

# OLIVIA TREVETT:

—OR,—

## THE PATRIOT CRUISER.

A Story of the American Revolution.

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# OLIVIA TREVETT.

## CHAPTER I.

### THE YOUNG PATRIOT.

THE year of our Lord 1776 had dawned upon the American colonies, and it found them upon the eve of their Revolution—upon the eve of that struggle which has since filled the noblest page in the history of nations—a struggle which owed its nobleness to the right and justice which gave it birth, and the holy zeal of the brave hearts that carried it through the bright victory track that God had marked out for it. The coast and bay of Massachusetts were at this time the theatre of the movements upon which hung the destinies of a nation. The British army was quartered in Boston, while a naval force was in the harbor, and from this point the king's troops scouted forth as occasion might require. Their track was marked by anything but soldier-like deeds, and their trophies were more befitting the outlawed bandit than the trained soldier. The people of the colonies had now become thoroughly divided on the great question of their political relations. There were no half-way opinions now—they were either loyalists or patriots; and though the latter may have had no fixed

plans for the future, yet they were indignant at the presence of the tyrant's troops, and they were ready for any plan that might be devised for the removal of the evil.

It was on a Sabbath afternoon—the twenty-sixth of February. The day had been remarkably pleasant for the season of the year, and though the ground was mostly covered with snow, yet the air was mild, and the sunbeams lay warmly upon the winter-clad earth. The good people of Salem were returning from church. Apart from the rest, and walking very slowly, was a girl who had been one of the last to leave the house of worship. She was a fair creature, not over twenty years of age, with a countenance full of loving simplicity and kindness. Her eyes were of a bright blue, and the few ringlets that escaped from beneath her closely-fitting bonnet were glossy auburn. Her dress seemed to indicate that she was wealthy, for it was of rare and costly material; but yet those who passed her gazed earnestly into her face, and there was certainly much of pity in their look.

They gazed sympathizingly upon the beautiful girl, and when they had gazed, they turned to their companions and spoke in low tones of her whom they had passed.

Such was Olivia Trevett; and those in Salem who knew her, knew her for her goodness as well as for her beauty and accomplishments. She had not walked far from the church, when a quick footstep sounded behind her, and just as she was upon the point of turning her head, she heard her name pronounced. The speaker was a young man, habited in the garb of a seaman, and his bearing, as well as the peculiar cut of his dress, spoke him an officer. In age he might have been three-and-twenty, but in the bold lines of his frank countenance there were marks that would seem to make him older, but they were evidently only the marks of long and rough experience. He was of medium size in his frame, and at the first glance the observer would have noticed nothing about his frame different from others; but upon closer observation one would have noticed an uncommon thickness and breadth of chest. This muscular development, however, took nothing away from the symmetry of the young man's form, but rather added to it in manly beauty.

"Olivia," he said, as he reached the girl's side, "did you expect that I would meet with you to-day?" His voice was low and tremulous, and his countenance was worked upon by considerable emotion.

"I hoped you would meet me," replied the maiden, frankly, and without hesitation.

"You did? Ah, bless you, Olivia, for that," continued the youth, with animation; and then, in a changed tone, as though some new thought had come over him, he added: "It was for my sake you would see me."

"Ay, Vincent; for both yours and mine own."

The young man cast his eyes about him, but there were none others near enough to overhear him. He returned his gaze upon the face of his companion, and in a lower tone than he had before used, he said:

"You love me yet, Olivia."

"Yes—yes."

"O, I knew you would not forget me. Ah, Olivia, I cannot tell you how much of joy I have derived from that simple assurance. It has been with me through storm and through tempest—in my day-walks, and in my night-watch, and now I have come home to find that my love has been true. You have thought of me often, Olivia?"

"Yes, very often."

"And now about your father," continued Vincent Gray, in an anxious tone. "How do you think he will receive me?"

"Alas," returned the maiden, while her voice trembled, "he is worse than ever before. He even forbids me now from mixing in the society where I used to spend much of social time. He grows more and more morose every day."

"But he does not really ill treat you?"

"Not personally; but he has almost shut me out from society. He will not allow me from his sight if he can help it. He allows me to attend church on the Sabbath, and that is about all."

"But how about myself?" asked Vincent.

"I dare not even mention your name in his presence," returned Olivia, with a show of sadness which she could not repress. "When I chance to speak of you, he instantly turns pale, and threatens some dire revenge if you ever cross his path again."

"I know he always treated me slightly, and yet I see not why he should have done so. My father, while he lived, was his best friend, and surely I have never given him occasion to think ill of me. In this last cruise I have done well for your father. I have taken his ship safely home from the Indies, and though I have performed the duties of commander for more than half the cruise, yet I only take my pay as second officer. In everything I have been honorable and upright, and have never failed to look well to my employer's interests."

"I know all that, Vincent; and so does my father know it; and for that very reason is he the more bitter against you."

"I see not why that should be," said the young man, with a puzzled look.

"Then I will tell you," resumed Olivia, with a slight hesitation in her tone. "My father is determined that you shall not be my husband, and the fact that you are so well worthy of my hand, leaves him without any other pretext than such as he can bring from his strained prejudices."

For some distance the two walked on in silence. What the young man had heard made him thoughtful. Vincent Gray was an orphan, and at an early age he had commenced to follow the sea as a profession. His father had formerly been a warm friend of Mr. Trevett, and hence he had entered the service of the latter gentleman shortly after his father's death. Trevett had grown rich upon the results of his mer-

cantile pursuits; but yet Vincent Gray had not hesitated to love his beautiful daughter, and the tendency of this love was by no means checked when the young man discovered that his love was reciprocated. Vincent could now remember that old Trevett always treated him with uniform kindness until the first signs were developed of the love which sprang up between the two young hearts; but from that moment the old man had been changed towards him.

Vincent had just returned from the Indies, having commanded the ship on the homeward-bound passage, and this was his first meeting with Olivia since his return.

"I must see your father," he at length said, in a determined tone. "I will tell him of our love, and if he is a man, he will not cast me off without some cause. Even a father has no moral right to make a child needlessly unhappy."

Just as Vincent spoke, and before the maiden had chance to reply, the companions were startled by a loud noise ahead of them—a noise which seemed to proceed from towards the North Bridge. While the young man was trying to make out the occasion of the disturbance, he saw a man running towards him in all haste, and of him Vincent asked the reason of the noise.

"The British have come to take our stores," hastily cried the man. "They are on the other side of the bridge, and there is likely to be a fight."

As the messenger spoke he fled on with his errand, and Vincent turned towards his companion.

"You must hasten home, Olivia," he said. "Hasten home at once, for I must go down to the bridge."

"You will not expose yourself to danger," earnestly entreated the maiden.

"No, no. But I must go, for there's trouble brewing. Haste thee home, dearest. I will see thee again."

With another anxious admonition to her lover to be careful of himself, the maiden turned her steps homeward, and Vincent hurried away towards the bridge. When he reached the spot, he found that the draw of the bridge was raised, and that a British colonel with a body of soldiers was upon the other side. A large body of the citizens had collected, and the patriots seemed determined to resist the passage of the troops. The military stores were upon the north side of

the bridge, and Colonel Leslie, who commanded the soldiers, demanded a passage; but it was stoutly refused. As there was no passing the bridge, the soldiers made a movement towards two large gondolas that lay in the stream; but here they were again baffled, for the owners of the boats leaped into them, and began to scuttle them. The soldiers tried to prevent this, and the result was a general melée. The patriots leaped down to the assistance of the boatmen, and the British fixed their bayonets, and made a charge. Several of the Americans were wounded, but none were killed, and before matters became more serious, the old clergyman appeared upon the spot, and the result was, that a compromise was effected. Colonel Leslie saw that the patriots were rapidly collecting, and to avoid further trouble he pledged himself that if he were allowed to cross the bridge he would not trouble anything beyond it. The draw was lowered, and the soldiers passed over, and then, without molestation, they passed back again, and just as they started to leave the town, the patriot minutemen began to assemble upon the ground, one company having come from as far as Danvers.

When Vincent Gray turned from the bridge, he stopped at a point where a party had collected about the person of a young man who had been seriously wounded. The poor fellow was groaning with pain, and though a physician who happened to be present assured the people that there was no mortal danger, yet they trembled with apprehension.

"That blood comes from a patriot heart," said one.

"Ay," added another, "and 'twas British steel that let it out."

An involuntary movement of indignation ran through the crowd, and long after the wounded youth had been carried to his home, the people remained by the bridge and talked over the affair. But upon none did it make a deeper impression than upon Vincent Gray. When he turned towards his abiding place his soul was wrought upon by fierce emotions. He had seen the patriot's blood spilled by the foe—he had seen the hireling soldiers of the tyrant king trampling upon the dearest liberties of his countrymen, and from that moment his life was pledged by an oath to the cause of that liberty which all true-hearted Americans prayed and hoped for.

## CHAPTER II.

## THE MAN-OF-WAR'S PASSENGER.

On the morning following the advent of the British troops at Salem, the people were aroused at an early hour by the booming of a heavy gun at the mouth of the harbor, and on hastening down to the wharves, they were not a little astonished at seeing two heavy English men-of-war just coming to off the harbor. At first the people were alarmed, and after more mature thought they quieted their fears and watched the movements of the ships. They were both of them standing slowly down towards the capes of Marblehead under their flying-jibs, with their courses hanging in the buntlines, and their topsails merely drawn up by the clews. Ere long the ship farthest astern fired another gun, and at the same time a signal was seen to wave from her poop.

[SEE ENGRAVING.]

"She wants a boat to come off," said an old man, who stood upon one of the wharves. "That's what she's firing for."

"Ay," added Vincent Gray, who stood near at hand, "that is surely what the fellow wants. Here, boys, let's put off one of our boats and go out."

He turned to three of his men as he spoke—men who belonged to his ship—and they quickly agreed to go with him. A fourth man was easily obtained, and having leaped into a boat with his

crew, our hero put off for the man-of-war which had fired the gun. There was an expression of wonderment among the men as to what could be the design of the ships in thus stopping, and though Vincent shared in the feeling, yet he expressed no opinion upon it.

When he reached the ship, he brought his boat up under the starboard quarter, and an officer from the deck hailed him.

"Can you take a passenger on shore?" asked the officer.

"Ay," returned Vincent.

"Then haul up to the gangway, and we'll send him down."

Vincent accordingly hauled his boat up, and shortly afterwards the passenger appeared over the gangway, the man-ropes having been thrown over for his accommodation. He was a young man, apparently about four-and-twenty years of age, with dark brown hair and blue eyes, not very stout in his build, but possessing much manly beauty, together with a good degree of firmness and resolution in the form and expression of his countenance. Vincent Gray was at once predisposed in his favor, and he received him with a kind greeting as he came aft. After the young man had come down, a heavy chest was lowered into the boat, and then Vincent was told that he might shove off. The captain of

the Englishman very kindly bade the young passenger farewell, and in conclusion he said:

"We may never meet again, Edward. I have somewhat overstepped my orders in putting in here to set you on shore; but it is the last kindness I may ever have the chance to do you, and I trust that you may prosper."

"I thank you kindly, Captain Montague," returned the young man. "From the bottom of my heart I thank you; and if we never meet again, I can only assure you that by me you will ever be held in grateful remembrance. Adieu."

The captain again said the word of parting, and in a moment more the boat was rowed away from the ship. Shortly after this both the ships made sail and stood towards Boston.

When Vincent turned towards his passenger, after they had left the ship, he noticed that there were big drops in his eyes, and from this a new feeling of sympathy was awakened in his bosom. The young stranger gazed long after the receding ships, and when he could see them no more he wiped his eyes, and turned his gaze towards the town he was approaching.

"What part of Salem do you wish to visit?" asked Vincent.

"None in particular," returned the young man.

"Then you have no friends here?" continued Vincent.

"Friends?" iterated the passenger, in a tone of strange sadness.

"Some acquaintance," suggested our hero; "for I can land you wherever you may wish."

"I am not acquainted here, sir. I only seek for the present some place where I can find a home—some well arranged inn where money will find me an abiding place."

"Then if such is your wish you can stop at the same inn with myself," said Vincent. "I have found it to be the best in the town, and I think you will be suited with the accommodations."

"Thank you, sir. That is the best I could wish. If you have no objection I will accompany you there at once."

Of course Vincent assented, and he did it with a peculiar gratification, too, for he had seen just enough of his companion to wish to know more of him. He thought it strange that the young man should have been at so much trouble to be landed here, and yet be an entire stranger in the place. But it was not altogether the strangeness of his coming that made him curious; there

was something in his very appearance and manner that was calculated to excite attention and curiosity.

When the boat reached the wharf, the people who had stood there watching the movements of the ships and the boats, gathered about the spot, and Vincent was literally overwhelmed with questions; but he merely stated that there was a passenger on board one of the ships who wished to land, and further than that he knew of nothing to tell. Whilst one of Vincent's men went for a barrow upon which to carry the passenger's chest, the older portion of the people busied themselves in asking the young stranger all sorts of questions; but his answers were short and pointless, and by the time the man came with the barrow, he had been given up as a hopeless case of laconicism.

"It's Jo-fired strange, anyhow," muttered one, "that two British seventy-fours should 'ave put in here just to land a passenger."

"So 'tis," added a second. "Blow me, if there aint sumthin' in it."

"Just my idee," chimed in a third, with more than common shrewdness. "S'pose 'em ships would 'ave put in here just to land a single man if there wasn't sumthin' in it? No, not by a plaguy sight. Depend upon it, there's sumthin' in it!"

By the time this last "idee" was advanced, Vincent and his passenger had started to leave the place, and those who stood upon the wharf watched them till they had passed from sight.

"You mustn't think hard of my countrymen if they appear a little boorish," said Vincent, with a smile. "The fact is, these are times of peculiar excitement, and the movements of the British are narrowly watched and quickly suspected. Your coming was strange, and in the present state of affairs I do not wonder that it should excite remark, at least."

"O, of course," returned the young man; "I expect all that; but you speak as though there was trouble."

"Ay—and so there is," returned Vincent. "Trouble enough, I ween. The people of these colonies are beginning to tire of the insolent presence of these British troops."

"I do not wonder," said the other, in a frank tone. "They certainly have no business here. But you do not mean that there has as yet been any open trouble."

"Yes, there has. In this very town there was blood spilled last night. British troops were

sent here to seize upon our stores, and they were resisted. Ah, let me tell you, sir, that this state of things cannot last much longer. Either the English king must withdraw his troops and concede to the reasonable demands of the colonies, or else—"

"What?" asked the young stranger, with a look and tone of interest, as Vincent hesitated.

"Else the colonies will make their own bargain, even at the point of the bayonet."

Gray spoke in a low, firm tone, and the deep flash of his black eyes told that he felt what he said—that the sentiment which he uttered was not taken from the voice of others, but that it had its rise in his own bosom.

"Well," thoughtfully murmured his companion, after a few moments of silence, "I do not know but that it is all for the best that it should be as it is. I may make it my home in America, and if I adopt the country I must give my heart to her interests."

"And these interests," added Vincent, in a low, thrilling tone, "are liberty and nationality!"

"And I pray to God that America may possess them."

Young Gray seized his companion by the hand as he heard this generous sentiment. The cord that bound his sympathies to the stranger was strengthened anew, and he felt sure that he had found a congenial heart and soul.

When the two reached the inn where Vincent made it his home, the young stranger entered his

name as Edward Thayer. He selected a room adjoining that of Vincent, and thither he had his chest conveyed. After this Vincent Gray went down to the wharf where his ship lay, and attended to the removal of the last part of her cargo. After the ship was cleared, Vincent called the men about him, and informed them that for the present the vessel would not go to sea again.

"And now," said he, "I have something of importance to communicate to you. I know that I may trust you, and that, if you do not join me, you will not betray me. You know that the British cruisers are committing all sorts of depredations upon our colonial vessels, and I know that the sentiment of our countrymen will sustain us in resisting the outrage. If I can possibly get a vessel, I shall set forth upon the broad track we have just left, on my own responsibility. I mean to strike a blow for the liberty of the colonies. How many of you will join me?"

There was but one answer from the brave seamen who stood upon the ship's deck. They pledged themselves to a man that they would join the young hero heart and hand.

Again Vincent enjoined upon the men that they should be secret about the matter, and when he turned his steps towards his inn once more, he had fully resolved that he would seize the first opportunity to possess himself of an armed vessel, and raise the flag of defiance to the foe.

## CHAPTER III.

MICAH TREVETT.

It was on the very evening succeeding the events last recorded that Vincent Gray went to the dwelling of Mr. Trevett. He was determined to see Olivia in her own home, and if her father was opposed to his visits, he wished to know it—not that he intended to be governed by the old man's will, but could he but learn it, he might then better know how to govern himself. He found Olivia at home, and she at once conducted him to the sitting-room, where a warm fire was glowing upon the hearth.

"Your father is not in, then," said Vincent, as he took a seat near the fire.

"No," returned Olivia. "He has gone to a meeting at the residence of Mr. Simon."

"But that is a meeting of the royalists," uttered Vincent, with considerable surprise in his manner.

"I know it," answered the maiden. "My father told me that they were going to take some measures to crush this spirit of rebellion among the people."

"I knew not that your father belonged to that party."

"Yes, Vincent; he is a firm supporter of the king's cause, and he hates all those who oppose the royal authority."

The young man was silent for a few moments; but at length he said, in a tone made tremulous by deep anxiety:

"Pardon me, Olivia, but I must ask you one question, and I trust you will answer me plainly. How rest your sympathies in this case?"

"Do you not know me well enough to tell that without asking?" said the fair girl, with a slight tinge of reproof in her tone.

"I think I do, Olivia. My own confidence in your nobleness of soul tells me that your sympathies cannot be with your father's."

"Of course they cannot," quickly and energetically replied Olivia. "I love the cause of freedom too well to wish for a tyrant's rule. No, no,—if to be a friend of the colonies, and to wish them independent, constitutes a rebel, then Olivia Trevett is a rebel."

"Spoken like yourself, dearest," exclaimed the young man, as he caught his companion by the hand. "O, I shall love you more now that I know you are so fearlessly noble."

"Not altogether fearless," added Olivia. "My father knows not my real feelings, and I almost fear to have him find them out."

"And have you really occasion to fear your father?"

Olivia raised her large blue eyes to the face of her lover, and two tears stood upon their long silken lashes.

"Alas!" she murmured, "you know not how—"

The maiden hesitated, and after a moment's thought, continued:

"I will not speak of him now. He is not what he was, Vincent. I am not as happy as I used to be when I was younger."

The young man had too much delicacy of feeling to question Olivia further upon the subject of her father's character, for he saw that it made her unhappy; and, besides, he could see enough to assure him that Trevett was far from being a kind parent. He was reflecting upon this matter when a footfall was heard upon the doorstep, and Olivia trembled as she noticed the step of her father. In a few moments more the man entered the room.

Micah Trevett was a man between fifty and sixty years of age. In form he was somewhat tall, but his height was slightly lessened by a contracted roundness of shoulders. His countenance was one not easily to be read, for at the first glance the practised physiognomist would have seen that the lines of his face were the result and marks of characteristics not his by nature. There was a peculiar look of moroseness about the expression of his face; but then it had too much of restlessness about it to be really natural. In short, the very appearance of his countenance told that he was a man whose nature had been marked by extraneous circumstances. His eyes were keen and quick, and his hair was more silvery than is usual with those not yet threescore.

When Micah Trevett entered the room, he appeared considerably surprised at seeing young Gray there, and there was a look of fear, too, mingled with that surprise. Our hero had watched the old man's countenance narrowly, and he could not fail to see this fear-mark, so plainly was it developed.

"Captain Gray," he said, after he had recovered somewhat from his first emotions, at the same time advancing towards where the young man had arisen to his feet, "I did not expect to find you here. I understood, sir, that when my ship's cargo was discharged our contract was at an end. I believe I have settled with you in all that relates to any pecuniary affairs between us."

"Yes, sir," returned Vincent, hardly knowing what answer to make.

"Then, sir, what can be the object of this visit?"

The young man was puzzled. He had not expected so abrupt a reception, and he was hardly prepared for it. He cast a furtive glance upon

Olivia, and he saw that she was pale and trembling. Mr. Trevett noticed the direction of Vincent's look, and he ordered his daughter to leave the room. The tone and manner of this command, and the look that accompanied it, together with the painful effect it had upon Olivia, called a quick sensation of indignation to the bosom of Vincent, and his brow burned as he saw the maiden depart.

"Now, sir," resumed the old man, after his child had gone, "may I know the object of this visit?"

"Mr. Trevett," commenced Vincent, striving to keep back his justly excited passions, "I hardly know how to interpret this reception. Are there no other relations between us but those of mere business? Does your heart hold no other tie but that which binds it to your money-box? Can you not conceive of other causes of friendship but such as result from business?"

"I did not ask for your catechism, sir," coldly returned Trevett. "I asked you a very simple question, and that question you have not yet answered. I wish to know the object of this visit."

"Then, sir, I came as a friend to visit those whom I had reason to suppose were my friends."

"Very well," said the old man, half sarcastically, but yet with some hesitation; "that answer is fair enough; and now I must inform you that your visits are no longer desired. If you have the feelings of a gentleman you will not trouble me again."

"Then you would turn me away from your doors?"

"I simply request that you will not enter them again."

"Mr. Trevett, I had not expected this," said the young man, in a firm, decided tone. "Towards you I have ever been faithful and obliging, and you cannot say that I have ever been remiss in my duty."

"And for all that I have paid you according to contract. What more can you ask?"

"To be treated as a man—to be received with that friendship which is due to me. My father, when he lived, was one of your firmest friends, and I am surely at a loss how to read your heart if you can thus easily tear away all the ties of that friendship now."

Micah Trevett regarded the youth for some moments in silence. There was a look of bitterness upon his face, and his hands were clenched

upon the rail of the chair by his side. At length a slight gleam shone in his eyes, and with a peculiar look he said:

"That is all very fine, young sir; but the truth lies yet behind. You have not told me all—you have not told me what I asked. You well know it is no friendship for me that brings you here. It is my daughter you are after!"

It was now Vincent's turn to hesitate, but he was not long in framing an answer.

"You have a right," he said, "to judge of my feelings towards yourself as you see fit."

"Ay," quickly added Trevett; "and by the same right I judge of your feelings towards my daughter. But you have not yet answered my question."

Vincent Gray was obliged once more to hesitate. His feelings were excited—his soul was stung by the old man's manner, and yet he knew that he must speak calmly. He knew that to betray his passion would ruin his cause at once. He soon grew calm, however, and gazing steadily into Trevett's face, he said:

"You know, sir, that towards your daughter I have ever entertained the warmest feelings of respect and esteem, and it is no wonder that those feelings should have ripened into love. I do love the fair Olivia, sir, and I trust that there is nothing connected with my habits, my character, or my circumstances, that should prevent me from hoping that I might gain her hand."

"Now you have spoken to some purpose, sir," replied Trevett in one of the coldest tones imaginable; "and the sooner you know my opinion upon the subject the better. My answer to your implied request is very simple: you must give up all ideas of my daughter, and from this time forth you must see her no more. I trust you comprehend me."

"I certainly comprehend what you say, sir," returned Vincent, in a tone made trembling by agitation, "but I cannot think that you mean all that your words imply. You do not mean—"

"Stop," interrupted Trevett. "I mean just what I have said, and I think you can understand it without further explanation."

Vincent Gray made no reply. He saw by the old man's looks that he meant just what he had said, and for a while his heart sank within him.

But gradually his lips became compressed, and a bright fire sparkled in his eyes.

"I trust," continued Trevett, "that I shall have no further trouble on your account. You know my decision, and I think you will abide by it."

"I shall make you no promises, sir," returned Vincent. "In my future conduct I shall be governed by my own sense of justice. You may have a legal, physical right to do as you please with regard to the future prospects of your daughter, but you have no moral right to control her against her wishes. She is of age, and she possesses a mind strong enough to govern herself properly. If she loves me as I love her, I shall not pledge myself to your conditions."

"Then," said Trevett, while his face grew pale, "you will place yourself upon your own peril. Approach my doors again, and you may suffer more than you are aware of."

"Very well, sir," returned Vincent, as he took his hat, "we now know each other, and time will show which of us is in the right. I, sir, can lay my hand upon my heart, and look toward God to prosper me in my opposition to your will. I doubt much if you can do the same in reference to your own designs."

The old man trembled, and there was something more than passion in the emotion that moved him. His hand loosened from the chair which he had been holding, and he took a turn across the room. When he stopped, he gazed fixedly into the youth's face.

"Go," said he. "Leave my house, and never let me see you within its doors again. Go. I want to hear no more of your speech."

Vincent knew that what more he might say would be productive of no good, and without another word he left the room. When he had gone, the old man sank into a chair, and gazed vacantly into the fire that was beginning to smoulder upon the hearth. His mind was evidently ill at ease, for the dim light of the coals revealed a face that was worked upon something very much like fear. Whatever may have been that old man's feelings, they were surely not such as a soul upright in its intentions would have given birth to.

## CHAPTER IV.

### A STRANGE SECRET.

FOR several days after his interview with Micah Trevett, Vincent Gray spent his time in looking about among the shipping at the wharves, and also in making the acquaintance of many of the seamen who were thrown out of employ by the tyrannical acts of the British. Of one thing he soon made himself assured, and that was, that he could at any time find able men sufficient to man a patriot vessel, when he should be so fortunate as to find one that suited him; and, more than this, he found that the majority of the seamen were with him in his desire to make a mark on the page of history in favor of his country's independence, and freedom from the mother country's tyranny.

With Edward Thayer our hero had spent much of his time during the week, and the more he became acquainted with the young man, the more he liked him. There was something about the young Englishman's countenance that had arrested Vincent's attention from the first, but what it was he could not tell. At times he felt sure that he had seen him before.

"Tell me," he said, one day, as they sat together in our hero's room, "is it not possible that we have met somewhere before? When I look at your face, and hear you speak, I cannot

divest myself of the idea that I have seen you in years past."

"I know not, Mr. Gray," returned Thayer, "but I do not think it probable. I have been in the East Indies; but, according to your statement, not at the same time you were there. If you spent any time in England when you were a boy—"

"I did," quietly interrupted Vincent. "I spent three years there."

"How long ago was that?"

"Let's see. It must have been eighteen years ago."

"And in what part of England were you?" inquired Thayer.

"I spent most of the time in London. I was there with my father."

"I must have been in London during part of that time," said Thayer, after some little reflection; "but I have no recollection of yourself. Indeed, we were both too young to have laid up much for future memory."

"True, true," murmured Vincent, gazing half vacantly into his companion's face. "And yet 'tis strange how your countenance awakens dull memory in my bosom. However, if there is any

substance to my imaginings I may yet call it to mind."

"Really," added Thayer, with a smile, "I hope you may succeed in calling me to 'mind as you wish, but I fear I cannot help you."

"Never mind," said Vincent.

And yet by the way he looked, it was evident that he did mind very much, for he not only gazed very fixedly upon his companion's countenance, but he also betrayed a great deal of anxious interest as he did so.

"Do you intend to go to sea again at present?" asked Thayer, seemingly more for the purpose of breaking up the uneasiness occasioned by the reverie into which Vincent had fallen, than from any real desire to gain a knowledge of his movements.

"No, I think not," returned our hero. "Or, at all events, I shall not go again in a merchantman for the present. My old employer, Mr. Trevett, will not send his ship out again under the present aspect of affairs."

"Trevett, did you say?" asked the young Englishman, starting as he heard the sound of that name.

"Yes."

"What is his given name?"

"Micah."

"Micah Trevett!" repeated Thayer, half starting from his seat, and then sinking back again, as if seeking to recall some thought.

"Yes," said Vincent, returning his companion's inquisitive look with one of wonder.

"How old a man is he?"

"He must be near sixty."

"Micah Trevett!" again uttered Thayer, starting up from his chair, and taking a turn across the room. "Micah Trevett!"

"Ay, and do you know him?"

"Know him?" iterated the young Englishman, tremblingly violently. "I know him not so well as I wish to. If you know him, tell me of him."

"I can only tell you that he is rich and hard-hearted."

"Ay—go on. Has he a family?"

"Only one child."

"And what is that?"

"A daughter."

Edward Thayer stopped, and sank down into his chair again. His face had assumed an ashy paleness, and he trembled at every joint. But

this state of feelings could not last long. The young man soon recovered from the first effects of the strange shock, and when he was once more calm, his countenance had assumed a rigid expression, and he gazed vacantly upon the floor.

"He must be the man," he murmured to himself; and then raising his eyes to his companion's face, he continued: "You may be surprised at what you have seen, but you must not ask me for an explanation now. I shall be obliged to dive still deeper into your indebtedness, for I must get you to introduce me to Mr. Trevett."

"Ah, sir," returned Vincent, allowing his mind to leave for a while the exciting scene he had just witnessed, "I fear that I cannot accommodate you in that. The old man has forbidden me to ever enter his house again."

"Ah," uttered Thayer.

"Yes," continued Vincent, seeing that his companion looked inquisitive, "and I know not why I should fear to trust you with the secret, and then you will see the peculiarity of my position. It is on his daughter's account that I am banished."

"I understand," delicately replied Thayer. "I understand your meaning perfectly; and I will seek some other means of an introduction to him."

There was a silence of some moments, during which time both of the young men seemed unusually meditative and lost in thought. At length Vincent remarked:

"I am at a loss to conjecture why Mr. Trevett should have turned me off as he did, for I can call on God to witness that in no point of my character or habits can he find objection to me."

"I shall find him out," said Edward Thayer, "and I hope that I may be the means of helping you. Ah, Micah Trevett, you are a—"

The speaker hesitated as he saw that Vincent's eyes were fixed keenly upon him.

"Excuse me," said our hero, "for regarding you so particularly, but I'm sure I cannot help it. I looked upon you with somewhat of anxiety before, but now I am almost nervously so. My own connection with Trevett is peculiar, and I am not all quieted by finding that—"

"I also have some connection with him," said Thayer, seeing that Gray hesitated. "Well, I have some little to do with him if I am not much



mistaken, but I cannot explain myself to you at present; you must not expect it, nor must you blame me for keeping my own secret."

"O, not at all," returned Vincent.

Shortly afterwards young Thayer arose and left the room, and after he had gone Vincent remained for some time meditating upon what had passed. He arose and put more wood upon the fire, and then sat back again in his chair to think of the strange youth who had just left him, and who had awakened feelings of such a peculiar interest in his mind.

The wind was howling without with a cold chilling music, and the streaks of frost upon the inside of the windows told how cold it was; but Vincent Gray noticed it not. He thought of Edward Thayer, and of Micah Trevett; and

anon his mind would stop to rest upon the sweet face of Olivia. He was engaged in this manner when his landlord appeared at the door and informed him that there was some one below who wished to see him.

"Who is it?" asked Vincent.

"A man," laconically returned Boniface.

"Ay,—but what sort of a man?"

"An old man—a sailor, I should say."

"An old sailor? Then he must be an honest man. Send him to me."

"He's rough dressed."

"Never mind. Send him up at once. Let me tell you, my good host, that in these times I look for honest hearts beneath rough dresses," answered Vincent quickly, while his eyes sparkled with animation.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE OLD PATRIOT, AND HIS MISSION.

VINCENT GRAY had not long to wait after his host had gone, for in a few minutes he returned and ushered in the individual whom he had announced. The new-comer was an old man, and his appearance at once bespoke him to be a coast fisherman. He was very short in his stature, and though by no means corpulent, yet he was very large for one of his height, looking somewhat as though he had at some time received a blow upon the head that had literally knocked his frame into a more solid mass. His face was very brown from constant exposure, and his hair, which had evidently once been red, was now of a grizzly hue. His eyes were very small, very gray, and very bright. His hands were huge in their proportions, and as he grasped the brim of his hat with one of them he extended the other to our hero.

"This is Capt'n Gray, I take it," he said.

"Yes, sir," returned Vincent, regarding his visitor with a curious look.

"Well, my name's Durkee—Obadiah Durkee. Them as knows me calls me Obed. And let me tell you, sir, 'at I've seen a good deal of salt water in my day."

"I don't doubt it," returned Vincent, with a smile.

The old man took a seat, and having hauled his chair up to the fire, he unbuttoned the great

pea-jacket, in which he was enveloped, and then turned his attention again upon our hero.

"You 're kind o' layin' on your oars now, I take it," was his first observation after he had made himself at home.

"For the present," answered Vincent.

"Yes," responded Obed. "There's a good many in the same fix." He cast a furtive glance about the room, as if to assure himself that no one was listening, and then he continued:

"There's no puttin' up with this sort o' things much longer. These intarnal Britfishers are givin' wuss and wuss every day. Only last week they robbed me of all my fish. By the great horn spoon, Capt'n Gray, we must n't stand it."

"It is rather hard," said Vincent. He would have smiled again, but he saw that there was a vein of deep feeling beneath the old man's quaintness, and he began to conceive a respect for him. "It seems wrong for us to submit to such treatment," he continued.

"Ay, capt'n. An' 'tis wrong. I don't b'lieve God ever made the colonies for England's footstool. Them's my sentiments, an' I don't care who knows 'em."

Vincent saw that the old man was in earnest, but yet he had no clue to the object of his visit, so he remained quiet, in hopes that he would explain himself. Our hero's silence had the desired



effect, for ere long the old man opened the subject.

"Capt'n Gray," he commenced, "I understand 'at you want to get hold of a good vessel—one 'at 'll do for a reg'lar cruiser."

"Well," said Vincent, becoming at once interested.

"Am I right?"

"Suppose you are, what then?"

"I'd like to know first if I am."

"Well," said our hero, after regarding the old man for some time, and feeling that he could trust him, "you are right."

"Well, then," resumed Obed, drawing his chair nearer to Vincent, and speaking in a lower tone, "I think I know of just the craft you want. It's the same one 'at robbed me of my fish. She's an English brigantine, an' had been cruisin' off the coast here for more 'n a week."

Vincent was now all attention. The idea of capturing a vessel from the enemy had not before entered his mind, but it was none the less welcome for that.

"Do you think she could be captured?" he asked, with much earnestness.

"If it is tried soon," returned the old man. "She 's cruisin' about the coast here, an' if she keeps on robbin' our fishermen she may get caught."

"What sort of a craft is she?"

"O, a beauty," exclaimed the old man, with animation. "As sancy a looking thing as you ever saw. She carries a square mainsail, an' a good heavy boomsail to back it. She's got ten guns, an' she slips around through the water as though her heels was greased. By the great horn spoon, capt'n, she must be took. I'm yer man if you ken only find enough more to carry the thing through."

"But there is no knowing how long she will remain here," suggested Vincent, in a thoughtful mood.

"O, there's no kind o' fear 'bout that," confidently returned Obed. "She's been knockin' about off Nahant an' Marblehead, an' so down towards Lynn, for a week, an' she 'll stay more'n a week longer if she aint drove off. I know she ken be taken if we ken only get the men to do it."

"And where would you gather your force?"

"O, you must do that, capt'n."

"Well, but where?"

"Down on Swampscott beach would be as good a place as any."

"Very well," returned Vincent, after having

thought the matter over; "and now I should like to ask you if you have thought of any plan by which the vessel can be taken."

"Why," said the old man, without hesitation, "we must have men enough to do it."

"I know all that, my dear man; but you are aware that there must be something more than merely men enough to do the fighting. It is no very easy job to get your men in a fighting position against a craft of that description."

"O, I know what you mean," said Obed, elevating his shaggy eyebrows. "Yes, yes, you want to know how we are goin' to get a board the fellow. Well, we'll have to study up some plan for that; but I don't think it 'll be very hard work, for you know when a chap is up to all sorts of mischief he's very apt to git into trouble. I think we can fix a trap for him. At any rate, if we git the men down on Swampscott beach I'll venture but that we'll make some plan work."

"If we could be sure that the brigantine would remain about the coast, perhaps we could," responded Vincent, thoughtfully.

The old man looked a little uneasy as Vincent made this last remark.

"Well, look here, capt'n," said he, "if you don't think the matter is worth running any chances for, I wouldn't have anything to do with it. When I come to see you I thought you wanted to get hold of a good vessel, and I didn't know but you would be willin' to run some risk, for in such times as these I'd be willin' to run a good deal. Howsomever, it don't make much difference, for if you wont—"

"Stop, my good man," interrupted Vincent, appreciating the reproof he had received; "I did not mean that I would run no risk, for, on the contrary, I expect to have to run much before I accomplish all I wish; but this is an important affair, and I wish to understand it thoroughly before I enter upon it. Now, sir, this very evening I will set about enlisting my men, and to-morrow I will be at Swampscott."

"That's right," uttered Obed, his countenance brightening as he spoke. "I'll go right away an' have all the matters fixed that I can."

"Perhaps you can raise some men among your acquaintance," suggested our hero.

"O, sartin. I ken raise a dozen, I guess; and they'll be good ones, too."

Vincent expressed his satisfaction at this, and then he went on and made such arrangements with the old man as he could. He promised that he would be at the designated place by noon

on the next day, and perhaps before, and in the meantime the fishermen were to make what provision they could for capturing the brigantine.

It was nearly dark when the old man left the inn, and as soon as Vincent could obtain his supper he set forth to hunt up his men. He had expected to find this part of the task an easy one, and he was not mistaken. From his previous conversations with the seamen he had learned whom he might trust, and the most he had now to do was to hunt them up and notify them that they were wanted. Before ten o'clock he had found seventy-five men who were ready and anxious to join him, and all of them, too, had pledged themselves to meet him on the next morning with arms sufficient for the enterprise, each one promising to find his own.

When Vincent Gray returned to his inn his heart was alive with the most ardent hope. He

looked forward to the moment when he could place his foot upon the first prize from the enemy with a longing in which was centered the whole patriotism of his zeal. And he was not alone in this feeling. All the seamen who had joined him were equally zealous with himself. They knew that the feelings they entertained towards England and her king were held by the best and most able men in the colonies—they knew that the clergymen of the land were with them in heart—and they felt, too, that the God of justice would uphold them in striving to shake off the chains of the oppressor.

It was with such feelings as these that our hero-patriots planned their operations against the enemy, and with such feelings, too, they determined to win the prize—the dearest, holiest prize of life—Liberty.

## CHAPTER VI.

## THE SLOOP AND THE BRIGANTINE.

THE morning of March 7th, 1775, was calm, clear, and frosty. The air was sharp with its icy breath, but by no means uncomfortable to those who were clothed for a New England winter. At an early hour the hardy seamen began to repair towards a point south of the town—a place secure from observation—and when Vincent Gray arrived he found most of his men already assembled, and before ten o'clock they were all there. They were reviewed and equipped sufficiently for all practical purposes, and without any unnecessary delay they set off for Swampscott, going in parties of six or eight each, and taking as many different routes as they could.

Vincent went ahead, and at about one o'clock he reached the high headland of Swampscott. The first thing that attracted his attention after he gained a view of the sea, was the English brigantine. She was just inside of Egg Rock, and was standing in.

"Upon my soul, Munn," he said, turning to one of his men who stood by his side, "she is a beauty."

"No mistake," was Munn's reply, as he stopped to gaze upon the vessel. "She's a saucy looking craft, any how."

"I should like to have the management of those batteries," continued Vincent.

"You must have," responded the other. "If your old fisherman can contrive a way to put us on board we can do the rest."

"Let's go on," said our hero, whose thoughts at that moment were not formed for speech. "Let's go on and find old Durkee. There come more of our boys over the hill. By the mass, we must not be found thick up here in sight, or the brigantine may be making us out."

With that Vincent and his party started on, and having reached the cove above the beach they found the cot of Obadiah Durkee, and the old man himself at the door.

"So you've come," cried Obed, as he recognized our hero.

"Yes," returned Vincent.

"By the great Moses, Capt'n Gray, I was almost afraid you'd be too late."

"Ah, and have you any plan studied up?" uttered Vincent, with energy.

"Part of one," said Obed, "but where are the rest of your men?"

"They'll be along in a few minutes—seventy-five of them."

"Jerusalum, that's good. Now come in, come in, capt'n, an' I'll tell you just what's turned up. By the great horn spoon, it does seem as though the fates were working for us."

When Vincent entered the fisherman's cot he found ten men already assembled there. They were all of them younger than Obed, but yet all middle-aged men, and men, too, whose frames were put together for strength and endurance. The old man introduced them as friends of his who were ready for the expedition on hand, and after Vincent had greeted them, he turned towards his host.

"Now," said he, "what have you done? You speak as though you had found some sea-room to work in."

"Ay," exclaimed Obed, with a brightly sparkling eye. "The Englishman's given us the course himself, and I don't see what's to hinder us from taking him. Here's Dick Powell, here, happened to put out after fish before daylight this morning. He ketched only a few, an' was comin' in with 'em when the brigantine overhauled him. They took what fish he had, an' then told him that if he would come out this afternoon an' ketch a lot they'd buy 'em. Dick, yer see, knowed all about our plans, an' so he just promised 'em 'at he would. He told 'em 'at he'd take his smack an' go outside and git all he could, an' they might have 'em if they'd be sure an' pay him. Yer see he pretended to be very 'ticular 'bout the pay so 's to make it 'pear as though he was in earnest 'bout it. Of course the Englishman don't mean to pay for any of the fish, he only said that so as to gum us; but he 'll find where the gum comes in afore another day, eh, capt'n."

"I hope so," returned Vincent.

"O, I know so," added Obed, with much confidence.

By this time all of Vincent's men had arrived, and as many as possible had crowded into the cot, while the remainder staid in the yard. Our hero had gained a pretty clear idea of what old Durkee meant, and this he explained to his men. Some of them were well acquainted with Dick Powell, and they knew him to be a shrewd, calculating man.

"Now, Durkee," said our hero, addressing the old fisherman, "how large a craft is your smack?"

"O, big enough for our use. Come, we'll go and look at her, for it's about time we were off. Come on, all hands."

The party followed on after the old man as he led the way to a place which had been scooped out at the upper end of the beach on purpose to receive the smack, and Vincent found the craft

larger than he had expected. She was a sloop, and of some sixty or seventy tons burthen; and upon examination he found that his men could easily be accommodated in her hold.

"Now," said he, turning to Obed, "if I understand you rightly, you will put us alongside of the brigantine if we will hide ourselves here in the hold?"

"Exactly," returned the old man; "and the sooner you do the thing the better. We 'll put the old smack alongside o' the Englishman, an' we 'll help you do the rest, too."

Our hero explained all to his men, and they were eager for the onset. Each man had his arms ready for use, and they were anxious to try their merits. They got on board of the smack as soon as possible, and when they entered the hold six of the fishermen joined them, leaving only Obed and four of his companions in charge of the deck. Our adventurers found themselves in rather close quarters, but by knocking away the bulkhead of the little cabin they managed to make good breathing room, and if they found their situation slightly uncomfortable, the object they had in view made it bearable.

As soon as Vincent Gray and his men were safely packed away below, Obed got his sloop off and made sail. As he passed out the brigantine hove down and hailed him.

"Where are you bound now?"

"After fish," returned Dick Powell, who stood by the quarter-rail.

"That's right," shouted the Englishman, "I'll see you when you come back."

"Yes—hope you will," responded Powell, as the sloop dashed on, while the brigantine passed under his stern. "And a mighty pretty sight you'll get I'm thinking," he continued, as he gazed after the Englishman."

"By the powers, I guess he will," added Obed, giving the helm a push to the leeward.

For over an hour the sloop stood on, and then she hove to, and the fishermen threw over their lines. They caught a few fish—cod and haddock—and after waiting about two hours, Obed broached the idea of returning.

"If we start now," he said, having called Vincent on deck, "it will be nearly dusk by the time we get back. Yes, it'll be most dark, for the sun aint sartinly more'n half an hour high."

"Then let us start," said Vincent. "Let us start at once, for I want to see this business done."

"So do I," resumed Obed. "Now in less'n

an hour I'll be alongside o' the brigantine, an' you must have your men ready."

"I'll do my part," said the young man.

The sloop was accordingly put back for the shore, and Vincent returned to the hold, where he informed his men of what was being done, and at the same time bade them be in readiness to follow him.

The wind was nearly north, and consequently the sloop had it nearly upon her starboard beam. At the end of half an hour the brigantine was seen standing in, but shortly afterwards she went about and stood out upon the larboard tack, heading across the sloop's course.

"He wants his fish," said Powell, who had now taken the helm.

"Ay," returned Obed, breathless with anxiety and excitement. "Mind the helm—mind the helm, Dick. Here, boys, let's give the sheets a pull,—and you may luff a little, Dick. 'T wout do to 'pear too anxious to fall in with him. I'd rather seem as though I was goin' to run in by him."

Powell made no answer, for he had his eye upon the brigantine. Everything was now quiet upon the fisherman's deck, and the men were anxiously watching the coming vessel. The sloop had not yet crossed the course of the Englishman, and as Obed could calculate, she would not, it being evident that the latter would pass under the sloop's fore-foot if both vessels kept on as they were now. And so it turned out; for in less than fifteen minutes the brigantine came dashing across the Yankee's bows, and as she was clear she went about, and by the time the sloop was up with her she had everything snug and taut on the starboard side.

"My soul?" uttered Powell, as he witnessed the evolution, "what a thing to work. May I

be blessed if she don't cut about in the water like a dolphin."

"She's a beauty," responded Obed, "a beauty, and no mistake." And thus speaking, he went to the hatchway and looked down.

"All ready there?" he asked, in a clear, earnest tone.

"All ready," returned Vincent.

"Then be on hand. I'll give you the word when it is time."

"Hallo, there!" at this moment shouted the Englishman.

"Hallo!" returned Obed.

"Got any fish?"

"Yes—plenty."

"Then heave to, and we'll send a boat."

"You know you promised to pay for 'em," cried Powell.

"O, certainly. Come, heave to, quick."

The brigantine hove her main-topsail aback, expecting, of course, that the sloop would also heave to at once; but instead of that the latter tautened her sheets and luffed.

"Avast, there, you lubber!" yelled the Englishman, in alarm. "You'll be afoul of us."

"Starboard! starboard!" shouted Obed, turning to Dick, who had the helm. "Good gracious sakes alive, what yer thinkin' on, Dick. Look out, now."

But Dick had no thoughts of moving his helm. He held it almost hard a-port with a perfect disregard of his commander's injunctions, and the result was such as might have been anticipated. In a minute more the sloop's bowsprit went poking in amongst the brigantine's larboard fore rigging, and on the same instant the old fisherman leaped to the main hatch and gave the signal to those below.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE PATRIOT CRUISER.

#### Blaisdell

"Now see what you've done, and be blowed to you!" yelled the commander of the brigantine, as he rushed forward to where the fisherman's bowsprit was poked up over his bulwarks. "Now don't git mad, cap'n," expostulated Obed, "for by the great Jerusalem, I couldn't help it."

"Then you must be a confounded lubber. Now—"

The Englishman ceased speaking, for at that moment he saw the heads of half a dozen men appear above the combing of the sloop's hatchway; in an instant he seemed to suspect that all was not right; but he had no time to collect his thoughts for action, for before he could fairly think of what he saw, the sloop's deck was literally covered with armed men, and on the next instant they began to pour over the bulwarks of his own vessel.

The Englishman leaped back to the wheel, where his sword hung in its becket, and having seized the weapon, he shouted for his men to arm themselves. He did not stop to count the host that had thus come upon him, but when, a moment afterwards, he saw the invaders still pouring in upon him, he began to tremble with something besides excitement.

The brigantine's men were all of them upon the deck, but it was not an easy thing for them

to arm themselves. To be sure the arm-chests were on deck, and the lids were thrown open, but the Americans easily beat off those who had gathered about them, and thus they gained a decided advantage. The next movement of the British sailors was towards the pikes which were arranged around the masts, but here they were again non-plussed.

"This brigantine is mine!" shouted Vincent, as he leaped upon the quarter-deck.

"Not quite yet," returned the English commander, at the same moment crossing swords with his young invader.

"O, but you must yield," said Vincent, parrying a thrust that was made at his bosom. "I have made up my mind that this vessel is mine."

"Not yet—not yet," hissed the Englishman, beating furiously at the young man with his sword.

"Look out—look out," said Vincent, throwing his weapon carefully about, "you are no match for me at this game."

And so it proved; for, on the third movement from that the Englishman's sword went whizzing over the rail.

"Now yield to me! Yield at once!" shouted Vincent, pointing his sword at his adversary's breast. "There's not a moment to spare. Speak

the word, or you die on the spot. *I am in earnest!*"

The disarmed captain was bewildered; but he had enough of sense to see that his young conqueror was not to be trifled with, and in a sinking, painful tone he spoke the word of surrender.

"Then call off your men," ordered Vincent. "I do not wish to spill more blood than can be avoided. You see my men have the advantage."

This order, however, was not necessary, for the Englishmen saw that their captain had surrendered, and instinctively they drew back from the hopeless conflict in which they were engaged. Our hero ordered his own men to desist from the conflict, and then he proceeded to have the brigantine's men disarmed.

By this time it was fairly dark, and after a short consultation among the Americans, it was arranged that the brigantine should stand off a few miles, and there lay to till morning, while Powell and three of his companions should take the sloop back to Swampscott. Accordingly the smack was got clear from the brigantine's fore rigging, and the crew that had been appointed for her went on board, and sailed her off out of the way.

Seeing that the brigantine was to remain out over night, Vincent thought it prudent to put his prisoners in irons, and having found those that belonged to the vessel, he at once set about the job. All the Englishmen were thus secured excepting three of the officers, and they, upon giving their pledge of honor that they would not engage in any disturbance, were allowed to go at large.

Our hero found that in all he had seventy-eight prisoners. Only three of the enemy had been killed in the melee, so that the vessel's crew had amounted to eighty-one men, while his own force, all told, had numbered eighty-seven.

As soon as the brigantine's head was put about, and some half dozen battle-lanterns lighted and arranged about the deck, Vincent went aft, and having called Obed and one or two of his own men to accompany him, he went down into the brigantine's cabin. He had but little time to take a survey of things before he was joined by the prisoner captain. The latter stood for a few moments and regarded his captor in silence, and at length he sat down upon a rich divan that was arranged in the after part of the cabin.

"You, I suppose, sir, are commander here now," he said, addressing Vincent Gray.

"Yes, sir," returned the young man.

"Well, sir, if it would not be impertinent, I should like to know what you mean to do now that you have got command of one of his majesty's vessels?"

"You mistake, my dear sir," said Vincent, with a smile. "This is now a Yankee vessel; but if you wish to know what I mean to do with her, I will tell you. Henceforth she is to be a patriot cruiser."

"You mean a pirate," returned the Englishman, with bitter sarcasm.

"No, sir. She has been a pirate until now, but she will be so no more. You forget yourself, sir."

"Do I? I'm thinking 'tis you who have forgotten yourself. It may be a very pretty thing now to find yourself in command of this vessel, but it will prove a sore job for you before it is finished. You know how piracy is punished."

"Ay, I do know," returned Vincent, boldly; "and your tyrant king will know how it is punished. Don't talk to me of piracy. Look to your own hands, sir. What have been your deeds since you have been cruising about this coast? You have been robbing our people whenever the opportunity was afforded. You have driven honest men from their vocation—you have robbed them of their hard-earned store—you have invaded the sanctity of our people's houses, pilfered from their flocks and broods; your king and his parliament have shut up our harbors, placed a navy to infest our waters, quartered an insulting army upon our shores, and driven our people to starvation and want; and now you talk to me of piracy! Out upon thee and thy whole race of hirelings! By the heavens above me, sir, there be hands and hearts in these colonies that are nervous. This is but a beginning of what is yet to come. Pirates, eh? O, you shall know how your own piracies shall be punished. This craft is now in the hands of those who have bitter wrongs to redress, and sweet liberty to gain."

The Englishman shrank from the burning gaze of the young patriot, and for some moments he was speechless; but at length he said, with some hesitation in his manner:

"Do you mean that you are going to cruise against the king?"

"Of course I do."

"Then your race will be a short one."

"It may be," returned Vincent, with a flashing eye, "but," he added, in a low, solemn tone,

"I say, with thousands of my countrymen, my

life and liberty shall go together for my country!"

"Ay," uttered old Durkee, whose enthusiasm was equal to Vincent's, but whose language was not so ample for its expression, "that's the idee. Whilst we live we'll have liberty, and when we can't have that we may as well die as not. By the crown of old Neptune, Mr. Englishman, you may tell your king that the patriots aint afraid to die, but they wont be trod upon."

The Englishman said no more, and shortly afterwards Vincent went on deck.

In the morning Vincent Gray had a better chance to examine the proportions of his prize, and he was agreeably disappointed upon finding her much better than he had expected. In every way she was proportioned to meet his most fastidious taste, and a few experimental evolutions convinced him that she was everything that he could desire. She carried ten guns, all of them eighteen-pounders, and the two bow guns were long ones. She was well armed in other respects,

and when our hero put his vessel's head towards the shore he felt well pleased with his fortune.

Before noon he had landed all his prisoners, leaving them at liberty to go where they pleased, and as soon as this was done he put back to Swampscott, where the four men who had taken charge of the sloop came on board.

Vincent's next movement was to organize his crew. Lyman Munn was chosen for the second in command, Dick Powell for the third, while old Durkee took the office of boatswain, leaving the gunner to be appointed when the most suitable one could be determined on.

Before night the patriot cruiser was ready for action, and with nine hearty cheers the men assumed their respective stations. They had a vessel in the qualities of which they could trust—they had a commander in whose skill and judgment they reposed the utmost confidence, and they had hearts that were longing for the first blow that could be struck for the honor of their flag and the good of their country.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### A STARTLING MESSAGE.

It was a week after the capture of the English brigantine that Micah Trevett returned from a visit to Boston, where he had spent two days. It was just dark when he entered his house, and having eaten his supper, he sat down by the fire in his sitting-room.

"Olivia," he said, addressing his daughter, who was alone with him in the room, "have you heard from any of your acquaintances who that young man was that landed here a few weeks since from the man-of-war that put in here?"

"No, sir," returned the maiden.

"You knew there was such an one."

"I heard something about it, for it was made the talk of the whole town."

"Ay—I know it," said Trevett; and then he fell into a thoughtful mood. But his thoughts were evidently uneasy ones, for he moved nervously about in his chair, and his face looked pale and haggard. At length he seemed to arouse himself, and turning again towards his child, he said:

"Well, Olivia, that young Gray has turned out just as I expected."

The maiden looked at her father inquisitively.

"He has turned out to be a regular pirate," resumed the old man. "I never thought him much better."

At first Olivia turned pale, but she knew that

her father's last statement was false; for she was well aware that he had ever placed the utmost confidence in the young man's integrity, and from this she thought that the whole might be untrue.

"What do you mean?" she at length asked.

"I mean just what I say. Vincent Gray has associated himself with a band of desperadoes, and they have seized upon one of his majesty's vessels, and are now cruising about on a regular piratical expedition."

"You mean, then, that he has taken up arms against England?"

"Ay, against his lawful king and master; but he will soon be caught, and then his head will answer for his crime."

There was a shudder passed through the fair girl's frame; but yet her countenance showed that she felt thankful for the information she now had heard. She knew that her lover had wished to obtain a vessel, and she knew why he had now gained one. In her heart she sympathized with him, and she inwardly prayed him God-speed on his noble mission.

"What do you think of his doings?" Trevett asked, after watching his daughter for a few moments.

"I do not know that I could express an opinion," returned the maiden. "Mr. Gray has ap-

peared to be an honest, virtuous man, and if he has now taken up arms against the king, I suppose he has done only what he thought was right."

"Ah," uttered the old man, gazing fixedly upon his child, "do you mean to excuse the fellow for what he has done?"

"I do not know that there is any need of my excusing him, sir."

"Perhaps you think he is doing right."

Olivia saw that her father's eyes were fixed upon her, and for the first time in her life she resolved to speak her mind when she knew it was in opposition to his. His own acts of late had been such as to tend towards the estrangement of his child, and she felt that the sooner she expressed her honest opinions, the better. Her father's whole course of conduct in relation to Vincent Gray had deeply wounded her heart, and the love which a child might feel for a parent was fast growing dim and cold in her bosom. She trembled when she thought of it, but she could not hide the truth—she could not put out of sight the fact that respect for her father was losing ground in her soul.

"Perhaps you think he is doing right," Mr. Trevett repeated.

"I hope he is," tremblingly returned Olivia.

"Ay; but what is your opinion in the premises?"

"Then, frankly, I think he is doing right."

Trevett started back aghast. He had not expected that the girl would dare to avow such opinions.

"Do you know what you say?" he asked, in a hissing tone.

"Yes, sir," returned Olivia, more emboldened now that she had broken the ice.

"I should like to know if you are a rebel at heart?"

"If to pray for the national freedom and independence of these colonies makes a rebel, then I am one."

"Now, girl, I shall know how to treat you," exclaimed the old man, in a tone of deep passion.

"I had suspected that you had a rebel heart, both against your father, and against your king; but I shall look out that you suffer the penalty of your sin. You may not be aware of the fact that my loyalty can overcome the parent in my bosom."

"O, do not profane that sacred subject," said the fair girl. "Do not talk of a parent's love until you can exercise some of it."

"Silence, girl!"

Just as Micah Trevett uttered that exclamation there came a loud rap upon the door. He started from his seat, and went to see who was there.

"Does Mr. Trevett live here?" asked the applicant.

"Yes. I am he."

"Ah. I have a letter for you."

"Then come in."

The old man led the way to the sitting-room, and he was followed by Edward Thayer.

"A letter, you say," said Trevett, after he had motioned his visitor to a seat.

"Yes, sir," returned Thayer. "Trevett, your name is—Micah Trevett."

"Yes, sir," answered the old man, gazing sharply into his face.

"Then the letter is for you, sir."

As Thayer spoke, he handed the letter to the old man.

"'Tis from England!" uttered Trevett, looking at the superscription, and turning pale.

"Yes, sir."

"Are you the man who landed from the man-of-war a few weeks since?"

"Yes, sir," calmly returned the young man, at the same time returning his interlocutor's look with a sharp, steady gaze.

Micah Trevett tore open the letter, and while he was reading it Edward Thayer turned his look upon Olivia. She met his gaze, and for a moment her eyes fell to the floor. There was a bright spark came to the youth's eyes as he looked upon her handsome countenance, and when she again looked up he spoke to her.

"A cool evening," said he.

"Yes, sir," tremblingly returned the maiden.

Thayer's gaze became more earnest than before, but Olivia bent not her eyes before it again.

Olivia returned the look of the young man steadily, until her eyes became dim, and then she bent her head as if in deep thought.

The young man started when he looked again upon Micah Trevett, for that individual was ashy pale, and he was trembling like an aspen. He caught the gaze of the youth and his daughter fixed upon him, and in a quick, excited tone, he bade the latter leave the room. After she had gone he turned to his visitor.

"Do you know the contents of this letter, sir?" he asked, trying with all his power to appear calm.

"No, sir," returned Thayer.

"Do you know its import?"

"I only know that a gentleman in London handed it to me, and asked me to deliver it to you."

"And was it for that purpose that you came to this place?"

"Partly."

"Then you have other business in Salem."

"Perhaps so."

Trevett hesitated, and looked uneasily upon his visitor. He was evidently worked upon by some deep, powerful emotion.

"Did that man-of-war put in here expressly to land you?" he asked, after a few moments of thought.

"I couldn't tell you, sir, I'm sure, whether the two ships would have come to off here or not if I had not been on board. I only know that I wished to be landed here, and the commodore granted my request."

"Who was the commodore?"

"Montague."

Micah Trevett arose from his chair and began to pace the room. At length he stopped in front of the place where the young man sat.

"What is your name?" he asked.

"Edward Thayer."

Trevett looked hard at the youth, and again he crossed the room. When he came back again, he sat down.

"Look ye, sir," he said, in a quick, excited tone, "do you know one idea that this letter contains?"

"Why do you ask me that question again?" returned the young man, with considerable severity.

"Because I would have some explanation from you, if you could give it."

"Then I fear you will not get it, for I know nothing of it."

"Neither do I," said the old man, as he folded the letter and placed it in his bosom; "I know nothing of it. Either they have mistaken the man, or else—"

"O, sir," interrupted Edward, "if you think the letter was not intended for you, I will take it again. I will take it, sir, if there has been a mistake."

"No, no," quickly returned the old man, at

the same time placing his hand upon his bosom, as if to assure himself that he had not lost the missive. "I think the letter was intended for me, but yet I am unable to analyze its meaning. Why have you not left it before?"

"Because I had not found you out."

Again Trevett gazed into his visitor's face, and he could not fail to detect the look of contempt that rested there. He was sure that he was not mistaken in the nature of the look, but the assurance did not serve to make him any more easy. Thayer guessed what was passing in the old man's mind, and without further remark he arose from his chair.

"I think I will take my leave," he said, as he buttoned up his coat.

"Where do you stop?" asked Trevett, as he, too, arose from his chair.

"I am stopping at Pollock's inn, at present."

"Then I shall know where to find you, if I wish to see you."

Micah Trevett conducted the young man to the door, and after his visitor had gone, he returned and sank down into his chair. For a long time he sat there and gazed into the fire. Deep shadows flitted across his countenance, and in every look he plainly showed that he was tortured by some agonizing thought.

"By heavens!" he uttered, starting up from his seat, "I'll not trust that man. He knows more than he chooses to reveal. He is—oh!"

It was a stunning thought that at that moment flashed across the old man's mind, and with a tottering step he went back to his chair, where he bowed his head upon his hands, and thought deeply and long. At length he raised his head and looked about him. His face was pale as marble, his features were rigid, and his eyes were fixed and glassy. Again he opened the letter and read its contents. The pallor of his face gave place to a deep flush, and his hands were clutched.

"I'll know him!" he gasped, as he thrust the now crumpled letter back into his bosom. "I'll know him! By my soul's redemption, I'll know him. *The game shall not be won from me now!*"

Micah Trevett looked terrible now;—he looked like one who enters a list where either himself, or another, must die.

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE SOUL-BARTER.

On the next morning after Edward Thayer's visit, Mr. Trevett met his daughter in the sitting room. His face still looked pale, and his brow was dark and contracted; his whole appearance showing pretty plainly that he had not slept much during the night. He met the maiden's look with a troubled expression, and when she bade him good morning he returned her no answer. He went and stood with his back to the fire, and gazed down upon the carpet. At length he raised his eyes to the face of his child.

"Olivia," he said, "do you know that young man who was here last night with that letter?"

"No, sir," returned she, gazing carefully into the old man's face.

"Don't you remember ever to have seen him before?"

"No, sir."

"Is there nothing about his countenance that looks familiar to you?"

"Not that I know of. I surely did not notice any such."

Micah Trevett eyed his daughter sharply for several moments, and then he turned away towards the door, and took his hat.

"Breakfast is almost ready," said Olivia, as she saw that her father was preparing to go out.

"Never mind," returned the old man; "you

may eat when you get ready; I may not be back in season."

He spoke in a husky tone, and his hand shook when he laid it upon the door-latch. In the hall he put on his over-coat, and then started out into the street. The air was biting cold, but the old man noticed it not. He moved on with a quick, nervous step, and when he reached Pollock's inn he stopped and tried to look through the windows of the bar-room, but the thickly gathered frost prevented him. He stopped upon the doorstep a few moments, irresolute, but at length he gathered resolution and went in. He felt relieved when he entered the bar-room to find no one there but a boy, the rest of the people having gone to breakfast. He called for spirits, and having drank nearly a tumbler-ful, he turned towards the small desk where lay the register of the inn. He opened it and looked over its contents until his eyes rested upon the name of *Edward Thayer*. With a trembling hand the old man shut the book, and then hastened away. Several times he stopped and gazed down upon the snow-crust, and then kept on again. In this way he walked until he reached the outskirts of the town towards Danvers. Here, situated at a little distance from the road, was a small hut among the bushes, with a beaten footpath leading to it. Towards this hut Trevett took his



way, and having reached the door he gave a rap.

"Who's there?" cried a voice from within.

"A friend," returned Trevett.

"Ay,—that's a very easy word to speak," came from the person inside; "but it don't often mean much. Who are you?"

"Micah Trevett."

"Aha! All alone?"

"Yes."

In a moment more the door was opened, and the old man was admitted. The individual whom we thus find was a peculiar looking being. He was a short, thick-set man, somewhere about forty years of age, and of that peculiar cast of countenance where character is not easily read. He looked shrewd, and, if he was a villain, he had the power to hide it from his face.

"You are out early this morning, Mr. Trevett," said the man, as he pulled a chair up to the old stone fire place, and motioned his visitor to be seated.

"Yes, Ithemar," returned the old man. "I am out early, for I have important business on my hands."

Ithemar looked sharply at his visitor, but he made no reply. Micah Trevett looked cautiously about the room—it was the only one in the house—and then he turned towards his companion.

"Are we alone?" he asked.

"Yes. I don't have many visitors here."

"No, I suppose not. There are but few who know you."

"As many as need be."

"Yes,—of course," returned Trevett. And then, after a moment's pause, he added, "it wouldn't be very safe for you to be generally known."

"Ah!" uttered Ithemar, with a sudden start.

"O, don't be alarmed. I only want to let you know that I understand your position. I know that you have been a pirate, and that—"

"Stop, stop. Look ye, Micah Trevett; when I sailed on board your ship, I did my duty, and with what I did before, or with what I have done since, you have nothing to do. I don't think," he continued, in a lower tone, "that you would betray me, at all events."

"Of course not," returned the old man, slightly shrinking before the threatening look of the pirate. "I have come for a very different purpose, I assure you."

"Well, then, let's know what it is."

"Do you want to earn money?" asked Trev-

ett, with a tremulousness in his tone which he could not avoid.

"That depends upon circumstances. First—how much?"

"Why, as for that matter, it shall be almost your own price."

"Well, that's fair, certainly. Few men could object to that part of the arrangement. Now for the rest."

Micah Trevett was not used to the kind of business in which he had engaged, and he hesitated. He was now entering upon a path he had never trodden before, though he had long been travelling in the road that led to it. He had once turned out from the true path of life—he had left the road of Right—and now he was fast entering upon ways that were dark and dreary. Had he, years before, been pointed to the ground on which he now stood, he would have shuddered with horror, and his soul would have shrank from it as shrinks mankind from death. But, short-sighted, grasping man, he had leaped forth into the quagmire, and now he was wallowing in its very depths.

"Ithemar," said the old man, while his lip trembled, and his eye wandered uneasily about, "you must pledge me that you will not betray me, even if you do not accept my proposal."

"You may rely upon my secrecy, sir," returned Ithemar.

"Then," said the old man, with an effort, "I want you to—"

"Go on, Mr. Trevett. No one hears or sees you but myself."

Ithemar forgot the great Eye that looks through all things, and perhaps Micah Trevett forgot it.

"There's a man in Salem who is in my way," continued Trevett. "I want him removed."

"Ah,—now you talk. Who is he?"

"I do not think you know him. He has very recently arrived here from England."

"Not the man who landed from the English man-of-war?" said Ithemar.

"Yes—the same. But how did you know?" asked Trevett, regarding his companion in much surprise.

"O, I chanced to be down on the wharf when he came in, and I saw him go off with Vincent Gray up to Pollock's inn. I have my eyes about me, sir."

"So it would seem," said the old man, in a troubled mood. "You say he went with young Gray?"

"Yes—because it happened to be Gray who went out after him."

"Ah, that's the reason, was it?" returned the old man, appearing to be somewhat relieved by this explanation.

"I suppose so."

"Young Gray has got himself into hot water," resumed Trevett, seeming desirous to rest from the subject he had broached.

"Ah!" was Ithemar's reply, as he looked into his companion's face.

"Yes,—he's seized one of the king's vessels, and changed her into a rebel cruiser."

"What?" uttered Ithemar, starting from his seat; "Vincent Gray seized an English vessel?"

"Yes,—a brigantine—the Spark."

"I know that craft, and a beauty she is, too. And he has commenced cruising against the king?"

"Yes, the villanous rebel."

"He must be a rebel to do such a thing as that," returned Ithemar, with a look and tone which Micah Trevett could not analyze.

"So he is," said the latter; "but I do not think he'll run long without being brought up."

"I don't know," thoughtfully replied Ithemar, sinking back upon his seat, and putting more wood upon the fire. "He's got a smart craft under him, and I know he is a good sailor. If there's a man in the colonies that can sail his vessel, young Gray is the man. But go on with your business, sir. I want to hear the last of it."

"Well, Ithemar, I want you to dispose of this Edward Thayer, as he calls himself; and I want it done quickly, too. Now, will you do it?"

"How do you want him disposed of?" asked the pirate, with a keen, searching look.

Again Trevett hesitated.

"Come, come, sir, if you want me to do you a favor, you must surely tell me how it is to be done."

"I want the fellow killed!" uttered the old man, with a shudder.

"Now you talk."

"And will you do it?"

"That depends upon circumstances. What will you give me?"

"Name your price."

"Say a hundred pounds."

"I will pay them to you," uttered the old man, with avidity. "I will pay them now if you will promise to do the job."

"No, no,—I'll not take your money now. You shall pay me after I have done the work, and then there will be no grumbling."

"But will you do the work? May I depend upon you?"

"Of course I cannot promise that I will do it. The most I can promise is that I will try."

"Well, Ithemar, if you will try, I can ask no more. When will you make the attempt?"

"As soon as possible, and when it is done I will come and let you know."

"Do not come by daylight."

"O, no. I'll come, if I come at all, when none will see me to know me."

"Then I shall trust the affair with you," said Mr. Trevett, arising and buttoning up his coat. "Be careful in the matter, Ithemar, and if harm is likely to come to you, I will help shield you from it."

"Never mind that, sir," returned Ithemar, with a strange smile. "I will look out that no danger comes to me."

"Very well; only do the work quickly, and let it be done surely."

Micah Trevett hastened away from Ithemar's hut, as though he would escape from the business he had been doing. He walked back towards the town like one who flees from some danger; but he fled in vain. He could not escape the demon he had courted. The evil spirit was with him—it was part of him; it had a home in his soul, and there it was gnawing at the very vitals of the man!



## CHAPTER X.

### THE GUNNER. Hithamar

THERE was a wide, wild sensation produced by the seizure of the English brigantine by the patriots. The loyalists were startled with wonder and indignation, and the patriots were awakened more keenly to a sense of their own powers and responsibilities. General Gage offered a large reward for the re-capture of the brigantine, and Admiral Graves despatched two corvettes and a brig to cruise after her.

Vincent Gray was aware that the most strenuous exertions would be made to take him, and hence he kept out of the way until he could systematically drill his men; for before he fairly entered the lists against those who might be more powerful than himself in regard to might and numbers, he desired that his men should at least have the advantage of thorough discipline. One thing alone needed more practice than all else, and that was, the handling of the guns, but he hoped soon to perfect his men in that branch of naval warfare.

The Spark (Vincent did not see fit to change the vessel's name) had been a fortnight in the patriots' hands when our hero felt a desire to visit Salem. It was after dark when he came to anchor off the town, and having left the vessel in charge of old Durkee, with injunctions that a strict watch should be kept, he lowered his boat and went on shore. He landed around on the

north side of the town, and then told his boatmen that they might return to the brigantine, and also that he wished them to come for him at midnight, and if he was not there at that time, to wait for him.

Our hero's first movement was towards Pollock's inn, for he had left his trunk there, and he had papers and clothing which he wished to obtain. It was eight o'clock when he reached the inn, and having noticed that there were quite a number of people in the bar-room, he went at once to the room he had formerly occupied, but he found the door locked. He thereupon went to the next door and knocked, and it was soon opened by Edward Thayer.

"Upon my soul!" uttered the young Englishman, as he recognized his visitor, "where upon earth did you come from?"

"—sh!" returned Vincent, casting his eyes quickly over his shoulder. "I think some one has followed me up stairs."

Thayer quickly brought a light, but no one was to be seen.

"I surely heard some one," said Vincent, gazing carefully about.

"It may have been one of the boarders going to his room," suggested Thayer.

"Ah, yes; I did not think of that," returned Vincent, as he followed his friend into the room

and took a seat by the fire, having first, however, taken the precaution to lock the door upon the inside.

"Now, my dear Gray," uttered Thayer, as soon as they were seated, "tell me where you have been—what you've been doing, and what you are going to do. I declare, I've been lonesome since you have been gone."

"And have you not heard of my doings?" asked Vincent.

"Yes,—O yes. Everybody has heard of it; but I want the particulars from your own lips."

"First, tell me if my things are safe in the other room."

"Yes. When you had gone I locked the door and took the key myself."

"I did not know as our host would allow that."

"O, as for that matter," returned Thayer, with a smile, "I promised him that I would see that the rent of the room was paid, and so he let me keep the key. Now don't go to wasting thanks," continued the speaker, as he saw that Vincent was about to reply, "but tell me of your adventure, for I am anxious to hear it."

Vincent did thank him, nevertheless, and then he went on and related all the circumstances connected with the capture of the brigantine, and also of his subsequent movements. After he had concluded, Edward Thayer remained for some time silent, but a length he said:

"O, Vincent, I should love to join you in your cruising."

"By my soul, Edward, you have the chance. Come—there's a berth for you."

"No, no; I should love to do it, but circumstances at present forbid."

At this moment there was a rap upon the door. "Who's there?" asked Thayer, rising from his seat.

"A friend," returned the applicant.

"But who? What's your name?"

"I'll tell you when I come in."

"Who do you wish to see?"

"Both of you."

"Both," repeated Vincent, in a whisper; "it must be somebody, then, who knows that I am here."

"—sh! I'll see," returned Thayer, and then turning towards the door again, he asked:

"Who is it that you wish to see?"

"Vincent Gray, and Edward Thayer. Come, let me in, for I may benefit you both. I am alone."

"Let him in," said Vincent, "I am well armed, and if he means evil, he may get the worst of it."

Thayer unlocked the door, and the applicant entered. He approached the fire, and having thrown back the collar of the thick pea-jacket which he wore, and removed his hat, he turned his gaze upon our hero.

"What?" exclaimed Vincent, starting up in surprise, "Ithamar!"

"Yes, Capt'n Gray," returned the new comer. "So it seems you know me."

"Who would ever forget you?" said our hero, in reply, at the same time reseating himself.

"I shouldn't suppose you would,—at any rate, not so soon as this."

"Are you acquainted with Mr. Thayer?"

"No; I only saw him when he landed with you."

"O, I thought you knew him," said Vincent. And then turning towards Edward, he continued—"This is Ithamar, Mr. Thayer. He sailed in the same ship with me several years, and though I cannot recommend him to your friendship, yet he is one of the best seamen in the colonies."

"Not very complimentary, at all events," said Ithamar, with a slight smile.

"And yet as much as I can afford to be."

"Well, perhaps you are right; but I ween that Mr. Thayer had better take me to his friendship than to his enmity."

"Of course I had," said Thayer, who had been regarding Ithamar with considerable interest; "I would make an enemy of no man if it could be honestly avoided."

"That's the safe doctrine," added Ithamar; and then turning to Vincent, he continued: "There's no use in looking too critically upon what's passed. I have come here to-night to see you on particular business. I have watched here by the inn every night for a week, for I knew you would be likely to come here when you came ashore. Now I know just what you've been doing, and I want to join you. I want to ship on board your cruiser. Give me any berth you choose, only give me one of some sort."

Vincent Gray did not hesitate for a moment, for at that instant he knew not of another man whom he would rather ship than the man who now applied to him. He knew the man to be an excellent seaman, a cool, brave fellow, and one who could be trusted on duty. He knew that Ithamar had been at some period of his life a

rover of rather a questionable character—that he had, in fact, been a freebooter; but yet he felt that there was nothing positively evil in his disposition.

"Do you understand handling heavy guns?" asked Vincent.

"I should like to see the man who can beat me in arranging a battery, or in aiming a gun. I flatter myself on that particular point, sir."

"Then you are just my man," exclaimed our hero, with considerable satisfaction.

"And you will give me a berth."

"Yes,—you shall be my gunner."

Ithemar arose from his chair and extended his hand. There was a strange light in his eyes—a light that was the brighter for the drops of moisture that were gathered there.

"Vincent Gray," he said, with a slightly trembling lip, "you are the first man who has trusted me for a long time, and you shall not regret it. There are men," he continued, in a deeper and more meaning tone, "who would trust me, but they do not know me, and in their trust they would make me a villain. I will accept your offer, sir, and all I can hope is, that I may live to leave a name behind me when I am gone, that some men at least, shall honor. By the heavens above me, sir, you shall find that Ithemar can do his duty."

Both Gray and Thayer gazed upon the man with strangely swelling feelings. The former grasped him by the hand, and warmly said:

"I am not afraid to trust you, Ithemar, for I know you to be a man who never neglected his promised duty. And now when will you go on board the cruiser?"

"When you go."

"That will be to-night."

"Then so much the better. And now," continued Ithemar, turning to Thayer, "I have a word to say to you. I think you can be secret and judicious."

"I think I can," returned Edward, with indications of wonder upon his countenance.

"Are you acquainted with Micah Trevett?"

"I have seen him."

"Ay,—and he has seen you. I wish to tell you in a sort of confidential way that you must beware of that man."

"Ah!" uttered Thayer.

"Yes," returned Ithemar, "you must beware of him. I will not leave you in the dark. Micah Trevett seeks your life!"

"Seeks my life?" iterated Thayer, starting

from his seat. "Do you know this to be a fact?"

"Yes, I do."

"How?"

"I ought not to tell you that."

"O, stop not now; tell me all; for if this be true I would have the proof."

Ithemar hesitated.

"Will it implicate any one else?" asked Vincent.

"None but Trevett."

"Then why should you hesitate?"

"I do not know that I should," thoughtfully returned Ithemar. "I surely do it for the sake of justice, and I may as well out with it."

"Ay, tell me," urged Thayer, "how you know of this."

"Well, I will," said Ithemar, speaking in a low tone. "Micah Trevett offered me one hundred pounds to kill you!"

Edward Thayer turned pale with excitement—an excitement that sent the blood all away from his face, and made him tremble.

"By my soul, I can hardly think that of Micah Trevett," said Vincent.

"But I can, though," returned Thayer. "I can believe it," he continued, the color coming back to his face. "Aha, the villain knows me."

"I speak the truth," said Ithemar. "Micah Trevett came to me—he told me that I had been a pirate, and he thought to engage me to do his murderous work; but his man was mistaken. It was he who told me that Vincent Gray had become a rebel cruiser. I did not refuse to do his work, for I resolved that I would warn his intended victim, and that I would also try to join the patriot cruiser. I have now done all that I could wish, and, Captain Gray, I am at your service."

"My dear sir," said Thayer, "I do not wish to insult you, but yet I will ask you to accept—"

"Stop, stop," interrupted Ithemar, "I do not sell my friendship, but if you will accept it, it is yours freely."

"I do accept it, sir," warmly answered the young Englishman, "and I hope I may see the day that I can repay you."

"Perhaps you may," said Ithemar. "You are on your guard now, and I advise you to be wary."

"Don't fear on that account," returned Thayer; "I will look to the fellow."

"Edward," said young Gray, with considerable earnestness in his tone, "may I not understand more of this?"

"No, no, Vincent; not now. Don't ask me. Between myself and Micah Trevett there is a deep account to settle, and if I were to reveal it to you I should break a solemn promise, and not benefit you, either."

Vincent asked no more. He was racked with curiosity, but he had too much good sense to impose upon his companion's friendship, so he turned the conversation upon another topic.

At length the landlord was sent for. He expressed much surprise at seeing Vincent, and after his vocabulary of wonderment was exhausted, he was engaged to procure a team to carry our hero's effects down to the wharf. This having been done—one of his own wagons being the vehicle, Vincent paid up his bill and

superintended the removal of his things. Having promised that he would call upon Edward Thayer upon the first opportunity, our hero set off with the wagon, accompanied by Ithemar.

It was nearly ten o'clock when the party reached the place where the brigantine's boat had landed. Vincent saw that his trunks were safely unloaded, and then he sent the wagoner off.

"Now, Ithemar, what say you to keeping guard here for a while?"

"Anything you please, sir."

"Then I wish you would remain about here. I may not be back much before midnight."

Ithemar promised to look out for the trunks, and Vincent turned back up into the town.

## CHAPTER XI.

## A FATHER'S CURSE.

WHILST the scene recorded in the last chapter was going on, Olivia Trevett was alone in the small sitting-room of her father's house. She looked paler than when we first saw her, and the marks of care were now clearly defined upon her brow. She had a book in her hand, but she had ceased reading, and the volume had fallen upon her knee. She was alone, for her father had gone, as he had told her, to attend a meeting of the loyalists, and the servants had retired.

The maiden gazed upon the flame as it curled up from the hearth, and her eye followed each fantastic wreath of smoke as it took its way up the wide-mouthed chimney. She murmured short sentences to herself—sentences full of grief and sorrow, and anon she would cast her eyes towards the windows as some gust of wind rattled the shutters. She had just put more wood upon the fire, and had sat back and re-opened her book, when her attention was arrested by the sound of footsteps without. At first she thought it was her father, but as they did not approach the door she concluded that it must be some one else. While she was yet hesitating to see if she could hear the footsteps, she thought she heard her name pronounced. In an instant the blood rushed to her face, and she sprang to the window. She saw the outlines of a

man revealed against the white snow, and she knew that it was Vincent Gray. She went to the door and called his name.

"Olivia," said our hero—for it was really he—"I must speak with you a moment."

He spoke in a low tone—almost a whisper—and at the same time cautiously approached the door.

"I am alone," returned Olivia.

In a moment more the young man was by her side, and she led the way to the room she had just left.

"Alone, did you say?" asked Vincent, as he entered the sitting-room and gazed about him.

"Yes. My father has gone away, and will not be back till midnight."

"O, that is fortunate," uttered the young man, as he pressed the maiden to his bosom and kissed her. "I feared that I might not see you," he continued, as he took a seat, "for I cannot remain long upon the shore, and yet I should not have been happy to have gone away without one word of blessing from you."

"And I shall be happier now that you have called to see me."

Olivia had seated herself by her lover's side, and her head was reclining upon his shoulder.

"You look very sad, Olivia," said Vincent, as he gazed into his companion's face.

"And why should I not be sad?" returned the maiden. "Alas! you know not what I suffer."

"Yes, I do. I know that you must suffer much—more than it is right you should suffer, and I have come now to offer you help from the trials you here pass through."

Olivia gazed up into her lover's face. "How can you help me?" she asked.

"How? Why, you shall leave the place where you are so miserable; you shall flee from the roof where all is harshness, and accept the boon of peace from me. I can find you a house, dearest girl—a home where you shall be safe till I can furnish a house for us both. Come, will you accept my proposal?"

The fair girl was thoughtful, and the tears that had started to her eyes dried away. Her head was bent for some moments, and when she at length raised it there was almost a smile upon her features.

"No, no, Vincent," murmured Olivia, "I would rather stay where I am for the present. I appreciate your kindness, and I am grateful for it, but I cannot accept your proposal now. Go on in the path you have chosen, and be assured that I shall not forget you. Whenever I hear of your success, I shall be happy, and at some time—when you can settle down—when you can offer me a home by your side—then—then I will be yours."

"I bless you for that assurance; but even then you will have to flee from your father, for he will never consent to our union."

"Then I shall not hesitate to disobey him," quickly returned Olivia; "and if in that I do wrong, may God forgive me."

"It can be no wrong," earnestly added Vincent, "for it is but the securing of a boon which God himself hath meant for all his creatures. O, I wish you would leave this place now; but if you really think you ought not, I will not urge it, for you would not be happy; but—forgive me if I speak too plainly—Micah Trevett is not—"

"—sh!" interrupted the maiden; "he is my father."

Vincent Gray did not say what he intended to have said. He felt the gentle rebuke, and a moment's reflection showed him that Olivia suffered enough already from knowing the truth, without having it spoken by other lips.

"I will not speak a word to hurt your feelings," he said; "but yet I do not think you know your father so well as I know him."

"Ah, Vincent, I know him well enough. God forbid that I should know more."

Olivia shuddered as she spoke, and buried her face in her lover's bosom. Vincent spoke kindly to her; he whispered words of love into her ear, and ere long she looked up and smiled again. It was some time ere our hero thought of Micah Trevett again, for the fountain of his heart's love was opened, and he poured forth such sweet, tender words that the maiden's cheeks glowed as they were wont to glow in years gone by. Time flew on unheeded. Minutes dwindled away so swiftly that even hours were unheeded, and the first startling summons that aroused young Gray to his senses, was the clanging of the clock-hammer behind him. He looked up, and it was midnight!

"My soul, how the time has fled!" he uttered, as he started up from his seat.

The maiden gazed tremblingly up at the clock.

"I knew not that it was so late," she said.

"My father will be back ere long. O, he must not find you here."

"No, he shall not; but one question I must ask before I go. I forgot it till now. Edward Thayer has been here?"

"Yes."

"And what of him? What do you know about him?"

"Nothing at all: only he came here and left a letter with my father."

"Did your father speak of him after he had gone?"

"Yes. He was considerably moved by the letter, and so he was by the young man's appearance. There is a mystery about the affair, but it is all dark to me."

"I would like to know what it is, but it must pass now."

"You can be no more curious about the affair than I am," returned Olivia, "for I know that my father fears that man."

"Yes,—I know he does," said Vincent, with a shudder. "But I must go now. When I come again I will not fail—"

"Hark!" uttered Olivia. "O, there is my father's step. Hasten,—hasten by the other door."

But before Vincent could reach the back entry, he was confident that Micah Trevett had entered the hall, and if such was the case, he could not avoid being seen. His soul shrank from the idea of being detected in the act of sneaking away from the premises.

"It is too late," he said, turning to Olivia

and imprinting a hurried kiss upon her pure white brow. "I would rather this had not have happened, but it cannot be helped."

The maiden had no chance to reply, for almost before her lover had done speaking, her father entered the room. The first object that met his eyes after he entered, was Vincent Gray. He stopped and gazed a moment upon the young man, and then he took another step forward. His face was pale, and the sudden anger made him weak. It was not until Vincent had started to wards the door that he recovered himself.

"Hold, you young villain," he gasped. "Stop where you are. Now what brings you here, creeping into my home when I am gone?"

The eyes of the young patriot captain flashed, and his bosom heaved with indignation.

"Speak, sir, and tell me why you are here," exclaimed Trevett, still pale with rage.

"I came here to see your daughter, sir. Now what boots it?"

"You forgot that I forbade you ever to enter my doors again."

"No, sir. I remembered it well; and I also remembered that I did not promise to obey you."

"By the saints above me, young rebel, I have a mind to—"

"Hold, Micah Trevett. Beware how you threaten! I, too, may have a mind, and if I should, 'twould be a bitter one for you."

Trevett quailed a moment before the glance of the young man, but it was only for the moment. On the next he had regained himself. He looked once more upon the intruder, and then he walked nervously to the door and opened it.

"Now, dog!" he uttered, "there is the door! Go! Come here again and you shall rue it,—go!"

Captain Gray was for a moment completely paralyzed. It did not lay in his power to obey such an order as that. His whole soul shrank from it with loathing. He saw that Olivia was trembling with fear and apprehension, and he knew that the sooner he left, the better it would be; but he could not go under that command.

"Are you going?" cried Trevett, taking a step towards the young man, and still pointing towards the door.

"Not by your order, sir," quickly returned our hero, while his eyes flashed more brilliantly than before. "Of my own free will I shall go;

but never for such a command as you have given."

"Aha!" gasped the now raving man, between his clenched teeth, "I'll help you, then."

Micah Trevett forgot himself; he sprang upon Vincent and seized him by the collar, and as he attempted to drag him towards the door, he cursed the young man with a bitter oath. Vincent Gray had been driven as far as human endurance could go before, and this vile outrage went beyond the bearing power of his impulsive soul. With all his wondrous strength, he seized the villain by the throat, and hurled him off. Micah Trevett struck with a stunning crash upon the opposite wall of the room, and then fell senseless to the floor.

Olivia uttered a quick cry as she saw the form of her father settle upon the floor, and both she and Vincent reached the spot at the same instant.

"O! God knows I could not help it!" groaned the young man. "He drove me to it. O, Olivia, can you forgive me for this?"

"Yes, yes, Vincent," at once returned the fair girl. "You were not to blame. Go, now. I forgive you, for I feel that you did no wrong."

"God bless you!" It was all the young man could say, for he saw that Micah Trevett was moving, and he wished to avoid another encounter; so, seizing his hat, he left the place.

"Is he gone?" whispered the old man, after he had found a chair and sunk into it.

"Yes," tremblingly returned Olivia.

Micah Trevett was pale as marble, and his hands were clutched firmly together. Slowly he turned his eyes upon the fire, and then he looked again upon his child.

"Olivia," he said, in a tone of dreadful calmness, "never speak with Vincent Gray again. If you ever dare to listen to one word of love from him—if you ever think of giving him your hand—if you dare to break my orders again, then—"

But we will not write the words which that mad old man spoke. It was a terrible curse; and, when he had done speaking, the poor girl sank fainting upon the floor. The curse was so fearful that it fell upon her almost with a death-stroke.

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE OAKEN BOX.

WHEN Vincent Gray reached the spot where he had left Ithemar in charge of the trunks, he found that the boat had been some time waiting for him. Ithemar had already placed himself on good terms with the boat's crew, and the luggage was all on board.

"I've kept you waiting longer than I expected," said our hero, as he stepped on board the boat. "Have you managed to keep warm, Ithemar?"

"O, yes; I've had excitement."

"Ah," uttered Vincent, detecting something peculiar in the man's tone.

"Yes. I'll tell you as soon as we put off."

As soon as the boat was well out into the stream, Ithemar turned towards our hero, and speaking in a tone so low that the oarsmen could not hear him, he said:

"I have had a visit from Micah Trevett. He stumbled across me accidentally, though I found before he left me that he had been out to my old quarters to night on purpose to see me. I had taken a turn up into the street, and was pacing carelessly along, when the old villain crossed my hawse, and run bump afoul of me."

"And what was his business?"

"About young Thayer. O, he swore right jolly because I had not killed the youngster; and he even began to threaten me, but I clapped a

stopper on that, I can assure ye. I told him, finally, that I'd given up the job, and I think he'll take another tack, now. He heard the men coming up from the boat, which landed while we were talking, so he up helm and steered off. I hope Thayer'll be on the look-out."

"So do I," returned Vincent; "and I think he will. He seems to be a shrewd fellow, and I hope he'll prove himself so."

"He's got fair warning, at any rate," returned Ithemar; "though I must say he's got a dangerous row to hold, for such an enemy as Micah Trevett is worse than a real bold villain. Of all enemies, the downright coward is the most dangerous."

"You are right there, Ithemar; you are right there. Upon my soul, I pray that Edward Thayer may be upon his guard. I have half a mind to turn back now, and warn him of this new danger."

"O, I have attended to that. I went into the pot-house on the corner, and wrote him a letter, and the tapster promised to put it into the office in the morning. So the young gentleman will not suffer for want of information."

"I am really glad you were so thoughtful, Ithemar."

"So am I, and I hope 'twill be the means of helping Thayer, too."

"No doubt of it," said Vincent.

Ere long, the boat reached the brigantine, and shortly after, the vessel was got under weigh, and stood off to the eastward. On the next morning, Ithamar was introduced to the crew, and when he took his station as gunner of the cruiser, there was not a dissenting voice to his appointment. As soon as opportunity offered, the new gunner went at work to drill the men at the guns, and he showed himself to be not only perfectly acquainted with all the minutiae of gunnery, but he also gave some valuable hints with regard to the rigging of the guns. In short, Captain Gray had reason to be thankful for the acquisition he had thus made.

Leaving the patriot cruiser to pursue her course in quest of adventure, let us return to the inn at Salem. It was the third morning from that on which Vincent Gray had last been there, and Edward Thayer was alone in his chamber. He had been perusing the letter he had received from Ithamar, for the twentieth time, at least. The missive was coarsely written, in chirography, but the language was pure and good, betraying the writer to possess not only a good education, but also much originality and genius.

Thayer was sitting at his table, and had just pushed Ithamar's missive from him, when some one knocked at his door, and quickly taking up the letter he had been re-perusing, he thrust it into his pocket, and then asked who was there at the door.

"The landlord," came back, in Pollock's blunt tones.

"Ah—then come in."

"A letter, sir," said mine host, as he laid the missive upon the table, "and with a lordly looking seal, too."

"Ah, how did it come?" asked the young man, as he picked the letter up.

"By the post, to night, from Boston. A shilling to pay."

Thayer handed Pollock the shilling, and as soon as the latter had gone, the young man opened the letter, and began to read. It was from the commodore who had landed him at Salem, and ran as follows:

"Province House, Boston, March 30, 1775.

"DEAR EDWARD,—I received yours of the 23d, and have taken some pains to look up the intelligence you need. Micah Trevett is your man! You had better proceed against him at once. The papers you possess are all pure, and you need not fear for the result.

"I am ordered back to England at once, and I am glad of it, for I have seen just enough of matters here to assure me that there must be a struggle between the colonies and the king, and with that struggle I would have nothing to do. My oath of office would not let me fight for the colonies, and God would not let me fight against them. I hope and pray that it may be a bloodless struggle, but I fear that it cannot be so.

"If you have letters to send to England, get them to me by the tenth of next month. See me when you can.

Yours, MONTAGUE."

"P. S.—Tear this as soon as you have read it, or I may be thought a rebel. M."

"Ay, Montague," murmured the young man to himself, as he twisted the letter and then threw it into the fire, "I'll destroy the letter, and people shall not know that you are an honest man. I know you, however, for an honest fellow, and I pray that you may be blessed wherever you go."

Thayer watched the paper he had thrown into the fire until its last particle was reduced to ashes, and then he arose from his chair and went to his trunk, from whence he took a small oaken box, the outer surface of which was almost covered with its bindings of burnished metal. Having gone back to his chair, he laid the box upon the table and unlocked it. It was full of papers, and one after another he took them out and read them. Most of them bore heavy seals, and had the appearance of being legal documents.

"Ah, Micah Trevett, you have run your race," soliloquized the young man, as he placed the papers back into the box, and turned the key. "You have missed the hour of your triumph."

As Thayer ceased speaking, he gazed thoughtfully into the fire. One hand rested upon the cover of the box, and the other was pressed upon his brow. In this position he was sitting, when he thought he heard a noise at one of his windows. There were two windows to his room, one of them overlooking the street, and the other looking out upon the passage way that led from the inn to the stable. It was at this latter window that Thayer thought he heard the noise, and thither he hastened. He looked out upon the roof of the passage-way, but he could see nothing.

"It was only the flapping of some loose shingle," he muttered to himself, as he returned to his seat; "that was all."

Again he heard something that sounded like a

scrambling upon the roof, and again he went to the window, but could see nothing. This time he opened the window and looked out, but everything was as it should be, so far as he could see. He ought to have opened the window before!

At eleven o'clock Thayer retired, but before he did so, he carefully loaded his pistols and placed them under his pillow. The noise he had heard at the window occasioned him to take this precaution. He set his candle upon the mantel-shelf, and left it burning.

For a long while after he laid his head upon his pillow he remained perfectly wakeful. The information he had received with regard to the intentions of Micah Trevett made him somewhat anxious, to say the least, and he desired to close his business with that man as soon as possible. He could not help wishing that he had received Montague's letter at an earlier date; for, brave though he was, yet there was a mysterious fear upon him which he could not exorcise—a fear that made him wakeful and uneasy.

At length, however, Edward Thayer slept, but his sleep was by no means a sound one. It was troubled by bad dreams. Once he dreamed that some one was trying to force his window; but he awoke and found everything as he had left it, and again he sank into a slumber.

When he next awoke, he had been startled by a sharp, rattling noise, and he found his candle had gone out and left him in almost total darkness. He felt a current of air strike his face, too, and he quickly comprehended that his window must be open. It took him but a moment to call his senses together, and without noise he reached under his pillow and obtained both his pistols, one of which he carefully cocked.

This being done, the young man silently raised his head and listened. For some time all was quiet, save the fitful gusts that came in at the window, which Edward knew now to be open. Ere long, however, he heard a slight rustling noise near the foot of his bed, and in a moment more he was sure that some one was moving there. His first impulse was to leap from his bed, but a moment's reflection showed him that such a course would by no means be a judicious one, so he remained where he was.

It might have been a minute after this that Edward saw a dark object pass between the foot

of his bed and the street window. He raised his pistol, but before he could fire, the object was lost in the darkness, and as he did not wish to risk a shot, he determined to wait and take advantage of the next favorable opportunity, for he had not the least doubt that the individual in his room had come to assassinate him. The next sound that met his ear, however, caused him to start up with a new fear. He was confident that his strange visitor was getting out at the window!

Edward Thayer leaped from his bed and hastened to the window, which was really open, and he saw a man just jumping from the roof of the passage-way. For a moment he thought of following, but that was a wild thought, and it passed quickly away. He would have given the alarm, but that would only make an affair public which for the present he had reasons for keeping private.

The young man was becoming chilled at the window, so he shut it down and turned towards his bed, where he sat down to think. He had no doubt that the man who had been in his room was an emissary from Micah Trevett, and that he had come to murder him, but that from some cause he had become frightened, and hence had fled.

As soon as Thayer thought he had satisfied himself on this point, he went to the fire-place and raked open the embers, and having found a coal large enough for the purpose, he re-lighted the candle, which had been blown out by the gust from the open window. Having done this, he proceeded to draw on his clothing, for he was very cold; and he had about half dressed himself when he noticed that his trunk was open. He was sure that he had shut it and locked it, after he had returned the box of papers back to it.

With a startling fear the youth sprang towards the trunk. The lock was broken, and the contents were all in confusion. He searched the trunk all through—he looked into every corner of the room—he examined his other articles and boxes—but he could not find what he sought. The oaken box, with all its priceless contents, was gone.

Edward Thayer gazed for a moment upon the spot where he had last placed the box, and then, with a groan of anguish, he sank upon a chair. The loss he had sustained could not be counted.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE PRICE OF CRIME.

It was not yet daylight; it lacked a full hour of dawn, when an individual emerged from a low pot-house near one of the wharves, and took his way up into the town. He was muffled up in a great bearskin coat, and his cap was pulled down over his face. There was no need of this precaution for the sake of concealment, for it was so dark that his features could not be recognized by the nearest passer, but the man seemed to hide himself instinctively, as though he feared even his own presence. He hurried on with quick steps, sometimes walking ankle-deep in the slosh of the late March thaw, and often slipping upon the half melted ice, but never stopping to take note of his mishaps, or to guard against their repetition.

Thus the pedestrian kept on until he reached the dwelling of Micah Trevett. Here he stopped, and having stood a moment at the door, as though he was undecided as to what course he should pursue, he gently touched the metal knocker. In a few moments the sound of a foot-step was heard in the hall, and then came the voice of Mr. Trevett asking who was there.

"It is me," returned the applicant, in a low, hurried tone, crouching nearer to the door as he spoke.

"Well, and who is *me*?" asked Trevett, from within.

"Jonas Pool," almost whispered the pedestrian, placing his lips close to the key-hole.

The door was slightly opened, and the eye of Mr. Trevett peered out upon the applicant. As soon as the old man seemed to have gained a view of his caller, by the aid of a small lamp which he held in his hand, he opened the door more widely, and bade the man come in. Having closed the door and locked it, Trevett beckoned his visitor to follow him, and then led the way up stairs to a small room in which was the merchant's library. Here there was a large lamp burning upon the table, and there were numerous boxes and packages lying about, looking as though they had been recently packed up.

Micah Trevett motioned his visitor to a seat, and then sat down himself near the small stove that heated the room. As soon as the new-comer was seated, he threw back the collar of his coat, and laid his cap upon the floor by his side. He was a young man, not over thirty at the farthest, and his face was pale in the extreme. He had a very intelligent look, and had it not been for marks of dissipation upon his features, he would have been decidedly handsome.

"Well," nervously spoke Trevett, after he had gazed awhile upon the pale features of the young man, "have you been to the inn?"

"Yes," whispered Jonas Pool, resting his left

hand upon the table at which the old man had been writing.

"Ha!" uttered Trevett, "there's blood upon your hand!"

"No, no," gasped Pool.

"Yes there is. You should have washed it before you came here."

"Blood! where?" said Pool.

"Upon your hand. See!"

The young man looked at his left hand, and he saw where the blood had trickled down upon the under side of it, from the fingers to the wrist.

"But never mind now," resumed Trevett, "you shall wash it before you go from here. You found the young man's room?"

"Yes."

"You disturbed no one."

"Only Edward Thayer."

"Yes; of course. But he made no outcry—no noise; he started no one else."

"Not that I know of."

"Good! And you are sure you finished him."

"Finished him!" repeated Pool.

"Ay,—killed him."

"No, no, I did not do that; I could not."

"What?" uttered Trevett, starting forward in his seat. "Did you miss the stroke?"

"No, no; I did not try it; I could not take his life."

"Fool! coward!" bitterly exclaimed the old man, as he clenched his fists and sank back into his chair.

"Hold, sir," cried the young man, brought back to himself by the merchant's taunts; "do not spit upon me now."

"But why did you not do the work you engaged? If you did not attempt the job, then how came that blood upon your hand?"

"I cut it on the ice when I got down from the stable-roof."

"And so that's the only blood you've spilled! O, what a coward!"

"Call me a coward if you please, sir," returned Pool, with a flushed cheek, "but I should have been a coward if I had killed that man in his bed. You know I am poor, and you know I have been a dissolute man, and when you offered me so large a sum to do the murder, I thought I could do it; but, sir, I could not. Hold, one moment," he continued, "as he noticed that the old man was about to speak, 'I did not come away entirely bootless. See if there is anything in there that can be of service to you.'"

As Pool ceased speaking, he drew a small

oaken box from beneath his coat, and placed it upon the table. The key was in the lock.

"Ah,—what means this?" asked Trevett, drawing the box towards him, with a look of amazement. Where did you get it? What is it?"

"I'll tell you, sir," returned Pool. "I got up on to the shed, where I could look into the young man's window, and I just saw him opening this box. He took out a lot of papers, and after he had looked them over and put them back, I heard him talk to himself about you, and I found out from what he said that in those papers he had some strong evidence against you. I saw him put the box back into his trunk, and then he locked it. And he must have heard me, for he came to the window and looked out, but I crouched down, and he did not see me. And afterwards, when I got down off the shed, he must have heard me again, for he came to the window, and this time he opened it, but I was out of sight. After I knew he had gone to bed, I got on to the shed roof again and looked into his room. He had left his candle burning, but I made out to hoist the window without noise, and the wind blew the candle out. When I got into the room I meant to have killed the sleeper, but my heart was too strong for me."

"Too weak you mean," interrupted Trevett.

"No; too strong; for it held out against the temptation that had turned my brain. If my heart had been weak, I could have overcome it. I could not do the bloody deed, but I resolved that I would do something for you, so I took my knife and broke open the trunk, and got this box. When I snapped the trunk-lock I must have startled Thayer, for I am sure I heard him move; but I got off without being detected, though it was a narrow chance. And now, sir, if those papers are of any value to you, you may pay me what you will; but not for all the gold you possess would I now take a human life in cold blood. I have this night learned a lesson which I shall never forget."

It may have been that Micah Trevett also had received some glimmerings of bitter truth from what he had heard, for his lips quivered, and his eye fell to the floor; but the puncture of his conscience was not very deep, for he soon recovered himself, and without speaking he drew the oaken box to his lap and opened it. The first thing that met his gaze was a bundle of papers, neatly folded and tied with red tape; these he began to examine. At first he trembled, and for



some time his emotions seemed to be almost overpowering, but at length he became calm, and what of feeling he experienced was all inward, for he expressed none of it upon his countenance.

Carefully he examined each paper that the box contained, and when he had finished the task he replaced the documents, and having locked the box, he placed the key in his pocket.

"You have done well!" slowly and emphatically pronounced Micah Trevett, as he looked the young man in the face.

"I thought the papers would be of value to you."

"They are," replied the old man, without betraying any feeling save what his words might convey.

As he spoke, he placed his hand in his pocket and drew forth his purse. He counted therefrom ten golden guineas, which he handed to the young man.

"Here," he resumed, "take these, and use them as you see fit. Will that pay you?"

"Yes, sir,—O, yes," said Jonas Pool, as he grasped the money and put it in his pocket.

"Then I hope you will be secret about this matter. Your own safety demands it."

"I shall not run my neck into danger; and I know there are no means of detecting me."

Micah Trevett knew from the young man's manner that his secrecy could be relied on, and he felt safe.

"You had better go now," he said. "It will be daylight ere long, and you must not be seen here. If I want you again, I shall know where to find you."

Jonas Pool made no reply, but he arose from his seat and put on his hat. The merchant lighted him down stairs, and having bade him once more to be secret, he let him out at the door.

When the young man reached the street, he hurried towards his home with quick, nervous strides. This was the first time he had ever done a wrong deed for hire. He had long been a spendthrift, and once, in a drunken brawl, he had stabbed a man. From such causes he had gained a notoriety, and Mr. Trevett had hit upon him as a fit person to do the work he had in hand. At the first offer of a large sum of gold, Pool had promised to do the deed, but when he did so, he did not know his own heart. That heart had been so long seared and overrun by petty crime and debauchery, that even its owner did not know its real worth, but when he thus dragged it up from its resting-place, he found more of humanity in it than he had expected.

Jonas Pool hurried on, and the gold jingled in his pocket. He had always thought that the music of gold would be pleasant, but he did not find it so now. He saw the pleasant face of the young man whom he had robbed, and he contrasted it with the face of the bad man whom he had wickedly served. His heart smote him. He had awakened from a moral sleep of years to find that he still had a soul.

Jonas Pool hurried on, but he pressed his hand upon his pocket to stop the jingle of the gold. Its sharp music was painful to him, and he hushed it!

## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE HIGHWAYMEN.

As soon as Micah Trevett was once more alone in his library, his face assumed an exultant look, and he placed his hand upon the oaken box with a decisive movement.

"You may live, my young man," he muttered to himself, while his eyes gleamed with satisfaction. "You may live, so long as you do not cross my path again. But you have lost your hoarded documents—you have lost the proof of the story you would tell. And yet," he continued, sinking into a chair, and bowing his head upon his hand, "I am not wholly safe while you live. I would rather you were dead, and these papers were with you. But while you live I'll keep these."

It was broad daylight when Trevett aroused himself from the reverie into which he had fallen, and his first movement was to hide the box he had received from Jonas Pool. Next, he went at work to finish packing up some articles which he had arranged for that purpose before Pool came in. By the time this was accomplished, his breakfast was ready.

After he had eaten his morning's meal, he called Olivia to his library. She was struck with amazement at the state of things in her father's room, for she knew that some radical change in affairs was about to take place.

"My child," said the old man, "what things

you possess separate from my store, you must at once pack up. Get your jewelry and clothing together as soon as possible."

"But why this movement, father?" asked the fair girl, looking up with painful wonder.

"Because I am going to leave this place at once. I have sold the house and all the furniture, and at the hour of noon a carriage will be at the door to take us away."

"And whither are you going?"

"Never mind. Be you ready to accompany me, and ask no questions."

"But do you mean that you will go at the noon of to-day?"

"Yes; and there must be no delay. Whether you are ready or not, you will go; so you had better hasten and do the most you can."

Olivia knew that further words with her father would be useless, so she withdrew from his presence and went to her own chamber; but it was some time before she set about obeying her parent's commands. She sat down in a chair by the side of her bed and gave way to the painful thoughts that came crowding upon her. In regard to the movements of her father, she had a faint glimmering of the truth. She felt confident that it was in some way connected with the appearance of Edward Thayer—that her father feared that young man, and that his present



movement was but to escape him. Thus much she felt confident of. Then she thought of Vincent Gray, and she wished that she had gone with him when he first asked her. When he had spoken to her of fleeing from the tyranny of her father, she had felt a tie for the home of her childhood, but, now that tie was to be severed, she wished that she were anywhere, so that her lover might be with her to bless her.

But Olivia Trevett dared not waste too much time in repining. She knew that if her father found her not ready he would be angry with her, so she arose from her seat and set about packing up her things. One large trunk contained all that she wished to carry, and just as she had finished packing, her father entered her chamber.

"Ah, you have been obedient for once," he said, as he noticed that Olivia was all ready.

"I am all prepared," returned the maiden.

"So I see. And now you had better dress yourself, and then get your dinner as soon as possible. The carriage is here."

Olivia looked for a moment into the stern face of her father, and then she burst into tears. She was miserable, very miserable.

"What means all this?" uttered the old man, with marked displeasure. "Why are you shedding those tears?"

"Because I am unhappy," was the fair girl's simple reply.

Micah Trevett did not speak further; he only looked for a moment into the face of the weeping girl, and then he turned and left the room.

It was one o'clock when Olivia Trevett was helped into the carriage that was to convey her away from Salem. It was a covered vehicle, the front seat of which was removed to make room for the trunks and boxes, leaving the back seat to be occupied by the father and child.

Mr. Trevett got in, and the door was closed after him, and shortly afterwards the carriage started on. Olivia asked of her father where he was going, but he gave her no answer.

"You will tell me, at least," urged Olivia, "if you are going far away."

"Yes; I am going far away," returned Trevett with sudden energy. "I am going where you will not be troubled with any more of your quondam lovers."

The poor girl sank back in her seat, for she had no more to say. Her father had no affection now in his words; he had no love for her in his acts; he had no feeling for her in his language,

and she remained silent, a prey to her sad thoughts.

The carriage rolled slowly on; the horses being obliged to walk more than half the time. The road was in a wretched state, owing to the recent thaws; the mud being in some places almost up to the hubs, and deep cradle holes intervening just often enough to keep the travellers on a constant guard against being thrown from their seats. In this way the coach crawled along its tedious way until the shades of coming night began to settle down upon the earth. The horses had not certainly averaged more than three miles an hour, but to Olivia it seemed as if they had travelled a long distance.

The coach was now upon a level road, and Olivia could see, upon looking out through the little glass window behind her, that they were in the midst of a deep wood. She had just made this observation when the sound of voices was heard by the roadside, and in a moment more the carriage stopped. Mr. Trevett opened the window and asked what was the matter.

"Ah, my dear sir," returned a man who at that moment approached the door, "we've stopped you on a bit of business. Bad travelling, isn't it?"

"Yes," faintly returned Trevett, not exactly knowing what to say.

"So we thought we'd be kind," continued the stranger, "and relieve you of part of your load. You will oblige us by getting out."

Micah Trevett began now to comprehend what all this meant. There was light enough to distinguish objects about the carriage, and he saw that the man held a pistol in his hand.

"Do you mean to rob me?" the old man uttered.

"O, you speak too plainly, sir. But get out—get out. Come, I hope you won't force me."

Now Micah Trevett was not a man who possessed a great deal of courage, and the sight of what he supposed to be a loaded pistol, struck him with terror. He was a man who might be urged by passion to do many foolish things, but he could not look calmly at danger. Had he only taken the precaution on the present occasion to arm himself, he might have made a show of resistance; but as it was, he tremblingly obeyed the order he had received, and when he reached the ground he found that there were two more men present, one of whom held the horses, while the other had the driver under charge.

"Ah, a lady," said the highwayman, as he put

his head into the coach, after Trevett had got out.

"You will not harm me, sir," uttered Olivia.

"No, no, madam; that is no part of my business. Ah, you have a goodly amount of baggage."

As he spoke he seized the trunk nearest to him and dragged it out upon the ground.

"Give me your keys, sir," he said, turning to Trevett. "Come, be quick, for it's getting dark, and I've no doubt you wish to be on your way again."

The old man handed over the keys without delay, and in a few moments the highwayman had the trunk open. He overhauled several articles of clothing which were on top, and at length he came to a brass-bound, oaken box, which he took out.

"Do not trouble that," urged Trevett.

"Don't trouble yourself," returned the highwayman, lifting the box in his hand; "upon my soul it's heavy."

"That's only the box that's heavy," anxiously replied the old man. "There's nothing in there but papers, and they can be of no use to you. Do not open it, sir."

"Yes, I understand," said the highwayman, with a look and tone of incredulity. "But it's a little too heavy for papers. I'll examine it, at all events."

"Hark!" at this moment uttered the man who stood at the heads of the horses. "There's somebody coming!"

The fellow spoke the truth, for in a moment more the sound of heavy wheels was distinctly heard ahead.

"Your watch, quick!" exclaimed the highwayman, as he made a grasp at the golden chain that hung from the old man's fob. "Good-by,

sir. I would like to stop longer, and examine the rest of your things, but you see 'twouldn't be judicious."

"Stop! stop!" cried Trevett, as the highwayman stuffed the watch into his pocket, and turned away; "give me that box!"

"O, don't trouble yourself about it. I'll take good care of it."

"But it will be of no use to you."

"O no—I suppose not. But good-by. Hope you'll have a pleasant journey."

The three highwaymen then leaped into the woods, and were soon out of sight. For a long time Micah Trevett stood and gazed into the open trunk, and he was not aroused from his reverie until the coming wagon stopped near him. It was a baggage team, bound for Salem.

"Hallo—upset, eh?" exclaimed the teamster.

The driver of the coach explained, in a few words, what had happened.

"Then I can't help you, I suppose," returned the other.

"Yes, yes, you can!" quickly cried Trevett. "Go and help us catch the rascals."

"O, that would be nonsense," said the teamster. "So, if that's all, I'll keep on, for I'm late already."

The fellow drew a heavy pistol from a box by his side as he spoke, and having examined the priming, he put it back again, and then started on.

"What was in that box, father?" asked Olivia, after they had resumed their way.

"No matter," sullenly returned the old man, sinking back into his seat, and uttering an audible groan.

Olivia knew that he must have lost something valuable, and she thought 'twas money.

## CHAPTER XV.

### THE SEARCH WARRANT—A CURIOUS PACKAGE.

WHEN Edward Thayer fully aroused himself to action, after having realized the loss with which he had met, he finished dressing himself, and then looked at his watch. It was two o'clock in the morning. He had thought long upon the circumstances under which the robbery had been committed, and he had made up his mind that Micah Trevett must have been at the bottom of it, and with this idea he determined to go at once to Trevett's house and watch to see if any one went in or came out. He set the candle upon the table, and, thinking that it could not burn until he returned, he extinguished it. Then he cautiously unlocked his door, and, with as little noise as possible, he descended the stairs.

Everything went well until Thayer came to the front door. He unlocked it without trouble, but, in opening it, he upset a chair, which, in the darkness, he had not discovered. Fearing that the noise might arouse the landlord, and not wishing to be seen and thus subjected to a questioning, he started with a quickened step for the street. He forgot that there was a high stone horse-block just in front of the low stoop, and he paid dearly for his heedlessness—for he struck against the block with such force that he pitched headlong over it, striking his head upon the stone curb beyond. Almost at the same moment the host appeared at the door of the inn

with a light, and catching a glimpse of the form upon the ground he inquired who it was.

Thayer was too much injured to speak, or to know what was going on; but he had sense enough to know that he was borne back into the house and placed upon a bed. He felt, too, the fumes of spirit as his kind host bathed his brow, but after this his consciousness was gone.

It was nearly noon when Edward came to himself, and he was somewhat agreeably surprised to find that he had met with no serious injury, only having been stunned by the fall he had received. His previous disquiet had fatigued him more than he had been conscious of, and for several hours he had slept soundly. When he arose he felt a little stiff, but he could perceive no further difficulty.

The host was full of curiosity, and Thayer told him the whole story of the last night's adventure, only keeping to himself the nature of the loss he had sustained.

"And didn't he steal anything?" asked Pollock, after Edward had related the circumstances.

"Not much of consequence. He took a box, but he won't find anything in it that will benefit him."

"I s'pose the 'tarnal snipe thought there was money in it," said the host, with emphasis. "But we'll catch him if he's to be found."

"I hope we shall," responded the young man. "It's a pity you stumbled over the horse-block last night, or you might have caught him as it was."

After the host had delivered this idea he was called away to attend to the serving of dinner, and Edward was left alone. He did not wish to eat at the table with the others, so he had his meal conveyed to his own room. When he had eaten it he felt quite strong—strong enough to go out, and he determined to go. He believed that his box had been conveyed to Mr. Trevett's, and he resolved to go there at once and confront the villain.

"Ere another night passes," he uttered to himself, as he drew on his overcoat, "you shall be brought to justice. Ah! Micah Trevett, your time is up—I know you now, and I have you fast. I'll take the means to make you give up the box, and then I'll show you to the world for what you are."

Edward's first movement, after he left the inn, was to find a justice of the peace, and, having found one, he applied for a search-warrant to be served on the premises of Micah Trevett. The justice was surprised at the request, and at first he refused to grant one; but, at length, being made satisfied with the applicant's credibility, he issued the warrant, and then procured an officer to serve it.

Thus prepared, young Thayer accompanied the officer to the dwelling of Trevett.

"Eh! What's this mean?" uttered the officer. "Shutters all closed—gates shut—fires out—and doors locked, too," he continued, as he tried the front door and found it fast.

"Has he gone?" murmured Thayer, starting with fear.

"Looks precious like it," was the characteristic response.

"We must enter the house," urged Edward.

"Of course we must, for I've got the order. Get in fair if we can, and, if we can't do so, we'll do the next best."

At this juncture a man came out from a neighboring house and hastened over to the spot where our acquaintances stood.

"What's the matter?" he asked, as he came up.

"Want to get in here," replied the officer.

"But the folks have moved out."

"Has Trevett gone?" asked Thayer.

"Yes—went this noon, not an hour ago."

He's sold his house and furniture and I've got the key."

"Well, let me have it," said the officer. "I've got a search-warrant here, and I must get in."

"Eh!" uttered the man, as he saw the warrant. "Gad's, my life, I thought old Trevett looked mightily flurried when he went away. He haint been right for more'n a week. But here's the key. Zounds! Trevett is an old fox, anyway."

The officer took the key and opened the door. They found the furniture all there, and the bedding, but all else was gone. All parts of the house were examined, but the box could not be found.

"Where are the servants?" asked the officer.

"Don't know," replied the man who had brought the key. "They went away this forenoon."

"But where has Trevett gone?" inquired Thayer, trembling with bitter disappointment.

"Don't know. I asked him, but he told me 'twas none of my business."

The young man made all the inquiries he could think of, but he could learn nothing, save that Trevett started off upon the road to Boston. He returned with the officer to the office of the justice, and, having paid the required fees, and explained as much of his business as he dared to, he went back to his inn, having made up his mind before he reached there that he would start for Boston on the next morning.

At nine o'clock that evening Edward was in his room, when one of the stable boys came up and asked to be admitted.

"Here be a bundle, zur, as you must 'ave left it the stable," he said, at the same time laying a small, dirty package upon the table.

"How so?" inquired Thayer, taking up the parcel.

"Why, 'cause I found it. Be'ant 'at your name on it?"

"Yes," returned Edward, assuming an intelligent look. There was to him a mystery in the affair; but he did not wish the boy to detect it. "Yes, yes, it is certainly mine. In the stable, you say, you found it?"

"Yes, zur; layin' right up side ov the grain-box. 'It's yours, be'ant it?"

"Certainly, certainly, my boy; and I am much obliged to you for bringing it. Here, take this."

He placed a shilling in the boy's dirty hand as he spoke, and then motioned for him to be gone.

The youngster grinned with intense satisfaction as his eyes sparkled upon the silver coin, and clutching it firmly in his hand he shuffled off.

As soon as Edward was alone he proceeded to examine the package he had so strangely received. The outer covering was of brown paper, and Thayer's name was written upon it in a coarse, scrawly hand. He untied the ropeyarn which secured it, and inside of this he found an old stocking, that was also firmly bound up. The young man hesitated about examining further, and he laid the curious bundle upon the table. The idea had crept over him that this might be some diabolical contrivance for his death. The circumstances under which he had received it, its peculiar appearance, and, above all, the events of the past few days, tended strongly towards this point.

For some minutes Edward Thayer sat and gazed upon the package; but he was not the man to be easy until he knew what it contained, and the longer he regarded it the more anxious he became to look into its contents. So he took the parcel up again, and, with careful movements, he unfastened the string. As he gradually unwound it he heard a chinking, jingling sound, and at length, when he emptied the contents out, he found ten golden guineas. He was looking at them with curious surprise when he felt something crumple in the stocking, and, upon further examination, he found a piece of paper, clumsily folded to resemble a letter, upon opening which he found the following, written very badly, but yet intelligibly:

"MR. THAYER:—This money is the first I ever received for doing a crime. I cannot enjoy it, and I cannot keep it, and to make a clean breast of the whole affair I will tell you all about it. Mr. Micah Trevett hired me to — [Here some words had been written, but they were so effectually obliterated that Edward could not make them out. The next that was intelligible was as follows:] I stole the box of papers from your room for him, and he paid me the ten guineas. I cannot give them back to him, for he has gone, so I send them to you. If you can

find Mr. Trevett you can find your box. I am sorry I took it, but it can't be helped now. You needn't try to find out who I am, for you won't be able to do it. But if I knew that you wouldn't be injured by what I have done I should be happier than I am now."

Edward sat back after he had read this strange epistle. He was confident that it was genuine, and he had no hesitation in giving it credit. The coincidence struck him as peculiar that in both of Trevett's attempts upon him he should have, in a measure, mistaken his man. One thing, however, troubled the young man exceedingly, and that was how it could have been known that the box was in his possession, or that it contained papers which could be of any account. He could only imagine that at some time he had been watched; then he remembered the noise he had heard at his window while he was last engaged in looking over those very documents, and upon this point he allowed the matter to rest.

Thayer was now sure that Micah Trevett had the papers, and he was resolved that on the following morning he would set out in quest of him. At about ten o'clock Edward went down to the bar-room. A teamster had just arrived, who sat by the fire sipping a mug of hot punch, and, at the same time, relating the circumstance of his having met a coach, upon the highway, that had been robbed. He described the man who had spoken to him, and Edward at once discovered that it must have been Mr. Trevett.

"Was there a female with him?" asked the young man.

"Yes, I seed some sort of a female in the coach," returned the teamster.

"And where were they then?"

"Just about two miles this side of Winnisimmet, on the road to Boston."

That was enough for Thayer. He did not stop to hear the remainder of the teamster's somewhat enlarged story; but going at once to his room he set about preparing to follow the base man who was, in some way, deeply wronging him.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### THE SEA BATTLE.

EDWARD THAYER went to Boston, and though he received the assistance of General Gage, through the medium of Montague's instrumentality, yet he could not find Micah Trevett. He searched for a long while—for days and weeks—but of the man whom he sought he could gain no intelligence. He became worried and downhearted, and his increasing anxiety was beginning to wear upon his constitution. Montague tried to persuade him to return to England in his ship, but the young man felt confident that Micah Trevett was somewhere about Boston, and he determined to stay until he had found him.

In the meantime the patriot cruiser was hovering about the bay of Massachusetts, and, though many attempts had been made to capture her, yet she was still free. It was near the last of April. The brigantine had been lying to off the town of Newburyport, where she had gone after provisions. It was in the afternoon that Vincent Gray came off from the shore and boarded his vessel. The provisions had been brought on board before noon, and he had just been to settle the bill. As soon as his boat was run up to her davits the young captain called his men all upon the quarter deck. There was a deep fire in his bright, black eye, and his face was glowing with excitement.

"Now, my brave men," he said, in a clear, bold tone, "we have no need to fear the censure of Heaven upon our course. The enemy have stricken the battle-blow! They have made war upon us; they have butchered our people; they have forced us to the chance of war! At Lexington and at Concord they have led their soldiers out and shot down the patriots. The country is ringing from one end to the other with the fierce war cry. The avenger is loose and the tyrant shall feel his blow. There shall be idleness on our hands no longer. Let every nerve be strained, and when next we meet the enemy he shall be ours!"

The crew did not shout; but they gathered more closely around their commander to learn the particulars of the startling announcement he had made. He explained it to them as he had learned it, and when they knew it all they moved silently away. It was a full minute ere another word was spoken after the captain had closed his story. The first who spoke was Ithamar. He laid his hand upon the gun nearest to him, and, in a deep tone, he said:

"I can die—but I must either live to see the tyrant fall, or else die by these batteries."

"So will we all!" responded Vincent.

And the whole crew joined simultaneously in the response.

As soon as the men were once more gathered at their respective stations the brigantine was got under sail again. That night, at twelve o'clock, she passed Cape Cod, and then stood off to the north'rd and east'rd. An hour after daylight, on the next morning, a sail was reported on the larboard quarter. Vincent Gray obtained his glass and stationed himself for watching the stranger.

"There are two sails," he said, at the end of some ten minutes.

"There sartinly is," responded Obed Durkee, who also had a glass.

"Mr. Durkee," said Vincent, "will you let Ithemar take your glass?"

"Sartin."

"Now, Ithemar," returned the captain, "I want you to go aloft and see what you can make of those fellows. One of them looks wonderfully like the brig that helped the sloop-of-war give us chase last week."

The gunner took the glass and went up to the main-top, and in the course of five minutes he came down.

"It's the same brig, sir," he said, approaching the captain.

"You are sure, are you?"

"Yes, sir; I know it."

"And the other sail,—not the sloop, is it?"

"No, sir. She's a ship; but she's got no guns. She must be either a store-ship or a transport."

"Then we'll now give the brig a chance to engage us," said Vincent, with sparkling eye and heaving bosom. "You may slacken sail, sir," he continued, turning to Munn. "Have the square mainsail clewed up, and then we'll watch the fellow's movements."

The commander's order was obeyed, and after the mainsail had been taken off, and the fore-staysail hauled down, the brig gradually gained upon the cruiser.

The wind was about southwest, and, as the brigantine stood, she had it upon the starboard beam. The brig was standing just about the same and was situated about two miles due west of the Yankee, so that their present courses were nearly parallel.

"She's luffing," uttered Ithemar.

"I see," returned Vincent, who was also watching the brig.

"And she's making signals to the ship," Ithemar added.

"Ay," responded the captain, "I see. That signal must be for the ship to keep on, for see—

the brig is standing for us now, and the ship keeps on as before."

The truth of Vincent's surmises was soon placed beyond a doubt, for the brig had luffed enough for the chase, while the ship, that was now clearly made out to be a store-ship, stood on as before.

"We won't run away from you again, old fellow," said Vincent, as he placed his glass under his arm and took his speaking-trumpet. "You shall have your heart's wish this time. Now see to your batteries, Ithemar."

"Ay, ay, sir," responded the gunner.

The men were called to their quarters; the small arms all got in readiness; the cutlasses and pistols distributed to the crew; and the guns cast loose, and a stand of grape put in upon the top of the round shot.

The brig was now not more than a mile distant and rapidly nearing the cruiser.

"Wonder if she thinks we can't sail faster'n this," said Obed, as he stood watching the movements of the enemy.

"Of course she must know better than that," returned Vincent, "for she can see that two of our best sails are off; and then she knows that we ran away from both her and the sloop once before. Ha!"

At this moment a wreath of smoke curled out from the brig's side, and a shot was seen to strike the water about two cables' length short of its mark.

"Wonder if that's their best gun?" said Ithemar, as he noticed where the shot struck.

"We shall be likely to find out soon," returned Vincent. "If he's got a better gun he'll give it."

In a few moments the brig fired another gun, but the shot fell short as before, and ere long afterwards a third was fired with the same result.

"By Saint George!" exclaimed Vincent, "her guns are no heavier than ours; and I believe our two bow guns are longer and heavier than any she has. If such is the case we'll give her broadside for broadside."

"While it suits us," added Ithemar, in a low tone.

Vincent looked into his face and saw that there was a meaning look there.

"I'd rather have it *arm to arm, hand to hand*," continued the gunner. "I know the metal of your men, and I don't believe they can be easily beat."

"I understand," returned Vincent. "We'll board when we can."

"Good!" uttered Ithemar; and then he turned away to look after his guns.

In half an hour longer the enemy was within less than half a mile, while the store-ship held nearly the same relative position as before. During all this time the brigantine had not deviated a point from her original course, while the brig had been veering and hauling in various ways. At the present moment the Englishman was nearly abeam of the Yankee, with his starboard bow open.

At this juncture the brig fired another gun, and the shot struck the water just under the brigantine's stern.

"That shot was fired low," said Ithemar.

"Ay," returned Vincent.

As the captain spoke the brig fired another of her bow guns, and this time the shot came whizzing over the Yankee's deck.

"Shall I level upon her?" asked the gunner.

"No," nervously returned the young captain.

"But we can strike her."

"I know that; but don't you see the chance the brig is giving us? By the cross of Saint George, if she stands on in that way ten minutes longer we'll rake her with a full broadside. See! what a chance she'll give us if she don't keep away."

"I'm afraid she'll up helm before she gives us that chance," said the gunner.

"She will if she's wise," resumed Vincent.

"But we'll be ready for the chance, at all events. See that the larboard guns are truly levelled, sir. O, if she *does* keep on so!"

Another shot from the brig at this moment struck the cruiser about three feet above the water, but did no further damage. Another shot passed over the deck. The patriots were now all excitement. The larboard watch were at the guns, and the starboard watch at the sheets and braces. Vincent saw that, great as was his control over his men, he could not restrain them much longer, for he noticed that those at the guns were blowing their matches to keep them well alive, and that they were keeping the guns to bear upon the enemy.

"—sh!" fell from the young captain's lips.

The sound, slight as it was, reached the ears of every man, and every eye was upon him.

"Let the guns be aimed two points further forward. Heave them around carefully. Stand by the braces, and be ready to ease away."

The order was quickly obeyed.

"Now, Ithemar," said Vincent, "I am going to put the helm up, and I give the batteries to you. As soon as they bear upon the brig, fire!"

The enemy was now within musket shot, and one or two of her last shots had done some damage amongst the cruiser's rigging. Vincent gave the word to the helmsman—the brigantine fell quickly off—Ithemar caught the enemy in the range of his guns, and he gave the word. The light cruiser started from the shock as her broadside howled forth its war note, and for some moments the smoke lay thick upon the water; but it was swept away at length, and then the Yankees saw what they had done.

The brig's mainmast was shot off within six feet of the deck, and it went overboard just as our patriots got sight of it. Vincent levelled his glass, and he could see where two shots had struck the bulwarks of the starboard bow.

"By Saint George!" he uttered, "she must have been raked by those shot. You did well, Ithemar."

"Ay, and I can do it again," returned the gunner.

"You shall have a chance with the other battery," said the captain, as he placed his glass under his arm. "Stand by to wear ship. Move quickly, now."

The brig had fallen off before the wind, having lost all her after sails, and Vincent could plainly see that all was confusion on her deck. His vessel wore handsomely, and, in a few minutes, was running free on the larboard tack. In this way he ran under the enemy's stern and fired his starboard broadside. Then he backed his main-topsail and thus held a raking position. In ten minutes from that time the brig fired a gun to leeward. She had no flag to pull down, for it had been shot away by the first broadside, and the Americans understood that her blank gun was a token of surrender.

Vincent Gray ordered his men away from the guns, and then he leaned back against the rail and looked thoughtfully upon the scene about him. Not a man of his crew had been killed, and only three wounded. His vessel was in no way seriously damaged. Not a spar was injured, nor a timber crashed. The few pieces of rigging had been effectually stoppered as soon as they were shot away, and the few shot holes in the sides had been plugged. And yet the enemy was a total wreck!

"Upon my soul," murmured the young cap-

tain, speaking aloud to himself, "I can hardly believe it."

"Believe what?" asked Ithemar, who stood by his side and heard him.

"That we are almost uninjured, and she a wreck."

"Simple as daylight," returned the gunner. "The Englishman lost his chance to fight by his very first foolish move. He must have thought that we meant to run away or else he wouldn't have kept on as he did and given us that first chance for raking him. But when that was done he was simply at our mercy."

"Yes, I see," said Vincent. "I understand it. I understood it before; and yet 'twould be a strange story to tell. Few Englishmen would like to believe it."

"Ay," responded Ithemar, with a kindling eye; "that's true; but, as sure as God is just, they shall have to believe harder things than this before America shakes off their galling shackles!"

Vincent was upon the point of responding, when he was startled by a cry from old Durkee, who came hastening towards him; and he quickly turned to hear what the old man had to say.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### THE STRANGE RECAPTURE OF A STRANGE THING.

"See! see!" cried Durkee, as he came up to where the captain stood, "the store-ship is off!"

"Zounds! I had almost forgotten her," exclaimed Vincent, as he gazed off to where the ship had squared away under full sail. "Larboard braces—round them in handsomely—up with the helm. Fore tack and sheet—let go the buntlines—haul down. Now for the mainsail. Stand by, Mr. Powell, to set all the starboard studding-sails."

These orders were broken and given at intervals, but the movements were quickly performed, and, in a few minutes, the patriot cruiser was leaping after the ship like a dolphin. In the meantime the brig was left to be knocked about at the mercy of the waves, possessing no power to make sail.

The ship was by no means a remarkable sailer, and the brigantine overhauled her fast. In less than an hour the distance was short of a mile.

"Ithemar," said the captain, "you may level one of your bow-chasers, and fire as soon as you are ready."

The gunner hastened forward, and, in a few moments, he fired one of the long guns. The ball struck the water under the ship's starboard waist. Ithemar loaded and fired again. The third shot struck the ship in the stern, and the Americans could see the splinters as they struck the water under her quarter.

"That's done the business," cried Obed, "for she's luffin'."

The old man's words were true, for the ship soon came up to the wind with her main-topsail to the mast, and, in less than ten minutes afterwards, the brigantine luffed up under her weather quarter.

"Ship ahoy!" shouted Vincent.

"Hallo!" returned the Englishman.

"What ship is that?"

"His Majesty's store-ship, *Succor*."

"This is the patriot cruiser, *Spark*. Send your boat alongside at once."

In obedience of this order the ship lowered her boat, and her captain was soon upon the cruiser's deck.

"Are you the commander of that ship?" asked our hero.

"Yes, sir," returned the Englishman, gazing around upon the stalwart men who composed the Yankee crew.

"I suppose you have surrendered?" resumed Vincent.

"If you mean to require it, I suppose I must," was the hesitating reply.

"Of course I mean to require it, sir; else I should not have given you chase."

"Well," uttered the captain of the store-ship, after some moments of reflection, "I must say

that you are brave fellows, but I wouldn't give much for your necks."

"Ah," said Vincent.

"Ay," continued the Englishman; "for you must know that eventually you will be captured, and then you must swing."

"I understand what you mean," returned our hero, with a smile; "but be assured that we give ourselves no uneasiness. Now what have you on board your ship?"

"A few passengers, and a cargo of sick men."

"What?" asked Vincent, thinking at first that the man might be quizzing him.

"A cargo of sick men," repeated the Englishman. "I have ninety-three invalids on board whom I was carrying from Boston to Halifax."

"I'll go on board and see," said our hero; and, turning to his coxswain, he ordered his boat to be lowered and got alongside.

Besides his boat's crew Vincent took Ithemar and Durkee with him, leaving Munn in charge of his vessel. He allowed the English captain to board the ship first, and then, accompanied by Durkee and Ithemar, he followed. When he reached the ship's deck he found a number of emaciated fellows about the gangway, and, on examination, he ascertained that the captain had told him the truth, for her steerages were full of poor, sick soldiers and seamen; and then some he saw who were evidently only passengers.

"Now what do you mean to do?" asked the Englishman.

A number of invalids gathered around the spot where the two captains stood, and Vincent could see that they were full of fear and apprehension.

"You may go your way," said our hero, as he cast his eyes about him. "I wish not to trouble such as you."

"Bless you!" cried a poor cripple, who had hobbled up to the spot. And all the others blessed the young American for his kindness.

"Then you will not take our provisions, sir, nor our—"

"No, no," interrupted Vincent. "I want nothing here; but I wish with all my heart that you may reach Halifax in safety."

"You are a generous conqueror," said the Englishman.

"I am engaged in a righteous cause and can afford to be," returned our hero.

"Well, perhaps you are."

"I know I am, for I fear not to call on God for help."

During this time Ithemar had caught sight of

a man—one who seemed to be a passenger—who was busily engaged in packing some things into a large trunk that stood open by his side. His countenance looked familiar and the gunner drew near.

"Hallo, Ithemar," exclaimed the man, as the gunner came towards him. "Rather a strange place to find me, but here I am."

"Eh—Jack Robuck," uttered Ithemar.

"Yes, it's me."

"You seem to be packing up in a hurry."

"Ay—for I want to join your vessel. I can handle a cutlass or a pistol."

"But what on earth brings you here? Are you a prisoner?"

"O, no—only a passenger. The truth is, I got into a bit of a scrape on shore, and my particular friend, the sheriff, was after me. I respect the man, but didn't care about seeing him just then, so I sloped—told the captain of this ship a cock-and-bull story, and got passage for Halifax. But I guess I'll leave him now."

Captain Gray had approached and heard the last part of the fellow's speech.

"Eh—you're the Yankee captain, aint you?" asked Robuck, looking up, and then rising to his feet.

"I have command of the brigantine," replied Vincent.

"So I thought; and I want you to give me a berth aboard. I can fight, sir."

"But who are you?"

"Ithemar can tell you."

Vincent turned towards his gunner.

"I'll tell what I know," said Ithemar, responding to his commander's silent question.

"This fellow is named, for the present, Jack Robuck. He is considerable of a noted highwayman, and is, just at this present time, fleeing from justice."

"Pretty well done, but full frank enough, though," said the fellow, with a coarse laugh; and then, turning to Vincent, he added:

"Not a very fair character for a Christian, but it'll do for a fellow that expects to get a living under the smell of powder all his days."

"It may do for you," said Captain Gray.

"But you'll take me on board your cruiser?"

"No, sir!" emphatically and indignantly returned Gray. "I do not lead a band of outlaws. My cause is a just and holy one, and I want none around me but noble hearts. You had better keep on, and leave America as far behind you as you can."



Just as Vincent ceased speaking, his eye caught a small, silver plate, upon which was engraved the name of *Edward Thayer*. It was just visible among the clothing in the fellow's trunk, and, without stopping to ask permission, the young man stooped down to examine it more closely.

"Hullo, there,—what ye up to?" cried Robuck.

"Just looking to see what this means," returned Vincent, as he dragged a small, oaken box out from the trunk, the corners of which were strongly secured by straps of burnished brass, and the upper plate of which bore the name of his young friend.

"Just drop that thing!" exclaimed the highwayman, springing forward and seizing the box. But he did not gain the prize, for the young captain knocked him back, and then turning towards the captain of the ship, the young American commander said:

"Look ye, sir, I have one favor to ask of you. I must have the handling of this fellow a few moments."

"Anything you please, sir," returned the Englishman, who had heard enough of the foregoing conversation to learn the character of his passenger.

"Now, sir, where did you get that box?" demanded Vincent, turning again to Robuck.

"No matter," doggedly replied the highwayman.

"Then we'll see if you cannot be made to speak," said Vincent, with decision. "Here, Ithemar—and you, Mr. Durkee—lash the fellow to the rigging, here."

The fellow struggled, but it availed him nothing, for, in less than two minutes, he was firmly lashed to the rigging by the end of the maintop-sail halyards. As soon as this was done, Vincent took the end of the spencer vang, and, having passed it twice around one of the shrouds, he placed the bite over the villain's head and drew it tight across his neck. He then passed the rope to Obed, and bade him pull when ordered.

"Now, sir," demanded Vincent, with a flashing eye, "where did you get that box? Speak, or I'll put you to the torture."

The highwayman trembled, but he did not reply.

"Pull!" said our hero.

Obed drew hard upon the rope, and Robuck began to grow black in the face.

"Will you tell me now?"

The fellow made a sign of assent, and the rope was loosened.

"Now, where did you get it?"

"I got it of a man who was on the road to Boston," answered Robuck, gazing first upon his interlocutor, and then upon the old man who held the end of the vang.

"A young man?"

"No—an old man."

"Do you speak the truth, now?"

"Yes."

"And you are sure 'twas an old man?"

"Yes."

"Do you know who it was?"

"Yes—Micah Trevett."

"Ah!" uttered Vincent, "did he have it? What else do you know about it?"

The highwayman was silent. Vincent made a motion for Obed to pull the rope, but, before it began to tighten the second time, Robuck spoke:

"Well," said he, "if you'll take me down out of this I'll tell you the whole story."

Vincent reflected a moment, and then he took the fellow down.

"Now," said he, "since you are so particular about it, you may have the whole story. I overhauled Trevett on his way to Boston, and I robbed him of this box. I thought it had money in it, but I got wonderfully deceived, for it contained nothing but papers. I afterwards found out that Trevett himself must have stolen the box, for a young chap—his name is on the box—had it stolen from his room at old Pollock's inn. Trevett's moved all his traps off,—nobody knows where,—and young Thayer has gone to hunt him up. That's the whole story, sir, from beginning to end."

"And, I suppose, Trevett took his family with him?" said Vincent.

"He had only one child."

"And she—did she go with him?" asked the young captain, trying with all his power to appear calm.

"Yes—I believe so."

"Have you heard anything of Micah Trevett since you saw him?"

"No, not a thing."

Vincent knew of no more to ask. He was already made uneasy, and, feeling confident that he could gain no more intelligence from Robuck, he resolved to let him go and return to his vessel.

"I will take this box," he said, "and see that it reaches its rightful owner."

"Look here," exclaimed the fugitive highwayman, with considerable assurance. "I've been keeping that box just for the sake of getting a reward for it, and 'tisn't hardly fair to be cheated out of it."

"If you had come honestly by it I would willingly pay you a round sum for it; but, as it is, you may thank your stars that you are not worse off than at present."

Robuck said no more about the box; but, before Vincent left the ship, he said to the captain:

"Your passenger here is certainly a great villain; but, I must confess, that in his robbing an old man of this box he may have done—as it now turns out—a most fortunate thing for jus-

tice. If you are willing you may do me the favor to let him go about his business when you arrive in port."

"Willingly," returned the Englishman.

"Well, that's something, anyhow," said Robuck.

In a few minutes more Captain Gray entered his boat, and, having informed the Englishman that he was at liberty to square away when he pleased, he rowed on board his own vessel. Having reached the deck of the *Spark*, our hero went to his cabin and put away the oaken box, and then he returned, and, after filling away, he put back towards the dismantled brig.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### THE MYSTERY OF THE OAKEN BOX.

#### ..B..B..B..

It was well into the afternoon when the patriot cruiser filled away after leaving the ship, and during the time she had been lying to the English brig had been drifting slowly to the north'rd and west'rd. The latter vessel had most of her foremast standing; but the foreyard had been shot away. The fore trysail was the only sail she could set, and though she had that on it did not keep her to the wind.

"Seems to me she is settling," said Ithemar, who had been watching the brig for some minutes.

"She is!" responded Durkee.

Vincent opened his glass, and he could see that the English crew were at their pumps, and that they were working hard, and yet he was convinced that the vessel was gradually settling in the water. While he gazed upon the brig the English ensign was hoisted at her fore trysail peak, with the union down.

"Ah," uttered the young captain, "there goes a signal of distress. I hope we shall reach them."

But the brigantine could do nothing more in the way of sailing, for she was close upon the wind, with her bowlines taut, and every sail was set that would draw. She was just able to stand direct for the wreck by allowing nothing for leeway; but then the brig was drifting enough to more than make up for that. In ten minutes

from that time the brigantine luffed and came about just under the Englishman's weather-beam.

"Brig ahoy!"

"Hullo!"

"Have you surrendered?"

"Yes; and we're sinking, too. For God's sake, help us!"

"Then down with your boat at once," shouted Vincent.

"We can't get them out," said the Englishman. "You've riddled the boats at our davits, and we can't get up a purchase to heave out our deck boats. Send your own boats alongside or we shall all sink."

Vincent ordered his men to stir themselves lively, and, in a few minutes, the three cutters were in the water and alongside. He did not deem it necessary or expedient to stop to get out the launch, but, ordering half of each crew to their respective boats, he set off at once for the brig. When he reached her he found that she had settled to within six inches of her portsills, and it was evident that she could not remain afloat many minutes at the farthest. When our hero reached the gangway of the brig, he found her men all crowded about the place ready for a leap into the boats, and it was with the utmost exertion that he succeeded in preventing them from all crowding into the single boat,

from which he had just come up. For a single moment Vincent cast his eye over that desolated deck. It was covered with broken spars, huge splinters, torn rigging, and dead men. The wounded were collected together in the starboard gangway, where they were waiting to be taken off.

"For the love of mercy, sir," urged the English captain, "let us get off as soon as possible. The brig must soon go down."

"I will make all the haste I can," returned Vincent, still standing in the gangway to prevent the men from rushing over. "How many men have you, all told?"

"There are only forty-eight left, in the wounded and all."

"Then pass the wounded over first," said Vincent. "Get them into my boat as soon as possible."

The English captain instantly cleared the gangway, and then the work of removing the wounded men commenced. It was speedily accomplished, for there were but few who needed assistance. After this the other men descended regularly into the boats, the three cutters holding them all with ease. It was too late to think of saving anything from the wreck, for the water was already rippling in over the portsills, so our hero at once leaped down, after the others were all in the boats, and then put off. The boats had not yet reached the brigantine, when the brig was seen to heel quickly over, with her lee rail under. In a moment more she righted, and the sea rolled over her deck. That was the last of the war-brig, for, while yet the men gazed at the quivering foremast, she pitched forward with a mighty throe, and on the next moment she was gone from mortal sight forever!

"That's the last of her!" uttered the English captain, gazing sadly upon the spot where his vessel had gone down, and where the floating spars and splinters were tossing wildly about.

"But, I suppose, you would rather see her there than to have had me taken her into port as a prize," said Vincent.

"It makes no odds," said the Englishman, dejectedly. "I deserved to lose her. In all my life I never did so foolish a thing before."

"Ah, how so?"

"Why, I might have known that you were not trying to run away, for you had your square mainsail and fore-staysail off, and yet I gave you chase with a perfect recklessness."

"You didn't give us credit for such metal."

"I knew the metal of your guns, and I sup-

posed you must have an efficient crew; but you ran away from me once before—"

"That was when you had a heavy sloop to back you," interrupted Vincent.

"Yes, I know that, but I didn't stop to think of it," said the English captain.

"Well, well," said our hero, "you have no need to blame yourself, for we were determined to take you, and we had no fear of failing."

"I don't know about that," returned the Englishman, with compressed lips. "I think if I had done as I ought you would now be my prisoner."

"I might have been a dead man," emphatically pronounced Vincent, "but not a prisoner. But that brigantine, sir, could not have been yours. You had not the men to take her."

Further conversation was cut off, for, at this moment, the first cutter grazed the side of the cruiser, and, soon afterwards, the prisoners were all on board. The boats were run up, the maintopsail filled away, and then the wounded were taken care of. From the prisoner captain, Vincent learned that the total of the brig's crew had been eighty men, and that among the killed were the first and second lieutenants, the gunner, boatswain, and one midshipman. By the time the prisoners were all secured it was nearly sundown, and, having seen the vessel set upon her course for Massachusetts Bay, Captain Gray retired to his cabin. The events of the day crowded heavily upon him, but among them all none occupied a larger space, in his mind, than did the oaken box he had obtained from the fugitive highwayman. He got the box and placed it upon his table. The lock was broken, and having cast off the stout cord by which it was secured, he raised the cover. He saw the papers—they seemed all in order, and appeared to have been not much handled. For a long while the young captain sat, with his head resting upon his hand, gazing into the box.

"I do not know as I ought to read these papers," he said to himself. "They are not mine, though I have fairly obtained them."

Vincent held a long debate with himself. He was anxious—nervous—but he hesitated. It was not curiosity that moved him—it was a far deeper emotion.

"I think it would be right," he at length murmured, "for then I should know how to act. There may be important intelligence there—intelligence which will guide me in assisting Edward Thayer."

This last consideration had its weight upon our hero's mind, and he resolved to examine enough of the papers to enable him to understand what he could do to help his friend. To be sure, curiosity was one of the elements at work in the young man's mind, but then from that cause alone he would never have sought to know the mysteries of the box he had come in possession of. Vincent took out the bundle of papers that laid uppermost, when he was interrupted by a call from the deck. He went up, and having attended to the subject upon which his decision was required, he returned to the cabin. He now lighted a candle and then re-opened the box. The first bundle of papers he untied, and one by one he cast his eyes over them. They were deeds, and the only thing that surprised Vincent was that the name of his friend was not mentioned in them. These he tied up as he had found them, and then he opened the second package. The first paper he unfolded was of little consequence, but upon the contents of the second his eye was fixed with more intensity. Twice he read the paper over, and then, with a trembling hand, he laid it aside. On taking the third paper he was still more deeply moved. He read it through, and then he leaned his brow upon his hand.

"Just Heaven!" he murmured, "can this be true?"

Again he looked at the paper, and, when he laid it aside, there were shades of strange doubt upon his features. Another paper, larger and more copiously written than any of the others, was next opened. Vincent read it with a burning eye. His lips were tightly compressed, and his brow was bent with the most intense application. When he had finished reading it, it fell from his hands and dropped upon the floor. He was pale, and his lip now trembled. He picked up the paper and again he read it. Then he folded it up and placed it back in the box.

"O!" he uttered, as he started from his seat, and paced up and down the cabin, "Micah Trevett must not escape. If he is in Boston he must be found."

After musing a few moments, he added:

"Edward may find him—and Edward will want these papers."

The young captain stopped and looked into the box. Then he shut down the cover and placed it back in the place from which he had taken it. It was while he was laying the box away that he thought of the English captain.

There was a bare possibility that he might have seen or heard something of Trevett, and, acting upon the impulse, our hero sought him at once. He found him sitting upon the after gun carriage, on the starboard side of the quarter-deck.

"Ah, captain," said Vincent, as he leaned over the gun, "I wish to ask you a question."

"Go on," returned the Englishman, in a sort of depressed tone; "I will answer you if I think proper."

"O, I mean to ask you nothing which can in any way relate to your interests, or those which you serve. I merely wish to ask you if you know of a Mr. Micah Trevett, in Boston—if you have seen him?"

"I know no such man."

"Then I shall gain nothing from you," said Vincent, in a disappointed tone.

"Trevett—Trevett," muttered the Englishman to himself. "I have heard the name, but I know of no man now who bears it."

"If you had ever seen him," said our hero, "you would not forget him. He may have left Boston."

"I have seen a good many strange looking men in Boston. How did this Trevett look?"

"He was a tall man, with a slight stoop in his shoulders. His hair was very gray—almost white; his eyes were small, gray and sharp; his nose was long and prominent; his cheek bones high; his forehead quite broad, and his neck very long. He was nearly sixty years of age, and some might think him older."

"By the royal truncheon, Captain Gray, I think I've seen your man," exclaimed the Englishman, after a moment's thought. "He had a child—a daughter?"

"Yes, yes," gasped Vincent. "One child—that was all his family. What do you know of him?"

"Yes, yes; that must be the man," resumed the Englishman. "He came down and engaged passage for himself and child in the ship that you overhauled to-day."

"But he did not go in her?" uttered Vincent, fearing, for the moment, that Trevett might have been on board.

"No. As near as I could learn he was watched by some one; or, rather, some one watched at the wharf, and he did not come."

Vincent asked several more questions, but he could gain no more intelligence on the subject. He could only learn that for a week, at least, from the time of the brig's sailing, there would



be no opportunity for Trevett to leave Boston by water.

When the patriot captain left the Englishman, he had gained as much intelligence as he could have hoped for; but what he had learned made him nervous and uneasy, for he knew that Micah

Trevett was watching for an opportunity to escape from the colonies, and he feared he might succeed. *Succeed!* O! all of Vincent Gray's hopes of happiness to come hung upon that one issue.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### THE FATAL COMPACT.

It was near nine o'clock in the evening. The night was dark and stormy, and the wind howled mournfully through the streets. In a small room, in the third story of an old house, situated near what was then known as Belcher's Lane, in Boston, sat Olivia Trevett. She was very pale and wan, and her cheeks were wet with tears. There was no fire in the room where she sat, and she had to draw her shawl closely about her to keep out the cold. The wind whistled without, and the rain pattered heavily against the single window. Ever and anon the maiden would start as a gust rattled the sash, and, at such moments, it could be seen that her nerves were almost wholly unstrung.

She sat there and heard the distant clock strike the hour of nine, and then she arose and went to the window. She tried to peer out into the street, but the darkness was too intense.

"O, why don't he come?" she murmured, as she turned away from the window. "Even his company is better than this loneliness. Why does he leave me alone so much? O, father! father! if you knew what I suffered; if you knew how you were wrenching my poor heart, you would not treat me so!"

She sat down again and wept. She was, indeed, miserable and unhappy. She had been confined to that chamber, and the one adjoining, for several weeks, and—save one old woman who supplied them with food, and her father—she had seen no one. She knew that her father was forced to do as he did; that from some strange cause he was seeking concealment. She knew that he had once engaged a passage in a ship bound for Halifax, but she knew not why the ship went without him.

At length she heard a heavy, cautious step upon the stairs, and, in a few moments more, Micah Trevett entered the room. He was wondrously altered since last we saw him. His face had grown thinner, his brow more contracted, his frame more bent, and there was more tremulousness in his limbs. His eyes were restless and uneasy, and they moved about in quick, furtive glances.

"Have you been disturbed, Olivia?" he asked, as he removed his wet coat, and laid his hat upon an old shelf in the corner.

"Only by my own thoughts and fears," returned the maiden.

"You must be foolish, child. There's nothing here can hurt you."

"And do you never fear when you are here alone?"

Micah Trevett turned quickly upon his daughter, and an angry flush overspread his features.

"Be careful how you speak," he said.

Olivia tremblingly shrank from her father's frown, and, with a painful movement, she buried her face in her hands.

"You shall not stay here much longer," continued the old man, in a softer tone. "There is a ship soon to sail, and I shall secure a passage in her."

"But why did you not go before?" asked Olivia, looking up into her father's face.

"Because," returned Trevett, with the evident hesitation of one who lies, "she had so much sickness on board, and some of it was contagious."

"O, I pray that you may not be disappointed again," ejaculated the maiden, with fervent emphasis. "I cannot live here, shut out from

God's pure air. Any place would be preferable to this."

"No, no—you might find some places worse," said the old man, in a peculiar tone; "many places worse than this. But you shall leave it soon."

As Trevett spoke he commenced pacing the room, and, at the end of some ten minutes, he stopped and took his watch from his pocket. It was a heavy silver watch, which he had purchased since he came to Boston.

"Come, Olivia," he said, "it is near ten o'clock, and you should be in your bed. Besides, it is warmer in bed than it is here."

"So it is," murmured the poor girl, as she shuddered and drew her shawl more closely about her. "I have been very cold here. If you stay much longer—"

"Hush!" sharply interrupted the old man. "We shall not stay here much longer. There—say no more, but go now to your bed."

Olivia slowly arose from her chair, and, having lighted the only remaining candle, she retired to the adjoining room.

"Look ye, girl," called her father, just as she was about to close the door of her little room behind her, "if you hear other voices here than mine, you must not be alarmed, for I may have company. I expect some one here on business of importance."

Olivia made no reply, but when she had closed her door, and was alone, she set down her candle, and then sank down upon her knees. She raised her eyes towards heaven and prayed. She prayed long and fervently, and her pure soul seemed to gather strength from the prayer, for her features were more calm and serene as she once more arose to her feet, and she trembled not as before.

After his daughter had gone, Micah Trevett sat down and leaned his head upon his hands. Broken sentences fell from his lips at intervals, and though the train of thought from which they sprang may have been connected, yet the words he uttered had no connection with each other. They were low and incoherent, and sometimes he started, when he gave them utterance, at the sound he had made.

At length the old man sank into a sort of slumber; and when he started from it he had heard the clock strike the hour of midnight. He arose from his chair and went to the window. The rain had ceased falling, but the heavens were still hung with clouds, and it was too dark to see

down into the street. Trevett left the window and commenced pacing up and down the room, and this movement he kept up for full fifteen minutes. At the end of that time he heard footsteps upon the sidewalk, beneath his window, and, in a moment more, the sound of a low, shrill whistle broke upon the air.

Trevett took the candle and descended to the street door; and when he returned he was followed by two of the king's soldiers. They obeyed the motion of the old man by seating themselves, and then awaited his pleasure. The candle was nearly burned out, and Trevett glided noiselessly into his daughter's room. He found her candle, and having satisfied himself that she was sound asleep, he returned.

"Now," said he, after he had lighted the other candle, and seated himself, "we will to our business."

Both the soldiers looked at him. They were low, uncouth looking fellows, with lust and crime stamped upon every lineament of their features—bearing just enough of ignorance in their countenances to indicate that they were the ready tools for any kind of villany where money could be gathered to their scanty purses.

"You have been recommended to me as men who could be trusted," continued the old man, as the attention of his guests was turned towards him.

"Yes, sir," returned the first soldier, "we pride ourselves on that—eh, Mike?"

"Cert'nly," responded the second soldier. "We can be trusted, 'specially when we's paid for it."

"Speak low," said Trevett, "for there is some one sleeping in the next room."

Both the soldiers nodded assent, and then the old man went on:

"Do you know what I want of you?"

"Not zactly," said the first man.

"Nor we aint particular," added the second, "seem' as how you mean to pay us. We was told you would pay us handsomely."

"I will pay you well, and you shall ask no questions."

"O, don't be afeared of that, old feller. 'Taint our business to pry into your secrets. Just give us the work and the money, and we'll do the rest."

Micah Trevett was chafed by the fellow's coarse familiarity, but he dared not resent it. He had sought the interview; he had placed

himself in the ignoble position, and the truth came upon him that he must now put up with the consequences. With all his villany he could not but feel ashamed of the company into which he had fallen. Some traces of his natural pride were still left—enough, at least, to show that he was not now what he once had been!

While Micah Trevett sat there and gazed into the bloated features of the two hireling villains with whom he had to deal, he felt a strange sensation of awakening remorse creeping over him. Why should he not? He had once been a proud, independent man, and he had not lost the memories of his manhood. But it was now too late! He had sold himself a slave to the power of gold, and his own hands had wound the meshes which he could not now rend in sunder.

The old man shook off the feeling that had fallen upon him, and, drawing nearer to the soldiers, he said:

"You need not fear for the pay; you shall have it in the king's pure gold."

"And in course we'll have it afore we do the work!" said he who had been called Mike.

"Yes—before you leave this room, if you like."

"Well, that sounds honest; so just tell out your business."

"Do you know Edward Thayer?" asked Trevett.

"Yes," said the first soldier. "The man as engaged us to do your work showed him to us. A young, pale, womanish-looking fellow."

"I don't know about his looking womanish; but he is young and he looks pale, too."

"All right—we know him."

"Well," resumed Trevett, in a half-hesitating manner, "from particular causes and reasons I do not wish to come in contact with that fellow. I know that he has the most base designs upon me."

A significant glance, which was at this moment passed between the soldiers, arrested the old man's attention. He saw the sly smile that played upon their features, and he at once com-

prehended that he was making a fool of himself in attempting to deceive his present company by any false coloring of his relations with young Thayer; so he resolved that he would go straight forward with his business, and leave his moralizing for those who might not know its base quality.

"The truth is," he continued, "this young fellow is hanging close upon my heels, and I am confident that he has found out my place of abode. He must not find me; and yet I cannot again move for the present to avoid him. It would suit me if he were dead."

"And the sooner the better, I suppose," said Mike, with a significant leer.

"Yes, of course," responded Trevett, gaining more confidence now that he had fairly broached the subject. "I want you to put him out of the way so that he may never tread the earth again to molest me—and it must be done at once, too."

"Just when you say, sir."

"Then let it be on the first opportunity. Between you both you can contrive to watch him. Be sure and not let the first chance pass."

"Leave us alone for that, sir. You may be sure that we shan't let this business lay long on our hands."

"And now for the pay," said Trevett, as he opened a trunk near him and took out a bag. "I will pay you down twenty guineas each, and when your work is well done I will pay you twenty more. Are you satisfied with that?"

"Yes," uttered both the soldiers at a breath, as their eyes caught the glitter of the yellow gold.

Micah Trevett paid them the gold, and then, with a repetition of his former injunctions, he dismissed them.

In half an hour afterwards that old man laid his head upon his pillow. He tried to think that he was safe. Safe from what? He thought of the danger he had just been trying to guard against. He forgot the Eye that was looking into his soul! He did not then hear the Voice that was then whispering a terrible truth into his ear!

## CHAPTER XX.

### ADVENTURE.

VINCENT GRAY landed his prisoners at Portsmouth, and, without waiting to receive the congratulations and encomiums of the countless patriots, who came crowding in from the surrounding country, he at once set sail for Massachusetts Bay. He had determined to take a trip upon the land, and he knew of no better place in which to harbor his vessel, while he was gone, than that from which he had made his first venture. Therefore he ran his vessel direct for Swampscott, and, without meeting any hindrance he reached the haven in safety. The brigantine was anchored in a sheltered place, and Vincent gave her in charge to Lyman Munn, with directions that he should remain there until his return; but with a proviso, however, that, in case of danger, the brigantine might be put to sea with the mutual consent of the three next highest officers—Durkee, Powell, and Ithemar.

"But," said Durkee, after Vincent's boat had been called alongside, "hadn't you better have some one go with you. By the great horn spoon, them Britishers will make quick work of you if they get hold of yer."

"Never fear," returned our hero. "I do not mean to expose myself without need. I think you'll see me back again in safety. All is, if I do not return, you will know how to do your duty. The cruiser must not fail with my loss."

"Stop a minnit," uttered old Obed, with much earnest feeling in his manner. "By thunder, if you talk so we shan't let you go—most sartinly we shan't. If there is the least possible danger that you wont come back you hadn't ought'r go. You know you hadn't. It's yer duty to take care of your vessel and crew first."

"I understand you," said Vincent, who could not help feeling flattered by the honest anxiety of the old man. "I understand you, Obed; but you do not quite understand me. I did not give you the injunction in view of any danger I apprehended, but in view only of that lot which is common to us all."

"Ah—yes—well," uttered Obed, "I suppose we should all try to do our duty as well as we could; but—but—you must come back."

"I'll risk him," said Ithemar, who had been standing near. The gunner well knew the business on which the young captain was bound, and he was the only one of the crew who had any clear idea about it. Ithemar's remark closed the conversation, and Durkee only shook his commander warmly by the hand in expression of his further thoughts and feelings.

It was nearly dusk when Vincent's boat was shoved off, and, by his directions, he was pulled towards the beach, where the neck of Nahant joins with the main land. As soon as the boat

touched the strand our hero leaped out, and, having bade his men return at once to the brigantine, he turned up towards the town of Lynn and hurried away. He was well armed, having a pair of well tried pistols and a stout dagger, all of which were safely hidden from sight, and it was with a hopeful step that he started on his mission. He hoped to find Micah Trevett; he hoped to find Edward Thayer; and third, but by far the deepest in his soul, came the image of Olivia. The thought of that beautiful, lovely being gave strength to his steps and steeled his heart against the fear of danger.

When Vincent reached the village of Lynn it was dark. There was to be no moon that night, and though most of the heavens were now clear, yet there was a thick, smoky haze coming up from the sea, and it promised to be dark ere many hours. But our hero knew the road well, and if there were likely to be obstacles in the way they were thought little of. The end to be gained was uppermost, and the dangers that might lie between were left for their own time.

It was near midnight when Vincent reached Winnisimmet, and here was the first need of hesitation. He knew that a line of sentries were stationed all around the entrances to Boston, and that no one could openly enter the town without a passport. A bona fide pass, of course, he could not obtain. He dared not trust himself to venture through Charlestown, for he knew that all was commotion there, so he settled upon the only chance left, and that was to procure a boat and run the risk of landing in Boston under cover of the darkness.

With this intention he proceeded to the water's edge, and, after groping about for some time in the darkness that had now enveloped the coast and bay, he found a small skiff, which was made fast to the ring of an old anchor that was embedded in the sand and mud. He found that he could easily launch the boat, but there were no oars to be found. In this emergency he be-thought himself of a small cot he had passed a short distance back, and towards that point he retraced his steps. After searching about for a long while, and stumbling over various obstacles that came in his way, he hit upon a pair of oars that were set up in one corner of an old shed. He could only be guided by the sense of feeling in his search, but he was sure that the oars were sound ones, and, having secured them, he worked his way out of the shed.

The young captain hesitated a few moments

after he had gained the open air, and gave a few thoughts to the thing he was doing. Perhaps the boat he was about to take might belong to some poor fisherman who could not afford to lose it. He would willingly have paid for it, but that was next to impossible under the present circumstances. He had no time to spend in hunting up the owner, and, moreover, he had no desire to trust himself to the inquiries he might be subject to if he should open a negotiation with the fisherman.

"Never mind," he said to himself, as he started back toward the water, with the oars upon his shoulders, "I will try to find the owner at some future time, and then I will pay him. He shall lose nothing by my appropriation of his property if I can help it."

Vincent found it harder work to get the skiff into the water than he had anticipated, but he at length accomplished the job, and, having seated himself upon the only thwart the boat contained, he got out his oars and put off. He had no landmarks by which to go, except a few twinkling lights that he could see to the southward, and, as he felt confident that these were in Boston, he took them for his guides. At first he pulled slowly, for he wished to husband his strength in case of need; then the tide was in his favor, so he made very good heading without much exertion.

After a while our adventurer saw lights to the west of him, which, he supposed, must be in Charlestown and, upon the other hand, he fancied he could detect the shore of Noddle's Island. He was now confident that he was on the right course, and he plied his oars with more energy. As he neared the shore he steered towards a point near which there was no light burning, choosing to make out his way in the darkness rather than to run the risk of exposure. Ere long he knew from the motion of the water that he was close upon a landing of some sort, and giving one more vigorous pull at his oars, he drew them in, and then hurried to the bows of the skiff. He had barely time to brace himself when the boat struck, and he could see that he was surrounded by floating timber, but that the shore was only a few feet from him. Having taken particular care that his pistols should not get wet in case of accident, he crawled out upon the timber, and was soon upon dry land.

The young man's eyes had now become so accustomed to the darkness that he could make out objects about him with considerable certainty,

and, after gazing about him for a while, he discovered that he was in a shipyard. At first he thought it might be Baker's, but he saw lights to the left which he knew must be upon the North Battery, and he concluded that he had landed in Greenough's yard. He knew enough of the localities of the town to guide him now, and, with a cautious tread, he moved up towards the street. The gate of the yard was locked, but he managed to crawl under it, and, in doing so, dropped one of his pistols. He picked it up, but, instead of putting it back from whence it had fallen, he kept it in his hand.

"Who goes there?" at this instant came starting upon Vincent's ear.

The young patriot captain looked up, and could plainly distinguish the sentinel only a few paces from him.

"A friend!" he quickly returned, having made up his mind instantaneously upon the course he would pursue.

"Then advance and give me the countersign!" ordered the soldier.

Vincent advanced, but the sentinel again interrupted him by bringing his musket to a charge and ordering him to "Stand!"

"Now give me the countersign?"

"Bar—Me—Mo,—I declare, I can't think of it. Let me see: Me—Po—Fla,—upon my soul, I must have forgotten it."

Vincent seemed to be exerting himself to the utmost to call to mind the talismanic word.

"It's no use," he continued. "You'll have to call the officer of the guard. He will know me."

"Can't call no officer now," bluntly returned the soldier. "You had better try to think of the countersign."

"I tell you it's of no use. Colonel Leslie gave me the word himself, but it's gone from me now as sure as fate. You'd better call your lieutenant or sergeant, or something, and I'll—"

"I tell you 'twont work. If you haint got the countersign you must just consider yourself my prisoner—that's all."

"Very well. Just tell me where I must go and I'll follow."

As Vincent spoke the soldier brought his musket to his shoulder. This was the movement our hero had been watching for, and, with a sudden

bound, he leaped forward and struck the sentry upon the side of the head with the butt of his pistol. The blow was struck with all the young man's might, and the unsuspecting soldier sank upon the pavement like a dead man. Vincent stopped not to see what were likely to be the ultimate effects of his blow, but, at the top of his speed, he started off up North street.

For a long distance he travelled on without coming across another sentry, and also without seeing any signs of a place where he might find lodgings. He naturally supposed that the further he kept from the wharves the less would be the danger of meeting sentinels, and in the end it seemed he was right, for he gained the head of Union Street without meeting any more of them. Here Vincent stopped a while to think. He was well acquainted with an old man, named Fallon, who kept an inn in Lindall's Lane, not far from the head of Long Wharf. He had stopped with the old man often when he had been in Boston, times past, and he knew that his heart was in the right place.

Our hero was not long in making up his mind that he would seek old Fallon, and, just as the town clock struck the hour of two, he started down Dock Square and entered Merchant's Row. He passed two sentries on his way, but, under cover of the darkness, he escaped them, and, at length, he had crossed King Street in safety. He had just entered Mackerel Lane (now Kilby Street), when he was startled by the sound of voices ahead of him. Directly upon his right hand he could distinguish an outlet of some description, and into this he carefully turned. He found it to be a sort of narrow shed, and, as he felt his way in, he discovered that it was partly full of wood. By the time he had gained what he thought a place of safety, the voices which he had heard had come to the entrance of the shed, and Vincent was not a little uneasy upon finding that he was likely to have visitors, for he knew that some one was entering. But he did not give a sound that could indicate his presence. He crowded himself as far out of the way as possible, and, having cautiously cocked one of his pistols, he awaited the result of this unlooked for companionship.

## CHAPTER XXI.

## THE ASSASSINS.

## Blunder!

VINCENT GRAY had been crouched away in his place of concealment some five minutes. During this time he had made up his mind that the fellows who had come into the shed were not after him, but that they had come in for some purpose of their own. He judged that there were only two of them, for he could just distinguish the outlines of their forms against the open space in front of the shed.

"—sh," uttered one of the men, in a low tone, but yet loud enough for Vincent to distinctly hear, "you must be careful now. We must do the thing to-night, if ever."

"Yes," returned his companion, "and that must be soon, too, for it strikes me that 'twont be a great while before daylight."

"No," resumed the first speaker; "but then he'll be sure to be along before that time."

There was a silence of some minutes, during which both the men occasionally peered out into the alley.

"I hope you haven't made a blunder now," at length said he who had before been the second to speak.

"Blunder! What d' ye mean?"

"Why s'pose 'n he shouldn't come along here, after all?"

"O, I know he will. I saw him go into Ad-

miral Graves's house, up in Cow Lane, and I know he'll come back this way. This is the way he went, and it's the nearest for him."

"Seems to me this is a curus time for him to go and see the admiral?"

"Not a bit of it. Old Graves has been down in the harbor and didn't get back till nearly midnight; and the young chap's business was kind of pressing. You see while I was under the window I heard something of his business, so I know just how to act."

"Well, now I should just like to know what you heard. Don't be keeping everything to yourself."

"Easy, Darby. Of course I couldn't tell you out in the open street. But, you see, I heard just enough to let me know that he'd gone up to the admiral's to get him to put a stop to old Trevett's leaving the town. Hark! what noise was that?"

"I didn't hear no noise."

"But I did. I heard somebody move in here."

"O, that must have been me. I trod on a stick of wood. Don't be scared at nothing."

"I aint easily scared, Darby; but I shouldn't like to be ketched in this business."

"Neither should I; but old Trevett's gold—"

"There's that noise again!" uttered the first

speaker. "By the cross, Darby, there's somebody here."

"I tell you I don't believe it."

"Well, I'll look, any way. You keep watch here, and I'll take a survey in amongst the wood there."

Vincent heard the fellow poking in amongst the wood; but he grasped his pistol firmly and remained perfectly quiet. Upon hearing the name of Trevett he had made an involuntary movement, for it had startled him; and now he began to collect his thoughts, and, even while the ruffian was hunting about among the wood, he took time to reflect upon what he had heard. He had no fear of the two fellows who had come into the shed, for he had every advantage over them; but yet he did not wish to be discovered, and for this he had two weighty reasons. In the first place, though he might easily defend himself with his pistols, yet they would expose him to a chance of publicity which he did not covet; and, secondly, he wished to know the result of the intentions of his two invisible companions. This last thought had the most weight upon his mind, and, if for nothing else, he would have risked a great deal for satisfaction on that point. He had heard enough to satisfy him that these men were about to do some job for Mr. Trevett, and, of course, he thought it must be Micah Trevett. Is it a wonder that his mind should run on to a second person—and that that second person should be Edward Thayer? At least, that was the course which his mind took, and he was overwhelmed with anxiety. The whole affair was strange, very strange, and even now Vincent fancied that he could see a wonderful providence in the results of his adventure that had thus far crowded upon him.

For two or three minutes the fellow, who had thought to search out the occasion of the noise he had heard, groped his way around amongst the wood, but he did not come near the spot where our hero was ensconced. He was feeling his way out to the extreme corner of the shed when, by some mishap, he contrived to overturn a pile of wood, and, as it came rattling down, he started back towards the entrance.

"There, I should think you'd hunted about enough," growled the man who had remained on the watch.

The other applied rather an indelicate epithet to the unfortunate wood pile, and, at the same time, he stooped as if to rub his ankle. He had but just commenced this last movement when

he was aroused by a quick exclamation from his companion.

"Hist! Here comes somebody. It must be him."

"Ha!—so it is. Steady now, Darby. We mustn't miss a stroke."

"But s'pose 'n it shouldn't be him?" suggested Darby.

"It must be him. But I've thought of a way to make sure. As soon as he comes along you make a groaning noise, as though you were in pain. Groan in real good earnest, now, and he'll be sure to stop. As soon as I hear his voice I shall know him."

"Wonderful," uttered Darby. "I'll commence now."

And, therefore, the fellow commenced to groan right lustily. He did it in the most agonizing style, and it had the desired effect. The pedestrian gradually approached the spot, and, as he came nearer, the ruffian renewed the piteous moaning with extra zeal. It had now become so light that objects could be seen in outline quite plainly. Vincent could see the forms of his two companions, and he could also see out into the street. He could hear the footsteps of the coming man, and his nerves were strung for the conflict in which he was determined to engage.

"Now mind, Darby," whispered he who seemed to be spokesman, "we must do the work with our daggers. As soon as I am sure of the man I'll strike, and you must follow suit. We mustn't cry out to give any alarm. —sh! Look sharp now!"

As the pedestrian reached the entrance to the shed, he stopped.

"What's the matter here?" he asked, while Darby still kept up his groaning.

In an instant Vincent recognized the voice of Edward Thayer. He had carefully possessed himself of a stout billet of wood, and, without waiting to hear Darby's answer, he sprang from the place where he had been concealed.

Vincent had had his eye from the first upon the head of the ruffian who was to strike first, and upon that head his club was aimed. He struck with all his might, and the fellow sank upon the pavement without a groan. Darby started up, but he was too late to use the dagger which he had drawn, for our hero had marked him, and the ponderous club came crashing down upon his head. Both those blows had been studied upon—the patriot captain had

counted upon them with a certainty; his eye had been true, and his nerves steady; and those two blows had been just such ones as a butcher gives when he settles his axe upon the massy brow of the stout ox.

"Edward! Edward!" cried our hero, stepping over the forms of the two prostrate men.

"Just Heaven!" ejaculated Thayer—for he it was. "Who are you?"

"You know Vincent Gray."

"Yes—yes; but this scene. What means it?"

Vincent—is it really you?"

"It is, most certainly."

Edward Thayer seemed, at first, inclined to doubt the evidence of his own senses; but he soon convinced himself that he was, indeed, in the presence of his friend.

"You are indeed Vincent," he exclaimed, at the same time extending his hand. "But what means all this?"

In as few words as possible our hero related all the circumstances, from the time of his leaving the brigantine, at Swampscott, up to the present moment.

"Then this is some of Trevett's work," uttered Thayer, after Vincent had concluded. "O, what a villain that man must be!"

"So he is Edward. So he is. But his course is well nigh run. I think we have him now—that is, if he's to be found."

"O, I know where to find him," returned Thayer.

"Then," resumed Vincent, "he is at the end of his race. But we must look after these two fellows here. Let us go around to Fallon's inn and get a lantern. I'll trust the old man."

Without hesitation, Thayer accompanied his friend around to Lindall's Lane, where they easily found the inn. There was a light burning in the bar-room, and, upon entering, they found that the old man had just arisen. The matter was quickly explained to him—or, at least, so much of it as was thought necessary, and he was requested to furnish a lantern.

"Eh—Vincent—"

"—h!" interrupted our hero, as he saw that the jolly old publican had recognized him. "I hope I may trust you."

"Trust me!—that you may. I know you—I know what you have been up to. I know you've trod on the king's corns most unmercifully, and I love you for it, my boy. Trust me!" again repeated Fallon, in a low tone, but yet with the deepest, truest energy, "my soul,

when a patriot mayn't trust old Bob Fallon, then I hope I may be buried in one of my own wine vats, that's all!"

"O, I believe you," said Vincent, as he returned the warm grasp of the old man. "Don't speak my name in the hearing of the royalists."

"Don't be alarmed on that account. But come—I'll light my lantern, and in the meantime, you just try the virtue of that fellow."

Fallon pulled a black bottle out from a distant corner as he spoke, and set it before our hero.

"That I keeps for particular friends," resumed the old man, as he pricked up the wick of the lantern-lamp. "If you've been out all night it'll do you good."

Both our hero and Edward felt in the mood for a slight stimulus, and they partook sparingly, of the wine—for wine it was, and of the pure vintage, too. By this time Fallon was ready, and together the three set out for the scene of the adventure.

"Here they be, still as mice," said the old publican, as he came up to the spot and held his lantern down. "And British soldiers, too. Wake up, here, you bloody thieves!"

"Is it possible you have killed them, Vincent?" uttered Thayer, seeing that neither of them moved beneath Fallon's exertions.

"Perhaps I did," returned Vincent. "I struck with all my power."

"They're dead, as sure as fate," said the innkeeper. "Gracious! their heads are both smashed in like rotten pumpkins. No wonder they died."

"What is to be done?" queried our hero, still a little anxious as to what the final result might be.

"Leave that with me," returned Edward. "I am intimate with General Gage, and I will take the whole of this upon my shoulders. You shall not appear in it at all. As soon as it is fairly daylight I will lodge the proper intelligence at the guard house."

Vincent thanked his friend for this, and, shortly afterwards, the trio returned to the inn, where Fallon proceeded to build a fire, intimating, as he did so, that his two friends should soon have something substantial for the benefit of their "inner man."

"Now Edward," said our hero, while Boniface was out, "we must have Trevett in our power as soon as possible. I know something of his attempts to leave the town, and I fear he

may accomplish his object if we do not move upon him at once. Do you know where to find him?"

"Yes; I know the very house he occupies. I learned of it yesterday. Yes, we will find him; we will crush him; but, Vincent, alas! I have lost much that I may need in the work."

"What is it you have lost, Edward?"

"Papers—documents. They were in—"

"An oaken box," interrupted our hero. "A box bound with brass, and bearing your name upon a silver plate on the top."

"Yes, yes," uttered Thayer.

"Then rest you easy on that score."

"But you do not mean that you have the box?"

"Not with me; but I have all the papers, safe, here in my pocket."

"Heaven bless you, Vincent! Get a light—let's have a room by ourselves. Safe—safe did you say? O,—"

At this moment Fallon returned. Vincent requested a private room for a short time, and, having lighted a lamp, the kind host led the way to one of his back rooms—a small, out-of-the-way place, where private meals were sometimes served.

After he had gone and left them alone they sat down by the table, and then Vincent drew the papers from his pocket. They were carefully tied up in an oilcloth covering, and, with trembling hands, Edward opened the package.

"Where—how did you get them?" he asked, as he threw off the string.

Vincent told the story of their recovery, and, when he had finished, Edward ran his eyes over them.

"Are they all there?" asked our hero.

"Yes—all," whispered Thayer. "They are all here. God be praised!"

"And you must not blame me that I read some of them," continued Vincent, "for I only sought light to guide me in the way I should operate with them."

"Then you know their secret?" said Edward, with a twinkling eye.

"Yes; I could not help it. I would not have done it, but—"

"Tut, tut, my dear Vincent. You did perfectly right—or so near right, at all events, that I shall bless you for it while I live. Now let's to breakfast."

"And then to Micah Trevett's," added our hero.

"Not quite. I must see to the two villains in the wood-house, first. They must be looked to."

"I am almost sorry I killed them; but 'twas their own fault."

"'Twas a blessing to the world that they died," said Edward "so think no more of it. Come, let's hasten, now. The sun is rising. O, these papers make me strong once more!"

## CHAPTER XXII.

## DAWN OF RETRIBUTION.

THE sun was just peeping up over the blue waters of the bay when Micah Trevett had finished dressing himself. His face was very pale, and his whole frame trembled violently. His features, now that they are seen by daylight, betray an unusual sharpness, and the brow has grown lower, and the furrows are multiplied and deeper. Even the hair has grown whiter, and the long locks quiver with the agitation of the body almost as though they were swept by the wind. He gazed nervously about the room when he had clothed himself. He heard a noise in the street, and he looked out at his window. He saw men and boys hurrying along—all anxious to make the best of their way. He thought some of them looked up at his window, and he drew tremblingly back.

Poor man! His cup of bitterness was well nigh full—and its flood was poison, too. He had filled it himself. Drop by drop had he let in the soul-searing tide, and now, while it trembled near the brim, seeming every moment to overrun, he only sought to let in another flood to swell the already accumulated sea of condemnation. His heart was not softened; his soul was not moved by even a thought of repentance. It was only bitterness that was in his life-cup, and, in his heart, he still held the demon that had lured him from the first.

He heard footsteps below, and, being satisfied that his hostess had arisen, he pulled at the tattered bell-cord that hung in one corner of the room. The summons was soon answered by Dame Lambert herself. She was a portly woman, many years past the bloom of life, possessing a fair share of good nature, and seeming not over-scrupulous in matters of order and cleanliness.

"Now, Dame Lambert," said the old man "haste thee with my breakfast as speedily as may be."

"As soon as I can fetch my water a bilin'," returned the dame.

"By the way, what was all this noise about in the street?"

"Why, sir," said she, opening her eyes very widely, "there was a horrid murder last night."

"Ha!" uttered Trevett, while a gleam of fiendish exultation shot athwart his face. "Where was it?"

"Down in Mack'el Lane, I believe. O, what horrid works!"

"Yes, yes, dame, it is horrible. I hope the villains may be apprehended."

"So do I, sir. Ah, me, these are terrible times. Nobody aint safe now. How I should like to see the murderers hung."

"A laudable wish, dame—very," said Trevett, with a slight twitching of the facial muscles.

"So you are sure it was a downright murder?"

"O yes, sir."

"And do they know the young man's name?"

"What young man?"

"Why, the one that was murdered, to be sure."

"O, Lord bless you, sir, 'twant no young man. 'Twas a couple of soldiers 'at was murdered."

"Soldiers! Two soldiers!" gasped the old man. "O, no, you mistake—you heard it wrong. No, no, no,—perhaps two soldiers did the murder?"

"I tell you, sir, I heard the news direct. It was two soldiers 'at was killed. Old MacNeal just come down by here from his rope-yard, an' he had been an' seen the bodies. One of the soldiers, he said, was Darby, and t'other was Mike Finch. But, less my soul, sir, you needn't be so frightened. Nobody wont kill you."

"I am not afraid of that," uttered Trevett, struggling with his emotion. "But it always affects me thus to hear of murder. There—go and get our breakfast, and bring it here to my room."

"Two soldiers!" groaned Micah Trevett, after he was left alone. "O, Heaven! if the fates be against me now! But no—I'll bear up against them! They shall not overcome me! Mike and Darby both dead! The youngster must bear a charmed life! This is the third time—and yet he lives!"

Thus was the old man murmuring to himself when Olivia entered the room; and, almost at the same moment, Dame Lambert appeared with a waiter, upon which were coffee and toast.

"Set it down, dame," said Trevett. "And now go and watch below. You know I pay you well for your trouble."

"O yes, sir; most excellently well," replied the woman, with a sparkling eye—for she thought of golden guineas.

"Then look you well to the door. Allow no one to enter till I am gone. If any one comes—if they ask for me—tell them that I am gone—that your house is empty. Tell them that I am gone to—to—Roxbury. Tell them I went away secretly—in the night—last night; that—I—I was afraid to stay here. Mind and tell them that. Be sure that you make them believe that I am gone."

"Yes, sir," hesitatingly returned the hostess, gazing with wonder into the terror-wrought features of the old man. "Yes, sir. But shall

I tell them that you was afraid to stay here?"

"Yes, yes; for then they will think more surely I am gone."

Dame Lambert cast a long, searching look upon her guest, and then she left the room. After she had gone, Micah Trevett poured him out a cup of coffee and drank it. After this he sat down by the table and drew a piece of toast upon his plate. Olivia watched him with anxious glances, and one might have seen, from the marks upon her countenance, that she was moved by something more than a mere settled melancholy.

"Father," she timidly said, "I heard Mrs. Lambert speak of a murder."

"Yes," returned the old man, trying to be calm, "she did speak of it. It seems two soldiers were murdered last night."

"Were they the same that were here?"

The girl seemed to have asked this question instinctively. She did not, surely, call to mind all the bearings of the thing, or she would not have asked it.

"The same that were here!" repeated Trevett, in a low whisper, at the same time turning pale. "What do you mean?"

Olivia hesitated; but she found that she had commenced, and she determined now to carry it through. She had a terrible suspicion—a suspicion that had been gradually creeping over her mind—that her father was a guilty man; that some great crime hung upon his soul. All his movements tended to strengthen her in this opinion, and she cared not now how soon she knew the whole truth. It might be dreadful to her; it might crush her already bleeding heart; but she wished to know the truth. She felt a spirit of boldness, too, creep over her soul—for the very worst she could have to fear was a knowledge of the truth she suspected. As for her father, she felt that, let his wrath reach as high as it would, he could harm her no more. He could not heap more suffering upon her head than she already bore.

"What mean you, girl, by that question?" repeated the old man.

"I meant to ask you if those two soldiers, who have been murdered, were the same that were here with you night before last."

"Ha! How know you that I had two soldiers here?" uttered Trevett, dropping the piece of toast he had taken upon his fork, and gazing sharply into the face of the girl.

"I heard them here," calmly replied Olivia.



"Ay—you may have heard them—but did you see them?"

"Yes."

"How?"

"I looked through the little window, in my room, when they were going out."

"And did you hear what we said? Did you know their business here? Speak—speak, girl, or by the—"

Olivia uttered a quick cry as her father caught her by the arm, and, in spite of her resolution, she was frightened by his terrible look.

"No—no," she gasped, "I heard nothing."

"Not a syllable? Beware! Did you not hear a word?"

"No, no. I only saw that they were two soldiers."

"Well," whispered the old man, letting go the poor girl's arm, and sinking back into his chair, "they were the two who have been murdered. But why do you look at me so sharply? Why do your eyes burn so? I had nothing to do with their death. Turn away that gaze! Look not at me so!"

Olivia was awe-struck by the sudden change which came over her father. He looked at her as if he were affrighted, and his eyes were set and glassy.

"I had nothing to do with the murder, I tell you," he continued. "By Heaven! there's not a drop of blood upon my hands! See—see—are they not white and clean? They would be red and gory if there were blood upon them!"

Olivia shrank away from the wild light that gleamed in the old man's eyes, and a cold shudder ran through her frame—for she saw that his mind was wandering. But he soon regained himself, and, for some time, he sat with his brow resting upon his hands. At length he started up from his seat and gazed about him.

"Come," he said, speaking quietly, "we must prepare to leave this place now. I have disguises prepared. Here is a suit of boy's clothing for you. This old woman's gown will hide me."

"What! and must we leave here in such a shape?" murmured Olivia.

"Yes; any shape, so that we may get away in safety. Come, a vessel sails to-day, and a passage is engaged for an old woman and her son. Let us once get beyond the confines of the colonies, and we may be safe."

"Safe from what?" asked the maiden, in a low voice.

"Ask me no more questions, but dress yourself."

Micah Trevett shuddered when his child asked that question—but he mastered the emotion, and, having given his answer, he turned towards a bundle that lay upon a chair near him, and proceeded to untie it. First he took out an old woolen gown, and then a black silk hood and shawl. He had just laid these upon the table, when he was startled by an outcry from Dame Lambert. He started up from his occupation; but, before he had thought of going to the door, he heard the sound of footsteps upon the stairs. They were too heavy for the steps of his hostess. He sprang forward to lock the door, but he was too late. It was opened before he could reach it, and Vincent Gray entered the room.

The young patriot captain stood for a moment without speaking. He gazed upon Olivia, and a shade of anguish swept across his features as he saw how pale she looked. She had started from her seat, and her hand was pressed hard upon her brow.

"Olivia," pronounced our hero, in a trembling voice. "Olivia, I have come to save you."

The fair girl took a step forward, and then stopped. Vincent saw why she hesitated, and he moved quickly to her side.

"Fear not," he said, as he caught her hand and pressed it to his lips. "Fear not, dear girl, for I have come to save you."

"To save her! villain!" cried Trevett, now recovering himself, and springing forward.

"Back! back! old man," exclaimed Vincent, still holding the maiden by the hand.

"Who are you that orders me back?" thundered the gray-headed man, full awakened to wrath.

"One who knows you!" returned Captain Gray, in a calm, deep tone.

These words were very simple, but they had a wonderful effect upon Micah Trevett. He drew back from the gaze which the young man had fixed upon him, and he shuddered. But he soon worked his way back to the possession of his assurance.

"Ay," he uttered, with a mad voice, "and I know you. By my soul, your head shall not rest on your shoulders through another day. You shall know what 'tis to bearded me. Let go the villain's hand, Olivia. Let go, I say!"

"Hold, sir! Lay but a hand upon this pure form, and by the Lord that made me, I'll level thee to the dust! Out, you base murderer!"

"Murderer!" cried Olivia, starting back in affright. "O, do not say that my father is a murderer!"

"Ha! ha!" scornfully, bitterly laughed Micah Trevett. "See now how kindly the pirate-chief-tain can be. Now, base girl, let go his hand, or bear the dreadful curse I spoke once in your ear. Ha! I see you remember it!"

Olivia did remember that fearful curse, for she drew tremblingly back, and shut both her hands over her face.

"O, leave me, Vincent—leave me," she groaned. "Leave me to my fate!"

"Up! up! Olivia," quickly replied the youth. "Up to your soul of love and purity!" he continued, again seizing her by the hand and drawing her to his bosom. "O, my soul of souls—

my purest, dearest love, there is no more danger for thee. That base man is not even to be feared."

Micah Trevett seized a chair and raised it above his head. With eyes glaring like coals of fire he darted upon the young man; but his blow was of no avail, for Vincent had been on his guard, and the chair was broken in pieces upon the floor.

"Back! back! old man," pronounced our hero. "Here comes one who can make you see yourself!"

Footsteps sounded upon the stairs as Vincent spoke. Micah Trevett seemed to know their import, for he shrank back aghast, and stood like the condemned awaiting his death-doom!

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### CONCLUSION.

"Ah! Vincent, you've cornered the villain!" exclaimed Edward, as he came hurrying into the room.

"Yes," returned our hero.

"Edward Thayer!" murmured Olivia, gazing into the face of the new comer.

"No, no, sweet girl," returned the young man. "I am Edward Thayer no more after this. Edward Wellington is my name."

"Wellington—Wellington," murmured the maiden, gazing hard upon him. "Surely, I remember that name. O, tell me, sir, what is it that hangs upon my memory."

"Out! out!" yelled Micah Trevett, starting forward, and wrenching the trembling girl from the young captain's embrace. "It's all a lie!—a base, fiendish lie! You cannot prove it!"

"Prove what?" calmly asked the young Englishman, as Olivia sank into a chair behind the old man.

"The foul nonsense you have hatched up," hissed Trevett.

"Ay, but I can prove it."

"No, no—you have no papers—no documents. It's a lie!—a base lie!"

"I have the papers, Micah Trevett. I have them safe. The very ones you stole from me, and which, in turn, you lost upon the highway. God has given them into my hands again, sir;

and he has also led you to the brink of the fate you deserve."

The old man sprang to his trunk, and, before he could be stopped, he had taken therefrom a pistol, which he aimed at the head of the young man who had just spoken; but Vincent Gray knocked the weapon down, and, with the same movement, he forced the gray-headed villain back into a chair.

"O, Micah Trevett," spoke Edward Wellington, in low, measured tones, at the same time shaking his finger with meaning emphasis, "how low have you fallen! O, where now is all the ambition that has led you through life! Old man, I would fain spare you, but I cannot."

The old man sank back into his chair and groaned aloud, while Vincent Gray turned to where sat Olivia, and took her hand once more.

"Do not tremble," he whispered. "Look up, dearest. You shall be happy."

The fair maiden faintly smiled through her tears; and she seemed struggling to believe that her lover had spoken the truth.

"Micah Trevett," continued Edward, still standing in front of the old man, "let me tell you a story. It is a plain, simple tale and one with which I am well acquainted. There once lived in England a wealthy baronet, named William Wellington. His wife died and left

him with two children—a little boy and an infant daughter. Sir William did not live long to mourn the loss of his wife; and, when he knew he was dying, he called his college-mate—a man whom he thought to be his friend—to his bedside, and into his hands he gave the whole of his vast wealth, and his children. Sir William bade that man to take care of his children, and when they were of age to turn the property over to them. He left all the documents necessary for the transaction of the business, and so true did he think his friend that he gave *them*, also, to his keeping. Shortly after that Sir William died."

"Stop! stop!" groaned Trevett.

"Not yet, old man. You must hear the whole now. Not long after the baronet died the guardian of his children went on a visit to the north of Scotland. He had friends and relatives in Aberdeen, and, while there, the boy—the eldest child—was lost amid the mountain fastnesses of the Mar Forest."

"But that was an accident. O, it was all unforeseen!" gasped the old man. "The boy was searched for long and thoroughly. He was a wild, unruly child, and he wandered away."

"I know all that," continued Edward. "But the boy was not utterly lost, for the young Lord Montague found him and took care of him. The guardian returned to London, and, shortly afterwards, he embarked for America; and now he began to look with longing eyes upon the wealth he had in charge. He began to hope that the boy might be dead, and with the entrance of this hope his heart began to harden. Among the documents Sir William had left was one which provided that when his daughter was married, let it be at what it age might, her share of property should be given up to her. Now, sir, how did that guardian do his duty? He destroyed all the papers he held; taught the child that she was his own daughter; and, finally, claimed the wealth that was not his, and used it for himself. He hoped that the thing was lost to other memories but his own. He hoped that the boy was dead; that the evidence of his crime was swept away by the hand of time; and, at length, he began to flourish as one of the rich men of the colonies. He did not know that the keensighted attorney had kept duplicates of the documents he had drawn up for the baronet; but such was the case, and those duplicates fell into the hands of Lord Montague, with whom the son of Sir William still lives. Search was at once commenced. At the instiga-

tion of Montague the youth changed his name, fearing that the name of Wellington would frighten the game before it could be trapped. Information was gained that the false guardian was in Salem. Montague landed the youth there—and—and—you know what has transpired since. You know the murder that has rested in your heart."

"O! O!" groaned the old man.

"Ah, Micah Trevett, wonder not that I your heart is heavy. Look up at me, sir. I am that boy whom you lost in the forest of Mar; you are the man to whom Sir William Wellington entrusted his children and his wealth; and you—you, Olivia—my own, my dear, my long-lost sister. God has given—"

Edward Wellington could speak no further. Tears filled his eyes and sobs choked his utterance. But he saw the fair girl who had sprang to his bosom; he felt her tears as they fell upon his cheeks; he heard her sweet voice it as called him "*brother*," and, with his arms twined fondly about her, he raised his streaming eyes to heaven.

Olivia drank in the heaven-sent truth, nor dwelt there a doubt of all she had heard in her mind. It was opened to her soul—not altogether as a thing of new creation, but more as the clearing up of hopes and aspirations that had lain long hidden in the darkness of the past.

"Micah Trevett, have I not spoken the truth?" asked Edward.

The old man said "Yes," and, even as the word trembled upon his lips, his head fell backward and he rolled from his chair. Vincent sprang to his side and lifted him up.

"He has only fainted," said our hero, as he laid his hand above the old man's heart. "Let us send for help at once."

Dame Lambert was called; and, very fortunately, she was found close at hand—being stationed just outside the door. How long she had been there was not certain, nor did either of our friends think to inquire. Trevett was assisted to the bed that Olivia had occupied, and the hostess promised to look after his welfare.

"Now, my dear Vincent," said Edward Wellington, after the three were alone, "you must leave Boston for the present. This case must go before a legal tribunal, where Olivia and myself must both appear; but, of course, you cannot accompany us. You know that even now you are not safe. It has leaked out, even now, that it was not really I who killed the two assas-

sins. Whilst I was in the general's quarters, this morning, I obtained a pass for you under the name of Thomas Leavenworth. It will pass you safely through Charlestown, and from thence you can take your own course as it seems best. You know the rebel captain who has captured a royal brigantine, and sunk one of his Majesty's brigs of-war, is not very safe in the heart of the British camp."

"I know—I know," said Vincent. "And yet it seems hard."

Olivia divined his meaning, and she quickly twined her arms about his neck.

"Go—go," she uttered, "O, you are not safe here. It would break my heart if danger were to come to you now. Go, and be safe; and, when the danger is passed, then will we meet again."

"Bless you, sweet girl," trembled upon the young man's lips, as he strained her to his bosom. "Yes, I will go, and I shall go happy, for I know that you love me."

"Ay, Vincent; and that nothing can turn that love from its source. We shall meet again, soon."

Vincent turned towards Edward Wellington. "You will be careful of her," he said, in a choking tone.

"Yes," warmly returned the happy brother, "as though she were part of my own soul. She is yours, Vincent, and I will hold her in trust for you."

"Then I can ask no more," murmured our hero.

"And now you must go, Vincent. I expect General Gage will soon send here, for he knows the object of my visit to this place. Mark!—there they come now."

Vincent Gray snatched one more kiss from the lips of the noble girl he loved; grasped the war in hand of her brother; and then, with a trembling prayer upon his lips, he turned away and hastened from the danger that beset him.

The pass that Edward had obtained conducted our hero safe out of Boston, and, before dark that night, he was once more on the deck of his own proud vessel. His step was light, his heart was strong, and his crew knew that he had been blessed with success. The augury was simple, but the patriot seamen gathered new courage from its manifestation.

It was towards the middle of the afternoon of a calm, pleasant day that Edward Wellington and his lovely sister sat together in their room.

Olivia had regained her wonted vigor, and the bloom of health was once more upon her cheek. Edward held in his hand a copy of the "Independent Chronicle," a paper, at that time, published in Boston, by Powars & Willis—two men who did not hesitate to speak out manfully on the subject of their country's wrongs.

"He is a brave fellow," said Edward, as he handed the paper to his sister.

"And a noble one, too," responded Olivia, as she took the sheet and read an account of the capture of one of the king's transports by the patriot cruiser, of which Vincent Gray was commander. "O, Vincent, I pray that God may preserve you!"

The maiden trembled when she laid the paper down; but it was with pride. It may be that a fear for her lover's safety crept in upon her soul; but it was soon overcome by a sense of his noble devotion to his country, and when she again looked up she was happy.

Edward was just upon the point of speaking when some one rapped at the door, and, in a moment afterwards, one of the king's officers entered.

"Sir," he said, addressing the young man, "I have been requested to come to you and bring the message of a dying man. Micah Trevett would see you both—you and your sister."

"Will you go, Olivia?" asked Edward.

"O, yes,"—she would not trust herself to say more.

Micah Trevett was in the jail. He had been tried before a legal tribunal, and been found guilty of all the things whereof Edward had accused him. His wealth, which had all been converted into money, had been restored to its rightful owners; and, after this, young Wellington would have let him go—but not so the officers of justice. They found out his connection with the affair that had resulted in the death of Mike Finch and Darby, and they held him for still another trial, for the crime of murder.

Edward and Olivia were soon ready to set out, and they accompanied the officer back to the jail. Trevett had been removed from his cell to one of the jailor's private rooms, and there the brother and sister found him. He was upon a bed, and seemed to have just awakened from an uneasy slumber.

The visitors started back with a thrill of horror as they beheld the eyes of the old man fixed upon them. O, how that man was changed! He was all faded away into a mere shadow of

his former self, and the deep furrows upon his brow were all working in agony.

"Edward, Olivia," he said, in a low, husky voice, "come near me. Do not shrink from me. I will not hurt you. I have just been praying—praying that God might bless you enough to make up for all the wrongs I have done you. Come near me—come."

The brother and sister approached the old man's bedside. Olivia trembled violently, and her eyes were wet with tears.

"Give me your hand," whispered the old man; "and you, Edward. There," he continued, as he held both their hands, "I have only hoped that I might live to see you both once more. O, my children, if you could know what I have suffered; if you could know what tortures have rolled over my soul, I know you would pity me! I meant not at first to be wicked. O, I did not mean at first to rob you of a single right: but the tempter came—he showed me gold, and I let him in. Then I had sinned only in thought: but it was enough to work my ruin. I let the thought remain a tenant of my soul, and ere long the possession was lost to me forever. But it is past! I have been wicked, very wicked. I have sinned against you both. Can you forgive me?"

"With all my heart," uttered Edward, who was deeply moved by the old man's misery.

"And you, Olivia—you, whom I have wronged most of all—can you forgive me?"

The old man spoke in a very feeble tone, and his grasp was weakening.

"Yes, yes—O, yes!" murmured the fair girl, down whose cheeks the warm tears were now rolling. "I do forgive you, and I pray, in my very soul that God may do the same for you!"

"You do? O, do you? Do you pray that God may forgive me? O, tell me that once more!"

"Yes, yes—I do pray so," returned Olivia, almost frightened by the sudden and vehement manner of the old man.

"Then," uttered Trevett, letting go the maiden's hand and sinking back upon his pillow, "I hope that God may grant your prayer."

"Amen!" uttered Edward.

The old man started and opened his eyes. They rested upon the youth, and a grateful look passed over the pallid features. His lips moved; the name of the Deity dwelt half uttered upon them. He looked not so unhappy as he did

when the visitors first came; but yet he looked far from happy. Edward bent over and took his hand, but it was cold and lead-like.

"Olivia," he whispered, as he turned to his sister and drew her away, "he is free from all earthly tribunals. He is now before that Judge who holds eternity at his sentence. O, what a scene is that for him who would court the demon Sin! Ah, my sister, I wish every soul to whom the tempter may come could dwell for a while upon the ordeal we have just witnessed."

\* \* \* \* \*

It was a clear, cold evening in early spring. The British had evacuated Boston, and the patriot army now held possession of the city. In all quarters there were glad hearts, and from a thousand hearth-stones the song of praise was going up to heaven. The first great step towards American Liberty had been gained. Eleven thousand men, all trained to war, and led by experienced officers, had been driven out of their stronghold, and no wonder that American hearts were strong and hopeful.

In one of the mansions, on Tremont Street, were assembled a select party—because all the members of it were particularly invited guests, and not because it was composed entirely of gentility. No, no—for in some of those large drawing rooms we detect the rough, hardy forms of weather-beaten seamen; and their full voices are not hushed through fear of offending delicate ears.

Suddenly there was a magic word given to the air, and every voice was hushed. Up through one of the large rooms walked a stately form. It was a man, yet in the vigor of manhood and all hearts beat more deeply as he passed on. His countenance was radiant with joy, and his smile made all light about him. When he reached the head of the room he stopped. It was near the spot where stood Vincent Gray and Olivia Wellington.

"Captain Gray," said the noble looking man, "I have come to participate in the joy of this occasion. I would see you happy, for you deserve it, and your country owes it to you. Come, I long to salute your fair bride, and to wish her happiness."

In a few brief moments Vincent and Olivia were made man and wife; but yet no murmur of joy had broken forth from the assembled multitude. They were awaiting the movements of the man who was just taking the hand of the blushing, trembling bride.

"Fair lady," the august person said, "I wish you joy. You have got a noble husband; and if he but shows you half the love he has shown for his suffering country, you will be happy indeed. God bless you both!"

"God bless GEORGE WASHINGTON!" at this moment cried out Obadiah Durkee, who had perched his short, thick body upon a high chair near the centre of the room.

It was like a spark of fire set to a magazine of powder. A hundred glad voices burst simultaneously forth into one long, wild shout of joy and blessing. Washington gazed around upon the crowd for a moment, and then big tears rolled down his cheeks.

"Noble, generous friends," he said, in a tone made tremulous by powerful emotion, "I accept your gushing heart-gifts. And now, while we rest for a season upon the happiness that is present here, let us gather new strength for the duties that await us. Remember that we hold the pen of the future in our hands. The scroll is open, and we must write. Let us write, in characters that the world can read and appreciate, '*American Independence!*'" As Washington ceased speaking there was a hushed silence in that room. All eyes were turned upon his inspired features. But the spell was at length broken by Edward Wellington.

"Vincent," he said, grasping his new made brother by the hand, "from this time forth I am a patriot, and my heart and my fortune shall be pledged in the sacred cause of American Liberty. God help me to do my duty!"

There is no need that we should tell more of

that scene, for it was a joy that can only be felt. Such happy, holy themes will benefit the imagination.

A few more words, reader, and we have done with you for the present. The patriot cruiser maintained her noble station through the whole of the long war; and it was not until the bells of liberty had rang their peals through the land that Vincent Gray settled down upon the shore with his fond and lovely wife. They had been separated some, but the noble duties that the husband had fulfilled were real treasures to the noble wife, and their after life was all the brighter therefor. Edward was settled with them, and he was still the noble, generous brother.

The crew of the patriot cruiser went into various callings, though most of them still followed the sea. Durkee, Powell, and the rest of the fishermen returned to their homes in Swamptown, all of them alive and well. And Ithamar—he commanded a noble ship, owned by Edward Wellington and Vincent Gray.

There is one more person who deserves our notice,—Jonas Poole. He was fortunate enough to read the warning he had before it was too late to profit by it. He had stood upon the brink of sin's dark pit; but, with a strong resolution, he had leaped back, and he became a better man. The ten golden guineas he had returned to Vincent Gray marked the turn-point in his life. He was one of those who have lived to see, by experience, that true happiness is a treasure possessed only by those who can draw it up out of a pure and virtuous soul.

THE END.

Blaisdell

[FROM GLEASON'S PICTORIAL DRAWING-ROOM COMPANION.]

## THE UNACCOUNTABLE MRS. WEYMOUTH.

A DOMESTIC DRAMA, IN FIVE ACTS.

BY AUGUSTINE J. H. DUGANNE.

### ACT I.

Mrs. LOUISA WEYMOUTH, a widow of less than forty, sat in her drawing-room, busily engaged in working an elegant purse with the name—not of a lover, but of a favorite nephew and her heir, Frank Weldon, who was now absent on his travels. Whilst thus employed, the fair widow heard announced the names of two fashionable female friends.

Mrs. Louisa Weymouth was a very "unaccountable" person to the majority of her lady acquaintances, and there were some who did not scruple to apply the term "singular" to the really natural and womanly character, which she never for a moment sought to conceal. Though moving in the first circles of society, and looked upon as the particular star of what ever galaxy she might appear in, she was yet so amiable in her manners, so affable without condescension, that it is no wonder she became an object of envy and jealousy to many of her fashionable friends. Extraordinary as it seemed to several antiquated maidens and plethoric widows, who anxiously scrutinized her every action, Mrs. Weymouth never appeared to imagine that opu-

lence gave her any peculiar claim to respect, or that a lovely face could bestow on her any legitimate title to be arrogant. And it was a notorious scandal to all the drawing-room and tea-table gossips, within ten squares, that the "unaccountable" Mrs. W. had been heard to assert that she considered sweetness of temper to be one of the most essential ingredients in the female character, and that a woman should endeavor rather to merit the love of her friends, than to challenge their admiration. The first of these propositions, was gall and wormwood to Miss Cynthia Tart, who was famous for her satirical turn; and the second was rated as sheer hypocrisy by Mrs. Dorothy Slywink, who always dressed in satin and wore red ribbons in her hair.

Nevertheless, Mrs. Louisa Weymouth was not destitute of either friends or admirers. The charms of her person and her gentle manners irresistibly attracted both young and old; and an admirably cultivated understanding and captivating sprightliness rendered her, what she ever shrank from being considered, a belle and a toast. Can we wonder, then, that she was almost smothered with the kisses of her two visi-

tors, and that they were secretly hating her with a most astonishing cordiality?

"O, you charming creature, Louisa, how sweet you look," was the first salutation of Mrs. Mary Crane, accompanied with a most theatrical embrace, and a kiss which sounded like the crack of a wet leather strap. "O, dear me, how can you shut yourself up in this gloomy house, when everybody is out on Chestnut street? I declare, Louisa, you are making a nun of yourself."

Mrs. Mary Crane possessed a remarkably long and not very delicately moulded neck, that she was in the habit of wriggling in imitation of a swan. She wore corkscrew curls, which presented a dry appearance, though her hair-dresser will stake his word that he oils them every night and sends them home moist. She was quite a tall lady, was this Mrs. C., and kept a full length picture of Juno in her dressing-chamber. To my certain knowledge (my informant is Miss Cynthia Tart) three *filles des chambres* were discharged from her service for presuming to make invidious comparisons between their mistress and the goddess. Mrs. Mary C. affected gay spirits at times; in fact, she fluctuated between the characters of Juno, Di Vernon, and Lady Gay Spanker.

"You shan't have our dear Mrs. Weymouth all to yourself," exclaimed the other visitor, in an exceedingly thin and watery tone, as if there were very little room in the lungs to manufacture a voice. This speaker was a small, delicate creature, with lackadissical eyes and an ominously sharp nose. There was a continual melancholy expression upon her face, for an explanation of which she referred to "early trials," and she seldom smiled, on account of having bad teeth.

Mrs. Weymouth, with some difficulty, extricated herself from the overpowering caresses of her two friends, and prevailed upon them to be seated. But they had so much to say about the transparency of their dear Louisa's complexion, and the brightness of her eyes, that the poor woman scarcely knew whether to laugh or be angry at their pertinacious flattery.

"But have you heard the news?" at last asked Mrs. Mary Crane, with a mysterious toss of her head. "Mark Joneson has failed, and will have to give up everything to his creditors."

"I am deeply sorry to hear that, for I have always esteemed Mr. Joneson," remarked Mrs. Weymouth. "He is an honest, upright man,

and his wife and daughter are truly amiable women."

"O, as for that part of it," rejoined the small lady, who rejoiced in the maidenly appellation of Miss Augusta Bridle, "some folks think differently. For my part I never liked Mrs. Joneson's ways. She was always too haughty and confident to please me; and the daughter was her perfect counterpart. Pride must have a fall."

"I have always considered Mrs. Joneson and her daughter as models of the true lady," quietly answered Mrs. Weymouth.

"O, Louisa, you are so strange: you speak well of every one, no matter how they conduct themselves."

"I have no right to judge others, Augusta; but, in this case, I should do myself injustice if I did not speak my opinion as regards Mrs. Joneson. A more amiable, well bred, and perfectly lady-like woman I never met; and her daughter, as you say, is her counterpart."

"Well, there's no accounting for tastes, dear Louisa," said Mrs. Mary Crane, with a twirl of her neck. "You think everybody good—that's your only fault; but, proud or not, Mrs. Joneson and her daughter must come down pretty low now. I hear that the sheriff is to sell all their furniture on Monday."

"All their magnificent sofas, couches, and mirrors," chimed Miss Bridle.

"And paintings, and carpets, and curtains," continued Mrs. Crane.

"And the carriage and horses," proceeded Miss Bridle.

"You must have been reading the inventory, ladies," said Mrs. Weymouth, with a smile. "But, seriously, is it so bad as this?"

"Why, he's over head and ears in debt," exclaimed Mrs. Crane.

"And can't pay one half," said Bridle.

"I regret this very much," answered Mrs. Weymouth, with a sigh.

"What! is it true, then—that story?" cried Mrs. Crane, lifting her hands and eyes in unison with a toss of her neck.

"Yes, dear Louisa—is it true?" echoed Miss Bridle.

"I am really at a loss to divine your meaning, ladies," said Mrs. Weymouth.

"Why—don't you know? Report says that your nephew, Frank, was—not quite, but almost—engaged to Lucy Joneson."

"I am sure," interposed Miss Bridle, "I heard they were to be married, and that the

wedding-day was to be fixed as soon as Frank returns from Europe."

"But, do tell us, dear Louisa," cried Mrs. Crane, wriggling,—“is it so? Was Frank really paying her attention?"

"I think it very likely," replied Mrs. Weymouth, quietly.

"Indeed! But, of course, it will be broken up now?"

"I really do not know."

"Why, Louisa—don't know! Why, Miss Joneson is penniless now. Her father is completely ruined, and will never lift up his head again in the city, my husband says. I shouldn't wonder if Lucy Joneson goes into a store."

"Or becomes a seamstress," said Miss Bridle.

"Not if Frank should marry her, certainly," remarked Mrs. Weymouth, with a smile.

"O, now I can see you are jesting, Louisa," said Mrs. Crane. "Your nephew, we all know, will have a fortune, and can marry any girl he pleases. There's not much danger of his throwing himself away."

"No, indeed," echoed Miss Bridle, with an eye to the matrimonial future.

"Ladies, I entirely agree with you," said Mrs. Weymouth; "my nephew, while I have influence over him, shall not throw himself away."

"Very right, Louisa," rejoined Mrs. Crane, encouragingly.

"Perfectly," acquiesced Miss Bridle.

And then, with a brace of explosive kisses, and two sentimental embraces, the agreeable visitors concluded their "call," and migrated elsewhere, with their morning budget of the latest scandal.

## ACT II.

About the same hour of the morning in which the above-mentioned call was in operation, a very different and busier scene was presented at the house of Mark Joneson, late a thriving merchant and respected citizen, who, by a series of calamities and unfortunate speculations, had been involved in pecuniary liabilities, from which he could extricate himself only by the surrender of his entire worldly possessions. And this he resolved to do.

Such a resolution appears (and we regret to say so) rather foreign to the custom of a majority of those who, by rash speculations, have plunged themselves headlong into difficulties. It is much oftener the case that a bankrupt is by far the lightest sufferer through his own fail-

ure, and the "winding up" of his affairs often enables him to retire into comfortable privacy at the expense of half-paid creditors. But Mr. Mark Joneson was a strictly honest man, and chose rather, by a timely sacrifice, to preserve his unspotted name, than to make use of any of the thousand shifts by which bankruptcy is averted to the last moment, only to bring wider ruin to all concerned. Consequently, on this morning, the spacious house of Mr. Joneson,—excepting the private family apartments,—was the scene of great bustle and confusion, occasioned by the presence of the sheriff and his assistants, engaged in making an inventory of all the goods, chattels and appurtenances of the merchant.

This ceremony of seizure might, and would, probably, have been dispensed with, as there was no one among the bankrupt creditors who did not respect his misfortunes, and really sympathize (*malgre* their own pockets) with his reversed position. But he had made up his mind to the surrender of everything; resolved to pay, if possible, every dollar on the hundred of all his liabilities. Therefore when those, in whose hands was his legal business, would have avoided the sale of his dwelling and furniture, Mark Joneson said "Go on; the furniture and house are unsuited to my altered fortunes. They must be sold at any rate; so let them be sold for the benefit of my creditors."

Under this view of the case, the sheriff and his aids made short work of the schedule of goods and chattels. "Sofa No. 1," and "Mirror No. 2," were chronicled with due exactitude; and when the family sat down that day to dinner, it was with the comfortable consciousness that they were resting on other people's chairs, and dining off other people's table, plates, and dishes.

Mrs. Joneson's usually placid face began soon to wear an anxious, care-worn expression; and Lucy, her daughter, grew suddenly, from a light hearted, laughing girl, into a quiet, serious woman. But this was only in each other's company; for when at evening the husband and father came wearied and feeble from his counting-house, the smiles of wife and daughter were bright as ever to welcome him; and the ruined merchant, clasping them to his heart, murmured to himself: "I have lost a fortune, but I have still great wealth left, of which none can deprive me."

Nearly a week passed, and the merchant's wife, it could be noticed, grew thinner; and

Lucy Joneson lost the rose from her cheek. At length Monday arrived—the day when they should, indeed, have no part in their present home; when the hammer of the auctioneer would mingle with the striving voices of purchasers, eager to scatter and separate forever all these household and familiar objects of her love. And not with sympathy or pity came the Cranes and the Bridles to the sheriff's sale, to dispute for articles of *virtu*, and contest the possession of rare paintings and works of art. It was more with the cruel satisfaction of selfish natures, delighting in the misfortunes of those whose virtues they are forced to respect, but know not how to emulate. And yet the Junonic Mrs. Crane, and the *spirituelle* Miss Bridle were loud in their condolence, as they purchased a beautiful vase and a magnificent mirror at precisely one third of the real worth; they were loud in their condolence, although, as Mrs. Crane observed, and Miss Bridle echoed,—"If people *will* be extravagant, why—they've nobody to blame but themselves."

The sale was at last over. The various lots and pieces of superb furniture were marked and ticketed with the names of their respective purchasers. Rolls of carpets, and piles of tables, and groups of chairs, occupied the large dining-room, where the auctioneer had expatiated upon their merits and sacrifice. The chandelier's pendants were wrapped in tissue paper, and the mirrors deposited between thin boards. Everything about the house denoted the fact that Mr. Joneson's establishment was "broken up."

But no one who might have looked in upon the little group, surrounding the tea-table upon the evening of that eventful day, would have suspected from the demeanor of Mr. Joneson, and his wife and daughter, that they had parted with all their worldly goods, and that the merchant was, at this moment, as poor as when, twenty-five years before, he had entered the city, with the dust of long travel upon his homespun clothes, and his entire wardrobe contained in a bundle strapped to his back. I say no one would have suspected this from the appearance of the little group around the tea-table; for the benevolent and intelligent face of the merchant was radiant with good humor; the calm and lady-like features of his wife were lit by a sweet smile; and the countenance of Lucy wore a gaiety that was the reflex of her guileless heart.

"I am a poor man, my dear wife," said Mark Joneson; "but, thank God, I owe not one cent

in the world; the sale of all I possessed has happily satisfied every claim."

"O, how thankful, indeed, should we be, Mark," returned the high-minded woman, taking her husband's hand, and gazing into his face with a look that rewarded him for all he had suffered; "you have wronged no one through your misfortunes, and you are still, as ever, Mark Joneson."

"How could I be otherwise than strictly just with you for my adviser?" said Joneson, affectionately pressing his wife's hand. "And with you, and this dear child," continued he, bending down to kiss his daughter's forehead, "I am as truly rich as ever."

"You are my own dear father," cried Lucy, bursting into tears, through which her bright smile still gleamed like sunshine. "I would rather be thus poor than to have all the wealth of the world."

"But we may yet regain, my Lucy, if not our former wealth, at least enough to enjoy the comforts to which we have been accustomed. I have already effected an arrangement with my creditors to advance me goods and means to commence business again, and the experience I have bought is worth half my fortune. Trust me, we shall yet retrieve ourselves. I begin life once more, and must ask both of you to assist me in retrenchment and economy. We may not have luxuries now, Lucy, but, with the blessing of Heaven, we shall not want for comforts. And now, my child, read me a chapter from that Book wherein all may look for consolation in sorrow, and encouragement in all good works."

Lucy, while the last domestic of the house removed the cloth and tea equipage, drew out a little stand from its corner, and, shading the astral lamp, spread the Holy Bible open before her, and began reading aloud, in a musical voice, the words of hope and peace that gleam forever upon that blessed page. Mark Joneson sat in his easy chair, with his head bent back, while his quiet wife occupied a seat beside him, holding still within her own the merchant's hand. All was calm and peaceful in that apartment, while the low tones of the young girl's voice fell softly upon the ears of the listeners.

It was a scene well calculated to shame the hollow sympathy of such false and meretricious natures as Mrs. Crane and her maiden friend, Bridle. Perhaps, indeed, had they witnessed it, they might have learned of how little moment was such friendship as they could offer to hearts

so rich in mutual love as these. And, perhaps, too, they might have collected, in viewing such a sight, an abundance of material for scandalizing the *hypocrisy* of the world; for never will the Cranes and Bridles of society allow the existence of such a quality as true piety or happy humility.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven!" fell from the lips of Lucy, as she repeated the glorious enumeration of the beatitudes. And, at the same moment, a startled exclamation from Mrs. Joneson, and the hurried ejaculation of "Husband!" caused her to glance anxiously toward her parents.

Mark Joneson's head was still leaning back, his hand clasped tightly in that of his wife, who gazed with an alarmed look into his face. The merchant's eyes were closed, but the smile still hovered upon his lip.

"Husband!—dear Mark!—are you asleep? What ails you?" cried the wife, now pressing her hand upon Joneson's forehead, from which a thick, beady sweat had suddenly started.

"Father!—dear father!" exclaimed Lucy, flying to the arm-chair and kneeling beside the merchant. "Good heaven, mother, how cold my father's hands are!"

And those hands grew colder, and the brain more chill and rigid, with the thin, gray hair falling motionlessly over it. No answering pressure of her husband's lips returned the wife's convulsive kiss; no pulsation of the heart answered the daughter's wild embrace—Mark Joneson was dead.

Calmly, as a child falls asleep, had the merchant's spirit passed away, even while the beautiful promise of Scripture fell softly on his ear. That terrible and sudden stroke, which shatters at once the citadel of life, had stricken the strong man silently to the grave; and the widow and orphan, destitute and desolate, knelt, sobbing together, with their hopes broken, and their hearts bowed in uttermost affliction.

The physician, who was speedily summoned, pronounced the death to have proceeded from disease of the heart. The funeral took place; the purchased furniture was removed; and, at last, the widow and her child departed from their own happy home. Strangers occupied the apartments; new faces appeared at the windows; and the family of Mark Joneson, the ruined merchant, were no longer known among the wealthy and gay of their former acquaintances. Mrs. Crane and Miss Bridle mentioned their names

no longer, and, in the fashionable world, they were as if they had never been.

### ACT III.

Nearly a year after the event chronicled in the last scene and act, a young man dismounted at the door of an old-fashioned family mansion, in one of the loveliest districts of Virginia, and was immediately almost thrown from his equilibrium by a sudden embrace which he received from another gentleman, of apparently his own age, who, rushing out of the house, grasped the stranger's hand, and cried in a loud, hearty voice:

"God bless you, my boy!—how are you?"

"Upon my word, Harry, you intend to give me a real Virginia welcome," said the other, warmly returning the friendly greeting. "That shake of the hand is one of the old-fashioned sort."

"Frank, my dear fellow, I'm rejoiced to see you. I heard of your return from Europe and knew you would keep your promise, made somewhere near the Hartz Mountains, I believe, was it not?"

"On the Brocken itself, Harry; do you not recollect where we parted, like wandering knight-errants, each in search of adventures. My quest, however, has been, I confess, extremely barren."

"And I, like the pilgrim who sought a shadowy happiness through all the climes of the world, have at last come home to find the substance itself, hiding very demurely among these old ancestral oaks."

"You do not, surely, mean that you are married?"

"Not yet; but I hope you have come in time for the ceremony. I am not married, but I am on the eve of—"

"Marrying—"

"No, *proposing*!—and to a perfect miracle of maidenly propriety. I tremble at the thought."

"Faith, Harry, you speak in riddles. Certainly, you are the last man to tremble in a lady's presence. But where is this paragon of whom you speak? She must, indeed, be a miracle of womankind to have captured the heart of my volatile, proud Harry Danville, who has avowed a thousand times that—"

"Stop, Frank, 'an' you love me; array no my youthful follies against me in retribution."

"But who is this Circe? Doubtless the beauty of some neighboring plantation, with any amount



of bullion and broad acres to enhance her attractions."

"Not a bit of it; she is as poor as a sister of charity."

"Then she must inherit the blood of Pocahontas, which is the *sangre azul* of your Virginians."

"On the contrary, she is one of your plebeian northern families, who derive their blood from Adam and their nobility from Heaven. To be plain, Frank, she's a little hazel-eyed governess here, in father's family, the pet of all the children, and the pride of a quiet old mother, who holds the station of my father's housekeeper."

"And you intend to marry her, Harry?"

"I intend to propose. But hang me if I know whether she'll accept me. For six months I have been madly in love with her, and yet I've not received a dozen smiles; and she persists in calling me Mr. Danville, though I assured her I delighted in the simple name of 'Harry.'"

"To my mind, Harry, your young governess is a very sensible woman, and properly discreet. But pray, how have you contrived to fall in love in the space of six months?"

"Zounds! I fell in love the day I returned home and caught a glimpse of her, walking with her mother—a good sort of an old lady, but very distant and reserved. If it had not been for this mother, I should, no doubt, have succeeded in a capital plan I had arranged."

"What was that, Harry?"

"Eloping with the daughter, and marrying her in spite of her teeth; but I never had an opportunity of proposing it."

"Unfortunate Harry! But who are these mysterious ladies? I must see them."

"You shall. But who they are I don't know and don't care. Father knew their family, and has a great respect for the old lady, and—but, egad, Frank, I have an idea!"

"Well, my dear fellow, out with it."

"You shall be my mediator in this affair. I confess, Frank I am a coward in the matter, and can no more make up my mind, to pop the question to this little governess, than I could to—hang it, I could do anything first!"

"Well, what's your idea?"

"You shall be my pilot, guide, proxy, in popping the question. You shall prove your friendship by courting her for me, and getting her consent to marry. You'll thus save your friend's modesty, and, perhaps, his life."

"I see, Harry, you are the same rattle-pate as

of old. But, my dear fellow, you must show me this paragon, and then we'll see what's to be done."

"And I may count on you?"

"O, of course."

"Come along, then, my dear Frank; I'll make my father acquainted with your arrival, and then we'll lay siege to the governess and her mamma. Come along, Frank."

So saying, the young Virginian led his friend to the library, and presented him, with all due form, to his father, a portly old gentleman, who "lied at home, at ease," and consequently, grew fat and owned to the gout. He welcomed the young man with true hospitality, and immediately made over to his free use the house, servants, horses, dogs, guns, fishing-tackle, and all things appurtenant to enjoyment on a southern plantation.

"And now, my dear Frank, let us seek the ladies," said Harry Danville, taking his friend's arm and hurrying from the library. They passed along the wide hall, garnished with portraits of cavaliers in ruffles, and ladies in stomachers, and drew near a room, from which the sound of youthful voices arose in musical jargon.

"That is the school-room," said the young Virginian; "and there our little governess is beating French grammar into the dull brains of my incorrigible brothers and sisters, of tender years and tough voices. Come, let us enter."

The group presented to the eyes of the stranger-guest, as he crossed the threshold of the school-room, was one which Rubens would have delighted to transfer to canvass. Near the window, through which the soft light, mellowed by its passage among the leaves of a tall shade-tree, fell upon her mild forehead, sat a woman of about forty-six years, whose countenance bore the marks of chastened sorrow. She was intently engaged upon a lace frame, while a little girl of ten was watching her fingers as they plied the bodkin. Opposite to her sat the young governess, with a perplexed expression upon her perfectly charming face, as she strove to impress upon the memories of a boy and girl at her knee the necessity of the article and adjective agreeing with the substantive, and changing, like a harlequin, to suit all characters.—She looked up as the two visitors passed the threshold.

Harry Danville was, at that moment, studying the face of his friend Frank, in order to see what impression a first view of "the little governess"

would make upon that young gentleman. And we may fancy the Virginian's astonishment, when his companion, hastily disengaging his arm, stood, for a moment, as if spell-bound upon the floor, and then, with one bound, reached the side of the governess, and caught her in his arms, while she incontinently fainted right away; and the old lady, letting fall her lace-work, clasped her hands together, and started from the chair.

It was a scene calculated to make an excellent tableau for the close of a comedy's third act. Harry Danville knew not whether to rush from the door, or jump out of the window. He saw that something had happened; but there was a confusion in his brain that prevented him from knowing exactly what it was. Under the circumstances, however, he fancied a walk would exhilarate him, and so, turning about, he quickly found himself outside the house, and measuring the piazza with the most military quick-step imaginable.

#### ACT IV.

"I can't woo the little governess for you, Harry," said the voice of Frank Weldon, as that gentleman suddenly appeared upon the piazza, and locked his arm in that of his friend.

"Zounds, sir! what do you mean by this conduct?" exclaimed Harry, growing alarmingly red in the face.

"I want her myself!"

"You!—and by what right do you—"

"By a prior right, my dear Harry; that you will presently acknowledge. Three years ago I wooed her for myself, and, though unconscious of her having returned my affection, I have worn her image in my heart ever since. Through the long period of my absence in Europe, I cherished the hope that I might find her on my return still unmarried, and, perhaps, disposed to receive my addresses."

"By Heaven! Frank, you dispose of my intended in a most summary manner. You were old lovers, then?"

"She was the daughter of an affluent merchant, who, ruined by speculations, died a year since, leaving his wife and daughter in poverty. This I learned since my return, from my Aunt Weymouth, and also that the unfortunate widow had retired with her daughter from their native city. Thank Heaven! Harry, your kind invitation drew me hither to find her whom I have deeply loved so long."

"Egad, Frank Weldon, you talk very coolly. And so, I suppose, I must thank Heaven for having given me a friend to steal away my intended wife. But how do you know she loves you now? But, perhaps, my choice is as good as yours still."

"Unfortunately, Harry—"

"Zounds! you don't mean that—"

"She loves me!"

"And, no doubt, you have—"

"I've proposed to the lady, and her mother besides."

"And she has accepted you. So much for courting by proxy! Hang me, if I'll ever engage a friend to do my business again!"

"Stop, Harry, she has not accepted. She, and her mother, likewise, have rejected me!"

"Zounds!"

"It's too true; and, though I clearly perceive and must respect their motives, I am not the less overwhelmed with sorrow. The mother is, in spite of her altered fortunes, a high-spirited woman, and she will not consent that Lucy shall marry, in her poverty, one who was scarce admitted as a lover in her days of fortune."

"She's a foolish, old—"

"Stop, Harry; I respect—I must respect the motives of these amiable ladies, knowing, as they do, the prejudices of many of my wealthy relations. But I hope yet to conquer their objections."

"Egad, you shall! I'll endeavor to heal the breach in my heart by contriving to unite yours with the little Lucy's. Faith, I'll be your proxy, and serve you more faithfully than you did me."

"What do you mean, Harry?"

"What I say; I'll be your mediator. Hang me, if I don't feel as courageous as a lion. I could pop the question for you, Frank, as easily as I could wing a partridge; and I'll do it, my boy!"

"Harry, you are the same noble, generous fellow—"

"And you're a false friend, you scamp! But I'll be revenged on you! And now come with me to the library, and we'll talk the matter over with my venerable father."

I know not what influence the co-operation of the old gentleman, and the intercession of Harry Danville, might have had in the matter; but that very evening, Frank Weldon and "the little governess" might have been seen walking arm-in-arm beneath the "old ancestral oaks," with as happy countenances, and as low, soft whis-

pers, as ever denoted a brace of united lovers. And, just within the drawing-room, engaged at a game of piquet, sat Harry's father and the mother of Lucy, ever and anon glancing out of the window at the two young people wandering up and down the moonlit walks.

## ACT V.

It was a month after this that Mrs. Louisa Weymouth sat again in her drawing-room in company with the two ladies who figured in our first act. They had just entered, and Mrs. Mary Crane had just begun to intimate a desire to speak with her dear friend, Louisa, on a subject that had given her great uneasiness.

"And, pray, what is it?" asked Mrs. Weymouth, quietly.

"It is a very delicate matter, Louisa; but, as a friend, you know, I cannot refrain from doing my duty."

"Of course not," remarked Miss Bridle, with an approving smile upon her friend.

"I shall be much indebted to you, if you will at once acquaint me with the cause of your uneasiness," said Mrs. Weymouth.

"Well, Louisa, you must not take it ill of me, but, really, the conduct of your nephew, Mr. Weldon, since his return from Europe, has become the talk of all your friends."

"A perfect scandal," exclaimed Miss Bridle.

"Indeed, ladies, you alarm me. What has Frank been doing?"

"Astonishing you should not have remarked it, my dear Louisa. But you are so unsuspecting. Why, every one knows that your nephew passes nearly all his time with that Lucy Joneson, and her mother, at their house."

"Yes," corroborated Miss Bridle; "and he

has been seen entering that house at all hours of the day, and, perhaps, night."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Mrs. Weymouth.

"Too true," continued Mrs. Crane; "and I thought it my duty to lose no time in telling you. Everybody knows that old Joneson left nothing, and yet Lucy dresses as richly as ever."

"And strange stories are told about the absence of that person, you know; she was not seen in the city for several months. Depend upon it, something is wrong," said Miss Bridle.

"You astonish and grieve me," said Mrs. Weymouth. "You tell me that my nephew is almost constantly at the house of Mrs. Joneson?"

"It is too true," replied Mrs. Crane.

"Indeed it is," murmured Miss Bridle.

"But, ladies, there is one circumstance of which you are both ignorant, and which it is proper for you to know," said Mrs. Weymouth, with a peculiar smile. "My nephew, Frank, while absent in the South, was married."

"Married!" exclaimed Crane.

"Married!" echoed Bridle.

"And here he comes, with his wife," continued Mrs. Weymouth, as the parlor-door opened, and Mr. Frank Weldon entered, with a lady leaning upon his arm. It was the merchant's orphan, "the little governess,"—Lucy Joneson.

"And now, I trust, ladies, you are satisfied."

"Perfectly," answered Mrs. Crane, growing a bright scarlet as she hastily seized her parasol.

"O, of course," assented Miss Bridle, following her friend, with alacrity from the room. And I have it from the best authority (Miss Cynthia Tart is my informant) that neither of the two interesting visitors ever made another "call" upon the "unaccountable" Mrs. Weymouth.

[FROM GLEASON'S PICTORIAL DRAWING-ROOM COMPANION.]

## THE FOREST-LEAF CHAPLET.

BY MRS. CAROLINE ORNE.

"WHAT makes you look so sad and melancholy, cousin Ella?" said Martha Harland, who had come to spend a sociable afternoon with her and her aunt.

"Don't you know that it is just three years to-day since Clarence went away?" said Ella.

"So it is, but I didn't think when I spoke."

"We little thought then that he would never return."

"I haven't given up all hope yet, Ella. There have been such things as some of the crew being saved, when a vessel was lost, and who have returned after years of absence. Mother was telling me of an incident of the kind the other day, which happened when she was young."

"If Clarence Berrington should return," said Miss Jenny Lee, Ella's maiden aunt, who sat at a window knitting—"If Clarence Berrington should return, the day that brings him back will be the brightest that ever shed its light over our pleasant hamlet; for, if there should be clouds in the sky to hide the beams of the sun, the sunshine in our hearts would be so warm and bright that we should never miss them."

"And if it isn't in our hearts," said Ella, "it does little good to have it shine on us from the sky, for there never was a brighter or pleasanter

day than this is, and yet everything appears gloomy to me."

"It is no brighter or pleasanter than it was the day Clarence left us," said Martha.

"It appears to me," said Miss Jenny Lee, "that the two days so nearly resemble each other that it would be hard to point out any difference between them. I remember, after he went away, that towards the close of the day I sat by this very window, and the slant sunbeams fell, as they now fell, on yonder woods, gilding the rich tints which autumn had spread over them. A purple glory, the same as now, rested on the mountains, which lie to the left of the woods, and the ripples of the lake that washes their base, looked as if they were crested with silver. Everything looked so bright and lovely, I thought it an auspicious omen; but the tempest came that day week, and—"

Miss Jenny did not finish the sentence, but instead turned quickly towards the window, for the benefit of more light, perhaps, as she took up a stitch she had dropped.

"I wonder why Edith don't come," said Ella. "I didn't think she would fail to walk over and spend this sad anniversary with us. She never has before."

"It is getting late, yet she will come," said Miss Jenny; "I haven't a doubt of it."

"Though the three years since Clarence went away have faded the roses on Edith's cheeks," said Martha, "yet she is very lovely. Does she often speak of him?"

"No, not often," replied Ella, "though I am certain he is seldom absent from her thoughts. She was here a year ago to-day, and took tea with us, but his name never passed her lips."

"You saw, though," said Miss Jenny, "when the wind came wailing by, and the rain and sleet came dashing against the windows—for it was a stormy day, just like the one when the ship he sailed in was wrecked—how a cold shudder would pass over her, the same as on that sorrowful night, when we sat together listening to the noise of the tempest, and with white lips prayed that he whom we loved might be saved from the perils of the sea. Your mother, Ellen, said to me, when no one else was listening, 'Jenny, we shall lose our Clarence to-night.' I tried to put the thought out of her mind, but she only smiled one of those sad smiles that show even more plainly than tears, that sorrow is in the heart, so I said no more, for I knew I could not comfort her. She thought not then how soon she herself should be at rest."

"There is Edith, now, coming down the lane," said Martha.

"So she is," said Ella. "I had given her up. My faith was not as strong as yours, aunt Jenny."

"Maybe; I knew what was in her heart better than you," said aunt Jenny.

As Edith drew near the house, Ella went out to meet her.

"Dear sister," said she, encircling Edith's waist with her arm, "we've been watching for you a long time."

"My little brother is unwell," replied Edith, "and he would not consent for me to leave him, so I was obliged to wait till he went to sleep."

When they entered, aunt Jenny rose to meet them, and warmly pressed Edith's hand, for she knew, though she tried to look brave and cheerful, that there was a sound of the moaning sea in the young girl's heart. She knew it, for it was a sound which had been murmuring in her own heart for twenty years. Ever since then, one who, when he bade her farewell, told her he should soon return and claim her for his bride, and who had as bright an eye, as free a step, and as generous a heart as Clarence Berrington, had slept beneath the billows.

Edith laid aside her bonnet and shawl, and took a seat in the little low rocking-chair, where she always sat when she came to see Ella and Miss Jenny Lee. She was, as Martha Harland had said, a very lovely girl, and the exercise of walking had given a slight tinge of red to her cheeks, which had long emulated the lily more than the rose.

She permitted her soft brown hair to fall in many curls, as she had formerly done, for she could not bring herself to alter a style which Clarence used to love so well, though many had wondered, and in words loud enough for her to hear, how she could have the heart to spend so much time in curling her hair. They did not know that it was the work of nature more than of art, and she did not take the trouble to deceive them.

After a few words had been interchanged between her and her friends, she sat in silence, with her eyes resting on a chaplet of forest-tree leaves, that hung over the mantel-piece. It had been woven by her own hand, after the keen frost of an October night had spread over the woods hues rich and gorgeous as the sunset clouds of a summer sky, and had been placed where it now hung by Clarence, the same day he left home.

"Let it be till I return," said he, and the voice and look with which he said it, and the slight tremor of his lips, that half broke the smile which wreathed them, were at this moment as fresh and vivid in the mind of Edith as the first time she saw it after his departure.

The leaves of the chaplet, though so crisp that they would have been easily broken, were whole and as bright as ever, for the dust was often removed by the gentle and careful hand of Miss Jenny Lee.

They all, as well as Edith, recalled what Clarence had said, and the simple chaplet of leaves was to them of higher price than a golden crown.

Ella rose and quietly left the room. Martha followed her.

"I am glad that you have come with me," said Ella, "for I find that it is a little later than I thought it was, and aunt Jenny wishes to have tea before candle-light."

"I have a mind to make some of those cream cakes aunt Jenny likes so well," said Martha. "We always have them when she comes to make us an afternoon visit."

"Well do, if you would like to. You know where to find the cream and the eggs, and every-

thing you will need. I will see that the oven is hot by the time you are ready for it."

Ella did not recollect, till she saw the nicely browned cakes that they used to be Clarence's favorite, as well as aunt Jenny's. She then regretted that they had been prepared, for the sight of them she knew would remind Edith that the same kind of cakes were on the table the last meal he ever ate with them.

She mentioned the circumstance to Martha, who shared her regret, but as there was nothing that would serve instead, and it being now too late to supply their place, the oversight admitted of no remedy.

While Ella and Martha were busily employed in the kitchen, Miss Jenny Lee, obedient to some uncontrollable impulse, related to Edith her own story.

"But I am not unhappy, my child," said she, wiping away a few tears, when she had finished. "Sweet as well as sad memories rise up, and linger in my heart like the perfume of the morning flowers, when my thoughts turn to Philip Devereaux. I know that he rests well in the deep, quiet caves of the ocean, and the thought gives me consolation. Or if, at times, the waves of trouble rise high, I hear a voice whisper, 'Peace be still!' and a calm like that which settled down upon the bosom of the tempest-tossed sea, steals over me, and I am comforted."

"It is so near sunset," said Ella, as she and Martha entered the room to place the table in the centre of the floor, and lay it, "that I believe we shall be obliged to have candles before we have time to finish our tea."

"Look," said Ella, laying her hand on Miss Jenny's arm, by whose side she sat, and directing her attention to the chaplet that hung above the mantel. The last golden beams of the sun shone full upon it, and gave such warmth and brilliancy to the variegated tints, as to make them, for the moment, rival those of the ruby, the amethyst, and other precious gems.

"I am afraid," said Martha, speaking in a low voice to Ella, "Clarence has been given up as lost for so long a time, that Edith would think it trifling with her sorrow, or I would tell her it is a good sign."

"What do you refer to?" said Ella, whose attention had been absorbed in arranging the table.

"The golden glory, spread by the last sunbeams over the chaplet. Clarence, no doubt, when he placed it there, intended it for a me-

mento of himself, during his absence, and who knows but that the light which now rests upon it may be the foretelling of good news—or better still—his return?"

"You know, dear cousin," said Ella, "that the day of signs and wonders is past."

"Yes, Ella, that is true, yet I like, occasionally, to indulge in superstitious feelings, especially if they assume a bright aspect."

"I do not think it is well to indulge in them," returned Ella. "What, at first, was a pastime, may grow to be a habit, and the mind subject to its control, cannot retain its proper balance. There, I believe everything is on the table except the cream-cakes. I covered them over, and placed them close to the fire to keep them warm, and I dread to bring them in, for they are almost the only article of food Clarence ever thought of praising, and Edith, I know, will remember it."

At that moment a step was heard on the threshold. It seemed to operate on all present like the spell of an enchanter. Edith turned pale, and not one of them either stirred or spoke. The silence remained unbroken for half a minute, and then there was a low rap against the door. Martha, who was the only one who had retained a degree of self-possession, opened it, saying to herself as she did so, "Clarence has come—I know he has."

A young man, with a countenance darkly bronzed, yet strikingly handsome, entered, and cast round the room a quick, searching glance. The blood rushed back to Edith's face, and she was at his side in an instant.

"Clarence! Clarence!" said she, holding out both hands; but a mist then gathered over her eyes, and she would have fallen, had not the young man's arm upheld her.

Ella, Miss Jenny Lee, and Martha had gathered near, and the hearty manner in which he shook the hand of each, made them certain that they were not under the influence of an optical illusion.

"You were expecting me, I suppose?"

"No," said Ella, "we never expected to see you again. News came that every one on board the vessel perished."

"Then the letters I sent home to Edith, and you, and to you aunt Jenny, did not reach you."

"They never did," replied Ella.

"No," said Miss Jenny, "we never have heard a word. You are like one risen from the dead."

"Do you know," said Edith, "that it is just three years to-day since you left us?"

"Yes, Edith, three years ago, about half an hour earlier than it is now, we all took tea together, and then I hurried away to be in season for the stage, which was to take me the first ten miles."

"And now Ella," said Miss Jenny, "let us take our seats at the same table again. Is not everything ready?"

"There is only one thing lacking," she replied; "the creamcakes Clarence likes so well."

"Yes; but there is hardly time to make them now."

"They are already made, and here they are."

As she spoke, Martha, who a minute before had left the room, re-entered, bearing a large plate, piled high with the nut-brown cakes.

"The sight of them will not cause Edith

much pain now I, guess," said she, in a low voice to Ella.

They all seated themselves at the table, and Miss Jenny Lee, in her sweet, gentle way said a few words relative to their mourning being turned into joy, by the presence of one they never more expected to meet on earth. She then reverently invoked a blessing on the meal before them.

Clarence sat with his face towards the fireplace, and as he raised his eyes when she had finished, he beheld the chaplet, that he hung above the mantel.

"I see that you have obeyed my request," said he.

"Yes," replied Ella, "it has never been removed, and not a leaf has been broken."

"We cherished it as a memorial of the dead," said Miss Jenny; "we will continue to cherish it for the sake of the living."

[FROM GLEASON'S PICTORIAL DRAWING-ROOM COMPANION.]

## THE BROKEN WINDOWS: OR, THE CROSS AND THE SORRY MOTHER.

BY MRS. CAROLINE A. SOULE.

"WHAT for mercy's sake has happened now?" exclaimed Mrs. Layton, vehemently, as she was startled from her doze on the sofa by the shivering of a window and the scattering of the broken pane. "I'll warrant those little harum-scarums of mine are at the bottom of this. They were born to plague me, I really believe. There's never a day passes but they are in some kind of trouble;" and rousing herself she picked up the book, whose pages had mesmerized her thoughts and eyelids, and, with a step and air that told plainly she was sadly out of humor, hastened to the casement. On her way she stumbled, and a ball bounded before her.

"Just as I expected! They never had a plaything yet but they were sure to do mischief with it the first thing. But I'll punish them for this, the little torments! I can't see for the life of me what comfort there is in having children. If they are in the room with me, they tease me with their noise, and if they are out of my sight, they're sure to be head and heels in trouble. I shall be glad when they're grown up and out of the way;" and she closed her amiable and affectionate soliloquy by giving the bell

a hasty pull, and throwing herself with an impatient gesture into her rocking chair.

"Where are the boys, and who broke the window?" said she, in an angry tone, to the domestic who appeared.

"In the kitchen, ma'am, waping hard; for, indade, ma'am, they niver maned to break it; I saw it meself, ma'am, and I ashure ye, it was all the sheerest accident, and they be very sorry, ma'am—"

"Send them here, instantly," was the lady's interruption, in no mild tone either, to the attempt of the warm-hearted Irish girl to "plade the cause of the little innocents," "and send for a glazier, too, and bring up a brush and dustpan and sweep up the bits of glass."

With a sad heart, Mary obeyed the commands of her irritated mistress.

"Is she cross, and will she whip us?" exclaimed the two little boys—the one five, the other seven years of age. "Say 'no,' do, that's a good Mary! Did you tell her we didn't mean to, and was so sorry?"

"Yes, yes, my darlints; but ye must go to her, and mind ye, go quietly, too, my masters,

and be sure to kiss her swately, and promise niver to be so careless agin," and wiping the sorrow stains from their cheeks, brushing their hair and smoothing their tumbled sacks, she sent them "above."

Hand in hand, as though they fancied there was safety in each other's proximity, the little offenders ascended the staircase, and with slow and noiseless footsteps paced the hall, but halted at the parlor door. Fear whitened each little face, and shook each little penitent heart.

"You go first," whispered Henry to the younger one. "She'll forgive you, I guess, 'cause you are so small and don't know any better, and then you can coax her to forgive me."

"No, no, I darsn't, 'cause I can't never speak right when I ought to," responded Frank, a shiver running over his delicate limbs.—"You go first, you're the biggest, and you ought to."

How long they would have tarried there, disputing in their childish way, and striving to wear a brave heart, we can hardly guess, had not their mother hastily unclosed the door.

"So you've come at last, have you, you naughty boys!" exclaimed she, with anything but maternal sweetness hovering about her lips. "You've come to get a good whipping, have you! I guess you'll remember next time to throw your ball somewhere else than into the parlor window. Naughty boys," and she dragged the tearful, speechless creatures into the room. "A whole dollar to pay out now for your careless trick. What do you think will become of us all if you go on so, breaking windows every day. We'll have to go to the poor-house, and you'll be beggar children, with nobody to love you. Naughty boys!" And she went to a closet and took from thence a "rod of correction."

"O don't, don't whip us, dear, dear mother," screamed both the children, as she drew near them. "We didn't mean to; we'll never do so again; we wont; we never broke one before; O don't, don't," and they struggled vainly in her angry grasp. Heavily came down the weapon upon the shrinking shoulders, stingingly it swept across the quivering palms, while shrieks of "It hurts, O, it does hurt so," were mingled with sobs so piteous that the servants below pressed their ears to keep out the echoes.

"There, now, I guess you'll behave after this, you naughty boys," exclaimed she, as out of breath, and hot and flurried, she sank in her

chair. "And now take yourselves off to-bed, and that as quick as you can, too, and don't let me hear any noise up there, either, or I'll come to you again. If you can't mind without whipping, it's high time you were whipped till you do mind. Come, why don't you start?"

"Have we got to go to-bed without any supper?" moaned, rather than asked, little Frank. "I am so hungry I shall die afore morning."

"I'll risk your dying. Yes, you've got to go to-bed without supper. I must take what the supper would have cost and pay for a new light. See what comes of being naughty."

The children started, but on the threshold they paused, turned round, and stood irresolute, as longing, yet fearing, to ask a favor.

"What do you want now?" said the mother, in a tone that was still shrill and discordant.

"We want you to kiss us," faltered their white and trembling lips. "And we want you to forgive us, 'cause we never meant to, and we was sorry all the time."

"Kiss you!—do you think you deserve to be kissed? No, I shan't kiss you to-night. I can't give my kisses to such naughty children. Go to-bed and pray to God to forgive you and make you good, that you may be a comfort to your mother, and not wear her life out with your bad conduct," and she, impatiently, pointed to the door.

"Well, I go," said the elder one, with an angry twist of his sore shoulders; and he shut the door after him with a good deal more noise than was necessary; "and, perhaps, I'll pray, too; but I wont pray to God to forgive me, for I haint been naughty at all, but I'll pray to Him to give me a mother that don't whip, and that'll love us and kiss us." And with hearts crushed and torn, the little ones sought their chamber and strove to undress. A weary time they had of it, for their fingers were sore and swollen, and their eyes so blinded they could hardly see button-holes, and much less the strings to their gaiters.

"I'll have to go to-bed with my clothes on," moaned little Frank, as pulling the wrong way he drew his lacings into a hard knot. "O dear, I wish Mary would come," and he burst out anew.

"She darsn't, 'cause mother wont let her," said Henry, as giving an impatient jerk to his jacket he drew it off with a sad rent, though, and the loss of a couple of buttons. "Here, I'll help you off with your things," and, taking

out his penknife, he severed, with little ceremony, the Gordian tie, and with a twitch here, and a pull there, succeeded, at length, in stripping his gentler brother.

"We haint said our prayers," said Frank, as Henry leaped into the bed.

"Well, I aint agoing to say 'em either," responded the other in an angry tone. "It's no use trying to pray when you feel so ugly—the minister said so, the other day; besides, my hands and shoulders ache so, I can't think about anything but that old whip. She did whip us awful hard, didn't she?"

"Yes. O, it did hurt, though, and it hurts now; but I guess I'll just pray to God to make her love us, and never whip us when we don't mean to be naughty."

"Twont do no good to pray that, Frank; 'cause when she's so cross she don't think about God, nor nobody else."

"Well, old granny used to say, 'if it don't do no good it wont do no hurt to pray, and it'll always make you feel gooder than it did before.'" And so the little child, though every nerve within was quivering yet with pain, and though he was tired and hungry, just in that frame of body and mind when he needed to be folded to a mother's heart, and kissed and lulled with the holy music of her evening hymn, knelt down and folded his red, smarting hands and prayed to the Good Father, not only to make him and his little brother good boys, but to make their mother love them and never whip them again when they didn't mean to be naughty. If ever the recording angel was tempted to blot out a mother's sin, it must have been when that prayer was heard in Heaven.

There was a holy, beautiful look on the face of the suffering child as he raised it to his brother's. His old granny's words were true, he felt "gooder" than he did before that knee was bent, before that petition was lisped. But he could not make his brother feel so. Dark, revengeful feelings were boiling in that young heart, and they bubbled over soon in expressions like these:

"I think it was real mean in mother to whip us when we didn't mean to do nothing bad. What if we did break a window? Father has got plenty of money to pay for it, and if he haint there is no use in making such a fuss about a dollar. I wish we'd broke two, we might just as well. It's her own fault, too; if she'd let us play in the parlor with our blocks it wouldn't have happened. She needn't have half killed us

if she did think she must whip us. I wish I was a big man, I'd clear out somewhere and never come back. I wonder if everybody's mother is so awful cross. O dear!" but here his voice melted into sobs again, now wild and convulsive, stirring the whole frame, then deep and passionate, choking the throat, and again so low and mournful that they seemed but the audible pulses of a breaking heart. But healthy childhood has ever a true and gentle comforter for all its woes, and the little boys, in an hour's time, were fast asleep, their veined eyelids fearfully swollen though, and their fair brows and rosy cheeks sadly stained with the effects of their little fingers to wipe off the scorching tears.

"The careless little things," grumbled Mrs. Layton, as going through their chamber an hour after midnight, on her return from a brilliant party, she tumbled over their scattered clothes. "*I verily believe the more I whip them the worse they grow.* How glad I shall be when they are old enough to take care of themselves and keep out of my way." And the "cross" mother, without a single prayer for the beautiful gifts God had vouchsafed her household, without one kiss upon the fragrant lips of those precious babes, without even a glance towards the little couch which had given rest to the limbs she had so cruelly tortured, hurried to her own room and hurried to-bed. God read her heart—I am glad I cannot.

"Mercy on me! What has happened? What is the matter?" exclaimed Mrs. Brown, in a half-frightened tone, as she was roused from a light doze in her chair, by the shivering of a window and the scattering of a broken pane. "Who could have done that; who could have been so careless? I hope, I trust it was not my little boys, and yet it would be nothing strange if it were them, for they are but children, frolicsome, light-hearted children, and I can't expect them always to do right. I am sorry, though, that it has happened, very, very sorry." And picking up the sewing, which excessive fatigue alone had caused her involuntarily to drop, and drawing her hand across her weary eyelids, as though she would fain efface the drowsiness which still lingered there, she hastened to the casement, hoping to find it in such a condition that her own skill could repair the fracture. But, alas! all in vain were her efforts to fit the tiny bits—China cement nor painter's putty could mend that shattered thing; it was a hopeless ruin.

"I shall have to give it up," moaned she, in a sad voice, as she failed in her third trial. "I shall have to give it up and get a new pane set. I am sorry, too, for I can ill afford the money now, and I am so tired—it does not seem as though I could sit up to-night to earn it. Yet there's no use in fretting over it. It's done and I must make the best of it. If it would only teach the little ones to be more careful hereafter, I wouldn't mind it so much after all. Poor things, it's only a little while you'll be children, and it would be hard, indeed, if your mother couldn't bear with your thoughtless acts for a few short years. O, if they are but spared to me! How could I live without them." And then her voice was hushed, but her lips moved, and the waiting angel bore a touching prayer to Heaven.

There was a calm and beautiful expression in her countenance as she turned from the window. Love had triumphed over that petulant spirit which hovers ever so closely above the mother's cares and patience. "God's kindest angel" had laid its white fingers on her worried heart and "it complained no more." Getting her brush and pan she swept up the scattered glass, watching, with a mother's anxious eye, lest she should miss some tiny particle, and thus endanger the safety of their little feet, whom poverty compelled to go nearly all the time without stockings or shoes.

She did not go out to seek the children; she did not even call them. She had read their young hearts too many times to fear for them in the present crisis. She knew that though they might hesitate for a time it would not be long ere truth would lead them,—it might be with streaming eyes and a sobbing voice, yet lead them to her side. So she resumed, quietly, her accustomed seat, and her worn thimble, and commenced again that "stitch, stitch, stitch," which earned for her, and her fatherless babes, their scanty living.

An hour passed on. Then the gate swung to, and the patter of little bare feet was heard on the steps.

"They are coming," murmured she, a pleasant smile weaving beautiful lines across her pale, sad face, and the light of her eye glowing with diviner lustre. "They are coming; I knew they would. Poor little things, I pity them; they will be so sorry," and she waited eagerly to hear the latch raised.

Some moments passed ere it was touched,

then it rattled but the door was not pushed open. A low, sad sound, as of sobs and broken words, mingled in the same note, stole upon the ear of the patient watcher. The tears gushed to her eyes.

"Poor little things," breathed she again.—"You do love me dearly, indeed, or you wouldn't feel so sorry. If we wasn't so poor I shouldn't mind it a bit, for it was an accident, I know." And again that mother's heart of hers excused them both, and again the waiting angel bore a pleading prayer.

The latch rattled a second time, but the door was left unmoved. In a voice that was tremulous with emotion, but sweet as the song of a bird at sunlight, she called:

"Henry, Frank! Is it you, my little boys? Come in, if it is; mother wants to see you."

Ere the last words had died on her quivering lips, the door was swung open and the children bounded into her opened arms, burying their faces in her bosom, and nestling close to her throbbing heart. Not a word was spoken, but as they felt themselves wound up so closely in her dear embrace, their tears wiped off so soothingly, and their hot brows cooled by such loving kisses, they knew and felt they were forgiven. Not a word was spoken, but as she felt their slender arms about her neck and waist, saw their swollen eyes and stained cheeks, and marked the suffering look they wore, she knew and felt that the pulse of love beat high in their young breasts.

She was worn and wearied, yet for a half hour she sat and held them on her knees, rocking them with a gentle, lulling motion, and, after the first gush of feeling was over, singing to them snatches of holy hymns, between each of which she paused, half unconsciously, to press their lips and breathe over them words of love and prayer.

The striking of the clock aroused her from her blessed trance, for oblivious had she been in body and mind to all her cares and sorrows and fatigue; and blest, indeed, in the inspiring confidence that her little ones were true to her and to themselves, and best of all, that she was true to them.

"It is supper time," said she, sweetly. "We have been so happy here in the old arm-chair that I had not noticed it was so late. Who will get me the wood to-night?"

"Both of us! both of us!" exclaimed the little ones; and leaping from her lap, they

bounded out to the shed and returned in a trice, each begging to build the fire.

"Let Henry build the fire and fill the kettle, and I'll draw out the table, and Frank may set it."

For a moment the children hesitated and looked wistfully into each other's eyes. Poor little ones! Knowing their mother's poverty they had resolved ere they came in not to eat any supper, that she might not feel so severely the penalty of their thoughtless act, but now their keen appetites of childhood combated with fearful activity the good resolution. They drew near each other, and Henry whispered:

"Shall we tell her?"

"Yes, I guess so; but I'm awful hungry, ain't you?"

"Yes, but so much the better; it wouldn't be any punishment, you know, if we went without when we wasn't hungry. I guess I'll tell her. It'll show her better how sorry we are."

Then, with a most musical tremble in his voice he spake up:

"You needn't put up only the leaf, mother, to-night, 'cause we don't want any supper."

"What's the matter?" asked she, striving to be calm; "don't you feel hungry?"

There was silence for a moment. Then running to her they bowed themselves at her knee, while their little hearts were turned inside out. They told her how that at school that day all the boys but them had balls to play with, and how bad they felt because they hadn't any, and how their playmates told them to go home and ask their mother to buy them some, and how they told each other they wouldn't say a word about it to her, for she had enough to buy without getting balls; that as they were coming home from school, they found some smooth, round stones, and they thought they'd do first-rate, and were so glad that they got most crazy, and forgot how many times she had told them never to throw anything towards the house, and that they were so scared when they heard the window break that they ran off into the woods, wondering what they should do.

"We don't mean," said Frank, with a beautiful earnestness, "we don't mean what we should do so that you needn't find it out; but we didn't know what we should do to make it up to you!"

"We knew you'd be so sorry," said Henry, "and we knew you'd have to work so hard to pay for it, that we were most grieved to death.

But, after a while, we thought if we didn't eat any supper, and didn't eat very hearty to-morrow, 'twould make it up; and as soon as we said that we came right off here to tell you. But we did feel so bad when we got to the door and thought how sorry you'd be. But, mother, we'll try and remember never to do so again!"

"I hope you will remember it, my children," said she, tenderly, but earnestly, "for twenty-five cents is a great deal for me to lose. It's all I've earned to-day. We must be very careful of our money or we shall get behind hand, and I can hardly tell what will become of us then. But I don't want you to go to bed without your supper to-night, for I am going to have a good one and I shouldn't enjoy it alone. Old Uncle John called here to-day and made me a present of a slice of his nice ham and a dozen eggs. Wont that be nice?"

"I guess it will," rejoined the little boys. "Ham and eggs! wont it be good?" and merrily pattered their little bare feet out doors and down cellar, and into the pantry, and wherever mother sent them; and, when supper was ready two brighter-eyed, rosier-cheeked, happier-faced children could not be found in the whole township. Nor ever did a happier mother ask a blessing on a meal than she who presided at that board, so humble that ham and eggs were a rare luxury.

When the happy meal was over, and the tea things washed and replaced again, as was her wont, she drew them to her side, and after telling them some stories, which they never tired of hearing, about their sainted father, she read to them from their Sunday school book a pretty story, and then an appropriate selection from the Scriptures, and went with them to their little chamber and assisted them to undress. Very careful were the little ones that night to see that their clothes were hung up in the most precise order, and very quietly came they and knelt beside her to repeat their evening prayer. Fervently did she press them to her bosom when it was over, and sweeter kisses never passed between the lips of a mother and her darlings than were given to and fro on that happy night.

"What a good mother she is," exclaimed Frank, as the door closed upon her.

"I guess she is," said Henry. "She is the best mother I ever knew in all the world. She's always sorry when we do anything naughty, but



she aint never cross nor ugly. I don't believe she knows how to be cross."

"Well, I am glad," responded the little brother, with emphasis. "Wouldn't it be awful, though, to have a cross mother and a dead father! How I wish he'd lived—then she wouldn't have had to work so."

"Mother says we mustn't say so, because God wouldn't have taken him if it hadn't been right. But I shall be glad when we're grown up big, so that we can take care of her. She's got to live with me in the summer, Frank, because I'm going to be a farmer, and the country will be the very best place for her in warm weather."

"Well, she may; but she shall be with me in the winter-time, 'cause I'm going to keep a big store in the city and have lots of money. O, wont she live nice and easy then! How I wish I was big. I'm such a little fellow, I'm 'fraid it 'll take so long before I get to be a man that she'll get sick and die."

"O, I guess not," was the hopeful answer. "At any rate, we'll be good every day while we're little, and then, if she don't live, why she'll have a good story to tell father about his little boys that he used to love so dearly. And we mustn't never, NEVER throw anything towards the house again—must we?"

"No, we mustn't, sure; but if we do we'll tell

her of it—wont we; 'cause she'll never be cross, but only so sorry."

Many a beautiful air-castle then did the little ones build, and in each there was a chamber for mother, with plenty of gold and plenty of love. And when, at last, slumber sealed their eyelids, it left them locked in each other's arms, with an expression on each lip that would have well become the angel dead.

Their mother had not spared the rod and spoiled her babes; but she had bent it over them with such a holy hand that it had budded in her grasp, and left upon their young hearts, not sore and crimson wounds, but the impress of green leaves and the dew of flowers.

"The dear little creatures," exclaimed she, in a thrilling tone, as she entered their chamber an hour after midnight, "*the more I love them the better they grow*. How sorry I shall be when they are no longer all my own."

Then she knelt down beside their humble bed and tendered many earnest thanks to God, for the beautiful gifts vouchsafed her household. Sweet and holy kisses she pressed afterward upon their lips, and the little ones smiled in their slumber and dreamed that an angel was bending over them. Then, with an aching brow and wearied limbs, the mother sought her couch and forgot herself in sleep. God read her heart—I wish I could.

THE END.

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