

NEW BOOKS IN PRESS.

NEW SERIES OF THE POPULAR "MERCURY STORIES."

- ENGLISH TOM: or, The Smuggler's Secret.
By NED BUNTLIN. Price, 25c.
- MILROSE: or, The Cotton Planter's Daughter.
By DR. J. H. ROBINSON. Price, 25c.
- ELLA ADAMS: or, The Demon of Fire.
By NED BUNTLIN. Price, 25c.
- LA MASQUE: or, The Midnight Queen.
By COUSIN MAY CARLETON. Price, 25c.
- MOUNTAIN MAX: or, Nick Whiffles on the Border.
By DR. J. H. ROBINSON. Price, 25c.
- KITTY ATHERTON: or, Broken Life.
By MARGARET BLOUNT. Price, 25c.
- THE RATTLESNAKE: or, The Rebel Privateer.
By NED BUNTLIN. Price, 25c.
- ERMINIE: or, The Gipseys Vow.
By COUSIN MAY CARLETON. Price, 50c.
- CEPHERINE: or, The Secret Cabal.
By DR. J. H. ROBINSON. Price, 25c.
- A DANGEROUS WOMAN.
By MARGARET BLOUNT. Price, 25c.
- BLANCHE: or, The Lost Diamond.
By S. R. URBAN. Price, 25c.
- THE GROSSBEAK MANSION: a Mystery of New York.
By NED BUNTLIN. Price, 25c.
- VICTORIA: or, The Heiress of Castle Cliffe.
By COUSIN MAY CARLETON. Price, 50c.

All the above are full of Beautiful Illustrative Engravings by Darley.

FREDERIC A. BRADY, Publisher,
24 Ann Street, New York.

ELLA ADAMS:

OR,

The Demon of Fire.

A TALE OF THE CHARLESTON CONFLAGRATION.

BY NED BUNTLIN.

New York:
FREDERIC A. BRADY, PUBLISHER,
24 ANN STREET.

384

June 24/1863

ENTERED according to Act of Congress, in the year 1862,

By CAULDWELL, SOUTHWORTH & WHITNEY,

In the Clerk's Office of the District Court for the Southern District of New York.

23505

FILMER & CO.,
ELECTROTYPERS,
17 Dutch st., N. Y.

ELLA ADAMS:

OR,

The Demon of Fire.

CHAPTER I.

"Boys, she's a woman, after all, though she is a cursed Yankee! I haven't heard that she has ever preached up abolition-doctrines in her school; and I vote for letting her slide North by railroad as soon as possible. I'll pay her passage myself, if so be you conclude to let her go!"

"You're not the whole committee, Sam Dunnigan! I reckon your molasses-and-hominy-heart has been touched by the beauty of the Yankee school-teacher, and that inclines you to be merciful. You was ready enough to knot the noose on the white-livered tract-peddler that we strung up yest-rday; and when he said he had a wife and children, and plead for his life for their sakes, said that you'd adopt his children when we had subjugated the North, and adopt his wife, too, if she was good-looking!"

"Shucks! He was a bird of another feather. I go in for hangin' all the he-abolitionists; but the women—I can't hang a woman!"

"We don't want to hang this woman. We'll be merciful, and let her take her choice of committing voluntary (?) suicide, by taking an ounce of laudanum, or else put up with a hundred lashes on her bare back, and then let her slide the best way she can. She had no business to come here from the abolition hot-bed of Massachusetts!"

"Maybe she couldn't help it. I've heard tell that she was an orphan, whose parents, once rich, died poor, and left her only an education for a living!"

"I know nothing about that—nor do I care. She is from the North; that is enough! We must make a few examples; and that will scare the miserable Yankees into submission to our plan of proceedings. Don't you think so, gentlemen?"

And the speaker appealed to some fifteen or twenty other men who sat in the room, smoking, and listening to the argument between Sam

Dunnigan and Bill Champe—the latter being the President of the Vigilance Committee which they composed.

"I think as our president, Bill Champe, does!" said one.

"And I—and I," added a dozen more.

Sam Dunnigan was the only dissenting voice. Even he said no more.

"Then I take it as decided, gentlemen, that Miss Ella Adams is to have her choice of laudanum or a sweltering with raw hickory!" said the president, who was a tall, dissipated-looking specimen of Southern chivalry, whose kinky black hair and smoke-colored face rather betokened a close affinity to the "institution", or, at least, to some of the chattels thereof.

"There's no use in my saying any more when all your minds are made up," said Dunnigan. "But whipping women isn't in my line, and I beg leave to resign my position on the Committee!"

"So that you'll be freed from your oath, and can help the woman off!" said the president, sneeringly.

"Bill Champe, you lie! Now, if you want to pick up a scrimmage with me, you've got the chance!" said Sam, deliberately, who, though not half the size of the other, evidently had ten times as much heart and courage.

"I've better business on hand just now! But I'll attend to your case in due time!" said the other, sullenly. "I believe you're half a traitor at heart. You'll stand watching any way!"

"Say that again, and I'll let daylight shine through you, you black-muzzled coward!" cried Sam. And he laid his hand upon the handle of a bowie-knife in his belt.

Mr. Champe did not say it again. But he muttered something about public duty being paramount to private quarrels, and then said:

"Gentlemen, what shall we do with Indigo Russell? He is an out-and-out abolitionist, and dars us to touch him because he is an Englishman!"

"I don't think it would be politic, even if it would be safe!" said one of the Committee. "We must have English help to whip the Yankees, and an English market for our cotton. It will not do for us to pick a quarrel with the country which may prove to be our only friend, and which would quarrel as quickly for a wrong done to a single citizen as it would for one done to a thousand. We must let Indigo Russell blow off steam as he likes for the present. Our business is with the cursed Yankees!"

"That's consistency and courage!" sneered Sam Dunnigan, as he rose and left the room.

"That man must be looked to, gentlemen!" said Champe, when Dunnigan was out of hearing. "I bore his insolence because I know that high duties demand all my time! But I will punish him when a proper opportunity occurs. We will now make arrangements for putting Miss Adams through a course of sprouts. I will myself bear the message to her giving her a choice, which is more than she has a right to expect. The meeting will now adjourn until tomorrow morning at ten o'clock, when we will meet to attend to her case!"

This scene occurs not far from Charleston, just before the outbreak of the present rebellion.

CHAPTER II.

God help me!"

These words fell from the lips of a young girl—an orphan, who had not yet reached her twentieth year, and who had struggled, alone and almost friendless, among strangers, to earn a subsistence by teaching school.

Ella Adams was very beautiful, both in face and figure—almost too delicate to bear up against the surges of the world's cruelty; yet sufficiently a heroine to bear her sorrows in silence, and to hope for light even amidst the darkness which lay like a fog about her. Gently dignified, pure as an infant in thought and action, she was well calculated to make friends everywhere she went; but, alas! for her and the evil times, she was from the North; and none but the children, who had learned with their lessons to love her, now dared to speak kindly to or of her. She would have left the country, and gone North to those who would not wrong or see a woman wronged, but she could not collect the money due her for teaching; and without money and passports she could not travel.

"God help me!"

These were her words, as she read a note, sent by some unknown person, kindly warning her that the Vigilance Committee, which had recently committed some fearful outrages upon Northern people, such as whipping, hanging, and burning, had got her name upon their list, and would soon exercise severity upon her if she did not speedily escape from the neighborhood.

"I have done nothing to merit ill treatment—said nothing which can be construed into evil by them," she continued. "And much as I wish to leave, I am powerless to do so. No money, no friends, but the poor mechanic and his wife with whom I board!"

And again she sighed, and said, sadly, "God help me!"

She had just dismissed her scholars for the afternoon, and was alone in the school house; which, however, was but a short distance from the house in which she boarded, in the village of M——n.

Hearing a step outside the door, she hastily concealed the note which she had received, and taking her key, started toward the door. But before she reached it, she was met by the man (?) whom we have alluded to before, as the President of the Vigilance Committee.

"Don't be in a hurry, Miss Adams," said he, as his tall form barred her passage by the doorway. "I've a little business for you to attend to!"

"Then call upon me at Mr. Wilson's, where I board. I have no business here, except with my scholars!"

"Yet you must listen to my business here!" said the chivalric ruffian. "You needn't be scared; for I am a gentleman, born in old Tennessee, in the City of Rocks; and I mean no immediate harm to you. But, first, let me tell you that I am the President of the Vigilance Committee of this district."

"I know it already," she said, with a shudder. "Now, will you please to let me go to my boarding-house? Anything that you have to say can be said to me there."

"I have nothing to say to you in your boarding-house. Henry Wilson is a Southern man; but he don't own niggers, and we don't trust him. By the way, you're a mighty pretty girl, Miss Adams; it's a pity you're a Yankee!"

And the sensual villain tried to look pleasantly upon his intended victim.

"Once more, Mr. Champe, will you let me pass?"

"No, not just yet, my dear. I have a communication to make to you from the Vigilance Committee; after that is made, I have another to impart upon my own account."

"Let me pass, or you will regret my detention!" said she. And her dark-blue eyes flashed, and her slender form was drawn up to its fullest height. "I have one friend and protector left, at any rate!"

"I know who he is. It is Sam Dunnigan; but I've got him where he can't help you," said Champe, with a sneer.

"No; my protector is here!" cried the brave girl. And she drew a Derringer pistol from her bosom, cocked and presented it. "Now, sir, leave me a free passage to the door, or I will make one over your body!"

The bullying coward turned blueish-white in the face, and, in a quivering tone, said:

"Don't shoot, Miss Adams. Just point that popper another way. It might go off by accident!"

"Point your face the other way, sir, and leave this building, or it will go off without accident!" said the brave girl, firmly.

Champe hated to be foiled, but there was a fire in the eyes which looked upon him, which told him that there would be no hesitation on the lady's part if he did not move.

Therefore, he turned and sneaked away, muttering, as he went:

"We'll pay you off for this, to-morrow, my fair lady."

Miss Adams now hurried to the door, and having locked it, hastened to the house where she boarded, not meeting any further interruption by the way.

But the moment she entered the house of Mr. Wilson, a new object of terror presented itself. A man, bleeding from several wounds, was stretched upon a rude settee, and both Mr. Wilson and his wife were endeavoring, by their kind aid, to stay the hand of death, which had evidently grasped him.

As soon as he saw Ella Adams, his eye brightened.

"I'm going fast the way of all flesh, miss," he said, "but I've time to do my errand before I go. They had me under guard, but I got away from 'em. But I'll soon be out of everybody's way. You must leave here soon as possible this very night. The Committee has decided to lynch you, if you don't take poison to carry yourself off. I went against it, and that's why I'm laid out this way. Now, get off, as soon as you can—Wilson, here, will help you—and when you're safe and have time to pray, remember my name is Sam Dunnigan, and I need prayin' for, if anybody does! There! I say, Wilson, I told you that howie-prog in my back would do it! I'm going—the Palmetto State has lost a soldier just when she needed him. Tell Bill Champe to come—I want to settle our affairs down where I'm going. I'm choking—blood is thicker than water. Where is Miss Adams? I saw her just now, looking like a crying angel; but it has got dark. Good-bye, folks—good-bye—it's all up with poor Sam."

There was only a choking sound or two more, and then all was still. The poor fellow who had risked his life to warn Ella of her danger, had now no life to risk further.

Ella Adams wept. She had not been acquainted with this man, but he had risked his life and lost it in the endeavor to save hers by a timely warning. Tears were now the only offerings which gratitude could lay upon his corpse.

"This is terrible—very terrible!" she murmured.

"Yes; but if we cannot get you away in safety, it will be more terrible," said Mr. Wilson. "The Committee has decided to either make you take poison and kill yourself, or else to whip you to death. So Sam told me before you came."

"I knew it already. Their chief demon told me as much," said Ella, recovering her firmness. "I will leave here, Mr. Wilson, so as not to compromise you and your good wife, who have ever been kind to me; but where to go—"

"Here's where he went in. We're on the trail; the blood run a stream, here! cried a rough voice outside; and the sound of other voices and many footsteps was heard."

And in a moment after, a gang of armed men rudely entered the house.

"Where's Sam Dunnigan?" cried the leader. "We want him."

"Take him," said Wilson, pointing to the body, which, covered with gore, lay before them, its cold, glassy eyes wide open.

"Dead!" muttered the leader, as he put his hand on the body. "Well, there's ten foot of rope saved for somebody else. But here's the gal, boys—we may as well put a guard over her as not, for she may try to give us the slip in the night."

"You needn't put a guard over anybody in my house," said Wilson, sullenly.

"Well, we can tote her off to the guard-house. It'll be fun to have her there. We can squeeze some music out of her there, maybe."

"For Heaven's sake! do not let them take me away from here!" moaned Ella. "Let me die here, if I must, but not among their vile rabble."

"If so be you stay here, Wilson must go security that you're forthcoming in the morning when we want you."

"I'll do that—I'll do that," said Wilson, hurriedly. "Now, take that poor fellow's body away and bury it, for I can't bear the sight of it here."

"We'll take it away for dog-feed; buryin' is too much trouble to take for his carcass," said the leader. "Boys, tote him off. And you, gal, make up your mind which you'd like best in the morning—an ounce of laudanum, or a hundred good lashes with the hickory on your bare back, well laid on. One or the other is laid down in the book for you. Go to sleep and dream out a choice. But don't try to get away. You're guarded on every side, and are in as tight as if a steel trap was around one of your dainty ankles."

With these savage words, the ruffian leader left the house, his gang carrying away Dunnigan's body as they went.

CHAPTER III.

For a few moments, there was silence in the dwelling of Henry Wilson, after its usual inmates

were left to themselves. The first who spoke was his wife.

"What shall we do, Harry?" she asked.

"First get ready to fight, and then be ready to die. They're too many for one man and a couple of women; but I'll make some of 'em eat dirt!" responded the brave mechanic.

"You must not get into trouble upon my account," said Ella, firmly. "If I cannot escape, I will yield myself up to them without resisting here under your roof, and trust to God for deliverance hereafter."

"If you do, may I never see the light of another day!" said Wilson. "If I am poor and don't own niggers, I'm a man. And the first he that offers to lay a hand on you, is ticketed for the burning lake of brimstone, as sure as my name is Harry Wilson. I've got a good brace of revolvers and a two-pound bowie-knife, and they shall know the value of both before they occupy this house again. You're not scared—are you, Debby?" And the brave man appealed to his wife.

"Not a bit," answered the doughty woman—"Not a bit. I'm going to put on all the kettles and get scalding water ready for them. The most of 'em hate water worse than mad dogs do; and they'll like it none the better when they have to take it boiling."

"I will not let you take this fearful risk upon yourselves, my kind friends," said Ella. "I will leave the house, at once."

"Didn't you hear their head man say that they'd hold me responsible for your forthcoming?" asked Wilson. "Besides, it is most likely that they've got guards all around the house; and if you tried to get away they'd catch you, and worse might come to you than they'd dare to try here, or anywhere else in daylight. No—you've been as good as an angel since you've been with us, Miss Ella, and we'll be none the worse off for doing what we can for you now. You and Debby go to bed together, to-night, and do the praying, while I run bullets and get ready for work in the morning. No words—my mind is made up, and all the women in the world couldn't change it."

"That's so," said Mrs. Wilson. "When my Harry puts his foot down, it is there, as fast as if 'twas riveted to the floor. He'll never budge from what he says."

"I thank him for his bravery, but it makes me wretched to think that my fate must involve others."

"Don't fret!" said Wilson. "This is only hurrying up matters for me a little. I had made up my mind to have nothing to do with their secession game, from the start. The Stars and Stripes are only flag which I will serve under, and they may as well know it now as hereafter. They've already got my name down in their military draft; but I reckon the name is all that they will get."

"Can't we get out of the village, husband, and work our way to the North?" asked his wife.

"I reckon that would be beyond possibility. No one can travel in the South, now, without a pass from head-quarters; and that I haven't got, nor can't get. We must just meet what comes, and do the best we can with it. And now, Debby, get supper; it isn't healthy to fight on an empty stomach."

The good wife immediately set about her work, while Ella went to her room—whither it is none of our business to follow her.

CHAPTER IV.

Another day dawned, and it was the holy Sabbath. On that day which having been pronounced holy should be so kept. Alas! how seldom is it done in war-parts and war-time! For years Henry Wilson and his wife had occupied a humble back-corner pew in the village-church, and had not missed a Sabbath even in those secession-times when the minister omitted to read the prayers for the President of the United States and those in power, as he had formerly done. But there was no preparation on this Sabbath for church-going made by the worthy mechanic or his wife. In vain had Ella Adams besought them to leave her to her fate, and not to involve themselves in trouble on her account. The sturdy mechanic only reiterated his intention to defend her with his life, and his wife gloried in his courage.

"When they find that my Harry is in earnest, I reckon they'll be right glad to let us all three go out of the country free and unharmed," said the little woman. "For my Harry is terrible when he gets his temper heat up! I never saw him right mad but once, and that was when a gambler-fellow that was runnin' for Congress insulted me! Harry whipped him so quick that he never had time to say 'enough' till he was all pounded into a jelly, and he couldn't see his way to Congress, nor anywhere, else for a month after that."

Mr. Wilson did not have much to say. He had got plenty of water and provisions into the house, and having strongly barricaded all the outside doors, and closed strong window-shutters made by his own hands, he made his arrangements for defending his house at first from the upper story where windows opened from every side commanding an approach.

In his belt were two heavy revolvers, with six shots in each, and a huge bowie-knife. And true to her idea of carrying on a hot warfare, Mrs. Wilson had filled every kettle which she had in the house with water, and it was boiling over a blazing fire.

Ella Adams, too, was prepared to aid her defenders, for well she knew that death would be preferable to the tortures and indignities which she must suffer if she fell into the hands of the self-formed and lawless Vigilance Committee.

The clock struck ten, and there were no signs of the dreaded visitors.

"Perhaps they have thought better, and concluded not to desecrate the Sabbath by trying to carry out their threats," said Ella to Mrs. Wilson.

"No, miss," said the mechanic; "they've no respect for the Sabbath at any time. They generally drink and gamble more on that day than others—that's all. It's likely they kept late hours last night over their rum and cards, and haven't got together soon this morning. But they're not much behind their time. I see them a gathering in front of the tavern yonder," added Wilson, glancing from a window.

"It is too true," said the school-teacher, with a shudder. "O Mr. Wilson! take another thought before you offer to resist so many men. Let me go and deliver myself up; in shame they may refrain from harming my person; and I can bear the jibes and insults which they may utter."

"I'm blamed if I do, Miss Ella, and there's the end of it. They've got neither shame or mercy. When they find that some of 'em will have to die before they can enter this house, they may agree to let us all go in peace. I will offer to leave the country with you. If that don't satisfy them, then God help us! and may only the right conquer! Is the hot water all ready below, Debby?"

"Yes, husband; if it don't scald the bristles off some of them, I'm no prophet."

Wilson now pushed down the upper half of such windows as he intended to use, and barricaded the rest with furniture, so that he could not be easily attacked from an undefended point. And it was time; for he saw the crowd approaching.

CHAPTER V.

They were a motley set—the lowest scum of the neighborhood, led on by a few leaders of rather more political than social respectability; such respectability as used to "tell" in the "bloody Sixth" ward of New York in election-times, where the rowdy principle predominated. They were all armed with pistols and knives, and some of them carried guns. A revolting-looking villain carried a coil of rope and several huge whips, such as are used sometimes, but for the credit of the "institution" be it said, but seldom, in the cotton-field. At the head of the gang, literally garnished with arms, strode the bully Champe; and on his right walked a gigantic Irishman, who, a renegade to his adopted country, as well as to the principles which actuate most of his countrymen, had sought and found a conspicuous place in the Committee, both on account of his personal strength and his utter brutality.

"You're about as near to my house as I want you to come, armed as if you intended to take a

fort or do some other big thing!" shouted Wilson, when the gang had reached a point not more than fifty yards from his door.

"Just button your jaw, Harry Wilson!" shouted Champe. "We don't want to have anything to do with you, at present. All we want is, that Yankee schoolmarm; and her we'll have, if we have to wake hell to get her!"

"You can never have her from my hands; so the sooner you turn your face the other way, the better for you," replied Wilson. "If you'll go off and let us alone, the lady, and my wife, and me will, all three, leave the country. Let that satisfy you, now, and there will be no more trouble."

"Divil the bit of satisfaction would there be in that!" cried John Murray, Champe's right-hand man—the Irishman of whom we spoke before. "We've come aither music; it is a delicate ear for the same that I have, and the schoolmarm has got to sing for us. So dance her out, ye ould rapsallion, or, be jippers, down comes your shanty! D'ye hear that, now?"

"You'll all feel worse than you'll hear, if you come any nearer my house than you are!" cried Wilson. "I've offered to leave peacefully; if you refuse me that chance, some of you will rue the hour that forces fight out of me. For, mark you, I am well armed, and shall defend my house and all that are in it while breath is left in my body."

"What's the use of botherin' to talk wid the haythen? Let's rouse him out o' that!" cried Murray, who, well stocked with whisky, was, to use the classical language of "Mose", sp'ilin' for a fight.

"Move on, men; we will have her, fight or no fight!" cried Champe.

"You've had your warning!" shouted Wilson. "Another step in this direction and I fire."

"Here goes the lead off, then," shouted Champe, suddenly raising a double-barreled gun which he carried, and taking aim at Wilson.

But a quicker eye and hand than his led off in that game. Ella Adams, standing just behind Mr. Wilson, saw Champe's motion, and quick as thought, she leveled one of her Derringer's and fired. The ball shattered the arm of the villain, and his gun fell to the earth without exploding.

"A good shot, Miss Ella. Maybe they'll hold back now," said Wilson, turning to Ella, who was already reloading her weapon.

"I doubt it. Even bad men have courage," was her reply.

A howl of rage and pain broke from Champe's lips when he felt the wound.

"Fire on the cursed house!" he shouted. "Riddle it with bullets!"

In an instant his order was obeyed, and a wild and scattering volley thrown, from guns

and pistols, sent a leaden shower into the house. But sheltered by the thick walls and some bedding behind which he and Ella retreated as the mob fired, not a shot did any harm to Wilson or herself.

Wilson waited a moment for the smoke to clear away, and taking good aim, he singled out another leader and fired. The man fell howling to the ground, and was borne to the rear.

"Charge on the house!" yelled Champe. "Charge on the house, and save in the doors, or we'll all get picked off at long law!"

"That's the music, be jippers!" cried Murray. "I like pertaties a hape better than bullets! Come on, boys, and we'll be inside the house afore there's any more stray shootin' done!"

With a mad shout, the mob rushed on. But six of them fell before they reached the house, beneath the deliberate aim of Harry Wilson and Ella Adams.

"Have your hot water ready, Lebby!" shouted Wilson, as he saw that the gang would reach the door in spite of his efforts.

"Here it is, Harry; let 'em have it!" cried the brave wife, bring up two large pails full of the boiling liquid.

The heavy shock of Murray's huge body, as he threw himself against the door below, was now heard, and the house shook beneath the blows of the enraged rabble. There was no time to be lost. Wilson hastily seized one of the buckets and discharged its contents through a window on the crowd below. And the contents of the second followed before they fairly understood the full intention of the first.

"Howly saints! it's kilt and skinned alive I am!" yelled Murray; and he fled screaming away, followed by the scalded gang, each yelling in a different key.

"Debby, you've routed them all!" shouted Wilson, who could not, in spite of his serious position, refrain from laughter as he witnessed the antics and contortions of his late assailants.

"Have they gone?" asked Debby, from below. "I've more water ready, husband."

"They've all left for the tavern after more courage; at least, such of them as can go," said Wilson, looking along the road, where several were lying either dead or helpless.

"This is not the end!" sighed poor Ella. "O Mr. Wilson, I am so sorry to see you so imperiled on my account."

"Don't talk of it, Miss Adams," said the brave man. "It would have come sooner or later, at any rate. I love my country too well to be a traitor; and that is what our enemies are. I wish I knew what they'd try next. If there was any law left in the land, I'd claim its protection; for I've only acted in self-defence, so far. But there's neither law nor rea-

son, and we must fight it out! Debby, I'll take a bite to eat while we're resting."

Tearfully, the good wife brought the choicest food in the house to her husband, not knowing how soon he would be unable to receive from her such kindness.

CHAPTER VI.

It would take more than the pen of the historian, or the pencil of the most gifted artist, to faithfully describe the scene which ensued at the tavern upon the return of the discomfited rabble which had been repulsed from Wilson's house. The only two doctors in the neighborhood, and the one-eyed apothecary (whose beauty was not heightened by the marks of smallpox, which had destroyed one of his eyes) were occupied in attending to the wounded, whose curses, like their groans, were many and loud.

The men who were scalded—prominent among whom was the big bully, Murray—suffered most keenly. The skin came off when their garments were removed, and their agonies were almost unbearable. Murray raged fearfully, and drank down glass after glass of whisky, swearing vengeance upon the rapscallion that had "biled him like a pertatie."

Champe said but little until his shattered arm had been dressed and splintered; and then he, too, began to swear vengeance as loud as the rest.

"Men of our party have been murdered and shot down like dogs!" he cried. "And all for a Yankee girl not worth the wood that would make her coffin!"

"Not to spake of them that's been scalded like kilt hogs!" cried Murray. "Bad luck to Wilson, the devil! Let me but get my clappers onto him once, and be jippers he'll think ould Satan has him by the neck!"

"This matter must not end so!" said Champe. "Wilson must be got hold of, and punished in a way to strike terror to all other men that dare to go against secession. Shooting is too good a death for him."

"Yes, be jippers! It's scaldin' he wants!" growled Murray.

And the Irishman took another tumbler of whisky, by way of salve for his blistered neck and shoulders.

"Who'll volunteer to try Wilson again?" cried Champe, who had also fortified his inner man with a few doses of whisky.

"We'd better get our dead and wounded men in first, I think," said one of the Committee. "He'll not dare to leave the shelter of his house now, and we can take our own time, and burn or starve him out. That would be better than to lose more men by trying to take him in open fight."

"Well, any way to get him," said Champe. "But he'll fire upon any one that goes after the bodies."

REBEL STRIPES FOR A NORTHERN WOMAN.



"Not if they show a white flag, and tell him what they're after, I reckon," said the speaker. "I'm willing to risk my carcass in his range that way, at any rate."

"If you go, I'll go, too; for my brother is there on the ground," said another, whose stern silence told him to be of better stuff than some of the braggarts around him.

"Two or three are as many as I want!" said the first speaker. "The man will not be so apt to fire on us. I'll rig up a flag, and be ready soon."

And he hastened away to do so.

"Where's Jim Taggart?" asked Champe, eagerly.

"Here. What's wanting, Bill?" said a tall, sallow-looking man in a buckskin hunting-shirt.

"Take a glass of 'old rye with me first, and then I'll tell you," said Champe. "Have you got your target-rifle here?"

"Yes; it's in the corner behind the bar," said the man.

"And you are good for a man's head with it at eighty rods—are you not?"

"Yes; with the globe-sight on, just as far as I can see him."

"Well, drink and come with me. If you'll hit one target where I tell you, I'll put fifty hard dollars in your pocket."

"I'm in for the chances on that," said the man, with a coarse laugh. "My old sockdologer don't often tell a lie when it speaks from my shoulder."

And he walked to the bar and drank; then taking his heavy rifle from its place, went with Champe into another room.

CHAPTER VII.

The men with their white flag were soon ready, and started out upon their errand. When they reached the same spot where Wilson had first hailed his assailants, his clear, loud voice again reached their ears.

"You're near enough to tell what you want," he cried. "Your white flag won't protect you a step further."

"We only want to carry away our dead and wounded. We give you our honor that we have no arms with us, and do not mean to attack you."

"Your honor isn't worth much; but I can't refuse you what you ask. As long as you only do what you have asked to do, I will not raise a hand. But if you try a false game on me, I warn you that there will be more dead men to carry away," replied Wilson, covering the party with his pistol, and, in doing so, exposing full half of his body at the window.

"We only mean what we say," replied the man who carried the flag.

"Then take away your friends, and for Heaven's sake, don't force me to take any more

lives!" said Wilson. "I'm not a blood-thirsty man, but I will defend myself and those I have beneath my roof."

The men proceeded to their work; but just as they were lifting up the first body, the sharp crack of a rifle rang from behind a clump of bushes in their rear; and with a cry of agony Harry Wilson fell back from the window.

Then, quick as thought, came two shots from the window, and the flag-bearer and one of his friends fell.

"Take that for your base treachery!" cried the clear, ringing voice of a female.

"I reckon Mr. Wilson has got a lame shoulder!" cried Jim Taggart, as he stepped from behind the covert which had concealed him, his rifle yet smoking in his hand. "I could have shot his eye out, if it hadn't been agin orders."

And, joined by the three survivors of the truce party, he turned toward the tavern to receive the reward which Champe had promised him, little caring that his act had cost the lives of two more men.

Ella Adams supposed when poor Wilson fell back wounded that his hurt was mortal, and with deadly aim she discharged both her pistols before she turned to his assistance.

His wife had already rushed, weeping, to his side; and now the two women raised him and carried him to a bed.

"Staunch the wound; I'm not much hurt. It's in the shoulder!" said Wilson, faint with intense pain and the free gush of blood. "They haven't knocked all the fight out of me yet. But it was mean and cowardly in them to so deceive me!"

"Two of them have paid the death-forfeit for their treachery, if that is any consolation to you," said Ella, as she proceeded to bandage his wounded shoulder.

"I acknowledge that I'm getting blood-thirsty!" said poor Wilson. "Debby, bring me some brandy; I must keep my strength up. They've disabled only one arm. Keep the water hot, my dear."

"That I will! The wretches! Oh, if I could only scratch all their eyes out!" said the weeping wife, as she hastened after the stimulant.

The uproar increased upon the return of the party to the tavern.

"The wretch will not even let us bring away our dead!" cried Champe, anxious to still further excite the feelings of the crowd.

"He would, had you not sent a man to shoot at him while our white flag was flying!" said one of the returned party. "And now we have lost two more men; and a woman fired both shots. We'd have done better to let the Yankee girl go when she wanted to."

"When she leaves me here, 'twill be for a

hotter place than she is in now!" said Champe, furiously. "Taggart, where did you hit Wilson?"

"Plum through the right shoulder!" replied the rifleman. "I reckon he'll not shoot so near centre after this."

"Why didn't you kill him outright, Jim?" asked several.

"Because we want to save him for a worse end than shooting!" said Champe, ferociously. "Now we'll take him alive. We'll wait till night and fire his house, and then he'll have to give in, or else burn like a possum in his hole."

"That's the idea!" said some of the rest. "We will risk no more lives there in daylight."

This being decided upon, there was nothing left for the crowd to do but to drink liquor and talk secession. Champe had a guard stationed at a distance around Wilson's house, to prevent its inmates from attempting to escape; and then, in company with the principal men of the Committee, he retired to lay out plans for the future.

CHAPTER VIII.

After his wound was dressed as well as a poor Ella could do it, Wilson had a large easy-chair moved near to the window which he had first chosen for a look-out. He watched the crowd still gathering about the tavern, and noticed, too, that guards were watching the house. Therefore, he knew that his troubles were not over.

"It is certain that they mean one of two things, Miss Ella," said he, after looking up the street intently for some time. "They either mean to starve us out, which will take some time, or to wait until after dark to make another assault. They'll not risk their cowardly bodies within shot in daylight; that is sure. There's a monstrous crowd of people about the tavern. It's mighty strange that, among so many, Harry Wilson has no friends. People used to like well me enough to all seeming before this secession craziness came over 'em."

"You've friends yet, Harry, if they only dared to speak out," said his wife. "But you've said you were a Union man, and it's death to befriend a Union man among the cruel Secesh! Oh, if we had only got away before these times came on!"

And her tears took a fresh start.

"Don't fret and carry on, Debby," said Wilson. "I'd rather you'd sing than cry. I don't want any drawbacks now, the Lord knows. Get us up a nice dinner, my little woman, for we want strength, and may as well eat as fast."

The day went on, and nothing new occurred to tell Wilson what his enemies intended to do. As the twilight deepened into darkness, Wilson would have consented to the wishes of Ella and his wife, and attempted to escape. But he was weak from the effects of his wound; and, besides,

he saw that, as night approached, the guards were doubled, and he knew that it would be next to impossible for him and the women to escape their vigilance. But he besought Ella and his wife to make the attempt alone.

"Get out of the back door," said he, "and creep a little ways off. You can hide under a board-pile back of the shop, or somewhere, and then if they come to attack the house, in the confusion, after they've begun, you two may get away!"

"Harry, when I leave you, water will run up hill!" said his little wife.

"And when I desert you, my brave defender," said Ella, "it will be because I am torn from you by brutal strength. I never will leave you alone to meet the attack of the cowardly rabble."

"Well, I can't make you," said Wilson, with a faint smile. "Keep the water hot, Debby; we may need it before long. And do you, Miss Ella, keep both eyes and ears open, for I expect they'll be about some of their devilry soon."

The night wore on. Hour after hour passed by, and there was no sound of alarm. Wilson's arm grew stiff and very painful, but he made little complaint. He did not wish to add to the anxiety of the women. He had not had any lights made, for he did not wish to give any foe in the darkness an advantage of aim which might prove fatal.

It was near midnight when the smell of burning timber and a crackling sound reached him.

"Debby, what are you doing with the fire?" he asked.

"Nothing, Harry," she replied, from down stairs, where she then was.

"I smell pine, burning. I am sure," he said again.

"There is only hickory in the stove," she said.

A faint light began to show itself outside the house, revealing the street; and the crackling sound grew louder; the smell of burning pine, stronger.

"Heaven help us! they have set the house on fire," cried Wilson.

"Merciful Father! what shall we do?" screamed his wife, who had made the same discovery.

"Die with courage, or break through their lines and escape in the darkness," said Wilson, firmly. "And what we do, must be done quickly, before the fire gets such headway as to light up all the neighborhood. Come, Debby, you and Miss Adams must get ready for a run. We will all go down to the back-door as quietly as we can, and I will open it. If there is any one in the way, we will shoot them down and run off in the dark as best we can. You know where the big cypress swamp is, beyond the school-house. We will try to get into that. If I get there, I'll imitate the hooting of an owl, and you can come to me."

"The plan is good, and we are ready," said Ella.

"I'm going to stick right close to you, husband!" said Debby.

The three now stole noiselessly down stairs, and, without a sound, undid the fastenings of the door, which opened from the rear of the house.

All was darkness outside yet, for the house had been fired on the front side, directly under the street-door.

"Come on!" whispered Wilson. "Go to the right of the shop."

A moment or two passed, and they crept stealthily on, uninterrupted. But suddenly a hoarse voice cried:

"Stand! Who goes there?"

No reply was made; but a moment after, a heavy "squelch", like the driving of steel through some yielding substance, was heard, and then a heavy groan, and a fall.

"What did you hear, Taggart?" cried another voice, in the darkness. No reply did that speaker receive.

"What the devil is the matter with you? Why don't you speak, Jim?" cried the same speaker.

"Oh, thunder, I'm knifed!" he screamed, a moment later. "Murder!"

And as the blow was repeated, he, too, fell back.

"Run—run—we have no other chance now," said Wilson to the women, who had clung closely by his side while he had cut down the two sentinels.

In an instant the air was filled with shouts. Lanterns flashed here and there; and a party bearing torches rushed around from the front of the house. Champe was at their head.

The open back-door showed them at once that Wilson had escaped.

"This way, boys; scatter with the torches, all but three or four of you, and let them put fire to this side of the house. We'll soon have 'em!" shouted Champe. "Hell! Who's this?"

The latter exclamation broke from his lips as he stumbled over a dead body.

"Jim Taggart, by thunder!" he cried, as he held his torch over the face of the dead man. "There's been a bowie lunged through and through him."

"And here's Tim Donnelly, stuck and bleeding like a hog—dead, too, as a saw-log!" cried another of the party.

"Harry on, boys—hurry on; Wilson has done this, and he isn't far off!" cried Champe.

A pistol-shot, several shouts, and then a long, wild scream was heard some distance off.

"There they are! Some of the boys have met 'em! Don't kill 'em; keep 'em for the Committee to deal with!" cried Champe, as he and his followers rushed to the spot from which the sound of the scream had come, and where yelling and swearing was heard to indicate that

either one or all of the fugitives had been intercepted.

"Who have you got?" cried Champe, as he reached a crowd of yelling men. "Oh, it's the pretty schoolma'am!" he added, with an exulting laugh, as he held his torch high above the face of Poor Ella, which was bleeding from a brutal blow struck by some one of the men (?) around her.

"Good evening, fair lady! You are well attended on your promenade. One beau wouldn't suit you—now you have a hundred; and here's a flambeau to light you to glory!" he added, as he shook his glaring torch in her face.

"Where's Wilson—haven't you got him yet?" he asked, a moment after.

"No—but he can't be far off. Look around, men—look round!" cried another of the Committee.

"And mind that half a dozen of you hold on to the schoolma'am! Here, take this rope and tie her hands behind her; and go and build a big bonfire up by the schoolhouse—we'll put her on trial up there directly. I want to hear some music. It may make my arm feel better," cried Champe. "I believe I am indebted to you for a broken arm, Miss Adams. I'll pay you for it, pretty soon!"

The poor girl made no reply to the tormenting villain, but pale and silent awaited the terrible fate which she did not doubt they would inflict. Her heart, now, only was filled with anxiety for poor Wilson and his wife; and she listened to the shouts of the men in search of them with tremulous terror. The flames from the dwelling-house now ran crackling and hissing up into the darkness, lighting up the gloom, and showing but too plainly the vast and excited crowd of demons who surrounded that poor and helpless girl.

In a little while the blaze of a huge bonfire was seen near the school-house, lighted by Champe's order; and with her guard now carried poor Ella, by his command, yelling and cheering as they went.

A group of scattered trees surrounded the small building, and out under these several of the school-benches had been brought, and upon one of them they seated Ella.

"We will wait twenty minutes longer to see if Wilson can be found; and if not, we'll commence dealing with the lady!" said Champe, as his features showed the utter malignity of his heart.

"Have you got the p'ison, Bill?" asked one of his colleagues.

"No; and if I had ten pounds of it, she shouldn't have a sniff of it, now! It is too late for her to have the comfort of dying so easy. She thinks it's horrible for us to look niggers, and we'll give her a chance, now, to know how it feels. Get plenty of raw-hide flays and some salt and vinegar. I'll lay on the first filthy my-

self. I haven't used a raw-hide for some time, so that with one arm I can do it tenderly until she begins to get used to it. Build up the fire—let it blaze! We want light to work by; and send down to the tavern for a barrel of whisky, at my expense, and tote it up here. We mustn't be dry over such a job. Maybe the schoolhouse man would like a drop or two, to keep her spirits up. I'm afraid Wason has given us the slip for to-night. He knows the country well; but we'll get him in the morning if he goes clear now. We may as well commence proceedings. Gentlemen of the Committee, form a circle!"

The circle was quickly formed around the huge fire, and around that circle crowded a vast assemblage of men, transformed for the time into demons.

CHAPTER IX.

It was a terrible sight. There sat that poor, helpless girl—her hands bound behind her, her clothes half torn from her person, her hair disheveled, her neck and face bleeding. Her large blue eyes looked from face to face of the scowling fiends which surrounded her, yet they looked in vain for one gleam of pity, one look of commiseration. Where all mercy was dead, hope could not exist.

"The court is open, gentlemen!" said Champe, taking a drink from a flask which he carried in his pocket; "and the prisoner is before us. If anybody has got anything to say for her, let him speak. But I reckon that man can't be found that would do it in this crowd. The Committee have had their eyes on her as an abolitionist and a spy, for a long while, and she has had fair warning of it; and she has not only defied the Committee, but has shot down men that tried to arrest her. And more, she seduced Wilson in o' defending her, and the consequence is, that we have lost near a dozen of our best men!"

"That's so!" said several of the crowd.

"There's no question of her guilt," continued Champe. "The only thing for us to consider is, how to punish her."

"Hang her! Hang her up before her own school-house!" cried several.

"Hanging is rather too easy a death!" cried Champe, with a sneer. "She'd choke for a minute or two, and then all would be over."

"Burn her!" cried another of the party.

"That wouldn't last long, either!" said the fiend who presided over their deliberations. "Whipping and pickling* will tell on her tender skin, I reckon, better than anything else. When she faints, let her rest a little, pour some raw whisky down her throat, and cure her up for more of it!"

"Yes; that'll do! Tie her up!" shouted the wretches.

* Pickling—To pour salt brine into the wounds made by the lash.

"If there is one man among so many dastardly cowards, let him shoot me at once!" cried Ella, speaking for the first time. "I ask no other favor from you."

"Hear the gentle creature!" cried Champe, sneeringly. "She dreads the lash! I thought we'd find a tender point. Tie her up, boys! I've spoke for the first turn with the cow-hide! Strip her to the waist, and tie her up!"

"Devils! do you not fear God?" said the indignant girl, as rude hands tore the dress from her beautiful shoulders.

"Ha, ha! She's getting religious!" sneered the chief fiend of the horrible group.

Poor Ella cast her eyes toward the sky. Black clouds overspread it. The air seemed thick and dense. A low muttering of distant thunder rolled along. A terrific storm seemed upon the eve of bursting forth. But what would it avail her in her despair, poor girl! Yet she prayed for Heaven's lightnings to fall upon her cruel tormentors.

Ah, how vainly!

In a moment she was tied to a tree, and Champe, with a huge rawhide in his hand, stepped up behind her.

"Now for the stripes! You may look for the stars afterward!" shouted the wretch, as he raised his brawny arm.

Merciful heaven! Had there been a man there, his flesh would have grown icy with horror at that scene; his blood would have curdled when he heard the shriek which followed the dastardly blow dealt by the Tennessean—whose real name I give here. But only a yell of exultation went up from their accursed lips.

Heaven could not witness such a scene in dumb silence. The storm which had been gathering—which in its dense blackness veiled earth and sky—now spoke in a terrific peal of thunder. And it was followed by a flash of lightning so fierce and vivid that it fairly blinded the yelling crowd. The fluid had struck a tree close by that where poor Ella was bound, and more than a dozen of the crowd were stricken senseless to the earth by its power. Even Champe, ruffian as he was, paused in momentary awe. And in a second more, another fearful peal of thunder shook the air.

"Hurry up the cakes, Bill, or the rain will be after puttin' out our fire!" shouted the bulky Murray, who, with a blanket over his raw shoulders, was enjoying the fun.

Champe raised his arm to strike again, but it fell helpless to his side the next moment; and a pistol-shot from outside the crowd told poor Ella that she had at least one friend near.

The next instant, the storm burst forth in terrible fury. The thunder rolled deafening through the sky; then the very heavens seemed to open their flood-gates, and the rain tumbled, rather than poured, down in torrents. Torches and bonfires were extinguished in a

moment, and all sounds were drowned in the terrible turmoil of the storm.

And at that moment Ella Adams, yet writhing under the cruel, merciless blow which Champe had inflicted, felt the cords which bound her suddenly loosened, and as the blood rushed into her arms again, she fainted. Yet even as she felt that her senses were leaving her, she felt a strong arm had clasped her around the waist. Whether it was friend or foe, who, in that terrible darkness and deluge, could tell.

CHAPTER X.

There was an island within the very centre of the dense and almost impenetrable cypress swamp which extended back but a short distance from the village wherein our former scenes have all been laid, and which, bordered on one side by a river that, passing Charleston, reached the ocean, was so miry and noxious, that there was no inducement for any people in the neighborhood to attempt to explore it.

Yet people did exist upon the island—slaves who had fled from masters whose "kindness was misplaced", or else who knew not how to win their love enough to retain them. There were not more than a dozen in all of them—all women, except one, a tall, intelligent-looking mulatto man, whose cheeks on either side, as well as his forehead, had been branded with the letter R. He was evidently an oldish man, for his hair, which curled but little, was white as snow.

He had just descended from the top of a tall tree which rose over the two little huts which had been erected on the island, and which tree, towering so high, was evidently used for a lookout.

"What's de matter, Mars'r 'Relius—some-thin's up to make you look so 'sterious!" said an old woman, whose skin could not have been darkened by charcoal or Day & Martin's blacking. "Is de Yankees come yet to set de poor niggers free?"

"I danno, Dinah!" said the mulatto. "I could see a heap of folks gatherin' about the old tavern, and none about the church. There's somethin' a goin' on—dat's sartin, sure! But we'll have to wait till night to find out. When I go out for pervision, to-night, I reckon I'll find some nigger dat can tell me."

And having imparted this information with quite a dignified air, Aurelius filled a corn-cob pipe with tobacco, and stooping over the embers of a small fire which had been burning in a cavity in the ground, found a coal to light it.

That this island had been used as a place of refuge and concealment for a considerable length of time was evident from several appearances. The stamps of trees that had been cut years before, were seen, here and there, rotten with age. Tobacco, melons, sweet potatoes, and corn were growing finely upon it. And the

huts bore the appearance of having been long built. They were made of slabs hewed and split and from the cypress, and shingled from the same tree. They were sufficiently tight to prove a shelter from any storm which might occur in that latitude, and furnished much in the way of ordinary negro cabins.

From a pole in front of one of them hung several fowls, dressed, ready for cooking; also, three or four hams, and a small pig, also ready for the spit. A basket of sweet potatoes, and a board upon which lay some fresh corn-cake, gave signs of there being a good caterer around—who, from his remarks about going for provisions, was doubtless our friend Aurelius, whose brands indicated him to have been an incorrigible runaway.

"Do you 'spec, Mars'r 'Relius, dat it is de real trufe dat de Yankees am a goin' to come to set de niggers free, like de poor clock-peddler tole us?" asked a rather good-looking woman, who carried a child in her arms, which was many shades lighter than herself.

"Not knowin' for sure, I can't say," said Aurelius, pompously. "But one thing is sartin' sure. If the clock-peddler hadn't told too much trufe, dey wouldn't have gone and burnt him up. And den ag'in, dis war must be about about de niggers, for everybody says it is, and what ebbery body says must have some trufe in it! An' now, Miss Roxymanner, since you hab recebe all dat inflammation, can't you get dis chile some dinner? 'Cause you see my apum-tite has been increase by de fresh air dat I git git up in de tree top!"

"Yes, Mars'r 'Relius, I'll cook de dinner if you'll blow up de charconl, for 'twon't do to make a smoke, you know!"

"Dat's a specumacious fac!" said Aurelius, as he went to the rear of one of the huts and got a basket of charcoal, which he proceeded to kindle in the place where the fire had been before.

Leaving the colony of refugees to dine, we will change the chapter.

CHAPTER XI.

Immediately after he had cut down the two sentinels, and the alarm given by the last one, Mr. Wilson rushed on at full speed, followed by his wife, who managed to keep up with him. Knowing the locality thoroughly, Wilson fled through a vacant lot in a direction which, fortunately, cleared him from the line of men stationed to intercept him; and he had run a considerable distance from his house before he heard the scream and shot, which caused him to feel almost sure that poor Ella had fallen into the hands of their enemies.

Hearing his panting wife close at his heels, he slackened his pace; for he was already near the swamp in which he hoped to find a temporary refuge, although he knew nothing of its interior.

"Debby," he whispered, "I'm afraid they've got Miss Ella!"

"I'm a'most sure they have, Harry! That was her scream, I'm certain," said the almost breathless wife.

"We can't help her now, if they have got her," said Wilson, sadly. "I'll get you safe into the swamp, and then I'll see what can be done. Jehosophat! what's that!"

"De Lor'— Who's dar?"

The last exclamation of Mr Wilson was caused by his coming in contact with some person who was hurrying in a contrary direction to himself.

And he found himself nearly breathless from the shock, which would have knocked him completely over, had not his wife, who was behind him, checked the shock by the contact of her plump little body.

Knowing, from the voice of the person who had run against him, that it was a negro, and not likely to be one of his pursuers, Wilson spoke again.

"Who are you, my man? I'm no enemy to you, whoever you are!"

"I knows dat, Mars'r Wilson. I knows you by your voice! It's no matter who I be! But what be you a doin' here in de dark, and runnin', too, like a mad bull, wid your head down?"

"I am flying from men that want to kill me. That is my house which they've set on fire. I and my wife are trying to get away from them! One of my arms is broken with a shot!" said the mechanic, hastily.

"Was it your wife dat scream so?" asked the man.

"No. It was poor Miss Adams, the school-mistress. They've got her, I expect. If I can only hide my wife, I'll try to help her!"

"O de cussed debbils! You jess come along wid me into de swamp, Mars'r Wilson, and I'll hide your lady where dey'll nebber find her; den we'll both try what we can do for de odder one. I'm only a poor runaway nigger. But dey can't catch me, and de good Lor' knows dey shan't catch you! Hurry along wid me; we're close to de swamp. You'll have to walk a fallen tree, and den crawl up anodder, and down anodder. It's a hard road; but dey can't foller it wid dogs, nor nuffin' else, widout dey has dis chile for a pilot, and when he is dat, de debbil is a goin' to sing hymns!"

"I know you now!" said Wilson, to his conductor. "You are Mr. Mordecai's Aurelius!"

"Dat's so, Mars'r Wilson. Many is de kind word you've spoken to dis old nigger, and I hasn't forgotten 'em. But come along—dere's a debbil of a storm a brewin' overhead, and de sooner we git Missy Wilson in out of it, de better it'll be for her."

Wilson needed no urging, but supporting his wife, hurried on.

CHAPTER XII.

The storm raged fearfully for nearly an hour, and then cleared away as suddenly as it came. Champe, who, after his second wound, had been carried to the tavern, now insisted upon being carried back to see the hellish work of cruelty finished upon poor Ella Adams. The crowd had fled away to the tavern for shelter, not dreaming that she, securely bound, could be removed from the tree to which she had been tied, and little caring how much the storm drenched her poor body.

Aided by some of his comrades, though utterly helpless now, with two shattered arms, Champe was carried forth, surrounded by the re-whiskied and once more brave rabble, whose torches threw a hellish glare over their forms and faces. Soon they arrived at the spot where they had left the wretched girl? Loud were their curses and bitter their oaths, when they found that the ropes had been cut, and that she had fled or been carried away.

"There must be traitors around!" yelled Champe, fairly gnashing his teeth with disappointed rage.

"The girl never could have got off without help!" said another. "Her hands were tied behind her, and a dozen strong lashings bound her to the tree!"

"She has had help; and the man or men that have helped her, if they're found out, had better make their peace with their Maker, quick! When daylight comes, I'll have every house searched within twenty miles; and the roof that shelters her or the Wilson's, licks fire in a hurry. That's as good as sworn to. Take me back to the tavern, boys—searching-parties must be organized. The Committee has got more work on hand now than ever it had. The traitors must be found out and attended to. Every man, woman, and child, must take the oath of the Confederacy. Them that don't, shall hang, and their property shall help to swell our treasury!"

A round of applause followed these remarks; and the crowd bore their maimed leader back to head-quarters.

When Ella Adams regained consciousness from the effects of the shower which drenched her face and figure, she felt that she was being rapidly borne over rough ground, by some powerful person; for the arms which encircled her seemed to grasp her like a vice; and yet the man seemed to move as if her weight was nothing. She did not speak; for, in the darkness, she could not see who was her bearer, or whither she was being carried. She heard the steps of another person following; but that person was silent.

It seemed to her as if she was carried for miles in this way; for she could not comprehend the passage of time; but she felt relieved when she



heard the person who carried her say: "Tank de Lor', me is a'most dare now!"

She felt no further fear of danger then; for among her humanly persecutors she had not seen a negro; and, by his language, she knew it was one of that race who carried her.

In a few moments longer, she heard the sound of another voice—that of a woman.

"Who's dat dar?"

"It's me and friends, Roxyanner—all right!" said the man who bore her. "How does Missy Wilson get on?"

"She's cryin', and prayin', for fear her man no come back."

"Well, he is here, safe an' sound, and so is de older lady, if de infarnal debbils hab left any life in her. Dey just begin to whip her when we get dere!"

"De Lor' to gracious! Dey whip a white lady?"

"Yes; dem Secesh don't care nuffin' what dey do. But here we is. Go in and light a candle, Roxyanner, and git some water, an' a drop ob dat brandy dat I borrow from Mars'r Mordecai's cellar; for I 'spec' we'll have hard word to bring de poor lady to. She's alive, though; for I can feel her breathe!"

The next moment Ella opened her eyes in one of the rude huts which we have before spoken of, and saw that Mr. and Mrs. Wilson were both bending over her. The poor girl had been laid on a rude bed by the mulatto, Aurelius, who now stood back respectfully, while the woman Roxanna held a gourd of water in one hand, and a bottle in the other.

"Merciful Heavens! you have suffered!" said Wilson, as he looked at Ella. "Your hair has turned as white as snow!"

"Oh! look—look at her back!" said Dolby, with a moan. "They have cut it open with a knife!"

"No," said her husband; "it was a blow with a rawhide. I saw Bill Champe strike her. But he will not strike another woman in a hurry. I shot him before he could bring his hand down again; and then the storm came on, by God's mercy, to help us. And here we are, safe for the present, at least."

"Yes, Mars'r Wilson, and safe just as long as you're here. I'm de best hand to get pervisions at ebber you saw. All de niggers likes me, and helps me when dey can; for dey know I'll help dem by-and-by, when de good time comes. But de lady had better take some dat water, and little drop o' brandy. Dere isn't but jist life in her. And you, Roxyanner, find some ob de best dry clothes dat you can for de poor lady, and I'll bring her in a pan o' coals, to dry er!"

"Saved! But, oh! how terrible it was!" moaned Ella.

And she swooned away; for, as Aurelius said, there was only life left in her.

Mrs. Wilson now used all the means in her knowledge to bring her to, and, aided by the colored woman, soon succeeded; and then, after dressing her gashed back, and putting some dry garments on her, endeavored to get her to get her to take food.

Never was a person more changed than she was. Her long, thick hair had turned indeed as white as snow, and she seemed, in those few hours, to have grown many years older. Who can describe the horror—the fearful mental torture which could have produced such a change.

CHAPTER XIII.

When the day dawned, it came out as clear and bright as possible. The fearful storm of the previous night seemed to have swept the floor of the sky, and to have purified the air. The sun arose warm and cheering, and the birds came and sang cheerily from the tree-tops about the island. Wilson was on foot at daylight, for he had not lain down, but his little wife, worn down with fatigue and her trouble of the day before, slept by the side of Ella Adams—who, though not sleeping, lay still upon the rude bed; for her strength was almost gone.

"Dis is a blessed mornin', isn't it, Mars'r Wilson!" said Aurelius, as he brought a large, fresh melon from the patch near by. "Eat a slice or two of dis melon, sah, cool from de 'lectricity of last night's storm, and you'll find it nicer dan a julep!"

And the mulatto, laying the melon on a clean board, cut it up in large slices.

"You seem in no danger of starving here, Aurelius!" said the mechanic, as he took a slice of the melon.

"No, sah. Ebbery dark night, I goes out and lays in a fresh supply. I don't tink it's stealin' to take what I want to eat from dem dat takes life-labor out of poor niggers dat can't help demselves! I 'spec' dey euss some when dey find de chicken, and de pig, and de gobbler, and de corn-meal, and de ham, and all dat fly away in de night. But if dey euss, I bless de luck—dat's all."

"Is there no way of getting away from here?" asked Wilson.

"Oh, yes," said the mulatto, "if de Yankees only come to Charleston. I done got a nice boat hid in de ribber, 'bout a half a mile from here, and it's big enough to carry twenty people. I made up my mind to stay here until de Yankees get near enough, and den to try to get to c'm wid de poor women an' children dat I helped away to dis place. But I has to be mighty careful; for I've run away so often, dat my mars'r would swing me up if he catch me ag'in. I wouldn't have run away de first time, though, if he ha'n't fooled me. He let me hire out my time, and said I might keep all I made over twelve dollars a month; and when I got a thousand dollars saved over my wages, he'd sell me

to myself for dat, and make me free. Well, I work for ober ten years, and I got de thousand dollars ad in hard cash. Den I tell him ob it, and bring him de money, and ask for free papers. He count de money, said it was all right; but I was so smart, he thought I was worth two thousand to him; and I must get another thousand before he'd give me the papers. I thought of the ten hard years back—now I'd worked early and late, and gone with few clothes, and all dat; and I knowed I couldn't stand another such a ten years no way. I begged my mars'r for papers; but twas't no use. He only put my money in his pocket, and laughed. I said some hard words, I 'spee'; for I was as mad as a wolf. Den he got mad, too, and he had me flog till I couldn't stand up. When I got well, he put me in de rice swamp to work. I run away from dat. He put dogs on my track, and catch me. Den he flog me, and brand me, and put me in field again. Three times I run away, and he catch me. But dis fourth time I been gone two years; and I guess he's done gin me up—tinks I got off to dat place dey call Cany-dear! Yah! Wait till de Yankees come! Maybe I go to see him den! I done got my thousand dollars back, though, de last time I run away. I know'd his body-boy, Jim, and I scare him wid a ghost, and he told all about where mars'r kep' his things; and when I come away I didn't come empty-handed. I took my own—dat was all! Yah, yah! But sense, Mars'r Wilson, I want to go and see what de debbils are doin' ober in de village!"

"You'll not venture out in daylight, surely?" said the mechanic, in surprise.

"No, sah; dis child isn't quite so foolish as dat. Do you see dat tree, wid de limbs left long enough to hold on by, and thick up towards the top? Dat is my step ladder. From de top ob dat I can see de village, and all de country round; and dere can't nobody see me for de leaves and limbs. I watches away many an hour dere!"

"I'll go up with you, if you like!" said Wilson.

"Come along, mars'r; but be careful ob your footin'—it's not ezactly like one o' your ladders."

When Wilson reached the top of the tree, he was astonished at the expanse of country which he could see. The village was in plain sight, and the ruins of his house were yet smoking.

"Dem fellers is off a lookin' for you and de poor school-mistress!" said Aurelius, as he called Wilson's attention to two or three small parties of horsemen that rode away from the tavern, taking different directions.

"Most likely they are," said Wilson. "Is there no possibility of their discovering our trail?"

"De Lor', no sah! De rain woud have wash out an elephant's track last night. And den

dere's no danger of anybody ever tryin' to get into dis swamp. In de daytime, de moccasins snakes all thick round de outside edge of it. Den dere's no path 'cept dat ober a tree where you creep last night; and afore we got to dat, you know we had a little brook to wade through. In daytime, dat's all full of alligator and snake, and noboddy eber tink of dis swamp bein' a place where a human erectur could lib!"

"How did you find out so sung a hiding-place, Aurelius?"

"One ob old General Marion's sarvant's told me about it on his deff-bed, and made me 'gree nebber to tell anybody else, widout dey had to run away, like me!"

"And the general used this place in the time of the Revolution?"

"I 'spee' so, sah. Dat was de way his sarvant know about it."

"What a difference between the men of the South now and then!" sighed Wilson. "Then, with their Northern brethren, they fought for the flag which they would now trample upon. Then, they preferred a hut in a swamp, with freedom, to a palace in the city, with a king for a master. But the patriots are dead, and their children have turned after strange gods."

"They hasn't no God at all. De old debbils owns 'em all in a heap. Let's go down, now, Mars'r Wilson, and take a little drop o' brandy to purify the swamp-air in our stomachs, and den I'll set de women to makin' up some sort of a breakfast for you and de ladies."

"I'll do it," said Wilson, casting one more glance at the ruins of his house. "The villains have burned all I own in the world. I have nothing left but my weapon and the clothes I stand in."

"Don't let dat fret you, Mars'r Wilson," said Aurelius. "If ebber we get where money is good for anything, you shall share with dis chile as long as he has a dollar."

"Thank you, my good man; you have more heart in your one breast than there is in all that cursed village!"

"'Twould be a miserable bit of a gizzard if I hadn't—yah, yah!" said Aurelius, as he descended the tree.

After taking a little of the medicine prescribed by his host, Wilson went into the hut where he had left his wife and Miss Adams.

Debby was awake, and looking with alarm upon the face of the school-mistress. It was pale as snow, and her eyes seemed to be glaring with the fires of insanity.

"I do believe Miss Ella has gone distracted," said she, to her husband. "She says that Ella Adams is dead, and the Demon of Fire has taken her place!"

"What is the matter, Miss Ella?" asked Wilson, anxiously.

She looked at him fixedly for a while, without replying. Then she gathered up the white

tresses which hung down upon her shoulders, shook them out, and laughed wildly. Then, in a low, wild tone, she sung, or chanted, these words:

"Fire! fire! fire! belfry and spire,
All in a flame!
Fire! fire! fire! palace and cot,
Kindled in shame!
Fire! fire! fire! see it leap high,
Up, up to the sky!
Fire! fire! fire! the work of the Lord,
Oh, hark to His cry!
Fire! fire! fire! above and below,
Their cities shall flame!
Fire! fire! fire! recorded their doom,
Like their sin and their shame!"

"De Lor'! Mars'r Wilson, has de sweet lady gone out of her senses?" asked Aurelius, who stood at the door of the hut, with several of the women also looking over his shoulder.

"No, no, good man!" said Ella, looking at him with a sad, sweet smile. "The Lord has sent me on a mission. I am the Demon of Fire, and I am to burn and destroy those who have rebelled. The good need not fear me."

"De Lor'! she's clean done gone wild!" said Aurelius, with a sigh.

"Maybe not," said one of the women. "I've hearn a preacher-man say dat sperrits did come and live in human bodies. He called 'em me-jums. And maybe de poor lady has turned in to a me-jum."

"Come to me—come," said Ella, beckoning with a thin, white hand to Aurelius.

The mulatto stepped forward, shrinkingly, and stood before her.

"You'll obey me when I speak the Lord's commands—will you not?" she asked, kindly.

"Yes, missy—be sure I will. Dis chile will do anything for you."

"That is well. But I want nothing, now. I must rest; when the Lord commands, I will speak!"

And the poor girl sank back upon the bed, her eyes closed, and she seemed to drop into slumber like an overworn child.

CHAPTER XIV.

Two weeks had elapsed since the manly "Vigilance Committee" had burned Henry Wilson's house, and driven him and his wife, fugitives for their lives, from the village where they for years had earned an honorable livelihood, for a wonder, respected and liked, though poor. Two weeks had gone by since they had there, as other bands of chivalry elsewhere had done, tied up a poor, tender, helpless female to a tree, to scourge the life from her! Talk not to me of red barbarians who roam our Western wilds; talk not to me of savages beyond the sea; look for their peers—ay, their teachers in fiendish savagery—upon the soil of the Confederacy which asks national recognition from civilized Europe.

Two weeks had been borne along upon the

tide of time since the three whom we have named had escaped from the demons who sought their lives, aided by that Providence

"Which shapes our ends, rough-hew them as we will."

And during all this time the famed Committee had failed to acquire the least tidings of the fugitives, though they had searched the country around for many a mile. But they had been busy hunting up all those who were supposed to have the least tendency toward the Union, forcing them not only to swear to support the Confederacy, but also to give largely toward the cause—in truth, adding robbery to oppression. Armed and now organized as a military company, they vaunted loudly of a desire to meet and exterminate the Yankees, and many an oppressed citizen wished that they would take their departure for the Seat of War. But the valiant band could not think of going without their leader, Champe, and his wounds healed but slowly.

There was another class that heartily wished for the absence of the Committee, or, what to them would be better, the coming of the Yankees. That class was composed of those whom General Butler, in his wisdom, named "contrabands". The Committee took all kinds of liberties with them. A suspicious look would book one of them for a flogging. It was Pompey here and Cæsar there, if anything was wanted; and woe to the unfortunate darkey that hesitated to obey an order received from one of the band. How this class was and could be affected, might better be described in the following scene than in any other way.

In an old, deserted barn, about a half-mile or more from the village, at the hour of midnight, were collected some eighteen or twenty male negroes. It needed not the presence of Aurelius to tell that the assemblage was stealthy and unlawful. The care which they had taken to post sentinels around the barn at a suitable distance, to give the alarm if any white party approached, and the care which was taken to surround their single lantern by their bodies, so that its light could not be seen outside the circle, told that, as well.

The mulatto, at the time which we choose to take for looking in upon this assembly, was holding forth to an eager and almost breathless audience, in the following manner:

"Brudder darkeys!" said he. "De good time is a comin', and it is nigh by, at dat. De bress-ed Lor' is agoin' to lend us niggers a helpin'-hand. De folks from de Norf are agoin' to come down here wid their ships, and big guns, and millions of sogers, and dey'll tan out de white trash dat's been a lickin' de lives out of us ever since we can 'member!"

"Bress de Lor'!" ejaculated the most of his auditory.

"But while de Lor' helps de poor nigger, it

Isn't for us to fold our arms and do nuffin'! No, brudders! we must help ourselves!"

"Dat's a fac!" said an old, white-headed man, whose scars and brands told that he had such hard times.

"And bein' told what we must do to help ourselves, it's time we was a join' it. I s'pose you'd like to know what dat is, and who told me? Look dar!"

And the mulatto pointed to a figure which seemed suddenly to have risen from the earth, which now, enveloped in a halo of light, stood near the entrance of the barn. It was that of a woman, pale, with great, glaring eyes, and hair as white as her face.

"A sperrit! a sperrit!" cried the negroes, in terror.

"Yes; a sperrit sent to tell us what to do! Don't move nor speak, but listen?" said Aurelius.

With hands upraised, the figure chanted, in a low, musical tone:

"Fire! fire! fire! let the flame rise high
From palace and cot!
Fire! fire! fire! kindle it wide
And hinder it not!
Let the villages smoke—the cities are doomed!
Fire! fire! fire! it melteth the chain
That bindeth the slave!
Fire! fire! fire! kindle it fast—
Wide, wide speed its wave!"

The chant ceased, and the chanter seemed to sink away into darkness; for, in a moment, she vanished from the sight of the awe-stricken slaves.

"Dat's de word, brudders!" said Aurelius. "You've heard it. De way for us to be free is to help de Lor' in His work of punishin' dem dat has offended Him. De sperrit said dat villages must smoke and cities must flame—dat fire would melt de chain dat bound de slave. Now, dat is as plain as dat possum-fat is grease. Let dat village down dere smell fire from ebbery corner, to-morrow night. And in less dan a week, you'll hear de white folks tell about Charleston being burnt clean up. Mind what I tell you. It's not for me to deceive you! You've seen and heard for yourselves. And now, brudders, it's time we journeyed. If de village is afire to-morrow night, you shall see an odder sight to prove dat I speak de trufe. You shall see a great big ball ob fire go up in de sky, and hang right ober your heads. So de sperrit told me. Now hurry off to quarters, and mind dat de patrol don't catch any ob you."

In less than a minute, the barn was vacant. Aurelius was the last but one to leave it. When he was satisfied that all the darkeys were gone, he said:

"All's clear, now, Missy Ella; de sooner we get back to de swamp, de better. Dis cold night-air won't do you no good."

"It will not hurt me, Aurelius. I am shielded from above," said Ella Adams, in a quiet

tone, as she stepped from behind the barn-door, her form enveloped in a large mantle.

"Did I talk to dem darkeys right, Missy Ella?"

"Yes, Aurelius; you obeyed me well and you shall be rewarded in good time."

"De Lor', Missy Ella! don't talk of rewardin' dis chile for anything dat he does for you. It makes me so happy to do anything for you, dat I don't want nothing else to do."

"You are very good, Aurelius. We will go back now. Mr. Wilson will be afraid harm has come to us, if we stay much longer."

"Yes, Missy Ella, dis way. Walk right after me, and step keeful."

CHAPTER XV.

An hour later, Ella Adams and her guide entered the hut, on the island, where we last saw Harry Wilson and Debby. They were up, even at that hour of the night, and very busily engaged in what might have appeared to be childish amusement, if it had not some serious object in view. They were engaged in pasting together a quantity of newspapers, which, when united, they drew over a frame made from slender boughs, causing it to assume the shape of a balloon, which it was—designed to be elevated by the heated air which a ball or two of candle-wick, soaked in spirits, would produce, when ignited beneath its open mouth.

"I'm very glad you've come, Miss Ella," said Wilson, as she entered. "I began to feel dubious, afraid those infernal heathen had got hold of you again. We've got this concern almost done. Do you think it will do?"

"I have no doubt it will," replied Ella, with a sad smile. "It will be expected to-morrow night, and it must not be a failure. After it is dried in the sun, to-morrow, we will try it."

"Please, Missy Ella, what's dat comboboration for?" asked Aurelius, who had been literally in a brown study for some time, as he stood looking at the curious globe.

"You recollect that I told those people that they would see a ball of fire traversing the sky to-morrow night, do you not?"

"Yes, Missy Ella, I 'members dat."

"Well, this balloon will carry the ball of fire over their heads, which will prove to them that we spoke the truth."

"What, Missy Ella! dat paper fixin' carry fire up in de sky?"

"Yes, Aurelius. You know that I never speak a falsehood. In large balloons, made of silk, people go up clear out of sight, among the clouds, in the Northern country that I came from."

"De Lor'! Well, dey might go for all dis chile. My look-out tree is high enough for dis nigger to perspire to, afore de breff is out of his body. Wonder what folkses want to do away up dar? S'pose dey want to see what liebben

is make of, eh? Ah, yah! Dis chile is willin' to wait till de hadder ob faith dat he hearn a preacher talk about, is set up for him, afore he tries such tail climb'n', with nuffin' for a foot-hold!"

"I am sorry to keep you and your good wife up so late," said Ella to Wilson.

"Oh, never mind us, Miss Ella. We couldn't have slept if we had laid down, knowing that you were in the way of danger. By the way, Miss Ella, when do you think we can get away from here?"

"In a very few days," replied Ella. "I intend first to go to Charleston, with Aurelius; perhaps taking Roxanna with me. While I am there, I can learn where the Northern armies are, and how to shape our future steps. I will aid you to escape as soon as it is safely possible."

"You will go with us?"

Ella smiled sadly, and shook her head.

"I have a mission to fulfill," she said. "Many a weary mile must my feet wander over before they press the free soil of the North, if they ever do. I am a spirit of desolation. Where I go, flames must rise and smoke must darken the skies. My hand must weaken the strength of the wicked. And I must not be hindered. Woe to whomsoever standeth in my path. Blessed be those that help me!"

"Dat means me," said Aurelius, proudly. "I is de right hand of Missy Ella, in de good work. Dis nigger has been noboddy all his life; but now he is somebody. Yah! yah!"

"Your works will be apt to throw some light over the country," said Wilson, with a laugh.

"Yah! yah!" laughed Aurelius. "I reckon dey will dat. I s'pect dere'll be a gran' 'lumination to-morrow night. Reckon Massa Champe'll find de tabern rayther war'n quarters. Put him in mind ob what he may s'pec' in de worl' to come. Yah! yah! He can't carry no raw-hide down dere wid him, cep'n' de raw hide on his own back!"

The handiwork of Mrs. Wilson and Ella had made the little hut in which they dwelt look quite comfortable. Two rooms had been partitioned off with blankets, and the place so cleaned up, that it looked far more inhabitable than it had when they first came under its roof. Several new articles of furniture, such as a table, chairs, a hanging cupboard, etc., had been made by Mr. Wilson, showing that the old adage "necessity is the mother of invention", has weight in all places.

Comfortable beds had been made, also, for the occupants of that building, who were only Ella and the Wilsons, for Aurelius had built himself a wigwam close beside it, which suited him very well.

CHAPTER XVI.

"Bet the drinks on your next game, boys. Bet the drinks and count me in."

These words were uttered by the redoubtable Mr. Champe, as he sat in his room, in the village tavern, overlooking a party of his comrades, who were engaged in a game of cards.

Mr. Champe was propped up by pillows in a comfortable arm-chair, with a servant close at hand, who, when ordered, raised a glass of toddy to his lips, first removing therefrom a pipe which he smoked when not drinking.

"You know I'd take a hand, if I had a hand that could hold the cards," continued the villain. "But I'll have to be contented with working head-work for a few weeks yet. Curse the luck! Here are my orders to Charleston, where I know that I'm wanted. I expect Beauregard wants me on his staff, in the place of Wigfall, who can't ride."

"Why can't Wiggy ride?" asked one of the party.

"He can't carry his grog! When he gets tight, and that is every time he gets a chance, he kisses his mother earth. I've seen him so tight, at the old 'Inn', at Nashville, that he thought he was the man of the moon, and all nights would be dark, if he kept on smiling. And so he kept up a general illumination as long as he could open his lips to swallow."

"He's great on cuche, isn't he?" asked one of the party.

"No; he's better on brag!" said Champe. "But hurry up your game, boys, my toddy is most out, and I've a thirsty throat, now."

"What's that? Does the moon rise as early as this?" asked one of the party, observing a strong light shining in at the window.

He was answered from outside; for the cry of "Fire! fire!" was heard rising in every direction in the village.

"Don't leave your cards, boys, there's folks enough in the village to put out their own fire!" cried Champe. "It's most likely that some Union crib has got afire, by spontaneous combustion!"

"D—n the fire! It won't bother us!" laughed one of the card-party. "Boy, go down for fresh liquors all round, and if the fire comes very close to this house, tell them to let us know time enough to move our baggage!"

"Yes, baggage. That makes me laugh right out, Mister Sullivan," said the bulky Murray, who, though too much under the weather to enjoy the cards, could indulge in the pleasure of looking on, and "counting in" for liquors. "I belave ye've got one dirty shirt, and that's on yer back; and two packs of cards, and they're in yer pocket—marked for advantage at that!"

"I've got a brace of revolvers and a 'leven-inch bowie, ye red-mouthed gray-back!" said the other, with a scowl.

"Devil a bit o' gray-back is there to me, now!" growled Mr. Murray. "Faith, I'm as raw as an oyster in the shell!"

"Rarer than you were when you first came over?" asked the other.

"Be jippers, the one that took me for a raw 'un, then, might have found a shialah in me fist!" said Murray.

"I'll back the barkers against all your shialahs," said the first. "They bite whenever they speak."

"Devil take 'em—that's so!" said the Celt.

"Gompliens, dere's mor'n twenty houses all afire, and de landlord says he's got no time to mix liquor, now!" cried the boy whom they had sent for liquor, rushing into the room in a hurry.

"The devil! I should think we'd had fire enough!" cried Murray.

"The village is all ablaze!" cried one of the Committee, looking from the window. "The cursed niggers must have done this!"

"Don't leave me, boys!" said Champe, turning pale. "Remember that I can't help myself."

"You've got your legs left, cap'n, and I believe you'd better be aither usin' them, for I smell fire mighty close!" cried Murray.

The alarm now spread nearer and nearer, and louder and louder. The wind was blowing a gale, and the flames flew from house to house with lightning rapidity. The inmates of the tavern had to fly from the house, for it was on fire in a few moments after the general alarm. The inhabitants of the village had but little time to save either clothing or furniture, but had to rush to the open fields for protection from the scorching flames.

There, collected in a crowd, men, women and children, now homeless, looked in terror on the destroying flames; some weeping, others cursing over their losses, and all wondering how such a sudden and general conflagration could have occurred. For, as yet, no one could tell how or where the fire commenced.

Suddenly a howl of terror arose from among a group of "contrabands", who, looking up toward the sky, saw what appeared to be a blazing ball of fire, sweeping rapidly along over their heads.

"De gracious Lor'! De day ob judgment am a comin'!" shouted one. "Dere goes de angel wid fire in his mouf!"

The whites, too, looked up in terror at the strange and supernatural sight.

"I'd like to know what it manes," said Murray, in a hoarse whisper to Champe. "I'm afraid it'll be aither rainin' hot wather, next. I wish I was safe back in ould Ireland ag'in, a trottin' in me native bogs or a diggin' for the potatoes to fule myself on."

"We had better start for Charleston," said Champe. "There's no place here for us, now. I'm bound for that city, at any rate, and all the boys that want good berths in the C. S. A., had better come long."

"How'll we get there?" asked one of the party.

"Press the first teams we can find. That's the rule now. The man who objects to letting his team go is a cursed Unionist, and has no business to own a team."

"Then's the principles! Hurrah for the Secesh!" shouted the rest of the Committee.

But there was no rejoicing cheer among the homeless villagers. Downcast and sullen, the most of them looked upon that very Vigilance Committee as having been the cause, directly or indirectly, of their irretrievable misfortune; and it was with undisguised pleasure that they heard they were to be relieved of their company by their intended departure for Charleston.

Speaking of departure, we will, for a moment leave the burning village to send its tribute of smoke and flame skyward, and look over to the island in Refuge Swamp.

Wilson and Aurelius had climbed up to their look-out post, some time before there was a sign of the conflagration in the village.

"Don't you think the boys will get scared, and back out, after all?" asked Wilson of the mulatto.

"No, sah! dere is niggers dere dat is true erit. The devil has been licked into 'em, as it has been into me, and I know dat dey won't flinch. Besides, dey'd be afraid to. Missy, wid her fireworks on, did look so droll like a sperit dat seein' was all ob belebin' wid 'em. Dat willage 'll burn, jest as sure as dat de sun will rise to-morrow. It isn't hardly time yet."

Wilson said no more, but waited another half-hour, when Ella Adams, speaking from below, said:

"It is the hour of twelve. The time of doom has come!"

"And golly! Missy Ella, dere goes de blazes. One—two—free—fifty. Golly, dem niggers has gone and went and done it! See de blaze—see it run! I reckon, Mars'r Wilson, you get some saxy-fashion, now, for what dey done gone and did to you."

"The village is on fire in more than twenty places," said Wilson, with glee. "There's one secession nest scorched out! But, Aurelius, we'll be wanted below, now. Our balloon must be got ready—hurry down."

In a few moments Wilson and Aurelius were down, and now the paper balloon was brought out, and while the two men held it, Miss Ella placed the spirit-saturated balls in the wire frame beneath its mouth, and ignited them.

In a very short time Mr. Wilson and Aurelius had no weight to sustain, but had to hold on to the cords which had been provided to keep the balloon down until the time arrived to let it speed upward on its fiery mission toward the sky.

As it pulled and tugged, like a living thing.

at its cords, Aurelius, who had never seen such a thing before, began to get scared.

"Golly! how it pulls, Mars'r Wilson!" said he. "It a'most takes dis child off his feet. I wouldn't be hitched to it for noffin', and all de worl' b'sides."

"Let go the cords!" said Ella.

Wilson and the mulatto did so, and the balloon shot up into the air, as swiftly as an arrow sent from a bow.

In an instant it was far above the tree-tops, and sailing, with its weird blaze, swiftly over the doomed village.

Aurelius and his colored companions looked up at it in speechless wonder; not one of them uttered a word until it had vanished away in the distance, even beyond the red glare "he burning village."

Then the mulatto spoke:

"Missy Ella, if I didn't feel sure dat dere was a heap of angel about you, I'd be afraid to stay where you is. I nebber seed or hearn tell ob de likes ob dat afore. De darkeys dat was warn'd ob dis, last night, will be clean gone, and ob-fustaciated."

"You will see more to surprise you yet, Aurelius," said Ella, with her usual sad smile. "Cannot you now disguise yourself and go out and see how the people bear this calamity, and especially what the famous Vigilance Committee think of it?"

"Yes, missy; dis chile was just agoin' to ask if he mightn't do it. I'll soon fix myself. I'll make myself so black dat de dark will be bright where I creep, and den I guess I can find out all dat missy want to know. De niggers and white folks will be so skeerey, to-night, dat dey won't ask who's who, I reckon. Yah! yah!"

And Aurelius hastened to deepen his color and to disguise his usual appearance as much as possible.

Meantime, Ella, with a quiet look of satisfaction, watched the red glare of fire reflected upon the sky, which told that those who had wronged her so deeply must feel the tide of their evil ebbing back upon their own sand, now.

CHAPTER XVII.

When Aurelius returned, at near day-dawn, from his trip of espial, he found that all were asleep upon the island, except the faithful Roxana, who ever in his absence kept an armed watch at the only place where a person coming from the village direction could reach the island. On learning that Miss Ella had gone to rest, Aurelius decided not to disturb her until after she woke naturally from sleep; for, as he told Roxana, he had no news that would "spoil by keepin' a little while."

"How does de folks feel out dere, now?" asked Roxana.

"A lit le bit cooler dan dey did a while ago, I reckon," said Aurelius, with a laugh. "Cause

de fire has a'most burn itself out. But some of 'em did euss awful! It a'most make me shake to hear 'em; and you know I've been used to eussin' all my born days?"

"Did you see dat willain who tried to whip poor Missy Ella?"

"Yes, I did; and I run ag'in' his sore arms a purpose, and got off afore he know'd who done it. Him and his gang was awful mad. All deir whisky went and got burnt up. Dey is off for Charleston by de break of day. Aud to-morrow night, s'pee' we'll have to make room for some more boarders. Dey is talkin' about hangin' some poor niggers for settin' fire to de houses; but dey can't prove dey did it. If dey say dey will, we must save de niggers if we can!"

"Sart'in, 'Relins—sart'in we must; and I reckon Missy Ella will help us do dat. I do be-leebe she can do jest what she likes, since she done went and sent dat fire up to de sky. We poor ignoramus niggers nebber could have done dat."

"No, indeed!" said Aurelius. "But you'd better go and turn in, Roxannna, my dear. An hour's sleep is better dan none, and it'll be all ob dat afore de white folks is up."

"Dat's so—de mornin' star is jest a peepin' up ober de trees. But isn't you ugoin' to tumble down for sleep, 'Relins?"

"Yes, Roxannner, after I take a little drop o' somethin' warm, to take de swamp-smell off my stomach. Nebber you mind me, chile, but go 'long, and dis nigger will circumamberlate 'bout right, I reckon."

"One t'ing, afore I go, 'Relins," said Roxana. "Do you know when Missy Ella is goin' to Charleston?"

"Right away now, I reckon," said Aurelius. "I've got de boat ready, and perwisions in it. You is to go 'long, you know?"

"Yes—she told me dat. I lived dere so long dat I knows a heap o' darkeys, and I can find plenty o' hidin'-places for us all. Charleston is a nice place, sometimes! Lots o' dry goods dere. But nigger mus'n't be out arter dark, or dere's de guard-house and de cow-hide."

"Maybe dey'll get loomed out like de village, afore soon," said Aurelius, with a laugh, as he went to his little wigwam, while Roxana sought her bed in another hut.

The sun had risen above the tree-tops before the Wilsons or Ella Adams awoke from the deep sleep which long watches had thrown upon their senses. When they did so, and came out to taste the morning air, they heard Aurelius singing one of his droll songs, as light and cheerful as if he never had been deprived of the rest which Nature requires. The song, though not quite up to Bryant's, may, as a plantation melody, be worth transcribing. So here it is:

"De Lor' make de grape grow,
De Lor' plant de vine—
Dat is for de white folks,
For dey drink de wine.
Oh, who dah!
Who dah—say!"

"De Lor' make de corn grow,
De nigger use de hoe;
De 'stiller make de whisky
Dat de nigger tub so!
Oh, who dah!
Who dah—say!"

"Debbil make de raw hide—
His sons use him den;
Dey score de nigger's back
Wid t'reesore and ten!
Oh, who dah!
Who dah—say!"

"Oh, who make de wheat flour,
De nigger doesn't know;
But he make de corn-cake,
And cook him on a hoe.
Oh, who dah!
Who dah—say!"

"When de clouds grow so black,
And de rain comes down,
De oberseer he leave,
And de nig is in town.
Oh, who dah!
Who dah—say!"

"And we pray for de rain
When dere's hard work to do,
And we pray for de sun
When de long week's t'rough.
Oh, who dah!
Who dah—say!"

"For Sunday is de time
Dat de possum climb a gum,
And den we catch de coon
A suckin' ob his thumb!
Oh, who dah!
Who dah—say!"

"You're musical this morning, Aurelius!" said Wilson, laughing.

"Somechin' dat way, sah," said Aurelius, grinning. "When I hear de bird a singin', and and de squirrel a cheeping, an' de breeze a whistlin', I feel like f'inin' in, even if I isn't c'zackly in time."

"Did you get good news for us, last night?"

"Yes, sah. Dem rascally Vigilant Committee is agoin' to leave. Dere's no more whisky left in de neighborhood, and dey'd be starved out in a day without it."

"Where do they go to?" asked Ella, stepping forward.

"To Charlestown, Missy Ella—right off dis berry morning, at de break of day. I hearn dat debbil Champe gib him orders."

"How do they go?"

"In de first planter's wagons dat dey find. Dey mean to take 'em whether de planter like it or not."

"Good! A rebellion which regards no rights—not even those of its friends—must be short-lived! How do the villagers feel?"

"Drefful sore, missy. Dem dat was insure de sorrest of all; for dey all insure in de Norf. De landlord a'most cry over his whisky. He

lose twenty barrel old corn, and none nearer, now, dan Charleston."

"Make all ready for our visit to Charleston, to-night," continued Ella. "We can reach there before daylight in the boat—can we not?"

"Yes, missy. S'pose we start afore twelve o'clock at night. D's chile can row dere in four or five hour."

"Then we will start at twelve, or even earlier. You have plenty of provisions here to last Mr. Wilson and the people until we return, I hope?"

"Yes, missy, if we isn't gone more'n two weeks. Dere's plenty of ham and bacon; and den de potatoes, and green corn, and squash, and beans, and melons, ought to help a good deal."

"You need not fear for our comfort," said Wilson. "Our fears will be for your safety."

"Have no fears for me. I will be protected in my mission," said Ella, with the same sad but sweet smile which was now a peculiarity with her. "I shall not expose myself or those with me unnecessarily. I shall not fall into the hands of those who are alike the enemies of God and freedom. Not yet, at least; though in time I may perish at their hands. What is written above, may not be altered below. You must remain here in quiet safety, and in a few days you will either see me or hear from me. When you see the sky in the east red at midnight, you may know that I am at work."

"Every night will find me perched upon the look-out tree," said Wilson.

"De brekfus all done ready, mars'rs and missuses," said Roxana, approaching. "Ise got nice hoe-cake, an' eggs, an' bacon, an' salad, an' cold chicken, an' coffee."

"If I ever keep a hotel, I must have you for my cook, Roxana," said Mr. Wilson, laughing. "It takes you to get up nice things."

"It's all owin' to my broughten up, Mars'r Wilson," said the pleased woman. "I was always a house-servant, till a few days afore I run away. Dey wanted more hands in de field, den, and dey put me dere. I couldn't stand de task, so de oberseer he lick me; and den good 'Relius help me to git away from 'em. But do come to eat de brekfus afore it's all cold. I've been a tellin' Dinah how she must cook for you when I'm done gone to Charleston. I reckon she'll do purty well, considerin' she's nebber had de chances to larn dat dis child had."

"She'll do de best she can, without doubt," said Wilson. "We're not hard to please."

And, accompanied by his wife and Ella, he entered the little cabin, where a nice smoking breakfast waited for them.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Finding themselves unhoused, and even (as Aurelius said), what was worse, starving for whisky, Champe and his band decided to go to Charles-

ton, where their services were already required on military duty. As the distance by the road was nearly a day's drive, and, of course, a most inconvenient distance for a lazy man to march, and but few of these patriotic rebels were the legitimate owners of horses, means of conveyance must be found.

There was one man among those who had been burned out who had saved three mule teams with their wagons and harness. And though well off before, these teams were now all that he possessed on earth except the ground upon which his smouldering buildings had stood, and some dozen or more negroes. For this man Champe sent.

"We want your teams to carry my party to Charleston, Mr. Buckner, and you'll oblige us by having 'em got ready in a hurry."

"I cannot spare my teams," replied Mr. Buckner. "I need them to haul my family to a place of shelter."

"Can't! Did I understand you to use the word 'can't' to me, a Confederate officer, Mr. Buckner?"

"I said, Mr. or Captain Champe, if you like that appellation any better, that I could not spare my teams."

"Have you anything more to say, Mr. Buckner? If you have, I'll wait till you are done," said Champe, with a sneer.

"Nothing more at present."

"Then I'll begin. We need and must have your teams."

"By thunder, you shall not, and there's the end of it!" shouted Buckner, in a rage.

"A good ways from the end," said Champe, with a sneer. "I have Brigadier-General Beauregard's orders to proceed to Charleston with my company."

"Then go—blast you—go!"

"Don't be in such a stew, old cockolorum! Hear the rest. I have also his authority to take transportation, and by Judas! I will take it. So, order up your teams, or I'll do it for you! And if I have to do it, you'll never see a mule of 'em again. If you are reported as working against the Confederacy, I'd rather be one of your mules than yourself. You'll be haltered as quick, and stay haltered till you are put under ground!"

Buckner turned pale, not only with rage, but vexation. For he had seen already too many high-handed outrages not to know that the leaders of the "Confederacy" would stick at nothing to carry out their plans. Bridling his wrath for the time, he said, in a milder tone:

"Will you compensate me for the use of my teams? This fire has ruined me."

"If you order up your teams without any more words, I'll certify to having used them in the Confederate service, and you can apply at head-quarters for compensation," said Champe.

Buckner, with a sigh, turned to his negroes

and gave the order. For well he knew that might ruled instead of right. In truth, wherever the "Confederacy" is in power, right flees the ground, justice vanishes, and only Secession and its minions ride the wave.

In a short time Buckner's teams were ready, and Champe and his gang were on their way to Charleston; and even homeless as they were, many a villager uttered a word of gratification at the departure of the lawless gang who had for weeks been a curse and a terror to their once quiet wlaec.

CHAPTER XIX.

The moon had not risen, but the night was clear and starry when Aurelius guided Ella Adams to the boat which lay hidden in a deep and closely-shadowed bayou in the swamp, not far from the island where the hut stood. This bayou connected with the river, but was so overhung by thick-branched cypress-trees, and so obstructed by fallen timber that no boatman would ever have thought to explore it out of curiosity, and no other object would call a visitor into it. The path, if such it could be called, was even more difficult than that which led to the island from the other side. But as the party carried little baggage, they made their way along it by carefully picking their steps.

Only Aurelius and Roxana were to accompany Ella to the city; but Mr. Wilson insisted upon seeing the poor girl safely as far as the boat. He had tried to induce her to let him share the danger of the entire trip. But Ella would not listen to this. For she said that she only could carry out her mission, and it was unnecessary to expose him to danger when he could do no good. It was his duty, she said, to stay and take care of his faithful wife. He had already suffered more than enough on her (Ella's) account.

After seeing her safely seated in the commodious boat which Aurelius had procured and fitted for use, he bade her farewell and returned to the island.

Making Ella and the woman Roxana crouch down in the bottom of the boat, Aurelius commenced pulling it out through the bayou, by the branches which swept down close upon the gunwales. After progressing some time in this way, they suddenly came out in the still, broad river; and now permitting his passengers to assume an upright and more comfortable position, Aurelius took his oars and rapidly propelled the boat down the stream. The hour was such that they were not likely to meet with any other boats on their way.

But remembering that caution was a jewel not to be despised, the occupants of the boat kept silence. Roxana made the most noise after she got to sleep; for she snored like one of the Seven Sleepers. Aurelius made very little noise with his oars; being muffled, only the

dip in the water could be heard by Ella, as reclining in the stern-sheets of the boat, she watched the stars overhead, or the lazy clouds which drifted here and there athwart the blue of the sky, like foam-flocks upon the bosom of the azure ocean.

For full three hours the boat glided on in this silence, passing plantations and small villages whose people seemed to be asleep; for though houses could be distinguished, no lights could be seen.

At the end of this time, Ella told Aurelius that she could see lights ahead. He rested his oars, and, standing up in the boat, looked long and anxiously down the river. At last he said:

"Dem is camp-fires, Missy Ella; de camp-fires of sojers along de river just in de edge ob town. We'll go a ways fuder, and den we'll land where I can hide de boat. After dat we'll hab plenty ob time to go to de place where we must hide to-morrow, while I see how de land lays in de city. I've got a first-rate friend where I'm a goin'. He's free—half-Spaniard and half-nigger—got some money, and is makin' more out of jest such darkeys as me!

"Is there no danger of his betraying us?" asked Ella.

"No, missy. He's been sworn by an obsee woman! He nebber dare to break dat oaf, no way. If he did, de debbit would roast his body alive, and carry his sperrit down to de hot place, to roast dere foreber and eber. And he knows it. De obsee woman had a dretful power! It's a pity she dole went away!"

Aurelius now resumed his oars, and pulled cautiously but swiftly down the river.

Ella watched the lights, which grew brighter and brighter, until she could plainly distinguish that they were fires, and she could see dark figures flitting between her and them, at times, and from the increased blaze she knew that those were the figures of men who were engaged in replenishing the fuel at the fires.

Aurelius rowed down within nearly a mile of these fires, and then pulling on shore near a small swamp, he landed Ella and Roxana, whom he gently awakened; and then, asking them to remain where they were a short time, he rowed the boat to a safe hiding-place in the swamp. After concealing it, he returned through the swamp to the spot where he had left Ella and the woman, and, taking up the bundle which contained some changes of clothing, asked Ella and Roxana to follow him as fast and as still as they could.

Going directly back from the river, he soon reached a broad road which led toward the city, and along this he hurried with rapid steps. Soon they came to houses, scattering ones, showing that they were in the suburbs of the town. Once, hearing the heavy tramp of men ahead, Aurelius hurried them under the shelter of a friendly orange-hedge, and there they cowered

while an armed patrol passed within a few yards of them.

After this they met with no interruption, but went on until they were evidently in the settled part of the city. Here, turning from the broad street, which they had followed for more than a mile, into a narrow alley, they proceeded only a few yards, and halted before a small and plain wooden house.

Here, Aurelius went to a window, and, giving a low whistle, struck several light blows upon the shutter.

A singular whistle was heard in reply. Aurelius answered with a similar sound, and struck the shutter slowly and distinctly seven times.

"A friend's signal," said a voice from within. "But who is that friend?"

"It is me—old Mordecai's 'Relius, Mars'r Sanchez," said the mulatto.

"Have you the last pass-word, 'Relius'?" asked the person from within, who was not visible; for the shutter was closed.

"De last is de first, Mars'r Sanchez," said Aurelius.

"That is correct. Are you alone?"

"No, Mars'r Sanchez—got two friends. But by de oaf of de obsee, dey is all right!"

"Then wait a moment, and I will open the door."

"Yes, sah; but be quick, for it's a'most de peep o' day, and somebody may be stirrin'."

They had not long to wait. In a minute more the door opened, and a tall, slender man, quite genteelly dressed, opened the door. The light which he held showed that his complexion was dark—not darker, though, than that of Aurelius. His features were good, and his expression not unpleasant.

As Aurelius asked Miss Ella to pass in, the stranger evidently saw that she was a lady, for he retired a step and bowed very obsequiously, without speaking, however.

Ella was followed by Roxana; and Aurelius, coming last, closed and bolted the door, showing that he was not unacquainted with the fastenings of the premises.

"Dis is Missy Ella Adams, Mars'r Sanchez, a persecuted lady 'bout whom I'll tell you by-and-by, arter you've put her in de nicest room you hab; for she and Roxana, her woman, dere, and dis chile, is a'goin' to stay here a day or two wid you. And dere is a couple of yaller boys to get de marketin' wid."

The eyes of the Spaniard gleamed brightly upon the two gold pieces which Aurelius placed in his hand, and bowing again very low, he said to Ella:

"Lady, my house and all that is in it is placed at your service. Be pleased to take a seat, and my wife will soon prepare an apartment for you!"

Leaving the light upon a table, Sanchez left the room.

Ella was surprised to see that it was well, almost elegantly, furnished. Upon a centre-table there were numerous books—a guitar-case and piano occupied one side of the small room—a large gilt-framed pier-glass fronted her, and the two front windows were curtained with damask. The chairs were of mahogany, with brocade-cover backs and bottoms—a marble-topped side-board was covered with fine glass ware—the carpets were rich and fine.

"What business does Mr. Sanchez follow, Aurelius?" asked Ella.

"He keeps a shop down-town; but don't ax me no more, Missy Ella, please. He's a good man to us poor niggers dat sees trouble, and I can trust him. He needn't know our business widout you wish!"

Ella said no more. Sanchez came in soon after to announce that a room was ready for her. To his astonishment she thanked him in pure Castilian.

"You are acquainted with the language of my fatherland," he said, in the same tongue. "You speak like a Spanish lady; but you are not one?"

"No; I am from the North of the United States," she replied.

"Ah! Now I understand why Aurelius said that you were persecuted," said he. "But you are safe here. I am not a Secessionist. But how is it that you speak my language so perfectly?"

"I speak it, and French as well," replied Ella, "because I have studied and taught both languages. I have had much practice for one of my age."

"My wife and daughter both speak Spanish, and will, if permitted, be delighted to entertain you as well as they are able, after you have taken rest," said Sanchez, politely.

His wife now entered the room, and being introduced to Ella, offered to show her to a room; for it was evident that she greatly needed rest.

After they had gone, Sanchez opened the lower part of his sideboard, and taking therefrom a decanter of brandy, he placed it and a couple of glasses on the table, and motioning Aurelius to fill a glass, he seated himself to hear what the mulatto had to say, wisely concluding that the brandy would tend to loosen the hinges of conversation.

What that conversation was we will not say at present, but leave the two gentlemen of mixed colors to enjoy both their talk and liquor in private, as gentlemen should.

Meanwhile, we will open another chapter, fearing, unless we do, that Mr. Champe may be lost sight of in the darkness of his own rascality.

CHAPTER XX.

Brigadier-General Beauregard, for a very small man, with a most unexceptionable and carefully-cultivated moustache, having made so much noise in the world, it would be unpardonable to

entirely neglect him in a tale of the Rebellion, even if he did not form a part and a portion of our story. To describe him any further is unnecessary, for if any of our New York readers wish to see his picture, they will find it in the celebrated Police Gallery in the Detective Department of that city.

He was busy in his office—or, I should say, at "head-quarters", on the very morning that Ella Adams and her escort arrived in Charleston. But it was some hours later—at least ten o'clock in the forenoon of that day.

While the rebel general was busy over some papers which had been handed to him by a secretary, an orderly entered, and after giving the usual military salute, said:

"A Captain Champe, of the South Carolina Volunteers, wishes to see the general."

"Champe—Champe? Who is he?" asked Beauregard of an aid that sat near him.

"A fellow from Tennessee that has been very zealous as the President of a Vigilance Committee up in the Rhettville region," replied the aid. "He and his gang have hung some Yankees and shot others. His band organized into a military company, and he has been commissioned a captain."

"Well, I suppose I must see him!" said the general, rather impatiently. "Show him in, orderly."

The soldier again saluted, turned on the pivot of his heel, and left the room.

In a few moments Champe entered. Both arms splintered and hung in slings, informed the general for the first time that the applicant for an interview was wounded, and so helpless that he could not even remove the military cap which he wore over his uncombed hair.

"You seem to have been in an engagement, captain? Has there been fighting up in Rhettville?"

"Yes, general—fighting and burning too. There were some cursed Unionists and Yankees there. I lost a dozen men in dislodging 'em, and am crippled in both wings myself. But I'll be able to do duty in a few weeks. The worst news is, that the whole village was burned down night before last."

"By whom?" asked the general, without a change of countenance.

"The Lord only knows. The fire was started in the night; no one appears to know how or where. Half the village was on fire when the alarm was given, and a gale blowing at the time swept the flames over the rest so swiftly that the people had barely time to escape with their lives."

"These incendiaries must be looked after," said the general, sternly. "I hear of more fires lately than accident could occasion. Is your company in the city, captain?"

"Yes, sir!"

"Quartered yet?"

"No, sir; we arrived too late last night to report, and are stopping around."

"See that Captain Champe's company is properly quartered and attended to by the commissary," said the general to an aid.

Champe was not a smart man, but he knew enough to be aware that his interview with the general was over. And rising, with an awkward bow, he turned and took his departure in company with the aid.

"I do not like that man!" muttered the general, when Champe was gone. "The Great Maker of men often writes their characters upon their faces. If I can read character, that man is a mixture of the liar and thief, with hardly enough courage to be fit for anything in either line. This business forces one into strange company. But I must have this Rhettville matter inquired into. Such fires look like the acts of discontented citizens, or the slaves have been tampered with, and persuaded to fire their masters' property. A more strict surveillance is needed, and through it we may learn the cause of this new danger, and, perhaps, how to avoid it. New and more stringent rules enforced in this city will prevent the misfortune here. No one, white or black, but an enrolled soldier on duty must be permitted in the streets after dark without a pass from these headquarters!"

And the general rang a bell. A secretary came to answer the call, and was told to write out the order which the general had just concluded to issue.

CHAPTER XXI.

"Have you seen the general, cap'n dear?" asked Mr. Murray, when Champe, after his brief interview with Beauregard, entered the low tavern where he had left most of his company.

"To be sure I have!" said Champe, with an air of importance. "You don't think he'd keep a man of my position waiting—do you?"

"Did he ask after me, cap'n, dear?" continued Murray.

"After you? What do you suppose he knows about you?" asked Champe; and he ordered the bar-keeper to sugar a glass of old Bourbon for him.

"What is it he knows about me?" cried Murray, in high du-ligeon. "Sure I don't know what he does know. But I know what he ought to know! He ought to know that I've fought, bled, and died for my adopted country, be jippers! He ought to know that I've gone through fire and water for him and the rest o' the blackguards that begrudge me the whisky I drink. He ought to know that the skin of me has been peeled off like that of a biled pertatie, be jippers!"

This sally of Murray's brought out a roar of laughter from the crowd, and as many invitations to drink as the Irishman could well attend to.

"The general has ordered quarters for our company, boys!" continued Champe.

"Quarters, is it? Bless his soul!" cried Murray. "It's so long since I've seen a quarter, that I believe I wouldn't know the face of one. Did you bring a specimen with yez, cap'n?"

"Quarters for us to live in, you fool!" said Champe, thinking that Murray was making game of him.

"Quarters to live in!" said Murray, in evident disgust. "Be jippers I'd rather have the quarters to live on! To the devil wid shin-plaster money says I!"

And Mr. Murray went in for the drinks.

Champe, aided by a "contraband," who lifted the glass to his lips, now drank off his sugared Bourbon, and then told his listeners a long story about his interview with Beauregard, the most of his story as false as his own treacherous heart. He concluded by saying that the general had sent his first aid-de-camp to pick out excellent quarters for the company, and had given a personal order to the commissary-general to furnish them with plenty of the best provisions.

The men heard this and cheered loudly over the gratifying news. And when Champe invited every one in the house to drink at his expense, they gave him three rousing cheers.

They did not know, perhaps, that the money which jingled in his pockets then was the proceeds of poor Mr. Buckner's teams, which he had sold as his own to a speculator, for about half their value. Even if they had known of this financial step made by their captain, it was not at all likely that they would have thought it out of the way, if he spent a portion of its proceeds upon them.

The "receiver" always considers the thief as his best friend. Alas! that half of humanity seem little to care how men get their gold, if they can only get a share of it. Success makes respectability—or I might, perhaps, use the word "popularity" in place of that. Honest poverty is the shabbiest, if not the worst of crimes. But a truce to moralizing. It has no fitting place in a tale of the present Rebellion.

CHAPTER XXII.

How long Ella slept in the fine, linen-sheeted and downy bed in which Mrs. Sanchez placed her, she did not know. But when she woke, the sun was evidently high, for it shone warmly down into the lovely little flower-garden back of the house, into which she could look from the window by her bed-side without rising. She was fond of flowers—what true woman is not?—for they looked like old friends to her. True, they would fade and die—as friends the truest do—but then there is a resurrection.

Ella had been awake but a few moments, when Roxana came in with a fragrant cup of

strong coffee, flanked by a tiny cream-pitcher and sugar-cup, all supported on a silver salver.

This truly Spanish and French custom, so reviving to the drowsy senses, was peculiarly delicious to Ella. Poor girl! it was long since she had known comfort, not to speak of luxury. She drank the coffee and sunk back upon her pillows in a momentary reverie—a dream of the far, far past, when wealth was hers and she lived as she wished—when love, yes, love nestled in her heart. It is not for me to tell now how that wealth took wings—how one parent committed suicide rather than to face hyena creditors, and the other died broken-hearted, leaving her to struggle for life in the great ocean of inhumanity on the mere raft of a good education. It is not for me to tell how all that fed her love fled from her then, as if she had been stricken by contagion. Some of it may come in hereafter; if it does, the reader will find it out without any doubt.

Ella remained in this reverie but a short time when a musical voice, accompanied by a guitar, reached her ear, and as it rose and fell in low, sweet cadences, she listened almost breathlessly. The singer sang these words:

"'Tis hard to live and love not
When loving things are near;
Dark were the world and gloomy,
Were nothing in it dear!"

"In vain the stars of heaven,
Would glitter in the sky;
In vain the summer zephyrs,
Above the flowers sigh!"

"I'd rather die than love not,
Than have a heart of snow—
So cold, so still, and pulseless,
As never love to know!"

"Let living be but loving,
Contented dwell I here—
My heart like ivy clinging
To something ever dear!"

"Who is that singing, Roxana?" asked Ella, struck by the touching melodiousness of the voice.

"Miss Carrollita Sanchez, Missy Ella. She sings sweet as any bird—doesn't she?"

"She has a sweet voice. I will dress, and go and see her!" replied Ella.

The toilet of the poor, pale, snow-haired girl was easily made, and she was soon prepared to leave her neat and pleasant little chamber.

Going down to the sitting-room, she found Mrs. Sanchez, who introduced her to her daughter, Carrollita—a most lovely girl of sixteen or seventeen years. To simply call her lovely is not enough, or ought not to be, to suit a young-man reader, or a hypercritical female critic.

Like her mother, she was tall, very perfectly formed—her complexion that rich brunette which is peculiar to the daughters of Spain. Her eyes were very large, liquid and soulful, and black as blackest night, with diamonds set in the pupils. Her features were classically fine—her smallish head set upon a neck which

a sculptor would have sought for a model. Her glossy jetty hair was braided in a coronet over her white forehead. When her rosy lips parted in a smile, they revealed rows of pearly teeth which no dentist could have improved. In very truth she was beautiful. Her expression was intellectual, though she did not exactly smell of books, as some "blurs" do.

No one, to see either mother or daughter, would have for a moment supposed that any African blood was mingled in their veins. In truth, Ella had looked hard to see any trace of it in Mr. Sanchez, when she first met him, prepared for it, as she had been, by the statement of Aurelius. There was not even an "octoroon" shade about the two first-named. They looked and they spoke like the daughters of that sunny Spain which, once so grand and glorious, is now so degenerate.

"Will Miss Ella be pleased to have breakfast now?" asked Mrs. Sanchez, as soon as the compliments of the morning had been exchanged.

"At your convenience," replied Ella. "Have you and your daughter yet breakfasted?"

"Oh, some time since. You looked so weary, that I did not wish to waken you. But your breakfast is ready. You must excuse its quality, for we were not prepared for visitors."

When Ella saw the neat cloth covered with smoking white rolls of bread, nicely-browned toast, eggs cooked in various ways, fish, and meat, radishes, lettuce, and fruit, she did not think that the quality of such a meal needed any excuses.

Mrs. Sanchez waited upon Ella, while the daughter continued playing and singing in the front room—it being her custom, the mother said, to practice in music for two or three hours every morning.

Mr. Sanchez was absent; and Aurelius, to use the classical expression of Roxana, was yet sleeping like an alligator on a mud-bank.

CHAPTER XXIII.

The company commanded by Champe was comfortably quartered in one of the public buildings in Charleston; but its captain, tolerably supplied with funds by his recent sale of mules and wagons, considered it more in accordance with his means and position to take rooms at the Charleston Hotel, where he could imbibe his Bourbon in private, and receive such friends as he chose.

He had not been long in his new quarters before he was called upon by the Mr. Buckner whose teams he had used to bring his men with from Rhettville. Having learned the number of his room, Mr. Buckner entered Champe's presence unannounced.

The latter was taken by surprise; but he was too much of a villain to lose all his cool effrontery. He was not alone; four of the hardest cases in his company were with him, engaged in

a four-handed game of euchre. Before them were glasses half filled with liquor, and a bottle stood handy for their replenishment.

"Hallo, Buckner! How are you?" cried Champe, coolly. "Take a seat. Boy bring another glass here. Do you like sugar in your Bourbon?"

"Curse your Bourbon, and your sugar, too!" cried Buckner, pale with rage. "I want none of your civility. I only want to know where my teams are. You sent my niggers back with word that you'd take care of the teams."

"Yes. Your niggers got back safe—didn't they?"

"Yes; but I want my teams."

"You ought to be thankful that you've got your niggers back," said Champe, with a sneer. "As to your teams, you'll see 'em when I've done with 'em—not before."

"For a picayune, I'd blow the top of your head off, you infernal scoundrel!" shouted Buckner.

"You threaten because I am wounded and helpless," said Champe, turning pale. "But I am not defenceless. Offer to raise a hand or touch a weapon, and you'll be bored through in a second. These men belong to my company, and will not see their captain wronged or insulted."

"No!" cried the men, with oaths which told Buckner that, being outnumbered, violence on his part would be imprudent.

"I will go to the commanding-general, and see if he will not force you to restore my teams," said Buckner, gloomily.

"Go; and see how differently he'll value the captain of a full company of volunteers and the burned-out, penniless citizen of Rhettville. I've only got to say that you're a Unionist, and he'd swing you up in an hour."

"But I can prove that I am not. I have a brother in the army; and there are plenty of respectable citizens who know me here, and who stand ready to vouch for my loyalty to the Confederacy. I will go to the general."

"Hold on, and listen to reason," said Champe, lowering his tone.

Really, he did not care to have the general informed of anything which might lead to an investigation of his character.

"Suppose," Champe continued, "that you take my obligation to restore the teams in sixty days, or my note for their value in that time."

"What is your note good for?" asked Buckner, with a look of contempt.

"As an individual, it might not be worth much," said Champe; "but as the note of a captain in the Confederate army, it will be worth more. Take my note, and if it is not paid, or the teams returned, then report me to the general."

Buckner hesitated. He seemed to feel that the note would be of little, if any, use; but,

hoping for the best, at last said: "Make the time thirty days, and I'll do it."

"Agreed. Boy, bring pen, ink, and paper. Now, Buckner, take a glass of Bourbon with us, and be a little friendly."

"I never drink before dinner," said Buckner, curtly.

"Oh, break over your rule, and drink success to the Confederacy. The man that backs from that toast ought to be made to drink swamp-water for the rest of his life. Come; take a drink; then write out the papers, and I'll sign them. True soldiers have rough ways, and you'll have to get used to them before the war is over."

Buckner made no reply; but thinking it inexpedient to refuse the toast in such company, he poured out a glass of liquor and drank it off. The servant having brought writing materials, he now wrote out the obligation and note, which Champe signed.

"There goes the biggest fool out!" laughed Champe, after Buckner, with the worthless paper in his pocket, left the room. "Before that paper is due, we'll be off to Alabama, or Virginia, or some other Christian land. I mean to have a merry life, even if it should be a short one, and don't intend to stay long in one place, if I can help it. Fill up, boys! drink hearty! The Bourbon is as free as water to you, and I know it is ten times as welcome!"

"There's the sentiments to swear by!" cried Champe's admirers, as they emptied and refilled their glasses.

"Go on with your game now. We'll not be disturbed again by Buckner; and I don't know of any one else that is after me just now. Boy, fill my pipe and put it in my mouth. I wish my arms would come into use again. This being helpless has no fun in it. I can't even sugar my own toddy. If I could have used my arms, I'd have made that old devil eat his words, or I'd have cut his saucy tongue out. Go ahead, boys! Play on and drink. I'll not suffer if you enjoy yourselves. I'd be lonesome without you. I dred for night to come, when I shall be alone!"

CHAPTER XXIV.

No one, who had seen Aurelius in his ordinary attire, with the brands upon his chocolate-colored face, would have believed that the young-looking, jet black, and excessively black-wooled African, whom we are now about to introduce to the reader, could be a transformation of that very individual. Assisted by Sanchez, his disguise was very perfect. And he was in livery, too; for he had a new character to assume. He had just returned in perfect safety from a visit down-town, and was in high glee, judging from his manner, as he bowed to Miss Ella, who received him in the sitting-room at the house of Mr. Sanchez.

"Did you find the man, Aurelius?" she asked, as the mulatto, after bowing very low,

PULLING THROUGH THE BAYOU.



straightened himself up, and looked sideways at his figure as it was reflected in the mirror.

"Yes, missy; he is a stoppin' at de Charles-ton Hotel, livin' in grand style. He has got lots o' money; Mars'r Sanchez found out how he got it, too. He done went and sold Mars'r Buckner's teams, wagons and all, and put de money in his own pocket."

"Did you see him in person?"

"Yes, missy; in course I did. Your orders was for me to do so, if I could widout s'picion. He never would s'picion dis genteel-lookin' brack gempleman for dat ole cuss 'Relius dat he has seen cuffed and kicked about like a blind dog. Not he! Why, de body-sarvent dat he has stole for to wait on him didn't begin to know me, though I've knowed him ebber since he was a creepin' baby!"

"What excuse did you make for calling on him?" asked Ella, who could not repress a smile at the airs which Aurelius put on.

"I axed to see him all alone, missy, sendin' word by his sarvent dat I had something very umportant to tell him. Dere was some ob his his debbils playin' cards in his room, and he didn't want to send 'em away. But I sent him a hint dat I come from de head-quarters, and den he went into anodder room, and sent for me. I wouldn't tell him what I had to say afore his sarvent, but tole him he must be alone. Den he sent his sarvent away, and ax me what de mystery was."

"I ask him was he de real Massa William Champe, all de way from Tennessee. He say dat he was. Den I teil him dat I had a rich young missey dad hab seen him and had admire his lubly figure an his handsome face. Lor', missey, you should hab seen him when I tell him dat. He strut about like a turkey rooster, forgettin' dat his wings was broke, and he look in de glass and twist his face all sorts o' fashions; and he ax me what was my missey's name."

"I tole him dat she didn't want him to know her name till he done see her. Den if he like her as well as she like him, she'd tell him herself. Den he said he'd like to see her right away. I tole him dat I'd tell you, and it was a'most likely you'd send your carriage for him one ob dese nights. Did I do right, missey?"

"Yes, Aurelius; perfectly! It now only remains for our good friend, Mr. Sanchez, to aid us by finding a proper place to carry out the rest of my design."

"You were speaking my name; can I serve you, lady?" said Sanchez, who came in at that moment.

"Yes, my good friend," said Ella. "I have a plan formed to partially punish the wretch who so cruelly used me and poor Mr. Wilson and his wife, as I have told you before."

"You can command my aid in that or anything else, lady," said Sanchez, bowing. Then turning to Aurelius, he said: "Roxanna is keep-

ing dinner for you, Aurelius; you had better eat."

"If missey is done with me, I will dat!" said Aurelius. "Telling so many whoppin' big lies gives me an appetite."

"I have no further need of you, at present," said Ella; "when I want you, Mr. Sanchez will call you."

Aurelius went out, and Miss Adams continued her conversation with Sanchez.

"I wish to get the use of some unoccupied building," she said. "Some building where the wretch, of whom we have spoken, can receive a portion of his earthly punishment, and yet where his outeries, if he is in a capacity to make any, will be unheard."

"I am agent for several houses that will do. Half of the best houses in the city are unoccupied now," said Sanchez.

"I wish to decoy this man to such a place, and after frightening him sufficiently, to have him scourged, as he has scourged others. Then to have his head shaved closely, and a mark put upon him which he cannot erase."

"All this can be done, and safely. But if possible we should have the countersign and a night-pass from the general. A new order has been issued, making it imperative on all citizens to remain in their houses after dark, without they have a pass from the general."

"I will get the villain himself to procure such a pass and the countersign."

"Then your wishes can be carried into effect. Do you need any other aid than that which can be given by Aurelius and myself, lady? If so, I have trusty friends."

"No; you two will be enough. Aurelius can drive the carriage, and you can receive the gentleman in it."

"When shall we carry out your wishes?"

"To-morrow night, if arrangements can be made so soon."

"They can and shall be made. It gives me pleasure to serve you, lady, for you have been the first to give me hope that the darling object of my life will yet be a success. To see my wife and child moving in good society, where no suspicion of tainted blood will darken their path, will repay me for all that I have endured, all that I have suffered in acquiring a competency which would enable me to sustain them handsomely in another section, where my past will be all unknown, and no one suppose me to be other than a Spaniard of full blood. Here, where I was born and my father's error made me what I am, they never could rise. But in the generous North I look for better days, when I can go there unknown. For this I have caused my daughter to be so educated that she need not blush for her ignorance in any society."

"She is accomplished, and very beautiful," said Ella, kindly.

"And, thank Heaven! as good as she is beautiful!" said her father, with enthusiasm. "I have had much to do which my natural pride has revolted at to get wealth. But neither her nor her mother have had to stoop to the cold world's scorn. And I have been kind to the oppressed, because I have felt oppression myself. Even now, I have to pay a tax to aid in this Rebellion, and they would tax me tenfold more if they supposed I had means to pay it. The taint in my blood saves me from being forced into their army. They will not trust arms in the hands of a colored man, be he bond or free. They know too well that there is danger in it. The fear of an insurrection has undoubtedly given rise to this last order, forbidding citizens to leave their houses after dark. But this cannot last long. Disguise it is as much as they try to, the Confederate Government, and the press which they control, cannot conceal the fact that mighty armies in the North are rushing to crush them in their evil. Faces of prominent men whom I meet often in the street, which at first were jubilant, now look care worn and gloomy. Money is becoming scarce; provisions are rising; many necessities are hardly procurable; luxuries are not thought of. The power of which you have told me must crush the misguided, and restore right where wrong now triumphs!"

"It will. The republic was the gift of the Almighty, and He will preserve it entire," said Ella, solemnly.

CHAPTER XXV.

Champe could scarcely keep what he considered his good fortune to himself, when he returned to his companions, after his interview with Aurelius. He could not refrain from hinting that he soon expected to be in a situation where he could at least command a generalcy and in his exuberance he promised every one, of them a commission; and they, his ever-obsequious tools, swore never, never to desert him, come weal or come woe.

And he knew well they would not, as long as he could pay for as much whisky as they wanted. They were like some of the public-spirited politicians of Gotham—they wanted to be corn or rye fed all the time, to be ready for a review.

How Champe managed to keep his secret, we can scarcely tell—for his vanity was at full tide and running over—but yet he did, and managed to carry, as usual, a full load of whisky to bed with him at that. But he waited impatiently for the hour which would bring the liveried servant of the wealthy young lady to him again on the morrow, as had been promised, to let him know where he could see the divinity who had been charmed by his superior attractions.

He managed to sleep and to dream also. To dream of beauty smiling upon him, of liveried servants waiting upon him, of feeding from gold

and silver plate, of drinking rare wines to such an excess that he had a terrible headache. The last part of his dream was verified, for he had a terrible headache when he woke. It took a half-dozen whisky juleps to make him feel at all straight, and his appetite for breakfast was not half so good as it was for liquor.

Between ten and eleven Aurelius made his appearance. By this time Champe had driven off his headache and had begun to feel his "rye" very sensibly.

"Well, my Prince of Darkeys," he cried, "what's the news? If it's good, I'll tip you a golden eagle. Let's have it."

"It's fast chop, Mars'r Cap'n," said Aurelius; "but there's providins, sah."

"Providings, eh? What ones, my son o' charcoal?"

"Can you have a pass for a carriage to come and go to take you to visit your friends, and get de countersign for de night, sah? Missy says de military is berry stric, and dere must be a pass for de carriage afore she send um."

"Oh! is that all? I can get the pass and countersign without any trouble."

"Den at ezactly 'leben o'clock to-night, I'm to come here wid her carriage for you. You is to 'gree to come to her house blindfolded, 'cause she says, s'pose you don't like her, she don't want to hab you know who she is or where she lib. If you do like her, why, den you'll get as purty a lady as ebber wore diamonds, wid more dan four hundred nigger and two plantations, one ob rice and one ob cotton, 'sides lots o' money and jewelary."

"There's no danger but that I shall like her, but I don't like the blindfold idea," said Champe.

"Dat's one of her grand idees, sah. She is berry romantic, and you'd better not cross her in it. She sent you dis ring for a token. Its a sparkler, isn't it?"

All of Champe's scruples vanished when he looked at the diamond ring, which had been lent by Sanchez for the purpose.

"I'll be ready, my boy, when you come. By the way, what is your name?"

"Melchisedeck, sah—a real scriptur' name; but my missy call me Chissy, for short," said Aurelius, grinning till his ivories could all be seen.

"Well, Chissy, there's a golden eagle as I promised. Take a glass of old bourbon, and then go and tell your mistress that I'm on nettles to see her."

"Yes, sah!"

And having t off a glass of Bourbon, Aurelius hurried away.

"By thunder! this is luck!" said Champe, as he looked at the glittering ring, which was too small for any of his coarse fingers, as he found out after Aurelius was gone. "If it wasn't for bein' honest, which goes against my grain, I'd

pay one Buckner for his mules when the note comes due. But blast him, for his insolence, I won't! I'll be rich enough to tell him and Beauregard both to go to the devil, if things don't go to suit me. Wait till I'm married, and have a hold of all them niggers and the two plantations—I'll make things fly then!" I'll show the boys how to live. I'll have the fastest team and the fanciest turn-out that ever run. I'll break every fire bank in the State. I'll go to Nashville and buy the State House and live in it. I'll give a free blow-out to all of Water street! I'll make Rome howl. I'll have a mint-julep bath every morning; I'll wear three watches, and keep more hounds, race-horses, game chickens, and bull terriers than any other he that stagers; I'll rule every track that I travel on; and I'll make the old woman stand round like a jay-bird, after we're harnessed. If she objects to my lookin' at the girls, I'll have a dozen winkin' at me every time we ride out. Bill Champe, you never had much luck before, but you're in for it now. If the Confederacy sinks, I'll be off for Cuba and play count, or duke, or king, maybe. I wish it was night. Boy! boy! bring me three or four thundering strong juleps, and be devilish quick about it!"

Leaving Mr. Champe to his juleps and grand anticipations, we will close the chapter.

CHAPTER XXVI.

A mighty armada was anchored in Hampton Roads, a large fleet of vessels, carrying not only their warlike crews, but thousands upon thousands of soldiers, some of them veterans of many a battle-field, others volunteers who had not mingled in the strife of battle, been pelted by the hail of lead or iron, or seen the flash of hostile steel. Above the crowded decks waved the starry ensign of the American Union; beneath the folds of that loved flag more than thirty thousand hearts beat with hope and patriotic enthusiasm. But few among all those thousands knew whither they were bound—little did they care, so that it was to cast their fierce weight against the rotten ranks of Rebellion wherever they might be found.

Though but one banner waved over all those heads, there were many beneath its folds who had been born far across the briny waters, men driven from the old world in the dark tide of persecution—men who had found a welcome and a home upon the soil of this free Republic, and who, ever grateful, were as ready now as its own native sons to fight for the preservation of the home of their adoption and its free government. Glorious cause, which could dash aside the rugged walls of party, sect, and clan—which could bring to one field the diversity of a hundred nations to sustain one flag, one Union, and one great and holy right—which could call the farmer from his plow, the merchant from his desk, the smith from his anvil, and the very

man of God from his pulpit, to strike for the Constitution and the laws.

Not these, zealots wild with the enthusiast's flickering fire, such as followed Peter the Hermit to the Crusades; not these, the followers of an Alexander, who conquered but to conquer; not these, the hirelings of a foreign tyrant, sent to crush fair Freedom out; but men who laid their lives and fortunes down before their country's altar, ready to lose all—all in her defence.

It was a grand sight to see these stately vessels riding upon the gently-heaving waters, with their dark-mouthed guns and flaunting banners. The clash and clatter of exercising arms, the thrilling bursts of martial music, the sharp sound of command, all these fell upon the listening ear. In the dim distance, dark and sullen, could be seen the hostile shore; nearer, close beneath frowning batteries, Union soldiers marched proudly to and fro.

The scene changed. Scattered far and wide out upon the sea, all heading to the southward, moved that gallant fleet. The huge waves rolled high and shook their foamy manes in anger out. Canvas and steam, strained to their utmost, impelled the fleet upon its waves, but more than one overlaiden craft labored fearfully in the tempest toils.

With one craft we will share the peril for awhile, for upon all we cannot keep an eye. She is a steamer, bearing one of New England's proudest regiments. Not fitted for an ocean voyage, and more than laden with cargo, both inert and living, she rolled and pitched fearfully in the surging sea. Though her commander was brave and skilful, his officers true as steel, and his men as staunch, his cheek more than once grew pale; for he felt that twelve hundred lives were there dependent on his care.

Urging every man to his duty, that captain stood at his post and watched each heaving billow—felt every blast that swept down upon his quivering vessel. Low was his tone when he asked the carpenter: "How much water in the pumps?"—louder and more cheerful as he cried: "Fire up below; we'll weather it out yet, my hearties!"

But when the colonel of the regiment on board—a young but well-loved soldier, who had first enlisted as a private, though a man of wealth, and then been elected to head the regiment—when that colonel came to him and asked, with the quiet of a truly brave man, if they were not in great danger, the captain told him that it would only be through God's mercy that the vessel lived another hour. He felt her frame quivering and giving way to the fearful strain—the leaking hull was opening fast, the water gained upon the pumps.

"You have life-boats!" said the colonel.

"Yes, enough for one-fourth of the men on board; but even they could not live in a sea like this!"

"My poor men!" sighed the colonel. "If I could have led them to the battle-field, and there we all had perished, not a sad thought would grieve my heart. They, like their leader, hold their lives cheap for their country's sake. Do not think, though, that even here a cheek will blanch. When the last hope is gone, they will yet look up at the flag which defies the storm, and sink with a cheer upon their lips."

"God bless you, colonel; we may weather it yet!" said the bronze-faced captain.

"Your lips speak what your eyes do not affirm," said the colonel. "But it is best that we keep this knowledge to ourselves so long as we can. Should you by any chance escape, and I perish, I have a secret to impart and a request to make."

"Both shall be sacred with me, colonel," said the captain.

"It was not patriotism alone which impelled me to volunteer in the service in which we are engaged," said the colonel.

The captain looked surprised, but said nothing. He waited for the colonel to explain his meaning in his own time.

"Years ago," continued the latter, "I loved, and was beloved, I know full well, in return. The young lady and myself, equals in social position, were betrothed. Her father speculated wildly, lost his all, committed suicide. Not the loss of wealth, but his last act, caused an estrangement between myself and the lady. Yet I loved her, and would have sought a reconciliation. But her mother died, and she left the country. In vain I sought to learn where she had gone. All my efforts were fruitless, and it was only at the commencement of this rebellion that I learned that she was engaged as a teacher in South Carolina. Then, with my thoughts as much, or, perhaps, even more upon her, than the country which needs and has my services, I enlisted. I applied to be sent upon this expedition. I have told you all this, that if I perish and you survive, you may rescue her from among the rebels, and take her to the North once more. My will is made, and if I die, all my property will be hers. Her miniature is even now next to my heart. Her name is Ella Adams! Will you seek her out if I perish and you survive?"

"I will, so help me God! I will, even as I ask you to bear my last words of love to my sweet wife and children in New York, if you live and I do not," said the captain.

That was a touching sight—those two braves, the sailor and the soldier, standing in the darkness of the night-storm only brightened by the glare of ragged lightning, enveloped in spray upon the wheel-house of the steamer, exchanging promises in the face of death.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Mr. Champe drank innumerable juleps, cocktails, and smashes during that day. But so exuberant were his own spirits, that liquor tended far less than usual to elevate him headwardly. He was intoxicated more with the joy of anticipation than with the fumes of whisky.

I once heard a debate in a school-house in the northern wilds of New York, the subject of which was: "Are there more real fun in the anticipation of a thing than there is in the having of it?"

One debater was a Mormon—humanly, a "cross" between a hyena and a jackal—the other an honest-meaning man, who stuttered awfully. If they only had known the experience of Mr. Champe's day of anticipation, it is likely that their arguments would have been more lucid, and that the president of the debate would have rendered a different decision. His decision was: "Orrin (the Mormon) has the best of the question so far as, ab goes—t'other one has the most sense of it!"

Aided by his usual companions, who could not desert him while whisky was free, Champe got through the day, still keeping his secret. He dismissed his company early, and then made his negro attendant dress him as well as he possibly could, and even sent for a barber to have his hair and whiskers combed out—a thing so seldom performed for him, that it took the hair-dresser full two hours to get the knots and tangles out, an operation which cost him several broken combs, and finally caused the use of the scissors to cut away the knottiest part. But he had been called early; and, fortified with a great many juleps, Mr. Champe was ready a full hour before the time. He caused a flask to be filled, and put in his pocket, to use in case he felt any sinking of his courage; and considering himself properly loaded, he was ready, like a percussion rifle, to "go off" when called for. He had sent for and received a pass and the countersign for the night; so that nothing seemed in the way. The last half-hour was a very long one to him. He drank a glass of plain Bourbon every five minutes, to tally the time. Six glasses had gone down the well-worn road of his dusty throat, when a knock was heard at his door, and Aurelius appeared, and with him another man, as black as himself, dressed in the same kind of livery.

"Dis is Scipio—my missy's own butler, Mars'r Cap'n!" said Aurelius. "He will ride in de carriage wid you, and see to de blind-foldin' 'ordin' to missy's wishes."

"Well, take a glass of Bourbon, boys, and heave ahead. I'm in a hurry to see that fancy lady of yours."

"Scipio nebber drinks, sah, but I will," said Aurelius; and he tossed off a glass of whisky without winking.

"And now, sah, if you is ready, we is."

"I'm ready, but just pour me out a glass of Bourbon and hold it to my lips. You see I'm crippled in both hands just now, but I'll be well before long. Scipio, there's a flask in my right-hand pocket, I want you to take it out and give me a swig just before we get to the house. I'm apt to be bashful in ladies' company, you see, and want my courage backed a little."

Scipio bowed, but did not speak.

Champe now started for the carriage, Aurelius leading the way, and Scipio bringing up the rear. They reached it in a few moments. The night was quite dark, and there were no lamps to the carriage, but this mattered little in a city.

As soon as Champe and Scipio were in the carriage the door was closed, and then the latter, producing a bandage, proceeded to bind it over Champe's eyes. The latter did not like this precaution; but as he had been told that the lady had insisted upon it, he feared to displease her by refusing to accede to her wishes.

The carriage was now driven rapidly along, seeming, by its whirling motion, to make frequent turns. Twice it was stopped and hailed by the guards; but the countersign was given, and it was allowed to pass on.

"Your mistress must live clear out of the city," said Champe, after they had been going for what seemed to him to be a very long time.

"We're almost there now!" said Scipio, in a low tone.

"Then I'll take a nip from my flask!" said Champe. "I'm uncommonly dry."

Scipio uncorked the flask, and held it to the captain's lips.

It remained there until it was fully half drained before the head of the satisfied imbibber fell back and he uttered a sigh of satisfaction.

"I reckon that'll prime me up," said he. "I'm not worth much without I have a pretty good load on."

The carriage suddenly stopped, and Scipio said that they had arrived at the house.

"You will please be silent, and not try to remove the blindfold until the lady does it with her own hands!" said Scipio, in the same low tone.

"Of course—I hope she'll not keep me waiting long. By the way, Scipio, I reckon I'd better empty that flask. I feel a little nervous."

The flask was again placed to the captain's lips, and he drained it, this time, to the bottom.

"All ready, sah; here we is! Jess let Scipio guide you 'long, and all's right an' bunkum," said Aurelius, opening the carriage-door.

Champe, aided by Scipio, got out, and was conducted up quite a flight of stone steps into a house. He could feel as he stepped that it was softly carpeted, for his feet made no noise. All was silent around him, for his conductor said nothing. He was led on some way—up

one pair of stairs and down another flight. Then, all at once, they came into a room, the floor of which seemed to be stone, and the air of it chilly and damp. Here he heard a heavy door clanged behind him, and at the same moment his conductor said:

"The lady is here!"

The bandage was torn from his eyes, and a glare of light for a moment almost blinded him.

Then, as his vision became plain, he saw that which, had he been twice as drunk as he was, would have sobered him in a moment.

Ella Adams stood before him. Not the quiet, lovely girl who had once aroused his lustful nature; not as, in her agony of terror, she shrunk from his cruel lash; but with a face flushed with triumph and hate! eyes which seemed to eat like fire into his very soul! By her side stood the two negroes who had decoyed him there—giants they looked to be, now.

He glanced around the room to see if there was no avenue of escape. He could only see the iron door which he had heard closed behind him. Not even a window. He was evidently in a cellar or some subterranean vault. Its furniture caught his eye next. There was a block, much such as is used by butchers for chopping meat upon. There were iron staples in the wall of stone; and ropes hung handily by them. A huge raw hide—it looked the counterpart of that which he had used upon poor Ella's quivering form—was laid across the block. A brazier of lighted coals and a branding-iron next met his terrified view. A box, containing what he supposed to be instruments of torture, stood near the block.

"Trapped, by hell!" he groaned, as he looked at the pitiless face of Ella Adams.

He knew that he was helpless, and his coward heart sunk in an instant.

"What are you going to do with me?" he moaned.

"Give you but a tithe of the punishment you deserve!" said Ella, sternly. "False to your country and all humanity—thief, gambler, libertine, and wretch below all wretches! you deserve no mercy. Men, cut that rebel uniform from his shoulders, and lash him up beside that wall. Then, with that only fit weapon to be used on his carrion form, scourge him as he has scourged others!"

"O Miss Adams, have mercy on me!" screamed the wretch—great drops of clammy sweat starting out from his forehead, his frame shaking as with an ague.

"The mercy you have shown to others—that, and no more, for you, now!" said Ella, calmly.

"Oh, my arms! Why am I helpless!" groaned the miserable villain. "Niggers, stand back! How dare you lay hands on a white man—on an officer! I'll have you hung, if you do!"

"Better see if you lib long enough yourself!"

said Aurelius, angrily. "Who do you call 'nigger', you miserable piece o' white trash? Come along here!"

In spite of curses, kicks, and yells, Champe found himself, in a moment, bound to the iron ring in the wall. His coat was literally cut from his shoulders, leaving the upper portion of his back bare. Then Aurelius, baring his great, brawny arms, laughed as we might believe a fiend would laugh in the world of fire which Dante tells us of.

"Dis chile has known how lickin' felt; guess he knows how to put it on, too!" said he. "Shall I pierce, Missy Ella?"

"Yes. Spare him only as he spared others."

"Dat wasn't none at all," said the negro.

And drawing back the great raw hide, he made it whistle through the air before it came down on the back of the victim.

Champe's yell of horror told how fearfully heavy the blow fell.

"Howl on! the walls are thick, and no ears but ours can enjoy your agony!" said Ella. "If I now am merciless, you have but your cruel self to blame!"

Lash after lash fell from the strong arms of Aurelius. Great wales of flesh were cut on the back of the helpless man. The black blood ran out and trickled down to his heels.

At last, the cries of the victim grew more and more faint. Even Aurelius tired in his work. He stopped at a sign from Ella. It was time, for when the blows ceased, Champe swooned away.

"Take him from the wall, bind him upon the block, and give him some brandy to restore him," said Ella.

It was quickly done.

Revived by the stimulant, Champe wondered what next terror he was to endure.

"Shave his head close to the skin!" said Ella.

Aurelius, aided by the other man, now proceeded, in spite of Champe's prayers and struggles, to remove his hair as closely from the skull as possible—first with scissors, then with a razor.

"And now mark his character on his brow, that the world may know him as a villain wherever he is found!" continued Ella.

Champe howled once more for mercy, when when he saw Aurelius take up the red-hot branding-iron.

"Kill me at once, but do not brand me!" he cried.

"Don't make a fuss, mars'r cap'n," said Aurelius, with a grin. "Niggers is branded every day, whether dey like it or not. It isn't much after you've done got used to it. It's only siz-siz, 'fiz-fiz, wid de hot iron, and it's a l over."

"Oh, do let me off now, Miss Adams," moaned Champe. "I'll never say a word about the

flogging; I'll never try to find you out or to hurt you for what you have done! Just let me go now. I'm sure I've suffered enough."

"This is but a little part of the punishment which yet awaits you on this side of the grave," said Ella, sternly. "What is to come after death, heaven only knows. Let the work go on!"

Champe shut his eyes and tried to draw back from the fierce heat of the glowing iron. He could. Nearer it came. He felt its heat, and moaned in speechless horror.

It touched his forehead; he could not draw back any more; the iron, smoking and steaming, sunk to the very bone.

His wild yell would have shaken the infernal vaults below.

The iron was withdrawn. It had done its work. A scarlet V centered the brow—a mark which neither time nor science could efface.

"Give the poor wretch some more brandy!" said Ella; and taking a phial from her pocket, she dropped into the glass, unseen by him, an opiate, which, in a few moments, rendered him insensible to his sufferings.

"Now get him back to his room; if possible, unseen," said Ella. "He will never forget me or this night, although he has not suffered half as much as some whom he has tortured to the death. But this will suffice for a time. It will teach him and his attendant villains that wickedness sometimes meets its reward on earth!"

CHAPTER XXVIII.

When the effects of the opiate passed away, Champe awoke in his own room at the hotel. At first, he thought that he had been suffering under the effects of some horrible dream. But his aching back and burning brow told him that there was reality in his sufferings. So stiff and sore that he could hardly manage to move from his bed, yet he crept from it and went across the room to where the looking-glass hung.

A yell of horror broke from his lips when he saw his branded brow and his close-cropped head. A yell so loud that his servant came rushing into the room.

And he screamed, too; for he did not at first recognize his master in the hideous-looking being who stood before him. He would have fled in affright, but he recognized the voice which called him back.

"Give me some liquor, Sam; I'm sick to death!" groaned Champe, as he staggered back to his bed.

"Gosh, mars'r cap'n, what is de matter?" cried the negro, as he hurried with a glass and bottle to his master. "Has de debil been here heself in de night?"

As Champe had sent the negro off to bed before the carriage came for him, the servant knew nothing of his going out the night before.

RETRIBUTION.



"Don't ask me any questions," groaned Champe, as he drank off a glassful of liquor. "Oh, my back! It is as raw as beef. I must have a doctor. But what can I tell a doctor? It'll have to come out any way. But I'll lay it to the cursed Unionists, and I'll find that Ella Adams out, and skin her alive. I'll torture her to death by inches! I couldn't see her die—no, that would be too good for her. I'd keep her alive and in torment for years!"

And the wretched man gnashed his teeth while he writhed in agony.

"Sam," said he, "go down to my company quarters, and tell the four gentlemen that were here playing cards yesterday to come here right away, and to bring a surgeon with them. Tell them I'm sick; but you need not say what the matter is. Don't tell anybody in the hotel either. Give me another glass of liquor before you go, and then lock the door, and take the key with you, so that no one will come in when you are gone."

"Yes, sah. Golly, but dey won't know you, sah, when dey do come!"

"Yes they will, and they'll avenge me, too. Oh, if cursing would do any good, I'd curse the walls down! Hurry, Sam, my head and back are all on fire."

Champe drank the liquor which the servant brought him, and then sunk back upon his pillows. The boy went out, locking the door as he had been told, and hurried away upon his errand.

And Champe lay there rolling and tossing in agony, while his whole past wicked life seemed to come up before him. He looked back over a career of infamy that made his name too black even for the lowest purveyor of vice in Nashville, from which place, in company with another wretch named Pentecost, he had been obliged to fly.

It seemed a very long time before he heard the steps of his servant returning, for he could not help himself; and those who have known sickness or bodily anguish can tell you that minutes, at such times, seem almost as long as hours at others.

Champe was glad when he heard the key placed in the door-lock, and heard the sound of footsteps and of voices in the hall, and though he almost shrunk from being seen, mutilated as he was, he needed some consolation in his misery.

But what was his surprise, we may as well say horror, to see among the faces which came into the room, and now crowded around his bedside, the stern visage of General Beauregard.

CHAPTER XXIX.

"Who is this? I was told that Captain Champe was here sick, and being in the house with my surgeon, called to see him," said the general, as he looked at the wretched man, who

sunk back speechless for the moment on his pillow.

"I am Captain Champe," at last he stammered.

"You? Who, then, has shorn your head and branded you in the forehead?"

"The cursed Unionists, general! The cursed Unionists!"

"What, here in this city, sir—in this city?"

"Yes, sir. I am the victim of a terrible outrage, and I hope you'll have the perpetrators found out and punished."

"When was this done?"

"Last night, sir."

"Where?"

"I do not know, sir. I went to the place blindfolded."

"You went? Did you go willingly?"

"Yes, sir. That is, sir, I was deceived into it."

"Explain yourself, Captain Champe, and be in a hurry. I have little time to waste."

"I will, sir. A darkey came here and told me a rich young lady had fell in love with me, and wanted to marry me if I liked her; and she sent a carriage after me, and I was to go blindfolded to her house in it."

"Well, go on, I am listening."

"I went to some house, I don't know where. There I was led down into a cellar, and the bandage taken from my eyes. Instead of seeing the lady that I expected, I saw two big niggers and a Yankee school-mistress that I whipped at Rhettville—"

"A woman whom you whipped?" asked the general, sternly.

"One that I had commenced to whip," said Champe, "when some one shot me through the arm. Then a storm came on, and some one else helped her to get away."

"Well, go on. You saw this female and two negroes."

"Yes, sir; and by her orders they tied me up, and whipped me with a cowhide until my back was all raw. Then she had my head shaved and a V branded on my forehead."

Champe in vain looked for a gleam of sympathy in the cold, stern face of the general.

"I hope you'll give orders to have the city searched for the woman, general, for it is a burning shame for a man to be treated so," said he.

"Men never whip women, Mr. Champe," said the general, sternly. "I have had a pretty full report of your doings at Rhettville and in its vicinity, already. And I am aware of your having sold the teams which you forced into your service. Were you worthy of it, I would have you court-martialed; but you are not, and I shall content myself with taking from you your commission as captain, and forcing you to disgorge what funds you have left which belong by right to Mr. Buckner; and if you will take my

advice, you will leave Charleston as quickly and as soon as you can get away. Such scoundrels as you are, are doing more to injure the cause of the Confederacy on Southern soil, than all the efforts of the enemy. Your company will be sent into service on the lines at once, and if these men belong to it, the sooner they are in their quarters the better for them. Orderly," added the general, addressing a soldier who followed him, "go for a sergeant and a file of men and bring them here."

"Oh, forgive me, general! Do not take all my money from me. I'll starve to death. They took a diamond ring from me last night," pleaded Champe.

"Go and sell yourself as a spy to the Federals!" said the general, contemptuously. "You're fit for any dirty work."

The sergeant and guard soon arrived, and Mr. Champe was deprived of his commission and his ill-gotten gains in a hurry. And no sooner had the general gone than he received notice to quit the hotel. His card-playing friends had already left him; and, unkindest cut of all, had emptied his whisky-bottle before they went.

CHAPTER XXX.

Aft a steamer in the Grand Armada, southward bound, struggling for life in a storm-wild ocean. Her decks, above and below, were crowded with brave volunteers—men who would have sought death upon the battle-field with smiling faces, and who even now did not pale, though they were front to front with Death.

The young colonel—Osborn was his name—still stood by Captain Garnett's side on the wheel-house, waiting for whatever fate Providence had in store for them. The engines yet worked nobly, and would, without the fires were choked or some breakage occurred. The spars, all except the short lower masts, had been sent down and stowed when the gale first commenced.

The darkness made the storm seem even more fearful than it was, if such a thing could be. Not one of the other vessels could be seen—not a glimmer of light, except that in the ship's binnacle, and the sparks which flew from the smoke-funnels when the fire in the furnaces were replenished and stirred up, or the occasional ragged bolts of lightning which flew athwart the sky.

"I wish that day would break," said the captain at last. "I think the storm is at its height—it certainly does not increase any now."

The carpenter came to make his half-hourly report.

"Three feet water in the hold, sir; and the pumps keep her about so. But she strains awfully, sir—awfully!"

"Very well. We'll hope for the best. Keep a snice on your face, Mr. Chips, and let the men see that you are cheerful. Smiles are

worth their light in diamonds in times like these."

"Yes, sir, I do my best. When they ask me for the soundin's in the well, I tell 'em they're nothin' worth speakin' of."

"That's right, Mr. Chips. Go to my steward for a stiff glass of grog. It will not hurt you in such weather as this."

"Do you think there is hope?" asked the colonel.

As if to answer, at that moment the clouds broke away for an instant in one spot, and revealed the face of the morning star.

Captain Garnett pointed toward it and smiled.

"Hope," said he, "is the last shot in the locker—the one drop which never gets spilled out of the bucket. It will be daylight in an hour."

Then, raising his trumpet, he shouted: "Lively at the pumps, my brave hearties. The back of the storm is broken. Work steady for an hour, and we'll splice the main-brace."

Many a glad and grateful eye was turned toward the heroic captain, and the men at the pumps worked like New York firemen at a "playing match."

At last the day struggled forward upon the track of reluctant Night, and threw a grayish gleam out upon the tumbling mass of waters.

And as it grew stronger and drove black night off over the waste of waters, the day began to smile and grow rosy about the lips. And the wind did not blow so hard when the breaking clouds began to show glimpses of the light of the rising sun.

And the captain, once more jubilant with hope, shouted to the steward to bring out the liquor, and told his mates to call all hands to splice the "main-brace."

And the colonel, saying with a quiet smile, "keep my secret, captain," left his station on the wheel-house and went down among his men, many of whom were sea sick, and others had been bruised and injured in the storm. Kindly he went among them, speaking a word here and there, and giving his officers orders to look to the welfare of the privates; for well he knew that the officers would take care of themselves.

As the sun rose the gale fell, and gradually the sea lessened, and the steamer heaved less, though her pumps had to be kept going.

Where now was the grand armada which had sailed in three close columns on the day before? Scattered far and wide over the waste of waters. Some of the vessels—few indeed; but some—shattered on a hostile shore. Others sunk forever. Yet its strength was not shorn. It was but a little weakened, and as each vessel had sent orders, to open in case of separation, they now found a general rendezvous appointed.

Toward this our steamer, with all steam on and all sail set, now laid her course. As the day wore on, she sighted vessel after vessel of

the fleet, which had weathered the gale—some in better and some even in worse condition than their own sorely-tried and hard-buffed craft.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Drawing his military cap close down over brow, so that the branded scar thereupon could not be seen, Champe, when he was ignominiously turned from the hotel where he had luxuriated for so short a time, slunk away into an alley which led toward a part of the town which bore in that city much the character of what the "Five Points" was once in New York, before the light of philanthropy bettered its crime-clouded regions. By what he termed the best of "luck", one secret pocket had escaped the search of the Confederate sergeant, and in it were hidden nearly fifty dollars in Federal gold—a sum which, in that era of shin-plasters, might be made to go a considerable way, in a pecuniary and subsidiary point of view.

That Champe had been in this crime-sodden quarter of the city before, was evident from the fact that more than one of the low grog-shop keepers, who stood by their doors as he passed, spoke to him, and, addressing him by name, asked him in to partake of some of their mixtures of aquafortis, strychnine, and turpentine, by them termed gin, rum and whisky. But he refused all these invitations until he reached a low-looking old shell of a building, over the door of which was a sign which, weather-beaten and faded, bore these words:

"D. ROGERS,
keeps boarders and licker. And ships sailors and byes
junk and old iron."

That the painter who got up that sign had not been much acquainted with the school-master, was evident.

Into the low entrance of this house Champe turned. There was but one person in the smoky-looking room which opened on the street, and which served for a bar and sitting-room, judging from the wooden benches around its sides, and the black, nasty-looking bottles upon some dirty shelves in the rear of a greasy counter.

And this person was the proprietor. For Champe hailed him by the cognomen on the sign. He was a short, thick-set man, gray-eyed, with a squint in each eye which seemed to be trying to get a look at the other over his pug nose. His hair looked like the singed bristles of a scorched hog, and his whole appearance indicated an utter disregard for soap and a great fondness for rum and tobacco.

Why, Billy Champe! What in the name of Moses is the matter with you?" he asked, as Champe entered. "What's become of your hair?"

"I'll tell you by-and-by," said Champe, gloomily. "But now I want a glass of your best whisky—none of the poison you sell to com-

mon customers; but some of that that you save for your own gullet. And then I want you to go out to a second-hand clothing store to buy me some other clothes, and to go somewhere to get me a wig."

Rogers took out a bottle from under the counter which contained a little less poison than those on the shelves; and putting two thick-bottomed tumblers on the counter, filled both to the brim.

Champe eagerly seized one and emptied it.

"That's the sort," said he. "It brings the breath o' life into me again."

"You look as if the breath of life had been pretty near dragged out of you," said Rogers. "Will you tell me now what the deuce is the matter with you?"

"Yes, if you'll not desert me, like the rest of the miserable cusses that have been loafing on my bounty for days, and then run away from me, without a word, this morning, when they saw me in trouble."

"You've got money yet, haven't you?" asked Rogers.

"Yes," said Champe, "you'll not find me without that."

"Then you know I'll not desert you? I never deserted a man yet that had money about him. No, sir! Fill up your glass, Bill, and you'll feel more like talking."

And, by way of example, Rogers filled his own glass a second time, and emptied it as Champe did the same, for the latter could begin now to use one of his arms a little.

Champe now told Rogers the whole of his previous night's adventure, and, also, how he had been treated by Beauregard; only omitting to state that a large portion of his money had been taken from him. When he had got through, Rogers expressed his astonishment by a prolonged whistle.

"Well, you have had a time," said he. "I wouldn't have gone through it for a hundred dollars, much as I love money. It was mean in Beauregard to treat you so. If that's the way he treats his fighin' men, he'll maybe find a bullet in his own back some warm day."

"Yes, by thunder! and I'm the chap to put it there," said Champe. "But now, old fellow, take this ten-dollar gold piece, and get me the wig and a change of clothes. I've got to put on a disguise, for I don't want to be known as Bill Champe just now. I must be into some new work before long, for my money won't last always."

"You're welcome to stay at my house just as long as it does," said Rogers, looking at the gold in his hand, with his squint eyes, as affectionately as a dog would upon a piece of meat when he'd been at starvation-point for a week.

"Well—hurry up and get my things. Somebody may be in that I don't want to see in my present fix."

"No danger. It's too early for my kind of customers. This cursed war has knocked my boarding business into a cocked hat. You tend bar till I come back."

And the dumpy landlord went after the things which Champe desired.

He was gone but a little while. He returned with a red, frowsy-looking wig, which, having whiskers attached, could be made to fit and stay on the head uncommonly well. He also brought a suit of coarse-looking sailor's clothes, which would enable Champe to assume a very different character from that which his present uniform indicated.

"There!" said Rogers, as he untied the bundle, and exhibited these things to Champe. "When you get them duds on, and rub a little Spanish brown over your face and hands, you'll pass for anybody else but Bill Champe. You can draw the wig down low enough on your forehead to hide that cussed scar. And there's a Scotch cap that'll fit tight, so as to keep on your wig, you see. Go into t'other room, and get the boy there to help you to put 'em on. I'll take care of your uniform afterward. It'll sell first-rate now; for uniforms is hard to get, they say."

Champe was not a great while in making the desired change in his appearance. When he came out, he was so completely altered that, had not Rogers furnished him with the materials for the change, he would not have known him.

"By the jumpin' Moses, but you're well done up!" said the landlord, in surprise. "Your own brother, if you had one, wouldn't know you. What shall I call you now—eh, Bill?"

"Call me Bill Bowers," said Champe. "The Bill will come handy, you know."

"Yes, so it will. I suppose you'll stand treat for the christenin' won't you?"

"To be sure! Any change left out of that ten?"

"Nary red! The wig and clothes cost it all," said Rogers, without a blush, though one-third of the identical ten yet remained in his pocket.

And he set out the black bottle and thick-bottomed tumblers once more.

After the two worthies had drank, Champe turned to Rogers, and said:

"I'm a thinkin' what to do now to keep the devil out of my mind!"

"What do you want to do? As long as you have money I don't see what you want to do anything for. If times was as they used to be, when you and me went partners in many a game o' cards, you could skin a big livin' out of sailors and other fools that would turn up here. But now there's hardly a dozen sailors in port, and they haven't any money. The only custom I get from that sort is from two or three schooners' crews that run the blockade, and get betwixt here and Havana once in a

while. They have money, but it is only once in a long while that I see anything of 'em. Cuss the war; it has broke up all my business."

"Curse them that's at the head of it now!" said Champe. "I was doing first rate when Beauregard put his nose in the way. My boys was good at anything I put 'em at, and I could have made a fortune with them in a little while. But I shan't be down-hearted for a little bad luck. I'll make something pay. The world owes me a living, and I'll have it, some way or other."

"That's right, Bill. I glory in your spunk. Let's take a drink on that. My treat this time."

"I'll drink this once, but then I'll hold up," said Champe; "for I'm going to take a walk over the city. I may get on the track of that cursed woman, Ella Adams; and if I do, God help her! she'll rue the hour that ever I was born."

"Better be careful, Bill," said Rogers; "they got the better of you last time."

"Yes, but the lesson I learned then has sharpened my wits, I reckon. With this wig on, no one will know me."

"You can bet high on that. But don't be gone long, Bill. I'm lonesome here, and some one may be along that would play a game o' cards, you know, and then I'd want you for a partner; and I some think that one o' the schooners I told you of will run the blockade to-night, and if she gets in, there'll be a sure chance for you and me to make a few dollars."

"I'll not be gone long," said Champe. And draining his glass, he went out.

Passing along the same street which he had come down, he had an excellent chance to test his disguise. The very men who had spoken to him as he passed along before, now gazed at him as a stranger; and even several females of undoubted character whom he had known before, now hailed him as a stranger, and, as usual, endeavored to entice him into the dens of misery and sin which they inhabited. Pleased and emboldened with the knowledge that he could pass unknown in his new character, he hurried on, and soon found himself in the better portion of the city. He thought first of visiting the quarters of the company which he had lately commanded, but rather feared to trust his disguise among the keen-eyed villains who had known him so well.

But, well disguised as he was, he was known to one person, who had followed him from the moment he left the hotel until the moment when, after perambulating many of the principal streets of the city, he stopped at a second-class saloon on the "Bay", and laying a piece of money on the bar, asked for a glass of Bourbon. But he did not see this person before, or for a moment think that he had been watched or followed.

The person to whom we allude appeared to be a Spaniard, both by his complexion and manner. He also approached the bar a moment after Champe did, and called for a lemonade.

Glancing at Champe, he asked, in a careless way: "Out of a berth, my lad?"

Glancing, with a look of surprise at his interlocutor, Champe hesitated in his reply. But, supposing from his dress and appearance that he might be a shipping-merchant, or perhaps a sea-captain, he said:

"Yes, sir, out o' my last, but in no particular hurry for another. I'm lame in my fins, you see. Got a shot or two in the locker left, and mean to spend 'em afore I ship again. Not much chance of a ship, either, now, I reckon?"

"More chance than every one knows of," said the man, quietly. "When you get tired of doing nothing, and want employment, come to this address." And he handed the pretended sailor a card.

"Yes, sir," said Champe, touching his Scotch cap.

The gentleman paid for his lemonade, and went out.

"Sanchez!" said Champe, looking at the card. "No. 2000 Queen street. I wonder what he is. May be he is one of the men that owns vessels running the blockade. Rogers will know, for he knows everybody. I must get into something before long. Rogers will be all right as long as I have money to spend with him, but the louse-hearted curse will turn on me the moment my tin is gone. I know him. People count me mean—that is, people that know me—but I can't hold a candle to him. He'd play cards on his mother's coffin, if he had a chance of winning half a dime by it!"

CHAPTER XXXII.

It was evening again. Ella Adams, pale, quiet as ever, sat in the pleasant parlor of Mr. Sanchez, listening to the dulcet voice of his daughter, as she sang a quaint old ballad taken from Lockhart's Castilian translations.

Mr. Sanchez came in, and then both the wife and daughter went to prepare the evening meal, for they kept no servant.

"What news has my kind host for me this evening?" asked Ella.

"Considerable," said Sanchez, with a smile. "First, our victim of last night has been deprived of his commission, stripped of his stolen money, and sent adrift by General Beauregard; but in a new disguise he is prowling about the city, ready for some new villainy. But I have traced him up closely, know where he stops, and have so arranged matters that he will, most likely, call on me if he wants a situation. At any rate, I can keep an eye on him without exciting his suspicion."

"Excellent! But how can he go along with his branded forehead?"

"A wig, drawn down almost to his eyebrows, conceals that for the present."

"We should have branded his cheeks," said Ella.

"I have more news. General Beauregard is ordered to Virginia, and a new general will take his place here."

"So much the better. It will be the more easy to carry my grand plan out," said Ella. "General Beauregard is a very strict disciplinarian, and has an eye open to every danger."

"Is it not almost time, fair lady, that you should reveal to me what your grand plan is?" asked Sanchez, earnestly. "You promised that you would, whenever the proper time came."

Ella hesitated; but at last she said:

"Mr. Sanchez, though you may not feel as I do, or even believe as I do, that I am inspired from on high to aid in putting down this wicked rebellion against the best and most liberal Government on earth; yet I feel that I can at least trust you—that you will never betray me."

"Of the last, fair lady, rest most solemnly assured," replied Sanchez; "of the first, I have not expressed doubts. You know well how I detest the aristocracy of slaveholders around me; how I hold no part or lot with them or their acts; and how I hope, in the more liberal North, to see those for whom I have toiled so long, elevated, socially, to an equality with a society that they are fitted to adorn. For this last reason, if for no other, I would not only countenance any and all of your plans, but aid you; as I yet hope for your aid when we have left this region to its fate, whatever that may be."

Ella paused a little while, and with her eyes fixed upon his, seemed to study his thoughts as she had his words.

"What would you say were you to see all Charleston in flames?"

"I would say that if my own property was sold or not involved, that I cared but little what became of the rest. Singular as it may seem, among the wealthy of this city there is not one person whom I desire to call friend, or to whom I owe a favor."

"Well, Mr. Sanchez, you have my secret. My grand plan is to strike rebellion to the heart by firing the principal cities of the South and destroying their arms and munitions of war, wherever I can. Aided by discontented slaves, it will not be a difficult task."

"More difficult than you seem to imagine, lady," said Sanchez, thoughtfully. "The penalty is so fearful that the negro will hardly risk it. And if one who was let into the secret should be terrified into betraying it, terrible would be the fate of all concerned."

"True; but few need ever be in the secret, and they such as would meet death without fear, and whom no torture would force into confession."

"In short, such as you would not find one out of ten thousand," said Mr. Sanchez. "Yet I will not discourage you. All that I ask and advise is patience. Delays, in some cases, are dangerous—in this matter, I see safety in prudence and delay. Heavy Federal expeditions are known to be fitted out at the North, destined undoubtedly for some part of the South. They may land here or near here, and then your act would aid them."

"You are right, my friend. I will have patience. But what will I do with the Wilsons? They will think that I have forgotten and utterly deserted them."

"They will be here with us in a day or two. Aurelius is to go up the river to them to-night, and I will arrange for their safety after they arrive. It is not likely that Wilson is known here—if he is, he can be disguised with little trouble. He can then work at his trade until a chance arrives for him to reach the Federal lines."

"You are very kind and thoughtful, Mr. Sanchez. I know not how I shall ever repay you."

"Speak not of that," said Sanchez. "But there is the tea-bell. I am not sorry to hear it, for I have not broken fast since morning."

And rising, the polite host bowed and motioned for Ella to precede him to the supper-room.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Night and day were very different in the establishment of Mr. D. Rogers, in Shimbone Alley, for his customers were few, and their visits far between. But when night came with its murky shadows, a set of bear-eyed men and women began to creep out from their squalid kennels thereabouts, and to call in for their customary doses of "red-eye", as they termed their favorite poison. And they lighted their little black pipes at one of the two tallow candles which made darkness a little less than visible in his begrimed barroom, and from thence sent up clouds of sickening smoke.

And as the night wore on, the number of visitors increased, and the landlord was kept quite busy dispensing red-eye—so busy, in fact, that he had to call in the temporary assistance of a girl who, in general, acted as his cook and housekeeper, but sometimes, as now, performed the extra duties of barmaid.

Not mingling with the general run of customers, but seated in a corner near the bar, where he could have his glass occasionally replenished from the bottle of Bourbon from under the counter, sat Champe, gazing with an air of indifference upon the motley set who came and went, or loafed about the room.

Once in a while Rogers would get time to exchange a word with him, but not often. When he did, he addressed him by the name of Bill Bowers, as before agreed upon.

Nothing unusual occurred until near midnight, when half a dozen men in seamen's dress

came in. The eyes of the landlord sparkled when he saw them.

"Hallo, boys!" he cried. "Is the 'Ceres' in? Have you run the blockade again, eh?"

"Yes, old grampus, here we are!" cried one, who seemed by his dress to be an officer of inferior grade. "We got clear of the Feds by the skin of our teeth, though. They've got a thundering fleet off our coast! They mean to land somewhere hereabouts—the Lord knows where. There's more than fifty sail of them, men-of-war and troop-ships, and we run the gauntlet of them all by having false papers and showing Yankee colors. But out with your grog—the best, mind you; not that kill-devil, forty-fathom stuff of yours."

"Come in the back-room, boys," said Rogers. "I'll set you out some liquor there that can't be beat in nary hotel in Charleston, not to speak of boarding-houses. There's an old friend of mine just down from Norfolk, Bill Bowers—he'll join us if you like. He got hurt up there, and had to quit work. The first treat is mine, at any rate, for I'm glad to see you in safe again. This running the blockade is risky business."

"Aye, that it is!" said one of the seamen; "but it is better than privateering; for they won't stretch a fellow's neck if they do catch him running the blockade."

Rogers now led the way to an inner room, followed by the seaman and Champe. Here he placed some glasses and a couple of bottles on a greasy table, and put a cigar-box full of tobacco and a lot of pipes on it, also.

"There, gents," said he, "go in and help yourselves. That Bourbon is ten years old if it's a day, and there's no water in it. I know how to treat my friends. Common stuff for common trash; but for men that I like, the best that can be got is none too good."

"And I believe you like those best that pays best," said one of the seamen.

"Of course. That's human nature, isn't it?" said Rogers, with a laugh. "Did you have a full cargo in, boys?"

"Of course! We wouldn't run the risk we do, with an empty bottom."

"Any salt?"

"Yes—a little. But more powder and lead. That pays best. The Johnny Bulls bring our loads for us; they're making a snug thing out of the war."

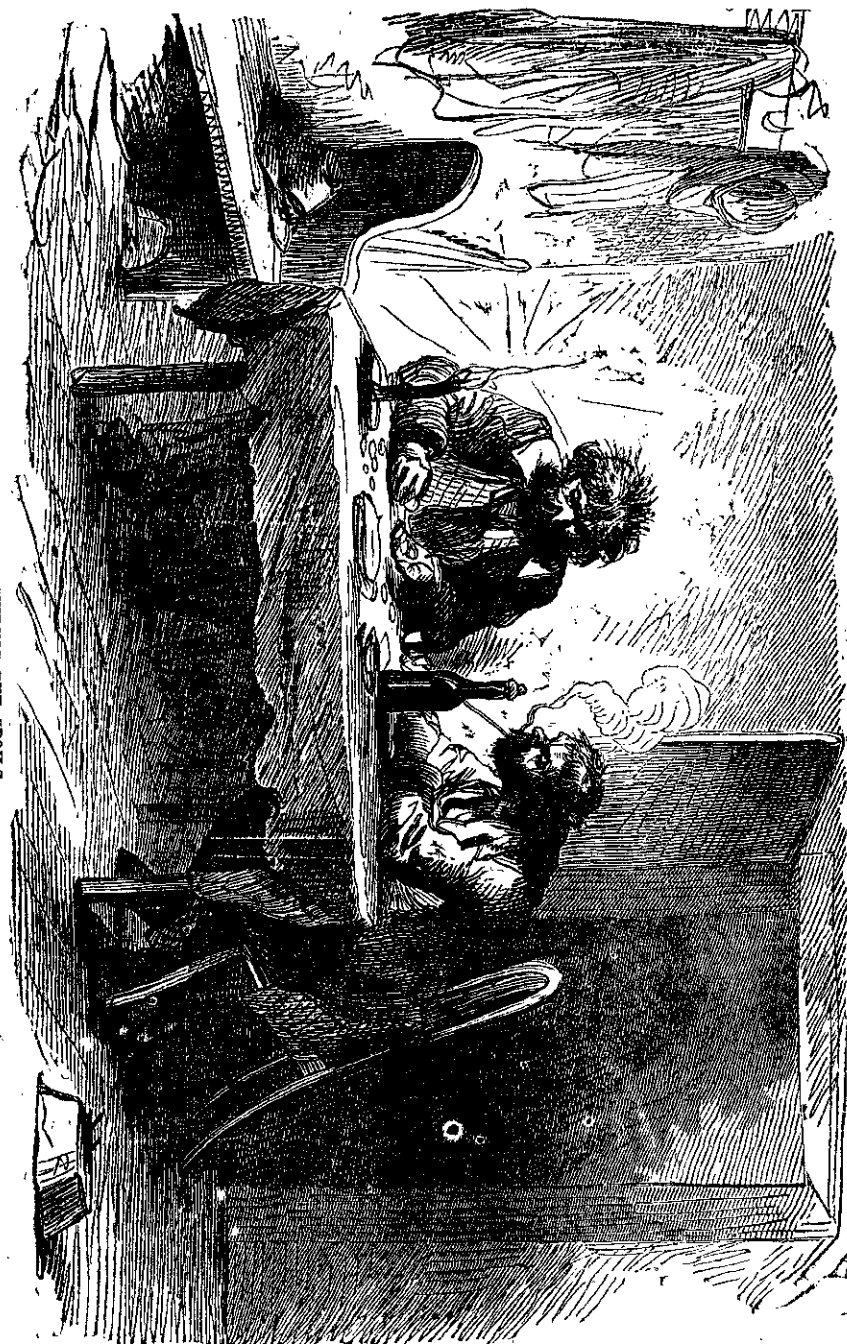
"Well, let 'em. Who cares? I'd like to make something out of it—but I can't. It has knocked my business cold. What do you say to a game o' cards, boys?"

"We're in for it," said several.

"Suppose, as there's so many of us, we make it faro. I reckon Bill Bowers will set up a bank—won't you, Bill?"

"I'm not much of a dealer—but I'll bank for you, if you'll deal," said Champe. "I'm too much crippled to deal anyway, just now."

DIVIDING THE SPOILS.



"That's a go!" cried Rogers.

And while the men were tasting his Bourbon, he drew out another table and arranged a faro cloth upon it. The cards, dealing-box, and checks were next produced, showing that games of faro were not very rare things in that house.

Leaving the crew of the "Ceres" to deal with the two unprincipled villains, whom I have so truthfully described, we will try to find a purer atmosphere. It would be impossible to get into a worse one.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

"Ain't it glorious! See how old Dupont runs right under the noses of their guns. Colonel, I've loved the navy all my life; but never before so much as now."

These words of enthusiasm were uttered by our friend, Captain Garnett, whose steamer now anchored with the other transports, lay in the bay below Hilton Head. The person whom he addressed, was our friend Colonel Osborn, who stood with him upon the little platform on the wheel-house, watching with intense interest the splendid manner in which the naval portion of the expedition, under Commodore Dupont, was pitching shot and shell into the rebel batteries upon Hilton Head and the point opposite.

"The noble old seaman will leave the army nothing to do," said the colonel, with a sigh.

"He will soon knock those batteries to pieces. If we only had our men on shore, to cut off the retreat of their flying garrisons, I would be satisfied."

"Never mind, colonel; your time will come soon enough," said the captain, with a smile. "Don't begrudge the navy boys their chance now. They don't get one often. Jupiter! how the commodore pitches into them. Round and round—he don't give them much time to get his range. He fires two shots to their one, and the other vessels are doing as well. Rebel blood must be running inside of these walls faster than water in a spring thaw."

"They cannot stand it long," said the colonel. "I have counted their guns, and more than half which they fired at first, are silenced."

"And the gunners that fired them are silenced too, I'll warrant," said Garnett. "This will choke down some of our Northern croakers who say we're doing nothing, I guess. I'll bet toddies I go back to York, loaded with cotton."

"I wonder why they don't let us land with the troops?" said the colonel, impatiently. "The rebels will be sure to run before long, and then we'll have no chance at them."

"They'll rally somewhere on the sacred soil," said Garnett, with a laugh. "They're the descendants of Marion, Horry, and Sumpter, you know."

"Yes, low enough descended!" said the colonel. "Descended so far that even the Tories o-

the Revolution would scorn to associate with them after death. But look at the right-hand fort, captain—it has ceased to fire."

"Ay; so it has," said the captain, and he raised his telescope, to look more carefully.

"The rebel flag is lowered," cried the colonel.

"Yes; and the rebels are running away in the rear, like a flock of scared sheep. Thunder! How they leg it—knots can't be counted where they are."

"The other fort is silenced also. There go our boats ashore, to take possession," cried the colonel. "Oh, why are we here idle, when those rebels could be cut off!"

"Patience, colonel, and let your men get over their sea-sickness. Remember they've had a hard time of it."

"True—true! But all the work here has been done by the navy."

"But there's more left for you. These forts only give us a harbor. There are cities to take, and more than one army to oppose, inland; or I'm mistaken. The rebels will not give up because we've taken a couple of their forts here."

"True. But hark to the cheers! There goes our dear old flag up on the rebel flag-staff!"

"Aye; there it goes! Hear the boys cheer, from ship to ship. Let's swell the chorus here! All hands ready for three cheers, and repeat. Here's the time for you; watch the motion of my cap!"

"Hurrah! hurrah! hurrah! A tiger, and three more."

How the wild, glad cheers rolled along the waters of that harbor! From near thirty thousand throats, the glad tidings rang, until earth, sea, and sky, seemed full of echoes.

And then came the signals for the transports to close up, and for the troops to prepare to land. How joyously was this last order received. For the colonel's corps, cooped up in close quarters, banged and thumped about on a tempestuous ocean, had not enjoyed their voyage, and a transfer to terra firma was the first desire of their hearts, just then.

The transports now, with colors flying, and with crews cheering, closed up with the men of war, and anchoring as near the shore as possible, began to discharge their living cargoes.

CHAPTER XXXV.

The morning dawned upon the city before the seamen of the "Ceres" left the infatigable gaming table, spread before them by Rogers and his colleague, Champe. For the two practiced and cunning gamblers, used to every trick of the game; and, as is customary with men of their class, dealing from a false box, permitted their dupes, once in a while, to win back a few dollars of their losses, and thus led them on, with a hope that they might, by persistence, get square.

Liquor was freely provided, and a substantial

lunch set close by the card-table; and this, without charge, made the sailors, in their own natural generosity of heart, think that Rogers was really a capital fellow. Pretty well provided with money, they kept the game lively until its very close, which occurred only when they were literally "cleaned out", or, in other words, had individually and collectively lost every dollar which they had with them.

"The bank is in luck, this time, boys; but one spell, you had the luck all on your side! I thought sure you'd break me," said Champe, when the game closed.

"Never mind—better luck next time. Pitch into the whisky, boys!" said Rogers. "It's as free as water, and a confounded sight better!"

"That's so! To the deuce with such luck as we've had!" cried the second-mate of the "Ceres." "But a chap has no right to expect fair weather all the time. What was up at Norfolk, when you left there, shipmate?"

The last question was addressed to Champe—or rather, Mr. Bill Bowers, as he had been introduced.

"Nothing much. Trade dull—everything blocked up," said Champe.

"Does old Waters keep hotel there, yet?"

"I believe so. I was up at the Navy Yard, and don't know much about the hotels."

"Norfolk is a jolly place for good-looking gals, and plenty of 'em. I've seen gay times there, under the old flag! But, boys, it's daylight, as sure as we're sinners. I'm off for the vessel; for I haven't had a wink of sleep these two nights, and I could stand forty of 'em, I think, without growling."

The crew of the "Ceres" left with the mate, and Rogers and Champe proceeded to count and divide the spoils, with no fear of interruption, for the bar-maid had closed the outside door, the other customers having dropped off as the night passed away.

"Four hundred and thirty dollars—two hundred and fifteen pieces!" said Rogers, as Champe counted out the money. "We've done a fair night's work, haven't we Bill?"

"Yes—considering the times!" said Bill. "But in old Nashville, with my old chum Pontecost, I've done ten times as well many and many a night! But in these days such a haul as this counts. Those chaps were precious green. I don't believe they ever heard of a false box, and thought we were dealing as square as a couple of bricks!"

"Of course—but, Bill, take a nip. We've had to touch the bottle lightly to night, and a drop or two won't hurt us afore we turn in. It's my bed-hour now. If I can sleep from daylight to eight or nine in the morning, I've all the rest I want!"

"I don't feel sleepy!" said Bill. "I was just thinking where that Yankee fleet was going to land, that those fellows were talking about!"

"Not here!" said Rogers. "We've too many forts for them! Maybe they're off for New Orleans!"

"Well, I don't care where they land! I'm not interested in the matter, just now! I wouldn't raise a hand for the Confederates to save my life, after the way I've been treated! And if I ever get a chance to pay Beaugard off for his treatment, I'll do it if I hang for it. It wasn't enough for me to have to suffer as I've done. He had to heap more fire on my pile of misery! If I had a chance, I'd do what he told me to. If they'd pay, I'd let the Fed's know every weak spot on the coast that I knew of, or could find out!"

"So would I, if it would pay!" said the other. "Pay is what I goes in for, even if the devil is paymaster. That is, I like to get pay. To pay out, though, it isn't in my line. I don't believe in it, no way! For if I keep all I get, and have luck, I shall be a rich man one of these days, and then I'll go where folks don't know me, and play gentleman, just to see how it goes! Did you ever play gentleman, Bill?"

"Yes—I've tried it on—but when it doesn't come by nature, it's a pretty hard job. I tried it at the hotel—had my servant and iced-juleps at fifty cents a piece, and my meals served in my room! But when they told me to leave, or they'd make a nigger kick me out, the gentleman part was done gone for me, and I felt as mean as I would if I wanted a drink o' red-eye, and had nary a red to get it with, and a nigger told me he wouldn't trust me! But I'm off for bed for an hour or two."

"So am I! My tumble-down is behind the bar—you can go up stairs!"

CHAPTER XXXVI.

The thunder of cannonry had ceased. The red lightning of artillery no longer flashed through the smoke-laden air. The battle of Port Royal had been fought and won. The chivalry of South Carolina had fled far beyond the "last ditch" of their fortifications. They had left Beaufort, the beautiful, with all its residences, its lonely gardens, its orange groves and other charms, to the mercy of the Yankee invaders, whose arms alone protected it and its property from utter despoilation at the hands of those "faithful" slaves who would stand by their masters until—well, until they had a chance to get away from them. Faithful darkeys! Glorious institution which insures fidelity with the chain and the lash! Great institution for "freemen" to boast of and to fight for!

The troops had all been landed at Hilton Head and its vicinity, and now were anxious for the next grand move on the military chess-board.

But what that was to be, they knew as little as would the senseless blacks upon the chess-board before a Morphy laid fingers on them.

Even those who watched the game most closely could but conjecture what the next move would be.

It was night in the Federal Camp. Taps had been sounded, and the song of the contraband and the hum of soldier voices had sunk into silence. Over the waters yet came glams of light from the vessels at anchor, but only the watch-fire of the guard could be seen in the encampment on shore.

But in one large, marquee tent lights yet shone, for it was the headquarters of the general in command of the expedition.

Upon a rude pine table in the centre of it, were maps, coast-charts, and writing materials in abundance. Around the table, with their faces turned to the commanding general to listening to some remarks which he was making, were the field-officers of the division, and the commodore of the fleet and his executive officers.

That this was a council of war was evident from the fact, that officers patrolled around the marquee at a sufficient distance to be themselves out of listening distance from those who spoke within; also that a double line of sentinels were posted still outside of them, and the rank of the officers in consultation also told the same story.

"Through the skill and bravery of Commodore Dupont, and the gallant men under him, we have been enabled to gain a foothold upon the enemy's soil," said General Sherman. "The first portion of my orders has been consummated. But gentlemen, we have a great deal to do, although our march into the interior will not be immediate, and even ultimately will depend entirely upon governing circumstances. The enemy, after they have learned our strength, may make the rash attempt to dislodge us from this position. They have the advantage of railroad communication but a few miles back, which extends to every point of their Confederacy. They may, if desperation urges them to folly, soon collect a large army to attack us here. We must prepare for that by intrenchments at once. I can lead an advance, but I do not understand the nature of a retreat. Nor do I mean to learn its nature in the presence of rebels. You understand me, without doubt. Next, I must impress upon all the commanding officers of regiments, as well as brigades, the necessity of using every spare hour in drilling and perfecting their men in arms and discipline. Well-drilled and thoroughly-disciplined volunteers are invincible. They connect the self-reliant independence of the man who has voluntarily become a soldier, with the knowledge and precision of the veteran. They act as if arms are the vocation of their love and their choice. I have, gentlemen, the utmost confidence in you and the men you command. All that I ask is, let nothing be left undone to improve them,

nothing left to add to their comfort and efficiency.

"And now, gentlemen, I come to the most important and delicate matter of this evening's consultation—one which I only name to you because I require your aid in selecting for a dangerous but most important duty some persons whose fidelity, tact, and courage will be tested to the uttermost degree. If they are detected, they must die—not as soldiers are willing to die—but as spies.

"It is necessary that I have constant knowledge of the movements of the enemy, and especially of their movements in and about Charleston. I must know if re-enforcements are coming down toward us, and what they intend to do. Although we are a portion of a grand cordon which is eventually to close all around them, we are now isolated and far from any connecting link to strengthen us. I have planned a method by which those whom I send for information can, without suspicion, gain access to the presence of the enemy. I shall prepare a small prize-schooner now in our possession with a cargo of rum, salt, and other necessities, to run the blockade under the English flag, hailing from the British West Indies. Now, I need a person who can act the Englishman well to officiate as her owner; another as her captain; and four or five more as crew. If the men conceal their true characters from the enemy, there will be but little danger in the enterprise; for, with proper signals they can run the blockade out as well as in—our fleet off the port being properly instructed. What do you think of the plan, commodore?"

"That is excellent. I will lend you an officer for a captain who will carry the vessel in and out, if it can be done by any man. And probably I can find among some of my officers those who will act as the crew on this occasion; for I take it that it would be most safe to employ officers on such a mission."

"Certainly! The owner of the vessel must be selected from among my own officers. Who will volunteer for that post?"

"I will, general," said the same officer whom we have met twice or thrice in company with Captain Garnett.

"Your face is hardly red enough to enable you to pass for an ale-drinking Englishman, Colonel Osborn," said the general, with a smile.

"I can pass capitally as a Bluenose,* general, the more especially that I am well acquainted in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Canada," replied Osborn.

"Upon second thought, the idea suits me. There are so many West India vessels said to be shipping in and out of the harbors in spite of the blockade, that it would be more safe for

* Bluenose is a name given to persons from the British Provinces.

our vessel to hail from a North-British provincial port. Thanks for the suggestion, colonel. You shall carry it out, and may make your preparations as speedily as possible. A small code of signals will be given to you verbally; for you must have no papers to compromise you. And no one not present, gentlemen, except those who go upon the expedition, must know of our plans. We cannot be too guarded; for many a precious life is saved by prudence."

The consultation was now brought to a close, and the officers sought their separate quarters.

We who are, with Captain Garnett, in possession of Colonel Osborn's secret, may "guess" why he volunteered to become a spy.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

The wharves at Charleston were filled with people, who were watching with intense interest a small vessel which, before a strong northeasterly gale, had boldly run the blockade in the broad light of day. That she had not done it without risk, was evident, not only from the furious cannonade of her pursuers, who followed her until they were almost under fire from the shore-batteries, but from the shot-holes in her canvas, which was pretty thoroughly riddled.

But she was in, and bearing up for the principal wharf, with English colors flying at her peak, and an improvised though not very showy Confederate flag at the fore.

Cheer after cheer rose from the crowd on the wharves as she came nearer and nearer; and when, at last, she dropped her anchor close in by the wharves, and her sails were lowered, a half dozen boats put off to board her.

Foremost of these was a barge, in which sat General Drayton, the commanding officer of the district. By his side was the Collector of the Port and the English consul, both of whom had been invited by him to a seat in his barge.

Ordering all other boats to keep off until his interview was over, the general was quickly set alongside of the schooner.

He was received on deck by two persons, one of whom—a palish, rather sea-sick-looking gentleman—announced himself as Edgar Bolton, owner of the British schooner "Palmerston," and introduced the other as Captain Smythe.

"Glad to see you, gentlemen. You've made a splendid dash in running the blockade as you have," said the general. "As I have just said to Mr. Numscull, your consul here, a few such examples of British success in breaking the Yankee paper-blockade will cause both England and France to recognize its inefficiency."

"There was something besides paper flying about our ears a bit ago," said Captain Smythe. "I'm jolly glad we're in. Suppose you step

below, gentlemen, and try a little rum punch with ice in it. The consul would like to see our papers, too, most likely."

General Drayton needed no pressing to go below to take some rum punch with ice in it. Neither did his companions require a great deal of persuasion. For ice was a great rarity to them. How Charleston, and Mobile, and New Orleans will pass another summer without "pure Boston ice", the good saints may know, but will scarcely tell.

And in a few moments the group around the small table in the little dingy cabin of the schooner were looking with watery eyes upon the "labor of love" which the owner and captain of the "Palmerston" were engaged in—that of preparing the punch aforementioned.

Mr. Bolton's long, lean figure, encased in a suit of Nova Scotia check, with a very small cap on his fair-sized head, was bent over the table—for he could not stand upright in the cabin—while he cut and squeezed the lemons; Captain Smythe, who was shorter, put the sugar and rum in the bowl and stirred them up; while a thin, knock-kneed cabin-boy stood shivering with a large lump of ice in his hands, waiting for orders to put that in.

General Drayton, in undress uniform, and the Collector and Consul, sat on the transom-bench close by, conversing with the owner about his cargo, voyage out, and what he'd like to carry back.

"Your cargo is general. Any ammunition with it?" asked the Confederate officer.

"No, sir. I thought it rather too risky," said Mr. Bolton. "I have salt, flour—Canada brands—and a lot of fine Nova Scotia potatoes."

"All articles much needed here—especially the salt," said the general.

"Also some blankets, salt fish, and onions."

"You will find a ready sale for everything, at high prices," said the general; "but money is scarce."

"I'd rather have cotton," said Bolton. "I can carry that to the West Indies and get things there that you need, and try my fortune again on the blockade."

"So you can. I admire your courage and enterprise," said the general.

By this time, the punch was mixed, and full tumblers filled.

"Here's to the Queen, God bless her!" said Bolton and Smythe, as, having helped their guests, they raised their own glasses to their lips.

"And the Confederacy," added the general and collector, on their account.

"You will take quarters on shore while your vessel is in port, will you not, Mr. Bolton?" asked the general.

"Yes, sir. The captain and myself always go to a hotel in port. The schooner is not

very comfortable; but she carries well and sails well; therefore, one can put up with discomfort at sea."

"I would offer you quarters at my house, but it is filled with officers at the present," said the consul. "You have heard of the general's misfortune at Port Royal, I presume?"

"No, sir!" said Bolton, opening his eyes with apparent surprise.

"The Yankees came there with an immense fleet and overwhelming numbers, and forced the general to retire after a most gallant defence."

"How lucky we were that we didn't run for Port Royal!" said Captain Smythe. "We talked of doing it, because we thought it wouldn't be blockaded so closely as this place. It was jolly good luck that we made up our minds to try this place first."

"How did you get by the Yankees? We saw you chased in, but wondered how you passed them."

"We ran right close alongside of one of 'em in the night, and told 'em we were an American from Havana, with nearly all hands down with the yellow fever, and wanted help. They told us to lay under their lee until morning, and then they'd see what they could do for us. They didn't want us to windward of them with that disease on board. So we rounded to to leeward of them, and hoisted a light as they ordered. Of course, we drifted in shore, and when daylight came our drift had got us pretty nearly out of gun-shot of them. We up sails then and increased the distance to the best of our ability—and here we are."

"Tricked them by a regular Yankee trick. Good, by the gods of war!" cried the tickled general. "Mr. Bolton, you and your captain must dine with me to-day."

"We will, sir, if you will accept a saddle of fat Nova Scotia mutton from our ice-chest."

"It will be a luxury," said the general, "and I accept it on the conditions. By the way, you will need passes and the countersign every day—for we are very strict with strangers in the city. I will furnish them to you. You will very likely quarters at the Memminger House—a new hotel, named after the great financial chief of the Confederacy. I will daily send my orderly to inquire if I can do you any favor."

"You are very kind, general. We do not wish to put you to so much trouble."

"It will be only a pleasure. We cannot do too much for those who risk their all, as you have done, to communicate with us."

After a few more glasses of punch, the general and his friends returned on shore; the collector informing Mr. Bolton that there would be no duties or port charges for him to pay, and the consul also requesting them to visit him often.

The general took the saddle of "Nova Scotia

mutton" on shore, little thinking that not two weeks had elapsed since it was hanging in the stall of one of our best Fulton Market butchers in New York city. But so it was.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

"Another craft has run the blockade, Rogers!" cried Champe, as he returned to his "boarding-house" from a visit to the wharves.

"What vessel?" asked the landlord, removing the stump of a dirty pipe from between his snaggy teeth.

"I can't say. She was a schooner, and wore English colors. General Drayton and some other chaps went on board, and seemed in high glee when they came back. I reckon they found something good to drink on board."

"They mostly carry such stuff, them Englishers," said Rogers. "But I'd like to know whether this is a new customer, or some old trader. If it's a new one, I must look out and try to get a visit from the crew."

"You can find out for a quarter. Hire a skiff, and go off and pay them a visit."

"That's so—I've a good mind to do it. They may have something in their cargo that would suit me to make a 'spec' with, too. Will you go aboard with me, Bill?"

"Yes. I've nothing else to do."

"Well; help yourself to some Bourbon while I go and tell the girl to watch the place while we're gone."

Rogers was soon ready; and Champe having imbibed—something which he could not long exist without doing—they started for the vessel.

She still lay at her anchorage when they arrived at the wharf, although permission had been given her to haul in. So Rogers hired a negro to set him and his companion on board.

They arrived just in time to see the owner and master, it appeared, for a boat had already been manned to take them on shore. Rogers, who had dressed himself up so as to look a little more decently than he usually did in his den, at once saw that the new-comers were strangers to him; and upon asking for the captain, handed the latter a greasy-looking card, on which was printed: "D. Rogers, boarding-house keeper, etc., ships sailors and supplies vessels."

"I'm glad to see you in our harbor, captain; and if you or any of your crew visit my crib, they shall be treated to the best the city affords," said he.

"No doubt—no doubt," said Captain Smythe, glancing at the card carelessly. "Me and the owner were just going on shore to look around a bit, but it will not set us back to go down in the cabin and take a nip."

This invitation was one which Rogers could not conscientiously refuse, and he followed Smythe and Bolton below.

The former whispered to the latter, as they reached the foot of the ladder:

"These look like hard cases, but we may pump more information out of them than four others in higher position."

Bolton only replied with a meaning smile; for Rogers and Champe evidently kept their ears open.

Another bowl of iced punch was soon mixed, and the glasses filled.

"Your friend, here, looks as if he'd been in action," said Smythe to Rogers, as he glanced at Champe's bandaged arms.

"Yes. He got rather chewed up in some machinery up at the Norfolk Navy Yard, and has come down here to recruit up a little. He and me are old friends—Bill Bowers is his name."

"Norfolk, eh? That's to the north of this, isn't it?"

"Yes, sir. And a little closer blockaded, I expect. Got any rum like this on cargo?"

And Rogers smacked his lips over as good a punch as he ever tasted, if not better.

"None on sale like that. Got some from fine to middling, though," said the captain. "Mr. Bolton, there, can tell you all about it."

"When we break bulk I'll send you a sample," said Mr. Bolton. Then, in a careless manner, he said: "I suppose you're pretty well acquainted in and about Charleston, Mr. Rogers?"

"I ought to be," said the landlord. "I've been here ever since I was knee-high to a hoptoad. I know every buzzard about the market, and about everybody else that travels in the city."

"Know some Northern people, maybe?"

"I used to, before the war. But such people are as scarce as gold dollars here now."

"Was you ever acquainted in a place called Rhettville, some miles from this city?" asked Bolton, with the same assumed air of carelessness.

Champe, in his surprise at this question, turned pale as snow, and nearly dropped his glass.

Rogers did not know what to make of it. Both of them evidently thought there was a trap in the inquiry.

Bolton and Smythe noticed the agitation of Champe, and the hesitation of Rogers to answer. Bolton added:

"I asked because I had a message from a person in Nova Scotia to a lady friend of hers, who was living there when she last heard from her."

"Oh!" said Rogers. "Well, I'm not acquainted up that way. The place was all burned out not long ago. Bill Bowers here has friends living up that way, and was up there not a great while ago. Maybe he could tell you something about her."

"What was her name, sir?" asked Champe, who had gathered him- self together a little, and was not quite so nervous.

"She was a school-teacher. Let me think—her name—I have it in a memorandum-book. It was Miss—Miss Adams, if I recollect right. I will go and look in my book."

And Bolton went into his state-room, taking there a position where he could study the rapid changes in Champe's countenance, without being seen himself.

Champe did not know what to make of the matter. Either these men knew all of his late history, and who he really was, or else Mr. Bolton was, in truth, making the inquiry about Miss Adams for a friend; and, if so, knew nothing about him, or her late sufferings and trials.

He watched the face of Bolton closely when he came out of his room, with a memorandum-book, and in it could read nothing to favor the first of his fears. Therefore, when Bolton, referring to the book, said:

"Yes; the name is Adams—Ella Adams!" Champe said:

"There was a teacher there who went by that name. I think that she is in this city now."

"Indeed!" And this time Bolton appeared nervous and agitated. "What makes you think so?"

"I am almost sure that I saw her here but a few days ago. In fact, I am certain that I did."

"You do not know where she might be found?"

"No, sir; I do not. But if it is any object to you, I might try to find out."

"Well, it is no particular object to me," said Bolton, with evidently assumed carelessness.

"But her friend, knowing that being from the North, her position here might be perilous, or at least disagreeable, sent a sum of money by me, to be used for her benefit; and wished me to endeavor to persuade her to leave the South. If you could find where the lady is, and let me know, so that I could communicate with her, I would reward you liberally, for her friend's sake."

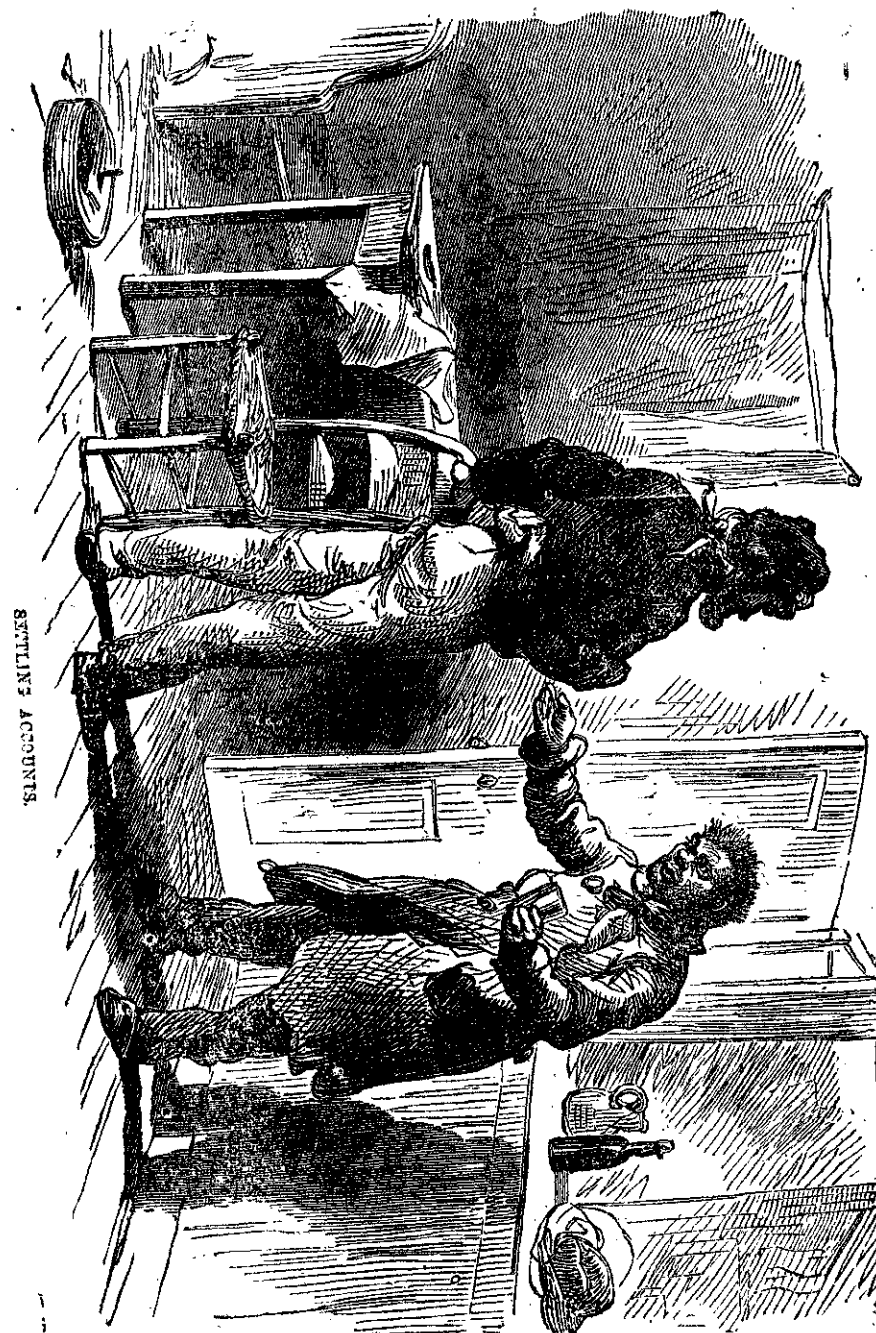
"Well, I'll try, sir. I think she can be found. But, as she is from the North, as you say, it is likely she has to keep shady."

"Well, do, my friend. And, as you will be at some trouble in your search, here are a couple of sovereigns to aid you. Take another glass of punch."

Bill pocketed the gold; Rogers eyeing it as if he wanted to cry "halves", right before the strangers.

"As you were going ashore, gentlemen, we'll not keep you waiting," said Rogers, after he had swallowed another glass of punch. "After you break out your cargo, I'd like to sample your rum, and to buy some, if prices suit."

"We'll break cargo to-morrow," said Bolton, and then, preceded by their temporary guests



they left the cabin; and, while the visitors had re-entered the boat which had brought them from the shore, Bolton and the captain took their own boat, which was manned, and waiting, and landed at the nearest wharf.

They said nothing to each other about their late visitors, until after they had reached the Memminger House, booked their names, hailing place, etc., and had got comfortably ensconced in the large double room which they engaged together.

After ordering up a bottle of wine, and uncorking it—or they seemed to know how to become popular at a hotel—Bolton asked the captain what he thought of the man, Rogers, and his companion.

"That two more finished rascals would be hard to find," said Smythe. "Their faces were naturally tough; and that Bowers was disguised. I noticed that he wore a wig and false whiskers."

"By Jove! they're Confederate spies. We must look out for ourselves," said Bolton. "Very likely, Confederate officers, disguised to search into our business more closely."

"If they're Confederate officers, Rebel-dom must be hard run to find gentlemen to hold their commissions," said Smythe. "I think they were only thieves, or high-binding 'long-shoremen, who came aboard to see what we had to steal; or else that they were sharks, who wanted to decoy our crew up to their den, to rob them there."

"Maybe so. Did you notice the agitation of the red-headed fellow when I spoke of Rhettville?"

"Yes; he has been in some mischief, if I can read human nature. And I watched him closely when you mentioned the lady's name. He evidently knows her, or of her. For he seemed to study your thoughts while you was speaking of her; and at first he said he was almost sure he had seen her. Then he said, in the next breath, that he was certain that he had."

"Yes—I noticed that. I believe he knows where she is."

"Then, for an equivalent, he will yet inform you."

"I hope so. Money will be no object, if I can only get the poor, dear girl safely out of this region. For my heart tells me that she has been, or yet is, in great peril."

"Well, colonel—I beg pardon—Mr. Bolton, hope for the best. You shall have my hearty co-operation in everything that you undertake. By the way, had we not both better patronize a barber before we dine with General Drayton? If I look as rough as I feel, I must wear the appearance of a Mexican brigand, who has made a vow to go uncombed and unwashed until he has taken a conducta!"

"We might as well get renovated," said Mr. Bolton, with a smile.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

Equally careful not to speak what was uppermost in their thoughts, until they had got to their den, where they could converse without danger of being overheard by spies or passing listeners, were Rogers and Champe. For no one dared to speak his thoughts aloud in the streets, when Government spies were listening at every corner, or moving about from group to group and man to man, eager to catch any word which might be tortured into treason toward the new despotism.

When they got there, they were so fatigued with their rapid walk, that the usual glass of Bourbon had to go down their respective gullets.

"This is good!" said Champe, smacking his lips, "but not quite up to that iced punch!"

Rogers said nothing about the liquor—but putting his empty glass down, looked square at Champe, and reaching out one of his bony hands, uttered emphatically the word:

"Halves!"

Champe put down his glass and looked at the other inquiringly, but said nothing.

"Halves, I say!" said Rogers, in a louder and a more impatient key, still keeping his open palm outstretched.

"Halves, o' what?" asked Champe.

"Halves o' thunder! You know what! That chap gave you two sovereigns in gold!" said Rogers, in a haughty tone.

"Well what if did? It was on business of his and mine! What have you got to do with it?" said Champe, loth to disgorge the precious metal.

"I'd like to know if you'd ever put a foot on that schooner if it hadn't been for me," cried Rogers, in a rage. "If you don't choose to go halves with me, you may find some other boarding-house, and that in a devil of a hurry too!"

"Well, you needn't go to getting mad and making a fool of yourself," said Champe, grum-ly. "I meant to go halves with you all the while. But I don't like to be driven to a thing that I've made up my mind to beforehand."

"Why didn't you say so at once, then, and save all this jaw!" said Rogers, still holding out his hand.

"You didn't give me time. But there's one o' the yellow-boys, and I reckon we're square so far as it goes!"

"Yes—take another glass of Bourbon," said Rogers, as he took a long and affectionate look at the gold piece, and then deposited it in a greasy purse with other coin.

"And now, Bill," said he, "what do you think of them chaps?"

"I'm curse'd if I know what to think!" said Bill. "That long chap, the owner, almost scared me out of my boots when he begun to ask about Rhettville."

"I saw that he did, and I eased you up as wel

as I could. He didn't act as if he knew anything of your doings up there!"

"How could he, if he has just come from Nova Scotia, as he says he has. But somehow I'm half afraid he isn't what he pretends to be."

"What else could he be?" asked Rogers.

"He might be a Yankee, and all his business in here be to get that very gal away that he wants me to hunt up. I heard that she had rich friends at the North."

Rogers seemed struck with the idea. He filled a tumbler and drank the contents before he spoke again.

"It would be risky in a Yankee to come in here, passing himself off for a Bluenose," said he. "There would be a 'hanging bee' just as sure as he was found out. What makes you think it might be so, Bill?"

"I hardly know. He seems to be more gentlemanly than any of the Bluenose skippers that I've met with. And they're as stingy as starved dogs. He handed out his gold as free as if he'd been used to handling plenty of it, and them Yankees have piles of it, I hear."

"Well, we must keep a close eye out, Bill. If they are Yankees and we find it out, we can sweat 'em to make us keep the secret. It'll cost them more than one pocketful of the yellow boys."

"That's so! I'll watch 'em as close as a cat would a mouse-hole."

"And the gal! Do you think you can find her?"

"I don't know. There's nothing like trying. But if I do, it will not be for him. Curse her, I owe her for all my trouble, and I'll pay her if I owing for it."

But you wouldn't be such a fool as to let your revenge stand in the way of your making money, would you, Bill?"

"You have your hide cut to ribbons, your head shaved as bare as a cocoanut, and your forehead branded with a red-hot iron, and maybe you'd feel more like having revenge than making money," said Bill, bitterly.

"Not I! Money is a salve for all sores," said Rogers. "Just give me money enough to make it an object, and I'd go through all you have, Bill. If you can find the girl, do it, and make him shell out handsomely to get her. That's what I call sense. Revenge won't take that scar out of your forehead; it won't heal your back, or make your hair grow. But money will buy salve, wigs, and all that, you see, and pay for rum to make you forget what you have suffered. Go in for the money and let revenge go afloat. That's my religion."

"It isn't mine," said Bill. "But I'm not on the girl's track yet. When I am, it will be time enough to make up my mind what to do."

"That's so! But mark you, Bill—I'm down for halves in the whole matter. I'll help you in all the devilry you undertake, and you can

make your home here with me. But half of all that's made comes to me."

"Of course," said Bill, filling his glass again, by way of making himself at home.

CHAPTER XL.

Ella Adams was intently perusing a paper which Mr. Sanchez had brought to her, and which contained a full account of the capture of Port Royal and Beaufort. It contained an extract from a Northern paper enumerating the troops composing the great expedition, and naming the officers.

While her eyes were upon this paper, Mr. Sanchez was startled at hearing a sudden exclamation from her lips; and as he looked up at her, she turned deathly pale and seemed about to faint.

"Some water—quickly, Carrollita!" he cried to his daughter, in alarm. "Good Heaven, Miss Adams, are you ill?"

"It was only a passing spasm," she said, faintly. But she trembled like a leaf quivering in a breeze.

"I am better," she added, after tasting the water which Carrollita brought to her.

Mr. Sanchez saw that she had dropped the paper. Picking it up for her, he said:

"You very likely have some acquaintances in the Northern army?"

"Yes," she replied, without raising her eyes. "Relatives?"

"Not that I know of," she answered. Then, by way of changing the theme, which seemed unpleasant to her, she asked:

"How do the citizens seem to bear this news?"

"Some of them are evidently terrified to find invaders so near. But the majority are loud-mouthed in indignation, and urge the raising of the black flag, to show that no quarter is to be given in the war—no more prisoners to be made."

"Ah! then it is about time that they received the lesson which I have been preparing for them."

"It would make them boast less of their security and power," said Sanchez.

"Well, our plans are nearly perfected. A proper night, with a good southwesterly gale, and we could make a blaze which our troops might see even as far as Port Royal."

"Undoubtedly, lady; but we had better wait for Wilson's arrival. We shall need Aurelius."

"You told me they would be here to-night."

"Yes; if nothing occurred to make it unsafe for them to venture out. The river has been full of boats transporting soldiers and provisions lately, and Aurelius is very careful. It behooves him to be, for his neck would be stretched if he was caught with Wilson."

"Do the people here think that the city will not be attacked by Federal troops?"

CHAPTER XLI.

"They have no idea of such an attack. They are so well fortified that they seem rather to court it, than wish to avoid a battle."

"They will find fire a hard tyrant to master," said Ella, with a sad smile. "They thought it a great joke to roast the brave Anderson and his garrison by the fire of their own barracks. When they are toasted by the blaze of their own dwellings, the joke may not be so apparent. By the way, do you not think, with my false hair and complexion heightened a little, that it would be safe for me to ride out to-morrow? I would like to look over the city a little before there is nothing left to see."

"I think there will be no danger in it. The villain Champe may be prowling around, but he would not recognize you in your altered appearance. Carrollita needs the air, and will ride out with you. It is seldom that she enjoys such a privilege, poor child. Can you not sing for us, my girl?"

"Yes, father. What piece will you choose?"

"Any one that you like. Perhaps Miss Adams has a favorite."

Ella smiled sadly.

"Sing that song of the past which you sung for me yesterday, Carrollita," she said. "I like the words."

Carrollita took her guitar, and playing a pretty prelude, accompanied herself to these words:

I.
When the spirit sits and shudders
In a cloud of gloom, to-day,
It is comfort if but backward,
Even e'er so far away,
We can glance, with memory's vision,
To an hour of love and light,
To assure us while we sorrow,
That there's day as well as night.

II.
And the spirit groweth stronger
With that memory of the past—
Better fitted for the struggle
And the clouds which overcast;
For if we can remember
When the stars shone overhead,
We know that Hope, the blessed,
In our bosom is not dead.

III.
And the spirit gathers courage
And the sinking soul revives,
As the drooping plant, from sunshine,
A second life derives;
And the weary feet grow stronger
While they tread the thorny way,
With the thought that hath been whispered:
After night appears the day.

Ella's eyes closed while Carrollita was singing, and a placid smile appeared upon her face. She seemed to looking back with "memory's vision", upon some scene of "love and light", and for the moment to forget how utterly alone in the cold, icy world, she was.

"Dreams—dreams!" she murmured, as she recovered herself, after the young girl had finished the song. "Blessed dreams! I would that there was no waking from them."

At the hour which had been named by General Drayton, Mr. Bolton and Captain Smythe appeared punctually at his quarters to fulfill their engagement to dine with him.

The Confederate general did not seem to be suffering much from the hardships of war. He received them in the parlor of one of the most elegant houses in the city. Upon its lofty walls were hung portraits of Marion, Lee, Sumter, Haynes, and others of those noble patriots who battled so bravely for the very Government which Drayton and his brother rebels now sought to overthrow.

And though he was courteous and strove to be gay and pleasant, the rebel general evidently had a task to conceal the real heaviness of his heart. Well might he be sad. One of the most daring and prominent of the officers who had fought and beaten him at Port Royal, was his own brother. That brother, doubly a hero because he did not shrink from his duty for any fraternal tie, but thought only of his flag and his country, sought only to punish and humble those who condemned both.

There were many army officers present, to whom the general presented his guests. As the latter appeared to be very ignorant of military matters, and utterly without curiosity in regard to them, the officers who, at first, were somewhat guarded in their conversation, soon conversed freely with each other upon the affairs of the Confederate army.

"What do your people up in the British provinces think of this war?" asked the general of Mr. Bolton.

"They think it a very sad affair, sir," said Bolton; "but they sympathize very warmly with the South who, all along, seem to have been the injured party."

"To be sure we have," said the general, warmly. "For years we have borne wrong upon wrong from the Yankees. They have stolen our niggers; taxed us to support a Government we don't like; flooded our markets with brown-paper shoes, wooden nutmegs, white-oak cheeses, and basswood hams."

"Really, I cannot see how you could have endured it so long," said Mr. Bolton, gravely.

"Their merchants were ever ready to sell their infernal manufactures here so cheaply, that our own manufacturers could not compete with them; and thus they drained us of all our ready money," continued the general.

"What were your principal manufactures, general?" asked Bolton. "You must excuse my asking, but I am utterly ignorant of matters south of our provinces."

The general seemed to be troubled what to say. At last he said:

"We could have made our own carriages, shoes, furniture, cotton goods, calicoes, hardware, glass, machinery, and agricultural imple-

ments, the cursed Yankees hadn't foreseen our market, and always kept it filled with such articles. Now we cannot get them at any price. Boots which cost me five dollars per pair before the war are worth twenty-five dollars now, and hard to get. It costs ten times as much to clothe an army as it does to feed it, and provisions are both scarce and high. When this war is over, I hope that a law of non-intercourse will be the first one passed by our Congress, so as to bar the Yankees completely out from all trade with us. Then we can be independent."

Bolton's eyes glistened as if he meditated asking where they would get the articles hitherto so cheaply supplied from the North. But if such was his thought, he curbed it, and asked, in a quiet way, if the general thought that the war would last long.

"No, sir!" said the general, pompously. "President Davis is the man for the times, sir; and he assures me that he is only waiting for the Yankees to involve themselves a little more in debt, and that by a succession of masterly movements he will crush all their power; sweep away their armies like chaff before the wind; hang the usurper, Lincoln, from the dome of the Capitol, and place the flag of the Confederacy not only in Washington, but over all the Northern States. They have threatened us with subjugation, but we, sir, will place that chalice to their own lips, and they shall drink of its bitter waters. That is"—and the general suddenly cooled down from his excited and lofty style—"that is, sir, if they do not permit us to withdraw in peace from the hated Union."

"That Lincoln is a black man—isn't he?" said Bolton, innocently.

"No, not exactly black," said the general, smiling.

"I have seen him called a black republican in the papers," said Bolton.

"Yes; he is, politically, a black republican, but, physically, a white man, I believe. I never saw him, and Heaven knows, I never desire to!"

The announcement that dinner was ready now temporarily interrupted the conversation, and the guests soon sat at a board which was rather lavishly supplied, considering that Confederate soldiers were even then said to be suffering from want and nakedness in the field.

But generals seldom know what hunger or cold is after they get stars upon their epaulets.

CHAPTER XLII.

"Our day has been most profitably spent," said Bolton, as they reached their room at the hotel, after dining with General Drayton.

"It has, indeed!" said Smythe. "It would cost more than one officer in our service their commissions, were they to discuss military movements so freely before strangers."

"Yes. General Drayton, for a man of his rank, is the most unreserved and careless person that I ever met with. Without any effort, or even an apparent wish to know, I drew from him the entire strength of his division, and the numbers of the garrison in each of the harbor-forts here."

"And one of his aids told me all about their intrenched lines here, while you were talking with the general. And he laughed very heartily when I told him that I knew what lead-lines and life-lines were, but did not know what an intrenched line was. And he very kindly explained the difference to me."

"He was very kind. In one thing we have pulled the wool completely over their eyes. They think that so far as military knowledge is concerned, we are utterly innocent. It amused me to hear them talk, when they supposed that what they were saying was 'dead matter' to us."

"To-morrow, we must send the general and his mess a few dozens of ale and porter, and a few bags of potatoes. If we keep the right side of him, our means of complete success will be certain. If they had any movement in view, we would have learned it to-day."

"Yes; for what one knows, all the rest seem to know. How the wine made them brag! Not one of them but felt himself more than a match for twenty Yankees. Their abandonment of Port Royal was only a strategic movement."

"Like the great plans which President Davis is to carry out when he gets ready. I hope that President Lincoln will never hear of my inquiry in regard to his color."

"You did it so coolly, that I could scarcely keep my countenance. But how shall we kill time this morning, colonel—I forgot: excuse—Mr. Bolton?"

"I hardly know. We have passes and the countersign. Suppose we take a ramble about the city."

"Is there no need of our going on board the schooner?"

"No; Marston is as cool and steady as a Turk at prayers. We can trust him and those on board to act their part there, as well as we are doing ours on shore. We have nothing yet that is worth signaling; and until we do have, we cannot be too careful of 'keeping dark', to use an old phrase."

"No places of amusement open, either?"

"No; none are announced in their papers. I suppose their actors used to come from the North, like their dry goods and hardware."

"Of course, it would be below the dignity of a noble Southron to tread the stage."

"Or to sing at a concert. If they had no better singers than the Lieutenant Rutledge who gave us 'Dixie' after dinner, I pity them. His screeching rings in my ears yet."

"Well, if the word is promenade, I am ready;

for I drank just enough of the general's old Amontillado to feel like moving about."

"Have you the card of that man Rogers, who was on board?"

"Yes, sir—here it is."

"I have a mind to visit his place, to-night. I want to keep an eye on that fellow who has undertaken to look up Miss Adams for me."

"Agreed, sir. But we must not forget to carry our knives and revolvers; for those men will not shrink from cutting a throat when they can make anything by it. If they are not risk for any crime, I cannot read character in faces."

"We will go prepared for anything. I agree with you that their faces indicated that they were hard cases."

CHAPTER XLIII.

Rogers and Champe were surprised at receiving such an early visit from the owner and master of the British schooner. But not at all displeased, though Rogers rather blushed for the looks of his bar-room and the customers in it. But he managed, at once, to invite his visitors into his back-room, which was fitted up in a little better style, and which was not infested with the squalid and motley crew which at night-time hovered about the bar in front.

"We dined with the commanding general, to-day," said Bolton, by way of excuse for calling, "and taking a stroll about the city, afterward, found ourselves so near your place that we thought we would make you a visit."

"You do me great honor, gentlemen," said Rogers, blandly. "I was just saying to Bill Bowers, here, that I wished *somebody* would drop in. The class of customers that you see outside there is no company for me."

"Of course not," said Bolton. Then turning to Champe, he said: "I suppose you have not yet succeeded in hearing from that lady?"

"No, sir; I have not had time, yet. To-morrow, I will take steps to look her up."

"Well, when you hear from her, let me know. You will find me either on board the schooner or at the Memminger House, where I have taken rooms."

"What will you have to take, gentlemen?" asked Rogers. "I have some fair brandy, and some as good old Bourbon as ever passed a man's lips."

"Bourbon—what is that?" asked Captain Smythe. "I never heard of that in Halifax."

"It is the best brand of whisky that we have," said Rogers.

"We've been drinking wine so freely at the general's table, that I doubt whether we had better indulge any further, to-night," said Bolton.

"Oh, no excuses, gentlemen—no excuses!" said Rogers. "I hope you will not slight my liquor because it is not quite as good as that which the general put before you."

"Your liquor is undoubtedly good," said Bolton. "I reckon we can stand a single glass of whisky on top of our wine."

Rogers hurried to get the best that he had. After his guests had tasted a glass, and manifested their approval of its quality, he asked them if they had not time to enjoy a game of euchre.

"Euchre? What is that?" asked Bolton. "I never heard of it before."

"A great American game of cards," said Rogers. "Almost every man, woman, and child, understands it in this country."

"We don't use cards much in the provinces," said Bolton, by way of apology for his ignorance.

"I should think not, if you never heard of euchre," said Champe, almost contemptuously. "A man couldn't know much, in his eyes, who didn't understand euchre."

The visitors did not stay long, but, provided with a couple of cigars that were strong enough to knock a buzzard from his perch, they started on their return for their hotel.

"Them chaps are not Yankees," said Champe to Rogers, when they were gone. "They didn't know how to play euchre, or what Bourbon was. They're nothing but Bluesnoses, after all."

"And precious green ones, at that," said Rogers.

"I'm going to see what they have got for sale, to-morrow. If I can't do them out of something, I'm not half as smart as I think I am."

"They'll take bait easy," said Champe. "I'd like to teach them euchre at a sovereign game. I think they'd learn what it was, after a while."

"I don't know; they seem to be cursedly stupid. But let's go back to the shop. There's no use in our staying in here with no company."

CHAPTER XLIV.

Hoping for the arrival of Aurelius with the Wilsons, Ella remained up with Mr. Sanchez until a very late hour—or, in truth, until an early one in the morning. They had almost despaired of seeing the expected party, the time had passed so far along, when the well-known signal was heard.

With his usual caution, Mr. Sanchez tested the party who were outside, and being satisfied that all was correct, they were admitted.

The party consisted of Aurelius, and Wilson and his wife.

"Here dey is; here dey is, missy, bress de Lor!" said Aurelius, almost dancing for joy, to think that he had successfully passed all dangers, and landed his party in a haven of safety.

"Dear, dear Miss Adams!" cried Mrs. Debby. "I'm so glad to see you, that I don't know how to act."

And the good woman wept and kissed her again and again.

"And Mr. Wilson got her by the hand, and shook it as if he would wring it off."

"Thank heaven, we are here," he said. "We were hailed by a dozen boats, and if it had not been for the pass and countersign which you sent us, we never would have got here."

"You are indebted to our mutual friend, Mr. Sanchez, here, for that," said Ella, introducing Mr. Sanchez and family to the Wilsons.

Mr. Sanchez now bade his wife prepare refreshments for them.

"I reckon we isn't de least mite hungry," said Aurelius. "We had plenty on de island, and I done fetch you a lilly present, Mars'r Sanchez."

And the negro opened a large bag which he had brought with him. Out rolled a half dozen pairs of nicely dressed and plump chickens, a couple of fat turkeys, a roasting pig, three or four pair of ducks, and a couple of nice melons.

"A good market up where we come from, sah."

And Aurelius laughed in his droll way, until the tears ran from his eyes.

"Has you heard de good news, missy?" he asked, at last.

"What good news, Aurelius?"

"Bout de Yankee soldiers, missy; dey done gone and took Port Royal, and Beaufort, too. And dere's lots of niggers done gone free, and dey calls 'em counterban's, and lets 'em do jest as dey like, and nebber axes 'em who owns 'em. And dey hire 'em to work, and pays 'em, too."

"How did you hear all this, Aurelius?"

"One of my old friends, he's a counterban' now, come up de country arter all his relations. He done tole me, and swear by the Obee, dat it was de trufe, so help him Bob."

"Is there any truth in the report, Miss Adams?" asked Wilson.

"Yes; the Federal troops occupy Port Royal and Beaufort."

"Thank Heaven, the day of our deliverance is near. I thought the news was too good to be true."

"Did I not tell you that the conquering armies of the North would soon pour down upon the leaders of this wicked rebellion?"

"You did; but I didn't expect them so soon. I begin to see daylight, once more."

"Yes, bress de good Lor', de day am a comin'," said Aurelius. "De tidin's dat coun-terban' fetch to me, made me feel as if I could jump up and butt my head agin de moon. Jess to think of de niggers getting paid for deir work down dere, and have de money to keep all for dere own selves. I is a counterban'; all de niggers is counterban' where victory and de blessed Yankees is. I se off for Beaufort de fast dark night. I knows de way like an owl, I does."

"What! would you leave us?" asked Ella.

"Would you leave us here in peril, Aurelius?"

"De Lor'! no, Missy Ella; no, nebber. I means to take you all 'long wid me."

"Do you forget the great work that I am commanded to do?"

"No, missy; but after de blaze we've got to go somewhere. Why not dere?"

Ella made no reply for a moment; she seemed to be thinking seriously. At last she said:

"It will be the best place for you to go to, and the rest of our friends, also, for a passage from thence to the North can be readily obtained. But for me—" Ella sighed, "my mission is far from fulfilled. I must abide my destiny here."

"Wherebber your mission takes you, Missy Ella, dere dis ehile and Roxyaner is bound to go; we is your sarbents, we is. You've been good to us and all our kind, and when we desert you I hope de debbil 'll come in de shape of a gallyater, an' carry us off in his jaws. Dat I do."

"You are too faithful, Aurelius," said Ella, affected by his words. "You have suffered so much, that I wish to see you enjoy freedom."

"Dat's jess what I want, missy. I want you to see me enjoy freedom, or else I don't want it at all. De Lor' knows if I was free as a bird on de wing, and rich as my ole Mars'r Mordecai, I wouldn't be happy if I knowed you wasn't out of trouble yet. I se black, but I isn't so black as dat comes to, yet."

Mr. Sanchez now insisted on the Wilsons accompanying Ella in to the supper-room, and when they were gone, opened his side-board and poured out a brimming glass of old brandy for Aurelius.

"I forgot to thank you for your present, Aurelius," he said. "Drink this brandy; it is almost as old as you are, and will warm your blood up till you feel young again."

"Dat it will; but I se been gettin' younger, Mars'r Sanchez, ebber sence I met dat counterban' and got de good news. And now tell me, Mars'r Sanchez, is all done got ready for de big fire?"

"Yes, if the wind is right, the city will blaze to-morrow night. All of my property is safely out of the city, or insured at Northern offices, long ago. All that we will have to do, is, to look out for our lives, and get away to Beaufort, if possible."

"Dat will be easy work, if Missy Ella will only go 'long wid us. I knows all de way; can go dere from here in a boat, all safe. But if she don't go, dis ehile won't. Dat's jess as true as preacin' ob fire ebberlastin'."

"I think we can persuade her to go. I will not leave her here."

"Thank you, Mars'r Sanchez, thank you for sayin' dat. If you'd seen how brave she was wid all dem he debbils a cussin' and swearin' at her, and dat big dog of a Champe a strikin' her wid a great rawhide, and she nebber sereech not flinch, you'd tink as much of her as I do!"

"I think a great deal of her," said Sanchez. "She is a noble woman, and my wife and daughter think there never was a being equal to her. But come now, Aurelius, and get a bite to eat. We will then have time to sleep a little before sunrise."

"I isn't de least mite hungry, Mars'r Sanchez, not de leastest mite; but I reckon I can sleep some, for I se been so glad since I seen dat counterban', dat I haven't shut my eyes wid sleep."

CHAPTER XLV.

The "Palmerston" had hauled in to the wharf on the day after her arrival, and broken out cargo. There was no trouble in disposing of all that she had on board, at a high figure, if Mr. Bolton would only take "Confederate Scrip" and Southern bank notes, but he wanted cotton. It required a special permit to enable him to purchase this article, but he had no trouble in getting that. We would not, for a moment, intimate that the Confederate officials granted the permit any more readily because sundry dozens of porter, and ale, and some other acceptabilities reached them with Mr. Bolton's compliments, early on that day. We would only remark, *en passant*, that official business, in almost all countries, is more easily got through with when the officers receive proper attention in advance.

I remember, once, that I made a purchase in Havana, for a friend (for I do not use the weed), of some thousands of very extra cigars. I was anxious to have them put on board the vessel which was to convey me to Key West, without being troubled on either side by Custom-House questioning, as they were to be a present, and were costly enough for a middy's purse, without having duties to pay.

Taking the advice of a holy padre, who "knew the ropes" right well, and who favored me because I had been the bearer of a letter of introduction to him from a relative of his in the United States, I handed a Spanish revenue officer a doubloon, and asked him if he would kindly see that my purchase was put on board the vessel.

"*Con mucho gusto*," was his reply, and the cigars were in my state-room when I got there, and the doubloon was all the "duty" that was ever paid upon them. But this is yawning off my course; I must steady my helm and get back to it again.

Before night Mr. Bolton had sold out all of his cargo, except a small portion which he had reserved for presents, and he had also engaged cotton enough to load out with.

Somewhere between four and five o'clock, having dined on board, he proposed to Captain Smythe that they should take a promenade on shore, for, it being a lovely day, many erringies were out, and he had some hope of seeing the fair girl in whom he was so deeply interested.

The captain assented, and they were soon walking along one of the principal streets toward the fashionable drive known as the "Battery", whence a fine view of the harbor and its fortifications, and even of the distant sea, could be obtained.

This point seemed to be the general centre where all persons who rode out or promenaded for pleasure met. There were officers in uniform in plenty here, and many a carriage full of gayly-dressed and beautiful women.

Bolton's eye wandered from carriage to carriage, and glanced at many a lovely face and peerless figure. But it turned coldly away from one face to another; for the face which alone could bring up the light of joy within it, did not appear.

"This does not look much like war times—does it, Mr. Bolton?" said Captain Smythe, as he looked at the gay crowd.

"No; but what is that fellow doing here?" he asked.

And as he spoke he pointed out Champe, who was loitering at a corner near them, evidently inspecting every carriage that was driven past him.

"Looking for the lady, I suppose. He has not seen us yet; let us keep back a little and watch his motions. What a villainous-looking dog he is."

They had scarcely changed their position, when Champe was seen to move quickly forward, almost in front of an open barouche which came down the street, having two ladies seated in it, and being driven by a stalwart and very black negro.

One of the ladies was a blonde, with soft, brown hair; a rich, fair complexion, and dark, melancholy-looking blue eyes. The other was a lovely brunette—evidently younger than her companion. Both were richly and fashionably dressed, and the style of their carriage betokened their aristocratic position.

Champe's eyes flashed with villainous fire as they fell upon the lady with the blonde complexion.

"Fixed up; but, by thunder, it is her!" he cried. "I'd know her among a thousand!"

And he rushed forward in front of the carriage, as if to stop the horses.

"Git out de way, dar, you white trash!" cried the driver. "Git out de way, or I'll drike ober you!"

"Stop! D—n you, stop! I know who you've got there!" cried Champe, trying to catch at the reins with his best arm.

The driver touched the horses with his whip, and the spirited animals sprang forward, dashing Mr. Champe violently to the ground. The carriage-wheels would have passed over him, had not a tall gentleman—it was Bolton—sprang forward and literally dragged him from under the horses' feet.

As he did so, his eyes fell upon the blonde lady in the carriage, and he exclaimed:

"Heavens! it is Ella!"

She heard his words, got one glimpse of his face, and seemed to sink back in a swoon, as the negro driver, urging his horses to full speed, drove rapidly away.

"Smythe, follow that carriage!" he cried. "She is in it!"

But his companion, who had helped him to raise Champe to his feet, lost sight of the carriage in another moment; for it drove in among the crowd and on so quickly, that they lost trace of it.

"You came near being run over, my man," said Bolton to Champe, who sullenly shook the dust from his garments.

"Yes; if I had only had a pistol I'd have shot the infernal nigger down!" he muttered. Then he added: "Did you see the lady?"

"Which lady?" asked Bolton.

For he was confident that Champe, in his position, could not have seen the mutual recognition.

"Why, the lady that you hired me to look for. She was in that carriage, sir."

"The deuce! I wanted the carriage stopped to have the driver punished for so nearly running over you. But are you sure she was in it?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then if we keep a good watch we will most likely see her again. Here is another sovereign to get something with which to wash the dust from your eyes."

"Thank you, sir."

And Champe quickly pocketed the coin, looking hurriedly around to see if Rogers was anywhere near to cry "halves" again.

Not seeing him, he muttered: "I reckon that's clear gain this time."

And muttering something about looking for the carriage, he went up the street.

"That was Ella Adams, and she recognized me," said Bolton, to his companion, in a low tone, after Champe had passed on. "I do not see what made the driver hurry away so. He seemed to know Champe. He ran over him on purpose."

"Yes; and either with orders or without them, he scudded off from this sailing ground in a hurry. But I'd know the carriage again if I saw it, and that sweet brunette among ten thousand of her sex. She was just the prettiest piece of angelicity that ever crossed my path. I'd give a year's pay for one hour's chat with her, and the rest of my pay for life if she'd take me with it."

"You've fallen in love very suddenly," said Bolton, with a laugh. "And like as not she is a rebel!"

"I'd convert her if she was. And besides, she'd hardly be in the company of your Miss

Adams if she was. I'll risk it, at any rate. But the thing is how will we find out where these ladies can be seen."

"Providence only knows. I shall address a note to Miss Adams through the post-office, written in such a guarded manner that if any one else gets it, it will not betray the writer or injure her to whom it is addressed. If she gets it, and wishes an interview, a plan will be contained which will bring the event about. In the meantime we must keep a 'bright look-out ahead,' as you say at sea—except General Drayton's invitation to visit the 'first families of the city,' and trust to luck for the future."

"I'm sure I shall not sleep much until I see my brunette again," said Smythe, with a smile.

CHAPTER XLVI.

"Drive home quickly, Aurelius!" cried Carrollita Sanchez, when she saw that Ella had suddenly fainted by her side. "Hurry all you can!" she added, half frightened to death; for Ella had sunk back upon the cushion entirely senseless.

"I wonder what dat debil Champe want. De mean cuss—maybe he didn't tink I know him for all his false har an' whiskers. If it hadn't been for dem gemples dat pull him out from under de horses, I'd have run both wheels right ober his cussed neck."

This was the colloquy of Aurelius as, obeying the orders of Carrollita, he drove hurriedly away from the Battery.

In a very short time the carriage was back to the house of Mr. Sanchez, and that gentleman helped to lift Ella out—for although she had partially recovered, she was so weak and nervous that she could not stand alone.

"Miss Ella has had a big scare, Mars'r Sanchez," said Aurelius. "Dat willian, dog, Champe, tried for to stop us. Lut I drive right ober him! I'll tell you all about it after I've done gone and put away de horses."

When Ella was taken into the house and some wine diluted with water had been given her, and her temples had been bathed gently by Mrs. Sanchez, she so far recovered that she could smile and thank her kind friends for their attentions.

Mr. Sanchez, with true delicacy, refrained from asking her any questions: preferring to let her make her own explanations when it pleased her. He learned from his daughter that a man had tried to take their horses by the head, and that Aurelius had driven over him, and that during the confusion Miss Ella was taken suddenly ill.

And he supposed, with Aurelius, that it was in consequence of the appearance of Champe, until an hour or two afterward when Miss Adams sent for him and he learned otherwise.

"Dependent as I am upon you for advice and assistance, Mr. Sanchez," she said, "it is neces-

sary that that I should not withhold any secrets from you."

He bowed, but did not say anything; for as yet he could not see the drift of her remarks.

"You observed my agitation when I was reading the paper which you handed me the other day?" she continued.

"I knew that you appeared to be taken suddenly ill," he replied.

"I saw the name of one who was once as dear to me as my own life—one to whom I was betrothed in brighter days. His name appeared as colonel of an Eastern regiment. It was that which affected me then. The cause of my illness to-day was seeing him in person. It was him who drew Champe from under the feet of our horses."

"Miss Adams, you astonish me. Might not some resemblance in another person have deceived you?"

"No!" said Ella. "I not only saw him and recognized him; but he knew me, and uttered my name!"

"Was he in uniform?"

"No; in citizen's dress; and, though more thin and pale than he used to be, looked so natural that I knew him in an instant. Our carriage was darting on swiftly, and I fainted; for the excitement was more than I could bear."

"Have you any objections to telling me the name of the gentleman?" asked Mr. Sanchez.

"None whatever," said Ella. "Colonel Rand Osborn was the name which startled me in the papers. It was Rand Osborn whom I saw to-day."

"He is here, disguised, on some duty," said Mr. Sanchez. Perhaps, Miss Ella, he is looking for you!"

Ella blushed and trembled at the thought.

"It cannot be!" she murmured. I wish that I knew why he is here."

"Perhaps I can find out," said Mr. Sanchez. "You will permit me to try?"

"Certainly. Yet I do not wish to have him know where I am. After the buried past, I do not wish to meet him again."

Mr. Sanchez seemed to be in a deep study.

"His rescue of Champe may lead to his discovery," said Sanchez, at last. "It is possible that the fellow, out of gratitude, may have asked his name or address; but even that is improbable, for such a wretch as he does not know what gratitude is. Yet I will see him, and learn what I can. In the meantime, I think we had best defer our bonfire until tomorrow night."

"As you judge best," said Ella. "I leave it all to your judgment. I feel less haste than I did, but none the less determined that the city shall feel the terrible visitation. Here, where they first laid out the wicked plan of rebellion—here, where they committed the first overt act in the taking of Sumter—here they must suffer the heaviest blow!"

"Justice would have it so!" said Mr. Sanchez.

And then he left Ella to her thoughts, and went out; first disguising himself in a coarse dress and a slouched hat, and placing a brace of revolvers in his pocket.

CHAPTER XLVII.

Champe was in anything but a good humor, with himself in particular and the world in general, when he returned to his boarding-house, after his adventure on the Battery. Rogers was out when he came in, and the "girl" was attending bar. Champe, having the run of the house, very soon found the bottle of Bourbon, and took a consoling glass or two; and then, lighting his pipe, sat down for a smoke. In the course of an hour or two, Rogers came in.

"So you like to have got your neck broke—eh, Bill?" said Rogers, as he espied Champe sitting in the corner, behind a cloud of smoke.

"Who the devil told you I had?" asked Champe, gruffly.

"Why, Mr. Bolton, to be sure. I met him and the captain down on the 'Bay', and they asked me to take something. Well, I took something, as a matter of course, and they told me how a buck nigger nearly drove his carriage over you."

"They told you that, eh? Didn't tell you who was in the carriage, did they?"

"They said you said that you saw the lady in it that they hired you to look for. But I don't think they believed you."

"Curse me if I care whether they believed me, or not. I did see her. And if I had only been armed, I'd have shot the nigger carriage-driver, and then they might have seen her! He was one of the same big cusses that she got to flog me that night. If ever I see him and her again, I'll put two lumps of lead into 'em!"

"That wouldn't pay. But it seems to me you might have followed the carriage."

"How could I? The pole struck me and knocked me over, and if it hadn't been for that tallest Bluenose, I would have been stamped into a jelly under the horses' feet. I was so crippled up that I couldn't help myself, you see! And before I could get fairly straightened out, and shake myself, the carriage was out of sight. I looked for it afterward, but it was no use. But if the infernal witch takes such drives often, I guess I'll spoil her pleasure! I'm not the man to be run over every day."

"No. Was you hurt much?" asked a stranger, whose slouched hat, drawn over his eyes, prevented Bill from seeing much of his features.

Bill was startled, for this man had stepped up to his side so suddenly that he neither saw or heard him until he spoke.

"What is it to you?" he asked rather gruffly, and blowing a heavier cloud than ever from his pipe.

"Not much. Only as I happened to witness the accident on the Battery, I thought I'd ask you if you was hurt. You don't seem to recognize me. Landlord, set out a bottle of your best liquor here, and maybe your friend will be in a better humor over a glass of it!"

And the stranger drew a handful of coin from his pocket, and, selecting a Spanish dollar from the rest, threw it down on the counter.

"So you was there, was you?" said Bill, regarding the stranger a little more closely.

He had raised his hat a little, so that Champe could see his dark-looking, sharp, Spanish features.

"I've met you before somewhere," said Bill, a little more pleasantly, as Rogers set out glasses and a bottle.

"Yes. I gave you my card the other day. Sanchez is my name."

"Oh, I remember! I met you down on the Bay, and you asked me if I was out of a berth."

"Precisely so!"

"That was a shabby trick that nigger played me to-day?"

"Yes. But that tall fellow saved you handsomely. Who was he? A stranger I should think, by the cut of his jib."

"Yes. He's the owner of the British schooner 'Palmerston', that run the blockade a day or two ago. He is a trump, if he is a Bluenose!"

"An Englishman, eh? They're not apt to be so plucky. Won't you take a glass, too, Mr. Rogers? I know you, though, you, perhaps, do not know me. My name is Sanchez. I trade around a good deal, in one way and another."

"Oh, yes, sir! I know you now," said Rogers. "I thought I'd seen you before. Glad to see you in my poor crib, sir! Hard times this war makes, doesn't it?"

And the landlord filled his glass very readily.

"Hard times for some—easy for others," said Mr. Sanchez. "So far, I've lost nothing by it. An eye open to speculation, you see, can often make a hit in times like these!"

"That's true, sir," said Rogers. "Especially if any one has anything to speculate with. But a poor man like me has to run close in the wind's eye to keep afloat!"

"Well, we'll drink to better times!" said Sanchez. "If you can keep a secret, I may put you in the way of a spec myself some time or other. I'm a Spaniard, and have friends in Havana, who send over a few thousand cigars once in a while, in spite of the Yankee blockade. But you must keep this still."

"Oh, mum's the word with us!" said Rogers. "And if ever you do throw anything in my way, I'll do you a good turn whenever I can," said Rogers.

"No doubt of it. I think of fitting out a vessel or two in the trade, and am partly on the look-out for men now. That was my reason for speaking to your friend there when I first met him. He looked as if he had some courage and spirit in him, and such are the only men that I like!"

"He is a good one, and I can find you a few more as good, I reckon," said Rogers. "Fill your glass, Mr. Sanchez. It's prime old Bourbon. Fill up, sir!"

"No more to-night, friend Rogers; no more to-night! But I'll call again soon," said Sanchez.

And he left without asking for any change for the silver dollar that went into Rogers' greasy purse with a sound most musical to that worthy's ears.

"I rather like that chap. He rings like good metal!" said Champe, when their visitor was gone.

"He seemed to have plenty of the right kind of metal about him," said Rogers. "There were doubloons laying loose in his fist when he tossed out that dollar for the drinks. I'd like to have the handling of a few bushels like 'em."

"I shouldn't be sorry to lend you a helpin' hand in that line. If this fellow does fit out a vessel, I mean to get a supercargo's berth, if I can. They have the handling of the cash-box, don't they?"

"Yes; where the owner isn't along."

"Well, that would just suit me."

"And me, too, if I wasn't tied down to this cursed old crib!"

"Don't curse the goose that lays golden eggs for you!" said Champe, with a laugh.

"Been to supper yet?" asked Rogers.

"No. I waited for you."

"Well, let's go in, and try some of them shrimps. I'd like some oysters, but they're as scarce as turkeys in market."

CHAPTER XLVIII.

The success of Mr. Sanchez in finding out who had dragged Champe from beneath the horses' feet greatly surprised and pleased him. As soon as he had left the den which Rogers inhabited, he hurried to the wharves and asked where the "Palmerston" lay. He was soon directed to her. Before inquiring for her owner, he was told that Mr. Bolton (the owner), and Captain Smythe had both taken rooms at the Memminger House, and could probably be found there.

To the Memminger House he, of course, directed his steps. Upon inquiry, he learned that Mr. Bolton and Captain Smythe were in. He sent up his card, and said he would like to see Mr. Bolton on business.

The servant who took up the card brought back a request for Mr. Sanchez to walk up.

He did so, and found a tall, pale, but very good-looking gentleman, and another younger, jollier-looking, and quite a fair representative of a gentlemanly seaman, sitting at a table with a bottle of wine between them.

By orders, the servant had also brought a fresh bottle and another glass.

"I believe I am addressing Mr. Bolton, sir," said Sanchez, addressing the taller of the two gentlemen after the servant had retired.

"Yes, sir," was the reply. "Join us in a glass of wine, sir, before you state your business, for it is agreeable to combine pleasure with business, sometimes."

Sanchez bowed, and taking the glass in his hand, looked Mr. Bolton significantly in the face and said:

"I wish you success, sir, in your mission, and safety from peril."

Bolton, in spite of himself, was startled by the look and words of the other.

"You allude to the peril of running the blockade, I presume, sir."

"There are other perils more serious than that, sir. Do not look alarmed, sir; I am a friend."

"An American soldier knows not what alarm is, sir!" said Bolton, sternly, and for the moment off his guard.

"Be careful, sir. The reputed owner of a British vessel ought not to know the character of an American soldier under this roof!" said Sanchez, in a low and hurried tone. "Were I not a friend to you, Colonel Rand Osborn, I would not be here unattended."

"Heavens! you know my name and rank! You stir not from here alive, until I thoroughly understand your position, sir."

And Osborn, or Bolton, as he has been called, drew a revolver from his pocket, and laid it cocked beside his wine-glass.

"You need not display your weapons, sir! Mine is a mission of peace!" said Sanchez, smiling to see the person who was known as Captain Smythe rise, and also drawing a weapon, place his back to the door, so as to prevent egress or ingress.

"Then it can be speedily explained, sir, and this suspense ended. For though while in the path of duty, I am fearless, I own that I would prefer anything rather than the exposure of my true character in this vicinity."

"There are but two persons in this city besides those with you that know your real name and character. One is your very humble servant—the other, a lady."

"A lady?"

"Yes, sir; one whom you saw to-day, and once knew, perhaps loved, as Ella Adams."

"Perhaps loved! I worshiped her, years ago; my love has not grown less with time. Did she send you here, sir?"

"No, sir; she did not precisely send me

here, but she gave me permission to seek you out. I availed myself of it, and here I am, ready to peril life to befriend you, as I am, and have been, to protect her!"

"Is she where I can see her?"

"If she consents, yes. She is under my roof, which has sheltered her since she fled from a persecution which you would shudder to hear."

"Why can I not go to see her at once?"

"Because, colonel, her consent must first be gained. I know that once you were betrothed to her; what misfortune or error separated you, I have not sought to learn. I have heard only from her lips that sudden misfortune left her friendless, and that she sought a livelihood in the South by teaching. I have asked no more—know no more."

"If she thinks that she was friendless because misfortune overtook her, she does one heart an injury," said Osborn, gravely. "I was absent when I heard of her trouble, but hastened home as soon as I could, and I wrote to her that I was coming to cheer and support her in her trials. But to my letter I received no answer; and when I arrived home, she had gone, no one knew where. By a mere accident at the time when this war broke out, I heard that she was in Rhettville, South Carolina. As the most ready means to reach and aid her, I raised the regiment which I command. So, sir, my love had as much to do in prompting me to become a soldier as my patriotism!"

"I honor you for both, sir. And when Miss Adams has such an explanation as this tendered to her, I feel sure that she will be glad to see you! Her emotion at seeing you to-day proves that you are not an object of indifference to her. She nearly fainted upon seeing your name in a paper which contained a list of the troops which took Port Royal."

"Heaven bless her! I hope soon to see her, and to be able to place her where no persecution can reach her. But tell me, sir, did she know the man whom her driver so nearly ran over?"

"Yes, sir, but too well. He was the villain who headed the persecution which nearly destroyed her at Rhettville. And now he would hunt her to the death if he could. He is a disgraced and branded villain—has been turned out of the Confederate army for stealing. At a proper time you shall know his whole history. Were the red wig torn from his head, you would see that it had lately been shaved, and the letter 'V' branded upon his brow!"

"It needed not such a close examination to read his character. It was well for him that I did not know all before!" said Osborn. "As it is, I will have the gentleman under hatches, as the sailors say, before he is aware of it."

"I advise you for the present to have nothing to do with him," said Mr. Sanchez. "Leave him to my care for a while, and do be

careful of yourself. Were your true character discovered here, a rope would be the first thing thought of—a trial last!"

"True; but with yourself and the lady only in the secret, I feel safe. I am on excellent terms with General Drayton and his staff; the British Consul considers me a true subject of Her Majesty Queen Victoria; and my vessel is a capital cloak."

"Yes, sir—so it seems!"

"Excuse me for delaying to introduce you to Captain Dawson, of the United States Service," said the colonel, now. "George," he added, with a smile, "you need not stand guard any longer, but can come and join Mr. Sanchez and myself in a glass of wine. Perhaps you may have a question or two to ask him," he continued, with an arch glance.

"Well, as I am a sailor, and sailors all have a name for bluntness, I may as well say that I have, and out with it," replied Captain George Dawson, *alias* Smythe, as he put away his revolver and took a seat at the table. "If the question is not impertinent, Mr. Sanchez, I would very much like to know who that exceedingly beautiful young lady was who sat beside Miss Adams in the carriage."

"The young lady whom you compliment so highly, sir, was my daughter," said Mr. Sanchez, gravely.

"Excuse me, sir. I did not wish to be impertinent. I speak candidly, and with all honor and respect. The beauty and grace of the young lady impressed me very much; and if it would not be considered improper by you, if the colonel succeeds in gaining permission to visit Miss Adams, I would beg that I might be permitted to accompany him, and to receive an introduction to your daughter."

"She is utterly unused to the society of gentlemen, sir—has been brought up in an almost entire seclusion; but to a request so honorably made, I cannot impose a denial. When Colonel Osborn visits my house, Captain Dawson will also be welcome. But remember, gentlemen, that hereafter you must preserve your incognito, and, for fear of mistakes, I will only address you as Messrs. Bolton and Smythe."

"Very well, Mr. Sanchez—so be it. And if you will amuse yourself with taking wine and conversing with the captain, I will write a letter to Miss Adams explanatory of the past, and asking an interview, that we may lay out a plan for the future."

"So do, sir. The captain and myself will try and find something to talk about."

Osborn now took writing-materials to another table, and busied himself in preparing a letter to the lady of his heart.

It was evidently a hard task; for he commenced several times, altered and erased, copied and recopied, until he had destroyed several sheets of paper. At last, however, he

finished one which seemed to satisfy him. He folded it, and handed it unsealed to Mr. Sanchez.

The latter noticed this confidence, and smiled. "I am a Spaniard, sir, and you can trust in my honor," he said.

"I do, implicitly," replied the colonel. "And as it is late, I will not detain you any longer. The countersign for to-night is—"

"Beauregard!" said Sanchez, with a smile. "What, you have it?"

"Yes, sir. Money will get anything from some of the servants of the Confederacy at present," said Sanchez, with a smile. "I have found it necessary to have the countersign and passes frequently for my own use, or for the protection of those whom I wished to serve. By the proper use of money, I have succeeded in getting either or both when wanted. Having a Spanish protection, which I use, though it belonged to my father, I avoid impressment into the Confederate army, and by a proper use of a few dollars now and then, learn all that is going on. You may learn to-morrow, or you may not, that an attempt will be made to decoy your troops into a battle against great odds, by getting you to attack a battery at the ferry above Beaufort. But few troops will appear to support the battery; but from ten to fifteen regiments and three or four light masked batteries will be concealed in the forests in the rear."

"Are you sure of this, Mr. Sanchez?"

"Quite sure. The plan of General Lee was read to General Drayton this evening at six o'clock. The time set is New Year's Day."

"This is very important. That news must go to our head-quarters at once," said the colonel.

"Have you the means of conveying it?" asked Sanchez. "If you have not, I can offer you a negro, for whose faith Miss Adams will vouch, who understands the water-route from here to Port Royal, and who can carry either verbal or written dispatches there more safely than any white man. He need not know you or be known by you. Prepare your dispatches, and he will take them. He saved the life of Miss Adams, and will go wherever she wishes him to."

"Then we will employ him. I will, trusting to the truth of your information, prepare the dispatches at once, and send them by you. They will be in cipher, so that no one but our commanding general can read them."

"Very well, sir. In two hours they will be on their way to your camp."

CHAPTER XLIX.

"I mean to make another raise out of that long-legged Bluenose," said Bill Champe to Rogers, on the morning after his adventure on the Battery. "I lay a thinkin' of it an hour before I got up this morning."

"Well, anything for a raise, Bill. How do you mean to come it over him?" asked Rogers.

"Why, I'll go and tell him that I've heard of the gal—that she got frightened at what her nigger did, and has left for the country. Then I'll soak him for funds to hire a horse and buggy, and to pay my expenses while I go to see where she has gone. Don't you think that bait will take?"

"Yes, to be sure I do. You're first-rate at making plans, Bill. We'll drink on that."

And the inevitable Bourbon was produced.

"You musn't forget my halves, Bill, though," said Rogers, as he looked at Champe through the bottom of his glass.

"No, indeed! Honor bright with me," said Champe. "You wouldn't think that I'd deceive you?"

"I'd hate to think so, and hate you worse if you did," said Rogers; "and I'd be sure to find you out some time."

"Well, there's no danger of it. I reckon Mr. Bolton is picking his breakfast teeth by this time. I'll go and see him before he leaves the hotel."

And after taking another strengthener of Bourbon, Champe lazily strolled off up the street.

Mr. Bolton and Captain Smythe had just finished their breakfast at the *table d'hôte*, and had purchased a couple of Havana cigars at the modest price of fifty cents apiece, and were enjoying the flavor thereof in their private apartment, when Mr. Champe made his appearance.

The brow of Mr. Bolton darkened as the unblushing villain came in, and he could with difficulty sufficiently restrain himself so as to hide his anger and bid the wretch be seated.

He did so, however; and Mr. Champe then very coolly made the statement which he had told Rogers that he intended to, and asked for funds to enable him to follow the lady up.

"How much do you think would be required, Mr. Bowers?" asked Bolton, blandly—for he had recovered his composure, and was disposed to see how far Champe's impudence could carry him.

"Thirty or thirty-five dollars might be enough," said Champe, suggestively.

"Wouldn't fifty be better?" asked Mr. Bolton, taking out a heavy-looking purse.

"On second thought, I believe it would. It is always best to have enough. Even if I had a hundred, I would only use what was necessary, and return the rest."

"Yes. You are a very honest man, Mr. Bowers. It is written on your countenance."

"My friends always said that I had an open countenance," said Mr. Champe.

"Yes! I like to see things open—don't you, Mr. Bowers?"

"Yes, sir!" said Champe.

"Bottles for instance!" and Mr. Bolton glanced at a black bottle on the table, extremely suggestive of morning bitters.

"Yes, sir!" said Champe, looking at the bottle, which was corked.

"And purses, too!" said Mr. Bolton.

Champe nodded his head, but did not speak.

"Captain Smythe, oblige me by opening that door," continued Mr. Bolton. "Do you observe that aperture, Mr. Bowers?"

"Certainly, sir."

"Well, sir, you may make use of it."

"What do you mean, sir?"

"That if you do not go out through that doorway in one minute, I will kick you out!" said Mr. Bolton, rising. "I know you, secondel that you are—know how you have persecuted the very lady whom you pretend to say has left the city, when she is here, and where I can protect her now. Not a word, you wretch, or I'll strip that wig from your shaven head and expose the felon's mark upon your brow! You are known, Mr. Bill Champe—now leave, and be sudden about it."

With a howl of rage and disappointment, Champe rushed from the room, and hurried back to the den from which he came.

"Exit, Confederate high-binder, in a towering rage!" cried Captain Smythe, as he closed the door after Champe's sudden retreat, and threw himself, laughingly, into a chair. "That chap is settled, I reckon! He calculated on making a nice thing out of you, colonel."

"Yes, by Jupiter! And had it not been for our timely warning last night, he would have succeeded. It seems, indeed, as if Providence was on our side."

"I believe it. Did you sleep much last night, colonel?"

"Candidly, I did not. My mind was on the rack all night, thinking whether I should see Ella or not, to-day! How did you rest?"

"Like a brick—a perfect brick, sir! I dreamed of that dark-eyed brunette all night. I must go to studying Spanish. I've heard that it is a splendid language to make love in. For of course she waltzes, and I can be her partner to the exclusion of all others. For I'd shoot my own brother if I saw him put an arm around her waist!"

Bolton laughed, and changed the conversation.

"I'm going to drop around to head-quarters," said he, "to see if they drop any hint about the affair at the ferry. I do not doubt the truth of the information which Mr. Sanchez gave us, but I would not believe they could be so imprudent as to speak openly of an intended operation before comparative strangers."

CHAPTER L.

"Halves, Bill—halves! What luck, old boy?"

eried Rogers, as he saw Champe coming back so soon from his visit to the Memminger House.

"The devil's own luck!" growled Bill. "You're welcome to the whole of all I got."

"Why, didn't he shell out?"

"Yes—he shelled me out in a hurry. Didn't give me time to say how d'y'e do, hardly."

"What do you mean? Explainify, if it isn't too much trouble."

"Why, he told me to leave, or he'd kick me out. Called me me—names—threatened to pull my wig off and show the mark on my forehead!"

"Thunder! How do you suppose he has found you out?"

"The devil may know—I don't! He has found the girl, and knows what I did up at Rhettville, it seems."

"How do you know that he has found the girl?"

"He said so."

"He might have been fooling you!"

"No—if he hadn't seen her, how could he have known what I did up at Rhettville?"

"That is a fact. Well, it is bad, Bill. I counted on our raising a big pile out of that chap."

"I'm not done with him yet, curse him!" cried Bill; "no, not by a long shot. If he has found the girl, he has not got her away from here yet by a good deal."

"Good for you, Bill. I like your bull-dog grit. Get bold and hang on! That's the sort for me. Take a nip, my boy, and tell me what is next on your peppergram."

"Why, I'll change my disguise, and watch the Bluenose devil wherever he goes, until I find where the girl is. Then I'll get the lady where I can pay her back with interest for what I've had to suffer."

"That's a good idea! But I don't see as you'll make any money out of it."

"Yes, I can. He'll be glad enough to pay to get her back."

"Maybe!" said Rogers.

"There's no maybe about it," replied Champe.

"The chap wouldn't be so thundering mad if she wasn't something to him."

"That is likely. But where will you keep her after you get her?"

"Haven't you a cellar under your old crib?"

"Yes—but it is not fit to keep any one in. It is full of rats, too!"

"So much the better. They'll be company for her, and I can gag and tie her so that she can be kept anywhere."

"Well, you can bring her here; if so, be you careful. It won't do for me to be caught in anything that will break me up."

"No danger. I'll be careful enough. The disguise is the next thing for me to think about."

"What shall I put on? I've got to alter my looks completely, for all will be up if I'm known another time."

"Try the nigger!" said Rogers. "Blackin' is cheap, and a wool wig drawn well down over your forehead will fix your head. A clean shave before you black yourself, and your face will shine like ebony. I'll give you a pass, and send you out a looking for work."

"I reckon that will be the best rig I can put on. Any old clothes will do to wear. Can you get me the wig?"

"Yes, I guess so. Let me have that red one, and I'll go and change it for another. Go to your room and I'll come and shave you, and black you over in a little while."

"Very well—be in a hurry. I don't want Bolton to get the start of me. I'll watch him as close as ever a cat watched a mouse. He'll be sorry that he ever showed me an open door. I could jump down his throat and gallop his soul out. Hurry up your cakes, Rogers. I can't rest till I'm on the fellows track!"

"Take a nip and keep cool, Bill. I'll be back as soon as I can."

CHAPTER LI.

Negroes are proverbially fond of music. There are more black "Nightingales" than Barnum ever heard of. You very seldom find a colored person, especially in the South, who is not versed in plantation melodies, and many of them excel on the banjo and violin.

And all of this is preliminary to merely saying, that when Mr. Sanchez returned to his house, he found Ella and the Wilsons laughing heartily to see Aurelius dancing a regular "hoe-down" to a tune played for him upon the guitar by Miss Carrollita. And Dan Bryant or Eph Horn might have taken lessons from him to advantage. As limber as an eel, quick-motioned, and gracefully grotesque, he would have "brought the house down", in New York; and to use the words of a certain critic, have been "applauded to the echo". Though what that applause is, I doubt if the critic could fairly say.

As soon as Mr. Sanchez entered, Aurelius subsided, and in an apologetic tone, said:

"De ladies wanted de ole chile to dance, Mars'r Sanchez, and he couldn't fuse 'em."

"All right, Aurelius. I like to see you enjoy yourself," said Mr. Sanchez. "But there's work as well as play, and I've some of that for you to do."

"I'm ready for it den, Mars'r Sanchez, as de coon said when he saw de gun p'inted at him."

"You've got to go to Port Royal, just as soon as you can," said Mr. Sanchez.

"To Port Royal? Is I a goin' to be a counterban, Mars'r Sanchez?"

And the negro's great eyes rolled up with curiosity, and his face widened into an unreasonable grin.

"Here is a paper that must be given to the commanding general at Port Royal, General

Sherman, and no one else. If any of the Confederates get you, that paper must be destroyed. They must not see it."

"I'll risk deir cotechin' dis chile," said Aurelius. "I can go a'most dere to-night, and hide in de swamp, and den git dere to-morrow night. But I isn't to stay dere, is I?"

"No; you will hurry back with whatever the general sends; and if you should see the blaze while you are gone, be careful not to say anything to show that you know what it is."

"Yes, sah. Shall I go now, sah?"

"Take some provisions with you."

"Yes, sah; I reckon a bite or two won't hurt me after I've rowed de boat thirty or forty mile."

"No, nor a drop of good brandy. I'll get you a bottle."

"Thank you, Mars'r Sanchez. Do take good care of Missy Ella, while Ise gone. If harm ebber come to dat poor chile while I is away, I'll nebber be myself again."

"We will take good care of her," said Mr. Sanchez, with a smile. "Now hurry on your way."

"Yes, sah—I'm off like a butterfly on a thunder-gust."

"You have some news for me," said Ella to Mr. Sanchez, after Aurelius was gone. "I can see by the expression of your face, that you have."

"I hope and believe that it is good," said he, as he handed her the letter which Colonel Osborn had given to him.

She glanced at the hand-writing of the superscription, and her hand trembled with nervousness; her face turned more pale than usual. She did not open it there, but rose and went to her own room to read it.

She was absent a long time, and all but Mr. Sanchez had retired to rest before she came back into the parlor. Her face was calm, but her eyes looked as if she had been weeping.

"You saw him?" she said to Mr. Wilson.

"Yes; and a noble man he seems to be!"

"He spoke kindly of me?"

"More than kindly. He used terms which would indicate the deepest and most faithful attachment."

"I fear that I have wronged his generous heart. But I thought that he, like all the rest, had deserted me when the troubled waters swept over my head."

"His letter tells you differently?"

"Yes; and his actions as well. For my sake, he is now in peril."

"I hope soon, that with his aid, we shall all be out of peril."

"Perhaps so. You did not tell him how altered I was? That the hair which he saw, though like what mine was, was not mine?"

"No—I had not your permission so to do; nor did I tell him all that you had suffered—

though I told him that you had been cruelly persecuted."

"He will know it soon enough."

"Then you have decided to see him?"

"Yes. He asks for an interview, and it would be more than heartless in me to refuse it. But I dread the trial. I am sadly altered from the bright and joyous girl whose first and only love he won."

"Love will be blind to alterations, so long as the heart is true."

Ella shook her head sadly.

"You did not reveal to him any of my plans?"

"Of course not. Without your wish for me to do so, I would not; nor do I think it necessary. Those plans can best be carried out without other aid or interference. And the colonel and his companions are involved in enough peril now, without having a knowledge of, or perhaps participating in, a work which would be doubly dangerous."

"Yes; you are right, my kind friend."

"When will you see the colonel?"

"To-morrow evening. He can call more safely after dark."

"He has a companion—a naval officer, named Dawson, who wishes to come with him, and solicits an introduction to Carrollita."

"Yes; Carrollita saw him from the carriage, but I only saw the colonel. She spoke of him to me this evening, and said he was fine-looking."

"He seems to be a gentleman," said Sanchez, thoughtfully. "But it is late, fair lady, and human nature requires some rest. Excuse me; I must retire."

And, bowing, he left her.

She, too, retired to her room—but not to sleep. Again and again she read that letter, and more than once she pressed it to her lips.

CHAPTER LII.

At an early hour on the ensuing day, Mr. Sanchez carried a tiny note to Mr. Bolton. A single line comprised its contents—that line only said:

"I will see you this evening, at the house of Mr. Sanchez."

Yet that line was enough to make the brave man tremble like a leaf.

"Thank Heaven!" he murmured. "This will be a long day. Waiting hours are tedious."

And he placed the note in the case which carried the miniature which was suspended over his heart. And after an arrangement was made that Mr. Sanchez should call for him and the captain at an early hour in the evening, he went down to the wharf with the captain, to see the cotton which he had bought, placed on board the vessel, so that whenever he thought it necessary to try "running the blockade" again, he could do so.

Little did he think that a black, ragged-looking negro, who loomed closely about him—near enough to hear what he was saying, and more than once near enough to be kicked out of the way, was the very villain whom he had ordered from his presence that morning, and one whom he had more reason to dread than any other person in that city—for his black heart was revengeful to a fiendish degree. He knew no scruples, possessed no conscience, lacked nothing but courage to make him a finished desperado.

While the cotton was going on board, and Mr. Bolton with Captain Smythe were seated on a bale, conversing in a low tone, General Drayton and some members of his staff approached.

"We are getting ready for sea, again, general," said Mr. Bolton.

"We will be sorry to lose you so soon," said the general. "But you will soon be back again, if the Yankees don't catch you. You will not go further than Bermuda?"

"Probably not," said Bolton. "Those fellows seem to keep a close watch outside, but with a dark night and a westerly breeze, I can slip clear of them, I think. The 'Palmerston', like her noble namesake, has a slippery way of her own."

"If he was only slippery enough to beat Bill Seward on the political ice, I'd like it," said the general, with a smile. "We never can succeed in establishing Southern Independence without European aid; I am satisfied of that."

"If you will wait long enough, general, you will get it."

"Yes, but we'll be eaten up, body and bones, before it comes; there will not be a skeleton of us left."

"Do not be despondent, general. When you look at your many military successes, and few reverses, I am sure you must be exultant. I believe you told me the other day, that the South had won fifty battles where they had lost one."

"Yes; but it annoys me to think that the accursed Yankees have been permitted to gain a foothold upon the soil of this State—upon this sacred soil, sir, rendered famous by the deeds of Marion and his men."

Bolton wanted to ask if Wayne and Greene, and other Northern men, had not fought and bled upon that "sacred soil," but he thought it best for him not to know too much of American history.

"But we will not let them stay here long. If you do not sail too soon you'll hear glorious news, sir! We've laid a trap for the Yankees that will send more than one thousand of them howling down to Hades!" continued the general.

"Gad! I'm jolly glad to hear of it!" said Captain Smythe. "General, will not you and your officers do me the honor to try a little more of my iced punch?"

"We can hardly refuse such a kind offer of this warm day," said the general, blandly.

And they all went on board the vessel.

"Curse them and their punch! I wish it was red-hot lead!" said the disguised Champe, as he turned away in the direction which led to the den of Rogers. He, too, began to feel as if his eleven-o'clock toddy wouldn't go amiss.

CHAPTER LIII.

If I had been an artist—alas! why was I not?—I never could have painted pictures of joyous and festive scenes half bright enough to suit my taste. I know it, because my descriptions of such scenes are ever too weak to begin to reach the ideal of my wishes.

How Ella received Colonel Osborn—how she looked and what she said; how he appeared and what he uttered, I shall not attempt to describe here. I will only say that somewhere between eight and nine o'clock on the evening appointed, a very cheerful-looking group "might have been seen" in the parlor of Mr. Sanchez.

In one corner of that parlor sat Mr. and Mrs. Wilson, and Mr. and Mrs. Sanchez. As they were conversing pleasantly with each other, it is to be supposed that they were comfortable, to say the least.

In another corner, very close together, talking rapidly in a low and earnest tone, sat Ella Adams and Colonel Rand Osborn, and he held in his hand the picture which she had given him years before, and which he had worn over his brave, true heart ever since.

And at the centre-table, looking over a sketch-book full of drawings from the pencil of Carrollita, sat that young lady and Captain George Dawson, apparently upon very friendly terms for such recent acquaintances.

Captain Dawson had an artist's taste, with something more than the skill of an ordinary amateur, and his enthusiastic encomiums upon the works of Miss Sanchez pleased and gratified her young heart very much. For she could see plainly that his was candor and not flattery. It is a weak head and a still weaker heart which can be pleased with flattery.

The captain distinguished faults as well as beauties, and not only pointed them out, but suggested the way of amending them, in so delicate a manner, that Carrollita found herself more and more interested in him the longer he remained by her side.

And he? Well, we have seen how suddenly and plumply he pitched head over heels into the troubled fountain of Love when he first saw her. Her extreme beauty "took him down" then. Now he found her to possess wit, intelligence, a superior education, a bright genius, and withal a gentle grace, so winning, that he yielded himself utterly a captive to the power which had at first affected him. Her voice was the sweetest music that he had ever heard. And

when her large black eyes looked into his, he actually blushed and trembled like a school-boy with his first love.

And she?

Why, she was decidedly pleased with him. She knew nothing of men; but she thought that if all men were like him, they must be very agreeable company. She had no further thought. Her heart did not flutter like his. She was very much pleased with him; but as to love, she did not yet know what it was. Not that her warm, impulsive heart was incapable of feeling that passion—not but that her heart was very susceptible, but she had not taken the premier lesson yet.

For a considerable time the tableau which we have glanced at remained unaltered. Then, at the suggestion of Mr. Sanchez, his amiable wife brought in some cakes and wine and passed them around, and then the conversation became more general, and the parties rather more united than isolated as before.

After a glass or two of wine had passed the gentlemen's lips, Ella, who seemed to wish to display the gifts of Carrollita to the best advantage, asked her to take her guitar and furnish them with some music.

She had but just done so, and was standing near the window, when she saw the face of a man glaring at her from outside, with a look of such fiendish malignity, that she screamed out in terror.

Colonel Osborn saw the object of her fright and sprung to the door. But by the time it was opened, the man, whoever he was, had leaped over the fence which fronted the yard and fled away in the darkness; for the sound of his rapidly-receding steps could be distinctly heard.

"What is the matter? What terrified you so?" asked Mr. Sanchez, of Ella.

"It was horrible! So horrible!" she said, with a shudder. "It had the face of a negro—but the eyes—the eyes—they were of fire! An enraged tiger might look so—no human being could!"

"Who, or what was it, colonel?" asked Mr. Sanchez, of Osborn, who came in and closed the door.

"Some one prowling around here for no good, or he would not have run away at such speed," said the colonel. "I only got a glimpse of his black face at the window, and saw him spring back as Miss Adams screamed."

"It is an unusual thing for any one to be lurking around my house," said Mr. Sanchez. "I must chain my dog in the front yard after this. But it is not likely that any black man would lurk around with any more serious intent than some petty theft."

"In a position like ours, everything makes us suspicious," said the colonel. "But I hope soon to be out of it. Miss Adams states that you are anxious to remove your family to the

North, Mr. Sanchez, and I shall be but too glad to have them and yourself, and Mr. Wilson and his wife, accept a passage with me when I leave this city, which will be just as soon as Miss Adams consents to go."

"We shall be rejoiced to accept of your offer," said Mr. Sanchez; "that is, if we can get away without endangering your safety."

"Oh! there will be no danger of that. Once concealed on board of our vessel, you will all be safe; for in two hours from the time we leave the wharf we will be under the protecting guns of our gallant navy, and I will defy all South Carolina to get you from thence again."

"Well, sir, we are under your orders."

"When will you be on board, Miss Adams?" asked the colonel, looking Ella in the eyes.

"To-morrow night, if we live," said Ella. "You must forgive my nervousness, but I cannot drive that horrible face from me! I have suffered so much that I am weak as a child."

"Do not fear, dear Ella," said the colonel, in a low tone. "A strong arm is near to protect you."

"I know it, Rand—I know it!" she replied, "but my heart is cold with dread—as cold as ice! A terror all the more sickening because it is vague and undefined, oppresses me. A shadow seems to stand between me and the hope which was rising so bright before me."

"Cheer up, dearest. It is only a temporary fright. I cannot think that any serious danger is near us. My plans are well laid. The authorities here are completely blinded as to my real character. Cheer up; another night and you will be safe and far from here. One day more and we will be in Port Royal, and then—then, if you will but consent, our regimental chaplain will have the most pleasant duty to perform that has occurred to him since he wore a uniform."

"If we get there safely, Rand, I shall refuse you nothing which you, in your great love and generosity, deem right. And if we do not—if this dead terror in my heart assumes life and reality, and I am torn from you, or should perish, remember that ever I have, and forever I will, love you and you only!"

"Bless you, my brave girl—bless you! And now cheer up! Miss Sanchez. I challenge you for a song, which will bring back some of the roses to this cheek, and in turn I will promise you that Captain Dawson shall show you that he can touch the piano as skillfully as he can use the sword, and sing you a gentle ballad as well as he can issue orders in a tempest or amid the thunders of a battle."

Carrollita was fortunately too unsophisticated to require much urging, and soon her melodious voice was floating, wave-like in its gentle cadences, through the room.

CHAPTER LIV.

It was night, and the pickets near Port Royal were on the alert, for they knew not when the "Black-flag" Chivalry of South Carolina might attempt to redeem their solemn oath, to sweep the invaders from their sacred soil.

The sound of oars attracted the attention of a sentinel, who paced to and fro near the beach which fronted the head-quarters of the general in command. It was so dark that he could not distinguish the boat, but by the sound he knew it was near.

"Who comes there?" he shouted.

"Don't shoot, Mars'r Sojerman—I is only a counterban," cried a voice from the water; and the sound of the oars ceased.

"Pull in here an' give the countersign, if you have it!" cried the sentinel.

"I is a goin' to pull in dere, Mars'r Sojerman—but I hasn't got no countersign dat's good dis side ob Charleston, I reckon. I wants to see de gen'ral, right off, d'reckly, or more sooner—I is a bear' of despatchums."

"Sergeant of the guard!" shouted the sentinel.

By the time that the sergeant of the guard came with a lantern and a file of men, the boat which contained our old friend Aurelius had reached the beach.

"Who is here?" asked the sergeant of the guard.

"Me—myself! And I is a counterban' all de way from Charleston wid despatchums for Gen'ral Sherman."

"For General Sherman? Do you know what time o' night it is?"

"Guess you doesn't. It isn't night at all Mars'r Sojerman—it's 'bout free o'clock in de mornin'."

"Well, you can come up to the guard-tent, and stay there till the general gets up," said the sergeant.

"If I tell him, den, dat you keep important despatchums from him dat he ought to see right off, dis berry minute, maybe he won't haul you over de coals."

"Let me see your dispatches, my colored friend."

"No sah! I knows my duty too well for dat, if I is only a counterban'. Nobody sees de papers, but de general himself, and maybe he'll make a stir when he sees 'em."

"They may be important. I think I'd better take him to the general," said the sergeant. "Ah, there comes the officer of the night. He will tell me what to do."

"Whom have you here, sergeant?" asked the officer.

"A fellow who calls himself a contraband, sir, and who says he is from Charleston, with dispatches for the general, sir."

"Ah! How did he get here?"

"He just landed in a boat."

"Rowed all de way from Charleston, sah!"

Been two nights a comin'—had to hide in de swamp yesterday; de rebels watch de ribber too close," said Aurelius.

"Let me see your dispatches," said the officer.

"No sah—s'cuse me. I know you is a gemp-lem, and I is only a poor counterban'; but my orders was to give de papers to Gen'ral Sherman, and nobody else, not if dey kill me."

"You are a faithful fellow. Come with me to the general's marquee. I will wake him up, and you shall deliver your papers."

"Tank you, sah—I is glad I has got here. It was a tough row, dat long, long ways!"

The general was soon aroused; and when Aurelius was satisfied it was him, he drew off one of his old boots, and ripping open the sole where he had opened it and again pegged it together, he took out a small letter, which he handed to the General.

The latter opened it, and a look of surprise gathered upon his features.

"You are from Charleston, my man," he said.

"Yes, sah!"

"This is important. Send at once for the generals of brigades!" said the general to the officer.

"When did you leave Charleston, my brave fellow?" he asked.

"Night afore last, sah," replied Aurelius, grinning with delight at the compliment. "I come on dat night till it was a'most day, and I see watch-fires close to me. Den I hide in de swamp, close by an island, where dere was a heap ob Souf Car'lina sojers, an' stay all day."

"How did you know that they were South Carolina soldiers, my lad?"

"Cause dey drink whisky, and play cards all day. I seen 'em from a tree-top. And dey had de cabbage-tree flag a flyin'."

"The palmetto, you mean?"

"Yes, sah—we counterban's calls it de cabbage tree."

The general smiled. Calling a servant, he told him to pour out a glass of brandy for Aurelius.

"Drink that, my man, and take this purse of gold. There are a hundred dollars in it, and you have richly earned them."

"All dese for me, mars'r gen'ral?" asked Aurelius, hardly able to believe in such good fortune.

"Yes; because you have been faithful and brave. You will now go with that man, and he will show you a bed. You will need sleep, for I must send you back to-morrow night."

"Yes, sah, I is ready to go anywhere, or to fight anybody for such a brave, good mars'r general."

Aurelius now followed the servant to a small tent in the rear of the general's marquee. Pointing to a mattress, and some good blankets on the ground, the man said:

"You can take a good sleep here, my friend."

"Yes, sah, will you jest do me a lilly favor, sah?" asked Aurelius.

"Yes—anything I can. What is it?" said the man.

"Jest hit me a deboil of a kick on de shin. I want to see woder I isn't asleep, and a dream-in'. I can't belebe I is awake."

The man laughed, and did hit Aurelius a devil of a kick on the shin with one of his heavy brogans.

"Ow! ow! Tank you, sah—I'm saxify now dat I is awake," cried Aurelius, rubbing his shin. "By golly, dis bein' a counterban' an' a bearer ob despatchums pays. I is one hundred dollar' richer dan I was dis time yesterday. Went Roxyanner jump right up an' down when she sees dem dollars."

And as he was now alone, Aurelius jumped a double shuffle, and cut a pigeon wing, and then dropped down on the mattress, and rolled himself up in a blanket.

Happy fellow! in less than a minute his nose gave audible signification of his being sound asleep. His labors were temporarily ended, and fatigue sought its reward.

Meanwhile the general officers of the army and the staff of the commander had been hastily summoned to his side. And horses galloping off bearing orderlies, and boats rowing off to the vessels of the fleet, betokened that some sudden and unusual movement was going on. The Yankees were not to be trapped by General Lee, that time.

CHAPTER LV.

"I've holed 'em! I've holed 'em!" cried Champe, in fiendish glee, as he rushed into the back room of Rogers' place, on the night when he had traced Bolton and Smythe to the house of Sanchez, and terrified Ella Adams by glaring at her through the window. "They were foxes and run keen, but I've holed 'em."

"Who?" asked Rogers, somewhat astonished at the exuberant joy of Champe, who fairly danced in his glee.

"Why the gal, and the man Bolton, and his captain, and old Sanchez, all in a lump. They've been playing a big game; but this child has been too sharp for 'em—too sharp, by thunder!"

"Blow me if I can understand you! What has Sanchez to do with the matter?"

"Why, the gal has been stopping at his house. And I followed Mr. Bolton there to night, and saw him making love to the gal. I was looking in at the window when she saw me, and gave such a yell that I jumped about ten foot high, and run for dear life. For I didn't want them to find me out, just then. Though I know well enough they only thought it was some stray nigger peeping in at their fun. But hand out the bourbon, old boy, I'm as dry as a preacher's 'ke."

Rogers produced the bottle and glasses, and,

after they had been used, asked Champe what he next intended to do.

"Why, I mean to take that gal and another beauty, that I think is a daughter of Sanchez, under my care to-morrow night, if I can raise help enough. They live in an out-of-the-way corner of the city; and I think, with three or four men, and a carriage, I could do the job up. After we get the women, we can do as we like with them, and ask our own price for delivering them up to them that will go half crazy to find them."

"It's risky—devilish risky!" said Rogers.

"Yes; but who cares for that?"

"I do, without I can see some money in it," said the landlord, bluntly.

"I thought you had more grit," said Champe, with a sneer.

"I've grit enough, but I want to see a thing pay."

"Well—suppose I guarantee that this pays."

"How'll you guarantee it? Your word is good enough, as far as it goes, Bill, but it isn't money."

"Well, you get me four men and a carriage for to-morrow night—have 'em all swear to act up to orders, and I'll plank down one hundred dollars for a guarantee."

"Now you talk something like, Bill. Give us your hand on that."

"Here it is. Can you find the men?"

"I reckon I can. I'll drive the carriage myself. I can get a hack from Paddy Forbes; he's cursed mean, and will charge like thunder; but then he'll take it out in rum, so the odds will just come to the difference."

"Well, that part is fixed. Now, I shall take an early hour for the job, before them men can get there for an evening's visit, or else a late one, after they're gone."

"The later the better. People won't be stirring, and I'll manage to get a pass which will keep the patrol and guard from interfering with us."

"Well, let it be after the chaps have gone, then. Sanchez will be easy to master, and we can gag and bundle the women into the hack in a hurry. I wish we were ready to-night."

"It is too short notice for that. Keep cool and take it easy, now that you've traced your game home."

"I try to. But that cursed branding-iron burns in my forehead yet, and my back feels as if a thousand cats were drawing their poisoned claws over it."

CHAPTER LVI.

"I think that we had better delay our attempt to leave until Aurelius returns from Port Royal," said Mr. Sanchez to Miss Adams, on the morning after Mr. Bolton had first visited her. "It would be cruel to leave the poor fellow here in ignorance of where we had gone, and a poor return for his faithful services. Besides,

he may have some communication of importance for the colonel. I told him to hurry back."

"Oh, true. Why did we not think of this last night. I intended that our bonfire should take place to-night."

"That had also better be deferred; for in the confusion which must ensue when that takes place, we can most easily transfer ourselves to the vessel."

"But the colonel expects us to-night."

"We can easily inform him that we have thought it better to await the return of Aurelius."

"Yes. I will write a note to him if you will carry it."

"That I will do with great pleasure. Have you fully recovered from your fright?"

"In truth, Mr. Sanchez, I have not. Those eyes haunted me all night; I cannot avoid thinking of their fiendish glare yet. Have you any idea who it could be?"

"I have an idea, but only a conjecture. I am going to look at one man's feet to-day, if I can find him. The track in my front yard is plain and rather singular. I have measured it. The shoe or boot which made it had the heel torn off in some way as the fellow got over the fence; the pegged heel is in my pocket. The foot was a large one—it measured eleven inches in length, and is almost as broad as it is long. It is a regular 'nigger' foot, yet I do not believe that a negro made that track."

"I saw his face, sir; it was black as night."

"It is very easy to blacken a white face, Miss Ella."

"True—I did not think of that. Who do you think it might have been?"

"It might have been that villain Champe. Mr. Bolton sent him off in a hurry, yesterday morning, when he went to him with a lie in his mouth, to try to extort more money from him. It is possible that in a new disguise he watched Mr. Bolton last night, and traced him here."

"Yes, yes—it must have been so," said Ella. "It was his vindictive glare which so terrified me. Is there not some way to cage the villain before he attempts more mischief?"

"I hope so. I will look him up to-day, and see if it was he who was here; if it was, he will get a warning to leave the city, or else find a lodgement in the jail. If he comes prowling around here again, he will get a charge of buck-shot through his head. I shall be armed and upon my guard, after this."

"I will go and write the note for the colonel," said Ella. "Do caution him to avoid exposure. Mr. Sanchez, his life is very precious to me."

"I will."

CHAPTER LVII.

Mr. Rogers was astonished by quite an early call on the morning ensuing the night when Mr. Champe had declared he had "holed" his

game. The visitor was Mr. Sanchez. There was but one person in the bar-room besides Mr. Rogers, and that person appeared to be a negro—would have been taken for one at a superficial glance, by an uninterested observer.

"Good morning, friend Rogers—good morning," said Mr. Sanchez. "I was passing your way, and thought I would step in and try a little of your excellent Bourbon."

Rogers nervously replied to the salutation of his most unexpected customer, and put the bottle and a glass on the counter.

The negro, who sat in the corner smoking, turned his back toward the visitor, and seemed to avoid even the apparently careless glance which Sanchez had favored him with upon entering.

"Put another glass out, and join me, Mr. Rogers—I dislike drinking alone. It looks unsocial, and I had rather pay for a couple of glasses than one, at any time."

Rogers muttered something about having taken his bitters that morning, but put down a second glass.

Sanchez poured out a light dose and drank it off; he then, as before, took a handful of gold and silver out of his pocket, and, selecting a dollar, threw it down.

"I'm sorry that I'm out of change this morning," said Rogers, unblushingly.

"Oh, never mind the change; I may want another glass before I go. Where is our friend Bowers, this morning?"

"He went into the country, to see a sick uncle, sir, yesterday," said Rogers.

"Ah! He seems to be a very fine fellow."

"Yes, a capital chap," said Rogers, uneasily; for he did not like the way in which Sanchez looked from time to time at the darkey in the corner.

"Have you known him long?" continued Sanchez.

"No—not very. That is, not intimately. I've met him off and on, though, for some time."

"Ah! Try another glass of Bourbon, Mr. Rogers. Your liquor is capital. By the way, do you know of a likely nigger that I can hire for a few days?"

"No, sir. I ship sailors, but niggers are not in my line," said Rogers, rather gruffly.

"Who is that man in the corner? He looks as if he wanted work."

"I don't know who he is; he has been loafing around here all the morning. It's time you moved your tracks out o' this, Sambo," said Rogers, harshly, to the negro.

The latter rose and started to go out, but Mr. Sanchez suddenly stepped between him and the door.

"Stop a moment, my man; you had better take some bitters before you go. I am never rough to a poor man, because he is black."

"I don't want nuffin'. De lan'lord told me

to go, and I'm goin'," said the negro, huskily, and he tried to break past him.

But Sanchez now stood fairly in the doorway, and taking from his pocket the boot-heel that he had picked up in his yard, and which was missing from the foot of one of the huge boots worn by this negro, he said:

"You had better have that boot-heel tacked on again a little stronger, Mr. Champe, alias Bowers, before you come prowling around my house again."

"Hell and damnation! the man knows me in this rig!" yelled Champe.

"Yes. And unless you leave the city before night, I'll see that you are caged in the strongest cell in its jail," cried Sanchez.

"Rogers, shoot him down!" cried Champe, in a rage. "I've left my pistol up stairs."

"Mr. Rogers will mind his own business, and you will take my warning and leave while I give you the chance," said Sanchez, coolly; and he turned and walked off before either of the villains could form a plan of action.

"Well, this beats me," groaned Champe, when he found that Sanchez had really gone. "That fellow was the coolest curse I ever met with."

"What'll you do now?" asked Rogers.

"Blast me if I know! The devil's luck seems to go with me of late; nothing prospers that I undertake."

"So it seems. You had better let this girl go by the board, and not bother with her any more."

"Curse me, if I do! I'll have satisfaction of the whole kit of them, if I have to swing for it."

"Well, as I don't want to swing in your company, I shall cut loose from the whole affair," said Rogers.

"Very well—I reckon I can find some other customer for a spare hundred or two that I've got left," said Champe, bitterly.

"I'd do as much for you, Bill, as for any other man that kicks, if there was any way of doing it without getting into worse trouble than I can see my way out of. This Sanchez and his friend have the advantage of you in every way. They know you, disguise yourself as you will—know all about you. They have money, and seem to stand all right with the general and his friends, which is more than we can say for ourselves."

"I don't care a curse for their money or their friends. I'll match them yet. I'll have that girl, or kill her."

"No money to be made by killing her," said Rogers, coolly.

"No; but there'll be satisfaction in it. And if I could pop over Mr. Sanchez or his girl, I shouldn't feel a bit bad. Give me a drink. By thunder, it is enough to make a fellow go wild, to have things in such a nice train, and then see them burst up!"

Champe now filled a glass to the brim, and drank it off.

"There is no use of my playing nigger any longer," he said; "I don't see what shape to get myself into to keep from being known."

"I'll tell you," said Rogers. "Wash yourself off, and tie one of your arms close down to your side; take the one that is the worst hurt. Then I'll get you an old uniform, and you can put on a jacket with one sleeve empty. In that rig you can pass for one of our sojers from the Virginny lines, that lost an arm up there."

"Yes; so I can. Help me to rig up, and I'll try that dodge, and wait my chances for the gal and her friends. Get me the rig and fit me out, and I'll pay you for it."

"Now you talk like a man, Bill. Take another drink—all will be right yet."

CHAPTER LVIII.

For four successive evenings the two Federal officers visited the house of Mr. Sanchez, without again being disturbed, as on the occasion of the first visit. Mr. Sanchez had informed them of his discovery of Champe in his new disguise, and as the villains kept aloof, they supposed that he had left the city. But Mr. Sanchez, who either in person or by faithful agents, kept a close watch of his movements, knew that he had not, and that he and Rogers were plotting some new devilry, in which the last-named scoundrel had enlisted three or four villains as unprincipled as himself. But he said nothing to alarm his friends and people—he kept his arms and his counsel ready for any emergency. Wilson, like himself, was well-armed, and as neither left the house at the same time, he felt no uneasiness about an attack there.

Late on the fourth evening, a knock at the front door announced a visitor.

Sanchez hastened to open it, and to the pleasure of all, admitted the faithful mulatto, Aurelius.

"Golly, dis chile am glad to be back in de lan' ob civilisationers," said that individual, as he entered the room. "An' Missy Ella and ebbery body else, dis 'ere counterban' is mighty glad to see you; for it is more dan I 'spected more'n once since I been gone. De sojers keep mighty close watch on bofe sides now, and it is some work to 'lude 'em. But I has done it, and here's de dispatchums, Mars'r Sanchez. Gen'ral Sherman gib um to me, bress his big heart, and a hun'ed dollars, all in gold, for my own self." And the negro handed Mr. Sanchez a folded paper.

It was in cipher, and he could not read it.

"It is for you, I presume, colonel," said he to Osborn.

The latter glanced at it, and replied: "It is." Aurelius opened his eyes very wide as he heard the stranger called colonel, for he had not

seen him before. And his surprise was even greater when he heard the colonel say:

"Our news was received by the general in time to save him and a few brave men from the rebel trap. And the general advises me now, as there may be peril in longer delay among the enemy, to return to my regiment. Having made all my arrangements, I am ready, my friends, as soon as you are; the sooner we get away from here, the better."

"We will detain you but another day, colonel," said Sanchez. "To-morrow night, between the hours of eleven at night and two in the morning, we will be on board your vessel. During the day a few boxes, marked 'stores,' and simply directed to your vessel, will be sent to you; they will contain all that we wish to carry with us."

"We will receive them," said the colonel. Then, turning to Aurelius, he said: "So, the general gave you a hundred dollars in gold, did he, my brave man?"

"Yes, sah, an' sent me supper and breakfast and dinner from his own table. He is a great man, sah; a berry great man."

"Well, as I am only a colonel, it will not do for me to overdo the general in generosity; but I can equal him. Here is another hundred dollars in gold for you."

And the colonel handed him ten golden eagles.

"De Lor' to gracious!" ejaculated the astonished mulatto. "If dis is bein' a counterban', all de niggers down Souf 'll want to be counterban' as soon as de know what it is to be one. Dis chile am a gettin' rich alltogedder too fast. He is afraid ob gettin' proud an' above common niggers. 'Twon't do, 'Relius—'twon't do."

And shaking his head, he reached back the money, and said:

"I hasn't arn't dis much, Mars'r Colonel; I doesn't like to take it. De gen'ral done more dan paid me nuff a'r ady."

"You do not know how much you have saved for the Government of the United States. It is your own money—well earned. Keep it, my brave fellow," said the colonel.

"Yes, keep it for your faithfulness to the cause, as well as to me," said Ella.

"I s'pose I must; but I s'c afraid I'll grow proud wid so much money all my own," said Aurelius, with a sigh.

And he put the money away. Then turning to Mr. Sanchez, he said:

"S'cuse me, Mars'r Sanchez, if I has to hint to you dat I hasn't eat nuffin' since last night, nor drank nuffin' warmer dan swamp-water."

"Come with me, then, into the back room. You shall have something to eat, and something a little better than swamp-water to drink," said Mr. S.

During all this evening, Captain Dawson almost exclusively monopolized the company of

Carrollita, in a corner by themselves, and he was in a low, but very earnest tone, urging some proposition to her when Aurelius came in. What it was, we cannot pretend to say; for it was made only in her ear. But her reply should be recorded, so that it may bear upon any event of the future. She said:

"If my father and mother consent, I will."

And her voice trembled, and a flush ran over her sweet face as she said these words, which seemed to give the captain great joy; for he pressed both her hands in his own, and said:

"Bless you, my own love! bless you!"

Matters had evidently progressed rapidly within a few days between them, and Miss Carrollita began certainly to understand what love was.

"Can you not sing us a song ere we leave you for the night?" asked the colonel, interrupting the *tête-à-tête* of the smitten couple.

"Certainly, if it will please my father's guests," said the sweet girl.

And going to the piano, with her usual easy grace, she sang:

NEW THOUGHTS AND NEW WORDS.

Our hearts I'm sure are not our own,
Or else those hearts we'd guide.
But no; they seem to ebb and flow
Like some mysterious tide;
We know not when, nor yet know how
We lose controlling power;
We only see—we only feel,
In some unguarded hour,
That they have gone—no more our own
To seek another breast—
More fortunate than Noah's dove,
To find a place of rest!

II.
A poet wrote in icy lines,
A warning not to love—
That all the nets were treacherous snares
Which gentle Cupid wove.
Believe it not! In vain the thought
That treach'ry is so sweet—
That misery's clouds should shadows cast
Before love's golden feet!
We know and feel that woe or weal,
The heart no master knows—
To-day, it seems to be our own;
To-morrow off, it goes!

"A thousand thanks—and off we must go, for it is past midnight!" said the colonel, with a sigh, as Carrollita closed her song and the piano at the same time.

"Are you off, colonel?" asked Mr. Sanchez, now re-entering the room.

"Yes, sir—be all ready for to-morrow night."

"We will, sir."

"And, perhaps, it will be best for the captain and myself to call and escort you down."

"No, sir; I think not. I will manage to get the ladies on board at as early an hour as possible—and Mr. Wilson and myself, with Aurelius, will form a rear guard. If you will take my advice, upon no account absent yourselves from the vessel to-morrow night. We will be there, and the sooner we are clear from the harbor af-

terward, the better. I have heard that there is a plot to burn the town—if it is so, we can escape easily in the confusion. But I beg you not to betray my surmise, for it is not much more."

"We will not," said the colonel. And in a moment he and his brave companion were gone.

CHAPTER LIX.

At a proper hour the next morning, Mr. Bolton concluded that with his captain he would make a call upon his friend, General Drayton, specially to inform him of his determination to again run the "Yankee blockade" and to ask the general if he had any "orders" for Bermuda.

They entered the quarters of the general at an hour when he was usually open to all visitors, without ceremony.

They found the general in a towering rage about something, as was evinced by his loud tone of voice and choleric countenance.

"D—n Lee's impudence—it beats creation!" he was saying to his chief aid. "He says a knowledge of his plans must have leaked out here; for I was the only officer intrusted with them up to the very hour when he intended to execute them."

Observing his visitors at this moment, the general subsided in a measure.

"Glad to see you, Mr. Bolton! Glad to see you, Captain Smythe! Come in and sit down," he said. "We military men have much to annoy us, which you civilians are happily rid of. I heartily wish this war was over—I'm sick of it—sick of it! When do you try your fortune on the sea again?"

"To-night, if the wind holds as it does now. Will you favor us with the customary pass, general?"

"Certainly—certainly! My secretary will fill a blank and I will sign it. Orderly, bid my servant bring a bottle of wine and glasses here."

"Have you any orders for Bermuda, general?" asked Bolton.

"No special ones, thank you. But should you have a chance to stow away a little fruit on your return voyage, I will gladly pay you for it. I have a passion for pine-apples and bananas. Ah, there comes the wine—we will drink to a safe and lucky voyage, gentlemen!"

This toast was duly honored by all parties, and the gentlemen having received their pass from the general, soon after left to pay another and a necessary visit to the British consul, leaving General Drayton to curse General Lee at his leisure.

"All now seems fair ahead," said Captain Smythe, as they went along.

"Yes—I only hope it may remain so. What Sanchez said about a plot to burn the city, runs in my mind. I dislike this burning of cities

and wholesale destruction of property; but it is none of our work, therefore none of our business!"

"No—that's so! Here we are at the consul's. We're in for a glass of London Dock here, or the consul will be mad."

CHAPTER LX.

"Is everything ready for our work, to-night, Mr. Sanchez?" asked Ella Adams, on the morning of the day which she expected and hoped to be her last in the city of Charleston.

"It is!" replied Mr. Sanchez. "The few of our trusty agents are posted—they know precisely what to do, and when and where to do it!"

"Will there be no danger of detection?"

"There will be danger, of course—but every care will be used to avoid it. A heavy fire starting at one point will attract attention there, and prevent observation at other points where the work will be easy. In an hour from the time of the first alarm, half the city will be aflame."

"It is well. Yet now, when all is ripe for the execution of my cherished plan, my heart half relents. Many poor people will be made homeless."

"Our poor people cannot be made much poorer than they are!" said Sanchez. "Our rich rebels cannot be made poorer than they deserve to be."

"True—most true! I will not be weak-hearted. I wish that it was all over, and that we were on board the colonel's vessel."

"You and the other ladies must be on board early. I think you had better go before the torch is lighted."

"There will be less confusion, but a more careful watch kept by the patrol."

"Passes and the countersign will make it easy," said Mr. Sanchez. "I am anxious to have you off early, for Champe and his gang are plotting some deviltry. They held a meeting in the back room of Rogers' last night—near a dozen of them—the hardest kind of desperadoes!"

"Cannot the military arrest of the villain be accomplished?"

"It might; but he is a keen-eyed wretch, and may have had his suspicions aroused as to who and what our friends, the colonel and captain, are. And if arrested, he might say something which would compromise their safety!"

"Ah! Then for Heaven's sake do not disturb the wretch. They must in no way be endangered. I tremble all the while for fear their true characters should be known."

"I will not disturb him. But I must keep a close watch over his every movement. I go now to put spies over the den where he lurks. And as I shall be absent all day, you will make all the arrangements for embarkation which we

have concluded upon. Everything which we are to carry must be put upon the drays which I will send to you during the day."

"All shall be attended to. And do be careful of yourself, Mr. Sanchez! You have been very kind to me; and should any harm befall you or yours, I should blame myself for it."

"No fear—no fear!"

And Mr. Sanchez went out cheerfully.

CHAPTER LXI.

"What the deuce tickles you so, Bill? You've been as grim as a nigger with the tooth-ache these three or four days, and now you look as pleased as a darkey over a roast possum."

These words were addressed by Rogers to Champe, who came into his place about noon of the day which dates with our two last chapters, and told the landlord to set out his bottle of Bourbon and let the expense be—go the way of sinners!

"We've got 'em jest where we want 'em—blast 'em! Jest where we want 'em!" said Champe, as he drank a full glass of Bourbon, and then took a half plug of "nigger-head" tobacco into his lank jaws.

"How's that?" asked the landlord.

"Why, I've just found out by their manoeuvres that they're going off in a body with the Bluenosed chaps in the Palmerston."

"Who? The gal?"

"Yes; and Sanchez, and all his kit! He has been sending stuff aboard, and they're a packin' up at the house. I went there a beggin', and the woman gave me somethin' to eat and a dollar to be rid of me. They didn't think who was a takin' a bite of cold bread and meat there then. The gal didn't see much of me; she was too busy!"

"Was Sanchez there?"

"I don't know. I heard some man a trampin' about up stairs; but I didn't see him. But I saw the buck nigger that had a hand in thrashing me. I know it by his size. If I don't put him in my pocket after I've paid off my grudge with him, may I be chained up by a snaggle-toothed old woman!"

"Well, what do you propose to do?"

"Why, the easiest thing in the world. Put our fellows all aboard a boat, and lay off towards the mouth of the harbor. When the schooner comes along, hail her as if we were the guard-boat, board her, and use up the parties in just five minutes. We'll kill all the men—take what money there is aboard. I'll take Miss Adams for my prize, and you may have the Sanchez gal for yours. Then set the schooner afire, and let her go to the devil. We can come ashore, and no one will be the wiser for our trip; but we'll be a devilish sight the richer!"

"Bill, you are a tramp—an ace in a full hand! You beat all for planning. I like the looks of the job now. There won't be no cursed patrol

to bother us, and Paddy Forbes may go to grass with his old hack. He'd charge me the price of a cow for it anyway. He's meaner than a nose-rag! Take another glass of bourbon, Bill!"

"I don't mind if I do. Now, be sure and have the boys all ready. We must go well-armed, so as to do our work quick. I'll look out for a boat to suit us."

"You're sure the schooner means to sail to-night?"

"Yes; got her passes and all ready."

"Then she is ours!"

CHAPTER XLII.

"Thank Heaven, you are all aboard!"

This was the exclamation of Colonel Osborn, as he escorted Ella Adams, Carrollita, and her mother, and Milrose and his wife down into the little cabin of the "Palmerston", on the evening of the day set for their departure.

"Not all; Mr. Sanchez and Aurelius yet remain behind," said Ella. "But he said that would not be an hour behind us!"

"I am glad of it. Our anchor is hoisted, and our sails are loosed, ready for hoisting. We only wait for them. The wind is fair, and this dark and cloudy night no hindrance."

"Will not the ladies take a glass of wine?" asked the captain.

"None for me," said Miss Ella. "I will go on deck, if you please, and watch for the coming of Mr. Sanchez!"

"And, if you please, I will bear you company!" said the colonel.

The wind blew a fresh gale from the northward and eastward, and the dark clouds scudded swiftly overhead, seldom allowing a star to peep down upon the earth. There were but two or three vessels in the harbor, and their lights shone dimly through the gloom.

On shore, instead of the once gayly-lighted city, all aglow when night came on, a few glimmering lights here and there could be seen. The hum of business was not heard—the clinking of glasses and the clattering of billiard-balls, even, were silent in the saloons upon the famous "Bay".

Alas for them! the war of their own creation has been their ruin.

Ella's eyes, after she got upon deck, were fixed upon one particular part of the city, and thither she gazed with an anxious steadiness which would have been noticed by her companion if he had not been in love. For love undoubtedly blinds people.

She did not seem inclined for conversation; and finding several flattering remarks of his replied to in monosyllabic answers, the colonel, too, subsided into silence, and watched the shore.

It was not yet midnight, and the tide was yet flood; so that the schooner had time enough yet before her. Yet the colonel felt terribly anxious to be off.

A sudden start and a sigh from his fair companion, aroused Osborn from a revery into which he had fallen.

And, as he glanced away into the city in the direction in which she was gazing, he saw a bright flame leap from the roof of a tall house near the very "Battery" where he had so fortunately first seen Ella. The flame increased very rapidly, and soon the hoarse alarm of "Fire—fire!" rang from a thousand throats, and the alarm-bells pealed wildly out from various points. The rush of many feet—the shouts of men as they rolled the engines along, all came off with vivid clearness to the ears of the listeners.

In a few moments, a blaze was seen farther up the town, and then another and another!

"It is true! The slaves must have fired the city! My God, it is terrible!" said the colonel. "See the fire run from house to house! I wish Sanchez was here; for I don't like to be a quiet witness to such a sight."

"He is here!" said Ella, pointing to a boat which that instant came alongside, containing Sanchez and Aurelius. "I will go below now!"

"Do; and, if you please, send the captain up. Tell him I wish to get under-way at once!"

Ella disappeared, and Captain Smythe came on deck just as Sanchez and Aurelius, casting their boat adrift, reached the side of the colonel.

"All hands up anchor and make sail!" cried the captain. "Thunder and Mars! what's going on ashore, colonel!"

"Warmer work than I'd like to be engaged in. Charleston is a doomed city. See how the fire rushes from house to house!"

"Flee an' bed-bugs 'll stan' no chance dere!" said Aurelius, in glee.

"Are all your crew armed, colonel?" asked Sanchez, in a low tone, of Osborn.

"They soon can be," replied the other.

"Why do you ask the question?"

"I think there will be occasion to use arms before we clear the harbor!" replied Sanchez. "Just before I pushed out from the shore, a boat, containing something like a dozen persons, rowed past the pier in the shadow of which I was lurking. It did not pull with the measured stroke of a guard-boat. Besides, I heard some one say: 'The schooner lays there still; but she'll be off soon. We may as well get down the harbor!' The words were not so startling to me as the voice which uttered them. I recognized it as the voice of the villain Champe. And I heard Rogers distinctly reply: 'Yes; heave ahead, boys. When we get down a piece, I'll pass around the bottle!'"

"Well, if they should offer to interrupt us, they will find us ready!" said the colonel.

Then he called Smythe to his side, and said:

"Captain, will you oblige me by seeing that every man has a pair of loaded revolvers in his belt, and their cutlasses handy. Mr. Sanchez

says that we may be boarded by pirates before we are clear of the harbor."

"Ay. Then we'll prepare to give them a warm reception. Mr. Sanchez, you had better go down into the cabin, and warn the ladies to keep close. And then you can join us here. We are not very strong-handed—only ten men all told, outside of passengers!"

"They make three, and will do their duty!" said Sanchez, hastening down to the cabin, to caution the ladies to remain below, no matter what occurred above.

He was not gone long, but soon returned with Wilson, well armed, and with arms for Aurelius.

The schooner was by this time under way, and standing under easy sail down the harbor. Meanwhile, the fire on shore increased with terrible rapidity. The red flames seemed to run like serpents from roof to roof—to spring from block to block of the doomed city. The hoarse shouts of men were almost drowned in the cat-araet-like roar of the fire. Tall steeples, gilded domes, marble fronts—all were alight with a gleam brighter than that of day. And the black smoke, gathering densely over all, hung like a cloud of doom above the fated city.

Every point in the harbor was lighted up as if it was day—the forts, with their black armaments—the islands, far and near. Boats were seen hastening from some of the forts, and now Osborn and his men kept a keen watch on these. But they passed the schooner at full speed, paying no attention to her. It was evident that they were hastening to the fire.

"I think we shall not be troubled to-night, Mr. Sanchez," said the colonel, as the vessel swept past the darkened walls of Sumter.

Sanchez made no reply, but pointed to a dark object which seemed to lie motionless on the water, near or quite a half-mile ahead, and directly in the channel down which they were running.

"That is a boat," said the colonel. "Men, be on your guard. Can't we run clear of the fellow, captain?" asked he. "There is no honor in fighting such characters, and we may lose men whose lives are, singly, worth more than a crew like those wretches."

"The wind has lulled since that fire begun, as if it would change, and we make but little headway. If we only had the breeze which we had an hour or two ago, I could run him down, or avoid him, as I chose," said the captain, looking at the boat with a night-glass.

"A dozen men or so, warned as we are, we'll get the first fire. Let them try their worst," he added.

The schooner now neared the boat quite fast. Bidding his crew to be all ready to fire a volley into the boat when he gave the word, the captain went forward.

As the schooner came within a hundred yards, he hailed the boat.

"What boat is that?" he asked.

"The guard-boat! Heave to, while we come abroad and examine your pass, if you have one," cried a man who stood up in the stern of the boat.

"That is Champe. I'll settle him!" said Osborn, as he grasped his pistols nervously.

"We've been boarded by one guard-boat, and that is enough. Steer clear of us!" cried the captain, in a clear voice.

"To your oars, boys, and lay her alongside!" shouted the man in the stern.

The men in the boat gave a few strokes of their oars, and in a moment it was close by the waist of the schooner, and a man in the bow caught hold of the fore-rigging of the vessel, and threw a grapnel-hook aboard.

"Give it to the scoundrels!" shouted Dawson. "Let them smell fire!"

In an instant, and while the gang in the boat were rising to spring on board the schooner, a terrible volley was poured in upon them. Several fell wildly back into the water; but Champe and Rogers, with two or three more, leaped upon the deck, firing as they came.

But the "repeaters" were at work. Osborn, whose first shot whistled by Champe's ear, sprang forward with his sword in hand, and before the villain could fire a second shot, his head was cloven asunder.

Rogers, badly wounded, dropped on his knees and craved mercy, as did the only two of the gang who had not paid the penalty of their mad attempt with the forfeit of their lives.

"Tumble into your boat and leave!" said Osborn, indignantly. "You deserve no mercy; but you are not worth the powder and lead which would be wasted in killing you."

Glad to get off so, the wretches got into the boat which, with a grappling-hook, had been fastened alongside, and were allowed to drift astern.

Ordering some of the crew to cast the body of Champe overboard, the colonel wiped his sword, and asked:

"Is any one hurt on our side?"

"I doesn't know wedder dis 'ero counterban' is hurt," said Aurelius, slowly; "but sumfin' has hit me, an' I feel like I was a goin' to womic up my supper."

And even while he was speaking, the brave mulatto staggered, and had not Mr. Sanchez caught him, he would have fallen to the deck.

"He is hurt!" cried Mr. Sanchez. "The blood is gushing out upon my hands, in a stream as hot as fire!"

Osborn sprang to his aid, and assisted by Wilson, they carried the poor fellow down into the first cabin.

To tear open his clothes and examine the wound was the work of but an instant.

Osborn saw in a moment that the faithful negro had received his ticket of leave for another world. One of the random shots fired by the accursed pirates had pierced his left breast, close by the heart, and gone out at his back.

To attempt to staunch the wound was useless: he was bleeding internally, and that was what had made him feel so sick at the stomach.

The colonel shook his head sadly.

Aurelius saw his look, and said:

"Dis chile am gone done for—isn't he mars'r?"

"You are hurt very badly, Aurelius," said the colonel.

"Well, I doesn't care so much now. Missy Ella an' de rest is safe! May I see Missy Ella and Roxanner?"

Ella was already by the poor fellow's side. And Roxanna came in a moment.

"Are you badly hurt, poor Aurelius?" asked Ella, as the tears gushed from her eyes.

"Spec I am, Missy Ella. Reckon dis chile am bound for anudder worl', where niggers is made white. Bress de Lor' for dat! Take care of Roxanner. All my money is here now. I was agoin' to ax her to hab me when we done got free at de Norf. But now it can't be. Where's Mars'r Sanchez—he been berry kind to dis chile—de Lor' bress him."

"Here I am, my good Aurelius," said Sanchez, in tears.

"I can't see you, it am so dark. I is goin'! Roxanner, nebber you leave Missy Ella—be good gal, an—an—"

A gurgle, and amid the sobs of every one in that cabin, the spirit of the brave and faithful negro sped its way to another and a better world.

"We are nearing one of the blockaders, captain," said one of the crew, who came down into the cabin at that moment.

"Show three lights—the red, white, and blue—on the forward signal halliards," said the captain; "they then will know who we are, and spare their powder."

I dislike to close my story with so sad a scene; but the death of Aurelius is the last tragic incident of this tale. In an hour more the schooner had "spoken" the blockading squadron, and was bearing away for Port Royal, leaving Charleston blazing behind.

Soon after the arrival of the vessel there, the regimental chaplain had the pleasure of uniting Colonel Rand Osborn to Ella Adams; and Carollita Sanchez became the beautiful bride of Captain George Dawson, amid the congratulations of the brave comrades of both.

And that was all.

[THE END.]

WAGNER, THE WEHR-WOLF.

PROLOGUE.

It was the month of January, 1516.

The night was dark and tempestuous;—the thunder growled around;—the lightning flashed at short intervals;—and the wind swept furiously along, in sudden and fitful gusts.

The streams of the great Black Forest of Germany babbled in playful melody no more, but rushed on with deafening din, mingling their torrent-roar with the wild creaking of the huge oaks, the rustling of the firs, the howling of the affrighted wolves, and the hollow voices of the storm.

The dense black clouds were driving restless athwart the sky; and when the vivid lightning gleamed forth with rapid and eccentric glare, it seemed as if the dark jaws of some hideous monster, floating high above, opened to vomit flame.

And as the abrupt but furious gusts of wind swept through the forest, they raised strange echoes—as if the impervious mazes of that mighty wood were the abode of hideous fiends and evil spirits, who responded in shrieks, moans, and lamentations, to the fearful din of the tempest.

It was, indeed, an appalling night!

An old—old man sat in his little cottage on the verge of the Black Forest.

He had numbered ninety years: his head was completely bald—his mouth was toothless—his long beard was white as snow—and his limbs were feeble and trembling.

He was alone in the world; his wife—his children—his grandchildren—all his relations, in fine, save one—had preceded him on that long, last voyage, from which no traveller returns.

And that one was a grand-daughter—a beautiful girl of sixteen, who had hitherto been his solace and his comfort,—but who had suddenly disappeared—he knew not how—a few days previously to the time when we discover him seated thus lonely in his poor cottage.

But perhaps she also was dead! An accident might have snatched her away from him, and sent her spirit to join those of her father and mother, her sisters and her brothers, whom a terrible pestilence—the Black Death—hurried to the tomb a few years before.

No: the old man could not believe that his darling grand-daughter was no more—for he had sought her throughout the neighboring district of the Black Forest, and not a trace of her was to be seen. Had she fallen down a precipice, or perished by the ruthless murderer's hand, he would have discovered her mangled corpse: had she become the prey of the ravenous wolves, certain signs of her fate would have doubtless somewhere appeared.

The sad—the chilling conviction therefore, went to the old man's heart, that the only being left to solace him on earth, had deserted him; and his spirit was bowed down in despair.

Who now would prepare his food, while he tended his little flock? who was there to collect the dry branches in the forest, for the winter's fuel, while the aged shepherd watched a few sheep that he possessed? who would now spin him warm clothing to protect his weak and trembling limbs?

"Oh! Agnes," he murmured, in a tone indicative of a breaking heart, "why could'st thou have thus abandoned me? Didst thou quit the old man to follow some youthful lover, who will buoy thee up with bright hopes, and then deceive thee?" O Agnes—my darling! hast thou left me to perish without a soul to close my eyes?

It was painful how that aged shepherd wept.

Suddenly a loud knock at the door of the cottage aroused him from his painful reverie; and he hastened, as fast as his trembling limbs would permit him, to answer the summons.

He opened the door; and a tall man, apparently about forty years of age, entered the humble dwelling. His light hair would have been magnificent indeed, were it not sorely neglected; his blue eyes were naturally fine and intelligent, but fearful now to meet, so wild and wandering were their glances;—his form was tall and admirably symmetrical, but prematurely bowed by the weight of sorrow;—and his attire was of costly material, but indicative of inattention even more than it was travel-soiled.

The old man closed the door, and courteously drew a stool near the fire for the stranger who had sought in his cottage a refuge against the fury of the storm.

He also placed food before him; but the stranger touched it not—horror and dismay appearing to have taken possession of his soul.

Suddenly the thunder, which had hitherto growled at a distance, burst above the humble abode; and the wind swept by with so violent a gust, that it shook the little tenement to its foundation, and filled the neighboring forest with strange, unearthly noises.

Then the countenance of the stranger expressed such ineffable horror, amounting to a fearful agony, that the old man was alarmed, and stretched out his hand to grasp a crucifix that hung over the chimney-piece: but his mysterious guest made a forbidding sign of so much earnestness mingled with such proud authority, that the aged shepherd sank back into his seat without touching the sacred symbol.

The roar of the thunder past—the shrieking, whistling, gushing wind became temporarily lulled into low moans and subdued lamentations, amid the mazes of the Black Forest;—and the stranger grew more composed.

‘Dost thou tremble at the storm?’ inquired the old man.

‘I am unhappy,’ was the evasive and somewhat impatient reply. ‘Seek not to know more of me—beware how you question me. But you, old man, are not happy? The traces of care seem to mingle with the wrinkles of age upon your brow?’

The shepherd narrated, in brief and touching terms, the unaccountable disappearance of his much-loved grand-daughter Agnes.

The stranger listened abstractedly at first; but afterwards he appeared to reflect profoundly for several minutes.

‘Your lot is wretched, old man,’ said he, at length: ‘if you live a few years longer, that period must be passed in solitude and cheerlessness;—if you suddenly fall ill you must die the lingering death of famine, without a soul to place a morsel of food, or the cooling cup to your lips;—and when you shall be no more, who will follow you to the grave? There are no habitations nigh; the nearest village is half-a-day’s journey distant; and ere the peasants of that hamlet, or some passing traveller, might discover that the inmate of this hut had breathed his last, the wolves from the forest would have entered and mangled your corpse.’

‘Talk not thus!’ cried the old man, with a visible shudder: then darting a half-terrified, half-outraged glance at his guest, he said, ‘But who are you that speak in this awful strain—this warning voice?’

Again the thunder rolled, with crashing sound, above the cottage; and once more the wind swept by, laden, as it seemed, with the shrieks and groans of human beings in the agonies of death.

The stranger maintained a certain degree of composure only by means of a desperate effort; but he could not altogether subdue a wild flashing of the eyes and a ghastly change of the countenance—signs of a profoundly-felt terror.

‘Again I say, ask me not who I am!’ he exclaimed, when the thunder and the gust had passed. ‘My soul recoils from the bare idea of pronouncing my own accursed name! But—unhappy as you see me—crushed, overwhelmed with deep affliction as you behold me,—anxious, but unable, to repent for the past as I am, and filled with appalling dread for the future as I now proclaim myself to be, still is my power far, far beyond that limit which hems mortal energies within so small a sphere. Speak, old man—wouldst thou change thy condition? For to me—and to me alone of all human beings—belong the means of giving thee new life—of bestowing upon thee the vigor of youth—of rendering that stooping frame upright and strong—of restoring fire to those glazing eyes, and beauty to that wrinkled, sunken, withered countenance,—of endowing thee, in a word, with a fresh tenure of existence and making that existence sweet by the aid of treasures so vast that no extravagance can dissipate them!’

A strong though indefinite dread assailed the old man as this astounding proffer was rapidly opened, in all its alluring details, to his mind;—and various images of terror presented themselves to his imagination;—but these feelings were almost immediately dominated by a wild and ardent hope, which became the more attractive and exciting in proportion as a rapid glance at his helpless, wretched, deserted condition led him to survey the contrast between what he then was, and what, if the stranger spoke truly, he might so soon become.

The stranger saw that he had made the desired impression; and he continued thus:

‘Give but your assent, old man,—and not only will I render thee young, handsome, and wealthy; but I will endow thy mind with an intelligence to match that proud position. Thou shalt go forth into the world to enjoy all those pleasures—those delights—and those luxuries, the names of which are even now scarcely known to thee!’

‘And what is the price of this glorious boon?’ asked the old man, trembling with mingled joy and terror through every limb.

‘There are two conditions,’ answered the stranger, in a low, mysterious tone. ‘The first is, that you become the companion of my wanderings for one year and a half from the present time—until the hour of sunset, on the 30th of July, 1517, when we must part for ever,—you to go whithersoever your inclinations may guide you—and I—But of that, no matter!’ he added, hastily, with a sudden motion, as if of deep mental agony, and with wildly flashing eyes.

The old man shrank back in dismay from his mysterious guest: the thunder rolled again—the rude gust swept fiercely by—the dark forest rustled awfully—and the stranger’s torturing feelings were evidently prolonged by the voices of the storm.

A pause ensued; and the silence was at length broken by the old man, who said, in a hollow and tremulous tone, ‘To the first condition I would willingly accede. But the second?’

‘That you prey upon the human race, whom I hate—because of all the world I alone am so deeply, so terribly accurst!’ was the ominously fearful yet only dimly significant reply.

The old man shook his head—scarcely comprehending the words of his guest, and yet daring not to ask to be more enlightened.

‘Listen!’ said the stranger, in a hasty but impressive voice; ‘I require a companion, one who has no human ties, and who will minister to my caprices,—who will devote himself wholly and solely to watch me in my dark hours, and endeavor to recall me back to enjoyment and pleasure,—who, when he shall be acquainted with my power, will devise new means in which to exercise it, for the purpose of conjuring up those scenes of enchantment and delight that may for a season win me away from thought. Such a companion do I need for a period of one year and a half; and you are of all men, the best suited to my design. But the Spirit whom I must invoke to effect the promised change in thee, and by whose aid you can be given back to youth and comeliness, will demand some fearful sacrifice at your hands. And the nature of that sacrifice—the nature of the condition to be imposed—I can well divine!’

‘Name the sacrifice—name the condition!’ cried the old man eagerly. ‘I am so miserable—so spirit-broken—so totally without hope in this world, that I greedily long to enter upon that new existence which you promise me! Say, then—what is the condition?’

‘That you prey upon the human race, whom he hates as well as I,’ answered the stranger.

‘Again those awful words!’ ejaculated the old man, casting trembling glances around him.

‘Yes—again those words echoed the mysterious guest, looking with his fierce burning eyes into the glazed orbs of the aged shepherd. ‘And now learn their import!’ he continued in a solemn tone. Knowest thou not that there is a belief in many parts of our native land that at particular seasons certain doomed men throw off the human shape and take that of ravenous wolves?’

‘Oh! yes—yes—I have indeed heard of those strange legends in which the Wehr-Wolf is represented in such appalling colors!’ exclaimed the old man, a terrible suspicion crossing his mind. ‘Tis said that at sunset on the last day of every month the mortal, to whom belongs the destiny of the Wehr-Wolf, must exchange his natural form for that of the savage animal; in which horrible shape he must remain, until the moment when the morrow’s sun dawns upon the earth.’

‘The legend that told thee this, spoke truly,’ said the stranger. ‘And now dost thou comprehend the condition which must be imposed upon thee?’

‘I do—I do!’ murmured the old man with a fearful shudder. ‘But he who accepts that condition makes a compact with the Evil One, and thereby endangers his immortal soul!’

‘Not so, was the reply. ‘There is naught involved in this condition which—But hesitate not,’ added the stranger, hastily: ‘I have no time to waste in bandying words. Consider all I offer you: in another hour you shall be another man!’

‘I accept the boon—and on the conditions stipulated!’ exclaimed the shepherd.

‘Tis well, Wagner—’

‘What! you know my name!’ cried the old man. ‘And yet, meseems, I did not mention it to thee.’

‘Canst thou not already perceive that I am no common mortal?’ demanded the stranger, bitterly. ‘And who I am, and whence I derive my power, all, all shall be revealed to the so soon as the bond is formed that must link us for eighteen months together! In the meantime, await me here!’

And the mysterious stranger quitted the cottage abruptly, and plunged into the depths of the Black Forest.

One hour elapsed ere he returned,—one mortal hour, during which Wagner sat bowed over his miserably scanty fire, dreaming of pleasure, youth, riches, and enjoyment; converting, in imagination, the myriad sparks which shone upon the extinguishing embers into piles of gold, and allowing his now uncurbed fancy to change the one single room of the wretched hovel into a splendid saloon, surrounded by resplendent mirrors and costly hangings, while the untasted fare for the stranger on the rude fir-table, became transformed, in his idea, into a magnificent banquet laid out on a board glittering with plate, lustrous with innumerable lamps, and surrounded by an atmosphere fragrant with the most exquisite perfumes!

The return of the stranger awoke the old man from his charming dream, during which he had never once thought of the conditions whereby he was to purchase the complete realization of the vision.

‘Oh! what a glorious reverie you have dissipated!’ exclaimed Wagner, ‘Fulfil but one tenth part of that delightful dream—’

'I will fulfil it all!' interrupted the stranger: then, producing a small phial from the bosom of his doublet, he said, 'Drink!'

The old man seized the bottle, and greedily drained it to the dregs.

He immediately fell back upon the seat, in a state of complete lethargy.

But it lasted not for many minutes; and when he awoke again, he experienced new and extraordinary sensations. His limbs were vigorous, his form was upright as an arrow; his eyes, for many years dim and failing, seemed gifted with the sight of an eagle; his head was warm with a natural covering; not a wrinkle remained upon his brow nor on his cheeks; and, as he smiled with mingled wonderment and delight, the parting lips revealed a set of brilliant teeth. And it seemed, too, as if by one magic touch the long fading tree of his intellect had suddenly burst into full foliage; and every cell of his brain was instantaneously stored with an amount of knowledge, the accumulation of which stunned him for an instant, and in the next appeared as familiar to him as if he had never been without it.

'Oh! great and powerful being, whomsoever thou art, exclaimed Wagner, in the full, melodious voice of a young man of twenty-one, 'how can I manifest to thee my deep, my boundless gratitude for this boon which thou hast conferred upon me?'

'By thinking no more of thy lost grand-child Agnes, but by preparing to follow me whither I shall now lead thee,' replied the stranger.

'Command me: I am ready to obey in all things,' cried Wagner. 'But one word ere we set forth—who art thou, wondrous man?'

'Henceforth I have no secrets from thee, Wagner,' was the answer, while the stranger's eyes gleamed with unearthly lustre: then, bending forward, he whispered a few words in the other's ear.

Wagner started with a cold and fearful shudder as if at some appalling announcement; but he uttered not a word of reply—for his master beckoned him imperiously away from the humble cottage.

CHAPTER I.

THE DEATH-BED—THE OATH—THE LAST INJUNCTIONS.

OUR tale commences in the middle of the month of November, 1530, and at the hour of mid night.

In a magnificently-furnished chamber, belonging to one of the largest mansions of Florence, a nobleman lay at the point of death.

The light of the lamp suspended to the ceiling played upon the ghastly countenance of the dying man, the stern expression of whose features was not even mitigated by the fears and uncertainties attendant on the hour of dissolution.

He was about forty-eight years of age, and had evidently been wondrously handsome in his youth; for though the frightful pallor of death was already upon his cheeks, and the fire of his large black eyes was dimmed with the ravages of a long-endured disease, still the faultless outlines of the aquiline profile remained unimpaired.

The most superficial observer might have read the aristocratic pride of his soul in the haughty curl of his short upper lip,—the harshness of his domineering character in the lines that marked his forehead,—and the cruel sternness of his disposition in the expression of his entire countenance.

Without absolutely scowling as he lay on that bed of death, his features were characterized by an inexorable severity which seemed to denote the predominant influence of some intense passion—some evil sentiment deeply rooted in his mind.

Two persons leant over the couch to which death was so rapidly approaching.

One was a lady of about twenty-five; the other was a youth of nineteen.

The former was eminently beautiful; but her countenance was marked with much of that severity—that determination—and even of that sternness, which characterized the dying nobleman. Indeed, a single glance was sufficient to show that they stood in the close relationship of father and daughter.

Her long, black, glossy hair now hung dishvelled over the shoulders that were left partially bare by the hasty negligence with which she had thrown on a loose wrapper: and those shoulders were of the most dazzling whiteness.

The wrapper was confined by a broad band at the waist; and the slight drapery set off, rather than concealed, the rich contours of a form of matured but admirable symmetry.

Tall, graceful, and elegant, she united easy motion with fine proportion; thus possessing the lightness of the Sylph and the luxuriant fulness of the Hebe.

Her countenance was alike expressive of intellectuality and strong passions. Her large black eyes were full of fire: and their glances seemed to penetrate the soul. Her nose, of the finest aquiline development,—her lips, narrow, but red and pouting, with the upper one short and slightly projecting over the lower,—and her small, delicately rounded chin, indicated both decision and sensuality: but the insolent gaze of the libertines would have quailed beneath the look of sovereign hauteur which flashed from those brilliant eagle eyes.