

BUFFETS.

BY

CHARLES H. DOE.

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Handwritten note:
Wm. A. Brewster
to George H. Doe
Nov. 10. 1874
Charles H. Doe

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BUFFETS.

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CHAPTER I.

WHICH IS PRELIMINARY AND TO VERY
LITTLE PURPOSE.

[The first chapter is omitted because it is preliminary and to very little purpose. THE AUTHOR.]

CHAPTER II.

IN WHICH MR. JOHN HOULDWORTHY
GIVES A DINNER TO A FEW TWID-
DLERS.

THE Wouter Van Twiller Club, of the State of New York and the County and City of New York, to give the full name as it appeared in the act of incorporation, occupied a building on Broadway at the time of which I write. A great, full-length portrait of the doughty Dutch governor took up nearly the whole of one end of the library, — a pleasant room enough, but frequented only by a few old fellows, because it was the only place in the house where the rules forbade smoking. The library was well appointed, but was furnished in a style rather suggestive of knee-breeches and pigtails, — too old-fashioned for the tastes of the young men, who, it must be confessed, preferred the fascinations of the card-rooms, or loved better to exercise their biceps in the billiard-rooms upstairs, which were sure to be lively, and hazy with tobacco-smoke at certain hours, varying a little according to the season. The club was made up of men who had money, and moved in good soci-

ety; and blackballs were used freely at the monthly meetings. It was computed by a man with a mathematical head, who by some strange freak of fortune had been admitted, that the incomes of the ten leading members were equal in amount to that of Mr. William B. Astor. This is open to doubt, notwithstanding the proverbial veracity of figures; but it is beyond question that the club numbered some heavy men on its rolls, although, being members of other and still more exclusive corporations, they seldom appeared, and so gave the young men the full swing of the place.

The name Wouter Van Twiller, although rather imposing in print, on a seal, and at the head of note-paper, was quite too long for ordinary use among these lazy young fellows; and so, by a very natural transition, it came to be "Twiddler." All the members, even to the oldest and most dignified, called themselves, and were called by their friends outside, "Twiddlers." The Twiddlers were, as a whole, judges of good wine; and the cellars of the club were well filled. Every man knew a good cigar from a bad one; and the steward imported the genuine product of the Vuelta d' Abajo direct from Cuba. Men, moderately rich, could afford to smoke good cigars in those days; and the price at which the Twiddlers obtained their Cabanas and their Figaros would in these times of duties and taxes seem absurdly low. One consequence was that the young Twiddlers smoked rather more than was good for them; and being in general sons of rich fathers, or having other ways of obtain-

ing the hard cash with but little trouble to themselves, they spent it rather freely in the card-rooms, or at pool in the billiard-room. Yet the "Twiddler" was a highly respectable club; and it was considered a fine thing to belong to it.

Mr. John Houldworthy and his friends were seated around a table in one of the private rooms of the "Twiddler." The table was a dining-table. It bore the most pellucid glass, and crockery of the chastest pattern. The Twiddlers understood that, although good wine needs no bush, it must be drunk from the purest crystal, or its *bouquet* is impaired. Two waiters in dress suits, white cotton gloves, and irreproachable white neckties, busied themselves about the table, and went in and out of the room in a noiseless and dignified manner, and altogether exhibited that overwhelming grace of deportment which distinguishes those men who have served in good society.

The occasion of this social gathering can be explained in a word. Houldworthy had made an agreement with his friend Van Dorp several years before, — when both men were younger, — that the first of the two who should become engaged should forfeit a dinner for eight persons, including themselves and three friends of each man. It had fallen to the lot of Houldworthy to provide this entertainment.

Around the table sat these eight young gentlemen, who, to judge from appearances, were making a very satisfactory dinner. At the head was Mr. John Houldworthy, the giver of the feast. At the foot of the table, sat Mr. Fred-eric Canning Rovington, who was the eldest of the party, and had been for various reasons asked to take that position. At the sides were Mr. William Fuller Smith, Mr. Richard Trumpington, Mr. Henry Eisel Van Dorp, Mr. Charles Young Lush, Mr. Vanderdonk Browne, and Mr. William Peterkin. They were all Twiddlers, and they were none of them in evening dress; for it was one of the rules of the Twiddlers to make themselves comfortable whenever circumstances would admit, and a tightly fitting coat and waistcoat interfere with digestion. This was only a quiet dinner, without form or ceremony of any kind; yet it took some time to get through the courses, and they went about it very moderately, as became gentlemen of leisure. There had been sauterne with the soup, as a matter of course, but very

little conversation. It is a serious matter to lay a good foundation for a feast, and first of all the stomach requires attention. With the fish there was sherry, also as a matter of course; and then they became sufficiently animated to talk of the prospects of war; for it was the month of January, 1861, and there were signs of very bad weather indeed in the horizon. The champagne, which came in with the roast, led to a little discussion about the relative merits of certain brands of dry and sweet wine, the extent of the champagne country, and the stock of choice brands in the cellars of the Twiddlers, — a kind of talk, which, I believe, has since gone out of fashion to some extent. I am too ignorant of that noble art, of which M. Gastrot, the *chef* at the club, was a master, to speak in detail of the removes and side-dishes and I know not what, which go to make up even such a quiet little dinner as that of Mr. Houldworthy; but I am quite sure there was game of some sort farther along in the courses, and that by that time they had come to speak of the opera and the last party. Then there was a little pause in the feast. The white cloth was removed, claret was brought in, and, a paper of cigarettes and a lighted candle also appearing, everybody treated his nose to a few mouthfuls of smoke, by way of passing the time and restoring the natural taste to his palate.

"Ah, but you th'd thee the *bal* at the Gwand Opwa in Pawith!" said little Peterkin, who lisped in a most exasperating manner, to his neighbor Browne.

"Oh, bah!" said Mr. Vanderdonk Browne, "I should say there was a little fun at masquerades at the Academy of Music: eh, Charley?"

"Well, rather," said Lush, who was a little fellow, with bright blue eyes, which already reflected the bubbles in the champagne. "Perhaps we didn't have no end of fun that night. Oh, no! I should say not. And perhaps Van didn't — but never mind, old fellow, I'm Mumm, as the champagne said to the claret-bottle."

"Yes," said Browne. "And the best thing was about Charley and old White. Did I tell you? I certainly told Trumpington. Well, this was it. Everybody knows old White the tailor, or ought to; for he's the best man about a bill I ever met with, not to speak of his fits, which modesty forbids me to mention."

"Modesty be hanged," interrupted Van Dorp.

"Well, old White was at the mas-

querade, which was rather mixed, of course, you know; and the vain old chap went in a sort of a troubadour suit, all ribbons and things."

"Jim Bagth?" feebly suggested Peterkin, meaning a joke.

"Oh, yes! of course, Peterkin. Well, White, you must know, is the ugliest tailor in New York. In the first place, he wears a palpable wig. In the second place, one of his eyes is trying to look up over his forehead, and see whether his hair is parted right; and the other eye is always looking around the corner for a customer. In the third place, his nose is as red as Bardolph's, and shaped like a ruta-baga turnip. In the fourth place, his mouth looks as if it had been made with a dull sardine-opener. But he's got a straight back, and good legs, and an oily tongue; and the old fellow is as proud of his shape as a peacock. I said to Charley, 'I say, this is my tailor.' — 'Whereabouts?' says he. So I pointed out old White. 'Introduce me, Van,' says he: 'tailors are people whose acquaintance it is my pride and interest to cultivate.' So I took him up, and introduced him; and White made a bow as graceful as — as old Thingumbob, you know. What does Charley do but burst out into a great laugh that shook the Academy, and made the musicians stop playing!"

"Will you draw it mild?" interposed Mr. Lush.

"Ho! ho! ho!" roared Charley. "By Jove, the best thing I ever saw in my life!" and then a crowd began to collect about him. "By Jove!" said Charley, "I wouldn't have believed it. It is the most natural thing I ever saw in my life: ho, ho!" and by this time the crowd was about ten deep, with people overhead looking down from the galleries. "What the devil do you mean?" says White, getting angry. "Excuse my smiling," says Charley, "but it's great; isn't it, Van? — Where did you get it, Mr. White?" "Get it?" says White, "get what?" — "Why, your mask!" says Charley. "Why, dash it," says White, "I haven't worn a mask to-night." And then the crowd went off in a roar, and old White very nearly busted with wrath. It was all I could do to keep him from punching Charley's head, there on the floor."

"Serve him right, the old goggle-eye," said Mr. Lush. "He ought to wear a mask all the time with such a face as that, and not go about the streets

frightening children with his natural mug."

Mr. Lush sipped his wine with an air of being very well satisfied with himself; and Mr. Browne, being somewhat thirsty with so much talking, drank a bumper.

"Masquerades are all very well in this cold-blooded country," said Houldworthy; "but you cannot always tell what there is behind the mask. — Tell them what happened to you in Rome, Fred."

"Oh, it was nothing," said Mr. Rovington from the foot of the table: "at least not much. It might have been a great deal worse. It was in the carnival. Jack Houldworthy was with us then, — we kept together a good deal, you know, — and I was seized with a fancy for a little mask that tantalized me, I confess, a good deal. She led me into an ambuscade, and I got this little cut on my wrist: it's not very plain now. By great good luck, Jack, who knew what I was at, had made me take his revolver; and so I got off."

"Did you shoot anybody?" asked Henry Van Dorp.

"Why, I shot at them, certainly; but I can't say that I hit anybody. They all ran like rabbits at the first fire."

"I remember little Cookey had some yarn to tell about an adventure at the Grand Opera in Paris," said Trumpington. "Little Cookey, egad! He staid in Paris six weeks, and when he came home he couldn't speak a word of English. He'd quite forgotten his native tongue."

"I dare say, the little snob," said Rovington. "I saw him there. By the way, does anybody know how he got into the 'Twiddler'?"

"Why, the little chap is worth untold ingots," said Browne; "and old twenty per cent Bramhall put him up, and backed him, and Tadpole Babbage engineered it. It was done at a thin meeting in summer."

"If I had been here, I'd be bound he would never have got in," said Van Dorp. "He came from the 'Minerva,' didn't he?"

"Yes," said Browne in a tone of extreme contempt. "Anybody can get into the Minerva Club that can bring a certificate of vaccination."

By this time the dessert and the finger-bowls were in place, and the ices and jellies were brought in. The party began to eat again, and the conversation became less general. It may be added,

since there has been some talk of wine, that these young men, at least up to this point, drank with great discretion; unless, indeed, as many good people aver, it is not discreet even to taste it. The Twiddlers were pretty well seasoned, and they could stand a good deal; and it was, beside, rather a point of honor to keep within bounds inside the club.

When eating had ceased, and cigars and coffee had come on, the buzz of conversation was only interrupted by the sound of the cracking of a stray almond. Mr. Rovingston rose from his seat, and stood waiting for silence. He was rather a handsome man, graceful, a little languid, with broad shoulders, a bronzed face, and a dark moustache. He had the reputation of having been in every place where it is desirable to go, and having seen every thing there is to see. He came of good family, and was said to be rich. He was, in short, considered extremely "nobby," and was, moreover, a little out of the set of the rest of the company. So the party all at once ceased their talk, and several hammered on the table with the handles of their knives, or whatever convenient implement for knocking came nearest to hand.

"Gentlemen," he began, "this is a very pleasant and informal party; and I need hardly say that I am not going to do violence to all the traditions of the Twiddler Club, — not to speak of your patience and my own inclinations, — by making a speech. [Cries of "Go on!"] But it is my duty, as an intimate friend of our host Mr. Houldworthy, and as the oldest Twiddler present, to propose a toast, without which these festivities would be incomplete. ["Hear! hear!"] We meet here to-night, gentlemen, not only to exchange greetings with our friend, who has, comparatively speaking, so recently returned from a year's absence abroad, but also to congratulate him upon an event [prolonged and somewhat uproarious applause], to congratulate him upon an event, which I trust and believe will prove one of the happiest of his life. [Applause.] Gentlemen, the name of a pure woman, young, innocent, and fair, is not to be idly spoken in a company of gay young bachelors sitting over their wine. I dare not praise her perfections; but I beg you will drink to the health of her, whom our friend has chosen as the 'brightest and best.'"

Every man present rose to his feet, and drank a bumper. Then they sat down, and so did Mr. Rovingston. Mr. Hould-

worthy arose, with his color somewhat heightened.

"Gentlemen," he said, "I confess to a little confusion, not only arising from the occasion, but from the very warm and cordial manner in which my friend has spoken, and in which you have echoed his sentiments. I can only say, I thank you, gentlemen, — thank you heartily; and now I — that is, you — I mean we — have got this little matter off our minds. I hope — in short, I hope we may all fall to, and have a jolly good time."

So Mr. Houldworthy sat down very red indeed in the face; and they pledged him all around the table with, "Here's at you, Jack!" "Here's to you, Jack, old fellow!"

Mr. Rovingston pleaded an engagement, and left quite early; but they closed up the gap, and, it must be confessed, did have rather a jolly time of it. It turned out that there was a great deal of musical talent in the party, although, to be sure, it was mainly in the rough, and needed cultivation. Everybody sang out loudly and strongly in the choruses, however, selecting the part which came easiest to him, and which was, in most cases, simply the air, without variations. Who could quarrel with the effect, when every man did his best? Not the grave waiters, certainly; for they were outwardly as calm as if they had been serving pea-soup at a *table d'hôte*. They went about noiselessly, filling the glasses and passing cigars, and, I fear, took the opportunity to smuggle away a bottle or two, and a few Cabagos, for their own use. These respectable persons had refined tastes, and colored their rubicund noses with no such plebeian fluid as beer. Certainly the other Twiddlers could not complain of the music. The walls were thick, and not many were left in the club at this hour. So the young men, having only themselves to please, sang away lustily, and very much to their own satisfaction, after the manner of all singers, whether professional or amateur.

First, Charley Lush, who had something sentimental in his composition, — or thought he had, which amounted to the same thing, — gave them a song about "the ever, ever, rolling, rolling waves." It is true that the others chose to consider it as a comic ditty, and laughed very heartily all the way through; but Charley took it all good-naturedly, and the hilarity of the occasion was greatly promoted. Then Willy

Smith, who had hitherto been very silent but now came out very strong indeed, gave them a song with a moral; to wit, that it was the duty of young men to avoid being too fascinating. It appeared from this tuneful and veracious history, that there once upon a time did dwell, in a brown-stone-front mansion on Fifth Avenue, two young ladies, who occupied the responsible positions of cook and chambermaid, and who were celebrated far and wide for their virtues and their beauty, — with a ri-tum-tiddle-olty, olty-tiddle, &c.; that the family residing in this mansion were served with milk by a hearty young milkman so galliant and bold, — with a ri-tum-tiddle, and so forth; that both the aforesaid young ladies fell in love with this galliant and bold young milkman, — with a ri-tum-tiddle, and so forth; but he proved to be a gay deceiver, and did not return the affection of either of them, — with a ri-tum-tiddle, and so forth; that, disputing one day about the object of their common affections, these young ladies presently carried their animosity to blows, and actually tore each other into such small shreds that it was quite impossible for the closest observer to tell which was the chambermaid and which was the cook, — with a ri-tum-tiddle, and so forth; and, finally, that the young milkman, upon hearing of the tragic end of these young ladies, was led in a fit of insane remorse to drink two cans of his own milk; and, in consequence of the deleterious chemicals contained in it, came thereby to an untimely end, — with a ri-tum-tiddle-olty, olty-tiddle-day, sung twice over, *fortissimo*, by all the company.

The song, which was new, was received with many expressions of approbation; but then, so were many of the old ones; for it is true of songs, as of wine, they improve by keeping. Finally Jack Houldworthy was persuaded to sing the only thing he knew, — a little conversation in rhyme, which appeared to have arisen from the circumstance that one Jean Baptiste had greased the nose of his master's little dog with tar, because the animal had one grand catarrh.

It would be quite impossible to tell all the songs they sang, without making this work far more poetical than was at first designed; but I am glad to say they sang nothing which could not be printed in these columns. When the party broke up, it was neither very late nor very early. Van Dorp, Peterkin, and Smith went to the card-room, where

they ordered champagne and seltzer water, and sat down to whist with a dummy. Jack Houldworthy, Van Browne, and Charley Lush left the club, and walked up Broadway homeward at a lazy pace. The effect of the night air seemed to be for a few moments to make Mr. Lush very silent.

"Jolly good dinner," said Browne. "I never saw the fellows in such spirits."

"Glad of it, I'm sure," returned Houldworthy.

"Bustin' old dinner," observed Mr. Lush rather inelegantly, — "bustinest old dinner ever was."

"I'm sorry it's going to be about the last of the kind for me," said Houldworthy, possibly growing a little confidential through the influence of the hour and the good cheer. "I must consider my wild oats sown, I suppose. This sort of thing is very well for young bachelors, but for a married man!"

"Bosh!" observed Mr. Lush. "That's way man always talks, when gets spooney. How long's last? That's what want know. How long's last?"

"You're not going to be swung off just yet, Jack, I take it," observed Browne, taking a simile from a public execution, after the playful way of bachelors.

"Why no, certainly not," said Houldworthy; "that is, unless the two governors come down remarkably handsome. They ought to, but it doesn't follow that they will."

"Then should like to know what's all's row about," said Lush, who was the same dapper little man as ever in external appearance, but who showed in conversation a marked disregard of the shorter words of the English language. "What's ag'cultural talk about? Wild oats? Wild oats be hanged! When get up to Centipede, 'll go in, have brandy soda. Awful thirst. 'Ston'shin' 'fect last bottle claret."

When they got up to the Centipede Club, which they were rather slow in reaching, Lush, who was a member, insisted on their going in to try the sedative effect of the compound he had proposed; and Houldworthy offering only a feeble resistance, and Browne not making any at all, they entered. When they had tried certain cooling mixtures, — which Lush pronounced not to have been mixed with discretion, — and lighted fresh cigars, proceeded on their way, Lush protested that he wanted to play

billiards; but the others objected; and, as the rules about admitting strangers were strict in those days, Lush thought it prudent to acquiesce, particularly as he felt a little uncertain of the steadiness of his hand.

Mr. Lush, on again reaching the open air, evidently felt much fresher, and grew slightly sentimental as they presently turned into Fifth Avenue.

"What beautiful night! Charming night! Observe moon. Oblige me, gents" —

"Gents' pants and vests?" observed Browne, recalling a sign of Mr. White the tailor.

"Thanks! Oblige me, gents' pants and vests, by fixing your eagle eyes on moon, and on shadows. 'Member what Lord Byron says 'bout night? 'M'm. I don't, but 'member dam fine. Talented man, Byron, man after own heart."

"Well, good-night, old fellows: I turn down here," said Browne, stopping, and shaking hands with Houldworthy. "I would ask you up to my room to smoke a quiet pipe; but, the fact is, it is getting late, and, to tell the truth, I begin to feel as if I had had about as much tobacco as is good for me."

"I think you're right, Van," said Houldworthy. "Good-night."

"Night, Van, my boy," said Lush. "And, I say," he continued, coming close to him, and speaking in low tones, with an exaggerated air of mystery, "bustin' good dinner, eh?"

"It was, indeed. Good-night." Browne waved his hand at parting; his friends returned his salute, and strode on together in silence.

"In that mansion," suddenly observed Mr. Lush, stopping short before a dignified-looking residence with wide steps, "in that mansion 'sides my maternal aunt. Worthy creature, but dam deaf. This 'casion must not pass without my taking 'mento of my deaf aunt. Oblige the subscriber by placing visual orb upon him, and keeping it there till asked remove it." Saying which, Mr. Lush mounted the wide steps steadily and boldly, but nevertheless very quietly, and standing in the shadow appeared to Houldworthy to be ringing the bell. In a few seconds there came one dull clang from the basement, and Lush tripped back noiselessly but rather hastily.

"What the deuce are you at?" said Houldworthy.

Lush dragged him hurriedly along a little distance, and then showed him a

bell-handle, broken short off at the iron which runs through the door-post. "My aunt'd never hear it," said he, "too deaf. But servants might not understand wanted 'mento, and object. See?"

"You young beggar!" said Houldworthy. "How did you do it so easily?"

"Easiest thing world," returned Lush. "Pull bell out straight, one wrench down, one wrench up; off it comes like shrimp's head, see? Wire flies back when breaks; bell rings, but you're off; see? Bless y'r heart, have got cabinet bell-handles, labelled and ticketed like skulls in governor's museum. My sister collects photographs, — pretty things, but no sentiment. My governor picks up skulls: all very well for doctor, but I take bell-handles; have sentiment and pretty besides; see? Oblige me by fastening y'er piercing gaze once more on the subscriber," and before Houldworthy could prevent him he had skipped up another flight of steps. But this bell-handle was obstinate, and refused to break. While Lush was struggling with it, Houldworthy thought he saw in the distance some brass buttons glimmering in the moonlight.

"Hush! Come on! Police!" he said in a sort of stage-whisper.

Mr. Lush instantly left his work, and came carelessly and deliberately down the steps. "Think it's better not wake up family to-night," said he, taking Houldworthy's arm, and speaking rather loudly for the benefit of whoever might be listening. "Be much better call early in morning."

The guardian of the night eyed them very suspiciously as they passed him, but, seeing that they were well dressed, said nothing. Lush was now somewhat quieter from the effect of his exercise, and the necessity for caution which had arisen; and although, when he reached the paternal residence, he at first insisted on going back, and conquering the stubborn door-bell, he was finally persuaded by his companion that it would be for the interest of society, as well as for his own good, to retire at once. He disappeared, after extending to Houldworthy a cordial invitation to come in some day, and see his cabinet of signs and door-bell handles.

Houldworthy very soon reached his own house, which was on the west side, a few doors from the avenue. His hand was a little unsteady as he let himself in; but he went very quietly up to his room on the third story, putting out the

lights which had been left burning for him on the way.

"By Jove," said he, looking at his flushed face in the glass, "this sort of thing must be stopped, and that quickly. Suppose that little beggar Lush had got me into a row to-night. A very nice thing it would have been, truly!"

He took from a little drawer in his dressing-table a large photograph of a fashionably-dressed woman, young and handsome, looked at it for a moment without a word, and then closed the case, and put it back. In ten minutes more he was in bed, sleeping heavily, but not easily.

"I don't think I like these young men," I think I hear some one say. "And I'm sure I don't like club dinners." It is quite possible, my dear madam; but young men will eat club dinners, and unless I tell you about this one, I do not see how we shall ever get a clear understanding of what afterwards happened to young Houldworthy.

CHAPTER III.

IN WHICH IT APPEARS THAT MR. LUSH HAS A BAD HEADACHE, AND THAT MR. HOULDWORTHY IS ESTEEMED BY THE WORLD A VERY LUCKY FELLOW.

THE sun rose next morning with commendable punctuality, and no envious clouds intervening between it and the great city of New York. Its mild, warm beams presently lighted up the comely front of a certain house two doors east of Fifth Avenue, on a street which cannot be named here, owing to the absurd fashion of using numbers instead of names for the highways, and so marking out their location far too definitely for the needs of the novelist, who ought to be, as far as possible, a man of mystery. The well-polished door-plate of this mansion, which bore conspicuously the name of Dr. John Lush, already stood out boldly in the sunlight, when the manservant appeared, very sleepy and red-eyed, and, putting out the door-mat, gazed up at the sky for some seconds before he disappeared. Then came the visits of the milkman and the baker; and there were sounds of opening shutters, and some bustle within. At half-past nine to a moment, an odd-looking low vehicle was driven to the door by a small colored urchin, whose white teeth

actually glittered. Two minutes later, the great Dr. Lush, imposing in appearance, but not in stature, appeared at the house-door buttoning his overcoat over his portly little form. He descended, slowly drawing his gloves upon his plump little hands; and, reaching the sidewalk, glanced once up the street, once down street, and once up to the sky, and then, getting into his carriage, took the reins from his small attendant without a word, and drove off upon his round of visits.

It was nearly eleven, when the large door again opened, and Mr. Charles Lush appeared to the interested gaze of two young ladies sitting in the bay-window on the opposite side of the street. There being promise of a bright day, Mr. Lush was arrayed in the latest specimens of White's handiwork. He carried a small cane in his neatly-gloved hand, and thoughtfully rapped his leg with it as he descended the steps with deliberation. There was a careworn expression on his face, and wrinkles on his youthful brow, as if he had the care of the nation on his shoulders. The watchful fair ones opposite, shielded as they were by flowers and the drapery of the curtains, observed that, as he walked away, he looked down at the pavement, and muttered to himself. What he really muttered was a malediction on the head of the serving-man for not imparting a more brilliant polish to his boots, coupled with a threat that the fellow should be reported if such negligence continued.

Mr. Charles Lush, who had recently given up the study of the law, was just then a medical student; and, as Prof. Marrow lectured that morning at eleven o'clock, on the human backbone, it followed, rather as a matter of course, that Mr. Lush, who had his own notions as to the best way to acquire a knowledge of anatomy, should take a direction leading him quite away from the college. He turned into the avenue, and walked down town, conscious of a very bad taste in his mouth, an ugly headache, and accelerated pulse. This, however, did not prevent him from smiling sweetly on the two Miss Honeycastles, who passed just then, and to whom he gracefully raised his hat.

It is hardly worth while to attempt to keep pace with Mr. Lush in his languid walk; the acquaintances whom he met were more numerous than the ideas which passed through his head. He did not stop at the Centipede Club, owing to

an idle impulse which seized him at the moment, but went on to the Twiddler, where he marched straight to the principal smoking-room. His bosom friend, Van Browne, was not there; for he had, unfortunately, to work for his living, i.e., he was secretary of something or other, somewhere down town, and had to spend the weary hours from ten o'clock, A.M., till two o'clock, P.M., in his office. But Van Dorp and Trumpington were there, and so was little Peterkin, likewise Mr. G. Washington Cooke. The family name of Mr. Cooke had been Monk, and everybody at school and in college had called him "Monkey." A bequest from a maiden aunt on the maternal side had in his opinion warranted the change of his name to Cooke. Everybody now called him "Cookey," which was certainly an improvement, but still not eminently satisfactory.

"Gents, to you," said Mr. Lush entering. Mr. Lush affected in the company of men of his own age a carelessness, not to say vulgarity of speech, which would have grieved the worthy surgeon his father, had he known of it, rather more than the young man's neglect of his medical studies.

"Hallo, young Sawbones," said Mr. Cooke. The others greeted the newcomer either by a lazy nod or a simple glance towards him.

"Hallo, Mr. Isaac Abrahams," returned Mr. Lush. "What is the very latest movement in Croton Point?"

This pointed retort, which was based on Mr. Cooke's predilection for money-lending and note-shaving, as well as on a recent stock fluctuation in which he was rumored to have lost heavily, was received with much satisfaction by the company, with one exception.

"Lush is out of humor this morning, I should say," Cooke retorted. "Mulligrubs, eh, Lushy? You had better take something with soda in it. It will improve your spirits."

Lush rang the bell.

"George," he said to the servant, "bring me a champagne cocktail. Gentlemen, name your weakness. Mr. Cooke is kind enough to ask us won't we improve our spirits. George, ask the gentlemen what they'll have, and tell Mr. James to charge these drinks to Mr. Cooke."

Mr. Cooke submitted with rather a bad grace. He was naturally very mean, and wanted to be thought very generous, — an inconvenient temperament for a club

man. It was observed that he left Lush in peace after that; but Trumpington accepted the invitation out of spite to "Cookey," and that unpopular person received a wound in his tenderest point, — his pocket.

"Have a cigar, Charley," said Trumpington.

"No: thanks," said Lush. "Fact, I'm rather shaky this morning. I've been knocking about, of late, no end. Bustin' dinner, though, last night, wasn't it? Regular slap-up, out-and-outer."

"One of the jolliest I've been at this year," said Trumpington.

"I suppose a man can afford to give swell dinners who is engaged to Papa Harley's only child," said Cooke, who was envious because a dinner had been given and he had not been invited.

"Especially if he is Papa Houldworthy's only son," said Lush.

"M. Well, I don't see that that follows so clearly," said Cooke.

"You don't pretend, I suppose, that the house of Houldworthy & Co. is not one of the richest and oldest ones in the city?"

"I make no pretences; I only say that if war comes, as plenty of people predict, nobody knows where anybody stands, unless he's out of business, like Harley."

"Bah!" said Charley Lush, and relapsed into silent disgust.

"I didn't know Jack Houldworthy wath too thick with Wovingston," said Peterkin.

"Oh, yes!" said Van Dorp. "They came together in Paris, took a fancy to each other, and kept together two or three months afterwards in Italy and Switzerland."

"Rovingston is an awful swell," said Dick Trumpington; "but men who know him say he's a good fellow at the bottom."

"Well, he may be a good fellow," said Cooke; "but I saw something of him in Paris, and I must say he seemed to me a snob."

"That's funny," said Lush with a sneer, "considering the high opinion he has of you."

"If he has a good opinion of me, that's all very well," returned Cooke, "although I must say he never took much trouble to show it. However, I don't know that he has any reason to think ill of me, except that I drove the finest pair of horses in Paris, the six months I staid there."

"He must be a brute if he was insensible to such a fine trait in your character as that," said Trumpington.

"I don't believe he's rich," continued Cooke, without minding Trumpington. "I don't believe he's rich, although he does give himself such airs. Old Rovingston had money at the start; but he was good-natured, and his wife extravagant before she died; and I don't believe the old fellow left much. I don't know; but that's what they say."

"You can't alwayth tell," said little Peterkin, an assertion so reasonable that nobody chose to deny it.

"How much money is old Harley worth?" said Van Dorp, willing to change the subject.

"Half a million at least," said Cooke.

"Some say a million, but that's stuff. I don't believe it."

"And it will all go to Miss Harley," said Trumpington. "The belle of two seasons, and a half a million in prospect! What a confoundedly lucky dog Jack Houldworthy is!"

"Well, I don't know," said Cooke. "I rather think he'll need it all, if his wife is as extravagant as they say."

"Damn it, Cookey!" broke in Lush, "did you ever speak well of anybody?"

"Never had occasion to speak well of you, certainly," retorted Cooke.

"And I trust you never may," said Lush. "Hallo, here's Jack Houldworthy!"

"Talk of — You know who," whispered Cookey, referring to a somewhat common superstition.

"You're just the man, Jack," said Lush. "We'll go up to the billiard-room, and have a match game. You and I will play Harry Van Dorp and Dick, and give 'em thirty points, and bust 'em too every time. Peterkin will keep game."

"Can't pothibly," said Peterkin. "Got an engagement," and he strolled off.

"You can't give us thirty points," said Van Dorp.

"I'll bet you the oysters for lunch for the four, that we do twice out of three times," said Lush.

"Done!" said Van Dorp. — "Come on, Dick."

"I don't mind taking that cigar now, Dick," said Lush. "I feel better."

Mr. G. Washington Cooke was left alone, feeling snubbed and angry.

Anybody who has seen the game of billiards played, not understanding it himself, must have been astonished at the persistent interest with which strong

men push little ivory balls hither and thither with long sticks; now tapping them so gently that their positions are scarcely changed by a quarter of an inch, and now playing them with such force that they career all about the table. Proficients in the game assert, that from the constantly varying combinations, infinite in number, and the fact that the foresight and the delicacy and accuracy of touch which may be employed have practically no limit, yet are accurately marked out so far as they are displayed by the points gained, there is no amusement more absorbing or more scientific in its character than billiards. There is no need to discuss here the ethics of the billiard-table; it will be enough to speak of the result of the match contrived by Mr. Lush for the purpose of dispelling his *ennui*, and getting rid of the company of Mr. Cooke. The score would not be interesting, although these young Twiddlers took a pride in their knowledge of the game, and some good caroms were made, and some good runs marked, on both sides. Houldworthy and Lush beat the first game, and their opponents the second. In the rubber, fortune seemed to favor Van Dorp and Trumpington; and a long run by the former carried them within ten points of the end, while Houldworthy and Lush had still sixty to make.

"You're beaten, Charley," said Van Dorp.

"I should be," Lush answered, "If I had anybody but Jack for a partner. He always plays best when he is behind. — Now, Jack," he continued, addressing Houldworthy, who stood quietly chalking his cue, "you see what you have got to do. Don't let them wax us. It's your poke. There's an easy shot on the two reds, and that'll bring 'em all in a heap down in the corner there, — see?"

"I see," said Jack. "Don't get in the way, Charley, please."

Jack played with caution, brought the balls together, and ran thirty-eight. Trumpington, a little disconcerted, played hastily, and made a miscue; whereupon Jack ran fifteen, leaving seven to go. Van Dorp ran nine, missing an easy carom amid the ejaculations of his partner for not running the game out, and the jeers of Lush. Intense excitement among the players. Lush ran seven, and "slipped up," as he would have phrased it, on a difficult shot around the table. There is a superstition that a single point left at the end of a game can hardly be

got, even by repeated trials; so that nobody wondered much when Van Dorp missed again, and Lush made a carom of two, and won the game. Van Dorp was disgusted, not so much at the defeat, as at the fact that it was palpably his own fault. However, they were all good-natured fellows, and not much was said on either side.

"Those two runs saved us, Jack," said Lush. "You'd make a buster for a forlorn hope."

"Yes, but you followed it up well," said Houldworthy modestly, "and left the balls safe."

"Yes, indeed," said Lush, "I made nine out of sixty. Big average, mine, that game."

After they had lunched, they played several more games with varying result, and inevitable tobacco; and then Jack Houldworthy left them, and, going down stairs, found his friend Rovingston just ready to go out. Together the young men walked leisurely up town.

"I never knew before last night that you were an orator," said Jack, "although I thought I appreciated all your accomplishments."

"I had a congenial subject," said Rovingston. "If I succeeded, I'm glad. I confess I felt a little shaky about the result. It's so difficult to say what ought to be said, without being absurdly formal and stiff."

"Shaky? I never knew that you shook at any thing."

"Oh, dear, yes! — often. But I try not to show it. If I succeed at that, it amounts to the same thing."

"I am glad to hear you say that," said Houldworthy. "It's tremendously embarrassing to have a speech made at one, I can tell you; and on such a subject too."

"I think you are a wonderfully lucky fellow, Jack, and that's the truth. A beautiful wife, and no end of shot in the locker."

"Why, so everybody says," Jack returned a little seriously, "but I don't know. Between you and me, Fred, — of course you won't speak of it, — Mr. Harley is not over-gracious. I can't make out why; and it bothers me. Perhaps he thinks I shall never be good for any thing but to spend other people's earnings. If he does, I'm afraid he's more than half right."

"Why, you have some law-business," said Rovingston.

"Precious little. Perhaps I might

have more if I went to my office every day, instead of twice a week."

"Very like," said Mr. Rovingston. And it certainly seemed probable.

"The fact is, that since I could not go abroad after I left college, on account of my brother's long illness and death, you know, I ought to have given it up for the present. It threw me out to go as I did. I not only forgot what little law I knew, but I got lazy, which was worse. Not that it makes so very much difference, indeed. The world is too good. There are six lawyers to one client in this and every other city. One sharp, unscrupulous pettifogger gets rich, and five brilliant and upright advocates starve. I don't starve; but that's because I happen to have a rich father."

"You certainly only stuck up your sign the other day."

"Yes; but, my dear boy, I began to practise before I went to Europe. That's what I say. I ought never to have had my own way in that matter."

"Well, I can't very consistently preach industry to you," said Rovingston. "I am not a miracle of activity myself. It's a selfish, idle life I lead, I know very well; but it's a comfort that I am not crowding any poorer man out of a place to get his living."

"I've often wondered why you never got married," said Houldworthy.

"A wife! Not any for me, I thank you. What should I do with one? I could give you fifty reasons for not marrying. And don't think there is any 'history of the heart' at the bottom, to begin with. I don't believe in that sort of thing. It's very well in novels, because the fellows who write them need it. It's a part of their stock in trade. What should I do if I were jilted, which I thank my fortune I never was yet? Why, I should buy another meerschaum, and set about coloring it. It might mortify me, but it wouldn't break my heart."

"You pretend you never saw a girl that you could get spooney on?"

"Nothing of the kind. I've been smashed dozens of times; but I always got bravely over it. I'm getting rather old now for that sort of thing, but I fear I'm not quite beyond it yet; that is, a reasonable, sensible, mature sort of passion with no nonsense about it." Mr. Rovingston, who had reached the "sear and yellow age" of thirty-three or four years, straightened out his black moustache with an air which seemed to say,

that, if women would run after him, why, he couldn't help it.

"Well, but don't you get tired of being knocked about the world, with nobody to care for very much except yourself?"

"Tired! Yes, bored to death. But then, I couldn't afford to be married, even if I wished. My income is like the turkey, that very inconvenient bird, as the hungry gentleman said, 'too much for one, and not quite enough for two.'"

"Yes, but take some nice girl with money."

"As far as my experience goes," said Rovingston, "all rich women are either fools or else atrociously ugly. I beg your pardon: there are exceptions to the rule, I admit, but those don't suit me."

"Very well," said Houldworthy, a little more annoyed at the last remark than he cared even to admit to himself; "of course you are the best judge of your own business. But I hope your peculiar views of life will not prevent your coming to that little toot at our house, next Thursday evening."

"What, your sister's party? No, certainly not. I had proposed to give myself that pleasure. I have a rule to go only to every third party to which I am asked; but I was very glad to make an exception in favor of your sister, when the invitation came out of turn. I shall do myself the honor, certainly, if nothing happens."

"I hope you will," said Houldworthy. They had reached Fourteenth Street, and Rovingston turned off here, after Jack had declined an invitation to go to his rooms. Jack proceeded onward to his own house, and, getting into an easy coat and slippers, read several chapters of an interesting but useless book, before he was summoned to dinner.

CHAPTER IV.

IN WHICH THE SMOKE CLEARS AWAY, AND A QUIET DINING-TABLE IS DISCOVERED.

IT must be confessed that there has been a great deal of tobacco burned in the preceding chapters; but since America is not only the land of the free and the home of the brave, but the abode also of the smoker, it is to be hoped that nobody has been disagreeably affected thereby. This smoke could not be avoided; it was absolutely indispensable in speaking of the Twiddler Club.

Perhaps it may have been observed through the dim haze, as it were, that Mr. John Houldworthy and his friends had no other aim in life than to amuse themselves. Their selfishness was certainly deplorable; but it is nevertheless to be considered, that there are many thousand persons in the metropolis, who spend their time in making themselves and others miserable. This seems to me a far less noble pursuit; and, while I do not apologize for the young Twiddlers, I confess that I think the work of reformation should be begun on the other class, by those beneficent beings who, without thought of themselves, live only to make others happy.

Consider what temptations to idleness beset these young men. Which of us would work if he were not spurred on by necessity? There may be people enough who have come to look upon labor with complacency, and are active by habit and inherited disposition. But all these toil with an object, — to be married, to support their wives and families, to have a name among men. Even to them, come after-hours when the genius of sloth and the goddess of pleasure tempt them sorely, and when it is only by dire struggles that they can resist the lusts of the flesh. And, if they should once listen to the wiles of the tempter, it would be no easy matter to regain their old habits of industry. Even I myself, the laborious chronicler of this history, — do I write solely with the plan of amusing and instructing my kind, and without any regard to the small modicum of filthy lucre which will be the only tangible reward of my pains? I wish I could think so. If I belonged to the Twiddler Club, this history might not be quite stunted, indeed; but its growth would be as slow, if not quite as stately, as that of the English elm. It is very well to talk of the dignity of labor. I myself, a laborer among the multitude, am very ready to believe that there is such a thing; but it seems of little use to hug ourselves with the delusion that the fall of Adam did not entail a curse. Men may dig in the ground, may handle the plane and saw, may write books even, for their own selfish amusement; but nobody on this earth does any really good, hard, honest work simply for the love of labor. And all this is so much the more to the credit of the industrious, who have some single, honorable end in view, which is presently to crown their toil.

There shall be no smoke in this chapter, to annoy weak lungs. The cheerful odor of soup first greets the reader in this apartment, which is the comfortably furnished dining-room of the Houldworths. The savory compound was brought in punctually, just as the door at the top of the quaint little wooden clock on the mantle flew open, and the absurd little bird within popped out; and softly piped forth "cuckoo" five times, and then as briskly popped back again, just in season to save a rap on its beak from the closing cover of its habitation. The smartest of maid-servants stood in waiting. Mr. John Houldworthy, on time for once, lounged in first; and, in an attitude of weariness, stood fingering some trifling articles which stood by the clock.

"So you are here again, Katy," he said. "Where's John to-day?"

"Gone to see his aunt at Astoria, sir."

"His aunt, eh? I don't believe much in that aunt."

The smartest of maid-servants blushed very deeply, and evidently wanted to reply, but had not the courage.

"However, you do just as well as John," added Mr. Houldworthy, "just as well."

The smartest of maid-servants colored, this time from another emotion.

And here Mrs. Houldworthy swept into the room with considerable dignity. Mrs. Houldworthy was a lady in a cap with gay ribbons, with a mature form, and a face which was not much wrinkled by deep thought, and which suggested the beauty which had existed before the comely lines had grown commonplace.

I can hardly give Mrs. Houldworthy less than a paragraph by herself on her introduction; but her lord and master, the father of the family, followed so close after as to make the propriety of this rhetorical division almost doubtful. The elder Mr. Houldworthy was stout in form, but at least half a head shorter than his only son, who nodded to his parents from the mantle. Mr. Houldworthy had an open, pleasant, bright face, just now a little clouded, but marked by intelligence, and a certain air of authority which even good-natured men acquire from having a recognized position in any walk of life.

"So you are going to honor us with your company to-day, John?" said Mrs. Houldworthy.

John said, "Yes, of course he always

dined at home when he could;" and just as they sat down Miss Warner entered.

Miss Amy Warner was an orphan, and a niece of Mrs. Houldworthy. There was nothing very striking about the young lady at first sight, except her eyes, which were so large, bright, and expressive, that they kept one from noting that her face, although not absolutely plain, was not quite regular in its features, and that her figure was good, and her hands perfect. Her dress, although well fitting, was very quiet, a result arising from her tastes, since she had a little property of her own, and was in no sense a dependant on the family. Miss Warner made some remark also about John Houldworthy's previous absence; and that young gentleman was forced to explain that he had dined the night before at the club, with some friends, and the night before that with his friend Rovingston.

The soup was nearly finished before Miss Houldworthy appeared. That young lady, a blonde of twenty, who had inherited her mother's complexion and her father's good humor, and so looked not a day more than eighteen, entered in such an elaborate costume, and looking so fresh and charming, that any candid jury of her countrymen, although they might have convicted her on a charge of tardiness, must inevitably have recommended her to the mercy of the court, on the ground of extenuating circumstances.

"Why, Jack," she said, "it isn't possible that you're at home!"

Mr. John Houldworthy intimated that if she intended that for an original remark, she was at fault, because it had been made twice already within five minutes.

"Jack's conscience smites him evidently," said Miss Houldworthy. "Thank you, mamma, not too much soup, please; I like it cool. — I hope," she continued, "you don't neglect Miss Harley as you do us."

"You may be sure that she doesn't grumble about it, at least."

"Don't be grumpy, Jack, dear," pursued the young lady. "How is your charming friend Mr. Rovingston?"

"I just left him; and, by the by, he's coming Thursday night."

"Is he, indeed? What condescension! What shall we do for him? make a little throne at one end of the room, where all the young ladies can come up and bow down before him?"

"Fanny, my love," interposed Mrs. Houldworthy mildly.

"Don't be silly, Fanny," said her brother: "Fred Rovingston is a good fellow at the bottom."

"I haven't a doubt of it; not the slightest. Why, the other night, at Mrs. Frank Osbaldiston's, he actually took the trouble to look at me; and I haven't recovered from it yet. If he comes next Thursday, I shall never survive it."

"Frances, my dear," said her father pleasantly, "I suppose you don't see that you are keeping everybody at the table waiting."

So the young lady stopped her chatter, and turned more seriously to the duties of the table.

A family group like this is a pleasant sight; but I doubt whether their innocent conversation would prove very entertaining if transferred to paper. As it is but a step from the sublime to the ridiculous, so bright talk often comes so near being twaddle, that one needs to know the speakers very well, and to be in the humor moreover, to appreciate and enjoy it. I think the reader will be far more ready to believe that Miss Houldworthy's prattle was amusing, if I do not tell what she said; and I am sure that her brother Jack had got himself in such a state of ill-humor, that what he said would be agreeable to nobody. I do not think that the history of the shortcomings of the man John, as recounted by Mrs. Houldworthy, would prove exciting if reproduced in these pages; although the smartest of maid-servants, who cherished the delusion that John's only weakness was a fondness for heel-taps, listened with cheeks burning with indignation. Indeed, it was with great difficulty that the fires of this young woman's resentment were kept smothered by the ashes of her modesty, — or, not to speak in metaphor, she was in such a twitter that she spilled a little of the contents of one of the dishes she was carrying, on Mr. John Houldworthy's coat-sleeve; an accident which did not improve that young gentleman's temper, and which put him to some trouble to conceal that he was ruffled. Miss Warner, who pitied the girl, and who had long ago made the discovery that servants are human beings and ought to be treated as such, made haste to turn the conversation; but her few words would hardly bear repetition; and the new topic introduced had no interest beyond that immediate circle.

As for Mr. Houldworthy, it was clear that genial old gentleman was for once out of spirits. Miss Warner was the first to notice it, but discreetly said nothing. Some persons do not like to have their moods talked about, and Mr. Houldworthy was one of them. Miss Houldworthy, less considerate, taxed her father outright with being melancholy; and he was forced to acknowledge it, and began to talk with his son about the unpromising state of political affairs. But not even Mr. Houldworthy anticipated open war between the North and the South. Miss Warner joined in the conversation; Mrs. Houldworthy and her daughter began to talk about the party. There was a decanter of sherry on the table; for Mr. Houldworthy liked a glass of wine after the fatigue of the day. This afternoon, quite contrary to his usual custom, he filled his glass repeatedly, and as if in absence of mind. Jack drank but little; for, whatever faults the young man had, over-indulgence in wine was not one of them; but he did not grow more cheerful as the meal progressed. If the truth must be told, he was a little bored; there had been too much unnatural excitement in his life of late, and he found the family gathering a little slow. It is a part of the system of the compensations of Nature, that undue exhilaration of spirits should be followed by depression. Jack was a little dull without, so far as he knew, having any reason.

I shall not, in this unpretending work, thrust many quotations upon my readers; but it occurs to me at this moment that some philosopher or other has somewhere said that all things earthly must have an end. Certain it is, at least, that this dinner of the Houldworths was at length concluded. Mrs. Houldworthy sailed out of the room, followed by her daughter and her niece, and led the way to a pleasant room up stairs, with windows on the street, where it was her custom to spend certain portions of her time in watching the carriages and the pedestrians. Mr. Houldworthy and his son went together to a little room at the back of the house, which contained a few books, and was used for smoking: Mr. Houldworthy the elder liked a cigar after dinner.

I think I hear a lady, who has neither a husband nor brother who smokes, — the only one thus blessed, in fact, who has honored me by glancing over these pages, — I think I hear this lady exclaim that the horrid creature (meaning there-

by her very humble servant, the writer) promised at the outset that there should be no smoke in this chapter. I beg most respectfully to observe that I am a man of my word, and to call attention to the fact that there can be no smoke without a fire. The Houldworthy mansion contained a smoking-room, and I could not prevent the two gentlemen from going thither after dinner. The moment they light their cigars we will leave them.

Jack stood with his back to the grate, in an Englishman's favorite attitude. He had a foreboding of something unpleasant. Jack's father sat down in his own easy-chair, and, taking from his pocket an extraordinary large cigar, began to roll it about in his mouth, according to his habit, as if he wanted to tantalize himself by putting off smoking as long as he could.

"I wanted to see you, Jack," he said. "I'm not satisfied with the way things are going on; I'm very far from satisfied."

"Business going wrong?" said Jack.

"It's your own business that I want to talk about," said the old gentleman, not in the least moved by this feint.

"I'm afraid there isn't enough to furnish a topic of conversation," returned Jack with a feeble attempt at jocosity.

"Whose fault is it that it isn't larger? I sent you some business myself, the first of the week. You were out, and you lost it. I have been at your office twice since then. You were not there, and nobody knew any thing about you. Now, this sort of thing won't do, sir; it won't do. If you are never going to be in your office, why, the rent of it is a useless expense, and you had better give it up."

"Perhaps I had better give it up. It's certain I shall never make any money as a lawyer. There are too many of us in New York. And, besides, the long and short of it is, and I may as well say so, I don't take any interest in the profession."

"No interest! Then I should like to know what you do take interest in."

"I don't know. Nothing useful, I'm afraid," said Jack rather sadly. "I think I was cut out for a blacksmith. My tools up stairs are the only ones I take to kindly."

"But, John! Good heavens! it's rather late in the day to find this out. And allow me to say, it's rather a poor return, after all the expense and trouble I have been at to give you an education."

"I know I have had every advantage,"

said Jack doggedly. "I know very well that I seem ungrateful; but I can't help it. There are the facts staring me in the face, as they have been for months; and I may as well be honest, and speak out."

"Well, but, John," said the old gentleman very anxiously, "what do you expect to do? Suppose any thing should happen to me. No fortune is sure in this country. A man is up-to-day, and down to-morrow. Because I have prospered thus far, it doesn't follow that my son will be able to live in idleness."

The thought crossed Jack's mind, that, if any thing should happen, he might fall back on his future wife's money; but he was man enough to put it down, and trample on it.

"The fact is, John," said Mr. Houldworthy, speaking with some apparent effort, "business is looking very badly indeed. There is no knowing what those Southern fellows may do; and we have got a good many debts out there, which are worth just nothing at all unless affairs are settled peaceably. Money is very tight. I don't like to say any thing to your mother and the girls; but I wish that party could be avoided. I saw they had set their hearts on it; and it had gone so far when they first told me, that I hadn't the resolution to put my foot down, as I ought to have done. It absolutely is not decent to spend money in merry-making, with the country in such a condition."

"I don't know," said Jack: "I think this political flurry will all blow over. At all events, now the invitations are out, it's too late to talk of giving up the party. I wish I had known how you felt a little sooner; perhaps I could have managed it with Fanny and my mother." Jack did not say any thing about his own heavy bills, although he thought of them.

"Well, well," said his father with a sigh, "I suppose it can't be helped now. But don't, for heaven's sake, let me hear any more talk about your disliking your profession. You have chosen it, and you must stick to it. And pray don't think you are a young Ceresus. You cannot afford to be idle; no young man can."

Mr. Houldworthy here took up the evening paper and a match, and we must perforce leave him.

Young Houldworthy sauntered out of the room without making any reply, or promising amendment; but such lectures from his indulgent father were so very unusual, that what had passed had a good

deal of effect on him. In going up stairs, he met his sister.

"O Jack!" said she, "I was just coming to ask you to mend the lock of my upper bureau-drawer. It is broken, I think; and I keep some trinkets there, that I don't like to leave exposed."

Jack took her playfully by the chin. "You must be less extravagant, puss," said he. "I have just been talking with your father about you."

"Fudge! I don't believe it. Set me the example of economy, Mr. Spend-thrift."

"No, but really, Fanny, the governor is feeling awfully blue about matters. I've never seen him so bad before."

"Is he? Well, after this wretched party is over, we'll all live on bread and water. I wish it were over," she added. "I'm tired of it already."

"I wish it were over," said Jack. "Parties are bores. I think Rovingston has the right plan. He makes it a rule to accept only every third invitation. And do you know, Fanny, he made an exception in favor of yours?"

"What an honor!" exclaimed Fanny in a tone of sarcasm. "Well, but, Jack, dear, mend my bureau, won't you? If you will, I'll promise to like Mr. Rovingston."

"Very well I will, then," said Jack; and he added as they separated, "and I believe, by Jove, that that sort of work is all I am fit for."

Jack carried the lock up to an unfurnished room in an upper story, which he had fitted up as an amateur workshop. He put on a very old and shabby coat, and, taking from a drawer a brown old meerschaum pipe, filled it from a jar of tobacco, which stood on his bench. Then —

CHAPTER V.

IN WHICH THERE IS A SOUND OF REV- ELRY BY NIGHT.

THE house at 13 East Blank Street, the residence of the Houldworths, was throwing out beams of light from every window. Carriages had been driving up, leaving people at the door, and driving away again, ever since nine o'clock; and there was as yet little rest for the policeman who had their movements in charge. Within, every thing was a blaze of gas-light, beauty, and flowers. The music was playing loudly but exquisitely, as all the bashful gentlemen in the room

had already observed to their partners. Mrs. Houldworthy was radiant in countenance as in brave attire; Miss Houldworthy was coquettish and fascinating to the last degree; and Miss Warner, in her simple dove-colored silk, was absolutely charming. Mr. John Houldworthy, whom we left in an old coat, lighting his pipe, was now dressed *à merveilles*, without the faintest suspicion of the odor of tobacco about his person. Mr. Houldworthy the elder, whom we mention the last of the family, because he seemed to be of the least importance, looked the handsome, amiable old gentleman that he was, and smiled to see every thing going on gayly. Mr. Charles Lush was there, a miracle of White the tailor. If it had been Mr. Lush's wedding-day, he could not have been more elaborately attired; and his boots were so small that they were positively almost invisible to the naked eye. Messrs. Trumpington, Van Dorp, Peterkin, and many other noble young Twiddlers; were there in gorgeous array. Mr. Rovingston came very late, as was his custom; but he made it up by his uncommon affability. Nobody had ever seen him half so amiable.

There was old Soapstone, President of the Bank of Mutual Admiration; and old Bluffum, president of the Spread Eagle Fire and Marine Insurance Company; with other presidents of banks and insurance companies, almost, it seemed, without number, until one began to count them. There was Bangup the heavy cotton-broker, and importers and wholesale dealers, young and old, by the dozen. There were young lawyers and doctors and merchants, sons of those heavy old people mentioned above, and of others still heavier, who did not, or would not, know the Houldworths. Mr. Peterkin asserted afterwards that everybody was there; Mr. Lush, whose circle of acquaintances did not coincide with Mr. Peterkin's, although it impinged upon it, was forced to admit that, while there were some queer coves there whom he had never met anywhere before, it was a regular, bustin', jolly old toot, and the Houldworths had done themselves proud no end.

What can I say of the ladies! My shy pen may amble around their surpassing loveliness, but I fear I can never bring it to write point blank about their charms of face and dress. Mrs. Cankerton, who was there with her niece Miss Yesbury (that tall girl, the bloom of

whose cheeks had in some way made a rendezvous at the end of her nose, and kept it too), Mrs. Cankerton had no such scruples. She would have told you to an ounce, how much rouge and pearl powder had been used to bring to perfection all these brilliant complexions. She would have described to the minutest detail, the subtle arts by which these belles, with the aid of their dressmakers and their maids, had built up and cut down those exquisitely-moulded figures. She would have taken great delight in relating in her cheerful, witty way all the little bits of scandal and gossip about those dear creatures, who, with heightened color and smiling faces, were waltzing or promenading with their favorite cavaliers. She would have reminded you how Miss Ratcatcher, old Ratcatcher's daughter, had been jilted by Mr. Westminster, because his friends had thought her not rich enough for him; and would have pointed out that the young lady appeared just now very happy in the society of Mr. Lilywhite Sand, although that young man had only recently started business in a very small way, as it was reported. She would have recalled the fact, when Mrs. John Wren passed across the field of vision, that John did not come with his wife, and was indeed reported to be going on in a most shocking way, so that it was no wonder the poor thing's eyes had great black lines under them, although she did try to put a good face upon it. Mrs. Cankerton would doubtless have told you that the Misses Blucher, of a good family, it could not be denied, and really very passable-looking, but oh, so poor (!) must have been scrimping themselves and their unhappy old widowed mother for months, in order to purchase the fine things with which they had bedecked themselves. Mrs. Cankerton would have — But I must take care lest I am drawn on unawares to repeat all her stories. The scene charms me, and I absolutely refuse to have the illusion destroyed. When a grand spectacle at the theatre pleases us, must we be dragged behind the scenes, and have it pointed out to us that the fairies are careworn and painted, that the fairy realms are only canvas coarsely daubed with green and yellow and red, and stuck together with tinsel, that their queen is old and wrinkled, with rouged cheeks and pencilled eyebrows, and that her car is really a flimsy sham with wooden wheels, which is dragged on and off by ropes reaching to the wings and held by

coarse stage-carpenters in pea-jackets and paper caps? Do not tell me, Mrs. Cankerton, that all these fair creatures gathered in the Houldworths' drawing-room will be pale, faded, and out of temper to-morrow noon, when they come crawling down to their late breakfasts. I refuse to believe it. I refuse even to listen to such an assertion.

Miss Harley arrived very late. She had a fearful nervous headache, she told Jack. Papa was going to send the carriage for her very early; and she could only give Jack one quadrille, and possibly one round dance, if he was very good. Papa would not hear of her coming at first, he was so careful of her, was papa; but she had insisted, for she knew dear Fanny would be disappointed if she did not come. "And would nobody else be disappointed?" Mr. Jack asked, looking straight into the eyes of his fiancée, — upon which he was told not to be absurd.

When these two young people danced a quadrille together, it was generally pronounced to be a fine sight. Mr. Jack was tall and well formed, with a fine moustache, — *bien distingué*, little Miss Pudge, who had just returned from Paris, whispered to the friend next her, — and he meandered through the changes as if it was all a great bore, and he wondered what stupid person had invented dancing. Miss Harley was pale, but not paler than usual; and she had what Miss Pudge pronounced classical features, and a stately carriage that was well in keeping with her form, and which she had inherited from her noble sire. Mr. Peterkin was quite overwhelmed by her charms; and Mr. Lush pronounced her the stunningest girl in the room, although he added that Miss Houldworthy was far nicer, because she was so jolly, and when a fellow talked to her he didn't have to bother himself to think of all sorts of swell subjects. Indeed, in Miss Houldworthy's cheerful society, Mr. Lush forgot his longing desire for the supper and champagne which seemed so long in coming.

It is very true, that, in my sketch of this merry gathering, I have thus far used *couleur de rose* with rather a free hand; but really all present seemed to be at the height of enjoyment, except a few unfortunate people, technically called wall-flowers, who knew nobody, and were but moderately successful in their frantic efforts to look happy, — a class just as essential to a large party as the killed and

wounded to a battle. Miss Houldworthy loved dancing above all things, and, besides, she was never melancholy for many successive minutes. She had made herself agreeable to Mr. Lush and other young Twiddlers, because they were her brother's friends; and she was in a measure rewarded by the excellent dancing of all these young gentlemen. I think this hypocritical young lady was even secretly pleased at a *galop* with Mr. Rovington; and she certainly accepted his invitation for the German very readily. Miss Warner, too, seemed to enjoy herself in her quiet way, although she danced much less often than her friend. Once, when John Houldworthy came to say that he hoped she had saved a dance for him, she ordered him to take out instead little Miss Pudge, who was really in danger of wilting in her seclusion. Mr. Jack said, "Bother Miss Pudge," but Miss Warner answered, "She is our guest, Jack;" and the young fellow did as he was bidden, like a good boy. Miss Pudge made but two mistakes in the whole quadrille, and actually amused the young man by her chatter about Paris. Jack got on tolerably well, because the party seemed so successful; but in his heart he did not believe that Miss Harley had the headache; and this would have annoyed him very much, if time had been given him to think of it. Miss Harley herself appeared very happy, in spite of her illness, dancing with Mr. Rovington and other gentlemen of mark; and declining, with great suavity, the advances of both Mr. Lush, who confounded her impudence, and Mr. Peterkin, who was thrown into despair by her coldness.

The supper was rather extravagant, and must have cost poor Mr. Houldworthy a very pretty penny. The first thing that greeted the eye was a tremendous pyramid in the centre of the table, so wonderful in design that it would have driven the architect of Solomon's Temple frantic, — or any other architect, for the matter of that. It had six cupids in as many recesses half way up its sides; and it was surmounted by a representation of that goddess which was once used to ornament coins of the realm, but which has gone out of fashion now, together with the coins themselves. Then there were two more pyramids of less altitude, but still imposing; besides six smaller ones, which were made to be broken up and eaten. The customary birds of the air and fish of the sea had been sacrificed

for the feast, and made into *salmis*, and otherwise tortured and disguised in such a fashion that I make no doubt that Noah, or any other old-fashioned person who may be supposed to have known a thing or two about natural history, would have given up the riddle at once, if he had been asked what they were. I shall not waste these precious pages in descanting upon the ices and jellies, nor the flowers, which were in profusion. The wines, even Mr. Lush and the epicures of the Twiddler pronounced *comme il faut*, — although they may not have used exactly that French phrase to express their meaning. There were not only champagne of the most approved brands, and light and sweet Cape of Good Hope wines for the ladies, but there was some Burgundy with a natural sparkle, which Mr. Houldworthy had himself imported, and which was generally allowed to be a beverage quite out of the common way. Mr. Charles Lush, shrewd youth, had taken down to supper little Miss Pudge, with the idea that that good-natured young lady would be satisfied with very little attention; and, having helped her very bountifully to the good things within easy reach, he himself got into a quiet corner with Harry Van Dorp, and punished that Burgundy most terribly. As for old Soapstone and Bluffum, you may rest assured that those two venerable and venerated gentlemen enjoyed the *Veuve Cliquot* immensely. Getting opposite a large dish of boned turkey with truffles, they watched, with many internal chuckles, certain verdant youngsters helping themselves very freely to the turkey, but carefully discarding the truffles. Then, when the coast was again clear, it was quite a sight to behold Mr. Soapstone and Mr. Bluffum gobbling up the expensive and succulent dainties, which the young men, in their innocence, had put aside.

I am forced to the conclusion that Mr. Lush partook rather more freely of that seductive Burgundy than was prudent; for, when he returned to the drawing-room, he employed his extensive and peculiar vocabulary so freely in his conversation with Miss Pudge, that, although she had been in Paris, she could comprehend but very little of what he said, and was at last quite content to return to her old quiet seat. Upon which, Mr. Lush straightway went back to the supper-room. Mr. Lush did not dance the German; in fact, he went home quite early.

Immediately after supper, the carriage of Miss Harley was announced. Mr. John

Houldworthy made sure that she was carefully wrapped up, and saw her comfortably seated within. He placed on the front seat a bouquet which he had saved from the wreck of the supper-table; but no old-fashioned endearments passed between these two, whose troths had been plighted. He simply said, "Good-night, dear;" and she answered, "Good-night, Jack;"—nothing more. In fact, her manner had not been during the evening such as to provoke any greater familiarities. Then Jack, biting his moustache all the way up the steps, entered the house, and re-appeared in the drawing-rooms all smiles.

Mr. Rovingston had graciously condescended to lead the German; and so he did, very skilfully and very gracefully, with the aid of Miss Houldworthy. It was a very jolly dance,—the German was always very jolly in those days, I believe,—and it lasted till four o'clock in the morning. Then the Houldworthys' party broke up; and everybody went away quite exhausted but still happy.

"Give me a cigar, Jack," said Rovingston; "I've forgotten my cigar-case, and I want to smoke as I never did before. Jack, I have had a right good time. I have enjoyed myself enormously, and especially in the German. I said all this to the ladies as a matter of course, when I made my *adieux*; but I shouldn't take the trouble to say it all over again to you, old fellow, unless I meant it: so I hope you will believe I am in earnest."

"If you were not bored, Fred, then I think the thing must have been a success," Jack answered. "I'm sure it was very kind of you to come, and we're immensely indebted to you for your exertions. Well, good-night. Tell me what you think of that cigar to-morrow; it's a new lot. And, Fred, we shall always be glad to see you here, you know,—all of us, from the governor down to your humble servant. Good-night." Mr. John Houldworthy had rather a disrespectful way of calling his father "the governor," as it may before have been observed.

It was a pleasant night, and Mr. Rovingston went his way on foot, puffing away at his cigar much more vigorously than was his wont. "Not bad, these people, eh, Frederic, my son," he said, addressing himself paternally, and in French. "Madame a little too well preserved, a little stiff; but mademoiselle is charming, a pretty child; I like her much, *la petite*. And Mademoiselle Warner, with her fine eyes; a relation evi-

dently,—a poor relation, I suspect. I must ask that of Jack. Decidedly, my brave boy, we must cultivate this acquaintance. It will do to pass the time." And he added in English, "I don't think much of Jack's taste in tobacco, if his box is no better than this. However, it is true there is too much wind for smoking."

When the door closed after the last guest, John returned to the drawing-room. The servants had extinguished all the lights except two candles; and the room looked very dim and dismal after the recent brilliant illumination. Mrs. Houldworthy, with her cap awry, sat in a large fauteuil, in rather an ungraceful attitude of utter prostration. She was talking about the brilliant success of the entertainment; but she talked very wearily, and in a tone suggestive of somnambulism. Miss Houldworthy occupied another chair, in a condition scarcely less wilted than that of her mamma. The difference in the vitality of the human frame at the ages of twenty and fifty is great; but then the German is such a tax upon one's strength! Miss Warner, however, stood by a mantle-shelf, picking out a few of the freshest flowers from a bouquet, with her eyes as bright as, when a quarter of a day before, she had welcomed the earliest arrival.

"Well, pussy," said Jack to his sister, "what did you think of Fred Rovingston to-night?"

"He was perfectly splendid, I admit," said Fanny languidly. "I'll never speak another word against him, never,—not for a month at least."

"Oh! You think so?" said Jack. "You should have heard what he said of you."

"What did he say?"

"Why, he said," Jack replied very soberly, "he said that he should have enjoyed the German very much, only he couldn't keep you from bumping up against people."

"O Jack!" said his sister with reviving spirits, "do you know where people go, who tell fibs?"

"Go to bed, I suppose. At least, it is time you children were sent there."

"I don't think Miss Harley exerted herself very much to be civil, I must say," said Mrs. Houldworthy, waking up.

"Why, aunt," said Miss Warner, "you know she was suffering from one of her terrible headaches. I'm sure I think it was very good for her to come at all."

"Fudge!" said Mrs. Houldworthy, and went to sleep again.

"Oh, dear!" sighed Fanny. "I am so tired! Aren't you, Amy?"

"A little," Amy said, going on with her flowers.

"It is my opinion," said Jack, with that tone of authority which elder sons and brothers sometimes assume, "that you had all better retire very speedily."

Mr. Houldworthy entered. He had been making a tour of observation below stairs.

"O papa, dear! How pale you look," said Fanny, rising, and going towards him. "I know you must be very tired and sleepy."

"Yes, so I am, I confess," said the old gentleman. "I am going directly to bed, and I advise all of you to go too. I suppose you do not know that it is near five o'clock in the morning."

"Oh! how can it be?" said Miss Fanny, pulling out a watch nearly as large as a five-cent piece. "I declare it is; and only a moment ago, when I looked, it was just four."

"Come, Fanny," said the old gentleman.—"Come, Amy, don't wait a moment longer.—Come, Mrs. Houldworthy,—Mrs. Houldworthy! Are you going to sleep in your chair all night? Come! Master John may sit up all night if he likes. Perhaps for once he'll be punctual at breakfast." And Mr. Houldworthy led the way up stairs. Mrs. Houldworthy brought up the rear, so nearly fast asleep that she once narrowly escaped falling over the balusters.

Master Jack went to his room, indeed; but he did not retire at once, as he ought, and as your son, my dear madam, who are honoring me with your attention, would have done. If my hero were quite perfect, I should rejoice extremely to be able to hold him up as an example; but he has so many faults that I fear he will serve better, for the present at least, as an awful warning. Master Jack threw his shining boots very violently into a corner. He tossed his new coat—and dress coats cost money, even in those days—very carelessly into a chair, and, putting on an old dressing-gown and slippers, sat down and smoked, smoked persistently and violently. The forms of Miss Harley, of Rovingston, Lush, and the Twiddlers, Miss Pudge, his father, Fanny, Amy, his mother, everybody he had seen that evening, went prancing through his brain in the most confused manner. Ever and anon he jerked away his cigar-ash nervously toward the fireplace, careless of where it struck. At last he rose, and took from his drawer the

photograph of Miss Harley. He looked at it for a moment. "She is certainly very beautiful," he said, "but"—He put it away without finishing the sentence; and then, going to the window, he pushed aside the curtain. It was quite light in the east, and the rattle and rumble of the early carts already came up from the streets.

CHAPTER VI.

WHICH IS RENDERED DOLEFUL BY THE DEPARTURE OF MISS HARLEY FOR BALTIMORE.

WHEN Mr. John Houldworthy called on his betrothed next morning,—he considered it morning, although many honest people were at that moment under the impression that it was afternoon,—he found Miss Harley a little languid indeed, but very amiable. She congratulated him on the success of the festival of the previous evening; she inquired after the health of his sister and Miss Warner, and asked especially concerning the physical condition of Mrs. Houldworthy, a lady for whom she had never displayed any extraordinary veneration. In short, she made herself so charming that her lover straightway put aside the ill-humor which he had brought thither, just as the traveller in the old fable threw off his cloak when the sunbeams fell on him. Their intimacy was not of very long standing; but he knew her already as a creature of varying moods, and had more than once suffered from her caprices, only to forget all his anger, and come again within the circle of her fascinations. We need not spend much time with the pair while they are in this humor. It is only the bickerings of lovers and married people that are ever entertaining.

Houldworthy had met Blanche Harley a year before on the Continent, at Rome or Naples, it matters not which, and had got an introduction through Rovingston. Miss Harley was travelling with her aunt, and was nominally under her direction, but really did very much as she pleased. Houldworthy was at once struck by her beauty, and, being moreover spurred on by a rivalry with one or two more admirers whom the young lady had in her train, did his best to make a favorable impression, and contrived as if by accident to keep with their party a considerable time, losing them in one

city to meet them at another. On reaching home in the autumn, whither Miss Harley had already arrived, he found the odds against him still greater; but, as we have seen, he had come in the winner, distancing all other competition. The engagement was very soon announced; and the little dinner at the Twiddler Club, at which we were present, took place some time after. Mr. Harley, who was a very stiff and proud old gentleman, although in truth he had very little cause for his pride except his money and his daughter's beauty, did not look upon the match with much favor; but it appears that he was not consulted in time to take any very active measures to stop it. The young lady had had her own way so long in Europe, that for some time she seemed very little in awe of her papa, who was indeed very peremptory in tone, but was very fond of his daughter. It was whispered even, that the engagement was made while the young people were still abroad; but this was contradicted by better-informed people. However it might be, it is certain that Mr. Harley did not choose to make any open and public objection to the young man, but contented himself with treating him in a very formal and stately manner. It was observed too, among Mr. Harley's friends, that he was not inclined to talk very much about the engagement.

It was not therefore with any small degree of dissatisfaction that Mr. John Houldworthy learned that morning from Miss Harley, that she was about to start at once for Baltimore with her father, to remain there for an indefinite length of time. Mr. Harley had suddenly been called there on business. He would be compelled to stay at least a fortnight, it was likely, and possibly longer.

"But I thought your father was quite free from business of all kinds," John objected.

"From any definite business, yes; from indefinite business of all kinds,—oh, dear! no." Miss Harley fancied that the present journey related in some way to the Southern troubles. It was only a surmise, and perhaps she ought not to say so; but of course Jack would not repeat it. Papa had not confided to her the nature of his business in Baltimore. He had only told her to have her trunks got ready, and to take as many of them as she liked; and he had spoken in such a way that she really had not dared to make any objections. Did Jack really think there would be any fighting?

No. Jack had not the slightest idea there would be any serious results from all this clamor and braggadocio on the part of the South. Both sides, in his opinion, were playing a game of poker: he begged her pardon; of course she did not know what that was: he meant that each party was trying to bully the other, and that by and by they would come to some compromise, not very satisfactory to either perhaps, and then every thing would go on as usual.

Jack's stay in Europe had perhaps somewhat dimmed his vision as regarded the politics of his native land; but his views were those of a great many people who prided themselves far more than he on their foresight. The elder Mr. Houldworthy had very often expressed similar views in his son's hearing, and, indeed, held them most of the time, except now and then, when he was suffering from an unusual depression of spirits.

Miss Harley knew nothing about politics, she said; and she was quite tired of hearing them talked about. Several Southern gentlemen who were stopping in the city had lately dined with her father, and had bored her horribly with their conversation. They could talk of nothing else but Southern independence. Her father believed that there would presently be fighting, but she certainly hoped not. It would be so horrible!

Jack sneered at the idea of Southern independence; and he vented some of his spite against Miss Harley on South Carolina. When one cannot be revenged directly for a slight or an injury, it is pleasant, while the wrong yet rankles, to hit some unoffending person. It is to this trait in human nature that small urchins and little dogs in the street, happening in the way of angry persons, often become martyrs. It chanced, however, that South Carolina was Miss Harley's native State; and, although she had never lived in it since she was an infant, she felt bound to defend it from Houldworthy's aspersions. Still she kept her temper, and Jack could find no excuse for losing his own. He went away, exhibiting some degree of affection, and promising to see her again before she left town. As he went into the street, he met Mr. Harley, who greeted him with civility, but with a degree of dignity which would have overwhelmed a young man of less independence.

Jack was sensitive enough, and he felt very keenly this indescribable coldness with which he had lately been treated.

It is true, it was the most natural event in the world for Mr. Harley to take his daughter to Baltimore. He might have business there; in fact, nothing was more likely; but Jack felt without knowing the reason, as it were by instinct, that Mr. Harley, who clearly disliked him, was taking this opportunity to separate his daughter from him. What vexed him most was that he could not with reason interfere or even remonstrate. So Master Jack walked down the avenue in no very cheerful frame of mind; and, if any stray terrier had by chance got under his feet, I think that innocent animal would have been rendered surprised and unhappy.

It may be supposed that Jack had not recovered his good humor when he came to the family dinner, which took place not long after he reached home. Mrs. Houldworthy was too much occupied in discussing the party, and the toilet of the ladies, and in talking about the people who did and did not come, to notice any circumstance except that the beef was overdone. Miss Houldworthy was suffering from a headache, and for once was out of spirits, and had no appetite. Miss Warner observed Jack's silence, but discreetly said nothing. Mr. Houldworthy seemed more harassed and fatigued by his business cares than when we were first introduced to that naturally kind and genial old gentleman; but he presently rallied under the enlivening influence of the sherry, which, contrary to his habit, he did not spare, as Miss Warner saw with concern. At length he remarked that John seemed not to have slept quite enough the night before.

Jack admitted as much, and volunteered the confession that he been smoking rather too much.

A disquisition on the pernicious effects of tobacco followed from Mrs. Houldworthy.

"Have you seen Miss Harley this morning?" asked Miss Houldworthy, willing to change the subject. "Has she recovered from her headache?" Fanny had hit upon an unfortunate topic.

"She looked well enough when I saw her just now," said Jack; and he added, "she is going to Baltimore with Mr. Harley."

"Indeed! For how long?" said Fanny.

"Don't know," Jack answered. "A fortnight perhaps, and it may be six months for all I know."

"I think it is shameful!" exclaimed Mrs. Houldworthy.

"What is shameful?" asked Jack quickly.

"Nothing," said Mrs. Houldworthy.

There was an awkward pause, broken only by the slight clatter of the dishes which the servant was removing. Mrs. Houldworthy gazed straight before her with a heightened color. Jack was very pale. Mr. Houldworthy poured out another glass of sherry, and drank every drop. Miss Warner's hand timidly sought Jack's under the table; she feared he would leave the room.

"I think," said Mr. Houldworthy, setting down his glass, "that the conduct of some of those young men at the supper-table, last night, was simply abominable."

"O papa!" said Miss Houldworthy, "why, I am sure"—

"Fanny, my dear," interposed her father, "don't interrupt me, please. I repeat that the way in which those young men drank wine would not have been tolerated in my day. If they were not capable of restraining themselves, their parents should have kept them at home. Not that I care any thing about the Burgundy, although it is a wine which can't be easily replaced. Heaven knows I wouldn't grudge a drop of it, but I do hate to see it wasted."

"Why," said Mrs. Houldworthy, "I'm sure I saw nobody who appeared the worse for it."

"It was owing to the strength of their heads, then, and not their prudence," said Mr. Houldworthy. "Two or three of them guzzled it down so fast that they fairly drove me out of the supper-room. I'm sure I don't know what became of them and I don't care." Mr. Houldworthy here filled his own glass.

Jack did not join in this new topic of conversation so suddenly introduced, nor defend his friends, as would have been his natural course; but he sat gloomy and dull during the rest of the dinner. When he left the table, he went up to his workshop at the top of the house.

Two days afterwards, Miss Harley left town with her father, her maid-servant, and several gigantic trunks, each one of which appeared large enough for the residence of a Western squatter and his family, with room for the hired man to sleep in the cover. Her parting with her lover on the preceding evening was at best only moderately affectionate; but

then she asserted that she would probably return in a fortnight at the farthest. Jack imagined that she seemed constrained and ill at ease in his society, but he might have been over-sensitive. He did not see Mr. Harley, but was very well content to leave his compliments for him.

Weeks passed on, and yet Miss Harley did not return. February went by, and then March; but still an unaccountable prolongation of Mr. Harley's business in Baltimore kept them away from home. During two or three weeks, Miss Harley's letters to Jack were dated at Richmond; but there, as in Baltimore, she described herself as quite tired of the life she was leading and the people she was thrown amongst, and as being ready and even anxious to return to New York, an event which she had reason to believe would not be postponed much longer. Jack read these letters with much inward dissatisfaction; but his answers were calm enough, and no allusion to the subject of Miss Harley's absence was ever made in his own family. Neither did he once propose to go to Baltimore, although the two were separated by so few hours of travel by railroad. During all this time, the young man was not the most entertaining of companions, — at least not at home; at the club, where he spent much time at billiards, he sometimes relaxed, and always made an effort to put on a good face. He was not enough of a hypocrite to deceive Cookey, however; and that amiable person took several opportunities to sneer at him behind his back.

Pride often drives men in such a frame of mind as to make them keep their griefs to themselves; but Jack had been at an early day impelled to confide in his friend Rovingston, who put on an air of great worldly wisdom, and gave the matter deep attention. His advice was, to wait patiently, like Mr. Micawber, for something to turn up. It did not appear, he argued, that Jack had received any tangible slight of which to complain. Mr. Harley had always been civil enough, — too civil, in fact; but then he was a pompous old idiot, Mr. Rovingston said civilly; and perhaps, after all, it was only his natural manner. It was possible he was mixed up with Southern politics, and was perplexed at the way matters had turned out, and so had been made irritable. Miss Harley's letters were not extraordinarily tender, it was true; but then, on the other hand, they

could hardly be called cold. The prolonged absence of the Harleys might easily be accounted for in the troubled state of the times, although it might seem strange to one who knew nothing about the nature of the business which called Mr. Harley to Baltimore. It did look a little as if Miss Harley was playing fast and loose, Mr. Rovingston was forced to confess; but she and her worthy parent had been at least adroit enough to cover their real plans. In Mr. Rovingston's opinion, Miss Harley was at the bottom extremely fond of Jack; else why should she have accepted him in the first place? At all events such a prize was not to be tossed aside lightly. Heiresses did not grow on trees, like Jersey peaches, to be had for the plucking, — at which Jack anathematized her money very warmly. And, if Jack really cared for the girl, why, so much the more reason why he should not go off with a fizz and a splutter at a stray spark, like a Fourth of July pin-wheel.

Jack raged outwardly and chafed inwardly at this calm and worldly view of his trouble; but he could not deny that the advice was in the main sound, and, as he saw nothing better to do, he followed it.

All this time there was no great change in the little world in which the Houldworthys went round and round like the patient horses in a circus, who amble steadily about the ring without minding in the least the jokes of the clown, the applause of the audience, or the patter of the rain outside the tent. The Twiddler Club whiled away the time with gossip and cards and eating and smoking. The ladies got on very comfortably, although some of them complained that their husbands and fathers were less liberal with their purses than was their wont. Who can tell how they passed their time? A few calls or a little shopping in the morning, dinner, and in the evening music at home or the opera, and — presto, there was a day gone. Yet it was allowed that the season was uncommonly dull for New York; and I think, if Mr. Rovingston followed strictly his rule of accepting only every third invitation, he must have lived very much by himself, that winter. Nevertheless, there were parties and great dinners; and young people danced and flirted, and made love in sober earnest, and quarrelled, and were reconciled again, just as they have always done in New York since it became a city, and I know not how long before. And

in the mean time the nation was trembling with the earthquake shocks which presaged the tremendous convulsions which were to follow.

CHAPTER VII.

IN WHICH A GUN IS FIRED.

So the days and the weeks rolled by; and the Houldworthys, although they might be annoyed by petty troubles, were still ignorant of the great calamity which was about to overwhelm them. It was true that the manifest disquietude of Mr. Houldworthy affected at times the family circle; but that kind husband and father was naturally courageous and sanguine, and was never utterly cast down. Perhaps he hoped against his better judgment; it is certainly very hard for any of us to be persuaded that the work of a lifetime, which has been steadily successful, can ever be overthrown by our own fault, or by the stress of circumstances.

It was about this time that a mortar was fired on Sullivan's Island, in Charleston Harbor, at a very early hour one morning. The muzzle of the piece, which was not loaded with blank cartridge, was pointed towards Fort Sumter; and it is said that the lanstrung, the slight pull of which produced the explosion, was in the hand of a venerable Virginian secessionist, Mr. Edward Ruffin. The honor of firing this gun was solicited by Mr. Ruffin, who not only gratified his personal hatred against the North, but, as it is reasonable to suppose, thought he had by this simple little action won a very distinguished place in the annals of his country. Mr. Ruffin's name may be preserved in history, but perhaps not with that glorious lustre on which he had so fondly counted. I think if Mr. Ruffin could have foreseen the bloodshed, misery, and ruin, which were to follow in the four years after his simple act, he would rather have been blown from the mouth of that mortar, on that April morning, than have stood behind it, a volunteer artilleryman.

Our poor old friend Mr. Houldworthy was killed by that mortar as surely as if he had stood in the way of the shell which went booming over the water towards Sumter. The news of the attack reached New York on Friday, April 12. Many disbelieved the story, and waited for its confirmation, which soon followed.

Mr. Houldworthy felt on the instant that all was over.

He was brought home stricken with apoplexy, and, in the course of a few hours, breathed his last. The next day, it was known over the city that the house of Houldworthy & Company, which had stood with unblemished credit for so many years, had failed, and was hopelessly bankrupt. It would be a melancholy task to describe the great grief which fell upon the family at the sudden death of their protector and friend; and it need not be attempted. The loss of their property was as nothing; and, indeed, Mrs. Houldworthy and Fanny did not know it for many days after. Jack, poor fellow, went about silent and pale, like one stricken dumb. Amy Warner, afflicted as she was at the loss of her kind old friend, made but little effort at consolation; and it was perhaps as well. It is a merciful dispensation of Providence, that such sudden losses cannot at first be realized to their full extent; and so the conviction falls upon the mourners gradually, and, as it were, in proportion to their strength. It is better to leave a gap of several weeks in our story, and say a word about the business affairs of Houldworthy & Company.

The house had had large dealings with Southern merchants, as was well understood on the street; but it was generally thought that Mr. Houldworthy's personal wealth and well-known shrewdness would carry it safely through the crisis. Perhaps it might have been saved, could Mr. Houldworthy have lived; and nothing but actual war could have broken down his courage. But the long siege which the house had sustained had weakened the physical strength of the senior partner, as well as eaten up his means. Political agitation, and the threatening aspect of the South, had produced a stagnation of business, even early in the previous year, which was that of the presidential election; and, as the twelve months wore on, the prospects grew no brighter. Merchants read with long faces, in the money articles of their favorite journals, such sentences as these: "Stocks still declining;" "The money market gives no signs of relief;" and, if for once these dismal chroniclers altered their plaint, it seemed that they were sure to repent next day, and to wipe out all their pleasant words with such phrases as, "The better feeling noticeable yesterday seems to have been spasmodic only." In the course of November, the banks

throughout the country very generally suspended specie payment, and this afforded a momentary relief; but the president's message in December was generally interpreted to look towards a warlike policy, and again financial matters looked gloomy.

I need not detail the history of the fluctuations in commercial affairs of that wretched year which preceded open hostilities. Poor Mr. Houldworthy turned hot and cold, with hope and fear, many times during these weary months; but he kept on bravely, and, while his exertions were mainly spent in taking care of ever arising emergencies, he did what he could to get his business back to a sound basis again. In spite of his acknowledged shrewdness, he made the fatal mistake—it seems incomprehensible, almost, to one looking back calmly over the facts,—of supposing that peace would be patched up on some basis, and that the nation would go on undivided, living upon a compromise as before. Very many people thought as Houldworthy did; and many suffered for their error in judgment. With him, it was the only great mistake in his life, and he paid dearly for it. In the struggle, he had risked and lost every thing. Jack Houldworthy knew something of the embarrassments of the house; but his father had never taken him fully into his confidence, either through mistaken kindness, or, more likely, from an over-sensitive aversion to speak about the troubles which were weighing him down. Jack had never guessed half the truth; indeed, how could a young man who had never been stinted in pocket-money, and whose days and nights were spent in seeking his own pleasure, realize that it was possible he could ever be thrown on his own resources? Mr. Houldworthy had never meant to over-indulge his children; but he was naturally kind-hearted and generous, and although they sought his advice, and obeyed him in all important issues, they had their own way for the greater part of the time, and certainly never lacked money to carry out their whims, even when the house of Houldworthy & Company was most straitened.

When Jack was informed by the surviving partners, Mr. Winston and Mr. William Smith, both young men, and both thoroughly frightened and discouraged, that the house was irretrievably involved, and that there was nothing left but to wind up the business, and to pay the creditors, if possible, a small divi-

dend, he did not fully comprehend the extent of his misfortune; but it broke upon him gradually, when he came to look at the facts and figures. Mr. Houldworthy had sacrificed all his own private property, which was considerable, in his efforts to keep the firm above water. All his real estate was mortgaged for much more than its value, now the war had actually begun; all his stocks and bonds had been hypothecated. His town house must be sacrificed; and even the pretty little country-seat up the river, which he had bought at a great bargain, must go with the rest. Jack found nothing which could be saved from the wreck with fairness to the creditors. There only remained a moderate annuity from an insurance on Mr. Houldworthy's life, made out in the name of Mrs. Houldworthy; and this would be hardly sufficient, even with economy, to provide for the support of Jack's mother and sister. For Jack himself, there was clearly nothing left but to go to work and earn his living, like any common man. Then came a thought of his engagement to Miss Harley; but it did not take him long to make up his mind what ought to be done in that matter.

Mrs. Houldworthy had brought her husband no money. Her paternal grandfather had been a blacksmith, a fact which in her prosperity she had put out of sight; although James Oakley was a man of shrewdness and intelligence, who had acquired a business of considerable extent, and a competency by his well-directed labor. But James Oakley was ambitious to make his only son a gentleman; and the result was that the young gentleman became an idler and a spendthrift. When Mr. Houldworthy met Miss Oakley, and fell in love with her, her father, already a widower, had run through with his inheritance. When he was killed by a railroad accident, a few years after, there were not a few of his former friends who expressed the opinion that "perhaps, on the whole, it was the best thing which could have happened to him." Mr. Houldworthy, then a prosperous merchant, did not grieve much, we may be sure, that his wife had no near relatives living, to make a hotel of his house when they came from the country. Mr. Houldworthy was not, himself, troubled with relatives; and so it happened that the family, in their present affliction, could only depend upon each other for sympathy. I am not quite sure that they were thereby the losers.

In short, without leading the reader by craggy pathways, through Mr. Houldworthy's account-books, it is enough to say that his poor little family were ruined; and Jack saw presently that the house must be sold, and that they must move somewhere into quiet lodgings: there was no help for it. When all this was unfolded to Mrs. Houldworthy, she first absolutely refused to believe it. But after she had insisted that she would never, never leave that dear place, and had nearly gone into a fit of hysterics, she gradually became calmer; and, on being consulted about some arrangements for packing, she was induced to give her opinion, and even, to a little extent, her assistance.

In the mean time, the city was filled with soldiers drilling, and marching, and countermarching. New York was responding to the call of the President for men and means to defend the capital, and crush the rebellion. The Houldworthys were not the only family, in those days, whom grief had overtaken. Indeed, there was lamentation in their own house, which no one of them heard except Miss Warner. A certain smart maid-servant went about with the face of Niobe, and her ribbons for once awry, dropping hot tears on the china. The man John, inspired by heel-taps and patriotism, had enlisted, and was going off with the next regiment.

Sorrow, like pallid Death, spares neither those of high nor low estate.

CHAPTER VIII.

IN WHICH JACK RECEIVES A LETTER.

"It's all over," said Jack grimly, as one morning he entered the room where Amy Warner was sitting, and tossed a letter very unceremoniously into her lap.

Miss Warner looked first at the handwriting, and next at the signature. "I don't think I ought to read this, Jack," she said. "Indeed, I had rather not."

"Oh, read it!" said Jack. "There's nothing in it that the whole town will not know to-morrow. There's no occasion to be squeamish about the matter. And tell Fanny and my mother, please. You know how to manage it; and I—it's not a pleasant sort of thing for me to talk about: you understand that, Amy." Jack turned towards the window at which he was standing, and pretended to watch the urchins at play on the oppo-

site sidewalk; but in reality he saw not even the few little blotches on the paint of the sash under his nose. His mind was far too busy, just then, to wait upon his sense of sight. Miss Warner looked at him earnestly for a moment; and then she read the letter, which was as follows:—

BALTIMORE, April 25.

Dear Friend, — Your letter, in answer to my note of condolence, surprised me not a little. But I cannot say, under the circumstances, that you are wrong in thinking our engagement ought to be broken. I pass over all your charges of coldness, although I think they are not quite kind. *If you knew what I had to contend with!*

But never mind. What does it matter, when things are as they are? You will forget me the easier. Believe me, I shall always think of you as a friend, and shall watch with interest the active career which you promise yourself. What you may think of me, I cannot help. I hope you will be just.

Pray tell your mother and sister I am really sorry for their affliction, — *really sorry*, although they may not believe it.

I shall send to your address to-morrow, by express, a box with *certain things*.

I wish I could see you, and talk with you. But no; it is better that we should break off thus, — and forever.

Ever your friend,

BLANCHE HARLEY.

"Well, what do you think?" said Jack, drumming restlessly at the window-pane. "Cool, isn't it? She'll not break her heart, if I do mine. The men always said Blanche Harley was heartless, and they were right. But she might at least have said she was sorry. I believe my poor old father, God bless him, would have shown more feeling in turning off John." And Jack's voice almost broke down, as in his excitement the thought of the kind-hearted friend he had lost crossed his mind.

"I think you do her wrong," said Amy, instinctively defending the absent, although she had long ago detected the faults in Blanche Harley's character. "I think she feels more than she shows. I believe her father is at the bottom of this, Jack."

"Do you think so?" Jack said quickly. "That's what I wanted to know. That's why I showed it to you. I know she did like me once. I know — but, as she says, what does it matter? It must have been broken off. I could never have married her. I *would* never have married her, beggar as I am. She talks of sending me a box with 'certain things.' I wonder if old Harley wouldn't pay my bill at

the florist's, for flowers for his daughter. It's all such a business-like transaction, I think I'll send it to him." And Jack made a feint of being greatly amused at this fancy, and immediately began pacing savagely up and down the room.

"Give me the letter, Amy," he said, stopping suddenly. "My mother had better not see it. I know very well what she would say. I know what she thinks of Blanche. O Amy!" he cried, breaking down all at once, "I go almost mad when I think of what has happened within these few weeks,—almost mad. What is to become of us all?" He threw himself down on a lounge, and buried his face in the cushions.

Amy was shocked and distressed beyond measure, and for a moment hardly knew how to offer consolation. Then she went and sat down by him, and placed her hand softly on his arm.

"There, there, Jack, dear," she said, "don't lose courage. It will all come right. It is hard, I know; but there are better days for us. The world is a coward. Stand up to it like a man, and it will fawn on you. There are better women in the world than Blanche Harley. She was never worthy of you."

"How do you know?" said Jack, starting up. "How can you judge her? I beg your pardon, Amy," he hastily added. "You are right. She is cold, heartless,—whatever you please. But that, alas! is not my only trouble. I wish it were. If I had only my own sorrows to bear, I could stand up under them. The business, Amy, is turning out horribly. It is as bad as the worst I told you could happen. We shall have to sacrifice every thing. You are safe. You have your own fortune; but what will my poor mother and Fanny do, who are used to every luxury?"

"Do you think I would leave you at such a time as this?"

"God bless you, no!" said Jack. "I will be selfish; I ought to be for their sake. You will stay with them until—until they get a little used to their new position; won't you?"

"That is all settled," said Amy; and, quickly turning the subject, she added, "And, for the rest, it is really not so bad. You have your profession."

"Profession!" echoed Jack. "Do you know how much that is worth to me? It has not paid for my cigars. It will not pay the rent of my office, unless I go down to the Tombs, and cheat drunkards and pickpockets out of their money. No,

no! I must give that up, I think. I have almost decided that point."

"Give it up, Jack! Oh, no! I hope not. Why, what will you do?"

"That's the point," cried Jack. "What can I do, great, ignorant, helpless lout? Go and become a blacksmith's apprentice, perhaps. What is the good of a university education? I can't even write well enough for a merchant's clerk. I would enlist to-morrow, yes, to-day, if it were not cowardly to leave my mother and sisters at such a time. And then the sooner I was ordered to the front, and shot by the rebels, the better. All I would ask would be an hour first in battle."

"Jack, Jack! You shall not talk in that way," interposed Miss Warner. "Be a man, and face bad luck. Where would be the merit of standing up against the rebels, when you had run away from the enemy at home? Come, come, let us reckon up what there is to be done. Things might be worse."

"I don't well see how," groaned Jack; and indeed, to tell the truth, Miss Warner did not either; but she went on bravely, without minding the interruption,—

"Do you know what my good mother taught me to do, when I was a little girl, and had hard lessons, and was ready to give up in despair and run away from them? She used to make me sit down quietly, and count them up one by one on my fingers, and then reckon the time and labor that each would need. And it usually happened, that when I came to look them straight in the face, as it were, and show them I was not afraid of them, they did not look half so formidable; and I found I could conquer them after all. So sit up straight, if you please, and let us see what it is we have got to do."

The courageous little woman seemed to inspire Jack with some of her own spirit. He was certainly calmer.

She went on, "First, we will pass over this letter you have shown me. You said you could bear that."

Jack winced, but he nodded affirmatively.

"Next, your mother and Fanny. I don't think you need be concerned much about them. Fanny is a dear, good, happy girl by nature; and I do not think she can remain miserable long in any circumstances. Aunt will feel the change most; but we can see that she is made comfortable, and does not miss the little luxuries. There is money enough, after all, to live very respectably."

"Hardly," said Jack.

"As for yourself, why,—I think, first of all, you ought to give up expensive dinners, and smoke less; I don't believe you'll be much the worse for that."

"Dinners be hanged!" said Jack. "I will live on a crust."

"And not suffer much either. I know you always liked the crust of the loaf. And then the club,—I do not know about the club. I fear it is terribly expensive."

"I have sent in a letter of resignation already," said Jack; "and I am expecting a wretchedly long bill from the steward, every day."

"That is well done," said Amy. "That is a good beginning. And when you have settled down into a model, steady-going young man, I do not believe it will be difficult to get occupation of some kind. A man who has seen the world, and knows several languages, ought not to lack something to do. Some of your father's old friends will help you to a place."

"Possibly," said Jack. "Only I don't like to go begging favors of them."

"Nonsense. That's not the way to look at it. I dare say they are under obligations to your father. He was not the man to leave the balance against him. And I suppose you have friends of your own. There is Mr. Rovington."

"Oh! Confound it, I can't go begging to him."

"You must put down your pride, and trample on it, at the start. And I fear that will be the hardest of all."

"I haven't any pride left," cried Jack. "It is all crushed out of me. But I can't go whining about the men at the club; that is too much. I can't have them pitying me and laughing at me behind my back. There are some of father's old friends I can ask. I will make out a list to-night. And if they will give me a chance, Amy, I will work; you may depend upon that. I have been idle enough, I know; but I think it is habit, not disposition. I don't think I have much sluggish blood in my veins,—none inherited, at all events. I don't think you know me quite, Amy; I don't think any of the family understand me; I know father almost gave me up in despair, and I fear he had reason to: but just wait, that is all, and see if I don't work, now that there's need of it."

"We all trust you, Jack," said Amy,

looking at him very tenderly, although he did not notice it in his excitement.

"You are a good girl, Amy," he said; "and I wish there were more like you,—I wish there were more like you," he repeated with bitterness. "It's all very hard to bear; but I was not going to give up, although it seemed like it, I suppose. This letter, coming after all the rest, got the better of me for a moment; but you shall see I will stand up under it all. As for this engagement, I shall be much happier, now that it is broken, than to have it going on in the old wretched way. And, Amy, stay with my mother and Fanny a month or two. That is all I can or ought to ask of you. Good-by, I shall be home to dinner."

Jack left the room by one door as Mrs. Houldworthy entered it by another. To that worthy and sorrowing lady, Miss Warner unfolded a new grief,—the breaking-off of her son's engagement with Miss Harley. Miss Warner shrewdly concluded that this would turn her thoughts in a new channel, and cause her to forget for the time her bitterest sorrow. Miss Warner was quite right. There is no need to give at length Mrs. Houldworthy's opinion of Miss Harley's desertion of Jack in his misfortune; but if the good old lady had been Mrs. Gamp,—a supposition I own quite absurd, and out of place in this chapter,—she would have summed up her views in a single phrase: "Good reddance to bad rubbage."

It may have been noticed that Miss Warner, in enumerating the troubles which Jack was called on to face, never spoke of the loss of his father. It was in both their minds nevertheless; but neither could have borne the mention of it.

When the family met again they all had the tact and consideration not to speak of Miss Harley; but Jack felt, by the increased kindness shown him in various little ways, that it was no longer a secret. The subject was handled without gloves at the club, that night, where the event had been looked for, and made the basis of sundry wagers, long odds having been given that Jack would be thrown over. "Cookey" had a cousin in Baltimore, who knew Miss Harley intimately; and this was the way the story got out so soon.

Poor Jack had a very sorry time over his pipe and his tools that night, after dinner.

CHAPTER IX.

IN WHICH THE READER IS INTRODUCED
TO STILL ANOTHER DINING-TABLE.

THE house and furniture of the late Mr. Houldworthy were sold under the hammer, without reserve. It was a ruinous time to sell property of any kind; but the person who held the mortgage on the house found himself all at once, by a series of accidents, very hard pressed for ready money; and he offered Jack such inducements to give him full possession at once, that the family, thinking that the sooner every thing was over the better, finally determined to remove without claiming the delay to which they were in fairness entitled, and which they could probably have obtained by insisting upon their rights.

I might be tempted to describe the auction, were it not that such scenes have been so often painted, and if one great master at least had not thought the subject worthy of an outline. It was, nevertheless, rather a commonplace affair, although two or three Twiddlers—not friends of Jack, it must be said—ventured in in search of bargains, and were overbidden on every article they wanted. There was no kind friend to step in quietly and buy Fanny's piano-forte, as honest Dobbin bought Amelia's; and, in fact, it would have been a very useless expenditure of money; for the instrument was a grand piano, and would have been very much too large for the modest quarters to which the family now betook themselves. Miss Warner took with her her own smaller piano, which would in any event have answered every purpose, and, indeed, was not opened in many months. Neither of the girls had the heart to play on it. There was very little taken from the house except their wardrobes and a few favorite books. Jack transported the least bulky of the fixtures of his workshop, because they were intrinsically worth nothing, and because he could not bear to part with them; but they sadly lumbered up his new quarters.

All the servants had been discharged, one after the other, as opportunity offered, even to the smart serving-maid Katy, who shed tears as copiously as if she was a little hydrant. She was the last to leave; and when the family were driven away in a hackney-coach, the day before the auction,—they did not care to make a show of driving to their new

house in their own carriage, which they could no longer keep,—Katy broke out into sobs and lamentations which would have melted the heart of a Roman gladiator. It was contagious; and the ladies were near breaking down themselves, when they bade her good-by. It was only after they had passed several blocks that Fanny's face emerged from her handkerchief; and then it was a very sorrowful countenance indeed, that she showed the little party. Mrs. Houldworthy sat speechless, gazing out of the window at nothing in particular. Jack was trying to get rid of the ugly lumps in his throat; and only Amy Warner made even a pretence of being cheerful. She took upon herself the task of distracting the thoughts of the whole family; and, although it was but sorry work, she met with at least partial success. They were able to leave the carriage decorously, when they reached their destination, and even to speak a few intelligible words to their landlady; but the ladies were glad when the door closed behind her, and they were left to solitude, alone with their unhappiness.

They had taken rooms in a house on Lafayette Place, which seemed to afford a happy compromise between gentility and economy. The rooms for the ladies were certainly pleasant; and although Jack's single apartment was at the top of the house, as he had insisted that he must live cheaply, yet it was large and airy, and afforded him room, on one side, for a small bench, and his vases and files. They were really not so badly off, so far as physical comforts were concerned; but they would have felt any change from their old home deeply, under the circumstances; and, as it was, every thing seemed to conspire to remind them of their losses. It was fortunate for the ladies that they had no maid, and were obliged to bestir themselves about their room and their trunks. Miss Warner contrived ingeniously to make Mrs. Houldworthy join in the work, knowing very well that industry is the best cure for heartache.

The first thing which Master Jack did, when he reached his new quarters, was to sit down in the midst of his goods and chattels, which had preceded him, and smoke his largest and strongest cigar. The effect of tobacco is soothing to the mind; and, before he had finished, he found himself planning that he must have a shelf here, a nail or a hook there, and his books in this or that corner.

The family, even on the first day, found their spirits improving a little, as it were, in spite of themselves; but, unfortunately, there was a very wide margin to be covered before they could reach their old happy state. None of them went down to dinner when the larger bell of the establishment was rung at six. The ladies pleaded fatigue and headaches; and the landlady, Mrs. Vincent, who was kind-hearted, and pitied them, sent them up fearfully strong cups of tea and a little dry toast. Jack pretended to dine out; but in reality he only took a very long walk, and came back to spend a rather doleful evening with the family. They all took tea together in their parlor in the evening, having brought with them the fragrant leaf and the necessary apparatus. Tea seems to take the place of tobacco in the economy of the female constitution, and the ladies felt better after it. They had but a dreary night nevertheless, after Jack went up to smoke his pipe before retiring. A new way of economizing occurred to him that evening, and he put it at once into practice. He would smoke no more cigars, except, perhaps, on a holiday, or on some momentous occasion. He had a box or two of different brands left; and these he would keep for his friends,—if any were left who would crawl up to that dismal place to see him, he thought bitterly,—but, for the future, he would use pipes, since they cost almost nothing. He could not give up smoking, he said: it was the last consolation he had left him; but he had a variety of meerschaums, and a good store of tobacco, and he could smoke for several months without spending a dollar. And so, as his smoke-wreaths curled towards the ceiling,—it was not so very far above his head,—he began to make plans for the future.

The Houldworthys did not meet their fellow-boarders at Mrs. Vincent's until next day at dinner. Breakfast at that house was a straggling meal; and the Houldworthys availed themselves of the opportunity offered to come down very late. They found only two or three people, who very soon went away, with the exception of one Mr. Witherington, who requested that a cup of tea might be sent up to his wife, and who read his newspaper assiduously, taking from time to time sips of very black coffee. Coffee, it may be mentioned, was one of several things on which Mrs. Vincent prided herself.

At dinner, however, the meeting could no longer be avoided; and they went down with instinctive dread and aversion to the company there assembled, which was, perhaps, not unnatural to a family which had all their lives been accustomed to the seclusion of their own table. The appearance of three ladies in the deepest mourning, with evident traces of sorrow on their faces, not to speak of Jack's solemn countenance, had any thing but an enlivening effect on the company; and the general depression did not wear away even with the disappearance of the soup. It may be well to take advantage of this quiet season to look about the table, and see who were the people among whom the Houldworthys, so much against their will, had been thrown. Perhaps the shortest and simplest way, though not, indeed, the most considerate for such a respectable body as Mrs. Vincent's boarders, will be to number all the chairs, after the fashion of the cages in a menagerie, and describe the occupants in the manner of a showman.

No. 1.—This is Mrs. Vincent, the landlady,—an extremely dignified person in a cap, who has seen better days. Mrs. Vincent prides herself especially on keeping a house of the highest respectability; but now and then, in summer, she is forced to lower the standard just a little, in order to fill her rooms at a time when people who are rich and intensely respectable have a stupid way of going out of town.

No. 2.—(On Mrs. Vincent's right hand) Miss Houldworthy.

No. 3. Mrs. Houldworthy, now very stiff and dignified.

No. 4.—Miss Warner.

No. 5.—Mr. John Houldworthy.

No. 6.—Mr. Witherington,—a gentleman with a hard, wiry face and hard, wiry red hair, stuck into a bullet head like a badly-made brush. Mr. Witherington is supposed to possess an independent property, which enables him to live in idleness, and gives him more time to bully his wife.

No. 7.—Mrs. Witherington,—a pretty little blue-eyed lady, without any particular characteristic except a wholesome dread of her husband.

No. 8.—(Foot of the table.) Mr. Tinkham,—a gentleman whose forehead extends up over the top of his head, and meets the back of his neck. An imaginative person might imagine Mr. Tinkham's head to be a globe, the hair on each side representing the two conti-

nents. Mr. Tinkham has a round little mouth, and no nose or eyes to speak of. Mr. Tinkham's responsible duties as carver leave him but little time for conversation. He is supposed to be related in some way to Mrs. Vincent, but nobody knows quite how much. Mr. Tinkham is a bachelor of forty-five, and precise in his dress, with an air generally of being a clergyman of an evangelical denomination. Mr. Tinkham, however, spends all his evenings in a neighboring billiard-room, watching the game, of which he knows nothing, and drinking gin and water, which from long custom seems to have no effect whatever on him. Mr. Tinkham, according to Mrs. Vincent, is engaged in a large commercial house down town. His real position is that of under-bookkeeper.

No. 9. — (Right of Tinkham) Miss Saltmarsh, an unmarried lady of amiable temper and good breeding, but no longer young.

No. 10. — Mrs. Seymour, her sister, a widow, — younger, but less amiable.

No. 11. — Mr. Felix Short, a broker, a member of the Board, and with bearish proclivities (in his business, of course). He has the reputation of having, with his partners, made a hundred thousand dollars in three months; but he does not alter his style of living, because he knows he may lose it all next week.

No. 12. — Chair empty.

No. 13. — Mr. Cartright, a silent young man, not ill-looking, and with the appearance of a gentleman. But Mr. Cartright thinks women bores, and secretly wishes the new comers on a lonely island in the Pacific.

No. 14. Mr. Hobbs, a young man dressed with great care, who is very fond of ladies (at a distance), and is secretly very glad the Houldworths have come, although he cannot for the life of him think of any thing to say to them.

This brings round to Mrs. Vincent again.

They had all heard of the misfortunes of the Houldworths, and were well disposed towards them; only they did not quite know how to show their good will, and moreover felt a little guilty, having canvassed the condition of the strangers pretty thoroughly on the previous day at dinner.

Mr. Hobbs came rather late; and, on being introduced to the ladies opposite, asked in a very affable manner: —

"Have you been out to-day, Miss Houldworthy?"

Fanny replied that she had not.

"Ah!" said Mr. Hobbs in a tone of some surprise; and he added, "Remarkably fine day for the season."

Fanny answered that the day had seemed from the windows very bright and pleasant.

Mr. Hobbs subsided into his soup-plate. Fanny expected him to continue the conversation so ingeniously begun; but not another word did Mr. Hobbs say during the whole of the dinner, except in reply to one or two observations of Mrs. Vincent, which he could not very well have avoided answering.

Mr. Tinkham opened his mouth as if about to speak. He was observed with much attention by those nearest him, for Mr. Tinkham was a man of few words. Mr. Tinkham disappointed them all; for he presently put a little piece of bread into his mouth, and then shut it again.

Mr. Tinkham had it in mind to ask Jack Houldworthy how the auction at his father's house had come out that day; but, being a man of great deliberation, it occurred to him that the subject might be an unpleasant one to open. Hence his ingenious feint with the piece of roll.

"Great fall that in Pimlicoës, yesterday," said Mr. Felix Short suddenly to Jack, who sat opposite to him, — "tremendous."

"Ah!" said Jack. If Mr. Short had said there was a great rise in Pimlicoës, he would have received the same reply.

"Perfectly surprising, — perfectly surprising," continued Mr. Short.

"A few people let in there," said Mr. Witherington with a chuckle. Mr. Witherington occasionally dabbled in stocks, and was, of course, glad to see other men lose, as well as himself.

"Few people let in?" said Mr. Short. "Well, rather. I should say so. Some of the smartest men on the street bitten, — bitten sharp too. Won't forget it in a hurry. We're all right, though. I sold the last we had the day before they went down."

"You were very lucky," said Jack.

"Lucky? Oh, yes, I suppose so! But we went in to win. It's a way we have at our shop."

Mr. Short and Mr. Witherington had at this point an amicable and extended conversation about the merits and probable variations of different kind of stocks. Jack had an opportunity to see that the table was set out handsomely with silver,

and that it was waited on by a man-servant in cotton gloves, — which had been worn before, and which were very large and loose, and had a hole in each of the thumbs, — and by a maid-servant who had no gloves at all.

After the soup, fish. Mrs. Vincent would rather have turned away her best boarder than have had a dinner without soup and fish. Then the roast was brought on with several side-dishes.

"Ah, beef to-day," said Mr. Tinkham, feeling called upon to say something. Mr. Tinkham did not, however, regard the appearance of the roast beef in the least in the light of a phenomenon, because the day happened to be Wednesday. Mrs. Vincent was a woman of idiosyncrasies; and it was one of Mrs. Vincent's idiosyncrasies to have roast beef every Wednesday.

Mr. Tinkham carved the beef. A knowledge of carving was the single strong point in Mr. Tinkham's character, and he did it well. Mrs. Witherington was anxious to begin a little conversation about bonnets with Miss Saltmarsh, while her husband was engaged with Mr. Short; but she could not, because the great platter of roast beef was in the way.

"Mrs. Houldworthy," said Mr. Tinkham in a solemn voice, upon which everybody looked at Mrs. Houldworthy.

"Shall I have the pleasure of helping you to a piece of roast beef?" continued Mr. Tinkham.

Mrs. Houldworthy gave him permission with much dignity.

"Do you like it rare, or well done?" pursued Mr. Tinkham.

"Well done, thank you."

"With a little of the dish gravy?"

"Not any, thank you."

Everybody looked relieved when this dialogue was finished; and Mr. Hobbs in particular was greatly struck by Mrs. Houldworthy's impressive manner. In fact, he spoke of it afterwards to Mr. Cartright, who, I grieve to say, laughed at him. I should hardly have dwelt on these words which passed between Mr. Tinkham and Mrs. Houldworthy, were it not that it was the only bit of conversation during dinner in which the good lady took the slightest interest; and it was almost the only occasion on which her voice was heard.

Jack had a side-dish placed before him, and the necessity of serving this helped to distract his attention somewhat; but his sister was in such a state of nervous

excitement, that she was several times on the point of bursting into tears, and leaving the room. After the first five or six minutes, the feeling of homesickness came upon her so strong that she could scarcely touch a mouthful; but she bravely put on as good a face as she could, and made a pretence of eating. Mrs. Vincent, with more tact than one would have given her credit for possessing, took care not to annoy her with pressing invitations to try different dishes, but devoted herself rather to occupying the attention of the others at the table.

"How we shall miss the Whittleburys!" said Mrs. Vincent. The Whittleburys, she explained to Mrs. Houldworthy, were the people who had just moved out of the rooms they had taken.

"Mr. Whittlebury was such a pleasant, agreeable old gentleman, always good humored and full of stories," said Mrs. Seymour. "I am sure we shall miss him ever so much."

"And such nice girls as the young ladies were," said Mrs. Witherington.

"Nice? yes," said Mr. Witherington, "but not overburdened with beauty."

"Why, Thomas! how can you say so?" said his wife.

"How can I say so? I can say so with the greatest ease, Maria. It's perfectly true. They both squinted, and they had positively bad complexions. I suppose you will allow that neither of these peculiarities is becoming to young ladies."

Mrs. Witherington observed meekly, that she never had observed that they squinted.

"Never observed? Then I must say, Maria, that it does not speak well for your powers of observation, considering that they were here all winter."

"They must be nearly at their journey's end by this time," said Mrs. Witherington, wishing to avoid her husband's ill-humor.

"Nearly at their journey's end? Quite at their journey's end, I should say. Do you know where the White Mountains are, and how long it takes to get there?"

Mrs. Witherington was obliged to confess that she had a very indefinite idea of where the White Mountains were.

"Then I can't say much for your knowledge of geography, Maria. They must have been there several days, at least."

"I believe they proposed to spend some time with a relative near Boston," said Mrs. Vincent. "They were not going to the White Mountains until later in the season."

"Oh, ah!" said Mr. Witherington. "I understood they were going directly to the White Mountains. You know we were away when they left."

"It's rather early in the season for the White Mountains, I should think," said Jack.

"Ah, yes, perhaps it is," said Mr. Witherington. "It is, now I think of it." And, having been clearly proved in the wrong, he held his peace for some time.

Jack glanced at his wiry hair, and repressed a strong desire to try the effect of pouring over it two or three spoonfuls of curry from the dish before him.

"They are fortunate in getting out of the city so early," said Miss Saltmarsh. "New York is a very dreary place with all this trouble about the war."

"I don't know," said Mr. Felix Short. "Yes, perhaps it is very well for Whitebury. He has made his fortune, and has a right to keep hold of it; but it strikes me that New York is going to be a fine place to make money by and by, when this war panic settles down a little."

"So you are not satisfied yet, Mr. Short?" said Mrs. Vincent. "I should like to know how much money would satisfy a gentleman in business."

"Satisfied? No, nor never shall be, I think," answered Mr. Short, rather well pleased at this allusion to his successes. "Not that I care so much for money; it's the fun of making it."

This conversation was not, on the whole, very edifying to Jack; but he made an effort to join in it now and then, and proved that he was not absolutely stupid, nor destitute of a sense of humor, as Mr. Witherington had hastily concluded at sight of his long face. The Houldworths sat the dinner out, even to the dessert, and were almost the last to leave the table. Mr. Cartright had pleaded an engagement to Mrs. Vincent, and left very early, scarcely having opened his mouth during the whole time. He had shown himself not quite insensible to the presence of the ladies opposite him, however, by occasionally passing them certain little articles at the moment they were needed.

When dinner was over, Jack, having nothing better to do, sauntered into a little room used by the gentlemen for

smoking, and, from force of habit, took out a cigar, and asked Felix Short for a light, before he remembered his resolution of the previous evening. Then he sat down by Mr. Short, and pumped him assiduously as to the chance of getting some employment. The result was not encouraging.

CHAPTER X.

WHICH IS DISMAL, ON ACCOUNT OF JACK'S LOW SPIRITS.

MR. FREDERICK ROVINGSTON had cut himself loose from New York for several weeks; and all that Jack knew of him was, that he was somewhere in New Brunswick fishing. Mr. Rovingston had done the Adirondacks and Maine pretty thoroughly in former years, and had set off this time with a determination to tackle the great salmon, a fish he had never yet caught. One evening, after the Houldworths had been several days established in their new home, and had acquired a feeling of greater contentment than they had at first thought possible, Jack, sitting in his room with a book, had a card brought up to him by the man John.

"He says, sir, please may he come right up to your room?"

Jack gave a glance around before he answered. The room was now arranged with book-shelves, and some of Jack's old pictures and trinkets,—pipes, dog-whips, walking-sticks, and all sorts of odd things, from a vase made out of an ostrich's egg, to a curiously-shaped bit of lava from Mount Vesuvius. There was rather a cosy, comfortable look about it, even if the ceiling was low, Jack thought: so he said, "Yes, John, show him up."

In another minute Fred Rovingston entered; swarthy as an Indian, from exposure to the sun, but dressed, Jack thought, with unusual care, and with a moustache longer than ever. In fact, Mr. Rovingston, in getting back to civilization, had found delight in returning to that excellent habit, which is not characteristic of life in the primeval forests,—that of making the person externally attractive to the eye.

Jack went to the door to meet him. "Hallo, Fred!" he said, "I'm right glad to see you, I am indeed."

"Jack, old fellow, how are you?"

"It's too bad to make you climb all the way up here."

"Stuff! as if I hadn't been climbing steeper places than this all the time for the last three or four weeks. Besides, I wanted to see your den; it's very snug too, upon my word."

"It will do," said Jack. "When did you get back?"

"Yesterday morning. I expected to see you at the club; but, as I didn't, I looked you up this morning at your—at Houldworthy & Co.'s."

"I left my address at the club."

"Then Pearson must have mislaid it. He's getting awfully stupid."

There was a little pause, after which Mr. Rovingston made some civil inquiries after the ladies, which Jack answered very concisely. Still another pause. Then Jack said, "How was the fishing?"

"Famous! Astonishing! Nothing like it. I shall never go after any fish but salmon again. Not that I caught so many, for the trick of it is not so easy to learn; but I saw just enough of the sport to whet my appetite. I did not want to come away. I found some good fellows in the garrison at Fredericton; up the St. John River, you know. Two of them went after the fish with me, and after we came back they gave me a little dinner. Never saw them before in my life either. I only brought letters of introduction to them, but before I left we were like very old friends."

There was another little pause in the conversation. Then Jack went straight at the difficulty.

"I suppose you know all about what has happened, Fred," he said.

"Why, yes," said Rovingston, "I know something about it. It seems every thing has been going to the bad while I have been away. The world is topsy-turvy. How is it, old fellow? are all these things true that they say at the club? Have you really been hit so hard?"

"They are all true, Fred, I'm afraid. It's just as bad as it can be, I think, although they're still at work upon those eternal figures. Perhaps my father might have brought something out of it; but his partners, Winston and Smith, never can, I am satisfied. They were good men in their places, but they are not fit to take the lead; I saw that from the first. As for myself, I am like a great, helpless infant. I know nothing about business."

"I was greatly distressed to hear of your father's sudden death," Rovingston continued. "Not that I had met him

often; but he was a man whom every one must have respected who knew him at all."

"That is the hardest blow of all," cried Jack, his voice trembling,— "the only blow. I would give up the money, yes, and Blanche too, without a single word, if we could only have him back."

"Well, well," said Rovingston, "these things are hard to bear I know; but time cures all wounds that are not mortal. These misfortunes only come to a man once, Jack. I don't know,—perhaps it is better to have them all over at once."

Jack made no answer, but sat gloomily staring forward at the floor, and turning a paper-knife over and over on the table, which stood at his right hand. Rovingston was a good deal affected at realizing his friend's misfortunes, but he did not know how to offer any consolation. Young men are generally at a loss how to put their sympathy into words. As he did not know what to say, there was a silence for a little time. At length, Rovingston espied Jack's array of tobacco and pipes on a small table.

"You don't mind my taking a pipe?" he said. "And I'm going to fill you one. It will do you good. Do you remember what Bulwer Lytton says in 'What will he do with it?' about tobacco,—that it will always be faithful to a man when his friends and his mistress forsake him, and the world turns against him?"

"I remember," said Jack. He took the pipe which Rovingston filled, and lighted it. Then they smoked together in silence for some minutes.

"My mistress has deserted me," Jack said with a sneer. "I suppose that has been talked over at the club, with all the rest of my affairs."

"I did hear of it, certainly. You know what a place a club is for scandal and chatter. But it's all over in a day, and then somebody else takes his turn. Everybody had nearly forgotten it, in fact, until I came to ask particularly about you."

"Let them talk," said Jack. "I can bear it." And he puffed out great clouds of smoke.

"As for Miss Harley, I doubt whether that is really a misfortune, if you will allow me to say so. I have been sorry for that engagement all along; only of course I could say nothing."

"Well, never mind," said Jack: "it's all over now."

"She's in town, I hear."

"Is she?" exclaimed Jack with interest. Then he added, "Not that it matters."

"And her father, they say, has gone South, nobody knows quite where. I believe he is an old rebel."

"Very like," said Jack.

The conversation was certainly neither brisk nor very enlivening, but there seemed to be no help for it. Suddenly Rovingston broke in, "I say, Jack, do you know I've half a mind to go down and shoot rebels for a twelvemonth?"

"I wish I could," cried Jack. "I would enlist to-morrow as a private, if it were not for my mother and sister. I cannot leave them now."

"Look here, Jack, old fellow," said his friend, "you must not go on in this way. Keep up your pluck, man. 'Never say die.' That was good advice of Master Barnaby Rudge's raven."

"I know I am horribly blue to-night," said Jack. "I'm wretched company, I know; but I cannot help it. You had better go away, and come some other night. I'm not in this way all the time."

"I won't do any thing of the kind," said Rovingston. "You can't shake me off that way, my boy. I'm going to stay here and talk salmon to you, whether you like to hear me, or not." And Mr. Rovingston, whose recent adventures had all been driven out of his head by the turn of the conversation, straightway proceeded to give his friend a detailed account of the habits of the salmon; his tactics when he is struck, and the way in which he is handled and killed by the successful fisherman. He also gave a modest account of an adventure with a drunken Indian guide with the party, and of the way in which the fellow was brought to reason by a blow on the head, with the butt of Mr. Rovingston's pistol, which he had the self-command to use at a critical moment, instead of the bullet inside. Finally Mr. Rovingston gave a description of the city of St. John, of the sail up the river of the same name, of the quaint old town of Fredericton, and of the pleasant manners and customs of the officers-quartered there. All this recital took at least an hour and a half; and the result was that Master Jack was shaken out of his apathy, and presently sat upright, and made intelligent questions here and there, which showed that he took an interest in New Brunswick and the art of salmon-fishing.

Mr. Rovingston saw with much inward

satisfaction this tribute to his power of making himself entertaining; and he did not leave until Jack was in a much happier frame of mind.

"I want you to come and dine with me quietly," he said. "Not to-morrow, for I have an engagement, but the day after."

"You are very kind, but I don't think I can."

"Very well; make it the day after that."

"I'm sure I would like to," said Jack; "but—but the fact is, I have cut the club, you know, and I have got to give up all these little extravagances."

"Very well. But I do not propose to dine at the club. There would be some fellow we did not want to see, sure to bother. We will go to Polichon's and have a French dinner, with *vin ordinaire* and nothing more, and afterwards we will talk business. Come, I will not take any refusal. You are moping yourself to death up here, and you must stir about a little. You *must* go. Day after to-morrow at six, at Polichon's. I shall expect you. Good-by. I can find my way down."

And Rovingston was off before Jack could persist in his refusal.

Mr. Rovingston walked towards the Twiddler Club, revolving in his mind the series of misfortunes which had befallen his friend, and trying to invent some way of helping him. Mr. Rovingston's power of invention seemed to him very dull that evening.

On the steps of the club-house, he found Mr. Charles Lush, who appeared to be standing there in a state of indecision. They greeted each other, and Rovingston was passing on, when Lush stopped him.

"Do you know any thing about the Houldworths?" said he.

"I just came from Jack's."

"Well, how is Jack? Do you know the story is, that the family have gone to the dogs, and are so poor they couldn't even put a penny in the contribution-box of a Sunday?"

"Nonsense! They have met with a reverse, certainly; but I fancy they have enough left to live on comfortably."

"I'm jolly glad to hear it. Somebody said they were living in a very queer spot at the other end of Amity Street."

"On the contrary, they are living in a very respectable spot in Lafayette Place."

"Pon my word, I'm glad though. I

just had a little row about them with Cookey, wretched little pup!"

"Where?"

"Not three minutes ago, in the smoking-room. Cookey had been taking too much beer, I should say, and his tongue was going uncommon lively. Toady Blankman and one or two others were there around him, and I was the other side of the room. Cookey began to chaff about the Houldworths; and he said something about Miss Houldworthy that I didn't like. It wasn't so much the words, you know, as it was his nasty way of saying it."

"Yes," said Rovingston impatiently.

"Well, Cookey may be a very nice, gentlemanly fellow, you know, his father's pride and mother's joy, and all that; but somehow I don't dote on him: I don't regard him as the apple of my eye,—not much: so, when he came to say this loud enough for the whole room to hear, I walked up to him, and I looked the beggar square in the eye. Says I, 'Mr. Cooke, I happen to have the honor of the acquaintance of that young lady; and I'll trouble you not to speak in that way of her, in my hearing, or out of it.'"

"What did he say to that?" said Rovingston.

"You ought to have seen him, by Jove! Turned the color of a pint of milkman's milk; and then he began to stutter out that 'he did not mean any thing by it.' 'Never mind whether you mean it, or not,' said I; 'all I have to say is just this: I've got a fine collection of bell-handles and door-knockers at home; and if I hear you say any thing more about that young lady, or any of her family,—yes, or hear, by Jove, that anybody else has heard you,—I'll wrench off that precious ugly nose of yours, and put it in my cabinet. I've got an iron knocker there that will just match it.' And so I would, by Jove," said little Mr. Lush, growing very hot at the recollection of the scene, "and so I would, just as quick as winkin'. If I wouldn't, bust me."

Rovingston held out his hand. "Mr. Lush," said he, "I am greatly obliged to you for defending my friends,—greatly obliged. I only wish you *had* pulled that little snob's nose."

"I begin to wish I had," said Lush, shaking the hand held out to him. "I'll go right back and do it now, if you think I'd better."

"No, no! It's very well as it stands. There is talk enough about the Houldworths in the club already."

"That's true," said Mr. Lush. "I haven't been so mad since Cornwallis surrendered," he continued, going back, "I know not why, a long way into history for a date to rest on. 'It was such a thing, you know, as no man ought to say of a lady; and to have this little beggar pitching into the poor girl, because her father happens to be dead, and her family generally come to grief, why, you know, I couldn't stand that. There is a point beyond which—you know.'"

"Come in and have a bit of supper, if you haven't been to supper already," said Rovingston.

"Thank you," said Mr. Lush: "on the whole, I don't mind if I do. I think I could pick a bit; and the city is so wretchedly dull, there's nothing left to do, but eat and sleep."

Mr. Rovingston, who had never before been able to endure the little man's slang, now ushered him into the club, in the character of his host. They had a very nice little supper; and Mr. Rovingston indulged Mr. Lush's weakness for what Dick Swiveller used to call "the rosy," up to the very verge of prudence. They talked about Jack's affairs until quite late at night.

CHAPTER XI.

IN WHICH SEVERAL EFFORTS ARE MADE WITHOUT MUCH RESULT.

It is an established principle of the modern school of medicine, I believe, that the tendency of all acute diseases, if left to themselves, is towards a cure. What is true of the body is true also of the mind. The most violent grief may rack the spirit, and almost crush it for a little while; but in time the wound closes and heals, and the patient recovers, although he may long bear the hideous scar. The family of whose fortunes this story treats found but little comfort for a period; and their sorrow was heightened by the change of scene made necessary by their pecuniary reverses, and which continually brought to mind the loss of their natural protector. But the healing hand of time brought relief; and they became reconciled, although very slowly. I have made no allusion to the consolations of religion in the progress of the last chapters; for such subjects are not to be touched lightly. It is enough to say, that they had their weight in bringing about that calm

resignation which succeeds all poignant anguish.

There is not room to show the lights and shades of this gradual recovery. Fanny Houldworthy was the first to regain something of her old buoyancy of spirits. Not that she felt her father's loss any less deeply; but her bright, elastic nature more quickly threw off the load that oppressed it. Yet she very often reproached herself with bitter tears, after moments of pleasure, as if she had no right to laugh after the bereavement which the family had suffered.

Mrs. Houldworthy was not quite happy in the circle amongst which she found herself thrown at table; and she would have been much more uncomfortable if she had not felt herself to be immeasurably above everybody there, and so taken to patronizing them. To Fanny, the follies and peculiarities of their new acquaintances were a constant source of amusement, when she came to take pleasure in any thing; and although she was sometimes guilty of satirizing them behind their backs, with the design of cheering her mother, she always managed to find some real or imaginary good qualities, which should balance their shortcomings. Mrs. Houldworthy regarded poor Mr. Tinkham, who sat at the foot of the table, and carved, simply as a stupid, fat man; and it was a very impressive sight indeed, to see the air with which she accepted a piece of mutton, or a bit of the breast of a fowl. Fanny, on the other hand, looked upon their landlady's relative as a good-natured, amusing, slow old fellow, who always remembered exactly the piece of chicken she liked, and never failed to send it to her. Miss Houldworthy never spared Mr. Hobbs, however, in the conversations of the family circle. That young gentleman, who had impaired his mind by reading too many novels, had fallen violently in love with the young lady; and, although his affection had so far only shown itself in such attentions as the offering of the pickles or the butter when they were out of her reach, I think she intuitively divined his mute admiration. It is possible for the possessor of a sympathetic nature even to pass the pickles in such a way as to convey the sentiments of a palpitating heart. Miss Houldworthy made fun of her admirer behind his back; it was very wrong, doubtless, but I think the case was not without precedent. Mr. Hobbs, meantime, spent a much greater propor-

tion of his income than ever before in stunning neckties, and flowers for his buttonhole, and persisted, every day at dinner, in asking Miss Houldworthy whether she had been out that morning.

Mr. Cartright also, on the other side of the table, rather improved upon acquaintance. The sight of the young ladies reminded him of some pretty sisters whom he had left in his country home; and his bearish nature softened a little. But Mr. Cartright was not under any circumstances a brilliant young man; and he never took a leading part in the conversation. In private, he used to make jokes at Mr. Hobbs about his progress in Miss Houldworthy's affections, in the most brutal and unfeeling manner; and that much-enduring young gentleman's only reply was, "Oh! come, really now!" and then he would retire, blushing like a boiled lobster. Of course Jack Houldworthy knew nothing of this playfulness of Mr. Cartright, or this hidden passion of Mr. Hobbs; and it was fortunate for them that he did not make the discovery. In his present frame of mind, he was not to be trifled with; and he would have punched either of their heads with the greatest promptness and satisfaction, upon the slightest intimation of what was going on. In fact, I think he would not only have enjoyed such exercise, but he would have been greatly aroused and benefited by it.

The whole family hated the churlish Mr. Witherington very cordially; and they pitied his wife, although she was such a silly little woman, they could never take very kindly to her. Miss Saltmarsh, however, proved an acceptable acquaintance; having tact, amiability, and good sense, she soon ingratiated herself into their favor. Her sister, Mrs. Seymour, they liked, but in less degree; and Mr. Felix Stout, the broker, served often to amuse them with his original views of life and its duties, although his talk about business was quite outside their comprehension. Mr. Short, who belied his name by being very tall, and was thin and restless, believed that the chief end of man was to make money. That was what he was sent into the world for; and that was at once his occupation and his amusement. The sharpest man was, according to Mr. Short, the best fellow and the most respected. If a man was rich, everybody looked up to him, and never inquired whether he had any other virtues. In the scramble for money, one had a perfect right to climb over his

neighbors' shoulders, if they chose to let him. If one could hoodwink and outwit his fellows, certainly he had a moral right to profit by it; if they were not sharp enough to see what he was at, they ought to pay the forfeit. Art and literature, Mr. Short regarded as inventions to amuse women, fools, and people who were born with silver spoons in their mouths, and so had no need to work for wealth. He read nothing but the stock list and the newspaper; he had heard of Mr. Thackeray and Mr. Dickens, of "The Pickwick Papers," and of "Vanity Fair;" but, if anybody had assured him that *Thackeray* was a novel by Mr. Dickens, he would not have ventured to positively contradict the statement. The only pictures in which he took any interest were the vignettes of bank-notes; and the only music he cared to hear was the tattoo of the auctioneer's hammer at the Stock Exchange. He had but one weakness,—a fondness for horses. He knew the points of a fast trotter, and liked to drive one; but this was an expensive taste, which, in his opinion, he was not rich enough to gratify. He premised himself that by and by, if luck favored him, and Central Park was ever finished, he would own a spanking team, and raise a very pretty dust behind him, of a pleasant afternoon. Mr. Short probably inherited this taste, for his father had been a horse-dealer and inn-keeper in the western part of the State. Mr. Short had left the paternal roof at a very early age, and had already made considerable money, and had acquired the air which characterizes, as one may say, the business man of the world. There are many people who appear to live according to Mr. Short's theories about the value of money and the way to acquire it, but only a few who proclaim it openly and as a matter of course. Mr. Short had, as Charley Lush would have expressed it, "fixed his eagle eye" upon Miss Warner. He was mortal, although he was a broker; and Miss Warner sat nearly opposite him at table. She contrasted very favorably indeed with the young lady who had last occupied that position, and had a quiet, sensible manner, which struck the practical Mr. Short. Moreover, he had heard in some way that she had a snug little property in her own right.

Jack was the most melancholy of the family, as he certainly had reason to be. He had to bear the grief and mortification of the summary breaking-off of his

engagement with Miss Harley, in addition to all the rest; but what weighed him down most of all at this time was his sense of his responsibility and his helplessness. The head of the family, and now their only stay, he found himself now and then almost frantic with anxiety and chagrin at his enforced idleness. He had early decided to give up his profession as a first step toward some profitable employment; and when Mr. Rovingston, at the quiet dinner at Polichon's, began to attempt to dissuade him from such a sacrifice, he was met and silenced by the information that Jack had already given up his office, discharged his office-boy, and taken down his sign. "But what do you expect to do then?" Mr. Rovingston had asked. The answer to this did not come so readily; but Jack professed his willingness to do any thing, and take any place he could get, no matter what was the work, or what the salary. "Only let me make a beginning," said Jack, "and you will see what comes of it."

Mr. Rovingston could promise nothing; but he knew a good many people, and he would see what he could do. If it were only a commission in the army, he might manage it,—although of course that was out of the question. He had a cousin who had the misfortune to be a politician, Mr. Rovingston said, and who was under obligations to him, and he had no doubt would get him any thing in reason he wanted. But, in the present state of business, places were not so plenty, since all the merchants were cutting down their expenses, and discharging all their superfluous employees. He would do all he could for Jack, of course; but he feared very much that it would be some little time before a situation was offered which suited him. Then Jack reiterated that he would take any situation, whether it suited him or not.

Rovingston was led by accident to first consult Charley Lush about the matter. It may be said here that he had not thought it well to pain Jack by any allusion to the affair between Lush and Cooke at the club. Mr. Lush was not filled to the brim with practical ideas; and being the son of a physician, and himself a medical student who never went to lectures, he could give no help, and could offer no suggestions, Rovingston applied to other of Jack's personal friends, with no better success. Many of them were sons of professional

men, who pronounced Jack's notions rather wild and absurd. Others were gentlemen, who, by reason of their own or their families' wealth, were enabled to live in idleness, and prided themselves on it. Those who had business connections in any way could do nothing; and one or two had been driven to the wall, and were nearly as badly off in pecuniary matters as Jack himself. Rovingston at the same time was stirring about amongst his own friends, but he met with no more success.

In the mean time, Jack himself had not been inactive. A considerable portion of his time was at first taken up by his duties as one of his father's executors: but, as soon as he got leisure in business hours, he began to call on the gentlemen whose names he had got down in a list of his father's friends and business acquaintances, whom he thought might be able and willing to serve him. But it is at times like these that a man's friends generally fail him. Many of them were well enough disposed towards the young man, but they had financial troubles of their own, which demanded their attention; so they gave him a little sympathy, which was very well in its way, but would not rattle in his pockets. Old Soapstone, President of the Bank of Mutual Admiration, assumed a patronizing and paternal air, which annoyed Jack very much. Mr. Soapstone informed him that it was quite impossible to think of getting into any business at present, and advised him either to stick to his profession, or enlist. Jack did not trust himself to enter into any argument, or reply at any length, but got out of the bank as quickly as he could.

He succeeded no better with old Bluffum, President of the Spread Eagle Insurance Company. Jack saw from the first that Bluffum had no intention of doing any thing for him; yet the old fellow, who seemed to have just finished his lunch, from his use of his tooth-pick, kept him there, asking all sorts of impertinent questions about the state of his father's affairs. Jack answered one or two straightforwardly, until he saw the old fellow's drift; and after that the information elicited from him was not of great importance. When Mr. Bluffum came to sum up the result of the interview, all he could make out was, that Houldworthy & Company had made a very bad failure, and that there was nothing left for the family, — and this

he knew before. When Jack took his leave, Mr. Bluffum said that, "If at any time he could serve Mr. Houldworthy or any of his family, of course he would do so with pleasure; but just now," &c. It was almost precisely what Mr. Soapstone had said; and Jack understood very well that their promises meant nothing. If they could have got him a place without putting themselves to any trouble, they would probably have done so; although Soapstone reflected that it would be rather dangerous to be on too familiar terms with an impoverished family, who might presently come to him, asking for loans. It was not the way of either of the two old fellows to put themselves to inconvenience for anybody from whom nothing was to be gained; and, besides, Jack's manner was not in the least conciliating. Perhaps he was over-sensitive in looking out for affronts to his pride.

All these rebuffs, a few of which would have been enough to dishearten many men, only made Jack more obstinately determined to persevere. He chafed because he could only call upon these people in business hours, and so must needs lose a good part of the day; and, in one or two cases where he thought his father's degree of intimacy with the persons warranted it, he called upon them in the evening. One or two of his father's old acquaintances were disposed to offer him a place as under-book-keeper, until they saw his handwriting, which was legible indeed, but very large, coarse, and awkward, and not at all suited for a merchant's account-books. Jack set himself to work one evening to compose an advertisement, and spent three or four hours over it in order to get the most meaning into the fewest words. It finally came to be a wonder for its terseness, and Jack kept a copy of it for many years afterwards. This advertisement he inserted in one or two papers; but nothing came of it, except two or three letters, which, on being traced to their source, were found to come from certain of those sharpers who live by cheating poor and simple persons in search of employment. It is probable that New York has never experienced such a period of utter prostration of business, since it became a city.

The Houldworthys very naturally gave up all society. They disappeared out of the little world in which they had lived, leaving few traces behind them. Rovingston was presently admitted into

the family circle, partly by design on his part, and partly by accident. He had stood by Jack so manfully, that none of them could make any objections; and even Fanny was forced by her brother on one occasion, to admit that his friend had some good points, and was not altogether conceited and selfish.

Their rector, the Rev. Robert Puffington, D.D., who was noted especially for the very skilful manner in which he christened the younglings of his flock, came to see them two or three times, as in duty bound; but he, who was so graceful at the font, was strangely awkward at these visits. He brought a few books and Mrs. Puffington's compliments. Mrs. Puffington was greatly occupied with her mission-school, but she would presently give herself the pleasure of calling upon them. Probably her mission-school took up all her time, for she never came; and, as the Houldworthys presently left Dr. Puffington's church, his visits ceased also. The reason for their change, however, had no especial reference to Dr. Puffington's social talents, or his power of offering consolation in time of affliction. His church was found to be too far off; and possibly some of the associations connected might not have been quite pleasant. They met too many people there whom they had known in the time of their prosperity, and who now, as they sensitively feared, would look down on them. The distance of the church, however, was the only reason they acknowledged to each other. "Why not hire a carriage?" said Mrs. Houldworthy. "You forget, mamma," said Fanny, "a carriage would cost money." "No, I do not forget, my child," replied Mrs. Houldworthy. "I do not need to be reminded of our misfortunes, which Heaven knows are constantly before me; but I suppose we are not paupers." Mrs. Houldworthy here shed tears, as she usually did after conversations into which questions of expenditure were in any way brought. She knew what poverty meant in the abstract; but her notions of economy were very crude indeed. Miss Warner would have been very glad to pay for the carriage out of her own purse; but the pride of the family was at this time so sensitive that she felt afraid to advance any such proposition. The result was that they went to a certain small church nearer their present home.

Mr. Rovingston was left almost the

only friend of the family. He at first made himself agreeable out of sympathy with and pity for their misfortunes. Then he got interested in them, and found the task of entertaining them during his calls rather pleasant.

CHAPTER XII.

WHICH SHOWS HOW JACK CONTINUED TO PERSEVERE, AND WHAT CAME OF IT.

WHEN Jack had exhausted the list of his father's friends, which he had made out from his own memory with some help from his mother, he went to the ledgers of Houldworthy & Company, to which he had access, and collected more names of those whom he thought might be disposed to aid him. With every refusal, Jack grew more stubborn, though it was hard, galling work, — so disagreeable that, when the second list was exhausted without any result, he waited three days before he could bring his pride down to the point of undertaking the next step which suggested itself. This was to call on people who were utter strangers, and ask for work, without telling them his circumstances, unless occasion seemed to demand it. I think, when Jack's early life and training are considered, it was rather brave in him to finally determine to make applications of this kind. The family were not at present straitened for money, for certain sums had come in in various ways, and in all were enough for their present necessities; but the insurance on Mr. Houldworthy's life, which was their main dependence, had not yet been paid. What if the company should fail? Jack thought. In those days nothing was to be trusted, and nobody knew what calamity would happen next.

So, one morning, he set off on this expedition rather early, and without confiding his plans to any of the family. His mother, he knew very well, would object vehemently. She had opposed from the first his idea of giving up his profession. She could not be brought to see that there was any need of it; and she would not listen to Jack's explanation, when he told her that, even if there were no imperative necessity for him to earn money, he had long been disgusted with the law, and before his father's death had seriously entertained the idea of giving it up. His dear father would never have consented to such a thing, Mrs. Hould-

worthy said, and then went off into a flood of tears. Jack was a good deal troubled by her opposition, but he felt that he was right; and, after consulting with Amy Warner, he carried out his plan.

There had been rain for a day or two; but it was a bright, sunshiny morning when Jack started out, bent on his disagreeable duty; and even the cobblestones had clean faces for once. Nature put on her nattiest morning dress in the little parks, as a belle at Saratoga makes her breakfast toilet, cramped up in the small chamber of her crowded hotel. Dapper young merchants in new garments and clean linen bent their jaunty steps down town. Shopkeepers hung out their latest patterns, and paraded their gayest colored goods, behind the plate glass of their windows. The old city put on its blithest smile, and made as if it had never seemed haggard, dissipated, and careworn. The weather has its influence on most persons; and Jack could not help feeling a little enlivened by the cheery aspect which greeted him out of doors. He succeeded in forgetting for a little time his misfortunes, as he walked down Broadway, stopping now and then to look into the print-shops, or to examine some unusually attractive window. It was still early; and the day, he thought, would seem long enough before it was over. He had very little confidence of his success, and he dreaded the work before him; but, whenever he thought of it, he set his teeth together, and said to himself, "I will go through with it." For it is to be remarked that young Houldworthy had a very square-set mouth; and the lines about it had not been much weakened by the careless life he had led.

He bent his steps to a street in a neighborhood which contained a considerable number of manufactories. He had a vague notion that, if he could get a foothold in one of them, his taste for mechanical appliances would help him on. At the first place at which he called, an old gentleman, reading the newspaper, looked at him over the tops of his gold-rimmed spectacles, and gave him a civil but decided negative. At the second place, one of the partners, to whom he was directed, looked at him curiously, and asked him one or two questions out of curiosity, as it seemed; for he, too, answered that they could not do any thing for him. At the third place, a flippant salesman was about to answer him impertinently, but caught

his eye, and concluded it were wiser to be civil. At the fourth place, he received a very quick and rather cross negative.

Jack paused on the threshold here, as he was going out. It was what he had expected, but still it was a bit disheartening; so many rebuffs in ten minutes took his breath away. While he stood there, a man, poorly dressed, with patches on both his coat and trousers, came down the street leading a little girl, and entered the counting-room behind Jack. In another moment he re-appeared again; and stood, like Jack, irresolute at the door.

"Come, father," said the child, pulling at his hand. She was yet too small to speak quite plain.

"Be still, Mary," said the father sharply. Then he disengaged his hand from her grasp, and, lifting his hat with it, passed his other hand wearily over his forehead as if uncertain where to turn next.

The child put her disengaged fingers immediately into her mouth, and stood looking curiously at Jack and his watch-chain. She had deep blue eyes and a pretty little timid face, which struck Jack's fancy, although it must be said that he was no fonder of children than most men of his age.

"Are you looking for work too?" said Jack to the man kindly.

"Sir?" said the other not comprehending him, at first, in his abstraction. Then he added, "Oh! yes, sir, I am. It seems mighty hard too, don't it, when a man's willing to work, that he can't get any thing to do?"

"It does indeed," said Jack, sorrowfully, "it does indeed."

"I've been out of work these five weeks," said the man, "and I've been walking up and down everywhere, trying to get a job, if 'twas ever so little; and it's the same old story over again, everywhere I go: 'Hain't got nothin' for you. Don't come round here botherin' us.' I'm — I'm gettin' heart-sick of it, and that's a fact." His voice trembled just a little as he said this.

"Well, well," said Jack, "you must not give up. Keep up your pluck. I try to."

"You?" said the man, looking at him closely for the first time.

"Yes; I am as badly off as you are."

"I doubt it," said the man. "Have you got two children looking up to you for bread and butter, and you nothing to give 'em? Have you pawned all your clothes except the rags on your back, —

and half your tools to boot? I guess not. You don't look as though you had."

"I have got a mother and sister to support, and I don't know any trade," said Jack. "I was not brought up to work, and I own nothing in the world but a pair of hands. Just now, it seems, I might as well be without them."

"H'm," said the man, doubtfully. It is not easy to convince ill-clad persons that those who are well dressed can have any griefs; but the man had no spirit for a controversy.

"What's your trade?" asked Jack.

"Well, I'm a machinist by trade. I was workin' at that last, but I can turn my hand to most any thing."

"And you lost your place?"

"Yes, they failed, and had to shet up shop. There was thirty of us, all told, discharged at one slap, one Saturday night. Some few have got places, but most of 'em hasn't. I don't know what we unlucky ones' goin' to do, unless we beg. I don't know but it'll come to that in the end." He went off sorrowfully towards the child, who was now watching some dirty children playing in the gutter.

"Well, good luck to you," said Jack.

"Thank you," said the man. "The same to you." And he walked down the street slowly, leading the child.

Jack went off in the other direction. "Well," he said to himself, "it's true, I am not the only one in trouble. But it does seem hard for all that; it does seem hard, — it does seem hard!"

He walked a block or two struggling with the thought of his fortunes. At a corner of the street, he was tempted by the sign of a common gin-shop. "I'll go out to Broadway, to a decent place," he said, "and get a glass of brandy. It will stiffen me up, and Heaven knows I need something to lean on."

Two seedy blackguards, smoking rank cigars, came out of the little green door of the liquor-shop, supporting between them the half-helpless form of a ragged old man, who smiled at Jack with the idiotic leer of drunkenness. The two fellows led the poor old wretch down the street, exhorting him with many blasphemies to keep on his legs.

The sight sickened Jack. In his excited state, it seemed to him at the moment a providential warning. He thought of his sister and mother and Amy, and imagined himself in the condition of the wretched old sot who had passed him. He shuddered at the tempta-

tion offered him, as he saw at a glance the effects of yielding. "No," said he, "God helping me, I will not drink to raise my courage. Come what may, I will meet my luck with a clear head. It is only a coward who needs to be spurred up to his work by stimulants. Be a man, old fellow. Be a man!"

It was very easy to say "Be a man;" but Jack had to take quite a long walk, before he could shake himself well together, and start again on his errand. The wounds his pride had received, his vexation at his ill success, and his growing conviction that his exertions would after all be fruitless, put him into a very wretched frame of mind. It was not only the humiliation, as he considered it, but the reflection that he was humbling himself to no purpose, which enraged him. The most turbid waters will settle in time, however; and Jack presently became calm enough to set off again upon his round. But it was all to very little purpose. One or two merchants went to the length of taking his address; but their manner was such as to give no hope that any thing would come of it. Towards the dinner hour, Jack broke in upon the family circle pale, dusty, and tired, and not in the least like the carefully dressed young man of fashion they used to know. Then these women — blessings on them and all other good women! — fell to work and petted him and cheered him, bathed his aching head in cologne, and made him up a little couch on the lounge; brought him up a cup of tea from the dinner-table, and went about on their toes all the evening, as silent as cats.

A good night's sleep brought Jack around all right again; but he decided that it would be of no use to pursue his efforts in the same direction, until there should be a change in the situation, and business should improve. It was not so much the series of refusals he had met that decided him, as the number of people like himself seeking for work, which showed him there was really no chance for those in want of a place, and that even those who really held situations were by no means sure to keep them.

It was in these days that Jack's spirits were at the lowest. It is the blessing of good hard work, that it turns the mind away from its troubles; but this solace was denied him, and he had very little to do but brood over his misfortunes. He tried to divert himself with his tools; but his thoughts were far away, and his hands were awkward. He

spent some time every day in the neighboring library; but the words of the printed page would somehow run together and group themselves till they formed the outline of well-known faces now lost to him forever; and he was almost at the point of throwing the book at the head of the assistant, and rushing madly from the room. His sister and Amy offered consolation, but it was of very little use. There was nothing to do but let the fit of despondency wear itself away.

Jack took a walk every day for "a constitutional;" but he shunned Broadway and the crowded streets, where he would be likely to meet his old acquaintances. He dreaded being cut by them, but I think he did most of them injustice. Jack had still the manners and dress of a gentleman; and although the Twiddlers might have shrunk fastidiously from torn trousers, or a coat out at the elbows, they would not have refused a friendly nod or word to a good-looking fellow, merely because he happened to have been suddenly thrown into poverty. If it came to marrying their daughters or sisters to such a person, that, to be sure, would have been another question.

All this time, Jack looked through the column of wants in the daily papers regularly every morning. Nothing had offered, which at all suited him; for he understood nothing of gardening, and was not yet quite prepared to take a situation as coachman, although, if such a place had been absolutely tendered to him, he might in his desperation have accepted it. One morning the following advertisement met his eye:—

WANTED IMMEDIATELY, an active, reliable young man, quick at figures. Address Box 1073.

Jack was inspired with new hope at sight of this. There seemed something honest in the terseness with which the advertisement was expressed; and, besides, nothing was said about the handwriting of the applicant. He went up to his room at once, and wrote out an answer in as straightforward and business-like a manner as he could command; stating that he was greatly in need of work, and was willing to do any thing required of him, and giving his full name and address. "This letter he took down town, and posted with his own hand; walking very rapidly, lest his application should be too late. Then he attempted to fortify himself against a probable disappointment, and so became very down-hearted, and walked for an hour or two in the old part of the city,

feeling very lonely and unhappy. Finally, having nothing better to do, he went home; and, finding Amy Warner there, he confided to her his new plan, as he had done many others before. Talking about his prospects relieved his mind; he plucked up new courage, and for once had some appetite for his dinner.

On going to the store of Houldworthy & Company next day,—the surviving members of that unfortunate firm were still engaged in closing up their business,—Jack was surprised and delighted to find an answer to his letter, requesting an interview. The card of the house, Messrs. C. Smith and Company, dealers in drugs, was enclosed. Jack armed himself with two or three letters of recommendation, and pushed off in such a prodigious hurry that on the way he accidentally knocked a small errand-boy down into a lager-beer cellar at such a moment as to crush and completely spoil the best hat of a young German who was just leaving the place. If this Teutonic gentleman had had the taste for abstract discussions peculiar to some of his countrymen, he would have found great pleasure in attempting to trace the relation between cause and effect, in the accident which had befallen him; although he would have arrived no nearer the truth than most philosophers, because Jack, finding no great harm had been done, had disappeared long before the German had discovered what it was that had brought him so abruptly to a stop. But it was a Monday, and the German had not yet got over his potations of the day before; and so he made this incident an excuse to go back into the cellar, and drink beer all day, with everybody who came in and would listen to his story.

Mr. Ctesiphon Smith, into whose presence Jack, a little out of breath, was presently ushered, was a short but compactly built gentleman, with a bald head, and a keen gray eye with a pleasant twinkle in it. He spoke very quickly; the few questions he asked Jack were to the point, and the interview lasted only a few minutes. He knew the late Mr. Houldworthy by reputation, he said; and he should be very glad of an opportunity to oblige his son, although he had no lucrative situation to offer him at present. Business had been dull, but they had just obtained unexpectedly a large contract from the government to supply army medicine-chests; and it was necessary to increase their working force at once in several of their departments. They had

filled all the places except one; if Mr. Houldworthy was really in earnest in saying that he was willing and anxious to do any work, no matter what, he might try that. Perhaps it might lead to something better. At all events, if Mr. Houldworthy knew nothing of business, did not understand book-keeping, and could not write a good hand, he would find it no easy matter to get a place which would exactly suit him. It would be a position of some little responsibility too, although, as times went, they could not afford to pay a high salary. They had great confidence in the strength of the government, and no great doubt that they would ultimately get their money; still they might have to wait a long time for it; and, besides, labor was very cheap just then, there were so many out of employment. Mr. Houldworthy's post was to be in one of the rooms in the basement,—well, not to put too fine a point on it, it was the cellar; but it was well lighted and dry. They had three or four young fellows there, who understood the business, and would do the most laborious part of the work; but they needed some older man to keep them steady, look after them a little, and keep a record of what went in or out. It might not suit Mr. Houldworthy's notions of what he should like; but he might try it if he chose. If not, Mr. Smith said, pointing to a large package of letters, there were other applicants.

Jack accepted the offer on the instant, without once asking what his salary was to be, so eager was he to get to work. He took a fancy to Mr. Ctesiphon Smith at first sight; Mr. Smith treated him as if he was a gentleman, and not a beggar; and Jack's experience with men of business during the past few weeks had not been altogether pleasant. He was undoubtedly too sensitive at this period of his life. Mr. Smith named the weekly sum which was to be paid Jack for his services; and although it seemed very low then, and would at present prices appear absurdly insufficient for the maintenance of an able-bodied young man, yet Jack assented without a murmur. Then he agreed to come the next morning, and begin his duties; and so, the bargain having been concluded, he went away.

"I suppose most men would say I was doing a foolish thing to take on a young fellow with such a training as he has had," said Mr. Ctesiphon Smith to himself, as he was left alone in his little room, after Jack had closed the door behind him.

"I like his looks though. I think he means business, if I'm any judge of men. He comes of good stock too; and, besides, there must be something in the fellow, or he would never have thrown up his profession, and gone to work in this way. Well, well! Mr. Baker [this to the head bookkeeper], I'll sign those checks, now, if you will bring them to me; and I'll trouble you at the same time to let me see the note-book."

Mr. Ctesiphon Smith gave no more thought to Mr. John Houldworthy that day, after he had given official notice in the proper quarters that the young man was engaged, and might be expected the next morning.

CHAPTER XIII.

IN WHICH JACK MEETS SOME OLD ACQUAINTANCES.

JACK went home at once, and communicated his new prospects to the family, not, however, without some misgivings as to how the intelligence would be received. The two girls entered into his plans very heartily, although it must be confessed Fanny was not nearly so much elated as she pretended to be. The idea of her elegant brother, whom she secretly admired very much, immersed to the chin in drugs and chemicals, was not in reality pleasing to her. She thought him fitted for a career much more brilliant, and she mourned in secret the cruel fate which had driven him into such a position. Mrs. Houldworthy burst into tears on hearing the news; and it was at least half an hour before she could be brought, by the united aid of *sal volatile* and her children, to listen to any thing like reason. It was only by a long and ingenious argument that she could in any degree be brought to see that there was any difference between an employee in a wholesale drug-store, and an apothecary's errand-boy. At one moment she beheld, in imagination, her beloved son in a blue checked apron, grinding up pills in a porcelain mortar; and the next she saw him with a small basket full of neatly labelled bottles under his arm, calling at the aristocratic area-doors of the houses where the family used to visit in the days of their prosperity. Mrs. Houldworthy was entirely oblivious to the fact that her grandfather, in his younger days, used to stand all day holding up horses' hoofs between his knees, and nailing on their

shoes. It was a very long time ago, to be sure, that he had been a journeyman blacksmith; and I have observed that the memory of ancestors who in their day wore powdered wigs, and owned china punch-bowls, is held much more tenaciously than that of those who used only their own hair, and left nothing more valuable than pewter mugs to their descendants. But Jack had agreed to begin his new work to-morrow, so there was no help for it; and Mrs. Houldworthy was presently persuaded to go down to dinner, where she became even more patronizing than usual; and her blandness in accepting Mr. Tinkham's offer of roast beef was positively overpowering.

Amv Warner, looking beyond the present, saw in this new step of Jack's the turning-point in his character, and augured from it the happiest results. A few words from her took out the sting of his mother's ill-advised remarks. "Bless that girl!" said Jack. "She understands me, if nobody else does."

Jack took occasion that evening, also, to inform his friend Rovington of his plans; and, although that gentleman's high-toned prejudices were really a good deal shocked at the idea of Jack's accepting such a subordinate position, yet he was too well bred to show any surprise, and had nothing for him but words of encouragement. That night, after Jack had gone, Fred Rovington reasoned it all out over his last cigar. "It's a pity," he thought. "Jack is not a brilliant man, to be sure, but he's clever enough in some respects; and I do hate confoundedly to see him drudging away his life in a cellar,—for that is what it amounts to, after all. Well, I suppose he must do something,—at least he says he must,—and I'm sure I don't see what there is left for him. It is a plucky thing though, by Jove, for a man that has been brought up as he has; I don't know whether I could do it. Yes, I suppose I could if I had a mother and sister leaning on me, and it came to the pinch. I wonder what they would say at the club. I wonder what Mistress Blanche Harley would say. Any way, Jack's a good fellow,—he's a good fellow right through; and, by Jove, I'll stand by him, come what will." At this point the smoke appeared to get into Mr. Rovington's eyes, for he wiped them with his pocket-handkerchief. Presently he threw away the stump of his cigar, and went thoughtfully to bed.

Jack arose early the next morning,

having slept but little during the night. He was so impatient that he started off before breakfast; for he had neglected to ask what time he was expected to begin work, and he was very anxious to avoid any appearance of unpunctuality at the start. He got a cup of coffee at a restaurant on the way down, and made his appearance at the warehouse of C. Smith & Co., before Mr. Chipman, who superintended the receipt and delivery of the goods, had arrived.

When Mr. Chipman did come in sight, he turned out to be a little man with short, bristling red hair, and red eyes, and a general wiry appearance which suggested a Scotch terrier. Mr. Chipman also bustled about in the most nervous and active manner, as if he had the scent of rats, and was frantic to get at them. He had not been in the store half a minute before he found out who Jack was, and started off with him to introduce him to the scene of his labors. On the way to the basement, Mr. Chipman stopped seven times,—four times to answer questions, and three times to give orders. Jack's new quarters were not arranged on the most extravagant scale, although they might have been worse. He had a little high desk for himself in the lightest spot, which was at the rear of the store, and immediately under some windows glazed with thick glass. The available space in the room was filled with packing cases, barrels, ranges of drawers, and the like; but there were no cobwebs, no dust, and no disorder. Mr. Chipman had a keen eye for spiders.

Jack was introduced to Mr. Pullis, who was the only one of the occupants of the room who had yet arrived, and was confided to his especial care. Mr. Pullis, commonly called Bob, was a young man with a plump little figure, and a round little smooth face, with a most innocent and childlike expression. He resembled nothing so much as an ideal cherub with his legs grown out, although his lower limbs were so short, and, so to speak, so unobtrusive, as to be hardly worth taking into account. Mr. Pullis had a mild blue eye and a gentle, harmonious voice; when he spoke of prussic acid or iodide of potassium, it was in such a melodious tone that it suggested whipped syllabub; and he was altogether such a good, simple, amiable little fellow, that a man would as soon have thought of striking a woman as doing him any injury. The cherub had on a green baize apron at

this moment, and his hands were stained black with chemicals of some sort.

Bob Pullis looked straight up into Jack's face with his round blue eyes, and held out his hand. "Don't be afraid of it," he said, as Jack cast an involuntary look at the singular-looking fingers extended to him: "it won't come off. I wish it would. I nearly took the skin off my hands last night rubbing them; but it's a fast color, and warranted to wash."

"I'm not afraid of it," said Jack, grasping the proffered hand, and giving it a hearty shake. "I'm going into these salts and acids without gloves myself; and I hope to have my own hands as black as yours before the week is over."

"Do you?" said Bob Pullis. "Well, now, I like that."

Jack was in earnest in what he said, although the old instinct of cleanliness kept him from carrying out his expressed intentions quite literally; and it is to be observed, that, although Jack never shirked using his hands in whatever way occasion seemed to demand, they were never black enough to cause him to be mistaken for a photographer. Jack's hearty manner won over young Pullis at once, however, and they were on friendly terms from the first moment. One after the other, three or four young men dropped in, went through the ceremony of an introduction to Jack, and put on their green aprons; which, indeed, seemed to be the uniform of the establishment. Then the business of the day went forward.

The young clerks went out to dine at one o'clock or at two, according to agreement, it being necessary that a certain number should remain in the store. Jack went out at one o'clock to get something to eat, but he called it lunch. As he had an hour's time, he went up Broadway; and, on turning the corner, almost the first man he met was Mr. Charles Lush. Jack, who had avoided all the club men whenever he could, through his own sensitiveness, turned, and pretended to be looking into a shop-window. Almost immediately he received a powerful slap on the shoulder, and, turning round, found himself face to face with Lush.

"Hallo, Jack," said that worthy young man: "you're not going back on a fellow, are you? Tip us your flipper, my gay young terrapin."

"Why, Charley," said Jack, "I'm glad to see you, I am indeed."

"Well, you ought to be," said Mr.

Lush, "but hang me if you looked as if you wanted to meet me though. If it had been anybody else, I should have set it down as a cut, a palpable cut; but I don't know that we have any reason to make a row with each other, have we?"

"Not to my knowledge, surely," said Jack. "What's up? How do you get on?"

"Well, things are not so cheerful, take them in a row, as they might have been. It's deucedly stupid at the club; and, as for the medical school, I've pegged out there."

"What's the matter? Any row?"

"Oh! no row," said Mr. Lush, "only the worthy president of that venerated bone-shop wrote a little note to my governor, whom he knows very well, stating as how I knew so much more about anatomy and the *materia medica* than the professors that they were jealous of me, and that they would leave unless I did. There's nothing mean about me. I told the governor I would leave, rather than make a disturbance in the bone-shop; and so I did."

"And how did the governor take it?"

"Why," said Mr. Lush, "he didn't seem to appreciate the compliment; and between you and me he has cut down my rations, as if they weren't small enough before."

"That's awkward."

"Awkward! I should say it was uncommon rough. What saith the great W. Shakespoke? How sharper than a servant's tooth it is to have an unfilial father,—or words to that effect."

"And what are you at now, Charley? and what keeps you in town this hot weather?"

"Nothing, and short rations. I can't travel on an empty pocket; and I am in the process of making up my mind to go in for civil engineering. I have been thinking about it for three weeks, and in three more I hope to settle it. There is no need of bustin' myself with haste; and, besides, a man who has just mastered law and physic needs some rest. What are you at, Jack? by the way, I heard you had pocketed your shingle."

"Yes; I've just got a place in a wholesale drug-store," said Jack, angry at himself for feeling a little embarrassed by the confession.

"No, have you though? Is it a good place? How do you like it?"

"This is the first day," replied Jack. "The place is not especially desirable, but I had to take what I could get."

"Yes, I see," said Mr. Lush. Then he suggested that talking was dry work, and invited Jack to lunch in a neighboring restaurant; but Jack knew the style of Mr. Lush's lunches was far above his own present means, and he did not care to lay himself under obligations he could not easily meet. So he excused himself as best he could; and the two separated, Mr. Lush exhorting Jack to let him know if he could ever do any thing for him.

Jack went off to a quiet place, and eat a modest lunch very moodily; reflecting meanwhile on such abstract subjects as whether Mr. Charles Lush would ever come to any good in this world, whether Mr. Ctesiphon Smith knew he was at work, or had forgotten all about him, and whether the salad he was eating was made of chicken or cold veal. Not arriving at any satisfactory conclusion on any of these points, Jack retraced his steps, still revolving these subjects in his mind, with others of equal importance. It chanced that he had to pass a telegraph-office; and, as he walked with his eyes bent on the sidewalk quite as much as was safe in a crowded thoroughfare, he suddenly espied a lace handkerchief just before him. He picked it up, and, looking round for its owner, saw a lady just getting into her carriage. Jack stepped hastily forward, and, raising his hat, called her attention to what he had found. At the sound of his voice, the lady started, and turned quickly: it was Blanche Harley! The blood rushed to Jack's face, and then he grew white as the handkerchief he held. Miss Harley, with a face no less pale than his own, took the handkerchief mechanically without looking at it, and her white lips opened as if she would speak; but Jack did not wait for her. He raised his hat again without a word, and started on at a quick pace, with his heart beating in a rapid measure. Miss Harley, who had already given the order to her coachman, passed into her carriage, and drew the curtains. The whole interview seemed to have lasted but a second, and these two were again separated.

It was the suddenness of the meeting, which had thrown them off their balance. The excitement of finding what he had so long sought for, and at last beginning work, had for the time driven all thoughts of his former mistress from his head; and Miss Harley was so rarely in town during the summer months, that she was the last person he would have thought of seeing, especially in the business part of

the city. He might have kept the handkerchief, he thought, he had nothing of hers now; and then he said to himself, grinding his teeth, that he wanted nothing of hers; he cared nothing for her, and she might drive to perdition, or to her house up town; it was all one to him. She was looking a little thin, he said in a calmer frame of mind. Could it be that the breaking-off of the engagement had affected her health? "Hardly, Jack," he said, answering his own thought: "you flatter yourself. She is heartless; she never cared for you." Then he bethought himself that the coat he had on had been worn considerably, and was not of the newest pattern, and he felt a little chagrined thereby; for this young man was not without vanity, and although he would not hesitate to declare manfully that he was poor, if there was need to say so, yet no one of us cares to hang out a sign of our impecuniosity. Especially before Blanche Harley would Jack have liked to appear at his best.

Thus musing, Jack accidentally jostled an old gentleman talking with a friend on the sidewalk. Jack apologized; and behold it was Mr. Soapstone, President of the Bank of Mutual Admiration, against whom he had stumbled. Soapstone's friend passed on; and Soapstone, hemmed in for a moment by some merchandise which porters were unloading from drays in the street, could not avoid making a few civil inquiries about Jack's affairs. Upon learning that Jack had succeeded in finding a situation, the old fellow proffered his sorrow that he had not given him a letter of recommendation to Mr. Ctesiphon Smith, whom he knew very well. Mr. Soapstone would be glad at any time to render Jack any assistance in his power, &c. It is astonishing how ready some people are with their offers, when they feel quite sure they will never be accepted. Mr. Soapstone did Jack a little service without knowing it, however; for, with this diversion, the young man perfectly recovered his equanimity before he reached the store of his employers.

Jack worked hard all day. Every thing was new to him, but he had set his teeth hard together on the way down that morning; and, when Jack set his teeth, it meant that he would surmount all obstacles which were not impossibilities. And there were no impossibilities in the way. Whatever there was to learn was easily comprehended by an ordinary intelligence, and he made great progress. The

men in the room with him evidently stood a little in awe of him. He was counted rather a swell, and, as Bob Pullis said "a peg above them;" but his straightforward manner pleased them, and the new man was voted a good, off-hand sort of fellow. Jack was very tired when the hour came to "knock off work," and he went home late to dinner; but the new scenes amongst which he had been thrown had diverted his thoughts, and shaken him out of his despondency.

The dining-table of Mrs. Vincent had by this time suffered a collapse. As the good landlady was wont to observe, one great disadvantage of keeping genteel boarders was, that in summer they all wanted to give up their rooms, and go into the country. The Witheringtons kept their rooms at a reduced price, and were rusticated in a small hamlet in New Jersey. Mr. Witherington had plenty of money, but he felt himself obliged to be saving, for some unknown reason,—he had no near relatives living, even if the thought of making his will had ever crossed him,—and he had beaten down Mrs. Vincent's price to the last farthing. Mrs. Seymour and Miss Saltmarsh were spending some time with a very aristocratic relative who had a very small country-seat on the Hudson; and they would afterwards go to a watering place. Messrs. Felix Short, Cartwright, and Hobbs, as well as the obese and taciturn Tinkham, were still kept confined in the harness of business; and these, with the Houldworthys and Mrs. Vincent, constituted the family.

Conversation languished under these changed circumstances. Mr. Tinkham's remarks were chiefly suggested by the joints placed before him to carve; he never ascended into the regions of fancy, and all the facts he knew he kept to himself. Mr. Hobbs regularly asked Miss Houldworthy whether she had been out that day; and then his contribution to the general amusement had been made. Mr. Felix Short knew nothing but the variation of stocks; and nobody cared about them very much, except the departed Mr. Witherington. Mr. Cartwright, the young man who sat opposite Mrs. Houldworthy, now appeared in a much more amiable light; and the burden of entertaining the company fell upon him, assisted by Miss Warner, who found the way to draw him out. He was an indefatigable reader of the newspapers, and knew all about the armies, the generals, and the situation of the forces. He had

a very clear way of putting the facts, and the amount of information which he diffused was really extraordinary. Mr. Cartwright was somewhat surprised himself, by his own volubility after the desert was brought on. Miss Houldworthy, meantime, being good-natured, sometimes talked with Mrs. Vincent of domestic matters about which she did not care in the least, and sometimes listened. Mrs. Houldworthy generally maintained a dignified silence, as if she considered it not worth her while to talk to these people.

Jack entered late, and apologized. Then he fell to eating with an appetite which astonished Mr. Tinkham, and talked meanwhile with a cheerfulness which surprised his family. He was encouraged by his success that day; and his hunger, stimulated by his unwonted exertions, his abstinence through the day from tobacco, and his rapid walk, had for the time driven all thoughts of Miss Harley out of his head; and he was bright and entertaining to such a degree that his fellow-boarders, who had set him down as a morose, moping, melancholy fellow, were quite astonished. The fit did not last long, however. There was ice-cream at dessert, and this in some mysterious way suggested the last party at his father's house; and so the image of Miss Harley rose before him, and he again became dumb. But in the mean time he had told all about his new position with a frankness which displeased Mrs. Houldworthy, who thought the dignity of the family compromised, and would not have taken much trouble to undeceive Mrs. Vincent and the rest, if they had fallen into the mistake of supposing that Jack had suddenly become senior partner of the oldest and wealthiest business house in town. Mr. Hobbs was overjoyed to hear Jack talking about little Bob Pullis, and the drugs he had been so suddenly thrown among; for it seemed to that modest young man that Miss Houldworthy was, by the change in her brother's position, brought much nearer to his own sphere of life, and that he might now even aspire in time to the honor of her hand. Mr. Hobbs was immediately afterwards struck by the idea that he must make himself agreeable; but unfortunately he could think of nothing to say, and so grew very hot and red in the face at his own position, and dropped his fork on Mrs. Vincent's silk dress. The most vexatious part of it was, that Mr. Hobbs had no sooner got to his room after dinner, than he thought of no

less than five remarks which he could have made to Miss Houldworthy, and which would have been at least very timely, if not absolutely clever.

There was a moment of silence, with everybody eating thoughtfully, when suddenly Mr. Felix Short broke in upon the party with the announcement that he was going out to drive the next afternoon. A friend of his, who lived in a very swell way, but who was just then at Saratoga, had a fine span of horses which needed exercise; and Mr. Short had been asked to give the quadrupeds the air which they so much needed. Mr. Short expatiated at some length upon his love for horses, and remarked that he wished they would hurry up that Central Park.

Somebody suggested that, if the horses had not been out of the stable for some time, Mr. Short might have his hands full. "Oh! confound it, no," said Mr. Short hastily, and added that he was used to horses, and that it ran in the family to know how to handle them. This was certainly true, for Mr. Short's father had been a horse-dealer, and his grandfather had followed the profession of stage-driving. When the discussion about horses was finished, the company left the table, with the exception of Mr. Hobbs and of Mrs. Vincent, who waited as in duty bound until the last. Mr. Hobbs trifled with his napkin-ring, and thoughtfully finished his ice-cream. He was thinking how nice it would be if some friend should ask him to exercise a pair of horses, or even one horse, so as to give him an excuse for asking Miss Houldworthy out to drive. Not that she would accept, he thought, but then he would like to try her. Mrs. Vincent rallied him upon his thoughtfulness; Mr. Hobbs's complexion assumed a roseate tint, and he speedily vanished from the table.

Mr. Felix Short contrived to waylay Miss Amy Warner on her way up stairs, and asked her point blank to "go to ride with him" next day. Miss Warner declined very coldly with thanks, hardly taking the trouble to make any excuse; and Mr. Short, with rather an injured air, said, "Very well, then I suppose I shall have to go alone, that's all," and walked off. Miss Warner proclaimed with considerable feeling, when she reached the parlor of the Houldworthys, that that odious Mr. Short had asked her to go to drive with him, as if the fact that he sat opposite her at table warranted him in taking such a liberty.

"Preposterous!" said Mrs. Houldworthy. "Of course, my dear, you said no, very decidedly."

"Well, I tried to certainly," said Miss Warner, tapping the floor with her little foot.

"Confound the fellow's impertinence!" cried Jack. "It seems to me he is presuming very much on a short acquaintance. It will be necessary to snub that man most decidedly."

"Yes," said Fanny, "Mr. Hobbs is much nicer. Poor young man! I know he would ask me to drive, only he doesn't dare to."

"Don't flatter yourself, puss," cried Jack.

"Why, Fanny, how can you talk so?" said her mother.

"Why, I like to remind Amy that I have an admirer, as well as she," said Fanny; and then the conversation turned to Jack's prospects, a topic in which all these good women took the deepest interest, and which they were never tired of discussing.

Jack gave them a minute description of his duties and his new surroundings; but he did not allude to his unexpected meeting with Miss Harley.

CHAPTER XIV.

IN WHICH MR. FELIX SHORT MEETS WITH A SLIGHT ACCIDENT, AND MR. JOHN HOULDWORTHY TAKES AN EARLY DINNER.

CONSIDERING that the intimacy of Mr. Felix Short the broker, with Miss Warner, had extended no further than brief and not very pointed conversations across the table at breakfast or dinner, I think that young lady perfectly justified in declining his invitation to drive. As it turned out, she had reason to congratulate herself that she did not go with him; for Mr. Short "came to grief," as Mr. Charles Lush would have expressed it. It happened in this way.

Mr. Short started off at four in the afternoon, alone, and in no very amiable frame of mind. Miss Warner had declined to go out with him; and on the top of that vexation he had lost ten thousand dollars that morning, in one lump, by a variation in a certain stock in which he had gambled largely. Nevertheless Mr. Short, sitting high on the left-hand side, after the English fashion, with a cigar in his mouth, and his hat brought down at a

knowing angle over his left eye, made quite a picture, and was envied by all the shop-boys along the road. His horses had been kept too long in the stable, and proved restive; but Mr. Short, who was a whip of no mean capacity, contrived to keep them well in hand for the most part. Coming home, however, he took occasion to drive through one of the cross streets up town; and here he encountered, all in a heap as it were, a funeral procession, a pile of building-materials extending beyond the sidewalk, and a butcher's cart containing a rather tipsy driver and his still more tipsy friend. Mr. Short's horses did not like the situation; and Mr. Short, losing his temper, gave them their head, and tried to drive through a narrow space between the butcher's cart and the pile of bricks. He could have accomplished the feat, rash as it was, and had at least an inch to spare on each side; but, just at the critical moment, the butcher's horse swerved a little towards the wall, as it seemed by the design of his driver; and Mr. Short, pulling up instantly with a great ejaculation, came to a stop, wedged in, as it were, between Scylla and Charybdis. A most violent altercation ensued between Mr. Short and the butcher and his friend, in which Mr. Short, being outnumbered, found himself getting rather the worst of it, and finally applied to the butcher an opprobrious epithet, which so roused his ire that he started up his horse with a great jerk. Off came the wheel of Mr. Short's light wagon with a crash, away went his horses at a gallop, and down came Mr. Short on the pavement in a confused and undignified mass. The butcher drove off at a gallop; the pair of horses were stopped by a courageous young Irishman, three blocks off; and Mr. Short, being gathered up by friendly hands, was found to have suffered no more serious injuries than a severe contusion over his left eye, an abraded elbow, a crushed hat, and a coat split up the back.

Mr. Short crept home crestfallen, and had one eye closed for him that night before he went to sleep. His mortification at the occurrence was extreme; and, although he could not leave his business, he had his breakfast sent up to him, and, telling the servants that he was going away, removed to a hotel, where he remained a number of days. When the eclipse had passed off his eye, and he had become able to think of the occurrence with more calmness, he returned to

the house to dinner; expecting that, as he had said nothing about the accident excepting to his business friends down town, the family would be ignorant of it. He had concocted a plausible explanation to account for the dark ring around his eye; and his chagrin and disgust may be imagined, when Miss Warner, almost before he was seated, demurely expressed her regret at his having been thrown from his carriage, and inquired whether he had fully recovered from his injuries. Mr. Short required all his politeness (which was not much) to answer her with calmness; and his indignation was so great that he could hardly drown it in the mock-turtle soup. He ascertained that the truth had come out through Mr. Hobbs, who had heard of the affair through a mutual friend down town, and had innocently enough detailed the whole circumstance at home, quite proud of having something to tell which would interest the whole table. That evening, after dinner, Mr. Hobbs received, to his great surprise, a lecture on the impropriety of "going about and telling things that did not concern him in the least," put with a terseness and vigor which would have been a model for many orators, although perhaps they might have objected somewhat to the choice of language. After that, Mr. Hobbs was very shy of speaking of Mr. Short in any connection.

It would have been more amiable in Miss Warner, perhaps, to have grieved over the misfortune which had befallen Mr. Short; but it is no otherwise certain that she rejoiced very much every day at the sight of his black eye, and watched its return to the usual color with the same interest with which an astronomer observes the signs of autumn. Jack burst into a great laugh every mention of the occurrence, and vowed that, poor as he was, he would give that butcher ten dollars if he could discover him. But even Mr. Short, notwithstanding all the trouble he took, could never find that butcher. Mr. Rovington, to whom the circumstance was communicated, evinced a strong desire to punch Mr. Short's head; and, all things considered, the unlucky broker got little sympathy, except from Mrs. Vincent; and her consolation was administered so publicly, and in such very large doses, that it had the effect of nauseating him.

Meanwhile Jack Houldworthy progressed steadily in his new business, and his attention and punctuality were soon

marked by the keen eye of Mr. Chipman, who was so active in overlooking every thing in the store, that he really seemed to be everywhere at once. Little Bob Pullis took a great fancy to Jack, who was in turn attracted to the amiable young man, and quite a friendship sprang up between the two; although Jack, being the elder, and having so much the stronger character, was apt to assume a rather patronizing tone. Bob did not mind this, and always deferred to his companion's views.

One day the conversation turned upon the best place to procure the noonday meal. The young men had just sallied forth, and the hour was about one o'clock.

"I'm tired of the sort of stuff one gets down town," said Bob Pullis; "but I can't go home to Williamsburg to dinner, of course, — that is out of the question. Sometimes I get a bowl of soup at Bache's. It's filling; but the trouble is, it don't last, and a man wants something to stand by him. Sometimes, in the season, I go down to Fulton Market, and get oysters. They are not bad, not by no means; but that is rather far off. Sometimes I go to Rough and Ragged; and sometimes, when I feel very hungry and unusually rich, I go down to Jollop's, and get a plate of English roast beef with Yorkshire pudding and an apple-dumpling. Oh, they do have the most gorgeous dumplings there! And lashins of sauce too! Let's go down there to-day: the thought of 'em makes my mouth water."

"What is Rough and Ragged?" said Jack. "I never heard of that."

"Didn't you? It's close by; but it wouldn't do for you. It isn't what you are used to, you know."

"I should like to see what it is," said Jack. "Let's go, if it is close by; and then we shall get time for a few whiffs of tobacco before we go back."

"Well, if you really want to," said Bob; "but I warn you you will need a cigar to take the taste out of your mouth afterward. I make it a rule never to go there more than twice a week. I can't stand it, you know."

The truth was, Jack was attracted by the idea of cheapness which the name suggested. From being an extravagant man, Jack had rushed to the other extreme, and he thought it possible he might discover a new way to save money. It may seem at first sight strange that a young fellow, bred to such expensive

tastes, should come so soon to look carefully after a few cents. A coward will fight when pressed into a corner, and so a spendthrift can be made economical by dire necessity. Give that spendthrift a strong will, and a powerful incentive to practise abstinence, and his reformation becomes easier. Besides, Jack was never a spendthrift. He was free with his money, because he was never stinted by his father, and because he had all his life been in the company of rich men's sons. Now that he had left the Twiddler Club, and come among Messrs. C. Smith & Co.'s young men, there was no longer any temptation in his way. I do not mean that Jack did not at first find it very hard work to be prudent, but that his new surroundings made it easier.

Without any more moralizing, behold the two young men on their way to the Pantheon. The cook-shop which bore this imposing title had a narrow but elaborate entrance, which did not appear to much advantage in the narrow street where the establishment was situated. It was frequented by young clerks and laboring men; and, when Houldworthy and Pullis entered, the tables were nearly full. A not unsavory smell pervaded the long, narrow apartment; and the clatter of knives and forks, the babble of tongues, and the vociferations of the waiters who were rushing hither and thither, made the scene noisy and bustling.

The two young men found seats opposite each other at a little table for four persons. The other two seats were occupied by an old man with cadaverous eyes, who ate silently and greedily, and by a young man whose pale and knobby face seemed to proclaim him a regular boarder at the Pantheon. A general air of untidiness pervaded the room, extending from the waiters to the tables, and from the tables to their occupants. Jack already found the effect disagreeable.

Suddenly there appeared from somewhere a tall young waiter, who gathered up the *debris* of the two guests whose places Houldworthy and Pullis had taken. The celerity with which this waiter moved accounted in part for the clatter in the room, as well as the notches nicked out of nearly every piece of crockery.

"See here," said the pale and knobby-faced young man at Jack's elbow, "I wish you'd hurry up that small beef-steak."

"Hurry up that small beefsteak!" shouted the waiter; and it was curious to

see how he could raise his voice so loud, and yet care so little about the matter.

"Well, gents," said the waiter, standing with a pile of plates on his left arm, rising, it appeared, from his hand to his shoulder, — "well, gents, I'll take your order." — "Roast beef rare," said Bob Pullis. "Roast beef well done," said Jack in imitation.

"One roast beef rare; one roast beef well done," shouted the tall young waiter, and away he bustled. The cry was taken up by a man at a large window at the back, and then repeated behind him by another man. In another minute the same cry came back through the window, along with several other orders, and presently back came the tall young waiter with his arm covered by another pile of dishes. First he slapped down on the table three little pats of butter with three plates of bread to match. Then he threw down the "small beefsteak" before the pale, knobby-faced young man, and dropped around it one or two small dishes of vegetables. Finally he flung before Houldworthy and Pullis their two plates of roast beef. Off he went again, and returned almost immediately with three tumblers which he tossed on the table; then he seized a big water-pitcher standing on a shelf near by, and adroitly managed to spill some of its contents into each of the tumblers. The next moment, they heard his voice on the other side of the room.

"Remarkably energetic young man, that," said Houldworthy, to whom this manner of serving dinner was novel, rather than pleasing.

"Yes," said Bob Pullis. "They don't stand on ceremony much at this shop. What always puzzled me was that the waiters don't break more plates."

The piece of beef in each plate was small and fat, and there was besides a little pat of mashed potato.

"Why didn't we have any vegetables?" said Jack.

"It doesn't pay here," said Pullis. "If a man has money to waste on vegetables, he'd much better go somewhere else. How's your beef?"

"Hum — well, it isn't so bad as it looks."

"That's a comfort," said Pullis. "It usually is."

Before they had fairly begun, the pale, knobby-faced young man had finished his "small beefsteak," and walked off. Jack had more room for his elbows;

and turning round a little he discovered sitting at the table behind him, and with his back towards him, the mechanic whom he had seen one day, when looking for a situation. Jack, in the intervals of clatter and his conversation with his companion, made out that this man had his brother with him, and that the brother was just about to go off on a long journey, and that the mechanic's condition was in some way bettered. Then they talked about an invention of some kind, which the mechanic had not yet completed to his satisfaction. The brother advised him not to waste much time or money on it; and the answer was, that, if it could only be brought to perfection, it would be worth a gold-mine.

"Plum, with plenty of both," said Bob Pullis to another tall young waiter, who repeated after him like an exaggerated echo, "plum, plenty of both!"

"Both what?" asked Jack.

"Both kinds of sauce," answered Pullis. "Don't you know there are two kinds of sauce? One is hard like mortar, and the other is soft like sirup. You ask for both kinds, and you get more of it. Don't you like sauce? I do."

"Oh!" said Jack. "Well, give me some plum-pudding, with both."

They had their pudding; and Jack, who was very hungry, managed to eat it, although his companion observed that he appeared not to be fond of sauce.

"Let me have your check," said Jack, referring to the little piece of pasteboard furnished to each guest with the number of cents which he was indebted to its proprietor.

"Oh, no!" said Pullis. "Every man for himself. That's the way we fellows always do when we come out together. 'Dutch treat,' you know. Besides, the amount isn't worth quarrelling about."

Jack looked at his own check; it contained the figure 12. "What's that?" he asked, turning it over and over.

"Why, twelve cents," answered Pullis.

"Twelve cents for a dinner!" cried Jack, bursting into a laugh.

"Why, yes. Beef six cents; pudding six cents. Rough and Ragged, you know. We call it ragged from the table-cloths, but they seem to have got some new ones."

"Ah, yes, I see," said Jack.

At the counter of the cashier, Jack found his acquaintance the mechanic, and nodded to him.

"Got a place yet?" said he

"Yes," said the man. "I've got a place in a coffee-roasting establishment. We make coffee out of dried peas and stuff. Got an army contract."

"Ah! lucky for you."

"Yes; it isn't the kind of work I wanted, but I was glad for the children's sake to get any thing. I'm seeing my brother off to-day. He's goin' back to California. How are you getting on, sir?"

"Oh! very well. I've got a place too, at last."

"Well, good day to you. — Come, Ben."

The two men went out, and Houldworthy and Pullis followed.

"How did you like your dinner?" said Pullis.

"To tell you the truth," answered Jack, "I didn't fancy it over much. I think it just a *little* cheaper than I like."

"It isn't nice," said Pullis with a sigh, "and that's a fact. But what is a poor fellow to do on a small salary, when he has a mother and two sisters and a small sized brother partly depending on him? He must keep soul and body together somehow, and once in a while he gets driven to Rough and Ragged. You know I warned you beforehand."

"So you did, and I am much obliged to you," said Jack. "It was an experience I wanted, and I am very glad to know where the place is. Still as I dine at home late, and only want a lunch, I do not think I should care to come here again."

"No," said Pullis sadly, "I should hardly think you would, but I suppose I shall have to; and really," he continued, brightening up, "their strawberry-shortcake at the Pantheon is great in the season. I don't think even you would turn up your nose at their strawberry-shortcake."

"Very likely not," said Jack. "Come in here, and get a cigar." Jack bought two small cigars, for which he paid thirty cents; and so the two young men walked slowly back to work smoking.

That night over his pipe, Jack suddenly burst into a laugh at the thought of this curious experience with Pullis, and the contrast between a dinner at the Pantheon and one at the Twiddler Club.

"I wonder what they would say at the club if they knew I dined for twelve cents to-day," he said to himself.

If Jack had gone down to the club that night, he might perhaps have found

out, for Mr. G. Washington Cooke happened to be passing the Pantheon just as Houldworthy and Pullis were coming out.

CHAPTER XV.

IN WHICH THERE IS A DISCUSSION.

IN those days it was Jack's frequent custom to go out walking with the ladies after dinner. Their affliction had brought the members of the little family nearer together; they became less selfish, and more tender of each other's feelings; and Jack, who at first suggested this means of getting exercise because he saw his mother and sister growing pale, and shunning the crowded streets, finally lost entirely the sensation of being bored, and came to take a pleasure in it. When Mrs. Houldworthy felt sufficiently strong to walk out, either Miss Warner or Miss Houldworthy staid at home, by a tacit understanding. They could not bear to see Jack burdened with three helpless women at one time. Jack, with the stupidity of man, was a very long time in discovering the secret of this self-sacrifice, and did not find it out until the change of season rendered walking at that hour no longer comfortable.

It happened one evening, that Miss Warner was left at home while the rest of the family were gone out. Mr. Rovingston came to see Jack, and, finding him out, sent up his name to Miss Warner. Mr. Rovingston had been a frequent visitor since the family had removed to Mrs. Vincent's, and was always welcome, because they now saw so few people, and because he brought them news of the world they used to live in.

On this occasion, Mr. Rovingston had just returned to the city from a fashionable watering-place; and he gave Miss Warner an amusing description of the follies and heartlessness, the dress and extravagance, of the gay little place where he had been sojourning. Mr. Rovingston could certainly be entertaining when he chose. In fact, he liked to be liked, and he had taken some pains to acquire the art of talking well.

Miss Warner laughed merrily at some of his descriptions, and admitted that such people as he had met were fair game for sarcasm.

"But," said she, suddenly becoming serious, "do you never get tired of all this frivolity and selfishness?"

"Very heartily. It sounds like affection, — and that I hate, — but, really, I often feel quite tired out and disgusted with the vanities of this world." Rovingston nevertheless smiled, as if he did not quite mean what he said.

"It is sad to become *blasé* so young," said Miss Warner.

"Young? thank you, if you mean it; but I am no longer such a young fellow. At least, I do not feel so. I am certainly old enough to be quite willing to be thought younger than I really am."

"And have you passed all this long life in the company of people of whom you afterwards made fun?"

"You have an unpleasant way of putting the facts, Miss Amy. I have been quite willing to take society as I found it, — to enjoy its wisdom, and laugh at its folly. There are still pleasant people in the world besides you and me, — if you will let me put it in that modest way, — but, as I say, I sometimes get heartily tired of it. I have too much time on my hands; but what is a man to do who has no useful occupation on earth?"

"Get some useful occupation immediately," said Miss Warner.

"You are very good. Perhaps you will be kind enough to suggest something."

"I beg your pardon. I was not quite serious."

"Oh, I am willing to receive your good advice. You think I am living a very idle and selfish life, and so I am. I have owned it, over and over again."

"But never reformed it," said Miss Warner smiling.

"What can I do? It was my fault at the start, I confess; but I have been idle all my life, and there is nothing left but for me to finish in the same way, even if I had the inclination to do something, — and of that I have grave doubts."

"It is never too late," said Amy.

"I think you were serious, Miss Warner, when you advised me to get some useful occupation at once."

"I admit, since you insist on it, that I do not think a life of idleness the noblest end of man."

"Yes, but see how it came about. My mother died many years ago; I scarcely remember her. I was constantly with my father, as a boy; and, when I was in college, all my vacations were spent with him. He was extravagantly fond of fishing; and many a week I have spent in the woods alone with him, except for

the guides. When I graduated, I went abroad; and before I returned he died. It was a hard blow to me, but I bore it. We can bear any thing in this world, I think. Well, I came home. The executors were old friends of the family, and they were good and sensible men. My father had been a lawyer, and a very successful one. They advised me to follow in his footsteps."

"But you preferred to mark out a path for yourself?"

"I was alone in the world, and New York no longer seemed a home to me. I loved travel, and, like many young men, was captivated by foreign ways of living. I showed my father's friends that I could live more cheaply in Europe, and that, with economy, my fortune was ample for my present maintenance. I was of age, and I had my way."

"I thought only women were wilful."

"Women only are wilful for the pleasure of opposition."

"Thank you! I beg your pardon for interrupting."

"Presently I became tired of knocking about without any special purpose, in the cities of Europe; and it seemed to me that it would be a pleasant change to come home. I returned, renewed old friendships, looked up my father's old friends, and went into society. I had studied abroad, and now and then with diligence, — although you might not believe it."

"Oh! I can readily understand that you would work steadily — at any thing you took pleasure in."

"I thank you this time. As I was saying, I had not lived in utter idleness, and was still urged to take a profession. But I saw every profession overcrowded with men younger than I, and with every incentive to activity and diligence. I hated dry technicalities; and I thought I saw only a moderate success before me, if I should settle down to work. I was alone and selfish. I had only myself to care for, and my means were sufficient. In a word, I decided that it was too late to attempt to practise either law or medicine; theology I had no taste for; and my habits were, by that time, not those of a business man, even if any opening had been offered. So I became an idler, and I have remained one. Last summer I went abroad for the third time, and there I met Jack. I took a fancy to him from the first, and he liked me as well, I think. We have been good friends ever since; and, at one time, I think he stood

as good a chance as myself to be a cumber of the earth."

"Poor Jack is going through a hard experience just now."

"Hard? Yes, but it may prove a valuable one. I sometimes think that, if I had been born a poor man, I might have accomplished something better. Oh! I have had my day-dreams, Miss Amy, like other men."

"You have not mentioned the last opportunity you have thrown by."

"And that is"—

"The war."

"Yes, but I have thought of it often."

"I beg your pardon again. My enthusiasm sometimes runs away with me."

"I don't often find one who takes such an interest in my affairs. I did think seriously of the war; but my fatal apathy stood in the way, and I did nothing. I cannot go in the ranks; and there are plenty of men, better fitted to command than I am, who lack places. I know nothing of the military art."

"But the country needs men."

"Hardly yet, I think. When I am satisfied that the country needs me, she shall have me. I have not lived long enough abroad to forget that I am an American. I hope you don't think so ill of me as that."

"If I did, I should not talk with you so frankly, you may be sure."

"I know something of what war is; and I should go into it with my eyes wide open, and not as some of these poor fellows do, who can see nothing before them but a jolly life in camp. The path of glory is very well when one sits quietly reading about it; when one comes to travel over it, it is quite another matter."

"It is terrible," said Amy absently, as she thought of the probable fate of so many poor fellows who had gone off filled with hope and enthusiasm.

"It is no child's play," said Rovingston; and then he looked curiously at his companion, whose eyes were filled with the beautiful tears of sympathy.

They sat silently for a few moments; and then there was a bustle outside, and the cheery voice of Jack was heard disputing with his sister, whom he delighted to plague. It had been for some time quite evident that Master Jack was recovering his spirits; and, as for his appetite, it was something prodigious.

Rovingston had art enough to conceal that he and Miss Warner had been talk-

ing about any thing more than commonplace subjects; and the conversation became general and very merry. Even Mrs. Houldworthy forgot for the time to be sorrowful, and contributed her part to the general enjoyment. When it grew a little late, Jack proposed to Rovingston to go up to his room and take a pipe. Rovingston protested that he disliked very much to break up such a pleasant party, but, as the hour was getting late, he would accept out of consideration for the ladies.

"What an excellent excuse tobacco is for getting rid of the ladies!" said Miss Houldworthy.

"Rather than have you think that, I will cheerfully go away pipeless," said Rovingston.

"Oh, no! go by all means," said Miss Houldworthy. "I suppose Jack really needs his pipe, poor fellow. Between our claims upon him, and his business, his time for smoking is sadly cut down."

"Which, I dare say, is better for him, if he would only acknowledge it," interposed Mrs. Houldworthy.

"Ah, now I shall certainly go, for I see, Miss Houldworthy, you are trying to get rid of me," said Rovingston.

"Oh, no! I had rather have you go away pipeless than think that," said Fanny.

The upshot of all was, that Rovingston took leave of the ladies, and accompanied his friend to his room up stairs, which was soon filled with the fragrance of the natural leaf. Perhaps it has, indeed, been before hinted, that there is too much tobacco burned in these pages; but who could help writing rather a smoky story, after he had laid the scene in the present day?

"Do you know, Jack," said Rovingston, "that it is a real pleasure to spend an evening with girls so natural in their manner, and so free from conventional absurdities, as your sister and Miss Warner? I think they were in society just long enough. They have learned to be always self-possessed, and yet are not spoiled."

"You are very kind, Fred; but I don't think any thing could spoil Amy Warner."

"Hasn't she got a wise little head, though?"

"A wonderful little head, I think," said Jack. "I find myself going to her with all my troubles."

"And she helps you out of them, I'll be bound."

"When anybody could, she does."

"She has been talking to me to-night like a young Queen of Sheba. She has given me no end of good advice, but in such a pleasant way that I couldn't be offended by it."

"Well, I hope you'll profit by it," said Jack. "By the by, do you know I met Blanche Harley one day?"

"No!"

"Yes. Came plump upon her without the faintest warning."

"In the street?"

"Yes. I think she would have spoken to me if I had only given her the chance."

"And you did not?"

"Not I. Why should I? What could we say?"

These questions seemed rather to stagger Mr. Rovingston, for he smoked on in silence without replying. Then Jack said,—

"Fred, I think I am getting over that affair a little."

"I'm precious glad of it, my dear fellow."

"Yes. I could never respect a woman who acted so heartlessly as she did; and even before the end she had vexed me almost beyond endurance by her indifference. It was very hard to break off the engagement just at that time, but I think now that I am glad it is over. I think it was the mortification that was the worst to bear, after all, although I didn't discover that at the time. One can't analyze one's feelings, you know, at a time like that. It isn't always easy to tell which tooth it is that aches."

"Well, I'm very glad you are well through it."

"Yes. I tried to persuade myself after I met her, that I was very wretched; but I went back amongst my chemicals, and behold, all at once, I found myself making a pun, a thing I have hardly done since my sophomore year."

"You had better be in love, than go to making puns," said Rovingston.

"Don't be alarmed. So long as I have plenty of work, I shall not be guilty of either indiscretion. It is work that is the great panacea for mortal ills, whether of the flesh or of the body."

"Upon my word, Jack, it is very funny to hear you enthusiastic about work,—you, who always had the reputation of being the laziest of men."

"I was lazy from education," said Jack, "and finally from your example; but I don't think I was ever lazy from

disposition. As it is now, I think—yes, on mature reflection, I absolutely think, I like work."

"Prodigious!" laughed Rovingston. "I have almost a mind to try work myself."

"Do! I'll get you a place in our store. What would you like? Something in a light porter style?"

"Thank you. No drug business for me; I don't like the smell. None of your civet for me, my good apothecary."

"Bah!" said Jack. "If you are so fastidious, I'll get you a place to sell ribbons, and tape to the ladies. I think that would just suit you, Fred."

"Oh, come, now, Jack, don't try to be funny."

"Very well, then. Don't turn up your proboscis at drugs."

The two friends talked together until near midnight, before they separated; and many things which they said were not even so much worth recording as those given above.

CHAPTER XVI.

IN WHICH JACK CROSSES THE FERRY TO WILLIAMSBURG.

"ALL quiet on the Potomac," was a standing head-line for the telegraphic despatches which the newspapers published during the winter of 1861-62; and during the same period nothing astonishing occurred at the warehouse of Messrs. C. Smith & Co. Not that there was any idleness there. On the contrary, the firm managed to secure some prodigious contracts from the government; and the quantity of quinine, alone, shipped by them would seem to have been enough to cure all the fever and ague in the Western country. Jack took kindly to the work; and, although the confinement made him a little pale, he found the time passing rapidly. There is, after all, nothing so disagreeable as the bore of being idle.

Little Bob Pullis was not very strong by nature; and he seemed rather the worse for the hard work which was put upon him, although he never shirked and never complained. Mr. Chipman, the "head man," was made of steel and wires, and regulated affairs on the supposition that everybody else was quite as tough as himself. He made it his private boast that he could get twice the work out of the young men that anybody else could,

and, indeed, twice as much as they thought themselves capable of doing. This was all very well for the interests of the employers; but some of the young men themselves were apt to complain that their salaries were not at all proportionate to the labor they performed. Jack, as well as Bob Pullis, never grumbled, however. The former had from the first determined to work his fingers to the bone, if need be; and, as for Bob Pullis, the good little fellow never complained about any thing.

Bob Pullis fell ill one day. That night, he had a headache and was feverish; and the next morning he did not appear at the store. The change in his health was brought about by a combination of circumstances, as, indeed, are most important events in the life of an humble individual, or the history of a nation. It was early in May, 1862. Bob had indulged in a rather extravagant dinner, for him, on the reception of the news of the capture of New Orleans by the Union forces; and so much luxury had disagreed with him. For purposes of economy, he had immediately after taken several cheap dinners in succession at the Pantheon, with still more pernicious results. Then, on the 1st of May, in accordance with a time-honored custom, he had moved with his family into the next street; and, as he could only spare half a day to aid in putting the household economy into the usual train, the confusion which followed was excessively annoying to one of his temperaments, because he concealed his vexation for the sake of his mother and sisters, and did not get rid of it in outbursts of ill temper, as more passionate men would have done. Add to this the hard work of the previous months, and it will be readily seen why Bob Pullis got "off his feed," as Charley Lush would have expressed it,—that is, lost his appetite,—and one morning was obliged to yield to the solicitations of his family, and remain in bed, instead of going over to his usual round of duties in the warehouse of Messrs. C. Smith & Co.

"I haven't seen Pullis this morning," said Mr. Chipman to Jack Houldworthy, on the Saturday on which Bob did not appear.

"No, sir. He is not well. His little brother has just brought me word. I was just going to tell you."

"Not well? That's very awkward, when we want every man here so much. What is the matter with him?"

"I don't believe they know. All the word brought was that he was sick. He has not been feeling well for several days."

"Oh, bother!" said Mr. Chipman. "If he had as many pains and aches as I have, he might have some excuse for staying at home."

Even steel, although it will stand a great amount of attrition and rough usage, will expand and contract with heat; and Mr. Chipman's wiry frame was at times racked by rheumatism in a very painful manner. It never kept him from his duties, however: it only made him cross.

"I don't think he would stay away without some very good reason," said Jack: "he's the most punctual man in this room by all odds. To-morrow is Sunday, and I will go over to Williamsburg, and look him up."

"You had better," said Mr. Chipman, rubbing his right arm, in which he just then felt a series of severe twinges. "And tell him, that, if he don't get about pretty soon, we shall have to fill his place. I think that will fetch him out; and, besides, we really can't stand any nonsense. Those chests must be got ready by the 20th, if every man in the store goes on the sick-list the next day."

Jack bit his lips hard. He wanted to make a sharp answer; but self-control was one of the lessons he had been learning of late, and he went on with what he was about, without replying.

The next day was Sunday; and Jack, having been to church in the morning with the family, thought he could not spend the afternoon in a better way than in going to see how Bob Pullis came on. Mr. Felix Short, whose eye had by this time emerged from its eclipse, gave him an invitation to drive; but Jack declined very decidedly, and in a way that came near being uncivil, especially since it was not by any means the first invitation of the kind that he had slighted. For Mr. Short, finding his direct approaches to Miss Warner pretty effectually barricaded, was trying to make a flank movement, and had of late taken especial pains to be agreeable to Jack, much to his disgust. Mr. Short took this last refusal in high dudgeon, and did not recover his equanimity until he had driven to the High Bridge, and had upon the way taken no less than three drinks of the national beverage. Whiskey excites some persons. It made Mr. Short more contented with himself; and his self-

conceit had been a good deal shaken by the manner in which the Houldworthys had one and all treated him. It puzzled him extremely, because it was quite outside of his experience of human nature. "If these (explosive adjective) beggars," said Mr. Short to himself, "had a cent to bless themselves with, I could understand why they should be as proud as a set of (explosive adjective) old turkey-gobblers. Those women put on as many airs as if they were John Jacob Astor's nieces; and that young chap carries his head as high as if he was old John Jacob himself, instead of being as poor as a church mouse. If that Warner girl chooses to turn up her nose at me, she can. I'll be hanged if I run after her any longer. It isn't worth the trouble. It's ten to one that she hasn't any money to speak of, after all; and it's twenty to one that it's tied up tight in some confounded way. As for her face, it's well enough; but there are other girls in the world, Mr. Felix Short, and girls who will be very glad to become Mrs. Felix Short too, and won't hesitate to say so if you are as lucky next year as you have been this."

At the High Bridge, Mr. Short found friends, and induced one of them, who had driven up with a party of four, to go home in his wagon. The pair reached home in a state of self-content and whiskey; and, although Mr. Short was very careful not to let any signs of his indulgence in the flowing bowl appear either in his speech or his manner, his friend could not help observing that he drove rather recklessly. The next morning, Mr. Short came down stairs with a headache, and just as much in love with Miss Warner as ever; his early liking for her had some time ago reached such a point as to deserve a tenderer name, although he would never acknowledge to himself that he cared for any thing but her money. Perhaps, with his instincts, he never fully realized what his motives actually were.

Jack walked blithely down to the Williamsburg ferry, with the brisk step of a man who has a clear conscience and a good digestion, the two requisites for easy locomotion, which come next in importance to a sound pair of legs. The weather was pleasant, and the boat, which was in the slip when Jack reached it, was already quite full. Jack walked through the ladies' cabin, and stood at the other end of the boat, looking out at the shipping. For an instant he did not notice a little man standing within a few

feet of him, who was dressed in what used to be called the "heavy English" style, and had thin side-whiskers, and a pinched-up, insignificant face. This man also was gazing out upon the shipping, when suddenly he looked towards Jack; and, Jack turning at the same moment, their eyes met. It was Mr. G. Washington Cooke. Mr. Cooke grew suddenly very red in the face, and turned his gaze again towards the river. Jack instantly turned his back, and walked to the other side of the boat.

Jack was calm enough, so far as any person on the boat could observe; but inwardly he was chafing with passion. To be cut by Cookey was very hard indeed. Rovingston had never told him of Cookey's incautious words about his sister, and the way in which Charley Lush had resented them; but Jack had always disliked the man, and had shunned his company, in common with many other members of the club, as far as possible. Besides, although he had always instinctively avoided the Twiddlers since he had ceased to be one of them, this was the first time he had met with rudeness from any of his acquaintances; and, in fact, many whom he was disposed to cut through his own sensitiveness had gone out of their way to say a kind word to him.

"What the mischief can bring him here?" thought Jack, apparently studying with great attention the lines of a French man-of-war anchored in the stream. "Who would have thought of finding a Twiddler on board a Williamsburg ferry-boat, and Cookey too, of all the Twiddlers! How red the little wretch looked when he saw me! How I should like to punch his head! I wonder if he can swim."

The explanation of the appearance of Mr. Cooke on his way to Williamsburg was really simple, although Jack could not guess it. That gentleman, whose thoughts at that moment were not a bit more amiable than those of young Houldworthy, owned a few houses across the river; and, according to the tenants thereof and his own agent, they needed repairs very badly. Mr. Cooke was very much averse to making this renovation, or, indeed, to undergoing expense of any kind which was not absolutely unavoidable; and so he had concluded to take the trouble of paying a personal visit to his property, in order, if possible, to bully the occupants of the houses into quiet, although they had renewed their leases

with the express understanding that all necessary repairs should be made. All days were alike to Mr. Cooke, whether he was making plans for business, or pleasure; and he had selected Sunday for this excursion, partly because it happened to suit his convenience, and partly because he expected to find his tenants, who were mechanics, at home on that day. Mr. Cooke recollected his altercation with Charley Lush; and he had other reasons for turning red at the sight of Houldworthy, about which Jack knew nothing. Mr. Cooke, strange to say, wondered, on his part, whether or not Jack could swim, and would probably have gone to the length of making an experiment in order to ascertain, if he had had sufficient confidence in his own strength, and there had been no prejudice in the popular mind against investigations of such a nature.

The perils of a voyage across the East River were not great at that season of the year; and the boat reached the other side in safety. Mr. G. Washington Cooke strode off with all the dignity which his little form could assume, looking neither to the right, nor the left; and presently he turned into a cross street, and Jack lost sight of him. In point of fact, Mr. Cooke went several blocks out of his way in order to avoid him.

Williamsburg, or to speak more properly, the eastern district of the city of Brooklyn, is laid out with regularity; and Jack had no difficulty in finding out the abode of the Pullises, although it was some distance from the ferry. It was a rule of Mr. Ctesiphon Smith, that a record of the residences of all his employees should be kept at the counting-room; and Jack had taken care to secure the necessary directions. He had lived all his life in New York, and had been in Europe; but Williamsburg had been up to this time a *terra incognita* to him. Jack's walk up from the ferry was not marked by any incident, although he looked about him with interest, like a traveller who finds himself for the first time in a foreign land. There was nothing very striking about the rows of low houses in the district which Jack was traversing; and he looked sharply for the number of the street he wanted. The number of vacant and unfenced lots increased as he went along, until presently he came upon one, whose owner must have certainly taken the first premium, had prizes been offered for pictures of

dreariness and desolation. It was a dusty, dirty, stony, wretched old vacant lot. Goats had been tethered here and there, until they had cropped short every visible blade of grass, and had finally been driven to fresh pastures. The residents of the street had used the lot for the deposit of worn-out boots and shoes, until it formed a perfect museum of dilapidated pieces of leather. Where it was not sprinkled with old boots, it was ornamented by bottles of all shapes, sizes, and kinds, from the aristocratic champagne-flask to the plebeian ale-jug, and never a whole one among them. Not that the residents of the street were given to drinking champagne, but they contrived in some way to become possessed of broken champagne-bottles; they may have kept pickles in them. And all over the field, whether there was leather or bottles uppermost, there was sure to be a substratum of rubbish,—old straw from beds, rags at which even *chiffonniers* turned up their noses, bits of crockery, pieces of broken boxes, sticks, broken bricks, bones, skeletons of defunct cats,—a conglomerate of every thing that was worn out and broken, or that never had a use. That vacant lot would have been an interesting study to the philosopher, the antiquarian, or the naturalist; but Jack had no taste for either of these pursuits. He remarked to himself, as he ran his eye over the scene, "Well, this is a lively prospect," and at once set about searching for No. 157.

The house inhabited by the Pullises proved to be opposite the vacant lot, in the centre of a long block of little houses, which all looked so exactly alike, that even those who lived in them must have been continually blundering into their neighbors' dwellings, but for the numbers on the doors. These houses had stiff, ungainly wooden shutters to the lower windows, and little Dutch "stoops" in front; and they were altogether as prim and ungraceful as a row of dowagers and maiden ladies lining the wall at an evening party; only the simile is not altogether a good one, because the whole block needed painting very badly.

Jack rang the bell at No. 157, and waited some time before it was answered. There are castes in door-bells, as well as different grades in society. The heavy, dignified-door bell of an aristocratic mansion is either so far off in the servants' quarters that its tones are not heard at all, or, if it is within hearing,

it goes off with a sullen clang, as if indignant at its comfort being disturbed. The bells of less imposing but still highly-respectable dwellings have a well-bred tinkle, which tells of hospitality and a pleasant welcome. The door-bell at No. 157 had a tone as if it was over-worked and cross. The sound seemed to come from a point only a few feet from the door, as if the bell-hanger had been short of wire; and the noise was harsh and jangling, as if the bell was exclaiming, "Blow me, if there ain't another feller a-pulling at my handle!"

Jack rang twice; and there presently appeared a little girl, who was evidently dressed in her Sunday best, and who put her finger in her mouth, and seemed otherwise embarrassed at the sight of a stranger. She replied to Jack's inquiries plainly enough, however, and told him that Mr. Robert Pullis did live there, that he was at home, and that she thought he would receive a friend. Then she invited Jack in, and held the door open for him such a very little way that, if he had weighed ten pounds more, he certainly could not have got through the space left for him. He was ushered into a little, low room in front, which from the generally uncomfortable appearance of its mahogany furniture, and its close smell, was evidently reserved by the Pullises for their visitors. Jack took up a photograph-album, and began to look over the miscellaneous collection of old, middle-aged, and young Pullises; who, in resigned attitudes expressive of their expectation of being immediately shot by a file of soldiers, and their entire readiness to meet their fate, stared determinedly at him from its pages. The walls of the Pullis mansion were very thin; and he was consequently an unwilling listener to the following dialogue going on in the next room:—

Female voice (soothingly).—There, there, there! So it was tired and sleepy, poor little sing!

Infantile voice.—Yah! yah! yah!

Female voice.—So it should turn right to its muzzer. Its heart's most broke, so it was.

Infantile voice.—Yah! yah! yah!

Female voice.—There, there, there! Its muzzer would sing to it, so she would.

Infantile voice.—Yah! yah! yah!

Female voice.—Bylobaby buntin', father's gone a-huntin'; get a little wabbit skin to wop the babibuntin' in. There, there, there!

Infantile voice.—Yah! yah! yah!

Female voice.—Shet up, you cross old thing, or I'll spank ye, and throw ye out the winder!

Infantile voice (with increasing violence).—Yah! yah! yah! yah! yah!

Female voice.—Eliza Jane, I wish you'd come and walk your little brother about a little bit. I declare my patience's wore out with him. He's done nothin' but cry this livelong day. It's his teeth, I s'pose."

Poor Eliza Jane seemed to accede to her mother's request, for the sounds of a youthful voice singing an old hymn were soon heard: the lusty cries of the infant were hushed, and comparative quiet reigned.

"Well," said Jack to himself, "this certainly would be a nice, quiet house for a single gentleman to live in. I wonder if Bob can have a brother as young as that. The young man is certainly blessed with a remarkably vigorous set of lungs, whatever may be the matter with his teeth."

The little girl who had answered the door-bell presently re-appeared, and showed Jack up stairs, following behind herself.

"He's in mother's room, right at the head of the stairs," said Jack's little guide; and thereupon Jack knocked upon the door indicated, and the little girl disappeared. At the moment his knuckles touched the panel, the door was opened from within, and there appeared a gentle, motherly-looking woman, whose face was still fresh-looking, although it bore traces of sorrow and suffering. Jack made her out at a glance to be Mrs. Pullis. He entered at her invitation, and saw little Bob Pullis lying there with the bed-clothes tucked well under his arms, and his round face flushed, so that his resemblance to the ideal cherub was stronger than ever. The room was of the same size as that Jack had just left, and in several ways suggested that it was usually occupied by Mrs. Pullis, and not by her son. The fact was, as Mrs. Pullis expressed it, that Bob's chamber was not large enough to be sick in, and so she had insisted upon an exchange, although Bob had opposed it with what strength he had left. The apartment in which he had been instated was most scrupulously neat; and even the medicine-bottles were drawn up as if about to pass in review before a pompous, fat-looking tumbler with a teaspoon in it.

"This is very kind of you, Houldwor-

thy, I'm sure," said Bob, making a movement to rise on his elbow.

"Now just keep quiet, then, or I'll go right away again," said Jack kindly as he took his hand. "We cannot have you exciting yourself on any account. — Can we?" he said, addressing Mrs. Pullis.

"Oh, excuse me!" said Bob. "Mother, this is Mr. Houldworthy. — Mr. Houldworthy, this is my mother." Bob got on one elbow to make this introduction; but he immediately lay down again, and was evidently very nervous and excited by Jack's presence.

"I thought I would come over and see how you were getting on," said Jack. "I am sorry to find you not about yet."

"Well, it was really very kind of you, Houldworthy," said Bob again. "I'm sure, I didn't once think of your taking the trouble to come way over here."

"Williamsburg is such an out-of-the-way place," said Mrs. Pullis, as if apologizing for not living any nearer Mr. Houldworthy's place of residence.

"Oh! I enjoyed the — voyage, do you call it? — the voyage across the river extremely," said Jack, thinking the next moment of his meeting with Cookey. "Besides, it is a place I have never been in before, and I was very glad of the opportunity to see it."

"Well, sit down, Houldworthy, now you are here," said Bob. — "Mother, won't you give Mr. Houldworthy a chair? — I declare, I never expected to see you in Williamsburg."

Jack, finding the patient so nervous, protested he could only stop a moment; but he took the chair, and Mrs. Pullis made an excuse for leaving the room. Then Jack tried to discover what complaint his friend was suffering from; but it appeared that the physician had not given it any name. He had only recommended quiet and absence from work for a few days. "And indeed," said little Bob, "I should not be worth much in the store as long as my head is as giddy as it is to-day." Bob went on to explain that they had every confidence in their doctor; adding, as if it were a great recommendation, that he had attended the late Mr. Pullis, senior, when he died. This physician, Bob said, had evidently thought nothing in particular was the matter with him, and he should probably be about in a day or two. In answer to Bob's somewhat eager inquiries as to what Mr. Chipman said about his absence, Houldworthy replied, that Mr.

Chipman was suffering from rheumatism himself, and was rather cross, but that he had not said much. Houldworthy did not think proper to repeat Chipman's threat that Pullis's place could not be kept open long; for he understood very well that the conscientious little fellow would be back as soon as it was safe for him, and that it would not be wise to cause any agitation on the subject.

At this moment, infantile cries were heard coming up from below stairs.

"Drat that child!" said Bob Pullis; "there it goes again." It may be remarked that this was a very strong and unusually unamiable expression for him.

"I heard that youngster down stairs," said Houldworthy. "Who is it, — your little brother?"

"It's no brother of mine, I'm glad to say," returned Bob. "No: it belongs to the family who have the other half of the house. The house isn't very big, as you see; but we can't afford to pay the rent of the whole of it. That child has cried from morning till night ever since it was brought here; and the mother says it's his teeth. I should recommend giving it ether, and cutting them all at once. How many teeth do babies have, as a general thing? I should think this one must be at work on about its sixtieth now."

Jack expressed the opinion that this must be a slight exaggeration.

"There are only five in our own family," continued Bob. "That young chap who brought you my note, the other day, was my brother Dick. He's a good young chap too, if he is my brother. He ought to be in school, but he isn't. He's a cash-boy at J. Straw & Co.'s. He had to begin life pretty early, poor fellow. Then there's my mother, — she you saw just now. She's just as good as she can be, my mother is. She has had hard times these last few years, but we do what we can for her. I don't think she has ever quite got over my father's death." Bob cleared his throat before he went on. "Then there's Maggie, — that was the little girl that let you in. She would work from morning till night, that child would, to help her mother, and never speak a cross word the whole time. Then there's my sister Julia; you've never seen her. She is a year or two older than I am. She was a saleswoman in a store on Broadway, for a while after father died; but she was not quite strong enough for it; and, besides, it wasn't just the thing, you know, for a young

girl — and a pretty girl, I think I may say, if she is my sister — to be crossing the ferry early and late, not to speak of any other objections; so, finally, we persuaded her to give it up. She didn't want to; for she is just as ambitious as any of us to do her part, I can tell you. As it is, she insists on taking in a little plain sewing. And, let me see," continued Bob, who had been keeping the count on his fingers, "that makes four of us. Who is the fifth? Why, myself, of course. How stupid!" It was not the first time Bob Pullis had forgotten himself in his solicitude for the little family which had been left under his protection.

A year or two before, Jack would not have considered even Mr. Robert Pullis a very desirable acquaintance; and he would certainly have been greatly bored by this prolonged description of all his relatives. Now, however, he found himself listening with great interest, and comparing Bob's struggles with his own; and I think if at that moment, the whole Pullis family could have been marshalled in a line like the medicine-bottles on the bureau, Jack would have taken great pleasure in shaking by the hand each and every member in succession.

"So old Chip has the rheumatism again, has he? Well, I suspect it is very hard to bear. When Chip is unusually fidgety and fractious, I always think of his rheumatism; and so I don't mind him so much. I don't think Chip is such a bad fellow at the bottom; do you?"

A discussion on the personal qualities of Mr. Chipman followed, with more or less talk about others at the store. Jack, seeing plainly that the patient was becoming more nervous and feverish, rose to go very soon, giving as an excuse that he had a long walk before him, and expressing the hope that Bob Pullis would be all right again in a few days.

"Oh! of course I shall," said Bob. "Why, bless you, this is nothing. Tell old Chip that I shall be in my place by Wednesday. And I say, Houldworthy, it was very kind in you to come way over here to see me, it was indeed. And I sha'n't forget it. Good-by. You'll find my mother in the parlor, as you go down."

The moisture stood in the little fellow's eyes as he pressed Jack's hand at parting; and even Jack was a little

moved, although he could see no reason for any emotion.

Going into the little room at the foot of the stairs, to take leave of Mrs. Pullis, Jack found also the elder daughter Julia, — a young lady with a brilliant complexion and bright eyes, and not in the least resembling her brother Robert. Some conversation here ensued upon the state of the patient. Houldworthy could not help expressing his regret at having seen him, because he thought the interview had excited him. Mrs. Pullis acknowledged that she had feared as much; but her son had said it would be treating Mr. Houldworthy very shabbily to refuse to see him after he had come so far. Besides, they had not considered Robert very sick. The doctor had not spoken as if there was any long illness to be feared. She confessed that Robert had seemed worse that day, and that she should be glad when the doctor came. He had not seen the patient since the day before.

Jack took his leave very soon, after a series of remarks on either side which may be easily imagined. But he was just as conscious that a pair of sharp black eyes were watching him keenly, as that the young gentleman in the next room was screaming as if for a premium.

Just outside the door, Jack met a young man who had evidently given great attention to the tie of his neckhandkerchief and the polish of his shoes, and was so palpably in his Sunday very best, that Jack turned round to look after him. The young man turned to look at Jack at the same moment, and his face came near assuming the expression of a scowl.

"Oh, ho!" said Jack to himself. "I suspect the amiable Miss Julia has got a lover. I thought that pair of eyes was made for a purpose."

Jack was right for once. Mr. Charles Albert Tompkins had come to be a constant visitor at the Pullises. The paternal Tompkins was a retail grocer with a large trade, and Charles Albert was altogether a most desirable *parti*. It was entirely an affair of the heart. Mr. Tompkins had met Miss Pullis at a little *soiree* at the house of a mutual friend in Williamsburg, and, falling violently in love with her, had followed up the acquaintance. Miss Pullis received his attentions with some favor; and the consequence was a sure although not very noticeable increase of the receipts of the Williamsburg Ferry Company.

CHAPTER XVII.

IN WHICH JACK HOULDWORTHY IS ASKED TO DINE, AND OTHERWISE ANNOYED.

THE hour was eight o'clock, P. M.; and four young men sat together in one corner of the smoking-room of the Wouter Van Twiller Club.—Mr. Henry Eisel Van Dorp, Mr. Richard Trumpington, Mr. Charles Young Lush, and Mr. William Peterkin.

"I thay," said Mr. Peterkin, "heard about that new engathement? I can't thwear it ith tho, you know, but thath wot they thay."

"Well, what do they say, sweet William?" said Mr. Lush.

"Oh! come now, I thay, you know. Don't call me thweet William. I've athked you a dothen times not to; I don't like it."

"Sour William, then. Come, eject your information. Name the spooney. Parade your leopards."

"Yes, let's have it, Peterkin. 'Two to one I know what you mean,' put in Trumpington.

"Well, I'll tell the west of you, of courth; but Luth talkth tho much thlang, that weally he makth himthelf deuthedly unpleasant sometimth."

"Hallo!" called out Lush. "Here's a man that hasn't spoken an s in all his life, talking about my using slang. Well, here is a go. If you want your English pure and undefiled and that sort of thing, as Shakspeare or somebody else calls it, then you'd better trade at this shop. If any body has got a better assortment of that article than I have, just trot him out, that's all. And, if you can't turn what I say into the broken language you patter yourself, then you'd better get the club dictionary, Worcester Unabridged, clap it into your waistcoat-pocket, and have it all ready to look out the words you don't understand."

The others smiled, except Mr. Peterkin, who, after looking for a moment with great disgust at Lush, concluded it was not worth while to show any anger, and went on to state that Vanderdonk Browne was reported to be engaged to Miss Mary Honeycastle.

"Oh, fiddle!" said Lush, "that's all in your optic, my Billy,—well, Mr. Peterkin, then, if you like that any better. I know Vanderdonkey Browne, if anybody does; and I know Miss Mary

Honeycastle, and have known her ever since I was knee-high to a manilla che-root; and I tell you it's all fol-de-rol. I heard the story this morning, and I denied it. I know what it sprung from: Cookey started it; and that proves he made it up himself. Van's a good fellow, and Miss Mary's a nice girl,—nobody had better say she isn't,—but Van hasn't got the ducats to marry her, even if he wanted to, which he don't. Why, I was at a tea-fight at the Honeycastles', last Thursday, and precious lively it was too for that kind of a show; and do you think I should have heard nothing about it?"

"Why, it only came out this morning," said Peterkin.

"Now, see here, Peterkin, I tell you there's nothing in it, upon my word. Do you believe me, or don't you?"

"Of courth, I believe you, if you thay tho. I only heard it ath a weport. I told you tho in the firth place."

"Well, don't let it go any farther: that's a good fellow. It's that beastly Cookey's work, give you my word; if I don't punch his head before long, I shall certainly bust."

All the young men promised they would contradict the report, if they heard it again.

The fact was, there had been certain love passages between "Van" Browne and Miss Mary Honeycastle; and Van did want to marry her, Mr. Lush to the contrary notwithstanding. But Miss Mary was rich and a belle,—there were only two girls and a widowed mother in the family,—and Mr. Van had been turned by. Cookey, who, as Lush said, was always nosing round, had really started this malicious report of an engagement; and Lush was naturally anxious for his friend's sake that the story should be nipped in the bud. It is quite useless to say, however, that, in spite of his efforts and those of other friends of Browne, the report went the rounds of the Twiddler Club, and every other circle where either of the parties were known. The most annoying feature of it was, that, although there was little doubt that Cookey was the author of the story, no steps could be taken to punish him for it, without increasing the scandal; and so he went free. Mr. Cookey had, of course, reckoned on this safeguard from the beginning. Van Browne had snubbed Cookey more than once before this occurrence; he now cut him dead, and turned his back on him. Cookey was satisfied with the change.

The discussion about the reported engagement of Mr. Vanderdonk Browne was followed by an order from Mr. Lush for four cooling mixtures, the basis of which was soda-water. Mr. Lush's finances were still in a somewhat embarrassed condition; but that did not prevent him from running up his account at the club.

"Who do you think I saw to-day?" said Trumpington.

"How should we know?" said Harry Van Dorp.

"The last man in the world I should have thought of seeing. I thought he was in New Zealand or Kamtchatka by this time."

"Oh, bother your conundrums!" cried out Lush, who was in no amiable frame of mind, from ruminating on a plan of vengeance against Cookey. "If you met anybody, why don't you say so at once?"

"Try and be civil, Lush," retorted Trumpington. "You are not in a rat-pit now, you know."

"Well I hate bother," said Lush. "However, I accept your apology. Who was it?"

"Jack Houldworthy."

"Jack? Why, I have met him several times since he left the club," said Van Dorp.

"So have I," said Lush.

"I've met him," said Peterkin, "but he theemed to dodge me, you know,—pretended not to thee me, and that thort of thing."

"I haven't seen him before; but I met him to-day, face to face, and we stopped and talked a bit. He said he was getting on finely; but he was looking very thin and pale, I thought."

"What ever became of hith thithter?" said Peterkin. "Deuthed nith girl. Pity that family came to grief the way they did; now, ithn't it?"

"I think Jack is very sensitive about his position," said Van Dorp; "but he has behaved finely about it, I think. Given up billiards and all nonsense, he told me, and settled down square to work. He's a manly fellow, is Jack. I wish we could have him up here to the club, to some spread, just for the sake of old times,—just to show him we haven't forgotten him, you know."

"I wish we could, by Jove," said Lush. "Jack's a regular slap-up, out-and-out trump, and there's no discount on him, not one cent; but the fact is, I'm deuced hard up just now, and I

couldn't treat to any thing better than clam-chowder; and that isn't commonly considered a swell dish to ask one's friends to."

"Thee here, fellerth," broke in Peterkin. "I've an idea. Ith jutht like me. I came down to the club to-night on purporth, and hang me if I didn't come near forgetting all about it."

"Your idea?"

"No. You thee, I've jutht had a present of thum fith,—twout, lake twout. My couthin had a lot thent him,—more'n he could uth; and he gave me one,—a thplendid feller,—weighs fifteen poundth, if he does an ounth."

"And you're going to do the proud thing by us?" said Lush. "By Jove, Peterkin, if I don't name my first-born after you, when I have one, then it will be entirely owing to objections on the part of its female parent."

"Why, yeth," said Peterkin; "thath what I had in my mind, only I almoth forgot it. I'll get the cook to dith up the twout somehow or wother,—he'll know,—and we'll have a leg of mutton, or thumthing of that thort, you know, for a foundathun, with thum fixingth and thingumbobth to fill up. And I'll make the governor come down with thum of hith old particular sherry, if I can get up in the morning in time to thee him, before he goeth down town. What do you thay, fellerth? To-morrow, at theven,—and we'll have Jack Houldworthy along, if he'll come."

"You do me proud," said Lush. "E'en at the striking of the clock, I will be there." Mr. Lush labored under the delusion that he was quoting from Hamlet.

"Make it day after to-morrow, can't you?" said Van Dorp. "My sister has a little spread to-morrow, and I suppose she will count on me."

"I have got an engagement for day after to-morrow," said Trumpington.

"Yeth, and the fith,—the fith, my dear feller, won't keep, I'm afraid. Heth been out of hith native element, I don't know how long already. Make thum excuth to your thithter, can't you?"

"Oh, yes, Harry!" said Lush. "Who ever heard of a man's keeping an engagement with his sister,—especially when there's a noble tautog a-pining to be devoured? A tautog, you said it was, didn't you, sweet Wil—I mean Peterkin?"

"A twout," said Peterkin.

"Well, it's all the same, except in the

natural history books. It's the sauce that makes the difference in fishes; and our cook does know how to make a sauce, he does. He can beat any cook alive, and give him points, on a sauce."

"I'll see what I can do," said Van Dorp. "I'm sure I should be very sorry to miss the dinner; but I am afraid my sister will cut up rough if I disappoint her. However, I will see what I can do. Do you suppose that Jack Houldworthy will come?"

"Go and write a note to him, now, Peterkin," said Lush. "If you don't, you will forget it."

"Pon my word," said Peterkin, "I think I'd better. We shall all count on you, Harry."

Peterkin went off to write his note, like the good-natured little fellow which he was at the bottom, when his vanity was not attacked; and the party of four broke up.

Jack received Peterkin's invitation next morning while at his work; and for a moment it proved a strong temptation to him. Visions of all the jolly gatherings at the Twiddler Club, at which he had been present, rose up before him; and he contrasted the scene around him with the cosy smoking-room at the club, where he had passed so much of his time. All was gone now, club, friends, mistress, — he must work out his prosaic destiny. Yet his friends were not all gone either. Here was an invitation to meet some of the old set. He thought he knew who were some of the men who had been invited to meet him. He imagined Fred Rovington would be there, — he had not seen Fred now for several days, — and Harry Van Dorp, and Van Browne, possibly, or Dick Trumpington, or Charley Lush. At all events there would be a jolly dinner. He remembered that Charley Lush had once described some very old sherry of which old Peterkin had a store in his cellars, and with which the young man regaled his friends on special occasions. Perhaps Peterkin would bring out some of that. Jack was fond of sherry; it was a long time since he had tasted any, too. He certainly liked a glass of good sherry after dinner; and here he turned the note over and over, and tasted the wine in anticipation. Jack had inherited a fondness for good living from his father; and the force of old habits and associations came back to him very strong now and then.

"Pullis isn't back yet, I see," said Mr. Chipman at his elbow.

"Eh, what? I beg your pardon," said Jack, starting out of his reverie. "I have just this moment got a note, which set me thinking. Pullis not back yet, did you say? No, and I have not heard from him either. I begin to be afraid he is seriously ill."

"Well, I am sorry," said Mr. Chipman. "Pullis is a good, steady fellow, and I should be sorry to lose him. I did say I should have to get another man in his place, if he didn't come back to-day; but I don't know; I think, on the whole, I'll give him one more day's grace. If you see him you'd better tell him."

"You don't really mean you would turn a man off for being sick," said Jack.

"Not for being sick, but for not being here to do his work," said Mr. Chipman. "I'm sorry for Pullis, but I can't help it. If it were leisure times with us, I shouldn't mind it. He might be sick a month, if he wanted to. But here's this order which we must get out of the way. The government can't wait, and we mustn't lose our reputation for promptness. That's how 'tis. Besides this, a young fellow is all ready, and waiting to come in, — a man that's been with us before, and knows what we want; and I've promised him Pullis's place if Pullis don't come back."

Mr. Chipman did not wait to hear Jack's views on the subject, but bustled off up stairs again. Mr. Chipman rarely staid in one place many minutes at a time.

"Hang the dinner-party," said Jack to himself: "I must go over and see Bob Pullis to-night. No, no. Dinners will not answer for me. I may as well cut them at once, and have done with them. I'll get some decent note-paper when I go out to dinner, and tell Peterkin I can't come. No, I will not. I'll write on the office-paper. Why should I assume to be a swell, when I am working for my daily bread in a drug-store, with a man like Chipman for my master? Peterkin and the rest may as well know that I am out of their set forever, and they must cut me, and have an end of it. It is kind of them, too, not to forget me. I do not know whether it would be quite courteous to make any show of carelessness in writing to Peterkin. Never mind: I'll answer his note at once, and make an end of it."

Perhaps Jack was afraid his resolution might fail him; he seized Peterkin's note with a degree of haste, which seemed to show he was not quite sure of himself. The invitation was written on the club paper, and ran formally as follows: —

"Mr. William Peterkin presents his compliments to Mr. Houldworthy, and begs that he will honor him with his company at dinner, at the Wouter Van Twiller Club, at seven o'clock to-morrow, the 27th instant, on which occasion he will meet three or four old friends."

Jack's paper had the card of Messrs. C. Smith & Company quite conspicuously printed on it. His answer ran as follows: —

"MY DEAR PETERKIN, — I thank you for your kind invitation, and regret very much that I cannot accept it. In declining it, as I am forced to do, I think it right to waive all formality, and explain that the altered circumstances of my family, since my father's death, have made it necessary for me to give up all my old friends, and, indeed, all society of any kind. While it would give me the greatest pleasure to meet you and the rest at the club to-night, it will be quite impossible without breaking over my resolution to cut myself free from all the old associations. Please to say to my old friends that I shall always hold them in kind remembrance, although I no longer meet them."

Jack signed and dated this missive more deliberately, and put it in a large envelope, also emblazoned with the card of the house. "There," said he, as he directed it to "Mr. William Peterkin, Wouter Van Twiller Club," "it may seem Quixotic; but if he shows it to the rest to-night, as I think he will, they must understand that they must leave me alone for the future; and that will save some trouble for all of us. I think I have made what I mean plain enough. Now, where can I get some sealing-wax? They must have some up stairs."

Jack sent the note by a special messenger; and, in the end, it had the effect he desired. Most persons would have considered Jack's explanation quite unnecessary, considering the number of such invitations he had received, and was likely to get; but it was his straightforward way to let the men at the club know that he was a poor man; and was not ashamed of it.

That evening Jack went to Williamsburg. He did not see either Mrs. Pullis or Bob, but Miss Pullis met him in the little parlor. She told him that the doctor had pronounced her brother Robert to be in a slow fever; and, although any danger was little to be apprehended, yet it would very likely be several weeks before he would be well enough to go back to the store again. Mrs. Pullis had thought it better that Mr. Houldworthy

should not see Robert, although she was very sorry, because it was so kind of him to come so far; it seemed really a shame, Miss Pullis thought. But Robert was very nervous; and, although generally quiet enough, he was easily excited, especially by any mention of his work at the store. He was very much afraid he should lose his place. "And, oh!" said Miss Pullis, her black eyes growing very bright, "do you think they would be so mean as to send him away because he was sick?"

Jack shook his head. It was very certain that they would, he thought, and the sooner the family were prepared for it the better. Yet he could not tell Miss Pullis so directly, for he saw tears gathering in her eyes at the answer she read in his manner. His compassion was excited, and he hastened to assure her, that although Mr. Chipman, the manager, was very harsh, and little could be expected from him, yet Mr. Ctesiphon Smith was a gentleman, and would undoubtedly behave fairly about the matter. He, himself, would make it a point to see Mr. Smith early in the morning, and explain Robert's condition; and he did not doubt that Mr. Smith would listen to reason.

"Oh! if you will, Mr. Houldworthy," said Miss Pullis.

Jack was led by the black eyes, and the tears in them, to prolong his stay a little, and entertain the young lady with some sketches of the wiry Mr. Chipman's peculiarities. He was so successful that the countenance of Miss Pullis speedily brightened, her manner became animated, and her black eyes again danced and twinkled. Jack presently took his leave, promising again to do what he could for Robert, and recommending that nothing more should be said to him about the store than could be helped.

"Rather a bright little woman," said Master Jack, as he walked away. "She is better bred too, than I should have thought, although she certainly has not the manner of a woman of fashion, — Blanche Harley, for instance."

The thought of Miss Harley threw Jack into a serious although not quite a melancholy train of thought. As a special indulgence he lighted a cigar, and then strolled back towards New York.

Miss Pullis had no sooner closed the front door after Mr. Houldworthy, than Mr. Charles Albert Tompkins appeared from another room, where he had been waiting.

"Seems to me that feller staid long enough," said Mr. Tompkins.

"Feller!" echoed Miss Pullis, "he wasn't a feller."

"Well, he looked like one. What was he, then, — a girl?"

"He was a gentleman, if you please."

"Well a gentleman's a feller, isn't he?"

"He isn't called so in polite society."

"Oh! come now, Jule, don't put on airs. I say he was a feller."

"And I say he wasn't."

It is impossible to say how this important and interesting dispute would have ended, had not Mrs. Pullis appeared at the head of the stairs, and called her daughter.

"Yes, mother, I'm coming," said Miss Pullis.

"Well, good-night, then," said Mr. Tompkins, "for I'm going."

"So early!"

"Why, yes: I've got to stop and see a — a gentleman, on the way over."

"Nonsense," said Miss Pullis, "I don't believe a word of it."

"Can't help it, if you don't. Suppose you believe I am going, don't you?"

"I know what is the matter," said Miss Pullis, coming close up to her admirer, and turning the battery of her eyes full upon him: "you're jealous of Mr. Houldworthy, you great silly thing."

"Of him! Nonsense!" said Mr. Tompkins, but turning very red nevertheless, because she had hit the truth.

"You are, you know you are."

"Nonsense, I tell you," said Mr. Tompkins, growing if possible still redder.

"Yes, mother, I'm coming. — If you go away before I come down," she continued to Mr. Tompkins, "I shall know what the reason is; so there now," and with that, she struck his arm a little blow, and ran gayly up stairs.

"Jule! See here, Jule!" called out Mr. Tompkins, after her, but he met with no response. He stood irresolutely holding the door-knob for nearly half a minute. Then he hung up his hat again, said, "Confound the girl," and went back into the little parlor. It may be added here, that Mr. Tompkins returned to New York that evening at an hour quite too late to call on the aforesaid gentleman, even if he had ever had such an intention. The power which young ladies have over the opposite sex is something truly terrible, when one reflects seriously upon it.

Miss Julia burst into her brother's room quite hastily, and would have been out of breath had the flight of stairs been longer.

"It seems to me you are very noisy to-night," said her mother mildly; then she added, "Robert is very impatient to know what Mr. Houldworthy said."

"Yes, what did he say, Julia?" said Bob, whose cheeks were as red as Mr. Tompkins's had been, although for a different reason, and whose hands were nervously making plaits in the blankets.

"Come, you have kept me waiting long enough, I should say."

"What did he say?" said Miss Pullis, collecting her ideas, "oh! not much. He told me several funny stories about that terrible Mr. Chipman."

"Funny stories? I don't want to hear them. I want to know what old Chip says because I haven't been back."

Mrs. Pullis gave her daughter a little cough of warning.

"Oh! Mr. Houldworthy says it will be all right. He has influence with Mr. Smith, and he will make it all right, even if there is any trouble: so go to sleep."

"Influence with Mr. Smith? I never heard that he had. Come now, Jule, did he say that? You had better not tell me wrong stories."

"He certainly said he would speak to Mr. Smith early to-morrow morning."

"And what did he say about old Chip?"

"Why, he said that he was as savage as a bear."

"I knew it," said little Bob. "I knew Chip would be; and that's what Houldworthy is going to see Smith for early in the morning. Smith won't listen to him for a moment. I knew how it would be. It's all over with me. I've lost my place, and who knows what is going to become of us?" Bob covered his face with his hands, and turned towards the wall.

Of course this set Mrs. Pullis crying, but Julia bore up under the load of possible afflictions with more firmness. She saw that she had unwittingly let out the whole state of affairs, as people are apt to do when they attempt to skirt around facts; but she endeavored to qualify what she had said, and to present the case in its most auspicious light, which, to say the truth, was not so very encouraging. Mrs. Pullis presently dried her eyes, however, and joined with her daughter; and the two presently succeeded in bringing poor Bob into a somewhat calmer state, although he was very far from that con-

dition of somnolence which his sister had recommended. Then Miss Pullis went down stairs to her admirer, who was chafing with impatience at her delay. When Mr. Tompkins found her seriously troubled, however, his ill-nature gave way; and the two fell to discussing plans for the future, in case the disaster should happen to Bob which they feared.

Jack Houldworthy took occasion next morning to call on Mr. Ctesiphon Smith, as he had promised. His first attempt to find Mr. Smith at leisure to talk with him was unsuccessful. Mr. Smith was engaged in close conversation with a gentleman, whose round, bald head, seen at a distance through the doors of the counting-room and Mr. Smith's private apartment beyond, bore a resemblance to a dinner-plate. Jack went up stairs a second time, half an hour later, and found Mr. Smith alone, engaged in looking over some letters, which he laid down when Jack entered.

"Ah, Mr. Houldworthy," said Mr. Smith, "good morning. Take a chair. What can I do for you?"

Mr. Ctesiphon Smith's manners were so bland that Jack, who was too frank, himself, to suspect any thing like dissimulation in others, until they had once deceived him, argued already a successful result of the interview.

"I thank you," said Jack, not accepting the chair which Mr. Smith had indicated. "I am sorry to trespass on your time, but it will only be for a moment. I have taken the liberty of coming to see you about the case of Mr. Robert Pullis, who is employed in my room."

"Pullis? Ah, yes, Mr. Chipman was talking with me about him this morning; that is, Mr. Chipman mentioned his plan to me, and I approved it." Mr. Smith's countenance was still bland, but his tone of voice was somehow less agreeable.

"I hope you do not think it necessary to discharge Pullis," suggested Jack.

"Is he ready to come back?"

"On the contrary, he has a slow fever, and he may not get about in several weeks."

"Then I certainly see no help for it."

"But Pullis is a good man, and he has a mother and a family depending on him."

"I am sure I am very sorry. But we don't pretend to keep an asylum here: we sell drugs," said Mr. Smith, smiling as if he had said something humorous.

"And you know how driven we are just now."

"Yes, but Pullis has lost his health in his zeal to get the work along."

"Hum," said Mr. Smith, as if he did not believe it. "Then I am inclined to think he would do well to find some easier place. I have been talking with Mr. Chipman; and I have about come to the conclusion that it will be necessary to work evenings. This large order must be got off in time, no matter at what cost."

Jack began to lose his temper, but he made one more effort. "Pullis's family are in great distress about the possibility of his losing his place, and I promised them I would see you about it."

"Very well, then, Mr. Houldworthy, if you will allow me to say so, I think you have discharged your duty already. You have no personal grievance to complain of?"

"Not any hitherto, certainly."

"Very well, then, Mr. Houldworthy. I shall always be ready to talk to you about your own affairs; but you must really permit us to carry out our internal arrangements in our own way. If you have nothing more to say, I must beg you to excuse me. I have some matters here, which must be attended to this morning." Mr. Smith's manner was still quite bland, but he spoke quickly, and with an air of a man who had made up his mind. He began to fumble with his letters.

Jack lost his temper completely, and he felt that he was growing very red in the face. Nevertheless he did not wish, for his own sake, to quarrel with Mr. Smith outright, especially when it seemed that nothing could be gained by it: so he made a little bow, and, without trusting himself even to say "Good morning," took his departure.

Jack saw Mr. Chipman coming towards him with a sour look of inquiry on his face; but he prudently avoided him, and went down stairs.

That afternoon a new man was installed in Bob Pullis's place; and that evening Bob himself received a letter containing money, and signed "C. Smith & Company, per Baker," which threw the whole family into tears, and put back Bob's recovery at least one week.

That evening, also, Mr. Ctesiphon Smith went to a dinner-party, and enjoyed himself extremely.

CHAPTER XVIII.

IN WHICH MR. FELIX SHORT MEETS WITH A SIGNAL DEFEAT, AND MR. HOBBS IS DRIVEN TO DESPERATION.

MISS WARNER and Miss Houldworthy sympathized very sincerely with the misfortunes of the Pullis family, and objugated Mr. Ctesiphon Smith and Mr. Chipman with much feminine earnestness. Jack thought Bob Pullis had been hardly treated, and that he was a good, kind-hearted, deserving little fellow. That was enough for these amiable little women. Jack had always been a favorite, as the only son and brother; his slightest wish was now as much law in this little family, as if he had been the great mogul, and they his crouching subjects. So even Mrs. Houldworthy expressed her opinion, with much more vigor than she commonly employed, that both Mr. Chipman and Mr. Ctesiphon Smith had behaved shamefully; "although, to be sure, it was all that could be expected of such persons; and it was all owing to John's having gone among such a set, instead of keeping on with his profession; although, to be sure, as John said, they must live somehow; and, if lawyers could not get employment, why, they must take to something else, even if it were not quite so respectable."

How the fact that Jack was in the employment of Messrs. C. Smith & Company affected the position of Bob Pullis, did not, indeed, appear very clearly; but Mrs. Houldworthy was not always logical in her arguments.

But the attention of the family was soon turned from the case of Bob Pullis, by a certain event which concerned themselves. This was no less a circumstance than their removal from Mrs. Vincent's friendly roof, which had sheltered them since the death of Mr. Houldworthy. Their residence here had been in some respects pleasant. Mrs. Vincent had been very kind and considerate, and, in some instances, even delicate in her attentions to their personal comfort and happiness. She had a kind heart, and that supplied many defects in her education. The company in her house was, however, as a whole, not agreeable to the ladies; and, while the society was not at all like that to which they had been used, they missed very greatly the retirement of their own home. The life-insurance money, which the late Mr. Houldworthy had settled on his wife,

had been paid in, after many tedious and unnecessary delays, and was now securely invested, under the advice of some of Mr. Houldworthy's old personal friends, where it brought an income small indeed, but certain. Added to this was Jack's salary, from which he saved a little by his economy; and also a small and unexpected dividend, which the surviving partners of the firm of Houldworthy & Company had rescued for the family, in their compromise with the creditors. It was now within their power to set up a very modest establishment of their own; and they were led to determine on doing this at once, by the fact that Jack's business hours did not correspond well with the hours for meals at Mrs. Vincent's; and Jack must be punctual, at any cost. So Jack hired a very small house in a retired part of one of the up-town streets, and engaged one servant, who knew how to cook; and then they announced their intention of leaving Mrs. Vincent's.

Her house was full at this time; and the vacant seat at the table was occupied by a certain Mrs. Tewksbury, a lady without such decided characteristics as to require any previous mention. The news of the proposed departure of the Houldworthys was received with varied sensations by the several members of Mrs. Vincent's household. Mrs. Vincent herself had become interested in the family, and was really sorry to part with them; although Mrs. Houldworthy had, by her deportment, always inspired her with a certain awe, from the shadow of which she was glad to be released. Mrs. Witherington said she should be very sorry indeed to have them go, and thought she was speaking the truth; but she was really incapable of feeling strongly upon any subject. Mr. Witherington was by nature indifferent to any event which did not especially concern himself. Miss Saltmarsh and Mrs. Seymour expressed, and really felt, a well-bred regret at the departure of such very respectable persons as the Houldworthys. Mr. Cartright thought, with sorrow, that nobody would now be left who would care much to hear the war news. Mr. Felix Short determined at once on a bold stroke, which should make or mar his cause with Miss Warner; and Mr. Hobbs was driven to the verge of desperation, and went hot and cold by turns. Mr. Tinkham received the news with an inaudible remark; and, that day at dinner, was observed to pay unusually

little attention to the conversation around him. This was generally ascribed to his regret at the intelligence; but, in reality, Mr. Tinkham was engaged in a little calculation as to the exact number of ounces of meat which could be dispensed with, in providing for the family, until the rooms occupied by the Houldworthys should be filled again. As for Mrs. Tewksbury, she had absolutely no feeling whatever about the matter.

The result of this combination was a general stagnation of talk at dinner on the day before the Houldworthys left. The conversation was confined, for the most part, to Miss Saltmarsh, Mrs. Seymour, Amy, and Fanny; although Mrs. Houldworthy was, on this occasion, exceedingly gracious, and made quite a number of remarks, with an air very friendly to the whole company; but they were of such a very general, and, in fact, obvious character, that they needed no reply. Mrs. Houldworthy had long ago made up her mind to invite none of the company to call on her at her new residence, and was quite ready to drop them all out of her acquaintance; but she did not wish to be unkind on this last occasion. In short, her manner meant very much what ministers of state of different countries desire to signify, when, after long letters in which they take exactly opposite views of the same facts, they give each other "assurances of their most distinguished consideration."

Mr. Short was revolving great things in his mind; in point of fact, his ideas were whirling around so fast that they came near being in a muddle. If the Houldworthys left the house while he was no further along in the good graces of Miss Warner, there was an end of everything; for he felt instinctively that Jack at least had no great admiration for him; and he had no expectation of being asked to visit them. On the other hand, could he venture to pay his addresses seriously, after all the rebuffs he had received? The answer to this would have been easy to most men; but, although Mr. Felix Short was by no means a fool, he had a sufficiently good opinion of himself, and a very thick epidermis. He was obstinate too; and he was unwilling to believe in the existence of any thing for which could see no reason. He could not conceive why a man of his personal appearance and prospects in life should be disagreeable to any young lady who was not a great heiress in her own right; and, as far as he could learn,

Miss Warner had only a comfortable little property. So he resolved to put on a bold face, and, as he expressed it, "cheek it out."

The Houldworthys were packing that day; and Miss Warner, in helping the others, had got behind in her own work. She excused herself therefore, and left the table before the dessert came on. Mr. Short, who had but a moment before arrived at the determination to "cheek it out," saw in this movement his last opportunity; and, impelled by a sudden impulse, he also made an apology to Mrs. Vincent, and followed her. Miss Warner heard the door of the dining-room shut, as she went up stairs, and felt instinctively that she was pursued. She did not run; she set her lips very firmly together, and went slower. It thus happened that Mr. Felix Short, who had started at a great pace in order to overtake her, found he was going altogether too fast, and was in danger of running over the young lady. He at once "pulled up," to use one of his own phrases; and, instead of calling rather loudly after her, as he had intended, he moderated his tone, as he had his gait.

"Miss Warner," he said, "one moment, if you please."

Miss Warner turned towards him, and said very quietly, "Well, Mr. Short."

Her manner would have annihilated Mr. Hobbs; but Mr. Short was not a sensitive man.

"Miss Warner," he began, "perhaps I ought to apologize for speaking to you in this abrupt way; but—you are going away to-morrow, are you not?"

"I am," said Miss Warner.

"Miss Warner," continued Mr. Short, "since you have been here, I have attempted to offer you some little civilities, which have not been over well received. It may be your fault, it may be—well, to be plain, it may be the fault of your relations. Some of them are not over fond of me, it is easy to see; but that is neither here nor there. You may have noticed, perhaps,—you must have noticed, for you are quick-sighted enough,—all young ladies are,—that you had made an impression on me from the first. Don't interrupt me, please: I only want a moment longer. Now, to-morrow you are going away; and it might so turn out that I should never see you again. I am a plain man of business, and I have to get at the point in a straightforward way. There is no nonsense about me; I wish sometimes there

was. What I want is this: I don't ask you to say now, whether you like me or not, or whether you ever could like me. This is neither the time nor the place for that; I understand that very well. But what I want is a fair chance,—only a fair chance. And what I want to ask you is,—may I call and see you now and then, when you get into your new lodgings?"

Mr. Short, as has been said, was not an over-sensitive man; but he breathed rather short and quick when he finished his little speech, the substance of which he had been concocting at dinner over his mutton; and his forehead was covered with a clammy perspiration. The hall was not light enough for this to be perceived, however.

"Mr. Short," said Miss Warner, "I find I must be very plain with you, since you refuse to understand hints which would be enough for most men. I have observed what you speak of; and I am compelled to say that I have regretted it extremely. I have endeavored to show you, without rudeness, that your attentions were distasteful to me,—that they were exceedingly annoying to me personally; but you have now forced me to say so to your face. And I am obliged to decline with thanks the pleasure of your further acquaintance after we leave this house."

Miss Warner made a courtesy, and swept up the second flight of stairs. Mr. Felix Short turned on his heel without a word, and went down stairs like a man stunned. His perceptions were rather dull, but Miss Warner's shaft was sharp enough to pierce the hide of a rhinoceros.

Amy Warner entered the parlor with a firm tread; but there came at the instant a sudden change of feeling, and she knelt exhausted in a large easy-chair, and, leaning on the back, burst into tears. At the same moment, Jack Houldworthy burst into the room with a quick tread.

"What has that fellow been saying to you, Amy?" he said. "The idiot! I met him on the stairs. I knew he was after no good when he left the table."

Amy pressed her handkerchief to her eyes, before she turned to answer him.

"What, crying? Has that fellow insulted you? By Jove, I'll kick him from here to Broadway." And with that Master Jack rushed out of the room, bent on carrying out his design against Mr. Short's comfort.

"No, no! Jack! Dear Jack!" called

out Miss Warner after him; but it was too late. He was gone.

Jack Houldworthy fortunately did not overtake Mr. Short. As he went down the last flight of stairs, he heard the hall-door close with a bang; and he felt sure that his enemy had escaped him. He was not quite rash enough, after a moment had been given him for reflection, to rush into the street after Mr. Short, and collar him, bring around a crowd, and provoke the interference of the police. It also occurred to him that his knowledge of what had really happened was yet extremely meagre, and it might be well for him to ascertain the facts from his cousin before he proceeded to extremities. He turned therefore, and slowly retraced his steps up stairs, vowing the direst vengeance on the head of the rejected lover; who, on his part, was just then striding towards Broadway, with his hat over his eyes, and breathing all sorts of maledictions on the whole family of Houldworthys, and everybody who ever had been, or might, could, would, or should be, in the remotest degree connected with them.

As Jack opened the door of their parlor, Amy sprang to meet him.

"O Jack," said she, "I am so glad to see you back! It was really nothing. It was very foolish in me to cry, I am sure. There was really and truly nothing to cry for."

Thereupon the young lady proceeded to recount the particulars of her interview with the broker, to the great delight of Jack, whose rage was turned into merriment when he heard what had happened. There was no need for him to promise to let Mr. Short alone; for it really seemed as if that unfortunate man had received severe punishment enough already.

Mr. Short did not make his appearance next morning at breakfast; in fact, he did not come home at all that night. Mr. Hobbs came down to his rolls and chop at the usual hour, however; and his pallid countenance betrayed that he had not slept well. He eyed his plate all through breakfast, except when he was drinking his coffee; and he took these opportunities to look at Miss Houldworthy over the top of his cup. He replied with a blush and a monosyllable when any one addressed him, which was not often, and looked so guilty and unhappy that even Mrs. Vincent had not the heart to rally him about the matter for a week afterwards. Mr. Hobbs had

thought of several pleasant compliments to pay Miss Houldworthy on the eve of her departure; and he probably would have succeeded in uttering one of them, had not Mrs. Vincent, at a most unfortunate moment, asked him for his empty coffee-cup. The shock to his nervous system was such that his courage vanished like a ghost at cock-crow; and the opportunity went by never to return. Mr. Hobbs very soon after rose from the table, and, managing to stammer out a few broken and unintelligible words of adieu to the Houldworthys, rushed up to his room, and, throwing himself upon his bed, buried his head in the pillows. He would probably have remained in this position all day, had not stern necessity compelled him to go to his daily avocation; and, as it was, he reached his place of business half an hour late. Mr. Hobbs was for many days after in a most melancholy frame of mind. Under these circumstances, music is thought to be very soothing, and it is often resorted to by the afflicted of both sexes. Mr. Hobbs bathed himself of a youthful partiality for the banjo; and, being the happy possessor of one of these instruments, he got it down, and went to the length of taking a dozen lessons of that celebrated instructor Mr. Bobson. If it is urged by any unfeeling reader, that the banjo inspires mirth rather than sentiment, it may be answered that the music drawn from it by Mr. Hobbs, who spent a great many succeeding evenings in practising on it, was of a character to strike the listener with the deepest melancholy, and certainly filled the breast of the occupant of the next room, Mr. Cartwright, with a most profound sentiment,—or, to put it in another form, a sentiment of the most profound disgust.

Immediately after this breakfast, so fraught with excitement to Mr. Hobbs, the Houldworthys took their departure,—at least, the ladies went away in a carriage; Jack, who had got a half-day off, remaining to superintend the removal of the luggage.

"I could not make out this morning whether Mr. Tinkham was glad or sorry to see the last of us," said Amy as they drove off,— "not, indeed, that it matters much."

"I doubt whether he comprehends that we are going," said Fanny. "He is certainly the most wonderfully stupid man I have ever met."

"Why Fanny, how can you use such expressions?" said Mrs. Houldworthy.

"I am sure I always considered Mr. Tinkham a remarkably quiet, sensible person."

"Quiet enough, certainly," said Fanny.

"But not so quiet as Mr. Hobbs," said Amy mischievously.

"Now, Amy, I will not have you say any thing against Mr. Hobbs. Poor young man! He felt so badly this morning that he could not talk."

"The plaintive way in which he said that Mr. Tinkham might help him to a chop, if he liked, was really so funny, I could hardly keep from smiling in his face."

"I am sure I saw nothing funny in it. Now, Amy, do you really think it was because I was going away?"

"Undoubtedly."

"I am sorry; but certainly it is not my fault. I am quite sure I never for a moment encouraged him."

"I should hope not," said Mrs. Houldworthy; "although I am sure Mr. Hobbs always seemed to me rather a well-behaved young man; and, for my own part, I could never see that he was disposed to show the slightest attentions to Fanny. In fact, he was evidently quite unused to the society of young ladies."

"Oh, yes! it was all in Amy's imagination, of course," said Fanny, who felt quite sure in reality that Mr. Hobbs was consumed by the ardor of his affection, and could not help feeling a little pity for him in the corner of her heart.

"I think, my dears," said Mrs. Houldworthy, "that we can perhaps find some more profitable subject of conversation. By the way, I hope that mirror will come safely. I hope Jack will not forget to give the carman directions about it. Those people are always so careless."

"I dare say, mamma, it will come all right," said Fanny.—"Did you notice, Amy, that Mr. Short was not at breakfast this morning?"

"I did," said Mrs. Houldworthy; "and I confess I was not very much grieved at not seeing him. I consider him a very disagreeable person. He must be away, I think; otherwise he would have come to bid us good-by at least, even if he was late down at breakfast. However, I asked Mrs. Vincent to say that we mentioned him."

"Why, mamma!" said Fanny.

"I am glad of it," said Amy simply.

"Why, Amy!" said Fanny, who knew the history of Amy's interview with Mr. Short, the day before, although Mrs. Houldworthy did not.

"I thought it proper," said Mrs. Houldworthy, "after living so long in the same house with him. You know we need take no further notice of him, my dear. In fact, I consider him a very undesirable person to know. If I can judge by the appearance of his face, he indulges too much in ardent spirits."

It will be seen by the last remark, that Mrs. Houldworthy's study of human nature had not been entirely fruitless, although she was not, indeed, quite infallible in her estimate.

Miss Warner did not again express her opinion that her aunt had done rightly, although she really approved it. She was not quite certain that she had not been a little too harsh with Mr. Short, notwithstanding her provocation. At all events, her resentment at his persecution had passed, and she was quite willing that he should receive no further affront from the family.

The conversation now turned on their new quarters, the probability of the safe transportation of their goods and chattels, and the proper disposition to be made of them on their arrival. I might fill many pages with the history of their trials before they got their arrangements completed; but I must leave such narratives as these to writers of a more domestic turn. They had five servants in rapid succession, before they got one to suit them; and, during this time, sad havoc was made amongst Mrs. Houldworthy's china. It might also be recounted, that the young ladies developed a taste for household economy, which surprised no one so much as themselves; and with the help of Mrs. Houldworthy, sundry cookery-books, and numerous experiments, accomplished results at which not even Master Jack could turn up his fastidious nose. These were happy days for the family, in spite of their somewhat contracted quarters, and their changed way of living. The bitter grief caused by the loss of their father and friend had passed away, although they still thought of him with sadness, at times. Their petty discomfitures they made light of; and all the more, perhaps, because they had seen serious trouble.

Amy Warner persisted in refusing to leave them; and they were too glad to have her stay to urge her more than lay within the limits of her duty. She was happy, she said; she could not live alone, and she had no other near relatives for whom she had any affection. She did not care for society; she had already had

quite enough of it; and she preferred the quiet life they were leading. If they really had a regard for her, they would leave her to do as she pleased. And so, after a time, the subject was dropped between them.

Jack never went out of an evening now; he had given up the club; and that of itself was a comfort to the little family. He had reduced his tobacco to a very moderate limit; and this kept him out of his own room, and more with the others. Sometimes Jack read aloud to them of an evening; but this was not often, for Jack was not a good reader. It was generally Amy who held the book when any thing fresh and entertaining was in hand; and her clear, sympathetic voice held the little circle in rapt attention. It was on one of these occasions, that Jack discovered that he liked poetry. Fanny Houldworthy, too, was always bright and cheerful; and her merry laugh drove away dullness. Not that she was especially witty; but she had such a graceful way of saying things of no great moment in themselves, that the listener was charmed, and did not care to search for the reason.

They were not absolutely without society. Several rather pleasant people, who worshipped at the same quiet little church where they were now regular attendants on Sunday, sought them out; and, although the family never became absolutely intimate with them, their visits made an agreeable variety, and were encouraged and returned. Their old set of fashionable friends were given up forever. Many of them were passed without recognition on either side; and none of them were encouraged to find them out. Rovingston, indeed, still held to Jack, and was always a welcome visitor at the house. Once or twice he was admitted to the family readings, although Miss Warner was shy of displaying her powers of elocution before him, and was only forced into it when refusal seemed ungracious. Rovingston was a well-read man, particularly in English literature: it was not so much a merit, considering the time he had at his disposal, but his taste and judgment were excellent; and, besides giving them many valuable hints, he loaned them books from his library, which was large and well chosen. It showed Mr. Rovingston's interest in the family, that he offered them this privilege; for the greater part of his books were in handsome, quaint bindings, after original de-

CHAPTER XIX.

IN WHICH THERE IS AN ODOR OF ORANGE-BLOSSOMS.

signs by their owner, and were jealously guarded, whether they were rare works, or new or old editions. A man with tastes of this sort is rarely a lender.

It was at this time that Jack began to make a collection of books on mechanics, histories of inventors, and the like. This taste of his was now the only one he encouraged; and it is possible he was at times a little extravagant in gratifying it: the habit of spending money is not easily broken. Many of his few leisure moments, after he had lunched down town, were spent in exploring the hidden secrets of the old bookshops, and dragging out works which some man of science had, perhaps, been driven to part with for a mere trifle, by dire necessity, years before, and for which the bookseller had long given up all hopes of ever finding a customer. Jack fitted up his workshop in a vacant room in the house, — it was a small room like all the others, — and here he arranged his worm-eaten treasures on shelves, topped by the bust of a certain great English engineer, and flanked on either side by the engraved portraits of two inventors which he had hit upon in one of his researches, and bought for a sum so nearly nominal that it was exceeded tenfold by the cost of their frames. To this den, as his sister Fanny called it, Jack retreated at odd seasons, and especially whenever he felt the blues coming on. Jack was generally cheerful, but old associations are strong; and now and then the quiet evenings of the little household did bore him, and thoughts of the noisier pleasures of the Twiddler Club, of the cruel wound to his pride which Blanche Harley had inflicted, and of the loss of his kind father, would crowd upon him. He never suffered his melancholy to get him down and roll on him, as did the honest Cheap Jack of Mr. Dickens's story; but there was sometimes a fierce struggle in that little workshop. Some men would have rushed off to the theatre, or the first form of cheap dissipation which offered. If one's duty were always pleasant, where would be the merit of performing it? The intervals between the fits of despondency became longer as time wore on; and Jack was certainly getting reconciled to his new position much faster than any of his friends would have thought possible. As has been said, the family enjoyed much peaceful happiness, and Jack was not an exception. In this respite, he gained strength for the new buffets which fortune had in store for him.

THE discharge of Bob Pullis from the employment of Messrs. C. Smith & Co. did not prove such a misfortune as he and his friends had at first anticipated; and this pleasant result came about through his having a pretty sister. Bob's recovery was slow; but as he was encouraged by the hope of something to do when he got about again, and was by nature a wonderfully good-tempered, sanguine little fellow, his conduct during this period would have been called angelic by women less prejudiced in his favor than his good mother. The resignation with which, when he was getting better and began to feel a returning appetite, he contented himself with a single bowl of gruel, and very thin at that, would have been something absolutely marvellous to a lady of any experience with sick persons of the male sex. And, at an earlier period, to have seen him swallow the boluses prescribed by his old-fashioned doctor, would have been as pleasant and interesting a spectacle as to see the elephant of a menagerie tuck away gingerbread and peanuts; although the comparison is in every way a vile one, because the boluses were ponderous, and Bob was small. In short, he behaved, as Mrs. Pullis privately expressed it to her friends and neighbors, like a blessed martyr. Bob himself would hardly have laid claim to such a title; many gentlemen in his position would have been less modest.

Houldworthy used to go over now and then to inquire after Bob; but the distance seemed so great to him, owing to possible delays on the ferry, that his visits were not made very often. At first he found the family tearful, then they appeared resigned; and finally Miss Pullis opened the door for him, one Sunday afternoon, with a radiant face. She beckoned him in mysteriously, and whispered to him to go into the parlor.

"Such news!" she said. "And Bob don't know it yet. We have been afraid to tell him, but I can't see any possible objection; can you? He ate such a big bowl of gruel to-day for dinner, and positively almost swallowed the spoon afterwards, he was so hungry. And the doctor only comes every other day now."

Houldworthy intimated that, if he should be told what this wonderful news

was, perhaps he might judge better whether it would be safe to let Bob know of it.

"Why, didn't I tell? Of course not. What a goose I am! Why, it is that Bob has the promise of a new place and a nice one too,—much better than being under that old bear of a Chipman."

Jack expressed his delight.

"Yes. It's the Shelverton Iron Works. It's a large concern, where they make castings and things, and I don't know what."

"In the city, is it not?"

"Yes, in New York. And Bob is to have quite an important place in the counting-room. There's a poor man in the place now, who drinks awfully, they say; and they have only been waiting for the right man, to turn him out. And, O Mr. Houldworthy! isn't it so nice?"

"For the poor man who drinks?"

"No, of course not, Mr. Houldworthy. For Bob,—you know very well who I mean."

"Yes, I'm sure it is very jolly,—very jolly indeed," said Jack with a sigh. He was thinking of his own place.

"Why, you don't seem so glad as I thought you would. That is—excuse me—I ought not to have said that. It is not just what I mean. But do you know any thing against the place?"

"Certainly not. I do feel very glad indeed. Only perhaps I was for a moment a little envious of Bob for his prospects of being better off than I am."

"Oh, you cannot mean that! Your place at Smith & Company's was certainly better than Bob's. At least he said it was."

"Well, never mind," said Jack: "why cannot we go up now at once and tell him the good news? It cannot do him any harm, if he is as well as you say."

"Yes, but there is another reason. It was only a little while ago that I,—that we heard the news; and he was asleep, and has not waked up since."

"I am sorry, for I should like to see him, and congratulate him. And, by the by, this package is a tumbler of jelly, which my mother sent him."

"Oh, thank you many times! You are so kind! And why will you not wait? he is sure to wake up very soon. He has had a very long nap already."

The prospect of a sight at little Bob's happiness was so tempting that Jack at once decided to stay, and laid down his hat. Then it occurred to him to ask how

it happened that Bob was so lucky as to get such a situation.

Miss Pullis cast down her black eyes, and blushed violently. "It was through a friend of the family," she said.

"Ah!" said Jack. "It is certainly very pleasant to have such friends."

"Yes," said Miss Pullis, and then she became silent for a moment. "Do you like to look at photographs?" she said suddenly. "There is my album on the table at your elbow."

"Oh, yes, of course!" said Jack, taking up the album. "I think it is very interesting."

This, by the way, was a polite fiction. Besides, he had been through this album once or twice already, to beguile the tedium of waiting alone in the little parlor. He began to think Miss Pullis's black eyes tiresome.

Miss Pullis drew up her chair on the opposite side of the table, and began to describe the pictures, after the style of a showman at a panorama.

"That," said she, "is my brother Robert. It was taken after he had just recovered from a long sickness, and he was thin. Otherwise it is good, only a little grave." Bob Pullis had his hair brushed straight up from his forehead in this picture, and looked as if he was a particularly serious divinity student, who boarded himself from economical reasons, and so was undergoing a course of gradual starvation.

"That," continued Miss Pullis, "is my uncle Thomas. He was a very amiable man, although he does not look so there. That scar on his face, he got by tumbling down stairs when a boy. He went to California, and I believe was doing very well there, the last we heard of him. But then that was a year ago, and nobody knows what may have happened in that time." Uncle Thomas's portrait looked as if he might be a twin brother of the famous Capt. Kidd.

"That," pursued Miss Pullis, "is my aunt Jane. I don't know much about her. She died when I was a child." Jack mentally concluded, after an inspection of Aunt Jane's countenance, that this was perhaps as well for her relatives.

"That old gentleman on the next page," Miss Pullis went on relentlessly, "is my grandfather—or one of them," she suddenly added, with a praiseworthy desire not to deceive her listener.

"Ah! Quite a fine-looking old gentleman," said Jack. "He was in the seafaring way, I should judge."

"Not at all," said Miss Pullis with much dignity: "he was a doctor."

"Ah, yes, to be sure, of course," said Jack. "I had it in a bad light. And this is your grandmother, on the other side?"

"No: that is an aunt of my mother's."

"Ah, indeed," said Jack with that air of extreme interest which young men are compelled to assume when pictures of other persons' aunts are shown them by young ladies.

"That," continued the remorseless Miss Pullis, "is one of my best friends."

"Quite a pretty face," said Jack: "who is she?"

"Her name is Miss Munchinello. She lives quite near here, and we see a great deal of each other. I don't think she is so pretty as most persons do, but she is a very nice girl."

"I dare say," said Jack. "Is she Italian?"

"Oh, no! At least I don't know that she is. It is an Italian name though; isn't it?"

"It sounds like one," said Jack. And then he was introduced successively to Miss Brown, Miss Batterson, Aunt Lucy, Cousin Sarah, Raphael, Edwin Booth, Miss Charlotte Cushman, Mr. Lester Wallack, and I know not how many more persons of great or small celebrity, whom Miss Pullis openly or secretly admired, or to whom she was related.

"And who is this gentleman?" asked Jack.

"Oh, that is Mr. Tompkins! That is the gentleman who got my brother his place." Miss Pullis blushed a second time, and Jack noticed it.

"He has a very pleasant face, certainly," said Jack. Miss Pullis blushed a third time, and Jack thought it prudent to turn over the page; when he came upon a young man, overshadowed by a scrubby spruce-tree, and leaning with a melancholy but graceful air upon something which from its shape, and the expression of the young man's face, might have been taken for a memorial urn set over the remains of his best friend.

"Ah, here is a face that is familiar," said Jack. "Who can this be?"

"Oh! that is a particular friend of Mr. Tompkins.—Mr. Hobbs. Do you know him?" Miss Pullis spoke with animation, because of her delight that her album contained some one whom Mr. Houldworthy knew.

"He boarded at the same house with us," Jack explained.

"He is a very quiet young man," said Miss Pullis, "but don't you think him fine looking?"

Jack assented, although certainly the fact had never struck him before, notwithstanding the number of opportunities he had had for observing Mr. Hobbs's physiognomy. However, the picture was the last in the book; and he was very glad to shut the clasps, and have done with it.

"And now," said Miss Pullis after a pause, "I will see whether my brother has waked up," and with this she departed.

"Mr. Tompkins, eh?" said Jack to himself. "Well, Mr. Tompkins, I congratulate you. It seems, confound it! that, from taking an interest in Bob, I have somehow got to be a friend of the family. I may come in the end to hob-nob with the nobby Hobbs. Well, after all, what does it matter?"

Houldworthy was presently ushered into little Bob's room, where the patient lay with a faint smile on his face, in the same attitude, apparently, which he had first assumed, when he lay down so many weeks before. Bob began in the old way,—

"Houldworthy, this is really kind of you to take all this trouble."

"Never mind that," said Jack. "I come this time on a pleasant errand. I congratulate you."

"Congratulate me? What for, pray?"

Houldworthy looked inquiringly towards Mrs. Pullis and Julia. "Then he don't know," said he. "May I tell him? No, you had better, Miss Pullis." But Miss Pullis preferred to delegate the work to her mother.

"Robert, dear," said his mother, "what should you think, if a certain gentleman whom we know had gone about everywhere, to all his friends, trying to find a situation for you?"

"And succeeded?" cried little Bob, opening his eyes very wide. "And succeeded! Has he succeeded?" he asked, appealing to Houldworthy.

Houldworthy nodded assent.

"I can't believe it," said Bob with moist eyes. "It's too good news. I can't believe it." Upon this he turned over to the wall, and lay there several moments. Jack looked out of the window, and Mrs. Pullis and Julia took the opportunity to furtively wipe their own eyes. Presently Bob turned to Houldworthy.

"Mr. Houldworthy," said he, "this is so kind of you! I shall never forget it

until my dying day. I never shall, indeed."

"Yes, but you don't owe this good fortune to me, my dear fellow," said Jack hastily. "I wish you did; and, certainly, my good will was not wanting. It's quite another man."

"Not to you? Who, then?"

"Why, to Mr. Hobbs—no, no, not Hobbs—Tompkins, Mr. Tompkins."

Bob looked at his sister, who turned her head away. Then he took her by the hand, and, drawing her down to him as he lay there, kissed her on the lips very tenderly, but without a word.

"And now," said Jack, making a show of looking at his watch, "I think I must leave you. I have got a long walk before me, you know, and I waited some time for you down stairs. I only came to find out how you were getting on; and I was just in time, it seems, to hear this good news. I see now, very plainly, that you will not let them keep you here in bed many days longer. Good-by. No, no; positively I cannot stay a moment longer. Good-by."

Jack left them to talk over Bob's good luck, and set off.

"There must be something in that Tompkins, after all," he said to himself, as he walked down the street; "there must be something in him, although one would never guess it from his photograph. And I think, on the whole, that I am rather glad I know the Pullises, in spite of that confounded album."

It was not many months afterwards, when Jack Houldworthy, on reaching home one evening, tossed into his sister's lap two envelopes, which looked very much as if they contained wedding-cards. Their appearance did not belie them. The nuptials of Mr. Charles Albert Tompkins and Miss Pullis were about to be celebrated; and they had honored the Houldworthys with two sets of invitations,—one for Mr. John Houldworthy, and the other embracing Mrs. Houldworthy and Miss Houldworthy. Of Miss Warner they had never heard. Jack observed that he imagined that his mother and sister would hardly care to be present at this interesting ceremony; and, indeed, he did not suppose they would be expected; but he felt as if he himself ought to go, notwithstanding it was a great bore, and he heartily wished Charles Albert at the North Pole,—a sentiment at which Fanny, with a sympathetic feeling for the young bride whom she had never seen, cried, "For

shame!" Jack continued, that although Bob Pullis, who was a very humble little fellow, and showed sometimes an almost annoying sense of Jack's greatness, would not, perhaps, place much dependence on his coming, he would nevertheless be overjoyed to see him; and he was really such a good little fellow that Jack was inclined to give him that pleasure, even at the expense of his own convenience and comfort. So Fanny was commissioned to look up a wedding-present suitable for the household use of the future Mrs. Tompkins; as well as to ransack Jack's wardrobe, and select a pair of gloves, a tie, and a suit of clothes fit to appear in. Jack's party garments had been left literally to their own destruction so long that he very much doubted the success of his sister's exploration. But few things are impossible to a determined woman; and as there was plenty of time, and a small tailor's shop convenient in a neighboring street, a suitable attire was completed without any expense to Master Jack, who, not being in the secret of how it was managed, was a good deal surprised at the result. It was not absolutely a "swell" costume certainly; but Jack reflected that it probably would not be a swell wedding; and, having by this time more extended views of life than in old days, he concluded not to make any objections. He was even good-humored enough to submit himself to the inspection of his family, after he had arrayed himself in what he called his "gorgeous attire;" and was rewarded, as he deserved to be, by their encomiums, which are not disagreeable to most men, no matter from what source they may come. And then Master Jack set off in a public conveyance; for he was very rigid in his economy, in most respects, in those days.

Charles Albert and his beloved Julia were united in a small wooden church not many rods from the residence of the bride's mother, which was already lighted up (for the hour was late) as if there had been a great victory of the national arms, and the citizens had been called on to illuminate their dwellings. The officiating clergyman was a middle-aged, excellent preacher of the Baptist denomination, who, by reason of long practice, had acquired such fluency in pronouncing the marriage-service, that it really seemed to the expectant guests as if the ceremony had been somewhat abridged. Mr. Tompkins, however, had no such sensations; and, as he was one of the persons

most deeply interested, others had certainly no right to complain. As for Mr. Hobbs, who officiated as a blushing groomsman, with Miss Munchinello leaning very heavily on his arm, and pretending to be a little faint, he would afterwards have taken his oath that the tying of the knot could not have occupied less than two hours and a half. Indeed, the church was so crowded by curious neighbors,—many of whom could not see what was going on, and so, I grieve to say, kept up a great whispering and titling,—and the atmosphere was so hot and uncomfortable, that even Mr. Jerome Frederick Tompkins—an elder brother who officiated as another groomsman, and had Miss Batterson hanging on his arm—was observed to look very unhappy and to frequently give his cravat a tug, as if he feared strangulation. And yet Jerome Frederick had the reputation of being a very off-hand fellow, and sang comic songs and made puns.

It was generally conceded by those young ladies of the neighborhood who were fortunate enough to get a sight of the ceremony, that the bride looked "sweetly;" and her dress was the subject of discussion for several days afterwards. Charles Albert was, in a more private manner, pronounced "nice looking," although a certain proportion affirmed that he acted "as if he was very proud." This last opinion probably had its rise in the fact that, on his way up the aisle, Charles Albert set his manly chest very much forward, and elevated his chin,—a deportment which a popular fallacy ascribes to very haughty individuals, but which, in Charles Albert's case, was the result of a severe course of military drill in a popular city regiment. The happy bridegroom (it is well, perhaps, to use the common euphemism, although he was just then very hot and unhappy) was led by the music of the organ and the concourse of spectators to feel as if he was on parade, and accordingly held up his head and turned his toes out, in a fashion to do his drill-master great credit. The crowd outside the church, which was found to have greatly increased when the wedding party came out, rather added to the illusion; and Mr. Tompkins did not lower his chin until he was lost to sight in the carriage. The people did not disperse until almost the last person had left the church. It was a tolerably well-mannered crowd, and only a few jeered, and only a few elbowed the heavy policeman on duty;

and only a very few indeed climbed up to look into the church-windows, because the peculiar construction of the edifice rendered this proceeding difficult. It was nevertheless a very large crowd; for it is an undoubted fact, the reason of which the reader may seek out for himself, that no events so excite public curiosity as weddings and executions.

On arriving at the house of Mrs. Pullis, Jack found another and a smaller crowd collected outside; but it was composed, for the most part, of very young and very dirty urchins, although the noise they made was by no means commensurate with their size. Jack, who was a little late, pushed through them with some difficulty, and was saluted by cries of "Hallo, here's another feller." Turning at the door, he was gratified to observe a policeman, who had just arrived, applying his rattan very freely among the noisier ones, and clearing the sidewalk. The door opened automatically, to all appearance, there being a small servant behind it on the watch at the sidelight. Almost the first person Jack saw on entering was Bob Pullis, who had now recovered his ordinary health and spirits, and who, it need hardly be said, shook Jack's hand very warmly, and whispered in his ear, "Houldworthy, this is very kind of you indeed, and I shall not forget it. I really did not think you would come."

"Not come?" said Jack,—he spoke a little hypocritically, although, at the sight of Bob's face, he believed what he was saying, for the moment,— "Not come? Of course I should come. I wouldn't have staid away on any account."

"Well, it is really very kind of you," said Bob again.

"My mother and sister desired me to present their congratulations and excuses. They never go into society now; and, besides, the distance would make it next to impossible."

"I'm sure we are very sorry not to see them," said Bob, "although, of course, you know, I hardly expected them. That is, the distance and altogether—Step up stairs and leave your hat and things.—Ladies, allow this gentleman to step upstairs, please. Or permit me to introduce you. Miss Brown, Mr. Houldworthy. Miss Gordan, Mr. Houldworthy. Just step up stairs and make yourself at home, Houldworthy; first door to the right, at the head of the stairs."

The young ladies with whom Jack was

thus unexpectedly made acquainted were sitting upon the stairs; and, in view of the crowded state of the rooms, perhaps their choice was, after all, not such an unwise one. They unwound their arms from each other, and made way for Jack, who thought himself justified in not stopping to address them more than a civil word, and so made the best of his way up stairs. Here, in one of the little chambers, was a confused heap of hats, caps, and outside garments; and several young gentlemen, who all had too much oil on their hair, were putting on their gloves, arranging their neckties, and giving the last touches to their toilets, with a deliberation which might have excited a suspicion that they were in no hurry to get down stairs.

"How do I look, Frank?" said one to the other. "Am I all right?"

"Yes," said the other, "you look as pretty as a lalock. Have you called the roll?"

"What roll?"

"The roll of hairs on your upper lip. It looks to me as if there is one more on one side than there is on the other."

"Oh, come, Frank, don't be a fool! Am I all right, or am I not?"

"Yes, yes! Come along, if you are coming; if not, you'd better go home."

Saying this, the speaker departed, followed by his friend; and several others took courage to go down after them, wisely thinking that the scrutiny of the brilliant company below would be divided if a party should encounter it together.

Jack did not stand much in awe of the persons assembled below, and he was very soon ready to go down. He found that the group which had preceded him had got no farther than the foot of the stairs, because the boldest of them was making himself agreeable to Miss Brown and Miss Gordian, and the rest were afraid to go any farther without them.

Jack pressed through them, and was instantly seized upon by Bob Pullis, who had evidently been lying in wait for him.

"Come with me," said Bob: "I want to introduce you to old Mr. Tompkins, — jolly old fellow; you'll like him, I know."

"Yes, but don't you think I had better pay my respects first to the bride and your mother?"

"Ah, well," said Bob, "I think my mother has just stepped out for a moment, but there's Julia. You can see her, if you like; but it won't be so easy getting at her."

The fact was that the good Mrs. Pullis, who had been all day long in a feverish state of excitement, was just then below, superintending the preparation of the refreshments. Houldworthy managed with the help of Bob, however, to squeeze up to the corner of the room where the bridal group was standing in state. Mrs. Julia had never looked so well, Jack thought; and he hinted as much in a delicate way, as he offered his congratulations. Her eyes were brighter than ever, if possible, at the compliment; but her husband, who again had the air of appearing on drill, heard it and frowned. He was forced to smile, though, the next moment, on being introduced to Jack, so it really went for nothing; and his ill humor was in part dispelled by Jack's hearty manner. Jack had a pleasant word too for Mr. Hobbs, who was standing near by, looking very unhappy with Miss Munchinello still attached to his arm. Miss Munchinello no longer felt faint; but she still leaned very heavily on Mr. Hobbs, in an attitude which she considered graceful. Miss Munchinello's face was wreathed in smiles, and her head was wreathed with flowers, and altogether she presented a very beaming appearance when Jack was introduced to her. Next came Mr. Jerome Frederick Tompkins, who was standing near by, and who, having speedily recovered his self-possession, had kept Miss Batterson in a continual state of titter ever since he left the church. Twice in the carriage, and three times since, Miss Batterson had called him a horrid creature, and requested him to "do stop now;" but as Miss Batterson was evidently amused, and did not quite mean what she said, Mr. Jerome Frederick still persevered in his efforts to be funny.

No sooner was this interesting ceremony finished by Jack, than he was dragged off by little Bob, and introduced to an immense number of persons, who seemed to look all alike, and whose names and countenances he instantly forgot. Jack saw with some annoyance, that his friend was determined to make him the lion of the evening; but, as there was no help for it, he put the best face he could on the matter; and reviving with an effort his old society manners, and being withal well looking and well dressed, he won the complacent regard of the elders and the admiration of the young people. It was really astonishing to see how many persons were collected together

er and actually moved about within the four walls of that little house. In view of Bob's bettered circumstances, the family which had occupied a portion of the rooms had some time ago been got rid of; and their places were in part supplied by two or three lodgers. These young men had in the most generous manner given up their rooms, in consideration of being invited to the festivities; and so the whole house was at the disposal of the Pullises. But for this, the invited guests could not possibly have been got in at the front door by any ordinary process of compression, unless they came and went by relays. The bride's circle of acquaintance was not, indeed, very large, but that of the Tompkinses was very much greater; and, besides, Charles Albert had been inconsiderate enough to invite the greater part of the regimental company to which he belonged; and, what was worse, a great many of them came, and, as may be imagined, monopolized the ladies, and trod on the toes of the more modest civilians. Everybody bore the crowding to which they had to submit with the utmost good humor; and, indeed, it seemed rather to promote the enjoyment of the occasion. Single gentlemen, finding themselves suddenly plumped against unmarried ladies whom they did not know, took advantage of the accident to speak to them, and make little jokes about the *faux pas*, and so glided insensibly into conversation about the weather, and previous weddings they had attended. It is, to be sure, disagreeable, when indulging in a rational conversation with a lady, to have to be constantly on one's guard lest a push from behind should cause one to step on her toes; but then the conversation on such occasions is very seldom rational, and so is helped on by amusing little incidents of this kind. There is, besides, a certain excitement in having always to be on the lookout for the shipwreck of one's self or one's partner, and constant pushing and shoving keeps the faculties awake. And everybody was bent on stopping, and making an evening of it.

The scene amused Houldworthy, but he made several efforts to get away. These were without success, because Bob had always some new person ready, to whom it was absolutely necessary to introduce him. Under Bob's guidance, Houldworthy was piloted up to a corner of one of the rooms, where the elder Mr. Tompkins sat in a kind of state, with his wife at his right hand. This worthy

couple were both very round-faced and good-natured, and beamed around on the company as if they would say, "Here we are; our son Charles Albert, one of the finest young men of his day, is just married, and his father is going to set him up in business for himself: but, bless you all, we're not a bit proud if we have got money."

"Ah!" said Mr. Tompkins, "Mr. Houldworthy, is it? Glad to see you, Mr. Houldworthy. I used to know your father very well."

"Indeed!" said Jack.

"Yes: he used to buy of us at one time. That was before you moved so far up town. I remember him very well. He was a very fine man, sir, was your father; what we call a square man, sir, and always prompt to settle, but very particular about his teas, — very particular about his teas. But we always contrived to suit him, — we always contrived to suit him somehow. If we hadn't any thing on hand to suit him, why, we generally went to work and mixed up something, don't you see? ha! ha! But that was when we was doing a good deal less business than we are now. We can't afford to take that little trouble with a customer now, I can tell you, if he is ever so good. How much do you suppose our sales amounted to last year?"

Jack was forced to reply that he had not the slightest idea.

"A little over eighty thousand dollars, sir, — a little over eighty thousand dollars."

Jack expressed a fitting amount of surprise at the extent of Mr. Tompkins's business.

"Yes, sir, and I can remember when we thought five thousand a very good business; and that wasn't so very long ago either. Excuse me," continued Mr. Tompkins, who suddenly became aware that his better half, who found herself neglected, was gently nudging him with her elbow: "let me introduce you to my wife. Eliza, this is Mr. Houldworthy. Mr. Houldworthy, my wife, sir."

Mr. Houldworthy thereupon entered into an enlivening conversation with Mrs. Tompkins about the crowded state of the rooms, the peculiar characteristics of marriages in general and of this marriage in particular, in the course of which he gradually became possessed with the idea, he could not tell how, that Mrs. Tompkins thought Charles Albert might have done very much better than marry into the Pullis family, but that she was really

a good old soul, and had not interposed any serious objections to his carrying out his own plan for his happiness. When Jack took leave of the worthy couple, who seemed to regard him as a person of some distinction, and kept him by them as long as they could, Mr. Tompkins gave him a most cordial invitation to come and see them at their house in Thirteenth Street.

"We shall be glad to see you at any time, and so will the girls," said Mr. Tompkins. "By the way, Eliza, where are the girls? I don't know what has become of them."

"I dare say I shall meet the young ladies in the course of the evening," said Jack. "And I am sure I should be delighted to call on you, but I have given up all society since my father died."

"Given up all society? Bless me, Mr. Houldworthy, that is very wrong, very wrong indeed, sir, for a young man like you. However, as I said, we shall be very glad to see you, very glad indeed. And good night, if we don't see you again. We are going very soon. Good night, sir."

Jack very civilly expressed his pleasure at having met them, and went away.

"I wonder if they would have asked me to come and see them, if they had known how poor we are now," said Jack to himself. "Yes, I think they would; they seem a good honest sort of people. So he used to sell my father tea, did he?"

To do Mr. Tompkins justice, he knew the whole story of the elder Mr. Houldworthy's failure and death, and, having respected the father, he had conceived a kindly feeling for the son. As for Mrs. Tompkins, it must be confessed that she was somewhat impressed by Jack's well-bred air, although she did not quite understand the feeling, and certainly made no unfavorable comparisons between him and either Charles Albert or Jerome Frederick.

Of course there were refreshments. It would be an imputation on the hospitality of the Pullises to omit to mention this fact. There was a spread of food and drink, which would have satisfied even such an epicure as Mr. Charles Lush; and there were dishes too, with French names which Mrs. Pullis had never heard before, and wisely did not try to pronounce. It was all the work of a New York confectioner, who certainly deserved credit for every thing except punctuality; and perhaps the poor man was hardly to be blamed on this point. He had received rather more

orders than he could conveniently fill for that night, and confectioners must live. They cannot eat their own ices and jellies, and certainly ought to be permitted to reap their harvest when it comes. This press of business put the confectioner's men very much out of humor; however; and this re-acted on the head of poor Mrs. Pullis. Still there was enough for everybody, notwithstanding the great number of military gentlemen present; and, if the company had not insanely insisted upon all crowding at once into the little room where the refreshments were served, there would not have been the slightest trouble. Not that there was any great harm done, indeed; for when those behind saw that it was quite impossible for any more to press into the supper-room, unless they got in over the heads of those already inside, — a very difficult proceeding in view of the lowness of the ceiling, — they went away, and waited for their turn in the most commendable manner. The crowded state of the room, and the difficulty of getting at it from the kitchen below, to be sure, made the work of the servants rather difficult; and one of the results was, that, when Mr. Hobbs had got Miss Munchinello a plate of ice-cream, he could not by any possibility find her a spoon to eat it with, until it had reached the consistency of boiled milk. The only refreshment, also, which Mr. Hobbs could secure for himself was the drumstick of a fowl, which he found great difficulty in eating, although the supply of plates, knives, and forks was positively tremendous. Mr. Jerome Frederick Tompkins, however, when he was released from duty, managed to secure every thing he wanted for himself and all his friends around him. Jerome Frederick was, it is true, a much less modest man than Mr. Hobbs.

Jack went in late, by the special advice of Bob, who kept near him all the evening, as if he was afraid he would go away too early, and in the end succeeded in introducing him to almost everybody present. In the supper-room, — it really amounted to a supper, — Bob was at his elbow, and managed to secure him every delicacy. There was sherry and champagne, — a present from old Mr. Tompkins, Bob whispered. His mother, who believed in temperance principles, did not quite like it, but she was afraid to make any objections; and Houldworthy would have found his voyage across the ferry extremely short that night, if he had drunk as much as Bob; in his hospitality, pressed on him. "I never drink any liquor, my-

self," Bob said; "but you do, I know, and there's plenty of it."

Jack, however, contented himself with drinking a bumper to the health of the bride. It was a very long time since he had drunk so much as that.

Just then one of the young Pullises rushed in with the exclamation, "Oh, Bob! they're going," and then rushed out again.

"Excuse me, Houldworthy," said Bob, "I'll be right back. I find my sister is going. You see, they are to stop at a hotel in New York to-night, and are going off to Niagara in the first train in the morning. — Here, waiter, just see to this gentleman, will you? See that he has every thing he wants. — I'll be right back, Houldworthy." And off Bob rushed, to bid farewell to his sister.

The news that the bride and bridegroom, the bridegroom's brother, and one of the bridegroom's sisters, were about to take their departure, created some excitement; and the result was that the supper-room was presently cleared of everybody except Jack Houldworthy. He had no curiosity to see the spectacle of the happy couple bidding farewell to their friends; and as he had been obliged to content himself with a very indifferent substitute for dinner, in order to reach Williamsburg in season, he now made a remarkably successful attack on the viands around him, as well as on whatever the waiter was able to bring him. I am compelled to record, too, that he enjoyed it. There was nothing ethereal about Jack at any time; and he had not eaten boned turkey nor Charlotte Russe in a long while.

It may be imagined that Master Jack left the table in good humor; and it will occasion no surprise, that, meeting immediately afterwards the pretty Miss Munchinello, who had at last shaken off Mr. Hobbs, or been shaken off by him, Jack should have stopped to talk with her for the purpose of seeing whether she resembled her photograph, and whether she spoke with an Italian accent. Miss Munchinello did her best to be agreeable to Mr. Houldworthy; but that did not prevent him from presently remembering that he had a long distance to go, as well as to rise at an early hour next morning. He had gratified Bob by coming, and there was really no occasion for him to stay any longer. So he sought out Bob, who was not very far off, and seemed to have his eye on his friend, and told him very decidedly that now he must certainly go. Bob was anxious to have him stop until the

others had gone, and smoke a quiet cigar with him. Or, why not stay all night, and go over with him in the morning? There was plenty of room in the house, now Julia was gone, Bob said with a sigh. And all these people would soon be out of the way. They were only waiting for somebody to start, and off they would shy, like a flock of sheep after their leader. It was old Mr. Tompkins that kept them, he was satisfied. It was a great pity the house was not big enough for a dance. They had thought of that, and, after a great deal of talk, had been obliged to give it up as impracticable. There was really nothing for them to do, unless they played games; and there was not even room enough for that. It was certainly a very slow wedding, and he was sorry for Houldworthy's sake.

Jack replied to all this, that he had enjoyed himself hugely, but positively he could not stop a moment longer. Then he reminded little Bob that he should be glad to take leave of his mother. Bob looked a little annoyed, and confessed that his mother had been a little overcome by the separation with Julia, and had retired up stairs for a few moments to recover her composure. She would be down very soon, and this was an additional reason why Houldworthy should stop.

But Houldworthy persisted in going, and finally got away, after having to take from Bob a very large and very bad cigar, — Bob was no judge of tobacco, — to smoke going over the ferry. It thus turned out that Jack did not see Mrs. Pullis during the whole evening, if the glance he got of her at the church is excepted. The good woman was in no place very long at once that day, and was, indeed, in such a state of excitement and agitation that she did not recover for two or three weeks. It was perhaps fortunate, as she said, that her younger daughter was only thirteen, and could not be married at present.

It was not so very late when Jack left the Pullises, but he had several detentions on the way; and he was surprised when he reached home to see his sister Fanny sitting up for him.

"Why, puss," said he, "you up?"

"Ah! Jack," said Fanny, throwing down her book, "I thought you were never coming. Did you have a good time you great, good-for-nothing fellow?"

"Oh, an ecstatic time."

"No, but honestly, did you?"

"Hum, well, I don't know. Yes, tolerably good."

"And how did the bride look? Was she pretty? And how was she dressed? Tell me all about it."

"Hum, I don't know," said Jack. "She was dressed like all brides, I believe. She had on a white gown of some sort, and a veil, and a lot of thingumbobs in her hair. Yes, she looked well enough. Come, go to bed immediately, puss. Do you know what time it is?"

It is certain that brothers are the most hard-hearted and unfeeling creatures in the world.

CHAPTER XX.

IN WHICH THERE IS A LITTLE MUSIC, AND A GREAT DEAL OF ANXIETY.

Time wore on. It is a habit with time, which is very pleasant when we are bored, and very disagreeable when we are enjoying ourselves. John Houldworthy was on the whole tolerably well satisfied at the flight of the seasons. Each day seemed short enough, for he was busy; but the change in his life and ways of thinking was so great that it seemed many years ago since his father died.

In point of fact, it was two years since the death of the elder Mr. Houldworthy; and in that time the nation had also been going through a bitter experience. With the history of the vicissitudes of the war, this story has but little to do, since it is only a plain account of the fortunes of a family very worthy but hardly distinguished. If John Houldworthy could have been spared by his widowed mother to use a sword in defence of the Union, or even to carry a musket in the ranks of its defenders, the course of this narrative might have been different.

It was the summer of 1863. The national armies had begun to close in on the rebels on the west and south-west; but the value of their successes was as yet hardly apparent. The brave but severely-trying Army of the Potomac had passed through the hands of three commanders, and now, under the fourth, was barely able to hold its own, and protect the capital. Nobody could yet foretell what was to be the end of it all; and it was perhaps not remarkable that Mr. Ctesiphon Smith, to whom Jack Houldworthy applied one morning early in July for an increase of salary, should have received the petition without much favor. Messrs. C. Smith & Company had

dealt largely with the government, and they had not found it a good paymaster, even in paper money. They still trusted in the strength and good faith of the American people, and they were still accepting large orders from the same source; yet this did not prevent the senior partner from getting very nervous at times,—so nervous that, in spite of his self-control, he could not help showing his irritation. Jack had the ill luck to come upon him when he was in one of these unpleasant moods; and, as a natural consequence, the interview was not only unsatisfactory, but very trying to the temper of both parties. Jack pleaded his long service and the high prices; Mr. Ctesiphon Smith answered that they had already raised Mr. Houldworthy's pay once; and, although they were on the whole well satisfied with him, he must not presume too much on that fact. The basis of Mr. Smith's argument was, that the whole country might be going to the dogs,—he hoped not, but really it sometimes seemed as if there was no help for it,—and, if it did, it would make very little difference to Houldworthy whether he had a large or a small salary, or, indeed, any salary at all. In short, the house was not yet prepared by any means to increase its expenses. Mr. Smith would be very glad to oblige Mr. Houldworthy if it were practicable; but really he could not see his way clear to it at present. And, if any way offered for Mr. Houldworthy to better his fortunes, why, they could not presume to stand in his way, although they should be very sorry to part with him, very sorry indeed. And then Mr. Ctesiphon Smith intimated in his usual civil but decided manner that he had seen quite enough of Mr. Houldworthy, and that he was busy, and wanted to be left alone.

Jack went away angry and dissatisfied with the way in which he had been treated. Perhaps he had at that time rather too great an opinion of the value of his services; and certainly, if he was not puffed up with pride, it was not the fault of his mother and sister. It was certain, at least, that he did not stand in a position to know much of the affairs of the house, nor how much reason Mr. Smith really had for his despondency and ill humor. Jack only knew that, for his own part, he had labored hard and late, and that he had worked in the evening for a week at a time more than once; and what galled him especially was, that Mr. Chipman had just informed

him that he would have to work that evening, and he had promised to take the two girls to a concert, and had even procured the tickets. This was an enjoyment in which Jack had not often indulged himself in the last two years; and he had shown signs of rebellion for the first time during his stay with Messrs. C. Smith & Company. He had even undertaken to argue the question with Mr. Chipman; but that gentleman had stated the case very plainly and squarely, and had gone away before Jack had time to quarrel with him. I think Jack felt this disappointment rather more keenly even than Mr. Smith's refusal to raise his salary; because he had not counted very strongly on receiving a favorable response, and it is, besides, little crosses which sometimes trouble us the most.

Still there was no help for it. After the first flush of his excitement had passed away, he was obliged to confess to himself that he could not afford to throw up his situation, even if there had been any excuse for it in the treatment of Mr. Ctesiphon Smith; and, that there was an excuse, he could not succeed in persuading himself, although he tried for a little time. So long as he remained with the house, he would not shirk the work, no matter at what cost to himself. On that point he was determined. He had long ago made a resolution never to spare himself, and this was not the time to break over it. Yet the girls must not be disappointed. Fred Rovingston was in town, he thought, unless he had gone away very recently. He would send the tickets up to the club, and ask Fred to go in his place. He was quite certain Fred could be depended on if he had no engagement, and it was not likely he had at that time of the season. And he would remain with C. Smith & Company, at least until they could get through their press of work. Their business was spasmodic, and a leisure time could not be long in coming. He was determined at least, that his application for an increase of salary should not have the appearance of a "strike," and he meant they should understand that he would take no unfair advantage of them.

By good luck, Fred Rovingston was in town, and answered Jack's note almost immediately, to the effect that he would be delighted to give the ladies his escort. Usually Jack did not go home in the evening to dinner when he stopped down town, but this time he told Mr. Chipman that it was absolutely necessary; and Mr.

Chipman, judging from Jack's manner that it was of no use to make any objection, said, "Very well," in a tone which meant, "Go, and be hanged to you!" Of course Jack received a due amount of commiseration from his mother and sister, who assured him he was killing himself with hard work. One would have thought, to hear these good women talk, that he was in the condition of a bottle of sal-volatile with the stopper left out, and that his strength would evaporate, and he would become absolutely good for nothing, unless he was immediately corked up, and put away on the shelf. Amy Warner never flattered Jack, and she did not join in these affectionate demonstrations. Perhaps Jack was spoiled a bit, for he observed her silence, and hinted that without doubt Amy did not care very much, since Mr. Rovingston was going in his place.

Amy's face was covered with a flush as she answered, "I don't think you are quite kind, Jack. You know very well how sorry I am that you cannot go. I only accepted the change because I thought it would annoy you if I should refuse to go with Mr. Rovingston."

"I hope you did not take what I said in earnest, Amy," said Jack, and there the matter ended.

Jack eat his dinner hastily, and went up to his room for a moment after he had finished. While there his eye fell on the case containing a little five-barrelled revolver, which he had owned for many years. It was the same which Rovingston had used with good effect in a certain adventure in Rome. A feeling came over Jack, at sight of it, that he would take it with him that evening. There was no reason for it, unless, indeed, his mind was turned towards the advantage of carrying fire-arms, by certain rumors that the military draft would be resisted by force, if the government should insist on carrying it out. It was one of those mysterious impulses, which every one has more or less often, and which, in most cases, spring from nothing, and result in nothing, so far as human intelligence can determine. Then Jack said to himself, "Nonsense! I'm coming straight up Broadway. What is the use of bothering myself with that thing? Who knows but it might go off of itself, at the store, and shoot old Chip through the head? And, although I don't love Chipman, I should not care to have him shot with my pistol." Nevertheless, after he had gone out and

closed the door after him, Jack returned, and took the pistol with him. It is hardly necessary to remark that he said nothing about this to the ladies down stairs.

He put his head into the dining-room, as he passed along. "Good-by, mother," he said: "good-by, young ladies. I hope you will have a jolly good time, and that you will not annoy Mr. Rovingston by your chatter."

"Good-by, Jack," said Fanny. "Come home early, please; and, if you don't get home first, we will sit up for you."

"Yes, come home early, Jack, if you can," said Amy.

"Thank you," said Jack, "you are very obliging; and I hardly think I shall stay out longer than C. Smith & Company require my services."

So Jack went away; and the young ladies, having arrayed themselves with much care, awaited Mr. Rovingston, who was punctual to a moment; for he had that virtue, although he was an idle man, and in any case would never have kept two ladies waiting.

It was a fact, although Miss Houldworthy and Miss Warner did not know it, that Mr. Rovingston postponed a journey to Saratoga, in order to have the pleasure of obliging his friend, and escorting the young ladies to the concert. It is true Mr. Rovingston cared very little about the watering-place itself, for it always bored him after a day or two, and he much preferred drinking bottled Congress water, to taking the trouble of going down to the spring after it, and using a glass common to everybody. In this instance, however, he had to disappoint a friend with whom he had proposed to go; and Mr. Rovingston was singularly punctilious in keeping his engagements. Nevertheless he sent a note to this gentleman, at the last moment, that he was detained by an unexpected matter of importance which had turned up; and the friend went off alone, muttering very hearty maledictions. Mr. Rovingston was really very fond of music, as he had often informed these young ladies.

It must be said, that Mr. Rovingston enjoyed a little supper at the Houldworths, which came after the concert, still more than the concert itself, although the music was really fine: I could prove it by telling who sang if I chose, but what does it matter? It was a very modest refection, and Mr. Rovingston had eaten much more elegant repasts night after night at the Twiddler Club, not to speak

of the mysteries of the culinary art into which he had penetrated in London and Paris and other gay cities where people live to eat. It was not so much the dishes set before him; for, if the truth must be told there was nothing, after all, but a salad and some few trifles. But there was something very pleasant to Rovingston in sitting at the head of the table, — for Jack did not come, and Mrs. Houldworthy had retired, and was dreaming of a man who had a nose like the Eddystone Light-house, and who afterwards turned out to be Mr. Felix Short, — there was something very pleasant to Rovingston in sitting there with two charming girls, bright and pure and honest and merry, not unwise, and yet not too knowing; not so pretty as to be silly, and not so ugly as to be *bas bleues*; and who were quite ready to be amused by his stories, notwithstanding he told two or three which had had their day at the club. What wonder was it that Mr. Rovingston should have felt so little alarm at Jack's protracted absence? He sat there very much at his ease, and drawing from his experience in different parts of the world, as he was rarely led to do; for he was not one of your petty travellers, who, having once had sight of Temple Bar and the outside of the Tuileries, imagine they know the whole world, and can never be done making perennial guide-books of themselves. He made himself so entertaining, that the minutes flew by much faster than they were counted.

Jack did not come. The little supper, which had been prepared as a kind of reminiscence of the old days, was to have been a pleasant surprise to him; and they delayed sitting down until the ice-creams, which had not been properly packed by the confectioner, threatened to dissolve of their own accord if left much longer. Out of consideration for Mr. Rovingston, the girls reluctantly ordered supper, in the expectation that, before they were half through, Jack's latch-key would be heard at the door. But Jack did not come: what could have delayed him? Thanks to Mr. Rovingston's powers of conversation, the time at table passed rapidly; but at length that eloquent gentleman began to discover that his auditors were not so attentive, and that they were only making a pretence of being amused. He was not in the least uneasy about Jack. There had been some unusual press of business at the store: Miss Houldworthy shook her head. Jack

had met some friend coming out of the theatres, as he had been walking up, and had been over-persuaded to eat a bit of supper with him. "Jack has no such friends now," said Miss Warner rather gravely. Mr. Rovingston was forced to own that this last supposition of his was rather absurd; for Jack would expect him to wait a reasonable time for his arrival, and so would hurry home.

Finally they went up stairs again; and Mr. Rovingston, who found his excuses running out, suggested music. Miss Houldworthy played a few airs for him, but asked to be excused from singing. She was not in the mood, she said: some other night, — any other night, — she should be very glad of the opportunity, if Mr. Rovingston cared to hear her.

Mr. Rovingston, from his position of friendship with the family, staid on waiting for Jack, notwithstanding the lateness of the hour. He began to feel some alarm himself: yet he hesitated to show it, and increase the anxiety of the ladies, by offering to go in search of the missing man. He hinted, indeed, with a pretence at a jest, that he should presently set out after the delinquent; but the idea did not seem amusing. At a quarter to one o'clock, he offered point blank to go after him, although he represented that he had no doubt Jack was safe enough. The young man knew very well how to take care of himself, he said. He had been with Jack enough to know that he would not seek danger rashly, but if he found trouble unavoidable he had the courage to face it, and bring himself out. Without doubt, too, it was no case of danger, Rovingston hastily added, as he saw Fanny's lips quivering, and Amy looking very pale and serious. Without doubt, Jack had been kept at the store later than he expected, by a press of work. And by the way, — not that it mattered, — was Jack armed? Had he any weapon with him?

Miss Houldworthy thought not. Jack had a pistol in a case on the dressing-table; but he never carried it, she thought.

Might Mr. Rovingston be permitted to run up to Jack's room, and see? He knew the way perfectly well.

Certainly, if he thought it important. Yes, certainly, if he would be so good.

Rovingston came down with an increased cheerfulness of manner. Yes, Jack was armed, and well armed too; for he had his pistol, and it was an excellent weapon. Rovingston had seen it often, — had used it, in fact. They need not be

in the slightest degree alarmed about Jack, while he had that pistol with him. Yet, as it would relieve their minds, Mr. Rovingston said, he would go to look after him if he did not return at one o'clock. They would give Jack ten minutes more grace. It was really too bad of him to give them so much uneasiness.

The young ladies tried to look encouraged; but in reality the notion that Jack had a pistol with him, and might find it necessary to use it, did not allay their alarm in the least. Mr. Rovingston had not hit upon a very ingenious device, if he went up to Jack's room for any reason except his own curiosity.

And, in truth, Mr. Rovingston himself did not at all like the looks of the situation, just then. Jack was not a boy, to go about armed in bravado; and he would have no need of a pistol in coming from the store of Messrs. C. Smith & Company to his own home. Was it possible he had started on some other adventure, about which he did not care to have his family know? At the moment, Mr. Rovingston had very strong suspicions of his friend. Men do not trust each other so implicitly as women trust them.

The clock struck one, and Jack did not appear. Mr. Rovingston rose to go; and the young ladies rose at the same time in great agitation. They were so sorry to have him go, but it would really relieve their minds very much to know that something was done. It rained too. It was really too bad. Would he not take Jack's thick overcoat, which would protect him better than his own? And he must certainly have an umbrella.

Mr. Rovingston accepted every thing they offered him, although he did not propose to expose himself to the rain any longer than would bring him to a carriage stand. He put on the coat, and buttoned it up very deliberately indeed; and afterwards he turned up the collar, and put on his gloves. His manner was quite different from that of the young ladies, who were evidently eager to have him start. In fact, Mr. Rovingston was perplexed. He did not in the least mind going out into the rain to serve his friend; but where should he first direct his steps? He wished very ardently that Jack might solve the difficulty just then, by coming in at the door.

But no latch-key was heard in the lock; and Mr. Rovingston at last reluctantly opened the door, letting in a dash of wind and rain; whereupon he shut it again.

"I beg of you not to be alarmed,

ladies," he said. "I dare say I shall find no trace whatever of Jack at this time in the morning. This is a great city; and a thousand things might happen to detain him, and yet no harm come to him. It is the most probable thing in the world that he will get home before I have been gone half an hour; and, if he does, I beg you will not sit up a moment for me. If I return and find the lights out, I will not disturb you. I insist upon that. And, for my own part, I shall get along very well, because I shall take the first carriage I can find unengaged. And I shall take the precaution to bid you good night."

Saying this, Mr. Rovingston finally made his exit, and closed the door after him.

The two girls, who had taken a formal leave of him rather mechanically, turned towards each other.

"What do you think?" said Fanny.

"If it were not unkind," said Amy, "I should almost say, that Mr. Rovingston disliked very much to go out into the rain to look for poor Jack."

"Oh, no, Amy! I cannot think that," cried Fanny. "I am sure you ought not to say that."

Mr. Rovingston started off in the rain in very ill humor. "It's a most foolish errand," he said to himself, "a most foolish errand: yet their looks were so pleading that, being a man, I couldn't refuse them. What the deuce can have become of Jack, I wonder? There's a man coming. That may be him. If it is, he is very tipsy: that's certain."

The individual whom he saw approaching by the light of the street-lamp was well dressed, although he had no overcoat and no umbrella; and the rain was making sad work of his garments. He looked neither to the right nor the left, but kept on, with his head bent down against the wind, in a course as straight as a pair of very unsteady legs could carry him. "Easy there," cried out Rovingston, as this individual made a lurch towards him. "All right," returned the man thickly, and kept on his course, without once looking up. "That's not Jack, at all events," said Rovingston. "Now the next thing is a carriage. Bzzz! how the wind blows!"

The streets were nearly deserted; but Rovingston was fortunate enough to stop a hackney-coach, with a pair of nearly fresh horses, on its way to its stable.

"Double price, you know, sir, at this time o' night," said the driver opening

the door for Rovingston. "How far do you wish to go, sir?"

"Never mind how far," said Rovingston. "I'll give you what you ask, if it is any thing in reason, and something over for yourself besides; and, if it is not in reason, I'll turn you over to the police. But I don't expect to be driven about town in this weather for nothing."

"Where to, sir?" said the man, who seemed to divine by intuition that he had got hold of a customer who would not dispute over a shilling.

"To the police headquarters in Mulberry Street. And be lively, will you?"

"All right, sir," said the driver; and climbing up to his box as quickly as his stiff, wet rubber overcoat would permit him, he gave the whip to his horses, and off they darted.

Mr. Rovingston lighted a cigar, and gave himself up to speculation about Jack, and meditations about the young ladies he had just left. "Jack assured me," he said, "that he had positively given up all his youthful follies; and I have no reason to doubt it. For the matter of that, he had not so many to give up as some men at the club. If it were young Lush, now, I might be able to find him. No, I was wrong to doubt Jack. Some accident must have happened to the poor fellow, unless, as is most likely, he is still digging away at his den, down town."

The police headquarters are connected by telegraph-wires with all the other police stations in the city; and this will explain Rovingston's business there. He gave the officials a description of his friend, whom he spoke of as having probably met with an accident; they had heard nothing of him. Then Rovingston requested them to inquire of the other stations by telegraph; he would be very glad to pay for any trouble to which they might be put. In the mean time, he would drive to one last place, where there was a bare chance of hearing of him.

He was advised to wait, since the operation of communicating with the stations from which there was much hope of hearing from Houldworthy would not take very long. Mr. Rovingston preferred not to wait, although he did not explain the reason; which was, that he was going to the store of Messrs. C. Smith & Company, where he really expected to find Jack, unless he had passed him on his way down, which seemed not unlikely. He left his card, and hurried away.

The carriage reached the store; and

every thing was dark and gloomy within, although the rain was not falling so heavily now.

"Try the door," said Rovingston from within the carriage to the driver.

The man rattled and banged at the door with an energy inspired by a strong desire to get home to bed. Presently a voice from within gruffly demanded what they were making a racket for.

"I'm sure I don't know," said the driver. — "Here's the watchman inside wants to know what we want," he called out to Rovingston.

"Ask him if there's anybody at work inside, — if Mr. Houldworthy is there," said Rovingston.

"No," answered the voice, "there's nobody here but me. Everybody went home by eleven o'clock. What's the row?"

"Drive back to the police headquarters," said Rovingston; and away they dashed again, leaving the mystified watchman within to go back grumbling to his blankets.

"Upon my word," said Rovingston to himself, as he lighted a fresh cigar, "I begin to be seriously worried about Jack, — very seriously worried."

Mr. Rovingston's second visit to the police headquarters gave him no clew to the mystery. They had signalled all the stations, except those a long way up town, and had got the same reply in every case. No such person as Mr. Houldworthy had been brought in up to that hour.

"And, if any accident had happened to him, he would naturally be carried to the nearest station-house first?" asked Rovingston.

"Probably, unless he had some friend with him, who knew where he lived."

"It's very strange," said Rovingston, half to himself.

"I beg your pardon," said the official, "but I don't think it is. He will probably turn up somewhere, by and by. They always do, — that is, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred."

"Well, perhaps so," said Rovingston, and he went out again.

There was no carriage in sight. Rovingston was startled for a moment; but he reflected that he had not paid the man, and so he waited. In another minute his Jehu drove up rapidly, and sprang down from his seat.

"I beg pardon, sir," he said. "I hope I haven't kept you waiting; but this is an awful wet night, and I thought I would

just step around the corner, and get something hot for my cough. It's awful hard weather, sir, for us as has to ride outside."

Rovingston looked closely at him, and saw that he was rather a better man than most of his class. "Very well," said he. "You have got a good pair of horses, and you may put that cough mixture in the bill, if you like. But just see that the cough does not trouble you too often, for I have not got through with you yet."

He cut short the man's protestations in regard to his temperance, by telling him to drive to the Houldworthys' house.

"There is still one more chance," said he. "Jack may have been detained in some unaccountable way, and he may be at home already."

The horses went as if they too had been taking something hot for their coughs. Rovingston saw the lights still burning when they reached the Houldworthys'; but he knew they would sit up for him, even if Jack had got back. The quick ears within heard the rattle of the carriage; and the door of the house was opened before Rovingston had alighted.

"Has he come?" and, "Did you find him?" was called out from either side, as Rovingston went up the step; but there was no reply. When he reached the two eager faces at the door, he answered, "No, I could not find him. I hoped he would have reached here before me."

Amy leaned back sick and faint against the doorway. Fanny seized Mr. Rovingston's arm in her extreme agitation.

"Oh, Mr. Rovingston!" she said, "what can have become of poor Jack? What do you think can have become of him?"

Rovingston gave her what comfort he could; and Amy had time to recover before her condition could be noticed, but she had come near falling.

The clock on the church not far off struck three with a dull clang. They all listened.

"And now," said Rovingston, in a cheerful tone, "I am going off to try again: so wish me good luck, please. I shall not bid you good-night this time, for I hope to be back very soon with good news. I shall keep on the wing till I find Jack, so don't fear. When I wear out these horses I shall get a fresh pair; but I hope that will not be necessary. You will see me again very soon."

Mr. Rovingston stopped a moment to reflect, on the lower step; and they watched him from the doorway. He

observed this, and gave his order to the driver in an undertone. The carriage rolled off, but at a slower pace this time, because the effects of the "cough mixture" had evaporated.

"Poor things!" said Rovington passionately, as he lighted his third cigar. "Poor things! They ought to go to bed at once, but I suppose it would have been of no use to suggest it. Perhaps I ought to have staid there to comfort them. It would have seemed rather shabby to sit down idly and do nothing; but I am sure it would be quite as wise as to start off again on this wild-goose chase."

And all this time good Mrs. Houldworthy was sleeping the sleep of the just. As Mr. Rovington's carriage rattled away, she was experiencing a very singular dream, the point of which seemed to be, that she was cruising in the Arctic Ocean, in a small dory, with her son, in search of Sir John Franklin. They presently were happy in discovering Sir John, — so the dream went on, — seated upon a large mound of snow, and eating icicles, with the same relish as if they had been sticks of barley-candy. He very gallantly offered Mrs. Houldworthy one; but, as she was about to take it, Sir John suddenly began to slide down from his chilly seat into a fathomless gulf, which, as Mrs. Houldworthy just then observed, was yawning beneath. Whether Sir John ever struck bottom or not, none of the family ever ascertained, because this was all Mrs. Houldworthy was ever able to remember of her dream. It is possible that important question might have been decided if the young ladies in the hall below had kept the street-door open a little longer.

CHAPTER XXI.

IN WHICH JACK HOULDWORTHY RECEIVES A VERY SEVERE BUFFET.

JACK was kept rather late at the store on the night of the concert. He knew that the entertainment would conclude early, and he wanted to get home; and for that reason, so it appeared, old Chip was unusually cross, and every thing went wrong. Nevertheless he did eventually get away; and, when he went by the City Hall, the hands of the illumined clock stood at five minutes past eleven. Jack never rode, as a matter of principle; and, besides, he was in a hurry. It was a disagreeable, damp

evening; and the clouds were threatening, although it did not absolutely rain. There was an unusually small number of people in the streets for that time of night; and for the first part of his walk, at least, he had plenty of room to keep on at the steady, quick gait into which he struck.

Just above Canal Street he observed, a short distance before him, a little barefooted beggar-girl, who ran from one person who appeared to have refused her, to another still farther along.

The idea crossed Jack's mind, that she seemed singularly importunate; but such sights are unhappily too common in great cities, to cause much thought. He was passing on, when suddenly his coat was grasped tightly, and a small, plaintive voice said, —

"Please, sir, father's dying."

"Well, child, I can't help it," said Jack, although he did not speak roughly; the child was too fragile for that. "Come, come, don't catch hold of me! I'm in a hurry." Jack was not unfeeling; but he had a theory at that time, being then a young man, that all street-beggars were impostors, and that the deserving poor never asked for charity, — except in story-books.

The small hands still kept fast hold of his coat, and the little voice said, "Oh, do please stop, sir. Do, please!"

Upon this, Jack took the trouble to look at the child; and, there being just there a strong light thrown on the sidewalk from the window of a cigar-store, he saw a pretty little, sorrowful face, which it struck him he had met somewhere before.

"Come up to the light, here," said Jack. "I think I know your face. You stand here every night, don't you? Well, what is it?"

"No indeed, I don't stand here every night," said the child in a tone of sorrowful indignation; "but father's very sick, and we hain't got no money nor medicine, and not much to eat. And father is out of his head, and don't know us; and Katy cries all the time. And Katy sent me out to-night for some stuff the doctor told her to get; and they wouldn't give me any because I hadn't no money. So I thought I'd try and beg some, like — like Mary Morrison."

"And who is Mary Morrison?"

"She is a little girl in a story, sir." She said this rather timidly, and with hesitation, as if she was afraid Houldworthy would laugh at her.

"So you read, do you?"

"Yes, sir."

It was rather an absurd question for Jack to ask, perhaps; but he was engaged in trying to think where he had seen the child before. She stood there waiting for him to speak again, gazing up the sidewalk, with quivering lips, and a dreamy, absent look on her face. She had a pretty mouth, and deep blue eyes. It was quite easy to see that she was not a common beggar. Her attitude struck Jack all at once, and he had a good memory for faces.

"I think I know your father," said he. "Isn't he a mechanic? Doesn't he work on machinery?"

"Oh, yes, sir!" The blue eyes brightened, and the face kindled.

"And you used to go out with him sometimes, when he was looking for work?"

"Yes, sir. Oh! if you know father, please come home with me; please come. He has been out of his head to-night, and Katy is so frightened! She thought he was dying. Maybe he is too; and Katy is all alone."

"My dear child, I cannot come to-night. I am on my way home, and it is late. I'll give you some money, and to-morrow perhaps I'll look you up."

"Oh, please come, please come!" cried the child. She was past arguing, and could only sob out her little petition for help, "Please come! please come!"

It was very hard to refuse her, and Jack hesitated. He had recognized her as the little daughter of the mechanic whom he had met looking for work, when he himself was on a similar errand; although the child had been too young at the time to carry away any remembrance of the stranger who had spoken to her father. The man, Jack had met once since, when he and Pullis had dined at the cheap restaurant; and he had struck Jack as being an honest, worthy, intelligent person. The man had spoken then of having a good situation; some misfortune had happened to him since, without doubt.

The child was evidently frightened and tired out. Could she be trusted at that time of night to return home alone, and procure the assistance which Jack did not doubt was needed? But then there were Amy and Fanny sitting up and waiting for him, and they would be greatly alarmed if he should stay out so late. Still his mother would be very likely asleep, and Fred Rovington would

be with the girls, he thought; and certainly they would be very glad that he had gone to help the poor people, after it was all over, even if they were anxious for an hour. Jack knew that the poorer streets of New York are not very safe by night for persons with gold watch-chains, — and Jack still retained this ornament of his earlier days, — but he had his pistol with him; and, to do him justice, he did not entertain this thought for a moment, although prudence suggested it.

The cigar-seller came out to put up the shutters to his shop. "Well," said Jack, "I will go with you, but let us be quick."

"Oh, thank you, sir!" said the child joyfully; and without another word she took him by the hand, as she used to her father in the old days, and led the way rapidly.

Jack felt a pleasant, warming sensation about the heart, as his grasp on the little hand tightened. He had not done so many good actions in his life up to this time, as to regard charity a matter of course; and it is not unlikely that he magnified his self-denial. The earliest stages of the expansion of the heart bring the acutest pleasure.

They turned first into Canal Street, and then into West Broadway. Their pace was rapid, and there was not much opportunity for conversation; but Houldworthy found out that the mechanic, whose name he now learned for the first time was Green, had done well for a time, until a serious injury to his hand, from machinery, had thrown him out of work for a while; and then they had gone behindhand. As if this was not enough, he had been seized with a fever soon after he got to work again; and so the family had gone down deeper and deeper into poverty, — a fall very easy in large cities. Some of his fellow-workmen had done something for him when he had suffered the accident to his hand; but they were, for the most part, men with families, and there presently came an end to their charity. Mr. Green had a brother in California, — too far off to be of any assistance, although letters had been sent to him. Katy was the name of Green's elder daughter; Mary was that of the little girl whose hand Jack was holding. They had no relatives that she knew of. They had come from a town a great way off, — Mary thought it was in Massachusetts, but she was not certain.

All these facts Houldworthy learned by direct questions on the way, and

when they stopped at the druggist's in West Broadway for medicine. Little Mary answered mainly by monosyllables now, for she was in feverish haste to get home; and Jack had to fill up the gaps in her history for himself. He would hardly have asked her so many questions, but for the notion that it might distract her thoughts.

The owner of the drug-store answered the night-bell in person, Jack made out. The man appeared to have been up, looking over his accounts; for his desk was lighted up, and he was dressed, and did not keep them waiting.

"Give him your prescription, Mary, and I will pay for it. Was this the man who would not give you the medicine without the money?"

"No sir. It was the druggist on the next corner."

"Whose prescription is that?" Jack asked of the druggist.

"Dr. Zeigler's."

"Where does he live?"

"No. 146 — Street."

"Two miles off, and across town at that. Does he know any thing of his profession?"

"Who? Dr. Zeigler?"

"Yes."

"Why, yes, I suppose he does. He has some reputation, but" —

"But what?"

The druggist held his measuring-glass to his eye, and, when he had set it down, made a motion of drinking with his empty hand.

"What is in that prescription you are putting up?"

"Laudanum, mostly."

"Hum," said Jack to himself, and reflected for a moment. Then he asked, "Are there any physicians near here, — any good ones?"

"Physicians enough," said the druggist, "such as they are. But I think I know as much myself as most of them."

"Do you practise medicine?"

"Now and then in an emergency. I'm not a regular doctor, but I have been in this business ever since I could see over a counter; and it would be hard if I didn't know something about it."

"I think it possible that this may be an emergency," said Jack. "Will you come with us and see this little girl's father?"

"Can't," said the druggist. "My clerk's off this evening. If he was here, perhaps I would. Twenty-five cents for that."

Little Mary seized Jack's coat again, as he was paying for the medicine. "Please, let's make haste," she said.

At that moment, a young man, smelling very strongly of tobacco and whiskey, entered the door. He had his hat very much over one eye, when he first appeared; but he immediately reduced the plane of its brim to a horizontal position; and, from having the appearance of a swaggering blade, came all at once to present the look of a very mild druggist's assistant, who would have made a night of it, if he had lived at home and been trusted with a night-key.

The druggist looked at him without a word, but with a face that expressed a whole dictionary of them; and the young man passed silently and humbly through the shop into a room in the rear.

"I'll go with you now, if you like," said the druggist. "Wait till I get my hat and umbrella." He passed into the inner room, and shut the door; after which his voice was heard in angry tones, as if he was abusing the clerk for staying out so late.

"Confound the man!" said Jack to himself. "If he does not make haste, I will take him there in a way he won't like. I don't suppose he knows much; but nobody can tell how badly off Green may be at this moment; and we may as well take him as lose time by trying to wake up some of these other quacks."

"Please tell him to make haste," said little Mary.

Jack thereupon opened the door through which the druggist had disappeared, and found him in an altercation with his assistant, as Jack had expected.

"I'll just trouble you to stop that, if you please," said Jack sharply. "I thought I told you the patient was in a bad way; it strikes me you are acting as if you had the night before you."

The druggist made no answer to Jack, but he said to the young man, "I'll talk to you again about that, to-morrow morning." Then he came out, and slammed the door after him; and the party set off.

There is a region on the east side of the town called the "Hook," which has nearly as bad a reputation with the police as the old Five Points, although it is comparatively unknown to fame. It was somewhere near this quarter, but not actually into it, that Mary led her two companions. The tenement-house which she entered was really not a bad one of its class, although the

unclean stairways were not lighted; and Jack's hand sought his pistol. "What a shame," he thought, "for a child like this to be travelling through such holes at night!"

The rooms were for the most part quiet; for the occupants were poor people, with some honest occupation, however humble, and they were generally up betimes in the morning, unless they accidentally indulged too much in drink over night. In one room on the second story, indeed, there seemed to be an Irish wake going on, or some other Bacchanalian festivity; and a gust of rude, boisterous laughter came out through the cracks of the door as they passed it. Still it was a decent place enough, as the dwellings for the poor go. There are tenement-houses in New York, and almost within a stone's throw of the marble warehouses on Broadway, where the owners keep two stout guards all day long; and, let the sun shine ever so brightly outside, no respectable man is suffered to enter unaccompanied, lest he should be robbed and murdered. And at night no well-dressed person should be rash enough to venture within those foul portals without a policeman with a lantern, to lead the way. Truly we need not go far to find heathen who stand in want of our prayers and our labors, even in this polished Christian country.

At the top of the second flight of stairs, their little conductor pushed open a door, which fitted tightly through the action on it of the atmosphere, but appeared to have no other fastening. They followed her quietly in, and saw on an old bedstead, a man asleep, and a pale young girl watching by him. She started up at the sound of their entrance, and would have spoken hastily to the child, but stopped short in agitation at sight of the strangers.

"Hush! don't be frightened," said Houldworthy kindly and in a whisper. "I know your father; and we have come to see what can be done for him."

The girl seemed to recover her composure in a measure. She shook her head sadly, and said, "You are very kind; but I am afraid it is too late."

"I see he is asleep," said Jack.

"Yes; he dropped off into a doze not a moment ago."

"Has the doctor been here to-night?" She nodded an affirmative.

"And he gave no encouragement?" The girl could not speak, and turned

away towards her young sister. Sinking into a chair, she drew her into her arms, and the two wept silently.

"I thought I had lost you too, Mary," said the elder when she found her voice again.

"Don't scold her," said Jack, who had not witnessed the scene unmoved; "she was doing what she could for her father. I should not have been here, but for her."

"And the medicine too," said Mary. "I've got the medicine too, for father, at last. Hadn't he ought to take it?"

"Hush! don't speak so loud, Mary," said her sister. "You'll wake up father."

"It don't make much odds," said the druggist quietly, "since he's awake already."

The patient had opened his eyes, and was looking at the group, although without any sign of astonishment at seeing them in his room. His face was colorless, and he was emaciated almost to a skeleton.

The two children looked at him doubtfully, till certain whether he was still delirious.

Houldworthy felt ill at ease in a sick-room; but he went forward, followed by the druggist.

"Do you remember me?" he said kindly. "I heard by accident that you were sick, and came to see what could be done for you."

The sick man moved his lips as if uttering some words of thanks, and extended his hand feebly towards Houldworthy's; as it rested on the counterpane, Houldworthy saw that his hand lacked two fingers.

Houldworthy continued, "Our friend here is a" —

"A doctor," said the druggist, as Houldworthy hesitated for a word.

"Our friend here understands medicine; and he has come with me to see what can be done."

The patient turned his head a little on the pillow to see the new-comer, and a faint, hopeless smile passed over his face. He made no other movement.

The druggist advanced to the bedside, and, taking out his silver watch with a professional air, felt of the sick man's pulse. Then he looked steadily into his face for a moment, the children meanwhile gazing in a terror of suspense. Houldworthy fancied he could hear the ticking of a clock in the next room, the silence was so great. Then the

druggist shook his head very solemnly and not unkindly, and turned away.

The sick man seemed to understand the meaning of this gesture quite as well as if the druggist had spoken. He extended his hand towards his children, and they rushed to his side, caressing him and weeping silently.

Houldworthy took the druggist to the other side of the room, — it was but a little chamber, — and asked him in a whisper, —

"How is he? Can he live?"

The druggist shook his head. "He'll peg out in fifteen minutes at the furthest."

Houldworthy was shocked and saddened, for the scene was a new one to him.

"And can nothing be done? That medicine?"

"No use whatever. I know what it is. It would only bother him."

At the same moment, the younger of the girls bethought herself of the medicine which she had been at so much trouble to get, and sprang forward to it in haste.

The druggist anticipated her, and stopped her with a touch on the arm. "I wouldn't. No use."

The child nevertheless took the bottle, and seemed to be inclined to dispute him, when a whisper from her father struck her ear.

The sick man could utter articulately but the single word, "Him."

Houldworthy understood that he was meant, and came forward. The sick man, by a great effort, took his hand. Then he said, "These — alone — orphans;" and Houldworthy comprehended that he was entreating his protection for the children.

"I am a poor man," he said, "but I will do what I can for them. I will see that they come to no harm; I can promise you that."

The sick man made no attempt to express gratitude; he appeared to have something else on his mind, of which he was anxious to relieve himself while strength was left him.

"Box!" he said. "Box — quick!"

The elder girl brought him a box, inlaid on the top with many pieces of wood of different colors. The key was in the lock; and she turned it, and threw open the lid, disclosing papers, of which some were covered with figures, and others were evidently mechanical drawings.

The sick man again tried to speak, but his strength was very rapidly leaving him. He turned his eyes on Houldworthy, and said, "Yours — great" — but here his voice failed him; and he sank back on the pillow, from which in his anxiety he had raised himself a few inches.

Houldworthy put his hand on the box, and made a sign of assent to show that he accepted the trust. The sick man never spoke again. His two children now took up a position by his bedside, where they could hold his hands, and look into his face; and, gazing upon them fondly, the poor man seemed to pass gradually and quietly into a deep slumber, from which he never awoke.

Houldworthy walked to the window. The clock on a distant church struck one, and heavy drops of rain outside dashed against the panes.

The druggist touched him on the shoulder. "Well," he said, "that's the end of it. I suppose you don't want me any longer."

"Is he dead?"

"Why, yes. Didn't you know it?"

"I guessed it."

"What are you going to do with these children? Let them stay here? I see there's another room."

"Heaven knows," said Jack, sorrowfully looking at the poor girls. The elder had the attitude of prayer; the younger, leaning forward with her face quite hidden, was quiet, save when a sob now and then broke forth.

"Are you married?" asked Houldworthy.

"No," said the druggist, divining his thought, "but I know a decent sort of family in this house; that is, they are here, if they haven't moved since I attended one of the children for scarlet fever."

"Irish?"

"No, I guess not; at least not much. The mother is a good sort of a woman. I'll go and wake her up, if you like."

"I wish you would," said Houldworthy. "I ought to have been at home many hours ago."

The druggist went off on his mission; and presently a knocking was heard below, and then an argument. A few moments later he re-appeared. "It's all right," said he. "She didn't know the family; but she is coming right up, and will take the girls down with her. They will do what's right."

"I'm very glad," said Houldworthy.

Then he was about to speak to the girls, but they evidently paid no attention to what was going on around them; and so he passed quietly out with the druggist, and left them alone.

On the way down, Houldworthy stopped to talk a moment with Mrs. Freeland, the good woman whom the druggist had just aroused. As far as it is possible to judge of a lady's character when you do not see her at all, but are conversing with her through a very small crack of the door, Houldworthy made her out to be a worthy body, who could safely be intrusted with the charge he was obliged to place in her hands. Certainly Mrs. Freeland expressed her willingness to do what she could, with great volubility; and in this assurance she was joined by her husband, who was also invisible, but whose voice was set in a deep, cheery bass.

"We'll do what we can, mister," remarked Mr. Freeland. "Don't you be afraid; you go home to your family. Let my old woman alone for a case like this. She's buried relations enough of her own to know what's what: hain't you, Tilly?"

"I should hope so," said Mrs. Freeland. She was too much intent on talking herself to pay much attention to what her husband was saying.

Houldworthy promised to pay the necessary expenses, and offered to leave a sum of money with them as a guaranty that he meant what he said; but they would not take it in advance. Then he went away, saying that he would come again early in the morning. The druggist, who had shown signs of increased impatience, preceded him down stairs, and waited for him with his umbrella open.

"It's an awful nasty night," said he. "I hope you haven't got far to go."

The rain was pouring down in torrents; and the deserted streets were enveloped in black darkness, save where a lamp here and there gave a feeble glimmer, and showed the water falling, as it were, in sheets.

"I'm in for it now," said Houldworthy. "The cars will not help me much, for I live on the wrong side of the town. By the way, how much shall I pay you for your trouble?"

"What you like," said the druggist. "I wasn't of much use, to be sure; but then that was not my fault."

Then they had a little more talk about the druggist's fee, as they walked along

through the wet and very close to each other; but they soon relapsed into silence, for the weather was certainly not favorable to cheerful conversation.

When they reached the druggist's shop the master of the establishment had to ring twice before he gained admittance; a delay which so exasperated him that he would probably have given his assistant a severe punch in the ribs with his wet umbrella, had not the wind favored that young gentleman by blowing out the candle which he carried, and enveloping him in protecting darkness. He prudently retreated behind the counter before he struck a match; and the candle, burning dimly at first, displayed a face so ridiculously weak, sleepy, and woe-begone, that Houldworthy was forced to smile, in spite of the situation.

"There, go to bed," said the druggist, as if he were afraid just then to trust himself to talk to the young man. "Go to bed, will you? and I'll see you in the morning."

The assistant, who had by this time lighted a gas-jet, walked off with his candle, and was seen no more. He was evidently in no condition for an argument.

Houldworthy gave the druggist a bill of a denomination rather larger than that worthy expected, although he had purposely refrained from setting any price for his services, in the hopes of profiting by the other's generosity. It is an old trick with a certain class of men. However, his temper was so far mollified that he said to Houldworthy in a low and mysterious voice, —

"Won't you have a drop of sperrits? It will keep you from getting cold."

"Thank you, no," said Houldworthy, putting up his money. "I'm in a hurry. Hark! Is that a car I hear coming? No. Well, never mind. I may as well make up my mind to walk. I don't think the rain will hurt me."

"Well," said the druggist, touched at the moment by a spark of commiseration, "you'd better take my umbrella. It will keep the rain out of your face at least, and you will have to face it."

"Thanks," said Houldworthy. "I will take it, if you will risk the wind turning it; and I will bring it back in the morning."

How seldom it is that good actions bring their reward on this earth! The druggist never saw his umbrella again.

"Well, good-night to you," said the druggist, "if you are determined not to try a drop of something."

"No, thank you," said Houldworthy. "It's bad stuff to walk on. Good-night."

The druggist closed the door after his customer, and, going behind his counter, mixed himself a very stiff glass of brandy and water, and drank it with much inward satisfaction. Houldworthy pushed on rapidly through the cold and wet, springing over the big puddles, and splashing through the little ones. He had made up his mind that he was sure to get thoroughly wet before he reached home; and he thought it as well not to lose time by trying to keep dry in the beginning.

With this idea, he very soon closed his umbrella with an invective against his own foolishness for taking it; for he found that it was almost impossible to carry it in the high wind, which seemed to grow stronger and stronger.

"This is a most extraordinary adventure, upon my word," said Jack. "Here I seem to have two orphans thrown on my hands without a moment's warning. Good girls they are, too, I should say; but what can I do with them? What *can* I do with them? I can't take them home to our house. We have no room for them, even if there were no other objections. I suppose they will be willing to work for a living, but there must be a delay; and where can they go to for a while, until they get over their troubles? I wonder if Mrs. Pullis would take them in for a week or two. That's it. That's just the place. I will get Mrs. Pullis to"—

The thread of Jack's reflections was broken off in a very abrupt and startling manner. As he stopped for a moment before a break in the sidewalk, where there was an unusually large pool of water, two arms were suddenly thrown around him from behind, so as to pinion his elbows, while a face breathing hot fumes of alcohol was laid beside his, and a chin ground into his shoulder, like the clamp of a vise. At the same instant, a creature in the dress of a woman, with a face red, bloated, and fiendish, came swiftly forward from the shadow, and struck him in the breast with a knife, once, twice, three times, in quick succession.

Jack sank under the blows without a cry; and then these Thugs dragged him into a little passage-way near at hand, and began to turn his pockets inside out with a dexterity which showed practice.

CHAPTER XXII.

IN WHICH JACK HOULDWORTHY FINALLY REACHES HOME.

AFTER a while, Jack Houldworthy partly recovered his senses. Water from a beam, or the like, above him, was dripping slowly but steadily on his up-turned face as he lay there in the darkness; but he was stiff and cold, and could not move; he had not the strength or the will to make an effort. He seemed to have gone through a terrible nightmare, from the effects of which he could not rouse himself. Footsteps approached; then the sounds stopped; then he heard them again, but fainter and fainter, until they died away in the distance. He turned a little so that the water no longer struck his face, and again lost all sensation.

Policeman Brown, a worthy and faithful officer, but a very slow walker, had passed the passage-way where Jack lay, and had stopped, and looked into it; but the young man lay concealed in the darkness; and Policeman Brown continued on his round, growling to himself about the weather, as he had never ceased to do, since he came on duty that night.

Policeman Brown was a methodical person; and it was one of his rules, of which he had made for himself a great number, to walk up this narrow passage-way, and another similar one not far beyond, alternately, as he came to them in his lonely pilgrimages around his beat. So it happened, in the natural course of things, that, after a considerable interval of time had elapsed, he stumbled over Jack's foot, and became conscious that some one was lying there on the ground.

"Come, git up," said Mr. Brown in a gruff voice suggestive of a combination of asthma and bronchitis. "Git up and go home, you. What you layin' there for?"

It may be imagined that Jack Houldworthy neither got up nor went home at Policeman Brown's direction. On the contrary, he obstinately refused to show any sign of life whatever.

"Well, he must be uncommon groggy," said Mr. Brown to himself, and thereupon he stirred the prostrate form gently with his toe.

When he found that this too brought no response, it occurred to Mr. Brown to stoop down, and examine the sleeper; and this he did, though somewhat reluctantly, because he was rather corpulent.

A match, lighted by rubbing it on his dry clothing inside his rubber overcoat, showed him red stains and a little red pool.

"Hallo!" said Mr. Brown to himself rather fretfully. "Here's a go! The man's been murdered. No, he ain't dead, neither. His heart's going. Jest my luck. Now I s'pose we've got him to tote to the station-house."

Policeman Brown rose, and, going out to the sidewalk, very deliberately, and without the slightest excitement, struck with his club on the pavement the signal that help was wanted. This very soon brought Policeman Blenker on the scene. Mr. Blenker was a thinner man, although he weighed one hundred and eighty pounds in his uniform; and he got over the intervening ground pretty rapidly.

"What's up, John?" said Mr. Blenker. "A feller's been and gone and got himself stuck," returned Mr. Brown.

"Oh, ho!" said Mr. Blenker in a tone which seemed to express that, in his opinion, the victim had been served right. "Where is he?"

"In here," said Mr. Brown. The two men had a little consultation over poor Jack's body; and it ended by their placing it on a shutter very carefully and tenderly, and carrying it off between them at a pace suited to Mr. Brown's habits.

Jack was conscious for a little time of being carried along, although he was in no condition to speculate as to the kind of conveyance which he was using. Then came another blank. When he came to himself for a third time, he was on a lounge in the police-station, with a surgeon at work over him; and a face, which seemed familiar, looking down anxiously upon him. This well-known countenance he gradually made out to be Fred Rovingston's.

Mr. Rovingston had been more successful in his second search. On reaching the police headquarters again, he was informed that a despatch containing news of his friend had just come in. Greatly agitated at hearing that Houldworthy had been attacked by thieves, and perhaps murdered, he, of course, lost no time in seeking him out. His gratification at seeing his poor friend open his eyes again was extreme; and as he came to his side, and pressed his hand, he could not restrain his tears.

"There, there, old fellow," he said; "don't try to talk. You are safe now; and, God willing, we will bring you out all right yet. Keep quiet, keep quiet."

Rovingston retired to the otherside of the room and was presently joined by the surgeon, who wished to consult him about removing the patient. It was settled that he should be carried home with but little delay; and that Rovingston should take his carriage, and start at once in order to forewarn the family. The surgeon was unwilling to give an opinion as to the extent of the patient's injuries; although he committed himself so far as to say that the hand which had given the blows was not a strong one, and that only one of the wounds was likely to prove troublesome.

Rovingston took a farewell look at his friend, bidding him keep up his courage, and then set off on his disagreeable errand. How delicately and considerately he performed it, there is no need to mention. The girls had never forgotten the similar shock which they had received two years before; but they did not break down under this new infliction, especially as Rovingston made his account of the affair as cheerful as his conscience would permit. Any thing, too, was better than the torture of suspense which they had been so long suffering; and they felt it at first almost a relief to know that the result was no worse. Amy went up stairs to break the news to her aunt, since the fresh trouble which had fallen on the family could not be concealed from her much longer. Fanny busied herself in making preparations to receive her brother; and Rovingston, left to himself in the little drawing-room, fell into a sound slumber, from which he only awoke,—and with a little feeling of shame,—when the carriage containing Jack drove up to the door.

It had long been daylight, when Rovingston saw the patient finally settled with his mother watching over him. Jack had taken an early opportunity, in spite of his weakness, to bespeak his friend's attention for the young orphans, his *protégées*; and Rovingston promised to look them up in the course of the day, although he got but a very indistinct idea of who they were, because he obliged Jack to be very sparing of his words. When Rovingston had assured himself that Jack was as comfortable as the surgeon could make him, he went down to take leave of the young ladies, who thanked him many times for his kindness; and promised him to seek, at once, the rest of which they stood so much in need.

"And you, Mr. Rovingston," said

Fanny; "you certainly need rest quite as much as we do."

"No indeed," he answered. "I have been anxious, certainly; but you had nothing to do but wait quietly, and bear it as best you could; while I was dashing about town in all the excitement of a search. Besides, to tell the truth, I got a bit of a nap just before Jack came; and I feel greatly refreshed. I am going to walk up after Dr. Lush now; and I have no doubt the fresh air will do me great good. See," he added, throwing open the door, "it has cleared off finely after the rain."

"Pray let us send for Dr. Lush," said Fanny, "if you think he is the best surgeon."

"Not on any account," said Rovingston; who understood very well that they had no one to send, and was, besides, partly in earnest in what he said. "I insist upon going, for I need the walk. So good-night, or good-morning, whichever you choose."

Mr. Rovingston raised his hat, and went down the steps with an easy grace, calculated to inspire confidence in his assertion that he was not suffering from fatigue; but he had not walked half a block before he congratulated himself that Dr. Lush lived no farther off. He had sent away the carriage, which he had used all night,—he astonished the driver by his liberality in paying him,—and he had now no alternative but to walk, or go a considerable distance out of his way in order to find a conveyance.

When he reached Dr. Lush's residence, he had to ring twice before there appeared to be any signs of life within. The Lushes, as has heretofore appeared, were by no means early birds or early worms. At the second pull of the bell, which was given with a vigor which showed Mr. Rovingston to be in no humor to be kept waiting, a window was raised in the third story, and a voice called out,—

"See here, old Beeswax, if you are trying to get a sample of our bell-wire, hold on, and I'll come down and cut you off a yard."

Rovingston looked up indignantly, and beheld the head of Mr. Charles Lush, adorned with a red smoking-cap, from which depended a very long tassel.

"Hallo," called out Mr. Lush, when he saw who it was; "is that you, Mr. Rovingston? I thought it was some cad or other. Wait a shake, and I'll let you

in; our flunkey's always asleep." Then the red cap disappeared; and presently Rovingston heard footsteps approaching.

Mr. Charles Lush and his father's flunkey appeared at about the same moment. The flunkey obsequiously held open the door; and Mr. Lush appeared behind it, in embroidered red slippers, red breakfastcoat, with waistcoat and trousers to match, and the red smoking-cap before mentioned. Mr. Lush's countenance was also somewhat rubicund; and his whole appearance would have been instantaneously suggestive of a boiled lobster, the scarlet fever, or a field of battle, according to the degree of poetic temperament possessed by the beholder.

"Come in, Mr. Rovingston," he said. "I didn't know it was you, of course, or I shouldn't have dropped such a salutation on your head. It is so early in the morning, you see."

"I will not come in, thank you. I called to ask your father to see Houldworthy. The poor fellow is badly off, I'm afraid."

"What! Jack need the surgeon? Mr. Rovingston, if you could spare me a moment, to tell me about it, it would oblige yours truly."

"Well," said Rovingston, "I have been up all night, and am on my way to bed. That is my first reason for being in a hurry."

"The deuce, you say! I beg your pardon; but I thought you had a seedlike appearance. Been up with Jack, eh? And I don't suppose you have had any breakfast; you don't look like it. Come in, and have a drop of Mocha. You don't know how coffee and a roll set a man up. You ought not to go to bed without it. Come, I insist upon it. There's nobody up but me, and won't be for an hour; but I heard the cook go down, and it will not take three minutes to make coffee, you know, in the French way."

The idea tempted Rovingston. He was greatly in need of coffee and a roll; and the Houldworthys, in their distress, had quite forgotten to offer him any refreshment. He hesitated, and then he accepted Lush's offer.

"Wiggins," said Mr. Lush, "go tell the cook to make some coffee in her very best style, and to serve it with some hot rolls; or, if the rolls are not hot, with some slices of toast, cut very thin; you understand. And, Wiggins, if you could possibly manage to accelerate your movements without splitting your dignity, or

otherwise bursting yourself, I should be extremely gratified."

"Yessir," said Wiggins, and marched off very stiffly.

"Come in here," said Lush, leading the way into a little reception-room. "After we get the coffee, we'll make the cook dish up an egg or two. I don't want to disturb her mind until she gets the coffee made; for I am particular about coffee. Our cook is a *she*; but she is up to a thing or two. We had a *he* for a little while, last winter; but he put on so many airs, that even the governor couldn't stand it; so Mr. Cook had to walk Spanish, although he was a Frenchman. So Jack has come to grief, eh? Any thing serious?" The wily Mr. Lush had had this point in mind all the time; and this was really the secret of his hospitality, although he had a respect for Rovingston, and would have gone out of his way to do him a favor.

Rovingston gave him as connected a history of the mischance which had befallen Houldworthy, as his own rather limited knowledge of the circumstances would admit; and Charley Lush interpolated various interjections, partly of his own invention, and partly culled from English sporting papers and novels.

Wiggins announced that coffee was served, and ushered Mr. Lush and his friend into the breakfast-room.

"This has a very comfortable look to a man who has been driving around in the rain all night," said Rovingston. "By the way, Lush, how is it that I find you up at this hour? Have you just come in, and are you getting ready to retire, like myself? or have you been in bed already? I never took you for an early riser."

"Early riser?" repeated Mr. Lush; "I should say not. I don't propose to ruin my constitution by getting up before the world is properly aired, as Thingumbob said,—you know who I mean. No; it was a tooth drew me out of my downy, this morning. I have been up ever since five o'clock, smoking all the time. I don't often use tobacco before breakfast; I don't approve of it, as a regular thing; but I must do something, you know. I have been trying to make up my mind to have the thing out. It's stopped aching since you came; and, if it don't begin again, I'll give it one more chance. I got five hours' sleep, though. Luckily, I went to bed early last night,—twelve o'clock."

"Were you at the club?"

"Yes; and that is what drove me

home. Have you heard the news,—new engagement out? No; I suppose not, if you were with Jack last night."

"Engagement? No. Queer season for that sort of amusement."

"Queer? Yes; and that isn't the only excessively playful thing about it. It strikes me as altogether the G. J. of the season."

"The 'G. J.'? What is that?"

"Why, Gigantic Joke, of course."

"Well, suppose you tell me the point of it."

"This is it. Miss Harley is engaged to—whom do you think?"

"Mr. G. Washington Cooke?"

"Yes. How did you know?"

"Why, I heard he had been hanging around there ever since she broke her engagement with Jack Houldworthy."

"Yes; I knew all that; but I did give her credit for better taste."

Rovingston shrugged his shoulders. "She has good taste in dress," he said.

"Yes, by Jove; she is a stunning girl to look at; but if I wanted a wife, do you know, I'd take the ugliest woman I could find."

"You would not choose a horse in that way."

"I don't know but I would. As the author of my being doesn't shell out a sufficient stipend for me to keep either a horse or a wife, it is not a question to make a row over. But to think that a girl like Blanche Harley should throw herself away on a little wretch—well, if I begin to talk about Cookey, it will set my tooth screeching again. As Hamlet says in the play,—'tis Hamlet, isn't it?—Woman, thy name is frailty; which it is. If it isn't, then may I be teetotally flusticumbobulated!"

"She might have got a handsomer man, certainly," said Rovingston, "but not a richer one, I think, as times go. Old Cooke had a habit of salting down all his property into real estate, as fast as he got it, I have been told; and land cannot run away, whatever may happen to the nation."

"Yes; but she had the ducats before. Old Harley is a blessed old Jew."

"A good deal of his property is in Confederate bonds, I fancy. Besides, there is a rumor,—I know nothing about the truth of it,—that he has gone into blockade-running, and has been very unlucky at it."

"Serve him right, the old beggar! I wish Cookey would go him partnerships; but there is no danger of that; he's too

sharp, is the little wretch. And there were the fellows at the club last night, drinking his champagne; though I am proud to say there were none of our set in it. It made me so bustin' savage that I couldn't stand it; and so I cut. I tell you what, Rovington, I'm not a saint, nor a miracle of wisdom, I know; there may be five or six better men in the world than I am; and I shouldn't wonder if there were as many as nine or ten who know more than I do: but, by Jove, I'm not snob enough to drink a man's wine when I don't like him; no, by Jove, not much, — not if I knows myself, which I thinks I does." Mr. Lush here sought to drown his indignation in a copious draught of coffee.

"That is why he has been abusing Jack Houldworthy behind his back," said Rovington.

"Dare say. He has had his ugly visual orb on Miss Harley all this time. Rough on Jack, though, isn't it?"

"It is not very flattering, certainly; but he has got well over that trouble. He never was half so fond of her as he thought. It was only a boyish fancy."

"I'm deuced glad of it, I'm sure. I thought the contrary. Well, they talk a good deal of poetry and bosh about being crossed in love; but hang me if I believe it is half as bad as the toothache. It doesn't wake a man up at five o'clock in the morning, I take it. I beg your pardon, Rovington: let me pour you out some more coffee. Wiggins, why don't you look alive?"

"I asked the gentleman, sir, whether he would have his cup filled, which he said he wouldn't," said Wiggins in a grievous tone.

"I'm sorry, Rovington, that my mother is not here to do the honors; but you cannot expect much ceremony at this time in the morning."

"I am indebted to you for the best cup of coffee I have had out of Paris," said Rovington.

"You are very good to say so," returned Lush, who was really much flattered. Then he suddenly exclaimed, "Hallo! I've forgotten the eggs. Wiggins, go and — stop a moment — how will you have your omelet, Rovington?"

Rovington resolutely but politely declined to trespass on the hospitality of Mr. Lush any further, and, pleading the great fatigue under which he was suffering, rose to depart. Lush accompanied him to the door, and, standing on the

threshold, displayed himself in all his scarlet glory to the admiring gaze of the young ladies opposite, who had but lately risen, and were gazing down on him from behind the protecting screen of their blinds.

"Tell Jack Houldworthy to keep up a stiff upper lip," said Mr. Lush, with his hands deep in the pockets of his red dressing trousers, "and I'll send the governor around to see him, just as soon as he gets his grub down his blessed old maw. And whenever you want a cup of coffee, Rovington, come here and get it, whether the hour is seemly or unseemly. Good morning."

"Good fellow, Rovington," mused Lush, as he stood there gazing after his guest's retreating figure, — "good fellow at the bottom, if he is a bit of a swell. I think he liked the coffee too, which shows him to be a man of taste. Oh! hang it, of course he's a man of taste: that sticks out all over him. Jack Houldworthy is another good fellow too; and I am precious sorry for him. I'm afraid this engagement business will cut him up, coming just at this time when he has got three stabs in his body. I don't more than half believe what Rovington said about it. I wish I could do something for Jack. I wonder if he would take it rough, if I should go around and see him. I can call and inquire after him, and leave my card, at all events. He can't object to that; and that will show him that I haven't forgotten him. I'll do that; I will, by Jove!"

Saying this, Mr. Charles Lush went in, and closed the door, and thoughtfully wended his way to his own room.

Rovington, on his part, was indulging in some reflections not altogether uncomplimentary to Mr. Charles Lush; but his thoughts very soon turned to the events of the night, and their possible and probable consequences. The news of the engagement of Miss Harley to Cooke troubled him not a little. It filled him with disgust to begin with; and, besides, he was by no means sure how Jack would take it. He had purposely exaggerated his notion of the way Jack felt about his former *fiancée*, for its effect on Lush, and, through him, on the Twiddle Club; for he thought it quite possible that Lush would repeat what he had said, if the subject came up for discussion among the men, — a thing very likely to happen. When he came to reflect seriously upon the matter, he was in great doubt whether the old wound had completely healed,

as Jack supposed. Would he have the strength of mind to laugh at the extraordinary match, and overlook the inferential slight to himself? Rovington feared not; and he had no hesitation in deciding to keep the news secret from Houldworthy, until he should at least be convalescent.

"Poor old fellow!" said Rovington, as he reached his rooms, and threw himself down in a large easy-chair, which stood there invitingly opening its arms to receive him. "Convalescent? I wonder when that will be."

Rovington's head dropped down towards his shoulder in a very uncomfortable position; and he slept with the warm sun shining in on him, and lighting up the room, with its pictures, pipes, books, and trinkets.

The idea of following his friend to Saratoga had never once occurred to him.

CHAPTER XXIII.

WHICH, TO THE AUTHOR'S GREAT REGRET, IS EXCEEDINGLY MELODRAMATIC.

MRS. FREELAND, the good woman in whose charge Houldworthy had placed the two orphans, had grave doubts of the good faith of the civil young gentleman who had bespoken her services, when he failed to appear next morning, in disregard of his promise. It is true there was a paragraph in the morning papers, which gave a brief account of the robbery and attempted assassination of Jack; but the Freelands did not patronize the daily press. Even if they had taken a newspaper, it is quite likely they might not have discovered the report describing his misfortune; for it was condensed into a few lines, and, in every paper in which it appeared, was crowded into an obscure corner. It is a matter of so little consequence in a great city, that a poor fellow should be robbed and half murdered! When Mrs. Freeland found that the stranger did not appear, she resolved to enjoy a little philanthropy on her own account, even though she could ill afford it; for the misfortunes of the children interested her, and the little girl reminded her of one of her own, from which she had been compelled to part, the year before. She felt at first a little vexed, then, when a tall, handsome, well-dressed gentleman called late in the afternoon, and insisted on leaving with

her a sum equal to twice her husband's weekly wages; but she speedily became reconciled to the dispensations of fortune, when she came to have the pleasure of laying out a portion of the money in articles of which the children really stood in need. It had never come in Mr. Rovington's way to be charitable, except by means of fairs and subscription papers; and he had no more notion of how much was needed in their cares than he had of the price of a tame elephant. It was not to his discredit that he determined that his error, if one was unavoidable, should be on the side of liberality.

The two poor orphans took kindly to Mrs. Freeland; but they were just then in a strait where earthly sympathy could do but little to alleviate their grief. They were gentle, quiet, and affectionate, and ready to do what was asked of them; but they were very silent in those days, and sat much together, holding each other's hands, as if they feared lest they might be separated by a second cruel stroke of fortune. Mr. Rovington saw them thus, and, so Mrs. Freeland thought, seemed rather impressed by the sight, for she heard him say to himself, "Poor things, poor things!" several times.

That same evening Mrs. Pullis had a visitor, who put her in a great state of excitement by the extraordinary proposition he made to her, and the news he brought. It was of course none other than Mr. Rovington, who told her of Jack Houldworthy's misfortune, and his desire that she should take the two orphans into her house for the present, and that, while she received a fair equivalent for their board, she should throw in a little motherly care for them, in view of their friendless condition. Of course Mrs. Pullis hesitated to take such a responsibility, and requested time for deliberation; she must consult her son Robert. Rovington foresaw the result, and suggested that if she would hold this consultation at once, and decide the question, it would save him a great deal of trouble, and Mr. Houldworthy much anxiety. The widow thereupon went to find her son Robert, whose advice may be easily guessed. It was settled in less than two minutes, that Katy and Mary Green should be installed in the vacant room formerly occupied by Miss Pullis, now Mrs. Tompkins, and that the orphans should be left in peace, so far as any thought for their maintenance was concerned, until they had had time to recover their shock.

"It will be time enough then, to consider what can be done with them," said Mr. Rovingston. "In the mean time, Mrs. Pullis, you can draw on me for whatever money you want, at any time you choose. I think I may trust you not to be extravagant or exorbitant. — Mr. Pullis, this is my address."

Rovingston gave Bob Pullis his card, and took his leave. It was easy to see that he was not a man of business, for he made no bargain whatever with the widow. He looked her full in the face often during the interview, and scanned her son's features pretty narrowly; and he had some knowledge of human nature. With some persons, Rovingston would have made a full and explicit contract.

It was only a day or two after Jack Houldworthy fell among thieves, that the draft riot broke out in New York. With the history of this revolt against the laws and the national authority, this narrative has very little to do. An account of that memorable struggle of the lowest dregs of the city's population for supremacy and plunder ought of itself to make a volume; and it is to be hoped that it may be one day written, and by an author free from partisan bias. The time for this has not yet come: and in these pages there is only room to show how it affected the Houldworthys.

The draft was ordered to begin in New York on Monday, July 13, 1863; and the process of drawing the names of the conscripts from the wheel was actually in progress when the first riotous demonstration was made in the Ninth Congressional District. A pistol-shot fired in the street outside was the signal for an attack with stones and missiles on the house where the draft was going on; the building was cleared of the United States officers and clerks by the mob, the implements of drafting were thrown out of the window, and the house was set on fire. A provost marshal was nearly killed; and Mr. Kennedy, the chief of police, was severely beaten. The small force of the invalid corps, on duty, proved no defence against the rough and brutal crowd; and a strong detachment of police fared but little better. The firemen, who arrived late on the scene with their engines, were received with marks of favor, and were permitted to extinguish the flames in the adjoining buildings of the block, to which the fire had spread; but no effort was made to save the house where the draft had been

begun. The mob remained masters of the situation.

That same day, the enrolling office of the Eighth Congressional District, on the corner of Broadway and Twenty-ninth Street, was burned; and the block of stores in which it stood was also plundered and destroyed. That same day, occurred the attack on the armory, on the corner of Second Avenue and Twenty-first Street, where one or two mechanics were shot, and the policemen in charge escaped with their lives through a back way. The same day, the Colored Orphan Asylum was sacked and burned, and the children turned homeless into the street. The telegraph-wires were cut, the railroad tracks running northward from the city were torn up, and successful efforts were made to interrupt business in the upper wards by intimidating the shop-keepers, and driving wagons and carts off the streets; though it was not until Tuesday that this was attempted systematically. The organized militia of the city were absent, many of the regiments having been sent into Pennsylvania; and there were only a handful of troops on Governor's Island and in the forts. The police did their duty, but they were not strong enough to oppose the tide. The city seemed almost at the point of being given up to mob-law. How far all this was the work of Southern emissaries need not be discussed here; but it is a fact that the force of rioters on the first day was comparatively small, and that the honest, sober mechanics and laboring men kept clear of the movement from the first. On the second and third days, when the news that the police had been outnumbered was spread through the lower wards of the city, there issued from all the vile dens the offscourings of the population, men, women, and children, bent on plunder, knowing nothing of the laws of God, and for the moment fearless of the laws of man. It is a wonder that no worse outrages were committed than those perpetrated on the unhappy negroes, and the few wretched soldiers, who happened to fall singly into the hands of the mob.

Something of what had been done, and of the work cut out for these outlaws, was told in the newspapers of Tuesday morning; but as yet quiet and orderly citizens hardly realized the extent of the mischief. Young Houldworthy was stretched on a bed of pain, suffering with less patience, indeed, than little Bob Pullis had shown under circumstances not so

trying, but still displaying manliness and fortitude. He had the most careful nursing, and was not ungrateful. Dr. Lush had pronounced him out of danger, unless certain contingencies should arise; but it was a case which needed careful watching and attention. It may be imagined that Houldworthy knew nothing of the riot, and of what was going on outside his chamber, since his nurses were scrupulous in the utmost that nothing should annoy or excite him. The ladies themselves, indeed, did not at all realize the extent of the outbreak, since Mr. Rovingston, who had thus far called every day, had made light of it, because he did not wish to alarm them. Their duties did not permit them to give the newspapers much attention, and just now they were more ready than at other times to take the news at second hand, well sifted and digested, as most women like it. They were ready to receive Mr. Rovingston's version of the trouble, and, in their anxiety for Jack's condition, did not pay much regard to their friend's advice to stay within doors while the riot lasted, because they did not foresee there would be any thing to call them into the street.

Such an occasion, nevertheless, arose. On Tuesday morning, Dr. Lush made his visit at what was for him an early hour. Only Mrs. Houldworthy was with the patient. The worthy doctor, who had the reputation of being extremely pompous and fussy, whether deservedly or not it is not worth while to inquire, seemed to be in a great hurry that morning, and made but a short stay. A bruise had been discovered on the patient's head, although how it came there no one ever knew: he might have got it in falling, or one of his assailants might have given him a final kick at parting. This contusion was just now extremely painful, and gave him more annoyance even than his other wounds. Dr. Lush made a prescription for it, in the nature of a liniment, and went his way. Mrs. Houldworthy, looking out of the window as he drove away, observed that the boy with him, who held the reins of his horse while he made his visits, was that morning white, and not black as heretofore. Reflecting that the Ethiopian and the leopard have an equal difficulty in changing their external appearance, Mrs. Houldworthy concluded that the doctor had changed his boy, — why, she could not imagine. The reason appeared clear to the family before the

week, when the persecution to which the colored race was subjected became known. Dr. Lush was a prudent man, and his horse was a valuable animal.

The little bit of paper with mysterious symbols crawling over it, which Dr. Lush left, was the means of causing a great deal of trouble and some loss of life. Dr. Lush was on the point of ordering a certain simple remedy which they had at hand in the house; but happening at the moment to put his fingers in his waistcoat-pocket, and feel there his gold-pencil case, he changed his mind, and wrote a prescription. Events of importance in this world not unfrequently turn on trifles, as the reader may possibly have seen stated somewhere before.

When Miss Houldworthy came into the sick-room soon afterward, her mother handed her this bit of paper, with the request that it should be sent to the druggist's. Miss Houldworthy felt a little concern; but she did not show it, and at once sought Amy Warner for consultation. Miss Warner saw no reason why Jane should not be sent: Jane was their only domestic. Fanny Houldworthy objected that it was dangerous to go into the street, because Mr. Rovingston had recommended that they should stay in doors. For her own part, she would have asked Dr. Lush to drive to the druggist's for them, great man as he was; but she had not been in the room, and her mother had not heard Mr. Rovingston's caution. Amy Warner urged, on the other hand, that it could hardly be dangerous for servants. Besides, the street and neighborhood was quiet enough, and would probably remain so, no matter what happened in other parts of the city. Fanny thereupon yielded, as she always did, to her cousin's arguments; and Jane was called up from her realm below, and directed to put on her oldest bonnet and shawl, and go for the liniment.

But here arose an unforeseen difficulty. Jane made no pretensions at any time to great physical courage. The sight of a spider would throw her into a state of nervous excitement which lasted until she had set her foot on it; and a rat would nearly drive her into hysterics. She was now fresh from a consultation with the servant-girl next door, carried on, in imitation of the interviews of Pyramus and Thisbe, through a knot-hole in the fence; and her hair almost stood on end with horror at the bare idea of going into the street on any errand whatsoever.

She was very respectful towards them; but she made it quite evident to them in half a minute, that, sooner than go on this errand, she would rather be broiled on her own gridiron, or stewed in her own boiler. So they sent her back to the congenial company of her pots and kettles.

Then there arose an amiable controversy as to which of the girls should go. Amy, prompt to look difficulties in the face, had instantaneously proposed to go herself, when Jane had refused. Amy was, besides, six months older, and claimed the right of seniority to decide. Fanny would not be outdone in generosity. It was her brother who was sick, and it was clearly her duty to go for this medicine. She was quite sure, besides, that there would be no danger.

This she said with great inward trepidation; for Fanny was not bold by nature, and a mob is not a pleasant animal for a lady to meet while she is out walking. Nevertheless Fanny was determined to go; for Jack was suffering, and her foolish fears should not be allowed to influence her. The upshot of the matter was a compromise: the girls would both go on the adventure.

They put on their waterproof cloaks, pulled the hoods well over their faces, and fancied they were disguised; but it is not easy for either ladies or gentlemen to conceal their breeding, and ape the manners of vulgar persons. Both Miss Warner and Miss Houldworthy were well booted and gloved; and their faces looked very bright and pretty, in spite of the pallor brought on by unusual confinement and anxiety. They paused on the doorstep, and looked up and down the street. The sidewalks were well-nigh deserted; and a mysterious, gloomy stillness seemed to have settled down on the city. Miss Houldworthy came near losing her courage at the start, and even Miss Warner hesitated. There seemed to be danger in the air.

"I almost wish we had waited for Mr. Rovingston," said Amy. "I dare say he will come very soon, and I know he would go for us."

"Mr. Rovingston is much too fine a gentleman to be sent on errands," said Fanny. "Besides, I doubt if he ventures across town to-day; and Jack wants this immediately. He is suffering, poor, dear fellow."

Miss Warner looked at her companion to see whether she was in earnest. "Mr. Rovingston not venture out?" she said.

"I do not believe you meant that, Fanny."

"It is no matter whether I did or not," said Fanny; "this is no time to stop and talk of it. A mob may come along while we stand here. Come, Amy, come!" Miss Houldworthy started quickly down the steps, as if she was afraid to trust her resolution; and Miss Warner had to walk fast for a few moments to overtake her, and keep up with her. Then they went on rapidly and in silence, saving their breath to accelerate their speed.

The druggist's shop was only around the corner, on the avenue; and they soon reached it, and that too without seeing any thing in the least alarming. They began to recover their courage, and were inclined to laugh at their own fears, or at least to make a show of merriment. The young man in charge dampened their spirits very much by giving it as his opinion, that the mob had undoubtedly got the upper hand of the police the day before, and would be likely enough to burn and plunder the whole city before the week was over. He had heard no news from them that morning, except that two fellows had been along the avenue ordering the shopkeepers to put up their shutters, and close their places; and most of them either had done so, or would do so very soon. It was still rather early for the rioters to begin work; but they would give an account of themselves before the day was over, without any doubt.

This set the girls trembling again; and each of them wished ardently that Mr. Rovingston or some other good friend would come to their succor just then, although neither spoke; they only looked at each other. They paid for the liniment as soon as it was ready, and left the shop hastily, inspired by the desire to get home at the earliest moment.

"Oh, do let us hurry, Amy!" said Fanny as they turned into their own street.

"Indeed, dear, I do not see how we can walk much faster; and I haven't the breath to run," said Amy.

They had nearly the length of a long block still to go; for their own house was only three doors from the corner of the next avenue. But little more than half the distance was traversed, when the two girls stopped short, and Fanny uttered a cry of dismay and terror. A crowd of men, women, and boys, headed by a great bully in a red shirt, on horse-back, dashed round the corner on the run, and came towards them.

"Let us go back," said Fanny, half fainting at the shock.

"No! no!" cried Amy. "There is no time. They would certainly overtake us. Let us go on, and perhaps they will not notice us. We are only two poor, harmless women, and they cannot hope to gain any thing from us. Come, dear, don't be frightened. It is only a step more. Come, dear."

Thus encouraged by Amy, who would have been no less alarmed than her companion, had she not been borne up by the necessity of sustaining her, Fanny managed to walk on towards the noisy crowd, although her limbs tottered under her, and she clung convulsively to her friend. They were on the sidewalk, and the mob was in the middle of the street. There was a chance that they might pass unnoticed. Certainly there was no shelter where they were, and it seemed folly to turn back.

Amy's plan seemed the best; but it was only another instance of the fallibility of human judgment, that it turned out badly. The crowd halted just before it reached them, and the girls in their panic also stopped. Then, when they saw the men and boys and some of the women gathering around the leader, and appearing from their gesticulations to be holding a consultation with him, they determined to make one more effort to push past them, and reach their house.

Fortune was against them. As they approached, an old hag who had been standing on the outside of the crowd, smoothing with an old knife the handle of a bludgeon, espied them, and at once started towards them. She was such a creature as neither of the girls had ever seen before, even in their worst dreams. She was short and obese, and rolled awkwardly in her gait, like a sailor just come ashore. She wore an old, ragged dress of some coarse, cheap material; and her arms, bare to the shoulders, were red, scratched, and scarred; while her hands were large, fat, and coarse. As she sauntered towards them, still whittling, though without much effect, on the knotty wood, as it appeared, they saw that she could hardly be as old as she seemed at a distance, and that it was her excesses, rather than her years, which had rounded her shoulders and wrinkled her face. An old scar divided one of her eyebrows, and ran up on her forehead; her nose was flat and villanous; and her mouth, parted with what she intended to be a smile, showed a miniature cavern with two fangs for

portals. Her watery eyes twinkled with malicious cunning; and her whole face was lighted up, as it were, by the fires of alcohol burning within. The two girls stopped short, as if bound hand and foot by the chains of a horrible nightmare.

"Good mornin', my dears," said this creature nodding to them, and still trying to make an impression on the stick with her dull knife. "Were you two goin' out for a little walk this fine mornin'?"

"Oh, pray do not stop us!" said Amy. "Indeed we have got no money,— nothing you can want. You see we can do you no harm."

"Stop you?" said the woman. "Oh, no, not by no means. You didn't know I was the pink of politeness, did you, my dears?"

She stood in front of them with a hideous grin on her face, still moving her knife over the stick, but eying them sharply all the time, and plainly enjoying their distress. They waited for her to speak again.

"What nice cloaks you have got, my dears!" she said presently. "Seems to me jist as if I should like to borrow them cloaks. You could have 'em agin, you know, any time you wanted 'em. Jest send to my house, No. 9 Fifth Avenue, and inquire for Mother Brown. You never heard of Mother Brown before, did you, my dears? Well, I guess I'll take them cloaks,— likewise any little change or jewelry you happen to have about you." Here Mother Brown stopped grinning, and began to shake her stick carelessly, in a manner as if she might presently be tempted to let them feel its weight.

"For heaven's sake," said Fanny in a whisper, "give her what she asks, and let us get away."

Just then a rough-looking fellow with a heavy beard, and a black patch over one eye, came up rather quickly, and took Mother Brown by the shoulder.

"See here, now!" said he. "What are you a-doin' to them gals? Sa-a-y!"

"Never you mind," said Mother Brown, shaking off his grasp, and turning angrily towards him. "What's that to you, I should like to know? I'raps you'd better mind your own business, or you may have more than you can take care of."

"Well, jest you leave them gals alone, that's all I want," said the man. — "Just you pass along, young ladies, and I'll see she don't touch you."

"See here, see here!" screamed Mother Brown, "seems to me you're putting on a great many airs. You may get your vest slit up for you, with this here knife. 'Twon't be the first jacket it's made a hole in this week." With this, she made an expressive gesture with the knife she held in her hand.

The man suddenly thrust his hand under his coat behind his back, and drew a revolver, which he cocked with a quick movement, and presented full in the face of the woman, who recoiled at the unpleasant sight. He uttered only one word, but he managed to throw into it a wonderful amount of defiance and impudence. It was a long-drawn "Ye-è-es?"

The woman stepped back into the gutter, and, still brandishing her knife, turned to the crowd, and called out fiercely, "Johnny, Johnny! See here! Here's a man drorin' a pistol on yer mother!"

A ragged blackguard in a cap and a blue woollen shirt, and armed with a club, came forward at the call, followed by two or three of his mates, and afterwards by a number of boys and a few women not much better looking than Mother Brown.

"Run," said the man to the young ladies, in a low tone, "run for your lives." But escape was out of the question; for Fanny had sunk down, fainting, where she stood, and Amy was crouching beside her. It was perhaps as well for them, since Mother Brown's blood was up, and she was swinging her club. They might have fared badly if she had seen them trying to get away just then.

Their defender with the black patch cast an anxious look at them, and moved nearer the mob to draw attention away from them. Mother Brown kept as close to him as she dared.

"Johnny," she cried, "that feller's been sassin' your mother, and he's been drorin' a pistol on her."

As Johnny had no pistol, himself, he kept at a prudent distance from the revolver in question, and contented himself with firing a volley of oaths at the intruder, and inviting him to come out into the street and fight. To do him justice, he swore very valiantly.

"Oh, yes!" said the man in the black patch scornfully, "that's all very well; but you just keep your distance, or I'll blow you square out of your boots."

Johnny thereupon fired another volley of imprecations, and ended with the inquiry, "Who is this feller puttin' on

airs? I'd like to know who this feller is. Does anybody know him?"

"I know him," said a little thick-set Irishman, who had just joined the group from the rest of the crowd, which now appeared about to break up and go over to the disputants. "I know him. His name's Mike Colburn, and he's a detective. I seen him writin' names in a book."

"You lie!" shouted the man in the black patch; but his voice was drowned in the outcry that arose. "He's a spy! He's a detective! Down with him, boys! Down with him!" Mother Brown caught up the cry with a relish, and waved her club, calling out, "Give it to him, boys! Give it to him!"

The man in the black patch, finding himself in a very critical situation, did not wait to be attacked, but fired at the man Johnny, who was leading on the rush against him. Johnny dropped his club, threw up his hands, and fell back into the arms of some of his fellows. A second shot, fired the next instant, crippled a companion; a third went through a boy's hat, and lodged in a tree on the other sidewalk; and a fourth made a round hole in a window-pane of an opposite house, and came within an inch of boring the ear of a servant-maid who was incautiously looking out, so that she might have worn a muffin-ring in it for the rest of her life. At the same minute an enfilading fire was opened from the side nearest where the girls were left, and a cry was raised in the rear, "Police, police!"

Now it is very well known that a mob is as cowardly as it is cruel; and while this crowd would have thought it good fun to rob two defenceless women, or knock down and trample to pieces a single man, they wanted only a little determined opposition to rout them. So when they found our friend in the black patch peppering them from the front, an unknown gentleman firing at them from one side, and at the same time had their attention called to the fact that a squad of stout men dressed in blue coats and with clubs in their hands were coming down the street upon them, on the double quick, it is certainly no wonder that they were seized with a sudden panic, and took to their heels, and fled in the opposite direction. Mother Brown went with them, and at a surprising pace, too, for one of her size and shape. When the cry was raised that the man with the black patch was a detective, she had

gone to the rear, not so much to be out of harm's way as to stir up the remaining portion of the crowd. Hearing all the shots, as well as the cry of "Police," she judged it prudent not to wait any longer in that neighborhood, and so started off, knowing nothing at first of the fate of her son, although she was very soon called to take one of his arms and help him along.

Fortunately the mob was neither very large in numbers, nor very courageous. The main portion of it was a little knot of choice spirits, who had started out from the neighborhood of the Five Points, that morning, bent on plunder; and they were not yet sufficiently intoxicated by success or by liquor to be really quarrelsome. Like many of the turbulent crowds which ranged at will through the upper wards of the city that day and the next, it was made up, in a great part, of women of the vilest class, and boys. It was women who perpetrated some of the most cruel crimes during the riot. Later in the day, this same mob, augmented from time to time by large reinforcements, met and routed, in one of the avenues on the east side, first a considerable force of police, and afterwards a detachment of regular troops sent against them.

The man with the black patch, finding his enemies taking to flight, did not pursue them, but contented himself with firing the remaining barrels of his revolver after them. Then he walked quietly back to where he had left the girls, and narrowly escaped being himself shot through the head by a zealous policeman, who rushed out from the advancing line, and demanded his surrender. The gentleman who had so opportunely arrived to open the cross fire on the rioters was no other than Mr. Rovington on his way to call on Jack; and he with Miss Warner, who had regained her presence of mind, succeeded in persuading the policeman that the man had been fighting very bravely on their side, notwithstanding his personal appearance was very much against him. If the man with the black patch was a detective, as the mob had supposed, he must have had reasons for concealing the fact from the other policemen; for he said very little in his own defence, and simply appealed to Mr. Rovington as a witness of his conduct. The police sergeant, who had halted his men opposite the little group, eyed the stranger closely.

"Well," he said, after a moment,

"we have got work enough before us to-day, without making any unnecessary arrests; and, if you will guarantee that this man is all right, very good. He can go. Do you want any help from us?"

"Thank you, no," said Rovington. "We have only a step or two to go; and, if our friend here will bear a hand with this lady who has fainted, we shall do very well."

The policemen, who had been standing at rest, formed in line again, and marched on with the regular tread of veteran soldiers. Indeed, these same men, with their comrades in the force, won the right to claim military laurels by their brave conduct, before the riot was over.

The two men took up the insensible form of Miss Houldworthy in their arms, and Miss Warner followed them to the house. Mr. Rovington noticed when he took the hands of the man with the black patch in his, to form a support, that they were as small and soft as his own; but he was too excited and anxious to reflect upon this fact.

CHAPTER XXIV.

IN WHICH THE MAN WITH THE BLACK PATCH OVER HIS EYE RELATES ANOTHER ADVENTURE.

Mrs. HOULDWORTHY sat in the sick-chamber, anxiously awaiting the return of the young ladies. From time to time she rendered to her son those little attentions which men with their coarser physical nature can appreciate, but which only women can perform. Jack did not share her uneasiness; for he had heard nothing about the riot, and he did not know that his sister and Amy had gone out.

Suddenly there rushed into the room the faithful Jane, with a dishcloth in her hand, and her eyes staring with fright.

"Oh, mum!" said she, "there's a mob just gone down the street tearin' mad, and howlin' and swearin' offul, and the young ladies is sure to be killed, mum!"

Jack hastily raised himself on his elbow crying out, "What do you mean?" and Mrs. Houldworthy sprang to her feet, pale with fright. Then she remembered the need that Jack should be kept quiet; and, mastering her fears with great difficulty, she ordered the woman to go down stairs, and not disturb Mr. Houldworthy with her idle stories.

"Well, mum," Jane replied with a show

of feeling aggrieved, "in course, I didn't want to disturb Mr. Houldworthy; but if the young ladies was goin' to be killed, mum, I thought you'd be glad to hear of it. However"—and here the faithful serving-maid took herself off, without waiting to finish her sentence. She had hardly reached the foot of the stairs when the sound of a pistol-shot echoed through the quiet street, and others followed in quick succession. Jane rushed to the cellar, panic-stricken, and took refuge in the coal-bin, from which she was extricated, after some time, in a very limp and dusty condition.

Mrs. Houldworthy, although greatly terrified herself, did her best to re-assure Jack; but it was to very little purpose. He grew more and more agitated, and bewailed very loudly the stern necessity which kept him stretched out there, notwithstanding it would have been difficult for him to say what he could have done, if he had been free to go out. His mind was presently somewhat relieved, when his mother, who was looking out of the window, exclaimed that the mob was evidently running. The next minute she rushed from the room. If Jack could have seen what his mother saw just then,—two men bearing the senseless form of a woman between them,—the shock in his state of health might have been serious. Mrs. Houldworthy soon learned the truth, but did not recover from the effects of the fright for a week or two.

Mr. Rovingston and the man with the black patch bore Miss Houldworthy into one of the lower rooms, and laid her upon a sofa. No servant could be found; and the stranger appeared quite as eager to give his assistance now, as when he had defended the young ladies in the street. He bustled around for water, and applied the various restoratives which were brought, with his own hands. "Allow me," he said, taking the smelling-salts at one time from Mrs. Houldworthy, "allow me, madam; I know something of medicine." Mrs. Houldworthy regarded him in the light of a rioter, tamed by the prowess of Mr. Rovingston very much as the man Friday was subdued by Robinson Crusoe, and was very loath to have him come near herself or her daughter. She cast a look at Mr. Rovingston, and, finding no signs of disapprobation on his face, reluctantly resigned the vinaigrette to the stranger, who seemed to know just what to do, and went about the work very dexter-

ously. There was no great effort needed, for Fanny opened her eyes almost immediately after the application of restoratives began; and, presently recovering a sense of what had happened before she fainted, she extended her hand to the man with the black patch, who kissed it respectfully, and with an air of chivalry contrasting rather ludicrously with his personal appearance. Then, seeing Mr. Rovingston, she greeted him with a faint smile, but she did not give him her hand; she did not know yet the part he had played in her defence. Mrs. Houldworthy, finding her daughter safe, hurried back to her son.

The man with the black patch had no sooner kissed Miss Houldworthy's hand with the air of a knight-errant than he began to feel the pulse of the same arm with the professional manner of a physician. He went on with a grave and learned air to recommend quiet for a time, and a recourse to certain light stimulants. Then he made a movement of leaving.

"I do not know how to thank you for what you have done for us," began Miss Warner, still pale and trembling.

"I beg you will say nothing about it," said the man, making rather a graceful bow. "I consider myself doubly fortunate in being able to succor beauty in distress, and that sort of thing, and getting a chance to pop over some of those thieves and murderers. Besides, we should all have come to grief, I think, if it had not been for Mr. Rovingston here, and the police."

Fanny looked at Mr. Rovingston with interest at this announcement.

"Then you know me," said Rovingston.

"I know you very well, Mr. Rovingston," said the man with the black patch. "Don't you know me yet?"

"Why, no. But since we are acquaintances, I will take the liberty of complimenting you upon your luxuriant beard."

"It is handsome, isn't it? It came from Paris; they don't know how to make them in this country. So you don't remember me? Why, you did me the honor to breakfast with me the other morning."

"Ah! Now I know you.—Ladies, let me introduce to you Mr. Lush,—Mr. Lush, to whom I must say I think you are very much indebted."

"Ladies, I beg you will not mention it," said Charley Lush again. "I am very much at your service, now and forever. I have had the pleasure of meeting you

under what I may call somewhat different auspices, but I dare say you have quite forgotten me. I hope you will excuse my appearance. My present costume, although I flatter myself that, regarded as a costume simply, it is rather ingenious, if not unique, is not that which society prescribes for making morning calls. I will remove my beard if you will permit me,—thank you; likewise my patch. Your rooms are quite warm. My coat is, to be sure, a little ragged and patched here and there, but, as *Hover* says in the play, it covers an honest heart. That is, I am not quite sure that he says it, but it would be quite in the style of his part, you know."

Lush rattled on at such a pace that the ladies could hardly find an opportunity to thank him; and that, indeed, was what he was trying to prevent.

"Rather a nobby dress, I think, eh, Rovingston?" he continued. "Something between the style of Jemmy Twicher in 'The Golden Farmer,' and Robert Macaire. I wore a part of it at a masquerade ball last winter, and the beard I own. You will observe that I have put a little black on my eyebrows, and a little red on my nose. I think the whole thing stands the daylight uncommon well. I don't think you noticed the beard was false, at first."

"I did not," said Rovingston. "In fact, you somehow looked very much taller in your disguise."

"Yes. And, how the mob came to take me for a detective, I cannot imagine. I think they must have mistaken me for some one else. One of them, confound him! said he saw me writing names in a book; and certainly I have not been enough of a fool to do that. I passed my father this morning without his recognizing me; although, to be sure, he was driving, and I was on the sidewalk. However, there's the old adage, you know: it's a wise father that knows his own son. Is that the way it goes, by the way? Well, it's all the same. And I had another lark,—a great lark. It paid me for all the trouble. I must tell you. You all know G. Washington Cooke,—generally known at the club by the name of Cookey?"

"I have heard of him," said Miss Warner, "but I have never met him." The girls, it may be remarked, had not yet heard of Cookey's engagement to Miss Harley.

"I'm sorry that you don't know him," pursued Lush, "because that destroys the point of my story. He is the most dis-

agreeable person I ever met and Mr. Rovingston likes him no better than I, if I am not mistaken. His engagement has just come out. I suppose you have heard of that."

Mr. Rovingston uttered a warning cough. "Oh, yes! of course,—the rich Miss Smithers. Go on with your story, Lush."

"Well, as I was saying," continued Lush, taking the hint on the instant, "I was going down the avenue just now in this rig; and who should I see but the little beggar tripping it along on his con-founded little toes, just before me! He was alone, and there happened to be nobody very near him; so I crept up behind him, and put my hand on his shoulder, and sang out all at once in my heaviest voice, 'Hallo, Cookey!' You ought to have seen him jump! By Jove, it was great! I beg your pardon: I meant to say it was extremely amusing. 'Who are you?' says he, spinning around; and, when he saw my beard and black patch, he turned as white as my pocket-handkerchief,—not this bandanna, but my regular handkerchief, you know. 'Never you mind who I am,' said I: 'I know who you are. You're the meanest man in New York, and your name is George Washington Cookey.' He was a sight to behold when I said that. First he was savage and turned red, and then he got frightened again and turned white; and so he went on white and red by turns, as if he didn't know what color he liked best for a complexion. He seemed to be trying to make up his mind whether to strike me, or run away. Finally he said, 'You let go of my arm, you low rascal, or I'll call the police!'—'Call away,' said I laughing in his face, 'call loud, and perhaps they will come.' All this time, he was fingering in his side-pocket with his other hand; and, do you know, I believe he had a pistol all the while, only he was afraid to draw it. Well, then he changed his note, and began to whimper. 'Let me go,' said he: 'I left my watch at home this morning, but you shall have all the money I've got about me. It isn't much, but you shall have it all, upon my soul.'

"Don't lie to me, you low sneak," said I, 'I see your watch in your fob-pocket,'—and there it was too, where he had put it; out of sight, as he thought. 'Take that,' said I, banging him over the hat with my fist, 'and learn not to call gentlemen names again.' His hat was a little loose, and by good luck had a stiff

rim; and with three raps I had it well down over his nose. He bawled murder; and I thought it time to leave, for fear somebody would come along who was not afraid to use his pistol. I didn't mind the police, you know, because all the roundsmen have been drawn in, and are kept to fight mobs. I turned down the first corner, keeping behind the trees as much as I could; and, when I got time to look about me, I found I was in this very street. So I thought I would go over to the east side, and see what was going on, and at the same time call and inquire after my friend Houldworthy. And that is how I happened to come along just in the nick of time. There would have been two of us if Harry Van Dorp, who agreed last night to start out with me, had not backed down this morning. He said it was a very foolish plan. All things considered, it strikes me it wasn't."

"I am sure we can never be sufficiently grateful to you both," said Miss Warner, extending her hands to them; and Fanny echoed the sentiment in faint tones.

"And now, Lush," said Rovingston, "I think, out of consideration to the patient, that we had better take ourselves off as soon as possible, unless we can be of further service."

"Of course we ought," said Charley Lush. "Upon my word, in the excitement of the moment I quite forgot that Miss Houldworthy needed rest. Excessively stupid of me! I declare I am extremely vexed. If you will be kind enough to give my regards to my friend Houldworthy. He is getting along very well, did you say? I am delighted to hear it. I beg your pardon, but perhaps you will allow me to arrange my whiskers at this glass, before I go out. Singular request to make of a lady you are calling on, isn't it? but I noticed, as I came through the hall, that the light was not quite good."

Charley Lush stopped talking while he was arranging his disguise; and Rovingston took the opportunity to tell Miss Warner that he would come again in the afternoon, and to entreat her not to venture out again, — a caution which was perhaps unnecessary.

"Deuced fine girl, Miss Warner," said Lush to Rovingston, as the two walked down the street together. "Plucky little woman, by Jove! Did you see how she stood that row? Not many women would have stood that as she did, I can tell you.

Miss Houldworthy is a nice girl too, a very nice girl. Fact, they're both of 'em enormously nice girls; and it is a bustin' old shame that they have lost their money."

"They are both very agreeable," said Rovingston absently. He seemed to pay very little attention to Lush's chatter, or at least no more than civility required, and only roused himself when he came to take leave of him.

"I am going to the house," said Lush. "I want to sneak in the back way and get these togs off. I am getting tired of them; and, besides, I want to go down to the club, and hear what little Cookey has to say."

"Lush," said Rovingston, taking him by the hand, "you behaved like a man to-day."

"What, in crowning Cookey? I think it was rather a lark. If he had only put up his hands, and made a show of fight, I would have wolloped him; but as it was I couldn't strike him, you know, any more than if he had been a woman."

"Pshaw, you know very well what I mean. I don't think I quite appreciated you for a long time; but I do now, and I hope you will count me for one of your friends."

"Mr. Rovingston," said Lush, "you make me proud and happy. I am a man of few words, and them's my sentiments."

The two shook hands very warmly and separated. Rovingston's estimate of Charley Lush's loquacity was not just the same as that which Lush himself had just expressed; and he thought it well to get away while he could.

"That reminds me," said Lush very thoughtfully for him, as he walked away, — it did not clearly appear what had jogged his memory, — "that reminds me. I wonder what has become of that fellow I shot. I know I hit him hard. I hope I did not kill him, although I dare say he deserved to be hanged. I don't care to go into the public execution line of business, — at least not just yet, not until I have tried one or two more professions."

Charley Lush confidently expected to be amused when he got down to the Twiddler Club, by Cookey's exaggerated accounts of the outrage which he had suffered. Falstaff's men in buckram, Lush supposed, did not multiply half so fast as would he himself, as the highwayman of Cooke's story. Lush was doomed to be disappointed. Cookey had been there that morning, so several men told

him, but there had been nothing unusual in his appearance. He might have had on a new hat, perhaps; they had not taken particular notice. He probably did look ill-natured, because he was seldom pleasant. He certainly had not staid very long, and had not talked about the riot, or the failure of the police to do their duty.

The fact was, that Mr. Cooke, knowing he had not played a very courageous part, was wise enough to keep the story of the adventure entirely to himself. He saw clearly, when he came to reflect, that the attack on him was made by some personal enemy, whose object was not to plunder him, but to insult him. He was shrewd enough to see that, the less said about such an affair, the more it would be to his credit. He employed a detective for a week or two to discover who perpetrated the outrage, but the man did not earn his money; and Cookey always had a theory that the person who had knocked his hat over his nose was one of his Williamsburg tenants, who had long held a grudge against him, as he very well knew. It may be imagined that this tenant did not have his life made any happier on account of Cookey's suspicions of him.

When Charley Lush found himself balked of his amusement in this way, he went to one corner of the smoking-room, and sat down sulkily by himself. A part of the time which it took him to smoke a cigar, he speculated about the probable fate of the man he had shot; and the other part he occupied in trying to make out which of the two young ladies he had rescued that morning he liked the better.

Jack Houldworthy knew so much of what had passed in the morning, it became necessary to tell him the whole story; and, to their surprise, the effect seemed to be rather beneficial to his strength than the contrary, since it gave him something of which to think, besides his own troubles. For he had had time to reflect on how much his accident would affect the fortunes of the family. He knew how strict were the rules of Messrs. C. Smith & Company, and their lieutenant Mr. Chipman; and he understood that his salary would not run on while he lay there sick, and his illness promised to be a long one. Then, too, Dr. Lush's charges would be by no means light; for that worthy practitioner was taking his revenge for having spent the earlier years of his life in working

for little or nothing. The family expenses would be increased in various ways; and, besides, there were the two orphans to be looked after. So poor Jack had plenty to think of when he was awake, and not over-pleasant subjects of thought either; and there was no harm done by the introduction of a new topic of conversation.

Jack was especially interested in Amy's description of the old hag who called herself Mother Brown; and he thought he recognized in her the woman to whom he owed the wounds from which he was suffering. It was true he had only seen her for a moment, and then in the dim light furnished by street-lamps not very near them; but the general outline of her face was indelibly photographed on his mind in that moment of helpless terror when his arms were seized and pinioned from behind, and she struck him. Jack held a short consultation that afternoon with Fred Rovingston; and, putting this and that together, they decided that it was very probable that the assault and robbery had been committed by Mother Brown and her son whom she had called Johnny, and who had certainly received a bad wound from Charley Lush's pistol. This would make it easy to track them; and the interesting family was doubtless well known to the police. Perhaps it might be possible to recover Jack's watch and chain, which were both relics of his days of prosperity, and were both valuable. It was at least worth the trial; and Rovingston, who had nothing better to do, was very ready to volunteer his services in the attempt.

When Mr. Rovingston left the Houldworthys' at the end of his afternoon visit, he went at once to the police headquarters, being resolved to lose no time. It was with great difficulty, however, that he gained admittance here, so securely was the place picketed and guarded by the vigilant men of the brass shields. And, when he was once inside the building, he saw very soon that all the energies of the department were concentrated on the riot, and that it would be quite useless to talk of any private business. In the court-yard a sergeant was drilling an awkward squad of special policemen, who had just been sworn in, and who looked, poor fellows, as if poverty and not inclination had drawn them into the service, and as if they would run at sight of the first rioter in the distance. Rovingston

stopped at an open window, and looked out upon their movements for a few minutes, speculating upon the amount of fighting which could be expected of them. Through an open door he caught a glimpse of Commissioner Acton, bustling about; giving directions now to this officer and now to that detective, and every minute or two adding another telegraphic despatch from the turbulent quarters of the city, to the pile which lay upon his desk. It was evidently not of the slightest use to speak to Commissioner Acton about any such trifling matter as the loss of a gold watch. Rovingston at length found a clerk, who consented to make a memorandum of his story, but assured him that nothing could be done about it at present. Rovingston went away feeling dissatisfied with the result of his effort, and fully persuaded that Jack would have to get another watch and chain if he wanted to know the time of day.

On the evening of the same day, Amy Warner and Fanny Houldworthy were together in a little room commonly occupied by the family, and which they called the library for want of a better name; although it was a very little room, and they had been forced to store most of their books in the garret. Jack was up stairs in bed, and in a restless, uneasy slumber; and Mrs. Houldworthy was sitting by him dozing, and at frequent intervals letting her head drop forward with a snap which almost threatened dislocation of the neck. Miss Warner sat by the shaded light, reading, in an attitude which she seemed to have designed expressly as a study for an artist: only there was no one to look at it but Fanny. Her quiet, grave, yet kind and pleasant face was in the shadow, and the outlines were thus a little softened. She was resting in a wide, comfortable arm-chair; and the light wrapper which she wore, and which indicated rather than displayed her well-made figure, flowed gracefully towards her feet, but did not quite reach them; so that her little slippers resting on a cushion were plainly to be seen, and there was, besides, a suggestion of a well-turned ankle. Two well-rounded hands held the book gracefully; and on them fell the full blaze of the gas. The poise of her head and her whole position was so easy and natural that it would have given a beholder a very soothing impression of quiet comfort. Unhappily

there was no one to look at her; for Miss Houldworthy, who lay on the lounge, still pale from her shock of the morning, shaded her eyes with her fan, and let her thoughts run miles away.

Suddenly Miss Houldworthy said, —

"Amy, dear."

"Well," said Miss Warner looking up from her book, "I thought you were asleep, dear, you have been so quiet."

"Oh, no! not for a moment. I have been thinking."

"Of what, pray?"

"I do not know. Nothing, — every thing. I was going to ask you a question; but it may seem to you a strange one."

"Try me, and see."

"I was going to ask you what you thought of Mr. Rovingston."

"I see nothing strange in that question," said Amy.

"Why, we have known him so long, you know; and I dare say you made up your mind about him ages and ages ago."

"You speak as if we were all antediluvians, Fanny."

"And I feel like one to-night, I am sure. But you have not answered my question, dear; did you know it?"

"I was thinking. I am not sure that I quite know."

"O Amy! And you with such a wise head on your shoulders, as Jack is always saying."

Amy smiled. "Mr. Rovingston is a very agreeable, pleasant gentleman, certainly," she said; "and he has been a very good and steadfast friend of Cousin Jack."

"Yes, of course. I know all that very well. I shall always like him, because he has been so kind to Jack; but still" —

"But what?"

"It may be unkind, Amy; but I have sometimes wondered, — I was thinking of it just now, — of what use Mr. Rovingston was in the world."

"He was of a little use to us, this morning, I think."

"Yes; and he was very good too, the other night, in looking after Jack. We could hardly have done without him. Yes, I am ungrateful, Amy. Please consider that I never spoke so of him."

"If you have thought it so often, my dear, I think there is no great harm in speaking it, at least to me."

"I know Mr. Rovingston is very good, and amiable, and agreeable, and all

that, and he certainly has been very kind to us; but do you think, Amy, that it is the highest aim of man to lead the German, and set the fashion in neckties?"

"Ah, now, Fanny, if you begin to argue that your opinion of Mr. Rovingston is right, I certainly shall not be able to forget that you have advanced it."

"Now don't be sharp, Amy; but answer me, please. Now I have said what I have, I will not take any of it back."

"I answer, no, then; but I think you are too hard upon Mr. Rovingston. You must remember that he has never had occasion to think of any thing but his own selfish amusement; and that was what I meant when I said I had not formed an opinion of him. I doubt if he even knows his own character very well, or if his character is formed yet, for any one to be quite sure of it. Something may happen to bring it out, or may not. In the latter case, he will probably go on leading the German, until he comes to have the gout, and stops dancing."

"Or some younger man steps into his place. I wonder how old Mr. Rovingston is."

"Not absolutely an antediluvian in years; but I fancy he has had a great deal of worldly experience."

"Do you know, I noticed his hair was getting thin on the top of his head."

"Some men are bald at thirty; and Mr. Rovingston cannot be many years beyond that point. He looks even younger."

"He is certainly a very entertaining man, when he takes the trouble."

"Yes. And, Fanny, you must reflect that Jack came very near being just such a useless man as Mr. Rovingston."

"I will not allow that, Amy."

"I think so, my dear."

"Jack was very young; and you know papa always indulged him in every way."

"Mr. Rovingston has had the handling of all his money, ever since he came of age."

"And indulged himself."

"Why, Fanny, what makes you so bitter against Mr. Rovingston? I thought" —

"You thought what?"

"Never mind what I thought, dear."

"Yes, but I do mind. I know very well what you were going to say. You thought I — that I liked Mr. Rovingston very much. Was not that it?"

Amy was silent.

"I do like him, certainly," Fanny continued. "As I said, I think him a very agreeable person, — as he ought to be, for he has studied and practised nothing else all his life. For Jack's sake, I should be sorry to have him stop calling here now and then. That is just the point to which I like Mr. Rovingston, nothing more. I thought you suspected the contrary."

"Perhaps I did, dear; and I cannot say I am glad to hear you say I was wrong."

"I don't know, Amy; I think of the two he likes you better."

"Nonsense!" Amy blushed, and changed her position.

"Not that I think he cares very much for either of us. He likes Jack, and he finds us pleasant enough. We amuse a leisure hour now and then, *et voilà tout*."

"You are philosophical to-night, Fanny. How long is it since you considered that a gentleman had no right to be idle?"

"I do not know. I can remember very distinctly when I thought that a gentleman ought to do no work. We have all changed in these later years, have we not? And I have got to be almost as wise as you, Amy; only you and Jack will not give me any credit for it."

"I think if you were quite wise, my dear, you would go to bed at once, after such a worrisome day as you have had."

"Indeed I shall not. I am not in the least sleepy or tired now, and there are many things to be done for Jack yet. Have I gone through any more than you have, I should like to know?"

Thereupon ensued an amiable discussion between the two girls; and, Mrs. Houldworthy presently coming in to lend her influence to the stronger side, Fanny was overpowered, and sent up stairs.

"It is certain," thought Amy Warner, as she followed some hours afterward, — "it is certain that Fanny is not in love with Mr. Rovingston, or she would never have called my attention to his thin hair."

CHAPTER XXV.

IN WHICH TWO OF THE DRAMATIS PERSONÆ ARE SUMMARILY THROWN OUT.

AT eleven o'clock, P.M., on the same evening in which occurred some of the

events recounted in the last chapter, Mr. Rovingston sat in the principal room of the suite which he occupied, reading an inconveniently large volume. Mr. Rovingston was in a *negligé* suit of much the same cut as that of Mr. Charles Lush; but the color was gray, and the effect was quite different. The room was in unusual disorder, even for a bachelor's apartment; and the table in the centre, in particular, was piled up with a jumble of pipes, papers, books, paper-knives, cigar-cases, tobacco-boxes, and no one could tell what, enough to have driven a good housewife into hysterics. The woman who took care of the rooms was not troubled by the appearance of the table very much; and, besides, she had orders to leave it entirely alone, on pain of instant dismissal. She only dusted the bare places on it, if there happened to be any. When it got so covered that the things dropped off it, Mr. Rovingston set to work, and put it in order.

It was a military work, on the subject of fortifications, which he was reading. When the little French bronze clock, with the figure of Minerva on it, which stood on the mantle, struck eleven in silvery tones, he tossed the book from him, and stretched his arms over his head wearily. Then he filled a large old favorite pipe, lighted it with a wax taper, and, leaning back in his chair, gave himself up to thought.

It is probable, that, in the hour which followed, Mr. Rovingston thought enough to fill several hundred pages like that at which the reader is looking at the present moment; and it will not be expected, therefore, that his meditations should be set forth here in full. It will be sufficient to give them in outline.

"I think they need me now. There can be no doubt of that; and it is my duty to go." This was the first thing he said to himself; and he was not speaking of the Houldworths either, although he added, almost immediately, "I promised Miss Warner I would, too, although it was so long ago that I dare say she does not remember it."

Not to speak any longer in riddles, it may as well be said at once, that Mr. Rovingston was seriously thinking of joining the Union army; and with this view had, for some time past, been diligently engaged in reading up different text-books on the art of war which he thought would help him. He had been in earnest when he promised Miss Warner that he would go when the coun-

try needed him; only, as he was scrupulous in keeping his promises, the fact that he had made one might have assisted him in carrying out his resolution. He had long ago foreseen that he should be called upon to add another unit to the force fighting on the side of the government; and so, with a full understanding of the dangers and hardships which awaited him, he had resolved to leave a life of ease and luxury, and go to the war. It was done not in a flash of patriotic excitement, but after a series of calm deliberations in the solitude of his room; the last of which was ended on the evening of which we are speaking.

There is no need to give Mr. Rovingston too much credit for this self-denial. He was tired enough of idleness, and acknowledged to himself that he needed stirring up very badly. He had, besides, no near relations bound to him either by ties of duty or affection, and no business to keep him at home. Very many made greater sacrifices than he, although it may be doubted whether any one decided in cooler blood. The only strong feeling which moved him was one of indignation against the brutality of the rioters; and the events of the day had certainly helped him very much in coming to a final conclusion. The passage of the conscription law proved that the country needed men; and the resistance to the draft showed how difficult it would be to get them by any means. The time had clearly come for Rovingston to act if he was ever to rouse himself; and he was led to regret that he had waited so long.

This was not the only subject which agitated Mr. Rovingston's mind. He could no longer conceal from himself that he was becoming seriously fond of Miss Houldworthy, and that it was quite time for him, as he expressed it, "to pull up, and make sure where he was driving." Fanny had not been in society long enough, at the time of her father's death, to be spoiled by flattery, or to gain a taste for fashionable follies, at the expense of her womanhood; and it was not so much her pretty face which had attracted Rovingston, as her simple, unaffected ways, and her vivacity and unflinching good temper. Young as he was, he had seen handsome women fade and wrinkle with late hours and ill-humor; and he knew something of the value of beauty, although he could never be perfectly independent of its influence. He believed that Fanny Houldworthy was

something better than merely a pretty girl. There could be no doubt, certainly, that Miss Warner had much the stronger nature, and that she was endowed to an extraordinary degree with common-sense; but she did not fascinate him like Miss Houldworthy. Yes, Fanny Houldworthy did certainly fascinate him; there could be no manner of doubt about that, Rovingston was forced to acknowledge, as he slowly blew upward another stream of thin gray smoke. That Miss Houldworthy had never shown any special preference for him, he did not stop much to consider; for an excess of modesty was by no means one of his failings.

Still it is one thing to be rather fond of a woman, and another to be ready to marry her, especially for a man who had arrived at such years of discretion as Mr. Rovingston, and had had as much experience of the world. Miss Houldworthy had no money; and she had never at any time belonged to the set in which Mr. Rovingston moved. His friends would be likely to raise their eyebrows a little, when they first heard that he was engaged to a girl whose father had died a bankrupt, and whose brother was working on a small salary, with no present prospect of any thing better. Still she was well educated, and had the accomplishments of most young ladies; she could play the piano with expression, sing little songs very prettily, could read German, speak a little French with an indifferent accent, and possibly knew a little Italian. The consideration of her family's poverty, to do Rovingston justice, he did not allow to influence him, although he certainly thought of it. As his wife, she would have the *entrée* of the houses of his friends; and she certainly would do him no discredit.

There were other points which he found more difficult to answer. Could he afford to marry on his present income? Was he ready to forego the comforts and luxuries of his bachelor life with its freedom? Could he give up his plan of going into the army, consistently with his notions of his duty? How much weight each of these considerations had with him, it is not necessary to ask; and, indeed, he did not know himself. We are rarely led to take any course from a single motive; and it is not easy to measure the influence of even what ought, in reason, to be a very trivial cause. Rovingston knew that the process of getting married involved a great deal of trouble; and he

presently determined that he was not yet quite ready to undertake it. It may seem that he was very selfish and cold-blooded. To this it may be replied, that all men are selfish, and bachelors above all other men. As for his temper, he had schooled himself to appear cold and calm under exciting circumstances; and perhaps it was this habit which helped him to the practice of reflecting seriously before he took any important step. It may be granted, however, that he was not deeply in love with Miss Houldworthy, because under such an influence men do not often stop to reflect, whether they be old or young.

It was settled, then, — he would set his friends at work to get him a commission; he would join some city regiment for a little while, for the sake of a practical knowledge of the drill; and he would not make love to Miss Houldworthy.

"And yet," he said, as he thoughtfully knocked the ashes out of his pipe, "I think I might do worse, after all, than marry Jack's sister."

Next morning, at a reasonably early hour, Rovingston was on his way down town, with the design, first of all, to telegraph to a certain relative, high in authority at Albany, for a commission of as high rank as could be conveniently obtained. He did not telegraph with the expectation of getting what he wanted by the next mail, but for the sake of expedition, as he had acquainted this relative with his possible plan some time before, when he had been in New York. Rovingston, who was on foot this morning, had not got a great distance down Broadway, being busily engaged in thinking, when, looking up, he espied a squad of policemen halted. Looking beyond them for the cause of this demonstration, he saw a veritable mob of perhaps a hundred persons, coming up town on their way to scenes of riot and plunder. It seemed to Rovingston an excellent opportunity for taking a lesson in the art of war: so he slipped behind a stone pillar of a building close by the handful of blue-coats, and waited. What followed deserves to be told in the sounding Greek of Homer's measures, rather than in commonplace English prose.

When the crowd got in full view of the policemen, they raised a great yell. The stout men in blue coats eyed them doggedly, and at the word of command drew their clubs from their belts. The mob did not stop a moment, but pressed

on. Another yell, and they drew nearer. Then the policemen, by a neatly executed movement, stretched themselves across the street in a double line reaching from curb to curb, but in open order, so that there was a space beside each man. Another yell, rather less bloodthirsty this time, but the mob did not stop. Rovingston saw Mother Brown in the front, playfully whirling what seemed to be a stone in a stocking; and those around her had bricks and stones and jagged clubs. The policemen remained immovable. The mob raised an angry growl, and pressed forward with a little less relish for what they expected. Then the blue-coated statues moved automatically. Each club was raised high in air at the word, and brought down very stoutly on the head of the man, woman, or child who happened to be nearest. It was like some new-fangled, many-armed threshing machine. Whack! The street resounded with the sound. Old Homer would have found some grand phenomenon in nature to which it might be compared; but the present writer, who is not poetical, can suggest nothing better than the cracking of a gigantic cocoanut with an enormous hammer. It was a disagreeable sound for a nervous man to hear; but Rovingston, remembering his adventure of the day before, rather liked it. The front rank of policemen seized each a prostrate prisoner, and dragged him back through the rank behind, and there before the rioters stood another line of immovable men in blue. Whack! Another line of blows from the solid *lignum vitae*, wielded by stalwart arms, and another row of brutes and bullies down on the pavement. The remainder of the mob turned and fled, and the field was won.

The scenes after a battle are not pleasant either to see or describe; and it will be enough to say that Mother Brown, who had been tapped sharply on the head before she had time to swing her slung-shot, was in a very bad way, and was taken to the hospital, whither Rovingston had no difficulty in tracing her the next day. Her son was also discovered in the male ward of the same building, badly wounded, but with a prospect of recovery. With proper measures, used at the right time, the lost watch and chain were traced to a Jew "fence," or receiver of stolen goods; and he was made to disgorge his plunder by the police, after some trouble. The money which Jack lost was of course never

recovered, but the amount was not large. Visiting the hospital some time after, to inquire after the health of this worthy couple, Rovingston learned that the man "Johnny" had recovered sufficiently to be discharged; and, there being no known reason for detaining him, he had departed no one knew whither. Mother Brown, having naturally an iron constitution, had been in a fair way to recover, when all at once a disease, the joint result of her wound and her intemperate habits, had set in; and it had been found impossible to save her life. She had died unrepentant; and the last moments of a depraved old woman are not a subject on which it is pleasant or instructive to dwell. It may be added here, that her son, who never came near his mother in her last illness, through fear for his own safety, changed his residence but not his habits, and is well known to the police under another name. He has of late done good service on election days, as a leader of a crowd of extremely independent and untimid voters, who work for the candidate who bids highest, and make it their business to vote themselves as often as they can, and to knock on the head those misguided persons who wish to cast a wrong ballot. He finds his political influence of great use to him, whenever he gets into trouble by any of those accidents which will sometimes happen to gentlemen of his profession.

As for the draft riot, everybody knows how that ended. The mobs had the upper hand of the authorities for only three days; and when the lawless ruffians who composed them found that they were fired at with ball cartridges, with now and then a volley or two of grape and canister, they slunk back, one after another, to their dens. On Thursday, July 16, the fourth day, their work was chiefly confined to isolated robberies and attacks on negroes, although the rioters at the upper end of the city still held together, and on Thursday evening had a desperate fight with a body of regulars sent against them. The soldiers fired at their assailants on the house-tops, and, entering the houses, made prisoners of the male inmates, and in the end came off victorious. The city militia, which had been for the most part in Pennsylvania to repel the rebel invasion, was sent for early in the week; and one regiment after another returned. The Sixth Regiment reached New York at five o'clock, A. M., on Wednesday, the 15th; and in the after-

noon of the same day, the Seventh Regiment, Col. Lefferts, reported for duty. Confidence was presently restored, business and pleasure went on as usual, and by Saturday the city was reported quiet; the regulars were sent back to Governor's Island, and the marines to the navy-yard.

Not to speak of such outrages as the burning of the colored orphan asylum, the gutting of the block on York Street, and the brutal murder of Col. O'Brien, the loss of property alone is estimated at over two millions. The rioters must have lost many more of their number than is generally supposed. In the single instance of the fight on Thursday night, the officer in command reported thirteen of the enemy killed, and eighteen wounded; and, in more than one place, howitzers were turned on the mob, and round after round of canister poured into them without any mercy. The hospital lists afforded no evidence of the number of casualties. Most of the wounded were taken care of by their friends, and the killed were quietly buried. The magnitude of the riot and its results were probably not fully appreciated outside of New York, and perhaps not quite realized even within the city limits.

Mr. Charles Albert Tompkins, who by this time had risen to the dignity of a second lieutenant in his regiment, returned to the city in the thick of the fighting, to the great distress of his wife, who feared the rioters much more than the rebels, or at least could realize this new danger more distinctly. She had left the hotel where they had rooms, and taken refuge temporarily in the house of her father-in-law, by his invitation, at the beginning of the outbreak. Here she met her husband, on his return from his brief and bloodless campaign, and besought him, with tears in her eyes, to resign, and not expose himself to any more danger. But Lieut. Tompkins manfully refused to resign in the face of the enemy, and, having done his duty faithfully, came back unscathed, and was ever afterwards a hero—in his own family.

On Thursday, the 16th of July, a recruit was added to Lieut. Tompkins's company, who knew something already of the drill, and had a good face and a martial bearing. His name was put down in the company books as Rovingston, and, as he seemed equal to service in the emergency, he managed to keep out of the "awkward squad," altogether.

CHAPTER XXVI.

IN WHICH JACK HOULDWORTHY GRADUALLY RECOVERS HIS HEALTH, AND HIS FRIEND ROVINGSTON PROVES HIS GENEROSITY.

JACK's dismissal from the employment of Messrs. C. Smith & Company came at least a week later than he expected it; and it was, after all, only conditional. It appeared that the government had suddenly stopped dealing with the house, for some unexplained reason; and, in place of being overburdened with work, they were just then under the necessity of reducing their force. As Jack was away, and had had the temerity to indulge in quite a serious illness without permission either from Mr. Ctesiphon Smith or Mr. Chipman, they made an example of him; but they intimated that, if a certain turn in business which they were expecting should come about, they would be glad to have him back in his old place, which, they were pleased to say, he had always filled to their satisfaction.

But Jack was by this time approaching convalescence; and he was, besides, made of very different material from little Bob Pullis. He had long been dissatisfied with the treatment he had received at the hands of Mr. Ctesiphon Smith and Mr. Chipman; and he saw no chance of rising in that house, unless some radical change was made in its management; and this, of course, he had no reason to expect. He was therefore not altogether dissatisfied with the contents of the letter. The next day he had himself bolstered up in bed, and dictated a civil reply to Messrs. C. Smith & Co., in which he thanked them for the good opinion of his ability and conduct which they had expressed, and informed them that he had for a long time thought of taking up his connection with their establishment, and that the present seemed to him the most opportune moment for such a step. When this letter was posted, Jack felt a little relieved, although he had matter for thought, in plenty, for several days afterward and for the nights too, when he happened to be awake.

He had but few visitors in those days; and, in fact, his nurses guarded him with such care that only one or two persons could obtain admittance at all, and those but seldom. Bob Pullis was one of the first to pass the door of the sick-room, and he came loaded with the jellies and good.

wishes of his mother. Bob was full of sympathy with Mr. Houldworthy's misfortune, and talked so fast and so long about it that at last the ladies were fain to get him out of the room by a very strong hint that the patient was still weak. Mr. Rovingston came frequently as a matter of course, and was the only one out of the family who had free admittance whenever he asked it; but this was certainly in part because he never abused the privilege. Even Mr. Rovingston would have been snubbed if he had come too often, and suffered his sympathies to run away with him as did Bob Pullis.

One of the earliest pieces of news which Mr. Rovingston brought related to himself. He had already become a militia-man, and was awaiting his commission to join the volunteer army in the field. Mr. Rovingston refused to allow that he was in the least patriotic in taking this step. If he had been governed very strongly by a devotion to his country, he should have gone long ago. And now, instead of waiting for a commission, he ought to have enlisted at once as a private in the ranks. There would have been some merit in it then. It had seemed to him hardly fair to be put over the heads of men who had seen service; but he was not sufficiently patriotic to go out as a common soldier, for he knew too well what hardships they had to suffer. Rovingston was tired of doing nothing, he said, and he wanted a change of life. He was likely to get that, if no other good.

Of course Jack told the family of Rovingston's determination, as soon as his friend was gone. Mrs. Houldworthy expressed it as her opinion that the young man was acting very rashly, and that he had not the slightest idea of what he had undertaken. Miss Warner thought it very noble in Mr. Rovingston that he had arrived at such a determination, even after so long a time, when the temptation to an idle life of luxury was so great. Miss Houldworthy affected to doubt that Mr. Rovingston really intended to enter the army, although she was at heart a little touched and repentant that she had, in thought, done him so great an injustice as to believe him fit for nothing but to lead the German.

"I wish I could go along with him," said poor Jack with a groan.

"O Jack!" cried all the female voices in chorus.

"Well, you know what I mean," said

the patient, a little peevishly it must be confessed. "You need not be alarmed. I'm not going to run away from you at this late day. And now, please, I think I could take a little nap."

This was a bit of fiction on Jack's part. He did wish so heartily to go with his friend that he could not bear to hear them talk about it; and so he was glad to get them all out of the room, and turn his face to the wall. This feeling did not last, however; and he had become quite reconciled to his fate by the next day, and was sorry he had ever betrayed himself.

Of course, when Jack got well enough to go out to any distance from home, the first visit he paid was to the orphans at the house of Mrs. Pullis. He had had frequent intelligence from them, both from Bob Pullis and from Amy and Fanny, who had found time to visit them more than once, and had pronounced them interesting. The fact that Jack had made them his *protégées* was in itself warrant enough for that assertion. Some plain sewing had been procured for Katy, the elder girl; for it was judged that she was not yet quite strong enough for any harder work. Miss Warner had employed her to make up some material for her own use, and had avowed herself satisfied with the manner in which it had been done; and Miss Warner was no lenient critic either, in matters of this kind.

Jack was prepared to see the sisters in much more comely trim than when he had met them on that distant night; but he had not expected to meet such fresh, pretty faces as they presented to him, nor to find them so neatly dressed. His thoughts had been turned, during his illness, rather to the way in which they were to be taken care of, than to their personal appearance, or their probable characters. He was a good deal surprised to find them so attractive. Katy, the elder, was a brunette, with regular features, still showing marks of her recent suffering, although her color was heightened at the sight of the friend upon whom the misfortunes of her own family had accidentally brought so much trouble. Mary, the younger, was a blonde, a very pretty child, and with bright and pleasant ways. Jack, feeling that his sickness and cares had aged him not a little, went to the strange length, for him, of taking the little girl on his knee before the interview had progressed very far, and asking her a number of

questions in a paternal sort of way, about her knowledge of reading and writing, and the like.

Of course the presence of Mr. Houldworthy brought back the memory of the death of their father, and Katy Green could not help showing that she was a good deal affected; and she tried to thank their protector for what he had done. When she began to speak of what she should do in the future, for the support of herself and her sister, Jack stopped her. He was not quite well enough to talk of business matters yet, he said; they seemed to be doing very well as they were, and he begged that they would rest easy for the present. They hardly felt that they ought? If it was necessary, then, he would use his authority, and insist upon their keeping quiet. By and by, when he got stronger, and their own health was quite restored, it would be time enough to discuss such questions. So Katy was obliged to dry her eyes, and thank Mr. Houldworthy again, which she did very prettily.

The good Mrs. Pullis, who had kept out of the room at first, in part from motives of delicacy, but more particularly because she was engaged in her household duties, and was in her oldest cap, presently entered in company with her elder daughter Mrs. Tompkins. There was no more need for Jack to utter a word; for these two estimable ladies, who now felt that they knew Mr. Houldworthy tolerably well, had a great deal to say. Mrs. Pullis had nothing but praises for the new inmates of her family; and Mrs. Tompkins, in a patronizing way which Jack did not quite like, promised Katy some sewing, and praised the manner in which she had done her work. The two girls, or at least the elder, would have been glad to escape from the room until the subject of conversation was changed, but did not quite know how to manage it, since Mr. Houldworthy still remained.

Then Mrs. Tompkins (she of the brilliant eyes), who was dressed in the gayest attire, with a bonnet of the latest fashion, had to tell how Charles Albert had been ordered to Pennsylvania, and afterwards had been sent home again, and had been made to fight the rioters; and what spasms of anxiety she had undergone, and how brave Charles Albert was, and how he had been promoted to be a second lieutenant, and how well he looked in his uniform, and how glad she was that the riots were over, and she had him safe

home again, and innumerable other things, to which Jack listened with a well-bred appearance of attention, although, to tell the truth, his thoughts were just then far away. At the earliest opportunity, he rose to take his leave, and then declined the proffered refreshment of a glass of wine, although Mrs. Tompkins recommended it, and said she knew where it came from; as she probably did, it being one of her presents to her mother. Houldworthy was still weak, and he walked very slowly to his carriage. "Good-by," he said, turning round and speaking especially to the two orphans, "Good-by. You must both of you be good girls."

As the carriage drove away, it occurred to him that this was rather an absurd way to address a young woman of the age of Katy Green; and then he laughed at himself for his clumsy manner of playing the protector. "She comes very near being charming, *cette jeune fille*," he said to himself. "Her sorrow, and her lack of vigorous health, give her almost an air of refinement. And little Mary, what a nice little thing she is! 'Pon my word, I think they are worth taking some trouble for, although benevolence is a luxury I can hardly afford just now, it is true."

Jack reached home with a feverish cheek; was reproached by his mother and sister with having over-exerted himself, and was sent immediately to bed, like a naughty boy. He did not go to Williamsburg again until he was well enough to take the public conveyances, which, indeed, ran so as to carry him nearly the whole way. Carriage-hire for such long distances was too expensive for poor Jack's purse.

The next day after this first visit, however, he bethought himself of the box of plans and papers, which had been Green's legacy, left to him in trust for the children, as he understood it. Probably that was in Williamsburg, although nothing had been said about it at his visit. He wrote a note to Katy Green, asking her to send it over by express, if she felt that he could be trusted with it; and, in the course of two or three days, it arrived. Its contents gave him amusement and employment during the rest of his convalescence. The box, as he expected, contained sketches of various mechanical inventions, with accompanying estimates and calculations; but, although some of the ideas seemed of real practical value,

unhappily no one of them was carried out to a conclusion. It appeared that Green was a man who started many schemes, but finished nothing.

Mr. Rovingston was compelled to wait two months before he got his commission; and, although he took care that his relative through whose influence he expected to get it should know that he was impatient, yet he did not altogether regret the delay; and he made the best use of his time in acquiring the knowledge of the military art which he needed. A man learns rapidly when he has his heart in the work; and what with this two months' hard labor, and his previous acquirements, he came at last to lack few qualifications for his new position, except experience. A certain regiment—it was one of many, unhappily—had been nearly cut to pieces in the fighting, first at Chancellorsville, and afterwards at Gettysburg, and needed both officers and men very sadly. Influence in high quarters, backed by money, can accomplish any thing in a republic; and Rovingston's relative, who was under heavy obligations to him, worked so hard, and made such representations of the sacrifices which the young man had made in his desire to save his country, that he obtained for him the majority in this regiment. Mr. Rovingston's money was spent freely in efforts to fill up the ranks above the minimum; the material obtained was not extremely good, for the best available men had gone into the service long before the summer of 1863.

Major Rovingston came at last to take his leave of the Houldworthys. The young ladies and Jack received him; Mrs. Houldworthy was not quite well, and sent her adieux and good wishes by her daughter. The whole party seemed a little stiff and formal, which was a little strange for such good friends as they had all been. Jack, who was not yet in his usual health, was, for the time, in a fit of despondency. At the moment, he seemed of no use at home; and it was with difficulty that he refrained from speaking of his great desire to go with his friend. Yet he would not again let the girls see that they and his mother were a hindrance to him. "Ah," he thought, "if my wounds had only been received in the field of battle!"

Fanny Houldworthy was suffering somewhat from the thought that she had done Major Rovingston so great an injustice. Now he was going away, and might

never return. It was true that he could not know what she had thought of him; but in a girl of Fanny's open, generous nature, this reflection was hardly sufficient. Major Rovingston himself misinterpreted her manner, and, with the vanity of mankind, assumed that her evident restraint arose from her fondness for him, and her distress at his going away. He was moved by a feeling which he did not stop to analyze, but he was aware that there was uppermost a very poignant regret at parting; and he showed something of this, notwithstanding his long practice at concealing his emotions. Miss Warner had, to a certain extent, an intuitive knowledge of what was passing in the minds of the others; and, sympathizing with them all, she could not altogether hide her concern. So they were all a little solemn, disagreeable, and almost awkward; and Major Rovingston fidgeted in his chair a good deal, and apologized for looking at his watch, because he had to take the cars for Washington at a certain hour.

Miss Warner talked of the disagreeable features of a journey to the capital, in company with a hundred raw recruits, and unruly at that; of the probable destination of Rovingston's regiment; of the movements of Lee, and the ability of Meade; of the courage of the rebels, and the positions of the opposing armies; but she could not, at the best, make the conversation cheerful. There came a pause, and then Major Rovingston rose to go. The thought occurred to Miss Warner, that he made a very handsome soldier as he stood there drawn up to his full height, even if, as Fanny said, his hair was growing a little thin on the top of his head.

"I want to ask of you one last favor," said Major Rovingston, "and I know it is a great favor."

"I do not think you will ask it in vain," said Miss Warner.

"It is this,—Jack, you will write to me, of course."

"Of course I will, old fellow."

"I want to ask you, Miss Warner, and you, Miss Houldworthy, to write to me also, now and then, of course with the permission of Mrs. Houldworthy, which I certainly hoped to be able to get to-day. One moment, please. Don't answer me until I tell you why it will not be enough to hear news of you from Jack. You all know what camp life is, and what rough savages men become shut up by themselves, without any of the refining influ-

ences of the other sex. Now, I shall ask for no furloughs as long as I can keep in the saddle; and I am going to let my beard grow to my waist if the war lasts long enough, so that, on the outside at least, I shall presently be as rough as the worst of them. I shall turn hard soon enough at the best; but I do want to keep a little corner of my heart moist; and, since I cannot have the society of women, letters are the next best thing. Will you grant me this favor?"

Amy promised readily; and Fanny said she would certainly try to write now and then, although she was but an indifferent correspondent. It was Amy, she said, who kept a debit and credit account of her letters, in the fashion of a merchant's bookkeeper, and who found herself unable to sleep if she delayed writing an answer beyond the limit which she had fixed for each person.

Major Rovingston thanked both the ladies warmly. He was in a sober mood at going away, it appeared. "You must remember," he said, "that I have no mother nor sister to write to me."

He shook hands first with Miss Houldworthy.

"Good-by, Mr. Rovingston," said she,—"I beg your pardon, I should have said Major Rovingston. I am very sorry to have you go; but certainly it is very generous and noble in you, and we all respect you more than ever before."

Major Rovingston said something to the effect that he had not supposed, before that moment, that going away would be so difficult; but he spoke indistinctly.

"Good-by, major," said Miss Warner; "we all hope to see you back very soon, and the war over."

"Heaven grant that the war may be over soon!" said the major, "but I think we have got some hard fighting before us still.—Jack, may I speak to you one moment outside, before I go?"

The major saluted the ladies once more; and Jack followed him out of the room, and closed the door after him. Exactly what was coming, Jack could not very well imagine.

"Jack, old fellow," said Rovingston, "I want you to promise me one thing too, before I go; and I want you to promise very quick, because I have not got two minutes to spare, even if my man has got my traps taken care of rightly."

"Yes, of course. Only tell me what it is."

"Promise me first. It is my last re-

quest, remember; and I may get knocked over before the month is out."

"Don't talk that way, Fred; don't talk that way. You will come out all right. It will not answer to doubt that."

"I am prepared for whatever comes, Jack. I take my life in my hands; I understand that very well. But come, there's quite enough of such talk. Give me your hand, and promise you will grant me what I ask. It shall not be unreasonable."

"Well," said Jack, "I promise."

"I want to pay what money is needed to support decently those orphan children you found out, and to educate the little one."

"Oh! come, Fred, this is not fair. That is my business," said Houldworthy, forgetting for a moment the unsatisfactory condition of his own finances.

"You promised, remember. I want to do a little good before I die; I may not have many more chances; and God knows I have neglected all that have been given me so far in my life. The sum will not be any such fearful amount, I suppose. The older one can work a little, and she will do it with a better heart if she is not weighed down with anxiety about little Mary. Come, Jack, it is settled. I like the children, and I saw them this morning, and told them I should be responsible for their support, and that they must look to you for advice. I shall grow very rich now, you see. I have got my pay in addition, and I shall not be able to spend much out there."

Jack had been struggling with his pride, and had conquered it. "You are very good and kind, Fred," he said. "It is better, after all, that it should be so; although it went against the grain a little, I confess, when you first proposed it. You see that the girls were left, as it were, in my care."

"Thank you very much, Jack. You will find a sum of money placed to your credit at my banker's,—you know them there; and, although I certainly meant the amount to be liberal, you shall have more if you need it. It will be renewed every quarter. And, Jack, consider this money your own, you know; and if you ever get hard up, as all men do now and then, I dare say, who have a family leaning upon them, don't hesitate to draw against it, and keep drawing. I have perfect confidence in you: I don't need to tell you that. Or see old Proudfoot, the manager of the bank; I spoke to him about you, and he never forgets any

thing. If you want money, go to him; I'm sure I don't know how much it takes to bring up two children, and it's possible I have not reckoned it enough."

Jack Houldworthy saw that Rovington had taken care to provide for any emergency which might overtake his friend, while he had been pretending to be only thinking of the orphans. He was touched by this generosity; and, while he thanked Rovington for his kindness, he expressed a hope and belief that his own family would get on very comfortably.

"Well, good-by," said Rovington: "I have staid here full three minutes longer than I ought. I shall write to you when I reach the regiment, and you will, of course, answer. Good-by!"

He shook Jack's hand, and hastened to the carriage which was waiting for him. Turning to the young ladies, who were standing at the window, he raised his hat in a final salute, and in another moment was rattling over the pavements at a great pace.

Jack closed the door when his friend disappeared, and went back into the room where his sister and cousin still remained. "There goes one of the best fellows in the world," said he; and he told the story of his friend's generosity.

"I think it is very noble in him," said Amy Warner.

"It is indeed," said Fanny seriously: "I fear we have not done him justice."

"Speak for yourself, if you please," said Miss Warner.

"Why, you know, Amy, it is your cruelty, and not mine, that has driven him to war. When he called Jack out so mysteriously, I really thought he was going to ask him for you, my dear."

"O Fanny! How can you be so absurd?" said Miss Warner. "Such things ought not to be said lightly, I think."

Jack looked at Amy, and saw her cheeks were crimson.

"Well, Amy dear, I did not quite mean what I said, of course. You must not take my nonsense to heart at this late day. Don't let us talk any more about Major Rovington, now he has fairly gone. I am going out to walk a little way. Will you come?"

The two girls left the room. Jack remained, and was not a little puzzled by what he had heard. He had so much other food for thought, of late, that it had never occurred to him that Rovington's visits could have any special mean-

ing. "At all events," he thought, "Fred has gone to the war, and there is an end of every thing for the present. I don't see why I should trouble my head about this matter."

CHAPTER XXVII.

IN WHICH IT IS SHOWN, AMONG OTHER THINGS, HOW HYMEN WAS KEPT BUSY.

JACK HOULDWORTHY recovered his health and strength but slowly; and by the united prayers and entreaties of his mother, his sister, and his cousin, he was kept for some time from seeking any active employment. He fretted not a little in secret, and openly too, at being idle and useless. Jack was not yet, by any means, a perfect young man; and he could not forego grumbling,—that unamiable prerogative of his sex. He was nevertheless bound to acknowledge that it would be foolish in him to risk the sacrifice of his health, permanently, by too great drafts upon his constitution; and so he agreed to wait, at least until some good position should be offered him. As Fortune rarely comes to those who sit down and wait for her, no lucrative situation came to hand; and, for what seemed to him a very long time, the world outside went on comfortably, without the slightest recognition of his existence.

Jack could not be absolutely idle all this time: he was too restless in spirit for that. He overhauled the apparatus of his old workshop, and employed himself for more or less, every day, according to his strength, in trying to perfect some of the ideas of the mechanic Green, and in making new experiments of his own. Green's hobby seemed to have been the discovery of perpetual motion; and it is hardly necessary to say that he had not made great progress towards the solution of this problem. His work was evidently that of a man but poorly educated, and with only a slight theoretical knowledge of mechanics; but although his madness was far from being methodical, like Hamlet's, Jack fancied he saw now and then, in some of his less ambitious attempts at invention, gleams of reason. The difficulty was, to bring any order out of his chaos of papers, which was evidently the accumulation of years, and to carry to a practical completion some one of his more intelligent schemes. At any other time, Jack would certainly never

have attempted what appeared such a hopeless task; but just now, when he had nothing better to take up his time, this sort of puzzle was the best amusement which could possibly have been offered to a man of his mechanical tastes and knowledge. The only untoward result was, that he became so interested in this work, that he at last came to confine himself too closely to it; and, on pleasant days, his den, filled as it was with tools, bits of iron and wood, and shavings, so that he himself could hardly move round in it, was invaded by a female army, and he was summarily turned out into the sunshine. The monotony of his life was broken up, too, by a good deal of reading aloud, in which Amy, and sometimes Fanny, held the book, and Jack was a quiet listener.

Of course, Jack did not lose sight of the orphans who had fallen so curiously under his protection. They still remained under the roof of the good Mrs. Pullis, whose sympathy had been, from the first, strongly excited in their favor, and who had, by degrees, come to regard them with almost as much affection as if they had been her own children. She always demurred a little, every time she received the pay for their board, "because it was such a pleasure to have them there," and because "they seemed as if they belonged to the family." Jack made it a point to visit them at least as often as once in one or two weeks, and took great interest in them. It would have been hard for him to tell which pleased him most, the quiet grace of the elder, or the bright prattle of the younger, who, from her training, had a manner curiously precocious, although not obtrusive; and, as Mrs. Pullis expressed it, "a supernaturally old head on her shoulders."

Their uncle, who lived in California, and just now appeared to have dropped out of the world, was the only relative upon whom they had any direct claim, although Katy had written twice since her father's death, to certain cousins of her mother, residing in one of the New England States, and had received no answer. Still they gradually recovered their spirits, and bloomed out fresh and pretty in the pleasant atmosphere of their home with Mrs. Pullis. Katy was ambitious to support herself and her sister without touching the generous gift of Major Rovington; and this desire was so laudable, that her friends could not gainsay her. She had received some hard lessons in economy in the years gone by; and, al-

though both she and her sister were always dressed neatly, Mrs. Pullis declared she spent next to nothing on her clothes. Then, as Bob Pullis's salary was now reasonably large, Mrs. Pullis was in comfortable circumstances, and let the girls a room at a very cheap rate. Here were two points gained. Katy fancied a position as governess; but this would have made necessary a separation from her sister; and, besides, Jack judged that her acquirements were not sufficient for this work. She was fairly grounded in the English branches, however; and it seemed not unreasonable to expect that she might obtain a position as a teacher of a primary school. This she was at length able to accomplish, through the influence of a member of the school-committee, who was a friend of the Pullises, and who had become interested in her story. At the end of the first quarter, she was able to inform Mr. Houldworthy that she could thereafter dispense with any more pecuniary assistance, and that she proposed, if her health did not fail, to lay up a little sum every month, and so in time to repay the kind gentleman who had befriended her and her little sister. It may be imagined how proud Jack was of his *protégées* after this, and how he praised them to his family at home. He never dared to think of what might have befallen Katy and Mary if they had been left alone and penniless in the midst of the great, heartless city. They all realized, for the first time, the value of a little timely assistance. Bright and intelligent as these girls were, it was hardly possible that they could have been saved from ruin, if they had not been tided over the dark days.

Mr. Charles Lush became a regular visitor at the Houldworthys', and supplied the place of Mr. Rovington in bringing them intelligence from the fashionable world, which they had quitted, but could not quite forget. Lush was not, in every respect, a person whom Jack Houldworthy would have eagerly welcomed into the family circle; although it was true the young man was a welcome guest at the houses of people who held their heads very high, both on account of their money and their blood. A man who has seen something of the world, and is still young enough to have a vivid recollection of what "wild oats" are, is, in the course of nature, excessively jealous of the intrusion into his home of one who is yet in the process of sowing this sort of grain. Yet Jack knew that

Charley Lush was idle and frivolous, rather than vicious; and he believed that his heart was in the right place. Besides, he had rendered the family such a signal service at the imminent risk of his own life, that common gratitude forbade that Jack should give him the cold shoulder. The young ladies received Mr. Lush kindly, and valued him at just what he was worth, — a good-natured little fellow, of no great depth of character; who meant well, but who had had the misfortune to be born rich. Lush had always admired Miss Houldworthy, and had a strong sympathy for the misfortune of the family; and, for his own part, thought he was doing them a kindness by showing them attention; although he was too open-hearted to feel that it was a condescension on his part, or to show by his manner that he thought they had lost caste, because they had become poor, and moved into a small house.

After Jack had convinced himself that it was his duty to become reconciled to the frequent visits of Charley Lush, he gradually came to take a pleasure in them, and not unfrequently invited him into his room for a friendly pipe. Jack was so nearly without any friends of his own sex, at this time, that it was really a comfort to him to talk with a man; and, there was certainly nothing effeminate about Lush, whatever might be his faults.

One evening, about four months after Jack's adventure with the thieves, Mr. Lush was calling on the ladies, and Jack was present in the room. Lush was giving a rattling account of a "shoddy" wedding which had taken place that day, and which had caused great amusement "at the club." He never talked slang in the presence of the ladies, unless he by accident forgot himself; and Jack even fancied that Lush had by degrees outgrown, in part, this disagreeable habit, which was only an affectation of carelessness. Lush's account of the extravagant display at this wedding was certainly amusing; and the young ladies were not so conventional but that they could give unmistakable signs that they thought it very laughable.

"You have not told us yet who the happy pair were," said Jack.

"No? Haven't I? My usual stupidity. Whenever I try to tell a story, I am quite sure to leave out the most important part. The blushing bride was a widow, *née* Briggs, — no, I don't mean that, you know. I mean her first husband's name

was Briggs. He was an army contractor, who made a heap of money out of the government, the first year of the war; some say a million, but I should say there might be a good discount on that, you know. A million is a good round word that rolls out of the mouth easily. At all events, from not having two coats to his back, he became to be all at once very rich; it is safe to say that; and it turned his head and his wife's head too. He took to drink; and his wife took to society, or tried to, but society would not take to her. I remember they used to give great dinners, busters, — I beg your pardon: I mean they were very extravagant and all that. Cookey took the Briggses up for a little while; and he and one or two more used to go to their gorgeous spreads, and then come back to the club, and laugh at the people they met there. I never went. I own to being rather fond of good living, but I never was willing to pay that price for a dinner. You know old Briggs had a fancy to know sporting men, and they say he drank nothing but champagne: so one night he went off very suddenly, — to 'that bourn from which' you know, — and it was perhaps the best thing he could do under the circumstances, for if he had gone on another year in that way, his disconsolate widow would have had to take in washing to keep herself alive. As it was, it seems she had got him to make a will in her favor; and there was money enough left to satisfy any reasonable woman, or at least there ought to have been by the way she has spent the greenbacks ever since."

"You have not told us who the bridegroom was," said Jack.

"Of course I haven't. How could I, when you haven't given me time?"

"I beg your pardon," said Jack, smiling. "Your story has been so interesting that I am anxious to know the hero."

"Thank you," said Lush, smiling in his turn. "The bridegroom is a broker. As Harry Van Dorp says, 'he brokes for his living.' I don't know him, but they say he has made two or three bold and successful speculations within a year, which have carried him right up to the top of the heap, and that the pair are well matched in every way."

"And his name?"

"A peculiar name. Felix something or other."

"Felix Short?"

"That's the name. Do you know him?"

"I was accidentally thrown into his company at one time, for a while, so that I saw something of him. If his wife is vulgar and foolish, I should say they were well matched indeed."

"Are you not using rather harsh language, Cousin Jack?" asked Amy.

"It is not improbable. I certainly meant to speak plainly."

Fanny cast a mischievous glance at Amy, as if she would say, "See what a chance you have missed! see what a rich husband you have thrown away!"

Lush saw, from Jack's manner and Miss Warner's heightened color, that the topic was no longer a pleasant one, and so made haste to change it. Very soon he rose to go; but Jack asked him to go up to his room and smoke, urging that it was still early, and that, for his own part, he did not feel in the humor to be left alone. Lush, who was always easily led away, did not need much persuasion, and, taking leave of the ladies, followed Jack.

"Look out and not tumble over any thing," said Jack, entering his room, "My quarters are not very spacious. Stand still, and I'll have a light in half a moment."

"Thanks!" said Lush, "I've found a very comfortable chair. I'm all right."

"I wish they would not give me these matches," said Jack, trying one after the other. "They are very pretty to look at, but I like brimstone better."

"Jack," said Charley Lush, "there was another couple swung off to-day, that I did not tell you about down stairs."

"Yes? Ah, here's a light."

"I suppose I may as well tell you. You will hear sooner or later."

"Then why don't you tell me, and not keep saying that you are going to?" Jack turned on the gas of the drop-light, which overhung the table in the centre of the room, and stood there looking down upon his friend, with a smile.

"Because Rovington said — because I thought you would be likely to feel a little cut up about it; although, to be sure, there is no reason why you should, the old affair was over so long ago."

"I think you may venture to tell me," said Jack, still smiling.

"I'm so hanged clumsy at this sort of business! Well, the long and short of it is, that Miss Harley, only daughter of Augustus Harley, Esq., was married at twelve o'clock this morning, at the Church of St. Pancras, to Mr. G. Washington Cooke."

"To whom?"

"To Cookey. Then you did not know of the engagement?"

"To Cookey, eh?" Jack's look of utter astonishment gave way to a settled sneer. "To Cookey! Well, I was not so revengeful as to wish her such a fate as that."

"She is deuced handsome; there is no denying that; but she's as cold as the North Pole. Besides, a woman that would marry Cookey! Bah!"

"I confess, Lush, you startled me a little at first," said Jack.

"Rovington told me he thought you had got well over that affair with her."

"And so I have. You need not have taken so much trouble to break the news to me. My passion for her was a boyish folly, which burned itself out like that match; and she is no more to me now than this charred end which I hold in my fingers." Jack spoke with a good deal of feeling nevertheless. "To Cookey? Well, I did not wish her any such fate, yet I am not sure that they are not well matched, — yes, as well mated as that other happy pair you spoke of. They both wanted money, and they have both got it. There was no question of heart, fortunately, on either side. And they will make a handsome couple," he added bitterly. "I should think old Harley might be proud of them."

"I dare say he is," returned Lush. "The match is of his making, I believe, and certainly I always gave her credit for a little more taste. Not that I was ever spooney on her. I remember very well how she turned up her proboscis at me, at a blow-out at your house one night. Confound her! It strikes me as very funny that she should, after all, go and marry such a man as Cookey. By the way, they say old Harley's blockade-running business don't pay, and that he has lost a pile on it. However, I believe Miss Harley's money was all settled on her; and of course it must be, or Cookey wouldn't have married her. The little beggar! I wonder if he ever guessed who it was that knocked his hat over his nose, that morning."

"Tell me about the wedding, Lush," said Jack, rousing himself from a reverie, and taking on his own natural manner. "How did the bride look, and who was there? I confess to a good deal of curiosity."

So Charley Lush, who had not been invited to the wedding, of course, but had heard all the gossip about it retailed

that afternoon at the club, gave an entertaining but not very concise account of every thing which had happened; and they sat there talking until long past the hour when Jack ought to have been in bed.

As another instance of the old adage about the violence of rain-storms, it may be added that, before a fortnight was over, Jack Houldworthy came home from Williamsburg, with the news of the engagement of Mr. Hobbs to Miss Munchinello, one of the young ladies who had acted as bridesmaid for Miss Pullis, now Mrs. Tompkins. It was a most excellent match, Mrs. Tompkins had asserted to Jack. Miss Munchinello was just the nicest of girls, and her father was well off too. As for Mr. Hobbs, he was a most excellent young man, everybody said, although to be sure Charles Albert had had some falling out with him, and he no longer came to their house; but that in itself amounted to very little, because Charles Albert was so quick-tempered. She supposed it was natural for military men to be quick-tempered.

Jack wished the young couple every conceivable kind of joy, although he had secret doubts as to whether their future would be as rosy as Mrs. Tompkins seemed to expect. He had an indistinct remembrance of Miss Munchinello, as she appeared in her friend's album and at the wedding, as a young lady, not ill-looking, but very dark, and with a Jewish cast of countenance, and signs of having a decided will of her own. Mr. Hobbs, Jack recollected very well as the most bashful young man he had ever met. If Mr. Hobbs had come to the conclusion that he needed a protector, he had undoubtedly made a wise selection; but, if he imagined that Miss Munchinello was going to "honor and obey him," he had made a mistake. At least these were Jack's reflections.

It was now Amy's turn to laugh at her cousin, because her lover had comforted himself with a new mistress; and Fanny took her joking very good-humoredly, and pretended to be inconsolable at the desertion of Mr. Hobbs. It was very amusing to see her make up her little mouth, and pretend to shed tears, calling upon Mr. Hobbs to leave that odious Miss Munchinello, — a name which Fanny never pronounced twice alike, — and come back to his first love. Jack heard some of these pretended lamentations, when the two girls were making merry together, and then fully realized for the first time

that Mr. Hobbs had the reputation of having been smitten with the charms of his sister. Master Jack was a great deal disgusted at the news, and did not know whether to laugh, or to go into a rage. In the end, he did both, and went to the extent of reversing his good wishes for the young couple, and expressing a very strong desire that Mr. Hobbs's bride should pull his hair for him. It may have been already divined that Jack was a jealous brother, and that he still retained quite enough of his old pride.

Jack Houldworthy told the truth honestly, when he said that Blanche Harley was no longer any more to him than the charred fragment of a match. His love had long ago burned out, and his indifference had changed to a bitter contempt. He did not even give Miss Harley the consideration which was her due, and would not allow to himself that this marriage had been brought to pass through her father's influence. "She is utterly heartless," he said to himself, "utterly heartless. They are well matched, and I wish them joy from the bottom of my heart." It must be confessed that Jack was just then in rather an ironical mood.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

IN WHICH JACK HOULDWORTHY'S FORTUNES IMPROVE, AND A GENTLEMAN FROM THE OTHER SIDE OF THE CONTINENT CALLS ON HIM.

As Jack Houldworthy grew stronger, his impatience to engage in some active employment increased in a tenfold ratio; and at last his cautious guardians were forced to let him have his own way, and seek some occupation. Just at this time, when he had begun to look about him, Bob Pullis came to his aid. Bob had that gentle and confiding nature which needs something to look up to, and Houldworthy, though not many years his senior, had developed such strength of character that he seemed to little Bob quite a giant in intellect and knowledge of the world. Houldworthy became his beau ideal; and he persisted in looking upon him in the light of a patron and benefactor, although it would have been hard for him to have pointed out any tangible benefit which he owed to Jack. Bob did not play the Boswell; his admiration for Houldworthy was not in the least sycophantic; and he only showed that he looked up to him by his

manner, and his gratitude for the friendliness which the whole family had taken pains to show him. Jack could not have endured any thing like fawning and flattery; but the feeling, which, after awhile, he saw little Bob had for him, was of a kind to be soothing to his vanity, and was not disagreeably obtrusive. As for the ladies, there was no surer way to their hearts than to praise Jack, either directly or indirectly; and so Bob Pullis was very soon taken into their confidence, and was looked upon as a very deserving young man. They had an impression that the other members of his family were worthy people; although they knew very little of them, for Jack was not communicative by nature. It would be safe to say, however, that the bright eyes and new bonnets of Mrs. Tompkins, *née* Pullis, would have made little impression on either Miss Houldworthy or Miss Warner, and that Mrs. Houldworthy would not have considered her a desirable person to know.

The relations of Bob Pullis being such as they were with the Houldworthys, as a matter of course, Bob kept a sharp watch for a chance to aid his friend; and, when there came to be a vacancy in the establishment with which he was now connected, he exerted himself to the utmost to get the refusal of the place; and, when he had succeeded, came and offered it to Houldworthy. "It does not pay any too well," he said to Jack, "and I know it is not what you deserve; but it is certainly better than nothing, and may answer for a while. Then there is a chance to get ahead, I think. Our people are not like old Chip, grinding all the work they can out of a fellow, and then turning him off to die, as if he were no more than a broken-down omnibus-horse. Beckman, the managing man, has got a keen eye; and, if a man does well, he praises him for it, and puts him along. He isn't like old Chip, growling from morning till night whether the work is well or ill done."

This was pleasant to hear; but what influenced Jack most, in accepting a situation at the Shelverton Iron Works, was the sound of the machinery rumbling and grumbling, and now and then giving a little rattle to the window of the counting-room where he and Bob were talking. The noise of these unwieldy monsters, forced to work like Ixion at monotonous tasks which never ended, would have annoyed most men; but Jack took pleasure in it, and thought of the enjoyment he should take in studying their complicated wheels and

pulleys. He might presently get the opportunity of putting to a practical trial a certain invention, which he had selected from the heterogeneous mass of papers left by Green, and had now, as he thought, brought to a satisfactory completion. After consultation with his family, therefore, Jack accepted the offer. The months rolled by; and Jack hard at work by day, and with his mechanical schemes to think of by night, had no time for fretting, worrying, or repining, and his health and appetite improved, although he grew thin, as men often do who think over-much. In this habit of body, he did not follow his father; and the principle of abstemiousness, which he had forced himself to adopt, undoubtedly tended very much to this result. He had marked himself out a line of conduct; and he adhered to it with that obstinate tenacity which was the distinguishing feature of his character. He wanted to retrieve the fortunes of the family, and he knew how much might be accomplished by courage and industry.

Charley Lush continued his visits to the Houldworthys. He certainly liked Miss Fanny very much; but he never reached that pitch of admiration where it would have been necessary to unbosom himself. Charley certainly stood in some awe of that eminent surgeon, his father, on whom he depended for his daily bread, and, what was almost of more importance to him, his cigars; and he felt that any such imprudence as a marriage, contracted without the parental sanction, would probably be followed at once by the cutting off of supplies. At all events, he did not feel like trying the experiment. Jack Houldworthy saw a little of what was going on; but he did not conceive that there was danger of his sister's breaking her heart for Mr. Lush, and so he gave no signs that his eyes were open.

Letters came regularly from Major Rovingston, detailing his annoyances, his hardships, and his adventures. His descriptions were picturesque; and, while he was not the man to hide his own light under a bushel, he did not foolishly expose it, so that the first puff of wind would blow it out. He was not egotistical in his letters, yet he made no effort to conceal the fact that he was now and then found in rather critical positions, both in the camp and on the battle-field. Major Rovingston did not say that he could not have extricated himself without the exercise of a very high degree of courage and coolness; but his correspon-

dents at home divined this, and probably gave him all the credit he deserved, although he certainly made a good officer, and established an excellent reputation in his army corps. His letters came to Jack, and to Fanny and Amy, with equal frequency; and those received by the young ladies were couched in a pleasant tone of friendliness, which was in a high degree courteous, without being stiff and formal. At least, this was their character at first; toward the last of their correspondence, there was naturally more freedom on both sides.

From the regularity of Major Rovingston's correspondence with the young ladies, it might be reasonably inferred that he was no less pleased with their letters to him; and, indeed, this was the fact. Fanny had professed to be careless about her epistolary duties; but it would seem that she had done herself injustice, for she and Amy wrote on alternate weeks, and Miss Warner never once had occasion to complain of Fanny's remissness. On one occasion, when Amy for some reason was unable to write when her turn came, Fanny readily undertook to fill her place. Through their letters, Major Rovingston gained a knowledge of her character, which all his intimacy with her had never given him.

"I can never tell you," he wrote on one occasion to Miss Warner, "how much pleasure this correspondence with yourself and your cousin gives me. Letters from home of any character are a great boon to us poor lonely fellows out here; and you ought to see the eagerness with which the men rush for the mail, when it arrives, and their joy when they are lucky enough to get news from those they have left behind them. But it is a delight apart from this of which I speak, and which makes your letters doubly, trebly welcome to me. My mother, as you know, died when I was still young; and I never had a sister. I have known worldly women by the score; but it has never before been my good fortune to be admitted to such terms of intimacy with good, pure, single-hearted girls, free from fashionable follies and pretensions. This is a new experience for me; and, trust me, I appreciate its value. I hope it will make me a better man. Heaven knows how much I have stood in need of such an influence.

"I think I never understood your cousin before,—I think I have never done her justice. That she was always bright, good-humored, and merry, I could

not help seeing; that she was a girl of high principle, I fully believed; but yet the depth and sincerity of her nature was hidden from me by her mask of gaiety. It was not until I read the last two of her letters that my eyes were opened. So here is another good which has come out of this correspondence.

"All this may sound to you like high-flown extravagance, and it might even seem so to me, three days hence; but my heart is full of it to-night, and I must write it to you. You may smile at it, but I hope you will understand it. This constant exposure to danger makes some men utterly reckless. It makes others serious, and I think that is the way in which it affects me.

"We go into action at daylight tomorrow morning. The movement is only intended for a reconnaissance, but it may bring on a general engagement."

Miss Warner pondered some time over one of these paragraphs, and she omitted it in reading the letter afterward to Fanny.

Jack Houldworthy did not suffer the engrossing cares of business to prevent his regular visits to the orphans; and he was as much interested in them as ever. He saw their natures, as it were, ripening and expanding under the new influences into which they had been thrown; and it never occurred to him to analyze the sentiment which they excited. It came upon him naturally, and he knew nothing more of it. One evening he had the very great pleasure of announcing to them that the new invention of which their father had laid the foundation, and which he had finished, had been put to a practical trial, and had been pronounced useful and valuable by Mr. Bickman, the principal man at the works, and by the foreman, an old machinist. Then he showed a diagram of it to the girls, and explained it carefully to Katy, her sister meanwhile standing at Jack's knee on the other side. This drawing might be reproduced here with all the puzzling explanations,—"*AA* are valves which," &c., "*B* is a chamber where," &c.,—but it will be quite sufficient for the general reader, who does not care to learn a new significance for the letters of the alphabet, to know that the invention was an improvement on a certain portion of a stationary engine, and, although in itself small and not of vital importance, was yet likely to come into general use, and have a value.

"So you may turn out to be very rich young ladies after all," said Mr. Houldworthy; smiling "and one of these days I shall see you driving up to our office in your own carriage,—that is, if you condescend to notice me at all. But don't build too many castles in the air; for there is a degree of uncertainty about all inventions, and this is apparently so simple that it may have been anticipated in some way. I shall send on to Washington at once, and have the matter looked into carefully by a good patent lawyer."

"Don't talk of our carriage, Mr. Houldworthy," said Katy. "I am quite sure, that, even if father had lived, this would never have come to any thing in his hands. I know that, even when mother was alive, she never could induce him to work on one thing long enough to finish it. No, this is all your work; and, if there is any profit in it, it all belongs to you. We owe you enough already."

"Come, come," said Jack, "I can't allow you to talk any such nonsense. I don't say that I should be above accepting a small percentage if you should offer it to me; but this invention is your inheritance, and I certainly am not the man to rob you of it."

This amiable dispute was only ended by a suggestion from Jack that it would, perhaps, be well to see what the invention was really worth, before they began to quarrel over the disposition of the profits.

The next afternoon Jack Houldworthy was waited on by an individual fifty years old or thereabouts, with a face red and weather-beaten, but showing signs of intelligence. He wore a soft hat, a rough, pilot cloth overcoat,—although the cold weather was nearly over,—and rough, heavy trousers; but the polish of his boots, the extreme cleanliness of his linen, and the excessive stiffness of the black satin stock which adorned his neck, gave him somewhat the air of being dressed for an important occasion.

"Mr. Houldworthy?" said this person pulling off his glove, and extending a large hand to Jack.

"Yes, sir," replied Jack taking it.

"I suppose you don't know me," said the stranger, shaking Jack's hand persistently, and never offering to let go of it.

Jack looked him straight in the face. "I can't say I do," said he, "although you seem to know me."

"Yes, I knew you at first sight,

although I never see you but once before, and then only for a moment, like. I never forget faces. So you can't guess who I am?"

"Why, no," said Jack, with a little impatience at the grip on his hand. "I told you I couldn't."

"Well, I'm Uncle Ben. I s'pose you've heard 'em speak of Uncle Ben, hain't you?" Here the pump-handle movement went on faster than ever.

"Uncle Ben?"

"Yes, Ben Green. They thought I was dead, or had forgotten 'em; but I saw 'em this morning, and have had a long talk with 'em; and they told me about you, and what you'd done for 'em; and there isn't many men'd 'a' done for 'em what you done for 'em, I tell you they ain't."

"Ah," said Jack, a new light breaking upon him, "you are Katy and Mary's uncle. Just turned up from California, eh? Well, I'm glad to see you. I suppose there is some good reason why we did not hear from you before." Here Jack took his turn at the pump-handle business.

"Why, yes," said Uncle Ben. "There was a reason, although it wasn't so good a one as I wish 'twas. I did git Sam's letters, but he didn't let on near how bad off he was,—too proud, I s'pose,—and my business was slack jest then, and I was feelin' kinder grumpy, and I thought I'd jest let him sweat a spell. You see I'd been helpin' of him all along, off and on, fur the last ten years or so; and once in a while I used to git tired of it; fur Sam was jest as well able to work as I was, and might have done well, too, if he'd ever stuck to any thing. But, Lord! If I'd er known how bad off he and the children was, I wouldn't have shilly-shallyed about it as I did, you'd better believe."

"I thought Katy wrote to you. I think she told me she did."

"So she did, but not till after 'twas all over, and poor Sam dead and buried. She seemed to have somebody to look after her, and to be gitting along comfortable; and so I thought a few weeks more or less wouldn't make no difference, and I might as well stop for my partner to get back. He was laid up for more 'n three months,—wasn't able to do a thing. Just as quick as I was able to get things straightened out, I put for New York; and here I am. If their mother's relations hadn't been a set of pigs, they would er looked out fur 'em."

"Now you are here, Mr. Green, I suppose you are going to stop some time."

"No; I am goin' right back. This was about all I come on for. I'm goin' to pay their bills, and take 'em on with me; and by and by, when you get time, I wish you would make out your account and your friend's, Mr. Stone, or whatever his name is, and I'll see it's settled."

"I don't think our account will be very large," said Houldworthy, smiling at Uncle Ben's business-like way of disposing of his obligations. "It troubles me more to hear you think of taking the girls away. They are doing very well here, I think. Are you sure they will be willing to go?"

"Willing? I don't know. I suppose so. I never thought much about it. I always took it for granted they would. Why shouldn't they?"

Uncle Ben was evidently a little startled at Houldworthy's suggestions; although when the latter explained that his nieces were well and happy in their new home, and that Katy was supporting herself and her sister, he did not appear at all shaken out of his determination. He had made this long journey with the intention of taking them home with him to assist his wife in her household duties, — he himself had no children, — and he was not a man to be easily persuaded out of his purpose. The interview did not last much longer, however; for Uncle Ben all at once declared that he would not keep Mr. Houldworthy any longer from his work; and, again shaking hands with him violently, he went away, after promising to see him again in a day or two.

As he disappeared it occurred to Jack Houldworthy where they had met before. It must have been in the cheap eating-house, when he had seen the mechanic for the second time; and he now remembered that there were then two of them together, and that Sam had spoken of "seeing off" his brother, who was going back to California. He had not the slightest recollection of the appearance of Uncle Ben, however, and might have passed him in the street again and again without a recognition.

Jack smiled, as he went back to his desk, at some of Uncle Ben's peculiarities. He had always spoken of his nieces as "they" or "them." They were uppermost all the time in his own mind, and he did not consider that there was a possibility of Jack's misunderstanding what he meant. Then, too, he had not uttered a word of gratitude for

the service which Jack had done his brother's children, although from his manner he was evidently grateful, and had conceived a very great respect for the young man. "I suppose he appreciates what I have done for his nieces, by the way he shook my hand, hang him," said Jack to himself, as he took up a pen; "but he would have been more civil if he had thanked me for it. Confound him! If the warmth of his heart is equal to the strength of his fist, he must carry around a young Vesuvius inside his old bosom."

Jack had not had time to speak to Mr. Green about the success of the invention, nor did he care to be very communicative until he found how much he was to be trusted. If it should turn out that the girls were likely to have money, that would be an additional reason for their uncle to insist upon carrying them off with him. Jack made up his mind to go over to Williamsburg that evening, and see what reception Uncle Ben had met with there.

This design was carried out. Jack crossed the ferry, and, on reaching the Pullises', was ushered by little Maggie Pullis into the parlor, where Katy Green sat alone.

"Oh, I'm so glad you have come, Mr. Houldworthy!" she cried. "I have been expecting you."

"I thought I should find your uncle here," said Jack.

"No; he has gone to the theatre with Mary. I did not want her to go; but I could not refuse him, and the child was crazy to be taken to see a real play. He asked me to go; but I did not feel quite well enough, and had to decline. Then he tried Mrs. Pullis and Mr. Robert, but they excused themselves; and finally he went off alone with Mary. I don't think he half liked it, that none of the rest of us would go with him. He said he saw you to-day."

"Yes," said Houldworthy; "he came to see me, and nearly wrung my hand off the end of my arm. I should have been rather glad to see him, but for what he told me."

"Yes, Mr. Houldworthy," said Katy; "and that is what troubles me. Do you think I ought to go way out there with him? Would it be ungrateful in me to refuse him?"

"Then you would be really sorry to leave us?" said Jack, taking up a corner of the cloth she was sewing, and rolling it over his fingers.

"Oh, indeed I would, Mr. Houldworthy," cried Katy with animation. "You have all been so good and kind to me; and I am so interested in my school, and Mary is doing so well, and" — Here Katy became conscious that Jack's eyes were fixed searchingly upon her pretty face; and she stopped short, and, blushing very red indeed, took up her work, and went on with it.

At this moment Mrs. Pullis entered the room; and Jack dropped the linen out of his fingers, and went and sat by her. Mrs. Pullis had a great deal to say to Mr. Houldworthy about Mr. Green and his proposition to carry off the two sisters to "that horrid, rough country." She concluded all her reasons for opposing him with the feminine argument, that Mr. Green wanted to return the following week, and that it would be absolutely out of the question for them to get ready by that time. "Mr. Green may be a very good man," said Mrs. Pullis. "He certainly seems like it; and he gave me a very polite invitation to go with him to the theatre to-night; but Bob wouldn't go, and I didn't want to go poking off alone with a perfect stranger. I didn't think it was either right or proper. Let me see: what was I saying? Oh, yes! What I was going to say was, that Mr. Green may be a perfect gentleman, and I have no doubt he is; but we don't want him here; and, the sooner he goes back to the place he came from, the better."

Mrs. Pullis became quite excited towards the end of the conversation, which she had pretty much to herself; for Mr. Houldworthy scarcely opened his mouth, except to let out now and then a monosyllable; and Katy kept her head bent over the work, and sewed with wonderful diligence. The truth was, that Master Jack was not listening at all to Mrs. Pullis. He was trying to make out the meaning of the look and blush which Katy had given him. There could be but one interpretation to it, he thought; and then he recalled what had seemed to him a change in Katy's manner towards him for some little time past. The idea staggered him; and he turned so red with thinking of it, that Mrs. Pullis got up and opened the door into the hall, with the design of changing the temperature of the room. If this was what the blush and the look meant, how should he receive this confession into which she had been betrayed? Was he glad, or was he sorry? Did he love her, or was he only

interested in her as a friend and a protector?

While these thoughts were running headlong through Houldworthy's mind, the clock struck nine. He came out of his reverie, and started up. "I must go," he said. "It takes me a good hour and a half to go home from here." And then he delivered himself of his opinion on the case in hand, after this fashion: "Let Katy think this matter over carefully, and take time for it. If she and Mary really believe they would be happier here, I do not see why they should be forced to go away. And, for one, I do not propose to allow it to be done either. If Uncle Ben wanted them, he ought to have come sooner."

Katy raised her eyes, wet with tears, and gave him a look of gratitude. It was only the glance of an instant, and then she was busily sewing again.

"Mr. Houldworthy," said Mrs. Pullis, "I always said you were the most sensible man of your age I ever saw; and I think now that that speech was the most sensible thing you ever said in your life."

Mr. Houldworthy left the room in a state of high satisfaction with himself, followed by Mrs. Pullis, who closed the door carefully behind her.

"I was very glad to hear you say that," said she. "I couldn't tell you in there; but I think" —

"Hallo, Houldworthy! is that you?" called out little Bob from the head of the stairs. "Are you going? Hold on, and I'll walk down a little way with you."

"Come along," said Jack.

"I'll tell you another time," said Mrs. Pullis mysteriously, and disappeared forthwith.

The two young men sallied forth into the night, and took their way towards the ferry. It was a dark and cheerless night; and Jack could not make out why his companion, who was not over-fond of walking at any time, should have volunteered to accompany him. Bob seemed not to be in the humor for talking either, for Jack opened various topics connected with business, the weather, and the war; and Bob Pullis had not a word of two syllables to utter about any one of them. Jack said nothing about the arrival of Uncle Ben Green; for that was a subject upon which he did not feel in the mood to talk, himself. After some unsuccessful attempts at conversation, Jack gave it up, and relapsed into meditation broken off so recently. Bob walked along quietly by his side, and said nothing at all.

When they came to the ferry, Bob said quietly, "I think I will go over with you, Houldworthy, if you don't mind."

"Glad to have you," said Jack. "Come along; I was expecting a very lonely journey home."

They entered the gates; and as they stood inside, waiting for the boat, Bob found speech, and unbosomed himself to his friend.

"The fact is, Houldworthy," said he, "that I want to ask your advice about something; and I might as well do it here as on the other side of the river. You know, perhaps, that I have always had a great respect for your opinion."

"Very much greater than I deserve, I dare say," returned Jack.

"Well, at all events, this is a matter in which you are concerned, and which I think I ought, any way, to consult you about."

It was at this point that Jack began to prick up his ears, if the expression may be admitted.

"They told you about the arrival of Mr. Benjamin Green," Bob continued; "and I believe, too, he called upon you. Quite unexpected, and I may say unfortunate, but it cannot be helped. Now, the point of what I want to say is just here. I—love Katy Green; and I don't want her uncle to take her away. There, it is out, and that's the whole of it. Now what shall I do? What do you think I ought to do?"

Jack Houldworthy turned very red in the face at this declaration; but fortunately the ferry slip was dark, and his companion did not observe it. For a half minute, the thoughts coursed through his head very much faster than they had at Mrs. Pullis's. Was he, then, such a vain idiot? he asked himself. Was Katy blushing because she thought he had guessed her secret fondness for Bob? Was it this, which had caused the change in her manner? It certainly seemed probable. Well, it was better so. They were every way fitted for each other. Yes, it was better so.

Then, rather to gain a little time to collect himself, than for any other reason, he asked Bob if he was rich enough to marry.

"Hardly at this moment," said Bob; "but I can ask for a rise presently, you know. I meant to wait; but, if Mr. Green takes Katy off with him, why you see that must be the end of every thing; and that I couldn't bear. You can't think how this troubles me. I was up in

my room, fairly rolling about on my bed, in agony, when you came to-night. I was indeed." Little Bob's voice trembled as he spoke.

"And have you ever asked Katy whether she loves you?" continued Jack with the air of a grand inquisitor.

"Never. But I think she does. That is, I hope so. Sometimes I don't, and sometimes I do; but generally I do. I could tell you of certain little things,—little in themselves, but not trifling to me, ah! no,—but then I know you would laugh at them. Yes, I feel at this moment pretty confident she does."

"Then," said Jack, "if you have or expect to have the means of supporting a wife, and you think she loves you, ask her to marry you; and, the sooner you ask her, the better. Heaven forbid that I should stand between you!"

"I will ask her," said Bob; "I'll ask her to-night if she's up when I get home; and she will be, for she will have to sit up for her uncle and sister. Houldworthy, you are the best friend I ever had. Thank you, thank you! You don't know how much you have relieved my mind. There is the boat coming; and now I think I'll hurry home, if you will excuse me. The uncle might get there first, you know, and that would be awkward. Good-night."

"Good-night, and good luck to you," Houldworthy called out to him. "If you want to impress a man with your wisdom," he said to himself, "advise him to follow what you know to be his own inclination." Then Jack lighted a cigar, and strolled on board the ferry-boat, puffing out rather larger mouthfuls of smoke than was usual with him; he was by nature a slow smoker.

Between ten and eleven o'clock that same evening, a man passing the house of the Pullises, and on the opposite side of the street, stopped to look at a very curious double shadow thrown on the curtain at one of the lower windows. There were two gigantic heads, one with a bunch of hair on the back, and one without any such protuberance; and they hobnobbed with each other in a most extravagantly ridiculous manner. Now both would appear on the curtain, and now only one, and that one would expand to such a size that it took up the whole window. Then the two heads would approach their faces until the shadow of one nose curiously overlapped the shadow of the other; and presently the two outlines would become for a moment merged

in each other. Then they would separate again, and then the phenomenon would be repeated. It was so funny, that the man on the opposite side of the street laughed until he got a stitch in his waist which took his breath away; and then he went along.

And this leads us to one of the many morals which may be deduced from the events recorded in this chapter: when you make love in-doors, in the evening, don't get between the light and the window-curtain.

CHAPTER XXIX.

IN WHICH ROVINGSTON EXPERIENCES BOTH A LOSS AND A GAIN, AND A NEW LIGHT BREAKS IN UPON JACK HOULDWORTHY.

It may be imagined that Katy and Mary Green did not go back with Uncle Ben, and that the worthy Californian grumbled a great deal, and certainly not altogether without reason, that he should have had his long journey for nothing. Still he had a little reward for his trouble; for he happened by chance to make a certain business connection, which he would otherwise have missed, and which promised to be valuable. He was good-natured, too, at the bottom; and when he found how matters stood with Katy and Bob, and that no objection could be brought against young Pullis, he gave his consent to the new arrangement, and perhaps, after the first flush of his disappointment, was not altogether sorry that so great a responsibility should be taken off his shoulders. He was not rich, and he could not promise the children any thing more than a home; but, on the other hand, if Mr. Houldworthy was not over-sanguine about the invention, and certainly it seemed to have a practical value, the two girls were not likely to need any assistance from him. In view of their improved pecuniary prospects, he consented to forego the satisfaction of paying for his nieces the money which had already been advanced by Houldworthy and Rovingston; and so, every thing having been arranged to the satisfaction of everybody besides himself, at least, Uncle Ben sailed in the next steamer, in a state of mind bordering on content.

Then there came a long interval of time, in which Jack Houldworthy received no buffets. At last he seemed to

prosper. The invention was patented, and proved profitable beyond what he had dared to hope. He had a long argument with Bob Pullis and Katy,—it lasted, indeed, for several months, being again and again renewed, without any decision,—as to the disposition to be made of the income thus obtained. Bob and Katy insisted that the invention would never have been worth a single cent if it had not come into his hands, and that it was no more than simple justice that he should at least accept half the proceeds. To this position they adhered stoutly; and he could not drive them from it. Jack asked the advice of all his intimate friends, and they all went against him; and in the end he was forced to submit, although it was much against his will. He was induced, however, both for his own sake and for that of his *protégées*, to give up his place at the Shelverton Iron Works, and devote his whole time to pushing forward the invention, and getting it generally adopted. The mechanism involved was small, and the profit on each separate sale comparatively light, so that it could only be made to pay handsomely by having it brought universally into use. It was to this task that Jack set to work; and he persevered in it with his usual energy.

The marriage of Bob Pullis and Katy Green took place after an engagement of some length, and when the success of the invention became certain. It was a very different wedding from that of the Tompkinses, described some chapters back; for the tastes of both Bob and Katy were simple, and it was their desire that the ceremony should be performed with the least show possible. The two were made one in the presence only of the nearest relatives, and set off without an hour's delay on a tour among the mountains of New England. Jack was present at the ceremony, of course, and, smiling bitterly at his own momentary folly months before, wondered how he could ever have questioned, for an instant, the nature of his regard for Katy. Jack had a curious feeling on this occasion of having grown very old; and he behaved to the young couple in a most fatherly manner. He declared that he felt like a "heavy parent," and that he wondered that a man so aged as himself, and one who had suffered under the load of so many responsibilities, should still retain hair of its natural color on his head. It evinced, he said, a most astonishing vitality in his constitution. Mary—

Green went off with her sister in high feather, both literally and figuratively; and Mrs. Pullis would have liked very much to throw a shoe after the carriage, for luck, but restrained herself in view of the large audience of curious neighbors.

Jack went back to work feeling rather lonely, and the life of the Houldworthys was for a long time afterwards uneventful.

Major Rovingston's experience had been varied. He had fought in many battles and skirmishes in the first year, and had just managed to escape a fever. After the battle of the Wilderness, he was made a lieutenant-colonel, and exchanged to the staff of Gen. X—, an old friend of his father; and here he found the duty lighter, and his associates more congenial, and had time to look a little after his health, which was beginning to suffer more than he was willing to confess. He had made a promise to himself, when he had set out for the war, that he would not accept a furlough unless he was compelled to leave his duty by wounds or illness; and this promise he kept, from a sense of honor, although he again and again grumbled at his own foolishness in binding himself so strictly. There were seasons when he might very well have been spared, and taken his turn in indulging in the renewal of home comforts and friendships; but he told his fellow-officers that he was making up lost time. It may be imagined that they were well content with his determination, since they could rely on him in their own absence.

It was not a little singular that Col. Rovingston, to give him his full rank, should have gone through two years service without a scratch, and then have been wounded on the last day of the fighting in Virginia, by the accidental bursting of a shell in his own camp. The Houldworthys got news of the surrender of Lee at Appomattox Court House, and of the accident to Col. Rovingston, on the same day; but the colonel wrote to them presently with his own hand, and assured them it was but a trifling matter. He had been struck in the hand by a piece of shell, and the surgeons had found it necessary to cut off three of his fingers; but he was doing well, and he was coming home at last. Col. Rovingston underscored the last two words. He would write them in a day or two, and let them know when to expect him. This second letter did not

reach them, from some unknown cause; but Jack got a telegraphic despatch one morning, announcing that Rovingston expected to reach New York the same evening. This was just after the news of the cruel assassination of Abraham Lincoln had plunged the whole loyal North in mourning; and it gave a new and pleasant turn to the thoughts of the Houldworthys. Of course Jack went down to welcome his friend, and the meeting between them was more than cordial; it was affectionate, and the two men came near embracing each other in the railroad station, in full sight of several hundred travellers.

Mrs. Houldworthy and Amy Warner eagerly questioned Jack, when he returned home, about Rovingston's appearance. Fanny seemed less curious. Rovingston was not looking so badly, after all, Jack said. He was very black from exposure, and, to say the truth, very dirty and travel-stained. After a long night's sleep, and a good brushing from his man, Jack thought he would turn out bright enough.

"And how is his poor hand?" asked Mrs. Houldworthy.

Jack replied that the hand seemed to be getting along well enough, although he confessed, that he had been so glad to see Rovingston, that he had forgotten to make any particular inquiries.

"Is it his left hand, or his right?" asked Amy.

"Let me see," said Jack. "He gave me his right hand. It must be his left."

His sister suggested that he seemed to know very little about it, and said that "it was terrible,"—meaning the loss of three fingers. Jack thought it might easily have been worse, and said that he called Rovingston a very lucky fellow. He himself was quite sure, that he would gladly give an arm or a leg to have Rovingston's reputation and experience, and to be able to reflect that he had done his share towards bringing about this glorious victory for the country.

At this all the ladies cried out in chorus, "O Jack!" as they always did whenever he advanced any uncommon theory but they secretly admired him very much for making such a speech, and in their hearts hardly questioned his right to dispose of his limbs in any way which he thought proper.

"I would," Jack persisted a little bitterly, as he thought that the war was now over, and the last opportunity gone for military glory. "I would, though

you do cry out, 'O Jack!' I should consider, too, that I had the best of the bargain. By the way," he added, "I forgot to tell you, that Rovingston inquired very particularly for you all, and that he sent his compliments, and said he would call on you early to-morrow morning,—by eleven o'clock, if possible."

"I wonder you finally remembered to tell us of it," cried his sister.

"Never mind, as long as I have told you," said Jack. "I think I shall go down to the office very early to-morrow morning, and come up again, so as to see him. I only had a glimpse of him to-night, and I want to ask him to dine somewhere with me to-morrow, and have a long talk with him."

"Why not ask him to dine here?" suggested Mrs. Houldworthy.

"Because I am selfish, and want him all to myself for a little while. Such a man as Fred Rovingston does not come home every day from the wars, I can tell you. You may have him all to yourselves afterwards, and bore him as much as he will let you; but I must have that privilege first, because I have known him longest."

They saw by Jack's manner that there would be no use in disputing that point with him; and so they let him have his own way, like the well-trained family they were.

Col. Rovingston had learned to keep early hours in the army; and his carriage stopped at the door of the Houldworthys, with military punctuality, just as the clock struck eleven the next morning. Miss Warner went down to meet him first. Miss Fanny seemed to be at odds with her toilet that morning, and good Mrs. Houldworthy was never ready on any occasion.

Rovingston was at the other end of the room, looking at a crayon head of Miss Houldworthy, which had been taken many years before. He did not hear Amy's light tread until she had nearly reached him; and then he turned, and seized in a firm grasp her outstretched hand.

"I am so glad to see you!" she said.

"You cannot understand how glad I am to see you at last. How long have I been away? It seems to me a lifetime."

"And you are hurt too. We were all so sorry to hear that."

"That is nothing," he said, still holding her hand, as if it was hard to realize that he was at home again and among

friends, once more. "It was my left hand; and it is of some use still, although I shall be awkward with it at first. But that was not my worst hurt," he added smiling, though a little sadly.

"Ah!" said Amy with an answering smile, for she guessed his meaning.

"I think you know what I mean," he said. "You must have guessed it in all those letters, even before I confessed it to you. I must have trusted my secret to somebody, I think,—I could not live without talking to some one about her. I was almost frantic at times, but I know it made me fight better. I think I must have loved her from the first; but it was very long before the truth forced itself on me so that I could not help acknowledging it. I think my passion has been growing and growing ever since. I had nothing else to think of out there, you know."

Amy still looked at him with a smile on her face.

"You are not quite complimentary to your very humble servant," she said.

"Don't torture me, Amy," Rovingston broke out. "You don't know how I have suffered; and last night I think it was worse than all, to have her so near me, and still be in doubt. Have you kept my secret, and do you think she cares for me?"

Miss Warner looked grave, for this was evidently a very serious matter. "I have kept your secret, even from Jack," she said. "It was very noble and generous of you not to speak to her, and I can imagine what a sacrifice it was; but I think you were right. As you said, it would have been better for you to have died without a word, than to have left her your widow. And this war has been so bloody! But now, colonel," she added, with another bright smile, "I think you may consider your troubles all over. If it will relieve your mind, I think I can promise that you will win her."

"Ah!" cried Rovingston, with a great sigh of relief.

"I do not think she cared much for you when you went away; but every thing is changed since then. I know she thinks you the greatest hero in the army; and you know we poor, weak women have never been able to hold out against heroes, since the world began."

"And you think she loves me?" cried Rovingston eagerly, and with the pertinacity of men in his condition.

"I think she does," said Amy. "Yes, I will give you the unfair advantage over

her, which I think you deserve, and say I am sure of it."

Rovingston turned away for a moment, and leaned his head against the mantle-piece. Isolated as he had been in certain ways, and forced as he felt in honor to keep his secret to himself, except of late in his letters to Amy Warner, he had perhaps grown a little morbid over his passion. While other men made merry over cards and wine, he had preferred to mope in corners; and it was only the constant excitement and bustle of his duties, which had kept him from that state when he must perforce have thrown up his commission, and gone home to learn his fate. The popular idea of Love is, that he is a very gentle little boy, with a toy bow and arrows to match; but, when the god seizes upon a man of Rovingston's character and years, he becomes a fierce giant, and, if he is crossed in the least point, there is likely to be some hard fighting. And, in these struggles, it would be generally safe to give odds on the god.

Rovingston turned, and again extended his hands. He was in that state of mind, in which a man is even ready to forgive his enemies. "Amy," he said, — "I call you Amy. We need not be formal any more, need we? You have been a true friend to me, — more than a friend. I know *she* looks upon you as a sister. Will you be my sister, after this?"

Amy looked at his beaming face. It was tanned and toughened by exposure; and the beard worn on the chin, in addition to the long but not heavy moustache, had altered very much the expression of his countenance. He was thin too, and the lines about his mouth looked stronger. "I do not know," said she playfully. "You do not resemble in the least the gentleman whom I used to know as Mr. Rovingston, and with whom I thought I was corresponding."

"I am the same man though."

"Not quite, I think; but I will venture to promise what you ask."

Rovingston, in his happy mood, bent down and kissed her forehead by way of answer. At that moment, he was conscious of a shadow at the door, but it was gone before he could look up. Then they heard the outside door shutting, but neither gave it much attention.

Fanny was certainly very slow that morning in making her toilet; even Miss Warner was compelled to make an excuse for her; Fanny was not apt to be

late, she said. In her heart she believed Fanny was a little afraid to meet Mr. Rovingston. The colonel himself was so impatient that he began to doubt how much Amy's guaranty for his success was worth.

At length Fanny entered, radiant as a red rose in June. Rovingston sprang to meet her, and the two stood for a moment with clasped hands looking in each other's eyes. Then the secret was out on either side, and Fanny's gaze fell. It was at this point that Amy left the room noiselessly; and perhaps we cannot do better than to follow her prudent example, and close the door after us.

In affairs of this kind, discreet sisters or cousins can make themselves of great service. Amy met Mrs. Houldworthy at the head of the stairs, just on the point of descending; and she drew the good lady back into her room, with a mysterious air, and, having shut the door, explained to her why it was that her presence would not just then be welcome in the drawing-room. Through the influence of Miss Warner, the happy couple were left to themselves for full three hours; and even then Col. Rovingston was so unreasonable as to be very much disgusted when he heard Mrs. Houldworthy speaking to some one outside the door, in rather a loud tone of voice, so as to warn them that she was about to come in. He was afterwards led to regard these three hours as the shortest he ever spent in his life; and this was curious, because his driver regarded them as by far the longest he had ever experienced.

Fanny escaped from the room as Mrs. Houldworthy entered it. Rovingston was as hasty in this business as he was majestically slow in the old days; and he very soon informed Mrs. Houldworthy of what she already knew, — that he loved her daughter; and asked her permission to do what he had just done without leave, — to pay his addresses to Fanny. He felt sure of a favorable answer from Jack, the head of the family, and he reasoned that it would be wise to strike while the iron was hot, and make sure of his standing with the mother. Mrs. Houldworthy received his intelligence in the most gracious and courtly manner; and the colonel presently went away in such a state of beatitude that he could with difficulty restrain himself from embracing the driver of the carriage. The driver, on his part, was so cross at being kept waiting so long, — he did not

own the carriage, — that he flogged his horses all the way down the avenue. Such little things make us happy and miserable in this world!

The sagacious reader may have divined that it was Jack Houldworthy, whose shadow Rovingston saw at the door, and who had immediately left the house. Jack had seen his friend the colonel, in the act of kissing Amy, although he had not understood a word of what was passing between them. Jack knew all about the correspondence; but if the idea had ever struck him that a man of Fred Rovingston's standing and wealth, and with his experience of the world, could seriously fall in love with either of those two quiet, simple girls, he had dismissed it from his mind as improbable, the next moment. Jack, poor fellow, who rather prided himself on his knowledge of human nature, ought to have known that this was the most likely thing in the world to happen; but he did not, and he was therefore thrown into a state of amazement by what he saw that morning.

Such a *tête-à-tête* ought not to be interrupted, and so he moved off; but, instead of going up to his own room, he found himself walking out of the front door into the street again. He did not quite know why he took that course, though he was staggered at what he had seen, he confessed. There were the horses and carriage, with which Rovingston had come. He was not dreaming, and he had just seen his friend kissing Amy Warner. And why should he not? and why was Jack himself wandering off in this absurd fashion, without any definite object? He asked himself these questions as he went along the sidewalk, and could not answer either of them; yet he did not turn back. Fred had a right to make love to Amy: why not? — but he did not feel so eager to see him again as he had a few moments before. Amy was the best girl in the world; he wished her joy, but still —

"I think you had better go back, and not make an idiot of yourself, Jack," he said to himself, in a tone of reproof, at the first corner; but Jack did not go back for all that. On the contrary, he turned, and went up the avenue. He raised his hat, and gave his head a shake; but his ideas were no clearer, after a moment, than they were before. "It is very singular how this thing has taken hold of me," said Jack: "I don't understand it."

He tried to laugh, and made a melancholy failure of it. His ideas became confused, and, as he walked on, tumbled over each other, and refused, like bad schoolboys, to come and range themselves in order. Suddenly they all took the shape of an imprecation against Rovingston. "Fred is a good fellow," he said, "but why should he come here into our family to break it up, and steal away the brightest of them all? He had better have staid at the war. Not that I absolutely wish him any harm, — oh, no! I'm not so bad a friend to him as that, — but why should he be so bad a friend to me? It must be those letters that did the mischief. What a fool I was, not to interpose my authority there! What a blind fool!"

It is not worth while to follow up the process by which Master Jack arrived at the conclusion that he felt for Amy Warner far more than a cousin's affection, and that he was madly jealous of his friend Rovingston. He walked a long distance before he found out and acknowledged to himself exactly the nature of his peculiar attack; and when he reached this point he set himself at work to learn magnanimity. Whatever were his own feelings, he ought clearly to give way to what was for their happiness. Unfortunately, he had got so far up town before he began this task, that he did not get it finished, until, having regained his reason to some extent, he judged it was time for him to retrace his steps. On his way down to his place of business, — he was still unwilling to go home, — his fever broke out again, and he had two very bad attacks. When he reached his office he looked around with some surprise to find the furniture and papers as he had left them, for it seemed to him at least a year since he had been there before.

When the dinner-hour arrived, Jack had another fit come on; and, instead of going home, he sent word that he was unavoidably detained by pressing business, and should be obliged to stay down until late. He asked that no one should sit up for him. Then he dined, or pretended to dine, at a restaurant, and, having smoked an expensive cigar, felt better for a little while. Love and neuralgia, and a few other diseases, are less troublesome immediately after eating. He reasoned that a little mild diversion was what he needed in his present condition, and determined to go to the theatre. His cigar finished, he

began to feel his malady returning; but he strolled up town, read the large posters at the different places of entertainment, and tried to make himself believe that he cared whether he went to see a tragedy or a ballet. Finally he decided on a comedy as most fitting under the circumstances, and, having paid his money, went in, and took his place. Jack looked on for a minute or two after the curtain rose, and then his thoughts went far away.

He thought of his long friendship for Rovingston, and how stoutly Rovingston had stood by him through good and bad fortune. It was not that they owed each other any favors, but that a perfect understanding had always existed between them. True friendship neither gives nor asks pledges; and complete confidence and mutual regard depend on an equality which must not be disturbed. Houldworthy knew that his friend's purse was open to him; but, if he had been driven by stress of circumstances to help himself from it, the bond between them would have been weakened in proportion as his self-respect suffered. It was much better that Jack should feel that Rovingston could be trusted in any emergency, than to put him to the trial. Then, too, he thought how Rovingston had of late proved himself a man, and a brave one too; for he had written to Jack much more unreservedly of his experience than to the girls, and Jack appreciated him at his full value. He could give Amy Warner at once the position she deserved, and he must have her.

Jack brought himself up to this point of magnanimity two or three times without sticking there; because, in the end, he always came to think of the graces and virtues of Miss Warner, and so lost his head, and fell back into the old depths of despair. At length he shook himself well together, to use one of his own phrases, and vowed that he would go home at once, and meet his fate like a man, and not like a whining schoolboy. If they loved each other, there was an end to it; and they should never know how much pain they had caused him. That this good resolution might not cool, he left the theatre at once, notwithstanding the hero and heroine of the play were just then in their most affecting situation. His untimely exit caused great disgust to a worthy patron of the drama, who sat with his family, between Jack and the passage-way; but Jack knew nothing

of this, and strode home at a great pace, calling himself hard names as he went.

As Jack let himself in with his pass-key, and closed the door, he caught a glimpse of a female figure flying up the staircase. "It is Amy, running away from me," he thought bitterly.

His mother was standing in the doorway of the little library. "Well, sir, and where have you been all day?" she said.

Jack muttered something unintelligible about "business," and found some difficulty in hanging up his hat.

"You do not know what has happened since this morning," said Mrs. Houldworthy. "Come in, and we will tell you."

Jack followed his mother into the room, scowling a good deal, as if the sudden glare of the light was too much for his eyes. He was startled to see Amy Warner sitting there, instead of his sister, as he expected. She was as calm as if nothing had happened; and, when he entered, did not stir from her position, which was very much like what we saw before on a former occasion, except that now she was at work on some small piece of sewing.

"Good evening, master runaway," she said.

"Good evening," said Jack. His voice sounded strangely to him, and he was almost afraid to speak, lest it should betray him. He sat down, however, with every outward appearance of calmness, and took up the evening paper.

"You do not seem very anxious to hear the news," said Mrs. Houldworthy.

"Oh, yes! of course I am," said Jack, without betraying the slightest appearance of curiosity.

"I would not tell him, aunt, until he explains where he has been all day, and promises better fashions in future," said Amy.

"Where is Fanny?" asked Jack, without paying any attention to his cousin.

"Fanny ran up stairs when she heard you coming," said Mrs. Houldworthy.

"I did not know that I was such a fearful object," said Jack.

"Ah! that is the secret," cried Amy.

"But, of course, he does not care to know it," said Mrs. Houldworthy in a tone of pique.

"What secret?" said Jack a little peevishly. "Come, you may as well tell me at once. You know I hate mystification. Why does Fanny run away when she hears me coming?"

"You must know, to begin with," Mrs. Houldworthy began majestically. "Lieut.-Col. Rovingston was here several hours this morning."

"Yes, I know," said Jack. "What has that to do with Fanny?"

"Why, as Damon did not come to keep his word with Pythias," said Miss Warner, "Pythias had to comfort himself with Damon's sister; and, indeed, he seemed to be very well satisfied with the exchange."

"What do you mean?" cried Jack, now thoroughly aroused.

"I mean," said Mrs. Houldworthy, "if Amy will be good enough to permit me to tell the story in my own way, that, before Lieut.-Col. Rovingston went away, he did himself, as well as our own family, the honor to make a formal proposal for the hand of your sister."

"What!" called out Jack, springing to his feet. "Are you sure, mother? Fanny and Fred Rovingston!"

"Sure?" echoed Mrs. Houldworthy. "Why, of course. And I do not see any thing astonishing in it. I've suspected it for a very long time."

Amy cast a mischievous glance at her aunt. She was looking and feeling especially bright and happy that evening.

Jack would very likely have paced up and down the room, if it had been large enough for such exercise. As it was, he sat down again, and said not a word for some moments. During this time, his mother was praising both Mr. Rovingston and Fanny, and speaking of the advantages of the match on both sides. Jack did not understand a single phrase she uttered. He was busy thinking. He understood it all now. Amy was free; and the little scene he had witnessed in the morning meant nothing more than that she knew of the match, and perhaps had aided and abetted it. And Rovingston was still his friend, — more than that, — his brother.

"Where is Fanny?" exclaimed Jack, springing up suddenly, and breaking off one of his mother's most self-complacent sentences in the middle. "Where is the little puss? I must go and pull her precious little ears for daring to go on in this way without my permission." With that, Master Jack ran up stairs, taking two at every jump; and finding his sister not yet retired for the night, although somewhat in *dishabille*, he kissed her twice on each cheek, and once on the lips, with such rapidity that she did not

have the presence of mind to scream. He called her a "naughty little puss," and asked her "what she meant by such conduct?" and, receiving no satisfactory answer, left her very red and happy; and came slowly down stairs, somewhat out of breath.

"Did you find her still up?" asked Miss Warner.

"Yes; and I punished her severely," said Jack. "She promised not to do so again; and I do not think she will — at present."

Mrs. Houldworthy was too much excited to think of retiring to her chamber for some time; so they sat there discussing Rovingston and Fanny and the probable plans of the young couple for the future. At length Jack, who had several times before showed signs of uneasiness, ventured to suggest, as if in a casual way, that the hour was late. Mrs. Houldworthy was quite startled when she looked at the clock, and very soon started, — of course, after the usual number of last words and cautions about the fastening of doors and windows.

Amy took up her work, which she had put down when Jack came in, and was about to follow. Jack shut the door, and barred the way.

"One moment, Amy, please," he said. "I cannot sleep to-night, until I tell you what I have suffered to-day, and what I have found out."

Amy looked a little startled when he came between her and the door. She turned pale, and he saw that she trembled.

"I don't quite understand you, Cousin Jack," she said.

"When I entered this room to-night," said Jack, "I thought it was you, whom Rovingston wished to marry; and much as I had loved my friend before, Amy, I hated him then. Yes, that is the word, I *hated* him. But for this mistake of mine, I might have gone on in my blind, stupid ignorance, and never have known, — I will not say never: the light must have come sooner or later, — but I should not now know that I love you, and that I cannot live without you."

"You love me as a sister, Jack," said Amy timidly, putting out her hand. She smiled faintly, with a piteous little attempt at pretending to misunderstand him.

"I love you as Rovingston loves Fanny, only a thousand times better," cried Jack passionately. "I want to make you my wife."

Amy drew away her hand, and sat down, covering her face with her handkerchief.

Jack was puzzled and shocked. "I have been too hasty," said he. "Of course you cannot understand this new feeling in a moment. Do not answer me now. I have been brutally hasty. I will go away, and you shall have time to think of it."

She made ever so slight a movement with her hand, and he understood it as a sign that he should stay. He stood gazing down on her; and, in the silence, the ticking of the clock sounded as loud as the blows of a blacksmith on his anvil. Was it hours or minutes, or only seconds, that she kept him waiting?

Then she dropped her handkerchief, and he read his answer in her face. He fell on his knees, and covered her hands with burning kisses.

The amount of love-making which was done in that little house in the three months following would have astonished St. Valentine.

CHAPTER XXX.

WHICH HAS THE MERIT OF BEING THE LAST AND SHORTEST CHAPTER IN THE STORY.

It is a good old fashion of the playhouse, to bring in all the characters at the end of the comedy, that they may make their obeisance to the audience, even if they speak no epilogue. The modern way of bringing down the curtain upon a tableau may have its merits too; but it seems to the author less mannerly, and so to be avoided. It is pleasant, likewise, to know the fate of all the personages who have figured importantly in a tale, beyond the general result of despair and degradation to the wicked, and health and happiness to the good. This, however, is not possible on the stage, nor is it much more possible in the present story, since the action is brought up almost to the day of writing; and the reader has very likely as good a gift of prophecy as the writer. Let us nevertheless see what can be done to satisfy this very proper curiosity, and at the same time serve the cause of good manners.

It is now only four years since Jack Houldworthy married his cousin; but he has prospered in business, having now

the agency of several inventions. He has never sought to regain the friendship of many of his old fashionable acquaintances, although he occasionally meets a few of them at the house of his brother-in-law. He knows some very good people, however, and is welcome at their houses as often as he chooses to give them his company. Neither he nor his wife cares to go out often, and they have the reputation of being extremely fond of each other. Mr. Houldworthy has already a young Johnny to pull his moustache after dinner, and otherwise disport himself in the ways peculiar to sons and heirs of tender years. This youngster is pronounced the brightest boy ever seen, by his grandmother; and he probably is a decent sort of child.

Mr. Rovingston dropped his military title after he left the army, although he has a right to call himself general now, if he chose. He has no regular business, although he has amused himself with writing a history of the campaigns with which he is familiar; and this work, if it does not grow so large as to frighten all the publishers, may one day prove valuable. It will certainly have the merit of honesty. Mr. Rovingston settled the question of his moderately-large income in a very simple way. He does not keep so large an establishment as he used to think indispensable for a married man. His wife thinks, perhaps, that a veteran who has lost three fingers has a right to live idle; and, at all events, she no longer considers it a serious objection to Mr. Rovingston, that he has no regular occupation. She is a great favorite in their set; and so is he, as for the matter of that. Finally it may be added that Mr. Rovingston may now be said to be slightly bald, without doing him any great injustice.

The Twiddler Club still flourishes, and so does Mr. Charles Lush, for the most part; although he still suffers from time to time from what he calls the chronic ossification of his father's heart. There was a report that he was engaged to Miss Emily Honeycastle, — sister, you know, to Miss Mary, who ran away last year with Vanderdonk Browne, — but I am in a position to say there was nothing in it. Charley is the same idle dog he always was, and has no thought of marrying any girl.

The Pullises, both great and small, as well as the young lady now called Miss Green, all prosper, and so do the Tompkinses; but the Hobbses, — Mrs. Hobbs's

maiden name was Munchinello, you may remember, and she was a friend of Mrs. Tompkins before she was married, — the Hobbses, it is reported, quarrel. I suspect this to be a libel, for it takes two to make a quarrel; and it is doubtful if Mr. Hobbs ever had the pluck to oppose his wife in any thing.

Mr. G. Washington Cooke is still disliked by almost everybody; but he gets along very well in spite of his unpopularity. His wife's parties are the most crowded of the season, as a rule; and by people, too, who hold their heads high in the world. Mr. Harley, reported ruined by blockade-running and Confederate bonds, is about town so well dressed and cheerful that few believe the stories about him; some of which, it is thought,

were started by his son-in-law, who quarrelled with him soon after his marriage.

It was Felix Short who engineered that last corner in Pemigewassetts, which hit Soapstone and Bluffum and several of our most respectable citizens so very hard.

The worthy Mr. Tinkham still carves the joints of meat for Mrs. Vincent's boarders, of whom Mr. Cartright is the only original one remaining. Mr. Cartright is not yet married; but there is still hope for him, as there is for all bachelors who have their homes in boarding-houses.

And now, the actors having absolutely nothing more to say, the prompter very reluctantly rings down the curtain.

THE END.