



THE OLD DOCTOR IN HIS LIBRARY.

THE DIARY  
OF AN  
OLD DOCTOR:

BEING SKETCHES OF THE MOST

INTERESTING REMINISCENCES OF AN OLD PHYSICIAN.

BY

JAMES A. MAITLAND.

AUTHOR OF "SARTAROE," "THE WATCHMAN," "THE LAWYER'S STORY,"  
"THE WANDERER," ETC., ETC.

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"The Physician, more than any other man, has the opportunity of studying the human mind, at times when all false pretensions are thrown aside. In these sketches, the reader is introduced to a variety of characters, portrayed under various circumstances—in health and in sickness, in prosperity and in adversity—and each character is delicately and graphically portrayed. It is a powerfully written work, decidedly a book for leisure reading. Lively and pathetic by turns, and a character that will secure it a place on the shelves of every choice library."—*Times*.

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Philadelphia:  
T. B. PETERSON AND BROTHERS,  
306 CHESTNUT STREET.

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## ILLUSTRATIONS.

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I. THE OLD DOCTOR'S STUDY, .....	18
II. MY SURPRISE ON FINDING THE WINE BOTTLE HALF EMPTY, .....	83
III. THE DEATH OF THE POOR ARTIST, .....	100
IV. EDWARD MARSDEN KEEPING BACHELOR'S HALL, .....	170

## PUBLISHERS' PREFACE.

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"THE DIARY OF AN OLD DOCTOR," forms one of a series of family books now in course of publication by us. The sketches of character drawn in this volume, will be found to be faithfully and gracefully portrayed; and the work is replete with interest and incident, while each sketch points a separate moral as well as forms a tale.

We ask the public, however, to read the Author's preface, and then judge for themselves whether they will follow him through the pages of his Journal, still confident that if they do, they will derive both amusement and instruction in the performance of the task.

T. B. PETERSON & BROTHERS,  
306 CHESTNUT STREET, PHILADELPHIA.



## AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

THE great favor these sketches have met with from the public, has determined the Author to send them forth revised, and somewhat increased in number.

While these sketches were in progress, many inquiries were instituted as to the name of the Author, and many surmises have been put forth, which he begs to say at once, are altogether incorrect. "THE OLD DOCTOR" has received many letters begging him to gratify the laudable curiosity of the inquirers by publishing his name to the stories. However, he begs to assure his readers, that, through a whim of his own, and actuated also by some little bashfulness and nervousness,—as he did not know how his modest attempts in the field of literature would be relished by the public,—he determined to be *incog* at the outset, although his name is now known to the public.

The Reminiscences are facts which have occurred beneath his own observation; but they are so woven together as to prevent any unpleasant recognitions. To have, when these sketches were written, declared himself the Author, would have been to let loose a hornets' nest about his ears, and to receive all sorts of prying, and perhaps impertinent letters from persons no way connected with any of the parties alluded to in the Reminiscences, who might fancy that some of their friends had been spoken of, or their affairs laid bare to the public eye.

## CONTENTS.

	PAGE
CHAPTER I.	
My Birth, Parentage, Education, and Early Struggles,.....	27
CHAPTER II.	
The Insane Family,.....	37
CHAPTER III.	
The Sailor—a Friend in Need,.....	50
CHAPTER IV.	
Destitution in New York forty years ago—The Forged Clause in the Will,.....	66
CHAPTER V.	
My House on Canal street, and my Neighbors; a Story of Ill-requited Love and Suicide,.....	76
CHAPTER VI.	
Our First Servant's Marriage and Death,.....	87
CHAPTER VII.	
The Poor Artist,.....	105
CHAPTER VIII.	
A Mystery,.....	119
CHAPTER IX.	
The Merchant's Daughter; or, Virtue Rewarded,.....	128

	PAGE
CHAPTER X.	
The Forsaken,.....	138
CHAPTER XI.	
The Somnambulist,.....	148
CHAPTER XII.	
The Actor—Love, Madness, and Suicide,.....	161
CHAPTER XIII.	
The Actress,.....	173
CHAPTER XIV.	
The Death-bed of the Spendthrift,.....	184
CHAPTER XV.	
The Eccentric—A Character of the Olden Time,.....	198
CHAPTER XVI.	
The Improvident,.....	209
CHAPTER XVII.	
A Solemn Wedding,.....	220
CHAPTER XVIII.	
The Death-bed of a Miser,.....	242
CHAPTER XIX.	
The Death of the First-born Son,.....	253
CHAPTER XX.	
A Mysterious Patient,.....	264
CHAPTERS XXI to XXVIII.	
Subject continued,.....	278

# THE DIARY OF AN OLD DOCTOR:

OR,

## STRAY LEAVES FROM MY JOURNAL.

### INTRODUCTION.

No persons are called upon in the course of their professional career to witness more singular scenes than are physicians. The lawyer may have it in his power to unfold much strange and secret history; but in dealing with a lawyer, men feel, despite of themselves, no matter how much they may esteem the private character of the man, that it is just as well to be on their guard, and to be careful what they say to him, or how they express their feelings. Seldom or ever, therefore, does the lawyer gain the full confidence of his clients, whatever he may do as regards his private friends.

The clergyman, in the course of his professional duties, is often called upon to witness scenes of unutterable woe, and to listen to the confession of a lifetime, concentrated in one burst of lamentation and contrition; but this is all.

Day by day, however, does the physician pass hour after hour in attendance upon the bed of suffering and death, listening to the complaints of the weary invalid; the querulousness of the hypochondriac, the silly fancies

of the monomaniac, the wanderings of the light-headed and unconscious sufferer, and oftentimes to the horrid oaths and bitter revilings of the rouse or the dissipated man, now first brought to reflect upon the evils of his course, knowing his guilt, yet unable and even unwilling, to form resolutions to lead in future, should he recover, a different life, until at length it is too late, and the spirit takes its flight amidst the horrors of despair.

All this, and more, is the physician, who has a large practice, called upon daily to witness, until his heart in a manner grows callous to the mere weaknesses of suffering humanity, although, generally speaking, and I say it to the honor of the cloth, there are few men of any profession more open to the calls of real distress than the large class who are daily witnesses to

"The woes that flesh is heir to."

However, it is not every physician who enjoys the laborious work that a large practice entails, and too often years elapse before their calls are anything like numerous enough to occasion them inconvenience, unless they gratuitously visit the house of poverty or the hospital which charity has provided for the suffering and destitute sons and daughters of affliction, and however humane may be their nature, they soon weary of this work unless it is accompanied with at least *some* more remunerative practice. In the early part of my professional career, I had my full share of this hard struggle for existence, and with some account of my birth, parentage and first entrance into the actual duties of life, I shall commence my first chapter of the reminiscences of a New York physician.

## CHAPTER I.

### MY BIRTH, PARENTAGE, EDUCATION, AND EARLY STRUGGLES.

I WAS born in the latter part of the last century, in a village of New Hampshire, not a hundred miles distant from the town which gave birth to the present President elect of the United States. I take pride in my New England birth. The New England States have been famous for the great men they have produced; although in most cases their greatness has been elsewhere developed, and their fame elsewhere acquired. I have heard it said that a "Cannie Scotsman" seldom goes north to reside among his native heath again when he has prospered on southern soil, however dearly he may love the remembrance of the mountains, and glens, and burns, and waterfalls, of old Scotia: so the mountains, and valleys, and the sterile soil and romantic scenery of New England, are ever dear to the memory of its sons. A visit to the old homestead brings the blood of youth bounding and thrilling back through the veins of the aged; but seldom do they return to end their days and lay their bones in the graves of their ancestors. But to my story.

My father was a sturdy New Hampshire farmer, who had bravely fought through the wars of the revolution, and whose proudest boast was that he had held a Colonel's commission under Washington, and had once been specially deputed by the "father of his country" to a post of great honor, and also of no little danger, where, in gallantly defending a stockade, he had received a musket ball in the shoulder, which he averred had made him subject to the "rheumatis" in that part of the body ever since. My mother was the daughter of a New England Yeoman who had gallantly fallen during the period which "tried men's souls." His death had occurred only about twelve months before her marriage to my father,

and in ten years after this marriage, I was ushered into the world.

So it will be honestly acknowledged that I am descended from a good old revolutionary stock, and my elder brothers and sisters, I had six of them, were cradled amidst the early rejoicings over that Declaration of Independence which has since made our country the glory and boast of the world. My father was an honest, upright, hard-working man, but with his large family, the somewhat sterile soil of which his farm consisted, did not enable him to accumulate wealth; yet with the assistance of my mother, who was a notable housekeeper, and that of my eldest brother, who at the period of my birth was growing to be of great use to my father, he managed to make both ends meet, to give his children a common, useful education, and always to have a crust and a sup for the poor, and a place at his hospitable board for a friend.

Like most men of shrewd sense, whose education has been limited, my father placed a great value upon scholarship, and my mother with pardonable pride thought she should like to have one of her sons educated to the profession of a gentleman.

Gentle, pious soul—her inclination led to the church as the profession in which she would have chosen to see her son figure; but my father had a great idea that a lawyer had a better chance of pushing his way upwards in the world. They had doubtless held many secret consultations upon this subject before; but the first intimation I received of the destiny that was in store for me, was on the night of my eleventh birth-day.

I slept in a small room that was partitioned off from the kitchen where my father and mother usually sat, when they had no visitors in the house, and whether or not I had indulged a little too freely in partaking of a large plum-cake, which my mother had made in honor of the occasion, or that the two or three glasses of home-made currant wine I had drank, had made me unusually wakeful, I know not; but certainly I had lain tossing in bed sleepless for upwards of an hour, while one of my

elder brothers who slept with me, gave ample evidence by his heavy breathings and the trombone tones which were blown forth from his nostrils, that he had long been in the arms of the drowsy god.

My father and mother were enjoying a cosey chat beside the huge wood fire, (for it was winter,) to which I was paying no attention, however, until I casually heard my name mentioned. Instantly I pricked up my ears, and inclining my body upon my elbow, I endeavored to catch the purport of the conversation.

"Reuben," said my mother, "have you made up your mind yet as to the subject of which we were speaking last night? James is now eleven years old, and as he is not so strong and hardy as his brothers, I think it is time we should follow up the plan we proposed, and get him into some better school than he has yet been in. He is a brave, apt scholar, and he takes to his book extraordinary, and I guess would make a bright minister.—What say you, Reuben, if we see Mr. Pearson about it to-morrow? The last butter money I saved will pay his schooling for a year."

My father replied in his slow solemn voice:

"I have been thinking over the matter, Sally, and as I know myself the want of education, I should certainly have no objection to raising up one of my boys so as to fit him for a higher position than his father has been able to obtain; but, Sally, I think Isaac, our fourth son, is smarter and better fitted to shine in the world than James, who was always a puny lad compared with his brothers. My own wish would have been to have made my eldest boy, Joel, a scholar; but we were not able to think of such a matter when he was of the proper age, and now it is too late—besides he will have to take my place by and by on the farm. But Sally, my girl, we must make the boy a lawyer, not a minister, if we want to push him up in the world."

"I would sooner see him a minister, Reuben. I should be right proud to see a son of mine in the pulpit; but if you think a lawyer better, I am content;—but think,

Reuben; James is such a weakly lad and never took kindly to farm work, like his brothers. He will never be able to rough it out in the world like the rest, and although your favorite, Isaac, is all that a mother should be proud of, take my word for it, Reuben, I have watched the boys as a father can't always do, and I believe Isaac would sooner be a farmer than any other business in the world, while James is in his glory only when at his studies."

"Well," replied my father, "perhaps you are right, Sally. Let it be James, then. I will see Mr. Pearson to-morrow, and now let us go to bed."

I had not lost a word of this conversation, and I lay awake the greater portion of the night, contemplating in my own mind the proposed change in my career. I neither agreed, however, with my father or mother, as to the choice of the profession they had made. My mother had spoken truly of my fondness for books, and without having the least idea until now that I should ever have the opportunity of following my inclination, it had always been my secret aspiration to learn to be a doctor. With this view, I had carefully collected all the old medical books I could get hold of, and secreted them in my chest, and I was never happier than when a chance holiday gave me an opportunity of studying their mysterious and well thumbed contents. Towards morning, I fell asleep, and dreamed that I was driving a great business in my native village—that all the neighbors were sick, and I was the only one who could render them relief, and a great deal of other ridiculous nonsense.

Nothing was said to me when I awoke in the morning; but about noon I saw my father and Mr. Pearson approach the house, from the fields, apparently in earnest conversation together. They entered the house, and were closeted with my mother for half an hour, when I was sent for.

Mr. Pearson was the Episcopal minister of the parish, and both my parents belonged to his church. He was a worthy man and a scholar, and although his salary was

small and he had little gold or silver to bestow, he was always ready to speak a kind word or to do a good action, and consequently was much esteemed in the parish, and his counsel sought on every important occasion.

I was, as I have said, ushered into the presence of my parents and the worthy clergyman.

"James, my dear boy," said my father, "sad experience has taught me the necessity of possessing a greater degree of school learning than I unfortunately am possessed of; and now that your older brothers are big enough to attend the farm and help me to earn a little more than I have hitherto been able to do, it is my intention to send you to school and perhaps to college, where you may learn to become a lawyer—perhaps some day a statesman, and be the means of advancing your family. Mr. Pearson approves of my plan, and you will go to Concord to-morrow to Mr. Longworth's school, where you will be prepared to go to college at the expiration of a twelve month."

"But I don't want to be a lawyer, father," said I.

"What," replied my father, sharply—but he was interrupted by my mother, who said—

"I knew it was so; you would like to become a clergyman like Mr. Pearson, wouldn't you, James, my dear?"

"No, mother; I am sure I should never be able to be a clergyman," said I.

My worthy parents appeared perfectly astounded; while Mr. Pearson stared me full in the face, as if doubting my sanity, until I colored scarlet with confusion.

"I want to be a doctor," I said, passionately, and burst into tears.

Mr. Pearson was the first to endeavor to calm me, and some whispered conversation went on between him and my mother, who then mentioned my fondness for books treating on medicine and surgery. On hearing this my father acquiesced in the conversation that was going on. He was quite opposed, he said, to the system of forcing a lad's inclination, and as I had shown such an early predilection for the medical profession, he was willing to



give up his favorite idea of making me a lawyer. My mother acquiesced in like manner. Mr. Pearson thought that it was the best thing that could be done, and on the following day I was sent to a school-master of good reputation at Concord, whose duty was to be to prepare me for Harvard University. My good father and mother had little idea of Colleges or Universities, or they would have known that a twelve month as they spoke of, would be far from sufficient to fit me for Harvard, and so my preceptor at Concord said, with a smile, when my mother intimated as much to him on the following day.

"Your son, madame," said the worthy professor, "has talents undoubtedly; I am bound to believe so from that intimation of his favorite pursuits which you have given me, although," he added, with a smile, "you will pardon me for observing that mothers are apt to be partial. But from the questions I have put to him, I have no doubt he will succeed in life and do honor to his instructors. But, Madame, I must inform you that his means of acquiring education having been hitherto limited, it will take much more than a year before he will become so sufficiently conversant with the mere rudiments of classical learning as to enable him to enter the college; besides he is young, too young to become a pupil in Harvard, yet I think if you consent to leave him under my care for a few years, I will ensure his entrance into the college with éclat; aye, and his certainty of carrying some of the collegiate honors, too," he added, looking at me with an encouraging smile.

My mother acquiesced in the decision of the tutor, and my father, who was with us, but who left all these arrangements to my mother, seldom, like a wise man, interfering except in matters pertaining to his farm, also acquiesced; although during our ride home that night in the market wagon, he, two or three times, broke out into soliloquies which evidently showed that he was mentally calculating how many turnip crops it would be necessary to sacrifice in order to pay for my fine schooling, as he usually termed it.

It is not my desire to weary the reader with dull details. I shall therefore pass over the few years which followed, merely observing that I spent four years under the instruction of my Concord tutor, and then entered as a student in the college, and at the age of nineteen years I graduated, after having gained two or three prizes, with all the honors of the University, and also received my Physician's Diploma, with certificates of my skill, scholarship and principles, from the professors, as well as a general certificate of good conduct from the head of the University.

Before setting up in business, I paid a visit to my home. A proud woman was my dear mother when, with all the acquired fashionable demeanor of city life, which I had naturally picked up in Boston, I sat down that night the finished college gentleman, the admired of all the rustic belles of the village, and the cynosure of all eyes; for the staid elders of the village could not conceal their admiration, approaching to awe, of a youth who had graduated with honors at the University; so simple and unaffected were the manners of the New Englanders thirty years ago.

My father too, good, honest, sturdy yeoman as he was, although he attempted to disguise his feelings, could not altogether succeed. I could see, despite his psha's and pretended carelessness, as the loudly and rather too flatteringly expressed admiration went round at some happy repartee or joke I had made, that the good old man's eyes twinkled with pride and the muscles of his face worked as he listened to the eulogies passed upon his son's learning and his wit and smartness, by the elders of the village, whom he himself, now, by the way, a justice of the peace and *custos custulorum*, had been used to treat with respect and to rely upon their opinions.

I have said that most of the belles of the village had been invited on the night of my arrival at home, to celebrate the auspicious event, as my mother considered it, by joining in the party she and my father had got up on the occasion. Among all the fair girls there assembled

on that, to me, eventful evening, for on that evening I decided on one of the great events of a man's life—the choice of a female partner to share his woes and his joys—there was no one who appeared to me to possess half the fascinations of Susanna White, the daughter of a neighboring farmer. Susy, as she was called by her parents, was not what would be called in the cities a beautiful girl. Her features were by no means regular, neither was her complexion such as novel writers are generally fond of describing as made up of the tints of the lily and the rose; but there was an expression of purity and gentleness in her countenance, and a glow of health in her cheek, and a happy sparkle in her large, clear, blue eye, that made sad havoc with my heart. However, I am not now about recounting a love story. It is enough to say that I remained at home three months, and that at the termination of those three months—arrangements having been made that I should commence the practice of my profession in Concord, on the following week—Susanna and I were married.

A snug house had been taken in the town which was at that time but a small place, and as my father and I both considered it essential that the physician's residence should cut rather a dashing, showy appearance, the bricks were stained the deepest red, and the jalousies were painted the brightest green of any in the place. All the ready cash my father could spare was laid out in furnishing the little residence neatly, and I had taken especial pride myself in getting a large showy brass plate inscribed "James B——, Surgeon, &c.," in large letters that could be seen a hundred yards off. This I conceived to be a master stroke. I was never tired of stepping over to the opposite side of the street and admiring its effect. Then I would walk down the street a little way and turning shortly round, on returning back would see if the door plate was likely to attract the notice of persons hurrying for the services of a medical man.

For a short time my wife and I were very happy,

living on love and hope, two very pleasant things in their way; but by no means all that is required to maintain a married couple in comfort, even when there are no responsibilities. For months I remained without a single call for my services, with the exception of having been sent for to extract a double tooth from the jaw of an old lady who lived two miles off; for which I was tendered a quarter of a dollar, and when I timidly requested a dollar as my regular fee, I was told that she had had two teeth pulled out before, and that was all she had ever paid.

At the end of four months, seeing no prospect of practice, I began, despite of myself—although I was of a very hopeful temperament—to give way to desponding feelings. The little cash that had been placed in my hands by my father on my wedding day was nearly all spent, and I knew my father with his large family could ill spare any further drain upon his purse. I kept up a cheerful face before my little wife and carefully kept from her knowledge the low condition of my exchequer, and listened with half doubt and half belief to her hopeful anticipations of future professional fame.

At length matters approached a crisis. My finances were reduced to the last sixpence. What should I do? I asked myself. Should I apply for a loan from my father, or brothers? Pride forbade it. After all the expense the family had been put to on my account, should I become a helpless burden upon them? No, I said firmly—I will not despair; something may yet turn up; and I walked musingly home to glean comfort yet again from the cheerful voice and pleasant smile of my wife.

She was more than usually lively.

"Dear James," she said, "do come out for a walk this evening, the moon shines so brightly—and James—you know I am not very extravagant, but I want to ask you to buy me that sweet new bonnet in Mrs. Dudridge's window—it is only four dollars."

Four dollars! and I had not four cents in the world.

Yet how could I dishearten my pretty, confiding wife.

"I will get it for you in a few days, dear," I replied, "but I have paid away what cash I had in my pocket to-day; still we will go for our walk. Perhaps," I mentally ejaculated, "something will turn up."

Something will turn up! What a vague, but what a common phrase. But something did turn up, and out of that evening's walk too. But I must defer the relation of the "History of my First Patient," to another chapter.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE INSANE FAMILY.

IN FORCING MY WAY INTO PRACTICE, I AM MADE TO OCCUPY AN AWKWARD POSITION IN A GRAND TABLEAU VIVANT, WHICH LEADS TO A TRAGICAL FINALE.

THE evening, as my wife had said, was truly delightful, and as the soft, balmy air fanned my cheek and cooled my heated forehead, for the various conflicting thoughts which had that day agitated my mind more than I had usually allowed them to do, in consequence of the apparent hopelessness of obtaining any practice that would procure even simple bread and cheese for my wife and myself, I gradually became more composed, and endeavored to think that it were useless and unmanly to despair: that while I had health and strength I should never banish from my mind the blessing of hope, and that things could not always remain at this low ebb.

My wife, too, was in gay spirits, and expatiated in glowing terms on the beauty of the evening scenery. In sooth the scene was one calculated to shed the relief of calm repose upon the most perturbed spirit, and I felt its soothing effects as I listened to the sweet voice of my fair young bride, who directed my attention to the gentle lowing of the cattle as they sought their sheds to rest for the night; to the musical tinkle of the bells softly stealing on our ears as it was borne on the breeze from some distant sheepfold, and the joyous chirrup of the birds as they tuned their evening songs of praise. I thought that that Providence who cared for all these would not leave me and my pretty, gentle wife to perish, and I felt comparatively happy; although I still kept revolving in my mind how I should procure the bonnet which had attracted my wife's fancy in the milliner's window.



It was perhaps a small matter to disturb me; but I ask any young and loving husband to picture to himself the situation I was placed in, and though the old bachelor or old married man may laugh at me, I am confident that *he* will sympathize with me. It was the first time my wife had asked me for a favor before or since our marriage, and as I had never had the moral courage to tell the dear girl how low was the condition of my finances, I feared she would take it unkindly should the mere fact of her having asked me for a trifling gift be the reason for which I chose to make the distasteful avowal. However, there was no use thinking about it, and I strove to banish the thought from my mind; but to tell the truth, I would have given half my prospects of practice for the next year (not much to bargain away, by the by,) if I could by any means have conjured the four dollars necessary for my purpose that evening, and I mentally resolved to dispose of my watch-chain on the pretence, (to deceive my wife,) that a black riband looked more genteel, and so at all hazards to get the bonnet.

This knotty point settled, my mind was more at ease, and we prolonged our walk to perhaps two miles from the town, when the fast gathering shades of evening warned us that it was time to think of returning home.

We had proceeded about half a mile by another path towards the town, when we passed by a house which for that day and in that neighborhood, had rather an imposing appearance. I had noticed the house before, the more especially, as there was a slight shroud of mystery thrown around its owner, who was reported to be wealthy, and who resided in the strictest seclusion with a young lady who was supposed to be his daughter, and an old housekeeper. They held no communion with anybody in the town, seldom or ever quitting their residence, and when they did so, driving through the town in a close gig of antique fashion, driven by a man, who served the family as gardener and out-door servant, but who did not live in the house, and who averred, although many persons doubted him, that he had never been allowed to en-

ter it; all orders relating to his duties having been given him by the housekeeper. He professed not to know the name of the family, and as they procured all their supplies periodically from Boston, I doubt if the name was known to anybody in Concord.

Thus a great deal of suspicion and superstition, too, was aroused among the gossips in the town and neighboring villages, who could conceive no reason why these people should thus hold themselves aloof from their neighbors—they considering this to be an unpardonable sin—and the consequence was that without any just or reasonable cause, the family was held in ill repute, and hated by the aforesaid gossips, who had possibly never clapped eyes on them.

I was relating all this to my wife, as we passed by the old mansion, and she, with woman's capricious and superstitious fear, was pressing closer to my side as she clung to my arm, and urging me, with a slight tremor in her voice, to hasten home, for the air was growing chilly, when my attention was arrested by a shrill voice giving orders to a servant, and telling him to hasten to the town and send the first medical man he could find to the house immediately. I did not hear distinctly the conclusion of her orders; but in a moment after, the old man already spoken of came out from the little shrubbery which surrounded the mansion, and was proceeding hastily in the direction of the town. I immediately recollected the expression I had made use of when we had just commenced our walk, "Something may turn up!" and in truth there did seem to be a great probability that something was about to turn up now. I called after the man, who stopped and inquired gruffly what it was I wanted with him.

"Excuse me," said I, "but did I not hear a lady desire you to obtain the service of a physician with all possible speed?"

"Well, and what if you did?" replied the man, almost savagely: "it's well you heard no more. Listeners seldom hear any good of themselves."

"I was not listening," I replied; "but I happened to be passing the house with my wife, on our way home from a walk, when I heard the orders given that I have spoken of."

"This is not the usual path people take at this time o' night for a walk," said the fellow, in a sneering tone of voice, and my wife, who evidently was much frightened with the rude speech and the strange aspect of the man, whose face was half concealed by the coarse red stubble of a beard of three or four days growth, whispered—

"Come away home, James, dear. I don't like the looks of that fellow."

But I was not to be so easily put off. I felt that possibly here might be something that would prove of service to me now and in the future. The old adage says; "a drowning man will catch at a straw," and I was not in a condition to stand upon punctilio; besides, I must confess, I so far shared in the general curiosity regarding the residents of the dwelling, as to wish, now that there seemed a possible chance of satisfying that curiosity, at least in some degree, to see the occupants.

I therefore again addressed the man, stating that I was a physician and that I possibly might answer the purpose required and save him the fatigue, and what might be, under existing circumstances, still more important, the time that must be necessarily occupied in a journey of three miles or more to town and back, besides the delay that might be created there. The fellow stood for a moment undecided. At length he replied—

"How am I to know that; you may be a thief for aught I know?"

At this uncourteous remark the blood rushed to my temples and I could scarcely control my anger; but I was set on an object, and then the fellow was armed with a stout cudgel and was big enough to throttle me in his grasp; besides all this, I felt my wife's arm tremble as she pressed mine and clung to me as in terror; so I subdued my rising temper and blandly replied, pointing to my wife:—

"I should have thought, sir, that my appearance, to say nothing of my having this lady—my wife—under my care, would have been sufficient to have protected me from such rude and uncalled for remarks. I reiterate my words, I am a physician recently established in business in the town of Concord, and accidentally hearing that the services of a medical man were required, and knowing also the value of promptness in such cases, I proffered my services until more efficient aid could be procured, and if any one is hurt or sick in that house," said I, pointing to the mansion, "I certainly think that they would at least be glad of my temporary services."

The man hesitated yet a moment; then, apparently assured that I was speaking the truth, he said, in a less surly tone—

"Well, if so be that you are a doctor, I see no reason why I should have the job of trudging to Concord, this time of the evening; but hark ye! if I take you to the house I won't swear that the old housekeeper will let you in. However, you can but try."

So saying, he led the way to the mansion.

"May I ask who it is that is taken sick in the dwelling?" I said. "Is it one of the family or one of the servants?" for, supposing that my services should be acceptable, I thought to myself, it makes some little difference who it is I try my healing powers upon.

"I know nothing of the family or the servants," said the old man, relapsing into his former gruff and rude manner—"you will know who it is when you learn if your services are required."

Perceiving that there was nothing more to be got out of this man, I passively followed him to the door of the house, where, having rung the bell, I found myself confronted with the lady housekeeper.

"Thomas," she said, addressing the man of all work, who had conducted me to the house, "you are soon back; dear me"—at the same time fidgeting in her hurry to look for her watch: "it seems to me that you have scarcely had time to go to town and back." Then look-

ing at the watch, she exclaimed, while I thought I perceived a strange wildness or vacancy which I could not understand, in her countenance, "You must have flown on the wings of the wind. It brings forcibly to my mind the passage of holy writ which says: 'Oh, that I had the wings of a dove; then would I flee away and be at rest.' Never mind, '*Tempores mutantur, et nos mutamur in illis*,' strange things happen in this sublunary sphere. Have you brought the doctor?"

"He is here, your ladyship," said the man whose name I now understood to be Thomas, "I picked him up on the road."

"So are treasures often discovered where we least suspect them," returned the lady. "Enter, my good sir, and I pray you visit my brother, and see what you can do to allay his distress of mind—stay. May I ask in the words of the immortal Shakespeare, 'canst thou minister to a mind diseased?' If you can do this, you are doubly welcome. Lavinia, show the doctor your guardian's apartment. But, who is this?" said she, casting a glance almost of fury at my wife. "I sought no lady confidant. I have enough to do to bear my own sorrows within my own breast. Away, madam,—away I say—nor profane this mansion with thy base presence."

I knew not what to make of this; but that the lady who had been designated as the brother of the master of the house was, to say the least, a little lightheaded, I had no manner of doubt; but a desire to see the affair to the end, notwithstanding the fearful and reproachful looks, and the pretty pouting of my wife, determined me to persevere.

"This lady, madam," I replied, "is my wife. We were accidentally walking near the spot, when I heard that the services of a medical man were wanted, and being of that profession, I thought it nothing but right that I should endeavor to be of such service as may lay in my power. You can of course send to Concord for the family physician."

"Dear sir, it is not needed," said the lady, whom I

judged to be about forty years of age, "your apologies are amply sufficient. Pray visit my brother, and administer to his needs, and meanwhile the lady—your wife and I—will spend an hour in delightful intercourse—the intercourse of congenial spirits, doctor; can you understand that? but no, you men are of too gross a nature. Lavinia, my love, pray show the doctor to your guardian, and tell him that supper will be ready at eight o'clock precisely."

Well, thought I, something has turned up and a queer adventure it seems likely to prove. The apparent mistress of the mansion is "as mad as a March hare;" but there is no harm in her. "Dear Susy," I whispered to my half frightened wife, "wait with this lady below, love, while I go up stairs to my patient. Remember your own words, dear, so often expressed," I added, "'something will turn up when least expected.' Let us hope that this strange, unlooked-for adventure, may be the pivot on which my fortune may turn."

My poor little wife acquiesced much more readily than I had anticipated, and as she followed the lady into the parlor, I ascended the stairs, preceded by the young lady who had been designated as Miss Lavinia.

She was a beautiful girl, whose age could not have exceeded at the utmost eighteen summers. There was a strange air of melancholy about her which ill befitted her youth and personal appearance; but she said nothing, contenting herself with conducting me to the apartment of her guardian. There she left me, gliding softly down the stairs with the grace and noiselessness of a fairy.

I was placed in a strange predicament. I knew nothing either of my patient or of the disease I was called upon to prescribe for, and I now thought how precipitate had been my own movements in not having ascertained more particulars before I had ventured thus far.

However, since I was at the door of the sick man's chamber, it was no use regretting that which could not be recalled, and I gently knocked at the door. A very polite, gentlemanly-toned voice bade me enter, and obey-

ing the order, I turned the handle of the door and stepped lightly into the room, in the belief that I was entering a sick chamber.

What was my astonishment when instead of serving an invalid in bed or reposing upon a couch, I beheld an elderly gentleman, of a benevolent countenance and silvery hair, sitting upright in the centre of the room, before a huge mirror, occupied in lathering his face.

He nodded familiarly to me, and then said—

"You have been a long time coming, doctor. I was getting quite out of patience and had commenced shaving myself. Now you can set to work."

I was perfectly astonished. Though I could distinguish the general appearance of the old gentleman's features, I could not gather their expression, covered as was the lower part of the face with soap-suds, by the light of the solitary candle which burned on the mantel shelf—for it was now quite dark out of doors; I had a suspicion that the old man was insane, as well as the lady who called him her brother, and I wished to ascertain the fact by catching his eyes, for a mad man with a razor in his hand, is by no means a pleasant companion. The old gentleman, however, again spoke—

"Why don't you set to work, doctor? Have'nt you got your tools with you?"

"Really, my dear sir, I fear you mistake—I am a physician, not a barber."

"Exactly so, and that reminds me that the two professions were once united, and for my part I am sorry that they were ever sundered; but to tell you the truth, doctor, I am the victim of a conspiracy. The old man whom I sent to Concord after you, has been used to shave me; but he is paid by a committee of all the barbers in the State to cut my throat on the earliest opportunity, in order to get possession of a secret recipe which has taken years to bring to perfection, which would go far to ruin their trade. You see I have not shaved for a week; couldn't trust my own servant, and would not let a barber come within a mile of me. So at last I determined

to send for one of your craft to do the thing genteely.—So to work, doctor."

I had no doubt now of the insanity of the old gentleman, and I thought it best to humor him; but at the same time I was not without misgivings for my wife, who was, as I believed, below stairs with an insane person of her own sex. My only consolation was in the thought that the lovely girl who had shown me up stairs, was with her—although, how such a beautiful creature came into the guardianship of a madman and his equally mad sister, and why she remained with them, was a mystery to me. However, anxious to get away as soon as possible, I set myself to work to rasp away the field of stubble which had accumulated in, as the old gentleman truly said, at least a week's growth.

It was rather hazardous work as I was not accustomed to it, and I was fearful of gashing the face of my patient; but at length I flattered myself that, considering the feeble light and my inexperience, I had succeeded tolerably well—so taking the napkin from beneath the old gentleman's chin, I declared my task finished.

He jumped from his chair, and passing his hand over his face, shook me heartily by the hand, and declared that I had made him my friend for life, and that under my tonsorial care, he should feel himself perfectly safe from the machinations of his enemies. "And, by the way, doctor, you must take your fee," he added.

So saying, he slipped five five dollar gold pieces into my hand, and courteously showed me to the door, bidding me as I left the room, not to disclose his secret—which, by the by, he had not communicated to me.

I at first felt some little hesitation in taking the fee, and under other circumstances should not have done so; but I recollected my straitened circumstances, and the vision of the bonnet in the milliner's window rose in my imagination, and I determined to keep the money; besides, although engaged on a ridiculous operation for a physician to undertake, I had been regularly called to visit a patient, and that argument stifled any compunc-

tion I might have felt. At the foot of the stairs I met the young lady before spoken of, and anxious as I was to get back to my wife, curiosity compelled me to stop and address her, in the hope to gain some clue as to the name and circumstances of her guardian, and the cause of her being placed under such strange guardianship. It was a difficult subject to address a stranger upon, and that stranger a young and beautiful female. She might, I thought, consider that I was prying impertinently into what did not concern me; but while I was cogitating upon the matter, the young lady herself saved me the trouble of opening a conversation, by advancing towards me and anxiously inquiring how I had left her guardian, and whether I thought the gold mines would prove a fortunate speculation. More matter of astonishment! thought I. Surely this beautiful young creature cannot be afflicted with the same disease as her guardian and his sister. I looked earnestly at her, and thought I detected a strange, dreamy wildness in her large blue eyes, as she looked anxiously, full in my face, awaiting an answer.

"I left your guardian in good health," I replied; "and really he said nothing to me of any gold mines."

"Then I breathe easier," she responded. "Do you know that I feared you were an emissary from the king of Siam, who is sadly envious of my guardian in consequence of his laying claims, on my account, to valuable gold mines in that country; but now I perceive I was mistaken. You have no turban, and wear no beard.—Perhaps," she hastily added, "you are a barber, in which case my poor guardian is lost."

"I am not a barber," I replied, smilingly, "although, to tell the truth, I have lately performed a shaving operation in a double sense," (alluding to the \$25.)

"Ha! then all is lost. There is blood on your hand," (a spot of blood from a slight cut had actually, as I perceived, stained one of my fingers.) "Thomas, Thomas," she shrieked, "this man has cut your master's throat set the dogs upon him. Help—murder! help!"

I endeavored to calm the girl; but in a few moments

a huge mastiff came bounding into the hall, barking and growling fearfully, and it was with only the utmost efforts by a vigorous use of a heavy cane that I could keep him at bay. This was not all; for while engaged in this by no means pleasant exercise, the redoubtable Thomas appeared with a loaded blunderbuss in his hand, which he pointed towards me, and seemed much inclined to obey his young mistress's mandates, and to fire at me, while from a side-door appeared the infuriated housekeeper, as Thomas had called her, dragging my fainting wife after her, and declaring that she was an accomplice of thieves and cut-throats, who had conspired to rob the house, and murder the inmates.

Here was a pretty tableau for a young physician to figure in, in this his first endeavour to get into practice. What would have been the result I cannot say; probably I should have been murdered by the man, or torn in pieces by the infuriated dog, who appeared to be as mad as the rest, had not the master of the house descended the stairs attired in his dressing gown and slippers, and in a manner which for the moment seemed to be divested of every symptom of insanity, ordered away the man and the dog, and at the same time expressed, in courteous tones, his concern at the mistake—a d——l of a mistake, truly!—and wishing me good evening, he directed Thomas to show me to the gate of the shrubbery, and to lock it after me.

The open air revived my poor wife, who was dreadfully agitated, and when we parted from the manservant, he warned me mysteriously not, on peril of my life, to let out the secret of the "elixir."

I was glad enough to get away, at any rate, and the twenty-five dollars I had received put me in a good humor; which soon made me regard the affair as a good joke, and when we reached the town, that very evening I bought and presented my wife with the coveted bonnet.

How to act respecting this mysterious family I scarcely knew. It was evident enough that they were



all mad—master, mistress, and man, and dog too for aught I knew—but it was a matter of consideration whether or not I should divulge what I had heard and seen.

I put an advertisement in the newspapers, couched in language that none but friends of the family could understand, and left it to chance to be discovered or replied to. I did not, however, wait long before I received a letter from New Orleans, inquiring for further particulars. I told all I knew, and the mystery was by this means developed.

The old gentleman and the housekeeper were brother and sister, and the young lady was the daughter of the former. They were all insane; the fearful disease of insanity being hereditary to the family. They were from the Island of Jamaica, where the old gentleman had been a wealthy planter; but showing symptoms of insanity, and, with the cunning peculiar to madmen, having obtained an inkling that his cousin, the next heir, was taking measures to secure the property and see him properly taken care of, he had secretly disposed of his estate for a large amount of cash, and, as secretly managed to effect his escape to the United States with his daughter and sister, and had hidden himself with his golden treasure in this solitary mansion, where, for some years he had remained undiscovered. The man Thomas had been an old servant of the family, who had from constantly humoring the whims of his master; "caught the disorder," if I may so express myself. Measures were taken to obtain possession of the property and the persons of the unfortunate family, and I was thanked sincerely for the part I had acted in the affair and offered remuneration; but, under the circumstances, this I could not accept. I am sorry to say that this business had a tragical ending. The cousin of the old gentleman came to Concord to take possession; but the vagary respecting the conspiracy drove the old man furious, and nothing could persuade him that he had not fallen a victim to those he so much dreaded. Every

precaution was taken to remove all dangerous weapons from him; but he managed to secrete a pistol, and on the day he was to be carried south, he blew out his brains in his study. Thomas was dismissed with a pension from the heir of the property, which amounted, in hard cash, to \$100,000, and the two unfortunate women were properly taken care of in a private lunatic asylum in the south.

Thus ended my first endeavor to force practice, and in a very few weeks I was as poorly off as ever, dunned by creditors on all hands, and without money, or hopes of money, to satisfy them. I had applied to my father, who had assisted me to the best of his ability, and until he could do so no more. I had serious intentions of going to New York to try my fortune, and had I possessed the means would have gone immediately. In fact, I was almost in despair, when something did at length turn up which shed a gleam of light on my gloomy prospects.

## CHAPTER III.

## THE SAILOR—A FRIEND IN NEED.

THE RETURN OF A LONG LOST SON LEADS TO MY EVENTUAL SUCCESS IN LIFE.

MATTERS, as I have said, grew worse, although, now that I could no longer disguise from my wife the condition of my affairs, she, like a true woman, bore herself with greater cheerfulness than ever, at least in my presence, and however desponding I became when I walked abroad, passing with a hurried gait from street to street of the small town, with the object of making people believe that my practice was extensive, although even in this pretence I thought I was detected, and that many a curious, laughing pair of eyes glanced at other equally curious and laughing eyes, as I hurried by, in my neatly brushed, but now, alas! threadbare clothing, and whispered, as I fancied, "what a humbug that little doctor is; does he think people cannot see through his wretched artifices?" However desponding I became, I repeat, while engaged in this fruitless employment, a cheerful smile of welcome from the bright eyes and pretty lips of my wife, and the neat, and even elegant appearance of my poor abode—made elegant notwithstanding its poverty, by the nameless charm that woman is able to cast over the humblest and lowliest dwelling, wherein love finds an abiding place, ever served to smooth my contracted brow, and to send the blood back to my heart and make its pulses beat high with hope, even though hope and I, but a few moments before, had seemed to have parted company for ever. I could but believe, as I listened to the words of faith and confidence expressed by my wife, that He who feeds the birds of the air would likewise care for us, if we un murmuring submitted to his behests, and

strove honestly to do our own part well, while we waited for his good time; that such trust and patience—such cheerfulness at all seasons would not go unrewarded; for to my gentle wife's charitable and compassionate feelings do I owe my earliest really lucrative practice.

The period at which I first entered upon the practice of my profession was at the commencement of the last war with Great Britain, and that war occasioned not a little excitement in Concord and the surrounding villages, for there were several families who had relatives at sea, either exposed to the dangers of, or actually engaged in, the war.

Among others, a widow lady had a son, master and owner of a vessel, which traded up the Mediterranean, and this young man was the sole support of mother and sister. This family had been one of the wealthiest in Boston some few years before; but the uncertainties incidental to trade had ruined the father of the family, who was a merchant doing extensive business in the Smyrna trade, and the shock of his failure had so affected him that he sunk beneath it and died, leaving his widow in poverty, a year afterwards. This son had been a midshipman in the navy; but on his father's death, he left that service, in the hope, by joining the merchant service, to be sooner enabled to obtain command of a vessel, and so support his mother and sister in comfort.

By his assiduity and integrity of character, united with a thorough knowledge of his profession, he had obtained a berth as mate of an Indiaman, and after a few voyages had been appointed master. In this capacity he had made three or four voyages to the East Indies, and had been so successful in his speculations that he had amassed sufficient money to purchase a small vessel of his own, in which he traded up the Mediterranean at the port whereat his father had done so much business in former days. The family had removed to Concord, and peace and plenty now again reigned in the home and in the heart of the poor widow and her daughter; for the son had the means of supporting them in comfort and even in luxury, and well had he done his duty towards his

aged parent; but the war broke out, and a year elapsed, and the widow, whom I shall call Mrs. Margetts, heard nothing of her son, or his vessel. Had the brig been sunk at sea in a gale of wind—had she run upon some sunken rock and split to pieces, or had she been sunk or captured by the enemy? Was her son in prison in England, or had he already found a sailor's grave in the waters of the deep? All these questions would the widow ask herself, and of course in vain. Vessels came in from the Mediterranean at rare intervals, for the British cruisers kept a jealous watch at its narrow inlet; but alas! none of these vessels brought the hoped for tidings to the anxious mother. Suspense is worse than a knowledge of the full depth of affliction. The health of the poor old lady began to give way, while, to add to her troubles, poverty bitterly assailed her. The daughter, an interesting girl of twenty years of age, was now her mother's sole support, and I need not expatiate upon the hard lot and badly remunerated labor of females, unused to toil, and suddenly reduced from a condition of competence, to earn their own living. Music, Ellen Margetts was well acquainted with; but in those days pianofortes were not found in every house as they are at present—nobody wanted to learn music. Drawing she found equally unproductive, although she sketched beautifully; but it was strange how those very persons who would have purchased her sketches at her own price when she drew for the mere sake of amusement, and who most admired her artistic talent, could now see no merit in her drawings, and though they told her they were pretty enough when she showed them, they made no offers of purchase and declared them miserable daubs that they would not disgrace their portfolios with, so soon as the poor girl's back was turned.

Needle work then was her last and her sole resource, and upon the miserable pittance earned by her needle, Ellen Margetts and her mother lived—lived, have I written—I should have written, starved.

My wife had employed Miss Margetts in helping her to make her wedding dress, and the two young women

had taken a great liking to each other; but for some months we had not seen her. She and my wife and I were alike struggling with poverty, and the poet said truly when he sang—

"The heart that weeps for sorrow all its own,  
Forgets the woes of others to bemoan."

One evening, however, I came home pretty early, after having, as usual, pursued my weary, useless rounds. I had that day received a remittance of a few dollars from my father, and as Susanna and I had been living on short allowance for some time past, I determined that we would have a treat on that day, at any rate. So, on going out in the morning, I had walked to the poulterers and ordered and paid for a pair of chickens to be sent home, and then had procured at the market such other accessories as were requisite to make up quite a little feast. It had struck me, too, that my wife's cheeks looked a little pale of late, as if the dear girl was suffering from the privations she endured, although she ever strove to hide her griefs from me, so I called in at the grocery and ordered and paid for a bottle of the best port wine. I know that it was rather extravagant for a man in my circumstances, and that a dish of pork and beans, with at the most, a mug of cider to wash it down, would have been more compatible with the real state of affairs; but I always liked a good glass of wine myself, and although I passed and repassed the door of the grocery twice, while cogitating upon the matter, before I made up my mind, I at length came to the conclusion that "it is a poor heart that never rejoices," and therefore giving my hat a determined pull over my brow, and fumbling the loose silver in my pocket with the air of a man of consequence, I walked in, and, as I have said, ordered and paid for the wine. I thought the man seemed half inclined to present me with a little account he held against me for sugar, soap, candles and the various *et ceteras* of housekeeping, but the unwonted jingle of coin in my pocket seemed alike to give him and me confidence, and he said nothing



about the dreaded bill, although he had pressed me for payment no less than three times during the preceding week. To tell the truth, I had a great mind to ask him to send the wine and charge it in the bill, and so save the two dollars (which God knows I needed very much) for the present; but I could not muster up courage enough for this, and besides, I half guessed that he wouldn't send the wine without the money.

I was much astonished, however, when I reached home at five in the evening to find that only one of the chickens was cooked, and as they were but small ones, I had made a hungry calculation of disposing of at least a whole chicken myself. I thought my wife for once in a way inclined to be too economical; but she looked so happy, and the one chicken after all, was so nicely cooked, while the piece of pork I had bought to eat with it, although that too seemed to have shrunk confoundedly during the process of boiling, sent forth such a savory steam, and the potatoes, large and mealy, bursting out of their jackets, looked so invitingly appetizing that I said nothing, thinking that after all, my wife's plan perhaps was the wisest, and the other chicken would make an admirable dinner for the next day.

When I had sufficiently satisfied my appetite—and in truth by that time the dishes and platters were pretty well cleaned out—I bethought me of the wine, and when my wife had cleared away the dinner things, I said—

"Susanna dear, the wine—did not Simkins send home a bottle of port?"

"Yes, love," replied my wife, "he did."

"Then hand it to me, my dear, and please bring the corkscrew; and if you don't mind my smoking, just one cigar; I intend this evening to enjoy myself, and you can make yourself some port wine negus. It will do you good; and—make it strong, love."

"The cork is already drawn, James," said my wife, handing me a half empty bottle.

"The devil!" I had almost said, but I checked myself in time. "How is this, Susy dear? that impudent fellow,



THE HUSBAND'S SURPRISE.

Simkins, has surely never played me such a trick as this? If he has dared to do so, I'll—I'll—" and then I stopped, because I didn't know what I would do, and as to breaking the bottle over the aforesaid Simkins' head, or any other such little matter, the vision of a little bill, "\$46.75," which I had no means present or prospective to settle, came floating between me and the object of my wrath, and suspended my vituperation.

"Simkins sent the wine home all right, my dear; but I opened the bottle and made use of the wine, James. You have always said that you would be glad for me to treat myself to any little pleasure that you could afford, and so I took my share of the wine beforehand. You see half the bottle full still remains—and won't that be enough for you, dear, to-night," she added, playfully stroking her fingers through my hair as she spoke.

I looked up in her face with perfect astonishment.

"I have used half the bottle of wine!—my share of the wine!" I had always been in favor of a community of goods between man and wife, with a leaning in many little matters to the gentler partner; but wine, although I had never taken the thing into serious consideration, was an article of consumption which, when we did enjoy the luxury, I thought should fall largely to my share. In fact, I had already mentally appropriated three-fourths of that bottle of wine to my own use, making a reservation in like manner of the remaining portion of the exhilarating liquor for my wife.

I looked at her with astonishment. My first thought, (I am ashamed of it to this day,) was, can Susanna really have drunk half a bottle of wine! and then I gazed upon her smiling face, unusually radiant with delight and blamed myself for harboring so ridiculous a suspicion.

"You will not be angry if I tell you how I have disposed of the wine, will you, dear?" said my wife, placing her arm round my neck; and I said, kindly, "Certainly not, love, for you make a good use of everything."

So I drew the sofa before the fire, and placing the half empty bottle upon the table before me, I drew my wife

towards me, and encircling her waist with my arm I awaited the elucidation of the mystery.

"You recollect poor Ellen Margetts," begun my wife, "who helped to do some sewing for me upon a certain occasion, in which we were mutually interested," and this she said with a sly, quiet, happy smile, (alluding to our marriage,) which provoked a kiss from me, "well I met her, to-day, so wan, so pale, so unlike she was three months ago when last I saw her, that I should not have known her had she not first recognized me. She was so weak and faint that I insisted upon accompanying her home; although she fain would have prevented my doing so, and oh! James, such wretchedness and poverty as I could not help seeing, much as they strove to hide it. I learnt that Ellen had overwrought herself, and carrying some needle-work home late at night, had caught a severe cold, which for want of care and proper medical assistance, had settled, as she feared, upon her lungs. For some weeks past, she has been unable to work at all, and I believe they have been near starving; for they were too proud to make their case known, and the poor old lady is worn out with grief for her son, whom she now begins to believe she will see no more. Altogether, James, it was a piteous scene; one calculated to make one's heart ache, and that will not be easily forgotten, and I insisted on sending my share of the port wine to the house; for the old lady had incidentally mentioned that some doctor had ordered her daughter to drink port wine. Are you satisfied, James? although I have more to tell you."

"No, love," I replied; "you should have sent all the wine and allowed me the pleasure of appropriating *my share* to so kind a purpose. I can guess the rest of your story. The fowl that did not appear upon the dinner-table——"

"Has gone to the same destination," interrupted my wife, "and half the piece of pork."

"Ah!" thought I, "that accounts for its shrinking so confoundedly in the pot."

"Nor is the story yet all told," continued my wife.—

"You gave me three dollars to-day as spending-money, out of the remittance your father sent you; that, although I told you at the time you were too generous, I thought belonged wholly to me, and so I insisted upon *lending* it to Ellen. I said *lending* it, dear; because, otherwise, they would not take it; so you see I shared what I had a partial claim upon, and gave up that which I believed to be my own. Have I your approval, dear?"

"My more than approval, dearest Susy," I answered; "well may I be proud of such a gentle wife. The money I could ill spare; but they needed it more than we, and are truly welcome to the small pittance you presented them with—although I must tell you the truth, Susy, much as I should wish to replace the trifle in your purse, you must wait for me to do so; for at present, with paying certain outlaying expenses which were imperative, and with providing our little treat to-day, which I am truly happy that others have shared, I have cleared out my pockets again."

"That we are so poor, of course I regret," replied my wife, "but I do not regret the money I gave away, and I enjoy the luxury of doing good in my humble way, all the more because I am compelled to suffer self-denial. And now, dear, one thing more. No physician attends Miss Margetts regularly, and I am sure she needs one. I promised her you would call and see her. Will you oblige me by doing so—nay, I am sure you will—for although you cannot hope to gain by it in a pecuniary point of view; nay, although perhaps you may lose by your attendance upon one so destitute of means as poor Ellen is—still the feeling that you have afforded consolation to the widow, and perhaps saved the life of her child, will more than ten fold repay you."

My wife ceased speaking, and I immediately acceded to her request, and promised to see Miss Margetts in the morning. "And now, darling," I said, "get some hot water and sugar, and I will brew some negus for you—for I am determined you shall still have your share of the wine that is left."

My wife smiled, and did as I requested, and we sat up late, discussing various topics for the amelioration of our own affairs, and also how we could best assist the poor widow and her daughter. At length we retired to rest, and the next morning, as soon as I had taken my frugal breakfast, I set out on my visit to the abode of Mrs. Margetts and her daughter;—it was in the suburbs of the town, and though the house was a decent one, and the staircases (a thing I always take especial notice of in forming my opinion of the residents of a dwelling-place) were scrupulously clean, it was very evident that the tenement was inhabited by poor people—mechanics, I imagined them to be, generally; and in consequence of the war, trade was then at a low ebb, and the most skilful and industrious mechanic had a great difficulty in obtaining a livelihood. Mrs. Margetts' room was in the uppermost story of the house, and although a general air of neatness pervaded the room she and her daughter occupied, the absence of furniture, even of the most necessary description, was painfully evident. I thought my own abode poor enough in this respect; but God knows—if it be really a cause of congratulation and praise that we are better off than our neighbors, which, in spite of good Dr. Watts, I very much doubt—I had sufficient to be thankful for when I surveyed the bare walls of Mrs. Margetts' dwelling.

I found the old lady almost worn out with grief for the prolonged and unaccountable absence of her son, and the fears she entertained respecting her daughter; and poor Ellen! glad was I to find, upon making inquiry respecting the symptoms of her disease, that it was not consumption which was preying upon her vitals—but, shall I say it, starvation—the want of the actual necessities of life, that, in order that her mother might not want for food, was wearing her away to the grave. Glad, I say was I even to ascertain this—for this a remedy might be found; but in a long course of—I say it not proudly, but thankfully—successful practice,—I have never, what ever empirics may say, found that human skill could ar-

rest the fatal progress of that fell destroyer of the human race, which year after year hurries so many of the best and fairest to the tomb.

While I was sitting in the room endeavoring to administer consolation to the almost heart-broken mother, and to the daughter who had, with Spartan virtue, determined to devote herself a victim to preserve her mother from the pangs of hunger, a young female entered the apartment, after giving warning of her presence by a gentle tap at the door and a voice of unparalleled sweetness saying, "May I come in?"

She was poorly and coarsely clad—but there was something in her air and manner which at once betrayed the gentlewoman. I cannot say what it was; but I venture to say that there is scarcely one of my readers who will not know what I mean. The French have the best method of expressing it by that *Je ne sais quoi* of good breeding which no art nor culture can emulate.

In truth, she was a lovely creature, notwithstanding the poverty of her attire, and I was doubly interested in her when I found she was, as I may term it, the widowed betrothed of the long absent and generally supposed lost son.

She was the daughter of a decayed stock-broker who had once moved in the highest circles of society, but whom the difficulties of the war had involved in one fell swoop of ruin. Her father was the inmate of a lunatic asylum, and her mother had escaped the miseries incidental to a life of poverty, when suffered by those who had known better days, by falling into the even less repulsive embraces of death.

Eleanor Sandford—that was the name of the beautiful girl—had been betrothed to young Margetts, who had known and loved her in happier days, and had not forsaken her in poverty, and when last he had sailed, it had been arranged that their marriage should take place on his return; but alas! the bridegroom came not to the wedding, and a heavy blight had fallen on the hopes and prospects of the expectant bride.

It was a sad and mournful errand, that on which she came. Mrs. Margetts had some weeks before arrived at the unwilling, oft deferred conclusion that her son was dead, and she was desirous to dress henceforward, until it should please God to release her from a world which had been truly to her a world of woe, in habiliments of mourning, and poor, gentle Eleanor had out of her own restricted means made up for the bereaved mother and sister, and for herself too, dresses befitting the occasion; funereal in reality as the most costly that could be procured in the most fashionable *magazin* for the disposal of these sad symbols, although of cheap material.

After some conversation with them and having administered such words of comfort, hope and consolation as I could think of, I left the house with a heavy heart, and returned home.

That evening my wife and I held a long consultation as to what we could do for these poor friendless females. We were poor enough ourselves, but we thought we could still help them; and I determined to make her case known to my friends. I could not beg for myself, my pride forbade it; but I thought I might with a bold front solicit aid in such a case of distress as had thus been disclosed to me.

By pursuing this course I collected sufficient to place them, at least in some measure, in a more comfortable position, and I was well repaid by finding the daughter improve beneath my care, and at length both mother and daughter had sufficiently recovered to attend the church, which sickness and the actual want of decent and creditable clothing had kept them from for some months.

It was a sad sight, and one that drew tears from many eyes, as that aged mother and fragile daughter, attired in the habiliments of woe, attended by Eleanor Sandford in the like mournful garb, walked up the aisle of the little church, and for many weeks they were the attentively observed of the congregation, and the cause of general commiseration. So time passed on. Matters with me were daily growing worse, that is to say, I was

every day growing deeper in debt, and every day having less prospect of ever being able to pay my debts. People would not get sick in Concord, or if they got sick, which I very much doubt, they procured other doctors to kill or cure them, and the worst of it was, all these doctors were strangers. They wouldn't trust to my curative powers. So true is it that "a prophet hath no honor in his own country."

This miserable state of things had almost arrived at a consummation; in fact I had begun to despair of ever getting further credit for a loaf of bread. I was sitting one rainy night, talking with my wife, and endeavoring to devise some plan for procuring a breakfast in the morning, for we seemed almost doomed to starvation, when a carriage rolled rapidly up the street, and stopped opposite my residence; another moment and there was a ring at the hall door. My wife hastened to open it, while I assumed a dignified aspect, in the anticipation of a patient at last.

"Does Dr. ——— reside here?" I heard asked, in a gentlemanly tone of voice.

"Yes," replied my wife.

"Can I see him immediately?" responded the querist.

"Please to walk into the parlor, sir," said my wife, and at the same moment a tall, handsome stranger entered the room, attired in a rough overcoat, on which the rain drops were glistening like diamonds.

"Have I the pleasure of seeing Dr. ———?" said the stranger, extending his hand and seizing mine, which he shook in a fashion that at all events sufficiently testified to his physical ability.

"I am Dr. ———," I replied; "but you, sir, are a stranger to me."

"You must not henceforth be a stranger to me, dear Doctor, if all I have heard prove true," was his reply. "My name is Alfred Margetts; I have arrived at Concord from Boston scarce a quarter of an hour since, and have in vain sought for my mother, and sister, and ———, but never mind who else. I was told by several persons



of the kindness that you have shown them in the hour of distress, and I have come hither to seek them. I am told you know where they reside."

My wife and I both started as though we had seen an apparition, and for some moments we were speechless with astonishment.

At length I regained sufficient composure to express my joyful surprise at his return. "Will you be seated?" said I.

"No, doctor, no; hurry on your coat like a good fellow, for the night is stormy enough for an old sailor, let alone a landsman, to be abroad in; but ask me no questions now; I can answer nothing until I have seen my mother and sister—yet stay, doctor, I will ask you one question. Do you know Eleanor Sandford?"

"I do," I replied, smiling in spite of myself at the impetuous manner in which the young sailor spoke.

"And she is living and well?"

"Living and well," I repeated, "and in this town too."

"And not married, doctor! not married, eh?"

"And not married," I added; "nor likely to be, I believe, unless a young sailor named Alfred Margetts, whom she has long thought dead, and to whose memory she is wedded, should return to claim her hand."

"Thank God for that," said the young seaman. "Doctor, you are a trump; now come along, there's a good fellow, never mind the rain."

We left the house together, and soon reached the dwelling-place of Mrs. Margetts, where I left the long lost son to meet his mother and sister alone. It would, I thought, be sacrilege to intrude on a scene so solemn, and withal so tender as I well knew would ensue.

As I turned to quit the house, and wend my way homeward, the young sailor turned towards me, and in a voice choking with emotion, gasped forth the words:

"Doctor —, the best day's work that ever you did, was on that day on which you befriended my poor widowed mother and my helpless sister. I have heard

all about it. God bless you!" and hastily wringing my hand, he almost flew up the stairs.

I returned home, and the joyful return of the supposed dead brother, son and lover, formed matter of conversation to my wife and I throughout the evening.

The next day I received a visit from young Margetts and his sister who had spoken, as I afterwards learnt, most warmly to her brother in my praise. I then learnt his story.

He had not, as we supposed, been taken by the British; but his vessel had been captured by Barbary corsairs, and for many long, weary months he had endured imprisonment in Algiers; but at length half starved to death, and half dead with ill usage, he had effected his escape at the risk of his life, and in an open boat, had himself sailed across the Mediterranean sea to the French shores; thence he had proceeded to Smyrna, where he had friends, in the hope of getting means to reach home again. Here, however fortune, who had so long frowned upon him and those he held dearest, befriended him. He found that his father's agent had wrongfully despoiled the old gentleman of his property, and on his death-bed had been visited by feelings of compunction and had left the property supposed to be lost, now greatly improved, to his employer's heirs. Young Margetts therefore found himself in the possession of a large fortune, and he immediately hastened to reach his home. The vessel he took passage in, succeeded in eluding the vigilance of the British cruisers, and as the reader has seen, he arrived safely in Boston, whence he immediately hurried to Concord.

The next Sunday the proud widow walked up the aisle of the church, no longer attired in the weeds of mourning, for the son whom she had deemed lost was found again, and on his stalwart arm, she rested her aged frame, and two others preceded them to their well known pew, and these, also, had doffed their mourning garbs. The reader need scarcely be told that these were Ellen Margetts and Eleanor Sandford.

In a day or two the young sailor called again at my house, and in a frank, but delicate and gentlemanly manner, inquired into my prospects, honestly telling me that he had heard they were none of the best.

I told him all, and he promptly replied:

"Doctor, you must go to New York; Concord is too small a place for you to hope for business, and you must allow me to advance the funds requisite to start you in business on a good foundation. Nay," he added, seeing me hesitate, "as a loan, doctor, of course, to be paid when you get rich, as one day you certainly will be. Mind I predict that. I have only to add one thing more—you must not leave until Eleanor and I are married; that will be on this day week, and you and your good little wife must be at the wedding."

This I promised, and the wedding duly came off, and young Margetts and his blooming bride were acknowledged to be the handsomest couple who for many a day had left that church as man and wife.

Several children blessed their union, and, although I have for some years lost sight of them, for aught I know they are still living. They went south some few years after their marriage, to reside upon an estate that young Margetts had purchased there; but before that I had repaid the liberal sum with which the grateful young man had supplied me, to enable me to make a fair start in life.

Since then until now, in a green old age, my course has been onward and upward, and I date all my success to the fact of my wife having, in the kindness of her heart, given half my feast away on the day I received the remittance, mentioned heretofore, from my father.

My wife is still living, and is now sitting beside me, spectacles on nose, busily engaged in knitting, of which employment she is very fond, and wondering, dear old soul, what I am spoiling so many sheets of good foolscap about.

My children are grown up, and all well to do in the

world. Thus have I verified the saying, that a good deed never goes unrequited, even in this world.

I removed to New York, and in the next leaf from my journal I shall narrate my experiences in that great city.

Strange, in my very first call, in the way of business, Bleecker street and the Five Points both figure. The highest grade and the lowest depths of social life then known in the city of New York. The facts are startling, as the reader will acknowledge when he comes to peruse them! but they are none the less true; for I have often found that "Truth is strange—stranger than fiction."

## CHAPTER IV.

DESTITUTION IN NEW YORK FORTY YEARS AGO.—THE FORGED  
CLAUSE IN THE WILL.

I HAD removed to New York, and was snugly ensconced in a neat house near the Battery, at that period (recollect this was nearly forty years ago) a very fashionable location, the Battery being then a favorite evening promenade of the beaux and belles of the city.

From the day I had removed from Concord and established myself in New York, everything had prospered with me in as great a degree as everything had formerly failed that I had taken in hand, so strange, yet so true it is, "there is a destiny that shapes our ends, rough hew them as we may."

I had got easily and rapidly (thanks to the kind offices of my sailor friend) into a comfortable, if not a lucrative practice, with every prospect of an increase of business, which in fact was growing upon me daily.

It is not my intention in making extracts from these Stray Leaves from my Journal, to narrate every trivial incident that a medical man may meet with in the course of his practice in a large city; but here and there an incident comes in my way, which I deem worthy of especial note.

I was returning home one cold frosty evening in December, 18— after having been to visit an aged patient who resided in a villa situated in a locality now known as Waverly Place, but at that period, quite in the country, and was anxious to regain my own home and to enjoy the remainder of the evening in my own quiet parlor, where, the tea things having been removed, for in those days we took our meals at seasonable hours, and did not speak of the evening meal under the misnomer of dinner—it was my usual custom to pass the evening

in reading to my wife, while she pursued her busy occupation with the needle, occasionally diversifying the tediousness of the evening hours with a little chit-chat respecting our prospects, or in discoursing of our neighbors—but no scandal, that I never could endure, and as to my wife, I don't believe she would have spoken evil of her greatest enemy—if indeed she had any enemies—behind their backs.

I was, however, as I have said, hastening home through the slippery streets, the sleet and snow beating in my face, and making the prospect of my comfortable home and snug fireside, still more comfortable,—for it was a night on which I would not have turned a stray dog abroad to endure the skin-piercing blasts, which penetrated to the very bone—when, on crossing Broadway just above Chambers-street, my sense of hearing was assailed by the piteous voice of a child who begged one cent from me to carry home to her sick mother.

The voice of any human being in distress, on such a night as that of which I speak, would have been sufficient to have drawn open the purse-strings of a miser; and although the cold wind was so piercing that respiration was difficult, and to cease motion in the open air appeared to create a stagnation of the blood, I involuntarily stopped, and putting my hands in my trousers' pocket, in which I always kept a supply of copper coins for purposes of charity, I drew out three or four cents, and was about placing them in the hands of the child and passing on, when the thought struck me, "What untold misery could thus have kept a child of this age abroad for the sake of earning a few cents in such a night as this, when everything human or bestial, which has a hovel under which to obtain shelter, would have been at home?" This thought caused me to look more closely at the object of my charity, and in the faint glimmer of light diffused from an oil lamp that was glimmering close by, and which shed its faint rays full upon her face, I perceived that the little petitioner was a girl who could not have numbered more than ten or twelve summers. I could



obtain but a faint glimpse of her features, but I thought I saw, in the midst of her rags and poverty, a countenance of rare childish beauty. In her little chilled hands she held a broom, with which she had been making pretensions to sweep the crossing; but it must have been an arduous and unavailing task, for the fierce wind blew keenly, and every now and then whirled a wreath of snow to occupy the place cleared for the moment by the little sweeper. Her garments were clean, so far as I could judge, but although whole, they were almost made up of shreds and patches, and shocking to relate, in that bitter night, with the fresh snow an inch in depth, on a level with the pavement, her little feet were bare.

I do not pretend to a greater degree of sensibility than most men, and the night was one that urged upon my feelings in the most sensitive manner, to hasten home to my own fireside; for so far as I was able to judge in half an hour's brisk walk, this poor child and I were the only living creatures abroad. Still, however, I could not help stopping for a moment, and asking how it was that she was abroad at that hour of the night, and such a night!

"My mother is sick in bed, sir," she replied, in trembling accents, while her teeth fairly chattered in her head, as she essayed to speak; and her voice was choked with emotion, as the tears burst forth from her eyelids, on being questioned in tones of kindness; "my mother is sick in bed, and has had nothing to eat to-day, and I could not go home without carrying her something to eat, for she is starving, and the money you have just given me is all that I have received to-day, although I have been all day at the crossing, and a hundred gentlemen have hurried by, too busy to pay any attention to me."

"Good God!" I exclaimed, "a child so young abroad on such a night, on so dismal an errand. Why, my little girl, how old are you?"

"Eleven years, sir," she replied.

"And where does your mother live?"

"In Orange-street, sir," replied the child. "She has a room there in a garret; but the landlord threatens to

turn her out in the street unless she pays her rent, and then she will die," and the poor child burst into tears.

I knew the locality had a bad name, even at the period of which I write, although I had never visited it, and so prone are we to suspicion, that even then, I had doubts as to the truth of the simple story; but it was not in the nature of humanity to resist the child's appeal for aid; and late as was the hour, and gloomy and dreary as was the night, and anxiously as I knew my wife would be to greet my arrival at home, I could not resist an impulse to go to the poor girl's home, ascertain the truth of her statement, and render such aid as lay in my power, should I find, as I had little doubt I should do, that her statements were correct.

Taking the poor little thing in my arms, therefore, and wrapping her half frozen feet in the folds of my cloak, I walked in the direction of Orange-street, the child sobbing on my shoulder, as though her little heart would break.

I had not far to walk, when, guided by the directions of the shivering child, I soon found myself perambulating dark dirty narrow streets, that until then I had no idea existed. From some of the wretched houses that I passed issued sounds of boisterous merriment, mingled with curses loud and deep—horrid blasphemies which fell terrifically upon the tympanum of my ears, and which caused my shivering burthen to creep closer to me and to bury her head upon my breast. "How is it possible," I thought, "that so frail and fair a child as this can have become an inmate of such habitations as these!"

From other dwellings, the doors and windows of which were broken, and which stood in various angles of erection, as though some earthquake had shaken them from their original foundations, issued sounds of lamentation and woe, mingled with the shrieks of women and the wail of childhood—and still the keen wind whistled up the dark alleys, and ever and anon came forth from some dark orifice a drift of sleet that cut upon my skin like

the pricking of needles, and almost blinded me as the sharp particles struck against my half-closed eyelids.

At length by the direction of the child, I stopped at a miserable tenement, situated at the present junction of Orange-street and the Five Points, on the Broadway side, and here I set down my burden and bade her conduct me to the abode of her sick mother.

We ascended a rickety stair-case to the topmost story of the dwelling, which appeared to be inhabited by numerous families, for as we passed by the doors of the filthy apartments, curious, squalid faces of ragged, half-clothed men, women, and children, peered forth to see who the unaccustomed stranger was, and so brutalized were some of these faces that I felt glad when I had passed them, and scarcely felt safe in the dwelling, as for aught I knew or saw, I might be robbed or murdered, and it never would have been known what had been my fate.

At length we stopped at the door of a small attic chamber, which the child entered, and requested me to follow her, first tapping gently at the door and saying:

"It's only, me; mother I have come home and brought a kind gentleman with me who says he will give us something to eat."

I have often witnessed scenes of misery and destitution, in my long course of gratuitous practice among the poor; but I never saw anything before or since, which struck me with such a sudden feeling of commiseration as did this.

There was neither fire nor light in the room, but the snow from the roofs of the houses without, reflected a faint glimmer of light sufficient for me to perceive a heap of bedding lying in one corner of the narrow floor, but I could distinguish no other furniture in the room except what appeared in the dim light to be a broken chair.

A light was the first thing for which I sought; but none was to be had, and I sent the poor child out to buy a penny candle, which she lighted, on her return, from one of the dim candles which were burning in some of

the rooms below. Then I saw the utter wretchedness of the scene.

That which I had taken to be a bundle of bedding on the floor was the figure of a female, evidently in the last stage of attenuation, who was stretched upon a piece of coarse matting and covered over with a heap of patched bagging, while a broken rush-bottomed chair was in reality the only other article of furniture in the apartment. The walls of the room were mildewed with damp, and there were crevices in the walls which admitted the driving sleet, which melted and ran in a thin stream on the floor, while the only small window had several of the narrow panes broken and stuffed up with pieces of rag.

I turned my attention to the prostrate female who amidst all her squalor shewed traces of having been possessed of extraordinary beauty, and as she in a faint voice and with great difficulty endeavored to thank me for my visit, her tone was one of that singular sweetness, which I have noticed never lingers long in the female voice, when its possessor has given herself up to dissipation and debauchery. While I was thinking how I could best relieve the distress I was thus unexpectedly a witness of, the door of the room was rudely burst open and an ill-conditioned man entered and coarsely demanded the week's rent from the child, who replied that she could not pay it; that she had been abroad the whole day and had only earned three or four cents.

"Then out you must bundle to-night," said the brute, "no one can remain here who will not pay my rent. Come, no crying. That's all gammon. Don't tell me you haven't earned enough this week to pay the rent of this room; that game won't do here."

"My poor child has not earned enough to provide herself with the coarsest food," gasped forth the sick woman.

"What the h—l is that to me," answered the savage; "starve and be d—d. I must and will have my rent.—Who is this?" said he, turning to me with a savage scowl.

upon his face—"a parson, eh! Well, make the parson trump up, or I'll soon make you all bundle out."

"How much is the rent?" I asked.

"Fifty cents. They owe me for two weeks," replied the wretch.

"Here is your money, and now can you not bring a little fire into the room, while I send the poor child for some food?" said I, taking the coin from my pocket.

"Fire costs money, and those who can't pay for it, must go without it," said the man.

"For God's sake go and get some fire," said I, putting more silver into his hand, which he pocketed greedily, saying—

"Why, parson, you have sprung a gold mine. Have you got many of these shiners about you?"

"Go and bring the fire. You have your money, and that's enough," I replied.

With a cunning leer upon his face, he left the room, and in a few minutes returned with a pan of lighted charcoal, which he capsized into the small, rusty grate that was set into the wall, and which appeared to have been unused for many a day.

Meanwhile I had sent the child for some bread and other articles of provision, and a bottle of wine, and on her return I allowed her to eat to her heart's content, while I administered to the sick woman such a portion of the food as I thought her stomach could bear with safety.

I remained with them for an hour, when having left a little money for their immediate necessities, I bethought me of returning home.

I had previously learnt from the sick woman, her brief history—for when she had partaken of a glass of the wine, mingled with water, and had taken also what I considered a sufficient quantity of food, she spoke more freely.

She had twelve years before fallen in love with a poor music teacher, being then but sixteen years of age, the teacher having come to the house of her guardian, who

was a merchant residing in Bleecker-street, as her musical instructor. She had early been left an orphan, and by a provision in her father's will, if she married before the age of twenty-five, without her guardian's consent, the property was to fall to him.

In the carelessness of youth, when blinded by sentiments of love, she had not heeded this—neither had her guardian very urgently endeavored to prevent her following the bent of her inclinations, for obvious reasons.

She married, and her cruel guardian had claimed her fortune.

For a time all went on well. While she had sufficient to sustain existence, with the man to whom she had given her affections, she said she cared little for the fortune she had been despoiled of; but evil days soon came. Her husband sickened and died, and then she, left a widow, with an infant, a year old, humbled herself in her sorrow before her guardian, and sought assistance from him.

This he roughly—nay, cruelly refused, and bade her never again enter his doors.

She betook herself to needle-work to earn a living for herself and child, and for some years managed to earn at least a comfortable subsistence; but she fell a prey to consumption, and at length was totally unable to work. Daily she grew weaker and weaker, and at length was glad to find shelter in a place from which she would have recoiled a few months before with a sensation of horror, while her poor child swept crossings and ran of errands to earn the few cents daily which kept them from utter starvation.

"And the name of the merchant?" I asked.

"Mr. —," she replied.

"Good God," said I, "I have attended him at his house to-day. He is dying, and I fear can scarcely live over the morrow;" so saying, after having seen them as comfortable as possible, I left the house, and in a few minutes was glad again to find myself in Broadway.

I told the sad tale to my wife that night, who (God

bless her) immediately proposed that the sick woman and her daughter should be, at least for the time being, brought to our house, and they were removed from their polluted abode on the following day.

The same day I called on my patient in Bleeker-street, and found him, as I expected, near his end. He was perfectly sensible, and evidently something was preying upon his mind. By degrees I brought about the sad tale of the preceding day. When I had briefly told all, the dying man started up in bed as if endowed with supernatural strength, and glared at me wildly.

"Mary S. dying!" he said; "she whom I have so foully wronged. Doctor, I forged that clause in her father's will, and I have brought her to this sad end; but she has been revenged. What good has her wealth done to me? My son, for whose sake I dared the villainy, is raving in a mad-house, (such was in fact the case,) myself struck down in my prime and in my pride of wealth and station, falsely acquired, by the hand of an avenging God. Quick, Doctor—that escrutoire—the will—quick—I am dying."

I opened the escrutoire to which he had pointed, and there, sure enough, were two copies of a will, fac-similes of each other, written on parchment, with the only difference that one contained the forged clause.

I hastened to the bedside of the sufferer, who had sunk back exhausted upon his pillow. He had but just strength to gasp forth—"Doctor—see justice done—I—am—dying;" and placing his index finger on the clause, he uttered the single sentence "Oh God!—I am a dead man—forgery," and immediately expired.

This work of justice was simple enough to effect—for the unhappy man had left no heirs but his insane son.—A blight had fallen on all connected with him, while still he had grown in wealth—an unjust steward still compelled to heap up wealth for the ultimate use of its lawful owners.

Poor Mary S. was too far gone in the fatal disease which ravaged her frame, for medical aid to avail her,

and she died at my house about a month after the above-mentioned events; leaving her child to my guardianship.

She grew up a beautiful girl and married an English officer stationed in Canada. When last I heard from her—for she still keeps up a correspondence with her old guardian—she was living in her husband's country house in Cumberland, and was the happy mother of a large family of children—the eldest of whom was just on the point of marriage. So, happily, was my dreary walk on that cold December night, the means, through Providence, of obtaining that justice to the unfortunate, which otherwise might forever have slept.

## CHAPTER V

MY HOUSE ON CANAL-STREET, AND MY NEIGHBORS; A STORY OF  
ILL-REQUITED LOVE, AND SUICIDE.

I HAD been two or three years in practice in New York, and had removed from my location on the Battery, and had taken a house in Canal-street; a street which, although it is situated right in the heart of the city, was then considered quite an uptown residence.

Among the friends we had made during our sojourn in New York, was the family of Mrs. K——, a widow lady, the relict of a lawyer of no little note in his profession. Mrs. K—— had two daughters. Mary, at the time I first knew her, had just arrived at the delightful age of eighteen, when the girl is just bursting into womanhood, with the freshly assumed matronly demeanor of the latter—so much the more delightful, because it sits so uneasily and seems ready upon any excuse, to rush back again into the happy current of girlhood's joyous carelessness—while the free frolicksomeness of girlhood still remains, and the merry laugh, like a silver bell, sounds more delightful music than Jullien ever produced from his monster orchestra, lingering far longer in the memory than the sweetest notes that prima donna ever sang.

Ah! those girls; at this enchanting period of their lives they little know, and yet I think the dear little witches do know after all, what power they exercise over the feelings of the sterner sex. The veriest miser can't keep his purse-strings tight, when such pretty music sounds upon his ears, and such bright eyes seem to plead so earnestly, and to look so trustingly, to his nervous arm for protection, and to his plethoric purse for the little trifles which give them such pleasure, and which he is ten times overpaid for by one glance of thankfulness

from those sparkling orbs. I am an old man now, and am privileged to say what I please, and I will assert that I have seen old bachelors who have forsworn marriage—the dolted fools—because, forsooth! they could not obtain at any moment, the girl they had set their hearts upon in their youthful days—fairly wriggle in their chairs when the pretty chime of the voices of half a dozen young women have floated past their ears, seeming to realize in the silly old fellows' heads the happiness they might have attained to, had they, in their younger days, listened to the voice of reason rather than passion. I am, as I have said, an old man myself, and the frosts of many winters have whitened the hairs of my head, and yet I cannot witness the pastime of a group of happy girls unmoved; but I turn to my wife, who sits beside me, and though we are shortsighted, and both wear spectacles, still we look at each other through those spectacles, while she, perhaps, gives me a gentle squeeze of the hand, which sends the blood thrilling through my veins, and renews within me the heyday of youth and youth's hopes, fears and heart-worshippings. If some whom I know among my bachelor friends were only to feel that tender pressure and feel the power of that glance of mutual love, albeit it came through the focus of two pair of gold spectacles, forsooth! the old fellows would marry their cookmaids, if they could get no one else to have them, in their dolted old age, sooner than any longer forego the pleasures of a married life.

But to return to my subject, (although when I get off in a digression on this subject, I am wont to be so silly, as my wife says, that she gives me a gentle tap with her fan. It is one that her grandmother brought from England, when she landed with the pilgrim fathers on Plymouth rock, and is probably the only heirloom of the vanities of European aristocracy—for her grandmother was a great lady, she tells me, bed-chambermaid to George the Second, or something of that sort—that has been handed down to succeeding generations, in this republican country, and she asks whether she is not worth all the



Marys and Phillises, and other pretty names of old-remembered sweethearts, and I am fain to say yes, and to tell her that she is the light of my declining years.)

But I am digressing again. Mary was as I have said—the eldest daughter of Mrs. K., and she was just verging upon eighteen, and Agnes, her second daughter and only remaining child, was thirteen; a sweet little fairy whom, when I first became acquainted with her, I used to treat as a pet. She was a vast favorite with my wife, who thought her one of the dearest children she had ever met with, always excepting our own little cherub, who at that time had just completed her first year. Mary K—— was a staid, gentle, pretty, modest girl, a little reserved in manner, and so prudent and careful that I had no fear of her future. I knew she was just the girl to gain a husband after her own heart, and I used to call her my rose, and little Agnes my lily. Poor little, fragile being! I always had a sort of presentiment that little Agnes's impulsive feelings would be the cause of sorrow to her in after life, and so, poor little creature, it turned out; but I am forestalling my history. At the period, of which I speak, Mary R—— had contracted a happy marriage with a merchant doing business in Third-street, Philadelphia, and to that city she had gone with her husband to reside, and Agnes, then in her seventeenth year, was residing with her mother, in the next house but one to mine, on Canal-street.

The war which had so long kept our then youthful country in a state of turmoil, had been brought to a conclusion, and something like peace and quietness was restored, and the excitement which had so long reigned in the breasts of all parties had cooled down.

Some few English officers, who, as is pretty generally known, belong chiefly to the aristocratic classes, had been taken prisoners and kept as hostages in the city of New York. Among these there was a Captain Montague, of the army, who, possessing a very handsome person and great fascination of manner, did not fail to find friends even while a prisoner, on parole, in the land of a

foe fighting for their rights. Indeed, I am not sure that the very fact of his being a prisoner of war, united of course with his *distingue* appearance, and that air of imported fashion which had not begun to show itself, or barely so, among our Broadway beaux, did not give him, in the eyes of my fair countrywomen, an especial claim to their pity, and we all know that, under certain circumstances, pity is near akin to love. Besides, he belonged to a branch of one of the most distinguished families of the old country. His mother was a baroness in her own right, and his father was an eminent judge of the Court of Chancery. This young man, whose name was Howard Montague, and who held the commission of captain in His Majesty's service, albeit the down had yet scarcely begun to bloom upon his cheeks and chin, by some means or other became acquainted with the family of Mrs. K., and glad of any opportunity to dispel his *ennui*, in the society of young ladies, he spent much of his time at K.'s house, and soon made sad havoc with the heart of the youngest and only unmarried daughter. To tell the truth, he was so handsome, danced so nicely, curled his whiskers so beautifully, and wore such a superb black mustache, and such a becoming uniform, that many a fair belle in the street envied Agnes when she walked abroad so often, and had such especial attention shown her by the young English soldier. Besides, he made her such handsome presents that they were the envy of all the young ladies of her acquaintance; for, although in the then state of affairs no money could reach him from England, he appeared to have brought a mine of wealth with him, and never was in want of money when it was necessary for him to make a liberal expenditure.

Poor, simple, confiding Agnes; she believed all her soldier lover whispered in her ear, and no doubt he too, for the time, thought and felt that he was telling the truth, and really felt towards her a temporary passion of the most ardent nature. In fact they were so far advanced in love that Captain Montague had proposed, and

with many blushes on the part of Miss Agnes, had been referred to Mama, who had likewise given her consent, and it was looked upon by the friends of the family as a grand match for Agnes, and though some envious folks said that they did not approve of her thus plighting her troth to a man who was in fact a sworn enemy at that period, to the liberties of her country, there was, perhaps, not one of these carping young ladies who would not have been very glad, could she have gained the prize that all thought had fallen to the lot of Agnes. Not that Agnes was wanting in patriotism. I liked to hear the pretty, gentle girl, her blue eyes sparkling with spirit, boldly assert that her countrymen had decidedly the right on their side, and she was responded to, half petulantly, half pleased, by the young soldier, who admired the spirit of independence shown by his betrothed, the more especially as these little discussions always ended by Agnes saying, when they were about to part:

"Never mind, Howard, I am an American girl, you know, and as long as this cruel war lasts, I shall assert my own opinion; but when peace comes, I shall forget all about the troubles, and perhaps by and by I shall become quite as much an English woman as ever you could desire."

"My pretty, Anglicized American wife," was usually the reply of Captain Montague; and then he would bid us good-night, and walk into the hall to put on his hat and gloves—and generally speaking they were not to be found until Agnes went out to look for them, and more than once, I am not sure, but I think I detected something like the sound of a kiss and muttered whisperings that were evidently intended for only one person's ear.

At length the war was brought to a conclusion, and Captain Montague had full and free permission to return home; but he did not immediately avail himself of it. He evidently loved Agnes too well to think of leaving her, until the last moment, to undertake a voyage across the Atlantic, at a period when it was not such a pleasure trip as it is now, and Messrs. Collins and Co., or their

worthy rivals had formed no conception of the mammoth steamships which now perform the journey of three thousand miles across the trackless ocean waste with more regularity than in those days the post-boy brought a letter from Philadelphia.

Montague wrote home to his parents and requested a remittance; but instead of himself hurrying home as he might have fairly been expected to do, under the circumstances, he contented himself with remaining in New York and spending now almost the whole of his time with Agnes. One evening there was a small family party at Mrs. K's house, consisting of myself and my wife, and Captain Montague, and Mary and her husband, who had come from Philadelphia, on some special occasion, I forget now what, but it was a birthday, or the anniversary of a wedding-day, or something of that sort, and we were all in high spirits. Howard was sitting on the sofa with his betrothed bride, whispering honeyed nonsense in her willing ears; for from the delicate blush which suffused her cheeks, and the liquid trembling of her large blue eyes, she was evidently pleased with the low deep-toned words with which the young soldier was addressing her. The remainder of the party, myself included, were enjoying a round game of chess, purposely leaving the young couple to the enjoyment of that which they no doubt prized more highly than the wearisome cards.

Suddenly I bethought me of a piece of intelligence I had heard during my visits of that day, which was, that the English mail ship was reported to have been off Sandy Hook early in the morning.

"You are awaiting intelligence from England?" said I, addressing Howard.

"Yes," he hastily replied; "but the vessel is long making her appearance with the mails; yet it gives me so much the more time here where there is an attraction without which home would be insupportable," added he, pressing the hand of Agnes, which he held within his own, and Agnes gave him in return such a trustful look,

that I have often wondered how it was possible he could have spurned such devoted love, and rejected such a wife as she would have made him.

There is an old English adage, which, translated into French, in order that we may not offend ears polite, says "*Parlez du diable et il paraît*," and scarcely had the words fallen from my lips, when a loud knock was heard at the hall door, which was opened by the servant.

It was the postman.

"Is there such a person here as the Right Honorable the Earl of Wilton?" we heard issue from the rough voice of the man of letters, "Captain in his Majesty's—foot. It's a strange, new-fangled way of addressing a letter, and I never before carried such a one," added the man.

"No, shure," replied the girl, for even in those days a good many Irish servants were in New York. "There's no such name as lives here; there's a soger officer in the room with misthress, but that's not his name."

"I was at the hotel to which the letter was directed," repeated the man, "and they sent me round here. This I am sure is the number of the house."

Captain Montague turned slightly pale, and then said, suddenly—

"Surely it cannot be possible that my uncle and father are both dead; for then the earldom would certainly devolve upon me;" and hastily rising, he himself went into the passage and took the letter from the man.

"For me sure enough," said he, as he returned into the room. "It is in my mother's handwriting, and sealed with black wax, on which is stamped the Earl's coronet and shield."

Somewhat nervously he broke open the seal, and after perusing the letter, not without considerable emotion, which he tried to hide, he added: "It is true, my uncle and father have both been dead some months, and I am the heir to the earldom. My lady mother desires my return to England with all possible dispatch, and sorry as I am to quit the friends I have made here, it will be my

imperative duty to obey her ladyship's behests." A solemn silence reigned in the apartment, and for some moments young Montagu appeared to feel deeply the loss of his father; but the high rank to which he had so unexpectedly attained, following so shortly after his release from parole, quickly had the effect of subduing his grief, and he became the liveliest of the party.

Agnes looked pale and discomfited. Poor girl—she seemed to have a foreboding that the rank to which her affianced lover had been raised, would be destructive to her hopes and her trustful love; but Montagu having named the day of his departure, quickly restored the bloom of her fair cheek by his cheerful conversation respecting the arrangements he intended making at home, and when he rose to go to his hotel, he playfully said, placing his hand caressingly upon the auburn ringlets of the blushing girl:

"What will the English folks think of the fair Countess I have picked up in the American wilds they talk about? I warrant she will bloom the fairest of the fair at the Court of St. James, on presentation night. Not among all the beauties that England's Court can produce, is there one that can vie, in my fancy, with my own Agnes. That is a gallant speech, now, is it not?—Lady Agnes Wilton," added he, playfully emphasizing the last words, and pressing her hand and gazing into her eyes with more fondness than usual.

In the course of a fortnight the vessel in which the young Earl had engaged his passage, sailed; and, meanwhile, many fond interviews had taken place between the affianced lovers. Lord Wilton was to write immediately upon his arrival in England; and it was arranged that as soon as his affairs were satisfactorily settled, that he was to return to America, marry Agnes and take his bride and her mother to his residence, Wilton Abbey, in Yorkshire.

With what impatience the gentle Agnes awaited her lover's letter, we leave our fair readers to imagine. I know how I used to look for a letter from Susanna every



day, when I was only a few miles distant. At length the letter came, as it happened, while I was in the house; but this was nothing extraordinary—for I was almost a constant visitor at the widow K.'s, and my wife busied herself, as women will do, in arranging matters for Agnes's approaching wedding—for we had not the slightest doubt of the truth of the young soldier's affection.

Agnes took the letter from the hands of the servant, blushing amid half smiles, half tears, and immediately rushed up stairs to her room to conceal her emotion and to peruse its contents at her leisure.

Anxiously we awaited her re-appearance; but she came not, and her mother was about to go to her apartment, all of us thinking that bashfulness was the cause of her absenting herself, when we heard a noise over head as some one falling heavily upon the floor. Mrs. K—— hurried up stairs, and presently a frightful scream caused us all to rush to the room. What a sight met our gaze. The beautiful girl whose breast but a few moments before had been palpitating with love and hope, lay stretched senseless on the floor, blood issuing from her mouth and nostrils, and her face ashy pale.

"My poor, dear Agnes, oh! my child, my dear child! she is dead!" cried the frantic mother, and she fainted in the arms of my wife.

With the assistance of a servant I raised Agnes from the floor and placed her on the bed. I found that she had fallen in a fit, but was not dead as I at first anticipated.

I immediately opened a vein and she shortly returned to some degree of consciousness, but I feared her reason had fled.

"Oh, Howard! Howard! how could you thus cast me off!" she said once, in the only slight interval of reason she showed, "the letter—see there—the letter! Mother, read that letter!"

The letter, which had been the cause of all this sad catastrophe, was from the Earl of Wilton, and it briefly stated that his mother thought it advisable that the silly

match which he had amused himself with to pass his weary hours in America, should be broken off—that he was to be married in the course of a few weeks, to the daughter of a noble Marquis, whose name it is not necessary for me to disclose; and, dastardly, perjured wretch! he concluded by offering a present of £500 to provide a trousseau for Agnes' wedding with a husband whom (again I say, dastardly wretch) he hoped might prove worthy of her.

It is needless to say how this intimation was received by Mrs. K——. Of course the money was indignantly rejected, and the stricken widow devoted all her time and attention to the hapless child; but reason never returned—she would moan and cry and laugh by turns, and call on Howard as her husband, in the most endearing terms, and then at other times fall into a paroxysm of fury on hearing the casual mention of his name. So weeks, aye, months passed away. Agnes had recovered her bodily health, but her mind was gone for ever. She more than once showed symptoms of a desire to commit suicide; but all the means of doing so awful a deed, were kept from her.

One day, however, and I never shall forget the sensation I experienced, I was sent for to go to Mrs. K——'s house, the frightened servant merely saying that Miss Agnes had taken poison.

"Good God!" I exclaimed, and hurried to the house, while my wife, still more frightened, hurriedly followed me. Alas! it was too true. The poor child had by some means obtained a bottle of laudanum, which her mother kept for medical purposes, and had swallowed the whole contents. I applied the stomach-pump, but in vain. Agnes K—— was beyond the reach of mortal aid.

I will pass over the scenes which followed, and the description of the funeral of the hapless and lovely victim of Howard Montagu's treachery; but on the day of the funeral I received a London paper, which announced in glowing terms the marriage of the Earl of Wilton with

Lady Sophie —, at St. George's, Hanover Square. I threw the paper from me with rage, and pushed it into the fire until the whole of it was consumed. I never dared show that cursed paragraph to Mrs. K——, or even to my wife, and I must say I read with almost fiendish joy, about six months afterwards, in the London Times, that a divorce had been concluded between the Earl of Wilton and his lady, some month or so before, and that in a quarrel arising out of the divorce—the husband and wife it appeared had been at variance almost from the day of their marriage—the perjured nobleman had fallen in a duel, by the hand of his wife's brother.

## CHAPTER VI.

## OUR FIRST SERVANT'S MARRIAGE AND DEATH.

WHEN my wife and I first set up housekeeping, we hired a servant of all work from the country; a hearty, healthy, broad shouldered and good humored girl whom it seemed impossible for any amount of work to overpower. She remained with us for two years, and so far as we were concerned might, had she lived long enough, have remained with us till this day, for she proved to be an excellent servant; and indeed just about the period she left us, my wife was thinking of making her work fall easier by getting another girl to assist in the rough drudgery of the household duties, as just then fortune had commenced to smile upon us, rather faintly, to be sure, but yet sufficiently to inspire a sanguine happy young couple with trustful hopes of the future. But Helen Dawson, though she acknowledged she was very happy and comfortable as she was, like most other young women, thought she would be happier still if she changed her name into Helen—something else, and instead of remaining a servant, become mistress of a household, however humble it might be, of her own. In plain words Helen fell over head and ears in love with the milkman—a fresh colored, good looking young lad, who was accustomed to station himself in his cart opposite our door every morning, and oftentimes, I believe, ring Helen out of her sleep to attend his sonorous summons. Not a very satisfactory way of making love, some of the readers of these reminiscences will think, who know how disagreeable it is to be awakened suddenly out of a sound sleep, and compelled to jump out of bed and hurry on one's clothes without having time even to turn on one's pillow. And not a very presentable attire—the morning gown and slippers, so hastily put on, without time to do more

than smooth down the ruffled hair with the palms of the hands; but there is an old and homely proverb which infers that all depends upon which foot touches the floor first, as regards the temper of the suddenly awakened sleeper, during the remainder of the day, and somehow or other Helen was one of those happy people who *always* and under *any* circumstances, manage to get out of bed right foot foremost, and then, although she was rather more stoutly framed than the majority of city bred ladies, she possessed a very neat, well made figure, which did not require to be made up by the art of the dress-maker and milliner to render her presentable; and not being troubled with indigestion, or jaded by keeping late hours and breathing the unwholesome atmosphere of a ball-room night after night, as is too often the case with city belles, her fair, rosy face needed no cosmetics to hide the pallor of the complexion beneath, and her glossy brown hair naturally smooth and silky, and always well brushed before she retired to rest, (for Helen was, like all young women, of lofty or lowly condition, proud of her neat figure and pretty face, and dark, clustering, natural curls) needed nothing more than the simple toilet I have mentioned, to make it look as neat as she could have desired. So perhaps Helen, in her simple morning attire, her face beaming with the cheerfulness of health and a smile of good nature, looked really quite as pretty or prettier than if she had bestowed hours upon her toilet, at least so thought Harry Thornby, who was a young man of twenty-five, and the owner of a few acres of land in New Jersey, a few miles distant from the city, upon which he kept some dozen cows, and who, by disposing of the milk and also of the fruit and vegetables he cultivated upon his little farm, managed to earn a good livelihood; in fact, he had begun to lay aside a little money, although he had only possessed the farm (the legacy of an uncle) for three years. Harry's father had died while he was a child, and he had been brought up on a farm out West, but on the death of his uncle, he came to take possession of his little property, bringing his mother with him to manage

the dairy and assume the supervision of the household affairs. Mrs. Thornby was, however, growing old, and Harry thought it would be doing nothing more than his duty, seeing he was now in a position of independence, moderate though it was, to take to himself a wife, in order that his mother might be relieved of some of her household duties, and his home rendered more comfortable and cheerful to himself.

Now Harry was a sensible lad, and he rightly thought, that a young woman who had been accustomed to household employments, and whose appearance betokened health and cheerfulness, would be a more suitable wife to a man in his position than one of those die-away, lack-a-daisical feminines, who, sooner than spoil their hands with wholesome, healthy work, choose to bury themselves in crowded rooms and earn a wretched half-starved existence by their needles; so having a wide field to choose from in his daily circuit through Jersey City and New York, he conceived the idea of picking and choosing from among the many young women who took the family allowance of milk from him every morning, and having found one to his fancy, to pop the question boldly and inquire whether *he* would suit her.

To be sure, being a good looking young man, and having tolerably fair prospects for one in his position of life, he might have looked higher. It was said that Miss——, the mistress milliner of Jersey City, would have been very willing to have joined her shop to Harry's farm in a life partnership—throwing herself into the bargain—but, although she put on her sweetest smiles whenever Harry stopped his cart near her door and commenced to ring his bell, and wished him good morning in the sweetest-toned voice in the world, she could make no impression whatever on the young milkman's heart—not that he did not perceive well enough what her intentions were, but as he told his mother, Miss—— was too much of the would-be fine lady to suit him, and besides, she seemed as if she wished to do the courting herself, and that was not at all to his taste. Then there was Mrs.

—, the confectioner, who was evidently enamoured of the young milkman, and a very nice, tidy little body she was—and youthful withal. Harry was heard to acknowledge this himself; but then there was one insuperable objection. Mrs. — was a widow, and although Harry lived previous to the period when the immortal "Tony Weller had given that famous piece of advice to his son and heir, Samivel, when, shaking his head solemnly, he said, "Samivel, Samivel, my boy, never marry a vidder," Harry, without having had "Tony's experience, had perhaps profited by somebody else's, for though he rather liked Mrs. —, he had fully made up his mind "never to marry a vidder." Thus it was, after having scrutinized all the damsels that his business necessarily threw in his way, under circumstances, perhaps, admirably calculated to show forth the fitness or unfitness of each to make a good wife for a young and struggling farmer, he at last fixed upon Helen; and, as it happened, Helen had not gone to the cart with her milk pitcher every morning for many months, without admiring the young man in her turn, and as sundry innocent jests and compliments had passed between them, when once Harry had made up his mind, he was not long before he offered his hand, nor was Helen tardy in accepting the offer. In truth, she had won the prize that many a damsel was secretly sighing for; and although the courtship, if secret, had perhaps been long, when once the engagement was made, the wedding quickly followed, and the happy Helen, somewhat to my wife's regret, although she rejoiced in her good fortune, (for we thought the match a most desirable one for her) left our service, and assuming the matronly appellation of Mistress Thornby, became joint proprietress and chief superintendent of the dairy of Cowslip farm, New Jersey. \* \* \*

Some years passed away, and although we hardly saw Helen more than once in six months, when she came over to New York in her husband's cart, for the purpose of making purchases of clothing and such like matters, on which occasions she always called in to see my wife, we

frequently heard of her from her husband, who still continued his occupation, and when her first child was christened, Helen begged my wife to stand god-mother, which she willingly did. In the course of five years Helen bore her husband four children—two girls and two boys—a girl being the eldest. Mr. Thornby's business was satisfactory, though he of course did not manage to lay by much money; but he at all events secured a good living for himself and his increasing family. His mother had died about two years after his marriage.

At length we removed from our residence, and took a house in the upper portion of the city, and as the residents were supplied with milk from other parties, for some time we heard nothing more from Helen, as, probably not knowing whither we had removed, she ceased to call upon us when she visited the city.

One day, about six years after Helen's marriage, I happened to be called to make an unusually early visit to a patient who resided in our old neighborhood, and on leaving the house, I saw a milk cart standing at the door, which struck me as being that of Mr. Thornby. I looked at the horse, and it was certainly the same animal, but it was not the same driver; some stranger had usurped Mr. Thornby's place. My first impression was, that with the increase of business he had hired additional "help," and that the driver was in Harry's employ. So I stepped towards the cart, and inquired after the welfare of him and his family. Greatly to my surprise, the answer was—

"Mr. Thornby has been dead, sir, these six months. I bought the horse and cart when the fixings of the farm were sold at auction, but my farm lies in another direction, and I know little about his widow and children."

"Mr. Thornby dead!" exclaimed I. "Why, he always seemed to me such a strong, healthy young man—you really surprise me. Of what disease did he die?"

"Why, sir," replied the man, "it's rather a sorrowful affair, and to tell the truth, I know very little about it; but folks say that about twelve months ago, Mr. Thorn-

by became security for a cousin of his, who shortly afterwards ran away South, leaving Thornby to settle matters with his creditors. Well, sir, the rascally fellow's debts swallowed up all the little matter of money that Mr. Thornby had saved, and obliged him to sell a good portion of his property besides; so that the family who had lived very comfortable became very poor. To make matters worse, Thornby, who had always been a temperate man, took the loss so much to heart, that he turned to drinking, and one day, about six months since, as he was driving in a load of vegetables to market, having taken a glass too much, he fell from the cart, which passed over him, and so injured him that he died a few days afterwards. After his death, it was found that the sale of the whole of his farm effects would not cover his liabilities, and the creditors therefore sold all off by auction."

"And Helen—Mrs. Thornby—the widow that is?" said I, interrupting the man—"what became of the widow and her children? Let me see, there were four of them, if I recollect rightly."

"Five, sir, five," replied the man. "There was a baby born about a month before Thornby's death. I fancy the widow went to Philadelphia, where she knew some folks who were pretty well off, and where she meant to take in washing and plain sewing. That's all I know about them," and as he said this, he drove on his cart to the house of his next customer.

When I returned home, I mentioned the subject to my wife, who sympathised equally with myself with the misfortunes of poor Helen. If we had known at the time where to have found her, we would have endeavored to to have been of some benefit to her, but as we did not, the matter was soon forgotten.

I now come to the page in my diary which has suggested this reminiscence. It runs thus:—

"April 7th, 18—. Greatly to my surprise and sorrow, heard that Helen Thornby, a former much-valued servant, was sick, and in the very extremity of distress, in

Philadelphia. At my wife's urgent request, went to that city, and with much difficulty found her out in miserable lodgings in Spring Garden. Saw that her case was hopeless, but relieved her to the utmost extent in my power."

\* \* \* \* \*

"April 11th.—Helen visibly sinking—scarce think she can live throughout the day. Administered restoratives. Much affected on witnessing her poor, half-starved children weeping around their mother's dying bed."

\* \* \* \* \*

"April 12th.—Helen Thornby died to-day, about noon, of general debility, caused by protracted suffering and semi-starvation."

The above is all the record that appears in my journal, but it tells a sad story to every reader, and suggests sorrowful reminiscences to me who knew her in health and in happiness, who am aware of the causes which led to her distress, and who witnessed her last dying moments, and heard the bitter wail of her hapless children, when they learnt that their last remaining parent was no more.

The way in which I became acquainted with the distress to which the once happy and cheerful Helen Thornton was reduced, was as follows:

My wife was reading a Philadelphia newspaper, which by some chance (wrapped around a parcel, I believe) had found its way into the parlor, when she suddenly uttered an ejaculation of surprise, and handing the paper to me, begged me to read a paragraph which run as follows:

"TO THE BENEVOLENT.—One of the most extreme cases of distress it has ever been our lot to record, has lately been made known to us, and having full confidence in the source whence the information was derived, we willingly make room in our columns for an appeal to the charitable in behalf of the poor suffering family. The mother, a widow of the name of Thornby, whose husband is represented to us as having but a few years since been a substantial farmer, but who was killed some three



years since by an accident, is lying at the point of death in a miserable attic in S—— street, Spring Garden. She is destitute of almost every necessary of life, and her illness has, it is said, been superinduced in a great measure, by the want of necessary food and clothing during the late inclement winter. She has five children, the eldest of which, is a girl nine years of age, and the youngest an infant of three years, all of them, according to our informant, in a state of suffering from the same causes which have brought their mother to the verge of death. The philanthropic public of this city will, we are assured, do a real charity, if they search out and relieve this dreadful misery. The poor widow is represented to have been a most industrious woman, who worked night and day to support her infant family, until prevented from following her occupation of washerwoman and needlewoman, by a severe attack of rheumatism. *Bis dat qui cito dat*, says the Latin proverb, (He gives twice who gives quickly,) and delay, we are assured, may, in this instance, be fatal."

Such was the paragraph I read at the request of my wife, and the reader may conceive my feelings when I contrasted in my mind Helen, our healthy, cheerful servant girl—Helen, the contented, happy wife, with Helen Thornby, the widow, stretched on the bed of death amidst such wretchedness as was described in the paragraph.

I laid the paper aside without saying a word.

"We must relieve her immediately," said my wife.

"Of course we must," said I.

"James, you must start off to Philadelphia immediately, and find out poor Helen," continued my wife.

"Impossible, my love," I replied, "there is General ——, lying seriously ill. Indeed his case is an intricate and dangerous complication of disorders, and I am getting greatly alarmed about him. And then there is Mrs. ——, and Mrs. ——, and Miss ——, and"—I was proceeding to con over my list of patients, when my wife again said, quietly—

"Nevertheless, James, you must let your assistant do duty for you for a few days, and set out for Philadelphia immediately."

Now when Susanna, my wife, says anything in that quiet but decided way of hers, I know it's of no use arguing the case any longer, so I felt bound to follow her wishes. Not that I would wish the reader to think she exercises any undue influence over me. Susy, who is now sitting opposite me, busied with her interminable knitting, occasionally raising her mild eyes from her monotonous employment, and beaming forth tender glances which do not in the least fail in their effect, from the fact of their beaming through the glasses of her gold spectacles—Susy, I say, would be the last woman in the world to wish people to think she wore—I was almost writing something not exactly *comme il faut*—to wish, I should say, people to think that she ruled her husband. I beg to assure the reader that my wife is not by any means "a strong-minded woman," nor a stickler for woman's rights, and all such detestable nonsense; but somehow or other she led me in that quiet way in the days of our courtship, and I *do* think that—just the least in the world—she feels her power in that respect, and as, like a sensible woman, she exerts it but seldom—only on special occasions, and for good purposes, she has managed to maintain it as fully as she did before marriage, when of course I was her humble slave and so forth. I fancy *now* by a comical twinkle in her eye, as she looks up from her work, that she knows I am writing about her—there certainly is a strong magnetic affinity between us, for sure as I write her name, I see her look up—and if she does suspect it, she will be sure to read it when it is printed, and then I shall get a good scolding. I know that perfectly well, but I don't care a fig about it, because it will lead to a kiss and a "make up," just as scoldings did thirty-five or forty years ago, and I am just as fond of these little playful "tiffs" now as I was then.

However, *revenons a nos moutens*. I foresaw at once that I must go to Philadelphia, and to Philadelphia I con-



sequently went. My wife would have accompanied me, but just at that time there was a *reason* for her staying at home; respecting which there is no occasion for me further to enlighten the reader.

It was a difficult matter for me, after having reached Philadelphia and placed my carpet-bag in charge of the clerk at the hotel where I put up, to find out the place mentioned in the paragraph which had been the cause of my undertaking the journey, and when I did find the street and enter the house indicated, I saw that the distress could not have been exaggerated, for assuredly no human being, unless reduced to the very extremity of wretchedness, would have sought so filthy a shelter from the elements. Better would it have been, I almost thought, to brave their severity even in mid-winter and in the midst of the tempest, than to breathe air so impure as that which circulated within the wretched tenement—to listen to the imprecations that resounded through the dwelling as, making my way up the rickety stair-case I passed room after room inhabited each by a family who appeared to be wallowing amidst filth and intemperance, or to witness the hideous, cadaverous features of the drivelling, drunken, diseased inmates with whom I came in contact on the landing-places. Truly they seemed the incarnation of church-yard spectres, and imagination could easily conceive that they even then were experiencing a foretaste of the horrors of the hell to which they were hastening, and that the fiery tortures of that remorse to which they appeared doomed for all eternity were already gnawing at their vitals. Faint and sickened by what I had witnessed and by the new phases of wretchedness that were thrusting themselves upon me step by step as I advanced, I at length reached the garret occupied by Mrs. Thornby. I knocked at the door, but I need not have done so, for it had no fastening, and swinging open, it revealed to my distressed view the utter, hopeless wretchedness within. Stretched upon a rickety machine, once intended for a bedstead, two of the legs of which had given place to brickbats, and in-

stead of a bed the unsteady frame now covered with only a thin layer of very dirty straw, lay the body of an apparently dying female. The cadaverous features were turned towards me, but the eyes were closed, and in those features I could not recognize the slightest resemblance to the once ruddy, healthy maid-servant Helen, and while pierced to the heart with the suffering that I witnessed, I almost indulged a hope that I was mistaken with regard to its object. It took not long to make the inventory of the room; besides the apology for a bed just described, the only other article of furniture consisted of an old deal-box without a cover, but having a couple of planks, each about three feet long, laid across it, serving either for table or chairs, as occasion might require. The walls, the floor, the ceiling, and the remnant of a window, were all alike begrimed with smoke and dirt. Around the bed were four children, all of them weeping bitterly; but the youngest, whose hunger was such as not even to be deadened by its sorrows, was munching, between its sighs and sobs, a hunch of bread which had been given to it by some pitying hand. On the bed, sleeping by the side of the dying mother, lay a little child, whose attenuated, fleshless limbs, were so tightly covered with the sallow skin, as to render every ligament visible; but as it slept, the delicate, though pinched features, and the long golden hair, appeared still beautiful, and forced a painful contrast in the mind of the spectator as he pictured the loveliness that might have shone forth in that young face, had its lot been a happier one.

There was yet one more person in this abode of wretchedness, whom I have not yet mentioned, but whose appearance, so neat, so orderly, so motherly, so angelically womanlike, offered a lively contrast with its other miserable inmates. It was a lady apparently of thirty or thirty-five years of age, attired in the garb of the Society of Friends, whose attention had doubtless been directed to the appeal in the newspaper, and who had long been beforehand with me in the work of charity. Strong and confident in the holiness of her cause; she, a woman,

unaccustomed to the sight of human misery save that which she sought to relieve; certainly not like me, compelled by the duties of my profession to witness it in all its hideous phases, had ventured unfalteringly, and as it appeared alone, through the scenes of horror that I have faintly pictured, and now stood leaning over the couch of the sufferer, all emotions of disgust stifled—that of pity only visible upon her fair features, while I had become so sick at heart, that I half contemplated leaving the place, and sending an almoner in my stead to dispense the charity I had come for the purpose of bestowing; but when I saw this lady so unwavering in the work of charity, I felt how selfish were the feelings of my own heart, and determined to drive such selfish feelings from me. I entered the room softly and unperceived. The lady who had hold of the sufferer's hand was thus questioning her:—

"How long hast thou been ill, poor woman?"

The poor creature she addressed raised her heavy eyes, and in a voice so low as to be almost unintelligible, answered—

"Long, very long. How long I know not."

Her eyes at once enabled me to recognize her as *indeed* the Widow Thornby; but she had not observed me, and still I remained a listener.

"Hast thou no assistance—nobody to nurse thee?" continued the fair Quakeress.

"Nobody but these," pointing to the children.

"Has any doctor been here?" asked the lady of the eldest child.

"No, ma'am," replied the little girl.

"And how long, then, has thy mother been ill?"

"Since she took the rheumatis."

"And how long is that?"

"Eight or nine months ago, ma'am."

"But, my poor children, you are not the only people that live with her, I suppose."

"Nobody else lives here, leastways not in this room," replied the child. "I tends mother."

"Thou art not big enough to take care of her, my poor child, even if thy mother were provided with all the necessaries that her illness requires."

There was silence for some moments, and then the fair questioner continued—

"I fear thou art very ill, poor woman, and I know not how I can best help thee. Money I can give, but there is no one here to make use of it for thee."

"Money!" almost shrieked the poor woman from her bed of straw, "Money! you can give me money? Oh, give it, give it, give it to *her*—give it to the child; she knows what it is; she knows the use of it; she knows I am dying for the want of it. It is too late for me, but give it, give it to my children, and may God —"

Here the poor creature's strength wholly failed; her eyes closed, and to all appearance she was already a corpse.

"Oh! this is very dreadful," said the lady, wringing her hands in the extremity of her own distress at the misery she witnessed, and for a moment she turned her eyes away towards the door, where I was then standing.

She started with surprise, but immediately recovered herself, and addressing me familiarly, as though the scene in which we had met removed all necessity of an introduction, she said—

"I am thankful that thou hast come on the same errand of mercy which brought me hither. Truly, I was wrong to come alone. I should have brought Jedediah, my brother, with me; but I had no conception of the misery I was destined to behold." Then taking her purse from her pocket, she placed half a dollar in the hands of the eldest child.

The little girl looked at the coin, and in a half whisper, ejaculated, "oh mother!" Creeping to the bed she put it into the palm of her mother's hand, pressing the fingers down upon it, and in an accent of interrogation, uttered the word "bread?" and then flew, rather than run from the room.

The lady then turned to me and said, "I know not

who thou art; but I consider thee in this case as a brother in mercy. We must seek medical assistance for this poor sister."

"I am a physician," I replied, "and I knew this poor woman in happier days. Such assistance as I can afford I will give freely and gladly; but I need scarcely say she is beyond the reach of medicine—she is dying. Still she may be partially restored; and these poor children—they need food more than anything else."

I approached the bedside and felt the pulse of the dying female. It beat faintly—irregularly; sometimes the pulsation could not be perceived; then came a sudden throb, as though life still lingered, loth to quit even such a wretched tenement as this poor wasted frame.

Presently the little girl came in with a large loaf of bread which was almost torn in pieces by the famishing children, who proceeded hastily to devour the food thus unexpectedly provided for them.

The lady looked on apparently horrified. At length she inquired, as though struck with some shocking thought:

"Of what disease dost thou think the poor mother is ailing—is dying?"

"She is dying of general debility," I replied, "caused by hunger and cold, and hastened to its fatal termination by the inroads made upon her constitution by rheumatism, not properly cared for in time."

"And truly thou believest her to be dying?"

"*She is dying.* She may live a few days, if great care be taken of her, but not many. She will scarcely survive this week."

"This is dreadful," repeated the lady. "We must immediately seek a nurse and provide such sustenance as she in her feeble condition is enabled to take. I will not leave her until I see this done. Doctor, wilt thou go on this errand of charity, and I will await thy return by the side of our suffering sister."

I turned away without speaking, and leaving the

room, descended the stairs, and having threaded my way through the noisome alleys, I soon procured a nurse, with the promise of high wages, and purchased such restoratives as I thought necessary, and then returned to the garret of the dying woman. I found the lady kneeling by the bed-side, and the children, who had finished their meal, weeping bitterly. The youngest child had awakened, and was clasping its mother round the neck and kissing her pale face.

In a few moments we administered some warm restoratives, and the poor woman revived considerably, and after a short time we left her in a calm sleep, to the care of the nurse.

I escorted my companion to the street and to her home, which was on Chestnut-street, near the Schuylkill river. It was a mansion of plain exterior, but evidently the abode of wealthy persons. My fair companion asked me in, but I begged to be excused for the time being, and promised to meet her at the residence of the poor widow on the following day in company with her brother.

On the way to the lady's house we conversed on the shocking scene we had witnessed, and I explained to her how I had known the poor woman in better days, and how I had come to a knowledge of her distress, my fair companion also telling me how she had read only that very morning, the paragraph in the newspaper, although it had been published two days before.

"Is it not terrible," said she, "that such misery as this should be experienced in our happy country, where we are told there is abundance for all?"

"It is," I replied, "and I could not have conceived it possible had I not been an eye witness of it; but I have not now to learn that men are selfish creatures, and that although few will object to relieve misery when it appears before them in all its hideousness, few will purposely seek it out. The poor woman was unable to make her case known until some one put that notice in

the newspaper, and her children are too young and too feeble to have helped her in any way whatever."

"But is it not strange, my friend," continued the lady, "that the person who put that paragraph in the paper, should not have afforded her relief, or that the proprietor of the newspaper should not have himself sought her out?"

"It is not," I replied—"the person who caused the paragraph to be inserted, *perhaps* temporarily relieved the distressed family, and having done that, and furthermore made her sad case public, he thought he had well done *his* part, and probably likewise the newspaper editor thought he had done his part when he gratuitously inserted the paragraph in question. Believe me, madam, I have seen distress in the course of my professional duties that few otherwise engaged, are aware of the existence of, and I am confident there is distress far deeper than any that I have seen—that is, until to-day."

"Not many cases I should hope, such as we have witnessed to-day," said the lady, thoughtfully and earnestly, as we came in sight of her residence.

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The next day, according to promise, I met the lady and her brother at the wretched abode of the widow.—The poor woman was able to sit up and converse freely, and she recognized me and related to me in broken accents, the history of her life since the unhappy hour when her husband had become security for his faithless cousin. Until that hour, her life, she said, had been one of uninterrupted happiness. It is not necessary, however, for me to repeat this history to the reader, as there was nothing said more than he has learnt while perusing the story. As my journal briefly states, I paid three visits to the poor woman, and during my third visit, she breathed her last—her head resting on the shoulder of the kind Quakeress, who, with myself, had promised the dying mother to provide for her children. I took care that poor Helen was decently interred, and also that the two boys were put to school. The eldest girl was taken

home by me to New York, and the two young girls—the youngest children—were adopted by the kind Quaker family.

They all turned out well. The boys are now merchants in Alabama, and all the girls are married—the elder one to a wealthy farmer of the State of New Jersey—the two younger ones to two brothers in New Orleans.

Having bid a kind farewell to my Quaker friends, whose acquaintance I had formed under such melancholy circumstances, I returned to New York and made my poor wife weep over the sad fate of her former favorite servant. Helen, the child I brought home, was put to school, and after having completed her education, she obtained a situation as governess. It was while in this occupation that she fell in with her future husband.

The strangest part of this story remains to be told, although it can be told in a few words.

Twelve years after the occurrence of the incidents related above, I was called to attend a gentleman who had long been suffering from ill health, and who had taken laudanum, it was suspected, with the purpose of committing suicide, although he had failed in immediately effecting his object. He lived for some weeks afterwards; but his constitution had been previously so much impaired, that the poison he had taken, at length effected its purpose, though much more slowly than he probably had anticipated. I will not, for obvious reasons, mention his name—but he continued to insist that he had long been in the habit of using laudanum, and that he had incautiously taken an overdose. He was a wealthy man, and everybody was at a loss to conceive what it was that was preying upon his mind—for he had evidently for some time past, as it appeared, been suffering from an aberration of intellect, produced by some dreadful mental burthen.

I was present when he died, and a few moments before he breathed his last, he placed a sealed packet in my hand, which he had concealed beneath his pillow.—

"Open that," he said, "when I am no more. Open it in secret;" and as he uttered the last word, he fell back in the bed, a corpse.

I took the packet home and opened it in the presence only of my wife.

It contained a letter and a very large sum of money in bank bills, amounting to several thousands of dollars.—The letter was inscribed: "To the children of Henry Thornby, to be opened by Doctor —, and the inclosed bills to be by him appropriated to their benefit." Inside were the following words:

"Restitution forced from C. D. to the children of Henry and Helen Thornby, by the ever-torturing demon of REMORSE."

The money was appropriated by me according to request, and I have no doubt that the donor was the cousin who had wronged Harry, and caused all the subsequent misery of himself and his family; but the children were not aware of this cousin's name, and although I endeavored to do so, I could not succeed in tracing any relationship between Mr. D—— and Henry Thornby

## CHAPTER VII

## THE POOR ARTIST.

"Poor creatures! what will become of them through the long months of winter?"

Such was the exclamation that greeted my ears as I entered the parlor one evening in December, 1834, having taken off my India rubbers in the passage, and called the servant to shake the snow from my overcoat—for it was snowing and blowing furiously out of doors. One of those regular old New York snow storms, which, in my time, used to visit us before Christmas, but which now come upon us scarce as "angels' visits."

"May I ask who is the especial object of your commiseration?" I said, advancing towards a couple of young ladies (my nieces) who were seated by the fire, and who had been so earnestly engaged in conversation, that they had not heard my steps in the passage.

"Oh, uncle, we are so glad to see you," said the elder of the girls, both of whom were daughters of my wife's elder sister. "Patty and I came up from Boston this morning to spend Christmas, according to our invitation, and brother Uriah will come up on Saturday;" and I received a hearty kiss from each of the two bouncing rosy-cheeked New England girls. "Why," continued Mary, the first speaker, "you had not left the house to go into town half an hour, before our sleigh drove up to the door. Had he, aunt Susanna?"

"No, my dear, your uncle could scarcely have reached the house of his first patient, before I heard the sleigh stop at the door, and quickly I guessed who it was," replied my wife.

For some minutes the conversation was engrossed with inquiries after all the folks at home, and a variety of

family matters of no interest to any but those acquainted with the family affairs.

At length, conversation having become general, I suddenly bethought me of the exclamation I had heard on entering the parlor, and I repeated my former and still unanswered question.

"Who was the object of your special commiseration when I entered the parlor this evening? If I mistake not, I heard some remark made about the difficulties some poor creature would find in getting through the winter."

"Oh!" said my wife, "we were speaking of a poor family whom the girls and I called upon to-day, for Patty insisted on dragging me out for that purpose, as soon as we had taken lunch. They were passengers in the stage from Boston with them, at least the mother and child were; the father is sick here in New York, and two other children are with them. The delicate health and lady-like appearance of the mother, and the helplessness of the baby, and the mother's evident poverty, attracted the pity of the girls, and they were desirous to afford them all the relief they could."

"Well, and did you find them out?" I asked.

"Oh yes, we found them out easily enough; with much persuasion Mary got the poor woman to write down her name and address upon a card; here it is, 'Katrina Jansen, 16 Waters-treet,' and so this morning I ordered out the carriage and took a drive round the battery, calling in at the poor people's residence on our return."

"Katrina Jansen," said I, taking hold of the card, which was inscribed in pencil, in a delicate feminine hand. "Are they foreigners? Jansen is a Danish name."

"They are Danes," replied my wife; "but the woman speaks perfectly good and pure English, and but a very slight accent betrays her husband's foreign birth."

"Of what trade or profession is the husband?"

"He is an artist—so his wife told me, for he scarcely spoke a word, and did not seem pleased with my visit—perhaps he did not like to have his poverty exposed, for they are evidently poor—poor as well they can be, and

besides, he is too sick to speak a great deal. His wife says he has no medical attendant and will not send for a doctor, because he has not the means of paying for one; but he pretends to have no faith in doctors, and takes such medicine as he thinks proper to send for, himself. I promised her that my husband should call and see him, as a friend, otherwise he is morose, if he thinks any one calls out of curiosity. You might call upon him as if you wanted a picture painted, or something of that kind, you know, and by degrees might let him know you are a physician, and so perhaps we could manage to be of some little help to them through the winter."

I could not help smiling, thus to have all the plans arranged for my winter's visits to a gratuitous patient, by my wife, but I said, somewhat seriously—

"You know, my dear, that my time is now so fully engaged that I have scarcely a moment to spare for recreation at home with my family. I have already some dozen gratuitous patients of your recommendation on my list, and if you swell the list much more, I don't know how I shall get on with my work. However," I added, seeing her disappointed look, "your patients have all turned out to be worthy ones, and so I shall add this last one to my list, and see if I can find time for a call to-morrow."

"But you must not go as a physician, James, otherwise you will spoil all."

"Oh, I'll manage that," I added, thinking to myself as I did so, "beggars should not be choosers."

The next day, after having concluded my calls in the lower part of the city, just as I was about to return home, I bethought me of the last evening's conversation, and I drove up to the house in Water-street. "Does Mr. Jansen live here?" I asked of a woman who was mopping down the steps of the stoop.

"There's sich a many people lives here," she replied, 'that it's meself doesn't know whether sich a man as Mr. Jansen lives in the house or not, but if you'll fasten your



horse's bridle to the lamp post, and walk up stairs, perhaps some of the lodgers can tell you."

Somewhat annoyed, and yet anxious not to disappoint my wife and nieces, I followed the bidding of the woman, and mounted the rickety old staircase, as she had told me, inquiring here and there, as I met with a stray person ascending or descending, for the name; at last a little boy told me that was his father's name, and led me into the room.

As I entered, I could not help being pleased, as my wife and nieces had been, with the lady-like appearance and manners of Mrs. Jansen, who rose as I entered, and evidently guessed my errand. She advanced toward me and whispered, "Dr. —, is it not, to whom I am indebted for the honor of this visit?"

"I am Dr. —," I replied, "and I called at the request of my wife and nieces, who, I understand, were here yesterday." "You are welcome, sir," she replied, and my ill humor at being kept so late in town through this whim of the women folks at home, and at having such a tramp up stairs, vanished at once. I never saw a more perfect example of good breeding than was shown by Mrs. Jansen, who, although her attire was of the plainest kind, and though her apartment showed unmistakably, signs of the utmost poverty, made no attempts at excuse. She was aware that I knew that she was poor, and had the care of a small family and a sick husband devolving upon her, and she judged rightly, according to the principles of intuitive gentility, that that was sufficient apology for all else but dirt and slovenliness—for that she knew there could be no apology, and there needed none.

I entered into a few minutes' conversation with her, and found her to be a lady of great intelligence, and one who in her earlier days had known comfort and prosperity. She had married her husband while he was still a student, with the consent of her parents, although he was poor, and dependent, even for his education, upon a royal grant; which provided for the education, in Italy

of some dozen or so young men who had shown sufficient proof of artistic talent at college in Copenhagen, to entitle them to such a privilege. Hans Jansen was one of the most promising among the young Danish artists, and as he and his wife had been children at school together, she gradually wound her affections around him as he grew into manhood, and as she heard the praises of his talents sounded from every tongue, until she was deeply in love with him without knowing the particular moment at which the feeling of sisterly regard, with which she had always looked upon him, had ripened into love.

That however, did not make much matter. Katrina Fernsen and Hans Jansen loved one another, for what reasons they knew best themselves, and there was an end of it.

Hans was about to proceed on his last journey to Rome, and like most impatient lovers, he was anxious that he and his sweetheart should be married before he started; retaining a recollection of the old adage, "There's many a slip between the cup and the lip,"—so he put the momentous question to Katrina, and Katrina blushed and referred her lover to mama, and mama, who was as soft-hearted, kind old *frau* as ever lived, said she would speak to the burgomaster, and when Burgomaster Fernsen heard of it, he said,

"Well! if the two young folks have determined to be so silly, I don't see that we old folks have any right to say them nay. We have no child but Katrina, and she needn't remove from us, and Hans is poor enough I know—for many a score of rix dollars have I given the good youth to help him along in his studies; for you recollect, *mein frau*, I am his god-father. They can therefore both live with us—for the house is big enough, and Hans is a good and worthy youth, and years will bring him fame, and increase the fortune he now gets in and with his wife."

Thus the love of Hans Jansen and Katrina Fernsen was by no means characterized by the customary ups and downs, and good hopes and evil forebodings, which the

old proverb says forms the history of "true love." For their love was true, and it had run in a smooth stream from the day when, hand in hand together, they had left school for the houses of their parents—

"Twa winsome, toddlin' wee things—  
Twa bairns wi' but ae heart."

And Hans and Katrina were married, and for some months after their marriage, all went on smoothly. Hans went to Rome with his young bride and completed his studies, and returned and passed before the college at Copenhagen with high honors, and work began to flow in upon him, and the future seemed to beckon him smilingly onward, and to afford glimpses of the shadow of the temple of fame that he was striving to reach, as if to encourage him to proceed in his arduous endeavors—for Hans studied hard. He painted portraits and landscapes and many small matters that came to hand, to add to his income; but he cared little for them, and did not rest his hopes of future fame on them. No—he had a studio in the house into which no one had admittance—not even Katrina, and here he spent hour after hour, and oftentimes nearly the livelong night, locked in by himself, diligently studying or painting or modelling something. He never told any one what it was; but that it was something that absorbed his entire attention, his appearance would testify, when after hours of intense labor he would make his appearance in his wife's bedroom, for the purpose of taking a few hours' repose before he again commenced what he considered the monotonous duties of life. However, all was going on well, when the commercial difficulties which for some years after the close of the great Peninsular war bore hard upon every country of Europe, began to approach their culminating point, and many large cities were almost laid prostrate, commercially speaking, with the force of the stroke. The capital of Denmark suffered with others, and among those who suffered in Copenhagen, there was no merchant who suffered more severely, I may say more ruinously, than

did Herr Fernsen. He was, in fact, reduced from competency to penury—utterly beggared. He had been universally respected, and his creditors made up a small annuity out of the stock they took from him—enough to keep him and his aged wife from actual want. But they did not need it long—they were both full of years when this sad and unexpected change in their fortunes had taken place, and a few months afterwards saw them laid side by side in the same grave.

Hans and Katrina were adrift in the world, and nearly penniless. The depression in trade was such, that people no longer wanted portraits or landscapes, and as to Hans' great picture, or whatever it might be, that was not finished—nor was it known probably to himself, when it would be; and besides, the painter would have starved sooner than have sold the work of his genius for mere bread.

So, amid poverty every day growing deeper and deeper—for although Hans still studied hard at his picture, (indeed, now it was his only solace,)—that brought no bread, and a child was born to increase the wants of his family; and still no little jobs came to help to buy bread, or only enough to keep them from the very verge of starvation. At length one evening Jansen turned to his wife and said: "It is useless our remaining any longer in our Faderland. There is a country across the Atlantic whither thousands of our German friends are emigrating, and they write good news from thence. It is America, my Katrina; and you and I and our little Wilhelm will go thither, and perhaps there we may meet with happier fortune, and I may be able to finish my great picture; and then if we make plenty of money and I acquire the fame I live for, we will return together to our beloved Faderland, you, little Wilhelm and I, and spend our last hours amidst its green fields and valleys, and our bones shall be at last laid to rest beside the bones of our kindred, beneath the soil of our native Denmark." And Katrina consented, and they had come out to America—but alas! New York had not been the land

of promise they had fondly hoped. The poor artist had found, that though the skillful mechanic, or the hardy, industrious laborer could find abundance of employment, the artist, at that time especially, might starve—for all that was wanted in his line, and then it was comparatively little, was imported from Europe. And so, wearily passed years away in America, during which period two more children were born—a girl, Katrina, and a boy, only now a year old, little Fritz; and at last the poor artist, who worked night and day at his great (unknown) picture, pined and pined away in untold, speechless misery, until at length he fell sick, and still he was wheeled on a sofa into his room, every day to touch and retouch his picture, until at last he could bear this no longer, and was compelled to remain in bed.

At length his wife, hearing that some old friends of the family in Copenhagen, were doing business in Boston, determined to pay them a visit, in order to state her husband's case, and in the hope to devise some means for his relief; and for this purpose she had gone to Boston and was returning, unsuccessful—for the party had sailed for Europe a week before her arrival at Boston, when she fell in with my nieces in the stage. All this long story I learnt during several successive visits to my poor artist patient. He was soundly sleeping on the afternoon on which I first called, and I would not allow his wife, nor indeed did she wish to awaken him. I saw, however, at once, from the hectic flush which sat on either cheek, and from the quick convulsive gasping of the breath, and the hollow sound as I bent my ear low over the breast of the sleeping man, that a disease had seized hold upon him whose deadly grip it were in vain for human skill to try to loosen, and as I glanced at the pale cheek of his wife as she stood anxiously watching me, I saw that she instinctively knew what conclusion I had arrived at—for she turned her head on one side and hastily brushed a tear away from her eyes, while her bosom heaved for a moment convulsively, and her features assumed an expression of woe pitiful to look upon; but

it was over in a moment, and, as she thought, unperceived. She quietly wished me good night, and put back a small piece of money I put into her hand, saying, "A thousand thanks, doctor; but I cannot take the money—he would not allow me—my own self-respect would forbid me—"

"But your husband needs nourishing food," said I, "and wine such as, pardon me, I fear you have not the present means of providing for him."

As I said this, she pointed to a basket, the lid of which she raised, disclosing an array of corked bottles, &c., and put the following note into my hands, which I perceived was in the hand writing of my wife. It ran—

"DEAR MADAM:—You can do the little job of worsted work we spoke about, for my nieces, at your leisure. It is enclosed in the parcel which will arrive with this note. I have taken the liberty of sending half a dozen bottles of port as a present from Dr. —, and hope the contents may prove beneficial to the patient. You must not refuse payment for the worsted work beforehand. I have sent it in the bottom of the basket. SUSANNA —"

"Ah!" thought I, "how much better these women know how to manage matters of this kind, than we blundering men folks do; but, Susy, you've been poaching in my wine cellar again, eh! but you're caught in the trap."

I returned the note to Mrs. Jansen, and promising to call and see the sick artist to-morrow, I returned home.

I called the next day and found the artist sitting up. He had been prepared for my visit by his wife, and I found him less reserved than I had expected. He had evidently been, when in good health, a handsome man, so far, at least, as the expression of talent and the impress of genius constitute beauty in features that are not classically regular—and I think they do. I hold it impossible for a man or woman whose features are purely, classically regular, to be really beautiful, although they may be eminently handsome; for intense regularity of

feature is always more or less attended with intense frigidity.

"It seems that soul is wanting there."

He was a man, I should judge, of about forty years of age, but the delicacy of complexion peculiar to those laboring under the disease which the poor artist was suffering from, might have made him look younger than he was; but he could not have been more than three or four and forty.

We discoursed freely of his profession, and I found him exceedingly well informed upon all subjects connected, not only with his own, but other branches of the arts and sciences. I spoke encouragingly to him, and got him to allow me to visit him as the family physician; for which he was to pay me by painting full length portraits of my wife, myself, and our children, when he recovered. When he recovered! What mockery to make such a bargain, when I, at least, knew full well that *he* would never recover; but, poor fellow! it was the only way I could satisfy him, for he would lie under nothing that he *thought* was an obligation. Of the nervous, irritable, impulsive temperament that almost universally accompanies true genius, he was the most difficult patient I ever came across. He would only take what medicine he chose, and at such times as he liked; and as soon as I got him a little restored, the next day I was sure to be baffled, by finding that he had been up half the night, occupied upon his great painting; the consequence was, that he was wrought to such a pitch of excitement, that he was worse than ever, and he would lie for days prostrate, raving in fits of light-headedness about some fearful object, which I had no doubt was created in his mind by his picture; although, as yet, I had never been able to learn what was the subject of this "great picture," which was, in his imagination, to place him on a pinnacle of fame with Michael Angelo, Titian, Raphael, and others of the great masters. In spite of all my endeavors, he gradually became weaker, and the days that he was able



THE DEATH OF THE POOR ARTIST.

to sit up and view his darling picture, and please himself with still adding something to it, or retouching it here and there, or filling up the background, were fewer and fewer, and still he raved in his fever of the horrors that met his affrighted, sleepless vision, till his wife's pale cheek turned paler with dread, and my hair would stand on end with terror. His wife would approach his bedside, and taking him by the hand would say, "Hans, do you not know *me*, Katrina? It is your wife who speaks," and he, as if endowed with supernatural strength; he, whom a boy could have lifted from the bed, would tear himself from my hold and his wife's, as if we held him by a tether of straw, and rising up, his face, neck and breast perspiring profusely, his eyes almost starting from their sockets, and his features assuming the appearance of the very agony of terror, would shriek out "hence! away! begone! It is not I—I did but paint it. Devil!—foul spirit!—it is not I. Ha! it comes. Oh God! save me. Oh horror! horror! horror!" and uttering those words in tones such as I have never heard mortal sound them before or since, he would fall senseless back upon his pillow, blood gushing from his mouth and nostrils, his whole frame palpitating fearfully, and his brow bathed in sweat, which gathered there like rain drops. Thus he would lie senseless for hours, until, by means of opiates forced down his throat between his clenched teeth, he would fall into a disturbed slumber, which would gradually become composed, until he awoke perfectly sensible, but so much the weaker, and consequently, so much the worse than he was prior to the fit.

His poor wife, of course, had more than she could do to attend to him, and my kind wife did all she could to help her, and we saw that she and her husband wanted for nothing.

How often I sought to gain admittance to see this picture; but no. Discoursing freely enough upon all other matters, on this he was reserved; nor was his wife more enlightened than I, and yet we both knew it had something to do with his horrible visions. So jealous was he



of it, that his bed was laid across the closet where it was kept, and no person could enter the closet without awakening him.

So, for a few weeks longer, passed the time away; when, one morning, just as I was about to start abroad on my business for the day, a note was put in my hand by a dirty messenger, who said it was from Mrs. Jansen. I opened and read:

"Oh! Dr. —, pray come quickly. I fear my husband is dying—is dead. Oh! doctor—that picture—it is too horrible."  
KATRINA JANSEN.

"Water-street, N. Y."

I immediately drove into town as rapidly as possible, and on reaching the house in Water-street, I hurried up to the apartments occupied by the Jansens. I knocked at the door. No answer was returned. Again I knocked, and again with the same result: at length I entered the room, and found Mrs. Jansen had swooned beside the dead body of her husband. The children had been, by me, placed out some days before. He had evidently died in one of the furious fits to which he had been subject; and now the secret was disclosed. The slight partition had been torn down; the narrow couch had been thrust aside: the curtain—the sacred curtain that was drawn before the easel was rudely torn, and was partly grasped in the hand of the dead man, while the other hand held a poker, which in his sane moments he was too weak to have lifted; but with it he had thrust a large hole through the canvas, and the picture stood exposed in its—what shall I say?—how describe it?—its horrible perfection—its exquisitely truthful monstrosity—its soul-harrowing, blood-curdling hideousness.

What think you, reader, was the subject which for years had occupied the imagination of the young painter—over which he had wasted the midnight oil, and toiled days and nights, while others slept—over which his imagination had brooded until his mind had become tintured with insanity? The picture was a full-sized paint-

ing of "*Satan sitting upon a throne of lurid flame, supported by columns of writhing, hissing serpents, and surrounded by his court of arch-demons, receiving a damned soul.*" Horrible as was the conception, it was carried out upon the canvas with a degree of hideous minuteness that made the flesh creep upon the bones to gaze at it, and yet which fascinated the gazer as the eye of the rattlesnake is said to fascinate its victim. The awful, demon-like beauty and majesty of the features of the arch-fiend, acted as a foil to the expression of the demons who formed his conclave, in whose countenances every malignant passion of humanity was represented. The sulphurous aspect of the atmosphere, in the midst of which the throne was seated and the court was held, was so life-like that one almost involuntarily snuffed the foul vapor, while the lurid light reflected from the bottomless pit of flame beneath, which gave an awfully supernatural aspect to the heavy canopy of smoke that rolled above and in the back ground, appeared actually to resound with the shrieks of the damned; but it was upon the last victim—the last re-embodied soul brought into the horrible Tartarus, that the painter had exhausted his imagination. The dreadful, unspeakable anguish of the features was utterly indescribable, and strange to say, amidst the ghastly contortions of the utmost extreme of horror, the features of the painter himself, Hans Jansen, were discernible. I drew the curtain before the picture: I felt my own brain reel, and I could endure the sight no longer—it was too horrible, too real, and yet strangely, strangely fascinating. I should have mentioned that I had raised the fainting widow to a couch, and administered some restoratives, and sent for such assistance as was necessary to arrange the corpse of the poor deceased artist.

The only will he had left was, that this picture should be covered up and sealed by the medical man who attended upon him during his last moments, and sent to the King of Denmark. Mutilated as it unfortunately



was, it was truly a Royal legacy—and the work of a lifetime of genius.

I followed the directions of the painter, and sent the picture—it was all he possessed—to his native Denmark. His wife, for the time being, I provided for, and in due time I received a letter from a Danish official accepting the legacy in the name of his sovereign, and enclosing an ample remuneration for my trouble, and abundant means to defray the expenses of the widow and children of the artist to Copenhagen, whither I saw them embarked, and whither they arrived in safety.

Many years have since passed away, and I have never since heard of the fortunes of the widow or of the fate of the picture. Perhaps it is still among the unfinished works of genius in the possession of his Majesty of Denmark.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### A MYSTERY.

ONE stormy night in February, 184—, I was awakened from a sound sleep by a determined ring at my door bell. I arose and asked what was wanted.

"Does Dr. ——— reside here?" was the reply in a man's gruff voice.

"He does," I replied; "for what purpose is he required?"

"A lady residing in ——— street," (mentioning a street near by), "has been suddenly seized with a succession of fainting fits, and we are becoming alarmed, as we have tried every resource we are acquainted with to relieve her, without success."

I unbolted the door and admitted a rough-looking man in a large white overcoat, whom, if it had been at the present period, I should have taken to have been a returned Californian.

"Wait a few moments, if you please," said I, "while I prepare myself to encounter the inclement weather, and I will accompany you to the lady's residence. You are, I presume, a servant of the family," for the house the man had mentioned was a large dwelling, of very fashionable exterior.

"No, not exactly a servant of the family," replied the man, in the same peculiar gruff tone of voice I had previously remarked; "but I am the servant of the young lady's husband."

From this reply, I imagined that the invalid was a visitor to the resident family of the house, and I hastened up stairs to prepare for my midnight visit, in no very pleasant humor at being thus disturbed from my slumbers, and especially such no a tempestuous night. However, I was tolerably used to these things, and made as little

of it as possible under the circumstances—a saint would have been excused for grumbling a little at the perversity of those people who sometimes suddenly fall sick without taking weather into consideration.

In a few minutes I was ready, and accompanied by my gruff and taciturn companion, I picked my steps through the mud, almost carried off my feet at times by the force of the wind, to the residence of the sick lady.

On entering the house, I was met by a female, who whispered some words to the man, and then requested me to follow her up stairs.

"Had you not better get a light?" I said; for the night was pitch dark, and the passage way of the dwelling consequently so dark that it was only by her voice that I had distinguished the person who spoke to be a female.

"I have no candle," she replied; "but if you will keep close behind me, I will conduct you to the apartment occupied by the lady and her husband."

I managed to stumble up three pairs of stairs behind the female, and then she led me along a dark passage, from the end of which we mounted a fourth flight, and then turning suddenly to the right, she knocked at the door of a room.

"Come in," was the reply to the knock. "Have you brought the doctor?"

The female made no answer, but pushed me into the room, and closing the door, immediately began to descend the stairs.

The apartment was a small bedroom almost destitute of furniture, in one corner of which was a rude bed, on which lay a young female of not more than sixteen years of age. Her only companion was a youth who scarcely appeared to have attained the age of legal majority. Both were attired in coarse plain garments; but it needed not a second glance to perceive that the young man belonged to a higher class of society than that indicated by his garb.

I noticed that his hands were soft and delicate, though his complexion was sun-burned, and his features bore an

air of refinement and good breeding. On the little finger of his right hand sparkled a diamond ring, quite out of keeping, with what I saw at once was an assumed attire, and his tone of voice was gentle, manly, and betrayed the man of education.

"I am glad to have you come, doctor," he said, "though indeed it is only the urgent necessity of the case that could have allowed me to send for your assistance on such a tempestuous night as this. Pray attend immediately to my wife, and do, for God's sake, see if you can do anything to revive her." His voice trembled with concern and emotion as he spoke, and I at once proceeded to pay attention to the invalid.

There were clearly discernible evidences in the appearance of the lady, that she also had for some mysterious reason, assumed the disguise of a person of far inferior condition to that to which she really belonged, and I was curious enough to satisfy myself by glancing immediately at her small white hand, that she really was the wife of the youth who had addressed me. Sure enough, there was the wedding ring, the outward symbol of marriage at least, upon her third finger, and yet as I examined her features more closely, as she lay in a death-like faint, I saw that she was a mere child.

"Have you any one whom you can send to my house with a message?" said I.

"Yes," said the young man, "the person who called for you, will go for anything you may require."

"The young lady," said I, "requires stronger restoratives than any I have brought with me. I will just write a few directions on a piece of paper, and the messenger can go to the house and tell the servant man to provide him with the medicines I want. I have used Thomas to these little things, and he will understand the note."

The young man searched his pockets for a piece of paper, and at length handed me a card, which he took from his vest pocket; but as I was about to take it, he hastily withdrew it, muttering something which sounded

very like an oath, and after fumbling sometime longer, he produced a letter, the back of which he tore off and gave to me.

I wrote the prescription, and by this time the young man had called up the messenger, who immediately started on his errand.

I saw that there was some mystery involved; but under the circumstances I thought it advisable not to appear to notice it.

"Do you ascribe this sudden attack of fainting on the part of your wife to any particular cause?" said I, when the man had left the room with the prescription.

"Not that I am aware of, beyond the fact that we have travelled a long distance during the last three days, without hardly stopping to rest for a moment, and to-day was stormy, and Jane got wet through, poor girl!" replied the young man.

He then took one of the hands of the girl in his, and appeared to be desirous of avoiding further conversation. I also watched, with painful interest, the pale, yet beautiful—almost childish features—of my patient, who showed no symptoms of reviving.

"Poor Jane!" said the young man, as he gazed upon the girl he called his wife, although I was not yet satisfied that that was really the case, "this is too bad. By to-morrow, or the next day, at furthest, we should——"

He suddenly stopped, as if recollecting that he was not alone, and glanced at me; after which he remained silent, still retaining his hold of the girl's hand.

In a few minutes the messenger returned with the restoratives for which he had been despatched, and I immediately began to administer them. I had been averse to using those I had brought with me, for I knew, if they were unsuccessful, as I doubted not they would be, their application would only make matters worse. At the same time I was under little apprehension for the girl, for I saw that she was only utterly prostrated with sheer fatigue.

In the course of half an hour, to the great delight of

the young man, as well as much to my own satisfaction, I had the pleasure of seeing that my patient was gradually reviving, and in another half hour she was able to sit up.

Her first movement was one of suspicion and affright, as she saw me standing by the bedside, and she looked round, apparently as if striving to recall her recollections.

The young man addressed her, and immediately her features assumed a joyous aspect.

"Is all right, Frank?" she said.

"Yes love; but you have had a bad time of it," he replied.

"Oh, I shall be well enough in the morning," she continued, smiling, "after a few hours rest. I think I can stand another day's journeying, after having gone through three without any rest."

"Will my wife be able to travel by to-morrow morning, doctor?" said the young man.

"I certainly should not advise it," said I, "at all events, every precaution must be taken against cold and fatigue. Were I in your place, I would postpone my departure for a day or two at least."

"If you were in my place, you would do as I do," replied he: "and now doctor, if you have done all you can do for Jane, here is your fee," putting into my hand a bank note of very considerable value; so large an amount indeed, that I hesitated to accept it.

"Take it, doctor, take it, without more words," said the youth, forcing it into my hand. "We have abundance of funds. You have no doubt already perceived that we are very different persons from what our disguise would lead those who have not come into contact with us, as you have, to suppose us to be. Perhaps some day I may explain, what now must appear a mystery to you; but before you go you must swear that you will not mention what you have seen to-night to any one, for one week from this date."

I hesitated, for I was somewhat irritated at being thus

peremptorily addressed, and I was not sure that I would be doing right to keep the matter secret.

"Swear you must, and on this book, too," said he, taking up a Testament, which he had previously taken from his valise, "or you do not leave this room alive (producing a revolver from his breast pocket) after having thus far succeeded, I will not now lose the game."

I was alone and unarmed, and he who thus addressed me, in a tone which showed that he meant what he said, although but a boy in years, was of a stout, muscular frame, and much stronger than I, to say nothing of the gruff looking man who I knew was in the house and ready to afford any assistance to the youth that he needed, and I had already begun to surmise that these persons, with the woman who had shown me up stairs, were the only occupants of the house. I, therefore, took the required oath, and then was accompanied by the young man down stairs and to the outside door, where he left me, observing:

"You needn't be alarmed, doctor; no harm has been done and none is intended. Perhaps some day you will enjoy the joke with me. Good night."

I retraced my steps homeward, certainly thinking the whole affair had not much the appearance of a joke. I kept my oath of secrecy until the term specified had expired, when I at once made inquiries respecting the occupants of the dwelling. I learnt, however, that it had lately been sold to a stranger who resided in Maine, and that a female had been put in charge of it, but she had suddenly absented herself a week before, and though search had been made, no trace of her had been discovered.

After a time, the matter, strange as it was, began to grow out of my recollection, and I seldom thought of it.

Two years afterwards I had occasion to visit Saratoga, and while stopping at the hotel, I noticed a man in livery, whose features I seemed to have some recollection of, but where I could not say. It was evident, however, that he knew me, for he gazed several times earnestly at me.

At length he went up stairs, and in a few moments returned and asked me if I would go up to No. 69 and see his master, who desired to speak with me.

I did as he desired, and when I reached the door of the room, it was opened by a handsome young man in the uniform of a lieutenant of the U. S. Navy. His features, too, I thought, I had a distinct recollection of.

"You," he said, "are Doctor —, of New York."

"I am, sir," I replied, "and I have seen you before, somewhere, but my memory fails me as to when or where it was."

He shook me heartily by the hand. "Do you know this lady?" he added. "Perhaps her features may assist your recollection," introducing to me a beautiful young woman, who had an infant about a year old in her arms.

I immediately recognized her as the young girl I had attended on the night of the mystery, in — street, New York.

"My name is S—," said the young man. "I told you that some day I would clear up the mystery which enveloped that visit of yours to Jane at New York, and I will do it now in a few words.

"I am the owner of large cotton plantations in South Carolina, and though I now wear this uniform, I have just returned from the last voyage I shall make to sea as an officer of the navy. This lady (my wife) is the daughter of a gentleman, whose residence is in Maine. We were attached to each other from childhood, and at a very early age, in fact, when mere children, were engaged to each other. My parents died shortly after I first went to sea, and my father left behind him a will, appointing my uncle as my guardian until I became of age, and in this will there was a clause, which, in case of my marriage before I was of age, without the consent of my uncle, would deprive me of one of the largest plantations my father possessed, which was to revert to his brother (my uncle.) The old gentleman wanted me to marry an adopted child of his, but neither Jane nor I

(smiling at his wife) could entertain the idea of this arrangement, and we agreed to manage matters so as to circumvent the plan of the old gentleman, who swore that he would act up to the power given him by my father's will, in case I married Jane before I was of age. Jane was going with her parents to Holland, whence they came, in the course of a few months, and I was going to sail in a fortnight, on a two years' cruise. We neither of us wished to defer the happy moment, for two, or possibly three years, besides, we knew not what might occur to balk us in the interim, especially as her parents wished her to marry a rich old Dutch burgomaster, whom, by the way, she had never seen. So we arranged matters in this way. I went to visit her, secretly, at her father's house in ———, Maine, and persuaded her to elope with me. I just wanted nine days of coming of age, and it would not do to get married until then; but, on the following day to that, the frigate to which I belonged was to sail to the Mediterranean. So we determined to get married on the very day of my attaining my majority, and thus to cheat the old folks on both sides. My frigate was at Norfolk, so we had but little time to spare, and what time we had, we made the best of, I can tell you, until Jane fell sick at New York. We were not actually married then, though I had placed the ring on her finger, and told her she was my wife. The house at which we stopped that night had been purchased by Jane's father, and it was an old nurse of hers, who was on our side, who had been put in charge of it. When Jane felt herself getting unwell, she told me this, and immediately I went to the house and told the old woman all, and she agreed to accompany us.

On the following morning, though Jane was still weak, we started and got through the business in style. I had plenty of funds, and I could not brook the idea of being two whole years away from my wife; neither, at that time, could I leave the service with honor to myself. So I had previously determined that Jane should take passage in a merchant vessel from New York, that was

to sail the very day after the frigate, to Toulon, the port to which the frigate was also bound, and she did so; and while at Toulon, I often visited her on shore. The captain knew my story; indeed, I told him it myself—and he gave me leave of absence for weeks together. My wife sailed for the United States a fortnight before the frigate left the station for home, and arrived two days before her; so that I had the chance to receive my wife, on her arrival, about a month since. The reason that we disguised ourselves was for fear that Jane's father might discover our flight and cause his daughter's arrest; and the cause of my making you take that oath, which seemed to stick in your throat so, was that Jane might not be incommoded until she got clear off; but the pistol wasn't loaded, so you had no need to be so frightened—though I dare say you have often made an awful mysterious story out of the circumstances. The old folks, to conclude my story, are now reconciled to what they cannot help; and here's my first born. Isn't he a spanking boy? His mother says—'he's the very image of his father;' though I can't say that I can see it. And now, doctor, you'll dine with us to-day; and if you ever come to ———, South Carolina, my house is open to you."

I did dine with him, and spent a very pleasant day; and I have since visited him at his place in South Carolina. He is now the happy father of five children, and one of my most esteemed friends.

The servant man, I should have mentioned, was an old sailor, who belonged to Charleston, and who served in the same ship and was devotedly attached to S——.



## CHAPTER IX.

## THE MERCHANT'S DAUGHTER; OR VIRTUE REWARDED.

HAVING occasion, during the summer of the year 1842, to visit Boston, I was invited by a medical friend to visit the hospital in that city. Among the patients there, was a young woman in whose behalf I could not help feeling an interest, although I was an entire stranger to her; there was something in her intelligent countenance, and the intellectual dark grey eyes, which beamed beneath a wide, nobly formed brow, that was eminently calculated to create sympathy in the beholder; but that which at first attracted my notice, was the sweet and gentle tones of her voice—perhaps one of the greatest charms in woman.

She was asked how she felt that morning, by my friend, and she replied—

"Stronger, I think, doctor. Do you know that I was actually able to sit up in bed until 9 o'clock last night; and see here," she continued, showing a bonnet on which she had been at work, nearly finished, "I did the greater portion of this last night. If I get on so well, I shall soon be able to leave the hospital and return home; my poor mother and my little brother must miss me so," she added, while the tears sprung to her eyes. "How they will be able to get on much longer without me I do not know."

"My dear young lady," said my friend, "if you commence to tax yourself in this manner as soon as you begin to feel a little stronger, I cannot give you any hope of leaving the hospital. You will occasion a relapse which may perhaps render you an invalid for the remainder of your life, and incapacitate you altogether from labor of any kind. As to your mother and brother, have

no fear for them. While you are under my care, be assured they will also be taken care of."

"But it is so humiliating, dear doctor, for my poor mother to be indebted for subsistence to the charity of strangers; not that I am ungrateful for your kindness and that of other friends—far from it; but I should be so much better pleased if they were once again indebted to me alone, upon whom they have a natural claim."

"No doubt of that, Miss Summerville;—no doubt of that," said my friend; and it is for that very reason that you have made so many warm friends. Your noble independence of spirit has won the admiration of all who know your story; and those who now, during your sickness, assist your mother, do not consider that they are doing a simple act of charity—but merely paying that debt of Christian love which we owe each other in the hour of trouble and affliction." Then he added cheerfully, "Now, Miss Summerville, I shall positively insist that you do not, henceforward, work more than one hour a day, just to keep your hand in, you know, and for amusement, until you receive my further permission; and as to that very pretty bonnet, when it is finished, I shall insist upon being the purchaser, at my own price, mind—you milliners are so extortionate—for my little daughter."

The poor girl smiled, and yet the smile was a sad one, for a tear fell from her eye, even while the smile yet lingered on her lips, as she said:

"I suppose I must do as you bid me, doctor; but indeed it is wearisome to be so many hours here alone in the watches of the night, when sleep refuses to close the eyelids, and the thoughts that are called into existence become painful and oppressive from the impotent desire one possesses to cast them off and to sink, at least, into a temporary forgetfulness of one's afflictions."

"Wearisome enough it must be—it is—my dear Miss Summerville," replied the doctor. "I myself have experienced the wretchedness one suffers under such circumstances; but we must not repine. Patience, my good young lady—patience, and all will yet be well."



"No, I know it is wrong—sinful to repine, especially when one is blessed with kind sympathizing friends, as I am, and indeed, I strive to be thankful to God for his goodness to me. Things might, you know, have been so much worse. Suppose, for instance, I had not learnt, for the sake of amusement, the milliner's art, what, when misfortune came upon us, would have become of my mother and my little brother?"

"Have patience, then, my dear girl, and I think I can promise you that in the course of three or four weeks more, you will be able to go home again."

So saying, he turned away to pay his customary round of visits to other patients.

"An interesting girl, that?" said he to me as I walked by his side.

"Very much so," I replied, "I was just about to make the same remark. Who is she?"

"The story is too long to tell just now," said he, "wait until I have got through my morning labors, and as we walk home I will tell it you."

In the course of an hour we left the hospital, and once out of the city, for my friend lived a mile or two in the country, I reminded him of his promise.

"Ah!" said he, "I recollect; you wish me to tell you about my interesting patient in the female ward. Well, then, Miss Summerville is the daughter of a gentleman who was, at one time, one of the wealthiest merchants in one of the largest of the western cities of the Union. She is now, I suppose, about twenty years of age, and until the age of fourteen she never knew what it was, scarcely, to wash her own hands. She was nursed in the lap of luxury. You see she is now very pretty, although, poor child, she is much worn down with incessant labor, care and sickness. When I first knew her, when she was in her thirteenth year, she was, I thought, the most lovely creature I had ever set eyes upon—a perfect little sylph. She had but one brother who is now not more than nine years of age, and who was then a babe in arms—three children, two boys and a girl, all younger than

her (she is the eldest child,) died while infants, and all her parents' love and care were bestowed on this daughter, who was thus spared to them. Had she not been of a most amiable disposition, she must have become utterly spoiled; for her parents doted upon her, and anticipated her every desire; but in the early part of the commercial crisis of 1836, her father, who was a great speculator, failed, although at one time he had been considered a millionaire, in fact he became utterly ruined—could not pay six cents in the dollar. He had speculated so wildly, and as it appeared, so far beyond what his actual means should have allowed him to do, that his creditors were exasperated, and at the time, though there was really no foundation for the imputation, he was charged with actual fraud.

At all events, at a period when every body was struggling to save themselves from ruin, he met with little sympathy, and being a man of very nervous and excitable temperament, he felt deeply the plunge from wealth into poverty, and still more deeply the apparent forfeiture of his fair fame. He did not long survive his disgrace, as he considered it—and so, in fact, to a certain degree it was—for though, doubtless, had it not been for the crisis, all would have gone well with him, he ought not to have speculated so rashly, knowing as he must have known, that his losses, should he meet with any, would seriously involve others who implicitly trusted in his honor. One day he came home more than usually excited. If I mistake not, he said to his wife and child, that he had been openly insulted in the street, and he retired in a state of great perturbation of mind into his bed-room. When Mary Summerville, his daughter—the young lady we have just quitted—went to call him down to his dinner an hour afterwards, she could obtain no reply, and at length she entered the room and found her father lying a corpse upon the bed. A strong scent of bitter almonds pervaded the atmosphere of the room; for the unhappy man had taken prussic acid—the empty bottle being afterwards found in bed.

I shall not attempt to describe the distress of the family, but shall simply state that his wretched wife would live no longer in the town of poverty and infliction, where she had at one time been the leader of the *ton*, and looked up to by the most fashionable society. She sold off the remnant of her furniture and came on, to Boston, with the intention of setting up a school for young ladies. But she was not composed of the material that is fitted to stem the tide of adversity. She was a weak-minded woman, whose only delight consisted in the fashionable follies and so called delights in which she had, since her early introduction into society, shone a leading star. Poor creature—perhaps it was not her fault. We should rather blame the parents who had never inculcated in her young mind, the possibility that even the wealthiest and gayest amongst us may be called upon, before we die, to taste the bitter cup of adversity.

The school did not prosper, for the very good reason that Mrs. Sommerville paid no attention to the scholars, and in the course of a year she found herself worse off than when she left Ohio—for she had lost all her pupils, and was considerably in debt. She became utterly listless and “shiftless,” as the New England folks say, and would soon have been reduced to the very verge of starvation. Then it was that the noble nature of the daughter shone out. Poor young thing—child as she was, it was she who by her assiduous attention had kept the school together even during the brief twelvemonth it lasted, and now when all else failed, she turned her attention to millinery, in which profession she was an adept, having learnt it when quite a child, little thinking poor, dear girl, she would ever be called upon to practice it for a living. Since that period she has supported her mother in decency and even in comfort. Ever cheerful, she has on every side gained friends, and not only that, but she has paid for the education of her little brother at one of the best schools in the city, and besides all this, I never saw her yet pass a real object of charity without bestowing her mite, with a kind word, and a look

of sympathy which was worth far more to the recipient than the trifling donation. She has had much to try her temper too. Her poor mother's temper is a shocking one to put up with. Poor woman, she fancies all the world to be in arms against her, and she repays the contumely to which she believes herself to be subjected, by querulous taunts towards her faithful daughter, who, the more dissatisfied her mother is, seems the more to strive to please her. “Recollect,” said she to a friend, who once on hearing the ill-natured remarks of her mother, said that were she in her place, and her mother treated her so badly, when she was slaving herself to death, in order to provide her the means of decent support, she would leave her to shift for herself.

“Recollect what my poor mother has had to contend with. She was not always thus. When I was a child, she doted on me and anticipated my every desire, and shall I not strive to repay her former kindness now? I was trouble enough to her once myself, I dare say—all children are—besides, I do not wish my brother always to remain in the poverty he is in at present, poor child! He shall have the benefit of a good education at least, and perhaps some day he will repay his sister for her kindness to him. Indeed I am more than repaid now for any bitter privation I endure—for Edward is very grateful.”

“Nor have I yet told you all that this poor gentle girl has had to suffer. When she was but a child, scarcely fourteen, a young man some six or eight years her senior, and the son of one of the wealthiest families in the city in which her father resided, had already fallen in love with her. The two families were very friendly, and the young man had known her since childhood. It had already been decided that on her eighteenth birth-day she should marry George Milton. Meanwhile the youth had been sent by his father to an uncle in New Orleans, who was rich and childless, and very much attached to his nephew, whom he intended to make his heir. When Mr. Sommerville failed, he involved his friend Milton

very considerably, and to poor Mary's great surprise and grief, she received, within six months afterwards, a letter from George Milton, telling her that in consequence of the unfortunate event which had lately occurred, his father and uncle had both peremptorily refused to allow him to consider himself as any longer under engagement to her, and that from that time forward she must understand that all correspondence between them must cease. Poor Mary was thunderstruck—for the letter she had received from George but a few weeks prior to this, had been long and more than usually affectionate; and he had condoled with her in the most feeling manner on the misfortunes which had befallen her, telling her that they made no difference in his love, and the conclusion of the letter had been couched in terms that breathed unalterable and undying love. Poor girl! deeply, (and none but those of disposition loving and trusting as hers, who have been thus spurned by the object of their love) can tell how deeply, she felt the blow; but she had too much maidenly pride to ask for any explanation, and since then she has never spoken of the once loved object, nor alluded to the affection she felt and I believe still feels for him—for if I am not mistaken, I saw his miniature fastened around her neck by a ribbon one day when I entered the ward unexpectedly. She was gazing intently upon it, and tears were in her eyes. She, however, hastily thrust it into the folds of her dress, and though she blushed deeply, she never spoke a word. For some years past, she has worked early and late with the object I have related to you, and some months ago she began to feel the effects of this severe toil, symptoms of spinal disease developing themselves, which at length grew so alarming, that she was compelled to desist from her employment, and at my earnest request she came to the hospital, where she could have more skillful treatment than she could procure at home, and I and a few friends, promised to support her mother, and keep her brother at school until she recovered. Fortunately the disease is not chronic in its nature, and I have hopes of

her complete restoration to health, when, I and the friends already alluded to, have concocted a plan to place her in a business of her own, in a small way, in the pursuance of which she will not again be subjected to a second attack; but you can observe," added the doctor, as he concluded his story, "how uneasy the poor dear girl is when she thinks of her mother and brother being indebted for their support to strangers."

"Poor girl!" I replied, "I believe there is a great deal more of this species of self-sacrifice amongst persons of her class and disposition, than the world has any idea of."

It was, I suppose, four years, as near as I can recollect, after this, before I heard any more of Mary Summerville. I think it was in 1846 that my Boston friend paid a visit to New York and spent a few days at my house. In the course of our conversation together, I recollected the interesting patient in the Boston Hospital, and I inquired of my friend concerning her.

"Oh!" he replied, "I have capital news to tell you from that quarter. Mary Summerville completely recovered a few weeks after you left Boston, and we set her up in a small fancy goods store, where she got on amazingly, and would by this time, or in a few years further at most, have been at the head of one of the best stores of the kind in Boston; but——"

"But what?" said I, interrupting him—"surely the poor girl is not dead!"

"No," he added, smiling, "she is not dead. If you were a younger man and unmarried, I really should think you had fallen in love with her. Let me see, where did you interrupt me? Oh! she was getting on, as I observed, famously in the fancy goods line, when one day who should come post-haste into the store but George Milton, and before Mary had time to say a word, he was round the counter hugging and kissing her like a mad fellow. As soon as Mary recovered her first surprise, she endeavored to release herself from his embraces, and repulsed him pretty coldly, I can tell you.

"George," she said, and her eyes flashed with indignation, and those large, soft gray eyes of her's can flash fire sometimes—"George Milton, after your conduct towards me—after the letter you sent me, I did not expect this from you. I did not think, though you had so unfeelingly spurned my love, that you could thus seek to insult me in my present humble situation in life——"

"I insult you! dearest Mary," said George. "It is all a mistake—a fraud, love. I never sent *you* a letter repudiating your love; but *you* sent one to *me*!"

"I did not reply to your letter, sir," said Mary.

"But I have your letter here," said he, producing the well worn sheet from his pocket-book, and giving it to her. "Is not that your hand-writing?"

"It certainly resembles it," said Mary; "but I solemnly declare I never wrote a word of it."

"I don't believe you did *now*, Mary dear—neither did I write a letter to you, to the purport you speak of. Both letters were counterfeits, and admirable ones too, of our hand-writing. My uncle died about twelve months ago, leaving me his sole heir, and, while on a visit to my father lately, something occurred to cause me to suspect that our mutual affections had been trifled with. I told my father so, and said that, at all hazards, I should seek you out, and learn the truth from your own lips. The old gentleman, whose resentment at his loss, has become considerably mollified, and who knows, at all events, I am independent of him, so far as fortune goes, seeing my determination, at length acknowledged that he and my uncle had managed the fraud between them, and had also intercepted all our real letters. He gave me permission, which I should otherwise have taken without his leave, to visit you, and if I still found you true, to renew my addresses."

"Poor Mary was overpowered with astonishment, joy and gratitude——"

"And of course they were married shortly afterwards?" said I, again interrupting the story.

"What a fellow you are for interrupting one," said my

friend. "*Of course they were married, and very shortly afterwards—for that very day week, pretty Mary Summerville became Mrs. Milton.*"

"Are they still residing in Boston?" said I.

"No," he replied. "Young Milton took his bride and her mother and brother to New Orleans, where his property is, to reside."

"And the old lady—is she as querulous as ever?"

"Oh, no. With the return of fortune's sunshine, the clouds were banished from her mind, and I hear she is one of the gayest of the fashionables at New Orleans; for she is still far from an *old* lady, as you term her.—Mary has a child, as she wrote me in her last letter. 'The sweetest babe the sun ever shone upon,' and a great deal more to the same purport, as young mothers always do say, when they speak or write of their children. However, if the child takes after its father and mother, no doubt it is a fine babe enough."

"Well, once now and then, amidst the ups and downs of life," said I, as my friend finished his story, "it is quite refreshing to hear of virtue rewarded."

## CHAPTER X.

## THE FORSAKEN.

WOULD that I could blot from memory the episode in my professional career which I am now about to relate, and which ever brings a chill to my heart when I think of it, so forcibly can I recall to mind every sad incident connected with it. Agnes Guilfoyle, the heroine of my narrative, was an Irish girl, born of poor parents, who had emigrated from Limerick to the United States while Agnes was yet a child.

Her parents belonged to the lower class of emigrants, and as is customary in such cases, the first occupation her father followed, after landing in this country, was that of a bricklayer's laborer, while her mother took in washing, and did any odd job she could get to do, in order to eke out their means of subsistence. They were both getting up in years at the period in which I became acquainted with them; and although, by dint of industry and economy, they were then pretty well to do in the world, the same roughness of habit and demeanor, and the same rude social habits still clung to them, which they had brought with them on their first arrival, almost in the condition of paupers, in the United States. They were honest, industrious, frugal and kind-hearted, but, withal, as rough-looking a couple as ever were united together in the bonds of wedlock. They had several other children besides Agnes, who more or less resembled their parents; but she, the eldest daughter, at the time I knew her, about seventeen years old, was, strange to say, entirely different in her appearance from her brothers and sisters, and was in reality one of the most graceful creatures I ever saw. It was scarcely possible to conceive that she was the child of Patrick and Bridget Guilfoyle, and yet I have no reason to suspect

otherwise, beyond the little resemblance she bore to the rest of the family. She was tall and rather slender, but most symmetrically formed, and stately in her walk as an Oriental maiden.

Her parents resided at no great distance from my abode, and I had, therefore, repeated opportunities of seeing her when she passed up and down the street, opposite my house, and long before I knew who she was, I had often directed the attention of my wife to her, so struck was I by her rare beauty. There were few persons, indeed, whom she met in the street, but turned to gaze at her as she walked along. And with all this she appeared utterly unconcious of possessing any extraordinary personal attractions. Her complexion was delicately fair, the contour of her face oval, and her features of the purest Grecian model were shaded by thick, silky, heavy masses of her hair of that shade which ancient poets have called golden, which is so rarely met with, yet so beautiful—neither brown nor yellow, but seeming to change its color according to the light in which she stood. Her eyes were blue, large and deeply seated beneath a brow of the purest alabaster, and shaded by full, brown eyebrows and silky, dark eyelashes, beautiful as ever lover penned a sonnet upon. However, a description of female beauty is not my forte, and I know full well that if I were to write pages, I should fail utterly in giving my readers any adequate idea of her passing loveliness.

One morning I was called upon by her father, with a request to visit his wife, who was suffering severely from rheumatism, and, of course, I called as requested, having little idea that he was the parent of the paragon of feminine beauty whose charms I have feebly attempted to portray.

Patrick Guilfoyle lived in a neat cottage at the bottom of the street in which my house was situated. From being a brick-layer's laborer he had become, in the course of a few years after his arrival, a brick-layer himself, and still animated by the same determination to



push himself forward in life, he had at length, after having saved a little capital, turned speculator in bricks and mortar, and at this period was the owner of upwards of a dozen houses of considerable pretensions, the rents of which brought him a very comfortable income.

I found the old woman in bed, her face and arms bandaged in flannel, and, to my great surprise, I found carefully tending her, the young female I have described. Her appearance was so perfectly ladylike, so different from any others of the family whom I saw in the house, that my first impression was that she was the daughter of some wealthy family in the neighborhood—one of those angels of mercy, who spend their leisure hours in visiting and endeavoring to comfort and assist the poor in the hour of affliction; and I actually started with ill-suppressed surprise when the old lady introduced her to me as her eldest daughter; and yet I might have thought it strange to find a stranger visiting the house on an errand of charity, for there was within it, every appearance of comfort and plenty, and even of taste, though I don't think my friend Patrick or his wife had much to do with the arrangement. *It*, I imagine, was due to the daughter.

I attended the old lady regularly for some weeks, until, as the weather grew warmer, she became perfectly restored to health. Meanwhile I had become quite intimate with the daughter, and was so pleased with her intelligence and modest, lady-like demeanor, that I introduced my wife to her, and she became a frequent visitor at my house, for though my wife saw that I admired the young lady so much, I assure the reader she was not at all jealous, [Susanna has not a particle of jealousy in her disposition,] and to tell the plain truth she was more enthusiastic in her praise than I.

Some months subsequently to the events I have related, I noticed a young gentleman, generally attired in a naval uniform, frequently passing my house, and I soon learned from my wife that he visited the Guilfoyles, and was the accepted lover of Agnes. He was the bro-

ther of one of her schoolfellows, and it was through his sister he had first fallen in with Agnes. The old couple were justly proud of the beauty and amiability of their eldest daughter, and had caused her to be educated at a school frequented by young ladies of much higher parentage than herself; and in fact the only objection I saw to the match was the difference in the position in life of the young couple. Edward T. was the son of a Southern planter of great wealth, and was at this time a lieutenant in the United States navy. He had first seen Agnes when on a visit to his sister at school, about a twelve-month previously, and now the frigate to which he belonged was undergoing repair in the Brooklyn Navy Yard. Agnes introduced him to my wife and I, and we were much pleased with his apparently gentlemanly manners and the respect and affection he seemed to entertain towards the fair young girl. He was a fine, manly looking fellow, and my wife often remarked to me, what a handsome married couple they would make.

About three months after this, the young lieutenant sailed for the Mediterranean, and, I understood from my wife, whom Agnes made her confidant, that a regular correspondence was kept up between the youthful pair, the letters of the young man breathing the strongest expressions of love and constancy. The vessel had been two years absent on her cruise, when, greatly to the distress of Agnes, the letters from her lover became more brief and less frequent; still they continued to contain the same sentiments of undying affection they ever had displayed, and it had been arranged that on his return he was to quit the service, make Agnes his wife, and retire to his father's large estates in the south.

One morning Agnes visited our house, and she had not been long seated in the parlor before my wife saw that she was low spirited and nervous, and evidently not in her usual happy frame of mind. At length she said:

"What ails you this morning, dear Agnes? Have you heard any bad news? You look quite dispirited."

The poor girl burst into tears, and for some time she did not speak. At length she handed my wife a newspaper, pointing at the same time to the column of "naval intelligence."

My wife took the paper and saw mentioned the arrival of the — frigate at Norfolk, four days before, with a list of the officers on board, among whose names was that of Lieutenant S—.

"He has not written to me," said poor Agnes, sobbing, "to inform me of his arrival; nor in his last letter, dated from Toulon, only two months ago, did he make any mention of the vessel being about to return home, although he must have known of it. His letter, too, was brief, as they have all been of late, and though they contain the same words of kindness and affection, there is something in the style—something I cannot describe—which tells me Edward does not feel the love for me now that he once did."

My wife sought to comfort and encourage the poor girl, although she felt a misgiving at her heart that all was not right; but for some time her efforts were in vain.

"He cannot love me as he did," she said, "or he would have written to me, or come on ere this to New York. Could I have been silent had I been absent so long from him, and at length had again arrived at home? Never. Nor could he unless his feelings were changed towards me. I feel it is so; for months past, I have felt a foreboding of this, though I sought to strive against it and to persuade myself that I was foolishly anxious."

"Perhaps," says my wife, anxious to bestow some words of comfort, although she had the same fears as the poor girl herself; "perhaps Edward intends to surprise you with a visit, not thinking that you would hear of the vessel's arrival. If I were you I would write to him, at Norfolk, and let him know how cleverly you have found him out."

"Oh, no; he could not think that; he knows well, for often, often have I told him, that I read the naval intel-

ligence every day. I have done so every day since he has been gone away. He must have known how anxiously I should watch the announcement of the return of his frigate."

"At any rate, I would write, love," said my wife; and at length she persuaded the poor girl to do so.

Agnes wrote to her lover on the following day, but a fortnight passed away without reply, and the poor young lady already begun to show symptoms of the dreadful admixture of hope, doubt, and despair, that was preying upon her mind, while the honest old couple, her father and mother, were bitter in their denunciations of her faithless lover. It would have fared ill with him, had honest old Patrick, or his son Andy, who was now a stout lad of eighteen, come into contact with him. Indeed the old man talked of going to Norfolk and confronting him, and would have done so, had it not been for the earnest dissuasions of Agnes herself.

At the termination of a fortnight, a letter arrived, and Agnes immediately brought it round to my wife. Poor girl! she had long expected it, and now she had obtained it she dared not open it. She had sighed to know the worst; she had schooled her mind, as she thought, to hear and bear it; but now she was unequal to the task. She held the letter in her grasp, while her fingers passed nervously over it, as though eager, but fearful to break the seal, and she caught her breath painfully. At length she said:

"I cannot, dare not open the letter; do so for me, Mrs. —," handing it to my wife, while she leant forward and pressed her hands to her forehead. My wife opened the letter as desired, and said:—

"Shall I read it, Agnes?"

"No, no—don't read it; now the seal is broken, give it to me, I feel better now, I will read it myself; "perhaps," she added, smiling a sickly, painful smile, "it may contain good news after all. I may have been wrong in thus casting blame on poor dear Edward."

She read the letter without uttering a word, while my

wife was intently watching her countenance. It turned ashy pale, and she bit her lips till the blood sprung from them. Then she let fall her hands into her lap, still holding the letter, and said in a whisper that was fearful and harrowing to listen to:—

"It is as I feared. Edward has forsaken me."

Her features assumed a despairing rigidity of expression that seriously alarmed my wife. She spoke to her, but received no reply; the eyes of the poor girl were fixed on vacancy.

"Agnes," said my wife, "speak, dear. What is the matter; do you not know me?" for the unhappy young woman gazed fixedly at her, as though she was a stranger; but still did not speak. My wife tried to take the letter from her; but it was held too tightly in her grasp, and she felt that her fingers were cold and stiff, as though she had been struck with death.

She became alarmed, and summoned assistance, and after some time the poor afflicted girl recovered her senses and found vent to her sufferings in a flood of tears.

She gave the letter to my wife to read. It stated briefly that his (Edward's) father had heard that he was affianced to her, and that he had positively commanded him to break off the engagement—but this, until now, he had not the heart to do; that it was his father's wish that he should marry a lady whose parents resided in his neighborhood, and who was the daughter of a brother planter, also of great wealth; that he was entirely dependent on his father, who had threatened him with disinheritance should he presume to disobey him; and he concluded by desiring Agnes to forgive and to forget him.

From this time Agnes began to show symptoms of insanity; her organization was extremely delicate, and the shock was too much for her to bear. She had loved Edward S. with her whole heart, and that faithful heart his cruelty had well nigh broken.

Her only solace was to search every Southern paper she could obtain, in order to see if there was any announcement of the marriage of her faithless lover; and though

at first her parents kept them from her as much as possible, it was at length found necessary to let her have her own way. When they were withheld she sometimes fell into hysteric fits, in which she raved fearfully.

At length the news we dreaded arrived. She read of the marriage of Edward to the lady he had spoken of. The paper dropped from her hands, and muttering, "*It has come at last!*" she gave a piercing shriek and fell back insensible on the sofa. In this condition she remained for hours, and was only brought to consciousness a harmless but confirmed lunatic.

She was happier—poor child!—than if she had retained her senses; for she was ever fancying that to-morrow—yes, to-morrow!—would bring her Edward back to her, and then she was to be married. Alas! many who are not, as she was, suffering under the most dreadful disease that can afflict humanity, dream, too, happy dreams of to-morrow, that are never to be realized.

It was, after some weeks, determined to send her to a lunatic asylum in New England, where many cures had been effected, and I and her mother accompanied her. Her father, poor old man! was so stricken with the weight of the affliction that had befallen him, that he was rendered completely helpless.

We reached the place, and saw the poor girl comfortably situated, and her mother and I remained a few days in the neighborhood, and visited her daily.

On one of these visits I met three gentlemen who were being shown over the asylum. I thought the appearance of one was familiar to me, but his back was towards me and I could not see his features. The party preceded me to the department where Agnes was confined, and we all four entered the room together. Agnes was sitting on a sofa, in the melancholy mood that her disorder had assumed. She raised her head as she heard our footsteps, and, to my surprise, started up and sprang towards one of the gentlemen, saying, in tones of joy—

"My Edward *has* come at last—it is to-morrow—Dear Edward, how could you remain so long absent?"

I recognized Edward S. in the young man about whose neck she had thrown her arms, and the terrified expression of his face I shall never forget.

"*Dear Edward—dear Edward,*" murmured the poor girl, while he remained statue-like, making no effort to disengage himself from her embrace, and the friends who were with him stood petrified with astonishment. At length recollection seemed to return to Agnes; her features, pale and wan as she was, assumed their former appearance. She looked earnestly at her false lover, and then said, in tones of agony, which pierced the hearts of all present, while at the same time she disengaged her arms from his neck—

"*I recollect it all now. I have been mad—mad. Edward, you have forsaken me. Doctor——,*" turning to me, "*where am I? My brain reels. Oh God! forgive him and me!*" and she fell to the floor a corpse, at the feet of him who had won her love, abandoned her, driven her crazy, and at length broken her heart.

He still stood statue-like, gazing upon the dead form of the beautiful girl—beautiful even in death. Fortunately, the mother of the unhappy girl was not present to witness the harrowing spectacle.

I turned to the young man and could not refrain from saying, as I pointed to the beautiful creature whose happiness he had wrecked and whose brittle thread of life he had broken:

"Edward S——, behold your work! Go, join your newly wedded bride; but can you ever know happiness again?"

Proper attention was paid to the corpse, and the body was conveyed home by her heart-broken mother and buried in New York.

Edward S—— was removed by his friends, still in a state of unconsciousness, and for some weeks he was in a raging fever, from which it was thought he would not recover. He had, I learnt subsequently, brought his wife to New England on a bridal tour, little thinking what he was fated to witness. He recovered eventually,

but was never perfectly himself again. The figure of the poor young girl whom he had so shamefully betrayed, haunted his imagination. His wife, who thus became acquainted with his perfidy, instinctively shrunk from him, and at length he again went to sea. One night, while the frigate he belonged to was lying at anchor in Gibraltar roads, he came up from his cabin, and before any one was able to stop him, sprang overboard and was drowned. The boats were lowered, but nothing was ever seen or heard of the body. The betrayer had been lured to destruction by his guilty imagination, which ever pictured the image of her he had loved and deceived, appearing before him, upbraiding his treachery, and at length he, as well as she whose heart he had broken, perished in a condition of insanity.

## CHAPTER XI.

## THE SOMNAMBULIST.

GETTING into my carriage one morning to go through my regular routine of morning calls, the post-man who had just stopped at the door, seeing and recognizing me, put a note into my hands. It was a delicate epistle, bearing the New York post-mark, and directed in a neat handwriting. I opened it, and read as follows:

"Will Doctor — be so kind as to call at No. —, Murray-street, in the course of the day. I should esteem it as a favor if he were to call as early as possible."

There was no signature to the note; but that was no great matter as it was sufficiently explicit of itself. Some hypochondriac lady patient desires to see me, no doubt, thought I; well, I will call as I return home, for really I had so much business on hand at this time, although the season was not particularly unhealthy, that I had little time to spare and no time to waste, to the prejudice of my other patients, on one who had given no further details regarding the nature of her business with me than those recorded in the letter. I accordingly called at the house designated, in the course of the afternoon. It was a handsome dwelling, and everything about it showed indications of comfort and competence, if not of wealth. I was shown into the parlor by a servant girl who appeared to have been expecting me. "Dr. —?" she said upon opening the front door; and on my replying in the affirmative, she showed me into a handsomely furnished parlor, begging me to be seated, and her mistress would be down stairs directly. I had to wait a few minutes, and amused myself by looking at the pictures on the walls. Over the mantel-piece was a half-length portrait of a gentleman, whose bronzed, weather-beaten countenance showed him to be a sailor, even had there

not been corroborating proof in the fact that he was represented with a spy-glass under his arm, while in the background were seen the ropes, shrouds, and rigging of a ship. Although weather-beaten, the features were regular, and the general aspect was gentlemanly. On the opposite side of the room was the portrait of a lady, somewhat pale, but nevertheless of considerable personal attractions, and on the mantel-shelf was a collection of foreign stuffed birds, in glass cases, curious pieces of coral and petrified sea weed, and other matters sufficiently indicative that the house was the residence of a seafaring gentleman. In a few minutes, the lady of the house came down, and I had no difficulty in recognizing in her the original of the female portrait, although it must have been taken some ten or perhaps fifteen years previous. Still there was little alteration, and if time had touched the features with his withering hand, he had touched them but lightly, and left few traces behind. The lady was attired in black, and from her general appearance, I at once decided that she was a widow. She was the first to speak, for on entering the room, she immediately apologized for having kept me waiting, and then added:

"If I am not mistaken, you are the family physician of Mr. B. in this street?"

I replied that I was.

"I sent you a note this morning, doctor," she resumed, "begging you to call during the day. I did not sign it, because I knew you would be ignorant of the name. I thank you, however, for your promptitude in attendance. I am the widow of Captain S—, of the packet-ship L—, which you may perhaps call to mind, was lost with all on board about three years ago on her passage home from Liverpool. It is not, however, of myself that I wish to speak about. I have a son who is first officer of a packet-ship trading between this port and Havre de Grace, and a daughter now about sixteen years of age who has lately returned home from a boarding-school in Baltimore, where she has been educated. Since she has



been home, which has only been for a few weeks, she has been afflicted with some singular symptoms, which, although perhaps they may not call for medical treatment, occasion me no little uneasiness. Without any appearance of ill health, she always seems fatigued and has no appetite whatever, besides which she has a continual inclination to sleep. I wish you to see her and give me your opinion upon her case, without her being aware that you are a medical man, for she is extremely sensitive, and has repeatedly refused to have medical advice, asserting that there is nothing the matter with her. If, doctor, you would call to-morrow evening when I shall have Mr. and Mrs. B. and a few friends here, I should esteem it as a favor."

I readily promised to do this, and wishing the lady a good evening, I left the house, calling on my way towards Broadway, at the residence of an old friend—Mr. B. in the same street—the same gentleman whose name had been mentioned by the widow.

I called purposely, in order to make a few inquiries respecting her. Mr. B. informed me that she was the widow of a gentleman who had been for many years captain and part owner of one of the finest packet-ships that sailed from New York, and that she had been left by her husband, who had been unfortunately lost at sea in a hurricane, in quite easy circumstances; he spoke highly of her as a most estimable lady, and said that she had but two children, a son, a fine young man, then at sea, and a daughter, a very pretty girl, but who enjoyed but poor health. Being perfectly satisfied as to the respectability of the parties, and having mentioned the cause of my inquiries, and learnt that he had been invited to spend the following evening at the house of Mrs. S., I took my leave.

The next day, according to appointment, I made a disguised professional visit to my youthful patient, and was ushered by Mrs. S. into the drawing-room, where some half-dozen gentlemen and ladies, with most of whom I was acquainted, were listening to Miss S., as she

sat playing upon the piano-forte. After a while she ceased playing, and I managed to get into conversation with her. I could observe no appearance of ill-health, save certain symptoms of fatigue, such as might have followed a day's unwonted exercise, and which I was utterly unable to account for. In the course of conversation, which I purposely led to this subject, I remarked that she seemed fatigued.

"Yes," she replied; "I am as tired as I used to be at school, after a whole day's scrambling over the hills and amidst the fields in search of botanical specimens. It has become habitual to me and I cannot account for it; neither, although I used to have an excellent appetite, can I enjoy a single meal, and yet I cannot say that I feel positively unwell. Mamma is quite uneasy about it, and wishes me to have medical advice; but that would be folly, for really I could not tell the doctor of any serious symptom were he to come."

I thought the opportunity favorable, and intimated that I was a physician.

"So I imagined," she replied; "for I heard you introduced as Dr. —; besides, I have heard Mrs. B. speak of you."

"Well, then, allow me to attend as a friend unprofessionally, if you have an objection to consider yourself fairly under a doctor's hands," said I.

"Really," replied Miss S., "I have nothing to tell you, doctor; there, feel my pulse," said she, extending her hand; "it's as regular as clockwork, is it not? I feel, doctor, as if I were always excessively tired, and that with downright hard exercise; and yet, in consequence of this very feeling, I never take any exercise, and when I rise in the morning, and come down to take my place at the breakfast table, I have no appetite; but I feel no nausea, but rather as though I had just arisen from partaking of a hearty meal; now, doctor, you know as much as I do myself of my singular malady, if such it can be called."

I must confess that the case was one that baffled me,

for there were no symptoms of attenuation about the young lady. In fact she appeared exactly as she had described herself, tired and her appetite satiated, but both in a healthful manner.

From this time forward I called occasionally at the residence of Mrs. S., and prescribed such invigorating medicines as I thought might prove beneficial, but without producing the slightest effect.

I had not long become acquainted with the family, before I discovered (physicians have various ways of discovering this secret) that Miss S., whose Christian name, by the way, was Emily, was in the habit of receiving the calls of a young gentleman named Douglass, who was paying his addresses to her; Mr. Douglass was a young man of prepossessing appearance, I should say about twenty-eight or thirty years of age perhaps, and by profession a lawyer; but he was in the receipt of a comfortable income derived from the rent of some houses in one of the then most fashionable streets of the city, and he followed the legal profession more as an amusement, and for the sake of a profession, than for the purpose of obtaining a livelihood. In a word, from all that I saw and heard of the young man, I judged that he would make a most eligible husband for Miss S. Emily had other suitors, for she was both a pretty and an accomplished girl, but it was evident that Mr. Douglass was the favored one.

Meanwhile Mr. S., the son of the widow, had returned from sea. I was particularly pleased with the young man, for with the frank urbanity of the seaman, he possessed the manners of a finished gentleman, as he had not gone to sea so young in years as is usually the case with lads destined to that profession, and his father had taken care that he should have a thorough education, under the best masters. The only fault I could possibly discover, was that he might perhaps be considered rather too hasty in temper; but like most impulsive people, he was generous and affectionate, and he was devotedly fond of his mother and sister. He, I learned, was paying

his addresses to the daughter of his mother's near neighbor, and my friend, Mr. B.

Young S—— was longer at home than usual, for the vessel on board of which he was chief officer, was being thoroughly overhauled and recoppered and generally refitted, and while at home, I with my wife, spent several evenings at the house. One evening we were speaking of the vast quantity of olives consumed by the peasantry in the southern provinces of France, when S—— turned to me and said:

"Do you like the olives now on the table, Doctor?"

"I think them remarkably fine," I replied.

"Then do me the favor to accept a bottle. I brought them home with me from Havre, and I think they are the finest I ever tasted."

So saying, he left the room and in the course of a few minutes returned with a bottle in his hand, which he presented to me. He then turned to Mrs. S. and said:

"Mother, I wish you would tell Martha when she uses any olives, to take them from one bottle until it is empty. There are nine bottles in the cupboard, and every one of them opened, and a portion of the contents withdrawn; that bottle which I have given to Dr. —, is the only one on which the seal is unbroken. I would not care; but the air will get in and destroy the fruit."

"My dear Edward," said Mrs. S., "you gave me these bottles when you first came home, and two of them are yet untouched in the kitchen cupboard; no one that I am aware has touched the olives in your room but yourself."

"It is very evident some one has though," said the young man; "you can satisfy yourself by ocular demonstration; and I am sure I have not touched them."

"It must be Martha or Bridget," said Mrs. S., "and that reminds me that I have missed a great quantity of eatables, such as cake, jelly, &c., for a long time past. I did not care to speak of it; for both the girls have been so long in the family; but if Dr. and Mrs. — will excuse me, we will at once set the matter at rest."

So saying, she sent for the servant girls.

"Martha and Bridget," she said, when they made their appearance, "Mr. Edward says that several bottles of olives that are in his sitting-room up-stairs have been opened; which of you has taken such a liberty?"

Both the girls strongly protested their innocence, and as nothing could be proved against them, they were sent down stairs. So the matter rested; but suspicion having been aroused, it was astonishing what a quantity of things were now missed nightly, which had never been thought of before. I learnt all through my wife, who was now the confidant of Mrs. S., and who was naturally curious, as all women are, in domestic matters. Not only were jellies and cakes and such like dainties found wanting or deficient; but the depredations appeared to extend to the most singular articles. Bread, cheese, butter, sugar, soap, meat; all these articles were missing, at one time or another, and naturally enough, quarrels and bickerings ensued with the servants, where heretofore all had been harmony. Mrs. S. did not like to part with the girls, for they were the daughters of an old steward of her deceased husband, and he had promised the old man on his death-bed that his girls should always have a home in his house; but what to do to stay this wastefulness?—that was the question.

Young S. kept watch; but on such nights nothing was disturbed, and the young man soon got weary of the duty.

At length the servant girls, at their own request, were locked in their rooms at night and the house having been thoroughly searched, a watchman was appointed to take especial care that no one entered from without; and still, though Mrs. S. kept the key of the servants' room herself, locking them in at night and letting them out in the morning, the devastation seemed rather to increase than otherwise. Mrs. S. grew alarmed. She began to believe the house haunted, and all was mistrust and confusion.

Douglass and the young sailor were great friends, and

to the former, young S., one day confided the details of the mystery, that enveloped the dwelling of his mother.

"Well, S." said Douglass, "since it appears that it is known when you determine to watch for these depredators, suppose, just for the fun of the thing, that I take upon myself the office of watchman, of course keeping the whole affair secret from any one in the house. What say you?"

"Agreed," replied S., "and be the nocturnal visitants material or ghostly, I wish you better luck than befel me when engaged in the like duty."

Accordingly, the following evening, unknown to any one but Edward S., Douglass was admitted into the house about 11 o'clock, and refusing to allow his friend to remain up with him, he seated himself in the kitchen, by the stove, lit a segar, and patiently awaited the event.

The clock struck one, and awoke Douglass from a partial dose, and as he sat up stretching himself and rubbing his eyes, he was startled by hearing a light step upon the staircase; he had no candle lighted, but he immediately secreted himself in the shadow of the stove and awaited the result.

Nearer and nearer came the steps, and he heard the rustle of female garments, and in a few moments a slender figure, attired in her night-clothes, over which were thrown a heavy cloak, entered the kitchen. Who was the visitant, he was not able to discover, for she wore a bonnet on her head, and a thick, heavy veil concealed her features, as did the cloak her shape. He had little doubt, however, that it was one of the servant girls. He determined, therefore, to watch her proceedings without giving any alarm, and report in the morning all that had occurred. Greatly to his astonishment, the strange, nocturnal visitant lighted a candle, and proceeding to the cupboard, took a bunch of keys from her pocket, unlocked the door, withdrew a large quantity of provisions, and carefully proceeded up stairs with the booty. Douglass watched her into the first landing, and then satisfied that he had discovered the cause of the

mysterious disappearance of the viands, endeavored to make himself comfortable for the remainder of the night.

Hardly, however, had he composed himself in his easy chair, before he heard the same light step cautiously descending the stairs, looking carefully around to see, apparently, that she was not watched, and this time more fully dressed. She went out into the garden at the back of the house, and entered into a room over the stable, where slept a sort of groom, coachman, gardener, and in fact general servant of the family—a smart, good-looking, and exceedingly intelligent fellow, who was very fond of his young mistress, Miss Emily. Here she remained perhaps half an hour, when she came out softly, and cautiously closing the door, proceeded to the stable and saddled a pony which Mrs. S. kept chiefly for the use of Emily, but which the young lady seldom used, in consequence of the *ennui* which continually oppressed her.

The curiosity of Douglass was fully aroused, and he determined at all hazards to see who it was that thus made themselves busy o' nights; but the mysterious visitant was too quick for him—she mounted the pony, set it into a gallop, and taking a by-street at the back of the house, started off in the direction of what then was the country. Two hours passed, when he heard the sound of the horse's hoofs returning, and the figure entered the garden by the back gate, dismounted, and leading the pony into the stable, brushed it down and groomed it; then again went into the bed-room of the servant man, and remaining but a short time, came out and entered the house. She seemed to be in a perspiration with her ride and her subsequent work of grooming the pony, and she threw aside her heavy veil, disclosing the features of Emily S——!

Douglass stood as if thunder-struck. At length, as she was about closing the door, he exclaimed:

"Is it possible, Miss S——!"

Emily turned—did not appear the least alarmed: but

placing her finger to her lips, as if to implore silence, entered the house and retired to her room.

In the morning Douglass was questioned by his friend as to what he had discovered; but he made an evasive reply.

"Then I presume," said young S., "you have been as unfortunate as myself?"

Douglass did not answer, and they proceeded to talk of other matters:

"Our double wedding comes off next week," said Edward, after a short silence. "Louisa B. will not have the company of her husband long, though—for I understand the Washington will have her repairs completed in a few days, and then I shall soon be off to sea. I half envy you, Douglass, who can remain on shore and enjoy the honeymoon, and I don't know how many other moons in your wife's company. Well, without flattering you, old fellow, I say Emily's a lucky girl, and when she gets married, I hope she will get over that strange depression and fatigue, or as the French word better expresses it, *ennui*, which now annoys her so much. We are to be married on the same day, you know."

Douglass made no reply.

"Why, what ails you?" said young S——. "You look as grumpy as a bear."

"Nothing of consequence; but I am not exactly prepared for a change of condition so soon as you seem to anticipate. I don't think, Edward, my marriage with your sister will come off next week."

"How! What! Why, has not the business been all arranged?"

"It has; but circumstances have occurred to cause me to alter my mind."

"Do my mother and sister know of your intention?"

"Not that I am aware of."

"What then do you mean?" said young S——, passionately. "I demand an explanation."

"And as yet, I do not choose to give one."

"Scoundrel!" said Edward S——, who, we have men-

tioned, was of a passionate, impulsive temperament, "you would betray my sister, would you? Take that," giving Douglass a severe blow in the face—"and if you are not a coward, as you are a scoundrel, revenge it."

"You have done away with the necessity of explanation, Edward S—," said Douglass, calmly. "There is now but one course left. Meet me this evening in the fields beyond Bleeker-street, just by the barn, alone. We need no witnesses nor seconds."

"As you will," said S—, savagely. "I am glad at least to find you are not a coward as well as villain. I shall be there; pistols, of course?" he added.

"Pistols," said Douglass, and so they parted.

They met according to appointment, and Edward S— fell severely wounded, the bullet from Douglass's pistol having penetrated his shoulder.

"You have the best of it," said he to Douglass, who was endeavoring to stem the hemorrhage; for the wound bled profusely.

Douglass made no reply; but fortunately a farmer's wagon passing near at hand, he stopped the driver, and putting five dollars into his hand, bade him assist the wounded man into the wagon, and convey him to his his own residence, where, having arrived, I was sent for.

With considerable difficulty I managed to probe the wound, and to extract the ball, and had the satisfaction of finding that, provided inflammation did not set in, the wound, though severe, and likely to be a long time healing, was not likely to prove mortal. I ordered, however, that Edward should be kept free from any excitement, and at the request of Douglass, promised to break the unfortunate affair to young S—'s mother and sister.

When seated in a private room, Douglass explained to me the whole affair.

I saw at once through it all, and discovered the mystery of the fatigue and loss of appetite of Miss Emily, the unfortunate young lady, who was afflicted with somnambulism, and thus the whole matter was cleared up.

I had much to do however, to convince Douglass, who

professed disbelief in any such disorder, strange to say, having never heard of it. We agreed, however, with the concurrence of young S—, who was able during the course of the day, to listen to my explanation, and completely to exculpate his friend, laying all the blame on his own impetuosity, to make some excuse for Edward's absence from home for a day or two, and to watch both of us together the next night at Mrs. S—'s house, and thus be completely satisfied.

We did so, and with the like results.

I then broke the subject to Mrs. S., who was much shocked, although I had made light of the affair, assuring her that probably the very fact of the habit being discovered, would prevent its renewal. I also told her of the accident that had befallen her son, assuring her, however, of his speedy and perfect recovery beneath my care.

"But my daughter," said the widow, "never could consume the provisions I have missed, had she the appetite of a plowman."

"One of the peculiarities of this nervous disease," said I, "is, that the patient is quite ignorant of all that he or she does during the time the fit is upon them. Probably if you search your daughter's apartment, you will find some clue to the wholesale disappearance of your edible property."

Mrs. S. did so, and in an old worm-eaten trunk in a small closet which no one ever thought of looking into, was found such a heterogeneous mass of mouldy victuals as fairly astonished her, and me, when she had shown them to me. It would appear that Miss Emily, having satisfied her appetite, had put the remainder of the food habitually into this trunk, and, of course, forgotten it.

As to the visit to the man-servant's room, she went there for the purpose of getting and replacing a portion of the pony's harness; and her grooming the horse was easily explained to me, for I was aware that the victims of this singular disorder always strive to maintain inviolable secrecy, and I understood Emily had, when a child, before the disease came over her, been passionately fond



of horses. As to the groom himself not waking, he slept so soundly that the firing of a twelve pounder within a few yards of him would scarcely have aroused him before six o'clock in the morning, and Mrs. S., having no suspicions whatever of her daughter, she had the coast clear to herself; but as is always the case, had abstained from night-walking whenever she had heard her brother say he or any one else would watch during the night, although in her waking moments utterly ignorant that she was the midnight wanderer. As I suspected, the shock, when told of the habit, actually prevented her from following it again, and Douglass, being freed by Edward S. from all blame, and satisfied on his part of the innocence of Emily, the double marriage was only postponed until he was quite recovered. In the meantime, the ship he was chief officer of, had sailed; but he went out a few months after, in the capacity of master and part owner. Both marriages turned out happily, and in the course of a few years Edward S. retired from sea, and eventually became a prosperous ship-owner. Mrs. S. is still living with her son-in-law, in one of the southwestern States, and I believe Emily has never since been afflicted with somnambulism.

## CHAPTER XII.

## THE ACTOR—LOVE, MADNESS, AND SUICIDE.

GEORGE HARLEY had been a playmate of my youthful days, and at the first school to which I was sent he accompanied me. He remained there during the whole period that I did, and when I went to college, there I left him. From what I recollect of young Harley at school, he was not especially remarkable for his attention to his lessons. In fact, he was generally at the bottom of his class; but this was from no actual want of capacity, for he was as quick-witted as any lad of his age, and remarkable for his vivacity in the playground, but from sheer idleness, or rather a disinclination to attend to the dry study of grammar, mathematics, and the rudiments of geography, astronomy, &c. He was, however, a most indefatigable reader of works of imagination, and more particularly of plays, either tragedy, comedy, or melo-drama—nothing of the kind came amiss to him, and to gain time for the perusal of these he would even quit the play-ground when his favorite games were going forward, and would smuggle bits of candle into his bed-room, and devote hour after hour, stolen from sleep, for the sake of indulging in his favorite amusement. Another faculty he possessed, to a great degree, was that of story-telling, and often, when he had failed in stealing candle-ends out of the kitchen, or coaxing them from the servants, he would keep his room-mates awake, hour after hour relating stories, the creation of his own boyish imagination. Often, too, he was punished for having novels, &c., in his possession—a class of books which were rigidly interdicted by the rules of the school. But neither punishment nor disgrace could cure him of his morbid appetite for these works.

As I have said, I left him at school when I went to

college, and I heard nothing more of him for several years. One evening, shortly after my removal from Concord to New York, I treated myself and my wife to the rare indulgence of a seat at the theatre. I forget now the subject of the performance; but among the actors was one whose voice seemed to resemble one familiar to my ears, though I could not recollect where I had heard it. We were seated in a box directly over the stage, and therefore could distinctly see the features of the actors, and I was naturally led closely to observe those of the young man whose voice arrested my attention. I thought there was something in his countenance which recalled to my recollection the days of my boyhood. I looked at the play bill, but that furnished no clue to my memory, for the name of the actor was set down as De Moulins. I knew that no person of that name had ever been on the list of my acquaintance, but I was also aware that actors often took assumed names. At length, at some particular point of the drama, a gesture made by the actor was so marked in character, that I recognized him at once, and, to the surprise of my wife and those seated in the box near me, I said aloud:

"By Jove! that's George Harley."

The stare that met me in all directions reminded me of my forgetfulness, and hurriedly explaining to my wife the cause of my astonishment, I watched with considerable interest the performance of my quondam schoolfellow and my boyhood companion.

At that day I was not sorely beset with overmuch practice, and half my time was spent in gratuitous visits to the poor. I therefore had always an hour or two in the day to spare when I desired it.

The next day I called at the box office and asked the box-keeper if he could tell me where Mr. de Moulins' residence was, or where I was most likely to find him.

"I do not know his residence," was the reply, "but about this hour, several of the gentlemen engaged at the theatre are accustomed to assemble at a sort of club-room they have close by (naming a hotel) for the purpose of

smoking, chatting, and reading the newspapers. I should not wonder if you were to meet De Moulins there now."

Thanking the box-keeper, I directed my steps to the place of rendezvous he had pointed out, which was only a few blocks off, and on entering the reading-room, there sure enough was the object of my search. Although I had experienced considerable difficulty and doubt as regarded the correctness of the recognition of the previous evening, when George was in his theatrical costume, with false moustaches and painted face, there was no possibility of any mistake now. Notwithstanding several years had elapsed since we had met, his features had scarcely altered, although I was sorry to see a haggard, care-worn look which sat ill on the countenance of one yet so young, and which I feared betrayed habitual intemperance. He was seated by himself, reading a newspaper, and at the same time, regaling himself with a cigar; so, being sure that none could overhear us, I seated myself by his side, and looking him full in the face, at the same time extending my hand, I said—

"Can it be possible that this is George Harley?"

He looked at me a moment as if half inclined to deny his name, but meeting my gaze, he at once recognized me and replied:

"Why, James —, my dear fellow, where in the d—l's name did you spring from?" and he shook me warmly by the hand.

"I am practising as a physician in this city," I replied, "that is, when I can get practice, although I find that no very easy matter; but you, Harley, how came you to take to the stage. Such a profession is surely quite in opposition to the puritan ideas of your father, who, if I recollect aright, was one of the principal elders of our church at Concord?"

"Hush, my dear fellow," said he, looking cautiously around, "I am known here as Albert de Moulins; for-gad! recollect yourself and don't call me Harley, else you will raise a pretty kettle of fish. It's well none of our fellows were within ear shot. As to my taking to the

stage, it is but following out an old fancy of mine which I could not resist, though Heaven and earth and all my friends to boot had opposed my designs. It was my destiny, James, and I could not fly against it. My father wanted me to go to college. He had a notion of making a lawyer of me; but that idea I resisted with all my might. He then said if I was determined to neglect my studies he would put me to work on the farm. Well, I thought I should like that well enough; anything to get a release from the drudgery of the school-house; but I soon found that farming was too hard, monotonous labor for one of my kidney, and when I should have been ploughing, I was amusing myself and half a dozen of the hired hands, with spouting Shakespeare. The old man soon found this would not answer, so he got me into a store in Boston; but I found measuring goods behind a counter more irksome still. However, I continued there a year or two, always getting into some scrape for not paying attention to the customers, and but that the boss was indebted to my father I should have been sent adrift the first month. However, when I had been in Boston about two years, the old man died, and I was sent for to go home. When the funeral was over, and my father's affairs were arranged, it was found that he had left my mother in pretty good circumstances. My elder brother William was to manage the farm; and I was to go back to Boston and the dry goods store. I kicked a good deal at this arrangement, but William and my mother determined, and so with a heavy heart I started from home; on the way I fell in with two lively young fellows, who were going to New York and thence to Philadelphia, where they had an engagement at the theatre, and we got to be so intimate, and liked each other's company so well, that I was easily persuaded to accompany them, and they procured me a supernumerary's berth at the house at which they were engaged. From that I took other characters under the name of De Moulins, and since then I have performed in most of the cities of the Union, and I flatter myself not without ac-

quiring some distinction in my profession. This is the fourth engagement I have had in New York and you are the first of my old acquaintances who have recognized me. My mother and brother have no idea what has become of me, and as my circle of acquaintance boasts of few play goers, I have little fear of being discovered. By and by, when Fortune thinks proper to shower her favors on me, I shall go home a distinguished man, ask my mother's forgiveness and blessing, and perchance retire from the stage; though I doubt if I shall reconcile myself to that while I am able to tread the boards. After all it's a hard life, and if it has its pleasures and excitements, it also has its pains and drawbacks—*Voila tout!* And now my dear fellow, I am really glad to shake hands with you—come to the bar, and let's have a glass of wine together, and you must come to the theatre to-night. What say you?"

I declined the proffered invitation to drink at that early hour; (it was not 10 o'clock,) but promised to come to the theatre in the evening, receiving a free pass from my old school fellow. George laughed at my squeamishness, as he termed it.

"Why," said he, "I could do nothing were it not for the stimulus that wine gives. I should be as nervous as an old man of sixty."

I told him the excitement was an unhealthy one, and would assuredly leave its mark in premature old age and imbecility, if not in a speedier and more fatal manner; but George laughed and pooh pooh'd, and finally, finding that I could not be tempted, called for a tumbler of wine for himself and drank it at a draught.

"And now, James," said he, when he had sent away the tumbler, "tell me, are you married?"

"I am," I replied.

"I thought as much; you were always a steady-going chap, just fitted for home and domestic comfort and all that sort of thing. When you come to the theatre to-night (the play will be Othello, in which character I shall perform,) take notice of the young lady who plays the

part of Desdemona; for, egad! you will acknowledge that she is the handsomest creature you ever sat eyes upon; her name is Miss P——. I am paying my court to her; but she is such a coquette that I feel half inclined to act the part of the jealous Moor to life, and to smother her outright. Twice when I thought the game was certain, have I been on the point of proposing, and both times she has laughed at my confusion, and yet managed to lure me on. Do you know if she would become my wife, I should feel half inclined to give up the stimulant of wine. It is now the only thing that can drown the jealous thoughts which haunt me night and day."

"If she be the coquette you say, her affections, could they even be secured, would not be worth the pains of wooing them. '*Le jeu ne vaut pas la chandelle*,' as the French adage says. Take my advice, George, abstain from this habit of hard drinking; for, I speak to you as an old friend; it is even now perceptibly telling upon your constitution. Get married and settled is my advice, by all means, but choose a wife after the manner of the Vicar of Wakefield, in Goldsmith's admirable novel, 'for qualities that will wear well.' Believe me, a disposition to coquetry in a mistress, will not add to the attractions of a wife."

"My good James, you are talking to the wind. It is idle to waste words upon me by giving me commonplace advice. I must marry Miss P——; I will, by heaven! for the man who robs me of her shall die by my hand or I by his."

I saw that it was useless to talk to him; reason he would not; besides Miss P——'s coquetry might, for ought I knew, exist only in his imagination, so I wished him good morning and went to visit my few patients.

In the evening I attended the theatre again with my wife, taking care to secure the same seats we had occupied on the previous night. I had then noticed the beauty of the actress, and it had been remarked by my wife; but I was so engrossed in the recognition of my

old schoolfellow, that she had not attracted the notice she otherwise might have done.

She was indeed a lovely creature, and George, I perceived, was so infatuated that he made several trifling mistakes in his part. His eyes followed her even when he should have been addressing other actors in the play, and his whole bearing showed the influence she had obtained over him. There was that in her glances too, which showed to a close observer that he was not indifferent to her; but coquette was plainly stamped upon her features as though the word had been written on her brow.

I saw George several times while he remained in New York, and every time he led the conversation to Miss P——. She haunted his imagination to such a degree that sometimes, when under the influence of wine, which he usually was even before he went on the stage in the evening, at which time I usually made my calls, having, through him admittance to the green room, that I feared he would be led to the committal of some rash act. I was introduced to Miss P—— likewise, and I soon found out that George was right in what he had told me, and that I had also read her character correctly. Still I could scarcely wonder at his idolatry, I can call it nothing else, for she was a beautiful, fascinating being, and appeared to take especial delight in entangling him in her toils.

In the course of a month the company went southward, and six months elapsed before they again returned to New York.

A day or two after I had read in the newspaper of their return to the city, I called for the purpose of seeing Harley and was told that he was indisposed. As he was then sleeping I did not go up to his room; but in the course of the day I received a letter from him, which ran as follows:

"DEAR JAMES: I am very ill, worse than people believe me to be. Come and see me this evening. I cannot play. *She* will be on the stage. If you can bring

any stimulant with you that will give me strength for an hour at whatever cost, pray do so. Yours, truly,

"GEORGE HARLEY—DE MOULINS."

I called an hour earlier than the time specified in the note, and was ushered into George's room. He was loling restlessly upon a sofa, from which he did not rise when I entered. He stretched out his hand and feebly grasped mine, and I was deeply pained to witness the ravages that I feared intemperance had made upon him in the short space that had elapsed since we had parted.

"Can you get me up, so as to go on the stage to-night?" he said, as soon as I had taken a chair. "Dear —, I must see Clara to-night or I shall go mad—mad. She has not been to see me since I have been ill. I am not very ill after all, am I?" he continued. "It is perhaps fancy. See, I can walk," and he attempted to rise; but in so doing, fell back on the sofa. "Yes," he added mournfully, "I am weak—very weak; but my dear fellow, do give me something that will strengthen me sufficiently to visit the green room to-night?"

At this moment a waiter entered the room with wine, which he placed upon a table near the sofa, within reach of the invalid.

He stretched out his trembling hand to reach it.

"George Harley, are you mad?" said I, as I took the tumbler from him. "You will kill yourself. Even now you have every symptom of incipient brain fever. If you drink that wine, I will not answer for the consequences."

"Mad!" said he—"yes, mad enough. Kill me! wine kill me! Pshaw! it is all that keeps me alive. Ha! ha! this makes the sixth tumbler I have drank to-day."

And as he spoke, he again seized the tumbler, and before I could prevent him, had drained it to the dregs. The glass fell from his hand and dashed to pieces on the floor as he fell back, uttering some incoherent mutterings. For some moments he remained in a sort of stupor. I summoned assistance and had him placed in bed, or

dering such applications as I thought necessary, and directing ice to be freely applied to his temples. He gradually recovered and opened his eyes; but appeared to recognize no one, and frequently called on the name of Clara. I administered an opiate, and soon he sank into an unquiet slumber, when I left him, promising to call the next morning.

I did so, and found him, as I dreaded, suffering under brain fever, and raving with delirium. For three days he was unconscious; but on the fourth, the fever took a favorable turn, and he recognized me and others about him.

"Where's Clara, James?" said he. "It is strange she has not been to see me this morning, although she has been here night and day lately. How long have I been ill, and what ails me? How my poor head aches. I shall never be able to write my composition. Down to the bottom of the class again. Well, that's nothing new. You must help me, and to-night I will lend you Tom Jones to read. Give me some wine—wine," he shrieked as he again was seized with a fresh fit of delirium.—"Wine, wine, women and wine; a short life and a merry one," and he attempted to sing a stave of a well known drinking song. One glance satisfied me he would never rise from that bed in health again, and as I knew the address of his mother, I wrote immediately to her, conjuring her, if she hoped to see her long lost son alive, to come to him immediately. I also called upon Miss P—— and told her of the dangerous condition of M. de Moulins. At the moment she was laughing and coquetting in the green room with some half a dozen male admirers. On my disclosing my errand, she turned pale and appeared as if about to faint. She however, recovered herself, and quitting the room with me, made further inquiries respecting the illness of her lover. I told her all—that in his delirium he had spoken alone of her; that I had written to his mother, and that, if he should show any symptoms of returning consciousness, I thought a visit from her would at least serve to compose him, after I



had prepared him for it. She appeared deeply affected, and was even moved to tears and said,

"I will call, doctor, to-day, now, any time you please. Poor Albert! I was not aware that he was so ill."

Having obtained her promise, I left her; but some days elapsed, during which, though the fever had left him, or it must have carried him off, he was too low and too excited, when spoken to, to allow me to mention her name to him. He lay in a stupor, muttering occasionally to himself, and once or twice I distinctly heard him whisper the word "mother." I was only fearful that he would not live to see and to obtain the forgiveness and blessing of his mother. Of his recovery, there was now no hope. At length she arrived at my house, and that day my poor patient was so much more composed, that I had spoke to him of Miss P——, and told him she would visit him. I informed her of it, and she promised to call at the appointed hour, (I should mention that she had not appeared on the stage since the day I had first told her of George's dangerous illness)—Mrs. Harley I took with me to her son's lodgings at the same time, and poor George recognized them both, and wept bitterly. All in the room were in tears, and the heart-broken mother, who had found her long lost child only to see him stretched on the bed of death, was inconsolable.

George begged her forgiveness, which was freely and fully accorded, the poor grief-stricken woman sobbing out, "Live George—live, my long lost, beloved son, and all will yet be well."

Miss P—— knelt by the bed-side, sobbing hysterically, and I began to fear the effects of the excitement might be immediately fatal to the dying man. With difficulty I led them from the room, the mother, with a beseeching look, asked if there was indeed no hope? I could give her no comfort, and for the present I begged that she would not further excite her son by her presence. She promised, on condition that she might remain in the next room during the night. This, of course, I could not object to, and I returned to my patient, administered an

opiate, and left him tranquilly sleeping. I walked home with Miss P——, who appeared to be almost as much affected by the scene she had witnessed, as the poor mother herself.

The following morning I again called at Harley's lodgings, not without a strange foreboding, so prostrated was his frame, that the quiet sleep in which I had left him might possibly have proved to him the sleep of death.

When I entered the house, I saw that every one of the inmates were fearfully agitated.

"What is the matter?" I asked. "Is Mr. De Moulins dead?" For by that name they only knew him.

"He is, sir," was the trembling reply of the landlady, "and alas! he has met his death by his own hand."

"Good God!" said I, "what do you mean?"

"Mr. De Moulins has committed suicide," was all the poor woman could say, and I rushed up stairs to learn what had really happened.

It was too true. A fit of delirium, accompanied by a return of fever, had seized upon the sick man in the night, and with the unnatural strength that is often seen on such occasions, he had risen from his bed, and gone to a drawer, where, unknown to any one, he kept a pair of pistols—his razors I had removed from the room.—His mother had heard the noise of his footsteps, and had rushed into the room just in time to see her son apply one of the loaded weapons to his forehead, and to witness his death. She had since fallen into a succession of fainting fits, and for some hours I feared for her recovery. At length she became more composed. I could do nothing more than offer such vain consolation as was in my power, and I saw the necessary preparations, after the inquest, for the decent burial of the unhappy young man. His mother followed him to the grave, and then returned, a saddened woman, to her home. Miss P., who was in reality the cause of poor George's sad fate—for I learnt that until he met with her, he had never given himself so completely up to drink, appeared inconsola-

ble. She performed no more in New York, and, in a few days after the funeral, went home to her friends in Baltimore. I heard no more of her for some three or four months, when, by chance taking up a Baltimore paper, I read the following announcement:—"The beautiful and talented Miss P., who for the last two months has delighted our citizens by her exquisite performances at the theatre in this city, has at length changed her name. She was married at Charleston, S. C., on Monday last, to Mr. S., a wealthy planter of that State. We hear that one of the conditions of the marriage is, that she is not again to appear upon the stage. While we rejoice at her good fortune, the theatrical world will suffer an irreparable loss."

I read the paragraph with disgust.

"So much," thought I, "for the feeling that exists in the heart of a coquette. Poor Mr. S., indeed I pity you. You have planted a thorn in your side which will embitter your future life."

## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE ACTRESS.

LATE in the afternoon of a wintry day in December, 1840, I was quitting the house of a wealthy patient, whom I had suddenly been called to visit, from my residence, just as I had sat down to dinner, when I was addressed in the following words by a little girl apparently about twelve years of age:

"Please, sir," said she, "are you Dr. —?"

"That is my name, my dear," said I; "what is it you want with me?"

"My mother, who is very ill, and who lives in the next street, sent me to your house, sir, to beg that you would call upon her when you have time. They told me you had gone out to see Mrs. —, in Beekman-street, and I thought I might find you here, and perhaps you would go with me to my mother's. It is such a long way from your house."

"So it is, my poor little girl—a long way to drive on such a day as this, and how much longer must it have been for you to walk amidst all the slop and snow on the street, and amidst this driving sleet, too. Come, let me lift you into the chase, and we will drive round to your mother's house."

So saying, I lifted the little creature into the carriage, and getting in myself, we drove rapidly round into Fulton-street, where the child directed me to stop at the door of a small lodging house.

"It is here mother lives," said she, "up stairs on the third floor back. She is very ill, and will be so glad that you have come so quickly."

I assisted the child from the carriage, and she guided me up the narrow, winding staircase, to the room occupied by her mother.

The invalid was reposing upon a sofa which extended the entire breadth of this narrow apartment, the opposite side of the room being occupied with a small bedstead. A faded carpet covered the floor, and with a couple of chairs, comprised the whole furniture. A few embers shed a sickly glow from a small grate set in the wall, and gave some degree of warmth to the apartment; but the temperature was quite inadequate to the severity of the season. All the furniture was clean and free from dust, but faded and worn, showing evidently that it was the wreck of what had constituted a goodly show in happier days. On the walls, however, were hung several pictures, chiefly consisting of landscapes and domestic scenes, which I, at the first glance, conceived to be engravings; but which I found on close inspection, were pencil drawings of the most exquisite finish; these were interspersed, here and there, with a few pictures in water colors, and in the narrow window-sill was a pot of mignonette which diffused its grateful fragrance throughout the small apartment.

"Dr. — has been good enough to come with me, dear mamma," said the child, as she closed the door and ran to her mother, throwing her arms around her neck and kissing her.

The lady, for such, despite her poverty, she evidently was, arose from her couch and welcomed me, thanking me in a mild, musical voice for my prompt attention, and begging me to be seated, then turning to the child, she said:

"Poor little Annie, you have had a weary walk, darling. Sit down near the fire and dry your feet. It was too bad to send you to Dr. —'s, and on such a day as this, but I fear I am very ill."

"May I inquire what are the symptoms of your disease, Madame?" said I.

"I can but tell you in general terms, doctor," replied the invalid, "for it would be a difficult task even for me to describe them individually. I am suffering beneath a general prostration of the system, a lassitude that effect-

ually precludes my making even the slightest exertion—and sometimes I fear"—she added, after a pause, "that I have an affection of the lungs, the forerunner of consumption; but I hope I am mistaken, for were I to be taken from her, what would become of my poor child."

To tell the truth, I had fancied, on first entering the room, that the invalid lady was suffering under the fell ravages of consumption, for the hectic flush which rushed to her cheek upon her addressing me, the pinched appearance of the features, the dark ring around the eyes, rendering so much more startling, in connection with the palor of the face, their sparkling lustre, her long attenuated fingers, and the transparent delicacy of her complexion, were all symptoms of the sinister ravages of a disorder, the deceitful but fatal character of which all medical men know but too well.

I felt her feeble pulse, and made such other inquiries as I deemed proper, desired her to procure some simple medicine, and promised to call the next day and bring with me some preparations which I hoped might be of some service to her. As I rose to quit the room, she said:—

"I fear, Doctor —, that I cannot expect you to call upon me as a regular patient, for—" and she hesitated for a moment, and a deeper blush suffused her cheek—"you can but be aware that I have not the means of paying a doctor's bill. Give me, if you please, such general instructions as you think it advisable for me to follow, and if in your calls of business, my poor lodgings should be in your way, perhaps now and then you will step in and see how I get along," as she said this she attempted to place a small piece of paper in my hand, which on looking at, I found to be a dollar bill. I immediately offered to return it, but she added, "I am aware, doctor, I am offering too small a fee, but indeed it is all I have to give."

"Dear madam," said I, "we will talk of fees at another time: for the present, take back the bill and I promise to call and see you daily as long as I think it necessary."

My remuneration will be a consideration of after circumstances, and by the by, may I ask what is your name, for I do not recollect that you have introduced yourself to me by name. If you have, I did not note it at the time."

"My name," she replied, "is S——. I did not think it worth while to mention it, Doctor ——, for I did not care that you should recognize me; but since you are determined to act the part of the good Samaritan, I cannot expect to keep my incognito; nor do I know, in fact, why I should be ashamed to make myself known to you. It is an infirmity of human nature that we do not wish to be recognized by those who have known us in better days, although if our poverty be not the fault of idleness or crime, it is a false shame which leads us to think that poverty dishonorable."

"Mrs. S—— of Cambridge!" said I, in a voice of astonishment, and as I closely scrutinized her features, I thought I could still recognize, beneath the mask of ill health and increased years, and perhaps mental as well as bodily anguish, the greatest belle, and subsequently, the most beautiful and winning bride of my acquaintance, before my own days of courtship had commenced, "can it be possible that I see you thus. How strange! I might have known, too, by the manner in which you received me and the readiness with which you addressed me by name, that we had met before. Nay—now, I must, indeed, have no more excuses," added I, smilingly, "you must put yourself in my hands, and obey my behests, whatever they may be. Now, you may be sure that I shall visit you in the regular routine of my patients, for——"

I stopped speaking. I was on the point of asking a question which the poor invalid might have considered obtrusive: that was to inquire into the causes which had led to her present state of apparent poverty. She, however, divined my thoughts,—

"You doubtless are surprised to see me reduced to the low ebb of fortune I now am, Dr. ——. It is natural

you should be so; but I do not now feel equal to the narration of the history of my life since I quitted Cambridge a gay and happy bride many years ago. Another time I may tell you all; for it will be a relief to meet with the sympathy of a friend of former years. I will only say that, although of late years I have met with unceasing sources of sorrow and tribulation; for some time after I had left Cambridge—as long as poor Alfred lived—my life was all that a happy loving wife could desire. Farewell, doctor," and she extended to me her thin hand, which I pressed gently and withdrew from the room.

I called again the following day, and found Mrs. S—— much in the same condition, perhaps a little more prostrated; but that I anticipated from the primary effects of the medicine I had given her. She had been many years before slightly acquainted with my wife (before our marriage) and after having called several times, and overcame the natural delicacy which led me to refrain from the semblance of offering patronage to the distressed whom we have known in happier days, when they were better off, so far as this world's goods are concerned, than we, I set about thinking how I could, without seeming to do so, afford her such assistance as in her situation she needed; for although the poor lady tried to disguise it, I could not help seeing that she was miserably poor, and often I thought the restorative medicines I ordered were not procured, simply because she had not the money to purchase them with; indeed I wondered how she supported herself and her daughter at all.

One morning therefore I related all the circumstances to my wife, and got her to call with me at Mrs. S——'s lodgings on the following day, and under pretence of business I left the two ladies together, having previously arranged with my wife that she should endeavor, in the most delicate manner possible, to offer her such assistance as one female may, without the appearance of condescension, offer to another enfeebled by ill health and oppressed by misfortune. Having been absent for about

an hour, I returned to the house and I and my wife left it together. She (my wife) was much impressed with the elegant manners and patient disposition of her new acquaintance, and from that day an intimacy commenced between the two which was continued until the death of poor Mrs. S——.

My wife (I must call her Susanna, "wife" seems so formal) well then, Susanna was almost an every day visitor, and I soon found her a better doctress in Mrs. S——'s case, than I was a doctor; she soon became so improved in health that she was enabled to ride out, and then she was a frequent visitant at my residence. The seeds of consumption, it is true, were too deeply sown in her constitution to be eradicated; but there was every appearance that she might live perhaps for a year—perhaps for years—to take a mother's care of her innocent and interesting child.

One day we were all three sitting in my drawing room. It was on the 25th of February, after I had first been called to visit the invalid, and it was the anniversary of her marriage. By some means—perhaps it was purposely on my part, for I had a great curiosity to know what series of misfortunes had reduced the poor lady to her present position, the conversation was led to olden times in Cambridge.

For some minutes she was visibly affected; but at length she said:

"Dear Mr. —, it is but natural that you should be anxious to know what ill fate brought me into the grasp of poverty, after having married a young man whose position at that time, and whose future prospects were so advantageous. I will give you a brief history of my life since we parted at Cambridge, the day after my marriage to Alfred S——.

"My dear husband, as you know, was the son of a wealthy merchant in Boston, and although educated for the law, he did not practice, as he was the sole heir to his father's reputed wealth; had himself a most liberal allowance from his father; and besides, was of too lively

a disposition to bend himself, under such circumstances, to the dry, irksome studies, which his profession would have necessarily imposed upon him.

"We travelled, after our marriage, over the greater portion of the United States, and then went to Europe, where we spent three or four years, chiefly in England and France. Oh, what happy years were those to me! Alfred was the kindest of husbands, and my every wish was gratified even before I had made it known to him. Dear Alfred! he seemed to have the power to divine my thoughts, and his greatest pleasure was to anticipate my desires.

"On our return to the United States, we went to live in the country, near Springfield, Mass., to which place my father-in-law had retired—having, some twelve months before given up business. For three years more my life was one of happiness—happiness too great for one human being to monopolize. I might have feared some misfortune, had not my soul been intoxicated with happiness and love.

"The first misfortune that befel us was the death of our first-born—a lovely boy of four years of age, who was born while we were in Europe.

"This was a sad blow to me, for it was the first time that I had been familiar with death; and, then, for the fell destroyer to make his dreadful presence known, through the death of my first-born, my boy, my beloved child, was, I thought, too great a sorrow for me to bear; but, I still had a smiling infant—this dear child, now her mother's only earthly solace—and, by degrees, my grief being softened and subdued by the tender solicitude and the consolation of my husband, I became somewhat reconciled to the loss of my boy. In the course of a few months from this period, my father-in-law's health began to decline, and he became evidently much troubled in mind. He had frequent conferences with my husband, and sometimes I saw a gloom upon Alfred's fine features; but he strove to be cheerful when with me, and I was too glad to see him smile to inquire too minutely into



the cause of his secret sorrow. On my part, I had nothing to complain of; my every wish continued to be gratified, even as they were in the earlier days of our marriage.

"At length, Alfred's father died; and scarcely were the arrangements for the funeral completed, and the body of the good, kind old man deposited in its final resting-place, before I could perceive that something of a serious nature occupied Alfred. He was frequently closeted whole days with gentlemen who were strangers to me, and for the first time since our marriage I began to think him neglectful of me. I need not dwell long upon this painful subject. One day Alfred was unusually downcast, and I, having in vain sought to cheer him, at length flung my arms around his neck and besought him, by the love he bore his wife, to tell me the cause of his distress, that I might share it with him. He looked at me steadily and mournfully for a few moments, and then said, in deep, earnest, loving tones which thrilled to my heart:—

"Dearest Agnes, can you love me in poverty and distress as you have done in wealth and in the sunshine of existence? Can you hear me say I am a beggar and still cling to me as you cling to me now?"

"Yes, dear Alfred," I replied, "and if it be, indeed, possible, love you dearer. Why should not I, your wife, share the misfortunes as well as the prosperity of her husband? Was it not to be yours ever, for better, for worse, I took the vows at the marriage altar, and shall I renounce them on feeling the first breath of misfortune? Never, dear Alfred—never. I am your wife—your own Agnes, in life—through sunshine and gloom, even unto death."

"He kissed me and the tears started to his eyes as he replied—

"And is it so? This is what I thought, yet sometimes scarcely dared to hope. Now half the bitterness of my affliction is past. Agnes, darling, I, who, but a month or two since was the imagined heir to wealth, am

now a beggar. Henceforward I must depend upon my own exertions for subsistence, and, severest blow of all, you, dearest, must quit this splendid mansion and give up the luxuries of life, at least, to bear a part in your husband's troubles. Again I ask, dear, can you renounce these and love me still?"

"All, I can give up all, everything but my husband and my child, and love them dearer than ever, for they will have my undivided care."

"A mutual kiss sealed this compact, and then my dear husband proceeded to tell me that his father, on quitting active business, had entered into large speculations, in connection with others, and that, through unforeseen circumstances, they had failed. He, though only equally responsible with the rest, as he had been led to believe, had been compelled to bear the heaviest portion of the losses, which had swallowed up his whole property, large as it had been, and left still a little deficiency.

"Our next care was to think how my husband had best apply himself in order to maintain his family. I suggested the profession for which he had been educated; but he said his habits of life had been such that he never could apply himself to the practice of the law with any hope of success. 'Besides,' he added, 'the profession is overrun already.'

"When in England he had become acquainted with two or three distinguished actors, and this acquaintance had been ripened into intimacy—for they were a class of men with whom he possessed many feelings in common, and while in that country he had been for some months, one of a company of amateur performers who had acquitted themselves very creditably. He had formed a resolution not to let his poverty be known in his own land, but to state his altered circumstances to his English friends, and ask them for advice as to his following the profession of an actor for a livelihood, which he had previously practiced for amusement. He did not write; but with the little money he possessed, he took passage for London, and there, through the influence of John

Kemble and one or two others, he obtained an engagement at the theatre of a large provincial town.

"However, he found that it was a very different thing to play as an amateur for the amusement of friends, and to play before a cold, critical public for the means to purchase bread. Had he been brought up in youth to the stage, he would probably have become a successful actor—for you will pardon the partiality of a wife, who firmly believes in the strength of her husband's natural talent; but he was too old and too much used to prosperity to bear with the sneers of critics, and the hisses and contemptuous remarks of an uneducated audience, from whom, by social habits and education, he was widely separated. I, anxious to help him, was also persuaded to try my fortune on the boards; but alas! with the like ill success. Suffice it to say, that the spirits and health of my beloved husband sunk beneath his misfortunes, and a violent fever which he caught after exposure to cold, soon left me a widow in a strange land."

Here the poor lady was so agitated, that for some moments she was silent, while suppressed sobs caused her bosom to heave with emotion. At length she continued:—

"After my poor Alfred's death, the public, perhaps moved by pity for my misfortunes, began to look with a more favorable eye on my endeavors, and I gradually, under the assumed name of B——l, grew into some degree of favor, and if my health had continued good, might have arisen to fame; but I found disease was making encroachments upon my constitution, always predisposed to consumption, and I was compelled to quit the stage. I had saved a little money; with that I returned to the United States, in the hope that the change might be beneficial to me—but I have found no relief, until I sent for you, whose name I recollected as soon as I heard it mentioned by a friend who had called to see me.

"What little money I had brought with me, was soon spent, and since then I have endeavored to support myself and my poor little Annie, by turning to account

some little natural talent I possessed for drawing. Annie takes my sketches to the picture dealers for me; but I am sorry to say that my poor exertions can scarcely procure me bread and the humblest of lodgings. This is all I have to tell. I, who too proudly thought, when a child, I was born to enjoy a life of happiness and ease, have since been taught a bitter lesson—but one that I hope I have profited by."

She ceased, and I could not repress the expression,

"Can it be possible, my dear Mrs. S——, that you were the actress—once the flattered of the newspaper critics—the talented and accomplished Mrs. B——l?"

"Even so," she replied, mournfully—"and while I was thus flattered, and nightly smiling to the plaudits of a gratified audience, even then my heart was breaking."

It is unnecessary for me to extend this sketch further than merely to say that Mrs. S—— lived for upwards of a year after this, and I and other friends purchased such drawings, &c., as she had on hand, or worked at, at such times as in the course of her insidious disease she found herself in better health than usual, at prices which insured her competence, and at her death, we sent little Annie to school. The child was worthy of our care, and grew up to be an accomplished and graceful young woman. She was some years ago married to a lawyer, who is doing well, and who is not, as was her poor father, unfitted by habit and a life of inglorious ease, from following his profession.

## CHAPTER XIV.

## THE DEATH-BED OF THE SPENDTHRIFT.

I MENTIONED in my last "leaf," the name of a fellow-student at Harvard University, Edward Marsden. We were college chums, and had shared alike our studies and our pleasures, often the latter, I am sorry to say to my own disadvantage, for Ned, as I used familiarly to call him, had much more abundant means at his command, as the only son of a retired merchant, than I had as the son of an independent, but by no means wealthy New England farmer, who had some half dozen children to provide for. Ned was an erratic genius—everybody liked him, and yet the staid elders of the college, and the cautious papas and mammas of the neighborhood always held him up as a type of reckless character not to be imitated by their own sons, and although the young ladies were delighted with his companionship, scarcely one of the families whom he visited, where there were marriageable daughters, considered him as an eligible son-in-law, notwithstanding at his father's death he would come into possession of considerable property.

No one ever saw Edward Marsden engaged at his studies, and yet he always maintained a foremost position in his class at college; but I knew that after spending the entire day until late at night, in some frivolous pursuit, in fishing, shooting or riding, he would come into his room when every one else was about retiring to rest, and burn the lamp till day-light, engaged in intense study. He would then throw himself down on his bed for a couple of hours, rise, douse himself well in cold spring water, and be prepared for his various studies, without failing, as I believe, in one single instance. Ned was studying medicine more for the sake of amusement, and that he might have a nominal profession, than any

thing else; he had studied law for two years, and then thrown it up, because it was, he said, too dry and tedious for a gentleman, and too full of chicanery and double dealing for an honest man. He then turned his attention to chemistry, and studied it with the most devoted earnestness for one year, when, upon some frivolous pretence, he threw that aside; and, while he kept up as usual, the study of the classics, he spent his time in arranging and retouching a collection of fugitive poems which he asserted he was preparing for the press. These, however, were never published—chiefly I believe, because he could get no publisher to purchase the manuscript. So one evening, after having imbibed rather an undue quantity of wine, he made quite a melo-dramatic *auto-de-fe* of it, in spite of my endeavors to prevent him, spouting some Latin verses on the burning of the Alexandrian library, while his manuscript was consuming.—He had a natural talent for drawing, and when he had consummated this sacrifice of the gifts of the muses, he swore that he would leave college and become an artist. Accordingly he went home and remained six months; but at the expiration of that period, I was surprised by his bursting into my bed-room before I was up one morning, and telling me that he had returned to study medicine. This study he pursued until the death of his father, (his mother had died some years before,) when he had but a few days before attained his majority. His father had not died so wealthy a man as had been expected; nevertheless Edward found himself in the possession of some thirty thousand dollars. He was greatly distressed at his father's death, and as he had gone home on hearing the sad tidings, I saw nothing of him for three months. At the expiration of that time, he came to visit me, and stayed a few days with me, during which period, he treated the whole of the students to a grand festival, at which Bacchus was worshipped to the fullest extent. So much so, indeed, that some very disgraceful scenes were enacted—several of the guests being found under the table, sleeping off the effects of the carouse

among empty bottles and broken glasses, while others, singing, "They wouldn't go home till morning, till daylight did appear," perambulated the streets of Boston, knocking down watchmen and committing other acts of lawlessness, which led to the incarceration of a dozen of the number, and if I mistake not to two or three expulsions from college.

Having done mischief enough at the place where he certainly should have learnt better things, young Marsden went to New York, and I saw no more of him until some months after my own removal to this city, when I by chance met him in Broadway. He invited me to call and see him at his apartments in an hotel on the Battery, and on visiting him, I found him keeping bachelors' hall in grand style. It was late in the evening when I called, and on being shown up to Mr. Marsden's room by the waiter, I found him reclining on an ottoman in an apartment gorgeously furnished in oriental style, smoking a hookah through perfumed water, a black boy attending the bowl of the pipe, to replenish it with the finest Turkish tobacco, after the style of the East.

He was arrayed in a Persian robe with turban, and pointed, turned up slippers of superb workmanship, while the apartment was scented with burning pastiles and a splendid chandelier cast a light over furniture of the most magnificent description.

"You see I am going it strong, doctor," was his salutation as I entered—"nothing like it, is there?"

Live while you live, the epicure would say,  
And taste the pleasures of the present day.

That's my motto, old fellow. I leave out the second stanza—it belongs to those of a different creed. I'm an epicurean philosopher."

I asked him if he was practising his profession, as I was acquainted with the names of most of the members of my profession in the city, and did not see his name among them.

"No," he replied, "hang medicine, doctor; excuse me,



THE BACHELOR AT HOME.

I don't apply the expression to its professors, but 'throw physic to the dogs—I'll none of it,' ahem! Shakespeare. Shakespeare was a wise man, and I can't do better than follow his advice, can I?"

I smiled, and trusting to our old intimacy, ventured to ask him how long his finances would allow him to support such extravagance.

"Oh!" he carelessly replied, "I don't know; in fact, to tell the truth, I don't know what money I have in my banker's hands. I draw out what I want, and when it's all gone I suppose they'll be quick enough in saying "No funds;" well, when that day comes, I shall sell off my furniture, my horses and carriage, and set up business in opposition to you, so you had better pray that the evil day be put off as long as possible; besides, perhaps I shall die before then; and another thing—I am going to get married to an heiress, a sweet creature, rather old though—fat, fair and forty, and a widow into the bargain—but what of that? if she wears false curls—mind I don't say she does, but I have my suspicions, because her hair is so deuced black, and that's not so often the case at her time of life—her money's good. She's got \$20,000 of her own, and as I guess my \$30,000 must even now be running to the end of its tether, why it'll set me up again, old fellow."

"You surely are joking," I replied, for I really thought he was; "what age are you now?"

"What age am I? Why, I'm; let me see. My dear fellow, just go to that book-case and fetch me that gilt lettered Bible of my mother's. I'm always confoundedly tired at night. If you want information it is but right you should be at the trouble of seeking it. I really don't know within a year or two how old I am. I'm getting up in years though. You'll see my name and the date of my birth on the title-page."

I humored him and took him the Bible.

"My dear fellow," he continued, "do please to look yourself. You see, if I drop my hookah I shall put my



pipe out, and that's deuced unpleasant, besides being very troublesome."

I turned to the title-page of the Bible, and found that he was in his twenty-fifth year.

"I told you I was getting up in years," he said, laughing; "I found two gray hairs in my head this morning, and made a holocaust of them to the goddess of vanity."

"Surely you are not serious in saying that you intend to marry a woman of forty?" I said.

"My good doctor, if you said forty-five you'd be nearer the mark. Indeed I'm not sure the fair dame is not bordering on the full half century. What of that? She'll be both mother and wife; and then, you see, money I must soon want, and money, by hook or by crook, I must have."

"But in your present style of living, how long will twenty thousand dollars last?" I added.

"Oh!" he laughingly replied, "as I'm living now, not long, I suppose; but as old Jack Falstaff says: 'I shall forswear sack and live cleanly' when I enter into the joys of wedlock; besides, my good, steady, sober doctor, I don't live so extravagantly now as you may be led to suppose. I don't drink hard, I don't gamble, I am no debauchee; all my pleasures are refined and gentlemanly, and money, although it goes fast enough in all conscience, any way, goes twice as far, in my way of enjoying it, than if I lived in apparently a much less expensive style, and resorted to more expensive and less refined pleasures. I am not only going to get married as I have told you; but the interesting ceremony will come off next week, and I shall send you a card of invitation to the wedding, so hold yourself prepared, and now enough said upon the subject; take a cigar and a glass of wine. I'm going to have a deviled chicken directly; join me in dispatching it, and let's talk of old times."

I saw it was no use arguing, so I did as he requested me, and after spending an hour in conversation about our college days and our old companions, I returned home. Sure enough, next week I did receive an invitation to the

wedding, and I could do no less than attend, with my wife. It was a magnificent affair, and made not a little stir at the time among the fashionables of the city, as much on account of the discrepancy of age, on the wrong side, between the bride and bridegroom, as on account of the splendor with which the whole affair was conducted.

As Marsden had told me, the bride was, I should judge, near fifty; but she must once have been very handsome, for she was still a fine looking woman. She was, as may be supposed, very fond of her husband; but although Marsden constrained himself to appear devoted to his bride, for with all his carelessness he was too kind-hearted willingly to cause pain to any one, the love was all on one side. However, the wedding passed over, and Marsden entered upon a fresh career of extravagance. I saw little of him, for although I visited him once for old acquaintance sake, his habits were of such a description that I had not the inclination, nor would it have been well for my friends to have believed that I was on terms of intimacy with him. About two years, or thereabouts, after the events had occurred that I have narrated, I was grieved, but I cannot say, much astonished, to learn that a separation had taken place between Marsden and his wife; she had gone home to her friends a ruined and heart-broken woman; for she had been so infatuated as to make no settlement of any portion of her property upon herself, and all had been recklessly squandered. Marsden, I learnt, had furbished up his medical acquirements, and on the strength of them and his proofs of having studied medicine at Harvard University, he had managed to procure a berth as surgeon on board a vessel bound from Boston to India.

Two or three years passed away, and I heard no more of him. I had the curiosity, when the vessel he had sailed in returned from India, to write to Boston, to learn whether he had returned on board of her; but I received a letter from the friend whom I had commissioned to make the inquiry, stating that the captain had told him

that Marsden had drawn what money was due to him in India, and indeed a considerable advance, and under pretence of going on an excursion a few miles in the country, had left the ship intentionally, or something had happened to him; but although every inquiry had been instituted, nothing could be learnt regarding his fate.

Knowing his reckless habits, I had given him up as dead, when a young friend of mine who was chief officer of an Indiaman, paid me a visit at New York, on his return from a voyage to the East, and casually mentioning Marsden's name one day, (my friend had been acquainted with him when at Harvard) he told me that he had met him hawking about samples of tea in Calcutta; that Marsden had attempted to avoid him, but he was determined to speak to him, and shortly afterwards meeting him again employed in the same avocation, near the "Chandpaul Ghāt," he had abruptly addressed him, in such a manner that he could not help but recognize him. Marsden then gave him his address, at an obscure locality between the white and native cities called "Go-reahmah Tollah;" but on making inquiry at the place designated, he found that he had been deceived. About twelve months after this, I again casually learnt that he had been recognized by some one who had known him in Boston, engaged in the capacity of a schoolmaster, in the house of a Parsee merchant, whose children he was instructing in the English language; but as, unfortunately, as in former days, in our classical schools, whatever it may be at present, and I fear it is not greatly improved for the better, far too little attention was paid while studying Virgil and Horace, to the simple rules of the English grammar; Marsden, although like all well educated men, a correct speaker from habit, was by no means a theoretical grammarian, and as the educated Parsees are noted for their correctness in the rudiments of education, he had been dismissed from what had been really a remunerative employment, on account of his having, in the hearing of the father of his pupils, falsely parsed a sentence of English grammar.

I cannot say how long a period had elapsed, but it must have been three years at least, before I again heard aught of my old college chum. And in the multitudinous cares of business and an increasing family, his existence was well nigh forgotten, when, one day, in passing up Market-street, Philadelphia, whither I had gone on business, a well-known voice attracted my attention, hailing passengers for a hack-stage which traversed that leading thoroughfare of the Quaker city, (it was before the era of omnibuses) I turned my head, and sure enough—I could not be—I was not mistaken—there was my old college chum, Edward Marsden, seated on a coach-box, striving with others for a fare. I had no particular business with a coach; but I determined to engage that one. So, without allowing him to recognize me, I got in, and ordered him, in a feigned voice, to drive to a place some miles distant, beyond the confines of the city.

On arriving at the village I had designated, I alighted, and entering the tavern, called for a private room, and then desired the landlord to send the driver to me, as though I wished to pay him his fare, or give him fresh orders respecting my return to the city.

He came into the room, and I immediately stepped up to him, and taking him by the hand, said, "Is it possible! Can this be Edward Marsden?"

He blushed until the blood dyed his swarthy, unshaven cheeks a deep red, stammered confusedly, and at length said, "it is; and you are Dr. ——. I saw you yesterday and recognized you; but for reasons you may well imagine, avoided you."

"But how in the name of wonder do I see you thus? Surely a man of your talents and acquirements, however reduced he may become by the fluctuations of fortune, should rise again to a more congenial position than that in which I now find you?"

"Fallen in fortune! Rise again!" he replied, while a sardonic sneer overspread his features and gave a shockingly sinister expression to his countenance, which was seared by the lines marked by intemperance and reck-

lessness now grown habitual. "Rise again! How can a man rise again when he has lost character, caste, his good name and fame, the sympathy of his friends—all, everything! How can a man rise again when the powers of heaven, earth and hell have conspired to crush him, and to render him a noxious, crawling reptile, rather than a being formed after God's own image, as the parsons cantingly say? How can a man rise from the slough of despair when he has no means of staving off the pangs of hunger, save the few cents he may chance to glean by labor and exposure from daylight until midnight, and then be compelled by the pressure of circumstances to rest,—if rest it can be termed—amidst the vilest of the vile in the sneaking abodes of penury and vice. Rise again! James —, you will excuse my familiarity, I know and feel it is out of place now; but this meeting has recalled to my mind too forcibly the memories of other days, and compelled me to recollect what I strive to forget, the knowledge of what I might have been, what I now am, and what I am doomed to be henceforward, until my carcase is borne to some 'Potter's Field' without a friend or mourner to see it deposited even in that outcast burial place, or perhaps dragged from the river into whose waters I should be doing mercy to myself and to mankind by ridding the world of my presence."

While thus speaking, his countenance and his voice had resumed something of the appearance and tone of former days; but they again assumed their dejected reckless, devil-may-care, despairing look and tone, as he raised his voice in conclusion, and added, "Rise again! Doctor —, do you want to drive me mad quicker than fate is doing. Ha! ha! can the arch fiend that priests tell us of rise again from the depths of hell to which he has been consigned. My fare is seventy-five cents; you must find some other conveyance to carry you back to Philadelphia."

I, however, would not allow him to quit me thus; and at length, after considerable difficulty, I managed to gain

the mastery over his better feelings, and prevailed upon him to accompany me to New York, promising to put him in the way of doing something to gain a living, more consonant with his education and natural talent.

"I can apply myself to nothing," he said to me as we were on our way to New York; for I had determined not to lose sight of him, and had provided him with an outfit at a ready-made clothing store in Philadelphia; "I never take a book in my hand, and have not touched pen for years. Brandy is my solace and the only friend I have, for when its fumes madden my brain, then—then only do I thoroughly forget my misery."

We arrived in New York; and at his urgent request, keeping his presence in the city unknown even to my own family, I procured him decent private lodgings, and attended him professionally until his broken constitution was as much restored as ever it could be; for the re-action consequent on his change of habits, although those habits were greatly for the better, had thrown him into a fever, and at one time I despaired of his life. At length he recovered and gave promise that with care his constitution might be so far restored as to give him yet many years of life and comparative health, for he was still a young man; and when he was able to apply himself to business I got him a situation as clerk in a store. For some weeks he was all that I could have desired; but his vices were constitutional, and should have been corrected in early youth. I found I might as well attempt to train the growth of the gnarled oak as to turn him from the evil tenor of his ways. Those which at first had been mere venial faults, which might have been curbed if not entirely eradicated, had now become habitual vices; and his spendthrift habits, only sins against himself when he had the means of gratifying them, had now assumed such permanency that to indulge them he scrupled not to resort to crime.

He had been about six weeks in his new employment, when one evening a ring at my door bell brought the

footman into the parlor, for at that time I had arrived at the dignity of keeping a man-servant.

"If you please, sir, a person wishes to see you privately," said the servant.

"Who or what is he?" said I.

"He would not give his name, sir, and appears highly excited. I think he is either drunk or mad," was the reply.

I was somewhat doubtful as to the propriety of seeing this man, but at length I came to the conclusion that I would do so, and I directed the servant to show him into a private apartment, whither I followed him. My visitor was Edward Marsden, and I was deeply grieved to see that he was in a state of intoxication, not so much so, however, as to confuse his ideas; but he was excited in a very high degree.

"Well, James," he said, as soon as I had closed the door, "this is the way in which I thank you for your kindness. You know the old proverb—'Set a beggar on horseback,' &c. All's up with me at K——'s, and I've got my *mittimus*. I've come to say 'good bye,' and then I'm off, the d—l knows where. Any way, you needn't follow me or inquire after me. You'd better not, any way," he added, with a menacing look.

"What has been the matter?" I said, for I saw it was useless to exasperate him, or to reply to him in terms of harshness, in his then excited state.

"Matter enough—I'm discharged incurable, that's all. You'll know more, by-and-bye. A pretty recommendation you gave to old K—— when you got him to place trust in me."

I could get nothing further from him, and after muttering several incoherent phrases, for the liquor he had imbibed was now beginning to take more effect, he left the house. I followed him at a distance and saw him enter his lodging house, when I returned home.

The next day, while making my calls, I called in at Mr. K——'s, the gentleman who at my request had employed him, and inquired the cause of the difficulty.

The old gentleman received me gruffly enough, and though I had told enough of his former history to render the storekeeper cautious, at least for some time, as to how he trusted him, I had enough to do to satisfy him, as it appeared, that I was not privy to his vices, while the fact was I did not think, despite all he had told me, that he had been guilty of what the world designates as crime.

At length the old gentleman was somewhat mollified. "The fellow," he said, "after the first three weeks, began to show symptoms of drinking, and the day before yesterday, I found, on watching him, that small sums of money which for some time past had been missing from the till, were taken by him and spent in the indulgence of his bestial propensities; but for my respect for you I would have caused him to be arrested. As it is, I have discharged him, and that without his wages."

I left the house, deeply grieved, and the sad affair made me low-spirited all day. On reaching home in the evening, I found a note from his landlady, whose security I was, for his board and lodging, stating that Mr. Marsden was lying in bed laboring under *delirium tremens*, and that she, fearing he was dying, requested my immediate attendance.

I was thoroughly shocked, and I went immediately to the boarding house. On seeing my patient, I found the landlady's words were too true. Edward Marsden was laboring under *delirium tremens*, and in his enfeebled state of body, I foresaw at once that the attack would be fatal. He was unconscious, and was alternately lying on the bed, tearing his hair and uttering the vilest and most incoherent blasphemies, or walking excitedly about the apartment, singing and laughing wildly.

"Are you a policeman?" he said; "but you haven't got me yet," and he seized hold of the poker, and stood in a menacing attitude.

I have always found in these cases, as in every other species of insanity, the best plan was to humor the patient, and, at least, appear cool and undismayed. I therefore

replied—"Do you not know me, Edward. I am your old friend, James ——. It's a good idea of yours to take me for a policeman."

"What a fool I am," he said, advancing towards me, and putting his burning, trembling hand in mine. "But they'll come soon. I must be off. Won't you help to keep them off, doctor? By Jove, they won't take me alive."

I got him composed in some degree, and then administered brandy and laudanum, and he fell into a lethargic stupor. While I was still sitting by the bedside watching him, and was just on the point of starting, after telling the landlady to send for me should he become in any degree wakeful, or if any alteration should take place, and promising to call in the morning, when there was a sound of feet on the stairs, and a knock at the room door. I opened it, and a couple of officers entered the room.

"Our business," said the chief, "is with Edward Marsden, we hold a warrant for his arrest for forgery."

"Forgery! Upon whom?"

"Upon Mr. R——, to the amount of \$900. He must go with us to the lock-up till morning."

"But you cannot take him from the house in his present condition; to attempt to remove him would cause his instant death. I will go bail for his appearance when called for."

"We have no authority to take bail," said the officer, "but if you will give my companion a certificate to the effect that the prisoner is not in a condition to be removed, he will take it to the magistrate, and I will remain here during the night."

To this I acceded, and was drawing up the certificate when Marsden awakened from his troubled sleep, and seeing the policemen in the room, sprang wildly from his bed, and before any one had any conception of his intentions, he had opened the window and sprang into the street, from the height of three stories. He was killed instantly, and the mandate of the law was served upon a senseless corpse. It was true that he had committed

the forgery, and the money was found in his packed trunk. It had doubtless been his intention to have fled that night, had not the demon of drunkenness impeded his progress and hastened his unhappy end.

Thus perished one who had talents and education to have worked his way to eminence, but who had never been able to control the vice of extravagance, partly natural, and uncurbed in early youth.



## CHAPTER XV.

## THE ECCENTRIC.—A CHARACTER OF THE OLDEN TIME.

WHILE living near the Battery, during the early part of my practice, I had often noticed an old gentleman, whose sole occupation seemed to be to con over the contents of an old book-stall which was kept by a Scotchman in that neighborhood. No matter what the weather, summer or winter, fine or cloudy, aye, even rainy, I seldom passed in the morning on my way up town, that I did not observe this old fellow, spectacles on nose, eagerly thumbing the dilapidated and venerable lore for which the stall was noted; for the keeper prided himself on being an antiquarian, and if ancient tomes out of print, and long ago forgotten by the world, were to be found anywhere, they were to be procured at old M'Tavish's stall. Being somewhat addicted to taking up any book which lay before me myself, and curiously looking into its contents, I often stopped a minute or two while on my way to business, especially of a fine morning when I was tempted abroad a little earlier than usual, and we gradually grew to acknowledge a sort of passing acquaintance, on my part, generally a nod and a cheerful "good morning," but on the part of the old gentleman a grunt, as if it came from the husky throat of a bear; and to see him as he stood, his brown scratch wig showing beneath his old fashioned three-cornered cocked hat, his long skirted, snuff-colored coat, and his indispensables of the same hue, finished off by worsted stockings and buckled shoes, added to his hatchet face and protruding chin, and sunken mouth, which betokened age more than any other part of his person, for he was brisk enough in his movements, and his eyes, despite his spectacles, which he looked over instead of through, were bright, keen and restless

as those of an eagle, he looked the impersonation of an old miserly bibliopole of the past generation.

One day having made a purchase of some antique volume, when, for a wonder, the old gentleman was not present, I asked the keeper of the stall who his constant visiter was, and whether he was a profitable customer?

"Ye ken about as muckle o' him as I do mysel," returned the man; "I dinna ken who he is, but he spends hours, almost every day, at my stall, thumbing over every volume on the shelves, and often reading whole pages where onything interests him. As to his being a good customer, he's weel eneuch for that, mair especially when I get a fresh supply of auld beuks fra my brither in Edinbro'. Sometimes he buys the whole stock; but at other times he comes as you see to the stall, and thumbs them over just. I fancy he kens by heart maist every line of the standing stock o' my wares."

This was all I could glean from M'Tavish, and the next day the old man was at the stall as usual, but he was closely muffled about the throat, and, while passing, I heard a hoarse cough, showing the cause of his unwonted change of attire.

For some days he was absent from his usual post, but the next time I saw him there I stopped and noticed the same dry, hoarse, hacking cough.

I determined to address him on the subject, for the morning was damp, and quite unfitted for an aged invalid to be abroad, especially to be standing in one spot, as he was, as usual, intent upon the books.

"You appear to have a bad cough, sir?" I said interrogatively.

"Humph," was his brief reply; as I understood the tone, affirmatively.

"Surely this is an unfit morning for you to be abroad in," I added.

"And who may have given you the right to say when it's fit for me to be abroad, pray? Who are you?"

"The question may well be asked," I said, with a smile, "for, though for well nigh two years we have exchanged

greetings of a morning, I believe this is the longest conversation we have ever held together. I am a physician, sir, Dr. —, residing in this neighborhood, and, therefore, from my profession, I flatter myself capable of judging when it is proper for an invalid to be abroad."

"Humph—a physician! I thought as much; and you want to get me under your hands, eh!—found you out?—I don't like doctors—physic—all humbug. It's doctors fill the churchyards," and so saying, the old man pored more deeply into the book he was perusing when I came up, and deigned no further conversation.

He was now absent oftener than usual, and when I did see him at his accustomed spot, the cough which troubled him still lingered, and evidently gave him some alarm; for he glanced furtively at me, and often seemed as though he would have spoken, but desired me first to break the ice; but I had received such a rebuff when I ventured to speak to him before, that I determined he should address me first. One day, after a violent fit of coughing, he said:

"You seem young in your business, and haven't learnt yet half the humbug of your elders; you can come to my house if you like, at 10 o'clock to-morrow, and perhaps you can give me something to cure me of this plaguey cough, the only sickness I have ever had in my life—not that I believe you will though—get what money you can from me—that's all;" so saying, he took out an old pocket-book that might have vied in antiquity with the most ancient tome on my friend M'Tavish's stall, and writing his name and address on a blank leaf, he tore it out and gave it to me.

Willing to humor the old man, I took it good temperedly, notwithstanding the brusque manner in which it was offered, and the offensive expressions which accompanied it, and bowing a good morning, passed on my way.

As I walked up Broadway, I glanced at the leaf and read the address—Mr. —, No. — Maiden Lane, and recognized in the name one of the reputed wealthy men

of the city; an old bachelor of eccentric habits, who kept no company, but lived a perfectly retired life, only having a housekeeper, said to be as eccentric as her master, to look after his household.

The next morning, punctual to my appointment, I called at the house. It was an old building long since pulled down, displaying no outward pretensions to wealth or even comfort, and having before the lower part a piazza with wooden jalousies, reached by mounting a high, old fashioned Dutch stoop.

On knocking at the door, it was opened by a vinegar-faced housekeeper, of prim and staid aspect, who answered my inquiry, "Does Mr. W—— reside here?" by propounding another:

"Who may you be?" said she.

"I am Dr. —," I replied, "and I have called at the request of Mr. W., whom I met yesterday."

"Come in," she said, and left me standing in the passage, while she went up stairs, as I imagined, to her master's private apartment.

A long conversation appeared to take place between the two—for I must have waited fully ten minutes, and began to grow weary, when the prim mob cap appeared over the balustrade above, and a shrill voice squealed out:

"You can come up; but see and wipe your feet dry on the mat, and don't dirt the stairs."

I ascended the old fashioned stairs as requested; not without remarking that every article of furniture wore the appearance of being at least half a century old. I was ushered into a large dingy-looking, but even painfully neat room, by the house-keeper, and immediately confronted my old acquaintance, seated before the fire, diligently perusing an old mouldy, moth-eaten volume, which I recognized as one of the late importations of my antiquarian friend, McTavish.

"So, you've come?" was the greeting of the old gentleman, as he consulted a large turnip-shaped gold watch, which now a-days would attract curiosity, were it placed

for exhibition in Barnum's Museum. "Ten minutes behind your time; I like young people to be punctual.—They were also so in my time."

I explained that I had been kept waiting full ten minutes in the passage below, while the house-keeper announced my presence, and that the clock had struck ten as I knocked at the door.

"Aye," said he, "those women folks will clatter and chatter and know the rights and wrongs of everything; but what are you standing there for, gaping like a simpleton. I sent for you to cure my cough, if you can.—Take a chair, man."

Amused at the old gentleman's eccentric behavior, despite his rudeness, I did as he desired. After asking a few questions, which he answered gruffly enough, I satisfied myself that his cough would easily give way to proper remedies, and indeed that it would perhaps long ago have subsided, but for his imprudence and exposure to the weather.

I sat for a few moments chatting, or rather endeavoring to draw the old gentleman into conversation; but to no purpose. As soon as he had replied to my questions, he again referred to his book; and I noticed that the walls of the apartment were covered with book-shelves, all stored with like antiquated volumes, but in perfect keeping with the ancient, dark, polished furniture and the air of antiquity that pervaded the room. The volume he was perusing, I observed, from the large, faded, gilt letters on the back, was a treatise on marriage, by some learned man of the sixteenth century. Rather a strange work I thought, to so deeply interest such a faded piece of antiquity as my patient. I then rose to go, saying that I would send round some medicine which I had no doubt would afford him relief, and that in a few days he would be quite well.

I did not call the next day; but on the following morning I stopped at the door as I was passing by, and passed in with the house-keeper, who had been out for some purpose. I did not wait to have my name an-

nounced, but immediately went up to the room I had seen my patient in on the former visit, heedless of the scowls and mutterings of the abigail. I tapped gently at the door of the apartment, and the well known gruff voice cried:

"Come in."

I entered.

"Ah! it's you, is it—got no more of your quack medicine, eh? Throw it out of the window if you have."

I was astonished not so much at this salutation as that the medicine I had sent, had afforded no relief to the cough, which I perceived was no better.

"I am sorry," said I, "that the cough mixture I sent you, did not afford you relief."

"Did doctor's stuff ever afford relief to any body?" was the surly reply.

To this I said merely:

"Did you take it in flaxseed tea, according to the directions?"

"Flaxseed tea! What next? Quackery! I didn't take the stuff at all. There are the bottles. Their contents were emptied in the slop-bowl."

Although somewhat annoyed at the contumacy of the old gentleman, and at the summary disposal of my medicine, I could not help smiling at the idea of the old gentleman grumbling because medicine so disposed of, had done him no good. Although the cough was not now of a dangerous character, I was well aware that if it were not relieved, it might soon become so. I therefore determined to work upon his fears, and told him that I would not be accountable for the consequences, if he still continued obstinately to reject advice and refuse proper medicine.

"Eh! what!" said he. "The consequences! What consequences? It's only a cough; there's no danger. I am whole and sound. Only sixty-four years of age, and never had a cough or an hour's sickness before."

"There is certainly no danger at present," said I, "and your cough will yield to proper treatment; but the

fact that you have a sound constitution, and have been blessed through life with good health, is in itself liable to render you careless, and surely I need not inform you that a cough neglected, is always dangerous."

"Well," replied my patient, "send me some more of your medicine, and this time Mrs. Standish shall have nothing to do with it. I will have it all my own way."

I wished the old gentleman "good morning," and was proceeding down stairs, when he called me back and said:

"Doctor, can't I go down to the old bookstall for an hour?"

"By no means," I replied, "if you wish speedily to get rid of your cough."

"Well, then, if it must be so, will you ask M<sup>r</sup>Tavish if he has found the third volume of this 'Treatise on Marriage, by a learned physician of the sixteenth century,' and if he has, bring it with you next time you call?"

"I will," I replied, willing to oblige the eccentric old gentleman as far as I was able.

Two days afterwards I again called at the house, with the odd volume which M<sup>r</sup>Tavish had hunted up, and found my patient, as I expected, if he obeyed my injunctions, almost wholly relieved of his distressing cough, and consequently much more inclined to converse with some degree of civility than I had before seen him. My having brought him the book he was anxious for, also operated in my favor considerably, and the old gentleman, for the time being, at least, strove to banish the "bear" from his manners.

"You are the first physician, I believe, who ever gave a patient any real relief," said he, "a parcel of greedy money hunters as they are generally—not you, mind—but perhaps," he continued, as if to qualify the last compliment, "perhaps you may have some stuff which might be beneficial to a cough, though you could be of no service in any other sickness."

I replied that I hoped he would never give me any opportunity of testing my skill as regarded himself; but

that I trusted I might be found quite as useful, even in other disorders.

"Humph!" was the only word he uttered in reply.—For some minutes he sat quiet, and I would have quitted the room had I not perceived that he had something to say to me, and I waited to give him the opportunity of saying it in his own way.

"Dr. —," at length he said, "I believe you to be a young man of discretion. I thought so when I saw you stop so often at the old bookstall. By the bye, what age may you be?"

I smiled at the strange patronizing way of the old gentleman, and replied:

"I am a few months over thirty years."

"Humph! and are you married?"

"Oh, yes, and have two children."

"Too young sir, too young by thirty, or at least twenty years, for marriage. Hear what the learned Godolphin says. Oh! sir, there were physicians on the earth in the days when Godolphin wrote—not the mere empirics, sir, of the present day. I will read you the extract: "Godolphin's Treatise on Marriage. Tome 2d, chap. 16, page 301." "And being in full vigour of mynde and bodye, not given to debaucheries, or synneful lusttes, or gluttonies or other vices, I should advise that the age of sixty or thereabouts, be the proper age for a man to take to hymselffe a wyffe. For at thatte ripe age, man hath caste asyde hys follyes, and beginneth to seek after wysdom. Hys bodye and mynde having arrived at perfect maturity."

"Now," continued the old gentleman, having read the paragraph aloud to me, "now, I fully agree with the learned and excellent author, and decidedly object to boys of thirty or young men of forty-five, or even fifty, assuming the responsibility of the married condition; besides, sir, it is calculated to lead to over population, and to a consequent state of things which it is horrible even to contemplate; but at my age a man may honorably enter into the holy sacrament. In fact, doctor, I am thinking

of getting married myself. Mrs. Standish I know will oppose it; but my mind is made up, especially since I have read these invaluable old volumes, and as I have kept aloof from all company, I want some one as a confidant. What do you think of the project?"

I replied, that, as the learned Godolphin would, no doubt, say, he was now arrived at an age of maturity, when his own judgment was likely to prove the soundest, but as I had always been an advocate for matrimony, and after several years experience had seen no reason to change my mind, I could only say "better late than never," and also added that anything I could do to advance the happy day I would engage to do with the utmost pleasure. So saying, I bade him a good day, and went to make my usual round of calls.

When I again saw the old gentleman, he had quite recovered from his cough, and I could perceive that I had greatly progressed in his favor, notwithstanding the scowls of the housekeeper, who evidently thought I had in some measure, usurped her position. As soon as I entered the apartment my recovered patient put a twenty dollar bill into my hand, saying:

"There, doctor, there is your fee; not a word now—I know it's a good deal of money for the little use you have been; but never mind; take it, and, stay awhile. I wish you to see the young lady whom I am about to make my wife."

"The *young* lady!" I said, almost unwittingly.

"Humph! the man's a fool—hasn't got the sense I gave him credit for, I see. And pray sir, (directly addressing me,) why not the *young* lady? Does not the learned Godolphin say, 'And while the man should be stout and comely, and well up in years, to the end that his mynde be freed from vain conceits, the maiden should be younge and fayre, and likewise of comely countenance and seemely grace?' Answer me that, sir!"

I said that I had no doubt that he was right, and expressed the strongest faith in the wisdom of the learned Godolphin, and thus appeased the wrath of the old gen-

tleman, just as a knock at the door, followed by a light step on the stairs, announced that a female was coming, and in a few minutes a very pretty girl of not certainly more than 21 years of age entered the room with the housekeeper. She had brought a silk waistcoat for the old gentleman, which had been sent to her to be embroidered. Mrs. Standish, in the simplicity of her own heart, and her confidence in the frigidity of her master's, had been at great pains to procure the services of this young woman, as she was skilled in an art even then fast going out of fashion, but which the old gentleman still most pertinaciously adhered to with regard to his own costume.

The young woman's workmanship had so pleased him, that he sent for her to thank her in person when he paid her, and her beauty and artlessness had then made such an impression on his heart, that he had found it necessary to make an earlier visit than usual the next morning to the book-stall, to banish the new sensations which had sprung up within his breast. Here he had fallen in with the works of some author of the 16th century, named Godolphin, treating in a strange style on matrimony, and despite the cough he had caught, it was the desire of finding the third volume of this old work, which had brought him abroad, and had led to my first speaking to him on the impropriety of thus exposing himself to the damp air. It appeared also that the preliminaries had been arranged; that the girl's mother, a respectable widow, had been spoken to, and that the young woman herself had been so dazzled with the prospect of a sudden leap from poverty and labor to wealth, for I cannot conceive that love could have had anything to do with the affair on her part, that she too had consented; the housekeeper had puffed and blown, pish'd and faugh'd, until she was tired; but in vain; the old man was inexorable in his determinations, and at the time I was let into the secret, all was settled, the old gentleman wanting only, just for the sake of giving him confidence, a friend of his own sex to see him through the ceremony, and for that reason he had fixed upon me.



I will make my story short. At length the day arrived; the wedding was to be strictly private, and it was so managed that none, even of the neighbors, were aware of it being about to take place. On the happy day, the bridegroom appeared in a sky-blue coat, instead of the snuff-colored one he usually wore; the snuff-colored breeches were also exchanged for black silk plush, and silk stockings replaced the worsted ones; a pair of diamond buckles sparkled in his shoes, and at his knees, while a new three-cornered cocked hat crowned his attire, and the antiquarian book-worm stood transmogrified into a beau of the reign of Queen Anne, or the first George, or sometime thereabouts; the bride was modestly attired in fawn-colored silk, and was accompanied by her mother only as bridesmaid, while I stood best man to the groom. It was, altogether, a droll wedding; but notwithstanding the disparity of age and of disposition, and of condition, I have every reason to believe it was a happy one. Mr. W——, old as he was—just in his prime, as he called himself—became the father of two children, a boy and a girl; full of eccentricity to the last, at the age of seventy, he took it into his head to purchase an estate in Virginia, and to dispose of his New York property. To this estate he removed, and died there at the age of eighty-three. His widow survived him about five years, dying when about forty-five years of age. The children grew up and married, and they and their descendants are yet living—and some of them, perhaps, may recognize their worthy but eccentric progenitor in the above sketch.

## CHAPTER XVI.

## THE IMPROVIDENT.

I HAD just dined, one summer's evening, in 1834, when a ring at the door bell brought the servant into the parlor.

"A letter for you, sir," said the man, handing me a note neatly folded, and directed in a man's handwriting; but there was a sort of vacillation in the characters, that in pursuance of a hobby I have somehow got hold of, and which I often find correct in its theory—that one may form some estimate of the character from the handwriting, I should not have considered the writer to be of a very firm disposition. However, I merely make this remark, as it was another test in which my theory came out correct; of course I did not think of anything of the kind at the moment, but broke the seal of the letter and read as follows:—

"Will Doctor —— please to call as soon as convenient at No. 6 Liberty street, and inquire for a lodger named Kreutzer. Call this evening, if possible, for I feel very unwell.

CARL KREUTZER.

"Well," thought I, "this is too bad after having been abroad since nine o'clock this morning until five, to be thus unceremoniously called out again just as I have dined and got on my dressing gown and slippers," and I tossed the letter to my wife, saying:—

"I think it will be soon enough to call in the morning as I drive into town."

"The boy is waiting for an answer, sir," said the servant.

I looked at my wife, who had read the note:—

"Decide, Susy," said I; "do you think I had better call to-night?"

"I think that twenty years ago you would have been only too glad to have obeyed a call from a patient, at any or all hours of the day or night," said my wife, archly smiling, "and I don't think that prosperity should make us careless of our fellow creatures when we may be of service to them."

"Then I understand that I am to don my boots and coat and again to drive a couple of miles over the jolting paving stones of Broadway?"

"No need of that either, dear," replied my wife. "The evening is fine, and the streets are free from dust, in consequence of the showers that fell in the morning, and I will accompany you; I wish to call at the dry goods stores, and I will wait in one of them while you make your visit."

"Ah! the wind lies in that quarter, does it?" thought I. "Well, true enough. I am now so occupied with the duties of my profession that my wife does not get as much of my company abroad, as it is reasonable she should expect. So, although I have a shrewd guess that her philanthropy this evening is partially moved by an intended foray upon the contents of my pocket book, I don't see that I ought to object to such things occasionally. Thank God, I can afford it; and, to say the truth, I can't charge her with extravagance. Her economy in our day of struggling, aided much in placing me in my present comfortable position. Besides, a dry goods store is always a sufficient lure to allow the ladies to practice a little connubial deceit. For my part, I am inclined to think that Satan tempted Eve with the shadow of one of the future dry goods stores, which were afterwards to exercise such fascination over her sex, instead of with an apple; and I am the more confirmed in this opinion, because it is very probable that thence she conceived the idea of sewing up aprons of fig leaves. So I cheerfully responded:—

"Well, then, my love, put on your bonnet and shawl and it shall be as you desire."

"You can put your purse in your pocket," said my wife.

"I presume so," said I, smilingly. "In case the patient I am about to visit, should turn out one of your distressed patients, eh?"

"Now, don't be provoking," she replied. "I want to purchase a quantity of linen for your use, and besides, James," and as she said this she came up and kissed me, "You know you promised me, I don't know how long ago, a new cashmere shawl, and I saw such a beautiful one in Broadway, this morning."

"Yes," I replied, "I believe I promised it to you as long ago as the evening before last. However, you shall have it to-night—so hasten and dress."

In a few minutes we were in the streets, and in the course of half an hour I had left my wife in a dry goods store and was wending my way down Liberty-street, towards the North River. I had no difficulty in finding the number of the dwelling. It was an old straggling boarding house which has long since given place to a more modern and more substantial dwelling. On making inquiry for Mr. Kreutzer, I was directed to ascend to the attic floor and knock at the first door on the landing. I did as I was desired, and on knocking at the door, a young man, slender and much emaciated, made his appearance, and I entered a rudely furnished dirty room in which was a bed, which, by the appearance of it, I judged my patient had just risen from:—

"I am exceedingly obliged to you for your prompt visit, Dr. —," said the young man, who was apparently about twenty-five or perhaps thirty years of age. He spoke with scarcely a perceptible foreign accent. "I have heard much of your skill and also of your kindness of heart, which has led you to visit, gratuitously, those who are unable to pay your fees. I do not wish to deceive you Dr. —, I have no money and am in arrears with my landlady even for this miserable lodging. I have no hope of getting better without medical assistance, and I made inquiry who among the physicians of

the city were most likely to attend me, for a time, without pressing immediate payment. Mind, I intend eventually to pay you, for I am by every mail expecting a remittance from my mother, who resides at Munich, and is a widow lady of considerable property. If you doubt my words, you can ask my landlady whether I have not within the twelve-month I have lodged here, received two or three considerable remittances."

He ceased speaking, and I must confess I felt somewhat inclined to consider him an impostor; for often had I been deceived, after attending a patient gratuitously, and even keeping him during his sickness from actual starvation, by donations of money, and found at last that all my care and charity had been expended upon a worthless character.

And here, let me remark, that although when people are ill they are ready enough to send for a physician, it has become quite a joke to remark upon their exorbitant charges, and a doctor's bill is almost invariably grudgingly paid; yet, I speak not alone from my own experience, but that of all my professional brethren; I believe there are no men who annually bestow so much of their time and money in relieving their fellow-creatures without hope of fee or reward. Some there may be, callous to the calls of suffering humanity; but they, I hope, and I truly believe, form the invariable exceptions to a general rule. In fact, the profession of a physician, while it necessarily renders him to outward appearance careless of pain and suffering, renders him peculiarly open to the calls of real distress. But, to my story.

As I have said, I was at first inclined to treat the young man as an impostor; but he had an open, honest countenance, and was evidently an educated man; besides, he had told me plainly what I had to expect, and then he looked miserably attenuated, and the peculiar pinched appearance of his nostrils led me to believe that at least much of his illness arose for want of food proper to sustain a stout-framed young man in health. I at once determined to satisfy myself of this, and I said:

"You board in this house, I presume?"

"I rent this room, only, Doctor, and get my meals at my own expense."

"What are the symptoms of your disease?" said I.

"I feel a sinking of the entire system," he replied, "and am constantly troubled with headache and heated skin. I fancy I have strong febrile symptoms too."

I felt his pulse and desired him to show me his tongue, the latter was thickly furred:

"You have no fever," I said, "indeed your pulse is low rather than otherwise, and the heated skin and general prostration of the system arises from a stomach wretchedly deranged. Have you any appetite?" he looked at me earnestly for a moment, and then exclaimed,

"Thank God I have no appetite just now. I have not had for some days."

There was something in the tone of his voice as he uttered these words, which struck me at once with the conviction that my suspicions were correct, and that the young German had actually been reduced to his present condition by a lack of nutritious food, and the indulgence of a craving appetite in such cheap and unwholesome victuals as his limited means would enable him to procure. I determined to sift the matter to the bottom:

"What food have you been living upon?" said I, "show me what you have in your room at present."

He hesitated; but I insisted, telling him that unless he did as I desired, I must leave him, as I could not prescribe for him, without being made acquainted with every phase of his disorder and the causes which had led to it. After some further hesitation, he produced from a cupboard at the head of his bed, a portion of a mouldy loaf, made of the most villainous flour and the remnant of some dried German sausage, which was nearly in a putrid state.

"Doctor," he said, "I did not intend to tell you—to tell anybody of the utter distress to which I am reduced. On such food as this, that I have purchased as the refuse

of the stores, I have lived for the last two months. This week I have tasted nothing.—Thank God, I have no appetite.”

“Have you no money?” I inquired.

“For the last fortnight I have not had one cent to bless myself with. For the past two months, I have portioned out the remainder of my mother’s last remittance in a dole of a few cents daily.”

“How long is it since you first felt symptoms of illness?” I asked.

“About four weeks.”

“And how long have you been in this country?”

“Two years.”

“And since you arrived, before you fell sick, in what business were you employed?”

“In none. I could find nothing to do.”

“Nothing to do!” said I in amazement, “a healthy stout young man of gentlemanly appearance and good education as you must have been, could find nothing to do in two years!”

“No, Doctor; you may think it strange, but I could not. Nobody wanted my services in anything that I had been educated for.”

“But,” replied I, “surely, sooner than live as you appear to have done, I would have applied myself to any species of labor.”

“I could find no labor to perform,” said he again, “none of any kind.”

“On what, then, have you subsisted?”

“On my mother’s remittances, which if they were tardy sometimes, and kept me in poverty, never before failed me so long, and never reduced me to the state of destitution I am in at present—now, too, when most I need aid.”

It was useless to protract the conversation further, and I therefore gave him a prescription to a druggist of my acquaintance, for such medicines as I thought would be serviceable. I saw nothing could be effected until his system was thoroughly purged, and yet I feared to give

him powerful medicines, in his weak state. I therefore prescribed a dose of magnesia in scalded milk, and desired his landlady, as I descended the stairs, to furnish him with some gruel, if he felt hungry after his medicine had operated, stating that I would be responsible for any expense she might incur. She seemed a kind-hearted woman enough, and corroborated what he had told me about his receiving remittances from home; then, she added, “he pays his rent, and lives like a fighting-cock, until his purse gets low again, when he writes home again, and doles out his few remaining dollars until he gets a fresh supply.”

“Are you aware that he is perishing from starvation?” said I.

“Lord bless you! no sir,” replied the woman. “Once or twice he has been very hard up, and I ventured to offer him some food from my own table; but he indignantly refused it, and asked me if I thought he was a beggar living on charity. He was very proud, sir, before he was taken ill, and would crave assistance from nobody.”

“Do you know,” said I, “who he is? that is to say, anything of his family?”

“From what I have heard from other lodgers, his countrymen, he is the son of a German Count, and had to fly his country on account of some political scrape he got into; but he is different from most of his countrymen—for they generally find some way of getting a living; but he is quite thriftless. I never saw any one like him.”

I left the house, having before I left my patient, promised to call upon him in the morning, and rejoined my wife, who had ample time to select her shawl, and to whom, as we walked home, I related the particulars of my visit.

“You see, my love,” I said in concluding my story, “how happy you are in the patients you especially recommend to my care. This is another of your gratuitous patients.”

"We were once poor enough ourselves, James," was the only reply she made, and I felt that she had said enough.

The next morning I repeated my visit to my patient, whose singular habits had already begun to interest me. As I expected, I found him considerably better, although it was still necessary for him to take purgatives, in consequence of the thorough disorganization of the natural functions of his system. He, however, had recovered his appetite, and my care now was only to see that he did not overfeed himself, in consequence of the reaction which had already commenced. I also, at his request, endeavored to discover how it was that his mother had not replied to his last letter. I found, after some time spent in inquiry, that he had confided the fact of his expecting a money letter to a fellow-boarder, who had gone to the post office and received it, and had since gone to Texas. He wrote to his mother again, and this time with better success—for at the expiration of three months, (the mails were tardy in those days,) he received an affectionate letter from his parent, and a draft for four hundred dollars. He immediately desired me to repay myself the money I had expended upon him, and begged me to take such a fee as I thought just; but this I positively refused, advising him as a friend interested in his welfare, to lay out the money, amounting to some \$350 after all his debts were paid, in getting into some respectable employment, for many descriptions of which he was eminently qualified, being a good linguist and writing a good hand, besides possessing an accurate knowledge of book-keeping; but my advice might as well have been given to the winds. I was utterly astonished, knowing the privations and wretchedness he had undergone, to meet him, about a month afterwards in Broadway on horseback, attired in the very extremity of the fashion. He spoke to me and told me he had removed to handsome lodgings near the Battery, desiring me at the same time to call upon him.

I saw that he was incorrigible and shook my head as

I passed on, confident that this extravagance must soon come to an end in one situated as he was. I was right. In a very few weeks, he made his appearance at my residence, all his valuables pawned or sold, and professing extreme penitence for his former improvidence, begged me to aid him in his endeavor to obtain employment. I was in hopes he had at last "sown his wild oats," and I spoke to some friend through whose means he obtained a mercantile situation; but he soon lost it again—for he obstinately refused to do any thing which his vocabulary construed as menial, although nothing more was required of him than is every day expected from junior clerks, members of the most respectable families in the city.

He was dismissed, and thoroughly tired of him, I left him to his own resources; and thus, forced to do something or starve, I believe he filled, for a few days, various situations, which he lost for the same reason he had lost his first one. To make my story short, however, fortune gave him one more chance. While in a state of the utmost poverty, he called upon me one day to say that a letter was advertised for him, in the post-office, and begged for the loan of a few shillings, to get it out. I gave them to him, and the next morning he called at my house—joy depicted upon his countenance.

"You have received good news, I presume," I said, coldly.

"Yes, doctor," he replied. "I can return to Munich. My friends have obtained a free pardon for me, and my mother has sent me money to pay my passage home."—He gave me the letter to read, and I was sufficiently a German scholar to perceive that it was as he had stated.

With many thanks for my kindness, he left me, and shortly after sailed in a vessel bound to Hamburg. I saw no more of him for many years. Indeed, I should, perhaps, have forgotten all about him; but I made a practice for amusement, of scribbling down in my note-book, in my leisure hours, the most singular of the cases that have come under my notice, in the course of a long, and, I hope I may say without vanity, tolerably successful



practice. One peculiarity I have, however, is never to forget a face I have once been intimate with, even though years should elapse. Not more than two years ago, I stepped into a fashionable oyster saloon, to obtain some refreshments, and to my great astonishment, although years had made some ravages in his countenance, I at once recognized in the waiter who served me, Carl Kreutzer. He evidently did not recognize me; but I made an excuse as he stepped away, to call for something else, in order that I might speak to him; and when he returned, I called him by name. He gazed at me earnestly, and then said—

"Is it possible! Can this be Dr. —?"

"It is," I replied, "and truly sorry I am to see you in this predicament. How has all this happened?"

"Through my own fault," he said. "I took the part of the populace in the troubles between the King of Bavaria and his nobles, and was compelled to flee the country. I have been a waiter here but a few weeks, and am daily expecting a remittance from my mother, when I shall do something better. My property—that is, the real estate attached to my father's title, is confiscated; but my poor mother is still living, although very aged. She has property in her own right, and that is spared."

"You, then, have enjoyed your father's property since I saw you last?"

"Yes, and his title, too. I am a Count, although you see me thus menially employed; but I have not the pride I once possessed."

I saw him no more. A few weeks afterwards, I called at the restaurant for the purpose of seeing him, and learnt from the proprietor that he had received some bad news from home, which had so affected him, that he had fallen sick, and had been removed to the hospital. On calling there, I found that he was dead, and had been buried as a pauper. There is a moral in this tale, drawn from real life. Carl Kreutzer was but a specimen of what we often see in the world, an accomplished, amiable, interesting man, in his youthful days, with a tolerably good head,

and an affectionate, honest heart; but of a weak, languid, lymphatic tone of character that always shrunk from any difficulty that came in the way. The moral is, simply, *labor* for your bread in any honest capacity, and think it no degradation to do so; and, above all, depend as little as possible on remittances from your friends.

## CHAPTER XVII.

## A SOLEMN WEDDING.

WHAT strange reminiscences are awakened in the mind by the magic spell of a few words carelessly traced upon paper in years gone by, and long ago forgotten. Every one should keep a diary in youth, were it only for the sake of the enjoyment he is sure to reap from its pages in after days, should he be spared until the frosts of age have covered his head with silvered hairs and traced deep wrinkles in his cheeks and brow. True, these brief records sometimes cause tears to gush forth from a fountain of sorrow long run dry; but there is not always a sorrowful remembrance attached to past troubles—bitter though they have been, and hard to bear in the moment of suffering—nay, the mind oftentimes feels a soothing, pleasing melancholy in their recollection.

I turn to a page in my diary, written well-nigh thirty years ago. It is a blotted page, and contains only two or three lines—the paper is yellow with age, and the ink is so faded that I am obliged to put on my spectacles to decypher the words. I draw the lamp closer, so that the subdued light cast by the glass shade falls full upon the page, and I read:

“APRIL 24, 1826.—Poor Margaret Fuller died yesterday, aged 18 years and nine months—for *her*, poor girl, a happy release—but alas! a source of heartfelt grief to her surviving relatives.”

Poor Margaret Fuller! When I had finished reading the lines, I could scarcely recall to mind the person to whom they alluded; but anon, the mist which had clouded my memory dispersed; gradually, but clearly, as the morning rays of the blessed sun dissipate the fogs which have overhung the earth, and reveal the landscape more close at hand, and then more and more distant, till

all is visible as far as the remote boundary of the horizon; so was every incident connected with this—one of the most interesting reminiscences of my early life—disclosed to my mind's eye, as though they had occurred but yesterday. “Poor Margaret Fuller!” I repeated half aloud, and almost unconsciously; and my wife looked up from her knitting, and looking me in the face for a moment, as though she were recalling to mind some memories of the past, re-echoed my words with a sigh. “Ah!” said she, “*Poor Margaret Fuller.*”

“Yes,” said I, as though in reply to some question she had asked of me, for there was, I thought, almost an interrogatory in the manner in which she had uttered the words; “Yes, my dear. It is really nearly thirty years since poor Margaret died.”

“Bless me, James—you don't say so?” replied my wife; “why it seems scarcely longer ago than yesterday that I used to nurse the poor girl and read to her as she sat up propped by pillows. Dear me! how time flies away! and these painful recollections—how apt they are to make one drop a stitch in one's knitting—I do declare I shall have to unravel all the work I have been doing for the last ten minutes.”

But I must inform the reader who was the Margaret Fuller, the brief records of whose death had conjured up these painful recollections in the minds of myself and my wife. Well then, thirty years ago there was a little sylvan cottage located on the banks of the Hudson, about six miles from the Battery. It was a beautiful little place and quite in the country then—for thirty years ago New York was not the great bustling metropolis it is at present, although then a large city, giving promise of its great increase; neither were there then the same facilities for travelling to and fro; railroads and steamboats had not then superseded the slower conveyances of our ancestors, and it was quite a country drive out to Miss Fuller's cottage. Yes, I am sure I am quite right in saying that the little sylvan cottage *was then* a long way from the city.

Enough, however, of the cottage, for the present; let me speak of its inmates. They were Mr. Fuller and his three daughters. Mr. Fuller was a Scotch merchant, who had been one of the most prosperous and wealthy men in the city of New York, but who, in his later days, had met sad reverses, which had reduced him to comparative poverty. With the remnant of his property, however, he had purchased the cottage I have described, and a small plot of ground of some acre or so, on which it was situated, and having invested what money he had left after his debts were paid, in the funds, he found himself in possession of an income of \$900 a year—a very small sum, to be sure, compared with what he had been accustomed to expend, but quite sufficient, with economy, to preserve him and his daughters from want.

At the period that this change took place, the eldest daughter was verging on her 30th year, the second was two years her junior, and little Margaret, the youngest, was hardly sixteen years old;—there had been a daughter and a son between Margaret and Mary, the younger of her two elder sisters, who, had they lived, would have been aged respectively twenty-two and twenty years—and then there was a wide gap, and little Maggie, the youngest daughter, the pet of the family and the idol of the household, was born. Two years before his failure, Mr. Fuller had lost his wife, and Jane, the eldest daughter, had become mistress of her father's house, and a mother as well as a sister to Margaret. At the period of which I write, these persons, with a negro man and woman as servants, comprised the denizens of the little cottage.

If there is one amusement that I prefer over another, it is that of angling. In my juvenile days, good old Isaac Walton never had a more enthusiastic disciple, and many a day before I got into a good practice, I beguiled the weary hours, and strove to banish, in the enjoyment of the present, that perpetually gnawing "hope deferred which maketh the heart sick," by sitting for hours on the shady banks of the river, and seeking to inveigle into

my snare the sportive finny tenants of the sparkling water.

One day I had been more successful than usual, and my "creel" by degrees became heavily laden with the spoils of the river. Fish were more plentiful in those days, before the constant hurry to and fro of steamboats had frightened away the timid little denizens of the then comparatively still waters. The day had been one peculiarly fitted for my favorite amusement—a soft warm haze pervaded the atmosphere, and although the weather had been fine, there had been no sun to lighten the dark shadow that a clump of overhanging trees, beneath which I sat, cast upon the water, and in which the fish were nestling beneath the bank, occasionally darting out and seizing the tempting but delusive bait that I played up and down and to and fro. I had brought a book with me; if I mistake not, it was good old Isaac Walton's own book, expatiating upon the delights of his favorite amusement, and intermingled with those indescribably quaint yet beautiful ideas which have served so much to increase the number of his disciples, and have been the cause of such a cruel persecution of the harmless finny tribe. When, for a short time, the nibbles had been few and far between, I had stuck the end of my rod beneath a furze bush, and throwing myself full length on the cool grass, had dipped into its pages, taking care at the same time so to arrange the rod that the slightest tug at the line would be perceptible to me, and thus between fishing and reading, I don't know how many hours had passed away. So pleasantly had I been employed that I had not perceived the heavy clouds—the precursors of a storm, that had been gathering and lowering in the horizon, and the first intimation I had of the fact was through a vivid flash of sheet lightning, which, just as the sun was setting, lighted up the darkening waters until they appeared like a mirror of silver. I looked up and felt the pattering of heavy drops of rain, and before I could gather together my fishing gear, the sky was darkened, the rain was falling in torrents, and flash after flash of

lightning, and peal after peal of thunder, told that the storm that had burst over the spot, was likely to be severe and lasting. I was several miles from home, and for aught I knew a very considerable distance from any habitable dwelling-place; the atmosphere shortly became dark almost as midnight, except when it was illumined by the vivid flashes of lightning, which only made the darkness that followed more palpable; while the very earth beneath my feet seemed to tremble beneath the peals of reverberating thunder. I had to walk over fields of long grass, which had already been changed into a marsh by the torrents of rain; and as the wind had arisen until it blew a tempest, it was with the utmost difficulty that I could manage to preserve my footing; as to making any headway, that was next thing to impossible; yet to stay where I was, seemed as though I were resigning myself to perish in the morass. I therefore set down my basket of fish and all my fishing gear, and endeavored mournfully to make my way into the high road, where I could find a firmer foothold than on the wet, slippery grass. Half blinded as I was with the rain and the lightning, it must have been at least an hour before I at length reached what appeared to be the high road, but I was not aware in what direction I had been walking, or rather floundering through the darkness, and when I reached the road I had been so anxious to gain, I was utterly ignorant of my whereabouts. I cast my eyes around me half in despair, and at length I thought I perceived through the foliage of some low brushwood, to my right, and apparently only a few hundred yards distant, a light.

Was it a mere will-o'-the-wisp—an *ignis fatuus* produced by the storm, or was it a real light from the casement of a dwelling-house? Never did bewildered, storm-beset mariner gaze more anxiously at the glimmering light looming through the obscurity of midnight clouds, uncertain whether it was a gleaming star that had burst through the canopy of hazy darkness, or whether it was in reality the beacon light which alike warned him of

hidden danger, and pointed out the approach to a haven of refuge, than did I at this faint indication that shelter might be near—nor could the mariner's joy be greater, when doubt no longer existed, than was mine when I ascertained that the cheerful light did actually gleam from the window of an inhabited dwelling.

With much difficulty, for the storm increased rather than diminished in violence, I made my way to the cottage, and knocked loudly for admittance. A watch-dog inside commenced barking furiously, but he was silenced by a gruff voice, and shortly after, the door was unbarred; all attempts to carry on a conversation as to who I was, or what were my intentions in presenting myself at such an untimely and unpropitious period, having failed, as well might one have attempted to carry on a private and confidential *tete-a-tete* in the "Cave of the Winds," beneath the Falls of Niagara. As I have said, the door was cautiously opened, as though the person inside was anxious to scrutinize the appearance of the unexpected visitor; but if that was his intent, it was useless, for as the bolt was drawn, a flash of lightning almost blinded his eyes, and caused him to start backwards, while at the same moment a gust of wind blew the door open with sufficient force to have torn it off its hinges, and carried me, in spite of myself, right into the arms of my late interlocutor, who fell backwards to the floor, uttering a hideous shout of alarm, and pulling me, streaming as I was with water and covered with mud, on the top of him. The little cur again commenced barking furiously, and I heard various exclamations and ejaculations of fear and wonder in the parlor. I strove to rise, but the man who held me in his arms kept on shouting, and would neither get up himself nor allow me to do so. He seemed paralyzed with fear.

At length the parlor opened, and a gentleman came out with a pistol in one hand and a candlestick in the other, followed by three young ladies, crouching and clinging together, and beseeching the gentleman to be careful how he ventured into the hall, and the rear was brought up

by a negro woman, who was flourishing a poker in one hand and a pair of bellows in the other, at the same time casting timorous glances behind her, as if she were calculating the chances of securing a retreat should it become advisable.

"Silence, Hector, silence, sir!" exclaimed the gentleman, speaking to the cur, which slunk into a corner at the sound of his master's command, carrying with him the remnant of my hat which had fallen from my head, and which he had been tearing and growling over.

"Get up, Sambo, get up, you stupid old fool," continued the gentleman, and then, as Sambo (for it was the negro servant who had been holding me in his terrified embrace) when thus commanded, rose to his feet, and allowed me to do so likewise, his master pointed the heavy horse pistol right at my breast, and asked me—

"Who the d——l are you, sir, who has thus dared to disturb me and my family at this untimely hour?"

"I am Doctor ——," said I, and as I spoke, I heard a suppressed titter from one of the ladies, while the gentleman lowered the formidable weapon he held.

"Doctor ——, eh?" exclaimed the gentleman, incredulously, and no wonder, for I looked very unlike a doctor or any other respectable member of society, as I stood with my drenched clothing and bare head, the wet hair streaming over my face. "Doctor ——, eh? Well, Doctor ——, and pray who gave you permission to enter my house in this ridiculous plight, and knock down my servant?"

Again I heard the suppressed musical titter, and no wonder, for the negro was a great burly fellow, six feet high and stout in proportion, who, to judge by his physical frame could have made mince meat of a half a dozen such men as I.

"Yes, massa, he come runnin' in like a bull and knock me down and then begin to kick my shins," said the negro, who would have continued his story, had I not cut him short by observing:

"My dear sir, I know not who you are, and I assure

you nothing but the fury of the storm would have led me to seek your acquaintance in, as you truly observe, my present ridiculous plight. As to knocking down your servant, I ask you whether it would not, in your own private opinion, be a physical impossibility on my part; he could, with much greater ease have knocked me back through the doorway after I had entered to beg shelter from the tempest."

I then briefly explained that I had been engaged in angling, and had been unfortunately caught by surprise in the storm, and should perhaps have perished beneath its violence had I not seen the light glimmer through his parlor window, and fought my way with difficulty to the house, and that on the servant opening the door a gust of wind had lifted me bodily into the hall while a flash of lightning having startled the negro, he had stumbled backwards, pulling me on the top of him.

The old gentleman, for I could perceive now that he was considerably advanced in years, looked at me earnestly for a few moments, as though satisfying himself whether or not I was telling the truth, and then, apparently satisfied with his scrutiny, he came forward and shook me by the hand, saying:

"Excuse me sir, I would not refuse shelter to a dog on such a night as this. Mary, my love," turning to speak to one of the young ladies, "go up-stairs and lay out some dry clothing," and then addressing me, he continued, "Pray walk into the parlor and take a seat by the fire and a glass of warm spirits and water. Never heed your wet clothing," seeing that I hesitated. "In a few minutes you shall be provided with dry linen and a suit of clothes. I think they will about fit you; meanwhile the girls shall brew you a glass of hot toddy. Dear me!" he added, as a violent gust of wind shook the house, almost deadening the sound of a heavy peal of thunder that had just burst over it, "it is indeed a dreadful night."

I was compelled by good natured force, wet as I was, to accept the proffered hospitality, and in an inconceiva-



bly short space of time, a smoking tumbler of whiskey and water was placed before me on the table, by the younger of the two girls who had remained below. I drank it off at once, for I really felt the need of it, and had scarcely set the tumbler down before the other lady re-appeared and whispered to her father, who said:

"Now sir, if you will go up-stairs into my dressing-room, you will find everything requisite for a complete change of toilette. Sambo, you great booby, show the gentleman up-stairs," he continued, speaking to the servant, "and take care," he added, with an arch smile, "take care, Sambo, that he doesn't knock you down again. If he shows signs of fight, call on little Maggie to help you."

I followed the negro up-stairs to a comfortable dressing-room where I found everything necessary to effect a complete change of attire, and Sambo having gathered up my wet clothing for the purpose of taking it to the kitchen to be dried, I descended to the parlor where the old gentleman, again shaking me by the hand, introduced me to his daughters, of whom I have already stated Maggie was the youngest.

This, reader, was my first introduced to Margaret Fuller.

The storm continued throughout the greater portion of the night, and finding that it would be impossible, until its force was abated, for me to attempt to reach home, I was fain to accept the offer of a spare bed, notwithstanding I felt that my wife would be terribly alarmed on account of my absence, for it was the first time since our marriage that I had been detained a whole night from home.

However, there was no alternative, and therefore I determined to make the best of a bad job and to be grateful for the hospitality that was extended to me.

I found Mr. Fuller a well-informed gentleman, rather garrulous respecting his former opulence, yet still as I thought, proud of the philosophy which had taught him to content himself—nay, to feel happy—in his changed

mode of life, and justly proud that notwithstanding his unlooked for misfortunes, not one of his fellow merchants could say that he owed them a cent. They had been so pleased with his honorable conduct that they had offered to advance money to set him up in business again; but this he had refused; he felt old age creeping upon him and feared again to risk the hazards of trade. He had a competence, although a small one, and he had determined to spend the remainder of his days in peace and quietness in the bosom of his family.

His daughters were amiable young women; the eldest was somewhat stiff and reserved in her manners, and, as I thought, seemed a little to affect the "blue stocking;" the second was evidently domestic in her habits, and both were joint housekeepers of the small tenement. They were good looking girls enough, without any pretensions to beauty, and had evidently been well educated and were mistresses of various accomplishments, as I perceived by the pictures which adorned the walls, which the old gentleman told me were the work of his daughters' hands, and by the manner in which they executed, by turns, several beautiful airs upon the piano-forte—a remnant of former splendor—and finished with a duett on the instrument to which Margaret added her voice.

There *was* a family resemblance, and yet little Margaret was unlike her sisters; she could not be styled a beautiful girl, but there was a charm of prettiness and of intellectual expression, far superior to the cold inanity of mere beauty, and at the same time there was an appearance of delicacy about her which, although it could scarcely be called the delicacy of ill health, to my practiced eye, betokened that she was one that consumption, the fell destroyer of the best and fairest, would seize as his prey, were not the utmost care taken of her health; still there was an archness in her laughing blue eye and a keen perception of the ludicrous in her quick glance (it was she, the little gipsy, who had laughed at me when I was sprawling upon the floor) which led me to

doubt whether or not I was mistaken, at least I hoped so, for her temperament was certainly one that is rarely met with in persons who are constitutionally inclined to consumption. After her sisters had played, she took her seat at the piano, and executed several favorite airs with extraordinary skill, so much so that I expressed my surprise, and was really astonished, when the old gentleman assured me that his elder daughters had been her only instructors. After a light, homely supper, the family retired to rest, the old gentleman himself showing me to the room I was to occupy, which was evidently the best in the house, and was, as I imagined, set apart for the accommodation of visitors.

I arose early in the morning and would have immediately started for home; but my hospitable entertainers would not allow me to go without partaking of their frugal breakfast, and then, having wished the ladies good bye, and taken the liberty of a married man and a doctor, to kiss little Maggie, the old gentleman walked with me to the place where I had deposited my fishing gear, which we easily found in the clear daylight, for a lovely day had followed the tempest of the previous night. I pressed upon him the acceptance of half my load of fish, and bade him good bye, he exacting a promise that I would follow up the acquaintance thus strangely formed, and I promising in my turn that I would bring my wife to see him and his daughters when I returned the hat he had lent me in place of the one which had been torn by the watch-dog, on condition that he and his daughters would do me the honor of a visit whenever they came to New York.

From this day our intimacy increased, and until his death four years afterwards, he was among the most esteemed of my personal friends. A short time before his death both his daughters were married, and when he died they sold the little property and went westward with their husbands, and after a year or two I lost sight of them altogether. Poor little Margaret had died two years before; but I am anticipating my story.

I have observed, this accidental and somewhat untoward introduction led to an intimacy. In the course of the week I drove out to Mr. Fuller's cottage with my wife, and a very pleasant time we had of it. There was a nice little fruit garden attached to the cottage, and as it was not often that we townsfolk enjoyed the enviable luxury of eating fruit fresh from the garden, rendered still more delicious in consequence of its being plucked with our own hands, we could not have half so much enjoyed the most costly artificial feast. For the first year of our acquaintance with the Fullers everything went on happily with them; the old man, to be sure, was growing imperceptibly more and more feeble every day, but his amiable daughters anticipated his every wish, and strove which should exceed the other in affectionate attention; filial duty was in their case truly a labor of love.

Margaret was, however, the greatest solace of her father's declining years; and when he heard her light step, or the musical sound of her voice as she came running into the parlor, as was her wont, with her morning offering of a bouquet of the choicest flowers of the garden, fresh gathered, and the pearly dew still resting upon their petals, and placed them in her father's hands, while she shook up the pillow upon which he leaned; and selecting a book of poetry from the book-case—the old gentleman was fond of poetry, especially of that of Sir Walter Scott—and choosing some favorite passage, sat herself down on a low footstool by his side and read it aloud in her soft, low musical voice, the poor old man's eyes would glisten, and he would lay his trembling withered hand upon his daughter's shoulder and draw her towards him, while his features beamed with a smile of unutterable affection.

Poor, good, single-hearted old man! Once or twice I was an eye-witness to this soul communion between a father and a favorite child, the one apparently approaching the threshold of eternity, the other just opening like the rose-bud she had gathered from the garden, into the

first bloom of early womanhood. I thought there was anxiety—deep, engrossing anxiety—mingled with the look of love he gave her, for he believed that he was about to leave her, forever on earth, just at the moment when a parent's anxieties regarding a beloved daughter are most strongly called forth. He little thought that she was destined to precede him into the spirit-world, and that the rose-bud she had plucked from the parent's stem just when it was about to burst in the full glory of its beauty, and which was now doomed to wither and perish, the withered leaves still retaining their fragrance, but their beauty forever fled, was emblematical of the fate of his cherished child.

Sometimes, but not often, for it was seldom the old man could be persuaded to let Maggy leave her home, and indeed she was always anxious about her father when absent from him, she came to New York and spent a day or two at my house, and then my wife would return the visit, I taking her to the cottage and leaving her there and returning to town, not that there was any real occasion for my doing so, for at that period I was not, unfortunately for myself, overburdened with professional duties; but then it would not have looked well for a young physician to absent himself from home for days together; and indeed the neighbors must have thought I was most busily engaged and reaping a fortune, by the manner in which I bustled to and fro from my dwelling house, sometimes leaving in a great hurry as though called to take part in a consultation on some case of the greatest importance, though my hurry generally subsided when I reached Broadway, and after taking a short stroll I would return to my house.

About this time, I recollect I had to renew the wire of my night-bell four times in a month, for I hired a boy to tug at it violently after midnight two or three nights in the week, and the little vagabond went to the work *con amore*, and broke the wires at least once a week.

But I must now change the tone of my story. Hitherto all had gone on happily at the cottage of the Fullers

but about twelve months after my first acquaintance with them, I noticed a change in little Maggie as I always called her, though now she was seventeen years of age, and was just opening into womanhood. Her complexion, always pale and delicate, now assumed a still paler hue, although with the least exercise, a bright flush appeared in her cheeks, which made her look enchantingly lovely; but I knew that the pale, anxious look, and that flushed cheek, and the soft dark eyes, beaming with an unnatural lustre, betokened the approach of the insidious disease that I had so often feared and doubted, lurked in the constitution of the fair girl. She lost her buoyant spirits, and seldom romped and sported in the garden and in the adjacent fields, as she had been accustomed to do, and when she had ceased reading to her father, and he had fallen asleep—soothed by the low tones of her voice—her sisters told me that they were pained to witness the wistful gaze she would fix upon the old gentleman's face for some moments, and then she would draw from her bosom a miniature of her mother, which she always wore, and gaze at that with the same fixed, yearning attention, until the look became abstracted, and she appeared already to be holding communion with the spirit of her deceased parent. Her elder sisters were aware, as well as I, of the nature of the fell disease which threatened to blight her young life; but neither they nor I dared breathe our suspicions to her father—not as yet. The too sudden shock would have hurried him into the grave, upon the threshold of which he was even now lingering. Poor old man! It was not long before he perceived that something was amiss with his favorite child; but he thought she was too closely confined in attending upon him—she wanted more air and exercise—she must leave him occasionally, and take longer walks in the fields, and busy herself more in the garden, as she was accustomed to do of old, and then she would soon be well again. His little lily—so he used affectionately to style her—must not injure her own health by too anxiously caring for her old father. He would sooner see her happy and cheerful, even though

he missed her from his side occasionally, and Mary or Jane had to take her place in reading to him; and Margaret, when he spoke thus, would lay her head upon his shoulder and sob aloud, while the old man mingled his tears with hers. I believe from the first, she had a presentiment of her untimely death; and, poor child! it was hard to be cut off so young from the innocent enjoyments of life, and to be laid in the cold dark tomb—very hard for one possessing a disposition so gentle and loving as was hers. But there was yet another cause for her grief, which I had as yet no suspicion of, although I shortly afterwards heard the whole story.

Mr. Fuller had had a partner in business of the name of Douglas, who had died ten years before his own difficulties came on, and Mr. Douglas, who was a widower, had a son who at an early age had entered the United States navy, as a midshipman.

He was some eight or ten years older than Margaret, and had been engaged, when little more than a child, in the stirring scenes of the war of 1812—14, in which, young as he was, he had behaved with such gallantry as to have attracted the notice and received the especial commendation of his captain. At the close of the war he had come home and had spent some days at Mr. Fuller's residence, where, of course, his courage and the distinction he had gained, were themes of general praise and admiration.

Margaret, at this period, was quite a child; but still of a sufficient age to be interested in the deeds of the youthful sailor, and of a lively, susceptible temperament, just fitted to associate those deeds with the glowing charm of romance. The tales of peril by storm and battle, he was, as is natural to all young sailors, fond of relating, were to her more interesting than the wonders of fairy story—for the narrator stood before her, and her childish imagination invested Edmund Douglas with all the attributes of a hero. He in his turn, was fond of the little girl who took such interest in his narratives. To apply

to them the sentiments Shakespeare applied to lovers of a riper age:

"She loved him for the dangers he had passed,  
And he loved her, that she did pity them."

However, young Douglas again went to sea, and was absent four years. Probably he had forgotten in that period, the little girl who had been his pet and plaything during his brief stay on shore; but she had not forgotten him—and when he returned from sea, she had looked for his visit with an anxiety that she could have given no reason for. When he did come, at last, greatly improved—for he was then grown a handsome young man, and his figure was well displayed in his gay uniform—she admired him more than ever, and Edmund was surprised and gratified to find the child he had left behind, and almost forgotten, grown so tall and so womanly, as she appeared to him, in comparison of his former recollection of her, although she was still but a very young girl.

However, I have not space to dwell upon this portion of my story. Suffice it to say that Edmund again went away for a short period and again returned, and each time that he and Margaret met, they found more to admire in each other. Their childish attachment had deepened into love. Before he had last sailed, just previous to my acquaintance with the family, they had told each other's love, and Edmund had told Mr. Fuller of his wish to make Margaret his wife, and the old man had promised that when he had obtained his lieutenancy, provided Margaret had then attained her eighteenth year, and then they still felt the same affection for each other, he would throw no obstacles in the way of their union. Indeed it was really a good prospect for Margaret—for the young sailor was possessed of some little property of his own, and had every prospect of rising rapidly in his profession.

Edmund was to return in two years. One year had passed away, when Margaret was seized with the earliest symptoms of the disease, which hurried her into a premature grave; and it was the thought of her absent lover,

which increased the sadness and the heart's desolation of the poor girl—for she had just at this time received a letter from him, dated from the Mediterranean, stating that the ship would return in twelve months, and then he would obtain his lieutenancy, and adding that he had for some months past suffered from bad health; but he hoped that he was getting better, and that as the summer months were approaching, the warm weather of that delicious climate would completely restore him to health.—Margaret was greatly alarmed on reading this letter. She knew that Edmund's mother had died of consumption, and that he had showed symptoms of the disease in his youth, and that one reason of his father having consented to his adopting the sea as his profession, was in the hope that the change of climate and habits of life, would eradicate the seeds of the insidious and fatal disorder.

Margaret lingered on through the summer months, apparently but little changed. Then came the autumn, with its chilling winds and early frosts, and she grew rapidly worse; and then the winter—and she could no longer leave the room, and her poor father, who had at length become aware of the presence of the disease which was hurrying his child to the grave, was almost distracted with grief on her account. He could scarcely leave the house; but his weakness was occasioned by the gradual decay of nature, and he felt no pain nor sickness. He had his easy chair carried into his daughter's room, and would sit for hours by her couch. In fact, he could seldom be induced by the persuasions of his elder daughters to leave the lovely sufferer, even to take the exercise necessary in his own feeble state of health. She was the very apple of his eye—the delight of his heart—the child of his old age; and for her to be taken away in the pride of her youth and beauty, and for him to be left, appeared to be too severe a decree of providence to be patiently borne; and the poor old man would complain aloud at the bitter dispensation, until he felt his child's thin hand laid upon his arm, to attract his attention, and then she

would look up into his face with her deep, trustful, loving eyes, and softly murmur:

"Do not grieve for me, my dear father. It is hard to leave Mary and Jane, and the beautiful garden, and the fields I have so often played in—and—and—Edmund," and her voice would become almost choked with emotion, "but, then, I shall see you and dear mama in heaven; and dear papa, I think Edmund will soon join us in that happy place, where we shall know sorrow and sickness no more—for Edmund cannot live without *me*. I have had a strange dream about him, and he will soon follow me, poor fellow! I could have wished to have lived a little while longer, to have been his happy wife; but we shall be united, never to part, in a better world; and by-and-bye Mary and Jane will join us, and shall we not be happy then? In my dream I saw mama, and she held out her arms to me and smiled. Such a sweet smile—just as she is painted in the miniature; but so much happier." And the old gentleman listened to his daughter's words, and he stooped his aged head to kiss her, while the tears stole down his cheeks, and he whispered, "I was wrong to complain, my child. God's will, not my will be done."

And now the spring had commenced, and nature had thrown off her frosty garb, and sprung into new life; but alas! the enlivening aspect of nature had no reviving influence on the health of poor Margaret. I had attended her throughout her sickness; but I knew from the first, that physic was useless in her case, and I foresaw that ere the spring buds blossomed into summer-flowers, her pure spirit would have sought a happier state of existence.

One morning, early in May, I was sitting at the breakfast table, reading the morning paper, when my attention was arrested by seeing the notice of the arrival of Edmund's ship in the stream. I immediately determined to go and meet him on board, and to break the sad news to him. For I feared the shock of the meeting without preparation, would be too much for Margaret, and I



knew he would immediately hurry to see her. One letter only had been sent to him speaking of her illness—for it was hard to know where to direct letters to him; and we thought it useless to harass his mind, especially as we heard that he was in a bad state of health. Accordingly I hurried on board, and asked for Edmund Douglas, and was told that he was below, sick, in his hammock. I immediately descended into the cockpit, and was shown to the side of his cot. I had been prepared to find him unwell; but I was startled to find him as he was—his once fine, manly form reduced to a mere shadow of his former self. I saw that the hand of death was upon him; that the fatal grasp was not far distant, and I shuddered as I thought of the sad fate of the lovers, both lingering on the very verge of the grave that was soon to close upon their earthly hopes, and to dissolve all their dreams of happiness and mutual love. The lover and his betrothed were both dying of the same ruthless disease. A sad meeting this, to those who, a few months before, had looked forward to it with such fond expectation.

With a sad heart I told Edmund of Margaret's dangerous condition, and he insisted on immediately seeing her. He was able to walk with assistance, and, leaning upon me, I led him to the deck, and shortly after we were put on shore, when I obtained a carriage, and at his urgent request I at once took him to Mr. Fuller's cottage, when, leaving him in the parlor, I went up to Margaret's room to prepare her for the sorrowful meeting. To my great surprise she betrayed little emotion, but calmly said—"I knew it. I have seen Edmund night after night in my dreams, and I am prepared to see him now changed as I know he is."

The poor old gentleman and the sisters of Margaret were in tears, and I was so excited that I scarcely knew what I was doing; but I brought the young sailor up stairs. Margaret and he alone were calm; they took each other's hands and held them and gazed long and mournfully into each other's faces—but neither spoke. At length Edmund, who had been struggling to maintain

his composure, could no longer restrain his grief, and the tears of the hapless lovers were mingled together. We quitted the room and left them to themselves; grief, such as theirs—a meeting under such painful circumstances, was too solemn, too sacred, to be idly intruded upon.

In the course of half an hour Margaret's bell was rung, and one of her sisters having gone up stairs, she shortly returned, saying that Margaret wished to see me and her father.

The old gentleman was assisted like a child into the room by the negro servant, and I followed him. Edmund was sitting on the bed beside Margaret, his hand still clasped in hers; but both had recovered their composure. Margaret was the first to speak:—

"Dear papa," she said feebly, "I have one dying request to make, but first I would ask Dr. — a question; and I beg," she added, with a faint smile, "that he will not deceive me. Dr. —, am I not dying? dying even now? How long do you think I shall live?"

Mr. Fuller burst into tears; but his daughter bade him be comforted, and looked appealingly to me as though awaiting my reply.

"It is more than I can say, dear Margaret," I replied. "I cannot deceive you. You are dying, but you may yet live some weeks—nay, some months."

"And I *may* die to-day," she replied. "Father, do not think my request a strange one, and do not refuse me."

"My child—my darling Maggie"—exclaimed the poor old man—"your father never has refused your wishes; they have never been such as to call for refusal; then surely he will not refuse them now."

"Then, dear papa, I wish you to send immediately for Mr. —; *I shall not live beyond this day*. I wish to be married to Edmund before I leave this world. He will soon follow me, my wedded husband, to a happier one. Will you grant me my desire, dear papa?"

I looked at Edmund, who did not speak, but signified by gestures that her wish was also his own; as to the poor old gentleman, in the bitterness of his grief he

sobbed aloud, and at length begged me to follow his daughter's wishes. The clergyman was sent for, he lived but a quarter of a mile distant, and great was his surprise when he became aware of the nature of the sudden call for his services. He had always been partial to Margaret, and his grief almost equalled that of her father; but he promised to accede to her request. The sisters were summoned, and in that solemn chamber of death were the two youthful, dying lovers united. We had forgotten the ring, and a momentary awkward pause ensued, when the clergyman, with trembling voice, reached that portion of the solemn service where the ring was required.

"My mother's ring—my mother's ring," Margaret faintly murmured, and one of her sisters took the cherished memento from a drawer, and it was placed by the trembling hand of Edmund upon the slender finger of his dying bride.

\* \* \* \* \*

The solemn ceremony was concluded, and all present stood for some moments silent, paralyzed by the awful solemnity of the scene they had witnessed.

"Kiss me, Edmund—my husband," said Margaret, and the young man stooped to kiss her lips.

He did not raise his head again, and after waiting a short time one of the sisters approached the bed. She gazed for a moment at her sister's face, and then uttering a piercing shriek, sank fainting upon a chair. The truth was soon known; the trial had been too much for both in their enfeebled—their dying condition. The bridegroom and the bride were dead—the first kiss of wedded love had been the embrace of death. Together had their spirits flown, released from the thralldom of the flesh to cement and sanctify their union in heaven.

I have but little more to add respecting this mournful episode in my life. The wedded lovers were buried in one grave, and at the time the sad affair created great excitement among all who had known them, for all dropped a tear of pity for them, and sympathized with their dis-

tressed friends. Poor Mr. Fuller never knew the whole weight of the grief that afflicted his daughters. He sank from that hour to the day of his death, two years afterwards, into the imbecility of childhood, and lingered in that state longer than I had thought possible, considering his feeble condition.

After his death, his two daughters resided for about a year in the cottage, and then, about the same period, both were married to substantial farmers living out West, who had long sought their hands, but whom they had previously refused, because they would not leave their aged father.

The property, as I have mentioned, was sold, and shortly after the cottage was burned down, and the whole of the little estate was put under cultivation as a farm.

I received but one letter from the sisters after their marriage, in which they stated that they were both well and happy, but still retained a keen remembrance of the solemn scene of their sister Maggie's marriage and death. Had not my wife and I both reason to exclaim—

"Alas! poor Margaret Fuller."

## CHAPTER XVII.

## THE DEATH-BED OF A MISER.

IN the neighborhood of my residence, at a late period in the course of my practice, there lived an aged, haggard, blear-eyed man, who was an object of mingled disgust and pity to everybody who saw him. Although a close neighbor of mine, as I was led to believe by always meeting him at an early hour of the morning, if, perchance, I happened to be called for before the sun had risen and the dew was off the ground, busily engaged, with the aid of a girl of perhaps fifteen years of age, of intelligent and engaging features, but as miserably attenuated in frame as himself, gathering up the rags, waste paper and offal that he found in the streets, I never could discover the place where he actually lived, although I, and not a few of my neighbors, who had known him to grope about the streets after the same fashion for years, were somewhat curious in this respect.

As are to be found in even the most favored portions of this great city, there were in our neighborhood two or three of those pestilential looking, filthy, narrow courts, reeking with slime and dirt of every description, and tenanted by numerous wretched families, who lived in a hopeless state of misery and crime, I had naturally set it down that in one of these miserable abodes the poor man and his daughter lived, and that they gained a miserable, starvation pittance by the sale of the refuse they gathered in their morning walks.

One day, however, about four years since, to my great astonishment my curiosity was satisfied in a manner that I little expected. I had risen at an earlier hour than usual to make an early call upon a patient, who was about to proceed to a sea bathing place for the benefit of his health. He was a hypochondriac, and the object of my

call was to furnish him before he started, with a list of regulations with regard to the medicines he was to take and the course of daily regimen he was to follow.

I had scarcely reached the side walk in front of my dwelling, before I perceived the girl, whose features were perfectly familiar to me; but to my astonishment she was unaccompanied by the old man. She was anxiously looking up at the house as though undecided whether to advance and ring the bell or not. There was an eagerness in her painfully attenuated features and an appealing look in her eye which in spite of my hurry I could not help taking notice of.

The glorious beauty of the morning, for it was the dawn of one of the brightest days of June, the healthful purity of the atmosphere, the brightness of the sky above and the peace and quiet that reigned at that early hour, caused the poorly dressed and sickly looking girl to look more squalid than usual—so utterly out of keeping was her poverty stricken appearance with everything around.

From her anxious looks and her being unaccompanied by the old man, it struck me that he must be sick and that the girl had been sent by him to seek my advice and assistance, but that in consequence of his poverty she was too timid to make her desires known. Under this impression I accosted her—

"Good morning, my poor girl, you are looking earnestly at my house. Do you wish to see me? Perhaps your father is unwell. If so, tell me where I can call and if I am able to afford him any relief I will do so as soon as possible."

"My father is sick, sir—very sick," replied the poor child, with tears in her eyes. "He has been ill now for a fortnight, but he is too poor to have a doctor, and now I have ventured out, without his knowledge, to beg you to call and see him."

"I will certainly call," said I, "in the course of the day—indeed, as soon as I return from the visit I am now about to make, which will be in the course of an hour; meanwhile you can step in and get some breakfast. I

will tell the cook to provide you with something to eat, and you shall accompany me to your home on my return."

The poor girl's eyes glistened as I said this, but she said—

"Indeed, sir, I cannot wait. I left my father sleeping and I must be back home before he wakes, for there is no one else to care for him and he is too weak to move—too weak even to turn in his bed."

"You are hungry," said I, greatly moved by the appearance of the poor thing, "you shall take some breakfast home with you."

"Thank you, sir," she replied, bursting into tears, as if unused to words of compassion and kindness; "yes, I am very hungry. Ever since my father has been ill I have been so busy with attending to him that I have not been able to collect so many rags as would sell to supply us with bread. I have not eaten anything since yesterday morning."

"Good God!" I exclaimed. "Is it possible! come in with me;" and passing in at the area gate, I descended to the kitchen and ordered the cook to supply the poor girl with as much broken food as would satisfy her and her father for the day, bidding her add such delicacies as would likely tempt the appetite of a sick man.

"Do not let your father eat too much at once," I said, for I suspected that want of proper food was probably the cause of his sickness, "and return here after you have had your breakfast and I will then accompany you home."

In the course of an hour or two I returned and found the girl anxiously waiting. I merely stopped to swallow a hurried breakfast, and then bid her go before me to the abode of her father.

She complied with alacrity, and I followed her along two or three streets, until she stopped before a brick house of considerable dimensions, which might have been the abode of a man of substance, had not the dirty and neglected front and the closed shutters suggested

the idea that the house had been for a long time untenanted. I had often noticed the house in passing, standing so grim, and dirty, and solitary, among the handsome dwellings on either side, and I had fancied that the deserted-looking tenement was probably involved in some law-suit, and therefore, having no responsible proprietor or tenant, had been left to itself, uncared for by any one.

"Do you live here?" said I, in a tone of surprise, to my ragged conductor.

"Yes, sir," she replied, "my father lives here."

"How long have you resided in this house?"

"Oh, a long time, sir; ever since I can recollect. I believe I was born here, but I do not know."

Further conversation was interrupted by the entrance of the girl into the house by means of a latch key, and I followed her into the dwelling. If I had been surprised by the outward appearance of the domicile, and the incongruity there appeared in a man who was evidently a pauper tenanted a house of such dimensions, I was still more astonished at the aspect of the interior. It was wholly devoid of furniture, and the lofty hall rung with the echo of my footsteps with that peculiar sound noticeable in an untenanted dwelling. The girl carefully closed, and then, as if mechanically, double-locked the door, and begged me to follow her up the carpetless and unwashed stairs.

We ascended flight after flight until we reached the uppermost story, when she opened the door of a small attic, which seemed to be both the sitting-room and bedroom—indeed, the only occupied room in the vast house. The furniture—but it is a misnomer to call it furniture—was of the scantiest and most wretched description, consisting of a couple of rush-bottomed chairs, the bottoms of which had given way, and clung with a very slender tenure to the ricketty frames; a truckle bed, upon which, covered with a heap of rags, lay a feeble and emaciated old man, whom I immediately recognized as the well-known street-scavenger; a mat on the floor,

upon which another heap of rags was rolled up, it being, as I surmised, the sleeping place of the girl; an old deal table, upon which lay the remains of the food I had given the girl in the morning; and a few household utensils of the coarsest and cheapest description. The solitary window had several of the panes shattered, and stuffed with rags and paper. A musty, death-like smell pervaded the wretched place; and, altogether, it was the most abject-looking apartment into which I had ever set my feet.

"Who is that?" asked the old man, sharply, and with a querulous, though feeble tone; and then, seeing the girl, he added, "Is that you, Mary? Where have you been to, girl? I have been wanting you to turn me in bed; but so it is, no sooner am I laid up than you are off gadding about. You care nothing for your sick father, and have almost starved me to death."

"Father, I get what food I can, and I cannot be long away now that you are sick to look after rags and paper to sell. To-day I brought you a nice breakfast, did I not?"

"Yes; I suppose you begged for it. I told you to beg long ago; but you would not, though your poor father was starving."

"Father, I cannot beg. That food was voluntarily given me by a gentleman upon whom I called, asking him to come and see you now that you are sick—"

"What?" almost shrieked the old man, as he made a convulsive effort to raise himself upon the wretched pallet. "You asked a stranger to come here?" And then, for the first time perceiving me, he exclaimed: "Who is this? Who have you asked to come here, Mary?"

"It is Doctor —, father, who lives in — street, near by. He has called to see if he can do any thing for you. It was he who gave me the victuals this morning."

"Doctor —! I want no doctors—I cannot pay for them. I have not money to supply myself with necessary food. How dare you, girl, ask a doctor to come and visit me."

The poor child did not reply, and I stepped to the bed-side of the old man, and informed him that I would attend him gratuitously, and see if I could not get him removed into the hospital.

"I cannot pay for the medicines you may order," said he, "and I will not go to an hospital to be killed. I cannot leave this house. Go away, sir, go—Mary, see the gentleman down stairs and out of the house, and lock the door. I shall soon get well without the aid of a doctor—nay, I am better *to-day*, see—" and he made a vain attempt to rise.

"You are very ill," said I sternly, for I saw it was useless for me to argue with the wretched old man; "and if you do not have the assistance of a physician and take such restoratives as are ordered by him, I can assure you that you will never be removed from that bed in life again."

"How! what!" he exclaimed, in a terrified voice; "Do you mean to say that I am dying? Pshaw! you wish to frighten me. I can't die—I won't die. Go sir—go. You are an impostor. You want to rob me of my hard earnings—no—no—I have no money; *nothing*. I have no money to give you, sir, and I know the world too well to believe your trumped up tale of charity. You are in league with my daughter to kill me—so that she can get clear of the duty of attending upon her aged father, and then when I am dead you will purchase my body of her for your cursed dissecting-room. Oh! I know you gentlemen well."

"Father," said Mary, reprovingly, "I know you are very ill, and I sought out this gentleman of my own accord, and he said he would come and do what he could for you. I have told you, father, it was he who gave me the food I brought home this morning."

"Well, well, I am obliged to him for that; God knows I want food and charity. Now, sir," turning his head to me, "Now, sir, go home and leave me alone; there is nothing in this house to tempt you to a second visit."



"Nothing, indeed," I mentally exclaimed, "except it be to serve that poor child, who is far too good and too dutiful to be linked with such an unnatural parent." Then speaking aloud, and addressing the sick man, I said, "I am willing to visit you *here*; but mark this—common decency and humanity will not allow me to leave you to die—and if you refuse what my charity offers you, although it is undeserved, I shall call upon the proper authorities, and insist upon having you conveyed to the hospital. Now choose—which shall it be?"

"Oh, call here, then. I cannot leave the house—I cannot go to the hospital—but I have nothing to give you—I cannot pay you—I never shall be able to pay you. When I get well, I shall have enough to do to earn bread for myself and my daughter."

Taking hold of the old man's feeble pulse, I found that he was in almost the last stage of physical decay, partly the effect of years, for he must have seen at least seventy summers, but owing still more (I suspected) to voluntary deprivation of the actual necessities of life, for I also suspected that the old man, poor though he might be and no doubt was, was one of those wretched beings who for the love of money will endure every privation, and submit even to be brought by starvation to the very jaws of death, sooner than spend their gold.

I knew that he never would recover, and my heart bled for the poor child. Taking out my pencil and tablets, I wrote a prescription and slipped it and a dollar into the hands of the girl, bidding her procure such restoratives as I had ordered, and to see that her father took them; and then addressing the old man, I told him that if I found he did not take the medicine provided for him, I would fulfil my threat, and see that he was cared for in the hospital.

I then left the house, promising the girl I would call on the following day. As I returned home I ruminated on the singularity of an old man, apparently so poverty stricken, occupying such a house, and also upon the style of his conversation, which, rude and abrupt as it was,

was evidently that of a man who in his youth had received some education. Even the girl had learned this refinement of tone and language from her father, and spoke with a purity of diction seldom found among those of her class.

The next day I called, and found that my threat of removal had had the desired effect; the old man was much better, but still it was evident to me that although he might linger for some time, his thread of life was unravelled and well nigh broken, and that he would never rise from his bed again.

The young girl in a few days showed evidence of the effects of better living. She was a kind, quiet, gentle creature, and in the event of her father's death I determined to exert myself to do something for her. To my astonishment, however, after some days a more speedy relapse than I had expected took place in my patient, and even the girl began again to lose her healthy appearance. I was at a loss to account for it, until, upon questioning her, she burst into tears, and begging me not to tell her father that she had told me, she informed me that the old man had for the last week compelled her to go abroad, after my visits, and sell the medicine and food that I had provided—scarcely retaining enough of the latter to keep them from starvation. She had given him the trifling pittance it brought, but she knew not what he had done with the money.

I told her on no account to do this again, and sternly told the old man that if I found my treatment of his case did him no service, I should certainly in a day or two see that he was conveyed to the hospital. I would have insisted upon this at once, but that my curiosity was aroused; and under the belief that he had money concealed in the dwelling, and knowing that he could not live long, I was desirous of obtaining it for his child.

For a few days, matters progressed more favorably with my patient and his poor child, but about a fortnight after I was surprised by a visit from the latter. She begged me to come to her father directly. He had risen from

his bed while she was absent, and on her return she found him stretched on the floor speechless. The effort had been too much for him, and she feared he was dying. I hastened with her to the old man's dwelling. It was as she said. At one glance I saw that for some purpose, to me unknown, he had risen from the bed and had fallen and sprained his back, hurting himself inwardly in so serious a manner, that in his feeble condition, it would prove fatal. He had partially recovered his speech, although his language was almost unintelligible. He had rolled over on his back, and his hands were clutched together, fanning the air as he jerked to and fro in his dying agony.

"I—will—not—die," he feebly uttered in disjointed words; "I cannot—leave my gold. Go—go—Doctor I want—no, Doctor—you want—my gold—you would rob me—my—child would rob me. Oh! my gold!—my money—I can—not take—my—money—with me," he gasped forth, and with one convulsive shudder, stretched out his attenuated limbs and expired.

Nature would assert her sway, and ill used as the poor child had been—abused and half starved; her grief, when she found her father was really dead, was distressing to witness. Poor thing! He was *her* father, brute and miser—miserable worm that he was. He was the only tie she had in this world, and she mourned his loss as deeply as though he had been to her all that a father ought to have been.

I endeavored to comfort her, and having partially succeeded, I left the house in order to procure assistance, and to arrange for the interment of the dead body.

On my return with the necessary persons, the old man was lifted on to the bed and the body straightened. The hands were unclenched, and closely clutched in the palms were found twenty-six shillings in small coins, which had probably been the fruits of the food and medicine he had compelled his daughter to sell. This money he had no doubt held in his hands in bed, until on the day of his death he had determined to hide it with his other hoarded

wealth. Such at least was my impression. I therefore set a watchman in the house upon whose honesty I could implicitly rely, and myself locking the door of the room in which the dead body lay, I took the key in my pocket, and removed the girl to a boarding house near at hand.

After the funeral, I, with proper persons, the girl being also present, instituted a thorough search in the expectation of finding money, although I did not expect the sum would be a large one.

For a long time our search was unsuccessful. The girl declared that although she sometimes thought her father had money, she had never seen more than a few cents in his possession, and had never seen him hiding any.

At length, after searching every possible and impossible nook and corner in which money could be stowed away, the thought struck me to have the planks removed upon which the old man lay when he had fallen on rising from his bed. One of these planks we discovered was easily raised, a hole having been cut in the plaster of the wall where it was inserted, and through which it extended into the flooring of another apartment. In this spot it had been severed, and on being lifted up a vast pile of canvas bags containing gold and silver coins of all descriptions was discovered, but no paper. It seemed that the old man converted all his money into hard coin. The money was taken out and counted in the presence of the parties assembled, and found to reach the incredible amount of twenty-seven thousand and some odd dollars.

This, of course, belonged to the girl, who was thus suddenly raised from a condition of penury to that of an heiress. On making the subsequent inquiries, it was found that the house was also the property of the old man, and that he had lived in this wretched condition ever since the death of his wife, shortly after the birth of his daughter. He had belonged to one of the most respectable families of a neighboring state, and had, upon coming of age, come into possession of considerable property. Until the death of his wife he had been noted

as a spendthrift of the most extravagant description ; but from some cause unknown, his disposition had suddenly undergone a change, and he had since lived a life of the greatest miserhood and wretchedness—starving both himself and his child ; and when he grew feeble, submitting to the most disgusting habits for the purpose of adding daily a few cents to his hoard. Like many misers, he had preferred keeping his money in his own possession to placing it out at interest, living in perpetual fear that if it were out of his sight it might be stolen from him. Possessed with the like strange infatuation that if he let the house, which, as I have said, was his own, to a tenant, he might not get the rent, he had preferred living in it: thus submitting to a positive loss for the sake of clutching his gains in his own hands, after the fashion of most of his tribe.

The poor, neglected child was sent to school, and is still there ; his money being in trust for her. Such was the end of one of the most detestable misers that ever existed ; one of a class of men who are, happily, more rarely met with in this country than in any other country in the world.

The affair made some little stir at the time ; but it was hushed up as much as possible, at the desire of some of the old man's distant relatives, and has, I believe, never before been given so fully to the public. As I have given no names, it can now occasion no annoyance to any one ; and I only publish it as one of the singular scenes to which a physician is often witness during the course of his practice.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### THE DEATH OF THE FIRST-BORN SON.

MANY years ago, having occasion to visit the state of Arkansas—then much more of a wilderness than it is at present—for the purpose of inspecting and surveying some waste land that had fallen to me through the death of a relative who had it bestowed upon him as a mark of favor for services rendered to the government, during the war of 1812-'14, I put up at a way-side house, kept by a man who united the occupations of tavern-keeper and planter—that is to say, who gave lodging, such as it was, and food, such as could be obtained, to the wayfarer travellers in that remote district, for a remuneration that should—had it been measured by that usually paid in more cultivated States—have supplied both lodging and food of much better condition and quality.

It was evening when I drew near to the location of this inhospitable house of entertainment, and I was still some miles distant from the county town of Hot Spring, in the county of that name, in which the land was situated.

There was nothing in the aspect, cold, cheerless and uninviting, that would have tempted me to remain, late as it was, had it not been that for some hours a heavy rain had been falling—plash—plash—in large drops, that fell perpendicularly from the sluice-gates of the heavens, suggesting the idea of a second deluge, while the dark, leaden-colored sky showed no symptoms of the probability of the rain-storm subsiding during the night. Indeed it seemed the commencement of one of those heavy rains which often fall in the spring of the year, especially in the far West, and which continue, uninterrupted by a glimpse of sunshine, for days together. For some miles I had ridden (for I was on horseback,) through a

perfect quagmire, and my progress several times had been greatly delayed in consequence of the hoofs of my poor horse having frequently sunk so deeply into the mud, that it was with difficulty he could extricate them. Every now and then I had been also delayed by streams of water rushing across the road, through which it was necessary to ford, often up to the belly of the poor, jaded animal, although the task was attended with both difficulty and danger, and many times I feared that I should be lost in the wilderness, or perish in the morass.

To get on to Hot Spring, therefore, was out of the question, until the storm had subsided, and it was with no little satisfaction that I hailed this way-side inn, which at any other time or under any other circumstances, I should have passed by with unconcern or contempt.

I drew up at the door, and cheerless as had been the aspect of the place at a distance, it looked still more cheerless on a near approach. The house was a mere log-cabin, with the interstices between the timbers closed up with mud, which now was thoroughly saturated with the rain, and here and there had fallen, leaving a wide gap open to the winds of heaven. It was inclosed in a piece of land, perhaps an acre in extent, rudely fenced in with cedar sticks, and covered with a scanty growth of vegetables. A couple of cows were munching a heap of damp hay, which had been thrown to them—for, alas! herbage there was little or none for the poor beasts to crop, and looking as stoically philosophical, amidst their evident discomfort, as these patient animals usually do. A herd of pigs, less patient and less philosophical, were giving vent to their dissatisfaction by a succession of grunts, as they poked their noses into the soil with that vain hope of something *turning up* for the better, which is so often the only solace of men as well as porkers; while a solitary horse, the very picture of misery and famine, was stamping its hoofs, shaking its wet, shaggy and unkempt mane and fetlocks, and poking its head over the fence, wheezing and neighing, and looking the very personification of brute distress.

No landlord was ready at the door to welcome the way-worn traveller, and I had to repeat my summons two or three times before the door was opened.

At length I made myself heard, and a gaunt, sallow-looking individual made his appearance.

"Can I rest here for the night?" I inquired of the man.

"Where are you from?" was his reply.

"I am from New York," I answered; "but for the last two days I have travelled on horseback, it having been impossible, by any other method of conveyance, to get over the abominable roads. The rain has fallen, as you must know, in a soaking shower for the whole day, and I and my poor beast are completely saturated, and utterly worn out. I presume," continued I, pointing to a sign which offered 'good entertainment for man and horse,' "that here I can procure at least temporary accommodation—for it will be out of the question for me to proceed further to-night."

"And where may you be going?" was the response to this appeal of mine.

"For heaven's sake," I hastily replied, "if you can give me and my horse shelter, say so at once, or let us seek it elsewhere, if it can be obtained. Can you not see that the rain is falling heavily while you are engaged in those useless questionings. Tell me at once. Can you accommodate my horse and myself for the night?"

"You hadn't need be captious, stranger," replied the imperturbable landlord. "I calculate you can get off your beast and bring it into the yard, and then you can get what the house will afford."

"Then take my valise," said I, unloosing a small trunk from the saddle, I having packed up a change of clothing, and carried it knapsack-fashion behind me, on finding it necessary to take to an equestrian conveyance.

"Here, Joe—Joe? where the mischief is Joe? Come here and kitch a hold of this stranger's plunder," exclaimed the man, not offering to stir himself from beneath the shelter of the projecting cover of the door-way,

and in a few minutes a shock-headed hobble-de-hoy, of eighteen or nineteen, came shuffling out, rubbing his eyes, as though he had just wakened from sleep, and lazily taking the valise from me, went with it into the house.

"Now you can get down and come in, stranger," said the landlord, "and Joe will see arter your critter."

"But where," I asked, "is my horse to be placed under shelter and cared for? I see no stable nor any other convenience."

"Oh, Joe will turn the critter adrift into the paddock, and throw him a bundle of hay, and he'll do well enough, I guess."

"But," said I, "I must see the poor brute better cared for than that. Have you no place where he can be put under cover, and rubbed down?"

"You're *migh-ty* careful of that ere critter of yourn," said the landlord. "Joe'll lead him under the ledge-roof at the back of the house, and he'll do well enough there, I calculate. If not, you must go ahead and look for better fixings."

Seeing that I could make nothing better of the man, I was fain to put up with the accommodation he was willing to afford; and therefore delivering up my horse to the tender mercies of Joe, who now again shuffled out, after having been an unconscionably long time in disposing of my valise, I entered the uninviting and inhospitable dwelling.

"Let me have a glass of brandy and water," I said; "for I am thoroughly soaked, and even fearful of catching cold."

"You'll find brandy there," said the landlord, pointing to a deal bench, upon which stood a demijohn, a bottle or two, and three tumblers, together with a huge pitcher of water; and, having thus delivered himself, he squirted a quantity of tobacco juice from his mouth into the earthen floor, and disposed himself to his philosophical observation of the apparently interminable rain. I helped myself to a strong glass of the invigorating bever-

age, and then stepped out the back way to see my horse. Having bribed Joe with a quarter, to make the poor animal as comfortable as possible, and promised him another quarter in the morning, if he acquitted himself to my satisfaction, I returned to the main room of the dwelling, and asked for something to eat.

"We've done dinner two hours, stranger," replied mine host; "but, I guess the old woman will get some buck-wheat cakes and a slice of pork ready, bym-bye, if you're a mind to."

"For God's sake," I replied, "let me have something to eat, whatever it be, and then I will go to bed; for I am thoroughly wearied."

The landlord rose from his chair, and proceeding, as I presume, to the apartment that was occupied as a kitchen, he gave the necessary orders, and returned.

Meanwhile I sought to draw him into conversation, which was by no means difficult, when once he had satisfied his curiosity as to who I was, what had brought me all the way from New York, and whither I was going.

I learnt from him that he owned I don't know how many hundred, or perhaps thousands of acres of uncleared land in the vicinity, a very small portion of which had been brought under partial cultivation, partly owing to the difficulty of draining, felling trees, and fencing, and partly to his disappointment in the bargain he had made.

He belonged to one of the New England states—I forget now which, and had swapped a small farm down East, for this wild waste of wilderness, and had removed hither with his wife and son—Joe—to whom I had been introduced, and his daughter, a year or two older, who formed his sole household. He had not found the change so agreeable as he had expected. At that time it was a difficult thing to procure farm hands in that remote region, and he therefore depended entirely upon his own and his son's industry, which, I presume, came only in fits and starts, and he eked out a scanty subsistence by



providing wretched lodgings and scanty entertainment, to any wayfarers whom their unlucky stars might lead to his dolorous neighborhood.

"Have you any other lodgers in the house at present?" I asked, after having listened patiently to the landlord's explanation of the state of his affairs and his future prospects.

"There's a man and woman up stairs sleeping, in the next room to that you will occupy," said he, "and they've got a child with them, who's sick, and as I take it, be 'ant long for this world. They've been a stopping here since yesterday, and when the weather clears up, they are going West, to settle on some land they have bought out there; but they take on sadly about the child, and seldom leave their room." "Going West!" I mentally ejaculated. "Good heavens! are they not sufficiently far to the westward at present?" However, further conversation was interrupted in a very pleasant manner to me, by the entrance of the daughter of the house, with the promised provender, which had taken as long to cook as an elaborate dinner ought to have done.

"Hunger needs no sauce," says the old proverb, and rude as was the food set before me, I did it ample justice, and having dispatched my meal, I asked to be shown to my sleeping apartment. It was a rude chamber, which had to be reached by a ladder, and the furniture of which consisted only of a bedstead made of roughly hewn logs and a couple of chairs and a table of the same materials. There was but one narrow window to the apartment, but the light and air came in freely—rather too freely for the comfort or convenience of its occupants, I thought, through the many crevices and chinks that were open to the winds and rain. However, I was weary enough, and therefore speedily divesting myself of my clothing, I threw myself on the rude bed and in a few minutes sunk into a profound slumber, from which I was awakened towards daylight by voices in the adjoining apartment which I had been informed was occupied by the travellers.

The first sound that reached me was like the wail of a woman—low and shrill, as though the expression of grief were bursting from a heart overflowing with mental agony. The sound was singularly at variance with the soft patter of the rain which still fell heavily, and the dreary sough of the wind which had risen during the night and now moaned without and whistled and shrieked through every cranny of the rude, ill-constructed dwelling.

For some time I lay half unconscious whether the sounds I had heard had not been suggested to my dreaming fancy by the combined noises of the storm; but while I was turning myself over to finish my yet unsatisfied slumber, I heard distinctly the words, in tones of such acute anguish that I shall never forget them!

"Oh, Edward, is this not dreadful! I cannot endure the light; my poor dear, suffering boy. Why did we come hither—no help at hand—no doctor near—my darling child must die, and I shall feel as though I had a hand in his death. Edward, we should not have come here."

"Hush, dear Mary, hush!" said another voice—the husky voice of a man who was endeavoring to suppress emotions which almost choked his utterance; the child has been dying—gradually and slowly, but none the less surely dying—for many days past; ever since he had the fever at Cincinnati. The doctor cured the fever then, but he could not restore the constitution of the child. I doubt if aught of human skill would avail him, Mary! He has been a feeble infant from his birth, and consumption would, at all events, before many years, have taken him from us, even had we remained at home."

"Feeble indeed, poor boy!" replied the female, "but only so much the dearer to the heart of his mother. Oh, Edward! if a doctor could only see him even now, though he died, I should feel better satisfied—I should have a load of grief taken off my mind."

"If it were possible, dear, I too should wish that; but, poor little Charley! Perhaps, love, it were better that

he be thus early removed from the trouble of this world. It is but six short years since we were wedded, with every promise of happiness beaming in the future, yet what but wretchedness has since awaited us. Poor Mary! I have entailed all this upon you. I took you from your happy home—a gay, laughing girl—to share my love—alas! it has been but to share my misery.”

“Oh, Edward,” answered the female, “do not speak thus. I am your wife; and love and duty would both bid me, had I again to choose, to share your fate for weal or for woe; but your well meant sophistry can never bring comfort to the heart of a mother. She can never be led to believe that God is just in tearing her first born from her arms.”

“Silence, Mary,” said the man, in a tone of mingled tenderness and severe reproof—“this is blasphemy. What God has given he has a right to take away.”

“Why, then, did he give? Oh, this is dreadful—see those convulsions—my poor, poor darling!”

I had heard enough to warrant my intrusion, and I hastily sprung from my bed, and dressing myself, I knocked at the door of the room occupied by the sorrowing parents and, as I suspected—the dying child.

“Come in,” said the deep-toned voice of the man, and I entered.

Upon a rude couch was stretched a beautiful boy of perhaps five years of age, but his handsome, regular features were distorted by violent convulsions, and his fragile form was attenuated to a frightful degree.

“I am a fellow-lodger,” I said, apologetically, “and by chance, I have heard—for I slept in an adjoining room—your lamentations over your child. I am a physician, and what aid I can give you is at your service. I trust that this explanation will excuse my intrusion.”

“Can you save my child?—my little Charley? Oh, sir, if you can save my child, a mother’s blessing will forever attend you,” almost shrieked the mother, as I gave my explanation.

The father, too, looked at me appealingly, but shook

his head mournfully and spoke not. He wished, but did not dare, to hope. I at a glance saw that the boy was in the last stage of consumption, and that the convulsions, under which he was suffering, were the prelude of death.

It were cruelty, I thought, to hold out hopes which could not be realized, and I told the sorrowing father and mother that indeed all earthly skill were vain; that soon the object of their fond idolatry would be an angel in heaven. Even as I spoke, the infant was seized with stronger convulsions, and with one powerful spasmodic throb which thrilled through every nerve, he half raised his feeble frame from the bed, fell back with a gurgling sound in his throat, stretched his little limbs to their full length, and expired.

The screams of the mother were dreadful to listen to, as she pressed the now inanimate form to her bosom, as though she would warm it with fresh life. She smothered the pale lips and brow of the dead infant with kisses, and then wept tears of agony upon his face.

Scarcely less painful to witness was the silent grief of the father; but he, roused himself from the stupor into which he had momentarily been thrown, and sought with gentle words to soothe and calm his wife, and partially succeeded. He then approached the bed where the dead body of the child lay, and stooping, and gently kissing his brow and lips, he laid the sheet over the body and exclaimed,

“Not my will but thine be done.”

For my part, I thought I was in a manner committing sacrilege by intruding upon such grief, and I left the room.

Towards noon, the rain clouds, swept away by the wind, had entirely disappeared, and Nature resumed her Spring loveliness even in this desolate wilderness.

There was nothing to invite one to remain in the hotel, and I and the other guests of the inhospitable inn left the house. The grief of the mother was now subdued, and as they were going my way we left the place together. The horse I have described as having so melan-

choly an aspect the day before, belonged to them, and they had a small wagon in which they travelled.

They had come, the man told me, from the State of Maine, where they had formerly been in business; but he had failed, and misfortune after misfortune had heaped themselves, as they sometimes will, upon him. At length, wearied with his vain endeavors to overcome the obstacles that fortune seemed to throw in his way, he had persuaded his wife to accompany him to a farm in the western part of Arkansas, which had belonged to his father; but which, in more prosperous days, they had little heeded, and which, indeed, had never been visited by him, and still remained a perfect wilderness. He hoped that here, in a new way of life, better times might dawn upon him, and he had disposed of all his household goods, and purchased such necessities as he thought would be required, and ventured forth to his future home in the western wilds. A poor prospect, he said, awaited him; but it could not be more hopeless than that he had left behind. They had stopped at Cincinnati, and there their only child, the idol of his mother's heart? gentle and intelligent but always weakly, had fallen sick with fever, from the effects of which it had never recovered, and the difficulties and privations of the journey, and the wretched weather they had encountered, had hastened it to the grave, which, under the most favorable auspices, would ere long have opened to receive it. Both the man and woman bore traces of having occupied a respectable position in society, and although worn by mental suffering, the features of the female were exceedingly beautiful. Their property lay a few miles distant from that I went to survey, and towards the close of the day, with many kind wishes on both sides, I left the bereaved parents to pursue their way into the wilderness, bearing with them their loved yet sorrowful burthen; for the mother had insisted that the grave of the boy should be near their future dwelling-place.

Four or five years afterwards I again visited Arkansas, for the purpose of putting a man and his wife on my

land, in order to bring it under cultivation. Having settled my own business, I made inquiries after my former interesting fellow voyagers, and I found their place out without difficulty. Fortune, wearied with buffeting them in the Eastern States, had here smiled upon them and been lavish of her stores. The land had been found to be the best in the State, and a portion had been sold to great advantage—already a sweet little farm had arisen in the wilderness, and a pretty, tasteful cottage had been erected. I was kindly welcomed by my former temporary friends, and I found the bloom restored to the mother's cheek, and the bright beams of hope and cheerfulness, illumining the once desponding brow of the father.

There was another little Charley, too—a bright-eyed little fellow of three years old, who exhibited none of the symptoms of feeble health which had always been apparent in his brother, and who was almost equally idolized by his mother; although she said, as she pointed to a neat grove which was profusely decorated with shrubs and flowers, at the bottom of the little garden—that she could never love any child as she had loved her first born. As she said this, however, I noticed that she stooped and kissed the little fellow playing beside her and hugged him to her heart, while the father looked at me with a quiet smile, as much as to say—"I think that the present little Charley is as dear to his mother and to me as the first, even now. You see his mother's actions belie her words." Then, however, he glanced toward the lowly grave; and a gentle sigh lifted his broad bosom, which told that, after all, no matter how many olive branches bloomed and blossomed around the table of the now happy pair—the first-born would never be forgotten.

## CHAPTER XX.

## A MYSTERIOUS PATIENT.

ONE morning in the fall of 1849, I was just putting on my overcoat, and was about to start on my morning round among such patients as I still visited, for at this time I had considerably curtailed my practice, and confined myself to a limited number of patients, with a view of giving up practice altogether in another year, when my servant entered the parlor, and told me a man was waiting to see me, down stairs.

"What does he want, Robert?" said I.

"I don't know, sir. He wouldn't send up any message; he said he wanted to see the doctor," replied the servant man.

"I can't wait to see any one now," said I, hastily. "Tell him that he must send up his message, or call another time. I can't be bothered with conversation just now."

Again Robert left the room, and I walked out, and was about to step into my carriage, seeing that he did not return with an answer, when a rough, ill-looking man stepped up to me, and placed a note in my hand.

"From whom is this note?"

"I don't know," was the surly reply. "Read it, and perhaps you'll find out," and the man turned the corner of the street.

The note was written in a lady-like style, and in neat handwriting. It simply said:

"Dr. — will confer an immense favor upon a lady whose husband is in California, if he will meet her servant at the corner of Bleecker-street, at 8 o'clock this evening, and follow her to the lady's dwelling.

"This is no light matter; so pray do not treat it as a silly joke. *Life and death are involved in your compliance.* I have sent this note by a messenger whom I have desired to give it unto your hands, himself, otherwise to return with it to me. I do not know the messenger, nor does he know me. *Do not fail!*"

My first impulse, on reading this letter, was to throw it on one side as a silly attempt at a hoax; but the style of the handwriting and the evident tremor in which the underlined portions of it had been written, induced me to believe that it really was seriously meant. After all I was only asked to meet a female at an early hour in the evening, in a public and fashionable thoroughfare. I was married, and too old to cause any evil reports to arise from the meeting, even were it to become known, which was not likely to be the case; so I determined to see the adventure out.

I returned at my usual hour in the afternoon to take dinner, and then informed my wife that I should be obliged to go out again to visit a patient, and accordingly about half-past seven o'clock, I left my residence in Irving Place and proceeded leisurely to the place of appointment.

The clock just struck eight, as I turned the corner of Bleecker-street, and sure enough there, under the first lamp-post, apparently awaiting some person's coming, stood a female wearing a straw bonnet with a red lining. I passed close by her, and looked at her earnestly. However, my gaze was useless, for the servant, or whoever she was, immediately dropped her veil.

"You, I presume, are the—lady—indicated in the note I received this morning?" inquired I.

"Yes," was simply the response to my question, and another silence ensued. At length the female said impatiently:

"It is not seemly for us to be awaiting here at this hour of the night; art thee ready to follow me according to the request of the writer of the letter?"

I was fairly struck dumb with amazement.

"A Quakeress!" I muttered to myself. "Well, there are strange adventures to be met with at times."

"I cannot hear what thee sayest," continued my mysterious companion; "tell me honestly if thee will accompany me or not."

"Ah—yes—certainly—I will," I replied, and I thought I heard first the faintest laugh in the world issue from beneath the tiresome veil which hid the face of the female. However, she walked on with a quick step and I followed her until she reached the lower end of the street, where a private carriage was in waiting for my companion. The driver, who got down from his seat, was evidently a private servant, for although he wore a rough overcoat, I could see the buttons of his livery as the wind blew aside the cape, and his appearance denoted the well-drilled domestic. He handed the female into the carriage in a respectful manner, and I now was satisfied that she was no servant. Still, she might be merely a companion to the writer of the note, "and perhaps," thought I, "she is herself the writer."

"Please to step in, sir," said she, when she had taken her own seat, and I accepted the invitation. The coachman came to the door, and she whispered something in his ear, and then turning to me as the man mounted into his seat, she added:

"I am about to draw up the blinds and place the interior of the coach in utter darkness. Thee must be aware that for some cause which thee will know by and by, secrecy is necessary in this business, and therefore I do not wish thee to see whither we are driving."

I made no objection; for after all, little harm could come to me, and it did not seem likely that any was intended. My companion was a young, and as I believed, in spite of the envious veil, a pretty woman, and our guide a young, smart servant lad.

"There can be no great harm come of the adventure," said I, half aloud; for my companion heard me, and replied:

"Harm! Nay, rather, much good may arise from it. Thou art not fearful of me—a poor, fragile female?" and again I thought I detected the smothered laugh which could scarcely be restrained.

"No," I replied, "I am not frightened, nevertheless it is always pleasant to know where one is going"—for by this time we were driving at a rapid pace, and every moment I expected to hear by the sound of the wheels that we had quitted the paved streets of the city and were progressing along a country road; but no, we still rattled on, although a full half hour, as I calculated in the midst of the darkness, must have elapsed since my fair companion had given her orders to the coachman, and pulled up the blinds of the coach. At length the soft easy motion warned us that we had reached beyond the confines of the city; and just as I was getting into a bit of a flurry on account of the distance I was from home, as I imagined, and the alarm that my wife would feel on account of my absence, the coach suddenly drew up, and the coachman alighted, and opening the door, handed first my female companion and then myself from the carriage.

I looked about me with a pardonable curiosity, in order to form some idea of where I was, if possible; but for aught I knew of the place, I might have stood in the midst of an African forest. On both sides of the wide gravelled path on which I stood, the shrubs were so thick and so closely arched overhead, as to hide altogether from my view the rays of the moon, which was just rising, as I saw by one brief glimpse afforded me by a partial break in the hedge or plantation, or whatever it might be, as I alighted from the carriage. My conductress took me by the arm and led me about a hundred yards, until we reached what appeared to me, in the imperfect light, the back premises of a large dwelling-house, and after ascending a short flight of stone steps, we entered a narrow passage, where the female said:

"Promise that thee will never speak of what thee may see here to-night, for six months, and I will take thee to the lady who needs thy services."



"I can make no such rash promise," replied I. "The nature of my profession, leading me as it does, into the knowledge of many secrets and many family histories, forbids me from speaking of what I see unless I should unsuspectingly be led into a knowledge of something wrong. You may depend upon my secrecy so far as the honor or happiness of the family is concerned, but I shall make no rash vow."

"It is well," she said, as, after leading me through several dark, tortuous passages, and ascending two or three flights of stairs, she led me at length into a handsomely-lighted parlor, the furniture of which, however, was covered with linen, apparently for the purpose of protecting it from dust.

Here she begged me to sit down while she went to inform her mistress of my presence. If I had been before astonished at the sweetness of her voice, I was now still more struck with the neatness of her attire, and the fawn-like elegance of her figure, as she bounded with infantile grace from the apartment; but she had, as I thought, rather coquettishly, not yet ventured to remove the veil from her face.

"She is no servant," murmured I; "and I am half inclined to think that Quaker style of speaking a mere ruse. However, a few moments will, I presume, lead me into the secret of this mysterious visit. A pretty sort of an adventure for an old man like me, truly! but here comes my travelling companion."

It was not she, however, but a servant of the household this time, and no mistake, who requested, in a tolerably broad Limerick accent, that I would follow her into her mistress's room.

I did so, and was received at the door by the fair incognita, who pointed towards a couch, where, wrapped in a loose dress, lay a very handsome and youthful female.

"Is that Dr. —?" she asked, in a feeble voice, as I approached the couch.

"It is, madam," I replied. "My visit, in reply to

your note of this morning, has been made under strange circumstances; and I shall be happy now to learn the nature of the business upon which I have been summoned."

"You shall know, doctor," replied the lady. "Adele," speaking to the incognita, "you will not need to go out again; take off your bonnet and leave the room. I must first see Doctor ——— alone."

I turned round as I heard this request on the part of the lady, for I was anxious to see the features of the young lady whose name I had found was Adele, as a young man of twenty-five would have been under similar circumstances. Adele had her bonnet off, and with it, of course, the veil was removed. She was looking me steadily in the face as I turned, and I was thunder-stricken—I had almost written horror-stricken—at what I saw. The gentle-toned, soft-spoken Adele, whose Quaker accent and elegant fawn-like figure had all conspired to make me expect something very beautiful in her features, was a negress! and not only that, but one of the ugliest specimens that ever was landed from an African slaver. Adele evidently noticed my surprise, but her countenance expressed no emotion whatever. It was one of the most vacant and idiotic I had ever gazed upon. She turned and left the room, and as the door closed I again heard, or fancied I did, the low, suppressed musical laugh.

"Dr. —," commenced the lady, in a feeble voice, often interrupted by a distressing cough. "Dr. —, I need not tell you that I am very ill, and even more racked in mind than in body. You will doubtless think my conduct strange in having sent for you in the singular manner I did; but I had my reasons for so doing, and when I have explained them I trust you will forgive me any annoyance I have been the occasion of."

She ceased speaking in consequence of being interrupted by a violent fit of coughing, which left her utterly exhausted, and for some minutes she lay back on the pillow of the couch motionless, and her breathing was

scarcely perceptible. At length she recovered herself, and proceeded with her story, which I shall relate in her own words:—

"I have not always been the tenant of an abode of luxury such as I now reside in," continued she, glancing around at the handsome furniture of the apartment, "and would to God I had never known such luxury. I was happy when I was poor—and now happiness and I have parted company for ever. You may think it strange, doctor, that I should have singled you out—as you surmise, doubtless, a perfect stranger to me—to be the confidant of my troubles. But do you recollect about five years ago attending in your professional capacity, Mrs. —?" (mentioning the name of the wife of a confectioner of considerable fame in the upper part of the city.)

"I do," I replied, and then an idea seemed to float through my mind that I had somewhere seen the girl's features before.

"Do you recollect," she continued, "once bringing your wife to the saloon and leaving her at one of the tables, while you went up stairs to see Mrs. —?"

"I cannot say that I do," I replied, "yet it is very possible I may have done so."

"I think I can recall your recollection of that evening, then, by mentioning another circumstance. When you were about leaving the saloon, a fracas occurred with some young men who were slightly intoxicated and had become quarrelsome. One of them used some rude language to me, which another one resented, and the first-mentioned so far forgot himself as to aim a blow at me with his cane, which you arrested, and bade me keep close to you until the young men had been removed from the saloon. Do not think me vain, doctor—I am not vain now," she added, with a mournful smile, "but perhaps it may assist your memory if I state that your good wife passed some very complimentary remarks upon my personal appearance, and that you, who had witnessed the whole of the riotous proceedings, satisfied the pro-

prietor that I was not to blame, he having some suspicion that perhaps some forward behavior of mine had caused the young men to behave as they did. Do you recollect now, doctor?"

"Yes," replied I. "I recollect perfectly well the circumstance now you speak of, and I have some faint recollection of your features likewise, but you are sadly changed since then or else my old eyes deceive me." "Changed!" said the lady in a voice so mournful, so touching, so full of heart-felt grief, that I felt sorry I had used the expression, "indeed *I am changed*. Changed in mind and in body—my youth and beauty fled—and my purity of mind, alas! I fear fled also. But let me proceed with my story.

"It was the recollection of your kindness to me on that evening which led me to seek you out in the singular manner I have done, and let me thank you now, doctor, for the promptness with which you replied to my vague and somewhat suspicious note. Most persons would have thrown it aside, considering it to be merely a wretched and idle hoax, and I knew not whom else to seek if you disregarded my application. A few evenings after the circumstances I have alluded to the young gentleman who had interposed between me and his tipsy companion, called in at the saloon again and introducing himself to me, begged my pardon for his share in the disgraceful outrage to which I had been submitted. He was so respectful and appeared so truly indignant at the conduct of his companions, that I really felt more hurt than he, and I assured him that I did not consider him to blame, for he had been prompt to render me such service as he was able to do.

"After this he was a constant visitor at the saloon, and he always managed to address a few words of politeness to me, without being in the slightest degree intrusive, and sometimes in passing he would hand me a bouquet of flowers which I at first took, merely because he offered it, and I did not wish to pain him by a re-

fusal; and by and bye I began to prize the flowers for the sake of the donor.

"So passed away three or four months during which period we had become intimate, so far as intimacy could exist between persons in our relative conditions, for he was a young man of wealth and high expectations, and I was a simple shop girl.

"Sometimes romantic ideas of love would spring up in my bosom, for he was a handsome young man, and I already felt a strong partiality for him, which, if it was not love, at least was near akin to it. At first, on such occasions I banished these thoughts from my mind; would to Heaven I had always done so; how much misery would have been spared me! But I could not do it, and when he entered the saloon in the company of ladies—his equals in social rank, I soon began to feel a pang of jealousy, which should have forewarned me to put myself beyond the reach of temptation, for it showed that the barbed arrows of Cupid had already transfixed in my heart.

"I will not weary you with long uninteresting details, but will at once proceed to the turning pivots of my brief life. I have a mother residing on Long Island, and on Sundays I used, if the weather was fair, to be in the habit of visiting and spending the day with her. One Sunday evening, about six months after my acquaintance with Edward had commenced, I was returning from my accustomed visit to my mother. The day had been sultry, and I had not left my mother's house more than a quarter of an hour before the atmosphere gave every indication of an approaching thunder-storm. I was still a considerable distance from the ferry boat and in a few minutes the air began to darken and the rain to fall. I was hastening on when a carriage containing three young men hurried by me, they seeming as anxious as myself to gain the shelter of the boat before the storm burst in its fury. The carriage was, however, suddenly checked a few yards in advance of me, and one of the young men, after giving some directions to his compa-

nions, sprang out and came towards me with an umbrella, the carriage again driving on. I soon recognized him as Edward. I was sorry that I had thus met him, and yet I was glad too. I felt a strange indescribable sensation of delight as he spread open his umbrella and offered me his arm; at the same time something warned me, I knew not how or why, that I was doing wrong—a mysterious voice seemed to whisper in my ear, 'Be on your guard or you will bitterly regret this meeting.' However, I heeded not the warning voice—Edward's conduct was kind and gentlemanly, and we sat in the cabin of the boat while it made two or three trips to and fro, until the violence of the storm had abated, when he insisted upon escorting me to my destination, and before he left me he had extorted a not unwilling promise on my part that I should meet him at Union Square on the following Sunday at a stated hour, and that I would ride out into the country with him.—From that date my visits to my poor mother were few and far between, for that delightful Sunday's ride led to many others, and by-and-bye Edward began to talk of love. How my heart throbbed as I listened to his honied words, and felt his soft, low, musical voice thrill to my heart. By-and-bye he grew bolder, and by degrees, from disparaging the vows of love made at the altar, he began to ridicule what he termed the absurd notion that a few mystic words spoken by a priest should be more binding than the untrammelled ties cemented by pure affection. Oh! why did I not then recollect the warning voice? Why did I not confide my feelings to my mother? Her counsel would have saved me. But, no! it was not to be. I listened at first with alarm, then with sorrow; but still I continued to listen to the voice of the tempter, when I should have spurned him from me. However, I always insisted that I would submit to no Socialist doctrines, but that the man who wished me to become his wife must sanctify his vows of love at the altar of the church; and Edward yielded to what he styled my silly squeamishness, and offered me marriage. *He*, the wealthy and highly edu-

cated gentleman, offered to marry the *poor, humble shop-girl*. When I heard him say this, I forgot all my fears in the delirium of delight that rushed through my veins, and I solemnly promised to be his—his alone. I said, and I spake the truth, that I loved him dearer than my own life."

For a few minutes the poor lady reclined back on her pillow, unable to restrain her emotions. I had become interested in her story and as I knew that when her mind was relieved of its burthen she would be much easier, I encouraged her to proceed:

"Then you were married," said I, to Edward —, to this gentleman of whom you speak?" for she had not mentioned his surname.

"Doctor —," she replied, making a great effort to speak, as was evident from the forced, unnatural firmness of her voice, "we were married as I thought then, but I soon had reason to believe that the marriage was false—that the priest who married us in the home Edward had procured for me, in order, as he said, that for the present, his wealthy friends who would be opposed to his marriage with me, having other views regarding him, might not be aware that the ceremony had taken place, was a companion of Edward's, who had disguised himself to represent a minister of the church."

Again she ceased speaking and after waiting a few moments for her to resume the thread of her story, I said—"May I ask how long ago it is since the ceremony, whether it was true or false, took place?"

"More than three years," she replied. "At first I was happy, oh, how happy! and then came the first feeling of remorse. I could not feel truly happy after the first flush of delight was over, until I had at least the satisfaction of telling my mother that I was a wife, and just before our first child was born (poor thing, happily for itself it was still-born) I besought Edward to allow me to tell my mother and promised inviolable secrecy as regarded every one else. Then, for the first time, I saw Edward angry. I never shall forget the fearful scowl

that came over his features as he bid me never to speak to him in that manner again. I fear that the terrors of that moment so affected my health that it was the cause of my babe being still-born. Yet I was not to be daunted, and a few days afterwards I again made a similar request and this time his passion knew no bounds. He taunted me with my former poverty, asked if he had not raised me to a position of wealth and splendor, and concluded his vituperations by telling me in bitter tones that *we were not married—that the ceremony was a mere pretence from beginning to end!* I believe I swooned away when I heard those cruel words, for the first thing I recollect after this, is that I was reclining upon the sofa, supported by Edward's arm, and he was applying restorative essences to my nostrils and lips, and softly bathing my brow.

"Thank God, my darling, that you have recovered at last," said he, as he imprinted a kiss upon my cheek. "Why, what a foolish, sensitive little thing you are!—Come, now, let us make a compact together. You shall promise me that you shall never speak to me on this disagreeable subject again, and I will promise that my dear little wife—my wife according to *my* ideas, although our marriage is not sanctioned by a pack of silly vows—shall have every wish gratified, before she utters it, if possible, by one who loves her with the most ardent affection. Is it a bargain?"

"I was overcome by his affectionate caresses, so glad to find him like himself again, that I made the promise, and since that time the subject has never been broached between us."

"You have had but one child, then?" inquired I.

"I have had two, doctor; the first, as I have said, was still-born, the second died when a few weeks old," she paused a few minutes, and then added, "and I am again about to become a mother."

"Is your husband here?" I at length ventured to ask.

"No," she replied, "Edward is in California, and perhaps may not return for twelve months. I do not know

who the medical gentleman is who has previously attended me in my confinements, and dreading Edward's anger if I sent for a stranger in an open manner, I ventured to send for you in this mysterious way. You will not betray my secret, doctor?"

"You may place every confidence in me," I replied. "I should be base indeed to betray such a trust; but did not your—husband—make any arrangements in anticipation of this event before his departure on so long a journey?"

A shade of uneasiness and alarm passed over her countenance as she replied:

"No, he did not—that is to say, he left in such a hurry that he could not."

It struck me that something was wrong from the hesitating way in which she uttered these words.

After a short time she added, "Now that I have sent for you, doctor, and have got your promise, *which I shall esteem sacred*, I cannot expect that you will visit me again in this manner. I will give you my address, but not my husband's—not Edward's name, and I beg that on your honor you will promise that you will take no measures to discover it—perhaps some day there may be no fear—that is to say, no need of this secrecy. I feel weak—I have not spoken so long together for months, not since Edward's departure. Here is my address," she added, writing it on a card in pencil; "and now, doctor, I conjure you by all you hold sacred, that at least for six months, you will preserve a profound secrecy as regards all I have told you—even from your wife."

Her voice trembled as she spoke, and though I felt there was some strange mystery enveloping the whole affair, I could not forbear giving her a pledge of inviolable secrecy.

"Do not look at the card until you reach home," she continued, "and ask no questions of the servant. He will drive you to your residence, for I have detained you very late. The direction will enable you to find your way here again. When shall I see you again, doctor?"

"The day after to-morrow," I replied. "I don't think there will be any need of my calling before that," and so saying, I bid my interesting but mysterious patient "good night."

As I passed down stairs, the female attendant met me, and requested me to sit down for a few minutes, while she gave directions for the carriage to be got in readiness, and she left the room for that purpose. I had come upon her suddenly, and saw that she was reading, for she had hastily thrust two books under the pillow of the sofa upon my approach. Curiosity had prompted me to look at them. I found that one was a volume of French poems by Lamartine, and the other was Moore's "Lallah Rookh." I was so astonished that it was as much as I could do to thrust the books into their hiding-place, when I heard her steps approaching, and, I saw that she immediately glanced at the sofa as if to see if the books had been disturbed. I wished her good night, and walking to the door, stepped into the carriage, which immediately drove off with me at a rapid pace.

"Mystery upon mystery," thought I; "what does it all mean. There is something wrong somewhere besides this false marriage of that unhappy girl; and then, here is a negro Quakeress reading Lamartine's poems and Moore's 'Lallah Rookh!'"



## CHAPTER XXI.

I HAVE already mentioned that my interesting and mysterious patient had given me her address, written with pencil on a piece of card, and true to my promise I visited the place on the appointed day. Of course this time I found it out easily enough, and I was somewhat surprised to find that it was, comparatively speaking, but a short distance from my own residence. It had appeared to me on the occasion of my first visit, that I had travelled over a far greater distance; perhaps the servant had received directions not to take a straight course, and perhaps my curiosity and suspense, and partial uneasiness, had led me to fancy that I had been a longer time on the journey than it really had occupied.

I shall not say where the house was located; but every one who has ridden out on the Bloomingdale road, has passed it on their way, and not a few must have remarked its snug and cosy aspect. It was not a large mansion, nor did the grounds, or the decorations within, give it any extraordinary pretensions to fashion: but as far as comfort was concerned, every thing was as perfectly arranged as it well could be, and the rooms were very handsomely furnished, although several of them appeared to be unoccupied. In fact the lady I was called to visit, the female, whoever she was, who had been my companion in the carriage on the occasion of the previous visit, and one servant girl besides the man servant before mentioned, appeared to be the sole tenants of the dwelling.

I was ushered up-stairs to her mistress' apartment, by the servant girl, and as I approached the door, I heard a melodious female voice reading aloud. As I paused after having knocked at the door, I heard a rustling of garments inside and a slight sound as though some one had passed from the room by an inner door, and then a

voice, which I recognized to be that of the invalid, bade me enter.

I found the lady alone; but a chair placed beside the couch upon which she had been reclining, and an open book laying on the table, told me that I had not been wrong in my conjecture, and that the person I had heard reading to the sick lady, had quitted the apartment by a door which I fancied opened into another room.

The lady looked still more languid than she had appeared on my former visit, and upon my asking her how she was, she feebly replied that she feared she was very ill.

It was needless for me to press her as regarded the symptoms of her disorder—for I knew what were her physical ailments, as the reader may readily surmise, from what had passed on the former interview. The distressing cough that I have spoken of, was occasioned by the general derangement of the bodily functions consequent upon the nature of her illness, and did not arise from cold or from any chronic affection of the throat or lungs. All this, therefore, was susceptible of improvement; but in addition to this, I could perceive that mental affliction of the most painful character was wearing away her life, and until this was relieved, I knew that all hope of her restoration to health, even after the critical moment that made her the third time a mother, had passed away, would prove futile.

Naturally anxious as I was to become acquainted with all the facts of this singular case, I was so situated that I could make no inquiries that would have furnished any clue to the yet undeveloped mysteries, without appearing intrusive, and perhaps causing pain; and after having sat for a reasonable time, and having satisfied myself that the crisis was not likely to take place immediately, I was about to take my leave, promising in a short time to call daily, when the lady was suddenly seized with a feeling of faintness, and at her request, I rang the bell for her attendant.

The summons was answered by the negress whom I

had seen on my previous visit, who must have been close at hand, as she entered by the door connecting the sitting room with the bed-room, as I perceived by a glimpse of the interior, as the door was opened.

She approached the sufferer, and taking a bottle from the table, bathed her brow with eau de cologne, and applied smelling salts to her nostrils, and in the course of a few minutes she revived.

"Thank you, Adele," said she—"I feel better now," and then turning towards me, she added, "I am so weak, doctor, that I often have these slight swoons; but they are no way alarming. In fact I attribute them entirely to the condition of my health, just now. I suffered from them very much previous to the birth of my first baby."

This was said interrogatively, as though she would have asked my opinion, and I replied:

"No, madam, they are not dangerous; they are of frequent occurrence under the circumstances, especially when the frame has been enfeebled by prior sickness, or when the mind is uneasy; but you should always have assistance at hand. Indeed, in your present condition, some attendant should always remain in the room with you, and you should likewise strive to be as cheerful as possible, and either enter into some interesting conversation, or let some one read to you, so as to keep your mind occupied."

"Be under no alarm for me in that respect, doctor," she replied; "Adele is always with me during the day-time, and she occupies the same bed-room at night. She was reading to me as you were announced, when she suddenly left the room; but she has since remained close at hand, as you may have perceived."

While the lady was speaking, I had taken the opportunity to more closely examine the features of her companion by the day-light, than I had been able to do during the mere glimpse I had of her face on the previous visit, and I now felt sure that she wore a mask; that the negro features were false, as well as the dark material that covered her hands and arms, although both were ad-

mirably arranged, and would have deceived any one, unless upon a close inspection. The lady observed me looking rather attentively, and immediately sought to turn my attention away, by making some apparently casual remark, and shortly afterwards I bid her good day, and quitted the room.

As I was leaving, the younger female whispered in the ear of the other, and then apparently having obtained an affirmative reply to some request, she followed me out and accompanied me down stairs, and into the little parlor where I had seen her reading on my former visit.

"I fancy, doctor," she said, "that you suspect that I have assumed a disguise, and you are right. I wear a mask and false hair, and these dark gloves (holding out a pretty shaped arm and hand, covered with dark close-fitting silk mittens) are only drawn on to make my disguise perfect. The Quaker style in which I previously addressed you, was also assumed, partly because I do not wish to be known, and partly to gratify a whim of my own. I wished to see how much I could mystify you; but I find that I am not perfect in the art of disguising myself, and since I cannot successfully carry out the character-I have assumed, it is as well that I should tell you, at once and openly, that I do not wish to be recognized. Henceforward I may perhaps, dispense with this troublesome mask," continued she, laughing; "but I shall wear a close veil whenever you happen to call, and truly I shall be happy to get rid of the tiresome disguise—for even thus far I have scarcely been able to restrain my mirth while speaking to you. The other night, when you put on that look of horror when I uncovered my face, it was almost too much for me. I had to rush from the room in order to restrain myself from laughing outright. By-and-bye you may perhaps know the cause of this singular deception. I now trust to your own honor and the promise you have given Mrs. Mason. (I will so designate the lady, as it is awkward to leave blanks, though of course this was neither her real name nor her false lover's assumed name.) I trust to that promise that you will not make any

attempt to discover more than I think proper to acquaint you with. Depend upon it, however, that nothing wrong is intended." So saying, she wished me good day, and immediately returned to the apartment of her sick friend.

I returned home as much mystified as ever and scarcely knowing what to think of the matter. It appeared to me that I was playing an illicit part in some game of deep deception, and that it was my duty either to insist that all should be explained to my satisfaction, or else that I ought to refuse to pay any more visits; but then I had bound myself to a compact of secrecy, and, whatever might be plotting, I thought, the conspirators are only two weak women, one of whom, at least, is truly an object of commiseration. I therefore determined to visit the house daily and to trust to chance for some explanation of the mystery that seemed to envelope all its inhabitants.

I called regularly several times after this, but was always introduced to the lady of the house alone, and whenever I did by chance see the younger female she was always heavily veiled, so that it was quite out of the question to get a glimpse of her features. I had, however, become exceedingly curious regarding her, and I noticed that she wore several richly mounted rings on her fingers, but none on the third finger of her left hand. Also, that she wore a locket of singular workmanship hanging on her bosom. Her hands were beautifully formed and delicately white, and her *tout ensemble* led me to believe that she was the daughter of wealthy parents, who by some unfortunate accident had been led astray, and who, although she was unwilling to leave her friend alone in her present condition, was desirous of avoiding recognition by those who had known her in happier days. I often asked myself whether it were possible that we had met before, and endeavored to form some idea as to whom she might be from the outline of her figure and her voice; but then she resembled so many young ladies of my acquaintance in these respects

that from such vague calculations it was impossible to draw any conclusion.

One day, however, while passing up Broadway I was stopped for some ten minutes at a crossing in consequence of the numerous carriages and omnibuses passing to and fro, and among the carriages were one or two belonging to private families. One of these stopped right before me and the blind being down and the window open, I could distinctly see the persons of the occupants. They were two ladies, one of whom was elderly as I could see by her features which were turned towards me, but the other had a green silk veil before her face, concealing her features as far as the chin. I should have taken no especial notice of them had not the younger lady raised her arm to point out something on the opposite side of the street to her companion, and to my astonishment on her fingers were the very rings which had so attracted my attention on the person of the incognita at the residence of my mysterious patient. I could not be mistaken, especially in one of them, for it was set with an amethyst surrounded by diamonds of considerable size, and must have been of immense value. It was not common to see such costly rings worn, and this in connection with the other rings, one set with pearls and the other with garnets, satisfied me that the occupant of the carriage could be no other than the unknown.

Presently the carriage moved on, and I asked a bystander if he knew to whom it belonged; but he could not tell me and I repeated my question to several others, so often, I suspect, that they began to think me crazy, but I was so anxious to gain information that I was only brought to a sense of the folly making such inquiries in the public streets by finding half a dozen boys collected round me, one of whom said—

"If yer wants to know who the ladies is, old feller, yer'd better run arter the machine and find out;" while another added:—

"Give us a shillin, old feller, and I'll run and ax who they be and save yer the trouble."

Finding that in my eagerness I was drawing attention to myself, I passed on, and as it was about my usual hour of calling at the house of the sick lady, I made the best of my way thither, desirous of ascertaining whether the veiled lady, as I termed her, was really at home or not. I was shown up-stairs by the servant and found my patient in much the same state of health as usual, although it was evident that the period of her accouchment was approaching. I made some inquiry respecting her companion, to which a vague answer was returned, and I was just on the point of asking whether I had not met her in the city that morning, when she entered the room, her face veiled as usual, apparently as though she had been sitting until then in the next apartment, as was usual with her during the time I remained with my patient. I was somewhat surprised; nevertheless, I glanced immediately at the rings on her fingers, and was more than ever satisfied that she who wore those rings was the lady I had met in the carriage that day. When I quitted the sick chamber and went down stairs, I stopped a few minutes in the parlor and took up one of the morning papers which laid upon the table; a paragraph had been cut from it, and while I was reading a column on the other side, the incognita came into the room, and, not perceiving me, as I was sitting near the door, she advanced to the table for the purpose as I imagined of taking up the paper, for missing it from the table, she glanced on the floor, and then turning round she caught sight of me:—

"I beg your pardon, doctor," she said, "I really thought you had gone."

"I presume," said I, "that you are looking for this newspaper, which I removed from the table."

"I was," she replied; "I generally read the paper to Mrs. Mason, every day; but there is no hurry. I beg you to be seated again."

"I was just on the point of going home," said I, handing her the newspaper; "I was only reading this interesting report of the Historical Society, but it is spoiled

for reading in consequence of a paragraph on the column on the opposite side, having been cut out."

"Yes," replied the lady, in a flurried manner, as I thought, "It is a mere trifle that I cut out to paste in my album. I am in the habit of doing so," and she hastily took the paper from my hand.

I could not resist the inclination to ask her if she had not been riding in the city, and whether I had not met her in a carriage in Broadway that morning?

She started as if struck by an electric spark, and for some moments did not reply. At length she said, hesitatingly, and in rather an angry tone of voice:—

"I was abroad in the city to-day. It is no use denying it. It is these rings that have betrayed me. They shall not do so again."

"Your incognito, Miss," I replied, good humoredly, "is safe as ever it was, for I, as you must be aware, could not see your features, neither do I know whose carriage it was you were riding in."

"And if you keep your implied promise, you will not seek to know," she replied, endeavoring to assume a lively tone of speaking, although I could see that it was feigned, "at least," she added, "until I remove the embargo I have placed you under."

"You may trust me," said I, as I rose from my chair and bade her good morning.)

When I reached home the idea came into my head to find out what was the nature of the paragraph which had been cut from the paper, my knowledge of which had apparently considerably annoyed the lady; and as I had noticed the portion of the paper from which it had been cut, I had no difficulty in finding it in a copy of the journal that was lying in my parlor.

It was a short paragraph in the midst of the news from California, a steamer having arrived the previous day, and related simply to the arrival at Sacramento, of a young man, who, it hinted, had left New York under suspicious circumstances, and who had arrived at San Francisco by a former steamer. The paragraph was,

however, perfectly vague, excepting to those who were aware of some prior circumstances to which the editor alluded, and I was not among the number; but I was strongly impressed with the idea that the young man was the husband or lover of my patient, and that the young lady had cut it out purposely, to prevent it being seen by her friend. I could not conceive any plausible reason why it should be so; nevertheless, I was induced to lay the paper carefully aside, in order that I might again refer to it should I have occasion, and I determined to watch in future for the news from California, and see if I could gain by this means, some clue to the mystery in which my patient appeared to be involved.

A few days after this occurrence, Mrs. Mason became the mother of a fine boy. I had previously hinted the propriety of engaging a nurse, but had been told that the servant girl whom I had frequently seen in the house, was perfectly qualified to act in that capacity, and indeed had been hired with that object in view.

I attended the young lady during her confinement and her subsequent illness, and was happy to find that she recovered her health more rapidly than under the circumstances I had anticipated.

She appeared to derive great consolation from the fact of her child being so strong and healthy as he was. Her maternal solicitude had twice met with disappointment, and she had evidently feared that the third time she would be equally unfortunate.

Eight weeks had now passed away since the confinement of my patient, and she was restored to a much better state of health than I had ever thought to have seen her on the occasion of my first visit. For the last three weeks, my visits had only been occasional, and now, on my leaving her room, she told me that she felt so well that she did not think there was any occasion for me to repeat my visits, and as she said this, she placed a bank-note of considerable value in my hand—far exceeding in amount any sum that I should have charged for my professional services. I hesitated—for in the first place I

was doubtful within myself, whether to make any charge, or at least, I had determined to wait a considerable time before I presented my bill; and then I would freely have given the whole sum to have had a full explanation of the reasons she had for observing such secrecy.

I had pleased myself with the idea that perhaps when I had generously refused any remuneration for my services, I might perhaps be told all—out of sheer gratitude; but the lady, observing my agitation, said—

"I understand the kindness of your motives, doctor; but I am well able to pay for any services you have done me. And now," she added, archly, "I do not release you as yet from your promise; but in a short time, if my child remains in good health, I will tell you all—nay, perhaps seek advice from you. Meanwhile, oblige me by the acceptance of this trifle (drawing a ring from her finger) as a proof of my gratitude for services rendered under circumstances that few, perhaps, would have been satisfied with. Call upon me, if you please, eight weeks hence, and in all probability you will be released from your promise of secrecy."

At the expiration of the specified time, I called as requested, but to my astonishment and disappointment, I found the shutters closed and the house deserted.

Fearful that some accident might have happened, to have caused this unexpected removal of its inmates, and blaming myself for not having made public what, after all, I had no business to have done, I sought out the landlord of the house and asked him if he knew where his late tenants had removed.

He did not.

"Did they give notice of their intention to remove?" I asked.

"No," replied he. "I believe their removal was quite unexpected to themselves. Indeed the rent was paid in advance by the husband of the lady, who is in California, I believe, until November next; there is still three months to run. It is a strange proceeding altogether, for the gentleman insisted on paying me in advance, and



since the removal of his wife, I find that he gave me a false name; and of course, under the circumstances, I was not particular in asking for references."

"How did you learn that the name was false?" asked I.

"I went to a gentleman of the same name in Wall-street, who, on taking the house, he said was a relative of his. He knows nothing at all about him. However, so far as I am concerned, all is right enough. I shall not let the house until the term is expired, and then, if I hear nothing from any of the parties, it is open for a new tenant."

Thus I was completely baffled, just when I thought the mystery was to be cleared up. I thought it my duty, without giving improper publicity to the circumstances, to institute every inquiry that I could, privately; but all was to no purpose; and as weeks passed on, my curiosity began to wear away, although I continued to peruse the California news carefully, and several times fancied I saw some remarks which could be connected with those of the first paragraph that had arrested my attention.

Three months after this visit of mine to the empty house of my former patient, I read in the morning papers that a male child, apparently about four or five months old, had been found drowned in the Hudson river, under circumstances which led to the belief that its death had been occasioned by violence. The child was described as being attired in superior clothing, and as showing every appearance of having been in good health up to the time of its death.

Had it not been that the age of the child corresponded with that of Mrs. Mason, I should have taken little heed of such a paragraph as this—they are unfortunately too numerous—but the particular age, and the fact that the child seemed to have come to his death by violence, led me to seek out the coroner, and with him to attend the inquest.

The body of the infant had been laid out in a police office near the spot where it had been fished out of the water, and that it had not been long in the water was

evident from the fact that decomposition had scarcely commenced.

Around its neck was a string of small coral beads, such as I had once or twice noticed on Mrs. Mason's child, and although I could not distinguish the features, I almost mechanically raised the sleeve of the left arm, and there, sure enough, was a peculiarly shaped mole or birth-mark, that I had frequently noticed on the infant at whose birth I had been present, and in my own mind I was satisfied that this was my unfortunate patient's child; but what could I do? I did not even know the name of its parents. It was the belief of all present that the infant had been purposely thrown into the river, and perhaps that its mother had committed the double crime of infanticide and suicide; and there was nothing left but to return a verdict in accordance with the circumstances.

Months passed away—I cannot say how many; but perhaps it was nine months after the discovery of the child, that I was called upon by a respectable and elderly female who was attired in mourning, and whose features showed that she was overburdened with grief.

On being shown into my private room, she for some time was so overpowered with emotion that she was unable to speak. At length she found utterance, and asked me if I had not attended the accouchement of a lady who lived near the Bloomingdale road (mentioning the place of residence of my mysterious patient.) I replied that I had done so. "Pray, madam," I asked, "was she a relation of yours?"

The poor lady burst into tears, as she murmured in scarcely audible tones, "she was my daughter, sir;" and then she added, "and I fear she has been made away with."

"Good God!" I exclaimed, "what do you mean; who gave you such information, and how did you learn that I attended the unhappy lady; for from her lips I could gather nothing relating to her family further than that she had a mother residing in Brooklyn; and she left the

house, strangely enough, just as I thought the curiosity she had aroused was on the point of being gratified."

"I fear she did not leave the house of her own accord," replied the poor lady. "Oh, why could she not trust her mother! If the world had forsaken her, I never should have done so. Poor thing! *she* was not in fault," and as she said this, the poor creature again succumbed beneath the violence of her emotions.

She had strangely acquired information, which by degrees, and by using considerable tact in soothing her mind, I extracted from her. It was a tale of horror that she told—such an one as is calculated to make one's blood freeze in one's veins to listen to; but the hour is late, and night, though best fitted for deeds of darkness, is not the best period to narrate or listen to such horrors.

## CHAPTER XXII.

I STOPPED short in my story just at the point where the mother of my mysterious and ill-fated patient was about to enlighten me, as I hoped, with regard to the singular and abrupt disappearance of her daughter.

The poor woman had fainted, and it was some time before she was in a condition to collect her scattered thoughts and to proceed with the narrative of her daughter's unfortunate marriage, and, as she believed, untimely fate.

After all, on this occasion her narrative was disjointed, and, as I imagined, exaggerated; but she told enough to enable me, with what I learnt subsequently, to connect the several parts, and by this means, by degrees, trace the villainous complot through all its intricacies.

"What reason have you, Madam, for the suspicion you appear to entertain that your daughter has been made away with?" inquired I, as soon as the widow had regained her composure. "Possibly," I continued, "you may be mistaken. We should never look to the dark side while a blink of sunshine bids us hope for brighter days." This I said to encourage the poor lady; not on account of any hopes I entertained myself, after what had passed; but I was aware that if the poor creature gave way to despair, she would be unable to narrate the incidents which had come to her knowledge, and although I feared that my unfortunate patient was beyond all human aid, I had a great anxiety that those who had deceived and then abandoned and perhaps caused her death, should be brought to justice, and made to answer for their crimes.

"What reason have I, doctor?" replied the poor lady, in a tone of voice so helpless and despairing, and with so wild a look, that it made me fear that I had been too ab-

rupt, and that she was again upon the point of giving way to her emotions. "What reason have I? Read that letter, and then say whether I have reason or not in my supposition."

I took the letter as requested. It was written in a hand evidently disguised—that is to say, it appeared as if it had been written with the left hand instead of the right, and it is a singular fact, that although hand-writings differ as much as human faces do, there perhaps being no two hand-writings exactly alike, if written naturally, the hand-writing of almost every person is similar when the left hand is used. The only thing that I was confident of, was, that from the peculiarity and delicacy of the strokes, the letter had been written by a woman.

To my surprise, it was dated a long time back, and from the appearance of the edges, it had been carried for a considerable time in some person's pocket. The date was, as nearly as I could recollect, a few weeks after the period that my mysterious and interesting patient had become for the third time a mother. Its contents were as follows:—

"NEW YORK, Sept., 1849.

"MADAM: I am requested to inform you that your daughter Mary, who is too feeble to write herself, and who has for some time past estranged herself from you, has become the mother of a fine healthy child (a boy). To you, the intelligence of her marriage may be strange; for, for some years past, you have not heard anything of her—but though she has not communicated personally with you, she has often been near you, and it has been from her that you have so frequently received presents, which possibly you have not known how to account for. It has been her husband's wish that the marriage should not be made public, and her husband's command still forbids her seeing you; but she can no longer resist the yearning that has possessed her to acquaint you that she is still living, and happier than she has ever been in the health of this her *third* child—the two former children having died, one at the moment of its birth, the other a

few days afterwards. Perhaps ere long the embargo that has been laid upon your daughter by her husband, may be taken off; in which case she will be only too happy to throw herself into your arms, and personally to beg your forgiveness for the uneasiness she may have caused. Meanwhile, for the present, rest content with this information, and accept from your daughter the enclosed sum of \$50. It may be of service to you, and will convince you that she is well cared for when she thus has money at her disposal."

The letter was signed—

"One who is anxiously watching over the welfare and happiness of your daughter."

"Well," said I, after having read the letter carefully, and examined the date, "I cannot see that this letter is calculated to lead you to imagine that anything serious has happened to your child. It would rather serve to show, as it was evidently intended to do by the writer, that your daughter was in the enjoyment of every comfort that could be bestowed upon one in her situation; although of course, it is natural enough that you, as her mother, should be anxious to be near your daughter at such a period, especially after having been so long separated from her. The letter, I perceive, is dated some months back—somewhere about the period of her last infant's birth, I should think, as in fact is indicated by the writer. Indeed about that time I must have been in the habit of paying her occasional professional visits. Tell me, madam, were the hopes held out that you might perhaps shortly be permitted to see your daughter ever realized?"

"Alas! no!" replied the poor woman. "I have shown you that letter, doctor, not because there was anything especially alarming in the letter itself; although you will allow there was sufficient to load the mind of a mother with anxiety and unpleasant forebodings—but because it was the first link in the chain which at length brought me to suspect, nay, almost to be certain, that something

dreadful has happened to my poor girl. I fear that she was not married; but instead of that, deceived by false marriage, and kept as a mistress, under the belief that she was a wife, by one of the most unprincipled wretches that New York has ever produced; and that after having committed a crime which compelled him to fly from the city, he has, by the aid of accomplices, hardened and debased himself, murdered my poor girl and her innocent babe, in order that at some future day they might not become witnesses against him, and that he might be untrammelled in the reckless career he has marked out for himself. My daughter's connection with him, would at least have prevented him from attempting to deceive others in this city, and would perhaps have led to his exposure, involuntarily on her part. To prevent this, he has ruthlessly murdered his wife, in the sight of heaven, and his child. Oh, sir, the debased libertine is more cruel than the savage—for he, in his wildest mood, watches over the safety of his offspring, and at least while it needs a mother's care, he is kind to the mother.

"Why is not justice administered alike to rich and poor? Why is money in a country like this, allowed to purchase immunity from punishment? Had a poor, penniless wretch deceived a confiding girl as this villain deceived my daughter, and subsequently committed a crime of one-tenth the magnitude this wretch has committed, he would at least have been put out of harm's way, and compelled to expiate his guilt in the State prison. But no—no—not so with those who have gold, or friends whose reputations would be sullied by their conviction. No, they commit crime with impunity. They may ruin their duped tradesmen; they may rob their employers of thousands; and all is hushed up, forsooth! because they are the children of *respectable parents* and *have friends* moving in *respectable circles*, whose dignity would be compromised by their conviction, and thus they are let loose upon society, submitting to a temporary withdrawal from the scene of their iniquities, while they are hatching schemes of future evil. Why—why is this? Why

should the wealthy scoundrel be held lightly to blame for the weightiest crimes, while the poor, half-starved wretch is severely punished for stealing a loaf of bread to save himself from starvation?"

For some time the poor woman, whose mind I feared was touched by the trouble she had undergone, went on in this manner.

I let her have her own way, and when her passion had subsided, and her grief had assumed a more tranquil form I said:—

"You say that the hopes held out that you might shortly see your daughter were not realized; nevertheless, I presume, from what has fallen from your lips, that you have had intelligence of your daughter of a later date than that given in the letter?"

"I have, doctor," she replied. "A few weeks after the receipt of this letter, which plunged me into such a state of excitement as almost to drive me crazy, for it was the first time for some years that I had heard of my daughter, though I had received various presents and valuable and useful articles, which I had half-doubting, half-hoping attributed to her. I say a few weeks after the receipt of this letter, I received a verbal message by a little girl, who said she had been commissioned to deliver it by a lady in the street, who had given her a shilling for her trouble—to the effect, that if I would call at a stated hour on the following day, at a house she described, situated near the Bloomingdale road, I would see my daughter, who desired an interview with me. This was all the messenger knew, and having delivered her errand she went away, and left me under the impression that I should meet my daughter—my dear Mary—on the following day. Accordingly I went as requested; indeed, I was in such a hurry to see my poor girl again, and to assure her of her mother's perfect forgiveness of all the anxiety that her elopement had caused, that I was in the neighborhood long before the appointed time; but fearful that she might have wished to see me—her mother—without the knowledge of her husband—

and that if I betrayed over much anxiety, and made my appearance before the designated hour, I might perhaps create mischief—I waited near the house till the hour mentioned by the little girl had struck. I was the more easily led to do this in consequence of seeing a travelling carriage in front of the house which had been described to me as the one that I was to visit—would to God I had been actuated by no such scruples! perhaps then my poor girl's fate might have been averted.

"In a short time the carriage rolled past me, the blinds closed, and the top heavily laden with luggage, and I thought I heard stifled sobs within the carriage, which a mother's instinct told me issued from the breast of her child; but I banished the idea as a mere vagary. My fancy has deceived me. 'It is my child's husband,' said I to myself, 'who is going on a journey, and my dear girl has watched this opportunity to see her mother again.'

"The carriage rolled on, and an hour afterwards a church clock near by struck twelve, the hour designated by the messenger for my visit. I hurried to the house, forgetful of everything, and filled with the idea that in a few short minutes I should be clasped in my repentant daughter's fond embrace.

"I ascended the steps which led to the hall door, and rang the bell—there was no answer; again and again I rang with desperate energy at the door, but in vain. A strange sensation of faintness came over me, and I think I should have fallen on the step, for the reverberation of the tingling bell through the deserted house sounded ominously to my ears, and seemed to ring the knell of all the hopes I had fondly entertained of seeing my dear child again. When just at the moment that I felt the sickening sensation about to overpower me, a young woman came to the door, and proceeded with a latch-key to open it.

"'Who may ye be wanting here?' said she, with a strong Irish accent.

"'I am seeking Miss W——,' I replied, forgetting in my excitement that my daughter would not be known

by her maiden name, and that I was ignorant of that which she had assumed on the occasion (as I then believed) of her marriage.

"'Sure there be's no person of that name a living here,' said the girl, who had withdrawn the latch-key in addressing me.

"'Who does live here?' I gasped forth, and without waiting for a reply, I added, 'Are you a servant to the family?'

"'Sure I'm the hired help, and the nurse to the young mistress's child,' replied the young woman, somewhat indignantly—but, immediately perceiving my excited and feeble condition, she continued, with true Irish feeling, 'You're not well, ma'am. No matter whether ye be's mistaken in the house or not, ye'll be welcome to come in and rest yourself awhile, and I'm sure the mistress won't complain, nor Mrs. ——— neither.'

"I did not catch the sound of the latter name, for as she said this, the girl turned the latch-key, and evidently to her surprise found the door was locked.

"'This is strange,' said she, 'but perhaps Mistress Mason and her friend be gone out for a walk, and have locked the door, not expictin' me back so soon. Howsomever, I knows a way to get in at the window, and if ye'll wait awhile, good woman, I'll let you in.'

"So saying, the young woman descended the area, and fumbling about the kitchen window, she soon effected an entrance, and beckoned me to enter the house by the same way.

"It seemed like a wrong method of proceeding on my part, but I was wearied with walking and waiting, and so tired that I was glad to get a little rest before my daughter's return, for I had no suspicion that the Mrs. Mason spoken of was my child, and that, as the servant had suggested, she and the female companion before spoken of had gone out together, after the departure of her husband in the carriage, and had locked the door, in consequence of the absence of the girl.

"'Sit ye down, ma'am,' said the girl, 'and I'll go up—'



stairs and see where be's the misthress. May be it's asleep she is.'

"She left the kitchen, and in the course of a few minutes returned.

"'Holy mother!' was her exclamation as she entered; 'sure the misthress is gone, and the lady, and the baby, and the thrunks, and clothes, and everything! Oh, worra, worra!—now I see why I was sent away into the city this morning.'

"'What is the matter?' said I, becoming alarmed at the agitation displayed by the young woman.

"'Matter enow!' she replied. 'Sure that black a vised man with big whiskers, as comed here last night, has carried off the misthress and every thing else in the house, except the furniture, and that belongs to the landlord.'

"'What, have they all gone away?' I said, scarcely knowing, indeed, what it was that I was saying.

"'Yes, misthress' clothes is all gone, and so are her trunks and bandboxes, and those of the other young lady, and all the things belonging to the dear little baby, which I was as fond of as if it was my child—gone—gone—all gone!' and the girl sat down and swung herself to and fro, as is customary in moments of intense sorrow amongst the peasantry of the west of Ireland.

"I was scarcely less affected; but desirous to ascertain all I could, I waited until the impetuous burst of grief on the part of the poor girl had expended itself, and then asked her to explain how it was that she had been absent so long from the house as she must necessarily have been, to admit of so much work having been effected.

"'Sure,' she replied, 'didn't a black a vised man wid dark, bushy whiskers come here last night and see the misthress, and when I went up stairs she and the young lady, too, was a crying, and the man ordthered me to go out of the room, and after a time he went to bed in a spare room, and this morning afther breakfast, misthress called me up stairs, and she says—"Bridget, your month's wages is due;" and I says, "yes, marm; but that don't

make no odds;" but the strange man was there, and I didn't say no more, and then misthress she paid me the money, and the sthranger he says, "Bridget, the misthress tells me as you've been a good help to her in her throuble, and as I'm a friend of her husband's, here be's a dollar," says he, "to add to your wages; and now, my good girl, ye can go to the city for an hour or two, and buy anything you may be in need of, only," says he, "be back by twelve o'clock."

"I didn't much like the way he spoke, as if he was masther of the house; but I looked at the misthress and the young lady as lived with her, and neither of 'em said anything agin my going, and so, as I wanted to buy a new dress, I went off, and that's all I know 'till I comed back and found that the misthress and all of 'em had gone.'

"'And the strange gentleman, then, was not your misthress' husband?' said I.

"'No, indeed,' replied the young woman; 'he was much older; and besides, to tell you the truth, I don't believe as the misthress were really married, forbye she's lived three or four years with the man she called her husband, who be's gone to California. John, the coachman, who is gone with them, and who knows more nor he cares to tell, about his masther, hinted as much to me, the vagabone, one night, when he wanted me to buckle on till him, as he said, in the same free and easy way as the masther and misthress had done, and when I spurned and scolded the vagabone, he up and tould me as Mrs. Mason was only a keptness, as he said, of his masther, and that there was no harm in our doing what the gentle folks set us an example in doing. He didn't come blarney over me, though, and since then I've kept him at a distance; but what he said sot me to work a thinking, and putting this and that together, I b'lieve he was right.'

"I had half unconsciously listened to the latter part of this story of the servant girl's, for my poor brain was bewildered, and I felt as though some one had struck me a

heavy blow that had half deprived me of my senses, and I asked mechanically:—

“‘What sort of a looking man was Mr. Mason?’

“‘Is it the master ye mean?’ asked the young woman; ‘troth and I never seen him, and I don’t b’lieve as his name was Mason at all—from what I’ve heard I b’lieve as he was a vagabone who had imposed on the poor young misthress from first to last; but she was a nice, mild, well-spoken lady, and so was the young lady as lived with her, who used to go out at times, so that nobody would know her if so be as her ould friends met her in the sthreets. Forby all that, she was a good young lady, and it’s my belief that she too had been deceived by some vagabone of a man who had taken her from her home and then deserted her, for she was a rale lady, and played on the pianner like anything.’

“‘This was the first intimation I had had of the dishonor of my daughter, and although I bore up as best I could in the presence of the honest, well-meaning servant girl, the blow struck to my heart,—and yet I hoped that she might be mistaken:

“‘Who is the landlord of this house?’ I asked.

“‘Sure never a one of me knows,’ replied the young woman; ‘whoever he be’s, I beern the misthress say many a time as his rent was payed up till January next. I’ve seen him here once or twice, and I know as he lives in the city, and that’s all as I knows about him. Howsom-ever, I shall stay here till dark, and if so be as they doesn’t come back or send word afore then, I shall go home to my friends. I wouldn’t stay here in this house, all alone at night, not for no money, ’specially as John might come back by himself, thinking to find me here.’

“‘I will go home—thank you for the kindness you have shown in allowing me to rest awhile, for I was very tired. Perhaps I am mistaken in the house,’ said I, as (scarcely knowing what I did) I rose to depart.

“‘Perhaps, if you’ll inquire at the next house, you will find out the person you want,’ said the young woman.

What is the name, W——? I don’t think any lady of that name lives near here.’

“‘No,’ I replied; ‘I am perhaps mistaken in the name. I will return home now, and make fresh inquiry,’ and I left the house, and retraced my weary steps to the city, but I felt no fatigue of body on my return home. My mental anguish—the reaction that had taken place within me—was too great. I had gone forth to meet my long-lost child—to clasp her to my heart, and breathe forgiveness in her ear ere she had time to seek it—to tell her that this happy meeting repaid a lone mother’s heart for all the hours and days and weeks, aye, years of anxiety it had suffered—and I had found that the child I had sought had disappeared just at the moment that I thought the cup of happiness was full—the chalice had been rudely dashed from my lips just as I was about to drain the sparkling draught fraught with the intoxication of a mother’s love, and the dregs as they were spilt had been poisoned, by the bitter intelligence of my poor child’s dishonor. Would to God I had died on the spot, and I should have been spared the horrors that I have since experienced. My poor, poor Mary! your fame was sullied, but your heart was pure and guileless still; was it not enough that you should become the unconscious victim of the deceiver? What mysterious Providence rendered it necessary that you should wipe out the stain of the sin you unwittingly committed, with your innocent blood. A curse—a mother’s withering curse on the wretch who has destroyed my child!’

Thus spoke the poor broken-hearted mother, and for some moments I allowed her to indulge her grief and her sorrowful retrospections unmolested.

I was about to question her further, for as yet I was ignorant of the reasons she had conceived that her daughter had perished by violence—by the ruthless hands of the destroyer of woman’s peace of mind and the black-hearted murderer; but at this moment she again burst forth in notes of lamentation, indulging in

a soliloquy, and apparently unconscious that she had a listener:—

"Poor little Mary! she was my own darling, fairy child. How well I recollect every little trait of her innocent, happy infancy—ere her poor father sought the busy, crowded, baleful city—before misfortune came upon us—when we had a little farm of our own on the northern border of the State. How her poor father and I would sit in the evening, after the day's labors were over, and amuse ourselves with watching her little pattering footsteps as she ran to and fro amongst the grass-grown walks in the garden, gathering flowers and making pretty little bouquets for us, and then, as with childish glee she presented them to us, she would seek the readily proffered kiss as her cheap, but fondly bestowed reward; and then, when her father died, and we removed to the city, and amidst its busy solitude she was all in all to me—the only tie that still bound me to the earth, and restrained the earnest desire that possessed me to join my dear husband in a happier world, where sorrow and disappointment would be unknown, with what motherly pride I watched her budding beauties unfolding themselves, and saw her spring up from infancy to girlhood, and from girlhood to the perfection of womanly beauty. Ah me! I was too proud of my dear girl's loveliness, and when, on account of the extraordinary beauty she possessed, she was eagerly sought to accept a situation in a store, where her loveliness would attract customers, at wages higher than were offered to her associates, I plumed myself too much on the good looks and gentle disposition of my child. Why did I not keep her at home with me? She might still have been living; perhaps happily married, a comfort and a blessing to her poor mother. Oh! that fatal pride which led me to place her in a position so full of temptations to a young and inexperienced girl as was the fashionable confectioner's to which she doubtless drew many customers among the young men—alas, poor, dear girl! one too many—one that led her on to her ruin. Oh, God! I

have been severely punished. Yes, my poor girl—spirit of my poor lost Mary, your mother, not *you*, was to blame."

Again she sat motionless and absorbed in thought, and at length I ventured to ask, by what means she had been led to suspect that her daughter had been murdered; for, to tell the truth, my own suspicions were that she had destroyed herself and her child, and I was very anxious to get some clue as to the personality of the incognita who had been so frequently mentioned, as the companion of the poor, deceived young woman.

The old lady continued thus:—

"I returned home in a state of mind that may be better conceived than described, and after a sleepless night I determined to find out the landlord of the house in which I believed my daughter to have resided, and to glean from him what information I could respecting her strange and sudden, apparently unexpected departure.

"I easily found him out, and I called at his house, but was told that he was not at home, but had gone to the very house I had visited the day before.

"Thither I bent my steps and found the gentleman I sought, engaged in closing the shutters and locking up the deserted dwelling. He could give me no information further than that the husband, as he believed, of the lady, who had gone to California, had paid him the rent for three months still in advance, and that he was ignorant of the cause of this mysterious departure on the part of his tenants. Still he considered it necessary, for the safety of his property, that he should retain the key until it was demanded by his late tenants, or until the term of their occupation had expired. 'Perhaps,' he added, 'the gentleman may have returned from California, and may have unexpectedly sent for his wife to meet him somewhere near at hand; but I wonder that they gave me no intimation; I received none until the visit of the servant girl last night, who told me that her

mistress had left the house with her baby and a young lady who lived with her.'

"Do you know the name of the gentleman who hired the house of you?" I inquired; 'or of the young lady who you say resided with his wife?'

"I do not," he replied. 'He gave me a name when he left the house, which on inquiry I found was a false one, as I called upon a gentleman of the name who he said was a relative of his, who asserts that he knows nothing of him. I do not feel myself at liberty to give you this name, unless you can give me satisfactory reasons for demanding it of me, as it is that of a gentleman well known as an eminent merchant of the city, and whatever be the upshot of this affair, he may not be pleased at having his name mixed up with it.'

"Do you think the gentleman and lady who took the house were really married?" I asked.

"The landlord looked at me curiously, as though endeavoring to ascertain my motives for asking such a singular question. At length he replied:

"I have had no reason to suspect otherwise; but I made no inquiry. I was paid the rent in advance, and I received good nominal references, although they proved to be false; but under the circumstances in which the house was taken, I was not very particular in making inquiry. I seldom do unless I have some suspicions of the integrity of the applicant.'

"I wished the gentleman good morning, and left him. A ray of hope had beamed upon me during the course of the conversation. 'He did not know that his tenants were unmarried,'—perhaps the servant girl had told me false—all might come out right in the end. Perhaps the husband had really returned, and might not be any longer unwilling that his wife should renew those intimate communications with her mother which had so long been interrupted, and with this hope I felt my peace of mind considerably restored; although I still remained in a state of great mental anxiety, as day by day I waited

in the expectation of being again summoned to meet my child.

"Thus several months passed away, until my heart grew sick with anxious hope long deferred, and at length I gave myself up almost to despair.

"A day or two since, I received a letter in an unknown hand; the same as that of the letter you have already read. It contained but a line or two; it is here," she continued, as she took it from her pocket-book and read it:—

"She who wrote you before, bidding you not to be anxious respecting your long-lost daughter, now writes to bid you seek out Dr. —, of this city. He attended your daughter in her confinement, and he will aid you, I hope, in bringing to light a deed of mystery and darkness—of blood and crime—that has too long lain hidden from the world. I am watched and am closely confined in a private lunatic asylum; but God knows I am not mad, though my tormentors would fain drive me so. My only wonder is, that I was not murdered by the same demons in human form who murdered your daughter and her innocent babe. The *wealth* and *respectability* of him who was the author and abettor, if not the actual committer of this dreadful double murder, alone saved him from punishment for a crime which should have sent him to States Prison. Had the law pursued its course, and justice been meted where justice was due—the villain would have been prevented from the committal of the more deadly crime. Long have I sought an opportunity to write to you, but this is the first time, after many months' watching, that I have had an opportunity of sending a letter. I dispatch it to the post by a child whom I have bribed, from the garden which I have been allowed to walk in for an hour every day, in consequence of the bad state of my health. The garden is closely barred, but my keeper is temporarily absent—she goes to meet her lover—taking this opportunity, while I am abroad, to meet him in a secluded part of the garden. I noticed this a day or two ago, and last night I wrote this

letter, for I am allowed pens and ink to amuse myself with. Be cautious—a false step may be irretrievable. Should it be known that I wrote this letter, my life might pay the forfeit. I know not in what part of the country I am confined.

"There is no signature to the letter," said the poor woman, when, amidst many sobs, she had finished reading it.

"It is this letter I had meant to have shown you first, when I left home, but I thought I would tell you, as it occurred, all that I know of the sad story."

"This is strange intelligence, indeed!" said I, "and most startling in its nature. I am aware that the most unheard-of barbarities have occurred, and do still occur in lunatic asylums, especially in some of those called private ones, but which are really only receptacles for such persons as it might be prejudicial to certain villainous schemes to allow to be abroad and at liberty; but if this be not the mere raving of a lunatic, it is horrible to contemplate. Let me see the post-mark," I said, "possibly by that means we may gain some clue to the mystery."

I took the letter in my hand, and examined it. It apparently bore two post-marks, one of which had so blurred the other, that it was scarcely possible to make out either. One, however, with much difficulty I made out to be Maryland State, though I could not tell the name of the town; the other, with all my ingenuity, I could not decipher.

"I will look to this," said I, as I returned the letter to the poor woman; "rest assured I will do what I can to bring to light this dark villainy; for, that villainy has been committed I am confident. But I must think how to set about its discovery. Will you call upon me in a day or two—say the day after to-morrow?"

"I will," replied the poor lady; and as she was rising to quit the apartment, she said:

"Perhaps you will deem it foolish, and the mere conjuration of a diseased fancy, created in my mind by brooding over that dreadful letter; but last night after I

had gone to my bed, where, for a long time, I lay weeping bitterly, I fell asleep and dreamed that my daughter called me. I answered her call, and as I thought, proceeded to the spot whence the sound of her voice proceeded; but she was not there. I wandered on until a broad river rolled before me—its banks half hidden by a fog, and while I was waiting a reply to my repeated calls on my daughter, the body of an infant was cast on shore, and the voice again spoke. It said: 'mother—see, here is my child. He was murdered! but his mother was not his murderess, though such the wretches would have the world believe. *By and by I will appear to confront the murderer.* The voice seemed still to continue to speak, but I could not hear; for the winds roared, and the waves increased, and the fog was blown away, and the child was cast high up on the banks and borne away from me, as I sought to clutch it, by some strange men who stood by, and I shrieked in my sleep until the sound of my own voice awakened me, and I found I had been dreaming a frightful dream."

"The horrible vision was doubtless conjured up as you say, in consequence of your having brooded so long over the letter you received," said I, unwilling to alarm the poor woman by informing her of my suspicion that the dead body of her infant grandchild had actually been cast up from the river, as she had seen in her dream. "It is strange," I thought to myself, "very strange," and as I wished the poor lady good day, and accompanied her to the door, I repeated—

"Be sure and let me see you the day after to-morrow."



## CHAPTER XXIII.

I HAD requested Mrs. W—— to call at the early period I mentioned after her first visit, in the hope that in the meantime I might think of some method of proceeding, whereby I might hope to clear up the mystery in which this affair seemed to be involved; but although I taxed my ingenuity to the utmost, I could conceive of nothing that appeared any way feasible, and I was fain to let matters rest until I again saw the old lady.

On the appointed day, she came punctual to the hour, and for sometime we conversed together upon the subject, and without arriving at any satisfactory conclusion.

"You have, then, no idea," said I, "who the young man was who gained your daughter's affections, and so cruelly deceived her?"

"No idea at all, doctor; for, although before I lost sight of my poor girl altogether, I had remarked that her visits to me were less frequent, and her manner was reserved; whereas, until that period, she had made me her confidant, even as regarded the most trivial matters, yet she never told me the cause that led to the unfrequency and brevity of her visits; nor, although more than once I pressed her to tell me what it was that seemed to weigh upon her spirits, could I get any information from her. She answered me evasively—said that nothing was the matter, and stopped all further inquiry by kissing me; but I plainly saw that her mind was disturbed, for she had always been of a cheerful, equable temperament, and now, she was alternately moody and silent, or else she would be seized with a fit of boisterous merriment altogether foreign to her nature."

"I would write to some of my friends, and ask them to join me in endeavoring to discover if a person answering to the writer of that letter was confined in any of the

lunatic asylums in the country," said I, musingly, "but the writer says she is in a private asylum, and therefore it is impossible to say where she may be, or whether the place be known as a lunatic asylum at all; besides, I could give no description of her that would lead to her identification, for I never saw her features, and her figure, though slender and girlish, would apply to thousands of young persons of her apparent age."

"Then you think, doctor, that it is impossible to discover anything relative to the fate of my poor child?" said the poor woman, appealingly. "Her strange disappearance—her murder, as I believe—must ever remain a mystery, and this poor creature, whoever she be, who is wearing out her life in the horrid confinement of a lunatic asylum, must there remain until she sinks broken-hearted, and, as she will believe, forsaken of humanity, into her grave."

"Nay, not so, my dear madam;" I replied, although I certainly saw no prospect at present of penetrating the dark secret. But I was unwilling to consign the poor woman to despair. "Not so; although at present all seems hidden in mystery impenetrable, something may turn up that will furnish us with a clue that will lead to the unravelling of the whole web of iniquity and crime that has evidently been woven, the more especially, as we shall both be on the watch for it. Rest assured, that although at present all seems dark and hopeless, it will not be permitted to remain so. Crime of such a nature as this may conceal itself for a time; but it is sure, eventually, to be brought to light, and the perpetrators rarely, if ever, escape punishment, even in this world. You, madam, use your endeavor to trace out some evidence which may throw light upon the matter, and be sure that in me you will find a faithful coadjutor. I am so much interested in the fate of my unfortunate patient and her former companion, that I shall be uneasy until I have succeeded in discovering and investigating the mystery that enshrouds their fate."

Sadly cast down, the poor lady left me; and, although

I managed to see her frequently, for some months after this nothing occurred to afford us any hope.

It might have been three months after the first visit of Mrs. W—— to my house, that I paid a short visit to Saratoga, at the earnest entreaty of my wife, who always had a fancy that the mineral waters agreed with her. It was at a season of the year in which this celebrated and beautiful village is full of company, and every hotel was crowded to excess, as well as the private boarding-houses. It was with difficulty we procured lodgings, but we at length succeeded in doing so at the —— Hotel.

Among the hundreds of boarders at this hotel, there were to be found residents of every part of the Union, and many, of course, were utter strangers to each other. In fact, amongst the incongruous assemblages that meet at mineral springs and watering-places, although there are certain ultra fashionable and exclusive cliques, the principal letter of introduction is wealth; and if a visitor has money, dresses well, and carries a haughty head, he passes muster, and is even sought for and flattered, although his antecedents be utterly ignored by all with whom he mingles. A foreign *soi disant* count, with an unpronounceable German or Polish name, and a rent-roll in the moon, or some other equally available spot, so long as the proceeds of his last gambling speculations are expended freely, and his coats, vests, pants, boots, and moustaches, are unimpeachable, is almost as great a man as the acknowledged millionaire, and stands pretty nearly as good a chance, if such be his aim, of running off with the heart of some romantic girl, who is too delicate and refined to become the wife of a plain, honest, and independent countryman of her own.

However, this is digression, and yet not altogether so. For it will serve to introduce to the reader some parties whom I met at Saratoga on the occasion of this visit, the meeting with whom eventually led to the clearing up of at least a considerable portion of the mystery in the investigation of which, I and poor Mrs. W—— were so deeply interested. Among the boarders at the —— Ho-

tel, there were a gentleman and lady who attracted a great deal of attention on account of their dashing style, and the liberality, nay, the perfect recklessness with which they spent their money. The gentleman had the appearance of a foreigner—for his complexion, hair and eyes, were dark as those of a Spaniard, and he wore a thick and heavy moustache; but his unimpeachable accent told that he was an American. The dark tan of his cheek might have been caused by exposure to tropical suns, and the rather un-American jetty blackness of his hair, eye-brows, whiskers and moustache might probably, had the truth been known, have attested to the marvelous superiority of the hair-dye that he patronized. He was still young; or at least not past the meridian of life. He certainly could not have been more than forty years of age, and notwithstanding a certain *blasé* air, the result probably of youthful debauchery, he was still handsome. The lady who accompanied him, and who was set down on the hotel books as his wife, was considerably younger; perhaps about thirty years of age. She was passably good-looking, and as elegant in her manners and deportment as she was fashionable in her attire. I met them frequently walking out together in the gardens, and the lanes adjacent to the village; but it was some weeks after I had first observed them, before I came sufficiently into contact with them to speak to them.

At length we met at a pic-nic party, to which some twenty persons, one half of them strangers to each other, had been invited; for the projectors of the party had each invited their own friends. In the course of the afternoon, it fell to my lot to take charge of the lady—her husband having joined a party who had gone into a neighboring wood, to try if they could not hit upon some game that would find work for the fowling-pieces they had brought with them. Not being much of a sporting-man myself, I had declined joining the party of gentlemen, and with two or three others, the elders of the party, I staid behind, to look after the ladies.

The lady was very chatty and agreeable, and she and

my wife were soon upon intimate terms. During the course of a spirited conversation, the lady drew off her glove, and to my astonishment—I may say, to my dismay, the identical rings sparkled before my eyes that I had remarked as having been worn by the incognita.

I actually started as if stung by an adder, and quite alarmed the ladies, who asked the reason of my consternation. I made some frivolous excuse that satisfied them; but I could not withdraw my eyes from the rings. Was it possible that I was mistaken? No, it could not be. There was the brilliant amethyst and diamond ring, and there were the garnet and pearl-rings. It was almost impossible that two persons should wear such costly rings of so exactly similar a pattern; and yet, setting aside the rings on her fingers, there was nothing in the figure or appearance of the wearer, which would have led me to believe that she and the incognita were one and the same person. She was taller, older, and her voice was entirely different. Besides, had not I learnt, only a month or two before, that the unfortunate and mysterious companion of my late interesting patient was confined in a lunatic asylum? Whence then came those rings? Was the lady who wore them, cognizant of the whereabouts of her whose fair hand they had once adorned? Did she know of her cruel fate? Nay, more—was not she, perhaps, her heartless persecutor? All these questions I asked myself, and then the thought would intrude, that it was barely possible there might be two sets of rings exactly similar, and that one set might have been purchased by or presented to my new acquaintance.

How to glean any further information; how to satisfy myself whether or not my suspicions were correct, I knew not. To ask the lady how she came by the rings she wore, would have been a gross insult. They might have been presented her by her husband; for, in addition to the rings I have mentioned, she wore on the third finger of her left hand, the golden symbol of matrimony. I kept my eyes fixed upon her person in a manner that, had she observed it, would have certainly given offence;

but she was so busily engaged in eager conversation with the other ladies, that she did not notice my rudeness.

The weather was warm, and the little party sat themselves down to rest beneath the shade of a group of trees. In setting down, a light crape shawl that the lady wore, was caught by a bramble and torn from her shoulders. I hastened to replace it, and in so doing, I perceived the edge of a locket attached by a blue riband, resting in her bosom, the workmanship of which exactly resembled the locket I have already mentioned as being among the ornaments worn by the incognita.

This, in my opinion, was confirmation, and I could not refrain from observing, after having performed the trifling service mentioned—

“Those are remarkably beautiful rings you wear, madam. They bring former days to my recollection.—A lady of my acquaintance at one time wore a set that were exactly their counterpart.”

I watched keenly the countenance of the lady as I said this, and I thought she gave me a look which sought to discover whether I had any particular reason for making the remark, or whether I had merely made it by accident, being actually pleased with the beauty of the rings. However, I might have been mistaken as regarded this scrutiny on her part—for she merely quietly remarked:

“Yes, they were the wedding gift of my husband, together with a locket of a beautiful and quaint workmanship, which I have now round my neck. They have often drawn the attention of strangers. They are very valuable, and as most people think, exceedingly pretty.” So saying, she took the locket from her bosom and showed it to the ladies seated beside her.

“It is nothing,” I thought to myself. “I suspect that the young lady has sold these jewels, and that they have been purchased by the husband of their present possessor; nevertheless, I should much like to know who they are.”

To ascertain this I made frequent, but apparently careless inquiry of various persons whom I knew, who

lived in different parts of the country, thinking that some among them might at least have a passing acquaintance with the strangers, but the answer to my questions was almost invariably—

"No; I don't know who they are, but they appear to be very wealthy, and are at any rate a very agreeable couple, willing to join in any project to make the time pass pleasantly."

I took occasion to glance my eye over the hotel book for the purpose of satisfying my curiosity as to where the parties came from. Opposite their names, I saw New York; but this might mean the city or the state alike, and it might have no meaning, for I well knew that this custom of writing the residence of hotel visitors was a mere form, and that any place of residence might be written that the parties fancied.

Once or twice after this, I essayed to introduce some remarks leading to the subject of the mysterious disappearance of my late patient, and touching the treatment experienced in lunatic asylums, in order that I might notice whether the conversation caused any embarrassment to the lady; but I never could observe that she betrayed any consciousness of my object, and respecting lunatic asylums and the cruel treatment sometimes therein inflicted upon the unhappy patients, she once or twice volunteered a history of the treatment of a relative of hers (who had been placed in a private asylum by her husband, as was supposed, for the purpose of obtaining possession of certain property of her own), who had been driven really mad through the cruelties she had experienced, and had died in the course of twelve months from the date of her incarceration in the infamous den.

A few weeks more passed away, and I was upon the point of returning to New York with my wife, when the gentleman and lady I have described as having created some suspicions relative to their knowledge of the matter I was so anxious to investigate, suddenly and quite unexpectedly took their departure. I say suddenly and unexpectedly, because they had promised to attend

a ball that was to be given at the hotel on the following week, and the lady had already greatly interested herself in the proceedings, and was, indeed, one of the lady patronesses.

Of course, the sudden departure of so fashionable a couple before the close of the season, led to a variety of surmises and to many reports. It was said that the gentleman had received a letter in the morning—and those who were seated near him in the reading-room, noticed that he turned very pale on perusing it, and then he immediately sought his wife's chamber, and in the course of a few hours they were on their journey; it was presumed, from the address that had been noticed, by some curious persons on the baggage, that their destination was Baltimore.

I returned to New York, and although somehow or other I could not get quit of the suspicions that had been aroused within me that those persons knew more respecting the unfortunate fate of my patient and her unknown companion than they chose to tell, in the course of a few weeks I had well nigh forgotten them; when they were recalled to my recollection in the following manner:

I met a friend and fellow-practitioner at the Irving House, who had recently arrived from Louisiana, of which State he was a resident, and as a matter of course I invited him to dine at my house.

In the course of conversation after dinner, I mentioned that my wife and I had been spending a few weeks of the summer at Saratoga!

"Indeed!" said he; "I never was there, but from all I have heard, it must be a very agreeable place. By-the-bye—that puts me in mind of a strange incident. You must have been at Saratoga, at the time that the wealthy and fashionable Mr. and Mrs. S—— were there?"

"There were a gentleman and lady of that name stopping at the same hotel with us," I replied. "They left rather hurriedly some weeks before the close of the season, and about a fortnight before I did, although I

believe it was generally thought that they had made arrangements to stay several weeks longer."

"Ah! they left in a hurry, did they?" said my friend. "No doubt they did; but their hurry happily, not for themselves but for others, did not much avail them; for they were arrested in Maryland, and conveyed to Galveston, where the gentleman is held to answer for various crimes of the greatest magnitude—theft, and it is said, murder are among the list. Why, my dear sir, the fellow, whose name is no more S—— than mine is, is a villain of the first water and the lady is reported to be little better than his paramour."

"His paramour!" said I; "why they passed as man and wife at Saratoga, and were universally received as such."

"And they passed for wealthy fashionables, and therefore, of course, highly respectable people, did they not? Well, they were neither. One is as bad by all accounts as the other, and a pair of more finished rogues, though I am loth to apply the term to a female, were never allowed to remain unhung."

"Then my suspicions were not without cause," said I; "pray, may I ask how you came to know anything of the matter?"

"How I came to know anything of the matter! My good fellow, I am lately from the south-west, and there the affair is in everybody's mouth. The scoundrel is from California, though I believe he is a native of New York; but he was an early emigrant to the golden land, and there became acquainted with others of like calibre with himself, and together they form one of the most infamous gangs that the newly settled territory has produced—and it has not been wanting in daring villains. By every kind of fraudulent means, they have amassed a considerable sum of money, and have managed, if not to avoid suspicion, at least to avoid the punishment due to their crimes. This man, whose real name is P——, nowever, it is said, murdered a man somewhere in the diggings, and afterwards plundered him of all his ac-

cumulated hoard. The deed was done without his usual caution, and he found it advisable, to escape Judge Lynch, to quit California under an assumed name about twelve months ago, bringing with him a considerable amount of money. The friends of the murdered man, who live in Texas, tracked him with considerable difficulty, and after considerable time had been expended, they learned that he had taken up with an infamous woman, it is said, of great personal attractions and of good education—one of those unfortunates, who have fallen from their high estate, and plunged into the lowest depths of moral degradation—and had proceeded northward; and they at length found that he was cutting a considerable figure with his reputed wife at Saratoga. Thither they went quietly, and without making known their intentions, for they knew the wily, cunning character of the man they had to deal with: but they found the bird flown. It appears that he must have some accomplices near at hand, for he had received a letter from New York the day before the friends of his murdered victim arrived, and it is thought that it contained information of the pursuit that was being made after him, for he left Saratoga immediately, and travelled southward, it is believed, with the intention of reaching New Orleans incognito, and thence proceeding to the Spanish main, where he would likely have effectually eluded pursuit. He did not dare to stop at New York or Philadelphia, for fear that his description might have been given to the police, and he might have been arrested. However, he had run the length of his tether, and was arrested somewhere in Maryland, and, as I have said, conveyed to Texas to answer the charge against him, and there before long he will pay the penalty of his misdeeds."

"Oh, that I had known the character of the man while he was at Saratoga," said I, groaning in agony of spirit that I should have allowed the chance to escape me; and then I related to my friend the narrative of my poor deluded patient and her companion, and told him my sus-



picious of their fate, as also the fact of my having witnessed on the person of the female at Saratoga, the jewels that had been worn by the incognita.

"Pity, indeed," said he, "that you could not have made more pertinent inquiry respecting the way the jewels came into the female's possession; and yet I don't see how you could have done so, under the circumstances. The fate of the poor girl, who wrote the affecting letter you speak of, may rest upon those very jewels; and yet there is one way by which you may, perhaps, now be enabled to extort confession: that is, to see the woman who is in jail at Galveston, and by persuasion and threats, manage to get the information you require. I do not know that there is any charge hanging over the woman, further than that she may be an accomplice of the fellow in his villainy, and this has to be proved. Perhaps, by promising, if she tells all, to use your influence to get her clear, you may learn all you wish to know."

"And that will involve a journey to Texas," said I; "a serious matter at my time of life."

"It is a long journey to take on a mere chance speculation," said my friend; "but you have interested me in this matter, and if you will allow me to act in your place, I will see what I can do. I return to New Orleans next week, and I do not care if I proceed to Texas from thence. I have never been there, and I confess to a strange desire to see that half savage State. What say you? Am I at liberty to act?"

"Most assuredly," I replied; "and I sincerely thank you, for I am so much interested in the matter—nay, I consider myself so far in duty bound to investigate it to the utmost—that I should have considered it my duty to have gone to Texas myself, had you not made the offer."

"Well, then, depend upon me," said he. "But if I were you, I think I would not let the old lady know anything about this fresh intelligence, until we see what comes of it."

"I do not intend to do so," I replied, and here for the present the conversation dropped.

My friend started at the appointed time for New Orleans, and, as I wished him good bye, I impressed upon his memory the promise he had given me, to see the female prisoner, and endeavor to get all the information he could from her, and even to be liberal in his offers of service and promises of reward, if he thought they would be of service.

"Trust to me," he said, as he went on board the steamer, "I have made the case my own."

About six weeks after this I received a letter from my friend, which informed me that on reaching New Orleans, he had lost no time in proceeding thence to Galveston, where he had obtained admission to the female prisoner, who appeared, the letter stated, to be very much cast down. After some conversation with her (in the course of which she sought to throw the whole blame on the male prisoner, saying that she was innocent of any crime save that of having consented to become his mistress to pass herself as his wife, and to share the proceeds of his ill-gotten gains) my friend broke the subject of the jewels.

The woman turned pale, and for some time pretended entire ignorance regarding them; but on being assured that they had been recognized at Saratoga by a gentleman who had known them to have formerly belonged to a young lady respecting whose fate strange rumors were afloat, and that this gentleman had determined to investigate the matter thoroughly, and that any light she could throw on it, provided she did not directly criminate herself, would tend to her future benefit. She acknowledged to having seen a gentleman at the Springs who had remarked to her that he had seen a set of similar jewels in the possession of a friend of his, to whom she returned an evasive answer, when he addressed her in somewhat of an interrogative manner; "but," said she, "I am guiltless of any evil respecting these jewels, and it was not until after the arrest of P—— and myself, that he told me how he procured them, and made me promise secrecy regarding them."

"If you maintain secrecy in a matter implicated with

the commission of crime," said my friend, "you render yourself equally guilty. The gentleman is determined, as I have said, to have the affair thoroughly investigated, and the confession you can now give in such a manner as to be beneficial to yourself, will by-and-by be extorted from you. You can scarcely more deeply implicate P——; his crimes are known to be so great as to render his escape from justice impossible; but if you tell me all you know of this business, I think I may promise you that measures will be taken to get you clear, and you will also be rewarded for the service you may thus render the unfortunate."

Thus pressed and persuaded, the woman told the following story:

"I knew P——," said she, "before he went to California, many years ago. He has wealthy friends, in the State of ——, who, however, cast him off altogether some years since, for they had long tried in vain to reclaim him;—this he told me himself, and boasted of his independence. Some how or other he always had a great deal of money, and when he was younger was really handsome—he is handsome still.

"I lived with him for some time, and then he left me in New Orleans, and went northward: there I heard that he had gained a vast deal of money by gambling, in which science he was an adept. He passed himself off as a gentleman of independent fortune and assuming a false name, pretending to be connected with a distinguished southern family, he succeeded in worming himself into good society in A——, and there he became acquainted with Miss L——, a very beautiful and innocent, but gay and high-spirited girl, whose parents were dead, but who was possessed of a considerable amount of property in money. He succeeded in winning her affections, and a mock marriage was solemnized, and, unknown to her friends, the poor deceived girl went off with, as she supposed, her husband.

"It was a year or two before she was undeceived, and when she only learnt the sad truth in consequence of a

quarrel that took place between her supposed husband and a friend respecting an unfortunate female whom he had deceived in the same manner. This friend of P——'s was a young man of good connections in the northern part of the Union; but he was of a depraved disposition, and, as it appeared, when his fraudulent actions had at length been discovered, he had been guilty of peculation to a large amount for several years. Meanwhile he lived in style with the poor girl, who believed him to be her husband and who bore him a child, still in that belief, which I have heard, however, was still-born, or died shortly after its birth. After she had learnt that she was not married to the man she believed to be her husband, she became very unhappy, but she still continued to live with him, and bore him another child, which also died.

"About this time P—— had determined to go to California, and as the quarrel which had occurred with him and his young friend had been cemented, he persuaded him to accompany him thither, both of them leaving the deceived women whom they had been living with, in New York. Indeed P——'s friend was glad of the opportunity, for his villainy had been discovered by his employers, and the Northern and Eastern States had become rather unpleasant abiding places for him. Indeed, had it not been for the respectability of his connections, he would have been sent for a long period to the states-prison. As it was, by some flaw in the indictment, he got off.

"While they were both away, the two females, who had conceived a great affection for each other, lived together, although P——'s mistress, who had friends who were unaware of the deceit that had been practiced upon her, used sometimes to visit her friends secretly, and she always maintained a disguise before strangers. She was a lively, thoughtless, but kind-hearted girl, and, with all his faults, devotedly attached to P——; and she even affected to like the mystery in which she lived.

"While her protector was in California the young woman who passed as the wife of P——'s friend, gave

birth to a third child, which lived, as I have been told; for both P—— and his friend regularly received letters from the poor duped girls, in which they told them all that passed. From what I have learned, the associates of P—— and his friend in California were of a most abandoned character, and for some crime, the nature of which P—— never told me, he was obliged himself to fly from that place. I have since heard it hinted that it was murder, and that it is for that he has been arrested.

"He had a very large amount of money with him when he came from California, and at his request, (for he met me in New Orleans) I came on with him to the north, now nearly a year ago. He told me he was keeping another woman he had deceived by a mock marriage; but that he was tired of her, and as she still had some money of her own, he intended to get it from her and then turn her adrift. With that purpose he paid her a visit at New York, and he was also charged with a message from his friend to the lady who passed as his wife. He told me that they left the house together in order to proceed to Philadelphia on some business connected with his friend, but I never could get him to tell me more respecting his friend's mistress and her child; whether or not they are in California I do not know. He has hinted that they are. What I have told you I have heard at different times from him. These jewels belonged to P——'s former mistress; he presented them to me a few months ago, telling me that she was dead; but after we were arrested, he told me he had told me a falsehood;—she was not dead, but in a private lodging-house—a sort of lunatic asylum in South Carolina near B——. He swore me to secrecy, saying that he had only told me this to prevent me making any false statements respecting the jewels, should I be questioned regarding them. And this," said the woman, "is all I know."

"I was perfectly horror-struck," said my friend, in his letter, "at the coolness of this poor, wretched, abandoned woman, while telling this tale of guilt, deceit and cruelty, but as the narrative has been drawn from her under pro-

mises of protection, we must do the best we can for her. After all, I think she is not cognizant of any of the graver charges that are preferred against her guilty paramour."

My friend advised me to proceed to the town he mentioned in South Carolina, and there endeavor to find out the place in which the poor young woman was confined, but this I had determined to do as soon as I had read the letter; as from her I hoped to gain further intelligence should I be fortunate enough to find her, and also to clear up several discrepancies in the story told by the woman in jail in Galveston. I lost no time in proceeding to the place specified, and after some difficulty I discovered the object of my search.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

I MENTIONED that after considerable difficulty, I had succeeded in discovering the object of my search in the private lunatic asylum, as it was called, in South Carolina; but I was there a long time, and had to proceed very cautiously to work to do this. I made numerous inquiries before I could get the least clue to the existence of any place similar to that of which I was in search. "There is no such place in this State as a private lunatic asylum, that I am aware of," was the response to every question that I put to residents in the cities and villages, or to the visitors at the hotels, and I almost thought of giving up in despair all further search, and returning home. However, one day while at Lexington, I heard some conversation between two gentlemen, which attracted my attention, as it seemed to promise some hopes of my discovering the whereabouts of the incognita. They were speaking of a so called "mad doctor," who had an establishment at a secluded spot not many miles from Chester, and while in the course of conversation, they exchanged several jests respecting the nature of this man's occupation, and the real character of the patients that were boarded at his house. I listened eagerly, and at length, in as careless a manner as I could assume—for I did not wish to excite suspicion—I joined in the conversation.

"It is astonishing," said I, in reply to some remarks made by one of the gentlemen, "it is astonishing that so cruel and scandalous an establishment should be allowed to exist. Surely, the authorities should institute inquiries into the nature of the treatment and the true state of the minds of the patients or boarders, and if it be as you say, the villainous proprietor, as well as those he is aiding and abetting by his abominable practices, should be punished most severely."

"Well," replied the gentleman to whom I addressed myself, "well, the fact is, it is a difficult matter to interfere with. Few persons, unless, like myself, they have had especial opportunities for becoming acquainted with the character of the parties concerned in this business, know anything about it. The general belief is, that it is a place wherein, by a peculiar method of treatment, persons suffering from slight aberration of intellect, are often restored to reason, and no doubt there are some patients of that description there; but I know," he added significantly, "that there are those who are as sane as ever they were, or ever will be; that is, they were sane when they were sent there. They may since have been driven to insanity; and as to the authorities, they have no right to interfere, unless called upon by some particular party, and then it would be a difficult matter to effect anything."

"But surely," responded I, "you, as you say, knowing that iniquitous work is going on there, could interfere—could do something to right the innocent and helpless, and bring their betrayers to just and well merited punishment?"

The gentleman merely shrugged his shoulders, as he replied:

"It is no particular business of mine, and I am too wise to enter the lists as a knight-errant, eager to rescue forlorn and distressed damsels. If the matter personally concerned me, it would be another affair," and so saying, he turned away as if desirous of dropping the subject of conversation.

While conversing, I had pretty well learned the locality in which the house I had spoken of, was situated. It was in a lonely retired spot, at some distance from any other human habitation, and a mile or two from any village, and the following morning at an early hour, I hired a horse and chaise, and set out alone to reconnoitre the spot, meaning during the ride, to turn over in my mind the best means to serve the party immured within, in whose behalf I daily became more and more interested.

After driving for a mile or so along the principal public road leading from the village of C——, I came to a narrow lane which led between two deep ravines of extraordinary beauty, the summit of the trees scarcely reaching the level of the narrow lane—so that the eye roamed over a mass of the most luxuriant foliage, which appeared to extend for miles, displaying all the varieties of color and of shade that are peculiar to the different species of palms, and here and there diversified by the livelier green of the elm and the maple; while the *coup d'œil* was frequently relieved by the brown and neutral tints of the faded leaves of trees which had been blighted, apparently, in the midst of their bloom. Keeping this road for some considerable distance, I at length emerged into a more open tract of country, and here and there, dotting, though sparsely, the cultivated surface, was a small farm-house. Half a mile of further travel through the lane, led me on to what appeared to be a public road, though one little used, and turning to the left, I drove for a few hundred yards, and then turned shortly off into a lane nearly overgrown with grass, which sloped gently down a hill. At its foot, a short distance to the right, was a thick copse of trees, from amidst which, at distant intervals, could be discerned the white walls and green window-blinds of what seemed to be a large mansion.—From the information I had cautiously gleaned at the hotel on the previous day, I had no doubt this was the place I was in search of; and now came the difficult question, how was I to make the object of my visit known to the person whom I sought? If I was not particularly careful and cautious in my proceedings, I might possibly effect more harm than good; for, if any suspicions were entertained of the nature of my visit, the poor unfortunate creature might be removed to some other and still more difficult place of concealment. So, if I applied to the authorities for aid, the like difficulties would be placed in my way—for I had no legal charge to make against the proprietor of the establishment, and I could not describe the person whom I was in search of. I

therefore stood a good chance, upon making such application, of being myself considered a lunatic. Besides, the very fact of my having applied to the authorities, must become known to the proprietor before the power of the law could be brought to bear upon him, and the like result would follow. For he would, of course, remove his ward to safer keeping, or perchance—for such a man, I thought, is capable of any action, however atrocious—her own fears may be realized, and her life may pay the forfeit of my temerity.

All this I had revolved in my mind as I had ridden along the road, and I had arrived at no definite conclusion how to proceed, when at length I had got within sight of the establishment.

However, I alighted from the carriage, and leading the horse into the grove, I fastened the reins to a tree, and proceeded leisurely and cautiously in the direction of the mansion.

It was a large wooden building, having no pretensions to elegance, and yet rendered tasteful by means of the cleanliness of the outside, and the neatness and order of the flower garden and shrubbery which surrounded it. Vines were trained to spread over the front of the mansion, and almost to cover the roof. The whole place presented the appearance of being the residence of some wealthy planter, or perhaps the country seat of some city merchant; the beautiful scenery in the midst of which it was located added to its attractions, and the landscape was completed by the rugged outline of a range of gray mountains, whose sharply defined angular summits stood in bold relief against the clear blue sky. I was almost inclined to believe that I had been mistaken in the place, for it appeared scarcely possible that sin and sorrow could exist in the midst of this sweet solitude; but I recollected that as the fairest apple is often rotten at the core, so the fairest front may conceal the foulest interior—the loveliest face and form the most false and deceitful heart. Men should learn not to judge from specious appearances.

I roamed about for an hour, admiring the scenery from



every point of view, and at the same time keeping a sharp look out, while I strove to remain unobserved, upon the house and grounds. For a long time no living person was visible, though two or three times my eyes were deceived by the statues that ornamented the ground, as the branches waving to and fro before them, gave to them the semblance of motion, but at last I was certain I saw two female figures. I cautiously approached, and unless my eyes deceived me, one form resembled in every particular, the very lady for whom I was in search. A thick group of trees close to one of the angles of the grounds, afforded me a commodious place for observation without being observed, and there I stationed myself. By-and-by two of the ladies approached the spot (I now saw there was four in the garden,) and from their conversation, for I was close enough to hear it, I perceived these were really insane. They were conversing about the "Hanging gardens of Ancient Babylon," of which they fancied themselves the royal inmates and owners; but neither of them was the object of my search. They were both women past the middle age, and stout and well-looking, seemingly well satisfied and happy in their situation. A few minutes more and the other ladies approached the angle, and now I was certain that one of them was the incognita, for although I could not get sight of her face, (if I had, it would have served me nought) I could not be deceived in so close a view of her figure. The female with her had the air of an upper servant, and I set her down at once as one of the female keepers of the establishment. One point now was gained; but still I was as far off as ever from the main purpose of my visit, viz: the obtaining speech with the incognita, as I shall still continue to designate her.

Just then my attention was arrested by the sound of the heavy footsteps of a man, who passed in close proximity to my hiding-place; so close, indeed, as to alarm me, for if, as I suspected, he had been an inmate—perhaps one of the servants of the establishment—I should have been placed in an awkward predicament, if caught

thus prowling about and so near a place of such a suspicious character.

However, he passed on, and walked along the skirt of the shrubbery in the direction of the two last-mentioned females. Presently he gave a low, peculiar whistle, and the elder female immediately turned her head, and held a handkerchief aloft in her hand; then addressing herself to the younger female, moving her forefinger up and down, as though in admonition, she began to retrace her steps, while the younger woman passed slowly on.

As soon as the man perceived that his signal had been answered, he also began to retrace his steps, and came towards my place of concealment. I began to think that it would be advisable for me to beat a retreat as quickly as possible, if I did not want to be discovered. And now the sentence in the letter recurred to my recollection, wherein the writer had remarked that her keeper took the opportunity of a daily airing in the garden, to meet her lover, and that it was during one of these meetings that she had managed to get the letter conveyed to the mother of poor Mary Mason. I had no doubt now that I had stumbled upon the lovers' trysting-place, and assuredly it was a place well adapted for Cupid's ambush; so secret was it—so secure from all observation from without were those who ensconced themselves within its mazes—that they, as I had done, could observe the approach of an intruder in sufficient time to escape unperceived.

Having had a little experience in such matters myself, I knew that when a lady and gentleman meet under these peculiar circumstances, the interview is generally protracted to an indefinite time, provided they meet with no awkward interruption to their sweet discourse; and I hoped, while the lady was so happily engaged, I might be enabled at least to meet the object of my search—to communicate with her—to assure her that assistance was at hand, and to arrange the preliminaries for future action.

By the time that I had effected my retreat, the lady

had unlocked the gate of the garden, and passed out, carefully relocking it from the outside, and then she and her loving swain, as I had anticipated, both drew near the secluded spot I had just quitted.

I passed round to the opposite side of the enclosed grounds which might have been a furlong or more off, for the shrubbery was extensive, and, posting myself as near as possible to the walk near the skirt of the grounds, I waited the approach of the incognita whom I observed slowly walking towards me.

As she drew near me, I coughed slightly in order to attract her attention, and she started as if alarmed, and I thought, was about to retire, when I exclaimed softly, yet loud enough for my voice to reach her ear:

"I am Dr. —."

For a moment the young woman stood as if struck motionless by a thunder-bolt; but presently recovering herself, I heard her ejaculate:

"Thank God! my prayers have been heard at last."

She advanced towards the close, quick-set hedge which separated us, and in a trembling voice said:

"You are not deceiving me?"

"I am not," I replied; "how could any other person than myself know that you are here, and are in need of aid, and be willing to render it? How should any other than I know that you sent Mrs. W——, and wished her to let me know how you were situated?"

"It is enough, doctor," replied the lady, in a more assured tone. "I know your voice. Thank God! you have come at last."

All this time I could not distinguish more than the outlines of the lady's dress through the thickly grown hedge; but she whispered to me:

"Follow me round to another place, where we will be better able to converse and more secure from observation from the house. Keep as close to the hedge as possible; for, if you are seen, all possibility of helping me, will, I fear, be at an end."

I did as the young woman requested, and followed her

until she had led me to a place where the hedge was not so dense, although from its formation, and the thorny nature of the wood, it was impenetrable, and which was hidden from the house by a copse of young cedars.

Here I had for the first time an opportunity of seeing the features of the incognita, and how great was my surprise to recognize in her the leading belle, but a few years before, of one of the most fashionable sea-bathing places in the United States. The sweet face, to be sure, was worn with suffering—the expressive features told too plainly that the heart had been tortured with grief, and the fair, fresh complexion was pallid—the roses had fled and left the lily alone to mourn the absence of the sister queen of flowers, but there was no mistaking under this guise of sorrow the features of the lovely and accomplished Miss —, the beauty and the heiress, who had turned half the gentlemen visitors of the bathing-place crazy.

I gave an involuntary start of astonishment and dismay. She observed it, and smiling languidly she said, "Yes, you may well start, doctor; when you saw me at —, when I used to walk out on the beach with Mrs. —, your good lady, it would have been an idle romance had either of us ventured to dream that the revolution of a few brief years would make such a difference between us—little did I imagine that such a horrible gulf was yawning to embrace me, and that I should be led idly to its brink and thus fall—fall—to its lowest abyss."

As she said this, she wept piteously, but shortly recovering herself, she added with something of her old manner as she dashed aside the tears:

"It is no use to mourn thus. Action, not lamentation, must now be the word. I thank you, doctor, that worthless as I am, you still have humanity enough not utterly to forsake me. I know *now* what must be your opinion of me; but, perhaps some day it may be altered, that is, in some degree. I did not sin wilfully; but, like the angels, I allowed pride to mislead me, and having discovered the dreadful error I had committed, I cast aside

the upbraidings of conscience and tried to persuade myself that I was happy. Happy! ah, ha," continued she, hysterically—"happy! Happiness and I have been strangers for many, many years. We parted when I stumbled from the path of duty, and we shall never meet again."

"My dear Miss T——," said I, venturing to mention her name, "if you wish me to aid you, you must not thus give way to your feelings: believe me, I do not see in you the object of scorn that you seem wrongfully to conceive yourself to be. I have heard sufficient to satisfy me that you were more sinned against than sinning; but recollect, Miss T——, that for the present all thoughts of what is past must be banished. Some measures must first be taken to remove you from this place, and then we will talk of other matters—"

"Call me not Miss T——, doctor," she replied;—"I have, through folly and crime—aye, through crime, though it was not of my own conception, rendered myself unworthy of the name," and again the unhappy woman began to weep. I hastened to console her; for I felt that every minute thus lost, planted greater difficulties in the way of my obtaining her deliverance from the dreadful place in which she was imprisoned.

"Calm yourself, calm yourself, madam," I repeated. "recollect that every moment we may be interrupted, and future chances of meeting prevented; as Miss T——, I knew you, and still know you; and it were folly thus to allow silly fancies to place obstacles in the way of your release."

"I know it is folly," she replied. "Forgive me, doctor, and I will try to abstain from such display of weakness in future."

"Then tell me," said I, "do you walk in these grounds every day?"

"Almost every day, when the weather is fine."

"And the woman—your companion—does she often absent herself thus?"

"Yes, for some time past she has absented herself for

an hour, sometimes more. A man comes to meet her there where you see the tops of yonder clump of trees. I fancy he is her lover."

"Then if this continues, we can make arrangements as to the best course to be pursued. I could of course make immediate complaints to the authorities, and obtain a search warrant for your person, or at least cause a jury of physicians to be empanelled, in order to test your sanity and to investigate the cause of your incarceration in this place, but that would occupy time, and as I have no means to identify you, it might lead, if the establishment merits the character I have heard of it, to your removal to some other and more secluded spot. We must, therefore, proceed with caution, and devise some safer and surer method."

"Oh no, for God's sake," she cried with a shudder, "do not let it be known that you are taking any interest in me. Oh! I have known horrible things to happen here: for once or twice the friends of some unfortunate inmates have sought them out—but they never found them—and so secretly and so cautiously have the plans of those who have placed them here been laid, that scarcely a shadow of suspicion has rested upon the establishment; nay, I have sometimes got hold of a torn local print, in which a parcel has been wrapped, and I have seen the institution highly spoken of, and its conductor mentioned with praise for his humane treatment of the poor insane creatures committed to his charge."

"This, then, is a private lunatic asylum?" I asked.

"It is to a certain extent. At present there are but three persons confined here. Myself, and two harmless lunatics who are really well treated, and who receive occasionally the visits of their friends. One or two, since I have been here, have gone out cured, and thus furnished fresh matter for the eulogies that had been bestowed upon the establishment; but there were two persons besides myself confined on a charge of lunacy who were sane as I am; that I could perceive, although we were not allowed to hold conversation with each other; but we were

all allowed to converse with and associate fully with the lunatics, in hopes, I suspect, that we might be driven by their companionship into the same awful state. One day some friends came to inquire for them, and from what I observed, the proprietor became alarmed; it was denied that they were here at all, and when a search was insisted upon, they could not be found. Nothing indicated that they had ever been inmates of the establishment; but, doctor, *I have my suspicions that they were made away with.*"

The poor young woman shuddered as she spoke, and I myself, was seized with a sensation of intense horror. Her earnestness and the extreme terror with which she almost hissed out the last sentence sent a horrible thrill through my veins.

However, I quickly recovered myself and said:

"If the weather be fine, I will see you again to-morrow, meanwhile tell me as briefly as possible the method by which you were lured hither."

The young woman gazed around her; "see," she said, "that Martha is not coming. If she observes you I am lost."

"No one is approaching," said I, "I am concealed from view myself by those trees; but I can see the moment one or the other of them quit their hiding place, and I will give you warning, and take myself off in time."

The young woman stooped down suddenly and appeared to be busily occupied with a bunch of flowers that grew at her feet—"Hush!" she whispered, conceal yourself—these poor mad women are coming up the path and will pass this way. They will pass on if they do not observe you, for they consider me beneath their notice. They think, one of them that she is Queen of Babylon, and the other that she is Queen of Sheba, and they affect to believe that I am only a handmaid of King Solomon."

I had scarcely time to hide myself behind the trunk of a tree when the two females passed, they tossed their

heads contemptuously as they passed by Miss T——, and were soon out of sight in one of the winding walks of the garden. Miss T—— arose from her stooping posture and sat herself on an antique carved garden-seat, as though she were lounging idly, observing:—

"It were better that I sit thus, in case I should be perceived by any person belonging to the establishment, although seldom any one but Martha walks in these grounds; the private gardens are at the back of the house."

She then proceeded to tell the following story:—

"One day, a good many months ago, for since I have been here I have lost record of time—at first I was too much paralyzed by grief to think of it, and since I have had no opportunity—but perhaps ten or twelve months ago, just on the very day that Mrs. Mason had appointed to see her mother, and, if I recollect aright, to tell you her melancholy history, we were both of us surprised by a visit from P——, the false-hearted monster who deceived me into the belief that I was his wife, and who subsequently betrayed me;—but it is necessary that I should explain this, and I fear it will take too long a time, or you will not understand my story?"

"No, no," I replied, "never mind. By-and-by, I hope, I shall be able to tell you how I heard of the deception of which you became the unconscious victim; proceed briefly with the history of your having been kidnapped into this place."

"Well, then, doctor," she continued, "on that very morning that I have mentioned, P——, (I cannot *now* call him my husband, though I loved and honored him as such long after his falsehood was known to me, so fondly was I attached to him,) came to our residence. I met him with joy, and flew to his embrace, while Mrs. Mason, herself, was pleased to see him, for she hoped through him, as he had been to California, to hear of the man whom she, too, still called her husband. P—— was kind, apparently, in his manner; but there seemed to be a restraint upon his mind which overburdened

him, and after returning my embrace he became for some moments quite abstracted; but collecting himself he bade us both prepare to go out with him in the carriage, and to make preparations for a long journey. When we asked the cause of this sudden mandate, he told us that Mr. Mason had returned from California, and was awaiting in a small village in Pennsylvania, as he did not wish to venture nearer New York until some unjust aspersions that had been cast upon his character were satisfactorily cleared up.

"It was known to me that Mason had, or was said to have committed some *faux pas*, the nature of which I was ignorant of; for Mrs. Mason, poor, fond, and cruelly deceived woman, could never bear any allusion to the subject, and still hoped and believed that the wretch who had deceived her, was innocent of this last wrong, and therefore, I did not discredit the story; and as for Mrs. Mason, as soon as she heard that the villain she still called her husband, was waiting to receive her, she made no further objections. Poor creature, she whispered to me, as she passed up stairs to attire herself for the unexpected journey, "won't Mason be proud of the boy?" She asked P—— to wait a short time, as she expected her mother to pay her a visit; but, at the mention of this, I observed a scowl upon his countenance, which, however, quickly passed away; but he said that it could not be; that he must be off immediately; and, to my astonishment, he proceeded with great alacrity to pack up certain luggage to take with us, saying that he would save us all trouble in that respect, and that, as regarded Mrs. Mason's mother, he would take measures to apprise her of our whereabouts in Pennsylvania, and that she should follow us thither.

"We went to our rooms, packed our clothes hurriedly, and dressed ourselves for the journey, and were hurried into the coach. John, the coachman, whom I now believe to have been a creature of P.'s, being already seated on the box.

"We travelled until late in the afternoon, and then

stopped at a way-side inn, where we remained during the night. On the following morning we found a hired conveyance waiting for us, and our own carriage, with the greater portion of the luggage, gone.

"We expressed surprise at this; but P—— said he had sent it on in advance, and that we should be more comfortable, and should attract less observation by travelling in a quiet, unassuming manner.

"That night we stopped again at a wayside inn, and during the night I was awakened by the sound of struggling in Mrs. Mason's room. I became alarmed and awakened P——, who arose, and went out of the room, but shortly returned, telling me to go to sleep again, for nothing was the matter. He struck a light and lit a cigar, and sat for some time smoking at the window—gazing anxiously into the road. His face, I thought, looked pale, and I asked him if he was unwell; but he, rather shortly, bade me go to sleep.

"In the morning when I awoke, P—— was up and dressed. He told me to rise and dress myself quickly, for he was in a hurry to be off.

"When dressed, and ready to leave the room, I missed my rings and a locket that I had always been accustomed to wear, which I had laid on the dressing-table when retiring to rest for the night.

I asked P—— for them, and he replied that they were safe enough; that he thought it folly to wear such valuable jewelry while travelling, and that he had put them into his valise.

"When we went down stairs, I missed Mrs. Mason and her child, and asked if they were well, and whether they were coming to breakfast or not.

"P—— replied that Mason had sent another conveyance for them early in the morning, and that we must hurry away, and get breakfast elsewhere, for we were already late. I would have remonstrated, for I felt hungry, but P——'s manner was so brusque—so different to what I had ever seen it before—that I felt frightened, and he pushed me roughly into the carriage.



"For a time I was dreadfully alarmed, but as we proceeded, my courage returned, and assuming a cheerful tone of voice, I asked if we should shortly rejoin Mrs. Mason.

" 'I don't know,' was P——'s reply, now brutally uttered; for at last he had thrown off all semblance of kindness.

" 'What ails you, dear?' said I, half alarmed by some vague fears respecting myself, and half fearful that he was unwell, and I threw my arms around his neck. He pushed me roughly from him, and I burst into tears.

"He bade me leave off snivelling, and became so brutal in his conduct, that my dormant courage was aroused, and I boldly told him that I suspected some foul play had been going on with regard to us both, and especially with regard to Mrs. Mason, in whose apartment I had heard the singular disturbance in the night.

"As soon as I had uttered this, he rose from his seat and caught my throat, saying, with a fearful imprecation, that it would be better at once to serve me as Mrs. Mason and her child had been served. He suddenly checked himself, and sat moodily silent. At length he said:

" 'Adele, will you make over to me as your rightful husband, the property you possess, and we will go to Europe together?'

" 'No,' I boldly replied, for I felt sure now that some dire wickedness was contemplated, and I repeated again, 'No, not though you murder me as you have Mrs. Mason and her child.' I said this vaguely, but as the words fell from my lips, his countenance turned dreadfully pale and his features appeared to be distorted as with mental and bodily agony. I was frightened, and remained silent, determining to leave him at the first place at which we stopped. At last we reached this house, and he sprang from the carriage, and I was lifted to the ground by a stranger, and borne into a room, the door of which was immediately locked, and I heard the sound of the carriage rolling rapidly away.

"How long I remained thus alone, I cannot say—for

my nerves were quite unstrung, and I fell into a stupor from which I was aroused by an elderly man of most unprepossessing appearance, who asked me if I was better, and whether I wanted anything? I told him that I did not, and asked where I was.

" 'In a mad house,' he replied, 'where you will be treated ill or well, according to your behavior.'

"Again I swooned away, and since then my life has been one continuous round of monotony. I seldom see the proprietor—neither does he nor will Martha converse with me, except upon trivial matters; though I do not believe the latter to be naturally a hard-hearted woman. I know that P——'s object was to obtain my property and all my ready money, and I have no doubt he has succeeded in doing so; but I will work night and day for my living; I will do anything to get clear of this dreadful place."

" 'And you shall get clear,' said I. 'If I live, of that rest assured. But tell me, what are your reasons for thinking that Mrs. Mason and her child came to a violent death?'

"The expression in P——'s countenance when I mentioned it, more in a fit of passion than in any belief that such had been the case in reality," was her reply. "Also, his own half-muttered expression, previously to my mentioning the horrible words."

At this moment I saw the man who has been already alluded to, emerge from the copse, and I intimated this to Mrs. P——, assuring her of my untiring efforts in her behalf, and also telling her that I would see her again on the earliest opportunity—the next day if possible.

I then took my departure, and on gaining a position where, unobserved myself, I could gain a view of the grounds, I saw that Miss —— had been joined by the female keeper.

## CHAPTER XXV.

AFTER much consideration I came to the conclusion to obtain an entrance into the private lunatic asylum, by making a feint that I had a boarder to introduce to the keeper, and then I determined to ask permission to see the accommodations, and if by that means I should come in contact with Miss T——, to claim her acquaintance and insist upon her release. "At any rate," thought I, "after witnessing the method of discipline preserved in the house, whether I see Miss T—— or not, I shall be better able to come to some definite conclusion as to the most advisable course to take to effect my object."

Accordingly the following day I addressed a note to the proprietor, cautiously worded, so as to imply that there was some mystery behind it, stating that I had heard of the excellent character of his *private establishment*, and that I was greatly troubled about a female friend whom some persons considered to be insane, and who was possessed of considerable property in her own right. Therefore I would take the liberty of calling at his establishment on the next morning.

There was a mixture of truth and equivocation in this statement, that many of my readers may consider was unwarrantable on my part; but they must recollect that without some subterfuge, it would have been impossible for me to have obtained admission to the infamous den, and then I *was* troubled about a lady whom some people at least, *professed* to consider insane, and who was possessed of considerable property in her own right. Where I went beyond the limits of truth; where I attempted to deceive, I can only hope that the end in view, may, under the circumstances, justify the deed.

True to my appointment, I called at the house about nine o'clock on the day specified, and upon stating my

name, and mentioning that it was I who had addressed a letter to the proprietor the previous day, I was shown into the parlor, where I found that worthy gentleman reading a newspaper.

The fellow was one of those men who are remarkable for massive, inanimate features. At a first glance, he was not ill-looking; but on examining his beetle-brows, which met in a mass of black, thick hair across his face, and on watching the dull, selfish, cruel eyes that they overhung, dead as they were to every generous emotion, and incapable of kindling even at cruelty itself, it was impossible for any man in the habit of observing nature closely, not to feel that a brutal ruffian, obstinate, indurated and unscrupulous, was before him. His forehead was low, and the whole shape of his head, such as would induce an intelligent phrenologist to pronounce him at once a thief and a murderer.

After a survey or two, I felt my blood boil at the contemplation of his very visage, which was at once plausible and diabolical in expression; but it was essentially necessary that I should disguise these feelings of abhorrence, and endeavor to obtain the confidence of the man. Therefore, after some preliminary chat, I said:—

"Your establishment, sir, is admirably situated here. It is remote and isolated, and these, I presume, are advantages?"

"Why, yes, sir," replied the proprietor—"the further we remove our patients from human society, the better. The exhibition of reason, has, in general, a bad effect upon the insane."

"Upon what principle do you account for that?" I asked. "To me, it would appear that the reverse of the proposition ought to hold true."

"That may be," he replied; "but no man can form a correct opinion of insane persons, who has not mingled with them, or had them under his care. The contiguity of reason—I mean in the persons of those who approach them—always exercises a dangerous influence upon lunatics; and on this account, I sometimes place those who

are less insane, as keepers over such as are decidedly so."

"Does that not seem very like setting the blind to lead the blind?"

"No," replied my companion with a heavy, heartless laugh, "your analogy fails; it is rather like setting a man with one eye to guide another who has none."

"But why should not a man with two eyes guide the blind man better?"

"Because the consciousness that there is but the one eye between them will make him proceed more cautiously."

"But that in the blind is an act of reason," replied I, "which cannot be applied to the insane, in whom reason is deficient."

"But where reason does not exist," said the proprietor of the establishment, "we must regulate them by their passions."

"By the exercise of which passion do you gain the greatest ascendancy over them?"

"By fear, of course. We can do nothing, at least very little, without inspiring terror."

"Ah!" thought I, "I have now got the key to his conduct!" "But, sir," I continued, "we can never love and fear the same object at the same time."

"True enough, sir," replied the ruffian, "but who could or ought to calculate upon the attachment of a madman? Boys are corrected more frequently than men, because their reason is not developed; and those in whom it does not exist, or in whom it has been impaired, must be subject to the same discipline. Terror, besides, is the principle upon which reason itself, and all society, are governed."

"But suppose I had a sister, now, or a relative, might I not hesitate to place her in an establishment conducted on principles which I condemn?"

"As to that, sir," replied the fellow, who, expecting a patient, feared that he had gone too far, "our system is an adaptable one—at least, our application of it varies

according to circumstances. As our first object is cure, we must necessarily allow ourselves considerable latitude of experiment, until we hit upon the right key. This being found, the process of recovery, when it is possible, may be conducted with as much mildness as the absence of reason will permit. We are mild when we can, and severe only when we must."

"Shuffling scoundrel," thought I, "I perceive in this language, the double dealing of an unprincipled villain."

Determined, however, to keep my counsel as long as I thought such a course advisable, I changed the current of conversation, and said:

"Your establishment is exclusively for females, I presume?"

"Oh, no," replied the proprietor; "I have both males and females; more, in fact, of the former than the latter; but they are kept widely separate. A person who has not been over my place would not have the slightest conception of its magnitude. From the road, when a glimpse of it can be seen, it looks by no means an extensive building, but it is very large. The male and female patients, even when convalescent, do not know of the proximity of the one to the other, nor even that the opposite sexes are within the same establishment; nay, more than that, some of the females are, for *certain reasons*, separated from the rest, and while they are allowed more liberty than the common herd, they are kept ignorant that others besides themselves are here confined."

"That accounts," thought I, "for the remark of Miss T——, that only three ladies were confined here just now; but what is the reason—what are the *certain reasons* wherefore she is allowed more liberty than the *common herd*?"

"Would you have any objection, sir," inquired I, "that I should look through your establishment?"

"I can conduct you through the convalescent wards," replied the proprietor; "but, as I have said, we find that the appearance of strangers—which is what I mean by the contiguity of reason—is attended by very bad, and

sometimes deplorable consequences. Under all considerations, it retards a cure, under others occasions a relapse, and in some accelerates the malady so rapidly that it becomes hopeless. You may see the convalescent wards, however, if you wish."

"You will oblige me," said I.

"Well, then," said he, "if you will remain here a moment, I will send a gentleman who will accompany you, and explain the characters of some of the patients, should you desire it, and also the cause of their respective maladies."

The proprietor then disappeared, and in a few minutes a mild, intelligent, gentlemanly man, of modest and unassuming appearance, presented himself, and said he would feel much pleasure in showing me over the convalescent wards.

It is not my intention to place before my readers any lengthened description of this gloomy temple of departed reason. Every one who enters a lunatic asylum, public or private, for the first time, must feel a wild indescribable emotion, such as he never before experienced, and which amounts to an extraordinary sense of solemnity and fear. Nor do the sensations of the stranger rest here. He feels that he is surrounded by something sacred as well as melancholy; something that creates at once pity, reverence, and awe; indeed, so strongly antithetical to each other are his impressions, that a kind of confusion arises in his mind, and he begins to fear that his own senses have been affected by the atmosphere of the place. That a shock takes place which slightly disarranges the faculty of thought, and generates strong, but erroneous impressions, is still more clearly established by the fact that the visitor, for a considerable time after leaving an asylum, can scarcely rid himself of the belief that every person he meets is insane.

I was perfectly astonished, as I walked along by the side of my conductor, at the size of the building. For my own part, I would much rather have visited the female wards and so have prosecuted my aim at once and

without delay! but the gentleman who conducted me told me that he could not enter the female wards; but that, after having shown me the male ward he would convey me back to the proprietor, or the "doctor," as he called him, who, he had no doubt, would depute a nurse to accompany me through the female wards; so I was compelled to make the tour of the whole building, and, to tell the truth, a sort of hideous fascination began to create a desire to witness all that was to be seen—the same fascination that leads us to contemplate any scene of danger and horror, although at the same time we sicken at the sight—we fain would, but we cannot, withdraw our eyes from the spectacle.

As perhaps but few of my readers have visited the interior of a lunatic asylum, I may be excused the slight digression from the thread of my narrative in describing this place—the more especially as it is after all in some measure connected with it.

On entering the long room in which the convalescents were assembled I felt, in the silence of the patients, and in their vague and fantastic movements, that I was in a position where novelty, in general the source of pleasure was associated only with pain. The startling looks of the inmates, the absence of interest in some instances, and its intensity in others, at the appearance of strangers, without any intelligent motive in either case, produced a feeling that seemed to bear the character of a disagreeable dream.

"All the patients here," said my conductor, "are not absolutely in a state of convalescence. A great number of them are; but we also allow such confined lunatics as are harmless, to mingle with them. There is scarcely a profession, or a passion, or a vanity in life, which has not here its representative. Law, religion, physic, the arts, the sciences, all contribute their share to this melancholy picture gallery. Avarice, love, ambition, pride, jealousy, having overgrown the force of reason, are here, as its ideal skeletons, wild and gigantic—fretting, gambling, moping, grinning, raving, and vaporizing—each

wrapped in its own VISION and indifferent to all the influence of the collateral faculties. There, now, is a man moping about, the picture of stolidity; observe how his heavy head hangs down until his chin rests upon his breast bone, his mouth open and almost dribbling. That man, sir, so unpoetical and idiotic in appearance, imagines himself the author of 'Beattie's Minstrels.' He is a Scotchman. I will speak to him:

"Come here, Sandy; speak to this gentleman."

Sandy without raising his lack-lustre eyes came over and replied

"Aye, aye! I'm the author of 'Batty's Menstril,' and having uttered this piece of intelligence, he shuffled across the room, dragging one foot after another at about a quarter of a minute per step. Never was poor Beattie so libellously represented.

"Do you see that round-faced, good-humored looking man, with a cut-away farmer's coat on?" said my conductor. "He's a wealthy and respectable farmer from Alabama, who imagines he's a saint, and has the power of working miracles. His name is G——. Come here, G——."

G—— came over, and looking at me earnestly, said:

"Do you know who I am, stranger? No, I'll go bail you don't."

"No," I replied, "I do not; perhaps you will have the goodness to inform me."

"I'm Saint Barnabas," replied the man, "and, stranger, I'll give you a piece of advice. Get out of this as soon as possible, or I'll work a miracle upon you."

"Why," said I, "what will you do?"

"I'll turn you into a four-legged ass, as you are a two legged one now, for venturing into such a place as this. You are a railroad director too."

The poor man had gone deranged, it appeared, in consequence of the death of his wife who was killed by a railroad collision.

"There is another man," said my conductor, "that little man with an angry face. He is a shoemaker who

went mad on the score of humanity, through reading tracts against cruelty to animals. He took a strong feeling of resentment against all men who had flat feet, and refused to make shoes for them."

"How was that?" I asked.

"Why, sir," said my conductor, "he said that they murdered all the cockroaches, not giving them even a chance of escape when they put their feet down. He looks upon every man with flat feet as an inhuman villain who ought to have his feet chopped off and beg for charity upon his stumps."

"Who is that broad-shouldered man dressed in rusty black, with the red hair?" I asked.

"He went mad," replied my conductor, "on a principle of religious charity. He is a Methodist preacher who being sent for in a hurry to baptize a child of an Episcopalian, strangled it, saying that by so doing he had saved one soul from being brought up in error and sent it direct to heaven."

"You are not without poets here, of course?" said I.

"We have, unfortunately," replied the conductor, "more individuals of that class than we can manage. They ought to have an asylum for themselves. There's a fellow now in the tattered jacket and night cap, who has written a heroic poem in eighty-six thousand verses, which he entitles 'Balaam's Ass,' or, 'The Great Unsaddled.' Would you like to speak to him?"

"Oh, for Heaven's sake, no," I replied. "Keep me from the poets."

"There is another of the species," replied the gentleman, "the thin, red-eyed fellow who grinds his teeth. He fancies himself a wit and a satirist; and is the author of an unpublished poem called 'The Smoking Dunghill,' or 'Parnassus in a Fume.' He published several things which were justly attacked on account of their dullness, and he is now in an awful fury against all the poets of the day, to every one of whom he has given an appropriate position on the sublime pedestal, which he has, as it were, with his own hands, created for them. He cer-



tainly ought to be the best constructor of a dunghill in the world for he deals in nothing but dirt. He refuses to wash his hands because, he says, it would disqualify him from giving the last touches to his poem and his characters.

"Have you philosophers as well as poets?" I inquired.

"Oh Lord! yes, sir. We have poetical philosophers, and philosophical poets; but I protest to Heaven the wisdom of Solomon or of an Archangel could not decide the difference between their folly. You see that man walking to and fro, apparently in deep and anxious thought. There is deep speculation in his eye, and yet his glances are restless, and he frequently starts as though with some novel fancy. That man, sir, has gone mad through preaching 'isms;' he has been in turns a spiritualist and a materialist, an abolitionist and a socialist, and he now is possessed of an idea that the millennium is at hand and only waiting for an universal earthly head to guide and govern it. He is the man; but this world won't believe him, and therefore the millennium is indefinitely postponed."

"Who are those two men dressed in black, walking arm-in-arm?" asked I; "they look very much like lawyers."

"And so they are," replied my conductor, "two legal controversialists, who, when they were at large, created by their attacks each upon the legal knowledge of the other,—each setting the residents of the place where they lived against each other, more ill-will than they could remove, were they to become philanthropists and live to the age of Methuselah. It is impossible to describe the mischief they were guilty of. Ever since they came here, however, they are like brothers. They were placed in the same room, each in a strong straight-waistcoat, for the space of three months; but upon being allowed to walk about, they became sworn friends and now amuse themselves more than any other two in the establishment. They indulge in immoderate fits of laughter, look each other knowingly in the face, wink,

and place their fore-finger on the side of their noses, after which their mirth bursts out afresh and they laugh until the tears run down their cheeks."

By this time my curiosity was gratified. I could get no information in this department respecting Miss T., and I hinted to my conductor that I should like to see the females of the establishment.

"Well, sir," he replied, "you will have to ask the proprietor, who may perhaps refuse you, for he is very particular whom he admits to visit the females; but (mark me, sir—I say harkee—you have humanity in your face—I will tell you a secret. The proprietor is a villain—that is—*entre nous*—but mum's the word between us."

"I am sorry," I replied, "to hear such a character of him from you who should know him well."

"Well, sir," replied the gentleman, "let that pass—*verbum sap.* And now pray tell me, when were you last at the opera?"

"Not for some months," I replied.

"Have you ever heard Jenny Lind shake?"

"Yes, I had that pleasure on the occasion of a late visit to Europe," I replied.

"Well, sir, I'm delighted that you have heard her, for there is but one man living who can rival her in the shake, and, sir, you have the honor of addressing that man."

This was said so mildly, calmly, rationally, and with that gentlemanlike air of undoubted respectability, which gives to an assertion such an impress of truth, that, confused as I was by what I had seen, I found it rather difficult at the moment to draw the line, especially in such society, between a sane man and an insane one.

"Would you wish, sir," said my guide, "to hear a specimen of my powers?"

"If you please," replied I, "provided you will confine yourself to the shake."

The gentleman then commenced a squall—so tuneless, wild, jarring and unmusical, that I could not help

smiling at the monomaniac, for such I at once perceived him to be.

"You seem to like that, sir," he observed, apparently much gratified; "but, I thought as much, sir—you are a man of taste."

"I am decidedly of opinion," said I, "that Jenny Lind has never, in her happiest efforts, given such a shake as that. By-the-bye, there is some talk of her visiting this country shortly. I heard her, as I have said, in London a year or two ago; I shall hear her again, and then I shall be better able to institute a comparison between your vocal powers."

"That is it, sir—that is it," said the gentleman, mysteriously; "they fear that I shall outvie her, and for that reason they have confined me here, among these mad men, and now, sir, I wish you farewell. We shall have another shake in honor of your excellent judgment; but it will be a shake of the hand. Sir you are a polished and most accomplished gentleman."

As I walked towards the portion of the house in which the proprietor resided, my ears were greeted with loud blasphemies; for I passed by the ward in which the most furious lunatics were confined. I looked in at an open grating, and immediately a shout arose from a dozen raving maniacs, who were strapped to chairs, and who represented themselves to be potentates and princes of every degree. Here sat the representative of the emperor of Russia, with a straight waistcoat upon him, to keep him quiet—such as the real emperor would be all the better for. There was the Pope of Rome, challenging Henry VIII. to settle the dispute between the Catholic and Protestant churches, with a bout of fisticuffs. Napoleon Bonaparte in the person of an apish-looking individual, with immense moustaches, was singing a song, to the tune of "Bob and Joan," the refrain of which was something like—"I'm not a Jew—I'm not a Jew; but I never could like 'Ham';"—and the Archbishop of Canterbury offered to pledge me his mitre, if I would bring him a good cigar and a glass of brandy and water. Some-

times a frightful yell from the whole body, simultaneously, would drown every other sound; and this would be succeeded by maniacal bursts of laughter. I withdrew, sickened, disgusted, and only just in time.—For as I moved my head, an individual who sat near the grating, and whom I had not previously perceived, would have thrust his forefinger, armed with a nail as strong and pointed as the claws of an eagle, right into my left eye, had I remained one moment longer. I entered the parlor.

"Well, sir," said the proprietor, "have you seen the melancholy sight?"

"I have, sir, in part, and a melancholy one, indeed, it is; but, I have a strong desire to see the females."

The man looked at me keenly, with his dull grey eyes:—

"We seldom allow visitors to see the females, unless they *come on business*."

This was said with a peculiar emphasis, and at the same time I observed a cunning leer in those cruel eyes.

"I have *come on business*," I replied, "and I wish to see how the females are treated. I suppose when once in your care, there is no fear of their escaping?"

"Oh no, my dear sir. None at all."

"Not even if they show no symptoms of insanity," said I, "because, *sometimes the insanity under which they labor is only observable to their friends*."

"I understand you, my dear sir, perfectly well," said the ruffian, for I had emphasized the last words.

"No, sir, there is no fear of their escaping, and as to their treatment, it depends upon the amount paid for their board. Some gentlemen who wish to get quit of *insane* female relatives and friends, still have a lingering affection for them and come down handsomely for their keep. Then they are well treated, otherwise they are put with the maniacs in another ward, and then they soon get as mad as need be themselves. You see, sir, I am speaking plainly to you. Come, I will call the keeper you shall see my lady boarders."

The villain! I could scarcely restrain my tongue, but policy held me under restraint, and I accompanied the female keeper, who was the very woman I had seen in the garden with Miss T——, round the woman's ward.

There were not nearly so many females as there were males and the same species of insanity appeared to affect them all; that is to say, either unhappy or misplaced love, or pride of dress and station, had reduced them to the melancholy condition they were in. However, on the whole, the scene was not so repulsive as it was in the male ward; the females seemed more reconciled to their situation, and with one or two exceptions, it was hardly possible except by close scrutiny to detect insanity—so quiet was their bearing.

"Here," said the conductress, after having crossed a large space of ground which separated the large wards from the private apartments of the proprietor?—"Here, in these rooms we keep such ladies as have friends who pay well for their board, and occasionally they are allowed to walk with me in the front garden, provided they are quiet. I will take you into the apartments presently, if you will seat yourself here and wait awhile, while I go and prepare the ladies for the reception of a visitor."

So saying, the woman left me for about ten minutes and then returned and requested me to follow her. I did so, in the full expectation of seeing Miss T——, but there were only two females in the apartment, and these I recognized as the two ladies, who Miss T—— had told me, believed themselves to be Queens of Sheba and Babylon.

"Are these the only inmates of these apartments?" I inquired in a tone of voice which I presume was expressive of disappointment, for the woman looked keenly at me as she replied:

"Yes, these are all—indeed, we seldom have many in these rooms. The doctor's charges are very high for these accommodations."

I felt certain that for some reason I had been requested to wait, only that the keeper might remove Miss T—— to another room before she admitted me, but I dared not imply any doubt as to the truth of her statement.

I returned somewhat disappointed into the parlor, and since evasion had been employed with me, I resolved to proceed to any lengths as regarded subterfuge on my part, for I saw I should effect no purpose by plain sailing.

"Now, sir," said I, "let us proceed to business. I am much obliged to you for the trouble you have taken in showing me around your establishment. Allow me to say that I think your treatment excellent and deserving of all praise. I have taken all this trouble myself, not from any curiosity to see a lunatic asylum, but for the benefit of others, for whom I am working. We are interested in a young lady, as I have hinted in the letter I addressed to you, and I am the *physician* employed—do you understand? The other gentlemen would wish to accompany me to-morrow, and then I hope the lady will be introduced to you. I should wish her to be placed in the private apartments under the charge of the keeper who has just left us. She seems a most amiable woman."

"Oh, a delightful woman!" exclaimed the proprietor, chuckling and rubbing his hands at the prospect of another well paying boarder.

"Then I shall bring the gentlemen to-morrow?" I said interrogatively.

"Oh, yes, by all means, sir—and I hope the lady too," said he with a laugh. "My entrance fee in *such cases* is five hundred dollars, and my charge one thousand dollars a year. When that ceases, the ladies are sent into the other ward. We think then that their friends have no longer any interest in them."

I rose, and was so utterly disgusted with the brutal wretch that I scarcely could preserve the semblance of civility as he wished me good day and extended his

hand. I took it in mine with the same sensation of horror and disgust that I would have felt on taking hold of the slimy body of a rattle-snake. I seemed to draw my breath with pain, and experienced a sensation of relief when I had got beyond the boundaries of the detestable place.

"I am resolved," said I to myself—"I am resolved on the course to take. It is the only practicable one. I will go at once to a magistrate and state the circumstances which have led to my visit hither, and then I will procure the services of two constables, provided with search-warrants and arms, and alive or dead, Adele T—— shall leave this den before to-morrow evening."

This course I pursued. I found the difficulty greater than I expected, however; the magistrate did not like to interfere in such a case, and expressed some doubts of his right to do so: but at length I over-persuaded him, promising that provided I obtained possession of the object of my search, I would take no further interest in the proceedings of the establishment. This settled, the services of two constables were easily obtained, and at the appointed hour we sallied forth on our adventure.

I am rather aged to act the part of a knight-errant; but the veritable knight of La Mancha never set out to the rescue of a forlorn damsel from the castle of a giant, with a more chivalrous spirit, than did I to rescue Adele from the power of the vile ruffian who had her in his abominable charge. We reached the house, and were received with smiles by the proprietor.

"Happy to see you again, sir," said he to me, again extending to me his detestable palm. "These gentlemen are the *principals*, I presume, in this little matter of business. Happy to see you, gentlemen; but where's the lady? I don't see the lady."

"I hope the lady will shortly be amongst us," I replied; "and now, sir, have the goodness to lock the door. This affair demands secrecy."

"Of course, of course," replied the villain, as he turned

the key, one of the officers, as had been previously arranged, placing himself before the lock.

"Now," said the proprietor, "now, gentlemen, let us be explicit. Who is the lady, and what is her name?"

"The lady's name," I replied, "is Adele T——, and you, sir, have her already under your charge."

The man changed color.

"I have been duped in this business," he said, grinding his teeth, and then recollecting himself, he added;

"We have no person of that name here."

"A wrong name may have been purposely given you, sir; but the person I speak of, *is* here. I myself have seen and conversed with her in the garden, although she was removed to some hiding-place when I went over your vile establishment yesterday. You had better understand me at once," I continued. "I am furnished with such authority as will force you to produce her."

"If she is not here, sir, no authority on earth can force me to produce her."

"We shall see that presently. Officers, produce your arms and your search-warrant, and one of you please to remove that key from the door. Villainy worthy of hell, has been concocted in this place, as regards that lady, and I am here empowered to demand her freedom."

"Family reasons, sir," said the man in a whining tone, "frequently render it necessary that patients should enter this establishment under fictitious names. But these are matters with which I have nothing to do. My object is to comply with the wishes of their relatives."

"Your object, sir, should be to cure, rather than to keep them, and to take none but the really insane under your care. Your establishment should be conducted as a house of recovery—not as a prison. Of course I mean where the persons *are insane*, and their cases are curable. I demand that you will find this young lady and produce her to me."

"But, provided I cannot do so," replied the man, doggedly, "what then?"

"Why, then, we are in possession of a warrant for

your own arrest, as being *particeps criminis* in abduction and murder. Sir, you are now aware of the alternative. You produce the person we require, or you accompany us yourself."

"If you wish to see the lady I suspect, I will go and bring her to you," said the man, rising from his chair, and going towards the door.

"The door is locked, sir," I replied. "My companions are constables, and armed with pistols. You do not quit our sight for one moment, until you have produced the lady we are in search of. Come, sir—an officer will take you by the arm. Are you ready to accompany us?"

Seeing that the case was hopeless, and having received a promise from me that if I found, upon making subsequent investigation, that he was guiltless of any other crime than that of detaining a sane lady against her will, I would not seek further to criminate him respecting the method of conducting his establishment, he consented to be led between the two officers to the apartment where Miss T—— was confined. The poor girl was almost mad, in reality, with delight, when she found that she was indeed free, and I had great difficulty in restraining her, at one time, in making extravagant demonstrations of joy, and at another from swooning.

After allowing her some time to become composed, and insisting upon all her trunks—according to her own account of them—being placed in my carriage, we left the vile den of infamy, and having dismissed my attendants with a handsome gratuity, I proceeded with my charge to my hotel. Through some papers which Miss T—— had secreted in one of these trunks, and through the confessions of P—— and his paramour, together with some further revelations from Miss T——, and the development of some other mysteries not hitherto explained, the whole affair, strange, mysterious, heartless, cruel as it was, was eventually brought to light.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

I MENTIONED in my last chapter, that some papers which Miss T——, as I still choose to call her, had in her trunk, subsequently aided materially in bringing to light the apparently iniquitous mystery that I was seeking to elucidate. However, for the present, I shall not bring them forward, as it is necessary previously, that light be thrown on certain other passages of this strange history.

After having rescued Miss T——, from the clutches of the depraved wretch who acted as proprietor of the private lunatic asylum, I took her with me to New York, and wishing on her account, as well as my own, to keep her as much apart from prying eyes as possible, I carried her to a country residence of mine, a short distance from the city, and there placed her in charge of my wife. We saw little company, as my wife was then something of an invalid—that is, without being afflicted with painful bodily complaint, she had begun to feel the effects of age. If, therefore, by any chance any one did happen to call, it was very easy for Miss T—— to retire to her own room until they had left, and thus she was as free from prying curiosity, as though she were still immured within the walls of the detestable lunatic asylum. Another motive that induced me to bring the poor girl to my own house was, that I had expected there were some secret passages in her early history which she might not choose to relate to me, and which, yet, might be of vital importance, in enabling me to fathom the depths of this apparently inextricable case. I was in hopes, therefore, that having become familiar with my wife, she might be led to confide to her such relations as she would be unwilling to confide to me, in the first person. I did not, for a moment, entertain a sus-



picion that Miss T—— had willingly been led astray, or had been guilty of any greater fault than that venial one of endeavoring, when she discovered to her sorrow that her fair fame had been destroyed, to accommodate herself to circumstances, and that, in obedience to a naturally volatile disposition, she had assumed an appearance of gayety, which she possessed not in reality. It is not always a sign of happiness when the eyes sparkle and the lips wear a smile; and oftentimes they who feel the keenest—they, the chords of whose finest susceptibilities are strained to the uttermost, appear to the outward observer to be revelling in delights. They who feel the most deeply are not always those whose eyes are red with weeping, and whose faces are clouded with care, for it is only in the solitude of their own chambers, when communing bitterly with their own hearts, that the really suffering give full scope to the indulgence of their grief. Real grief is too sacred to be made an open display of.

Such was the opinion I had formed regarding Miss T——, and I was not wrong in the estimation of her character. Few women who have not utterly fallen, through wretchedness and distress of mind, are able to withstand the sympathy of one of their own sex, and after a few days Miss T—— related to my wife the following history of her unhappy attachment, giving her, at the same time, free permission to disclose the sad story to me, if I conceived that it would prove of service in affording any light as regarded the investigation I was making into the causes which had led to the mysterious disappearance—properly the murder—of Mrs. Mason and her child.

I will relate Miss T——'s narrative, as I heard it from my wife, and in the unfortunate young woman's own words.

"The first time I saw P——, who has been the author of all my wretchedness and grief, was, while on a visit to a friend at A——, in New York State. This was before you were acquainted with me; for I believe I first made

your and Dr. ——'s acquaintance at N——, while on a visit to that celebrated bathing place.

"P—— was then a very handsome and agreeable young man; highly accomplished, at least in the superficial accomplishments necessary as a passport in fashionable life. I was then a very young and inexperienced girl; P—— was several years my senior, and I was greatly flattered by the notice he took of me. I fear I was inclined to be a little vain, and it pleased my vanity to receive such marked attention from a gentleman who, I was aware, from the whisperings I heard, would have met with favor from women much older than myself.

"P—— had, I have since learnt, been disowned by his relatives and friends, in consequence of his profligate character; for although he belonged to a wealthy and influential family in the State of ——, who had it in their power to help him upward to the highest position in society, he, by a continuous course of debauchery, and, it is whispered, even still more disgraceful conduct, frustrated their every effort. For a long time he was rescued from the consequences of his unbridled and unprincipled extravagance, by the pecuniary aid of his friends and relations; but by-and-by they refused to support him any longer in this disreputable course of life, and in a fit of drunkenness he entered the United States army. After some time had elapsed, his friends got to know of this, and as they learnt from inquiry, that during his short service in the army he had behaved himself well, they took pity upon him, procured his discharge, and furnished him with means to make a fresh start in life in some one of the Northern States, at a distance from his friends and his former bad companions; promising, at the same time, that if his future conduct gave proof of his reform, they would again acknowledge him, and that he should be received back into the bosom of his family. It was at this period that, with his refilled purse, he visited A——, and as he had the appearance of a gentleman, and plenty of money at his command, and bore the name, and evidently was intimate with all the affairs of

one of the most esteemed families in the Union, he was, of course, well received, and became a welcome guest in the most respectable families in the city.

"He left A—— after a lengthened visit, and before he went, extorted from me a promise to correspond with him secretly at H——, where, he said, he for some time intended to reside.

"It was through this correspondence that I learnt he was to visit N—— in the following autumn; and I was foolish enough to persuade my guardian to go there with me, under the pretence that I was not well, and I fancied sea-bathing would agree with me. I wanted some years of attaining my majority, and therefore, although I was heiress to considerable property, I was not exactly at full liberty to follow my own inclinations; but my guardian was too indulgent, and was accustomed to anticipate my every wish; consequently, to N—— we went, and there I renewed my personal acquaintance with P——. There, also, I met you and the doctor. While at N——, P—— first spoke to me of marriage; he had never breathed such a thing before, not even in the letters that I had received from him, and I was so young, so inexperienced—so ignorant of the conventionalities of the world, that I had never studied the cause of my attachment to him, and the pleasure I felt in his company. I don't think, at this time, I had any love for him. I was flattered that one, apparently so gifted as he, should have singled me out as the object of his admiration, when so many were sighing for the attentions he paid me, and paying him the secret homage of their hearts—and that was all.

"When he spoke to me of marriage, I was frightened at first, and, observing my trepidation, he, in the gentlest tone of voice, requested me to think seriously of the subject, and to give him a reply in the course of two days.

"I went to my room, and I believe that I was foolish enough to cry for hours. I knew not what to reply to him, and he had especially debarred me from taking any one into my confidence; for, he told me that our marriage must be kept secret for some time, as he had friends,

whom he dared not offend, who had other views respecting him; but that, when they once found that he was really married, they would soon come round. He could not, he said, surrender his hand to any one, however beautiful and wealthy, when his affections were irrevocably bestowed upon another.

"Like most girls of my age, I had read a great many romances in which the hero of the story has such disinterested expressions put into his mouth, and I thought how noble, how generous it was of him to act thus—to offer to marry me, who, although an heiress, was so far beneath what *he* represented *himself* to be; and I endowed him, in my imagination, with all the noble sentiments of my favorite heroes.

"I well remember the hour on which we again met. It was on a calm moonlit night, on the beach, beneath the impending cliffs, long after the last party of bathers had sought their hotels. Here and there along the shingled beach might be seen a stray couple, probably on the same mission as ourselves; for, the hour and the scene were alike adapted to the purpose and calculated to awaken all the liveliest and softest emotions. The wide expanse of ocean was calm and smooth as a lake embedded in mountain scenery and sheltered from the fury of the storm. It was scarcely possible for the imagination to conceive, as one gazed upon that smooth expanse of water, silvered over by the rays of the full moon, and on the bosom of which, in the distance, could be seen the white sails of the tall, motionless vessels as they lay becalmed, that its placid surface could ever be furrowed into mountain ridges, by the fury of the winds. The sand beneath our feet was softer to our tread than a Turkey carpet, and over our head the blue-black expanse of heaven was unbroken by a single cloud, and thence myriads of stars peeped forth as if the eyes of countless angels were gazing with delight upon the tranquillity and loveliness of a slumbering world. It was, truly, the witching hour of night; and never had that mysterious hour assumed a semblance of more soul-

subduing witchery. And there, as we lingered by the shore, watching the rippling eddies caused by the advancing tide, and listening to the murmuring music of the tiny waves as they broke upon the pebbly beach, there my willing ears drank in deep draughts of love. Perhaps, the outpouring of love—the tale of constant and ever increasing devotion that was told to me on that ever-to-be remembered night, was also told to others who lingered on the beach and gazed with me on the enchanting prospect. Yet, ever and anon, as I listened to the silver tones of the tempter, a still small voice seemed to whisper in my ear: beware!—be not too credulous; for, deceitful as is the now peaceful ocean that you gaze upon, are often the honeyed words of love.

“Was it mere fancy that whispered this solemn warning in my ear, or was it a warning in reality?—one of those strange mysterious forebodings of future evil for which we are unable to account. Did others standing on that peaceful shore hear this warning as well as I, or was it whispered to me alone? Was *I* the only deceived one among those youthful couples, and was *he* who whispered to *me* the only tempter—the only false-hearted being on that lonely beach? Pray Heaven it was so, for I could wish no unsuspecting maiden, no deceived matron to experience the misery that I have known since that night. Enough of this; I sorrow to dwell upon this melancholy retrospect, yet once having conjured up the scene to my mind’s vision, I am loth to banish it. That night was my last night of innocent unmingled happiness. I have known pleasure since, as I have known grief and remorse; but never since then have I been truly happy. Never can I know perfect happiness on earth again: for my purity of mind has flown, and once dispossessed of that, it can never be again restored to us.

“That night, I promised, when my guardian returned with me to New York, to take the first opportunity of becoming secretly the wife of P——. Having obtained this promise from me, my lover left N—— on the follow-

ing day, in order, as he said, to have all things in readiness on my arrival in New York, which was to be early in the following week.

“P——, placed a note in my hand at parting, in which he reiterated his vows of love, and conjured me as I valued his prospects of future well doing, not to breathe to any one that our love had been plighted, and that our union was at hand.

“In due time I arrived at New York, and was met by P——, according to appointment, at a saloon in Broadway, a few evenings afterwards. He assured me that all preliminaries had been arranged, and helping me into a carriage that was in waiting, I was conveyed by him to the house, as he said, of a friend, at which the clergyman was in waiting. At that house, on that evening, I gave, and received, as I believed in good faith, the sacred pledges of love and union while life should last.

“The ceremony having been concluded, I was taken to the head of —— street, where my guardian resided, by, as I thought, my husband, it having been previously arranged where we should meet each other on the following day.

“The next morning I met P——, and we took a long walk together, for my guardian left me wholly untrammelled, as regarded my personal liberty to go abroad when and where I chose. He placed full confidence in my discretion—would to Heaven I had never betrayed that confidence.

“We continued to meet in this clandestine manner for some time. More than once P—— told me he had been disappointed in the receipt of some expected remittances from his friends, and as I had always a considerable sum of money at my own disposal, I placed a large amount in his hands.

“At length he told me that business of importance would require his absence for a short time from the city; he said he was sorry to leave me even for so short an absence, but it was imperatively necessary that he should do so. At the same time he hinted that he was placed

in an awkward position by the failure of his customary remittances which he could not account for any other way than that there must be illness in the family. He said he had written to ascertain if such was the case. Had he, he continued, a few thousands, or even only a few hundred dollars at his immediate disposal, he could increase it tenfold by the very speculation which now called him away.

"He asked me then whether I had any means of supplying him temporarily with a little cash; but I had previously given him all my disposable store, and so I told him. He then asked what was the amount of property I possessed in my own right. I told him \$10,000. 'Could I not manage to get him a portion of that—say \$5,000,' he asked.

"I replied, that I regretted that it was impossible, for until I was twenty-one years of age, it was entirely under the control of my guardian. Had I at that time possessed the means of obtaining the money, I would freely have bestowed it upon him, but that was impossible; and he rather coldly, as I fancied, bade me good-bye—kissed me and started on his journey. Whither, he did not say, and I had forgotten in my grief and anxiety at his departure to ask. However, he was only to be away one month, and then we were to be reunited. I don't know how it was, but while thinking that night of—as I believed—my absent husband, it for the first time struck me as singular that he who had boasted of such great wealth should be so distressed for the want of, comparatively, so small a sum. I think I had been reading some account in one of the daily papers of a husband who had robbed his wife of all the property she had possessed in her own right, and I then made a mental resolve that, although P——, whom still I cannot say that as yet I distrusted, should always be welcome to the use of the interest my money brought me, but I should retain the principal under my own control.

"Three weeks after this, my guardian died suddenly, and he had made no arrangements relative to my

guardianship during the residue of my minority, and as he was the only person who had any control over my money, I found myself at once complete mistress of my resources. Two days after this unhappy event, and nearly a week before I expected him, P—— arrived home. His business, he said, had not occupied so much of his time as he had anticipated, and he, of course, upon concluding it, had hurried home. He expressed great surprise and regret upon hearing of my guardian's death, and said that I was his first informant of the sad affair. But this was false, as I, even at the time, suspected, for if he had not known of it, how came he to visit me at my guardian's own residence, a thing he had never done before.

"No sooner was the funeral over than he again urged me to make over the money I was possessed of to him; but I had made up my mind not to do this, unless he at once acknowledged me as his wife, when I said he would of course become my lawful guardian.

"He sought to make me alter my mind, but in vain. I asked him what the reason was that he longer wished to delay the acknowledgment of our marriage, and at last getting vexed at his pertinacious refusal, I said that I should call on the gentleman who had my money invested, and state to him that I was married.

"At this he grew angry, and not wishing to annoy him I said no more. I promised him that he should have the disposal of my dividends, and there the matter rested.

"Soon after this, he was amply supplied with money, as I believed, by his long silent friends, and we lived happily as man and wife for eighteen months; all that ever caused me any disquiet was that P—— still objected to make me known as his wife, to his family and friends.

"During this period, P—— made me acquainted with Mr. Mason, who was a very frequent visitor at our house. Sometimes he staid with us for days and weeks together

for we lived a short distance in the country, and led a very retired life.

"There was something I could not like in Mason, although he was rather prepossessing than otherwise in personal appearance; but the habits of dissipation which P—— disguised so well, were painfully apparent in the countenance of Mason, who, I should say by the way held a responsible position in one of the leading mercantile firms in the city.

"One evening I was sitting by the open window in my bed-room, admiring the beauty of a clear summer's evening, when my attention was directed to some conversation in high tones between Mason and P—— in an adjoining apartment.

"I did not wish to become a listener, but some secret feeling impelled me to remain where I was; besides, I soon found, to my astonishment, that the two young men were quarreling, and as they had always expressed extreme friendship, this astonished and alarmed me. I soon distinguished that the quarrel related to some female, and now my curiosity was fully aroused. By-and-by I heard Mason taunt P——, by saying that he was in the same hobble as himself, for he was well aware the marriage was false.

"I approached the door and put my ear to the key-hole. How my heart beat. Was it possible that Mason referred to me, when he spoke of a false marriage.

"I soon heard enough to satisfy me that he did, and for a moment or two I felt as though I should swoon away. I would have willingly sunk into the earth to have hidden the sense of shame and degradation that overwhelmed me. But this feeling quickly passed away, and I was seized with the rage of a tigress. I burst open the door, and appeared before the guilty pair, and charged P—— with the crime and outrage he had been guilty of. For a moment he was paralyzed, and then he attempted to make some excuse—to say that I was mistaken in what I had heard; but I had listened too long

and made too sure, and I would not be appeased. I threatened both with instant exposure.

"Mason shortly afterwards slunk out of the house, and I was left alone with P——; until now, he had always used me kindly, and when the first burst of fury was past, I listened to his excuses. He said still that there were reasons which he could not explain for his having acted as he had done; but that the time would arrive when they would no longer exist, and then the marriage should be properly performed, and all would be well. He said it was his ardent affection, and his fear of losing me, should he wait, that had urged him to act as he had done.

"Good God! why did I listen to his specious words—I was fascinated by the man. Before we parted that evening I had promised to say nothing respecting what had occurred, but still to live with him as I had done before, as his wife. It was then that I made the first real descent into crime. I should immediately have left him, although I would not expose him; but I loved him too well.

"In a short time Mason brought a young woman to reside at our house, who passed as his wife, and such both she herself and I believed she was. She lived with us some time, and gave birth to a child, who died almost immediately after its birth.

"By some means or other it leaked out that this poor creature, who was some five or six years older than I, had likewise been deceived in the same manner as myself. Poor thing! she likewise refused to expose her guilty lover, for she loved him to adoration; but she bore the disgrace worse than I; she was of a more retiring and far more thoughtful disposition.

"However, both P—— and Mason behaved kindly to us, and we were as happy as we could be under such distressing circumstances.

"One evening Mason did not return home from the city, and poor Mrs. Mason, as I still called her, grew alarmed. In the morning the newspaper was brought to



the house as usual, and on taking it up and casting her eye over the columns, she gave a faint scream, and swooned away.

"When she was restored to consciousness, she took my hand and murmured, 'Oh, that horrid paper. It can't be true.' P—— had gone out early in the morning, and we were alone in the house, with the exception of the servants. I took the paper in my hands at her bidding, and read the paragraph she pointed out. Alas! it alluded to a heavy defalcation which had occurred in the house in which Mason held a confidential position, and hinted that he was the delinquent.

"Poor Mrs. Mason went into one fainting fit after another, until the evening, when she fell, utterly exhausted, into a heavy, but anxious slumber. Meanwhile, P—— returned home and corroborated the newspaper statement. He told me that Mason had been arrested and that heavy bail had been demanded, which, however, at last had been procured, and he had no doubt that all would turn out well, for his disgrace would reflect severely upon influential friends, who would move heaven and earth to procure his acquittal at any cost, not so much out of regard for him as for their own sakes, who were related to him. He said Mason would return home that night, and meanwhile it would be well to allow Mrs. Mason to believe that the allegations were untrue. Mason came home about ten o'clock, and the sound of his voice immediately aroused Mrs. Mason from her fitful slumber.

"As soon as she saw him she rushed to his embrace and said she had had a frightful dream regarding him. Then the whole truth flashed to her recollection, and she pressed her brow violently, and then taking hold of one of her husband's hands, she pushed back the hair from his forehead with the other hand, and looking up beseechingly, yet half wildly into his face, said in tones of anguish that I shall never forget:

"*'Edward—you are not guilty, Edward—say you are not guilty, my husband?'*

"*'No—no,'* said Mason, *'it is all a mistake, which will*

soon be put to rights—now let us retire,' and he stooped and kissed her pale cheek.

"That night Mrs. Mason gave birth to another child, which also died shortly afterwards.

"The examination of Mason was a protracted but a private one. Little was heard of the matter in public after the first explosion. However, many months passed away, and the examination was still pending, and even after it was ended, it was long before the firm could find out how heavily they had been robbed.

"At length all was settled, and Mason was discharged—nothing wrong could be attached to his character publicly, although people might think what they pleased in private, and P—— and Mason started for California, having determined to enter into business there, as they said, and then to send for us.

"Before Mason sailed, he made the arrangements he thought needful, in accordance with P——, respecting our subsistence during their absence, and Mason took a small house, paying the rent in advance. P—— also discharged the man servant we had kept, and Mason hired one of his own choosing, who, I fear, was as wicked as himself.

"I still had one or two friends living some distance from New York, who were ignorant of the false step I had taken. They were maiden ladies, who seldom went abroad, and sometimes I paid them a visit. Once I was nearly discovered, for one of these ladies unexpectedly came to New York, and sent word to me, for they knew the number of our house, and the place where it was located, stating her desire that I would visit her at her hotel and then she would be happy to accompany me home.

"I never went abroad without being thickly veiled, and thus it was that I was never recognized by the many persons who would otherwise have known me in New York; and by-and-by I began to feel a sort of pleasurable excitement in maintaining this incognito. On this occasion I went to the —— House, and saw the lady, taking my own carriage, and I offered to drive her out,

which offer she accepted; but I excused myself from receiving her at home, saying that there was sickness in the house—which was, indeed, true, for Mrs. Mason was about being confined at the time. That was the occasion when Dr. — saw me in the carriage, and knew me in spite of my veil, in consequence of the incautious exposure of the rings I wore on my fingers.

"Some months after P— and Mason had left us, Mrs. Mason gave birth to her third child, which lived, though much I fear neither it nor its mother are now alive. While we lived thus, we received letters regularly from California, although at distant intervals. At first, I had no suspicion but that all was right. We thought that Mason and P— had gone into business together, and we hoped they would prosper; that they would send for us to join them when they were properly settled, and that then our wrongs would be redressed; and that in a distant land, far from the many recollections which embittered home to us, we should be happy together.

"By-and-by, however, our letters began to grow still more scarce; but, as we were naturally interested in all that was going on in California, we paid particular attention to, and were deeply interested in, the budget of California news brought by each successive mail.

"At length I saw several strange paragraphs, which I instinctively thought alluded to Mason and P—; and from the tenor of them, I began to fear that they were following an evil course in the land of their adoption. I concealed these suspicions as much as possible from Mrs. Mason, who continued in such a weakly state of health, that I feared the least excitement would lead to severe illness. It was one of these paragraphs that I was cutting out from a fresh budget of news from California, when I was surprised in my employment by Doctor —. Perhaps he may have mentioned the circumstance to you.

"All these paragraphs I pasted in an album, under the dates to which they related, and they are now in the bottom of one of my trunks. No one suspected me of

possessing them, or I feel assured that the album would have been taken from me and destroyed.

"One day, several weeks after the birth of Mrs. Mason's child, and when he was grown to be quite a fine little fellow, we were quite surprised by the utterly unexpected arrival of P—, from California. He informed us, when the first surprise into which we were thrown, was past, that Mason had also returned, and was waiting us at a small town in Pennsylvania, and that we were to set out to meet him immediately.

"This we did; and it is needless for me to pursue this narrative any further, as Dr. — is acquainted with all that has since occurred to me."

Having thus told the story of her own troubles to my wife, which story was duly related to me, Miss T— wished me to examine the papers in her possession; also the scraps she had pasted in the album, as she believed much might be gathered from them.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

SHORTLY afterwards, I received a letter from Texas, containing the partial confession of T——. This letter I of course received from the friend alluded to in the earlier period of this reminiscence, as having gone to Galveston from New Orleans, for the purpose of visiting T—— and his paramour in prison, and getting such information, if possible, as would lead to the release of Adele from the Lunatic Asylum, in which she had been confined. This friend had become subsequently so interested in this matter, which at first, as the reader will recollect, he seemed inclined to scoff at, that he almost identified himself with its investigation in an equal degree with myself, and was of infinite service to me, in discovering the facts which have yet to be communicated to the reader. The letter of which I have spoken, ran as follows:

GALVESTON, ———

"DEAR DOCTOR \* \* \* \* \*—Now to the main business which brought me to this *ultima thule* of creation, or at least of civilization. I have had several interviews with P——; also, with the female who was arrested with him. As you are aware, the woman was at first inclined to be communicative; but she has since become quite taciturn—still P——, although guarded in all that regards himself, indirectly has given some information respecting the doings of the worthy coterie to which he belonged, in California, which may be of service. I have gained this information from P——, only upon condition that it shall not be used for the purpose of criminating himself upon his trial; and therefore, as I feel bound in honor to keep my promise, I must forewarn you to be careful how you apply it.

P—— says, after having quitted New York, in com-

pany with another person, whose name he would not give, (as he intimated that there was "honor among thieves," and as this person, whoever he was, had left the city to avoid the evil effects of some misdemeanor there, and was still, so far as he knew, at large and unsuspected, to mention his name, or even his aliases—for it appears that he went by more than one name, would be perhaps prejudicial to him,) he sailed via Cape Horn to San Francisco, at which place having a considerable sum of money with him, (I fear not over honestly obtained,) he with his friend engaged in the lumber business there, and were for some time very successful.

However, perhaps, it is best that I allow P——, to tell his story in his own words as near as possible, and I think I have them pretty correct, as I jotted them down in my note book that very evening, after I had left.

"We had rather a tedious but a pretty fair voyage from New York, although we were considerably detained by adverse winds on the eastern side of Cape Horn—but take it all in all, the passage was a fair one. Upon landing, our first question was to ascertain the exact amount of our resources, and then to consider how we could render them most available to us. We found upon comparing purses that together we had about \$9,000; the greater portion of this, however, belonged to Mason, but then, as an offset to this, I had so arranged matters as to obtain the promise of \$10,000—the fortune of a deceased relative who had died leaving no will, but to whose property I was legally the only living heir. This money was invested in various securities, and it is to the difficulty of obtaining it that I may lay the misfortunes that have overtaken me. For if I could have put my full quota of cash to my partner's, we should not have met with anything more than a temporary reverse at the moment of panic, while as it was we were ruined, having no resources to fall back upon, when by a sudden glut in the market our stock of lumber was ruinously depreciated in value, and we were left without a penny to help ourselves with.

"We had commenced business with the intention of gaining an honest livelihood, and if we succeeded, of sending to New York for our wives, and making California our future home." (So you see, doctor, the fellow speaks of his *wife*, and that of his companion. May not the *wife* be the lady in the lunatic asylum, and may not the \$10,000, the alleged property of the *deceased relative*, allude to moneys of hers, which the fellow hoped, by the cruel incarceration of the poor girl, to get into his possession? It strikes me, doctor, that this would be worth looking into, provided you have not already gained information respecting which I am ignorant.)

But to proceed with the fellow's story. I left off where he said he intended to have made California his future home. He continued:

"But all our good resolves were banished by this unfortunate catastrophe, and mutually cursing all attempts at honesty as downright humbug—for had we not found the fallacy of such a course of procedure? When for the first time in our lives that we tried to be honest we were cleared out without a shilling.

"Determined to use mankind in future as the gourmand does an oyster—to extract all that was worth taking from the fattest, or wealthiest, if they came in our way; but at the same time, by no means to shun any prize, however small, we cast about to see how best we could commence our new mode of life, or rather, I scruple not to say it, how best we could recommence in a strange, to us, almost a foreign land, the profession of *chevalier d'industrie*, which both of us had heretofore practised, although in a different manner; for my companion, you see, had been one of those respectable rogues who, so long as they are not found out, go upon change with a brazen countenance, and pass as worthy members of society; while I had practised at the gaming-table, and done other deeds which it is not necessary to mention, more open to the contumely and scorn of the world, but not a whit more guilty. As it was, the different manner in which we mutually plucked purses from the simple

and the indolent, led to our secret acquaintance, although until an unlucky discovery took place one day, of course the respectable rogue could not mix in social equality with the disreputable vagabond. Still as I have said, we worked into each other's hands secretly, until an unlucky turn of the cards rendered it advisable for us both 'to leave our country for our country's good,' and we did so, but we left plenty more behind us, who some day may find themselves in the like predicament, although now they would scorn to acknowledge us. Their defections are yet secret, and they walk undisguised in high places.

"Well, sir. It is a difficult matter for penniless men even to be dishonest, as it is almost impossible for them to be honest. This may appear paradoxical; but it is not so; for we could not stoop to petty acts of delinquency—we should have been discovered by our awkwardness, for to such acts we had never accustomed ourselves, and without money or credit we could not enter into any grand scheme.

"The gaming-table in California has made the fortune of many a desperate man; but we could not seek fortune even there without means to risk, or at least without the pretence of risking money, that we had not to risk.

"In this dilemma, just as we were upon the point of actual starvation in that land whence gold has flowed eastward in such a prodigal and uninterrupted stream, and were actually upon the point of demeaning ourselves by committing acts of petty theft for the purpose of maintaining life within us, I met with some friends whom I had known in the Eastern States. They recognized me, as I could see at once, but were apparently doubtful whether to address me or not, for although California destroys all social distinction amongst those whom the world *calls honest*, but who in the Atlantic cities move entirely in a different sphere, it renders the truly honest, because open-hearted, bare-faced knave, cautious. His comrade at home, may here have work on hand of a special character, which recognition by his former friend

would impede, if it did not entirely prevent, its being carried out.

"However, I determined to renew our acquaintance, and also to introduce my friend to them. I had been looked up to—though I say it myself—as a sort of chief among the higher order of blacklegs and gamblers, and had never stuck at other matters which required a degree of cunning and daring which they had not either the mental or physical capacity to execute, and I determined, if possible, to acquire the same supremacy there, in that distant place of meeting.

"I had full faith in the general readiness of mankind to be led by those who have once acquired any power over them, and I therefore boldly stepped forward and grasped the now willingly extended hands of my former friends.

"What are you doing here, P——?" was the first question that was put to me, as soon as I had introduced my friend, and a few common place remarks had passed between us.

"I at once, openly and above board, told of the difficulties and embarrassments with which I had temporarily fallen, although I forbore to say that I had become so weak-minded, as to hope to obtain my living as an honest man, and for fear they should judge ill of my want of success, I attributed my present difficulties to the unlooked-for, and, therefore, impossible to be avoided, monetary crisis, which had strangely fallen upon a country, in the soil of which gold so plenteously abounds; but I expressed a hope that things would be better by-and-by.

"Have you rattled the dice of late?" asked one.

"I replied in the negative, stating that so completely had I been prostrated, that I had not even the means left to venture upon the smallest chance with the cards or dice.

"That is bad—bad," said my interlocutor, 'but we are engaged in a certain business in which a place shall be found for you if you are willing to join us, and to swear secrecy to our plans beforehand, and without ques-

tioning, or the power of withdrawing afterwards, upon peril of your life.'

"When did you ever know me to quail?" said I, proudly drawing myself up.

"Never, to tell the truth," said my old acquaintance, 'therefore I suppose we may enrol you at once in our list.'

"But my friend here?" said I.

"Can you swear to his firmness?"

"If I could not, he were no friend of mine."

"Then he may join us likewise; but the peril is great, although the gains are large, likewise. He must have no scruples."

"As my friend, he will have none," I replied, and so for the night we parted, I having borrowed a few dollars from my newly found friends for my present uses, and I promised to meet them at a hotel in the city at a specified hour on the following day.

"As yet I did not think it worth while to explain my suspicions to my companion, as to the nature of the employment, which I partially surmised, I was expected to enter into, as I knew he was so situated, that once mixed up with us, I could easily silence any qualms of conscience that might present themselves to his imagination; and, therefore, resorting to a gambling saloon that evening, for the first time since my arrival in California, and there passing myself off as a green hand, I managed, in the course of an hour, to quadruple the handful of dollars I had lately borrowed, and then, while luck was with me, I took advantage of a squabble and left the house. My companion did not play, but he left the house with me, and as we passed to our wretched lodging, I exultingly displayed my winnings, saying:—'Here is proof sufficient to convince any wise man of the fallacy of the old proverb, "Honesty is the best policy." Bah! I should like to hear honesty correctly defined; each man has his own ideas regarding the commodity, and I guess that quality which canting fools so call, is scarce with us all, and most scarce with those who make the loudest boasts of its possession.'



"And yet, I replied," wrote my friend, "for I was perfectly astonished at the coolness and audacity of the villain, who thus boasted and made a virtue of his misdeeds, 'yet you are here, yourself a sufficient refutation of the abominable principles you boast of. Had you thought honesty the best policy, and acted according to the well known and oft repeated axiom, you would not have been here now, charged with a crime of great magnitude, for the commission of which you will, in all human probability, forfeit your life.'

"Ah, ha!" sneered the unruffled scoundrel. "My good sir, had I adhered to that worn-out schoolboy's axiom, the probability is, that instead of being here now, with at least a chance of escape from the clutches of the law, after having enjoyed life, for my favorite maxim has ever been, 'Live to-day, and let the morrow provide for itself.'—I should have perished from starvation at San Francisco, the result of my first attempt at honesty."

"You surely could not have starved while you had health and the use of your hands," replied I.

"Faugh! work!" replied the wretch; "work and I never could agree. A short life and a merry one, even if it be ended by a dance beneath the gallows' tree, has ever been my ambition. I am not the man to grow old in poverty, neither do I set the value on my life that your honest folks seem to do. I have risked it too often; nor yet do I despair even now, gloomy as things look. I have got out of as bad scrapes before, and so may get out of this, and if not, why, I shall show no white feather on the day on which I make my jump into what you croaking creatures call eternity. Depend upon that."

"Seeing that the man was irreclaimable, and that it was useless to argue with him," continued my friend, in his letter, "I let him proceed with his story, or rather I may call it, his barefaced confession of his monstrous guilt—his open avowal of his shame."

"He continued:—

"The next day, true to my appointment, I met my old comrades at the place pointed out, and was there in-

itiated into the secret business they were carrying on, as they affirmed, and as was indeed evident from their appearance, with the utmost success.

"They had established a regular gang, thoroughly organized, consisting of men of every profession and of every scale in social life, whom crime, as the world calls it, had reduced to a level.

"Among them were two or three miners—rough, hard-fisted fellows, who were quite capable of groping in the diggings for themselves; but who wisely thought that since every living thing in this world preyed upon others, it was all the better if, while digging for themselves, they could so manage as to make others work for them at the same time, and clutch their gains. One of these fellows was a Cornish miner, who had some years previously emigrated from England to Peru; his skill in the discovery of good working ground was freely acknowledged, and it was perfectly easy for him, assisted by his miner comrades, to collect a large gang around him, who were anxious to be guided by the other's experience; and the skill of the regular miners, as skill of any kind always does, soon enabled them to exercise perfect control over their less skilful companions.

"Just then they were busy at Toulumne River, at which place some rich ground had been lately struck, and consequently I was not introduced personally to them.

"It appeared that the miners at Toulumne River disposed of a good deal of their gold dust at Stockton, that town being the nearest place of any note, to the mines they were working. Accordingly, at Stockton two others of the gang who had in former days kept rum-holes in the purlieus of New York, now kept grog-shops, to which of course the miners in connection with them, led their unsuspecting comrades, and assisted in drugging them and robbing them of their hard-earned gains. Another one kept a gambling saloon in the same place, and here the few that would not drink their senses away, were more readily fleeced by means of dice and cards. So,

some one or other of the gang were engaged as keepers of every seductive place of amusement and debauchery; and, among them all, it was not a very difficult matter to turn the whole profits of the miners into one till, which was the strong box of the confederates. Sometimes, however, they had a contumacious hand to deal with, who could not be persuaded either to drink or to gamble, nor yet could be enticed into the still more degrading dens. These men accordingly, deposited their store of "dust" in safety, for the first time; but they were marked men, and some how or other—of course by accident—on the next trip of the band into the town from the mines, these fellows always managed to stray from the track, and were *surprised and murdered by the Indians*, as was supposed by their comrades; though it is needless to say their gains for the second trip, always found their way into the strong box.

"By these and such like means a vast amount of wealth had already been realized by the confederates—some of whom had come down to San Francisco on a visit, at the time I fell in with them, and knowing me to be a perfect master in all kind of gambling deceptions, they wished me to join the gambling concern at Stockton; and, as I have said, I consented, only stipulating that, as I was confident I could fleece hundreds of others besides the victims of our own gang, I should be at once admitted to a full share of the wealth already secured, and that my companion should also join us, as after his first qualms of conscience were over, if indeed he showed any, and to do him justice, his *qualms* were very few, we could make use of him as a decoy duck in some way or other.

"This having been arranged, we started in a few days for our place of destination, and for a few months all went on swimmingly, and so it might have done to this day; but the d—l persuaded me to take a trip to the mines myself, sometime after I had been engaged in the gambling house, and after our friends at the mines had paid us a visit, and poor simple fools, had been fleeced and sent back with empty pouches, to fill them again by

dint of hard labor and harder fare, little thinking to whose coffers those piles of 'dust' had gone.

"While up there, a steady chap from Louisiana joined us. He was a Frenchman by birth; but had resided in Louisiana from childhood, and like many other people from every State of the Union, and from all parts of the world, he had been seized with the gold fever, and although a pretty substantial tradesman, and well advanced in years, he had sold all, and taken this trip to California, as he supposed, to make his fortune.

"He was abundantly supplied with every requisite for the work he had to perform, and hearing of the skill of the Cornish miner who headed our gang; for although *we were such a wild set that we were always fleeced when we took our customary recreative trip to Stockton*, we always managed to carry in a good store of 'dust' every trip, he solicited and obtained permission to join us.

"It was soon evident enough to me that there was no hope of our making anything of this fellow. He was a hard-headed, steady-going old man, who spent all his leisure hours reading his Bible, and writing home to his friends, and I, as well as others of the confederates, were rather annoyed at the idea of the sneak escaping even for once, as we knew he had a good store of 'dust' in his pouch. So, somehow or other, on the way down, he and I got adrift from the rest of the party, and were surrounded by Indians, who attacked us and robbed and murdered the Frenchman. I managed to escape, and reached my companions in safety; but when we arrived at Stockton, we found that the Frenchman had friends there, who would not be persuaded that the old fellow had lost his life through the Indians. They insisted that I should be held for examination respecting this affair, as I was last seen in the company of the murdered man, and as stories flew from mouth to mouth, and were exaggerated, things at last looked so serious, that upon consultation with my friends, we came to the conclusion that the wisest plan to escape Judge Lynch, who was hovering upon our skirts, would be for me to make tracks for the

Atlantic States, and for the confederacy to break up and scatter, for a while. Therefore, after sharing the proceeds of our industry, we all fled in different directions, I making all possible speed to place the Rocky Mountains between me and the blood-hounds who were in search of me.

"I made my way to New Orleans, where I picked up an old acquaintance, and having a pretty good stock of cash, I determined to enjoy myself for some months. I traveled through the Northern States, stopped for a short time at the principal watering-places, and was going on very comfortably, when some more of the unlucky Frenchman's friends, who seemed to be as thick and revengeful as a nest of hornets, and who resided in Texas, some how or other got wind of me, and trumping up some ridiculous story about murder, threw me into jail at this place; but d—n them, I'll get out of their clutches yet, and only let me do that, and then for revenge."

"The villain stopped here," wrote my friend, "and seemed to be indulging in some imaginary revenge, as he sat clenching his fists and grinding his teeth, a sardonic smile resting upon his sallow but handsome features. I was vexed that he had not spoken more about 'Mason'—as I see you call him in your letters, and also that he had not mentioned anything directly respecting either of the women. I knew so little of the case that it was a difficult matter to cross-question him; besides he had voluntarily given me some information and I thought perhaps through the same means I might obtain more, and then again I feared that if I used threats or even appeared very anxious, he might choose to keep silent altogether, for as yet he only thought me interested in the vile woman who is his fellow prisoner, or, I should say, who is confined in the female ward of the same jail at this place. However, I determined to risk something, and I asked whether he and his friend Mason had not left their wives behind them at New York, when they started for California, and whether his wife was aware

of his present difficulty; also whether Mason had remained in California or had returned to his wife?

"I was wrong in doing this, and I saw my mistake in a moment. The fellow glanced at me with his keen, dark eyes, as though he would read my inmost thoughts, and then, after muttering 'so they have set you on the scent, have they?' I was a fool to say what I have said, but I've kept on the dark side yet." He became sullen and taciturn, and though I have seen him once or twice since, I can get nothing further from him. His trial shortly comes on, and though I feel bound not to make use of any information received directly from himself, yet I shall watch narrowly the proceedings, and if anything is brought forward openly in court respecting the connection of Mr. Mason and the girl you call Adele with the prisoner, I shall not fail to take advantage of any knowledge I have already gained or any further information that you may send me, by coming forward as a witness in the case.

"As I have hinted in the beginning of this letter, I have strong suspicions that the ten thousand dollars spoken of by the prisoner, has something to do with the incarceration of Miss Adele. What do you think of confronting her with the prisoner after the trial?—she would not be able to reach here before—but perhaps by that means we might be able to terrify a full confession respecting the fate of Mason and his poor innocent victims.

"I should think from the letters of Adele that whatever may have been the former affection she felt for P—, she would not now shrink from anything that would lead to the clearing up of this mysterious business. Let me hear from you shortly—as soon, indeed, as possible—and tell me whether you have managed to obtain the release of the poor young woman from the Lunatic Asylum." \* \* \* \* \*

The above extracts from my friend's letter I have copied word for word as it now lies before me, and after perusing it, I was almost inclined to think it advisable

for Miss T—— to visit Galveston, and confront the miserable seducer, robber and—as he had even half hinted himself—the cowardly murderer. I was only sorry that she could not be there at the trial as one of the witnesses against him. If she could be persuaded to appear as such, and from her present state of feeling I had no doubt she would have no objection, could her real name be kept secret, and that would not be difficult to manage in an out of the way place like Galveston, of which so little is now heard and of which less was heard a year or two since, in the more settled portions of the Union, much I thought might be learnt that was involved in mystery.

The only additional information that we received through the female prisoner, was that Mason had left California shortly after P—— had done so, and had actually been in the neighborhood of New York about the time of Mrs. Mason and the child's strange disappearance, and that she believed that he was still hanging about either in some part of the State of Pennsylvania or in New York. This she had gleaned from P——'s conversation with her before they were separated. Of course, therefore, knowing that P—— would not have hesitated to tell her any falsehood to suit his own infamous purposes, and knowing also the bitter animosity she now felt towards him, whom she blamed for bringing her from New Orleans and causing all her present troubles, information thus derived was to be received *cum grano salis*, especially when the characters of both parties were taken into consideration. Nevertheless, it tallied so well with prior information received that I was willing to believe that it was true.

The scraps from the California newspapers, already mentioned as being in the possession of Miss T——, had considerable light thrown upon them by this revelation respecting the occupation of P—— and Mason and their confederates in California, given by the former through my friend at Galveston. It was singular to note how from one obscure paragraph, which might or might not have referred to P—— and Mason, but which the pene-

tration of Miss T—— had discovered did really refer to them, this young woman had traced the whole course of their operations almost from the day they had formed the desperate gang.

She had remarked a change in the tone of P——'s and Mason's letters, and had been shocked at the recklessness of language displayed subsequently to the loss they had experienced in business, and though she had withheld her suspicions from Mrs. Mason, she had watched with eager anxiety the Californian news. A mail arrived bringing a letter from P—— and also one from Mason. At the same time a paragraph appeared detailing certain particulars respecting parties who were looked upon with suspicion, and some remarks were made upon a systematic plan of robbery supposed to exist; but which at present it was impossible to detect. Some chance expression in P——'s letter aroused her suspicions, and she looked at the post mark and date of the letter and found it to have been written from the locality pointed out in the newspaper. From that period she had watched carefully every mail arrival and had cut out every paragraph relating as she imagined to the same matter, and thus her album, could it have been produced in a court wherein P—— and Mason were jointly tried for the crimes they had been guilty of, would have afforded one continuous, unbroken chain of circumstantial evidence.

In the course of a few days I received another letter from my friend, informing me that P——'s trial had come off, and that he was found guilty, upon the most conclusive evidence, of the murder of the Frenchman. There were several other counts of outrage and robbery held against him, in order to detain him should he chance to get clear of the capital charge; but of course these were now withdrawn. P—— was sentenced to be hanged six weeks after the day of his trial. Since his conviction he had remained sullen and taciturn, and not a word had escaped his lips relative to his former life. "He appeared," wrote my friend, "determined to die as he had lived, a hardened, God-forsaken wretch."

The female prisoner had been acquitted. In fact there was no evidence against her to warrant her detention, and the grand jury had ignored the bill against her.

Having now no doubt on my mind that Mason had been guilty of the murder of his wife, I determined to set to work at once in ferreting him out. I carefully scanned the various newspapers, especially those from the West, in which portion of the Union I had some idea that Mason was secreted; but for a long time without success. In fact, it was something of a wild goose chase that I had ventured upon, and it is little to be wondered at that I was so long unsuccessful; indeed it was owing entirely to one of those strange chances which almost appear as though they were special interpositions of Providence, for the attainment of certain purposes, that after a length of time had elapsed, I at length succeeded in discovering the object of my search.

I was one day surprised by a visit from Mrs. W—, who requested to see me alone. I say surprised, because there was evidently some greater anxiety than usual weighing upon the mind of the old lady, as was apparent by the agitation which she betrayed on being shown into my study.

After having requested her to be seated, and waiting some minutes, in order to give her time to recover from her emotion, I asked her, in an apparently unconcerned manner, whether she had heard anything further respecting her daughter.

She silently drew forth a letter from her pocket and placed it in my hand. I examined the envelope and found that it had passed through two or three post offices before reaching its destination, and on taking the letter from the cover, I saw that it was ante-dated three weeks. It was simply directed to Mrs. W—, Brooklyn, and the original post-mark had been stamped in Ohio. The letter, it appeared from post-marks which had been subsequently stamped upon it, had been sent to Brooklyn, N. Y., and not being claimed, had been forwarded to other places of that name in other States, and again returned to Brooklyn, N. Y., where a friend of Mrs. W—'s had

seen it at the post-office, and had suggested to Mrs. W— that she should call for and open it and see if it was really intended for her.

She did so, and found that it was, as she imagined, nay, as there was little reason to doubt, from the seducer of her child, although there was no name attached, and the locality whence it was written was not named. The letter was couched in strange language, and, as I perused it, I had my suspicions strongly confirmed, that the writer (Mason) was laboring under insanity. No wonder the poor lady was agitated, for the writer had acknowledged in the first portion of the letter, that he was married to her daughter, and he then went on to express his deep sorrow at the subterfuge he had employed to gain her affections. He hinted that she and her child (his child) were dead, and that he should speedily join them (he hoped) in a better world, and then he broke out into a strain of incoherency something resembling that related by P—, to have taken place during the interviews he had holden with him subsequently to his return from California.

He spoke of visions by day and visions by night in which the forms of Mary and the child appeared to him, sometimes in anger, sometimes in pity. He told how he conversed with Mary, and how she told him that he should soon rejoin her in a better world, and that he must write to her mother and bid her prepare to rejoin her likewise; but even while she spoke—a grim-visaged devil—the self same demon, who had leaped into the wagon and urged him to strike the blow which caused Mary's death, stood by and "glanced between the curtains of the bed with his eyes of molten fire, that scorched to the very heart and seemed to dry up the blood and wither the muscles of the beholder—that self same demon," he repeated, "stood by and mocked and jeered and gibbered, and pointed a skeleton finger towards a yawning pit whence issued sulphurous smoke and lurid flame, and from the mouth of which escaped the shrieks and howlings and impotent curses of the damned, and this pit stood, too broad for him to leap, between him



and the vision of his beatified wife and child. To that fiery abode," he continued, "he felt that he was eternally doomed, for he already felt the unutterable anguish of internal burning in his blood, and frightful gnawing in his bones—the calls of his wife and child were in vain—nothing but hell awaited him—the horrors of hell in life; the pains of hell in death, the perpetual remorse, agony, anguish and despair that exist with the damned forever, and ever—and ever.

In such frightful language was the letter couched, that my blood ran cold as I read it, and endeavored to realize what must be the feelings of the writer. No wonder poor Mrs. W—— was fearfully agitated. She said that she had made several attempts to read the letter before she could muster courage to go through with it, and even after she had perused it, it was some time before she could reconcile herself to allow any one else to see it. However, she thought that possibly I might wish to see the letter, as it might, in some way, assist me in my endeavors to discover the author of her poor girl's misfortunes, and therefore she had decided upon bringing it to me.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

MONTHS passed away, and Miss T—— wearied of the Atlantic States, where misfortune had crowded upon her, decided to go to California, and there, with the property she had still left, to establish a millinery business. It seemed almost providential that she did so—for by that visit, and through her means, the mystery respecting the strange disappearance of Mrs. Mason, was eventually cleared up. Some months after she had gone, I received a letter from her, stating that she was getting on admirably with her new business; but the letter also contained information that perfectly startled me, as it will, I have no doubt, greatly astonish the reader. I will publish those portions of the letter which did not allude to mere personal matters, possessing no interest to any one but ourselves. They run as follows:

"SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA, ———

\* \* \* \* \*

"And now, my dear sir, I have a strange disclosure to make. You will think I am writing under the influence of some optical or mental delusion, I fear; but I am well satisfied that what I am about to state, is correct.—At first, I was doubtful myself. I thought my eyes or my senses had deceived me, and although at the time I was on the point of writing to you, I purposely delayed my letter until I had made myself sure of the truth of what I then deemed an illusion. I have seen Mary Mason—Mary Mason alive, and apparently in health; but greatly different from her former self—so haggard, so care-worn, that her mother would scarcely have known her. I should not have recognized her at first, but by her voice. I heard her speak, and I knew the tone of her voice immediately. In that I could not be deceived.

I thought, and subsequently I found I was right. Since then I have spoken with her; for she is now in the city of Sacramento, and about to take up her residence here, at least temporarily. I have mentioned, in the commencement of my letter, that Mason had perished in a drunken brawl with some of the wretched set with whom he had become mixed up in this State. However, I will give you the particulars in detail.

"About six weeks ago, I was one morning about taking the steamer to proceed to San Francisco, on matters connected with my business. The vessel was on the point of starting, when she was momentarily delayed in the stream, in consequence of the arrival of a steamer from that port. The steamer passed close by us, very slowly, and so near that any person might have jumped on board of her from our vessel.

"She was pretty full of passengers, who were seated on the benches on her after-deck. I was with natural curiosity scrutinizing the appearance of the passengers; for one meets here with such singular *contre temps*, and sees so many faces which look like those one has met with before, in the old States and cities of the Union, often so changed, apparently, in circumstances, that there is more than ordinary interest felt in the arrival of a passenger vessel.

"I had searchingly scanned nearly all the passengers on board, without having on this occasion recognized any one, even in fancy, when, just as the vessel cleared us, and both the steamers were in motion, the figure of a female, who had just come up from the cabin, arrested my attention. It was as like Mary Mason, in height and general outline, as could possibly be; nay, the walk was the same, and every gesture reminded me of one I knew so well, and whose unfortunate history was so well known—whose memory was so dear to me. As yet I had not seen her face; but a slight motion of the paddle wheels of the steamer, enabled me to look her full in the face, and to my astonishment—I may almost add to my terror; for I thought at the moment that Mary had risen

from her watery grave—the face, too, was that of Mary Mason! But, how care-worn, how prematurely aged, 'No,' thought I—'it cannot be she; and yet, what a striking resemblance, setting aside the disparity of years.' For the female before me, looked at least forty-five years of age.

"She did not observe me; for her eyes were cast down upon the deck, and she took a seat and looked over the side of the steamer, leaning her elbow on the rail. Suddenly one of the waiters addressed her, apparently with relation to some baggage; for he held a carpet-bag in his hand, and again she turned her face full towards me, and replied to him, stating that the bag was hers, and desiring him to see to the remainder of her luggage.

"I could no longer be mistaken; for the voice was undeniably that of Mary, and I called aloud to her by name. She looked up—a proof that I had not been deceived; but, just then the steamer shoved off, and in a few moments we were widely separated.

"This singular, apparently supernatural rencontre, dispossessed my mind for business, and though I could not now return, I determined to start back again from San Francisco, as soon as I arrived, placing my affairs in some other person's hands, instead of remaining there several weeks, as had been my original intention. I did so, and was in a very short time back again in Sacramento.

"My first movement, on stepping on shore, was to visit the hotels, and see if any one answering the name or description, was stopping there; but though I searched for the greater part of the day, I could not discover her. One person, indeed, told me that a lady answering the description of Mary, had stayed a few days at his hotel; but she had gone away, he believed, to Stockton, but he was not certain. This intelligence I did not deem satisfactory, and I almost began, as I have said, to doubt whether the whole affair had not been either a mental hallucination or an optical delusion. Still, it was so strongly impressed upon my mind, that I determined to

advertise ambiguously, yet in such a manner that if the advertisement came to the notice of Mrs. Mason, she could not fail to recognize it, and I doubted not, would reply to it; as I had every reason to believe that were my old and dear friend, my more than sister, still living, and so near me, she would be glad to see me, and happy in the opportunity that would be thus afforded to both of us, of pouring out our mutual sorrows in each other's ears.

"Days and weeks passed anxiously away—oh, how anxiously! but nothing came of my advertisement, although I diligently searched the columns of every newspaper I came across, from all parts of the State, in the hope—every day growing more and more faint—that I should see some notice taken of it by Mary. At length I gave up the hope of obtaining a reply, and had almost come to the conclusion that my suspicions were correct, and that my fancy had deceived me, when one morning, just after I had opened my store, a note was placed in my hand by a colored girl, who said she had been directed to give it to me, by a lady who was stopping at the — hotel.

"My heart beat so violently, and my hands trembled so that it was with difficulty I could open the note, for I thought I recognized the hand-writing, and leaving the girl in the store, I retired to my private room to read it.

"Judge, doctor, of my feelings, when I found that it was really written by Mrs. Mason; that she had seen my advertisement in a paper at Stockton, and had thought that it could have been no other person but me.

"She was the more convinced of this in consequence, as she stated in the note, of my voice having struck her when I had called her by name from on board the steamer. She was now, she said, stopping at the hotel from which the note was directed, where she begged me to call and see her immediately, if possible, or at all events, in the course of the day. She added that she was now going by the name of W——, her maiden name, and the name of Miss W——, was entered in the hotel

books—thus accounting for my not having found the name of Mason in the course of my research among the books of the various hotels. 'The name of Mason,' she added, 'which was linked with all the misfortunes and horrors she had passed through in her short life, she had dropped forever, and she begged that I would no longer address her by it.' She entered into no details beyond this, and telling the girl to say that I would call in the course of an hour, I set about preparing myself for the painful, yet joyful visit.

"It was a long time before I could obtain sufficient command over myself to gain courage for the anticipated meeting; but at length I dressed myself and set out for the hotel.

"I will not waste my time and space by attempting to describe the meeting with my long lost, and, as I thought, my deceased friend and sister in affection as well as in misfortune. It was a long time before either of us became sufficiently composed to explain matters to each other.

"At length Mary did so in the following words—although I have omitted much in her narrative that, from what has passed between us, I am inclined to think you are already acquainted with.

"She said that on the night when we put up at the road-side inn, after having been brought from our residence in New York to meet Mason by P——, she, when just on the point of retiring to rest, discovered by some papers that fell casually into her hand that she had been legally married by Mason, and therefore was entitled to the name and to the position of his wife.

"On making this discovery she was so overcome by a variety of conflicting emotions that she could not forbear shrieking aloud, and felt on the point of fainting, when Mason sprang towards her and with a horrid curse on his lips, struck her a blow which rendered her insensible.

"She recollected nothing further until, revived by the cold night air, she found that she was seated in a carriage with her husband and child. Mason was raving as

though he were out of his senses, and he urged on the horse furiously as if seeking to escape from some imaginary enemy. Suddenly he drew up, and snatching the child from her arms, he struck her a blow which again rendered her senseless, and when she again recovered she found herself floating on the waters of a narrow river, buoyed up by her clothing. With considerable difficulty she managed to scramble on shore and then she looked anxiously yet fearfully around her. For a long time she could not recollect herself, nor call to mind how she came to be in her present plight. At length her recollection was gradually restored, and then she thought of her child; whither was he gone? Had he, too, been thrown into the river by his remorseless and cruel father, or had he been carried off?

"At all events all traces of the carriage containing Mason and the child had disappeared, and the unfortunate creature managed by some means—she herself knew not how—to crawl along the river's bank until early in the following day she found herself in the neighborhood of the town of ——. It was then, for the first time, she thought of her wretched figure.

"Her clothing, it is true, had nearly dried during her weary journey of several miles, but of course it was very far from being in a condition for her to make her appearance in the streets of a crowded town. She then bethought herself of a purse of money containing bank bills to a considerable amount and a small quantity of gold, which she had brought with her from home, in case that she or Mason should need it. Had she been robbed of this? or had the paper money been rendered worthless in consequence of the soaking it must have received?

"With trembling hands she searched her pocket—the purse was still there. The paper had stuck together, and was of course completely saturated; but having been tightly rolled, a short exposure to the sun, which now shone brightly, soon restored it to its original condition. Thus she was well supplied with cash for her immediate

necessities; for the notes amounted to some hundreds of dollars.

"She therefore entered the town, and urged by the necessities of her position, sought out a boarding-house, and by liberal payment in advance obtained lodgings. Wearied and distracted, overwhelmed with misfortune, prostrated in body and mind, and almost in despair, she kept her room during the remainder of the day, and retired early to rest.

"How she had so long managed to bear up is a wonder to me; but in the morning she found herself very unwell, and was before many hours in the delirium of a raging fever.

"For several days she was insensible to all that passed; but she at length showed symptoms of convalescence, and then she found that, fortunate for once in her life, she had fallen into the hands of a kindly-natured person, in the landlady with whom she had taken lodgings. Her money had not been touched—the good woman of the house having personally defrayed every expense attending her illness. It is true, she had seen that the poor patient had plenty of money in her own possession, when she had at first taken lodgings of her, and therefore she was well satisfied that she could reimburse herself in the event of her lodger's death—and likewise that in the event of her recovery she would be reimbursed. However, as things go, it was altogether fortunate that she, a strange, lone woman, in such a condition, had not lost her little stock of money.

"When she grew well, she formed a settled conviction, at all hazards, to hunt Mason throughout the country, with the object of compelling him to acknowledge her as his wife, and to restore her the child. She could not find it in her heart, even now, to denounce him as her would-be murderer, and she felt so deeply the sense of her degradation, that she could not make known her condition to her friends in New York or elsewhere—not even to her mother.

"With the utmost frugality she husbanded her re-

sources, and so managed to support herself for many months, tracing, as she informs me, the track of her husband from place to place; occasionally losing all clue for weeks—even for months—and then discovering it again, and renewing her search.

"So time passed away, until at length she discovered, by means which I cannot retail at length in the pages of a letter which already consists of a wonderful heap of sheets,—that Mason had gone off, actuated, seemingly, by the freak of the moment, to California, and thither, although her resources were greatly reduced, she resolved to follow him.

She still had more than sufficient money left to pay her passage, besides a quantity of valuable jewelry upon her person, which she disposed of before starting, with the sole exception of the wedding-ring, which she had had first placed as she thought in good faith, upon her finger; which she had subsequently learned to consider the symbol of her shame, but which she had never had the courage to renounce—and which she now considered to be again truly symbolical of her lawful union with her husband—*her husband* still, brutal and degraded though he was.

"With the amount of money gained by this disposal of her jewels, she landed in California. Her passage having cost her nearly all the money she was possessed of besides, and she had traced Mason to some mining grounds in the vicinity of Stockton. Thither she was proceeding when I at first saw her on board the steamboat at Sacramento, and on arriving at Stockton, she quickly discovered the place frequented by Mason. It was a low hotel in the city, the chief supporters of which were rowdies, blacklegs, and gamblers; and it was whispered that sometimes it was a lurking-place for thieves and murderers. Undaunted and resolute in her purpose; careless, as she assured me, alike of life or reputation, she proceeded alone to this den of wickedness.

"When she entered it, she was astonished to find that a violent noise, as of persons in high altercation, was

suddenly stilled, and an appearance of horror seemed to pervade the features of the occupants of the bar-room, who were grouped together over a prostrate form, while two or three attempted to retain in their grasp, a man whose features were distorted by violent passion, and who suddenly sprung from their grasp, and with a loud yell of mingled fear, triumph, and defiance, ran away at the top of his speed, flourishing a bowie knife wildly over his head as he pursued his way towards the open country.

"No one attempted to follow him; but three or four persons gruffly asked her what she wanted there.

"‘This,’ said they, ‘is no place for women, and if you want money, my good woman, you had better take yourself off to some place where you are more likely to get it.’

"What more they said, she did not hear, for in the figure lying prostrate on the floor, his life-blood fast ebbing away from a deep wound in his side, she recognized Mason.

"Regardless of all that had occurred; forgetful of the deception he had been guilty of; forgetful of his desertion, of his attempt to murder her; forgetful, for the moment, even of his child, whose image was almost omnipresent before her eyes, she flung herself upon the prostrate form, almost shrieking out—

"‘Edward, my husband—speak to me—speak to your Mary—to your wife. O God! he is dead!’

"She fainted; and as she supposes, was borne by the woman of the house, for there was a female president even of this wretched den, to a bed-room, in which she found herself when she recovered her senses.

"The woman was in the room, and she gruffly but kindly asked her, if she was better.

"Mary replied that she was, and desired to be taken to her husband; tremblingly inquiring whether he was still alive.

"The hotel-keeper's wife, perhaps touched with some womanly sympathy, replied that she would see what could be done. She left the bed-room, and shortly re-



turned, saying that Jackson was perfectly sensible, and wished to see his wife alone.

"'Thank God for that!' said Mary, as she hurriedly followed the landlady into the apartment occupied by the wounded and dying man.

"Mason was lying on the bed, gasping faintly for breath. He gazed at Mary with a look in which terror and wonder appeared to be mingled. At length he said, feebly—

"'Mary—have you risen from the dead to *confront me*, your murderer, now that my last hour is at hand? Or can it be possible that you are still living?"

"'I am living, Edward, and still am your wife. Oh, Edward! as you hope for mercy, tell me where are the papers which acknowledge my marriage with you?"

"The dying man appeared to take no heed of this request; but, still gazing earnestly through his filmy eyes—for the hand of death was already upon him—he said:—

"'Mary, I am dying, and h—ll with all its horrors awaits me. I sought to murder you, but I was mad—a fiend led me on, and since then you have haunted me by night and by day, and I have seen you in the spirit, beckoning me to come to you, although a yawning gulf of fire was between us, that I could not overleap. Can these visions have been but dreams?"

"'Dreams, Edward, but dreams,' replied Mary. 'All you have done to me I forgive; but Edward—my husband—tell me where is my child?"

"'The child I drowned,' replied Mason. 'His body rests in the Hudson, and his pure spirit has gone where yours will rejoin him, Mary—but his father's never—'

"Mary told me she did not recollect what subsequently passed, for as she heard Mason speak of her child's hapless, cruel fate, she swooned away. When she recovered herself, her husband was raving, and in an agony of terror. Several persons were holding him down in the bed, using all their exertions to control him. She drew near the bed in the hope of pacifying him, for, although he had been guilty of so many and great sins towards her,

she still remembered her early love, and believed his last great sins to have been, as he said, committed in a moment of insanity; but the sight of her threw him into still more fearful convulsions. He fancied she had arisen from the grave to confront him, and to charge him with the crime of murder before the Great Judge, and with the most horrid shrieks and the most awful curses upon his lips, he expired.

"It is needless for me to repeat what followed. The body of the wretched man was interred by his comrades, and Mary prepared to leave Stockton—the thought of the place being hateful to her.

"As she was about to take her departure, the old woman placed a small box in her hand, saying:—

"'After you fainted, and before Jackson was seized with them awful convulsions, he called me into the room to help you. "Mother," he said, "I shan't see the poor creature again. Promise me, a dying man—that you will give her this box; it contains some papers that will be useful to her, poor thing: and mind, mother, don't let the boys know anything about it."

"The old woman, as it appears, gave the required promise; and, almost unconsciously, Mary clutched it in her hand as she left the house.

"When she recovered in some measure from the stupor into which this last shocking meeting with her husband had thrown her, she examined the contents of the box, and found that it contained the papers proving her marriage, and also a bank book, for a very considerable amount of money placed in a bank at San Francisco, in the name of Mason.

"She was about proceeding thither, when her attention was arrested by the advertisement I had caused to be put in the papers, and amazed, yet overjoyed at the announcement of my presence in California, she hastened hither to meet me. We leave in a day or two for San Francisco, whither Mary will go to look after the money left her by her worthless husband, and I to attend to the business I left undone on my last visit."

\* \* \* \* \*

This is all that it is necessary for me to give to the reader, of the voluminous and extraordinary letter I received from Miss T——.

I have now related all that I know myself of one of the most singular episodes that have occurred to me in the course of a long and eventful practice.

I have only to add that on the receipt of this letter, I hastened to inform Mrs. W—— of the existence of her daughter, and also to tell her that she had been a lawfully married woman, and was now a widow; but, alas! a childless one.

Mrs. W—— wrote to Mary, as did I likewise, and she was persuaded to return home. The money left her by Mason, amounted to upwards of ten thousand dollars; and on that the widow and her mother could live comfortably, but Mary has determined, she says, never to marry again.

She could not endure the idea of continuing to live near the scene of her early troubles, and she and her mother, shortly after her return from California, removed to a western city; where Mary still resides, I believe. The mother died about six months since.

Miss T—— is still carrying on business in Sacramento, and thriving astonishingly; and is, I have heard, about to get married to a gentleman who resides in the neighborhood of Sonora; but this may be only a report.

Thus ends the narrative of the MYSTERIOUS PATIENT.

THE END.