, in a tone which she alone could hear:

"Now, for mercy's sake, let us have no scenes. You have sent for us, and of course you knew with what expectations we should come. Therefore—"

"You need speak no more," she said, in a low, firm tone. "But I would speak one word with Mr. Danton."

The young tory came forward, and after a moment spent in composing herself, the maiden said, in a tone of voice so low that none else could distinctly hear:

"Mr. Danton, I love you not, nor can I ever love you. From the moment that sees me your wife, to the end of life, misery, and misery alone, can be my portion. This I speak to you from the solemn knowledge of my judgment, and the most faithful impulses of my soul. Can you, then, wish me for a wife?"

"Yes, fair one, though you hated me with a hatred such as Satan has for holiness, or a seraph for sin, I'd make you mine. But mind you," and his voice sank to a grinding whisper—"I shall either teach you to love me, or, I'll teach you to dread me!"

"How now?" spoke the major, as Danton stepped back. "Is all ready?"

"We are ready," answered Abner, and then turning to Belinda, he added: "Come, you shall not remain here much longer. I have a noble home prepared for you."

Belinda arose to her feet, and with one mighty effort she was calm. Her heart sank to its lowest deep, and her blood all seemed to fall back

upon it, for her face, her neck, her arms, and her hands, were pale and bloodless.

"Well, major," said the clergyman, in a tone and manner which at once showed him to be a particular friend of those whom he was serving; "as you are to give the bride away, I wait your motions."

"Ho-o—mustn't wait for me. Zounds, I aint much used to such things, though I guess I can manage it. Here, Abner, you stand here. You've got the ring, haist you?"

"Yes, sir," returned the young man, taking a small morocco case from his pocket. "Here 'tis."

"Ah, that's all right. Stop. Ye don't put it on yet. Now you stand this way, Belinda. There, now we're ready, yer reverence."

The clergyman stepped forward and commenced the ceremony. As he proceeded, Abner felt the small hand that rested within his own growing heavy and cold. He was startled, and in his tremulous emotion he dropped the ring which he held in his hand, and almost at the same moment Belinda sank down upon the floor ere any one could come to her assistance.

"Hark!" at this moment uttered old Jiley.

"There's somebody at the door. Hear 'em knock."

Both the major and Danton were startled, and even the clergyman seemed to wish himself out of the scrape, for ere this he had come to an understanding of the affair.

"Run down and see what that all means," said Fitzgerald.

So old Jiley went out, and while the major hurried to the assistance of Belinda, Abner commenced to search for the lost ring.

"Zounds!" uttered the major, as he supported the girl in his arms, "have we an army upon us? Hear the tramp; hear 'em, Abner! What is it?"

The young man got up without having found his ring, and at that moment Jiley burst into the apartment.

"Lo'd 'a' massy!" she gasped, in accents of terror, "I oopened 'e door an' 'ey bust rite in!"

"Who burst in?"

But there needed no verbal answer to this question, for hardly had the words escaped ere the door was again pushed open, and our metamorphosed hero entered. He had not paid the least attention to his seeming age in ascending those stairs, for he even kept ahead of Tom Wilson. Old Adam entered first, and Tom followed; and behind them came four more

stout fellows who might have been known for artizans of the North End, had they not been now disguised—all of them wearing masks upon their faces.

"Who—what! Egad, men, who are ye?" uttered the major, in alarm.

"We have come for a young lady called Belinda Clyne," returned old Adam.

Belinda heard those words, and they revived her on the instant. She started up and gazed into that old face, and as the bright rays of the great lamps shone upon it, she saw gentleness and goodness in every feature.

"Lady," the disguised man said, "do you wish to go with me?"

"Wherefore?" the maiden whispered.

"To be saved."

"Yes! yes!"

"Gad, zounds!" the major cried, turning pale with fear, "do ye know I'm a major in the royal army?"

"We don't know anything about ye," returned Tom. "We only know about this gal."

Then turning to his companions he added: "Come, boys—let's make quick work of it."

In an instant the major and Abner were seized and bound, hand and foot. They struggled some, but they found men to deal with whom they could not overcome, and their term of opposition was short.

"You'll excuse us, sir," Tom said, as he approached the clergyman, "but we must secure ye."

"What, me? a servant of the Lord?" uttered the astounded man, clasping his hands in horror.

"Yes. We can't help it. We wont hurt ye."

The minister was bound; and at the same time old Jiley met the same fate; and she was the most difficult one to conquer, for all her tiger-like propensities were aroused, and she fought hard. But she was at length secured, hand and foot, and then our hero took Belinda by the hand. He looked searchingly into her face, but she did not recognize him.

"Now, my child," he said, "you shall be safe. Fear no more. Come with me, and I will lead you to those who love you too well to make you miserable. Come, for you surely have nothing to keep you here."

The fair girl made no reply, for she was too much affected to speak; but with a wild, fluttering movement she gave her hand to the old man and hastened towards the door.

"Now, gentlemen," said Tom Wilson, turning to the bound ones, "you'll probably find help afore mornin', an' if ye make noise enough, ye'll be sure to start somebody out. So good-by, now, an' we hope ye'll feel thankful that we've taken this disagreeable job off 'n yer hands."

With this the party left the room. As they descended the stairs they heard the prayers of the clergyman, and the curses of the major and old Jiley mingled in strange confusion. But they stopped not to listen. Down stairs they hurried, into the narrow alley, and then 't' the street, and even here they could hear the cries of those they had left behind, though very faintly.

"They'll start up somebody to help 'em, if they keep on at that rate," said Tom.

The party now separated, some hurrying on ahead, while the rest fell back, Tom Wilson and Rolin remaining with Belinda. Their course was down Hanover to Cross Street, and so on to Lee's ship-yard, where they found a boat in waiting. Thus far they had only been stopped once, and that was by an officer of the guard, to whom the old man told a plausible story which gained them safe passage.

There were two men in the boat, and Tom and his four companions joined them. Then Belinda was assisted in, and as soon as she and the old man had taken their seats, the bows were pushed off, and the oars dropped. The night was dark, and the adventurers got half-way down the harbor before they were hailed. Tom answered the call—he knew there were three boats up from vessels which lay down among the islands, and he claimed that this was one of them.

"Where am I going?" the maiden at length asked, looking up into the age-marked face by her side.

"Can you not guess?" returned her companion.

"O, I can hope, sir."

"Then I think your hopes are to the point. At any rate you are going to those who love you—and—and—" his voice fell to its natural key as he continued—"to those who have the right to love you."

Belinda started and gazed more fixedly into that strange face, and equally as earnestly was her gaze returned.

"Who are you, sir?" she whispered.

"Your friend, Belinda—your dearest, truest friend!"

"O, why that voice with that face! You are—"

"Rolin!" the youth whispered, as the maiden's head sank upon his bosom.

\* \* \*

It was near midnight when the boat pulled into the shore at the northern boundary of Scituate.

"We must hasten back," said Tom Wilson as he brushed his sleeve across his eye, "but we shall meet again if we live. Now don't stop for thanks, nor load me with gratitude. Wait for all this till we have time. You'll get home in safety now; and God bless and keep ye."

There was a straining of heart to heart by those two noble men, and in a few moments more the boat had put off into the waves again. Rolin and his companion stood there upon the beach and watched the noble crew until they were lost in the gloom, and then they turned away into the path which pointed towards their home.

Belinda clung closely to the arm of the noble man she loved, and her every thought was a prayer of joy and thanksgiving.

Two hours later, and Matthew Clyne heard a rap at his door. His lamp was still burning, for he had an invalid in his house, and having cleared the wick, he went to answer the summons. He saw a well remembered face—he heard a well known voice, and it said—"my father!"

\* \* \*

"—sh!" whispered Matthew, as soon as he could command his senses, "speak not too loud, for I have a sick woman in the next room."

Both Rolin and Belinda looked inquiringly at him.

"'Tis poor old Polly," the old man resumed. "She came to me a week ago from Boston, and she was sick and faint. She is easy since dark, but she has raved fearfully."

## CHAPTER XXI.

### CONCLUSION.

A WEEK passed away, and during that time Rolin and Belinda were constant companions. And only one cloud hung over the poor girl's way; but even this was sufficient to give her much pain and disquiet. She could not drive from her mind the still fearful fact of that father whom she had left in Boston. At times, when she would turn to Matthew Clyne with her heart

yearning and beating with its load of love, the dark form of Fitzgerald would arise to her mind, and throw an icy chill upon her soul. To Rolin she whispered her feelings, and he smoothed them with his love and tenderness.

"O," she murmured, "would that I had never seen him, for he will haunt me always!"

"Nay, nay, dearest," whispered Rolin. "He cannot take you from your husband. And if we would be perfectly safe let us unite our destinies at once."

"As you will, Rolin. I am yours, and I will not refuse you."

"Then the ceremony shall take place at once, for when you are my wife no power of earth can take you from me."

Belinda made no objection, and from that moment the two lovers commenced their arrangements for their nuptials.

In the meantime, old Polly Poll had ceased her ravings, and now lay in a feeble, dying state. She had sought Matthew's door while the fever was on her, and when he had taken her in he found her powerless and faint, and shortly afterwards she became raving mad, and thus she continued for nearly two weeks, with only short intervals of rest. But now she had ceased her raving, and death seemed close upon her. She seemed very strange still, but she spoke not save when she had occasion to call for drink, and then she spoke clearly and calmly. That wild look of the eye was gone, and in its place had come an expression of deep, earnest thought.

"Rolin," said old Matthew, as he came out where the youth and maiden were sitting, "old Polly has got a funny whim into her head. She wants to see you and Belinda married."

"She shall certainly be blessed with the privilege if she lives a few days longer," returned Rolin. "But does not this seem to indicate the return of reason?"

"Yes, my son, I think—in fact, I know, it does. Since she has left off her raving she had a spell of the sulks, like. I couldn't get nothing out of her, nor could I get her to say if she knew me. But now she calls me Captain Clyne, and speaks of Belinda and Rolin. She cannot live long, why not have the clergyman come to-morrow?"

Rolin looked into Belinda's face and she smiled.

"We will do so," he said, turning to the old man. "I will go and see the clergyman at once."

It was near ten o'clock on the following day when the minister came. He was an old man, grown white with honored years, and his greeting bore that childlike simplicity which marked the noble men of that period. The holy man had just taken a seat, when a quick, low cry from Belinda started them. She sat by the window, and had seen a party of men who were chair, and upon looking out, he saw Major Fitzgerald, Jonas Danton and his son, and two others, one of whom Rolin recognized as an officer of the king's. Just as this party entered the house Belinda fell fainting into her lover's arms.

"Save me! Save me!" she groaned.

"I'll die ere they harm thee," was all the reply Rolin could make before the intruders were upon them.

"Ha! Here's the runaway!" cried the major, who showed plainly in his looks that he had been fortified by brandy. "Belinda, what possessed you to run away from your father?"

"Spare me now," the poor girl gasped, clinging more closely to her lover.

"Look ye, sir," uttered Abner Danton, turning a furious gaze upon our hero, "do you profess to be this lady's protector?"

"You shall learn to your cost, if you dare to place a hand upon her!" Rolin replied, in a tone and with a look, that made Danton quail.

"Ha! So you put on airs, eh?" cried the elder Danton. "But we have a power here that takes precedence of force. I, as a justice, have issued a writ of *habeas corpus*, and here we have the officers to serve it, and remove the body of this old officer's child. You will resist at your peril!"

"That's my child," spoke the major, turning to the two officers, and pointing at the same time towards Belinda. "Take her and bring her with you."

Matthew Clyne had started to his feet, and Belinda rushed forward and clung to him.

"Father! father!" she cried, "O, do not let them take me away!"

"What?" uttered Fitzgerald. "Is it possible that you would leave your own father thus, and cling to another? But you must think better of this when you are once more in your own home."

"This is my home! This is my home! O, I want no other!"

"But we will find another home for you, pretty one," hissed young Danton.

"Come," spoke his father, "we have no time to waste. Officers, you know your duty. This man has claimed his child who has been stolen away from him, and you see her here. You have your instructions to take her body. Do so at once. I will be at my office in season."

"By the hosts of heaven!" cried Rolin, seizing the heavy door-bar that stood near him, and raising it above his head, "the first man among ye who dares to lay a hand upon that girl falls upon the spot!"

The major drew his sword, and in another moment would have rushed upon the youth had not Belinda rushed in between them and sank upon her knees.

"Rolin," she murmured, clasping her hands, "bring not destruction upon your own head in useless effort for me. My fate is sealed, and I cannot escape it!"

"Now you speak sensibly," said the major. "Be generous, sir—"

"Come, come," cried Abner, impatiently. "Ay," added his father. "Let us be off at once."

"By heavens—no!" shouted out hero. "There's no—"

He stopped speaking, for at this moment a seeming spectre glided into the room. It was none other than old Polly. For long years she had been haggard to look upon, but now she seemed the very impersonation of death. Her skin was all shrivelled and dry—her flesh all wasted away, and her eyes, which retained yet a strange spark, were deep sunken in their dark sockets. She tottered to a seat, and the newcomers started back aghast.

"What have we here?" the woman asked, in dry, crackled tones.

It was some time before any one answered, for the sight of the death-stricken had seemed to render them speechless. But Matthew Clyne at length spoke:

"Alas!" he said, "they have come for Belinda again, and now they will take her away!"

"Come for her? Who has come for her?"

"Her—father."

"And who is her father?" the woman cried, with sudden energy, as though the tide of life had taken a new flow.

"I am her father," answered the major. "Come—come," cried Abner, "let this thing pass. We have no time to waste over the squeaking of this hag."



"Officers, do your duty," ordered the elder Danton.

"Hold, sirs!" cried the woman, in a voice that made all present start. And then turning to the major she fixed her deep-set eyes upon him, and gradually lifted her long, bony fingers to his face. He quailed before her glance, and a perceptible tremor shook his frame.

"Barton Fitzgerald," she said, "ere you go further in this, listen to me. I have dragged myself out here to die, and you shall know a thing now which I had meant never to breathe forth to mortal ear. I heard your voice here, and I knew you at once; and from the lips of Matthew Clyne I have heard the story of your present claim. Do you not know me?"

"Know you? No," tremblingly uttered the officer.

"Did you ever hear the name of Marsella Paul?"

"Marsella Paul!" gasped the major, turning pale.

"Marsella Paul!" cried Matthew, wildly. "O, I knew you were Marsella! I knew it! Tell me what become of her who was with you in that mad sea. O, tell me?"

"Stop a moment, Matthew. Let me speak with Barton Fitzgerald first." Then turning to the officer, she resumed—"You know me now, sir. You see before you the woman, who, but for your father, might have been honored in the land of her birth. Do you remember that bitter day when poor Marsella Paul went forth from your father's house a ruined woman? Speak, sir! Do you not remember it?"

"Yes! yes!" gasped the major. "But I am not to blame. I did it not."

"I know it, but beware, Barton, for I know your whole life up to the time when this fair girl whom you now claim as child, was a woman grown, almost. Mark me, sir! Do you understand?"

"Yes—yes—"

"Then listen."

"Out upon this!" shouted Abner Danton. "What have we to do with this stuff? If you would hear her story, major, come here again, for we have no time now."

"No, no," gasped Fitzgerald. "Wait a few moments."

"But wherefore?" asked the elder Danton.

"Because—be—be—"

"Because I wish it," said the old woman.

"And now listen, all of you, for my story is short,

and need not detain you long. Captain Clyne," she continued, turning to Matthew, "you and I both remember that fearful night at the entrance of the Bristol Channel?"

"Ay—ay—O, tell me!" cried Matthew.

"I will. On that dreadful night your wife feared that the ship was every moment sinking. For a long time she tried to rush on deck, but I prevented her. I told her there would be no danger if she remained below. Barton Fitzgerald, I was a nurse then. When I was turned from your father's house a ruined thing, I sought the shores of America, and ere long afterwards engaged myself as nurse to this man's wife, and with her I went on a voyage with her husband to England. Marsella Paul had become a common servant! But, Matthew Clyne, you were good to me—you and your angel wife both. You remember how far I had gone in my story—"

"Yes, you tried to keep my wife below."

"Ay, I know, yes, yes. I told her she'd be safe if she'd only stay. But at last she broke from me, and, with her child in her arms, rushed upon deck. I followed her. I reached the deck, I saw the great sea coming as I came up, but I noticed it not. I sprang for my loved mistress, and I remember of seeing you near at hand. Next came the sea—I felt a rushing, sweeping sensation—and I knew I was in the sea. It was dark—all, all dark—but I could soon see a glimmer from the top of the great wave that took me up, and when I came down I heard a cry in my ear. I looked about, and your wife was close to me. She knew me, for she asked me to take her child. I took the infant—we struggled together for a while, and then a huge sea separated us. But I clung to the child. On, on I went, and my thick clothes held me up. But my memory soon failed me, and soon my eyes and soul were shut. When I came to myself, I was upon a warm bed, in a poor fisherman's cot. I was told that I had been found upon a huge mass of sea-weed with the child in my arms. We both lived—the child and I; but my mistress died. She was found not far from where I was, among the rocks."

"But where? where?" asked Matthew. "I hunted everywhere, and could gain no tidings."

"It was in a little cove called the Piper's Bowl. I lay there upon that bed long weeks, but I know not how many—but when my strength came back my reason failed me. I went forth a poor crazy thing with the child in my arms. I remember how they tried to take the little one

from me, and I would not give it up. Where I had been nursed they named the child Belinda, and I remember that I called it afterwards by that name.

"And now the long years that have passed since that time seem like a dream, but yet I remember the chief incidents, even to my own ravings. It seems as though I have awakened from a sleep of ages, in which these strange fancies have been upon me. From the moment when I awoke out of that deep sleep a week ago my mind has been new to me, and gradually the dreary, misty past has been unfolding itself. It took a long while for me to realize it all, and hence I have not spoken before, for I had not wholly grasped all that dwelt so confusedly in my mind.

"I remember of wandering to Bristol, and of there getting a passage to America. I can remember of landing in Boston, and of wandering about the country with the child in my arms. A strange fancy possessed me, for I remember it plainly. I was searching for the child's mother. I fancied I should find that mother somewhere about her old haunts. I searched and searched, but all in vain. I made the woods my home, for I thought the mother might be hunting there for her lost darling. At length one cold day in autumn, I came to this cot. I saw you, and I knew you were Matthew Clyne. I thought you would kill me if you could, for I fancied I had stolen your child. So my wild fancies ran. I remember of placing the darling on your doorstep, and then hiding myself near to watch. I saw you when you came and picked up the bundle; I saw you take it into your house, and then I ran away as fast as possible.

"After that I went to England, and for nine long years I wandered up and down my native land. I saw you often, Barton Fitzgerald, and I know when you first were married. Ah, you cannot deny it. I saw you often, Barton, and I only wished that your father could have lived to see the wreck he had made. But enough of this. I returned to this country, and here I wandered on. I came to this house, and I knew this sweet child the moment I saw her; but stranger fancies still had worked upon my brain. I thought we were both of us children of that woman who had died, and that we were born in heaven. But you know the rest. I remember well of following Belinda to Boston a short time since—and of the sickness that came upon me. I have a faint recollection of feeling

that this place was my home, and of seeking it. Little else do I know until the lamp of my soul flamed up again, and I found myself in light and recollection. Now you know all. Barton Fitzgerald, can you go farther in this wicked plot now?"

But before the conscience-stricken man could reply, Belinda had thrown her arms about old Matthew's neck, and the tears of joy were rolling down her cheeks.

"Father! father!" she murmured, wildly and frantically—"O, my father, they cannot take me from you now!"

"Major," uttered Jonas Danton, in a stern, threatening tone, "will you allow this crazy woman's lies to influence you? Remember your oath! This is your child, and we can prove it!"

The poor major was sober now, and he hesitated. He looked first upon Danton, then upon Marsella Paul, and then upon the fair girl whom he had so wronged. She met his hesitating gaze, and she read there the same natural softness of feeling which she had seen before when he had been himself. On the instant she broke from her father's embrace and threw herself at his feet.

"O, sir!" she cried, "be noble now, and speak truly. Should this be our last meeting on earth let me not suffer more from you. Speak truly—O, I pray you, and say you are not my father!"

"Gad, zounds, girl, I can't stick this out any longer. I've got a wife in Old England, I expect, but I never had a child—never! There, that's the truth!"

"How—villain! Would ye betray your honor now?" gasped Jonas Danton, while his son started back aghast.

"No, I'll get back my honor if I can," returned Fitzgerald, starting to his feet, and speaking in tones which showed that Danton's words had angered him. "When Captain Balfour came to me to help you in this, he told me there was a poor girl whom you wanted to rescue from poverty, but that to get her away from her present guardian, he must use some deception."

"Liar!" hissed Danton.

"O, wait till I finish, for be sure I'll make a clean breast of it now. I don't claim much virtue, but I can tell the truth when I'm myself. I came to you, sir. You knew how prone I was to drink, and how much I wanted money, and you plied me with both. Then you told me this



girl's story, and hired me to play the part of her father; and I have done it. By the holy piper, I've done enough, I've had to drink more brandy to keep my heart shut down to this work than you and all your hopes are worth."

"Liar!"

"Oho—call me liar as much as you please, only I think you won't want to make much noise about it."

"While both father and son stood utterly confounded, the major extended his hand to Belinda. She caught it with a grateful emotion."

"Now, lady," he said, with more emotion than she had ever before seen him exhibit in his sober moments, "you and I may never meet again; but, whatever may be the impression I may leave upon your mind, I hope you will remember this one act. If this poor old woman had not exposed the whole affair I might have stuck it out; but give me one kind thought, nevertheless, for I leave you happy, and I found you miserable. There, that's all. Good-by. I'm off."

Belinda kissed the hard hand she held, and in a moment more, Barton Fitzgerald had left the house. The maiden never saw him again.

As soon as the major had gone, Jonas Danton seemed to start up from his chagrin, and turning to his officers, he said:

"You have your orders, and you have due authority for executing them. Let your duty be done at once!"

"Mr. Danton," answered the foremost of the officials, in a stern, rebuking tone, "we have orders to take the body of *Belinda Fitzgerald*, at the will of her father. We have yet found no such person; and, according to Fitzgerald's own account, he has no daughter. Therefore we have nothing to do here."

"Hold, sirs!" cried the enraged justice. "Be-ware how you trifle. You hold your offices at my will."

"Not exactly, sir. I know we received them at your intercession, but it takes the governor to remove us. You can rake open this affair as soon as you please. At least, if you make a noise about this, the whole thing shall be known. Good day," he added, turning to Matthew. "If we have caused you a few moments' uneasiness, you will see that we did it innocently." And with this the two officers left the house.

"Now, sirs!" cried Matthew Clyne, starting to his feet, and turning his flashing eyes upon Jonas Danton and his son, "your presence is no

longer needed here. Your villany is all exposed and you stand now, where you ought to stand. Leave us alone now."

It was some moments ere the intruder could speak. We can imagine how the proud man felt to be thus humbled before those honest people. He could only call upon his anger for support, and in savage tones he uttered:

"You shall suffer for this! By the host you shall! I've not done with you yet!"

"Nor I," cried Abner, turning a fierce gaze upon Rolin.

"Ha!" uttered our hero, no longer able to contain his bursting indignation. "Say ye so?"

And as he spoke, he darted upon the young tory and seized him by the throat and hip, and bore him aloft as though he had been a man of straw. With one bound he reached the door-step, and then he hurled the viper upon the ground. In an instant he returned to the house and seized the elder villain by the collar. His blood was hot and revengeful now, and he stopped not to reflect upon consequences.

"Out! you double-dyed villain!" he gasped, as he hurled the serpent towards the door.

"Out, I say! and if ye show your faces here again, either of you, you die on the instant!"

As soon as Jonas Danton had been hurled out, Rolin stood upon the door-stone until they had both—the father and son, arisen to their feet.

"O-h-h!" hissed the elder, hardly able to articulate, "you shall hang for this! You shall, as true as death!"

Rolin made no reply, and in a few moments more, the villains moved off. The young man then returned to the house, and was just in time to see Belinda again in her father's arms.

"Come," whispered Marsella Paul, "let me be not disappointed. My life is going."

Rolin extended his hand to Belinda, and together they stood up. The white-haired old clergyman advanced, and with grateful, thankful emotions he said the magic words which made those two loving, faithful souls one forever—one in life, and one in all the cares and loves, and trials and misfortunes of mother earth.

But the white-haired old man went not away then, for he saw that a soul was passing away, and he staid to smooth its dark passage. Marsella Paul saw the last golden ray of the setting sun, as it gilded the wall by her side, and when that sun-smile faded away the soul of the wanderer went quietly forth from the dark prison

house that had held it so long, and but a cold clod of earth was left to bear the semblance of the unfortunate one.

\* \* \* \*

Matthew Clyne felt not wholly safe in his old home, and as soon as the last honors had been paid to the memory of Marsella Paul, he and Rolin and Belinda moved to Plymouth, and here the happy, young wife, found a safe retreat among kind and noble friends, while her husband and her father went once more out to do battle for the liberty they sought.

One day, while the privateer lay in Plymouth harbor ready to sail, Tom Wilson and his family, with ten stout men, came to find a home for their wives and little ones in the patriot town, and to join the Yankee crew. They were received with open arms, and they proved themselves valuable champions in the cause they had espoused.

As for Jonas Danton and his son, they had made themselves so obnoxious to the people of Marshfield, that they fled to Boston, and when the British evacuated that town the villains went with them, and from that time nothing more was known of them by the patriots of the old colony.

And time passed on, and when that delightful morn broke upon America that saw the nation free and independent, old Matthew Clyne sat down in his chair, and smoked his pipe in joy and peace. And close by him sat Rolin and Belinda playing with a bright-haired little boy, whom they called Matthew Paul Lincoln, thereby showing that they still held in honored remembrance the name of her who had passed away, and but for whom the now happy wife and mother would have slept long years ago in a cold, and sea-washed grave.

THE END.

## THE TWO ACRE LOT.

BY HORATIO ALGER, JR.

WHEN Andrew Merriam died, it was found that besides the little cottage in which he lived, and its simple furniture, he left absolutely nothing. His widow and only child Frank had but little time to indulge in grief. They were compelled to devise some plan by which they might be enabled to support themselves, without, if possible, being compelled to move from the cottage which, though far enough from being a sumptuous home, was endeared to them by many associations.

Frank was a fine, manly boy of twelve, with strong and generous impulses, and an affectionate disposition, which made him a universal favorite. He had been kept at school from an early age, and was more than usually advanced for his years.

The mother and son sat in the little sitting-room, a few days after Mr. Merriam died, discussing their prospects.

"Mother," said Frank, earnestly, "I don't want you to feel troubled. You have labored so long for me that it is now my turn. I only want something to do."

"My dear child," said the mother, "I do not need to be assured of your willingness. But I am sorry you should be compelled to give up your studies on my account."

"That will not be necessary. I can study in the evening. But what do you think I can find to do?"

"I know so little about such things, Frank, that we must consult some one who is better qualified to advise—your Uncle Moses, for instance."

"What sort of a man is Uncle Moses, mother?" asked Frank. "He never comes to see us."

"No," said his mother, with some hesitation; "but you know he is a business man, and has a great deal to attend to. Besides, he has married a lady who is fashionable, and I suppose he does not care to bring her to visit such unfashionable people as we are."

"Then," said Frank, indignantly, "I don't want to trouble him with any applications. If he doesn't think us good enough to visit, we won't force ourselves upon him."

"My dear child, you are too excitable. It may be that it is only his business engagements that have kept him away from us. Besides, you are only asking advice; it is quite different from asking assistance."

Finally, in the absence of other plans, it was thought best that Frank should go to his uncle's house the next day, and make known his wants.

Moses Merriam was an older brother of Frank's father. Early in life he had entered a counting-room, and had ever since been engaged in mercantile pursuits. At the age of twenty-eight he had married a dashing lady, who was more noted for her fashionable pretensions than for any attractive qualities of the heart. She was now at the head of a showy establishment, and did not fail to bring up her children in the same worldly manner in which she had herself been bred. She knew little and cared less about Mr. Merriam's relations. It was enough that they were not in a position to reflect credit upon the family. When Mr. Merriam had communicated to her at the dinner-table a week previous, that his brother Andrew was dead, she said, "Ah, indeed!" in the most indifferent manner, and that was all.

She had one son, Edgar, of the same age with Frank, but he was far from having the good qualities of the latter. His mother's indulgence and example made him selfish and arrogant, and in particular filled him with an unbounded contempt for the poor.

The town of Clifton, where Frank and his mother lived, was six miles distant from the city in which his Uncle Moses did business.

Early one morning, Frank, having dressed himself as neatly as his modest wardrobe would permit, started to walk to his uncle's place of residence. There was a communication by stage, but it was necessary to study economy, and Frank fortunately possessed a stout pair of legs which would answer the purpose quite as well.

Two hours found him knocking at the door of his uncle's residence. It was a tall, brick house, with a swell front, and to Frank's unpractised eyes, looked magnificent enough for a nabob.

"Well, what's wanting?" asked the servant, who answered the bell, in rather a supercilious tone.

"Is Uncle Moses at home?"

"Who's Uncle Moses?"

"Mr. Merriam."

"No, he isn't."

"Where is he?"

"At the store, I expect."

"Is Mrs. Merriam at home?"

"I don't know, I'll see. Who shall I say wants to see her?"

"Frank Merriam."

Frank was shown into the drawing-room, which displayed an amount of splendor that quite dazzled him.

He was mentally comparing it with his mother's quiet sitting-room, and thinking that in spite of its simplicity, it was far more pleasant and comfortable than his aunt's drawing-room, when his meditations were interrupted by the entrance of a showily-dressed lady, who sailed into the room with a majestic air, and fixed a cold stare upon Frank.

"Are you my aunt?" asked he, somewhat disconcerted.

"Really I couldn't say," she returned, "never having seen you before."

"My name is Frank Merriam," he replied; "and I live at Clifton. My father," here his voice faltered, "died lately. He was Mr. Merriam's brother."

"Ah, yes, I believe Mr. Merriam mentioned something about it."

Mrs. Merriam said nothing more, but seemed to wait further communications.

Frank sat in silent embarrassment. His aunt's coldness repelled him, and he easily perceived that he was not a welcome visitor. But a touch of pride came to his aid, and he resolved that he would be as unsociable as his aunt.

Finding that her visitor was not disposed to break the silence, Mrs. Merriam, growing tired of the stillness, and wishing to put an end to the interview, rose with the careless remark:

"You must excuse me, this morning, as I am particularly engaged. I suppose you know where your uncle's store is? You will probably find him there."

Mrs. Merriam went up stairs and resumed the novel whose reading had been interrupted by Frank's call—that being the important engagement which she had alleged to excuse her withdrawal from the room.

Frank, his warm heart considerably chilled by his cool reception, and a little indignant also, descended the front steps and inquired the most direct way to his uncle's store. He was not long in finding it. Entering, he looked about him to see if he could not recognize his uncle, whom he had never seen, by his resemblance to his father.

Mr. Moses Merriam stood behind a tall desk at the extreme end of the store, with a pen behind his ear. He looked up as Frank approached.

"Are you Mr. Merriam?" asked he.

"That's my name," was the reply.

"Then you are my Uncle Moses?"

"And you, I suppose, are my brother Andrew's child?" said Mr. Merriam. "Have you any brothers and sisters?"

"No, sir, I am the only child."

"You may be surprised that I should ask, but we have not met as frequently as brothers should. I am so occupied by my business that I have little time for other things. Were you named after my brother?"

"No, my name is Frank."

"Your mother is still living, I believe? I hope my brother left her well off?"

"My father left us the house we live in, and that is all."

"And I suppose you have come to ask help? I am sorry, but my family expenses are very great, and trade is dull. If I were able—"

"You are mistaken," said Frank, a flush rising to his brow—"I do not come for assistance. I am old enough to work, if I only knew what to do. Mother told me that I had better consult you."

Mr. Merriam looked relieved when he ascertained that his nephew's visit threatened no demand on his purse, and regarded Frank more favorably than he had done.

"Ah, that's well. I like your independence. Just what I like to see. I suppose I could get you into a store in the city, if you would like."

"How much could I earn?" asked Frank, anxiously.

"Well, ahem! as to that, they are not in the habit of paying anything the first year, as the knowledge of business obtained is considered a sufficient recompense."

"Then it won't do for me," said Frank. "It is necessary for me to earn something at once, to support my mother."

"Then I don't know," said his uncle, "what can be done. There are very few things that boys of your age can do, and it is so easy to obtain them, that people are not willing to pay them wages."

Frank looked crestfallen, and his uncle embarrassed. He feared after all that he might be compelled by fear of the world's opinion to extend pecuniary assistance. At length an idea struck him.

"Do you know anything about farming?" he inquired of Frank.

"Yes, sir," said Frank, "a little."

"I asked for this reason," pursued Mr. Merriam. "When your grandfather, and my father died, he left me a two-acre lot in Clifton, which has always been used as a pasture, when at all. The land was not very good, and I have been so much occupied with other things, that I could

not look after it. Perhaps you may know something of it?"

"Yes," said Frank, "it is only half a mile from our house, and is called the two-acre lot. But I didn't know that it belonged to you."

"Yes," said his uncle. "What I was going to say is, that although I am unable to give you such assistance as I should like, I will, if you like, give you the use of this lot rent free, so long as you like. Perhaps you can put it to some use."

Frank's face lighted up, and he thanked his uncle, giving him credit for much more benevolence than he really possessed. He was already building castles in the air, and was anxious to return to his mother to communicate his good fortune.

His uncle congratulated himself on getting off so well, and invited Frank to dine with him; but the latter was not tempted by his morning's reception to go again, and accordingly set out homewards.

Early the next morning Frank went out to inspect his "lot." He had passed it hundreds of times with indifference, but it was with an entirely different feeling that he regarded it now.

It was pasture land naturally good, but had been much neglected. Frank decided that it would be a good plan to have it ploughed up, and planted with potatoes and other vegetables, which would not only give their small family a sufficient supply, but enable him to sell a large quantity at market.

These plans he unfolded to his mother, who approved them, but feared the labor would be too severe for Frank's strength.

He only laughed, stretching out his stout arms in playful menace towards his mother.

"But," said she, a doubt occurring to her mind, "you will have to get it ploughed, and buy seed. That will cost something."

"I have thought of that," said Frank; "but although we have no money to pay for these things, people will be willing to wait till the harvest, and then I can pay them easily."

During the day Frank called on Farmer Norcross, who had two pair of oxen, and asked him if he could come the next day and plough up his two-acre lot."

"Your lot!" exclaimed the farmer, surprised. "Why, you don't mean to say you are going to farming? It's a good idea," he said, heartily. "I'm glad to find you've got so much spunk, and I'll help you all I can."

"I don't know," said Frank, hesitatingly, "as I shall be able to pay you until autumn. But the first money I get for the potatoes I'm going to plant, I'll pay you."

"Never trouble yourself about that, Frank," said the farmer, kindly. "I shan't charge you a cent for ploughing the land."

"But," said Frank, "I don't want you to take so much trouble for nothing."

"It won't be for nothing," said Farmer Norcross. "Your father has done me more than one good turn, and it's a pity if I can't do something to help his son, especially when he's such a good boy as you have always been, Frank."

Frank walked home with a glow of pleasure lighting up his face. He was more fortunate than he had hoped. The favor to be conferred was, he knew, no trifling one, and would tend materially to increase the profit of his crop.

Farmer Norcross was true to his promise. The next day he appeared on the ground, and by sunset the two-acre lot was ploughed. He did not stop there, but gave Frank much useful advice as to how he should apportion the land to different purposes, and also supplied him with seed, consenting at Frank's request, to take pay, in kind when the harvest time should come.

One day as he was at work in the field, his attention was drawn to a man, who after watching him for a while, climbed over the wall, and approached the place where he was standing.

"Pretty hot work, isn't it?" he inquired, with a pleasant smile.

"Yes, sir, rather," said Frank, wiping his brow.

"Who are you at work for?" continued he.

"Myself," said Frank.

"You are quite a young farmer. Does the land belong to you?"

"No, sir. To my Uncle, Moses Merriam."

"Then your name is—?"

"Frank Merriam. My father was Andrew Merriam."

"You say was," said the stranger, with some emotion. "Is your father dead?"

"Yes, sir," said Frank, sadly.

"And where does your mother live?"

"In a little cottage about half a mile distant," was the reply.

"My name is Thompson," explained the stranger—"Edward Thompson, and I used to know your father many years since. I have been in foreign parts for twenty years past, and have just returned. I am intending to pass some time in this village, and if you think your mother

would be willing, should like to board with her."

"I'm afraid," said Frank, hesitating, "that we live too plainly to satisfy a gentleman like you."

"No fear of that," said Mr. Thompson. "I am somewhat dyspeptic, and my physician orders me to live simply. Come, I'll wait till you have hoed through this row, and then you shall go home and introduce me to your mother."

Mrs. Merriam, although she had no remembrance of Mr. Thompson as one of her husband's friends, was pleased with his appearance, and agreed to take him as a boarder, at his urgent request.

"As to the price of board," said she, "we live so simply that it will not be worth very much—perhaps two dollars."

"Two dollars!" interrupted Mr. Thompson.

"Or if you think that too much—"

"Too much, my dear madam! Far too little, rather! Do you know I have always been accustomed to pay seven, and I am sure they did not give me such a pleasant room as this. As to the living, I shall live just as well as the doctor will let me, and that is enough. So it's agreed, and I will pay you seven dollars a week."

Mrs. Merriam objected, that this was enormous, but her new boarder insisted that he should be a great deal of trouble (a mere fiction, as it proved), and, saying that it was customary to pay in advance, placed twenty-eight dollars in her hands.

The bright sun of prosperity seemed all at once to rest upon the widow's cottage. Mr. Thompson proved to be not only a profitable but an agreeable boarder. He would often go out and assist Frank in his labor, and in the evening when the three were gathered about the table in the little sitting-room, would entertain Frank and his mother with accounts of what he had seen in his travels.

The summer passed away, and autumn filled the fields with plenty. Frank's lot exceeded his anticipations. After reserving a sufficient quantity of vegetables to keep them through the winter, he sold enough to bring him fifty dollars. In addition to this, Mr. Thompson had now been with them fourteen weeks, and his board, of which the greater part remained untouched, amounted to ninety-eight dollars. Actually, Frank began to feel rich.

One evening, Mr. Thompson announced abruptly, that he had purchased one of the finest

estates in the village, and that he intended soon removing there.

Frank and his mother looked disappointed. "Then you will leave us?"

"No, I hope not. I mean to have you come and live with me. I haven't the least idea of keeping bachelor's hall. Had too much of that in India. Well, will you go?"

There could be but one answer to this generous proposal. After a pause, Mr. Thompson said:

"For whom was Frank named?"

"For a brother of Mr. Merriam—who disappeared many years since, and who is presumed to be dead."

"And yet I have the fullest assurance that he still lives."

Mrs. Merriam looked at him in astonishment. "It cannot be that—"

"That I am he? Yet it is so. My dear boy," said he, addressing Frank, "you must learn to

look upon me as your Uncle Frank, who having been tossed about the world for many years, has at length returned to his native country, to enjoy the competency which he has accumulated, and to bestow a portion upon those of his relatives who need it."

Little more need be said.

Before winter set in, Mr. Frank Merriam, as we must now call him, with his sister-in-law and nephew, were established on the estate he had purchased. Frank has resumed his studies, and will enter college next fall. He always meets with a flattering reception now from Mrs. Moses Merriam. It is strange how much prosperity changes one for the better. His Uncle Moses has even generously bestowed upon him the two acre lot. Frank never regrets his brief season of adversity. It has strengthened in him the conviction that "God never fails to help those who help themselves."

## THE UNCONQUERABLE CONQUERED.

BY MARIA M. MOORE.

It was with swollen and still streaming eyes that Hattie sought her room, in accordance with a peremptory order from her father, whose presence she had just left; and who now, with angry looks, paced with rapid strides the softly carpeted floor of his handsome and luxuriantly-furnished parlor.

"I will teach her obedience and submission," he muttered. "Too long have I permitted her will to sway my own; until now, she expects my happiness to yield to her caprices."

Just then the door opened, and the face of her who entered bore too strong a resemblance to the face of the occupant of the parlor not to be recognized as his sister. Her countenance was troubled in its expression, and she would have advanced close to her brother's side, but he stepped back, and fixing a stern glance upon her, said:

"Ellen, I am not pleased. Many have been the remonstrances I have offered to induce you to use your influence to curb my daughter's strong and, too often, selfish will; but I have felt them all of no avail, and this evening I have had evidence that even her father's happiness is a matter of no consequence to her, when in opposition to her own selfish desires. My kind, affectionate and persuasive arguments

have proved of no avail, and I have sent her from me angry and obstinate. But this time, I am determined my will shall rule. I will attempt no more expostulations, but I command that she prepare cheerfully to receive her, whom in one week I bring to this house as my wife."

The door closed with a violent slam, and the father was beyond the voice of persuasion. As the sister looked up at the kind, benevolent face, which hung in its rich frame over the mantel, she wondered how its features could have worn the angry look that had just so distorted them.

She would go to Hattie; poor Hattie! It was a pity she should have to submit, when it came so near breaking her heart. Her brother had scolded her for humoring the child; how could she cross the frail and delicate creature? But now she saw the daughter's will must yield, and she must gently strive to win her to submission.

When Hattie, expelled from her father's presence, reached her room, she threw herself upon her bed, and gave vent to a passionate burst of tears and sobs. The violence of her grief had sent Aunt Ellen to the parlor to expostulate with her brother; but we have seen the utter failure of her mission; and Hattie knew by her lingering footstep upon the stair, and her gentle

and silent opening of the door, that she had no good news of success to communicate. Her first words, solemnly spoken, were:

"Hattie, your father is very angry."

"I don't care," sullenly responded the young girl; and after a moment's pause, she added, "he is cruel and hard-hearted. Does he think I have no feeling—no spirit—to submit to the whims and assumptions of a step-mother?" And she sat upright upon the bed, while her eyes fairly glistened with aroused passion. "And poor little Laura," she continued, "I suppose she is to be taught to honor and obey my lady's dignities and caprices. But it shall not be!" and she folded her arms, and drew up her form with a firm determination.

"Hush! Hattie, my child," said her aunt. "You know Mary Marshall is said to be all that is lovely and amiable. Be assured, she will not desire to domineer over you and Laura."

"If she is so very lovable," said Hattie, in a scornful tone, "I am confident our father will have no affection to spare for us."

"O, Hattie, do not be unjust to the best and kindest of fathers. He will never love you less, my darling; believe me, he *could* not," and Aunt Ellen kissed fondly the flushed cheek. "Now, my pet," she continued, "you must promise me to weep no more, for your poor head must ache already, I am sure."

Some sixteen summers had left their brightness on Hattie's fair brow; and as she stands with proud and erect form, flushed cheeks, and eyes brightened with excitement, we cannot but think her very beautiful. Her hair had become loosened from its confinement, and fell over her shoulders in waving luxuriance. With an impatient movement, she quickly gathered up its profusion, and twined round and round the long brown tresses until they formed a mass of careless, though not ungraceful, braids; a handsome adorning to the fair head, and giving grace to the swan-like throat and drooping shoulders.

Now the moment had come for her nightly prayer, and her angry spirit quailed before her Maker's presence. She threw herself wildly upon her knees, bowed her head one moment upon her clasped hands; and though her lips moved not, the inward struggle of her soul was visible in the shudder which passed over her form, and in the firm compression of her tightly-clasped fingers. Her young spirit, though passionate and unyielding, had not yet learned de-

ception's coils, and shrank from mockery's offerings with terror and disgust.

Exhausted by her late violent paroxysms of grief, our young heroine soon found that peace and repose which sleep and its oblivion brings.

Mr. Hamilton had started to bring to his home a northern bride. Aunt Ellen had pleaded that it would not be necessary for Hattie to accompany him, and he had yielded to her arguments, thinking, perhaps, that after all it would be the most peaceful arrangement; but he gave it to be distinctly understood that he would expect to find cheerful faces and greetings when he returned.

Hattie, for her part, gave Aunt Ellen expressly to understand that she need look for no assistance from her in the arrangements of household affairs, for the reception of the fair bride. Little Laura, delighted with the bustle of preparation, ran hither and yon, wherever the footsteps of her aunt led, asking a thousand questions, and expressing interest in everything that was going on, until Hattie would check her joy by beseeching her to be still, and declaring she felt it to be more a preparation for a funeral than anything else.

"Why, sister?" the little creature would ask, creeping to her side, and looking up wonderingly in her face.

"Because, Laura, our own dear mother is now to be forgotten, and her place filled by another, who may, perhaps, even win our father's love from us. I hate the name of step-mother; it is hard—too hard!" and she would burst into tears, when Aunt Ellen would fold her in her arms, and beg her not to weep.

Little Laura would then seat herself upon her cricket, and folding her tiny hands in her lap, would wonder what dreadful thing was going to happen. Papa had told her he would bring back with him a beautiful and good lady, whom she would love like the dear mama the Lord had taken to the bright heaven when she was a wee helpless baby. It had made her happy to think of this; but now Hattie cried, and Aunt Ellen looked troubled, so she could only feel frightened. She wished papa was home, that she might creep into his arms, as she often did, and feel there was no harm near.

At last the few days had passed; all preparations were completed; the evening had arrived, and the hearts of the expectant ones, grouped

in the parlor, beat quickly to the sound of each carriage wheel as it rolled up the street.

Hattie, with excited impatience, had seated herself at the piano; but her fingers kept pace with her heart instead of her music, and, with some impatient exclamation, she threw aside the sheet, and rose from the stool. Next, she picked up a book; but page after page her eye gleamed over, without her comprehending a word, until, angry at her visible want of control, she sprang from her chair, and commenced hurriedly to pace the floor. This last motion caused little Laura to look up wonderingly from her low seat at Aunt Ellen's feet; and even Juno, the beautiful hound that lay asleep upon the rug, in front of the bright grate, started and raised his graceful head in surprise at the young mistress's disquiet.

Hark! here come wheels—nearer—nearer. Hattie pauses in her walk, and clasps her hands tightly, while the color forsakes her cheek, and her heart almost ceases to beat. Close—closer,—yes, they stop! the bell peals, and Juno starts to his feet, barking a loud welcome. Aunt Ellen placed Hattie's trembling arm within her own, and drew her towards the hall. The young girl paused a moment, but she heard her father's voice, and she felt she must obey; so clinging nervously to Aunt Ellen, she reached the passage in time to see Laura in her father's arms, and to hear a sweet, thrilling voice calling the little one's name, as though it had forever been familiar music.

Before her father was aware of her presence, the stranger's eyes had rested upon her; and when Hattie saw their gentle light, and felt the twining of her arms about her neck, while a warm kiss rested on her lips, her heart smote her, and the bright color rushed back to her cheek. Her father's "God bless you, my beautiful child!" as he folded her tenderly in his arms, assured her that as yet his love was all the same.

Aunt Ellen was assisting to divest the late traveller of her warm wrappings, and when she stood relieved of their burden, Hattie could find no fault in her broad, open brow, large hazel eyes, full of tenderness and the soul of poetry, straight and well-formed nose, and a mouth boasting of several hide-and-seek dimples, and around which played no spirit not altogether lovely. Her hair was very black and shiny; her complexion dark, though clear; her form round and slightly robust, although, in stature, below the medium height.

Attracted by the handsome hound, she stooped to caress it, at the same time saying to Laura, around whom her arm was thrown:

"Is this your beautiful pet, darling?"

"No, he is Hattie's; but he loves me, too," said the little girl, while her tiny hand followed the strokes of the fair stranger.

"And can you spare enough of his love for me, Hattie?" said the gentle, thrilling voice.

She answered, coldly:

"Juno would do as he pleased, despite my directions. He is used to his own way, and I am not tyrant enough to compel him to do anything against his will."

The cheery little tea-bell sounded its pleasant tones, and Laura, as guide to the newly-found mama, led the way to the dining-room. Here was the bright urn, with its ever cheerful sing, behind which Aunt Ellen led the young wife, who playfully remonstrated against taking from her the seat of honor; but Aunt Ellen, for once, was firm, and the former yielded, laughingly declaring she knew she would not be able to fill it half so worthily.

Did any one observe Hattie's untasted cup, as they rose from the table? One gentle eye filled as it rested upon it, and one heart sank with a sad foreboding; but the husband's voice called "Mary," and she drove back the tear, and crushed the rising fear at her heart as she followed him to the servants' hall, where her soft hand grasped kindly the hard palms of those who claimed her as a mistress, and who, as she left their presence, united in one voice of admiration and praise.

One year had passed since Mr. Hamilton had brought home his gentle wife. As she sits in the misty light (for it is starlight), we can see there is a shadow resting on her brow, and a sadder light beaming in her dark, tender eye than were there one short year ago.

The bright grate glows just the same as it did on that frosty winter evening, and, as then, Juno lies asleep upon the rug. The shadow is creeping deeper and deeper over Mary's troubled brow, until, at last, unable longer to restrain her feelings, she covered her face with her hands, and the tears trickled fast through her white fingers. At the sound of a broken and half-controlled sob, Juno roused, and creeping to her feet, raised his eyes wishfully to her face. She bent over to give the never-witholden caress, but the tears fell as fast as ever, and she murmured a word which the dog seemed to know,



and he whined low as he caught its sound. It was Laura's name. Poor, little Laura! sweet to her had been the summer of the mother's love, who had held the slight form in her arms while the young, pure spirit had taken its flight to heaven, and in whose heart her image was enshrined, never to grow cold or forgotten; and she is the mother who now sits alone in the dim, misty twilight, weeping her spirit child's memory. But hark! there is a peal at the bell. It is Hattie's voice. What is it she says?

"I will be ready at eight."

The door is closed, and a light footstep glided up the stairs. Could Hattie be going out again? But here comes a well-known sound at the hall door, and remembering her tearful eyes, the wife quickly escaped to bathe away the traces of her recent emotion. As she took her wonted place at the tea table, the ever kind-hearted Aunt Ellen would hardly be satisfied that it was only a slight headache that caused her to look so badly.

"Hattie, love, do take something warm to drink this cold evening," said her aunt; "it makes me chilly to look at your tumbler of ice water."

"I like it better than tea; so don't trouble about it, Aunt Ellen," was the reply.

None guessed, but the gentle step-mother, why Hattie never drank anything but cold water.

"Father, I am going to hear Parodi to-night," said the young girl, passing her arm through Mr. Hamilton's, as they rose from the table.

"Indeed, Hattie! With whom do you go?" and the affectionate father patted the little hand resting on his arm.

"There is quite a party of us going together. Mr. Robertson calls for me, and we all meet in the concert room."

"Well, my darling, you love music better than anything else in the world. Go and enjoy it." And Hattie went.

"Mary, you do not like Robertson?" said the husband, in an inquiring tone, as the door closed after the young couple.

"I do not consider him a man of very high-toned principles," was the reply, "nor of much intellect; and I should feel happier if Hattie were less inclined to receive his attentions."

"His extreme light-heartedness and freedom of manner, I think, deceives you, Mary," said the husband. "I have never discovered an actual want of principle in his conduct. I acknowledge him to be impulsive; and his generosity and carelessness of expenditure amount to

a fault; but he is young, and his errors are by no means crimes; and you know, my love, one is often deceived by judging too hastily of intellect."

"Well," responded Mrs. Hamilton, "I may be uncharitable in my opinion, but I cannot bring myself to think as favorably of the young man as you do, although I would grieve to judge him harshly."

"As to his attentions to Hattie," added the husband, "they amount to nothing; he is a cousin of the child's most intimate friend, Minnie Morrison, and meeting as frequently as they do, doubtless they have acquired a kind of sociable friendship for each other—nothing more. If Hattie were thinking of aught else, I should soon give her the benefit of some of my differing views. Tut, tut, Hattie is too young to think of such things."

Woman's quick conception had discovered more than this. Mrs. Hamilton knew well that young Robertson could not be Hattie's ideal of a man. The young girl's own talents, and appreciation of intellect in others, forbade her to think it; but that she was encouraging attentions seriously meant by him, she could not but perceive. Hattie's intentions she could not fathom. Well the young girl knew the estimate her step-mother placed upon the character of her young friend; but Mrs. Hamilton had seen that the expression of her own opinion only incurred Hattie's resentment, and provoked her to persevere in her obstinacy to act her own will; so she refrained from the utterance of the offensive subject, though her heart trembled as she saw the young girl's incomprehensible conduct.

Let us follow Hattie and her companion on their walk to the concert hall.

"I might say this is an unexpected pleasure, the enjoyment of your company this evening, Miss Hattie," said young Robertson.

"Why so?" was her inquiry.

"I imagine your mother has somewhat of an antipathy to your humble servant, and would object to your receiving his services as escort," responded the young man.

"She has never said anything to you to justify such an opinion," she haughtily answered.

"O, no, I only judge by appearances," said Robertson; "but I feel as though I would beard a lion in his den to win one of your bright smiles."

"No necessity for such a wonderful act of valor for the accomplishment of so small a fa-

vor; and as for appearances," she went on to say, "never trust to them, they are often deceptive," and she was sure he would not feel quite so elated if he knew she was speaking with reference to her own conduct, while he considered her remark apropos only to another.

"Where are your spirits this evening, Miss Hattie?" asked her companion, observing the young girl's unusual indisposition to engage in the wild and animated flow of conversation and repartee that rendered her so fascinating to him.

"I was not aware," she answered, "you were so luckily escaping their fire; so, without loss of time, I must resume my charge." And she ran off into one of her wild bursts of wit, sarcasm and ridicule, keeping her young escort in a fund of amusement until they arrived at the concert hall.

Her grave mood, noticed by her companion, had been caused by a train of reflections, chased through her mind by the movements of an uneasy and reproving conscience. She felt her action of the evening to be unkind, ungenerous—ay, even cruel. She knew she had pained the heart of her gentle step-mother. To be sure, no word had passed, but that mild glance had spoken volumes. Too well she was aware of the quiet, though decided, judgment, passed upon young Robertson; and she knew it to be just. Why so persevering in her wayward course? Did she love him, that his faults should be forgiven, and his attentions encouraged? No; even his civilities disgusted her. Then why so strangely mask her feelings? Was it only to pain the heart of the gentle being, whom, from the first, she had resolved never to love, never to respect, outwardly, and to oppose in all things possible? Could it be that all that being's forbearance towards her, all the affection and devotion shown to those dear to her, who persisted in repelling the same advances, the same affection, and the same extended confidence—could it be that all this had failed to soften her heart? and that her conduct of this evening was only indulged in for the sake of continuing an opposition of her own obstinate nature, to one who would willingly have folded her to her bosom, as an own precious child, and shielded her from suffering and harm? Hattie's heart echoed it was but for this; her conscience whispered remorse; but it seemed to her now as though to yield were death. Pride! pride! thou wilt let the heart wither with remorse, but how hard it is for thee to show the semblance of a repentant spirit.

In the concert hall, our heroine met familiar faces, and her voice spoke to them of a heart happy, free and guileless. How little they knew its mysteries!

During the evening, Robertson, while standing by her side, once bent to whisper something, meant for her ear alone, when his leaning position caused his watch-guard to display its adornments of charms rather boldly to the young girl's gaze, and among the trinkets, her eye caught sight of a familiar ring. She knew it was her own, and remembered that her young friend, Minnie Morrison, had, almost unconsciously to herself, removed it from her finger one evening or two before.

"Mr. Robertson," said she, "I perceive you are in possession of a piece of my property, which I will take the liberty of reclaiming," and she looked significantly at the tiny ring.

"But which claim I cannot admit unless you consent to make an interchange, and receive this in lieu," said the young man, drawing from his finger a handsome diamond.

"O, no," she quickly responded, while an angry flush mounted to her cheek and brow, "that would be but useless to me, while the other is dear from old association."

The short intermission was over, the music had recommenced, and Robertson bent low, that she alone might catch the music of his voice, as he said:

"You will not be cruel enough to compel me to resign what, though but a bauble to you, is the dearest treasure I possess on earth."

"Mr. Robertson, your trifling is disagreeable to me. I desire the immediate return of my ring, and the recital of no such preposterous speeches," said the young girl, while her brow contracted with displeasure; but heedless of her frowns, he proceeded:

"Hattie, you shall hear me, by Heaven! I love you, and all the powers of earth shall not deprive me of you. Say you will be mine, and I can be calm; but refuse, and you drive me mad!"

Frightened by his wild words and manner, the maiden's heart beat fearfully, and her color fled as she said, "Return me my ring, and I will show you my answer. Be assured, I will not keep it."

And this promise, together with the tremulousness of her voice, and the palor of her cheek, deceived him, and he removed the treasure from

his guard, pressed it fervently to his lips, and placed it in her hand.

"This ring," said the young girl, in her now usual voice, "was the treasured possession of a little sister, whose death I now mourn; for her sake, it was dear to me, but your breath and touch have polluted it—rendered it unworthy of my regard—so I part with its memory forever!" and she crushed the frail, jewelled bauble between her fingers, and scattered the fragments on the floor.

Robertson was gone. Everybody but Hattie thought he must have felt suddenly ill. She was silent, and thought no one was the wiser for her evening's performance; but as Minnie Morrison and her brother bade her good-night at her own door, the former whispered, "O, Hattie, you have been cruel to him!" and then she knew Minnie had seen all. How could she have helped it? But from that time she was no more like the intimate friend of the past. She was Robertson's cousin, and had doubtless encouraged him to make that hated declaration; at least, she had loaned him the ring, which had called it forth. Hattie knew she loved him, and would sympathize in his mortification, and blame her, as she already did, for her cruelty; so whenever they met in the future, it was only in the crowd.

When Hattie entered the parlor, enveloped in her wrappings, she started on seeing a stranger; and, as he rose from his seat on the sofa beside Mrs. Hamilton, in acknowledgement of her presence, his tall, manly form, and noble intellectuality of feature, struck her as forming the handsomest and noblest specimen of mankind she had ever beheld.

"Hattie, this is my cousin, Glen Morgan, of whom you have heard me speak frequently," said Mrs. Hamilton.

She had expected the young girl to make the encumbrance of her wrappings an excuse to leave the room; but her heart, bounded with surprise and pleasure when she threw them off carelessly upon a chair, and seated herself on one side of the bright grate. How beautiful she looked, with her eyes glistening like brilliant stars from under their long lashes, and her cheeks suffused with a bright color, heightened by her evening's excitement, while her hair was soft and rich in its brown luxuriance, and her brow bore the stamp of proud intellect. Her mouth had even forgotten to assume its usual slight curl of scorn, which it generally wore in

the presence of her step-mother; and the latter, forgetful of all past injuries and neglect, looked upon her only with love and pride, as she replied with her native quickness and elegance of expression to the remarks of him, the first tone of whose rich voice had won her lingering presence.

Hattie knew this to be Mrs. Hamilton's favorite cousin, who for two years had been visiting the beautiful lands of the continent, and whose return had been expected for some weeks past. Of the same age with his young cousin, he had first been her playmate and companion, then her friend, confidant and adviser; and as she possessed neither brother nor sister, he occupied the place in her heart of both. Bereft of father and mother, his home had been hers, and his gentle mother—the sister of her own—had opened her heart as warmly to the little lone orphan as to her own darling, and clasped them with equal tenderness to her maternal bosom. Thus they had grown and lived together at dear old Oakland, and no sooner had Glen pressed upon his mother's brow the kiss of re-union, than he bade his old home a short farewell, while he sought his sister-cousin, to receive from her a dear greeting and warm welcome back to his native land. The clock struck eleven, and he rose to go.

"You are not worthy a shake of the hand," said Mr. Hamilton, while he nevertheless directly contradicted his assertion by a warm grasp, as he continued: "You should have ordered your trunk to follow you here, and made our home yours while you tarry in the city. I cannot forgive you for not doing so."

"It was impossible for me to tear myself away from a young friend, who met me at the depot on my arrival, and who had been my fellow-traveller during nearly the whole of my European tour, until I promised to let my baggage go to his hotel, and return and room with him while in the city, as he wanted to talk over with me many pleasant incidents of our travels, and enjoy, at least, some of my company, which I must of necessity give him under these circumstances. However, be assured I shall not apoke you my presence, and I am afraid you and Miss Hamilton will both be willing to admit me a bore ere very long, as I have no doubt my fair cousin here as done many a time before."

With a graceful inclination of the head, and a light good-evening to Hattie, he passed from the room, followed by Mr. Hamilton and his wife, who accompanied him to the door.

Hattie had escaped to her room ere they had

returned to the parlor; but when she laid her head upon her pillow, it was not to sleep, for the events of the evening came trooping through her mind; and when she had succeeded in driving away the remembrance of her angry and strangely-terminating scene with Robertson, then came the rich tones of the stranger, and the light of his clear dark eye, to haunt her with their own peculiar fascination. And when at last she slept, the same face visited her dreams; and in her sleep she still heard the deep music of the stranger's voice.

The next morning, when Hattie awoke, the sun was streaming in her window, and astonished that she should have slept so late, she sprang up and commenced a hurried toilet. She feared they were all at breakfast, and wondered why Aunt Ellen had not called her. In her hurried descent of the stairs her foot slipped, and, in attempting to prevent her fall, she only precipitated herself forward with more violence, and falling with her weight upon her arm, uttered a cry of pain as she felt the bone snap in sunder.

Whose arm was it twined so tenderly around her, as she lay overcome by her agony? And whose voice was it beseeching her in tremulous and agitated tones to tell the cause of her suffering? Could her scream have been recognized and answered thus promptly? It was *she*, the step-mother, whose love and tenderness she had always so heartlessly repelled, who was the first to answer her distress. Mr. Hamilton and Aunt Ellen had followed, and she was borne to the low couch in the breakfast-room, while a messenger was quickly despatched for a physician.

When she was bearing, with courageous fortitude, the painful operation consequent upon her accident, she turned her face away, that she might not become mentally weakened by the sight of preparations and procedure, and her eyes fell accidentally upon Mrs. Hamilton, who knelt at the foot of her couch. She perceived that the bright tears were chasing each other rapidly down her cheeks, and that every trace of color had vanished from her face. This exhibition of undeserved love and tenderness touched Hattie's "seemingly unconquerable heart. Her pride, her obstinacy, she forgot all—all, and extending her hand, she closed her eyes to hide the tears which fast filled them, and grasped tightly the fingers which now clasped her own, heedless of all the rude pressure of the hard diamond, whose sparkle had, hitherto, petrified each tender heart-string.

The physician had gone; but Hattie was ordered to lie perfectly still upon her couch the remainder of the day. How strangely her heart beat as that gentle hand bathed her pale brow, and anticipated each wish and want before half imagined by herself. As Hattie raised her grateful and tearful eyes to her face, and murmured a low "Thank you, mother," the sound seemed like an echo of Laura's voice, and the step-mother bent and kissed the white, tremulous lips that had uttered the precious words, and her heart swelled with a thankful prayer that this blessed moment, so long pleaded and waited for, had arrived at last.

Hattie had never before called her "mother;" she had adroitly avoided every occasion when it would have been necessary for her to address her by name. Long had her heart been sensible of its depth of injustice; but now, by one master struggle, she had conquered the towering pride of her nature, and drank freely and gratefully of the golden bowl, brimming over with its rich treasure of a pure and unchanging love, which she had, heretofore, dashed rudely from her lips. How sweet and dear its draughts, the future told; and Hattie ever praised God that he had blessed her with its wealth.

O, those precious days, spent half reclining on the long couch, in the cheery and sociable little breakfast room, with the long, raging storm in her bosom all quelled, and peace and love illumining and blessing each as it passed! Will Hattie ever forget their memory?

There she lay and listened, with ear and heart entranced, to the rich voice of Glen Morgan, as he painted in his vivid coloring the beautiful lands of his visitings, and the soul-stirring scenes he had witnessed; and then how strangely pleasant and welcome were the glances of appreciation and admiration, when her own heart would pour out its depths of thought and aspiration with an enthusiasm which would afterwards call the bright blush to her cheek in fear that she had spoken too wildly, too earnestly. The days were thus passing rapidly away; a few more, and Glen must leave their pleasant society for his Oakland home.

One bright morning before his departure, as he sat alone with Hattie in the pleasantly associated little sitting-room, he paused suddenly in the cheerful conversation, and his countenance assumed a thoughtful and serious expression.

"Why so pensive this morning, Mr. Morgan?"

"I was thinking just then," he answered,

"that partings were sad things; and I was also indulging a hope that you would not refuse a remembrance from one who will ever cherish the recollection of these bright days as the happiest of his existence." And with these words, he drew from his pocket a long, slender box, and took from its velvet lining a band of richly-chased gold, adorned as a coronet, with three delicately carved stones of exquisite Florentine workmanship.

"How beautiful!" was her exclamation.

"But one earnest request I must make, ere I ask your acceptance of my offering," said the young man, and he still detained the beautiful ornament, as he continued: "It is my wish that you accept the giver with the gift. Say me not nay, Hattie. My heart is yours—all yours. Tell me it is not altogether a vain offering, and let me crown you as my own." And Glen held the circlet over her head.

Her cheeks were suffused with blushes; but as she raised her glistening eyes to his face, he read

his response in their dear light. The jewelled clasp united, and she was all his own.

The days departed, and Glen went to cheer the lone hearthstone of his mother's home; but ere long he came again, and yet again, and then Hattie promised he should return no more without her. But when the summer birds had flown, and the gay flowers drooped their bright heads to die—when old Oakland was growing cheerless and desolate—she would come and drive away the shadows with her own bright presence.

And Hattie's wedding eve. How beautiful she looked in her orange flowers and lace. Glen's treasured gift rested upon her brow, and from its golden band flowed her bridal veil. The farewells were spoken; and as they drove from Hattie's old home, she wiped away a tear-drop from her cheek; it was a parting tribute of love from her gentle step-mother. And Glen and she went home to old Oakland, while Hattie now more than ever blessed the day when Mary Marshall became her step-mother.

THE END.